



# Studienabschlussarbeiten

Faculty of Social Sciences

UNSPECIFIED

El Ghali, Nadia:  
Indirekte Kriegsführung

**Bachelor, Summer Semester 2023**

Faculty of Social Sciences  
UNSPECIFIED  
UNSPECIFIED

Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München

<https://doi.org/10.5282/ubm/epub.94581>



## Münchener Beiträge zur Politikwissenschaft

herausgegeben vom  
Geschwister-Scholl-Institut  
für Politikwissenschaft

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**2022**

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**Indirekte Kriegsführung**

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Bachelorarbeit bei  
Prof. Dr. Bernhard Zangl  
2022

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## A Introduction

Since Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 and the subsequent resistance by Ukrainian forces, war is once again on the frontpages in Europe. As devastating and horrible as this conflict is, it is also an exception for an ongoing trend in armed conflict – indirect warfare. Indeed, the Russo-Ukrainian War started in this very same way, with the Russian Federation (not so) indirectly supporting the rebels in Eastern Ukraine, to achieve Russian interests and goals in the region without having to intervene directly with their own troops. So, while this is currently not the case anymore, indirect warfare has been increasingly used by states in general after 1945 (Salehyan 2010, 499). Especially big powers like Russia or the United States of America (USA/U.S.) have engaged in sponsorship of opposition groups or rebel forces to achieve their interests. Examples would be the previously mentioned sponsorship of Ukrainian separatists by Russia or the U.S.-support for the Contras in Nicaragua. As this decline in direct interstate war seems to be ongoing, it is important to investigate the reasons behind the governmental decision to delegate fighting to rebel groups. If big powers continue to wage war indirectly, there are many implications for the future of warfare in general, especially if this means that in some cases indirect warfare can turn into to direct warfare again. These implications for civilians and international security make it important to develop a deeper understanding of a state's decision to wage war indirectly.

In order to do so, research on indirect warfare has drawn on Principal-Agent Theory to explain states' decision to support rebel groups (Salehyan et. al 2014; Salehyan et al 2011; Salehyan 2010; Byman and Kreps 2010). Generally, a state (*principal*) delegates the conduction of warfare to a rebel group (*agent*) to save costs and employs control mechanism to make sure the rebel group keeps acting in line with the state's goals (Byman and Kreps 2010). But this approach is unable to explain the varying degree of control states have over their respective agents/rebel groups. For example, the United States were very closely involved with the mission planning for the Contras in Nicaragua (Hoekstra 2021) but only gave material support to the Forces Armées du Nord (FAN) in Chad (May 1988). Drawing on the literature on indirect governance, scholars have tried to explain this variance of control (Tamm 2020; Heinkelmann-Wild and Mehrl 2022). If a state exerts hard control mechanisms (e.g., U.S. and Contras) it is *delegating*, if it exerts softer/no control mechanisms (e.g., U.S. and FAN) it is *orchestrating*. Indirect Governance Theory as well as Principal-Agent-Theory expect hard control mechanisms to be more likely if a state has more capabilities to do so (e.g., bigger military or financial resources), whereas soft control mechanisms are due to states being incapable of hard

control mechanisms because of a lack of resources, not a lack of willingness on the state's part (Abbot et al 2015a, 2015b; Salehyan 2010). Empirically though, we see variance in the mode of indirect governance and the control mechanisms imposed by big powers even though the resources for hard control mechanisms stay the same, as seen in the U.S. examples above. Some scholars have even found that big financial and military resources make soft control mechanisms more likely (Heinkelmann-Wild and Mehrl 2022), which contradicts the initial expectations of both strands of literature. This puzzle thus leads to the following question: *When do big powers delegate or orchestrate to rebel groups?*

To answer this question, I am conducting a crisp-set Qualitative Comparative Analysis (csQCA) of sixteen cases where the USA supported rebel groups in armed conflict. This research design helps to determine and to theorise the necessary and sufficient conditions for a specific mode of indirect governance. The independent variables that are theorized to have an influence on the governmental decision on a mode of indirect governance are (1) the *distance* between rebel group and big power, (2) the *number of actors* involved in the conflict, (3) *goal convergence* and (4) the *saliency* of the conflict. In 11 out of 16 cases a combination of the geographical proximity between big power and rebel group and the number of actors involved in the conflict was able to explain the decision to delegate or orchestrate. To limit the scope of the proposed variables the following theoretical framework and hypotheses will be focused on explaining the state's decision on the mode of indirect governance as this is the primary concern for the puzzle that was laid out above. So, while characteristics of certain rebel groups or actor complexity also influence the decision on indirect governance (Salehyan et. al 2011; Abbot et al 2020b) an additional focus would go over the limits of the intended research design and scope for this thesis.

