THE ENEMY OF MY ENEMY: REBEL GROUP STRATEGIES AT THE ONSET OF CIVIL CONFLICTS

by

Courtney Kayser
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DEDICATION

To my Mama, Mikey, Caitlin, and Chloe –
I couldn't have done this without you all
I love you most

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I need to thank Anna Kuchta and Tatiana Shiloff for introducing me to the Russian language. As I imagine is obvious from the case studies in this dissertation, I have a particular interest in conflicts in post-Soviet countries. Anna called me during the summer of 2012 to request that I take Russian in my first semester of undergrad. When she found out I could not attend her summer lessons, she demanded to start teaching me Russian over the phone. During orientation, she plied my mother with homemade coffee liquor and chocolate covered peanut butter balls, promising my mom that she would take care of me – no need to worry about me being so far from home.

Within the first week of classes, I was in Anna's office teaching the Cyrillic alphabet to a new student. I was in Tatiana's Elementary Russian I class when I fell in love with the language, the region, and the culture. I spent my Friday mornings voluntarily at her study sessions, munching on donuts, discussing the intricacies of Russian grammar, and hearing stories of the pack of wild dogs Tatiana acquired while living at Lake Baikal (she swears that they were all very kind) and her bilingual parrot that demanded to watch PBS cartoons. The two of them somehow managed to convince me to take four years of Russian (my major only required two), several classes on Russian cinema (Tatiana's favorite), and enough credits to earn a Certificate in Russian and East European Studies. Though, it was probably the endless pierogi at Slavic Club that did the heavy lifting.

I would also like to thank my committee, Ahsan Butt, Eric McGlinchey, and Mariely López-Santana. Throughout this process, they have both challenged and encouraged me. My cohort though I was insane when I told them of my committee, picking three of the professors with reputations of high expectations. All three have this habit of asking me that one question that I haven't considered that sends me back to the drawing board. I remember thinking I had a theory ready to turn into a proposal, only to bounce between Ahsan's and Eric's offices revising, reconceptualizing, fixing methodologies and terms, etc. It made my dissertation all the better for it, once I got used to the process of never really being done. According to my fellows, the habit of asking such questions appears to be contagious.

This dissertation began in Mariely's seminar on the State and Society, with my newfound fascination in the division between internal and external sovereignty and the myriad of *de facto* statelets. Even better – many of these statelets were in post-Soviet space. It further evolved in Ahsan's seminar on nationalism, where I researched ethnic conflict in the South Caucasus, particularly those in Abkhazia and South Ossetia. In the process, I found census data, gathered by the Russian Federation, for Abkhazia showing that the majority group in the border regions of Abkhazia was Georgian. Moreover, in the Georgian Civil War, there was fighting between ethnic groups in Abkhazia, fighting between the state and Abkhazian forces, and fighting between the Georgian and Russian governments – a miasma of groups fighting one another that as soon as I noticed it, started showing up across other conflicts without rhyme or reason.

I defended my dissertation proposal two weeks before the COVID-19 shut down. Transitioning away from coursework coupled with quarantine was all the more isolating. Finishing my dissertation would not have been possible without my accountability group, comprised of my comps study group, Matt Fay and Joe Petrucelli, along with Jordan Cohen and Kyle Fowler, who also defended proposals during COVID. We spent countless hours discussing theory, our data, and our writing. Erica Seng-White and I also formed a zoom writing group at the same time, one that carried over to when we were back in-person. Between zoom and coffee shops, she was kind enough to let me ramble on about my theory, poking holes when necessary and then helping me fill back in the gaps. As we both focus on nationalism and intrastate unrest, her advice and knowledge were invaluable. I only hope I was able to do the same for her.

I would not have gotten to graduate school at all without Dana Kutzleb and Megan Lombardo. Dana has never held back in her criticism, but it comes from a place of love, even if she denies it. She never accepted anything less than her best, and she demanded my own. Megan has been kind enough to read my dissertation in its full, though I don't know how she found the time. She has listened to me ramble and debated me at every chance she got. But, the three of us have been hashing out arguments, theories, and political debates since we met one another. Neither went down the route of becoming political scientists, but they very well could have. They are both brilliant women, fantastic lawyers, and my best friends for over a decade now. Antonio Lombardo and Sarah Kuehn have had the very difficult task of trying to make us all seem like sane people who don't have to constantly be in an argument, with limited success. But, they certainly made us more mellow… occasionally. I would also be remiss not to thank Erica Brown, who's been across the country for what feels like forever but has stayed in touch as we both make our way to finishing our degrees.

Lastly, I would like to thank my family. To my mother, who always knew I could do this, even when I questioned it; who kept me going while I was sick; who stayed with me in the hospital, through the tests, who made sure I still tried to write. To my father, who read this whole thing in under a week, who edited it for me despite somehow making it to 2022 without access to Microsoft Word. To my brother, Mikey, who writes so much because he loves it, who inspired me to continue to write when it felt like I couldn't look at a computer ever again. To my sister, Caitlin, who is so very brilliant, who struggles, like me, to accept anything less than perfection, who is dedicated and driven in a way I hope to emulate. To my sister, Chloe, who I've watched grow up and become such a smart, wonderful person, who loves so fiercely, and who let me read her political science articles in exchange for help with geometry and chemistry (which I had to relearn myself first). To my newly adopted sister, Sierra, who has been through so much but keeps going with a smile. I could have never done this without you all.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Armored Personnel Carrier ..... APC
Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic ..... ASSR
Collective Security Treaty Organization ..... CSTO
Committee for State Security (Soviet Union/Russia) ..... KGB
Commonwealth of Independent States ..... CIS
Correlates of War ..... COW
Croatian Armed Forces ..... HOS
Croatian Defense Council ..... HVO
Croatian Democratic Union ..... HDZ
Croatian National Guard Corps ..... ZNG
Croatian Party of Rights ..... HSP
Federal Counterintelligence Service (Russia) ..... FSK
Government of National Reconciliation ..... GNR
Islamic Revival/Renaissance Party ..... IRP
League of Communists of Yugoslavia ..... LCY
Logistic Regression ..... logit
Maneuvering Structure of the National Defense ..... MSND
Maneuvering Structure of the National Defense ..... MSND
Military of Serbian Krajina ..... SVK
Ministry of Internal Affairs ..... MUP
Ministry of Internal Affairs ..... MUP
Motorized Rifle Division ..... MRD
Multinomial Logistic Regression ..... mlogit
Serbian Autonomous Oblast ..... SAO
Serbian State Security Service ..... SDB
Shanghai Cooperation Organization ..... SCO
Soviet Socialist Republic ..... SSR
Soviet Federative Socialist Republic ..... SFSR
Special Purpose Mobile Unit ..... OMON
State of Emergency ..... SOE
Territorial Defense Force (Територијално Одбрара/Teritorijalno Obrana) ..... TO
The Army of the Republika Srpska/Vojske Republike Srpske ..... VRS
The Croatian National Army/Hrvatska Vojska ..... HV
The National Guard Corps (Croatia) ..... ZNG
The Republika Srpska ..... Srpska
The Serbian Republic of Krajina ..... Krajina
Total National Defense Doctrine ..... TND
Union of Soviet Socialist Republics ..... USSR
Yugoslav National Army ..... YNA
Zone of Armed Conflict ..... ZAC

ABSTRACT

THE ENEMY OF MY ENEMY: REBEL GROUP STRATEGIES AT THE ONSET OF CIVIL CONFLICTS

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Dissertation Chair: Dr. Ahsan Butt

This dissertation seeks to explain the why some rebel groups target the state while others target fellow armed groups. Much of the literature focuses on features of the state to explain intrastate violence, but I propose to turn the spotlight onto groups themselves, specifically their organizational control structure and relative material capabilities. At the onset of a civil conflict, groups can 1) target the state, 2) target other groups, 3) engage in mixed targeting, or 4) engage in reactive/no targeting. I argue that organizational structure informs which groups are likely to view as their primary threat, while relative capabilities provide groups with agency in combat: those with high/symmetric capabilities have focus, while those with low capabilities are more opportunistic. Through an examination of five civil conflicts in post-Soviet and post-Communist countries and statistical modeling with a novel dataset, I demonstrate that these two variables in conjunction with one another map onto the varied configurations of group targeting.

PART I: INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

In modern conflicts, intrastate war, not interstate war, is the name of the game. In comparison, the actors involved in interstate wars are clear cut: they are the armies of sovereign states. Conversely, in civil wars, civil conflicts, insurgencies, and other intrastate or mixed conflicts, the line between civilians and combatants is often blurred, requiring both politicians and scholars to possess local knowledge in order to make distinctions between the two. Rebel organizations are not unitary actors, and there is typically a plethora of groups that have not yet consolidated even in more homogenized regions at the start of conflicts. Additionally, the variable size, composition, and targets of rebel groups and coalitions makes it difficult to determine the type and scale of conflicts.

Civil conflicts, group formation, ethnic divisions, and state capacity and structure have all been topics of scholarly interest. To understand intrastate conflicts, there are two major ways in which scholars have truncated case analyses: 1) by focusing on civil wars (state vs. group) or on civil conflicts (group vs. group) and 2) by focusing primarily on state reactions to civil wars and civil conflicts. Both, and especially the latter, have resulted in a bias towards the state, examining its responses, resources, and infrastructure, at the cost of the same depth of analysis being done on rebel groups. This type of analysis stems from the disparity in available data between the state and rebel groups, but this still hinders our understanding of how intrastate conflicts unfold and how they are fought and ended. I propose to shift the center of analysis from the state to rebel groups directly in this dissertation.

Table 1.1 shows a list of conflicts and the most common type of targeting to occur in that conflict occurring during and after the breakup of Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union. Only one conflict was an interstate war, seven cases were rebel groups targeting the state, seven cases were rebel groups engaging predominately in mixed targeting of other groups and the state, and six cases were rebel groups targeting other groups. While it is oft assumed that localized civil conflicts are less severe than civil wars or interstate wars, the Croatian and Bosnian Wars are two of the deadliest of the conflicts in the region. Whether a group targets the state or another non-state actor, the two may differ in scale, but not necessarily in substance or intensity. This raises a crucial question the literature has yet to satisfactorily examine: **why do similar armed groups target the state while others target fellow non-state groups at the onset of violence?**

Table 1.1: Primary Form of Targeting in Conflicts in the Former Soviet Union and former Yugoslavia

Interstate Wars	Rebel Group(s) Targets the State	Rebel Group(s) Engage in Mixed Targeting	Rebel Group(s) Target other non-state Groups
Russo-Georgian War (Russia and Georgia) (2008)	Slovenia vs. Yugoslavia (1991)	Nagorno-Karabakh War (Armenia and Azerbaijan) (1988-1994, 1994-)	Abkhaz vs. Georgians in Abkhazia (1991-1993)
	1993 Russian Constitutional Crisis (1993)	Tajik Civil War (1992-1997)	Ossetians vs. Georgians in South Ossetia (1991-1993)
	South Ossetia vs. The Republic of Georgia (1991-1992)	Croats vs. Serbs in Croatia (1991-1995)	Ingush vs. North Ossetians in Ingushetia (1992)
	Abkhazia vs. The Republic of Georgia (1992-1993)	Insurgency in the Presevo Valley (1999-2001)	Bosnians vs. Serbs vs. Croats in Bosnia and Herzegovina (1992-1995)
	Transnistria vs. Moldova (1992)	Insurgency in Macedonia (2001)	Abkhaz vs. Georgians in Abkhazia (1998)
	Chechnya vs. The Russian Federation (1994-1996, 1999-2009)	Ingush vs. The Russian Federation (2007-2015)	Kyrgyz vs. Uzbeks in Kyrgyzstan (2010)
	Kosovo War (1998-1999)	Ukrainian Civil War (2014-)	

Decisions made by the state and imposed on a peripheral region drive mobilization, and groups should, theoretically, target said state. Yet, in many cases, groups target a peripheral, non-state group instead. When analyzing why civil conflicts occur and how they proceed, this is a crucial consideration – the choice to target the state or another group

is not a random one, and the misclassification or exclusion of atypical cases obfuscates the pre-conflict differences between groups that target the state and those that do not.

As shown by the outbreak of violence between Ingush and North Ossetians, between Bosnian Muslims and Bosnian Serbs and Bosnian Croats, between ethnic Abkhaz and ethnic Georgians, and between ethnic Kyrgyz and ethnic Uzbeks, intrastate violence is not constrained to occurring between the state and a mobilized group dissatisfied with governance. By examining the differences in targeting between different groups in similar conflicts, this dissertation seeks to explain the variation in rebel group strategies at the onset of a conflict using a combination of quantitative statistical analysis, informal modeling, and qualitative case studies. I use a series of three paired case studies – the conflicts in Slovenia, Croatia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina – to build my theory and then test its generalizability with two sets of paired case studies: the Tajik and Kyrgyz conflicts and the conflicts in Chechnya and Ingushetia.

My dissertation diverges from existing studies via a new conceptualization of the dependent variable. Many studies examine at where violence is likely to occur, whether groups are likely to conduct violence, or the relationship between the state and non-state actors. Rather than following any of these routes, I am examining who precisely groups go after: whether they are targeting the state or a fellow non-state actor. I propose a four-part typology of rebel group targeting at the onset of civil conflicts: 1) targeting the state, 2) targeting other rebel groups, 3) mixed targeting, and 4) reactive/no targeting. How groups choose to target is observable through the actions of a given rebel group. Though the accuracy of reporting on the ground may vary from conflict-to-conflict and from day-to-

day in a conflict, we can see where attacks are occurring and, sometimes, who is initiating the attack.

I posit that group decisions are driven by the interaction between two key variables: organizational control and relative material capabilities. Both structure and capabilities have been used in analyses of actors in conflicts. However, my conceptualization differs from those previously used. For example, studies sometimes focus on structure or on capabilities, but not on both together. Conversely, group capacity is a common variable in analyses, but definitions of capacity combine elements of both structure and resources. Furthermore, many analyses focus on the state's structure, capabilities, and capacity, and how groups compare to the state. My measurement of relative material capabilities necessitates comparing actors in a conflict; therefore, the capabilities of the state are often incorporated into my theory. However, the state is not always present or is only active in particular locales. Additionally, my primary focus remains on how this affects groups, not the state.

Organizational Control Structure refers to the degree to which the political leadership of a rebel group can control the level of violence, where violence occurs, and how many factions operate within a rebel group, and organizational structure can either be fragmented or consolidated. Organizational control contributes to the environment in which groups operate; it serves to shift what type of actor groups are more likely to view as threats, be this the state or other groups.

Relative Material Capabilities is the ability of a group to enact its policies and its potential to achieve military goals and is measured as either high/symmetric or low *vis-à-*

vis other groups operating in the region. Group capabilities are only symmetric when all groups operating in said conflict are symmetric to one another, otherwise they are classified as high/low relative to one another. If three armed actors are operating in a region, for instance, if all have similar material capabilities, then they would be classified as symmetric. If one has greater material capabilities than the other two, then that one would have high capabilities. The other two would have low capabilities, even though they possess similar capabilities to one another. If a fourth party were to enter the conflict with even greater capabilities, then initial three actors would have low material capabilities. When rebel group capabilities are low, groups are less likely to pursue their political goal of governing a territory – these groups are trying to survive and build their capabilities. When capabilities are high or symmetric, rebel groups are more focused on a particular type of target – be this the state or other groups – based on their environment. These groups are also less likely to be reactive, since they have the capacity necessary to achieve victory if they do attack.

This chapter is structured as follows. Firstly, I will discuss how intrastate violence in defined in the literature and how, moving forward, I will be addressing forms of intrastate violence in this dissertation. Secondly, I will outline my theory for how rebel groups select their targets at the onset of civil conflicts. Thirdly, I will discuss the plan for this dissertation, including an overview of my methodology and an outline of the following chapters.

What is a Rebel Group?

Some rebel groups attack the state while some attack other rebel groups in civil conflicts. Likewise, some groups attack both; still others strive to avoid direct conflict entirely. It is easy to blame these strategies on a rebel group's political goals. If the state has collapsed or does not represent a viable threat, groups are more likely to compete against one another, while rebel groups that wish to replace the national government are more likely to target the state to accomplish this goal. The choice of targets for others may be limited by the nature of the groups themselves: if there are few rebel groups active, then a group is more likely to target the state; whereas, if there are many groups active, inter-group fighting may be more likely. Whether it be taking over the state, leadership changes, secession, or territorial control and autonomy, these political goals drive who groups should target.

How do we predict how groups will behave? Some rebel groups attack the targets that aid them in achieving their political goals. Others attack targets that are somewhat associated with their political goals but occasionally are not in line with those goals. Yet others engage in haphazard targeting, often attacking individuals or groups who are counter to their overall political intentions, sometimes to the point of losing international assistance or local alliances. Sometimes, groups do not initiate violence in the first place – responding instead to violence around them.

As famously stated by Prussian General Carl von Clausewitz, war is simply politics by other means, and this claim is as true for civil conflicts as it is for interstate wars. Rebel groups are organizations that use open, armed conflict in opposition to an established

government(s) for the purposes of political change. In this way, rebel groups are intrinsically political actors, though their political message may be muddled by their organizational structure and the influence (or lack thereof) of a group's political leadership. Rebel groups can form over the course of a war or be present at the start, but they require an overarching goal – be this secession, replacement of existing governance, or regime change, among other aims. Individuals can join a group for a myriad of reasons separate from this overarching goal, and group control can fracture internally with subgroups seeking possibly contradictory aims while rhetorically remaining under another's control.

Defining Intrastate Violence: A Conundrum

In an interstate war, combatants are, comparatively, clear cut. In civil wars, civil conflicts, and similar intrastate conflicts, it can be difficult to identify combatants and mobilized groups. Are these coalitions or a single group? Is the leadership unified or dispersed? Are alliances between groups stable or prone to upsets? Is the state a viable actor at the onset of the conflict or is the central government already dissolving? Moreover, groups often have an interest in obfuscating their membership, goals, supplies, and movements to prevent their dissolution. The state has fewer such fears, and this is one of the reasons why there is more available information on the state compared to rebel groups.

This dissertation examines why some rebel groups select certain targets over others at the onset of violence. "Rebel group" in this case refers to a group of individuals involved in open, organized, and armed violence. Even if opposed to one another, groups excluded from the power structures of the state raise similar complaints: that the state does not represent their interests, that the national government is acting counter to their interests, or

that the center is misappropriating resources away from their region. Some groups respond to this frustration by directly engaging the state – either to exit the state, to capture the center,[1] or some combination thereof – in traditional civil wars.[2] As shown by Figure 1.1 below, these three goals can and have been further subdivided into more specific goals in some studies. The Correlates of War dataset on Intra-state Wars v.4.0. uses a similar framework, as well, coding a civil war as 1) central control, 2) over local issues, 3) regional internal, and 4) intercommunal.[3] Other datasets, like Uppsala's Conflict Data project, classify civil wars as a conflict between two parties, one of which is the government of a state, over the government, the territory, or both of a state. Others, like Baev (2007) define civil wars as armed conflicts between the state and an organized, domestic party, i.e. rebel groups, to force the government to change its policies, replace the existing government (with or without regime change), secede from the state, or force the incorporation of all or part of a territory into another state.[4] Sarkees and Wayman (2010) also add a requirement for a minimum death thresholds either in a year (prior to 1992) or over the course of the conflict (post-1992). Purpose and battle casualties are the two features that dominate the classification of different types of intrastate conflicts in the studies of civil war. Still, there are critiques of whether death thresholds are sufficient to separate civil wars from other forms of intrastate conflicts since this can mask variations in the level of violence.[5]

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[1] "Center" refers to the state's seat of government, or the center of the state. It does not refer to the geographic center of the state. Many times, the "center" is used in contrast to the "periphery," as the central government typically has less influence over regions further from the seat of government, especially in weak states that lack coercive capacity.
[2] Fearon and Laitin (2003). Baev (2007).
[3] Sarkees and Wayman (2010). Sarkees. "Codebook."
[4] Baev (2007).
[5] Sambanis (2004).

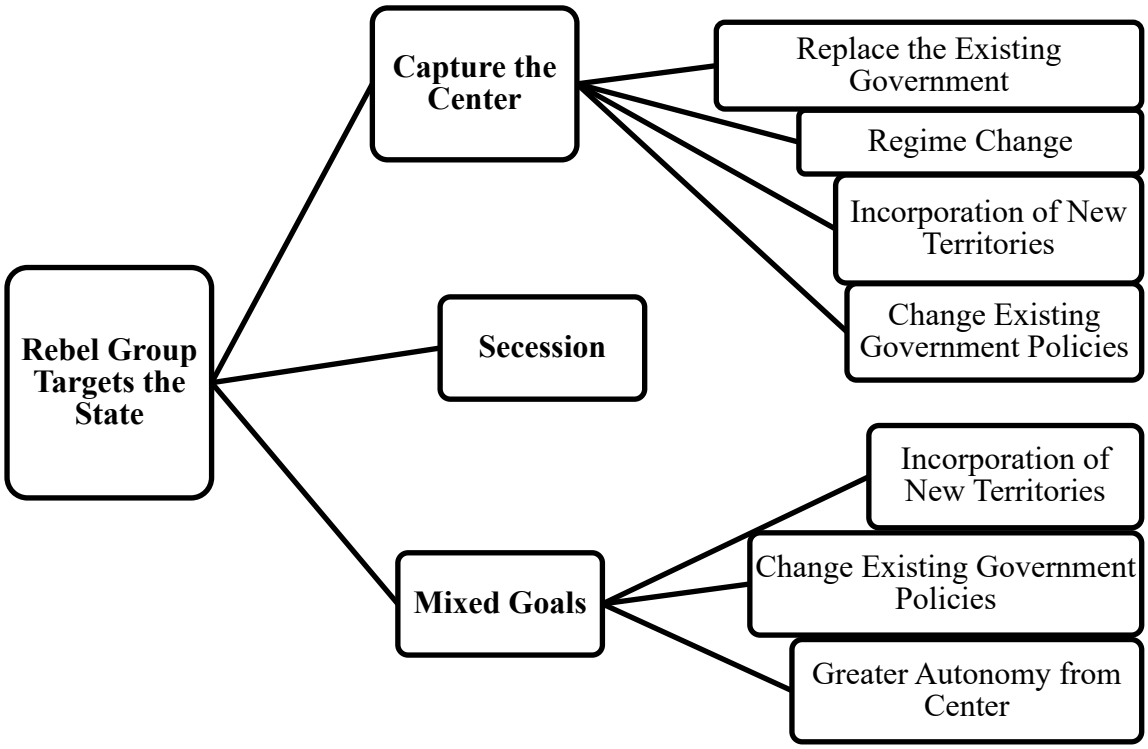

Figure 1.1: Rebel Group Choices in Civil Wars

Some studies have subdivided civil wars based on how the state and a rebel group fight rather than focusing om the reason for fighting. Conventional civil wars, for instance, are characterized by clear frontlines, stable positions, and major battles; irregular civil wars, conversely, lack clear frontlines, do not have clear divides between civilians and combatants, and rebel groups engage more often in guerrilla tactics. Though her theory focuses on patterns of violence in conventional civil wars, Laia Balcells (2017) also discusses symmetric non-conventional wars, in which both the state and a rebel group(s) field irregular armies. Rather than focusing on purpose, other definitions introduce

additional constraints on what qualifies as a civil war, usually requiring conflicts reach a degree of severity before they can be counted as civil wars. Correlates of War (COW), for instance, requires civil wars to have 1000 battle deaths over the course of the conflict.[6] By contrast, Uppsala's Conflict Data project reduces the minimum death requirement to twenty-five in a single year, and Uppsala specifies that a civil war is one between two parties: the state and another group. Similarly, Collier and Hoeffler (2001) assert that a civil war is between the government and an identifiable rebel organization but specify that both parties must suffer a minimum of five percent of the casualties to distinguish between civil wars and massacres.

Civil wars are, however, only one kind of intrastate violence. This type of war can overlap with massacres or other forms of violence, such as interstate wars, civil unrest, state repression, revolutions, coups, terrorism, and crime. Moreover, it is entirely possible that a conflict between two nonstate groups could meet these minimum battle death thresholds without the state being the primary target of said groups.

It is very rare for rebel groups to field traditional armies, meaning that conventional civil wars, as described by Balcells (2017), are rare in modern war-making. When these groups, or even the state, primarily utilize irregular armies, it introduces further difficulties in identifying singular, unitary groups in civil conflicts. Additionally, not all rebel groups target the state. These conflicts are not classed as civil wars *per se*, but the groups that

[6] Sarkees and Wayman (2010). Prior to 1992, COW required 1000 battle deaths in a single year to qualify as a civil war.

mobilize are not dissimilar to those that fight in civil wars. They are not necessarily less intense than traditional civil wars, and in some cases, the opposite is the case.

Whether a civil war or merely a civil conflict, the state loses the monopoly on the legitimate use of force within its territory, and multiple groups and actors rise to fill the vacuum left by a struggling or failing state apparatus. In a civil war, a group or coalition of groups engages the state with violence. While coalition membership or group membership may change over the course of a conflict,[7] the state is, from the outset, a major party to the conflict and the primary target of violence in a civil war. For example, Slovenian forces engaged the Yugoslav National Army, and Chechen forces engaged the Russian Army. In both conflicts, a region with a high degree of autonomy from the state fielded groups that were comparatively well organized for nonstate groups and aimed for secession from the center.

This means that civil conflicts need to be examined in conjunction with civil wars, especially since the two types of conflict can occur alongside one another as states destabilize. This can be seen in both the breakup of Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union. Conflict was not ubiquitous: Montenegro, Belarus, Kazakhstan, and other new states did not experience the level of conflict seen in Croatia, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, or Chechnya. Despite dissatisfaction with governance triggering mobilization, this frustration is not always expressed via violence, nor is it necessarily expressed as violence against the state. This violence can be instead displaced onto other groups or even result in groups engaging in mixed targeting.

[7] Christia (2012). Krause (2017).

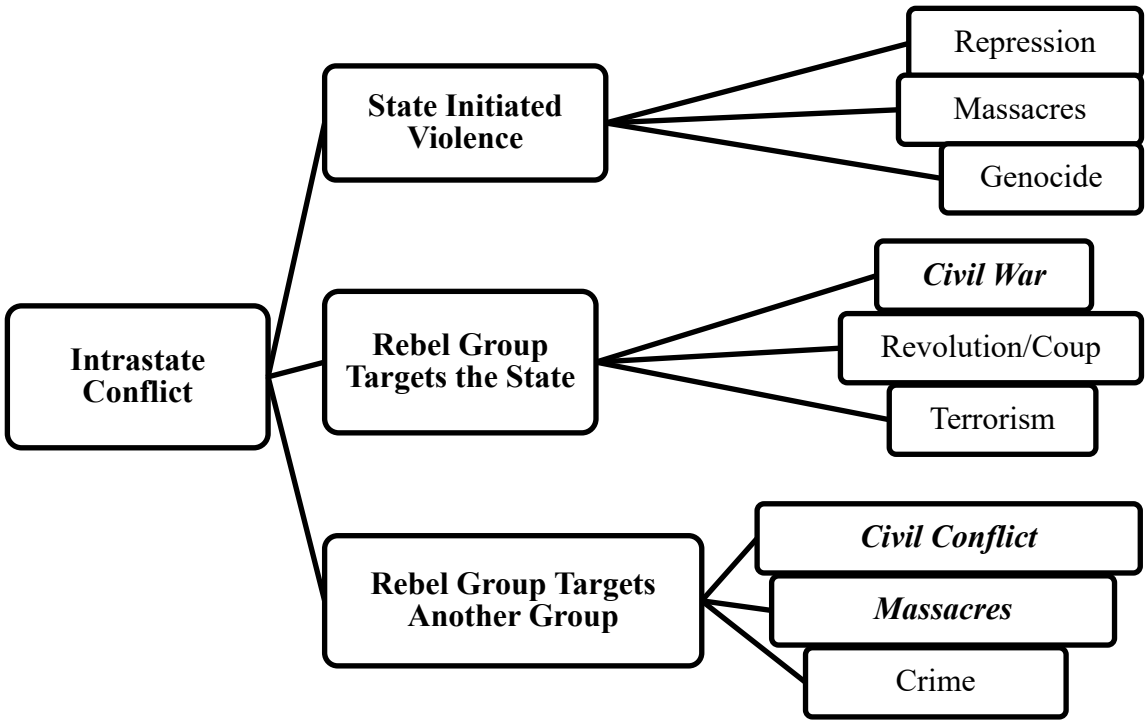

Figure 1.2: Types of Intrastate Conflict

Based on these gaps, I put forward a simplified typology of how intrastate conflicts are likely to occur in Figure 1.2; it is by no means exhaustive or absolute. As with most definitions, there is a degree of ambiguity, as different types of violence can overlap with one another. It is not uncommon to see multiple types of intrastate conflict in the same locale. For example, a rebel group may be fighting the state while the state commits genocidal acts against the co-ethnics of this group, while a separate group uses terror tactics and simultaneously criminal networks use the chaos to expand their illegal financial ventures. Additionally, it is not wholly clear who may be perpetuating acts of violence: massacres and genocides may be perpetuated by nonstate actors, even if the state is more likely to be behind such atrocities. Likewise, criminal networks may choose to target state

assets, or government officials may be members of criminal organizations. However, criminal groups more often aim to avoid the scrutiny of the state and security forces as their main goal is profit generation. Terrorist groups, conversely, may use criminal ventures to generate funds to put towards their political goals wherein they do directly target the state. Additional overlap can occur due to minimum battle death thresholds: a conflict may be between a rebel group and the state but only be a civil conflict or a revolution rather than a civil war if it is not severe enough. Depending on requirements, for instance, the conflict in Slovenia can be classed as a civil war while others would reject this classification due to it not meeting minimum battle death thresholds. Despite the complexity of how different forms of violence arise and are carried out, I argue that it is crucial to consider these aspects of intrastate conflict in conjunction with one another.

This dissertation focuses specifically on how rebel groups behave in civil wars and civil conflicts. Both civil conflicts and classically defined civil wars involve groups or coalitions of groups engaged in violence. This violence can be intense. The Croatian and Bosnian Conflicts were both devastating conflicts, though not civil wars. The Tajik Civil War and the First Chechen War were civil wars and were incredibly devastating in both Tajikistan and Russia. The civil war in Slovenia and the interethnic conflict in Kyrgyzstan were comparatively less severe conflicts within their respective regions, despite the former being a traditional civil war and the latter being a civil conflict.

Under weak national governance, the devolution of power to local leaders, or warlords (in line with Joel Migdal's work), makes mobilization for and justification of

violence against the state more feasible.[8] Groups in peripheral regions can be excluded from the political structures of the center and engage in either a civil war or a localized civil conflict. Conflicts in which rebel groups choose to target other groups can still lead to devastating conflicts. Moreover, the lead up to civil wars, especially secessionist ones, and civil conflicts can look highly similar, especially if a rebel group selects multiple targets at the onset of violence. The state is not absent from the conflicts, but it is not the primary target of violence. **As a result of both the actions of multiple rebel groups and the state, four options emerge for rebel groups: 1) to target the state, 2) to target other rebel groups, 3) to engage in mixed targeting of both the state and rebel groups, or 4) to not target or only reactively engage other actors.**

The cases selected for this dissertation vary along both the type of intrastate conflict being examined and the target selected by a rebel group. These seven cases are paired according to their location and, when possible, to the time of the conflict, to hold as many confounders as possible constant. In the Yugoslav conflicts, all groups were secessionist, either from the state or from a republic within the state. I examine these conflicts based off reason for secession; first the Slovenian, Croatian, and Bosnian governments, and second the Serbian Republic of Krajina, Republika Srpska, and Herzeg-Bosnia. My analysis of these six actors is not predictive. Instead, this is used to build my theory.

My predictive cases differ from those in Yugoslavia in a key way. In my first set, I examine non-secessionist conflicts. These two conflicts occur in Central Asia – Tajikistan in 1992 and Kyrgyzstan in 2010. My second set occur in a strong state. In Yugoslavia, the

[8] Migdal (2001). Finnemore (2004). Collins (2006). Fazal (2007).

state was in the process of dissolving and weakening over the course of the three conflicts. In both Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, an interim government came to power either just before or at the start of the conflicts. Additionally, both lacked coercive capacity. Contrastingly, the Russian Federation was not undergoing major changes in its executive leadership, despite the Soviet Union's recent collapse. Further, its military was functional, and it possessed equipment far in excess of that of the rebel groups.

There is within case variation that is mirrored across all three sets of case studies. The Croatian War, the Bosnian War, the Tajik Civil War, and the First Chechen War were long-lasting conflicts. These four, additionally, fit the definition of a civil war as opposed to a civil conflict. Conversely, the Ten-Days War in Slovenia, the Interethnic Clashes in Kyrgyzstan, and the East Prigorodny Conflict between Ingushetia and North Ossetia in Southern Russia were short, ethnic-based conflicts. Fighting was not as intense as what was seen in other conflicts examined. The Slovenian War was a civil war in the sense that it was between the state and an armed group for secession. However, it was 1) very short and 2) does not qualify as a civil war according to some measures due to the low death rate. The Interethnic Clashes in Kyrgyzstan are most accurately classified as an ethnic riot, and the East Prigorodny Conflict is a border conflict.

The small-n presents some danger of selecting cases on the dependent variable,[9] and I am solely looking at instances where violence did occur. This case selection is designed to mitigate the impact of both these factors, by examining how rebel groups select targets in different circumstances and different locales. Furthermore, while I examine

[9] Geddes (1990).

instances in which violence did occur, there are groups operating in these conflicts than chose not to target other groups. I use the three conflicts in Yugoslavia to build my theory. Groups in these three conflicts have the most variation in targeting, and due to the geographic and temporal closeness, I am best able to control sources of spuriousness.

As shown in Figure 1.4, the two cases from Central Asia test how this theory holds up in cases of intrastate conflicts wherein groups are not primarily secessionist. Despite the variation in group targeting, many groups were ultimately secessionist in the Yugoslav Wars, whether this be secession from Yugoslavia or secession from the republics attempting to secede from Yugoslavia. Additionally, the Tajik Civil War was not a conflict as entrenched in ethnic rivalries as the others examined in this dissertation. The dynamics between groups in the Interethnic Clashes in Kyrgyzstan, conversely, were intensely ethnic in nature. The third set of cases I examine are in the North Caucasus. In both these conflicts, the state (the Russian Federation) remained a functional and influential actor, differing from the Yugoslav government that collapsed partway through the conflict. Comparatively, the Russian Federation was in a better position to stem group capacity-building in the pre-war period than Yugoslavia. Both sets of cases differ from the conflicts in Yugoslavia in key ways, and the differences in overarching goals and comparative capacity enable me to test the generalizability of my theory beyond the original conditions that built it.

Table 1.2: Case Selection

Region	Reason for Selection	Conflicts
Yugoslavia	Theory-building	Ten-Day War (Slovenia) Croatian War (Croatia) Bosnian War (Bosnia and Herzegovina)
Central Asia	Theory Testing in primarily non-secessionist conflicts	Tajik Civil War (Tajikistan) Interethnic Clashes (Kyrgyzstan)
North Caucasus	Theory Testing in an environment where the state is strong	First Chechen War (Chechnya) East Prigorodny Conflict (North Ossetia and Ingushetia)

The split between studies of civil war and civil conflict truncates the observed cases limits the generalizability of conclusions drawn from studies, and it unnecessarily limits examinations of rebel group strategies at the start of conflicts to only those that directly involve the state or to those that do not. Looking specifically at the cases, this dissertation will be examining, in line with Fearon and Laitin's (2003) *Additional Tables for "Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil Wars,"* Bosnia's civil war against the Republic of Srpska and Croats is coded the same as the civil war between the Russian Federation and Chechnya. Additionally, Croatia's civil war against Krajina is coded separately from Yugoslavia's conflict with Croatia and Krajina, despite these being two periods of the same civil war. Interethnic conflict between Ingush and North Ossetians is not included in the cases Fearon and Laitin examine.[10]

[10] Based on Fearon and Laitin's (2003) scope conditions and definitions, my analysis makes sense. Especially since they are examining solely civil wars, many conflicts do not reach the minimum death threshold for examining civil wars. However, it still restricts analysis of mobilizing groups and what drives these groups

At the start of the Croatian War, Croatian militia forces engaged forces from the breakaway Republic of Krajina, not the Yugoslav Army. In fact, the Yugoslav National Army initially bypassed Croatia to attack Slovenia, despite the Republic of Croatia declaring its independence first. Much like traditional civil wars, there are multiple insurgent groups active in localized conflicts alongside the state. The difference is one of degree of involvement not in the underlying nature of conflict. In many studies, limiting the classification of civil conflicts to classically defined civil wars means that civil conflicts in which groups do *not* target the state at the outset cannot be accurately classified. Therefore, theories utilizing definitions of traditional civil wars cannot accurately predict when different types of conflicts will begin, as localized civil conflicts are oft excluded from these analyses.

Alternative Explanations

There are several explanations put forth by the existing literature for how civil wars start and develop. Presently, the literature is bifurcated, with studies focusing on state-society relations and the state's relations with mobilizing groups or on the internal dynamics of groups and group coalitions. There exist two key drawbacks with the current literature. First, they overvalue the role of the state at the cost of rebel groups. Second, they focus on national level indicators to explain variation in local dynamics.

These works inform us on crucial elements of the behavior of the state and of groups, and my theory builds on existing findings. I will be discussing three major

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to pursue violence. Additionally, while such conflicts are oft separated based on post-hoc determinations of what kind of conflict arises, determined either in the middle of or after violence has concluded, little has been written on how to distinguish between the two based on pre-war conditions.

arguments within the field. The first focuses on ethnic fractionalization and conflict. The second focuses on structure, which I subdivided into state structure and group structure arguments. The third focuses on resources and capacity, once again subdivided into a discussion on the state and of rebel groups. I will be discussing each of these arguments separately, but there is overlap between them. For instance, there is a debate on whether weak state capacity prevents ethnic closure on the national level or if ethnic fractionalization prevents the state from building capacity. Either way, the impact of state capacity and ethnic fractionalization are correlated.

My theory purposefully separates organizational structure and material capabilities, but these two variables are often related – though not always. The two have different impacts on rebel group targeting, but discussions on capacity often include structure and capabilities in their operationalization. For instance, state capacity is often linked to the state's ability to penetrate society, but its ability to do so is based on state infrastructure and available resources. Moreover, converse to many of the analyses looking at resources, I argue that behavior in combat is driven by the disparity in resources, not the resources available to the group alone.

Many of the existing explanations align with where violence occurs. However, they do not correlate with when groups target the state versus other groups. This is not wholly unsurprising, as they do not conceptualize their dependent variable in the same way that I have here. The focus is on 1) what features make violence more likely, placing emphasis on the state's ability or lack thereof to combat mobilizing groups, or 2) what features drive group coordination and longevity instead of on group targeting patterns.

Table 1.3: Explanations for Intrastate Violence

	Independent Variable(s)	Predicted Outcome	Outcome in Practice
Ethnic Fractionalization	• Number of ethnic groups in a state • Concentration of ethnic groups • Ethnic groups being excluded from power structures of the state	• Ethnically concentrated groups that are distinct from the center are more likely to mobilize. • Ethnically homogenous groups are more likely to target the state • Ethnically heterogenous groups are more likely to target other groups	• Ethnic identification is often constant for individuals. Mobilization occurs more easily when ethnicity overlaps with other grievances
State Structure	• Structure of punishment and inducements • Principal-agent problem and power delegation	• The state picks winners and losers in conflicts • If the center delegates power to actors that are aligned with its interests and enjoy sufficient regional support, this should hinder group mobilization.	• External support shapes rebel group behavior, but this primarily serves to prevent some groups from targeting the state rather than informing us of who groups will target. • State interactions with sub-national leaders has an impact on the likelihood of group mobilization, but it does not map onto group targeting
Group Structure	• Number of groups active • Power dynamics between groups in a coalition	• Due to the number of groups and competition between groups, it is more likely that groups will target other groups	• Neither groups nor the state are always unitary actors. Both see infighting that degrades their war-making capabilities • Even when there are many groups active, they choose different targets

	• The principal-agent problem on the level of groups	• Expected to operate similarly to that seen on the state-level with structure being driven by capacity and state-society/group-society relations	• Due to the lack of state infrastructure, which part of a group's leadership is in control and the one to penetrate society is unclear, and leadership competition and semi-independent units affect group structure outside of capacity and capabilities.
State Resources	• State strength • Control of territory • Co-option of elites • Military expenditures • Discriminate/ indiscriminate violence	• Groups are more likely to target a weak state than a strong one • Discriminate violence enables the state to preempt the outbreak of nationalist violence • Indiscriminate violence drives the creation of nationalist movements	• More violence occurs in weak states, but groups do not necessarily target the state • Indiscriminate violence leads to the mobilization of nationalist groups that are rhetorically against the state, but these groups do not always target the state at the start of a conflict
Group Resources	• Access to resources (high/low) • Presence of lootable resources	• Groups with access to lootable resources are more likely to target the state • The state is better able to control elites when resources are unlootable • When resources are lootable, fighters are more likely to be undisciplined and opportunistic	• Access to lootable resources can result in groups targeting the state, but it also causes groups to target one another

Ethnic Fractionalization

Many civil conflicts revolve around ethnic differences. In the Yugoslav Wars, ethnic fractionalization is pointed to as the cause of the conflict, group organization, and group behavior. Generally, ethnic fractionalization is one of the most prevalent variables identified as a cause of violence. In Bormann, Cederman, and Vogt (2015), for instance, the presence of multiethnic states and locations with trans-border ethnic communities correlate with both weak governance and the onset of civil wars.[11] Unlike language or religion, ethnicity is ascriptive: inelastic and nigh impossible to change.[12] In states where there is not a salient national identity, ethnicity is a common justification for self-determination, secessionist movements, and state-building nationalism. The lack of national closure may be due to ethnic diversity, but a lack of national resources can result in a lack of a cohesive national identity.[13] Sans some semblance of a national-level identity, individuals will continue to trust members of their ethnic group over other members of the state,[14] and threats or attacks to co-ethnics are often viewed as threats and attacks to the self.[15]

Monica Toft argues in *The Geography of Ethnic Violence* that geographically concentrated groups with a clearly defined territory to claim have been more likely to mobilize than those that are dispersed.[16] In the conflicts in Yugoslavia and the North Caucasus, which I examine in this dissertation, groups do mobilize where ethnic majority-

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[11] Bormann, Cederman, and Vogt (2015).
[12] Wucherpfennig, Metternich, Cederman, and Gleditsch. (2012). Denny and Walter (2014).
[13] Weber (1976). Wimmer (2002).
[14] Robinson (2016).
[15] Stein (2017).
[16] Toft (2003). Also see: Ayres and Sideman (2000) and Weidmann (2009).

minority communities are concentrated, as Toft predicts. State structure is also linked to ethnic mobilization. The center's actions are commonly linked to ethnic divides, favoring co-ethnics while discriminating against "out groups." Both the Yugoslav Wars and during the East Prigorodny Conflict in the Russian Federation this occurred. The state can also pursue its interests along racial, linguistic, religious, economic, and ideological divides. Overlapping divides are even more salient: for example, if a religious community is concentrated in a specific region of a country and that religion has connections to the center, it is more likely to see support from the state than a religious community that is more dispersed.[17] While ethnic groups were concentrated, though, group organization was not necessarily similarly consolidated. Furthermore, these groups did not necessarily target the state, despite grievances typically stemming from dissatisfaction with state policies.

There are several drawbacks to placing ethnicity and ethnic fractionalization at the center of causal models of intrastate conflicts. *First*, ethnic divisions create stress points in a society around which groups will likely mobilize. For many individuals, though, ethnic identification is a constant. On its own, ethnicity is not enough to spur mobilization. When identity-based cleavages overlap with other inequalities, such as economic or political ones, violent conflicts become increasingly likely. War, therefore, is usually the result of grievances combined with an opportunity structure that makes rebellion a viable option, rather than ethnic distinctiveness alone.[18]

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[17] Lipset and Rokkan (1990). Toft (2003).
[18] Gagnon Jr. (2004). Bara (2014).

Second, it is easier to identify rebelling and violent ethnic groups than peaceful ones,[19] leading to an inadvertent *ex post* selection bias toward more violent groups.[20] Of these mobilized and radicalized ethnic groups, it is likely that they will express secessionist desires. This is corroborated by Fearon and Laitin's study of ethnic conflict, which found through statistical modelling that once controlled for per capita income, ethnic and religious diversity do not increase the likelihood of civil conflict. Instead, poverty, political instability, and rough terrain correlate with civil wars.[21] As a result, shared ethnic identity is not the inciting factor in many conflicts, even if it becomes a rallying point around which groups mobilize.

Third, focusing on sites where secessionist movements arise inadvertently overvalues the characteristics of regions that do become secessionist. Secessionist regions are often locations with concentrated ethnic majority-minority communities, but these locations are not necessarily more likely to become secessionist. These communities are also not necessarily more likely to mobilize than heterogeneous regions. Ethnically homogenous groups, however, are more likely remain active longer.[22] This is not to say that ethnic diversity and ethnic fractionalization play no role in intrastate conflict. Ethnic fractionalization can drive the center to develop federal state structures and delegate more authority to regional units, precluding national closure while also allowing multiethnic states to exist without conflict.[23] Moreover, concentrated ethnic communities do not

[19] Hug (2003). Lewis (2017).
[20] Lewis (2017)
[21] Fearon and Laitin (2003)
[22] Larson and Lewis (2016). Lewis (2017).
[23] Wimmer (2016).

necessarily translate higher degrees of capacity in terms of regional political, military, or economic infrastructure. In fact, the center often aims to undermine autonomy in regions it views as potential security threats.

Ethnonationalism is a useful rhetorical tool for politicians. Ethnic identities are expedient for those seeking to mobilize a population to violence, as it creates a radicalized group that views its opponents as existential threats. Many intrastate conflicts are rhetorically based in nationalism and ethnic differences. This contributes to the impression that ethnicity is at the heart of conflicts, despite ethnic radicalization varying over time due to state capacity, economic performance, and similar indications. Crucially for my case examinations in this dissertation, nationalism and ethnic conflict does not correlate with a specific type of group targeting.

State and Group Structure

Both the structure of the state and the structure of groups have an impact on the start and progression of civil conflicts. I propose that the structure of groups has a greater impact on group targeting opposed to the structure of the state. The state manipulates the relations between groups and favors some groups over others. Multiple groups rise to fill the vacuum left by a struggling or failing state apparatus. Yet a weak state is not necessary for multiple groups to mobilize. A weak state is a more vulnerable target, and more conflicts occur in weak states. However, rebel groups mobilize in strong states too. Usually, there are more groups active at the start of a conflict than at any other point during a conflict, as groups that are less capable are weeded out during the war. Group structure, therefore, can shift. Especially at the onset of violence, the pressures of combat can cause

structure and alliances to shift. This is part of the reason I specifically examine the first few months of conflicts in my case studies, as it provides within-case variation when either exogenous shocks or internal power struggles result in structural changes.

State Structure

The state is a combination of national-level institutions, the existing regime leaders and their supports, and the national military apparatus. Theoretically, the state functions as "a human community that successfully claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of force over a given territory."[24] When it does so, it can influence and guide society, political agendas, and the balance of power between various groups through the deployment of resources, punishments, and inducements.[25] However, theories about intrastate violence must be able to account for why different types of targeting arise from similar conditions within a given state. No national government rules alone, and even when the state is strong and closely aligned with regional actors, though, the center must delegate authority.

This is true even for unitary states, where leaders are reliant on lower-level allies to enact their decisions. The state delegates authority for rational and practical reasons, such as cost and coordination concerns. Delegating decisions also enables national-level leaders to take advantage of regional- and local-level expertise of political and ideological dynamics that are obscured on the national level.[26] Leaders outsource security needs to local elites as a cost-saving measure for the center to prevent the outbreak or reemergence

[24] Gerth (1946).
[25] Evans, Rueschemeyer, and Skocpol (1985).
[26] Marten (2012). Haer (2015).

of conflict.[27] For instance, after the Second Chechen War, the Russian government outsourced security for Chechnya to the Kadyrov family. Doing so granted the region greater autonomy but the center lost the ability to govern interactions between local actors. Decentralization serves to stabilize multiethnic states, granting ethnic groups a degree of self-rule and autonomy without sacrificing the territorial integrity of the state.

The center cannot know *ex ante* if it has chosen to delegate power to the right individuals, and information asymmetries mean that it cannot discern if its orders are being faithfully executed on the local level.[28] The state has a variety of ways to coerce actors to align with its will, but when state leaders and local leaders are in a prototypical principal-agent relationship - conflicting with one another over power and resources and pursuing their own self-interests, even if these interests are not aligned with one another.[29]

Group Structure

Group structure, I argue, is critical to group targeting, and structure has been conceptualized in a variety of ways. Some focus on the ethnic makeup of groups and its effect on coordination, others on coalitions, and others on internal structures. Migdal (2001) discusses state structure in his work, focusing on the relations between local leaders or warlords and state leadership. When local leaders are strong, they inhibit the state's ability to control policy and force the state to negotiate control through these actors –

[27] See Marten (2012) for a discussion of how outsourcing security can be used as a cost-saving measure for the State and the potential drawbacks of this strategy.
[28] Haer (2015).
[29] Ruachhaus (2009).

making the state weak.[30] In this way, state capacity to penetrate society results in different types of state structure. I argue that this conception of leadership relations with sub-units. Rebel groups lack an internationally recognized government, but the political leadership faces similar hurdles with exacting control over its membership and the territory it claims to control.

Though it is not a fault of studies of state structure, it is important, I argue, to separate structure from capabilities. Even if the two are related as Migdal and others have noted, their effects on combat and group behavior are different. Armed group leadership does not align with capabilities, even if capabilities are an element of capacity. Because rebel groups often do not have the advantage of a state's infrastructural apparatus, leadership is less clear cut. There is not necessarily a government present to penetrate society, or there are multiple governments present competing against one another to do so. In other cases, a group is being removed from its original region of operation, constantly shifting which population the group is trying to influence. In this, a group might retain high or low material capabilities, having similar membership or access to military equipment, but its structure would be based on how and where the group and its sub-units were organized.

Ethnicity affects group organization. Groups wherein members share a common ethnic identity face fewer barriers to in-group cooperation, as members share pertinent traits, including language, race, or religion; a belief in a common heritage; and an

[30] This conception of state-society relations is heavily debated; though, with Putnam (1994) putting forward the argument that a strong society creates a strong state. There is something to be said for the fact that Migdal and Putnam's definitions of society differ greatly, with Migdal focusing on local leadership while Putnam focuses on the generation of social capital and social engagement.

association with a given territory.[31] Ethnic homogeneity is perceived to be the key driver of both national and regional cohesion. It then follows that it is in the state's interest to promote national closure and unification at the national level to prevent internal fragmentation.[32] However, ethnically homogeneous regions are not guaranteed to field a single rebel group to advance the interests of that group, and co-ethnic groups have been observed competing with one another for power and resources.[33] Ethnically, religiously, or linguistically similar groups are likely to compete with one another for prominence even if they have similar goals.[34] In the Bosnian War, for example, there were two ethnic Croatian militant groups initially – the Croatian Armed Forces (HOS) and the Croatian Defense Council (HVO). Instead of aligning, these two fought one another, with the HVO winning and the HOS dissolving.

Whether unified or fragmented, whether ethnically homogenous or heterogenous; coalitions suffer from commitment problems, due to the lack of enforcement mechanisms to prevent defection. Additionally, alliances between groups can shift – groups that were initially on opposing sides sometimes join to target former allies. Others fractured along pre-existing cleavages within groups. or fracturing along preexisting cleavages. This is especially the case when groups have parity with one another or when a group has experienced asymmetric losses compared to other coalition members.[35] The pressure upon

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[31] Smith (1986, 1988). Hobsbawm (1990). Billig (1995). Saideman (1997). Wimmer (2002). Toft (2003). Smith (2003). Brancati (2006). Walter (2006). Weidmann (2009). Wucherpfennig, Metternich, Cederman, and Gleditsch. (2012). Bormann, Cederman, and Vogt (2015).
[32] Weber (1976). Wimmer (2002). Wimmer (2016). Wimmer (2018).
[33] Mozaffar and Scaritt (1999). Cunningham, Bakke, and Seymour (2012). Oppenheim (2015). Lewis (2017). Mosinger (2018).
[34] Krause (2017).
[35] Christia (2012).

coalitions means that we are likely to see groups targeting one another, even if they agree that they should be targeting the state.

Available Resources of the State and Groups

State Capacity and Violence

A monopoly on the legitimate use of violence, the provision of public goods, mediating disputes, preventing corruption, spurring economic growth, and protecting a country's borders from external threats define state capacity. In Michael Mann's conceptualization of state capacity, infrastructural power, or the ability of the state to penetrate civil society and enact its polities over its territory and police dissidents, generates capacity.[36] When the state is weak, it cannot assert full control over its territory and cannot co-opt peripheral and local elites.[37] When the state and local groups are operating in a non-cooperative environment, much as in Migdal's archetypical Strong State-Weak Society framework, the state seeks to dominate local warlords, elites, political parties, and similar groups.[38] In line with this framework, when society is strong, much like when the state lacks infrastructural power, the state cannot impose its control over peripheral regions. The state's internal legitimacy then is weak. If it cannot outright defeat rebel groups, the state may prefer stability – *i.e.,* avoiding violence with a rebel group by surrendering part of its monopoly on the use of legitimate force. This results in a mixture of conflict and cooperation between the state and insurgents.[39]

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[36] Mann (1984).
[37] Migdal (2001)
[38] Migdal (2001).
[39] Staniland (2012).

The mobilization of non-state actors is a key consideration for the state, and the state must consider the ability of the masses to organize collectively and the ability of the elites to either suppress (via coercion) or co-opt (via goodies) the masses.[40] When the state cannot induce loyalty, it can rest its power on violence and coercion. State violence is closely tied to state capacity, as enacting *effective* violence relies on state capacity. Effective, here, meaning that the state succeeds in demobilizing potentially violent groups prior to conflict escalation. Michael Mann outlines two types of power that the State can utilize in *The Autonomous Power of the State*: infrastructural, as mentioned above, and despotic. Despotic power is the ability of the elite to act without routine institutional negotiation with civil society groups.[41] State violence is mediated through the state's despotic power, relying on coercion instead of inducements.

When the center believes that violence is imminent, it can expand its national-level coercive apparatus to prevent groups from organizing against its interests. The state is primarily punishing its rivals, using violence to modify individual and group behavior. Violence refers to state policies and actions that result in repression, imprisonment, or harm to individuals. The state uses such coercive means to discourage the mobilization of groups with goals counter to its own goals. However, state violence can either help or hinder the consolidation of rebel group aims in civil conflicts depending on how violence is conducted.

[40] Haggard and Kaufman (2016).
[41] Mann (1984).

State coercion is not automatically successful, as the state's ability to control the timing and intensity of violence is crucial for coercion to be an effective tool for modifying individuals' behavior. Violence must be discriminate – *i.e.*, targeting only those who take illegal action or are radicalized. The state can use national police or security forces to target actors acting against the state's interests; however, it may also outsource to local forces for the same purpose, contingent upon local cooperation.

Local knowledge, civilian cooperation, shared language and culture, geographic accessibility, and other features aid in being able to suppress potential threats to the state's monopoly on the use of violence.[42]As detailed in Timothy Snyder's *Bloodlands*, the Soviet state security apparatus had tremendous and devastating success with such efforts in undercutting Polish and Ukrainian resistance. Their success relied on local informants and local knowledge to 1) produce fear among the populace and 2) target those acting against the state specifically.

If a weak state chooses to use coercion, resource constraints make it unlikely for the state to enact punishment on an individualized basis. In such cases, the state resorts to indiscriminate violence – that is violence against individuals regardless of whether they have committed acts against the state. Indiscriminate violence based off broader indicators, like locale, ethnicity, or religion, encourages defection more often than compliance.[43] Moreover, when national-level actors target the collective, rather than the individual, with punishment, this generates incentives for rebellion.[44]

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[42] Snyder (2010). Mir (2018). Blaydes (2018).
[43] Wood (2003). Kalyvas (2006). Worsnop (2017).
[44] Wood (2003). Blaydes (2018).

When the state engages in coercion and violence, this can either successfully demobilize populations or encourage group mobilization, depending on the type of violence used. Even when the state engages in discriminate violence and demobilizes the population in peripheral regions, this is often only a temporary measure. For example, when the Yugoslav government ceased policing nationalists to the same degree as they had under Tito, Croatian nationalist groups quickly started organizing again in the 1980s. When groups mobilize due to state violence, it is natural to assume these groups would target the state over others. Yet, this is not what occurs. As seen in Yugoslavia and elsewhere, numerous groups organize due to state violence and are highly vocal about this fact, but they do not target the state.

Group Capacity and Capabilities

The capacity and capabilities of rebel groups in conflicts are often derived from that which they can acquire despite the state. There are exceptions – groups that are aided by the state – but these are rarer. Access to resources feeds into two processes: one where resources enable groups to operate and mobilize and second where resources produce undisciplined and opportunistic fighters. *Lootable resources*, or resources where there are low barriers to entry into markets and easy conversion from resources to income without the involvement of the state, are necessary for both.

Groups must be able to capitalize upon those resources to then translate the resources into weapons and payment for soldiers. When resources are lootable, regional elites can use them to finance non-state coercive institutions or insurgent groups.[45]

[45] See Markowitz (2013) for his analysis of the impact of lootable vs. nonlootable resources

Peripheral regions' ability to capitalize on available resources is key to a region's potential statehood, much as it is for states themselves. War-making options available during conflict depend on access to resources. Groups with reliable access can afford to escalate violence and negotiate from a position of strength. Those with low access de-escalate because they cannot afford to continue a conflict.[46] Capacity and organization are critical, as groups without these cannot revolt against either the center or another non-state group for a prolonged period of time.[47] This influences my conceptualization of relative material capabilities: those with greater access to resources are able to attack their primary threat. However, those with less relative resources must be more careful, lest they be forced to disband. This diverges from measures of capabilities that focus on what type or resources are available or the consistency of access to those resources.

Both the state and potential rebel groups have an interest in securing control over and the dispersal of resources to their supporters, and rebel groups face pressures to secure access to resources or external revenue streams due to their institutional, monetary, and military disadvantage compared to the center. In *State Erosion: Unlootable Resources and Unruly Elites in Central Asia*, Markowitz (2013) argues that the presence of *lootable* resources can promote civil conflicts between regional elites and the state, though this is not a direct cause of conflict. By contrast, *unlootable* resources can only be translated into cash or rents through the involvement of the center. These resources allow the state to better control the timing and intensity of violence. Unlootable resources are, therefore, theorized

[46] Hazen (2013).
[47] Tilly (1994). Hazen (2013).

to enable the state to modify individuals' behavior. Consequently, when groups have access to lootable resources, they can use these to improve their capacity *vis-à-vis* the state.

Many lootable resources cannot be fully regulated by leaders, either national or regional. As such, leaders cannot reliably control violence, since fighters can receive benefits or inducements from other sources – such as the act of looting.[48] Resources must be controlled by someone or some group, and resources that can be looted are subject to theft. Individuals may join groups for the purpose of acquiring profit, leading to the recruitment of opportunistic and undisciplined fighters. When leaders can control the dispersal of resources to fighters, groups are more likely to recruit committed, ideologically driven fighters that are more disciplined.[49] Therefore, while lootable resources may make it more likely for regional elites to target the state, it also makes it more likely for groups to target other groups as well.

Capacity-building is an important endeavor for rebel groups but building capacity may not enable elites to solidify their control over a territory and push out competitor groups. Moreover, groups are not limited to lootable resources to build capacity – they can receive resources from external actors or even from the state itself. When considering the potential capabilities of the periphery *vis-à-vis* the state, lootable resources are certainly a means by which rebel groups can offset their organizational capacity, and the presence of these resources can aid in predicting when groups are likely to mobilize against the state.

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[48] Worsnop (2017).
[49] Weinstein (2006).

I will not discount the importance of resources to conducting military operations, be they carried out by the state or a rebel group. In my theory, I do consider material capabilities to be a driving force of rebel group targeting. However, I theorize that material capabilities are important relatively not objectively. How a group's available resources compare to the actors it is fighting against, not necessarily the resources they hold, predict rebel group behavior. This will be the clearest in Part IV, wherein I examine how armed groups behave in conflicts with a strong state, as the involvement of a strong state shifts the relative material capabilities of groups to low as opposed to high/symmetric.

Structure, Capabilities, and Group Targeting

I aim to fill an existing gap in the literature by shifting the focus from the state to the characteristics of the rebel groups themselves. While the nature of the state provides key insights into the development of civil conflicts, accurately predicting rebel group behavior is of critical importance to both our understanding of civil conflicts and our ability to successfully demobilize armed groups. The evolution of conflicts depends on which actor or actors groups are likely to target at the onset of violence, particularly in conflicts with more than one rebel group.

I propose a four-part typology of rebel group targeting at the onset of civil conflicts: 1) targeting the state, 2) targeting other rebel groups, 3) mixed targeting of both the state and rebel groups, and 4) reactive/no targeting. Rebel groups can choose to target the state, thereby producing a civil war to either capture the center or secession. Some groups target other rebel groups in their area of operation, and this can increase the complexity and

longevity of conflicts, depending on the number of groups. A third option open to rebel groups is mixed targeting, wherein a group targets both the state and other rebel organizations. These conflicts can be classified as civil wars, as the state and its military arm are direct targets of violence. However, the state is not the only target groups are attacking, and these conflicts usually have less clear front lines and contested territorial control.[50] A final option is for a group to not select a target, despite being party to a civil war. These groups are reactive, responding to being attacked but not taking initiative in a conflict to select targets, whether this be the state or another group.

Within this typology, I assert that group targeting at the onset of a conflict can be anticipated by examining the interaction between the group's organizational structure, being consolidated or fragmented, and relative material capabilities, being high/symmetric or low. Organizational control structures indicate who groups are likely to view as their primary threat; relative material capabilities inform us of a group's agency and focus on that threat. I predict that consolidated groups with high/symmetric capabilities will target the state, while consolidated groups with low capabilities will engage in mixed targeting. Fragmented groups with high/symmetric capabilities are more likely to target other groups, while fragmented groups with low capabilities result in reactive targeting.

Table 1.4: Organizational Structure and Material Capabilities in Group Targeting

	Consolidated	**Fragmented**
High/Symmetric Capabilities	Targets the state	Targets other groups

[50] Wood (2003). Kalyvas (2006).

Low Capabilities	Mixed targeting	No targeting/Reactive targeting

Organizational Control refers to the degree to which the political leadership of a rebel group can control the level of violence, where violence occurs, and how many factions operate within a rebel group. It can either be fragmented or consolidated. Organizational control contributes to the environment in which groups operate, and it shifts who groups are more likely to view as threats. Fragmented groups, prone to fighting one another, are more likely to view other groups as threats. Consolidated groups, conversely, are more likely to view to the state as their primary threat. Additionally, the presence of fragmented groups makes division into separate rebel groups more likely over the course of a conflict, resulting in more groups being present to theoretically target.

Material Capabilities, I assert, is the ability of a group to enact its policies and its potential to achieve military goals and is measured as either high/symmetric or low *vis-à-vis* other groups operating in the region. When rebel group capabilities are low, groups are less likely to pursue their political goal of governing a territory – these groups are trying to survive and to build capabilities. When capabilities are high or symmetric, rebel groups are more focused on a particular type of target – be this the state or other groups based on their environment. These groups are also less likely to be reactive, since they have the capacity necessary to be more likely to achieve victory if they do attack.

From this, I derive the following four hypotheses:

H1: Consolidated groups are more likely to view the state as their primary threat.

H2: Fragmented groups are more likely to view other groups as their primary.

H3: Groups with high/symmetric material capabilities are more likely to target their primary threat.

H4: Groups with low material capabilities are more likely to target multiple types of targets rather than focusing on their primary threat.

I derive my theory and these hypotheses through a mixed qualitative and quantitative analysis of the Yugoslav Wars, before testing the generalizability of this theory on a series of case studies. These case studies deviate from the dynamics in Yugoslavia. The first case study will examine non-secessionist conflicts: the Tajik Civil War in 1992 and the Interethnic clashes in Kyrgyzstan in 2010. The second will focus on conflict wherein the state remained a powerful actor throughout: the East Prigorodny Conflict in North Ossetia and Ingushetia in 1992 and the First Chechen War in 1994.

Methodology

At the onset of violence, rebel groups have four options: 1) target the state, 2) target another rebel group, 3) engage in mixed targeting, or 4) not target other actors. There are a variety of arguments pertaining to how this selection process occurs. This dissertation will utilize a series of paired case studies to build and test a novel theory highlighting the importance group structure and capabilities to group behavior. Additionally, I pair quantitative and qualitative methods, which will enable me to analyze the causal relationships between variables and generalize these correlations beyond the cases

examined.[51] Contrary to commonly used datasets, this study uses local, rather than national or regional, data to draw more nuanced conclusions. Examining clustered case studies enables me to approximate a most-similar case design, despite the small-n, while varying key pre-war conditions. Most-similar case designs aim to hold as many conditions the same as possible between cases while the dependent variable differs, allowing scholars to narrow down potential causal mechanisms.[52] This is often best done via within-case analysis, since this holds the most potential independent variables constant and allows one to isolate causal mechanisms. This is not always possible, though; I am limited by where intrastate conflicts have occurred. I seek to mitigate the inherent differences between my cases by holding region and general time frame consistent.

The breakup of Yugoslavia presents the widest variety of conflicts, and this dissertation will be comparing the conflicts in Slovenia, Croatia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina in order to build my theory. In these three conflicts, all three of the options for the dependent variable are exhibited, and there are readily available municipality-level census data recording ethnic identities in 1991, along with preceding years. Therefore, I can analyze the role of group structure and capabilities in comparison with other theorized causal variables, like group competition and ethnic fractionalization. The remaining two sets of case studies, 1) the Tajik Civil War and the Interethnic Conflicts in Kyrgyzstan and 2) the First Chechen War and the East Prigorodny Conflict in Ingushetia, satisfy at least two potential outcomes. As a note on terminology, I will be using the terms 'group,'

[51] George and Bennet (2005). Brady and Collier (2010).
[52] Przeworski and Teune (1970). George and Bennet (2005).

‘forces,’ and ‘formations’ interchangeably to describe the rebel groups operating in these conflicts.

These case sets are temporally close together and two sets occur within the same country, allowing the capacity of the center in which these conflicts are taking place to be the same. Still, the various paired case studies differ from one another. For instance, both Yugoslavia and North Caucasus in Russia had civil wars in which one group aimed for secession while another was a localized civil war. However, while Yugoslavia collapsed, the Russian Federation did not. Another set of cases compares Tajikistan, which underwent a civil war with rebel groups engaging in mixed targeting in the 1990s and transformed into an insurgency in the 2000s, and Kyrgyzstan, which saw localized ethnic violence periodically since 2010. Comparing these two cases has precedent in the literature, and they differ from the Yugoslav and Russian cases in that these conflicts were not as tightly bound to a single region within the state.

Scope Conditions

Firstly, I am specifically analyzing group behavior at the onset of conflicts, not the dynamics between groups during conflicts.[53] This dissertation is not examining post-war

[53] For works on group organization during wartime, see Elizabeth Wood, Peter Krause, Paul Staniland (2014), and Kalyvas (2006). and Lewis, Larson and Lewis (2017). Additionally, see Balcells (2010). and Worsnop (2009). for specifically how group organization influences how wars are fought and leadership control over violence.
See Wimmer (2002). Toft (2003). Fearon and Laitin (2003). Lewis (2016). Shesterininia (2016). and Bakke and Wibbels (2006). for works that focus on how ethnic identity and collective threat framing shape civil wars.
For works on how the international system and external actors shape dynamics between groups, see Butt (2017). Kalyvas (2006). and Balcells (2010). Saideman (1997). Mylonas (2012). Horowitz (2000). Coggins (2012).

group dynamics.[54] There is an expansive literature on both these topics, but it is beyond the scope of this dissertation to incorporate these time frames into the theory. Additionally, since my theory focuses on how pre-war conditions shape target selections, it cannot account for how wartime conditions and actions cause shifts in strategies and alliances, either during a conflict or in post-war negotiations.

