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EXPLAINING EFFECTIVENESS IN MODERN COUNTERINSURGENCY

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## Abstract

Why are some counterinsurgency campaigns effective while others are not? Existing theories give primacy to hearts-and-minds strategy, preponderance of state forces, and type of group as determinants of effectiveness. This dissertation argues that variation in effectiveness results from differences in select tactical, organizational, and technological capabilities of the counterinsurgent state, captured by the concept of Legibility and Speed-of-Exploitation System (L&S). The L&S varies in the legibility of the population (legibility) and the speed of exploitation of legibility gains (speed). This dissertation shows that campaigns attaining high L&S are effective even when failing to implement a hearts-and-minds strategy, fighting resilient insurgents, and without adequate force levels. Further, the dissertation shows that the variation in the L&S is shaped by domestic political salience of the counterinsurgency effort and prior experience of counterinsurgent forces in internal war. The dissertation tests predictions of the new theory and orthodox theories in multiple counterinsurgency campaigns and conflicts using novel fieldwork data, archival materials, and historiography: Indian counterinsurgency in Punjab (1984-1994) and Jammu and Kashmir (1989-1999), Pakistani counterinsurgency in the North West Frontier (2002-2011), British counterinsurgency in Malaya (1952-55) and Kenya (1953-56), US counterinsurgency in Iraq (2007-2010), and US Drone War in Pakistan (2004 to 2014). The dissertation's theory and findings challenge the conventional wisdom that success in counterinsurgency is tied to winning the support of the civilian population.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

Counterinsurgency remains central to the study of international politics and security. It is the major form of warfare most states have been involved in since the Second World War.<sup>1</sup>

Motivated by the salience, this dissertation examines variation in military outcomes of counterinsurgency wars, what I call counterinsurgency effectiveness. The broader puzzle at the heart of the dissertation is straightforward. States are powerful, more organized, and well resourced. Insurgent challengers are less powerful, often rag-tag or fractious, operating under many more constraints. Great and regional powers expend considerable energy and effort trying to be militarily effective at counterinsurgency. And yet, counterinsurgency effectiveness -- the degradation of insurgent foes -- often proves elusive. From the United States' counterinsurgency against the Vietcong in Vietnam to the recent expeditions in Afghanistan and Iraq, the Russian military operations in Chechnya to Egyptian counterinsurgency in the Sinai Peninsula, the trials of strong and well-resourced states in bringing their insurgent foes under pressure are a reality.

Within the broader variation in counterinsurgency wars lies an intriguing puzzle around campaigns. Campaigns are to counterinsurgency what battles are to interstate wars. Scholars of conventional war have turned their attention to battles when trying to understand the dynamics of interstate wars.<sup>2</sup> Scholars of counterinsurgency, however, generally neglect campaigns.<sup>3</sup> This is surprising because they are very important. Counterinsurgency wars play out in distinct

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1 Data on interstate war from Correlates of War project and on counterinsurgency wars from Correlates of Counterinsurgency project, introduced in Lyall and Wilson 2009, shows the dominance of counterinsurgency. See: Gleditsch 2013 on decline of inter-state war.

2 Important studies on dynamics of battlefield effectiveness include Biddle 2004, Grauer and Horowitz 2012, Talmadge 2015, Narang and Talmadge 2017.

3 An important exception is Biddle, Shapiro, and Friedman 2012, which studies the dynamics of violence before and after the 2007 Surge in Iraq.

campaigns – sometimes they are phased by time period, at other times by time periods and geography. Much like effectiveness in interstate battles, counterinsurgency campaign effectiveness tends to vary dramatically. Some campaigns succeed in curbing insurgent pressures, undermining insurgent collective action, operational capability, and bases of support. Famous examples of effective campaigns based on available historiography are the British counterinsurgency against the communist insurgency in Malaya, Indonesian military operations against the Free Aceh Movement in 2003 and 2004, and the Peruvian military operations against the Sendero Luminoso in the 1990s. Other campaigns make little headway in disrupting the insurgent momentum, like the Thailand Junta’s campaign against the separatists in Southern Thailand provinces starting 2007, the Russian campaign in Chechnya from 1994 to 1996, and the 2004 to 2006 US campaign in Iraq.

This dissertation’s main aim is to explain the effectiveness of such counterinsurgency campaigns. The focus on effectiveness contrasts with political outcomes of counterinsurgency, like political capability to keep fighting and concessions made to insurgents. Since Andrew Mack’s famous article *Why Big Nations Lose Small Wars*, many scholars have privileged explaining the political over military dimensions of state-insurgent conflicts.<sup>4</sup> Incontrovertibly, the political dimension of counterinsurgency is salient. But variation in counterinsurgency’s military dimension i.e. effectiveness is equally important, meriting scholarly attention for three reasons.

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<sup>4</sup> Mack 1975; large-N study explaining the variation in political outcomes of counterinsurgency: Lyall and Wilson 2009. On structural limits on counterinsurgency’s political success in the modern period, see: MacDonald 2013, 2014.

First, counterinsurgency effectiveness is often distinct from the political trajectory of a conflict. Many conflicts terminate militarily, but do not end politically. Consider the British campaign in Northern Ireland where major military hostilities largely ceased by the late 1980s, but it was not until 1998 that the insurgents politically agreed to stop fighting.<sup>5</sup> Other conflicts may end politically even when military hostilities suggest no clear winner. Consider the anti-Japanese resistance in Malaya, which ceased with the end of second World War. Much like the case of interstate battles, as noted by Caitlin Talmadge, the political outcome of counterinsurgency may also “hinge on a variety of factors besides what goes on in the battlefield. The political goals for which a war is fought, the international environment, and third-party involvement – are but a few factors that can influence ultimate political victory and defeat, independent of the military trajectory of the conflict.”<sup>6</sup> Thus, it is analytically useful to locate the causes of counterinsurgency effectiveness independent of the political outcomes of counterinsurgency.

Second, campaign level outcomes of counterinsurgency effectiveness are a first order concern for political leaders, general staff, and policymakers during the course of a conflict. We see this in a number of contexts. Succeeding at the Pacification in Vietnam was a goal of both the Military Advisory Command of Vietnam and President Lyndon B Johnson’s administration.<sup>7</sup> After the invasion of Iraq, President George W. Bush was deeply concerned about the performance of the US forces against Al-Qaeda in Iraq.<sup>8</sup> In the Russian context, Vladimir Putin, after becoming the Russian Prime Minister in 1999, paid extensive attention to Russian

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5 Dixon 2009, 2012

6 Talmadge 2015

7 Johnson 1971, Sorley 2011

8 Gordon and Trainor 2012

counterinsurgency operations during the Second Chechen War.<sup>9</sup> Throughout the early 2000s, the Russian General Staff strove to achieve degradation of the rebel forces of commander Shamil Basayev.

Third, counterinsurgency effectiveness has life and death implications for the forces involved and the civilians living in areas where state-insurgent contests play out. These implications have political fallout -- which may impact different facets of civil wars, including rebel governance, civilian wellbeing, prospects of a negotiated settlement, and post-war politics.

#### Puzzles for the Existing Literature on Effectiveness

Existing scholarship provides important theories for various facets of insurgencies and counterinsurgency. While some of the research speaks directly to the determinants of effectiveness, other works imply logics for the prospects of counterinsurgency. I synthesize the existing literature in three major theoretical categories: views favoring preponderance of counterinsurgency forces, civilian-centric theories touting the importance of hearts-and-minds strategies and population control approaches, and insurgent group type theories. I discuss and highlight the puzzles suggested by each of these theoretical paradigms.

#### Preponderance of Forces View

In the last two decades, many analysts and practitioners have suggest that the counterinsurgent's material superiority, with a focus on manpower, is a causal factor for explaining outcomes of

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<sup>9</sup> Van Herpen 2015

counterinsurgency wars.<sup>10</sup> Classical works on counterinsurgency, like T.E. Lawrence's and Col Charles Callwell's writings, have also emphasized the importance of manpower to counterinsurgency.<sup>11</sup> This focus on force level is, in part, traceable to the study of conventional warfare; scholars and practitioners have extended routinely seen manpower as a critical factor to conventional warfare.<sup>12</sup> Following their lead, counterinsurgent analysts have sought the right "ratio" of forces for counterinsurgency operations.

The force level view has been reinforced by the policy ambivalence towards counterinsurgency. American counterinsurgency in Vietnam was punctuated with heated debates over how to best deploy force with no obvious consensus, leading to prioritizing of manpower requirements.<sup>13</sup> The debate around manpower reemerged during the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. American politicians, intelligence officials, and military leaders sparred over how to use force, if at all, in Iraq and Afghanistan.<sup>14</sup> The famous 2007 Surge in Iraq was preceded by a debate on manpower requirements.<sup>15</sup> The policy consensus at the time was that manpower preponderance was a necessary condition for success. In 2009, President Barrack Obama again reverted to the question, vigorously debating whether the manpower intensive doctrinal approach laid down by US military officers in the Field Manual 3-24 was the best approach forward.

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10 Views on importance of size of counterinsurgent manpower have been and continue to be pervasive in the military strategy literature and policy prescriptions. See: Lawrence 1917, Kneeece Jr et al 2010, Dobbins 2003, Sepp 2005, Quinlivan 1995, 2003, and Nagl et al 2008. Social science studies that have examined role of manpower in recent years include Biddle, Friedman, and Shapiro 2012, and Friedman 2011; the former considers size of manpower a necessary condition if not a sufficient one, while the latter finds no conclusive evidence in favor of numerical preponderance cross-nationally.

11 Callwell 1903, Lawrence 1917

12 For a review of literature on force size views in conventional warfare, see: Biddle 2004.

13 Krepinevich 2009

14 Gates 2014, Panetta 2014, McChrystal 2013

15 See: Gordon and Tainor 2012

Despite the pervasiveness of manpower-oriented views in the policy and scholarly discussion around counterinsurgency, the track record number of counterinsurgent forces alone struggles to account for important variation in campaign outcomes. There are two reasons to be skeptical. First, cross-conflict analysis doesn't suggest a clear association between force levels and effectiveness. In an important analysis, Friedman (2011) finds no clear relationship between various metrics of manpower levels and counterinsurgency effectiveness. Second, even if there was a cross-conflict association, we cannot explain within-conflict variation in many important cases using a force level view alone. Among specific cases, an obvious example is of US counterinsurgency in Vietnam. From 1965 to 1968, US counterinsurgency forces struggled to achieve effectiveness despite preponderance in manpower levels. From 1969 to 1972, Phoenix, a campaign which was relatively light on force levels, consistently brought the Vietcong under pressure.<sup>16</sup>

### Civilian-Centric Views

Civilian-centric theories constitute a dominant perspective on counterinsurgency dynamics. Building on descriptive accounts of military officers in colonial counterinsurgency, civilian-centric theories suggest that counterinsurgency effectiveness depends on implementation of measures which induce the collaboration of the civilian population. Informally, the combination of these measures is also called a hearts-and-minds strategy.<sup>17</sup> The key insight of civilian-centric

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16 On Phoenix, see: Moyer 1997, Kalyvas and Kocher 2007. In 1968, US government had a total of 1356100 troops, including South Vietnamese Forces, in Vietnam; this number was down to 1072200 in 1972.

17 Lyall and Wilson 2009, 76: "Scholars and practitioners largely agree that successful COIN efforts hinge not on the physical destruction of insurgent organizations but rather on the incumbent's ability to win over local populations. Mechanized militaries thus already begin at a disadvantage since their direct battle mission may be secondary, and even counterproductive, to the determinants of success." For similar ideas, see: Mao 1961, Thompson 1966, Trinquier 2006, Galula 2006, Nagl et al 2008, Kilcullen 2010

theories is that success in counterinsurgency is tied to winning the support of the civilian population, and not the destruction of the insurgent organization.<sup>18</sup> Berman, Shapiro, and Felter (2011) offer a powerful game-theoretic exposition of the rich descriptive literature, formalizing it as “a three-sided game between violent rebels seeking to impose costs on a government, a government seeking to minimize violence by a mix of militarized counterinsurgency efforts and service provision, and civilians deciding whether to share information.” The model suggests that when counterinsurgents implement strategies which provide material incentives to civilians -- ranging from protection from insurgents, security from their own militarized efforts, minimal use of heavy firepower, to service delivery -- they can obtain civilian allegiances, leading to a surge in information tips on the insurgency from civilians.<sup>19</sup> By implication, this suggests that once the balance of civilian collaboration is in favor of the counterinsurgents, counterinsurgency is likely to be effective and the insurgency is difficult to sustain. This model has been empirically buttressed with important micro-level sub-national analyses from Iraq and Afghanistan.<sup>20</sup>

The historical and contemporary practice of counterinsurgency in large part of the world, however, challenges this view. Many old and contemporary counterinsurgents appear to have entirely circumvented the quest for obtaining civilian support -- rhetoric notwithstanding -- and degraded their insurgent foes. This apparent empirical anomaly has been noted by Stathis Kalyvas (2008), arguing that “the theoretical “primacy of the political” has proved elusive in

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18 Galula 2006, 52, Nagl et al 2008, 79, Thompson 1966

19 For a critique of the model, see: Hazelton 2017

20 See key conceptual/review works: Berman and Matanock 2015, Felter and Shapiro 2017, Berman, Shapiro, and Felter 2018. Relevant empirical work: Berman, Shapiro, and Felter 2011, Condra and Shapiro 2011, Kocher, Pepinsky, Kalyvas 2011, Dell 2016, Shapiro and Shaver 2017a. Other scholars depart from assumptions about malleability of civilian preference, arguing that preferences may not be that easily changed. They may be conditional on identity of combatant. See: Lyall, Blair, and Imai 2013. A separate strand of the civil war literature suggests that repressive behavior of states can solve insurgent’s collective action dilemma by generating sentiments of revenge and sympathy, thereby helping in recruiting. See: Wood 2003.

most cases; winning “hearts-and-minds”...takes the back seat to the application of violence...In some cases, the “correct” application of violence proves enough to defeat the insurgency and consolidate state control.”<sup>21</sup> On the other hand, states like the US which strive to pursue hearts-and-minds strategies due to the pervasiveness of related ideas in military doctrine have often failed in meaningfully lowering insurgent pressures. US military’s trials in Afghanistan are a prominent example. From 2009 onward, the US military announced a hearts-and-minds strategy for Afghanistan.<sup>22</sup> And yet it failed to meaningfully degrade the insurgency by 2013. That hearts-and-minds strategies don’t lead to effectiveness has been noted in a recent study by Austin Long. Writing on the determinants of compliance with population-centric counterinsurgency doctrine, Long notes that even successful implementation of the doctrine may not lead to effectiveness.<sup>23</sup>

A smaller body of scholarship has noted these anomalous patterns and attempted to rectify the lacuna in the literature. The course correction offered also theorizes the building block of the hearts-and-minds oriented camp, civilian behavior. However, in contrast to strategies which lead to voluntary civilian compliance with the counterinsurgency force, this camp suggests the importance of measures that force civilians to comply with state authorities. An older, descriptive version of this argument grouped such measures under the category of “population-control.”<sup>24</sup> The recent more explicitly theorized variants suggest hypotheses focusing on targeting, coercing, and/or displacing civilians, such as through population-camps, collective punishment, and/or torture, as being the pathway to efficacy.<sup>25</sup>

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21 Stathis Kalyvas in Isaac et al 2008

22 McChrystal 2013

23 Notes this in conclusion chapter. See: Long 2016.

<sup>24</sup> Markel 2006

<sup>25</sup> See: Leites and Wolf Jr 1970, Kalyvas 2006, Downes 2007, Downes 2008, Zhukov 2014, 2015, Hazelton 2017b.

This is an enormously important line of argumentation, but it's focus on civilian coercion as the key causal factor can be called into question for three reasons. First, general patterns of civilian harm appear to be compatible with both efficacy and in-efficacy. The Russian campaigns in Chechnya, first from 1993 to 1996 and later from 1999 to 2003, engaged in extensive civilian harm; yet, one proved to be a decisive failure, while the other one was much more effective. If brutalization of civilians alone was the driver of efficacy, we should not see such diametrically opposite outcomes. Similarly, specific civilian-harm measures do not suggest an obvious trend in outcomes either. Population control measures, for example, have corresponded with both effective and in-effective campaigns. The US and South Vietnamese forces' resettlement scheme in South Vietnam in the early 1960s, called the Strategic Hamlet Program, were similar to British colonial villagization in Malaya. Yet, the latter corresponded with efficacy while the former did not. Similarly, systematic use of collective punishment and torture has not yielded the same outcome in some key cases. While the British use of such tactics appears to have corresponded with efficacy in Kenya, French counterinsurgency in Algeria appears to have struggled despite their use. It could be that these are outlier cases, but they warrant more convincing comparative and case-specific explanations.

Second, existing works on civilian-coercion do not consider what else the state might be gaining through efforts which may victimize civilians. All counterinsurgency behaviors harming civilians may not be intended to compel civilians to collaborate. Some measures may be aimed at strengthening state capacities under wartime pressures. Civilian harm may just be a byproduct of that, and not the actual goal. For example, the standard repertoire of population-control

measures, like resettlement and registration, are compatible with civilian-coercion and also trawling and surveillance of civilian records. Trawling doesn't involve coercion as much as it aids good intelligence craft based on skillful police and intelligence tactics. Similarly, the creation of free-fire zones lends itself to dire and deeply difficult population displacement, but also an opportunity for population registration of low state capacity areas, and more rapid action on intelligence, with much less concern about collateral damage. This raises the question about what mechanism is actually operative when such measures are employed. If the civilian compellance logic is not at work, the conceptual focus on altering civilian behavior for may be erroneous.

Finally, and this is an extension of the third point, the empirical basis of the claim is particularly weak for the cases argued, especially on mechanisms. Some of the cases of hard approaches to counterinsurgency, such as British counterinsurgency in Malaya, struggle to clearly delineate how civilian brutalization contributed to effective counterinsurgency, if at all? Did it lead to a surge in collaborative activities of the civilians with the state, such as through provision of intelligence, or a lower desire on part of the population to join the insurgency? The available evidence doesn't help address the validity of these important processes.

All of this is to say that the civilian-centric camps -- both the soft variant focusing on hearts-and-minds strategies and the hard variant focusing on civilian-coercion -- need to be reconsidered. Given the track-record at hand, it may be that they are over-playing the actual role of civilians in effective and in-effective counterinsurgency campaigns.

## Group-Type Views

Theories emphasizing the differences in the type of the insurgent group are limited in accounting for patterns of counterinsurgency effectiveness. Many scholars locate explanatory power of various facets of conflict trajectories, including counterinsurgency, in the nature and type of the insurgency.<sup>26</sup> This body of work disaggregates insurgencies by analyzing their social ties, transnational networks, resource endowments, ideology, and organizational institutionalization. The key empirical claim of this tradition is that certain types of insurgencies, depending on their intrinsic attributes, are more formidable and likely to survive in the face of sustained counterinsurgency, whereas weak types are more likely to collapse. The general logic of this literature is captured by Staniland (2014): “the very nature of counterinsurgency campaigns fundamentally varies depending on the insurgent actor/s in question.”<sup>27</sup>

These views are important to understanding insurgent origins and have implications for important variables of intra-war politics, but they leave various empirical puzzles. They struggle to explain the relative longevity of ostensibly weak insurgencies, like the separatists in Thailand, and the dramatic demise of formidable ones, like the LTTE in Sri Lanka. Some of the works recognize that variation in state behavior can alter the course of insurgent politics; however, they do not provide analytical lenses to evaluate what kind of state behavior might do that.<sup>28</sup>

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26 The idea that some movements and groups have intrinsic qualities that may make them more formidable at their politics is found in a range of literatures including those on revolution, structures of rebellion, and ethnic conflict. See: Mao 1961, Selznick 2014, and Horowitz 1985. In recent years, theories that closely engage with the prospects of state crackdown for armed groups include: Weinstein 2006, Long 2009, Jordan 2014, Staniland 2014, Toft and Zhukov 2015, Finkel 2015, 2017.

27 Staniland 2014

28 On critique of group type views which do not account for the role of the state in shaping insurgent trajectories, see: Kalyvas 2007

To sum, the exiting literature has gaps on the important topic of counterinsurgency. We lack generalizable and empirically backed accounts of the determinants of counterinsurgency effectiveness. This dissertation aims to fill that void. It is also important to be clear what this dissertation does not do: It does not offer a theory of political effectiveness of counterinsurgency.

What is Counterinsurgency Effectiveness?

Before proposing a theory of counterinsurgency effectiveness, I must define what constitutes effectiveness in counterinsurgency.<sup>29</sup> I propose that variation in counterinsurgency effectiveness is best assessed in the organizational trajectories of the targeted insurgent group.<sup>30</sup> Such trajectories are evidenced in the operational capabilities, organizational basing, and collective action activities of the insurgency. *Operational capabilities* encompass the physical infrastructure and human capital that insurgents can mobilize to undertake sabotage and subversion. *Organizational basing* covers where armed groups live, operate from, and establish their bases of operations. *Collective action activities* capture armed group recruitment process and trajectories as well as maintenance of available manpower/retention of recruited cadres.

This dependent variable is in contrast to standard event-level time series on violent events or overtime territorial control data used in the literature. One reason to move beyond a single-indicator proxy like violence is that it tends to miss important military and political variation in

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29 Effectiveness as an outcome variable is commonly invoked in the study of conventional military operations. A seminal social science work in this regard is Biddle 2004. This line of work notes the importance of distinguishing between military and political outcomes of military campaigns for social scientific analysis.

30 This outcome contrasts with concessions made to or “compellance” of an insurgency. On compellance: Schelling 1966; Pape 1996; on political outcomes: Lyall and Wilson 2009

armed group trajectories. While very informative, on its own a drop-in violence is not necessarily indicative of the efficacy of the counterinsurgency; it may reflect a political arrangement like cessation of hostilities between states and insurgents, or the nature of territorial alignment in the operational area.<sup>31</sup> We need to consider indicators in addition to levels of violence to track the trajectory of an insurgency, especially in response to counterinsurgency efforts.

This dependent variable is in contrast to conceptions of military effectiveness in vogue for conventional military warfare. Recent works on military effectiveness treat it as distinct from consequences of military deployment, arguing that the ability of militaries to execute select operational tasks alone constitutes effectiveness.<sup>32</sup> Counterinsurgent effectiveness cannot be defined in the same way for two reasons. First, there is no clear consensus on the organizational activities and strategies that are likely to lead to victory for counterinsurgents at the tactical and operational level. While conventional warfare has converged on the “modern system” as an agreeable benchmark of efficacy, counterinsurgency hasn’t found its modern system yet.<sup>33</sup> Second, and this is a byproduct of the previous point, forces undertaking counterinsurgency are more diverse than conventional warfare, drawing on an array of coercive elements like paramilitary and police besides regular armies in combat roles. These forces do not train in any specific tasks during peacetime to be successful at counterinsurgency. Thus, it is analytically not useful to evaluate them against a given standard of practices.

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31 On challenges to inference with violence events: Kalyvas and Kocher 2009, Staniland 2017, Gutiérrez Sanín and Wood 2017

32 Talmadge 2015

33 On modern system, see Biddle 2004, on counterinsurgency not finding its “modern system”, see Long 2016. Long 2016 also notes that compliance with hearts-and-minds practices do not ensure success.

This dependent variable is also different from conceptions of counterinsurgency strategy. In some studies of counterinsurgency, scholars have theorized counterinsurgency strategy as a variable, focusing on variation in military behaviors like provision of population security, population-control practices, compliance with doctrine, clear-hold-build, high value targeting, violent negotiation among others.<sup>34</sup> These are useful analytical categories; however, for the purpose of understanding campaign level outcomes, focusing on effectiveness provides more analytical leverage because many of the strategies are often not mutually exclusive. Also, these strategies do not directly map onto actual effectiveness – the puzzle driving this dissertation. Instead, they may incorporate political dimensions such as ability to hold elections, peace negotiations, and/or possibility of disengagement from the conflict.

How does counterinsurgency effectiveness vary? While the variation in counterinsurgency effectiveness is likely to be on a scale, I disaggregate it in three categories of insurgent trajectories: ineffective, stalemate, and effective. A campaign is **ineffective** if the targeted group continues to increase in operational capability, observed in operational manpower, weaponry, cash, plans, and/or facilities; if the group continues to establish and expand its spheres of influence often by extending its base for manpower and operational activities; if it maintains a robust collective action drive, evidenced in good retention of existing cadres and increase in new cadres.

A campaign is a **stalemate** if the targeted group neither increases nor loses operational capability, observed in manpower, weaponry, cash, plans, and/or facilities to undertake

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<sup>34</sup> Jackson 2008, Lindsay and Peterson 2011, Lalwani 2014, Long 2016.

operations; if the group continues to relocate its bases for manpower and operations in systematic and organized ways; if it preserves its collective action drive without significant losses, evidenced in the retention of a majority of existing cadres.

A campaign is **effective** if the targeted group loses abundant operational capability, observed in operational manpower, weaponry, cash, plans, and/or facilities to produce all of the above; if the group folds bases, as opposed to relocating them; if collective action drive breaks down, evidenced in desertion of existing cadres and inability to recruit new cadres.

#### Argument in Brief

This dissertation argues that a particular counterinsurgent capability of deploying selective violence varies systematically, and has explanatory power for effectiveness. This capability is captured by the concept of Legibility and Speed-of-Exploitation System, or the L&S. The importance of this capability is traceable to the fact that in the modern period states are centrally challenged by the informational advantages enjoyed by their insurgent foes. Relative to state forces, armed groups are small and less resourceful, lacking in the means essential for sustained conventional military warfare. Instead they engage in their politics by building clandestine structures for recruitment, training, planning, decision making, and fundraising. This invariably involves hiding in small groups among the civilian population by leveraging stealth and flexible deployment. The insurgents, thus, end up challenging counterinsurgents in two specific ways. First, the counterinsurgent has to identify and locate the armed group concealed in the civilian population. Second, the counterinsurgent state must respond to the dynamic nature of an armed

group; as insurgents strive to stay clandestine, any information that may become available on the insurgency has a limited time validity.

The L&S is the specific counterinsurgent capability that responds to the two challenges posed by the insurgents. It is constituted by select tactical, technological, and organizational capabilities of the counterinsurgent state varying in two dimensions: the legibility of the civilian population in which armed groups are based (legibility) and the speed of exploitation of legibility gains (speed). Legibility involves mapping of the social, economic, and political terrain of the target geography, logging of civilian identities and behavior, and identifying networks of civilians and insurgents.<sup>35</sup> Speed captures the pace at which legibility gains are pursued for more information or strikes against targets. On the side of legibility, states can call upon the interrelated databases of population registries, deep social censuses, controlled administrative reorganization, registration of population assets, entry-exit movement tracking, biometric identity card projects, and surveillance technologies. On the side of speed, states can call upon bureaucratic integration for real-time analysis, database technologies that swiftly search population records and logs of interception, mobilization practices and technologies for rapid targeting, and devolved battlefield authorities.

Taken together, the tactics, technologies, and organizational practices subsumed under L&S determine the extent to which state forces can locate the insurgency. When implemented well, L&S can dramatically reduce the informational advantage available to insurgents, and in turn bring the insurgent organization under substantial pressure.

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35 The concept of legibility drawn from Scott 1998, recent empirical work on legibility: Lee and Zhang 2017

The concept of L&S challenges the orthodox theories dominant in scholarship introduced earlier: force level, civilian-centric hearts-and-minds strategies, and group type.<sup>36</sup> If L&S is more powerful than these orthodox concepts and carries explanatory power for effectiveness, there are two interrelated implications. First, counterinsurgents achieving high L&S should be effective even when failing to implement a hearts-and-minds strategy, fighting resilient insurgents, and without adequate force levels. The converse ought to be true as well: campaigns that implement hearts-and-minds strategies, are numerically preponderant, and are fought against weak group types, but attain low L&S should be ineffective.

Second, L&S does not critically depend upon gaining civilian collaboration. The argument suggests that a campaign can be highly coercive and/or highly selective towards civilians with little to no consequence for campaign effectiveness. This implication highlights a critical point of departure of the new theory with the civilian-centric scholarship on counterinsurgency: that is, state's own specific capacity, and not civilian collaboration, is the sine qua non of counterinsurgency outcomes.

### Why Do States Not Adopt the “Right” L&S?

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36 The unit of analysis, variation across which is central to this dissertation, is a counterinsurgency campaign. A campaign can be “...a series of interconnected battles resulting from a single prior plan”; a sustained air power deployment in a specified geographical space; a declared leadership decapitation effort to counter the insurgent foes. The specifics of a campaign are likely to vary from one conflict to another and may ultimately be determined by availability of data. I do not provide a standard slicing technique for identifying campaigns. Nevertheless, it is important to always distinguish campaigns from the entirety of a conflict. In Vietnam, Phoenix was a campaign but the US involvement as part of the Military Advisory Command of Vietnam (MACV) was the entire conflict. In Chechnya, security operations by the FSB from 2001 to 2003 constitute a campaign, while the Second Chechen War was the entire period of the war.

If select tactics, practices, and technologies -- as captured by the L&S -- can lead to effectiveness, why do all states not adopt it? Put another way, why might all counterinsurgents not master and successfully implement L&S?

The L&S is a rational response to the pressures of counterinsurgency but it is very challenging to implement. Two challenges are key. First, L&S raises the specter of a range of domestic political challenges. It can impose substantial costs on the civilian populations. For example, population registration requires disrupting civilian life and compelling them to register in targeted geographies. It also requires creation of novel military and bureaucratic capability, which is very expensive for most states. Implementing large-scale surveillance of telephones and/or by aerial platforms requires vast quantities of expensive technology and buildup of intelligence apparatuses. The L&S also requires broad-reaching political latitude. For example, it requires policymakers to permit intrusive record keeping, surveillance capabilities, quick oversight processes, and a higher appetite for noncombatant casualties that could result from quick processing and lower targeting thresholds.

The second challenge is more organizational in nature. Security bureaucracies charged with counterinsurgency need to be dynamic in implementing tactics, technologies, and practices associated with the L&S. The L&S requires them to mobilize considerable organizational skill, learning, and adaptability under high risk environments in short periods of time.

What are the conditions under which counterinsurgents might overcome these challenges and implement L&S? Answering this question requires a theory of change and adaptation by

counterinsurgent states. There is an extensive literature on change and innovation in military organizations. I group the existing literature in three major categories. The first set posits the primacy of leadership.<sup>37</sup> It argues that the right general can bring about the operational changes necessary for counterinsurgency. Historians like Mark Moyar, Donald W. Hamilton, and Michael Sullivan have argued the importance of leadership and command to the success and failure of counterinsurgency.

The second set argues the primacy of civilian control.<sup>38</sup> While the causal logics differ, the general theme of this tradition is that change as may be necessary for effectiveness is best achieved when generals are answerable to their civilian political bosses and can be removed for incompetence or misguided strategic direction. This literature is rooted in civil-military models of military innovation and change for conventional warfare, first developed by Posen (1986) in the *Sources of Military Doctrine*. Specifically, Posen argues that realist threat perceptions cause political leaders to push for the right innovation. In the *Ideology of the Offensive*, Snyder (1989) argues that militaries default to certain practices to minimize uncertainty and maximize autonomy, like offensive doctrines, that can be checked by civilian intervention. Avant (1994) focuses on the apparent inability of the US armed forces to react appropriately to the challenge of counterinsurgency in Vietnam and the British Army's much more successful adaptation during the South African War, finding support in the civilian-military model as the critical factor of the divergent outcome. Jackson (2008) extends this family of explanations by arguing that militaries fundamentally misunderstand counterinsurgency, seeing it as a variant of an inter-state war, and

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37 Hamilton 1988, Nagl 2002, Sullivan 2007, Rovner 2011, Moyar 2014

38 Posen 1986, Snyder 1989, Avant 1994, Jackson 2008

that the professional interests and bureaucratic interests undergirding this misunderstanding are best appended by forceful civilian intervention.

The third set argues the importance of organizational culture, suggesting that formative professionalization experiences of the leadership and rank-and-file of military organizations are hard to overturn; some organizations have the right professionalization and thus culture for counterinsurgency while others don't.<sup>39</sup> The most recent elaboration of this argument comes up in Long (2016), making the argument that formative professionalization experiences are vital in shaping beliefs about the nature of war and military i.e. culture.

While providing important insights, these theories are insufficient for explaining adaptation and change during important counterinsurgency wars. Some empirical anomalies stand out. For example, counterinsurgency campaigns take very different forms under the same set of leaders. We see this clearly in the case of an iconic counterinsurgency leader of his generation, US General David Petraeus. Petraeus appears to have led the implementation of two very different counterinsurgency campaigns across Afghanistan and Iraq. In Iraq, he appears to have achieved a robust deployment of ground forces and special operators combined with a political settlement with key supporters of the insurgency, but struggled to implement the same model in Afghanistan.<sup>40</sup>

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39 Krepinevich 2009, Long 2016, Nagl 2002, on cultural explanations of military behavior during conventional war: Kier 1997

40 Biddle, Shapiro, Friedman 2011, Long 2016 on varied behaviors in Iraq and Afghanistan

Primacy of civilian control hasn't led to desirable adaptation either. Many democracies like India, the Philippines, and Great Britain (in Ireland) -- which ought to have good civilian control -- have struggled with adaptation and change. In contrast, non-democratic regimes -- ranging from the Islamists in Iran to the Junta in Argentina -- seem to have done fairly well in counterinsurgency operations despite lack of civilian oversight.<sup>41</sup>

The organizational culture argument, best made by Austin Long, is an important one. One of its findings is that because of colonial experiences, the British Army had the foundational experience and thus organizational culture conducive for counterinsurgency. That finding does not accord with the behavior of the militaries created by the British in their erstwhile colonies, like the Indian and Pakistani Army. Both the militaries were infused with similar professionalization experiences and cultural traditions yet behaved in diverse ways when confronted with domestic rebellions.

Given these gaps, I offer a new account of change and adaptation by counterinsurgent states, geared towards explaining change and adaptation towards the new concept of counterinsurgency capability in this dissertation, L&S. I argue that variation in the L&S is driven by 1) the domestic political salience of the counterinsurgency effort and 2) prior internal war experience of the counterinsurgent forces involved.

Domestic political salience is key to determining the extent to which counterinsurgents can overcome the political obstacles in the way of implementing L&S, ranging from availability of

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<sup>41</sup> On counterinsurgency in Argentina, see: Gillespie 1982

just sheer resources to latitude for targeting practices. Counterinsurgent states assign varying political value to internal wars, depending upon the preferences of key power brokers towards the war. These key brokers can range from ruling and opposition political parties, top coterie of generals, to launching coalitions of coups. The preferences of such key power brokers can be shaped by regime ideology, views on center-periphery relationships, perceptions of external threat, electoral incentives, geographic proximity of the rebellion to centers of state power, civil-military relations, political party politics, and/or palace politics among other factors.<sup>42</sup>

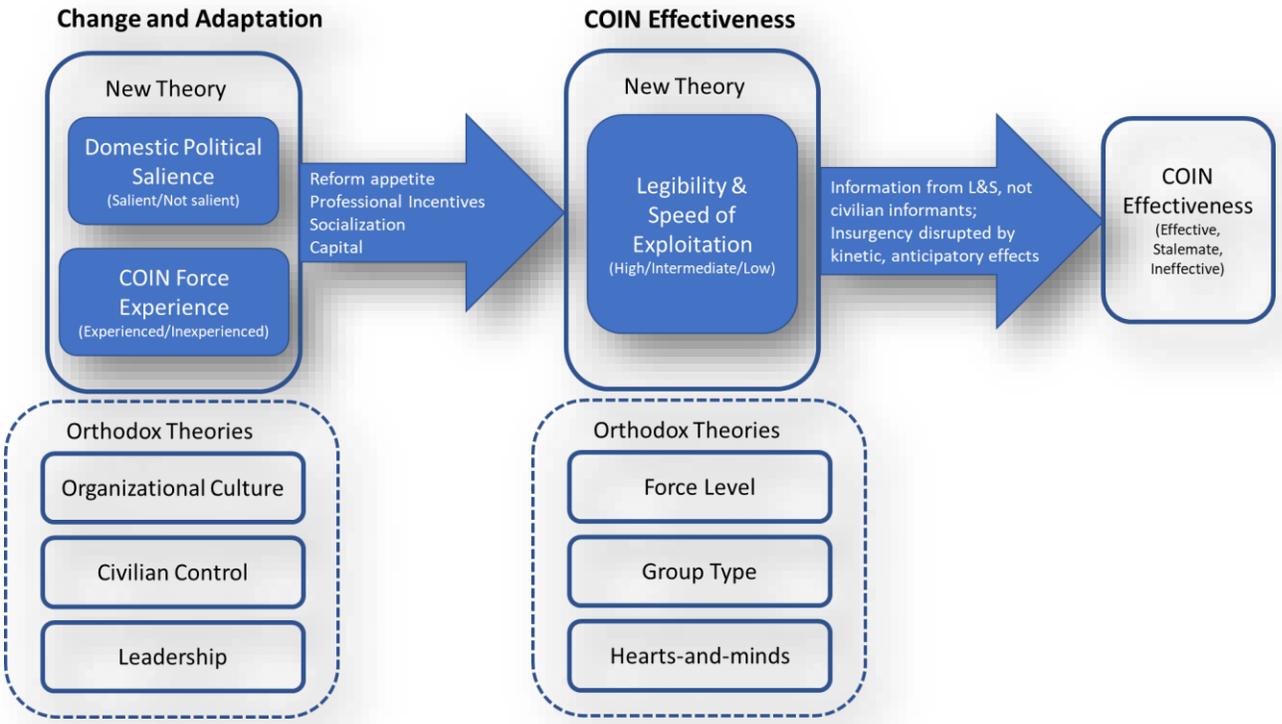
Similarly, experience of the forces involved is key to determining the extent to which counterinsurgents can nullify the organizational challenge of implementing L&S.

Counterinsurgent states create force structures with varying levels of immediate counterinsurgency war experience. Experienced force structures are much more likely to possess structures and practices of leadership delegation, information management, and expectations of discipline essential to implementing the L&S.

The implication of this argument is that adaptation and change as necessary for the L&S is not a function of leadership, cultural pathologies of counterinsurgent organizations, and/or civilian control but of the domestic political evaluation of the counterinsurgency effort and the recent history of the counterinsurgent forces involved.

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<sup>42</sup> That preferences of dominant players on the question of counterinsurgency are variable, and lead to varied “political capability” towards the cause of counterinsurgency deployments is alluded to in a range of literatures. On ideology shaping preferences: Mack 1975, Boudreau 2004, Straus 2015, Staniland 2015, on geography: Roessler 2016; on ethnic separatism: Walter 2009, on beliefs about political communities: Lieberman 2002, Yashar 2005, Hanson 2010



**FIGURE 1: SUMMARY OF NEW THEORY VS ORTHODOX THEORIES**

## Scope Conditions

There are four major scope conditions that are important to the theoretical claims of this dissertation. First, the theory explains effectiveness of campaigns against insurgent foes resorting to irregular warfare who “assume the tactical offensive in selected forms, times, and places.”<sup>43</sup>

All civil wars do not devolve into irregular warfare. Some civil wars play out as conventional conflict, like the American Civil War or the Spanish Civil War, which “entails face-to-face confrontations between regular armies across clear front lines.”<sup>44</sup> Such interactions have a different theatrical geometry. Importantly, the raw power differential is much lower. The kind of capabilities that matter in such interactions are altogether different from those in irregular warfare.

Second, the theory is built around state-insurgent interaction and therefore only explains outcomes against insurgent groups, not other armed actors. Insurgents are armed groups that are considered enemies by the incumbents. They may make separatist or center-seeking claims. As recent scholarship has shown, armed actors within the boundaries of most modern states are not limited to insurgent actors.<sup>45</sup> Armed actors tend to include pro-state militias, gray zone armed actors, criminal groups, and drug cartels. The theory is less likely to apply to groups that fall short of acquiring the enemy status. While the basic concepts are transportable and scalable to a

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43 Kalyvas 2005

44 Kalyvas 2005

45 State preferences towards all armed groups are neither similar nor static. See Davenport 2007, Auyero 2007, Ahram 2011, Acemoglu, Robinson, and Santos 2012, Staniland 2012, Cunningham 2014, Staniland, Mir, and Lalwani 2018

range of contexts, like authoritarian regimes and weakly democratized political orders where repression is common, the explanation for effectiveness only applies to insurgent foes.

Third, the study only explains variation in outcomes of counterinsurgency campaigns which employ selective violence in intent. In doing so, the study sidesteps campaigns which engage in mass-killing or genocidal approaches to counterinsurgency.<sup>46</sup> These are an important and very troubling subset of cases whose outcomes do not vary in the same way as counterinsurgency campaigns; mass-killing approaches almost always end up putting away their rebel foes. This is not to say that this dissertation looks at campaigns in which there is no civilian victimization. Far from it. What is scoped out are campaigns where counterinsurgents call upon a “kill-all” approach.

A final scope condition is on the kind of states this theory applies to. The conceptualization of counterinsurgency in this dissertation is most suitable for understanding coercive efforts of relatively strong and capable states.<sup>47</sup> The theory applies to the four distinct types of engagements by strong states: 1) Domestic Counterinsurgency: these are cases of counterinsurgency by states with de-facto political control of the territory in question recognized by the United Nations or some subset of international community; 2) Colonial Counterinsurgency: these are cases of colonial powers such as the British, French, and the Dutch among others confronting their anti-colonial foes; 3) External Counterinsurgency: These are cases of great and/or major powers intervening in some target state, acquiring primary or

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46 Downes 2007, Valentino 2013, Strauss 2015

47 On weak states which are unable to summon capacity, see: Reno 1998, Fearon and Laitin 2003, Bates 2008, on counterinsurgency by weak states, see: Roessler 2016

secondary political control and engaging in military operations; 4) Off-shore counterinsurgency: These are cases of great and/or major powers employing off-shore methods -- a combination of airpower, special forces, surveillance, and/or local partners -- to engage in off-shore counterinsurgency, or counterterrorism.

While less capable states too regularly take on insurgent foes, they face two key, insurmountable constraints which render the L&S concept unlikely to apply. First, the relative power difference between the two warring parties may lead to a more symmetric contest because of which the logics that drive effectiveness are likely to be different than those in the proposed theoretical model.<sup>48</sup> Second, the demands of L&S may be so high in terms of material cost that weak states may never be able to move beyond the lowest rungs of L&S.

## Research Design

There is no perfect methodology to assess the theoretical predictions on counterinsurgency effectiveness.<sup>49</sup> This is because state-insurgent interactions play out in highly dynamic settings. The behavior of both the state and the insurgents is never fully observed. What may be observed is confounded by unobserved dynamics. The challenge to inference emanates not only from the observational nature of plausible research designs but from severe data limitations. Large-N analyses are not useful for studying campaign level variation, especially if the goal is internal

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48 On importance of warfare, see: Kalyvas 2005, Kaltvas and Balcells 2010

49 The challenge of inference in conflict processes noted in: Kalyvas 2006, Weinstein 2006, Parkinson 2013, Staniland 2014

validity.<sup>50</sup> In addition, there is a dearth of indicators for both the new theory and orthodox theories which can be easily coded ex-ante for granular cross-sections like country-campaigns for all regions of the world. Field experiments are obviously ruled out because of intractable ethical concerns; credible natural experiments are rare generally, and unlikely in situations of internal conflict.<sup>51</sup>

This leads me to methods of small-N analysis.<sup>52</sup> I grapple with the challenge of testing counterinsurgency effectiveness by assessing a range of different empirical implications of the new and old theories using “focused” and “structured” case studies and comparisons combined with process tracing tests.<sup>53</sup> This design affords opportunities for in-depth and careful measurement of both independent and dependent variables, in addition to providing traction on causal mechanisms of the new theory and the key alternatives at hand. In turn, it yields new theoretical insights, showing both the potential and limits of the theories of counterinsurgency, while putting granular empirical materials in a theoretical perspective.

Before choosing cases to study in a small-N analysis, it is important to be clear about the universe of cases the theory applies to.<sup>54</sup> I create a new, updated list of counterinsurgency conflicts building on conflict lists created by Lyall and Wilson (2009), Kalyvas and Balcells (2010), and UCDP Armed Conflicts database. I identify 214 major conflicts between states and

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50 On how more macro-level variables can confound conflict processes, see: Carey et al 2013, 2015, Stanton 2015, Eck 2015, Roessler 2005

51 See, for example, Kocher and Monteiro 2016 on limits of credible natural experiments.

52 On the epistemic foundations of small-N analysis as used in this dissertation: George and Bennett 2005 and Collier 2011.

53 George and Bennett 2005, 67-72

54 George and Bennett 2005, 83: “Cases should [be] selected to provide the kind of control and variation required by the research problem. This requires that the universe of subclass of events be clearly defined so that appropriate cases can be selected.”

insurgents from 1944 to 2017. Out of the 213, 112 meet the scope conditions of a) irregular warfare b) campaigns against insurgents c) selective violence campaigns d) strong states.<sup>55</sup> Among the 112 cases, there are 74 cases of domestic counterinsurgency cases, 15 cases of colonial counterinsurgency, 9 cases of external counterinsurgency, and 14 cases of off-shore counterinsurgency/counterterrorism.

I assess whether my theory explains counterinsurgency effectiveness for this universe of cases in two parts. First, I test if the variables of domestic political salience of counterinsurgency effort and experience of counterinsurgency forces explain patterns of variation in the L&S. I focus on testing the internal validity in the context of domestic counterinsurgency, the simplest category of cases for operationalizing the variables of the new theory. I select cases based on two criteria. First, I look for multiple cases which offer within conflict variation on the independent variables implied by the new theory. Second, I look for conflicts which offer the opportunity to gather granular data to assess the predictions of the new theory and orthodox theories. These two criteria lead to me to focus on the following cases from South Asia.

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<sup>55</sup> See appendix for operationalization of scope conditions.

**TABLE 1: CASES ON SOURCES OF VARIATION IN L&S**

Country	Conflict	Category	Research Design	Data
Pakistan	Insurgency in North West Frontier	Domestic Counterinsurgency	Within Conflict Analysis, Medium-N, Process Tracing	Fieldwork data including interviews of counterinsurgency force leaders, insurgents, bureaucrats, civilians
India	Insurgency in Punjab and Jammu and Kashmir	Domestic Counterinsurgency	Comparison of Punjab and Kashmir	Historiography on both conflicts and a small number of interviews

Second, I test if the L&S has explanatory power for effectiveness at the campaign level. I

employ within conflict case tests and comparisons, where the case is a counterinsurgency

campaign. I employ three criteria to select my cases. First, I identify cases from each of the five

major categories of counterinsurgency: domestic counterinsurgency, colonial counterinsurgency,

external counterinsurgency, and off-shore counterinsurgency. Second, I look for conflicts -- and

campaign cases within them -- which provide compelling research design options, such as

variation in the IV of the new theory, paired comparisons, and/or least-likely/most-likely case

tests.<sup>56</sup> Third, I study conflicts which offer enough granular data to assess the predictions of the

new theory and orthodox theories. These three criteria lead me to focus on the following cases.

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<sup>56</sup> This criterion aligns with a guideline by George and Bennett 2005, 83: “[Case study] Researchers can be somewhat opportunistic [in case selection]—they may come across a pair of well-matched before-after cases or a pair of cases that closely fit “most similar” or “least similar” case research designs. They may also come upon cases that have many features of a most- or least-likely case, a crucial case, or a deviant case.”

**TABLE 2: CASES ON DETERMINANTS OF EFFECTIVENESS**

Country	Conflict	Category	Research Design	Data
Pakistan	Insurgency in North West Frontier	Domestic Counterinsurgency	Case Tests maximizing variation in IV of the new theory, L&S	Fieldwork Data including interviews of counterinsurgency force leaders, insurgents, bureaucrats, civilians
India	Insurgency in Punjab and Jammu and Kashmir	Domestic Counterinsurgency	Method of Difference Comparison of Punjab and Kashmir	Historiography on both conflicts and small number of interviews
United Kingdom	Communist Insurgency in Malaya, Mau Mau Insurgency in Kenya	Colonial Counterinsurgency	Method of Agreement Comparison of Kenya and Malaya	Archival data from British National Archives and historiography
US	Sunni Insurgency in Iraq	External Counterinsurgency	Most-Likely Case Test of Iraq Surge	Historiography, declassified information, and leaked documents
US	Al-Qaeda and Pakistan Taliban in North Waziristan	Off-shore Counterinsurgency/Counterterrorism	Before-After Design of US Counterterrorism	Fieldwork Data including interviews of US and Pakistani counterterrorism operations, members of Al-Qaeda, Taliban

### Data

To execute the outlined empirical approaches synopsis above, the dissertation makes extensive use of novel and detailed microdata, drawing on a variety of quantitative and qualitative sources.

A key empirical value-added of the dissertation are the 124 in-depth interviews conducted to

study Pakistani counterinsurgency, the US drone war (N=112), and Indian counterinsurgency (N=12).<sup>57</sup> I carried out around 8 months of fieldwork in Pakistan, including in areas of the Pakistani tribal belt. My Pakistan interview respondents are drawn from counterinsurgents, civilian elites, insurgents, and non-combatants.<sup>58</sup> My India interview respondents are drawn from Indian military officials. In addition, I also rely on archival materials obtained from British National Archives. I also draw on historiographies that have emerged on the colonial and South Asian conflicts in addition to a variety of secondary sources. The data sources are discussed at length at the start of each of the chapters.

## Dissertation Layout

Chapter 2 outlines the new theory. It offers a detailed conception of L&S, outlines its two dimensions descriptively, and identifies the mechanisms by which it is likely to disrupt an insurgency. It then turns to the question of variation in L&S, why states may not master it always, and the conditions under which states are most likely to implement it fully. Following chapter 2, the first part of the empirical work is presented. It focuses on testing the source of variation in L&S across two chapters. Chapter 3 presents a paired-comparison of counterinsurgency in two conflicts from India and chapter 4 presents a within conflict analysis of counterinsurgency in Pakistan. Then, the second of part of the empirical work is presented across 5 chapters. Chapter 5 presents the method of agreement analysis of British counterinsurgency

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57 On the epistemic value, challenges, and opportunities of fieldwork in difficult to access conflict zones, see: Malejacq and Mukhopadhyay 2016

58 I used the purposive sampling strategy for interviews. According to Tansey 2007: "Purposive sampling is a selection method where the study's purpose and the researcher's knowledge of the population guide the process." See: Tansey 2007

effectiveness in Kenya and Malaya. Chapter 6 presents the method of difference analysis of Indian counterinsurgency effectiveness in Punjab and Kashmir. Chapter 7 presents case tests and comparisons counterinsurgency effectiveness in Pakistan. Chapter 8 presents a case test of US counterinsurgency effectiveness in Iraq. Chapter 9 presents a before-after analysis and process tracing of the effectiveness of the US drone war in Pakistan. Chapter 10 concludes the dissertation with implications and contributions for scholarly literatures. I also offer some policy implications in light of the theory, including on the issue of civilian protection under counterinsurgency.

## **Chapter 2: Theory of Counterinsurgency Effectiveness**

In this chapter I argue that counterinsurgency effectiveness is determined by the selective violence capability of the counterinsurgency effort, which varies and is captured by the concept of the Legibility and Speed-of-Exploitation System, or the L&S. L&S is constituted by select tactical, technological, and organizational capabilities of the counterinsurgent state. L&S allows state forces to make the civilian population in which insurgent groups are based legible, and exploit the gains from legibility of the population to locate and degrade the insurgency. When states implement L&S, they can disrupt the internal ties of the insurgency, and scale back its operations, bases, and collective action. However, not all states can fully implement L&S. L&S is politically very challenging to implement, posing major political tradeoffs. It is organizationally very challenging as well. I make the case that these challenges are overcome when the counterinsurgency effort enjoys abundant domestic political salience and the counterinsurgency force structure has experience of fighting internal wars.

I develop this position in four steps. First, I lay out what constitutes the L&S and detail why it matters. I assume that counterinsurgency is a struggle to locate and eliminate an insurgent organization. I identify the two constraints facing counterinsurgents in trying to fight and locate the insurgency: information acquisition and information execution. Given these challenges, I argue that the most relevant capabilities of counterinsurgents are best captured by the concept of L&S. The L&S involves mastery of tactics, technologies, deployment schemes, and organizational practices which amplify a) the legibility of the population in which the insurgency is rooted and b) the speed at which the counterinsurgents exploit the gains from legibility.

Second, I descriptively lay out the variation in the tactics, technologies, deployment schemes, and organizational practices relevant to the L&S. I describe the sources of legibility of the civilian population, grouping them in three major categories: population management, legibility tactics, and technology. I then discuss the sources of speed of exploitation, grouping them in three categories: analysis, collation and dissemination, mobilization capital and technologies, and use of force authorization.

Third, I show how variation in the L&S effects changes to insurgent trajectories, and in turn determine counterinsurgency effectiveness. I argue that insurgent politics is a function of a robust organization. Efforts and activities relevant to legibility and speed disrupt the internal ties of the insurgency. The disruption may take place due to sustained kinetic losses, like killing of leaders and rank-and-file and physical resources like weapon stores and training facilities among other tangible assets; it may also take place due to anticipatory effects, like crises of movement, in-group trust issues, and reduced communication. Thus, depending on the level of the L&S, a counterinsurgency campaign may damage the insurgents' internal ties entirely, partially, or not at all. When counterinsurgents struggle to implement the L&S, the internal ties are unconstrained as the kinetic and anticipatory challenges are minimal; insurgents can thus improve their operational profiles, organizational bases, and invigorate collective action. When counterinsurgents attain high L&S, the internal ties are severed due to high kinetic and anticipatory constraints; insurgents are unable to keep up their operational profiles, maintain organizational bases, and pursue collective action.

Fourth, I identify the constraints on implementing the L&S faced by counterinsurgent states. L&S imposes costs on the population, necessitates costly investments in bureaucracies and new capital, and requires abundant political authority; it is organizationally very difficult as well. And given these constraints, I make the case that varied compliance with L&S is best accounted for by the variation in the domestic political salience of the counterinsurgency war and the organizational experience of the forces involved. I argue that these variables interact to determine whether and when states can overcome the political and organizational challenges of implementing the L&S.

There are two key contributions of this chapter. For one, I develop the L&S as a new variable. L&S stands in contrast to three important alternative theories and the variables associated with them: material preponderance views which advocate primacy of force levels, hearts-and-minds strategies which advocate primacy of winning over the civilian population, and group type views that find the strength of the targeted group to be the key variable. My key claim is that L&S is more widely applicable than the available battery of variables, varying systematically and considerably across state-insurgent conflicts. Importantly, it captures what states do and how they behave during counterinsurgency in a way that has explanatory power for counterinsurgency effectiveness. Relatedly, I develop a theory of why counterinsurgents may not master and fully implement the L&S. Knowing the specifics of the L&S allows me to more explicitly theorize the political and organizational challenge of undertaking counterinsurgency the L&S way and the conditions under which it is likely to be realized by counterinsurgent states.

## L&S

Counterinsurgent's means and processes of deploying selective violence against insurgents are immensely important for the prospects of counterinsurgency. This argument flows from two assumptions. First, counterinsurgency is an exercise in consolidating state control through application of violence. This means that counterinsurgency is a struggle to confront and eliminate an insurgent organization challenging the state. This assumption departs from works which see counterinsurgency as an exercise in winning over the support of the population.

Second, counterinsurgent's application of violence is not an outcome of dynamic interaction between a state, insurgents, and/or civilians, but a one-sided affair dominated by the actions and conduct of the state.<sup>1</sup> States are much more powerful than their insurgent foes. They can deploy their coercive capabilities in a variety of ways, but only a subset of such deployments can detrimentally hurt the insurgents. States do not always deploy the right set of capabilities. The inability to deploy the necessary capabilities is driven by constraints internal to the counterinsurgent, and not due to some action or behavior of the insurgents and/or the civilian population.

Given these two assumptions, I propose a new variable to study counterinsurgency effectiveness: Legibility and Speed of Exploitation System, or L&S. The L&S varies in two dimensions: 1) the legibility of the population in which the insurgent group is based (legibility) 2) the speed of exploitation of the legibility gains (speed).

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<sup>1</sup> On counterinsurgency being a three-way dynamic interaction between states, insurgents, and civilians, see Berman, Shapiro, Felner 2011, 2018

Why do the two dimensions of legibility and speed matter and not others? To understand this, it is important to situate the insurgent's organizational structure and the technology of warfare they call upon. Insurgent groups emerge by harnessing a variety of different political, social, ideological and/or financial resources for collective action. Their marshaling of these resources produces bureaucratic structures for politics by violent means. The bureaucratic structures are built on two essential internal organizational ties: vertical ties of decision making and horizontal specialization ties. Maintaining these core ties is essential to subversion by an insurgency. Subversive aspirations, behaviors, and activities are constrained by the internal structures groups are able to sustain over time.

As states' material preponderance allows them to project lethal firepower, insurgents adapt their vertical and horizontal ties to evade state forces. Even if they do not follow the blue prints of Mao and Che, insurgents realize their vulnerability to state's firepower relatively quickly. Under wartime pressures, they learn that a unique technology of warfare is available to them in which they do not have to be visible, can employ hit and run tactics, and avoid confrontation until the time of their choice. Many insurgents, thus, structure their organizations in a way which can hide among civilian populations and survive by evasion. This turn to the technology of irregular warfare has been an abiding feature of state-insurgent conflicts.<sup>2</sup> From 1944 to 2017, around 66 percent of conflicts involved rebels engaging in irregular warfare.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Kalyvas 2005  
<sup>3</sup> See Appendix

In the face of irregular warfare mounted by an insurgent group, the counterinsurgent state is challenged in two specific ways. First, the counterinsurgent state faces the challenge of identifying and locating the insurgent group concealed in the civilian population. Members of the insurgent group are hard to find as they may be indistinguishable from ordinary civilians; civilians tend to be reluctant to identify those associated with the insurgent group for reasons of safety or ascriptive association. Non-combatants who know about them often refuse to identify them for instrumental or ascriptive reasons. I call this the information acquisition problem. This problem – sometimes called the identification problem -- has been noted in the civil war literature. Prominent examples include Fearon and Laitin 2003 and Kalyvas 2006.

Second, the counterinsurgent state faces the challenge of responding to the dynamic nature of insurgent group structures. The insurgent group may adjust and change identities, modes of operations, and locations of its members frequently to stay clandestine. Any information leads that may become available to state forces, thus, have a limited time validity. The observation of Col Charles Callwell captures insurgent dynamism adequately: “The enemy is untrammelled by the shackles which so limit the regular army’s freedom of action. And this fact is of great strategical importance.” Such rebel strength is acquired “... through elusiveness” and that “[r]eatreat and withdrawal” are “central to the struggle.”<sup>4</sup> I call this the information execution problem.

The L&S captures that specific feature of the counterinsurgent state capability which is essential for responding to the two challenges posed by insurgent’s irregular warfare, and by extension the

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<sup>4</sup> Callwell 1903

challenge of acquiring and executing on information. Specifically, legibility makes the civilian population more visible, and solves the information acquisition problem faced by counterinsurgents. And given the fleeting nature of information in counterinsurgency, the pace at which the counterinsurgent state *exploits* – processes, disseminates, or acts on -- information gains is important to meeting the information execution challenge.

L&S stands in contrast to existing scholarly views on the source of selective violence. Current works recognize that selective violence by states can disrupt insurgent groups.<sup>5</sup> These accounts, however, see mass civilian collaboration as necessary for deploying such violence. In an important review article, Berman and Matanock (2015) note: “a defining aspect of [the existing] literature is that civilians have a consequential role: they can share information (tips) with government forces. That information...makes government attacks on rebels much more effective.” In my theory, I see information as key for selective violence; however, I propose that such information comes from the counterinsurgent state’s specific tactical, organizational, and technological capability, as captured by the L&S, and without gaining the support and cooperation of the civilian population.

From hereon I undertake a discussion to outline the sources and in turn variation in the dimensions of legibility and speed.

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<sup>5</sup> See Kalyvas 2006 on conception of selective violence; on value of selective violence against rebels, see: Nagl et al 2008, Berman, Shapiro and Felner 2011, Berman and Matanock 2015.

## Sources of L&S

### Legibility

Legibility involves mapping of the social, economic, and political terrain of the target geography, logging of civilian identities and behavior, and identifying networks of civilians and insurgents – especially how they are linked to each other. The conception of legibility is borrowed from James Scott’s seminal work *Seeing like a State*. Providing the foundations of the concept of legibility, Scott argues that states seek to create and sustain knowledge to render people and geographies *legible*.<sup>6</sup> Given my focus on counterinsurgency, I restrict legibility to “... the breadth and depth of the state’s knowledge of its citizens and their activities.”<sup>7</sup>

Knowledge on a population, how it is structured, what the relationships within it are, and the biographical attributes of various members of the population are invaluable to the end of counterinsurgency. Counterinsurgents can undertake elaborate cataloging, categorizing, and monitoring of populations to produce the knowledge. As the insurgency is deeply enmeshed in the civilian population, such knowledge allows counterinsurgents to construct and in turn understand patterns and behaviors of those engaged or assisting in subversion. Legibility then allows counterinsurgents to generate regular cues, details, and patterns on the individuals, bases, locations, and networks of the insurgency.

How might states undertake elaborate cataloging, categorizing, and monitoring of populations to achieve legibility? The sources of legibility most relevant to counterinsurgency can be grouped

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<sup>6</sup> Scott 1998

<sup>7</sup> Lee et al 2017

in three broad categories: population management and organization, legibility tactics, and technology-oriented surveillance.

But before proceeding with the discussion of these sources it is important to be clear which set of tactics and practices are not a source of legibility, at least the way I conceive it. I exclude those tactics which are geared towards eliciting information from civilians. As noted earlier as well, existing scholarship places extensive attention to these tactics. Because insurgents live among the population, civilians are believed to be privy to insurgent movement, behavior, quotidian and community ties, military activities, and intra-insurgent politics. Thus, according to these works, civilians can reveal information in two ways: they can volunteer it or they can be coerced into giving it. While there is merit to this account, obtaining civilian collaboration -- and in turn information -- is not the primary way of gaining knowledge about the civilian population and by extension the insurgency hiding behind it. As the meticulous counterinsurgent has discovered, legibility improvements are possible by application of skill, financial resources, and initiative towards specific capacities of knowledge accumulation which do not depend on civilian behavior. The legibility sources discussed below do exactly that.

Population Management: A state can improve its legibility by -- in words of James Scott -- “discovering and/or arranging populations.” There are three main kinds of population management and organization programs which allow counterinsurgents to improve legibility: registration, spatial ordering and organization, and dossier creation.

Registration involves elaborate head counting and categorization of all members of the affected population. It may involve collection of detailed biographical information, photographs, family connections, and economic/social status. More recent variants of registration have included collection of biometric traits, like fingerprints.<sup>8</sup> Using such information, counterinsurgents can establish familial connections within the population and classify them by categories of clan, kinship, and community ties. It further allows provision of legibility markers, like identification materials/cards to the population. Such record keeping can be immensely useful in detecting anomalies that might suggest presence of the insurgency, for example due to missing family members who are part of the insurgency. They also come in handy when leads from other legibility sources – like telephone numbers and/or addresses – might become available, requiring their collation with specific individuals; availability of such databases allows for generating more specific intelligence. In addition to the civilian population, registration may also encompass population assets and properties. Counterinsurgents can collect detailed knowledge on sale, purchase, and/or ownership of cars, motorcycles, and land. They can also create detailed records of cellular subscribers. In the contexts of conflicts involving IEDs, counterinsurgents may be interested in detailed record keeping of fertilizer purchases – a key ingredient in IED production.

Spatial ordering can take many different forms but they serve, in part, the same function as detailed registration. Some programs involve organization of populated areas into marked and known quadrants, identified by households, families, and communities. Others are more coercive, involving relocation to model villages and urban quarters. The most extreme form of spatial ordering is evacuation of populations into barricaded camps. Spatial ordering allows

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<sup>8</sup> Privacy International 2018

counterinsurgents to account for civilians and their ties with each other, who may otherwise be geographically spread out. The ability to order and organize population in a way which is visible and in control of the counterinsurgent lends itself to deep knowledge accumulation.

Counterinsurgents can use this knowledge to assess the composition of the population, and traces of anomalous behavior plausibly associated with the insurgency.

Different variants of registration, and spatial ordering have been used by counterinsurgents over the last century. In the post war period, the British and French used both, often in tandem. In Indonesia, for example, the civilian population was evacuated to camps. The evacuated population, once living in camps, was registered and closely surveilled by the colonial administration's Special Branch. Knowing the attributes of the population and its ties to one another, yielded insights into the networks and support system of the MCP insurgency.

Dossier creation involves counterinsurgency forces creating elaborate files on members of the civilian population, documenting their familial linkages, political tendencies, economic, and/or social standing. This kind of dossier creation can be done centrally. It can also be done by creating geographically dispersed police and/or intelligence outfits who maintain detailed records of the civilian population living within their specific geographies. There are important precedents of such dossier creation from colonial contexts. British counterinsurgency forces regularly maintained dossiers in "Special Branch registries."<sup>9</sup> on large numbers of civilians consisting of "careful compilations" of biographical information, background details, and political tendencies.<sup>10</sup> In French Algeria, the French intelligence introduced a similar system of dossiers

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9 Walton 2014

10 Walton 2014

on the civilian population called the ‘fichier’ – a notecard with particulars of civilians, their familial ties, and social/political standing.<sup>11</sup>

Legibility Tactics: Counterinsurgents can draw on a unique set of practices, falling under the rubric of legibility tactics to amplify legibility. A look at the historical record reveals that counterinsurgents have improved their legibility using at least three different tactics: 1) cultivation of informants within the insurgency 2) lucrative amnesty programs for insurgent defectors 3) Interrogation programs for captured insurgents.

Intelligence agencies of counterinsurgent forces with background in counterforce espionage often default to cultivation of moles in the insurgency. While fraught with risk to both the mole and the handler, resourceful and skillful intelligence operators succeed in making inroads in their target organizations. The British intelligence services invested resources and manpower to upgrade their capability to permeate their insurgent targets. Prominently, the British were successful in buying off agents within the EOKA in Cyprus and against the PIRA in Northern Ireland: “the British had considerable success recruiting a number of moles within the PIRA and loyalist groups, including the deputy head of the PIRA’s internal security section.”<sup>12</sup> Beyond moles, counterinsurgents may use lucrative amnesty awards to induce defection of insurgent rank-and-file from their groups. For example, in British Malaya, the Special Branch ran a well-funded and sustained amnesty program until the end of the conflict. In Vietnam, the defection program called Chieu Hoi was used for accumulating knowledge on identities and locations of the civilian population tied to the VCI infrastructure, and by extension VCI cadres. According to

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11 Branche 2016  
12 Charters 2009

Austin Long, “In Malaya, an extensive reward program combined with informal amnesty for insurgents who cooperated against their former comrades worked very well. In Vietnam, the Chieu Hoi amnesty program was less successful than the Malayan experience, but it still led to the removal of thousands of insurgents from the Viet Cong at relatively low cost.”<sup>13</sup>

Detained insurgent leaders and rank-and-file offer an opportunity to gain more knowledge.

Detained individuals can provide leads depending on the nature of the organization, its modus operandi, as well as more specific details about cadres at large. But getting all of these details from detainees requires an intensive and systematic effort. In many campaigns, counterinsurgents have paid little to no attention to interrogation. In select cases, counterinsurgents have made systematic interrogation of arrested insurgents a priority.

According to US Army General Stanley McChrystal, the commander of the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan (ISAF) from 2009 to 2010: “One of the most important of these has always been prisoners, or detainees. Detainees can explain the meaning of what we see from other intelligence sources and can let us step into the mechanics, mindset, and weaknesses of the enemy organization.”<sup>14</sup>

Technology: Counterinsurgents have drawn on technology to penetrate the civilian population in order to locate the insurgency. Technology can help with monitoring of the population. There are three main kinds of technological sources that lend to legibility: video/CCTV cameras/motion sensors, communication interception, and aerial observation.

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13 Long 2002

14 McChrystal 2013

Video feeds, close circuit cameras, and motion sensors can be used for surveillance of geographies for detecting anomalous patterns. Such feeds can be called in as a source of knowledge following incidents of sabotage to identify saboteurs. There is substantial evidence now that such technological tools have been used for the last few decades by various counterinsurgents. In Northern Ireland, for example, British forces would use such tools to surveil sites from where they would find information on locations “such as arms caches, residences, or commercial buildings” used by Provisional Irish Republican Army.<sup>15</sup> British security forces would “monitor the sites with audio and video surveillance for extended periods in an effort to identify unknown terrorists or supporters.”<sup>16</sup> More recently, in what is an extreme manifestation of this approach, the Chinese government implemented a vast infrastructure of surveillance cameras in the Xinjiang province to track the civilian population in a bid to combat the Uyghur separatists.<sup>17</sup>

Communication interception involves surveillance of the communication infrastructure of populations. Insurgents have benefited from democratization of information and communication technologies. As they tend to operate in small groups spread across geographies, insurgents rely on communication devices, like cell phones, radios, FM transmitters, and satellite phones, to coordinate operations. Counterinsurgents can monitor the communication infrastructure of the population to detect traces of the insurgency. Such monitoring can provide clues on identities of key operatives, size, intended activities, community relations, and sometimes the exact location of insurgent rank-and-file.

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15 Jackson 2007

16 Jackson 2007

17 Zand 2018

Advocacy groups, biographies, and declassified records have documented the use of such practices as part of counterinsurgency and counterterrorism historically and in the contemporary period. For example, the use of such practices was common -- even if not extensive -- in Vietnam. The US military experimented with signals intelligence to assess locations of the North Vietnamese Army's conventional assets. Tactical direction finders, also referred to as D/F, were used to locate those carrying radio wave devices.<sup>18</sup> More recently, military doctrines have emphasized in very concrete terms the importance of such legibility tactics. The 2007 British counterinsurgency doctrine explains the importance of radio signals to locating insurgents in abundant entail: "In low-level conflict the immediate value of [signals intelligence] may be less apparent. Insurgent groups will, however, have a need to communicate and when they do via any electronic medium they are vulnerable to intercept...Analysts will exploit emissions from radars and other electronic emitters. This electronic intelligence (ELINT), can enable the detection of, for example, radio-control devices dots."<sup>19</sup> In addition, the US government has engaged in building an industrial scale solution to intercepting telephonic communication. The US government "... is gathering nearly 5 billion records a day on the whereabouts of cellphones around the world...enabling the agency to track the movements of individuals — and map their relationships — in ways that would have been previously unimaginable."<sup>20</sup>

The use of communication interception technologies is also pervasive among counterinsurgent states which fall well short of major power status. In Kenya, the Kenyan National Intelligence

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18 Johnson 2008

19 British COIN 2009

20 Gellman 2013

Service (NIS) has relied on communication interception to monitor the civilian population: “NIS [is] passively connected to Kenya’s telecommunications backbone. NIS agents analyse and listen to live calls at NIS offices both regionally and in Nairobi...NIS-owned BTSes directly access Kenya’s telecommunications backbone...Mobile phone numbers of interest will be ‘flagged’ such that they notify the NIS system when they are engaged in a call.”<sup>21</sup>

Observation intelligence involves attempts to improve legibility of insurgency affected populations from cameras installed on aerial platforms. This practice has been in-vogue since the Second World War. It can allow legibility in three ways. First, aerial photography can reveal information on insurgent hideouts with overt signatures. In 1957, the French air-force employed aerial platforms for surveillance of population centers with “strong rebel presence or along principal lines of transit.”<sup>22</sup> In recent years, aerial photography and video recording has been used by counterinsurgent forces in India and Mali to carry out reconnaissance of restive regions. Second, advanced platforms powered by reconnaissance technology can establish vital signatures and patterns of insurgency. Such surveillance capabilities significantly improve the counterinsurgent’s visibility of the civilian population. The US intelligence bureaucracy has used a technique called “patterns-of-life analysis” to monitor civilian populations from overhead using drones, to detect behaviors which might be plausibly associated with those of insurgents. Overtime, such analysis has been used to isolate locations and individuals suspected of being involved in the insurgency in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Pakistan.<sup>23</sup> Third, advances in information technology have allowed states to add other surveillance technologies to air-borne platforms,

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21 Privacy International 2018

22 Alexander 2013

23 Woods 2015, 77

including listening devices and signals intelligence capabilities. According to internal US government documents leaked through the outlet Wikileaks, US government's drones hoist devices called "Gilgamesh" and "Shenanigans" which can intercept signals being transmitted including voice samples.

### Speed of Exploitation

The cues, details, and/or leads generated by legibility are only useful if they are processed and acted upon before becoming void. Thus, the speed at which the counterinsurgent state exploits legibility gains is important to meeting the information execution challenge. Speed captures the pace at which legibility gains are processed for conversion into more information or strikes against targets. Existing scholarship either neglects exploitation or assumes that states can always execute on any information they generate.<sup>24</sup> This is a major omission -- states frequently struggle to both process and act upon available leads because of poor bureaucratic processes, weak capacity to mobilize, and political constraints on intelligence sharing and targeting.

The time-sensitive or perishable nature of information in counterinsurgency and the inability of counterinsurgent states to adequately address it has frequently appeared in descriptive accounts of various counterinsurgents historically and in the contemporary period. British historian Alan Warren has documented such challenges for the British Indian Army against the rebels in Waziristan in 1936. As the fighting against the rebel forces of Faqir of Ipi intensified, he notes, "... the army's defensive tactics and siege mentality was no longer appropriate."<sup>25</sup> The British

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<sup>24</sup> Berman, Shapiro, and Felter 2011, 773 make this assumption.

<sup>25</sup> Warren 2000, 284

forces realized that “If Wazirsitan was to be brought back to the standard law and order prevailing in 1936, the army had to catch insurgent gangs and small lashkars determined to avoid contact until moments of their own choosing. Mobility became more important than firepower.”<sup>26</sup> A similar dynamic has been noted by US General McChrystal in the context of US’s post 9/11 wars in Iraq and Afghanistan: “Our problem in both the Iraq of 2003 and the Afghanistan of today is that indicators popped up everywhere, unevenly and unexpectedly, and often disappeared as quickly as they emerged, flickering in view for only a moment.”<sup>27</sup> Daniel Byman (2014) notes the challenge of legibility gains getting lost in the bureaucratic process for US counterterrorism: “...rapid interrogation and dissemination of resulting of information is vital. This shift to recognize the value of this information was slow to develop.”<sup>28</sup>

Capabilities, then, that lead to high speed of exploitation can be grouped in three broad categories: 1) Analysis, Collation, and Dissemination Capability 2) Mobilization Technologies like thinly spread deployment patterns and population management schemes 3) Authority to act on leads

Analysis, Collation, and Dissemination Capability: The counterinsurgent state can increase its speed by prioritizing select tactics, practices, and technologies geared towards efficient analysis, collation, and dissemination of legibility gains. It can implement bureaucratic capability proficient in real-time analysis of legibility gains.<sup>29</sup> To achieve this, the counterinsurgent can

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26 Warren 2000, 284

27 McChrystal 2011

28 Byman 2014, 855

29 See Lin-Greenberg 2018 for description of the US Air Force Distributed Common Ground System, “a worldwide network of units, analysts, and equipment responsible for processing, analyzing, and disseminating the vast quantities of intelligence data.”

dedicate personnel for analysis of legibility leads. Analysts can be charged with analyzing incoming leads, collating them systematically, and piecing them together to create opportunities for conversion of gains into more information or strikes against targets. It can also integrate intelligence bureaucracies responsible for running different legibility sources to streamline the flow of information and prevent legibility gains from getting lost in the bureaucracy; they can, for instance, combine bureaucracies charged with communication interception with those responsible for maintaining registration records and undertaking interrogation of detained cadres. A counterinsurgent can implement database technologies that swiftly search population records and logs of information from technological sources. It can also implement flat command-control hierarchies for immediate dissemination of legibility gains to those responsible for targeting.

**Mobilization Capital and Technologies:** Even when counterinsurgents have the right process to analyze, collate, and process legibility gains, it may not be sufficient. Possessing the right capital and technology to exploit legibility gains quickly is equally important. Such hardware may be rooted in the deployment patterns of counterinsurgent forces. Deployment patterns that lend themselves to speed include positioning of forces deep inside insurgency torn regions. Such patterns can improve speed of exploitation by reducing mobility time for the counterinsurgent forces to areas of insurgent presence. In the counterinsurgency wars of early 20th century, foraging facilitated such deployments. Often the counterinsurgent forces had to deploy close to the civilian population for logistical reasons. Being close to areas of insurgent activity, counterinsurgents collected more information and were well positioned to act quickly on information leads. Similarly, counterinsurgents employing strongly defended pickets or fortifications deep in areas of insurgent activity can acquire high speed of exploitation. In recent

years, the population-centric counterinsurgency model proposes deployment patterns of ground forces that lend themselves to speedy exploitation. Even if positioned to secure the population, spread out force deployments can rapidly react and make the most of any information obtained.<sup>30</sup> Some counterinsurgents have come up with specific deployment tactics to improve the rapid deploy-ability of their forces. The French in Algeria lowered their response time on available information by implementing “a quadrillage system” which “sought to establish points fortifiés to hold and secure the countryside.”<sup>31</sup>

Technological means can improve speedy deployment of exploitation in two ways. First, aerial platforms like gunship helicopters and drones allow counterinsurgent forces to rapidly mobilize after obtaining information. To further improve reaction times, aerial platforms like drones are capable of loitering in operational areas for extended periods of time. This allows counterinsurgents to exploit information for more leads as well as for kinetic strikes. What this achieves is best captured in the following quote by David Kilcullen, a former adviser to US forces in Iraq and Afghanistan: “If you’re a terrorist and I am an intelligence expert, I generally need to know not where you are at but where you’re going to be at flight time plus preparation plus approval time from my strike asset. But if my strike asset is the same drone that’s surveilling you, I could have a two second, three second turnaround and I can strike now.”<sup>32</sup>

Second, technology offers tools to overcome barriers imposed on land-based mechanized elements. For example, vehicular movement is susceptible to ambush tactics of insurgents. Radio

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30 Nagl et al 2008

31 Canuel 2010

32 Woods 2015

jamming devices and mine protection gadgets enable vehicles to transport troops in population centers and in turn enable rapid delivery of punishment.

Authority: In addition to processing gains and possessing the ability to act upon information in time, counterinsurgents must also grapple with the question of the conditions under which they are willing to act upon available leads. Generally, centralized decision making, and the bureaucratic process to evaluate the legality and political appropriateness of targeting can lead to sufficiently long delays which benefit the target. Thus, to achieve high speed, counterinsurgents have to delegate authority to battlefield commanders. They also need to simplify the bureaucratic process to determine the legality and appropriateness of targeting.

#### Explaining Counterinsurgency Effectiveness

Until now, I have put forth L&S as an independent variable, and theoretically and descriptively offered justifications for why its two dimensions – degree of legibility and speed of exploitation – matter. Counterinsurgents manage to attain varying level of legibility of the civilian population and speed of exploitation across campaigns. The interaction of the two variables produces dramatic differences in the kind of selective violence capability that counterinsurgents bring to bear on the insurgency, which is associated with specific, observable levels of effectiveness (shown in Table 3). It is important to note that Legibility and speed operate independently of each other. Many tactics, practices, and technologies relevant for legibility -- for example interception, dossier creation, population records -- do not contribute to speed. Similarly, various capabilities that improve speed -- like rapidly deployable forces, analytical capability to process

gains, and devolved battlefield authorities -- have no value for legibility. In some campaigns, the counterinsurgent state might have more of one and less of the other -- which amounts to the intermediate L&S capability outlined in Table 3.

**TABLE 3: L&S TO EFFECTIVENESS**

		Speed of Exploitation	
		Low	High
Legibility	Low	<i>Low L&amp;S</i> Outcome: Ineffective	<i>Intermediate L&amp;S</i> Outcome: Stalemate
	High	<i>Intermediate L&amp;S</i> Outcome: Stalemate	<i>High L&amp;S</i> Outcome: Effective

This raises the next question: How do the different levels of the L&S – such as the four levels

sketched in the Table 3 above -- determined effectiveness of a campaign? Indeed, there is analytical distance between the L&S and effectiveness, the outcome of interest. Importantly, the implications of the L&S are falsifiable by analyzing the change in insurgent behavior and politics. To understand the divergent trajectories of insurgent groups in response to different levels of the L&S, we need to look at how the insurgent’s organizational structures change in response to the L&S.

Insurgent groups, much like other organizations, are defined by the internal process by which decisions are made and insurgent operations are executed. Such processes can be understood along two dimensions: vertical flows of decision making and horizontal links of specialization. Vertical flows of decision making refer to the communication of decisions by leaders to those who execute operations ranging from violence to service provision. All groups have one or more leaders. These leaders make the decisions by which the group functions. Some groups have a centralized decision-making system, in which the decisions flow from the top. Other groups have a more devolved system of decision making, where decisions are made at the middle tier or

levels closer to the rank-and-file. Irrespective of the chain or style of decision making in the group, the fact that orders are given by some and received by others pushes all insurgent groups to possess vertical flows of decision making.

Horizontal links of specialization refer to the coordination and distribution of labor among the rank-and-file or the foot soldiers of the group who undertake operations. Once decisions are made, the foot soldiers undertake operations by collaborating with each other. Such collaboration is necessitated by specialization of labor as well as need for man power. Horizontal links depend on communication between the rank-and-file of the group as well as the ease of movement of the rank-and-file. Some groups rely extensively on horizontal synergies to undertake operations, while others are minimalist. One example of such horizontal ties at work is as follows: collaboration for a manpower intensive ambush of a moving military convoy would require exchange of ideas on where to place an IED, positioning of one or more individuals who provide information on movement of the convoy, and a plan for the follow-up attack after the IED is detonated. In either case, collaboration is essential to the execution of operations by the insurgent group.

Strong horizontal links of specialization mean that the insurgent rank-and-file can get together with ease to undertake simple and complex specialized military tasks, from putting together an IED to an organized manpower intensive assault. Under strong horizontal links, groups can assemble and mobilize in meaningful numbers. Strong vertical flows of decision making mean that mid ranking to high level leaders can communicate their decisions without any interruptions to the rank-and-file that must undertake a specialized task. However, groups do not have the

facility of strong horizontal links and vertical flows of decision making at all times. In the event of weak horizontal links of specialization, the rank-and-file cannot get together seamlessly as most of the manpower is in hiding. The specialized tasks the rank-and-file can undertake are limited by the constraints on mobility of the manpower. Weak vertical flows of decision making mean that mid ranking to high level leaders do not communicate their decisions, which can preclude operations requiring elaborate planning, direction and execution.

## Mechanisms

There are two complementary sets of mechanisms by which it can be traced that variation in L&S causes variation in the extent of disruption to the internal ties of the insurgent organization and determines effectiveness: 1) information flows driving targeting 2) kinetic and anticipatory effects on the targeted groups.

The information flows mechanism entails counterinsurgent forces drawing on L&S capacities to generate actionable information and in turn targeting the groups. The legibility sources largely drive the information acquisition process; state forces use population databases, knowledgeable police officials, registration records, interrogation, paid informants, telephonic interception, and/or aerial surveillance to generate leads on the insurgency; on availing the leads, exploitation capacities ranging from bureaucratic capability for collation, analysis, dissemination, capital for rapid action, and legal/political authorization mediate whether or not legibility gains are converted into more information/targeting. In turn, this drives counterinsurgents' targeting of

insurgent groups. The information flows mechanism, in turn, paves the way for kinetic and anticipatory effects to set in.

In counterinsurgency campaigns, targeting essentially disrupts the vertical and horizontal ties of the insurgency. The obvious way in which disruption may take place is through kinetic damage. Studies of repression, counterinsurgency, conventional air-power, and leadership decapitation focus on kinetic damage and its consequences. Examples of the kinetic effects are leadership decapitation, rank-and-file attrition, logistical hardships due to lost capabilities, casualties of civilians, and damage to hide-outs or other tangible resources. Kinetic damage can impose serious constraints on the structures of the targeted group. It can remove important leaders and rank-and-file, interdict transfer of resources, training of manpower, and destroy physical spaces used by insurgents. Such kinetic losses are damaging but may not meaningfully damage the insurgency. Insurgent groups may they have the capacity to withstand kinetic losses. They are often dynamic enough to continue their operations despite kinetic pressures, especially as the needs of irregular warfare are low. More importantly, groups may be able to call upon their social, ideological, or resource capital to recover from losses. Leaders may be replaced by new leaders quickly. Specialized rank-and-file jobs may be given to new manpower.

But kinetic effects are not the entirety of the coercive pressures at the heart of most campaigns. Campaigns also unleash anticipatory effects which may undermine internal ties of targeted groups. In the anticipatory mechanism, the anticipation of the targeting, instead of the actual targeting, undermines insurgent capabilities. In the literature on air-power, leadership decapitation and counterinsurgency, such anticipatory effects of targeting strategies have been

neglected. Various targeting strategies, ranging from raids by police/infantry units, artillery bombardment, air-power, and drone strikes, unleash varying degrees of anticipatory effects.

Anticipatory effects may impose serious constraints on the structures of the targeted group. Such effects may be more lethal in breaking the flow of information, transfer of resources, and the training of manpower. Insurgent leaders and rank-and-file privilege security, and thus develop expectations about targeting in response to any campaign by state forces---and calibrate their organizations accordingly. Anticipatory effects can, thus, compel insurgents to significantly adjust their organizational practices to mitigate the threat posed by the counterinsurgency campaign.

In the most extreme case of anticipatory effects, insurgents may be compelled to alter the way they move, communicate, and interact within their group in a bid to avoid targeting. Movement for patrolling, picketing, and/or organizing sabotage might become challenging if insurgents feel that they may reveal detectable patterns which can lead to targeting. Insurgents may also limit communication involving messengers, letters radios, mobile or satellite phones fearing that interception of communication devices can provide cues about their organization and locations. Significantly, regular intra-group interaction may break down altogether; leaders and rank-and-file may exercise increased caution regarding who they interact with---even within their own ranks---due to concerns of infiltration. Such pressures may compel insurgents to devote more resources and effort in trying to survive as opposed to pursuing their political goals, manifesting in less frequent movement and communication, besides trust deficit.

Under varied levels of the L&S, the intensity of these mechanisms is likely to vary. When a counterinsurgent state has low L&S, the information flows are constrained; it acquires and executes on only limited information on the targets, leading to low targeting activity. Such targeting minimally disrupts the internal ties of the insurgent group through kinetic and anticipatory mechanisms. When a counterinsurgent state has high L&S, the information flows are abundant; it acquires copious information from legibility sources and executes on them to either develop more leads or actual targets, leading to high targeting activity. Such targeting extensively disrupts the internal ties of the insurgent group through kinetic and anticipatory mechanisms.

Under high L&S, the kinetic and anticipatory mechanisms can complement each other to prevent group recovery. Some insurgent groups may attempt to leverage their strong institutionalization of internal processes, discipline, social bases, transnational networks, or quotidian ties to recover from lost capital and adapt to targeting.<sup>33</sup> Depending on the level of the L&S, the combination of kinetic and anticipatory effects can nullify such attributes and constrain meaningful recovery.

#### Constraints on L&S: Sources of Variation

If the tactics, technologies, and organizational practices which I subsume under L&S are as effective as I claim, a natural implication -- given the trials of states at counterinsurgency -- is that most states clearly struggle to implement L&S well. Why do all counterinsurgent states not master L&S? Or what is the source of variation in L&S?

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33 Parkinson 2013, Jordan 2014, Long 2014, Staniland 2014, Toft and Zhukov 2015, Pape 2017

L&S is a rational response to the pressures of counterinsurgency, but implementing it is not straightforward. Instead, it is extremely challenging for any counterinsurgent state to implement. There are three key political challenges. First, the L&S imposes costs on the civilian population. Select geographies are exposed to intensive scrutiny, which may be physically coercive, involve considerable surrender of private space, and disrupt status-quo way of life. Such costs on the civilian population are likely with capabilities essential for both legibility and speed. On the side of legibility, registration and/or spatial ordering programs which render populations legible are inherently violent. Moreover, managing population transfers on such a large scale, preventing indiscipline, and queuing them up for registration is likely to elicit extensive opposition and protest. Similarly, creating dossiers on each household of the civilian population through screening and interrogation is likely to create an environment of harassment and fear; such fears are likely to be exponentially elevated by any attempts of coercion in the form of torture during the interrogation process. In the modern period, collecting biometric data and linking them to cell phones of the entire civilian population may require imposition of penalties and punishments, which is also unpopular. The nature of the opposition is likely to be contingent on the regime type and the political status of the target geography, but it is not inconceivable that civilian elites, political parties, generals, clan leaders, economic elites, civil society groups may come in the way of implementing some capacities associated with the L&S.

Second, the L&S requires expensive new tactical adoption, technology, and novel bureaucratic capability. This means that counterinsurgent states have to invest and build new capability. Building that new capability is likely to require reform of existing bureaucracies in order to meet

the demands of L&S. This is likely to be hurt by bureaucratic interests. It also requires raw capital to acquire what is likely to be very expensive technology. Surveillance technology requires gadgets, machines, and technical capacity requiring investments of vast sums of money. From wire-tapping to internet IP traffic monitoring, location tracking/direction finding to armed drones capable of deep aerial surveillance, almost all surveillance technologies are materially very expensive. The requirements vary by the size of the geography, population size, nature of the counterinsurgency campaign, ethnic/religious composition of the insurgency.<sup>34</sup>

Counterinsurgent states have to either generate new revenue or relocate capital from available resources.

Third, the L&S also requires broad-reaching political latitude. On the side of legibility, counterinsurgent states must make tough decisions like compiling intrusive details e.g. census data, revealing which may bear upon political arrangements like distribution of electoral seats and resources. Implementing surveillance technologies may be widely perceived as likely to lead to the kind of information and data which may not be used just for counterinsurgency. On the side of speed, abundant latitude is essential for implementing and maintaining quick oversight processes. In addition, counterinsurgents must also have an appetite for noncombatant casualties that could result from quick processing and lowered targeting thresholds given the challenge of distinguishing combatants and non-combatants.<sup>35</sup> As participating in insurgencies is on a scale, with non-combatants sometimes performing minor combat functions, high speed of targeting is unlikely to allow sufficient time for discriminating such targets.

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34 See ISR 2013: A US government study on counterterrorism Yemen and Somalia; notes “tyranny of distance” i.e. “long distances to operating areas” as obstructing capabilities falling under the L&S.

35 ISR 2013 also identifies three political constraints on : 1) Not an Active War Zone 2) AUMF (Authorization of Use of Military Force) Process 3) Strict Pre-strike Reassurances.

In addition to these political challenges, there is an organizational challenge as well. Security bureaucracies charged with counterinsurgency need to be dynamic in implementing tactics, technologies, and practices associated with the L&S. L&S requires them to mobilize considerable organizational skill under high risk environments in short periods of time. This means that even when all political challenges to L&S are overcome, counterinsurgency forces must learn and adapt.

#### Domestic Political Salience of the Counterinsurgency Effort and Organizational Experience

What are the conditions under which a counterinsurgent state may overcome these challenges? I assert that domestic political salience of the counterinsurgency effort takes on an important role in determining the mastery or lack thereof of L&S. Domestic political salience reflects the importance of a specific issue among the key domestic political actors. Domestic political salience matters because the counterinsurgency effort is not always politically salient across or even within conflicts. States frequently see insurgents as enemies and thus important threats to be dealt with. But that doesn't mean counterinsurgency, let alone high L&S counterinsurgency, is the default option for them. This is because most strong states do not see the insurgency as imperiling their existence.<sup>36</sup> Thus, counterinsurgency effort is one among many options that a state can call upon to deal with the insurgent threat, which may range from promotion of the electoral process, amnesty schemes, offers of peace deals/dialogue, and/or unilateral concessions. When the counterinsurgency effort is not salient in domestic politics, counterinsurgency

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<sup>36</sup> Staniland 2012

responses are likely to be stymied by unwillingness to impose costs on the civilian population, resource constraints, and organizational mistakes/errors.

What constitutes the specific variation in domestic political salience of the counterinsurgency effort? In democracies and autocracies, the salience of counterinsurgency is likely to be shaped by preferences of the domestic political actors who authorize and participate in counterinsurgency. The exact configuration of the relevant domestic actors is likely to vary by context. Generally, there is more than one domestic political actor who authorizes and participates in the counterinsurgency effort. In a democracy, these actors may comprise ruling political parties forming the central government, political elites participating in the government of the geography where insurgency breaks out, and the military force involved. In an autocracy, these actors might consist of the dictator, his launching coalition, and the military force.

The preferences of these actors are likely to be influenced by a wide range of factors. They may be shaped by electoral pressures, concerns of legitimacy, intra-party politics, ideology, interest group pressures, international opinion, and/or normative beliefs. These factors – individually or collectively -- determine the place that a counterinsurgency effort finds in the hierarchy of policy choices of a counterinsurgent state to deal with an insurgency. This, in turn, shape the kind of constraints and pressures to change and adapt that the counterinsurgency forces may be subjected to.

But domestic political salience is not the only driver of L&S. Prior experience of the security forces involved in the counterinsurgency effort is important as well. In medium to high capacity

states, the counterinsurgency force is a large sized security bureaucracy. If not for experience, it is likely to lack structures and practices of leadership delegation, information management, and expectations of discipline necessary for implementing the tactics, practices, and technologies essential for L&S. This gap is the widest when the bureaucracy is inexperienced and shortest when it is experienced.

What constitutes the specific variation in organizational experience of counterinsurgency? Many counterinsurgent forces geared towards conventional wars may deploy for counterinsurgency for the first time, which lends itself to low experience, like the Pakistanis in the tribal areas. At other times, due to generational gaps in counterinsurgency operations, counterinsurgents may have a force structure with little to no experience, like the US in Iraq. And even when a counterinsurgency force has contemporary involvement, many in the military may not be exposed to counterinsurgency because of limited or piecemeal quantum of troops and formations of a large army getting mobilized into the counterinsurgency effort. In contrast, limited rotations and retention of the same force structure in a counterinsurgency mission lends itself to high experience.

#### Mechanisms to L&S

The interaction of these two factors -- domestic political salience of the counterinsurgency effort and organizational experience of the counterinsurgency forces -- determines the level of the L&S. Overall, five mechanisms shape the constraints, or lack thereof, facing the counterinsurgent. The first mechanism is of appetite to undertake politically charged decisions

ranging from reform of existing capacity, relevant bureaucratic reordering, and provision of the political latitude essential to the L&S. The second mechanism is of professional incentives of the counterinsurgency force to implement the tactics, technologies, and practices necessary for L&S. The third mechanism is of provision of capital for building up the capacity to execute L&S. The fourth mechanism is of socialization pressures on the counterinsurgency force to try to adopt L&S. A final mechanism is of organizational receptiveness – the ability to adjust/respond - - to implementation of L&S. Note that the first four mechanisms flow from the channel of domestic political salience, whereas the last one flows from the channel of organizational experience.

#### Source of Change in Domestic Politics and Experience

Domestic political salience of counterinsurgency and/or organizational experience of forces involved do not change easily, but they are not set in stone either. Three potential sources of variation are: regime change, civilian victimization, induction and exposure of a majority of the military, and multi-conflict involvement.

Regime Change/Elections: For domestic politics to see a decisive difference in the structure in which counterinsurgency plays out, key domestic political players need to change. Regime changes/elections offer that opportunity; they can shift the political salience of the war effort – for better or for worse. Consider Charles De Gaulle’s return to power in France in 1958 during the war in French Algeria, or Richard Nixon’s rise to power in 1968 during the Vietnam war.

The rise of both the leaders influenced the domestic political salience of counterinsurgency operations.

**Civilian victimization:** Insurgencies tend to impose costs on ordinary civilians. If civilian victimization by the insurgents increases, it can alter the domestic political salience of counterinsurgency. Under some circumstances, increased civilian victimization by the insurgents pressures the counterinsurgent to deploy more vigorously against the insurgents. This is likely when the civilians associated with the ruling regime are hurt by the insurgency. But the converse is possible as well. Some kinds of civilian victimization may lead to calls for restraint and change in domestic political perceptions of the counterinsurgency effort. It is challenging to locate the level and composition of civilian victimization which might trigger shifts in the domestic political evaluation of the war effort; therefore, in the empirical chapters I do not use this to trace shifts in conflict-level domestic political salience.

**Multi-conflict Involvement:** Involvement in multiple internal conflicts has an indecisive effect on domestic politics but it can enrich the organizational capital of the militaries involved by exposing officers and soldiers to counterinsurgency over short periods of time. If political salience exists for both the conflicts, an army engaged in conflict in two war zones is like to transport experience of one theatre to the other. The colonial powers benefitted from multi-conflict involvement, diffusing experienced cadres from one region to the other. Post 2008, lessons from Iraq benefitted American formations moving to Afghanistan, even if the counterinsurgent forces remained politically handicapped. However, caution is warranted in how to operationalize this source of change/shift. Tracing multi-conflict involvement requires careful

within conflict analysis. Sometimes, militaries delegate exclusive military forces to one conflict. For example, the Indians drew on new units and forces in Jammu Kashmir following the breakout of the insurgency in 1988 despite having an entire force structure with prior recent experience of counterinsurgency, like the conflict in Punjab.