This thesis will be structured as follows: First, the theoretical framework, concepts and the proposed hypotheses will be laid out. Afterwards I will show my research design, case selection and data which will then be used to conduct the csQCA in the next chapter. This will also entail a theoretical interpretation and discussion of the obtained results particularly in relation to the proposed variables in the beginning. Finally, a conclusion will bind all parts together.

## **B Theoretical Framework**

State-sponsorship of rebel groups has been extensively researched. By drawing on Principal-Agent-Theory (P-A), scholars have argued, that delegation to rebel groups reduces the extensive

costs associated with war (Salehyan 2010; Salehyan et. al 2011; Byman and Kreps 2010). These include casualties and military resources, but also governance costs of an occupied territory, especially, after the conflict has ended (Salehyan 2010). Furthermore, states are less likely to be internationally condemned and can, to an extent, avoid blame for a certain conflict (Salehyan 2011), while gaining political or technical expertise (Byman and Kreps 2010) or strategic advantages and bargaining power (Maoz and San-Akca 2012; Bapat 2011). To make sure that the rebel groups are acting in the state's interests, different control mechanisms are employed (Byman and Kreps 2010; Salehyan 2010). However, the literature fails to differentiate between varying intensity of external state control and states are expected to use all the control mechanisms they can employ. This assumption can thus not explain why the United States only channelled material support through other countries to aid UNITA in Angola in the 1980s (Hoekstra 2018) but even deployed Special Army Forces in Afghanistan to help with and control the Northern Alliance's fight against the Taliban in the early 2000s (Peltier 2005). So, while Byman and Kreps (2010) argue that control mechanisms may be decreased if both parties have converging interests, this is not seen as a different form of indirect warfare.

To close this gap in the literature and to find a solution to the empirical puzzle, the following theoretical framework and hypotheses will additionally draw on indirect governance theory by Abbot et al (2020a, 2015a, 2015b) to further develop the insights by the literature on indirect warfare. Central to the decision on the mode of indirect governance is the Competence-Control Trade-off (Abbot et. al 2020b). This means, that a governor "can obtain either high competence or strong control, but not both" (Ibid, p. 5). To fully tap into the capabilities of an intermediary (i.e., expertise, credibility, legitimacy, and operational capacity) the governor often has to eschew hard control mechanisms (Abbot et al 2020b). These control mechanisms are still very costly, so the literature – like Principal Agent Theory – expects only those states with big financial and military resources to employ them (Abbot et. al 2015a, 2015b, 2020a; Salehyan 2010; Salehyan et. al 2011). The following theoretical framework and hypotheses will thus try to explain when big powers delegate or orchestrate to rebel groups.

## **I. Indirect Governance in Armed Conflict**

For this analysis, a rebel group will be defined as a primarily militarily organized group of people that resorts to violent means to achieve their mostly political objectives vis-à-vis an at least somewhat legitimized government over a period of time. This also includes armed wings of political parties as well as military dissidents. This definition combines previous

conceptualizations by San-Akca (2009) and Cunningham et al (2013), to have it be as concise as possible while also being able to account for the broad variance in non-state actors that have been supported by the United States. As the mode of indirect governance (and the degree of control) varies for each rebel group that is supported, they pose different advantages and disadvantages for a state (Tamm 2020; Heinkelmann-Wild and Mehrl 2022). Depending on its individual interests and the calculation of the Competence-Control Trade-off (Abbot et al 2020b), delegation or orchestration of a rebel group is more likely.<sup>1</sup>

## **Delegation**

If a state decides to delegate, essentially enacting a Principal-Agent relationship, it will *grant* authority to the rebel group on a contractual basis (hard ex-ante control), while also being able to use hard control mechanisms (hard ex-post control). This works, because the state can credibly threaten to remove the authority (e.g., in the form of sanctions), if the rebel group does not act the way it is supposed to, as the latter relies on that authority. At the same time, the state can monitor the actions of the rebel group, which provides enough information about its actions, which gives them leverage to use harder control mechanisms.