Secondly, this theory examines who rebel groups target. This introduces a challenge to identify who is the first mover in a conflict. The state can attack first, moving to preemptively repress a mobilizing population. This can either result in the demobilization of this population, as the state desires, or force a group's hand in who it will target. In the case of the former, such cases would result in no targeting, since a group would not resort to violence. Individuals may still do so, but this does not fit this dissertation's definition of a rebel group – being an open and organized group engaged in armed violence against others. In the latter, groups can still target the state, but they can also engage in mixed targeting. In some instances, rather than going against the state, groups with low capacity may choose to target other groups in response to state violence, targeting the regional allies of the state that are in a relatively weaker position than the center. As such, even if a rebel group is not the first to engage in violence, the question of who they will target remains a salient one.

Thirdly, in this dissertation, I am primarily examining conflicts wherein the state is collapsing or has recently collapsed. The conclusions this theory draws may be restricted

[54] See Ormrod (1997). Beissinger (2002). and Wimmer (2018). for state consolidation, See Autesserre (2009), Fortna (2004), Sambanis (2000) for peacekeeping; See Matanock (2017), Flores and Noorudden (2012) for elections in post-conflict environments; See Hartzell and Hoddie (2003), Paris (2004) for institutionalization of peace

to locales with an unstable or declining state. Governments are typically unstable when civil wars and civil conflicts occur, but the state failure of both Yugoslavia and the USSR represent extreme cases of this type of scenario. In Yugoslavia, the state military was an active combatant in several of the conflicts, while the Soviet military apparatus was inherited almost solely by the Russian Federation. There is variation in the power of the state in the post-Soviet conflicts, and those in Central Asia look different from those in the North Caucasus. Moreover, developments in Central Asia had a minimal impact on the North Caucasus and vice versa. However, the conflicts in Yugoslavia greatly influenced one another. I will be testing whether this theory is generalizable to conflicts wherein the state is strong with my cases occurring in the North Caucasus. Despite the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Russian Federation inherited much of its administrative and, critically, military infrastructure. Additionally, the conflict began in a peripheral region and, largely, remained in the periphery.

Dissertation Structure

Part I continues with *Chapter Two*, which will provide a detailed explanation of my theory, examining how organizational control structure and relative material capabilities shape group targeting in civil conflicts.

Part II illustrates the quantitative and qualitative analysis that I used to derive the theory described in Chapter Two. *Chapter Three* provides background on the events leading up to the conflicts in Slovenia, Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. *Chapter Four* utilizes a novel dataset I have constructed to examine how existing theories on conflicts and group behavior fit with what is observed in Yugoslavia. I examine both where attacks

are occurring and whether attacks are occurring on the state or other groups by location, using municipality-level data on ethnicity, terrain, and economic performance. *Chapter Five* returns the focus to my theory on group behavior, examining both groups aiming to secede from Yugoslavia, the Slovenian, Croatian, and Bosnian governments, and groups aiming to secede from their republic, the Serbian Republic of Krajina, the Republika Srpska, and Herzeg-Bosnia.

Parts III and IV will turn the focus to testing the generalizability and predictive power of my theory outside of the Yugoslav Wars. Part III will focus on non-secessionist conflicts, while Part IV will focus on conflicts wherein the state remains a powerful actor throughout the conflict.

In Part III's conflicts both occur in Central Asia, in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. *Chapter Six* examines common features to conflicts in this region, and the events preceding the outbreak of violence in both the Tajik Civil War and the Interethnic Clashes in Kyrgyzstan. *Chapter Seven* examines the two initial phases of the Tajik Civil War, examining group behavior from June to November 1992, beginning with the protests in Dushanbe and concluding with Emomali Rakhmonov coming to power. In the first stage, I examine the Pro-Nabiyev and Opposition protesters in Dushanbe; in the second stage, the conflict moves south between Kulyob and Kurgan-Tyube Formations. *Chapter Eight* examines the Interethnic Clashes in Kyrgyzstan, which occurred between ethnic Kyrgyz and Uzbek groups along the Kyrgyz-Uzbek border April through June 2010.

Part IV focuses on two conflicts in the North Caucasus, and in both, the state, the Russian Federation, remained a powerful actor in the conflicts that possessed military

superiority over the various rebel groups in the two conflicts. *Chapter Nine*, much like Chapter Six, focuses on features common to the two conflicts in the North Caucasus due to historical, cultural, and environmental dynamics. In *Chapter Ten*, I examine the East Prigorodny Conflict, a border dispute between North Ossetia and Ingushetia over the Prigorodny Rayon[55] and the city of Vladikavkaz in October into November of 1992. This conflict involved groups organized along ethnic lines, both Ingush and Ossetian, mobilizing in both North Ossetia and Ingushetia. It also involved North Ossetian police forces, the Russian Interior Ministry Troops, and both Chechen military and insurgent groups. *Chapter Eleven* assesses group targeting during the onset of the First Chechen War from November to December 1994, looking at the Chechen military, Chechen insurgent forces, and the Chechen Opposition formations. Much like the East Prigorodny Conflict, the Russian Interior Ministry forces were involved in this conflict as well, along with irregular formations operating in Ingushetia and Dagestan.

Chapter Twelve summarizes the events examined in these case studies and how they align with my theory. Moreover, I will apply this theory to more contemporary conflicts, like the War in Afghanistan and the unfolding events in Ukraine. These events are yet ongoing, meaning that the decisions and behaviors of groups and governments may deviate, and future events can, and likely will, shift incentives and avenues of action. Yet, it is important that my theory does not only apply to the events examined here; it provides key insights into current conflicts.

[55] Rayon, sometimes spelled raion, is an administrative unit used in several post-Soviet states that is equivalent to a district.

CHAPTER TWO: ORGANIZATIONAL CONTROL STRUCTURE AND MATERIAL CAPABILITIES

Introduction

Civil conflicts are one of the most common forms of political violence, negatively affecting government effectiveness and economic development. They often result in civilian casualties, massacres, and ethnic cleansing. Despite major advances in the study of civil wars, the state is still often perceived as the central actor in fighting. However, in many civil conflicts, the central government is a bystander. Even when involved, some armed groups choose not to target the state. Indeed, the presence of widespread violence within a polity itself is indicative of the government's loss of its monopoly on control over its citizenry.

Rebel groups have an agency of their own, but the focus given to the state inadvertently strips groups of the agency and shifts the outcome of analyses. Armed groups have an impact on how conflicts evolve, intensify, and resolve. Therefore, having a means to predict how mobilizing groups behave is advantageous both to scholarship and policymakers. Explaining why rebel groups target the state or other armed groups advances our knowledge of civil wars and can serve to mitigate the loss of human life, prevent conflict escalation, and enable peace-making. I assert that rebel group behavior is driven by the interaction of rebel group organizational control and material capabilities.

This chapter examines the role of organizational structure and material capabilities in the decisions of rebel groups in conflict. To do so, I discuss the role of the state in the onset of violence before shifting the focus to rebel groups themselves. My theory derives from an inductive analysis of three cases in the former Yugoslavia and a quantitative analysis of when and where violence broke out in the former Yugoslavia, which will be discussed in the next two chapters. The validity and generalizability of this theory will then be tested against two further sets of regionally based cases: Central Asia in Chapter 5 and the North Caucasus in Chapter 6. My theory is predictive in these two regions, but it is *not* predictive for the three Yugoslav cases.

Anticipating group targeting at the start of an intrastate conflict is a crucial endeavor, as it shapes patterns of conflict escalation and resolution. If a group is targeting other rebel groups, measures taken by the state or outside actors that address grievances between a group and the state will not de-escalate conflicts. Moreover, if a group is in an intrastate conflict but engaging in reactive targeting, *i.e.*, not instigating violence, many measures that are meant to prevent groups from gaining material capabilities, like arms embargos, can lock in power imbalances between groups or between that group and other actors involved in the conflict. This can, in turn, lead to massacres or ethnic cleansing of the weaker party, despite meaning to prevent this very outcome.[56] Additionally, if groups are highly fragmented or move across borders (internal or international) to join groups with

[56] This was seen during the Bosnian War. The UN Arms Embargo prevented the Bosnian government from acquiring necessary armaments to combat the Bosnian Serb forces, who were supplied by the Yugoslav National Army (YNA) and the Serb government. Due in part to the embargo, the Bosnian government was unable to reach parity with other forces operating in the country. (Office of Russian and European Analysis 2002).

similar purposes, solutions that do not take this into account are unlikely to be able to demobilize or destroy these groups.

At the start of civil conflicts, rebel groups can: 1) target the state, 2) target other armed groups, 3) engage in mixed targeting of both the state and rebel groups, and 4) engage in reactive/no targeting. I argue that group targeting is driven by the combination of that group's organizational control and relative material capabilities.

Organizational Control Structure is either consolidated or fragmented, and it refers to the degree to which the political leadership of a rebel group can control the level of violence, where violence occurs, and how many factions operate within a rebel group. To measure this, I will be examining 1) if the political and military is unified into a central body; 2) if this central body is embedded into the population that they are mobilizing; and 3) if this central body is able to coordinate its forces across multiple locales. Crucial to group targeting, organizational control shapes to the environment in which groups operate. It shifts who groups are more likely to view as threats. Fragmented groups, prone to fighting one another, are more likely to view other groups as their primary threat to political and military hegemony in their area of operation. Consolidated groups, conversely, are more likely to view to the state as their primary threat, as they are both organized internally more like a state and have solidified their control over their members.

Relative Material Capabilities, I assert, is the ability of a group to enact its policies and its potential to achieve military goals. I measure capabilities as either high/symmetric or low *vis-à-vis* other groups operating in the region. When a rebel group's relative capabilities are low, groups are less likely to pursue their political goal of governing a

territory – these groups are trying to survive and to build capabilities. When capabilities are high/symmetric, rebel groups are more focused on a particular type of target – be this the state or other groups based on their environment. These groups are less likely to be reactive, since they have the capacity to be more likely to achieve victory if they attack.

Table 2.1: Structure and Capabilities in Group Targeting

	Consolidated	**Fragmented**
High/Symmetric Capabilities	Targets the state	Targets other groups
Low Capabilities	Mixed targeting	Reactive/No targeting

The interaction between organizational structure and material capabilities maps onto my four-part typology of rebel group targeting, as shown in Table 2.1 above. Consolidated rebel groups with high/symmetric material capabilities, seen in the top left square in Table 2.1, are likely to *target the state*. These groups are more likely to have a clear command structure and control over the level of violence along with the capabilities to feasibly weather attacks on the state's military arm. They are likely to view the state as a primary political and military opponent while having the capabilities necessary to home in on attacking the state.

Consolidated rebel groups with low material capabilities, seen in the bottom left of Table 2.1, however, are more likely to engage in *mixed targeting*. Like consolidated groups with high capabilities, these groups are also likely to view the state as a primary opponent, but they do not have the capacity to solely focus their efforts on the state. These groups can be seen targeting both the state and other rebel groups depending on relative strength and

protection. These groups are aiming to bide time and build capacity, so will attack the targets of least resistance, prioritizing survival over the immediate accomplishment of political goals. If they are unlikely to win or prevent serious losses if they attack certain targets, they avoid them. These rebel groups strategically select targets based on factors on the ground, like which of their opponents has weaker defenses or occupies a more strategically important locales and the like.

Fragmented rebel groups that have high/symmetric capabilities, seen in the top right slot in Table 2.1, are likely to *target other groups*. Their fragmented organizational structure means that there are numerous sub-groups operating nominally under the group's political control, but its actual ability to control those sub-groups is highly suspect. They have material capabilities, meaning that they can attack high value targets, but they are less likely to view the state as their primary opponent. They are more likely to focus their efforts on attacking other rebel groups in their area of operation.

Fragmented rebel groups with low material capabilities, shown in the bottom right of Table 2.1, are in the worst position and engage in *reactive targeting*. These groups can respond to being targeted by other groups in their region, but they are not likely to initiate violence on their own. They lack a clear command structure and the ability to direct violence. They also lack the material capabilities necessary to pursue their overarching political and/or military goals. Beyond attempting to take out secondary targets or push for military victory, these groups are primarily concerned with survival and being able to continue fighting.

Defining Organizational Structure and Capabilities

The explanations discussed in Chapter 1 present a partial picture of what occurs at the onset of intrastate violence, and my theory aims to fill the existing gap in the literature by shifting the focus from the state to the characteristics of the rebel groups themselves. We can predict who rebel groups are more likely to attack by examining the interaction between a given group's organizational structure and relative material capabilities. Organizational structure informs us of the environment in which groups are operating and of whom they are more likely to view as existential threats – it reflects how individuals and leadership are networked with one another and their internal structure. Material capabilities, conversely, inform us of the focus of groups: are they focused on who they view as existential threats, or are they more focused on simply surviving to fight another day? This, in turn, is based on a group's supplies, membership numbers, and infrastructure.

The pre-war period is characterized by competing objectives for both national- and local-level actors regarding how the relationship between the two should be structured. It is well understood that strong states can penetrate society and are less subject regional leaders.[57] This is not unique to state structures, however. Consolidated rebel groups have this ability as well, and this is reflected in their ability to operationalize support and mobilize fighters into a coercive body separate from the state.

Organizational Control

Of first concern when examining the behavior of rebel groups is the structure of the group: is it consolidated or fragmented? For this, I am examining a combination of group

[57] Mann (1984). Migdal (2001).

ties, coercive capacity, and principal-agent relations between the leadership of a rebel group and the various members and groups operating under its banner.

Organizational structure builds upon the insights provided by Staniland's (2014) work on ties in *Networks of Rebellion* and Migdal's (2001) work on state-society relations in *State in Society*. However, my operationalization differs, due to my focus on how principal-agent problems shape rebel group action. Staniland argues that we can distinguish between different types of insurgent groups based on vertical (between organizers and local communities) and horizontal (between organizers) ties between social bases. Integrated groups have strong vertical and horizontal ties, Vanguards have strong vertical but weak horizontal ties, Parochial groups have weak vertical and strong horizontal ties, and fragmented organizations have weak vertical and horizontal ties. His operationalization focuses on how ties, driven by interactions between individuals, their networks with one another, and the density of their connections.

Migdal (2001) writes on state relations with local actors, not rebel groups, arguing that the state must negotiate with these local leaders to enact its policies over the whole of its territory. When local leaders or warlords are strong, they inhibit the state's ability to control policy and force the state to negotiate control through these actors – making the state weak.[58] The governing structures of rebel groups are not usually well-established, but the political leadership faces similar hurdles to state governments, needing to exact control over its membership and territory. Instead of looking at network connections, as Staniland

[58] This conception of state-society relations is heavily debated; though, with Putnam (1994) putting forward the argument that a strong society creates a strong state. There is something to be said for the fact that Migdal and Putnam's definitions of society differ greatly, with Migdal focusing on local leadership while Putnam focuses on the generation of social capital and social engagement.

does, Migdal is more concerned with the control and coercion capabilities of local leaders *vis-à-vis* the state or a supra-group organizer.

My operationalization of organizational control structure draws on the insights of the prototypical principal-agent problem. The leadership of a rebel group aims to control a variety of actors, including its own infrastructure and governing entities and its membership. Even when weak, a state typically has or recently had a central government that attempts to guide the behavior of regional leaders, who in turn, guide that of their subjects. Rebel groups, similarly, build a command structure to direct fighting, control its members, and direct resources. However, they lack the advantage of the state: their structure is not established, and it can rapidly evolve or devolve under the pressures of combat. There can be subgroups, paramilitary organizations, and armed actors that can operate independently of the political apparatus that cut into the efficacy of group leadership.

Consolidated organizations have a hierarchical leadership structure with a clear chain of command and low levels of within-group fractionalization. The professionalized militaries of states often exemplify consolidated organization. In the United States, for instance, the military is under the control of the president in his capacity as Commander-in-Chief, and though there are multiple branches of the military, they coordinate under the Joint Chiefs and the Secretary of Defense. This stands in stark contrast to the American intelligence apparatus, in which multiple agencies have overlapping and perceived exclusive responsibilities and incentives to withhold information from one another.

Fragmented organizational control exhibits high within-group fractionalization, unclear chain of command, multiple sources of leadership, and localized control. Fragmented groups are not necessarily worse than consolidated groups: they are more difficult to destroy and fully root out, and they are less susceptible to leadership beheading strategies.[59] Many terrorist groups, particularly when facing international pressure, resort to fragmented structures to ensure survival, with attempts to reform as consolidated groups when this pressure is alleviated. When facing off against stronger foes, a fragmented group structure can be a group's best bet to survive in the long-term, even if fragmented groups are less efficient military and political actors. Conversely, consolidated groups may be more intent on their overarching goal of governing a particular territory, as is the case in many civil conflicts, but they are potentially less adaptable when facing off against a stronger opponent. Though, consolidated groups make for more effective military operations in the short-term.

Organizational control provides insight into the environment in which groups are operating and affects their perception of threat. Under the logic of the principal-agent problem, the Principal, or state, attempts to impose its will on Agents, who are local strongmen, warlords, roving bandits, and members. The principal does so by delegating decisions to save costs and to take advantage of local expertise.[60] This process, though, exposes the Principal to 1) adverse selection and 2) moral hazard.[61] Within rebel groups, a similar principal-agent problem exists: the head of an armed group cannot monitor all

[59] Pape (2003). Kydd and Walter (2006). Shields et. al (2009). Dear (2013). Calderon et. al (2015). Prorle (2017).
[60] Marten (2012). Haer (2015).
[61] Haer (2015).

fighters in all locations, and therefore, must delegate. In delegating, the leader cannot know if those it has delegated power to will follow their edicts due to information asymmetries. Consolidated groups are successful in mitigating the dangers of principal-agent problems. A fragmented organizational structure, though, results in rebel groups being less adept at doing so.

Organizational control structure indicates, as the name suggests, how groups control their internal leadership and their territory. A consolidated group mimics the structure of the strong state: hierarchical leadership, strong vertical and horizontal ties, and coordination between different locales. Within the territory it operates in, consolidated groups intend to secure the monopoly on the legitimate use of violence traditionally held by the state. As a result, these groups are likely to view the state as their primary threat, as the state is the body that stands in that group's way of fully securing said monopoly. Fragmented groups, prone to fighting one another, do not have a monopoly on the use of force within their area of operation and their coordination within that territory is typically poor. Therefore, fragmented groups are more likely to view other groups as their primary threat to their political and military authority in their area of operation.

This does not necessarily mean that consolidated groups will not attack other groups. Instead, it indicates that consolidated rebel groups are more likely to view the state as their primary opponent. Moreover, the presence of many fragmented groups means that there are potentially more non-state actors and sub-groups to be targeted, shifting the calculus utilized by groups about what constitutes a credible threat. From this, I derive my first two hypotheses:

H1: Consolidated groups are more likely to view the state as their primary threat.

H2: Fragmented groups are more likely to view other groups as their primary.

In order to operationalize organizational control structure, I will be looking at two predominate factors that lead into a group either being consolidated or fragmented: the nature of a group's political leadership and its relationship with the group's members. Firstly, does the group have a unified political leadership, *i.e.,* is there a body generating a public, political consensus? For example, if the territory of a group is noncontiguous, oftentimes, the political leadership is divided, or new political actors arise in the region that is isolated from the main political body. Perhaps there are competing political actors vying for control over the rebel group; perhaps one actor controls that political sphere while a competitor dominates the military sphere. This can change over time as well. Two political leaders may be aligned at the start of a conflict but drift apart over time, fracturing a once consolidated group's control.

Secondly, what is the nature of the group's membership, and does the main political apparatus control the dispersal of inducements? This concern derives from the literature on principal-agent problems and from Worsnop's (2017) work on how groups can keep the peace in conflicts. Who can effectively turn violence on and off is of crucial concern, both during fighting and in its end? He attributes this to a combination of resource control (*i.e.,* dispersal of inducements) and leadership embeddedness, which enables enforcement and self-policing among members. Both factors are related to principal-agent problems, which

dominate rebel groups. Rebel leadership is the principal, and it must negotiate with local leaders, warlords, and armed individuals to execute its aims.

Relative Material Capabilities

After organizational control, the second element to examine is a group's material capabilities. A group's capabilities can be high/symmetrical or low *vis-à-vis* other actors. Both rebel groups and the state are concerned with power projection capabilities – and for rebel groups, this is driven by 1) membership, 2) weaponry and armaments, and 3) intelligence apparatus. Unlike the state, groups have neither a history of independent leadership nor the ability to acquire supplies independently and legally. Additionally, the state has a vested interest in preventing most groups from developing the ability to compete with it. How successfully these groups operate around the state's coercive apparatus – or become a component of this apparatus – is critical for their eventual war-making capabilities.

Material capabilities are driven by a group's membership, weaponry, and armaments. What is important to predicting rebel group behavior is what kind of resources and capabilities a group has in comparison to other actors involved in the violence. Material capabilities give groups more agency, while a lack compels the prioritization of survival over military advancement. Low capabilities may preclude groups from immediately pursuing their political goals at the onset of violence. Who is the weakest operating in the region? Who is the most exposed? Would victory over a target translate into an opportunity to build capacity – either by seizing a strategic location or by seizing weaponry and armament caches? Who rebel groups target is based on these kinds of considerations when

they have low capacity? This causes rebel groups to act against what their pre-war rhetoric would suggest, as this rhetoric expresses political goals, and their military operations prioritize survival.

Conversely, when groups have high/symmetric capacity, they do not have to be so restrained in their targeting. They can prioritize their goal, be this secession, capturing the center, or conquest of a particular region without secession. Instead of making decisions based on mere survival or wartime capacity-building, these groups succeeded in building sufficient capacity during the pre-war period to concentrate on their political goals at the onset of military operations. I group high/symmetric together, but it is important to note that symmetric capabilities are not measured between two parties in a conflict – unless there are only two present in that locale. Instead, groups are measured as "symmetric" if all groups acting in a region are equal or near-equal to one another. If there are three actors present, and one possesses high relative material capabilities, then the other two have low relative capabilities even if the two with low capabilities are symmetric to one another. Relative capabilities are measured across all groups, not simply the groups actively attacking one another.

As discussed in the previous section, organizational structure drives who groups are likely to view as their primary threat. Relative capabilities, on the other hand, provides agency. I predict that groups with high/symmetric capabilities will be focused on their primary threat. Those with low relative capabilities are less focused. They aim to survive the onset of violence and engage in more opportunistic targeting. Groups with low capabilities engage in mixed targeting (when consolidated) and reactive/no targeting (when

fragmented). They target less secured locations and less prepared targets, regardless of who they structurally view as their primary threat. Those that are fragmented and possess low relative capabilities are in the worst position at the start of a conflict, as they lack the organization to direct their minimal resources. While all groups desire survival, it is the chief goal of reactive groups.

Joining a conflict carries risk: one can be killed; one's family can be targeted; and, if the movement fails, the state can imprison or make an example of mobilized individuals. Not organizing is often the safer route for individuals, so group organizers need to shift potential member preferences so that joining the group is viewed as more advantageous than being passive to expand. Rebel group success in expanding membership is driven by an opportunity structure created in part by the state and in part by the ingenuity of rebel group leadership.

When examining the behavior of rebel groups, capabilities do not necessarily inform us of who groups will target. While organizational control informs us of who groups are more likely to view as a threat, material capabilities inform us of how focused groups are on a given target and their perception of their likelihood of success in attacking certain targets. Groups with high or symmetric material capabilities are more likely to attack a single type of target as opposed to several. Groups with low material capabilities, however, are more likely to be focused on survival and attacking either low risk or high reward targets. I derive the following two hypotheses from examining a group's material capabilities:

H3: Groups with high/symmetric material capabilities are more likely to target their primary threat.

H4: Groups with low material capabilities are more likely to target multiple types of targets rather than focusing on their primary threat.

Particularly in conflict situations, data on membership, armaments, and the like can be difficult to discern. Rebel groups do not have to report budgets, reporters put themselves at risk if they try to report on movements, and, beyond this, groups have incentives to hide their resources. Capabilities can be assessed indirectly when direct data is not available. Local support levels, provision of goods, territory patrolled, and efforts to acquire arms from outside actors can be utilized in conjunction with reports, memoirs, and government and leadership documents declassified and released after conflicts.

Armament acquisition is a consistent hurdle for rebel groups prior to and during conflicts. Leaders are often required to establish smuggling operations to move weaponry from abroad into fighters' hands. These operations are risky, as those involved can be caught and arrested. Additionally, groups do not always have a recourse for continuing combat operations if these smuggling rings are compromised by defectors. Such compromise can threaten current and future membership, as the state can more easily identify those mobilized if operations are uncovered and infiltrated. Accordingly, information is a critical currency for both rebel groups and the state. Can the state infiltrate groups? Can group members identify and eliminate double agents from their rosters? The success of rebel groups is driven by an opportunity structure created in part by the state and in part by the ingenuity of rebel group leadership. In this way, membership, armament acquisition, and an intelligence apparatus operate together. Groups with a better

intelligence apparatus are typically better at gaining membership, preventing imprisonment, and acquiring weaponry. How rebel groups perform in the pre-conflict information war has a real impact on their wartime capacity, both in membership and armament acquisition.

Groups face resource and timing constraints – do they focus on building up membership, on expanding to nearby locales, or on acquiring weaponry? Outside actors, being either the state or an international actor, can aid groups by providing additional armaments, funding, training, or troops. However, they can also hinder the groups by enacting embargos, confiscating weaponry, arresting members, or infiltrating organizations. A lack of armaments is often easier for external actors to alleviate, but external support can also be used to artificially expand group membership. However, if these members are not from region and answer to external authorities, it can undercut local leadership or generate multiple, disparate chains of command.

Material capabilities interact with organizational structure. Their material capabilities may be generated domestically, but it is more difficult for fragmented groups to organize and direct these resources than their consolidated counterparts. They may also enjoy support from external actors – either the state or a different international actor. It may be the cheaper and more practical route for the state to outsource its security to other groups active in the region,[62] supplying these groups with money, weaponry, and training.

[62] Marten (2012) argues that supporting warlords, as individuals who control small pieces of territory using a combination of force and patronage, can be a cost-saving measure for the state to outsource the cost of occupying and defending a territory, though it is difficult for the state to recapture control of these territories and produces its own principal-agent problems. Migdal (2001) makes a similar observation about the nature of relations between the state and local leaders; though, he places the impetus on the strength of these groups *vis-à-vis* one another rather than the state choosing to relinquish control. Additionally, Staniland (2014)

For international actors, this can be a less costly way of accomplishing its national interest, as well. Other groups may also choose to get involved on humanitarian grounds or to prevent genocide.[63]

Theory Building and Predictive Cases

My theory is built upon an analysis of three cases in the breakup of Yugoslavia: the conflicts in Slovenia, Croatia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina. Though beginning in the same state under similar national-level conditions, the three wars differed in severity and in the number of groups fielded. These cases both provide between-case and within case variation, enabling my theory to account for both national and regional level differences while tracking the local developments of rebel groups. Table 2.2 below outlines the observed nature of the cases from the former Yugoslavia.

In Part II, I will test the existing literature's explanations for civil conflicts and civil wars, particularly ethnic and secessionist conflicts, with a quantitative analysis utilizing a novel dataset incorporating municipality-level data. In Chapter 5, I will separately examine the armed group aiming to secede from Yugoslavia, the Slovenian, Croatian, and Bosnian governments, and those seeking to secede from their respective republics, the Serbian Republic of Krajina, the Republika Srpska, and Herzeg-Bosnia. I do this because the republic administrations begin the conflicts with a distinct advantage over the groups that mobilize for secession within the republics. Though new to independence, Yugoslav republics, particularly after Tito's death, operated with varied levels of autonomy. Slovenia

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addresses this as well, looking specifically and wartime relations between the state and rebel groups, wherein the state may choose to relinquish its monopoly on the legitimate use of violence to rebel groups if doing so enables a reduction in conflict or the consolidation of state control over a portion of its territory.

[63] Finnemore (2003).

and Croatia were pushing for more autonomy prior to war. Moreover, the groups aiming to secede from the republics shared similarities as well. All three received aid from other Yugoslav republics, all three were home to transborder ethnic communities, the three fought almost exclusively along these borders, and after secession, all three aimed to join another Yugoslav republic. By separating the republic groups from the within-republic groups, I can 1) hold more variables constant in the analysis and 2) analyze differences based on a rebel group's ultimate political goal. Moreover, I can assess the six groups separately and in concert with one another based on goal and region.

My theory is derived from analysis of the six armed groups below, and the outcome written in the last column is *not* predictive. I build my theory using group targeting in Yugoslavia as my initial model. Nor does my quantitative chapter make predictions. Rather, it examines how the existing literature's explanations of civil conflicts applies to the Yugoslav Wars, using a novel dataset on municipality-level data. My theory is predictive for the case studies in Part III and Part IV, examining first non-secessionist conflict and second conflicts with a strong state.

Table 2.2: Breakdown of the Groups Operating During the Yugoslav Wars

Goal	**Region**	**Group**	**Organizational Control**	**Material Capabilities**	***Outcome***
Secession from Yugoslavia	Slovenia	Slovenian Government	Consolidated	High/ Symmetric	*Targeted the state*
	Croatia	Croatian Government	Consolidated	Low	*Mixed Targeting*
	Bosnia	Bosnian Government	Fragmented	Low	*Reactive/No Targeting*

Secession from a Republic of Yugoslavia	Croatia	Serbian Republic of Krajina	Fragmented	High/ Symmetric	*Targeted Other Groups*
	Bosnia	Herzeg-Bosnia	Consolidated	Low	*Mixed Targeting*
	Bosnia	Republika Srpska	Fragmented	High/ Symmetric	*Targeted Other Groups*

In Part III, I examine two non-secessionist conflicts in Central Asia: The Tajik Civil War and the Interethnic Clashes in Kyrgyzstan. Table 2.3 provides an overview of the groups in these two conflicts. The Interethnic Clashes in Kyrgyzstan were ethnically based, as the conflicts in Yugoslavia were. However, the civil war in Tajikistan was not ethnically based. In fact, the fighting in Tajikistan was concentrated where the population was more homogenous. This changes a key variable from the original cases: all the conflicts in Yugoslavia were secessionist in nature. It also provides within-region variation, with one conflict paralleling the Yugoslav Wars in group mobilization patterns, while the other does not. Together, these two enable me to test the external validity of my theory on conflicts with a different purpose.

In Part IV, I examine conflicts in which there was a strong state actor involved in the conflicts. Table 2.4 provides an overview of the groups in the East Prigorodny Conflict and the First Chechen War. In Yugoslavia, the central government collapsed over the course of the conflict, and in Central Asia, both the Tajik and Kyrgyz governments had experienced recent or concurrent upheavals. Contrastingly, the Russian government was a stable actor, and its capital was insulated from the fighting in the East Prigorodny Conflict

and the First Chechen War. Moreover, the Russian military had clear superiority over the various armed groups involved, directly impacting the relative material capabilities of rebel groups. Like Yugoslavia, many of the groups in the North Caucasus mobilize along ethnic divisions, there are transborder ethnic communities, and border disputes. Therefore, these cases deviate on a key variable, the power of the state, but still share many structural similarities with the Yugoslav Wars, enabling us to discern how rebel groups behave differently in a weak versus strong state and if my theory accurately predicts behavior despite this difference in state capacity.

Table 2.3: Predicted Outcomes for Groups Operating in Non-Secessionist Conflicts

Conflict	Group	Structure	Capabilities	*Predicted Outcome*	*Actual Outcome*	Theory Status
The Tajik Civil War	**Dushanbe "Pro-Government"**	Fragmented	Low	*No/ Reactive Targeting*	*No/ Reactive Targeting*	Aligns
	Dushanbe "Opposition"	Consolidated	Low	*Mixed Targeting*	*Mixed Targeting*	Aligns
	Kulyob Forces/the Popular Front	Consolidated	High/ Symmetric	*Targeting the State*	*Mixed Targeting*	Divergent
Interethnic Clashes in Kyrgyzstan	**Kurgan-Tyube Forces/the United Tajik Opposition**	Fragmented	High/ Symmetric	*Targeting Other Groups*	*Targeting Other Groups*	Aligns
	Kyrgyz Groups	Fragmented	High/ Symmetric	*Targeting Other Groups*	*Targeting Other Groups*	Aligns
	Uzbek Groups	Fragmented	Low	*Reactive/No Targeting*	*Reactive/No Targeting*	Aligns

Table 2.4: Predicted Outcomes for Groups Operating in Conflicts with a Powerful State

Conflict	Group	Structure	Capabilities	***Predicted Outcome***	***Actual Outcome***	**Theory Status**
The East Prigorodny Conflict	**Ingush Militants**	Fragmented	High/ Symmetric	*Targets Other Groups*	*Targets Other Groups*	Aligns
	Ossetian Militants	Fragmented	High/ Symmetric	*Targets Other Groups*	*Targets Other Groups*	Aligns
	Ingush Militants (post-Russian Intervention)	Fragmented	Low	*Reactive/No Targeting*	*Reactive/ No Targeting*	Aligns
	Ossetian Militants (post-Russian Intervention)	Fragmented/Consolidated	Low	*Reactive/ Mixed Targeting*	*Reactive/ Absorbed by the state*	Partial Alignment
The First Chechen War	**The Chechen Army**	Consolidated	Low	*Mixed Targeting*	*Mixed Targeting*	Aligns
	Dudayev's Supporters	Fragmented/Consolidated	Low	*Reactive/ Mixed Targeting*	*Mixed Targeting*	Partial Alignment
	The Chechen Opposition	Fragmented	Low	*Reactive/No Targeting*	*Reactive/ No Targeting*	Aligns

The interaction of organizational control structure and relative material capabilities drive rebel group decision-making at the onset of civil conflicts. *Organizational Control Structure* characterizes the political leadership of a rebel group, and how capable that leadership is at controlling the level of violence, where violence occurs, and how many factions operate within a rebel group. Whether groups are consolidated or fragmented shifts who groups are more likely to view as their primary threats. Fragmented groups are more likely to view other groups as threats, while consolidated groups are more likely to view to the state as their primary threat.

Relative Material Capabilities shape a group's focus and agency to enact their primary political and military goals. This is measured relative to the other groups and the state operating in a conflict, since a group with less access to fighters, weaponry, ammunition, and the like possess fewer options than those who do possess these resources. A rebel group with 1,000 soldiers versus a group with 100 has an advantage; a state military with 100,000 soldiers versus a group with 1,000 soldiers has an advantage. When rebel group capabilities are low, groups are less likely to pursue their political goal of governing a territory – these groups are trying to survive and to build capabilities. When capabilities are high or symmetric, rebel groups are more focused on a particular type of target – be this the state or other groups based on their environment. These groups are also less likely to be reactive, since they have the capacity necessary to be more likely to achieve victory if they do attack.

Conclusions

In this dissertation, I examine why similar groups target the state while others target fellow non-state groups at the onset of violence. Understanding civil wars, specifically the start of civil wars, is a critical endeavor. While large-scale interstate wars have been on the decline, intrastate conflicts have become one of the most common forms of violence. Additionally, even in interstate conflicts like the Russo-Ukrainian War, non-state actors and proxies are prevalent. The effects of war are long-lasting and far-reaching, impacting everything from international security to terror developments to poverty. Anticipating how rebel groups select their targets provides crucial information that can serve to mitigate the loss of human life, prevent conflict escalation, and enable peace-making.

The importance of understanding civil wars has driven much research, but presently, studies concentrate heavily on national-level variables to predict the behavior of actors and the severity of conflicts. My theory posits a shift in focus – away from the state and national-level indicators to the rebel groups themselves.

I aim to provide a more holistic understanding of how rebel groups select their targets and how they organize during the initial stages of a conflict. Though built on my analysis of the breakup of Yugoslavia, my theory is generalizable to other regions and other types of intrastate conflicts. Moreover, my theory has applications to conflicts elsewhere, like the Russo-Ukrainian War, the War in Afghanistan, and the Syrian and Libyan civil wars.

PART II: THEORY BUILDING AND THE YUGOSLAV WARS

CHAPTER THREE: THE YUGOSLAV WARS

Introduction

In Part II, I will be conducting my first set of cases, which I am using to inductively build the theory laid out in Chapter Two. These cases will examine six rebel groups: 1) the Slovenian government, 2) the Croatian government, 3) the Bosnian government, 4) the Serbian Republic of Krajina, 4) Herzeg-Bosnia, and 5) the Republika Srpska. This chapter will first outline these groups I will be examining, the type of targeting they pursued, and the locations in which they were active in the first months of the conflicts they were involved in. Second, I will provide the backdrop for the start of the collapse of Yugoslavia and the federal bodies, namely the Yugoslav National Army (YNA). In Chapter Four, I will test the explanations provided by the existing literature for group behavior, assessing if the proposed causal mechanisms for violence and group behavior hold for the Yugoslav Wars. Chapter Five will provide a detailed dive into how organizational control structure and relative material capabilities are correlated with group targeting.

On June 25th, 1991, forty-six years after the founding of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Croatia made a constitutional decision in favor of independence and Slovenia formally declared its independence. Two days later, the Ten-Day War began between Slovenian forces and the Yugoslav National Army (YNA). While hostilities ended in Slovenia quickly with the signing of the Brioni Agreement on July 7th, violence did not

conclude in Croatia or elsewhere in Yugoslavia on this date. Instead, violence continued to escalate in Croatia, and Yugoslavia continued to fracture. On September 25th and October 8th respectively, Macedonia and Croatia declared independence, and on December 19th, the Republic of Serbian Krajina declared its independence from Croatia. A few months later, Bosnia and Herzegovina declaring its independence on March 3rd, 1992. Despite many groups in these wars wanting a similar thing – independence, autonomy, self-rule, and the right to self-determination – rebel groups behaved very differently across these conflicts.

Groups do not behave randomly in conflicts: I propose that they are driven by a combination of their internal organizational structure and their objective and relative material capabilities. These two factors aid us in predicting how groups will behave and shifts in these variables can result in changes in targeting over the course of conflicts. Part II details the history surrounding the start of the Yugoslav Wars in Chapter Three. Chapter Four is a quantitative analysis that examines if the structural features, such as terrain and ethnic fractionalization, of municipalities can predict group behavior. Chapter Five is an examination of three conflicts during the breakup of Yugoslavia: The Ten-Day War in Slovenia, the Croatian War, and the Bosnian War. By examining these cases, I will model how structure and capabilities drive action via a two-part most-similar case design, investigating first those seeking to exit Yugoslavia and second those seeking to exit a republic.

These three conflicts are clustered in both time and space, all starting within a year of each other. Most-similar case designs aim to hold as many conditions the same as possible between cases while the dependent variable differs, allowing scholars to narrow

down potential causal mechanisms.[64] This is often best done via within-case analysis, since this holds the most potential independent variables constant and allows one to isolate causal mechanisms. The breakup of Yugoslavia presents wide variation on both between-case and within-case variables of interest, providing leverage for theory-building. Additionally, the Yugoslav breakup, comparatively, has much more information cataloged and available about pre- and post-war features than other regions wherein violence is common in recent history. Once again, the analysis in this chapter is not predictive: it is modeling and informing us of how the variables of interest interact and impact the dependent variable, being targeting. The predictive power of this theory will then be ascertained in later chapters.[65]

The Yugoslav Wars consisted of six major conflicts over the course of a ten-year period: the Ten-Day War (Slovenia), the Croatian War, the Bosnian War, the Kosovo War, the Insurgency in the Presevo Valley, and the Insurgency in the Republic of Macedonia. Exact numbers are unknown, but these conflicts resulted in at least 130,000 casualties, 2.4 million refugees, and 2 million Internally Displaced Persons.[66] Through these cases, I will construct a theory of how rebel groups select their targets in the initial stages of a conflict. Through examination of rebel groups operating in Yugoslavia, I inductively derive a novel theory to predict group behavior at the start of intrastate conflicts.

Groups in these three conflicts engaged in all four types of targeting: targeting the state, targeting other groups, mixed targeting, and reactive targeting. Table 3.1, below,

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[64] Przeworski and Teune (1970). George and Bennet (2005).
[65] Mahoney and Thelen (2010).
[66] International Center for Transitional Justice (2009).

provides the full breakdown of groups and their targets. There were perhaps hundreds of groups operating in Yugoslavia, ranging from groups of individuals haphazardly attempting to defend themselves to fully organized military and political entities with claims to statehood. My dissertation focuses on groups that had the potential to not only fight but to rule territory if the fighting resolved. This does restrict the number of groups examined, but it is a starting point for analyzing groups as their own entities. Furthermore, examining smaller groups becomes functionally impossible or, at the very least, highly costly, due to the difficulty of obtaining accurate data. Many smaller militia groups also operated with the explicit or tacit approval of larger, politically active rebel groups.

The number of groups operating within the republics increased as the dissolution proceeded, with the fewest operating in Slovenia and the most operating in Bosnia and Herzegovina. It may seem redundant to examine the Ten-Day War, as one group operating within the republic cannot then target other groups. However, it remains that the Slovenian government could have 1) reactively targeted or not targeted YNA forces or 2) suffered from coordination problems that split various military and militia groups. There were internal divides within Slovenia between more moderate and more radical actors. Both situations would constitute counterfactuals, but it would do an analysis of the breakup of Yugoslavia a disservice to discount the first conflict of a series of conflicts. Moreover, the dynamics of the Ten-Day War and those party to it – and those who chose not to be party to it – influenced the subsequent conflicts.

The intensity and duration of these conflicts vary, with the wars in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina lasting far longer and leading to far more losses of human life

than the war in Slovenia. Despite this, Slovenia and Croatia share many pre-war characteristics: both had high levels of industrial productivity, both had well-defined political elite, both were intent on transforming Yugoslavia into a confederation, and both were willing to threaten, and later to declare, secession to ensure control over their territory.[67] Meanwhile, Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina had pre-war similarities as well: both had salient ethnic divisions, both were the target of Serbian territorial expansion, and both saw extensive pre-war debates about how to proceed as the Communist Party collapsed and democratic elections were implemented.

Groups in Yugoslavia

I will be examining six groups in the Yugoslav Wars. Three aimed to exit Yugoslavia, while three aimed to exit their respective republics. Between these six groups, there is full variation across the dependent variable and both independent variables. These groups are 1) the Slovenian government, which targeted the state; 2) the Croatian government, which engaged in mixed targeting; 3) the Bosnian government, which engaged in reactive/no targeting; 4) the Serbian Republic of Krajina (Krajina), which targeted other groups; 5) Herzeg-Bosnia, which engaged in mixed targeting; and the Republika Srpska (Srpska), which targeted other groups. Table 3.1 outlines the features of the groups I will be examining.

Figures 3.1-3.4 picture the locations of major clashes in the Ten-Day War, the Croatian War, and the Bosnian War. These maps visualize who was present in locations but does not picture who attacked whom in those locales. Information on who groups

[67] Tanjug (9 April 1989).

targeted and how often they were targeted will be discussed at the start of Chapter Five. These maps do not include every clash that occurred in these republics during the Yugoslav Wars. However, Figures 3.1 and 3.2 include the clashes that are included in the dataset I utilize for my statistical modeling in Chapter Four. Figures 3.3 and 3.4 include attacks that occurred in Bosnia between February and June 1992, while my dataset tracks clashes until December 1992.

Table 3.1: Breakdown of the Groups Operating During the Yugoslav Wars

Goal	**Region**	**Group**	**Organizational Control**	**Material Capabilities**	***Outcome***
Secession from Yugoslavia	Slovenia	Slovenian Government	Consolidated	High/ Symmetric	*Targeted the state*
	Croatia	Croatian Government	Consolidated	Low	*Mixed Targeting*
	Bosnia	Bosnian Government	Fragmented	Low	*Reactive/No Targeting*
Secession from a Republic of Yugoslavia	Croatia	Serbian Republic of Krajina	Fragmented	High/ Symmetric	*Targeted Other Groups*
	Bosnia	Herzeg-Bosnia	Consolidated	Low	*Mixed Targeting*
	Bosnia	Republika Srpska	Fragmented	High/ Symmetric	*Targeted Other Groups*

The conflict in Slovenia was the most simplistic, actor-wise, featuring the YNA and the Slovenian Territorial Defense Force (or Slovenian TO).[68] Locations of clashes

[68] TO stands for "Територијално/Teritorijalno/Teritorialna Одбрара/ Obrana/Obramba" in Serbian, Croatian, and Slovenian respectively

occurring May-October 1991 are pictured in Figure 3.1. Though the highest intensity of fighting in Slovenia occurred over ten days in June, fighting continued between the YNA and the Slovenian TO for months after the end of the Ten-Day War. Most of the fights between the YNA and Slovenian TO occurred along the borders of the country and along major highways into the interior. This occurred for two primary reasons. First, seizure of border posts was of first concern for the YNA. Second, the YNA's strategy relied on tanks, making moving inwards to Ljubljana easier along main roads and highways.

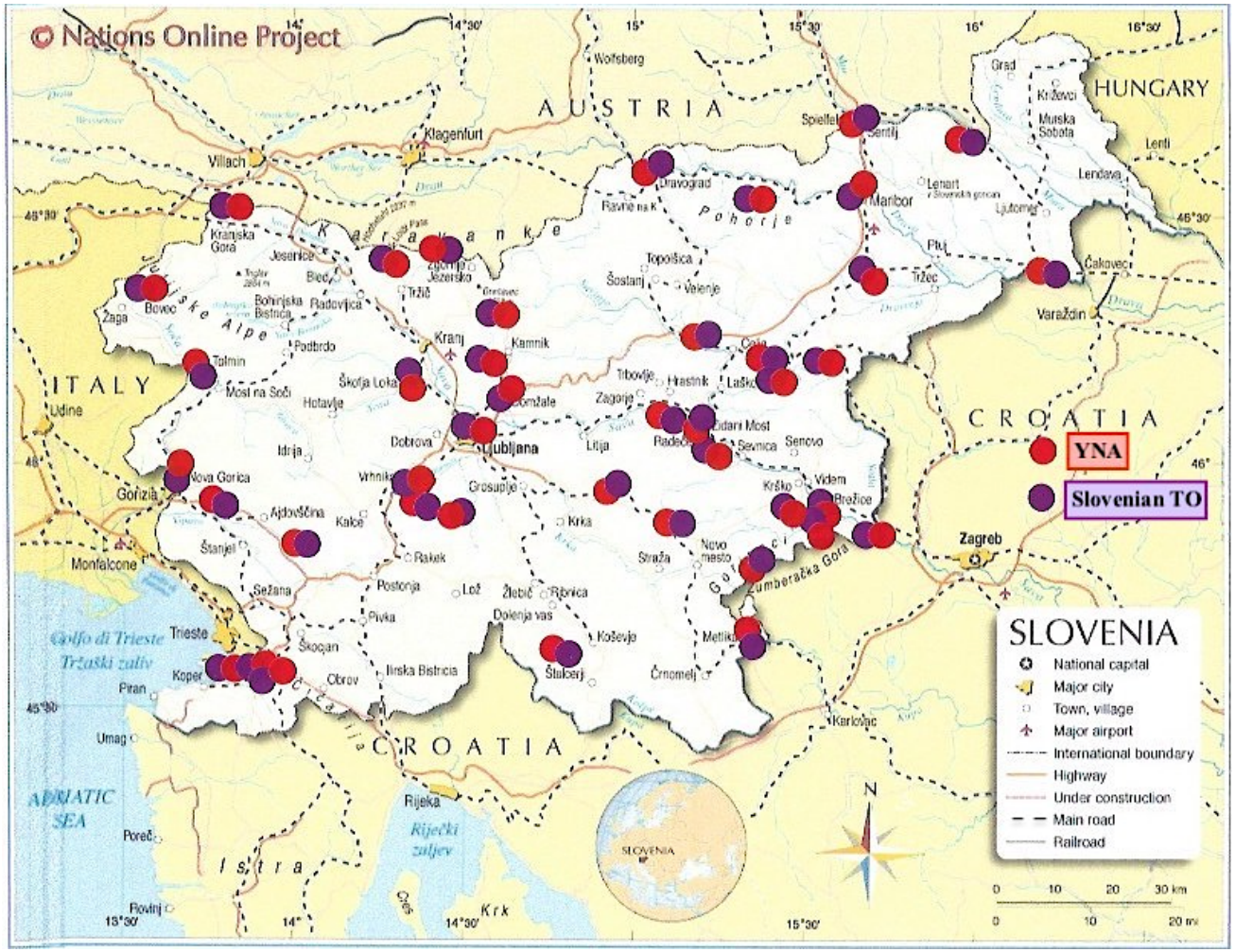

Figure 3.1: Map of Slovenia: Locations of Clashes May-October 1991
Source: Nations Online Project

The Croatian War included three primary parties, the YNA, the Croatian TO, and the Krajina TO. Fighting in May-October 1991 occurred primarily in Slavonia, or northeast Croatia. Much fighting, additionally, occurred along Croatia's border with Serbia in Vukovar and Vinkovci. Though farther from the border with Serbia, the region surrounding Pakrac and Nova Gradiska in central Slavonia also saw fighting involving all three groups. Fighting also occurred in Dalmatia in the country's southeast arm along the Adriatic and the Bosnian border. Some of the heaviest fighting in Croatia occurred in Dubrovnik, on the southern tip of Dalmatia. The locations of major clashes are pictured in Figure 3.2.

The Bosnian War involved the most rebel groups. Both Srpska and Herzeg-Bosnia were attempting to secede from Bosnia and Herzegovina to join Serbia and Croatia respectively. Herzeg-Bosnia operated through a wide territory in Bosnia and Herzegovina, but the Croatian population was concentrated in Herzegovina, a region in the south highlighted in Figure 3.4. We see groups operating in different regions. In Herzegovina, for instance, fighting is predominately between Herzeg-Bosnia, Srpska, and the YNA. In the northwest, fighting is primarily between the Bosnian TO, Srpska, and the YNA. All four groups were involved in the fighting in the northeast around Brcko, Doboj, and Bosanski Brod. As stated above, Figures 3.3 and 3.4 show the attacks that occurred between February and June 1992, meaning that later sites of high intensity fighting are not included, like Jajce and Banja Luka.

Figure 3.2: Map of Croatia: Locations of Major Clashes May-October 1991
Source: Nations Online Project

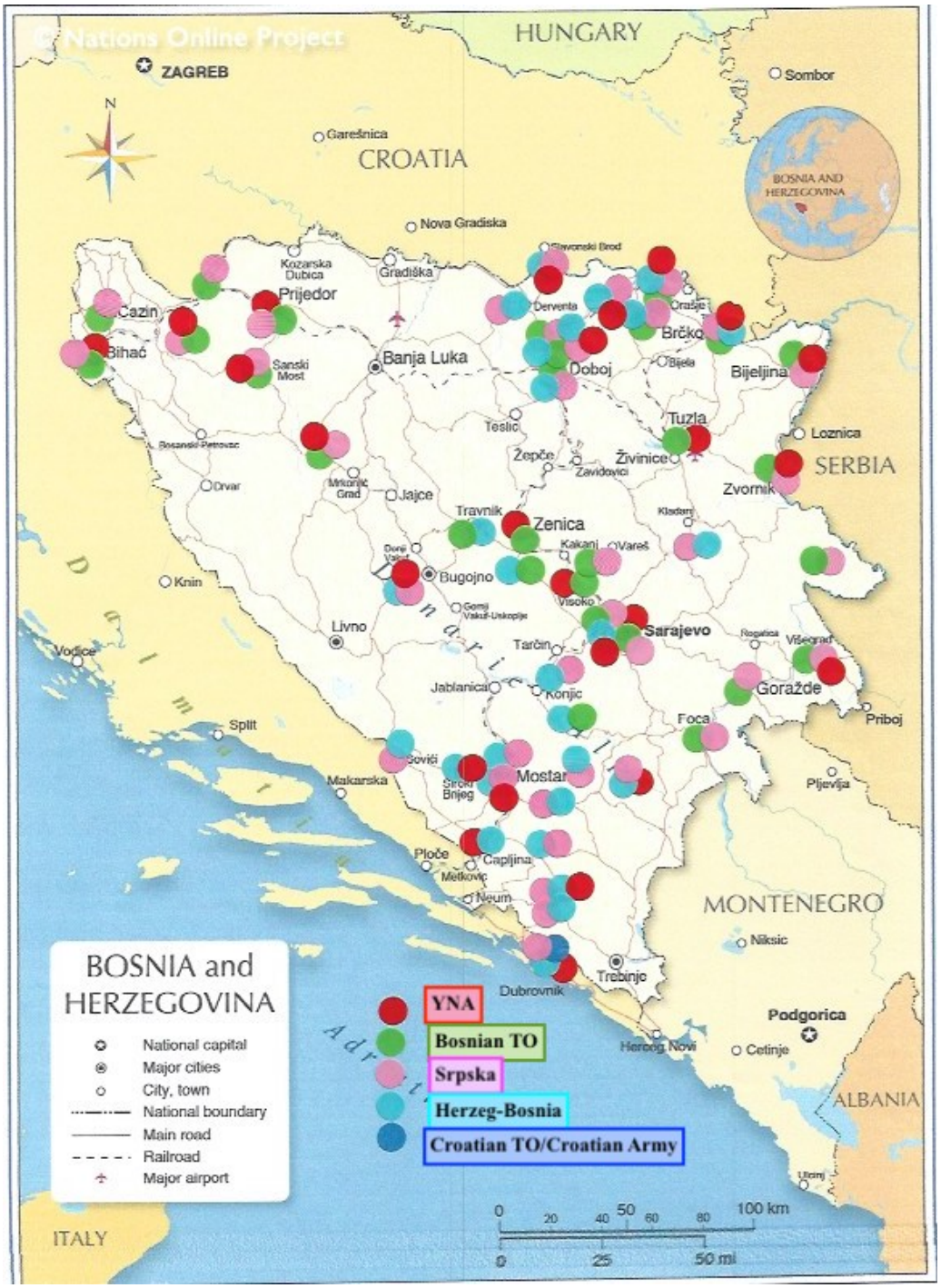

Figure 3.3: Map of Bosnia and Herzegovina: Locations of Major Clashes February-June 1992
Source: Nations Online Project

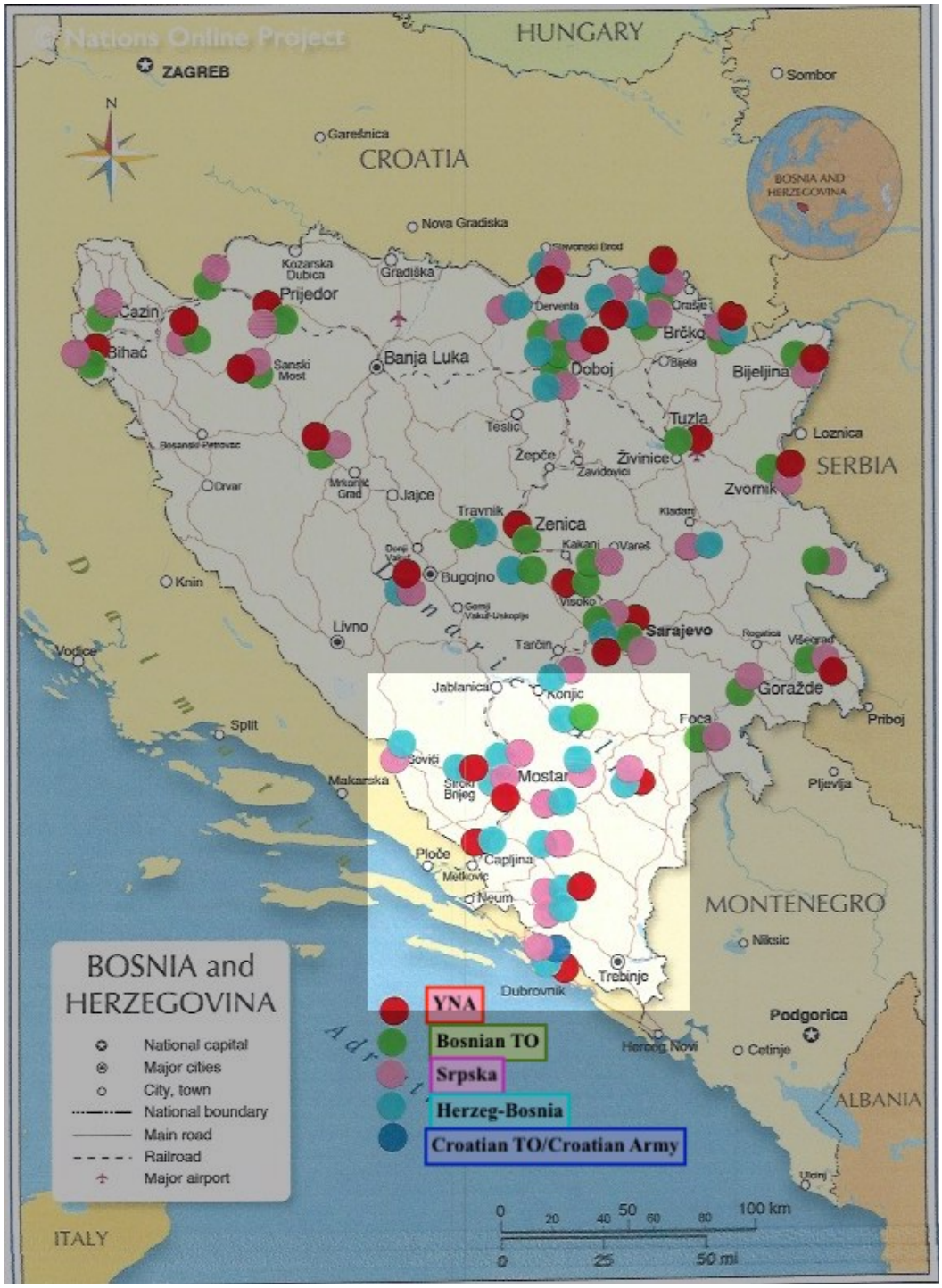

Figure 3.4: Map of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Highlighting Herzegovina
Source: Nations Online Project

Setting the Stage

It is hard to point to a single event as the cause for Yugoslavia tipping into war, as the slow dissolution from centralized state to federation to potential confederation occurred over the course of decades. In the leadup to the Yugoslav Wars, there were very salient divides within the state, primarily nationalistic and economic in nature. While ethnic mobilization certainly played a role in the dissolution, it did not necessarily spark the beginning of the conflict. Slovenia, for instance, chaffed under the budgetary demands made by the Yugoslav government. The redistributive policies of the federal government served to undermine Slovenian industry and reduce its competitiveness in European markets. Croatian demands for autonomy are likewise easy to see in an ethnic and nationalistic light, but the repeated attempts by both federal and Serbian leaders to sow discord by exploiting the large ethnic Serbian population within Croatia indicate that the driving force of this conflict was not from Croatian separatists alone. Exclusionist nationalist politics became a means by which politicians could rally support, and without a national-level actor, like Tito, to repress nationalist sentiments, this became one of the most popular and most divisive means to pursue one's policy goals in the constituent republics of Yugoslavia.

Tito's Yugoslavia viewed nationalism as an existential threat to the survival of Yugoslavia as a multiethnic state; it therefore had routinely repressed nationalism, whether this stemmed from peripheral groups or from ethnic Serbs.[69] Tito's death in 1980 left a power vacuum that would remain until Milosevic's, who utilized consistent appeals to Serb

[69] Silber and Little (1997).

nationalism. Rise to power. He was not alone in doing so: Franjo Tudjman's successful election as the first president of Croatia in 1990 also relied on spurring Croatian nationalism.

Religious divides also generated intra-republic tensions, often overlapping with ethnic divides. There were religious divides between the Serbs, who were majority Eastern Orthodox, and Croatians, who were majority Catholic. This carried an additional linguistic layer of difference, with Serbs using the Cyrillic alphabet and their Croatian counterparts using the Latin one. Moreover, "Muslim" was dual listed as an ethnic and religious identity starting in the 1961 census, being primarily an ethnic category in all following censuses. Some viewed Yugoslav Muslims as simply Slavs who had been forced to convert to Islam due to Ottoman occupation, either victims to a foreign power or betrayers to their kinspeople. In the dissolution of Yugoslavia, Serbian forces were especially brutal in their efforts to ethnically cleanse Muslims from Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Not all divides were identity-based, though. The first fractures in Yugoslavia occurred due to economic stressors: Serbia, Vojvodina, Croatia, and especially Slovenia performed much better economically than Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, Montenegro, and Kosovo.[70] Those that were performing better saw their productivity subsidizing worse performing republics, pulling resources away from the better performing regions. An economic downturn in the 1980s progressed into a recession paired with a growing desire to integrate with the European Economic Community and a declining standard of living contributed to growing grievances. In fact, Slovenia's quest for

[70] UN Data (2022). Office of Russian and European Analysis (2002).

independence almost exclusively revealed economic concerns as its motivator for leaving, citing its right to economic self-determination.[71]

In the past, Yugoslavia had not been united under a one banner nor had the regions that would become Yugoslavia been controlled by the same empires. The first iteration of Yugoslavia – the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croatians, and Slovenes – formed in 1918. The new state combined regions that had historically been incorporated into different, recently disintegrated, empires: namely the Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman Empires. The regions shared a macro-ethnic group – the Slavs – and, in some locales, the same language.

There were also differences among these regions: different ethnic groups overlapped with religious divides, and a portion of the population, especially in Bosnia and Herzegovina, had converted to Islam while under Ottoman rule. Moreover, the Austro-Hungarian Empire engaged in demographic engineering, moving ethnic Serbs to the border regions to form a military frontier.[72] Much like the Cossacks in the Russian Empire, the Austro-Hungarian Empire used perceived militant and violent groups to secure a their hinterland and serve as a first line of defense.[73] Accordingly, the regions along the border with the Ottoman Empire were majority Serb, regardless of the ethnic group that comprised the majority of the population of a subregion. These Serb populations had a historical narrative of honor, violence, and militaristic resistance. Additionally, as the borders between republics had been somewhat porous,[74] there were large cross-border ethnic

[71] Taskar (2 February 1991).
[72] Office of Russian and European Analysis (2002).
[73] McNamee and Zhang (2019).
[74] Becirevic (2014).

communities throughout Yugoslavia.[75] A large Serb population lived along the Serbian border in both Croatia and Bosnia; a large Croatian population lived near the Croatian border in Herzegovina.

During the interwar period, the first Yugoslavia sundered due to perceptions of Serbian domination, Croatian separatism, and external pressures. Nazi Germany supported Croatian separatists during World War II, creating an independent Croatia that served as an Axis puppet state. The Nazi-aligned Croatian government and the Ustashe militia, a Croatian fascist, ultranationalist, and terrorist organization, massacred large numbers of ethnic Serbs, killing between 200,000 and 600,000 "undesirables."[76] The rest of the territory of Yugoslavia was divided between Germany, Italy, Hungary, and Bulgaria. Much like victims to advanced scurvy, scars from previous eras, like the Ustashe massacres, would reopen during dissolution. Historical memory of the Ustashe ethnic cleansing efforts influenced later politics, with mobilizing Croatians receiving the harshest crackdowns against nationalism under Tito. The ethnic Serb population was also sensitive to Croatian nationalism – only heightened by the Croatian government's usage of Ustashe symbols during the late 1980s and early 1990s.

Yugoslavia's second iteration reformed after the end of World War II for a multitude of reasons, including the protection of individual republics from external threats and maintaining economic viability in the long-term. Its stability rested on the combination of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia, renamed the League of Communists of Yugoslavia

[75] Cederman et. al (2013). Haselsberger (2014).
[76] Office of Russian and European Analysis (2002). Baker (2015).

(LCY) in 1952, Josip Broz Tito, and the Yugoslav National Army (YNA).[77] Though the Communist Party of Yugoslavia split from Stalin and the Cominform in 1948, Tito had initially established a centralized government wherein, he argued, that the national question that had plagued the first Yugoslavia had been resolved.[78]

Increasing Federalism and Nationalism

Like the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia was divided into titular ethnic republics. While the saliency of ethnic identity varied over time, the populations of these republics were not comprised of solely one ethnic group. This was to a degree purposeful, as having multiethnic republics hampered republics' ability to challenge the policies of the center.[79] However, a centralized Yugoslavia was a short-lived entity. Tito's government routinely suppressed nationalist actors and political movements, fearing that nationalism would cause Yugoslavia to disintegrate.[80] His initial push toward centralization gave way to sliding state decentralization starting in the 1950s and continuing into the 1980s. Notably, when the constitution was redone in 1974, republics won themselves far more lateral agency than they possessed in previous iterations.

Allowances for federalism enabled Tito to maintain a unified Yugoslavia and undercut burgeoning nationalist movements, but it also made republic leaders the

[77] Meier (1999). Ramet (1992). Vuckovic (1997).
[78] Ramet (1992).
[79] Suny (1999-2000). and Brubaker (1996). both speak on this phenomenon in relation to the politics of the Soviet Union, specifically citing its policy of tracking individuals' ethnic identity rather than republic identity. Moreover, Soviet polices of deporting potentially mobilized populations along with moving ethnic Russians into potentially separatist regions (ex. Baltics, Kazakhstan) to hamper mobilization is well documented.
[80] Office of Russian and European Analysis (2002).

spokespeople for their titular ethnic group and hardened local identities over time.[81] By the time the 1974 Constitution was implemented, Yugoslav politics were trending more towards confederalism than stable federalism. Various ethnic and national identities, moreover, began to supersede other political identities, leading, in turn, to greater demands for decentralization and regional autonomy.

At this time, one third of the ethnic Serbian population lived outside of borders of Serbia, with large minority populations in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina.[82] Croatian populations lived in Bosnia-Herzegovina; Albanian populations lived in Macedonia and Kosovo. Initially, the combination of the LCY, Tito, and the army deterred mobilization, but Tito's death and the declining saliency of the LCY left the YNA as the primary means to maintain cohesion. While the multiethnic nature of the various republics had past served to demobilize, as ethnic identities became more salient and ethnic political parties started to gain traction, this multiethnic nature became instead a threat to stability and a reason to mobilize.

Alongside this decentralization and hardening of ethnic identities, there were growing fears that Yugoslavia was becoming 'Serboslavia.' Arguably, the beginning of the end was April 24th, 1987, when Milosevic spoke to a crowd of Serb nationalists in Kosovo. Rather than demobilizing the crowd and decrying nationalism, as the then President of Serbia, Ivan Stambolic, requested, Milosevic rallied these groups. Milosevic's rhetoric became increasingly nationalistic as he consolidated his power in Serbia/ He ultimately

[81] Meier (1999).
[82] Trbovich (2008).

advocated for "Greater Serbia," which encompassed all regions that were majority Serbian, be they in Serbia or otherwise.[83] His claims of a "Strong Serbia, Strong Yugoslavia"[84] served to alienate non-Serbs and spur calls for decentralization outside of Serbia. The renegotiation of the status of two autonomous republics within Serbia, Kosovo, and Vojvodina, served to further cement fears that such policies would spread to other republics if left unchecked.

The End of the LCY and Calls for Confederation

In response to increasing Serb nationalism, Slovenian and Croatian nationalists demanded greater decentralization of Yugoslav politics and the formal transformation of Yugoslavia from a Federation to a Confederation to lock in their autonomy. Slovenian and Croatian leaders throughout 1989 and 1990 both threatened secession if this demand was not met.