## Implications

This chapter provides a theory of counterinsurgency which is useful in two ways. First, as the dissertation seeks to explain counterinsurgency campaign outcomes, the theory provides new and operationalizable concepts for testing counterinsurgency effectiveness, like L&S. It also yields calibrated, falsifiable implications on mechanisms, like information flows during counterinsurgency operations and kinetic/anticipatory effects. The new concepts and mechanisms presented can be pitted against orthodox theories, especially the hearts-and-minds theory, to adjudicate which one has more explanatory power.

Second, the theory lends itself to clear predictions to test out the sources of variation in counterinsurgency conduct of state forces as captured by the L&S. These predictions can be pitted against those of key orthodox theories on counterinsurgency change and adaptation, like leadership, culture, and civilian control, to assess what drives variation in the L&S better. In the chapters that follow, I undertake extensive testing to check the validity of my claims and those of the orthodox theories.

### **Chapter 3: Determinants of L&S in Punjab and Kashmir: Domestic Politics and Experience in India**

In this chapter, I explain patterns of Indian counterinsurgency change and adaptation as captured by Legibility & Speed of Exploitation System, or L&S, the new variable conceptualized in the dissertation. I do so in a comparative perspective on two major internal conflicts in India: Punjab from 1984 to 1994 and Jammu and Kashmir from 1989 to 1999. I break down this inquiry in three stages. First, I show India's divergent compliance across the variable of L&S, both within and across the two conflicts.<sup>1</sup> Second, I probe causes of India's divergent compliance of L&S, within and across the two conflicts. Third, I assess these patterns against explanations in the counterinsurgency change and adaptation literature like organizational culture, civilian control, and leadership, in addition to the explanation on the importance of domestic political salience of the counterinsurgency effort and organizational experience of the counterinsurgency forces.

After illustrating the variation in L&S for each of the conflicts, I show that the varied compliance with L&S is best accounted for by the variation in the domestic political salience of the counterinsurgency and the organizational experience of the forces involved. In Punjab, for the first few years, the central government in Delhi saw counterinsurgency as secondary to other political initiatives in the aftermath of the botched operation Blue Star when responding to the insurgency. Key Punjabi political elites actively opposed counterinsurgency in the state. For a few years into the conflict, the Indian military was also apprehensive about counterinsurgency in

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<sup>1</sup> Some of the evidence used in this chapter is repeated in chapter X when testing India's counterinsurgency effectiveness.

Punjab due to the large representation of the Sikhs in the military, who were angered by the events of Bluestar and its aftermath. By late 1991, however, these three actors clearly saw a counterinsurgency effort with use of force at its center as salient to handling the crisis in the state. The high domestic salience for the counterinsurgency effort combined with an experienced force structure in the state allowed for swift adaptation towards high levels of L&S.

In contrast, in Jammu and Kashmir, the Indian central government remained ambivalent about the counterinsurgency campaign consistently. The relatively little electoral sensitivity of the conflict in Jammu and Kashmir to central electoral politics and the international political backlash to a high-octane military effort reinforced the ambivalence. Key political elites in the state, like leaders of the National Conference, did not see counterinsurgency as desirable. The Indian military never opposed counterinsurgency, but it did not see it as a first order priority. Successive army chiefs saw the counterinsurgency effort as a distraction from conventional military preparedness. Moreover, the Indian state's constantly changing counterinsurgency force structure meant that until nearly ten years of the conflict the forces involved in counterinsurgency operations were operating in a counterinsurgency role for the first time.

## Research Design

I employ a paired comparison of Punjab from 1984 to 1994 and Jammu and Kashmir from 1989 to 1999. Studying Punjab and Kashmir in a comparative context offers inferential leverage in three ways. First, the two cases allow for controlled over time and cross case examination. Both conflicts have similarities (see Table 4). The insurgencies made separatist demands, drew on

religious and rural bases for organization, enjoyed strong external support from Pakistan, and overlapped in time periods.<sup>2</sup> Despite these similarities, the two cases take divergent paths on the variable of interest: L&S. Thus, this pair of cases allows us to control for a number of important factors, while containing significant cross- and in-case variation over time on the independent variable and the dependent variables being probed in the theory of interest.

Second, these cases offer inferential leverage on alternative theories of interest. Three key theories are examined in addition to the one proposed in the paper: organizational culture, civilian control, and leadership-centric arguments. These theories generate different predictions than those of the new theory.

Third, Indian counterinsurgency experience as a whole is a “least-likely” case for an old theoretical argument on democracies as counterinsurgents.<sup>3</sup> The argument hypothesizes that democracies are likely to be poor at counterinsurgency. While this theory has been challenged in the large-N literature, for example Lyall 2010, there is limited case-based evidence of counterinsurgency by democracies which engages with this view to back up the large-N analysis. The India case offers an opportunity to both test and refine the regime type as a determinant of counterinsurgency effectiveness argument.

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<sup>2</sup> Saleyhan 2009

<sup>3</sup> See: Gartner 2008, Gelpi, Feaver, and Reifler 2005/2006, Lyall 2010

**TABLE 4: COMPARING PUNJAB AND J&K**

	Punjab	J&K
Years	84 – 94	89 -- 99
Duration (~years)	10	10
Type of Conflict	Separatist	Separatist
Ideology of Insurgency	Religion/ethno-nationalism	Religion/ethno-nationalism
Relevant Religion	Sikhism	Islam
Composition of State	Sikh-Hindu mix	Muslim-Hindu mix
External Involvement	Pakistan	Pakistan
Terrain of Conflict	Rural, agrarian	Rural, mountainous
Major International Conflict	None	None
Total Conflict Fatalities (Source: SATP)	21362	22907



**MAP 1: PUNJAB AND KASHMIR**

It is important to note that this analysis suffers from data constraints. It is difficult to test most of the predictions implied by the new and old theories, especially those pertaining to mechanisms – which is in contrast to the granular analysis offered in the Pakistani case, for which I was able to draw on fieldwork data. Still, the available data is rich enough to probe the general patterns of

the key variables of interest in each of the conflicts over time and across the conflicts to assess important predictions of the framework.<sup>4</sup>

## Data

To execute this approach, I rely on a mix of publicly available information and some original empirical data. A large part of the analysis draws on conflict historiographies, newspapers reports, press releases, and secondary specialist studies. I have conducted a few interviews with key elites across the two conflicts [N=7] on the phone to gather more granular details on the cases, who remain anonymous. In addition, I have relied on my reading of the India military's internal publications like the Combat Journal, War College Journal, Infantry Journal, among others, from the late 1980s and 1990s. I have also tried to cross-check these different sources against one another.

## Punjab vs Kashmir

I first undertake a within case analysis of Punjab from 1984 to 1994, followed by Kashmir from 1989 to 1999. I develop each case in three steps. First, I provide a brief background of each of the conflicts. Second, I map out the variation in L&S. Third, I evaluate necessary implications of different arguments that may be used to explain the trajectory of the conflict. Following the within case analysis, I compare the two cases.

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<sup>4</sup> KKV 1994, George and Bennett 2005

## Punjab 1984 to 1994

This section undertakes a within case analysis of the conflict in Punjab from 1984 to 1994.

### Background

Punjab is a state in the north west of India. At the time of the country's formation, Punjab's population comprised of two religious groups: the Sikhs and the Hindus. The displacement at the time of the partition had rendered Sikhs in majority in the western districts and the Hindus in the eastern districts.<sup>5</sup> The politics of the state was organized around these demographic lines.<sup>6</sup> An ethno-nationalist party by the name of Akali Dal became a potent political force in the province after 1957, representing Sikh interests. The federal political party Indian National Congress, or Congress, also made early inroads in the state; it was able to marshal the support of Hindus and poorer urban Sikhs.<sup>7</sup>

Soon after partition, Punjab started experiencing sustained bouts of contentious politics that worsened relations between political actors in the state and the central government. First, the Akali Dal demanded a new province along linguistic lines, called the Punjabi Suba [Province].<sup>8</sup>

The original state of Punjab was made up of present day states of Punjab, Haryana and Himachal

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5 Purewal 2000, 78

6 Purewal 2000, 78

7 Wallace 1986

8 Chima 2010, 30

Pradesh. The dominant vote base of the Akali Dal, the Sikhs, were a minority in the original Punjab state. The Congress party deeply opposed the Punjabi Suba in the 1950s.

But things changed in the 1960s. In 1966, the Congress-led central government conceded to the Punjabi Suba movement: it created a new state of Punjab with Sikhs in the majority.<sup>9</sup> Instead of solving the problem, however, the division created more problems. It left key demands unresolved which became the basis of the politics that incubated the insurgency in later years.<sup>10</sup> The city of Chandigarh, which the Punjabi Suba wanted as the capital of the province, was made the joint capital of the States of Punjab and Haryana and a territory under the control of the central government in Delhi. As per the division, many Punjabi speaking areas were given to the new state of Haryana. The central government also assumed control over the irrigation system, canal headworks and dam projects. These issues drew a sharp wedge between the center and the state as a whole. In the ensuing politics, these issues polarized the Sikh political base: Some began to see secession as the next logical step, while others saw a stiffer confrontation with the center as crucial.<sup>11</sup>

The 1970s saw politics around the combination of Sikh nationalism and center-state relations. Akali Dal retained its central role in this politics by winning elections regularly on the one hand and being a critical opposing voice to Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's political machinations on the other. Akali Dal also passed a resolution seeking more autonomy for Punjab, known as the

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9 Shani 2008, 46

10 Wallace 1986

11 Chima 2010, 32

Anandpur Sahib resolution.<sup>12</sup> Indira Gandhi viewed the Anandpur Sahib Resolution as a secessionist document, depicting the Akali Dal as separatist and herself the savior of Indian unity. When she imposed the emergency in 1977, Akali Dal was extremely vocal in its opposition of Gandhi.<sup>13</sup> In 1980, after losing in elections called by the Congress-led government in Delhi, Akali Dal became even more agitational.<sup>14</sup>

While Akali was largely leading the agitational politics against the center, more extreme groups propped up as well that attracted widespread support and sympathy. Of the extreme groups, a faction led by Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale assumed unusual importance.<sup>15</sup> In the late 70s, and especially in the aftermath of the emergency when Akali Dal had led the charge against Indira, Congress sought to support Sikh political groups that could offset the Akali's electoral advantage.<sup>16</sup> The Congress backed and encouraged the rise and subsequent arming of Bhindranwale. Surprisingly for Congress, Bhindranwale did not serve their interest of countering the Akali alone. He used the initial cover to engage in violence, incrementally coming out with strong separatist claims, all the while challenging the Akalis. By the early 1980s, he turned against the Congress and began to use the Golden Temple as a staging ground for his movement. The movement kept swelling while engaging in sporadic violence. The violence intensified and Indira Gandhi faced pressure to act.

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12 Brass 1988

13 Chima 2010, 33

14 Chima 2010, Shani 2008

15 Brass 1988, Chima 2010, 63

16 Tully 1991, 153

This led to the infamous Operation Bluestar in June 1984. The central government ordered the Indian military to fix the worsening law and order situation in Punjab, including clearing the Golden Temple.<sup>17</sup> The Indian Army used heavy firepower to clear the Temple – one of the holiest sites of the Sikh religion. Sikhs in India and overseas were tremendously angered by the Indian state’s heavy-handed handling of the operation. This created an unprecedented blowback. Alienation and resentment gripped much of the Sikh population. After Bluestar, almost instantly, Sikh nationalism embraced secession.

Sikh anti-government mobilization was further aggravated by a series of events. The Indian Army experienced a mutiny of around 4000 Sikh soldiers.<sup>18</sup> In October 1984, Indian prime minister Indira Gandhi was assassinated by two of her Sikh bodyguards.<sup>19</sup> Following her assassination, anti-Sikh rioting broke out across India in which thousands of Sikhs were killed and many more were displaced from their homes. The anti-Sikh sentiment created a pro-Congress sympathy wave across India – excluding Punjab, where the Congress was hated. This allowed Rajiv Gandhi, Indira’s son and successor to the throne of the Congress party, to sweep the 84-85 elections, which added to resentment in Punjab. A full fledged insurgency was underway in the state by 1985.

Variation in L&S:

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17 Tully 1991, 153  
18 Kundu, 1994  
19 Chima 2010, 108

Starting 1984, as violence engulfed large swathes of the state, the Indian government mounted a counterinsurgency response across the state of Punjab. From here on, I describe the Indian counterinsurgency approach in terms of the variable of L&S, coded for by the terms of the central government in Delhi.

**TABLE 5: SUMMARY OF L&S IN PUNJAB 1984 TO 1994**

Time Period	L&S
1984 – 1987	Low
1987—1989	Intermediate
1989 – 1991	Intermediate
1991 – 1994	High

Legibility in Punjab:

From 1984 to 1987, the Indian government struggled to put in place a functional legibility infrastructure as part of the counterinsurgency campaign in Punjab. But that began to change in 1987. These changes largely took place in the security apparatus spearheaded by the Punjab Police. Between 1984 to 1987, three types of legibility gaps are important to note.

First, the counterinsurgent forces – primarily the Punjab police -- did not put in place any systematic population monitoring program. Punjab had a natural node in the shape of the *thana* -- police station – for such population monitoring. The *thana* in India was a colonial legacy. Traditionally, it maintained elaborate records on populations, often organized by beats; the *thana* categorized civilian population into those at risk of causing subversion and those considered safe; the *thana* also drew on an elaborate network of informers who functioned as the eyes and

ears of the head of the *thana*, called the Station House Officer (SHO).<sup>20</sup> As Mahadevan notes, “They served to detect the very first murmurings of discontent against colonial rule and were very effective in suppressing these.”<sup>21</sup> Or, in the words of Punjab Police Chief Chaman Lal from the period, it could “read and heed the signs like snatching/theft of licensed arms, attacks on banks and post offices in rural areas, unexplained explosions at remote places, disappearance of school dropouts and unemployed educated young boys.”<sup>22</sup>

With the onset of the insurgency, however, much of the *thana* infrastructure in the state of Punjab broke down. In the lead-up to Bluestar, many *thanas* across the state were closing down. Where they were open, manpower tended to be in short supply. Until 1985, the *thana* infrastructure and its associated basic data recording and dissemination operations remained completely dysfunctional.<sup>23</sup> Lal notes that “standards of normal policing had so declined that even a simple task like the recording of an FIR (first information report) became a matter of specialization confined to a few experts.”<sup>24</sup> A junior police officer in the 1984 to 1987 period, and later famous police chief, K.P.S Gill notes that the police infrastructure before 1988 was deficient, with problems of “...manpower, training, weapons, transport, and communications.”<sup>25</sup> Gill also tellingly notes that “even the routine practice of record keeping in connection with terrorist crime was neglected by the Police administration in the early years.”<sup>26</sup> This kind of a breakdown was accelerated, in part, due to the distrust plagued environment after Bluestar. The

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20 Nath 1994

21 Mahadevan 2008

22 Lal 1999

23 Fair 2009

24 Lal 1999

25 Gill 2001, 37

26 Gill 2001, 43

Police force was seen as unreliable by India's central intelligence agencies. Thus, the Police infrastructure was neglected by both state level elites and the central government purposefully. As late as 1987, Gill notes that the police infrastructure in the state – and specifically the *thana* and its capabilities – were hamstrung.<sup>27</sup>

A second major challenge for the security forces in Punjab was their inability to implement basic legibility tactics to track the population. Generally, such tactics can range from running decentralized paid informers with professional handlers, flipping of insurgents, and systematic interrogation of arrested cadres. Punjab saw a surge in forces of various stripes, but until 1987 there was no systematic effort to employ such tactics for building up basic knowledge of the population and locate the source of disturbance within it.<sup>28</sup> In the pre-insurgency period, the Punjab Police's intelligence agency managed human intelligence systems.<sup>29</sup> Much of that, however, disintegrated in the face of targeted assassinations by terrorists.

Interrogation of arrested insurgent cadres was a major weakness. Reflecting on the inadequate handling of prisoners in the period, a police officer noted: "Many of the interrogations had to be carried out by officers at a senior level, as Station House Officers [SHOs] and subordinates at the police stations were clearly unwilling to be associated with the process for fear of identification and reprisals."<sup>30</sup> A senior police official posted in Chandigarh described the dysfunction of basic interrogation practices saying: "So nerve chilling is the hit list fear among even the policemen

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27 Gill 2001, 38

28 Gill 2001

29 Nath 1994

30 Gill 2001

today that it is difficult to find an officer to interrogate the odd terrorist we capture.”<sup>31</sup> The result was that “...very scant information was forthcoming from local police and intelligence sources as regards the data necessary at this stage, even to evolve an outline plan.”<sup>32</sup>

Third, the Punjab police had weak to non-existent technical surveillance capability. This was a period of technical equipment shortages. The main factions of the insurgency were extensively using short wave radios and other communication devices. Yet, until 1988, the Punjab Police, the major paramilitary organizations in the state, and the supporting arms of the Indian military lacked the technical means to intercept those communications.<sup>33</sup> Punjab Police lacked wiretapping equipment and basic wireless sets. Indian Army’s electronic warfare assets were largely not pulled into the conflict. The Punjab Police tried to get Intelligence Bureau’s support, but that support “fell in the gap between consumer expectation and producer priorities.”<sup>34</sup> As the conflict intensified, the Punjab Police and the central government bickered over resource allocation specifically for shoring up the technical intelligence capability of the force. Punjab police demands ranged from wireless phone sets to surveillance equipment. Promises from the central government “to the state that resources will not be a constraint” were many.<sup>35</sup> The central government also pledged to pull in resources from the military, like helicopters, to energize aerial surveillance capability of the police force.<sup>36</sup> But in most cases, such promises did not

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31 Gupta 1986

32 Brar 1993, 37

33 Gill 2001, Chaman 1999

34 Mahadevan 2012, 156

35 Report 1986

36 Report 1986

materialize. The Punjab Police continued to struggle to build up a functional, state level technical surveillance capability.

Starting 1988, Punjab began to go through a process of change in how the security apparatus was organized, which directly improved the legibility of the Punjab Police. First, the *thana* was revived and made the lynchpin of the population monitoring and tracking the population.<sup>37</sup> A number of new *thanas* were created across the state. The *thana*'s basic documentation processes were revived.<sup>38</sup> Multiple analysts, practitioners, and officials of the Punjab Police note that the emphasis on maintaining population records saw a revival in this period: "As a first step towards reinvigorating Police intelligence networks, Gill introduced a regime of meticulous documentation of terrorist crimes."<sup>39</sup> As part of the documentation process, the Punjab Police also started the use of population categorization to narrow their surveillance operations, creating detailed listing of the civilian population. Lists of baptized Sikhs, known as *Amritdharis*, were created and closely tracked through the office of the State Intelligence: "The State Intelligence Department updates its dossier on *Amritdharis* every month."<sup>40</sup> A so-called "black list" was also maintained across the state; suspects were "...placed on a secret "blacklist" which is maintained by the SHO [incharge of the *thana*]....Even an unsolicited visit by Sikh militants [to the home of a civilian] condemns a person to the blacklist....It is also common knowledge that the list is circulated to the SHOs who administer the Punjab police department."<sup>41</sup>

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37 Gill 2001, Fair 2009

38 Mahadevan 2012, 132

39 Mahadevan 2008

40 Sandhu and Vinayak, 1992

41 Watch 1994

The *thana* was not the only element of the population tracking system. The Punjab Police, in collaboration with the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), also built up a detailed population database.<sup>42</sup> This database was run by the CBI's Co-ordination Cell at Chandigarh. Mahadevan notes that "The database pooled background information into a centralized system that recorded the names of a particular terrorist's associates, relatives, known harbors and location of hideouts. In addition, his physical descriptive roll, fingerprints and available photographs would also be stored in the database."<sup>43</sup>

The Punjab Police also placed a premium on improving their legibility tactics in this period. As noted earlier, the tactics being used in the previous period were haphazard at best. Senior police leadership was acutely aware of these gaps. Starting 1988, they began to address them. One of the first steps in this regard was a well-funded informer system managed by the *thana*.<sup>44</sup> This was a new informer system, which tried to scale the model of informer system that India's central intelligence agencies managed: a dedicated handler with a network of informants.<sup>45</sup> The informants drawn upon for this purpose fell in two categories. First were standard police informers run by the local *thana* at a large scale. With "additional funds for intelligence-gathering" in hand, *thanas* across "Punjab were able to intensify their coverage of terrorist activity within their jurisdictions."<sup>46</sup> A second category of informants consisted of petty

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42 Mahadevan 2008

43 Mahadevan 2008

44 Fair 2009

45 Chandan 2013

46 Mahadevan 2008

criminals and flipped insurgents. Starting 1988 and onward, the Punjab Police relied more on petty criminals as informants. But the use of turned terrorists started to become more systematic and widespread in the post-Black Thunder phase.<sup>47</sup>

In late 1991, the Indian central government provided abundant resources specifically for the Punjab Police's intelligence efforts. A major chunk of the funds was directed towards building up the 'CATS' program -- "the use of specially recruited infiltrators and systematically turned captured terrorists as intelligence assets for tracking down listed terrorists"<sup>48</sup> -- which "formed the pivot of... post-1991 anti-terrorism strategy."<sup>49</sup> As "the funds available for running 'CATS' increased, so did their numbers." Each "claim for intelligence funds to pay a 'cat' who helped arrest a terrorist, was subjected to thorough scrutiny by the State Police intelligence wing to prevent fraud by District Police Officers. It was these officers who received the funds, which were held centrally by Police intelligence and disbursed on a case-by-case basis."<sup>50</sup>

The Punjab Police also began to make better use of technology to track the civilian population.<sup>51</sup> Wiretapping and wireless interception were two key areas in which the Punjab Police had struggled, but that began to change starting 1988. The Punjab Police developed what came to be known as the Police radio network. Around "INR 140 million was spent on improving the extent and quality of Police communications." In addition, the "Police radio network was interlinked

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47 Fair 2009

48 Mahadevan

49 Vinayak 1995

50 Mahadevan 2007

51 Chandan 2013, 146

with those of the central paramilitary forces, who had been specially inducted into the state to contain terrorism.”<sup>52</sup>

### Speed in Punjab

From 1984 to 1991, the Punjab Police’s speed of exploitation of legibility gains was constrained. There were improvements in select years in this period, but the general pattern was of poor exploitation. There are four indicators of poor speed of exploitation in this period. First, the counterinsurgency force – made mainly of Punjab police but also drawing upon paramilitary organizations like the Central Police Reserve Force (CPRF), the Border Security Force (BSF), and Indian Army -- struggled to share, disseminate, and analyze intelligence that was being generated in their respective bureaucracies. On the side of the Punjab Police, the inability to process intelligence was rooted in the lack of capacity of the *thana*.<sup>53</sup> For the early years of the conflict, *thanas*’ processing capabilities were largely dysfunctional in multiple districts. To the extent any reporting was produced, it was not passed on with any regularity.<sup>54</sup> The central office of the Punjab Police overseeing information collection also lacked the capacity to channel the information leads down to field units. And while the Punjab Police had the *thana*, the CPRF and BSF lacked intelligence setups to process information leads being generated by their tactical deployments.<sup>55</sup>

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52 Mahadevan 2008

53 Mahadevan 2008

54 Gill 2001

55 Gill 2001

The capacity to process, coordinate, and synergize intelligence exchange between the Punjab Police and the newly inducted security forces was poor. The three key security forces in the state, Punjab Police, paramilitary organizations, and the Army, did not place much premium on sharing information. Even when senior leaders began to emphasize the importance of information sharing, security forces from outside Punjab, like the paramilitary organizations, viewed the predominantly Sikh Punjab Police with suspicion. Media reports in the period consistently noted a “...growing distrust between the CPRF and the predominantly Sikh Punjab Police -- an inevitable fallout of the growing communal divide.”<sup>56</sup> India’s central intelligence agencies – like the Intelligence Bureau and RAW – also remained averse to information flows to the Punjab Police for the fear of information being compromised.<sup>57</sup> The poor synergy remained a major source of “...consternation in the Union Home Ministry.”<sup>58</sup>

In addition to the challenge of processing legibility, the task of acting upon leads remained a problem for the counterinsurgency force. The Punjab Police force was neither trained nor structured to undertake rapid deployment. These problems were compounded by capacity constraints on the side of mobilization: The Police lacked vehicles, spread out network of outposts, and/or helicopters. Instead, a siege mindset pervaded the organization.<sup>59</sup>

Finally, while all other areas saw improvement over time, the challenge of obtaining authorization to act -- running new *CATS*, detention, arrest, and/or raise -- was severe. Key

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56 Mahadevan 2012  
57 Mahadevan 2008  
58 Report 1986  
59 Gill 2001

political elites in Delhi and Punjab -- mainly through the Governor -- carefully sorted between the series of offensive actions that they were comfortable with and those that they weren't. The mere act of seeking permission from the political leadership in the state hampered the execution of available leads, thereby systematically constraining execution.<sup>60</sup> As one analyst notes for the pre-1991 period: "Political mood-swings in Delhi decided if and for how long aggressive operations against the terrorists could be initiated. True to form, Indian policymakers would order an offensive against the *Khalistan* movement, and then suspend operations to reopen negotiations."<sup>61</sup>

Some of the constraints were gradually overcome in the 1987 to 1991 period. In this period, the Punjab Police's capacity to process information saw a dramatic overhaul. The challenge of synergy and sharing of intelligence was also addressed. The most clear-cut evidence of changes along the dimensions of capacity to process, sharing and dissemination, procedures and capacity to act swiftly, and authorization, becomes evident starting 1991.<sup>62</sup> Various analytical writings accredit these changes to Police Chief K.P.S Gill and "the Gill Doctrine", which made it a priority to achieve "co-ordination of efforts." Crucial to the "doctrine was the view that counter-terrorist attrition could be made both rapid and sustainable."

By 1991, what Gill termed the "cooperative command concept" considerably matured. The various security bureaucracies working in the state were unified operationally. The Indian "Army

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60 Kang 2005

61 Mahadevan 2008

62 Dhar 2005, 186, Kang 2005, Sandhu 1991

formed the anvil of the counter-terrorist effort while the Police acted as the hammer.”<sup>63</sup> To pursue “senior terrorists...across the length and breadth of the State by Police teams armed with specific intelligence,” the organizations were flattened out, information generation and sharing prioritized. This kind of cooperative command concept was sustained by extensive liaison arrangements between the Army and the Police: “Orders were sent down the chain of command within both services, stressing the need for unity of effort and close co-operation in the field.”<sup>64</sup> Dissemination of information across the range of security forces working in the province was made a real priority: “From the strategic level down to the tactical, Police representatives interacted closely with their Army counterparts. Tactical intelligence was immediately disseminated to the widest possible audience, so as to ensure total situational awareness on the part of all units.”<sup>65</sup>

The Punjab Police, however, remained the more sizable and thereby critical element of the counterinsurgency deployment. Gill paid abundant attention to improving the force’s tactical procedures to act upon leads. He made rapid reaction a central plank of Punjab Police’s conduct.<sup>66</sup> By late 1991, the “Police were freed from static duties by the massive deployment of the Army, which saturated the countryside with section-size quick reaction teams (QRTs).”<sup>67</sup> Such rapid deployment standard practices were synergized with technical means. These “QRTs were tuned in to the Police wireless network and authorized to act on their own initiative to

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63 Mahadevan 2008, Fair 2009

64 Mahadevan 2008, Gill 2001

65 Mahadevan 2008, Gill 2001

66 Joshi 1993, Kang 2005, Gill 2001, Fair 2009

67 Fair 2009

render such support as requested with all speed.”<sup>68</sup> As a result, “Police patrols became assured of reinforcement within 15 minutes if they confronted terrorists armed with superior firepower.”<sup>69</sup>

#### Explaining L&S in Punjab:

This is a remarkably mixed pattern of L&S. In chronological order, it suggests a period of absolute stagnation (low L&S), some improvement but general stasis (intermediate L&S), and a final period of change (high L&S). What explains these patterns? I consider four general explanations: domestic political salience of the counterinsurgency effort and experience of the forces involved, leadership, organizational culture, and civilian control.

#### Domestic Political Salience & Organizational Experience:

This explanation proposes that variation in the interaction of domestic political salience of the counterinsurgency effort and organizational experience of the forces involved can both constrain and drive the necessary adaptation and change essential for L&S. For this explanation to hold, we should see key domestic political actors in the Indian context attributing low salience to the counterinsurgency in Punjab – especially in comparison to other policy options available to them to deal with the insurgency -- and the forces involved in the counterinsurgency to possess little to no experience of counterinsurgency from 1984 to 1987. We should see the adaptation towards high L&S from 1992 to 1993 preceded by some radical shift in both the domestic political

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68 Mahadevan 2007

69 Mahadevan 2007, Gill 2001, Kang 2005

salience of the counterinsurgency effort and involvement of an experienced force structure. In terms of mechanisms, we should see differences in reform appetite, professional incentives, socialization pressures, availability of capital for counterinsurgency, and responsiveness of the forces during the conflict.

There is plenty of support for this explanation. There were clear-cut and important differences in the domestic political salience of counterinsurgency and organizational experience of the forces involved over the course of the conflict. From here on, I describe these differences. For situating domestic political salience, I focus on three key political actors for the Punjabi context: the political elites in-charge of the central government, the Indian military, and political parties in the state of Punjab. For situating experience, I focus on the varied experience of the Punjab Police and the paramilitary forces which formed the preponderance of the force structure in the conflict.

**TABLE 6: DOMESTIC POLITICAL SALIENCE OF COUNTERINSURGENCY IN PUNJAB**

	Central Government	Punjab State Elites	Indian Army	Overall
1984 to 1987	Low	Low	Ambivalent	Low
1988 to 1991	Low	Low	Ambivalent	Low
1992 to 1993	High	High	High	High

**Domestic Political Salience of Counterinsurgency in Punjab**

From 1984 to 1987, the Delhi based central government was not keen on counterinsurgency, even though it launched counterinsurgency operations across the state. The major focus for dealing with the insurgency through this period was on reaching a bargain with the estranged factions of Punjab’s main ethnonational party, the Akali Dal. Indian Prime Minister Indira

Gandhi was initially keen on the military option to address the emerging crisis. However, her keenness evaporated after the disastrous Operation Bluestar, which had an unprecedented countrywide blowback.<sup>70</sup> Thus, she began to consider concessions on some of the grievances driving the insurgency, like the status of the city of Chandigarh, terms of center-state relations, river water distribution, implementation of the Anandpur Sahib Resolution, among other issues.

Indira was exploring re-negotiations with the Akali Dal leadership when she was assassinated. Her successor, who was also her son, Rajiv Gandhi picked up the baton of overtures to the leadership of the Akali Dal. In the elections following Indira Gandhi's assassination, Rajiv spoke about solving "the Punjab tangle through negotiations and compromise."<sup>71</sup> After getting elected as Prime Minister, he did not call off counterinsurgency operations but his go-to policy option to deal with the crisis was a political settlement. Rajiv strongly felt that counterinsurgency operations alone "could not provide the answer to communal strife."<sup>72</sup> In 1985, he struck a deal with a more moderate faction of the Akali Dal led by Sant Harchand Singh Longowal.<sup>73</sup> These accords came to be known as the Punjab Accords. The Punjab Accords, however, failed in the implementation phase.<sup>74</sup> In 1986, the chief minister of Punjab's neighboring state Haryana, Bhajan Lal, did not agree to the transfer of some areas in exchange for the city of Chandigarh. Rajiv refused to lend his weight to the accords. Even then, the central government did not begin

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70 Brass 1988

71 Chima 2010, 109

72 Tully and Jacob 1985, 224

73 Chima 2010, 115

74 Chima 2010, 121-122

to see counterinsurgency as an option. The elusive search for a political solution continued as a matter of priority.

Like the central government, the political leadership in the state also did not see counterinsurgency as a priority until 1987. The key domestic political elites were the Akali Dal's moderate and radical factions besides the Congress party's state level leadership. Even though the Akali Dal was in disarray due to infighting, it consistently strongly opposed counterinsurgency efforts. For example, Akali's moderate faction led by Harchand Singh Longowal and the radical but influential factions led by the Tohra and Talwandi opposed counterinsurgency operations.<sup>75</sup> Harchand Singh Longowal's preferences assumed more importance after his faction did well in the 1985 state assembly polls. His preferences were shaped by the contest in the Sikh political arena. Fighting for survival against more radical factions like Talwandi's that mobilized against him, he carefully steered clear of voicing support for use of violence as a solution to quell the disturbance in the state.

After Longowal's assassination, Surjit Singh Barnala became the President of the Akali Dal (L) and maintained the same posture as Longowal. When Barnala became the chief minister, instead of prioritizing counterinsurgency, he opposed the central government policies to fend off the challenge of more radical rivals within his camp, led by Badar and Tohra. Such was the opposition of Barnala in 1986 that Rajiv had to publicly warn him to control "the spiraling cycle of violence and extremism in the state."<sup>76</sup> On the other hand, despite a spate of violence, the

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75 Chima 2010, 117 -- 119

76 Chima 2010, 131

Congress's state leadership did not insist on counterinsurgency either. Their primary political interest in the period was in blocking the implementation of the Punjab Accords and dislodging the Akali. Rajiv dissolved the Akali led government in the state and imposed Presidential rule.<sup>77</sup>

Much like the central government and the state elites, counterinsurgency in Punjab was not a priority for the Indian Army. The Indian Army was not actively opposed to it but it remained ambivalent – neither fully throwing its weight behind the effort, nor fully opposing it. This ambivalence was rooted in concerns about cohesion of the Indian armed forces.<sup>78</sup> After Operation Bluestar, multiple units consisting of Sikh soldiers of the Indian Army' mutinied across north India. In one incident, angry troops of the Sikh Regiment formed a convoy and tried to dash towards the Golden Temple but were stopped in bloody firefights. The anger also enveloped a sizable portion of retired Sikh military personnel, numbered around 600,000 in Punjab. From the perspective of the Indian Army, this was a threat to “the very cohesiveness and fabric of the [Indian] army.”<sup>79</sup> As a result, the Army was wary of any blowback that might happen in case of use of force to counter the insurgency: “The army itself, smarting under the impact of the post-Bluestar desertions, is not too keen to do a repeat of Operation Shop, the code-name for the highly unpopular clean-up campaign in the Punjab countryside after June 1984.”<sup>80</sup> This view appears to have not changed until the retirement of Army chief General Krishnaswami Sundarji in 1988.

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77 Chima 2010, 132

78 Cohen, 1988, 137-138

79 Barua, 1992, 131

80 Report 1986

From 1988 to 1991, the continued violence and the inability to address the conflict with non-military options frustrated the central government. But that still did not lead to a clear determination on counterinsurgency. The central government took a hard line in public, but in the backdrop continued with concessions to find a political compromise.<sup>81</sup> In March 1988, as part of one such compromise – known as the Joghpur Detenues – 40 insurgent prisoners were released, who quickly descended upon the Golden Temple in Amritsar.<sup>82</sup> This proved extremely embarrassing, compelling the central government to order another raid at the Golden Temple, called Operation Black Thunder. Starting with Black Thunder, it appears that at least the central government had run the gambit of peace overtures. Thus, Rajiv began to see counterinsurgency as a priority affair. Besides Rajiv, many in the Congress's central leadership felt that continued disturbance in Punjab was impacting the Congress's electoral fortunes in multiple states.

This sense of priority in the central government, however, only lasted from April 1988 to late 1989, when Congress lost the elections. The central government switched from Congress to the National Front coalition led by VP Singh. Prime Minister VP Singh pursued a Punjab policy in which counterinsurgency lost all priority, and political overtures to the insurgents, what he called the “healing hearts” approach, took precedence.<sup>83</sup> When less than a year later VP Singh's government collapsed, his successor Prime Minister Chandrashekhar continued the VP Singh government's policy of talks and negotiations, and kept the counterinsurgency operations as a second fiddle option.<sup>84</sup>

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81 Chima 2010,

82 Gill 2001

83 Gill 2001, Sandhu 1989

84 Gill 2001

From 1988 to 1991, while the central government oscillated between no interest in counterinsurgency to some interest and back, the state level political elites remained consistently opposed to counterinsurgency. The traditional Akali leadership engaged in competitive outbidding (i.e. pretended to be more radical than they were) by expressing support for the militants and their cause.<sup>85</sup> The more extreme United Akali Dal (Mann) also clamored against the “actions of the security forces.” Their opposition intensified after the imposition of Presidential rule in 1988. During the VP Singh and Chandrashekar governments, the Presidential rule continued. To the extent that there was a shift, it occurred in the Indian Army. Concerned about the stability of the Punjab state which was a vital staging ground for operations against Pakistan and realizing that politics may not stabilize the province, the Indian Army wanted a more vigorous counterinsurgency effort.

Late 1991 was a watershed for the domestic political salience of the counterinsurgency war. The Indian National Congress came to power using Punjab as a key electoral slogan. Narsimha Rao strongly felt that political solutions had been exhausted and counterinsurgency needed to be given a priority. The Rao led central government was in part reacting to the soft approach that had been taken by his predecessors.<sup>86</sup> The central government’s revived interest in counterinsurgency was complemented by a coalition of Akali elites in the state government in early 1992. Beant Singh became the Chief Minister of Punjab with the support of traditional

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85 Chima 2010

86 Chima 2010, Gill 2001

Akali factions.<sup>87</sup> He benefitted from fragmentation and feuding in the more hardline factions like the United Akali Dal (Mann). The traditional camp's cohesion and unity at a time when the more extreme Akali factions were divided allowed Beant Singh and traditional Akali factions to not engage in competitive outbidding and instead be candid on the need to stop the insurgency. Beant, thus, matched Narsimah Rao's preference for a vigorous counterinsurgency effort. He categorically ruled out holding any negotiations, and "characterized the Punjab problem as a "law-and-order" one as opposed to a "political" one."<sup>88</sup> The Indian Army also welcomed the new-found consensus of the central and state level government. According to an officer from the period, the Army Chief General Sunith Francis Rodrigues wanted to steady India's conventional war preparedness in case of a Pakistani invasion, for which Punjab needed to be stabilized. Thus, Rodrigues thought that sustained counterinsurgency in Punjab was inevitable.

#### Organizational Experience of Counterinsurgency Forces in Punjab

In Punjab, the counterinsurgency force moved from low experience in the early period until 1987 to high experience by 1988. This was because there was a gradual accumulation of experience by a set of forces: the Punjab Police and allied paramilitary forces. When the conflict started in 1984, the counterinsurgency force consisted mainly of the Indian Army. That changed quickly after the operation Bluestar. The Indian Army was pulled back and the local security bureaucracy in the shape of the Punjab Police came in the lead. Starting 1984, the Police's involvement grew.

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87 Chima 2010, 218-219

88 Chima 2010, 220

The Punjab Police consisted of 35,794 personnel.<sup>89</sup> Not only did these personnel stay in the state until 1990, but the overall force grew to 52,898 in 1990 to 69,630 in 1994.<sup>90</sup> Similarly, two paramilitary forces, the Border Security Force (BSF) and Central Police Reserve Force (CPRF), were brought into the state to support the Punjab Police early in the conflict.<sup>91</sup>

One major source of break in experience for counterinsurgency can be the rotation of the forces out of the state. The lead security bureaucracy in the context of Punjab, the Punjab Police, remained stationed in Punjab through the course of the conflict. Senior officers rotated out of the state, but the key cog in the Punjab Police- the *thana* level personnel- saw no rotation. Other forces, however, saw rotation. For example, the CPRF regularly rotated. The Indian Army was brought back into the conflict piecemeal and saw rotation. But being in a minority, this did not impact the overall force's experience levels. Even when these forces were involved, it was a secondary, reinforcement force to the Punjab Police.

### Alternative Explanations

The domestic political salience and organizational experience theory offers a strong explanation for variation in L&S. In this section, I probe three alternative explanations which have been touted in the literature. The probes for each explanation identify key implications of the argument that we would expect to see if the explanations were valid:

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89 Purewal 2000

90 Purewal 2000

91 Mahadevan 2008, Gill 2001

## Organizational Culture

The culture thesis suggests that formative professionalization experiences of the leadership and rank-and-file are hard to overturn; some organizations have the right professionalization and thus culture for counterinsurgency while others don't.<sup>92</sup> This, in turn, implies that forces with the right culture can adapt and change as is necessary for counterinsurgency. In the Indian Punjab context, we need to probe the culture of the Punjab Police, which was the lead counterinsurgency force. For an organizational culture explanation to hold, as good adaptation and change was witnessed by 1992 and 1993 along the dimensions of L&S but not in the periods before it, that change needs to be preceded by some dramatic disruption shock that caused a shift in the culture of the counterinsurgency forces.

The overall pattern of change and adaptation contradicts the organizational culture thesis. The Punjab Police's pre-war professionalization experiences<sup>93</sup> suggest that the force was tailored and created for "law-and-order" roles – which is much closer to the kind of professionalization experiences considered optimal for counterinsurgency. It did not operate in large unit structures; decentralization was common; initiative was encouraged; and innovation was allowed. For the Punjab Police's dire struggles along the dimensions of speed from 1984 to 1991 to be accounted

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92 Long 2016 argues that formative professionalization experiences are vital in shaping the beliefs about nature of war and military, which inform the organizational culture of counterinsurgency forces. also in the culture camp: Downie, Nagl. These kind of cultural explanations of behavior during counterinsurgency are extension of works on conventional war like: Kier 1997.

93 Nath 1994, Gill 2001

by the path dependent nature of professionalization experiences, and thereby culture, we should expect continued poor compliance of L&S. But that did not happen.

If culture was holding the Punjab Police's adaptation back in the early period, how did it so dramatically improve in 1991? Typical culture arguments suggest that such shifts are likely mediated by major external shocks, which compel states to undertake wholesale changes in the professionalization processes of the counterinsurgency force. There was no real external shock in the Punjab conflict, however. The shift appears to be much less a function of the organizational culture involved and more a case of the domestic political salience that came to power the counterinsurgency effort starting late 1991 and the organizational experience gained by the forces in the state.

A second major piece of evidence which challenges the culture argument is the role played by the Indian Army in Punjab starting 1991. While the Punjab Police remained in the lead, the Indian Army served as a reinforcement force. The formations of the Indian Army deployed in the region worked well with the leadership of the Punjab Police.<sup>94</sup> The regular infantry also became tightly integrated in the Punjab Police's legitimacy and exploitation infrastructure. What explains Indian Army's role as a key cog in the counterinsurgency force which achieved optimal levels of L&S? None of these synergies can be explained by a culture-based argument. Professionalized in conventional war experiences, the Indian Army lacked the cultural ethos for the kind of adaptation we see.

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94 Gill 2001

## Civilian Control

Importance of civilian control has been touted as a key factor in counterinsurgency change and adaptation.<sup>95</sup> While the causal logics differ, the general theme of this tradition is that change as may be necessary for effectiveness is best achieved when generals are answerable to their civilian political bosses and can be booted for incompetence.

This kind of a civilian control account is the weakest for explaining the patterns of L&S we see in Punjab. Counterinsurgency in Punjab was by and large a civilian effort, with very limited role of the military and/or poorly performing general officers. As noted earlier, the Indian Army remained peripherally involved after Operation Bluestar. Thus, the Indian Army's poor compliance was not an issue. The central government and the state level elites were the key decision makers on how the counterinsurgency played out. Despite absolute civilian control, compliance with L&S flailed for a long period. At the level of the central government, Rajiv Gandhi, VP Singh, and later Chandrshekar actively pursued policies which obstructed the acquisition of the capabilities necessary for L&S. Later, when Punjab saw improvement in L&S, again the charge was led by civilian political elites like Prime Minister Narsimah Rao and Chief Minister Beant Singh. Rao and Singh were able to put forth a robust infrastructure not by booting senior officials for incompetence but by allocating resources and authority to the counterinsurgency force.<sup>96</sup>

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95 See: Avant 1994, Jackson 2008

96 Gill 2001, Chima 2010, 220

## Leadership

The conflict in Punjab is often touted as an important case of “the great man of counterinsurgency” argument. The great man thesis argues that the right general can bring about the operational changes necessary for counterinsurgency. In the context of Punjab, that great man was the famous Punjab Police Chief K.P.S Gill. Many of the innovations and adaptations that I document above are generally most powerfully associated with Gill’s leadership. Can his leadership account for the variation in levels of L&S?

While Gill’s personal charisma and leadership seems to have been an important contributor, the overall levels of L&S do not align with his role purely. Gill served in Punjab in multiple roles after the onset of the insurgency. Critically, he remained the Police Chief twice. When he served earlier, as one analyst notes, “Gill, despite his unique experience and immense skill, had previously been unable to completely eradicate militancy from either Punjab or the northeastern States.”<sup>97</sup> In words of the theoretical frame of the paper, he did not manage to implement L&S. He showed remarkable ingenuity even in early periods; but he was not above the constraints of domestic politics and the inexperience of his force. Starting 1992, however, “Gill was left to conduct operations untrammelled by politically-imposed handicaps,” which allowed him to bring about the reform and changes he actively sought.<sup>98</sup> In fact, the Rao government in Delhi and Beant Singh government in Punjab were equally keen on reform and changes to terminate the conflict. As one analyst notes, “the existence of a political consensus that the Police would be

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97 Mahadevan 2008

98 Mahadevan 2008

allowed to get on with its job without interference,” proved decisive in adapting to high levels of L&S.

Did Gill’s leadership, then, make no difference to compliance along L&S? The revival and implementation of the legibility infrastructure in Punjab from 1985 to 1988 is hard to account for with a domestic political salience and organizational experience account alone. As I show above, the Punjab Police began to swiftly improve on the dimensions of legibility. What is remarkable is that no serious domestic political pressures were driving the Punjab Police to revitalize its security bureaucracy at such a scale. More importantly, the Punjab Police was still relatively new to the counterinsurgency of warfare. There, Gill’s leadership explains more than a domestic political salience and experience account.

#### Kashmir 1990 to 1999

This section undertakes a within case analysis of the conflict in Kashmir from 1989 to 1999.

#### Background:

While the insurgency in Punjab was underway, a new crisis broke out in the state of Kashmir in the winter of 1988. Kashmir had been a contentious territory in the Indian federation since partition.<sup>99</sup> At the time, it was a Muslim majority princely state, ruled by a Hindu leader, Hari

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<sup>99</sup> Ganguly 1997

Singh. On the eve of partition, the British gave him the option to accede to India or Pakistan, or to be independent. Singh first chose independence, which triggered a local rebellion. Pakistan tried to capitalize on the rebellion by sending in material support and manpower. Hari Singh turned to India, who offered to support him only if he acceded to India.<sup>100</sup> He accepted the condition and the Indian government sent in forces to consolidate control. This led to the first war between India and Pakistan which continued into 1948.

Kashmir's contentious communion into India laid the basis for contentious politics in the state for decades to come.<sup>101</sup> In the backdrop of Pakistan's claims on Kashmir, politics in Kashmir centered around Prime Minister Nehru's 1947 commitment of organizing a plebiscite on the one hand and the central government's interference on the other. State level politics was dominated by the National Conference Leader Sheikh Abdullah.<sup>102</sup> Abdullah engaged in agitation against the central government up until the 1970s. One of his main demands was the holding of the plebiscite that Nehru had promised. This period incubated a generation of Muslim political activists across the state opposed to Indian rule of the state. Abdullah, however, dropped this demand after reaching a deal with Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, which allowed him to become the Chief Minister of the state. Abdullah's compromise engendered abundant resentment that never dissipated.

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100 Schofield 1996, 144

101 Schofield 1996, Bose 2009

102 Schofield 1996, Bose 2009

Following 1983, the center-state relationship saw crisis after crisis, each of which fueled the resentment. After Abdullah's passing, his successor Farooq Abdullah, who was also his son, formed the government at the state level and joined the anti-Congress alliance.<sup>103</sup> Gandhi was infuriated on losing her ally in the state and swiftly moved to dismiss Farooq's government. Congress then engaged in political engineering in the state in search of an ally. It threw support behind Farooq's rivals. But Farooq and the National Conference worked to earn the favor of the Congress back. They reached an accord with the Congress in 1987. Congress and the National Conference decided to contest elections together.

This was the backdrop in which the 1987 elections crisis was triggered.<sup>104</sup> The election saw massive mobilization in response to the Congress and the Muslim Conference alliance. The Muslim United Front, an alliance of local political parties led by the Jamaat-e-Islami, was a key player in the mobilization.<sup>105</sup> But the elections were -- if not rigged -- widely perceived to be rigged, which further fueled the mobilization. Many young members of the Muslim United Front decided to pick up the gun. Many began to cross the line of control and join training camps in Pakistan.<sup>106</sup> Soon after, violence began to break out in Kashmir and an insurgency was underway.

## Variation in L&S

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103 Bose 2009

104 Schofield 2000, Bose 2009

105 Joshi 1999, 15

106 Joshi 1999, 15

Beginning 1989, as violence engulfed large swathes of the Jammu and Kashmir, the Indian government mounted a counterinsurgency response across the state. From here on, I describe the Indian counterinsurgency approach in terms of the variable of L&S.

**TABLE 7: SUMMARY OF VARIATION IN L&S IN JAMMU AND KASHMIR 1989 TO 1999**

Time Period	L&S
1989 – 1994	Low
1994 -- 1996	Low
1996 -- 1999	Low

Legibility in Jammu and Kashmir:

From 1989 to 1999, the Indian government struggled to put in place a functional legibility infrastructure as part of the counterinsurgency campaign in Jammu and Kashmir. In this period, three types of legibility gaps are important to note. First, the counterinsurgent forces – primarily the Indian Army -- did not put in place any systematic population monitoring program. Jammu and Kashmir, like Punjab, had a node in the shape of the *thana* -- police station – for such population monitoring. In Kashmir, like in the rest of the country, the *thana* had maintained basic tabs on the population. Because of its mountainous terrain, the traditional *thana* did not have the same capacity as *thanas* in other states. Yet, it maintained look out warrants, fed local intelligence to Indian “intelligence agencies’ lists of the A and B category extremists”, and area dossiers on disturbances.<sup>107</sup> Once the conflict broke out, the *thana* took a major hit from which it did not recover until the late 1990s.<sup>108</sup> Across districts of North Kashmir, its regular administrative functions – recording FIRs and dissemination of situation reports -- were fractured

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107 Gupta 1990

108 Gupta 1990, Chadha 1997, Oberoi 2001

by the mid-1990s.<sup>109</sup> Through 1991 and 1992, the dysfunction of the Police spread to South Kashmir and Doda.<sup>110</sup> As late as 1995, a preponderance of *thanas* across the Kashmir valley remained closed.<sup>111</sup>

The *thana*'s revival as a node of legibility was precluded by the induction of a variety of security forces, ranging from the Indian military to paramilitaries like the BSF and the CPRF. Far from relying on them to monitor and/or track the population, the military and the para-military deeply mistrusted the Police: "The local police [were] suspected of being sympathetic towards the militants."<sup>112</sup> The mistrust was intensified by incidents of revolts and mutinies. A prominent break in discipline which reduced the role of the Police took place in 1993. A mutiny took place in the Police headquarters in Srinagar. The Indian Army was sent in to clear the "...resistance from the 1,000-odd personnel of the Jammu and Kashmir Armed Police inside, who in a revolt, had taken over the compound out of anger at the death of a colleague, Riyaz Ahmed, allegedly while in army custody." The Jammu and Kashmir Police saw a revival in its fortunes after the 1996 elections. Farooq Abdullah's government paid some attention to reviving basic administrative functions of the Police across the state. The creation of the Special Operations Group and the use of pro-state armed groups also brought about improvement of the *thana* in districts of Baramula and Anantnang. But much of this improvement was sporadic.<sup>113</sup> There is no

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109 Chadha 1997

110 Singh 1999

111 Multiple phone interviews

112 Baweja 1993

113 Swami 1998

clear evidence of a large-scale revival and expansion of the *thana* and its population tracking operations in the period which I examine.

A second major shortcoming which restricted the legibility of the counterinsurgency was the inability to implement basic legibility tactics to track the population in early periods, and the poor scale of such tactics when they were implemented. Until 1996, the counterinsurgency forces looked towards two agencies for running de-centralized paid informers with professional handlers and systematic interrogation of arrested cadres: Intelligence Bureau and the Jammu and Kashmir Police. As noted, the Police remained devoid of capacity to run such operations for much of the early period because of the closure of *thanas*. The Intelligence Bureau took a hit as well. In 1990, the IB lost many of its officers in the initial surge of violence, following which “Of its 32 offices in the valley, the IB had decided to pull out its utterly unprotected operatives from 26.”<sup>114</sup> A former head of the IB’s Kashmir operation, A.S. Daulat notes that in the initial period, “The IB’s sources dried up.”<sup>115</sup> The Intelligence Bureau’s erosion of capacity remained a major constraint for the Indian central government until mid to late 1990s.<sup>116</sup> In the mid-1990s, when the intelligence bureaucracies started recovering, non-availability of funds curtailed the implementation of such tactics at the level of both Police and the intelligence agencies.<sup>117</sup>

There is limited evidence of the counterinsurgency force in Jammu and Kashmir implementing a systematic interrogation program to map out the population. The closest evidence of systematic

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114 Report 1990

115 Dulat 2015

116 Dhar 2005, Mahadhevan 2012

117 Vinayak 1995

interrogation program appears to be the initiative of inducing surrender of militant forces.

Starting mid-1990s, the Indian government offered financial reward and protection for giving up militancy. These surrenders, however, were seen less as an intelligence collection opportunity but more as an opportunity to raise a counterinsurgency militia.<sup>118</sup> Some of the surrendered were made part of deployed forces, who would accompany, sometimes lead in raids. In 1996, the Special Operation Groups comprising the police and the surrendered militants operated in select districts. Others were allowed to form and maintain their own factions and rewarded for targeting insurgents in their regions of influence.

Third, the counterinsurgency force in Jammu and Kashmir did not have a technical surveillance capability.<sup>119</sup> The initial years were a period of dire equipment shortages. The Indian Army's electronic warfare assets for interception and monitoring were few.<sup>120</sup> The Intelligence Bureau also struggled to build up a technical surveillance capability. It acquired equipment; however, that equipment struggled to achieve scale at the level of the state. By mid 1990s, and onward, there was growing realization of the importance of technical surveillance. One report noted the kind of scale that the Indian intelligence needed for adequate coverage: "The job of monitoring, deciphering and locating their source is magnified by the fact that as of now there are 400 militant calling stations operating in the Valley alone, with 160 of them taking to the air almost every day...In Doda, ideal for guerrilla tactics because of its mountainous terrain, militants have 172 calling stations...In Rajouri and Poonch districts...131 calling stations have sprung up in

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118 Mahadhevan 2012, Chadha 2016

119 Chadha 1997, 2016

120 Roychowdhury 2002, 62

just one year.”<sup>121</sup> The Indian Army’s Signals Intelligence Directorate was tasked<sup>122</sup> to respond to the proliferation of this challenge with an Electronic Warfare operation to break “the “burst” and frequency-hopping systems being used by the militants” for interception to “direction finding of intercepted communication.” But until 1998, the Indian “army’s equipment [was] largely obsolete, mainly ex-Soviet or outdated European designed scanners to intercept messages.” The Indian Army wanted, for example, latest interception equipment, the kind that could “go through 220 channels per second.” Their demands were largely not met. Army officials were left complaining “for years about the old equipment they...had to use and the refusal of the Ministry of Defence to process their requests for urgently needed direction-finding equipment.”<sup>123</sup> Such problems also remained on the side of the Jammu and Kashmir Police and its CID. Police officers regularly noted that intelligence equipment for technical surveillance remained in short supply as late as 1999. A former DG Police in Jammu and Kashmir Gurbachan Jagat lamented the “resource crunch and failure of the bureaucracy in Delhi to gauge how crucial electronic warfare has become in the Valley.”<sup>124</sup> The state government asked the central government to provide the resources to expand communication interception. Funds were “...promised to the local police in 1998 through a Rs 197-crore package. [Until 1999 the Police] only received Rs 43 crore.”<sup>125</sup>

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121 Vinayak 1998

122 Multiple interviews

123 Vinayak 1998

124 Vinayak 1998

125 Vinayak 2000

## Speed of Exploitation

From 1990 to 1996, the speed of exploitation of legibility gains by counterinsurgency forces was constrained. There were attempts at improvements starting 1996, but the general pattern remained low speed of exploitation until 1999. There are three important indicators for the poor speed of exploitation.

First, the counterinsurgency force – made mainly of Indian Army but also drawing upon paramilitary organizations like the Central Police Reserve Force, the Border Security Force, Jammu and Kashmir, and the Intelligence Bureau -- struggled to process, share, and disseminate intelligence that was being generated in their respective bureaucracies. In the initial years, the problem was that most security bureaucracies – if they operated some basic legibility operation – struggled to process the leads that were generated. In the pre-insurgency period, processing of legibility gains gleaned from across the state in Jammu and Kashmir was the task of the Intelligence Bureau and the Jammu and Kashmir Police. The Jammu and Kashmir Police, however, lost that capability with the breakdown in the *thana* infrastructure.<sup>126</sup> A similar erosion in the scale of the Intelligence Bureau's operations hurt the bureau's processing capability.<sup>127</sup> By 1993/1994, however, all these bureaucracies were re-building their capability to process any legibility gains. The Indian Army's regular infantry divisions tasked with counterinsurgency drew on deficient internal intelligence apparatuses – tailored for conventional military

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<sup>126</sup> Joshi 1999, Nanavatty 2013, 75-77

<sup>127</sup> Joshi 1999

deployments, they lacked personnel, equipment, and standard procedures.<sup>128</sup> The Indian Army's intelligence arm, the Military Intelligence Directorate, also remained understaffed and ill-equipped to process legibility gains.<sup>129</sup>

But even with the shoring up of intelligence processing capability, sharing and dissemination of intelligence across the various security bureaucracies working in the state remained a challenge. As one analyst from the period noted: "One of the biggest problems that has plagued security operations in the Valley is the utter lack of communication and working relationships between the CPRF, BSF, ITBP, the army and the local police."<sup>130</sup> Senior commanders in the period saw the obstacles to sharing and disseminating as being rooted in the absence of an operational command which could coordinate with all the agencies. In the central government and the state level, as early as 1992 there was discussion of how to best solve this bureaucratic conundrum. In 1993, there were proposals to unify the command of the various security agencies. A structure was created in 1993, called "a new unified command structure" to improve relations between the variety of security units. But "...the new structure [was] admittedly still creaky because it has to be fine-tuned." Even the then Army chief, General Shankar Roychowdhury, was deeply dissatisfied with the arrangement.<sup>131</sup> In the years following that, the Indian Army continued to feel that the synergy between the various agencies was sub-optimal. The unified command was revamped in 1996 after Farooq Abdullah's rise as Chief Minister of the state.<sup>132</sup> Abdullah

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128 Joshi 1999, Singh 1999

129 Unnithan 2012

130 Baweja 1993

131 Roychowdhury 2002, 55-57

132 Roychowdhury 2002

elevated the Corps Commanders in rank on the committee. But the senior commanders wanted the subordination of the entire civilian administration in the state for improving operational flow of information. This was never solved in the Abdullah Chief Minister-ship. As late as 1999, the Army wanted “new coordinating mechanisms to be set up at all levels of the administration, mechanisms that would create an interface between civilian officials, the police and the military... down to district and even tehsil levels [to] provide for joint planning, decision making, directions, coordination and control.”<sup>133</sup> But this kind of a unified command was never realized.

A second problem – that complemented the lack of processing, sharing, and dissemination of intelligence – was that the counterinsurgency force remained ill equipped to undertake rapid mobilization and kinetic strikes. While there were definite improvements from 1991 to 1999, major roadblocks remained in this capacity till the start of the Kargil war. The inability to rapidly mobilize and carry out kinetic strikes was in large part due to capacity constraints. The Indian Army’s force structure, much like most conventional military forces, had a siege mindset.<sup>134</sup> It centered on territory domination out of large strongly fortified camps. The task of holding deployments which reached into the population was relegated to the Border Security Force and the CPFRR in large parts of the state. Most of the troops of the two paramilitaries were tasked with holding static positions instead of being mobile. The siege mindset of the counterinsurgency force was complicated by mobilization equipment shortages, dearth of road-opening parties, and

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133 Swami 1999

134 Baweja 1994

“zero-error” standard operating procedures.<sup>135</sup> The combined effect of these problems was that they remarkably slowed down deployment pace in case of raid or action. In Doda, for example, one analyst noted that “if there are people willing to pass on information about the militants’ whereabouts, it takes up to eight hours before the forces can actually act on that information.”<sup>136</sup> In 1995, even senior central government Ministers, like Rajesh Pilot, had begun to see the inability of the Indian Army to mobilize rapidly as a major constraint.<sup>137</sup> Dulat quoted Pilot asking the Vice Chief of Army Staff Surinder Nath in the context of the high-profile kidnapping by al-Faran/Harkat-ul-Ansar: “when we give the army information, why aren’t they able to do anything?”<sup>138</sup> To the extent that Indian Army had the tools available for rapid mobilization, they were constrained by authority. The central government largely barred the Indian military from utilizing helicopters for the purposes of rapid raids and mobilization to troubled spots.<sup>139</sup>

Towards the late 1990s, major efforts were afoot to improve the Indian Army’s exploitation processes. One major initiative in this regard was the creation of the counterinsurgency grid.<sup>140</sup> The grid was initially intended as an area/terrain domination exercise, supposed to signal to the population the return of the authority of the Indian state. It integrated principles of rapid mobilization on information leads.<sup>141</sup> The entire state was divided into forty-nine sectors with a 1000-man unit in each sector. Each sector was also provided with road-opening parties. Quick reaction teams at the level of the platoon were also made available to reduce mobilization time.

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135 Chadha 2016

136 Baweja 1994

137 Dulat 2015

138 Dulat 2015

139 Chadha 2016

140 Ganguly 2009, 83

141 Nanavatty 2013, 102

But the grid struggled to take root until 1999 and the concept of the quick reaction teams did not mature or scale.<sup>142</sup> Bickering and poor synergy was rife in the integration of the grid in Doda, for instance.<sup>143</sup> Swami notes that “In 1997, Doda district was carved into four “core group” areas, and an officer of the rank of Superintendent of Police was assigned effective charge of each Army brigade. Power struggles and institutional egos predictably disrupted the earlier parameters of cooperation between the forces, and the concept was quietly shelved.”<sup>144</sup> In the summer of 1999, the grid was disrupted with the onset of the Kargil war. After the war ended, a new effort was afoot by the Delhi based Home Ministry to improve the counter-insurgency grid in the state. Swami notes that “The Home Minister announced that 49 operational sectors were being carved out in order to improve efficiency...But no one at the Union Ministry of Home Affairs has so far cared to explain just how this will improve the functioning of the counter-insurgency grid.”<sup>145</sup>

A third recurring problem was issues of authority that were also hampering Indian Army’s exploitation practices in the region. As many analysts note, this problem was not one of the Indian Army being constrained by anything on paper. They enjoyed abundant latitude in initiating *CATS*, detention, arrest, and/or decapitation ex-post. There was no bureaucracy either at the level of the central government or the state that held them back. But the sentiment within the Army was that they were held back by post-raid action/accountability/criticism on the count of human rights abuses.<sup>146</sup> This accountability was initiated by the Army Headquarter in the time

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142 Subramanian 2000

143 Singh 1999

144 Swami 2000

145 Swami 2000

146 Singh 1999, 111, Saklani 1999, 113-115

of General BC Joshi and continued under the period of Shankar Roy Chaudry.<sup>147</sup> This led the Indian Army to create new in-house mechanisms for determining the appropriate use of force. This added a layer of bureaucratic control which systematically hampered the Indian Army's raiding practices.<sup>148</sup>

### Explaining L&S

This is a consistently poor pattern of L&S. In chronological order, it suggests a period of largely continued stagnation (low L&S). What explains these patterns? I first consider the domestic political salience and organizational experience explanation.

### Domestic Political Salience & Organizational Experience in Jammu and Kashmir

This explanation proposes that the interaction of the domestic political salience of the counterinsurgency war and the organizational experience of the forces involved can both constrain and drive the necessary adaptation and change essential for L&S. For this explanation to hold, we should see key domestic political actors in the Indian context attributing low salience to counterinsurgency in Kashmir and the forces involved in the counterinsurgency to have low experience of counterinsurgency throughout the period. In terms of mechanisms, while difficult to test with available evidence, we should see limited appetite for politically tenuous changes,

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147 Roychowdhury 2002

148 Interviews

limited professional incentives, low socialization pressures, and constraints on availability of capital for counterinsurgency, consistently.

There is substantial support for this explanation. For situating domestic political salience, as with the Punjab case, I focus on three key political actors: the political elites in-charge of the central government, the Indian military, and the key political parties in the state. For situating experience, I focus on the Indian Army and auxiliary forces like the paramilitaries of the BSF and CPRF, which formed the preponderance of the force structure in the conflict.

### **Domestic Political Salience of Counterinsurgency**

**TABLE 8: SUMMARY OF DOMESTIC POLITICAL SALIENCE OF COUNTERINSURGENCY IN J&K 1989 TO 1999**

	Centre	State Elites	Military	Overall
1990 to 1994	Ambivalent	Low	Ambivalent	Ambivalent
1994 to 1996	Ambivalent	Low	Ambivalent	Ambivalent
1996 to 1999	Ambivalent	Ambivalent	Ambivalent	Ambivalent

From 1984 to 1987, the Delhi based central government had a largely ambivalent attitude towards counterinsurgency in the state. Immediately after the conflict broke out, the central government worried about Pakistan attempting a conventional military invasion to take advantage of the uprising in the state.<sup>149</sup> To ward off that possibility, the central government prioritized massive induction of troops in the state. But in terms of counterinsurgency as a

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149 Butt 2017

solution to the problems of the state, there remained remarkable ambivalence starting with Prime Minister VP Singh in 1989 and continuing until Vajpayee.

There were a set of structural and contingent factors that made successive central governments ambivalent about the conflict. On the structural side, while Kashmir enjoyed an immense status as a symbol of the inclusive, secular state, Kashmir was in large part peripheral to the mainstream Indian polity. Kashmir as a territory had strategic worth for India but its politics did not factor into political calculations of the political parties either at the center or in other states. The relative exclusion of Muslims and Kashmiris from the modern Indian state also contributed to a general insensitivity to the political trajectory of the state: Kashmir's people and territory were "perceived as different, distant."<sup>150</sup> This distance from the polity is borne out by the fact that throughout the period that I examine, the conflict in Kashmir did not feature in the electoral fortunes of the political parties running for the central government across multiple elections. Put another way, parties did not have to worry about conflict and/or stability in Kashmir to achieve a winning coalition in federal India.

Then, successive Indian central governments remained divided over seeking a military victory by counterinsurgency and a political solution. Narsimah Rao's government saw Kashmir as one of those problems that had to, in words of a former Governor of Jammu and Kashmir, "...evolve till it's ready to be resolved" and until then "...the problem needs to be managed well."<sup>151</sup> The notion of leaving the problem to fester led to vigorous debate among Rao's ranks through 1993

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150 Lalwani 2014, 507

151 Bhatt 2004

and 1994. The New York Times noted in 1994: “With divisions among his top advisers on the balance to be struck between seeking a military victory and a political settlement, Mr. Rao has apparently settled on a middle course.”<sup>152</sup> Following Rao, the next two prime ministers, I.K. Gujral and H.D. Deve Gowda desired “serious dialogue.”<sup>153</sup> Under Vajpayee, counterinsurgency was again seen with abundant ambivalence and the central government sought the elusive political solution. In his memoir, former in-charge of the Intelligence Bureau’s Kashmir Group A.S. Daulat describes Vajpayee’s background political initiatives to a range of insurgent leaders.<sup>154</sup> Insisting that a political settlement/compromise was central to the “Vajpayee way”<sup>155</sup> for handling Kashmir, Daulat quotes Vajpayee as saying: “Iss guthi kou suljhana hai (we have to untie this knot).”<sup>156</sup>

After the spate violence in the state in 1992 and 1993, the central government began to see high tempo counterinsurgency as counterproductive. From 1989 until 1992, as insurgent violence mounted, Indian security forces frequently resorted to indiscriminate violence.<sup>157</sup> By 1993, India’s human rights record was a matter of intense international scrutiny. This led to an international political backlash, which the central government in Delhi was abundantly sensitive to.<sup>158</sup> The central government did not call off the counterinsurgency operations in the region but it began to see high-tempo militarized efforts as something that was likely to earn international opprobrium. By 1995, the central government saw denting international sympathy for the

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152 Burns 1994

153 Swami 2003

154 Daulat 2015

155 Jaleel 2014

156 Daulat 2015

157 Levy and Scott Clark 2012, 398

158 Mahadevan 2012, 112-113

separatist movement as essential. For Prime Minister Rao, this meant holding elections in the state. For Gowda, it became about dialogue. For Prime Minister Gujral and Vajpayee, dialogue with political figures in the state and a reset of relations with Pakistan were the key to solving Kashmir – all of which placed counterinsurgency on the backburner for the key domestic political elites in Delhi.

The political leadership in the state opposed counterinsurgency efforts from 1989 to 1999. Some of this opposition was active: State elites spoke out against counterinsurgency. At other times it was passive: State elites – if in charge of the government – actively obstructed counterinsurgency efforts. The key political elites in this context were the leaders of the National Conference, the political parties with Pro-India leanings.<sup>159</sup> During the period of the Presidential rule, the heads of the parties, Farooq Abdullah and Mufti Sayed, spoke out against counterinsurgency. Their behavior, in part, was shaped by the separatist non-violent political coalition, the All Parties Hurriyat Conference. Hurriyat, as it was known, enjoyed popularity in the state, but also refused to participate in the political process. Both consciously positioned themselves to pander to Kashmiri nationalism.<sup>160</sup>

Farooq, who was a more critical state level player as chief minister of the state following the 1996 elections, couched his opposition in an alternative political plan for the state: regional autonomy. During the years of the Presidential rule in the state, which lasted until 1996, he vigorously campaigned on this platform as a solution to the agitation in the state. After becoming

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159 Bose 2009

160 Dulat 2015

the Chief Minister in 1996, he doubled down on his demands for autonomy arguing: “A clean political process will build confidence in the people and that will gradually silence the gun. Then our neighbor too will realise the futility of their proxy war.”<sup>161</sup> And while he furthered his agenda of autonomy, arguably with limited success, he consistently behaved in ways “...to distance himself from counter-terrorist operations in Jammu and Kashmir.”<sup>162</sup>

Much like the central government, the Indian Army was also ambivalent towards counterinsurgency. On the one hand, it worried about the Pakistan specific threat to Jammu and Kashmir. Like the central government, the India Army worried about the possibility of a potential invasion by Pakistan. But the Army also felt stretched with internal security duties. In 1990, the Army had nearly four division worth of regular infantry deployed in Assam. The conflict in Punjab was also continuing, where more forces had been sent in support of the Punjab Police. Overall, the Army Chief General Sunith Francis Rodrigues wanted to steady India’s conventional war preparedness in case of a Pakistani invasion, according to a senior officer from the period. Between Punjab and Kashmir, the Army chief Rodrigues wanted Punjab to be accorded priority.<sup>163</sup> This state of thinking continued in the period of Generals BC Joshi, Shankar Roychowdhury, and VP Malik – all of whom gave priority to conventional war preparedness. An important indication of the low priority given to counterinsurgency in the periods of Rodrigues, Joshi, and Roy was the Army’s refusal to meet Governor Krishna Rao’s multi-year demand for two additional infantry divisions for the valley. In denying this request, they shared the central

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161 Baweja 1996

162 Swami 2000

163 Interviews

government's view on the counterinsurgency mission being a support to political openings in the state ranging from holding of elections to dialogue with the militants, and not the end goal itself.<sup>164</sup>

### Organizational experience

In Kashmir, the Indian government deployed massive manpower. One estimate placed the number at 300,000 to 400,000 security forces by 1993 and up to 500,000 by 1995.<sup>165</sup> These troops consisted of regular infantry units of the Indian Army, the specialized counterinsurgency force called Rashtriya Rifles, paramilitaries of the Border Security Force, the Central Police Reserve Force, and the Jammu and Kashmir Police.<sup>166</sup>

Some limited evidence suggests that four of these deployments – the regular infantry units of the Indian Army, the Border Security Force, and the Central Police Reserve Force -- saw consistent rotation out of the state after relatively short periods – ranging from twelve to eighteen months -- because of demands on the forces in other regions as well as concerns about combat fatigue.<sup>167</sup>

The Rashtriya Rifles, a specialized counterinsurgency force raised for Kashmir in the era of General BC Joshi, was initially intended to overcome the rotation pathology. But at least until 1999, it was no different. The Indian Army pulled in manpower from different infantry army

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164 Interviews  
165 Lalwani 2014, 226  
166 Nanavatty 2013  
167 Interviews

regiments on “a rotational two-year basis.” As Rajagopalan notes, “the [Rashtriya Rifles] is like any other regular army infantry battalion in the way it operates.”<sup>168</sup>

### Alternative Explanations

The domestic political salience and organizational experience explanation appears to strongly account for variation in L&S. In this section, I probe three alternative explanations which have been touted in the literature: culture, civilian control, and leadership. The probes for each explanation identify key implications of the argument that we would expect to see if the explanations were valid.

### Organizational Culture

The culture thesis can be probed in the context of Jammu and Kashmir by assessing the conduct of four security bureaucracies: the Indian Army, the Rashtriya Rifles, the paramilitaries, and the Jammu and Kashmir Police. If professionalization experiences matter in shaping change and adaptation of counterinsurgency forces, the argument would predict that the Indian Army should struggle, whereas the paramilitaries, the Rashtriya Rifles and the Police should gradually improve through the course of the conflict.

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<sup>168</sup> Rajagopalan 2004

There is support for the argument to the extent that regular infantry units of the Indian Army struggled to adapt and change for a long period of time. Based on limited evidence, it appears that the professionalization experiences of the regular Indian Army held them back.<sup>169</sup> With its conventional war background, the Indian Army deployments struggled to overcome their siege mentality, stage discriminate operations, and operate in small-unit form. But the argument cannot explain the conduct of the other forces involved. We see the paramilitaries of the BSF, the specialized Rashtriya Rifles, and the Jammu and Kashmir Police struggling in somewhat the same way as the Indian Army. There is no evidence that the Jammu and Kashmir Police operated in any way that aligns with L&S, even during the Chief Minister-ship of Farooq Abdullah. The BSF had a “police ethos,”<sup>170</sup> and yet it couldn’t overcome siege mentality or the “zero-error” syndrome.<sup>171</sup> A consistent complaint with the BSF was its inability to deploy in a way that allowed for holding of territory and rapid deployment.<sup>172</sup> The Rashtriya Rifles’ operational conduct specifically contradicts the culture thesis: The Indian Army made substantial investment in first raising, and later training diverse personnel from the regular Army to inculcate a counterinsurgency culture.<sup>173</sup> And yet, the Rashtraya Rifle’s battlefield conduct – while better than that of other bureaucracies – was not substantially different from its peer security services.<sup>174</sup>

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169 Rajagopalan 2004

170 Rajagopalan 2004

171 Nanavatty 2013

172 Singh 1999

173 Ganguly 2009

174 Baweja 1995, Ahmed 2009, Rajagopalan 2004

It appears that the problem of change has much less to do with culture and much more to do with the absence of any kind of sustained domestic political pressure to adopt L&S. There is some evidence that senior and local counterinsurgency commanders realized the importance of the tactics, practices, and technologies of L&S, yet were constrained in realizing them. That constraint appears to be much more domestic political in nature.

### Civilian Control

Civilian control has been touted as a key factor in counterinsurgency change and adaptation. The case of Jammu and Kashmir is of poor adaptation and change towards L&S. For the civilian control argument to be correct, we should expect the inability to adapt to L&S to result from civilian political bosses struggling to control or dismiss incompetent senior leaders of the counterinsurgency force, like general officers.

This kind of a civilian control account does not explain the patterns of L&S in Kashmir. The Indian internal security context is generally one of solid civilian control.<sup>175</sup> In the case of Jammu and Kashmir, civilian control was even stronger. In the period examined, the central government in Delhi devised the Kashmir policy; general officers had a minimal role.<sup>176</sup> Even at the state level, civilians had more influence – especially after 1996. The Indian Army had a long-standing demand to be allowed more executive control over the unified command apparatus. But the civilians did not give in. In 1999, Lt General Avatar Gill, the chief of the Rashtriya Rifles, “made

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175 Ray 2013

176 Nanavatty 2013

demands for new powers” but “the State Government...fought off the Army's efforts to place itself at the apex of the security establishment.”<sup>177</sup> As late as 1999, “civilian authority remain[ed] firmly in place.”<sup>178</sup>

Given such absolute civilian control, the patterns of poor adaptation and change cannot be attributed to the civilians being unable to hold the military forces accountable. The civilian political leaders could have easily removed and made examples out of incompetent senior officers for poor counterinsurgency. But the fact that they did not suggests two possibilities. Either there was no incidence of incompetence; or, if there was, the civilians were somewhat indifferent towards it. With the available evidence, it is difficult to arbitrate between these two. More plausible is the fact that the civilians did not care as much, which aligns with the ambivalence coding of the domestic political salience variable.

### Punjab vs Kashmir in Comparative Perspective

How might we account for the cross-case variation in compliance with L&S? At the level of the conflict, there are two stark patterns. In Punjab, there is shift and change in L&S. In Kashmir, we don't see any meaningful change in L&S. These patterns most closely align with predictions of the interaction of domestic political salience and organizational experience variables.

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177 Swami 1999

178 Swami 1999

There are clear and dramatic differences in the domestic political salience of counterinsurgency and organizational experience across the two cases, especially some years into the conflict. By 1991, counterinsurgency in Punjab became politically very salient and the state also had an experienced counterinsurgency force, so we should expect to see a rapid shift to optimal levels of L&S. On the other hand, counterinsurgency in Kashmir remained well below the domestic political salience bar and frequently had an inexperienced counterinsurgency force. Therefore, we should see less than optimal levels of L&S. Indeed, that is exactly what we see in the two cases.

If we apply any of the alternative accounts like organizational culture, civilian control, and leadership patterns to the two cases, there are differences, but those differences do not predict such a dramatically different outcome and thus cannot account for the patterns we see. For example, the culture of the organizations involved is not altogether that different. The composition of forces was different -- with Punjab seeing a dominant role of the Police and Kashmir seeing the Army in the lead -- but the overall force structure across the two conflicts was hybrid. There was an abundance of paramilitaries in both campaigns; the Army was involved in Punjab starting 1989, and Kashmir saw a substantial role of the Jammu and Kashmir Police at least mid-1990s onward. There was not much in terms of variation on the dimension of civilian control. The leadership patterns across the two cases overlapped somewhat -- with Narsimha Rao presiding crucial years of both the conflicts -- so that cannot account for such a wide difference either. The Jammu and Kashmir campaign broke out in the fifth year of the conflict in Punjab. Until 1994, the counterinsurgency effort saw the same leaders at the level of the central government and the Army.

## Conclusion

This chapter shows that Indian counterinsurgency conduct as captured by a new variable of L&S within and across the conflicts in Punjab and Jammu and Kashmir is best accounted for by the variables of domestic political salience of counterinsurgency and the organizational experience of the forces involved. The argument contrasts with views arguing primacy of counterinsurgency leadership, civilian control, and organizational culture as central to change and adaptation in counterinsurgency behavior.

Besides providing an important alternative to existing theories, two implications emerge from this argument for understanding counterinsurgency conduct. First, the Indian case shows that change and adaptation rest in major part on political assessments of the counterinsurgency by a number of key domestic political players. Second, the Indian case challenges an empirical literature on counterinsurgency emphasizing the influence of regime type on counterinsurgency performance.<sup>179</sup> This literature asserts that democracies are inferior at counterinsurgency, and by extension unlikely to change and adapt. The Indian case shows that far from being inferior at counterinsurgency they can be fairly adept at it under the right conditions, like in Punjab. But the democratic process can also pose major constraints on it under other conditions, like in Kashmir. All of this is to say the regime type alone doesn't provide essential explanatory power for explaining counterinsurgency conduct as captured by L&S.

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<sup>179</sup> Lyaal 2010, Zhukov calls this the democratic pessimism towards counterinsurgency literature



## **Chapter 4: Determinants of L&S on the North West Frontier: Domestic Politics and Experience in Pakistan**

In this chapter I study the sources of variation in the L&S in Pakistan's counterinsurgency on its North West border from 2002 to 2011. Since 9/11, Pakistan's North West has been the site of an irregular civil war between the Pakistani state and groups like the Pakistan Taliban, Al-Qaeda, and their affiliates. I provide a medium-N analysis of Pakistani counterinsurgency campaigns testing implications of my theory and orthodox theories of counterinsurgency change, like leadership, culture, and civilian control. I further process trace the mechanisms driving the patterns of L&S.

This chapter has three main findings. First, I show that the variation in the L&S -- corresponding by and large to low and intermediate levels of L&S -- best accords with the variables of the new theory i.e. domestic political salience and experience of the military involved. In Pakistan, counterinsurgency was a low salience issue until 2008 for major political actors; the Pakistani military also had limited experience of counterinsurgency in the period. Both variables shifted from 2008 to 2012. The domestic political salience changed from opposition to ambivalence. Increasingly, counterinsurgency operations involved forces which had gained some experience.

Second, there is limited support for implications of theoretical alternatives like culture, leadership, and civilian control. For example, the forces involved exhibited some variation in their organizational culture; the counterinsurgency force structures in some regions was dominated by the Army's regular infantry trained in conventional warfare, while in others by the

paramilitary comprising of local co-ethnics, the Frontier Corps. However, there is limited force-specific variation. Additionally, Pakistan had ample variation in leaders of counterinsurgency campaigns over time and across geographies; yet, no Army chief, corps commander, and/or Frontier corps inspector general's tenure corresponds with definitive improvement.

Third, I find that Pakistani adaptation and change was mediated by mechanisms such as low political appetite, poor professional incentives, absence of socialization pressures, and resource constraints towards counterinsurgency from 2002 to 2008. From 2008 onward, the mechanisms appear to have shifted, which aligns with predictions of the coding of the domestic political salience and force experience variables.

## Research Design

This chapter analyzes counterinsurgency in Pakistan's North West Frontier in two parts. First, I use medium-N data on Pakistani counterinsurgency as captured by L&S to compare the predictions of the new theory and orthodox theories. To capture variation in L&S in Pakistan from 2002 to 2011, I code 9 districts by year in Pakistan's North West that were engulfed by the insurgency between 2002 and 2011. These districts include South Waziristan from 2002 onwards; Bajaur, Khyber, Orakzai, Kurram, and Mohmand from 2005 onward; Swat from 2006; and FR Tank from 2007. I code a variety of indicators of legibility and speed dimensions in all district years using mostly interview data, details of which are provided in the appendix. Second, I process trace multiple mechanisms implied under the variables of domestic political salience and organizational experience. The process tracing method I draw upon is called analytic process

tracing, in which the narrative is described in theoretical terminology of the theory under consideration.<sup>1</sup>

## Background

Bordering Afghanistan, Pakistan's tribal areas, known as the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), have been semi-autonomous regions since the country's formation in 1947. At the time, Pakistan's founder Muhammed Ali Jinnah embraced precepts of indirect rule left behind by the colonial British to govern the FATA. The informal agreement reached was that tribes were to stay loyal to the state while the state would allow tribes to live by a combination of tribal code and side payments, codified in an agreement called the Frontier Crimes Regulation (FCR).

During the cold war, the region became an incubator for the fledgling Afghan resistance. The Afghanistan rebellion against the Soviets, facilitated by the governments of United States and Pakistan, relied deeply on support from the tribal belt. After 1988, the centrality of the tribal areas to Afghanistan based armed groups increased. As Afghanistan fell into a bloody civil war, indigenous resistance in eastern Afghanistan backed by the Pakistani government, continued to fall back on the tribal areas. By 1996, the Taliban movement led by Mullah Omar, the Kandahar based religious leader, had swept across much of the eastern parts of Afghanistan while drawing on extensive support from the tribal areas of Pakistan.<sup>2</sup>

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1 George and Bennett 2005, 211

2 Rashid 2010, 41

The events of 9/11 put the tribal areas on the center stage of international politics. Al-Qaeda and other transnational “jihadis” -- targets of the American Operation Enduring Freedom -- were overwhelmed by American firepower. As the pressure mounted, Al-Qaeda and its various affiliated groups, including the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, turned to the Pakistani tribal belt for sanctuary.<sup>3</sup> Soon after invading Afghanistan, American policy makers realized that Al-Qaeda leaders, including those involved in the September 11 attacks, were moving towards the tribal areas of Pakistan.<sup>4</sup>

Following 9/11, Pakistan joined the US-led coalition’s war against Al-Qaeda. In 2002, the Pakistani military organized search operations to hunt Al-Qaeda’s leadership escaping to the tribal districts of Mohmand Agency, Kurram Agency and South Waziristan Agency. Some of the search operations ended uneventfully but others, especially the search operations in the South Waziristan Agency, were met with stiff confrontation.<sup>5</sup> By the end of 2002, the resistance to search operations was mounting. The Pakistan Army started coming under offensive attacks in a number of regions in the South Waziristan Agency. In 2002, an attack took place in the Azam Warsak area of the South Waziristan Agency, killing nearly a dozen Pakistani soldiers. The year 2002 proved to be a watershed. Violence against the Pakistani state began to mount, surprising Western capitals and General Pervez Musharraf’s military regime alike. Led by the Peshawar based eleventh corps, the Pakistan Army turned to rapid militarization of the region, not knowing that it was about to be the start of a long counterinsurgency war.

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3 Rashid 2008, 148

4 Rashid 2008, 99

5 Fair and Jones, 2010

## Domestic Politics and Military Experience in Pakistan 2002 to 2011

In this section, I establish the values of the two variables relevant to my theory: domestic political salience and military experience. I show two things from hereon. First, the counterinsurgency war did not enjoy any domestic political salience from 2002 to 2008 among two key political actors in the domestic political context: Army's general staff and major political parties. The lack of domestic political salience was rooted in the widespread perception of the war effort being a consequence of the unnecessary American presence in Afghanistan, which riled important political brokers in the country. In late 2008, there was a regime change, with which the domestic political salience shifted from low to medium salience as the major political parties in the country moderated their opposition.

Second, the Pakistani security apparatus tasked with the counterinsurgency operation -- both the regular Army and the paramilitary Frontier Corps -- had limited prior experience of internal war. The Pakistan Army was a conventional army at the onset of the conflict. Only a fraction of the military had taken part in counterinsurgency, if at all. And as the conflict went on, despite a significant part of the country falling in throes of the insurgency, less than a third of the military was exposed to the war effort.

### Domestic Political Salience of Counterinsurgency in Pakistan

**TABLE 9: DOMESTIC POLITICAL SALIENCE OF COUNTERINSURGENCY IN PAKISTAN 2002 TO 2011**

	Army Chief	Generals	Major Political Parties	Overall
2002 to 2008	High	Low	Low	Low
2008 to 2011	High	Low	Ambivalent	Medium

I first detail the initial structure of the conflict from 2002 to 2008, which corresponds to low for domestic political salience and low for experience, and the shift in it for the 2008 to 2011 period, which corresponds to medium for domestic political salience and low for experience. The Table 9 above summarizes the coding of domestic political salience.

#### Domestic Politics: 2002 to 2008

The domestic politics surrounding the counterinsurgency was shaped by three important political actors: General Pervez Musharraf, the then ruler of Pakistan, the military's general staff, and political parties.

In 1999, Pakistan descended into military rule. Army Chief General Pervez Musharraf deposed civilian government of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif in a bloodless coup. Musharraf inherited a heavily sanctioned Pakistan -- short on cash and economically in dire straits. 9/11 gave him an opportunity to alter the course of Pakistani economy with US aid. Musharraf sided with the US government post US invasion of Afghanistan, pledging to support US operations. As resistance in Pakistan intensified, two things in this period made him view the counterinsurgency effort towards Al-Qaeda and select other factions of the Taliban. First, Zawahiri's jihad against him in

2003 and the two attacks on his own life. Second, the concern of a drop in US aid money, which was shoring up his rule, if he failed to act against Al-Qaeda. Thus, as early as late 2003, he personally viewed the counterinsurgency effort against select groups as essential.<sup>6</sup>

In contrast, the preponderance of Musharraf's generals held a negative view of waging counterinsurgency. What were the roots of the military's opposition and why did it matter so much? The general officers were Musharraf's political base.<sup>7</sup> They had catapulted Musharraf into power in 1999. Much of his decisions were filtered by the concerns of his generals and the sentiment within military, above all else. He also extensively used the military led intelligence agencies to stifle domestic opposition which opposed the coup.<sup>8</sup> Thus, the views and preferences of the generals had implications for the domestic politics surrounding the insurgency.

The generals were conservative and nationalist. One view that was common to the generals of the generation was a commitment to revisionist ideas, especially vis-à-vis the Indian role in the region.<sup>9</sup> In the revisionist ideology, the generals considered Afghanistan as a region of so-called "strategic depth." Further, in this view, a pliant government in Afghanistan was considered imperative for Pakistan's security. Through the 1990s, the Pakistani military facilitated the rise of the pro-Pakistan Afghan Taliban regime.<sup>10</sup>

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6 Aziz 2013

7 Aziz 2013

8 Shah 2014

9 Fair 2014

10 Rashid 2010, 48

Following 9/11, Musharraf's decision to drop support for the Taliban regime in Afghanistan and side with the US defied the revisionist ideas common to the general staff of the Pakistan Army. Most of Musharraf's generals were deeply committed to instrumentalizing the Afghan territory for strategic gains. They were deeply offended by Musharraf's acquiescence to US demands, seeing it as a desperate attempt on his part to shore up international support for his regime.<sup>11</sup>

In the days immediately after 9/11, the disdain was muted and Musharraf was able to pull the plug on support for the Afghan Taliban. But soon enough Musharraf started getting backlash from the general staff. In meetings with corps commander, he was confronted with tough questions.<sup>12</sup> Musharraf reasoned that he had no choice and that any decision to the contrary would have risked the American invasion of Pakistan. The 9/11 commission reflected Musharraf's political predicament: "Musharraf said the GOP [Government of Pakistan] was making substantial concessions in allowing use of its territory and that he would pay a domestic price. His standing in Pakistan was certain to suffer."<sup>13</sup>

By the end of 2003, the opposition of the generals was more than a polemic affair. Al-Qaeda was on the move towards Pakistan and incubating a resistance movement to fight the Pakistanis. The Americans realized the growing challenge, and worried about its implications. Brian Cloughley observes that "Washington insisted that Pakistan take action against tribes sheltering Taliban adherents and possibly (indubitably, in the US assessment) members of Al-Qaeda."<sup>14</sup>

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11 Interview Pakistani official, Islamabad 2016

12 Aziz 2013

13 Report 2011, 474

14 Cloughley 2008, 123

Musharraf opted for an audacious dual strategy. On the one hand, he started covertly supporting and aiding the Afghan Taliban -- ironically, after helping the Americans in bringing the Taliban down.<sup>15</sup> On the other hand, Musharraf tried to fight Al-Qaeda and its influx in Pakistan. He wanted his generals to step up militarily against Al-Qaeda and its affiliates. But the generals remained half-hearted. General Musharraf found considerable reluctance amongst his chosen commanders. Most in the military headquarters showed little enthusiasm for the war effort. Shahid Aziz, a former Chief of General Staff under Musharraf, notes that most officers in the period felt a deep revulsion towards the war. The then main local commander of the war effort, General Ali Jan Orakzai was seen as leading the charge for “soft-pedaling” the response.<sup>16</sup>

Cloughley notes that Orakzai consistently “...tried to avoid direct military confrontation.”<sup>17</sup> A former Military Intelligence official told me in an interview that “General Musharraf faced opposition on issues as minor as how many troops to mobilize, which action to undertake, which village to target; very quickly he realized that he just could not push too hard.”<sup>18</sup> This tension within the general staff on operational matters is noted by Nayak, arguing that it “..divided Pakistan’s traditionally cohesive army. US pressures for more vigorous Pakistani operations in border areas allegedly has spered arguments among military leaders on whether to refocus the army on the growing insurgency problem along the western border or to continue arming and strategizing against India as a central threat.”<sup>19</sup>

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15 Interview Pakistani official, Islamabad 2016

16 Interview FATA secretariat bureaucrat, Peshawar 2016, also noted in: Schofield 2011

17 Cloughley 2008, 125

18 Interview Pakistani official, Islamabad 2016

19 Nayak 2008, 308-309

Like the generals, various political parties in Pakistan were major power brokers. And they, too, opposed the war effort. Why did the political parties matter? Indeed, the country was under military rule, and Musharraf was unconstrained in many ways. Still, Musharraf gave some space to the domestic political opposition.<sup>20</sup> Musharraf fashioned himself as a liberal autocrat, allowing some democratic activity in the country. He allowed the opposition to organize both on the streets and in the media. He also allowed elections to take place in November 2002, allowing a return to, what his detractors called, “sham” parliamentary democracy.<sup>21</sup>

The domestic opposition was led by two religious political parties: the Jamaat-e-Islami and Jamaat-e-Ulema Islami. General Musharraf was sensitive to the concerns of these parties for three reasons. First, General Musharraf, and his extended political coterie of advisers and political allies, prominent of which was the political party Pakistan Muslim League Q, remained concerned with the ability of the religious parties to mobilize protests against the regime.<sup>22</sup> This was not an unfounded concern. Following 9/11, religious leaders demonstrated considerable street power.<sup>23</sup> General Musharraf’s decision to side with the Americans was unpopular among a large section of the Pakistani public. The religious parties successfully harnessed the anger by activating the country’s extensive religious base of *madressas* and mosques to protest against the US invasion and Pakistan’s decision to support it.<sup>24</sup> In the November 2002 elections, the religious parties coalesced into an alliance called the Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA), and leveraged the anger into important political victories. As noted by the Human Rights Watch in

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20 Shah 2003

21 Daalder 2006, 210

22 Interview 2016

23 Rashid 2008, 90

24 Rashid 2008, 90

2003, “The dramatic rise of MMA, opposed to US presence in the region and Pakistan’s participation in the war on terror, signaled increasing rejection of Musharraf’s domestic and foreign policies.”<sup>25</sup>

Second, Musharraf needed the parties to legitimize his rule through the Pakistani parliament. Musharraf wanted to pass constitutional provisions recognizing his military rule as essential. But in the November 2002 elections, religious political parties won more seats in the national and provincial legislatures than at any time in Pakistan’s history, which made them an important power broker in the parliamentary politics at the time. Thus, General Musharraf’s ambitions to engineer constitutional provisions to validate his military rule invariably were impossible without the support of the religious political party coalition. This point is best noted by Jones and Fair: “The JUI and its allies in the MMA also comprised Musharraf’s ‘opposition of choice’ in the federal parliament. Musharraf’s appetite for confronting the militants, which enjoyed the support of elements of the JUI, waned for fear of alienating key leaders of the MMA, whom Musharraf needed to push through his controversial and extra-constitutional policies.”<sup>26</sup>

Third, the religious base’s anger was doubly dangerous because of its close nexus with the insurgency. During the dictatorship of General Zia-ul-Haq from 1977 to 1989, Pakistan’s religious political base had incubated the resistance against the Soviet Union, aided and funded by both the Pakistani government and the US. During the 1990s, the religious parties also supported the rise of the Taliban regime. Prominently, the Jamiat-Ulema Islam had supplied a

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25 HRW 2003 Report, 262; it is important to note that many allege the MMA’s rise was orchestrated by General Musharraf as a way to signal to the US the threat posed by the extremists, and therefore the US needed a partner like him.

26 Fair and Jones 2009, 171

stream of manpower to reinforce the Afghan Taliban's fighting strength as it swept through Afghanistan. The US decision to invade Afghanistan led important factions within these parties to call for a rebellion against the Pakistani state.

Two other important mainstream political parties at the time also mobilized against General Musharraf, further weakening his hand. General Musharraf sought to keep out the Muslim League of the deposed Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and the Peoples Party of former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto. Both strongly clamored against General Musharraf's support of the US invasion and his subsequent decision to militarily confront the fledgling resistance on the Pakistani side.

