Rebel Organizations in Crackdown and Truce

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Abstract

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In the past three decades, more than two dozen civil conflicts have ended in a long-term truce between the government and rebels. In these agreements, neither side disarms or makes any substantial concessions. Instead, rebel forces are permitted to recruit, fund themselves, and patrol territory without punishment so long as they leave government forces alone. Governments typically offer these agreements when they have few domestic or political interests in the conflict (as in remote separatist regions) or when they face short-run international pressure to reduce violence (as in high-profile conflicts).

What happens to rebel organizations when the government permits them to operate and recruit freely? Governments and scholars believe that forbearance benefits rebel organizations, allowing them to gather new funds and new members who will empower them on the battlefield and at the bargaining table. This book argues instead that these periods of truce undermine rebel organizations by changing the types of recruits they attract. Truces do indeed make life safer and easier for rebel soldiers, attracting an influx of new rebel recruits. But they also undermine a key screening process in rebel recruitment. Rebel leaders need rebel soldiers to sacrifice their own desires (safety, pleasure, and profit) for the movement's goals (battlefield victory, territorial control, and bargaining credibility). The safety and material benefits of truce disproportionately attract selfish opportunists who are prone to desert, defect, and disobey in the long run. Constrained by recruitment competition and bureaucratic incapacity, rebel leaders struggle to screen or control these new soldiers. I lay out this argument in a formal model of rebel recruitment, competition, and screen-

ing, validated with dozens of interviews of current and former rebels in Northeast India and Sri Lanka.

I examine the effects of long-term truces on rebel organizations using three forms of evidence. First, I test how truces affect the behavior and motivations of rebel recruits with an innovative recruitment experiment in three separatist regions in Northeast India. By mimicking local rebel recruiting strategies in civic organizations and public gathering places, I gather nearly 400 likely rebel recruits. These recruits then evaluated randomly-generated hypothetical rebel groups, testing what factors make them more willing to join. The results shows that the safety and material benefits of truce disproportionately attract recruits who are less community-oriented, both in past behavior and self-assessments.

Second, I explore the broader impacts of these recruit-side motivations on rebel organizations with 76 in-depth case interviews in Northeast India and Sri Lanka. These interviewees include rebel leaders, current and former rebel soldiers, and civilians interacting with rebel groups. By comparing over time (before and after truce agreements) and between movements, I track how truces shape rebel recruitment and control.

Third, I construct an original worldwide dataset of civil conflict endings since 1946. This exercise shows just how common long-term truces are: since the end of the Cold War, more civil conflicts have ended in a truce than in a rebel victory or peace agreement. I also combine this data with existing conflict data, demonstrating that after a truce rebel groups are more likely to fragment, struggle in clashes with the government, and abuse civilians.

This book challenges several key assumptions that scholars and policymakers hold about conflict resolution, rebel organizations, and state development. By shining a light on the largely ignored phenomenon of long-term truces in civil conflicts, it demonstrates what happens when reducing violence does not resolve a conflict. With innovative experimental evidence of rebel recruits' motivations, it shows how changing resources can shift the quantity and quality of recruits rebels attract. By tracking rebel organizations before and after truce, it shows how a government can

more effectively undermine a rebel movement in the long run with forbearance than with violent crackdown.

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Civil Society Organizations	
AASU	All Assam Students Union
ABSU	All Bodo Students Union
NSF	Naga Students Federation
Rebel Groups in Nagaland	
NNC	Naga National Council
NNC-A	NNC - Accordist faction
NNC-Kudao	NNC - Kudao faction
NNC-N	NNC - Non-Accordist faction
NSCN	National Socialist Council of Nagalim
NSCN-IM	NSCN - Isak Muivah faction
NSCN-K	NSCN - Khaplang faction
NSCN-R	NSCN - Reformation faction
NSCN-U	NSCN - Unification faction
Rebel Groups in Manipur	
KCP	Kangleipak Communist Party
KNF	Kuki National Front
KNO	Kuki National Organization
KRA	Kuki Revolutionary Army
KYKL	Kanglei Yawol Kanna Lup
PLA	People's Liberation Army (of Manipur)
PREPAK	People's Revolutionary Party of Kangleipak
UNLF	United National Liberation Front
Rebel Groups in Assam	
NDFB	National Democratic Front of Bodoland
ULFA	United Liberation Forces of Asom
Rebel Groups in Sri Lanka	
EPRLF	Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front
LTTE	Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (a.k.a Tamil Tigers)
LTTE-K	LTTE - Karuna faction
PLOTE	People's Liberation Organization of Tamil Eelam
TELO	Tamil Eelam Liberation Organization

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Throughout the 1990s, Indian government forces and separatist rebels fought a brutal conflict in the Naga Hills. Naga rebel groups have been fighting, off and on, since the 1950s, when the Indian army marched into the previously unadministered forested hills along the Myanmar border.[1] Ethnic Naga communities in the hills have long seen themselves as racially and culturally distinct from other Indians, and many still see India as a foreign occupier. These tensions came to a head in the early 1990s, when two Naga rebel factions launched an all-out assault on government forces. Between 1991 and 1997, more than 500 government soldiers, rebels, and civilians were killed in guerrilla fighting.

In 1997, the conflict suddenly ended. The government offered a blanket ceasefire to all Naga rebels, trying to end the conflict in a single stroke. Two of the three major rebel outfits signed immediately, and the third signed a few years later. Almost overnight, even before all parties had formally signed, rebel and government forces slipped into peaceful coexistence. In the two decades since then, there have been just a handful of deadly clashes between insurgents and counterinsurgents.

Yet in the two decades since the conflict ended, neither side has collapsed, conceded, or demo-

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[1]Unadministered in the sense of having little to no connection with a central state.

bilized. The 1997 ceasefire explicitly permitted rebels to carry arms, maintain bases throughout the state, and recruit and train new members. Government forces agreed under the table to allow rebels to tax local businesses, civilians, and even the salaries of state employees. Rebel soldiers frequently carry weapons in full view of police and military forces. Nearly all of the "underground" leaders live in large, well-known houses in Nagaland's main towns, just blocks from government bases. Yet this toleration should not be confused for active cooperation: both sides still maintain that they are enemies preparing to fight one another. The government still refers to Naga rebels as "terrorists" and still deploys tens of thousands of counterinsurgency forces in Nagaland. Rebels still call the government "foreign invaders," and boast more combat troops today than they did in the 1990s (approximately 10,000 combined between the major Naga factions). Opposing militaries, each claiming to be the sole legitimate government of Nagaland, live peacefully side by side.

This situation seems strange, yet many civil conflicts around the world have ended with similar arrangements. Senegal has refused to consider any autonomy or power-sharing in the Casamance region, yet for almost two decades it has explicitly permitted MFDC rebels to remain armed and active. Indonesia granted independence to East Timor in 2002, yet more than a decade earlier it scaled back counterinsurgency there without conceding or withdrawing troops. Russia, Georgia, Moldova, and Serbia entirely pulled out of secessionist regions for years or decades while still preparing to seize them back. As it was silencing massive democracy protests in 1988, Myanmar's[2] military was offering agreements to ethnic separatist rebels throughout its hill areas which allowed them to operate freely and openly for the indefinite future.

In all, more than 30 civil conflicts have ended in a *long-term truce* since 1989 alone. In these truces, government and rebel forces stop fighting, but both sides remain mobilized and committed to the conflict. Both sides explicitly or tacitly promise not to attack one another for the indefinite future, but neither side disarms or makes any substantial policy concessions. So long as the deal

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[2]Then Burma.

stands — which is typically a decade or more — government forces permit rebels to patrol territory, gather resources, and recruit new members.

1.1 The Argument

This book asks what happens to rebel organizations when they transition from conflict to long-term truce. That is, what happens to rebels when a government chooses to forgo crackdown and allow them to operate freely?

When governments offer truce agreements, they generally do so despite believing that they will benefit rebels in the long run. Permitting rebel groups to operate and recruit freely, after all, should encourage more rebels to take up arms and allow them to gain more power. Instead, I show that long-term truces actually undermine rebel organizations, and for an unexpected reason. By making life safer and easier for rebel soldiers, truces indeed encourage more potential rebel recruits to join rebel outfits. This change, however, unravels the screening process at the heart of rebel recruitment. A rebel organization's power comes from its soldiers' willingness to sacrifice their own desires for organizational goals: to risk their lives in battle, to stand down during negotiations, and to forgo opportunities for plunder and abuse. When the government is cracking down on rebel soldiers, danger and deprivation deter all but the most committed recruits from joining. But when the government offers a long-term truce, selfish opportunists begin to flow into rebel organizations, where they are prone to desert, defect, and disobey when the organization needs them most. Over time, rebel organizations in truce become larger but weaker, full of undisciplined and fractious soldiers. For governments seeking to undermine militant competitors, this can be a blessing: rebels lose strength on the battlefield and leverage at the bargaining table. For other interested parties, however, the results are decidedly more mixed: rebel chaos and fragmentation can endanger civilians and stymie peace negotiations.

In this section, I describe the basic structure of this argument and what it says about the behavior

of three main types of actors: governments, rebel recruits, and rebel leaders.

Explaining Long-term Truces in Civil Conflicts

What makes long-term truces like Nagaland so counterintuitive is that the conflict ends with both sides still mobilized, present, and claiming to be the legitimate government. In a civil conflict, unlike in an interstate war, the two sides cannot simply retreat to their own sovereign territories. As a result, scholars and policymakers generally assume that civil conflicts can only end with one side collapsing, conceding, or disarming.[3] Rebels may win outright, forcing the government to give up control of the central state or to grant independence to a separatist region. The government may defeat rebel forces, causing them to unravel, disarm, or go into hiding. Or the two sides may agree to a peace settlement in which rebels disarm or merge into the state military in exchange for autonomy, power-sharing, or policy changes.

Yet many governments around the world — from Morocco to Lebanon to the Philippines — have halted violence for years and decades while allowing rebels to remain armed and threatening. Rebel conspiracy theories aside, governments rarely intend truces to degrade or divide rebel forces. Government military planners typically avoid truces specifically because they believe forbearance will embolden and unify rebel forces. Nor do truces bridge the gap to a permanent peace settlement, as international actors often believe. Government and rebel forces who settle into a truce rarely intend to negotiate disarmament and policy concessions, and just four of the 35 truces I document have led to a permanent resolution.

Instead, governments typically offer long-term truces when a temporary peace is more valuable than a chance at defeating rebel forces outright. This happens for one of two reasons. First, the political and economic stakes of many conflicts may be low enough that the government is willing to accept potential disadvantages if it means not having to fight. Nearly every civil conflict which has ended in a truce has been a separatist conflict, where a defeat will at most lead to

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[3]See, for example: Walter (1997) and Fearon (2004).

secession rather than governmental overthrow. Many of these cases, in particular, have happened in remote, underdeveloped regions where governments have few political or economic interests.[4] There, governments are willing to put off fighting for decades, letting rebels retain their military strength and bargaining leverage so long as they can avoid conflict.

Second, many governments face intense international pressure to halt violence with rebels. Since the end of the Cold War, international actors — the United States, the EU, Russia, and the Arab League — have increasingly pressured their allies to the bargaining table with rebels.[5] Even where neither government nor rebel leaders have no intention of making any meaningful concessions, they may agree to a truce in order to signal their good will and thereby avoid sanctions or intervention. The list of truce cases around the world includes some of the highest-profile conflicts of the post-Cold War era: Israel-Palestine, Serbia-Kosovo, and Sri Lanka-Tamil Eelam. These outside pressures, however, appear to be substantially less durable than domestic drivers of truce. These internationally-driven truces tend to break down within a decade as international attention fades and both sides see opportunities to gain through violence.

Long-term truces are worth examining on two levels. On the most basic level, these truces represent an understudied type of conflict ending. They challenge the common assumption that ending a civil conflict must mean establishing a monopoly on the use of force. As a result, international actors typically view ceasefires as a temporary step toward a longer-run settlement. These cases demonstrate that international pressure, rather than pushing the two sides to a peace agreement, can result instead in a prolonged truce. It is worth investigating systematically how these truces affect civilians and prospects for peace.

However, truces are also worth studying as a window into how government violence affects rebel organizations and civil conflicts more generally. As these truce cases demonstrate, states often have substantial strategic choice in how much to violently punish rebel groups that mobilize

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[4]Scott (2010) and Fearon and Laitin (2011) have highlighted unusual features of these center-periphery conflicts.

[5]Fortna (2004b) describes how this process has pushed many more conflicts to end in negotiated settlement rather than military victory.

in their borders. While some anti-state armed groups invite immediate government crackdowns, many others are tolerated.[6] Even the United States in the past century, a model for state strength, has been home to huge variety of explicitly anti-state armed groups (e.g. the Ku Klux Klan, the Black Panthers, far-right militias in the Mountain West), which faced everything from brutal crackdown to tacit state support. Policymakers generally assume that state violence by its nature weakens rebel organizations so long as it is effective and targeted at the right people. Yet evaluating that assumption is much trickier than it sounds because it is hard to know which groups a state *might have cracked down upon but did not*. These truces, however, involve armed groups who have recently challenged the state and are still present, armed, and committed to their goals. Comparing before and after the truce, we can see the same group function with and without the threat of government violence.

Truces and Rebel Recruits

Governments generally offer these truces assuming that periods of leniency will empower rebel organizations. The logic of this assumption is fairly simple: the best tool that a state possesses to prevent rebellion is the credible threat of violence against anyone who takes up arms.[7] Permitting rebels to organize and recruit without punishment, then, only invites more and more disgruntled citizens to mobilize against the state. Even worse, they fear that truces enable rebel groups to gather and spend new material resources. Freed from their fears of government crackdown, rebels are free to collect taxes from the local population, operate smuggling or protection rings, and run legal side businesses. Flush with safety and material benefits, rebel leaders can attract new soldiers who would be otherwise scared off by the danger and hardships of life in a rebel outfit.[8]

The premise of this argument is exactly right: the main effect of long-term truces is to make

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[6]Staniland (2012, 2017) and Arjona (2016) describe many types of state-rebel relationships, and Malone (2018) catalogues many militant groups that exist outside of conflict.

[7]This argument mirrors the arguments made by Hobbes (1651), Becker (1974), and Gates (2002).

[8]For more on material and safety benefits and the collective action problem in rebel organizations, see Olson (1965), Kalyvas and Kocher (2007), Humphreys and Weinstein (2008), Mueller (2000), and Collier (2000).

life easier for rebels. When the government permits offers a long-term truce, rebel soldiers are free from the constant danger of death and injury, and free from the psychological stress that comes with that danger. They experience an improvement in wages, accommodations, transportation, and lifestyle perks. As a result, joining a rebel group becomes much more attractive and a host of new recruits flow into rebel organizations.

The problem for rebels, then, is not whether new recruits join, but *which* new recruits join. Like other types of organizations, rebel groups need high-quality workers to survive and succeed. But there is a key difference: while most types of organizations care primarily about their workers' *skills*, rebel groups are much more concerned with their soldiers' *commitment*. Unskilled soldiers may be ineffective in battle, but uncommitted soldiers actively unravel the hard-won victories of their fellows. Uncommitted soldiers desert in the height of battle, disrupt productive negotiations with internal squabbles, defect to the enemy with critical information, and sully their organizations' reputations by abusing civilian supporters. Attracting committed soldiers while screening out the uncommitted, therefore, is a life and death matter for rebel organizations.

Truces, however, attract exactly the wrong types of recruits to join a rebel group. In other industries, having more money to offer to potential employees generally allows a firm to attract high-quality talent. But with rebel groups, it is just the opposite. The most committed soldiers are those who will join a rebel organization even when joining means danger and deprivation. In times of crackdown, then, rebel organizations have a natural screening mechanism built into their recruitment: unable to offer attractive benefits, they only get the best soldiers. But in truce, this process begins to unravel. The types of soldiers who are attracted by the safety and material benefits of truce are the types who are most likely to desert, defect, and disobey once they are armed. After a truce, many new recruits are attracted to join rebel organizations, but many of them are selfish, lazy, and opportunistic. Once they join, these new recruits are prone to desert, defect, and disobey.[9]

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[9]Weinstein (2007) makes a similar argument about material endowments and rebel recruitment.

Truces and Rebel Organizations

These individual-level behaviors have major implications for rebel leaders and their organizations. When governments grant a truce to a rebel movement, rebel soldiers are safer and rebel leaders have more material benefits to spread around. Attracted by safety and lifestyle, low-commitment recruits flock to rebel organizations, where they shirk their duties, abuse civilians, and behave erratically during negotiations. If rebels do clash with government forces, rebel soldiers are slow to risk their lives and may even desert en masse, leading to unexpected defeats. All of this leaves the rebels weaker in clashes with government forces, less credible in negotiations, and unpopular with their supporters.

There is one other group of actors in this process, however: rebel leaders. Far from passive observers of their organizations' dysfunction, they are typically quite sophisticated managers and problem-solvers. But rebel leaders face a number of strategic dilemmas preventing them from restoring discipline and cohesion in times of truce. The most fundamental issue is that of imperfect information. Rebel leaders cannot easily tell whether a recruit is community-oriented and dedicated to the cause, and recruits have a strong incentive to pretend to be committed until up until the moment when they desert or defect.

The most obvious solution would be for rebel leaders to screen out low-commitment recruits by lowering soldiers' wages and benefits or demanding they endure harsh training as a signal of commitment.[10] However, rebel organizations face a major constraint in screening their soldiers: recruitment competition. If rebel leaders will not pass on their own good fortune to their soldiers, some other aspiring leader will. Most rebel movements have at least two armed groups, typically recruiting from the same populations and areas.[11] And even if a single rebel organization dominates a movement, potential mutineers wait in the wings to take over the organization or steal

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[10]Spence (1973) and others lay out reasonable ways to think about this. This behavior has been documented among rebel groups in contexts as diverse as Uganda, Peru, Iraq, and the DRC (Weinstein, 2007; Bahney et al., 2013; Gordon, 2015).

[11]See Christia (2012), Humphreys and Weinstein (2008), and Gutierrez Sanin and Giustozzi (2010).

recruits if conditions are right. Even highly committed soldiers are willing to defect to a similar organization if they feel they are underpaid, underappreciated, and betrayed by their leaders. This puts rebel leaders in a bind: either increase wages, bringing in low-commitment soldiers, or lose even high-commitment soldiers to a rival faction. With this recruitment competition, the creativity and strategy of rebel leaders ultimately exacerbates the indiscipline and fragmentation that result from truce.

Rebel leaders try several other major strategies to prevent indiscipline and chaos, but they face a number of constraints that state militaries do not. Rebel groups rarely have strong bureaucracies, well-designed command structures to relay information, or deep territorial control. This gives a misbehaving rebel soldier a host of ways to avoid organizational control. They may be able to keep their misbehavior secret, collude with corrupt superiors, or flee to avoid punishment. These limitations also makes it difficult for rebel leaders to find unbiased sources of information on new recruits, especially when recruitment is profitable.

As a result, truces have a major impact on how conflicts are fought and resolved. For rebel movements, it means that they experience seemingly contradictory results. They grow larger and wealthier, but perform worse in every way that matters. They lose battles against the government, lose leverage at the bargaining table, and lose supporters in the population. For civilians, it means that violence becomes more decentralized and chaotic. In the process, civilians are more likely to be abused or extorted by out-of-control rebel soldiers. For peace negotiators, it means that a conflict may be more difficult to resolve outright. More rebel organizations typically means more spoiling and greater challenges in finding a solution everyone is comfortable with. For governments, though, truces are much better deals than they typically believe going in. Truces weaken rebel organizations in the long run, though they bring with them disorder in rebel-held areas.

1.2 Research Approaches

This book makes claims about three separate sets of actors: governments who offer truces, recruits who decide whether to join a rebel organization, and rebel leaders who try to screen and control those recruits. Each has their own motivations and behaviors, and each poses a unique set of research challenges. In order to rigorously test the theory, then, I use empirical strategies which evaluate the predictions at all three levels and theoretical tools to tie all of their behaviors together.

Formal model

The main theoretical elements in this book are laid out with the help a relatively simple formal model, described in Chapter 3. The model brings together all three types of actors in the theory. The government decides how harshly to pursue rebel soldiers, on a scale ranging from benign neglect to harsh crackdown. Potential rebel recruits decide whether to join a rebel group, weighing the danger of crackdown against the material and non-material benefits the group can offer. Rebel leaders decide what sorts of material benefits to offer recruits, knowing that higher wages make their offer more competitive but may attract uncommitted opportunists as well as committed idealists. The model shows how a government's decision to forbear punishment on rebel groups (that is, to offer a truce) changes the behavior of rebel recruits and rebel leaders.

In this structure, the model takes the essential claims of the argument and formalizes them into a set of observable hypotheses. By its nature, laying out this model is a process of simplifying the complex interactions in the real world down to their essential dynamics: the central actors, their central motivations, and the central decisions they make. As Kenneth Waltz put it, a theoretical model is more like a paper airplane than a model airplane.[12] That is, it is meant to illustrate and assess the essential dynamics of a process rather than replicate as many details as possible.

Why, then, use a formal model at all? This book can, and does, lay out the argument in plain

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[12]Waltz (1979)

English as well. However, formal models have at least two advantages over purely rhetorical arguments.

The first advantage is in disentangling the strategic behavior of multiple interlocking actors. Rebel groups, like other types of organizations, are neither single monolithic actors nor unconnected groups of individuals. They involve multiple layers of individuals, each with their own motivations and strategies. Rebel leaders compete with one another over recruits while simultaneously trying to screen recruits for commitment, and rebel recruits try to evaluate competing offers from rival rebel organizations. Without some theoretical tools to distill down these interactions, it is hard to know where to start. This is particularly important when evaluating policies: a policy that fails to account for competition or internal dynamics may have precisely the opposite of the intended effect. By forefronting the actors in a theory, a formal model forces open the black box of organizations and examines the effects of their internal workings.

The second advantage is in clarifying the assumptions behind an argument. In a rhetorical argument, it is easy to miss important premises that support an argument or elide critical scope conditions. A formal model, by contrast, lays out very clearly the assumptions being made about which actors, motivations, and decisions matter. Importantly, and contrary to common assumptions about rational theories, a formal model does not need to assume that actors are motivated only by materialistic or economic desires. An important claim of this theory, for instance, is that some rebel recruits are motivated more by material benefits while others are motivated more by ideological or social benefits. The benefit of a formal model is that it makes these claims explicit rather than implicit, opening them up to evaluation on their own. Where I do make specific claims about important actors and their motivations and strategic constraints, I work hard to empirically evaluate these assumptions as rigorously as I do the results of the model.

I pair this formal model with three research strategies, each focused on one set of actors in the theory.

Cross-national data

The first of these empirical strategies is an original, worldwide dataset covering every civil conflict ending since 1946. For each conflict ending, I examine what happens to the major military force involved in the conflict after the fighting stopped. Did the rebels collapse, surrender, or go into hiding (a government victory)? Did the government lose control of the central state or surrender control of a separatist region (a rebel victory)? Did rebels disarm or merge into the military in exchange for policy concessions (a peace agreement)? Or did both sides remain armed, active, and resolved (a long-term truce)? Prior datasets, more interested in the military or political results of conflicts, have little information on what happens to the forces afterward. Therefore, collecting this information involved a thorough examination of secondary sources on each conflict by myself and a small team of research assistants. In all, the data cover 232 conflict endings in 175 civil conflicts since World War II.[13] This macro strategy, looking widely over time and space at conflict outcomes, is useful for three major purposes.

The first goal is primarily descriptive: to define the phenomenon of long-term truces in civil conflicts and track their prevalence. Long-term truces are so counterintuitive and so interesting because both sides retain their power and purpose but agree not to fight for years and decades. Yet this fact also makes truces liable to be misclassified or dismissed as one-off occurrences. By examining conflict endings across the world and over time, this dataset shows just how often civil conflicts end in long-term truces. It also enables me to make some basic descriptive statements about what these truces look like: how long they tend to last, who initiates them, and whether they serve as a bridge to more permanent resolutions.

The second goal is explanatory, testing possible explanations for the causes long-term truces. Though most of the book focuses on the effects of long-term truces, it is important to start with where, when, and why they happen in the first place. Yet given that truces are typically initiated

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[13]Many conflicts recur after an extended period of peace.

by governments, within-country or over-time comparisons are much less helpful in testing these theories than between-country comparisons. In order to make these comparisons, then, I look across the world at when and where conflicts end in truces as opposed to government or rebel victory or a peace agreement. To do so, I combine my original conflict-ending data with existing data on rebel strength, casualties, foreign support, and conflict type. These results help to sift through competing explanations and rule out some causal effects which might pose challenges to other parts of the research design.

The third goal is to test some of the more obvious observable effects that long-term truces have on rebel organizations. If long-term truces weaken rebel organizations in the long run, then they should fragment into multiple organizations, observably struggle on the battlefield, and more frequently abuse civilians. Using existing violent event data from UCDP, I test these hypotheses systematically, comparing before and after the long-term truces in my dataset.

Case Interviews

Most of the theory laid out above is concerned with how truces shape the inner-workings of rebel organizations. While some of these effects are visible in cross-national data, most are much more difficult to observe across a large number of cases. Clandestine rebel organizations are by their nature opaque: they deliberate cloak their patterns of recruitment, internal discipline, and violence from the government and from civilians. This is particularly true in insurgent campaigns, where rebel groups use secrecy and unpredictability to their advantage against government forces. Moreover, even with good information on soldier behavior, it can be difficult to discern the organizational processes behind it. Violence against civilians, for example, can result from deliberate planning or from soldier misbehavior.[14]

In order to look more closely into the inner-workings of rebel organizations in crackdown and truce, therefore, I conducted 76 in-depth case interviews during seven months of fieldwork in

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[14]Compare, for instance, Kalyvas (2006), Weinstein (2007), and Stanton (2016).

South Asia. About half of these interviewees were current or former combatants from nine rebel organizations fighting in four separate civil conflicts. These rebels ranged from top commanders to high-ranking human resource managers to drill sergeants to foot soldiers. Most of the non-rebel interviewees were civilians in conflict zones who interact with rebel organizations on an everyday basis: village chiefs, shopkeepers, activists, and teachers. Nearly all of these interviewees broadly supported the cause of autonomy/independence for their ethnic group, but they often had wildly different views of specific armed groups and leaders. By asking the same questions to actors with widely differing perspectives and insights, I worked to collect a full picture of how rebel groups functioned over time and across cases. The interviews lasted between 30 minutes and two hours and covered a wide range of current and historical subjects.

These interviews were intended for two primary purposes. First, I use them to test the book's major theoretical claims about how truces affect rebel organizations. In my interviews, I asked a set of structured questions about how rebel soldiers behave, how rebel leaders control soldiers, and what life is like for rebel soldiers. These questions allow clean comparisons over time and between rebel groups, tracing how truce offers affect the internal workings of rebel organizations. In Northeast India, I investigate the changes over time in the two largest and longest-running rebel movements in the region, in Nagaland and Manipur. While Naga rebels were offered a truce in the late 1990s, Meitei (Manipuri) rebels were not. I compare the organizational change over time in the two movements, a qualitative difference-in-differences. In Sri Lanka, I track the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and other Tamil outfits through crackdown, truce, and renewed crackdown.

Second, I use these interviews to fill in the causal process by which truces shape rebel organizations. In addition to the structured questions above, I asked a host of follow-up questions about changes over time and open-ended questions about how rebel groups recruit and control soldiers. The first set of open-ended interviews in Nagaland, conducted in July 2015, informed the structure of the formal model. The actors, preferences, and strategies were all based on discussions

with current and former rebels and civilians. During the remainder of the interviews, conducted in July-August 2016 (in Nagaland and Manipur) and March-April 2017 (in Sri Lanka), I asked many follow-up questions to understand the process behind the systematic observations described in the previous paragraph. In other words, I asked when and why organizations changed over time in their recruitment and control practices, validating the structure and focus of the theory. In addition, I asked quite extensive questions about why rebel organizations did not use alternative recruitment and control strategies, validating not only how the causal process worked but why it did not work a different way.

Recruitment experiment

The most innovative empirical investigation in this book, however, is the recruitment experiment described in Chapter 4. This book makes bold claims about what attracts different sorts of potential recruits to join a rebel organization. It argues that some recruits are far more committed to their communities than others, and that these high-commitment recruits are less attracted to the safety and material benefits of truce than are low-commitment recruits prone to misbehavior. While some other prominent works make similar claims,[15] many others disagree about what motivates committed recruits to join.[16] These competing descriptions of rebel recruits' motivations matter a great deal. Whether rebel organizations can attract high-commitment recruits, as well as screen or control low-commitment recruits, shapes which forces win on the battlefield, at the bargaining table, and in public opinion.

Rigorously testing what motivates more and less committed recruits to join a rebel group, however, is extremely difficult. The qualitative interviews, while very informative about the organization-level effects of truces, are less reliable in drawing systematic conclusions about individual-level effects. Even with very detailed descriptions about how current and former combatants de-

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[15] Notably Weinstein (2007).

[16] Various competing theories of recruits' motivations are described in Chapter 3.

cided to join, it is hard to know who might have joined under different circumstances or how committed they would have been. Instead, the ideal test of these theories would get inside the recruitment process itself, identifying likely recruits and testing what sorts of factors might motivate them to join a rebel group. Doing so requires (1) finding a group of likely recruits, (2) judging which recruits are likely to be more and less committed to a community and cause, and (3) eliciting honest answers about who would and would not join under different circumstances.

In the unique setting in Northeast India (which I describe in more detail below), I was able to design a recruitment experiment to do just this. Along with local research assistants, I designed and implemented a sampling procedure to locate likely recruits: people who are likely to come into contact with rebel recruiters and consider joining under the right circumstances. In order to do so, my team mimicked the real recruiting methods of local rebel groups in the Northeast. They approached young men in locations that rebel recruiters are known to frequent: at local ethnic volunteer organizations (the high-commitment group) and in local gathering places in towns and villages such as roadside teashops, moonshiners, and stadiums (the low-commitment group). These procedures were developed based on interviews with dozens of current and former rebels comparing the qualities of various pools of recruits. The respondents answered a battery of opinion, self-assessment, and behavioral questions, both to screen them for likelihood of joining a rebel group and to assess their commitment to community causes. After these questions, they participated in a conjoint experiment, evaluating a number of hypothetical rebel groups from their ethnic community. By randomly generating the features of the rebel groups, in particular the safety and material benefits of truce, these likely recruits reveal their preferences without ever directly stating them or making any specific statements about real rebel groups.

1.3 Settings

The most important empirical investigations in this book — the case interviews and recruitment experiment — are centered in two areas, Northeast India and Sri Lanka.

Northeast India

Over the past six decades, the Government of India has clashed with more than 100 rebel groups from ten distinct ethnic-separatist movements in its Northeast region. Each of these movements mobilized (the earliest in the 1950s and the most recent in the 1990s) demanding independence or autonomy for one of the region's ethnic minority groups (shown in Figure 1). Members of these ethnic groups generally see themselves as racially and ethnically distinct from Mainland Indians, and most had a long history of self-rule before India inherited the region from Britain in 1948.[17] As a result, there is fairly strong support for separatism or autonomy among all social classes, and the government has nearly 400,000 army and paramilitary personnel stationed in the Northeast.

Starting in the mid-1990s, the Indian government has changed approaches to these rebels, offering long-term truces (referred to locally as ceasefires) like the one in Nagaland. These agreements essentially freeze the conflicts in place, allowing rebels to recruit freely, patrol openly, and even tax local populations in exchange for halting attacks. The government has offered these truces not where rebels fight or bargain effectively, but instead where the government has few economic or political interests.[18] While the selection of eligible movements is purposeful, the timing of truce offers is fairly haphazard. Because of limited bureaucratic capacity in the region, the government takes several years to formalize each ceasefire and move onto the next. The result has been to offer a new ceasefire (a single deal to all of the rebels representing an ethnic movement) about once every 3-4 years.

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[17]Scott (2010) describes the history of the broader region ("Zomia") in some depth, and Lacina (2017) describes the causes of mobilization.

[18]I go into more depth in Chapter 2.

Figure 1.1: Major Separatist Movements of Northeast India

Table 1.1: Featured Rebel Movements

Conflict	Largest Outfit	Years	Truce	Interviews	Experiment
India					
Naga	NSCN-IM	1958-	1969-1990, 1997-	Yes	Yes
Meitei	UNLF	1971-	none	Yes	
Bodo	NDFB	1986-	none		Yes
Assamese	ULFA	1990-	none		Yes
Kuki	KRA	1997-	2005-	Yes	
Sri Lanka					
Tamil	LTTE	1976-2009	2001-2007	Yes	

The conflicts in the Northeast help to overcome two empirical challenges inherent in work on truces, recruitment, and rebel organizations. The first is largely practical. Because rebel organizations operate outside the law, it is difficult and potentially dangerous to identify and interview rebels and recruits. The ceasefires, however, have made it semi-legal for rebel groups to operate and recruit. Even in movements with no ceasefire, the ceasefires mean that rebel activities are much more visible and openly discussed in the general population. This makes it much safer to observe and replicate the rebel recruitment process. I have talked to dozens of civilians about how they decided whether or not to join a rebel group and have even sat in a de facto rebel recruitment center. It also makes it safer to conduct honest interviews with rebel leaders, current and former combatants, and activists. Despite this safety, however, militant recruitment carries real stakes for armed organizations and would-be militants: annual fatalities from insurgent violence number in the hundreds every year, and many organizations leverage their rank-and-file soldiers to bargain with the government for policy concessions.

Second, Northeast India has a huge number and variety of rebel groups and conflicts, which helps with internal and external validity. The recruitment experiment was conducted in three hotspots of militancy: in and around Dimapur and Kohima (home to ethnic Nagas), Guwahati and Jorhat / Sivsagar / Dibrugarh (Assamese), and Udalguri (Bodos). Testing the generalizability of recruitment patterns is much easier with a variety of settings: hill vs. valley, truce vs. ongoing conflict, town vs. village, and unified vs. divided movement. It also helps citizens learn their own preferences and conceive of counterfactuals when they answer questions. The respondents can call on their experiences interacting with rebel organizations which were large and small, generous and stingy, strict and lax, hardline and softline. Meanwhile, interviews were conducted in and around the two major movements in Nagaland and Manipur. Together, these movements represent nearly 15 rebel groups which vary across a host of organizational and contextual dimensions but all experience truce or crackdown together as a movement. This makes it easier to learn about the organizational-level effects of truce, comparing both over time and between cases.

Sri Lanka

The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE, or Tamil Tigers) fought the Sri Lankan government in an nearly thirty-year war for independence on behalf of Sri Lanka's Tamil minority (1983-2009). Unlike the comparatively small and remote conflicts in Northeast India, the Sri Lankan Civil War was incredibly intense and politically salient. The LTTE fielded thousands of soldiers and drew support from the millions of Tamils both in Sri Lanka and in Southern India. By the 1990s, the LTTE controlled large swathes of the North and East and regularly launched bombing raids in the capital Colombo.

Yet at the height of the war's bloodshed, the two sides suddenly stopped fighting for six full years (late 2001 to late 2007). The ceasefire, formalized in February 2002, was even more generous to rebels than the agreements in Northeast India. The government agreed not to send troops into LTTE-occupied areas and explicitly permitted the Tigers to operate and recruit openly in the region. LTTE soldiers were even permitted to travel freely in government-occupied zones so long as they were unarmed. While there were ongoing peace talks organized by Norway's foreign ministry, they were never very serious. The famously-paranoid LTTE chief V. Prabhakaran never even left his bunker for negotiations and refused to delegate any real power to his deputies.

Unlike Northeast India, Sri Lanka does not offer a between-conflict comparison. The Tamil separatist movement was the only large separatist conflict, so there was no similar case which was not offered a truce.[19] Instead, the comparison here is over time, from crackdown to truce to renewed crackdown. As in Northeast India, the timing of the ceasefire was unexpected and somewhat haphazard, which makes this comparison more reliable.

The Sri Lanka case is an important counterpoint because the conflict was so different from the conflicts in Northeast India. Despite their variety, the Northeast Indian conflicts tend to be small, remote, and low-intensity. The LTTE, by comparison, was powerful, politically salient,

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[19]The JVP's leftist insurgency was defeated long before 2001 and was never large or salient enough to be reasonably compared.

and threatening to the government and to the population. While the truces in Northeast India are essentially entirely driven by domestic political apathy, the truce in Sri Lanka was caused in large part by outside pressure. More than that, there is ample reason to suggest that Sri Lanka represents a particularly unlikely case for the theory. By the 1990s, Prabhakaran had eliminated all major rivals within the Tamil movement and built a complex bureaucracy in the LTTE's territory. If any leadership is likely to maintain discipline during a truce, it should be the highly charismatic, legalistic, and powerful leaders of the LTTE. If truces have a similar effect in Sri Lanka as in Northeast India, then it is strong evidence it should apply in conflicts across the world.

1.4 Outline of the Book

This book moves through each of the major actors in turn, explaining their decision-making regarding long-term truces. It starts with the government, showing when and why governments halt civil conflicts by offering long-term truces. Then it proceeds to rebel soldiers and recruits, showing how truces change the lives of rebel soldiers and shape which types of potential recruits join the fight. In the later portions of the book, it focuses on rebel organizations as a whole, showing how truces weaken their screening and control mechanisms.

Chapter 2 starts by introducing and defining the surprising phenomenon of long-term truces in civil conflicts. It then introduces the cross-national dataset, demonstrating how many civil conflicts end in long-term truce, especially in recent years and in separatist conflicts. Using this cross-national data and case evidence from Northeast India and Sri Lanka, it then tests competing explanations for why governments offer long-term truces.

Chapter 3 is the main theory chapter, examining how truces effect rebel recruits and organizations. It starts by laying out the theoretical building blocks — the key questions and claims — with illustrative evidence from case interviews. It then formalizes them into a screening model and then presents the model's results, showing how truces (along with recruitment competition) undermine

rebel leaders' organizational control. It concludes by considering alternative strategies which rebel organizations may use to control soldiers in lieu of effective wage screening.

Chapter 4 presents the recruitment experiment in Northeast India. This experiment tests the theory's claims about how different types of likely rebel recruits — community-oriented altruists vs. selfish opportunists — decide whether to join an armed organization. The chapter first describes the design of the experiment: the sampling process, the key comparisons, and the survey design. It then examines the results: how high-commitment and low-commitment recruits react to the added safety and material benefits of truce and to other features that rebel groups might use to attract recruits.

Chapters 5 and 6 present the case interviews in Northeast India and Sri Lanka, respectively. Comparing over time and across cases, these chapters test the theory's claims about how truces shape rebel organizations. In each case, truces flushed rebel organizations with new resources, attracted a host of low-commitment recruits, and exacerbated intra-movement recruitment competition. As a result, the rebel movements grew richer and larger, but at the same time lost strength on the battlefield and lost sway over the local population.