Despite the threats, dissolution was not inevitable for either Slovenia or Croatia Even as late as the 14th Congress of the LCY in January 1990. Kucan (Slovenia) and Tudjman (Croatia) were both willing to negotiate for greater autonomy, confederation, or a soft, mutual exit. Macedonia and Bosnia and Herzegovina both favored a transition to a confederate state, though neither made explicit steps at this time for a possible exit.[85] Many placed their hopes for a peaceful resolution to these debates on the LCY's 14th Party Congress, scheduled to take place in January of 1990.

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[83] Ramet (1992).
[84] Ramet (1992).
[85] Djuric and Podgornik (2 February 1991).

At this time, Slovenia and Croatia had new constitutions underway and had separated from the LCY. These moves put them at odds with the YNA, which viewed it as its obligation to maintain the Communist party's hegemony and Yugoslavia's territorial integrity after Tito's death. With Serbian leaders refusing the possibility of a confederation, first the Slovenian and then the Croatian delegations walked out of the 14th Party Congress. Both Slovenia and Croatia then issued an ultimatum after this: Yugoslavia becomes a confederation, or Croatia and Slovenia would secede on June 26th, 1991.

The push for greater autonomy from Slovenia and Croatia did not necessarily spell the end for Yugoslavia as a political entity, as the state had weathered similar pushes for the devolution of state power in the past. On May 15th, 1991, the head of the Presidential Council was supposed to transfer from the Serbian Representative, Borisav Jovic, to the Croatian representative, Stjepan Mesic, but this did not occur. Instead, Milosevic maneuvered Sejdo Bajramovic, the representative for Kosovo, into the role. This undercut the legitimacy of the federal presidency, and in the coming months, this would prevent the federal presidency from being a major decision-maker in the conflict.[86] This, unfortunately, left the military as the only remaining fully functional federal institution.

The Yugoslav National Army

The YNA was not prepared to hold Yugoslavia together with anything but brute force. While most institutions had been becoming more nationalistic, the YNA served as the last strong, federal institution. It was the bulwark against the political forces aiming for dissolution, but it was not suited for this task. Moreover, the YNA had several

[86] Tanjug (8 February 1991). Tanjug (19 June 1991) "Jovic." Tanjug (19 June 1991) "Kostic."

disadvantages. First, its ethnic makeup did little to assuage fears of Serbian domination. Serbs and Montenegrins comprised 36 and 3 percent of the Yugoslav population respectively, yet together held 70 percent of the YNA's officer assignments. Conversely, Croatians and Slovenes comprised 20 and 8 percent of the population, but only 15 percent of the officer slots. The remaining 25 percent of the population, comprised of Macedonians, Hungarians, Muslims, and Albanians, together held only 10 percent of the officer positions.[87] This disparity would become starker over the course of the conflict, with many non-Serbs defecting, surrendering, or simply refusing to report for duty.

The YNA's equipment was outdated and would not have fared well against another sophisticated military force, but it was more advanced than that of the nascent militaries and police forces of the constituent republics. Especially in terms of artillery and tanks, the YNA's capabilities far outpaced the Territorial Defense Units (TOs) and police forces. The YNA could adequately equip its troops, something that groups in Slovenia, Croatia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina struggled to do. However, the YNA's budget fell from 7 to 4 percent of Yugoslavia's GNP during the decade before the war.[88] Additionally, the majority of the military's budget came from Slovenia. This created conflicting incentives between the Yugoslav political and military leadership, with Milosevic expressing his willingness to allow Slovenia to peacefully secede while the military objected due to Slovenia being necessary to fund its operation.[89] Furthermore, the YNA's desire to

[87] Office of Russian and European Analysis (2002)., 46.
[88] Office of Russian and European Analysis (2002).
[89] Jovic (20 March 1991).

maintain Yugoslavia's territorial integrity would generate repeated instances wherein Belgrade elites had less expansive goals than the YNA.

Another hurdle the army needed to overcome was the very structure of the military within Yugoslavia. Much like the republics themselves, Yugoslav defenses had increasingly become federalized. The YNA represented a traditional national military force with active-duty membership, conventional capabilities, and centralized control from Belgrade.[90] In response to the Stalin-Tito schism, however, fears increased of a potential Soviet invasion, a war that a traditional military force in Yugoslavia could not win. To combat this, the Yugoslav government developed the Total National Defense Doctrine (TND). Each republic had its own Territorial Defense (TO) Force, which was designed to deter invasion by creating insurgency-like fighting in the whole of Yugoslavia.[91] The force was purposefully decentralized with regional command structures able to wage their own campaigns absent direct command from the YNA to prevent a decapitation strike. This doctrine relied on countrywide military training and massive stockpiles of small arms, light weapons, and ammunition. Moreover, many members of the TOs started their military careers in the YNA before transferring to TOs with their training.

In Slovenia and Croatia, the governments were able to build out these TOs into capable fighting forces, and TO units had distinct advantages compared to their YNA corollaries. They had clarity of purpose and high morale. This occurred not only on the republic level, but also within republics. The Serbian regions in Krajina and Srpska and

[90] Office of Russian and European Analysis (2002)., 48.
[91] Horncastle (2013).

Croatia and Bosnia possessed their own TO units due to the decentralized nature of the TND. In an increasingly more nationalist environment, the more ethnically homogenous TOs had a clear advantage over the quickly fracturing YNA forces. Moreover, the YNA had spent the 20 years leading up to the Yugoslav Wars training the various TOs to fight against the very strategies that the YNA would be using against those TO units.[92]

Moving Forward: Theory Building and the Yugoslav Wars

The dissolution of Yugoslavia was a slow process, beginning with Tito's death and culminating in nearly a decade of war and continued recovery efforts over 20 years after the conflicts ended. In this chapter, I have provided a background of how the wars in Yugoslavia began and the major national-level actors in these conflicts moving forward.

Slovenia and Croatia, two of the most economically productive republics, moved in lockstep in their quest for autonomy and a confederal Yugoslavia. When this did not occur, they declared independence. While Milosevic appeared ready to let Yugoslavia fracture – provided internal administrative borders were amended first – the YNA aimed to hold Yugoslavia together. With the LCY's power over republic governments dissipating and the Presidential Council incapable of action, coercion was the state's remaining option for holding Yugoslavia in one piece.

When war began, Yugoslavia fractured and so too did the republics. When this occurred, there were three republics fighting for independence: Slovenia, Croatia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina. Within Croatia and Bosnia, there were three groups attempting

[92] Horncastle (2013).

to secede from their republics: The Serbian Republic of Krajina, the Republika Srpska, and Herzeg-Bosnia.

The following two chapters of Part II are utilized to construct my theory detailed in Chapter Two. Chapter Four explores the causal mechanisms for conflicts and group targeting proposed by the literature. These arguments are predominately structural in nature; therefore, I am examining 1) whether attacks occur and 2) what type of targeting occurs in Yugoslav municipalities. In Chapter Five, I examine the behavior of the six secessionist groups I explain how their organizational control structure and relative material capabilities are correlated with group targeting. Unlike the cases discussed in Parts III and IV, this analysis does not seek to predict group targeting. Rather, I derive the theory I will be testing from this analysis in Part II.

CHAPTER FOUR: EXAMINING ALTERNATIVE THEORIES FOR GROUP BEHAVIOR

Introduction

In Chapter Two, I outlined the logic behind my theory, which focuses on characteristics of rebel groups to predict their targeting at the onset of violence. This is a deviation from much of the literature on civil conflicts, which focus on structural, demographic, and economic dynamics. Interestingly, the existing literature often puts forth contradictory claims for the impact of certain variables. For example, ethnic fractionalization is correlated with more instances of violence, but so too are rural regions, which tend to be more ethnically homogenous. On top of this, while rural regions are pointed to as a site of mobilization and violence, so too are regions with large populations, which tend to be urban.

To analyze these claims, I have constructed utilizing municipality-level data from Slovenia, Croatia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina. My dataset utilizes the 1981 Yugoslav census[93] and data on a sampling of fights in Slovenia, Croatia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina.[94] Again, this chapter is not designed to test the theory developed in Chapter Two. My theory uses a four-part dependent variable, but this is not shared by most of the

[93] There was a census conducted in 1991, but it was not completed prior to the outbreak of the conflict and its results were contested.
[94] This data is pulled from the Office of Russian and European Analysis (2002), which recorded who was attacking whom during the conflicts when possible. This is far from every battle that occurred in the conflicts, but it is sufficient to draw conclusions.

literature. As discussed in Chapter One, most scholarly research focuses on what makes violence, regardless of type, is likely to occur. This is reflected in the claims I will be examining in this Chapter, and the majority of these claims are structural in nature.

Most of these structural features align with where violence occurs, but my analysis in this chapter indicates that these structural features do not align with a specific type of targeting, either of the state or another group. While the dependent variable in this analysis does not align with my theory, the results of my modelling demonstrate that other variables are needed to explain what type of targeting is likely to occur. These structural features alone are insufficient. As such, non-structural factors, like organizational structure and relative material capabilities, have greater explanatory leverage when examining specific targeting patterns.

My theory focuses on the features of rebel groups, their structure, and capabilities. I analyze six major rebel groups: the Slovenian, Croatian, and Bosnian governments, Krajina, Srpska, and Herzeg-Bosnia. I examine these six because they are the groups that have major political aspirations: many of the smaller groups either were or present themselves as members of their coalitions, and information on their structure and capabilities are present to be analyzed. As a result, if I were to run a statistical analysis with these groups as my unit of analysis, there would be too few observations. In Chapter Five, I do analyze this data to determine how groups are targeting and being targeted before diving into my case study analysis. (See Figures 5.1-5.4).

I will be conducting a series of logistical (logit) and multinomial logistical (mlogit) models to test if structural factors have an impact on 1) whether attacks are occurring in a

municipality and 2) whether attacks are occurring on the state or on another group in a municipality. Analyzing the type of targeting based on location has several advantages. First, there are enough observations to run statistical analyses. Second, many variables are recorded based on location. Various rebel groups did not track their ethnic membership. For example, I can say that Herzeg-Bosnian forces were majority Croatian, but I could not say what exact percentage of their membership was Muslim, even though it is known that Muslims served in their ranks. The Yugoslav government, however, did track ethnic identification, and they did so by location. Therefore, I can track ethnic distribution in these locations. and where attacks are occurring and if those attacks are on the state or another group. Crucially, this dataset tracks where attacks occur and what kind of actors are attacks, but it does not track 1) which group is attacking or 2) which group is being attacked. I will explore this dynamic of targeting at the start of Chapter Five. Unfortunately, there is no available data on the ethnic distributions within these groups beyond what can be inferred due to their general ethnic organization.

There are five main categories on which I will be testing the literature's claims: ethnic fractionalization, rural populations, total populations, terrain, and location. Notably, I do not examine variables concerning state capacity, though this is featured heavily in the literature. I do not include state capacity measures because the Ten-Day War, the Croatian War, and the Bosnian War all took place in the same state, and that state had a low capacity for all three conflicts. From these five indicators, I derive eleven claims to test with my statistical models, as pictured in Table 4.1. Those on the left side of Table 4.1 concern the logistic regressions while those on the right concern the multinomial logistic regression.

The primary difference between these two types of models is in the dependent variable. The logistic regressions use a dichotomous variable, examining whether attacks occur in each municipality. The multinomial logistic regressions use a categorical variable that distinguishes between attacks on other groups and attacks on the state.

The claims about the percentage of the rural population are fully rejected. Likewise, claims about ethnic fractionalization and population are fully corroborated, but the effects on the likelihood of attacks are small. Most claims made by the literature are only partially corroborated by the conflict in Yugoslavia. Furthermore, though the effect of several indicators that the literature focuses on align with the findings in Yugoslavia, the impact of these indicators is minimal. This demonstrates that while these indicators may be causal, they are only so at the edges of the spectrum. In other words, large changes in the indicators are required for even small changes in the likelihood of conflict. For instance, there needs to be an increase in ethnic fractionalization (scored 0 to 100) by 27.3 percentage points for the log likelihood of an attack to increase by 1 percentage point. Similar changes for small impacts on the likelihood of attacks are needed for both the rural proportion and total population measures.

These findings are not a rejection of the claims about conflict made by scholars. Many of these claims are derived from analyzing several conflicts in conjunction with one another. A theory is at its strongest when it is parsimonious and mostly right, most of the time. Only examining the Yugoslav Wars is a reduction in scope from much of the literature. However, it is important to note how the existing literature interacts with these conflicts. Additionally, many quantitative analyses of civil wars utilize national-level or

conflict-level variables. Shifting analysis to the municipality-level is a shift from most preexisting literature.

This analysis is also important to understand the explanatory advantage of my theory. Many claims are only partially corroborated because indicators have a similar impact on the likelihood of groups targeting the state *and* other groups. These indicators do provide insight into conflict, but not into the specific patterns of targeting groups utilize. My theory on organizational control structure and relative material capabilities aims to specifically fill this gap in the existing understanding of group behavior.

Table 4.1: Claims and Findings

Logistic Regression	Findings	Multinomial Regression	Findings
1a: The more fractured a municipality is, the more likely it is that an attack will occur in that locale.	Corroborated; effect is small	*1b: The more fractured a municipality is, the more likely an attack against a group will occur in that location versus attacks against the state or no attacks.*	Partially corroborated; positively correlated with attacks on both targets; effect is small
2a: As the percent of the population of a municipality that lives in rural areas increases, the more likely groups will carry out attacks in that locale.	Rejected; Significant but small relationship in the reverse	*2b: As the percent of the population of a municipality that lives in rural areas increases, the more likely groups will carry out attacks against the state.*	Rejected; Significant but small relationship in the reverse; no significant impact on the targeting of groups
3a: The larger the population of a municipality, the more likely attacks will occur in that locale.	Corroborated; effect is small	*3b: The larger the population of a municipality, the more likely a group will target other groups in that locale.*	Partially corroborated, affects targeting of groups and the state similarly
4a: If the terrain is mountainous, it is more likely that attacks will occur in a given municipality.	Partially corroborated; significant when controlling for population effects	*4b: If the terrain is mountainous, it is more likely that groups will attack other the state.*	Partially corroborated; significant when controlling for population effects

5a: Attacks are more likely to occur in municipalities that are border regions.	Corroborated in most models; particularly the case for the Croatian and International borders	*5b: Attacks against the state are more likely to occur in municipalities that are border regions.*	Partially corroborated; affects targeting of groups and the state similarly; corroborated for municipalities along an international border
		5c: Attacks against groups are more likely to occur in municipalities that border Bosnia or Croatia versus attacks against the state.	Corroborated for both, but having a border with Croatia also increases the likelihood of attacks on the state

Methodology and Modeling

Before diving into the findings of my statistical modeling, it is important to first describe precisely what my modeling aims to accomplish. There are several different claims on the nature of the relationship between different causal variables and the outbreak of conflict. To adequately assess these claims, I am running two different types of statistical tests. The first uses a dichotomous dependent variable: attacks or no attacks. The second uses a three-level categorical variable that splits what types of attacks are occurring, including coding for: no attack, attacks on other groups, and attacks on the state. I do so to ensure that I am not missing a possible relationship between structural features and attacks which I might otherwise miss if attacks are separated out into different types of targeting or vice versa.

To do this, I will first be constructing a series of logistical regressions (logit), testing what features make attacks more or less likely to occur with a dichotomous dependent variable. I will be testing whether certain variables impact the likelihood of attacks occurring, not what type of targeting is occurring in a locale. High degrees of ethnic fractionalization, for example, is linked to a higher likelihood of conflict. Therefore, I would anticipate this variable to be positively correlated with attacks.

Table 4.2 and Table 4.4 show the coefficients for these variables across several models. Table 4.2 focuses on population controls, while Table 4.4 utilizes a different measure for borders than those in Table 4.2, measuring whether a municipality is along a border rather than which republic a municipality bordered. Figure 4.1 and Figure 4.3 visualize Models 1-5 and Models 13-16 respectively. Models that specify which republic

a municipality borders better fit the data than their corresponding models that only specified whether a municipality was on a border. Much of this chapter will focus on Models 1-5, which use the more specific measure. I will, however, include both conceptualizations of borders in my discussion of location below.

Though the exact variable measures vary, the relationship between structural features and the likelihood of attacks in a locale remain similar across models. For instance, whether controlling for the total population or the proportion of the population in rural areas, ethnic fractionalization is statistically significant. Likewise, so was possessing a Croatian majority or bordering the Croatian republic. Visualized in Figure 4.1, the main deviation stems from models that control for the interaction between population measures and the presence of mountains, making the presence of mountains have a stronger impact on the likelihood of attacks. This is most interesting in Model 3, wherein the interaction term results in the proportion of the rural population not being a significant indicator of the likelihood of conflict. Instead, the rural population in mountainous regions does affect the likelihood of conflict.

I also complete a series of multinomial logistic regressions (mlogit); this is specifically used to test relationships when the dependent variable is a categorical dependent variable with 3 or more categories. Here, the dependent variable is coded 0) no attacks, 1) attacks on groups and 2) attacks on the state. The exact variables in the mlogit are also slightly different for some controls. The categories for which republic a municipality borders and which ethnic group is the majority in a locale are reduced in the mlogit due to concerns of over-correlation and error terms. The coefficients for these

models are featured in Table 4.3. In Figures 4.2-4.4, I visualize Models 9, 10, and 12. Model 9 and Model 12 are the two models with the best fit, though with different population controls: the rural percentage and total population respectively. Model 10, conversely, visualizes the model with the best fit that also utilizes a simplified border indicator. As a note on visualization, Figures 4.2-4.4 displays the coefficients of a marginal effects analysis. In Figure 4.1, a coefficient is significant at a 95 percent confidence interval if it does not intersect the 0-line (in red). In Figures 4.2-4.4, however, a coefficient is significant if its error bars do not overlap with those of "No Attack." This is because in the multinomial regression models, "No Attack" is the reference category. I.e., the coefficients in Table 4.3 are the differences between municipalities with "Attack on Group" and "Attack on Group" versus "No Attack."

Taken together, the logit and mlogit models enable me to distinguish when certain variables are correlated with attacks occurring in a municipality and when certain variables are correlated with different types of attacks. Some relationships remain similar across the two types of models, but others demonstrate that structural conditions have different effects on the likelihood of groups targeting the state or other groups. Models 1-5 and 13-16 are logistical regressions, and Models 6-12 are multinomial regressions. Models 1 and 6 are the most simplistic, just examining the relationship between ethnic fractionalization and group targeting.

The total population and the proportion of the rural population are correlated with one another, so they cannot be included in the same models. Of the two, models measuring the effect of the total population have better model fit, meaning that this variable helps the

model explain more of the variation in the dependent variable. It does so in both logit and mlogit models. Models 2, 3, 7, 8, 9, 13, and 14 contains an indicator for the proportion of the population classified as rural, scored 0 to 100. Models 4, 5, 10, 11, 12, 15, and 16 instead contain an indicator for the total population.

Additionally, there are two types of indicators for borders used. One tracks whether a municipality has a border, while the second tracks which republic a municipality borders: Bosnia, Croatia, Serbia and Montenegro, Slovenia, or an international border.[95] The first is generalizable across conflicts, while the second is specific to Yugoslavia. Models with the more specific measure tend to have a better fit than those that the dichotomous indicator. Models 7, 10, and 13-16 use the dichotomous measure for municipalities with borders, while Models 2-5, 8, 9, 11, and 12 use the less generalizable indicator of which republic a municipality borders. Due to the models which specify which republic a municipality borders having a better fit, the models with the dichotomous measure will specifically be discussed in the section on terrain.

There are models that contain interaction terms, as well. These interaction terms allow models to control for potential overlap between indicators. The first interaction terms control for the interaction between terrain and the population, used in Models 3, 5, 9, and 12. I do this because harsh terrain can affect who lives in an area, reducing the total population and making a region more rural. In models 14 and 16, I also include an interaction term for ethnic fractionalization and being a border municipality. I do so

[95] The coefficients indicate the difference between the likelihood of attacks between municipalities along each border versus having no border as the reference category. In Model 2, for instance, we would say that there is no significant difference in the likelihood of an attack occurring in a municipality that borders Bosnia versus interior municipalities.

because border regions in Yugoslavia tend to have majority-minority communities. Therefore, it is important to consider whether ethnic fractionalization, being a border municipality, or the combination thereof impacts the likelihood of attacks in that locale.

In the sections below, I will explain the specific relationships between various indicators and the likelihood of 1) attacks and 2) attacks on the state versus other groups in Yugoslav municipalities.

Table 4.2: Logistic Regression Models

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Ethnic Fractionalization[1]	0.16***	0.18***	0.18***	0.16***	0.16***
	0.019	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.03
Mountainous		0.42	2.32*	0.62*	1.38**
		0.29	0.96	0.31	0.51
Border Republic[2]					
Bosnia		0.26	0.3	0.37	0.41
		0.48	0.48	0.52	0.54
Croatia		1.86***	1.88***	1.93***	1.96***
		0.42	0.42	0.43	0.44
Serbia and Montenegro		0.6	0.65	0.6	0.54
		0.47	0.46	0.49	0.5
Slovenia		-0.03	0.08	-0.36	-0.37
		0.61	0.64	0.62	0.6
International		1.3*	1.29*	1.3	1.18
		0.64	0.64	0.65	0.65
Proportion Population Rural		-0.03***	-0.01		
		0.01	0.01		
Mountain-Rural Interaction			-0.03*		
			0.01		
Total Population[3]				0.32***	0.43***
				0.06	0.09
Mountain-Population Interaction					-0.22
					0.12
Largest Ethnic Group[4]					
Croatian		1.16**	1.2**	1.3**	1.44**
		0.41	0.4	0.42	0.44
Muslim		0.98*	0.92*	0.78	0.83
		0.41	0.4	0.44	0.45
Slovenian		0.38	0.44	0.77	0.96
		0.58	0.58	0.58	0.6
Constant	-1.32***	-1.13	-2.14*	-4.11***	-4.6***
	0.21	0.78	0.91	0.6	0.67
R^2	0.1721	0.2865	0.2954	0.3695	0.3763

** significant at 0.05, ** significant at 0.01, *** significant at 0.001*

[1] by 5 percentage point increases

[2] no border as the reference category

[3] by 10,000 individuals

[4] Serbian as the reference category

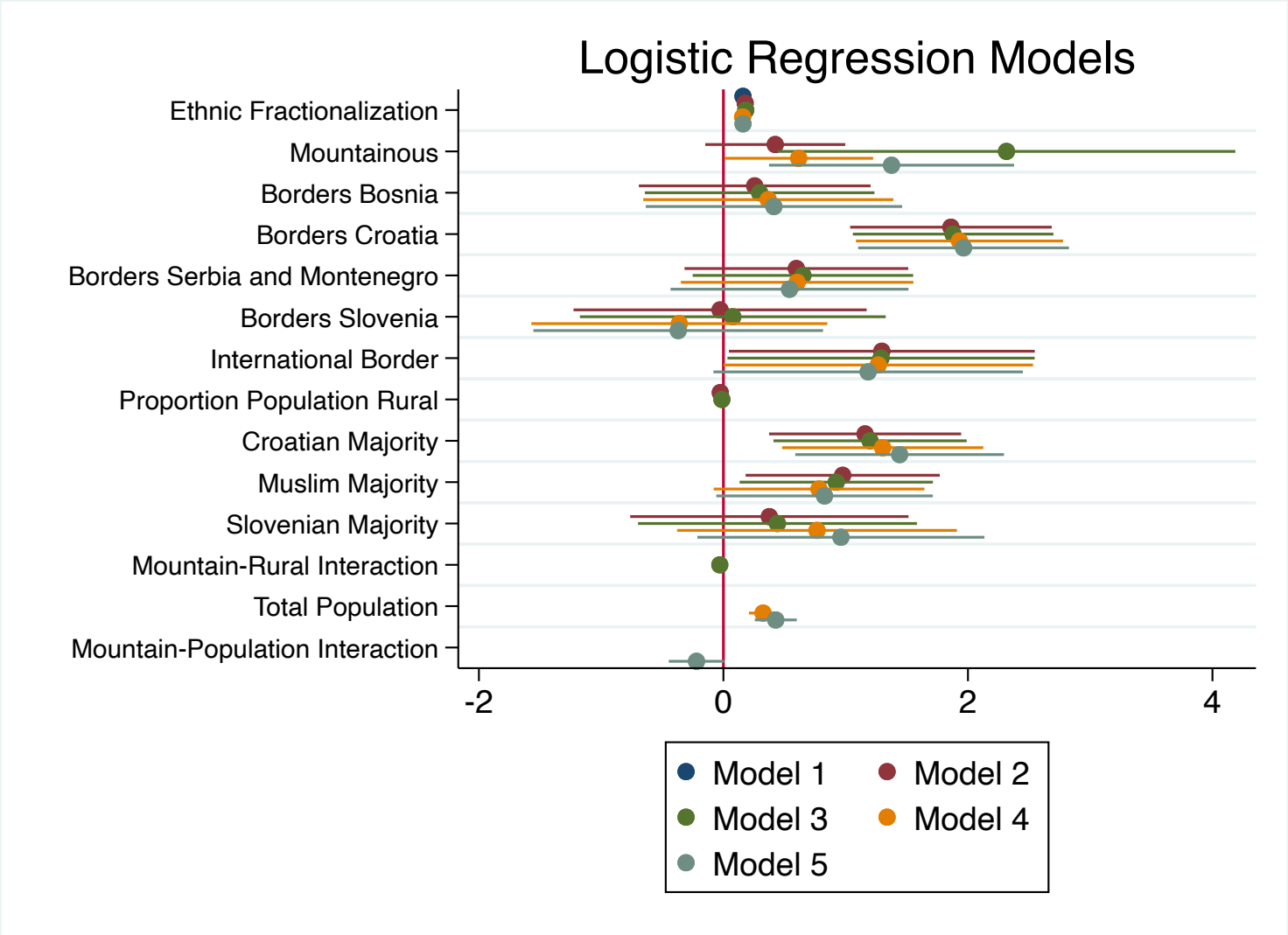

Figure 4.1: Logistic Regressions Visualization for Models 1-5

Table 4.3: Multinomial Logistic Regression Models

	Model 6		Model 7		Model 8		Model 9		Model 10		Model 11		Model 12	
	Groups	State	Groups	State	Groups	State	Groups	State	Groups	State	Groups	State	Groups	State
Ethnic Fractionalization[1]	0.28***	0.08***	0.3***	0.08**	0.31***	0.08**	0.31***	0.08**	0.27***	0.06*	0.28***	0.01*	0.28***	0.06*
	0.03	0.02	0.03	0.03	0.04	0.03	0.04	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.04	0.03	0.04	0.03
Mountainous			0.11	0.29	0.29	0.41	3.00*	1.96*	0.16	0.38	0.43	0.55	1.06*	1.27*
			0.36	0.31	0.37	0.32	1.27	0.98	0.36	0.32	0.38	0.34	0.6	0.54
Border Region			1.14***	0.94**					1.14**	0.85**				
			0.36	0.31					0.37	0.31				
Serbian Border					0.79	0.62	0.94	0.59			0.84	0.62	0.79	0.55
					0.54	0.55	0.54	0.55			0.56	0.56	0.57	0.58
Bosnian Border					1.17	-0.24	1.22*	-0.24			1.34*	-0.14	1.37*	-0.13
					0.63	0.6	0.618	0.6			0.64	0.62	0.65	0.63
Croatian Border					2.36***	1.81***	2.43***	1.8***			2.48***	1.85***	2.5***	1.9***
					0.53	0.46	0.53	0.45			0.55	0.46	0.56	0.47
International Border					0.91	1.33*	1.02	1.31*			1.09	1.53*	1.07	1.5*
					1.3	0.61	1.33	0.62			1.28	0.63	1.29	0.63
Proportion Population Rural			-0.02	-0.04***	-0.02	-0.03***	0.01	-0.02*						
			0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01						
Mountain-Rural Interaction							-0.04*	-0.02						
							0.02	0.02						
Total Population[2]									0.31***	0.33***	0.31***	0.34***	0.4***	0.44***
									0.06	0.06	0.06	0.06	0.09	0.09
Mountain-Population Interaction													-0.19	-0.21
													-0.12	0.12
Croatian Majority			1.03*	0.58	1.28**	0.97**	1.34***	0.99**	0.83*	0.42	1.14**	0.85*	1.2**	0.88*
			0.4	0.32	0.42	0.34	0.42	0.34	0.41	0.33	0.43	0.36	0.43	0.36
Muslim Majority			1.34**	0.42	1.42**	0.54	1.34**	0.5	0.93*	-0.16	1.12*	0.02	1.09*	-0.03
			0.43	0.46	0.44	0.47	0.44	0.47	0.46	0.48	0.47	0.5	0.48	0.51
Constant	-3.56***	-1.20***	-4.02***	0.18	-4.5***	-0.13	-6.13***	-0.85	-5.97***	-3.08***	-6.55***	-3.4***	-6.88***	-3.76***
	0.4	0.22	0.89	0.58	0.93	0.62	1.26	0.78	0.66	0.43	0.71	0.46	0.8	0.53
R^2		0.187		0.2612		0.284		0.2908		0.3035		0.3305		0.3343

* *significant at 0.05,* ** *significant at 0.01,* *** *significant at 0.001*

[1] by 5 percentage point increases

[2] by 10,000 individuals

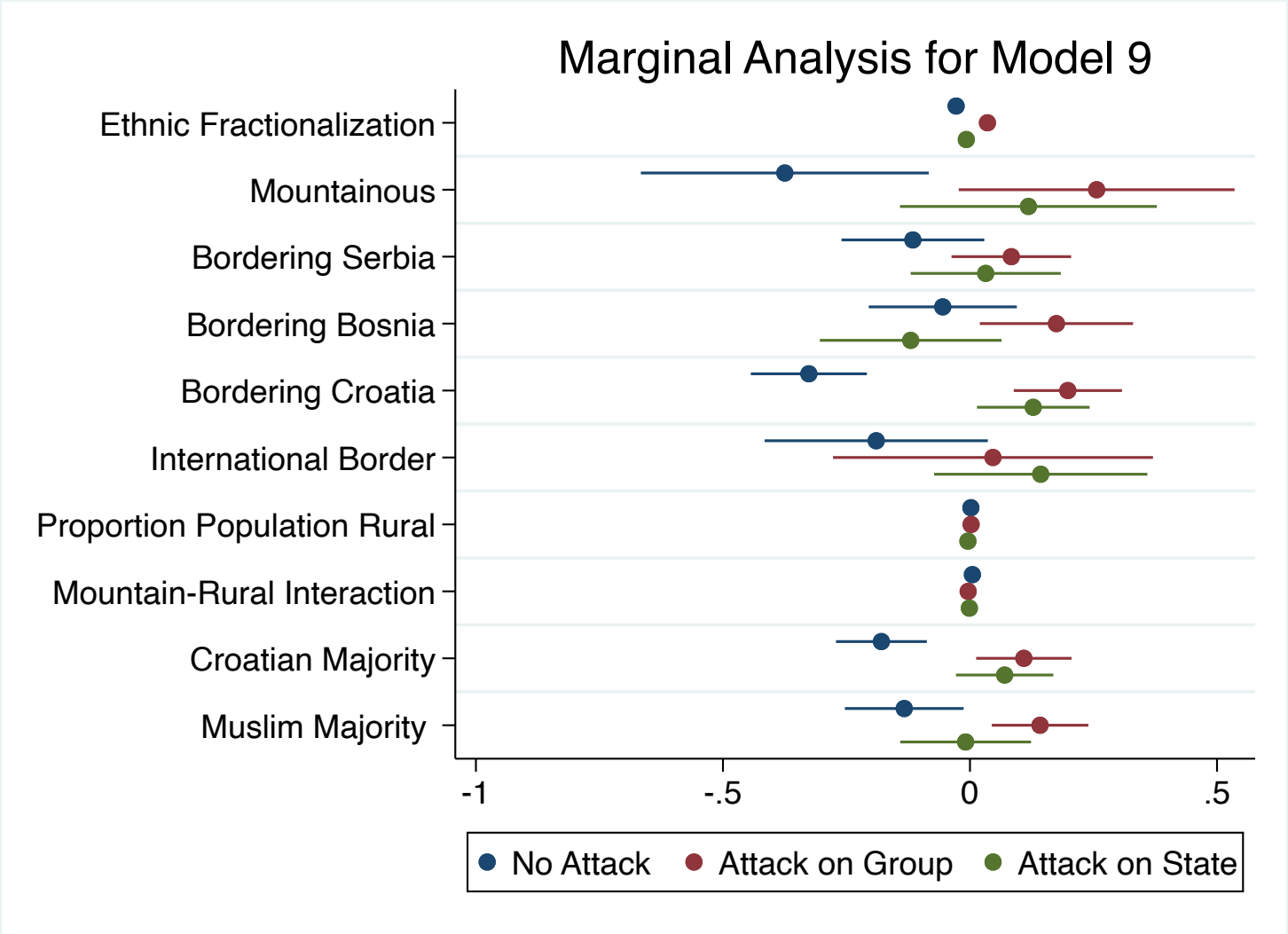

Figure 4.2: Marginal Analysis of Model 9

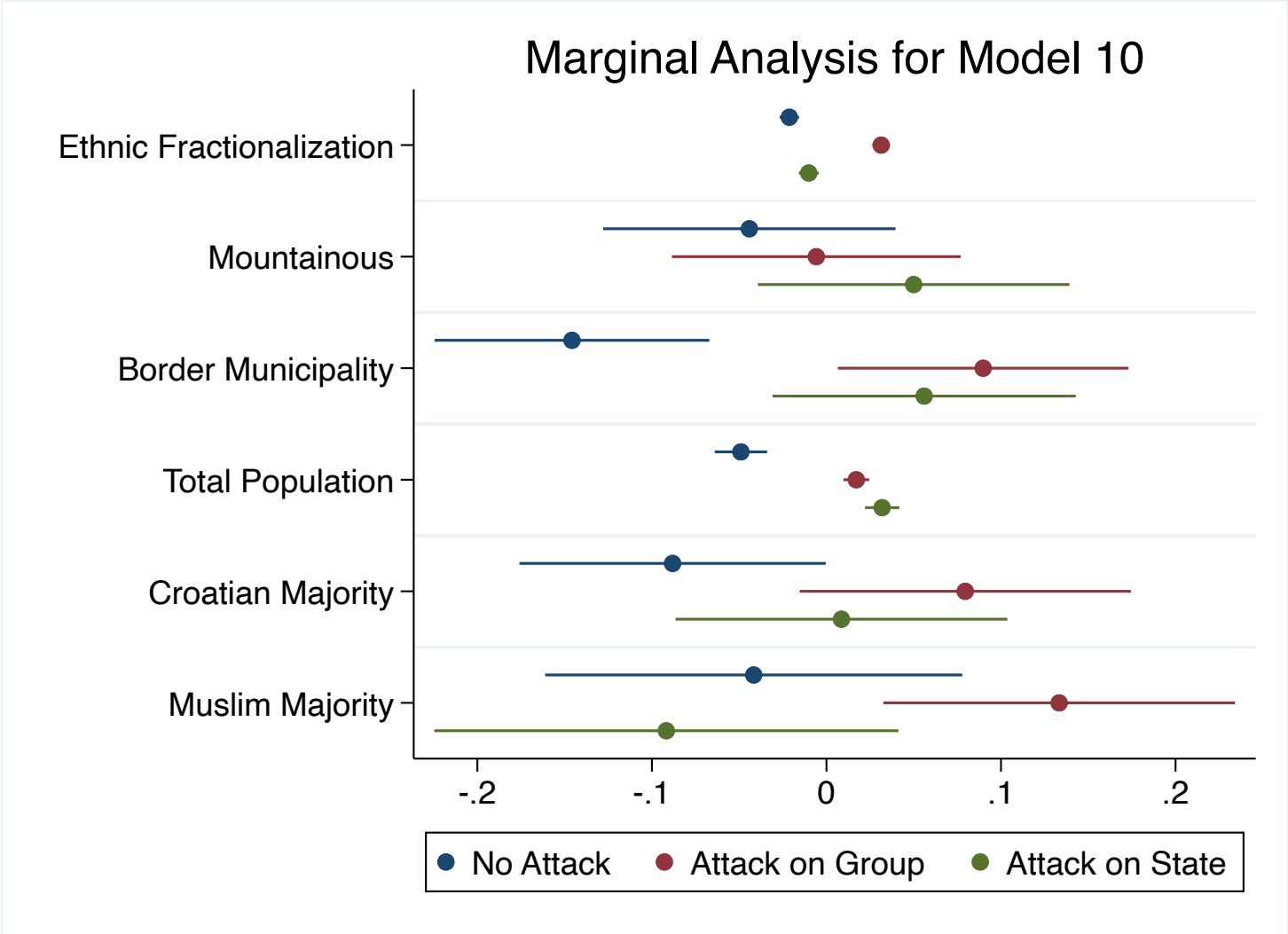

Figure 4.3: Marginal Analysis for Model 10

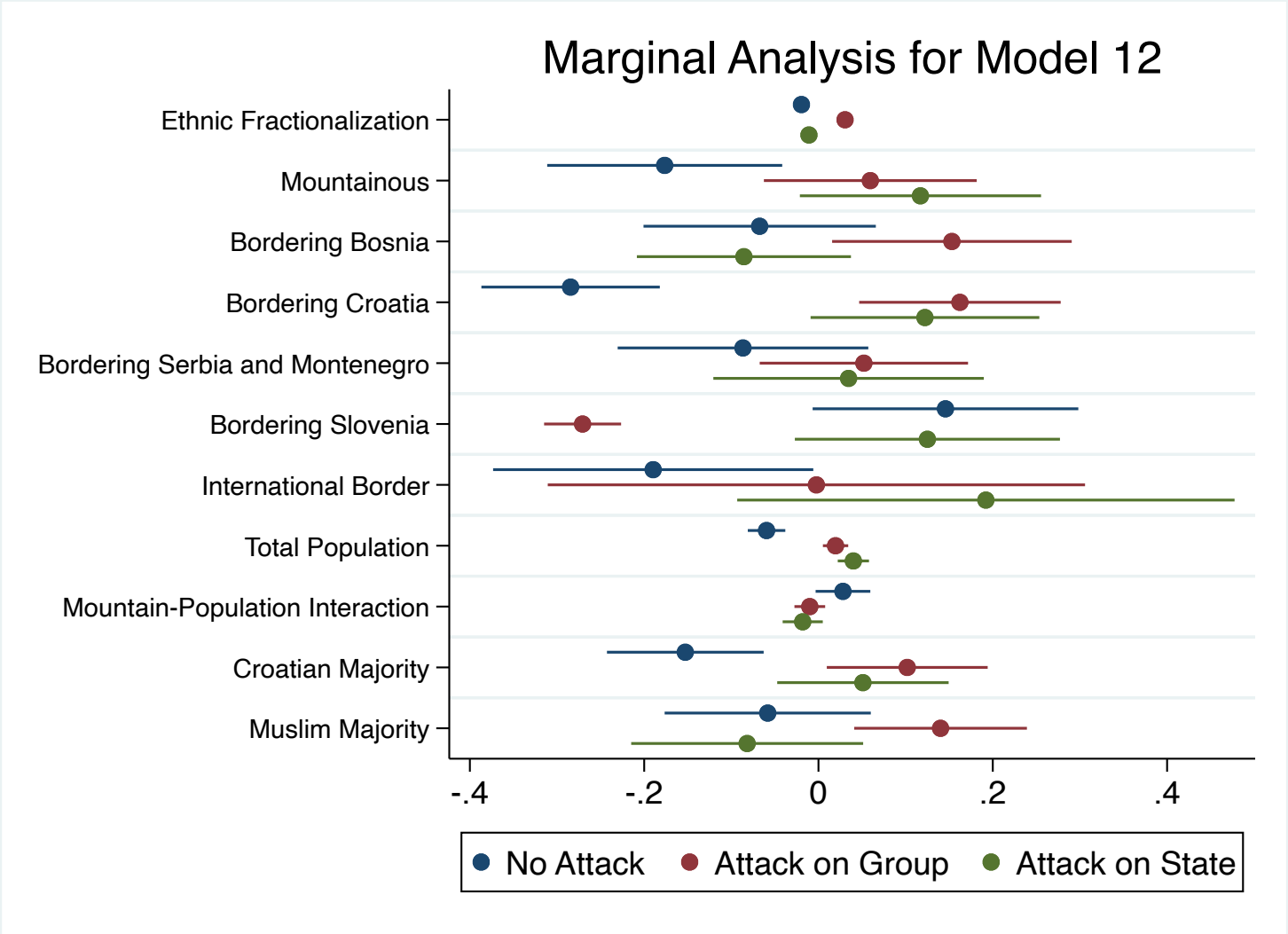

Figure 4.4: Marginal Effects Analysis for Model 12

Ethnic Fractionalization

Ethnic fractionalization is correlated with civil conflict. For civil conflicts, sub-national variation is a crucial indicator for where groups are likely to mobilize and where violence is likely to occur. In qualitative studies, variation within states is a central predictor for secession and other forms of intrastate conflict. As stated in Chapter One, ethnic identity is inelastic, meaning that individuals cannot change their ethnicity like they can their religion or the language they speak.[96] As a result, threats to an ethnic group are more likely to translate into existential threats for members. Additionally, ethnic group membership reduces the likelihood of defection to other groups during a conflict.

Ethnic majority-minority communities, a community in which a national minority comprises a regional majority, can be a salient political and social divide.[97] One problem with many existing datasets examining ethnic fractionalization, however, is that analysists measure it at the national level.[98] This is done for several reasons. First, regional and local ethnic distribution numbers are not always available, nor are they necessarily accurate. If one is comparing across countries, national-level data is usually sufficient and enables a larger sample of countries to be analyzed. From these statistical analyses, we can observe that states with higher degrees of ethnic fractionalization are more prone to conflict, and qualitative analyses of conflicts indicate that regions with large majority-minority communities are correlated with violence, particularly secessionist violence.

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[96] Wucherpfennig, Metternich, Cederman, and Gleditsch. (2012). Denny and Walter (2014).
[97] Wimmer (2002). Toft (2003).
[98] Fearon and Laitin (2003). gtBormann, Cederman, and Vogt (2015).

I aim to fill a gap in the quantitative data on ethnic-based conflict. To do so, I have constructed a dataset that accounts for municipality-level variations in ethnic distribution in Slovenia, Croatia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina. My dataset utilizes the 1981 Yugoslav census. There was a census started in 1991, but this census remained incomplete in Macedonia. Additionally, the final product was not approved by several republics, like Croatia, due to their secession or initiated secession while the census was underway. My measure looks at distribution via the percentage of the population that the first and second largest groups comprise. The 1981 census recorded Albanian, Croatian, Hungarian, Macedonian, Montenegrin, Muslim, Roma, Serbian, Slovenian, and Yugoslav as ethnic identities. I generate a score for ethnic fractionalization that represents the difference in size between the largest two ethnic groups: as this score increases, so too does the degree of ethnic fractionalization in a given municipality.[99]

Studies on civil wars put forth seemingly contradictory arguments: 1) that concentrated ethnic minorities are more likely to seek autonomy or self-determination and 2) that ethnic mixing produces conditions for ethnic violence. On second glance, these two show the difference between an uncontested or less contested base of operations and the location of violence – the contested territory between ethnic groups. There are three primary ways ethnicity and ethnic fractionalization might interact with types of targeting. First, more fractionalization means that there are more groups present, therefore more groups to attack more generally. This would result in more targeting of groups in a municipality. Second, more fractionalization could result in less mobilization due to

[99] See Appendix A for calculation details.

coordination issues, resulting in less targeting overall. Third, the state could view regions that are ethnically mixed as a bigger security threat and aim to have a larger presence in these more contested areas.

Secession, specifically, is correlated with where ethnic minorities are concentrated: Abkhazia, Chechnya, Bangladesh, Nagorno-Karabakh, etc. are all sites where there concentrated ethnic minorities either are pushing for or have successfully bid for autonomy and/or independence. From this, one would assume that attacks are more likely to arise where ethnic groups are concentrated, since those are the locales of mobilization. Conversely, it is possible that while groups organize around ethnic identities, violence is more likely to occur where control of territory is contested – where ethnic groups are more mixed and identities more fractured. I predict that in Yugoslavia, we will see more of the latter. Moreover, mobilization patterns in Yugoslavia that will be explored in Chapter Five indicate that the more ethnic groups that reside in each municipality, the more attacks are likely to occur in that locale. More groups operating in a region would then result in groups targeting other groups.

From this, I test two claims on how ethnic fractionalization should interact with attacks (logit) and targeting (mlogit):

> *Claim 1a: The more fractured a municipality is, the more likely it is that an attack will occur in that locale.*
> *Claim 1b: The more fractured a municipality is, the more likely an attack against a group will occur in that location versus attacks against the state or no attacks.*

I have found that ethnic fractionalization is not explanatory for either attacks or targeting on its own.[100] Still, higher ethnic fractionalization scores are correlated with an increased likelihood of attacks occurring in that municipality, and it is highly statistically significant across all five logit models. Its impact remains relatively small compared to other factors, though. The relationship between ethnic fractionalization and the likelihood of an attack occurring is the strongest in Model 3, and here, there needs to be an increase in ethnic fractionalization (scored 0 to 100) by 27.3 percentage points for the log likelihood of an attack to increase by 1 percentage point. This indicates that on the subnational level, the exact ethnic distribution of a municipality does have an impact of the likelihood of an attack, but it is, perhaps, not the best predictor of how groups will behave unless that distribution is on the more extreme ends of the spectrum.

In the multinomial logistical regression, instead of testing whether attacks occur or not in a given municipality, the model splits: comparing whether groups target a group versus no targeting and whether groups target the state versus no targeting.[101] Ethnic fractionalization is significant across all five mlogit models for both categories, though its effect on the log likelihood of attacking either groups or the state remains small. While both targeting of groups and the state are significantly and positively correlated with ethnic fractionalization, my findings do align with H1b, as there is a stronger relationship between ethnic fractionalization and the targeting of other groups compared to the state. Within these models, ethnic fractionalization does have a different effect on the likelihood of

[100] Both the R^2 and Hosmer-Lemeshow test return poor results (0.1721 and 0.0276 respectively).
[101] This differs from an ordinal logit (ologit), which uses an ordinal variable that can be placed on a scale, even if the "distance" between categories is unclear. As the type of targeting is categorical as opposed to ordinal, I am utilizing a multinomial logistical regression that tests categories against a null category.

groups targeting the state versus other groups. Increasing ethnic fractionalization by 16 to 20 percentage points results in an increase to the log likelihood of attacks on groups by one percentage point. There needs to be a larger change in ethnic fractionalization for there to be a similar increase in the likelihood of attacks on the state, and there is a much wider range to the effect of ethnic fractionalization on the targeting of the state. Here, there needs to be a 45 to 80 percentage point increase in ethnic fractionalization scores depending on the model.

Specific to Yugoslavia, I also track the impact of specific ethnic groups on the likelihood of attacks occurring and the types of attacks. In the models in Table 4.2, I test the impact of having a Croatian, Muslim, or Slovenian majority, and if these ethnic groups behave differently from Serb-majority municipalities. Across all models in Table 4.2 that use ethnic majority group controls, possessing a Croatian majority increases the likelihood of attacks occurring in that locale by 1 to 1.5 percentage points. In Table 4.3, Croatian majorities remain significant: increasing the likelihood of attacking groups by just over one percentage point and of attacking the state by just under one percentage point. In Models 7 and 10, which use a more general measure of borders, possessing a Croatian majority is does not significantly impact the probability of groups attacking the state. Compared to their Serbian counterparts, Muslim-majority municipalities are more likely to experience attacks, but only when not controlling for the total population of a location. In Table 4.3 and Figures 4.2-4.4, we see that having a Muslim majority does impact the likelihood of groups attacking other groups in that municipality, increasing the likelihood of attacks by

1 to 1.5 percentage points. However, it has no impact on whether attacks against the state are likely to occur.

Population Measures

Demographics are an important component to the development of conflicts, though arguments put forward contradictory claims about the impact of the population on the likelihood of conflict and targeting. As discussed above, a rural population is highly correlated with the total population, making it impossible to run both in the same model. Therefore, I run two versions of my models, one set for each variable. Across all models, those including the total population explain more of the variation in both attacks and the type of attack than the rural proportion of the population. I control for whether the likelihood of an attack is influenced by the population size/rural population terrain, or the combinations thereof with an interaction term. I do this because terrain influences what kind of development that can occur in a locale, and these locations typically have fewer people.

Rural Populations

First, population dispersion can act as a proxy for ethnic tolerance. Cosmopolitan areas tend to be more ethnically heterogenous, but they also tend to have higher degrees of tolerance towards members of other ethnic groups due to exposure to other cultures, intermarriage, and frequent intermingling.[102] This is especially obvious in Bosnia and Herzegovina, with the capital, Sarajevo, being ethnically mixed, while the periphery was more homogenous.

[102] Gagnon Jr. (2004).

Ethnic violence was at its most severe in the periphery, rural regions of the former Yugoslav republics. Rather than just looking at ethnic fractionalization levels, urban/rural divides ask us to consider the density of interactions. An ethnically fractionalized rural district would have higher degrees of ethnic-based violence than an urban district with a similar degree of ethnic fractionalization. Rural areas tend to be more homogenous, reducing within-group barriers to communication and easing the way for mobilization and coordination.[103] As a result, we should see increased mobilization in these regions, and therefore, more attacks being carried out there. Additionally, due to the homogeneity and relatively easier coordination in rural areas, we should anticipate fewer groups forming, which would result in more groups targeting the state.

Therefore, according to this line of thinking, we should anticipate:

> *Claim 2a: As the percent of the population of a municipality that lives in rural areas increases, the more likely groups will carry out attacks in that locale.*
> *Claim 2b: As the percent of the population of a municipality that lives in rural areas increases, the more likely groups will carry out attacks against the state.*

Importantly, the arguments pertaining to urban/rural divides and ethnic fractionalization are diametrically opposed. Arguments focused on ethnic fractionalization point to conflicts occurring where ethnic groups are heterogenous, while those that focus on urban/rural divides say that regions that are more fractured may not necessarily be those

[103] Smith (1986, 1988). Hobsbawm (1990). Billig (1995). Saideman (1997). Wimmer (2002). Toft (2003). Smith (2003). Brancati (2006). Walter (2006). Weidmann (2009). Wucherpfennig, Metternich, Cederman, and Gleditsch. (2012). Bormann, Cederman, and Vogt (2015).

that are the site of conflict. Instead, the density of interactions between individuals is an intervening variable in the relationship between ethnic fractionalization and ethnic conflict.

The rural percentage of the population in municipalities in Slovenia, Croatia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina ranges from 4.6 to 100 percent. The relationship between the rural population and attacks occurring is significant in Model 2, but its significance drops from the model with the inclusion of an interaction term between terrain and the rural population. In Model 3, terrain becomes statistically significant (unlike Model 2), and the interaction term between terrain and the rural population is statistically significant. This means that when this relationship is controlled for, the rural population is significant in mountainous municipalities but not non-mountainous ones.

Much like ethnic fractionalization, there is a small influence on the likelihood of an attack. When not controlling for the terrain, for every 38.5 percentage point increase the rural percent of the population, there is a 1 percentage point *decrease* in the likelihood of an attack occurring in a municipality. This is the opposite relationship as was predicted in H2a: rather than increasing the likelihood of conflict, a larger proportion of rural residents in a municipality decreases it. This is particularly interesting, as rural populations were observed to be more likely to mobilize than their urban counterparts in both military analyses of Yugoslavia and survey research conducted both before and after the war.[104]

The significance of the rural population drops in Model 3 when incorporating an interaction term of the rural populations and terrain. However, we do observe that in mountainous municipalities, the likelihood of attacks decreases by one percentage point

[104] Office of Russian and European Analysis (2002). Gagnon Jr. (2004).

when the rural population percent increases by 34.5 percentage points. However, the rural population in non-mountainous municipalities does not influence the likelihood of attacks occurring. Once again, this contradicts H2a, as possessing a greater percentage of rural residents decreases the likelihood of attacks.

In H2b, existing literature indicates that we should expect groups in rural regions to attack the state more than other rebel groups. However, much like in Models 2 and 3, Models 8 and 9 demonstrate a similar relationship between the rural population and the probability of groups attacking the state or other groups: increasing the percent of the population that resides in rural areas decreases the likelihood of attacks on both the state and other groups by similar amounts. Though, it did reduce the likelihood of attacks on the state by slightly more than attacks on other groups.

Like its effects on the probability of any type of attack, this effect is small: to reduce the likelihood of attacks on the state by one percentage point, the rural population must increase by at least 34 percentage points. To do the same for attacks on groups, the proportion of the rural population must increase by 50 percentage points. Attacks on the state are not impacted by the interaction between the rural population and terrain. Whether mountainous or no, the likelihood of an attack on the state is reduced by one percentage point for every 43.5 percentage point increase in the proportion of the rural population in a municipality. Attacks on groups, conversely, are not impacted by the rural population unless the district is mountainous. In mountainous districts, increasing the percentage of the rural population by 25 percentage points reduces the likelihood of attacks on groups by 1 percentage point.

This tells us several things about H2b. First, it is contradicted by the data here. Having a proportionally larger rural population does not result in groups being more likely to target the state. Second, a proportionally larger rural population reduces the likelihood that attacks will occur on either groups or the state. Third, when controlling for terrain, the relationship remains negative for both types of targeting, but the relationship between the rural population and the targeting of groups is complicated. On one hand, it does not either reduce or increase the likelihood of attacks on groups in non-mountainous municipalities. In mountainous municipalities, on the other hand, rural populations have a larger negative impact on attacks on other groups than it does on the state in either mountainous or non-mountainous regions.

There are a few explanations for this. Perhaps, more attacks simply just occur in urban areas. These areas typically have larger populations, and therefore, urban regions have 1) more people to mobilize and 2) more people to target. As seen in the next section, larger populations are correlated with more attacks. Qualitative data does, however, indicate that radicalization occurred predominately in rural regions, rather than urban ones. Perhaps, mobilization occurs in rural regions, but these groups leave rural regions to carry out attacks on urban areas.

Another potential explanation lies in using the rural population as a proxy for economic productivity. This dataset lacks a control specifically for GDP or productivity, since this data was recorded on the republic-level, not the municipality-level. A lack of variation caused issues within both models. However, if one uses rural populations as a proxy for lower economic productivity *vis-à-vis* urban regions. The results of these models

indicate, then, that regions that are less economically productive experience fewer attacks. This aligns with claims made in the literature on available resources: locations with less access to resources are less likely to experience attacks.

Total Population

A second argument focuses on how the total population of a municipality can impact where individuals mobilize and fight. Regions with larger total populations have more people to mobilize as fighters; they also have more people to target. Low population and/or rural areas typically means poorer economies *vis-à-vis* those with a large population and/or urban areas. This is an important indicator of a ceiling for group capabilities in each region.[105] More people can also translate to more diversification and a greater capacity for resource extraction. Thus, regions with higher populations have a greater likelihood of being able to access lootable resources, or those regional elites can control for their own purposes without the interference of the state. These resources can promote regional autonomy or even civil conflicts with the state.[106] Conversely, a large population could mean that more types of people live in that location, meaning that coordination would be more difficult and producing many small groups rather than one large group with access to that municipality's resources.

As a result, when examining a municipalities total population, we would expect the following with regards to the existing literature:

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[105] This if far from a perfect stand-in, but there are no accurate measures of municipality-level GDP or budgets recorded for 1981 or 1991. Furthermore, municipality records are hard to find for counties originally part of state that no longer exists and many of whom had their borders redrawn and renamed between the mid-1990s and early-2000s.
[106] Markowitz (2013).

Claim 3a: The larger the population of a municipality, the more likely attacks will occur in that locale.
Claim 3b: The larger the population of a municipality, the more likely a group will target other groups in that locale.

There is a wide range is population size between municipalities, with the smallest being just under 1,000 individuals and the largest being almost 700,000. The average population across the three republics was roughly 68,000 individuals. When looking at the total population, this variable has a relatively small impact on the likelihood of an attack occurring, requiring large changes in the population to cause even small changes in the probability of an attack occurring. Unlike the rural population, however, Models 4 and 5 do corroborate H3a: municipalities with larger populations did increase the likelihood of attacks. For instance, an increase by 10,000 individuals in a municipality increases the likelihood of an attack occurring by 0.323 percentage points. The interaction between terrain and population is significant in this model, as well (See Model 5). In non-mountainous municipalities, an increase in the population by 10,000 individuals results in an increase in the likelihood of an attack by 0.438 percentage points, but in mountainous republics, the same increase in the total population only increases the likelihood of an attack by 0.208 percentage points.

Population is significant in both models run with my tripartite dependent variable,[107] but the results do not fully corroborate that groups are more likely to target other groups in high-population areas. Municipalities with a larger population are correlated with an increased likelihood of attacks on both the state and other groups. An

[107] At a 99.9 percent confidence interval in both Models 11 and 12

increase in the total population by 10,000 individuals results in a 0.400 percentage point increase in the likelihood of attacks on other groups and a 0.434 percentage point increase in the likelihood of attacks on the state. From this, we know that a larger population is correlated with an increased likelihood of attacks on other groups, as expected. However, it also indicates that there is an almost equal but slightly stronger likelihood that groups will target the state with the same population increase. Unlike in other models, the interaction between terrain and the total population is not significant,[108] and the impact of the population on both type of attacks remains the same.

Terrain

Where a municipality is located and the nature of the terrain have impacts on how groups organize and their capabilities. Studies have examined how terrain influences conflicts. Fearon and Laitin (2003), for example, control for mountains and contiguous territory.[109] Both features can make state control of its territory more tenuous and introduce added difficulties to controlling its citizenry via enforcement. Mountains are often a key to insurgent survival: al Qaeda and the Taliban use the mountains between Afghanistan and Pakistan to hide and to organize while under pressure; Chechen insurgents have used the mountains in Chechnya and Dagestan to prevent their destruction by Russian forces. In Part IV, I examine two conflicts that occurred in the North Caucasus. Mountains were a

[108] At an 85 percent confidence interval for targeting other groups, and at a 90 percent confidence interval for targeting the state. For the state, a 90 percent confidence interval is borderline statistically significant. If it were to be included, it would indicate that in mountainous municipalities, an increase in the total population by 10,000, the likelihood of attacks on the state increases by 0.228 percentage points rather than 0.434.

[109] Expanded datasets beyond Slovenia, Croatia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina would additionally make use of a control for territorial contiguity, but these three republics were all contiguous, making this constant rather than variable in my analysis.

critical component of both, as it not only hindered the state's ability to govern the territory prior to the start of the conflict, but it also provided a place for fighters to retreat to where the state could not follow. The Spin Ghar Range between Afghanistan and Pakistan served a similar role, hindering the expansion of state institutions, promoting local and regional governance, and enabling groups like the Taliban to regroup between offensives.

Additionally, mountains have an impact on group structure: while they can help ensure survival, they can hinder communication and cohesive organizing, thereby making it more likely that groups will have a fragmented organizational structure. Due to the advantages rugged terrain provides rebel groups, especially those at a technological and capabilities disadvantage *vis-à-vis* the center, more attacks are likely to occur in or around mountainous terrain because groups are likely to move into mountainous terrain. A greater number of attacks is a function of the strategic advantages mountains provide against the state. Moreover, the groups that choose to operate in such terrain are likely to either have a fragmented organizational structure or to be there because they have lower capabilities, or both. From this, I derive the following claims:

> *Claim 4a: If the terrain is mountainous, it is more likely that attacks will occur in a given municipality.*
> *Claim 4b: If the terrain is mountainous, it is more likely that groups will attack the state.*

The impact of terrain on the likelihood of any kind of attack occurring in a municipality is impacted by the inclusion of the interaction term between population measures and terrain. On its own, mountainous terrain has no significant impact on the likelihood of attacks occurring. However, when controlling for the relationship between population and terrain, it does impact the likelihood of attacks. Mountainous terrain

increases the likelihood of attacks occurring by 2.32 and 1.38 percentage points when modeling with the rural percentage and the total population respectively.

These findings are particularly interesting when comparing to other studies of the effect of terrain on conflict. Fearon and Laitin (2003), for instance, find that mountainous terrain is statistically significant on a national level for most forms of civil conflict, but it is not significant when specifically looking at "Ethnic" war, under which the conflicts in Yugoslavia would fall.[110] It is important to note that they are examining the percent of a state's territory that is covered by mountains while I am tracking whether specific sub-national units have the presence of mountains as a dichotomous variable. Under this analysis, mountains have the largest impact on violence in a region when controlling for the overlap between rural regions and mountainous ones in Yugoslavia.

When considering what type of targeting is occurring in muncipalities, mountainous terrain is not statistically significant in models that do not control for the interaction between terrain and different population measures. When controlling for the rural population and the interaction between the rural population and terrain, mountainous terrain increases the likelihood that groups will target other groups by 2.96 percentage points and the state by 1.96 percentage points. This partially corroboates H4b, as mountains do increase the likelihood of groups targeting the state, but it increases the likelihood of groups targeting other groups by more. When controlling for the total population and the relationship between terrain and population distribution, mountains have no signficant

[110] Fearon and Laitin (2003), 84.

impact on the targeting of other groups. However, mountains do increase the likelihood of groups attacking the state by 1.27 percentage points, which does corroborate H4b.

Location

Location is important to consider when modeling attack patterns in a conflict; therefore, I track the impact of both border municipalities and of specific borders within Yugoslavia. In this section, I will be examining the effect of being a municipality in a broad sense and the effect of being located on a particular border in Yugoslavia. This is important to consider when examining the existing literature: do borders alone influence the likelihood of conflict, or are specific borders in Yugoslavia making borders significant? Across all models, those that control for which republic a municipality borders have a better fit that those that control for borders more generally.

Where territories are located within a larger state or sub-national unit can also introduce difficulties for the state. Carter and Geomans argue that borders are rarely new; they are not drawn according to nationalist ideals or in quests for defensible borders. Instead, new borders coincide with previous administrative frontiers.[111] Territorial integrity has gained increasing salience since the end of World War II, as many European states linked territorial revision with the outbreak of war. Zacker writes in "The Territorial Integrity Norm" argues that while borders have not been frozen, "states have been proscribed from altering them by force."[112] While secessionist movements are fighting over this very thing, it is easier to select a border that the government has already been using,

[111] Carter and Goemans (2001).
[112] Zacker (2001), 246.

since institutions already exist within them. Internal divisions within recognized states to denote regions, moreover, are usually drawn with some calculus in mind, whether this be in the age-old quest for natural borders[113] or due to economic or cultural distinctiveness.[114] Still, when states have seceded successfully from larger political entities, their borders are often former internal borders.

In Yugoslavia, this caused several problems. The international community initially sided with the Yugoslav government, preferring for the republics to remain one state even after this ceased to be feasible. Moreover, once republics began declaring independence and being recognized, the international community and the republic governments desired for the administrative borders to become the new international borders. However, these border regions were often home to ethnic minority communities who themselves desired secession and independence. Within republics, being in a border region could lead to exclusion from state structures and political segmentation in multiethnic states, like Yugoslavia.[115] Periphery regions are, therefore, likely to be the site of conflict, especially if that border is overlaid with a transborder ethnic community.[116]

The major conflicts in Yugoslavia occurred along borders, even in the ethnically homogenous Slovenia. Both the Tajik Civil War and the Interethnic Clashes in Kyrgyzstan, explored in Part III, occurred in border regions, and the East Prigorodny Conflict, explored in Part IV, was border dispute due to an internal administrative border bisecting an ethnic community. In these border regions, state or regional membership can be amorphous. For

[113] Sahlins (1990).
[114] Haselsberger (2014).
[115] Wimmer, Cederman, and Min (2009). Cederman, Wimmer, and Min (2010). Vogt (2018).
[116] Cederman et. al (2013).

example, South Ossetians hold Russian passports, despite the Russian Federation not annexing the region and supporting its independence from Georgia and despite Georgia still claiming its residents as Georgians. From analysis of the existing literature and patterns observed during the Yugoslav wars, I will be exploring the following three claims. The first two are more generalizable claims, while the third pulls from observations of patterns of attack during the Yugoslav conflicts.

> *Claim 5a: Attacks are more likely to occur in municipalities that are border regions.*
> *Claim 5b: Attacks against the state are more likely to occur in municipalities that are border regions.*
> *Claim 5c: Attacks against groups are more likely to occur in municipalities that border Bosnia or Croatia versus attacks against the state.*

Table 4.4: Logistic Regressions Using Dichotomous Border Variable

	Model 13	Model 14	Model 15	Model 16
Ethnic Fractionalization[1]	0.19***	0.19***	0.17***	0.16***
	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.03
Mountainous	0.27	0.25	0.34	0.35
	0.28	0.28	0.29	0.29
Border Region	0.95**	1.15*	0.95**	0.78
	0.27	0.48	0.28	0.49
Ethnic-Border Interaction		-0.02		0.02
		0.05		0.05
Proportion Population Rural	-0.03***	-0.03***		
	0.01	0.01		
Total Population[2]			0.32***	0.32***
			0.06	0.06
Largest Ethnic Group[3]				
Croatian	1.01**	1.00**	1.08**	1.09**
	0.38	0.38	0.4	0.4
Muslim	1.00*	1.00*	0.74	0.75
	0.4	0.4	0.43	0.43
Slovenian	0.72	0.7	1.13*	1.13*
	0.54	0.54	0.54	0.54
Constant	-1.1	-1.11	-4.08***	-4.01***
	0.75	0.75	0.57	0.59
R^2	0.2626	0.2632	0.3419	0.3422

** significant at 0.05, ** significant at 0.01, *** significant at 0.001*
[1] by 5 percentage point increases
[2] by 10,000 individuals
[3] Serbian as the reference category

Across the four models analyzing the impact of being a border municipality, relationships between different variables are similar regardless of various controls, apart from a municipality having a Slovenian majority. In three of the four models, being in a border municipality increased the likelihood of attacks occurring by roughly one percentage point, corroborating H5a. Most other relationships in Models 13-16 remain the same as their counterparts above in Table 4.4**,** except for the impact of a Slovenian Majority

in Models 15 and 16. In these two, if a municipality has a Slovenian majority, it increases the likelihood of an attack occurring in that locale by 1.13 percentage points. This is not seen in any of the models that control for who specifically a municipality borders. It is also important to note that models taking into account which specific border a municipality is along explain more of the variation in the probability of attacks than models that only code for a border's presence. This indicates that within Yugoslavia, knowing the specific border provides additional information and that not all borders are significant. In fact, most borders have no impact of the likelihood of attacks occurring. However, bordering Croatia increases the likelihood of attacks in a municipality by nearly two percentage points, and this is consistent regardless of controls.

Interestingly, when controlling for the rural proportion of the population rather than total population, the likelihood of attacks increases the likelihood of attacks by 1.3 percentage points when a location is on an international border. Although, a larger proportional rural population decreases the likelihood of attacks; however, this relationship between being on an international border and attacks indicates that rural districts along an international border are more likely to experience attacks than their interior counterparts. Regardless of location, districts with larger total populations are more likely to experience attacks than those with smaller populations, and this is not impacted by being located along an international border.