Thus, major political parties across the country roused the public opinion against the war effort. Many in the politico-religious elite openly argued that the emergence of the Pakistani groups calling for "Shariah" was a legitimate expression of anger and anxiety in response to Pakistani decision to side with the Americans. Puri notes that "It provided Musharraf's political opponents material to vilify him, with the MMA arguing that Musharraf had made Pakistan into a US stooge. The Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), under Nawaz Sharif, and the Pakistan People's Party (PPP), the party associated with the Bhutto lineage, both opposed the offensive on political grounds since both parties had been frozen out of politics after Musharraf's 1999 coup. In the years to come both Sharif and Benazir Bhutto would sharpen their challenge to Musharraf."<sup>27</sup>

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27 Puri 2012, 52

The political parties were taking cues from the public opinion at the time, which was deeply opposed to counterinsurgency. In three polls conducted in September, November 2007 and January 2008, the IRI found that in response to the question of “Agree or Disagree? I support the Army Fighting Extremists in NWFP and FATA,” only 27% to 39% answered in agreement; the plurality of the response was in disagreement, ranging from 55% to 53%.<sup>28</sup> In June 2008, IRI similar found “only 27% wanted the Army to fight extremists in NWFP/FATA, 22% said it should fight al Qaeda, and 20% felt this way about the Taliban.”<sup>29</sup> As Fair noted for the pre-2009 period, Pakistanis were “...divided about their army’s operations against militants in the NWFP and FATA, staunchly opposed to fighting Al Qaeda and the Afghan Taliban and continue to be extremely supportive of the infamous and ignominious peace deals that have been inked with domestic militants since 2004.”<sup>30</sup>

Thus, the opposition by the generals and the anger of political parties resulted in a domestic political environment deeply opposed to the counterinsurgency war. From 2002 to 2008, the opposition never abated; it only exacerbated. As the military’s involvement in the tribal areas intensified, key politicians and generals began to frequently use the adage: “this is not our war, this is America’s war.”<sup>31</sup> As one commentator noted, “The war on terrorism -- termed “the American war” -- has been deeply unpopular in Pakistan, where the perception of this war as anti-Islamic has been fed by the conflict in Iraq. Many blame Musharraf for doing the bidding of the United States. The notion that Washington is dictating policy inside Pakistan has sparked an

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28 IRI 2008

29 Pew 2009

30 Fair 2009, 48

31 Interview Journalist, Peshawar 2016

anti-US reaction, even among moderates.”<sup>32</sup> General Musharraf’s challenge was best summarized to me by an interviewee from a religious political party: “When the dead bodies of the soldiers fighting in the war returned home, the dead soldiers tended to be ostracized for “fighting in someone else’s war.” In a society as deeply conservative as Pakistan, this was very telling for General Musharraf’s regime. It was indicative of the fact that fighting the war meant losing political capital and not gaining it.”<sup>33</sup>

### Domestic Politics 2008 to 2011

In 2008, Pakistan transitioned to democracy. Elections were held in February 2008. The main opposition parties– the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) and the Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) -- won majority of the votes. The PPP went on to form the government at the national level and the PML-N formed the government in the Punjab province. Their election considerably reduced General Musharraf’s power, forcing him to resign in August 2008 and paving the way for Pakistan’s return to democracy. Pakistan also got a new Army chief in the lead-up to the elections. Appointed as vice chief in Musharraf’s time, General Ashfaq Kayani rose to the position after Musharraf left the post in November 2007. Both these changes altered the political makeup of the country, with implications for the domestic political evaluation of the counterinsurgency war.

The two mainstream political parties -- PPP and PML-N -- largely dropped their active opposition to the war. Until the elections, the PPP and PML-N had vehemently opposed the war.

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32 Nayak 2008, 307

33 Interview, Peshawar 2016

The PML-N was especially critical. It was vocal in calling for dialogue with the insurgents. But once in government, both the parties treaded a more cautious line. For the PPP, the change of heart was not just political but personal. Benazir Bhutto, the leader of the PPP, was killed in a bomb attack, which was traced to Baitullah Mehsud, the leader of the Pakistan Taliban. The PML-N also admitted the armed challenge the insurgents posed, at least to the US ambassador in background conversations.<sup>34</sup> Still, much of the base of both parties opposed the Pakistani military campaign.

A Pew Global Attitudes survey noted that “support for military action had increased since IRI’s previous poll in June 2008.” In March 2009, “38% of Pakistanis supported using the Army to fight extremists in NWFP and the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), while half opposed such efforts. About one-third (34%) said they would like to see the Army confront al Qaeda, while 52% disagreed with this view.”<sup>35</sup> In the absence of any radical shift in public opinion at the time, the parties moved from a position of strong opposition to either guarded support -- as in the case of the PPP -- or feigned ambivalence -- as in the case of the PMLN.

Despite the return to democracy, the other main political actors in the period were the Army chief and the military’s general staff. Technically, the military was subordinate to the civilian government but it enjoyed significant clout. As Aqil Shah notes, “Despite blows to its public standing and without any formal-legal guarantees to preserve its interests once it had left power, the military was able to retain its core institutional privileges concerning control over its internal

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34 Patterson 2008

35 Pew 2009

structure, national security missions, budgetary allocations, intelligence gathering, and so on.”<sup>36</sup>

The new Army chief saw the “bad Taliban” -- essentially the coalition of the armed groups attacking the Pakistani state -- as a major problem.<sup>37</sup> The general officers in the period -- especially after the takeover of the Swat valley by the Pakistan Taliban in late 2008, early 2009 - - grew to view the counterinsurgency as more than a gimmick that Musharraf was using to appease his American interlocutors. This broke the deep domestic political impasse towards counterinsurgency, giving it more salience than before but still it was far from sufficient. By late 2008 and early 2009, the domestic political salience of the insurgency moved from low to ambivalent.

## Organizational Experience in Pakistan

### Experience 2002 to 2008

The Pakistani counterinsurgent force was a clear-cut case of a limited experience army. As noted by Fair and Jones, “Prior to 2001, Pakistan had limited experience countering domestic militants.”<sup>38</sup> Starting 2002, the counterinsurgent coalition comprised of the regular formations of the Pakistan Army and the paramilitary Frontier Corps. Fair and Jones described the Army as having “...an organizational strength of approximately 550,000 active-duty personnel and another 500,000 reservists,” adding that “The army is a conventional force primarily geared towards a conflict with India, a configuration which it prefers.”<sup>39</sup> Such a configuration was affirmed by the geopolitics of the decades preceding the breakout of the insurgency. There was

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36 Shah 2014

37 Schaffer and Schaffer 2011

38 Fair and Jones 2009, 163

39 Fair and Jones 2009, 163

no all-out war between India and Pakistan after the conflict in 1971 but the Army remained engaged in escalatory spirals, in which the troops were mobilized to the borders.

The Frontier Corps was different. It was local to the western periphery.<sup>40</sup> It did not have a set doctrine for operations; its role was border security and to act as second fiddle to the fighting arms, a role which was never clearly articulated for it. Its training regimes were loser as well; there was little to no focus on maneuver warfare. The Frontier Corps did not have its own officer cadres. Its mid-level officers and senior commanders came from the Pakistan Army.

This is not to say that no one in the Army had ever experienced fighting in an internal war. Historically, the Army had some experience, but the forces involved in the post 9/11 conflict had no experience. For example, there were two notable internal conflicts for the Pakistan Army after Pakistan's founding: the 1971 war in erstwhile East Pakistan, which became Bangladesh, and the 1977 insurgency in Baluchistan. The 1971 insurgency in East Pakistan affected more of the Army. Many involved in the conflict learnt hard lessons about the asymmetric nature of the war. But by the time the 2002 conflict started, much of the officer corps had not made it to the senior ranks. Making matters worse, many of the officers who participated in the counterinsurgency, from seniors to juniors, were not allowed to continue in the Army in the aftermath of the war. Some of the relevant generals were seen too close to the erstwhile dictator Yahya Khan by Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, who became the premier of Pakistan after 1971. Bhutto was quick to sideline them. The junior commanders and officers got similar treatment but for different reasons. As they were taken as prisoners at the end of the war, on their return they were eyed

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40 Abbas 2007

with intense suspicion for being implants of the Indians. Many saw their careers coming to unceremonious ends.

A few years later, an insurgency erupted in Pakistan's south west region of Baluchistan. The Pakistan Army was called to handle the conflict in 1974.<sup>41</sup> A new counterinsurgency training school was established. But the force structure involved was limited. Only two out of 37 divisions of the Army were deployed. The insurgency affected area was also limited, where the Army was able to use excessive firepower to curb the insurgents. An urban internal conflict also erupted in Karachi in the early 1990s. An ethno-nationalist political movement, led by the MQM, rebelled against the Pakistani state. The civilian government at the time relied largely on the local paramilitary -- called Rangers -- and the police to undertake operations. This time a large contingent -- almost a Corps level -- was on the cusp of being pulled into the conflict. However, a de-facto ceasefire was struck before the regular military could be inducted.

All of this is to say that the forces of the Pakistan Army involved in the conflict in the tribal belt had low level of experience of counterinsurgency.

Experience 2008 to 2011

Even by 2008, at least six years into the war effort, Pakistani military's forces undertaking counterinsurgent operations were well short on experience. In the first six years, only a small part of the Army had been pulled into the war effort. The Pakistan Army had 37 divisions. Of

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41 Nawaz 2008

these, according to Shuja Nawaz, “The equivalent of six infantry divisions were deployed over time to FATA and Swat, some having moved from their positions along the Indo-Pakistan border where they represented Pakistan’s strike force against any Indian attack.”<sup>42</sup> The remaining load was shared by the paramilitary Frontier Corps. The units that had rotated through the insurgency torn area were reverted to conventional war duties. The new units that came through late 2009 were coming to the tribal area and thus getting exposed to an asymmetric environment for the first time. Officers being placed in mid-level command and staff positions -- like the Chief of Staff of 11 Corps, GOCs, brigade commanders, and unit commanders were deploying in counterterrorism and counterinsurgency roles for the first time.

For example, a senior officer from the Pakistan Army’s 37th division confirmed that none of the units in the formation had prior experience of counterinsurgency operation in the tribal areas.<sup>43</sup> Most units in the 14<sup>th</sup> Division pulled into the South Waziristan Agency in 2009 similarly had no background in internal war. Similarly, the 26th Brigade mobilized to Bajaur Agency from the military base at Mangla had never been exposed to counterinsurgency. The three units with the brigade were typical infantry units, whose only experience for the last decade was along the Pakistan’s eastern border.<sup>44</sup>

Until late 2009, the lack of experienced staff personnel was pervasive on staff appointments. One respondent noted that the “Army had this policy where those who had experience, almost never went back to the western border. For example, Brigadier Amir Riaz was appointed Chief of Staff

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42 Nawaz 2009

43 Interview Senior Pakistani military official, Islamabad Pakistan, 2016

44 Interview senior officer, Pakistan 2016

11 Corps in 2008. I was shocked when he was brought into such an important staff position tasked with planning important operations, despite the fact that he was serving in the tribal area for the first time. I told the Corps Commander to find someone else, but to no avail. He remained in the position till 2010.”<sup>45</sup>

### Implications for L&S

From 2002 to 2008, the domestic political salience towards the counterinsurgency war in Pakistan was low. For the next period i.e. 2008 onward, the domestic political salience is best categorized as medium. From 2002 to 2001, the Pakistani military’s experience of counterinsurgency war is best categorized as low because of regular rotation policies. If these variables mattered to Pakistan’s adaptation and change in counterinsurgency, the following predictions make sense: In the 2002-2008 period, Pakistan’s L&S should be mostly low. In the 2008-2011 period, because of the improvement in the domestic political salience towards the war, Pakistani counterinsurgency may somewhat improve along L&S than the period preceding it but it is unlikely to be radically different.

### Medium-N for L&S

In this section, I offer the medium-N analysis testing for my argument and the alternative arguments. Table 10 and Table 11 show the L&S in the two periods for which I have coded the

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<sup>45</sup> Interview senior officer, Pakistan 2016

domestic political salience and military's internal war experience; while Table 10 shows the count of district years, Table 11 shows percentage of total campaign district years.

**TABLE 10: MEDIUM N OF NUMBER OF DISTRICT YEARS OF VARIATION IN L&S**

<b>Year   Campaign District Type</b>	<b>High L&amp;S</b>	<b>Intermediate L&amp;S (High L, Low S)</b>	<b>Low L&amp;S (Low L, Low S)</b>	<b>Intermediate L&amp;S (High S, Low L)</b>
2008-2011	3	7	6	16
2002-2007			27	6

**TABLE 11: MEDIUM-N OF PERCENTAGES OF DISTRICT YEARS OF VARIATION IN L&S**

<b>Year   Campaign District Type</b>	<b>High L&amp;S</b>	<b>Intermediate L&amp;S (High L, Low S)</b>	<b>Low L&amp;S (Low L, Low S)</b>	<b>Intermediate L&amp;S (High S, Low L)</b>
Shift in Structure (2008-2011)	10.71%	25%	21.43%	42.86%
Initial Structure (2002-2007)	0%	0%	86.67%	13.33%

### New Theory

The medium-N presented above provides support for the implications of the new theory. As shown in Table 10 and Table 11, there is a very clear trend of the counterinsurgency effort clustering around low L&S campaigns in the initial period -- which agrees with my theory. Similarly, the period of the shift -- 2008 to 2011 -- largely accords with my prediction. There is no secular trend in improvement, but it is somewhat better than the period preceding it, which is what I expect given the improved domestic political salience. On one dimension, my theory has clearly mis-predicted. In Table 10 and Table 11, it is clear that high L&S campaigns began to take in the 2008 to 2011 period. Given that the domestic political salience was still ambivalent and the experience of forces involved was low, this is a much better performance than I expect in this period. This coding corresponds to the campaign in Swat, which is analyzed in more detail in

## Chapter 7: Campaigns in Pakistan: The Battles of Waziristan, Bajaur, and **Swat**.

### Alternative Explanations

Until now, I have relied on a congruence analysis to test my claims. Such an analysis is far from a definitive test of my claims. One way to falsify my claims is to test how the medium-N fares against any applicable alternative explanations.

The medium-N provides a way to test implications of the alternative theories. There are three dominant alternative explanations from the political science scholarship which can be applied to assess Pakistan military's change and adaptation. The first one is on leadership. This predicts that certain leaders and generals may be better than others. The right general, so the argument goes, should be able to implement the right set of tactics and practices. This explanation is easily tested in the case of Pakistan. Pakistani counterinsurgency effort saw a diverse set of leaders both at the strategic level and the level of the theatre. And under these different leaders -- some of whom acquired a reputation for a commitment to irregular warfare while others did not -- the military showed no secular trend of improvement.

For example, Pakistan's counterinsurgency played out under two different strategic leaders, or Army chiefs. From 2002 to 2008, General Musharraf was in-charge. From 2007 to 2011, General Kayani commanded the Army. General Musharraf's priors were more conventional warfare than irregular warfare. General Kayani saw Pakistani military involved in counterinsurgency; thus, by

the time he assumed command of the Army he had gathered considerable experience.<sup>1</sup> American military leadership of the period frequently described him as being committed to counterinsurgency.<sup>2</sup> Thus, General Kayani came close to the “great-man of COIN” that some of the literature seems to argue as vital for adaptation and change.

What does the data say about their performance? Table 12 below shows the results. It should be obvious that the table on strategic leaders is exactly the same as the Table 11 because General Musharraf’s tenure corresponds perfectly with the initial structure and General Kayani’s for the latter. The performance under Musharraf was completely one-sided. During General Kayani’s time, the military exhibited improvement in select campaigns but struggled in the majority. If General Kayani was indeed the “Great Man”, the data doesn’t bear it out.

**TABLE 12: MEDIUM-N ON STRATEGIC LEADERS**

<b>Leaders   Campaign District Type</b>	<b>High L&amp;S</b>	<b>Intermediate L&amp;S (High L, Low S)</b>	<b>Low L&amp;S (Low L, Low S)</b>	<b>Intermediate L&amp;S (High S, Low L)</b>
Gen Ashfaq Kayani	10.71%	25%	21.43%	42.86%
Gen Pervez Musharraf	0%	0%	86.67%	13.33%

Did the theatre level commanders make a difference? Commanders of two different forces mattered: the 11 Corps Commander and the Commander of the Frontier Corps. Over time, both the forces saw a variety of commanders. In select districts, the overall operational commander was the Corps Commander, like in South Waziristan, whereas in others it was the commander of the Frontier Corps, like in Bajaur. I code each district-year by who the theatre commander for the

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1 Mullick 2012  
2 Dawn 2008

region was based on interviews. I identify 9 theatre-level commanders. This offers considerable variation in leadership over time and across regions.

As shown in Table 13, this changing theatre level leadership variation provides some interesting trends. On the one hand, it is indicative of leaders whose campaigns struggled consistently, like Orakzai, Taj, and Hussain. On the other, it does not correspond with clustering of improvement for any one leader. This is most notable during the tenure of Masood Aslam, whose tenure lasted from 2007 to 2010. Masood Aslam oversaw a variety of campaigns. While one of his campaign seems to have exhibited the high speed and high legibility dimensions, three other campaigns he presided failed to achieve the same.

**TABLE 13: MEDIUM-N ON THEATRE-LEVEL LEADERS**

<b>Theatre Leaders   Campaign District Type</b>	<b>High L&amp;S</b>	<b>Intermediate L&amp;S (High L, Low S)</b>	<b>Low L&amp;S (Low L, Low S)</b>	<b>Intermediate L&amp;S (High L, Low S)</b>
Lt Gen Ali Jan Orakzai	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%	0.00%
Maj Gen/Lt Gen Hamid Khan	0.00%	0.00%	88.89%	11.11%
Maj Gen Alam Khattak	0.00%	0.00%	60.00%	40.00%
Lt Gen Masood Aslam	10.00%	0.00%	60.00%	30.00%
Maj Gen Nadir Zeb	0.00%	40.00%	0.00%	60.00%
Lt Gen Safdar Hussain	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%	0.00%
Maj Gen Taj	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%	0.00%
Maj Gen Tariq Khan	0.00%	30.00%	10.00%	60.00%
Lt Gen Aamer Yaseen	33.33%	0.00%	33.33%	33.33%

The second explanation is on civilian control. As Posen, Snyder, and Avant suggest, civilian leadership and intervention that disrupts the military’s default standard operating procedures can

lead to innovation. What might constitute a good operationalization of their theories can be debated, but realistically a more complex coding involving some balance of civil-military relations is not possible in the case of Pakistan. Only a straight up operationalization of the definition is possible, and yields some valuable variation. If civilian control is seen as a dichotomous indicator, taking the value of no control if the regime is authoritarian and led by a military ruler, we can assess this by examining the difference in Pakistani behavior across the two types of control.

From 2002 to 2008, the first half of the counterinsurgency period, Pakistan fell squarely in the authoritarian camp. In 2008, Pakistan saw a reassertion of some civilian control. While the authoritarian period was marred by similar campaign types, the civilian control period does not exhibit any secular trend. Under civilian rule, the Pakistani military conducted a variety of campaigns. In Table 10 and Table 11, the data shows that while there is improvement in implementing the L&S, it is far from a clear-cut trend. It may be argued that whatever little improvement is taking place is driven by some civilian control dynamic. In the next section, I discuss some of the dominant mechanisms at work, which show that was not the case.

The third explanation is around culture. The proponents of this view locate culture in the professionalization practices of the force structures involved. In the case of Pakistan, this requires examination of two force structures: the regular Army and the paramilitary Frontier Corps. It is clear from historiography on the Pakistani Army that its culture was informed by professionalization around conventional warfare.<sup>3</sup> The dominant set of ideas before and during

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<sup>3</sup> Nawaz 2008, Fair and Jones 2010, Fair 2014

the first years of the war were the appropriate ends and means of maneuver warfare. On the other hand, the Frontier Corps had no such professionalization experience. At least its ranking soldiers and junior leadership were professionalized very differently; they were neither exposed to the rigors of conventional warfare nor trained in maneuver. If the culture argument stands, we should see variation in adoption of the L&S across the two force structures. Put another way, the Army should have been resistant to change and the Frontier Corps should have adapted somewhat better and more quickly.

As shown in Table 14, the data does not show any such trend. The Army and The Frontier Corps seem to have performed largely similarly. If at all, the Army has some high L&S campaigns to its credit, which defies the expectation under a culture-based argument.

**TABLE 14: MEDIUM-N BY FORCE STRUCTURE**

<b>Force Structure   Campaign Type</b>	<b>High L&amp;S</b>	<b>Intermediate L&amp;S (High L, Low S)</b>	<b>Low L&amp;S (Low L, Low S)</b>	<b>Intermediate L&amp;S (High S, Low L)</b>
Army	12.50%	0.00%	66.67%	20.83%
FC	0.00%	17.50%	42.50%	40.00%
Police	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%

#### Pakistan-Specific Alternative Explanations

In this section, I briefly derive and discuss two explanations for Pakistan’s poor adaptation and change generally argued in the policy literature. The first argument may be that Pakistan’s poor adaptation is a function of its strategy of selective repression of and collusion with armed groups, because of which the military struggled at counterinsurgency. Under this reasoning, if the

military was to undertake a more indiscriminate policy, it was more likely to acquire the necessary coercive capacity, such as what I conceptualize under the L&S. A similar point is noted by Fair and Jones who in their analysis of “...factors account[ing] for the varied outcomes of operations Pakistani security forces have prosecuted against foreign and indigenous Islamist, criminal and insurgent groups” suggest that the “policy of sustaining the ‘good jihadis’ has...endangered the state.”<sup>4</sup>

The empirical evidence shown so far lends little support for this logic. Pakistan consistently pursued a strategy of selectively targeting some armed groups, while leaving others alone from 2002 to 2013.<sup>5</sup> Yet, we see some adaptation and convergence, especially when comparing the 2002 to 2008 period to the 2008 to 2011 period. Put another way, after 2008 Pakistan continued to support some armed groups and yet found the coercive capability essential to the L&S in some places. What may account for the break? Certainly, a straightforward explanation of the military’s selective violence preferences fails to account for the patterns.

The second argument may be that Pakistan’s poor adaptation is a function of its focus on fighting a conventional war with India, because of which the military struggled at counterinsurgency.<sup>6</sup> Pakistani military doctrine is indeed fixated on fighting a conventional war with India, which spilled over into its effectiveness for irregular warfare.<sup>7</sup> Still, the military was responsive to domestic political pressures and shows the ability to retain lessons acquired through experience, while concurrently maintaining the focus of fighting with India. Again, like the tendencies

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4 Fair and Jones 2010

5 Staniland, Mir, Lalwani 2018

6 Nawaz 2009, Mullick 2012, Lynch 2013

7 Nawaz 2008, Fair and Jones 2010, Fair 2014

towards selective violence, Pakistan military's focus on fighting wars with India has been a constant. Empirically, an explanation centering on India-centric doctrine alone cannot account for the variation in L&S that we see in the 2008 to 2011 when comparing 2002 to 2008.

## Mechanisms

If the new theory is correct, Pakistani military's behavior should have been mediated by five key mechanisms. Given my interview data, I am able to analytically process trace four of them: appetite, capital, socialization, and receptiveness. This evidence doesn't constitute either necessary or sufficient data, but it helps illustrate the mechanisms in the case better and show their plausibility.

## Appetite

From 2002 to 2007, Pakistani counterinsurgency deployment did not undertake legibility and speed projects, often for obvious lack of political appetite. There was deep resistance from within the military as well as civilian populations to undertake even basic tasks related to legibility and speed, let alone complex ones.

On the side of the military, the resistance came from the senior leadership and trickled down to the level of enlisted men. Many respondents described the 2002 to 2008 period as deeply contentious within the military. A senior commander from the period noted that "Until 2008, there was considerable confusion on how long the war was to be fought and if it was to be fought

at all.” Officers and soldiers were also torn with guilt.<sup>8</sup> Fighting their own co-religionists elicited revulsion. Such revulsion led to refusal of orders. Officers and troops were said to have refused new tactics and standard procedures to adequately respond to the challenge posed by the insurgents. Mullick reports that in 2008 the Army established a commission to examine its poor performance in counterinsurgency: “Absent public support and a smarter way to clear and hold territory, the Commission feared the very unity of the army was at stake. Pakistani soldiers were fighting fellow Muslims and needed a clear, believable, and worthy mission to justify doing so.”<sup>9</sup> Nayak noted the threat to cohesion posed by ethnic Pashtun ranks: “Military operations in ethnic Pashtun areas have demonstrated the potential for ethnic loyalties to divide the ranks -- as exemplified by the surrenders to Pashtun militants of both Pakistani Pashtun regulars and members of the local Frontier Corps, who are raised from surrounding communities by levy.”<sup>10</sup> Fair and Jones noted the same challenge: “...since at least 2004 there have been consistent reports that sympathetic elements of the Frontier Corps have been helping the Taliban.”<sup>11</sup> Another senior officer noted: “General Kayani after becoming the Army chief was so concerned about the poor organizational state of the Frontier Corps that he wanted to disband it.”<sup>12</sup>

The regular infantry was often no better than the Frontier Corps. The regular infantry had moved to the tribal areas in 2003 for the first time since the country’s formation. The tribal belt was daunting -- mountainous, rural, and with very limited infrastructure of legibility. On the one hand, the Army’s mid-ranking leadership and rank-and-file often second guessed whether it was

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8 Aziz 2012

9 Mullick 2012, 95

10 Nayak 2008, 309

11 Fair and Jones 2009, 164

12 Interview Senior Officer, DI Khan 2016

appropriate for it to be operating in the tribal area given that the local population was not able to relate with them. The regular troops were ethnically Punjabi. This proved to be a major challenge. According to Nawaz, “The regular army, appearing for the first time inside FATA, was seen as an “alien” force. Even today, many of its officers still consider it as such. Largely Punjabi (60% or more), the army lacked the ability to converse with the locals and had to rely on interpreters.”<sup>13</sup> On the other hand, the Army’s mid-ranking leadership and rank-and-file saw the war effort as unnecessary, sometimes explicitly refusing to fire or undertake assaults “against its Muslim brethren.” A former ISI sector commander of Peshawar told me that “There were a number of times I gave information leads to a local commander [of the regular Army] who questioned the wisdom of the military assault.”<sup>14</sup>

To improve discipline within the Frontier Corps and the Army, aggressive purging and organizational change was essential. Such change required immense political capital, which was never available until 2008. Musharraf’s own standing was weak in the period. Markey noted in 2008 that “The Pakistani army was not built to conduct counterinsurgency or counterterror missions. Post-9/11 operations against Pakistani nationals -- whether in the FATA, NWFP, or elsewhere -- have been broadly, unpopular and characterized as “Washington’s war.””<sup>15</sup> Far from penalizing officers, he re-appointed senior leaders to manage the resentment. General Ali Jan Orakzai was relieved of his command as Corps Commander prematurely, according to one former FATA secretariat bureaucrat, and yet General Musharraf brought him back as the governor of the province in 2006. A senior military officer noted the newly appointed corps

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13 Nawaz 2009

14 Interview Peshawar 2016

15 Markey 2008, 12

commander in 2005, General Hamid Khan, had been “an abject failure as Inspector General of the Frontier Corps” adding that “As he was a ‘yes man’ and Musharraf’s drinking buddy, Musharraf brought him back.”<sup>16</sup>

The lack of appetite within the Army was peaking by the end of 2007, when “rising domestic antipathy toward Musharraf’s military-led government precipitated a drop in the normally high esteem accorded to army officers and enlisted men. By many anecdotal accounts, morale in the ranks has plummeted, with predictably disastrous implications for combat effectiveness.”<sup>17</sup> The lack of political appetite created an environment where status quo was more palatable within the Army: “Pakistani security forces have found themselves in an unpopular internal conflict that they neither anticipated nor wanted, were slow to comprehend, and are ill prepared and ill equipped to fight.”<sup>18</sup>

The unwillingness of the officer corps and rank-and-file prevented the military from even considering the kind of vast population management programs in FATA which would have made L&S possible. The Army and Frontier Corps also remained reluctant to overrule local political pushback against implementation of basic L&S tactics like building spread-out defenses. As multiple bureaucrats interviewed for the study noted, building spread-out defenses and sending out regular patrols was widely an invasion of the tribal culture -- an issue that came up in every jirga with senior military officials in the period.<sup>19</sup> Despite having constructed check points along the Pak-Afghan border, the military was advised against establishing permanent encampments of

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16 Interview Senior Military Officer, Islamabad 2016

17 Markey 2008, 12

18 Nayak 2008, 308

19 Interview Former Political Agent South Waziristan Agency, 2016

“non-native soldiers.”<sup>20</sup> As one commentator noted, “The army presence in Waziristan is described as a violation of the purdah of Pashtun territory. Invading tribal space is considered as penetrating private space and is an affront to tribal honor.”<sup>21</sup> Fair and Jones noted that “One reason the army has been averse to conducting operations in FATA and NWFP is the hostility of residents to what appears to be its Punjabi-dominated ethnic composition. Due to this image as a ‘Punjabi force’, many in FATA view it as a foreign force working with the United States against them.”<sup>22</sup> The Army’s corps commanders and formation commanders remained reluctant to push back. As one senior officer from the period noted: “You cannot solve a strategic problem at the tactical level.”<sup>23</sup>

Following 2008, the political appetite improved. With the political parties on board, the Army was willing to take on a more intensive approach. The Army Chief Kayani started undertaking some military organizational changes.<sup>24</sup> Desertion in operations became an unforgivable crime.<sup>25</sup> It also allowed him to shake up the intelligence infrastructure in the period. The Army also asserted the gains of political salience by undertaking more ambitious legibility programs. In fact, the ambitiousness shown by the Army in certain areas in this period belies the expectation of my theory. In 2009, the Army undertook massive population registration in Swat. At least the timing of such an effort cannot be explained by the level of salience I have coded for this period; given the mediocre level of domestic political salience, I would expect something like this to happen much later. Overall, though, the Army’s cautious approach closely tracks the

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20 Interview Former Political Agent North Waziristan Agency, 2016

21 Nayak 2008, 308

22 Fair and Jones 2009, 164

23 Interview Senior Military Officer, Islamabad 2016

24 Fair and Jones 2010, Mullick 2012

25 Interview Senior Military Officer, DI Khan 2016

expectations of the medium level of salience as ambitious coercive registration and/or population programs were not tried in other insurgency hit areas like Bajaur, Mohmand, Kurram, and Khyber.

### Professional Incentives

Pakistan did not implement any specific incentives to convince its officer corps to exhibit attributes necessary for optimal levels of the L&S. The chief professional incentive in any military organization is promotion. According to General Safdar Hussain, “the promotion processes were gamed in the period, and far from meritocratic.”<sup>26</sup> Senior generals and brigade commanders who performed poorly in FATA were largely not penalized. General Hussain gave the example of two general officers –who he said were sacked by him -- were not made an example by General Musharraf.<sup>27</sup> If anything, junior and mid-level commanders saw the assignments as an opportunity where victory was elusive, and too much initiative yielded no gains.

In the pre-war period, the military assigned its best officers at all ranks on specialized operational and staff roles geared towards conventional warfare. This did not change during General Musharraf’s era. Officers at the top of the food chain continued to be prioritized towards conventional warfare duties. The lack of quality was felt in both the Army and the Frontier Corps. As one DC based observer remarked, “Locally deployed Frontier Corps, a largely

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26 Senior Military Officer, Islamabad 2016

27 Per one former corps commander interviewed, after he asked the MS Branch (the military’s human resource division) to sack one of his commanders, he got a call from the Vice Chief of the Army, asking him, “Have you lost your mind? You are sacking a formation commander?”

peacetime militia that had lost its efficacy over the years through neglect and lack of training and upgrading of arms and systems, was not up to the job of aggressively patrolling or fighting the well-armed and well-trained militants.” This was because the “FC received the dregs of the officer corps of the Army,” adding that, “There was little incentive for officers to do well during their short rotation to the FC.”<sup>28</sup>

Post 2008, the professional incentives saw an improvement. Performance in counterinsurgency became a major criterion for promotion at least for mid-level commanders. Appointments in counterinsurgency operations gained as much salience as appointments for command and staff along the eastern border with India. Yet, in certain ways, the old incentives persisted. According to one senior general officer, formation commanders who had performed disastrously “like Naveed Zaman, Azhar Ali Shah, and Rabbani [formation commanders in the period] could still fall back on the glories of their careers as staff officers in GHQ to earn the next rank.”<sup>29</sup> Many mid-level commanders and general officers had ample opportunity to evade deployment in the tribal areas to continue on the path of promotion.

### Socialization Pressures

The socialization pressures within the Pakistan Army did not conform to counterinsurgency learning. Four features of the socialization pressures in the period from 2002 to 2008 are important to note. First, the dominant doctrine within the military was around conventional war.

The formations mobilized 2008 onward were not repurposed for counterinsurgency through

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<sup>28</sup> Nawaz 2009

<sup>29</sup> Interview Aviation Commander, Pakistan 2016

deployment and/or training in the pre-war period. Despite the repeated failures, the pre-2008 era did not see radical exposure to irregular warfare doctrine.<sup>30</sup> Pakistan remained largely committed to its organizational orientation as a conventional military force. As Fair and Jones note, “In the early months of Gen Ashfaq Kayani’s tenure as chief of army staff, there was some optimism that Pakistan would formally adopt a counterinsurgency strategy. Those hopes largely dissipated as Pakistan remained reluctant to develop such a doctrine. In fact, General Kayani often stated that the Pakistan Army would not become a counterinsurgency force.”<sup>31</sup>

This doctrinal socialization was the practical manifestation of a deeply held ideological aversion towards the Indians, combined with a deployment and structure centered on complex operations. The infantry divisions were combined with the armored brigades in select cantonments or forward bases.<sup>32</sup> Training regimes were centered on tactical tasks of cover and conceal, and defending clearly delineated defensive positions. This had implications for what the officers read and trained in, and how they behaved. Officers believed in centralized command. The preference for centralization was perilous in the pursuit of the L&S. It imposed constraints on their ability to work with civilians in the tribal belt, who had more knowledge and experience of building legibility structures. Where the civilians could have filled in with their local assets, the military remained highly territorial. A civil official from the FATA secretariat said “the officers brought in over years never understood the importance of paying attention to detail.” Instead, they “thought that maneuvering groups of soldiers was the most important element of fighting.” Nawaz poignantly noted that “a key factor hindering Pakistan’s ability to fight the insurgency

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30 Rashid 2009

31 Fair and Jones 2010

32 Interview Senior Military Operations Directorate Officer, 2016

has been its own forces' lack of training and indoctrination for fighting an insurgency inside its own borders."<sup>33</sup> He added that the generals were tightly "clinging to its self-image as a conventional army," refusing to accept "the need to change to counterinsurgency mode."

Second, officers and soldiers were not expressing opinions on or engaging in dialogue on the military dimensions of counterinsurgency. At Staff Colleges, training institutions like the Infantry school, senior and junior officers sparred, debated, war gamed possibilities of conventional war primarily.<sup>34</sup> Rank-and-file led publications across the military devoted little time and effort to discussing why the Army was finding it so challenging to adjust to the pressures of the war effort. The pages of prominent publications like the NDU Journal, the Green Book, the Armed Forces War Course Journal, and Hilal took cues from the general political environment in the country to discuss whether Pakistan should fight the war as opposed to discussing how to fight the war.<sup>35</sup>

Third, the precedents of success and failure of leadership and tactical conduct in counterinsurgency were never disseminated through speeches, orders, and examples of senior leadership. The 2002 to 2008 period was action packed. Many soldiers and officers died in this period, sometimes trying to do the right thing, and other times driving themselves into poorly thought out situations. The stories of these officers never left the battlefield. Neither norms developed overtime of what good and bad practices for counterinsurgency are, with the good conforming to the attributes essential for the L&S. A general stigma prevailed around the war

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33 Nawaz 2009

34 Nawaz 2009, Shah 2014

35 Multiple interviews, Shah 2014

effort. The general staff, thus, avoided discussing the follies and the good practices that the forces involved were stumbling across in the battlefield. Gen Safdar Hussain was candid on this issue, and said the Vice Chief and the Director General of Military Operations sought to play down both successes and failures.<sup>36</sup> He gave the example of a dismissal of a commanding officer of an infantry unit in front of his troops in 2004. Gen Safdar Hussain thought that this action would send shockwaves through the Army, and press upon all future commanding offices that abandoning your troops is not game. According to Hussain, “What happened instead was the absolute opposite. The said officer was sidelined. My letter on the failures of the mid-level leadership never made beyond the files of GHQ.”

Finally, the rank-and-file and officer sub-culture was marred by defiance of the war. Officers who had deserted or refused were valorized. Much of the gossip, folklore, joke, and complaints revolved around “General Musharraf’s betrayal.” This created a culture of indifference towards poor combat performance.

Following 2008, the socialization pressures did not entirely shift towards counterinsurgency or counterterrorism but demonstrated a shift. The GHQ began to dwell more time on the challenges of internal war. Junior officers were at least made aware of best practices, readings, and role models of counterinsurgency. This was not just an endogenous shift. In this period, there was immense American interest and pressure on the Pakistanis to alter their doctrinal focus. While Pakistan largely defied that pressure, still to rake in American aid undertook certain doctrinal improvements, which filtered to the level of the officer corps.

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<sup>36</sup> Interview Senior Military Officer, 2016

One major improvement in this period was a shift towards more flexible conceptions of leadership and command. Many formations, such as the 37 division in Swat, recognized the perils of hierarchal structures -- which improved adaptation towards L&S.<sup>37</sup> Similarly, some formations began to take precedents of success and failed leadership and tactical conduct in counterinsurgency more seriously. By 2010, the Frontier Corps routinely disseminated through speeches and orders examples of senior and junior leadership who had done well, what they had done right, and what they had done wrong.<sup>38</sup> This was in sharp contrast to the silence and ambivalence towards combat performance in the 2002 to 2008 period.

## Capital

From 2002 to 2008, Pakistan faced dire capital constraints. These constraints were specifically adverse for undertaking legibility and speed projects. Pakistan did not have the equipment necessary for implementing tactical legibility programs -- like surveillance and interception.<sup>39</sup> Being a conventional military force with no priors of internal war, much of Pakistani state capacity was rudimentary. While I note in detail the deficits in specific campaigns in the campaign case tests chapter, the general trend was of Pakistan not possessing sufficient basic radios for small-unit operations for a 700-man unit. Pakistani tactical surveillance capability -- including interception -- was woefully inadequate, according to multiple respondents with knowledge of deployments and capital availability from the period.<sup>40</sup>

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37 Interview Senior Military Officer, 2016

38 Interview Senior Military Official, 2016

39 Mullick 2012

40 Multiple interviews, 2016/2017

Pakistan also lacked the equipment necessary for rapid mobilization. Unlike the Indian Army, which doesn't use air power as a means to improve reaction times, the Pakistani military was comfortable with deploying air power in counterinsurgency operations. But it had severe helicopter shortages lingering from the 1990s, a period in which it was heavily sanctioned and cash strapped. Multiple senior Aviation officers from the period noted the dire straits as late as 2008 -- noting shortfalls in hard capital, maintenance crews, and availability of basing facilities proximate to areas of operations. Shuja Nawaz, a DC based observer with access to the military, noted the capital constraints: “[The Army] did not have the proper equipment for the highly mobile war against militants who engage in surprise attacks and disappear before troops can reach the affected areas or military posts. The lack of attack and troop lifting helicopters limited the ability of the Pakistani forces to react with alacrity to seemingly random and widely distant insurgent attacks. Although the United States promised Cobra helicopters, not all of the helicopters had been delivered by the end of the summer of 2008. The Pakistan Army's smaller and unarmored Bell helicopters cannot operate at the altitude required in the mountains of Malakand and Swat, especially during hot days. Moreover, the solitary heli-lift squadron supplied and supported by the United States at Tarbela cannot adequately cover the wide arc of militancy in the region from South Waziristan to Dir and Swat.”<sup>41</sup>

In the absence of political salience and experience, mobilizing resources to fill such capital gaps was a challenge. Pakistan looked towards the US primarily to meet these needs. Leaked cables on conversations between the US military leadership and the Pakistani military chief are

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41 Nawaz 2009

illustrative of American concerns around Pakistan's lack of essential capital. Referencing a conversation between then Pakistani Army Chief General Kayani and US CENTCOM Commander Admiral Fallon from 2008, it notes: "Kayani stated his preferred aerial support weapon against militants continued to be the Cobra Attack Helicopter. He observed ruefully that maintenance issues still plagued the Army; one hour of flight time corresponded to 24 hours of maintenance. Kayani said that only two operational Cobras were available in the FATA. Fallon responded that a US Army helicopter maintenance team was currently in Pakistan to provide both short and long-term recommendations to improve Pakistan's rotary sustainment."<sup>42</sup>

The capital availability changed 2008 onward. With more domestic capital at disposal, the government gave priority to the capital needs of the military. But all of the needs were not met by internal provisions.<sup>43</sup> Ample external flows took place, which funded purchases of helicopters, technical equipment, and communication and surveillance technologies. Moreover, resources flowed from outside for integration of these technologies and equipment into kinetic components. Data on Pakistani military purchases maintained by Stockholm Institute of Peace Research bears out an influx in capability 2007 onward, a large part of which was paid by the US military.<sup>44</sup> For example, Pakistan received 12 cobra helicopters, and 26 Bell 412 helicopters in 2007 funded by US aid. Declassified records by CENTCOM similarly note an influx in military aid 2010 onwards; the specific operations funded by the US military included helicopter and

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42 Patterson 2008

43 Fair and Jones 2010, Mullick 2012

44 SIPRI Arms Transfers Database 2016

surveillance operations.<sup>45</sup> The US government also appears to have provided aid for improving training.<sup>46</sup>

It is important to note, then, that the mechanism of improved capital flows towards counterinsurgency was dominated by international aid flows -- which is different than the mechanism driven by the variable of domestic political salience.

## Conclusion

So far, the evidence on variation in the L&S is consistent with the new theory, and provides limited support of any of the alternatives. Factors like leadership, culture, and civilian control did not make much difference to how Pakistani counterinsurgency played out. In contrast, domestic politics and experience of the forces involved appears to have driven the overall pattern of adaptation and change, at least as captured by the L&S. The evidence on mechanisms implied by the domestic political salience variable is especially telling, though some of the shifts -- like in capital flows towards counterinsurgency -- seem to have been mediated by mechanisms outside the proposed model, like international support. That does not pose a major challenge to the validity of the overall set of claims.

The main takeaway from the Pakistani context on change and adaptation towards L&S is that even for a non-democracy like Pakistan -- at least for most of the period examined -- counterinsurgency response was marred by domestic political considerations. The fact that there

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45 Under FOIA request to CENTCOM: FOIA# 16-0319

46 Fair and Jones 2010

was a challenger to the writ of the state did not lead Pakistan to summon all of its coercive capacity right away. Instead, there was considerable push and pull between a variety of political actors, which shaped the options available to and constraints on Pakistani counterinsurgency forces.

## Chapter 5: British Counterinsurgency in Malaya and Kenya

This chapter evaluates British counterinsurgency campaigns in Malaya and Kenya during the 1950s. Following World War 2, anticolonial movements swept across multiple British colonies. The colonies in Malaya and Kenya saw the strongest manifestation of rebellion against colonial rule. In Malaya, the British were challenged by a communist political organization, the Malayan Communist Party (MCP), which mounted a swift and decisive challenge to British authority. In Kenya, the British were challenged by the Mau Mau—drawing predominantly from the Kenya Kikuyu tribe. In response, the colonial authorities mounted counterinsurgency campaigns. The campaigns I examine include the Malayan campaign from 1952 to 1955 and the Kenyan campaign from 1953 to 1956. These two campaigns are specific slices of the counterinsurgency effort in both contexts. In Malaya, counterinsurgency started in 1948 and continued until 1960. In Kenya, counterinsurgency started in 1952 and continued until 1959.<sup>1</sup>

I evaluate the two campaigns using the method of agreement and combine it with analytic process tracing. This type of comparison provides important -- even if limited -- leverage for small-N research. In the context of counterinsurgency effectiveness, the method of agreement allows me to identify necessary (and not sufficient) causes of variation in three ways. First, I can employ the “logic of elimination to exclude as a candidate cause (independent) for the common outcome (dependent variable) in two or more” dissimilar cases, which for me are counterinsurgency campaigns; the use of process tracing ensures that the “cause or condition that

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<sup>1</sup> The general historiography I rely on comes from recent and old works. On Malaya: Coates 1992, Short 1975, Stubbs 2004, On Kenya: Elinkins 2005, Anderson 2005, Bennett 2013

survives this method of elimination” is not a false positive.<sup>2</sup> Second, the heterogeneity of the cases subjects the new theory to a difficult test and generates evidence on causal mechanisms. Finally, by casting the net widely on explanatory variables and causal pathways which have been invoked as contributing to effectiveness, I am able to minimize the problem of omitted variable bias.

I use new, granular data from British colonial archives and extensive historiography. I proceed by first showing that the two campaigns differed in important political, external support, and counterinsurgency conduct dynamics. Further, I show that the two campaigns diverge in the three variables proffered by counterinsurgency scholarship: hearts-and-minds, group-type, and force level. I then find the two campaigns converging in the variable of the new theory, L&S. In light of a comparative mechanism probe, I find abundant evidence of L&S driving robust information flows, i.e. information acquisition and execution on the insurgency, and limited evidence on mechanisms implied by alternative theories, such as surge in civilian collaboration under the hearts-and-minds theory. Given the limitations of the design, these findings do not affirmatively rule in favor of L&S as the sole causal factor.<sup>3</sup> But they strongly support the contention that L&S was a necessary factor to have caused counterinsurgency effectiveness across the two campaigns.

## Background

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<sup>2</sup> George and Bennett 2005, 155-156; on combining case studies with process tracing, see George and Bennett 2005, 2015; process tracing test employed is called a hoop test by David Collier

<sup>3</sup>

Malaya had been under British rule since 1824. Kenya had been under British rule since 1863. These were both multi-ethnic societies where the British had long maintained firm control. Malaya comprised of three major ethnic groups, the Malays, the Chinese, and the Indians. In Kenya, the Africans were the major ethnic group, followed by the Indian and European settlers. Before the Second world War, communist Malays had campaigned for national liberation. Leading the charge for liberation was Malaya's main communist organization, the MCP, which in turn suffered from restrictions by the colonial authorities.<sup>4</sup> During the second world war, the MCP took to combat against the Japanese invading forces. Post war, therefore, the MCP enjoyed a degree of recognition from colonial authorities for fighting the Japanese. But the combination of political impasse on the Malayan peninsula, the dominance of and conflict with ethnic Malay, and the success of the Chinese guerilla movement, pushed the MCP towards a violent revolt. The MCP leadership saw armed resistance against the British as the best way to seek independence.<sup>5</sup> Serious confrontation – short of major violence -- between the MCP and the British authorities started in early 1948. By summer of 1948, a full fledged war led by the MCP's armed wing, the Malaya National Liberation Army, and the British counterinsurgency forces was underway across the Malayan peninsula.

In Kenya, the Kikuyu tribe from among the Africans – and especially the squatters/the temporary workers on European farms -- had been aggrieved due to the colonial expropriation of their agricultural lands.<sup>6</sup> Following the Second World War, a new political organization, the Kenya Africa Union (KAU), under the leadership of Jomo Kenyatta, emerged which sought to rally

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4 Coates 1992

5 Stubbs 1966, 60

6 Bennet 2013, 11, Anderson 25, 33

African nationalism to pressure the British. The KAU attracted the Kikuyu, who had developed “deep reservoirs of discontent.”<sup>7</sup> But the KAU turned out to be too moderate for the politicized Kikuyu. They were willing to work with the colonial authorities and thus failed to satisfy the aggrieved communities. Therefore, Kikuyu tribesmen in the east of Nairobi, leaders in the Kenyan trade union movement, ex-servicemen, and the squatters on the settler estates in the Central and Rift Valley provinces, turned to more radical politics – which came to be known as Muhimu, and later as the Mau Mau.<sup>8</sup> By 1952, the Mau Mau had launched an insurgency across the Central and Rift Valley provinces.

Both the insurgencies were major challenges to British colonial rule. In the post war period, the British ruled the colonies with strong central governments led by British bureaucrats and in consultation with elected legislative bodies. In Malaya, the ruler was the High Commissioner. In Kenya, the ruler was the Governor. As the insurgencies intensified, the British imposed “Emergencies” – an administrative arrangement which elevated the political powers of the appointed rulers and the senior most military officers in the colony in addition to minimizing the role of the legislative bodies. In turn, the combination of the civilian administrators and senior military officers launched counterinsurgency campaigns to deal with the insurgent challengers. In Malaya, by 1952, General Gerald Templer was appointed to the positions of High Commissioner and senior most military officer in the colony, called Director of Operation. In Kenya, for much of the campaign period, Sir Evelyn Baring was the Governor of the colony, and General George Erskine was the military commander of operations (as head of the British East Africa Command).

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7 Anderson 2013

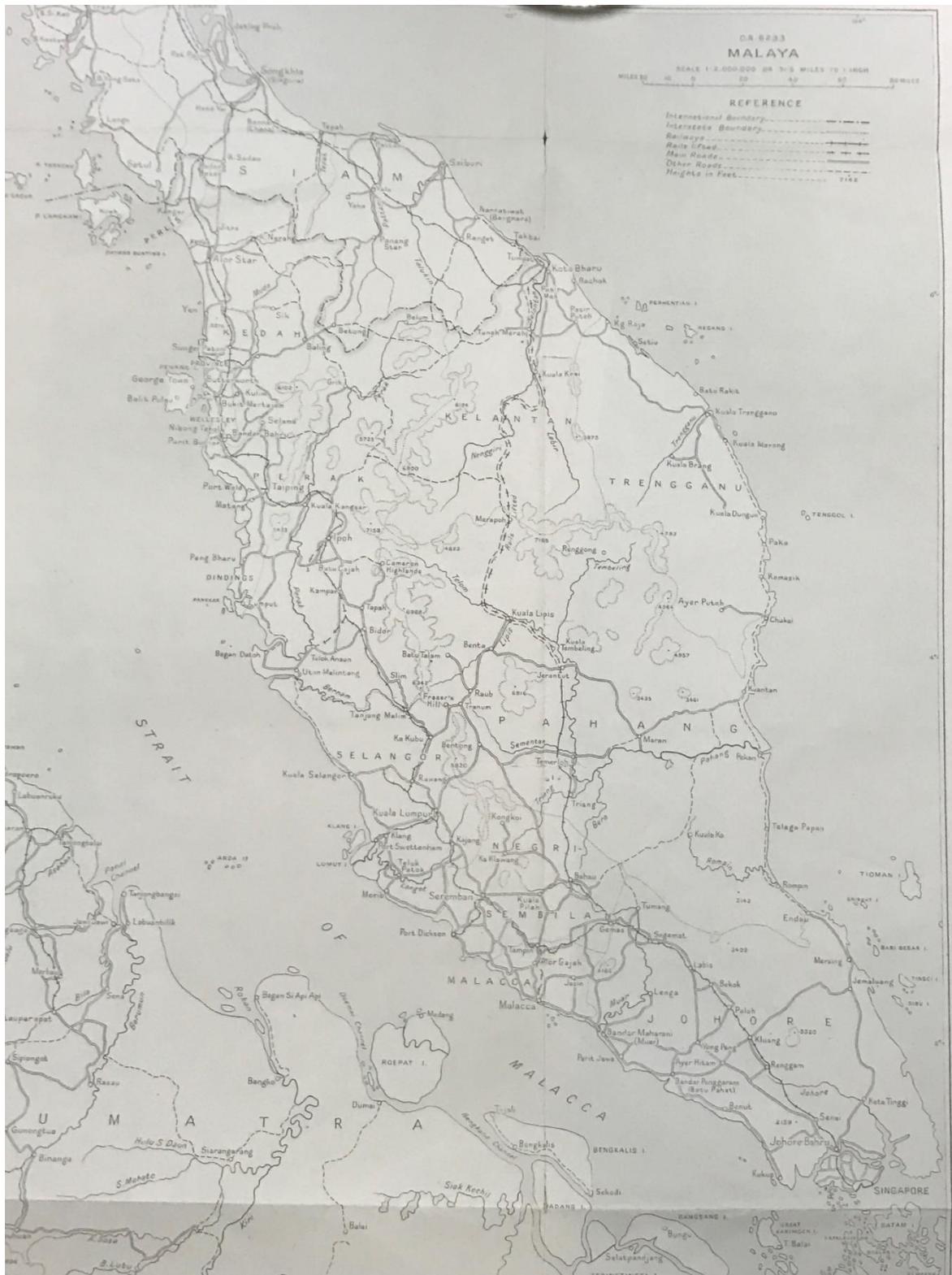
8 Anderson 2013, 37

The campaigns in the two locations unfolded in distinct ways. The MCP began to prepare for an uprising in early 1948, moving underground by 1948. By June 1948, after the murder of three British planters in Perak, the British declared an emergency across the colony. Following the announcement, the British counterinsurgency campaign involved series of indiscriminate raids and operations seeking to neutralize the MCP and its armed wing, the MNLA.<sup>9</sup> By 1951, a new campaign was underway under General Harold Briggs – which involved a reorganization of the counterinsurgency effort and resettlement of the civilian population into newly created villages. Starting 1952, this campaign was led by General Gerald Templer, which went on until 1955. In Kenya, after the Mau Mau began to engage in subversion in 1952, the initial counterinsurgency campaign aiming to locate the Mau Mau’s militant and passive wing was underway in the Reserves, Nairobi, and the Settled Areas.<sup>10</sup> The campaign was reorganized under the new commander of the British East Africa Command, General George Erskine in 1953. Erskine led the campaign until 1956, which is the phase that I study in this chapter.

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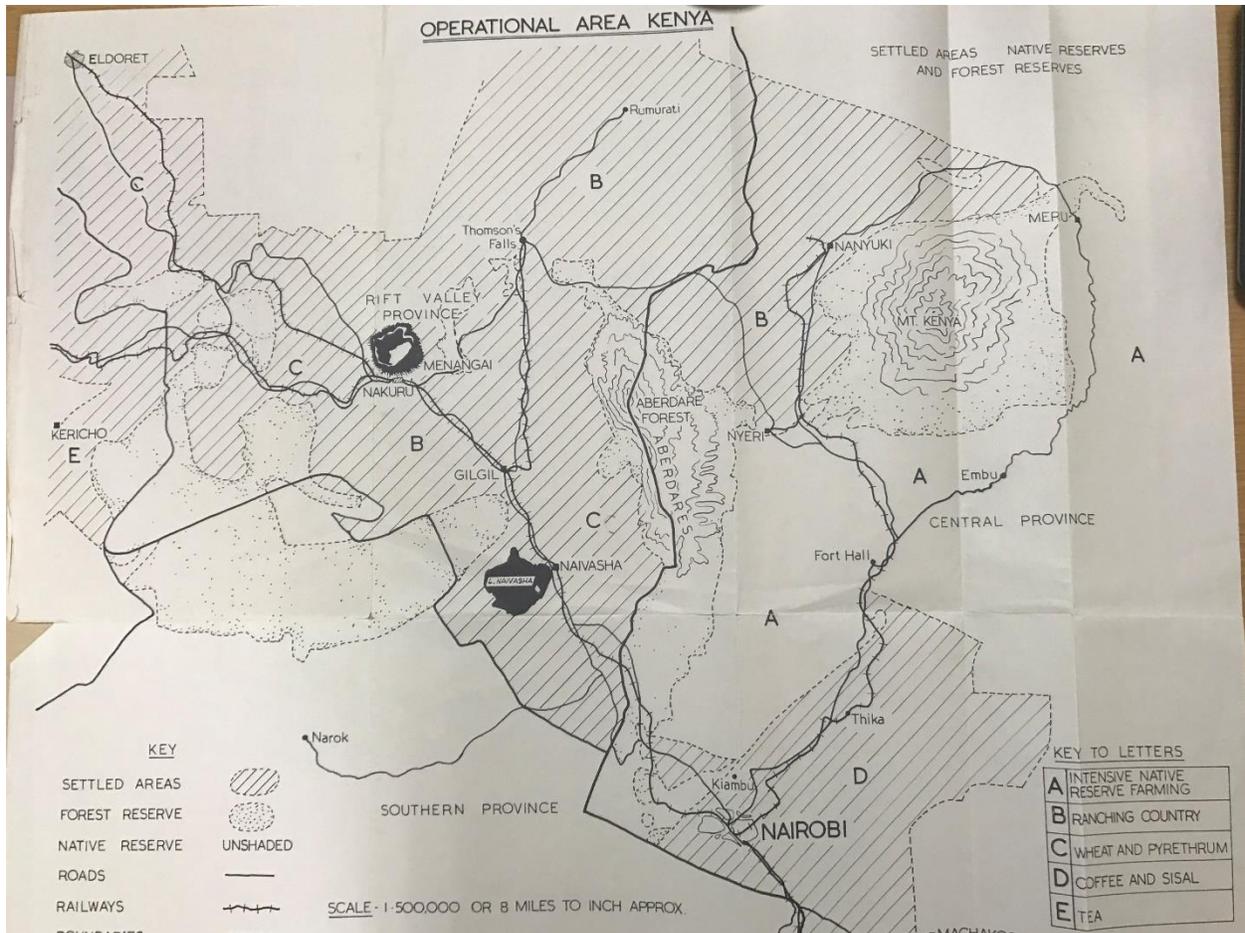
9 Stubbs 1966

10 Elkins 2005, 31-52



**MAP 2: BRITISH MALAYA**

**SOURCE: BRITISH NATIONAL ARCHIVES**



**MAP 3: BRITISH KENYA**

**SOURCE: BRITISH NATIONAL ARCHIVES**

Research Design: Method of Agreement with Process Tracing

I use the method of agreement to evaluate the two campaigns. This design can rule out necessary causes by maximizing variation across a number of independent variables that might explain counterinsurgency effectiveness. This allows for a more careful examination of the variables that converge in values through process tracing. The campaigns in Malaya from 1952 to 1955 and Kenya from 1953 to 1956 afford this opportunity. Despite both campaigns being cases of British

counterinsurgency in a similar time period, they were dissimilar in a number of important theoretical ways. As I discuss extensively subsequently, the two cases vary across three variables commonly cited by scholars as causes of effective counterinsurgency: hearts-and-minds strategies, group type, and force level. In addition to these differences, there are a number of other features which scholars and analysts frequently invoke as being important to counterinsurgency. Table 15 outlines the disparate nature of these cases across such features

**TABLE 15: METHOD OF AGREEMENT COMPARISON OF MALAYA AND KENYA**

	Malaya	Kenya
Years	1952-55	1953-56
<b>IVs of interest</b>		
Absolute Force Levels	Preponderance	Deficit
Relative Force Levels	Preponderance	Deficit
Group Type	Resilient	Weak
Hearts & Minds	Followed	Not Followed
L&S	High	High
<b>Relevant Variables</b>		
Duration since breakout of conflict	4	1
Rural to Urban Population	Substantial	Less
Ideology of Insurgency	Communism	Ethnic
Force Structure Mechanization	Mechanized	Limited
Religion/Ethnicity as a motivation	No	Yes
Election in State	Yes	No
External Support	Yes	No
Terrain of Conflict	Jungle, rural	Forest, urban
Political concessions to Insurgency during campaign	Yes	None
Food Control	Yes	No

First, the two campaigns differed in broad-structural factors, like structure of the state, national income, and nature of domestic politics despite being British colonies in the same time period. Malaya was a rich colony, generating extensive revenue for the colonial authorities from valuable natural resources. Kenya, in contrast, was a poorer colony for the colonial government. Malaya had an export of rubber, tin, copra, coconut oil, wood, and lumber totaling to British Pounds 187 million; Kenya had an export of British Pounds 25 million.<sup>11</sup> Malaya's political structure was much more complex than Kenya's. Malaya had a much more vibrant domestic politics and engagement with major ethnic actors, whereas Kenya had many more marginalized ethnic factions, like the Kikuyu.<sup>12</sup>

Second, the two campaigns saw different political handling by the British. In Malaya, the British made abundant efforts at reform and political inclusion as part of the counterinsurgency effort. The thrust of the political effort revolved around accommodating the Chinese squatter population into the emerging Malayan state. The Chinese were offered formal citizenship and land title, which was not permitted to them before the counterinsurgency campaign. The colonial authorities also organized municipal and federal elections in 1951 and 1952. We do not see similar efforts of reform and inclusion in the Kenyan context – especially viz-a-viz the Kikuyu tribe – either before or through the course of the campaign.<sup>13</sup>

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11 TNA W0291/1670, June 1957, 5, 7

12 TNA W0291/1670, June 1957, 9

13 Clayton 1976, 1: "...all were agreed on one thing: Mau Mau had to be suppressed; political negotiations were totally inconceivable."

Third, the two insurgencies were different in two distinct ways. First, the ideological basis to the insurgency and in turn its appeal across various cross-sections of the population varied.<sup>14</sup> The insurgency in Malaya was a communist insurrection – it was inspired by communist ideas, sought to implement communist blueprints, and was based on universal class interests and nationalist passions, thus being theoretically open to all Malay population. In Kenya, the insurgency was decidedly ethnic – it sought to mobilize the Kikuyu tribe to seek concessions regarding their ethnic grievances. Second, the insurgency in Malaya had some degree of external support, whereas the campaign in Kenya was purely indigenou. In Malaya, communist organizations, and specifically the MCP, had been guided and helped by the Communist International organization based out of Moscow in the pre-war period. After 1945, the “secret section” of the MCP—which did not disarm to the British post-war—continued to receive support from the world communist movement coordinated in Asia by the Far East Bureau of the Communist International (COMINTERN) based in Shanghai.<sup>15</sup> The exact nature of the support remains unclear, with the historiographical consensus being that the insurgency did not get much in terms of material help through the 1950s.<sup>16</sup> But strategic guidance to the insurgency continued during the campaign.<sup>17</sup> The Mau Mau in Kenya, on the other hand, had no such external networks for material support or for inspiration and direction. An internal British military assessment noted that “whereas in Kenya the makings of an armed revolt were present within the country, in Malaya such a revolt would not have taken place without the interference and direction from outside the country.”<sup>18</sup>

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14 Theoretically, the idea of an ethnic vs ideological civil war, also called the ethnic war model, was common in the post Iraq invasion debates. See: Kauffman 1996, Biddle 2004. This model makes no predictions about counterinsurgency effectiveness. Kalyvas and Kocher 2006 dispute the model.

15 Chin 1999, 14

16 Hack 1999, 135

17 Hack 1999

18 TNA W0291/1670, June 1957, 9

Fourth, the geographies of the insurgencies had two dissimilar features. First, the operational area of the region was vastly disproportionate in size: the operational area in Malaya was 3 times that of Kenya's.<sup>19</sup> Of the operational areas, around 80% was covered with jungle in Malaya, whereas only 15% of the operational areas was forest in Kenya.<sup>20</sup> Second, the climate and the accessibility of the two regions was substantially different: Kenya had an advantage in terms of climate and accessibility by roads, whereas Malaya was at a substantial disadvantage. Kenya's climate was more temperate and thus "healthy" whereas the climate in Malaya was much tougher.<sup>21</sup> Kenya's operational area had well laid out tracks and roads, whereas Malaya didn't have similarly laid out tracks.

Fifth, the force structures employed by the British in Malaya had more mechanized elements than the campaign in Kenya.<sup>22</sup> As per data available, in Malaya the British had 5.5 armored and artillery battalions out of 27 battalions; in Kenya, on the other hand, 2 out of 14 battalions were armored battalions.<sup>23</sup>

Kenya and Malaya: Outcome?

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19 TNA W0291/1670, June 1957, 20

20 TNA W0291/1670, June 1957, 21

21 TNA W0291/1670, June 1957, 21

22 Lyall and Wilson 2010

23 TNA W0291/1670, June 1957, 37

Despite these differences, the two campaigns were similarly effective. A number of different metrics of the insurgency--during the course of the campaign--suggest the convergence in outcomes.

First, in both campaigns, the insurgency's operational capability appears to have been largely dismantled by the end of the campaign. In Malaya, the insurgents' operational capability was organized around the "regiments" of Malayan Races Liberation Army (MRLA), the armed wing of the Malayan Communist Party (MCP).<sup>24</sup> The MRLA's regiments maintained specialized sabotage teams, often called platoons. Min Yeun—the supply organization units among the Chinese squatter population--were in charge to maintain and supply stockpiles of weapons, ammunition, and food.<sup>25</sup> In the jungle, the MRLA units operated in tandem with operational units of the Asal Organization, which drew from Orang Asli.<sup>26</sup> They were charged with distributing food supplies, securing food logistical lines, and procuring food supplies, especially from the new villages. By 1954, however, the MRLA's core regimental structure was in crisis in the jungle, in the new villages, and the cities.<sup>27</sup> By 1955, the regiments were short on equipment, manpower, and specialized leaders, preventing them from operating as regiments. The regiments thus increasingly operated as independent platoons. Detrimental to the combat capability was the dwindling strength of the Min Yeun supply units "...left behind in the cities and squatter settlements [which] soon collapsed."<sup>28</sup>

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24 Coates 1992, Comber 2008, 89-91

25 Jumper 2001, 33

26 Jumper 2001, 39

27 Hack 1999, 145

28 Jumper 2001, 39

In Kenya, the Mau Mau's combat capability wrested in its militant wing, aided in large part by the passive wing. The militant wing was the "fighting element" which was "organized into gangs."<sup>29</sup> The passive wing comprised of special units which managed the "supply line to the Mau guerrillas."<sup>30</sup> These units were responsible for acquiring and providing "food, ammunition, intelligence, medical supplies, and clothing" for the militant wing.<sup>31</sup> By 1955, much of this operational capability was in disarray, and struggled to engage in subversion in the reserves or the settled areas.<sup>32</sup> This was because the residual militant wings, comprising of the Aderdares group and the group in Mount Kenya, was in disarray; they were short on gangs for operations and sabotage.<sup>33</sup> The specialized units in the passive wing among the civilians were curtailed; the Mau Mau struggled to link up the militant and passive wing.<sup>34</sup>

Second, we also find patterns of sustained dislocation from major bases of operations of the two insurgencies during the course of the insurgency. By 1954, the MRLA and Min Yeun units were engaged in an "...ad-hoc retreat northwards, from Johor to the Cameron Highlands in Perak, from Perak to Kelantan, and hence to southern Thailand."<sup>35</sup> This evacuation was phased; it initially began as a move from villages to the jungle. By late 1954, there were "...a few pockets of MRLA guerrilla units isolated in southern Perak, central Selangor and northern Johor."<sup>36</sup> By 1955, a large proportion of even jungle units were moving out of Malaya: "The MCP and MNLA had no other option but to retreat to the border and cross into the jungles of southern Thailand."<sup>37</sup>

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29 TNA W0291/1670, June 1957, 12

30 Anderson 2005 74, 75, TNA W0291/1670, June 1957, 12

31 Anderson 2005 74, 75

32 Anderson 2005, 250

33 TNA WO 216/884, April 1955

34 Alao 2013

35 Hack 1999, 175

36 Chin 1999

37 Chin 1999

In Kenya, starting 1954, much of the Mau Mau's militant wing was dislocated from Nairobi – which was their main base of operation; by late 1954, units of the militant wing had moved away from districts of Fort Hall, Kiambu, Masia, Laikipia and Elburgon to the Aberdares and Mount Kenya.<sup>38</sup> Some of the moves were systematic; while others took place in piecemeal, haphazard fashion.<sup>39</sup>

Third, the collective action trajectories of the two insurgencies dramatically dropped through the course of the two campaigns. In Malaya, the MCP and MNLA “began to suffered heavy casualties and failed tremendously in their recruitment campaigns.”<sup>40</sup> One estimate of the aggregate sum of recruits available to British authorities was that the MCP had 8200 fighters in January 1953; this number had come down to 3345 in 1955.<sup>41</sup> Independent accounts concur with official British estimates. One account notes that by 1954 MCP was in “deep trouble”: “Insurgent numbers had dropped to a 1954 average of 3402, from a 1951 average of 7292, and were falling further.”<sup>42</sup> The Mau Mau's recruitment numbers nosedived similarly. One estimate of the aggregate sum of recruits available to British authorities was that the Mau Mau had 12000 fighters in 1953; this number had come down to 1350 in 1956.<sup>43</sup>

Data maintained by the British authorities on surrenders also suggests a break in collective action of the insurgencies across the two campaigns. Figure 2 and Figure 3 show the trajectories of surrenders of fulltime fighters in Malaya and Kenya respectively. In Malaya, we find a sustained

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38 Alao 2013

39 Alao 2013

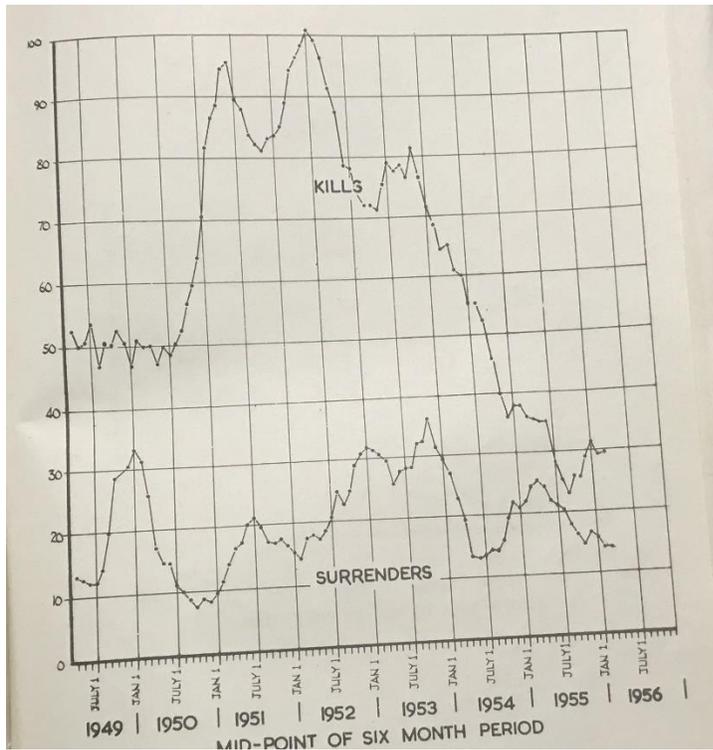
40 Chin 1999, Short 1975, 490

41 TNA W0291/1670, June 1957, 14

42 Hack 2008, 177

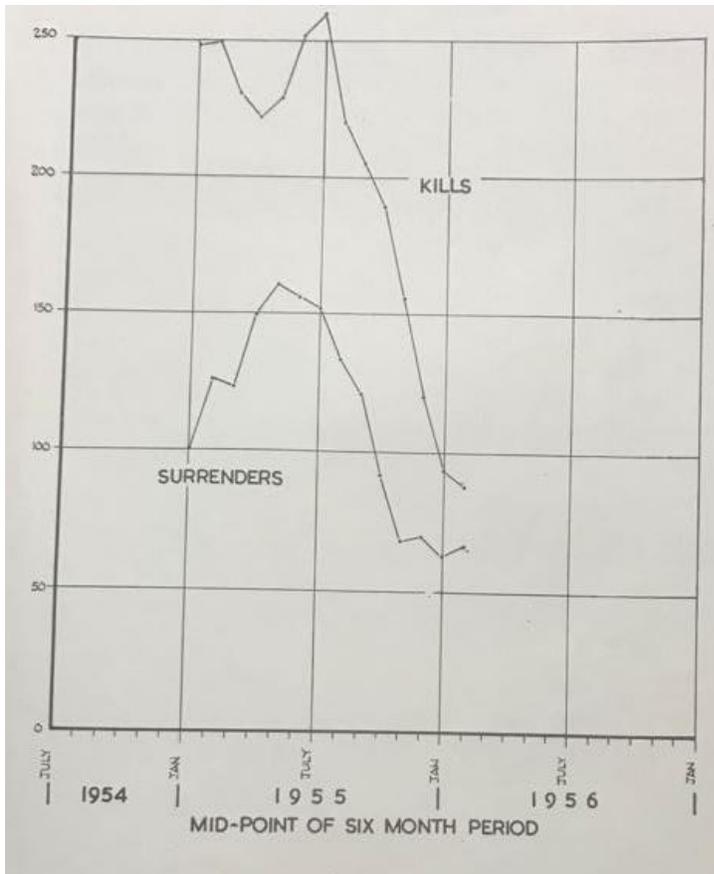
43 TNA W0291/1670, June 1957, 14

trend of surrenders from 1952 through late 1953; there is a drop in the first half of 1954, which is followed by another spike in surrenders. In Kenya, in late 1954, and through 1955, surrenders continued.



**FIGURE 2: SURRENDERS IN MALAYA**

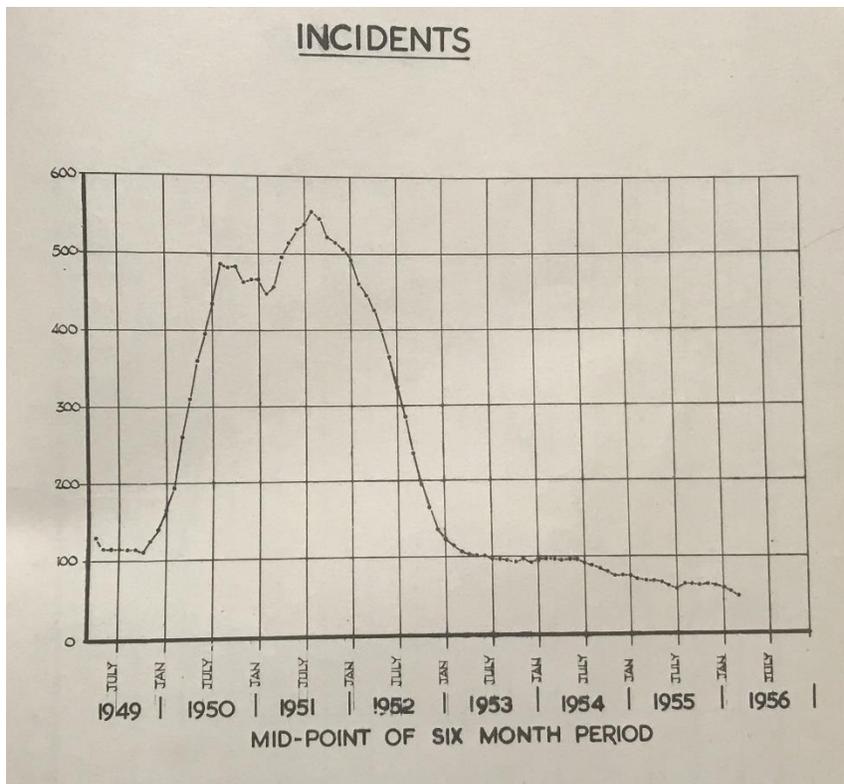
**Source: British National Archives (TNA W0291/1670, June 1957)**



**FIGURE 3: SURRENDERS IN KENYA**

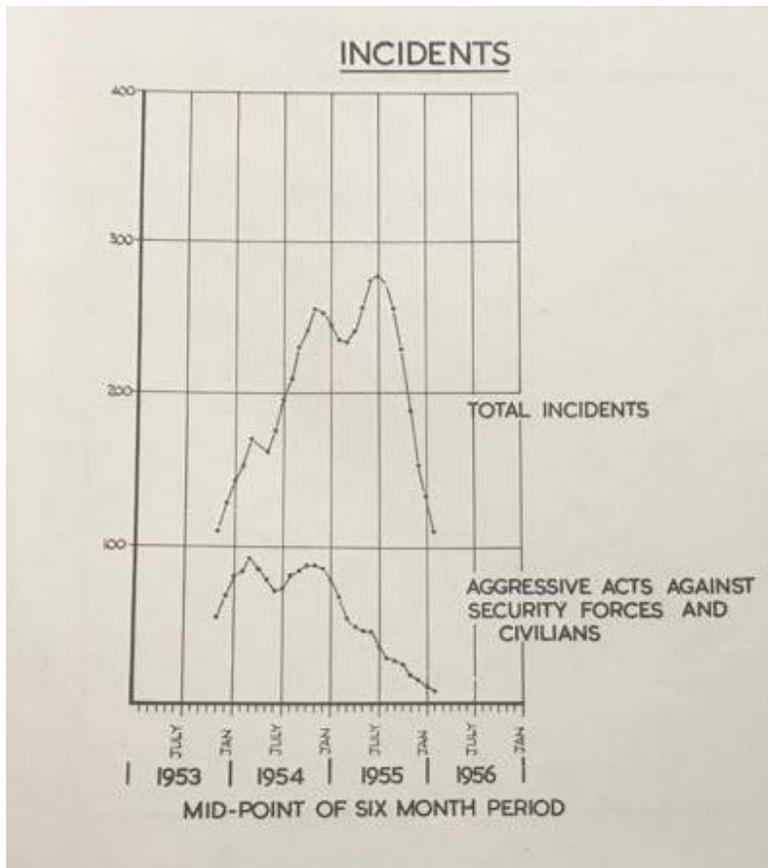
**Source: British National Archives (TNA W0291/1670, June 1957)**

The similar nose-diving trajectories of the insurgencies in the two campaigns align with the similar trends of violence across the two campaigns. As shown in Figure 4 and Figure 5, both the campaigns showcase a dramatic decline in violence. On its own, levels of violence are hard to interpret. In tandem with details on operational capability, basing, and collective action trajectories, however, they are consistent with interpretations of effectiveness offered above.



**FIGURE 4: INCIDENTS OF VIOLENCE IN MALAYA**

**Source: British National Archives (TNA W0291/1670, June 1957)**



**FIGURE 5: INCIDENTS OF VIOLENCE IN KENYA**

**Source: British National Archives (TNA W0291/1670, June 1957)**

### Explaining Counterinsurgency Effectiveness in Kenya and Malaya

The discussion in this section shows that the two campaigns were dissimilar along the three variables proffered as important to explaining counterinsurgency outcomes by existing theories, like group type, hearts-and-minds strategies, and force level. This rules them out as candidate explanations. I then discuss the variation in the L&S across the two campaigns -- in which the campaigns converge -- as an explanation. I then turn to mechanism probes.

## Group Type

**TABLE 16: SUMMARY OF GROUP TYPE INDICATORS IN MALAYA AND KENYA**

<b>Group Type</b>		Malaya	Kenya
<b>Social Bases</b>			
	Religious Bases	None	None
	Tribal Bases	None	Extensive
	Pre-war Political Party	Extensive	Limited
	Student Group/Labor Union Organization	Extensive	Limited
<b>Recruit Quality</b>			
	Ideological appeals	Extensive	Extensive
	Opportunists	Limited	Extensive
<b>Institutionalization</b>			
	Hierarchy/Geographic Organization	Extensive	Limited
	SOPs	Extensive	Limited
	Training	Extensive	Limited
<b>Cohesion</b>			
	Multiple factions/groups	Extensive	Extensive
	Central Coordination	Extensive	None
	Fratricide	None	Limited

Group type offers no explanatory power: The insurgencies in Malaya and Kenya were extremely dissimilar. Four comparative differences are important to note. First, the targeted insurgency in Malaya repurposed a variety of strong prewar politicized networks for the purpose of rebellion, whereas the Mau Mau didn't build on a similar set of networks, as indicated in the Table 16 above. For instance, the insurgency in Malaya was dominated by an old political organization: the Malayan Communist Party (MCP). The MCP was both popular and well-organized, drawing on rural and urban ethnic Chinese communities across the Malayan Peninsula.<sup>44</sup> In the pre-war period, it built a political machine geared to further a revolutionary, even if non-violent, agenda. The MCP turned to combat after the Japanese invasion of Malaya during the second world war,

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<sup>44</sup> Staniland 2014, 186-187

drawing on “their considerable organizational skills and the network that they had built throughout the Peninsula.”<sup>45</sup> In this period, MCP delineated its political organization and insurgency organization – the Malayan People’s Anti-Japanese Army (MPAJA).<sup>46</sup> By end of the war, the MCP was drawing on deep local networks penetrating “schools, clubs, associations, and other forms of corporate life.”<sup>47</sup> In the post-war period, the MCP disbanded the intra-war combat organization, like the MPAJA. However, by 1948, as confrontation with the British intensified, the MCP began to repurpose its armed wings from the intra-war period, albeit in an incoherent fashion. By the time the counterinsurgency began, the MCP had strong networks of support drawing from the MPAJA, labor unions, and the squatter population, to wage rebellion: “MCP gained control over much of the region’s labour force...old, well-established unions were infiltrated and taken over. More often, however, new structures were set up.”<sup>48</sup>

In comparison, the Mau Mau built on much weaker pre-war social roots. The Mau Mau drew from the Kikuyu tribe, whose members had remained politically inactive due to sustained British policies of exclusion and marginalization.<sup>49</sup> Following the second world war, a hodge-podge of ex-servicemen, union leaders, and political activists from the Kikuyu sought to change the trend of Kikuyu exclusion. These people initially became part of the Kenya African Union – which was a pan-African body. Within the KAU, they came to be known as the “Forty Group.” But the Forty group was disenchanted by the KAU’s politics: “the formal politics of the KAU had little appeal for the [Kikuyu leadership].”<sup>50</sup> The forty group slowly began to drift away from the

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45 Stubbs 1966, 43

46 Stubbs 1966, 44

47 Fatt 1977

48 Stubbs 1966, 48

49 Anderson 2005, 35, 36

50 Anderson 2005, 37

KAU's politics and turned towards violence: "It was these militant urban politicians, operating on the fringes of the murky, criminal world of Eastlands [of Nairobi], who drew together the threads of African political protest, not the moderates of the KAU."<sup>51</sup> These militant politicians then formed the core social base of the eventual insurgency, and worked to connect them to rural communities by identifying new organizational bases: "under the direction of no more than a dozen urban militants, the Muhimu [Mau Mau]...set about establishing a subordinate structure, connecting them to locations in the Kikuyu country."<sup>52</sup>

Second, the insurgency in Malaya was strongly institutionalized, which was not the case in Kenya. In Malaya, the MCP was "organized on communist lines and trained and administrated on British lines."<sup>53</sup> The MCP encouraged role delineation and specialization of its cadres, which was apparent from its macro and micro-organization structures. It waged insurgency with two specialized organizations: the jungle organization and the open organization. The jungle organization comprised mainly of the Malayan National Liberation Army (MNLA), the successor of the MPAJA, which largely operated in and from the jungle. The MNLA comprised of regiments, which in turn was organized down to the level of platoons. The open organization comprised of Min Yuen Movement, or Masses Organization established in urban and semi-urban regions, charged with fostering subversive activities and provision of intelligence, supplies, recruits, and communication.<sup>54</sup> The MRLA operated with "a common tactical doctrine and battle

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51 Anderson 2005, 37

52 Anderson 2005, 40

53 TNA W0291/1670, June 1957, 15

54 Stubbs 1966, 87

drills for offensive and defensive action.”<sup>55</sup> In addition, it sought to wage coordinated, synchronized, and discriminate campaigns.

In Kenya, the Mau Mau lacked a clear, deliberate organizational structure. Its organizational structure fell in two categories: the militant wing and the passive wing.<sup>56</sup> The militant wing comprised of group and district committees in the Nairobi area, the Aberdarest, and Mount Kenya, which in turn operated multitude of independent gangs. Across the gangs, role specialization, delineation of hierarchy, and creation of standard operating procedures for logistics, assault, and/or defense depended on individual leaders. In the observation of British authorities, the Mau Mau lacked “organization, training and equipment.”<sup>57</sup>

Third, the recruit quality of the two groups also varied significantly. The MCP, for instance, made a concerted effort to identify high quality recruits.<sup>58</sup> It sought to filter for literacy and university education for its leadership positions. Among rank-and-file, it sought to include fighters of specific “age groups, physical, moral, and political track records.”<sup>59</sup> The Mau Mau, on the other hand, made no deliberate effort to distinguish between recruit types.<sup>60</sup> It was captured by those who could push their way into the organization based on pre-war tribal linkages, thus endowing the Mau Mau militant wing with generally lower quality and discipline fighting cadres. The Mau Mau also established independent units of police in various geographies to

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55 TNA W0291/1670, June 1957, 15

56 TNA W0291/1670, June 1957, 12/13

57 TNA W0291/1670, June 1957, 15

58 Stubbs 1966, 49

59 TNA W0291/1670, June 1957, 12

60 TNA W0291/1670, June 1957, 15

monitor the civilian population, called the Askaris. The Askaris largely comprised of former professional criminals.<sup>61</sup>

Fourth, the overall level of cohesion in the insurgency in Malaya was high, whereas that was not the case in Kenya around the onset of the two campaigns. In Malaya, the insurgency was waged by one group, the MCP. MCP's cohesion was rooted in a base of support tied together through the "united front strategy" adopted in 1948.<sup>62</sup> The MCP's united front strategy appropriated power through an organizational structure of "concentric circles": "At the center was the MCP. In the next circle were the satellite organizations."<sup>63</sup> The satellite organizations included New Democratic Youth League, Ex-servicemen's Association, and The Chinese Women's Association. Complementing the inner circle was a vast, decentralized outer circle: "In the outer circle were the front organizations which were controlled or influenced by the Party to varying degrees."<sup>64</sup> In this way, the MCP's united front strategy blended decentralization for operational affairs and centralization for political decisions, which ensured political unity and coordination across the various layers of the insurgency. Notably, across the insurgent organization, there was limited fratricide – though consistent instances of infiltration by the British authorities.<sup>65</sup>

The Mau Mau was similar to the MCP in that it was one group which dominated the insurgency. Yet, it never had much in terms of political unity. It was deeply factionalized; its various gangs struggled to maintain a centralized and unified front: "Mau Mau was a significant fighting force by the middle of 1953, but it would never be a unified guerrilla army."<sup>66</sup> The central

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61 TNA W0291/1670, June 1957

62 Stubbs 1966, 47

63 Stubbs 1966, 47

64 Stubbs 1966, 47

65 Stubbs 1966, 57

66 Anderson 2005, 244

committee—which was charged with coordinating the political and military operation of the Mau Mau—collapsed in 1952.<sup>67</sup> The group and district committees operated independently; their subordinate gangs were largely autonomous in functioning, political, and military decision making. There were attempts to unify the insurgency politically by creation of farm committees to better tie up the passive and military organizations. But these efforts suffered fratricide and sustained in-group feuding.<sup>68</sup>

### Force Level

The force level view also doesn't offer explanatory power. Data on force levels in Malaya and Kenya suggest a remarkably divergent level in absolute and relative levels along a number of different metrics.<sup>69</sup> In Malaya, the British counterinsurgency force comprised of elements from the Army, Police, and the home guards.<sup>70</sup> In 1953, there were a total of 22 infantry battalions, 2.5 armored regiments, 1 field artillery regiment, and 1 heavy artillery regiment. In early 1954, there were 24427 regular infantry forces, and 27208 special constabulary; there were also 152000 home guards. In Kenya, the force comprised of elements from the Army, Police, and tribal militias.<sup>71</sup> By 1955 the force comprised of 8 infantry regiments, 1 armored regiment, and 1 field squadron of an engineering regiment. In 1954, there were 11332 regular police force, and 9820 police reserve forces. There were around 2730 tribal police and 20000 Kikuyu home guards. On

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67 TNA W0291/1670, June 1957, 13

68 Anderson 2005, 248-249

69 It is worth noting that the force level calculation for Malaya substantially differs from the force sizing estimation offered in existing work. See Moore 2012:

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/09592318.2013.866423?src=recsys>

70 TNA W0291/1670, June 1957, 37

71 TNA W0291/1670, June 1957, 38

the side of the insurgency, in Malaya, the British authorities estimated ~ 7800 active insurgents in 1952.<sup>72</sup> In Kenya, the British authorities estimated around 12000 fighters in 1953.<sup>73</sup>

Given these numbers, the following force ratios emerge, which have been summarized in the Table 17 below. First, the tier-down ratio, or force to enemy ratio, in this period ranged from 30 to 1 in Malaya, and 4 to 1 in Kenya -- which suggests a clear advantage in Malaya in relative terms. Second, the troop density ratio, also called the force to population ratio, was around 41.66 per 1000 residents in Malaya, and around 9.41 per 1000 residents in Kenya – which suggests an advantage in Malaya in relative terms. Compared to the benchmark from manpower studies of around 40 soldiers per 1000 residents for victory, the British forces had a clear advantage in Malaya and substantial disadvantage in Kenya.<sup>74</sup> Third, the force to space ratio was roughly around 4.46 soldiers per square kilometer in Malaya and 2.97 per square kilometer in Kenya – which suggests an advantage in Malaya in relative terms.

**TABLE 17: SUMMARY OF FORCE LEVEL INDICATORS IN MALAYA AND KENYA**

	Malaya	Kenya
Counterinsurgency Force	237465	52682
Insurgency	7800	12000
AOR	Malaya	Select regions of Kenya
Area of Active Insurgency	53240	17746.67
Population	5700000	5600000
Force to Area (Soldiers/Square Kilometer)	4.46	2.97
Force to Population (Soldiers/1000 Civilians)	41.66	9.41
Force to Insurgents	30	4

72 TNA W0291/1670, June 1957, 14/15

73 TNA W0291/1670, June 1957, 14/15

74 See Appendix on Force Level

Hearts-and-minds

**TABLE 18: SUMMARY OF HEARTS-AND-MINDS INDICATORS IN KENYA AND MALAYA**

<b>Hearts-and-Minds</b>		Malaya	Kenya
Civilian Victimization/Protection			
	Collateral Damage	Limited	Extensive
	Collective Punishment	Limited	Extensive
	Protection from Insurgents	Extensive	Limited
Targeting Methods			
	Disappearances	Limited	Extensive
	Arbitrary Detentions	Limited	Extensive
	Torture	NA	Extensive
Firepower			
	Artillery	None	None
	Airpower near populated areas	Limited	Extensive
	Major explosives/demolitions	Limited	Extensive
Small Development Projects			
		Marginal	Limited
Perception of Campaign			
	Among Civilians	Unclear	Indiscriminate

A comparison of a variety of indicators capturing hearts-and-minds strategies reveals that across the two campaigns British counterinsurgency was substantially varied. Per the coding employed, the Malayan campaign was close to being a hearts-and-minds campaign but the Kenya campaign was not.

From 1951, the campaign in Malaya sought to protect the civilian populations, though its results were not always optimal. This was a break from the pre-1951 counterinsurgency campaign when military operations made little attempt to protect civilians and in turn consistently harmed them. By 1951, "...a shift away from poorly targeted and intimidatory tactics was under way."<sup>75</sup> Under

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75 Hack 2015, 633

General Briggs initially, and more so under General Templer, colonial authorities prioritized fire-power restraint and civil-protection tactics, which to a reasonable extent shielded civilian from direct violence and that of the insurgents.<sup>76</sup> Thus, “Villagers were decreasingly ‘between two terrors’ as they had been up to 1950 at least, as government protection became more effective.”<sup>77</sup>

In Kenya, in contrast, the campaign did not seek to protect the civilian population. Consequently, civilian victimization remained high due to both counterinsurgency violence and insurgency violence. The counterinsurgency forces adopted a fairly lax “shoot to kill policy.”<sup>78</sup> In special areas, “Initially the security forces were expected to challenge anyone found there before opening fire, but in February 1953 [Governor] Baring removed even that safeguard.”<sup>79</sup> In prohibited areas, on the other hand, the security forces were under no legal obligation to issue a challenge before opening fire. This resulted in extensive civilian harm.<sup>80</sup> The Kikuyu Home Guard committed especially egregious violence against civilians: “When it came to discipline and the treatment of civilians and prisoners, the Home Guard presented the army with problems. Scholars have rightly condemned the Home Guard’s reputation for ruthlessness and brutality, not to mention looting and personal enrichment.”<sup>81</sup> Rape by security forces was also major problem in Kenya. Anderson and Weis note that “We cannot know the full extent of rape during the Emergency years in Kenya, but we can now suggest that it was widespread.”<sup>82</sup>

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76 Hack 2015

77 Hack 2015, 633

78 French 2011, 85

79 French 2011, 85

80 Hack 2015, 85, 150-152

81 Bennett 2013, 250

82 Anderson and Weis 2018, 292

One indicator of civilian protection in Malaya, and lack thereof in Kenya, is the number on civilian casualties across the two campaigns. Specific numbers are contentious for both campaigns, but the general trend is accepted in available historiography. In Malaya, the British claimed around 4651 civilian casualties from 1948 to 1960; most the civilian harm appears to have taken place before the start of the campaign period examined. In Kenya, on the other hand, a conservative estimate of civilian deaths is of around 25000 civilian casualties for the period starting 1953 until 1959. And a substantial portion of the civilian damage appears to have taken place between 1953 and 1956 – the period examined in the case analysis. Historian Caroline Elkins has suggested a much higher number than this.<sup>83</sup> An excess mortality analysis by demographer John Blacker challenges that number, but still concludes a very high level of civilian deaths: “Of the remaining 24,000 adult excess deaths, perhaps some 17,000 were of males and 7,000 of females. A high proportion of these will have been due to violence.”<sup>84</sup> Another major source of violence against civilians was population resettlement in both campaigns. Forced resettlement is an intrinsically violent exercise -- it imposes immense cost on the civilian population. But its conduct and impact on civilians can vary. Under the tenuous assumption that population relocation in and of itself doesn't constitute violence, I probe the violence employed in addition as part of population resettlement. I probe for the scale of the resettlement, length of time in which the resettlement took place, and who provided for the new living spaces. Available indicators suggest that the scope and nature of civilian resettlement was different across the two campaigns; it was decidedly more violent in Kenya than in Malaya.

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83 Elkins 2005

84 Blacker 2007

In Malaya, around 423,000 Chinese squatters were resettled in 420 new villages over a period of two years.<sup>85</sup> Existing labor residencies were re-grouped. In Kenya, around 1,077,500 tribesmen from the Kikuyu, Meru, and Embu tribes were resettled in 854 villages in a little over a year.<sup>86</sup> These villages were largely built by the civilians themselves. In the Malayan context, the Federal government claimed that “Care was to be taken to explain to [Chinese squatters] why they were to be moved, where they were going, and that the government would provide them with lands and the materials to build new homes.”<sup>87</sup> This guidance was not always met, and there ended up being “passive resistance.” In Kenya, the population dislocation was violent in intent; it was sudden and punitive – with much of the Kikuyu tribe being moved in a period of just four months.<sup>88</sup>

In line with the commitment to civilian protection from direct violence, the Malayan campaign starting 1952 moved away from collective punishment practices. Again, this was a clear break from the period prior to the campaign being studied, when “[the] combination of large-scale repatriation, detention, army sweeps and episodic killings of civilians of 1948–49 imposed a huge cost in human suffering, coldly justified as necessary to prevent even more suffering should squatters not be brought into line.”<sup>89</sup> By 1952, methods of exemplary punishment were dramatically brought down; forced deportation to “teach a lesson” or with the aim of coercing changes in behavior were reduced. By “...late 1953 to 1954 there was a diversity of conditions in

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85 TNA W0291/1670, June 1957

86 TNA W0291/1670, June 1957

87 French 2011, 119

88 French 2011, 118/119

89 Hack 2015, 634

which rural Chinese might be...[but] this no longer included collective detention, and the rate of deportation had slowed to a trickle.”<sup>90</sup>

In Kenya, in contrast, the campaign was marred by some of the most extreme collective punishment violence across all British counterinsurgency campaigns in the post-war period.<sup>91</sup>

The mastermind of campaign-wide collective punishment practices was the military commander, General George Erskine. A large part of the Kikuyu tribe was put in “punitive encampments designed to house Mau Mau sympathizers and their families...[where] the government would make full use of collective punishments, including the destruction of all food except the minimum necessary for local consumptions, and all movement outside villages and trade between villages would be prohibited.”<sup>92</sup> In January 1954, “[General Bobby] Erskine urged the detention of Any Kikuyu against whom there was the slightest suspicion.”<sup>93</sup> There were stark financial penalties on the Kikuyu for being the support base of the insurgency: “...the government levied an annual tax of 20 shillings per head on every Kikuyu.”<sup>94</sup>

The result of the diverging focus on civilian protection and the use of collective punishment also manifested in the differences in abusive targeting practices like disappearances and arbitrary detentions. Available data on maximum number of detainees at any given time from British records, shown in the Table 19, suggest that the campaign in Malaya was far more restrained in detaining civilians compared to Kenya, especially once population is accounted for.<sup>95</sup>

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90 Hack 2015 633

91 French 2011

92 French 2011, 119

93 TNA WO 216/863. Jan 27, 1954

94 French 2011, 109

95 For Malaya: TNA WO 291/1670, 1957; For Kenya: TNA CO 1031/120, 12 July 1954; also see: French 2011, 111

**TABLE 19: DETAINEES IN MALAYA VS KENYA**

	Maximum number of detainees	Maximum number of detainees per 100K Population
Malaya	9782	405
Kenya <sup>96</sup>	70922	4575

The campaign in Malaya also saw a focus on small-project development and uplift of the living conditions. All of this happened within the context of the newly created villages, which “were both highly restricted, with a police post, home guard, barbed wire, curfews and searches at the gates, but also budding communities which by 1952 had started to receive schools, community centers and local elections.”<sup>97</sup> The British forces aggressively attempted to engage the Chinese Squatters better: “They were also increasingly likely to qualify for leases on land—however little this was initially taken up—citizenship and local elections.”<sup>98</sup> In Kenya, in contrast, no real attempt was made to provide development aid. Instead, the living conditions of the population worsened during the course of the campaign. One clear outcome was the spread of hunger: “the social and economic dislocation engendered by the Emergency resulted in widespread malnutrition.”<sup>99</sup> Restrictions on the Kikuyu tribe also added to the economic woes of the country as a whole. One clear effect was the increase in wages after the Kikuyu labor supply began to dry out.