Chapter 7 tests some of the key organizational hypotheses using cross-national violent events data. It shows that, following a truce, rebel movements become more likely to fragment into factions, to perform badly in clashes with the government, and to abuse civilians.

Chapter 8 concludes by discussing the broader implications of this theory and evidence, both for scholars and for policymakers. It starts with what this theory means for peacebuilding, especially for the international actors who promote truces as a means to resolve conflicts and protect civilians. It then discusses what this theory means for combatants, especially for states seeking to defeat rebels and expand into their peripheries.

Chapter 2

Long-Term Truces in Civil Conflicts

When a government clashes with rebels, we expect that the conflict will end in one of three ways.[1] First, the government can win outright, pushing rebels out of the picture. Rebel forces may collapse, disarm, or go into hiding, and the government regains a full monopoly on the use of force. Second, the rebels could win outright, wresting control of the contested state apparatus from the government. For center-seeking rebels, this means forcing the government out of power. For separatist rebels, it means forcing the government to accede to a new, independent state. Third, the two sides could work out a peace agreement. Rebels disarm or merge into the state military, and the government makes key policy concessions: power-sharing, electoral reform, or regional autonomy.

Conflicts that end in a long-term truce, however, seem to confound this typology. Were South Ossetian separatists victorious if the Georgian government still claims the territory and attempts to retake it every few years? Did Senegal negotiate a real peace agreement with rebels in Casamance if they made no substantial policy concessions and permitted the MFDC to stay armed and operating? Did the Philippines defeat NPA rebels in Mindanao if local politicians still consistently negotiate with armed rebels on local issues in order to avoid open conflict? If the war in East Timor ended with independence in 2002, then why did the government so dramatically reduce its

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[1] Fearon (2008), Doyle and Sambanis (2006), Licklider (1995), and Fortna (2004*b*)

counterinsurgency actions more than ten years earlier?

These cases seem so counterintuitive because they clash with the broader underlying assumption that scholars and policymakers tend to make about civil conflicts: that two opposing armed forces who both claim the state cannot simply "agree to disagree" as warring states can. In a civil war, rebels' very existence is for the purpose of contesting the government's control over its territory. So one way or another, we expect that only one military force will be left when the fighting stops. As Walter (1997) puts it, "the key difference between interstate and civil war negotiations is that adversaries in a civil war cannot retain separate, independent armed forces if they agree to settle their differences." For violence to be resolved, then, forces on one side must disarm, concede, collapse, or go into hiding.

There is a reason this generalization has been so persistent: it offers a very helpful way to think about the differences between intrastate and interstate conflicts.

First, it helps explain why civil conflicts have historically been more difficult to resolve peacefully than interstate conflicts. On average, civil conflicts tend to last more than twice as long as interstate wars.[2] And while interstate wars typically end in a negotiated settlement, civil conflicts more often end in a military victory for one side, especially before the end of the Cold War.[3] These patterns make a great deal of sense if civil conflicts cannot end with both sides' forces coexisting. If one side must disarm at the end, then that side has little guarantee that the other side will follow through on the agreed-upon terms unless a third party serves as an enforcer. Both sides in a civil conflict, then, have an incentive to hold out for outright victory rather than risk being betrayed after disarmament.

Second, it explains why intrastate conflicts have been so much bloodier than interstate conflicts. In the last 70 years, civil conflicts have claimed more than five times as many lives as interstate wars.[4] This, too, is neatly explained by intrastate combatants not being able to coexist peacefully.

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[2]Fearon (2004)

[3]Walter (1997), Fortna (2004*b*)

[4]Lacina (2006),Fearon and Laitin (2003)

While two states can retreat to their respective sides of the border and use violence sparingly, governments and rebels have no such option. Instead, two sides in a civil conflict cannot credibly commit not to fight a total war.[5]

Third, it explains why governments so often go to war with rebels who pose little military threat. Most states have standing armies, yet strong states rarely feel threatened by weaker states around them. For example, the United States has no need to disarm Mexico: the U.S.'s military strength deters an invasion, and the two sides can maintain a stable alliance and international border. Within their borders, however, states are seldom satisfied with hegemonic power or temporary alliances.[6] Instead, states frequently crack down on tiny internal foes that pose little military threat.[7] This makes sense if governments and rebels cannot credibly maintain peace or cooperation. Any significant group within a state's borders, even a pro-state militia, will eventually pose a threat, and therefore the government must act.[8]

When civil conflicts end in long-term truce, however, it exposes the limits of this generalization. Rebels still carry arms, operate bases, and often fund themselves illicitly. The government retains full control of the central state apparatus and refuses to make any policy concessions. Both sides remain resolved and defiant, preparing to fight should an opportunity arises. Yet they manage to end violence anyway.

In this chapter, I ask two questions. First, I ask how wide of a phenomenon conflict-ending truces are. That is, how commonly do civil conflicts end with neither side collapsing, disarming, conceding, or going into hiding? To do so, I look systematically across the world, examining every civil conflict ending since 1946. In all, I find that more than 15% of civil conflicts have ended in a long-term truce — more than have ended in a truce agreement and nearly as many as have ended in a rebel victory. To clarify the phenomenon, I review these cases in brief and describe their

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[5] See Weisiger (2013) on credibility problems and total wars, and Carter and Goemans (2011) on the coordinating power of borders.

[6] In general, scholars tend to assume that peace is the default state of interstate disputes while they assume that conflict is the default once rebels are mobilized. Compare Fearon (1995) vs. Fearon (2004), for example.

[7] See, for example, data by Cunningham, Gleditsch and Salehyan (2013).

[8] Marten (2012), Mitchell, Carey and Butler (2014)

commonalities. Second, I examine why civil conflicts end in long-term truces. Using both cross-national data and within-case evidence from Northeast India and Sri Lanka, I test several plausible explanations for truces. Governments generally offer truces where they have few political and economic interests in the outcome of a conflict or where international forces put pressure on both sides to halt the fighting. After addressing these questions, I conclude by discussing why it is important to investigate the effects of long-term truces.

2.1   Documenting Truces, 1946-2016

How often do civil conflicts end in long-term truces? Answering this question turns out to be quite challenging. There are at least three types of criteria one might use in classifying conflict outcomes: (1) which side achieved its battlefield goals, (2) which side achieved the political power it was fighting for, and (3) which sides retained their military forces after the conflict. Prior work on civil conflict outcomes generally think about victory and defeat in either battlefield or political terms.[9] But what sets truces apart from other conflict endings is the third: government and rebel forces both remain after a conflict, coexisting peacefully. These different criteria generally correlate very well with one another: winning on the battlefield generally means destroying or driving away the enemy's forces and achieving your political goals. But when both sides remain mobilized for battle, these correspondences tend to break down.

Therefore, along with a small team of undergraduate research assistants, I constructed an original dataset of all civil conflict endings from 1946 to 2016. Rather than coding the outcome by who achieved military or political objectives, I code by whether each side remained armed and active or whether it collapsed, conceded, retreated, or demobilized. This enables me to make statements about what these truces look like, what causes them, and what their effects are.

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[9]Correlates of War (Sarkees and Wayman, 2010) defines outcomes primarily based on battlefield outcomes, while UCDP (Kreutz, 2010) and Fearon (2008) primarily define them based on political power after the conflict.

Methodology

The universe of cases for this study is every *civil conflict ending* between 1946 and 2016. That is, when the warring parties stop or substantially reduce their prior violent activity. This does not mean that the policy issues at stake have been resolved, or that one side has disarmed. It just means that the two sides have managed to bring down violence. Note that this is a statement about the proportional change in violence rather than the absolute level of violence. A drop from 20,000 battle deaths per year to 200, for example, indicates a much more significant break from the past than a drop from 30 to 20, even though the second case drops to a lower level.

I started with the 175 civil conflicts in the UCDP intrastate conflict dataset (Allansson, Melander and Themner, 2017), and marked any time that violence from a two-year period was at least 80% lower than the prior two-year period. Given that violence varies substantially from year to year,[10] we used a two-year period and cross-referenced UCDP battle death data with journalistic sources on each conflict. This process identified 232 total conflict endings. Some conflicts included multiple endings and subsequent recurrences (e.g. the Kurdish separatist movement in Iran), while some ongoing conflicts have never experienced a downturn (e.g. the war in Eastern Ukraine).

For each conflict ending, I then classified the type of ending based on the subsequent fate of each of the principal armed forces involved. This categorization process is described by Figure 2.1. The first question is whether the rebels were victorious in wresting control of the contested state apparatus from the government. In *center-seeking* conflicts — where the rebels' primary goal is to take over the central seat of power – a rebel victory sees the rebels take the state away from the government, as the RPF did in Rwanda in 1994. In a separatist conflict — where the rebels' goal is to gain autonomy or independence for a region — a rebel victory sees the government accede to an independent state, as Pakistan did in Bangladesh in 1971.

In cases where the government retains control of the state, I then shift over to questions about

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[10]Even the most impressive data collection efforts, such as Lacina (2006), often yield widely-varying estimates of battle deaths.

Figure 2.1: Coding Process for Conflict Downturns

Center-Seeking Conflicts
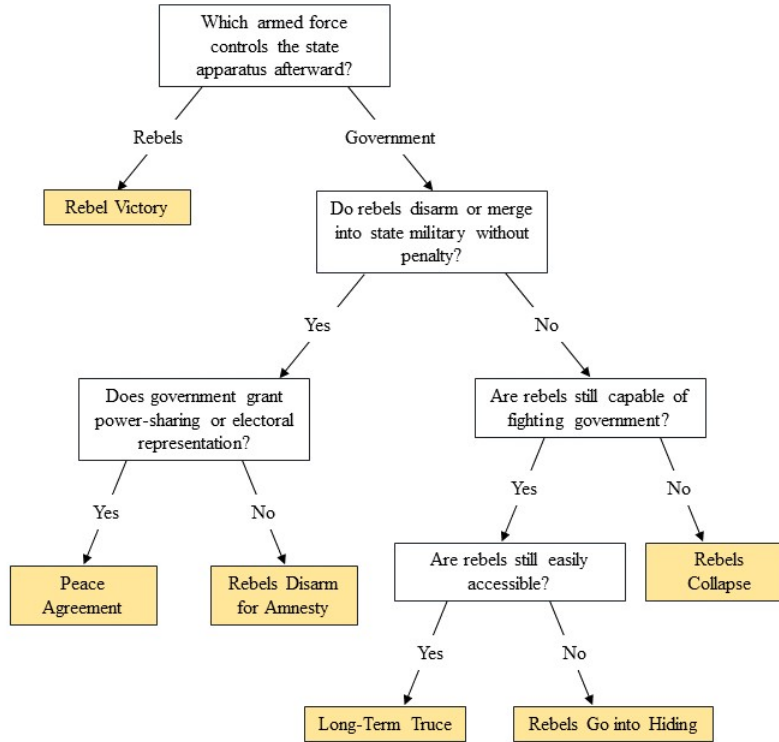
Separatist Conflicts
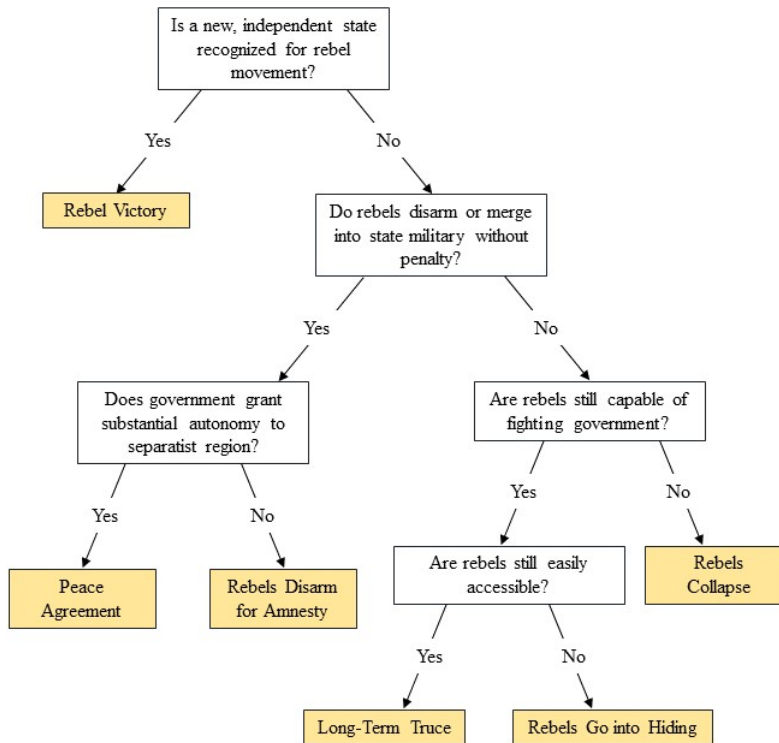
the rebels. The second question is whether a substantial portion of rebel forces demobilized or merged into the state military. Sometimes this takes the form of a traditional peace agreement, as in Lebanon in 1989 or Northern Ireland in 1998. In these agreements, rebels disarm in exchange for formal power-sharing, electoral reform, or autonomy concessions. In other cases, rebel demobilization is a form of government victory: the rebels surrender their arms in exchange for an formal or informal amnesty but receive no substantial policy concessions, as with Mali's Tuareg rebels in 2008. In either case, the rebels are no longer present and threatening.

If there is no such disarmament, I ask whether the rebels are still capable of fighting the government and whether the government can still reach rebels. If either answer is no, then it is a form government victory. In some cases, rebel forces collapse, as the Tamil Tigers did in 2009. In other cases, rebels go into hiding, melting into the countryside or fleeing over state borders, as various conflict endings involving Kurdish rebels. Both of these outcomes are also fairly unsurprising: they mean that rebels are not a present threat to the state.

The remaining cases are the puzzling ones. Violence has dropped dramatically without either side conceding, disarming, collapsing, or fleeing. Rebels are just as threatening and present as they were before, and the government remains in power, yet violence has dropped dramatically. These cases are long-term truces, cases in which the government has agreed, explicitly or tacitly, not to pursue rebels.

Conflict Ending Data

Given that coding process, how do conflicts end? Table 2.1 shows the results of each of the 232 conflict endings since 1946. Just over half of these conflict endings are government victories. In most of these government victories, the rebels collapsed or surrendered in exchange for a formal or informal amnesty. However, there were also a number of cases of rebels going into hiding, melting into the countryside or withdrawing over state borders. Spain's ETA went underground in the 1980s, as did Mexico's EZLN in the 1990s, India's JKLF in the 2000s, and Mauritania's branch

Table 2.1: Conflict Downturns by Outcome

Outcome	*No.*	*Example*
Government Victory	**119 (51%)**	
Rebels collapse	61	Sri Lanka-Tamils (2009)
Rebels disarm for amnesty	21	Mali-Tuaregs (2008)
Rebels go into hiding	37	Iran-Kurds (1996)
Rebel Victory	**48 (21%)**	
Rebels take power	38	Rwanda-RPF (1994)
Rebels gain independence	10	Pakistan-E Bengal (1971)
Peace Deal	**30 (13%)**	
Rebels disarm for power-sharing	22	Lebanon-Sectarian (1989)
Rebels disarm for autonomy	8	Indonesia-Aceh (2005)
Long-Term Truce	**35 (15%)**	
No concessions or disarmament	35	Philippines-NPA (1992)

of AQIM in the 2010s. Meanwhile, about 21% of the conflict endings were rebel victories. Most of these involved rebels taking over the central state, with a few resulting in new independent states run by the rebels. Even rarer (just 13% of downturns) were what we generally conceive of as peace agreements, in which rebels agree to disarm or merge into the state in exchange for substantive power-sharing or autonomy concessions.

However, this leaves 35 conflict endings (Table 2.2) in which the conflict ended in a long-term truce. In these cases, neither side collapsed, conceded, disarmed, or went into hiding. Instead, government and rebel forces, each claiming the same state, stopped fighting while still remaining mobilized for battle with each other.

At first, it is not obvious these 35 cases belong together. Some cases followed dramatic battlefield successes for government forces, like Morocco in Western Sahara. Others followed military disasters for the government, like Azerbaijan in Nagorno-Karabakh. Some cases involved dramatic drop-offs in violence, like the end of Russia's First Chechen War, but other conflicts were so low-intensity to begin with that few noticed the drop-off, like Senegal's Casamance insurgency. In some cases, governments pulled out entirely from contested areas, as Israel has from Gaza and Moldova has from Transnistria. In others, governments offered formal truce agreements that permit rebels

Table 2.2: Cases of Long-Term Truce

Conflict	*Year*	*Violence Recurred?*
Azerbaijan - Nagorno Karabakh	1994	No
Comoros - Anjouan	1997	Yes (2008)
Georgia - Abkhazia	1992	Yes (2008)
Georgia - Abkhazia	2008	No
Georgia - S Ossetia	1992	Yes (2004)
Georgia - S Ossetia	2004	Yes (2008)
Georgia - S Ossetia	2008	No
India - Garos	2004	Yes (2012)
India - Kukis	2008	No
India - Nagas	1969	Yes (1990)
India - Nagas	1997	No
Indonesia - East Timor	1989	No (Independence, 2001)
Israel - Palestine	1994	Yes (1999)
Israel - Palestine	2009	Yes (2014)
Israel - Palestine	2014	No
Ivory Coast - New Forces	2004	Yes (2010)
Lebanon - Sectarian	1976	Yes (1982)
Moldova - Transnistria	1992	No
Morocco - W Sahara	1991	No
Myanmar - Kachins	1989	Yes (2009)
Myanmar - Kokangs	1989	Yes (2009)
Myanmar - Mons	1995	No
Myanmar - Nagas	2010	No
Myanmar - Palaungs	1991	Yes (2012)
Myanmar - Shans	1988	Yes (1993)
Myanmar - Was	1989	No
Philippines - NPA	1992	No
Philippines - Moros	1989	Yes (2003)
Russia - Chechnya	1996	Yes (1999)
Senegal - Casamance	2002	No
Serbia - Kosovo	1999	No (Independence, 2008)
Somalia - Somaliland	1991	No
Sri Lanka - Tamils	2002	Yes (2006)
UK - N Ireland	1994	No (Demobilized, 1998)
Venezuela - Bandera Roja	1994	No (Demobilized, 2006)

Table 2.3: How Other Datasets Categorize Long-Term Truces

UCDP		Correlates of War	
Government Victory	2	Government Victory	2
Rebel Victory	2	Rebel Victory	4
Peace Agreement	3	Compromise	2
Ceasefire	11	Stalemate	1
Low Activity	9	Internationalized	3
Termination Not Included (Did Not Cross Threshold)	8	Conflict Not Included (Insufficient Deaths)	23

to operate and fund themselves so long as they do not attack government forces, as Myanmar has with its many hill insurgencies and the UK did in Northern Ireland in 1994. In others, the government quietly scaled down counterinsurgency and began to cooperate informally with rebel groups, as the Philippines has with communist insurgents.

Because these truce cases do not fit neatly into the win-lose-settle paradigm, these cases have been classified very inconsistently (Table 2.3) by the two most commonly-used conflict datasets, UCDP (Kreutz, 2010) and Correlates of War (Sarkees and Wayman, 2010). Although both datasets coded some of the endings as a victory or a peace agreement ("compromise" in COW), they disagree on every single case. Most of the cases included by these datasets, however, are generally classified as neither victories nor peace agreements but instead into the residual "ceasefire" or "low activity" category.

However, these long-term truces share a common set of features, just as victories or peace agreements do. In these cases, violence ends or drops dramatically for an extended period of time despite neither side collapsing, fleeing, demobilizing, or conceding. Instead, the government agrees — either explicitly or tacitly — to refrain from attacking active, armed rebels. In other words, despite a challenge to their monopoly on force, the government assents to otherwise illegal rebel activity. They usually do so in exchange for some indication that rebels will not directly attack government forces.

These truces lead to a strange but stable equilibrium. On one hand, they do not appear to be a

temporary tactic by one side, prone to break down into renewed hostilities. More than two-thirds of the truces have lasted at least 10 years without any new fighting, and nearly half were still ongoing in 2016. On the other hand, truces do not seem to be a productive step toward a more conventional settlement. Just four of the 35 truces have eventually led to one side disarming or conceding. East Timor and Kosovo were granted independence, while the Bandera Roja and PIRA formally demobilized in exchange for greater political rights. If the government and rebels are able to stop fighting for a few years, they are likely to keep that truce for a long time.

2.2 Explaining Truces

So what explains when civil conflicts end in long-term truce? Governments typically believe that allowing rebels to operate and recruit openly will allow them to grow stronger over time, even if it buys peace in the meantime. So when might governments be willing to offer an agreement that they believe exchanges long-term strength for short-term peace? Surprisingly, governments generally do not offer truces because the rebels are too powerful or because the conflict is too costly. Nor do they offer truces as an attempt to *divide and conquer* rebel movements. Instead, governments generally offer truces for one of two reasons.

First, many governments simply have few political or economic stakes in their conflicts. Governments may officially have sovereignty equally over their entire territory, but they rarely care equally about all regions in their borders. Instead, most large states are based in a densely-populated core and extend much more tenuously into more sparsely-populated peripheries.[11] As a result, the stakes of conflict can vary widely depending on the economic or political context. While losing control over the central state is life or death for a government, losing control of a remote backwater may cost little economically or politically. The government's base may care little about their periphery as long as the conflict does not tap into larger political divides. When the stakes

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[11]Scott (2010), Herbst (2000), Boone (2003), Lee (Forthcoming)

are low, the government may be willing to ignore a rebel movement more-or-less indefinitely if it means it can spend state resources on more high-profile goals.

Second, many governments offer truces when they face intense international pressure to do so. Since the end of the Cold War, international actors have become much more assertive in pressuring states and rebels to the negotiating table.[12] These international actors, particularly the United States and its European allies, often believe that a truce will serve as a first step toward a peace agreement. And in many cases, they possess substantial economic, military, and political leverage on the belligerent governments and rebels. As a result, even if the belligerents have no intention of disarming or making substantive policy concessions, they may commit to a truce as a costly signal to appease international forces.

Cross-National Patterns in Truces

In order to test these explanations for truces, I first use the cross-national data to look at the patterns in when and where truces occur. I combine my conflict ending dataset with a variety of data sources on the civil conflicts. Table 2.4 summarizes these data, comparing conflicts that end in long-term truces to conflicts that end in government victory, rebel victory, and peace agreement. [13]

First, there is strong evidence that governments are more likely to offer truces when the stakes of a conflict are low. If this is the main explanation, we should see few truces in center-seeking conflicts — that is, conflicts where rebels' primary goal is to take over the central state. If rebels are mobilized primarily to take power, then the conflict is always high-stakes for the government. Governments will not take chances with leniency if it means potentially empowering rebels who wish to oust and kill government leaders. It should be no surprise, then, that nearly every long-term truce (31 of 35) has happened in a separatist conflict,[14] where defeat will only mean loss of part

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[12]Fortna (2004*b*), Fortna (2008), Kalyvas and Balcells (2010)

[13]In the appendices, I also include multivariate tests of the differences (using multinomial logit models), but these bivariate tests are more reasonable given the theoretical claims.

[14]Primarily coded using Allansson, Melander and Themner (2017)

Table 2.4: Characteristics of Conflicts by Ending Type

	Truce	*Gov Victory*	*Reb Victory*	*Peace Deal*
No. of Cases	**35**	119	48	30
Stakes of Conflict				
Separatist Conflict	**89**%	41%	21%	27%
Sons of Soil Conflict	**54**%	28%	2%	20%
International Pressure				
Some Foreign Involvement	**77**%	54%	58%	93%
Ended Post-1988	**94**%	47%	48%	87%
Alternative Explanations				
Avg. Reb Strength (1-5)	**2.1**	2.1	3.2	2.6
Avg. Battle Deaths*	**2,078**	1,532	3,651	6,225
Involved >1 Rebel Group	**46**%	34%	50%	63%

* Harmonic mean (Battle deaths is distributed roughly log-normal).

of the government's territory. By contrast, separatist conflicts rarely end in a rebel victory or a traditional peace agreement.

Moreover, a disproportionate share of truce agreements involved small rebel movements representing minority ethnic groups in remote, underdeveloped regions of larger states. Fearon and Laitin (2011) call these conflicts "Sons of the Soil" conflicts, and conflicts on their list account for more than half of the long-term truce cases. Formal or de facto truces have been offered to the MFDC in Casamance, POLISARIO in Western Sahara, and Fretilin in East Timor. The sprawling, sparsely-populated Asian hill region sometimes referred to as "Zomia" (Scott, 2010) alone accounts for 12 of the ceasefires (those in Northeast India and Northern Myanmar). But even the exceptions to these patterns — the truces that ended center-seeking conflicts — seem to suggest that the domestic political stakes matter. The communist insurgencies in the Philippines and Venezuela nominally were for the purpose of overthrowing the regime, yet they operated nearly exclusively among ethnic minority groups in remote areas. With few economic or political interests in these areas, governments often invest resources in conflicts only when it shores up political legitimacy at the center.

Second, there is similarly strong evidence that international pressure contributes to civil con-

flicts ending in long-term truces. As a first test, I asked, simply, whether long-term truces were more likely in conflicts where there was some foreign involvement. Using the UCDP's foreign support dataset,[15] I tracked foreign involvement across all conflict types. Here there is some evidence in favor. Foreign involvement is much more common in conflicts that end in truce or in peace agreements than in conflicts that end in a victory for one side. Indeed, the truce cases in Table 2.2 involve some of the most salient internationalized conflicts of the past 70 years: the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the Kosovo War, and the Lebanese Civil War.

One interpretation of this correlation is that foreign governments force truces by intervening or threatening to intervene on behalf of rebels. This argument has been made about Georgia's truces in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, for instance: Russia's military support for ethnic Russian rebels forced the government to consent to de facto statehood for separatist regions.[16] This rebel support idea seems plausible enough at first glance: many rebel groups in truce cases have been funded, guided, and protected by powerful international supporters, particularly Russia, NATO, and the Arab League.

However, a more systematic look at these cases suggests that truces result instead from impartial, peace-focused interventions. In these types of cases, powerful international actors, particularly in the Global North, pressure both sides to resolve a civil conflict. The most logical systematic test of this hypothesis is asking whether truces have increased or decreased since the end of the Cold War. During the Cold War, international involvement in civil wars typically took the form of superpowers backing one side or another. In the post-Cold War era, by contrast, international powers have mostly intervened primarily to push for conflict resolution rather than to support one side. This has paid dividends: peace agreements, once rare in civil conflicts, have become much more common since 1988.[17] Like peace agreements, truces have happened almost exclusively since the end of the Cold War. Indeed, many of these truces were offered right after end of the Cold War,

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[15]Hogbladh, Pettersson and Themner (2011)
[16]Lee (Forthcoming). For more on de facto statehood, see Florea (2017)
[17]Kalyvas and Balcells (2010), Fortna (2008), Fortna (2004*b*)

when the international winds shifted. Indonesia, Philippines, and Venezuela all offered truces to long-running rebel movements soon after the US scaled back its support for their anti-communist regimes. All of this suggests that post-Cold War international pressure on both sides to bring peace explains many of the truces internationally.

By contrast, there is little evidence for two alternative explanations for long-term truces. First, it does not appear to be the case that states offer truces when conflicts become too costly for them. This explanation would mean that truces are essentially rebel victories or peace agreements in all but name. If rebels are strong enough to defeat the government or at least to cause a mutually-hurting stalemate, then the conflict will be too costly for the government to continue.[18] However, this explanation does not match the cross-national patterns in long-term truces. If rebels get truces primarily by making the conflict painful for the government, then truces should be more common where rebels are strong relative to the government and the fighting has been intense. Instead, governments have disproportionately offered truces to weak rebels in low-intensity conflicts. Here I used the 5-point rating of relative rebel strength developed by Cunningham, Gleditsch and Salehyan (2013), comparing rebels to the government militarily. As we might expect, rebel victories and peace agreements typically come when rebels are fairly strong relative to the government (means of 3.2 and 2.6, respectively). But conflicts ending in long-term truces involved rebels that were, on average, just as weak as those in government victories (both means of 2.1). As a proxy for the costs of conflict for the government I also looked the prior battle deaths using UCDP event data.[19] Here again, truces look more similar to government victories rather than rebel victories or peace agreements.[20] In other words, truce cases like Georgia and Moldova — where rebels are strong enough and violence is intense enough to force the government to quickly accept a truce — are the exception rather than the rule. Instead, most conflicts where truces occur look much more like those in Myanmar, Senegal, Indonesia, and Northern Ireland. That is, they tend to be

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[18]Zartman and Berman (1982)

[19]Sundberg and Melander (2013)

[20]On a yearly basis, truces actually follow fewer battle deaths than government victories.

long-running, low-intensity conflicts which impose low costs on the government.

Second, it does not appear that governments use truces as a means to sow discord within rebel movements. Governments sometimes use traditional peace agreements to divide and conquer their opposition, offering concessions to one rebel faction in order to strengthen their hand against others.[21] If this were true, we would expect truces to be more common where conflicts involved more than one rebel group.[22] The evidence suggests just the opposite. Like government victories, the majority of truce cases involve only a single significant rebel group challenging the government. Peace agreements, by contrast, tend to be made in conflicts with multiple rebel outfits. And as I detail in the cases below, truces tend to be offered to all rebel groups in a conflict rather than to some factions over others.

The broad patterns suggest both domestic political stakes and international pressure play a role in long-term truces, but that does not mean that they weigh equally on all cases. Looking at the conflicts that ended in truce (Table 2.2), there appear to be two fairly clearly-defined categories of conflicts represented. About half of the ceasefires are in remote center-periphery conflicts such as those in India, Myanmar, Philippines, Indonesia, Senegal, and Morocco. Many of these conflicts have little international involvement but take place in such remote regions where governments have few political or economic interests. The other half, by contrast, includes some of the most internationally-salient conflicts in the world, such as those in Georgia, Russia, Azerbaijan, Serbia, Israel, Lebanon, Northern Ireland, and Sri Lanka. Some of these rebel groups are actually quite powerful and geographically proximate to the broader population, but international pressures have at times overridden domestic political concerns and permitted truce offers. One key difference between these two clusters of truces is their duration. The truces in remote regions have lasted, on average, twice as long as the more internationalized conflicts (16 years vs. 8 years), and half are still ongoing. This suggests that truces are easier to maintain in remote regions, where the

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[21]Cunningham (2014), Nilsson (2008)

[22]I code rebel factions using their appearance in UCDP events data Sundberg and Melander (2013). I only included rebel groups recorded before the year of the downturn in case some sorts of resolutions are prone to cause fragmentation in rebel movements.

government's interests (or rather lack thereof) are unlikely to change. International interveners, by contrast, may lose patience with a conflict, leading them to give up or force a permanent settlement (as in Kosovo and East Timor).

In order to investigate the causal process by which domestic and international factors lead governments to offer long-term truces — and rebels to accept them — I examine one exemplar case from each category. First, I examine the remote, low-salience conflicts of Northeast India. The Northeast is relatively insignificant in Indian domestic politics but has had almost no international attention or involvement. Second, I look at a highly-salient, internationalized conflict in the same region: the war between Sri Lanka and Tamil insurgent groups (most notably the Tamil Tigers). Each of these cases exhibits variation in outcomes: Sri Lanka significantly altered its approach to the LTTE over time, and the Indian government has offered truce agreements to some conflicts and not with others. The idea is to isolate the two separate groups of pressures, domestic and international, in order to see how they work similarly and differently.

Ceasefires in Northeast India

Over the past six decades, the Government of India has fought at least ten distinct ethnic-separatist movements in the Northeast. In all, these conflicts look remarkably similar. Local army and counterinsurgent forces greatly outnumber rebels, rebel organizations recruit within a well-defined ethnic minority in remote areas of the countryside, and violence remains low.

Yet despite the broad similarity of these movements, the government has taken a variety of approaches to silencing them, both over time and between movements. In some cases government forces have brutally cracked down on rebel forces — notably during their initial post-independence deployments into the Naga Hills.[23] In others, the government has offered formal ceasefire agreements to rebel forces. Many of these ceasefires — like those offered to Assamese and Bodo rebels — are essentially rebel surrender agreements that grant amnesty or payment in exchange for dis-

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[23] Author interviews with former combatants and civic leaders, Nagaland, July-August 2016

armament.[24]

However, the most generous of these ceasefire offers — those to Naga, Kuki, and Garo rebels — have resulted in the types of long-term truces described above. These agreements are generally very short (less than one page) and are typically nearly identical within the same conflict.[25] Militants are expressly permitted to recruit and train new recruits, carry arms, and conduct operations so long as they do not harm government personnel or civilians. The government typically provides housing ("designated camps") and food for militants as well.[26] In practice, militants are often allowed to tax the local population (and even, in Nagaland, to tax government employees' salaries).[27] Government military personnel, meanwhile, are free to operate throughout the region so long as they do not conduct any anti-militant raids. These ceasefires include no mention of disarmament, autonomy, or further negotiations. As a result, governments and rebels have remained in the same position for decades without renewed conflict or any deeper resolution.

Rebel groups, for their part, typically jump at the opportunity to have a reprieve from violence so long as they can operate freely. This may not be particularly surprising – life in open conflict is difficult, and militant leaders and soldiers alike have often been fighting for decades. Even if they anticipate long-term risks for the organization, they often feel pressure from their subordinates to agree to a truce.[28] Even when rebel leaders refuse an agreement, the result often looks as if they accepted it. In 1997 the government offered a blanket ceasefire to all Naga armed groups, and the NSCN-K's leadership initially rejected the deal. However, the government acted as if they had accepted, permitting NSCN-K troops to patrol territory and tax the population. Meanwhile, the NSCN-K's rank-and-file favored the ceasefire, and the leadership became reluctant to spoil the truce lest its soldiers defect to its ceasefire-signing competitors like the NSCN-IM.[29] The leadership

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[24] Author interviews with ethnic activists, Assam, September 2017

[25] South Asia Terrorism Portal (satp.org) has a catalog of these agreements.

[26] The author interviewed current members of six Naga and Kuki rebel organizations in designated camps and leaders' houses in 2015-2016.

[27] Author interviews with Naga taxation activists, Dimapur, July 2015 and July 2016

[28] Author interviews with militant leaders, July-August 2016

[29] Author interview with NSCN-IM member, July 2016

relented and signed the ceasefire in 2001, long after violence had fallen off between government and NSCN-K forces.

So why is the government willing to offer such generous terms to end the conflict? Consistent with the cross-national patterns, there seems to be little evidence that conflict-level factors play much of a role. First, rebels in Northeast India do not appear to be winning truces through military strength. As a general rule, Northeastern rebels are incredibly weak relative to government forces in the region. The largest rebel outfits (ULFA and NSCN-IM) field around 5,000 combat troops, compared to the 400,000-strong army and counterinsurgency forces in the region.[30] Even in the most intense years of fighting, the government has suffered a few hundred casualties across the Northeastern conflicts combined.[31] Moreover, military strength seems to have little to do with *which* rebel movements are offered truces. The government has offered generous ceasefires to rebel movements ranging from comparatively strong (Nagas) to comparatively weak (Kukis), as well as those somewhere in between (Garos). Meanwhile, it has consistently refused such terms to rebel movements with a similar variety of battlefield abilities, from powerful Assamese and Manipuri outfits to relatively small Karbi and Khasi groups. Second, the Indian government very clearly does not offer ceasefires in order to take advantage of divisions in rebel organizations. For one, the government generally offers these ceasefires to all groups in a movement at once. The government initially offered a generous ceasefire to the three major Naga outfits at once in 1997 and to the 23 Kuki factions in 2005. Rather than dividing and conquering, government forces in the region enact ceasefires all at once in order to consolidate ceasefire monitoring by region. Moreover, the government has been no more likely to offer a truce to highly unified movements (like the Assamese and Garos) than to highly-fragmented ones (like the Meiteis and Kukis).

Similarly, there appears to be no evidence of international involvement playing a substantial role in Northeast India's truces. While the similarly-sized insurgencies in Kashmir and in the Naxalite "Red Corridor" attract considerable attention, the conflicts in the Northeast are virtually

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[30]Author interviews with civic activists, Nagaland, July 2016

[31]South Asia Terrorism Portal. www.satp.org

unknown internationally. If there is an international issue at stake in the conflict, it is the vague specter of Chinese influence in the region. During the 1960s, the Chinese military lightly armed and trained several Northeastern groups. Since that era, however, China's government has played little to no role in the region and has done nothing to stifle or punish counterinsurgency in the region. Indeed, many rebel groups still fight with the same outdated rifles from the 1960s.[32]

Instead, the government appears to be willing to offer such truces because it has few economic or political interests in the region. Few citizens or industries are directly affected by Northeastern rebel movements, which recruit and operate fairly exclusively in remote, minority areas. Nor do many Indian citizens care about the broader ideological or identity stakes of the conflict, as they do with Kashmiri irredentism or rural Maoism. As a result, in many cases the government is willing to merely contain a long-lasting, low-level conflict rather than spend the lives and resources needed to fully eradicate insurgent groups. The pattern of which groups are offered generous ceasefires confirms this logic. While the government has generally been willing to offer truces to hill areas (Nagas, Kukis, Garos), they have generally refused to offer such agreements to similar groups based in the Northeast's major valleys (Assamese, Bodos, Meiteis, Tripuris). The valleys are home to the vast majority of the Northeast's population, political representation, and industry (particularly tea and textiles). As a result, the government has been reticent to offer generous ceasefires which might allow valley-based rebels like ULFA to operate, recruit, and extort freely, even as they do exactly that with similarly-strong hill-based groups.[33]

So why does the government of India not simply offer a true peace agreement to hill-based rebels? In some cases they have — MNF rebels successfully transitioned into a political party in 1986, and the government is currently working on a similar agreement with at least one major Naga faction. However, the Indian government has generally been reticent to offer any terms which might set precedent for more politically-salient conflicts, particularly Kashmir. And India is hardly alone in this motivation. Myanmar, Indonesia, and the Philippines are all large, multi-ethnic

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[32]Author interviews with historian and rebel (A1, U7), Nagaland July 2016

[33]Author interview with Indian think-tank analyst, July 2015

empires with histories of diverse secessionist movements. So even if the government is willing to offer a truce in some remote secessionist conflicts, it may be unwilling to make formal autonomy arrangements which may encourage separatists elsewhere. This also explains why governments get involved in remote areas in the first place. India's most brutal crackdowns in the Northeast were in the late 1950s and early 1960s, when Congress leaders legitimately feared India might break apart from ethnic, linguistic, and religious conflicts. British India, after all, was a complex patchwork of semi-unified states and provinces already fragmented by Partition. Since the mid 1990s, India's leaders have been much more willing to consider truces to silence distracting conflicts in the Northeast.