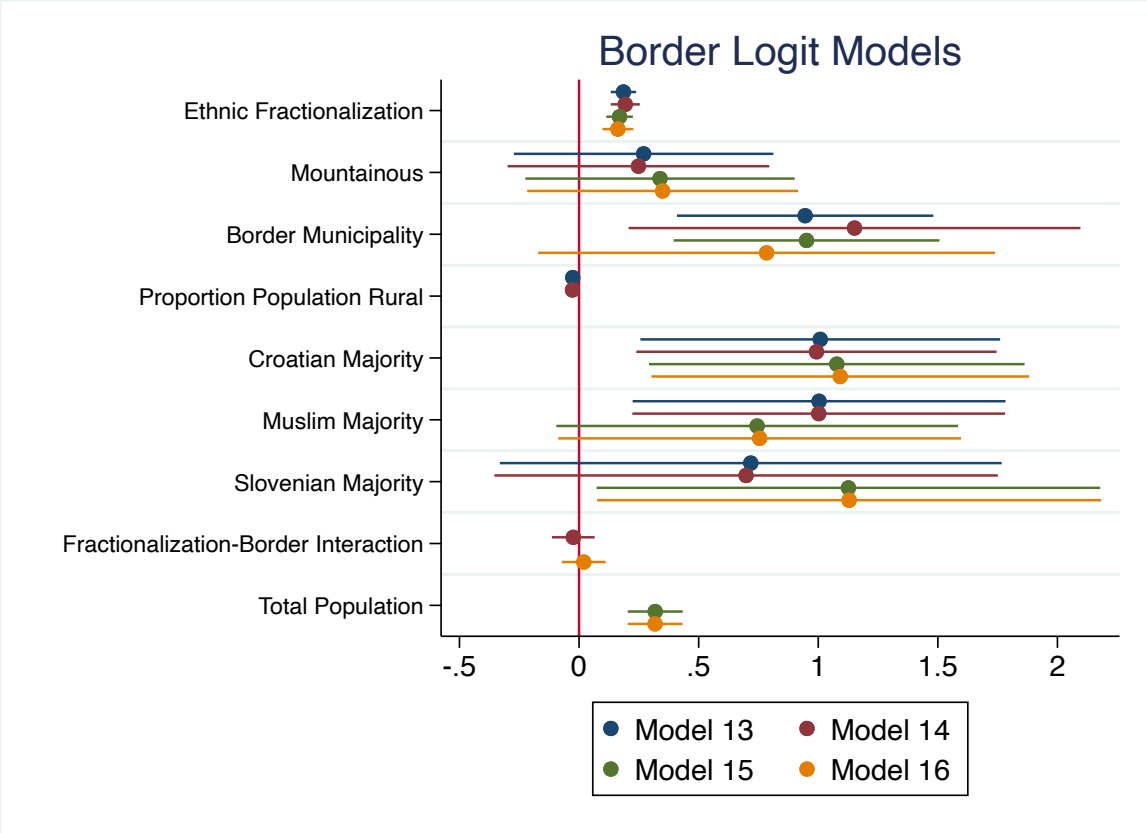

Figure 4.5: Logistic Regression Models Using Dichotomous Border Variable

Being in a border municipality does increase the likelihood of groups attacking the state, as H5b claims, but it also increases the likelihood that groups will attack other groups. Additionally, shown in Table 4.3, possessing a border has a slightly stronger impact on the likelihood of attacks occurring on groups versus the state (1.14 to 0.85/0.94). However, models that track whether a municipality is located along a border consistently have a worse fit than models that specify which republic within Yugoslavia a municipality borders. Much like in logistic models, specific borders have an impact on the likelihood of different types of attacks. H5c, for instance, is corroborated. Being located along the

Bosnian border increases the likelihood of attacks on other groups by 1.2 to 1.4 percentage points, but it has no impact on the likelihood of groups targeting the state. This is in direct contrast to models with a dichotomous dependent variable, wherein the Bosnian border was insignificant across all models. Bordering Croatia, though, was significant in logistic models. Here, it increases the likelihood of attacks occurring on both the state and other groups. It increases the likelihood of groups targeting other groups by 2.3 to 2.5 percentage points and targeting the state by 1.8 to 1.9 percentage points. Though not asserted beforehand, being located along an international border also influences targeting: increasing the likelihood of groups attacking the state by 1.3 to 1.5 percentage points, with no effect on groups targeting other groups.

Conclusions

The relationship between these indicators and the likelihood of conflict and the likelihood of differing types of targeting is varied. For instance, reporting from the Yugoslav wars indicates that mobilization was centered in rural, more homogenous regions. Yet, in modeling, rural regions were associated with a decrease in the likelihood of attacks generally. Moreover, it had no impact on the likelihood of groups targeting other groups and decreased the likelihood of groups targeting the state. Other relationships were corroborated: ethnically heterogenous regions and regions with larger populations did increase the likelihood of conflict. Furthermore, ethnic fractionalization is correlated with an increased likelihood in groups targeting other groups versus the state. However, this effect is very small: requiring large changes in ethnic fractionalization to impact the likelihood of attacks and targeting occurring in each locale.

Critically for my dissertation, these models tell us that the claims made by the existing literature are largely corroborated when addressing the likelihood of attacks occurring in a given municipality, even if the effect is relatively small in some cases. However, when considering specific types of targeting, findings are more ambiguous. Some, like mountains, being a border municipality, and the total population impact targeting of other groups and the state similarly. Specific borders do affect one or the other: being located along the Bosnian border makes it more likely groups will target the other groups, being located along an international border makes it more likely groups will target the state. Bordering Croatia, though, increases the likelihood of groups targeting the state and other groups.

These proposed impact of these indicators on the likelihood of conflict occurring in a municipality is corroborated for the most part by my models for the Yugoslav Wars. However, these indicators are less useful when attempting to discern what causes groups to target the state or other groups. Additionally, several of the indicators that do distinguish between targeting the state and targeting groups are situational to Yugoslavia – specific borders or specific ethnic majority groups – not something generalizable beyond this series of conflicts.

This analysis informs the explanatory advantage provided by my theory. My theory on organizational control structure and relative material capabilities aims to specifically fill this gap in the existing understanding of group behavior, both for the specific conflicts in Yugoslavia and other civil conflicts. If the structural features of conflicts are unable to provide a sufficient answer to why groups target the state versus other groups, then we

must turn to other explanatory features. In the next chapter, I will explain how the organizational structure and material capabilities of the six primary groups in the Yugoslav Wars explain the variation observed in group behavior.

CHAPTER FIVE: GROUP BEHAVIOR IN THE YUGOSLAV WARS, 1991-1992

Introduction

In this chapter, I will be laying out my theory for group behavior based on the actions of six parties in the Yugoslav Wars: The Slovenian government, the Croatian government, and the Serbian Republic of Krajina (Krajina), and the Bosnian government, the Republika Srpska (Srpska), and Herzeg-Bosnia. As discussed in Chapter Four, the behavior of these groups cannot be wholly explained by the arguments put forth by the existing literature based on the municipality in which attacks occurred. Therefore, in this chapter, I will turn from quantitative data analysis to comparative case studies.

I assert that group targeting can be explained by organizational structure, which informs us of what type of target is likely to be a group's primary threat, and relative material capabilities, which informs us of whether groups will possess the agency to target their primary threat or not. First, I will lay out what type of targeting each group was carrying out in Yugoslavia. Second, I will explore how the existing literature applies or does not apply to the targeting undertaken by groups in the Yugoslav Wars. Third, I will compare the actions undertaken by the rebel groups aiming to secede from Yugoslavia: the Slovenian, Croatian, and Bosnian governments. Finally, I will compare the actions of the three rebel groups that aimed for secession from secessionist republics: Krajina, Srpska, and Herzeg-Bosnia.

Group Targeting in the Yugoslav Wars

As part of a dataset I constructed for my dissertation, I have collected a sample of 281 attacks in Yugoslavia: 54 attacks in Slovenia, taking place between June and July 1991; 71 attacks in Croatia, taking place from February into October of 1991, and 156 attacks in Bosnia and Herzegovina from March to December of 1992.[117] I tracked who was attacking whom during the conflict and when they were targeted by other armed groups and the state, examining attacks across four dimensions:

1. How many attacks a given group carried out?
2. How many times a given group was attacked?
3. How many attacks a group carried out against the state
4. How many attacks a group carried out against other groups

Together, these dimensions tell us whether groups are engaging in targeting the state, targeting other groups, or mixed targeting. It is a bit more difficult to determine if groups are engaging in reactive targeting, as these groups may still sometimes target others and groups may be involved in attacks while not being the instigator. To determine a group that is reactive, we need to look at the proportion of attacks carried out by a group compared to the number of times it was attacked.

[117] More attacks did occur in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as there were also more groups operating in the region. The initial period of violence differed in length between the three. The Slovenian War lasted a week, and the Croatian War's dynamics changed in November 1991 due to negotiations around the Vance Plan, which would have included a ceasefire and the possible introduction of United Nations peacekeepers. This dataset still captures the escalation that occurred at this time in Croatia, including the fighting in Vukovar and Dubrovnik.

Table 5.1: The State and Active Groups in the Yugoslav Wars

Conflict	Ten-Day War (Slovenia	Croatian War	Bosnian War
The State	Yugoslavia (YNA)	Yugoslavia (YNA)	Yugoslavia/Serbia and Montenegro (YNA)
Targeted the State	Slovenian government		
Targeted Other Groups		Serbian Republic of Krajina	Republika Srpska
Engaged in Mixed Targeting		Croatian government (Sept 1991-onwards)	Herzeg-Bosnia
Reactive/No Targeting		Croatian government (June-Sept 1991)	Bosnian government

The Slovenian government targeted the state; the Serbian Republic of Krajina and Republic Srpska targeting other groups; the Croatian government and Herzeg-Bosnia engaging in mixed targeting; and the Bosnian government engaging in reactive targeting. Therefore, there is full variation on the dependent variable of interest for this theory-building chapter.

To visualize this data, I have four figures below. How often the six major armed groups attacked the state and attacked other groups, along with how often they were targeted by both other groups and the YNA is pictured in Figure 5.1. Figure 5.2 compares the proportion of attacks carried out by each group in the republics. Attacks carried out by the state are excluded from this analysis, as the state is not a rebel group. "Government" here refers to republic-level forces, being the Slovenian government in Slovenia, the Croatian government in Croatia, and the Bosnian government in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Figure 5.3 compares the proportion each group attacked others versus was attacked by others. Finally, Figure 5.4 compares the proportion of attacks each group carried out on the state versus other rebel groups.

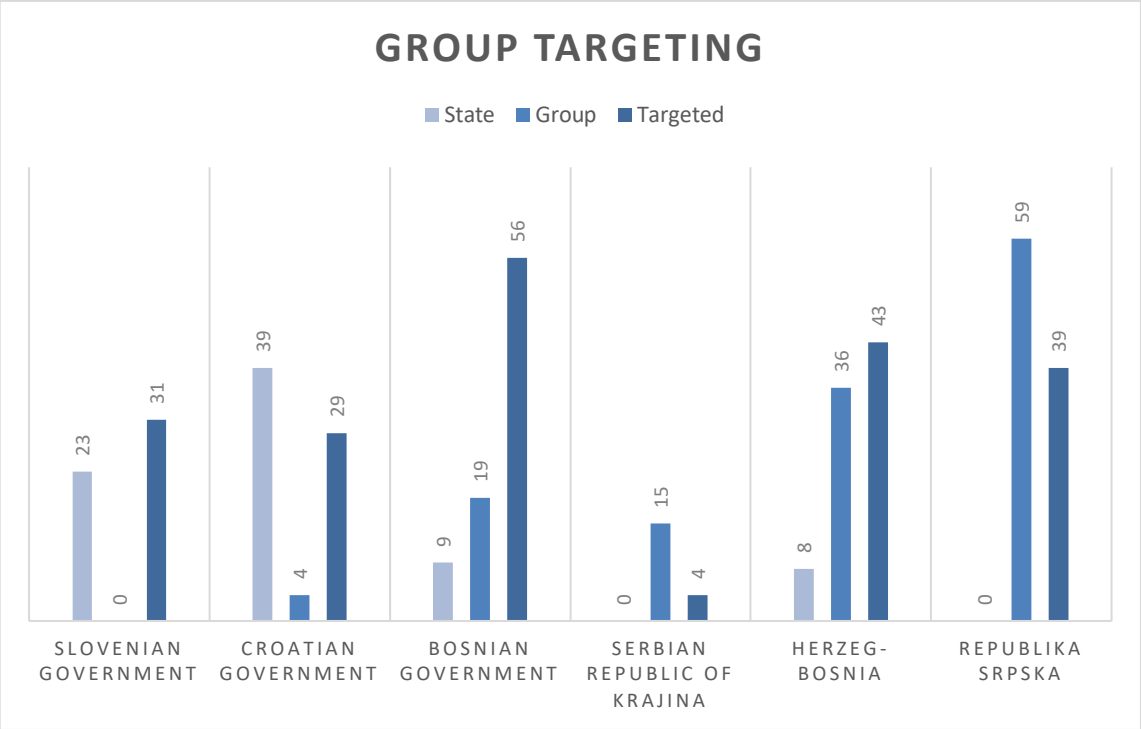

Figure 5.1: Group Targeting

The Slovenian government attacked the state 23 times and was attacked by the Yugoslav National Army 31 times. Therefore, the Slovenian government was targeted in this sample of battles more than it was targeting. As shown in Figure 5.3, though, this split was roughly evenly split between the two major actors in the conflict: the YNA and the Slovenian government. As the only armed rebel group in the conflict, it carried out 100

percent of the attacks by a rebel group, and all these attacks were on the YNA and its facilities.

The Croatian and Bosnian government both engaged in mixed targeting, attacking both groups and the state. As shown in Figure 5.1, the Croatian government attacked the state more often than other armed groups, and the Bosnian government attacked other groups more than the state. Of the six armed formations, the Bosnian government was attacked the most by other rebel organizations. As shown in Figure 5.3, the Bosnian government was attacked proportionally more than the other two groups in the republic, Herzeg-Bosnia and Republika Srpska. This indicates that the Bosnian government either 1) had fewer opportunities to attack, 2) was not as engaged in the fighting, or 3) was an easier target than other actors.

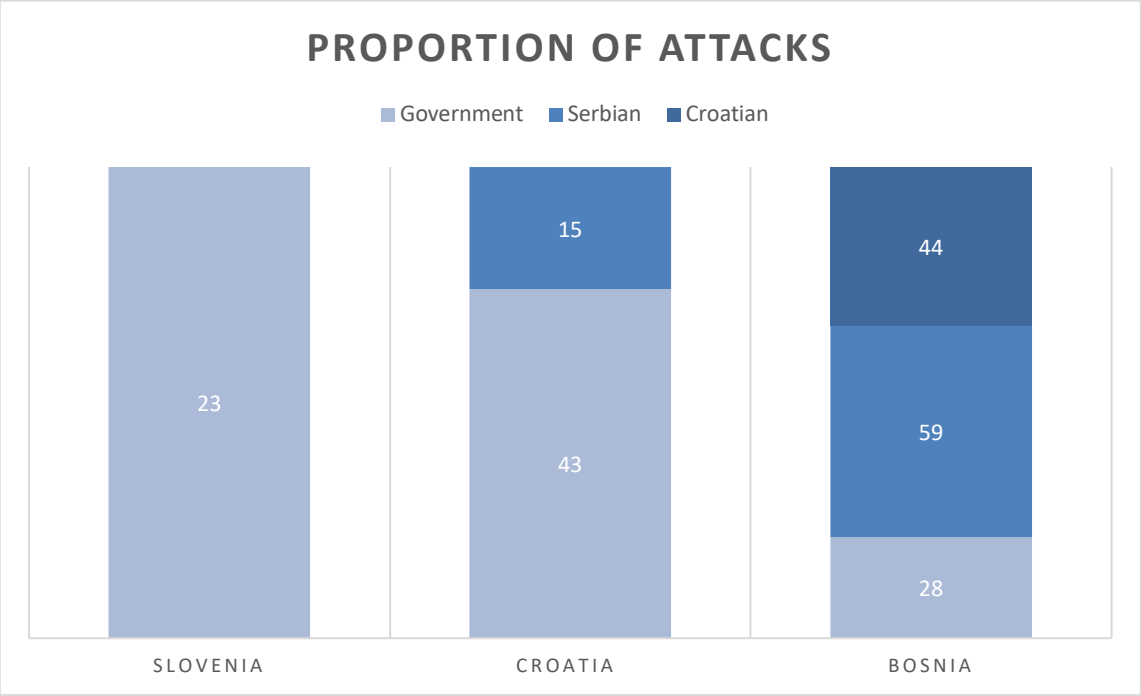

Figure 5.2: Proportion of Attacks by Rebel Groups

In Croatia, there is a split in who is carrying out the attacks. Like in Slovenia, the Croatian government carried out the majority of the attacks. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, conversely, the government defense forces did not carry out the majority of attacks. Instead, the Republika Srpska forces carried out the plurality of the attacks, followed by Herzeg-Bosnia forces.

Both Serbian groups, the Serbian Republic of Krajina and the Republika Srpska, engaged in targeting of other groups, and were attacked less often than they attacked other parties. Herzeg-Bosnia engaged in mixed targeting during the Bosnian War.

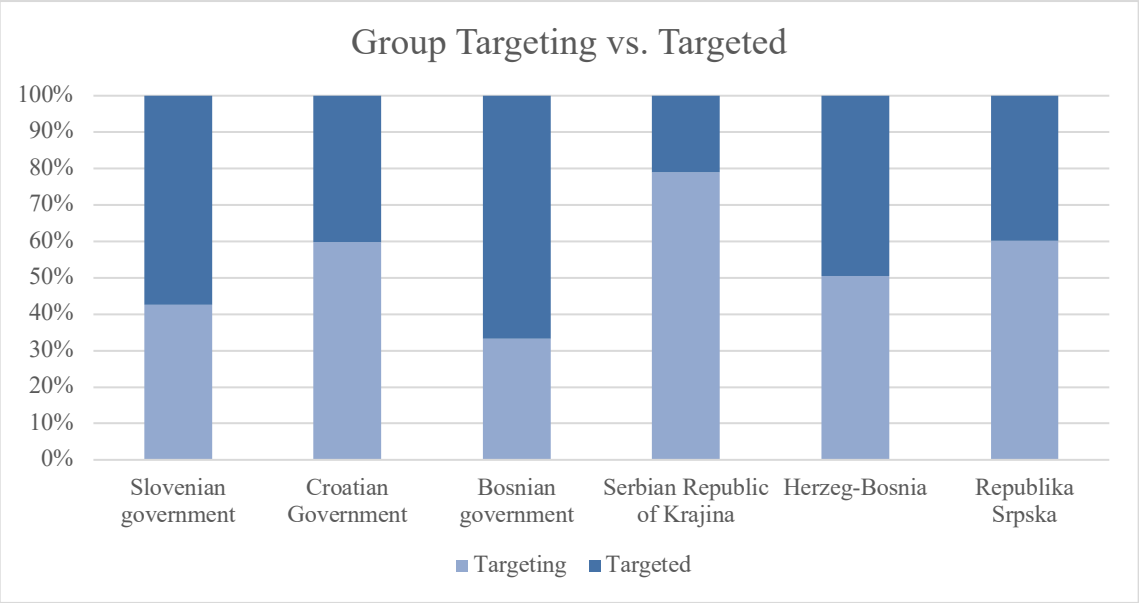

Figure 5.3: Group Targeting vs. Targeted

Both Figure 5.1 and 5.4 show how often groups attack the state versus other groups, and Figure 5.4 does so by visualizing the percentages of who groups are attacking. The Croatian government, Bosnian government, and Herzeg-Bosnia all targeted both the state and other groups. Targeting of groups was proportionally more common among the actors operating in Bosnia and Herzegovina, perhaps an effect of there being more groups operating in the republic during the war and many of those groups being fragmented in nature. The difference between the Croatian government and Herzeg-Bosnia in the percent they targeted the state versus other groups is interesting to note, as these two groups had very close ties and operated across borders. A similar difference does not exist between the Serbian Republic of Krajina and Republika Srpska, though they do have a similar dynamic and paramilitary groups likewise crossed the border from Croatia to Bosnia between 1991 and 1992.

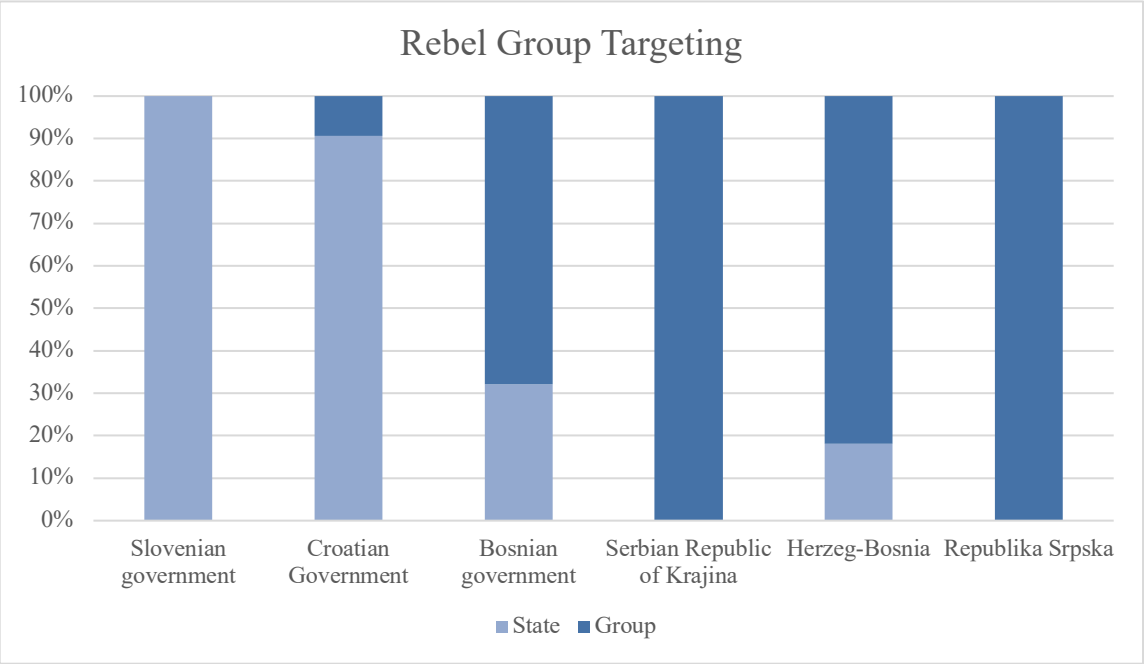

Figure 5.4: Rebel Group Targeting

This sample of attacks in these three republics, along with attacks carried out by the state, aligns with the typology outlined above. One potential point of deviation is the Bosnian government, since they are typed as engaging in Reactive Targeting, and the data indicates that they were, to some degree, attacking others. However, it is unclear if they were attacking in response to being targeted or initiating violence on their own from the quantitative data alone. Otherwise, as visualized in Figure 5.4, the six groups provide a full variation of my dependent variable. Additionally, there is variation between groups on the republic level and the within-republic level.

Possible Explanations

There are several possible explanations for why rebel groups behave the way they do, but there are deviations in behavior between the three secessionist republics are not fully explained. The most straightforward means to explain group behavior would be to examine the goals of the group. Here, the three republics all desired secession, and therefore, they should target the state to achieve their goal. However, only one republic, Slovenia, solely targeted the state. Perhaps, the Slovenian government only targeted the state because there were no other groups present. Therefore, we see Croatia attacking both other groups, the Serbian Republic of Krajina, and the state, Yugoslavia. However, directly after declaring independence, both the Croatian and Bosnian governments were reactive, engaging in no or limited targeting directly after declaring independence.

When we examine within republic secessionist movements, similar discrepancies emerge. Both the Serbian Republic of Krajina in Croatia and the Republika Srpska and Herzeg-Bosnia in Bosnia and Herzegovina desired secession from their respective republics. We would then expect to see these groups target their respective republics. This is what we observe the Serbian Republic of Krajina do during the Croatian War. The Republika Srpska forces do also target the Bosnian government, even in regions that were not Serb majority. However, they also targeted Croatian military groups. Herzeg-Bosnia targeted the YNA and the Republika Srpska forces but worked alongside the Bosnian government in some cases. In others, Herzeg-Bosnian formations attacked their Bosnian allies while Bosnian Serb forces and the YNA watched from nearby.

Arguments about state capacity would point us to state strength and control of territory to explain when armed groups are likely to engage in conflict within or against the state. In 1991, Yugoslavia was at best unstable, and groups did mobilize against the state at this time. However, the state became increasingly unstable over the course of the conflicts, and the Bosnian government engaged in reactive targeting despite the state being at its weakest at that point. A similar argument can be made about state violence: when the state uses discriminate violence, it can demobilize potential rebel groups, while indiscriminate violence can encourage anti-state mobilization. Under Tito, nationalist political parties, organizations, and leaders were specifically targeted by the government. This particularly effected Croatian nationalist leaders. Arrests, self-censorship, and state-censorship were all common withing Yugoslavia up until the late 1980s. While a turn to nationalist politics may have started with Milosevic in Serbia and Kosovo, nationalist

political parties quickly became the norm. Most of the violence organized along ethnic lines during the dissolution of Yugoslavia, and Tito's policies against nationalism did align with a lack of large-scale ethnic violence, giving credence to the theory that state discriminate violence can prevent mobilization. This does not, however, explain why groups behaved differently once this discrimination ended.

Turning from explanations that focus on the state to those that focus on groups themselves provides more clarity for why groups behaved the way they did. It has been observed that ethnic majority-minority communities are likely sites of conflict, especially if ethnic minorities are excluded from national political structures. Whether on the republic or within republic level, groups did organize around ethnic identity. Ethnic groups did not, however, act as monoliths: there were salient political divides in the Croatian government, two Croatian rebel groups operating in Bosnia, a geographic and political split between Serbian groups in Central Croatia and Slavonia, and both Bosnian Muslims and Croatians operating together in theaters of the Bosnian War. Moreover, ethnic divisions tell us who is likely to mobilize and where, not who they will target once mobilized. All three republic governments attacked different targets. Moreover, the groups aiming for secession from secessionist republics also behaved differently, despite mobilizing along ethnic lines.

While most groups during the Yugoslav Wars organized along ethnic lines, the resources these groups had access to does provide insight on how groups behave. For example, Slovenia's GDP per capita in 1990 was three times the size of Yugoslavia's when aggregated, over five times that of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Macedonia, and twice that

of Serbia.[118] However, due to the economic recession and the federal government subsidizing lower performing republics, the buying power of the average income in Slovenia slipped from eighty to forty-five percent of Austria's. The anti-reformist and dogmatic policies of the center served to further exacerbate the recession. Alongside Croatia and Vojvodina, Slovenian economic capacity funded numerous government programs, including the majority of the YNA's budget.[119] This meant that Slovenia and Croatia had greater economic capabilities and monetary capital *vis-à-vis* Bosnia. When observing the behavior of the three republics, the two with greater access to resources were more aggressive in their targeting, while the republic with less access to resources, Bosnia, was reactive to being targeted by other parties. Moreover, the group that targeted the state did so while the state had its greatest access to resources.

Yet, this does not fully explain group behavior. Resources are important: they create a realm of possible actions for a group. A rebel group with no resources cannot provide for its fighters; it cannot arm them; it cannot fight in a sustained civil conflict. However, the Croatian government's strategy changed from reactive to mixed targeting in the first year of the conflict despite no change in available resources. If anything, it lost resources, namely territory, during this time frame. Nevertheless, the Croatian government increased the intensity of its operations. Some armed groups within the republics that had access to resources behaved like the Croatian government, like the Herzeg-Bosnian forces. Others, like Krajina in Croatia and Srpska in Bosnia and Herzegovina, targeted other rebel

[118] National Accounts Section. (2021).
[119] UN Data (2022).

groups, rather than the state or both the state and other groups like others who also had access to resources. Additionally, while both groups gained territory over the first months of the conflict, neither changed strategy.

Group Strategies in Yugoslavia: A Function of Organization and Capabilities

In the following sections, I first compare republic-level strategies of the Slovenian, Croatian, and Bosnian governments. Second, I explore within republic-level strategies of Krajina, Srpska, and Herzeg-Bosnia. Doing so keeps the overarching goal of the rebel groups is constant, first leaving Yugoslavia and second leaving a republic. Furthermore, the preparations and political infrastructure of the two sub-groups differ substantially. Republics, while their capacity varied, possessed administrative and political infrastructure that many within republic groups were attempting to build alongside violence. Krajina, Srpska, and Herzeg-Bosnia all received outside support from other actors, while the republic governments did not.

Borrowing from the importance derived from available resources and combining it with insights pulled from Paul Staniland's work on networks within rebel organizations, I propose that the inconsistent behavior observed in rebel groups when examining the material capabilities of a group can be accounted for when one considers a group's internal organizational structure. Staniland's work outlines a typology based off 1) horizontal ties between organizers and 2) vertical ties between organizers and the community. For my dissertation, I classify groups that possess both ties as consolidated and groups that are missing one or both as fragmented. I also propose a slightly differing view of resources: opposed to availability or objective numbers, the importance of resources a rebel group has

access to is relative to the other groups operating within a region. Two groups with similar capabilities to one another will behave differently in combat compared to when a group possesses lower capabilities *vis-à-vis* others.

Leaving Yugoslavia: Republic Strategies

Here, I will be exploring the differing strategies, organizational structure, and relative material capabilities of the Slovenian, Croatian, and Bosnian governments. The Slovenian government targeted the state in the Seven-Days War, the Croatian government engaged in mixed targeting during the Croatian War, and the Bosnian government engaged in reactive targeting during the Bosnian War.

The dissolution of Yugoslavia was not sudden; it was a long, drawn-out, heavily negotiated affair. Slovenian and Croatian leaders spent much of 1989 and 1990 attempting to negotiate either the creation of a confederation or a peaceful transition to independence. Once dissolution became inevitable, it did not occur all at once. The Republics differed on what they desired: Serbia and Montenegro desired greater centralization, Slovenia and Croatia desired autonomy or independence, and Bosnia and Herzegovina and Macedonia were trapped in the middle.

Though Slovenia and Croatia coordinated with one another before the Ten-Day War, the Croatian government did not engage federal forces when these forces traveled through Croatia to Slovenia. Likewise, following the Seven-Days War, the Slovenian government abstained from engagement in Croatia. The Croatian government, conversely, was involved in the fighting in Bosnia and Herzegovina, providing aid to Herzeg-Bosnia.

The governments of these republics aimed to secede from Yugoslavia, and they were willing to use military force to do so. However, all republics were not created equal: Slovenia was perhaps the most prepared militarily and politically for independence. Croatia was politically prepared, but Bosnia and Herzegovina was not prepared in either category. Ostensibly, these governments had similar goals and similar structures. Slovenia and Croatia, particularly, shared many pre-war traits and coordinated their actions prior to exit. Yet, when it came to waging war, these three groups behaved very differently.

The Slovenian government faced two major challenges: 1) coordinating domestic actors, and 2) building military capacity to offset the YNA's weaponry advantages without the federal government identifying and halting their efforts. The two goals were accomplished together, with the YNA's efforts to demobilize and disarm the Slovenian forces serving to unify various elements within the Slovenian government and revel those within the republic whose loyalty was to the federal government over Slovenia. The Slovenian government then moved to preempt YNA action in June, declaring independence on June 25th, despite the deadline being June 26th. The TO seized key facilities, namely border posts, whose customs revenues generated 40 percent of the federal budget.[120] This forced the YNA to be the first to use violence to root out the Slovenian TO, making the YNA appear to be the aggressor to international observers.

[120] Office of Russian and European Analysis (2002)., 58-9.

Table 5.2: Organizational Structure and Material Capabilities in Group Targeting on the Republic Level

	Consolidated	Fragmented
High Capabilities	Targets the state ***Slovenian government***[121]	Targets other groups
Low Capabilities	Mixed targeting **Croatian Government (September 1991)**	No targeting/Reactive targeting **Croatian Government (June 1991) Bosnian Government**

[121] The first violence took place on June 27th, when one of the three armored columns the YNA moved from Croatia into Slovenia encountered the 2nd Regional Command of the Slovenian TO at 4 o'clock in the morning.[121] After exchanging fire and engaging in protracted negotiations, the YNA's column was allowed to proceed, only to be blocked again near Medvedjek by the 52nd TO Brigade, 174th TO Antidiversionary Unit, and several squads of Slovenian Special Forces. Another column moved to take the Brnik Airport; however, YNA Major General Marjan Vidmar, a resident of Slovenia and ethnic Slovene, was still at YNA headquarters and informed Jansa where the column was headed. The Slovenian TO was, therefore, able to organize its defenses prior to the YNA's arrival. Despite these setbacks, the YNA had still accomplished its primary mission of regaining control of border crossing by the end of June 27th, even capturing some of the new control points along the Slovene-Croatian border. Many clashes in the first days of the conflict occurred along the Slovene border with Italy and Austria and around the capital.[121] In fact, many conscripts were initially told that they were defending Yugoslavia from an invasion from Italy, but this lie did not hold as the YNA accomplished its initial objectives.

After these early successes, though, the YNA lost its momentum. When combined with the still ethnically diverse YNA conscripts and the psychological impact of engaging in violence against fellow Yugoslav citizens, some of which that were even Slovene co-ethnics, there were high rates of surrender and defection among YNA forces in Slovenia after the first day of fighting.[121] While Slovenia is often seen as the underdog in this conflict, its focus on its disadvantages *vis-à-vis* the YNA masks the fact that the Slovenian TO had several advantages when combating the YNA. Also, unlike the YNA, the Slovenian TO and the Slovenian government were prepared to fight a long, protracted, asymmetrical war that played to it strengths. For all leaders spoke about a blitzkrieg in Slovenia and Slovenia being subdued and returned to Yugoslavia, the YNA did not commit the resources necessary to make such a victory possible against an opponent prepared for this very plan.

Organizational Structure

I argue that organizational structure informs us of who groups are likely to view as their primary threat, with consolidated groups viewing the state as such and fragmented groups viewing other armed groups as their primary threat. Identifying group structure can be difficult: rebel groups rarely make their internal structures public. Fragmented groups, especially, are hard to identify in archival documents at all. Instead of being named, these groups are "gangs," "criminals," or "self-defense formations." In many conflicts, they are identified by their ethnic identity or location, but little else.

Consolidated groups, however, typically have identified leadership, and that leadership usually has control over a wider territorial region. These groups are named and tend to have administrative structures and explicit designs to govern – either the state or a subnational unit. Subnational governments, interim administrations, opposition governing bodies are indicative of a consolidated group structure. This must be considered in conjunction with leadership claims of control, though, to determine if this structure is truly consolidated or more fragmented.

This influences rebel groups in several ways. First, offshoot groups are a problem for fragmented groups. Whether militias, paramilitary organizations, or local defense organizations, these sub-groups make it more difficult for groups enact their political goals. For example, a fragmented organization desiring secession from the state may not attack the state due to its inability to control the various sub-groups nominally under its banner. Second, either due to the presence of its own offshoot groups, the presence of other groups, or its own lack of territorial control, fragmented groups have an interest in clearing the

field, so to speak. Third, the structure of a consolidated group more closely resembles that of the state, even when a group has low relative material capabilities. Moreover, a consolidated political and military structure enables these groups to focus on their primary goal for mobilization. Both secession and capturing the center necessitate overcoming the state's control either of a portion or whole of its territory. Low capabilities mean that a group may have to be more opportunistic in its targeting, focusing on biding time and building capabilities, but this is a function of material elements not structure.

As discussed in Chapter 2, fragmented organizational structures are not necessarily bad for a group. They may not be going after their primary goal, but the decentralized structure can enable groups to survive longer, engage in widespread operations without necessarily having territorial control, and stave off common state strategies against rebel groups, like the elimination of key leadership figures. A consolidated Bosnian government, for instance, may not have survived long in the Bosnian War if it had not incorporated local militias, criminal organizations, and the Patriotic League's formations. The VRS's campaign in Sarajevo, for instance, was not bogged down by the Bosnian TO, but by criminal organizations forcing the VRS into an extended urban warfare campaign.

Of the three republics, Slovenia was the most consolidated when it declared independence. When Slovenia declared its independence on June 25th, 1991, the republic had a new constitution and had held its first multiparty elections since World War II in April 1990. The winning coalition, DEMOS, had ousted the LCY.[122] For the Croatian and Bosnian governments, preparations proceeded less smoothly. Though the Croatian

[122] Government Communications Office (2012).

government planned for independence alongside its Slovenian counterpart, the structure of its political and military leadership was less consolidated at the start. As I will discuss later, both also possessed low relative material capabilities compared to other groups and the YNA.

Both the Croatian and Bosnian governments began as reactive groups, and Bosnia and Herzegovina remained so throughout the onset of the Bosnian War. When Croatia declared independence, its organizational structure was fragmented, but it consolidated between June and October 1991. However, its relative material capabilities remained low. In this time, targeting shifted as well, moving from being reactive to mixed targeting. Of the three, the Bosnian government had the lowest administrative capacity. Against the Army of the Republika Srpska (VRS) and experienced paramilitary groups moving from the fighting in Croatia to Bosnia, many Muslim groups were fighting for mere survival. Particularly in the Drina Valley, defenders were a mixture of Patriotic League forces,[123] police, and local people hastily organized into a regional defense force.

Slovenia was the most ethnically homogenous in the country, and it was the most economically productive. Ethnic Slovenes comprised 88.3 percent of the population according to the 1991 census.[124] Additionally, the lack of a large Serbian minority meant that the republic was not of critical concern for Milosevic's new Yugoslavia. Milosevic was willing to let Slovenia go; the army was not. This differed starkly from both Croatia and Bosnia, which both had large Serbian populations. Milosevic's designs for "Greater

[123] The Patriotic League is the military arm of the Party of Democratic Action (SDA), the Muslim-majority political party.
[124] Yugoslav Government (1991).

Serbia" included large swaths of both Croatia and Bosnia, stretching from the Drina Valley in southeastern Bosnia to parts of Dalmatia and Central Croatia along the Croatian-Bosnian border to parts of Slavonia in eastern Croatia near the Serb border.[125] Tudjman, the president of Croatia, also had designs for territorial acquisition, namely the Croatian-majority regions of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The primary point of internal contention in Slovenia stemmed from its president's, Milan Kucan, and Defense Minister's, Janez Jansa, disagreement over the nature of Slovenian preparations[126]. Kucan, wary of further antagonizing the YNA and Yugoslav government, advocated for a more cautious approach, while Jansa argued that the Slovenian TO needed to be assertive in its preparation for conflict. Additionally, both worried about international opinion, since being viewed as the initiator of violence meant that Slovenia was less likely to receive international recognition. This generated pushback to Jansa's more radical calls for preparations.

Kucan, however, deferred to Jansa in military matters. For example, when the YNA moved to confiscate the Slovenian TO's weaponry, Kucan was informed, and he also believed the YNA officers that this confiscation was an initiative to replace outdated weaponry. Jansa, who had assumed office only the day prior, ordered municipality leaders not to hand over weapons. Kucan did not move to cancel this order, and due to Jansa and his staff's quick actions, the YNA was only able to confiscate about 60 percent of the Slovenian TO's weaponry.[127] To offset the losses, Jansa began to build the Slovenian TO

[125] Radio Belgrade (1 July 1991).
[126] Belgrade Domestic Service (14 February1991).
[127] Jansa (1994).

and Interior Ministry's special police into a secret army with Kucan's reluctant approval using the "Maneuvering Structure of the National Defense" (MSND) as legal cover.[128]

Crucially, the Slovenian TO received an unexpected boon in the YNA's weapon's confiscation program. Leaders in Ljubljana were able to identify which actors were loyal to Slovenia and which were loyal to the YNA well before violence started by determining who complied with the confiscation program and who did not. Disloyal actors could then be rooted out or, at the very least, not trusted with the secret plotting for independence and potential war. In this way, Ljubljana won a key victory in their information war against the federal government before actual fighting began. This was not something that occurred in either Croatia or Bosnia and Herzegovina, and it enabled Jansa to proceed with building up the Slovenian TO without the YNA knowing the details of its movements, tactics, or armament acquisitions.

In Croatia, there was a similar division between its president, Franjo Tudjman, and defense minister, Martin Spegelj. Spegelij, like Jansa, advocated for decisive and preemptive action against the YNA, and he believed that blockading YNA barracks would cause YNA conscripts to defect and the YNA presence in Croatia to disintegrate.[129] Spegelj advocated for Croatian intervention on the side of Slovenia during the Ten-Day War; however, Tudjman allowed YNA forces to move through Croatian territory and rejected calls for attacking the YNA for working with Croatian Serbs. Knowing their lack of parity

[128] This was a military doctrine that enabled the republics to build, train, and supply the republics' TO forces. This doctrine provided legal cover for the Slovenian effort to acquire armaments and recruit new troops. Horncastle (2013). Additionally, in March, the Slovenian TO was moved to being under republic control opposed to under the YNA. (Tanjug 20 March 1991).
[129] Office of Russian and European Analysis (2002).

with Yugoslav forces, Tudjman wanted to internationalize the conflict before engaging with the YNA. He wished for the European Council or the United States to recognize an independent Croatia first, which would put pressure on Belgrade to halt its aggression against the Croatian government. To express his opposition, Spegelj resigned his post as Minister of Defense due to his disagreements with Tudjman in July of 1991, ending the rivalry that divided the executive body of the Croatian government.

Secondly, the pre-independence Croatian TO did not evolve as a singular entity into a new military force, and the Croatia government did not field a single military arm. Croatian forces were split into two armed forces: Ministry of Internal Affairs (MUP) and the National Guard Corps (ZNG). There was poor coordination between the MUP and ZNG, leading to competition between the two over resources, particularly over the limited armaments available. There was no robust command and control structure to direct combat operations in the field, and the absence of strong regional commands meant that leaders could not control Zagreb's ill-disciplined and inadequately trained troops.[130] Initially, the Croatian government was dependent on the MUP, as it was the only government institution with armaments. In the lead-up to the conflict, the MUP Special Police transformed into four all-professional brigades and doubled in size.[131] However, power shifted from the MUP to the ZNG, with the ZNG transitioning into the Croatian National Army/Hrvatska Vojska (HV). In the later months of 1991, the ZNG played an increasingly larger role,

[130] Office of Russian and European Analysis (2002).
[131] Office of Russian and European Analysis (2002)., Baker (2015).

replacing the MUP as Croatia's military arm. This shift coincided both Spegelj's exit from office and Tudjman's consolidation of control over the Croatian government.

Turning to the Bosnian government, its actions were predominately reactive to the actions taken by Bosnian Serb and Bosnian Croatian forces. Beyond going against the founding, multiethnic ideology of the Bosnian state, Bosnian leaders were not prepared to fight other rebel groups, much less the YNA. Moreover, unlike its Croatian counterparts, the Bosnian government remained reactive. Fractionalized organizational structure stemmed from two facets: first, limited power projection capabilities and weak command and control left defense in the hands of civilians and criminal organizations and second, the Bosnian government's reliance on aid from the Croatian government

The first source of fractionalization stemmed from the government's limited power projection capabilities. In Sarajevo, the Patriotic League and militia groups were more engaged in direct fighting. However, in addition to the formally organized units of the Patriotic League, some of the city's defenders were outright criminal gangs led by outlaw "chieftains," like Juka Prazina, Musan "Caco" Topalovic, and Ramiz "Celo" Delalic. These groups often extorted the civilians they defended, becoming the law onto themselves, but they were also some of the city's best armed defenders.[132]

As one moved out from the capital, however, the ability of the state to dictate policy rapidly dropped off. The Patriotic League, unable to defend the population, turned to locals for defense. These individuals lacked formal training, but due to the terrain and local knowledge, they were sufficient to engage in asymmetric warfare against Bosnian Serb

[132] Office of Russian and European Analysis (2002).

units. The defense of towns, especially, at the start of the war, was often left to the townspeople themselves and the local law enforcement.

A second issue stemmed from the fact that the Bosnian government was the only major party in the Bosnian War without a dedicated ally. The Bosnian President, Izetbegovic, stated that choosing between Milosevic and Tudjman was like choosing between leukemia and a brain tumor.[133] The actions of the YNA and Bosnian Serb forces, though, forged an alliance between the Bosnian government and Croatian forces – a shared enemy creating temporary and unstable coalition. Croatian separatist elements made this relationship untenable. Due to its deficit in capacity, the Bosnian government was still reliant on the Croatian government, and thus on Croatian forces within Bosnia and Herzegovina, for supplies and aid in the early stages of the war. Bosnian forces, especially those engaged in Bihac, were almost entirely reliant on Zagreb for supply lines to stay in the war, and this shifted priorities for the Bosnian government. The Croatian government, though, was predominately concerned with the survival of ethnic Croatian forces, namely the HVO.

Despite the cooperation, there lacked a unified command. Izetbegovic was the nominal head of Bosnia and Herzegovina, but Croatian forces, whether integrated into the Patriotic League or not, answered to Mate Boban, who worked closely with Tudjman. Boban aimed to create a separate state called the Croatian Community of Herzeg-Bosna, an all-Croatian, HDZ-dominated, one-party state. While Izetbegovic and other Bosnian leaders were diametrically opposed to the idea of having a *de facto* statelet within Bosnia,

[133] Malcom (1996).

the Bosnian government and the Patriotic League were too focused on their struggle against Bosnian Serb forces and too dependent on Croatia to wage this war to voice their dissent.

Relative Material Capabilities

When discussing possible explanations for group behavior, available resources did align with what was observed in some groups, but not in all. Resources a rebel group can use for its own campaign mean that that group can do more: they have more forces to mobilize and more weaponry and munitions to commit to operations. Fewer resources mean that an armed group must be more careful and more opportunistic in their targeting. First, there are fewer fights that they could win through superior numbers, in either people or armaments. Second, losses have the potential to be more devastating to a group with low capabilities that miscalculated or over-committed. In some cases, a lack of resources mean that some groups mobilize but do not attack others. Absolute resources, I argue, matter less than relative resources: how much agency resources provide depends upon the other groups operating in a conflict. For example, the civil war in Afghanistan looks very different depending on if there is an international party involved or not. Be this the Soviet Union or the United States, groups behave differently when there is a more powerful actor involved. With American backing, for instance, the Islamic Republic had high relative material capabilities *vis-à-vis* the Taliban. However, when the US military began withdrawing from the country, this shifted from high to symmetric to low. As a result, both the strategies and targeting patterns of the Islamic Republic and the Taliban shifted.

I argue that resources enable groups to focus on a single type of target, whichever they view as their primary threat due to their organizational structure. A consolidated group

with high or symmetric relative material capabilities, therefore, is likely to target the state. A fragmented group with high or symmetric capabilities, conversely, will likely target other rebel groups. Low relative material capabilities give actors less options. While all organizations and groups desire survival, the lack of agency makes this groups' primary goal when they have low relative material capabilities. Consolidated groups, though, have an underlying structure that can direct their more minimal resources, making it likely that they will engage in mixed targeting. They are likely to target less defended locations, exposed units, and the like to build capabilities. However, fragmented groups lack this ability to direct resources. These groups are likely to be reactive, responding to being attacked, but unlikely to initiate violence themselves.

In Yugoslavia, Slovenia possessed symmetric material capabilities, while both Croatia and Bosnia possessed low capabilities. In conjunction with their organizational structure, we then observe that these three groups engage in behavior consistent with my theory. Slovenia targeted the state, and the other two began by engaging in reactive targeting. Additionally, the Croatian government changed from reactive to mixed targeting as its organizational structure consolidated.

In Slovenia, the Slovenian government had symmetric capabilities to the YNA, though this symmetry was not to the YNA as a military enterprise but to the inadequate forces the YNA committed to the conflict. Prior to June 1991, the YNA worried about the Slovenian Territorial Defense Force (the Slovenian TO) transitioning into an independent Slovenian Army. Many YNA-trained officers and enlisted members moved to the Slovenian TO, and ethnic Slovenes were poorly represented in the YNA's ranks. The actual

YNA force that was sent into Slovenia was rather small. The YNA could have fielded about 60,000 troops, double the Slovenian forces, but YNA leadership worried about committing too many forces to Slovenia and creating an opportunity for Croatia to push for independence.[134] This 60,000 required the YNA to deploy five brigades, but General Kadijevic chose to send portions of four brigades and one air defense regiment. Additionally, the 1st Guards Mechanized Division was held in reserve near the Serbian-Croatian border. It was not meant to engage in the Slovenian conflict, instead it was preparing for a conflict in Croatia. In actuality, the YNA fielded about 3,000 troops in Slovenia – one tenth the size of the Slovenian force.

Slovenian forces were able to re-acquire confiscated weapons, as the YNA did not revoke Slovenian TO officers' and enlisted personnel's authorization to YNA storage sites. According to Jansa's personal memoir, "the TO drove away automatic rifles, hand-held mortars, pistols, ammunition, and in some cases, even rocket launchers, every day, under various guises," including, but not limited to, smuggling out weapons wrapped in sleeping bags.[135] Jansa's additional efforts saw the acquisition of a number of antitank rocket launchers in December and a reported 5,000 automatic rifles, 5 million rounds of ammunition, 1,000 antitank weapons, and a few dozen SA-7 antiaircraft missiles on June 21, 1991, a mere six days before fighting would begin.[136] This last arms shipment arrived on June 25th. Dubbed Operation BOR, the weaponry included increased the Slovenian antitank combat capabilities by more than 100 percent.[137] As the YNA's preferred mode of

[134] Office of Russian and European Analysis (2002).
[135] Jansa (1994).
[136] Office of Russian and European Analysis (2002)., 54
[137] Jansa (1994).

combat relied on tanks, this was especially critical to Slovenia's warfighting capacity – and it was a capacity Slovenia lacked until just before combat operations began.

Much like in Slovenia, the YNA was concerned about the Croatian TO, moving to seize armaments from its barracks and using them against the YNA and Krajina forces.[138] There were two major differences between this process in Slovenia and in Croatia. Firstly, this disarmament occurred unequally in Croatia. The YNA aimed to seize all arms in Slovenia, but the YNA largely left Croatian municipalities with Serb majorities alone.[139] Secondly, the YNA was far more successful in seizing arms in Croatia than in Slovenia, meaning that the Croatian forces had far more ground to make up they would be symmetrical to other parties in the conflict. Additionally, this gave Krajina formations greater access to weaponry than the Croatian government, thereby lending to Krajina's relative material capabilities at the cost of the Croatian government's.

The Croatian ZNG and MUP forces had training, but poor leadership and command and control structures meant that the two struggled to coordinate their operations effectively. Poor staff work kept the ZNG from attempting many large-scale offensives that required high degrees of planning and execution.[140] Critically for the development of the Croatian army, they lacked the ability to expand their capacity in secret, and their intelligence apparatus was quickly infiltrated by the YNA.[141] Additionally, weapons

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[138] Thomas and Mikulan (2006).
[139] Baker (2015).
[140] Office of Russian and European Analysis (2002).
[141] Spegelj asked a junior YNA officer, Captain Vladimir Jager, to inform him on the movements and decisions of the YNA. Jager then flipped and informed on Spegelj to the YNA, recording his conversations with Spegelj and Spegelj's various black-market arms dealings. The YNA would publish these under the title of the *Spegelj Tapes*, and the YNA went on to attempt to prosecute Spegelj. It further hampered Croatian efforts to acquire armaments and stressed the already strained relationship between Spegelj and

distribution was contentious between the MUP and ZNG. The lack of clear communication lines and high degrees of officer coordination prevented the two forces from engaging in more complicated maneuvers that could have offset the Croatian Serb and YNA weaponry advantages. These improved over time, but for much of the early stages of this conflict, the Croatian government was losing ground to the YNA and Serbian Autonomous Oblast (SAO) Krajina forces and militias. Once again, this change came not from major changes in its relative capabilities. It came from changes to the organizational structure of the Croatian government as the divisions between the MUP and ZNG resolved, and power consolidated around Tudjman.

The Croatian government's capabilities were influenced by the actions of the YNA itself. When the YNA moved to explicitly to support Krajina, there was a wholesale refusal of many reservists to respond, with many deserting their posts. The lack of reservists meant that many formations earmarked for the offensive against Croatia were unable to field them. In the offensive planned for Eastern Slavonia, for instance, the YNA offensive became bogged down in their assault on Vukovar, a city on the border between Croatia and Serbia. This was an early symbolic victory for Zagreb, and many saw this as a sign of the failure of the federal cause to hold Yugoslavia together. The failure of YNA attacks on Croatian targets had the additional benefit of building the Croatian government's material capabilities via weaponry and equipment confiscated from the YNA.

Tudjman. Spegelj's exit from office was a further blow to these efforts to acquire armaments, and when paired with the coordination problems between the MUP and ZNG, Croatian forces remained primarily reactive in the early stages of their fight against Serb separatists and the YNA.

Like the Croatian government, the Bosnian government fought its war for independence with low relative material capabilities. Throughout the war, Bosnian forces were plagued by low recruitment numbers, a lack of heavy weapons, limited ammunitions, and poor power projection capabilities.[142] Initially, there were between 10,000-15,000 armed personnel with few heavy weapons and limited ammunition in Sarajevo. These defenders encompassed much of the former Sarajevo TO and units from Muslim-majority municipalities, alongside Muslim deserters from the YNA barracks in the city. Additionally, there were several thousand Patriotic League members organized, though these were not fully armed units.

However, the consistent problem facing the Bosnian Government was arming its fighters. The main obstacle to the procurement of arms did not come from the Yugoslav government – it came from the United Nations. Even after Slovenia, Croatia, Macedonia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina were recognized by the UN as independent states, UN Resolution 713, which applied an arms embargo to the region, remained in effect for the government entities. As a result, the Patriotic League struggled to achieve parity with the VRS, especially since the embargo was applied most stringently to the import of heavy weaponry, the League's critical deficiency. A combination of the UN embargo, shortages of time and money, the misappropriation of funds, and the inflationary spiral driving up the price of arms and munitions, the Bosnian government was not able to adequately arm is nascent army before the start of violence in April 1992. Paired with its fragmented

[142] For instance, after seizing a YNA weapons depot and acquiring some 800 90-mm antitank rockets but no rocket launchers, Colonel Sulejman Vranj had to be flown from Sarajevo to Visoko to pick up rocket launchers. Not believing he would make it back to Sarajevo alive, he was given a single rocket launcher, which was then driven to critical locations in the city to be used. Fejzic, Fahira (15 May 1996).

organizational structure, the Bosnian government did not possess the capacity necessary to acquire armaments, distribute those armaments, or organize its forces across its territory into a cohesive strategy. The Bosnian government and the Patriotic League were still involved in fighting, but the survival of the Bosnian government as a political and military entity relied on its use of civilian self-armed militias, guerrilla warfare tactics, and avoiding direct confrontation at the onset of fighting.

Leaving the Republic: Within Republic Strategies

In this section, I will be examining Krajina, Srpska, and Herzeg-Bosnia. These three groups, like the republics, desired secession, but this desire was for secession from republics rather than Yugoslavia itself. Both Krajina and Srpska aimed to secede from Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina respectively and to join with Milosevic's Serbia. Herzeg-Bosnia, conversely, desired to secede from Bosnia and Herzegovina to join Tudjman's Croatia.

Table 5.3: Organizational Structure and Material Capabilities in Group Targeting on the Within Republic Level

	Consolidated	**Fragmented**
High Capabilities	Targets the state	Targets other groups ***Serbian Republic of Krajina*** ***Republika Srpska***
Low Capabilities	Mixed targeting ***Herzeg-Bosnia***	No targeting/Reactive targeting

Krajina possessed a fragmented organizational structure; however, due to support from the YNA and Milosevic, they had high material capabilities compared to the Croatian

government. As a result, we observe the Krajina forces targeting other rebel groups during the Croatian War for Independence. Throughout the Summer of 1991, a pattern would emerge: Serb forces would move to take control of Serb-majority cities and Croatian MUP and ZNG outposts, and once violence erupted, the YNA would move in to pacify the two sides. This pacification locked in Serb territorial gains by preventing the MUP and ZNG from forcibly retaking territory, allowing Serb forces to seize and consolidate their control over the borders of SAO Krajina.

Srpska, like Krajina, was fragmented and possessed high relative material capabilities due to support from the YNA and the Serbian government. As a result, Srpska forces targeted other rebel groups during the conflict. After Izetbegovic's announcement of Bosnia's intent to separate from Yugoslavia, Srpska's President, Radovan Karadzic, activated his own Municipal Crisis Headquarters reserve police units and TO forces.[143] The Army of the Republika Srpska (VRS) was the primary aggressor against the Bosnian government and Muslims in the Drina Valley, the Bihac Pocket, and Sarajevo.[144] Fighting in Posavina occurred primarily between the VRS and Croatian armed groups, and fighting in Jajce occurred between the VRS and a Bosnian Muslim-Croatian coalition. In these conflicts, the VRS enjoyed the support of the YNA.

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[143] Office of Russian and European Analysis (2002).

[144] Bosnian Serb violence towards Muslims was especially brutal, even compared to the violence seen between other ethnicities. Muslim was a newer ethnic category in Yugoslavia, only being introduced as an ethnic identity in 1963, and the introduction of "Muslim" as a category reduced the number of individuals identifying as 'Yugoslav' in subsequent censuses. Throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bosnian Serb forces, largely collaborating with the YNA, attempting to restructure the ethnic demographics to reflect an ethnically 'pure' Serbian ministate. There were elements of genocide and ethnic cleansing in Croatia: in its history, in ethnic enclaves trapped behind new borders. These acts were amplified in the Bosnian War, with Bosnian Muslims being the primary victims. Savezni Zavod Za Statistiku (1974). Savezni Zavod Za Statistiku (1992). Savezni Zavod Za Statistiku. (1991). Savezni Zavod Za Statistiku. (1998).

The development of Bosnian Croatian groups was shaped by the events of the Croatian War and the concurrent political developments in Croatia. Some Bosnian Croatians had crossed the border into Croatia to serve in the nascent Croatian armed forces, and they played a prominent role in many elite Croatian units. Their knowledge was then applied to their fighting in the Bosnian War. Herzeg-Bosnia's features, though, are the inverse of Krajina and Srpska: its material capabilities were low *vis-à-vis* other actors in the Bosnian War, but its structure was consolidated. Additionally, Herzeg-Bosnia forces targeted both the state and other groups, attacking the YNA, the VRS, and the Patriotic League.

Organizational Structure

Krajina and Srpska were fragmented in structure, while Herzeg-Bosnia was consolidated. Krajina and Srpska were fragmented because: 1) the territory was non-contiguous; 2) defense relied on numerous, loosely organized militia groups; and 3) the division between the goals of the Croatian and Bosnian Serb forces and their benefactors: the YNA and the Serb Security forces. Herzeg-Bosnia, conversely, was consolidated, eliminating a competing Croatian military organization and cooperating with the HDZ in Croatia.

First, the Serb-majority regions were concentrated along borders, namely Croatia's border with Bosnia and Herzegovina and Bosnia's border with Serbia. The territory of Krajina and Srpska were not contiguous. Croatia's territory along the Bosnian border was split between Central Croatian and Dalmatia, and these two regions were separated from

the Serbian-majority municipalities in Eastern Slavonia, near the Serbian border.[145] This did limit their ability to organize a cohesive militia force on their own, as their territory was segmented. Krajina had a political and military structure, with Milan Babic as the president and Mile Mrksic as the Commander and Chief of the Military of Serbian Krajina (SVK). However, Goran Hadzic was a second president for the Serbian population in Croatia, specifically for the Serb population in Eastern Slavonia along the Serbian border. Fighting was also split between these two locations. The most intense fighting occurred in Vukovar, in Eastern Slavonia, and Dubrovnik, in Southern Dalmatia. Likewise, in Bosnia and Herzegovina, VRS forces were primarily concentrated in the Drina Valley[146] in Northeastern Bosnia but fighting also occurred in Posavina[147] and Jajce.[148] The Drina

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[145] Dalmatia is the region of Croatia that curves around Bosnia and Herzegovina along the Adriatic Sea.

[146] Fighting first began in the Drina Valley. In the first week of April 1992, Bosnian Serb forces attacked a series of towns: Bijeljina, Zvornik, Visegrad, and Foca. Three of the four are located on the Bosnian border with Serbia, while the fourth, Foca, is located on near the Bosnian border with Montenegro. Fighting in Bijeljina, a multiethnic town in the Northeast corner of Bosnia, started before the war officially began on April 6th. Located less than 15 kilometers from the Serbian border and at the junction of two important roads, controlling the town was deemed to be strategic necessity for the Bosnian Serbs. Between 1991 and 1992, the Serb Democratic Party (SDS) made substantial efforts to Serbianize the town's police force. On March 31st, 1992, local Serbs attacked a Muslim-frequented coffee shop to justify the intervention of Serbian TO forces. It worked, and on April 1st, Bosnian Serb TO and volunteer troops surrounded the town. Patriotic League members were routed before they could mount a sufficient defense, and the police executed Muslim leaders in the streets of Bijeljina.

[147] The first clashes occurred in Bosanski Brod in early March when mixed Croat and Muslim HVO units,[147] supplied by the Croatian Army, stopped a Serb takeover of the town. In late April and Early May, Croatian HV troops reinforced the Bosnian HVO formations to push Bosnian Serb TO forces, and their YNA supporters, out of Bosanski Brod entirely. HVO troops went on to push Bosnian Serb forces out of Modrica and Derventia, severing the east-west route running between Serb-controlled Bosanska Krajina and Serbia proper. As a result, the Serb forces in this region could not be supplied. This blow was partially mitigated by Serb control of Doboj, Bosanski Samac-Pelagicevo, and Brcko, which provided enabled the VRS 1st Krajina Corps under General Momir Talic to move in forces and prepare major counteroffensive. In July, the VRS took Odzak and Derventa-Bosanski Brod in a three-pronged attack. The VRS quickly retook Derventia on July 5th, and the VRS drove HV/HVO forces driven out of strong positions near Odzak, seizing Odzak on 12 July. They reached the Sava River on July 14th. VRS operations against HVO forces in Bosanski Brod began on September 27th, but Serb forces only made small gains until October 4th when the VRS surprisingly broke through HV/HVO lines.

[148] Though there were Muslims in the HVO fighting in Posavina, this was an exception rather than the rule for HVO membership, and there were no Bosnian TO or Patriotic League forces present in the Posavina region. July-November of 1992, the VRS deployed a force of seven to eight thousand troops from the 30th

Valley is a large territory, but its northern tip is near Posavina. The Posavina Canton, however, was comprised of two noncontiguous pockets along the Bosnian border with Croatia, separated from the rest of Bosnia by Western portion of the Serb Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Moreover, Jajce and Sarajevo are in the interior, not along the Serbian border.

Second, the structure of the Serb forces in Croatia was segmented. Utilizing the State Security Service (SDB), Milosevic aided in the organization a police force and local village guards, along with an elite combat unit that could move between sectors.[149] Local militia forces were rechristened the SAO Krajina Territorial Defense Force (TO), and similar TO militias then organized in the SAOs of Western Slavonia and Eastern Slavonia-Baranja-Western Syrmia. Eastern Slavonia would also develop its own elite force, the Serbian Volunteer Guard, or Arkan's Tigers, which would fight both in the Croatian War and later in the Bosnian War.

Infantry Division of the 1st Krajina Corps to Jajce, a town in central Bosnia to eliminate the Croat-Muslim groups operating there that threatened Serb lines of communications of Serb-controlled Western Bosnia. As elsewhere in Bosnia, the VRS had the clear advantage in heavy weaponry, fielding both tanks and field artillery, and in its command and control and organization. A combined HVO and Bosnian TO force fielded 5,500 highly motivated troops occupying well-fortified positions in difficult terrain for the VRS to traverse. The HVO and Bosnian TO forces, however, lacked a unified command structure, and squabbles between the two would weaken the defenses around Jajce overall. The Serb campaign began in earnest in mid-August with a second push occurring in early to mid-September. VRS forces took control of much of the land to the West of Jajce, followed by the Southwest. An HVO-Bosnian TO counterattack failed to gain ground, and on October 9th, Bosnian Croat forces signed a separate cease-fire with the Serbs in exchange for a pledge to provide electricity from a local power plant. The Muslim forces were not party to these discussions. On October 21st, Croat and Muslim groups opened fire on one another, and four days later the VRS took advantage of the in-fighting for their final push on Jajce. While HVO and TO forces fought well, despite their inter-group conflicts, Bosnian Serb forces took the city on October 29th. Unlike in Bosanski Brod, there is no evidence to suggest that Jajce was lost due to a deal between Croat and Serb leaders. Once again, VRS's superior firepower, organization and planning garnered them a victory against Croatian and Muslim forces.

[149] Office of Russian and European Analysis (2002)., 85.

Volunteer and unincorporated units played a role in VRS operations, as well. For example, both the Arkan's Tigers and the White Eagles, Serbian volunteer units that had fought in Croatia, fought alongside the VRS in the Drina Valley. Arkan's Tigers, in particular, became notorious within Bosnia and Herzegovina and the international community for their genocidal acts against Bosnian Muslims and Croatians during the fighting in the Drina Valley. Republika Srpska's political leadership and the YNA moved in to theoretically "keep the peace" and disband irregular formations. However, Arkan's Tigers continued their "reign of terror" despite the YNA's effort.

Third, the goals of the YNA deviated from those of the Krajina forces. This is important, because Croatian Serbs relied on the YNA to have an edge over Croatian military forces in the conflict. On one hand, the Serbian Republic of Krajina desired secession from the Croatian Republic and incorporation into Serbia. The YNA, on the other hand, desired for all of Croatia to remain intact and to remain part of Yugoslavia. As a result, the YNA did not announce its support for Croatian Serbs; instead, the YNA's initial goal was to act as a peacekeeping force.

This did still aid Serbian forces. While it is unclear if their peacekeeping attempts were an intentional effort to allow Croatian Serbs to hold territory, YNA forces usually moved in to separate the two sides after Krajina forces had secured territory. The result enabled Croatian Serbs to occupy most of their objectives by the end of the Summer 1991, but Krajina formations lacked outright support at the start. It was clear, however, that the

YNA's sympathies were with ethnic Serbs, especially after the Serbianization of the YNA following the Ten-Day War.[150]

Simultaneous to the YNA-Krajina divergence in goals, there was a divergence between the YNA and Milosevic. Borisav Jovic and Milosevic advocated for the YNA to pull back and solely focus on defending the Serb regions of Croatia, but the YNA refused.[151] Both Milosevic and Jovic did not believe that the military would be able to dislodge the secessionist governments in either Slovenia or Croatia. In this, they were correct – the YNA's position steadily weakened in Croatia as the Croatian government strengthened.

The tensions between Srpska and the YNA in Bosnia were different from those observed in Croatia. When Bosnia and Herzegovina declared its independence, the YNA "left" the new country. In actuality, it folded its officer corps and military hardware into the Republika Srpska forces. Srpska formations focused primarily on Muslim targets in the Drina Valley; however, the YNA's primary concern in the conflict was Croatian forces, namely the HVO and elements of the HV that had crossed into Bosnia from Croatia. The Serbian State Security Forces (SDB) were also supplying the VRS. This produced competing objectives: VRS military leaders answered to Milosevic over the political leadership of Srpska. Milosevic's plan called for parts of Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina to be incorporated into Serbia, while Tudjman's plan called for parts of Bosnia and Herzegovina to be incorporated into Croatia.

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[150]Silber and Little (1997).
[151] Jovic (1995)., entry for 24 June 1991

The Republic of Herzeg-Bosnia was an all-Croatian, one-party state ruled by the Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ), a branch of the same political party in power in the Republic of Croatia. The HDZ openly advocated for the territorial partition of Bosnia and Herzegovina, namely the secession of Herzegovina and its attachment to Croatia. Very few Muslims were accepted into HVO, and its leadership was almost exclusively Bosnian Croatian.[152] The president of Herzeg-Bosnia, Mate Boban, worked closely with Croatian president Franjo Tudjman, Boban's own Minister of Defense, Bruno Stojic, and the Major General of HVO forces around Mostar, Slobodan Praljak. Unlike the Croatian government forces, within the HDZ, there was not the same infighting between different military arms like there was between the MUP and ZNG. Additionally, by the time violence began in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the rivalry between the MUP and ZNG in Croatia had resolved. While there was a second Croatian group operating in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Croatian Party of Rights (HSP), the two did not attempt to operate as a single political or military unit like what we observe occurring with Krajina and Srpska formations.[153] The HVO had a formalized military structure, borrowing from the HV's administrative configuration, with fully formed units, featuring officers, staffs, and weaponry, being fielded within days of the Bosnian War's beginning in April 1992.