L&S

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96 TNA WO 236/17. 7 December, 1954.

97 Karl 2015, 633

98 Hack 2015, 633

99 Blacker 2007, Elkins 2005, 259–265

L&S offers explanatory power for the outcome of effectiveness of the two campaigns. A variety of indicators capturing L&S reveal that the counterinsurgency forces attained high L&S in both campaigns. In both contexts, the high L&S level was rooted in a vast intelligence bureaucracy setup by the British authorities during the course of the campaign. In Malaya, the relevant bureaucracy was led by the Director of Intelligence, who presided on the federal intelligence committee comprising the police, army, and specialized intelligence. In Kenya, it was led by the director of intelligence and security, who presided on the colony intelligence committee comprising of intelligence organizations of the police, army, and specialized intelligence. These bureaucracies built, invested, and reformed in a number of capacities.

**TABLE 20: SUMMARY OF L&S INDICATORS IN MALAYA AND KENYA**

<b>L&amp;S</b>		Malaya	Kenya
Legibility			
	Population Monitoring by Special Branch	Extensive	Extensive
	Registration Program	Extensive	Extensive
	Aerial Surveillance	Marginal	Limited
	Systematic Interrogation	Extensive	Extensive
	Flipped Insurgents	Extensive	Extensive
Speed of Exploitation			
	Analysis, Collation, Dissemination	Extensive	Extensive
	Institutional Coordination	Extensive	Extensive
	Authority Delegation	Extensive	Extensive
	Decentralized Deployment	Extensive	Extensive
	Protocols for Rapid Action	Extensive	Extensive
	Quick Reaction Teams	Extensive	Extensive

There are multiple data points which suggest high legibility across the two campaigns. First, the counterinsurgency forces could draw on a vast population monitoring program. At the center of the infrastructure was the vast pre-existing infrastructure of the Police’s “Special Branch” in both campaigns: “The police Special Branch...were to serve as recipient and office of record for

nearly all raw information.”<sup>100</sup> In Malaya, the scaling up of the population monitoring program was motivated by the failings of the “the post-World War II military and colonial authorities [who] were short on knowledge about the Chinese community.”<sup>101</sup> To remedy for this, starting 1951, the Special Branch was tasked to monitor all civilians and all organized activities of civilians across the peninsula. The population monitoring program was built around relocation to new villages, regrouping, and systematic outreach into already built residential areas.<sup>102</sup> To account for all civilians, a major registration effort was undertaken with the aim of gathering granular data about the population and how the population was linked and related to each other.<sup>103</sup> As per French, “In the initial phase, which might last for two to three months, the Special Branch built up its knowledge of the area and penetrated the Min Yeun.”<sup>104</sup> Building on the registration effort, all members of the population were issued detailed identity documentation. The Special Branch was then tasked with carefully locating, recording, and surveilling the movement of all registered civilians. Resettlement was perceived as achieving this end especially effectively: “Resettlement, in John Morton’s view, succeeded in establishing the desired contact with the Chinese squatters. Once they were enclosed in fenced new villages, the police could control the movement of people in and out and be on hand to receive information and to observe.”<sup>105</sup> In addition to monitoring the population, the Special Branch also focused on tracking the sale and supply of property, assets, drugs, and food items across the Malaya.<sup>106</sup>

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100 Sunderland 1964, 21

101 Jumper 2001, 35

102 Comber 2008, 151-152

103 Sunderland 1964

104 French 2011, 121

105 Sunderland 1964, 34

106 TNA W0291/1670, June 1957

In Kenya, by late 1953, colonial authorities worked to rewire the population monitoring of the African tribes, especially the Kikuyu.<sup>107</sup> The population monitoring went into real effect with the villagization program of the farm labor: “The regrouping of estate and other labor in Malaya had its counterpart in the regrouping of farm labor in Kenya, and the issue of fool-proof identity documents in both countries was a further essential feature.”<sup>108</sup> The infamous operation Anvil, which involved evacuation of the Kikuyu tribe from the city of Nairobi, was combined with registration and issuance of identity documentation to all civilians. At the camps/new villages, “teams of loyalist Africans from the reserves worked with the security forces to build up a dossier on each man.”<sup>109</sup> To determine the risk propensity of civilians and who needed more surveillance, “A crude grading system was put in place, categorizing suspects by their supposed degree of commitment to the Mau Mau cause.”<sup>110</sup> In that way, the colonial state used the registration, identity documentation, and the dossiers to account for every civilian, establish their familial ties, and record property and assets of civilians. Even “the movement of people from one district to another would be forbidden without a government pass” – which ensured that civilian behavior was carefully recorded in the ledgers of colonial authorities, available for swift retrieval in case any questions were to be asked.<sup>111</sup>

The two campaigns also combined population monitoring with systematic interrogation, informant-networks, and collection of captured documents – which are indicators of high legibility. In Malaya, the treatment of collaborators of insurgents hiding in the population

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107 Anderson 2005, 203

108 TNA W0291/1670, June 1957, 35

109 Anderson 2005, 203

110 Anderson 2005, 203

111 French 2011, 122

identified through population monitoring, captured insurgents, and surrendered insurgents was turned into a large-scale interrogation effort. The Special Branch was the main handler of such interrogations: “Captured or surrendered enemies normally were sent to Special Branch at once.”<sup>112</sup> The Special Branch also invested in creating networks of informants: “Special Branch was the only organization permitted to run agents and it became increasingly adept at doing so. Recruitment methods included bribery and threats.”<sup>113</sup> Such networks were not limited to those among the Chinese squatters, they were also extended to the 60000 aborigines population: “An intelligence network using aborigines was set up.”<sup>114</sup> Captured documents were also funneled into the legibility infrastructure at the Special Branch: “captured documents would be carefully packaged and sent to Special Branch.”<sup>115</sup>

In Kenya, interrogation was a central plank of the intelligence collection effort. Subversive elements suggested by the population monitoring in relocated villages, special areas, and reserves were subjected to systematic interrogation through the screening teams.<sup>116</sup> The intelligence committee also emphasized detailed interrogations of captured insurgents. According to Bennett: “[a key source of] intelligence on the insurgency came from interrogation of suspects, either those detained on screening or captured during offensive actions.”<sup>117</sup> The Army was tasked to hand over captured insurgents and their passive supporters for questioning to the Special Branch: “There are plenty of examples in the archive files of the army sending captured suspects to the police for interrogation”<sup>118</sup> Orders were disseminated for “immediate

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112 Sunderland 1964, 20

113 French 2011, 31

114 TNA W0291/1670, June 1957, 32

115 Bennett 2011, 147

116 Bennett 2011, 231

117 Bennett 2011, 234

118 Bennett 2011, 235

tactical interrogation for actionable information” from arrested cadres. Those arrested cadres were then handed over to the Police’s Special Branch for further, detailed interrogation.<sup>119</sup>

The intelligence bureaucracies in both campaigns drew upon some technological sources to monitor target geographies. In Malaya, “military units continued to collect information in fields peculiarly their own (through aerial photography, visual reconnaissance, and patrolling), passing on to Special Branch any raw information they acquired.”<sup>120</sup> The monitoring of the jungle was undertaken with the aid aircraft like Austers, Lincolns, Meteors; helicopters were also used.<sup>121</sup> In Kenya, throughout 1954, extensive reconnaissance by aircraft was undertaken of the forests. The Kenya Police Air Wing provided varied support including “air offensive support, contact and visual reconnaissance, night reconnaissance, [and] direction of mortar fire.”<sup>122</sup> As one report noted, “It was possible from photographic cover of the forests to identify terrorist hides.”<sup>123</sup>

Like legibility, in both the campaigns, speed of exploitation was clearly high. There is evidence of substantial focus on creation of bureaucratic structures capable of swift processing, sharing, and dissemination of intelligence in both campaigns. In Malaya, there was wide-ranging recognition by 1951 that abundant intelligence generated by various sources was getting lost in the bureaucracy.<sup>124</sup> There was also a sense that the military needed more than raw information to identify subversive elements in the resettled population and those outside. Under Briggs, the Federal Intelligence Committee was created to address this challenge: “The task of this body was

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119 Bennett 2011, 147

120 Sunderland 1964, vii

121 TNA W0291/1670, June 1957

122 Short 1975, 490

123 TNA W0291/1670, June 1957

124 Comber 2008, 153

to oversee intelligence activities and ensure that Special Branch intelligence on which operations could be mounted was analyzed and disseminated without delay to the army before it became ‘stale’ and overtaken by the course of events.”<sup>125</sup>

Under Templer, the Federal Intelligence Committee pressed for even swifter information sharing: “The Federal Intelligence Committee was designed to provide a free flow of intelligence among the principal departments of the Federal Government.”<sup>126</sup> The Federal Intelligence Committee elevated the Special Branch to improve the pace of exploitation of all available intelligence. According to French, “The Special Branch was given the sole responsibility for the evaluation, collation, and dissemination of intelligence.”<sup>127</sup> The Special Branch introduced new methods of swift engagement with various legibility sources and rapid analysis on the information produced by those sources.<sup>128</sup> Special attention was paid to unifying the analytical capability of the special branch and the kinetic prongs of the military: “The solution to the problem was to attach to Special Branch...[military intelligence officials] who undertook to collect operational intelligence as it passed through Special Branch channels, to process it in a form useful to the military, and to see that it reached the army in time for operations.”<sup>129</sup> The integration ran vertically and horizontally across all levels of operations: “At state and district levels, the intelligence sections of brigades and battalion, respectively, [were] combined with police staff to man operations rooms.”<sup>130</sup>

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125 Comber 2008, 153

126 Sunderland 1964, 26

127 French 2011, 29

128 Sunderland 1964, 26/27, Comber 2008, 153/154

129 Sunderland 1964, 28

130 Sunderland 1964, 29

In Kenya, the Special Branch was charged with analysis and collation of all intelligence gathered from the various legibility sources. To ensure that processed information reached the army and police units on the ground in time, the Kenyan Intelligence Committee combined Special Branch and military intelligence officials. As one internal analysis noted, “The most important feature of both organizations [in Malaya and Kenya] is the complete integration of the Special Branch and the Military Intelligence staff at all levels.”<sup>131</sup>

The two campaigns delegated abundant authority on dissemination of information and mounting of operations. In Malaya, the control and conduct of operations was in the hands of the Director of Operations starting 1952, who controlled the war executive committee.<sup>132</sup> The fact that Templer was both High Commissioner and Director of Operations of the colony elevated his powers. Templer had absolute authority to alter the shape of preexisting institutional arrangements. Templer also had direct authority over senior members of the police, military, and civil authorities in their respective areas. This allowed him to delegate authority to Special Branch to suggest raids, and to tactical elements of the Army to act on their own. This ensured that dissemination of information and mounting of operations faced no tangible delays because of delays in authorization.

In Kenya, the war council, containing the governor and the commander-in-chief, enjoyed absolute authority to delegate and permit any use of force.<sup>133</sup> These powers were enjoined upon the war council in general and the commander-in-chief specifically to restore law-and-order in

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131 TNA W0291/1670, June 1957, 29

132 Sunderland 1964, 29

133 TNA W0291/1670, June 1957, 23

the colony. The command-in-chief, in turn, had complete “operational control over all the Security Forces.”<sup>134</sup> This ensured that there were no delays in dispersal of information, approval for raids and/or ambushes.

The counterinsurgency forces in both campaigns also built up new capacity to rapidly deploy on available information outside the relocated regions. In Malaya, battalions of the regular Army were broken up into small teams, positioned on the fringes of the jungle and deep inside the jungle.<sup>135</sup> In areas proximate to the model villages, they were tasked to react rapidly on available information, disseminated through a robust and large-scale system of wireless communication.<sup>136</sup> In Jungles, the security forces built and operated from new jungle forts – which also brought down reaction times on available information. In Kenya, small-teams of regular Army units – such as the Kings African Rifles -- and specialized “General Service Units” were organized. These were platoon size integrated with wireless communication and spread out in Settled Areas and prohibited areas, such as forests: “Troops and police posts established on the fringe of the forests to intercept movement out of the forests.”<sup>137</sup> These teams were tasked “...to act in a mobile, offensive role” once information was provided.<sup>138</sup> A plethora of tracking teams were also devised which were closely integrated with special branch monitoring: “Tracking/Combat Teams [were deployed for] primarily in the Settled Areas and adjacent forests for seeking out and destroying terrorist elements, particularly after stock thefts.”<sup>139</sup> The Special Branch also created small paramilitary teams which would operate in Forests and Reserves: “Apart from obtaining

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134 TNA W0291/1670, June 1957

135 Comber 2008, 134/165/285, Sunderland 1964, 29, TNA W0291/1670, June 1957, 47/48

136 TNA W0291/1670, June 1957, 66

137 TNA W0291/1670, June 1957, 52

138 TNA W0291/1670, June 1957, 39

139 TNA W0291/1670, June 1957, 39

and supplying information on subversive activities and Mau Mau gangs, they lead and operate ex-Mau Mau Special Forces in the forests and Reserves.”<sup>140</sup>

### Comparative Probe of Mechanisms

The analysis above suggests that L&S was a necessary cause of effectiveness across the two campaigns. To further probe the theory’s validity, I turn to evidence on mechanisms. The use of process tracing is necessary to ensure that the “cause or condition that survives [a] method of elimination” in a method of difference design is not a false positive.<sup>141</sup> Given the available evidence, I am able to probe one necessary mechanism for the L&S to hold across the two cases: information flows rooted in the L&S. I can also test information flow implications of mechanisms suggested by alternative arguments, such as the hearts-and-minds view. I also focus on the role of violence against civilians, and test if it was key to generating intelligence for the counterinsurgency forces.

There is substantial evidence in support of the information flow mechanisms implied under the L&S: the counterinsurgency forces leveraged the legibility infrastructure to generate information, and the vast exploitation capacities to turn available gains either into more information or kinetic strikes. In Malaya, high L&S was “...directed toward building up the order of battle of the Malayan Communist Party and its military organization.”<sup>142</sup> The Special

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140 TNA W0291/1670, June 1957, 39

141 George and Bennett 2005, 155-156; on combining case studies with process tracing, see George and Bennett 2005, 2015; this process testing constitutes a test of necessary implications of a theory, also called the hoop test of process tracing. See: Bennett 2010, 210, Van Evera 1997, 31–32, Collier 2011, 825

142 Comber 2008, 80

Branch leveraged the legibility infrastructure, comprising of extensive population monitoring across the new model villages and outside, to detect traces of the communist organization.<sup>143</sup>

Being able to monitor the population, its movement, its interactions allowed the Special Branch to uncover key nodes in the underground organization and establish its connections within the population: “As soon as a guerilla was identified, he was charted and allocated a Wanted List (WL) number, and a personal file or dossier was opened for him in the Special Branch secret registry containing his personal and family particulars, the Chinese characters for his name, including any known aliases, a photograph if available.”<sup>144</sup>

The detailed exploitation paraphernalia ensured that all information acquired from the various legibility sources was turned into actual gains.<sup>145</sup> On the one hand, the security forces’ proficient analysis of legibility gains allowed it to develop a strong picture of the MCP organizational structure: “the Special Branch was able to construct de novo a comprehensive picture of the [MCP’s]/MNLA’s structure and organization from information obtained from the interrogation of captured and surrendered guerillas, as well as the careful examination and analysis of captured communist documents.”<sup>146</sup> On the other hand, the leads and cues suggested for reaching insurgents were readily acted upon. The “...improved Special Branch took its place in a comprehensive intelligence system designed to give timely and usable information to the fighters in search of guerrillas.”<sup>147</sup> This was a break from the pre-campaign period when the “Police and military saw and spoke in different terms.”<sup>148</sup> The military “wanted to be told that n guerrillas of

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143 Comber 2008, 160-161

144 Comber 2008, 80

145 Comber 2008, 88-89

146 Comber 2008, 79

147 Sunderland 1964, 25

148 Sunderland 1964

such and such a unit would be at a designated place at a designated time” but the police were only able to “to report that a certain man or group of men might visit a given spot “some night soon.””<sup>149</sup> By attaching multiple military intelligence officials, with well-integrated wireless and communication infrastructure, backed by abundant authority, this problem was overcome. As one analyst from the period notes, “The need to produce intelligence in a form useful to the army found administrative recognition in the attaching of thirty military intelligence officers to Special Branch, whose mission it was to collect operational intelligence, process it, and pass it on to army.”<sup>150</sup>

I find a similar dynamic in Kenya. The civilian population inside the camps, in the reserves, and settled areas were effectively surveilled; having accounted for them in the ledgers through pass books, the Police and the Special Branch came to acquire deep knowledge about all the tribes and were quick to react on what might be anomalous. Screenings based on suspicions led to creation of dossiers on suspects. Interrogations of arrested cadres generated details on support networks within the population and methods of the insurgency in general. Thus, extensive knowledge on the civilian population, leads from screenings, combined with detailed interrogations of arrested cadres generated a deluge of information on the insurgency, which was swiftly collated and analyzed for generation of further leads.

The frequency of information flows in this period has been documented by scholars based on extensive analysis of intelligence reports left behind by the colonial authorities. Huw Bennett, in his study of intelligence reports on the Mau Mau, notes: “The evidence shows a rising quantity

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149 Sunderland 1964, 28

150 Sunderland 1964, 24

and quality of [information] in the second half of 1953 and throughout 1954.”<sup>151</sup> The information acquired was not allowed to get lost in the bureaucracy. The Special Branch made it a point to swiftly circulate all information generated. On analyzing the flow of information and its exploitation process in the archival record, Bennett concludes that “information from low-level insurgents could be quickly disseminated through the committee system and inform offensive operations.”<sup>152</sup>

There are two ways to test the alternative information generation logic which may be advanced under a hearts-and-minds theory. The key logic is that civilians -- on being won over by the counterinsurgency forces -- may share information voluntarily. This mechanism can be hypothesized for the Malaya campaign. On the other hand, there is limited reason to expect that this mechanism should have played out in Kenya given the coding along the dimension of hearts-and-minds variable, suggesting poor compliance with civilian protection and security. Detailed, disaggregated data on sources of information is not available for either campaign. However, I can assess whether information from civilian collaboration was employed or not -- such as through tips.

In the evidence examined across the two campaigns, I find efforts by British forces to gather tips from civilians. But there is limited data to support the view that civilian collaboration was the central information generation mechanism. In Malaya, for instance, one common practice by the Police was to circulate questionnaires asking for information on the insurgents and to collect it in a box. Called “Operation Question”, it was hoped that this would allow security forces “to gain

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151 Bennett 2013

152 Bennett 2013

information in selected areas by the delivery of questionnaires to households and their collection in sealed boxes.”<sup>153</sup> Between 1952 and 1956, however, Special Branch intelligence reports do not seem to be basing much of their analysis on the results of “Operation question.”<sup>154</sup> There appears to have been some cooperation by villagers on their own in some areas. But such cooperation appears to have been limited: “Confidence in the government increased, and a few people were willing to provide information on the local Min Yeun members and guerilla movements.”<sup>155</sup> This might be explained by the failure of hearts-and-minds strategies to convince the civilians to side with the counterinsurgency forces: “Social welfare in New Villages must also have had some impact on the rural Chinese, though most sources demonstrating knowledge of Chinese attitudes in 1950-53 suggest villagers remained at best resigned, at worst seething with anger.”<sup>156</sup>

In Kenya, there is some specific evidence that the civilian population remained reluctant to collaborate and provide intelligence voluntarily. Clayton notes that “One unsuccessful method tried (only twice) was to march a band and drums and a company of soldiers into an area of Nairobi just before dawn, distribute tea and buns, and invite the local populace to deposit names of insurgents in sealed boxes to be opened at Government House, a remarkable and quite futile performance.”<sup>157</sup>

Another implication of civilian information sharing is that such information may be shared during regular dismounted patrols. An analysis of patrolling protocols used by British authorities

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153 TNA W0291/1670, June 1957, 32

154 Comber 2008

155 Stubbs 1989, 190

156 Hack 1999, 146

157 Clayton 1976, 34

across Malaya and Kenya, however, suggest no focus on systematic information gathering by patrols.<sup>158</sup> To be sure, patrols were common in both populated and unpopulated areas, but they do not seem to have focused on interactions with the population to collect intelligence. In Malaya, for example, patrols acted on available intelligence reports from Special Branch, instead of generating their own intelligence from a cooperative population: “The infantry battalion in Malaya in the latter years of the Emergency did not, of course rely solely on intelligence reports to guide it to the enemy...there were two principal sources of intelligence: Special Branch reports and patrolling...commanders in the jungle therefore depended on patrolling and such ground as footprints in their planning.”<sup>159</sup>

A different civilian information logic may have been at work. It might be argued that it was not L&S but information generation due to indiscriminate violence against civilians which led to effectiveness. An important historical analysis by David French places both the campaigns in the category of “population control”, which is generally associated with indiscriminate use of violence against civilians.<sup>160</sup> Hack calls “Population control” in Malaya as essential to the campaign’s effectiveness.<sup>161</sup> Can this view account for the information generation dynamics?

The most clearly falsifiable implication of this view is that sustained coercion of civilians through torture, manipulation, and/or collective punishment can generate information. There is sufficient evidence to suggest that such methods contributed to intelligence across both campaigns. However, again, they do not seem to have dominated the systematic piecing together

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158 TNA W0291/1670, June 1957, 52

159 Sunderland 1964, 56

160 French 2011

161 Hack 1999

of intelligence across either campaign. Put another way, the information acquisition process appears to not be powered by violent coercion of civilians.

In Malaya, for instance, a sizable number of civilians were indiscriminately picked up and subjected to harsh interrogation regimens for information on the insurgency. This was purportedly the norm in specific areas marked as ‘black zones’ by Templer: “Templer’s strategy was to make life in the black zones so harsh for the local population that they would never want to return to it and would give up guerrilla fighters because of the collective punishments inflicted upon them.”<sup>162</sup> However, it is unclear what kind of information was generated by such methods and whether it was sufficient for the security forces. Even within such areas, the use of torture to extract information from civilians remains contested. As noted by Walton, “There is no evidence that torture, either as it was understood at the time or as it is defined now in international law, was institutionalized [in the black zones].”<sup>163</sup> Instead, “The Special Branch in Malaya achieved some remarkable levels of penetration into rebel guerrilla forces...using interrogation methods that fell short of physical violence.”<sup>164</sup> In parts of the campaign, collective punishment was used with the intent of generating information. In April 1952, for example, after the killing of twelve men in the town of Tanjong Malim, British authorities imposed “a twenty-two hour curfew, reduced the rice rations [and circulated] questionnaires in which residents were instructed to write what they knew of the communists.”<sup>165</sup> Humphrey judges that “the threat of fine, extended curfew, reduced rations [improved] the quantity and the quality of information” and yet such

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162 Walton 2014

163 Walton 2014

164 Walton 2014

165 Stubbs 1989, 165

“extreme measures were discarded by Templer presumably because they were judged ineffective or counter-productive.”<sup>166</sup>

Hack ventures a so-called “population control” logic without involving direct civilian coercion. Hack argues that a population control strategy -- which equates to the regrouping of civilians into controlled spaces alone -- enabled civilians living in the new villages “to contact administrators and provide information.”<sup>167</sup> Yet, Hack doesn’t provide sufficient evidence to back the claim of civilians approaching administrators. Hack provides compelling evidence of MCP and MRLA feeling under pressure 1952 onward and being increasingly wary of maintaining cadres and specialized teams inside the new villages.<sup>168</sup> But it is unclear from the analysis if the source of their trouble was voluntary civilian surrender of information or the ability of the counterinsurgency forces to just monitor civilian populations better.

In Kenya, in contrast to Malaya, the use of violence against civilians was a strategy of the counterinsurgency forces.<sup>169</sup> General George Erskine authorized violence against civilians, specifically the Kikuyu tribe. The goal of much of that violence appears to have been punitive and not intelligence collection. For example, until 1956, interrogation of civilians identified through screenings was rife with torture. But not all torture was carried out to extract information. What is striking is that interrogations geared towards systematic intelligence gathering relied on least amount of torture. “As in Malaya, a crucial distinction existed between different kinds of interrogations in Kenya: some were intended to punish and rehabilitate Mau

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166 Stubbs 1989, 166

167 Hack 1999, 133

168 Hack 1999, 141/145

169 Elkins 2005, Anderson 2005, Bennett 2013

Mau suspects, and these were often extremely violent; some were conducted at the front line of 'hot combat, while others took place later, after a captured insurgent had been transported to a detention center. The latter were more likely to be conducted by trained Special Branch officers and had the aim of eliciting operational strategic intelligence. These seem to have involved less physical violence."<sup>170</sup>

## Conclusion

British counterinsurgency is important from scholarly and policy angles. From a scholarly perspective, it is the basis of theoretical ideas on hearts-and-minds theories, largely because of prolific writings on counterinsurgency by British officers like Colonel Roger Thomson. British counterinsurgency also forms a large share of colonial counterinsurgency, which is an integral category of the universe of counterinsurgency cases. From a policy angle, it is the cannon fodder for military doctrines around the world. The US military doctrine invokes it multiple times. This case study therefore contributes empirically to a variety of scholarly and police debates drawing on British counterinsurgency.

In addition to providing a new interpretation to understand the outcomes across the two campaigns, the analysis is novel attempting to systematically distinguish the nature of violence against civilians for which British counterinsurgency has become known for in recent historiography. As I show, there was violence against civilians across the two campaigns, but it was far from comparable -- qualitatively or in scale: Kenya was much more brutal than Malaya

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170 Walton 2014

for civilians. By doing so, the analysis shows that large-scale violence against civilians was -- at the very least -- not a necessary causal force for effectiveness in these two cases of British counterinsurgency.

It is important to not over-interpret the case analysis. The analysis has important limitations. The design only helps us identify necessary causal factors. On its own, it makes clear that hearts-and-minds, force levels, and/or group type are not one of them across these two campaigns. The use of process tracing for testing a few necessary implications of various arguments bolsters confidence that I have not stumbled upon a false positive. However, we can still not completely rule out the role of the other factors – L&S may not have been sufficient on its own. Further testing is essential to check the validity of L&S, to which I turn in the next few chapters.

## Chapter 6: Indian Counterinsurgency Effectiveness: A Comparative Analysis

In this chapter, I examine counterinsurgency effectiveness in another South Asian context: India. Specifically, I analyze two campaigns in a comparative perspective: the campaign in Punjab starting 1991 and going on until 1994, and the campaign in Jammu and Kashmir starting 1996 and culminating in 1999 (right before the break-out of the Kargil war between India and Pakistan).<sup>1</sup> Chapter 4 provides extensive details on the backgrounds of the two conflicts. Just to recap, the insurgency in Punjab broke out in 1984, whereas the insurgency in Kashmir had broken out in 1989. These insurgencies were major internal security challenges for the Indian state -- to which the Indian state responded seriously. The campaigns analyzed i.e. Punjab (1991-1994) and Jammu and Kashmir (1996-1999) are not the entire conflict -- they are specific periods of the conflict which allow for a controlled comparison.<sup>2</sup>

This campaign-level comparison provides important leverage: it shows a divergent trajectory of effectiveness in a bounded context, thereby constituting a method of difference design. The counterinsurgency campaigns in Punjab (1991-1994) and Jammu and Kashmir (1996-1999) converged in three key variables emphasized as important to counterinsurgency effectiveness; these campaigns also shared important political, state capacity, geographic, and external support features. Thus, I am able to assess the cause of the variation in effectiveness by exploiting a tight comparison, which I supplement with analytic process tracing.<sup>3</sup> If L&S carries explanatory power, we should see the campaign in Jammu and Kashmir being relatively ineffective whereas

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1 I extensively rely on conflict overviews provided by Chima 2010 for Punjab and Bose 2009 for Kashmir

2 Note that some of the evidence in this chapter -- such as that on L&S -- repeats what has been discussed in chapter 3.

3 George and Bennett 2005, 215

the Punjab campaign should be effective: Punjab had high L&S, whereas Jammu and Kashmir had low L&S. Moreover, the variation in effectiveness should be mediated by two causal steps: a) information flows rooted in L&S (instead of mass civilian collaboration) b) divergent pressures on the insurgency mediated by the variation in L&S. I draw on a variety of secondary sourced and interview data to assess these predictions.

The findings of this comparison strongly align with trajectories predicted under the L&S.: variation in the L&S across the campaigns in Punjab and Kashmir accord with varied levels of effectiveness, evidenced in the insurgents' operational capabilities, collective action trajectories, and organizational presence. Punjab had a high L&S campaign, and was effective; Kashmir, on the other hand, had a low L&S campaign and the outcome of the campaign was also ineffective. Importantly, I find that the arguments centering on the type of insurgent group cannot do much cross-case explaining. It is difficult to argue that the insurgency in Punjab collapsed because it was intrinsically weaker. The insurgencies in Punjab and Kashmir shared similar strengths and weaknesses. Force size accounts are also inadequate for understanding the patterns. In absolute numbers, in Jammu and Kashmir, the Indian state had somewhat of an advantage compared to Punjab. Force level relative to population and geographic area suggest that in Punjab the Indian state had a clear disadvantage. If force accounts mattered on their own, Jammu and Kashmir should have been effective, and Punjab should not have been effective. At worst: we should have ended up with a similar outcome. We see a very different outcome, however.

Hearts-and-minds explanations provide no cross-case explanatory power. Indian state authorities conducted themselves in ways which were largely antithetical to the doctrinal best practices

across both campaigns: I draw upon a plethora of domestic analysts and international rights organizational accounts, which have powerfully documented the heavy-handed and abusive conduct of the Indian security forces in both contexts towards civilian populations.

Comparative probes of mechanisms provide abundant support for the hypothesized mechanisms under varied levels of the L&S, increasing confidence in the explanatory importance of the L&S. Punjab acquired and executed on information on the insurgency because of high L&S. In contrast, due to weak L&S capacities, the campaign in Jammu and Kashmir remained deficient in both information acquisition and execution. To the extent information was available in Jammu and Kashmir, available accounts suggest a distinct information flow mechanism: turned/flipped insurgents. This information flow, without high L&S state capacities, struggled to blunt the insurgent coalition. I also find evidence that the result of robust information acquisition and execution on the insurgency in Punjab was serious. Almost all the major groups of the insurgency in Punjab suffered from severe kinetic effects, like sustained leadership decapitation; anticipatory effects also substantially curtailed the ability of the Punjabi militant groups to recover and bounce back, In Jammu and Kashmir, in the absence of robust information acquisition and execution, senior leadership of most of the major factions remained untouched; available accounts provide limited support for anticipatory effects.

Research Design: Method of Difference with Process Tracing

Comparing the two campaigns provides a method of difference design.<sup>4</sup> As I show subsequently, the campaigns in Punjab and Jammu and Kashmir show markedly varied effectiveness. I seek to explain why the two similar campaigns achieved such divergent outcomes of effectiveness. I combine the method of difference design with process tracing. This allows for a) the elimination of alternative explanations by identifying the presence of shared variables b) comparison of variables making contrasting predictions c) testing of key mechanisms hypothesized under new and orthodox theories. For this research design to be persuasive, however, I need to demonstrate that these cases are indeed comparable. I undertake this task below.

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<sup>4</sup> George and Bennett 2005, 156

**TABLE 21: SUMMARY OF METHOD OF DIFFERENCE COMPARISON OF PUNJAB AND J&K**

	Punjab	J&K
Years	1991 -- 1994	1996 -- 1999
<b>IVs of interest</b>		
Absolute Force Levels	Preponderance	Preponderance
Relative Force Levels	Similar	Similar
Group Type	Strong but with infractions	Strong but with infractions
Hearts & Minds	Not Followed	Not Followed
L&S	High	Low
<b>Control Variables</b>		
Duration of campaign (~years)	3	3
Duration since breakout of conflict	7	7
Rural to Urban Population <sup>5</sup>	~ 70:30	~ 75:25
Political Type of Insurgency	Separatist	Separatist
Ideology of Insurgency	Religion/ethno-nationalism	Religion/ethno-nationalism
Force Structure/ Mechanization	Limited Mechanization	Limited Mechanization
Force Structure	Police, Paramilitary, Indian Army	Indian Army, Paramilitary, Police
Religion as a motivation	Yes; Sikh	Yes; Islam
Election in State	Yes; Feb 1992	Yes; June 1996
Composition of State	Sikh-Hindu mix	Muslim-Hindu mix
External Support for Insurgency	Pakistan	Pakistan
Terrain of Conflict	Rural, agrarian	Rural, mountainous
Political concessions to Insurgency during campaign	None	None
Major International Conflict During Campaign	None	None
Shared Border/Safe Haven for insurgency	Pakistan	Pakistan
Total Conflict Fatalities (Source: SATP)	21362 (1984-1994)	22907 (1989-1999)

<sup>5</sup> 1991 Punjab population ~ 2,028,196, Source: Economic Adviser 2011; 1996 Kashmir population estimated at ~ 8814,241 based on 2001 population numbers in the census of ~ 10,143,000. Source: Indiatat

The campaigns in Punjab and Jammu and Kashmir are also comparable across multiple dimensions which some scholars and analysts suggest as important for counterinsurgency effectiveness. First, the two campaigns share broad-structural factors, like structure of the state, national income, regime type, and nature of domestic politics. Both the campaigns played out in the same country—India---in a similar, contemporary period, the 1990s.

Second, the campaigns were directed insurgencies with similar political aims. They were directed against ethno-nationalist insurgencies making clear and consistent separatist political claims. The campaign in Punjab was waged against an ethno-religious separatist Sikh movement.<sup>6</sup> Sikh ethno-nationalist politics dated backed to the partition; various groups had championed the cause of a separate Punjabi state initially, and later for more rights and autonomy. The movement's contention with the Indian state escalated through the late 1970s and early 1980s. The movement turned to full-fledged violence after Sikh militants and Indian security forces clashed at the sacred Golden Temple in the city of Amritsar in 1984.<sup>7</sup> Multiple Sikh religious and political groups took to arms, making claims for a separate Sikh state called Khalistan. The campaign in Jammu and Kashmir was similarly directed against ethno-nationalist political groups in the state. The contentious ascension of the Kashmir state to India in 1947 had laid the basis of this politics.<sup>8</sup> In the aftermath of the rigged 1987 state election, a variety of political actors in the state, embracing religiously inspired nationalist precepts, took up arms against the Indian state, with some demanding autonomy while others demanding a merger with Pakistan.

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6 Chima 2010, 41-102

7 Chima 2010, 93

8 Ganguly 1997, 8-11

Third, the geographies of the insurgencies shared three key features. First, they shared a long border with Pakistan: Punjab shares a 461 km long border with Pakistan, whereas the state of Jammu and Kashmir shares a 740 km long border.<sup>9</sup> Second, much of the insurgency affected area was rural -- even through divergent in terrain -- in both contexts. Punjab experienced insurgent pressures in the rural heartlands of Punjab's Malwa, Majha, and Doaba regions. In Kashmir, while the insurgency had started in the urban regions, by 1996 the rural areas of both north and south Kashmir were equally disturbed.<sup>10</sup> Fearon and Laitin (2003) have emphasized rural terrain in general as being especially conducive to guerrilla warfare. Thus, the two insurgencies enjoyed favorable turf for guerrilla warfare. Third, and this is an extension of the previous point, the rural-urban divide in both states was similar. According to 1991 population statistics, Punjab had a rural-urban divide of 70 to 30.<sup>11</sup> According to 2001 population statistics, Jammu and Kashmir had a rural-urban divide of 75 to 25.<sup>12</sup>

Fourth, the Indian state's political handling of the insurgent crisis before the launch of and early in the campaign had some important similarities. Undoubtedly the politics of both states is peculiar; how it is perceived and processed in Delhi is distinct. Even then, the Delhi based central government took a series of steps which were very similar across the two contexts. In the lead up to the campaigns, both states saw a long bout of Presidential rule:<sup>13</sup> Indian central government held elected state governments in abeyance and transferred administrative and

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9 Estimated from Maps

10 Bose 2009, 102-153

11 Bedi 2013

12 J&K Report 2011

13 Telford 2001

executive powers of the state to appointed Governors under special provisions of the Indian constitution. After some years of Governor rule, the Indian government organized state-level elections early in both campaigns in an attempt to alleviate political grievances. In Punjab, the election took place in February 1992. In Kashmir, the election took place in September/October 1996. The elections were equally tenuous in both contexts: electoral violence, low turnout, boycotts were common.<sup>14</sup> The similarity in Indian handling of the crises in two states is summed by Telford: “The citizens of Punjab and Kashmir first witnessed the dismissal of their democratically-elected governments. They then endured a decade of police rule followed by sham elections. The governments elected by these charades were the political puppets of New Delhi, not the representatives of the people.”<sup>15</sup>

Fifth, Pakistan was a key external benefactor of the insurgencies in both contexts. In Punjab, Pakistan appears to have been involved in all aspects of the insurgency, including provision of sustained material aid, coordinating different insurgent groups within the Panthic Committee organization, and providing training and advice on tactics, targets, and operations.<sup>16</sup> Lalwani (2014) offers one of the most detailed, multi-sourced account of Pakistani support to the insurgency arguing that “Sikhs flooded across the [Pakistani] border for material support, training, and safe haven.”<sup>17</sup> Butt (2017) also offers important details, suggesting that “in response to the 1989 Brass-tacks crisis...,” Pakistan “...opened the terror-tap,” supplying “assault rifles including the AK-47 and AK-56, RPG-7 rockets, Chinese origin machine guns, night vision

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14 On boycotts, forced/low turnout, and violence in 1996 Kashmir elections, see: Schofield 2010, 192-193; on boycotts and violence in Punjab, see: Chima 2010, 206-207

15 Telford 2001

16 Fair 2009

17 Lalwani 2014, 498

equipment, communications equipment, training, and leadership of Khalistani groups by Pakistani intelligence personnel.”<sup>18</sup> In Kashmir, following the rigged elections of 1987, various factions of the insurgency received extensive material support from Pakistan. According to Butt (2017), “Pakistan Army and its Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) setup training camps and used much of the same personnel it had used in Afghanistan.”<sup>19</sup>

It is important to note that there is debate on the quantity and quantum of support for the insurgency. Lalwani (2014) and Butt (2017) differ on the quantum of the support; Butt categorizes it as moderate compared to Kashmir, whereas Lalwani assesses it to be at par. Lalwani’s weight of evidence appears to be stronger, who has interviewed Indian intelligence officials on the matter.

Sixth, the intensity of the campaigns in terms of sheer levels of violence and the size of the insurgency was similar. In Punjab from 1984 to 1994, insurgents killed an estimated 13317 civilians and security forces.<sup>20</sup> In Kashmir from 1989 to 1999, insurgents killed an estimated 12320 civilians and security personnel.<sup>21</sup> In both Kashmir and Punjab, around the start of the two campaigns analysts estimated an insurgency size of 5000 to 6000 at the low end and 9000 to 10000 at the high end.<sup>22</sup>

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18 Lalwani 2014, Butt 2017

19 Butt 2017

20 Punjab SATP 2018

21 Jammu and Kashmir SATP 2018

22 Lalwani 2014

Seventh, the two campaigns share a number of control features: number of years since start of conflict and mechanization of forces.<sup>23</sup> The number of years since the start of conflict at the time of the start of the campaign was the same. Forces in both campaigns were similarly mechanized.

### Contrasting Effectiveness of Punjab and Jammu and Kashmir

Despite the similarities outlined above, the two campaigns had a markedly different outcome. The campaign in Punjab was effective, whereas the campaign in Jammu and Kashmir was ineffective. A number of different metrics of the insurgency--during the course of the campaign--suggest this divergent outcome.

First, the operational capability of the insurgency in Punjab completely broke down, whereas it varied between robust and scaled-back in Jammu and Kashmir, depending on the group. In Punjab, by the time the campaign started, the insurgents had four major groupings: the first Panthick Committee including the Khalistan Commando Force led by Wasan Zafarwal, the second Panthick Committee including the Panjwar led Khalistan Commando Force and Khalistan Liberation Front, the third Panthic Committee, and the Babbar Khalsa.<sup>24</sup> At the onset of the campaign, these groups maintained a range of robust operational capabilities. These included capacities specific to guerilla warfare, like safe houses, ammunition dumps, training facilities for new recruits, and explosive manufacturing units.<sup>25</sup> These also included elaborate

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23 On importance of mechanization to counterinsurgency, see: Lyall and Wilson 2009

24 Chima 2010, 225; there were many other smaller organizations at the time, but these were the major, influential factions

25 Sharma 1995

fund-raising and public mobilization operations, like trucking operations, as well as smuggling operations.<sup>26</sup> Some of the factions also operated kidnapping and extortion rings.<sup>27</sup>

Available evidence from former police officials, analysts from the period, and academic studies of the insurgency agree that almost all of these operational capabilities took a major hit as early as the summer of 1992.<sup>28</sup> One scholar of the Punjabi insurgency argues that the four groupings were “organizationally and operationally crippled.”<sup>29</sup> Major disruptions in all operational capabilities of the major groups continued through 1992: “bandh calls” became rare, kidnappings and extortions came “down considerably.”<sup>30</sup> By late 1992, the militants were “operationally ravaged.” By 1994, the general assessment of insurgent capabilities was that they “had become nearly dysfunctional.”<sup>31</sup>

In Kashmir, in sharp contrast, the operational trajectory of the targeted groups appears to have remained ascendant despite frequent losses. The insurgency comprised of three major groups with well-developed operational capability at the time the campaign started: the Hizb-ul-Mujahideen, Harkat-ul-Ansar, and Lashkar-e-Taiba. These groups, much like their counterparts in Punjab, maintained specialized operational units like infiltration teams, rest and recovery units, specialized sabotage teams, safe houses in villages and urban centers in the Kashmir valley and some in the districts of Doda, Poonch, and Rajauri.<sup>32</sup> They also ran fund raising operations

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26 Gill 2001, 84

27 Gill 2001, 84

28 Gill 2001, Singh 2002, Pettigrew 1996

29 Chima 2010, 225

30 Singh 2002, 320

31 Chima 2010, 231-232

32 On Hizb and Lashkar units, see: Swami 1999a, 1999c, 2001. On capability of Al-Badr, Lashkar, see: Swami 1999a, Jamal 2009, Sanathanam, Sreedhar, Saxena, and Manish 2003

and wireless operating units in both villages and urban areas to communicate.<sup>33</sup> By 1999, despite the counterinsurgency campaign, much of this operational capability of the groups remained intact. The insurgents maintained a sizable capability of specialized units, weapon dumps, safehouses, and communication centers.<sup>34</sup> A report noted the spread of the operations across the Kashmir valley, Doda, Rajouri and Poonch: “[In 1998] there [were] 400 militant calling stations operating in the Valley alone, with 160 of them taking to the air almost every day...In Doda, ideal for guerilla tactics because of its mountainous terrain, militants have 172 calling stations. In Rajouri and Poonch districts, the “new gateways of militancy”, 131 calling stations have sprung up in just one year.”<sup>35</sup> Some Indian analysts claim that Hizb-ul-Mujahideen suffered some damage, rolling back operations in the Kashmir valley, especially in urban centers like Srinagar.<sup>36</sup> There are few independent accounts -- and hardly none from the insurgents themselves -- to corroborate this. There was a similar trajectory of important units within the Hizb i.e. Al-Badr and the Pir Panjal regiment, and that of the two other major groups, Harkat-ul-Ansar and Lashkar-e-Taiba. Most accounts largely agree that the three other groups -- especially the Lashkar-e-Taiba -- were able to keep up their trajectory; in some areas, by 1999, they even expanded.<sup>37</sup>

Second, by the end of the campaign period, the insurgents were largely uprooted from their organizational bases in Punjab, which was not the case in Jammu and Kashmir. The nature of insurgent displacement in Punjab was sudden and chaotic. In Kashmir, it was limited; to the

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33 Vinayak 1998, Kumar 1999, Swami 1998b: “There are also records of the Hizbul Mujahideen's financial dealings in Kashmir, which were worth some Rs.80 lakhs a month.”

34 Vinayak 1998

35 Vinayak 1998

36 Joshi 1999

37 Sahni 1999, Swami 2007, Jamal 2009, Sanathanam, Sreedhar, Saxena, and Manish 2003

extent that it took place, it was controlled and systematic from regions of more force levels to limited forces. For example, before the campaign began, the insurgency in Punjab maintained robust bases in the “three socio-geographical regions” of the Punjab state.<sup>38</sup> They had a “command center” in the Malwa region: districts of Ludhiana and Sangur were main launching pads for the insurgency.<sup>39</sup> The insurgents also operated in districts in the Doaba region.<sup>40</sup> Writing in 1991, Gupta noted that “Majha [is] like the wild west. Doaba, the fertile delta between the Beas and Sutlej is rocked by new militant inroads. And Malwa, including Patiala is fast succumbing to the rule of the gun.”<sup>41</sup> Select areas were especially infamous for insurgent bases. These included the districts of Tan Taran, Majhita, Batala, Ferozepur, Gurdaspur, and Amritsar.<sup>42</sup> In words of Pettigrew, until 1991, “Districts Ferozepur and Gurdaspur, though only parts of Amritsar, remained in guerilla hands.”<sup>43</sup> The Punjab Police led counterinsurgency campaign, however, compelled the insurgents to move away from these bases. The insurgents began to relocate early in the campaign. Granular details on these movements are few but available accounts suggest that insurgents were fleeing away from their bases in places like “Batala, Tan Taran, and Naushehra Pannua” by mid of 1992.<sup>44</sup> By 1993, the insurgents were largely removed from their bases in the border districts; some were forced to flee to Pakistan.<sup>45</sup>

In contrast, most of the groups in Kashmir did not relocate away from their bases out of Kashmir. Instead, some groups shifted from the valley towards districts in South Kashmir and

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38 Gupta 1991

39 Gill 2001, 66

40 Gupta 1991

41 Gupta 1991

42 Gill 2001, 66

43 Pettigrew 1992, 395

44 Sandhu 1993, Swami 1999a

45 Gill 2010, 81

Doda. Various groups were able to stand their ground -- to the extent that they held on to their bases even after the fighting season was over: "For the first time, foreign terrorists in the Kashmir valley have not moved back to Pakistan across the Line of Control with the coming of the winter snow. Traditionally, foreign terrorists operated on six-month or one-year contracts, and each October would see a lull in violence as the passes into Pakistan became impenetrable. Now, as biting cold forces terrorists down to inhabited areas from their forest hideouts, engagements with security forces have become more regular than in past years."<sup>46</sup>

Third, the insurgents experienced a complete breakdown in collective action in Punjab, whereas that was not the case in Jammu and Kashmir. In Punjab, until January 1991, there was "...no dearth of recruits. For each one that falls three more are willing to join the militant ranks, unmindful of the short life span in that avocation."<sup>47</sup> By January 1992, however, fresh recruitment into the four major groupings "had come virtually to an end."<sup>48</sup> By late 1992, insurgent surrenders were common. Per one account, around 537 fulltime fighters surrendered in 1992, and another 379 surrendered in 1993.<sup>49</sup> A separate account by Police officer Sarabjit Singh claims that "...the terrorists were being killed in large numbers and, on the other, no fresh recruitment was taking place."<sup>50</sup> Giving specific data points on surrenders, Sarb Jit Singh adds that in "...April 1992 in Tan Taran, 40 militants surrendered to the army [which was on top of]

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46 Insurgents would hold their bases inside Kashmir until 1999 reflected in a number of news reports from the period. See: Swami 1998a, Kumar 1999. Swami 1998c: "The strategy of keeping cadres within Kashmir through the winter serves two key purposes. One, operating in larger numbers in inhabited areas provides the terrorists with valuable public visibility. Secondly, it helps avoid the casualties suffered each year at the time of returning across the Line of Control."

47 Gupta 1991

48 Gill 2010, 81

49 Gill 2010, 81

50 Singh 2002, 317

160 militants [who] had surrendered and that was the first surrender.”<sup>51</sup> Singh further noted that “Most of the militants who surrendered were associates and auxiliaries working for various militant organizations.”<sup>52</sup> In contrast, the groups in Kashmir maintained a robust recruitment drive in various places in the region. As late as 1998, insurgents leveraged their “appeal among the youth in urban Jammu and Kashmir” by recruiting “...with a degree of success.”<sup>53</sup> In Doda, “Munir Khan, superintendent of police in Doda, told Human Rights Watch that he estimated that there were 700-800 militants in the area.”<sup>54</sup> In 2002, which is much later than the end of the campaign period examined, Swami provides estimates of fulltime members of the five major groups in Jammu and Kashmir per an assessment of the Home Affairs Ministry: Hizb-ul-Mujahideen had 1230, Lashkar-e-Toiba had 787, Jaish-e-Mohammed had 365, al-Badr had 230, and Harkat-ul-Jihadi Islami had 224 fighters.<sup>55</sup>

The discrepant trajectories of the effectiveness of the two campaigns aligns with trajectories of violence during the two campaigns.<sup>56</sup> As shown in Figure 6 and Figure 7, whereas Punjab was a dramatic decline in violence, Jammu and Kashmir continued to be persistently violent. On its own, levels of violence are hard to interpret. In tandem with details on operational capability, basing, and collective action trajectories, they are consistent with the interpretations of effectiveness offered above.

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51 Singh 2002, 317

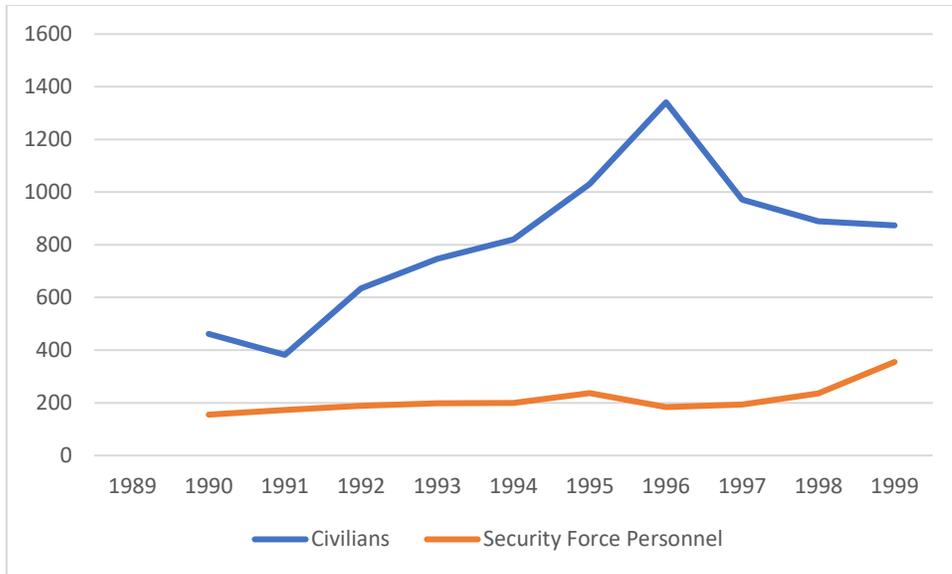
52 Singh 2002, 317

53 Swami 1999d

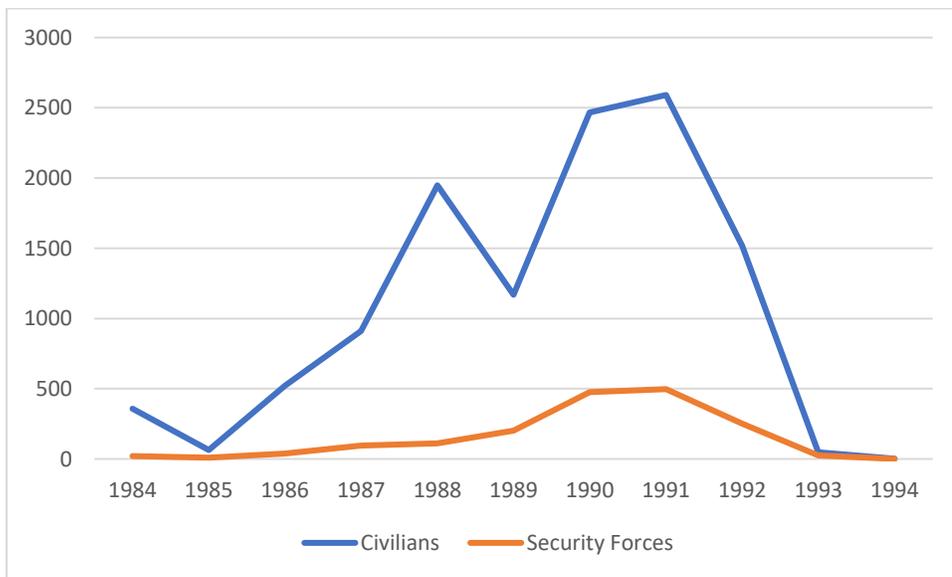
54 HRW 1999

55 Swami 2002

56 Source: South Asia Terrorism Portal



**FIGURE 6: JAMMU AND KASHMIR INSURGENT VIOLENCE**



**FIGURE 7: PUNJAB INSURGENT VIOLENCE**

Explaining Counterinsurgency Effectiveness in Punjab and Jammu and Kashmir

As I show subsequently, the two campaigns were similar along a number of different variables proffered as important to explaining counterinsurgency outcomes by existing theories, like group

type and compliance with hearts-and-minds practices, which rules them out as candidate explanations. I discuss each of those in turn, laying out the similarities. I then discuss the force levels account, which predicts the opposite of what we see in terms of effectiveness. Following that I discuss the variation in the L&S as an explanation. I conclude with some discussion of mispredictions.

### Comparative Group Type

The insurgent coalitions targeted in the counterinsurgency campaign in Punjab and Jammu and Kashmir appear to be comparable along key dimensions. Careful measurement of the targeted coalition for an array of group type theories is indicative of shared strengths along the dimensions of social bases, recruit quality, and institutionalization, and shared weaknesses for multiple indicators of cohesions. Substantively, the comparison suggests that the insurgent coalitions in both contexts were not the strongest but also far from being weak. If group type had explanatory power for effectiveness, we should not see such a divergent outcome across Punjab and Jammu and Kashmir.

**TABLE 22: SUMMARY OF GROUP TYPE INDICATORS IN PUNJAB**

Group Type		Punjab	Jammu and Kashmir
Social Bases			
	Religious Bases	Extensive	Extensive
	Tribal	None	None
	Pre-War Political Party Bases	Extensive	Extensive
	Student group Organization	Extensive	Extensive
Recruit Quality			
	Ideologically appeals	Extensive	Extensive
	Opportunists	Some	Some
Institutionalization			
	Hierarchy/Geographic Organization	Extensive	Extensive
	SOPs	Extensive	Extensive
	Training	Extensive	Extensive
Cohesion			
	Multiple factions/groups	Extensive	Extensive
	Central Coordination	None	Extensive
	Fratricide	Extensive	Extensive

First, the targeted insurgent coalitions in both Punjab and Kashmir repurposed a variety of strong prewar bases of support for the purpose of rebellion. In Punjab, the insurgency drew upon deeply embedded religious and political bases. Specifically, the four major groups, the first Panthick Committee including the Khalistan Commando Force (KCF), the second Panthick Committee including the Khalistan Liberation Front, the third Panthic Committee, and the Babbar Khalsa, were built on old, highly politicalized religious networks of the Shiromani Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee, or SGPC, and the Dam Dami Taksal.<sup>57</sup> SGPC was a religious organization controlling the network of gurudwaras that defined the Sikh community.<sup>58</sup> Dam

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57 Telford 1992, Chima 2010, Major 1987

58 Kang 2005

Dami Taksal was “a religio-political institution that first shot into limelight...when Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale took over as its 14th head in 1977.”<sup>59</sup>

The insurgents also drew upon the structure of the dominant ethno-national political party, the Akali Dal, which had been the political voice of the Sikh community in national and state level politics.<sup>60</sup> The Akali Dal never formally joined the armed struggle -- but its cadres were extensively drawn towards the insurgent organizations, at times holding dual roles in both the insurgency and the political organizations.<sup>61</sup> Such was the pull of the insurgency on the Akali’s base that “Akali leaders moved closer rhetorically to extremists, as a way of rebuilding their local legitimacy.”<sup>62</sup> Even as late as the 1990s, “the leaders of the party’s various factions jointly announced that they “supported the struggle...”” of the various insurgent groups.<sup>63</sup>

The Punjabi insurgents also drew heavily on wings of pre-existing youth organizations, a prominent one of which was the All India Sikh Student Federation (AISSF).<sup>64</sup> In the lead up to the insurgency, “AISSF, largely through the recruitment drives of the Bhindranwale’s Dam Dami Taksal, had over 100,000 members throughout Punjab’s colleges and universities and cadre cells down to the local level, including in rural areas.”<sup>65</sup> In the aftermath of Bluestar, the AISSF networks struggle to maintain their pre-war coherence. Yet, they proved to be an important network of the insurgency well into the late 1980s and early 90s.<sup>66</sup> Finally, the insurgents also

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59 Chima 2010

60 Chima 2010, Major 1987

61 Jetley 2008, 70

62 Chowdhury and Krebs 2009

63 Chowdhury and Krebs 2009

64 Telford 1992, 986, Major 1987

65 Chima 1997, 18

66 Sandhu 1991a, Pettigrew 1995

“...drew [their] membership from ex-servicemen, policemen” who had served either in the British Indian Army or the post-partition Indian Army.<sup>67</sup> Almost all of these bases existed across Punjab’s three major regions, the Malwa, Doaba, and Majha. The combination of these political and religious linkages connected leaders of the various insurgent groups to the population in rural and urban regions across the Punjab state.

In Kashmir, prominent factions in the insurgency had repurposed and revived major political bases spread out in both North and South Kashmir. One of the major targeted groups was the Hizb-ul-Mujahideen, which had repurposed the well embedded rural social bases and networks of the political party Jamaat-e-Islami.<sup>68</sup> The Hizb-ul-Ansar, which had formed after the merger of the Harkat-ul-Jihadi Islami and the Harkat-ul-Mujahideen, drew on the well-developed Deoband network in the Jammu region and the valley, in addition to those in Pakistan. There were other groups in the targeted coalition, however, which had a much weaker local social base, namely the Lashkar-e-Taiba -- which had fewer local cadres and relied much more extensively on external networks of support such as those from Pakistan.<sup>69</sup>

Second, the major groups in both Punjab and Kashmir were reasonably institutionalized. Select groups were better than others, but a large chunk of both the insurgencies developed detailed organizational protocols for mounting a sustained guerrilla war. In Punjab, groups which were most institutionalized included the Khalistan Commando Force, Khalistan Liberation Organization, and the BKI. These organizations drew on “a strong base,” abetted by “a

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67 Fair 2004, 77

68 Staniland 2014

69 Sanathanam, Sreedhar, Saxena, and Manish 2003, 224

developed organizational infrastructure.”<sup>70</sup> The institutionalized groups of the Punjabi insurgency paid abundant attention to in-group discipline. The institutionalization had been fostered by Pakistani external backing. The Khalistan Commando Force was the most disciplined, which trained its cadres for discipline and sought to engage them in non-military religious activities which would bind them in bonds of discipline.<sup>71</sup> The groups also paid significant attention to developing clearly delineated hierarchies, with functional specialization for various guerrilla war functions.<sup>72</sup> Some of the groups adopted elaborate regimental command structures along the lines of Indian military structure.<sup>73</sup> Subsumed within the regimental structures was an elaborate cell structure, tasked with managing “arms supply line(s)” and acquiring and managing “higher intensity explosives and sophisticated weaponry.” The KCF paid special attention to developing the cellular structure “...to contain infiltration, if not to remove it.”<sup>74</sup> The KCF leadership felt that this could save the “...lives of many guerillas and [prolong] their survival...” and help “...the movement also expanded into every district of the Punjab.”<sup>75</sup> Some of the groups, especially those falling in the first and second Panthick committees, after working on “...the establishment and working of a cell structure” worked on standard operating procedures such as those pertaining to “...disguise and on secrecy rather than on the flaunting of one’s identity.”<sup>76</sup> The groups also devoted select calls to making political determination about targeting choices. Such cells came up with the “policy to attack economic rather than human targets.”<sup>77</sup>

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70 Jetly 2008, 73

71 Pettigrew 1995, 94

72 Kang 2005, 153-154

73 Pettigrew 1992

74 Pettigrew 1992, 396

75 Pettigrew 1992, 396,

76 Pettigrew 1992, 397

77 Pettigrew 1992, 398

In Kashmir, the institutionalization of all the major groups targeted during the campaigns was high. The four key groups, the Hizb-ul-Mujahideen, Harkat-ul-Ansar, Lashkar-e-Taiba, and Jaish-e-Muhammed, developed elaborate and sophisticated organizational protocols for mounting a sustained guerrilla war.<sup>78</sup> Much credit of these institutional mechanisms among these groups is often given to Pakistan, but they also reflected the organizational hierarchies and role specialization -- at least among the Hizb-ul-Mujahideen and the Harkat-ul-Ansar -- of their pre-war organizations. For example, the Harkat-ul-Ansar's operation was run by a Majlis-e-Shoora, which comprised of a top echelon to devise operational strategy and more local organizational structures, led by district level commanders.<sup>79</sup> The district level organization was further organized down to the level of sub-district commanders, who in turn appointed group commanders to organize the resistance and undertake sabotage. This kind of geographically spread out organization was supplemented with acute operational and logistical role specialization. Backed by training camps in Jammu and Kashmir, Pakistan, and Afghanistan, the Harkat-ul-Ansar ran a strong two-tiered training program. One was the Tehsisiya, a month-long course in weapon handling of both low to heavy grade weapons; and Jundullah, a multi-month course specializing in guerilla warfare.<sup>80</sup> The Harkat-ul-Ansar leadership carefully sorted the graduates of these courses into specialized roles in the district and sub-district level organization.

Staniland (2014) offers the strongest appraisal of the Hizb-ul-Mujahideen's organizational institutionalization in various districts across the Kashmir valley, in the Jammu region, and in

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78 Sanathanam, Sreedhar, Saxena, and Manish 2003

79 Sanathanam, Sreedhar, Saxena, and Manish 2003, 94

80 Sanathanam, Sreedhar, Saxena, and Manish 2003, 107

Doda -- it used “the Jamaat networks” to “create and consolidate...command structures.”<sup>81</sup> The command structure’s key nodes were divisions, overseeing operations in the valley, South, Jammu, Doda, and Poonch/Rajouri regions. Like Harkat-ul-Ansar, the Hizb’s geographically spread out organization was supplemented with well-trained cadres -- often in Pakistani camps -- charged with specialized operational and logistical roles. Other groups, like the Lashkar-e-Taiba, also organized a strong operation across the valley and the Jammu regions with launching commanders.<sup>82</sup>

Third, the recruitment quality of the major groups was generally high but it was far from ideal in both contexts. In Punjab, there is a dearth of granular data on who the recruits were, and the descriptions tend to be biased depending on who is describing the recruits. Accounts by those who were neither part of the Indian state apparatus or the insurgent groups, such as those of anthropologist Joyce Pettigrew, suggest that the preponderance of the recruits was drawn to the factions on solid ideological appeals. These appeals varied between religious and/or ethno-nationalist, depending on the group. For instance, the fighters of the Khalistan Commando Force were attracted on ideological appeals ranging from the establishment of the Panth by standing up to injustice and earning martyrdom in turn. As one respondent told Pettigrew, “When young boys hear the dhadhhis singing at melas [festivals] about our heroes in the past, they say, ‘this is how we want to die since we have to die anyway.’”<sup>83</sup> Thus, much of the insurgency felt that “they were the Sikhs of the tenth Guru, that is, Sikhs who were prepared to follow the example of the tenth Guru and die fighting the injustice of superior power.”<sup>84</sup> Select groups built on the movements’

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81 Staniland 2014, 76-77

82 Sanathanam, Sreedhar, Saxena, and Manish 2003, 224

83 Pettigrew 1992, 396

84 Pettigrew 1992, 396

religious appeal to concurrently advance a social revolutionary agenda. This agenda had its immediate impact in both rural and urban areas of Punjab -- especially Majha and Doaba areas.<sup>85</sup> Groups actively advocated that their "...goal is not just Khalistan but the liberation of the Sikh people through the introduction of a new social order based on the principles of the Guru Granth Sahib."<sup>86</sup>

The Indian state's behavior drove many to join the insurgency. Starting 1984, the Indian state's high handedness had angered a spectrum of the Sikh community, from moderate Jats to the *Amritdharis*. Indian state action through the late 80s sustained this anger. Across the three regions of the Punjab state, the Doaba, Malwa, and Majha, the dominant Indian state behavior was of indiscriminate targeting -- which engendered a spirit of revenge. By early 1990s, "...questions [were] being raised in every sector of Sikh society, namely, how to prevent false encounters, disappearances, how to prevent dishonour to ex-soldiers, the rape of daughters, and the horrors of torture."<sup>87</sup> Insurgency was the answer for many.

In Kashmir, much like in Punjab, there is a dearth of precise individual level data on who the recruits were. A prolific body of journalistic profiles of recruits from both Jammu and Kashmir and Pakistan -- where the insurgency had a major safe haven -- suggests that the preponderance of the recruits was drawn to the factions on ideological appeals.<sup>88</sup> These appeals varied between Pan-Islamism, secession and merger with Pakistan, and/or pure ethno-nationalism, depending on

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85 Kang 2005, Judge 2005,197

86 Pettigrew 1992, 397

87 Pettigrew 1992, 397

88 Santhanam and Sreedhar 2003, Joshi 1999, Swami 1999a, Swami 2002, Jamal 2009

the particular group.<sup>89</sup> For example, Harkat-ul-Ansar's cadres were motivated by *Deobandi* ideology -- a revivalist and anti-imperialist ideology to defend the religious theology by the right interpretation -- and the call to jihad enmeshed in it. Hizb-ul-Mujahideen cadres comprised of religiously motivated cadres who had broken away from the Jamaat-e-Islami as well as those motivated by Kashmiri nationalism, such as the factions of the Tehreek-e-Jihad led by Majid Dar.<sup>90</sup> In contrast, Lashkar-e-Taiba's fighter profile was very different. Its cadres were drawn from the Ahl-e-Hadith, a "radical Sunni sect which believes in [purest understanding of] the sayings/rulings of the Prophet."<sup>91</sup>

Despite these strengths, both the insurgencies suffered from some common weaknesses, which undermined their cohesion. Both the insurgencies saw a proliferation of groups around the time that the campaign started. As noted earlier, in Punjab the insurgent coalition while agreeing on the "creation of an independent Sikh state—Khalistan—through an armed struggle" was divided in a number of distinct pieces. It consisted of a "multitude of armed militant groups"<sup>92</sup> -- falling broadly in four alliances. Of the four, the most powerful groups of militants was the Second Panthic Committee, and consisted of the Khalistan Commando Force faction led by Panjwar and the Khalistan Liberation front.

Both the insurgencies lacked any kind of solid, unified control. In Punjab, the problem existed at both the political and military levels of the insurgency. At the political level, they did not have an

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89 Swami 1999a, Santhanam and Sreedhar 2003

90 Dulat 2015, Santhanam and Sreedhar 2003, 117

91 Santhanam and Sreedhar 2003, 228

92 Chima 2010, 233

“effective “political front” for their separatist struggle...[becoming] completely factionalized.”<sup>93</sup>

The political division was mirrored at the level of the military organizations and operations: at the outset of the campaign, the various groups “...functioned as a number of separate, and more or less autonomous, groups, rather than as units linked to a single, centralized command.”<sup>94</sup> In Kashmir, despite attempts by Pakistani intelligence to force a merger, the insurgency remained divided politically and militarily. A major unifying effort in this regard was the United Jihad Council (MJC). However, ideological differences between all the major *tanzeems* i.e. Hizb-ul-Mujahideen, Harkat-ul-Ansar, and Lashkar-e-Taiba prevented the MJC from becoming an active political and military authority to shepherd the insurgency.

Both the insurgencies also suffered fratricide in the lead up to and during the course of the counterinsurgency campaign. Before the campaign in Punjab, the armed groups had “...begun engaging in intense internecine competition and violence.”<sup>95</sup> In Kashmir, the Hizb-ul-Mujahideen saw fragmentation and feuding between a variety of factions including the Pir Panjal Regiment, the Tehreek-e-Jihad’s faction, and the Mujahideen-e-Tulba.<sup>96</sup> The Harkat-ul-Ansar also saw fragmentation into Al-Badr, the Jaish-e-Muhammed, and Harkat-ul-Jihadi Islami.<sup>97</sup>

In both contexts, the insurgents saw an influx of some opportunist recruits. While the exact numbers are contested, with the Indian state machinery accusing the entire movement of comprising of criminal elements, and Sikh militants negating the presence of any opportunist

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93 Chima 2010, 233

94 Major 1987

95 Chima 2010, 233

96 Sanathanam, Sreedhar, Saxena, and Manish 2003, 128-130

97 Sanathanam, Sreedhar, Saxena, and Manish 2003, 114-116

cadres, the reality appears to have been more mixed. According to Jetley, select groups "...had begun to attract lumpen elements that joined the movements for the lure of money rather than the long-cherished cause of a separate homeland for the Sikhs..."<sup>98</sup> In Kashmir, due to the rise in kidnappings and arms smuggling, some groups saw an influx of some opportunist recruits. According to Human Rights Watch, "some militant leaders command popular support, extortion and other abuses by the militant groups and their failure to prevail against the Indian forces have left the population embittered."<sup>99</sup> The report went on to add that "Militants have also abducted and threatened civilians for the purposes of extortion. Members of some of the groups have committed rape, have threatened and attacked journalists, and have kidnapped tourists and others as political hostages."<sup>100</sup>

#### Comparative L&S

In Punjab, the counterinsurgency force managed to implement a high L&S campaign, whereas in Jammu and Kashmir it struggled to do the same -- all available data indicates that the campaign was low L&S.

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98 Jetly 2008, 73  
99 HRW 1999  
100 HRW 1999

**TABLE 23: SUMMARY OF INDICATORS OF L&S IN PUNJAB AND J&K**

L&S		Punjab	Jammu and Kashmir
Legibility			
	Population monitoring by <i>thana</i>	Extensive	Limited
	Registration program	Extensive	None
	Interception/wire-tapping	Moderate	Limited
	Direction Finding Equipment	NA	Limited
	Interrogation Program	Extensive	Limited
	Flipped Insurgents	Extensive	Extensive
Speed of Exploitation			
	Institutional Coordination	Extensive	None
	Authority Delegation	Extensive	Limited
	Decentralized Deployment	Extensive	Moderate
	Protocols for Rapid Action	Extensive	None
	Quick Reaction Forces	Extensive	Moderate
	Aerial Mobilization Capital for Raids (Helicopters/Drones)	Limited	Limited

In Punjab, three key improvements on the side of legibility are important to note. First, the *thana* had been revived, strengthened, and modernized. In turn, it was made the lynchpin of monitoring and tracking the population.<sup>101</sup> The *thana*'s basic documentation processes were revived.<sup>102</sup>

Multiple analysts, practitioners, and officials of the Punjab Police note the emphasis on population tracking records in this period: "As a first step towards reinvigorating Police intelligence networks, Gill introduced a regime of meticulous documentation of terrorist crimes."<sup>103</sup> As part of the documentation process, the Punjab Police also started the use of population categorization to narrow their surveillance operations, creating detailed listing of the civilian population. While a major piece of the population monitoring mechanisms, the *thana* was not the only element of the population tracking system. The Punjab Police, in collaboration

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101 Gill 2001, Fair 2009

102 Mahadevhan 2012, 132

103 Mahadevhan 2008

with the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), also built up a large and detailed population database.<sup>104</sup> This database was run by the CBI's Co-ordination Cell at Chandigarh. Mahadevan notes: "The database pooled background information into a centralized system that recorded the names of a particular terrorist's associates, relatives, known harbors and location of hideouts. In addition, his physical descriptive roll, fingerprints and available photographs would also be stored in the database."<sup>105</sup>

The Punjab Police also placed a premium on improving their legibility tactics in this period. As noted earlier, the tactics being used in the previous period were haphazard at best. Senior police leadership was acutely aware of these gaps. Starting 1988, they began to address them. By the time the campaign set in, the Police had instituted a well-funded informer system managed at the level of the *thana*.<sup>106</sup> This was a new informer system, which tried to scale the model of informer system that India's Central intelligence agencies managed: a dedicated handler with a network of informants.<sup>107</sup> The informants drawn upon for this purpose fell in two categories. First were standard police informers run by the local *thana* at a large scale. With "additional funds for intelligence-gathering" in hand, *thanas* across "Punjab were able to intensify their coverage of terrorist activity within their jurisdictions."<sup>108</sup> A second category of informants consisted of petty criminals and flipped insurgents. Starting 1988 and onward, the Punjab Police relied more on petty criminals as informants. But the use of turned terrorists began to become more systematic and widespread in the post-Black Thunder phase.<sup>109</sup>

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104 Mahadevhan 2008

105 Mahadevhan 2008

106 Fair 2009

107 Chandan 2013

108 Mahadevhan 2008

109 Fair 2009

In late 1991, the Indian central government also provided abundant resources specifically for the Punjab Police's intelligence efforts. A major chunk of the funds was directed towards building up the 'CATS' program -- "the use of specially recruited infiltrators and systematically turned captured terrorists as intelligence assets for tracking down listed terrorists"<sup>110</sup> -- which "formed the pivot of... post-1991 anti-terrorism strategy."<sup>111</sup> As "the funds available for running 'CATS' increased, so did their numbers." Each "claim for intelligence funds to pay a 'cat' who helped arrest a terrorist, was subjected to thorough scrutiny by the State Police intelligence wing to prevent fraud by District Police Officers. It was these officers who received the funds, which were held centrally by Police intelligence and disbursed on a case-by-case basis."<sup>112</sup>

The Punjab Police also began to make better use of technology to track the civilian population.<sup>113</sup> Wiretapping and wireless interception were two key areas in which the Punjab Police had struggled, but that began to change starting 1988. The Punjab Police developed what came to be known as the Police radio network. Around "INR 140 million was spent on improving the extent and quality of Police communications." In addition, the "Police radio network was interlinked with those of the central paramilitary forces, who had been specially inducted into the state to contain terrorism."<sup>114</sup>

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110 Mahadevhan

111 Vinayak 1995

112 Mahadevhan 2007

113 Chandan 2013, 146

114 Mahadevhan 2008

Like legibility, the campaign's speed dimension was also clearly on the high side. The most clear-cut evidence of changes along the dimensions of capacity for processing, sharing and dissemination, procedures and capacity to act swiftly, and authorization, becomes evident for the period starting 1991.<sup>115</sup> Various analytical writings give credit for these changes to Police Chief K.P.S Gill and "the Gill Doctrine", which made it a priority to achieve "co-ordination of efforts." Crucial to the "doctrine was the view that counter-terrorist attrition could be made both rapid and sustainable."<sup>116</sup> By 1991, what Gill termed the "cooperative command concept" considerably matured. The various security bureaucracies working in the state were unified operationally. The Indian "Army formed the anvil of the counter-terrorist effort while the Police acted as the hammer."<sup>117</sup> To pursue "senior terrorists... across the length and breadth of the State by Police teams armed with specific intelligence," the organizations were flattened out, information generation and sharing prioritized. This kind of cooperative command concept was sustained by extensive liaison arrangements between the Army and the Police: "Orders were sent down the chain of command within both services, stressing the need for unity of effort and close co-operation in the field."<sup>118</sup> Dissemination of information across the range of security forces working in the province was made a real priority: "From the strategic level down to the tactical, Police representatives interacted closely with their Army counterparts. Tactical intelligence was immediately disseminated to the widest possible audience, so as to ensure total situational awareness on the part of all units."<sup>119</sup>

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115 Dhar 2005, 186, Kang 2005, Sandhu 1991

116 Gill 2001, 26

117 Mahadevhan 2008, Fair 2009

118 Mahadevhan 2008, Gill 2001

119 Mahadevhan 2008, Gill 2001

The Punjab Police, however, remained the more sizable and thereby critical element of the counterinsurgency deployment. Gill paid abundant attention to improving the force's tactical procedures to act upon leads. He made rapid reaction a central plank of Punjab Police's conduct.<sup>120</sup> By late 1991, the "Police were freed from static duties by the massive deployment of the Army, which saturated the countryside with section-size quick reaction teams (QRTs)."<sup>121</sup> Such rapid deployment practices were synergized with technical means. These "QRTs were tuned in to the Police wireless network and authorized to act on their own initiative to render such support as requested with all speed."<sup>122</sup> As a result, "Police patrols became assured of reinforcement within 15 minutes if they confronted terrorists armed with superior firepower."<sup>123</sup>

From 1989 to 1999, the Indian government struggled to put in place a functional legibility infrastructure as part of the counterinsurgency campaign in Jammu and Kashmir. In this period, three types of legibility gaps are important to note. First, the counterinsurgent forces -- primarily the Indian Army -- did not put in place any systematic population monitoring program. Jammu and Kashmir, like Punjab, had a node in the shape of the *thana* -- police station -- for such population monitoring. In Kashmir, like in the rest of the country, the *thana* had maintained basic tabs on the population. Because of its mountainous terrain, the traditional *thana* did not have the same capacity as *thanas* in other states. Yet, it maintained look-out warrants, fed local intelligence to inform Indian "intelligence agencies' "lists of the A and B category extremists", and area dossiers on disturbances.<sup>124</sup> Once the conflict broke out, however, these functions of the

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120 Joshi 1993, Kang 2005, Gill 2001, Fair 2009

121 Fair 2009

122 Mahadevhan 2007

123 Mahadevhan 2007, Gill 2001, Kang 2005

124 Gupta 1990

*thana* took a major hit and did not meaningfully recover until 1999.<sup>125</sup> The *thana*'s revival as a node of legibility was precluded by the induction of a variety of security forces, ranging from the Indian military to paramilitaries like the Border Security Force and the CPRF. The military and the para-military forces maintained a degree of mistrust towards the Police during the campaign period. The Jammu and Kashmir Police, under Farooq Abdullah's government, paid some attention to reviving basic administrative functions of the Police across the state.<sup>126</sup> The creation of the Special Operations Group and the use of pro-state armed groups also brought about improvement of the *thana* in the valley. Much of this improvement was sporadic, however. As late as 1998, the J&K Police was operating under constraints of authority, resource crunch, manpower shortages: "Jammu and Kashmir Police could [do] well...once it was provided adequate resources."<sup>127</sup>

A second major shortcoming which restricted legibility was the inability of the counterinsurgency forces to implement basic legibility tactics and the poor scale of such tactics when they were implemented. Between 1996 and 1999, the counterinsurgency forces looked towards two agencies for running de-centralized paid informers with professional handlers and systematic interrogation of arrested cadres: Intelligence Bureau and the Jammu and Kashmir Police. But non-availability of funds curtailed the implementation of such tactics at the level of both Police and the intelligence agencies.<sup>128</sup> There is limited evidence of the counterinsurgency force in Jammu and Kashmir implementing a systematic interrogation program to map out the

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125 Gupta 1990, Chadha 1997, Oberoi 2001

126 Vinayak and Baweja, 2000. For example, until 1998, J&K Police was awaiting the "Promised Rs 197 crore for acquiring better arms and ammunition to launch special operations"

127 Swami 1998d

128 Vinayak 1995

population. The closest evidence of a systematic interrogation program appears to be the initiative of inducing surrender of militant forces. Starting mid-1990s, the Indian government offered financial reward and protection for giving up militancy.<sup>129</sup> Some of the surrendered were made part of deployed forces, who would accompany, sometimes lead in raids. Starting 1996, the Special Operation Groups comprising the police and the surrendered militants operated in select districts. Others were allowed to form and maintain their own factions and rewarded for targeting insurgents in their regions of influence.

Third, the counterinsurgency force in Jammu and Kashmir did not have much of a technical surveillance capability.<sup>130</sup> The campaign period was a period of dire equipment shortage. The Indian Army's electronic warfare assets for interception and monitoring were few.<sup>131</sup> The Intelligence Bureau also struggled to build up a technical surveillance capability. It acquired equipment; however, that equipment struggled to achieve scale at the level of the state. By mid 1990s, and onward, there was growing realization of the importance of technical surveillance. One report noted the kind of scale that the Indian intelligence needed for adequate coverage: "The job of monitoring, deciphering and locating their source is magnified by the fact that as of now there are 400 militant calling stations operating in the Valley alone, with 160 of them taking to the air almost every day...In Doda, ideal for guerrilla tactics because of its mountainous terrain, militants have 172 calling stations...In Rajouri and Poonch districts...131 calling stations have sprung up in just one year."<sup>132</sup> The Indian Army's Signals Intelligence Directorate was

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129 Mahadhevan 2012, Chadha 2016

130 Chadha 1997, 2016

131 Roychowdhury 2002, 62

132 Vinayak 1998

tasked<sup>133</sup> to respond to the proliferation of this challenge with an Electronic Warfare operation to break “the “burst” and frequency-hopping systems being used by the militants” for interception to “direction finding of intercepted communication.” But until 1998, the Indian “army’s equipment [was] largely obsolete, mainly ex-Soviet or outdated European designed scanners to intercept messages.” The Indian Army wanted, for example, the latest interception equipment, the kind that could “go through 220 channels per second.” Their demands were largely not met. Army officials were left complaining “for years about the old equipment they...had to use and the refusal of the Ministry of Defence to process their requests for urgently needed direction-finding equipment.”<sup>134</sup> Throughout 1998, “...the Army chief’s repeated calls for upgrading India’s signals intelligence capabilities and for the introduction of new direction-finding and interception facilities ran into a wall of disinterest in the Defence Ministry. The new equipment that [Army Chief VP] Malik asked for arrived late, and in very small quantities.”<sup>135</sup>

Such problems also remained on the side of the Jammu and Kashmir Police and its CID. Police officers regularly noted that intelligence equipment for technical surveillance remained in short supply as late as 1999. A former DG Police in Jammu and Kashmir Gurbachan Jagat lamented the “resource crunch and failure of the bureaucracy in Delhi to gauge how crucial electronic warfare has become in the Valley.”<sup>136</sup> The state government asked the central government to provide the resources to expand communication interception. Funds were “...promised to the

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133 Multiple interviews

134 Vinayak 1998

135 Swami 1999e

136 Vinayak 1998

local police in 1998 through a Rs 197-crore package. [Until 1999 the Police] only received Rs 43 crore.”<sup>137</sup>

From 1996 to 1999, the speed of exploitation of legibility gains was constrained. There were attempts at improvement starting 1996, but the general pattern remained of low speed of exploitation until 1999. There are three important indicators for the poor speed of exploitation. First, the counterinsurgency force -- made mainly of Indian Army but also drawing upon paramilitary organizations like the Central Police Reserve Force, the Border Security Force, Jammu and Kashmir, and Intelligence Bureau -- struggled to process, share, and disseminate intelligence that was being generated in their respective bureaucracies. In the initial years, the problem was that most security bureaucracies -- if they operated some basic legibility operation - - struggled to process the leads that were generated. In the pre-insurgency period, processing of legibility gains gleaned from across the state in Jammu and Kashmir was the task of the Intelligence Bureau and the Jammu and Kashmir Police. The Jammu and Kashmir Police, however, lost that capability with the breakdown in the *thana infrastructure*.<sup>138</sup> A similar erosion in the scale of the Intelligence Bureau's operations hurt the bureau's processing capability.<sup>139</sup> By 1993/1994, however, all these bureaucracies were re-building their capability to process any legibility gains. The Indian Army assets comprised of regular infantry divisions, and with intelligence apparatuses that are common to conventional military deployments.<sup>140</sup> The Indian

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137 Vinayak 2000

138 Joshi 1999, Nanavatty 2013, 75-77

139 Joshi 1999

140 Joshi 1999, Singh 1999

Army's own intelligence arm, the Military Intelligence Directorate, also remained understaffed and ill-equipped to process legibility gains.<sup>141</sup>

But even with the shoring up of intelligence processing capability, sharing and dissemination of intelligence across the various security bureaucracies working in the state remained a challenge. As one analyst from the period noted: "One of the biggest problems that has plagued security operations in the Valley is the utter lack of communication and working relationships between the CRPF, BSF, ITBP, the army and the local police."<sup>142</sup> Senior commanders in the period saw the obstacles to sharing and disseminating as being rooted in the absence of an operational command which could rein all the agencies in. A structure was created in 1993, called "a new unified command structure" to improve relations between the varieties of security units. But it did not solve the challenges of coordination and synergy. Thus, around the start of the 1996 campaign, the unified command was revamped after Farooq Abdullah took over as the Chief Minister of the State.<sup>143</sup> Abdullah elevated the Corps Commanders in rank on the committee. But the senior commanders wanted the subordination of the entire civilian administration in the state for improving the operational flow of information. This was never solved in the Abdullah Chief Minister-ship. The Indian Army chief, General Shankar Roychowdhury, remained deeply dissatisfied with the arrangement until 1997.<sup>144</sup> In 1998, military officers at multiple levels on counterinsurgency duties noted dysfunction at the level of the unified command: "The issues of the differences in perception between the army, the BSF and the intelligence agencies [were not]

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141 Unnithan 2012

142 Baweja 1993

143 Roychowdhury 2002

144 Roychowdhury 2002, 55-57

addressed.”<sup>145</sup> Lt General HS Panag, a former commander of North Command of the Indian Army, notes: “The Unified Command under the Chief Minister remains dysfunctional leading to lack of coordination between the Army, police and the CRPF, which operates under the Director General of Police. The DG Police is equivalent in rank to the Army Commander, Northern Command, and may even be senior to him by virtue of being appointed earlier. This only compounds the problem of coordination.”<sup>146</sup> As late as 1999, the Army wanted “new coordinating mechanisms to be set up at all levels of the administration, mechanisms that would create an interface between civilian officials, the police and the military... down to district and even tehsil levels [to undertake] provide for joint planning, decision making, directions, coordination and control.”<sup>147</sup>

A second problem -- that amplified poor intelligence processing, sharing, and dissemination capabilities, and by extension exploitation -- was that the counterinsurgency force remained ill equipped to undertake rapid mobilization and kinetic strikes. While there were definite improvements from 1991 to 1999, major roadblocks remained in this capacity till the start of the 1999 Kargil War. The inability to rapidly mobilize and carry out kinetic strikes was in large part due to capacity constraints. The Indian Army’s force structure, much like most conventional military forces, had a “siege mindset.”<sup>148</sup> It centered on territory domination out of large strongly fortified camps.<sup>149</sup> The task of holding deployments which reached into the population was relegated to the Border Security Force and the CPFR in large parts of the state. Most of the

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145 Vinayak 1998

146 Panag 2016

147 Swami 1999

148 Phone Interview Former Indian Official, 2017

149 Baweja 1994

troops of the two paramilitaries were tasked with holding static positions instead of being mobile. The siege mindset of the counterinsurgency force was complicated by mobilization equipment shortages, dearth of road-opening parties, and “zero-error” standard operating procedures.<sup>150</sup>

To the extent that Indian Army had the tools available for rapid mobilization, there were constrained by questions of authority. The central government largely barred the Indian military from utilizing helicopters for the purposes of rapid raids and mobilization to troubled spots.<sup>151</sup> After 1995, major efforts were afoot to improve the Indian Army’s exploitation processes. One major initiative in this regard was the creation of the counterinsurgency grid.<sup>152</sup> The grid was initially intended as an area/terrain domination exercise, supposed to signal to the population the return of the authority of the Indian state. It integrated principles of rapid mobilization on information leads.<sup>153</sup> The entire state was divided into forty-nine sectors with a 1000-man unit in each sector. Each sector was also provided with road-opening parties. Quick reaction teams at the level of the platoon were also made available to reduce mobilization time. Despite these efforts, however, the grid struggled to take root until 1999 and the concept of the quick reaction teams did not mature or scale.<sup>154</sup> In the summer of 1999, to the extent the grid existed, it was disrupted with the onset of the Kargil war.

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150 Chadha 2016

151 Chadha 2016

152 Ganguly 2009, 83

153 Nanavatty 2013, 102

154 Subramanian 2000

Another recurring problem was the standard operating procedure for targeting, which hampered Indian Army's exploitation practices in the region. The sentiment within the Army was that they were held back by post-raid action/accountability/criticism on the count of human rights abuses. This accountability was initiated by the Army Headquarter in the time of General BC Joshi and continued under the period of Army chiefs Shankar Roy Chaudry and VP Malik.<sup>155</sup> This led the Indian Army to create in-house mechanisms for determining the appropriateness of use of force. The new layer of bureaucratic control systematically hampered the Indian Army's raiding practices.<sup>156</sup>

#### Comparative Hearts-and-minds

**TABLE 24: SUMMARY OF INDICATORS OF HEARTS-AND-MINDS STRATEGY IN PUNJAB AND J&K**

<b>Hearts-and-Minds</b>		<b>Punjab</b>	<b>Kashmir</b>
Civilian Victimization			
	Collateral Damage	Extensive	Extensive
	Collective Punishment	Extensive	Extensive
	Protection from Insurgents	Limited	Limited
Targeting Methods			
	Torture	Extensive	Extensive
	Summary Executions/Extra-judicial murders	Extensive	Extensive
	Disappearances/Arbitrary Detention	Extensive	Extensive
Firepower			
	Artillery	None	None
	Airpower	None	None
	Major Explosives/Demolitions	None	Limited
Perception of Campaign			
	Among Civilians	Indiscriminate	Indiscriminate

155 Roychowdhury 2002

156 Interviews, Singh 1999

Across the two cases, Indian state authorities largely failed to comply with behavior which can be categorized as a hearts-and-minds strategy. In Punjab, Brass notes that the Indian state's behavior was marred by "...increasing and well-documented reports of police illegalities, excesses, and brutalities including summary executions."<sup>157</sup> Van Dykes describes the counterinsurgency as involving "...draconian policing measures under the now legendary (or infamous) Punjab Director-General of Police K. P. S. Gill."<sup>158</sup> In Kashmir, human rights abuses were extensive and sustained. As per a Human Rights Watch report, "Indian forces and the countermilitants...fostered a climate of repression."<sup>159</sup> Independent observers unanimously voice the opinion that the "...counter-insurgency operations by the Army, para-military forces, police and surrendered militants have created a vicious circle of violence...human rights violations is a direct consequence of this bloody, and in part, fratricidal conflict."<sup>160</sup>

The two campaigns converged in four critical areas, which allows me to code these as defying a hearts-and-minds strategy. First, in both Punjab and Jammu-and-Kashmir, civilian victimization was extensive. It is clear that in both contexts the Indian military avoided the use of heavy firepower, including air power, artillery, and/or mortar -- which are traditionally assumed to be more harmful for civilians. Yet, the Indian state routinely employed methods which harmed the civilian population. The civilian harm was pervasive and systematic, manifesting in a number of similar ways in both contexts.

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157 Brass 1994, 200

158 Van Dyke 2009

159 HRW 1998

160 Chenoy et al 2001

There were regular instances of collateral damage, leading to deaths.<sup>161</sup> Some of the civilian harm took place through the practice of fake encounters -- where the police forces claimed deaths of insurgents when it had actually killed a civilian in a unilateral exchange. An important Human Rights investigation found that fake encounter “incidents, on average, involved a lone killing of an alleged “militant” or a “civilian”.”<sup>162</sup> Kashmir saw even more extreme patterns of excesses against civilians in the valley, as well as in the districts of Poonch, Rajori, and Doda: “Indian forces and paramilitary militias working with them have been responsible for rape throughout the conflict. Although the Indian government has prosecuted and punished a number of security personnel for rape, many cases are never investigated. Reports of rape from Doda and other border areas have increased since the crackdown in these areas began in 1997.”<sup>163</sup>

Disappearances of suspected insurgents and civilians thought to have intelligence were also pervasive across the two campaigns. For Punjab, there now exists extensive documentation by independent organizations of arbitrary arrests and subsequent detentions of young men in rural areas through the course of the counterinsurgency campaign: “In the mopping-up operations that followed in the rural areas of the Punjab, many young men disappeared; others were detained.”<sup>164</sup> Another report found that “Many innocent people from all walks of life have been seized in their homes, at night, or while harvesting in their fields...”<sup>165</sup> In Jammu and Kashmir from 1996 to 1998, per multiple human rights accounts, the Indian Army “...retaliated by conducting cordon-and-search operations in Muslim neighborhoods throughout these districts,

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161 Silva 2009

162 Silva 2009

163 HRW 1999

164 Pettigrew 1991, 96

165 Pettigrew 1991, 96

detaining young men, assaulting other family members and summarily executing suspected militants.”<sup>166</sup> It went on to add that “The victims of “disappearance” belong to all ages and professions, including businessmen, lawyers, labourers and farmers -- most of whom appear to be ordinary civilians having no connections with armed opposition groups operative in Jammu and Kashmir.”<sup>167</sup> Amnesty International reported that in the insurgency heavy areas of Doda, Poonch, and Rajouri, “Many people appear to be arbitrarily detained during “crackdowns” without any discernible reason. Some are arrested as the only male members found in their homes during raids. Others appear to be arrested in an attempt to force male relatives, assumed to be involved in an armed opposition group, to surrender.”<sup>168</sup>

There is no real evidence of collective punishment being institutionalized in available accounts of Indian security elite. Yet, it appears to have extensively played out in both campaigns. In Punjab, counterinsurgency efforts profiled and targeted individuals in the 18 to 25 age group -- referred to as “Munday” in the local language. Collective punishment methods were also directed against specific sectarian bents of the Sikh population more than others: “Sikhs in general are victimized but specifically *amritdhari* Sikhs (those Sikhs wearing the five Sikh symbols, who have taken baptism) are singled out.”<sup>169</sup> These assessments were affirmed in a granular assessment of counterinsurgency violence through a survey in the district of Amritsar many years later.<sup>170</sup> The survey found that “...more *Amritdharis* (or baptized Sikhs) were the victims of state-attributed lethal violence than non-*Amritdharis*...[and] that most victims of state-based

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166 HRW 1999

167 Amnesty International 1999

168 Amnesty International 1999

169 Pettigrew 1991, 96

170 Silva et al 2010

lethal violence were young males of military age.”<sup>171</sup> In Kashmir, Muslim youth in the Kashmir valley were intensely profiled, and in turn subjected to more scrutiny, often violently.<sup>172</sup> The counterinsurgency forces also engaged in systematically more non-lethal violence in villages which were perceived as having ties to the insurgency. There are multiple, well sourced accounts of sustained use of collective punishment. A report by the International Peoples’ Tribunal on Human Rights and Justice in Indian-Administered Kashmir powerfully captures such violence during the period thorough multiple testimonies of civilians.<sup>173</sup> Another human rights account from the period notes: ““The brutality exhibited by the army during these operations appears designed to punish local villagers suspected of supporting the militants...whole neighborhoods and villages have been surrounded, the residents beaten and subjected to other abuse, and property damaged or destroyed. Those detained most frequently are young men who because of their age or appearance are suspected of being militants.”<sup>174</sup>

The Indian state authorities struggled to provide security to the civilian population in both contexts. While the insurgents enjoyed support, their ties to the population—as is common in most insurgency contexts—was marred by frequent threats of violence. As the counterinsurgency campaign unfolded, such threats against the civilian population increased exponentially. In Punjabi rural areas, especially those in Majha and Doaba, “the population felt preyed upon.”<sup>175</sup> Anthropologist Joyce Pettigrew, who interviewed civilians and insurgents during the course of the campaign, notes that in the region of Tan Taran, “Most villagers I talked to...lived in a state

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171 Silva et al 2010

172 IATP and ADAP 2015

173 IATP and ADAP 2015

174 HRW 1999

175 Pettigrew 1995, 116

of total fear of all armed groups.”<sup>176</sup> The Indian state authorities failed to provide the villagers with any sort of security: “ordinary villagers found themselves harassed by both police and militants.”<sup>177</sup> In Kashmir, civilian insecurity was rife. For example, “Between 1997 and mid-1999, [various insurgent groups] massacred more than 300 civilians.”<sup>178</sup> The counterinsurgency effort exacerbated the civilian security problem in regions away from the Kashmir valley. One report noted that “...wholesale attacks on civilians have decreased in the valley as Indian forces have consolidated their hold there, they have increased in the southern border districts where they are perceived by the local population as an attempt by Indian forces to punish the Muslim community at large.”<sup>179</sup>

Another noteworthy feature of Indian state behavior which defied the hearts-and-minds strategy in both contexts was its extensive use of torture and extra-judicial killings to deal with suspected insurgents and their relatives. In Punjab, starting 1994, human rights organizations discovered extensive evidence of fake encounters and “illegal cremations.”<sup>180</sup> In Kashmir, human rights organizations noted that “It is not just Kashmiris suspected of being militants who are subjected to torture. Relatives of militants are also taken into custody and tortured, either to discover the whereabouts of a suspect, or as a way of forcing militant to surrender.”<sup>181</sup> Rights groups documented a similar pattern of custodial killings through the course of the campaign: “Custodial killings -- the summary execution of detainees -- [remained] a central component of the Indian government’s counterinsurgency strategy. While the difficulties associated with

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176 Pettigrew 1995, 116

177 Pettigrew 1995, 116

178 HRW 1999

179 HRW 1999

180 Ensaf 2006

181 Watch 2006

documentation make it impossible to state accurately the number of such killings, human rights groups in the state and elsewhere in India estimate that such summary executions number in the thousands.”<sup>182</sup>

The result of such violent methods was that the campaigns were perceived by the local populations to be abusive and thus indiscriminate in both contexts. Pettigrew (1995) offers an ethnography which suggests a widespread perception of indiscriminate violence in the rural areas of Punjab. There are other testimonies from the period and later which are suggestive of such an environment. For example, an India Today report noted, “A Punjabi farmer put it well in 1992: the “...chief minister has provided us respite from terrorists but the police has replaced them.””<sup>183</sup> In Kashmir, the campaign was widely seen as involving widespread excesses backed by systematic “structures of violence.”<sup>184</sup> Some reports suggest that many civilians saw the counterinsurgency as aimed at disabusing the Kashmiris of dignity and self-respect. In words of one officer involved in counterinsurgency duties, “they [the Kashmiris] probably felt we were humiliating them.”<sup>185</sup>

### Comparative Force Size

A comparative force sizing analysis of the two contexts suggests preponderance of forces in absolute terms in Jammu and Kashmir compared to Punjab. In relative terms, at least two key indicators suggest a preponderance of forces in Jammu and Kashmir compared to Punjab. One

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182 HRW 1999

183 Sandhu 1992

184 IATP and ADAP 2015

185 Phone Interview Former Indian Army Official, 2018

indicator, specifically the force to space ration, suggests a parity of forces in both contexts. To be sure, there are data constraints in calculating force levels of both Indian state authorities and the insurgency; contemporary Indian military records are not available to researchers, and insurgency size is never affirmative. I, thus, compare a range of estimates transparently so as to not cherry pick any particular metric to illustrate the differences in force levels. The forces included in the calculation for both states include those tasked with border security and active counterinsurgency duties.