The 2002 Sri Lanka - LTTE Ceasefire

By contrast, Sri Lanka's civil war looks more like the other cluster of civil conflicts in Table 2.2: intense and highly salient both domestically and internationally. Yet in the midst of almost 30 years of intense conflict between the Sri Lankan government and the Tamil Tigers, there were two periods of relative peace. From 1987 to 1989, India attempted — and ultimately failed — to implement a peace agreement between the Sri Lankan government and the LTTE. Second and more significant was a ceasefire offered by the government in late 2001 and signed in February 2002 which resulted in a truce that gradually broke down between 2004 and 2006.

The 2002 ceasefire offer looked similar in many ways to the ceasefires in Northeast India, albeit with terms that were more generous to the rebels. The government accepted the LTTE operating freely throughout the North and East: LTTE soldiers carried arms, policed local crime, and taxed the population.[34] Unarmed LTTE militants were also permitted to travel and conduct business freely through the rest of the country. Aid and business operations were allowed to flow into the North and East, both enabling some economic recovery and lining the pockets of LTTE officers.[35]

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[34]Author interviews with Tamil activists, Vavuniya, April 2017
[35]Author interview with think-tank analyst, Colombo, March 2017

The government operated in some of the North and East, but allowed the LTTE to maintain control of well-defined territories. In other words, the government not only permitted LTTE rebels to go about their lives, but granted them special rights typically withheld from regular citizens. As part of the agreements, government and rebel leaders committed to high-level peace talks mediated by the governments of India and Norway, respectively. However, few insiders had any real hope that these talks would lead to a peace agreement.[36] The Sri Lankan government never seriously considered any form of federalism, and the LTTE steadfastly refused to consider anything short of independence. LTTE leader V. Prabhakaran declined to attend the talks in Norway entirely, and only agreed to talks in India after being captured by Indian military forces. Yet despite these diplomatic failures, the 2002 truce lasted years.

So why were the sides willing to accept a truce? While LTTE strength likely played a role, the timing does not suggest that was the decisive factor. But the LTTE was much stronger in 2001 (and 1994 and 2008, for that matter) than in 1987. The costs of conflict, meanwhile, were fairly constant in the mid-to-late-1990s at a much higher level than in 1985-1986.[37] Nor did the truces apparently stem from divide-and-conquer tactics — the first truce did not happen until after the LTTE had largely consolidated control of the Tamil insurgency.[38]

There was substantial public frustration with the conflict, but the government also had powerful political reasons to continue the conflict. For nearly three decades the conduct of the war was Sri Lanka's primary issue both in national elections and in international affairs. By the 1990s, the LTTE controlled a huge portion of the country and was regularly launching attacks in Colombo, home to over two million people as well as the government and nearly half the country's economic output. War-weariness definitely played some role in national elections, but the Sinhalese majority largely viewed the war as a competence issue and had little appetite for substantial concessions. This dilemma played out after national elections in 1989, 1994, and 2000. The incoming govern-

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[36] Author interview with former government official, Colombo, March 2017
[37] Sundberg and Melander (2013)
[38] Author interview with former Tamil militants, Colombo, March 2017

ment offered a ceasefire to the LTTE in order to signal their due diligence and a new leadership direction, but neither side offered anything new and the ceasefire fell apart in a matter of months.[39] It is not particularly unsurprising, then, that November 2001 saw newly-elected PM Ranil Wickremesinghe make a formal ceasefire offer to the LTTE (which Prabhakaran signed in February 2002). What is surprising is that the truce persisted for six years.

Instead, the 2001 truce offers correspond with a sharp uptick in international attention and pressure on both sides to resolve the conflict. In the wake of the September 11 attacks, the United States began putting pressure on both sides to silence world's second most famous terrorism campaign. American diplomats began threatening the LTTE that they would use anti-terrorism laws to crack down on the LTTE's supply routes and funding supply (much of which came from members of the Tamil diaspora in the US, UK, and Canada). Meanwhile, the Norwegian government used the opportunity to publicly lobby the new UNP government to negotiate a permanent settlement using what limited leverage it had.[40] Once the ceasefire was signed, Norway dramatically increased its development aid to Sri Lanka, spending more than 1.2 billion Kroner (around 170 million USD) from 2002 to 2006.[41] In 1987, India played a similar role in pushing both sides to the table at a time when few domestic factors in Sri Lanka pointed toward peace. India offered development aid, threatened to crack down on LTTE supply routes, and sent troops to help with disarmament and implementation. The timing of both of these ceasefires suggest that international pressure played an important role in coaxing both sides into truce.

Comparing the Sri Lanka case to Northeast India also helps to clarify why truces in high-salience, internationalized conflicts are less durable than those in low-salience, center-periphery conflicts. Insurgencies in Northeast India rarely play an important role for national political figures, even at their most intense or embarrassing. Truces, therefore, can stick for decades without

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[39]Author interview with former government official, Colombo, March 2017

[40]Author interview with former government official, Colombo, March 2017

[41]More than double Norway's official development aid to Sri Lanka 1997-2001, while aid to India and other nearby countries remained relatively constant. Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation website. https://norad.no/en/front/toolspublications/norwegian-aid-statistics/

much scrutiny from political leaders. In Sri Lanka, however, international pressure and public calls for peace both faded within five years. By 2006, the United States was fighting two foreign insurgencies and Norwegian diplomats were frustrated from four years of stalled talks. The Sri Lankan economy had recovered from its recession, and the population elected a hawkish Freedom Party government led by PM Mahinda Rajapaksa. Over the course of 2006 and 2007, fighting gradually escalated and in January 2008 Sri Lanka officially pulled out of the ceasefire.

2.3   Why Truces Matter

Long-term truces like those in Northeast India and Sri Lanka are counterintuitive but also surprisingly common. The government stops pursuing rebels, rebels gather funds and soldiers, and both sides remain ready to fight over regional power. When governments care little about the stakes of conflict or face international pressure, they may be willing to risk empowering rebels for the future if it means bringing peace in the present. Neither a temporary tactic nor a path to future settlements, this stasis can last for decades. These truces show the limits of common assumptions about conflict and peacebuilding. They demonstrate that governments and rebels can in some cases reach an agreement without creating a massive commitment problem. They demonstrate that battlefield violence is a strategy, one that states can forgo if they choose. They demonstrate that the mere existence of a rebel group is not enough to automatically cause states to crack down. But more importantly, long-term truces present an opportunity to study the consequences of doing so.

The rest of this book examines their effects, asking what happens when a government and rebels agree to disagree. It asks how truces affect the internal workings of rebel organizations, which in turn affects the balance of power, violence against civilians, and long-run prospects for conflict resolution. This study of truce and consequences is important on two different levels.

On a basic level, long-term truces are important to study as an option for conflict resolution. International powers often respond to civil conflicts by putting pressure on both sides to negotiate a

peace agreement. These outside actors typically assume that the only way to maintain peace is for one side to disarm in exchange for a political compromise. As a result, most scholarly and policy discussion regarding conflict resolution has been focused on how to reassure the disarming side that the remaining side will not abuse its position. These works debate the effectiveness of peace-keeping, confidence-building measures, partition, and large-scale political reforms.[42] Yet conflicts in Sri Lanka, Israel, and Serbia show that international pressure is just as likely to bring a long-term truce as a peace agreement. In many of the cases detailed above, international interventions could stop both sides from fighting but could not bring either side to disarm or concede.

What, then, are the effects of such truce periods? In particular, it is worth asking whether such truces might make it more difficult to resolve the conflict in the long-run or put civilians at risk on the way. Interveners often assume that any pause in fighting gives opposing sides an opportunity to build trust and see the potential benefits of reduced violence. Yet by making the short-run more tolerable, truces may also take pressure off of elites on both sides to reach a genuine resolution. Conflicts in Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova, and Serbia have languished for decades in an uncomfortable stalemate with little momentum toward settlement. However, in some cases long-term truces might offer a stable and attractive alternative to disarmament. Truces leave both sides armed and prepared to fight, making them more like international peace agreements than intrastate peace agreements. Even in civil conflicts when commitment problems make a peace agreement difficult to negotiate and enforce,[43] two sides may be able to negotiate a durable, self-enforced truce.

On a second level, though, truces provide an opportunity to study the effects of government toleration of, and violence toward, armed groups in their territory. Scholars and policymakers frequently assume that once rebels are mobilized and threatening, states have no choice but to crack down violently. Yet these truces demonstrate that in some cases governments have a choice

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[42]Fortna (2008), Fjelde, Hultman and Nilsson (2019), Fortna (2004a), Posen (1993), Autesserre (2010), Matanock (2017)

[43]Walter (1997), Fearon (2004)

about whether to pursue rebels — even rebels who are mobilized and threatening.[44] In these long-term truces, governments agree to tolerate rebels against whom they have fought for years, with little more than a promise of non-aggression. Just as states may forbear punishment on some petty crimes, they may even tolerate armed anti-state mobilization.[45] This raises the urgency of two related questions.

First, is battlefield violence really the best way for states to undermine militant competitors? As Kalyvas (2006) famously argued, violence is not an automatic consequence of conflict but an interesting phenomenon in itself. Over the past two decades, scholars and policymakers have taken up Kalyvas' call, evaluating the consequences of violence against civilians and between rival factions within the same movement.[46] Truces demonstrate that we ought to be asking the same questions about battlefield violence. If governments can decide how aggressively to pursue rebels, then do crackdowns actually work?[47] That is, does targeting rebels undermine rebel organizations more effectively than simply letting them be? This question is critical because it calls into question a commonly-assumed premise of state development: that military might enables states to establish sovereignty over their territory.

Second, do non-state armed groups undermine state strength in contested regions? Truces which end civil conflicts are a particularly surprising example of a much wider phenomenon: most states — even powerful ones — peacefully share their territory with non-state armed groups. These groups may be called "warlords," "militias," or "self-defense forces" and have varying levels of cooperation with the state. [48] Do these groups help to establish state sovereignty over outlying areas, or does it permanently undermine the state's monopoly on force?

Conflict-ending truces not only raise the urgency of these questions but also provide a unique

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[44]Staniland (2012), Malone (2018)

[45]Holland (2017)

[46]Lyall (2009), Wood (2010), Condra and Shapiro (2012), Eck and Hultman (2007), Lyall, Blair and Imai (2013), Sewall et al. (2007), Bakke and Cunningham (2012), Pischedda (2018), Cunningham, Bakke and Seymour (2012), Fjelde and Nilsson (2012), Heger, Jung and Wong (2012)

[47]Min (2017) asks a similar question about the use of negotiations in interstate wars.

[48]Arjona (2016), Staniland (2012), Driscoll (2015), Daly (2016), Marten (2012), Kolas (2011)

opportunity to study them. In these cases, the state suddenly shifts strategy from violent crackdown to willing forbearance. Therefore, we can observe the same rebel groups in crackdown and truce, tracking the effects on rebel organizations and the conflicts around them. It is typically very hard to separate the effects of violence from its causes. If a state does not crack down on a rebel group, it might because it has failed to do so or because the group is particularly strong, or weak, or friendly, or inaccessible.[49] In these truce cases, the government has already shown it is willing and able to crack down on rebels. Instead, other factors — lack of interest in the conflict as a whole or international pressure — drives the government to offer a truce and forbear on rebels. By looking at the effects of these truces, we can learn a great deal about how governments defeat opponents, secure territory, and bring peace.

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[49]Schram (2015) and Wood (2014), for example, explore how government violence affects rebels by comparing the aftermath of successful attacks to unsuccessful attacks.

Chapter 3

Theory

Governments and scholars alike generally assume that government leniency empowers rebel organizations. These arguments start from the premise that the credible threat of government violence is the main factor deterring rebels from mobilizing and threatening the state. By offering a truce, then, a government permits rebels to grow and organize unchecked.[1] It is no surprise, then, that few governments wish to unilaterally give up this right and do so only when they face international pressure or care little about the outcome of a conflict.

This chapter demonstrates that such forbearance might actually have the opposite effect in the long run, weakening rebel organizations by undercutting their discipline and cohesion. When government forces permit rebels to operate and recruit freely, they do indeed make life easier for rebel soldiers and encourage more potential rebels to take up arms. But in the process, rebel leaders lose the screening processes by which they maintain organizational control. Over the first few years of truce, rebel movements experience an influx of uncommitted recruits attracted by the ease and safety of truce. Rebel movements erode into misbehavior and fragmentation, ebbing in capabilities and influence even as they grow larger.

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[1]Hobbes (1651), Weber (1919), Becker (1974), Kuran (1991), Gates (2002) all make a version of this argument explicitly, but most works simply assume this.

3.1 Truces and Rebel Recruitment

After years of conflict, rebels are right to jump at an opportunity to function freely in a long-term truce. More than anything else, long-term truces make life easier for rebel soldiers and organizations. This is not terribly surprising: the goal of counterinsurgency is to make life hard on rebels. One Kuki rebel described how life changed for him (as a low-level combat officer) before and after his movement was offered a Suspension of Operations (SoO) agreement with the government in 2005:

> "We went from living in jungles to living in buildings, from walking to driving places,
>
> from always being afraid to being relaxed, from a hard life to an easy life."[2]

On the most basic level, truces make soldiers' lives safer and easier. Life in conflict means constant danger of death and injury, intense psychological stress, and isolation from friends and family. In interviews, current and former rebels recount the stress and fear before the truce. Former LTTE soldiers recall having been on guard for nearly twenty years before the ceasefire, often fighting and moving for days at a time with no sleep. They fondly recalled suddenly having a "chance to rest" when the truce started. [3] In Nagaland, cadres were always on the move between hiding places and potential ambushes.[4] All of this took an intense psychological toll on young men that had joined hoping to serve their national movement, one that was suddenly relieved in truce.[5] This newfound security, in turn, enables soldiers to connect with friends and families. Before truce, visiting family and friends was impossible for most soldiers — making their way home was too dangerous, even if rebel organizations could afford soldiers taking leave. With truce, soldiers could suddenly see their families regularly and visit other parts of the country, experiencing "a world they never knew."[6] In Sri Lanka, the 2002 ceasefire led to a massive burst in weddings as

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[2] Author interview (KU2), Manipur, August 2016
[3] Author Interviews with former soldiers (TC1, TC6) and civilians (TA1, TA7), Sri Lanka, March-April 2017
[4] Author interview (C2), Kohima, July 2016
[5] Author interview (KC2), Manipur, August 2016
[6] Author interviews (TC1, TC3, TC4, TC5, TC6, TA1, TA5, TA7), Sri Lanka, March-April 2017

militants visited home having become more reliable potential spouses.[7]

Even more importantly, however, truces bring rebels a stream of material benefits. Some of these are what might be termed lifestyle benefits: accommodations, travel, food, and other perks. Finally free to operate out in the open, rebels can live in villages and towns without fear. Naga rebels once had to sleep in the jungle and subsist on small amounts of rice, but since the truce they typically rent apartments or houses in major towns and are able to walk around in plain clothes without fear.[8] The safety of truce also allows rebels to tax local households and businesses and distribute spoils to their soldiers. Naga rebels even demand contributions from state government salaries and projects.[9] Sri Lanka's 2002 ceasefire brought in new UN-sponsored building projects and microlending institutions to LTTE-held territory, many of which flowed into the pockets of militants themselves.[10] When the truce opened up these resources, LTTE cadres remember suddenly having access to new vehicles, weapons, foods, and medicines.[11]

Life does change to some degree for civilians as well, rebel groups are particularly well-positioned to profit from truce. Unlike in a typical peace agreement, rebels are still fully armed and organized, allowing them to tax civilians and run side businesses, building up both safety and material benefits. Therefore, rebels are likely to benefit much more than the rest of the population so long as two scope conditions hold. First, the truce has to actually reasonably reduce the expectation of violence against rebels. An uncertain or ineffective truce is unlikely to have any effect on rebel soldiers' lives or on recruits' behavior. Second, government violence had to be at least somewhat effective and targeted in the first place. If state violence is completely ineffective or indiscriminate to begin with, then a truce is unlikely to benefit rebels compared to the rest of the population.[12]

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[7] Author interviews (TA6, TC4, TC6), Sri Lanka, March-April 2017

[8] Author interview with cadre (C10), Mon, August 2016

[9] Author interviews with activists (A2, A3, A4, A13) and cadre (C10), Nagaland, July 2015, July-August 2016

[10] Author interview with former UNDP engineer (A9), Vavuniya, April 2017

[11] Author interview with former LTTE cadres (C3, C4, C5, C6), Vavuniya, April 2017

[12] Kalyvas (2006) and Kalyvas and Kocher (2007) lay out a number of ways that rebels can use indiscriminate violence by the other side to their advantage, advantages which may be taken away by a truce.

By making life easier on rebels, truces help rebel organizations overcome the collective action problem at the heart of recruitment. Joining a rebel organization means taking on individual risks on behalf of organizational goals. Therefore, rebel groups must offer some individual compensation in order to gather new recruits: monetary wages, lifestyle perks, and safety for family members.[13] Truces relieve both sides of this collective action problem. By making life safer, the transition to truce reduces the individual sacrifices that soldiers make by joining. By making life easier and more profitable, it gives rebel organizations more resources to convert to selective benefits. This draws in new rebel recruits who would have never before taken on the danger of rebellion. Even the current second-in-command in a major Kuki outfit admitted that he "never" would have joined a militant group if not for the Suspension of Operations, saying it would have been "too dangerous."[14]

The ability to mobilize large numbers of new soldiers safely and cheaply would seem to be a gift for rebel organizations on the battlefield and at the bargaining table. Instead, truces undermine rebel organizations in the long run by attracting exactly the types of soldiers who undermine organizational control and cohesion.

Rebel groups face a massive dilemma while recruiting. To survive and succeed, armed leaders must attract soldiers who will help win victories on the battlefield, credibly threaten violence at the bargaining table, and control civilians in their territories. Yet recruiting the *wrong* soldiers can just as easily undermine these goals. Every day pits the good of the movement against recruits' personal desires, and some recruits are less willing than others to sacrifice. Disloyal recruits may desert when times are dangerous, starting a chain reaction of defection.[15] They may defect to the other side with information, leaving rebel forces exposed.[16] They may attack during negotiations, disrupting opportunities for profitable concessions.[17] They may commit unauthorized extortion or

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[13]Olson (1965), Kalyvas and Kocher (2007), Humphreys and Weinstein (2008), Mueller (2000), Collier (2000)

[14]Author Interview (KU1), Imphal, August 2016

[15]Lyall (2014), Gordon (2015), Johnston (2008)

[16]Obayashi (2014), Larson and Lewis (Forthcoming), Mao (1937), Guevara (1968)

[17]Worsnop (2017), Kydd and Walter (2002), Daly (2016)

settle scores against potential civilian supporters, undermining the group's control over population and territory.[18] Rebel soldiers who fail to do these things are not just ineffective but actively toxic for a movement: they defect to enemy forces, desert in times of need, leak information to the enemy, and disrupt relations with the population. One misbehaving soldier can undo the work of many good soldiers. As a result, rebel organizations that fail to contain soldier misbehavior routinely suffer unexpected defeats on the battlefield, lose popular support, and sabotage their credibility in negotiations.[19] This is particularly true in insurgencies, which depend on secrecy and assistance from the population.[20]

How soldiers act once they join an armed group, in turn, is closely related with their reasons for joining in the first place. Some soldiers are more altruistic than others, willing to put the community's good before their own. This altruism may be motivated by intense emotions or social ties or by a belief that group success will lead to individual benefits in the long run.[21] Altruistic recruits, unlike their more selfish peers, are more willing to sacrifice on behalf of the community good. As long as recruits believe their movement serves and protects the community in some way, then that altruism drives them to sacrifice for the movement's goals. [22] Throughout my interviews, rebels and civilians in Northeast India and Sri Lanka attributed misbehavior to exactly this sort of individual selfishness. Rebels repeatedly and unpromptedly complained about "materialists" who care more about themselves than the organization and community and misbehaving as a result.[23]

The material and safety benefits of truce, however, are likely to disproportionately attract precisely those low-commitment recruits. More selfless, self-sacrificing recruits are likely to join a

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[18]Mkandawire (2002), Wood (2009), Cohen (2013), Hoover Green (2016), Kalyvas (2003), Mampilly (2011), Weinstein (2007)

[19]Staniland (2014), Lyall (2014), Kalyvas (2006)

[20]Berman and Matanock (2015)

[21]Petersen (2002), Wood (2003), Weinstein (2007), Forney (2015), Gordon (2015)

[22]Note that this link in the theory provides one other scope condition: purely self-interested rebel organizations may not be able to rely on individual commitment to begin with. However, even purely criminal organizations like Colombia's cartels often often gain the loyalty of local civilians by providing public goods or taking an ideological stand on some issue.

[23]Author interviews (U1,U7,U9,U12,U13,U16,C7,A7,A8,A10,TC2,TC6), Nagaland and Sri Lanka, July-August 2016 and April 2017

movement even if it means danger and deprivation. Consider the answers of two former NSCN-K rebel soldiers when I asked why they joined:

> "I joined at the request of my village elders. I wanted to keep my village safe."

> "I wanted to hold a gun and be rich." [24]

If the second soldier is joining in order to become rich and feel powerful, he is unlikely to join during an active crackdown. Critically, he is also less likely to stand his ground under attack or forgo opportunities for personal plunder, even if it undermines the movement's goals. The first soldier, by contrast, may join even if times are tough and is less likely to prioritize his own desires over the group. Prior work provides evidence of exactly this point: soldiers who join for material benefits are the most likely to desert, defect, and disobey once in the group.[25] This effect arguably explains why civil conflicts that play out in the presence of lootable natural resources (like drugs or diamonds) are more frequent, more violent, and more difficult to resolve. A profusion of these material benefits attracts many uncommitted soldiers who disobey orders, abuse civilians, and refuse to disarm.[26]

None of this is to say that government crackdown and truce only affect low-commitment rebels. Even the most altruistic recruits prefer safety and plenty to danger and deprivation. If the government brings enough targeted violence to bear against rebels, they can deter even the most committed recruits from joining rebel organizations. Within a certain range, however, government violence is counterproductive, deterring precisely the low-commitment recruits that rebel leaders wish to screen out. Most conflict-ending truces fall in this range. Prior crackdowns have been too weak to deter rebels from mobilizing altogether — the rebels are still armed and active — but strong enough to affect what sorts of recruits join.

It is also worth noting that this process need not only play out with new recruits. Existing soldiers face a similar decision if they are tempted to leave the group and return home, especially

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[24]Author interviews (C3 and C7), Nagaland, July and August 2016
[25]Oppenheim et al. (2015)
[26]Weinstein (2007), Collier and Hoeffler (2004), Dube and Vargas (2013), de la Sierra (2015)

if they have reached the end of a term of service or their family commitments change. The same motivations which motivate new recruits to join — selfless commitment to the movement, safety, material benefits — also should motivate a soldier to stay with the movement. Therefore, a similar screening process may take place in these decision points. Material benefits may convince a soldier to stay even long after he has stopped caring about the movement, potentially causing the same problems as a new low-commitment recruit.

3.2   Truces and Rebel Organizations

Why would rebel leaders let this happen? Most rebel leaders are savvy managers, and many foresee the problems that these new, low-commitment recruits will pose. So if high wages and an easy lifestyle will attract low- commitment recruits, then why do rebel leaders not make soldiers' lives harder during a truce to screen out these opportunists? Rebel leaders can reduce wages, refuse to give out lifestyle perks, or require new recruits to endure harsh training to prove their commitment.[27] This is not an abstract theoretical solution. When asked whether he was concerned about potential misbehavior among his soldiers, one Naga rebel commander said, "We don't pay much and this is a hard life. Only the good ones join us."[28] Another high-ranking rebel officer, the head of recruitment, went so far as to say he does not even try to convince friends to join. He argued that recruits "have to decide for themselves" rather than be talked into it, or else they may not be commitment.[29] Extensive use of this strategy has been documented in contexts as diverse as Uganda, Peru, Iraq, and the DRC. Rebels lower wages and institute harsh training, making life harder for soldiers in order to screen out low-commitment recruits.[30]

However, rebel organizations face a major constraint in screening their soldiers: recruitment

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[27]These sacrifices by soldiers are a commitment signal (Spence, 1973) except that paying less is actually profitable for armed leaders and therefore the behavior is more durable than signaling dynamics typically are.

[28]Author interview (U17), Nagaland, July 2015

[29]Author interview (U1), Dimapur, July 2016

[30]Weinstein (2007), Bahney et al. (2013), Gordon (2015)

competition. Most rebel movements involve at least two rival factions, and armed groups frequently overlap in territory and recruit from the same pools of civilians.[31] In Nagaland, for instance, some towns have five or six major rebel outfits recruiting young men in town.[32] These groups generally work hard to distinguish themselves by ideology or competence so that they will not lose recruits.[33] But when resources are plentiful, it gives entrepreneurial leaders an opportunity to grow their recruiting base with material benefits. Even high-commitment soldiers are willing to shift their allegiances if they feel they are being underpaid, underappreciated, and betrayed by their leaders. If rebel leaders will not pass on their own good fortune to their soldiers, some other rival leader will.

Even in cases where a single rebel organization dominates a movement, rebel leaders still face potential recruitment competition. Would-be mutineers are often waiting in the wings, threatening to take over the organization or steal recruits if conditions are right. V. Prabhakaran, the commander of the LTTE, spent the 1980s and 1990s consolidating control of the Tamil movement by crushing his rivals and establishing a powerful cult of personality. Yet even faced recruitment competition during the 2002 truce from one of his regional commanders, Colonel Karuna, who started to build a rival faction. These divisions may start off as personal spats or ideological disagreements, but they can quickly evolve into much less principled disputes. Truces give would-be mutineers a host of new resources with which to attract soldiers they would otherwise not be able to. Unless rebel leaders are careful, they can quickly lose soldiers to rivals in their own organization who are empowered by the truce.

As a result, plentiful material benefits and recruitment competition put rebel leaders in a bind. On the one hand, they can pass on material benefits to their soldiers, attracting low-commitment recruits who will undermine discipline in the long run. On the other, they can limit material rewards, risking an organizational fracture. If they have a more established brand, they may opt

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[31]Christia (2012), Humphreys and Weinstein (2008), Pischedda (2018)

[32]Author interviews with militants (U1,U12,U13,U15,C7,C10), Nagaland, July-August 2016

[33]Gutierrez Sanin (2008)

for the second option, trusting that they can still keep high-commitment recruits and lose only low-commitment recruits. If their brand is not as reliable, they may have to pay out greater benefits to keep their high-commitment recruits. Rebel groups may even choose different strategies in different areas, allowing local recruitment competition in some places while opening recruitment in other places. All of these suggest some mix of slipping standards, increased local recruitment competition, and organizational fragmentation. The important element, though, is that new mutineers and rivals will attempt to differentiate themselves based on the material rewards they can offer rather than their ideological or geographic positioning.[34]

In the long run, this misbehavior and fragmentation within rebel movements should be observable on the battlefield and in the community. First, when rebels do fight with government forces, either in sporadic clashes during a truce or in renewed conflict afterward, they should perform poorly. Low-commitment soldiers should be more likely to desert and less likely to put themselves at risk during a battle. Meanwhile, they should be more likely to defect with information and put other soldiers at risk. The result is that rebels be more likely to lose soldiers and less likely to kill government soldiers and achieve their objectives. Second, they should be more likely to abuse civilians. While some violence against civilians is a strategic from rebel leaders, it is much more often the result of rebel soldiers satisfying their own desires. They may steal from the community, collect unauthorized "taxes" that they pocket. They may use their power to settle old scores, beating or killing old rivals. They may sexually abuse civilians. All of these actions should damage the reputation of the organization with supporters and undermine their territorial control.

This theory generally assumes that the decision to join a rebel movement is voluntary. But forced recruits pose many of the same issues because of lack of screening. Recruits who join only out of fear are unlikely to take risks for their organization, especially if they are old enough to be effective on the battlefield. As a result, prior work has shown that forced recruits consistently

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[34]Principled recruitment competition might look like descriptions by Humphreys and Weinstein (2008) and Nanes and Knuppe (N.d.) rather than descriptions like Christia (2012).

perform poorly in battle and are costly to train and retain.[35] Therefore, rebel leaders who look to avoid costly recruitment competition by conscripting locals will likely face similar discipline problems.

3.3 Formal Model

To clarify this theory, I construct and solve an original formal model of rebel recruitment and organizational control. The model demonstrates that government forbearance can actually weaken rebel organizations against the government by disrupting the screening process for new recruits. Recruitment competition exacerbates this process, forcing leaders to pass on material benefits when they would otherwise prefer not to.

Setup

There are three types of actors interacting in the model: two rival rebel leaders (A and B), a potential rebel recruit (R), and the government (G). At the end of the game, the two rebel leaders will each separately negotiate with the government for concessions. The rebels' bargaining leverage comes from attracting high-commitment recruits to join and deterring low-commitment recruits. But rebel leaders do not know whether a given recruit is committed or not. Instead, if they wish to attract only committed recruits, they must set wages low enough to screen out the low-commitment types. This all happens in the context of government crackdown – joining a rebel group exposes R to deprivation and danger.

The game plays out as follows (summarized in Table 3.1). In the first stage, the government G commits to a level of violence ($v \geq 0$) to punish any rebel recruit who joins. $v = 0$ represents a pure live-and-let-live counterinsurgent strategy: it does not take away the threat of violence in negotiations with rebels (step 5), but it lets the rebel soldiers mobilize without punishment for the

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[35]Eck (2014), Humphreys and Weinstein (2006), Beber and Blattman (2013), Archvarina and Reich (2006), Oppenheim et al. (2015)

Table 3.1: Game Play

1	Government G sets violence level v
2	Rebel leader A offers wage w_a to attract R
3	Rebel leader B offers wage w_b to attract R
4	Recruit R joins group A or B or rejects both offers
5	G negotiates separately with A and B over concession x
	(if negotiations fail) Rebels inflict damage $2\sum_R f_\theta$ on G

time being (steps 2-4). A high v, by contrast, represents an all-out crackdown on armed groups. This crackdown is costly for the government, whether or not the rebels end up recruiting, and the cost rises with the level of counterinsurgency (cv). However, by mobilizing this violence, the government may deter recruits from joining the rebels and prevent concessions later on.

In the second stage, the first rebel group A offers a wage ($w_a \in \mathbb{R}$) to attract recruit R to join. This wage represents the material rewards which rebel groups may offer to soldiers: monetary wages, lifestyle perks, accommodations, and transportation. For A, a recruit joining will bring two benefits. First, A gets a benefit (π) merely from having an extra soldier, regardless of commitment. π represents the non-fighting advantages of soldiers: with more soldiers, rebels can collect more taxes, profit more from illicit businesses, or gain greater status in the community. Second and more importantly, a new soldier can fight for A, which provides A more leverage in later negotiations with G. This fighting value (f) depends on R's type (θ). If R is a high-commitment type ($\theta = 1$), then he makes A stronger ($f_1 > 0$). But if R is a low-commitment type ($\theta = 0$), then he makes A weaker ($f_0 < 0$). For low-commitment types, the non-fighting value (π) may be large enough to offset this negative fighting value. If not, then A prefers to set the wage w such that high-commitment types will want to join but low-commitment types will not.

However, A has to consider rival B, who in the third stage can make an offer of her own (w_b). B represents a potential competitor in recruitment — either the leader of a rival faction or a potential mutineer. This rival may not even be noticed by anyone but A: if A's offer is high enough, B will not try to mobilize recruits at all. However, in other cases B may steal recruits from A, or A and

Table 3.2: Player Utilities

Government	$U_G =$	$-x - cv$	if deal is reached
		$-2\sum_R(f_\theta) - cv$	if sides fight
Rebel Leaders	$U_i =$	$x + \sum_R(\pi - w_i)$	if deal is reached
		$\sum_R(\pi - w_i)$	if sides fight
Rebel Recruits	$U_R =$	$w_i - v + i\theta$	if R joins group i
		0	if R does not join

B may both mobilize recruits (thus fracturing the movement).

In the fourth stage, the recruit R must decide whether to join one of the rebel groups (A or B) or stay home altogether. They have three considerations in this decision. As already mentioned, joining a group means that R receives the wage that group offers (w_a or w_b) and suffers from government violence (v). In addition, if R is a high-commitment type, it gains a non-material benefit (a or b) from joining. This benefit represents the non-material appeal of being a part of that group. High-commitment recruits may want to be a part of the group because of ideological affinity, emotional attachment, or belief in the group's leadership. Some groups have done a better job cultivating these non-material appeals than others, so the model assumes that A is more attractive than B ($a > b > 0$). Critically, this extra motivation means that high-commitment types need fewer material rewards in order to convince them to join. That is, high-commitment types will join for a lower w than low-commitment types. This allows A or B to wage-screen if they so choose, setting wages at a level that only the high-commitment types join. For mathematical simplicity, I assume that (in expectation) there is one R of each type in the population.

In the final stage, the rebels (A and B) separately negotiate with the government (G) for concessions. In lieu of a specific process to negotiations, I set this up as Nash bargaining. If these negotiations fail, the government and rebels will fight. In this clash, the rebels inflict fighting damage on the government proportional to the sum of all the fighting value of their soldiers ($2\sum f_\theta$). I assume for the sake of this negotiation that G knows the overall quality of the soldiers a rebel group recruits. The purpose of this stage is not to accurately represent battle, but to set the stakes

Table 3.3: Exogenous Parameters

$f_1 > 0$	the battlefield value of high-commitment R
$f_0 < 0$	the battlefield value of low-commitment R
π	the non-battlefield value of R
$a > b > 0$	the non-monetary benefit of joining for high-commitment R
$c > 0$	the cost G pays for crackdown v

of recruitment. The reason that the quantity and quality of recruits matters is because new soldiers help or harm rebel prospects in battle and therefore rebel leverage in negotiations.

Results

Rebel movements are at their strongest when rebel leaders can attract high-commitment recruits while deterring low-commitment recruits and preventing competitors from mobilizing. In this model, this is what I call a *selective recruitment* equilibrium: A offers wages that attract only the high-commitment R, and B does not mobilize at all. So when is this possible, and what effect does a truce (the government reducing v) have on this process?

This model is a series of sequential moves, so I solve for the Subgame Perfect Nash Equilibrium using backwards induction. That is, I start with the last move and work my way to the beginning, assuming that prior actors anticipate future actors' rational response. In step 5, G will make a concession x to A and/or B to avoid suffering the costs of conflict. As a result, the concession they offer will be proportional to the military threat that each rebel group represents.[36] The greater the quantity and quality of rebel recruits, the more it gains and the more the government loses due to this bargaining/conflict process. In step 4, R must decide whether to join. An low-commitment type R does not care about the armed group's non-monetary benefits, and so will prefer to join an armed group rather than to stay home if and only if that offer makes up for the violence they face from the government. That is, if $w_{a,b} \geq v$. A high-commitment type R, meanwhile, is willing to fight for fewer material benefits because she also benefits from the non-material rewards the group

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[36]Specifically, they will agree to split the surplus by G making the concession $x^* = \sum_R f_\theta$.

Table 3.4: A's Recruitment Strategy (Monopsonist Case)

Strategy	*Wage Offer*	*Conditions*
Recruit All Types	$w_a = v$	$v \leq \pi + f_0 - a$
Recruit Committed Types	$w_a = v - a$	$\pi + f_0 - a \leq v \leq \pi + f_1 + a$
Recruit No one	$w_a < v - a$	$v \geq \pi + f_1 + a$

can offer ($w_a \geq v - a$ or $w_b \geq v - b$, depending on the group).

The key questions, then, regard steps 2 and 3: when can A selectively recruit only high-commitment Rs? In order to illustrate the role that competition plays, let's first imagine that A is a *monopsonist*, with no competition from B. In step 2, A wold have three options. First, she could offer a high wage which attracted both high-commitment and low-commitment recruits. She will pay more and will have worse battlefield outcomes, but she will benefit off the battlefield by having a larger force. Second, she could offer a lower wage and attract only high-commitment types. She will recruit only the more useful recruits and pay less, but she would miss out on greater potential non-battlefield benefits. Third, she could recruit no one and avoid the wage costs but would gain nothing on or off the battlefield.

Table 3.4 shows when A would do take each of these actions, depending on the level of government violence v. There are a few key takeaways here. First, it implies that a certain amount of government violence is actually necessary for A to recruit selectively. If G can set violence high enough, he drive R off the battlefield entirely. Short of that, G may actually be driving A to recruit selectively and become more effective on the battlefield by increasing v. If government violence is low enough, A would rather take advantage of the cheap labor to gobble up the rewards of truce. That is, they recruit as many new members as they can in order to profit from the non-battlefield benefits (π) they bring. This is fairly rare, though — material resources have to be so abundant that A will pay more to all their recruits to bring in these low-commitment soldiers.

Second, it suggests some conditions under which rebels are more likely to recruit selectively. For one, A is more likely to recruit selectively when the stakes of conflict are higher. When high-commitment recruits can do a lot of good ($f_1 \uparrow$) and low-commitment recruits are dangerous ($f_0 \downarrow$),

A is more likely to care about screening. Similarly, if the rebel leader A is particularly appealing to high-commitment types ($a \uparrow$), she will particularly favor attracting only these types. By contrast, rebel groups are more likely to be discerning if there are few profits to be made by rebel groups just by mobilizing ($\pi \downarrow$). This is likely to be true, for instance, if there are few opportunities for illicit gains (like drugs or diamonds).[37]

But what if A cannot set the terms of recruitment so easily? Wage screening depends upon rebel groups being able pay low wages, thus screening out the low-commitment types while still attracting the high-commitment types. But as described above, A also has to be concerned about potential competitors — in this case B — who might offer more material rewards to draw recruits away.[38] This recruitment competition shifts the negotiation in favor of recruits, forcing A to pay more to attract recruits. But if A has to pay more for high-commitment recruits, she may end up attracting low-commitment recruits she would prefer to deter.

This competition effectively puts a minimum on the offer that rebel leader A can pay to attract high-commitment recruits. A starts with an advantage in attracting high-commitment recruits because it has more to offer in non-material benefits (i.e. $a > b$). However, A still has to offer enough that B does not want to bid higher to get high-type recruits.[39] If this new minimum wage that A can offer is enough to attract low-commitment types, then screening becomes impossible.[40]

These conditions can be summarized into Proposition 1, which contains the most important intuitions from the model:

Proposition 1 (Organizational Control): In a competitive market, M recruits selec-

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[37]This comparative static is a restatement of the key findings of Weinstein (2007).

[38]For this dissertation, I assume that A and B are indifferent about the other's success. I relax this assumption in other work and find that internal rivalries can substantially worsen the effect of competition on organizational control.

[39]Strictly speaking, A has an advantage in screening as well, which means that A often only has to offer enough that B cannot screen for high-types. In these cases, the binding constraint is the point at which it is no longer worth it for B to beat A in order to attract *all types*, which is substantially.