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[152] The exception to this was Northern Bosnia, where a significant percentage of Muslims were accepted into MHVO brigades. It is important to note that Croat-Muslim relations were much better in Northern Bosnia than they were in Herzegovina. Office of Russian and European Analysis (2002).

[153] Initially, there were two major Croatian groups active in Bosnia and Herzegovina fielding military forces: the Croatian Party of Rights (HSP) and the Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ), both offshoots of political parties in Croatia. The HSP building the Croatian Armed Forces (HOS) and the HDZ building the Croatian Defense Council (HVO). Despite having similar goals, these two were political, military, and philosophical rivals who competed to control the Bosnian Croat ministate. The HDZ would out-compete the HSP, and before the first year of the conflict ended, the HSP had dissolved.

Krajina and Srpska possessed a highly similar structure, both being fragmented. All rebel groups during the Yugoslav Wars had unofficial offshoots, paramilitary formations, and even mobilizing civilians. With Krajina and Srpska, however, the territorial spread without a previous administrative infrastructure and the prominence of non-organized units limited the political leadership's command and control over the military units under its banner. Herzeg-Bosnia possessed a more consolidated organizational structure. Despite the differences in structure, both still engaged in targeting, with both Krajina and Srpska targeting other groups and Herzeg-Bosnia engaging in mixed targeting. Structure alone does not explain group targeting. For instance, Krajina and Srpska behave differently than other fragmented groups, like the Croatian government at the start of the Croatian War and the Bosnian government. The Croatian and Bosnian governments were reactive, while Krajina and Srpska targeted other groups. Additionally, Herzeg-Bosnia's actions also deviate from those of the Slovenian government, which was consolidated but targeted the state, while Herzeg-Bosnia engaged in mixed targeting. To fully explain this difference in behavior, I will now turn to examining these groups' material capabilities.

Relative Material Capabilities

All three groups aiming to secede from their respective republics had support from an outside government, Krajina and Srpska from Serbia and Herzeg-Bosnia from Croatia. Both Krajina and Srpska had high relative material capabilities, while those of Herzeg-Bosnia were low. This provided both Krajina and Srpska with more agency to pursue their goal of clearing what they hoped to become their territory of other rebel groups. One could argue that both targeted other groups because the state, Yugoslavia its military, was their

primary benefactor. Though Yugoslavia was mid-collapse, the YNA was involved in all three wars, both fighting and supplying non-state actors. This certainly had an impact of decision-making, as it is not in a group's interest to bite the proverbial hand feeding it. However, the goals of Krajina and Srpska diverged from that of the YNA and of Serbia at times, and despite this, attacks did not occur.[154]

Support does not necessarily preclude attacks, though. In both Tajikistan and North Ossetia, which will be explored in later chapters, rebel groups receiving aid from the state also attack the state or its bases. Sometimes, this is done because of disagreements between erstwhile allies, other times it is so a group can build up its material capabilities. Herzeg-Bosnia forces, however, had low material capabilities. Even though their structure would indicate according to my theory that the state would be Herzeg-Bosnia's primary threat, low capabilities indicate that this groups should engage in mixed targeting. We do see this, with Herzeg-Bosnia formations attacking the YNA, the VRS, other Croatian groups, and the Bosnian government forces.

In Croatia, Krajina operated alongside the Croatian government and the Yugoslav Army. Compared to Croatian forces, Krajina forces had high relative material capabilities despite occupying a smaller territory. Krajina benefited from the political and military support they received from the YNA and Serbian security forces. Some of their military leaders were, in fact, former YNA officers. Mile Mrksic, for example, was a YNA general

[154] The Serbian government did not share the YNA's worry about balancing its role, as Milosevic bypassed federal institutions to coordinate efforts in Serb-majority regions. Interestingly, while Milosevic's government was preparing the Serb-majority regions for a fight against the Croatian government, Milosevic did state that, along with Slovenia, he was prepared to let Croatia leave Yugoslavia – provided the Serb regions stayed. The YNA, conversely, refused to accept a potential Croatian exit.

who left to become the Commander in Chief of the Military of the Serbian Krajina. Additionally, the Croatian Serb forces were well-supplied compared to their Croatian government counterparts. This was partly due to the support they received from outside sources and partly because the YNA had success in disarming Croatian forces prior to the outbreak of the conflict. This aid provided a clear advantage in terms of armaments, and this gave Krajina more agency than its primary opponent, the Croatian government. Compared to the Croatian government, Croatian Serb forces were better able to function in the country before Croatian forces were able to start making up the difference with armament seizures from the YNA.

Of the three conflicts in Yugoslavia, the Bosnian War was the most brutal, and there were multiple theaters of the conflict. Srpska forces fought in the Drina Valley, Sarajevo, Mostar, Posavina, and Jajce. The Republika Srpska's formations benefited from their close relationship with the YNA and Serbian forces. The VRS, regardless of arena, possessed greater material capabilities *vis-à-vis* the Bosnian government and Herzeg-Bosnia, largely due to these resources and personnel inherited from the YNA. In anticipation of Bosnian independence, the YNA prepared to fold itself into the Army of the [Bosnian] Serb Republic – the Vojske Republike Srpske (VRS) – with 85 percent of the 90,000 YNA troops in Bosnia being from Bosnia in 1992.[155] Non-Bosnian YNA officers and enlisted corps had been shifted out of the republic. Moreover, units and equipment, including tanks, artillery pieces, rocket launchers, and even means of air support, from the conflicts in

[155]Silber and Little (1997)., Jovic (1995).

Slovenia and Croatia were moved into Bosnia and Herzegovina.[156] More importantly, when the YNA left, they took the Bosnian TO weapons they had previously confiscated, stripped military-industrial facilities, and took all ammunition and fuel stocks. They then passed these spoils on to the Bosnian Serb government and the VRS. Neither the Croatian nor Bosnian Government forces would be able to overcome the arms advantage Bosnian Serbs would have from the beginning of the war.

The VRS also received aid from the SDB. The Serbian Internal Affairs Minister Bogdanovic said, "[w]e did our utmost to carry out, follow up, and ensure security for [the help] they [Bosnian Serbs] sought and for that which Serbia and the Serbian people offered. There, that was what the Service did," of the SDB's actions in the early 1990s.[157] The President of the Republika Srpska, Radovan Karadzic, was often in Bogdanovic's office seeking Bogdanovic's advice in organizing the Serbs in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

When examining the fighting in the Drina Valley, the Republika Srpska was capable of fielding groups in two sectors: Zvornik-Srebrenica sector[158] to the north and the Foca-Gorazde-Visegrad[159] triangle to the south. In these attacks, a well-armed, well-organized, and well-supplied Serb force targeted numerous unprepared predominately

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[156] Office of Russian and European Analysis (2002).
[157] Belgrade Duga (January 1995).
[158] In the northern sector, VRS operations began in Zvornik, a town of 15,000 people and 60 percent Muslim. Violence started after the results of independence referendum were declared, and the Serbian Municipality of Zvornik was declared two weeks after the referendum. By the end of March, the police force was split into two rival bands based on ethnicity.[158]
[159] VRS forces also targeted Foca in the southern Drina Valley. Here, the YNA's 37th Corps offered only limited support. Additionally, the Muslim side in Foca was, comparatively, exceptionally well-organized. The city's several hundred defenders were the best organized and armed in Eastern Bosnia, and as such, they were able to resist Serb occupation for almost three weeks while other towns fell within a day or two. Even after Foca fell, Muslim resistance continued in the area surrounding the town almost until the end of April, and by the time the Serbs had eliminated the Muslim resistance around Foca, Muslim forces had already shifted focus to forming a defensive ring around Gorazde to the east.

Muslim towns near the border with Serbia. In both sectors, the VRS's opponents were a coalition comprised of Patriotic League forces, police, and local people hastily organized into a regional defense force. Bosnian Serb forces, often with the direct aid of the YNA and Serb Security forces, targeted numerous towns and swiftly beat the Muslim defenders. Here, we observe the pattern seen throughout VRS interactions in the Drina Valley: well-organized Serb forces, backed by Serbian MUP forces, the Serbian State Security (SDB) forces, and the YNA quickly defeated an ill-equipped and disorganized Muslim resistance. By April 9th, VRS forces, aided by Arkan's Tigers, defeated the outnumbered Muslim resistance to occupy the town. YNA officials would later claim that the victory was due to their involvement, as the best units in the fight were from Serbian forces, particularly the Serbian Interior Ministry's special units.[160]

In the southern sector of the Drina Valley, the VRS attacked Visegrad on April 7th with a coalition force of about a thousand irregular troops, 100-200 municipal police, and some soldiers from the YNA's 37th Corps.[161] Once again, the town's Muslim population were not prepared. At most, there were 250 armed Muslims in the Visegrad area, and even these forces were not under a single command structure.[162] Most of the population fled, especially after news that the Arkan Tigers were moving from Zvornik to Visegrad.

Bosnian Serb forces in Sarajevo, likewise, had heavy equipment and artillery that they could use to fire indiscriminately onto the city from well-defended hills miles from Sarajevo. They did, however, lack the infantry to seize or hold ground – meaning that the

[160] Office of Russian and European Analysis (2002).
[161] Office of Russian and European Analysis (2002).
[162] Office of Russian and European Analysis (2002).

Bosnian Government and Bosnian Serb forces were locked in a stalemate in Sarajevo during the early months of the war. In Posavina, the VRS was more evenly matched against Bosnian Croatian forces, who received aid from the Croatian government. The 2nd Krajina Corps, stationed in Posavina, was the weakest and most overstretched of the Serb forces, fighting a two-front war against the Croatian Army and the Bosnian Army 5th Corps. As the Croatian Army was the bigger threat of the two, this pulled the attention of the 2nd Krajina Corps, allowing the Bosnian Army to continue its operations longer than many others.

Herzeg-Bosnia operated in Bosnia and Herzegovina, coordinating with the Croatian government and the HV. By late 1992, the HVO was fielding between 15,000 and 20,000 armed troops. As stated in the previous section, these forces were well-organized, mimicking a professional military. These troops were organized into battalions and brigades, and the HVO formed Croatian Defense Councils in each Croatian-controlled municipality.[163] Initially, Herzeg-Bosnia's military arm, the HVO, was limited in its ability to combat the YNA or the Bosnian Serb Army in the earliest days of the war due to its rivalry with the HSP. On August 9th, HVO assassinated the leader of the HOS, Blaz Kraljevic, and eight of his staff. The HSP's military arm would cease operations by the end of 1992. The HVO simultaneously targeted other groups, including but not limited to the Bosnian Serb VRS and the Muslim Patriotic League. The HVO would also target the YNA at this time.

[163] Malcolm (1996).

Much like the VRS, Herzeg-Bosnia forces received outside aid – here from the Croatian government. The HVO functioned as a subordinate arm of the Croatian Army (HV) and answered to HV General Janko Bobetko, who reassigned numerous former HV officers to the HVO.[164] For much of the Bosnian War, and especially in the early months, the HVO was directed from Tudjman's desk in Zagreb. Therefore, the HVO possessed a complicated relationship with the Bosnian government, as one of the aims of the HDZ and HVO was the territorial partition of Bosnia and Herzegovina. This strained alliance would also fracture over the course of the first year of the war. Additionally, the HVO relied on Croatia and the HV due to a lack of their own armor and artillery. As a result, the HVO still had lower relative material capabilities than the VRS, as the VRS took control of the military infrastructure of the YNA, including not only its military hardware but also much of its officer and enlisted corps who the majority of which were of Bosnian descent by May 1992. In the Bosnian War, therefore, we see the three major rebel groups displaying different levels of material capabilities, from highest to lowest: Srpska, Herzeg-Bosnia, and finally, the Bosnian government.

The Yugoslav Breakup: In Sum

The breakup of Yugoslavia was an incredibly violent series of conflicts with lasting impacts on the states that emerged. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, for example, the United Nations Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina ran from 1995 to 2002, and the European Union Police Mission took over on January 1, 2003, to June 2012. Additionally, the Office of the High Representative was created to oversee the implementation of the Dayton

[164] Office of Russian and European Analysis (2002).

Accord in Bosnia. The High Representative still serves in Bosnia and Herzegovina. This office, transferred between EU member-states, has veto powers over laws passed in the country until certain conditions, like the resolution of state-owned land and rule-of-law stability, are fulfilled.

Ethnic conflict and the rise of nationalist politicians is oft blamed for the start of the war and the degree of violence observed. For example, Tudjman did not come to Slovenia's aid at the start of the Ten-Day War, and the alliance of Bosnian Croatian and Bosnian Muslim groups against Bosnian Serbs succumbed to infighting. Even though the groups analyzed here formed around ethnic identities and aimed to secede from either Yugoslavia or the state, they did not behave the same and they did not target the same type of actors in the conflicts. As a result, knowing ethnic groups concentrations and intrastate ethnic dynamics informs us of where groups are likely to mobilize. Other regions of Yugoslavia, like Kosovo or the Albanian majority regions of Macedonia, also saw violence. It is not sufficient, however, to predict the behavior of these groups in a conflict.

The resources these groups had access to did influence their behavior. We see those with high or symmetric capabilities, like the Slovenian government, Krajina, and Srpska, acting differently than those with low material capabilities, like the Croatian and Bosnian governments. However, despite both having equal or greater relative material capabilities *vis-à-vis* their opponents, the Slovenian government behaved differently than Krajina and Srpska. Moreover, while initially the Croatian and Bosnian government forces behaved similarly, the Croatian government's behavior changed over the summer of 1991 from reactive to mixed targeting.

One could also point to opponents present to explain group targeting. The Slovenian government would logically attack the state, as the state was its main opponent. Further, there were no other rebel groups for the Slovenian government to attack. However, this does not explain why the Croatian and Bosnian governments were reactive in their conflicts, avoiding attacking any groups – be this the state or other armed groups. We see other groups engage in mixed targeting. For the Croatian government in the summer of 1991, this took the form of targeting the other major rebel group, Krajina, and the YNA. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, Herzeg-Bosnia formations carried out a similar pattern of behavior, primarily targeting Srpska and YNA forces. However, Herzeg-Bosnia's primary political goal was secession from Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the armed group they operated the closest with – not against – was the Bosnian government.

There is overlap between actions and ethnicity. If we ignore the Croatian government's first few months of engaging in reactive targeting, the Slovenian group targeted the state, the Croatian groups engaged in mixed targeting, Serbian groups targeted other rebel groups, and the Bosnian government engaged in reactive targeting. Perhaps this is indicative of ethnicity being somehow related to group behavior; perhaps this is an interesting coincidence. In later chapters, I will be examining other conflicts with ethnic components, and this relationship fails to hold for these rebel groups. More likely, the similarity in group behavior based on ethnicity is driven by the fact that the Yugoslav Wars, especially the Croatian and Bosnian Wars, were two theaters of a singular conflict. Individuals and groups who fought in Croatia on behalf of the Croatian government and Krajina crossed over into Bosnia to fight with Herzeg-Bosnia and Srpska respectively.

Milosevic desired both Krajina and Srpska to be annexed into Serbia; Tudjman desired for Herzeg-Bosnia to be annexed into Croatia. The YNA and SDB's influence over the two Serbian groups and the HV's influence over Herzeg-Bosnian's HVO created a degree of continuity.

Variables like ethnicity, resources, and the number of groups provide a partial picture for how rebel groups are likely to behave, but there are variations in group behavior that these variables fail to explain on their own. However, by pairing organizational structure, being consolidated or fragmented, with relative material capabilities, being high/symmetric or low, group targeting during the Yugoslav Wars can be explained. Here we see consolidated groups with high/symmetric capabilities, the Slovenian government, targeting the state; fragmented groups with high/symmetric capabilities, Krajina and Srpska, targeting other groups; consolidated groups with low capabilities, the Croatian government after September 1991 and Herzeg-Bosnia, engaging in mixed targeting; and fragmented groups with low capabilities, the Croatian government June-September 1991, and the Bosnian government, engaging in reactive targeting. In the following chapters, I will test the predictive power of these two variables, examining first non-secessionist conflicts and second conflicts with a powerful state throughout.

PART III: NON-SECESSIONIST CONFLICTS

CHAPTER SIX: CONFLICTS IN CENTRAL ASIA

Introduction

Turning away from Yugoslavia, Part III presents my first set of predictive case studies, as opposed to my inductive analysis of Yugoslavia. In the following two chapters, I will test my theory on the impact of organizational structure and relative material capabilities on group targeting at the start of the Tajik Civil War between May and November 1992 and the interethnic clashes in Kyrgyzstan between April and June 2010. In the Tajik Civil War, I will be analyzing four groups: 1) the pro-Government protesters, 2) the Opposition protesters, 3) the Kulyob Forces, and 4) the Kurgan-Tyube Forces. The first two existed in the first month, acting primarily in the capital, Dushanbe; the second two operated primarily in the south as fighting intensified. In the Interethnic Clashes in Kyrgyzstan, I will be examining two groups: 1) Kyrgyz groups and 2) Uzbek ones.

There are two major reasons groups mobilize in civil wars: 1) secession or exit from the state and 2) capturing the center. Secessionist groups typically have a clear base of support, and while it is not likely, the state can choose to let secessionist regions go. For example, the breakup of the USSR into its fifteen constituent republics in 1991 and the Velvet Divorce of Czechoslovakia in 1993 occurred with minimal violence executed by the center. In civil conflicts to capture the center, however, the state is a necessary actor – as a combatant, target, or both. In both Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, the state was a weak

actor,[165] and the state struggled to root out mobilizing groups. In Tajikistan, we observe groups on both sides of the conflict targeting the state at different times. Yet, we do not see the same during the clashes in Kyrgyzstan, as both groups operated in the periphery and relatively quickly demobilized.

There are many features that conflicts in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan share. In both conflicts, mobilization began in the capital soon after presidential elections. The conflicts then moved to a border region as violence intensified. Both conflicts occurred in post-Soviet countries in Central Asia; both states had interim governments in power in both at the start of their conflicts. The two conflicts vary in terms of duration and intensity, and as a result, the violence in Kyrgyzstan did not evolve into a civil war. The groups in the conflicts had different purposes. In Tajikistan, rebel groups were fighting for a regime change or a return to the status quo. Initial Opposition mobilization in Dushanbe focused specifically on democratization and the removal of the Soviet-era political elites. Conversely, the mobilization in Kyrgyzstan focused more on changing government policies pertaining to corruption and election s. While there was an interim president appointed in Kyrgyzstan, the government was more stable in 2010 than Tajikistan's government in 1992.

These cases deviate from the Yugoslav Wars, but they align in other ways. Both are non-secessionist conflicts. All six groups I examined in Chapter Five were attempting to exit, either from the state or a republic. In the Tajik Civil War, groups mobilized to

[165] Under the logic of Migdal (2001), the state is weak when it is unable to penetrate society, with local leaders controlling local politics. In both Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, the government struggled to exert influence beyond the capital.

capture the center: these groups desired to control the state, not to leave it. Groups in Kyrgyzstan mobilized along ethnic lines, much like they did in Yugoslavia, but neither group pushed for secession. Additionally, the population on both sides of the border was ethnically mixed between ethnic Kyrgyz and Uzbek residents, as it was in the Yugoslav conflict.

These two conflicts share many similarities with one another. In both, the state experienced recent power transfers, and their citizenry participated in protests that resulted in civilian deaths. The conflict epicenter moved south to a border region, and support for the previous regime versus support for the interim government was a salient cleavage. Yet, the violence in Tajikistan escalated into a civil war with defined combat groups that operated for years, while the conflict in Kyrgyzstan de-escalated. This deviates from what was observed in Yugoslavia, where regions that were more ethnically heterogenous saw more intense fighting.

Table 6.1: Organizational Structure, Material Capabilities, and Predicted Group Behavior in Central Asia[166]

	Consolidated	**Fragmented**
High/Symmetric Capabilities	Targets the state • *Kulyob Forces*	Targets other groups • *Kurgan-Tyube Forces* ○ *Kyrgyz Groups*
Low Capabilities	Mixed targeting • *Dushanbe Opposition Forces*	No targeting/Reactive targeting • *Dushanbe Pro-Government Forces* ○ *Uzbek Groups*

[166] In Figures 5.1 and 5.2, groups operating in Tajikistan are marked with a solid circle, those in Kyrgyzstan with an open circle, and groups that deviate from predicted outcomes with an (x).

Both Kyrgyz and Uzbek Groups were fragmented in the 2010 clashes, while groups in Tajikistan were a mix of fragmented and consolidated groups. A conflict without at least one consolidated group did not occur in Slovenia, Croatia, or Bosnia and Herzegovina. The pattern of behavior observed during the clashes in Kyrgyzstan

Apart from the Kulyob Formations in Tajikistan, the actions undertaken by armed groups align in these conflicts with my theory's predictions. Additionally, my theory accounts for changes in targeting, as these groups' structures and capabilities change. The Pro-Government Forces in Tajikistan began as reactive, but they were the precursor to the Kulyob Forces. Kulyob Formations did not target the state as predicted. They shifted to more assertive targeting that still targeted the state alongside other groups, mirroring the Croatian government's shift in targeting as it consolidated. Much like the Pro-Government Forces, Opposition Forces became the Kurgan-Tyube Formations when the violence intensified and moved out of the capital. In doing so, the Opposition's leadership fragmented from its tight coalition, largely because some of the Opposition leaders were incorporated into the Government of National Reconciliation (GNR) while others were not. As this fragmentation occurred, the targeting pattern shifted from mixed to targeting other groups.

In this chapter, I aim to introduce Central Asia and the two conflicts I will be analyzing in Chapter Seven and Eight. First, I will detail structural explanations for the conflicts and group behavior in non-secessionist conflicts. Second, unlike the Yugoslav Wars, these conflicts occur after the dissolution of a multiethnic state, the Soviet Union. There are several features of Central Asian states that can be cited as potential explanations

for group behavior: resurgent Islam, inter-clan and patronal network-based conflicts, and clashes between Soviet-era apparatchiki and those in favor of democratization. I will then provide an overview of group targeting in the Tajik Civil War and the Interethnic Clashes in Kyrgyzstan.

Alternative Explanations for Conflict in Central Asia

The Central Asian states are a fascinating mix of historical continuity and upheaval. Some of these features are pointed to as potential causes for instability, violence, and conflict. In the Tajik Civil War, for example, religion was pointed to as a cause for the violence. Islamic fundamentalism was a concern in the post-Soviet era, particularly in regions bordering Afghanistan. In Kyrgyzstan, the national government had to mediate its rule through familial and clan networks that preexisted the region's incorporation into the Russian Empire.

In the collapse of the Soviet Union, the five republics in Central Asia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan, gained their independence. Despite the transition, there was a high degree of regime continuity, with Communist party leaders remaining in power in four of the five party leaders retaining office in their state's first elections. Some domestic and international actors, however, wished to see democratization in these states, viewing the end of the USSR as a victory for democracy. Some states made efforts at transition to democracy once they gained independence, but in others, state structures overlaid more traditional ones, making political change more difficult.[167]

[167] Svolik (2012). de Mesquita et al. (2009).

Institutions are resistant to change,[168] and the dissonance between the entrenched political elite and the rest of the population created conditions conducive to protest and conflict. This dissonance between elites and the population in Tajikistan and in Kyrgyzstan contributed to the onset of violence.

Political Upheaval and Conflict

Central Asia was incorporated piecemeal into the Russian Empire between 1839 and 1895, starting with the Kazakh steppe and moving southwards to Tajikistan and Turkmenistan. The region was split between sedentary and nomadic groups. The distinctions between traditionally nomadic and sedentary groups can be seen in the region's ethnic divisions today, with Uzbeks, Tajiks, and Uyghurs being primarily the descendants of sedentary populations, and Kazakhs, Kyrgyz, and Turkmen being the descendants of nomadic groups on the steppe.[169] Stalin's Soviet collective farming projects in the 1930s and 1940s focused on transitioning nomadic groups into sedentary ones. However, few areas in the region are suitable to large-scale farming, and regions that were suitable, like the Fergana Valley, are highly valued and contested spaces. The Fergana Valley, which stretches across eastern Uzbekistan, western Kyrgyzstan, and northern Tajikistan, is highly ethnically heterogenous. The Interethnic Clashes in Kyrgyzstan were centered in this valley, though the Tajik Civil War occurred in the more homogenous southern regions.

In both Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, we observe that conflicts began as a result of pro-democracy protesting. In Tajikistan, Communist party member, Rahmon Nabiyev was

[168] Pierson (2000). North (2009).
[169] See Liu (2021).

elected president in December of 1991. His victory was contested, however, leading to protests in the capital as groups mobilized against Nabiyev and the Communist party. The Opposition coalition's primary goal was the expansion of political office openings to non-Communist party members. As violence moved beyond Dushanbe, it centered in the south around where the majority of Nabiyev's recently dissolved Presidential Guard's permanent residences were. Repeated transfers of power during the civil war heightened uncertainty and the desire for state stability, and while democracy and elections tend to generate political instability and inefficiency.[170] After 1992, Emomali Rakhmonov, a political leader from Kulyob, would use this uncertainty to solidify the power of the executive in Tajikistan, turning away from attempts at democratization

Nearly twenty years after the Soviet collapse, contested elections were still a problem in Kyrgyzstan. The first president, Askar Akayev, was pushed out of office in 2005 during the Tulip Revolution after serving as president for over a decade.[171] His successor, Kurmanbek Bakiyev came to power because of pro-democracy and anti-corruption protests. Like Akayev before him, Bakiyev was also pushed from office by protests. After Bakiyev's removal in 2010, an interim government under Roza Otunbayieva came to power in April. Protests continued in the capital, Bishkek, both in support of the interim government and in support of the previous Bakiyev regime. Bakiyev's support stemmed from the southern regions, where violence was concentrated.

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[170] Carothers (2002).

[171] The Tulip Revolution was part of a larger group of protests in the Color Revolutions in Eastern Europe and Central Asia that sought to establish liberal democratic governance and curb government corruption, which included the Orange Revolution in Ukraine, the Rose Revolution in Georgia, the Blue Jean Revolution in Belarus, and the Snow Revolution in Russia.

Thus, the two conflicts began under very similar pretexts, and protests in both escalated to civil conflicts in the region where a recently ousted leader had supporters. However, much like in other analyses that focus on state capacity, here, we can see that domestic instability is certainly associated with the outbreak of violence. Groups that mobilized behaved differently both with their conflicts and between each other.

Patrons, Clients, Clans, and Family

Though government capacity has been improving since 2006 across all five Central Asian countries according to the Fragile States Index in Central Asia, periphery regions in these states have retained high degrees of autonomy from the central government.[172] Historically, politics have been highly localized based on clan networks, which depended on familial relations to govern. During the Soviet era, state reach into the hinterland was suspect; therefore, the federal government relied on ethnic and regional organizations to maintain control.[173] This had several impacts on regional politics post-1991. First, Soviet policies reinforced the role of these informal networks in formal political institutions. Second, regime continuity helped ensure that these networks maintained their power and influence. Third, the reliance on these networks reinforced local rule against state structures, as these networks both provided access to the state's political sphere and provided public goods to their local communities.

[172] According to the Fragile State Index, as of 2006: Kazakhstan (71.9) Kyrgyzstan (90.3) Uzbekistan (94.4) Tajikistan (87.7) Turkmenistan (86.1). Scored 0-120, 0 being most stable, 120 being most fragile. Between 2006 and 2021, the Fragile States Index reports that these states have, on average, been becoming more stable. (Messner De Latour 2020)

[173] Brubaker (1996). Suny (1999-2000). Beissinger (2002).

It's not what you know; it's who you know is an adage that rings true for many a political inner circle, but it is one that resonates even stronger in authoritarian and hybrid regimes. Colloquially referred to as nepotism and cronyism, interactions are driven in part by patronal networks, wherein the political and economic spheres are organized around personal exchanges of "concrete rewards and punishments through chains of actual acquaintance" in much of post-Soviet space.[174] Particularly around periods of regime transition in Central Asia, political behavior converged around localized, familial networks, as opposed to a country-wide political class or professionalized political corps.[175] These patronal networks are built on wider clan and ethnic-based networks.[176] While there is debate in the literature as to whether ethnic divisions prevent state cohesion[177] or whether societal divisions precede ethnic ones, preventing consolidation in weak states.[178]

In Tajikistan, clan and patronal networks are overlaid with political identification, and these divisions are not ethnic in nature. Division by geography, particularly the north-south divide, could be attributed to the fact that familial networks are often geographically locked as well. Northern Tajikistan, though ethnically heterogenous, was unified by their support for the Communist Party and the Nabiyev regime. Southern Tajikistan was more

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[174] Hale (2014), 9-10. Bueno de Mesquita et al. (2009) puts forward a theory on the nature of political survival through selectorates: the selectorate, comprised of those who have the potential to have a say on who is the state's leader, and the winning coalition, comprised of those whose support is essential for the leader to remain in power. Democracies tend to have large selectorates, all those eligible to vote, and large winning coalitions, 51 percent of the vote in majoritarian elections and the largest percentage in plurality elections.
[175] See Collins (2006). Murtazashvili (2018).
[176] See Schatz (2004). Driscoll (2015).
[177] See Anderson (1983, 2006). Horowitz (1985). and Hobsbawm (1990).
[178] Weber (1976). Brubaker (1996). Wimmer (2002). Wimmer (2018).

homogenous, but political affiliations were more divided between those that supported the existing Communist infrastructure and those that favored Opposition political parties.

In Kyrgyzstan, ethnic and clan lines paralleled one another. Though they are not officially allowed to officially engage in politics, the lineages are the pathway to political advancement, and the heads major clans have an influence over the selection of political candidates.[179] Bakiyev was from Jalal-Abad, which is where clashes were centered in southwestern Kyrgyzstan after his ouster. Groups here largely organized along ethnic lines, though there were criminal organizations that participated in the violence that were ethnically mixed.

Looking at these networks and their impact on state influence, it provides insight into where groups are likely to mobilize. Where key support bases are and where those bases are contested indicate where groups are more likely to mobilize and who they are likely to align with politically. This was seen in Yugoslavia, with co-ethnics aligning with one another, despite geographic separation. In Tajikistan, we see the Kulyob Formations align with the political elites in the north, and though this alliance did not back Nabiyev's return to the presidency, both objected to his removal from office and the GNR. Though geographically separate, Nabiyev's base of support in the north and the separate pro-Nabiyev base in the south unified with the election of Rakhmonov, a leader from southern Tajikistan to the presidency while the presidency operated out of Khujand in the north.

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[179] Ismailbekova (2017).
"Kyrgyz" means forty, and the unification of the forty tribes by Manas is a founding myth for the Kyrgyz nation. It is referenced in their flag, which sports a sun with forty rays. It is, however, illegal for lineage and kinship networks to exert political influence, rendering their role in politics covert. The influence of clans is oft critiqued for being medieval and unbefitting for modern democratic politics.

Group Dynamics in Central Asia: An Overview

My theory focuses on the role played by 1) organizational structure and 2) relative material capabilities to predict group behavior. As explored in Chapter 2, these two variables lead to two primary hypotheses. First, consolidated groups are more likely to view the state as their primary threat while fragmented groups are more likely to view other groups as a threat. Second, groups with high/symmetric capabilities are more likely to attack a single type of target while those with low capabilities are more likely to be opportunistic in their targeting. Below I will first define how I will be measuring organizational structure and relative material capabilities. Second, I will summarize my predictions and findings for the groups in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan.

Theory and Variable Measurement

Organizational Structure indicates who groups are more likely to view as their primary threat. Consolidated groups are more likely to identify the state as their primary threat, while fragmented groups are more likely to view other groups as their primary threat. Material capabilities provide focus and agency to pursue their primary target. Groups with resources can be more aggressive in their targeting than those without, and those with less access to resources must be more careful if they wish to survive. I focus on relative material capabilities more than objective capabilities to predict group targeting, since agency is derived from the likelihood that they will be able to successfully pursue their goals. Groups with high or symmetric capabilities are likely to engage their primary threat, while those with low relative capabilities are likely to be more opportunistic or survival-oriented in their targeting. Groups with low relative material capabilities are also

more likely to engage in guerrilla tactics. These two features interact to inform us of who groups are most likely to target, as shown in Table 6.2.

Table 6.2: Organizational Structure and Material Capabilities in Group Targeting

	Consolidated	**Fragmented**
High/Symmetric Capabilities	Targets the state	Targets other groups
Low Capabilities	Mixed targeting	No targeting/Reactive targeting

I determine targeting via reports of who is attacking who. Sometimes this is unclear, and we are merely told if two groups are present in a location and attacking one another without an instigator listed. In other cases, an instigator is listed, but reports differ on who the instigator was depending on the source. As a result, determinations of group targeting must be taken over a period of time. This enables me to determine if 1) there are consistent patterns with who is participating in attacks, 2) one side is consistently retreating, as this implies that they are being attacked by the group making territorial gains, and 3) an actor or actors have a pattern of participating in attacks against one type of target or multiples. When combined with reports on instigators when available, this reliably informs us of who groups are targeting.

Identifying group structure can be difficult, as rebel groups are unlikely to publish their internal structures. In Tajikistan, groups are identified at the start by the location in which they operate, while in Kyrgyzstan, their names are that of their ethnic majority. Consolidated groups tend to have identified leadership, and that leadership is noted for

having control over a wider territorial region. This makes them easier to identify, and fragmented groups are sometimes identified via their opposition to consolidated ones. Consolidated groups have administrative infrastructure and designs to govern – either the state or a subnational unit. Subnational governments, interim administrations, opposition governing bodies are indicative of a consolidated group structure. This must be considered in conjunction with leadership claims of control, though, to determine if this structure is truly consolidated or more fragmented.

Relative capabilities, likewise, are determined via proxies. Groups are unlikely to disclose their numbers and armaments to the government they are fighting or media sources. There are numbers provided at times, but these often must be cross-referenced between accounts. Pro-government sources are more likely to exaggerate the threat of rebel groups to justify military action, while rebel groups are harder to predict. Sometimes they downplay their capabilities, at other times they play up their capabilities – depending on what brings the greatest benefit to their cause. A group trying to deter the state from attacking, for instance, is likely to exaggerate their capabilities, but a group trying to undercut the state's justification of intervention would be more likely to downplay its capabilities.

To get around this, I utilize several indicators found in archival documents. This process is made easier by the fact that I am looking for relative capabilities rather than absolute capabilities. When one side has tank columns and combat aircraft while the other is using hunting rifles and a single rocket launcher they have to drive around to key locations, the disparity is obvious. There are several factors we can derive from archival

sources. One, I look for the actual armaments listed for various groups to compare. Two, I discern what sort of tactics the state and the rebel groups are using. Numbers may not be listed, but weapon types are more common to find, as are means of attack. Like armaments, exact numbers for membership are unlikely to be mentioned, but what type of mobilization is easier to tell. However, we can tell whether a group is using a professionalized military or if they are a mobilizing civilian population. Additionally, we can discern from archival sources whether mercenaries are present, either to participate or provide training to rebel groups. The presence of these forces is often heavily disputed, but if there are multiple reports or confirmations from multiple groups or opposing sides, then this can be considered a measure of group capabilities.

Table 6.3: Non-Secessionist Groups in Central Asia

Group	Structure	Capabilities	*Predicted Outcome*	*Actual Outcome*	Theory Status
Dushanbe "Pro-Government"	Fragmented	Low	*No/ Reactive Targeting*	*Reactive/ No Targeting*	Aligns
Dushanbe "Opposition"	Consolidated	Low	*Mixed Targeting*	*Mixed Targeting*	Aligns
Kulyob Forces/the Popular Front	Consolidated	High/ Symmetric	*Targeting the State*	*Mixed Targeting*	Divergent
Kurgan-Tyube Forces/the United Tajik Opposition	Fragmented	High/ Symmetric	*Targeting Other Groups*	*Targeting Other Groups*	Aligns
Kyrgyz Groups	Fragmented	High/ Symmetric	*Targeting Other Groups*	*Targeting Other Groups*	Aligns
Uzbek Groups	Fragmented	Low	*No/ Reactive Targeting*	*Reactive/ No Targeting*	Aligns

There are six rebel groups I will be analyzing: four operating in Tajikistan and two operating in Kyrgyzstan. Table 6.3 above lays out the predicted behavior of groups in these two conflicts based on their characteristics and whether these groups behave as predicted. In the Tajik Civil War, each of the four rebel groups is predicted to be in a different quadrant of my two-by-two, as shown in Table 6.4. The Kulyob Forces and the Opposition forces in Dushanbe were both consolidated but had differing relative capabilities. The Kurgan-Tyube Forces and the Dushanbe Pro-Government forces likewise differed in capabilities, but both were fragmented. Of these four, only the Kulyob Formations deviated from what I predicted their behavior to be: engaging in mixed targeting instead of targeting the state. In doing so, they behaved more similarly to consolidated-low resource groups,

like the Croatian government and Herzeg-Bosnia, than a consolidated-high resource groups, like the Slovenian government. In doing so, Kulyob Forces did still attack the state, but they did not have the focus seen in other, similarly structured and supplied groups.

In the interethnic clashes in Kyrgyzstan, the two groups were fragmented, but they differed in their relative material capabilities. Fighting spread to several cities in southwest Kyrgyzstan, but it quickly died down. However, during the conflict, Kyrgyz groups targeted Uzbek groups, while Uzbek groups were reactive. The pattern of mobilization followed by quick demobilization both in the clashes in Kyrgyzstan and in the East Prigorodny Conflict between North Ossetia and Ingushetia, and in both cases, the mobilizing groups were all fragmented.

Table 6.4: Organizational Structure, Material Capabilities, and Group Behavior in Central Asia[180]

	Consolidated	**Fragmented**
High/Symmetric Capabilities	Targets the state • *Kulyob Forces*	Targets other groups • *Kurgan-Tyube Forces* ○ *Kyrgyz Groups*
Low Capabilities	Mixed targeting • *Dushanbe Opposition Forces* × *Kulyob Forces*	No targeting/Reactive targeting • *Dushanbe Pro-Government Forces* ○ *Uzbek Groups*

[180] In Figures 5.1 and 5.2, groups operating in Tajikistan are marked with a solid circle, those in Kyrgyzstan with an open circle, and groups that deviate from predicted outcomes with an (x).

The Tajik Civil War: An Overview

The Tajik Civil War progressed in two stages. The first lasted from March into June of 1992, and its epicenter was the capital, Dushanbe. Here, Opposition Forces squared off against the state and Pro-Government protesters. This phase of the conflict ended with the creation of the GNR, which incorporated many of the Opposition's political leaders into the government. The second stage of the conflict shifted attention south and away from Dushanbe between June and November. Tracking groups after leaving Dushanbe becomes more complicated. The creation of the Government of National Reconciliation (GNR) in May and Nabiyev's exit from office in September rendered terms like pro-government and opposition ambiguous. Terms like "Popular Front" and "United Tajik Opposition" also did not initially carry much weight, though groups would take these titles. I will be following the trend used by Tajik and Russian primary sources over this timeframe to describe these groups. The pro-Nabiyev, alternatively pro-Communist or later pro-Rakhmonov, forces first solidified their control over Kulyob. Therefore, this group was referred to as "Kulyob Forces/Formations," even when the group began to expand its zone of control out of Kulyob. Meanwhile, groups that could be described as pro-Opposition, pro-Interim Government, pro-democracy, and/or pro-Islam, and later the United Tajik Opposition organized in Kurgan-Tyube, being referred to as "Kurgan-Tyube Forces/Formations."

Figure 6.1: Map of the Phases of the Tajik Civil War
Source: Nations Online Project

The Pro-Government forces initially did not engage in fighting, reacting to attacks carried out by Opposition forces but primarily relying on government police and national guard forces for their defense. They engaged both the Pro-Government protesters and state defense forces. Both groups in the first stage had low relative military capabilities *vis-à-vis* government and national guard forces and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) troops.[181] Pro-Government forces were fragmented at this time; they were organized

[181] The Commonwealth of Independent States was founded in December 1991 by the Russian SFSR, Byelorussian SSR, and Ukrainian SSRs. It was later joined by Armenia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan,

and active but lacked clear leadership. Conversely, there was explicit coordination between Opposition political leaders and protesters, making their side more consolidated. The political coalition of anti-Communist forces was a diverse one, but during this initial stage, they coordinated well.

Converse to the conflict in Dushanbe, the organizational structure of these two groups flipped after the creation of the Government of National Reconciliation in late May 1992 and Nabiyev's resignation in September. The Nabiyev-aligned Kulyob Forces were consolidated and the Opposition-aligned groups and government offices in Kurgan-Tyube were fragmented. Also, unlike the situation in Dushanbe, these groups no longer had low relative material capabilities. In the capital, the state had military resources, despite their difficulties in organizing them against the protesters. In the South, however, these groups enjoyed largely symmetric capabilities to one another due to 1) arms trafficking into Tajikistan from Afghanistan and 2) arms seizures from the government and CIS garrisons by these rebel groups.

Interethnic Clashes in Kyrgyzstan: An Overview

Like the Yugoslavia Wars, the conflict was ethnic in nature in Kyrgyzstan. Like past conflicts I have examined, protests started in the capital before migrating to peripheral regions. There were two groups operating in Southern Kyrgyzstan at this time, and both remained fragmented throughout the course of the violence. These groups were the Kyrgyz groups and Uzbek groups. The groups present in the protests in Bishkek against Bakiyev

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Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. Ukraine as sense left, and Turkmenistan has become an associate state. CIS is meant to be facilitate cooperation and coordination among member-states over military, political, and economic affairs.

did not translate to a parallel group formation among those mobilizing along the Uzbek border. Instead, the protests in the capital were economic in nature and focused against the Bakiyev administration. The violence in Osh and Jalal-Abad was ethnic in nature, and it was not focused on the national-level administration. Rather, national government destabilization resulted in an environment that allowed mobilization and radicalization to flare.

Both groups were fragmented, and there was little cooperation between groups in different locales. Violence occurred in several locations (See Figure 6.3), but ethnic identification did not result in coordination. The Kyrgyz groups had higher relative material capabilities compared to their Uzbek counterparts due to Kyrgyz groups' alignment with the national government and member links to criminal organizations providing armaments and resources. Government support was not explicit, but the actions of police and government officials during and after the conflict were more lenient towards Kyrgyz perpetrators than Uzbek ones. Additionally, there was a pattern of portraying Kyrgyz as victims in the clashes, despite contemporary reports indicating the reverse.

Figure 6.2: Map of Kyrgyzstan, Locations of Major Clashes
Source: Nations Online Project

Conclusions: Rebel Groups in Non-Secessionist Conflicts

While Parts I and II focused on developing my theory via an inductive analysis of the Yugoslav Wars, the two conflicts examined in Part III are the first to test my theory. First, I hypothesized that consolidated groups would be more likely to view the state as a threat, while fragmented groups are more likely to see other groups as a threat. Second, groups with high or symmetric capabilities are more likely to focus on a single type of target, namely the one that they view as their primary threat based on their organizational structure. Groups with low capabilities are more likely to be opportunistic in their targeting,

attacking easier targets rather than focusing on the group they view strategically as their primary threat. Of the groups operating in these conflicts, my theory accurately predicts the behavior of five of these six groups, a notable exception being the deviation in the Kulyob Forces in Tajikistan.

Additionally, my theory provides an explanation for changes in rebel group behavior via changes in their underlying organizational structure and military capabilities. Looking at Opposition forces in Tajikistan as an example, it becomes clear that they began the conflict as a consolidated political coalition with low relative material capabilities compared to the CIS troops and Tajik National Guard. My theory predicts that Opposition forces should engage in mixed targeting. This is what we observe, with the group targeting both pro-Nabiyev formations and government forces and infrastructure. When the conflict's epicenter moved out of the capital, however, this political coalition fractured. Not all was lost, as in the time between the protests start and the move south, opposition forces (now Kurgan-Tyube Formations) were able to acquire arms and organize into self-defense units. As a result, these formations were fragmented but possessed symmetric capabilities. My theory predicts that: 1) their fragmented nature would result in other groups being their primary target, and 2) symmetric material capabilities would result in a focus on a single type of target – *i.e.*, these formations should target other groups. This is, once again, what we see these groups doing in the south. As a result, my theory is not just able to explain the behavior of groups at an isolated point in time, but it is also able to do so over time.

A second insight provided by these cases centers on conflict de-escalation. Kyrgyzstan shares many similarities with the conflicts in the former Yugoslavia. There was high ethnic diversity, historic animosities, and a lack of a salient national identity in both Kyrgyzstan and Yugoslavia. Furthermore, in both conflicts, the state was biased in favor of one side of the conflict. Transborder ethnic communities also existed, which are associated with violent conflict. Yet, despite these structural features linked to conflict escalation, peak violence in Kyrgyzstan lasted only about two weeks before subsiding. Group dynamics can provide potential answers as to why. This has been the only conflict thus far where all parties have been fragmented. These two groups were highly localized, and even in towns, coordination was primarily haphazard. Moreover, while Kyrgyz groups had greater relative material capabilities compared to Uzbek ones. However, both would have low relative capabilities if compared with groups operating in southern Tajikistan. In other conflicts, either consolidated groups or groups with high membership in absolute terms could perpetuate conflicts, even while reactive groups were present. In Kyrgyzstan, conversely, neither group fit this role. However, even though violence quickly de-escalated this time, it does not mean that tensions cannot reignite. Patterns of conflict mobilization and de-escalation can too, perhaps, be elucidated by group dynamics.

Turning back to Tajikistan, the Kulyob Formations are the one rebel group that deviated from my theory in this chapter. They were consolidated with symmetric capabilities. Like the Slovenian government in Yugoslavia, this was predicted to result in Kulyob Forces targeting the state. Instead, this group engaged in mixed targeting. As a result, this group aligns with my first hypothesis: they are consolidated, and they did view

the state as a threat, and they targeted the state. What the Kulyob Formations lacked is the focus symmetry/high capabilities are predicted to provide; they do not focus on a single type of target. Perhaps, this is because Kurgan-Tyube Forces were symmetric with Kulyob ones, and therefore a threat as well. Perhaps, this occurred because the state was an ambiguous actor that lacked the capacity to defend its supporters in the south. Perhaps, if the state had been able to do so, Kulyob Forces would have been more focused. However, these are all hypothetical situations. As it stands, the Kulyob Formations do not align with their predicted behavior.

Other than the Kulyob Forces, though, my theory does provide insight into how the other three groups in Tajikistan and the two groups in Kyrgyzstan acted in their civil conflicts. When creating my theory, I was examining secessionist conflicts. These two conflicts, however, were not secessionist. The violence in Kyrgyzstan was ethnic in nature, like the conflicts in Yugoslavia, but neither group appeared to be aiming for exit. In Tajikistan, groups fought over control of the national government, rather than state exit. This was the case even though both conflicts were geographically localized and concentrated along an international border. Despite this deviation from the conflicts in Yugoslavia, my theory retains predictive power when examining non-secessionist conflicts. It also retained explanatory use in a shorter conflict that more readily de-escalated.

CHAPTER SEVEN: THE TAJIK CIVIL WAR, 1992

Introduction

Tajikistan declared independence in September of 1991 and held its first elections in December of the same year. Protests, organized by a coalition of opposition political parties, began in the capital, Dushanbe, in March and escalated at the end of April into early May. This was not a war for exit, unlike the secessionist conflicts seen in the collapsing Yugoslavia. Instead, the groups in Tajikistan were attempting to gain control over the government.[182] This conflict progressed in two stages: 1) in Dushanbe between pro-Nabiyev and Opposition forces and 2) in the Southwest between Kulyob and Kurgan-Tyube Forces. Figure 7.1 shows where the pro-Nabiyev/Kulyob Forces, Opposition/Kurgan-Tyube Forces, and CIS/Russian troops were recorded staging attacks. This chapter examines the period from when the protests turned violent in April in Dushanbe until Rakhmonov came to power in November 1992.

[182] The northernmost region, the Leninabad oblast, did threaten secession during this time, but never followed through on these threats. This was the region from which Nabiyev drew his support and possessed a more entrenched Communist apparatus than the south. When political changes occurred in the south, therefore, they threatened secession. In November, though, Leninabadi politicians resecured their role in politics by dissolving the GNR parliament and placing Rakhmonov in power.

Table 7.1: The State and Active Groups in the Tajik Civil War

Phase	Phase I: Dushanbe	Phase II: Southern Tajikistan
The State	Nabiyev Administration	Government of National Reconciliation (GNR)
Targets the State		Kulyob Formations (*Predicted*)
Targets Other Groups		Kurgan-Tyube Formations
Mixed Targeting	Opposition Protesters	Kulyob Formations (*Actual*)
Reactive/No Targeting	Pro-Government Protesters	

As stated in Chapter Six, the pro-Nabiyev, alternatively pro-Communist or later pro-Rakhmonov, forces first solidified their control over Kulyob. Therefore, this group was referred to as "Kulyob Forces/Formations," even when the group began to expand its zone of control out of Kulyob. Groups that could be described as pro-Opposition, pro-Interim Government, pro-democracy, and/or pro-Islam, and later the United Tajik Opposition organized in Kurgan-Tyube, being referred to as "Kurgan-Tyube Forces/Formations."

Like Yugoslavia, Tajikistan was amid an economic recession. In the first six months of 1992, prices quadrupled, production fell 13.2 percent, production of consumer goods fell 19 percent, construction fell 65 percent, and capital investment fell by 70 percent.[183] Additionally, real wages fell 48 to 50 percent in Tajikistan and 52 to 79 percent in rural areas between August 1991 and August 1992.[184] Also like Yugoslavia, this economic recession applied pressure to existing societal cleavages, reducing the barriers to radicalization. It served to make the Tajik government more beholden to outside powers as

[183] INTERFAX (17 June 1992). Pershin, Petrovskiy, and Shishlin (18 June 1992).
[184] Standing Presidium of the Union of the USSR's People's Deputies (18 August 1992).

well, namely on the Russian Federation for military assistance, on other CIS states for humanitarian aid and, later, on the IMF for loans.[185]

Unlike Yugoslavia, the salient political cleavages were not ethnic in nature, nor were groups aiming for secession. Instead, mobilization among the Opposition focused on potential democratization and the opening of the political space to non-Communist politicians. Among this coalition, there were also those desiring the return of religion, specifically Islam, to Tajik politics. The Soviet Union's policy of state atheism was no longer in effect, but there was division over whether religion should be the basis for political organization. Within the Opposition, there were Islamic parties, but the Communist and pro-Nabiyev forces objected to their inclusion, fearing Islamic fundamentalism. Interestingly, one of the most salient divides was geographic in nature, between the north and south. However, the northern provinces were isolated from the fighting due to their more homogenous support for the Communist party *vis-à-vis* the south.

The Tajik Government

Tajikistan's political environment was not stable: between August and December of 1991 alone, the presidency changed hands four times. The preexisting government under Nabiyev lasted until late May 1992, wherein the government transitioned into the GNR, still under Nabiyev. This government incorporated leaders of the opposition, making the

[185] Khovar News Agency (21 August 1992). TIA Khovar Agency (28 August 1992). Khovar-TASS (28 August 1992).
Tajikistan was approved for membership in August, though accepting a loan would require extensive economic and structural reorganization in Tajikistan. IMF leader Henry Laurie stated that he anticipated that Tajikistan would be able to join by the end of 1992. The offer of a loan was made despite the escalating conflict, leading later leaders, and scholars to call the loans predatory. TIA Khovar Agency (28 August 1992).

government highly controversial in the Leninabad and Kulyob oblasts. In September, Nabiyev resigned and Iskandarov became the acting president for the GNR. In November, the GNR was dissolved, Iskandarov was removed, Rakhmonov was elected, and Tajikistan transitioned from a presidential to parliamentary republic.[186] Rakhmonov was from the south and was the chairman of the Kulyob provincial council. His election transferred government power back into the hands of the pro-government/pro-Nabiyev forces while providing a political link between the north and the south.

Table 7.2: The State in Tajikistan

Regime	**Head of State**	**Seat of Power**	**Time in Power**
Nabiyev Admin.	President	Dushanbe	Dec 1991-Sept 1992
Iskandarov Admin.	Acting President	Dushanbe	Sept-Nov 1992
Rakhmanov Admin.	Chairman of the Supreme Soviet (until 1994)[187]	Khujand	Nov 1992-Present

This introduces a problem when identifying who the "state" is at varying points, particularly as it pertains to group alignments. In the protests in Dushanbe, pro-government meant supporting Nabiyev, but in Kurgan-Tyube in September, being pro-government meant supporting Iskandarov and the GNR. In November, this changed once again, with

[186] ITAR-TASS (27 November 1992). Dushanbe Radio (27 November 1992).
[187] In 1994, Rakhmonov became the President of Tajikistan, a position he still holds as of 2022.

Kulyob Forces now being pro-government, due to their support for Rakhmonov. Moreover, the regime did not present a unified front under either Nabiyev or Iskandarov.

It is important to note that the Tajik government did not have an official military at this time. A national guard, the president's special forces unit, and police forces did exist, but they lacked the resources of a professional military. Prior to December 1991, it had relied on both the Soviet military and the military equipment and hardware present within its borders, which technically now belonged to the Russian Federation. There were military garrisons present, but these were staffed by CIS troops, not Tajik ones.

The CIS garrison in Dushanbe claimed neutrality during protests; though, it was quickly raised to combat readiness in Dushanbe in response to armed clashes.[188] Without its backing, Nabiyev lacked the capacity to outright repress the protesters, and repeated denials by CIS to intervene on his behalf undercut regime legitimacy.[189] The Kremlin worried that aggressive action in Tajikistan would prevent the consolidation of the CIS and cause some members to leave due to perceived Russian aggression and colonialism towards its former holdings.[190]

Due to the polarizing nature of the GNR, the military's Officer Assembly was against the Tajik parliament, or the Supreme Soviet, taking over jurisdiction of units and military formations, believing this would escalate the situation.[191] The CIS officers went as far as to declare all military hardware in Tajikistan the property of the Russian

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[188] ITAR-TASS (3 May 1992). Dushanbe Radio (5 May 1992) "State of Emergency Declared."
[189] ITAR-TASS (8 May 1992).
[190] Radio Ukraine (28 April 1992). Radio Ukraine (1 May 1992). Russian Television Network (6 May 1992). INTERFAX (6 May 1992) "Ukraine Removes 'Last Lot' of Tactical Weapons." ITAR-TASS (11 May 1992).
[191] Kozlov (25 June 1992.). KYODO (24 June 1992.)

Federation. However, the GNR and leaders of the former government opposition repeatedly called for the privatization of CIS military sub-units, believing this to be the only means to deescalate the violence and return control of the state to the government.[192] Individuals, like Muslim leader Qazi Akhbar Turadzhonzoda, advised CIS to provide the "lawful government" with weapons, arguing that the government could settle the conflict if it had an army of its own.[193] The Russian government, however, argued that providing the Tajik government with weapons would only make Tajikistan more unstable.[194]

Both Nabiyev and Iskandarov repeatedly appealed to both sides to lay down their arms,[195] but without any means to enforce agreements, neither leader had the tools necessary to incentivize self-organizing units to comply. When there were ceasefires, they did not hold. A ceasefire in October, for example, lasted from 4:00pm on the 14th to 9:00pm on the 15th.[196] Unimpressed with the government's response, Shodmon Yusufov, chairman of the Democratic Party of Tajikistan, formed the Committee for National Salvation. The committee planned on establishing border outposts around Kulyob and Kurgan-Tyube to inspect vehicles and seize weaponry.[197] Despite being yet another government body, Yusufov called the supporters of the Communist Party fascists who wanted a dictatorship, doing little to spur inter-governmental cooperation.[198] While doing so, Yusufov also called

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[192] Karpov (24 June 1992). Gridneva (23 June 1992) "Movement Calls for CIS Troop Privatization."
[193] KYODO (6 October 1992). "Muslim Leader Urges Weapons Supplies."
[194] KYODO (6 October 1992) "Religious Leader Rules Out Transition to Islamic State." Lenskiy (14 October 1992).
[195] ITAR-TASS (25 June 1992). Gridneva (14 August 1992). ITAR-TASS (19 August 1992) "Disarming Opposition "Has Practically Failed'." KYODO (24 August 1992) "22 Civilians Killed." KYODO (5 October 1992) "Iskandarov Says Government Unable to Disarm Detachments."
[196] Kharchenko (14 October 1992). Novosti (15 October 1992).
[197] Dushanbe Radio (22 June 1992).
[198] Dushanbe Radio (22 June 1992).

upon all groups, including explicitly the mafia and other criminal enterprises, to support the committee.[199] Unfortunately for Yusufov, this only encouraged the pro-Nabiyev forces to further claim that the GNR was a criminal enterprise.[200]

The Russian Government

The Russian government was invested in the developing situation in Tajikistan in 1992 for many reasons. First, the Afghan border was a security concern, since drug and weapons crossing into Tajikistan could easily be trafficked into other CIS states, Russia included. Second, conflict spill over into other Central Asian states was beyond the diminished capacity of the post-Soviet military to contain or end. Third, the Russian Federation feared the creation of an Islamic state in its near abroad, primarily pulling from its own experiences fighting various forces in Afghanistan. Fourth, there was a sizable Russian-speaking minority in Tajikistan that the Kremlin feared would be targeted by the creation of an Islamic or non-Communist government.[201]

These fears coalesce into one overarching concern: the loss of Russian influence over CIS. The Kremlin did not have the political capital to act rashly, however. Aggressive moves, especially at the start of the conflict when it overlapped with the CIS summit in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, could startle former Union members into competing alliances. A

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[199] The Committee for National Salvation was later disbanded in October, citing that they had accomplished their goal of destroying the Communist regime, ironically a month before the Communist party would return to prominence under Rakhmonov's leadership. Gridneva (22 June 1992). Programma Radio Odin Network (12 October 1992).
[200] NEZAVISIMAYA GAZETA (14 November 1992).
[201] Protection of Russian minorities is a common refrain in Russian foreign policy even as late as 2022 after the Soviet collapse, used in Crimea, Eastern Ukraine, Latvia, and Kazakhstan, among others. These large Russian populations are there in part due to Soviet demographic engineering, wherein ethnic Russians were moved into key regions to undercut burgeoning nationalist movements.

successful cessation of violence due to Russian actions would be a boon to the nascent alliance, but hasty involvement in another sovereign state would diminish Russian legitimacy.[202] Their position of neutrality deprived the Tajik government of a coercive apparatus necessary to end the conflict swiftly.

The military hardware present was formally transferred to the jurisdiction of the Russian Federation on August 25th.[203] The 201st Motorized Rifle Division (MRD) was the backbone of this force, financed directly by the Russian Defense Ministry.[204] These forces specified their role as maintaining border security, specifically Tajikistan's border with Afghanistan. Despite being placed there to defend against possible Afghan incursions, the 201st garrisons were also targeted by Tajik locals, often those attempting to traffic arms into the country.[205] (See Figure 7.1). Desires to prevent escalation meant that these units also lacked the ability to aggressively engage their adversaries. Furthermore, troubles gaining access to consistent communications and supplies from outside Tajikistan resulted in the 201st threatening to abandon its garrisons entirely.[206]

Rumors circulated that CIS forces attacked Opposition Forces in Dushanbe in May and were supplying Kulyob fighters with weaponry.[207] Nabiyev repeatedly requested

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[202] Other CIS states were critical of Russian/CIS involvement as well, with President Kravchuk of Ukraine stating that Tajikistan calling for aid against Russian troops shows that CIS is a defense union without protection and Kyrgyz officials stating that the lack of trust in CIS meant that it would be unable to solve interethnic conflicts like that in Tajikistan. Krauze (3 October 1992). KYODO (6 October 1992) "President Previews Summit Agenda."
[203] Gridneva (25 August 1992). Ergashev, Salokhiddin (26 August 1992). Trenin (Sept 1992). By October, all joint CIS forces in Moldovia, Transcaucasia, Tajikistan, and outside CIS space were transferred to Russian jurisdiction. I.e., Wherever conflict was underway, CIS troops were transferred to Russian control.
[204] Ergashev (17 June 1992).
[205] Vesti Newscast (20 June 1992). KYODO (19 June 1992). ITAR-TASS (27 August 1992). Gridneva and Kharchenko (15 October 1992).
[206] Gridneva (14 November 1992). "
[207] Karpov (30 September 1992). Musa (3 October 1992). Dushanbe Radio (3 October 1992).

Russian military involvement in Tajik internal affairs, even after leaving office, while the GNR and refugees from Kurgan-Tyube demanded their exit and the transfer of their equipment to the Tajik government.[208] The Russian position was, likewise, inconsistent. At one point, Russian President Boris Yeltsin announced his intent to have the 201st MRD removed from Tajikistan, but he quickly reversed course under the advisement of military leaders in the Russian Defense Ministry and in the 201st's officer corps.[209] General Ashurov, who was in charge of the Russian division, argued that the presence of the Russian military was the only reason Russian speakers were safe in Tajikistan.[210] In October, the 201st was reinforced with four additional battalions, bringing the total number of Russian troops to 10,000.[211] Furthermore, when Rakhmonov came to power in November, Yeltsin backed Rakhmonov's request for collective peacekeeping forces, despite Kremlin officials announcing they would be ineffective in the months prior when requested by the GNR.[212]

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[208] NEGA Reports. (21 August 1992). ITAR-TASS. (3 October 1992).
[209] KYODO. (6 October 1992). "Yeltsin Sends Four Battalions to Tajikistan." Novikov. (6 October 1992). KYODO. (6 October 1992). "Yeltsin Reports Four Additional Battalions Sent to Tajikistan." Khovar News Agency. (8 October 1992). Dushanbe Radio. (7 October 1992). KYODO. (9 October 1992). "Russian General." Mayak Radio. (14 October 1992). Burbyga. (15 October 1992). Chupakhin. (15 October 1992).
[210] KYODO. (9 October 1992). "Russian General."
[211] Novikov. (29 September 1992). Karpov. (30 September 1992). ITAR-TASS. (30 September 1992).
[212] Dushanbe Radio. (25 November 1992).

Figure 7.1: Map of Clashes in Tajikistan
Source: Nations Online Project

Phase I: Dushanbe

In March of 1992, protesters claiming that Nabiyev had rigged the election in December 1991 mobilized in the capital, Dushanbe.[213] Contested elections frequently ignite protests in post-Soviet space: the Orange Revolution in Ukraine, the Rose Revolution in Georgia, the Snow Revolution in Russia, the Blue Jean Revolution in Belarus, and the Tulip Revolution in Kyrgyzstan all also started amidst claims of election rigging. The intensity of the protests varied over the coming months, reaching a fever pitch at the end of April into the start of May. In May, gatherings in Dushanbe ranged from 50,000 to 100,000 individuals, concentrated in two squares: the Opposition in Shakhidon Square and the Pro-Government supporters in Ozodi Square. I predict that with their fragmented structure and low relative material capabilities, the Pro-Government protesters are likely to engage in reactive targeting. Opposition protesters possessed low relative capabilities as well but possess a consolidated organizational structure. Therefore, I predict that the Opposition will target both the state and other groups.

[213] Nabiyev had been the Chairman of the Supreme Soviet of Tajikistan (role that would transition into president in verbiage) in 1991, before stepping down to run for President. At this time Akbarsho Iskandarov stepped into the role of acting head-of-state. He would do so again in September 1992 after Nabiyev's resignation.

Table 7.3: Groups in Dushanbe

Group	Structure	Capabilities	*Predicted Outcome*	*Actual Outcome*	Theory Status
Pro-Government	Fragmented	Low	*No/ Reactive Targeting*	*No/ Reactive Targeting*	Aligns
Opposition	Consolidated	Low	*Mixed Targeting*	*Mixed Targeting*	Aligns

Pro-Government Protesters

Groups organized along party lines during the protests, with the supporters of the Communist party administration and the Nabiyev regime versus Islamist and liberal democratic parties. Though comprised of supporters for a single political party and a single political leader, Nabiyev could not officially support the pro-government protesters. As a result, the Pro-Government protesters were largely fragmented and had low relative material capabilities, relying on Nabiyev and CIS for support if any violence did begin. I predict that these protesters will primarily engage in reactive targeting. This does not mean that they did not participate in violence, simply that they will be less likely to initiate attacks.

Organizational Structure

Pro-Government forces were fragmented at this time; they were organized and active but lacked clear leadership, as the government did not wish to be directly associated with the protests. Such a connection would undermine the idea that these protests were the natural organization of individuals expressing their honest support for the regime. President

Rahmon Nabiyev did vocalize his support of these protesters, but the political leadership of the government was not directly present. Furthermore, these protests occurred in response to the Opposition's protests, not an organic upswell in support or opposition. This is relatively common pattern in protests, with pro-state forces reacting to the opposition organizing. In mid-May, these pro-government organizers began moving their operations out of Dushanbe. With the GNR in place, these groups found independent leadership under individuals like Sangak Safarov and Rustam Abdurakhim in Kulyob.

Relative Material Capabilities

The government did not utilize coercive measures against protesters in Ozodi Square as they did in Shakhidon Square, and reports indicate that the presidential guards supplied Nabiyev's supporters with over 1,000 arms.[214] Even with arms supplied by the battalion, the national guard and the CIS garrison all had greater military capabilities. Furthermore, these weapons quickly vanished entirely from news reports on the ongoing events, and they were suspected to have been moved out of the city.[215] This created knock-on effects for Nabiyev's efforts to disarm both sides, as the opposition refused to give up their arms until these weapons, no longer in Dushanbe, were surrendered as well.[216] Due to this aid and their alignment with the state, there was little incentive for the Pro-Government protesters to target the state despite their organization as a non-state actor.

These protesters did not target the state or other groups in April and May 1992. Nabiyev's special battalion engaged in fighting, but this was a state force, distinct from the

[214] ITAR-TASS. (7 May 1992). ITAR-TASS. (14 May 1992).
[215] ITAR-TASS. (14 May 1992).
[216] ITAR-TASS. (14 May 1992).

protesters. Additionally, while protesters forces were targeted and responded to attacks, they were not the ones predominantly *instigating* the attacks. The support received from the government, additionally, meant that these protesters could, and did, rely on the state to protect them in this first phase of the conflict. This protection did not last, and the behavior of individuals and groups aligned with the motives of the Pro-Government protesters underwent structural and capabilities changes that shifted their targeting. With the Opposition targeting the state first and the protesters second in Dushanbe, Pro-Government forces could survive while only responding to attacks carried out by others and relying on the state. Additionally, with their fragmented organizational structure, the protesters struggled to restructure in response to quick changes on the ground as the protests turned into a civil war.

Opposition Protesters

Though in a less advantageous position *vis-à-vis* the Pro-Government protesters, the Opposition was well organized in Dushanbe. I predict that due to their consolidated organizational structure, combined with their low relative material capabilities, these forces will engage in mixed targeting of both state forces and locations and other groups. In the fighting, Opposition forces' primary target was state forces, quickly securing government and communications facilities throughout the capital, while their secondary target was the pro-Nabiyev protesters. However, the Opposition was under-armed compared to state forces, but it was comparably armed to the pro-Nabiyev protesters.