**TABLE 25: SUMMARY OF INDICATORS OF FORCE LEVEL IN PUNJAB AND J&K**

	Punjab	J&K
Counterinsurgency Force -- High	275000	576638
Counterinsurgency Force -- Low Estimate	267000	400000
Insurgency High	9000	10000
Insurgency Low	4000	5000
Area of Active Insurgency in Square Kilometers	19445	32632
Population	20281969	6843966
Force to Area (Soldiers/Square Kilometer) -- Low	13.73	12.26
Force to Area (Soldiers/Square Kilometer) -- High	14.14	17.67
Force to Population (Soldiers/1000 Civilians) -- Low	13.16	58.45
Force to Population (Soldiers/1000 Civilians) -- High	13.56	84.25
Force to Insurgents -- Low/Low	67	80
Force to Insurgents -- Low/High	69	115
Force to Insurgents -- High/Low	30	40
Force to Insurgents -- High/High	31	58

In Punjab, the low end estimate of Indian state forces is provided by Mahadevan, who notes that following Operation Rakshak 2 in 1991, there were around 53000 Punjab Police personnel, 70000 paramilitary soldiers, 28000 personnel home-guards, 1000 special police officers, and

115000 army, which totals to 267000.<sup>186</sup> A higher end estimate suggested by Chatterji et al, who estimates that there were 34 Army brigades of around 150000 troops, 40000 paramilitary soldiers, 12000 SPOs, 20000 Home-Guards, and 53000 Punjab Police personnel, which totals to 275000.<sup>187</sup>

In Kashmir, on the high end, one estimate with the most granular breakdown of Indian Army strength suggests 656638 soldiers.<sup>188</sup> This includes 387233 Army personnel and 269504 total personnel of the Border Security Force, Central Police Reserve Force, Jammu and Kashmir Police, Village Defense Committees, and non-military intelligence agencies.<sup>189</sup> However, this numbers include elements deployed -- such as those of the Jammu and Kashmir Police, paramilitaries of the Border Security Force, Central Police Reserve Force, scouts, and the Indian Army-- in non-insurgency areas of the Jammu and Ladakh; according to an interview estimate, the total number of forces in the non-insurgency areas total to around 80000, which leaves the total high-end estimate of Indian forces during the campaign to be around 576638. On the low end, according to a former official of Indian military from the region, the total number of security forces deployed on counterinsurgency duties in late 1990s was around 400000.<sup>190</sup>

Insurgent force sizing is always difficult. On the side of the insurgency, in Punjab, a low-end estimate of the Sikh insurgency is offered by Mahadevan (2010) of around 4000 insurgents. At the high end, Punjab Police forces estimated ~ 9000 active insurgents.<sup>191</sup> In Kashmir, the low-

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186 Mahadevhan 2011,134.

187 Chatterji et al 2016

188 IPTK and ADPD 2015

189 This number as quoted in the source is for a much later period; one interview respondent noted that this force level had been attained by the late 1990s

190 Phone Interview Former Indian Army Official, 2018

191 Chandan 2013

end estimate was similarly estimated around 5000 in 1996.<sup>192</sup> At the high end, in Kashmir, much like in Punjab, there were ~ 10000 active insurgents.<sup>193</sup>

Given these numbers, the following force ratios emerge, which have been summarized in the figure below. First, the tier-down ratio, or force to enemy ratio, in this period ranged from 30 to 1 to 67 to 1 in Punjab, and 40 to 1 to 115 to 1 in Kashmir. Second, the troop density ratio, also called the force to population ratio, was around 13 per 1000 residents in Punjab, and between 58 to 84 per 1000 residents in Jammu and Kashmir. An internal Indian intelligence estimate found the force to population ratio prior to 1999 to be around 32 per 1000 residents, which excluded troops deployed along the Line of Control.<sup>194</sup> My estimation, and that of the Indian intelligence itself, suggests that in Kashmir Indian force levels were significantly higher than the benchmark popular in accounts on counterinsurgency and manpower studies of around 20 soldiers per 1000 residents. In contrast, in Punjab, the Indian forces were below the benchmark levels, per 1991 population estimates. Third, the force to space ratio was roughly around 13 to 14 per square kilometer in Punjab and 12 to 17 per square kilometer in Jammu and Kashmir -- which suggests parity in absolute terms, but a higher level than the benchmark levels.

### Comparative Mechanisms

The evidence mobilized above rules out two explanations, group type and hearts-and-minds: The campaigns show remarkable similarity in these two variables. Coding for the third variable of

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192 Lalwani 2014, 497

193 Lalwani 2014

194 Phone Interview Former Indian Army Official, 2018

force levels predicts different outcome than what we see: If force levels mattered, the campaign in Jammu and Kashmir should have been effective, and the campaign in Punjab should have been ineffective. One indicator of force level suggests similarity in the two campaigns – which, too, doesn't align with the outcome we see. This lowers confidence in the importance of force level as a variable.

This comparative analysis, thus, leaves the L&S as an important explanatory variable, variation in which strongly aligns with the trajectories of the two campaigns. However, much like any method of difference, this does not affirm the causal power of the L&S. There is abundant concern about stumbling over a false positive. In order to sustain variation in L&S as an explanation for the divergent outcomes, the mechanisms mediating the outcomes align with those hypothesized for the L&S.

In the next two sections, I offer comparative process tracing mechanisms predicted under varied levels of L&S -- which can improve or lower confidence in its explanatory power. L&S predicts two necessary mechanisms which should operate sequentially: information flows rooted in L&S, and kinetic and anticipatory effects on the insurgency. I further attempt to falsify the mechanism-based evidence by looking for implications of the hearts-and-minds argument. While the coding and comparison of the hearts-and-minds variable doesn't give a reason to expect the mechanisms, it might be conjectured that my measurement of hearts-and-minds is flawed. To ward against that possibility, I look for evidence in favor of the mass civilian collaboration mechanism -- a necessary implication under the hearts-and-minds theory.

## Comparative Information Execution/Acquisition in Punjab and Jammu and Kashmir:

If L&S carried explanatory power, we should see proficient information acquisition and execution on the insurgency rooted in the high L&S capacities of the counterinsurgency force in Punjab; we should similarly see limited information acquisition and execution rooted in the low L&S capacities of the counterinsurgency force in Jammu and Kashmir. There is reasonable support for these predictions.

In Punjab, there is abundant evidence of Indian counterinsurgency force's extensive information acquisition and execution on the major groups in the insurgency including the Khalistan Commando Force, Khalistan Liberation Force, and BKI -- which was a direct by-product of state capacities subsumed under the L&S. By late 1991, information acquisition on the insurgency was powered by the population monitoring functions of the Punjab Police -- the lead counterinsurgency force in the state. The Punjab Police leveraged the extensive and elaborate documentation at the level of the *thana*, or *the Police Station*, on the civilian population, various religious groups in the state, and incidence of violence, to locate the insurgency. It created lists of insurgents and suspects, under-watch civilians, and at-risk areas to winnow down the subsets of population and geographies for locating the insurgency. Three intelligence agencies, the CBI, Central Intelligence Agency, and the State Intelligence Department, worked with the Police station to surveil civilian populations. The State Intelligence Department, for example, paid extensive attention to tracking of *Amritdharis*, the baptized Sikhs: "The State Intelligence Department updates its dossier on *Amritdharis* every month."<sup>195</sup> The CBI used its detailed

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195 Sandhu and Vinayak, 1992

population registers to create a so-called “black list” for across the state.<sup>196</sup> Suspects were “...placed on a secret “blacklist” which is maintained by the SHO [in charge of the *thana*].”<sup>197</sup>

As noted earlier, the Punjab Police population monitoring capacities were combined with multiple complementary intelligence gathering functions: systematic interrogation of arrested suspects, field informants, and infiltration program. This integration produced a deluge of information on the “...the identity of individuals in their organizations, the whereabouts of leaders and members, the location of weapons and explosives caches, how weapons were obtained, details of plans for future terrorist attacks, and information about the working of the organizations and their support infrastructures.”<sup>198</sup> The Punjab Police’s use of technological tools for tracking the population also allowed sustained and valuable information acquisition. The main technological tool was basic telephone interception and wire-tapping: “The Punjab police began to use technical and non-technical methods to intercept communications. Individuals believed to be active in or supportive in any way of the militant movement were placed under surveillance.”<sup>199</sup> An army of intelligence officers remained stationed at “...local phone exchanges where they would tap into the phone system and listen to all calls being received by an individual under surveillance. Members were also posted at local telegraph offices and mail facilities where they would intercept communications.”<sup>200</sup>

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196 Mahadevhan 2007

197 Watch 1994

198 Kang 2005, 133

199 Kang 2005, 149

200 Kang 2005, 149

The Punjab Police's robust information acquisition was combined with dynamic information execution processes. A highly functional and centralized unified command meant that all incoming intelligence from a variety of sources -- be it the CBI, interrogations by the Central Police Reserve Force, the State Department Intelligence, or some remote *thana* -- was rapidly collated to yield specific and actionable information.<sup>201</sup> Under the command of the Gill led unified command, the fanned-out counterinsurgency force acted swiftly. The Indian Army and paramilitary's extensive use of "tactical radio networks...interlinked with those of the Punjab Police" ensured swift flow of information.<sup>202</sup> The Punjab Police's protocol of night operations minimized information losses. With the "dispersal of troops into section-sized patrols, this meant that the army [and other paramilitaries] could respond to an incident anywhere in the state within 30 minutes."<sup>203</sup> This allowed the "...security officials to remove or detain individuals participating in the movement, raid safe houses, seize weapons or explosives, prevent terrorist attacks, and slowly dismantle the terrorist infrastructure."<sup>204</sup>

I do not find a similar dynamic of information acquisition or execution in the context of Jammu and Kashmir. With the counterinsurgency force in Jammu and Kashmir lacking high L&S capacities, information flows through the channel of monitoring populations appears to have remained limited. The Jammu and Kashmir Police, for instance, was not tasked to deploy its population monitoring capabilities to locate the insurgency, especially in the rural areas. It was seen as weak, unreliable, and lacking in the ability to carry out intelligence work.<sup>205</sup> An under-

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201 Kang 2005, 133

202 Mahadevhan 2012, 135

203 Mahadevhan 2012, 135

204 Kang 2005, 133

205 Mahadevhan 2012, Saklani 1999, 110

resourced and fragmented interrogation program also constrained population monitoring and by extension mapping of the insurgency.<sup>206</sup> Limited technical tools to surveil and monitor the population meant that they never yielded the kind of large-scale information flows that could allow Indian forces to fully map out the insurgent presence either in the valley or the disturbed districts of Doda, Rajouri, and Poonch.<sup>207</sup>

What, then, were the intelligence collection methods of Indian forces in Jammu and Kashmir?

The Indian authorities relied on two information acquisition processes: 1) population-domination by dismounted patrols of Indian security forces, who would try to gather “atmospherics” -- a euphemism for street-level intelligence; in villages, this process was conducted in collaboration with village defense committees and 2) flipped insurgents, some of whom became part of the Special Operations Group, while others operated their own independent armed factions, like the Ikhwan.

These information channels had clear limits, however. Across the Kashmir valley, and in districts of Doda, Poonch, and Rajouri, the population appears to have remained unwilling to engage and/or collaborate with Indian security forces.<sup>208</sup> On the other hand, the flipped insurgents brought valuable information on select leaders and personnel of the groups. By 1997, the value of the information provided by the Special operations group was returning marginal returns.<sup>209</sup> Having been out of the groups, by 1997 and 1998, the surrendered militants that were part of the Special Operations Groups had dated information. This period also saw a brutal turf war between

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206 Singh 1999, 111

207 Singh 1999, 111

208 Bose 2009, Joshi 1998

209 Phone Interview Former Indian Army Official, 2018

various security forces who wanted control over the Special Operations Groups and the counter-militias -- which further lowered their utility for information acquisition purposes.<sup>210</sup>

The poor information acquisition on the insurgency was exacerbated by a range of information execution challenges. The information execution process was foremost encumbered by conflicts between the various counterinsurgency forces and intelligence agencies in the state. The dysfunction at the level of the Unified Headquarter meant that to the extent any information was acquired, it was passed on sporadically, often shared late, or not at all.<sup>211</sup> This had a dire effect on analysis and collation of information to reveal insurgent support structures. Mahadevan notes that at best these “forces occasionally shared information at the tactical level” but at the level of the state “their effectiveness was limited by a lack of high level coordination.”<sup>212</sup>

When information was available, raids were frequently slow.<sup>213</sup> Indian authorities’ decision to not use helicopters reduced all mobilization to either by foot or by road. The insurgency’s use of IEDs slowed down deployments in the mountainous country side. Slow response was also rooted in issues surrounding where the information for targeting emanated from. For example, on information which emanated from the Indian Army, the paramilitaries BSF and CPRF were reluctant to act, often looking towards the central government’s Home Ministry and its bureaucratic structures for permissions and approvals.<sup>214</sup> The launch of investigations into human rights abuses at the level of the central government and at the level of the Army headquarter in

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210 Mahadevhan 2011, 165

211 Vinayak and Baweja 2000

212 Mahadevhan 2012, 166

213 Saklani 1999, 104, Baweja 1994, Singh 1999, 111

214 Phone Interview Former Indian Army Official, 2018, see: Singh 1999, 103

Delhi also contributed to slow mobilization and cause measured response.<sup>215</sup> The feeling in the Northern Command was that “it lacked the legal cover to operate” -- this also impaired mobilization and response on available intelligence.

The combined effect of these problems was that they remarkably slowed down deployment pace in case of raid or action. In Doda, for example, one report noted that until 1994 “if there are people willing to pass on information about the militants’ whereabouts, it takes up to eight hours before the forces can actually act on that information.”<sup>216</sup> This situation did not change much even as late as 1998 and 1999. One Indian military commander from the period noted: “There is a lack of real-time, actionable information” and that “commanders on the ground need to push and develop a thrust towards the requirement of timely intelligence.”<sup>217</sup>

Did the civilian population collaborate more with the counterinsurgency forces in Punjab than in Kashmir? The answer to this is two-fold. First, there is limited reason to expect that the civilian population should voluntarily collaborate more—i.e. provide information-- with the counterinsurgency forces in Punjab than in Kashmir. Both the campaigns were tough on the civilian population; the reputation of the counterinsurgency forces was adverse in both contexts. Second, practitioner accounts from Punjab place much more emphasis on a number of other channels—revival of the *thana*, paid informants, interrogation, and technical means—as the source of intelligence. One account quotes Police chief KPS Gill as saying that “information on terrorist groups started pouring in from members of the public only once the need for it had

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215 Phone Interview Former Indian Army Official, 2018, Singh 1999, 101, Saklani 1999, 113-115

216 Baweja 1994

217 Singh 1999, 111, 110

begun to wane.”<sup>218</sup> There is no way to further probe Gill’s claim so it needs to be treated with caution. If it is believed, this provides strong evidence against the hearts-and-minds theories.

### Comparative Kinetic & Anticipatory Effects in Punjab and Jammu and Kashmir

The impact of the variation in information flows on the insurgencies in Punjab and Jammu and Kashmir were distinct. Punjab saw qualitatively distinct kinetic effects compared to Jammu and Kashmir. For example, the top cream of the insurgency in Punjab was taken off the battlefield—either by killing or detention--by late 1993. In 1992, the Indian forces killed the chief of Khalistan Liberation Force Gurjant Singh Budhsinghwal, his second-in-command Navroop Singh Dhotian, chief of the BTFK Rachhpal Sindh Chhandran, and chief of the Babbar Khalsa Sukhdev Singh. In 1993, the Indian forces killed BTFK chief Gurbachan Singh. These were back-to-back losses of much of the leadership of the insurgency, which created major gaps in the insurgent coalition targeted in the campaign. Throughout 1992 and 1993, the Indian forces continued killing a number of senior and mid-ranking commanders of the Khalistan Commando Force, Khalistan Liberation Organization, the Babbar Khalsa, and the BTFK.<sup>219</sup>

Such kinetic effects against the Punjabi insurgency were combined with serious anticipatory effects. Those who were left behind in the insurgency actively began to anticipate being targeted -- which engendered challenges to movement, communication, and within-group trust. For example, the Khalistan Commando Force, such as its Zafferwal and the Panjwar factions, lost contact with their rank-and-file in Punjab. More importantly, they were compelled to restrict

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218 Mahadevhan 2011, 136

219 Chima 2010, 241

themselves to Pakistan.<sup>220</sup> The Khalistan Liberation Force's key units, the Sekhon and the engineer group, were also forced into "hiding underground in Punjab" -- their curtailed movement and control disrupted the group's command and control.<sup>221</sup> The BTFK was similarly crisis struck -- its leadership was "on-the-run" -- trying to "avoid being captured or killed."<sup>222</sup> Its top leadership had been "moving from place to place with a bedroll flung on one shoulder and an assault rifle on the other."<sup>223</sup> Thus, the "militants" were in complete disarray [by] early 1993."<sup>224</sup>

In contrast, the campaign in Jammu and Kashmir saw a different profile of the targeting of the insurgency -- to the extent it took place. The kinetic effects remained limited to more rank-and-file personnel or tactical commanders instead of top or key mid-ranking leaders. The Harkat-ul-Ansar's Haji Arif, Riyaz Ahmad 'Karimullah', Hizb-ul-Mujahideen's Ali Mohammed Dar were killed in 1998.<sup>225</sup> The insurgency also exhibited behaviors which suggest limited anticipation of targeting. Much of the top leadership of the insurgency, such as the Hizb factions continued to move in and out of the valley -- almost at will. The communication infrastructure of the insurgency largely remained intact, despite some losses. Until 1998, for example, the Police chief Gurbachan Jagat felt that the insurgents maintained robust communication: "the real strength of the militants is not their number but their ability to communicate faster."<sup>226</sup>

## Alternative Explanations

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220 Pettigrew 1995

221 Chima 2010, 228

222 Chima 2010, 229

223 Chima 2010, 232

224 Chima 2010, 231

225 Swami 1998b

226 Baweja 1998

The evidence mobilized above lends support to L&S as a causal force in mediating the outcomes of effectiveness. I must consider India-specific explanations which might be proffered as an alternative to L&S. First, some analysts claim that the insurgency in Punjab was “easier” than the insurgency in Jammu and Kashmir. The logic of this explanation centers on the relative differences in the crisis of legitimacy, size of the insurgency, and/or Pakistani support. However, there is no real empirical basis to these differences. The crisis of legitimacy in Punjab was severe -- this is apparent from the sustained political wrangling around elections in Punjab throughout the late 1980s, and early 1990s in the state. The size of the insurgency was not that different in Punjab and Kashmir. As argued earlier, the best available estimates suggest a strong parity. Some analysts claim that Pakistani external support was qualitatively different in Punjab than in Kashmir.<sup>227</sup> This can be a serious basis to further the argument of an “easy” insurgency -- but we do not have a detailed account from the Indian or Pakistani sides to make the claim that the support for the insurgency was radically different. Instead, available intelligence analyses and anthropological account suggest lethal and sustained support from Pakistan for the Punjab insurgency after 1987.<sup>228</sup>

Second, and this is an extension of the previous explanation, some analysts point towards ethnic heterogeneity and terrain as making counterinsurgency much more difficult in the context of Jammu and Kashmir and relatively easier in Punjab. The logic of this explanation suggests that counterinsurgency conduct in Jammu and Kashmir was disproportionately more challenging than in Punjab. Punjab is rural but agrarian and flat. It is also primarily Sikh. Jammu and Kashmir, on the other hand, is heavily mountainous, comprising of different ethnic groups, dialects, religious

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227 Butt 2017

228 Lalwani 2014

bents, which lent the insurgency torn landscape unique complexity. I recognize the importance of these factors in complicating counterinsurgency in Kashmir. The question, then, is: How do they make counterinsurgency more difficult? It is not obvious that there is a causal pathway by which they can directly influence counterinsurgency effectiveness. Instead, the most plausible pathway is one in which these variables shape the nature of the L&S capacities required, which in turn shapes effectiveness.

## **Conclusion**

The campaigns in Punjab and Jammu and Kashmir offer a powerful comparative analysis, which holds constant a variety of factors that can directly influence effectiveness. Careful measurement of the independent variable and mechanisms bolsters confidence in the importance of L&S to counterinsurgency effectiveness, and weakens confidence in the importance of force level, hearts-and-minds strategies, and group type as explanatory variables.

The comparison in the chapter is useful in reducing confidence in the possibility that civilian coercion may enjoy causal power in defeating insurgencies – at least militarily.<sup>229</sup> We see a similar profile of state abuses against civilian across the two cases and yet only one proved to be effective. If coercion of civilians mattered significantly, the outcome should not have been as radically different as I find. We need a different explanation -- and L&S provides that.

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229 Zhukov 2014, 2015 probes the question of when civilian coercion is more likely; Hazelton 2017 identifies violence against civilians as an essential causal condition along with concessions to political elites.

I want to caution against over-interpreting the results, especially for the case of Punjab. The model proffered and the analysis in support of it only explains the substantial degradation of the targeted insurgent coalition in Punjab. It doesn't explain the political death of the insurgency by the mid-1990s. As the empirical work in this dissertation suggests, not all effective campaigns translate into dramatic political deaths for the insurgency. In that sense, the demise of the insurgency in Punjab is remarkable and unique, and an unanswered puzzle of my empirical work.

## **Chapter 7: Campaigns in Pakistan: The Battles of Waziristan, Bajaur, and Swat**

In this chapter, I test Pakistan's campaign level counterinsurgency effectiveness. Chapter 4 provides details on the backgrounds of the conflict. To recap, the insurgency broke out in Pakistan's tribal belt following the US invasion of Afghanistan. Inspired by the Afghan Taliban and incubated by Al-Qaeda money, the center-seeking insurgent coalition consisted of an array of loosely aligned groups, who referred to themselves as the Taliban. I focus on four distinct counterinsurgency campaigns against the various groups that were part of the insurgent coalition across Pakistan's North West Frontier: South Waziristan from 2004 to 2006, Bajaur Agency from 2008 to 2010, Swat from 2009 to 2011, and South Waziristan from 2009 to 2011.

The within-conflict counterinsurgency campaigns provide important leverage to draw reliable inferences on counterinsurgency effectiveness. Leveraging field-work based data, I am able to employ case tests to adjudicate whether the L&S has explanatory power. Important alternative accounts propose primacy of other campaign level factors, like force levels, group type, and hearts-and-minds strategies. I integrate the case tests with process tracing where the outcome is predicted by more than one variable. Doing so allows me to probe the campaigns a) at a substantial geographic granularity in each case, thereby reducing the possibility of confounding due to a pooled analysis b) subject the new theory to a tough test with competing predictions under alternative views; as I explain in the discussion case selection, if L&S carries more explanatory power, the case tests should lead to very different outcomes. I conclude by placing the four cases in a comparative perspective and analyzing the outcomes.

My main finding is that the L&S does a much better job of explaining campaign level variation in effectiveness. That is, variation in the L&S led to varied levels of effectiveness, evidenced in the insurgents' operational capability, collective action trajectories, and organizational basing. For instance, in the campaign where the Pakistani military struggled to put in place a legibility infrastructure and was also constrained at speedily exploiting gains of legibility, like the Waziristan campaign of 2004-2005, the final outcome was ineffective. In the campaigns where the Pakistani military implemented tactics and technologies that were conducive for legibility or speed, but not both, like the Bajaur campaign of 2008 to 2010 and Waziristan campaign of 2009 to 2011, the final outcome corresponded with a stalemate. Significantly, no orthodox theory predicts the outcome we see across these two campaigns. In the Swat campaign of 2009 to 2011, the Pakistani counterinsurgency force implemented tactics, practices, and technologies that were conducive for both legibility and speed, thus attaining high L&S. In the case test, however, effectiveness in the Swat campaign is also compatible with a force level account. When placed in a comparative perspective, force level doesn't appear to be doing much causal work across the four cases. But the process tracing evidence doesn't allow me to affirmatively rule in favor of one or the other explanation.

#### Research Design: Case Tests, Process Tracing, and Comparisons

The empirical work of this chapter employs two distinct and complementary strategies. First, I analyze four campaign cases for comparative case tests. I select these four from seven major 2-year campaigns in Pakistan in the study period. My selection of these four cases is governed by two criteria: 1) I pick cases which show variation on the independent variable under investigation

for the new theory -- L&S 2) I select cases which are concurrently strong candidates for alternative theories and the expected outcome under the proposed theory is contrary to the predictions of at least more than one alternative theory. When the eventual outcome is predicted by more than one theory, I employ hoop tests of process tracing to arbitrate between the competing explanations.<sup>1</sup> Second, I place these four campaigns in a comparative perspective to assess which variable can better account for the outcomes across the four cases.

## Data

I execute the empirical strategy using evidence collected mainly from fieldwork. The thrust of the evidence comes from 112 interviews. As part of the fieldwork for this chapter, I travelled to Pakistani tribal areas and the Swat valley multiple times over an 8-month long period. I draw on interviews of civilians from the insurgency affected regions and civilian government officials from the period. I also use interview data from members of the Waziristan, Swat, and Bajaur factions of the Pakistan Taliban from the period of the campaigns. Among Pakistani military and intelligence officials, I interviewed 8 former corps and formation commanders who directly led Pakistani forces in the campaigns. During fieldwork, I got access to some documents of the insurgents and Pakistani counterinsurgency forces, which I use sparingly given the difficulty of verifying them. I also draw on secondary sources. A subset of the interviews conducted for this chapter overlapped with the interviews I conducted on the US drone war in Pakistan, which are used in chapter 9.

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<sup>1</sup> Hoop test of process tracing. See: Bennett 2010, 210, Van Evera 1997, 31–32, Collier 2011, 825

I also draw on some administrative data on Pakistani state's spatial capacity to measure the variable of L&S. I use district level population registration records for issuance of identity cards (obtained through fieldwork), police stations, and *chowkis*. I also use the 1998 district level census data to estimate one indicator of legibility called the Meyers score. Building on the literature in demography, Lee (2018) and Lee and Zhang (2017) suggest that Meyers score is a reasonable indicator of legibility. The score can estimate the degree of inaccuracy in census age data at both the national and subnational level. The score essentially estimates deviation from the standard distribution of age by each age year expected of a population. As true age distributions in a population for each sing-year follow a natural smooth curve, in case of an accurate tabulation of age in census percentage change across two ages (3 to 4, or 17 to 18 etc) should vary smoothly. Thus, any significant variation from the smooth curve are indicative of inaccuracies in age aggregated by census. Meyers score capture the variation from the smooth curve.

Why might age inaccuracy, as captured by the Meyers score, be reflective of a state' legibility? Census age collection is likely to be more inaccurate when state authorities have limited knowledge of the civilian population. There are two sources of error which may correlate with knowledge of the civilian population: error by enumerators responsible for collecting census data and respondent error.<sup>2</sup> The enumerator error stems from enumeration shirking in census collection, which is more likely for regions where state infrastructure of access (like roads) are not present. Respondent error can result from members of the population being unaware of their

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<sup>2</sup> This indicator has its limits. For one, it is not obvious which component is more dominant in a given Meyer score i.e. the enumerator error or the respondent error. This is important because legibility is more likely to be reflected in respondent error. For this reason, I offer extensive qualitative assessments of the regions of counterinsurgency campaign's pre-campaign period to glean a holistic picture of legibility.

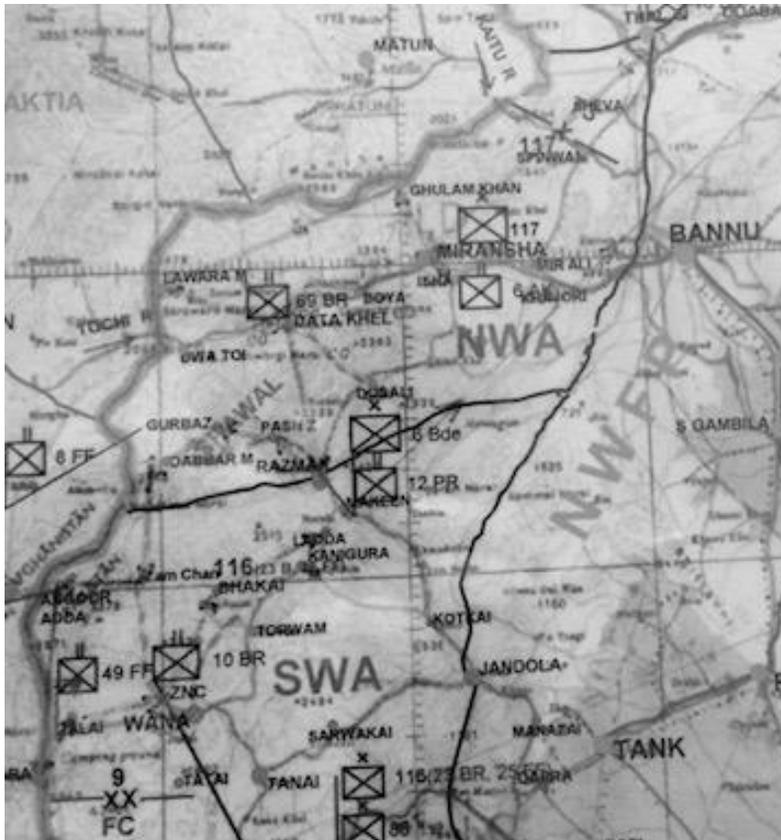
precise ages due to limited interaction with the state’s knowledge accumulating infrastructure, like police, revenue collectors, or identity record keepers. Together, the potential of error in census age collection suggests that when a state has good knowledge infrastructure of the population, the age data collection is likely to be more accurate. Conversely, when the state has poor knowledge infrastructure, the age data collection is likely to be more inaccurate.

**TABLE 26: SUMMARY OF 4 COUNTERINSURGENCY CAMPAIGNS STUDIED IN PAKISTAN**

Campaign	South Waziristan	Bajaur	Swat	South Waziristan
Year	Jan 2004 to Jan 2006	September 2008 to September 2009	May 2009 to May 2011	October 2009 to October 2011
Groups	Nek, Baitullah, Abdullah Groups	TTP Bajaur	TTP Swat	TTP Mehsud
Forces Involved	Army and Frontier Corps	Frontier Corps and Army	Army, Police, Frontier Corps	Army and Frontier Corps
Terrain	Mountainous, rural	Mountainous, rural	Mountainous, rural	Mountainous, rural
Population	429841	595227	1257602	429841
Area	6620	1290	5367	6620



**MAP 4: MAPS OF THE FOUR CASES IN PAKISTAN**



**MAP 5: THIS IS A PHOTO OF AN OPERATIONAL MAP USED BY PAKISTANI SECURITY OFFICIALS IN LATE 2007/EARLY 2008. THIS MAP WAS PROVIDED BY A RESPONDENT ON CONDITION OF ANONYMITY. NWA IS SHORTHAND FOR NORTH WAZIRISTAN. SWA IS SHORTHAND FOR SOUTH WAZIRISTAN. SOURCE: FIELDWORK PAKISTAN**

#### Case 1: South Waziristan 2004 to 2005

The Pakistan Army went into a full-fledged counterinsurgency mode in the South Waziristan Agency of the tribal belt in 2004. In official parlance, the operations conducted in the period were grouped under the Operation Al-Mezan. The campaign was undertaken against the insurgent coalition of Nek Muhammed, Abdullah Mehsud, Baitullah Mehsud, and Al-Qaeda. I develop this case in six steps. First, I provide the context. Second, I describe the groups involved.

Third, I provide values on the key independent variables/alternative explanations. Fourth, I summarize the predictions of each of these theories. Fifth, I sketch out the outcomes. Sixth, I process trace them.

## Context

In June 2002, the Pakistan Army was first attacked in the Azam Warsak area of the South Waziristan Agency, resulting in the death of nearly a dozen Pakistani soldiers.<sup>3</sup> By 2003, tribal *mashars* [elders] and intelligence officials were reporting that an insurgency in the tribal areas, informally referring to itself as the ‘Taliban’ in some places, had begun. Pakistani security officials at the FATA secretariat, the administrative headquarters of the region, and the ISI’s Peshawar detachments, realized that “Al-Qaeda was at the back of the emerging rebellion.”<sup>4</sup> Yet, there was a deep division on how to deal with Al-Qaeda’s presence and the rebellion it was incubating in the tribal belt.

The year 2004 proved to be watershed as the nascent insurgency began to regularly bleed the Pakistani state presence in the tribal areas. Local tribal leaders along with Uzbek, Chechen and Arab fighters intermittently attacked the Pakistani military in the South and North Waziristan Agencies. the Pakistan Army turned to rapid militarization of the region. Under the Peshawar based eleventh (XI) Corps, the Army deployed regular troops of the Pakistan Army to confront the insurgent challengers in the Ahmedzai Wazir area of the South Waziristan Agency, the

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<sup>3</sup> For history of the conflict, in addition to field interviews, this section relies on Mir 2005, Rashid 2008, Abbas 2013, Mahsud 2013

<sup>4</sup> Interview Senior Bureaucrat Habibullah Khan, Peshawar, 2016

Uthmanzai Wazir area of the North Waziristan Agency, and the Mehsud area of South Waziristan Agency. During this period, the campaign was led by Lt General Safdar Hussain, commander of the 11 Corps.

### Groups Involved

The Waziristan campaign of 2004 to 2005 was not directed against one insurgent organization but against at least three independent groups, led by Nek Muhammed, Abdullah Mehsud, and Baitullah Mehsud. Each of them had the support of Al-Qaeda's Arab, Uzbek, and Chehcen fighting cadres. Other salient groups that were not targeted through this period included the factions of Jalaluddin Haqqani and Mullah Nazir.<sup>5</sup>

Nek Muhammad was the first leader to declare war against the Pakistani state. A young Ahmadzai Wazir from the Kalusha village in the South Waziristan Agency, Nek Muhammed became prominent for fighting alongside the Afghan Taliban against the US led coalition and the Northern Alliance in Afghanistan. According to a tribal leader of the Ahmad Wazir, he “started off as a foot soldier but his bravery catapulted him to a mid-level position in the Taliban military hierarchy.”<sup>6</sup> Nek gained prominence for defending his positions against heavy incoming fire, even when the Afghan Taliban's senior leadership ordered a pull back, earning the alias of ‘Bodogay’, meaning a thoughtless, stubborn person.<sup>7</sup> From 1997 to 1999, Nek commanded

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5 See: Ganguly and Kapur 2010, Shahzad 2011, Fair 2014, Tankel 2016, Staniland, Mir, and Lalwani 2017

6 Interview Civilian, DI Khan 2016

7 Interview Journalist, Peshawar 2016

Afghan Taliban fighters at the Kargha camp, the Bagram airbase, and the Panjshir front line in Bamiyan, sites of the bloodiest battles that the Taliban fought against the Northern Alliance. During the American invasion of eastern Afghanistan in November 2001, Nek lost contact with the Afghan Taliban's senior leadership and was forced to retreat from Bagram to the South Waziristan Agency. On his return, Nek Muhammed started organizing a local force to initiate a rebellion to protest Pakistan's post 9/11 alliance with the United States. Nek was not the only one angered by Pakistan's alliance choice. Anti-Americanism and anti-military regime sentiment was on the rise in Pakistan's North West; in FATA, it was peaking. In an interview to the BBC in 2004, Nek Muhammed declared that he wanted to "eradicate the US-installed puppet governments in Pakistan and Afghanistan. Once we overthrow them, then there will be peace and no-one will be able to harm Muslims."<sup>8</sup>

Nek's public anti-state position made him prominent. Many transnational *jihadis* fleeing Afghanistan sought his company. According to Journalist Syed Saleem Shahzad, Nek Muhammed had "ties with Al-Qaeda's central leadership including Osama bin Laden and his deputy Aiman al-Zawahir, the leader of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan Tahir Yaldevish, and the Chinese separatist leader Hasan Mohsin."<sup>9</sup> Shahzad notes that in the wake of the battle of Tora Bora, uprooted from the "Shahikot mountains in the wake of the US-led Operation Anaconda, Arab, Central Asian, and Chechen fighters needed an exit route or sanctuary and Nek soon rose to become their chief contact in Wana."<sup>10</sup>

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8 From an interview of Nek Muhammed. See: Ali 2004

9 See: Shahzad 2004

10 See: Khan 2004

Abdullah Mehsud, like Nek Muhammed, fought with the Afghan Taliban against the Northern Alliance in Afghanistan. Abdullah hailed from the Mehsud tribe, the most influential tribe in the South Waziristan Agency. The Mehsud tribe had led a famous rebellion against the British in 1918 and later in 1936. But Abdullah himself was not a tribal leader of note. On the back of his stint with the Afghan Taliban, he organized a small faction of the Shaman Khel Mehsuds following the American invasion of Afghanistan. He surrendered in December 2001 to the Northern Alliance forces near Kunduz, Afghanistan, from where he was transferred to Guantanamo Bay.

Abdullah returned to the town of Makeen in the South Waziristan Agency in March 2003 “to avenge the fall of the Afghan government.”<sup>11</sup> His personal symbolism raised his profile in the tribe. Not only was he a veteran of the war effort in Afghanistan having served time in Guantanamo, he had lost a leg in a land-mine explosion a few days before the Taliban captured Kabul in September 1996. Like Nek, he too became a conduit for the Al-Qaeda and Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) fighters escaping American forces in Afghanistan. Cashing in on his reputation and the ever-increasing flow of cash rich Arab and Uzbek fighters, Abdullah put together a force to take on the Pakistani state. As the Nek Muhammed led Ahmedzai Wazir rebellion in and around Wana picked up in 2004, Abdullah marshalled his Mehsud tribesmen to challenge the Pakistani state in eastern tehsils of Sararogha and Ladha of the South Waziristan Agency. Abdullah Mehsud declared jihad against the Americans and the Pakistani state arguing that the “American occupation of Iraq and Afghanistan was a provocation for the followers of

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<sup>11</sup> Interview Journalist Nasir Dawar, Peshawar 2016

Islam and must be avenged [through] ...jihad, or holy war, against the government of President Pervez Musharraf.”<sup>12</sup>

Around the same time as Abdullah began to rally his faction, Baitullah Mehsud, a fellow Mehsud but from a competing sub-tribe organized a small militia. Baitullah did not have the military pedigree of either Abdullah or Nek. Nek and Abdullah had been leaders of note, recognized by the Afghan Taliban and Al-Qaeda, but Baitullah was relatively unknown.

Unlike Abdullah and Nek who played hosts to Al-Qaeda’s leadership escaping Afghanistan, Baitullah became a popular conduit for *jihadis* and armed groups escaping Pakistan’s post 9/11 crackdown. A military crackdown against Pakistani jihadi outfits after the 2003 failed assassination attempt on then-president General Pervez Musharraf caused an exodus of militants to the tribal areas. Prominent among them were veteran Kashmiri guerrilla commanders like Ilyas Kashmiri and Qari Zafar. Famous Taliban commander Mullah Dadullah too turned to the Sararogha area of the South Waziristan Agency for refuge, where Baitullah purportedly housed him. Baitullah’s guests showered him with cash, off-road vehicles, and weapons in return for hospitality, which, despite his relatively insignificant social status in the prewar life, catapulted his status in the Mehsud area. After Nek Muhammed’s death in June 2004, Tahir Yuldashev, the chief of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, spent most of his time in areas under Baitullah’s influence.<sup>13</sup> As Abdullah began to assert his control in the Sararogha and Ladah tehsils, Baitullah began to carve his area of influence and challenge the presence of the Pakistani state in eastern South Waziristan Agency and parts of the adjoining North Waziristan Agency. By 2005,

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12 Yusufzai 2007

13 Shahzad 2009

Baitullah was intermittently fighting the Pakistani state while also providing valuable manpower to the Afghan Taliban in Helmand province in Afghanistan.

### Independent Variables

I first characterize the 2004-2005 Waziristan campaign in terms of the key independent variables, representing the alternative explanations: group type, force size, and hearts-and-minds. I then characterize the campaign in terms of the proposed independent variable for the theory under consideration, i.e. the L&S.

### Group Type

The insurgent groups targeted in the campaign were of weak type, according to the operationalization I propose for various theories of insurgent organizations. Four features are important to note. First, the insurgent coalition lacked any strong prewar base of support. The leaders were not re-purposing existing organizations but in fact attracting youth, cashing in on the wave of anti-Americanism rampant in the tribal areas. Nek Muhammed formed his own group drawing primarily from the Yargul Khel sub-tribe of the Wazirs from Wana, Shin Warsak, and his native Kalusha village.<sup>14</sup> Abdullah Mehsud leveraged his status of being a veteran of Guantanamo Bay to launch his group. He was skillful, according to Journalist Nasir Dawar, as he had been an activist of the secular Pashtun Student Federation in Peshawar before leaving for

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<sup>14</sup> Khan 2004

jihad in Afghanistan but lacked any solid base of support. Similarly, before the war, Baitullah Mehsud was a junior activist of the political party Jamat-e-Ulema Islami.

Second, the insurgents were not embedded across geographies. The bonds of each of the leaders in populations beyond their specific sub tribes were weak. Drawing on fighters from their specific sub-tribes, the leaders were encumbered by legacies of internecine tribal infighting. For example, Nek struggled to marshal the strength of his own tribe, the Ahmedzai Wazir, despite echoing the “rampant pro Al-Qaeda and anti-military establishment sentiment in the region.”<sup>15</sup> Abdullah Mehsud also struggled to draw support from other sub-tribes within his Mehsud clan.<sup>16</sup>

A second reason for the weak social ties of the groups was the limited standing of the leaders in the tribal landscape of the South Waziristan Agency. In the tribal context, leaders of note or status were recognized by the office of the Political Agent. Nek Muhammed, Abdullah Mehsud, and Baitullah Mehsud did not enjoy any such relationship with the Political Agent’s office. They were neither ‘*mashars*’ -- tribal elders -- nor religious scholars of note. They could not even convene ‘*jirgah*’ -- a forum for consultation -- beyond their villages, according to Habibullah Khan, a former Political Agent of the South Waziristan Agency.<sup>17</sup> Nek, Abdullah and Baitullah did not have readily available ‘politicized social networks’ that they could turn to the end of raising their groups.

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15 Interview Former Political Agent, Peshawar 2016

16 Interview Elder Dawar tribe, Peshawar 2016

17 Interview Former Political Agent, Peshawar 2016

Third, the groups formed by Nek Muhammed, Abdullah Mehsud, and Baitullah Mehsud were poorly institutionalized. A senior journalist from the Dawar tribe noted that “for the first few years these groups operated from the *‘hujras’* of senior leaders, as opposed to offices, with fluid hierarchy and little discipline.”<sup>18</sup> A former Political Agent of South Waziristan emphasized the lack of structure of the groups, arguing “when one begins to think of the strength of these groups it is noteworthy that the armed movement [of the Pakistan Taliban] was not as organized in the era of Nek Muhammed.”<sup>19</sup> In an interview to Chris Woods, Asad Munir, a former ISI officer, pointed out the deficient organizational structure of Nek’s group, arguing Nek was at best “a very local leader.”<sup>20</sup> Abdullah and Baitullah were primarily drawing on their individual war fighting experiences in Afghanistan, and lacked the institutional discipline common to their contemporaries in Al-Qaeda and the Afghan Taliban.

Fourth, the recruitment quality of all three groups was generally poor. The groups were primarily drawing on opportunists for the first few years, keen to profit from the influx of Al-Qaeda money. The escaping units of Al-Qaeda and its affiliates as well as the Afghan Taliban prized safety and sought refuge. For leaders like Nek Muhammed, Al-Qaeda’s arrival in the tribal areas proved to be a financial boon. By December 2003, Nek Muhammed was said to possess a fleet of 44 pickups, financed by Al-Qaeda.<sup>21</sup> Abdullah and Baitullah Mehsud also benefited from the funding largess of Al-Qaeda. According to a former ISI official, Abdullah and Baitullah Mehsud hosted prominent Al-Qaeda leaders, who, in return for protection, “provided abundant cash.”<sup>22</sup>

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18 Interview Elder Dawar Tribe, Islamabad 2016

19 Interview Former Political Agent, Peshawar 2016

20 Woods 2015, 103

21 Khan 2004, Interview Civilian, Peshawar 2016

22 Interview Senior Military Officer, Islamabad 2016

As the exodus from Afghanistan took place in chunks, those coming in and seeking refuge flocked to different leaders. In the resulting vacuum, a number of groups started competing for funds. All of these groups “vied with each other for the hefty Al-Qaeda dole outs and developed some serious differences with each other.”<sup>23</sup> According to a report from Dawn in 2004, “[in] the first week of October, Rs 60 million was distributed through the Al Qaida network to its three key operatives in the area. One of the recipients was Abdullah Mehsud.” The insurgent coalition used the cash influx to recruit for “jihad” and “expand their factions.” According to Shakeel Qadir, the “initial set of recruits were drawn to these groups for the lure of money.”<sup>24</sup> Al-Qaeda’s Arab and Uzbek fighters would often “directly pay out the recruits of the factions of Nek Muhammed and Abdullah Mehsud group.”<sup>25</sup> According to a tribal leader of the Ahmedzai Wazir, the core fighting forces comprised heavily of former criminals, not the upper echelons or the religious minded Mehsuds or Ahmedzai Wazirs, and were paid out “not only in local currencies but also in dollars.”<sup>26</sup>

## Force Level

The numerical balance in the Waziristan campaign shows that the force level was favorable to the Pakistan Army.

To undertake this calculation, I use one estimate of the counterinsurgency force obtained through interviews. A former chief of staff of the 11 Corps noted that by June 2004, the Army had

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23 Khan 2004

24 Interview civilian, Peshawar 2016

25 Interview civilian, Peshawar 2016.

26 Interview civilian, DI Khan 2016; a senior Corps Commander Peshawar confirmed this as well

deployed 18 units of regular infantry and 10 wings of Frontier Corps across nine *tehsils* of the South Waziristan Agency.<sup>27</sup> These troops were organized under one infantry divisional formation based out of Wana. Nek Muhammed raised a force from his village and adjoining areas reaching -- according to a former Pakistan intelligence officer -- 500 in 2003.<sup>28</sup> Baitullah was the commander of a much smaller force at the time, outnumbered by his co-tribal Abdullah, who similarly commanded a force of rag-tag militia men reaching a “couple of hundred.”<sup>29</sup> The combined fighting force the Pakistanis were contending with, according to the then 11 Corps Commander Lt General Safdar Hussain, did not exceed 2,000.<sup>30</sup> The combination of Al-Qaeda, IMU and other foreign fighters was said to have been less than 600, who supported the core units of Nek, Baitullah and Abdullah in the fighting. Tariq Hayat, a former Political Agent of the North Waziristan Agency, offered an even smaller number, saying it did not exceed 1500. The lowest bound estimate was provided by a former ISI official, according to whom the combined strength was not greater than 1200.

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27 Interview, Islamabad 2016

28 Interview former FATA Secretariat Official, Peshawar 2016

29 Interview former FATA Secretariat Official, Peshawar 2016

30 Interview Former Senior Military Official, Islamabad 2016

**TABLE 27: SUMMARY OF FORCE LEVEL INDICATORS SOUTH WAZIRISTAN 2004-2005**

	Metric
Counterinsurgency Force -- High	24400
Counterinsurgency Force -- Low Estimate	24400
Insurgency High	1200
Insurgency Low	1500
Area of Active Insurgency in Square Kilometers	6620
Population	429,841
Force to Area (Soldiers/Square Kilometer) -- Low	3.69
Force to Area (Soldiers/Square Kilometer) -- High	3.69
Force to Population (Soldiers/1000 Civilians) -- Low	56.77
Force to Population (Soldiers/1000 Civilians) -- High	56.77
Force to Insurgents -- Low/Low	16
Force to Insurgents -- Low/High	16
Force to Insurgents -- High/Low	20
Force to Insurgents -- High/High	20

The following numbers emerge. First, the force to insurgency ratio in this period -- based on insurgency size estimates for the first quarter of 2004 -- ranged from 16 soldiers to an insurgent to 20 soldiers to an insurgent. The entire range of estimates is clearly higher than the benchmark of 10 soldiers to an insurgent. Second, the troop density ratio, also called the force to population ratio, was roughly around 57 per 1000 residents -- significantly higher than the benchmark popular in accounts on counterinsurgency and manpower. Third, the force to space ratio was roughly around 3.7 per square kilometer -- significantly higher than the benchmark of 1.2 soldiers per square kilometer in accounts on counterinsurgency and manpower.

As all three ratios were higher than benchmark levels, I conclude the Pakistani forces had a clear-cut advantage.

## Hearts-and-minds

The Waziristan campaign saw little to no compliance with a hearts-and-minds strategy. Four features are important to note.

First, the military conduct prioritized firepower and high intensity raids. The Pakistan Army's predominant style of operations was large unit-sized sweeps aided by air assaults. Such actions were dominated by regular infantry units with only select actions carried out by the special operations forces. In the area of operation of the 9th division, according to one interviewee, an entire unit would be sent in advance to lay out a parameter. In such situations, Pakistan's composition of firepower was not restricted to hand-held firearms. Local formations were able to call upon artillery.<sup>31</sup> Up to 8 artillery units were mobilized which remained positioned for artillery assaults. Moreover, given the conventional style unit structure of most battalions, infantry units relied on mortar fire to respond to incoming fire from populated areas.<sup>32</sup>

Second, the campaign involved extensive reports of torture, extra-judicial killings, and arbitrary detentions. The Human Rights Watch noted in 2004 that "The Pakistan government did not apply international humanitarian law to the conflict, arguing that though the offensive was being conducted by its army, it was an anti-terrorist operation."<sup>33</sup> This approach to the military campaign led to uses of indiscriminate tactics towards the civilian population. The government extensively relied on the colonial law called the Frontier Crimes Regulation (FCR) to "justify the

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31 Interview Military Officer, Peshawar 2016

32 Interview civilian, Peshawar 2016

33 HRW 2005, 318

use methods such as collective punishment, and economic blockade of civilians.”<sup>34</sup> The Human Rights Watch further noted that “reports of extrajudicial executions, house demolitions, arbitrary detentions, and the harassment of journalists abound.”<sup>35</sup>

Third, civilian harm was substantial through the course of the campaign. While the forces did not compel civilians to vacate their residences, there were frequent enough incidents of civilian areas being subjected to collective punishment or strikes in the form of mortar shelling and artillery bombardment. Use of medium and short-range artillery was infrequent, but whenever it took place it forced civilians in the targeted areas to flee their homes, or worse, caused significant collateral damage. Brian Cloughley notes that “Over 40,000 people were driven from their homes, some hundreds of houses were demolished, cattle were killed, orchards destroyed, and an unknown number of civilian casualties inflicted.”<sup>36</sup> A report by the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP), states that there were “hundreds of civilian casualties, including women and children” and coercive dislocations.<sup>37</sup> According to senior human rights activist Afrasiab Khattak, “Reports tell us of up to 50,000 people who have been displaced. But the government has not taken a single step to rehabilitate them or provide relief, food, medicine, anything.”<sup>38</sup>

Fourth, the perception of the campaign was of an indiscriminate one, with civilian targeting being common. Various tribal leaders interviewed suggested that Pakistan’s tactics were “harsh on civilians.” A senior *mashar* of the South Waziristan Agency noted that once the military’s bid

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34 HRW 2005, 318

35 HRW 2005, 318

36 Cloughley 2008

37 Anderson 2004

38 Human Rights Watch quoted by Anderson 2004

to isolate militants from civilian populations would fail, the Pakistani military would bring in “artillery shelling and target large vicinities adjacent to the hot spots of insurgent activity.”<sup>39</sup> This perception was compounded by the fact that the Pakistan Army in the South and North Waziristan Agencies engaged in collective targeting practices. These collective targeting practices were not new to the tribal areas. As Brian Cloughley notes, the tribes are “loosely contained by the Frontier Crime Regulation which is based on collective responsibility in that the authorities, if they dare, can detain members of a law-breaking fugitive’s tribe or quarantine his village should he fail to surrender or if tribal punishment is not administered.” A particularly compelling example is that of a negotiation with the Yargul Khel sub-tribe of the Ahmedzai Wazirs. In late 2003, the Pakistani government asked South Waziristan’s political administration to identify locals harboring foreign militants. The administration “conducted several *shuras*, consulted *maliks* [tribal elders], and examined intelligence from local informants” to identify over “70 Ahmadzai Wazir tribesmen that were supporting foreign fighters.”<sup>40</sup>

Explaining the strategy, a former Political Agent of South Waziristan noted: “The government’s response was that not everyone is our enemy. Instead the government thought it was important that we reach out to the tribes and ask them to stop protecting, giving refuge to the outsiders. And there was nothing new about such a request. Previously people would escape from settled districts, would find refuge in the tribal areas, and the political administration would then employ a stick and carrots approach to convince the tribes to surrender the wanted men. If they don’t, then the entire tribe suffers!”<sup>41</sup> When the Yargul khel refused to surrender the wanted militants,

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39 Interview civilian, Peshawar 2016

40 Interview former FATA Secretariat Official, Peshawar 2016

41 Interview Peshawar, 2016

the local forces employed collective punishment tactics first in January 2004, arresting leaders of the tribe and attacking areas of Shin Warsak. A few months later more attempts were made to isolate the foreign militants and insurgents from followers of those who were taking part in the jirgas. In March and June 2004, the army carried out large unit offensive operations supported by mortar and artillery, targeting densely populated regions on the pretext that “you failed to deliver so this is what you get.”

## L&S

In the Waziristan campaign, the Pakistani Army’s L&S is best characterized as *low L&S*. The Pakistan Army struggled to put in place a functional legibility infrastructure through the course of this campaign. Four types of legibility gaps are important to note.

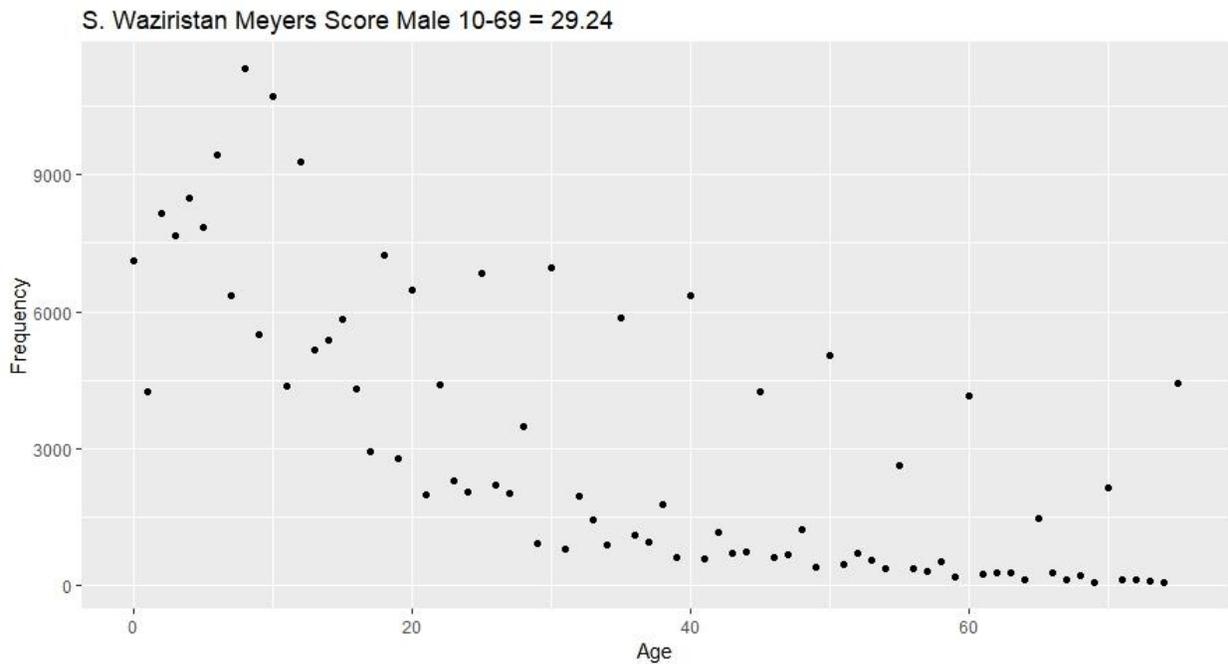
First, the tribal belt had long been an ungoverned territory, because of which the pre-existing legibility infrastructure of the region was poor. Unlike mainland Pakistan, which had a vast state apparatus tasked with collecting and collating knowledge of the population, FATA in general and South Waziristan in particular did not have any such capacity. It was ruled by bureaucrats through a combination of side payments and local customs.<sup>42</sup> The bureaucrats were dependent on local elites to establish connections and networks within the population. Population records were limited; there was no real effort at record keeping of population assets. According to a former Assistant Political Agent of the South Waziristan Agency, the Political Agent’s office had struggled to keep up-to date with “the who’s who of the area.” Another respondent noted, “It is a

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42 Interview former Political Agent of North Waziristan, Islamabad 2016

myth that the Political Agent’s office was all knowing. Years of neglect had weakened it. The terrain made it even more challenging.”<sup>43</sup>

The absence of the Pakistani state and its poor legibility in the pre-insurgency era of the region is reflected in the Meyers score of the South Waziristan district based on ages reported in the 1998 census. As shown in the figure, the distribution South Waziristan’s male population aged 10 to 69 substantially deviates from a smooth curve; the Meyers score for this distribution comes to around 29.24.<sup>44</sup> In absolute terms, a score farther away from zero, specifically higher than 20, suggests substantial age in-accuracy, and plausibly reflects poor informational capacity of the state. South Waziristan’s score appears to fit that bill.<sup>45</sup>



**FIGURE 8: CENSUS AGE DISTRIBUTION FOR SOUTH WAZIRISTAN 1998 CENSUS**

<sup>43</sup> Interview Peshawar, 2016

<sup>44</sup> See appendix for Meyers score calculation

<sup>45</sup> Lee 2018, 296

Second, the counterinsurgent forces struggled to put in place any concerted population management or registration program. Without a preexisting population tracking program, the demands on the counterinsurgent forces to shore up the legibility infrastructure in the region were significant. The forces “needed to register everyone”, not just select enclaves in the affected region “to know who was who”, according to a former FATA bureaucrat from the period. Even basic markers on infrastructure in the area did not exist. Despite such gaps, the counterinsurgency forces did not make much of an effort to improve their visibility of the local population in the period. Initially, the Frontier Corps and the regular units of the Pakistani military largely relied on the senior *mashar* of the area to navigate the region. Later, to the extent they made the effort, opposition from local political elites to registration led to shelving of plans to shore up legibility of the region.

Third, the military struggled with implementing legibility tactics. General Safdar Hussain conceded that his force’s intelligence systems were fractured.<sup>46</sup> Owais Tohid, writing in News Line in 2004, noted that “The Pakistani forces know now that their intelligence network, even though bolstered by US support, is inadequate at best.”<sup>47</sup> Such poor human level intelligence infrastructure was an artifact of the absence of the Pakistani state in the tribal areas prior to 9/11. Starting 2003, Pakistani military turned to three intelligence agencies for collection of tactical intelligence, the ISI, Army’s Military Intelligence (MI), and the federal government’s Intelligence Bureau (IB). Peshawar based 11 Corps relied on the ISI and MI for planning most operations. These agencies, according to multiple officials in the FATA secretariat, failed to develop sources that would generate quality leads. Lt General Safdar Hussain, the commander of

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46 Interview Former ISI Official, Islamabad 2016

47 Tohid 2004

the forces in South and North Waziristan during the campaign, was critical of the human intelligence capability of MI and ISI, describing it to have been “out of touch with reality.”<sup>48</sup> He added that “while ISI and MI were more of a hindrance than a help, the civilian agency, Intelligence Bureau, provided some actionable and reliable information.” The poverty of ISI and MI’s human intelligence sources was attributable, according to one former intelligence official, to “lack of prior experience, background and deployment in FATA.”

The Army did not put into effect any special initiatives for improving their human intelligence collection. Interrogation of arrested insurgent cadres was a major weakness. General Safdar Hussain said that “months would pass and I would still not get the interrogation report from either ISI or MI.”<sup>49</sup> General Faisal Alavi, a special operations commander at the time, lamented the inadequate handling of arrested cadres: “They were handcuffed to the walls of the barracks. We had some space accommodation, but some soldiers had to double up as a result of the influx...The MI had no facilities to detain large number of people. There was no systematic way of handling prisoners. After an operation, there was no time to document them properly.”<sup>50</sup> Language barriers amply hurt the development of a robust interrogation operation. According to a former sector commander of ISI Peshawar, the military’s field intelligence units at the formation level, survey units, and signal battalions faced a shortage of personnel who could speak and understand the particular dialect of Pashto common. Another related problem that reduced the collection of human intelligence was the absence of a culture of analysis, especially among the military’s tactical elements. ISI’s Peshawar sector was somewhat capable of it, but the

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48 Interview Former Senior Military Official, Islamabad 2016

49 Interview Former Senior Military Official, Islamabad 2016

50 Schofield 2011

detachments in Wana, DI Khan, and Bannu struggled. Piecing together information, collecting notes from interrogations, and constructing a picture of enemy activity was a non-starter. The Army did not establish either a flipping program or an anonymous tipping program. Instead of tactical level flipping to gain intelligence, the Army and ISI spent more time weighing and managing peace deals with the bosses of the insurgency.

Fourth, the Army and allied agencies had weak to non-existent surveillance capability.<sup>51</sup> Even though the three factions of the insurgency were extensively using short wave radios and other communication devices, the Army could not tap them. The Pakistan Army's weak signals intelligence too was rooted in the structure of the military. Trained for conventional fighting, large-scale interception was the domain of the ISI. At the level of the military intelligence or brigade and formation, there was non-existent signal interception capability. The problem was so acute that most of the units of the military moving to FATA throughout 2004 and 2005 did not have "VHF radios", "Walkie talkies" or "short wave hand held phone sets which the insurgents were using," a consequence of which was that the military's tactical deployments could not intercept insurgent communication.<sup>52</sup> Select unit commanders, on their own initiative, bought a few handsets off the shelf but the assets brought were too few "to have achieved any sort of scale." An interviewed intelligence staff officer from the 11 Corps said; "we had little to no ability to either intercept or record their conversations, only the ISI did at the time, who too couldn't listen in on everything."<sup>53</sup> This problem, or absence of signal interception systems, was magnified due to a lack of resources. Pakistani security establishment did not have the

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51 Based on multiple interviews with civilian and security official of the period in Peshawar and Islamabad

52 Interview Former Intelligence Staff Officer 11 Corps, Peshawar 2016

53 Interview Former Intelligence Staff Officer 11 Corps, Peshawar 2016

wherewithal to quickly buy short wave radios for two formations. Listening in on phones and intercepting cellular communication in general was also restricted by resource availability.

The Pakistan Army's speed of exploitation through the course of the campaign was low.

Interview information revealed that inflexible and concentrated deployment patterns, dearth of technology, and conventional military oriented standard procedures gravitated against rapid execution on information leads. Three features of the exploitation regime are illustrative.

First, the Pakistan Army's deployment was highly concentrated in select bases, forts and camps across the South and North Waziristan Agencies. Until early 2003, the Frontier Corps' South Waziristan Scouts manned check points throughout the Wana and Ladha areas, before insurgent movement escalated. With increasing insurgent activity, the paramilitary troops were withdrawn to their camps as their check posts were considered to be weakly fortified. The newly deployed regular infantry was also confined to their fortified encampments in Wana, Sararogha, and Ladha. As one former 11 Corps operational staff officer pointed out, we had less than "a dozen islands of activity across the North and South Waziristan Agencies which remained disconnected from each other."<sup>54</sup>

Second, the Army lacked the requisite technology and resources that could have facilitated mobility and movement. Interview respondents ranging from the 11 Corps Commander, officials of the Aviation Corps, and former intelligence officials stated that the Army did not possess sufficient combat or logistical air support. According to General Safdar Hussain, the military had

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54 Interview Civilian, Peshawar 2016

5 to 8 cobra helicopters available throughout the duration of the operation, which was “not sufficient.” The utility of even these assets was limited. Given the length of time it took to come from and go back to the military’s nearest full-service aviation base in Dhamial in the Punjab province, the Army’s reliance on combat helicopters was reduced to “availability as opposed to being a go-to option.”<sup>55</sup> Victoria Schofield’s account also gives insight into the lack of adequate technological equipment for acting on information. She quotes senior officials of the Frontier Corps saying that often local commanders were strapped by lack of air support; helicopters would either not be available or arrive “too late.”<sup>56</sup> A staff officer who served in the South Waziristan based formation reflected on the effect of the non-availability of adequate air support on brigade level tactical maneuvers saying: “moving troops from one area to another was an elaborate logistical operation. No commanding officer was willing to move without choppers in the air, which were not always readily available. By the time we acted on any information leads, the insurgents were either well dug in or long gone.”

Third, the Pakistani Army had a highly centralized decision-making infrastructure which slowed decision making, leading to long gaps between information acquisition and execution. The Pakistani Army’s preferred modus operandi remained large unit raids under a highly centralized chain of command, with orders for most offensive operations coming from the Military Operations Directorate at the General Headquarters in Rawalpindi. With such a deployment, the regular infantry was slow in reacting on any available lead. Describing the battle procedures and offensive action given intelligence, a former Chief of Staff of the 11 Corps stated the following: “We would make a battle plan like a plan is made for conventional war. Someone would be sent

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55 Interview Former Senior Aviation Officer, Islamabad

56 Schofield 2011

for reconnaissance of area of operation. Then on day of operation, the military would move from one direction towards enemy concentration, with its movement restricted and impaired by elaborate standard procedures to neutralize improvised explosive devices (IEDs)...non-availability of air cover also limited action, even on days where there might be actionable intelligence.”

Schofield provides telling details of the slow exploitation practices of the Pakistani military through the course of the campaign.<sup>57</sup> Providing snapshots of various operations as narrated to her by General Faisal Alvi, a Special Forces commander, she depicts a picture of a highly centralized counterinsurgency mission. Information obtained from local sources or American intelligence was not dealt with tactically but would lead to “conferences in the Military Operations Directorate” in the Army headquarters, where recommendations would be made to “the Vice Chief [of the Army].” The Vice Chief would seek input of the formation commanders through the course of the conference. “During the planning conferences, tea and sandwiches were served whenever the Vice Chief or the Chief of General Staff attended” -- according to Faisal Alvi, despite the possibility that the intelligence information obtained might become void over time.<sup>58</sup>

## Prediction

In light of the variables representing two of the alternative theories, the Waziristan campaign should have been effective. As the insurgency was weak, lacking in prewar base of support and

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57 Schofield 2011

58 Schofield 2011

well-organized structures, it should have wilted in the face of counterinsurgency pressures. Similarly, if force levels mattered, the Army was highly preponderant and should have had no trouble in putting away the insurgency. However, the other two variables, including one representing the theory under consideration, predict an ineffective campaign. Given that the Army's campaign was brutal, it could be that the civilians decided to favor the insurgents. Or as my theory predicts, because the Army's campaign was so off the mark, unable to make the insurgency legible and exploit leads on time, it should have allowed the insurgents to grow their vertical and horizontal ties, thereby leading to an ineffective campaign.

**TABLE 28: PREDICTION OF PAKISTAN CASE 1**

IVs of Interest	Coding	Prediction for Effectiveness
Insurgency type	Weak	Effective
Force Size	Preponderant	Effective
L&S	Low Legibility, Low Speed	Ineffective
Hearts-and-minds	Not Followed	Ineffective

### Outcome

As I show from hereon, the campaign outcome and the mechanism driving it agree with the prediction of the new theory. The Waziristan campaign saw a lethal rise in the insurgency's operational capability, collective action, and organizational bases. This outcome is also consistent with observables of a competing theory: the hearts-and-minds theory. I show, however, that the mechanism driving the observed outcomes are more in line with the expectations of my theory. I find that the campaign did little to impair the internal workings of what were nascent groups at the time. The use of force did not create any pressure on the groups;

neither was there much kinetic damage, nor were there any anticipatory pressures, a situation that the groups were able to utilize for expansion and growth of their organizations.

Consider the case of the Taliban force drawing from the Wazir tribe: Despite the coercive effort of the Pakistani military, the Nek Muhammed group grew in capability and size during the course of the insurgency. In early 2004, Nek's group consisted of fighters from Al-Qaeda, who he was protecting in the Yargul Khel area. According to tribal sources, the fighting force reached around "600 Al-Qaeda guerrillas, mostly Chechens, Uzbeks and Arabs."<sup>59</sup> In addition, he had full time fighters from the Yargul Khel, "... who were trained by the Arabs in the Al-Qaeda training camps in Afghanistan [and were] committed jihadis," reaching 500 fighters. These fighting cadres were led by local leaders like Maulanas Mohammad Sharif, Noor Islam and Maulvi Nur Abbas, all Ahmedzai Wazirs. After the killing of Nek Muhammed in June 2004, Haji Omar, a veteran of the Afghan jihad, consolidated training centers in the Shakai valley of the Wazir area with the aid of Haji Sharif Khan, Javed Karmazkhel, Maulana Abdul Aziz and Maulana Mohammad Abbas.<sup>60</sup> Furthermore, the group actively recruited through offices in the Wazir area, growing to a size of more than 2000 active fighters.

On the other side of the agency, the Mehsud rebellion became operationally much more robust under the leadership of Baitullah Mehsud. In early 2004, Baitullah Mehsud was the weakest of the three insurgent leaders.<sup>61</sup> Hailing from the Shobi Khel subtribe of the Mehsuds, he drew on youth from the Sararogha tehsil. By late 2005, however, Baitullah's permanent fighting force --

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59 Multiple interviews, DI Khan 2016, Tohid 2004

60 Frontline 2006

61 Interview FATA Secretariat Official, Peshawar 2016

called *halqa* Mehsud -- had grown, numbering 1000. By 2006, Baitullah had systematically expanded his cadres, having appointed a commander for different areas of Saraogha, Makeen and Ladha regions of the South Waziristan Agency. Abdullah's faction similarly multiplied, drawing on recruits through offices in Makeen and Shawal areas. He was assisted by his cousin Qari Zain, who, on the eve of Abdullah's death in 2006, assumed command of 2000 of Abdullah's men. This number is significantly higher than the number reported for Abdullah's formative faction in 2004, which was at best running in a couple of hundred.

#### Best Estimates of Group Size

**TABLE 29: GROUP SIZE SOUTH WAZIRISTAN 2004-2005**

Groups	Factions/Sub-Groups	Size in Q1 2004	Size in Q1 2006
Nek Muhammed Group	Haji Omar, Haji Sharif, Maulvi Abbas	<500	~2000+
Baitullah Mehsud Group	Shobi Khel	<300	7+ <i>Halqas</i> /1000+
Abdullah Mehsud Group	Saif-ur-Rehman Mehsud, Qari Zain, Misbah Mehsud	~200	~2000+
Al Qaeda and affiliates, Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan	Tahir Yaldashev, Arab and Chehchen fighters	~600	~1500

Descriptions and information collected also suggest that the organizational bases for the three groups did not undergo major displacement of either its leaders and/or rank-and-file to areas outside of the counterinsurgency operation. In late 2005, major leaders and their fighting groups continued to operate primarily in the areas where they were suspected to have been based at the start of the campaign.

For example, the Nek Muhammed group continued to operate from Shin Warsak, Daza Gundai, Kalusha, Ghaw Khawa, and Kari Kot near the towns of Wana and Shakai. After Nek Muhammed's death, his group, led by Haji Umar, remained stationed in Wana. Maulvi Abbas temporarily left his village, with his fighting cadres being displaced to the Kari Kot and Azam Warsak areas.<sup>62</sup> Abdullah Mehsud was ostensibly targeted aggressively by the Army. In October 2004, he kidnapped two Chinese engineers after which targeting him was considered a high priority. In November 2004, Lt General Safdar Hussain, then Peshawar Corps Commander, met Abdullah Mehsud at Saraogha Fort to broker an accord. The negotiations failed, after which Abdullah and his fighting cohort consisting of Punjabi fighters returned to his village called Nano. They continued to be stationed there through 2005, operating from areas around his village Nano, Shaktoi, Raghzai, and Gurgurai.<sup>63</sup>

Baitullah established his base in Wacha Darra area of the South Waziristan Agency in 2004. In 2005, Baitullah frequently moved between the Shawal valley, Makeen, and Saraogha but his fighting cadres remained stationed in the Wacha Dara area. His important South Waziristan based sub-commanders like Mufti Noor Wali, Wali-ur-Rehman Mehsud, and Maulvi Shamim continued to operate from their villages near Gurgarai, Wacha Dara, and Badar Ladha respectively.

## Mechanisms

## Hearts-and-minds

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<sup>62</sup> Interview, DI Khan 2016

<sup>63</sup> Interview Journalist, DI Khan 2016

Could it be that the campaign's failure to implement hearts-and-minds practices was fueling the insurgency? The fieldwork-based evidence did not provide direct evidence on the information flows from civilians. Instead, I checked a mechanism which can plausibly proxy for information flows: anger in response to Pakistani military activity driving civilians towards the insurgents.<sup>64</sup>

Interviews with elites, local officials, and ordinary civilians did not reveal systematic cues/data points in favor of these logics. Instead, the general sentiment echoed was that the excesses of the Pakistan Army created widespread anger but did not drive the local population to support the insurgents. For example, a journalist from the region noted that the insurgency was "restricted to small portions of the population" and that it angered notable tribal leaders and elders across the Wazir and Mehsud areas. A senior Pakistani bureaucrat, known for his religious bent within the Pakistani bureaucracy, noted that the Pakistani military activity engendered anger but the Taliban were not popular either. A *Khan* of the Behlolzai sub-tribe of the Mehsuds explained that Pakistani military's regular raiding activity revived "folklore of resistance and rebellion" from earlier eras but the tribal leaders and *maliks* also challenged the rebel factions of Nek Muhammed, Baitullah, and Abdullah. Mehbut Khan, a tribal elder from the Wazir area, summed up the ambivalence: "It is an attack against Pakistan-loving tribesmen and our motherland; it is the same thing the goras [British] did during British times. Our forefathers would tell us how British forces tried to occupy our land but we never expected it from our own forces. Look at the misery the operation is causing among innocent civilians. Not every tribesman is involved with Al-Qaeda and they cannot all be punished for somebody else's sin or crime."<sup>65</sup> Tribal elder

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64 Galula 1964, Wood 2003, Kocher and Kalyvas 2007

65 Tohid 2004

Malik Behram Khan echoed similar sentiments, saying, “The tribesmen perceive these operations as an intrusion and interference in their centuries-old traditions, culture and independent lifestyle. To compound the outrage, the forces failed to consult tribal elders or take the tribesmen into confidence before launching the operation.”<sup>66</sup>

Why was the insurgency not acceptable to the tribal elders and notables in the region? Elders and local leaders emphasized that the insurgents were “trampling” on age old community structures.<sup>67</sup> They were challenging the *mashars* and “... the dignity of the tribal code of honor.”<sup>68</sup> The influx of Al-Qaeda made the tribes distrustful of the ambitions of the insurgency. Thus, many civilian elites, especially those who were losing their traditionally held positions to the rising tides of the insurgency, were deeply dismayed by the ineffectiveness of the military activity. A senior Mehsud leader, using his office as a senior *mashar*, complained to the South Waziristan Agency’s Political Agent that the military’s actions were doing little to harm Abdullah and Baitullah Mehsud. In Makeen, the sentiment was that “Abdullah had won against the army. He moved freely even though there was an operation going on.”<sup>69</sup> As Owais Tohid noted in 2004, the fighting “...managed to alienate the [Waziristani] tribesmen, who after half a century of complete political and social exclusion, are now caught in the crossfire with their homes reduced to rubble in the fighting between “foreign terrorists” and Pakistan security forces.”<sup>70</sup> “For us, the sky and earth are both spitting fire,” Dilawar Khan Wazir was quoted by Newline, adding, “From the sky, helicopters are targeting us, and from the ground the

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66 Tohid 2004

67 Interview, DI Khan 2016

68 Interview, DI Khan 2016

69 Interview civilian, Peshawar 2016

70 Tohid 2004

mujahideen are firing. We poor tribesmen are sandwiched between the Al-Qaeda and Pakistani forces.”<sup>71</sup>

If not anger towards the Pakistani state and an outpouring of support from the civilians, what enabled the insurgency to survive, sustain violence, and grow in the face of counterinsurgency? The insurgent groups leveraged Al-Qaeda’s cash and the gaps left by the blundering Pakistani state effort to scale their platforms, conduct meaningful intra-group politics, and make their political appeals against the Pakistanis more forcefully. To be clear, Pakistani forces killed a number of local and foreign fighters, and disrupted select hideouts, but the damage was sporadic and the organizational capital of the insurgents was hardly degraded. Lt Gen Safdar Hussain, the Corps commander of Peshawar, candidly accepted the legibility gaps and execution problems of his force structure: “by the 2nd year of my tenure, I was done with the intelligence agencies. I was hardly getting any actionable intelligence. Most of my GOCs lacked initiative. I sacked two GOCs, generals Akram Sahi and Tahir, because they repeatedly missed their targets.”<sup>72</sup>

For example, Nek Muhammed’s group, despite its small size in 2004, successfully evaded damage in repeated Pakistani military actions. The Pakistani military’s coercive pressures were either misdirected or too late. An example that illustrates this is from early 2004. After failing to get a Yargul Khel jirgah to surrender Nek Muhammed and his “Arab guests”, the Pakistan army decided to conduct search and cordon raids in the Yargul Khel area. An ISI official from the period noted that initially the Army had no information on where Nek and his fighters were. A few days later, under intense pressure to locate Nek, the local ISI office found a lead on the

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71 Tohid 2004

72 Interview Former Senior Military Official, Islamabad 2016

potential location of Nek Muhammed and his Uzbek guests. Then ISI sector commander asked the formation commander in the region to launch an operation. To the sector commander's dismay, "the GOC delayed the launch of the action by three days." He first sent a reconnaissance team to the site of target, planned the raid after getting the feedback from his advance elements and then embarked on the raid. Given such a delay, Nek Muhammed's group was able to one-up the advancing Pakistani forces and undertake tactical retreats. The military's convoy was ambushed on its way back from the Yargul Khel areas. On January 4th, after the military convoy returned to its camp after a search-and-cordon raid, its camp in Wana came under rocket attack from three sides. Over the next several nights, militants fired more rockets on the army camps in Wana and destroyed a "military check post in Shulama, west of Wana."<sup>73</sup>

On the ISI's cues combined with a change in leadership at the 11 Corps, the Army launched another sweep operation in March 2004 in the area around Wana involving a Brigade, the South Waziristan Scouts, the Khasadar Force, and commandos of the Special Services Group of the army. The rumor was that "commander Abdullah Ahmed Abdullah, Qari Rashi Maqtoom of Al-Qaeda's special training cell, Taliban commander Abdul Bari Sayyaf, and the supreme commander of the Harkatul Islami Uzbekistan, Tahir Yuldevis, were reportedly all present in Kaloosha[ Nek Muhammed's village.]"<sup>74</sup> On what was at best suspect information, according to a former ISI sector commander, hundreds of paramilitary troops were ordered to cordon "the villages of Shin Warsak and Kalusha." According to a former political agent, the raiding convoy was "so scared of IEDs" that it took "multiple hours to reach the village which is not that far from Wana's army camp," giving Nek and his men ample time to be prepared to take on the

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73 Fair and Jones 2010

74 Shehzad 2004

military.<sup>75</sup> By the time the offensive began, the leadership the military had come after had gone while the mid-level cadres were well dug-in, who ambushed the advancing forces of the army. Yargul Khel areas were blanketed with firepower. The fire had no impact on Nek's well-defended cells given the "one entry and exit point of incoming soldiers into the Yargul Khel area" and "poorly directed artillery fire."<sup>76</sup> A local journalist, Mujeeb-ur Rehman, recalled that "There was firepower coming from everywhere. Suddenly the movement of men in groups of twos and threes became visible. Carrying rockets over their shoulders, their bodies covered with blankets, they formed a cordon around the Frontier Corps jawans positioned there, and, encircling them, launched a heavy attack on them. Their rockets hit the FC men's armored vehicles, killing some of the jawans inside."<sup>77</sup> The offensive ended with several hundred soldiers and tribals killed but very little damage to Nek's organization. Mohammed Niaz Khan described the state of Nek's fighters as "... split into groups ... fighting using guerrilla warfare tactics," adding, "They have automatic weapons, rockets, and explosives strapped to their bodies." Despite losses of rank-and-file in the March 2014 raid, Nek and his cadres had little difficulty in spreading their control from "the Kaloosha village to the Wana bazar."<sup>78</sup>

Such delayed raids continued to be a recurring theme of the operations in the Mehsud area. Abdullah Mehsud's force was gradually raiding and bleeding various military and state installations in areas like Saraogha, Makin, and Laddha. Initial raids by unit and wing strength forces met with no success. Journalist Rahimullah Yousufzai, who met Abdullah multiple times through 2004, found that "despite being targeted by the Pakistan Army, there were no limitations

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75 Interview civilian, Peshawar 2016

76 Interview FATA Secretariat Official, Peshawar 2016

77 Tohid 2004

78 Interview civilian, Peshawar 2016

on Abdullah Mehsud's men to use territory, manpower from Mehsud areas, and radio communication to organize and undertake operations." Abdullah Mehsud did not become a shadowy leader, despite being at the top of the list of the Pakistani military. Instead, he was accessible and approachable. He reportedly "rode a camel or horse while visiting his fighters in the mountains."<sup>79</sup> On other occasions, his men drove "... him in a vehicle and protected him round-the-clock."<sup>80</sup> In an interview to the BBC in 2004, Mehsud said that he "led his fighters by example by taking risks and surviving in tough conditions."<sup>81</sup> According to a senior Mehsud Tribe Elder, Abdullah did not seem like a leader "operating under the pressures of war."<sup>82</sup> His men were able to travel between Makeen, Laddha, and Shawal areas. His sub-commanders, like Qari Zain, were able to "buy fertilizers and move them to the Waziristan area."<sup>83</sup> Moreover, in his meetings with journalists, Mehsud did not come off as a leader on the run or in hiding. Instead, he "appeared uncompromising and emotional but also careless with communications."<sup>84</sup> Baitullah's robust organizational growth was apparent to both government officials and journalists in the area.

## Case 2: Bajaur 2008 to 2010

The campaign in Bajaur was a counterinsurgency campaign launched by the Gen Tariq Khan led Frontier Corps of the Pakistani Army against the insurgent coalition of the Bajaur Taliban led by Faqir Muhammed in the fall of 2008. It included high intensity raids as part of operation Sher Dil

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79 BBC 2007

80 Interview Journalist, DI Khan 2016

81 BBC 2007

82 Interview Mehsud Tribe Elder, DI Khan 2016

83 Interview Mehsud Tribe Elder, DI Khan 2016

84 Interview Journalist, DI Khan 2016

launched in September 2008. This campaign is a case with special leverage for the theories under consideration. The results conform to the new theory presented and contradict the orthodox theories. I develop the argument in five steps. First, I provide an overview of the social and political context in the lead up to the operation. Second, I explain the groups involved. Third, I provide values on the key independent variables\alternative explanations. Fourth, I provide the outcomes.

## Context

Bajaur Agency is in the north of Pakistan's federally administered tribal areas. Some of its prominent tribes are the Uthman Khel and the Mamund, although the Salarzai tribe are in the majority. After the American invasion of Afghanistan, Bajaur, like the Waziristan Agency, was a launching point for jihadi groups against the American forces in Afghanistan.

In 2005, Bajaur was swept by the tide of the Taliban insurgency.<sup>85</sup> A cleric from the Mamund tribe, Maulvi Faqir Muhammed of Damadollah surfaced as a vicious challenger. The US also sought to target Maulvi Faqir. Intelligence analysts in Pakistan and the US believed that Maulvi Faqir's base in the Mamund areas of Bajaur Agency was providing a safe haven to Al-Qaeda's senior leadership. The US government carried out two highly publicized drone strikes in Bajaur - one in January 2006 and the other in October 2006, which resulted in massive civilian casualties. These strikes fueled the flames of the insurgency. Faqir Muhammed capitalized on the popular sentiment and acquired fragmented control of more than half of the agency.

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<sup>85</sup> Descriptions based on interviews in Bajaur and Peshawar

The campaign in Bajaur -- from July 2008 onward -- played out in this backdrop. The initial plan -- called operation Sher-Dil in official parlance -- had limited aims. It was aimed at preventing the fall of Khar, headquarters of Bajaur district, to the Taliban. But in August 2008, the Pakistani forces realized how badly outnumbered they were. In August, the Taliban surrounded 200 men of the paramilitary Frontier Corps in Loesum.<sup>86</sup> After a three-day battle, the Pakistani troops were routed from Khar. The Frontier Corps began a campaign to take back Bajaur in August.<sup>87</sup> In September General Tariq Khan sent the regular infantry's 26th Brigade to the Bajaur Agency.<sup>88</sup>

#### Groups Involved

The campaign in Bajaur was directed largely against the Bajaur chapter of the Pakistan Taliban under Maulvi Faqir Muhammed. Maulvi Faqir Muhammed became part of Baitullah Mehsud's trans-tribal alliance in 2007. But he organized his insurgent faction long before then. Maulvi Faqir came from a lineage of clerics, with a rich history of fighting in Afghanistan during the Afghan jihad against the Soviet occupation and later as allies of the Taliban. Maulvi Faqir, much like the eminent clergy of Bajaur, was part of the political party Jamaat-e-Islami.<sup>89</sup> A famous leader of the Jamaat from Swat Maulana Sufi Mohammad of Swat broke away from the Jamaat-e-Islami to create his own faction in 1993 called the Tehrik-e-Nifaz-e-Shariat-e-Mohammadi (TNSM).<sup>90</sup> Maulvi Faqir and much of the Bajaur faction of the Jamaat-e-Islami joined him. Under

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86 Interview Former Bajaur Scouts Official, Islamabad 2016

87 Interview Former Senior Military Official, DI Khan 2016

88 Interview Former Senior Military Official, DI Khan 2016

89 Interview Civilian, Karachi 2017

90 Interview Former Bajaur Political Agent, Peshawar 2016

Sufi Muhammed, Maulvi Faqir first took on the Pakistani state in 1994. After some bouts of fighting, the Pakistani state reached a negotiated settlement with Maulvi Faqir and his group in 1996. Following 9/11, Faqir accompanied Maulana Sufi to reinforce the Afghan Taliban against the US invasion of Afghanistan in 2001.<sup>91</sup> Maulvi Faqir reportedly marshalled a 5000 man *lashkar* into Afghanistan.

When the Taliban's resistance crumbled, Maulvi Faqir Muhammed returned to Bajaur, fuming at the Pakistani state's decision to side with the Americans. He became a vocal critic of the government, calling for imposition of "Shariah". The Political Agent's office tried to pacify him, but he was not satisfied. By 2004, he was hosting Al-Qaeda's leadership and trainee western jihadis, including the to-be 7/7 London bombers. By 2005, word had gotten around of Maulvi Faqir's mosque and madressa being a hot bed of insurgent currents, backed by Al-Qaeda.<sup>92</sup> The 7/7 London bombings compelled the Pakistani state to finally confront him. According to a former political agent of Bajaur, the local paramilitary could not check his growing influence. The Khar –Nawagai road became more inaccessible for the Pakistani state as the insurgency spread rapidly.<sup>93</sup> The 2006 drone strike in Damadollah, which led to the killing of over 100 young boys, sealed the fate of the state machinery. Swept by a wave of support, Maulvi Faqir emerged as the most dominant political actor in Bajaur Agency. By late 2006, Maulvi Faqir was believed to have close links with Bin Laden's deputy, Ayman Al-Zawahiri.<sup>94</sup>

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91 Siddique 2014, 96

92 Interview Former Bajaur Political Agent, Peshawar 2016, Siddique 2014, 96

93 Interview Former Bajaur Political Agent, Peshawar 2016

94 Interview Former Bajaur Political Agent, Peshawar 2016, Siddique 2014, 96

Bajaur Taliban was supported by three other independent factions in its subversion against the Pakistani state.<sup>95</sup> The first one was Jaish-e-Islam. It was led by a local leader by the name of Waliur Rahman, drawing on a formidable fighting force from the village of Damadola and other areas of Mamund. Maulana Ismail -- another veteran of Afghan jihad -- similarly supported Faqir Muhammed with several hundred fighters. The Karwan-e-Niamatullah was considered one of the most powerful groups in Bajaur. Led by Haji Niamatullah of the Salarzai area, the group had several thousand fighters.

### Independent Variables

I first characterize the campaign in terms of the key independent variables, group type, numerical preponderance, hearts-and-minds, and L&S.

### Group Type

The insurgent groups targeted in the campaign were formidable. Three features are important to note. First, the Bajaur Taliban managed extensive support from the social bases across the Bajaur Agency. The insurgent coalition had solid ties within the leadership cadres and horizontal bonds within populations across the tehsils of Bajaur Agency. The insurgency's Bajaur wide solid vertical and horizontal connections were built on both politicized pre-war and social relationships. Maulvi Faqir had a robust political organization and a standing in the tribal landscape. The insurgency's core base of support was the Mamund. Maulvi Faqir's traction and

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<sup>95</sup> Interview Former Bajaur Political Agent, Peshawar 2016

standing among the Mamund had grown during the jihad in Afghanistan. Later, the Mamund's leadership had formed the core of the political networks of the Jamaat-e-Islami and Jamiat-e-Ulema Islami Fazl-ur-Rehman in both Bajaur and the adjacent district of Dir. He repurposed them for fighting, first under the Tehreek-e-Nifaz-e-Shariat Muhammdi (TNSM) in 1992 and post 9/11 for jihad against the US invasion. On his return, he had merged factions of the various Salarzai sub-tribes.

Second, the Bajaur Taliban was a well-organized and politically unified group. Multiple respondents noted the hierarchal nature of the group. Unlike Baitullah, Faqir's initial mobilization had relied on an available existing organization. Faqir Muhammed had structures and on the ground roots of the Tehreek-e-Nifaz-e-Shariat Muhammdi in 1992. Malvi Faqir was the "central *amir* of the agency Taliban, but he would himself look after the affairs of the Wara Mamund, the stronghold of Taliban."<sup>96</sup> Faqir Muhammed solidified the organization politically by obtaining Al-Qaeda's endorsement and financial aid; he used both cash and Al-Qaeda's branding to create an agency wide political front. In addition to using his own experience, Faqir worked with Al-Qaeda's Bajaur leadership to build a well-oiled military machine with clearly laid out hierarchy, specialized roles, and disciplinary procedures. For instance, Across Bajaur, "they had local amirs and commanders charged with special roles to field a strong army."<sup>97</sup> Faqir appointed "Shena as the overall military commander." Maulvi Omar was made "in-charge of information and propoganda."<sup>98</sup> Maulvi Munir was "charged with judiciary and financial affairs."<sup>99</sup> Faqir appointed Pervez as the "Amir of Nawage" to manage weapons, ammuniton,

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96 Interview Former Bajaur Scouts Official, Islamabad 2016

97 Interview Former Bajaur Scouts Official, Islamabad 2016

98 Interview Former Bajaur Scouts Official, Islamabad 2016

99 Interview Former Bajaur Scouts Official, Islamabad 2016

and training; in Salarzai areas, he appointed “JUI-F leader and former Senator Muhammad Rasheed” to look after both political and military affairs.<sup>100</sup>

Third, Faqir’s recruitment base had a number of committed ideologues.<sup>101</sup> He was able to draw on widespread anger in the aftermath of the US drone strikes of 2006 to recruit the best and the most committed fighters from across the area. Thus, despite the cash influx, the insurgent coalition did not have to draw on money to recruit. The initial set of recruits were drawn to these groups for both ideology and tribal loyalty. While it is clear that from 2005 onward, the insurgent coalition thrived on the resource influx in FATA post 9/11, the role of resources in the foundational moments was limited. This was because Faqir Muhammed and his sub-commanders were organized into an armed faction long before Bajaur experienced the boon of Al-Qaeda money.<sup>102</sup>

#### Force Level

The force level in the Bajaur campaign was clearly unfavorable to the Pakistan Army. The Army deployed 1 brigade and 5 wings of Frontier Corps across the seven tehsils of the Bajaur Agency.<sup>103</sup> The military’s estimated force number in this period varied, depending upon the respondents. Different respondents gave different numbers for the units that operated under the 26<sup>th</sup> brigade. Some asserted a number closer to 8200 while others suggested around 12400. On

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100 Interview Former Bajaur Scouts Official, Islamabad 2016

101 Interview Taliban Leader, Bajaur 2016

102 Interview Taliban Leader, Bajaur 2016

103 Interview Former Bajaur Scouts Official, Islamabad 2016, Interview Former Senior Military Official, Karachi 2016

the side of insurgency, one former civilian official from the agency estimated the combined force was close to 5000.<sup>104</sup> A military official estimated the insurgency to be around 2500 fulltime fighters.

**TABLE 30: SUMMARY OF FORCE LEVEL INDICATORS BAJAUR 2008-2010**

	Force Level/Ratio
Counterinsurgency Force -- High	12400
Counterinsurgency Force -- Low Estimate	8200
Insurgency High	2500
Insurgency Low	5000
Area of Active Insurgency in Square Kilometers	1290
Population	595227
Force to Area (Soldiers/Square Kilometer) -- Low	6.36
Force to Area (Soldiers/Square Kilometer) -- High	9.61
Force to Population (Soldiers/1000 Civilians) -- Low	13.78
Force to Population (Soldiers/1000 Civilians) -- High	20.83
Force to Insurgents -- Low/Low	2
Force to Insurgents -- Low/High	2
Force to Insurgents -- High/Low	3
Force to Insurgents -- High/High	5

Given these numbers, the following ratios emerge.

First, the tier-down ratio in this period ranged from 2 to 1 to 5 to 1 over the insurgents. The entire range of the ratio is much lower than the benchmark level of 10 soldiers to an insurgent. Second, the troop density ratio, also called the force to population ratio, ranged from 14 to 21 per 1000 residents. As much of the range of the estimate is below the parity level of 20 per 1000 soldiers, I

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104 Interview Former Bajaur Political Agent, Peshawar 2016

interpret this as being a disadvantage to Pakistani forces. Third, the force to space ratio was roughly between 6 and 9 per square kilometer -- which is higher than the benchmark ratio.

As two ratios gravitate against an interpretation of an advantage, I code this to be a case of a disadvantage for the Pakistani forces.

### Hearts-and-minds

The Bajaur campaign saw little compliance with a hearts-and-minds strategy. Four features are important to note.

First, in the initial part of the campaign, the Frontier Corps -- which directed the operations -- resorted to extensive use of heavy firepower. A senior Frontier Corps commander from the period noted: “in this kind of conflict, you must overwhelm the enemy with firepower.”<sup>105</sup> The Pakistan Army relied on large-unit, battalion-sized sweeps accompanied by air assaults, mechanized tanks and infantry in 2008 to clear the Khar-Nawagai road and later in 2009 to extend the “perimeter of security” in the Mamund areas.<sup>106</sup> The 26th Brigade had been drawn from the 37th Mechanized Infantry Division. Besides a short battle inoculation course for low intensity conflict, the 26th Brigade was built and trained to undertake large scale operations. This is exactly what it did starting from its initial induction in the area in September 2008.<sup>107</sup> In the first part of the operation when the Army had fluid control across the four tehsils, the 26th

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105 Interview DI Khan, 2009

106 Interview Former Bajaur Scouts Official, Islamabad 2016

107 Interview Former Bajaur Scouts Official, Islamabad 2016, Mukhar 2010

Brigade extensively called upon medium artillery and air force to take out targets. As in other places, the tactical units maneuvered onto their targets with both mortars and rocket propelled grenades.