[40]If this condition holds and A is capable of recruiting selectively, she always prefers to do so rather than recruit indiscriminately. That is, for all conditions in which indiscriminate recruiting is preferable than the splitting BR described afterward.

tively if and only if

$$\max\left\{\pi + \frac{f_1 + f_0}{2} - (a - b), \pi + f_0\right\} \leq v \leq \pi + f_1 + a \qquad (3.1)$$

Proposition 1 has several similarities with the best responses from the monopsonist case in Table 3.4. Screening is still more difficult when the government sets violence low, when battlefield stakes are low in comparison with non-fighting stakes, and when A is more appealing to high types.

The most important thing to note about Proposition 1, though, is that the lower-end of this range is higher than in the monopsonist case. That is, screening recruits becomes more difficult unless government violence is particularly high. Unless government violence makes life hard on recruits, B can make a great offer to poach high-commitment types — that is, they can offer wages w_b that are high in comparison to the dangers of service v. In many cases, this recruitment competition makes screening impossible: A cannot outbid B without offering so much that even low-commitment types want to fight. This difference is illustrated in Figure 3.1, where any meaningful competition cuts into the possibilities for selective recruiting and expands the range in which low government violence undermines discipline. Whereas a monopsonist recruiter can set the terms of recruitment, a competitive recruiter has less bargaining leverage and thus loses substantial ability to screen recruits.

Recruitment competition also opens up one other possibility mentioned earlier: fragmentation. That is, both rebel leaders are able to mobilize recruits, but they attract different types. A, which has more to offer in non-material benefits, sets a wage that attracts only the high-commitment types. B, which does not have this advantage, pays more to attract the low-commitment types. In order for this to happen, two things have to be true. First, government violence (v) must be so low that B wants to recruit low-commitment recruits in order to cash in on the non-battlefield value (π) of these recruits. Second, the groups must be sufficiently differentiated in their appeals to high-commitment recruits. If A can offer substantially better non-material benefits than her

Figure 3.1: A's Recruitment Strategies
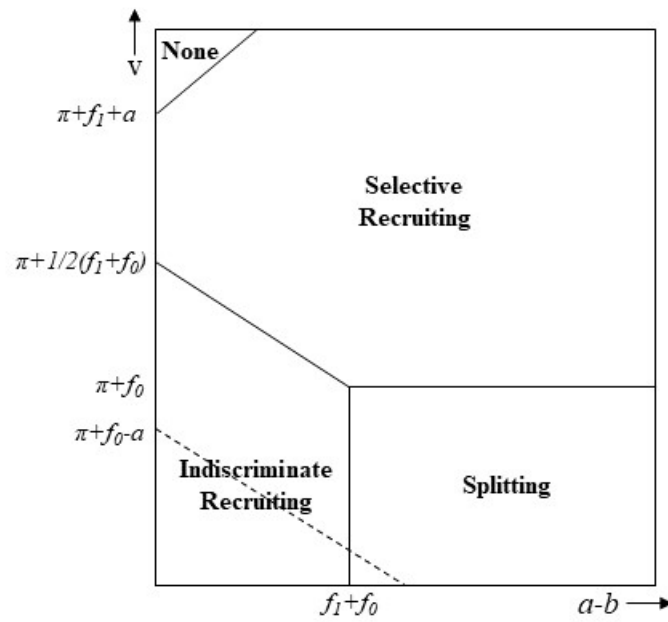
X-axis: difference between A and B in non-material appeal ($a - b$). Y-axis: cost of participation (v). As v increases, M is more likely to be selective in recruiting. Dashed lines are the monopsonist case (no group B), and solid lines are the recruitment competition case (B is a competitor).

rivals can, she does not need to offer much in material benefits to attract high-commitment types. B then can make higher offer and attract low-commitment types, even it has no chance at the high-commitment types.

Proposition 2 (Fragmentation): While competing over recruits, A and B splitting recruits by type is a joint best response if and only if

$$a - b \geq f_1 - f_0 \text{ and } v \leq \pi + f_0 \qquad (3.2)$$

Proposition 2 demonstrates that an idealistic, well-defined rebel leadership does not insulate a movement from indiscipline and chaos. If violence is sufficiently low ($v \downarrow$) — and material resources sufficiently plentiful as a result — competitors will emerge. Even if a rebel group is much more attractive to high-commitment recruits because of their ideology or strength (i.e. $a - b \uparrow$), a more materialist competitor may emerge to soak up the rewards of peace. Figure 3.1 illustrates this visually. A never selectively recruits in the lower areas of the graph, whether because they accept low-commitment types themselves or B mobilizes separately to recruit them.

Low violence may still be profitable for rebels, but it always disadvantages them on the battle-field. Rebel leaders and soldiers can profit from relative peace and material abundance, bringing in more soldiers who generate non-battlefield benefits (π). But so long as low-commitment soldiers take the field, the rebels as a whole will have less leverage in negotiations and get less out of the government.

As described in the last chapter, there is little evidence that governments offer truces in order to sow indiscipline and fragmentation among rebels. Governments rarely see this deeply into rebel organizations in the long run, and even if they know the results they may be unable to calibrate violence so precisely. However, how could governments calibrate violence if they anticipated these effects? This model provides some hints.

Given that G pays the cost cv for their crackdowns, he only ever prefers to raise v when it

drives rebels off the battlefield in a way that is advantageous. But Proposition 1 shows that in some cases violence may drive only low-commitment rebels off the battlefield. Unless government crackdowns drive even the high-commitment rebels off the battlefield, they are either pointless or counterproductive. This means G only has two viable choices: set violence extremely high ($v > \pi + f_1 + a$) and clear the battlefield, or give up on crackdowns altogether ($v = 0$) and let rebels recruit indiscriminately.[41] The government is willing to set this higher level of violence when keeping rebels off the battlefield is worth the costs of crackdown, as summarized in Proposition 3.

Proposition 3 (Government Crackdown): The government sets violence high ($v^* = \pi + f_1 + a$), causing A and B not to recruit at all, if and only if

$$c(\pi + f_1 + a) < f_1 + f_0 \tag{3.3}$$

Otherwise, the government sets violence low ($v^* = 0$), causing A to recruit indiscriminately.

Proposition 3 confirms the broader findings from the previous chapter. Governments should be willing to offer a truce, lowering violence, in two basic conditions. First, it could be that the costs of crackdown are extremely high. This could be true if, for example, international forces put pressure on governments to quiet a conflict, as in Sri Lanka. Second, it could be that the stakes of conflict are low in comparison with the costs of military activity. This is true in remote, low-salience conflicts like those in Northeast India.

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[41]Complete toleration ($v = 0$ will result in indiscriminate recruiting provided that $\max\{\pi + \frac{f_1+f_0}{2} - (a - b), \pi + f_0\} \geq 0$. However, governments may actually have more flexibility in real life. They could, for example, actually subsidize rebel mobilization. In Nagaland, the government pays monthly stipends and distributes rice to rebel soldiers in ceasefire.

3.4 Hypotheses

Recruit-Level Hypotheses

The theory above poses a set of claims about what attracts various types of potential recruits to join a rebel organization, tested in Chapter 4. In particular, it compares the motivations of high-commitment potential recruits — altruistic, community-oriented individuals that rebel organizations want — to those of low-commitment ones — the selfish, opportunistic individuals who are likely to misbehave in the long run. The theory states that the material benefits and safety of truce are more likely to attract low-commitment recruits substantially more than high-commitment recruit.

> **H1:** In deciding whether to join a militant group, low-commitment recruits should be more attracted than are high-commitment recruits by high wages and a comfortable lifestyle, all else equal.
>
> **H2:** In deciding whether to join a militant group, low-commitment recruits should be more attracted than are high-commitment recruits by the safety of government truce offers, all else equal.

Note that these are comparative statements. Few individuals want a lower salary or greater danger. But high-commitment recruits should be more willing to join when times are tough. This is represented in the model by the different wages demanded by the two different types. While low-commitment recruits demand compensation for the danger and deprivation of being a rebel, high-commitment recruits are willing to endure these things for the good of the group.

Organization-Level Hypotheses

The theory also makes clear predictions about what is likely to happen to rebel organizations as a result of truce, tested in Chapters 5-7. These predictions are likely to play out over 5-10 years, as

the current soldiers of an organization are gradually replaced with new soldiers recruited during the truce.

These first two organization-level hypotheses correspond to Propositions 1 and 2 of the model. A truce brings violence down, providing rebel groups with many new material goods with which to attract recruits. This should cause two effects. In some cases (H3), this competition should cause rebel leaders to recruit indiscriminately, allowing in an influx of new recruits. In others (H4), the competition should lead to fragmentation as new militant competitors arise to profit from peace by buying off low-commitment recruits. In a real conflict, these effects may not be as easily separable as they are in the model because recruits are distributed more continuously and rebel groups may particular advantages in some localities and among some demographics. Therefore, both effects may happen at once: rebel groups may fracture in some areas and experience an influx of rebel recruits in others. This also means that rebel groups should be more easily able to compete in each others' core areas, increasing local recruitment fragmentation.

> **H3:** In the years following a truce offer, rebel movements will experience an influx of new soldiers, and these new soldiers will be less committed to organizational goals than rebels recruited before the truce.
>
> **H4:** In the years following a truce offer, rebel organizations will be prone to fracture and local recruitment competition, with rival factions competing over recruits and defectors with material wages.

These effects — an influx of undisciplined soldiers and a fracturing movement — should lead to observable misbehavior by soldiers. If rebels and the government clash violently, rebels should perform worse than they did before the truce. They should lose more rebel soldiers for every government soldier they kill and achieve fewer of their military objectives. When rebels interact with civilians, they should be more likely to abuse and kill civilians. This should decrease public support.

H5: In the years following a truce offer, rebel organizations will have greater problems with soldier misbehavior among civilians, including unauthorized extortion, abuse, and violence.

H6: In the years following a truce offer, rebel organizations will have greater problems with desertion and defection, resulting in military failures and a worse battle death ratio.

3.5   Alternative Strategies for Rebel Organizations

If truces cause such serious problems for rebel recruitment and control, then why do rebel groups accept these truces and continue to recruit new soldiers? First, rebel leaders may profit from truce — particularly in the short run — even if it weakens the organization on the battlefield and at the bargaining table. The model shows why this might be the case: lower government violence means a greater utility for rebels as a whole. Even if rebel leaders fully foresee the organizational risks that truces pose, they still benefit from a safer and easier life. This might be exaggerated by short-sightedness: short-term profits may outweigh long-term organizational problems. Second, as mentioned earlier, recruitment competition may force rebel leaders to accept a truce to retain their soldiers. If the government has offered a truce, then any group that accepts has a major recruiting advantage because its soldiers will be safer and its material resources greater. Nagaland's NSCN-K rejected its ceasefire offer in 1997, but accepted a few years later after it began losing soldiers to its competitors. Even soldiers who already in the organization are prone to defect to other organizations if they feel the leadership is not working for their interests.

However, there is a much bigger reason that rebel leaders accept truces and continue to recruit: they tend to be overconfident in alternative methods of organizational control. Here I briefly describe two other methods of control which are often discussed by rebels and scholars. In the empirical chapters, I show evidence that rebel groups often fail to implement them and explain

71

why.

Monitoring and Punishments

Armed leaders often attempt to maintain organizational control through incentives: monitoring soldiers and punishing any disobedience.[42] If an armed group successfully implements strict codes of conduct, it should reduce misbehavior in one of two ways. First, strict rules might keep low-commitment recruits from joining the rebels in the first place because they fear being punished for future misbehavior.[43] Second, strict rules might cause low-commitment soldiers to follow orders once they join, even if they would rather not.[44] In either case, the reliability of the disciplinary system is critical: if rebel leaders cannot identify misbehaving soldiers and credibly commit to punish them, soldiers have no incentive to heed their orders.

It is understandable for rebel leaders to be optimistic about disciplinary systems: state militaries use codes of conduct and punishments to manage soldiers, even during peacetime. However, rebels often lack several of the administrative tools that enable state militaries use to police soldier conduct. First, rebel groups typically have weaker bureaucratic capacity than state militaries do. They typically have less extensive record-keeping, less established chains of command, and murkier legal frameworks. Second, rebel groups typically have weaker territorial control than state militaries do, and often employ guerrilla tactics that rely on secrecy and strategic flexibility. These disadvantages mean that rebel disciplinary systems often fall short in screening recruits (tested in Chapter 4) and controlling soldiers (Chapters 5-6).

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[42]Gates (2002), Humphreys and Weinstein (2006), Weinstein (2007), Johnston (2008), Gutierrez Sanin and Giustozzi (2010), Kenny (2010), Shapiro (2015), Schram (2015), Worsnop (2017)

[43]For how contracting incentives can resolve imperfect information, see Rothschild and Stiglitz (1976).

[44]For how contracted incentives and punishments can compel good behavior, see Holmstrom (1979) and Becker (1974).

Ideological Branding and Indoctrination

Rebels also often believe that they can prevent any negative effects of truce either by developing a clear ideological brand or by indoctrinating their soldiers effectively.

First, rebel leaders may establish a distinct ideological brand in order to attract the most committed recruits. If rebel leaders can establish themselves as being more ideologically pure than other competitors, they may appeal to high-commitment recruits and still screen out low-commitment recruits, even in truce.[45] In particular, "outbidding" theories posit that rebel leaders are able to credibly signal their purity by adopting an extremist anti-government ideology.[46] By demonstrating their extremist ideology, rebels may be able to attract the most committed recruits and overcome the organizational effects of ceasefire. However, this is only a viable strategy if high-commitment recruits actually prefer more extremist groups. I test this claim in Chapter 4 and find evidence that high-commitment recruits instead prefer to join ideologically moderate rebel groups.

Second, rebel leaders may try to use ideological indoctrination to motivate low-commitment soldiers to sacrifice on behalf of organizational goals. Many rebel organizations around the world — especially Islamist and Marxist groups — put soldiers through some sort of "political education" to motivate them.[47] However, I find little evidence in case interviews (Chapters 5-6) that ideological training helps reverse the deleterious effects of truce. Rebel leaders argued instead that selfish, low-commitment soldiers are unlikely to be swayed by these ideological appeals. Therefore, even if high-commitment soldiers become more committed, low-commitment soldiers still misbehave and undermine rebel discipline.

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[45]Walter (2017) calls this the "extremist's advantage in civil war."
[46]Bloom (2005), Kydd and Walter (2006). Gutierrez Sanin and Wood (2014)
[47]Hoover Green (2016), Mampilly (2011), Mao (1937), Wood (2003), Cohen (2013), Guevara (1968)

Chapter 4

Recruitment Experiment

The first half of the theory is about how truces influence the motivations of rebel recruits. When the government permits rebels to operate without constant fear of crackdown, it makes life safer and easier on rebel soldiers. These new resources — both material benefits and safety — attract many new recruits. However, the people who are most attracted by these goods are low-commitment recruits: selfish opportunists who rebel leaders would prefer not join. Truces, therefore, cause an influx of low-commitment recruits who are likely to desert, defect, and disobey.

In Chapters 5-7, I empirically evaluate these processes by observing how organizations recruit and behave over time, before and after truces. The interviews provide a wealth of accounts of the causal process, how recruits' motivations and behavior changed due to truces. In this chapter, though, I take this one step further, stepping inside the recruitment process and experimentally testing the motivations of likely rebel recruits in three conflicts in Northeast India.

Testing the motivations of rebel recruits directly is a huge empirical challenge. Everything about rebel recruitment is usually secret and inaccessible. Rebel groups identify and approach potential recruits in secret, and recruits hide their true levels of commitment and motivations for joining. The unusual environment of Northeast India, however, allowed me to uncover and replicate major elements of rebel recruitment. Along with a small team of research assistants, I gathered

a group of likely rebel recruits by mimicking the recruitment methods of local rebel groups. I identified high-commitment and low-commitment recruits by comparing respondents gathered in community volunteer organizations to those in less reputable gathering places. I then experimentally tested what factors rebel recruits look at in joining rebel groups with a conjoint survey experiment. All of these procedures were designed based on dozens of prior interviews and observation of rebel recruitment processes.

This survey provides strong evidence for the book's central argument. Low-commitment recruits are much more likely to be swayed to join a rebel group by the material benefits and safety that truces provide. Absent these incentives, only high-commitment recruits are willing to endure the danger and hardship of joining a rebel group. Truces, therefore, disrupt this natural screening process and attract exactly the selfish opportunists that rebel groups would rather keep out. I find no evidence, by contrast, that strict discipline or extremist ideology helps rebel groups to attract high-commitment recruits or screen out selfish opportunists.

4.1   Design

In order to evaluate the motivations of high-commitment and low-commitment recruits, I designed a procedure to achieve three tasks. First, it gathers a group of real likely rebel recruits in conflict zones. Second, it evaluates their commitment, separating high-commitment idealists from low-commitment opportunists. Third, it tests how material benefits, safety, and other factors affect whether or not these recruits are willing to join a rebel organization.

Finding Likely Recruits

The first major empirical goal is finding the most relevant respondents. The theory makes claims about government leaders and rebel leaders, but the most important motivations are those of rebel recruits. Truces change rebel groups primarily by influencing which recruits prefer to join and

which prefer to stay home. The relevant actors, then, are *likely rebel recruits*: not just those who joined but those who might join under the right conditions.

There are a few reasonable ways to make claims about these recruits' motivations. One way to do so is to interview current and former combatants themselves, as I do Chapters 5-6. Like many other studies on rebel recruitment, I ask rebels why they joined, making comparisons between groups and over time.[1] This approach makes a great deal of sense: these are the real people who decided to join, and they know a great deal about their own motivations. However, it has a major drawback as well: it excludes the people who did not join but might have under different circumstances. As a result, it can be hard to know what separates the joiners from the non-joiners.[2] A second option would be to survey the general population, hoping to find a comparison group of non-joiners.[3] However, it can be very hard to know who might have joined a rebel group under the right circumstances and who never would have considered it. Only a small proportion of the population ever considers joining an armed group.[4] The potential recruits — those who may join a group under the right circumstances — may have very different preferences than the rest of the population.

In this experiment, I use a third strategy: identify potential recruits *during the recruitment process* and test what factors could hypothetically influence them to join. This strategy brings together the primary strengths of the two other strategies. Like combatant interviews, this sampling strategy specifically targets the most relevant group of respondents: those who are likely to be approached by rebel groups and might consider joining under certain circumstances. Like broader interviews, it compares joiners and non-joiners in a wide variety of circumstances, allowing me to make clear statements about what sorts of factors separate the two.

The ceasefires of Northeast India make this experiment possible. In most cases, rebels operate outside the law, so it is difficult and potentially dangerous to identify and interview rebels and

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[1]Weinstein (2007), Forney (2015), Daly (2016), Staniland (2014), Oppenheim et al. (2015)

[2]Depending on the question being asked, this technique may effectively select on the dependent variable.

[3]Humphreys and Weinstein (2008), Lyall, Blair and Imai (2013), Morgan (2016)

[4]Mueller (2000)

recruits. The ceasefires, however, have made it semi-legal for rebel groups to operate and recruit. Even in movements with no ceasefire, the ceasefires mean that rebel activities are much more visible and openly discussed in the general population. This makes it much safer to observe and replicate the rebel recruitment process.[5] I have talked to dozens of civilians about how they decided whether or not to join a rebel group and have even sat in a de facto rebel recruitment center.[6]

Despite this safety, however, rebel recruitment has changed little since the ceasefires. Rebel groups still generally recruit from the same populations and use the same basic techniques, albeit somewhat more publicly. Most importantly, though, recruitment still carries real stakes for armed organizations and would-be militants. The rebel groups in ethnic Assamese and Bodo areas are still actively fighting the government despite the relative openness of the recruitment process. The ceasefire groups, meanwhile, are often involved in negotiations with the government, leveraging the strength of their rank-and-file soldiers to pursue policy concessions. Rebel groups also rely on their military strength to collect taxes and patrol territory. All of these require a large number of committed soldiers who will act on behalf of organizational interests.

Along with local research assistants, I designed and implemented a sampling strategy based on how rebel recruiters actually court new recruits. By replicating these recruitment tactics, I gathered a group of *potential recruits* — young people who are not yet rebels but are highly likely to be approached by rebel recruiters and would consider joining under the right circumstances. The activity, in other words, is a decision-maker survey: it poses questions to those who are currently facing the decision of whether to join an armed group. The strategies, therefore, were designed to select likely recruits rather than gather a representative sample of the population.

My research team — twenty-something locals of the same ethnicity as respondents — approached these subjects in two types of locations. First, the team visited a host of ethnic *community organizations*. These groups, common across Northeast India, are somewhat deceptively

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[5]This experiment, along with the case interviews, were approved by the Columbia Institutional Review Board under Protocol AAAP6257. I was extremely cautious not to put my assistants or respondents in harm's way, consulting both local experts and my assistants at each stage.

[6]Specifically, it was an empty house owned by a rebel leader in which rebels and recruits bonded over rice-beer.

called "student associations," but mostly consist of non-student young adults.[7] Student associations are primarily community service groups, organizing volunteers for public works projects and events. But they also organize protests and strikes for local political causes such as corruption, immigration, and disaster relief. As with most social organizations in Northeast India, each ethnic group has their own student associations, and sub-ethnic tribes have separate sub-organizations within the broader associations. Critically, student associations in this context are unaffiliated with any political or militant organization, and they often go out of their way to avoid appearing political. However, because so many idealistic young men hang around the offices of these associations, they serve as a convenient pool of recruits for rebel groups. Many militants I interviewed were student association volunteers when they first were approached by rebel recruiters. The research team contacted association organizers in advance and visited the offices of these organizations, both in large towns and smaller villages.

Second, my research team approached young men in local *gathering places*: along the side of the road, at small tea shops and moonshiners, near the offices of local legislators, and in local sports stadiums (when there were no public events there). Northeast India, like many conflict-affected regions, suffers from substantial youth unemployment and underemployment. As a result, many young men idle in public places during the day. Some of these young men are hoping for work opportunities — legal or otherwise — while others are just there for the social life. As a result, members of rebel organizations are known to spend substantial time in these locations, talking up their employers to potential recruits. Accordingly, the research team visited these locations to interview young people hanging around.

In each recruitment location, my research team identified and approached men who are likely to be targeted by rebel groups and consider joining.[8] First, my team of three research assistants would enter the location and look for men between the ages of 18 and 40. The vast majority of rebel

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[7]The student associations included, among others, sub-groups of the All Assam Students Union (AASU), All Bodo Students Union (ABSU), and Naga Students Federation (NSF).

[8]This approach was practiced extensively along with me in a week-long training session. However, I was only present for a handful of actual surveys because we agreed my presence would likely affect respondents' answers.

recruits in the region fit into this demographic, so it was more appropriate than a wider sampling approach. Second, each assistant would approach a young man, and ask whether they would be willing to speak about Naga / Assamese / Bodo politics (which is understood to include the rebel movements), and offer a small gift for the respondent's time. This approach was intended to tap into the twin motivations for joining a rebel group described in the theory: interest in regional politics and material gain. Third, the first battery of questions included whether the person agreed that their group should have independence from India (or statehood in the case of Bodoland). Because this is the basic goal of the rebel movement, this question was consistently interpreted by both enumerators and respondents as asking a necessary condition for ever joining an armed group. All three of these steps were meant to draw in likely recruits — people who are likely to be approached by rebels and ever consider joining — and screen out others.

The research assistants, three co-ethnic twenty-somethings in each region, would initiate the conversation in the regional language (Assamese or Nagamese). For English-speaking respondents (English is the language of schooling in the region), the interview was conducted in English with occasional explanations in the regional language. For non-English-speakers, the interview was translated by enumerators to the regional language.[9] The interviews were conducted one-on-one in as private a place as was feasible in the environments. Research assistants invited the respondent to sit at a separate table or bench out of earshot from others, and often bought tea for the respondent as part of the conversation.

Evaluating Commitment

The recruitment experiment is designed to compare how truces affect two different groups: committed recruits, who rebel leaders want, and uncommitted recruits, who might cause discipline problems. The advantage of the sampling strategy laid out above is that it gathers two separate

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[9]This translation was done orally, but the wording was agreed-upon and practiced numerous times during survey preparation.

pools of recruits with very different levels of commitment. Young men who were approached in community organizations are much more likely to be committed to, and interested in, community issues. By spending their free time in a community organization office, they have given a fairly strong signal of their altruism. Volunteers for student associations spend long hours community organizing for free, and so only very community-oriented individuals tend to spend time there. By contrast, young men who spend time in gathering places tend to be far less committed to their communities. Young men have many reasons for spending time in local gathering places, but they tend to be either neutral or negative signs for altruism. They may be looking for informal work, for entertainment, or for a good time.

This choice of comparison groups was made based on extensive interviews in the region, including several in both types of location. Interviewees both in and out of rebel organizations repeatedly used participation in student associations as a shorthand for community-mindedness. Several high-ranking rebel officers, asked about misbehavior, lamented their groups' struggles to recruit community-oriented militants from student organizations.[10]

The survey suggests that the respondents from community organizations really are more community-oriented than those from other gathering places. I asked the respondents a battery of questions (full questionnaire in Appendix C) in order to test altruism and some other behavioral traits. Some of these questions were modeled off of common questions in social psychology, asking respondents to self-assess their own altruism. Others were behavioral, asking about specific situations in the past when respondents would have had opportunities to engage in community-oriented behaviors which are common locally, such as giving money to a beggar or helping a stranger lift heavy objects. Whether or not I control for demographic differences, the differences between the two groups were quite large, as shown in Figure 4.1. The group from community organizations consistently rated themselves as more likely to put others' good first before their own and reported many more past instances of pro-social behavior. These differences ranged between 0.1 and 0.4 standard

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[10]Author interviews with NSCN-IM leaders (U1, U16), Dimapur, July-August 2016

Figure 4.1: Respondents' Altruism: Community Orgs vs. Gathering Places
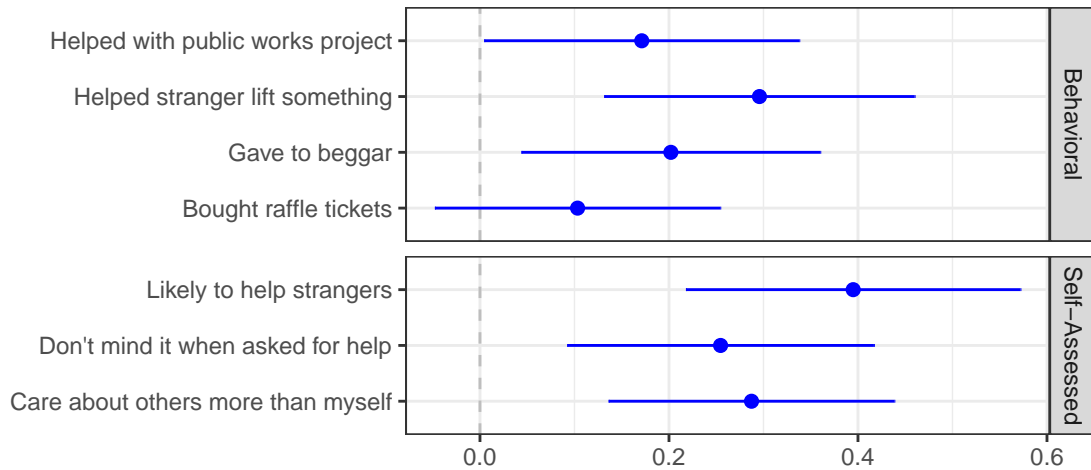
Each line is an OLS estimate (in standard deviations of the outcome) of the difference between activists and non-activists (the base category) for each survey response. Enumerator-Region pairing included as control.

deviations of the outcome. Rebel leaders believe that these differences make high-commitment community organization members more likely to sacrifice on behalf of the rebel movement.

These two pools differed somewhat in other ways as well (Table 4.1), but not in some of the ways we might expect. The differences do not appear to primarily be about class or job skills, for instance. The high-commitment (community organization) group was more likely to be young, educated and urban in origin. But they were also less likely to be employed and scored no higher in intelligence/reasoning questions. Politically, the community organization group was if anything less ideologically-aligned with rebel groups than the gathering places group. They were mildly less likely to identify primarily with their ethnic group,[11] and more likely to favor a soft-line, negotiation-focused approach to militancy. Regardless, for all of the comparisons below, I ran robustness checks which control for these demographic differences (or for the interaction between

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[11]The overall rates of ethnic identification, however, were extremely high across the board, which may be unsurprising in areas with a long history of anti-state ethnic mobilization.

Table 4.1: Demographics and Traits by Sampling Group

	Community Orgs	Gathering Spots
N	129	246
% Age <30	88	59
% Bachelor's Degree	59	42
% Originally From Village	35	55
% Unemployed	86	46
% Identify Strongly w/ Ethnic Group	88	93
% Support Talks w/ Government	82	72

these demographics and key treatments).

If young men from community organizations are so much more committed, though, why do rebel organizations recruit from the low-commitment pools at all? The answer is that community associations do not have any means to police their membership; they merely attract high-commitment members. If militant organizations began recruiting only from student associations, then rebel-interested recruits would begin flooding into those student associations. In recent years, most of the major Naga armed factions began requesting that all new recruits present a letter of recommendation from their village chief or village council asserting that the recruit is community-minded and well-behaved.[12] In practice, however, recruits could easily use social ties to pressure community elders into signing these letters. Elders had no incentive to report truthfully because they preferred for their local youth to be employed, even if (maybe especially if) they were troublesome.[13] As a result, armed groups do not bother trying to require community organization membership for new recruits and rebel soldiers frequently promote their groups in low-commitment pools.[14]

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[12]Forney (2015) observed the same behavior in Liberia

[13]Author interviews with militants (U1, U12, U13, C10), Nagaland, July-August 2016

[14]In formal theory, this is essentially a no-communication outcome of cheap talk with an highly-biased informant (Crawford and Sobel, 1982).

Figure 4.2: Example of Hypothetical Armed Group in Conjoint Experiment

Testing What Recruits Want

The main question, however, is how the benefits of truce affect the willingness of high-commitment and low-commitment recruits to join a rebel group. When governments offer a truce, it makes life safer and more profitable for rebel soldiers. The theory claims that these benefits should disproportionately attract low-commitment recruits rather than high-commitment recruits.

To test this theory, then, I use a conjoint experiment (Hainmueller and Hiscox, 2010) to measure how these factors influence a likely recruit's willingness to join hypothetical rebels. The experiment asked the respondent to imagine a hypothetical rebel organization fighting on behalf of separatism / autonomy for his ethnic group. With visual images (Figure 4.2) to help respondents keep track, the questionnaire describes six different characteristics of the rebel organization. The group, for example, could have a strong or weak military, strict or lax rules, and a hardline or softline approach to the government. It then asks the respondent whether "someone like you" would be likely to join the group, answerable on a 1-5 scale, where 1 is "no one like me would" and 5 is "everyone like me would."

Table 4.2: Armed Group Features in Conjoint Experiment

Trait	Possibilities
Wages / Lifestyle (H1)	Offers no wages, hard lifestyle
	Offers small wages, OK lifestyle
	Offers high wages, good lifestyle
Ceasefire Offer (H2)	Government has offered a ceasefire [details follow]
	Government has refused to offer a ceasefire [details follow]
Reputed Discipline	Loose Discipline
	Strict Discipline
Ideology	Leaders want to make a peace deal with government
	Leaders want to keep fighting until [region] is independent
Social Connections	Leaders from a different tribe [/community] and different area
	Leaders from a different tribe [/community] in the same area
	Leaders from the same tribe [/community]
Strength	Weak (200 troops)
	Medium-Strength (1,000 troops)
	Strong (5,000 troops)

Tribe/Community is a subset of area in the NEI context. Ceasefire offer was clearly described to not be a prelude to peace talks or a result of rebel bargaining (as described in Section 3).

Each hypothetical rebel organization consists of six different features, shown in Table 4.2. These six characteristics — wages and lifestyle, truce offers, disciplinary systems, ideological orientation toward the government, military strength, and social/ethnic ties of the leadership — were the most frequently discussed topics in my interviews in Northeast India, both among current and former rebels and among civilians. In most cases, respondents can clearly imagine the characteristics that are being described. Northeast India has more than 100 armed groups, and two of the three survey areas have several major groups varying on most of these dimensions. This should help citizens learn their own preferences and conceive of counterfactuals when they answer questions. The respondents can call on their experiences interacting with rebel organizations which were large and small, generous and stingy, strict and lax, hardline and softline.

The two most theoretically-important treatments are the changes that come with a long-term truce: material benefits and safety. When governments offer a truce, it makes life safer and easier for rebels. Free from the constraints of violence, rebel soldiers can sleep soundly, travel openly,

and visit family. Rebel groups, meanwhile, are suddenly flush with material resources: they can collect local taxes, run side businesses, and buy goods on the open market. This frees them up to provide greater wages and lifestyle perks to their soldiers: money, food, cigarettes, housing, and vehicles. I represent these changes through two treatments. First, the group may offer no wages and a hard lifestyle, low wages and an OK lifestyle, or high wages and a good lifestyle. The accompanying pictograms emphasized money and accommodations, the two benefits that current and former rebels mentioned the most. The no wages and hard lifestyle level, for instance, shows a lack of monetary wages and a soldier sleeping out in the forest. The low wages and OK lifestyle, by comparison, shows a small pile of coins and a real tent. Most of the results described compare the first two levels, which are the most plausible levels in the context. A truce may result in a group going from no wages to low wages, but rebel groups seldom offer anything which may be described as high wages. Second, the group may have been offered a truce (in this context called a ceasefire) or not. This is meant to capture the direct benefits of truce, separate from the material benefits. This ceasefire treatment was delivered separately from the list of group features (because truces are offered by movement), and emphasized that it did not say anything about peace negotiations (which ceasefires typically do not in the context).

This conjoint design has a number of benefits over survey experiments and interviews. First, it includes information on many characteristics of a rebel group at once. Rebel groups can vary over many dimensions other than truce benefits: military strength, social/ethnic proximity, disciplinary systems, and ideology. When a recruit hears about an organization's reputation, he may hear about any or all of these features. The survey includes information about all of these features. Each one of these characteristics is independently randomly assigned, meaning that a no feature has any effect on the others. By putting the benefits of truce alongside other varying characteristics, it not only puts them in a more realistic context but also allows us to compare the separate effects of various features.

Second, it provides recruits with plausible deniability to admit true preferences. Even despite

the relatively safe environment of Northeast India, respondents may be reticent to express strong opinions about a real-life group or about their true motivations for wanting to join. A conjoint experiment, on the other hand, asks only about hypothetical groups, which they may mentally compare to known groups as they choose. The setup, moreover, never forces respondents to admit — to others or to themselves — why they like one group and not another. On any particular group, a respondent can always point to a different feature varying at the same time. Instead, respondents reveal their preferences in the aggregate, expressing inclinations toward or against rebel organizations based on their characteristics. The phrasing "someone like you" in the outcome question was designed to encourage the respondent to respond with their own preferences in a given situation while providing plausible deniability to answer honestly.[15] Overall, respondents were remarkably willing to answer that a young man like them would be willing to join an armed group. More than 30 percent of responses were that "some," "many," or "all" young men like the respondent would join, and nearly every respondent expressed some willingness to join at least one of the groups he saw. This suggests that this process did indeed identify potential recruits and give them license to express preferences.

The results presented throughout the next section are all estimates of the degree to which changing one of these features of an armed group affects a potential recruit's stated willingness to join. Because each feature is randomized independently, the use of a regression model is necessary only to improve precision — a simple difference-in-means would yield equally unbiased estimates. As a robustness check (Appendix C), I also ran all results using ordered probit models, which are slightly more appropriate to the distribution but yield less useful estimates. These models had substantively identical results, so I report the more easily-interpretable ordinary lest squares (OLS) estimates.

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[15]The phrasing was borrowed from Holland (2017).

Figure 4.3: Effects of Armed Group Features on Joining (Baseline)
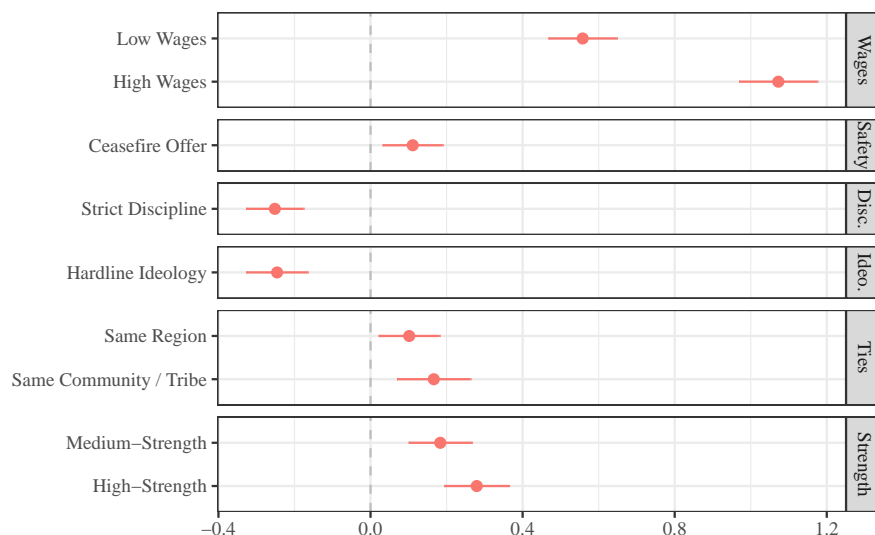
OLS with SEs clustered at respondent level, includes FE for recruiting pool. Group trait effects are relative to reference attribute for each category (No Ceasefire Offer, Lax Discipline, Anti-Talk Ideology, Low Strength, Leaders from a Different Region, No Wages).

4.2 Results

Before comparing how committed and uncommitted recruits differed in their preferences, it is worth looking at the overall effects of each trait on the recruits' willingness to join. Figure 4.3 shows the baseline results: the OLS estimates of the effect of each armed group trait on respondents' willingness to join the group (on a 1-5 scale).

These results confirmed many of the common understandings about why people join a rebel group. First and foremost, potential recruits care a great deal about the material rewards that rebel leaders can provide. When the hypothetical rebel group offered "no wages and a hard lifestyle," just 8 percent of respondents overall said that "most" or "all" people like them would join. Even when the group was appealing in other ways, these potential recruits were hesitant to join a rebel group. When the group offered even "low wages and an OK lifestyle," the proportion of likely

joiners nearly doubled. All else equal, the average person moved more than half of a scale point when the group offered low wages, or about 0.6 standard deviations of the dependent variable. The less-realistic "high wages and good lifestyle" had an even larger effect, doubling the number of likely joiners again and moving the average person an additional half a scale point. The strength of these effects — more than double the size any other factor — provides fairly strong evidence that greed is a powerful motivator for rebel recruits.[16]

Second, even holding these material benefits constant, truce offers had an additional positive effect. As respondents were working through the group, they generally talked about truces in the same breath as the material benefits, seeing them as making life easier and safer.