Organizational Structure

There was explicit coordination between Opposition political leaders and protesters, making their side more consolidated. The political coalition, comprising of anti-Communist forces, was a diverse one, but during this initial stage of the protests they coordinated well. This group included religious parties, like the Islamic Revival/Resistance Party (IRP) and the Rastokhez Movement, and liberal elements, like the Democratic Party of Tajikistan and the urban intelligentsia. This alliance further consolidated when Major General Farukh Niyazov told news outlets that Nabiyev directly ordered in the 3rd Article of his May 1st decree to distribute weapons to presidential supporters during the protests.[217] The opposition's key demands during these protests were 1) new elections and 2) the dissolution of Nabiyev's special battalion.[218]

The attacks then carried out by the Opposition were selected to have the most impact with the resources available: aiming for communications and possible reinforcement routes, seizing a local TV station, blocking the roads to-and-from the city, and commandeering the presidential palace.[219] Though, the latter occurred due to a National Guard Major General defecting to the opposition to preclude bloodshed.[220] The national guard repelled an attack on the airport; however, Russian officials denied that an attack on the airport happened or that their forces were involved.[221] Despite possessing less

[217] Dushanbe Radio. (25 June 1992).
[218] INTERFAX. (6 May 1992). "Opposition Urges Coalition Talks." Radio Rossii. (7 May 1992). Dushanbe Radio. (7 May 1992).
[219] Teleradiokompaniya Ostankino Television First Program Network. (5 May 1992). Dushanbe Radio. (5 May 1992). "Opposition Seizes TV Center." ITAR-TASS. (6 May 1992). "Opposition Appeal Read on TV." Postfactum. (6 May 1992).
[220] INTERFAX. (6 May 1992). "Guard Commander Joins Opposition."
[221] ITAR-TASS. (6 May 1992). "CIS Troops "Maintaining Neutrality"."

capacity than their opponents, the Opposition was able to both select and then attack specific locations – indicating a consolidated organizational structure capable of directing these attacks.

Relative Material Capabilities

The Opposition protesters were quick to acquire arms and military equipment, like armored vehicles.[222] Nabiyev and the Supreme Soviet made several overtures to defuse the situation, such as wage increases, pension payouts etc., alongside more coercive measures, like arrests and the introduction of combat-ready subunits to Shakhidon Square.[223] Opposition protesters, in turn, created their own formations, establishing their own guard 20,000 strong, most of whom were armed.[224] However, these forces did not supersede those held by the combination of government forces and CIS military ones. Relatively speaking, the Dushanbe CIS garrison had the greatest material capabilities of the state and non-state groups assembled, and despite its claimed neutrality, it did align more with the state than any other actor.

Nabiyev declared a state of emergency and established a curfew the evening of May 5th, banning all forms of assembly and protest and ordering all military units in the Dushanbe garrison to full combat readiness.[225] In an effort to stave off further violence, Nabiyev attempted to partially acquiesce to opposition demands, announced his intention to create a reconciliation government and dissolve his special battalion.[226] With the

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[222] Russian Television Network. (7 May 1992).
[223] INTERFAX. (4 May 1992). Radio Rossii. (5 May 1992).
[224] Russian Television Network. (4 May 1992).
[225] Dushanbe Radio. (5 May 1992). "State of Emergency Declared."
[226] INTERFAX. (6 May 1992) "Opposition Urges Coalition Talks." Radio Rossii (7 May 1992). Dushanbe Radio (7 May 1992).

appointment of opposition leaders to the GNR, the political coalition that had coordinated well during the protests in Dushanbe became less aligned, especially when moving away from the capital. Though violence continued, the opposition parties made significant headway through the protests that ran March through May, leaving Shakhidon Square for the first time in two months after the new government was formed.[227]

Phase II: Southern Tajikistan

The major issue when trying to track how groups are behaving during the Tajik Civil War is that it is often unclear who is acting where. "Pro-government" is a position that changes over the course of the first several months of the conflict. "Unidentified actors" are commonly reported as the perpetrators of border crossings, attacks, and arms trafficking.[228] Groups are often identified as "militia" or "self-defense units," self-organized, non-state actors fighting in a locale – with observers being unable to distinguish between the pro-/anti-government forces. Additionally, both presidential guardsmen and Opposition forces attacked the CIS garrison on the Afghan border in June, even though CIS forces would later align against the Opposition.[229]

[227] Podyapolskiy and Titov (14 May 1992).
[228] Gridneva (26 June 1992). KYODO (26 June 1992). KYODO (18 August 1992).
[229] KYODO (19 June 1992).

Table 7.4: Groups in Southern Tajikistan

Group	**Structure**	**Capabilities**	***Predicted Outcome***	***Actual Outcome***	**Theory Status**
Kulyob Forces/the Popular Front	Consolidated	High/ Symmetric	*Targeting the State*	*Mixed Targeting*	Divergent
Kurgan-Tyube/the United Tajik Opposition	Fragmented	High/ Symmetric	*Targeting Other Groups*	*Targeting Other Groups*	Aligns

Power quickly devolved from the political actors that spearheaded the protests in Dushanbe to the military commanders on both sides of the conflict. By late August, preliminary estimates from the Ministry of Internal Affairs indicate that non-state actors had amassed somewhere in the realm of 20,000 firearms, and no groups reported their intention to voluntarily surrender their arms. More weaponry still poured in from Afghanistan as well.[230]

There were two groups operating in southern Tajikistan: The Kulyob Forces and the Kurgan-Tyube Force. As shown in Figure 7.1, these two locations are relatively close to one another, but pro-Government forces consolidated first around Kulyob, in part due to the presence of many of Nabiyev's recently dissolved Presidential Guard. With the creation of the GNR, this group was no longer pro-Government. The Opposition protesters organized around Kurgan-Tyube and were early targets of the Kulyob Forces. However,

[230] ITAR-TASS (19 August 1992) "Disarming Opposition "Has Practically Failed'." Khovar-TASS (26 August 1992).

the relative capacity of the Tajik state was diminished by the protests, as many of its coercive apparatuses were dissolved in the creation of the GNR. This then left the CIS as the major remaining state-linked coercive apparatus. However, this body was implicitly and then explicitly under the control of the Russian Federation, and the Kremlin's primary concern was the Tajik-Afghan border. Additionally, the Kremlin feared potential Islamic Fundamentalism from the non-Communist parties now included in the GNR, leading to a lack of support for the GNR and Iskandarov.

Between August and October, Kulyob Forces saw numerous military successes against pro-NGR forces and volunteer units. The fighting was the harshest around Kulyob and Kurgan-Tyube, but pro-Nabiyev forces quickly locked up control of Kulyob. Kurgan-Tyube became the most dangerous area in Tajikistan, even more than Kulyob. Numerous measures to spur de-escalation and disarmament, like arms controls posts and mandating internal passports for movement between locales were attempted with limited success.[231] Much like in Kulyob, pro-Nabiyev forces made quick work of their political opponents in Kurgan-Tyube: exacting revenge killings on members of the opposition.[232] Several protesters returning from Dushanbe to the oblast went missing at this time. Even more excruciating for residents, they could not hold funerals for their dead, as armed formations in the Vakhshskiy Rayon did not accept the new government's jurisdiction and prevented access to state and religious offices.[233] By the end of August, the region had declared a state of emergency.[234] Individuals began turning to self-defense units and religious

[231] Khodzhayev (20 August 1992).
[232] Karpov (12 June 1992).
[233] Karpov (12 June 1992).
[234] Dushanbe Radio (28 August 1992).

organizations for protection, rather than to the state. By the latter half of June, self-defense units supporting the IRP were involved in a sustained conflict with a unit of the president's guards from Kulyob in Kurgan-Tyube.[235]

Thousands of refugees fled the fighting in Kurgan-Tyube, turning the oblast's center into a ghost town.[236] Many of these refugees found their way to Dushanbe, where there was consistent outcry against the Russian troops acting in the region.[237] The Chairman of the Kurgan-Tyube oblast blamed the escalation in attacks in October on Russian encouragement of pro-Nabiyev forces. He specifically cited the fact that three heavy tanks and an armored personnel carrier (APC) vanished from Kurgan-Tyube between September 27th and October 2nd and had appeared in Kulyob. Tellingly, these tanks and the APC vanished with their Russian crews – and this was not the first time such an event had occurred.[238] On October 3rd, Dushanbe Radio reported that Russian tanks were now shelling Kurgan-Tyube under the pretext of "protecting their hardware," but the GNR and opposition forces believed that they were aiding Kulyob insurgents. They compared Russian actions to those it had undertaken in the Afghanistan countryside to support its government of choice.[239] Kulyob-based forces then moved west to Kalininabad, before launching a sustained assault on Kurgan-Tyube. The GNR-backed government of Kurgan-Tyube was forced to flee south to Kolkhozabad. By mid-October, Kolkhozabad was too encircled, with a full-scale attack seeming eminent.[240]

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[235] Babakhanov (17 June 1992). KYODO (18 June 1992).
[236] Karpov (30 September 1992).
[237] KYODO (30 September 1992) "Women Refugees Protest Outside Supreme Council."
[238] Karpov (30 September 1992).
[239] Dushanbe Radio (3 October 1992).
[240] Radio Rossii (11 October 1992). KYODO (14 October 1992).

Kulyob Forces: A Deviant Case

I predicted that due to their consolidated organizational structure and symmetric material capabilities relative to other groups and state forces operating in Southern Tajikistan, Kulyob Formations would target the state. However, Kulyob Forces engaged in mixed targeting, deviating from my theory. These forces attacked both the GNR and self-organizing units throughout the region. My first hypothesis is corroborated by this outcome, as the Kulyob groups did view the state as their ultimate opponent. However, it does not corroborate my second hypothesis that specifies that rebel groups with high/symmetric material capabilities should be focused on a single type of target. Instead, Kulyob Formations behaved more similar to groups with low capabilities along this dimension. In doing so, they still targeted the state, but they did not only target the state.

Fighting continued in Kurgan-Tyube between Sangak's Popular Front units and volunteer units, though the center transferred to Kolkhozabad as Sangak solidified his group's control over Kurgan-Tyube. Controlling Kolkhozabad was of great strategic interest for the Kulyob fighters, as with the village and its railroad, Kulyob Forces could get around Dushanbe's blockade and receive supplies – particularly food – from Uzbekistan and other CIS states.[241] In November, Kulyob groups turned back North to focus their efforts on blockading Dushanbe just before the November government restructuring.[242]

[241] KYODO (14 October 1992).
[242] People's Democratic Army of Tajikistan (14 November 1992).

Worries of armed groups from Kulyob heading north into the capital were abound, and the GNR spent a considerable effort to set up and maintain blockades around the capital.[243] Unfortunately, these blockades were later used by the groups from Kulyob to cut off Dushanbe from the rest of the country.[244] Alongside the meetings of the Supreme Soviet in Khujand in November, Nabiyev supporters continued their string of successes, taking control of Yavan, attacking Nurek,[245] destroying the railway connecting Dushanbe to other CIS states twice in the month, and amassing self-defense units around the Gissar district, less than 20 kilometers from Dushanbe.[246] Yavan is a strategically important for launching attacks on Dushanbe, making these moves crucial for putting the Kulyob Forces in a strong negotiating position when Rakhmonov, who had been the Chairman of the Kulyob Provincial Council, was elected Chairman of the Supreme Soviet in November. At the same time, a joint Tajik-Uzbek detachment was moving in on the capital from the West.[247]

Organizational Structure

The Kulyob Forces were consolidated, with clear political goals and military leadership. Non-state actors in Kulyob expressed support for Nabiyev over Iskandarov, citing the necessity of a return to the Communist party's control and the dissolution of the GNR. The forces united under Sangak Safarov and Rustam Abdurakhim, taking on the name the Popular Front.[248] Both wished to restore the government as it was on May 7th,

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[243] KYODO (30 September 1992) "Roadblocks Set Up on Approaches to Dushanbe."
[244] People's Democratic Army of Tajikistan (14 November 1992).
[245] A key hydroelectric plant for Dushanbe and the surrounding areas was located here.
[246] ITAR-TASS (18 November 1992). Umarov (18 November 1992). Novosti (18 November 1992).
[247] Rotar and Ayubzod (20 November 1992).
[248] Dushanbe Radio (3 October 1992). News sources throughout Tajikistan continued to refer to the Popular Front as "Kulyob Forces" or some variation thereof for the remainder of 1992.

1992, restoring Nabiyev to the presidency and dissolving the GNR. Political messaging for the Popular Front sought to capitalize on Russian fears of Islamic fundamentalism and, by extension, the Islamic Revival Party in order to gain their support.[249] This messaging appears to have been successful, for although Kulyob Forces targeted Russian/CIS military installations early on in the conflict, Deputy Prime Minister Davalt Ismonov stated that Russian forces were supporting non-government forces in Kulyab and encouraging their operations to expand into the Kurgan-Tyube oblast.[250]

A consolidated group of fighters organized under Sangak Safarov took control over the mountain passes connecting Dushanbe with the South and East of the country, cutting the GNR off from the conflict.[251] Reports indicated that on June 22nd militant groups under Safarov had expanded their influence from Kulyob to the Kurgan-Tyube, targeting members of the Islamic Revival Party and the Rastokhez Movement.[252] At the same time, all political parties except the Communist Party were disbanded in Kulyob.[253]

In an interview, Sangak Safarov, leader of the Popular Front, he stated that the creation of the State Council was a mistake and that his group and others from Kulyob were fighting for the restoration of the republic Tajikistan had until May 7th.[254] In the same interview, he stated that Kulyob did not desire to attack Dushanbe, but their hand was forced by the Muslim extremist and criminal nature of the state and non-state groups

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[249] KYODO (5 October 1992) "Muslim Leader Supports." KYODO (9 October 1992) "Regional Leader Opposes Russian Withdrawal."
[250] Musa (3 October 1992).
[251] Postfactum (22 June 1992).
[252] Gridneva (23 June 1992) "Government Said "In Full Control' of Situation."
[253] Postfactum (22 June 1992).
[254] NEZAVISIMAYA GAZETA (14 November 1992).

operating under the banner of the GNR. Specifically, blame was placed on Turadzhonzoda, a religious leader, Yusupov, the leader of the Democratic Party, Ousmon, the leader of the IRP, and Abdudzhabor of the Rostokhez movement.[255]

He additionally advocated for the introduction of more Russian troops into the conflict, further solidifying the fact that Russian forces, for all their claims of neutrality, were backing the Popular Front/pro-Nabiyev/pro-Communist forces. At the same time, the 201st was entrenching its positions around Dushanbe.[256] While the Tajik state expressed wariness over the introduction of any forces – peacekeeping or otherwise – into Tajikistan, Safarov asserted that the Kulyob Forces were aligned with Uzbek President Islam Karimov. This put the Kulyob Forces in a good negotiating position *vis-à-vis* the groups from Kurgan-Tyube, especially with Kulyob officials being placed into positions of prominence within the Supreme Soviet and this new government receiving recognition and backing from the Kremlin.

Relative Material Capabilities

The Kulyob Forces had high material capabilities, and individuals organized quickly in Kulyob, with 1,700 of the president's armed guardsmen already present by May 18th.[257] Groups of pro-Nabiyev forces seized weapons from Kolkhozabad and Vakhsksiy Rayons, along with the frontier militia and security precincts in Pyandzh, a border outpost in South Tajikistan, seizing guns and ammunition.[258] By the end of August, unofficial sources stated that about 15,000 people had taken up arms in the region, largely under the

[255] KYODO (25 November 1992).
[256] Novosti (18 November 1992). ITAR-TASS (18 November 1992).
[257] Postfactum (15 May 1992).
[258] Babakhanov (17 June 1992). KYODO (19 June 1992).

control of self-armed units.[259] Moreover, Kulyob Forces possessed sub-machine guns, grenade launchers, anti-hail cannons, sixty-four shielded trucks, and four tanks, though their primary focus was on small arms and military vehicles.[260] With these resources, the Kulyob Forces were similar in terms of numbers and access to arms to those operating out of Kurgan-Tyube. With the Kremlin's aim for neutrality and the GNR's inability to project coercive power over the south from Dushanbe, this meant that the Kulyob Formations had symmetric relative material capabilities.

Targeting the State versus Mixed Targeting

With its consolidated structure and symmetric material capabilities, I had predicted that the Kulyob Forces would target the state. This is not what is observed, though. Instead, Kulyob Forces targeted the state alongside non-state actors. The behavior of the Kulyob Forces raises an important question: why did their behavior deviate from my theory? We do observe that Kurgan-Tyube Forces were fragmented but had symmetric capabilities, which would lead them to engage in targeting other groups. This is how we observe them behaving. Moreover, we see the Kurgan-Tyube, and eventual United Tajik Opposition, become more reactive as they lose symmetry when the government comes under Rakhmonov and receives more explicit international support, primarily from Russia and Uzbekistan. Nonetheless, my theory does account for this change in behavior for one side of the conflict. Yet, it fails to do so for the other.

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[259] KYODO (27 August 1992).
[260] Postfactum (22 June 1992). KYODO (30 September 1992) "Roadblocks Set Up on Approaches to Dushanbe." ITAR-TASS (18 November 1992).

This suggests that there is an interaction between the rebel groups and the state that is not accounted for in my theory. In the Yugoslav Wars, armed groups had to contend with the YNA, and barring the Slovenian government, the groups with high/symmetric relative capabilities were those supplied by the YNA. Though Yugoslavia dissolved, its military was still a powerful actor. In Tajikistan, we see the territory of the state remain whole, but its government lacks a similar coercive capacity. The Soviet, now CIS, military in Tajikistan would be the equivalent to the YNA in Yugoslavia, but the remnants of the Soviet military aimed for neutrality. As a result, the actor with the greatest coercive capabilities *vis-à-vis* Kulyob was the Kurgan-Tyube Forces. This is a situation unaccounted for in my inductive analysis – what occurs when the state is not the biggest obstacle to overcome to accomplish one's political goals? Since the governing body of the state was contested and lacked the ability to enforce its rule, the forces operating around Kurgan-Tyube were the impediment to Kulyob's consolidation of power in the south. This was only further confirmed when Rakhmonov, a government official from Kulyob, was elected as the Chairman of the Supreme Soviet when the GNR was dissolved. Therefore, we now have a group that was meant to be targeting the state becoming the state in November 1992.

Even though Yugoslavia collapsed, the Serbian government stepped in to administer the parts of the state that remained and exerted influence over the conflicts in the other republics. In the Tajik Civil War, the Russian Federation was the body that paralleled Serbia, not the Tajik government. This government had administrative precedence, like the other governments in Central Asian states. The creation of the GNR was meant to be a compromise that stabilized the government, but it instead triggered

greater instability and mobilization. This loss of control over the state's territory and monopoly on the use of force corresponded with a loss of state legitimacy. Competing national government aiming to control the whole of the state's territory was not seen in republic-level governments in Yugoslavia. There were other bodies aiming to be governments, but only over specific regions.

The Kulyob Forces and eventual Patriotic League is an outlier in my theory. Yet, theories aim to explain most cases most of the time, and while it does not accurately predict Kulyob Forces' behavior, these groups were still attacking the state during this time. Thus, while it failed to accurately predict the full behavior of the Kulyob Forces, it is still not wholly incorrect, as they did attack the state. More importantly, the theory does accurately predict the behavior of the other three groups and explains the variation in their behavior over time based on changes in their organizational structure and capabilities. Competition over the group that would have the monopoly on the use of force, would have the legitimacy to rule over the whole of the state was predominantly between Kulyob Formations and Kurgan-Tyube Forces, not Kulyob and state forces.

Kurgan-Tyube Forces

The Kurgan-Tyube Forces targeted other rebel groups, namely the Kulyob Forces. These rebel groups are distinct from the GNR, and the fighting was primarily carried out by self-organized defense units, not official state-sanctioned forces. The Opposition was represented by a coalition of political parties: the IRP, the Democratic Party, the Rastokhez Movement, and the liberal intelligentsia. This coalition represented both Islamic and liberal democratic interests, to varying degrees, and the coalition of political forces present in

Dushanbe desynchronized as the conflict evolved. While the creation of the GNR triggered increased mobilization of the pro-Government and then Kulyob Forces, it started to demobilize the Opposition, as this satisfied their major political objective of being incorporated into the government. When protesters left Dushanbe to return to their homes, then, the organizational structure of the Opposition fragmented.

Political leaders in Leninabad, Kulyob and the Kremlin feared that the coalition took its cues from Muslim clergy and religious leaders (Qazi), rather than their democratic cohorts. This spurred fears of Islamic fundamentalism in pro-Nabiyev and international actors.[261] In late May, for instance, the Pravda predicted that Tajikistan was likely to become an Islamic state.[262] Nabiyev fed international fears that the GNR and Iskandarov were controlled by Islamists to garner Russian sympathy and support.[263] Especially towards the end of 1992, the IRP received blame for starting the war, with calls from Nabiyev, Rakhmonov, and other CIS leaders to neutralize the threat IRP posed.[264]

Organizational Structure

Compared to their initial outing in Dushanbe, Opposition protesters, now Kurgan-Tyube Forces, transitioned from being consolidated to fragmented. This transition is predicted to trigger a transition from their primary target being the state to other rebel groups. This transition in structure occurred for two primary reasons. First, many of the leaders of the Opposition in Dushanbe were incorporated into the Interim Government, making their political influence over individuals organizing to fight more suspect. Second,

[261] Skosyrev (8 May 1992). Dushanbe Radio (25 November 1992).
[262] ITAR-TASS (22 May 1992).
[263] Lenskiy (14 October 1992).
[264] KYODO (20 November 1992).

it also shifted their priorities – instead of fighting against the government, they were now fighting to maintain it. Third, there was also disparity between how the members of the coalition were treated by the GNR, with many remaining wary of Islamic political parties. Conversely, the Nabiyev-aligned groups now had a clear goal to unify behind.

Relative Material Capabilities

Despite this, the Kurgan-Tyube groups were better armed than their Dushanbe counterparts, and their membership was more widespread. As such, these formations had symmetric capabilities to the Kulyob ones. The groups, therefore, should be seen principally targeting other rebel groups.

Kurgan-Tyube Forces did not have the support of Nabiyev's presidential guard or the tacit support of the CIS forces, but the Kurgan-Tyube Forces were not without their own military capabilities. They acquired these resources through seizures from various CIS garrisons and weapons depots and trafficking arms from Afghanistan. Numerous groups of unidentified Tajiks crossed the border into Afghanistan; the frequency of these crossings in both directions increased in frequency over the first months of the war as groups continued their pursuit of arms and ammunition. The border guards confiscated 4,590,345 rubles, over 3,000 units of weaponry, including two light machine guns, two automatic rifles, a carbine, four pistols, ten grenades, and an unspecified amount of ammunition. [265] They also detained approximately 800 people.

[265] Ergashev, Salokhiddin. (15 August 1992). Ergashev, Salokhiddin. (17 August 1992). Znamenskiy. (24 August 1992). ITAR-TASS. (30 September 1992). KYODO. (4 October 1992).

It is unlikely that the CIS forces were able to halt all border crossing or confiscate all weaponry moving across the border. The sheer number of confiscations, therefore, indicates that both the Kulyob and Kurgan-Tyube Forces were able to traffic in a substantial amount of weaponry. Preliminary reports indicate that Kurgan Tyube Forces had around 1,500 sub machine guns, 3 armored vehicles, and least 1 tank.[266] Reports from October and November indicated that the two groups possessed approximately 80,000 weapons, armored vehicles, and anti-tank guns present, along with hail-dispersal and anti-aircraft missiles.[267] Kurgan-Tyube Forces were also rumored to have been aided by the Mujahedeen, namely reports that the IRP receiving weapons and training from Afghanistan.[268] Though claims are conflicting,[269] some did report that Islamic paramilitary groups were being trained by Hekmatyar, founder of the Hezb-e Islami party and Mujahedeen commander during the Soviet-Afghan War.[270]

Kurgan-Tyube, like Kulyob, initially was divided into spheres of influence between supporters and opponents of the Reconciliation Government. Unlike Kulyob, the GNR did initially have control over government offices and public support. On the opposition-side, the IRP was the major power-player in Kurgan-Tyube, and the opposition saw more initial success in Kurgan-Tyube than Kulyob. When Iskandarov authorized the use of force against illegal armed formations, Kulyob Forces escalated their fight against the pro-GNR

[266] Novosti. (27 June 1992).
[267] KYODO. (6 October 1992). "Religious Leader Rules Out Transition to Islamic State." Gridneva and Kharchenko. (8 October 1992). Samoletov. (22 November 1992).
[268] ITAR-TASS. (19 August 1992). "Press Review"
[269] Radio Moscow. (23 August 1992).
[270] Rotar. (19 August 1992).

government and self-defense groups in Kurgan-Tyube.[271] As a result of their symmetric material capabilities to other parties and a fragmented organizational structure, we see the Kurgan-Tyube Formations engage in the targeting of other groups, namely the Kulyob Forces. If the group had maintained its consolidated structure, perhaps the Opposition would have continued to push for government reforms and an expansion of the GNR's coercive capabilities. Instead, we see this group rely on an assortment of tacitly aligned but separate self-defense units that struggled to coordinate their movements in southern Tajikistan.

Conclusions: The Tajik Civil War

In November, the GNR began to crumble. Operating out of Khujand, the Supreme Soviet removed Iskandarov from office in a vote 140 to 54.[272] Then, Emomali Rakhmonov was elected as chairman of the Supreme Soviet in a vote 186 to 11 on November 19th.[273] News sources predicted that the new government would be dominated by the Communist party, with the coalitions from Khujand and Kulyob joining forces. The Supreme Soviet stipulated that it would only lift the blockade on Dushanbe if the Government of National Reconciliation resigned. As Kulyob Forces were the ones blockading Dushanbe, this trade is only credible if the GNR and Kurgan-Tyube Forces believed that the Supreme Soviet could dictate policy to Kulyob Forces. The Supreme Soviet also demanded that all weapons be transferred to the 201st.[274] The Kurgan-Tyube Forces and other IRP and Democratic Party aligned groups main goals were to have Dushanbe blockade lifted and for Kulyob

[271] Karpov (30 September 1992).
[272] Novosti (18 November 1992). ITAR-TASS (18 November 1992). ITAR-TASS (19 November 1992).
[273] Ochilov (19 November 1992).
[274] Ivlev (11 November 1992).

Formations to leave Kurgan-Tyube. They did, however, specify that they wanted staged, simultaneous disarmament.[275] At this time, the Acting Interior Minister projected that there was somewhere in the range of 18,000 firearms, including grenade launchers and machine guns, in the hands of Tajik militant groups.[276]

In an effort to de-escalate the conflict, the Tajik parliament invited the heads and field commanders of the warring groups to Khujand for a session on November 25th, promising their safety if they came to talks.[277] Safarov, the field commander of the Kurgan-Tyube Forces (presently in Kofarnikhon), Mukhamadullo Khusaynov, and the field commander of the, of the IRP/Democratic Party affiliated formations in Dushanbe, Khabibulo Ismat, announced that they would be willing to lay down arms and accept the government under Rakhmonov.[278] The field commanders present in Khujand signed a truce agreement on November 25th before their return home. However, at the end of November, the blockade of Dushanbe continued and there was a news vacuum in the South, casting the ceasefire into question. News from the Pyandzh border indicated that fighting was ongoing, with Kulyob fighters targeting refugee convoys to search for IRP members.[279] Though Rakhmonov would remain in power, the civil war would last until 1997, with an insurgency continuing until 2008.

The groups in Tajikistan were not operating at the same capacity of a state's professional military, but the Tajik government did not possess a professional military.

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[275] People's Democratic Army of Tajikistan (14 November 1992). KYODO (26 November 1992).
[276] Khovar (24 November 1992).
[277] Ochilov (23 November 1992).
[278] KYODO (26 November 1992).
[279] Mayak Radio (28 November 1992).

When fighting in Dushanbe, the state had a degree of coercive capacity, stemming from the Presidential Guard, the National Guard, and the CIS garrison. Due to this, both the Pro-Government and Opposition protesters possessed low capabilities *vis-à-vis* the state associated coercive bodies. The Pro-Government forces were fragmented at this time, and as predicted, were primarily reactive during the protests. The Opposition at this time was consolidated and engaged in mixed targeting.

However, the Tajik government, under Nabiyev and the GNR, could not project its influence far beyond Dushanbe. In the fighting to the south, Kurgan-Tyube and Kulyob Forces did not have to contend with state or CIS forces. Thus, these two groups had largely symmetric material capabilities. In this transition away from Dushanbe, group structure also shifted. The Pro-Government/Kulyob Forces consolidated, but the Opposition/Kurgan-Tyube Forces fragmented. As structures and capabilities changed, so did the type of targeting in which groups engaged. The Kulyob Formations changed from reactive behavior to mixed targeting, deviating from my prediction of them targeting the state. The Kurgan-Tyube Forces shifted from mixed targeting to targeting other groups, aligning with their predicted behavior.

The consolidated nature of the Kulyob Forces in comparison to the fragmented organizational structure of the Kurgan-Tyube Forces and associated formations translated into a series of early victories for the Kulyob Forces. These early victories were then reinforced by the regime changes that occurred in November 1992. While some of these attacks were on the state, much of the fighting occurred between the two groups operating in the south while the state's influence was confined to the capital. The deviation from their

predicted behavior indicates that the capacity of the state and the state's legitimacy does have some effect on group behavior. Despite this, my theory does accurately predict the behavior of the other three groups in this conflict.

CHAPTER EIGHT: THE INTERETHNIC CLASHES IN KYRGYZSTAN

Introduction

In this section, I will examine the interethnic violence between Kyrgyz and Uzbeks in Kyrgyzstan along the Kyrgyz-Uzbek border in May of 2010. These clashes were precipitated by protests in April 2010 in Bishkek. These protests, referred to as the People's April Revolution or the Melon Revolution, to follow the naming conventions of the Color Revolutions, advocated for democratic and economic reforms. There were isolated instances of violence during these protests, but it did not progress into an armed conflict until later in the year. This conflict was not a civil war, falling more clearly into the realm of ethnic conflict or ethnic riot, and the group construction reflected this. Official reports put the death toll around 200, but the actual count could be as high as 2,000.[280] According to UN estimates, nearly 20 percent of the country's population of 5.3 million was affected by the violence.[281]

Unlike Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan did not experience a civil war alongside the Soviet collapse. The 2010 Ethnic Clashes in Kyrgyzstan occurred in the Fergana Valley, which stretches across three states: Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan. It is a region not unfamiliar with ethnic violence. The region is ethnically heterogenous in all three, and the borders, drawn by the Soviet Union, purposefully cut through ethnic and clan communities. During the Soviet period, citizens could freely move between the republics, but this became

[280] Interfax (18 June 2010). Lambroschini (2010). The Herald (18 June 2010). Harding (19 June 2010).
[281] Trend News Agency (13 June 2010). Harding (2010).

more complicated when the republics gained their independence. As such, violence occurring in the Fergana Valley is part ethnic conflict and part potential interstate war.

Despite being further removed from the collapse of a state, the pre-conflict situation in Kyrgyzstan was similar to pre-war Yugoslavia: high ethnic diversity in a border region, a history of past ethnic violence, and a pattern of political and economic inequality between groups. This region resembled the Drina Valley in Bosnia, where some of the harshest fighting in the Yugoslav Wars took place. Furthermore, there was a history of periodic violence between the two groups. Notably there was a flareup in the same region in 1991 that was pacified only with the introduction of Soviet troops.

These features would typically be fertile ground for prolonged violence. Yet, the clashes in Kyrgyzstan did not escalate. I assert that this conflict diverged from previous cases for two main reasons. First, both rebel groups were fragmented, resulting in localized mobilization with a lack of connections between centers of violence. Neither group had a robust network between hotspots. Second, Kyrgyzstan's border with Uzbekistan was porous, allowing Uzbek refugees to flow into Uzbekistan, separating the two groups while violence was at its most severe. This was not possible in Bosnia, because Serbians had co-ethnics on the other side of the border, but Bosnian Muslims did not. Since Srpska forces were attacking Bosnian government and affiliated forces, they did not have reason to de-escalate by retreating.

Table 8.1: The State and Groups in the Interethnic Clashes in Kyrgyzstan

The State	Kyrgyz Interim Government under Otunbayeva
Targets the State	
Targets Other Groups	Kyrgyz Groups
Mixed Targeting	
Reactive/No Targeting	Uzbek Groups

Much like in Tajikistan, the violence in Kyrgyzstan was concentrated in the south along an international border. Contrary to violence in Tajikistan, though, this violence was concentrated in an ethnically heterogenous region as opposed to a more homogenous one. Additionally, Nabiyev's base of support was Leninabad, which was not the center of violence in Tajikistan. In Kyrgyzstan, violence was concentrated in the former president's, Kurmanbek Bakiyev, home and surrounding regions.

Violence was concentrated in the Fergana Valley, an ethnically diverse region stretches across Uzbekistan, southern Kyrgyzstan, and northern Tajikistan.[282] It is highly productive farmland, making land ownership contentious. Kyrgyzstan was around 70 percent Kyrgyz and 15 percent Uzbek in 2010, but Kyrgyz and Uzbeks made up similar proportions of the population on both sides of the border.[283] While underrepresented in national Kyrgyz politics, Uzbeks controlled more land rights and, overall, were better off economically than their Kyrgyz counterparts in the Fergana Valley. As a result, ethnic identities were highly salient in the region, and there was not a national "Kyrgyz" identity

[282] Prior to the Soviet restructuring of Central Asia, the valley had been under the auspices of one subnational region of the Russian Empire – Tatarstan. However, this valley was purposefully divided to undercut any potential burgeoning nationalist movements in the 1920s and 1930s, ensuring that several republics had pockets of majority-minority ethnic communities in key economic regions. In Kyrgyzstan, Uzbeks were one of these majority-minority communities.
[283] Al Jazeera (10 June 2010). Merkushev and Karmanau (2010).

that included Uzbeks – they were Uzbeks who were citizens of Kyrgyzstan, rather than Kyrgyz.

Table 8.2: Groups in Kyrgyzstan

Group	**Structure**	**Capabilities**	***Predicted Outcome***	***Actual Outcome***	**Theory Status**
Kyrgyz Forces	Fragmented	High/ Symmetric	*Targeting Other Groups*	*Targeting Other Groups*	Aligns
Uzbek Forces	Fragmented	Low	*Reactive/No Targeting*	*Reactive/No Targeting*	Aligns

Kyrgyz Government

Kurmanbek Bakiyev came to power during the Tulip Revolution in 2005 amid protests against Askar Akayev, the first president of Kyrgyzstan.[284] Bakiyev also left power amidst protests in 2010, fleeing the capital for Osh and for Belarus.[285] These protests were also pro-democracy and anti-corruption, and they were also classified as a Color Revolution – the Melon Revolution. Much like the Tulip Revolutions, protesters objected to his regime's corruption and political favoritism, alongside rising energy costs. An interim government headed by Roza Otunbayieva stepped in to restructure the government in response; however, corruption and patronal networks remained prominent in

[284] The Tulip Revolution was part of a larger group of protests, the Color Revolutions, a series of protests against election fraud and corruption that occurred throughout post-Soviet space. This included other protests, like the Orange Revolution in Ukraine, the Rose Revolution in Georgia, and the Snow Revolution in Russia. In some, election results were overturned, but many countries have seen further anti-corruption protests, like Euromaidan in Ukraine.
[285] Weir (2010). Voice of America (19 June 2010).

governance. This undercut the effectiveness of police forces and other state security apparatuses, though they remained present.

Ethnic violence began in the south at the end of May with an attack on a private university in Jalal-Abad in which several thousand Kyrgyz attacked Uzbeks.[286] In an echo of what occurred in both Yugoslavia and Tajikistan, protests and riots began in the capital, Bishkek, and transitioned into violence in the periphery. Like the conflict in Tajikistan and the initial protests in Bishkek, there were initially pro- and anti-Bakiyev elements. Loyalists installed a pro-Bakiyev governor after they seized a regional government office in Jalal-Abad, much as in Kulyob, Tajikistan during the Tajik Civil War.[287] Police forces objected to this interim leadership, demanding that a professional police officer be appointed the Interior Minister.[288] In Osh, nearly 1,000 police officers rallied against the interim government, threatening not to report for duty if their demands were not met.[289] They received support from the population, as well. In Bishkek, 1,500 civilians volunteered to aid the police department maintain order.[290] However, the pro-/anti-Bakiyev and pro-/anti-interim government divisions did not last. In Tajikistan, groups kept their general alignment between Dushanbe and the south. In Kyrgyzstan, this connection was less clear as the violence progressed.

Bakiyev hailed from the Jalal-Abad region, which would make one assume its residents would support Bakiyev over Otunbayeva. Pro-Bakiyev politicians were in power

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[286] Leonard (2010).
[287] TAP (20 April 2010). Interfax (20 April 2010) "Military Daily." Daily Star (21 April 2010).
[288] Interfax (20 April 2010) "Military Daily."
[289] Interfax (20 April 2010) "Military Daily."
[290] Interfax (20 April 2010) "Military Daily."

in the region. However, violence was ethnic in nature, without the connection to the national power struggle or economic concerns when fighting began. Moreover, the interim government eventually began to tacitly support Kyrgyz groups over their Uzbek counterparts, regardless of initial political alignment.

International Influences

Kyrgyzstan's international position was precarious: Russia, China, and the United States were interested in the clashes' progressions. Both the US and Russia had military bases in Kyrgyzstan located near Bishkek, but the Kremlin considered Kyrgyzstan to be part of its "zone of privileged interest."[291] The American Manas Air Base was a sore point for the Kremlin, but the base was key to the US War on Terror in Afghanistan, mainly as a transport hub for troops and supplies. Bakiyev's ouster was related to this competition: the Kremlin pressured Bakiyev to close Manas Air Base, offering 2 billion in credits in exchange. Bakiyev announced his intent to do so, only to renege on this decision when the US offered to pay triple its current rent for continued use of the base.[292] The Kremlin responded by raising its tariffs on gas exports to Kyrgyzstan, which contributed to rising prices and then the outbreak of riots in Bishkek in April. These "gas wars" were a common foreign policy tactic for the Kremlin in its perceived zone of interest, seeing the most use in Ukraine prior to 2014.

China was also expanding its One Belt, One Road project with the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) into Kyrgyzstan; this project focused on southern

[291] Gorst and Clover (26 April 2010).
[292] Kirchick (2010).

Kyrgyzstan, requiring building around Osh.[293] This promised international investment in Kyrgyzstan, more so than the isolated military bases, but it would also make Kyrgyzstan more beholden to Beijing *vis-à-vis* Moscow and Washington. The ethnic conflict coincided with an SCO summit in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, leading some to believe that if the violence was orchestrated, it was meant to undercut the summit and the project in Kyrgyzstan.

Despite the Kremlin's role in the start of the 2010 protests, Kyrgyz interim President Otunbayeva repeatedly requested Russian peacekeepers and Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) resources in response to the military's and police's inability to contain the violence. She argued that the presence of Soviet troops was the only thing that quelled ethnic violence in the past. There was a presumption that Russian intervention would be the only successful means to resolve violence now.[294] Both the US and the Russian Federation denied Otunbayeva's requests for military support, though there were shipments of humanitarian supplies from both Russia and the US.[295] The Kremlin declined to send peacekeepers, but it sent 150 paratroopers to protect the Kant Air Base.[296] These forces were ordered not to interfere in fighting around the base. Bakiyev's flight to Belarus was also very interesting, as this would have had to been cleared by the Kremlin. Moreover, the Belarusian government would have likely extradited Bakiyev at Russia's request. This indicates that the Kremlin was aiding Bakiyev, despite being instrumental in his ouster from office. On one hand, this could show a transfer in the Kremlin's loyalties, or the Kremlin may have been chiefly interested in the destabilization of Kyrgyzstan at this time.

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[293] Interfax (20 April 2010) "Diplomatic Panorama."
[294] RIA Novosti (12 June 2010). Schwirtz (2010). Interfax (17 June 2010).
[295] Kirchick (2010). Interfax (17 June 2010). Interfax (18 June 2010).
[296] Trend News Agency (13 June 2010). Interfax (17 June 2010).

Group Dynamics in Kyrgyzstan

Violence in 2010 was concentrated on the Kyrgyz side of the border, but there were sporadic attacks on the Uzbek side. Though Uzbek troops did not cross into Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan did move troops towards the border.[297] At the end of April, there were rallies ongoing in Osh and Jalal-Abad, along with those in progress in Bishkek.[298] These rallies transformed into riots quickly. Emotions ran high as individuals engaged in opportunistic violence. This resulted in violence against individuals and police forces that was spontaneous in nature, rather than targeted. Much like their Tajik counterpart, the Kyrgyz government was not prepared to handle widespread violence. For instance, the Associated Press reported that there was a startling lack of police and military presence in Osh and Jalal-Abad.[299] Rioters seized unsecured police equipment, like automatic weapons and armored vehicles. As a result, the state's presence in the region was minimal at the start and further diminished early in the violence.

As violence progressed from riots to armed clashes, this violence became more ethnically targeted. It lost the pro-/ani-Bakiyev character and it was no longer focused economic and democratic reforms either. The first major attack occurred on May 19th when an armed group of Kyrgyz attacked a university in Jalal-Abad.[300] As shown in Figure 8.1, the violence in Jalal-Abad quickly spread to other locales, including Osh, Uzgen, Kara-Suu, and Aravan.[301] Despite the government's precautions, violence continued, primarily

[297] Interfax (15 June 2010).
[298] Interfax (20 April 2010).
[299] Scottish Daily Record (14 June 2010). Harding (15 June 2010). Interfax (15 June 2010). Interfax (20 April 2010). Merkushev and Karmanau (2010).
[300] Leonard (2010).
[301] Gevorgyan (2010).

with Kyrgyz individuals targeting Uzbeks. The cities in the south were also separated into sectors by ethnic identification. Both Osh and Jalal-Abad had Uzbek and Kyrgyz neighborhoods that were targeted by attacks during the clashes in 2010. This was not a formal or legally enforced segregation, but it was a salient geographical division. This too contributed to the localized nature of the violence seen in towns like Osh, Jalal-Abad, and Kara-Suu.

Though there was violence on both sides, there were reports of over 75,000 Uzbeks having crossed the border into Uzbekistan by June 1st.[302] There were no reports of similar numbers Kyrgyz residents fleeing the region, either across the border or further into Kyrgyzstan. The death toll in Osh continued to rise in the second week of June.[303] On June 12th, the death toll was 600, with 850 people wounded.[304]

There was speculation that the clashes were not an organic upswell of radicalization in either ethnic group, but instead it was the result of orchestrated attacks by actors associated with Bakiyev to start violence against the Otunbayeva regime. This is a common refrain from governments about protesters. In both the Snow Revolution in Russia in 2011 and Euromaidan in Ukraine in 2013, for example, the Kremlin claimed that protesters were being paid by Western governments, the US specifically, to discredit them.

In most cases, actors tend to disagree. Ingush and Chechens objected to North Ossetia's portrayal of events in 1992; the United States objected to Russia's in 2011 and 2013. In Kyrgyzstan, though, multiple groups agreed that criminal organizations had a role

[302] Asian News International (1 June 2010).
[303] Al Jazeera (10 June 2010). Gevorgyan (2010). Gorst (2010). The Irish Examiner (11 June 2010).
[304] The Associated Press (12 June 2010).

in events, or at the very least, many agreed that the initial attacks were orchestrated. Notably, the Kyrgyz government, the Uzbek government, and the UN all delivered statements to this effect. Additionally, criminal organizations did appear to coordinate, or at least align with, primarily Kyrgyz groups operating in southern Kyrgyzstan. Even some crime families that were Uzbek were seen aiding Kyrgyz groups.[305]

The earliest attacks took place in public areas: a university in Jalal-Abad, a casino in Osh, and a bazaar in Bishkek.[306] Riots turning violent to prompt escalation are common to see in the first wave of attacks in civil conflicts: they are highly visible locales where individuals from disparate groups previously coexisted. Therefore, these are convenient locations to both find targets and generate the largest reactions.[307] In Bosnia, for instance, early attacks occurred between Bosnian Serbs and Bosnian Muslims near the Serbian border took place in cafes and diners. Additionally, Bosnian Serbs were attacking the less prepared Bosnian Muslims. In Kyrgyzstan, the same pattern persisted. In Jalal-Abad, the university was the community center for the Uzbek population, and this attack was carried out by Kyrgyz on Uzbek citizens. Attacks on the bazaar in Bishkek were likewise carried out by Kyrgyz on Uzbeks. Throughout the riots, Kyrgyz were seen initiating violence on Uzbek individuals and Uzbek neighborhoods, while Uzbeks were reactive. Attacks that carried out by Uzbek groups were largely asset seizures, like when a group seized an oil depot on the Kyrgyz-Uzbek border around June 16th.[308]

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[305] Shermatova (2010).
[306] Gorst (2010). The Irish Examiner (11 June 2010).
[307] Pape (2003). Kydd and Walter (2006). Shields et. al (2009). Dear (2013). Calderon et. al (2015). Prorle (2017).
[308] Platts (16 June 2010).

Uzbek Groups

Uzbek groups were fragmented and possessed low relative material capabilities; thus, they should be reactive or engage in no targeting according to my theory. Supporting this assertion, Uzbeks were the victims of violence more often than not. There were some reactionary attacks, but they did not frequently initiate attacks. While both sides believed that they were attacked first, the sheer number of Uzbek refugees compared to the dearth of Kyrgyz ones indicates that Uzbek groups were on the defensive.

Organizational Structure

Uzbek groups were in a weak position. In the Yugoslav Wars, several rebel groups were fragmented, like the Croatian and Bosnian Serb formations. However, this was offset by their support they received from the Yugoslav and then Serbian governments. The Bosnian government and, by extension, Bosnian Muslims during the Bosnian War were the most like the Uzbek groups during these clashes. They, too, possessed a fragmented organizational structure and low relative material capabilities. However, the Bosnian government and Bosnian Muslims had the advantage of an administrative infrastructure that the Uzbeks did not have. Here, too, we see an ethnically heterogenous region being the site of conflict, wherein the weaker party, both in terms of organization and capabilities, is predominately reactive. The Uzbek population in Kyrgyzstan was isolated from the government due to their underrepresentation in national politics and their concentration in the south. If the Uzbek government had gotten involved, this would be a different situation. On the Uzbek side of the border, for example, the power distribution between the two groups was reversed, with the Kyrgyz population lacking government support.

Relative Material Capabilities

Many Uzbek citizens of Kyrgyzstan feared of retaliation. Death tolls and injury reports from this time are likely incomplete.[309] There were also reports of mass graves of Uzbeks, with community leaders issuing warnings of genocide.[310] Furthermore, the Kyrgyz government ordered a partial mobilization of civilian reservists and issued a shoot to kill order.[311] Though these government forces were meant to end any violence, reports on the ground indicated that soldiers were firing on Uzbek residents and protesters – but not their Kyrgyz counterparts.[312] After the conflict, a Human Rights Watch analysis of the arrests and treatment of prisoners found that "the profoundly flawed investigations and trials, mainly affecting the ethnic Uzbek minority, undermine[d] efforts to promote reconciliation and fuel[ed] tensions that might one day lead to renewed violence."[313] The New York Times reported in July that numerous Uzbek community and religious leaders had been arrested for inciting violence in June.[314] Furthermore, there was no sign of government aid to Uzbek citizens after the violence quieted; instead, the aid went only to Kyrgyz victims.[315]

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[309] The Irish Examiner (11 June 2010).
[310] Isamova (2010).
[311] Trend News Agency (13 June 2010).
[312] Isamova (2010). Gorst and Clover (13 June 2010).
[313] Human Rights Watch (16 August 2010). Human Rights Watch (8 June 2010).
[314] Kramer (2010).
[315] Harding (19 June 2010).

Figure 8.1: Map of Clashes in Kyrgyzstan
Source: Nations Online Project

Kyrgyz Groups

The Kyrgyz groups, like the Uzbek groups, were fragmented; yet, compared to their Uzbek counterparts, they had greater material capabilities. Therefore, I anticipate that this rebel group will target other groups. Kyrgyz residents blamed Uzbeks for starting the violence, but others, like the mayor of Jalal-Abad, argued that outside instigators attacked both Kyrgyz and Uzbek residents to incite violence.[316] After violence began, larger groups began forming. The march on the university was hundreds of people, but soon crowds of over one thousand armed Kyrgyz were reported moving towards Uzbek neighborhoods in Osh.[317] By mid-June, state officials reported over 100 deaths, over 1,000 wounded, and approximately 75,000 Uzbek refugees from the region.[318]

Organizational Structure

Like the groups in Kurgan-Tyube in Tajikistan, Kyrgyz groups were localized, with little coordination across cities. There were two facets to the Kyrgyz groups. The first being the protesters who staged targeted attacks on Uzbek groups, and the second being the criminal elements that coordinated with Kyrgyz groups for the advancement of their own goals – namely reasserting control over drug trade routes they lost when Bakiyev was ousted from office.

The structure of Kyrgyz groups was heavily influenced by criminal organizations. Criminal organizations lost their connection to power with Bakiyev's ouster. These groups had a vested interest in regaining their previous position and reasserting their control over

[316] Merkushev and Karmanau (2010).
[317] The Irish Examiner (11 June 2010). The Associated Press (12 June 2010).
[318] The Associated Press (12 June 2010). Merkushev and Karmanau (2010). Trend News Agency (13 June 2010).

drug trade routes.[319] The mobilized Kyrgyz individuals were a convenient vehicle to destabilize the national government's ability to control the region and resecure their revenue streams.

The UN confirmed that the riots in Osh were initiated by five simultaneous attacks by men in ski masks.[320] This is markedly different from other instances wherein governments declare that their internal conflicts are caused by criminal groups. The Kyrgyz government announced on June 17th that they believed that the attackers had been hired by Bakiyev to start the riots. The Uzbek government agreed with the assessment that the violence was orchestrated, though it did not specify fault with Bakiyev. [321] Reports speculated that Bakiyev or his son, Maxim, were paying these actors from Belarus or from the UK.[322] Specifically, a well-known crime boss, Aibek Mirsidikov, also known as Black Aibek, was linked to the Bakiyev family. He was accused of inciting attack on an Uzbek-majority university in Jalal-Abad and organizing the seizure of government offices.[323] However, he was killed in inter-gang violence the evening of June 7th before anything could be proven.[324]

Relative Material Capabilities

Though fragmented, this loose alignment of interests between 1) mobilized ethnic Kyrgyz individuals and groups, 2) criminal elements, and 3) the state provided Kyrgyz groups greater material capabilities than Uzbek formations. Additionally, fewer Kyrgyz

[319] The Katmandu Press (17 June 2010).
[320] The Katmandu Press (17 June 2010).
[321] Gorst and Clover (13 June 2010).
[322] Interfax (15 June 2010). Interfax (17 June 2010).
[323] Shermatova (2010). Radio Free Europe (7 June 2010).
[324] Shermatova (2010).

were fleeing the region, allowing membership levels to remain more stable. The combination of fragmented organizational structure and greater relative material capabilities leads my theory to predict that Kyrgyz groups will target other rebel groups. The behavior of these groups in the interethnic clashes aligns with my prediction in this case.

The connections with the criminal underground did provide rioters with resources. These enterprises possessed monetary resources and arms with which to supply Kyrgyz groups – and an interest in regional destabilization. The Kyrgyz government, moreover, did support ethnic Kyrgyz over ethnic Uzbek individuals, even if Bakiyev was blamed for the violence. This corresponded with the two groups lacking any official pro-/anti-Bakiyev leaning. This support was not explicit; the government did not tell Kyrgyz groups that they had their backing. However, tacit support meant that the Kyrgyz groups had more agency than their Uzbek counterparts during the onset of violence. Additionally, Kyrgyz formations and individuals could make use of state apparatuses, like hospitals, with greater ease than their Uzbek counterparts as the conflict progressed. Therefore, Kyrgyz groups with their government and criminal allies were able to initiate violence against Uzbek groups.

Conclusions: Ethnic Violence in Kyrgyzstan

Uzbek citizens were quick to return to Kyrgyzstan from Uzbekistan when violence began winding down. Whether honest or not, Kyrgyz and Uzbek community leaders were willing to sit down to begin reconciliation talks.[325] Kyrgyz and Uzbek groups behaved

[325] Trend News Agency (13 June 2010).

differently during the clashes, with Uzbek groups primarily being reactive and Kyrgyz groups targeting Uzbek formations. Both were fragmented in structure, still in different ways. Both groups lacked cohesive organization and did not engage in coordinated attacks, especially between locales. While initial attacks may have been staged, the following violence appears to be mostly spontaneous. Uzbek groups were isolated geographically, as were Kyrgyz groups. Kyrgyz and Uzbek groups were internally fragmented, with different wings desiring different outcomes. Protesters and rioters lacked distinct, vocalized, or consistent demands.

However, the two groups additionally differed in material capabilities. Compared to the groups operating in Tajikistan, neither were particularly well supplied. However, compared to one another, Kyrgyz formations had greater capabilities than their Uzbek counterparts. Membership in Kyrgyz groups remained high compared to Uzbek ones, as many Uzbek individuals retreated across the border with Uzbekistan. If the conflict had been longer, this would have given Uzbek groups space to regroup and rearm without being targeted. Therefore, moving across borders is a common strategy in intrastate conflicts: the Taliban's flight to the Pakistan side of the border during the height of American operations in Afghanistan is another well-known instance. In a conflict as short as this one, it did provide safety, but there was not enough time to take advantage of this before things de-escalated. Both groups aligned with my predicted outcomes: the fragmented and low capabilities group was primarily reactive in its targeting (Uzbek) and the fragmented group with higher relative capabilities targeted other rebel groups (Kyrgyz).

This region was primed for an ethnic conflict, with high degrees of ethnic diversity, a transborder ethnic community, and low government capacity. In many cases, this would produce a sustained and devastating conflict. Though still severe and resulting in the loss of numerous lives, the 2010 interethnic violence in Kyrgyzstan quickly de-escalated. Clashes began at the start of June but were already subsiding by June 16th. Compared to other conflicts examined thus far, the interethnic clashes in Kyrgyzstan differ in a critical aspect: this is the first conflict wherein all non-state actors were fragmented. In PART IV, the East Prigorodny Conflict also has two fragmented actors, and it too de-escalated soon after a period of ethnic violence. This is a feature of conflict derived not from the influence of the state – here the state is weak, while in the East Prigorodny conflict, the state, the Russian Federation, is strong. Instead, this indicates that the structure of groups both individually and collectively in a conflict has an impact on the longevity of conflict.

PART IV: CONFLICTS WITH A STRONG STATE

CHAPTER NINE: CONFLICTS IN THE NORTH CAUCASUS

Introduction

This chapter will focus on two conflicts that occurred in the North Caucasus in the 1990s: the East Prigorodny Conflict between North Ossetia and Ingushetia in 1992, and the First Chechen War between the Chechen and Russian governments in 1994. Unlike the conflicts in Yugoslavia, the state, here the Russian Federation, survived the conflicts. Although both conflicts were small from the perspective of the Kremlin, Russian military forces still struggled to pacify both conflicts. Compared to armed groups examined in previous chapters, relative material capabilities vary less because the Russian Army and Interior Ministry troops possessed far greater resources in terms of money, military equipment, and personnel. Russian interest and involvement, though, did vary over time and between these two conflicts. Fighters, on the other hand, were highly motivated and large percentages of the population mobilized into irregular units. Moreover, the Kremlin was not interested in a prolonged conflict and profound divisions existed between the executive and legislative branches over what course of action to pursue.

Violence in the North Caucasus was not surprising. In September 1992, Ramazan Abdulatipov, the Chairman of the Council of Nationalities of the Russian parliament, stated that Chechnya, Ingushetia, and North Ossetia were the most dangerous locales in Russia due to a myriad of overlapping factors: traditionally militant groups, like the Cossacks and

mountain peoples, preexisting territorial disputes, acute socioeconomic crisis coupled with massive unemployment, and stalled land privatization efforts.[326] In 1994, the East Prigorodny conflict would be referred to by some as a genocide of the Ingush people.[327]

In the sections to follow, I will first discuss features and perceptions of the North Caucasus. Unlike Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, the Russian government had jurisdiction over North Ossetia, Ingushetia, and Chechnya. As a result, Russian perceptions of governments, groups, and individuals in the North Caucasus is important to the Kremlin's approach to violence in the region. Second, I will discuss the major groups operating in these conflicts, as shown in Table 9.1 below. In the East Prigorodny Conflict, there were two groups, Ingush and Ossetian militants who operated in two phases, before and after Russian intervention. In the First Chechen War, there were three groups: the Chechen Army, irregular formations that supported Dudayev, and the Opposition. In this section, I will also provide an overview of the Russian approach to these two conflicts. Finally, I will explain some of the common tactics utilized by rebel groups in the North Caucasus. For both conflicts, my analysis will focus on 1) government documents, 2) government announcements, and 3) contemporary local news reporting, both print and radio, on the conflict. Many of these reports are contradictory, since they were published by conflicting parties, but they still reveal facets of the armed groups' structure and capabilities.

[326] Kovalskaya (1992).
[327] Illarionov (October 1994).

Table 9.1: Groups in the North Caucasus

Group	Structure	Capabilities	*Predicted Outcome*	*Actual Outcome*	Theory Status
Ingush Militants	Fragmented	High/ Symmetric	*Targets Other Groups*	*Targets Other Groups*	Aligns
Ossetian Militants	Fragmented	High/ Symmetric	*Targets Other Groups*	*Targets Other Groups*	Aligns
Ingush Militants (post-Russian Intervention)	Fragmented	Low	*Reactive/ No Targeting*	*Reactive/ No Targeting*	Aligns
Ossetian Militants (post-Russian Intervention)	Fragmented/ Consolidated	Low	*Reactive/ Mixed Targeting*	*Reactive/ Absorbed by the State*	Partial Alignment
The Chechen Army	Consolidated	Low	*Mixed Targeting*	*Mixed Targeting*	Aligns
Dudayev's Supporters	Fragmented/ Consolidated	Low	*Reactive/ Mixed Targeting*	*Mixed Targeting*	Partial Alignment
The Chechen Opposition	Fragmented	Low	*Reactive/ No Targeting*	*Reactive/ No Targeting*	Aligns

The North Caucasus

The North Caucasus is a highly diverse region – in an administrative area roughly the size of the state of Florida, there are more than 50 ethnic groups and between 34 and 38 different languages that are distinct enough from one another that they cannot be grouped into the same linguistic family. It is one of the most ethnically and linguistically diverse regions of Russia, though whether it should be included in the Russian Federation has been heavily debated. There are seven republics in the region, moving west to east: Karachay-Cherkessia, Kabardino-Balkaria, North Ossetia, Ingushetia, Chechnya, and

Dagestan Stavropol Krai, located north of these republics, is sometimes included in the region. Of these, only two have a plurality practicing Russian Orthodox: North Ossetia and Stavropol Krai. In the other five, most of the population practices Islam. There are also traditional religions still in practice: the second largest religion in North Ossetia is Uatsdin, an ethnic religion within the Scythian tradition.[328]

Figure 9.1: Map of the North Caucasus
Source Fitzgerald (2008).

The religious differences drove a further wedge between the North Caucasus and the Kremlin. Due to the Soviet War in Afghanistan, there were worries of Islamic

[328] Foltz (2019).

extremism in the North Caucasus. Rumors about mujahedeen fighters making their way from Afghanistan to the region to fight in both the East Prigorodny Conflict and the First Chechen War did not assuage this fear.[329] Much like in the Tajik Civil War, Islam and foreign fighters were used by the Kremlin to undercut local political movements. This was of particular concern in Chechnya, as this republic possessed the strongest tradition of resisting Russian rule. There were worries of international actors, namely Islamic states, interfering on behalf of the Chechen president, Dzhokhar Dudayev during the onset of the conflict to either provide him with a haven if he had to flee Russia or to provide funding, training and/or weaponry to Chechen fighters. Russian diplomats in Iran reported in early December that there had been an uptick in informal talks between Iran and representatives from Chechnya and Dagestan, two majority-Islam republics.[330]

The ethnic and linguistic heterogeneity of the region is partially due to terrain. The Greater Caucasus Mountain range runs through the region from Sochi, Russia to Baku, Azerbaijan. It includes Mt. Elbrus, the tallest mountain in Europe. The Russian Empire conquered this region in stages between 1800 and 1864 and continued Russian and then Soviet control was based in part on demographic engineering – namely moving ethnic Russians into the region and then, during the Stalin era, deporting indigenous populations out to Central Asia. Another key component was the use of Cossack armies, who manned a line of Russian forts through the region, behind which Russian serfs were moved to farm under Cossack protection. The presence of Russian serfs then was used to further justify

[329] Interfax (30 November 1994).
[330] Korzun et. al (30 November 1994).

Russian rule. The Terskoye Cossack Army still resides in the North Caucasus, and the Cossacks continue to play a role in regional politics. There were fears from both Russian and local officials that Cossack communities would radicalize where they overlapped with high concentrations ethnic minority groups.[331] Cossack positions varied between offering to host or mediate negotiations between combatants and threatening to mobilize to protect the territorial integrity of Russia.

Russian rule, though, was contested. Ethnolinguistic differences tend to be more pervasive and salient than religious[332] and class-based ones.[333] However, religious, cultural, and ethnic identities overlapped and reinforced one another in the North Caucasus. Studies have demonstrated that both exclusion from state structures based on ethnicity and political segmentation in multiethnic states contribute to increased violence.[334] Partition, autonomy, or federal governance divided along ethnic boundaries can produce strong regional parties that increase the likelihood of conflict.[335] Additionally, preexisting patterns of governance that promote discrimination[336] coupled with inelastic ethnic identities[337] obstruct effective central governance and promote conflict.[338] Moreover, state capacity is linked with ethnic exclusion. As Wimmer argues, states with fewer resources and less political and economic capital are more likely to pursue policies of ethnic exclusion rather

[331] Sartanov (12 August 1992).
[332] Bormann, Cederman, and Vogt (2017).
[333] Esteban and Ray (2008). Robinson (2001).
[334] Wimmer, Cederman, and Min (2009). Cederman, Wimmer, and Min (2010). Vogt (2018).
[335] Brancati (2006).
[336] Denny and Walter (2014).
[337] Wucherpfennig, Metternich, Cederman, and Gleditsch. (2012). Denny and Walter (2014).
[338] Wimmer, Cederman, and Min. (2009). Cederman, Wimmer, and Min (2010). Kolsto (2006).

than nationalist inclusion.[339] Over periods of instability – the collapse of the Russian Empire, World War II, the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia's Constitutional Crisis – often overlap with increased activism in the North Caucasus. The region's peoples never fully assimilated into Russian culture nor did these groups have much sway over national politics. These groups were seen as potential threats or defectors to the Russian state, culminating in the deportation of several groups under Stalin's rule of the Soviet Union. The region's ethnic minority groups were targeted by the Russian government specifically due to their distinctiveness from Russian culture.

The Russian conquest of the North Caucasus served as the basis for many works of literature that had a lasting impact on Russian perceptions of the Caucasus, including Alexander Pushkin's *The Prisoner of the Caucasus* and Leo Tolstoy's story of the same name and his final work, *Hadji Murat*. Both pulled on their experiences in the region: Pushkin from his exile to the region and Tolstoy from his service in the Russian military. Most depictions of Caucasian peoples oscillated between noble warrior and savage barbarian stereotypes, both serving to other these groups from their "more civilized" Russian counterparts. These stereotypes have persisted into modern perceptions of the people and politics of the North Caucasus. As a result, the region has maintained cultural and political distinctiveness, rather than assimilating into Russian culture.

Notes on Theory and Variable Measurement

Organizational Structure informs us of who groups are likely to view as their primary threat: the state or other groups. Consolidated groups are more likely to identify

[339] Wimmer (2002).

the state as their primary threat, while fragmented groups are more likely to view other groups as their primary threat. Capabilities, on the other hand, provide focus and agency to pursue their primary target. Groups with high or symmetric capabilities are likely to engage their primary threat, while those with low relative capabilities are likely to be more opportunistic or survival-oriented in their targeting. These two features interact to inform us of which actors a group is most likely to target, as shown in Table 9.2.

Table 9.2: Organizational Structure and Material Capabilities in Group Targeting

	Consolidated	**Fragmented**
High/Symmetric Capabilities	Targets the state	Targets other groups
Low Capabilities	Mixed targeting	No targeting/Reactive targeting

Targeting is determined via reports of who is attacking who. Sometimes this is unclear, and the report only specifies if two groups are present in a location and attacking one another without an instigator listed. In other cases, an instigator is listed, but reports differ on who the instigator was. As a result, determinations of group targeting must be taken over a period of time. This strategy enables me to determine if: 1) there are consistent patterns with who is participating in attacks, 2) one side is consistently retreating, as this implies that they are being attacked by the group making territorial gains, and 3) an actor or actors have a pattern of participating in attacks against one type of target or multiples. When combined with reports on instigators when available, this information reliably informs us of who groups are targeting.

Identifying group structure can be difficult: rebel groups are unlikely to publish their internal structures. The most fragmented groups tend to be hard to identify in archival documents at all. Instead of being named, these groups are "gangs," "criminals," or "self-defense formations." In many conflicts, they're identified by their ethnic identity or location, but little else. Regional leaders, governors, and the like often disavow control or influence of subgroups in fragmented rebel groups. This is one of the key advantages of fragmented groups: they are more resilient to beheading tactics. Additionally, it can provide asymmetric groups greater negotiating agency, as they stress that if their demands are not met, they cannot control the actions of those aligned with their goals.[340] Consolidated groups, by contrast, tend to have identified leadership, and that leadership is noted for having control over a wider territorial region. These groups are named and tend to have administrative structures and explicit designs to govern – either the state or a subnational unit. Subnational governments, interim administrations, and opposition governing bodies are indicative of a consolidated group structure. This must be considered in conjunction with leadership claims of control to determine if this structure is truly consolidated or more fragmented.

Relative capabilities, likewise, have to be determined via proxies. Groups are unlikely to disclose their numbers and armaments to the government they are fighting or media sources. There are numbers provided at times, but these often must be cross-referenced between accounts. Pro-government sources are more likely to exaggerate the threat of rebel groups to justify military action, while rebel groups are harder to predict;

[340] See Putnam (1988). Fearon (1995). Weiss (2013).

sometimes they downplay their capabilities, at other times they play up their capabilities – depending on what brings the greatest benefit to their cause. A group trying to deter the state from attacking, for instance, is likely to exaggerate their capabilities, but a group trying to undercut the state's justification of intervention would be more likely to downplay its capabilities.

To overcome this challenge, I utilize several indicators found in archival documents. This process is made easier by the fact that I am looking for relative capabilities rather than absolute capabilities. This is advantageous when studying under-reported conflicts, because I do not need to know the exact numbers for group membership, monetary resources, weapons, ammunition, or various military hardware. Governments and reporters are unlikely to know this information for certain in the first place. However, governments, reporters, third party analysts and the like can typically note when two parties are symmetrical, when a party is stronger, and when a party is weaker. When one side has tanks and combat aircraft while the other is using hunting rifles and a single rocket launcher, the disparity is obvious.[341]

Still, there are several factors we can derive from archival sources. First are the actual armaments listed for various groups to compare. Second is the weapon types. Exact numbers may not be listed, but weapon types are more common to find, as are means of attack. Air superiority, for example, is relatively easy to infer from news reports. If a group is capable of bombing another, I can infer that 1) they have aircraft and 2) if successful,

[341] This occurred in Sarajevo, Bosnia, wherein the government acquired a single rocket launcher that then had to be driven around to key locations in the city. Fejzic (15 May 1992).

the other side is unlikely to have sufficient anti-aircraft defenses, especially if the bombings continue for an extended period and they are not bombing the other side in return. Third, I extrapolate what type of membership a group is attracting. Like armaments, exact numbers for membership are unlikely to be mentioned, but what type of mobilization is easier to tell. However, we can identify whether a group is comprised of individuals with military training or members of the civilian population. Additionally, we can discern from archival sources whether mercenaries are present, either to participate or provide training to rebel groups. The presence of these forces is often heavily disputed, but if there are multiple reports or confirmations from multiple groups or opposing sides, then this can be considered a measure of group capabilities.