Second, the campaign led to extensive collateral damage due to use of heavy firepower. The intermittent artillery fire and F-16 strikes in the Mamund area continued until December 2009.<sup>108</sup> In select regions, the counterinsurgency forces tried to create free fire zones. Units would announce the launch of operations, forewarning that homes from where any incoming fire was received would be hit back.<sup>109</sup> Yet, such tactics failed to prevent civilian harm. By late 2008 alone, some respondents noted a high estimate of collateral damage for the period: “Local people and medical staff in the area claim that around 290 civilians were killed, the majority of whom were children and elderly, and more than 300 people were injured, most (but not all) of them as a result of shelling and bombardment that locals believed came from the Pakistani military.”<sup>110</sup> Multiple civilian respondents powerfully noted the pervasiveness of civilian harm in Bajaur during the course of the campaign. One respondent, giving specific examples, noted: “Once a convoy of civilians was going in Damadola area. When they saw helicopters, they did the same thing but all ten to 12 vehicles were blown up. Around 25 people were killed in shelling of gunship helicopters at Gol Market in Inayat Kali. Those killed also included the cousin of former governor Engineer Shaukatullah, who was the owner of Deen Medicos in Khar. Son of Dr Khalil, the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf President was also among those killed in helicopter shelling.”<sup>111</sup>

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108 Interview Civilian, Karachi 2017

109 Interview Former Senior Military Official, DI Khan 2016

110 International 2010, 52

111 Interview Civilian, Karachi 2017

Third, the use of heavy firepower fueled the displacement of the civilian population throughout 2009. In the early part of the campaign, the civilian population fled due to the use of long range artillery and air power in the areas.<sup>112</sup> One news report noted that “Feelings of distrust toward the government’s strategy are especially high in Bajaur, where, for the past three months, the Pakistani military has pounded suspected insurgent strongholds with artillery fire and air raids... More than 200,000 people have fled clashes in Bajaur, setting off a humanitarian crisis as the refugees struggle to find food and shelter.”<sup>113</sup> Interviews with civilians suggested that local people were terrified at the sound and sight of every incoming air sortie, fearing that they could easily be the victims.<sup>114</sup> While the counterinsurgency forces frequently announced for clearance before launch of operations, confusion prevailed on when and where action was imminent. One respondent noted: “I have grievances against the government because, firstly, the government had announced that there would be no firing during Ramadan and this was the reason we came back to our houses.”<sup>115</sup>

Fourth, the counterinsurgency forces actively engaged in collective punishment practices. The advance of Faqir Muhammed in Bajaur embarrassed the Pakistani state. The General Tariq Khan led Frontier Corps was convinced “that a lesson had to be taught to those in the tribes who supported the insurgents.”<sup>116</sup> According to a senior officer from the 26<sup>th</sup> Brigade, some in the Mamund and Utmarkhel tribes were “pro-Taliban” whereas everyone in the Charmang and

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112 International 2010, 52-53

113 Rondeaux 2008

114 Interviews Bajaur, Peshawar, Karachi 2016

115 International 2010, 52

116 Interview Former Senior Military Official, Karachi 2016/2017

Salarzai tribes were “pro-Pakistan.”<sup>117</sup> The Mamunds’ support for the Taliban, given their size and sway in regions of Maulvi Faqir’s bases, did not sway due to the agency administration’s efforts to convince them through consultation with the maliks. A Mamund elder told me that “Maulvi Faqir and Dr Ismail deserved our support. The government was complicit in the murder of innocents in Chenagai [referring to the 2006 drone strikes in the region].”<sup>118</sup> By July 2008, the Political Agent of Bajaur found himself besieged in the town of Khar. It further infuriated the administration “where we wanted the Mamund to know the cost of their choice,” according to a former Bajaur Scouts officer.<sup>119</sup> Another former official from the period echoed the sentiment: “the Mamund brought it upon themselves, supported the Taliban, and refused to side with Pakistan.”<sup>120</sup> As the military advanced in the Mamund area, it made it a point to flatten the houses of Mamund elders, especially in Tanga Khel, Loe Sam, and Damadollah areas, who were seen as having supported the insurgency.<sup>121</sup>

Some tribal leaders went on the record to say “they have little choice but to fight their brothers, cousins and neighbors” as “The Pakistani military... has threatened to bomb their villages if they do not battle the Taliban.”<sup>122</sup> Akhunzada Chitan, a tribal representative from the Bajaur area was quoted as saying that the people find themselves between the “...the devil and the deep sea,” as “on the one side, there is the Taliban, but on the other side, they are being forced by the government to fight the Taliban or flee or the government will bomb them.”<sup>123</sup> Select local leaders alleged that their villages were bombed because of refusal to allow the military to create

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117 Interview Former Senior Military Official, Karachi 2016/2017

118 Interview Tribal Elder, Bajaur Agency 2016

119 Interview Former Political Agent Bajaur Agency, Islamabad 2016

120 Interview Islamabad

121 Interviews Bajaur, Peshawar, Karachi 2016

122 Rondeaux 2008

123 Rondeaux 2008

fortified positions. In one report from 2009, for instance, a tribal elder said that “the bombardment came after he and fellow tribesmen refused to set up a checkpoint to limit the movement of Taliban fighters.”<sup>124</sup> I found evidence that the local resentment towards the military in many areas was in line with Amnesty International’s description. One civilian respondent’s response captured the trauma, fear, and anger engendered by the military’s methods: “The people became psycho. Many people would start crying seeing helicopter roaming over the sky. At one time was there regular air-patrolling and bombing between 8am to 9pm, frightening the people. The Missiles would be fired from Monda but helicopters would suddenly appear. When the people would see helicopters, they would come out of their vehicles and up their hands, signaling that they were civilian. This would work but not always.”<sup>125</sup>

## L&S

In the Bajaur campaign appears to have attained an intermediate level of L&S. the Pakistan Army improved on one dimension of the L&S, i.e. speed of exploitation. The counterinsurgency force failed to put in place an effective legibility infrastructure for the Bajaur campaign. The low legibility of the region was due to four factors: weak pre-existing legibility infrastructure, inability to put in place a population registration and monitoring program, fractured human intelligence systems, and weak signals interception system and ISR capabilities.

First, much like in South Waziristan, Bajaur did enjoy normal state authority. As part of the tribal belt, it was ruled by bureaucrats through a combination of side payments and local

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124 Rondeaux 2008

125 Interview Civilian, Karachi 2017

customs.<sup>126</sup> Thus, formal records of population composition and assets were limited. An added constraint was the fact that Bajaur's powerful mashar large came from the elite of the Mamund. Some of the Mamund elders had largely moved to Pakistan's major urban centers, whereas many aligned themselves with the Taliban.<sup>127</sup> This hurt the state's informal legibility of the region.

The absence of the Pakistani state and its poor legibility in the pre-insurgency era of the region is reflected in the Meyers score of the Bajaur district based on ages collected in the 1998 census. As shown in the figure, the Meyers score for Bajaur's male population aged 10 to 69 comes to around 29.99.<sup>128</sup> In absolute terms, a score farther away from zero, specifically higher than 20, suggests substantial age in-accuracy, and plausibly reflects poor informational capacity of the state. Bajaur's pre-campaign age in-accuracy reflects a serious dearth of legibility.<sup>129</sup>

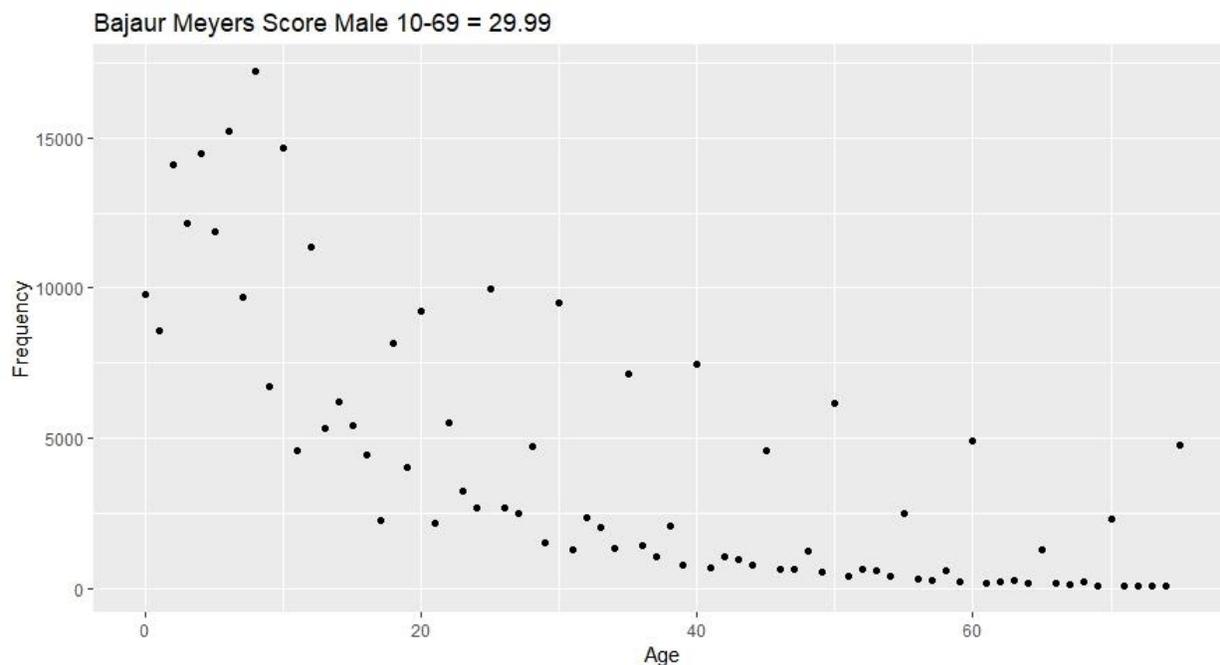
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126 Interview former Political Agent of North Waziristan, Islamabad 2016

127 Interview Tribal Elder, Bajaur Agency 2016

<sup>128</sup> See appendix for Meyers score calculation

<sup>129</sup> Lee 2018, 296



**FIGURE 9: CENSUS AGE DISTRIBUTION FOR BAJAUR 1998 CENSUS**

Second, during the course of the counterinsurgency campaign, the Pakistani military did not make any systematic effort to put in place a population management program. Neither the population in entirety was registered, nor was a population grouping program undertaken. The Political Agent’s office struggled to create basic population records and identity documents despite repeated requests for such tabulation by some military units.<sup>130</sup> Two units of the 26th Brigade asked the local Frontier Corps commander for a list of those who lived in areas where violence was highest: “The Brigade commander wanted lists of civilians to keep record of entry and exit in the area of operations.”<sup>131</sup> The commandant of Bajaur Scouts, according to the respondent, told the Brigade commander: “We don’t have anything like that.”<sup>132</sup>

130 Interview Former Political Agent Bajaur Agency, Peshawar 2016

131 Interview Former Senior Military Official, Karachi 2016/2017

132 Interview Former Senior Military Official, Karachi 2016/2017

Third, the poor legibility of the population was exacerbated by the weak human intelligence infrastructure in the region. Bajaur had been in the grips of the insurgency since 2005. Until 2008, the human intelligence network was operated by the Political Agent's office with the help of an officer of the ISI and IB. The ISI and IB officers had seen defections from their ranks, with some of their officers leaving their jobs in 2008.<sup>133</sup> Traditional human assets had either fled the region; those who were willing to volunteer information sought more for less. Even when the conflict intensified, ISI and MI never saw adequate replacements. According to a former intelligence official, "Bajaur was IG FC [General] Tariq Khan's show, and he could only manage the intelligence manpower and resources that he had, which were limited."<sup>134</sup> The Frontier Corps and military intelligence units moved in late 2008 found it challenging to run spies. Having never had an entrenched spying system, they struggled to gain information on location of important units of the Taliban. According to a former political agent, "Where the civilians could have filled in with their local assets, the military remained highly territorial."<sup>135</sup> The campaign also did not implement a systematic interrogation program.<sup>136</sup> All interrogations were conducted by the Bajaur Scouts, which were neither trained in systematic interrogation nor had much pre-campaign experience of doing the same.<sup>137</sup>

Fourth, despite relative improvements in signals interception capabilities of the intelligence agencies as well as ground units, the campaign struggled to trace and interdict enough phone calls and signals communication that could be tactically meaningful. Theatre wide intelligence

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133 Interview Former Bajaur Scouts Official, Islamabad 2016

134 Interview Former Senior Military Official, Karachi 2016/2017

135 Interview Former Political Agent Bajaur Agency, Peshawar 2016

136 Interview Former Senior Military Official, Karachi 2016/2017

137 Interview former ISI Operative, Islamabad 2016

interception was beyond the capability of the Frontier Corps.<sup>138</sup> At the time, ISI, Military Intelligence and Intelligence Bureau were stretched in other theatres and thus could not spare enough resources.<sup>139</sup> The Army's electronic warfare assets, normally enmeshed with division sized forces, were not deployed to Bajaur. The regular brigade of the military as well as the wings of Bajaur scouts had acquired more high frequency sets yet their availability was limited to a few per company.<sup>140</sup> The intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) assets available to the Pakistani military were never scaled. The Pakistani military's own ISR assets were crude; the military used cameras fixed on fixed wing aircraft. While it detected some intelligence like location of activity and areas of movement, that detection was far too limited to be a constant source of signatures of the population. A second source of ISR in the campaign came from US forces embedded with the Frontier Corps. That capability, too, was limited. According to a senior Frontier Corps officer, the Corps commander was "opposed to US embedding with our forces and the support that the US forces could mobilize was never fully realized."<sup>141</sup>

Speed of exploitation is difficult to code on a binary scale for the campaign. Some of Pakistan Army deployment patterns and technological availability in Bajaur were conducive to rapid exploitation of legibility gains; however, one key indicator still constrained the campaign. On balance, the campaign appears to take a high value of speed.

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138 Interview former ISI Operative, Islamabad 2016

139 Interview Former Bajaur Scouts Official, Islamabad 2016

140 Interview Former Senior Military Official, Karachi 2016/2017

141 Interview Former Senior Military Official, DI Khan 2016

First, even though the military's opening forays were largely conventional, by early 2009 the counterinsurgent forces deployed across the insurgent dominated territory and started establishing posts for offensive deployment. The multi-layered defenses across the agency allowed the military to guard against insurgent forays and act on information feeds relatively quickly. The military, in one sweep, took back all major communications links in the agency. The 26th Brigade went on a rapid advance from three axes, backed by intensive air patrols of gunship helicopters and fixed wing jets, to connect local areas of Rashakai, Tang Khatta, Mamoon, Bai Cheena, Bicheena, Delay, Nisarabad, Niag Banda, Charmang and Khazana. What followed this initial sweep was a layered security blanketing of the region. The brigade and the Frontier Corps established more than 100 defensive positions, with quick reaction forces to act on immediate notice.<sup>142</sup>

Second, the Bajaur campaign was the most decentralized campaign in all of FATA in that period. Directed by the Frontier Corps, the campaign had few layers of command. All information gains were dealt with at the level of the Bajaur Scouts, the paramilitary force of the region.<sup>143</sup> The Bajaur Scouts commander was in-charge of intelligence gathering and dissemination. In the absence of elaborate division level operation staff, the Scouts could share all available leads immediately with the kinetic prongs of the 26th Brigade in real time. The Bajaur Scouts also integrated its intelligence collection operation with the office of the Political Agent and the fusion center at the Balahisar Fort in Peshawar.

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142 Interview Former Senior Military Official, DI Khan 2016

143 Interview Former Bajaur Scouts Official, Islamabad 2016; confirmed in three interviews, one with a Former Senior Military Operations officer, a second one with a Senior Frontier Corps Officer, and a third with a Senior Peshawar Corps Officer

Third, the decentralized campaign instituted protocols to ensure rapid reaction on available information leads. The Bajaur Scouts and the 26<sup>th</sup> Brigade were able to synchronize with aviation units.<sup>144</sup> Pakistan acquired more aviation assets in 2007, which were commissioned in 2008 and deployed to Bajaur.<sup>145</sup> An air patrol of more than 20 gunship helicopters at the Peshawar Forward Operating Base (FOB) remained on standby for the campaign, which could be rapidly called in by the commander of the Bajaur Scouts.<sup>146</sup> In addition, a US Special Operations Force (SOF) team remained stationed with the Pakistanis, coordinating unmanned aerial vehicles and artillery fire to identify targets on availability of information leads. As noted in a leaked cable, “The Pakistani Army has approved deployment of US special operation elements to support Pakistani military operations,” according to then US Ambassador to Pakistan Ann W. Patterson, adding, “The first deployment, with SOC(FWD)-PAK [Special Operations Command Forward, Pakistan] elements embedded with the Frontier Corps in Bajaur Agency, occurred in September.”<sup>147</sup> The deployment “provided ISR [intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance] for an FC [Frontier Corps] operation. This support was highly successful, enabling the FC to execute a precise and effective artillery strike on an enemy location.”<sup>148</sup>

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144 Interview Former Senior Aviation Official, Islamabad 2016

145 Interview Former Senior Aviation Official, Islamabad 2016

146 Interview Former Bajaur Scouts Official, Islamabad 2016; confirmed in three interviews, one with a Former Senior Military Operations officer, a second one with a Senior Frontier Corps Officer, and a third with a Senior Peshawar Corps Officer

147 Originally leaked by a number of cables of Wikileaks, collated on Security 2017; Series of events confirmed in three interviews, one with a Former Senior Military Operations officer, a second one with a Senior Frontier Corps Officer, and a third with a Senior Peshawar Corps Officer

148 Security 2017

The one dimension where the campaign continued to struggle was its ability to analyze and collate available legibility gains. The ISI and the MI's own capability was weak; the local commander did not devote any significant resources to improve that particular capability.<sup>149</sup>

## Prediction

The Bajaur campaign offers a difficult test for the theory under consideration. All applicable orthodox theories strongly predict the campaign's failure: type of group, hearts-and-minds, and force level. The campaign was fought against a group with high social embeddedness. Counterinsurgency tactics were anything but oriented around civilian protection. The campaign involved coercive dislocations, use of firepower intensive tactics, burning of crops, and flattening of suspected hideouts. Because of concurrent pressures on the Pakistani military in other parts of the tribal belt at the time, force deployment relative to population and the enemy was also thin. The Pakistani Army deployed only a brigade worth of regular infantry against a fighting force running into a few thousand. In contrast, my theory offers a less pessimistic prediction. I expect this campaign to be neither highly effective nor an outright failure; while the Army's campaign was unable to make the population highly legible, it still had some capability of exploitation; this should have led to a stalemate outcome.

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149 Interview Former Bajaur Scouts Official, Islamabad 2016

**TABLE 31: PREDICTION OF PAKISTAN CASE 2**

IVs of Interest	Coding	Implication for Effectiveness
Insurgency type	Strong	Ineffective
Force Size	Not Preponderant	Ineffective
Hearts and minds	Not followed	Ineffective
L&S	Slow Kill	Stalemate

### Outcome

As I show from hereon, the campaign outcome, and the mechanism driving it, agree with the prediction of the new theory. The Bajaur campaign turned to be far from a case of a military failure but it also struggled to dent the insurgency. Three points are important to note.

First, the Bajaur Taliban's operational capability was marginally disrupted. In the first half of the campaign until late 2009, the Bajaur Taliban maintained their weapons handling units. A senior Taliban military commander Sheena and his sub-ordinate commanders were able to maintain the flow of weaponry and ammunition from adjacent regions, according to a leader from the Lwe Mamund who was familiar with the Taliban.<sup>150</sup> The Taliban forces closed down their training centers in and around Damadola and the tehsil of Bar Chamarkand. But in the tehsils Khar, Mamund, and Salrazai, they continued to operate teams of saboteurs, some IED and bomb making production facilities, intelligence collection and food distribution teams.<sup>151</sup> Even after some losses, the Taliban forces also maintained teams of "khudkush" (suicide bombers) and "fidayee" (suicide bombers who carry out assaults before exploding their vests) in tehsils of the

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150 Interview Tribal Elder, Bajaur Agency 2016

151 Interview Tribal Elder, Bajaur Agency 2016

the Mamund tribe -- some of whom undertook brazen and organized attacks of sabotage.<sup>152</sup> In the tehsils of Mamund and Khar, the Taliban maintained some safe houses and explosive storage facilities.<sup>153</sup>

Like operational capability, the TTP Bajaur's collective action trajectory suggests no glaring trend of success or defeat through the course of the campaign. The TTP in Bajaur is reported to have several thousand fighters and supporters under the leadership of Maulvi Faqir Muhammed. By all accounts, it was growing before the campaign.<sup>154</sup> During the campaign, however, Maulvi Faqir's Bajaur Taliban struggled to sustain their pre-campaign collective action levels. A number of respondents in Bajaur noted that village level recruitment ceased during the campaign.<sup>155</sup> In Nawagai and Khar, the Bajaur Taliban suffered some defections. One respondent said that cadres loyal to commander Pervez and Sheena surrendered to the Bajaur Scouts.<sup>156</sup> In one case, up to 21 militants laid down arms during a jirga of Mamond tribal elders.<sup>157</sup> The most damaging hit for the resistance was the surrender of the faction of Dr. Ismail, the chief of the Bajaur chapter of the Tanzim Nifaz Shariat-e-Muhammadi (TNSM), in Khar.<sup>158</sup> Despite such manpower losses, Maulvi Faqir appears to have retained much of his group's strength by early 2011.<sup>159</sup>

The most serious challenge to the insurgency was its ability to hold on to its bases. Prior to the campaign, the Bajaur Taliban were strongly embedded across the four tehsils of the agency.<sup>160</sup>

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152 Interview Former Bajaur Scouts Official, Islamabad 2016, Interview Tribal Elder, Bajaur Agency 2016

153 Interview Civilian, Karachi 2017

154 Interview Journalist, Peshawar 2016

155 Interview Civilian, Karachi 2017, Interview Tribal Elder, Bajaur Agency 2016

156 Interview Tribal Elder, Bajaur Agency 2016

157 Interview Civilian, Karachi 2017, Interview Tribal Elder, Bajaur Agency 2016

158 Interview Former Bajaur Scouts Official, Islamabad 2016

159 Interview Journalist, Peshawar 2016, Interview Tribal Elder, Bajaur Agency 2016

160 Interview Tribal Elder, Bajaur Agency 2016

Village level organizations had strong coordination with tehsil level groups, which in turn reported to the central leadership under Maulvi Faqir in Damadollah. The Bajaur Taliban maintained offices and *hujras*; they even established a Shari'a court in Sewai village with branches in different parts of Bajaur. But descriptions and information collected strongly suggest that the organizational bases for the three groups saw a systematic rollback of such pre-campaign structures, and major displacement of both leaders and/or rank-and-file to areas outside of the counterinsurgency operations.<sup>161</sup> In the first half of the campaign, major leaders and their fighting groups continued to operate primarily in the areas where they were suspected to have been based at the start of the campaign, Maulvi Faqir operated from Mamund and Wali-ur Rehman from Barang and Pervez from Nawagai.<sup>162</sup> But as the campaign went on, the leaders across different tehsils began to organize well-planned retreats to border areas. Such retreats first came to notice after Maulvi Faqir's faction declared a unilateral ceasefire in February 2009, calling for talks with tribal elders.<sup>163</sup> By mid of July and August, much of the leadership and specialized cadres, according to multiple local sources in contact with the Taliban, had moved from areas of Bajaur Agency to either Mohmand Agency or Afghanistan's Kunar and Nuristan province.<sup>164</sup> It is important to note though that this displacement was organized.

### Case 3: Swat 2009 to 2010

In this section I present the fourth case test. The Swat campaign was a major campaign conducted in the Swat district. It was geared against the Mullah Fazlullah led faction of the

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161 Interview Civilian, Karachi 2017

162 Interview Tribal Elder, Bajaur Agency 2016

163 Reporter 2009

164 Interview Civilians, Karachi 2017, Interview Tribal Elders, Bajaur Agency 2016

Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan. The Pakistan Army grouped the operations conducted during this campaign period as part of the operation Rah-e-Rast II starting late April 2009. I develop this case in six steps. First, I provide the context. Second, I describe the groups involved. Third, I provide values on the key independent variables/alternative explanations. Fourth, I summarize the key predictions of each of these theories. Fifth, I sketch out the outcomes. Sixth, I process trace them.

## Context

In 2005, the Islamist insurgency in Pakistan's North West had spread beyond the tribal areas to the important district of Swat. Swat was a scenic valley, known for its tourism. The local insurgency in the district was distinct though loosely tied to the insurgents in the tribal areas. It was led by a local cleric by the name of Mullah Fazlullah.<sup>165</sup> Like Baitullah Mehsud, Fazlullah led a sizable faction of the Taliban in the Swat valley. Pakistan moved military troops to the region, undertaking operations from 2006 to 2009. In this period, Fazlullah's faction continued to aggressively bleed the Pakistanis.

The Taliban's ascent in Swat tremendously worried the Pakistani political elite in Islamabad. Some argue, including a former Military Intelligence official, that it worried them more than the insurgent pressures in the tribal belt.<sup>166</sup> While the tribal area was seen as far and distant, Swat was considered a part of mainland Pakistan. The initial reaction to the insurgency was that the insurgents were an aggrieved party -- reflecting the demand for justice -- that ought to be

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165 Basit 2013, 85-86

166 Interview Former Senior Military Intelligence Official, Peshawar 2016

fulfilled.<sup>167</sup> Peacemaking and politics ensued. In 2008, the military released Mullah Sufi Muhammed, an important cleric and father-in-law of Fazlullah, to appease the Swat Taliban.<sup>168</sup> But the Taliban continued with their sabotage and the Pakistani military largely struggled to locate or target the Taliban. In this period, the Swat Taliban were especially vicious in their targeting of schools. More than 400 schools for girls were destroyed in the region.<sup>169</sup>

In the first quarter of 2009, the provincial government with the backing of the then Army chief Ashfaq Kayani undertook negotiations with Sufi Muhammed for a peace deal with the Taliban.<sup>170</sup> Sufi agreed to a peace deal. On reaching Swat, Sufi addressed his followers at a place called Maidan, where he turned on his commitment.<sup>171</sup> Instead of offering a peace deal, he struck a secessionist note. He declared Swat to be a territory under Shariah law, and rejected the Pakistani constitution. The Pakistanis military seethed at this turn of events.<sup>172</sup>

It was in this backdrop that the campaign in Swat from July 2009 to June 2011 took place. The campaign was supervised by the 11 Corps under General Masood Aslam. However, given that this was a nontraditional area of operations, the local commander of the newly pulled in 37 division, Major General Sajjad Ghani was the de-facto in charge of the campaign for the first few months; following his tenure, General Ashfaq Nadeem was appointed in-charge of the counterinsurgency force.

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167 Siddique 2014, 121, Interview District Official, Swat Valley 2016

168 Siddique 2014, 120-121

169 Yousufzai 2013, Hussain 2010, 5

170 Interview Journalist, Peshawar 2016

171 Interview Journalist, Peshawar 2016

172 Interview Journalist, Peshawar 2016, Interview Former Senior Military Intelligence Official, Peshawar 2016

## Group Involved

The insurgency in Swat was dominated by one group, the Swat Taliban. The insurgency was led by Mullah Fazlullah. Fazlullah was a firebrand cleric from Imamdheri, a town in the North West region of the Swat valley, better known as the son-in-law of a veteran political activist and one-time rebel leader, Maulana Sufi Muhammed. Sufi was the chief of his organization, the Tehreek-e- Nifaz-e-Shariat-e-Muhammadi (TNSM).<sup>173</sup> In the 1990s, Maulana Sufi Muhammad, broke from his parent political organization, the Jamaat-e-Islami to support Hizb-e-Islami of Engineer Hikmatyar in Afghanistan. Later, he founded and expanded the TNSM across the Swat valley, before calling for a rebellion against the Pakistani state. After a combination of military action and negotiations, Sufi Muhammed called off the jihad.

Following 9/11, Sufi Muhammed, this time with the help of Fazlullah, made another call for jihad to support the Afghan Taliban against the Americans. As one local leader noted, “After the 9/11 there were clear instructions from Afghan Taliban to not send manpower as they had decided the strategy of retreat in the wake of strong offensive from US and its allies. But Sufi, unfazed by the Taliban warning, gathered through his fiery speeches around 10,000 people, majority from Dir, and crossed the border to Afghanistan, where the situation was not welcoming for them.”<sup>174</sup> Sufi’s small militia met a fateful end. Caught off guard in a foreign territory by a rampant force of the Northern Alliance, Sufi’s fighting cadres turned out to be sitting ducks. Thousands of dead bodies were brought to different parts of Dir, which turned the people of Dir against Sufi. Sufi and Fazlullah managed to come back to Pakistan but were arrested and jailed.

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<sup>173</sup> Basit 2013, 85-86

<sup>174</sup> Interview Civilian, Swat Valley 2017

On his release from the jail, Fazlullah sought to reactivate the unfinished business of jihad by reviving the activists and grassroots organization of his father-in-law. Fazlullah set up a *madrassah* and *markaz*, a sort of head-quarter, at Imam Dheri where he also started an FM Radio station.<sup>175</sup> Fazlullah made a variety of political demands, ranging from implementation of Shariah to change in Swat's judicial system.

The latter struck a popular note with many in the valley. Until the 1960s, Swat had enjoyed the status of a special territory within mainland Pakistan, administered not as per the constitution of the country but through an ad-hoc local system with its own land record rules and judiciary under the local ruler, called the Wali of Swat.<sup>176</sup> In the 1970s, the government of Pakistan changed Swat's status and extended civil law to the region, which changed the status of many land holding people and left claims on lands and other disputes unfished for a significant chunk of the population. This remained a simmering source of resentment in the region.

Fazlullah saw in this a political opportunity. He started offering parallel judicial and enforcement mechanisms. Later, he made explicit calls of vanquishing the state's "corrupt, broken, rigged judicial system."<sup>177</sup> Concurrently, he became more aggressive in proselytizing the Wahabi variant of Islam through his pulpit and the FM radio. He would openly discourage girls from being sent to school, listening to music and watching TV. His base kept becoming more and more radical. The class-angle of his platform helped with the mobilization: "Fazlullah was especially critical of the well-off or Khawaneen (plural of Khan) and informed/literate, who were

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175 Interview Civilian, Swat Valley 2017

176 Interview District Official, Swat Valley 2016

177 Interview District Official, Swat Valley 2016

mostly from the Yousufzais. Thus, the lower strata of the population, especially the Gujjars who were the majority in the valley and rural farmers and laborers, saw in him and his movement a chance to get emancipation from the clutches of the upper class.”<sup>178</sup>

## Independent Variables

I first characterize the campaign in terms of the key independent variables, representing the alternative explanations, group type, force level, and hearts-and-minds. I then characterize the campaign in terms of the proposed independent variable for the theory under consideration, i.e. L&S.

## Group Type

The insurgent groups targeted in the campaign were a strong type according to the operationalization I propose. Three features are important to note. First, the Swat Taliban had ample support from the social bases across the Swat region. As noted above, Swat had a long history of class dispute; the population was divided across two social groups, the Gujjars and the Yousufzais.<sup>179</sup> These class divisions formed the master cleavage of the conflict. The movement’s local embeddedness revolved around this class division. Fazlullah was able to very quickly activate and draw from the rural countryside of the valley and integrate important leaders, clans, and families into his movement.<sup>180</sup>

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178 Interview Civilian, Swat Valley 2017

179 Interview Civilian, Swat Valley 2017

180 Interview Journalist, Peshawar 2016

Second, Fazlullah turned the Swat Taliban into a highly organized and institutionalized group in a short period of time.<sup>181</sup> Fazlullah formed a consultative council -- *Shura* -- comprised of around 40 local leaders to advise him on military and political matters, which latter increased to 55.<sup>182</sup> Different *Shura* members were in charge of different fighting units across the valley. According to a former activist, “The fighting units were clearly divided into foot soldiers, prospective suicide bombers, trainers, and special commando cells.”<sup>183</sup> One prominent fighting unit -- which was source of much awe and fear in the valley -- was the “Shaheen force” which had around 500 fighters.<sup>184</sup> The *Shura* also supervised a moral police force responsible for imposing the Quranic injunction of “Amar Bil Maroof wa Nahi Anel Munkir,” which translates to enjoining good and forbidding evil.

Third, Fazlullah used experienced military professionals who had fought alongside his father-in-law, Sufi Muhammad. Thus, the recruitment drew on veteran fighters and activists of Jamaat-e-Islami and the TNSM.<sup>185</sup> Multiple respondents mentioned that many of the fighters, trainers, and influential local chiefs across the valley had experience from their days either in the Afghan jihad or the Pakistani state sponsored jihad of Kashmir.<sup>186</sup> The *shura* called upon some notable activists like Sirajuddin, who had been associated with the anti-India Jaish-e-Muhammad of Maulana Masood Azhar. Another prominent activist was Muslim Khan, a former political activist and notable student leader with the Peoples party who had turned to the TNSM.

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181 Based on interviews Swat Valley

182 Interview Journalist, Karachi 2016

183 Interview Taliban Activist, Karachi 2017

184 Interview Taliban Activist, Karachi 2017

185 Interview Taliban Activist, Karachi 2017

186 Interview Journalist, Karachi 2016

## Force Level

The numerical balance in Swat suggests that the force level was favorable to the Pakistan Army.

To undertake this calculation, I use two estimates of the counterinsurgency force through interviews. On the low end, the Army deployed around 44 units of regular infantry and Frontier Corps across the nine tehsils of the Swat valley, which totals to 35200 troops.<sup>187</sup> On the high end, the Army deployed a total of 52000 soldiers. These troops were organized under two infantry division formations, one based out of Shangla, the other one based out of Mingora. Credible estimates of insurgent strength remain elusive. On the low end, multiple respondents reported that Fazlullah's faction was around 3000 fighters.<sup>188</sup> On the high end, according to civilian respondents from Imam Dheri, the core fighting strength of the group consisted of 2000 fighters from Peochar valley and another 3000 from areas adjoining Charbagh and Kabal.<sup>189</sup>

Given these numbers, the following ratios emerge.

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187 Interview Former Senior Military Official, Islamabad 2017

188 Interview Journalist, Peshawar 2016, Interview Former Senior Military Intelligence Official, Peshawar 2016

189 Interview Civilian, Swat Valley 2017

**TABLE 32: SUMMARY OF FORCE LEVEL INDICATORS SWAT 2009-2011**

	Swat
Counterinsurgency Force -- High	52000
Counterinsurgency Force -- Low Estimate	35200
Insurgency High	3000
Insurgency Low	5000
Area of Active Insurgency in Square Kilometers	5367
Population	1257602
Force to Area (Soldiers/Square Kilometer) -- Low	6.56
Force to Area (Soldiers/Square Kilometer) -- High	9.69
Force to Population (Soldiers/1000 Civilians) -- Low	27.99
Force to Population (Soldiers/1000 Civilians) -- High	41.35
Force to Insurgents -- Low/Low	7
Force to Insurgents -- Low/High	10
Force to Insurgents -- High/Low	12
Force to Insurgents -- High/High	17

First, the force to insurgency ratio ranges from 7 to 1 to 17 to 1; much of the range is clearly above the benchmark of 10 to 1. Second, the troop density ratio, also called the force to population ratio, was roughly around 28 to 41 per 1000 residents. This number is suggesting parity relative to the benchmark level. Third, the force to space ratio was roughly around 6.6 to 9.7 per square kilometer -- which is significantly higher than the benchmark of 1.2 popular in accounts on counterinsurgency and manpower.

On balance, given that two ratios suggest a clear advantage and one ratio is agnostic, I conclude the Pakistani force levels as being high enough to merit an advantage in the campaign.

Hearts-and-minds

The Swat campaign like its predecessor campaign saw some attempt at compliance with a hearts-and-minds strategy. Four features are important to note on where it fell short.

First, senior military leadership gave ample leeway to local commanders to deploy heavy firepower. The 37 Division -- which directed the operation -- was inducted into the campaign by General Kayani after failure of the April peace deal. The peace deal greatly embarrassed the military leadership. "Vowing to "eliminate" the Taliban", the military leadership was comfortable with the use of heavy firepower and high intensity raids, especially in the first half of the campaign.<sup>190</sup> Air power was called in early in the campaign; it was used extensively in the initial few months; after the first years, its use became much more sporadic. In addition, light and medium artillery units were deployed and positioned to provide suppressive fire in case of advancing forces in the first half of the campaign. Once the population returned, the military continued to resort to conventional infantry assets like mortar and light artillery, especially in the rural areas of Babuzai, Matta, and Charbagh.<sup>191</sup>

Second, the Army resorted to forceful coercive displacement to create free-fire zones. In the last week of April, the military started announcing that civilians need to start evacuating parts of the Swat valley from various areas of operation. Thus, civilians were compelled to leave their homes, a majority of whom were accommodated in refugee camps.<sup>192</sup> The government estimated that a total of 329,792 families were displaced from their homes.<sup>193</sup> According to the Human

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190 Interview Former Senior Military Official, Islamabad 2017

191 Interview Former Senior Military Intelligence Official, Peshawar 2016

192 Yousufzai 2013

193 Malik 2009

Rights Watch: “[The] military operation triggered a massive displacement crisis as some two million civilians fled the fighting to adjoining districts.”<sup>194</sup>

Third, the military extensively resorted to torture, extra-judicial killings, and arbitrary detentions during the course of the campaign. In October 2009, the US Ambassador noted in a cable that “A growing body of evidence is lending credence to allegations of human rights abuses by Pakistan security forces during domestic operations against terrorists in Malakand Division.”<sup>195</sup> Civilian respondents and human rights organizations saw the counterinsurgency forces as engaged in arbitrary executions.<sup>196</sup> Many civilian respondents interviewed also mentioned the military’s high handedness towards families of insurgents.<sup>197</sup> One human rights report voiced a similar concern about victimization of families of insurgents: “Punishing people because their family members may be militants has become rampant in the Swat Valley.”<sup>198</sup> The campaign also saw frequent bouts of collective punishment.<sup>199</sup> The military was not the only actor employing targeting tactics which were hurting the civilian population. Local police, revived in early half of the campaign, was also said to be equally complicit: “NWFP Police have also been implicated in the abuse and extra-judicial killing of terrorist suspects that they believe responsible for attacks on police stations and individuals in the run-up to the conflict.”<sup>200</sup>

Fourth, this counterinsurgency campaign was widely perceived as being indiscriminate in its targeting. Civilian elites from the region and former administrators of Swat contended that the

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194 Watch 2010, 333

195 Patterson 2009

196 Multiple interviews Swat and Karachi, 2016/2017, Patterson 2009

197 Multiple interviews Swat and Karachi, 2016/2017, Patterson 2009

198 Watch 2010b

199 Watch 2010b

200 Patterson 2009

military was in the “mood to punish.”<sup>201</sup> In the second half of the campaign, collective punishment became common. Often, in villages and urban areas, the houses of those who were said to have supported the insurgency were torched.<sup>202</sup> Military’s establishment of defensive positions, patrols, and check points engendered extreme anxiety. Multiple residents contended that military presence meant that attacks were more likely so they approached the local commanders to move the positions. “We were never included instead we were always disrespected every time we tried to speak to the local commander,” one respondent added.<sup>203</sup>

It is notable that the campaign saw one civilian well-being measure instituted: provision of cash grant to the displaced population. By late 2009, “the government had so far disbursed cash grant worth Rs 5.75 billion among 222810 families through visa cards.”<sup>204</sup>

## L&S

The Pakistani counterinsurgency force attained high L&S in the campaign. Pakistan Army’s degree of legibility of the population through the course of the campaign was considerable. In Swat, the military worked with pre-existing legibility infrastructure unlike in the three other campaigns. In addition to the pre-existing infrastructure, it also implemented a legibility project like it did in no other campaign. The Army also massively improved its human and technical intelligence collection infrastructure in the region. Four features of the legibility infrastructure are important to note.

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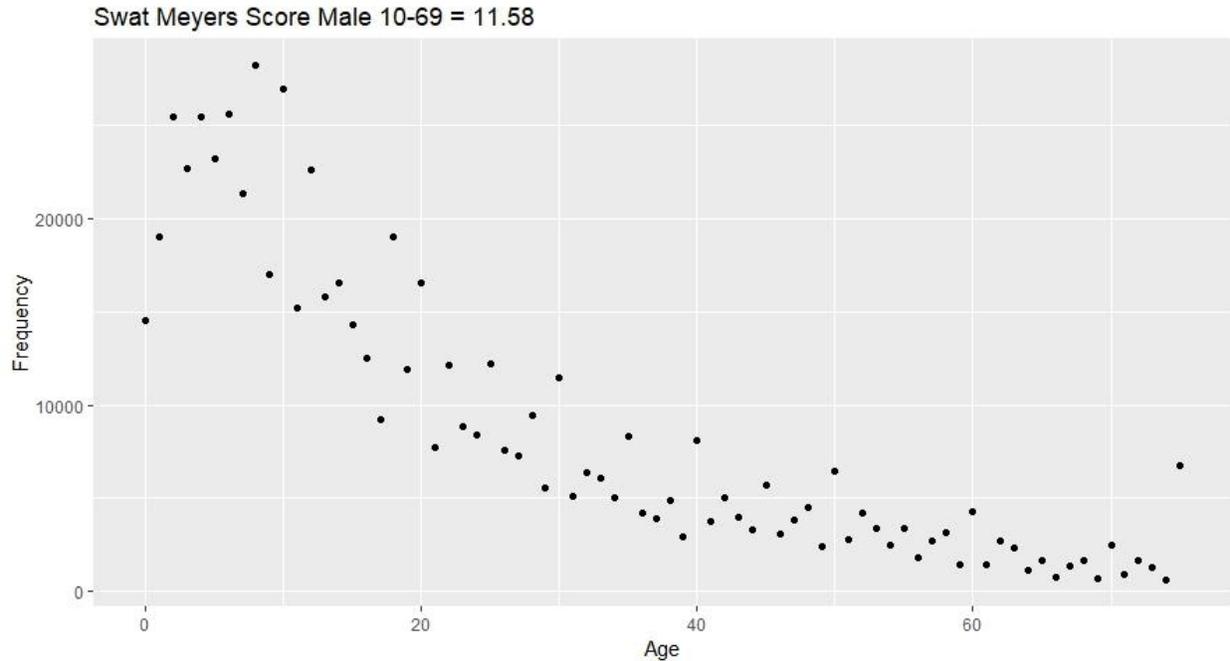
201 Interview District Official, Swat Valley 2016, Watch 2010B

202 Interview Civilian, Swat Valley 2017

203 Interview Civilian, Swat Valley 2017

204 Malik 2009

First, the Pakistani state capacity, specifically as captured by the state's knowledge of the civilian population, in the region was high. Unlike the tribal areas, Swat was the part of mainland Pakistan and thus had the Pakistani state's regular administrative and policing infrastructure reaching into all areas. Whereas there were no police stations in the pre-insurgency era in any of the districts of the tribal areas, Swat was different. Until 2008, it had 9 police stations, which were charged with keeping crime and criminal records, lists of local political and religious leaders at the risk of subversion, and a general knowledge on law and order situation. The region fell in the purview of the then North West Frontier Province's government, which managed relatively robust land records, issued birth and marriage certificates, and kept records of ownership of vehicles. This penetration of the Pakistani state and its relative legibility in the pre-insurgency era is reflected in the Meyers score of the Swat district from the 1998 census. As shown in the figure, the Meyers score for Swat's male population aged 10 to 69 comes to around 11.58. In absolute terms, a score closer to zero suggests less age in-accuracy, and plausibly reflects reasonable informational capacity of the state.



**FIGURE 10: CENSUS AGE DISTRIBUTION FOR SWAT DISTRICT 1998 CENSUS**

Second, the Army built on the pre-existing capacity to establish a dynamic population record program to distinguish those with and without ties to the insurgency. Three kinds of registration programs were leveraged. First, the military organized its own elaborate registration program. As the population was evicted, the military mandated that all civilian population leaving the area register. When the population returned, the same set of people were asked to re-register. Identification papers were provided to all members of the population, which were then used by local police stations from the area to sort between those individuals who presented high risk. These population records were regularly updated, and the leads generated were brought under surveillance. Second, the population monitoring apparatus of the NWFP Police was also revived. Early in the campaign, police stations across the district were expanded and modernized.<sup>205</sup> By end of 2009, the number of Police Stations in Swat was increased from 9 to 16; by 2011, there

<sup>205</sup> Interview District Official, Swat Valley 2016

were 17.<sup>206</sup> The Police was tasked with creating detailed dossiers on the civilian population, lists of potential assailants, and suspect civilians requiring surveillance operations across the tehsils of Swat.<sup>207</sup> Third, the military made it mandatory for all citizens to possess the national identity card to either enter or move around the valley.<sup>208</sup> The national identity card registration service collected a trove of information, including phone number, addresses, parental and sibling information, as well as biometric information like finger prints. Given that movement from all major exit and entry points into the valley was heavily regulated, even the insurgents had to acquire the national identity card if they did not have it and register with the local military authorities, which started leaving behind important cues for forensics and intelligence analysis in later stages of the campaign.<sup>209</sup>

That such registration immensely surged, giving the counterinsurgent forces high degree of legibility, is evident from the data on the number of people registered by the political administration of Swat before and during the counterinsurgency campaign.<sup>210</sup> This registration carried records on names, family, tribe, address, phone numbers, photograph, and biometric information like finger prints. By the end of 2009, when the campaign under consideration had already started, around 125K people in the population were registered. In 2010, the registration surged further, crossing 190K. Compared to 2008, when the population registration was at 55K a year, the 2009 and 2010 registration increases were significant.

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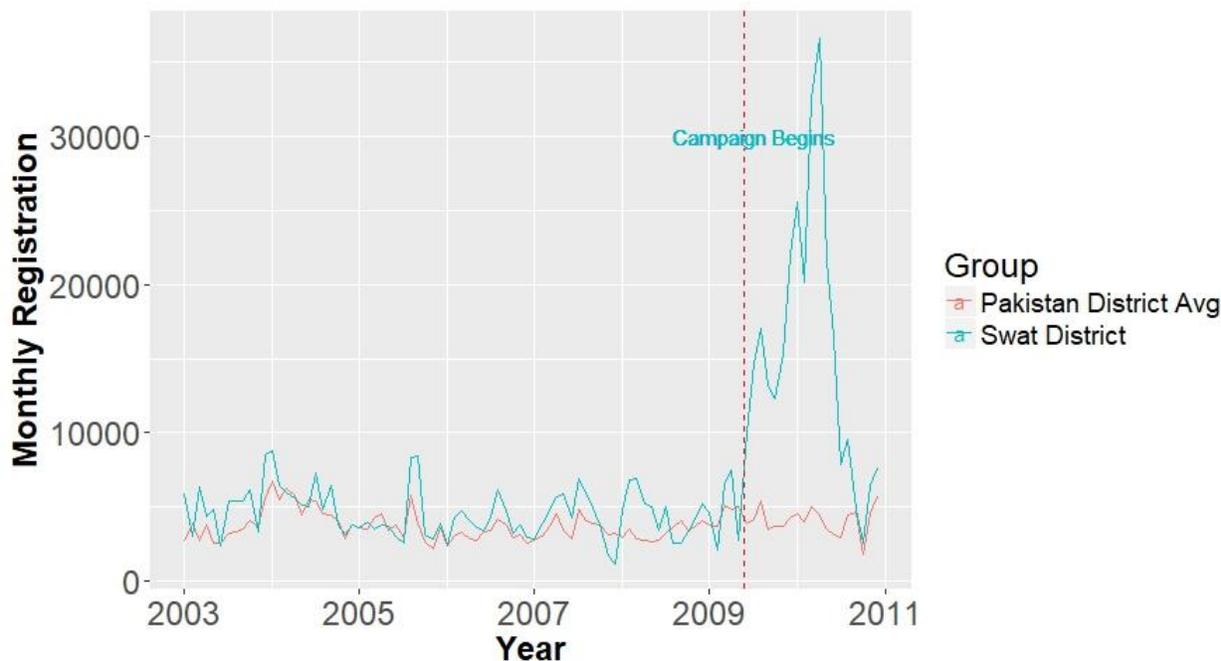
206 Pakistan Statistical Yearbook 2015

207 Interview District Official, Swat Valley 2016, Interview Former Senior Military Official, Islamabad 2017

208 Interview Civilian, Swat Valley 2017

209 Interview Civilian, Swat Valley 2017

210 Source: Registrar General of Pakistan



**FIGURE 11: SWAT REGISTRATION LEVEL**

Third, the counterinsurgent forces devoted considerable attention to developing a robust human intelligence system. The 37th division quickly integrated the intelligence tentacles of the three agencies in the area -- the ISI, Army's Military Intelligence (MI), and the federal government's Intelligence Bureau (IB) -- to establish regular and occasional sources. Operationalized under the divisional intelligence committee (DIC) and brigade intelligence committees (BIC), the intelligence infrastructure was by far the most well-funded intelligence operation in the region. These intelligence assets were supplemented by the Army's tactical intelligence and survey units integrated into kinetic components, which were assigned the role of interrogation of arrested insurgent cadres. This was a break from earlier campaigns, where most of the arrested insurgent cadres were allocated between different intelligence agencies. Both the DIC and BICs were given backing and financial capital to run a flipping program. Low ranking elements of the TTP were offered cash rewards to defect and assurances of amnesty.

Fourth, around this time much of the intelligence equipment procurements were beginning to come online. The Pakistan Army had been attempting to procure more assets to upgrade its interception capability at the tactical level for a period of time. Three kinds of upgrades were witnessed. First, the Army equipped its ground forces with abundant VHF-plotting assets -- both fixed and hand-held -- to locate signal transmitting devices. Second, more than half of the ISI's domestic phone interception capability under the ISI-T division was diverted towards Swat. Third, the Pakistanis drew own aerial intelligence support from the Americans as well as their own surveillance. The US government provided extensive feed from its unmanned aerial vehicles to identify and locate targets.

On the dimension of speed of exploitation, Pakistani deployment patterns, organizational practices, and technological availability meet the criteria of high speed. Four features are important to note.

First, the counterinsurgency leaders enjoyed a bureaucratic structure which would rapidly process, share, and disseminate legibility gains from all available source. Abundant analytical resources of the ISI, Army's MI, Swat Police, and the federal government's IB were channeled towards Swat; new officers were hired; intelligence officials of Swat origin were sent to Swat. These intelligence agencies extensively cooperated under the leadership of General Sajjad Ghani. All agencies were tasked with swiftly collating information leads, ensuring sharing and dissemination through the divisional intelligence committee (DIC) and brigade intelligence committees (BIC).

Second, the counterinsurgency developed bases to ensure rapid deployment across the district. Like in Bajaur, the Swat campaign saw the military establishing a vast network of defensive positions within the first 6 months of the campaign. The military created a “vast and interlocking network of forward bases and check points: with a sizable strength of personnel to react to available information leads.”<sup>211</sup> The Police also deployed in a spread-out decentralized fashion. The Police’s rapid reaction deployment drew upon its 16 stations and 24 Police *chowkies* across the district.<sup>212</sup>

Third, the campaign had ample aerial mobility support. Swat saw the Army’s aviation command shifting most of its aviation fleet geared toward conventional operations against India to the aviation base in Tarbela. Some assets from the air patrol of 20 gunship helicopters at the Peshawar Forward Operating Base, initially deployed to support the forces in Bajaur, were redirected towards Swat. In addition, according to an Aviation officer from the period, 30+ were mobilized for Swat alone. The officer in-charge added that the aerial support undertook regular daily aerial patrols for over 14 months. The Aviation commander from the period noted that “Helicopters accompanied raiding forces on short notices -- often raiding forces of the size of a section (14 men) -- until winter of 2009.”<sup>213</sup>

Fourth, the Swat campaign was a highly decentralized campaign, second only to Bajaur 2008-2010. The 37<sup>th</sup> division had been hastily inducted into the theatre; the Shangla based formation was also recently drawn in. The Peshawar based Corps never centralized the operational

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211 Interview Former Senior Military Official, Islamabad 2017

212 Pakistan Statistical Yearbook 2015

213 Interview Islamabad

planning and intelligence related decision making in Swat as it did in other areas of the tribal belt.<sup>214</sup> This lent the operational commanders in Swat abundant political latitude on integrating the various agencies in the region, and undertaking targeting actions.

### Prediction

The variables representing the two alternative theories, group type and hearts-and-minds theories, suggest that the 2009-2010 Swat campaign should have failed. The Army's campaign was very challenging for the civilian population, which engendered deep and widespread anger. On the other hand, the insurgency had strong local roots, an ample base of support, and a well institutionalized organization. Both these factors can be argued to be invaluable aid to the insurgency. If the force level view or the new theory's L&S mattered, this was also a clear-cut case of effectiveness.

**TABLE 33: PREDICTION OF PAKISTAN CASE 3**

IVs of Interest	Coding	Implication for Effectiveness
Insurgency type	Strong	Ineffective
Force Size	Advantage	Effective
L&S	High L&S	Effective
Hearts-and-minds	Not Followed	Ineffective

### Outcome

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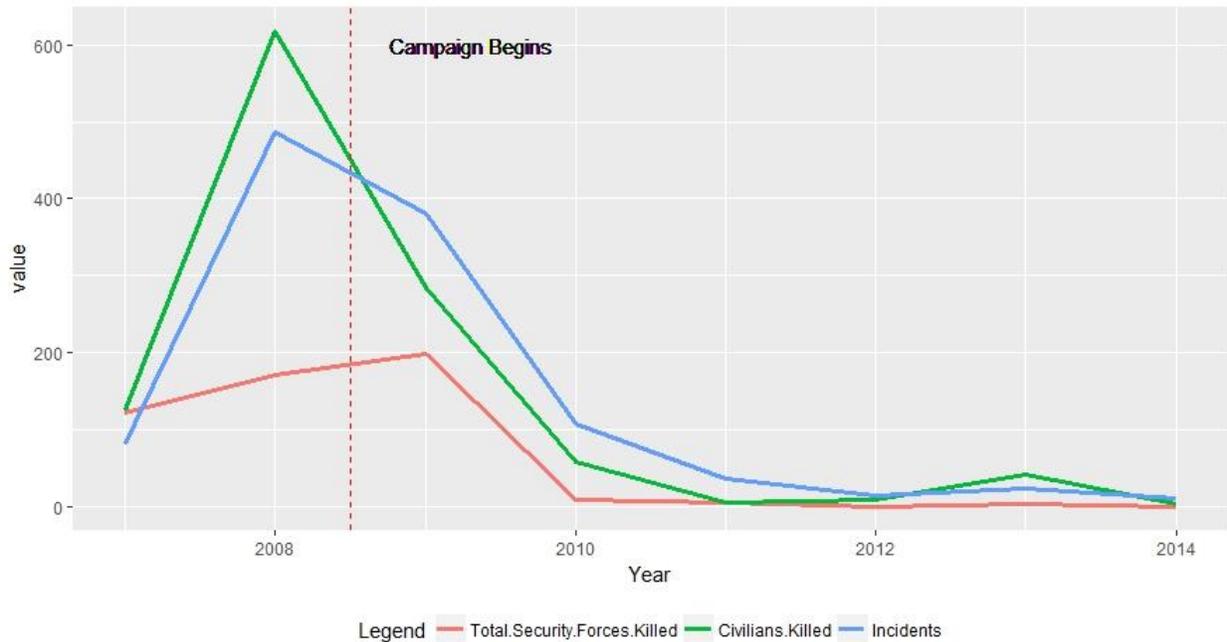
214 Interview Former Senior Military Official, Islamabad 2017

As I show from hereon, the campaign outcome conforms to the prediction of the new theory: The Swat campaign was effective. Three data points suggest this outcome. First, the operational capability of the insurgency appears to have taken a major hit. Across the regions of Kanju, Charbagh, Matta, and Kabal, the insurgency had established a vast paraphernalia of training centers, “marakaz” to store and distribute weapons, ammunitions, and explosives, a fleet of “Non-Custom Paid” cars, and units of anti-aircrafts guns. The units of *Shaheen Force* – Swat’s Taliban’s special guerrilla force -- similarly trained and recruited cadres from centers and safehouses, in addition to maintaining IED factories and suicide bomb training schools. However, by all available accounts, by early 2010 this capability had been devastated by Pakistani security forces. The insurgents were not able to maintain any of their old safehouses; no respondent offered any specific detail on any new safe haven or facility of the insurgency for the late 2010 and early 2011 period.

I cross-check the operational capability by checking it against another indicator of the insurgency’s operational capability: levels of violence. I rely on violence event data to proxy for operational capability. I use data on political violence in the FATA region obtained from an incident-level dataset compiled by the Pakistan Institute of Peace Studies and narrow it down to Swat.<sup>215</sup>

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215 PIPS 2014



**FIGURE 12: VIOLENCE IN SWAT**

The data suggests that whereas the pre-campaign period saw extensive violence, the post campaign period corresponded with substantial drop in insurgent violence, as measured by incidents and casualties of security forces and civilians. To be sure, on its own levels of violence are hard to interpret. As an important body of scholarship notes, a decline in violence can represent a case of military victory of the insurgents or a political agreement between state forces and insurgents.<sup>216</sup> Thus, the drop in violence needs to be interpreted in tandem with details on insurgent basing and collective action trajectories to be certain on what the drop in violence is reflecting.

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216 Kalyvas and Kocher 2009, Staniland 2017

Second, the Swat Taliban's collective action appears to have fallen apart during the course of the campaign. Multiple respondents from among civilians, Taliban activists, and security officials noted that the campaign detrimentally damaged the recruitment activities and manpower of the insurgency. In early 2009, the Swat Taliban had a fighting force of around 10000. With the onset of the campaign, the fighting force rapidly began to thin out. There was a massive wave of middle-tier commanders and foot soldier level defections, many fleeing to Karachi, while a significant fraction surrendered to the Pakistani military.<sup>217</sup> Throughout the course of the campaign, large surrenders of Taliban fighters took place across the Swat valley. In the regions of Charbagh, Khwaza Khela, and Imam Dheri, individual cells and complete units -- such as those of the Shaheen Force -- surrendered to the Pakistani forces in autumn and winter of 2009 initially, and then on a nearly monthly basis throughout 2010.<sup>218</sup> As per one source, the surrendered members of the insurgency were more than 1500.<sup>219</sup>

Third, the Swat Taliban were uprooted from their organizational bases.<sup>220</sup> One respondent noted that much of the rank-and-file of the Swat Taliban were compelled to abandon their pre-campaign bases and villages within the first six to eight months of the campaign. Another respondent noted that mid-level commanders attempted organized evacuation from Charbagh, Khwaza Khela, and Imam Dheri regions, but failed to achieve it. Fazlullah and his close coterie of fighters managed flight. After that Shah Duran and Muslim Khan were all compelled to relocate from Imam Dheri area of the valley. Despite attempts to maintain coherence, the fleeing

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217 Interview Civilian, Swat Valley 2017

218 Interview Civilian, Swat Valley 2017

219 Interview Civilian, Swat Valley 2017

220 Interview Civilian, Swat Valley 2017

cadres dispersed and fragmented. This process was exacerbated by deserting mid-level commanders, which led to various rank-and-file trickling out of the organization piecemeal.

## Mechanisms

The combined weight of the indicators conforms to observables of an effective campaign under the new theory. An alternative account of force levels predicts an effective campaign as well. From here-on, I check what mechanism drove the outcomes of changes in operational profile, collective action, and organizational basing, comparing the theoretical arguments of the new theory with the closest alternative argument of Force Level.

The Swat campaign took place under unique domestic political circumstances. The civilian government and the Army had failed at deal making. The Army made much fuss about the failure -- arguing that they had given a chance to the insurgents but the insurgents had larger ambitions. This gave the Army ample political capital to undertake a highly involved legibility campaign. Army Chief Ashfaq Kayani designed a highly coercive campaign. He gave the command of the region to a new commander, Sajjad Ghani, and placed all the intelligence and organizational paraphernalia under him. Kayani also approved an unprecedented population relocation and registration program. All of this political capital raised the stakes for the local commanders involved. According to a senior military operations officer from the period, knowing that “the Army chief is looking at you and that a failure here meant there was nowhere to hide, put the GOCs under incredible pressure.”<sup>221</sup> In previous years incurring casualties meant

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221 Interview Islamabad, 2016

that careers might be upended but herein the pressure was intense. The division operating in Swat had been berated intensely, charged for cowardice and poor leadership, and letting the insurgents go.

There was also an element of leadership: Sajjad Ghani was said to be an aggressive commander. Some respondents said he was ambitious and believed in his force's ability to attrite the Taliban. According to one respondent, "He wanted to destroy the entire organization of the Swat Taliban and not just hold territory and lines of communication."<sup>222</sup> When I asked a senior officer if that was the operational strategy, he said, "I don't understand the logic of population security, which Americans would lecture us on. I would ask them, "What have you achieved with your theories in Afghanistan and Iraq?"<sup>223</sup> I told them I only understand destruction of the enemy."<sup>224</sup> This remark was in contrast to the operational goals mentioned by two other important Pakistani counterinsurgency commanders of the period for Bajaur and Waziristan. In interviews, both mentioned the US military doctrine inspired view of "Clear, Hold, and Build" as being central to their operational conduct.<sup>225</sup> A senior Waziristan commander noted: "You can't kill your way to victory." But the Swat based military differed, arguing: "Unless you attrite them, they [the insurgents] can make it very difficult to hold territory."<sup>226</sup>

Thus, in Swat, the Army put in place a highly integrated bureaucratic apparatus, which generated abundant legitimacy leads. In turn, the Army exploited the legitimacy gains rapidly to generate

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222 Interview Peshawar, 2015

223 Interview Islamabad, 2016

224 Interview Islamabad, 2016

225 Interview Islamabad and DI Khan, 2016

226 Interview Islamabad, 2016

more leads and/or to decapitate the insurgency. This was easier in the first two months, when the civilian population had vacated the area; firepower could be called in rapidly without any regard to the population. Once the population returned, the military was careful but still prevailed with use of high intensity raids backed by aviation. Within the intelligence bureaucracy, the military routinized a clock-work like system of monitoring the population to identify and locate insurgent rank-and-file. According to a senior commander of the forces, the Brigade Intelligence Committee and Division Intelligence committee generated high quality intelligence from technical surveillance, sifting through records of population in villages, and interrogations of arrested/surrendered cadres. The senior commander also mentioned a phone tip line created to facilitate the flow of information, but assessed that “we got very little” from the tip lines.<sup>227</sup> Instead, the commander noted that “ISI’s phone tracing” and the maintenance of population “ledgers to maintain head count through village defense committees” was much more useful in knowing who it is that “we need to be looking for.”<sup>228</sup>

What did high L&S do to the insurgency? A close scrutiny of organizational dynamics with the onset of the campaign closely track those of the new theory. Almost immediately, much of the internal ties of the Swat Taliban came under extreme stress. Not only were the mid-level leaders and rank-and-file frequently killed, cells and factions were rapidly cutoff from their senior commanders. For example, Shah Duran, the key lieutenant of the Swat Taliban in the region, learnt that his mid-level factions had been exposed to the Pakistani military. “He took refuge first in Buner [an adjoining district from Swat], cut-off from his sub-commanders, before being killed,” according to a civilian respondent from the village of Imam Dheri which was once the

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227 Interview Islamabad, 2016

228 Interview Islamabad, 2016

head-quarter of the Swat Taliban. The cadres left behind were left with both lack of direction and an inability to undertake organized concealment. The Army kept hitting the various cells of Kanju, Kabal, and Imamdheri, because of which the various cells had weapons, ammunition, and explosive material shortages. Despite attempts by various cells to reinforce their dwindling strength, senior commanders remained unavailable, and other known junior cadres were beyond reach. This caused chaos in the remaining cadres, which too either began to surrender or flee to avenues of safety.

The political salience which facilitated a restructuring of the security bureaucracies also brought with it abundant resources, specifically in the form of manpower. Much of it was regular infantry, often lacking local language ability. Did it, if at all, contribute to the final outcome of the campaign? It is challenging to nail the role of the manpower variable alone even with fine-grained data. Part of the problem is that most works on counterinsurgency manpower imply logics, as opposed to delineating them precisely. Thus, they are difficult to falsify. Still, I look for two logics which have been used to relate manpower to effectiveness. First, it may be suggested that the surge in manpower allowed the Pakistani military to provide security to the insurgency torn tehsils of the valley. Doing so solved what can be called the balloon squeezing problem common to counterinsurgency operations. That is, military action in one place displaces insurgent forces to the other areas. More troops -- spread out across theatres -- can prevent this problem. They can prevent the return of insurgents, act as deterrents, and sustain security gains. A second force level logic -- which dovetails with a hearts-and-minds argument -- would imply that force level preponderance allowed for assignment of abundant security forces to civilian security roles. Some such theories imply that abundant forces can be pushed out among the

population and tasked with protecting civilians. Such civilians can in-turn provide information at best or at least be prevented from being coerced by the insurgency.

My fieldwork evidence supports the first logic and not the second one. The influx of troops prevented any kind of ballooning from happening; it is clear that the under-pressure insurgents had very little in terms of obvious space within Swat to evade the Pakistani counterinsurgency force. Multiple civilian respondents who remained in touch with Taliban personnel that the mere presence of Pakistani forces in every tehsil of Swat was a deterrent.<sup>229</sup> On the other hand, it is unclear how the second logic might explain the organizational breakdown of the insurgents. The only pathway is the one implied by hearts-and-mind argument, which suggests civilian security leading to surge in civilians informing on the insurgency. I found no evidence of the increase in force level altering civilian calculus on informing on the Taliban. As per one Pakistani military source, there was no meaningful increase in flow of tips from civilians. Multiple respondents from Kanju, Kabal, and Imamdheri noted that much of the civilian population did not support the insurgents, but they also remained reluctant to support the military.<sup>230</sup> Some respondents noted that informing was replete with risks of reprisals: “Some (informants) were targeted by the Taliban after they gave information to the Army.”<sup>231</sup> Thus, the military prioritized its funded human intelligence, interrogation program, and technical intelligence programs to locate the insurgency.

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229 Interviews Swat, 2017

230 Interviews Swat, 2017

231 Interview Civilian, Swat Valley 2017

What, then, should we make of this evidence? One plausible explanation is that the L&S capacities were sufficient on their own; there is a lot of evidence aligning with implications of L&S. An alternative view can be that L&S and force level interacted to produce the outcome that we see. There is some support for at least one logic of the force level variable. Unfortunately, the process tracing evidence doesn't allow us to arbitrate between these two possibilities.

#### Case 4: South Waziristan 2009 to 2011

In this section I present the second Pakistan case. The October 2009 to October 2011 Waziristan campaign was a major campaign conducted in four tehsils of the South Waziristan Agency. It was geared against the Mehsud faction of the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan. The Pakistan Army grouped the operations conducted as part of the Operation Rah-e-Nijat, launched in October 2009. I develop this case in six steps. First, I provide the context. Second, I describe the groups involved. Third, I provide values on the key independent variables/alternative explanations. Fourth, I summarize the predictions of each of these theories. Fifth, I sketch out the outcomes.

#### Context

By 2009 the insurgency in Pakistan's North West had spread beyond its initial base in the South and North Waziristan agencies of the tribal belt. It was more formalized, having consolidated under the banner of the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP). The TTP was officially formed in December 2007 out of a collection of armed factions from across the tribal belt and some districts of the North West province. Baitullah Mehsud successfully supplanted himself as the

most powerful leader in the insurgency. Baitullah had the blessing of Al-Qaeda, outmaneuvering his fellow tribal Abdullah Mehsud and also eclipsing the Nek Muhammed faction. A statement by Baitullah's spokesman Maulvi Omar on Dec 13, 2007 stated that the sole objective behind creating TTP was to unite the Pakistani Taliban to wage a 'defensive jihad' against the Pakistani forces, carrying out military operations in the North West.<sup>232</sup>

The TTP, and specifically its Mehsud cadres, posed a formidable challenge to the Pakistani military. President Musharraf declared Baitullah Mehsud "public enemy number one" as early as January 2008. The TTP then launched an "unprecedented spate of attacks on the Pakistani military through the autumn of 2007 and on into 2008" in Pakistan's urban areas. It was widely seen as a "direct assault on the core of the Pakistani political and security establishment." The Peshawar based 11 Corps initiated a sustained counterinsurgency campaign in Waziristan in 2008 with prominent raids including the operation Tri-Star. The 2008 campaign was prematurely terminated due to a high number of military casualties.

Through 2008 and 2009, the TTP continued to aggressively bleed the Pakistani state. In 2009, the TTP took over the district of Swat. In response, the Army moved in and launched a campaign, called the Operation Rah-e-Rast, whose case test is presented in the next chapter. Even after the campaign, violence in Pakistan's major urban centers continued to be a major challenge for the Army. It was in this backdrop that the campaign in Waiziratan was launched in October 2009. At the time of the launch of the campaign, Baitullah Mehsud had been killed in a drone strike in August 2009. But the threat from the Mehsud faction of the Taliban based out of

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232 Report 2007

the South Waziristan Agency was far from over. Its suicide bomb training centers were considered to be the nerve center of the violence directed against the Pakistani state.

The 2009 Waziristan campaign was led by General Masood Aslam until the first quarter of 2010 and later by General Aamir Yaseen. There were two phases to the campaign. The first part of the campaign focused on clearing the TTP strongholds of Ladha, Makin, and Sararogha.

Prominently, around three divisions worth of infantry forces -- totaling 35000 combat troops -- were mobilized for a high intensity territory clearing operation followed by more targeted raids across Waziristan.

#### Groups Involved

As mentioned above, the TTP was formed through a merger of many smaller groups across the tribal belt. The Waziristan campaign of 2009 to 2010 was directed against one faction of the TTP, the Mehsud Taliban in the South Waziristan Agency. The Pakistan Taliban did not formally exist until 2007. Local leaders like Baitullah Mehsud, Nek Muhammed, and Abdullah Mehsud, used the name of Taliban to refer to themselves. By 2007, Baitullah Mehsud had overshadowed Abdullah Mehsud's factions and other smaller groups in the South Waziristan Agency. He emerged as the most resourceful leader, organizing a formidable group. His base of activity stretched from the South Waziristan Agency to the North Waziristan Agency. He drew on strong ties with Al-Qaeda, the Haqqani Network, as well as the Dawar and the Uthmanzai Wazir tribes. By late 2007, he had a large fraction of Tahir Yaldashev's force at his disposal.

Throughout 2006 and 2007, Baitullah expanded his organization by asking various sub-tribes to provide manpower. He also appointed commanders for agencies like Kurram and Orakzai agencies, asking them to raise local forces. By late 2007, Baitullah announced the formation of a coalition, the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP). This was a loose coalition with groups in other parts of the tribal areas, like Faqir Muhammed in Bajaur, Hafiz Gulbahadur in the North Waziristan Agency, and Maulvi Fazlullah in Swat. Baitullah's status as the leader of the most powerful insurgent group in Pakistan was affirmed.

Baitullah's centrality to the TTP made the Mehsud Taliban, also called *Halqa Mehsud*, the most powerful faction of the TTP. TTP's top commanders came from the Mehsud tribe. The most sizable fighting faction of the TTP also drew from the Mehsud tribe. In earlier years, the Mehsud Taliban had both housed and supported Al-Qaeda's Arab, Uzbek, and Chechen fighting cadres. The Mehsud *Halqa*, as it was called within the TTP, had divided the area into at least 14 *halqas* across the Ladha, Makin, Saraogha, and Tiarza areas.<sup>233</sup> Each *halqa* had its own sub-commander, who was responsible for managing fighting cadres in their area of operations. After the death of Baitullah Mehsud in a drone strike, Hakeemullah Mehsud became the head of the TTP. Though succession disputes had caused issues, by the time of the operation, the Mehsud Taliban had consolidated under Hakeemullah.

## Independent Variables

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<sup>233</sup> Interview TTP Leader, 2016

I first characterize the campaign in terms of the key independent variables, representing the alternative explanations, group type, force size, and hearts-and-minds. I then characterize the campaign in terms of the proposed independent variable for the theory under consideration, i.e. the L&S.

## Group Type

The insurgent groups targeted in the campaign were of weak type according to the operationalization I propose for various theories of insurgent organizations. Three features are important to note.

First, the Mehsud Taliban managed limited support from the social bases across the Mehsud area of the South Waiziristan Agency. The Mehsud tribe is divided into three sub-branches, known as the Dre-Masid: the Alizai, Behloolzai, and the Shamankhel. The group lacked support of prominent social and religious elites -- called *masharan* -- of the Alizai and the Behloolza. A Khan of Behloolzai said that most elders refused to support Baitullah. The Shaman Khel's elders too resisted the dominance of Baitullah and later Hakeemullah. The group, as a result, relied on its military capacity as opposed to its social base of support to sustain itself. It appointed its own commanders like Khan Saeed of Asman Manza and Molvi Shamim of Ladha to extend the group's reach and presence.

Second, the Mehsud Taliban continued to be a poorly organized group. Baitullah's initial mobilization had relied more on initiative than any available existing organization. By 2007 he

had leveraged Al-Qaeda's financial aid and guidance to streamline organizational affairs. Baitullah tried to emulate the hierarchy and practices of Al-Qaeda and the Afghan Taliban. He centralized command structure, with major commanders represented at a *shura*.<sup>234</sup> While all of these efforts had improved the group's structure since 2004, it was still far from being a well-oiled military machine with clearly laid out hierarchy, specialized roles, and disciplinary procedures. As Schofield quotes an ISI official from North Waziristan telling her, the TTP organization starts at "The basic level" with a "*halqa*, the local circle of Taliban, with members drawn from several villages, but all belonging to the same sub-tribe. Each has an amir, and a naib amir, the second-in-command."<sup>235</sup> Within each *halqa*, major commanders like Hakeemullah Mehsud and Wali-ur-Rehman Mehsud maintained reasonable discipline. They complied with Baitullah's strategic cues even though the organization had no set out standard procedures for promotion, role assignment, and division of labor. Still the various sub-commanders remained independent. This independence resulted in serious disputes over succession after Baitullah's death in 2009, dividing the group between Wali-ur-Rehman and Hakeemullah Mehsud faction.

Third, Baitullah's recruitment base did not consist of committed ideologues. He was not recruiting the most committed fighters from the Mehsud area. Even at the peak of his popularity in 2008, Baitullah would either rely on his resource abundance to recruit or force "various sub-tribes to provide fighters."<sup>236</sup> One TTP respondent added that each sub-tribe was expected to contribute and non-compliance was not an option.<sup>237</sup> Asked to explain how Baitullah could wield so much power in such a short period of time, Dawar responded that "the government and its

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234 Interview Mehsud Tribe Elder, DI Khan 2016

235 Schofield 2011

236 Interview Mehsud Tribe Elder, DI Khan 2016

237 Interview TTP Leader, 2016

links with the tribes had been replaced. Baitullah became the most powerful leader in the region and the *masharan* were dependent on him. If he asked for manpower, they had no choice.”

### Force Level

The numerical balance in the Waziristan campaign shows that the force level was favorable to the Pakistan Army.

To undertake this calculation, I use two estimates of the counterinsurgency force through interviews. On the high end, the Army deployed 45 infantry battalions and Frontier Corps wings. On the low end, the Army deployed 20 units of regular infantry and 12 wings of Frontier Corps across the South Waziristan Agency.<sup>238</sup> These troops were organized under three infantry divisional formations, one based out of Wana, the other based out of Razmak, and the third one based out of DI Khan.<sup>239</sup> Credible estimates of insurgent strength remain elusive. But multiple respondents reported that the Baitullah led faction had quadrupled since 2006. According to an ISI operative from the period, the combined force was close to 5000.<sup>240</sup> Of the 5000, the core fighting strength -- fighters who were paid, well-armed, and moved around -- consisted of 500 fighters in areas of South Waziristan like Wacha, Darra, and Janata, and another 500 in Asman Manza and Dilla. This estimate of the insurgent group’s size was confirmed by a Ladha based journalist.

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238 Interview Former Senior Military Official, Islamabad 2017

239 Interview Former Senior Military Official, Islamabad 2017

240 Interview former ISI Operative, Peshawar 2016

**TABLE 34: SUMMARY OF FORCE LEVEL INDICATORS SOUTH WAZIRISTAN 2009-2011**

	Metrics
Counterinsurgency Force -- High	48000
Counterinsurgency Force -- Low Estimate	28000
Insurgency High	3000
Insurgency Low	5000
Area of Active Insurgency in Square Kilometers	6620
Population	429,841
Force to Area (Soldiers/Square Kilometer) -- Low	4.23
Force to Area (Soldiers/Square Kilometer) -- High	7.25
Force to Population (Soldiers/1000 Civilians) -- Low	65.14
Force to Population (Soldiers/1000 Civilians) -- High	111.67
Force to Insurgents -- Low/Low	6
Force to Insurgents -- Low/High	10
Force to Insurgents -- High/Low	9
Force to Insurgents -- High/High	16

Given this troop availability, the following numbers emerge. First, the troop density ratio, also called the force to population ratio, was between 65 to 112 per 1000 residents -- significantly higher than the benchmark of ~ 40 per 1000 residents suggested for efficacy in counterinsurgency and manpower accounts. Second, the force to space ratio was roughly around 4.23 and 7.25 per square kilometer -- significantly higher than the benchmark of 1.2 per square kilometer suggested in accounts on counterinsurgency and manpower. Third, the force to insurgency ratio in the period neither suggests a clear advantage nor a disadvantage. As shown in the Table 34 above, it ranged from 6 soldiers to 1 insurgent to 16 soldiers to 1 insurgent.

On balance, given that two ratios suggest a clear advantage and one ratio is agnostic, I conclude the Pakistani force levels as being high enough to merit an advantage.

## Hearts-and-minds

The Waziristan campaign saw limited compliance with a hearts-and-minds strategy. Three indicators are important to note which suggest the absence of a hearts-and-minds strategy.

First, the campaign involved extensive use of heavy firepower. Multiple respondents from the 11 Corps -- which directed the operations -- noted that they had no qualms about use of firepower and high intensity raids. A senior officer who oversaw the first half of the campaign from Peshawar was clear that “we waged this campaign like a conventional battle. Our predominant style of operations were large sweeps and the goal was territory.”<sup>241</sup> In the first part of the operation when the Army had fluid control across the four tehsils, the Corp’s operational staff extensively called upon the Air Force to take out targets. While the Corps headquarters’ operational staff maintained that the F-16s were carrying out precision targeting which minimized the radius of damage, the Corps commander, Lt Gen Masood Aslam, was skeptical.<sup>242</sup> Still, the formations continued to call in close air support, in clearance operations and on being engaged by the insurgents, well until late 2010. The counterinsurgency forces also drew on medium and light artillery through the first year of the campaign. In the area of operation of the 9th and 11th divisions, brigade commanders had considerable leeway in calling on artillery fire.<sup>243</sup> A commanding officer from the 9th division states that most infantry units preferred artillery fire to pacify areas over close cordon raids.<sup>244</sup> The military’s tactical units maneuvered to their targets with both mortars and rocket propelled grenades.

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241 Interview Former Senior Military Official, Islamabad 2017

242 Interview Former Senior Military Official, Islamabad 2017

243 Interview Former Senior Military Official, Peshawar 2017

244 Interview Former Senior Military Official, Islamabad 2017

Second, the counterinsurgency forces engaged in forcefully uprooting the civilian population from various areas of the Mehsud tribe. According to multiple respondents, the military's use of heavy firepower was based on the assessment that it had created a free-fire zone. Mehsud tribal leaders were informed of the impending campaign by the region's civilian administration, as early as July. The Army air dropped leaflets asking the civilians to vacate the area. Amnesty International estimated that "between 90,000 and 150,000 residents of South Waziristan have fled the area since July, when the Pakistani military began a long-range artillery and aerial bombardment in the region."<sup>245</sup> Yet many stayed back and only abandoned their homes as and when they were caught in cross fire.<sup>246</sup>

Third, the overall campaign was widely seen as highly indiscriminate. Journalists, tribal leaders, and even civilian bureaucrats interviewed for the study were unanimous in noting that Pakistan's tactics were "extremely harsh on civilians."<sup>247</sup> A senior *mashar* from the Shaman Khel Mehsud of the South Waziristan Agency stated that the Pakistani military would bring in "artillery shelling and target large vicinities even if they were populated."<sup>248</sup> A senior Peshawar based journalist noted that "the military tried to sweep the militants away and civilians suffered tremendously."<sup>249</sup> Another elder from the Mehsud tribe similarly echoed that "the military did not care if its bomb was falling on a house with women and children. The diameter of damage was always extensive."<sup>250</sup> The campaign was also devoid of community empowerment, and

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245 International 2009

246 Interview Mehsud Tribe Elder, DI Khan 2016

247 Interview Journalist, Peshawar 2016

248 Interview Former ISI Operative, Peshawar 2016

249 Interview Journalist, Peshawar 2016

250 Interview Mehsud Tribe Elder, DI Khan 2016

inclusion of local leaders. Civilian elites from the region and former political administrators of the South Waziristan Agency contended that the military did not allow them to consult local elites on the evacuation of the civilians. In fact, in contrast to earlier campaigns, the civilian bureaucrat in charge -- the Political Agent -- and his office was not involved in interfacing with local elites and the insurgents. Journalists said that the Political Agent and the Assistant Political Agent stopped paying off the tribal *mashar* the first year of the campaign, defying custom and legal arrangement in vogue in FATA.<sup>251</sup> The systematic exclusion of civilian officials and community elders, thus, engendered anxiety against the campaign.<sup>252</sup>

It is notable, however, that the campaign saw one civilian well-being measure instituted: provision of cash grant to the displaced population. As noted by the Amnesty International, “People displaced from South Waziristan by the 2009-2010 military offensive have received automatic bank cards worth 5000 rupees (US\$60) per family.”<sup>253</sup> This cash grant was provided to nearly 40,000 families, “amounting to an estimated 280,000 individuals.”<sup>254</sup>

## L&S

The Pakistani Army’s L&S during the campaign is best characterized as intermediate L&S -- high for legibility but low for speed of exploitation. The Pakistan Army’s legibility through the course of the campaign was high. In comparison to the earlier campaign, the Army had improved

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251 Interview Mehsud Tribe Elder, DI Khan 2016

252 Multiple interviews Peshawar and DI Khan

253 International 2010, 25

254 International 2010, 25

its human and technical intelligence collection infrastructure in the region.<sup>255</sup> Four features of the legibility regime are important to note.

First, in the years leading up to the campaign, the counterinsurgent force had begun to shore up the capacity of the Political Agent's office.<sup>256</sup> The Political Agent was the repository of formal even if limited knowledge on the population, in the shape of limited land records, lists of tribal elders, and inheritance details.<sup>257</sup> The Political Agent was also the storehouse for informal knowledge. The intelligence agencies, including the ISI, tapped the formal and informal knowledge more and more. By 2009, the Political Agent's office was helping the ISI detachment based out of DI Khan to create dossiers on sub-tribes, key personnel, and business interests within each of the three dominant tribes of the Mehsud clan. The focus of this exercise was to locate those who supported the insurgency.

Second, the counterinsurgent force developed a robust human intelligence system. The ISI, Army's Military Intelligence (MI), and the federal government's Intelligence Bureau (IB) set up a vast cadre of regular and occasional (called casual in official documents) sources which fed information on both the identity and the location of the insurgents.<sup>258</sup> The ISI's Counter Terror Detachments based in DI Khan and Wana played a major role in maintaining these sources. General Masood, the commander of the forces in South and North Waziristan, devoted considerable effort to upgrading the human intelligence capability of the MI and ISI in the

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255 Interview ISI Operative, Islamabad 2016

256 Interview Former Senior Military Official, Islamabad 2017, Interview FATA Secretariat Official, Peshawar 2016

257 Interview FATA Secretariat Official, Peshawar 2016

258 Interview ISI Operative, Islamabad 2016

region. One former intelligence official stated that the abundance of ISI and MI's human intelligence sources was attributable to systematic up-gradation of the human intelligence capability in the region for the American drone program. Since 2008, targeting by drone strikes had increased in the FATA region. ISI officials working to generate intelligence for these strikes were given much bigger budgets than before.

Third, the interrogation of arrested insurgent cadres was dramatically improved. Army's tactical intelligence units understood the need of making the most of arrested insurgent cadres. Lt General Ahmed Shuja Pasha, after becoming the ISI's head in late 2008, shored up the physical infrastructure and manpower of the detachments of ISI in Wana, DI Khan, and Bannu.<sup>259</sup> He pushed the Peshawar sector of the ISI to dedicate more effort to systematically interrogating arrested cadres, which led to expansion in the availability of custodian assets and analysts to interrogate. US involvement in the period led to the creation of fusion centers in the Peshawar Corps. People in-charge of these centers pushed intelligence units to undertake systematic interrogation of arrested cadres. Concurrent to these efforts, the Army also established a flipping program. Low ranking elements of the TTP were offered cash rewards to defect.<sup>260</sup> However, it is unclear whether the program scaled or how much budget was allocated for the program.

Fourth, the Army and the intelligence agencies underwent a signals and aerial interception capability surge. These improvements took place with the Army's infantry formations as well as intelligence agencies. As one analyst from the period noted, "ISI has worked to create and

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259 Interview ISI Operative, Islamabad 2016

260 Interview ISI Operative, Islamabad 2016

deploy more intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance assets to FATA in particular.”<sup>261</sup> The Army equipped its ground forces with VHF-plotting assets to locate signal transmitting devices used by the insurgents.<sup>262</sup> The intelligence agencies also tracked a large number of phones of suspects with ties to the insurgency. Such signals interception was complemented by aerial intelligence. The Pakistani forces developed their own aerial intelligence capability by this stage, which they used extensively. The Air Force took the lead in this: “FLIR Systems Star Safire III EO/IR sensor ball” were put atop C-130 transport aircraft from which the “Army staff on board the C-130 was able to track the movement of terrorists at night.”<sup>263</sup> This way, the military could “... identify terrorist training camps, ammunition dumps and command and control facilities.”<sup>264</sup>

The Pakistan Army’s speed of exploitation through the course of the campaign was low. Interview information revealed that the patterns of deployment from the years before continued, and stayed inflexible and concentrated. Conventional military oriented standard procedures continued to be in vogue which prevented rapid execution on information leads. Three features of the punishment regime are illustrative.

First, the campaign lacked the capability to collate, process, and disseminate intelligence gains during the campaign. While both ISI and MI contributed to identification of targets, the MI was in-charge. The Military Intelligence had a dire shortage of staff to undertake analysis and collation.<sup>265</sup> The MI “lack-ed the personnel, equipment, and infrastructure to collect and

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261 Mullick 2012, 100

262 Interview Former Senior Military Official, Islamabad 2017

263 Pocock 2011, confirmed by Intelligence Officer, Islamabad 2016

264 Pocock 2011

265 Interview Military Official, Islamabad 2017

disseminate intelligence key to military operations in FATA.”<sup>266</sup> The ISI was no better: its “processing, exploitation, and dissemination methods are wholly inadequate; they require large investments in technology and well-trained intelligence officers that are currently unavailable.”<sup>267</sup> An internal ISI document noted the challenge of poor intelligence synergy and the resulting friction towards the tail end of the campaign: “Presence of CT tcIs of various agencies in the same area unwittingly result in rift amongst the same thus denying launching of a synergistic effort.”<sup>268</sup>

Second, the counterinsurgency force had inefficient protocols for reacting on intelligence leads. Part of it was due to the deployment, which was geared towards holding the lines of communication. In the first half of the campaign, the Army’s regular infantry swooped through three directions across the Mehsud area. In this phase, select check points were activated on the Ladha-Makin-Kotkai axis. After recovering the territory, offensive units were restricted to their fortified encampments in Ladha, Sararogha, and Kotkai. “We had to break the myth that Mehsud area was irretrievable,” according to a senior official from the period.<sup>269</sup> A senior officer from the Frontier Corps said that “Given that the operation’s overall in charge was the Corps Commander, the Division commanders were loath to initiative anyway. But after the Corps Commander declared territory and not enemy to be the goal in the campaign, they became even more conservative.”<sup>270</sup> Thereafter, until late 2010, units and companies were concentrated in select bases, forts and camps across the South Waziristan Agency, which inhibited their

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266 Mullick 2012, 100

267 Mullick 2012, 100

268 2011 internal document titled “CT – Challenges and Remedies” obtained during fieldwork

269 Interview Former Senior Military Official, Islamabad 2017

270 Interview Former Senior Military Official, DI Khan 2016

mobilization. As per data collected, the number of positions from where the Army would mobilize for offensive action/raids was less than 25. This number was extremely inadequate given how mountainous the terrain was. According to a former Chief of Staff of the 11 Corps: “mobilization continued to be a time intensive process and the Army’s tactical units were invariably late on showing up at sites of their targets.”<sup>271</sup>

Third, the Army’s use of technology to both process and act on information leads was constrained. The Waziristan campaign came on the heels of territorial clearance and follow up campaigns in Bajaur and Swat. Through 2008, Pakistan’s overall fleet of helicopters had surged. But given the sustained operations conducted through 2008 and early 2009, specifically in Bajaur and Swat, the fleet was reduced in availability.<sup>272</sup> Interview respondents ranging from the 11 Corps Commander, officials of the Aviation Corps, and former intelligence officials stated that combat and logistical air support was less than half of total capacity available for the Swat campaign. By late 2009, the requirements of servicing had grown massively.<sup>273</sup> This was said to be one of the reasons for the delay in the launch of the territory clearance part of the campaign in October 2009. As a consequence, attack helicopters, which could be mobilized on information leads through the course of the campaign, remained limited. The use of drones and other aerial surveillance platforms generated abundant information in real time, but the Pakistani forces struggled to tie them with response and intelligence analysis. As Mullick notes, and a point which was echoed in some interviews as well “Pakistan’s nascent surveillance drone program

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271 Interview Former Senior Military Official, Islamabad 2016

272 Interview Former Senior Aviation Official, Islamabad 2016

273 Interview Former Senior Aviation Official, Islamabad 2016

needs archival data capabilities and a core intelligence interagency team that can synchronize multiple ground and air assets.”<sup>274</sup>

Fourth, the Pakistan Army also had a highly centralized decision-making process, which prevented rapid reaction on available leads. The campaign was planned and conducted by the Peshawar based 11 Corps headquarter. The decision to maneuver, share information, pass orders on execution leads rested with the Peshawar Corps. As three divisions were involved, the operational staff of all of those divisions were involved. The operational staff would filter the orders and flow of information from the Corps headquarters. So many layers of decision making incredibly slowed down the decision making, leading to gaps between information acquisition and execution. Even within the intelligence agencies, battlefield authorities were not delegated to the lowest rungs in the operational area; instead, approvals and permissions were sought from Peshawar, where the headquarters of the two agencies, ISI and MI, were located. As one internal report noted: “Apprehension of any suspect irrespective of profile is a daunting challenge and involved acqn [acquisition] of detailed backgr [background], meticulous planning and swift action. However, even diff [difficult] disposal procedure [approval process] adds to apathy [creates gaps].”<sup>275</sup>

## Prediction

In light of the variables representing two alternative theories, group type, and force size, the Waziristan campaign should have been effective. The insurgency, even if stronger than the

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274 Mullick 2012, 100

275 2011 internal document titled “CT – Challenges and Remedies” obtained during fieldwork

earlier campaign, was weak, lacking in strong base of support and organization. The fratricide preceding the campaign should have let it wilt in the face of counterinsurgent pressures. Similarly, if force levels mattered, the Army was even more preponderant and should have had no trouble in putting away the insurgency. In contrast, the variable representing the hearts-and-minds theory predicts an out rightly ineffective campaign. Given that the Army’s campaign was brutal, it could be that the civilians decided to favor the insurgents. My theory’s prediction is neither optimistic nor pessimistic. The Army’s legibility infrastructure was far more robust. Even if it was unable to mobilize on leads on time, it did collect plenty of information which at times should have led to some kinetic losses for the insurgency.

**TABLE 35: PREDICTION OF PAKISTAN CASE 4**

IVs of Interest	Coding	Prediction
Insurgency type	Weak	Effective
Force Size	Preponderant	Effective
L&S	High Legibility, Low Speed	Stalemate
Hearts-and-minds	Not Followed	Ineffective

Outcome

The campaign outcome conforms to the prediction of the new theory. By late 2010, the Waziristan campaign saw the insurgency in the Mehsud area possess reasonable even if scaled back operational capability; it also saw some disruption in the insurgents’ collective action, and a relocation away from the insurgent’s organizational bases. Much of the description below of the state of the insurgency following the onset of the campaign has been constructed from interviews of the Mehsud Taliban conducted for the study.

For example, before the campaign, Baitullah Mehsud's fighting force in South Waziristan consisted of a permanent force of around a thousand-foot soldiers, whereas a sizable faction of the group had moved to the North Waziristan Agency. After Baitullah's death in August 2009, his successor Hakeemullah Mehsud had managed to retain the strength of 12 out of 14 *halqas*.<sup>276</sup> Until the launch of the campaign in South Waziristan, the *halqas* possessed significant operational capability, frequently planning and convening fighters. By early 2009, some of the *halqas*, especially those which operated in neighboring North Waziristan Agency, had come under pressure due to the US drone program. Baitullah diverted some capability towards South Waziristan, asking his commanders Khalid Mehsud Sajna and Wali-ur-Rehman to preserve their operational firepower.<sup>277</sup>

With the onset of the campaign, however, the South Waziristan capability saw some drop. Wali-ur-Rehman Mehsud, the key lieutenant of the Mehsud Taliban in the region, was aware that the Pakistani military had strong knowledge of his organization across the two key tehsils of the South Waziristan Agency. Rehman shut down important *marakaz* (centers) in the Ladha region within the first month of the campaign. Qari Hussain, the master trainer of the suicide attackers, was also aware of the challenge posed by the Pakistani military. He began to withdraw his team of saboteurs after some initial losses.<sup>278</sup> One Taliban respondent noted that "The Mehsud area was like our state, and we were running the Islamic emirate from Makeen [a town in the South Waziristan Agency] which was like our capital. The operation caused heavy loss of infrastructure, houses, and weapons."<sup>279</sup> By early 2010, the Mehsud Taliban's top leadership had

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276 Interview former ISI Operative, Islamabad 2016

277 Interview TTP Leader, Pakistan 2016

278 Interview, Pakistan 2016

279 Interview TTP Leader, Pakistan 2016, also see Yousufzai 2009

begun to recover from the losses and regroup some of their operations.<sup>280</sup> As one commander from the period put it: “our organization suffered from it but not significantly. We were able to move to North Waziristan and avoid any lasting damage. There, however, things were not easy due to drones.”<sup>281</sup> Hakimullah formed special teams to systematically evacuate “anti-aircraft guns, explosive materials, and/or weapons” to the border region of the South and North Waziristan Agencies during the campaign.

By December 2009, when the military began information-based raids in the region, the Taliban experienced desertions and surrenders of some mid-level factions.<sup>282</sup> Some respondents noted that Wali-ur-Rehman’s faction -- which operated independently of Hakimullah Mehsud -- experienced defections.<sup>283</sup> One of the dire losses for the group was the closure of the seminaries operated by Commander Mufti Noor Wali at Gurgai. Across a network of seminaries, Wali trained and channeled a fighting force to the various sub-units reporting to Hakeemullah Mehsud. While Noor Wali retained his core fighting unit, his ability to produce recruits from the seminaries was disrupted.<sup>284</sup>

By early 2010, it appears that the insurgency folded many of its bases in the face of Pakistani firepower, and attempted to relocate. Yousufzai noted “there is little evidence that heavy fighting occurred during the entire operation because it appears that most militants fled in the face of the government advance.”<sup>285</sup> The relocation of major cells and sub-groups was largely systematic.