Most of the other effects were in the direction that we would generally expect. All else equal, the respondents preferred to join an armed group that had greater military strength and had leaders who were from the same region or community as the respondent. Respondents as a whole were also less interested in joining groups with strict disciplinary rules, which is consistent with scaring away low-commitment recruits. They were also less likely to join when the group espoused a hardline approach to negotiations with the government. I return to both of these features in the Alternative Strategies section. Importantly, though, these other features have much smaller effects than do material benefits.

Material Benefits and Safety

The main theoretical claims, however, are about the differences between the motivations of high-commitment recruits (in this case respondents from community organizations) and low-commitment recruits (those on the roadside and in criminal gathering spots). The material benefits (H1) and safety (H2) which result from truces should have a much larger effect on the low-commitment pool than on the high-commitment pool.

Figure 4.4 shows how wages and lifestyle (top two panels) and safety (bottom panel) affected

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[16]Collier (2000), Mueller (2000)

Figure 4.4: Effects of Material Benefits and Safety on Joining (by Recruit Type)
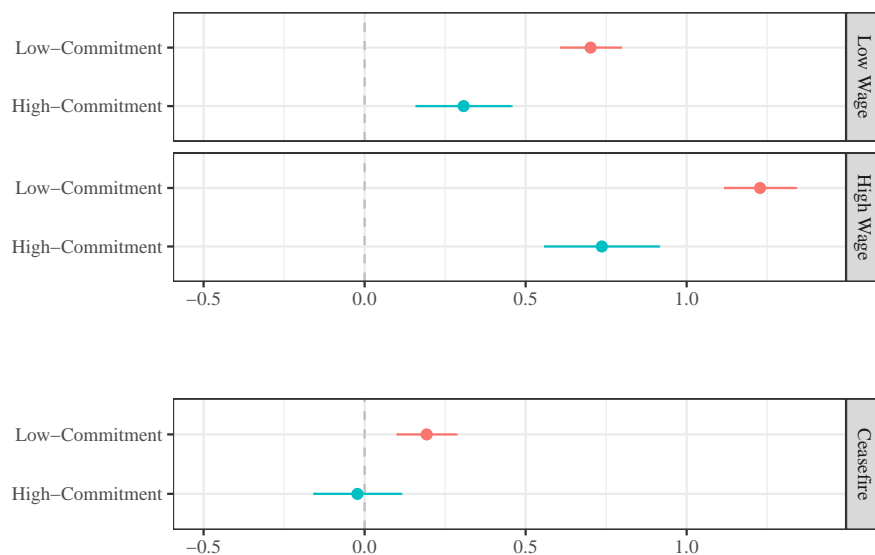
Results from OLS model (same model as Figure 4.6) with type interaction and SEs clustered at respondent level. Group trait effects are relative to reference attribute for each category (Low wages, No ceasefire offer). Includes FE for enumerator-region pair.

the willingness to join for the high-commitment and low-commitment respondents. As the theory suggests, low-commitment respondents were much more likely to be moved by material benefits and safety than were high-commitment respondents. For the low-commitment respondents, wages and lifestyle were by far the most important motivating factor in joining an armed group. All else equal, moving from no wages (and a hard lifestyle) to low wages (and an okay lifestyle) moves low-commitment respondents nearly three quarters of a scale point toward joining (on a 1-5 scale). This effect is about .75 standard deviations of the dependent variable — an effect that dwarfs the other five factors that respondents are considering. The slightly less realistic scenario of a group offering high wages and a good lifestyle moved low-commitment respondents even more: more than 1.25 scale points.

For the high-commitment respondents from community organizations, this effect is less than half as large. All else equal, high-commitment respondents were moved just 0.3 scale points by a

rebel organization offering low wages. Even one offering high wages and a good lifestyle moved high-commitment recruits just 0.75 scale points. The differences in these effects are massive: about half of a scale point, or half a standard deviation of the dependent variable. Importantly, though, the high-commitment respondents were no less eager to join a rebel group which offered material benefits than the low-commitment respondents. Instead, the difference comes from high-commitment recruits being more willing to endure joining a rebel group with few material resources. High-commitment recruits were more likely to join in the worst scenarios and more likely to be moved by other features of the group like military strength and social ties. High-commitment respondents were more likely to say they would join an organization that is militarily strong but offers no wages than one that is militarily weak but offers low wages. Similarly, these idealists would prefer a group have co-tribal leaders than offer wages.

This all means that rebel groups are likely to attract very different types of recruits depending on the types of benefits they offer (Figure 4.5). Overall, just under 10 percent of respondents expressed interest in joining rebel groups which offered no wages and a hard lifestyle (i.e. they said "Most" or "All" people like them would join).[17] But these 10 percent who join were disproportionately high-commitment respondents from community organizations. As laid out above, these high-commitment respondents were much more willing to join a rebel group that offered few material benefits, especially if it had other appealing qualities. Groups that offered low wages and an OK lifestyle attracted more people (16 percent of respondents), but nearly all of these additional people were low-commitment types. Whereas about three-quarters of the likely joiners of no-wage groups are high-commitment types, the low-wage groups' joiners are split 50-50. This is a good proxy for the effect of truce offers on rebel recruitment. The safety and ease of truces typically enable rebel groups to go from offering no wages and a hard lifestyle to offering low wages and an OK lifestyle. The result, then, confirms the basic intuition of the theory. The material benefits of truces undermine the natural screening process which keeps out low-commitment recruits.

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[17]This exercise upweights high-commitment respondents to assume a 50-50 starting pool.

Figure 4.5: Wage Screening Effects
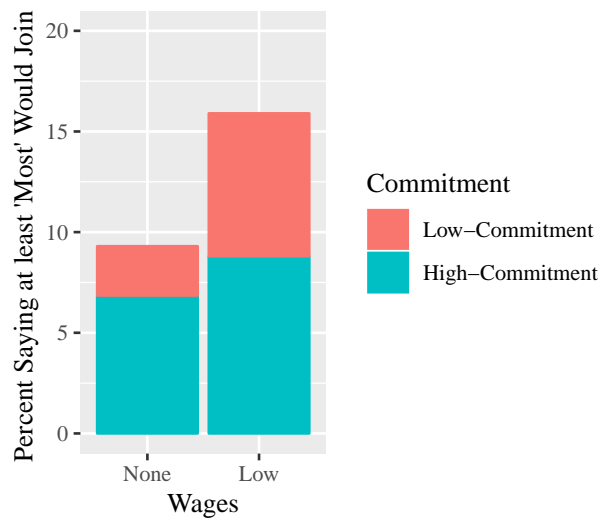
Stacked bar graphs showing the proportion and composition (whether they are high-commitment or low-commitment) who responded that at least "Most" individuals like them would join, for rebel groups that offer no wages vs. low wages.

Even holding constant the material benefits, however, truces still have a differential effect on low-commitment and high-commitment recruits. The lower panel of Figure 4.4 shows how a ceasefire offer affects the two groups of respondents. The offer had a clear positive effect (albeit a smaller one) on low-commitment respondents, increasing their willingness to join about a quarter of a scale point. Meanwhile, the ceasefire offer had almost no effect overall on high-commitment respondents. Because this feature is separate from wages, this treatment captures all of the residual effects of truce — the safety, mobility, and emotional security of truce. Truce offers, then, have an even greater effect on the commitment of rebel recruits than Figure 4.5 suggests. Truces both make life safer and open up new material benefits for soldiers. Both of these factors encourage selfish, opportunistic recruits to join while having little effect on the community-minded recruits who rebel leaders want to attract.

Robustness Checks

Moreover, these differences between low-commitment and high-commitment respondents are consistent and robust across a number of additional tests. I briefly describe a few key tests here for which tables can be found in Appendix C.

First and foremost, these results do not appear to be a result of the demographic differences between the two pools of respondents. High-commitment respondents are more likely to be young, single, highly-educated, urban, and unemployed than the low-commitment respondents. As a robustness check, I ran regression models controlling for these available demographic characteristics — or more precisely, for the interaction between these characteristics and the relevant treatments (wages/lifestyle and truce offers). The results, however, were nearly identical even when accounting for these factors. Even accounting for demographic differences, low-commitment recruits are much more attracted by the benefits of truces than high-commitment recruits.

Secondly, the effects of the various features of rebel groups appear to be relatively independent from one another. It is possible, for instance, that people read differently into truce offers or material benefits based on the group's military strength or social connections. As a test, I ran the main model fifteen more times, including each of the interaction terms for the fifteen pairs of treatments. Of these fifteen potential interaction terms, just one was significant at a $p < .05$ level.[18] This one-in-fifteen rate is exactly what we would expect if there were no relationships between any of the variables.[19]

Lastly, these effects are consistent across all three conflict regions in the study (Naga, Assamese, and Bodo). In all three regions, the low-commitment recruits were substantially more attracted by wages/lifestyle and truce offers. This is surprising given just how different the three settings are. The Naga movement — based in a remote hill region with a homogeneous and pre-

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[18]The significant relationship was between a truce offer and group ideology. Truce offers made a pro-talk orientation mildly more attractive.

[19]We would expect the null hypothesis to produce a false positive one in twenty times.

viously isolated population — is more similar to other center-periphery conflicts like those in Myanmar, Bangladesh, and the Philippines. The Assamese and Bodo movements are rural but are based in far more densely-populated, diverse, and economically-developed regions — more similar to higher-salience and higher-intensity conflicts like those in Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Kurdistan. The consistency of the results, therefore, suggests that these theoretical building-blocks are likely to travel to other locations.

4.3 Alternative Strategies for Rebel Organizations

This experiment also provides evidence regarding the two alternative strategies for rebel recruitment and control laid out in Section 3.5. On both counts, the experiment suggests that rebel leaders may struggle to overcome the negative effects of truce with alternative strategies.

Monitoring and Punishments

First, the results suggest that strict disciplinary systems are unpopular and do not help to screen out low-commitment recruits. In the recruitment experiment, one of the randomly-varying factors was the rebel group's reputation for discipline. The hypothetical group could have strict rules and punishments or loose rules and punishments. If these systems are effective, they should help to screen out low-commitment recruits. So long as low-commitment recruits believe that a rebel group is effective in finding out and punishing misbehavior, they should have less reason to join. They either should fear being caught for disobedience or should see less opportunity for unauthorized plunder and score-settling. High-commitment recruits, on the other hand, should not be negatively affected by these systems. They should be less interested in ill-gotten gains and may actually appreciate having disciplined peers.

If anything, the results of the experiment (the top panel of Figure 4.6) showed the opposite pattern. All respondents, both high-commitment and low-commitment, were less likely to join

Figure 4.6: Effects of Strict Discipline and Hardline Ideology on Joining (by Recruit Type)
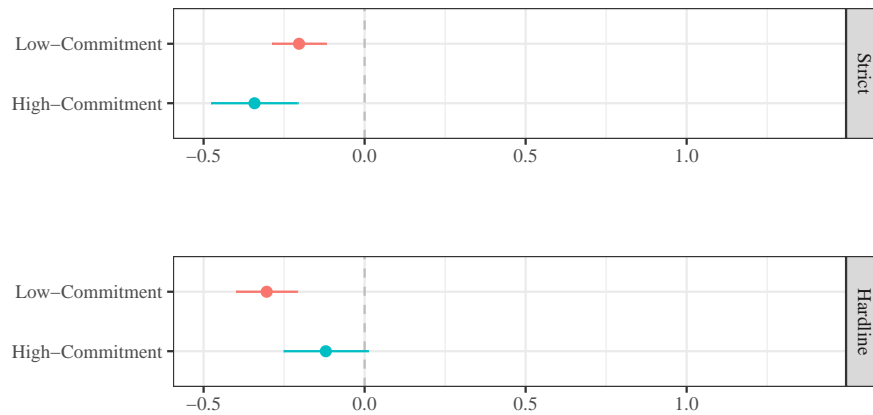
Results from OLS model (same model as Figure 4.4) with type interaction and SEs clustered at respondent level. Effects for each group of Strict Discipline and Hardline [Anti-Talk] ideology versus the reference categories (Loose Discipline and Softline [Pro-Talk] Ideology). Includes FE for enumerator-region pair.

a rebel group if the group had strict disciplinary systems. The average respondent was about 0.25 scale points less likely to join if the group had strict discipline as opposed to loose discipline. High-commitment respondents were actually slightly more likely to be negatively affected by strict discipline than low-commitment respondents, but this difference is substantively small and statistically insignificant.

These results should troubling for rebel leaders for two reasons. First, as I discuss more in Chapters 5-6, it suggests that rebels do not trust these disciplinary systems to punish the right people. If anything, the more selfless, self-sacrificing recruits are more likely to fear these punishments. Second, though, it suggests that rebel recruits — even ones who wish to follow the rules — see internal discipline as a burden. Insofar as rebel leaders wish to attract new recruits, strict rules may actually be a hindrance rather than a help. Both of these should make it more difficult to overcome the negative effects of truce with good personnel management.

Extremist Outbidding

Second, the results provide evidence that rebel leaders may struggle to attract high-commitment recruits by establishing a distinctive ideological brand. Prior work on rebel groups argues that the easiest way for rebel groups to prove their ideological purity is to adopt an extreme anti-government ideology. In Northeast India, the most discussed ideological dimension is whether the group has a hardline or softline approach to government negotiations. Groups frequently brand themselves as "anti-talk" or "non-accordist" in order to show that they care deeply about the cause of independence.[20] This is extremism in the sense of obstructionism: being "anti-talk" means that the group will not disarm in exchange for token concessions in exchange but rather will hold out for something better. Therefore, I included a treatment which described the group as "pro-talk" or "anti-talk." If a more extreme ideology helps a group distinguish itself as ideologically pure, then high-commitment respondents should be attracted to the "anti-talk" groups.

Figure 4.6 shows the effect of a hardline ideology on high-commitment and low-commitment respondents. Overall, both high-commitment and low-commitment respondents expressed significantly less interest in joining a rebel group if its leaders were described as hardline. This effect was consistent across both high-commitment and low-commitment recruits in all three study locations. The effect was slightly smaller for high-commitment recruits. That is, high-commitment recruits were slightly more willing to overlook a hardline ideology. This difference, however, was substantively small and highly sensitive to modeling choices and location.

This result, too, is troubling for rebel leaders hoping to overcome the disadvantages of truce. If a hardline ideology deters even highly-committed recruits, then rebel leaders cannot use them to attract the soldiers they want. This actually suggests that rebel groups may have an incentive to "outbid" one another with moderation. If recruits generally prefer more pragmatic, moderate rebel organizations, then more recruitment competition should actually put pressure on rebel

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[20]At least four major rebel organizations have given themselves names based on this dimension: NNC-Accordist, NNC-Non-Accordist, ULFA Pro-Talk, and ULFA Anti-Talk.

groups to appear moderate. More competition among rebels, then, might make it easier for governments to buy off rebels with token concessions.[21] The difference between high-commitment and low-commitment recruits does leave open the possibility that rebel groups may use ideology as a screening tool, using extremism to deter low-commitment types.[22] But if extremism deters high-commitment recruits, then recruitment competition should make this screening harder by increasing pressure on all groups to adopt more moderate ideologies.

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[21]This is the primary argument of Cunningham (2014).
[22]This is offered as an alternative mechanism by Walter (2017).

Chapter 5

Rebel Organizations in Northeast India

Chapter 3 describes how long-term truces affect rebel organizations and the conflicts they fight in. By making life easier and more profitable for rebel recruits, truces bring in a large influx of new recruits, many of whom are selfish opportunists (Hypothesis 3). By providing new material resources to rebel leaders, truces drive recruitment competition between rebel leaders, leading to more fragmentation and defection (Hypothesis 4). By sowing indiscipline and fragmentation, truces lead to abuse and extortion in the civilian population (Hypothesis 5), and to desertions, defections, and defeats on the battlefield (Hypothesis 6). All of this leaves rebels in a weaker position against the government, despite greater numbers and more material resources.

Although some of these effects are visible from a distance, most of these processes are difficult to detect from a distance. Therefore, I test these theoretical expectations by looking up close at two cases: two conflicts in Northeast India and the Sri Lankan Civil War.

This chapter examines the effects of ceasefires by tracing internal organization over time in two major rebel movements in Northeast India: ethnic Naga rebels in Nagaland and ethnic Meitei (a.k.a. Manipuri) rebels in Manipur. These two independence movements are the two largest and longest-running in Northeast India.[1] Both movements first organized against Indian rule during the

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[1]The Assamese independence movement, featured in the recruitment experiment, is the only other Northeastern conflict of a similar scale to the Naga and Meitei movements, but it is more recent in origin.

independence process in the late 1940s and both first took up arms against the Indian Army in the 1950s and 1960s. India granted statehood to both regions (to Nagaland in 1962 and to Manipur in 1972) but failed to satisfy calls for secession. Both movements saw an uptick in violence in the 1990s, as rebels reinitiated a guerrilla campaign against Indian Army and paramilitary forces. By the late 1990s, both movements fielded about 5,000 soldiers split between a small handful of factions.

But beginning in the late 1990s, the two movements' experiences diverged. The government offered a blanket ceasefire to Naga rebels in 1997, freezing the conflict and permitting rebels to operate and recruit freely. They maintained their troops in the region, but agreed to leave rebel forces alone. A few years later, the government increased its military presence in the Imphal Valley, maintaining its crackdown on Meitei rebels but deploying more resources to the task. Why did the government respond to such similar conditions with opposite responses? As described in Chapter 2, the difference was primarily about economic and political interests rather than anything immediate about the conflict or bargaining process. The regions where the two movements are based — the Naga Hills and the Imphal Valley — are similarly remote, sparsely populated, and ethnically homogeneous. The Imphal Valley, however, is much more vibrant economically, home to tea and textile industries. As a result, the government is much more concerned about maintaining military control of Manipur than of Nagaland.

Comparing the results of interviews in and round these two movements allows me to compare the diverging trends in discipline within a wide variety of armed organizations in these three movements – a sort of qualitative difference-in-differences. These interviews reveal the predicted divergence: Naga armed groups have experienced a marked decline in discipline and cohesion since their ceasefires, while Meitei armed groups have not. An overwhelming majority of the interviews date the changes to the ceasefire and trace the causal story described by the theory. At the end of the chapter, I also look into two smaller comparisons within Manipur: KCP rebels in Imphal and Kuki rebels in Northern Manipur.

For these comparisons, I conducted interviews of a variety of actors inside and outside rebel organizations in order to trace these organizations' behavior and organizational practices. These interviews included 28 current and former rebels from seven different rebel organizations. I interviewed current and former foot soldiers who joined at various points in the movements' histories. I interviewed low-level officers and NCOs who trained new soldiers and managed recruits before and after truce. I interviewed numerous senior officials and commanders, including the official heads of three rebel outfits. I also interviewed 28 civilians who deal with rebel groups on an everyday basis: village chiefs, community association leaders, and journalists. Nearly all of these interviewees broadly supported the cause of autonomy/independence for their ethnic group, but they often had wildly different views of specific armed factions and leaders. The idea was to triangulate the events and processes within rebel organizations by combining the observations of dozens of actors with different perspectives.

In this chapter, I include several tables which compare the answers of ethnic Naga and Meitei respondents. These include only the 33 Naga and Meitei respondents who participated in longer, one-on-one, semi-structured interviews in Summer 2016, after the theory development stage. The remaining interviews, which were either conducted alongside others or meant primarily for theory-building.

5.1   Changing Membership

The first major observable result of truces is to attract an influx of new rebel recruits who are selfish, lazy, and otherwise undisciplined.

During the early 1990s, both Naga and Meitei rebel groups attracted only small numbers of recruits. Even in hotspots for rebel activity, only a small fraction of boys (5% or 10%) were brave enough to join. Rebellion was a hard life, and few joined. New recruits slept in the jungle, trained from day to night, and lived on cold rice because they were constantly on the move. Several

former soldiers who joined during the 1990s recalled their early experiences as a shock, even more difficult and isolating than they expected. As a result, many new recruits left for home just a few days into training.[2] Those who stayed, however, tended to be highly disciplined and loyal to the cause. Nearly every interviewee talked glowingly about the bravery of soldiers who joined in the 1990s because they "believed in the Naga nation."[3]

Following the 1997 ceasefire in Nagaland, a huge number of young men decided to take up arms. Before the ceasefire, recruitment numbers for the major Naga rebel outfits had remained stable for decades. But in the first two years of ceasefire, the groups more than doubled in size with a flood of new recruits.[4] Even ordinary citizens could see the dramatic change in wages and lifestyle as rebel soldiers stepped out of the jungle and into ordinary life. To young Nagas, especially young men, rebellion suddenly became attractive, profitable, and cool.[5]

These new recruits, however, quickly gained a reputation for laziness and lack of commitment. In response to an open-ended question about the types of people joining rebel organizations in the past two decades, the vast majority of Naga interviewees launched into complaints about the types of recruits who have joined in the last two decades. Most used some variant of the term "materialists" to refer to the bad apples joining since the ceasefire. A local professor and former rebel, asked what has changed in the rebel movement since the 1950s, summarized the consensus well. "What you have to understand," he said, "is back then [in the 1950s and 60s] there was no money in rebellion. That all changed with the ceasefire."[6]

Even many rebels who themselves joined after the ceasefire complained about the motivations of their fellows. Many of these rebels insisted that their own groups had managed to avoid slipping standards but that their competitors had become little more than protection rackets.[7] Despite their obvious interest in the image of their movement, some of the most despondent comments came

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[2]Author interviews with former NSCN-K cadres (C3 and C7), Nagaland, July-August 2016
[3]Author interview with former cadre (C2), Kohima, July 2016
[4]Author interviews with rebel leaders (U1, U13, U16), Nagaland, July-August 2016
[5]Author interview with former NSCN-K cadre (C7), Kohima area, July 2016
[6]Author interview (C5), Patkai, July 2016
[7]Author interviews with current cadres (C6, C10)

Table 5.1: Change over Time in Types of Recruits

Question: Are there more, fewer, or about the same number of soldiers who joined for the wrong reasons in [respondent's ethnicity] armed groups today than there were twenty years ago?

	More	Same	Fewer	NR
Naga Interviewees	18	3	0	3
Meitei Interviewees	1	7	1	0

from rebel leaders themselves. With little prompting, several rebel leaders complained that new recruits were 'out for themselves," "join for the wrong reasons," and "don't know any better" than to misbehave.[8]

Naga interviewees nearly universally agreed on two facts that are consistent with the causal process described in Chapter 3. First, the change happened quickly and happened immediately after the truce. For every Naga interviewee who said there had been a change over time in recruits' motivations, I asked whether it had happened gradually or at a certain time. 16 of the 18 said that this decline happened over the few years immediately following the ceasefire. This is consistent with a change specific to truce rather than a gradual organizational decline. Second, the soldiers who were recruited before the truce remained just as committed as before. Rebel leaders made this comparison frequently, arguing that the disciplinary problems had come nearly exclusively from post-ceasefire recruits.[9] This is exactly what we would expect if this effect was primarily driven by the types of people joining rather than the circumstances of truce.

All the while, Meitei groups have seen no substantial change in quantity or quality of recruits. Increased military presence has decreased recruitment slightly, but few low-commitment recruits joined during the 1990s crackdowns anyway. With no respite from government violence, few low-commitment recruits joined in the 2000s either. Even when pressed with a more direct question (Table 5.1), ethnic Meitei respondents unanimously agreed there had been little, if any, change over the past few decades in the dedication of rebel recruits. Even local activists who had sub-

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[8]Author interviews (U1, U7, U8, U9, U12, U13, U16), Nagaland, July-August 2016
[9]Author interview with rebel leaders (U1, U8, U9, U12, U13, U16), Nagaland, July-August 2016

stantial disagreements with certain rebel groups begrudgingly admitted they had remained just as committed and self-sacrificing as ever.[10] The fact that Manipuris recount no substantial change suggests that Nagas are not just nostalgic for the past of the rebellion but instead are recognizing a real, specific change over time.

5.2 Recruitment Competition

Second, truces should lead to increasing recruitment competition as rebel leaders each try to leverage the material benefits of truce.

Prior to the Naga ceasefires, rebel recruitment looked very similar in Nagaland and Manipur. Although both movements included a handful of factions (3 for Nagas, 5 for Meiteis), they generally avoided competing over recruits directly. In Nagaland, the factions each dominated geographically-separate tribal groups. The NSCN-K had a near monopsony recruiting in communities in Eastern Nagaland and Myanmar (particularly with Konyak communities), while the NSCN-IM dominated the Tangkul and Sumi communities and the NNC tended to dominate in Angami areas. Rebel groups had few resources to appeal to distant recruits and had to rely on local relationships with villages. Recruits were also hesitant to travel to distant rebel groups out of fear of government attack.[11] Meitei rebel factions, meanwhile, differentiated over class and ideology. Each of these groups was (and is) well-known to recruit from clearly-defined demographics: the PLA recruits primarily rural peasants, the UNLF upper-middle-class secularists, and KYKL and PREPAK middle-class Hindus.[12] Without the material and safety benefits of truce to outbid one another, these organizations attract only the high-commitment recruits attracted to their social and ideological appeals.

The material resources and safety of truce, however, has enabled rebel groups in Nagaland to

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[10]Author interviews (M2, M4, M6), Imphal, August 2016
[11]Author interviews with former cadres (C3, C7), Nagaland, July-August 2016
[12]Author interviews with activists (M2, M3, M4, M5, M7), Imphal, August 2016

Table 5.2: Change over Time in Intra-Rebel Defection

Question: Is it common or rare for soldiers in [respondent's ethnicity] armed groups to switch to another group?

	Common	Rare	DK/NR
Naga Interviewees	12	2	10
Meitei Interviewees	0	7	2

recruit new soldiers by raising compensation and lowering expectations. Numerous rebel leaders complained how recruitment competition from other factions forced them to raise wages and prevented them from demanding any substantial sacrifice of recruits in order to join.[13] As a result, Naga organizations have consistently raised compensation, both in wages and in lifestyle perks. Rebel soldiers once slept in the jungle and ate cold rice, but even soldiers in cash-strapped Naga factions now typically rent small apartments and earn a weekly stipend. Training, meanwhile, has gradually become shorter and less demanding. Recruits typically train part time for three months on base as opposed to full time for six months in the jungle.[14]

Increasingly, rebel factions even try to court defectors from other rebel factions. Before the ceasefires, defection from one Naga faction to another was virtually unheard-of. Since the cease-fires, it has become commonplace.[15] Several factions are known to make attracting defectors an explicit strategy and advertise "homecomings" (that is, soldiers defecting from rivals) in local newspapers. Several rebels recounted stories of rebel recruiters approaching uniformed members of other rebel groups, promising better wages and lifestyle perks if they were to switch.[16]

Hypothesis 4 suggests that these material goods should enable new rebel competitors to fracture off of rebel groups and compete for recruits. Nagaland has seen exactly this process play out, as documented in Table 5.2. During the crackdowns of the 1990s, there were no fractures. Instead,

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[13] Author interviews (U1, U5, U12, U13, U15, U16, C2, C6), Nagaland and Manipur, July-August 2016

[14] Author interviews with current and former rebels (U1, U4, U16, C1, C7, C10), Nagaland, July 2015 and July-August 2016

[15] Author interviews with rebels and civilians (C7, U4, U5, U9, U12, U13, U15, U16, A10, A15), Nagaland, July-August 2016

[16] Author interviews with Naga commanders (U12, U13, U16), Nagaland, July-August 2016

Table 5.3: Splits and Mergers in Nagaland

Time Period	Counterinsurgency	Splits and Mergers
1991-1997	**Open Conflict:** Indian Army cracks down on armed groups	**(1991-1995)** NSCN-K and NSCN-IM consolidate recruits from NNC **(1996)** NNC-Kudao joins NSCN-IM
1997-2016	**Formal Ceasefires:** peaceful operation in overlapping areas	**(2000)** NNC-A and NNC-N split **(2008)** NSCN-U splits from NSCN-K and NSCN-IM **(2015)** NSCN-R splits from NSCN-K

the 1990s saw a merger and greater consolidation of forces under the two largest factions, the NSCN-K and NSCN-IM. Since the 1997 ceasefires, however, each of the three major Naga rebel organizations has fractured in two. The initial splits are typically driven by personal disputes between leaders: long-standing disagreements over tactics or credit for past victories. But in each case the new faction was able to attract troops, both soldiers in other groups and new recruits, by offering greater wages and lifestyle perks. [17] The result, as the theory predicts, is that these new factions all have a worse reputation for discipline than their parent organization. The recruits who can be peeled off by material rewards alone are generally lower-commitment than those who cannot.

This fragmentation is more obvious, though, when looking at recruitment on a local level. Even when the number of groups overall remained constant, new material benefits has allowed existing groups to increasingly compete for recruits in areas previously dominated by their competitors. Mon, the largest town in Eastern Nagaland, was home to only one rebel organization (the NSCN-K) before the 1997 ceasefires. In the years since, it has also become fertile recruiting ground for two new factions (the NSCN-R and NNC-N) and for the NSCN-K's long-time rival (the NSCN-IM).[18]

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[17] Author interviews with current and former militants and community leaders (U12, U13, U16, C1, C10, A7, A10), Nagaland, July-August 2016

[18] Author interviews with current and former militants and activist (C7, C8, C9, C10, A10), Mon, July-August 2016

The Meitei movement, meanwhile, has seen a remarkable consistency in rebel organizations and their recruiting patterns. Aside from the KCP (which I discuss more in Section 5.4) the major Meitei factions have recruited roughly the same numbers and types of recruits they have since the 1970s.[19] With no additional material resources, these groups continue to rely on their identity appeals and local relationships to attract recruits.

Neither the Naga nor Meitei rebels have successfully implemented any disarmament or autonomy agreement with the government in recent decades, but diplomatic efforts in Nagaland have highlighted how difficult it can be for rebels to negotiate effectively after fragmenting in ceasefire. The largest Naga rebel organization, the NSCN-IM, began negotiations with New Delhi in early 2015 and signed a one-page framework agreement in August of that year. More than three years later that agreement was not only yet to be implemented but yet to be shown to the public. In the meantime, the other factions have done their best to spoil the agreement, frustrated with their exclusion and fearing that they will lose the material benefits of ceasefire. The NSCN-K made their position clear when they responded to the beginning of negotiations by ambushing government troops. Rebels who fought for the NSCN-IM in the past but broke off during the truce, especially those in the NSCN-U, are leading the chorus against reconciliation.[20]

5.3 Misbehavior in the Community and in Battle

Third, rebel organizations should see an increase in misbehavior after a truce offer, which should erode their battlefield strength and territorial control.

Before the ceasefires, both Naga and Meitei rebel groups had good reputations for organizational control. In Nagaland, rebel soldiers taxed the local community, both in cash and in kind (mostly rice), but had a reputation for taxing exactly what their superiors directed. As a result, they

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[19]Author interviews with activists (M2, M3, M4, M5, M7), Imphal, August 2016
[20]Author interviews with community leaders and rebel leader (U1, A16, A19, A20), Dimapur, July 2015

maintained a good reputation while also enforcing their will with local people.[21] On the battlefield, Naga rebel groups generally performed well. Publicly-available violence data suggest that Naga rebel factions killed two government soldiers for every one they lost in the 1990s.[22] Meitei groups, meanwhile, were similarly structured. Meitei rebels set and enforced strict codes for soldiers interacting with civilians.[23] Like Naga forces, they generally performed well on the battlefield as well, killing government forces at a higher rate than they lost soldiers.

Since the ceasefires, however, rebel organizations in Nagaland have struggled to maintain control of their soldiers. The most obvious signs of this decline are in interactions with civilians. With civilian interviewees, merely asking about soldiers disobeying orders sparked a host of stories describing the rise over time in extortion and abuse by soldiers, despite concerted efforts by rebel leaders to restrain them.[24] But even current rebels complained about the rising tide of theft, rape, extortion, and defection in their own ranks and in the ranks of other rebel organization. They argued that "materialism" and "corruption" have become an increasing problem, and that soldiers have "less conviction than they once did."[25] Rebel leaders fail to restrain soldiers even when their own money is on the line. One local activist estimated that more than 50% of what Naga rebel cadres collect goes into their own pockets rather than into the organization's coffers.[26]

Interviewees overwhelmingly insisted that these changes were a result of the low-commitment recruits who joined since the ceasefire. First, there was wide agreement — both among civilians and current/former rebels — that these types of misbehavior emerged in the first few years after the ceasefire.[27] And this did not just come from civilians who were newly encountering rebels

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[21]Author interviews with former cadres and civilians (C1, C2, C3, C7, C13, A3, A5), Nagaland, July 2015 and July-August 2016

[22]Estimates both from Sundberg and Melander (2013) and from the South Asia Terrorism Portal (www.satp.org).

[23]Author interviews with Meitei civilians (M2, M3, M4, M5, M8), August 2016

[24]Author interviews with community leaders and activists (A2, A3, A5, A6, A8, A12, A13, A15), Nagaland, July 2015 and July 2016

[25]Author interviews with NSCN-IM, NSCN-K, NSCN-U, NNC-A, and NNC-N militants (U4, U7, U8, U9, U12, U13, C7, C9)

[26]Author interview (A15), Dimapur, July 2015

[27]As with the question about recruit types, I followed up the question in Table 5.4 by asking whether the change was gradual or quick and when it happened. And as with the other question, 16 of the 18 interviewees who noticed a

— current and former rebels said the same. Second, the interviewees widely agreed that this misbehavior has been concentrated among the soldiers who joined since the ceasefire.

As a result of this unauthorized extortion and abuse, Naga rebel organizations have experienced a huge decline in public support. This change over time is the most significant feature of Naga politics: nearly every civilian interviewee began the interview by describing just how unpopular the movement's leaders had become because of extortion and abuse.[28] In recent years, there have been a number of huge protests against rebel taxation in major towns. As a result, anti-tax activists have become major players in local politics, calling for rebel groups to rein in rogue cadres who demand repeated payments which they subsequently pocket.[29] Similarly, frustration with civilian abuse has come to a boil in recent years in two separate incidents in Mokokchung and Zunheboto Districts. In both cases, rebel soldiers (from the NSCN-U and NSCN-IM, respectively) sexually abused local girls, setting off a riot. Civilians armed with machetes and torches destroyed rebel bases, drove soldiers out of the area, and have since refused to pay taxes to the offending faction.[30]

By contrast, the major Meitei outfits have seen no significant change in their organizational control, despite increasing pressure by government forces to undermine rebels. Meitei civilians have observed very little extortion or abuse by rebel soldiers. In recent years, the Meitei groups have even cooperated to install and effectively enforce a new set of strict rules of engagement with civilians.[31] As a result, Meitei civilians still widely approve of rebel organizations. This is true even as the government has worked hard to marginalize Meitei rebels and funnel development projects into the Imphal Valley.[32]

Table 5.4 shows the overall counts of interviewees' responses to my first major question: whether soldiers disobey orders more or less than they did twenty years before (just before the

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change said it was relatively quick and following the ceasefires.

[28]Author interviews with community leaders and activists (A2, A3, A5, A6, A7, A8, A12, A13, A15, A20), Nagaland, July 2015 and July 2016

[29]Author interviews with community leaders and activists (A3, A6, A15, A20), Nagaland, July 2015 and July 2016

[30]Author interviews with local activists (A6, A12, A15) and tribal leaders (A13, A14), Nagaland, July 2015 and July-August 2016.

[31]Author interviews with civilian observers (M2, M3, M4, M5), Imphal, August 2016

[32]Author interviews with Meitei civilians (M2, M3, M4, M5, M8), August 2016

Table 5.4: Change over Time in Soldier Misbehavior

Question: Has misbehavior in [respondent's ethnicity] armed organizations increased, decreased, or stayed about the same over the past twenty years?

	More	Same	Less	NR
Naga Interviewees	18	4	0	2
Meitei Interviewees	1	7	1	0

first ceasefire had been signed). While Meitei interviewees agreed misbehavior had remained approximately the same, nearly all of the Naga interviewees argued that misbehavior had risen substantially.

Naga rebels have also performed poorly on the battlefield since the ceasefire while Meitei rebels have remained united. There have been relatively few clashes between Naga rebels and government forces since 1997, but the limited sample has been poor. Defections, desertions, and general laziness have repeatedly caused problems for Naga rebels. This is apparent even looking over time at the ratio of battlefield deaths (i.e. how many government soldiers are killed for every rebel soldier). In general — and in the Meitei case — rebel groups tend to perform better when violence is low, picking their battles and hiding when they can.[33] In Nagaland, however, the ceasefire has seen rebels perform even worse in low levels of violence. Before the ceasefires, rebel outfits regularly killed more government soldiers than they lost rebel soldiers. During the truce, however, they have lost two to five rebels for every government soldiers they have killed. These losses have happened despite the fact that rebel forces typically perform better in these types of insurgent conflicts when violence is low and rebels can choose their battles. Meitei rebels, meanwhile, have continued to kill government forces despite a huge investment in counterinsurgency forces by the government.

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[33]I return to this point in the cross-national analysis.

Table 5.5: Causes of Misbehavior

[Among the 18 Naga interviewees who noted a behavior change over time.]
Question: Why has the behavior of those armed groups changed?
How many made any mention of changes in...

Types of People who are Joining	16
Monitoring and Punishment Systems	4
Ideological Branding and Political Education	1

5.4 Alternative Strategies for Rebel Organizations

It is worth asking if the eroding discipline in Naga rebel organizations happened not because of an influx of selfish recruits, but in concurrent changes in how the groups functioned. In interviews I carefully asked about two commonly-discussed strategies for managing rebel organizations: systems to monitor and punish misbehavior, and systems to define an ideological brand and indoctrinate soldiers.

Following my first major question of the interviews (whether misbehavior has increased or decreased over time), I asked all interviewees an open-ended question about what had caused this change. At least nine Naga interviewees responded to this initial *why* question by describing this causal story in full – an easier lifestyle after ceasefire led to an influx of materialists which led to increased misbehavior.[34] However, most interviewees described some part of this process. In particular, I was curious whether interviewees mentioned any change in: (1) the types of soldiers joining (the basis for the main theory), (2) the monitoring or punishment of recruits, or (3) the effort to establish or spread a clear organizational ideology. Table 5.5 shows just how consistent these answers were. While many interviewees described a change in the types of people joining Naga rebel groups, very few mentioned either of the alternative theories, even quite widely defined.

Instead, since the ceasefires Naga rebel organizations have nearly universally ramped up efforts on both fronts. Rebel leaders have put in place strict disciplinary systems and punishments, and

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[34]Author interviews with current and former militants (U9, U12, U13, C1, C2, C7) and community observers (A3, A5, A7, A8), Nagaland, July-August 2016

they have put more resources into political education. These rebel leaders themselves readily admit that these approaches have failed to stem the tide of misbehavior. These experiences help explain why rebel groups so often fail to successfully implement these strategies.