The Major Players

The conflicts in the North Caucasus deviate substantially from previous conflicts examined. Unlike Part III where I examined non-secessionist conflicts; in Part IV, the focus is on conflicts wherein the state is a powerful and influential actor. In civil conflicts, the state has often been an unstable, unreliable actor. In the Yugoslav Wars, it was on the verge of collapse, and the Tajik government went through several transitions in power over the first few months of fighting. Though the Soviet Union dissolved in December 1991, the Russian Federation was a stable successor state. More crucially, the Russian Federation maintained control over much of the military and intelligence infrastructure and hardware. Therefore, the Russian Federation's involvement in both the East Prigorodny Conflict and the First Chechen War changed how groups behaved, namely, by shifting the relative material capabilities of rebel groups to low. The First Chechen War was secessionist, like

those in Yugoslavia. The East Prigorodny Conflict, on the other hand, was a border dispute between North Ossetia and Ingushetia.

The influence the Russian government and the Russian military exerted over the development of the conflicts in the North Caucasus is a key difference between the cases examined in Part IV and those in Parts II and III. Outside of a few initial days of fighting during the East Prigorodny Conflict, every group examined in this chapter possesses low material capabilities vis-à-vis the state. According to my theory, low capabilities would make it more likely for groups to engage in mixed targeting or reactive targeting. For the most part, this is what we observe: armed groups are opportunistic in these two conflicts, engaging in mixed or reactive targeting.

The involvement of a strong state, following Migdal's (2001) definition wherein the state has the capacity to influence and even control local politics, has several critical effects on armed rebel groups. First, as stated above, groups are more likely to have low relative material capabilities due to the state's involvement. Second, given sufficient forces, the state's military involvement can result in temporary de-escalation, even if it does not remove the underlying motivations for mobilization. To influence the path of the conflict in the long-term, the state must be able to 1) identify combatants, 2) sufficiently disarm combatants, and 3) use the period of de-escalation to negotiate a political settlement that addresses the underlying reasons for mobilization. However, de-escalation is dependent upon continued pressure, and mobilization and violence are likely to continue where the state is not present. Crucially, if pressure on less powerful armed groups is removed, then violence is likely to resume. Third, the state and state-like groups, i.e., those

with pre-existing territorial control of a territory and political and bureaucratic infrastructure à la Slovenia or Chechnya, have an impact on others' organizational structure. Both Ossetian and Chechen irregular formations developed hybrid structures, wherein they themselves were fragmented, but adapted the more consolidated structure when operating or being folded into official structures.

Table 9.1 outlines the five primary armed groups operating in the East Prigorodny Conflict and the First Chechen War. Of these, all had low relative material capabilities following Russian intervention. Ingush and Ossetian militants, in the few initial days of escalation, conversely, had symmetrical capabilities to one another. Many groups possessed a fragmented organizational structure, mobilizing in locales and villages without much coordination between one another. As a result of these to features, I predict that many of the armed groups in these two conflicts will engage in reactive targeting. The behavior of some groups is harder to predict, namely that of the Ossetian Militants and Dudayev's Supporters. The issue arises from the fact that groups with consolidated structures, like Russian forces, co-opted armed groups that aligned with their interests over time. This mirrors how the Tajik government under Rakhmonov co-opted the Kulyob Formations towards the end of 1992.

The East Prigorodny Conflict

The first conflict examined in this section is a border dispute between North Ossetia and Ingushetia over the Prigorodny Rayon and Vladikavkaz in eastern North Ossetia in 1992. The population of Prigorodny was majority Ingush, and Vladikavkaz was once the capital of Ingushetia. Both the Ingush government and the Ingush population of Prigorodny

desired for the region to be returned to Ingushetia, though the Russian and North Ossetian governments were highly averse to any border revisions.

Figure 9.2: Map of East Prigorodny and Surrounding Regions
Source: Mike Shand/International Crisis Group, October 2012

Mobilization occurred among Ingush and Ossetian residents, with some fighters entering the republic from Ingushetia and South Ossetia. The predicted behavior of both groups is pictured in Table 9.3. Both groups were fragmented in nature, organizing in several locales but lacking extensive cooperation between those locales. When the two first mobilized, they were symmetric to one another. Due to these two features, I predict that both will engage in the targeting of other groups, here being one another. After Russian

intervention, relative capabilities must be adjusted in reaction to a stronger military force – dropping both from symmetric to low relative capabilities. I predict that after the arrival of Russian troops, both will switch from predominately engaging in targeting other groups to reactive targeting.

Table 9.3: Predicted Group Targeting in the EPC

	Consolidated	**Fragmented**
High/Symmetric Capabilities	Targets the state	Targets other groups • *Ingush Militants* • *Ossetian Militants*
Low Capabilities	Mixed targeting	No targeting/Reactive targeting • *Ingush Militants (post-Russian Intervention)* o *Ossetian Militants (post-Russian Intervention)*

In the conflict, the two groups mostly followed their predicted behavior. Ingush and Ossetian militants began by primarily targeting one another, with some instances of targeting of and threats to local law enforcement. After the introduction of additional Interior Ministry troops, Ingush militants demobilized, moved to mountain climes, or retreated farther into Ingushetia. Ossetian militants, however, did not do so. Instead, these formations were folded into the North Ossetian security structure, especially in the region immediately around Vladikavkaz.

Table 9.4: Actual Group Targeting in the EPC

	Consolidated	**Fragmented**
High/Symmetric Capabilities	Targets the state	Targets other groups • *Ingush Militants* • *Ossetian Militants*
Low Capabilities	Mixed targeting	No targeting/Reactive targeting • *Ingush Militants (post-Russian Intervention)*

**Ossetian Militants (post-Russian Intervention) were partially absorbed into North Ossetian law enforcement infrastructure*

Therefore, in this conflict, we observe three out of four cases aligning with my theory. Looking at a conflict where there is a powerful state provides additional perspective on what occurred during the Tajik Civil War. Here, once again, we see the co-option of an irregular group by the state. This is not something my theory initially accounted for, but it appears to not be uncommon in civil conflicts.

The First Chechen War

The First Chechen War was a secessionist war that began in late 1994 and lasted until 1996. A Second Chechen War was fought between 1999 and 2000, with an insurgency lasting until 2008. During the First Chechen War, Russian forces primarily fought against the Chechen Army. Two other armed groups operated within Chechnya: Dzhokhar Dudayev's Supporters, an irregular formation separate from the Chechen Army, and the Chechen Opposition under Uman Avturkhanov. The Russian military's capabilities were beyond those held by either of these three groups. While governments like that in Tajikistan lost their coercive capacity with the fall of the Soviet Union, the Russian Federation held onto the military hardware and many of the military personnel of the USSR in the collapse.

As a result, the three Chechen groups had low relative material capabilities compared to the Russian military present in the North Caucasus. Additionally, unlike in the East Prigorodny Conflict, the First Chechen War began escalating in earnest while the Russian military was already focused on the Chechen Republic, not reactively focusing on it in response to violence already underway. Of the three armed groups operating within Chechnya, the Chechen Army possessed the closest capabilities to those of the Russian Federation. The Chechen Army's organizational structure was consolidated, unlike that of Dudayev's Supporters or the Opposition. The structure of Dudayev's Supporters, much like Ossetian Militants, was difficult to classify, floating between fragmented and consolidated due to their alignment in certain locales with the Chechen Army. The Opposition, though, had a fragmented organizational structure.

Table 9.5: Predicted Group Targeting in Chechnya

	Consolidated	**Fragmented**
High/Symmetric Capabilities	Targets the state	Targets other groups
Low Capabilities	Mixed targeting • *The Chechen Army* ○ *Dudayev's Supporters*	No targeting/Reactive targeting • *The Chechen Opposition* ○ *Dudayev's Supporters*

As shown in Table 9.5, due to their low relative capabilities, the rebel groups in Chechnya are more likely, according to my theory, to engage in mixed or reactive targeting. The Chechen Army was consolidated in structure, and I predict that it will engage in mixed targeting. As shown in Table 9.6, this was what occurred during the conflict. Due to its

fragmented organizational structure and low relative capabilities, both the Chechen Opposition and Dudayev's Supporters are predicted to engage in reactive targeting. This does align with what is observed for the Chechen Opposition at the onset of the conflict. Dudayev's Supporters, conversely, mostly attacked targets alongside the Chechen Army. Others within this group, however, moved into the mountains to protect family members, like women, children, and elderly, and being evacuated from Grozny and other major population centers. Therefore, Dudayev's Supporters' behavior partially aligns with my theory, as its behavior aligns more so with that of a consolidated group than a fragmented one.

Table 9.6: Actual Group Targeting in Chechnya

	Consolidated	**Fragmented**
High/Symmetric Capabilities	Targets the state	Targets other groups
Low Capabilities	Mixed targeting • *The Chechen Army* ○ *Dudayev's Supporters*	No targeting/Reactive targeting • *The Chechen Opposition* ○ *Dudayev's Supporters*

The Russian Federation

Between the Prigorodny Conflict in 1992 and the First Chechen War in 1994, the Russian Federation itself had come startlingly close to civil war itself. The Russian Federation is a presidential democracy, but it is typically classified as a hybrid regime or illiberal democracy in modern politics. Prior to the 1993 Constitutional Crisis, in which a dispute between President Yeltsin and Parliament was resolved via military force, the

democratic outlook for Russia was more hopeful. During the crisis, Yeltsin dissolved the Supreme Soviet following its attempt to impeach him, replacing it with the bicameral Federal Assembly, comprised of the Federation Council and the Duma. In both conflicts, a division existed between the executive and legislative branches, with the Russian Parliament being more hesitant to involve Russian troops in conflicts. Both houses also disapproved of Yeltsin's performance in both conflicts, accusing him of unnecessarily escalating violence.

The Russian Federation was a new state in 1992, but it inherited the structure of the Russian Soviet Socialist Republic (SSR). Many of the North Caucasian states had been Autonomous SSRs (ASSRs) within the Soviet Union, making their status between that of an SSR and a typical sub-national unit of a Republic of the Soviet Union, with ASSRs like SSRs in terms of autonomy and self-rule. ASSRs were typically home to significant ethnic majority-minority communities. The USSR provided greater autonomy to these regions as a strategy to stave off potential revolt. Many ASSRs, like Adjara, Tatarstan, and Nagorno-Karabakh, pushed for independence alongside the SSRs, like Ukraine, Georgia, and Kazakhstan when the Soviet Union collapsed. SSRs with breakaway republics highly resisted the independence of these regions, often citing that it would set off a domino effect for other pockets of ethnic minorities to declare their sovereignty as well. The Russian Federation's policy towards breakaway regions in post-Soviet space is contradictory: suppressing internal secessionist movements, but supporting ones in its near abroad, often to make countries more closely align with Russian foreign policy.

For Russia, another issue arose from a lack of clear internal borders. This was the underlying reason of the East Prigorodny Conflict, as borders had been moved while the Ingush population was deported under Stalin's rule. A war almost began between Russian and Chechen forces in 1992 due to conflicting views on the location of the border between Chechnya and Ingushetia. President Boris Yeltsin and the Russian Parliament were hesitant to make decisions about borders, perhaps naively believing that the issue would resolve on its own.

Common Tactics

In both the East Prigorodny Conflict and the First Chechen War, the actors operated at a lower military capability compared to the Russian Federation. Russian troops were not always present in full force, meaning that the other actors had times where they were fighting a conflict where they were symmetric to one another. Many of the groups in these conflicts were fragmented and operated in semi-independent or independent groups that utilized tactics commonly used by asymmetric groups.[342] This combined with cultural practices of mountaineering populations: banditry. In the past, it was not uncommon for residents of the resource-poor highlands to raid the resource-rich lowlands, and it was from this behavior that the region gained its reputation for being home to fearsome warriors. A common strategy for these groups was hostage taking, which itself evolved from being a means to sidestep starting a blood feud. In more modern conflicts, hostage-taking was used primarily a means to maintain leverage, as each side has collateral to prevent attacks or reneging on agreements.

[342] Arreguin-Toft (2001). Wood (2003). Kaylvas (2006) Balcells (2017).

This strategy was seen on both sides of the East Prigorodny Conflict, with negotiations often centering on the return of hostages rather than the root cause of mobilization. Moreover, whenever negotiations would appear to or break down, both Ossetians and Ingush would take another round of hostages to secure their positions.[343] It was also seen in Chechnya and its neighboring republics during the start of the First Chechen War to slow the Russian advance.

Other strategies of asymmetric groups were also observed. Many groups blended into the local population when not actively fighting. Members could quickly mobilize and demobilize depending on the local dynamics. Groups also avoided open battles, ambushing other groups or stationary targets, engaging in sabotage, and the like. In both conflicts, groups heavily utilized their knowledge of the terrain and population. Fighters would move to less accessible areas in the mountains to avoid capture, as the terrain made it difficult for Russian forces to take advantage of their numbers and heavy weaponry.

Conclusions: Conflicts with a Strong State Actor

The conflicts in the North Caucasus differ from the cases presented in Parts II and III due to the presence of an influential state. Rebel groups can operate with high/symmetric capabilities to one another; they may even possess high/symmetric capabilities in comparison to local and regional coercive apparatuses, like police forces. In Yugoslavia, there was a national military, but like the state itself, the YNA degraded over the course of the wars. The Russian military lacked the full might of the Soviet military due to the strains of collapse of the USSR, but its coercive capacity was still high. Moreover, the Russian

[343] KYODO (23 November 1992).

government could project its coercive capacity beyond the bounds of the center into its periphery. Its army could feasibly be involved in international conflicts in Tajikistan and Georgia alongside domestic ones in North Ossetia and Chechnya.

For rebel groups in the North Caucasus, this directly impacted their relative material capabilities. When the Russian government was involved with the violence, armed groups had low relative material capabilities. This restricts group agency, leading to a higher likelihood of mixed or reactive targeting. A strong state does not mean that a conflict will not occur, but it does mean that groups are more likely to utilize guerilla tactics against the state.

Moreover, when groups are fragmented, the state is more likely to be able to repress mobilized groups, provided the state maintains coercive pressure on armed groups. We observe this during the East Prigorodny Conflict, wherein Russian forces were able to quickly resolve the violence once they arrived in the region. This demobilization, however, is reliant on the continued presence of the state. We see this too in East Prigorodny, with violence sporadically flaring over the years, and again in 1994 during the onset of the First Chechen War.

In Chechnya, consolidated groups were present, namely the Chechen Army. Unlike the secessionist movements in Yugoslavia, Chechnya would not win independence in the First Chechen War nor the Second Chechen War. This is, in part, because secession was far removed from the Russian center, preventing a peripheral conflict from threatening the national government. This further enabled the Russian military to sustain operations in the

North Caucasus for a prolonged period of time, fighting either a war or insurgency in Chechnya from 1994 to 2008.

In the following two chapters, I will first examine the East Prigorodny Conflict and then the First Chechen War. These two differed greatly from one another, despite their territorial, cultural, linguistic, and historic similarities to one another. The East Prigorodny Conflict was a border dispute that first developed without a heavy Russian presence, causing groups to operate differently during their initial mobilization than they would after the Russian military turned its focus to North Ossetia and then Ingushetia. Mobilization and demobilization were both quick processes, but both occurred in a fragmented, localized manner based on external pressure or the lack thereof. Most Ossetians and Ingush benefited from this structure that enabled fighters to blend back into the civilian population and prevent state targeting when exposed to a professional military.

This was not the case in Chechnya. From the beginning of the conflict, the Russian military was involved, putting in a concerted effort to isolate Chechnya from the surrounding regions. Unlike the East Prigorodny Conflict, there were consolidated groups in the conflict, leading to more targeting and less demobilization in response to state coercion. From this difference in responses, it becomes apparent that the effectiveness of state coercion is dependent not only on state capacity but also the rebel groups the state is attempting to coerce.

CHAPTER TEN: THE EAST PRIGORODNY CONFLICT

The focus of this section is the East Prigorodny Conflict. Like the conflicts in Slovenia and Kyrgyzstan, the East Prigorodny Conflict was a relatively short one, lasting officially from October 30 to November 6, 1992. Table 10.4 outlines the prominent political actors in the conflict. Of note are Georgiy Khizha, the head of the interim government in North Ossetia and Ingushetia appointed by President Yeltsin, Akhsarbek Galazov, the Chairman of the North Ossetian Supreme Soviet, and Ruslan Aushev, the President of Ingushetia. To assess group organization and relative capabilities, I will utilize archival documents and contemporary news reporting from the start of September to mid-December 1992.

Table 10.1: The State and Groups Active in the East Prigorodny Conflict

	Pre-Russian Intervention	**Post-Russian Intervention**
The State	The Russian Federation	The Russian Federation
Targets the State		
Targets Other Groups	Ingush Militants Ossetian Militants	
Mixed Targeting		
Reactive/No Targeting		Ingush Militants Ossetian Militants (*predicted*)
Other		Ossetian Militants (*actual*)

Group behavior is particularly interesting in this conflict. Both Ingush and Ossetian rebel groups initially mobilized under conditions where they were symmetric to one another in terms of relative capabilities. Members of these two groups were united by their ethnicity, but many organized independently in geographically proximate locales for the specific defense of their homes, with little direct coordination between local organizers. As a result, both groups possessed a fragmented organizational structure, occupying quadrants II and IV in Table 10.2. In the first stage, I predict that both groups will target other groups – in this case being each other. After the introduction of Russian troops, however, I predict that both will transition to engaging in reactive targeting.

Table 10.2: Predicted Group Targeting in the EPC

	Consolidated	**Fragmented**
High/Symmetric Capabilities	Targets the state	Targets other groups • *Ingush Militants* • *Ossetian Militants*
Low Capabilities	Mixed targeting	No targeting/Reactive targeting • *Ingush Militants (post-Russian Intervention)* o *Ossetian Militants (post-Russian Intervention)*

Ingush militants do become reactive after the introduction of Russian troops, but their Ossetian counterparts do not. Much like in what was observed in Tajikistan among the Kulyob Formations, the Ossetian group was instead absorbed by the state when it was predicted to switch to reactive targeting. In the cases examined in my dissertation, there

have now been two instances wherein the state has co-opted rebel groups as its own forces. My theory attempts to predict the behavior of rebel groups based on the features of those groups themselves. However, there appears to be an additional mechanism related to having a stable or semi-stable government and alignment of purpose. With Ossetian Militants, the transition from rebel group to state-sanctioned security force was preceded by their opponents' transition to reactive targeting paired with a government-led initiative to co-opt their forces.

Table 10.3: Actual Group Targeting in the EPC

	Consolidated	**Fragmented**
High/Symmetric Capabilities	Targets the state	Targets other groups • *Ingush Militants* • *Ossetian Militants*
Low Capabilities	Mixed targeting	No targeting/Reactive targeting • *Ingush Militants (post-Russian Intervention)* • *Ossetian Militants (post-Russian Intervention)*

**Ossetian Militants (post-Russian Intervention) were partially absorbed into North Ossetian law enforcement infrastructure*

Due to resistance to Russian interference or violations of sovereignty, coupled with harsh terrain, Russian Interior Ministry forces were present in small numbers in North Ossetia, but not in Ingushetia. The population in East Prigorodny mobilized in several locales, but it was difficult for Russian forces to identify who was mobilized and who was not. Particularly for arms confiscations, the military had to isolate villages and search

homes to find and confiscate weaponry. Otherwise, fighters would simply retreat with their armaments until external pressure lessened. Therefore, we see a shift in group strategy when Russian troops arrived in the numbers necessary to isolate and search residences, because this strategy shifted the balance of relative material capabilities from symmetric too low for rebel groups. Table 10.4 outlines the prominent Russian and North Caucasian officials involved in the conflict.

According to the Provisional Administration of North Ossetia and Ingushetia reports in early December, over 300 people were killed, nearly a thousand wounded, 3,500 dwellings, schools, hospitals, shops, and the like destroyed, 11 billion Rubles worth of damage, and over 65,000 refugees.[344] It was the first serious armed conflict in the territory of the Russian Federation. While there were other conflicts in post-Soviet space, like the Tajik and Georgian Civil Wars, this was the first to be within Russian borders. The region was unstable for quite some time before and after the official cessation of the conflict. In 1994, for instance, Russian forces were waylaid on their way into Chechnya by Ingush residents, both due to their kinship with Chechens and their remaining anti-Russian sentiments. Tensions between Ingushetia and North Ossetia remained in 1994 as well, with the borders question still unsettled. The conflict in Chechnya reignited worries that violence would resume in the Prigorodny Rayon.

[344] Gondusov and Shanayev (8 December 1992).

Table 10.4: Prominent Figures in the East Prigorodny Conflict

Russian Officials	North Caucasian Officials
Boris Yeltsin: President of the Russian Federation Ruslan Khasbulatov: Chairman of the Supreme Soviet of the Russian Federation General Pavel Grachev: Russian Defense Minister Georgiy Khizha: Vice-Prime Minister of Russia, placed in charge of interim government in North Ossetia and Ingushetia Sergey Shakhray: head of the temporary administration in the conflict zone Ramazan Abdulatipov: Chairman of the Council of Nationalities of the Russian parliament	Akhsarbek Galazov: Chairman of the Supreme Soviet of North Ossetia Sergey Khetagurov: Head of the North Ossetian Government Ruslan Aushev: President of Ingushetia Yusuf Geroyev: Head of the Ingush National Movement Musa Shanibov: President of the Confederation of Caucasian Peoples Dzhokhar Dudayev: President of Chechnya Movladi Udugov: Chairman of the Chechen State Committee

Chairman Galazov of the North Ossetian Supreme Soviet and Georgiy Khizia, the Russian official appointed to head the interim government of North Ossetia and Ingushetia, argued that residents in Prigorodny mobilized against the North Ossetian governments.[345] Others asserted that Ingush fighters entered North Ossetia from Ingushetia to spur

[345] Mayak Radio (4 November 1992). Timofeyev (4 November 1992) "Blames." Timofeyev (4 November 1992) "Rules Out." ITAR-TASS (5 November 1992)

violence.[346] Yet others argued that it was a combination of these two. Still others argued that the conflict was a struggle between old, Soviet-era political elite and new political actors, and the ethnic conflict was merely an overlay to this. Yet others pointed to the rise in mafia and organized crime activity in the North Caucuses due to the general lack of law and order and territorial control by local governance. This, specifically, was a common refrain in the North Caucasian conflicts. Sergey Shakhray, head of the temporary administration in the conflict zone, stated that just members of the mafia and those involved in the drug trade found the presence of Russian troops objectionable, not the average citizens of North Ossetia and Ingushetia.[347] This, though, is not the most reliable measure of public opinion.

The Borders Question

It seems intuitive that borders will be drawn with ethnic communities in mind; however, many ethnic groups are divided by international borders and internal administrative boundaries. Borders do not always perfectly contain ethnic groups, nor are they always designed to do so. Throughout the Soviet Union, for instance, administrative borders were specifically drawn to undercut potential nationalist movements by isolating ethnic groups and creating minority enclaves. Between Ingushetia and North Ossetia, the border created an Ingush minority-majority region in North Ossetia. Further complicating matters, this region was formerly part of the Ingush administrative unit.

[346] KYODO (4 November 1992) "INTERFAX Updates Situation."
[347] Radio Rossii (27 November 1992).

Some argue that borders are unlikely to be changed from administrative ones. Carter and Geomans (2001), for example, argue that borders are rarely new; they are not drawn according to nationalist ideals or in quests for defensible borders. Instead, new borders coincide with previous administrative frontiers, as this decreases uncertainty for both actors in a conflict.[348] Territorial integrity has gained increasing salience since the end of World War II, as many European states linked territorial revision with the outbreak of war. Zacker writes in "The Territorial Integrity Norm" that while borders have not been frozen, "states have been proscribed from altering them by force."[349] Secessionist movements oft desire for their territory to exit as a whole entity, as Chechnya did. This holds true for many even if administrative borders include ethnic communities that are distinct from those that are the regional majority. Kyrgyzstan had large ethnic minority communities, but it did not carve these sections out when it sought independence. Likewise, in Yugoslavia, the various republics sought secession along administrative boundaries, although some, like Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, had ethnic minority groups that did not desire independence. This posed a problem for Ingushetia, as the Ingush government and the Ingush population in North Ossetia explicitly desired a border change to have administrative borders align with the region's ethnic distribution. With both the Russian and North Ossetian governments contesting this change, though, it was unlikely to occur.

[348] Carter and Goemans (2001).
[349] Zacker (2001), 246.

Under Soviet rule, Chechnya and Ingushetia were one administrative unit – the Checheno-Ingush ASSR. This ASSR was created in 1934, after the Mountain Autonomous SSR separated into Chechnya, Ingushetia, and North Ossetia, and then re-merged Chechnya and Ingushetia. Chechnya and Ingushetia separated during the Soviet Collapse, but the border between the two had still not been established in 1992.[350] It was assumed that the borders would be returned to where they were before 1934 on the Chechen side, but the Ingush administration advocated that its borders should be drawn where it was in 1944, prior to the deportation of the Chechen and Ingush peoples to Central Asia.[351] Ingushetia's border with Chechnya would only be set in November 1992, mere weeks after violence began in East Prigorodny. Even then, Yeltsin only temporarily set the border for the sake of deescalating potential violence between Russian and Chechen forces.[352]

To the East, the Ingush border with North Ossetia had also been revised in a way Ingushetia opposed. The Russian Federation passed the Law on the Rehabilitation of Deported Persons on June 4th, 1992, which allowed deported groups to return to their place of residence prior to their deportation. This resulted in many Ingush returning to their homes in Prigorodny – though this region was now officially in North Ossetia. The law did not establish a mechanism for land redistribution between sub-national units alongside the population. Ingushetia's borders in 1944 included Vladikavkaz and Prigorodny. North Ossetian officials argued that this border was only established in 1924; therefore, Ingushetia's historical claim was invalid. Before this, the region had been controlled by

[350] Pershin et. al (4 November 1992).
[351] KYODO. (23 October 1992). KYODO (27 October 1992) "North." KYODO. (27 October 1992) "Ingush." KYODO (28 October 1992) "Ingushes."
[352] ITAR-TASS (14 November 1992).

Cossacks between 1859 and 1924, but the North Ossetian government did not advocate for the territory to be transferred to them.[353]

The Russian Federation was unwilling to adjudicate border disputes due to the returning groups. There was an assumption on the part of the Russian Federation that current borders (as of 1991) would hold. The North Ossetian government would initially blame Ingushetia for the violence, but by mid-November, it would blame the Russian Federation, as well, for opening the door to potential border revision without fully understanding the complexity.[354] Russian officials in the region, like Georgiy Khizha, the head of the interim government in North Ossetia and Ingushetia, stated that borders could not be redrawn with ongoing fighting.[355] However, this undercut conflict resolution options and discouraged demobilization, as the main reason for the violence was removed from the realm of potential compromise.

Violence Begins

The situation in the North Caucasus was unstable for some time, both due to internal contentions between republics and between the republics and the federal government, but also due to the Georgian Civil War ongoing directly to the South. A State of Emergency (SOE) edict had been active in North Ossetia since April of 1991 due to periodic ethnic clashes between Ingush and Ossetians.[356] Additionally, Russian troops were involved in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, two breakaway regions of Georgia, resulting in another local

[353] KYODO (10 November 1992) "Blames."
[354] KYODO (10 November 1992) "Blames."
[355] Novosti (13 November 1992).
[356] KYODO (28 October 1992 "N. Ossetian."

SOE, declared on October 7th, 1991, in North Ossetia due to an influx of refugees from South Ossetia due to the ongoing Georgian Civil War.[357]

Violence in the East Prigorodny Conflict began with an incident in Yuzhny, an Ingush-majority town located just south of Vladikavkaz, on October 23rd, 1991. This clash occurred between Ingush individuals and Ossetian police, specifically an Interior Ministry unit sent to investigate an unrelated crime.[358] Six people, including two policemen, were killed and seven were injured. While the Chairman of the Supreme Soviet in North Ossetia reported that republic militia forces had the situation under the control that evening, the Presidium declared a SOE in Vladikavkaz and requested additional Russian Internal Ministry troops.[359]

The North Ossetian Government

The North Ossetian government presented itself as the victim on Ingush aggression, arguing that Ingush extremists had crossed the border to incite conflict on its territory.[360] Compared to the Ingush government, the Ossetian government enjoyed more support from the Russian government. The North Ossetian Supreme Soviet described the conflict to the Congress of the Russian People's Deputies as "a carefully planned armed intrusion of the Ingush bandit formations with the aim of a forcible annexation of some territories of the

[357] KYODO (22 October 1992). Shanayev (23 October 1992). Radio Rossii (23 October 1992).
[358] KYODO (23 October 1992).
[359] Radio Rossii (23 October 1992).
[360] Shanayev (3 November 1992). Mayak Radio (4 November 1992). Timofeyev (4 November 1992) "Blames." KYODO (9 November 1992) "Ingush Radical."

Ingush Republic."[361] Khizha, the Russian representative in the region, backed claims that armed groups from outside North Ossetia caused the conflict.[362]

[361] KYODO (27 November 1992) "Asks."
[362] ITAR-TASS (5 November 1992).

Figure 10.1: Group Locations Before Russian Intervention
Source: Mike Shand/International Crisis Group, October 2012

North Ossetian officials argued for differentiated treatment of Ossetian and Ingush groups. For example, the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of North Ossetia, Sergey Khetagurov stated that while it was necessary to disarm all illegal armed units in the republic, there were several exceptions. The Ossetian national guards were mentioned by name, but he also argued that self-defense units should not be fully disarmed. Conversely, Ingush groups in Prigorodny, he argued, should be eliminated by force – and the North Ossetian government might consider not allowing Ingush residents to return at all, violating the Law on the Rehabilitation of Deported Persons passed earlier that year.[363]

Differences between North Ossetia and Ingushetia were further exposed by the Russian reaction to the conflict. In early November, Yeltsin met with the Chairman of the North Ossetian Supreme Soviet, Akhsarbek Galazov, but not the Ingush counterpart.[364] Whether deliberate or no, this was a snub to Ingushetia, especially when combined with the blame levied against the Ingush by both North Ossetian and Russian officials. During this meeting, Galazov ruled out the possibility of border revisions in North Ossetia.[365] Khizha continued this pattern, meeting with Ossetian authorities in person but only talking to Ingush leadership by phone.[366]

Russian Defense Minister, General Pavel Grachev, countered that Russian forces were not taking the sides nor were they aiding any armed formations. Instead, Grachev blamed the Ingush government's refusal to allow Russian troops into Ingushetia as they

[363] Shevtsov (7 November 1992). KYODO (27 November 1992) "N. Ossetia."
[364] Timofeyev (3 November 1992).
[365] Timofeyev (4 November 1992) "Rules Out."
[366] Pershin et. al (4 November 1992).

did in North Ossetia.[367] Grachev's theory was that the Ingush government refused Russian aid due to its possession of its own military equipment and armed formations in the republic. In the same vein, he asserted that Ingush leadership may be seeking to obfuscate potential collaboration between Ingush and Chechen formations. Both these claims deepened beliefs that Ingushetia was to blame for the violence.

The Ingush Government

The Ingush government was not a fully functioning political entity at the start of this conflict. Its split from Chechnya left it without the basic infrastructure of a republic, even lacking a TV or radio station. There was an economic collapse along with the Soviet Union's collapse, the government lacked control over its territory, and law enforcement bodies were weak and insufficient to deal with armed groups on their own.[368]

North Ossetian and Russian government officials and news sources blamed the violence on the Ingush government for either encouraging the mobilization of groups in North Ossetia or sending illegal formations across the border from Ingushetia to start violence. Despite placing blame on Ingush militants, there were reports that Ossetians were using the conflict as an opportunity to commit genocide on Ingush inhabitants, targeting women, the elderly, and children.[369] Furthermore, Russian Colonel General Filatov stated in a speech on Ossetian television that troops had the expressed goal of clearing all of the Prigorodny Rayon of Ingush, going so far as to poison the water supply in Narzan,

[367] Fatigarov (7 November 1992).
[368] Teleradiokompaniya Ostankino (30 November 1992).
[369] Radio Rossii (2 November 1992) "Colonel."

Ingushetia.[370] Taken together, this resulted in the Ingush population having little faith that the Russian government would act as an impartial mediator in the conflict.[371]

The Ingush government announced that they refused the introduction of Russian troops because their presence would trigger violence between Ingush nationals and Russian forces.[372] The Ingush government's hesitancy to allow Russian troops or interior ministry units into Ingushetia allowed armed groups to move into Ingushetia from North Ossetia when Russian troops moved into the Zone of Armed Conflict (ZAC) in East Prigorodny. Isa Kodzoyev, leader of the Ingush Justice Party, reaffirmed fears of escalation, declaring that fighting would continue as long as Russian troops were present in the North Caucasus – even if Ingush fighters had to resort to guerrilla warfare.[373] Salman Mutaliyev, the representative of the Movement for the Revival of the Ingush Republic, another Ingush political organization, accused Russian troops of facilitating the genocide of the Ingush people.[374] He, too, believed that Russian actions would only strengthen regional separatist movements.

The Emergency Committee of Ingushetia denied that Ingush nationals were taking part in pillaging or hostage taking in North Ossetia.[375] Ingush leadership, furthermore, stated that the conflict was orchestrated by Russian leadership to eliminate the Ingush people.[376] The Russian parliament eventually admitted to partial blame, stating that their

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[370] Radio Rossii (2 November 1992) "Colonel."
[371] Radio Rossii (2 November 1992) "Colonel."
[372] KYODO (7 November 1992) "Committee."
[373] KYODO (9 November 1992) "Ingush Radical."
[374] KYODO (12 November 1992) "Ingushes."
[375] KYODO (4 November 1992) "INTERFAX Updates Situation."
[376] KYODO (4 November 1992) "INTERFAX Updates Situation."

clumsy ethnic policy exacerbated the problem.[377] Russian Vice-President Aleksandr Rutskoy admitted that almost no one devoted any time to ethnic policy on the all-Russia level.[378] The Chairman of the Human Rights Committee of the Russian Parliament, Sergey Kovalev, corroborated this, stating that their actions exacerbated the situation by confining its decision to just a decision of territorial exoneration.[379] The Russian Defense Minister would eventually take a more middling position, claiming that Russian forces were forced into conflict with nationalist gangs on both sides of the conflict.[380] The Russian government did explicitly deny any intent of genocide.

The Kremlin's Intervention

Though there were some Interior Ministry troops present at the start of the conflict, the Kremlin began asserting its influence over the evolving situation in November. At the start of November, the Kremlin declared a State of Emergency in North Ossetia and Ingushetia that would last from November 2nd to December 2nd, 1992.[381] Russian forces set up headquarters in Vladikavkaz in North Ossetia and in Narzan in Ingushetia. An extension of the SOE was then approved in late November 1992 to January 2nd,, 1993.[382] This move was supported by the North Ossetian government, but both Ingush and Chechen officials protested the move.[383] The Ossetian government additionally requested that Yeltsin extend the SOE for two months instead of one on November 27th.[384] The Russian government once

[377] KYODO (12 November 1992) "Deputies."
[378] KYODO (19 November 1992) "Wants Oblasts."
[379] KYODO (19 November 1992) "Human Rights Expert."
[380] Ovsiyenko (12 November 1992).
[381] Rossiyskaya Gazeta (4 November 1992).
[382] Novosti (24 November 1992).
[383] ITAR-TASS (24 November 1992).
[384] KYODO. (27 November 1992).

again sided with the North Ossetian government, extending the SOE further to January 30th, 1993.[385] Furthermore, Yeltsin appointed Vice-Prime Minister Georgiy Khizha as the head of an interim government and trouble-shooting mission to the region.[386] Russian troops were placed along the North Ossetian-Ingush border to separate the two sides until all illegal formations were cleared from Ingushetia.[387] Khizha announced his intent to force all illegal units, regardless of which side they supported, to disarm.[388]

There was debate among Russian politicians on whether the introduction of Russian forces successfully de-escalated violence. Yeltsin was quick to assure the Russian public that Interior Ministry troops had the situation under control in around two days. On November 7th, 1992, the Russian State Committee for Emergencies seconded this, stating that Russian troops, acting alongside North Ossetian armed detachments, controlled all villages in the Prigorodny Rayon in a press release.[389] However, the situation on the ground contradicted these claims, as fighting continued. Khizha announced that the situation continued to escalate despite Russian troops, and Musa Shanibov, the President of the Confederation of Caucasian Peoples, requested that the Russian troops leave the North Caucasus since their presence was unlikely to lend to a lasting solution.[390]

The Russian strategy was flawed. Russian forces were committed in Tajikistan and Georgia, and now, they were deployed in two internal republics while issues continued elsewhere in the Russian Federation. Officials had to be careful to avoid escalation with

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[385] Novikov (1 December 1992).
[386] ITAR-TASS (1 November 1992) "Khizha."
[387] Timofeyev and Shanayev (31 October 1992). Radio Rossii (1 November 1992).
[388] ITAR-TASS (1 November 1992) "Khizha."
[389] Spar (29 October 1992). Gondusov (2 November 1992). KYODO (7 November 1992) "Troops."
[390] KYODO (9 November 1992) "Yeltsin." KYODO (9 November 1992) "Caucasian."

Chechnya, as well. This provided incentives to limit the number of troops committed to the East Prigorodny Conflict. Russian reservists were stretched thin in the region: there were simply not enough to deploy to hot spots, rendering them unable to fully suppress and disarm illegal formations.[391]

Clearing villages proved difficult, and keeping these regions clear added another difficulty, Not only were troops required to isolate a locale, but troops also needed to remain in order to prevent fighters from returning. It took the combination of both law enforcement, Russian forces, and Ossetian Republic Guards, in conjunction with South Ossetian militants, to clear Yuzhny of Ingush gunmen.[392] Despite this action, more Ingush militants were still known to be making their way into Vladikavkaz. Both Russian and regional experts expressed that the conflict would only end when all weapons had been confiscated by official forces and the borders of Chechnya, Ingushetia, and North Ossetia had been officially determined.[393]

More Russian Interior Ministry troops transferred into North Ossetia, including 3,000 Special Purpose Mobile Unit (OMON) troops, and these forces, along with all other armed units, were placed under the command of Commander Vasiliy Savvin in the ZAC.[394] On November 1st, 1991, two Russian airborne regiments arrived in Vladikavkaz as well, with the goal of closing the North Ossetian-Ingush border entirely to prevent the entry of Ingush combatants into North Ossetia.[395] Within the declared ZAC, Russian Interior

[391] Felgengauer (25 November 1992).
[392] Shanayev and Timofeyev (3 November 1992).
[393] Spar (29 October 1992).
[394] Radio Rossii (31 October 1992). Timofeyev and Shanayev (2 November 1992).
[395] KYODO (1 November 1992).

Ministry troops would work alongside North Ossetian troops to clear the zone of all armed non-residents and free hostages.[396] These forces were given the license to shoot to kill if Russian servicemen were attacked by militants.[397]

On November 5th, Russian troops formally moved into the conflict zone to ensure the enforcement of the SOE due to a ceasefire brokered between Khizha and Isa Kastoyev, the representative of the Russian president in Ingushetia.[398] Russian Interior Ministry troops, as seen in Figure 10.2, moved into the region East and North of Vladikavkaz, specifically Oktyabrskoe, Kartsa, Dachnoe, Kurtat, Chermen, Maisky, and Yuzhny to disarm all illegal armed units.[399] On November 10th at 1100, Russian troops finally moved into Ingushetia with the goal of preventing fighting from restarting by stationing troops both in the capital, Narzan, and along the Ingush-Ossetian border, which the Chechen government denounced as a "crude demonstration of force."[400] There is a clear escalation in the conflict, as shown by the density in attacks occurring in Figure 10.1 versus 10.2. However, this escalation was not sustained; rather, it was a 'flash in the pan' increase in the level of violence before the conflict settled down. Moreover, in this transition, not only did Russian forces enter North Ossetia, but they also replaced the North Ossetian police and national guard forces at the same time.

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[396] Shanayev (1 November 1992).
[397] Radio Rossii (2 November 1992) "Shoot."
[398] Shanayev (5 November 1992).
[399] Shanayev (5 November 1992).
[400] ITAR-TASS (10 November 1992). KYODO (10 November 1992) "Chechen Border." KYODO (10 November 1992) "Chechen Forces." Asuyev (10 November 1992) "Condemns." Asuyev (10 November 1992) "Chechen."

Figure 10.2: Group Locations after the Russian Intervention
Source: Mike Shand/International Crisis Group, October 2012

Ingush versus Ossetian Rebel Groups

The period of high intensity violence was short, primarily due to the quick Russian intervention shifting group priorities. We observe rebel group behavior shift quickly from targeting primarily one another to being reactive and defensive as their material capabilities shifted from being relatively symmetric to low. More Russian troops began arriving within days of the escalation, but their effectiveness was hampered by disputes between Yeltsin and the Supreme Soviet and Ingushetia's refusal to allow Russian troops into the affected areas. The head of the Ossetian parliament, Akhsarbek Galazov, made repeated appeals for both sides to lay down their arms, but these went unheeded.[401] Moreover, Galazov believed that talks with the Ingush side would only be possible once Ingush fighters had been removed from North Ossetia.[402]

Early violence occurred primarily between Ingush and North Ossetian armed formations, with Republic forces, including police, other law enforcement bodies, and Interior Ministry troops, attempting to de-escalate. There were four reasons suggested for the violence: 1) competing territorial claims, 2) tension between regional and national actors over control and influence, 3) competing militant nationalists, 4) the Kremlin's colonial policies towards the North Caucasus.[403]

Ingush Forces

Ingush forces first engaged by targeting Ossetian irregular forces. At this point, Ingush groups had broad mobilization in Prigorodny with numerous small clashes

[401] Vesti (31 October 1992).
[402] Radio Rossii (1 November 1992).
[403] Asuyev (2 November 1992). Asuyev (3 November 1992). Mayak Radio (3 November 1992). Novikov (3 November 1992). KYODO (4 November 1992) "Seeks Disintegration."

throughout the region.[404] Additionally, Ingush militants with armored vehicles were seen concentrated in southern Ingushetia near the North Ossetian border.[405] The situation sharply deteriorated between the first attack on October 23rd and 27th, with armed clashes between Ingush and Ossetian residents in numerous locales.[406] By early November, most buildings in Kartsa and Kurtat were destroyed due to Ingush and Ossetian militants using artillery on each other's positions in and around the town.[407] Ingush militants also cleared Chermen of all non-Ingush residents by early November, with nearly 2,000 of the town's 7,000 residents fleeing to Olginskoe.[408]

There is a shift in strategy after the declaration of the SOE and the introduction of more Russian troops, particularly those with experience in maintaining public order.[409] Opportunistic targeting patterns emerged, with Ingush snipers reportedly entering Vladikavkaz.[410] There was some targeting of state forces; though, these were typically isolated incidents. In Kartsa, for example, a group of 150 Ingush militants blockaded Interior Ministry troops, demanding their withdrawal from North Ossetia.[411] Rather than targeting Russian forces, Ingush forces more often targeted local police and law enforcement. These forces, while affiliated with the local government, typically lacked formal military training or equipment. Much like in Yugoslavia, local police forces were

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[404] As shown in Figure 10.1 and 10.2, mobilization was seen in Vladikavkaz, Chermen, Kambileyevka, Chernorechenskoye, Terk, Kartsa, Kurtat, Dachnoe, Kambekyevskoe, and Redant
[405] KYODO (9 November 1992) "Fears."
[406] Shanayev (27 October 1992).
[407] KYODO (1 November 1992). KYODO (4 November 1992) "INTERFAX Updates Situation."
[408] KYODO (4 November 1992) "Fighting."
[409] Gondusov (2 November 1992).
[410] KYODO (3 November 1992).
[411] Radio Rossii (27 October 1992).

targeted because they were seen as an arm of the ethnic majority (Ossetians) targeting an ethnic minority (Ingush). Ingush fighters additionally targeted Russian military hardware, particularly when left exposed or under-defended.[412] For example, Ingush groups were seen raiding Russian military bases and seizing equipment along the North Ossetian-Ingush border.[413] Simultaneously, Ingush groups would begin retreating to the mountains, demobilizing in regions with high concentrations of Russian troops, primarily in the ZAC. Skirmishes continued at a lower frequency outside this zone.

Organizational Structure

The fragmented organizational structure of the Ingush groups was useful, since it allowed them to survive a more powerful opponent. Russian forces could not eliminate leadership, as military leaders were difficult to distinguish. Political leadership, like the Ingush president, were removed from the actions of illegal armed formations, even if these political forces were involved. It allowed groups to mobilize and demobilize quickly. It also prevented forced disarmament for some time. Significant progress was only made after enough Russian troops were dispatched to both North Ossetia and Ingushetia to isolate villages and individually search homes.[414] When Russian troops increased their numbers, Ingush forces were able to disengage and retreat: North Ossetian KGB documents indicated that Ingush armed forces were retreating into the mountains.[415] Documents blamed the slow Russian arrival in Ingushetia for allowing forces to regroup and dissipate, blending in with the civilian populations in hard-to-reach locales. The relatively quick mobilization and

[412] Pershin et. al (2 November 1992).
[413] Vesti (31 October 1992).
[414] Gondusov and Shanayev (3 December 1992).
[415] KYODO (9 November 1992) "Ingush Armed Formations."

demobilization of Ingush forces absent of any clear centralized military or political leadership is a key indicator of a fragmented organizational structure.

Russian forces also could not target fighters, as they are difficult to distinguish from the civilian population. The Russian military could not achieve its objectives due to the irregular forces' ability to mobilize and to demobilize. These groups avoid pitched battles and vanish back into the civilian population when under pressure. Ingush groups did so when Russian Interior Ministry troops entered the conflict zone. However, it enables these groups to 1) survive and 2) fight again once the state's coercive apparatus recedes. Russian Vice Admiral Aleksandr Selivanov stated that this conflict had exacerbated the already negative sentiments of the Ingush populations towards Russian leadership, the Supreme Soviet, and Russian troops.[416] Combined with forces' fragmented nature, this increased the likelihood of a long-standing low-intensity conflict in the region.

Ingush forces were fragmented for several reasons. *First*, some were residents of North Ossetia, while others did cross the border from Ingushetia to fight in Prigorodny. Some mobilized to fight for independence, some to protect their homes, and some to evacuate family members.

Second, while fighters received some guidance from the Ingush government, there is no direct evidence of a unifying political body for the fighters in North Ossetia and those from Ingushetia. Moreover, due to a lack of infrastructure in Ingushetia, including no state TV or radio stations or a news bulletin, individuals had to rely on gatherings in town centers

[416] KYODO (10 November 1992) "Observer."

across the republic to receive information of the ongoing conflict.[417] This diminished the capacity of groups to coordinate with one another and with the government, since it was difficult to even know what was going on in other locales. This lack of coordination was exacerbated by the terrain since travel between villages was made more difficult by the Caucasus Mountains.

Third, mobilization was atomized to villages. In Tajikistan, we observed armed groups organized in locales, but then either formed connections with other locales or solidified a power base. Kulyob Formations, for instance, may have initially mobilized in Kulyob, but they linked fighters in numerous locales over time. Ingush groups, however, mobilized in locales, but there is little evidence that fighters coordinated with other others. Movement was most often observed to be refugees fleeing the violence or hostages being moved to more secure locations.

Relative Capabilities

We observe an interesting dynamic emerge between Ingush forces and their opponents. When up against Ossetian rebel groups, Ingush formations have largely symmetric capabilities. However, when Russian Interior Ministry troops were deployed in greater numbers to North Ossetia, Ingush forces no longer had symmetric relative capabilities. This became readily apparent when Russian forces were able to close off and isolate entire villages to force disarmament. This shift in capabilities correlates with a shift in Ingush strategy. On the Ingush side, where Russian troops did not initially deploy, mobilization patters continued and even expanded southwards. In North Ossetia, however,

[417] Teleradiokompaniya Ostankino (30 November 1992).

there is a shift from group targeting to reactive targeting. Moreover, as demonstrated by future flare ups, Ingush formations were quick to return to group targeting when Russian forces were removed, and capabilities returned to being symmetric.

Villages and towns in North Ossetia either did not or could not rely on the Ossetian government for protection, and both Ingush and Ossetian residents turned to home guards to fill this role. Objectively, these forces were not well armed. Both Ingush and Ossetian villages were policed primarily by local militias, often with few armaments during the conflict.[418] Still, Ingush residents in the Ingush-Ossetian border region were highly motivated to fight in the Prigorodny rayon. Exact numbers for Ingush militants are hard to determine, as many were civilians who took up arms in their hometowns. People were not the problem for Ingush fighters – their problem was sufficient armaments. Yusuf Geroyev, the head of the Ingush National Movement, stated as such to Chechen officials when he asked for weaponry.[419]

Armaments were present. For instance, militant groups were using armored vehicles, heavy artillery, and grenade launchers in clashes on the outskirts of Vladikavkaz according to ITAR-TASS correspondents.[420] When Russian troops began quarantining villages in the ZAC and confiscating weapons, villages did not appear to be under-armed. The MOD reported the weapons confiscated from two towns near one another: Dalakovo, Ingushetia and Zigla, North Ossetia. Included in the confiscation were a large number of arms and ammunition, machine guns, automatic rifles, grenade launchers, missile

[418] Barchugov and Lomakin (25 November 1992).
[419] Vesti (31 October 1992). Andreyev (3 November 1992).
[420] ITAR-TASS (1 November 1992) "Gaydar."

launchers, a cannon, a 100-mm anti-aircraft gun, and several kilograms of narcotics.[421] In response, the Russian Deputy Minister for Internal Affairs, Aleksandr Lulikov, stated he was "upset" that Ingush fighters had not given up their arms.[422] In other towns, armored personnel carriers, more arms and ammunition, tanks, and armored vehicles were found.[423] Similar armaments were found in the possession of Ingush and Ossetian civilians. Even though these caches were impressive, they paled in comparison to those held by the Russian Federation.

Ossetian Forces

Alongside the Ingush population, Ossetian residents began joining volunteer formations in Vladikavkaz.[424] Ossetian formations were a non-state group that contributed to the escalation of violence alongside their Ingush counterparts. Ossetian fighters undercut the legitimacy of the Ossetian government, despite being more closely aligned with the North Ossetian government. The government still demanded these groups disarm. Perceptions of Ossetian irregular units were different compared to Ingush forces among government officials, as the North Ossetian government blamed violence on Ingush groups.

Militants from South Ossetia aided Ossetian formations by driving out a group of Ingush fighters from Oktyabrskoe and Yuzhny in November.[425] Fighting between Ingush and Ossetian militants continued in both locations afterwards.[426] Ossetian armed groups operated in many of the same locations as Ingush groups, and these two groups targeted

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[421] Gondusov and Shanayev (3 December 1992). Maryukha and Petrov (5 December 1992).
[422] KYODO (4 December 1992).
[423] KYODO (4 December 1992).
[424] Radio Rossii (1 November 1992).
[425] Shanayev and Timofeyev (3 November 1992). Timofeyev and Shanayev (2 November 1992).
[426] KYODO (4 November 1992) "Fighting."

each other during the onset of violence. When Russian forces entered the fray, group behavior shifted, much like the Ingush formations. However, unlike Ingush groups, Ossetian groups did not become reactive. Instead, much like Kulyob groups in the Tajik Civil War, Ossetian home guards and armed irregulars were folded into Ossetian law enforcement. Ossetian home guards even regained control of Vladikavkaz working alongside the North Ossetian and Russian forces.

Organizational Structure

North Ossetian formations looked like their Ingush counterparts at the start: localized mobilization within a limited territory. In the language of Paul Staniland's Networked Rebellion (2014), groups possessed vertical ties between the mobilizing population and local organizers, but local organizers lacked horizontal ties with one another. Fighting was geographically concentrated in Prigorodny and Vladikavkaz, but fighters were mostly fighting Ingush militants in the places where they initially mobilized. Even though the groups operated close to one another, had similar political goals, and shared an ethnic identity, specific leadership figures for Ossetian formations were not identified. Like with Ingush formations, this enabled groups to operate in a flexible manner, difficult to identify, disarm, and disband. This made negotiating an end to violence more difficult, as those who claimed leadership could not credibly say that they could end the violence if their demands were met.[427]

During much of the fighting, Ossetian groups were separated from those of the Ossetian government, but they enjoyed tacit support from both official Russian and

[427] Worsnop (2017).

Ossetian forces. This tacit support decreased the likelihood of de-escalation between Ingush and Ossetian rebel groups, since unilateral disarmament is improbable. In December 1992, the North Ossetian Security Council sought to deepen its ties with Ossetian rebel groups by seeking pathways for bringing republican guards and home guards under a single umbrella.[428] The Council's three published goals were to improve coordination, enhance discipline, and improve living conditions – implying that the illegal Ossetian forces struggled with these features during the conflict. Coordination and discipline would give the state the ability to control when and where violence was enacted by Ossetian groups, thereby returning the North Ossetian government a partial monopoly on the use of force within its borders.

Relative Capabilities

Like their Ingush counterparts, most villages were guarded by under-armed formations with little connection to the overall state structures.[429] These forces had basic armaments on par with Ingush groups, but not with Russian Interior Ministry troops when they began to enter the republic on the North Ossetian government's behalf. Like Ingush groups, they also targeted munitions and hardware cashes.[430] Some groups of Ossetian extremists were reported to have chemical weapons, which were used on residents around Dzchnoye, Chermen, and Kurdat northeast of Vladikavkaz.[431]

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[428] Gondusov and Shanayev (21 November 1992).
[429] Barchugov and Lomakin (25 November 1992).
[430] Pershin et. al (2 November 1992). KYODO (4 November 1992) "INTERFAX Updates Situation."
[431] Radio Rossii (2 November 1992) "Colonel."

Ossetian forces were still subject to disarmament by Russian troops.[432] Compared to their Ingush counterparts, Ossetian home guards were recorded registering and handing over their weapons and armored equipment towards the end of November.[433] At the end of November, past the deadline for surrendering weapons, Sergey Shakhray, the head of the temporary administration in the conflict zone, states that both sides still held a larger number of weapons, including heavy weaponry.[434] Both also still held hostages, supposedly 200 Ingush held by North Ossetians and 600 Ossetians held by Ingush.[435] At this time, Russian Interior Ministry troops and North Ossetian guards were still struggling to lock down control over important establishments in the emergency zone.[436] Additionally, in the last two weeks of November, nearly 50,000 people were recorded exiting ZAC.[437]

However, North Ossetian formations were simultaneously being folded into official armed formations, not truly disbanding. For instance, around Chermenskoye and Oktyabroskoye, Ossetian "home guards" operated alongside special police forces and Interior Ministry troops against Ingush fighters, referred to in news reporting as "bandit groups."[438] The presence of South Ossetian militants was also evidence of Russian complicit alignment with Ossetian formations. These groups entered North Ossetia via the Rokskiy Pass, which was heavily guarded by Russian internal troops to prevent spillover of the Georgian Civil War into Russia.[439] Though there were no official documents, the

[432] KYODO (9 November 1992) "Fears."
[433] Gondusov and Shanayev (29 November 1992).
[434] Radio Rossii (27 November 1992).
[435] Radio Rossii (27 November 1992).
[436] KYODO (27 November 1992) "N. Ossetia."
[437] ITAR-TASS (1 December 1992).
[438] KYODO (3 November 1992).
[439] NEGA (14 November 1992).

presence of South Ossetian fighters in the numbers they arrived indicates that Russian troops allowed them in to participate. Taken together, this indicates that Ossetian armed groups were on par with their Ingush counterparts, though they did have greater leniency from both official Russian and North Ossetian forces. Later, instead of becoming reactive like other groups, the North Ossetian government made moves to transition these groups into its existing law enforcement structure.

Conclusions: The East Prigorodny Conflict

The East Prigorodny Conflict demonstrates two important things about the behavior of rebel groups when there is a stable, powerful state involved in a conflict. First, the state has an impact on group behavior, as it is likely to render groups' relative material capabilities as low vis-à-vis the state's coercive apparatus. With a weak state, groups can possess high/symmetric capabilities, as the Slovenian government did during the Yugoslav Wars or the Kurgan-Tyube and Kulyob Forces during the Tajik War. Second, groups are sensitive to where the state's coercive capabilities are applied. The state's potential to apply force is not necessarily what is most important. Instead, groups respond to where pressure is applied. When violence began in East Prigorodny, for example, groups did not behave as if Russian troops were already in the region, even though they could easily be deployed there. Their behavior changes when Russian troops enter East Prigorodny, and the Kremlin succeeds in demobilization only when it has established a military presence in both North Ossetia and Ingushetia.

The state applying pressure onto groups and successfully triggering group demobilization is not something that I have observed in past cases. In some, the state may

eventually build capacity and force group demobilization, but in both Yugoslavia and Central Asia, the state lacked the ability to act as the Russian Federation did during the East Prigorodny Conflict. Despite a stable, strong state being unique in my cases in Part IV, there are facets of group behavior that hold true across conflicts that are secessionist, non-secessionist, and within a strong state. In this conflict, my theory accurately predicts the behavior of Ossetian militants prior to the Russian intervention and the behavior of Ingush militants both before and after the Russian intervention. Unlike their Ingush counterparts, Ossetian militants were not demobilized through suppression. Instead, Ossetian fighters were demobilized through incorporation into the state's coercive apparatus. This is not, however, unique to civil conflicts with a strong state: a similar co-option occurred of the Kulyob Formations during the final months of 1992 during the Tajik Civil War.

Also like the non-secessionist conflict in Central Asia, the East Prigorodny Conflict quickly resolved, like the Interethnic Clashes in Kyrgyzstan. Like their counterparts in Kyrgyzstan, Ingush and Ossetian militants were both fragmented throughout this conflict, and their fighting de-escalated when a group or groups possessed low relative material capabilities. Additionally, the Kyrgyz in Kyrgyzstan and the Ossetians in North Ossetia had close relationships with the state or a state-supported regional administration. These groups were also co-ethnics to a regional or national government, while their opponents were underrepresented in governance.

Overall, the East Prigorodny Conflict shows that armed groups operating within strong states do not behave fundamentally different from groups in conflicts with weak

states. While the presence of a strong state's military shifts the balance of power in the conflict, making rebel groups more likely to have low relative material capabilities, rebel group targeting shifts alongside this change in their relative capabilities. This is observed in the two stages of the conflict in East Prigorodny: as the Kremlin moves forces into the region, relative material capabilities change, and the type of targeting groups engage in changes as well from mixed targeting to reactive.

CHAPTER ELEVEN: THE FIRST CHECHEN WAR

Introduction

Chechnya's split from Ingushetia was precipitated by Chechnya's desire to be an independent state. In the three years since the USSR's collapse, Chechnya never formally joined the Russian Federation. Between 1991 and 1994, the Kremlin did intervene in Chechnya, but it did not engage in prolonged operations. Instead, the Kremlin was prepared to wait out the violence until it began to spread beyond Chechen borders. There were several instances in those three years that conflict almost broke out between Russia and Chechnya: the conflict during the East Prigorodny Conflict being one such instance. The Kremlin blamed Chechen president, Dzhokhar Dudayev, for Chechnya's refusal to join the Federation, believing that if he were replaced, Chechnya would quickly acquiesce. Moreover, according to some in the Kremlin, the Chechen Opposition had sufficiently discredited the Dudayev administration, meaning that Chechnya should mandate preterm elections.

Table 11.1: The State and Active Groups in the First Chechen War

The State	The Russian Federation
Targets the State	
Targets Other Groups	
Mixed Targeting	The Chechen Army Dudayev's Supporters (*predicted and actual*)
Reactive/No Targeting	The Chechen Opposition Dudayev's Supporters (*predicted*)

There were three rebel groups operating in the First Chechen War: 1) the Chechen Army, 2) Dudayev's Supporters, and 3) the Chechen Opposition. Unlike what was seen in the East Prigorodny Conflict, not all groups in Chechnya were fragmented (See Tables 11.1 and 11.2). However, all three had low material capabilities vis-à-vis the Russian Federation. The Chechen Army, with its consolidated organizational structure, is predicted to engage in mixed targeting. The Chechen Opposition, conversely, is expected to engage in reactive targeting. Much like the Ossetian Militants, Dudayev's Supporters are more difficult to predict. Their structure is not as clear-cut as the other two, alternating between fragmented and consolidated depending on whether they are being folded into Chechen Army operations. Due to the variations in structure, Dudayev's Supporters could lean towards mixed targeting or reactive targeting. However, considering how their structure tended more so towards fragmented, I predict that this group will be seen more often being reactive.

Table 11.2: Predicted Group Targeting in Chechnya

	Consolidated	**Fragmented**
High/Symmetric Capabilities	Targets the state	Targets other groups
Low Capabilities	Mixed targeting • *The Chechen Army* ○ *Dudayev's Supporters*	No targeting/Reactive targeting • *The Chechen Opposition* ○ *Dudayev's Supporters*

The Chechen Army and the Chechen Opposition behaved as predicted at the onset of the conflict. Dudayev's Supporters proved difficult to classify, as expected. Their structure was largely fragmented, and their relative capabilities were low, leading to my prediction that they would be reactive like the Chechen Opposition. However, other elements engaged in mixed targeting – specifically when operating alongside the Chechen Army. Therefore, this Dudayev's Supporters partially corroborates my theory, but its behavior does not wholly align with how they were predicted to behave.

Table 11.3: Actual Group Targeting in Chechnya

	Consolidated	**Fragmented**
High/Symmetric Capabilities	Targets the state	Targets other groups
Low Capabilities	Mixed targeting • *The Chechen Army* ○ *Dudayev's Supporters*	No targeting/Reactive targeting • *The Chechen Opposition* ○ *Dudayev's Supporters*

The First Chechen War officially began on December 11, 1994, and it ended on August 31, 1996. Violence, however, started prior to December 11th. Dudayev and the Chechen Opposition had been waging a low-intensity civil war over whether Chechnya should declare independence since 1992. Over the course of three years, fighting had resulted in hundreds of deaths.[440] The Opposition controlled territory within Chechnya and enjoyed greater support from the Kremlin due to their willingness to join the Russian Federation if put in power. According to the Russian Federation Security Council, the conflict was between Russia and illegal armed groups, not between Russia and Chechnya.[441]

[440] Chernomyrdin (14 December 1994).
[441] ITAR-TASS (7 December 1994). ITAR-TASS (8 December 1994). Radio Rossii (10 December 1994). ITAR-TASS (12 December 1994) "On Foreign."

Table 11.4: Prominent Officials during the First Chechen War

Russian Officials	Chechen Officials	Others
Boris Yeltsin: President of the Russian Federation General Pavel Grachev: Russian Defense Minister Ramazan Abdulatipov: Chairman of the Council of Nationalities of the Russian parliament Viktor Chernomyrdin: Chairman of the Russian Government Aleksandr Gamov: Head of the Russian Federal Counterintelligence Service Andrei Kozyrev: Russian Foreign Minister Anatoliy Kalikov: Commander of the Russian Interior Troops	Dzhokhar Dudayev: President of Chechnya Yusup Soslanbekov: Chechen Parliament Speaker Umar Avturkhanov: Provisional Council Chairman Khadzhiyev: Provisional Council Premier Beslan Gantamirov: Commander of the opposition armed forces Yaragi Mamodayev: Leader of the Government of People's Trust	Ruslan Aushev: President of Ingushetia Musa Shanibov: President of the Confederation of Caucasian Peoples Mintimer Shaymiyev: President of Tatarstan

The Opposition's role in the First Chechen War was more minimal in the early stages than one may initially expect. Avturkhanov's delegation was involved in the talks occurring in Vladikavkaz, North Ossetia. Interestingly, these were not three-way talks; rather, the Kremlin was holding separate talks with Dudayev and Avturkhanov. Within Chechnya, though, the Opposition scaled down combat operations and primarily provided support for Russian forces once their column entered the republic. Both the Chechen Army

and a conglomeration of irregular units that supported Dudayev, on the other hand, were heavily involved in fighting Russian forces.

In the 1990s, the Kremlin's main opponent in Chechnya was the republic's president, Dzhokhar Dudayev, who became the Chechen president in the aftermath of the failed August Coup against Gorbachev in 1991. Yeltsin quickly tried to have Dudayev removed from office, but the Russian parliament overruled this warrant. Dudayev became the face of Chechen independence: in at least one instance, Dudayev offered to surrender his position as president in exchange for Russian recognition of Chechen independence, reportedly stating, "I will step down with my cabinet if the sovereignty of Chechnya is recognized."[442] According to the Kremlin, Chechnya was a constituent of the Russian Federation, and the Kremlin justified its presence by claiming to protect the Chechen population from violent extremists.

To Chechen leaders, Russian actions against the Chechen republic in 1994 represented an imperial war against the Chechen people.[443] Political leaders in Ingushetia, Abkhazia, and Tatarstan warned that Russian actions would backfire. The President Mintimer Shaymiyev of Tatarstan warned that the introduction of troops could serve to unify Dudayev, his supporters, and the opposition.[444] Tatarstan expressed concern over the Kremlin's willingness to use force to resolve inter-ethnic relations, adding that All-Tatar Public Center would be sending aid to their Chechen Muslim brothers.[445]

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[442] Stanley (1995). Womack (1995).
[443] Asuyev (12 December 1994) "Chechen People's Congress."
[444] Komsomolskaya Pravda (8 December 1994).
[445] Yermakova (8 December 1994).

Chechnya's Quest for Independence

Chechnya's push for independence was a fraught affair. There was a difference in perception between Chechen and Russian actors. To Dudayev, independence meant not joining the Russian Federation after the Soviet collapse. Chechnya was an ASSR, meaning it had more control over its internal affairs than other administrative units of the Russian SSR. This, arguably, put Chechnya in a similar position to Ukraine, Georgia, or Kazakhstan. The Kremlin did view Chechen independence as a loss of territory and was highly concerned that Chechnya would set a precedent for other subnational units to leave. Negotiations frequently stalled because Russian officials refused to engage in talks in earnest if Chechnya did not first agree that it was part of the Russian Federation. At this point, however, Dudayev's regime was tied to Chechen independence. Additionally, there was an internal dimension to the conflict, exacerbated by the tension between Dudayev and the Kremlin. Opposition groups took advantage of the breakdown in relations between the Kremlin and Dudayev: trading Chechen independence in exchange for making Avturkhanov, the Opposition leader, the Chechen president and ousting Dudayev.

Historically, Chechens, like many populations in periphery regions of Russia, have been highly resistant to Russian incursions, and the region's mountainous terrain contributed to the Russian Empire and the Russian Federation's difficulty in rooting out and eliminating insurgent forces. National identity is based, in part, on animosity towards Russia and Russian interference. The Kremlin did not believe that it could let Chechnya go without setting off a domino effect – a series of exits and territorial losses in the North Caucasus and Siberia, both having large ethnic minorities and a history of aversion to

Russian intervention.[446] Both regions are crucial to Russian oil production and transport. Russian oil reserves are located in Siberia, and pipelines and refineries in the North Caucuses transported oil and gas extracted from the Caspian Sea Basin. The Kremlin had additional concerns about the influence of various criminal organizations over the region, both within Chechnya and as discussed earlier, Ingushetia and North Ossetia.[447] Russian national politics simultaneously portrayed the criminal enterprises in the North Caucasus as being intrinsic components to local governance and as elements that only existed due to weak state structures. Russian politicians claimed that Chechnya has become a "vast territory, controlled by criminal clans" and a crime hotbed, instead of gradually resolving as they had hoped in 1991.[448] Russia was increasingly concerned about the expansion of criminal networks out of Chechnya and the North Caucasus. In November 1994, for instance, there was contested evidence that Chechen criminal enterprises had already made inroads into Latvia.[449]

Dudayev asserted that he had been attempting to negotiate with Russian officials on the status of Chechnya for three years – but Russia had been an unpredictable party to these talks. Yusup Soslanbekov, the Chechen Parliament Speaker, stated that Russian hardliners had stymied Chechen attempts to negotiate, treating independence as a temporary whim the Chechen people would eventually get over.[450] Dudayev engaged in an oscillating strategy: alternatively claiming that he was the only bulwark against retaliatory

[446] Russian Crisis in Chechnya (1994).
[447] Boudreaux and Goldberg (1994). Russia Backs Overthrow of Rebel Leader in Caucasus (1994).
[448] ITAR-TASS (3 December 1994). Vesti (13 November 1994).
[449] Binev and Sharov (1994).
[450] Suprun and Shevtsov (30 November 1994).

strikes on Russia and that he was unable to control the various groups, requiring the Kremlin to capitulate to Chechen demands. This is not a unique strategy during negotiations. One would like to be able to make credible commitments – *i.e.* Dudayev needs to be able to say that the violence will end on his say-so – but one also wants to construct a situation wherein the other side is more likely to capitulate – *i.e.* Dudayev needs to convince the Kremlin faces an imminent prolonged conflict unless the Kremlin acquiesces to the Chechen people's demands.[451] This second position is benefited, furthermore, by Dudayev convincing the Russian delegation that he does not control the various armed groups.