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280 Interview TTP Operative, Pakistan 2016

281 Interview TTP Leader, 2016

282 Interview TTP Leader, Pakistan 2016

283 Interview TTP Leader, Pakistan 2016

284 Interview TTP Leader, Pakistan 2016

285 Yousufzai 2009

Most commanders understood that they could not just disperse and evade in the same region and engage in sabotage given the Pakistani military's intelligence surge. Important rebel commanders like Wali-ur-Rehman, who had cells operating in geographies of Waziristan like Janata, Wahcha and Darra, started moving to the North Waziristan Agency.<sup>286</sup> According to multiple Ladha based civilian and Taliban respondents, the Mehsud *halqa* gradually slipped into the neighboring North Waziristan Agency. Hakeemullah himself similarly moved to the Shawal valley from his native village Kotkai in the first half of the campaign. Qari Hussain Mehsud, an important commander of the TTP who ran the suicide bombing operation of the TTP, also relocated with his fighting cadres to the Miramshah and Data Khel regions of the North Waziristan Agency. Multiple civilian respondents in addition to Taliban respondents noted that the various factions "moved out of the region in organized convoys."<sup>287</sup> Some of the reserve cadres left behind by Hakimullah in South Waziristan Agency, which assisted the Mehsud *halqa* in logistics, moved towards Karachi in 2011.<sup>288</sup> In some regions, however, "the TTP's retreat did not appear to be well organized considering that militants left behind heavy weapons and even cooked food."<sup>289</sup>

## Pakistani Counterinsurgency Campaigns in Comparative Perspective

The four campaigns, when put in a comparative perspective, cannot be explained by the variables suggested by existing theories. The type of insurgent group theories cannot do much explaining.

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286 Interview TTP Leader, Pakistan 2016

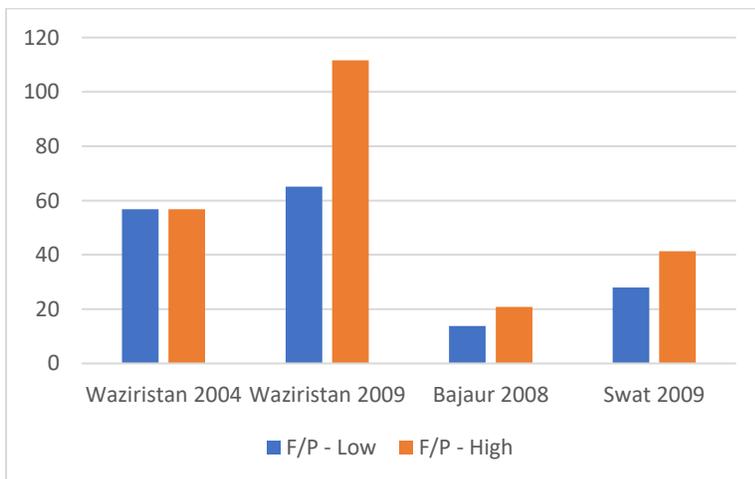
287 Interview Journalist, DI Khan 2016

288 Important cells which ran "Taliban courts" reporting to Mufti Noor Wali, such as the one led by Zawail Mehsud, moved to Karachi.

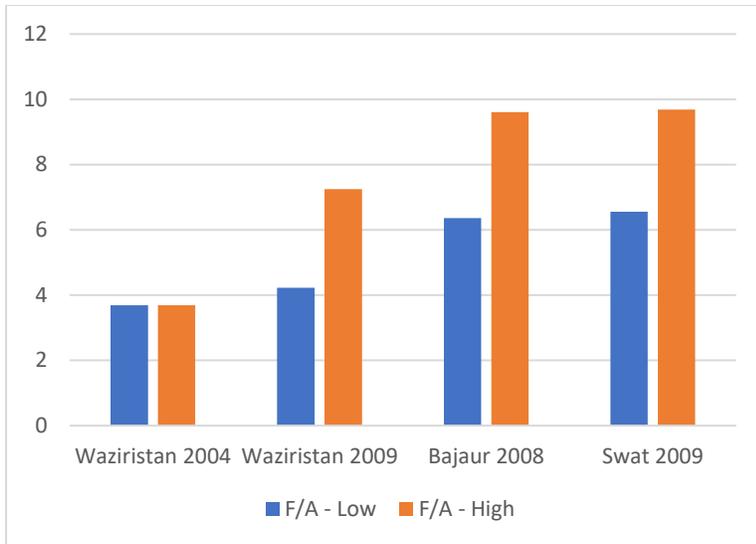
289 Yousufzai 2009

We see this most clearly across the Waziristan campaign of 2004 and the Swat campaign of 2009. The Pakistani counterinsurgency force performed poorly when the insurgency was weak in Waziristan: it lacked a real base of support, a good organization, and quality recruits. Later on, in Swat where the insurgents were both well organized and locally embedded, Pakistan's counterinsurgency performance was more robust, successfully degrading the insurgents. If group type mattered, these cases should have led to very different outcomes.

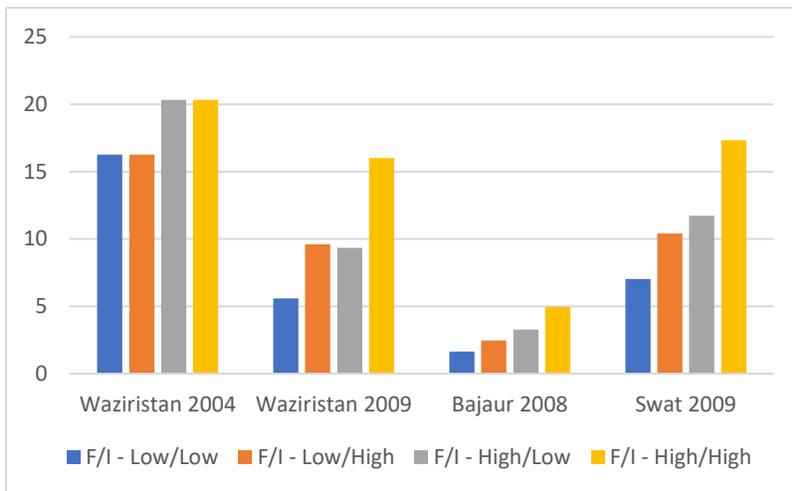
Force size accounts are inadequate for understanding the patterns. To put the force level numbers in perspective, figures 13 and 14 present a comparative analysis of the four campaigns analyzed. If force to population mattered, the Waziristan campaigns should have done better than the campaigns in Bajaur and Swat. If force to space ratio mattered, Bajaur and Swat should have had the same outcome. If force to insurgency mattered, the Waziristan campaign of 2004 should have been effective. None of these predictions, however, correspond with what we see in the data.



**FIGURE 13: PAKISTAN COMPARATIVE FORCE TO POPULATION RATIOS**



**FIGURE 14: PAKISTAN COMPARATIVE FORCE TO SPACE RATIOS**



**FIGURE 15: COMPARATIVE FORCE TO INSURGENCY RATIOS**

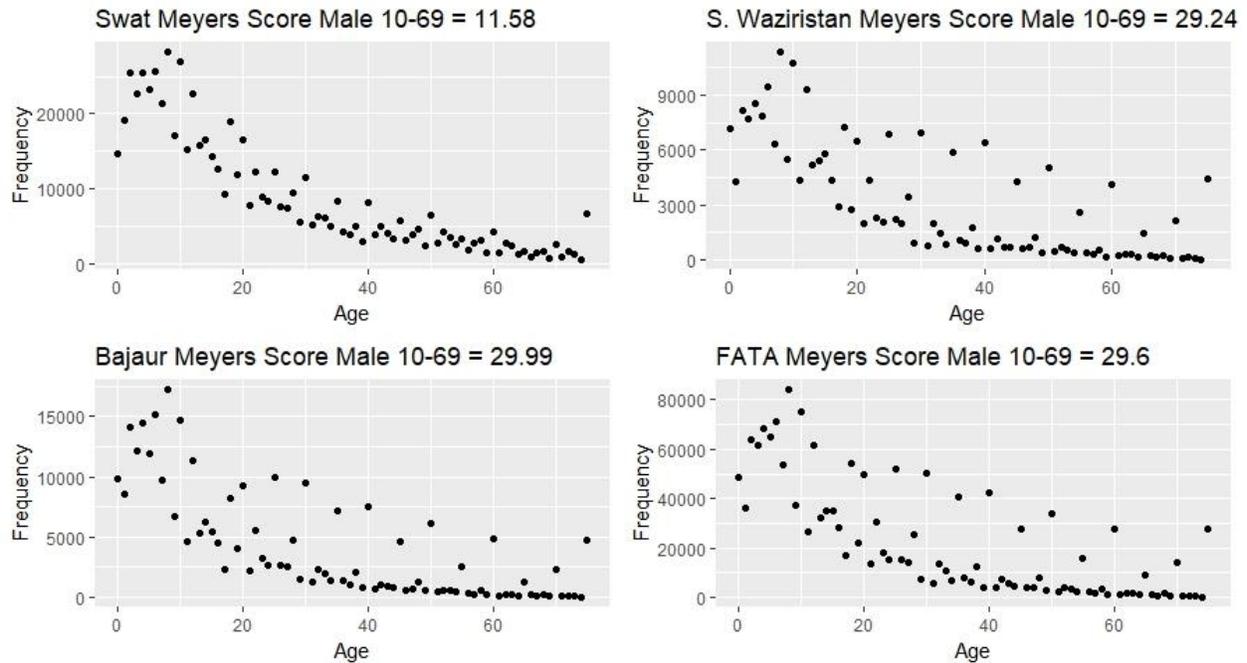
A hearts-and-minds variable provides no explanatory power either. Across the four campaigns. Pakistani conduct was largely antithetical to hearts-and-minds strategies: It was consistently heavy handed, employing coercive dislocations, unrestrained firepower, and excessive air-power. The measurement I have offered jives with an assessment by Neta Crawford, who notes that

“Pakistani military [has] killed civilians in their counterinsurgency and counterterrorism operations in northwest Pakistan. The Pakistani security forces’ operations (including military and paramilitary forces) have included the use of significant military force using F-16 strikes, mortar attacks, and raids on militant camps.”<sup>290</sup> Did the provision of cash grants have an impact on the outcome in the Swat campaign? The Pakistani forces provided cash grants in the 2009 Waziristan campaign as well as in the Swat campaign. If cash grants could make such a decisive difference, the outcome of the Waziristan and Swat campaigns should have converged.

This leaves L&S, which appears to have varied considerably across the four campaigns, and aligns with the outcome of effectiveness. On the side of legibility as shown in figure 16, there is a clear-cut trend: South Waziristan and Bajaur had adverse pre-campaign legibility compared to Swat. While Swat recorded a Meyers score of 11.58, South Waziristan and Bajaur only attained scores of 29.24 and 29.99, which is a substantial difference. In addition, we see that the Waziristan campaign of 2004 was marred by critical L&S gaps, ranging from basic knowledge of the population composition, technology availability, and to poor protocols of processing, disseminating, and acting upon available leads. In Swat, however, the counterinsurgency force paid extensive attention to improving a variety of tactics, technologies, and practices that I subsume under L&S. The cases of Bajaur and Waziristan 2009 fall in the middle of the L&S spectrum; as expected under the new theory, accord with stalemate outcomes.

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290 Cawford 2013, 134



**FIGURE 16: CENSUS AGE DISTRIBUTION 1998 CENSUS**

### Summary and Conclusion

This chapter has offered granular case tests and comparisons from counterinsurgency in Pakistan. The case tests subject the new theory to a difficult test while being likely cases for alternative accounts. They also offer an opportunity for mechanism tracing of select key implications of the new theory in cases where the outcome is predicted by more than one theory. The empirical evidence presented reasonably accords with the theoretical position under consideration: L&S. In that way, this chapter offers compelling new evidence in favor of the theory.

It is important to note that there are some limitations of the analysis. These case tests do not provide any substantial evidence on how L&S came to drive the information flows, and in turn the targeting tempo of the counterinsurgency effort. In the context of the Swat case, there is some

evidence. An important interview with a senior officer involved in planning and intelligence details the information acquisition and exploitation process. As noted, that officer downplays the information flow implied under the hearts-and-minds argument -- i.e. of civilian collaboration. Still future work on Pakistan should look more systematically into the information flows implied under L&S. For further testing and verifying the theory, I turn to more systematic attention to information flow mechanism in the case of US counterinsurgency in Iraq.

## Chapter 8: US Counterinsurgency in Iraq

In this chapter I examine the US counterinsurgency campaign in Iraq from 2007 to 2010. After the US invasion of Iraq in 2003, Iraq was swept by an insurgency drawing from the Sunni population. The US government launched counterinsurgency operations against the insurgents as early as 2004. In late 2006/early 2007, it rewired the campaign. This marked the onset of a new phase of the war, which continued until the US withdrawal from Iraq in 2010. This is the period that I examine in this chapter.

The war effort studied is an iconic period of the US intervention in Iraq. It has been studied and subjected to important investigations. But abundant gaps remain. For one, recent investigations have been challenged.<sup>1</sup> In addition, new evidence has come to fore documenting the state of Al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) from 2007 to 2010, and hitherto unknown details on US deployments in Iraq, such as those of the US special operations force.<sup>2</sup> I draw on the criticisms and the new sources of evidence to re-interpret the US campaign in Iraq. In that way, this chapter provides a unique, theoretically driven case analysis of counterinsurgency in Iraq.

Research Design: Most-Likely Case with Process Tracing

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1 Major studies on the early part of the campaign: Biddle, Shapiro, Friedman 2013, Long 2014; also see correspondence on the study, especially: Lindsay and Long 2013

2 In addition to rich declassified documentation of AQI through the US Army West Point's Combatting Counterterrorism Center, the literature on the state of AQI as a precursor organization to ISIS is now sizable. Prominent works include: Fishman 2016, Lister 2015, Weiss and Hassan 2015, Malkasian 2017. In addition, a new literature has emerged on US Special Forces and Counterinsurgency operations with novel, primary sourced information: Gordon and Tainor 2012, McChrystal 2013, Mansoor 2013, Schultz Jr 2016

I study this case through a case test integrated with process tracing for two reasons. First, it is a case of external counterinsurgency; the other cases studied in the dissertation are of domestic and colonial counterinsurgency. Second, the case constitutes a “most-likely” case for the new theory.<sup>3</sup> The campaign attained high value on the variable proposed for explaining variation in effectiveness, the L&S. In contrast, variables of orthodox theories, like group type, force level, and hearts-and-minds, do not attain high values; at best, they predict a stalemate or an ineffective campaign. This implies that if L&S matters to counterinsurgency effectiveness, we should most certainly see an effective campaign in this case. To better arbitrate between the competing explanations and ward off the possibility of a false positive, I test the key mechanisms using process tracing. I also consider an informal explanation suggesting the importance of a political realignment which occurred in Iraq during the campaign period.

#### Overview of the Case

By 2004 -- following the US invasion -- a Sunni insurgency had begun to emerge across northern, western, and southern Iraq to resist the US occupation. By 2004, the insurgency came to be dominated by one group, the Jamaat Al-Tawhid Waal-Jihad, generally known by the acronym JTJ.<sup>4</sup> By 2005 – after elaborate and complicated negotiations with Al-Qaeda central’s leadership -- JTJ rechristened itself as Tanzim Qa-idat al-Jihad fi Bilad al-Rafidayn, commonly referred to as Al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI).<sup>5</sup> AQI also formed important alliances, formalizing them under a jihadi front called the Mujahidin Shura Council (MSC). In 2006, AQI supplanted MSC

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<sup>3</sup> On use of most-likely cases in studies of military campaigns, see: Biddle 2004

<sup>4</sup> Lister 2015, 6, 7

<sup>5</sup> Felner, Joseph and Fishman 2007, Fishman 2016, 58/59

with a new jihadi front which merged a number of Sunni organizations. That front came to be known as the Islamic State of Iraq, or ISI.<sup>6</sup>

The AQI's early organization -- and its precursor JTI -- was rooted in the Anbar province, with a concentration along the western Euphrates river. By 2005, it was expanding operationally and territorially, operating in provinces proximate to Baghdad and the Northern Iraq provinces of Ninawa and Dahuk. AQI also established presence in major urban centers, like Baghdad, Fallujah, and Mosul, as well as rural areas along the Iraq-Syria border.<sup>7</sup> Across these regions, AQI mounted sustained violence against the US led coalition, Iraqi security forces, civilians -- specifically Shia civilians -- and various smaller armed groups. In the same time period, a sectarian dimension to the conflict emerged. By 2004, Iraq saw an influx of Shia armed groups, sometimes with strong ties to the US propped government in Baghdad.<sup>8</sup> In addition to targeting former Bathist elements, the Shia armed groups -- like the Mehdi Army -- engaged in violence against Sunnis in response to AQI's violence against the Shias.<sup>9</sup> The retaliatory violence intensified after the 2006 bombing of the al-Askari Mosque in Samara.<sup>10</sup> Select Shia armed groups -- like Iranian special groups -- engaged in violence on the prodding of Iranian government's Quds force.<sup>11</sup>

By late 2006, alarmed by the increasing violence, the US government was reconfiguring its approach to counterinsurgency in Iraq. In early 2007, the US government approved more

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6 Felter, Joseph and Fishman 2007

7 McChrystal 2013, 179

8 Gordon and Trainor 2012, 220

9 Weiss and Hassan 2015, 59/60

10 Weiss and Hassan 2015, 60

11 Gordon and Trainor 2012, 316

resources, including a 30000 reinforcement of US troops and a new strategy for counterinsurgency operations. The key combat forces came to comprise a plethora of conventional forces under the theatre-wide command, called the Multi-National Force Iraq (MNF Iraq), led by General David Petraeus from 2007 until September 2008 and General Raymond Odierno from September 2008 until January 2010.<sup>12</sup> Among conventional forces, it included -- by mid-2007 -- 6 brigade combat teams part of the Multi-National Division Baghdad, 5 brigade combat teams part of the Multi-National Division Center, 6 brigade combat teams part of the Multi-National Division North, 1 brigade combat team, 2 regiment combat teams and a marine expeditionary unit in the Multi-National Force West, 1 brigade with the Multi-National Division Southeast, and one battlegroup with the Multi-National Division Central-South. It also included a large special operations force, called Task Force 714 (TF 714), initially under the command of Lt General Stanley McChrystal until June 2008, and from June 2008 until late 2010 under the command of Admiral William H. McRaven. In addition to these US forces, the counterinsurgency force also included a variety of Iraqi security forces, including the Iraqi National Police.<sup>13</sup>

This marked the onset of a new phase of the US campaign in Iraq – often called the Surge in the news media of the period.<sup>14</sup> The goal of the new campaign was to bring down the levels of violence as well as to diminish the growing strength of the AQI.

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12 MNF Iraq was reorganized into a new command, the United States Forces – Iraq

13 Brookings Iraq Index

14 Biddle, Shapiro, Friedman 2012

## Outcome

From 2007 to 2010, the outcome of the US campaign can be coded as effective. Three points are important to note on why the campaign qualifies as effective. First, AQI's operational capability was decidedly scaled back by the end of the campaign in 2010. In early 2007, AQI had formidable operational capability to mount large scale violence, hold territory, and channel the wave of transnational sympathy for its jihadi cause into functional operational capital. This capability of AQI and its auxiliary organizations' lay in a vast infrastructure of suicide bombing, IED production, smuggling networks, fund-raising units, propaganda outlets, training and recruitment centers, and specialized units to facilitate the inflow of foreign fighters across Iraq.<sup>15</sup> Such operations existed across southern, western, and northern Iraq.<sup>16</sup> Starting mid to late 2007, this operational infrastructure demonstrated a descendent trajectory. By 2008, US forces assessed that "a major decline was taking place in the capacity of different parts of [the AQI] network."<sup>17</sup> By 2009, the trend appears to have continued. The US government assessed for good reason that it had disrupted "AQI's clandestine apparatus," with the AQI no long operating "a large number of AQI's operational cells, financial units, communications and media centers, bomb and IED production facilities, and arms acquisition networks."<sup>18</sup> Fishman offers a similar assessment, seeing Al-Qaeda's operation capability undergoing "dramatic disruptions" in the period.<sup>19</sup>

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15 The earliest detailed account of the AQI's operational capability were recorded in the Sinjar records released by the US government Center. See: Fishman, Shapiro, Felter 2008, also in McChrystal 2013, Gordon and Trainor 2012, Weiss and Hassan 2015, Fishman 2016

16 Fishman, Shapiro, Felter 2008

17 Admiral McRaven quoted in Shultz Jr. 2017, 828

18 Shultz Jr. 2016, 5; the general trajectory of AQI's operational decline is also documented in Fishman 2016, Weiss and Hassan 2015

19 Fishman 2016, 147

Second, AQI's units across Iraq began to relocate their bases early in the campaign, sometimes systematically, and at other times haphazardly. In early 2007, the AQI's core bases were in southern, central, and western Iraq.<sup>20</sup> By late 2007, AQI had folded bases in and around the regions of the Sunni triangle, in the south and western regions; in some cases, AQI was closing down its bases and relocating them to the North; in other cases, it was outrightly abandoning its units, safe houses, and recruitment centers, such as those in the Baghdad belts.<sup>21</sup> By 2008, AQI was even fleeing from Anbar towards the north, specifically towards Ninawa province.<sup>22</sup> As one analyst noted, the "center of gravity for the Sunni Arab resistance had been inexorably shifting northwards."<sup>23</sup> The US military similarly noted AQI fleeing from the Sunni Triangle, South and the West towards Nineveh and Mosul. In October 2009, MNF Iraq commander General Raymond Odierno noted that the AQI does not "control large portions of Nineveh or Mosul, but they do have enough influence or they have do have some freedom of movement where they're able to conduct some high profile attacks inside of Nineveh Province and Mosul."<sup>24</sup>

Third, AQI's collective action appears to have broken down during the campaign. One metric of this is an estimate of AQI fighters in Iraq documented by the US forces in Iraq. In 2006, the AQI was believed to have between 15000 to 20000 fighters. By 2010, the CIA assessed around 1000 AQI fighter.<sup>25</sup> Multiple accounts document a series of desertions from AQI ranks during the course of the campaign.<sup>26</sup> While most of the sources for this are US officials themselves,

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20 Knights 2008

21 Fishman, Shapiro, Felter 2008; Fishman 2016

22 Fishman 2016, 132

23 Knights 2008

24 Odierno 2009

25 Ignatius 2010

26 Knights 2008, Fishman 2016

independent analysts documented a similar trend. Fishman notes that by 2008 “the organization was contracting as its fighters defected or were killed.”<sup>27</sup> By 2009, AQI’s frequency of losses increased, and the frequency of recruitment came down manifold; AQI suffered “dramatic...personnel losses.”<sup>28</sup> AQI’s foreign fighter recruitment – which had been the central plank of its fighting machine until early 2007 -- also dramatically came down. One account of AQI foreign fighters notes that by 2008 “The group’s foreign volunteers...started to dry up.”<sup>29</sup> By 2008, another estimate reported that the flow of fighters was down to around 20.<sup>30</sup> By late 2009, “US government believed that only five foreign fighters were entering Iraq a month, down from seventy per month three years earlier.”<sup>31</sup>

#### Explaining Effectiveness in Iraq

Given the available metrics outlined above, it appears that the AQI led insurgency transitioned from having a wide-ranging and growing operational capability, bases of support and sustenance, and robust collective action in 2006 to a near collapse of operational capability, dramatic even if mostly organized displacement from bases, and a tangible breakdown in collective action by 2010. This corresponds with an effective outcome. What explains it? Below I offer a discussion of how the campaign fared along the three variables emphasized by existing theories -- group type, hearts-and-minds, and force level -- and the variable emphasized by the new theory -- the

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27 Fishman 2016, 132

28 Fishman 2016, 142

29 Knights 2008

30 <https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/index20110131.pdf>

31 Fishman 2016, 147

L&S. After describing each of the variables, I turn to process tracing implications of the key theories and alternative explanations.

## Group Type

Group type cannot do much explaining. AQI was a relatively robust organization by 2006 -- -- it was built to fight, sustain, and recover from US counterinsurgency violence. Four dimensions of the AQI's organization are important to note. First, AQI – by the time the campaign started -- was built on reasonably well-embedded and politicized social bases across Iraq. AQI, however, did not start out with such a base of support. Its key pre-cursor organization, JIT, lacked any clear linkages with Iraq's pre-war social and/or political landscape. Led by the Jordanian Abu Musab Al Zarqawi, who made his way to Iraq after the US invasion, it comprised mainly of foreign fighters. By 2005, through a combination of mergers and alliances, AQI had changed that. It was extensively drawing on strongly politicized social bases. These included tribal bases of support, like those in the province of Anbar.<sup>32</sup> These also included religious bases in multiple provinces, like those of the Ansar al Sunnah, and local jihadi/religious organizations part of the jihadi umbrella, the Mujahidin Shura Council.<sup>33</sup> Finally, a key source of organization and mobilization were former Bathist regime officials and their pre-war networks from Saddam's Iraq: "Jihdist and [former] Iraqi government officials...collaborated [to build AQI] since the earliest days of the Iraq war."<sup>34</sup> As Zarqawi started drawing on these bases, he also continued his extensive integration of foreign jihadis travelling to Iraq from all over the Middle East.<sup>35</sup>

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32 Malkasian 2017

33 Fishman 2016, 130-131

34 Fishman 2016, 41-42, also see Kirdar 2011

35 Fishman et al 2008

Second, AQI was well institutionalized at the onset of the campaign. AQI had built a bureaucratized and layered organization across south, western, and northern Iraq.<sup>36</sup> As Fishman notes, AQI had “a highly organized bureaucracy to delegate authority and responsibility throughout the organization.”<sup>37</sup> AQI’s top comprised of a “...formal cabinet which provided national-level leadership, produced propaganda, and led the military effort.”<sup>38</sup> The organization in various regions of Iraq was “divided into “sectors.” which were subdivided into districts, each led by a district emir.”<sup>39</sup> AQI records also provide strong evidence that the organization had abundant functional specialization: “[E]ach emir had six direct reports: emirs for medicine, propaganda, shariah administration, security, and the military.”<sup>40</sup> It also maintained detailed protocols and standard procedures to replace leaders and specialized personnel in case of losses.<sup>41</sup>

Third, the recruit quality of AQI was generally high. AQI’s recruits were highly motivated and committed, joining the organization by and large for ideological and/or nationalist reasons. AQI’s core organization comprised of both Iraqi and foreign cadres. A large portion of Iraqi cadres came from Anbar, Diyala, and the Ninawa provinces: “There is no doubt that al-Qa’ida’s Iraqi affiliates successfully recruited many Iraqis.”<sup>42</sup> The foreign fighters joining AQI were frequently screened by local recruiters and jihadi coordinators, which ensured their quality: “Foreign fighters who ended up in Iraq appear overwhelmingly to have joined the Jihad through

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36 Long 2014

37 Fishman 2016, 130

38 Fishman 2016, 130

39 Fishman 2016, 130

40 Fishman 2016, 130

41 Long 2014

42 Felter and Fishman 2008, 6

local Jihadi sympathizers (33.5%) and personal social networks (29%). Only a few Jihadis appear to have met their local coordinators directly through the Internet.”<sup>43</sup> That is not to say, however, that recruits were motivated by ideology and nationalism. AQI also drew on criminal elements, who played a role in fundraising operations: “AQI uses criminal smugglers, who they do not fully trust, to cross the border.” Despite the influx of criminally minded cadres, AQI managed to maintain a very high level of skill and expertise: “AQI has produced fewer, but far more skilled, fighters than the “Arab-Afghans” did in the 1980s.”<sup>44</sup>

Fourth, the overall level of cohesion of the AQI led insurgency was high. AQI was not factionalized. Starting with Abu Musab Al Zarqawi, and following his death, AQI maintained reasonable discipline on matters of operational and political strategy. To reduce friction with other smaller jihadi organizations in Iraq, Zarqawi coordinated strategy through the MSC; however, the MSC did not fully integrate all political and operational decision-making. This changed in October 2006. The AQI was replaced by the Dawlat al-Iraq al-Islamiyya, or the Islamic State of Iraq (ISI). Unlike the MSC, “the ISI totally supplanted its constituent organizations...The ISI was meant to unify resistance to US occupation, inspire support from al-Qa’ida’s global supporters by imposing Islamic law, and ensure that [AQI] was prepared in case of a precipitous US withdrawal from Iraq.”<sup>45</sup>

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43 Felter and Fishman 2008

44 Fishman, Shapiro, Felter 2008, 9

45 Felter and Fishman 2008, 5

**TABLE 36: INDICATORS OF GROUP TYPE IN IRAQ**

<u>Group Type</u>		
Social Bases		Strong
	Religious Bases	Extensive
	Tribal	Marginal
	Political Party/Military Organization	Extensive
	Student Group/Labor Union Organization	None
Recruit Quality		
	Ideologically appeals	Extensive
	Opportunists	Limited
Institutionalization		
	Hierarchy/Geographic Organization	Extensive
	SOPs	Extensive
	Training	Extensive
Cohesion		
	Multiple factions/groups	Extensive
	Central Coordination	Extensive
	Fratricide	Limited

Force Level

The measurement of the force level variable suggests that the US government was not at a disadvantage during the campaign, but it did not have a major advantage either. Based on this measurement, force level variable neither suggests a clear-cut effective nor ineffective campaign.

To calculate counterinsurgent force level and the associated ratios, I record the highest and lowest levels of the sum of US and Iraqi force levels during the three-year campaign.<sup>46</sup> On the high end, recorded in September 2009, the coalition had an Iraq wide strength (excluding Kurdish regions) of about 124,000 US and allied forces, and around 323,000 Iraqi troops and police. On the low end, recorded in January 2007, the coalition had an Iraq wide strength

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<sup>46</sup> These data are from the Brooking Institution's Iraq Index

(excluding Kurdish regions) of about 146,650 US and allied forces, and around 323,000 Iraqi troops and police. On the side of the insurgency, as with any conflict, calculating insurgency levels is difficult. There, however, are two available estimates around or near the start of the insurgency: A lower bound estimate of 15,000 fighters, and a higher bound estimate of 20,000 fighters.<sup>47</sup> I use these numbers to calculate a range of estimates of force levels across the theatre as shown in the Table 37 below.

**TABLE 37: INDICATORS OF FORCE LEVEL IN IRAQ**

Counterinsurgency Force High	788000
Counterinsurgency Force Low	469650
Insurgency High	20000
Insurgency Low	15000
AOR	All Iraq excluding Kurdistan
Area of Active Insurgency	396429
Population	30000000
Force to Area (Soldiers/Square Kilometer) -- Low	1.18
Force to Area (Soldiers/Square Kilometer) – High	1.99
Force to Population (Soldiers/1000 Civilians) – Low	15.66
Force to Population (Soldiers/1000 Civilians) – High	26.27
Force to Insurgents -- Low/Low	31
Force to Insurgents -- Low/High	53
Force to Insurgents -- High/Low	23
Force to Insurgents -- High/High	39

There are two ratios which suggest a moderate level of forces during the campaign.<sup>48</sup> First, the troop density ratio, also called the force-to-population ratio, was roughly around 16 to 26 per 1000 residents. The population estimate includes the population in all provinces of Iraq other than those falling in Kurdish regions. As per the CIA world factbook, the total Iraqi civilian

<sup>47</sup> <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/fighting-a-ruthless-foe-in-iraq/>

<sup>48</sup> By way of comparison, the force-to-population and force-to-space numbers are closer to the lower bound of the force ratios of some of the other campaigns studied in this dissertation.

population was roughly 30 million.<sup>49</sup> The lower bound is lower and the upper bound is slightly higher the benchmark of 20 soldiers per 1000 civilians suggested by the US military doctrine. One account suggests that for clear-cut victory a troop density of 40 to 50 soldiers per 1000 civilians is required.<sup>50</sup> Clearly, US forces fell well short of that. Second, the force to space ratio ranged between 1 and 2 per square kilometer – which is at parity with the benchmark of around 1.2 soldier per square kilometer popular in accounts on counterinsurgency and manpower.<sup>51</sup> Third, the tier-down ratio, or force to enemy ratio, suggests an advantage. It ranged from 23 to 1 to 53 to 1. Even the lower bound of this estimate is higher than the cutoff suggested in troop density recommendations, which is of 10 to 1.

#### Hearts-and-minds

**TABLE 38: INDICATORS OF HEARTS-AND-MINDS IN IRAQ**

		Level
Civilian Protection		
	Collateral Damage	Extensive
	Collective Punishment	None
	Protection from Insurgents (Civilian Casualties)	Extensive until 2008; Limited in 2009
	Disappearances	Limited
	Torture	Limited
Firepower		
	Artillery	Limited
	Airpower in/near populated areas	Extensive
	Major explosives/demolitions	Extensive
Development		
	Civilian Aid/Small Projects	Extensive
Perception of Campaign		
	Among Civilians	Unclear

<sup>49</sup> Biddle, Shapiro, Friedman 2013

<sup>50</sup> Kneee Jr et al 2010

<sup>51</sup> Friedman 2012

A hearts-and-minds variable cannot account for the effectiveness of the campaign. A number of indicators suggest that the US forces failed to (successfully) implement a hearts-and-minds strategy. Despite abundant doctrinal focus on implementation of a hearts-and-minds approach to the war effort, US forces fared poorly along a number of indicators of the strategy. The US forces performed well along one indicator: provision of development aid. Even then, key metrics of civilian well-being remained adverse. At best, the value of the hearts-and-minds variable can predict a stalemate campaign. Three points are important to note.

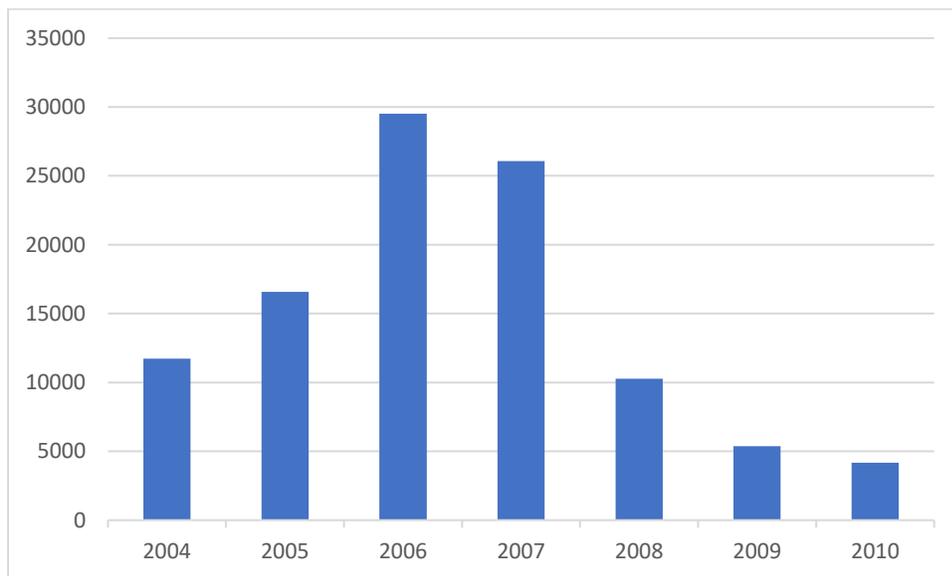
First, it is difficult to argue that civilian life in Iraq moved from a state of insecurity to security for a critical protection of the campaign. Civilian insecurity was an abiding feature of the campaign until early 2009. This outcome was not for lack of effort on part of US forces to improve civilian security; civilian insecurity persisted despite US efforts at improving civilian security. Starting 2007, for example, the US military implemented a new doctrine under the leadership of General David Petraeus. Petraeus “pushed US forces out among the population and tasked US troops with protecting Iraqi civilians themselves.”<sup>52</sup> US forces, in turn, implemented new tactics to shore up population security, including smaller, dispersed bases, dismounted patrolling, and direct provision of US security for threatened Iraqi civilians. Before 2007, select commanders had implemented population protection tactics. In contrast, from 2007 onward, “Petraeus insisted on their consistent, theaterwide adoption and thus regularized such methods across Iraq.”<sup>53</sup>

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52 Biddle, Shapiro, Friedman 2013, 23

53 Biddle, Shapiro, Friedman 2013, 23

Despite such measures, there was continued -- even if fluctuating -- violence against civilians. Available data from the Iraq Body Count on civilian casualties by any perpetrator shown in Figure 17 suggests that violence against civilians came down from the very high level of 30,000 civilian deaths in 2006, but it was above 25,000 in 2007 and close to 10,000 in 2008 – the peak years of the campaign’s degradation of AQI.<sup>54</sup> Even by 2010, violence against civilians was not insubstantial – it was close to around 5000 civilian deaths across the country.



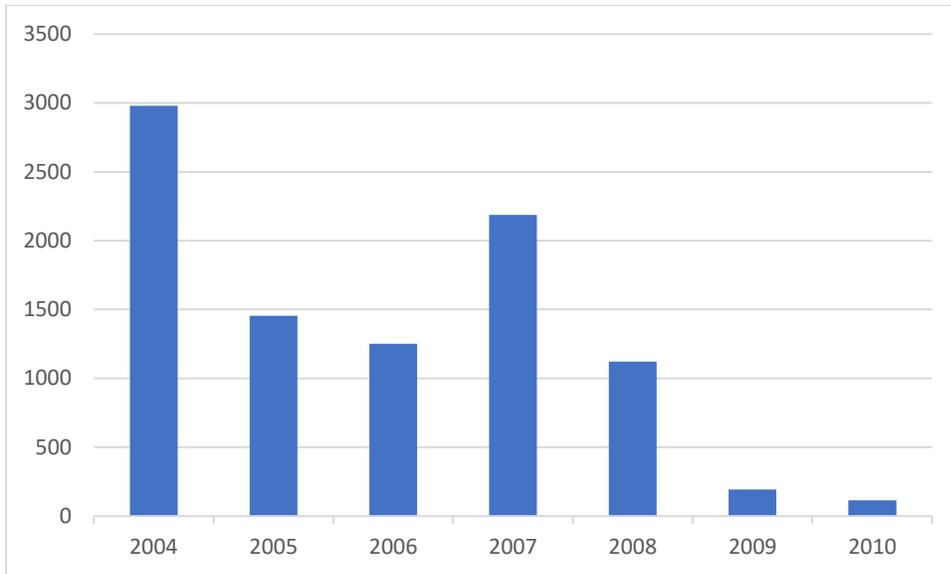
**FIGURE 17: CIVILIAN DEATHS BY ANY PERPETRATOR IN IRAQ**

The breakdown of the Iraq Body Count on civilian casualties shown in Figure 18 suggests that the US shift to civilian protection measures did not eradicate civilian casualties even by US and Iraqi security forces.<sup>55</sup> In 2007, around 2000 civilians were killed in US and Iraqi military actions, which was substantially higher than 2006 and 2007, when US and Iraqi forces killed between 1200 and 1500 civilians. In 2008, civilian casualties came down but were still substantial – around the same level as they were in 2006.

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54 Iraq Body Count 2018, <https://www.iraqbodycount.org/database/>

55 Iraq Body Count 2018, <https://www.iraqbodycount.org/database/>



**FIGURE 18: CIVILIAN DEATHS BY US/IRAQI FORCES**

In early 2008, the UN Mission in Iraq powerfully noted the widespread state of insecurity for the civilian population: “During the first half of 2008 and despite the improvement in general security conditions, indiscriminate violence and targeted killings continued throughout Iraq. UNAMI received numerous reports of deliberate attacks on civilians as a result of car and suicide bombings, extrajudicial executions and abductions. Armed groups continue to ignore the distinction between civilians and combatants. These systematic and widespread attacks against a civilian population are tantamount to crimes against humanity and violate the laws and customs of war.”<sup>56</sup> It offered a similar assessment in 2009, noting that “as with previous reports, UNAMI notes with concern that the issue of civilian deaths and injuries as a result of military ground operations or checkpoint confrontations continued during the reporting period.”<sup>57</sup>

<sup>56</sup> 2008 Human Rights Report, UN Assistance Mission for Iraq, 6

<sup>57</sup> 2009 Human Rights Report, UN Assistance Mission for Iraq, 11

The counterinsurgency campaign in the period also involved arbitrary abductions and detentions by US and Iraqi counterinsurgency forces.<sup>58</sup> Disappearances of civilians increased in 2007, especially at the newly created checkpoints. Local and international rights organizations have documented such abuses. A 2007 report noted: “With a drastic increase of violence and disappearances at checkpoints in Baghdad, some citizens say they now fear checkpoints more than they fear explosions.”<sup>59</sup> It went on to add that “...the number of people who had disappeared after being arrested at checkpoints in the capital had increased significantly since February 2007. The Iraqi Ministry of Human Rights said it has looked into many cases of Iraqis missing after being stopped at checkpoints, but said “police officers have shown sufficient proof that they have not had anything to do with their disappearances.” That contradicts many eyewitness accounts.”<sup>60</sup> In 2009, in its annual report on the human rights conditions in Iraq, the US State Department noted: “During the year, the following significant human rights problems were reported: a climate of violence; misappropriation of official authority by sectarian, criminal, and extremist groups; arbitrary deprivation of life; disappearances; torture and other cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment.”<sup>61</sup>

Second, the US government resorted to extensive use of heavy fire-power. Data on US air strikes in Iraq is telling on this point.<sup>62</sup> In 2007, the US forces undertook 546 strikes in 19542 sorties, dropping 1708 munitions. In 2008, the US forces undertook 270 strikes in 18422 close air support sorties, dropping 915 munitions. In 2009, the use of air-power came down – US forces

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58 Williams and Al-Salhy 2009

59 Adriaenssens 2010

60 Adriaenssens 2010

61 US State Department 2008

62 AFCENT CFACC Airpower Statistics for 2004 to 2011

undertook 8061 close air support sorties, dropping 119 munitions. US use of heavy firepower was not limited to air operations. Heavy firepower abounded in ground operations intended to establish control in regions where US or Iraqi forces were not present. We find abundant evidence on the use of heavy firepower during ground operations in most descriptions of US Army operations in Iraq for 2007 and 2008.<sup>63</sup> The Operation Fardh al-Qanoon in Baghdad, for example, started out with “methodical and persistent patrolling through heavily populated areas” in order to improve civilian security. But early in the operation, heavy firepower began to be called in. In June 2007, the US forces launched a conventional assault in the Baghdad Belts against AQI hideouts and safe havens, what was called Operation Phantom Thunder. One leg of the operation was limited to regions in and around Fallujah, called Operation Alljah. Another leg of the operation was limited to regions in and around Baqubah, called Operation Arrowhead Ripper. A third major sub-operation was limited to Arab Jabour, called Marne Torche. These were “intensive clearing operations” which brought “heavy firepower to bear.”<sup>64</sup> For instance, one of them used “forty-six JDAM bombs, fifty-seven GMLRS rockets, four Excalibur satellite-guided artillery rounds.”<sup>65</sup> The 3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry division in the south of Baghdad was “determined to fight fire with fire.”<sup>66</sup> In another instance, the Air Force’s “B-1 bombers pounded two intersections south of Arab Jabour with satellite-guided bombs.”<sup>67</sup> To be clear, these are select illustrations. Histories of the Surge offered by Schlosser 2017 and Andrade 2010 suggest a widespread pattern of heavy firepower use throughout 2008 and 2009.<sup>68</sup>

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63 See US Army histories of the Surge: Schlosser 2017 and Andrade 2010. Biddle, Shapiro, Friedman 2013 discuss firepower. Schlosser 2017 notes that “the US forces frequently found themselves drawing on their expertise and training in conventional, small-unit combat to defeat the enemy forces.”

64 Gordon and Tainor 2012, 396-398

65 Gordon and Tainor 2012, 396

66 Gordon and Tainor 2012, 398

67 Gordon and Tainor 2012, 398

68 Also see: Long 2016’s Iraq chapter

Third, the overall level of civilian economic well-being for majority of Iraqis appears to have remained low through the course of the campaign. There were some improvements, but those improvements appear to have changed the state of poor service delivery and lack of basic amenities to large parts of the Iraqi population. Data obtained from the Brookings Institute's Iraq Index suggests that until 2009 majority of Iraqis did not have access to Sewage, Water, Electricity, Fuel, and Public Health.<sup>69</sup> These numbers are shown in Table 39. While there was improvement in 2009 compared to 2008, the percentage of population with access to basic services across the country was below 50%. Again, this outcome was not for lack of effort on part of the US government. The US government provided aid through a variety of programs. The US government spent around USD 10.2 Billion in aid through USAID and the State Department.<sup>70</sup> In addition, the US forces initiated a special program called the Commander's Emergency Relief Program for small-project reconstruction by tactical military commanders in various provinces, which built projects and disbursed material aid worth USD 2.3 Billion from 2007 to 2010.<sup>71</sup>

**TABLE 39: % OF POPULATION WITH SERVICES**

	Feb-08	Feb-09
Sewage	8	20
Water	22	45
Electricity	23	42
Fuel	25	48
Public Health	18	30

69 Brookings Institution's Iraq Index: <https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/index20100728.pdf>

70 Brookings Institution's Iraq Index: <https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/index20100728.pdf>

71 SIGAR 2011; This doesn't include any development/economic aid funds that the Government of Iraq might have spent directly.

## L&S

L&S provides strong explanatory power for the outcome of the campaign. Per multiple indicators, US forces reformed and invested in a wide variety of new capacities of their ground forces, intelligence agencies, and special operations task forces to improve capabilities which the new theory subsumes under L&S. This leads me to conclude that US forces appear to have achieved high L&S. On the side of legibility, four points are important to note:

First, the US government implemented a wide-ranging population monitoring program. At the heart of the population monitoring was a concerted effort on part of US forces to tabulate, record, and track as many details on the civilian population as possible. The base of this was a biometric population registration program: “[Over] the course of the surge Multi-National Corps-Iraq introduced biometric identity screening devices into Iraq.”<sup>72</sup> US forces collected detailed biometric data in two major ways. One was through the Biometric Automated Toolset (BAT), which was “a laptop computer with identification processing software and associated devices that could scan a person’s iris or read his or her fingerprints.”<sup>73</sup> A second way was through the Hand-Held Interagency Identity Equipment (HIDE) – this was “fielded at the commencement of the surge in 2007” as part of which “Soldiers would collect biometric data during the normal course of operations.”<sup>74</sup> In addition to the biometric database, US forces also undertook targeted censuses in various provinces through their ground forces. US military battalions “would cordon off an entire city block and then proceed to interview every family inside their homes... The

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72 Mansoor 2013, 75

73 Mansoor 2013, 75-76

74 Mansoor 2013, 75-76

soldiers gathered basic personal and family information from every household, which enabled [the battalion] to map out the demographic realities.”<sup>75</sup>

The US government also integrated the biometric database with entry-exit operations in select regions and cities to track the civilian population better: “From Baghdad to Mosul, the US military has rapidly constructed scores of massive concrete walls, barriers and checkpoints between and around Iraqi neighborhoods and cities. Euphemistically referred to as “gated communities,” vast areas of Iraq have been sealed off behind concrete walls and sand berms. In Baghdad alone, 12-foot-high concrete walls separate and surround at least 11 Sunni and Shiite communities, and even now subdivide Sadr City.”<sup>76</sup> These walls were “Often covered with graffiti and broken by narrow checkpoints where soldiers monitor traffic via newly issued ID cards and biometric scanning devices.”<sup>77</sup> The entry-exit movement was layered and spread out. The Marines, for example, divided “Fallujah into sectors, each of which they subsequently cleared and “gated” (using cement barriers and other obstacles coupled with an identification card system to monitor entry).”<sup>78</sup> The US government further tied the population registration to sale and purchase of key assets of the civilian population, like cell phones. US government encouraged the establishment of a modern communication infrastructure following the invasion. Cell phone licenses were sold across northern, southern, and central Iraq. In 2007, a nation-wide coverage license was sold, which was obtained by a company called Zain.<sup>79</sup> Zain extensively liaised with the counterinsurgency forces, providing detailed records on cellular subscribers.<sup>80</sup>

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75 Mansoor 2013, 75

76 Nina 2008

77 Nina 2008

78 Mansoor 2013, 135

79 SIGAR 2008

80 McChrystal 2013, 199

Second, the US government placed extensive emphasis on improving their legibility tactics during the campaign. One of the key facets was through large-scale and systematic interrogation. According to US Army General Stanley McChrystal, then JSOC commander and later commander of the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan (ISAF), “detainee intelligence” was vital for his Task Force 714, a key component of the US counterinsurgency forces in Iraq.<sup>81</sup> The importance was motivated by the fact that “Detainees can explain the meaning of what we see from other intelligence sources and can let us step into the mechanics, mindset, and weaknesses of the enemy organization...Many of those operatives captured nightly had extensive knowledge of a particular function or aspect of the AQI network in which they were situated and that information often generated new targeting options.”<sup>82</sup> Until 2005, US forces had grave shortages of specialized staff which could adequately interrogate arrested cadres: “We suffered from a shortage of trained interrogators.”<sup>83</sup> This began to change by 2007; more interrogators and specialized detention facilities were created to make the interrogation processes.<sup>84</sup> To extract the most from the detainees in order to locate the insurgency, “[the] CT task force interrogators concluded, an interdependent relationship between interrogators and intelligence analysts was essential. The knowledge exploited by analysts from the intelligence collected by ISR and HUMINT and extracted from all those devices and documents gathered up on TF 714 raids and utilized to identify the nodes and links in AQI networks was also vital to how interrogators conducted the questioning of detainees.”<sup>85</sup>

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81 McChrystal 2013, 198-203

82 McChrystal 2013, 199

83 McChrystal 2013, 178

84 McChrystal 2013, 179

85 Schultz Jr 2016, 53

Finally, the US government extensively relied on technological tools like interception and sustained aerial surveillance in a number of regions of Iraq to monitor the civilian population. In and around Baghdad, “SIGINT (signals interception) crap” – recordings and intercepts of cellular, landline, and/or handheld radios -- was used by regular infantry/army units and special operations forces to trawl for traces of the insurgent organization.<sup>86</sup> Interception technologies were combined with advanced aerial surveillance platforms, called Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR): “ISR provided the technical means to become “intimately familiar with a target’s habits and characteristics to the degree that they could easily recognize something unusual and in some cases even detect a visual signature of how the target walked, traveled in groups, or engaged other people.”<sup>87</sup> As Task Force 714’s intelligence chief Lieutenant General Flynn told Schultz Jr, ISR platforms were employed with “long dwell time [and] persistent surveillance directed against known and suspected terrorist sites or individuals.”<sup>88</sup> The goal of such sustained surveillance was “to apply multi-sensor observation 24/7 to achieve a greater understanding of how the enemy’s network operates by building a pattern-of-life analysis.”<sup>89</sup> ISR platforms were in limited availability at the start of the campaign, but battlefield commanders paid early and abundant attention to improving their fleet: “Predator unmanned aerial vehicles, especially those armed with Hellfire missiles, were coin of the realm. Allocation of these scarce assets gripped General Petraeus and, above him, US Central Command and the Pentagon...McChrystal likened the debate to the argument over the allocation of gasoline during the breakout from the Normandy beachhead in the fall of 1944...He would soon get his wish.”<sup>90</sup>

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86 Interview, Schultz Jr 2016

87 Schultz Jr 2016, 50

88 Schultz Jr 2016, 50

89 Schultz Jr 2016, 50

90 Mansoor 2013, 81, Gates 2014, 127

ISR availability was also increased for conventional forces. Lieutenant General Raymond T. Odierno, the Commander of the Multi-National Corps-Iraq, noted the increase in the availability of ISR assets in late 2008: “While still insufficient to meet the demand of the COIN environment, significantly more ISR assets are available to commanders in Iraq today than were available in the early stages of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Since 2003–2004, [Full Motion Video] within the corps has increased tenfold. However, it is not just about numbers; it is also about improved capability... Today, the corps can count on daily support from at least 12 [Full Motion Video] systems while each BCT has its own organic [Full Motion Video] support.”<sup>91</sup>

Like legibility, the speed of exploitation of legibility gains was also high. There are multiple indicators which suggest this to be the case. First, US counterinsurgency leaders built a bureaucratic structure which would rapidly process, share, and disseminate legibility gains from all available sources inside and outside Iraq. The key structure in this regard was within the TF 714 and called the Joint Intelligence Agency Task Force (JIATF). It could draw on all legibility sources available at the disposal of any US agency in/outside Iraq as well as those of the fledgling Iraqi government: “The JIATF could call on the full toolbox of intelligence capabilities its interagency partners brought to the table to locate and fix a target “in time and space.””<sup>92</sup> Members of the JIATF included the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), National Security Agency (NSA), Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA), National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency (NGA). These members were represented by liaison officers, or LNOs, to facilitate effective working relationships with the larger US Government

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91 Odierno, Brooks, Mastracchio 2008

92 Schultz Jr 2016, 41

counterterrorism network.<sup>93</sup> In addition, the special operations task force and the conventional army units on the ground in various areas also liaised at the level of the JIATF: “the institutional barriers between conventional and special forces began to slowly erode.”<sup>94</sup>

The conventional force’s capabilities to disseminate, analyze, and receive information from various legibility sources in real time was enhanced as well. In addition to creating sizable analysis components at the level of the brigade combat teams, the conventional forces appear to have been integrated into the theatre-wide intelligence apparatus, including that of the TF 714.<sup>95</sup> As the US Army’s official history notes, “Before the campaign, the Special Operations Forces in Iraq, consisting of elements from the various service special operations commands, the Central Intelligence Agency, and the British Special Air Service, had often operated independently from the conventional units, sometimes conducting raids in areas without informing the local commanders on the ground. By 2007, Lt. Gen. Stanley J. McChrystal’s Joint Special Operations Command Task Force had fine-tuned its operational approach, effectively synchronizing its reconnaissance and analysis efforts.”<sup>96</sup> The conventional force were able to draw in on legibility from technology based sources [like ISR] which were being run by other organizations: “tactical commanders in Iraq integrate theater ISR assets into their operations [through] the presence of Combined Air Operations Center (CAOC)/Combined Forces Air Component Command (CFACC) ISR liaison officers at division headquarters.”<sup>97</sup>

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93 Schultz Jr 2016, 55

94 Mansoor 2013, 81

95 Mansoor 2013, 81, Odierno, Brooks, Mastracchio 2008

96 Schlosser 2017, 61

97 Odierno, Brooks, Mastracchio 2008

Second, the US government also paid extensive attention to its protocols and capital to increase pace of reaction on information leads. The rapid mobilization was achieved, in part, by building new capability of decentralized troop presence with conventional forces. Across the various Brigade Combat Teams and Regimental Combat Teams, US forces created a well spread out network of outposts, breaking the fortified siege deployment that had been common in early part of the war. According to US Army official history, the spread of “battalion-sized joint security stations and smaller, company- and platoon-sized combat outposts” gave US conventional forces “a rapid response capability.”<sup>98</sup>

The real source of rapid reaction, however, were the assets at the disposal of the Task Force 714. The exact quantum of the available resources remains classified, but these sources appear to have been abundant and some of the highest that US forces brought to bear in that period across Iraq and Afghanistan.<sup>99</sup> These assets ranged from Predator unmanned aerial vehicles, especially those armed with Hellfire missiles, to a vast fleet of heliborne teams of commandos and special operators.<sup>100</sup>

Third, the US government extensively devolved decision-making authorities while simplifying the rules of engagement for targeting to enable the rapid sharing of information and exploitation of available leads. This was true for both special forces and conventional forces. The Special Forces, had vast and broad-reaching operational purview under the AUMF. That political purview was enabled by delegation of absolute authority on obtaining any available intelligence

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98 Schlosser 2017, 41

99 McChrystal 2013, 180-181

100 McChrystal 2013, 180-181

source within the US counterinsurgency bureaucracy in Iraq and/or undertaking targeting by the theatre-commander, David Petraeus, to the special forces. As McChrystal notes, “From the very beginning, Dave had been supportive of TF 714’s target missions in Iraq...My teams needed immense freedom to operate in order to achieve the required operational tempo...the only way I could manage the balance between assuming the risk for their actions and allowing them enough autonomy was through trust, and lots of it.”<sup>101</sup> Mid-ranging rungs of the conventional forces could call on close air support, armed, and unarmed ISR while bypassing senior central commanders: “ISR is working in Iraq because tactical leaders are maximizing the effectiveness of a limited resource. The optimal use of ISR is enabled through decentralized control that provides the greatest flexibility at the lowest levels within the command.”<sup>102</sup>

## Mechanisms

The congruence analysis of this case, on its own, suggests that the campaign achieved sufficiently high L&S, which should have led to effectiveness. In that sense, the new theory appears to have merit. But it might be argued that I have measured the variables of group type, force level, and/or hearts-and-minds wrong. Or some other case specific explanation better explains the outcome, and thus I have stumbled upon a false positive. To better arbitrate between the different explanations and improve or reduce confidence in the findings of the congruence analysis, the key question to probe is: How did AQI undergo such substantial degradation? Different explanations suggest distinct mechanisms for why the AQI’s degradation should take place, which offer an opportunity to verify the various theories at hand. Given availability of

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101 McChrystal 2013, 268

102 Odierno, Brooks, Mastracchio 2008

evidence, I test three key mechanisms: where information came from for targeting of AQI, if exploitation processes played any serious role in driving the targeting process, and whether the alternative explanation of the “Awakening” can account for AQI’s trajectory.

#### Hearts-and-minds vs L&S: Where was the Information Coming From?

The hearts-and-minds and L&S arguments depart on the source of information for counterinsurgency forces. If the hearts-and-minds explanation is valid, AQI’s degradation should be mediated by a surge in civilian informing due to the civilian security measures instituted by the US forces. Some scholars have argued that targeting based on technological sources, such as those that I subsume under L&S, can minimize collateral damage and improve civilian confidence in government forces, and in turn bolster civilian collaboration with counterinsurgents.<sup>103</sup> Thus, a necessary and sufficient implication for hearts-and-minds to hold is that the targeting of AQI should have a large share of civilian collaboration. On the other hand, if the variable of L&S is doing most of the causal work, we should see the legitimacy sources largely driving the counterinsurgent’s information acquisition process. This is a necessary implication for the variable of L&S to be valid.

A variety of sources suggest that civilian informants did not form the thrust of the information flows which drove the degradation of AQI -- thereby ruling out the hearts-and-minds argument. Three data points are important. First, detailed interviews of US Special Force leaders charged with targeting Al-Qaeda in Iraq from 2006 to 2010 do not place any real emphasis on civilian

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<sup>103</sup> Shapiro and Weidmann 2014; As noted earlier in the case study, across the Iraqi theatre, collateral damage by US/Iraqi forces was very high until 2008

collaboration as the key source of intelligence in the target killing of what appear to have been thousands of AQI operatives.<sup>104</sup> These interviews, conducted by Richard Schultz Jr, suggest that the goal of the Special Forces was to target the senior and mid-ranking leadership of Al-Qaeda, and that most of the information was acquired from interrogation of detainees, technological sources like ISR and interception, systematic sifting of captured documents, cell phones, and/or laptop, and the triangulation of available leads from large databases of records on the civilian population.<sup>105</sup> This is a common theme of response by respondents ranging from General Stanley McChrystal, Admiral William McRaven, General Joseph Votel, and other anonymous senior leaders of the TF 714. In addition to refuting the hearts-and-minds argument, this evidence strongly aligns with the implication of the L&S argument on where information should come from for counterinsurgency forces in a high L&S campaign.

A second key source of evidence – which corroborates Schultz Jr’s interview data -- comes from a leaked document on the sources of information underlying the target killing lists of the AQI in 2007.<sup>106</sup> Prepared by the US government’s interagency ISR Taskforce in 2013, which appears to have had access to wide-ranging US government internal records, this document identifies the initial set of leads to develop “target packages” in Iraq.<sup>107</sup> It shows that the major sources of initial information – like names, phones numbers, and locations – came from a variety of signals interception, interrogation of detainees, and documents/media obtained during previous raids; there is no mention of human intelligence via civilian informants. Figure 19 shows the breakdown of sources for target packages as provided in the original document. Again, in

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104 Schultz Jr 2016

105 Schultz Jr 2016, 50-55

106 ISR Taskforce 2013

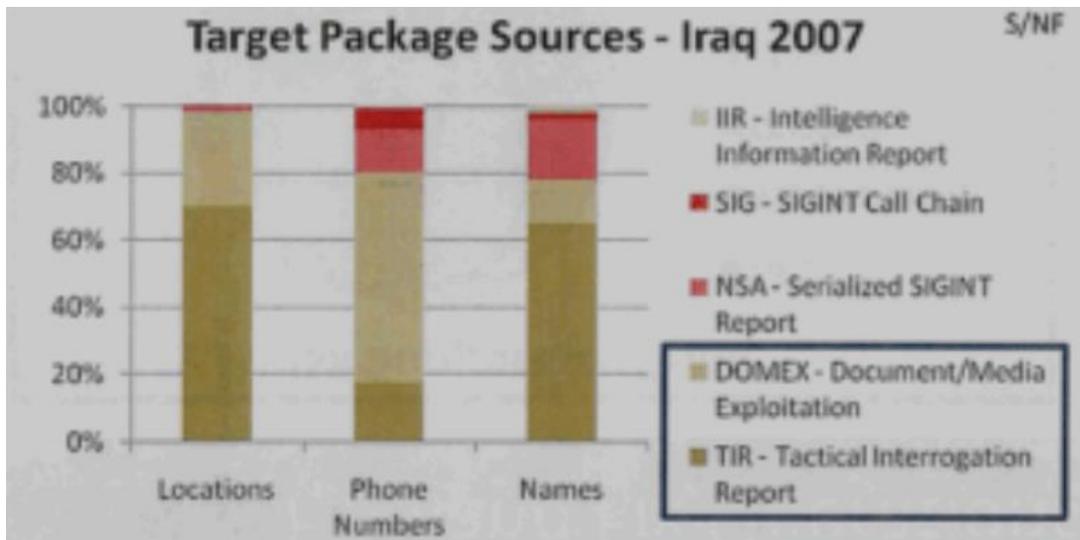
107 ISR Taskforce 2013, 9

addition to refuting the hearts-and-minds argument, this evidence strongly aligns with the implication of the L&S argument.

Third, US conventional ground forces comprising of the various BCTs charged with patrolling and providing security to the Iraqi population also appear to have not relied on an increase in civilian collaboration in this period. Biddle, Shapiro, and Friedman conducted an original series of seventy structured interviews with coalition officers who fought in the 2006–08 campaign across 20 districts of Iraq. Their interview data rules out greater collaboration of Iraqi civilians with coalition forces. They note: “Current US doctrine is often seen as predicting victory for counterinsurgents who “win hearts and minds” by providing superior government services, thereby persuading uncommitted civilians to back the government and reject the insurgents. There is no evidence, however, that the 2007 turnaround occurred because some group of nonaligned civilians changed their minds and decided to support Nouri al-Maliki’s government.”<sup>108</sup>

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108 Biddle at al 2013, 38



**FIGURE 19: US COUNTERINSURGENCY INFORMATION LEADS SYNOPSIS 2007**

L&S: Importance of Information Exploitation to Mapping AQI and Targeting Tempo

The above evidence bolsters faith in the importance of L&S in one way: information acquisition through legibility sources. A related necessary implication for L&S to hold is the importance of exploitation of legibility gains. As detailed earlier while describing the variable of L&S for the campaign, the US forces invested in and reformed a range of capacities to improve their speed of exploitation. Still, the question remains whether that actually enabled the rapid exploitation of legibility gains, and in turn the location and targeting of the AQI. A variety of sources suggest that the exploitation infrastructure created by US forces was a crucial contributor to exploitation of information acquired into useful information – either for more analysis or actual targeting. US forces’ exploitation was central to capitalizing on the information generated by the various legibility sources available. Without the exploitation infrastructure, US forces would have struggled to turn legibility gains into useful information – either for more analysis or actual targeting. The role of analysis and collation of information gained from various sources took centerstage.

A very telling datapoint on this emerges in Richard Schultz Jr's interview of Lt Gen Michael Flynn, TF 714's intelligence chief until 2008. Providing a detailed narrative on how leads and cues available from a number of distinct sources were collated, analyzed, and acted upon, he describes the centrality of the vast exploitation infrastructure for targeting. He notes: "You could already have intelligence that you collected from previous operations. For example, our interrogators would go into an interrogation looking for something in particular. We might be going after a particular individual and we find out that the just captured detainee knew him, was in contact with him, and could know his location. How did we know this? Here is an example I remember. At 2200 one night we do a download on the phone of a just captured detainee, and we have the technology in place because technology was never the problem. So, we would process it immediately. Here are his contacts. We do a quick contacts check, and that's all done internally. We didn't have to go back to big NSA, all is being done internally. And we find out here is a number that's associated with an insurgent we are looking for. That information from the analyst is provided in real time to the interrogator who would go back into the interrogation booth and bring the guy back in to the booth and ask about this guy and about his location. This led to a new target that we put ISR collection on. This is all happening in a span of 3 or 4 hours. Now we know the house, we have a phone number that's associated with it, and we have the site under observation. If the phone rings, we can listen in. If the target leaves the house we can follow him. And as we are doing this, a team is preparing to carry out a raid on the house and capture the target. It is still the same night."<sup>109</sup>

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109 Schultz Jr 2016, 43

In addition to illustrating the broader point on the importance of exploitation, Flynn’s narration also suggests that a key contributor in the swift analysis and collation was the seamless flow of information between the different agencies. This was enabled by the JIATF in the TF 714, which had minimized barriers between various organizations: “We could do that because of all the interagency representatives. They all brought something. NSA brings their signal capacity, DIA and CIA bring in their analytical capacity, FBI helps with forensics... We tracked targets with all the tools of intelligence.”<sup>110</sup> Sustained exploitation, in turn, allowed US forces to map out the AQI organization. Schultz notes that “What these intelligence capabilities permitted the members of the JIATF to do was to develop the ‘pattern of life’ for a member of AQI and then to map out his place in an AQI network.”<sup>111</sup> Admiral McRaven, who was commander of JSOC from 2008 onward, further noted that “we were able to map out different parts of their [AQI] networks, what they were involved in, who was involved, how they were linked together.”<sup>112</sup> Explaining how the insurgency became visible to the counterinsurgency force from the leads and cues generated by the legibility sources, Schultz adds: “[A]nalysts begin to put together the outline of a sub-network for one part of AQI in one part of Iraq. They figured out where it was located, who populated it, what the communication patterns looked like, who was in charge, and what they were planning to do... All of this intelligence, collected and exploited in a very short period of time, was triangulated with information already in data management systems.”<sup>113</sup>

The result of such high speed of exploitation is borne out by the operational tempo that US forces acquired in this period. Multiple analysts and officials report the high operational tempo.

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110 Schultz Jr 2016, 44

111 Schultz Jr 2016, 43

112 Schultz Jr 2016, 68

113 Schultz Jr 2016, 45

Schultz notes that “Between 2006 and 2009 the task force maintained an operational tempo of 300 raids a month against AQI’s networks in Iraq through the JIATF system described in this study.”<sup>114</sup> An anonymous respondent told Schultz: “We could capture, kill, exploit, develop, and disseminate intelligence within a 24-hour cycle, and in one period of darkness we would sequentially execute up to eight to 12 missions.”<sup>115</sup> Mansoor 2013 offers a similar assessment: “By 2007, several thousand hardcore operatives had been eliminated from the battlefield.”<sup>116</sup> Fishman similarly notes: “American commandos had spent the past four years perfecting the process of exploiting intelligence quickly and bouncing to follow-on.”<sup>117</sup>

Overall, then, if the interview data is taken seriously, there is strong support for L&S. However, the process tracing evidence should not be overinterpreted. It only tests two necessary implication. Passing these tests improves confidence in the theory, but as they are not sufficient implications, these tests do not affirmatively rule in favor of the theory. Additional testing of the mechanism of effects on AQI through the course of the campaign – such as the kinetic and anticipatory effects within the organization -- would be valuable. But due to lack of detailed evidence on AQI’s Iraq wide internal dynamics, this is difficult to undertake.

#### Alternative Explanation – Awakening

Around the time the campaign started, a US backed political movement against the insurgency, called the *Sahawa* or Awakening, also emerged. Starting in the winter of 2006 in Anbar, US

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114 Schultz Jr 2016, 67

115 Schultz Jr 2016, 43

116 Schultz Jr 2016, 82

117 Fishman 2016, 147

officials began to offer a combination of security and financial rewards to Sunni tribal leaders to align with the US counterinsurgency. By mid to late 2007, members of many Sunni tribes abandoned their erstwhile AQI allies in exchange for US payments of \$300/350 per fighter per month to join a corps of demobilized volunteers, called the Sons of Iraq. This demobilization was the most intense across Baghdad, Anbar, Ninewa, Diyala, Qadisiyah, Tamim, Salahuddin, Babil, and Wasit.<sup>118</sup>

In a large literature on Iraq, the Awakening has been touted as key to the reversal in violence from its peak levels in 2006 and 2007.<sup>119</sup> Others argue that the combination of the Awakening and US force increases contributed to the drop-in violence.<sup>120</sup> Can the Awakening -- on its own or as a synergistic element of the US counterinsurgency effort -- also account for AQI's sustained losses that this case analysis is trying to explain?

There are three ways in which the Awakening appears to have partially contributed to AQI's degradation. First, the realignment weaned away important support networks -- pool of recruits as well as smaller insurgent cells -- which the AQI was able to leverage before the campaign. As Iraqi civilians aligned with the US government, it fostered internecine fighting. In Diyala, for example, "...one of the first locations outside of Al Anbar to see a concerted effort by Sunni Arabs to turn on [AQI] and ally themselves with the Americans. Throughout the winter and spring of 2007, US soldiers operating in the region began to observe internecine fighting

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118 Brookings Iraq Index, Long 2008, Dodge 2012

119 Simon 2008, Lynch 2007, Michaels 2010, Green 2010, Couch 2008, Kober 2008

120 Biddle, Shapiro, Friedman 2013

between insurgent groups.”<sup>121</sup> AQI’s brutality and radical agenda “...alienated many locals, and many looked to the Americans for support and supplies.”<sup>122</sup>

Second, the Awakening led to the recruitment of 139797 Iraqi youth -- which improved the legibility of a large chunk of Iraqi population at risk of joining and/or aiding the insurgency.<sup>123</sup>

Mansoor (2013) notes that on concerns raised by Prime Minister Maliki regarding the Sons of Iraq initiative, “General Petraeus and Lieutenant General Orierno pointed out that they were hardly hidden; indeed, the biometric identity information we had gathered on the Sons of Iraq...made them easier to control, not more dangerous.”<sup>124</sup> This point is similarly echoed by Dodge (2012), noting: “During an interview with a senior US military adviser to Petraeus in Baghdad in April 2007, the Sons of Iraq Programme was described as an exercise in ‘funky DDR’ (disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of armed forces). The collection of biometric data from former insurgents in return for payment made them simultaneously visible and vulnerable to whatever organisation had access to that information.”<sup>125</sup>

Third, the Awakening generated some information at the tactical level for conventional forces, especially for neutralizing emplaced IEDs. Biddle et al (2013) suggest that the Awakening led to increase in information flows: “Interviewees reported that these SOIs manned checkpoints, provided intelligence, led patrols, and fought insurgents.”<sup>126</sup> Subsequent histories of US military officials also attest to this. In Diyala, for example, despite being “Unsure of how much trust to

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121 Schlosser 2017, 54-55

122 Schlosser 2017, 55

123 <https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/index20100427.pdf>

124 Mansoor 2013, 215

125 Dodge 2012, 101

126 Biddle, Shapiro, Friedman 2013, 34

put” in the realigned fighting units “considering that some were members of insurgent groups like the 1920 Revolution Brigades” the “Americans nevertheless accepted their aid in searching out IEDs and al-Qaeda in Iraq fighters.”<sup>127</sup> The 2nd Brigade Combat Team of the 10th Mountain Division, operating in the Triangle of Death, “energetically pursued alliances with Sons of Iraq volunteers, relying on them for intelligence on AQI operations.”<sup>128</sup> However, as discussed earlier, there is no real evidence that this information flow was dominant in driving the targeting of much of AQI – especially of its mid-ranking/specialized cadres.

## Conclusion

This case analysis provides abundant evidence in favor of the L&S. The case study shows that the US government attained an extreme value on the variable during the campaign, which correctly corresponds with the outcome of effectiveness. The case also shows evidence strongly challenging orthodox theories of counterinsurgency. None of the other variables proffered by major theories of counterinsurgency appear to offer sufficient explanatory power. However, it should be kept in mind that the case is a “most-likely” case for the new theory, so the confirmation of the theory here is important but not exceptional; if there is anywhere the theory should have been right, it was in this case.

Despite being a most-likely case, the case analysis’s value is improved by unusually strong mechanism-based evidence in favor of the L&S, part of which also contradicts alternative theories. The US government’s tactics, technologies, and organizational practices geared towards

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127 Schlosser 2017, 55

128 Schlosser 2017, 59

L&S appear to have been dominant in generating and executing on information and, in turn, targeting of the insurgency. And there is almost no support for the information flow mechanisms of the hearts-and-minds theory.

The case analysis also highlights the importance of political realignment initiatives, which remains an under-theorized feature of counterinsurgency studies.<sup>129</sup> I find that the effects of the realignment do not fully align with the importance of the L&S but also do not contradict it. The Awakening appears to have contributed to some extent both directly and through the channel of L&S in bringing about AQI's downfall.

One possible objection to the analysis is the coding of the effectiveness of the campaign. It may be argued that as the AQI staged important violence, even took control of Tikrit in 2011, the effectiveness coding is incorrect. Indeed, there is a body of historiography which argues that interpreting the US counterinsurgency as a "success" is questionable as the damage inflicted on AQI wasn't sustained post 2010.<sup>130</sup> It is worth noting that even this body of work doesn't dispute AQI's degradation until 2010; instead it asserts how short lived that damage ultimately proved to be as ISIS emerged from the ashes of AQI by 2013/2014. Thus, my coding of effectiveness is not incompatible with this view.

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129 Important exception is Roessler 2016, 135 which sketches the concept of cooperative counterinsurgency for the contexts of weak/fragile states. Even if the Awakening had been fully operative in this context, Roessler's brokerage concept wouldn't fully map here.

130 Weiss and Hassan 2015, Fishman 2016, Malkasian 2017

## Chapter 9: US Drone War in Pakistan

This chapter studies an emerging class of counterinsurgency conflicts: off-shore counterinsurgency, or counterterrorism as I will refer to it. Major powers now mount such campaigns in safe havens/weak states to fight armed groups posing transnational and/or regional threats. They do so with a combination of air-power, surveillance technologies, special operators, and local allies. Such campaigns do not involve large number of ground forces, at least of the counterterrorism state itself. The counterterrorism state also tends to not take direct political control of the state where the armed group is based. The US government, for example, has waged counterterrorism campaigns since 9/11 against Al-Qaeda, ISIS, and their affiliates in South Asia, Middle East, and Africa.<sup>1</sup> Other similar campaigns include the French in Sahel-Saharan region, the British in Syria, the Russians in Syria, and more recently the Israelis in Egypt (Sinai).

This chapter tests whether the new theory of L&S or two orthodox theories, group type and/or hearts-and-minds, have any explanatory power for effectiveness in the context of off-shore counterinsurgency and/or counterterrorism.<sup>2</sup> This chapter studies the 2004 to 2014 US

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1 In this chapter, counterterrorism is narrowly defined as use of force from “off-shore” -- combination of air-power, surveillance technologies, special operators, local allies -- to target armed groups in safe havens and weak states. This excludes counter-radicalization programming, humanitarian support, and/or information operations.

2 Both the arguments have unique salience in the context of off-shore counterinsurgency/counterterrorism. The views on limits of counterterrorism were central to the 2009/10 Afghan surge policy debate. See: Kaplan 2010. O’Hanlon and Riedel 2011, 127 noted: “[a counterterrorism option] is more likely to lead to a defeat of NATO and its Afghan allies.” Exum 2009: “an orthodox [counterterrorism] campaign is almost certainly destined to fail spectacularly in Afghanistan and Pakistan.” Major accounts seeing counterterrorism as ineffective in short and/or long term: Cronin 2012, 2013, Boyle 2013, Mazetti and Shane 2013, McChrystal 2013, Abizaid and Brooks 2015, Pape 2017, Hazelton 2017a. Important exceptions: Long 2010, Byman 2013. Many argue that counterterrorism strikes engender resentment in civilians, increasing recruitment of targets. Boyle 2013 notes for Pakistan: “Drones have given them a recruiting boost as the carnage has encouraged relatives and friends of the victims of strikes to join the ranks of the TTP or other militant groups to fight the US or the Pakistani government.” Also see: Exum and Kilcullen 2009, Cavallaro et al 2012, Cronin 2012, 2013, Mazetti and Shane 2013, Abizaid and Brooks 2015.

counterterrorism campaign against Al-Qaeda and the Pakistan Taliban in Pakistan's North Waziristan region. I employ a *Before-After* design integrated with a process tracing approach.<sup>3</sup> I draw on novel evidence collected through fieldwork, including interviews of members of Al-Qaeda and the Pakistan Taliban. The evidence shows that the campaign's low L&S period (2004 to 2007) corresponds with ineffectiveness (ascendant trajectories of the groups), whereas the high L&S period (2008 to 2014) corresponded with effectiveness (dramatic drop in the trajectories of the groups). These patterns are mediated by mechanisms of disruption expected under varied levels of the L&S and contrast with expectations of hearts-and-minds strategy and group type theories.

#### Research Design: Before-After with Process Tracing

One of the main challenges for studying counterterrorism campaigns is that they are difficult to observe.<sup>4</sup> A *Before-After* research design integrated with process tracing approaches advantages to studying counterterrorism.<sup>5</sup> This design draws on granular qualitative data collected through fieldwork to probe the internal validity of the theory and the relevant alternatives.

The strategy offers inferential leverage in three specific ways. First, this approach provides traction on the sequence of events and causal mechanisms for process tracing while a) holding

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Accounts disputing this: Fair 2014, Shah 2018. In addition to the hearts-and-minds scholarly literature cited in the literature, there is a separate policy literature which has invoked civilian-centric arguments to argue the limits of counterterrorism. For example, O'Hanlon and Riedel 2009: "The fundamental reason that a counterterrorism-focused strategy fails is that it cannot generate good intelligence." Also see: Riedel and O'Hanlon 2011. Among group type arguments, additional works which are salient to the counterterrorism debate include: Toft and Zhukov 2015, Pape 2017

<sup>3</sup> George and Bennett 2005, 166

<sup>4</sup> Challenge of inferences on behaviors of clandestine organizations, see: Parkinson 2013

<sup>5</sup> George and Bennett 2005, 166

constant factors like the structure of the state, nature of the war, per capita GDP, and geography  
b) reducing effects of independent Pakistani state activity, an important political confounder, especially from 2008 to 2014 -- Pakistan did not undertake a full-fledged territory clearance offensive in the North Waziristan Agency.<sup>6</sup>

Second, it offers within-case variation on the variable of interest for the new theory, the L&S.<sup>7</sup> George and Bennett (2005) argue that “an investigator may be able to achieve control by dividing a single longitudinal case into two sub-cases.”<sup>8</sup> I identify variation in the L&S in two temporal categories: 2004 to 2007 (low legibility, low speed) and 2008 to 2014 (high legibility, high speed) using interview data about US technological capabilities and Pakistani cooperation under the secret US-Pakistan counterterrorism collaboration.

Third, it offers different predictions under group type and hearts-and-minds theories on outcomes and mechanisms. The group-type view predicts group-specific variation. The campaign was carried out against two different groups: Al-Qaeda and the Pakistan Taliban. If it carried more explanatory power, we should see group specific variation in effectiveness. The hearts-and-minds strategy view predicts ineffectiveness under two different logics: lack of implementation of a “hearts-and-minds” strategy leading to information deficits, and a blowback logic of energized recruitment due to civilian alienation/harm.

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6 Pakistan’s political reasons for protecting the Haqqani Network were a function of its ideological project and functional need for projecting influence in Afghanistan. See: Staniland, Mir, and Lalwani 2018.

7 George and Bennett 2005, 166: “One of the difficult requirements of a before-after research design is that only one variable can change at the moment that divides the longitudinal case neatly into two.” This case meets the requirement.

8 George and Bennett 2005, 166

## Data

The research design warrants granular accounts of what the targeted groups looked like at the start of the counterterrorism campaign, how they changed over time, and the role of the counterterrorism campaign in bringing about those changes. The main evidence I use comes from 66 semi-structured interviews<sup>9</sup> in Pakistan and the US conducted in 2016 and 2017.<sup>10</sup> The interviews were conducted using the purposive sampling strategy, which is a non-probability sampling strategy most viable when the population of interest is not visible but the researcher has some knowledge to guide the selection process.<sup>11</sup> I supplement these interviews with primary source documents like the history of the Halqa Mehsud Taliban authored by Mufti Noor Wali (obtained during fieldwork), Bin Laden letters released by the US government, leaked US government documents, and secondary accounts. In the supplement, I include a detailed discussion on the health of the data. Broadly, I was challenged by issues of safety of respondents, enumerators, and fixers. On ethics of fieldwork, I took cue from Driscoll and Schuster (2017) – especially around the concern of local security services seeing the researcher/research team as “spies.” Given such challenges, I recognize limits of the data and remain open to further evidence.<sup>12</sup>

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9 My interview respondents fall in six categories: members of Al-Qaeda and the Pakistan Taliban (N=12), civilians who remained in the captivity of Al-Qaeda and the Pakistan Taliban from 2008 to 2014 (N=3), civilians who self-described as living in areas proximate to sites of drone strikes (N=22), journalists who remained in close contact with Al-Qaeda and the Pakistan Taliban (N=8), Pakistani security officials involved in coordinating or knowledgeable on US CT (N=13), Karachi police officials involved in CT operations against Al-Qaeda and Pakistan Taliban (N=2), and CIA officials involved/knowledgeable on counterterrorism in Pakistan (N=6).

10 In Pakistan: Bannu, DI Khan, Karachi, Miramsha and Mir Ali in North Waziristan Agency, Bajaur Agency, Islamabad; on the value, challenges of fieldwork in conflict zones, see: Malejacq and Mukhopadhyay 2016.

11 Tansey 2007. Rules and procedures on interviews governed by an IRB protocol.

12 See appendix for detailed discussion of interview process, health of interview data, and fieldwork ethics.

## Background

The history of Al-Qaeda's turn to Waziristan has been covered in the earlier chapters on Pakistan, specifically in the South Waziristan Agency. This chapter focuses on the events in the adjacent district of North Waziristan Agency, which was enveloped by Al-Qaeda's influx by 2003 as well.

Just to re-cap, bordering Afghanistan, Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) have been a semi-autonomous region since the country's formation in 1947. The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, put the tribal areas at the center of international politics. In late 2001, al-Qaida and other targets of the US military campaigns in Afghanistan traveled from Afghanistan's Shahikot mountains to FATA. There, al-Qaida rallied local leaders opposed to Pakistan's support for the US invasion of Afghanistan. By 2004, the resistance had grown to become the Pakistan Taliban.

In 2004, the US government, in cooperation with the Pakistani government, launched a counterterrorism campaign to target al-Qaida and its local affiliates. The campaign was governed by a secret pact reached in June 2004 between the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) agency. The agreement demarcated "flight boxes" over two regions of FATA above which US drones could fly (i.e. the Waziristan and Bajaur Agencies); it also established CIA forward bases in the tribal areas and provided for an intelligence-sharing arrangement between the two agencies regarding drone strikes.<sup>13</sup> The

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<sup>13</sup> The demarcation was initially done on "million-maps" in Pakistan's Military Operations Directorate and ISI headquarters. Interview with former Pakistani military official, 2016.

negotiations leading to the pact were complex. Pakistani leaders worried about the potential fallout of the campaign on the country's domestic politics and the possibility that the United States might use the campaign as an excuse to spy on nuclear and other facilities in Pakistan, as well as key ISI detachments.<sup>14</sup> The final pact took these concerns into account.

In 2008, the two countries renegotiated the pact to expand the program. In January 2008, CIA Director Michael Hayden and US Director National Intelligence Michael McConnell met with Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf and brokered a wide-reaching intelligence-sharing and targeting arrangement featuring looser rules of engagement than contained in the original pact.<sup>15</sup>

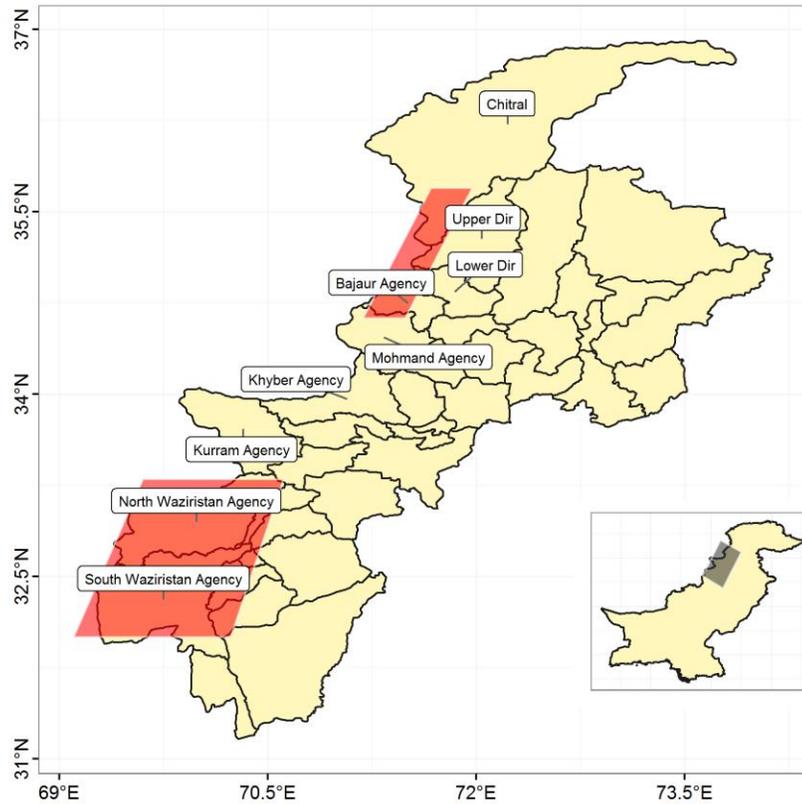
An ISI official with knowledge of the 2008 pact explained the context at the time: "General Musharraf was under tremendous pressure at the time. He was worried about his own survival in office and wanted American support."<sup>16</sup> Pakistan agreed to the expansion of the campaign, but terminated the flight box over Bajaur Agency (see Map 6).

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<sup>14</sup> Levy and Scott-Clark 2017, 222.

<sup>15</sup> Interview with Pakistani military official, 2016. Hayden's meeting with Musharraf has been referenced in Woods 2015, 111.

<sup>16</sup> Interview with former ISI official, 2016.



**MAP 6: INSERT SHOWS MAP OF PAKISTAN. SHADED AREAS DEMARCATED AS FLIGHT BOXES IN 2004. FROM 2008, THE LOWER SHADED AREA REMAINED AS THE ONLY FLIGHT BOX. SHADING APPROXIMATED FROM A HAND-MARKED MAP OBTAINED FROM A PAKISTANI INTELLIGENCE OFFICIAL. SOURCE: FIELDWORK PAKISTAN.**

### The US Counterterrorism Campaign's L&S in Waziristan

In this section, I discuss the broad patterns of the L&S in North Waziristan Agency across two time periods: 2004 to 2007 and 2008 to 2014.

#### Constraints and Limits on L&S, 2004–07

From 2004 to 2007, multiple indicators suggest that the L&S was low. First, in terms of legibility, the US counterterrorism force had only limited availability of drone “orbits” to monitor much of Waziristan.<sup>17</sup> (“Orbit” here refers to a metric used to determine the number of surveillance platforms employed by the US government.) Interviews with officials from Pakistani intelligence and the US government suggest that surveillance drones were often unavailable during this period of the campaign.<sup>18</sup> Second, the ISI did not provide the CIA access to its domestic communication-interception infrastructure.<sup>19</sup> Third, the campaign had limited human intelligence resources (including linguists and analysts). The CIA and ISI joint human intelligence program to identify drone targets was small and lacked funding.<sup>20</sup>

In terms of speed, the campaign also experienced significant limitations. First, the targeting protocol was severely constrained. The US government process for determining the legality and utility of targeting was cumbersome and created significant time lags.<sup>21</sup> From 2004 to 2006, all strikes had to be cleared first by the director-general of the ISI and then the Pakistani president.<sup>22</sup> In 2006, the US government further constrained the process with the imposition of a “triple trigger” system, requiring the agreement of three officials before a subject could be targeted: the CIA’s station chief in Islamabad, a US military commander, and the US ambassador to Pakistan.<sup>23</sup> Second, the campaign suffered from a paucity of US armed-strike platforms, especially as the war in Iraq intensified.<sup>24</sup> Consequently, in a number of instances where the CIA

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<sup>17</sup> Interview with former ISI official, 2017; and interview with US government official, 2016.

<sup>18</sup> Interviews with former ISI officials, and US government officials in Chicago and Washington, D.C., 2016 and 2017.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Interviews former ISI and Pakistani military officials, 2016 and 2017.

<sup>21</sup> Grenier 2016, 381–382; and author interview with former US government official, 2016.

<sup>22</sup> Interview with former ISI official, 2017; and Woods 2015, 102.

<sup>23</sup> Interview with former US government official, 2017.

<sup>24</sup> Interview with ISI official, 2016; and author interview with US government official, 2016.

had some intelligence leads, it would pass them on to its Pakistani interlocutors, who would mobilize regular infantry units to carry out raids.

#### Ramped-Up L&S, 2008–14

From 2008 to 2014, the US counterterrorism campaign attained high L&S in North Waziristan Agency. Four factors contributed to change this. First, starting 2007, the US government significantly augmented its technical capability to undertake intensive aerial surveillance by bringing online a stream of Predator and Reaper drones.<sup>25</sup> By 2008, these drones were operating over Waziristan. The US Air Force Central Command reported 3,764 Predator and Reaper sorties until 2007 in regions within the Central Command, which includes Pakistan; this number increased to 7,185 in 2008 and 9,415 in 2009.<sup>26</sup> In interviews, Pakistani officials also noted a surge in “ISR [intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance platform] activities” and continuous surveillance by multiple drones over North Waziristan.<sup>27</sup>

Second, the US government increased its surveillance and analysis resources designated for the campaign. According to a former US official involved with the campaign, the level of surveillance resources starting in 2008 was substantially higher than it was for operations in Somalia and Yemen until 2014.<sup>28</sup> A US intelligence official noted that the National Security Agency (NSA) “threw the kitchen sink at the FATA”; to achieve its “huge coverage of the

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<sup>25</sup> Gates, 2013, 133; and interview with former US government official, 2016.

<sup>26</sup> Declassified by US Central Command under a Freedom of Information Act request (2016-04358-F).

<sup>27</sup> Interview with former Pakistani military officials, 2016 and 2017.

<sup>28</sup> Interview with former US government official, 2017.

FATA, NSA had 10 times the manpower, 20 times the budget, and 100 times the brainpower” compared to the CIA’s Information Operations Center.<sup>29</sup>

Third, the US and Pakistani governments deepened their level of cooperation under the 2008 pact. One interviewee remarked on their wide-ranging communication interception and population data-sharing arrangement, part of which focused on Waziristan. Additionally, ISI increased US access to the region’s communication infrastructure to facilitate interception.<sup>30</sup> The ISI cooperated with a number of US NSA surveillance programs, including the Boundless Informant Program, to identify telephone numbers and record phone calls.<sup>31</sup> The ISI’s Bannu detachment (renamed Counterterrorism Center Bannu in 2008) shared population records available through North Waziristan’s political administration.<sup>32</sup> The ISI also provided the CIA’s forward bases with analysts, linguists, and mapping information until 2009.<sup>33</sup>

Fourth, the CIA upgraded its human intelligence infrastructure for North Waziristan, with significant support from the ISI. By 2008, there were two human-intelligence networks on the ground. One was set up by the ISI’s counterterrorism wing, which coordinated its operations with the CIA’s Islamabad station.<sup>34</sup> The second was managed directly by the CIA’s Islamabad station. In addition to Afghanistan-based units in regions bordering FATA, this network relied on retired Pakistani intelligence officials and was operated without the knowledge of the ISI.

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<sup>29</sup> Miller, Tate, and Gellman 2013

<sup>30</sup> Interview with former ISI official, 2016.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid; International 2015, 6, mentions deep cooperation between the ISI and NSA.

<sup>32</sup> Interview with former ISI official, 2016.

<sup>33</sup> ISI’s support to the forward bases 2010 and onward remained unclear in interviews.

<sup>34</sup> Interview with former ISI official, 2016.

The influx of Predator and Reaper drones concentrated in a relatively small region ensured that the CIA had ample rapid-strike capability without having to compromise continuous aerial surveillance operations, as had been common in the past. This capability translated into high speed, for two reasons. First, the US government gave the CIA considerable leeway in undertaking strikes against unknown targets.<sup>35</sup> Given the “Agency’s understanding with the Pakistanis in 2008,” noted one US government official, the CIA began to ignore the triple-trigger requirement in early 2008 and officially shelved it in early 2009.<sup>36</sup> The ISI agreed to let the US government execute strikes at times and locations of its choice.<sup>37</sup> Second, the US policy expanded beyond targeting “high-value” al-Qaida leaders to include fighters whose “patterns of suspicious behavior [could be] detected from drone surveillance cameras.”<sup>38</sup>

Although the overall capacity and rules of the campaign remained similar throughout this period, there was one exception. Interviewees noted that tenuous relations between the US and Pakistani governments from early 2011 to mid-2012 curtailed both the level of cooperation and the political latitude available to the US government for targeting. Three incidents contributed to the near breakdown in ties: the January 2011 shootings in Lahore by US spy Raymond Davis, the May 2011 raid that killed bin Laden, and the November 2011 US attack on Pakistani military outposts.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Woods 2015, 14.

<sup>36</sup> Interview with former US government official, 2017.

<sup>37</sup> Interview with former Pakistani military official, 2016.

<sup>38</sup> Landay 2013a; Woods notes that this targeting criteria came into effect in January 2008. See Woods 2015, 111.

<sup>39</sup> For a discussion of these tensions, see Coll 2018, 513-630.

**TABLE 40: INDICATORS OF LEGIBILITY FOR US DRONE WAR**

Indicators of Legibility	What does it reveal?	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	Source
Forward bases in tribal areas with Pakistani intel/tribal leader personnel	Maps of social, economic, political terrain		1	1	1	1	1	1					Pak intel officials/US Official
Population records shared	Maps of social, economic, political terrain; logs of civilian identities					1	1	1					Pak intel officials
Daily (majority of the time) aerial surveillance drawing on aerial precision geolocation, full-motion video	logs of civilian identities and behavior, network connections in the population						1	1	1	1	1	1	Pak military officials of NWA and US Officials
USG access to telephone exchanges/sharing of call records/recording/sharing of phone calls	logs of civilian behavior, network connections in the population					1	1	1		1	1	1	Pak intel officials
Intensive human-intel	Maps of social, economic, political terrain, network connections in the population					1	1	1		1	1	1	Pak intel officials
If 3 or more including daily aerial surveillance, code as high		Low	Low	Low	Low	High	High	High	Low	High	High	High	

**TABLE 41: INDICATORS OF SPEED OF EXPLOITATION FOR US DRONE WAR**

Indicators of speed of exploitation	What does it reveal?	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	Source
Strike platform availability						1	1	1	1	1	1	1	US officials
USG Process													
Sustained targeting permitted (political, legal, diplomatic process)	Permissiveness of strikes					1	1	1	1	1	1	1	US officials
USG policy of seeking permission from DG ISI/Pakistani political principals (0 if yes, 1 if no)	Permissiveness of strikes					1	1	1	1	1	1	1	US officials
High analytical capability (analysts processing incoming leads)	Conversion pace of available lead into					1	1	1	1	1	1	1	US officials
Availability of strike platforms proximate with rapid turnaround, proximate to AOR	Conversion pace of available lead into					1	1	1	1	1	1	1	US officials
Pakistan process													
Consent for continuous surveillance	Permissiveness of strikes					1	1	1		Missing	1	1	Pak military officials
Assurance to keep flight box de-conflicted	Permissiveness of strikes					1	1	1		Missing	1	1	Pak military officials
High if at least 1 in Pakistan process and 3 or more in US process		Low	Low	Low	Low	High	High	High	Low	NA	High	High	

The Trajectories of al-Qaida and the Pakistan Taliban, 2004–14

In this section, I process trace the trajectories of al-Qaida and the Pakistan Taliban from 2004 to 2014 along four dimensions of effectiveness: operational capability, organizational basing, collective action, and political relationships with other armed factions. Across three periods, I first compare the trajectories of the two groups along the four dimensions. I then analytically trace the mechanisms on targeting patterns and internal group dynamics that can be expected under different levels of the L&S.<sup>40</sup>

### The Rise of Al-Qaida and the Pakistan Taliban, 2004–07

From 2004 to 2007, the US counterterrorism campaign against al-Qaida and the Pakistan Taliban was ineffective, and the trajectories of both the groups were on the rise. At the start of the campaign, al-Qaida had rebuilt itself in the South and North Waziristan Agencies of Pakistan's tribal areas, receiving support from young local leaders. The organization had two major factions: the central faction reporting to Osama bin Laden, but led by Hadi al-Iraqi and seconded by Abu Laith al-Libi; and a Pakistan-based faction, led by Khalid Khubaib.<sup>41</sup> Until late 2004, al-Qaida's main base of operations was the South Waziristan Agency. By 2005, al-Qaida, under Libi's supervision, had ordered the group's core members to move to the North Waziristan Agency.<sup>42</sup> From 2006 to 2007, al-Qaida established elaborate bases in areas of Data Khel, Dosali, Mir Ali, and Miramshah—all in the North Waziristan Agency. By 2006, its leadership had begun referring to the North Waziristan Agency as the Islamic State of Waziristan.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> This approach constitutes “analytical process tracing” of the new theory. See, for example, George and Bennett 2005, 225–228.