Monitoring and Punishments

Since the 1997 ceasefire, every major Naga rebel organization has expanded its efforts to monitor and punish misbehavior. Each of the major groups has implemented some sort of three-strikes system for misbehavior. In these systems, even mild offenses, like fighting or laziness, can garner harsh punishments. A first offense merits a warning, a second brings a beating, and a third is punishable by death. Not to be outdone, the NNC-N recently shortened this to make a second strike punishable by death.[35] These systems, however, have widely failed to stem misbehavior, showing limitations that government militaries rarely face.

First, Naga rebel organizations have struggled to effectively monitor their soldiers' behavior. Punishments only prevent misbehavior if rebel soldiers actually believe that their superiors will find out about it. But the interviews suggest that Naga rebels — like the potential recruits in the recruitment experiment — have little faith in these systems. Former soldiers recounted that most of their fellow soldiers felt that misbehavior was likely to go unpunished. These soldiers described that they felt completely unsupervised when they were out on patrol in the community or the countryside.[36] Several rebel leaders readily admitted these struggles, complaining that there was nothing they could do to monitor soldiers once they left the camp. One proclaimed "some soldiers have the wrong motives, and they will misbehave as soon as you turn your back."[37] This is a particular problem for insurgent groups, who rely on flexibility and close relationships with the community. Unlike conventional military forces, insurgents must operate on their own or in small groups and must make many judgment calls with civilians. This is a recipe for unclear blame and

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[35] Author interviews with current and former soldiers (C7, C10), Mon, August 2016
[36] Author interviews (C3, C7), Nagaland, July-August 2016
[37] Author interviews (U1, U7, U13, U16), Nagaland, July-August 2016

collusion between officers and foot-soldiers.[38]

Second, even when rebel organizations effectively detect misbehavior, they may not be able to catch misbehaving soldiers who choose to flee punishment. In recent years, this has become a major issue in Nagaland. Soldiers who are at risk of receiving a third strike simply desert or defect, slipping out of the areas that the rebel group typically operates in. The NNC-N put its two-strike policy in place specifically because its leadership noticed so many soldiers defected after they had been punished for a second strike.[39] Government soldiers rarely have the option to flee because governments typically have much stronger territorial control. Rebel soldiers, on the other hand, can hope to escape or even defect to a rival rebel faction without detection.

Ideological Indoctrination

Second, Naga rebels have worked hard to establish a clear ideology and indoctrinate recruits during the truce. But rebel leaders readily admit that these efforts either have failed spectacularly or have had no noticeable effect.

A few Naga groups — notably the NSCN-K and the NNC-N — have responded to the truce by acting more belligerent toward the government, attempting to burnish their reputation for incorruptibility. The NSCN-K refused to sign the ceasefire until four years after it was offered and since then has abrogated it repeatedly by ambushing government forces. They have vowed to take a hard line in negotiations and position themselves as the anti-talk group. The Non-Accordist faction of the NNC (NNC-N) broke away from the NNC in the mid-2000s specifically to spoil a compromise. But as the recruitment experiment suggests, extremism is unpopular as a whole, and the recruiting results have been disastrous. The NNC-N has drawn few recruits, while the NSCN-K's strength has gradually been lost to the more moderate NSCN-IM and to more moderate splinter organiza-

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[38] See Tirole (1986) for a clear explanation of the collusion problem in monitoring. For a good example of how civilian interactions obscure blame, look at police shootings in the United States. Even with strong command-and-control structures and widespread use of video, blame can be highly subjective.

[39] Author interviews with militants and civilians (U16, C7, A2, A3, A6, A15), Nagaland, July 2015 and July-August 2016

tions. The NSCN-K's moves against ceasefire have been blamed for their splits. The NSCN-IM, by contrast, have drawn hundreds of defectors in recent years by engaging the government directly, including one of the NSCN-U's founding leaders. When the NSCN-IM announced that it had reached a one-page framework agreement with the government, hundreds of soldiers from other organizations defected en masse before the NSCN-IM had even announced terms.[40]

Meanwhile, all of the major Naga groups continue to conduct extensive political education for their recruits. The original leaders of the NSCN adopted a Maoist ideology and implemented extensive socialist political education after receiving assistance and training from the Chinese army in the 1970s.[41] They meshed this indoctrination with Baptist religious rites to match Nagaland's Christian population.[42] Current and former rebels, though, were skeptical of these efforts. The biggest issue with political education was expressed best by the minister for propaganda and ideology in a major Naga organization. He argued that such indoctrination has little effect on people who come in with only selfish motives. A community-minded person can be swayed to a certain point of view, they said, but "corruption is a permanent part of the person."[43] If truces cause an influx of selfish opportunists, they may parrot ideology without any desire to internalize any of the lessons.[44] After 16 years in a socialist armed group, one former rebel neither knew nor cared what the word socialism meant.[45]

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[40]Author interviews with Naga militants (U1, U16, C6)

[41]Author interviews with current and former militants (U7, U8, C8), Nagaland, July-August 2016

[42]Religious rites and leftist ideology have traditionally been the two strongest sources of rebel political education (Hoover Green, 2016). The combination does, however, create the strange sight of Marxist organizations with mottos like "Nagaland for Christ."

[43]Author interview with rebel leader (U7), Dimapur, July 2016

[44]Kalyvas (2003) and Christia (2012) discuss this issue: people may use a group's stated ideology as an excuse to carry out personal objectives while armed.

[45]Author interview with former NSCN-K soldier (C7), Mon, August 2016

5.5 Comparisons within Manipur

In addition to the broad comparison between Naga and Meitei groups, it is worth looking at two other minor cases within Manipur. The Government of India has refused to offer a truce to the main rebel groups in Manipur, the large Meitei rebel groups (UNLF, PLA, PREPAK, and KYKL). But it has granted official or de facto truces to two sets of groups: KCP splinter factions in Imphal and Kuki rebel groups in Manipur's northern hills. These groups are exceptions that prove the rule: since their truces, they have shown exactly the same organizational problems as the Naga rebel factions.

Breakaway Factions of the KCP

In the 1980s and 1990s, the Kangleipak Communist Party (KCP) was one of the largest and most prominent Meitei rebel groups. Like the PLA, it had a Marxist ideology and recruited largely from the intelligentsia and lower castes. By the mid-2000s, it had nearly collapsed as a functional organization, degraded by years of counterinsurgency. Its soldiers were deserting en masse, and its leadership had fled into the countryside. But rather than continuing to pursue these KCP militants, the government offered these deserting militants an informal truce. The government allowed these rebels to incorporate into breakaway factions and permitted them to carry weapons, recruit, and extort locals. These factions are not pro-government militias: the government agreed to mutual non-aggression but did not require them to take on any further duties. This offer is somewhat different from the truces described in previous chapters. It was offered only to specific rebel factions rather than offered indiscriminately to all groups in a conflict. Moreover, it was likely offered specifically because the KCP was collapsing and specifically intended to sow discord among rebel groups. Nevertheless, the agreement looks a great deal like a truce in miniature, stopping government-rebel violence but not resolving the conflict. As a result, it serves as a not-unreasonable counterfactual for what Meitei rebel groups might look like in truce.

Table 5.6: Comparing KCP Factions from Other Meitei Groups

Question: Do the KCP factions have more, less, or about the same amount of problems with soldier misbehavior as other Meitei groups?

	More	Same	Less	NR
Meitei Interviewees	9	0	0	0

Question: Do the KCP factions have more, less, or about the same amount of recruits who join for the wrong reasons as other Meitei groups?

	More	Same	Less	NR
Meitei Interviewees	9	0	0	0

These KCP factions show just how damaging truces can be to rebel discipline and cohesion. Meitei interviewees were absolutely unanimous in their frustration with the structure of KCP splinter groups (Table 5.6). Safe and flush with material resources, these groups are able to recruit large numbers of young men, particularly in the city of Imphal.[46] Interviewees consistently described KCP soldiers as "materialists," "disaffected," and "thugs," who are "driven by money" and "only want to hold a gun and steal from people." When asked, they repeatedly emphasized that even effective leaders would not be able to keep the militias' soldiers in line. These groups splinter and disappear so frequently that even scholars and journalists do not bother keeping track of them.[47] These groups are thoroughly unprepared for any violent activity, and have drawn in recruits who are completely uninterested in doing so.

Rebels in the Kuki Hills

Although the ethnic Meitei independence movement has long dominated Manipur politics, the state is also home to one other conflict: the Kuki Hills conflict. Ethnic Kuki rebel organizations first mobilized in the 1990s to protest incursions by government forces and by Naga rebels and to demand a separate state for the Kuki Hills. Aside from extended clashes with paramilitary forces in 1997, Kuki rebels have posed few problems for the government, and the government has never

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[46]Author interviews (M2, M3, M4, M5), Imphal, August 2016
[47]Author interviews (M2, M3, M4, M5, M6, M7, M8), Imphal, August 2016

seriously considered statehood for Kukis. However, the government has few interests in day-to-day control of the hills, so in 2005 the government offered a Suspension of Operations agreement. This truce agreement, formally signed in 2008, looks a great deal like the Naga ceasefires and others in the Northeast. Kuki rebels operate bases, patrol territory, and recruit openly in exchange for promises not to attack government forces. The Kuki rebel movement is much smaller and weaker than the Meitei movement. Yet it is hard not to compare them: Kuki rebel leaders largely live in Imphal and operate in large swathes of the state for which Meitei groups are demanding independence.[48]

As a result of their truce agreement with the government, Kuki rebel organizations have experienced the same changes in discipline and cohesion as Naga rebels have. Before the 2005 ceasefires, Kuki rebel groups tended to be small, highly-committed, and well-behaved. Over the next decade, Kuki rebels experienced changes on all of these dimensions. Many ethnic Kukis who were previously concerned about safety instead began joining in large numbers because they "think only of the stipend."[49] There have also been increasing issues with inter-group defection and local competition since the truce as rebel groups try to offer greater material rewards than their rivals.[50] As a result, Kuki rebels still see large differences in the motivations and conduct of these pre- and post-ceasefire recruits. While pre-ceasefire recruits "see themselves as real soldiers," working hard for the movement, more recent recruits see military service as an easy way to make money.[51] At times, organizations in truce hardly resemble rebel groups. In one case, I visited a Kuki rebel camp, where a few dozen soldiers were in the middle of a training session. When these soldiers spotted me for the first time, they all rushed off their posts to take selfies with me, ignoring the orders of their frustrated commanding officer. It was not a promising sign for battle-readiness.

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[48] Author interview with Kuki rebel leader (KU1), Imphal, August 2016

[49] These new recruits included, as noted before, the # 2 in a Kuki rebel group who admitted he "never" would have joined before the ceasefire because of the danger. Author interview (KU1), Imphal, August 2016

[50] Author interviews with Kuki rebels (KU2, KC2), Manipur, August 2016

[51] Author interviews with Kuki rebel officers (KU1, KU2), Manipur, August 2016

Chapter 6

Rebel Organizations in Sri Lanka

When the Government of Sri Lanka offered a formal ceasefire to the LTTE in December 2001, the Tigers were rightly considered one of the world's most capable and competent rebel groups. What started as a small band of guerrillas in Jaffna in the late 1970s had developed into 5,000-strong army regularly launching attacks on government bases and on civilian targets in the capital Colombo. These successes came in no small part due to intense discipline and unified control of the once-fractious Tamil militant movement under the Tigers' founder, V. Prabhakaran. Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, the LTTE gradually grew larger, stronger, and more unified, striking greater victories against the government.

In this chapter, I trace how a years-long truce, beginning late 2001 and breaking down from 2004 to 2007, shaped the LTTE and its separatist war with the conflict. As in the previous chapter, I follow changes in the types of recruits who joined the movement (Hypothesis 3), in recruitment competition between intra-movement rivals (Hypothesis 4), and in soldier behavior in the community and on the battlefield (Hypotheses 5-6). Unlike Northeast India, however, Sri Lanka offers a chance to witness what happens when a rebel organization goes back to war after a prolonged truce. Over the course of 2008 and early 2009, the Tigers collapsed a downward spiral of desertion, defection, and defeat. I argue that this decline was, at least in part, a result of organizational

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changes during the ceasefire.

Sri Lanka's civil war is an important counterpoint to the conflicts in Northeast India because it had so little in common. The LTTE was powerful, the fighting was intense, and the war carried enormous stakes for the government. As a result, the Sri Lankan war is the South Asian case which looks like many of the cases where truces were pressured by international actors, as in Kosovo and Chechnya. In addition, as I describe below, the LTTE is a particularly hard case for the theory. The LTTE had strong disciplinary systems, complete control of the Tamil insurgency, and a distinctive and powerful ideological brand. These features mean that Sri Lanka offers no comparable movement for between-movement comparisons. But by tracking how the LTTE functioned over time, it is possible to see how truce affected the organization. This comparison is reasonable in part because the timing of the ceasefire was so haphazard, as described in Chapter 2.

This chapter presents evidence from 20 in-depth interviews in Sri Lanka with former rebels and civilians who interacted closely with the conflict. The interviewees include seven former rebels both inside and outside of the LTTE as well as activists, journalists, and shopkeepers who lived in LTTE-controlled areas. I supplement this with prior research on the Tigers: both ethnographic work from academics and reports from Tamil-run NGOs. As in Northeast India, the vast majority of these interviewees were supportive of the cause of Tamil independence but had a wide variety of opinions about specific leaders and organizations. And as in Northeast India, I asked a set of systematic questions to get comparable answers across interviews which track organizational changes over time (listed in Appendix D).

6.1 Alternative Strategies for Rebel Organizations

If any rebel organization should have been able to survive and thrive during a long-term truce, it was the LTTE. By 2001, the Tigers had built robust systems to maintain control and cohesion, and it showed. LTTE cadres refrained from drinking, smoking, gambling, fighting, extortion, and,

before 1984, from marriage.[1] These systems generally took two forms: systems for punishing misbehavior and systems for inculcating a shared ideology.

First and foremost, the LTTE had an extraordinary set of processes for monitoring and punishing soldier disobedience.[2] LTTE officers wielded a wide array of punishments for theft, abuse, and desertion: reassignment, pay cuts, hard labor, sleep deprivation, solitary confinement, torture, and execution.[3] Prabhakaran and his deputies were known to administer these punishments incredibly impartially. Even Prabhakaran's closest advisor and LTTE's general secretary, Uma Maheswaran, was expelled from the LTTE when he married against LTTE regulations.[4] To ensure that discipline was kept, Prabhakaran built an incredibly complex system of monitoring and regulation of his cadres. Cadres were organized into small units with overlapping reporting responsibilities so that no action could be taken without notice. A special investigative division was tasked with granting license and reviewing every civilian execution so that a cadre could wield lethal force on the community only with permission from the senior leadership.[5] Cadres were typically deployed in their home areas so that civilians could report directly to LTTE officers on the behavior of their soldiers.[6] These disciplinary systems continued to work efficiently even after the truce. If anything, the LTTE's punishment and monitoring became easier to organize in ceasefire.[7] One report on LTTE recruiting activities noted, "Now that the LTTE is free to roam anywhere, escapees running into them are mercilessly thrashed."[8]

Second, the LTTE had a deeply-ingrained culture of obedience and sacrifice. LTTE recruits were put through months of training which centered on following orders at all costs. Soldiers had

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[1]Author interviews with former LTTE cadres (TC2, TC4, TC5) and civilian observers (TC1, TA1, TA2, TA5, TA8, TA10, TA11), Sri Lanka, March-April 2017

[2]The descriptions here strongly resemble the "army" model of armed organizations in Gutierrez Sanin and Giustozzi (2010)

[3]Author interviews with LTTE cadres (TC2, TC3, TC4, TC5, TC6) and civilian observers (TA7, TA8, TA10), Sri Lanka, March-April 2017

[4]Author interview with former EPRLF militants (TC1), Colombo, March 2017

[5]Author interview with former LTTE cadres (TC2, TC4), Vavuniya, April 2017

[6]Author interview with Tamil activist (TA8), Vavuniya, March 2017

[7]As Shapiro (2015) suggests.

[8]UTHR (2002)

to be at constant attention 24 hours a day – drill officers regularly interrupted sleep and bathing to test cadres' instinctive obedience. By the time cadres were finished with training, "if cadres were told to dance, they would dance. If they were told to plant a tree over here, they would not ask, 'why not over there?'"[9] This training was coupled with a deeply-ingrained culture of sacrifice that described by several interviewees as a "religion." As one Tamil NGO put it,

> As an institution the LTTE's existence hinges on celebration of personal sacrifice to the Leader's will and military glory, as means the imposition of absolute control. The deaths of thousands of young and children has been honoured as martyrdom, and peddled as a stimulant to excite the nationalist ego.[10]

In LTTE territory, martyrs were honored with monuments, film reels, and holidays.[11] And this commitment was singularly invested in the LTTE's larger-than-life leader, Prabhakaran. Prabhakaran wielded such sway over his supporters that on several occasions subordinates who had failed the leader committed suicide in shame at his request.[12]

As a result, the LTTE is a very hard case for truces degrading rebel organizations. These disciplinary systems and ideological rituals are explicitly designed to coerce and cajole low-commitment recruits into obeying orders — or at very least to send the message that opportunists have little to gain by joining. Even if a truce makes life easier on rebel soldiers, these systems should prevent an influx of disobedient recruits. Therefore, any decline of the LTTE's discipline after 2001 would be both surprising and strong evidence for the theory.

As I show moving forward, the LTTE's organizational control ultimately did fail in the end. But in the short run, these systems masked signs of organizational rot. Many civilians, who sometimes had few interactions with LTTE soldiers, reported seeing no substantial changes in their behavior or commitment. But LTTE cadres, with a view under the surface, saw an influx of new, selfish,

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[9] Author interview with former LTTE cadre (TC6), Kilinochchi, April 2017
[10] UTHR (2005)
[11] Author interviews with Tamil activists and politicians (TA8, TA12, TC1), Sri Lanka, March-April 2017
[12] UTHR (2005)

lazy recruits who would do only the bare minimum. As long as disciplinary and indoctrination systems stood strong, these opportunists made an effort to appear to be following orders.[13] But when the conflict restarted and the LTTE began to lose support and strength, soldiers were called on for real sacrifices and these systems lost much of their credibility. Soldiers could steal or extort knowing that their bosses had bigger concerns. They could desert whenever they faced danger, knowing that the Tigers may not endure long enough to enforce the rules. The existence of such effective monitoring and indoctrination systems complicates the theory somewhat. It suggests that these systems can keep small indiscipline in check but do little to stop wholesale organizational collapse in wartime. This means, in part, that some organizations may show little effect during a truce but suffer when a conflict resumes afterward.

6.2   Changing Membership

By 2001, years of fighting had made the LTTE's ranks lean but strong. They fielded just 6,000 front-line soldiers compared to the 90,000-strong Sri Lankan Army, but these Tigers were widely revered for their commitment. Civilians and former Tigers described the recruits who joined during the 1980s and 1990s as "100% dedicated to the nation" and to their "brothers and sisters."[14] This was no surprise: life as a soldier was hard, and the LTTE did little to make it easier. Soldiers frequently survived on meager meals of stale rice and coconut-milk smoothies, sometimes only had one set of clothing, and new recruits had to endure a month of 24/7 physical training in which they were "like slaves."[15]

The ceasefire, however, suddenly made the LTTE much more attractive. In the truce, the LTTE was able to come out of the shadows, reintegrating into the community and gaining control of new development projects in the region. The organization passed on this good fortune to their cadres,

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[13]A problem discussed by Kalyvas (2003) and Christia (2012).
[14]Author interviews (TA6, TC2, TC5), Sri Lanka, March-April 2017
[15]Author interview with former LTTE drill sergeant (TC4), Vavuniya, April 2017

permitting their soldiers to rest, travel, and profit.[16] This new, attractive soldier lifestyle brought a wave of new recruits into the LTTE. Within three years the LTTE's ranks had nearly tripled in size.[17] One LTTE cadre described how during the ceasefire, LTTE officers would ride around in public armed and in fancy new jeeps, making the LTTE look "a bit luxury" and attracting new recruits.[18]

Both long-serving LTTE members and civilians observed a subtle but marked difference between the behavior of these new recruits and the older generations of LTTE soldiers. They frequently described these new recruits as "attracted to the vehicles" or the other new benefits of truce. Although the new recruits followed orders under strict monitoring and punishments, they were not nearly as committed as older soldiers.[19] Blatant civilian abuse, extortion, and theft were still rare, but new cadres "would not take risks" to help their "brothers and sisters."[20] One former LTTE soldier described that when they were engaged in fighting, these "lazy" cadres would "think about their benefit only," remaining safe in their bunkers rather than engaging the enemy when called upon. They would "say that they are fighting, but they talk and do not do anything."[21] Indiscipline among these new recruits, in other words, took the form of subtle lack of effort and sacrifice rather than open defiance.

A parallel process played out in soldier retention during the truce: soldiers stayed in the LTTE for the money, even when they had grown out of their ideological fervor. The most obvious manifestation of this in the LTTE was marriage. Marriage is an important turning point for many soldiers, causing them to reassess their commitment to the movement.[22] One former LTTE cadre described his own transition, saying,

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[16]Author interviews with former soldiers (TC1, TC6) and civilian observers (TA1, TA7), Sri Lanka, March-April 2017

[17]UTHR (2002), Krishnan (2012)

[18]Author interview (TC4), Vavuniya, April 2017

[19]Author interviews with former LTTE cadres (TC4, TC5, TC6) and civilian observers (TA6, TA7, TC1), Sri Lanka, March-April 2017

[20]Author interviews with former LTTE cadre (TC5), Vavuniya, April 2017

[21]Author interview (TC6), Kilinochchi, April 2017

[22]Author interviews with former LTTE cadres (TC4, TC5) and civilian observers (TA1, TA6, TC1)

> Before I was married, I only cared about war. When I got married, I began to worry about my life and my family. When gunfire broke out, I did not want to take risks. I thought about how I might escape if fighting became bad.[23]

Before the ceasefire, LTTE cadres who married outside the LTTE typically left the organization.[24] New husbands rarely wanted to spend their new married life sleeping in a jungle, and frightened parents typically expressly forbade their daughters from marrying LTTE cadres.[25] After the ceasefire, soldiers could stay in the organization while living with their spouses, and parents began to see advantages in marrying into the LTTE. As a result, many older LTTE cadres[26] – several cadres estimate well over half – married during the ceasefire. But unlike prior generations of married cadres, these men remained in uniform.[27] This meant that retention followed the same logic as recruitment. Low-commitment recruits were willing to remain in the organization because of the new material and lifestyle benefits. This meant the LTTE was suddenly full of selfish soldiers threatening to undermine the discipline of the organization.[28]

6.3   Recruitment Competition

The theory also describes how truces enable rival organizations and would-be mutineers to compete over recruits by passing on their new resources and safety. Here again the LTTE would appear to ideally positioned to avoid this organizational erosion. Between 1983 and the early 1990s, the

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[23]Author interview (TC5), Vavuniya, April 2017

[24]The large number of female LTTE cadres meant that marriages between LTTE cadres were common before 2001. Prabhakaran himself married a female LTTE cadre in 1984.

[25]Author interviews (TA7, TA8), Vavuniya, April 2017

[26]LTTE cadres were permitted to marry only if over 28.

[27]Author interviews with former LTTE cadres (TC4, TC5, TC6) and civilian observers (TC1, TA1, TA6, TA8), Sri Lanka, March-April 2017

[28]No Sri Lankan interviewees specifically mentioned having children, but this may play a similar role. FARC explicitly demanded their female soldiers abort babies during their conflict with the government and relented once they signed the 2016 peace deal. As a result, early 2017 saw a massive baby boom in FARC camps. Brodzinsky, Sibylla, "For FARC rebels, peace deal brings baby boom after 52 years of pregnancy ban," The Guardian, 10 Feb 2017, online at https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/feb/10/farc-peace-deal-baby-boom-pregnancy-ban (Accessed 4 May 2017).

LTTE systematically destroyed or out-competed each of its rival Tamil rebel organizations: TELO, PLOTE, and EPRLF. Along the way, Prabhakaran brutally snuffed out two attempted mutinies before they posed any threat to his leadership.

Through this process, Prabhakaran and the LTTE displayed a number of consistent competitive advantages over its competitors. First and most importantly, the LTTE was incredibly effective in battle. Numerous civilians living in the area described how the LTTE "won the confidence of the people" in the 1980s by fearlessly attacking government forces. They demonstrated that they were "hardcore" enough to defend the population and their recruits.[29] The LTTE filmed attacks on government targets and used those films as recruiting propaganda in local schools.[30] By the time he came of age in the 1990s, one former LTTE cadre described that only the LTTE was strong enough to provide protection to him and his community.[31] Second, the LTTE was incredibly brutal with opponents. By 1989 most major figures in the EPRLF, TELO, and PLOTE had fled the country out of fear.[32] This brutality was only enabled by the truce: the LTTE used the ceasefire to brutally crack down on opposition from the EPRLF and other LTTE opponents.[33] Third, the LTTE's discipline enabled it to gain a reputation for moral purity. Many former LTTE members and supporters referred to the LTTE leadership being "of the people" and "rooted in the community," and thus could not be bought off by government bribes.[34]

Just over two years into the ceasefire, however, the LTTE fractured in two. In 2004, Colonel Karuna and the LTTE's Eastern Command suddenly broke away from Prabhakaran and the LTTE's Northern-based leadership. Observers generally agree that the split originated in a personal dispute in 2000. Karuna disobeyed direct orders from Prabhakaran during a battle, and Prabhakaran reassigned him to the less-prestigious Eastern Command.[35] The split itself is not particularly sur-

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[29] Author interviews (TA1, TA2, TA6, TA9, TA11), Jaffna, April 2017

[30] Author interview with Tamil politician (TA3), Colombo, March 2017

[31] Author interview with former LTTE cadre (TC6), Kilinochchi, April 2017

[32] Author interviews (TA1, TA2, TA6, TA9, TA11)

[33] (UTHR, 2005) and Author interview with Tamil activist / professor (TA12), Jaffna, April 2017

[34] Author interviews with former LTTE militants (TC4, TC5) and supporters (TA6, TA8), Vavuniya and Jaffna, April 2017

[35] Author interviews with former cadres (TC3, TC4, TC5) and civilian observers (TA1, TA2, TA3, TA6, TA7, TA10,

Table 6.1: Splits and Mergers in Tamil Eelam

Time Period	*Counterinsurgency*	*Splits and Mergers*
1983-2001	**Open Conflict:** Constant arrests and government offensives	**(1983-1985)** LTTE and TELO grow more rapidly than groups **(1985-1986)** Soldiers abandon other outfits en masse for LTTE **(1987-1989)** Remains of LTTE's competitors propped up by IPKF **(1990-1994)** All other Tamil groups disarm, flee, or join LTTE
2001-2007	**Formal Ceasefire:** almost no violence	**(2004)** Karuna Faction splits from LTTE, crushed by LTTE.
2007-2009	**Open Conflict:** escalating offensives which eventually defeat LTTE	Remaining LTTE remains unified through its defeat in May 2009

prising: on two prior occasions, a prominent member of the LTTE leadership mutinied against Prabhakaran after a personal spat. What is surprising, though, is that Karuna gathered so much support. In each of the previous cases the mutineer failed to rally any support and Prabhakaran immediately had him executed.[36]

Why, then, did more than 6,000 cadres, more than one third of the LTTE's strength, follow Karuna?[37] A number of factors certainly helped. Karuna had a strong reputation as a military leader, having directed many of the LTTE's most successful battles.[38] Karuna was also able to stoke regional tensions between Eastern rank-and-file and the LTTE's Northern leadership.[39]

However, Karuna had one tool that prior mutineers did not: the truce enabled him to gather the material benefits to buy soldiers' loyalty. In 2002 and 2003, the Eastern Command gathered money from taxes and smuggling operations. As tensions escalated with Prabhakaran, Karuna

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A11, A12), Sri Lanka, March-April 2017

[36]Author interview (TA3), Colombo, March 2017

[37]Krishnan (2012)

[38]Author interviews with former cadres (TC3, TC5, TC6) and civilian observers (TA1, TA7, TA10, TA11, TA12), Sri Lanka, March-April 2017

[39]Mukarji (2005), Author interviews with government and civilian observers (TG1, TA2, TA6, TA12) and former LTTE cadre (TC5), Sri Lanka, March-April 2017

offered his soldiers higher wages and more lifestyle perks, cultivating their support for the coming split. Numerous interviewees, both in and out of the LTTE, described this recruitment competition as a "turf battle" between Karuna and Prabhakaran.[40] One Tamil activist and professor remarked that the split "wasn't about ideals. Neither side had any," and that the split was merely between "the warlord of the North and the warlord of the East."[41]

The theory suggests that truces may cause rebel groups to fracture along commitment-based lines: a less-established mutineer may be able to attract low-commitment opportunists but not more committed idealists, who remain with the more-established leaders. Even if the better-reputed group does not lose any high-commitment soldiers in the split, the mobilization of so many opportunists may lead to defection and chaos. Several of these features appear in accounts of the Karuna split. When the split was announced, hundreds of LTTE soldiers from the East fled and joined Prabhakaran's forces. These forces included many of the the Eastern Command's most committed and experienced troops, and they provided Prabhakaran with critical intelligence and manpower.[42] Prabhakaran's Northern Command invaded the East, and Karuna's forces collapsed almost immediately, despite numerical parity and a defensive position. Prabhakaran's forces scored huge victories and Karuna's forces deserted and defected to the government.[43]

Although Prabhakaran's forces weathered the clashes with few losses, the damage was already done. The LTTE's invasion antagonized many supporters in the East and drove thousands of Eastern cadres to flee into government protection. Karuna himself escaped to a military base in Colombo, purportedly hidden in the back seat of an MP's car.[44] Worse than that, Karuna brought with him extensive details on the LTTE's positions and battle strategy, which he largely designed himself. Observers in the government, LTTE, and civil society all identify the split — and Karuna's

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[40] Author interviews with civilians and former cadres (TA3, TA6, TA11, TA12, TC4, TC5, TC6), Sri Lanka, March-April 2017

[41] Author interview (TA12), Jaffna, April 2017

[42] Author interviews with former LTTE officer (TC4) and think-tank member (TA1), Sri Lanka, March-April 2017

[43] Author interviews (TG1, TC5, TA6, TA7), Sri Lanka, March-April 2017

[44] Author interview with former LTTE soldier (TC4), Vavuniya, April 2017

defection in particular — as one of the key factors leading to the eventual defeat of the LTTE.[45]

6.4   Misbehavior in the Community and in Battle

In the final years, the LTTE suffered defeats on the battlefield and its cadres increasingly misbehaved among the population. Interviews in and around the organization suggests that the ceasefire may have played a large role in this process.

Before the ceasefire, even vocal critics of the LTTE expressed awe at the organization's discipline and efficiency when interacting with civilians.[46] When it came to silencing the organization's opponents, LTTE cadres could be brutally effective. A former university professor recounted an incident during the LTTE's occupation of Jaffna in which two students spoke out against the LTTE at a rally. Before the students had even finished speaking, they were arrested by LTTE cadres and turned up dead days later.[47] At the same time, LTTE soldiers were incredibly restrained with supporters. Unauthorized extortion and sexual abuse were incredibly rare if they happened at all.[48] Instead, the LTTE had a strong reputation for enforcing the rule of law in their territory. Several inhabitants of formerly LTTE-controlled areas used the same image – that in the LTTE times a woman with jewelry on could walk alone through the streets at midnight and have nothing to fear from LTTE cadres or the civilians they patrolled.[49] Nearly all of these interviewees agreed that crime and violence are substantially higher now under government control than it was under LTTE control during the war.

If anything, the LTTE showed even stronger discipline on the battlefield. Despite the Sri Lanka Army's vastly superior numbers and commitment to counterinsurgency, the LTTE fought them to a stalemate during the 1990s. The LTTE scored important victories, including taking and retaking

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[45]See Obayashi (2014), Author interviews (TG1, TC5, TA6, TA7), Sri Lanka, March-April 2017

[46]Author interviews (TC1, TA2, TA3, TA6, TA10, TA11, TA12), Sri Lanka, March-April 2017

[47]Author interview (TA12), Jaffna, April 2017

[48]Mampilly (2011) and Wood (2009) both document the LTTE's incredibly low rates of abuse.

[49]Author interviews (TA8, TA10), Vavuniya, March-April 2017

the critical military base at Elephant Pass. By the end of the 1990s, the LTTE was killing nearly one government soldier for every cadre they lost.[50] In the process, LTTE cadres demonstrated incredible resiliency and cohesion. One civilian observer recounted watching an LTTE attack on a police station when the LTTE first invaded Vavuniya in 1990. Twenty soldiers stood in a line in front of the police station for nearly ten minutes, unwavering despite a volley of gunfire, waiting for their commander's order to attack.[51]

Yet in the closing stages of the conflict, the LTTE appeared to be a very different organization. Interviewees nearly universally agreed that the LTTE had massive issues during the latter stages of the war with controlling soldiers. LTTE cadres stopped enforcing the rule of law in their communities and began abusing civilians at will. LTTE-held areas saw a rash of theft, abuse, and unauthorized extortion from cadres and civilians alike.[52] The results were even more dramatic in battle. Nearly every interviewee described their surprise at the mass desertions of LTTE soldiers during 2008 and 2009. The LTTE repeatedly lost engagements with the government as their forces disappeared into the forest or defected to government forces.[53] The government, which had been mired in stalemate for a decade before the ceasefire, swept across the LTTE's territory in just 18 months. Between late 2007 and mid 2009, government forces killed four LTTE cadres for every soldier they lost. By June 2009 government forces had captured or killed nearly every remaining member of the LTTE, including its entire senior leadership.[54]

If the major signs of organizational collapse did not manifest until the conflict resumed, why should we attribute them to the influx of low-commitment recruits in the early years of ceasefire? Certainly recruitment patterns were not the only difference between the 2007-2009 campaigns and past periods of violence. The government took a much more aggressive approach to the Tigers dur-

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[50]UCDP Events Data (Sundberg and Melander, 2013)

[51]Author interview with Tamil community leader (TA10), Vavuniya, April 2017

[52]Author interviews with civilians and former LTTE cadres (TA5, TA6, TA7, TA11, TA12, TC2, TC3, TC4, TC5), Sri Lanka, March-April 2017

[53]Emphasized particularly in author interviews with former LTTE cadres (TC2, TC3, TC4) and civilian observers (TA2, TA3), Sri Lanka, March-April 2017

[54]Author interviews with former LTTE cadres (TC2, TC3, TC4, TC6) and Tamil politician (TA6), Sri Lanka, March-April 2017

Table 6.2: Change over Time in Soldier Misbehavior

Question: Over the last ten years of the war [1999-2009], did misbehavior in the LTTE increase, decrease, or stay about the same? [follow up] When did this change happen?

	Increased (2001-2007)	Increased (2008-09)	Decreased / Same	NR
Former Cadres	6	1	0	0
Civilians	4	5	0	4

ing this period, the Tigers' social ties were damaged by the 2005 tsunami and subsequent recovery, and Karuna supplied the government with extensive inside information on the LTTE.[55] However, the case offers at least two major clues that ceasefire-era recruitment played a substantial role in this organizational change.

The first is that many of the Tigers who joined before the ceasefire remained loyal throughout the war's closing stages. Former cadres insisted that the vast majority of those deserting or defecting were new recruits.[56] Even as the LTTE was devastated and pinned between government forces in Mullativu in May-June 2009, a large number of long-time LTTE fighters stood strong around Prabhakaran.[57] As government forces closed in, Prabhakaran purportedly had to command his soldiers to escape into the forest to save themselves, and even then many remained at their leader's side.[58]

Second, those closest to the inner-workings of the LTTE noticed a decline in discipline long before the conflict resumed in full in 2007. Table 6.2 shows this pattern clearly. The civilians who had little day-to-day interactions with the LTTE only saw the organization's changes after the ceasefire broke down. But nearly all of the former LTTE cadres and civilians who were close to LTTE cadres said that misbehavior started increasing during the early days of the ceasefire. During this period, cadres recounted seeing an uptick in subtle signs of indiscipline from the cadres who

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[55]Mampilly (2009), Obayashi (2014)

[56]Author interviews with former LTTE cadres (TC2, TC3, TC4, TC6), Sri Lanka, April 2017

[57]Some of the LTTE's leadership is rumored to have defected to government forces, but the government maintains that they were killed in action. Author interview with think-tank researcher (TA3), Colombo, March 2017

[58]Author interviews with former LTTE cadres (TC2, TC3, TC4, TC6) and Tamil politician (TA6), Sri Lanka, March-April 2017

joined during the truce. When these new cadres could get away with it, they stole from fellow soldiers, mistreated civilians, accepted bribes, and shirked their fighting duties.[59]

The LTTE's strong disciplinary systems, however, prevented most obvious signs of indiscipline during the truce. Even low-commitment recruits feared being caught and punished, which prevented most flagrant misbehavior. As a result, only those with a deep knowledge of the organization noticed this increase in misbehavior. As the government began to encroach on LTTE territory and the LTTE began to lose battles, however, these systems lost much of their power.[60] Low-commitment soldiers who joined for the money became more scared of government forces than their officers' threats.[61] Officers became more concerned with danger than with monitoring their soldiers' treatment of civilians. Soldiers could more easily escape LTTE-controlled territory and flee home. Most importantly, soldiers began believing that the LTTE may not survive long enough to enforce punishments.[62] The result was a downward spiral for the LTTE: desertions led to battlefield defeats, and defeats led to desertions.

A number of observers, both supporters and critics of the LTTE, argued that this organizational chaos played a major role in the organization's rapid defeat over the first half of 2009. A former LTTE cadre said that the LTTE lost the war because the soldiers recruited since 2001 "lacked team spirit."[63] A Tamil civil society leader described the defeat in 2009 as "not a military failure, but a failure of manpower."[64] One former EPRLF militant remarked, "the government didn't win the war in battle. They won the war with ceasefire."[65]

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[59] Author interviews (TC2, TC4, TC5, TC6), Sri Lanka, April 2017

[60] These processes look a great deal like the ones Shapiro (2015) describes.

[61] Author interviews (TA2, TC1, TC3, TC4, TC5, TC6), Sri Lanka, March-April 2017

[62] Author interviews with LTTE cadres (TC2, TC4, TC6) and civilian observers (TA11, TA12), Sri Lanka, March-April 2017

[63] Author interview (TC6), Kilinochchi, April 2017

[64] Author interview (TA7), Jaffna, March 2017

[65] Author interview (TC1), Colombo, March 2017

6.5 Forced Recruitment

The LTTE's collapse also includes one other factor worth discussing: forced recruitment. While the theory explicitly is about voluntary recruitment, during its decline the LTTE extensively conscripted civilians into service. However, two elements of the LTTE's use of forced recruitment are relevant to the theory.