Dudayev faced internal opposition, spearheaded by Umar Avturkhanov, Ruslan Labazanov, and Ruslan Khasbulatov. The three were not a unified opposition,[452] but they did pose both a political and ideological threat to Dudayev's regime, even more so due to their alignment with Russia. Opposition forces carved out a pocket of the republic that they controlled. As the situation began to escalate towards war in late 1994, Dudayev was both battling potential Russian incursions into Chechnya and competing claims to the Chechen presidency.

Secession or Capturing the Center

Civil war was brewing in Chechnya, but it was not initially clear if this would be a secessionist civil war between the Chechen and the Russian governments or a civil war between groups over control of the Chechen government. Instead, it appeared that there

[451] Yarhi-Milo (2013). Weiss (2013).
[452] Ormrod (1997).

would be a civil war within Chechnya between Dudayev supporters and Opposition supporters.[453] Kozyrev voiced fears that criminal gangs were tied up in fighting in Chechnya.[454] Much like the East Prigorodny Conflict, violence was initially concentrated between irregular armed formations of supporters of Dudayev or the Opposition. Much like in Kyrgyzstan, the divisions in Chechnya were in part clan-based, and the Russian government hoped that these clans would be able to reach a political compromise to prevent violence.[455] Many worried about conflict spillover into surrounding republics or the breakup of Chechnya along clan lines.[456] The Russian Foreign Minister, Andrei Kozyrev, voiced concerns over criminal groups using the confrontation for their own purposes.[457] Between 1991 and 1994, Chechnya had the fourth largest population flight in post-Soviet space, after Tajikistan, Georgia, and Azerbaijan.[458] Russian officials stressed the importance of restoring law and order They believed Russian forces were necessary to ensure this occurred. However, Russian actions against Dudayev's regime backfired on the Kremlin, serving to consolidate Dudayev's support base.

November 26th Assault

On November 26th, an unsuccessful Russian assault was launched on Grozny which was thought to be orchestrated by the Federal Counterintelligence Service (FSK). Neither Dudayev nor the Opposition were pleased that the attack took place. The Opposition, specifically, believed that the incursion unified Dudayev's base against Russia. Ruslan

[453] Aramyan (28 September 1994).
[454] Korzun et. al (2 December 1994).
[455] Novikov (30 November 1994).
[456] ITAR-TASS (2 December 1994).
[457] ITAR-TASS (2 December 1994).
[458] Kuznetsova (30 November 1994).

Khasbulatov stated that Dudayev would have likely already been out of power by December if Russian forces had not intervened.[459] Additionally, he said the failure of this operation was due to Russian unpreparedness for the political and military operation and its implications, not the strength of Dudayev's forces.

Instead, Russian forces had moved hastily with an ill-prepared operation that backfired against their goal of ousting Dudayev. The Kremlin found itself in a very similar situation twenty-eight years later when Russian forces entered Ukraine in 2022 with the goal of ousting Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky. When met with greater than expected resistance and too few forces initially committed to the operation, the use of force solidified Zelensky's power and turned him into a national hero. Much like in Chechnya, the Kremlin has found it necessary to commit more and more resources to a conflict that, theoretically, should have been a quick operation to secure the Russian president's power. The operation in Chechnya was initially limited, rather than a full invasion like its invasion of Ukraine in 2022, but it still had a lasting impact on Russia's ability to secure its political and military goals in the long-term.

This incursion was the fourth time the Kremlin had launched operations on Grozny. The first was in 1991, when 70,000 troops were present in the country; the second was when part of Chechen territory was occupied by tanks during the East Prigorodny Conflict in 1992; and the third was through Russian involvement in organizing a coup against Dudayev in 1993.[460] Dudayev claimed that these attacks along with that of November 26th,

[459] Interfax (6 December 1994) "Khasbulatov."
[460] Tulanti (12 December 1994).

1994, set a dangerous precedent for the Kremlin's behavior in other regions. The more the Kremlin engaged in operations against what Yeltsin's administration viewed as its own constituents, the more this would become regarded as their standard operating procedure in other cases of civil unrest. If it had been successful, it may have been a quick means to reassert control, its failure ensured anti-Russian sentiments and frustrations with the Kremlin continued.

Exact numbers are not known, but reports released by the Russian Ministry of Defense indicated that the operation consisted of 82 to 150 Russians, with the highest casualty numbers reported being 55 unaccounted, 70 taken hostage, and six dead.[461] Dudayev provided different numbers, claiming that 5,000 mercenaries, 170 tanks and fighter aircraft were involved in the attack, most likely combining the November 26th attack with the Kremlin's bombing campaign on Grozny.[462] Operatives may have been official Russian military soldiers, an outside mercenary group, or a group recruited by the Federal Counterintelligence Service.[463] Revealingly, the Head of the Russian Counterintelligence Service, Yevgeniy Savostyanov, was fired on December 2nd. Savostyanov was linked to planning the Chechen operation in November that had led to the Russian failure and ensuing hostage situation.[464]

Russian Early Involvement

As in the East Prigorodny Conflict, the Caucasian Confederation's president warned that deploying Russian troops to Chechnya would result in a Caucasian War. The

[461] Interfax (7 December 1994) "Duma." Vesti (7 December 1994). Kirpichnikov (9 December 1994).
[462] Tulanti (12 December 1994).
[463] Interfax (1 December 1994) "Official."
[464] Stark (3 December 1994).

Vice President of Ingushetia stated that Russia's choice to back the opposition and attempts to oust Dudayev would likely backfire, as if they had let Dudayev's term run out, he would not have likely been reelected.[465] The Chairman of the Dagestani Supreme Soviet voiced a similar outlook, stating that the situation still required political means of resolution. Military solutions would only escalate violence.[466] Crimean Tatars also spoke out against Russian interference in Chechen affairs, and they accused the Kremlin of sending weapons to Dudayev's Supporters to justify sending in peacekeeping forces.[467] The *Izvestia's* analytical center prepared a report that indicated that a Russian military victory in Chechnya would not be a victory, as it would be viewed as an occupation and would turn Chechens into traitors or resistance fighters.[468]

Yeltsin was in a precarious position. He was considering a SOE, and Viktor Chernomyrdin, Chairman of the Russian Government, stated that the Russian government would do everything possible to stop bloodshed.[469] The majority of Russian citizens supported an introduction of a SOE,[470] but they opposed launching a war in Chechnya or a neighboring region by over 90 percent.[471] Additionally, Russian actions, both the troop concentrations in neighboring republics and the possible attacks and incursions into Chechnya, resulted in an increase in Dudayev's support. Many viewed Russian actions as

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[465] Stepovoy (1 December 1994).
[466] Stepovoy (1 December 1994).
[467] Unian (1 December 1994).
[468] ITAR-TASS (3 December 1994).
[469] Ivantsov (30 November 1994).
[470] 52 percent in Central and Northwestern Russia indicated they would not object to an SOE; 82 percent of local Cossacks and 92 percent of residents in Southern Russia indicated they favored an SOE as of December 1st. Interfax (30 November 1994) "Russians."
[471] Interfax (30 November 1994) "Russians."

provocative and believed that a war in Chechnya could have long-reaching negative impacts on Russian democracy.[472] Others, like the Chairman of the Lower House Subcommittee on the Affairs of the Federation and Regional Policy, worried that Russian aggression would result in a quagmire reminiscent of the Soviet-Afghan War.[473]

Dr. Aleksey Arbatov, Director of Geopolitics and Military Forecasting Center, identified a dangerous cycle in the North Caucasus: the Kremlin would send troops to attempt to pacify situations, which would result in increasing anti-Russian sentiments, which in turn would result in the need to increase the number of troops to protect Russian citizens, thus requiring an ever-increasing number of Russian troops to pacify the region.[474] This strategy was unsustainable, and the longer it continued, the more likely it would escalate into an armed conflict. The Russian population, furthermore, was frustrated by the lack of progress, and over the course of 1994, President Boris Yeltsin's power became increasingly linked to the resolution of the crisis in Chechnya. He was likely to lose his reelection if the Kremlin could not reach a settlement.

The Kremlin also found a military operation in Chechnya undesirable but stressed that it had the right to conduct military operations in Chechnya.[475] Negotiations were stymied. Parties were able to agree on several basic facts, including that the bloodshed should immediately end and concrete mechanisms for joint disarmament should be established.[476] The Chechen delegation announced it would sign an agreement if 1) Russian

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[472] Muratov (3 December 1994). ITAR-TASS (6 December 1994) "Press Review."
[473] ITAR-TASS (6 December 1994) "Press Review."
[474] Arbatov (1994).
[475] Interfax (30 November 1994) "Moscow."
[476] Mikhaylov (15 December 1994).

soldiers left and a ceasefire between the Russian and Chechen governments was signed prior to disarmament, 2) a specific mechanism for disarmament was defined, and 3) principles of citizenship for Chechen residents were delineated.[477] Frustration continued: the Chechen Chief Prosecutor Usman Imayev argued that the Russian proposals were unacceptable, since the Russian delegation continued to insist that Chechnya had to agree to be part of the Russian Federation first.[478]

Once again, this demand by Russian negotiators hindered talks, as there was little to no incentive for the Chechen delegation to enter talks, much less sign an agreement. Additionally, despite this push for negotiations, Russian forces escalated attacks on Grozny, targeting areas where the Chechen Army and Dudayev's Supporters were deployed.[479] Military officials also indicated that they were prepared to engage in a guerrilla campaign. [480]

Though denied by the North Caucasian Military District Chief, Vladimir Potapov, twenty-seven Russian military transport AN-12 planes brought paratroopers to Beslan, North Ossetia the night of November 30th, 1994, and Russian aircraft began bombing Grozny[481] The Russian Provincial Council stated that planes only bombed where Chechen armored vehicles, artillery, and Dudayev's strongholds were located, not civilian targets.[482] Dudayev confirmed that the Grozny airport and a settlement where a tank regiment was

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[477] Asuyev (13 December 1994).
[478] AFP (14 December 1994).
[479] ITAR-TASS (3 December 1994).
[480] Ekho Moskvy (3 December 1994).
[481] Interfax (30 November 1994) "'Rumors'." Kuznetsov (1 December 1994). Styazhkin (30 November 1994).
[482] Palariya (30 November 1994).

based were bombed.[483] In these bombings, the landing strip at the Grozny airport was completely destroyed.

A small contingent of Russian troops and equipment were also deployed to Mozdok, North Ossetia near the Chechen border. According to Russian officials, the forces were placed there to ensure the protection of communications, prevent sabotage and banditry, and prevent fighters from entering Chechnya.[484] To further insulate Chechnya, the Kremlin reached a deal with Georgian President, Eduard Shevardnadze, to seal the Chechen-Georgian border.[485] Moreover, approximately 150 armored vehicles and 70 tanks were moved close to Grozny in the surrounding republics, though they refrained from entering Chechnya.[486]

Conflict Escalation

Avoiding a prolonged conflict in Chechnya relied on a fast and decisive campaign by Russian military forces. This, however, did not occur. There were divisions within the executive, as Deputy Defense Minister Boris Gromov opposed the use of force in Chechnya, while Yeltsin and Defense Minister Pavel Grachev stated they viewed violence as inevitable.[487] The Interior Troops Commander, Kalikov, argued that a general military operation would be the best course of action.[488] Russian military sources denied that they had plans to enter Chechnya.[489] Units were already in Maykop, a military field hospital had

[483] Asuyev (1 December 1994) "State Duma Deputies."
[484] Mayak Radio (1 December 1994) "Troops."
[485] Korotchenko (1 December 1994).
[486] La Repubblica (2 December 1994).
[487] Vyzhutovich (7 December 1994).
[488] Muratov (3 December 1994).
[489] Byrkin et. al (3 December 1994) "Three Military Groups."

been established in Mozdok, and approximately 1,500 officers and conscripts recruited by the Federal Counterintelligence Services.[490] Contradicting reports were given to the Duma, Grachev announced that Russian military groupings, including armed forces, interior troops, and special forces were being formed in three regions adjacent to Chechnya in case Yeltsin ruled that the use of force was necessary.[491] Additionally, the Commander of the Russian Interior Troops, Anatoliy Kalikov, reported that there were no Interior troops in Chechnya, but they were deployed along the border and a contingent was deployed near Mozdok.[492] However, it was then reported that a column of 60 armored personnel carriers were seen heading towards Chechnya on December 1st, and the 21st Air Assault Brigade in Stavropol was raised to combat readiness.[493]

More Russian troops were being flown into Beslan, North Ossetia, culminating in two divisions, approximately 20,000 to 30,000 troops, being stationed there. Approximately fifty transport planes and fifty armored vehicles were concentrated around the Beslan airport, supported by anti-aircraft units.[494] Furthermore, the armed forces in the North Caucasus transitioned to operating under wartime laws.[495] On December 10th, the Russian government fully closed the Chechen border and airspace based on Yeltsin's December 9th decree to halt the activity of illegal armed formations.[496]

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[490] Muratov (3 December 1994).
[491] Interfax (5 December 1994) "Grachev."
[492] Interfax (1 December 1994) "Commander." Burbyga (2 December 1994).
[493] Mayak Radio (1 December 1994) "Sixty."
[494] Interfax (5 December 1994) "Russia."
[495] ITAR-TASS (6 December 1994) "Commandant."
[496] ITAR-TASS (10 December 1994).

Russian troops from both the Defense Ministry and Federal Interior Ministry moved to enter Chechnya in three columns to enact Yeltsin's presidential decree to disarm all illegal armed formations.[497] The first column advanced from Mozdok, North Ossetia; the second from Narzan, Ingushetia; and the third from Dagestan. A single Russian column consisted of 200 units of equipment, 30 tanks, 50 Armored Personnel Carriers, 10 self-propelled guns, 70 personnel carriers with munitions, and anti-aircraft weapons.[498] Once in Chechnya, the highest concentration of troops was in Znamenskoye, with 60 pieces of armored equipment, 500 armored vehicles, and 50 helicopters.[499] Three armored convoys, split from the North Ossetian column, moved from Znamenskoye via Gora-Gora and Dolinksiy on their route to Grozny supported by combat aircraft and helicopters.[500] Though temporarily stalled by Ingush forces, The Ingush Interior Group for Urgent Matters reported that the column moving from Ingushetia crossed the Chechen border near Assinovskaya on December 12th.[501]

Initially, Russian Prime Minister Chernomyrdin stated that this was not a war since it was not an interstate issue. Instead, Russian actions were the normal reaction to lawlessness in its territory.[502] However, Presidential Council Member Leonid Smirnyagin later announced that the Russian troops had a different goal: overcoming Dudayev's heavy military hardware.[503] This was a deviation from the previous mandate to disarm illegally

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[497] ITAR-TASS (9 December 1994).
[498] Ekho Moskvy (11 December 1994) "Movement." Ekho Moskvy (11 December 1994) "'Advance Detachments'." ITAR-TASS (11 December 1994) "Troops Begin."
[499] Ekho Moskvy (12 December 1994).
[500] ITAR-TASS (12 December 1994) "Russian."
[501] Asuyev (12 December 1994) "Casualties." ITAR-TASS (12 December 1994) "Russian."
[502] Korzun et. al (2 December 1994).
[503] Russian Television Network (12 December 1994).

armed formations. Instead, this mandate directly targeted the existing administration in Chechnya. He still maintained that no Russian forces were planning on seizing Grozny. Additionally, on December 13th, Russian officials reversed their order telling troops not to open fire, now being ordered to fire on anyone who attempted to block their movement.[504]

[504] ITAR-TASS (12 December 1994) "Russian." Vesti (12 December 1994).

Figure 11.1: Group Locations during the Start of the First Chechen War
Source: Mike Shand/International Crisis Group, October 2012

The Chechen Army

The Chechen Army was, of all the armed groups, the most cohesively organized, and it was directly linked to Dudayev's administration of the republic. By material capabilities, this group also had the advantage, as it possessed most of the non-Russian military hardware in Chechnya, and it was the primary target early on of Russian airstrikes. As the conflict developed, Chechen officials worried of the ulsterization of Chechen politics by Russian forces if Chechnya were to become a member-state of the Federation.[505] The number of Russian troops surrounding the republic meant that if Dudayev agreed to join the Russian Federation or lost in an armed conflict, military rule was a possible, perhaps likely, outcome.

While Russian forces claimed a limited mandate, it steadily expanded: first it was isolating Chechnya, then disarming armed groups, then eliminating the Chechen Army's heavy hardware, and finally war. This mission creep made negotiating de-escalation difficult and made the Russian government's efforts to do so appear disingenuous. Eventually, Yeltsin would classify the Chechen Army as an illegal armed group as well, making it subject to the decree on group disarmament, further closing off the possibility of peaceful settlement.[506]

Early attacks consisted of Russian airstrikes on Chechnya, primarily around Grozny. The Russian column from North Ossetia was the first to enter the republic, concentrating around Znamenskoye and Tolstoy-Yurt, carrying out searches of civilian

[505] Russian Television Network (12 December 1994).
[506] ITAR-TASS (14 December 1994) "Dudayev."

residents.[507] Chechen troops seized six Russian armored vehicles and took 47 soldiers as hostages.[508] Chechen troops also surrounded Russian military unit 36-71, a motorized rifle company, near Znamenskoye on December 11th.[509] Over the course of three days, Dudayev's troops had killed 9 Russian servicemen and wounded 14, most via missile attacks on the Russian convoy near Dolinskiy when it was 15 km from Grozny.[510] Clashes continued in Dolinskiy and Pervomaysk.[511] The Chechen Army worked alongside Chechen irregulars in several locales, including Dolinskiy, Chervlenaya, and Grozny.[512] Both groups engaged in fighting in Northeast Chechnya. The Grad multiple launch rocket system was the primary tool of the Chechen Army's defense of Grozny against the Russian advance, according to the Chief of the Chechen main military headquarters.[513]

Organizational Structure

Like the Slovenian and Croatian republic armed groups, the Chechen army was a consolidated group, using the political infrastructure of the local government to structure the military and maintain command-and-control structures. The Chechen Army was preparing for conflict with Russia since its declaration of independence. The Chechen Army was a professionalized military with a hierarchical structure and officer corps. Moreover, the military had squared off against Russian forces previously, and in this conflict, the Russian military had backed down. Irregular formations were not brought into

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[507] Ekho Moskvy (11 December 1994) "'Advance Detachments'."
[508] Ekho Moskvy (11 December 1994) "'Advance Detachments'."
[509] Ekho Moskvy (12 December 1994).
[510] ITAR-TASS (13 December 1994) "Medical."
[511] Asuyev (12 December 1994) "Casualties."
[512] ITAR-TASS (13 December 1994) "Six Russians." ITAR-TASS (13 December 1994) "Interior." 2x2 Television (13 December 1994).
[513] Interfax (14 December 1994).

the military structure at the start of violence. Instead, the Chechen Army attempted to distance itself structurally from the mercenaries reportedly entering the country, with an official claiming that they could not be entering Grozny since all the airports had been destroyed and Azerbaijan had severed air service to Chechnya two years previous.[514] They would work alongside these forces, but unlike North Ossetia, there was no effort to draw these fighters into the Chechen Army.

Relative Material Capabilities

Many of the Chechen Army's preparations were defensive in nature, designed to counter Russian military superiority. Defensive tactics involved establishing ammunition dumps around Grozny, mining communications facilities, and setting up roadblocks and sniper nests along likely Russian routes to the capital.[515] Oil refining enterprises and fuel stores, a key concern of the Russian Federation, as Chechnya was a major oil-transport hub, were sabotaged. The Chechen Army also prepared field landing strips to offset those destroyed by Russian bombings, mined roads, and prepared various strongholds.[516] Chechen government forces also established mobile anti-aircraft installations around Grozny.[517]

Chechen airspace was closed in August of 1994, specifically to prevent weapons, ammunition, and mercenaries from being able to get into the republic.[518] Despite this, air traffic reports indicated that unplanned flights had made stops in Grozny, by going radio

[514] ITAR-TASS (5 December 1994).
[515] Byrkin et. al (3 December 1994) "Dudayev."
[516] Zharov (7 December 1994).
[517] Interfax (11 December 1994) "Several."
[518] Interfax (30 November 1994) "Commander."

dark near their destination then appearing there, usually leaving from Tbilisi, Georgia or Baku, Azerbaijan,.[519] Coupled with the border closures, this did prevent movement in and out of Chechnya.

Coordination was, however, made difficult by Russian forces knocking out communications when their armed columns began advancing into the country.[520] A central command center was established at the Khankala airfield outside Grozny. Chechen forces turned to HAM radios to share Russian positions.[521] Despite this, Chechen government forces quickly moved to intercept the Russian column moving through Ingushetia in Sleptsovskaya, Chechnya.[522]

According to military intelligence reports, Dudayev had 11,000 to 12,000 men, a small number of tanks, artillery, and air defense equipment at his disposal.[523] A unit of 1,000 soldiers formed 45 kilometers from Grozny, spread between Arshty, Bamut, and Chemulga.[524] This force had tanks, APCs, and a helicopter. The Chechen Army also had access to Grad missile launchers, armored equipment, and artillery.[525] According to the Warsaw Radio Team reporting on the conflict, the Chechen army lacked armored weaponry with which to defend themselves.[526] Additionally, Dudayev had goals of expanding the size of the military membership, announcing a draft of those between the ages of 17 and 60 in early December.

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[519] Interfax (30 November 1994) "Commander."
[520] ITAR-TASS (11 December 1994) "Troops Begin."
[521] Asuyev (12 December 1994) "Chechen Delegation."
[522] Interfax (11 December 1994) "Several."
[523] Interfax (5 December 1994) "Grachev."
[524] ITAR-TASS (12 December 1994) "Chechen Security Council."
[525] ITAR-TASS (13 December 1994) "Interior."
[526] Walter (13 December 1994).

Outside actors moved to aid Dudayev's administration, as well. Before the Conflict, other mountain republics voiced their support for Dudayev. Ruslan Aushev, the President of Ingushetia, warned Russia that it would face a prolonged guerrilla war in the North Caucasus. Aushev also announced his intent to hinder any movement of Russian troops through Ingush territory if they were to begin an invasion.[527] The President of North Ossetia, despite their conflict with Ingushetia, warned the Kremlin of the risks of an invasion and announced that they would not support a Russian invasion. Unlike Ingushetia, they did not offer Chechnya military support.

Dudayev's Supporters

In addition to the Chechen Army, there were irregular units that either supported Dudayev or who objected to Russian intervention. On the surface, Dudayev's forces were fragmented, but they often worked alongside units from the Chechen Army. Since they also had low relative capabilities, we would expect Dudayev's Supporters to engage in reactive or no targeting. Many armed groups did this, behaving similarly to Ingush groups after additional Russian forces entered the East Prigorodny Conflict by evacuating to less accessible regions and engaging in sabotage. However, due to their closeness with the Chechen Army, they did engage in mixed targeting alongside official forces.

While some Chechens did not initially support Dudayev, the threat and then actual invasion solidified Dudayev's support base. Many elements of the Chechen defense fell to these self-organized defense units. These units received support from Dudayev but

[527] Komsomolskaya Pravda (8 December 1994). Interfax (11 December 1994) "Armored Vehicles." Interfax (11 December 1994) "Several." Ekho Moskvy (11 December 1994) "Five Dead." Ekho Moskvy (11 December 1994) "Further."

operated independently of the Chechen command-and-control structure. They were a critical component of Chechen defense, as they were more difficult for the Russian Army to target compared to official Chechen forces. Dudayev did not have control over these units, and he expressed this by accusing the Kremlin of trying to induce his supporters to engage in terror tactics, before reiterating that Russian officials kept ending talks.[528]

As Russian troops moved towards Grozny, Chechen civilians confronted them and questioned whether Russian soldiers were there to commit massacres as they did in Georgia and Armenia.[529] These questions indicated three things. First, noncombatants objected to the Russian presence. Second, they did not believe that Russian soldiers were there to protect them, like the Russian government claimed. Third, the Chechen people did not consider themselves to be part of Russia, as both Georgia and Armenia were independent states in which the Russian Army had intervened between 1991 and 1994.

Fighters massed near the Chechen-Ingush border, concentrating along the main highway to Grozny.[530] The Russian column moving through Ingushetia only managed to make it three kilometers into Chechen territory before being stopped at Novy Sharoi by Chechen irregulars.[531] Further attempts to cross the Tersky Range were halted by a combination of irregular troops and Dudayev's troops in several locales.[532] Dudayev's Supporters also attempted to break through the Russian line around Grozny but failed.[533]

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[528] Asuyev (1 December 1994) "Dudayev."
[529] Triomphe (12 December 1994).
[530] Asuyev (12 December 1994) "Casualties."
[531] ITAR-TASS (12 December 1994) "Chechen Opposition." Interfax (13 December 1994) "Advancing." Asuyev (13 December 1994).
[532] Interfax (13 December 1994) "Advancing." ITAR-TASS (13 December 1994) "Chechen."
[533] Asuyev (13 December 1994). ITAR-TASS (13 December 1994) "Interior."

Organizational Structure

Chechen irregulars were in an interesting position. Various groups existed to support Dudayev's administration and to support an independent Chechnya. Since 1991, Dudayev had become the figurehead of Chechen autonomy and sovereignty, and individuals that may not have supported his administration rallied to him due to his support of Chechen autonomy. However, several features of the Dudayev administration made it difficult for Dudayev's Supporters to form a consolidated structure.

First, prior to violence, there was a large internal migration of people away from urban centers to mountain villages.[534] This was primarily the evacuation of women, children, and the elderly, but it also moved potential fighters out of the lowlands to defend their more vulnerable friends and family members. As in North Ossetia and Ingushetia, mountains provided a safer place to retreat, but the advantages of this – namely being more difficult for enemy forces to get to one's position – made it more difficult for fighters to coordinate between locales.

However, in the lowlands, this coordination was easier between groups across a wider territory. As a result, some members, especially those working closely with the Chechen Army, engaged in mixed targeting. Chechen defense against Russian incursions relied on home guard detachments since they were more difficult for Russian troops to target at the onset. The effectiveness of this strategy, though, relied on maintaining an atomized command and control structure.

[534] ITAR-TASS (30 November 1994).

Second, many volunteers from outside of Chechnya arrived to fight in support of Dudayev. Specifics are contested, but fighters were reportedly arriving from Georgia, Azerbaijan, and Afghanistan. These mercenaries alarmed Russian officials, with President Yeltsin first suggesting an SOE in response to the influx of these volunteers.[535] Dudayev reported that thousands of fighters arrived from Dagestan, Kabardino-Balkaria, and the Afghan mujahideen, along with several hundred from Ingushetia and Ukraine.[536] Similarly, radicalized, pro-independence groups operated outside of Chechnya. The North Caucasian Liberation Army, which operated in Europe, for example, issued terrorist threats to all members of Russian organizations in Denmark.[537] Though not formally associated, these groups were affiliated with Dudayev and his regime.

Relative Material Capabilities

Dudayev's Supporters had access to fighters and weaponry. Russian targeting initially focused on traditional military targets, like the Chechen Army's hardware. Dudayev's Supporters were more suited for a guerrilla style campaign, designed to counter an opponent's superior military capabilities.

Home guard detachments, according to Dudayev's interviews, were forming in major population centers, settlements, villages, and mountain hamlets.[538] As in other instances, Dudayev and Soslanbekov distanced the administration from these arrivals – calling for moral and diplomatic support from other Muslim leaders – but not fighters or

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[535] Interfax (30 November 1994) "Russians."
[536] Interfax (1 December 1994) "Situation." ITAR-TASS (2 December 1994). La Repubblica (2 December 1994). Byrkin et. al (3 December 1994) "Dudayev." Shevtsov (5 December 1994). Noyan Tapan (8 December 1994). Demidenko and Melnik (13 December 1994).
[537] ITAR-TASS (2 December 1994).
[538] Interfax (7 December 1994) "Planes." Asuyev (14 December 1994).

weapons.[539] According to the FSK, there were several thousand mercenaries from the Baltics, Afghanistan, and other CIS states present in Chechnya, and these fighters had brought in more weaponry.[540] Weapons were airdropped by unknown aircraft, according to Russian sources.[541] Dudayev's Supporters were reportedly supplied with automatic weapons and grenade launchers, as well.[542]

Though not in Chechnya, both Ingush and Dagestani armed groups moved to intercept the Russian troop columns moving through their territory. Ingush forces managed to halt the Russian advancement around Smestovka, Barsiki, and Karbulak on its approach to the Ingush-Chechen border.[543] Under slogans of "Chechnya and Dagestan are United," Dagestani civilians blocked the advancement of four APCs towards the Chechen border.[544] Dagestani fighters fired on Russian troops and tried to seize weapons, combat hardware, and hostages.

As a result, the Russian column had to halt and negotiate the return of their troops, delaying their entry into Chechnya to support the other two columns. Much like in Ingushetia, this delay was not long, but it did buy the Chechen Army and other rebel groups additional time to prepare. This also forced Russian forces to become more aggressive

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[539] Suprun and Shevtsov (30 November 1994).
[540] Interfax (13 December 1994) "Soskovets."
[541] ITAR-TASS (30 November 1994).
[542] Karpov and Danilkin (1 December 1994).
[543] Ekho Moskvy (11 December 1994) "1 Dead." Ekho Moskvy (11 December 1994) "Five Dead." Ekho Moskvy (11 December 1994) "Further." Interfax (11 December 1994) "Armored Vehicles." Interfax (11 December 1994) "Several."
[544] Velichko (12 December 1994).

outside of Chechnya. Troops had been told not to engage with the population in Ingushetia and Dagestan, but after being stalled, they were ordered to repel attacks "by any means."[545]

In the Tersk Mountains in Chechnya, irregular troops were outmatched by 150 pieces of Russian armor and more than 5,000 soldiers.[546] According to First Deputy Prime Minister Oleg Soskovets, there were some 50,000 firearms held by Chechen militants and criminal groups.[547] Before being fired upon themselves, a team of reporters from Warsaw Radio communicated that there appeared to be a full mobilization of the population, but they were armed with primarily hunting rifles rather than modern military equipment.[548]

Opposition Supporters

Opposition Forces enjoyed support from Russian officials. The Provisional Interim Government under Umar Avturkhanov was tacitly recognized as the official Chechen government. Avturkhanov's political views more closely aligned with that of the Kremlin, and he was willing to compromise on Chechen independence. The Opposition was included in the talks in Vladikavkaz, which hindered Russian negotiations with the Dudayev administration. Dudayev's Supporters and Opposition Forces were engaged in sporadic fighting prior to Russian forces moving into the republic. The Opposition also controlled territory: the Nadterechny Rayon.[549] This would become a launching ground for Russian operations against the Chechen Army and Dudayev's Supporters in the Shelkovsky Rayon on the left bank of the Terek River.[550]

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[545] ITAR-TASS (12 December 1994) "Russian."
[546] Asuyev (13 December 1994).
[547] Interfax (13 December 1994) "Soskovets."
[548] Walter (13 December 1994).
[549] ITAR-TASS (12 December 1994) "Chechen Minister." Turan (12 December 1994).
[550] Guskov (12 December 1994).

In early December, however, the frequency of Opposition's combat operations slowed.[551] While contemporary Russian and international reporting continued to report on smaller groups fighting Russian forces, little was published about the Opposition at the onset of the conflict. For instance, the Opposition stated that they would only disarm if Dudayev's Supporters did first.[552] When Russian forces began moving into Chechnya, Russian Foreign Minister Andrey Kozyrev stated that the actions of Russian troops were meant to "protect the constitutional rights of ethnic Chechens who were Russian citizens."[553] Considering Russia's position on Chechnya. the Chechen people Russia claimed to be protecting was not the whole of the population, but those who supported the Opposition. In Nadterchny, Russian troops did not make moves to disarm the local population. Even though they kept their weaponry, Avturkhanov's forces were reportedly not involved when Russian troops began moving into Chechnya.[554]

Organizational Structure

On paper, the Opposition Forces were well organized. The Opposition had a government with a clear political goal. Its military structure was not as established as that of the Chechen government, but there was one present. Avturkhanov was the Provisional Council Chairman, Khadzhiyev was the Provisional Council Premier, and Beslan Gantamirov was the commander of the opposition armed forces. This group had a clear political goal – the ouster of Dudayev and free elections in Chechnya – and a consensus

[551] Karpov and Danilkin (1 December 1994).
[552] Bakina and Byrkin (5 December 1994). Interfax (6 December 1994) "Opposition."
[553] Interfax (12 December 1994). ITAR-TASS (13 December 1994) "Kozyrev."
[554] ITAR-TASS (11 December 1994) "Troops Enter."

that Russian military intervention would likely be necessary.[555] However, much like Dudayev's Supporters, there was a reliance on home guards and similar, decentralized units.

Chechen opposition fighters did have some formal military training. The Vystrel program in Solnechnogorsk, and two sites, one near Volgograd and another near St. Petersburg, trained members of the Chechen opposition.[556] Dudayev, like many leaders in such conflicts, claimed that the Chechen opposition was merely criminal elements being supplied by Russia.[557] Complicating matters, there were offshoot paramilitary groups. For instance, Ruslan Labazanov, the former head of Dudayev's Presidential Guard, headed his own group within the Opposition, like how Arkan's Tigers operated within Croatian and Bosnian Serb rebel groups during the Yugoslav Wars.[558]

Avturkhanov's leadership was not uncontested. There was another, third Chechen Opposition governing body, calling itself the Government of People's Trust under Yaragi Mamodayev, who believed that Avturkhanov's group should be removed from talks.[559] This group, however, was removed from the fighting, as it was operating out of Moscow. Doku Zavgayev, who had been ousted by Dudayev and his supporters in 1991, also sided with the Opposition, though he was also in Moscow at this time.[560] Ruslan Khasbulatov, the Speaker of the Supreme Soviet until he was arrested during the 1993 Constitutional Criss, also objected to Dudayev. However, Vadim Pechenev, an academic expert on

[555] Krasnaya Zvezda (7 December 1994).
[556] Muratov (3 December 1994).
[557] Asuyev (5 December 1994).
[558] Hughes (2001).
[559] Interfax (6 December 1994) "Opposition."
[560] Bransten (1996).

Russian territories, argued that Ruslan Khasbulatov could not be the head of the unification process in Chechnya either during the transition or post-Dudayev.[561] Khasbulatov, he stated, was a politician of confrontation. Additionally, he would rally the opposition and likely be anti-Moscow in the long-term. Khasbulatov did go on to object to the nature of the Russian intervention, deviating from Avturkhanov.

Relative Material Capabilities

Chechen Opposition forces were confident from early on that there would be a Russian intervention in the republic.[562] Some within the Russian government, however, objected to Russian aid. The Federation Council Speaker Vladimir Shumeyko cited that the violent overthrow of the Supreme Soviet of the Chechno-Ingushetia ASSR on September 6th, 1991, resulted in the rise of the Dudayev regime. Now, the Kremlin was sponsoring another violent overthrow. Russian support of Avturkhanov's Opposition government, he said, would be an unpardonable mistake.[563] Instead of intervention, Russian troops should isolate Chechnya to prevent weapons, ammunition, hardware, and volunteer fighters from. These opinions, though, ran directly against the interests of the Chechen Opposition.

Sans direct Russian intervention on its behalf, though, the Opposition was not without its defenses. Opposition weapons and membership were similar to that of Dudayev's Supporters. It lacked the heavy military hardware, like that of the Chechen

[561] Interfax (5 December 1994) "Yeltsin."
[562] Mayak Radio (1 December 1994) "Chechen."
[563] Radio Rossii (5 December 1994).

Army. While the Russian intervention aided these forces, Opposition formations still had low relative military capabilities compared to both the Russian and Chechen militaries.

Conclusions: The First Chechen War

Most civil conflicts occur in unstable, weak states. There are some differences derived from the state having coercive capabilities during violence, namely the shift in armed groups' relative material capabilities and the ability of the state to engage in long-term operations. In the First Chechen War, there were three primary rebel groups fighting both together and against one another. The Chechen Army and the Opposition were the two major players in the conflict, with Dudayev's Supporters as irregular formations of civilian fighters aligned with the Chechen government. All three possessed low relative material capabilities, while the Chechen Army was the only consolidated group at the onset of the First Chechen War. Avturkhanov, and their respective forces had been engaged in a low-intensity conflict since 1992. The conflict escalated quickly when the Russian government carried out their fourth failed attempt to oust Dudayev, which resulted in a hostage crisis and the Russian military's encirclement of the Chechen Republic.

Dudayev's Supporters are an interesting group, as they were, at times, folded into Chechen Army operations. In this way, Dudayev's Supporters are similar to Ossetian militants, as they too merge with the coercive apparatus of a regional government, engaging in mixed targeting. However, this only occurred in regions where the Chechen Army and Dudayev's Supporters were operating alongside one another. In situations where Dudayev's Supporters were alone, their targeting was primarily reactive. Perhaps Ossetian militants would have engaged in a similar split strategy in the East Prigorodny Conflict,

but violence was highly concentrated in East Prigorodny and Vladikavkaz – and, therefore, the seat of the North Ossetian government. In the First Chechen War, fighting was spread over the whole of the republic, concentrating along the routes the Russian columns took to Grozny. The Chechen Army more consistently co-opted Dudayev's Supporters around Grozny and its surrounding regions. Two things occur as a result of this: 1) Dudayev's Supporters' targeting changed based on proximity to Chechen Army forces and 2) Dudayev's Supporters are engaged in fewer locations compared to the Chechen Army.

Between the Kulyob Forces in Tajikistan, the Ossetian Militants in North Ossetia, and Dudayev's Supporters in Chechnya, a pattern emerges of regional, consolidated governing bodies providing fragmented groups with an external support when 1) goals are aligned and 2) there is geographic proximity between the two groups. Notably, this did not happen with the Chechen Opposition at the start of the First Chechen War. It was not pulled into the Russian Army. Their presence aided Russian troops, as the Russian column moving though Opposition-held territory was the only of the three columns to enter Chechnya unmolested. The existing tensions between Avturkhanov and Khasbulatov and between Khasbulatov and Yeltsin resulted in uncertainty over whether the Opposition and the Kremlin were aligned. The Kremlin desired influence over the Chechen government, and who won the internal struggle among Opposition leadership had a direct impact on the likelihood of the Russian Federation being able to do so.

Despite an active conflict with a powerful state, one with the military capacity to be involved in several, simultaneous conflicts, rebel group targeting remains predictable knowing their organizational structure and relative material capabilities. The state has an

impact, as it did in East Prigorodny, to shift relative capabilities, but this results in a corresponding effect on group targeting as well.

PART V: CONCLUSION

CHAPTER TWELVE: CONCLUSION

Civil conflicts are a common form of violence in modern affairs. The sovereign state has been described as the style of national governance that has "won:" multiethnic empires, city-leagues, and city-states have ceased to be common forms of political organization.[564] Yet, many states fall short of maintaining full control over the territory they claim. Instead, they are either forced to or choose to mediate their rule through local, regional leadership.[565] The strong state-weak state division generates the assumption that only weak states lack a monopoly on the legitimate use of force. However, strong states can struggle with this in their periphery, as well. As shown by the two conflicts in the North Caucasus, possessing a strong military does not preclude intrastate violence. My dissertation aims to contribute to the growing work on subnational studies, focusing on how regional dynamics and characteristics of mobilizing groups drive behavior and the evolution of conflicts.

All rebel groups do not behave in the same manner during civil conflicts. Non-state actors target a variety of actors during violence. Yet, the state's capacity, a group's purpose for mobilizing, and regional features, like ethnic distribution or GDP, do not correlate with group targeting. In the cases examined in this dissertation, ethnic groups behaved

[564] Tilly (1990, 1992). Spruyt (1994).
[565] Migdal (2001). Marten (2012).

differently from on another both in and between conflicts. Regardless of ethnic makeup, group targeting aligned instead with the actor's organizational structure and capabilities. Similarly, armed groups, both ethnic and not, behaved in similar ways both when the state's capacity was high and when it was low if their organizational structure and relative material capabilities were the same.

I have sought to build a predictive theory to explain observed variations observed in group targeting, as set forth in the table below.

Table 12.1: Structure, Capabilities, and Group Targeting

	Consolidated	**Fragmented**
High/Symmetric Capabilities	Targets the state	Targets other groups
Low Capabilities	Mixed targeting	Reactive/No targeting

Based on my analysis, I argue that group behavior is driven by facets of the groups, rather than by those groups' external environments. Organizational structure affects groups' perception of threat. Relative material capabilities contribute to a group's focus and agency in a conflict, allowing the group to focus on its primary threat or requiring it to behave more opportunistically to survive.

Consolidated groups have a hierarchical structure and a unified political and military leadership. These groups are better situated to govern if they were to achieve victory – meaning that the state is their primary obstacle. Fragmented groups, conversely, have a fractured structure and atomized membership. They are more prone to infighting, but they are also more robust against common tactics states typically use against non-state

actors. These groups are less fit to govern if the state were to be removed. As a result, fragmented actors have the aim of clearing competing organizations from their area of operation, be this other groups or their own sub-groups.

Material capabilities are judged comparatively across the actors in the conflict. Membership and armaments are tools for building a group's coercive capacity. Those with high/symmetric capabilities *vis-à-vis* the state and other groups have greater agency and are more focused on their primary target. Those with low capabilities are more sensitive to loss; therefore, they must be more careful when selecting targets. As capabilities are judged relatively, if a group has low material capabilities, that means that the state or another group possesses high/symmetric capabilities.

My dissertation makes several contributions to the existing literature. *First*, organizational structure and relative material capabilities do predict rebel group behavior in the manner that I theorized they would in most cases. *Second*, changes in organizational structure and material capabilities resulted in changes in targeting. This occurred in the Croatian War, the Tajik Civil War, and the East Prigorodny Conflict. *Third*, I found that conflicts wherein all groups are fragmented are typically shorter-lived than those with at least one consolidated group. *Fourth*, potential coercion does not affect group targeting, but actual coercion applied does. This means that if the state or international community wishes to demobilize groups, it cannot rely on its greater military capabilities to deter groups. It must commit sufficient resources to shift the relative material capabilities in the region where the conflict is occurring. Additionally, when this pressure is removed, groups can revert to their previous forms of targeting before the shift in capabilities, like what was

seen in the East Prigorodny Conflict. *Finally*, the groups that deviate from the theory often are aligned with the state or some version of the state. This does not occur every time there is alignment in interests, though. Specifically, it occurs when the relative capabilities of the state or an armed group are low. Thus, the specific findings of this dissertation are a valuable contribution to our understanding of civil conflicts and the targeting behavior of militant groups.

Along with these findings, there are several avenues for future study stemming from my analyses in this dissertation. The first focuses on the difference between demobilization and disbandment, and how this impacts successful conflict termination. This addressed my fourth primary key finding: the difference between potential and applied coercion. Reactive groups can appear as if they are disbanded when they are only demobilized – meaning that they can transition back to different types of targeting when dynamics, usually relative capabilities, change. How groups can be successfully disbanded has implications for ending conflicts and preventing the resurgence of violence.

A second avenue could address the impact of groups whose structure varies between consolidated and fragmented due to either external actors or inter-group dynamics. This impacts both government co-optation and alliance formation, and the full implications of these hybrid groups is not fully explored here. Groups between consolidated and fragmented still aligned with my theory for the most part, but my theory does not directly account for these structures.

A third avenue could concentrate on why there is occasional divergence between groups that have high relative capabilities versus those that are symmetric with all other

groups in a conflict. Those with high or symmetric capabilities, typically, behave similarly in conflicts. However, what occurs when armed groups have high capabilities *vis-à-vis* the state as opposed to symmetric? This was the case in examining my deviant case examining the Kulyob Forces during the Tajik Civil War. The behavior of the Kulyob formations indicates that the relationship between capabilities and targeting may be different when the state possesses low relative material capabilities. This may be occurring because it shifts who groups are likely to view as their primary threat, but without additional cases, I cannot say what drives this divergence from my theory.

In this dissertation, I have argued that organizational structure and relative material capabilities operate in concert with one another to drive group behavior. I derived this relationship from an inductive analysis of the Yugoslav Wars, wherein six ethnically based, secessionist groups targeted different actors between the Ten-Day War, the Croatian War, and the Bosnian War. Consolidated groups with high/symmetric capabilities should target the state, while those with low capabilities should engage in mixed targeting. Fragmented groups with high/symmetric capabilities should target other groups, while those with low capabilities should engage in reactive/no targeting.

As shown in Chapters Three through Five, organizational structure and relative material capabilities are associated with group targeting across all three of the Yugoslav Wars. Moreover, changes in group targeting occurred alongside changes in organizational structure and material capabilities. For instance, the Croatian government's structure transitioned from fragmented to consolidated between June and September 1991. Contemporaneously, their behavior changed from reactive to mixed targeting. While I

focus on groups at the onset of violence, the fact that shifts in group targeting followed changes in group structure demonstrates that my theory has the potential to predict group behavior post-onset, as well.

In testing my theory on non-secessionist conflicts in Chapters Six through Eight, organizational structure and relative capabilities could consistently predict group targeting in the Tajik Civil War and the Interethnic Clashes in Kyrgyzstan. The notable exception was the Kulyob Formations, which did target the state as predicted, but also targeted other groups. This case corroborates my first hypothesis – a consolidated structure would result in groups targeting the state in some way. Yet, it did not corroborate that relative material capabilities provided focus and agency. However, my theory did accurately predict the behavior of the other three groups in the Tajik Civil War and the two groups in the Clashes in Kyrgyzstan. Furthermore, while a deviation from my theory, the Kulyob Forces were in an interesting position wherein their primary obstacle to reinstating the pre-GNR government was not the state, but the Kurgan-Tyube Formations. Despite being built upon insights derived from a series of secessionist conflicts, knowing a group's organizational structure and relative capabilities enables one to predict group targeting in non-secessionist conflicts as well.

Group behavior in conflicts wherein the state is strong also corroborated my theory and provided insights into how the state combats armed groups and how the state's behavior shapes relative material capabilities. First, the state's potential coercive capacity does not direct group behavior. Rather, it is the actual coercive capacity the state applies to a group or region that shifts group targeting. Potential coercion is the military forces,

internal security forces, economic tools, and the like that the state could bring to bear on non-state actors. Actual coercion, conversely, are the resources the state commits to these efforts. In other words, rebel group targeting does not readily respond to the threat of force, but it does respond to threats carried out.

Second, despite the state's coercive power, fragmented groups have the potential to survive state coercion. Ingush militants in the East Prigorodny Conflict, for instance, mobilize and demobilize based on the degree of Russian focus and military presence in the region. Though mobilization peaked in 1992, violence occurred in East Prigorodny when Russian focus shifted to Chechnya in 1994. Additionally, the Second Chechen War's major combat operations lasted for approximately nine months between 1999 and 2000, but insurgency was fought for the next nine years. In fact, at the time of writing, the region is still unstable and a source of potential conflict in Russia.[566] Consolidated groups, like the Chechen Army, may struggle in sustained operations against a strong state, but fragmented ones tend to have more survivability.

Third, a pattern of the state co-opting rebel groups existed. The North Ossetian government co-opted Ossetian militants after the Russian intervention. This was seen in Tajikistan as well, but only after the GNR dissolved and the Rakhmonov administration aligned with the Kremlin in November 1992.

Another insight from the cases from Central Asia and the North Caucasus is that reactive does not mean non-existent. Reactive groups can remain present in a conflict if their *raison d'etre* is not resolved. A lack of violence can deceive the state or other actors

[566] Shishkina (2022). Chambers (2022). Stephens (2022).

into thinking that reactive groups have fully demobilized. Especially when the groups are fragmented, rooting out members is made even more difficult by the atomized organization and lack of a hierarchical leadership. Moreover, with shifts in either structure or relative capabilities, reactive groups can quickly transition into groups that are engaging in military operations.

My cases focus on post-Soviet and post-Communist conflicts. This is due in part to the sheer number of conflicts occurring in different regions with different rationales and different inter-group dynamics. There was a mix of variation in key variables and constants between and within the regions that made these conflicts excellent for a most-similar case design. Another reason for this focus is my own regional specialty: I speak Russian and I have lived and studied in Kiev, Ukraine, Moscow, Russia, and Tbilisi, Georgia. As a result of being able to read Cyrillic, I could read many of the documents from these various regions. This region inspired my focus on civil conflicts in the first place. I was living in Kiev studying Russian and Ukrainian in the summer of 2013, only to see protests and then an armed conflict a few months later.

Russian behavior towards Ukraine in 2022 is not new. There is a pattern of Russian domestic and foreign policy towards its near abroad, of supporting *de facto* statelets to undermine countries acting counter to its foreign policy interests, of invading states in its near abroad when subtler (relatively speaking) forms of coercion have failed. If East Prigorodny or Chechnya were located, hypothetically, in eastern Ukraine or northern Georgia, the Kremlin's behavior towards them would likely be very different. In 1994, Ukrainian nationalists expressed worries that the Kremlin's aggression towards Chechnya

would later be extended to Georgia and Ukraine.[567] Though considered a fringe view at the time, Russian actions have confirmed these fears with the 2008 Russo-Georgian War and the 2022 Invasion of Ukraine.

While the Russian invasion of Ukraine has shifted the conflict from an intrastate one with external supporters to an interstate war, my theory can be applied to pre-2022 Ukraine. Russian support for the Republics of Donetsk and Luhansk in Eastern Ukraine since 2014 has been crucial to their survival as *de facto* states, resulting in a prolonged civil conflict. There were multiple non-state groups, volunteer units, and paramilitary organizations operating in Eastern Ukraine, both alongside and against Ukrainian military forces.

This structure mirrors that seen in the First Chechen War, with government forces operating alongside a more fragmented organization and against opposition groups.[568] In Chechnya, Russian forces invaded in 1994 after supporting the Chechen Opposition in its failed efforts to oust Dudayev. Likewise, Russian forces did not invade Ukraine outright in 2014. Instead, the Kremlin provided aid to the pro-Russian groups in Ukraine that offset their low relative material capabilities, shifting them into a high/symmetric position. This balance, however, shifted once again back into the favor of the Ukrainian government. Moreover, the groups in Eastern Ukraine were failing to achieve their purpose of destabilizing Ukraine and preventing its alignment with the West. Like Chechnya, we then observe Russian forces invading.

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[567] Kiselev (1994).
[568] There is a divergence in purpose. The Chechen Opposition sought to capture the center by ousting Dudayev, while the rebel groups in Donetsk and Luhansk sought secession.

My findings do not only apply to post-Soviet countries. Organizational structure and relative material capabilities can also explain group behavior in conflicts farther afield. The targeting exhibited by the Taliban in Afghanistan, for instance, can be attributed to their structure and relative capabilities. Much like Ingush militants during the East Prigorodny Conflict, the Taliban has repeatedly mobilized and demobilized, blending back into the local population, depending on the degree of external pressure. The involvement of the United States and its coalition in Afghanistan and its military support of the Afghan government, much like the Russian involvement in East Prigorodny, shifted the distribution of relative material capabilities. Paired with a fragmented organizational structure, the Taliban has been able to survive an extended campaign and capitalize on shifts in the distribution of capabilities. Mobilizing and switching its targeting patterns when external pressure is removed. As with fighting both in East Prigorodny and the Chechen insurgency – the coercive potential of the state, or an outside actor in the case of Afghanistan, does not matter as much as the actual coercive power committed to the region.

A potential limitation of my dissertation stems from the dearth of groups solely targeting the state. This occurs because rebel groups tend to have lower relative capabilities, even when the state is weak. However, it does make testing the full range of outcomes more difficult. Additionally, even smaller-scale conflicts examined in past conflicts were, for the time they lasted, sustained intrastate violence. Future studies can expand the scope of my study to other types of violence, like gang violence or protests. Additionally, I examined the start of these conflicts, but even in these cases shifts in structure and capabilities occurred. It would be interesting to see if this level of change is

consistent throughout conflicts or if shifts in the facets of groups slow down or speed up as conflicts progress.

Additionally, the state co-opted armed groups into its security apparatus in several cases. My theory does not include this as a potential outcome. Granted, I specifically examine the onset of violence, and at the onset, these groups were not co-opted; they were independently mobilizing armed groups who happened to have motives that aligned with the state. However, as shown by the Ossetian forces during the East Prigorodny Conflict, this co-optation can happen quickly. There, it occurred within a month. Rebel groups mobilize not because they necessarily oppose the state, but because the state is not present to protect them. These groups, regardless of structure, are not likely to target the state.

In civil conflicts, groups mobilize due to specific grievances. This can be dissatisfaction with the current governance, with groups desiring changes in policy or challenging the center for the right to rule. It can also be groups that seek self-rule, often due to the presence of ethnic majority-minority communities. Yet, knowing a group's reason for mobilizing does not necessarily inform us of who they are going to attack. Furthermore, armed groups do not simply target a singly type of actor in a conflict. Some do target multiple actors, others focus on a single type of target, and yet others mobilize but do not initiate attacks.

The prevalence of non-state actors and asymmetric groups in conflicts means understanding the behavior or rebel groups is of upmost importance. However, many existing theories and arguments only provide a partial picture of how groups are likely to act during intrastate conflicts. To predict how conflicts will evolve and to execute effective

de-escalation, it is crucial for scholars and policymakers to know whom armed groups are likely to target. Strategies to curb violence can impact the organizational structure and relative material capabilities of groups, thereby impacting their targeting style. These strategies do not affect groups equally, though.

For example, the UN instituted an arms embargo against the former Yugoslavia to halt the violence, the logic being that fewer armaments would mean less conflict. In a broad sense, this works; it is generally a bad call to allow radicalized groups greater access to weaponry. In the Bosnian War, though, this also served to lock-in the groups' relative capabilities. This meant that the Bosnian government struggled to build its capabilities and remained reactive, which then contributed to the Bosnian forces inability to halt the ethnic cleansing of the republic's Muslim residents. The arms embargo directly impacted the Bosnian government, but due to support from the YNA and Serbia, Srpska forces were not similarly affected. Therefore, the arms embargo did not translate to conflict de-escalation. Being able to predict group targeting informs us if de-escalation efforts are likely to affect groups unequally.

Additionally, being able to predict group targeting informs us of how conflicts are most likely to evolve in several ways. First, where groups are consolidated groups, with both high/symmetric and low capabilities, the state is likely to be a target of violence. Conversely, if a conflict involves fragmented groups with high/symmetric capabilities, the state is likely to be a bystander as these groups are more likely to target one another. Second, decapitation of group leadership could be an effective strategy against a consolidated group, but it would not be effective against a fragmented one. Third, in cases

where there are reactive groups, which are fragmented and possess low relative capabilities, demobilization does not necessarily mean that a conflict is over. If groups became reactive because of coercive pressure from the state or another group, the removal of this pressure can trigger re-mobilization and conflict escalation.

Organizational structure and relative capabilities are built in the pre-war period, and their impact on targeting is visible at the onset of violence. Mobilization does not arise from nothing; individuals and groups typically voice dissatisfaction prior to turning to violence. Mobilization efforts also require a degree of visibility. In Tajikistan, for instance, reports of groups traveling across the Tajik-Afghan border and trafficking arms began before the violence was initiated. Ingush residents of East Prigorodny voiced their desire for a border revision prior to the conflict's onset.

Structure informs us of a group's primary threat, and relative capabilities inform a group's agency. Across civil conflicts, these two variables work in concert with one another, and knowing both enables us to predict group targeting. My theory accurately predicts who groups are likely to target. Moreover, these predictions can aid in the creation of more effective strategies to mitigate violence and deescalate conflicts. Being able to predict who groups are most likely to attack at the start of conflicts is an important component to halting the escalation of violence. Moreover, knowing that shifts in structure and capabilities shift targeting matters means that de-escalation strategies can be more tailored to combat situations, and this can generate a more stable and lasting conflict resolution.

APPENDIX A: VARIABLE MEASUREMENT AND CODING

Target_Type[569]
0 No Targeting
1 Targeting groups
2 Targeting the state

Target_Type_2[570]
0 No Targeting
1 Targeting of state and/or groups

Location[571]
1 Slovenia
2 Croatia
3 Bosnia and Herzegovina

Border_Region
0 Interior
1 Border Municipality (international and republic borders internal to Yugoslavia coded as 1)

Border_who
1 Bosnia
2 Croatia
3 Macedonia
4 Montenegro
5 Serbia
6 Slovenia
7 International

Border_who2
1 Bosnia
2 Croatia
3 Serbia and Montenegro
4 Slovenia
5 International

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[569] Office of Russian and European Analysis (2002).
[570] Office of Russian and European Analysis (2002).
[571] Savezni Zavod Za Statistiku (1991).

Top_Eth_Group and Second_Eth_Group[572]
1 Serb
2 Croatian
3 Muslim
4 Slovenian
5 Albanian
6 Macedonian
7 Yugoslav
8 Montenegrin
9 Hungarian
10 Roma

Ethnic Fractionalization (ethfrac6)[573]
=(1-(First_Percent-Second_Percent)*100)/5

My measure for ethnic fractionalization subtracts the percentage of the first largest ethnic group and subtracts it from the second largest ethnic group. As the distance between the two ethnic groups decreases, this indicates that the region is more fractured. I then subtract this score from one hundred, generating a score between 0 and 100. This is mainly to ease in interpretation of models, as this means as the ethnic fractionalization score increases, so too does the degree of fractionalization in the municipality. For example, if the first largest ethnic group comprises 95% of the population and the second 2%, then that municipality would have a score of 7. However, if the first comprised 35% and the second 30%, it would have a score of 95.

Since a one percentage point increase is very small, so the variable used in models is ethfrac6 – which provides the coefficient at five percentage point increases.

Mountain Ranges (Mountainous)
0 No Mountains
1 Mountains

Slovenia: The Central-Eastern Alps, Julian Alps, Kamnik Alps, the Karawanks, Dinaric Alps, Pohorje, Zumberak Mountians,
Croatia: Dinaric Alps, Bilogora, Biokovo, Moslavacka gora, Papuk, Ucka, Vukomericke gorice, Zumberak Mountains
Bosnia and Herzegovina: Dinaric Alps

Note: While Bosnia and Herzegovina has the least named mountain ranges, it has the highest percentage of municipalities classified as mountainous (40%) with Croatia closely behind (38%). Slovenia has the lowest percentage of municipalities classified as mountainous (28%). Additionally, while they have different names, many of these ranges are part and parcel to the larger Alps range that exists throughout Southern Europe.

[572] Savezni Zavod Za Statistiku (1991).
[573] Savezni Zavod Za Statistiku (1991).

TotalPop2[574]
= TotalPopulation/10000

This variable examines the total population of a given municipality in Yugoslavia. As is the case with many logistic regressions, population numbers are 1) too large and 2) have too much variation to be able to be in a model as a simple number. To remedy this, divided the population by 10,000. Therefore, the effects in the model are demonstrating the change in log likelihood for an increase in the population by 10,000 individuals.

rural_percent2[575]
=Rural_pop/TotalPopulation*100

mtn_POP and mtn_Rural2

These two variables are interaction terms for measures of population (lnPOP) and population distribution (rural_percent2) and terrain (Mountainous). This is used due to how terrain can influence where individuals choose to live. Mountains can have harsher weather and poor farmland, leading to fewer urban settlements and causing a rise in the rural population versus the urban population and a lower population overall. Due to this, an interaction term is introduced as a control in Models 3, 5, 8, and 10. Generally speaking, these interaction terms improve models' internal and external explanatory power.

[574] Savezni Zavod Za Statistiku (1991).
[575] Savezni Zavod Za Statistiku (1991).

APPENDIX B: MAP DETAILS

Slovenia

Yugoslav National Army/YNA

Ajsevica, Boc, Borovnica, Bovec, Bregana, Brezice, Bukovzlak, Catez, Cerkjle, Domazle, Dravograd, Gornja Radgona, Gornja Vas, Hrvatini, Karavanke, Kocevska Reka, Korensko Sedlo, Krakovski Gozd, Krim, Krvavec, Kum, Lazaret border crossing, Ljubelj, Ljubljana, Medvedjek, Metlika, Mokronog, Nanos, Nova Gorica, Ormoz, Pecovnik, Pekre, Pohorje, Ratece, Sentilj, Skofije, Skofja Loka, Tolin, Trdinov Vrh, Trebnje, Vrhnika, and Zaloska Gorica

Slovenian Government Forces

Ajsevica, Boc, Borovnica, Bovec, Bregana, Brezice, Bukovzlak, Catez, Cerkjle, Domazle, Dravograd, Gornja Radgona, Gornja Vas, Hrvatini, Karavanke, Kocevska Reka, Korensko Sedlo, Krakovski Gozd, Krim, Krvavec, Kum, Lazaret border crossing, Ljubelj, Ljubljana, Medvedjek, Metlika, Mokronog, Nanos, Nova Gorica, Ormoz, Pecovnik, Pekre, Pohorje, Ratece, Sentilj, Skofije, Skofja Loka, Tolin, Trdinov Vrh, Trebnje, Vrhnika, and Zaloska Gorica

Croatia

Yugoslav National Army/YNA

Banija, Borovo Naselje, Dubrovnik, Kijevo, Knin, Lika, Maslenica, Osijek, Pakrac, Sibenik, Slunj, Vinkovci, Vukovar, Zadar, and Zagreb

Croatian Government Forces

Baranja, Banija, Bilogora, Borovo Naselje, Borovo Selo, Dubrovnik, Glina, Hrvatska Kostajnica, Kijevo, Knin, Lika, Maslenica, Okucani, Osijek, Pakrac, Plitvice, Podravska Slatina, Sibenik, Slunj, Tovarnik, Vinkovci, Vukovar, Zadar, and Zagreb

Serbian Republic of Krajina Forces

Baranja, Bilogora, Borovo Selo, Glina, Hrvatska Kostajnica, Kijevo, Knin, Maslenica, Okucani, Pakrac, Plitvice, Podravska Slatina, Sibenik, Tovarnik, Zadar, and Zagreb

Bosnia and Herzegovina

Yugoslav National Army/YNA

Bihac, Bijeljina, Bosanska Krupa, Bosanski Brod, Bosanski Samac-Pelagicevo, Brcko, Capljina, Doboj, Dubrovnik, Jasenica, Kljuc, Kupres, Mostar, Mt. Hum, Mt. Orlovac, Prijedor, Sanski Most, Sarajevo, Siroki Brijeg, Stolac, Tuzla, Visegrad, Visoko, Zenica, and Zvornik

Bosnian Government Forces

Bihac, Bijeljina, Bosanska Krupa, Bosanski Novi, Bosanski Samac-Pelagicevo, Brcko, Busovaca, Cazin, Cerska-Kamenica, Doboj, Foca, Gorazde, Gradacac, Johovac, Kljuc, Kotorosko, Ljuta, Mostar-Sarajevo Road blockade, Novi Travnik, Prijedor, Prijedor—Sanski Most—Kljuc region, Sanski Most, Sarajevo, Srebrenica, Tuzla, Visegrad, Visoko, Vogosca, Zenica, Zvornik

Republika Srpska Forces (VRS)

Bihac, Bijeljina, Bivolje Brdo, Blagaj, Bosanska Krupa, Bosanski Brod, Bosanski Novi, Bosanski Samac-Pelagicevo, Brcko, Buna, Cazin, Cerska-Kamenica, Cule, Derventa, Doboj, Dubrovnik, Foca, Gorazde, Gradacac, Gubavica, Hodovo, Jasenica, Johovac, Kljuc, Kotorosko, Krusevo, Kupres, Lovke, Modrica, Mostar, Mostar-Sarajevo Road blockade, Mt. Hum, Mt. Orlovac, Mt. Velez, Neretva, Pijesci, Prijedor, Prijedor—Sanski Most—Kljuc region, Recice, Sanski Most, Sarajevo, Slipcici, Srebrenica, Stolac, Tasovici, Visegrad, Vogosca, and Zvornik

Herzeg-Bosnia Forces (HVO)

Bivolje Brdo, Blagaj, Bosanski Brod, Bosanski Samac-Pelagicevo, Brcko, Buna, Busovaca, Capljina, Cule, Derventa, Doboj, Dubrovnik, Gradacac, Gubavica, Hodovo, Jasenica, Johovac, Kotorosko, Krusevo, Kupres, Ljuta, Lovke, Modrica, Mostar, Mt. Hum, Mt. Orlovac, Mt. Velez, Neretva, Novi Travnik, Pijesci, Recice, Slipcici, Stolac, and Tasovici

Tajikistan

Russian/CIS Military

Dushanbe, Kulyob, Panj/Tajik-Afghan border

Pro-Government/Kulyob Forces/Popular Front

Khujand, Dushanbe, Nurek, Kulob, Kalininabad, Kurgan-Tyube, Kolkhozabad, Panj/Tajik-Afghan border, Kafirnigon

Opposition/Kurgan-Tyube Forces/United Tajik Opposition

Dushanbe, Nurek, Kurgan-Tyube, Kolkhozabad, Panj/Tajik-Afghan border

Kyrgyzstan

Kyrgyz Groups

Aravan, Bishkek, Jalal-Abad, Kara-Suu, Osh, and Uzgen

Uzbek Groups

Aravan, Bishkek, Jalal-Abad, Kara-Suu, Osh, and Uzgen

Ingushetia Phase I

North Ossetian Forces

Chernorechenskoye, Kartsa, Kurtat, Vladikavkaz, and Yuzhny

Ingush Militants

Chermen, Chernorechenskoye, Kartsa, Kurtat, Redant, Terk, Vladikavkaz, and Yuzhny

Ossetian Militants

Chermen, Kartsa, Kurtat, Vladikavkaz, and Yuzhny

Ingushetia Phase II

Russian Government Forces

Chermen, Chernorechenskoye, Dachnoe, Dalakovo, Ingush-Chechen border, Kamileyvka, Kartsa, Kurtat, Maisky, Nazran, Oktyabrskoe, Yuzhny, and Zigla

North Ossetian Government Forces

Oktyabrskoe and Vladikavkaz

Ingush Militants

Armkhi, Chermen, Chernorechenskoye, Dachnoe, Dalakovo, Dzhayrakh, Guli, Kamileyvka, Kartsa, Kurtat, Maisky, Nazran, Oktyabrskoe, Olgeti, Terk, Vladikavkaz, and Yuzhny

Ossetian Militants

Chermen, Chernorechenskoye, Dachnoe, Kamileyvka, Kartsa, Kurtat, Maisky, Oktyabrskoe, Terk, Vladikavkaz, Yuzhny, and Zigla

Chechen Forces

Ingush-Chechen border and Yuzhny

South Ossetian Forces

Terk, Oktyabrskoe, and Yuzhny

Chechnya

Russian Government

Chechnya: Assinovskaya, Dolinskiy, Novy Sharoi, Shelkovsky, Tolstoy Yurt, and Znamenskoye
North Ossetia: Beslan, Mozdok, and Vladikavkaz,
Ingushetia: Magas, and Karbulak
Dagestan: Shelkovskaya

Chechen Army

Assinovskaya, Grozny, Chemul'ga, Chervlenaya, Dolinskiy, Pervomayskaya, and Znamenskoye

Dudayev's Supporters

Chervlenaya, Dolinskiy, Grozny, and Novy Sharoi

Opposition

Nadterechny Rayon and Znamenskoye

Ingush Fighters

Karbulak and Magas

Dagestani Fighters

Shelkovskaya

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