<sup>41</sup> Interview with former ISI official, 2016; and author interview with al-Qaida operative, 2017.

<sup>42</sup> Interview with former ISI official, 2016.

<sup>43</sup> Interview with former TTP operative, 2017.

In this period, al-Qaida had ample cash flow, which it used to set up a vast operational infrastructure. A Karachi-based *shura* (consultative body) assembled by Khalid Sheikh Mohammed funneled a steady stream of funds to Waziristan.<sup>44</sup> Abdul Hadi al Iraqi, a senior member of al-Qaida used these funds to “establish training centers, suicide bomb training, IED [improvised explosive device] production, weapons and explosive handling, material printing, and lodging facilities.”<sup>45</sup> He also set up specialized units such as Jundullah and Jaish-ul-Qiba: Jundullah would target the US and other Western interests in Pakistan with the goal of neutralizing Pakistan’s support for the United States while Jaish-ul-Qiba would conduct operations in Afghanistan.<sup>46</sup>

From 2004 to 2007, al-Qaida aggressively sought out new members, especially “emotionally stable, well-educated, and experienced cadres.”<sup>47</sup> It recruited fighters from across the broader Middle East and expanded its cadres of Pakistani fighters—in particular, trained cadres of “jihadi organizations [who] had fought in [Indian] Kashmir.”<sup>48</sup> Journalist Saleem Shahzad notes that “slowly and gradually this strategy began to work, and brought thousands of new recruits into the [al-Qaida] fold.”<sup>49</sup> Al-Qaida attracted fighters from Harkat-ul-Mujahideen, Harkat-ul-Jihad al-Islami, Lashkar-e-Jhangvi, and Jamaat-e-Islami—all of which had been involved in the so-called “Jihad-e-Kashmir”, or fight for Kashmir.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Interview with former ISI official, 2016.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Interview with TTP operative, 2016; and Shahzad 2011, p. 7.

<sup>47</sup> Interview with police official, 2016.

<sup>48</sup> Interview with former ISI official, 2016.

<sup>49</sup> Shahzad 2011, 9.

<sup>50</sup> Interview with TTP operative, 2016.

Starting in 2006, al-Qaida began to consolidate its Pakistan-centered operations under the commander of the 313 Brigade, Ilyas Kashmiri. Kashmiri started training “*fidayee* [suicide bombers who would carry out assaults before exploding their suicide vests], [other] suicide bombers, and IED saboteurs.”<sup>51</sup> In parallel, al-Qaida focused on training cadres for operations in border regions of Afghanistan now that “opportunities to launch operations from North Waziristan Agency were better.”<sup>52</sup> In addition to its ever-growing military capability, al-Qaida expanded its public outreach through outlets such as Al-Sahab Media and the Urdu magazine *Ummat*.<sup>53</sup>

From 2004 to 2007, al-Qaida consolidated its political ties with other armed groups in the region and solidified control over quasi-independent factions. In the South Waziristan Agency, it formed an alliance with Nek Muhammed’s Yargulkhel Wazir tribe and co-opted the fighting units of two other local armed group leaders, Abdullah and Baitullah Mehsud. In the North Waziristan Agency, it created alliances with influential armed groups such as the factions led by Maulvi Sadiq Nur and Abdul Khaliq Haqqani.<sup>54</sup> Al-Qaida also backed the fighting force of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan.<sup>55</sup> From 2006 to 2007, it took control of important independent factions in the region, including the Libyan Islamic Fighters Group and the Egyptian Takfiri group.<sup>56</sup> It also made pacts with influential local groups such as the Hafiz Gul Bahadur group and the Haqqani network.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Interview with journalist, 2016.

<sup>52</sup> Shahzad 2011, 18.

<sup>53</sup> Interview with journalist, 2016. Both outlets producing materials in 2004.

<sup>54</sup> Interview with Dawar tribal elder, 2016.

<sup>55</sup> Interview with al-Qaida operative, 2016.

<sup>56</sup> Interview with former ISI official, 2016.

<sup>57</sup> Interview with former ISI official, 2016.

The Pakistan Taliban's trajectory was similar but less linear than al-Qaida's. Nek Muhammed, based in South Waziristan but with some influence in the tribal areas of North Waziristan, emerged as a key leader of the Taliban movement. He started out with "a small force without much operational capability; he had some weapons and only a few hundred men."<sup>58</sup> By early 2004, his operational strength had grown and he had gained recognition as a supporter of al-Qaida. In the same time period, Abdullah Mehsud had created a group with influence in North Waziristan.<sup>59</sup> Baitullah Mehsud similarly had organized a small militia and engaged in sabotage in South Waziristan.

By 2005, Baitullah's militia had eclipsed both the Nek and Abdullah factions. (Nek died in a US drone strike in the South Waziristan Agency in June 2004.) Baitullah expanded his group to the North Waziristan Agency, building bases in Dand-e-Darpa Khel, Data Khel, Dosali, Mir Ali, and Miramshah.<sup>60</sup> By 2006, he had set up "dozens of *marakaz* [centers] for training suicide bombers and IED factories."<sup>61</sup> By late 2007, his group's operational capability was comparable to that of "a division-sized conventional military force."<sup>62</sup>

Factions of the Pakistan Taliban recruited local tribal youth as both midlevel commanders and full-time fighters. In 2004, Baitullah set up offices to recruit in select *tehsils* (subdistricts) of the South Waziristan Agency; by 2006, he had expanded his recruitment drive to the North Waziristan Agency. Baitullah organized his factions into *halqas*, the equivalent of "brigades

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<sup>58</sup> Interview with former ISI official, 2016.

<sup>59</sup> Interview with Mehsud tribal elder, 2016.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> Interview with former ISI official, 2016; and Asim and Wali, *Inqilab-e-Mehsud*, 2017, 165–167.

organized down to the level of *tehsils*.”<sup>63</sup> By late 2006, he had created near a dozen *halqas*.<sup>64</sup> In response to the Pakistani military’s 2007 assault on Islamabad’s Red Mosque, he rapidly expanded all of his *halqas*, making “appeals to avenge the blood of the martyrs of Red Mosque.”<sup>65</sup>

From 2004 to 2007, the Pakistan Taliban’s political trajectory in the North Waziristan Agency was one of consolidation, though messier than al-Qaida’s. Abdullah Mehsud’s and Nek Muhammed’s factions cooperated loosely in this period. After Nek’s death in June 2004, his faction maintained an alliance with both Abdullah and Baitullah Mehsud. Abdullah and Baitullah were estranged, however, accusing the other of being on the ISI’s payroll. In February 2005, Baitullah struck a deal with the ISI, substantiating Abdullah’s accusation. That deal, however, collapsed within a few months, and Baitullah expanded his group for jihad against Pakistan. By late 2005, Baitullah’s faction had grown more powerful than Abdullah’s. Baitullah was able to convince major fighting units in Abdullah’s and Nek’s factions to merge with his group.<sup>66</sup> He also maintained a strong alliance with al-Qaida, which gave him not only with funds, but also trainers and commanders to provide supervision to his organization. In late 2007, Baitullah emerged as the amir of the Pakistan Taliban, which he renamed Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP). According to a tribal elder from the region, “Baitullah’s growing force helped him gain al-Qaida’s endorsement and cash for buying out other factions from across the tribal belt.”<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Interview with TTP operative, 2016. *Halqa* in Pashto signifies a sizable unit.

<sup>64</sup> Interview with TTP operative, 2016.

<sup>65</sup> Interview with TTP operative, 2016; author interview with Mehsud tribal elder, 2016; and Asim and Wali 2017, 161–166.

<sup>66</sup> Asim and Wali 2017, 444.

<sup>67</sup> Interview with Dawar tribal elder, 2016.

Besides merging factions from across FATA and the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province, Baitullah co-opted groups in North Waziristan by giving them a seat on the TTP's *shura*.<sup>68</sup>

During the 2004–07 period, the US government carried out only a limited number of drone strikes. Mostly, it provided information to Pakistani forces to check the growth of al-Qaida and the Pakistan Taliban. The US drone strike that killed Nek Muhammed was coordinated by Pakistani intelligence.<sup>69</sup> In late 2005, three drone strikes were reported.<sup>70</sup> In one strike, senior al-Qaida leader Hamza Rabia was killed in the village of Asoori, near the town of Mir Ali. In 2007, the US launched three US drone strikes in the North Waziristan Agency.<sup>71</sup> Using information provided by the CIA, the Pakistani military conducted raids with limited success on villages near Mir Ali, Miramshah, Razmak, and Shawal.<sup>72</sup>

The low number of strikes during the 2004–07 period can be attributed to difficulties associated with locating targets. US and Pakistani intelligence officials noted how the lack of leads was a source of continuing frustration for the CIA's counterterrorism leadership.<sup>73</sup> Drone surveillance generated some leads, and according to an interviewee, "the ISI's Bannu detachment and its offices in Miramshah and Mir Ali cooperated with the CIA."<sup>74</sup> Such cooperation was sporadic, however, and the CIA did not depend entirely on the ISI for obtaining leads. As another interviewee stated, "The CIA's Islamabad station generated leads from intelligence gathered in Afghanistan and Iraq on potential high-value targets in the tribal area," which in turn led to drone

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<sup>68</sup> Interview with TTP operative, 2017.

<sup>69</sup> Interview with former Pakistan military officials, 2016.

<sup>70</sup> Bureau of Investigative Journalism, 2017

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>72</sup> Interview with former Pakistani military official, 2016; and author interview with ISI official, 2017.

<sup>73</sup> Interview with US government official, 2017.

<sup>74</sup> Interview with former ISI official, 2016.

strikes.<sup>75</sup> In internal meetings, CIA Director Hayden fussed over the failure to remove “a single al-Qaida leader from the battlefield in 2007,” using the phrase “0 for 07” to signify the dearth of intelligence and successful strikes.<sup>76</sup>

As noted earlier, to the extent that the United States was able to acquire information, stringent rules made the execution of strikes difficult. According to a US government document, “In 2007, the CIA sought ISI approval for 15 strikes, received prompt approval for three and a single “forced approval.”<sup>77</sup> One former ISI official observed, “The process of maturing the target was long, which led to targets disappearing, and the final bureaucratic approval was complicated on the American and Pakistani sides; it went as far as the DG [director-general] ISI and then president [of Pakistan], all of which contributed to many near misses.”<sup>78</sup> Given the difficulty the United States in calling in drones, “the CIA’s Miramshah forward base provided leads to the [Pakistani military’s] 117th Brigade [on the ground in Miramshah].”<sup>79</sup> Often, the brigade “acted on the leads but was invariably late.”<sup>80</sup>

In sum, the minimal pressure applied by the United States against al-Qaida and the Pakistan Taliban from 2004 to 2007 allowed both groups to recover from their losses relatively quickly and to avoid future losses while maintaining growth trajectories. During this period, al-Qaida became more deeply institutionalized and attracted large numbers of specialized cadres. And by late 2007, the Baitullah Mehsud-led Taliban had become a formidable and sizable armed group.

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<sup>75</sup> Interview with former ISI official, 2016.

<sup>76</sup> Interview with US government official, 2017; and Morell 2015, 130.

<sup>77</sup> Landay 2013b

<sup>78</sup> Interview with former ISI official, 2017.

<sup>79</sup> Interview with former Pakistan military official, 2016.

<sup>80</sup> Interview with former Pakistan military official, 2016.

## Reversals of Al-Qaida and The Pakistan Taliban, 2008–11

As noted earlier, under the renegotiated CIA-ISI counterterrorism pact and with an influx of technology resources, the US counterterrorism campaign from 2008 to 2011 attained high L&S. In line with the theory's expectation, the United States' increased aerial surveillance of North Waziristan generated many more targeting leads from 2008 to 2011 than it did from 2004 to 2007. Pakistani officials were surprised at the richness of the video feeds available to US ground operatives in Bannu, Mir Ali, Miramshah, and Islamabad.<sup>81</sup> One official involved with the program stated, "Drones started identifying al-Qaida and the Pakistan Taliban factions under training, notable midlevel commanders, and important *marakaz* used to host local jihadis and foreign fighters from Afghanistan and Iraq."<sup>82</sup>

By early 2010, the operational capabilities of both al-Qaida and the Pakistan Taliban had fractured. Until 2007, al-Qaida had been freely training and plotting operations against targets inside and outside Pakistan: "During Sheikh Libi's time, al-Qaida had global ambitions, declared a TTP operative."<sup>83</sup> By 2009, it was struggling to maintain its global and local operational activities, scrapping a "dozen plans" for attacks in this period.<sup>84</sup> According to an interviewee, starting in early 2008, al-Qaida began moving personnel from "villages in the Nauraq tribe area and those along the Mir Ali—Miramsah road."<sup>85</sup> Another noted that "*marakaz* in Spulga, Degan,

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<sup>81</sup> Interview with former ISI official, 2017. On ISI's access to live feed from US drones, see Syed 2015, 73.

<sup>82</sup> Interview with former Pakistan military official, 2016.

<sup>83</sup> Interview with former TTP operative, 2017.

<sup>84</sup> Interview with al-Qaida operative, 2016. In addition, see Government Exhibit 429 10-CR-019(S-4)(RJD), in *United States of America v. Abid Naseer*.

<sup>85</sup> Interview with former ISI official, 2017.

Yusuf Khel, [and] Tappi” villages were closed.<sup>86</sup> By late 2009, al-Qaida had pulled back most of its master trainers and midlevel commanders who had been helping the Taliban forces.<sup>87</sup> Al-Qaida’s leadership started preparations to relocate bases out of Waziristan, such as those created by the eastern Afghanistan leader Farook al-Qatari, and to safe houses in mainland Pakistan. In a letter to bin Laden in June 2010, North Waziristan–based al-Qaida leader Sheikh Atiya Abd Rehman advocated pulling a “large portion of the group out of Waziristan.”<sup>88</sup>

Until late 2009, the Pakistan Taliban also showed signs of disruption, though not to the same degree as al-Qaida. Baitullah Mehsud preserved some of the Taliban’s operational infrastructure in the South Waziristan Agency at “a safe distance from al-Qaida [Central].” Baitullah saw al-Qaida as the main target of drone strikes.<sup>89</sup> He ordered the factions under the command of “Wali-ur-Rehman, Mufti Noor Wali, Khan Saeed, and Maulvi Shamim [TTP commanders] to remain in the Mehsud area [of the South Waziristan Agency]” and to focus “on training rather than active sabotage.”<sup>90</sup> He also asked Qari Hussain Mehsud, a master trainer of suicide bombing squads, to “prepare a stream of suicide bombers to bleed the Pakistani state.”<sup>91</sup> The Pakistan Taliban staged suicide bomb attacks in Pakistani urban centers. One Taliban interviewee claimed that the group “planned ninety-four attacks.” He added, “I know it because I myself played a role in delivering messages and shifting eleven to twelve suicide bombers and suicide jackets... They carried out successful suicide attacks.”<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> Interview with former TTP operative, 2017.

<sup>87</sup> Interview with TTP operative, 2017.

<sup>88</sup> See Government Exhibit 421 10-CR-019(S-4)(RJD), in *United States of America v. Abid Naseer*.

<sup>89</sup> Enumerator interview with TTP operative, 2016.

<sup>90</sup> Interview with journalist, 2016.

<sup>91</sup> Interview with TTP operative, 2016.

<sup>92</sup> Interview with TTP operative, 2016.

By late 2010, however, US drone strikes had significantly damaged the Pakistan Taliban's operational capability. The onset of a Pakistani counterinsurgency campaign in neighboring South Waziristan Agency in 2009 and 2010, known as Operation Rah-e-Nijat, precluded the group from shifting its operational capability away from the North Waziristan Agency. After the discovery of Taliban leader Qari Hussain Mehsud's involvement in the December 2009 sabotage operation against the CIA forward base in Khost, Afghanistan, the United States intensified its surveillance and targeting of the Pakistan Taliban's infrastructure in the North Waziristan Agency. In response, the group systematically closed a number of its facilities, including training and IED manufacturing centers. Hakimullah Mehsud, the successor to Baitullah Mehsud (who was killed in a drone strike in August 2009) as the *amir* of the Pakistan Taliban, asked his aide "Latifullah [Mehtud] to minimize the signatures on his *marakaz* and create mobile training units."<sup>93</sup> By late 2010, Hakimullah had relocated some of his North Waziristan-based cadres closer to Pakistani urban areas, including Karachi.

By 2009, al-Qaida was beginning to suffer a growing number of desertions. A Pakistani official who monitored Waziristan during this time stated, "I read intercepts of al-Qaida and Taliban for around three years [2008 to 2011]. There was chaos in these groups by 2010 due to drone strikes. I heard al-Qaida's leadership, known for its cool and strong discipline, regularly lose its composure. So much of the chatter was about 'my men have left me!'"<sup>94</sup> A member of al-Qaida from the period observed, "Drone strikes became a major concern for all jihadi organizations, including al-Qaida...the majority of the members were not as committed ideologically. I noticed that many left...I was troubled by this and spoke with [fellow jihadis]. We concluded most want

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<sup>93</sup>. Interview with former ISI official, 2016.

<sup>94</sup>. Interview with former Pakistani military official, 2016.

to be *ghazis* [holy fighters who return from the battlefield alive]. Only a few want to be *shaheed* [martyrs].”<sup>95</sup> In November 2010, al-Qaida leader Sheikh Atiya wrote to bin Laden, “We are facing difficulties due to the grave shortages in personnel in some cadres.”<sup>96</sup> A Karachi-based journalist tracking jihadi activity noted that, by 2010, many jihadis from Waziristan were returning “because of drone strikes.”<sup>97</sup>

From 2010 to 2011, the Pakistan Taliban also experienced an increasing number of defections. Until 2008, ISI officials based in the towns of Wana, Dera Ismail Khan, Miramshah, and Bannu were expressing increasing concern about “the growing *halqas*...Boys were flocking to the TTP offices in different *tehsils* of North Waziristan Agency.”<sup>98</sup> By early 2010, however, the ISI had begun noticing a gradual thinning of the Taliban’s ranks.<sup>99</sup> In separate interviews, two Taliban operatives initially declared desertions to be “a propaganda of ISI.” Later in one of the interviews, however, one of the operatives confirmed that there had been some desertions, describing those leaving the groups as “non-ideological.”<sup>100</sup> An al-Qaida operative declined to discuss al-Qaida’s manpower challenges, but noted a spate of desertions from the Pakistan Taliban in 2010 and 2011.<sup>101</sup>

By 2010, al-Qaida’s and the Pakistan Taliban’s political strategies of consolidation and co-optation had begun to unwind. Both organizations experienced within-group fratricide and breakdowns in relations with other groups in the region. Al-Qaida grew wary of the Haqqani

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<sup>95</sup> Interview with al-Qaida operative, 2017.

<sup>96</sup> See Government Exhibit 429 10-CR-019(S-4)(RJD), in *United States of America v. Abid Naseer*.

<sup>97</sup> Interview with journalist, 2016.

<sup>98</sup> Interview with former ISI official, 2016.

<sup>99</sup> Interview with former ISI official, 2016.

<sup>100</sup> Interview with TTP operative, 2017; and author interview with TTP operative, 2017.

<sup>101</sup> Interview with al-Qaida operative, 2016.

network.<sup>102</sup> Its top leadership in North Waziristan considered the network too close to the ISI; senior and midlevel leaders even thought it might be involved in the kind of intelligence gathering that led to drone strikes. Al-Qaida also fell out with the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group over differences concerning al-Qaida's strategic direction.<sup>103</sup> The Pakistan Taliban experienced similar political challenges. Under Baitullah, the Mehsud faction fell out with the Hafiz Gul Bahadur group in early 2008. After Baitullah's death, senior commanders under Mehsud Taliban, Hakimullah Mehsud, and Wali-ur-Rehman Mehsud began a fight over succession.<sup>104</sup> Hakimullah Mehsud's relations with important local commanders also began to suffer.<sup>105</sup>

Al-Qaida's and the Pakistan Taliban's dislocation from bases, degradation of operational capability, manpower challenges, and breakdowns in their political strategies of consolidation resulted, in part, from an increase in the number of drone strikes, or what I call "kinetic effects." The strikes killed leaders and specialized personnel from both groups.<sup>106</sup> According to data compiled by the New America Foundation, from 2008 to 2011 al-Qaida lost twenty-five prominent leaders and the Pakistan Taliban lost ten. Some of my interviewees directly linked these kinetic losses to ongoing degradation. In January 2008, for instance, senior al-Qaida leader Abu Laith al Libi was killed in a drone strike in Mir Ali after the timely exploitation of a lead generated by the CIA and triangulated by the ISI.<sup>107</sup> As one Taliban operative noted, "Libi...was one of the most important persons of al-Qaida...His death was a big loss for *amir sahib*

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<sup>102</sup>. Enumerator interview with TTP operative, 2016; and author interview with al-Qaida operative, 2017.

<sup>103</sup>. Interview with former ISI official, 2016.

<sup>104</sup>. Interview with journalist, 2016; and enumerator interview with TTP operative, 2017.

<sup>105</sup>. The leaders mentioned included Maulvi Sadiq Noor, Khaliq Haqqani, and Hafiz Saeed. Interview with journalist, 2016.

<sup>106</sup>. Asim and Wali 2017, 445–446.

<sup>107</sup>. Interview with former ISI official, 2017.

[Baitullah Mehsud].”<sup>108</sup> According to another interviewee, “[In 2008] an al-Qaida leader who was responsible for jihadi activities in Pakistan was killed in a drone strike. After his death, many plans came to a halt.”<sup>109</sup> Another noted how the 2009 killings of Qari Tahir Jan of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan and his field commanders in an air strike set back both al-Qaida and the Pakistan Taliban. The interviewee added, “[It was] a great loss, as they were commanding many Uzbek, Turkmen, and other foreign fighters who would fight alongside both al-Qaida and the Pakistan Taliban.”<sup>110</sup>

The targeting of al-Qaida’s Sheikh Abu Khabab and his explosives project reveals how losses of specialized personnel undermined al-Qaida operationally.<sup>111</sup> Khabab ran a robust operation in North Waziristan, with a number of *marakaz* dedicated to training explosives experts for local and global operations. He produced instruction materials, led lectures, and mentored Pakistan Taliban leaders. His death in a drone strike was a major loss for al-Qaida and had consequences for the Pakistan Taliban as well. Compounding this loss were the deaths from drone strikes from 2009 to 2011 of personnel he had trained to produce dirty bombs, land mines, and shaped charges, as well as instructors and examiners affiliated with his explosives training course “Dor-al-Mutafarja.”<sup>112</sup> In the process, the explosives project was transferred initially to a Pakistani faction and later to Khabab’s teenage son, Luqman. The Pakistani faction tried to revive the project by translating Khabab’s manuals and instruction materials from Arabic to Urdu for mass circulation. Without reliable trainers, however, the written materials could not compensate for

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<sup>108</sup>. Interview with TTP operative, 2017.

<sup>109</sup>. Interview with TTP operative, 2016. In an interview while in Nangarhar prison, al-Qaida operative Sheikh Jafar made a similar assessment. See Khan 2016, 140.

<sup>110</sup>. Interview with TTP operative, 2016.

<sup>111</sup>. Interview with TTP operative, 2016; another interviewee confirmed the same chain of events but noted that Khabab survived a 2008 strike and died much later, probably in 2010.

<sup>112</sup> I obtained materials on “Dor-ul-Mutafarja” during fieldwork.

gaps created by the loss of the elder Khabab and his team. By late 2011, the quantity and quality of al-Qaida's and the Pakistan Taliban's explosives expertise dramatically dropped.

Multiple interviewees noted that, as with al-Qaida, the growing exposure of the Pakistan Taliban to drone strikes starting in 2009 led to substantial operational disruption. One interviewee noted, "We had to close so many important centers after drone strikes. So many plans fell through. I will give you example of one center which we had to close. There were eighteen drone strikes in a single day on [one] center in which many Arab sheikhs were killed. I don't remember exactly whether it was 2009 or 2010, but I know it was almost a month after the [October 2009] attack on GHQ [Pakistan's military headquarters], because the ones who attacked at GHQ were trained in that center. Another attack, this one on Sri Lanka's cricket team...was also planned there."<sup>113</sup>

Some interviewees linked the disruption of the Pakistan Taliban's operational infrastructure to the target killing of Qari Hussain Mehsud. In the words of one interviewee, "Qari Hussain was considered the 'nuclear power' of TTP. Many great plans remained incomplete due to his killing."<sup>114</sup> Another stated, "Under [Qari Hussain's] leadership, a number of tasks were completed successfully until drones came in our way. I remember one drone attack in Mir Ali, in which seven Germans were killed. They were soon to undertake suicide attacks in Germany and France...A few days later Qari *sahib* was martyred in the Wazir Kushali area [of North Waziristan]. Due to drone strikes, the plan of sending the German suicide bombers to France and Germany was never realized."<sup>115</sup>

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<sup>113</sup>. Interview with TTP operative, 2016.

<sup>114</sup>. Interview with TTP operative, 2016.

<sup>115</sup>. Interview with TTP operative, 2016.

Kinetic effects, however, were not the only mechanism pushing al-Qaida and the Pakistan Taliban toward further degradation. Both groups suffered from anticipatory effects as well. For example, the remaining leadership and rank and file had to stay on the move. The intensified surveillance, which frequently led to strikes, made the top leadership and important midlevel commanders of al-Qaida and the Pakistan Taliban “feel extremely vulnerable.”<sup>116</sup> A Taliban leader described the challenge of operating under the deluge of drone activity: “When drones started flying [in 2008], we became very careful about our movement. They surely made many of us anxious. It was as if a fan is turned on at the peak of winter. You cover yourself in a blanket but still feel very cold due to the fan being on. And you have to bear the noise of the fan.”<sup>117</sup>

Interviewees from al-Qaida and the Pakistan Taliban stated that both groups feared being spied on from within their ranks: “Commanders would regularly change their locations and vehicles. Also, they kept their locations secret, as there were reports that people within were providing information to the CIA.”<sup>118</sup> According to multiple interviewees, the pervasive fear of spies had an especially detrimental effect on recruitment. One interviewee spoke about Hakimullah Mehsud turning away new cadres for just this reason: “[In late 2009] after arrival of fresh cohorts from Karachi, Punjab, and Mohmand Agency, the number of drone strikes increased. So those in Mir Ali and Miramshah used to see them suspiciously. *Amir sahib* [Hakimullah] decided that they should go back where they had come from.”<sup>119</sup>

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<sup>116</sup>. Interview with former TTP operative, 2017.

<sup>117</sup>. Interview with former TTP operative, 2017.

<sup>118</sup>. Interview with TTP operative, 2016; and Lodhi, *Drone hamley aur un ka tour*, p. 35.

<sup>119</sup>. Interview with TTP operative, 2016.

Interviewees from al-Qaida and the Pakistan Taliban also mentioned how fear arising from the inability to move about freely limited the ability of leaders to make standard organizational decisions and maintain operational capability. Some factions of al-Qaida and the Pakistan Taliban, such as Jundullah and the 313 Brigade, were more watchful than others, believing they were more likely to be targeted. One Pakistani intelligence official noted that, “because of drone strikes on moving vehicles, groups started using motorbikes.”<sup>120</sup> In a letter to bin Laden, Sheikh Atiya suggested “stopping many of the operations so we can move around less, and be less exposed to strikes.”<sup>121</sup>

Constraints imposed on the ability of groups to communicate also damaged within-group ties. Both al-Qaida and the Pakistan Taliban became increasingly wary of using communication devices, though the Pakistan Taliban was initially much less cautious than al-Qaida; many of its cadres used *mukhabras*, a Pashto word for shortwave radio sets.<sup>122</sup> By 2011, however, even the Taliban had become fearful of communication devices, knowing that [Pakistani] “intelligence and its sidekicks were listening in on all radio communication, even PTCL [landline phones].”<sup>123</sup> Groups instead relied on carefully chosen human messengers for within-group communication, leading to long gaps in communication and weak command and control. According to one interviewee, “Many were deeply frustrated that senior leaders would not stay in contact. In my second trip, I remember not seeing any senior leader nor getting communication for two months. We were told to concentrate on reading jihadi material.”<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>120</sup>. Interview with former Pakistani military official, 2016.

<sup>121</sup>. See Government Exhibit 421 10-CR-019(S-4)(RJD), in *United States of America v. Abid Naseer*.

<sup>122</sup>. Interview with TTP operative, 2016.

<sup>123</sup>. Interview with TTP operative, 2016.

<sup>124</sup>. Interview with al-Qaida operative, 2017.

Challenges to mobility, effective communication, and trust operated in tandem, constraining the ability of al-Qaida and the Pakistan Taliban to engage in damage control and recovery.<sup>125</sup> In a letter to bin Laden, Sheikh Atiya noted, “We will focus on defensive security (counterespionage) by focusing on striking the spy plane bases using special operations, and on patience, persistence, hiding as well as decreasing our presence at least this year because it is an important year.”<sup>126</sup> Such descriptions of sustained degradation were echoed by al-Qaida and the Pakistan Taliban members interviewed for this study: “The challenges faced by al-Qaida and the Pakistan Taliban were the same. Training became very difficult because a number of strikes took place where training was carried out...Movement became especially hard [and] people would maintain distance from those [midlevel commanders and rank and file] they did not trust.”<sup>127</sup>

Writing in 2011, an al-Qaida leader known by the pseudonym Hikmatullah Lodhi summed up the overall impact of drone strikes on al-Qaida and the Pakistan Taliban from 2008 to 2011: “We need to do our utmost to recover from the losses due to drone strikes...if leaders continue to be killed, the jihadi movement’s entire direction and pace can suffer; if field commanders continue to die, training will be poorer and the operational capabilities of mujahideen will suffer, and the the next generation of mujahideen will not be of high quality. In short, drone strikes can overwhelm the strength of the mujahideen.”<sup>128</sup>

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<sup>125</sup>. Lodhi 2012, 35–37.

<sup>126</sup>. See Government Exhibit 421 10-CR-019(S-4)(RJD), in *United States of America v. Abid Naseer*.

<sup>127</sup>. Interview with al-Qaida operative, 2016.

<sup>128</sup>. Lodhi 2012, 60–61.

## Ongoing Fracturing of Al-Qaida and The Pakistan Taliban, 2012–14

From 2012 to 2014, the CIA maintained high legibility of Waziristan, having made improvements following years of experience surveilling the region and maintaining close cooperation with the ISI.<sup>129</sup> During this period, it also successfully exploited numerous leads not just on al-Qaida, but also on the Pakistan Taliban. As a result, both groups suffered—often in similar ways. By 2012, for example, al-Qaida had begun moving its senior leadership and midlevel commanders out of Waziristan. According to one TPP interviewee, “Many of the Turks, Uzbek, and other foreign mujahedeen shifted to some new safe houses.” Others “went to Afghanistan. Some even went back to Chechnya, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan.”<sup>130</sup> The remaining leaders and cadres spent most of their time in temporary hideouts in Mir Ali and Miramshah: “With increasing drone strikes hitting the targets,” observed another TPP interviewee, “many had moved to settled neighborhoods.”<sup>131</sup>

The Pakistan Taliban also continued to disperse its bases and factions, often within but also away from the North Waziristan Agency. For example, Hakimullah Mehsud asked “Mullah Nazir [a South Waziristan–based commander] and, after his killing in a drone strike, Bahwal Khan, to house some of his fighters.”<sup>132</sup> Two civilians held prisoner by the Pakistan Taliban from 2012 to 2014 noted that the Taliban closed multiple *marakaz* where they were held captive out of fear of drone strikes.<sup>133</sup> By 2012, increasing numbers of “Pakistan Taliban fighters [had] moved to

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<sup>129</sup> See, for example, details on availability of bulk cell phone records of major Pakistani telecommunication firms to and their use for target acquisition by the NSA as late as 2012 in “Skynet Applying Advanced Cloud Based Behavior” (Washington, D.C.: NSA, 2012), <https://assets.documentcloud.org/documents/2074625/skynet-applying-advanced-cloud-based-behavior.pdf>.

<sup>130</sup> Interview with TTP operative, 2017.

<sup>131</sup> Interview with TTP operative, 2017.

<sup>132</sup> Interview with former ISI official, 2016.

<sup>133</sup> Interview with former civilian captives, 2016 and 2017.

Karachi.”<sup>134</sup> Hakimullah Mehsud also sent some of his fighters to Khost and Paktika in Afghanistan.<sup>135</sup>

The operational capabilities of al-Qaida and the Pakistan Taliban also continued to diminish during this period. By 2012, al-Qaida was struggling to train and produce fighters. It closed most of its training centers, explosives production facilities, and lodging *marakaz* in and around the town of Mir Ali, which had once powered both global and local operations.<sup>136</sup> The Pakistan Taliban still operated small training centers in and around Miramshah, which were significantly more in number than what al-Qaida had; much of its capability, however, was “a shadow of the past.”<sup>137</sup> Hakimullah Mehsud sought to build underground bases in Miramshah and Mir Ali to revive his group’s training and explosives production activities. Although construction on some of these bases was completed, most projects remained unfinished.<sup>138</sup>

Defections continued to plague both al-Qaida and the Pakistan Taliban. The number of foreign fighters as well as fighters from Pakistan’s jihadi organizations available to al-Qaida dried up. One interviewee from the Pakistan Taliban, who claimed to have interacted with al-Qaida in the period, noted: “Compared to local jihadi organizations, al-Qaida was in dire need of manpower.”<sup>139</sup> Another interviewee noted that by late 2013 an unspecified number of Pakistani jihadis, who had originally come from Karachi, had left al-Qaida.<sup>140</sup> Two important commanders of the Pakistan Taliban, Khalid Sajna and Shehryar Mehsud, “worried about increasing

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<sup>134</sup>. Interview with journalist, 2016.

<sup>135</sup>. Interview with journalist, 2016.

<sup>136</sup>. Interview with former ISI official, 2016; and Lodhi, *Drone hamley aur un ka tour*, p. 34.

<sup>137</sup>. Interview with former ISI official, 2016.

<sup>138</sup>. Interview with Pakistani military official, 2017.

<sup>139</sup>. Interview with TTP operative, 2016.

<sup>140</sup>. Interview with al-Qaida operative, 2017.

desertions” of full-time fighters.<sup>141</sup> Throughout 2013 until the start of Pakistan’s military operation against the TTP, known as Zarb-e-Azb, in June 2014, a number of Mehsud Taliban cells surrendered to the ISI.<sup>142</sup>

From 2012 to 2014, al-Qaida’s political relationships with armed groups in Waziristan worsened significantly. Its “cold war” with the Haqqani network came out into the open, with many leaders criticizing Siraj Haqqani, the leader of the Haqqani network, for the harm inflicted on al-Qaida by drone strikes.<sup>143</sup> Within al-Qaida, relationships between the senior leadership and various subgroups also deteriorated. Al-Qaida’s Pakistani cadres argued incessantly with the Arab leadership over operational strategy, a lack of direction, and the leadership’s extreme operational security measures. According to one interviewee, al-Qaida leader Aiman-al-Zawahiri’s 2013 pledge to create an al-Qaida branch on the Indian subcontinent, with expansive operational goals for the region, was in part a response to the growing sense of frustration expressed by Pakistani cadres.<sup>144</sup>

Finally, the Pakistan Taliban’s political ties continued to fray. In the words of one interviewee, “Hakimullah felt he was under siege; he did not trust the Mehsud *halqa*; he also grew wary of the Punjabi factions.”<sup>145</sup> Such distrust led to the splintering of the Pakistan Taliban into three distinct groups: one led by Shahryar Mehsud, another by Khalid Sajna, and a third by Asmat Muawiya. After Hakimullah’s killing in November 2013, some of his group’s surviving cadres joined

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<sup>141</sup>. Interview with al-Qaida operative, 2016.

<sup>142</sup>. Multiple North Waziristan-based civilians and journalist respondents.

<sup>143</sup>. Interview with al-Qaida operative, 2017.

<sup>144</sup>. Interview with al-Qaida operative, 2016.

<sup>145</sup>. Interview with Mehsud tribal elder, 2016. He was in contact with Hakimullah Mehsud from 2009 to 2013.

forces with Shahryar Mehsud in an organization called Karwan-e-Hakimullah [the Caravan of Hakimullah]. Others aligned themselves with Maulvi Fazlullah and Khalid Sajna.<sup>146</sup>

As they had from 2008 to 2011, the anticipatory effects of US drone strikes caused enormous harm to both al-Qaida and the Pakistan Taliban from 2012 to 2014; multiple interviewees highlighted challenges to conducting operations, holding bases, and finding new recruits.<sup>147</sup> One Pakistan Taliban interviewee noted, “The senior leaders struggled to contact their subordinate commanders due to frequent flying of drones over the area...When [Hakimullah Mehsud] came to Miramshah, he would often quit meetings, avoid contact until drones flew overhead. Like him, other leaders avoided interacting and travelling with drones flying.”<sup>148</sup> When asked to clarify why drones caused such shifts in behavior, the interviewee added: “Once a man from London told *amir sahib* that data on his eyes, hair, dress, cap, etc. had been recorded and that he could be traced anywhere with this information. He even advised him not to look upward to the sky, as he could even be traced by the saved data of his eyes.”<sup>149</sup>

Al-Qaida’s and the Pakistan Taliban’s political relationships in the region suffered from both kinetic and anticipatory effects. From the perspective of al-Qaida’s leadership, the killing of senior leaders empowered junior commanders, who were harder to manage. Assertive junior commanders made operational calls, managerial changes, and basing decisions, which engendered friction with more senior members.<sup>150</sup> Such agency problems metastasized into in-

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<sup>146</sup>. Interview with TTP operative, 2016.

<sup>147</sup>. Author and enumerator interviews with TTP operatives, 2016–17.

<sup>148</sup>. Interview with TTP operative, 2017.

<sup>149</sup>. Interview with TTP operative, 2017.

<sup>150</sup>. Interview with elder in Dawar tribe, 2017.

group trust issues, with many leaders claiming that the newly empowered cadres had “sold out” to the CIA and the ISI.<sup>151</sup> Similar dynamics also contributed to the Pakistan Taliban’s political fragmentation. Senior leaders, including Hakimullah Mehsud, felt constrained in making political decisions. One of the two captive civilian interviewees recounted conversations with senior commander Khalid Sajna about the political challenges stemming from the increasing use of drones: “Sajna would often come eat with me. He once said there are many days now when I have no cash, and I have nothing to pay my people.”<sup>152</sup>

Kinetic and anticipatory effects directly fueled in-group discord. The sidelining and subsequent breakaway of the Punjabi Taliban faction in 2013 resulted from severe in-group trust issues. Hakimullah Mehsud was aware of the ISI’s overtures to Punjabi Taliban, but disarray in his own group prevented him from sanctioning the faction’s leader, Asmat Muawiya. As one TTP interviewee remarked, “*Amir sahib* [Hakimullah Mehsud] was told by a number of other leaders that Asmat Muawiya is, in fact, an ISI agent and that you should not assign him the important position of the commander of TTP in Punjab. *Amir sahib* could not give much attention to this.”<sup>153</sup>

Two mechanisms contributed to the degradation of al-Qaida and the Pakistan Taliban that my theory does not predict. First, as both groups in North Waziristan struggled to find new safe havens, they increasingly became targets. Until 2010, both remained wary of relocating to other districts of FATA or Afghanistan because of a lack of reliable local hosts. A 2009 Pakistani

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<sup>151</sup>. Interview with al-Qaida operative, 2016. Interviewees highlighted such problems in Jundullah, the Egyptian Takfiri Group of Issa Al Masri, the Turkish Jamaat of Abu Ahmed, and the Roshan Aka faction.

<sup>152</sup>. Interview with former civilian captive, 2016.

<sup>153</sup>. Interview with TTP operative, 2017.

military operation known as Rah-e-Nijat prevented the Pakistan Taliban from moving training centers, lodging facilities, and IED factories to South Waziristan. Al-Qaida seriously contemplated moving to eastern Afghanistan, but the US surge of forces from 2010 to 2012 ruled out a wholesale move.<sup>154</sup> Second, the rise of the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria added to al-Qaida's challenges in Waziristan. Its emergence captured the attention of many cadres in Waziristan, particularly those who differed with bin Laden and Zawahiri on the revival of the caliphate; al-Qaida's soft approach toward Iran, and Shia populations, more generally; and tacit acceptance of the political authority of nation-states.<sup>155</sup> Multiple interviewees implied that some members defected to the Islamic State, but none provided details.

#### Alternative Explanations for US Counterterrorism Effectiveness

In this section, I evaluate two alternative explanations that scholars have proposed for understanding counterterrorism effectiveness: one group-type, the other civilian-centric. Based on the evidence available, I process trace select necessary implications for each of the explanations to be valid.<sup>156</sup>

Group-type theories, which predict that group attributes determine a group's survival strategy, its ability to recover in the face of targeting, or both, cannot account for the trajectory of effectiveness for the 2008 to 2014 period. Such theories. These attributes include embedded social bases, the quality of the group's recruits, the degree of group institutionalization, links to

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<sup>154</sup>. Select leaders moved to Karachi and some al-Qaida commanders relocated to Iraq and Syria. These findings should not be seen as downplaying those effects.

<sup>155</sup>. Levy and Scott-Clark 2017, 240–241; author interview with al-Qaida operative, 2017.

<sup>156</sup>. This constitutes the hoop test of process tracing in Collier 2011, 825. If the evidence bears out the implications, it affirms relevance of the theory but does not confirm it.

transnational resistance networks (including jihadi networks), and the experience of prior conflict.

Al-Qaida and the Pakistan Taliban did not share all of these attributes. Al-Qaida employed better methods for attracting a steady stream of foreign fighters and high-quality recruits, using ideological appeals to appeal to motivated jihadis from Pakistan. Pakistani factions of al-Qaida such as Badar Mansoor, Jundullah, and the 313 Brigade drew significant support from Waziristan's Mehsud, Dawar, and Wazir tribes. Al-Qaida also was a highly institutionalized organization.<sup>157</sup> Some of its factions had experience fighting strong states in Egypt, Iraq, Indian Kashmir, Libya, and Jordan.<sup>158</sup> Al-Qaida also had deep ties to global Salafi-jihadi networks. On the other hand, the Pakistan Taliban employed poorer methods for recruitment, using cash and tribal linkages as opposed to strong ideological appeals. Its level of institutionalization paled in comparison to al-Qaida's. Its main factions did not have significant experience of dealing with state repression. The Pakistan Taliban's only advantage relative to al-Qaeda was its social base: the deep tribal network in Waziristan.

Despite their differences, both al-Qaida and the Pakistan Taliban struggled in the face of US targeting. I did not find evidence of al-Qaida's superior organization helping the organization survive the increasing rate of US drone strikes or recovering by adaptation. The Pakistan Taliban, too, fractured like al-Qaida. It exhibited less dysfunction than al-Qaida in certain periods. For example, it maintained a reasonable operational trajectory and a sizable number of bases in 2008–09. From 2010 to 2014, however, the Pakistan Taliban's trajectory continued

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<sup>157</sup>. Jordan 2014, 22–25.

<sup>158</sup>. Interview with al-Qaida operative, 2017; and author interview with former ISI official, 2017.

downward, as the group failed to make meaningful progress toward restoring its pre-2008 growth trajectory. There is support for the group-type view to the extent that al-Qaida tried to find sophisticated defensive measures to manage its vulnerability to drone strikes, but that appears not to have stopped its degradation.<sup>159</sup>

Is the Pakistan Taliban's superior trajectory, compared to that of al-Qaida from 2008 to 2009, compatible with a group-type explanation? Not necessarily. That trajectory was less a function of its type and more a function of the variation in the targeting preferences of the counterterrorism operation. US and Pakistani officials noted that the main focus of the targeting in that period was al-Qaida, not the Pakistan Taliban.

Civilian-centric theories also cannot account for the trajectories of al-Qaida and the Pakistan Taliban from 2008 to 2014. A set of civilian-centric theories emphasizes hearts-and-minds strategy as the key to effectiveness.<sup>160</sup> One test of this explanation is to determine whether the United States implemented such a strategy and the level of civilian security during the campaign. All available evidence suggests that the United States made no effort either directly or through its Pakistani partners to improve civilian security in the targeted regions. Instead, with al-Qaida and the Pakistan Taliban searching for spies who were purportedly tipping off the CIA/ISI, civilian security seems to have worsened from 2008 to 2011.<sup>161</sup> Al-Qaida and the Pakistan Taliban created two units, Lashkar-e-Khorasan and Saif-ul-Furqan, for the purpose of

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<sup>159</sup>. Lodhi provides sophisticated guidelines to jihadi leaders on defending their organizations against drone strikes. See Lodhi, *Drone hamley aur un ka tour*.

<sup>160</sup>. O'Hanlon and Riedel 2011, 127; and Berman, Felter, and Shapiro 2018, 55.

<sup>161</sup>. Interview with TTP operative, 2017; and enumerator interview with TTP operative, 2016.

counterespionage. Civilian interviewees noted that the units engaged in excesses and were widely feared.<sup>162</sup>

Another way to assess a civilian-centric explanation is to examine the main sources of intelligence available to the counterterrorism campaign. For this civilian-centric account to hold, tips from civilians should be the main source of intelligence.<sup>163</sup> I found only limited support of this. As I have argued, intelligence collection was a function of the L&S. Two ISI officials who worked with the CIA until 2011 on intelligence collection described the role of civilian informants as marginal, claiming that the CIA depended primarily on technology and cash incentives for members of armed groups.<sup>164</sup> There are limits to my sources on this point, but they align with an internal assessment by the US government's intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance task force in two other counterterrorism theaters: Somalia and Yemen.<sup>165</sup> That assessment emphasizes tactics such as document exploitation and a variety of technological tools as the key sources of intelligence.

Another civilian-centric theory suggests that counterterrorism creates resentment, especially when it involves the killing of civilians, and thus more local recruits for the targeted groups.<sup>166</sup> The recruitment trajectories of al-Qaida and the Pakistan Taliban do not align with this view, however. There is substantial evidence of civilian harm caused by US drone strikes in Waziristan, although its exact level is unclear.<sup>167</sup> Yet, as discussed earlier, multiple interviewees

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<sup>162</sup>. Interviews with civilians in Dera Ismail Khan, Mir Ali, Peshawar, 2016 and 2017.

<sup>163</sup>. Berman and Matanock 2015

<sup>164</sup>. Interview with former ISI official, 2016; and author interview with former ISI Official, 2017.

<sup>165</sup>.ISR Taskforce 2013

<sup>166</sup>. This is a narrow slice of the broader drone blowback thesis. For a review of that thesis, see Shah 2018.

<sup>167</sup>. The Bureau of Investigative Journalism estimates that 421 to 960 civilians were killed in Pakistan from 2004 to 2014. Reports by the US Director National Intelligence claim there were 117 civilian casualties outside Afghanistan

from al-Qaida and the Pakistan Taliban denied a surge in recruitment in response to drone strikes; more dominant explanations centered on manpower shortages and desertions starting in 2008. One al-Qaida operative tellingly noted, “When I see the news that drone strikes have helped the militants to recruit more people, I consider it false analysis...[both] al-Qaida and Pakistan Taliban had serious manpower shortages.”<sup>168</sup>

**TABLE 42: INDICATORS OF GROUP TYPE IN US DRONE WAR**

Group Type			
Social Bases		Pakistan Taliban	Al-Qaeda
	Religious Bases	Yes	No
	Tribal	Yes	Some
	Experienced Base	None	Yes
	Global Networks	None	Yes
Recruit Quality			
	Ideological appeals	Some	Extensive
	Opportunists	Many	None
Institutionalization			
	Hierarchy/Geographic Organization	Limited	Yes
	SOPs	None	Yes
	Training	Limited	Yes
Cohesion			
	Multiple factions/groups	Yes	Yes
	Central Coordination	Limited	Yes
	Fratricide	Yes	None

## Conclusion

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and Iraq from 2009 to 2016. See, for example, “US Counterterrorism Strikes outside Areas of Active Hostilities” (Washington, D.C.: Office of the Director of National Intelligence, 2016), <https://www.dni.gov/files/documents/Newsroom/Press%20Releases/DNI+Release+on+CT+Strikes+Outside+Areas+of+Active+Hostilities.PDF>. Steve Coll notes that civilian casualties from select US drone strikes fueled an “imagery of callous atrocity.” Coll 2018, 535.

<sup>168</sup>. Interview with al-Qaida operative, 2016.

The US counterterrorism program sought to degrade Al-Qaeda and the Pakistan Taliban in Waziristan. Al-Qaeda was a formidable transnational armed group. It aided and incubated the rebellion of the Pakistan Taliban against the Pakistani state. Al-Qaeda was generally formidable, impervious to splits and cohesion issues, while the Pakistan Taliban was weaker and relatively more discordant. Until 2007, the US counterterrorism campaign against them was ineffective.

Following 2008, the US counterterrorism campaign against them was effective. Backed by a surge in capabilities aligning with L&S such as influx of unmanned targeting platforms, sustained aerial surveillance and interception, improved cooperation between the US and Pakistani authorities, and change in targeting rules, the campaign pushed both Al-Qaeda and the Pakistan Taliban onto a similar path of collapse, evidenced in the roll back of their operational capability, breakdown in collective action, dispersal of organizational bases, and political dysfunction in the form of splintering and fratricide. The trajectory of collapse was not sudden but gradual. In the 2008 to 2010 period, the pre-2008 growth trajectory of both the groups was reversed. In the 2010 to 2012 period, the two groups began to dramatically thin out. From 2012 to 2014, the groups lost much of their strength. These fieldwork-based findings complement assessments of US counterterrorism by Byman (2013), Johnston and Sarbahi (2016), and Shah (2018), and contrast with assessments by Boyle (2013), Cronin (2013), and Jordan (2014).

Overall, the impact that I document is best summed in the following response by an interviewed Taliban leader: “Drone strikes had a major effect on the situation. I would say that it was not Zarb-e-Azb [Pakistani military operation to clear North Waziristan starting June 2014] that shattered Talibanization but drone strikes. They are the real cause of our downfall. Although the

Taliban [and Al-Qaeda] can never be eliminated as *jihad* will continue till the day of judgement but the drone strikes greatly weakened the Taliban [and Al-Qaeda].”<sup>169</sup>

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<sup>169</sup> Interview Taliban Activist, 2016

## **Chapter 10: Conclusion**

This dissertation has shown that counterinsurgency effectiveness in a set of important conflicts and cases within them has been tied to a specific capability of the counterinsurgent state, captured by the L&S. L&S is constituted by tactics, technologies, and organizational practices which allow counterinsurgents to make civilian populations legible, and exploit the gains of legibility for either generating more information or actual targeting. L&S is an alternative to the canonically held view on what might lead to effectiveness: civilian-centric theories suggesting the importance of hearts-and-minds strategies. A number of case studies and cross-case comparisons from conflicts in South Asia, colonial counterinsurgency, and US external and off-shore counterinsurgency show that states which implement L&S well end up being effective, even if they fail to implement hearts-and-minds strategies, and sometimes when pitted against strong insurgent foes. In addition, the findings also suggest that systematic civilian-harm or coercion is pervasive across the examined cases; however, it doesn't exert influence on campaign-level outcomes.

The dissertation also takes on a puzzle generated by the importance of the L&S: If L&S is sufficient to be effective at counterinsurgency, why might states not be able to implement it? The dissertation argues that implementation of the high levels of L&S is not a matter of mere choice for states and that instead it is an outcome of a deeply political and organizationally intensive process. Thus, the interaction of two factors -- domestic political salience of counterinsurgency and organizational experience of counterinsurgency -- underpins the conflict-level environment in which counterinsurgency plays out, determining the extent to which counterinsurgent states

can realize L&S. Case studies and medium-N data from South Asian counterinsurgency contexts show the importance of domestic political evaluation of the counterinsurgency effort and organizational experiences of counterinsurgency forces – over factors like leadership, organizational culture, and civilian control -- to change and adaptation towards L&S.

### Implications for Scholarship

The theory and findings of the dissertation lend themselves to implications for five key areas of scholarly work across international relations, comparative politics, security studies, and political violence.

### Civilian Role in Insurgency and Counterinsurgency

This dissertation challenges the dominant wisdom on counterinsurgency effectiveness, the hearts-and-minds model, and by extension the role of civilians as strategic actors in internal conflict. The importance of civilians to counterinsurgency is rooted in a 60-year long literature dotted by scholars, practitioners, and analysts.<sup>1</sup> It emphasizes the importance of winning over civilians for effectiveness at counterinsurgency. More recent work has elevated the role of civilians through careful game theoretic analysis and better data. It touts civilian collaboration as necessary for counterinsurgency effectiveness.<sup>2</sup>

This dissertation has shown that the analytical focus on civilian collaboration through inducements or coercion is overstated. Multiple case studies and comparisons demonstrate that

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1 Mao 1961, Thompson 1966, Trinquier 2006, Galula 2006, Nagl et al 2008, Kilcullen 2010

2 Berman and Matanock, Berman, Shapiro, Felter 2018

civilian harm is compatible with effective and ineffective counterinsurgency. This, troublingly, implies that civilians have limited agency in altering the course of counterinsurgency efforts. Their preferences, actions, and behaviors can count for very little in the face of state capacities subsumed under the L&S. This is because states can sidestep civilian behavioral choices to locate the insurgency, damage it, and prevent its recovery. To the extent civilians may want to join the insurgency, the absence of an able insurgent organization/coalition due to sustained counterinsurgency with high L&S can rule that out.

The dissertation makes a powerful case for moving beyond civilian behavior as the pivot of insurgency and counterinsurgency processes. Focusing on civilians as central strategic actors omits important analytical variation in counterinsurgent response. This, however, doesn't mean that civilian preferences and protection should be taken lightly from a normative standpoint. Instead, an analytic lens which right sizes the role of civilians in internal conflict provides new and realistic ways to examine issues of civilian security and wellbeing which are discussed in the next section.

### State Capacity

This dissertation has essentially advanced a state-centric explanation for understanding outcomes of counterinsurgency. How does it improve on or add to previous state-centric accounts? In three ways. First, it improves an older set of state-centric explanations, which have offered a raw understanding of what kinds of states might be effective at quelling rebellion.<sup>3</sup> This literature

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<sup>3</sup> For example: Fearon and Laitin 2003, Lyall and Wilson 2009, Weidmann 2009, Hendrix 2010

broadly divides state capacity into sheer military capacity and administrative/bureaucratic capability. In turn, scholars used operationalizations such as income levels, military personnel, levels of mechanization, bureaucratic quality, tax receipts, export revenue among other measures to capture the relevant conceptions of state capacity. This dissertation helps move beyond the binary of military capacity and administrative/bureaucratic capability, offering a sharper conception of state capacity that matters to the end of counterinsurgency – namely L&S. The dissertation shows that L&S is neither just about military capacity nor a feature of bureaucratic capability alone. Instead, it constitutes the interaction of a subset of military capacities (like those associated with exploitation) and a subset of administrative/bureaucratic capability (like those associated with legibility).

Second, the dissertation adds to a burgeoning literature in international relations and comparative politics on the importance of legibility as a key and under-appreciated feature of state capacity. Lee (2018), for example, shows how legibility gaps in some regions by states are determined by inter-state relations.<sup>4</sup> My use of legibility in the counterinsurgency context is consistent with those works, focusing on the state's information capacity. In that way, my work joins an emerging body of literature pushing legibility as a crucial feature whose effects and causes need more scholarly attention. However, my work also identifies the additional dimension of exploitation, which is key to fully capturing the informational capacity of states.

Third, the dissertation reiterates the challenge of improving state capacity in weak and fragile states from a new perspective. Recent scholarship extensively documents the challenge of state

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<sup>4</sup> Lee and Zhang 2017, Lee 2018

capacity improvements like taxation, service delivery, and cohesive military forces.<sup>5</sup> L&S is distinct from these capacities, and essential to curbing insurgent pressures. And given the difficulty of implementing L&S fully, the dissertation suggests that weak states may remain highly constrained in mastering it – even if they manage to improve some of their other capacities.

#### Group Type and/or Insurgent Agency

This dissertation has shown that counterinsurgency campaigns which achieve high L&S can blunt formidable insurgent foes, as shown in the chapters on Indian Punjab, Iraq, and Pakistan. We also see the converse when states fail to implement L&S well; states struggle to bring any serious pressure on relatively weaker groups, like in early part of the insurgency in Pakistan. Thus, the dissertation advocates the primacy of state-centric factors over insurgent politics -- at least to the end of counterinsurgency effectiveness.

Does this imply that my work shows insurgents have no agency in the face of counterinsurgency? Not necessarily. I have shown that insurgent agency can be immensely constrained by counterinsurgency forces, but that doesn't mean group type features are never deterministic. A key limitation of this dissertation is that it doesn't clearly articulate areas where group type factors matter more. This is partly because of the case-study research designs which lend themselves to assessing causal relationships and mechanisms, and not causal effects. It also

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<sup>5</sup> See: 2017/2018 issues of *Daedalus* on civil war on challenge of capacity building in weak states; on the challenge of building weak states, see: Fearon and Laitin 2004

takes a simple view to account for group type and/or insurgent agency during the course of the counterinsurgency campaign.

Where, then, can insurgency type matter? Group type arguments are likely to matter in various dimensions of insurgents within campaign trajectories. While my findings are agnostic on crucial dimensions of insurgent behavior like the rate of insurgent loss, insurgent battlefield strategy, and/or insurgent political strategy under the varied pressures of L&S, more granular analysis can uncover systematic heterogeneity in these dimensions depending on the group's type. The dissertation also doesn't say much on the issue of post-campaign insurgent trajectories. Group type arguments may well be more valid post campaigns. Future research needs to look into these issues more systematically.

## Technology

One of the key components of L&S is technology. Technology allows state forces to make both populations legible, as well as to exploit legibility gains better. There are four implications of this position. First, it appears that continued advancements in technology are likely to disproportionately benefit states than insurgents. The advent and spread of technologies of surveillance, drones, and artificial intelligence is providing counterinsurgents some very powerful tools to find and destroy their insurgent foes. Insurgents, on the other hand, have not been able to channel advances in technological tools in quiet the same way to nullify the growing advantage enjoyed by states. This might change. Future research needs to examine how technology is altering the asymmetry of power between states and insurgents.

Second, and this is an extension of the previous point, the importance of technology to L&S shouldn't be overinterpreted. The dissertation's theory is not an argument of technological determinism. Instead, the application of human capital-intensive tactics and organizational practices geared towards L&S was possible even 50 years ago – as shown in the dissertation in the case studies on British Malaya and British Kenya. Put simply, L&S is possible without modern technology.

Third, and this is a critical caveat to the last implication, improvements in technology relevant for L&S haven't made their adoption seamless. Realizing high L&S for a large-scale campaign requires substantial domestic political support for sustained investments in technology. And the unabated use of technology requires broad-reaching targeting latitude, which raises distinct legal, political, and normative challenges. Surveillance, for example, is tied to privacy concerns in many societies. Detailed biometric data collection in conflict torn and ethnically fractious societies is similarly challenging to implement. The ability to surgically strike targets via drones at high operational tempos can elicit fierce public backlash in democracies. All of this is to say that technology may be solving some problems but it also raises new political challenges for counterinsurgent states.

Fourth, when striving for high L&S during counterinsurgency, technology appears to offer states more in the way of capacities which can lower direct harm towards civilians. As shown in the dissertation, efforts at improving legibility with old school tactics like registration, identity documentation, and/or dossier creation inflicted very high costs on the civilian population. Some

technologies can lower such direct costs. The ability to surveil civilian populations using tools like wire-tapping, interception, and aerial surveillance minimizes direct hardship, for example. Yet, other technologies like biometric record collect involve similar kinds of hardship; it requires states to use punitive measures to get the population to become part of its database. Finally, technology also opens the avenues of more indirect forms of violence – such as privacy violations, fears of being watched and tracked. Future research needs to examine the relationship of technology to civilian population in internal conflict settings, focusing on both micro- and meso-outcomes more systematically.

#### Politics of Counterinsurgency Change and Adaptation

The dissertation has three key implications for understanding the politics of counterinsurgency change and adaptation. First, the dissertation's theory brings domestic political assessments into debates on counterinsurgency. The domestic political arena and the politics that ensues around issue areas like counterinsurgency has tended to be ignored in major debates on counterinsurgency. The focus on military organizational pathologies has been more dominant. The case studies from South Asia show that change and adaptation is not constrained by military organizations and their pathologies; instead, they rest in major part on multi-faceted and complicated political assessments of the counterinsurgency by a number of key domestic political players, whose preferences can both further and constrain counterinsurgency. I am able to argue this by analyzing and explicitly theorizing the variable of L&S and the political needs for achieving the necessary capabilities subsumed under L&S.

Second, the theoretical framework challenges an empirical literature on counterinsurgency emphasizing the influence of regime type on counterinsurgency performance.<sup>6</sup> This literature asserts that democracies are inferior at counterinsurgency, and by extension unlikely to change and adapt, arguing that: “democratic publics are cost-intolerant and highly casualty-sensitive, especially if the war turns protracted.” This argument is largely derived from the context of external intervention counterinsurgency, like the US in Vietnam. This dissertation moves the theoretical debate forward by showing that democracies respond to counterinsurgency in much more varied ways. Far from being inferior at counterinsurgency, they can be fairly adept at it under the right conditions. The converse is true as well: all authoritarian states – as Pakistan was for much of the period studied – also do not summon all their coercive capacity instantly to mount counterinsurgency. We need to move beyond the binary of regime type as a determinant of counterinsurgency change and adaptation, and in turn effectiveness.

Third, my argument sees counterinsurgent militaries as more rational and likely to change bureaucracies than much of the literature gives them credit for. The cases of Pakistan and India show that counterinsurgents can be flexible and responsive irrespective of their foundational basis. This implies that persistence of organizational biases and/or dispositions -- which may hurt counterinsurgency -- are endogenous to factors outside of the counterinsurgency organization. Instead, they plausibly reflect the absence of pressures -- most likely domestic political -- to overcome those biases and/or dispositions.

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<sup>6</sup> Lyall 2010; Zhukov 2010 calls this the democratic pessimism towards counterinsurgency literature

## Policy Implications

### States and Militaries

The theory and the findings have three policy implications on the promise of counterterrorism and counterinsurgency for state forces. First, counterinsurgency campaigns which achieve a specific template of capabilities i.e. L&S can degrade insurgent and/or armed groups, and that too without winning the hearts-and-minds of the civilian population. Many policymakers hold the opposite view. In the case of US policy debates, many policymakers perceive counterinsurgency and counterterrorism as unlikely to yield much in terms of gains. A large part of the policy pessimism towards counterinsurgency and counterterrorism can be situated to the belief in hearts-and-minds strategies, and the difficulty of implementing such strategies.<sup>7</sup> My work offers a counterpoint to such policy perspectives.

Second, the dissertation raises doubts about the design of modern-day military doctrines on counterinsurgency. Most modern military doctrines – ranging from the US military doctrine to the Indian military doctrine – tell their officers and soldiers about the importance of hearts-and-minds practices.<sup>8</sup> Some go as far as to declare that without hearts-and-minds behavior counterinsurgency is likely to lead to failures. My work suggests that the emphasis on hearts-and-minds of the civilian population in doctrinal writing is misplaced. In light of the new theory and findings presented, practitioners should note that the theoretical underpinnings of current military doctrine are much weaker than generally appreciated.

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<sup>7</sup> Long 2016

<sup>8</sup> Rajagopalan 2000, British COIN 2009, Nagl et al 2008

However, and this is the third implication, policymakers need to be mindful that achieving counterinsurgency capabilities which lead to efficacy i.e. high L&S is not a matter of mere choice of top policymakers. Policymakers cannot achieve high L&S by doctrinal adjustments alone, for example. Instead, realizing high L&S for a large-scale campaign requires substantial domestic political support for sustained investments in controversial and expensive tactics, practices, and technology. It also requires tremendous cooperation from political elites for broad-reaching surveillance and targeting latitude. Finally, it requires an experienced force structure. In wartime, it is possible that policymakers may be unable to influence the necessary politics and organizational dynamics, and thus remain unable to change L&S. The bottom-line here is that to the extent counterinsurgency is a preferred policy option, policymakers need to pay attention to the political and organizational constraints on counterinsurgency to realize the capabilities essential for L&S.

## Civilian Protection

The dissertation challenges conventional normative approaches to issues of civilian security and protection during counterinsurgency -- a central moral and policy dilemma. Dominant approaches emphasize utilitarian arguments to improving civilian safety, arguing that civilian protection and wellbeing is essential for strategic effectiveness.<sup>9</sup> These approaches, in turn, hope that the strategic logic of civilian protection will compel states and their militaries to minimize civilian harm.<sup>10</sup>

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9 Nagl et al 2008, Abizaid and Brooks 2015, Shapiro and Shaver 2017a, 2017b, Felter and Shapiro 2017

10 Felter and Shapiro 2017

This dissertation has shown that the hope implicit in such utilitarian arguments is erroneous. The dissertation documents that civilian harm is an abiding feature of counterinsurgency campaigns over time and across regions. And, disturbingly, effective and ineffective campaigns have involved abundant levels of civilian harm. The only silver lining from a normative perspective is that I find no real evidence of civilian harm being necessary for counterinsurgent success at the campaign level.

This is a deeply troubling implication of my study. Policymakers and human rights organizations need to rethink approaches of minimizing harm against civilians. I suggest decoupling civilian security from battlefield efficacy in doctrine, policy, and the human rights discourse. Interest groups and civil society organizations should not invoke the language of strategy and outcomes to implore civilian wellbeing during wartime. The case of protecting civilians and improving their wellbeing needs to be made emphatically for purely normative rather than for utilitarian reasons. This is a very difficult ask, and it is not obvious how the international community or leading states in the international system can correct course on this issue. However, moving away from utilitarian arguments of civilian security is an important starting point to have a more realistic discussion about the threats to civilian security during counterinsurgency.

## Appendix

### Case Selection

To create the universe of cases, I first operationalize the scope conditions using the following definitions.

#### Scope Condition 1: Strong State

- If GDP per capita in year prior to onset of conflict > \$800

#### Scope Condition 2: Warfare

- Conventional: If both sides (state and rebel forces) have the capability to call in artillery, armor, air-power, and/or 10K+ infantry armed with mortar
- SNC: If both sides (state and rebel forces) do not have the capability to call in artillery, armor, air-power, and/or 10K+ infantry armed with mortar
- Irregular: If only state forces have the capability to call in artillery, armor, air-power and/or 10K+ infantry armed with mortar

#### Scope Condition 3: No mass-killing campaigns

- If conflict features in the list of major one-sided conflicts by UCDP

#### Scope Condition 4: Insurgents

- If insurgents make center-seeking or separatist political claims

I use the following definitions to code each conflict's type.

- Domestic Counterinsurgency: A state with de-facto political control of a territory undertakes counterinsurgency operations.
- Colonial Counterinsurgency: An outside major/great power ruling a territory outside of its mainland undertakes counterinsurgency operations.

- External Counterinsurgency: A state without de-facto political control of a territory intervenes in a state, reaches a formal political pact providing it authority to run/administer some if not all affairs of the state.
- Off-shore Counterinsurgency: Major powers mounting campaigns to fight armed groups posing transnational/regional threats. They do so with a combination of air-power, surveillance technologies, special operators, and local allies. Such campaigns do not involve large number of ground forces, at least of the of the off-shore state itself.

The summary statistics of the cases identified are:

**TABLE 43: SUMMARY STATS OF UNIVERSE OF CASES**

<b>Type of Warfare/State Strength</b>	<b>Strong</b>	<b>Weak</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Conventional</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>55</b>
Domestic	40	15	55
<b>Irregular</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>140</b>
Colonial	15		15
Domestic	81	21	102
External	9		9
Off-shore COIN	14		14
<b>Symmetric Nonconventional</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>18</b>
Domestic	15	3	18
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>173</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>213</b>

Data



**MAP 7: MAP OF FIELDWORK IN PAKISTAN**

IRB, Fieldwork, Interviews

The dissertation draws on a total of 124 semi-structured interviews conducted between January 2016 and August 2018. These data have been used extensively in chapters 3, 4, 6, 7, and 9. This interview data was collected under the University of Chicago International Review Board Protocol, 16-0234. Due to safety concerns which I discuss at length below, I withhold the transcripts of these interviews, and the identity of majority of respondents as agreed under the IRB protocol for the project. I also withhold the questionnaires to the respondents as they included specific details on the role and positions of the respondents, which can plausibly reveal

their identity. While the IRB protocol permits me to cite names of officials who agree to being cited, I tread on the side of caution and keep all my respondents anonymous.

### Sample Selection

For chapters 4, 7, and 9, I employed a purposive sampling strategy to select interview respondents. I located operationalized this strategy in two steps. First, I cultivated relationships of trust and confidence with retired officials in the US, Pakistan and informed journalist to establish better knowledge of the key actors. I spent considerable time trying to identify the names and positions of counterterrorism operators with critical appointments and members of the armed groups for the relevant period. Second, I made requests by email, phone, in-person meetings, and through referrals of network of acquaintances (made during initial field visits in 2015 and 2016) to those identified in the purposive sampling process to participate in the study. On the side of the armed groups, my interviews with members of armed groups were facilitated by a number of local fixers, with whom I built relationships during initial field visits. Combined, I conducted the interviews in multiple trips to Pakistan and various locations in the US between March 2016 to August 2017.

For chapters 3 and 7, I only conducted telephonic interviews. The intended sampling strategy was purposive; however, due to the inability to travel to India for fieldwork, I relied on snowball sampling strategy.

## Caveats on Interview Data

### On Pakistan Chapters

First, the data is on an extremely sensitive topic and the interviews were conducted during a tapering but active conflict period – so I faced some of the same challenges to personal and respondent safety that ethnographers undertaking “extreme fieldwork” face. Respondent information, in line with the IRB protocol, has thus been anonymized.

Second, I was declined interviews both in the US and in Pakistan. This was a major point of concern for me, raising the specter of bias. To ensure that non-participation was not associated with some particular viewpoint, I located respondents from the same category and of a similar type to those who declined – and remained successful.

Third, a key challenge for some respondents was of situating timelines given the study’s broad temporal scope. To minimize omissions, I structured my interview questions with major events from the study period -- major decapitations, major violent attacks in mainland Pakistan and beyond, and statements given out by officials/armed group leaders.

Fourth, the accuracy of the claims of senior intelligence officials was a major concern. Security elites can have motives to spin and/or deflect. Thus, I have treated the data they provide with caution. I have done my best to cross-check details from multiple sources. But given the secrecy surrounding the campaign, I was not able to get all the details confirmed from multiple sources. To mitigate against omissions and bias, I provide quotes from an array of respondents.

Fifth, I remained aware of the possibility that the respondents might try to respond in interviews with what they thought I wanted to hear. I structured the questions to minimize any overt positionality. To the extent I failed to minimize my own positions, I am not concerned those positions biased the responses in any one direction. Much of the particular sample of respondents enjoyed abundant power and agency. Some of the respondents engage in hostilities against state authorities, while others enjoyed substantial social and political power. They had no obvious reason to conform to my views.

### On India Chapters

As should be obvious, my interview respondents for India are few. Unlike the Pakistani context where I gained interview data from a variety of respondents, and could cross-check information against respondents with varied backgrounds and institutional affiliations, I only captured accounts of former state/military officials. Thus, I use the data minimally and carefully, and only when it describes a phenomenon which multiple other data sources appear to be pointing towards.

### Safety Concerns

Some readers might be interested in more details on how I engaged and identified local fixers for the purpose of interviews in the context of Pakistan. Given the context, however, any more specificity on local fixers can potentially reveal the identity of those who facilitated me in the

field and expose them to danger by the US government, Pakistani government, and/or the armed groups. In withholding this information, I take cue from Driscoll and Schuster 2017, who argue that it is important to have "...situational awareness in research design"; this "is crucial to supporting the kind of research [which is] empirically grounded, sensitive to community-based concerns, built out of local idioms, theoretically rigorous – while also grappling with the non-zero probability that affiliation with the ethnographer could expose the local research team to charges of espionage."

#### Fieldwork Access to Pakistani Tribal Areas

As of 2017, the Pakistani tribal area was heavily militarized, where movement of all civilians through major entry and exits was intensively regulated. I was able to access the region through a *rahdari*, the local term for guarantee/safe passage, secured by tribal elites from the political administration's office.

#### My Claims on Civilian Casualties

My limited claims on civilian casualties in the various Pakistani and Indian campaigns are not based on assessments provided by security officials. In the Pakistani context, I could not collect systematic data on the extent of civilian victimization as gaining unsupervised access to a representative sample of the civilians remains very challenging. When practically feasible, any survey, including a sensitive survey, would pose serious risks – in many ways insurmountable -- to the lives of both the respondents and the enumerators, which will be in violation of the ethical

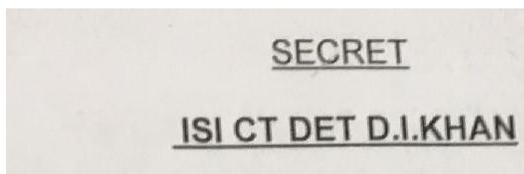
guidelines central to any IRB protocol. The dilemmas outlined by Driscoll and Schuster 2017 – especially around the concern of local security services seeing the researcher and the research team as “spies” – are extraordinarily intense, which warranted caution.

### Archival Data

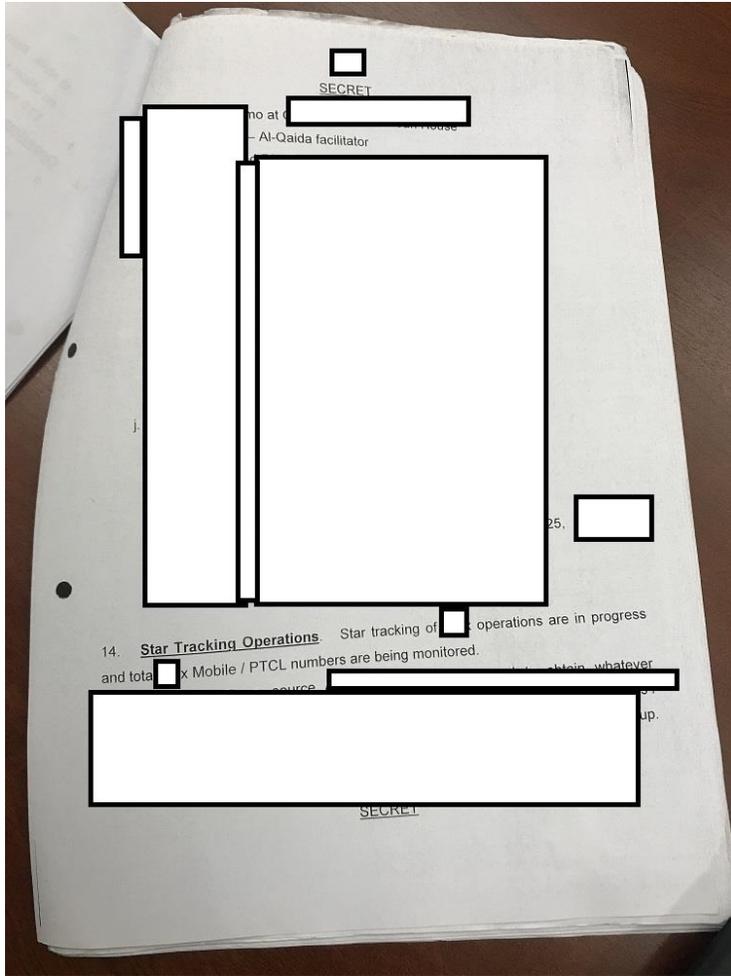
In addition to the historiography cited, the dissertation relies on original archival materials obtained from the British National Archive in Kew, Richmond. These documents cited mainly include reports, records, and post-war analysis carried out by the British War Office and British Colonial office pertaining to the counterinsurgency in Malaya and Kenya.

### Field Data

I have relied on select documents of Pakistani intelligence, Pakistani Police’s Counterterrorism Departments, Al-Qaeda, and the Pakistan Taliban. As I noted earlier, I use these sparingly given the difficulty of verifying them. I also draw on secondary sources. Below I provide snapshots of some of those documents. I have blackened out all information which can plausibly identify individuals who passed these documents to me.



**FIGURE 20: FIELD DOCUMENT SAMPLE 1**



**FIGURE 21: FIELD DOCUMENT SAMPLE 2**

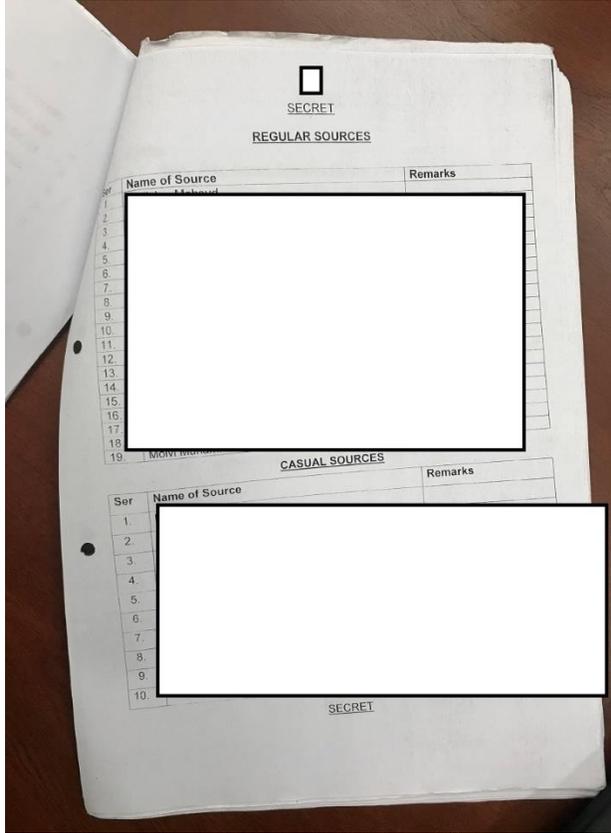


FIGURE 22: FIELD DOCUMENT SAMPLE 3

علم السموم  
TOXICOLOGY .

تعریف

یہ وہ طبعی یا کیمیائی مادہ ہے جو کہ جانداروں کی زندگی کو نقصان یا ختم کرنے کی صلاحیت رکھتا ہے۔ یا رہے کہ زندگی اور موت صرف اللہ کے ہاتھ میں ہے۔ کسی جاندار کی جات آپ اپنی مرضی سے نہیں لے سکتے اور نہ ہی آپ کہ قبضہ میں کسی کی زندگی یا موت ہے۔

تعریف علم السموم

یہ وہ علم ہے جو کہ زہروں کی کیمیائی اور طبعی ماہیت اور ان کے زہریلے پتے کہ جانوروں اور انسانوں پر ہونے والے اثرات پر بحث کرتا ہے اور ان کے اثرات کے توڑ کیلئے تدابیر کرتا ہے

زہروں کے اثرات TOXICITY POISONOUS

یہ آدمی پر امراض کے سبب انداز سے اثر انداز ہوتے ہیں اور خاص قسم کی علامات جسم پر ظاہر ہوتی ہیں۔ مختلف زہروں کے جانداروں پر مختلف قسم کے اثرات ہوتے ہیں اگر یہ اثرات فوراً ظاہر ہونا شروع ہو جائیں تو یہ مفاقتور زہر ہے۔ اگر متعلقہ اثر آہستہ آہستہ ظاہر ہونا شروع ہو تو یہ سست زہر ہے

قاتل مقدار LETHAL DOSE

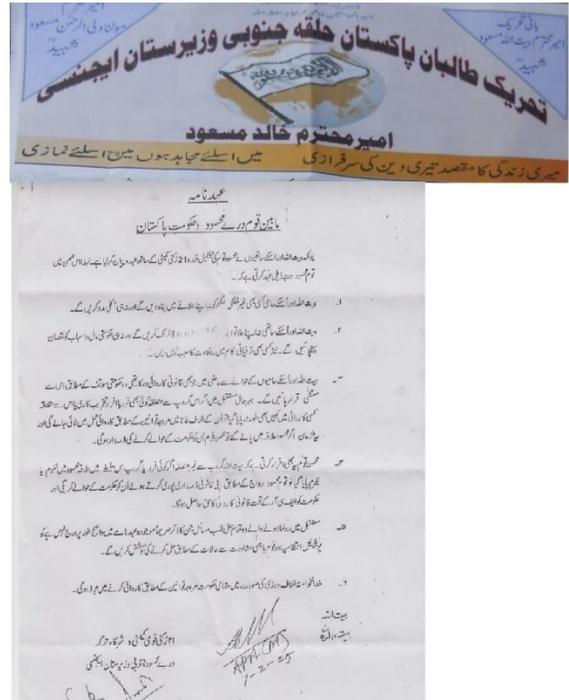
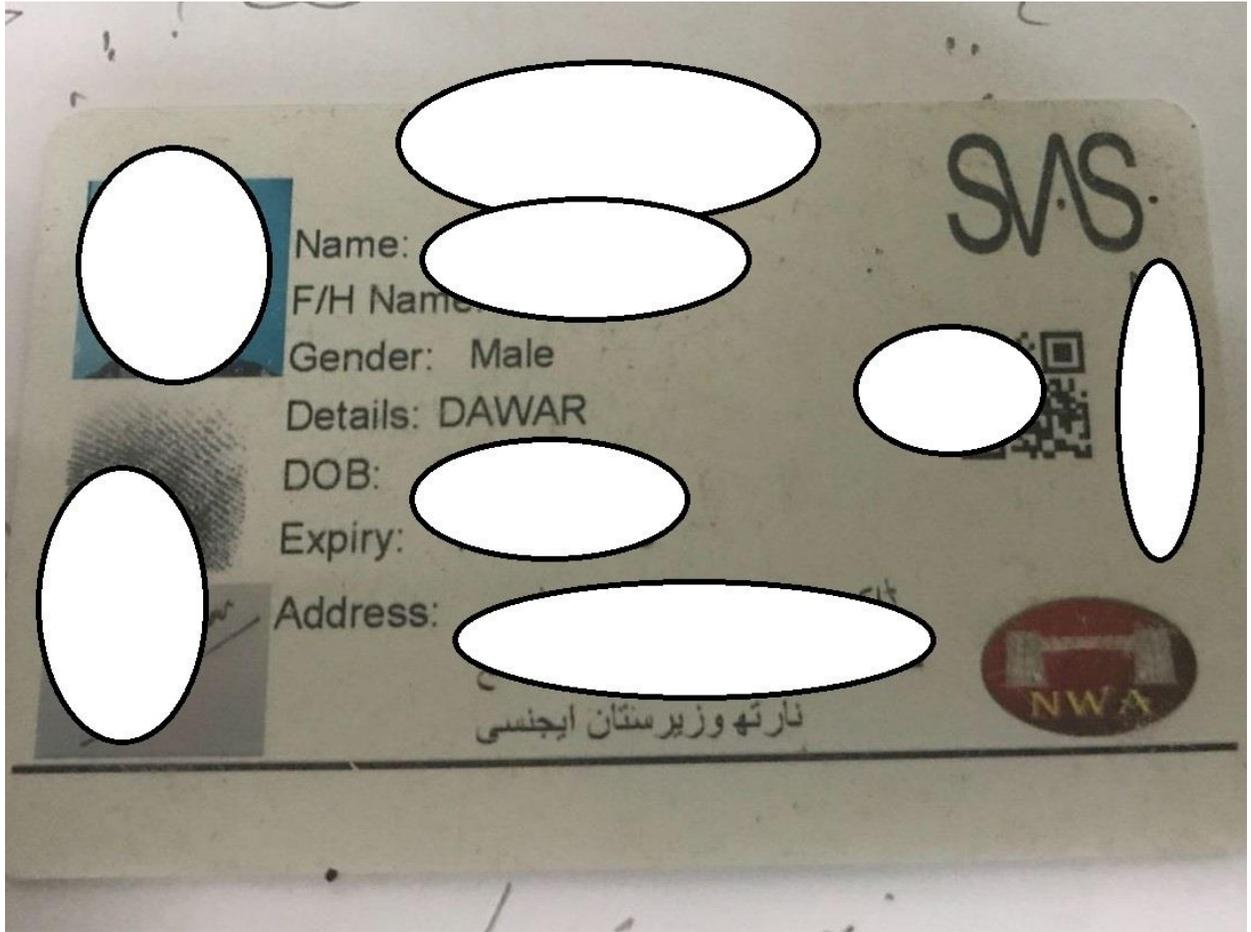


FIGURE 23: FIELD DOCUMENT SAMPLE 4



**FIGURE 24: FIELD DOCUMENT SAMPLE 5**

مستقیم

عمر 22 سال

قوم بنگالی

1- AQIS کے ذمہ دار رحمت اللہ عرف چھوٹی دنیا سے ملاقات کرنا:-

مستقیم نے ابتدائی تفتیش میں بتایا تھا کہ یہ 2011/2012 میں یونی کون گارمنٹس کمپنی کورنگی میں بطور لیبر کام کرتا تھا اس دوران اسکے ایک دوست نے جو کہ عوامی کالونی کورنگی کے مدرسے کا ایک طالب علم تھا اسکی ملاقات AQIS کراچی کے ذمہ دار رحمت اللہ عرف چھوٹی دنیا سے ایک چائے کے ہوٹل پر کروائی۔

2- AQIS کارکن رحمت اللہ کا مستقیم کی جہاد کیلئے ذہن سازی کرنا:-

مستقیم نے بتایا کہ AQIS کارکن رحمت اللہ کے ساتھ اسکے بعد کافی ملاقاتیں ہوئی اور ملاقاتوں کے دوران وہ مجھے جہاد کی ترغیب دیتا تھا۔ اسکا کہنا تھا کہ دنیا میں مسلمانوں پر ظلم و ستم کے پہاڑ ہائے جا رہے ہیں اور برما میں مسلمان بچوں، خواتین اور مردوں کو زندہ جلایا جا رہا ہے اور پاکستانی فوج حکومت بھی اس ظلم میں برابر کے شریک ہیں۔ لہذا ان کے خلاف بھی جہاد کرنا فرض ہے۔ مذکورہ بات کے پیش نظر ہر مسلمان کو اپنا فرض ادا کرتے ہوئے جہاد میں حصہ لینا چاہیے اور مستقیم کو کہا کہ اسکو مسلمانوں پر ہونے والا ظلم کا بدلہ لینا چاہیے۔ مستقیم نے بتایا کہ رحمت اللہ کی ذہن سازی کی وجہ سے AQIS میں شمولیت اختیار کی اور عسکری ٹریننگ کیلئے رضامند ہوا۔

FIGURE 25: FIELD DOCUMENT SAMPLE 6

## Coding Protocol and Approach

### Coding for Chapters 3, 4

How can domestic political salience of counterinsurgency effort be operationalized? There is no single-indicator to code domestic political salience of counterinsurgency effort. Public opinion can be informative for capturing preferences of select political actors, however they are unable to capture the incentive structure that informs preferences of the multitude of political actors who matter in the decision-making surrounding counterinsurgency.

I propose a two-step process to code domestic political salience of counterinsurgency effort. The first step requires identifying *ex-ante* influential domestic political actors. Such political actors are likely to vary across regime types. For example, in democracies, I expect a combination of central/federal political government, state/provincial political government, and military/intelligence/civilian bureaucracy to matter. In autocracies, I expect elite power brokers who impact regime survival, like ethnic groups'/influential social groups'/launching coalitions' view of the counterinsurgency war effort to shape the domestic politics.

The second step requires assessing the domestic political sentiment of the influential political actors towards the counterinsurgency effort. I code each actor's preference towards the war effort as either high, low, or ambivalent. I code it as high when key leaders of the political actor in question voice clear cut support for counterinsurgency operations in comparison to other policy options, be they elections, amnesty schemes, peace deal offers, both publicly and in internal

deliberations. I probe for indicators of such preferences in accounts offered by key officials from the period either in historiography, interviews, or media reports.

I code it as low when key leaders of the political actor in question voice strong opposition especially in comparison to other policy options, be they elections, amnesty schemes, peace deal offers, publicly or in internal deliberations. I probe for indicators of such preferences in accounts offered by key officials from the period either in historiography, interviews, or media reports.

I code it as ambivalent when key leaders of the political actor in question voice neither clear opposition nor clear support for counterinsurgency operations -- especially in comparison to other policy options, be they elections, amnesty schemes, peace deal offers -- in internal deliberations only. I probe for indicators of such preferences in accounts offered by key officials from the period either in historiography, interviews, or media reports.

What are some indicators to ex-ante code counterinsurgency experience of the militaries? The collective orientation of the organization matters more than what individual or a few formations have experienced. I am interested in discrete levels of this variation. Thus, a clear-cut indication of bad experience is if the majority of the force structure involved has not been exposed to internal conflict. On the other extreme a clear-cut indication of good experience is if a third or more of the force structure was involved in a prior-war; or, the plurality of the current crop of senior, mid-ranking officers and rank-and-file engaged in operations are on second rotations or experienced counterinsurgency in a previous conflict.

## Coding for Chapters 5, 6, 7, 8

To test effectiveness, the L&S framework can be deployed broadly and comparatively, but its specifics are contextual: what counts as high L&S in 2018 Philippines may be very different than in Cyprus in the 1950. I operationalize this framework – and the alternative accounts of hearts-and-minds, group type, and force level -- for each of the conflicts studied by outlining a transparent coding scheme drawing on a range of indicators reflected in table and narrative form. The table and the associated narrative is discussed at length in each of the chapter. Here I specify the generic approach to coding and indicator determination. I then provide the coding in table format of each of the variables.

### Group Type

As highlighted earlier, recent theoretical work on insurgent group's organizational structure situates counterinsurgency effectiveness to the type of group. Four prominent theories that do so are Staniland's social type, Weinstein's endowment type, Jordan's bureaucratic and popular support type, and Long's organizational structure. I propose an operationalization that can illustrate which groups are likely to be strongest and weakest under all theories.

I measure the group type in two steps. First, I assess the group for observables of each of the group type theories. I proxy for indicators in four categories: 1) To measure social type of the group at the start of the campaign, I evaluate the prewar support and embeddedness across geography. I check the group traces its roots to a pre-war political party, resistance movement,

NGO, labor union, networks of training institutions, and/or tribal structure with offices and presence in multiple geographies 2) I measure the recruit quality: Why are people joining the insurgency? And how does the motivation of those joining varies? 3) To measure Jordan and Long's focus on insurgent organization's institutionalization, I assess the organizational structure of the group, how organized it was, standard operating procedures for delegation/task specialization/mid-level leadership change/turnover in cases of losses 4) Finally, to capture cohesion, I attempt to capture of nature of central political control, factionalism, and instances of with-in group fratricide.

#### Force Level

To measure force level, I consider three rules that dominate the military studies debate on appropriate manpower for counterinsurgency: force to force/tier down ratios, force to population, and force to theater.

Force to force, or tie-down ratios, refer to the relationship between counter-insurgents and their opponents. According to the US Army Field Manual FM-23, during previous conflicts "planners assumed that combatants required a 10 or 15 to 1 advantage over insurgents to win."<sup>11</sup> Force to population or troop density is the ratio between counter-insurgents and local inhabitants in the area of operations. While the optimal amount is up for debate, there seems to be a consensus on the lower bound. Most density recommendations fall within a range of 20 to 25 counter-insurgents for every 1000 residents in an AO [area of operations]. As the FM-23 notes, "Twenty

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<sup>11</sup> Nagl et al 2008

counter-insurgents per 1000 residents is often considered the minimum troop density required for effective COIN operations.” Kneece et al (2010) suggest a higher estimate: “We found that force densities of 40-50 troops per 1,000 may be required for high confidence of success.”

Force-to-Space ratio is traceable to T.E Lawrence’s observation about the relationship between space and force deployment. Much like other thresholds in security studies, force-to-space ratio thresholds too are subject to much debate. Lawrence suggested 600K troops to cover half a million square kilometers of the Hijaz.<sup>12</sup>

Based on these benchmarks provided above, in the case tests I compare the force calculations to these numbers.

**TABLE 44: FORCE SIZE BENCHMARKS**

Measure	Cutoff	Source	Coding
Force to Force	10 to 1	Nagl et al 2008	If greater, advantage, else disadvantage
Force to Population	If between 20-40 per 1000 parity, if greater than 40, advantage	Nagl et al 2008; Kneece et al 2010	Below 20, disadvantage
Force to Space	> 1.2 sq km	Lawrence 1920	If greater: advantage, else disadvantage

Hearts-and-minds

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<sup>12</sup> Lawrence 1920, 7-8

The debate on hearts-and-minds has been dotted by practitioner accounts and military doctrines, which often offer deeply contradictory set of guidelines on what constitutes hearts-and-minds practices. For sake of generating falsifiable implications of the theoretical position, I focus on the model developed by Berman, Shapiro, Felter 2011, which they call the Hearts-and-minds (HAM) model. That model “is a three-sided game between violent rebels seeking to impose costs on a government, a government seeking to minimize violence by a mix of militarized counterinsurgency efforts and service provision, and civilians deciding whether to share information about insurgents.” In equilibrium, rebel subversion is limited to a ““noncooperation constraint,” the point at which the externalities of violence to the community are so high that the representative community member is indifferent between sharing information with the government or not, given their political preferences and exposure to rebel retaliation.” Further the model suggests rebel subversion is reduced/weakened when the counterinsurgent is able to offer extensive security and material gains.

In light of this, I operationalize those measures of counterinsurgency military tactics and strategies as constituting hearts-and-minds strategy that pertain to issues/frequency and quality of civilian victimization, the extent of humane and transparent targeting methods, minimizes the use of firepower, and the perception of the campaign.

Among indicators of actual civilian harm and victimization, I focus on level of collateral damage in counterinsurgency, collective punishment practices, and state of security of the civilian population from insurgent violence.

Among indicators of counterinsurgency targeting methods, I look for evidence on use of torture of detainees, arbitrary detentions, and frequency of disappearances.

Among indicators of firepower, I look for evidence of firepower uses which are visible to large number of civilians, leave major traces of use like craters, and are likely to involve collateral damage. Specifically, I look for evidence of artillery fire, airpower use, and major explosions.

L&S

The new theory's variable of interest can be measured ex-ante by assessing indicators/ dimensions of legibility and speed of exploitation.

To assess variation in the degree of legibility, I assess the campaigns in three set of indicators:

1) Pre-existing legibility infrastructure pertaining to population knowledge in the specific geography: What is the spatial coverage of state's information capacity like, as captured in bureaucratic penetration of police, civilian asset registration like cars and phones, and intelligence bureaucracy? One key indicator of this kind of pre-existing legibility is Meyer score.<sup>13</sup>

2) Population management programs including the size, scale, and sophistication of the fixed capital of spatial and physical registration during the course of the counterinsurgency campaign.

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<sup>13</sup> Lee and Zhang 2017; Lee 2018

For example, I look for evidence of population management programs like registration initiated as part of the counterinsurgency effort. Where possible, I collect data on number of civilians registered in the geography of the campaign.

3) Implementation of legibility tactics; I check tactical and strategic capabilities. For example: did the counterinsurgents run a functional interrogation program, did they possess adequate capital and space to detain suspects and insurgents, sufficient translators, and analysts to piece information. I also check if the counterinsurgents ran a functional flipping program with cash incentives and/or offers to surrender and whether or not they were systematically interrogated.

4) Use of technology to surveil civilian population: The set of indicators depend on the time period but generally I check if the counterinsurgent could intercept communication besides undertaking direction finding of signals emanating in the area of operations, and the scale at which it could do so; I check if the counterinsurgent possessed aerial platforms unmanned aerial vehicles to surveil their areas of operation; if yes, what was the sophistication of the platform and their availability and scale.

To assess variation in the speed of exploitation, I assess indicators capturing three dimensions:

1) I first check for the analysis, collation, and dissemination process. I check for the means of processing, analyzing, and storing intelligence leads. Do the relevant bureaucracies have abundant human capital to analyze, process, and store intelligence? I check for bureaucratic

integration or lack thereof between agencies/bureaucracies involved in the counterinsurgency effort.

2) I assess the organizational and human capital to execute on information leads by land and air. I first check if counterinsurgents establish a population relocation program, and if it deployed in the relocated regions in a way which shortened the response time; in the absence of population relocation, I check if the counterinsurgents disperse themselves in the operational area in a way that allows them to execute on information leads from shorter distances; this might involve creation of new forts, bases, forward operating regions; when possible, I check standard operating procedures on available information leads; to measure execution capability by air, I first check the availability of attack and transport helicopters in their area of operation. I also check the number of weaponized unmanned aerial vehicles available to the counterinsurgents.

3) I assess the political and legal process for acting upon information leads; who approves strikes and how long does it take? How centralized is the decision-making infrastructure of the counterinsurgent? How do on the ground operators describe the process by which they carry out raids?

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