First, the LTTE's forced recruits generally fought and operated very ineffectively. Like recruiting under ceasefire, forced recruiting does not make use of a natural wage/lifestyle screening to sort recruits by motives. If soldiers join only out of fear, they are unlikely to make sacrifices for the organizations, no matter how hard their superiors coerce and cajole.[66] Interviewees inside and outside of the LTTE went out of their way to emphasize how unreliable conscripts were, both in battle and in the community. When volunteers arrived to an Eastern Command base in 2002, a frustrated former volunteer warned them about the conscripts' behavior and exclaimed, "Why on earth did you come here? You don't know the situation now. It is no longer a pure and virtuous movement."[67] When Prabhakaran's Northern Command attacked Karuna's largely conscripted Eastern Command in 2005, Karuna's conscripts melted almost immediately.[68] In the late stages of the war, forced recruits were the first to desert the LTTE in battle. Cadres complained that conscripts fled as soon as they had the chance, "were not good to fight," and "only thought about going back to their families."[69] This poor behavior demonstrates the limits of disciplinary systems and political education among otherwise low-commitment recruits. Conscripts went through the same training as volunteers and were subject to the same punishment system, yet they still behaved poorly.[70]

Second, the LTTE chose to recruit forcibly only when the truce had hobbled their ability to

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[66] For other cases, see Eck (2014), Beber and Blattman (2013), and Oppenheim et al. (2015)

[67] (UTHR, 2002)

[68] Mukarji (2005), Krishnan (2012)

[69] Author interviews with former LTTE cadres (TC3, TC4, TC5) and civilian observers (TA2, TA6, TA11), Sri Lanka, March-April 2017

[70] Author interview with former LTTE officer (TC3), Vavuniya, April 2017

screen recruits properly. The LTTE recruited forcibly during two periods. Karuna's Eastern Command conscripted from 2001 until Karuna broke from Prabhakaran in 2004, and the main command of the LTTE conscripted in the final years of the war, 2007-2009.[71] Karuna's conscription coincided with his efforts to build a rival force to Prabhakaran. This makes a great deal of sense from the perspective of the theory. If Karuna was accepting any soldiers he could rather than screening them for commitment, then unscreened conscripts were a reasonable complementing strategy. Prabhakaran's conscription, by contrast, came in the closing stages of the war. By this point, the LTTE was desperate for new recruits of any kind and conscripted local youth knowing they were unlikely to fight effectively.[72]

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[71]UTHR (2005), UTHR (2008)

[72]Author interviews with civilians and former LTTE cadres (TA2, TA6, TA11, TC3, TC4), Sri Lanka, March-April 2017

Chapter 7

Cross-National Evidence

Most of the effects that truces have on rebel organizations are difficult to detect from the outside: an influx of low-commitment recruits, local recruitment competition, and growing indiscipline. But the experiences of Northeast India and Sri Lanka show that truces can have some extremely dramatic effects as well. Rebel groups can fracture into competing organizations, abuse civilians, and struggle on the battlefield — all of which can be observed even in cross-national event data. These cross-national patterns demonstrate that the effects observed in Northeast India and Sri Lanka are not unique but a general pattern.

The theory and cases suggest three organizational effects which should be observable even in cross-national data. First, Hypothesis 4 predicts that truces should make rebel groups more prone to splinter into competing factions. In both Northeast India and Sri Lanka, truces provided would-be mutineers with the material resources to mobilize soldiers that they otherwise were unable to. In these cases, mutineers were able to mobilize because the current leaders maintained such high standards in spite of newfound safety and plenty. When leaders demanded their soldiers demonstrate their commitment by fighting for few material rewards, rivals slipped in and offered soldiers greater material benefits for defecting, thus dividing the movement.

Second, Hypothesis 5 predicts that rebel soldiers should be more likely to kill civilians. With

many new, low-commitment recruits joining rebel groups, rebel leaders should struggle to prevent their soldiers from committing unauthorized extortion and civilian abuse. The most obvious and reliable indicator of civilian abuse is rebel one-sided violence against civilians — that is, the number of civilians killed in interactions with rebels. While soldier misbehavior is not the only reason that rebels kill civilians, it is the most obvious signal that rebel leaders lack control of their recruits.[1] Therefore, rebel organizations should kill civilians more often in a truce than after.

Third, Hypothesis 6 predicts that rebels should become weaker on the battlefield during a truce, even though they grow larger. This was very dramatically demonstrated in Sri Lanka. Before the 2001 ceasefire, the LTTE survived two decades of clashes and performed quite well, winning battles and killing thousands of government soldiers. When they returned to war after six years of truce, the LTTE collapsed completely in less than two years, with thousands of Tigers killed and little damage done to government forces. Outright military defeat is rare, but these effects should appear in comparative death rates in cross-national event data. If rebels are weaker on the battlefield, they should kill fewer government soldiers relative to the number of rebel soldiers who die.

All three of these effects should be somewhat delayed. Recruits may take months or years to fully trust and internalize the implications of truce. Rebel recruiters may take months or years to adjust their behavior and begin competing over these new recruits. More committed, pre-truce recruits may only slowly be replaced by more recent, less committed recruits. Meanwhile, rebel organizations may have extreme incentives in the short run to prevent fragmentation and civilian abuse in order to preserve the truce. Therefore, I use two different cutoffs to measure the effects of truce: immediately after a truce offer and five years later.

In this chapter, I test all three of these hypotheses using cross-national violent events data from conflicts all over the world, from the UCDP's Global Events Dataset.[2] First, I test whether these

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[1]Kalyvas (2006) and others show many strategic uses of violence by rebel groups, which may actually decline if rebel leaders lose control of soldiers. However, Weinstein (2007) and many others demonstrate that one-sided violence is a frequent result of organizational chaos.

[2]Sundberg and Melander (2013)

changes are visible comparing over time in the cases that experienced a truce, before and after the first truce. Second, I bring in data from all separatist conflicts from around the world, accounting for any general trend in conflicts over time.

The results are broadly consistent with the theory. First, more rebel factions tend to be present in clashes with government forces after a truce than before, despite there being many fewer clashes with the government. Second, rebel organizations are more likely to commit one-sided violence against civilians after a truce. Third, despite years of mobilizing freely, rebel groups tend to perform worse on the battlefield after a truce than before it. All three of these effects are strongest after a handful of years, after the effects of truces have begun to filter through the movement. The results also hold up in a number of specifications, providing strong evidence that rebel organizations are weaker and more chaotic after a truce takes effect.

7.1 Organizational Fragmentation

The first major observable implication of truce is rebel fragmentation. Truces enable would-be mutineers to compete over both recruits and current soldiers with newly-available material resources. Therefore, rebel organizations should be more prone to fragment or face newly-formed rivals within their broader rebel movements. We should observe more *rebel factions* on the battlefield within a given conflict after a truce than before.

How do we know, though, when a rebel group is active? The easiest way to tell if a rebel group is active and capable of fighting is if they engage in conflict with government forces. But as Chapter 2 laid out, many rebel groups continue to exist without being in an active conflict, and some without clashing with the government at all.[3] On the other hand, it would be a mistake to assume that a rebel organization remains active just because it has not formally disarmed or broken up. Therefore, I take an approach which splits this difference. For each year in which violent events

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[3]For the sake of my study, it would be easy to effectively select on the dependent variable. Staniland (2012) documents this issue in depth, and Malone (2018) is working on a dataset of pre-conflict rebel groups.

Table 7.1: Yearly Averages of Active Rebel Factions and Fatalities

| | | | Battle Deaths Per Year | | | |
	Factions	Rebel OSV	Gov	Reb	Ratio	N
Truce Cases (Before)	1.32	36	242	415	.368	79
Truce Cases (First 5 Years)	1.36	6	77	79	.494	42
Truce Cases (After 5 Years)	1.81	174	65	193	.253	106
Non-Truce Cases	1.28	30	295	134	.685	432

Observations (N) are conflict-years with any recorded violence between 1989 and 2016. Columns 1-4 are means of each category per year. Column 5 (Ratio) is the proportion of government deaths to all battle deaths. All data from UCDP Events Data (Sundberg and Melander, 2013). Truce cases are the 19 separatist conflicts which experienced a truce between 1990 and 2016 (and thus have pre- and post-truce years in the dataset). Truce cases are tracked from the first truce in the data (and thus not double-counted for each new truce).

are recorded — whether the conflict is counted as *ongoing* by UCDP or not — I use the UCDP events dataset to count up the number of rebel organizations that have been engaged in any violent events. In my regressions, I then control for the overall level of violence (logged battle deaths) because more violent events should, all else equal, involve more rebel factions. This measure is surely an undercount of the rebel factions involved, but controlling for violence should correct the bias from lower levels of violence.

Column 1 of Table 7.1 shows the number of factions per year before and after the first truce in a conflict. Among the 19 separatist conflicts which had a truce during the data — and thus there is pre-truce and post-truce data — there was a dramatic increase in the number of factions present before and after. Before the first truce, an average of 1.32 rebel groups are fighting per year, which is very similar to the number of groups fighting per year in other separatist conflicts. In the first five years after that first truce, battlefield violence dramatically decreases, but the number of factions fighting actually ticks up slightly.[4] As violence rebounds slightly in the long run, the number of

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[4]Note that Table 7.1 only includes the conflict-years with some recorded violence, so the decline is not as dramatic

fighting factions grows substantially. Despite there being far less violence than before the truce, these post-truce years have more than a third more rebel factions actively fighting.

In order to test these effects a little more systematically, I lay out four OLS models in Table 7.2. The first two of these models are similar to the comparisons in Table 7.1, comparing the number of active factions per year before and after a truce. However, these models account for two other issues. First, they account for the overall level of violence (logged battle deaths). As predicted, conflict-years with more violence also tend to include more rebel groups. Second, the models include fixed effects for the conflict. Conflicts that include more rebel groups may be more likely to have some violence occur at all, which could bias the results. Including fixed effects helps account for this selection effect by only comparing within a given conflict.

Even after accounting for both of these effects, however, truces still are associated with a significant and substantial increase in the number of active rebel groups. Compared to the years before a truce, the years after a truce involve about 0.3 more rebel groups, an increase of about 25%.

Models 3 and 4, meanwhile, compare these truce cases to other separatist conflicts around the world. Rebel movements in general tend to fragment over time. This presents an alternative interpretation for the results: maybe truces themselves do not cause fragmentation but merely allow rebel movements to survive long enough to fragment. To account for this effect and differentiate between these interpretations, I include other separatist conflicts in the regression and control for the year of conflict. The results suggest that the over time trend does indeed play a role: older conflicts on average had more active rebel factions. However, even after accounting for this effect, truces were associated with a significant (if slightly smaller) increase in the number of active rebel factions.

This is all consistent with Hypothesis 4's claim that truces cause rebel movements to fragment into rival factions. All else equal, truces are associated with an increase in the number of rebel

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as we might expect.

Table 7.2: Effect of Truce on Rebel Fragmentation

	Dependent variable:			
	No. of Rebel Factions in Combat			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
After Truce	0.310**		0.161*	
	(0.120)		(0.096)	
> 5 Years After Truce		0.271***		0.174**
		(0.103)		(0.088)
Log Battle Deaths	0.139***	0.106***	0.099***	0.092***
	(0.031)	(0.028)	(0.014)	(0.014)
Year of Conflict			0.009***	0.008**
			(0.003)	(0.003)
Conflict FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
N (Conflict-Years)	227	227	726	726
N (Conflicts)	19	19	63	63

Note: $^{*}p<0.1$; $^{**}p<0.05$; $^{***}p<0.01$

OLS with conflict fixed effects. The unit of analysis is conflict-years in which there was any violent events (and thus a chance for a rebel faction to appear). Models 1-2 include the 19 separatist conflicts that experienced both pre- and post-ceasefire periods in the dataset (1989-2016), and Models 3-4 add in all other separatist conflicts.

factions competing over recruits and legitimacy within a movement. As past work shows, fragmentation strengthens the government's hand because rival factions defect on the battlefield, spoil negotiations, and compete for government concessions.

7.2 Violence Against Civilians

The second major observable effect of truces surrounds violence against civilians. In truce, rebel organizations should lose control of their soldiers, particularly the soldiers they recruited during the truce who are attracted by material benefits and safety. This should result in more civilian abuse and extortion. Some of the subtler forms of civilian abuse may be difficult to detect, but killings of civilians are tracked fairly consistently in conflicts around the world. When rebel soldiers disobey orders with civilians, stealing and settling personal scores, they are more prone to kill civilians who get in their way. Therefore, we should see an uptick in incidents in which rebel soldiers kill civilians.

The key outcome, then, is civilian deaths from *rebel one-sided violence*, which should increase after a truce. Here again UCDP events data provides an opportunity to witness these trends, whether in or out of open conflict. I counted up the civilian deaths in any events coded as occurring between rebels and civilians (i.e. not including "collateral" civilians killed in clashes between government and rebel forces). While this certainly results in an undercount of rebel violence against civilians — excluding non-fatal events — it is still a strong indicator of civilian abuse over time.

In Column 2 of Table 7.1, I laid out the per-year averages of civilian deaths before and after a truce. Before they were offered a truce, the 19 truce cases had very similar levels of civilian violence as other separatist conflicts, averaging about 30 civilians per year killed by rebels. Surprisingly, the first few years of ceasefire show a dramatic drop in civilian deaths, down to just an average of just 6 recorded civilian deaths. Within a few years, though, the trend reverses completely, shooting up to an average of 174 civilians killed per year after the fifth year of truce. After

just a few years of truce, rebels kill five times as many civilians per year as they do before the truce. Put another way, before the truce these rebel groups killed seven government soldiers for every civilian they killed. More than five years after truce, they killed three civilians for every government soldier.

Table 7.3 tests these results more systematically. Rebel OSV numbers are events, so I use a zero-inflated negative binomial model to measure the frequency of violence against civilians.[5] As with the rebel fragmentation data, the primary purpose of Models 1 and 2 is to add in conflict-level fixed effects.[6] These fixed effects adjust for overall differences in violence between movements, allowing the comparisons to be purely over time, comparing before and after a movement. This helps to account for any selection effects that might result from particularly violent movements being overrepresented in the data either before or after a truce.

The regression results in Table 7.4 are dramatic and confirm exactly the trends visible in the raw numbers. All else equal, rebel abuse of civilians increases 60% after a truce — even as battlefield violence falls dramatically. This happens in spite of the substantial decrease in civilian abuse in the years immediately following a truce. After five years of truce, as rebel groups return to fighting and the organizational effects of truce set in, violence rises much higher. The results from Model 2 show that these long-post-truce years involve more than four times as many civilian killings as prior conflict years.

As with rebel fragmentation, I then run two additional models (Models 3 and 4) which bringing in other separatist conflicts' over-time trends for comparison. In general, rebel movements in a conflict tend to abuse civilians more often over time. When accounting for this trend, the effect of truces on rebel violence might actually be negative overall because of the dramatic drop in

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[5]A Poisson model is inappropriate because the outcome, government deaths, is overdispersed. This is because government deaths tend to be clumped together in years with more rebel victories.

[6]In this case, I do not control for battlefield violence because it might unfairly discredit truce environments. If truces reduce violence against civilians in part by reducing battlefield violence, this would be counted as a gain by the international community, and perhaps a sign of rebel strength because rebels are reducing violence against civilians with their battlefield violence. However, battlefield violence may influence whether violence is likely to be recorded at all, so I include battlefield violence as a predictor for the first stage (whether there is any violence against civilians at all).

Table 7.3: Effect of Truce on Rebel Violence Against Civilians

	Dependent variable:			
	Rebel OSV			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
After Truce	0.523***		−0.235***	
	(0.023)		(0.027)	
> 5 Years After Truce		1.605***		1.289***
		(0.022)		(0.025)
Year of Conflict			0.064***	0.028***
			(0.001)	(0.001)
Conflict FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
N (Conflict-Years)	227	227	726	726
N (Conflicts)	19	19	63	63

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Zero-inflated negative binomial regression with conflict fixed effects. The unit of analysis is conflict-years in which there was any violent events. Models 1-2 include the 19 separatist conflicts that experienced both pre- and post-ceasefire periods in the dataset (1989-2016), and Models 3-4 add in all other separatist conflicts.

civilian killings in the first five years (Model 3). Accounting for this trend, however, discards one potential effect of truces on civilians: truces keep rebel group alive when they might otherwise collapse. So if longer-lived rebel movements kill more civilians, truces may result in more civilian deaths simply by keeping conflicts going long enough for rebels to abuse civilians more and more over time. In in the long run, however, rebel groups in truce commit much more violence against civilians than would be expected, even when accounting for these effects (Model 4). After the first few years of truce, when there tends to be little violence, new recruits begin to abuse civilians in large enough numbers to show up in the events data. After five years in truce, rebel groups commit well over than three times as much violence against civilians per year as would be expected, even accounting for these factors.

This is generally consistent with the hypothesis (H5) that rebel organizations tend to lose control of their soldiers, and therefore to abuse civilians, during and after a truce. This is not only a human tragedy but a sign of massive organizational failure. Because separatist rebels tend to operate in fairly homogeneous minority regions, they disproportionately kill civilians in their own ethnic group. Groups that kill potential civilian supporters tend to discredit themselves in the community and weaken their position vis-á-vis the government.

7.3 Battlefield Performance

The third observable implication is that rebel movements should perform worse on the battlefield after a truce. Truces help rebel organizations recruit many new soldiers, but many of those soldiers are selfish opportunists who are prone to desert, defect, and disobey. These soldiers actively undermine their organizations on the battlefield, causing casualties and losing battles. Many of these implications — loss of territory, defeats in battles, mass desertion, or complete military defeat — are either not consistently tracked or happen so rarely that it is impossible to systematically compare over time or between cases.

However, there is one measure of battlefield performance that is consistently tracked and happens even during a truce: battle fatalities for rebels and government forces. Even when government and rebel forces are not actively engaged in conflict, they often have minor clashes which are tracked by UCDP events data. If a rebel movement performs worse following a truce offer, then we should expect that the *fatality ratio* should decline. That is, a smaller share of battlefield deaths should be rebels killing government forces and a larger share should be government forces killing rebels. This is a rough indicator of battlefield performance, but it is consistently tracked across cases and should be relatively consistent within a case.

Columns 3 and 4 of Table 7.1 show the per-year averages of government deaths (rebel kills) and rebel deaths (government kills) in their clashes.[7] Among the 19 separatist conflicts which had a truce during the data, there was a notable worsening of battlefield performance from before to after the truce. Before the first truce, rebel forces killed an average of 242 government soldiers per year and lost 415 rebel soldiers. To put this another way, about 37% of fatalities in combat were rebels killing government soldiers. This is notably worse than the yearly averages in other separatist conflicts, where rebels tend to outkill government forces, but it is still not far from parity with government forces. In the first five years after a truce offer, violence declines substantially, but when violence does happen rebel forces continue to perform as well or better. After a few years of truce, however, truces begin to wear on rebel organizations. After five or more years, rebel organizations lose three of their own soldiers for every government soldier they kill. This is consistent with the theory: truces degrade rebel organizations, but only by changing long-run recruitment and control processes.

Testing these hypotheses more systematically, however, gets a little wonky. The outcome of interest is a proportion of an event count: the proportion of battlefield fatalities which were rebel kills, rather than rebel losses. When dealing an outcome like battle deaths, it is typical to treat the data like an event count, using a negative binomial regression. However, we are less interested in

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[7]These averages only include years in which there was violence, so the averages are higher than they would otherwise be after truce offers.

whether or not the rebels killed government forces than whether, given that someone was killed, the killed person was a government soldier. This is typically modeled by using an offset variable — that is, to include the total opportunities for an event as a predictor. In this case, this means using total battlefield deaths as a predictor for government battlefield deaths. If government deaths were a consistent proportion of all deaths — i.e. if rebels killed exactly the same number of government forces for every soldier they lost — then this offset variable would have a coefficient of exactly 1 and all other predictors would have coefficients of 0. I decide not to peg this offset variable at 1 in order to account for the possibility that rebels tend to do better when violence is more or less intense overall.

Just like columns 1-2 in the prior two tables, these regression models help account for two potential biases in the comparisons in Table 7.1. First, as mentioned above, they account for any differences between high-intensity and low-intensity conflicts. If rebels appear to be performing worse in a truce because rebels perform worse in general when the conflict is simmering at a low intensity, then this should be captured by including log battle deaths as a predictor. Second, they help account for differences between conflicts in the overall performance of rebels. I include conflict fixed effects, using only the variation within a conflict to show that the same rebel movements are performing worse after a truce than they performed before. This would help adjust for the selection problem, for example, if conflicts where rebels are stronger are more likely to recur after a truce.

Columns 1-2 of Table 7.3 show the results of the simplest comparisons of this form. Even accounting for these potential sources of bias, rebel forces tend to perform significantly worse on the battlefield after a truce offer than they do before the truce. The offset variable (log battle deaths) ends up slightly below 1, which suggests that, absent a truce, rebels tend to perform slightly better in low-intensity conflicts. When we account for this effect, the coefficients for truce (whether measured immediately after or 5 years down the road) have a value of around -0.4. This is a huge change: it says that, all else equal, a truce is accompanied by a 30% decrease in the proportion of

Table 7.4: Effect of Truce on Rebel Battlefield Performance

| | Dependent variable: | | | |
| | Log Government Deaths | | | |
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
After Truce	−0.411***		−0.083	
	(0.124)		(0.118)	
> 5 Years after Truce		−0.382***		−0.131
		(0.107)		(0.108)
Log Battle Deaths	0.857***	0.903***	0.926***	0.930***
	(0.036)	(0.033)	(0.019)	(0.019)
Year of Conflict			−0.016***	−0.015***
			(0.004)	(0.004)
Conflict FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
N (Conflict-Years)	227	227	726	726
N (Conflicts)	19	19	63	63

Note:	*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Negative binomial regression with a free-floating offset variable (Log Battle Deaths) and conflict fixed effects. The unit of analysis is conflict-years in which there was any violent events (and thus a chance for government soldiers to be killed). Models 1-2 include the 19 separatist conflicts that experienced both pre- and post-ceasefire periods in the dataset (1989-2016), and Models 3-4 add in all other separatist conflicts.

government deaths among all deaths.

Imagine, for example, that before a truce, government and rebel forces were killing each other at a 1-for-1 rate. If the two sides went back to war after a period of truce, rebel forces would expect to lose two rebel soldiers for every government soldier they kill. This decline in battlefield performance is almost as large as the one the LTTE experienced and which caused their dramatic defeat.

As with the other two dependent variables, I include two other models (Models 3-4) which include conflict-years from other separatist conflicts around the world. This accounts for trends over time over the course of conflicts. Rebel groups tend to do best in the first few years of conflict, so any decline later on may be a result of this. When accounting for this effect in Models 3 and 4, the effect of truce is still negative but no longer statistically significant. The coefficients, rather than implying a 30% decrease in the death proportion, instead imply a 10% decrease. However, while these results lend some reason for caution, but they do not necessarily mean truces have no effect. The results suggest that rebel groups perform poorly in general if the conflict drags on decades. In the absence of truce, conflicts rarely last so long. Truces, then, may still allow governments to extend a conflict long enough that rebel organizations deteriorate.

In general, though, these results are consistent with the theory's predictions. After a truce, rebel organizations tend to perform much worse on the battlefield. When they clash with government forces, they kill fewer government soldiers and lose more of their own. And if they go back to war, it may be disastrous.

All three of these results indicate that the theory applies in cases far different, and far away, from Northeast India or Sri Lanka. When conflicts end in a long-term truce truce, rebel organizations erode into indiscipline and chaos. New recruits drawn by material resources defect to new splinter groups, abuse civilian supporters, and desert and defect in battle. While truces may ini-

tially improve the position of rebel organizations, they suffer over time as they change from the inside. In the long run, rebel movements become more divided internally, less popular in public, and weaker in battle.

Chapter 8

Implications for Scholars and Policymakers

The mere existence of long-term truces in civil conflicts challenges conventional wisdom in a number of ways. Governments should not be able to coexist peacefully with armed, active rebels seeking to break off in an independent state. And even if they could, governments should not want to empower their enemies by permitting rebels to gather resources and followers freely.

Yet long-term truces are surprisingly common and durable, even in the heat of long-running civil conflicts. Since the end of the Cold War, more civil conflicts have ended in long-term truces than in rebel victories or in traditional peace agreements. These truce cases — from Abkhazia to Palestine to Kachin State to Mindanao — have key differences. In many cases the government pulls entirely out of contested areas, but in others the two forces live side-by-side. But the broad outlines of truces look very similar throughout the world. The two sides halt hostilities for years or decades without either side making any policy concessions or officially conceding any territory. Rebels, though, continue to collect new resources and recruit new soldiers, and the government permits them to operate freely. And contrary to common assumptions, this uneasy peace is neither a government ruse, nor a rebel victory, nor a road to disarmament. Only a few have ended in major concessions or demobilization, and most last for more than a decade without a return to fighting. Instead, truces represent the government prioritizing short-run peace over long-term

stakes. Governments grant truces when international actors pressure both sides to halt a conflict (as in Sri Lanka) or when the conflict has very low political and economic stakes for the government (as in Northeast India). Governments silence an annoying conflict in the short run, even though in the long run it may attract new rebel soldiers and empower rebel organizations. However, truces instead weaken rebel organizations in the long run. These effects, and the causal process, reveal a great deal about how rebel recruits decide to join and how rebel organizations control soldiers.

First, truces do attract new rebels to take up arms, but many of these new recruits have the wrong motivations and actively harm their rebel movements. Some high-commitment recruits care primarily about their communities: they join a rebel organization because they believe the organization serves the public good. Others, though, join because they see an opportunity for personal profit or power. These low-commitment recruits, though, are unlikely to sacrifice personal desires for the movement's goals: they will desert, defect, or disobey if it can help them. Truces make life easier and more comfortable for rebel soldiers. As a result, they attract a host of new recruits — no soldier prefers life to be harder or more dangerous — but it disproportionately attracts low-commitment recruits who would otherwise be deterred by danger and deprivation. The experiment with likely rebel recruits in Northeast India showed how dramatic these differences can be. For the high-commitment recruits from ethnic community organizations, material lifestyle and safety were just two factors among many in deciding whether to join a rebel group. For low-commitment recruits in public gathering spots, they were by far the most important motivators. As a result, a truce brings many new recruits but disproportionately attracts selfish opportunists — those that rebel leaders say are most likely to cause behavior problems.

Second, these motivations mean that rebel organizations benefit in the short run but erode into indiscipline and chaos in the long run. Rebel leaders would love to keep wages low and standards high, screening out low-commitment recruits. But rebel leaders always have to worry about rival factions or potential mutineers who use these new material resources to lure away even high-commitment recruits. Rebel organizations, then, are caught between indiscipline and

fragmentation: either they accept in new low-commitment recruits or watch their movement break apart. In truce, rebel groups gather new resources and attract many new recruits, but they also lose battles, territory, and bargaining leverage. In Northeast India, Naga rebels have eroded over twenty years in truce while Meitei rebels have maintained discipline under fire. In Sri Lanka, the LTTE spent the 1980s and 1990s growing stronger only to collapse rapidly into indiscipline and chaos after six years of truce. Worldwide, rebel movements are much more likely to break apart, lose on the battlefield, and abuse civilians after a truce.

These processes have major implications for both scholars and policymakers. First, they inform discussions about peacebuilding: how states and international actors can resolve conflicts and protect civilians. Second, they have implications for conflict: how armed organizations operate and succeed and how states overcome rebel competitors.

8.1 Peacebuilding and Civilian Protection

When a civil conflict arises, international actors and scholars typically view it through a humanitarian lens, asking three questions. First, how can domestic and international actors bring an end to violence for as long as possible? Second, how can they resolve the underlying issues of conflict, disarming rebels and settling the underlying policy issues? Third, how can they protect civilians, whether in peace or conflict? International actors, then, hope to achieve all of these goals by pressuring both sides to halt hostilities and open negotiations. If unsuccessful, they generally work to reduce civilian casualties and empower the most favorable combatants.

Yet cases like Sri Lanka, Georgia, and Lebanon demonstrate that international pressure can stop the fighting without catalyzing meaningful negotiations to resolve the underlying issues. Instead, truces leave both sides intact and policy disagreements unresolved. Rather than historical flukes, these truces represent an underexplored type of conflict ending.

From one perspective, truces offer a promising alternative where peace agreements are difficult

to achieve and preserve. Scholars have long lamented how difficult it is to build an enduring peace out of civil conflict.[1] Peace agreements frequently fall apart, and military victories can invite backlash. If one side must disarm at the end, that side has little guarantee that its rights will be protected. Truces, on the other hand, leave both sides armed and prepared to fight, making them more like international peace agreements than intrastate peace agreements. Moreover, truces are tremendously flexible. Rather than committing to a long-term division of power, rebel and government forces can adjust the deal over time and enforce it with force.[2] Therefore, even in civil conflicts when commitment problems make a peace agreement difficult to negotiate and enforce, two sides may be able to negotiate a durable, self-enforced truce. If offered a choice between open war and a frozen conflict, many international and domestic actors would prefer truce.

On the other hand, truces rarely lead to peace agreements and serve as poor substitutes. Conflicts in Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova, and Serbia have languished for decades in an uncomfortable stalemate with little momentum toward settlement. Of the long-term truces documented in Chapter 2, just four resulted in a long-term settlement. Three of these agreements — Northern Ireland, East Timor, and Kosovo — took a concerted effort from the international community to break the stalemate, and one (Kosovo) is still somewhat contested. The other case (the Bandera Roja in Venezuela) was resolved only with a wholesale regime change at the center. Governments who kick the can of conflict down the road are unlikely to pick it up unless they have an overwhelming reason to do so. Some actors may even prefer frozen conflict to real resolution and work to sabotage any attempts at a peace agreement. The cases of Northeast India and Sri Lanka demonstrated just how attractive truces can be for rebel leaders in the short run, even if it weakens them in the long run. Truces bring safety, comfort, and opportunities for profit. The Nagaland state government receives more than double the per-capita funding of the average Indian state because rebel leaders tax — and sometimes double- and triple-tax — every state project and salary.

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[1] Walter (1997), Fearon (2004), Posen (1993), Fortna (2008)

[2] When the balance of military power shifts but political power is bound up in an inflexible arrangements, it can spark renewed conflict. Daly (2016) documented this in depth on the local level among militias in Colombia.

Instead, while most peace agreements last, especially with international support, most truces end sooner or later in renewed conflict.[3] If truces are a replacement for peace agreements rather than a complement, they look a lot worse by comparison.

The bigger issue, however, is that truces may make conflicts more difficult to resolve peacefully. Maintaining a peace agreement takes an extraordinary effort on behalf of armed leaders on both sides, straining both discipline and cohesion. Individual soldiers may undermine negotiations by killing civilians or government forces at the wrong time in an act of score-settling or opportunism.[4] Internal rivals, meanwhile, may have an explicit incentive to disrupt negotiations with violence, hoping to secure a larger slice of the pie.[5] Truces, however, flood rebel movements with selfish, opportunistic recruits and enable intra-movement rivals to mobilize. As a result, truces make it much more difficult to constrain individual disobedience and strategic spoiling.

But whether armed actors are able to maintain peace or not, truces put civilians at increased risk of exploitation and abuse. Both the cross-national and case work in this book shows that governments can and do end conflicts by offering a truce. That is, they halt or dramatically reduce battlefield violence. But ending battlefield violence does not necessarily protect civilians. This book bolsters a growing scholarly literature showing that armed groups play important roles in politics and society during peacetime.[6] Thanks to the corrosive effects of truce, those roles can be even more chaotic and dangerous than in peacetime. Some of the selfish opportunists who flood into rebel organizations during a truce use their newly bolstered power to steal from civilians, settle scores with old enemies, and abuse civilians. Rebels in Nagaland, once restrained around civilians, have undermined their reputation with rampant extortion of abuse. Cross-national violence data show just how much this impacts civilians. While battlefield fatalities decline dramatically after truces, violence against civilians actually rises in the long run. Compared to pre-truce years, rebel movements are more than three times as likely to kill civilians during and after a truce offer.

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[3]Licklider (1995), Fortna (2008)

[4]Worsnop (2017)

[5]Kydd and Walter (2002), Pischedda (2018)

[6]Arjona (2016),Daly (2016), Staniland (2012), Staniland (2017), Marten (2012), Driscoll (2015)

These are all sobering outcomes for policymakers and scholars looking to resolve conflicts and protect civilians. For international actors, reducing battlefield violence may make conflicts more difficult to resolve. For governments, offering a temporary truce empower bad actors to abuse civilians. For scholars, it emphasizes the importance of investigating and evaluating how truces can be designed to protect civilians and pressure armed actors to the negotiating table.

8.2 Conflict and Statebuilding

More pressingly, though, long-term truces offer insights into how civil conflicts are fought and how states expand sovereignty into remote regions. They challenge the idea that violence is both inevitable and necessary when governments face armed rebel challengers. By highlighting cases where governments have suddenly changed their approaches to rebel competitors, this book exposes that violence can be a strategic choice. By evaluating the effects of these truces on rebel recruitment and organizations, it exposes the sometimes counterintuitive effects of government violence on conflict outcomes and state power.

For scholars, this poses a number of questions about when and why states use violence against rebels. If governments can so dramatically change their approach to conflicts in progress, surely they face many subtler versions of the same decision during the rise and fall of rebel competitors. When a group first appears, they may decide whether to squeeze their operations or give them room to operate. When violence is rising, states may decide whether to escalate or accommodate. When conflict is ongoing, states may choose whether to invest in all-out aggression or take a more restrained approach.

Chapter 2 of this book investigated the causes of truces, but these other decision points pose analogous but separate questions. Nearly every state deals with anti-state armed groups, so where and when does the government crack down and when does it permit them to mobilize?[7] Why, for

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[7]Malone (2018) is working to answer this question by assembling a dataset of pre-conflict anti-state armed groups.

example, did the US government treat the Black Panthers as a nuisance group of citizens when they first mobilized in 1966? Then, three years later, why did the FBI suddenly begin treating them as a criminal organization under its Counterintelligence Program (COINTELPRO), hunting down and killing large swathes of the Panthers' membership?

This also asks why certain conflicts reach certain levels of violence while others do not. Work on conflict typically treats a conflict as either a threshold (sufficient violence or not) or a gradient (a linear scale of violence). Yet as Kalyvas (2006) argued, the causes of a conflict may be entirely separate from the causes of violence within that conflict. This insight has long driven research on violence against civilians,[8] but this book emphasizes the degree to which it is also true of battlefield violence: crackdown and clashes are choices, even when forces are mobilized. This brings urgency to research on why some civil conflicts are more violent than others, and argues that this work should look at it, at least in part, as a strategic decision by the government.[9] It also suggests that works on the causes of conflict should use multiple thresholds in evaluating conflict onset. The factors that predict a conflict reaching one level of violence may not predict it progressing to the next.

For rebels and would-be rebels, this book also demonstrates how fragile armed organizations can be. During a conflict, mobilizing supporters seems to be the insurmountable obstacle for rebel leaders. Rebel leaders spend their time struggling to turn out new soldiers, and scholars spend their time asking how rebels can overcome collective action problems.[10] In Northeast India and Sri Lanka, rebel leaders celebrated the onset of truce, cheering the opportunity to rest and gather new supporters. Rebel leaders in conflict rarely see their disciplinary systems really challenged. If truly low-commitment recruits are deterred by danger and deprivation, it is easy to misattribute soldier loyalty to disciplinary systems, ideological branding, and effective training. But when the threat of government violence wanes, rebel leaders see their systems tested much more forcefully.

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[8]Lyall (2009), Wood (2010), Condra and Shapiro (2012), Eck and Hultman (2007), Lyall, Blair and Imai (2013), Sewall et al. (2007)

[9]Lacina (2006) does an excellent job evaluating some of the structural causes of civil conflict intensity.

[10]Olson (1965), Kalyvas and Kocher (2007), Humphreys and Weinstein (2008), Mueller (2000), Collier (2000), **?**

Disciplinary systems must keep selfish opportunists in line, and ideology must gain the loyalty of non-believers as well as believers. The results, an expected boon eroding the discipline and commitment of an organization, can be as disillusioning for rebel leaders as for their supporters. In one of my interviews, a rebel leader in Nagaland looked back fondly on the pre-truce days, saying that he hoped "when violence comes again, the corrupt will fall away and the believers will still stand."[11]

For states, this book shows that in some cases violence not only is unnecessary to undermine rebel competitors and consolidate territory, but actively counterproductive in doing so. States generally assume that without credible, targeted crackdowns on rebels, rebel organizations will only grow larger and stronger. Yet where governments like those in India and Sri Lanka have suddenly opted out of crackdowns entirely, rebel organizations have eroded into indiscipline and chaos. This was not because the prior counterinsurgency was poorly designed: both governments worked hard to target civilians and protect civilians. Nor was it because violence legitimized rebel groups: rebel ranks swelled in the absence of harsher violence. Instead, it is because rebel leaders depend on some government violence to screen recruits. By allowing rebel organizations to function in peace for extended periods, states can undermine this screening process. Over time, rebels may erode into indiscipline and chaos (as in Northeast India) or be vulnerable in a renewed conflict (as in Sri Lanka).

This highlights the danger of designing state policy without a clear understanding of individual motivations and how they interact. Viewed through the lens of greed or grievance, carefully targeted violence against rebel groups should undermine rebel organizations.[12] Yet the novel recruitment experiments in Chapter 4 demonstrate that these assumptions can mislead theoretical predictions. Greed and grievance both matter to all recruits, but some types of recruits are more sensitive to the former and others to the latter.[13] As long as rebel groups rely on the commitment

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[11]Interview with senior NSCN-U leader (U7), Dimapur, July 2016

[12]Collier (2000); Mueller (2000); Gurr (1970)

[13]See Weinstein (2007) for a fuller description of how this insight shapes the larger greed-grievance debate.

and self-sacrifice of their recruits, it matters who fights, not just how many do. As a result, even subtle changes in the conflict environment can reshape the incentives of recruits and shape the balance of soldiers in a rebel movement. It also challenges the idea that soldiers' motivations are either "rational" or "irrational." Looking at committed rebels mobilizing against a state despite great danger and scarce resources, it is easy to assume that they are unaffected by violence, or driven solely by greed. Yet even idealists can be affected by material benefits and safety, and even selfish individualists may join under the right conditions.

Meanwhile, it demonstrates how seemingly straightforward events can have unexpected effects when filtered through organizational structures. When governments and scholars consider militant organizations, they typically view them as fixed. They ask how strong organization's command structures are, or how states can target key figures in a militant network.[14] Yet government actions also impact the relationships between rebel leaders and rebel soldiers. This is critical because these relationships are already fraught by nature: rebel leaders' interests often clash with those of soldiers and recruits. Crackdowns meant to undermine rebel networks or leadership may actually empower rebel leaders by helping them screen recruits. In particular, this book highlights the important role that recruitment competition from internal rivals plays on this process. Even where rebels seem to have full control of a movement, they are always adjusting behavior to account for intra-movement competitors. Governments, then, need to consider not just how their crackdowns affect rebel leaders, but also how it affects their rivals.

Instead, for states it suggests an alternate way to defeat militant competitors and consolidate outlying territory. Recent research has emphasized that governments frequently tolerate, and even promote, non-state armed groups in their territories.[15] Most scholars and policymakers view this type of arrangement as a sign of weakness, a temporary fix which emboldens warlords to threaten sovereignty in the long run.[16] Others argue that such alliances enable states to gradually, if halt-

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[14]Staniland (2014), Worsnop (2017), Shapiro (2015), Schram (2015), Wood (2010), Wood (2014)
[15]Arjona (2016), Staniland (2012, 2017), Lessing (2015)
[16]Marten (2012)

ingly, centralize power.[17] By showing how these arrangements can undermine rebel organizations, this book makes an even more optimistic case for governments tolerating rebels. Twenty years ago, Nagaland had little connection to the government or the rest of India besides a heavy military presence. Today, the government is more effective in Nagaland than it has been at any time in history. Nationwide projects consistently operate even in the most remote villages, and military forces patrol throughout the state without fear. Meanwhile, the rebel outfits that once threatened government control are far more fractious, less popular, and weaker than they once were.

Yet new territorial control comes with the cost of funding and emboldening non-state armed actors. Nagaland's state government pays regular taxes to at least six different Naga rebel groups. Civilians are safer from strategic kidnappings and indiscriminate government violence, but are increasingly afraid of abuse from disorganized and fractious rebel soldiers. Truce has gradually undermined rebel organizations, but at the cost of local administration and civilian protection. For some governments, this tradeoff may be worth it, especially in remote, underdeveloped, ethnic minority areas. For others, voluntarily surrendering a local monopoly on the use of force may be unacceptable.

Long-term truces in civil conflicts are puzzling but important phenomena. They demonstrate that governments can and do coexist peacefully with rebel organizations: that it is possible to reduce violence without disarming or defeating one side and that battlefield violence is to some degree a strategic choice. They also show that forbearance may undermine rebel organizations even as it swells rebel ranks. When filtered through recruitment competition and individual motivations, even concessions can turn into government victories. While peacebuilders usually advocate truces, it is statebuilders who gain.

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[17]Driscoll (2015), Tilly (1990)

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Appendices

Appendix A

Cross-National Analysis

A.1 All Conflict Endings

Government Victory

Rebels Collapse

Argentina	Leftists	1977
Azerbaijan	Ganja Revolt	1995
Cameroon	UPC	1961
Cameroon	UPC	1984
Chad	Chadian Civil War	2010
China	Taiwanese	1947
China	Tibet	1959
Comoros	Denard	1989
Croatia	Serbs	1995
Cuba	Communists	1953
Cuba	Communists	1965
DR Congo	DRC Civil War	1966
DR Congo	DRC Civil War	1968
Ethiopia	Afars	1977
Ethiopia	Ogaden	1983
France	OAS	1962
Gabon	M'ba	1964
Gambia	NRC	1981

(Continued)

Ghana	Military	1982
Greece	Communists	1949
India	Sikhs	1993
Indonesia	Aceh	1991
Indonesia	Islamists	1961
Indonesia	South Moluccas	1951
Iran	Arabs (Khuzestan)	1980
Iran	Jundallah	2010
Iran	Kurds	1947
Iran	MEK	1981
Iran	MEK	1988
Iraq	Kurds	1989
Kenya	Military	1982
Malaysia	Sulu	2013
Mali	Tuaregs	1964
Morocco	Military	1971
Myanmar (Burma)	Communists	1989
Myanmar (Burma)	Kokang	2009
Nepal	Maoists	1963
Oman	Dhofar Rebellion	1976
Oman	Jebel Akhdar	1959
Pakistan	MQM	1996
Panama	Military	1989
Paraguay	Military	1948
Paraguay	Military	1955
Peru	Socialists	1999
Russia (USSR)	Chechnya	2007
Russia (USSR)	Dagestan	1999
Russia (USSR)	Estonia	1948
Russia (USSR)	Latvia	1946
Russia (USSR)	Lithuania	1948
Russia (USSR)	Ukraine	1948
Somalia	Somalia Civil War	1996
Spain	Basques	2011
Sri Lanka	JVP	1971
Sri Lanka	JVP	1989
Sri Lanka	Tamils	2009
Syria	Islamists	1982
Tajikistan	Islamists	2011
Togo	MTD	1986
Tunisia	Resistance Armee Tunisienne	1980
Uruguay	Socialists	1972
Yemen	North Yemen Civil War	1949

Rebels Disarm for Amnesty

Argentina	Leftists	1963
Djibouti	Afars	2000
DR Congo	Katanga	1962
DR Congo	South Kasai	1962
India	Tripura	1988
India	Tripura	2004
Iran	MEK	2004
Iraq	Kurds	1971
Malaysia	CCO	1973
Malaysia	CPM	1989
Mali	Tuaregs	2008
Myanmar (Burma)	Communists	1953
Niger	Tuareg	1997
Niger	Tuareg	2009
Nigeria	Biafra	1970
Nigeria	Niger Delta	2009
Pakistan	Balochistan	1977
Russia (USSR)	Parliament	1993
Suriname	Maroons	1988
Thailand	Communists	1982
Trinidad & Tobago	Islamists	1990

Rebels Go Into Hiding

Bangladesh	Communists	2009
Cambodia	Khmer Rouge	1986
China	Tibet	1950
China	Uighurs	2008
DR Congo	DRC Civil War	1979
DR Congo	Katanga	2014
Egypt	Islamists	1998
Guatemala	Socialists	1988
Guinea	RFDG	2001
India	Assamese	2010
India	Bodos	2004
India	Kashmir	2006
India	Meiteis	2009
Indonesia	Islamists	1953
Indonesia	Papuans	1969
Indonesia	Papuans	1978
Iran	Kurds	1968
Iran	Kurds	1988
Iran	Kurds	1996
Iran	Kurds	2011
Iraq	Islamists	1985
Iraq	Islamists	1997
Malaysia	CPM	1960
Mauritania	Islamists	2011
Mexico	Chiapas	1997
Myanmar (Burma)	Communists	1979
Myanmar (Burma)	Karen	1992
Philippines	Communists	1954
Russia (USSR)	Chechnya	2000
Saudi Arabia	Qatif Uprising	1979
Spain	Basques	1981
Turkey	Kurds	2000
Turkey	Kurds	2013
Uzbekistan	Islamists	2000
Venezuela	Communists	1963
Yemen	North Yemen Civil War	1983
Yemen	Socialists	1994

Rebel Victories

Rebels Take Power

Afghanistan	Northern Alliance	2002
Argentina	Leftists	1955
Bolivia	Leftists	1946
Bolivia	Leftists	1952
Bolivia	Leftists	1964
Burkina Faso	Popular Front	1987
Cambodia	Khmer Rouge	1975
Cambodia	Khmer Rouge	1979
Central African Rep	CAR Civil War	2003
Chile	Military	1973
China	Chinese Civil War	1949
Congo	Cocoyes, Cobras, Ninjas	1999
Costa Rica	NLA	1948
Cuba	Communists	1959
Ethiopia	Afars	1991
Ethiopia	Tigray	1991
Ghana	Military	1967
Guinea-Bissau	Military	1999
Haiti	FLRN	1994
Iraq	Islamists	1960
Iraq	Islamists	1964
Laos	Pathet Lao	1974
Liberia	Liberian Civil Wars	1980
Liberia	Liberian Civil Wars	1996
Liberia	Liberian Civil Wars	2003
Libya	Libyan Civil War	2011
Nepal	Maoists	2006
Nicaragua	Contra	1979
Paraguay	Military	1989
Romania	Romanian Revolution	1989
Rwanda	Hutu-Tutsi	1994
South Africa	ANC	1994
South Vietnam	Viet Cong	1975
Syria	Islamists	1966
Uganda	Ugandan Civil War	1972
Uganda	Ugandan Civil War	1986
Yemen	North Yemen Civil War	1971
Zimbabwe	Patriotic Front	1979

Rebels Secede

Ethiopia	Eritrea	1991
Indonesia	East Timor	2000
Mauritania	Sahrawis	1979
Pakistan	Bengalis	1971
Russia (USSR)	Armenia	1991
Russia (USSR)	Azerbaijan	1990
Serbia (Yugoslavia)	Croats	1992
Serbia (Yugoslavia)	Slovenia	1991
South Africa	Namibians	1990
Sudan	South Sudan	2005

Peace Deal

Rebels Agree to Disarm for Power-Sharing

Angola	UNITA	1995
Angola	UNITA	2002
Burundi	CNDD	2003
Cambodia	Khmer Rouge	1998
Chad	Chadian Civil War	1993
Congo	Cocoyes, Cobras, Ninjas	1994
Djibouti	Afars	1994
DR Congo	DRC Civil War	2001
DR Congo	DRC Civil War	2008
El Salvador	FMLN	1990
Guatemala	Socialists	1995
Lebanon	Sectarian Conflicts	1958
Lebanon	Sectarian Conflicts	1989
Lesotho	Military	1998
Macedonia	UCK	2001
Madagascar	MONIMA	1972
Mozambique	RENAMO	1993
Nicaragua	Contra	1990
Sierra Leone	RUF	2001
Somalia	Somalia Civil War	2002
Tajikistan	Islamists	1997
Uganda	Ugandan Civil War	1992

Rebels Disarm for Autonomy

Bangladesh	Chittagong Hills	1997
Bosnia Herzegovina	Bosnian Civil War	1995
India	Mizos	1986
Indonesia	Aceh	2005
Mali	Tuaregs	1996
Mali	Tuaregs	2015
Papua New Guinea	Bougainville	1998
Sudan	South Sudan	1972

Long-Term Truces

<div align="center">No Concessions or Disarmament</div>

Azerbaijan	Nagorno-Karabakh	1994
Comoros	Anjouan	1997
Georgia	Abkhazia	1993
Georgia	Abkhazia	2008
Georgia	South Ossetia	1992
Georgia	South Ossetia	2004
Georgia	South Ossetia	2008
India	Garos	2004
India	Kukis	2008
India	Nagas	1969
India	Nagas	1997
Indonesia	East Timor	1989
Israel	Palestinians	1994
Israel	Palestinians	2009
Israel	Palestinians	2014
Ivory Coast	New Forces	2004
Lebanon	Sectarian Conflicts	1976
Moldova	Transnistria	1992
Morocco	Sahrewis	1991
Myanmar (Burma)	Kachin	1989
Myanmar (Burma)	Kokang	1989
Myanmar (Burma)	Mon	1995
Myanmar (Burma)	Nagas	2010
Myanmar (Burma)	Palaung	1991
Myanmar (Burma)	Shan	1988
Myanmar (Burma)	Wa	1989
Philippines	Communists	1992
Philippines	Moros	1989
Russia (USSR)	Chechnya	1996
Senegal	Casamance	2002
Serbia (Yugoslavia)	Kosovo	1999
Somalia	Somalia Civil War	1991
Sri Lanka	Tamils	2001
United Kingdom	Northern Irish	1994
Venezuela	Communists	1994

A.2   Analysis: Cause of Truce

Model A1: Conflict Dynamics

	Relative to Government Victory:		
	Truce	Peace Deal	Reb Victory
Log Battle Deaths	0.027	0.263**	0.283***
	(0.104)	(0.110)	(0.094)
Rebel Strength	0.239	0.731***	1.124***
	(0.243)	(0.236)	(0.201)
> 1 Rebel Group	−0.248	0.026	−0.225
	(0.504)	(0.552)	(0.507)

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01
Multinomial logit. Controls: Ending Year and Log Duration.

Model A2: Domestic Context

	Relative to Government Victory:		
	Truce	Peace Deal	Reb Victory
Sons of Soil	1.978***	−1.005**	−2.902***
	(0.263)	(0.509)	(0.033)
Separatist, Non-SOS	2.380***	−1.195***	0.039
	(0.241)	(0.099)	(0.433)

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01
Multinomial logit. Controls: Ending Year and Log Duration.

Model A3: International Context

	Relative to Government Victory:		
	Truce	Peace Deal	Reb Victory
Foreign Involvement	0.714	2.244***	0.313
	(0.480)	(0.102)	(0.369)
Ending Post-1988	3.261***	1.867***	0.461
	(0.113)	(0.581)	(0.353)

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01
Multinomial logit. Controls: Ending Year and Log Duration.

Appendix B

Formal Model Proofs

B.1   Proposition 1: Organizational Control

Step 5: The Nash bargaining solution to this bargain is that x must be:

$$\max(x - 0)(-x - (2\sum_R f_\theta)) \tag{B.1}$$

$$x^* = \sum_R f_\theta \tag{B.2}$$

Step 4: The lowest wage R will accept from A rather than staying home is:

$$w_a - v + a\theta \geq 0 \tag{B.3}$$

$$w_a \geq v - a\theta \tag{B.4}$$

Meanwhile, the lowest wage R will accept from A rather than join B is:

$$w_a - v + a\theta \geq w_b - v + a\theta \tag{B.5}$$

$$w_a \geq v - (a - b)\theta \tag{B.6}$$

Step 2 & 3: In order for A to be able and willing to recruit selectively, A must have a committed-type wage available that still deters B from recruiting R of any type. This puts three requirements on w_a:

1. Because B cannot prefer to recruit only high types, A must set w_a high enough that B either cannot selectively recruit or will prefer to recruit no one than to selectively recruit. The first of these is met if $w_m \geq v - (a - b)$, because then N must set a wage greater than v in order to attract high types, which makes screening impossible. The second of these is met if $w_a \geq f_1 + \pi - (a - b)$.

2. Because B cannot prefer to recruit all types, A must set w_a high enough that the cost of recruiting indiscriminately outweighs the benefit. This is true if $2\pi + f_1 + f_0 - 2\max\{w_a - (a - b), v\} \geq 0$. Therefore, it is only possible to deter if $v \geq \pi + \frac{f_1 + f_0}{2}$ or if $w_a \geq \frac{f_1 + f_0}{2} - (a - b)$.

3. Because B cannot prefer to take the low types (splitting), M must set w_a high enough that $\pi + f_0 - 2\max\{w_a, v\}$. Therefore, it is only possible if $v \geq \pi + f_0$ or if $w_a \geq \pi + f_0$.

That sets three relevant ranges:

- If $v > \pi + \frac{f_1 + f_0}{2}$, then there is always a wage ($w_a = \min\{v - (a - b), \pi + f_1 - (a - b)\}$) which meets these conditions.

- If $v < \pi + f_0$, then there is never a wage that meets these conditions, because it must be true that $w_a > \pi + f_0$ so therefore w_a must always be greater than v.

- If $\pi + f_0 < v < \pi + \frac{f_1 + f_0}{2}$, then the minimum wage for A is $w_a \geq \pi + \frac{f_1 + f_0}{2} - (a - b)$. Screening is possible in this range, therefore, so long as

$$v \geq \pi + \frac{f_1 + f_0}{2} - (a - b) \tag{B.7}$$

Together, these conditions form Proposition 1.

This leaves one question: if these selective recruiting strategies are possible, are they preferred to indiscriminate recruiting? If $v > \pi + \frac{f_1+f_0}{2}$, then indiscriminate recruiting is never preferred even to no recruiting because it would result in a utility of $2\pi + f_1 + f_0 - 2v$, which is always less than 0. If $\pi + \frac{f_1+f_0}{2} - (a - b) < v < \pi + \frac{f_1+f_0}{2}$, then selective recruiting is preferred so long as

$$\pi + f_1 - [\pi + \frac{f_1 + f_0}{2} - (a - b)] \geq 2\pi + f_1 + f_0 - 2v \tag{B.8}$$

$$v \leq \pi + \frac{f_0}{2} + \frac{1}{2}[\frac{f_1 + f_0}{2} - (a - b)] \tag{B.9}$$

which, because $f_0 < 0$, is always true in the range for which screening is possible.

B.2 Proposition 2: Fragmentation

In order for fragmentation (i.e. A recruiting high-commitment types and B recruiting low-commitment types), two sets of conditions need to hold.

First, it must be true that B prefers to take only low types over any other option. This includes three requirements:

- B must prefer taking uncommitted-types to taking no one, so it must be true that

$$f_0 + \pi - \max\{v, w_a\} \geq 0 \tag{B.10}$$

  . Therefore, it must be true both that $v \leq \pi + f_0$ and that $w_a \leq \pi + f_0$.

- B must prefer taking low-commitment types to taking all types. In order for this to be true, it must be that

$$\pi + f_0 - \max\{w_a, v\} \geq 2\pi + f_1 + f_0 - 1 - 2\max\{w_a + (a - b), v\} \tag{B.11}$$

Because high-commitment types are much more valuable, it must be that they are much more expensive for B, and therefore this can only be because w_a is very high. Unless v is so high as to violate the first condition, the binding constraint here is that $w_a \geq \pi + f_1 - (a - b)$.

- A must prefer taking only uncommitted-types to committed-types. In order for B to screen in this way, it must be that $w_a + (a - b) < v$ (to create separation) and that

$$\pi + f_0 - \max\{w_a, v\} \geq \pi + f_1 - (w_a + (a - b)) \tag{B.12}$$

This is true if and only if $w_a \geq f_1 - f_0 - (a - b)$ and $a - b \geq f_1 - f_0$.

This means that in order to even have splitting be possible (much less profitable for m, a number of constraints must be met. So long as $\pi > -f_0$ (specified above), it must be true that the minimum wage ($\pi + f_1 - (a - b)$) must be less than the maximum wage ($\pi + f_0$), which simply duplicates one of the previous requirements (that $m - n \geq f_1 - f_0$). In order to be profitable for B to split rather than simply recruit indiscriminately (which would require a higher wage of $\pi + f_0$), it must be that

$$\pi + f_1 - (\pi + f_1 - (a - b)) \geq 2\pi + f_1 + f_0 - 2(\pi + f_0) \tag{B.13}$$

$$a - b \geq f_1 - f_0 \tag{B.14}$$

which once again duplicates the same requirement. Therefore, the only two requirements for splitting to be both possible and profitable for M are that $m - n \geq f_1 - f_0$ and that $v \leq \pi + f_0$, which combine to form Proposition 2.

B.3 Proposition 3: Government Crackdown

As long as low-commitment types are unhelpful to rebels ($f_0 < 0$) and crackdown is costly ($c > 0$), G always prefers no violence to any violence which does not result in high-commitment types staying home, and does not prefer any violence beyond the exact amount necessary to deter A from recruiting at all.

Because A has an advantage with high-commitment types anyway, the level of violence necessary to make A prefer to recruit no one than recruit high types is the same whether or not A has a competitor B. Given that the minimum wage for high-commitment Rs is $w_a = v - a$, that violence level is:

$$f_1 + \pi - (v - a) = 0 \tag{B.15}$$

$$v^* = \pi + f_1 + a \tag{B.16}$$

This higher level of violence (which deters all recruiting) is preferable to no violence (which induces indiscriminate recruiting) if and only if:

$$-0 - c(\pi + f_1 + a) \geq -(f_1 + f_0) - c(0) \tag{B.17}$$

$$f_1 + f_0 \geq c(\pi + f_1 + a) \tag{B.18}$$

Which is Proposition 3. As noted earlier, This assumes that no violence ($v = 0$) will induce A to recruit indiscriminately, which is true if:

$$\max\{\pi + \frac{f_1 + f_0}{2} - (a - b), \pi + f_0\} \geq 0 \tag{B.19}$$

However, as noted, this constraint may not be so binding in real life, where governments may effectively subsidize rebels to mobilize (i.e. set $v < 0$).

Appendix C

Recruitment Experiment

C.1   Questionnaire

Table C.1: Stages of Survey

1	Consent Script
2	Demographics
3	Political Opinions
4	Conjoint Experiment on Rebel Groups
5	Self-Assessment and Behavioral Questions
6	Intelligence / Reasoning Questions
7	Debrief and Gift

Altruism Self-Assessment Questions

I will make a statement, and you tell me if it sounds: very much like you, mostly like you, somewhat like you, not much like you, or not at all like you.

- I care more about what other people need than what I need.

- I do not like it when people ask for help when they have not helped me in the past.

- I often stop on the street and help strangers with something, even when I have somewhere to be.

Altruism Behavioral Questions

Think about the last few times things like this have happened to you. How did you respond? (Never / A few times / About half the time / Most of the time / Always)

- When you passed a beggar on the street, did you give money?

- When someone in your community was selling raffle tickets, did you buy any?

- When there is a big public works project in your community, like a big cleanup, do you volunteer?

- When a stranger is carrying something heavy, do you help?

Political Opinion Questions I am going to read some statements about local issues. Please tell me whether you strongly agree, somewhat agree, neither agree nor disagree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree.

- (Nagaland / Assam) should be its own country.

- (Only Bodo) Bodoland should be its own state.

- I think of myself as (Naga / Assamese / Bodo) more than Indian.

- It would not be appropriate for a female member of my family to marry someone outside my tribe.

- The National Government of India does important work for the local community.

- The State Government of (Nagaland / Assam) does important work for the local community.

- (Only Nagaland) The Baptist Churches do important work for the local community.

- The (Naga / Assamese / Bodo) armed groups do important work for the local community.

- Non-violent activism is usually better at achieving political goals than violent resistance.

C.2 Descriptive Statistics and Main Analysis

Figure C.1: Histogram of Dependent Variable

Question: *Would a young [Naga] man like you be willing to join this armed group?*

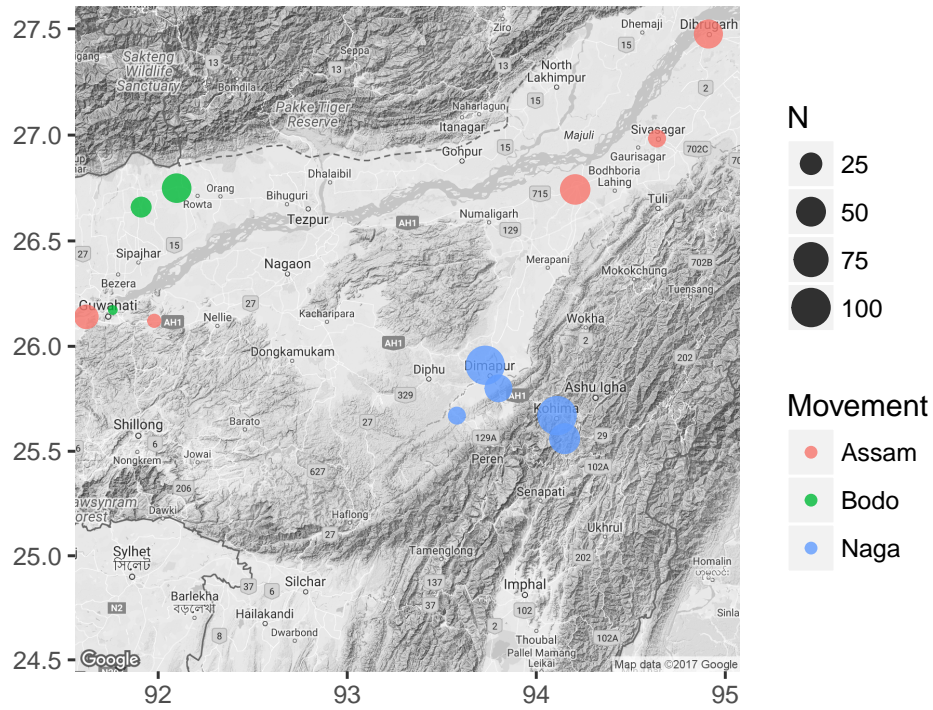Figure C.2: Northeast India Survey Locations

Table C.2: Effect of Armed Group Features on Joining, by Respondent Type

| | DV: Likelihood of Joining (1-5 Scale) | | | |
| | OLS | | Probit | |
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Activist		0.46***		0.62***
		(0.14)		(0.17)
Med. Wages	0.56***	0.70***	0.68***	0.91***
	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.06)	(0.07)
Activist * Med. Wages		-0.39***		-0.53***
		(0.09)		(0.11)
High Wages	1.07***	1.23***	1.22***	1.49***
	(0.05)	(0.06)	(0.07)	(0.08)
Activist * High Wages		-0.49***		-0.65***
		(0.11)		(0.13)
Ceasefire	0.11**	0.19***	0.13**	0.24***
	(0.04)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.06)
Activist * Ceasefire		-0.22*		-0.27**
		(0.08)		(0.10)
Strict	-0.25***	-0.20***	-0.29***	-0.24***
	(0.04)	(0.05)	(0.04)	(0.05)
Activist * Strict		-0.14		-0.14
		(0.08)		(0.09)
Pro-Talk	0.25***	0.30***	0.28***	0.38***
	(0.04)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.06)
Activist * Pro-Talk		-0.18*		-0.23*
		(0.08)		(0.10)
Med. Strength	0.18***	0.10*	0.19***	0.13**
	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.05)	(0.05)
Activist * Med. Strength		0.19*		0.20
		(0.09)		(0.11)
High Strength	0.28***	0.16***	0.32***	0.20***
	(0.04)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.06)
Activist * High Strength		0.27**		0.30**
		(0.09)		(0.10)
Same Area	0.10**	0.10*	0.12**	0.11
	(0.04)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.06)
Activist * Same Area		0.04		0.04
		(0.08)		(0.10)
Same Tribe	0.17***	0.30***	0.34***	0.36***
	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.06)
Activist * Same Tribe		0.02		0.01
		(0.10)		(0.12)
Enumerator-Region FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
N (Choices)	3654	3654	3654	3654
N (Respondents)	368	368	368	368

* p<.05, ** p<.01, *** p<.001

C.3 Robustness Checks

Controlling for Demographic Features

Table C.3: High/Low Commitment Difference in Treatment Effects, Controlling for Demographics

	Hi Wages Effect	Med Wages Effect	Ceasefires Effect	Discipline Effect	Pro-talk Effect
High-Commitment	**-0.54*****	**-0.43*****	**-0.22***	**-0.11**	**-0.14**
	(0.13)	**(0.11)**	**(0.11)**	**(0.10)**	**(0.10)**
Age	-0.01	-0.03*	-0.02*	-0.01	-0.01
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Education	0.03	0.06	-0.01	0.02	0.04
	(0.05	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)
From Town	0.03	-0.36*	-0.02	0.11	0.25
	(0.19)	(0.17)	(0.16)	(0.14)	(0.16)
From Village	-0.02	-0.44*	-0.09	-0.06	0.20
	(0.19)	(0.17)	(0.17)	(0.15)	(0.16)
Unemployed	0.08	-0.22	-0.20	0.08	-0.14
	(0.15)	(0.13)	(0.12)	(0.12)	(0.14)
Employed Part-Time	0.02	-0.17	-0.18	0.03	-0.32
	(0.18)	(0.17)	(0.16)	(0.14)	(0.16)
Married	0.16	0.14	0.00	0.08	-0.04
	(0.17)	(0.15)	(0.14)	(0.13)	(0.15)
N	356	354	368	367	367

*$p<.05$, ** $p<.01$, *** $p<.001$

Each column is an OLS regression in which the DV is the individual-level difference-in-means for each effect. For example, the DV of column 1 is the difference in "joining" responses between high and low wage groups for each individual. The Activist line, then, is exactly equivalent to the interaction term in columns 1-2 of Table 7 above.

Interactions between Treatments

Table C.4: Interactions Between Treatments (T-Statistics)

	Wages	Ceasefire	Discipline	Ideology	Ties	Strength
Wages	—	+1.27	+0.86	+0.54	+1.17	+ 0.29
Ceasefire	+1.26	—	-0.25	+3.55	+0.96	-0.17
Discipline	+0.86	-0.25	—	-0.45	+1.59	-0.11
Ideology	+0.54	+3.55	-0.45	—	+0.34	-0.98
Ties	+1.17	+0.96	+1.58	+0.34	—	+1.92
Strength	+0.29	-0.17	-0.11	-0.98	+1.92	—

Each of 15 results is the t-statistic on the estimated interaction between two interactions on the main outcome (joining). The two treatments are also included in the regression. Wages, Strength, and Community Ties are reduced to a 1-3 scale to make comparisons easier.

Differences between Regions

Figure C.3: Interaction Effects by Region
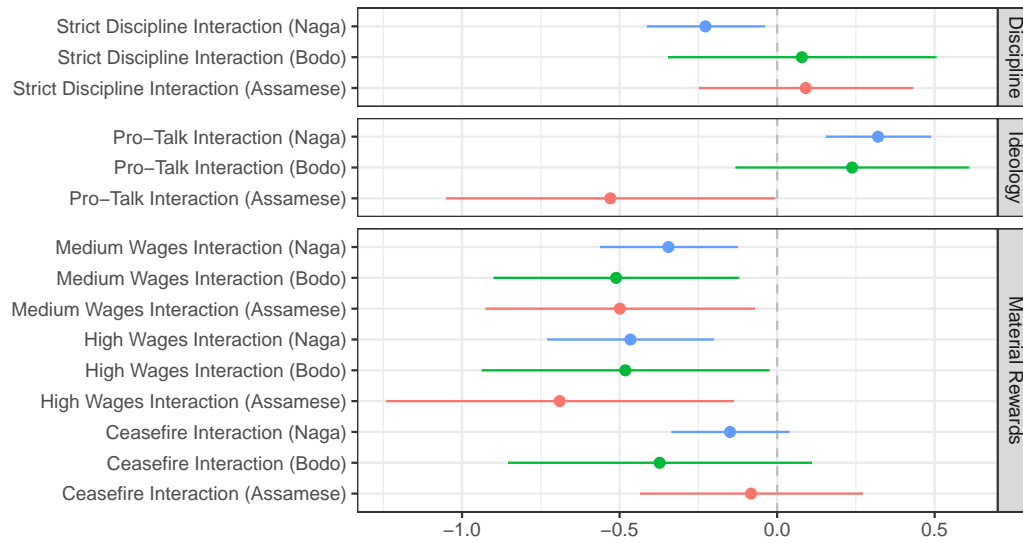
Three separate (one per region) OLS regressions with type interaction and SEs clustered at the region level. Each line is one treatment-by-covariate interaction analogous to the "difference" lines of the main results. Group trait effects are relative to reference attribute for each category (Low wages, No ceasefire offer, Loose Discipline, Anti-Talk Ideology). Includes FE for enumerator-region pair.

Appendix D

Case Interviews

D.1 Interview Subjects

Table D.1: Interviewees by Location

	Nagaland	*Manipur*	*Sri Lanka*
Current/Former Officers	15	2	3
Current/Former Soldiers	9	2	4
Civilians	18	9	13
Total	**42**	**13**	**20**

Table D.2: Interviews: Current/Former Rebels in Northeast India

Code	Date	Location	Description
C1*	July 2016	Patkai	Professor / Former Cadre (NNC)
C2*	July 2016	Kohima	Former President / Former Cadre (NNC-N)
C3*	July 2016	Kohima area	Former Cadre (NSCN-K)
C6*	July 2016	Dimapur	Cadre (NSCN-IM)
C7*	Aug 2016	Mon	Former Cadre (NSCN-K)
C8*	Aug 2016	Mon	Former Cadre (NNC)
C9*	Aug 2016	Mon	Cadre (NSCN-R)
C10*	Aug 2016	Mon	Cadre (NNC-N)
U1*	July 2016	Dimapur	Human Resources Manager (NSCN-IM)
U4*	July 2016	Dimapur	High-Ranking Officer (NSCN-U)
U5*	July 2016	Dimapur	Top-Level Leader (NSCN-U)
U6	July 2016	Dimapur	Top-Level Leader (NSCN-U)
U7*	July 2016	Dimapur	Top-Level Leader (NSCN-U)
U8	July 2016	Dimapur	High-Ranking Officer (NSCN-U)
U9*	July 2016	Dimapur	High-Ranking Officer (NSCN-U)
U10*	July 2016	Dimapur	Top-Level Leader (NSCN-IM)
U12*	July 2016	Kohima	Political Officer (NNC-A)
U13*	July 2016	Kohima	Top-Level Leader (NNC-A)
U14	July 2016	Kohima	Top-Level Leader (NNC-A)
U15*	Aug 2016	Mon	Top-Level Leader (NSCN-R)
U16*	Aug 2016	Dimapur	High-Ranking Officer (NSCN-IM)
U17	July 2015	Dimapur	Top-Level Leader (NSCN-IM)
U18	July 2015	Dimapur	High-Level Bureaucrat (NSCN-IM)
KC1*	Aug 2016	Imphal area	Cadre (KRA)
KC2*	Aug 2016	Imphal area	Cadre (KRA)
KU1*	Aug 2016	Imphal area	Top-Level Leader (KRA)
KU2*	Aug 2016	Imphal area	Low-Level Officer (KRA)

* Full interview (rather than background or informal)

Table D.3: Interviews: Civilians in Northeast India

Code	Date	Location	Description
A1*	July 2016	Dimapur	Community Organizer (Genesis Project)
A2*	July 2016	Dimapur	Immigration Activist (Survival Nagaland)
A3*	July 2016	Dimapur	Taxation Activist (ACAUT)
A4	July 2016	Dimapur	Government Official
A5*	July 2016	Kohima	Community Organizer (NSF)
A6*	July 2016	Kohima	Former State Government Official
A7*	July 2016	Kohima	Peace Activist (Naga Mothers' Association)
A8*	July 2016	Kohima area	Writer and Activist
A9*	July 2016	Dimapur	Journalist (Eastern Mirror)
A10*	July 2016	Mon	Community Leader / Former NNC Cadre
A11	July 2015	Guwahati	History Professor (IIT Guwahati)
A12	July 2015	Mokokchung	PoliSci Graduate Students (IIT Guwahati)
A13	July 2015	Zunheboto area	Village Chief & Village Council
A14	July 2015	Zunheboto area	Village Chief
A15	July 2015	Dimapur	Taxation Activist (ACAUT)
A16	July 2015	Kohima	Writer and Activist
A17	July 2015	Dimapur	Writer and Baptist Minister
A18	July 2015	Dimapur	Journalist (Morung Express)
A19	July 2015	Dimapur	Community Leader (Naga Hoho)
A20	July 2015	Dimapur	Peace Activist (Forum for Naga Reconciliation)
A21	July 2015	New Delhi	Think-Tank Analyst (ISDA)
M1*	Aug 2016	Imphal	Professor (IGNTU)
M2*	Aug 2016	Imphal	Human Rights Activist
M3*	Aug 2016	Imphal	Peace Activist (CPA)
M4*	Aug 2016	Imphal	Ethnic Rights Activist (Coalition for Indigenous Rights)
M5*	Aug 2016	Imphal	Professor and Dramatist (Manipur University)
M6*	Aug 2016	Imphal	Human Rights Activist (CHR Manipur)
M7*	Aug 2016	Imphal	Sociology Professor (Manipur University)
M8*	Aug 2016	Imphal	Activist
M9*	Aug 2016	Imphal	History Professor (Manipur College)

Full interview (rather than background or informal)

Table D.4: Interviews: Sri Lanka

Code	Date	Location	Description
TG1*	Mar 2017	Colombo	Former High-Level Aide (SLFP)
TA1*	Mar 2017	Colombo	Think-Tank Researcher (ICES)
TA2*	Mar 2017	Colombo	Think-Tank Researcher (CPA)
TA3*	Mar 2017	Colombo	National Politician (TNA)
TA4*	Mar 2017	Colombo	Religious Leader
TA5*	Mar 2017	Colombo	Professor (Colombo University)
TA6*	Mar 2017	Jaffna	State Politician (TNA)
TA7*	Mar 2017	Jaffna	Professor (University of Jaffna)
TA8*	Mar 2017	Vavuniya	2 NGO Organizers
TA9*	Apr 2017	Vavuniya	Local Business Owner
TA10*	Apr 2017	Vavuniya	Local Business Owner
TA11*	Apr 2017	Vavuniya	Former Politician (TULF)
TA12*	Apr 2017	Jaffna	Human Rights Activist
TC1*	Mar 2017	Colombo	Two Former Officers (EPRLF)
TC2*	Apr 2017	Vavuniya	Former Cadre (LTTE)
TC3*	Apr 2017	Vavuniya	Former Officer (LTTE)
TC4*	Apr 2017	Vavuniya	Former Officer (LTTE)
TC5*	Apr 2017	Vavuniya	Former Cadre (LTTE)
TC6*	Apr 2017	Kilinochchi	Former Cadre (LTTE)

* Full interview (rather than background or informal)

D.2 Standard Interview Questions

1. Do cadres in [ethnicity] armed groups ever disobey orders and do things they are not supposed to?

   - (If uncertain) Do cadres ever steal, or commit sexual violence, or take taxes for themselves without permission?

   - (For rebels) Is this ever an issue in the **other** armed groups?

   - Why does this happen? / Why does this not happen?

2. Over the last 20 or so years, has cadre misbehavior among [ethnicity] armed groups increased, decreased, or stayed about the same?

   - (If changed) Was this a gradual change, or did it happen at a particular time? When?

   - (If changed) Why do you think this has happened?

3. Over the last 20 or so years, has there been any change in the types of individuals who join [ethnicity] armed groups?

4. Over the last 20 or so years, do you think that the number of individuals joining [ethnicity] armed groups for the wrong reasons has increased, decreased, or stayed about the same?

   - (If yes) Why do you think this has happened?

   - (If yes)Why do you think this has happened?

5. (For Rebels Only) Why did you join the movement?

   - Why did you join the group you did?

6. Can anyone join [ethnicity] armed organizations, or do they only allow in some people?

- (If no) How do they tell if someone is the right type of recruit?

7. Why do cadres join the groups they do, and not others? How do most people choose?

8. Is it common for a cadre to leave one [ethnicity] armed group and go to another?

   - Why? / Why not?

   - Has it ever been common?

9. (For Rebels Only) Have you ever changed to a different group?

   - Why? / Why not?

10. Do certain types of people tend to join one group?

    - For example, do certain tribes usually choose certain groups? Or people who share certain beliefs?

    - Why do you think this is?

11. Have [ethnicity] armed groups ever split apart?

    - Why do you think these splits happen?

    - Why do people follow when a leader breaks off?

12. Over the last 20 years, has it become easier, harder, or about the same to resolve differences and misunderstandings between armed groups?

    - Why?

13. Why do armed groups sign ceasefires when they do?

    - (If confused) For example, why did [armed group] sign a ceasefire in [date] and not [a different date]?

- Did the Government of India offer ceasefires at any other times? Do you think they would have been willing to?