This means, that a state is more likely to delegate if it places more emphasis on controlling the rebel group. These harder control-mechanisms include ex-ante controls like training or even indoctrination of the rebel troops (Byman and Kreps 2010), as well as creating safe havens, but also ex-post controls like monitoring the rebel's activities (Heinkelmann-Wild and Mehrl 2022; Byman and Kreps 2010) or being involved in mission control. Since it can always credibly threaten to take away the support, which is crucial for the rebels, there is a huge incentive for the rebel group to keep in line with the state's goals. Even if the rebel group's goals diverge from those of the governor, the state can coerce them to comply. Due to the Competence-Control Trade-off this often means compromising on certain competencies (e.g. the legitimacy of a rebel group or their operational capacity) (Abbot et al 2020b), but a state might be willing to do that in order to have a strong position vis-à-vis the agent. The information regarding the rebel group and the control mechanisms that the sponsor has might be crucial in winning the conflict. Acquiring such information and control mechanisms are often very costly, but big powers should have enough funds and personnel available to be able to manage those. Still, there are downsides to the decision to delegate. Byman and Kreps argue that state sponsors “face a trade-off between control and ‘plausible deniability’” (Byman and Kreps 2010, p. 14).

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<sup>1</sup> The literature on indirect governance (Abbot et al 2020a, 2020b) further differentiates between co-optation and trusteeship, for the purpose of analysing indirect warfare this is not as relevant and will thus not be included.

This plausible deniability is more difficult to uphold if a state exercises hard control mechanisms over a rebel group. In most cases this means that it is obvious that the state is sponsoring a group, if they are also training and monitoring them at the same time. Public responsibility attribution is thus very likely. But states in general rely on rebel groups for their local legitimacy (Salehyan 2010), so a state cannot closely control a rebel group, without it losing some sort of legitimacy (Abbot et al 2015b, 2020b; Lake 2016). Big powers may have a huge negative impact on the perceived legitimacy of a rebel group, since their overall presence in the international system makes them seem “foreign” to the local population.

### **Orchestration**

If a state decides to orchestrate it will draw on the already existing authority of a rebel group. It *enlists* this independent intermediary on a voluntary basis. This means that it relies on soft inducements, since it cannot credibly threaten to take away the rebel groups authority (Abbot et al. 2020b). Hence, a convergence of interests is very important, since soft inducements only work if both already share the same goals (Abbot et al. 2015a, 2015b).

A sponsor is more likely to orchestrate if the competence of the rebel group is more important. This means that a state will engage in softer control mechanisms, like providing financial resources, while the rebel group can operate independently (Heinkelmann-Wild and Mehrl 2022). The state draws on an already autonomous rebel group for their capabilities. Since a state can only nudge the rebels into a certain direction once the resources are handed over and does not have any more information about whether the rebels are pursuing the desired goals, it must rely on the shared goals. Credible threats to take away the support are nearly impossible, since the state has basically no control mechanisms to ensure the rebels are acting in line (Abbot et al 2015b). This might be not that big of an issue for big powers, since they might still be able to credibly threaten to employ sanctions due to their status. Furthermore, orchestration also poses different advantages for states. Due to the lack of any direct control mechanism, a state can easily deny any involvement in the conflict. If there are only financial or intelligence sources transmitted a state might be able to keep up the plausible deniability (Byman and Kreps 2010). Orchestration is also likely to solve the issue of perceived legitimacy (Abbot et al 2020b), since the state is not as deeply involved, the legitimacy of the rebel group stays intact (Salehyan et al 2011). Another reason to orchestrate might be to tap into specific combat or operational skills or extensive local knowledge about the terrain (Salehyan 2010; Tamm 2020), which can be gained from local rebel groups without investing time and effort. Particular niche rebel skills can then be used in order to win the conflict (Byman and Kreps 2010). Big powers



might be interested in that, since they often have large conventional military capacities but no niche skills that are also valuable (Ibid). On top of these advantages, orchestration is also less costly, since it requires less control mechanisms compared to delegation. So, while states with big financial resources might be able to manage the costs associated with delegation, they are also interested in reducing those as much as possible.

## **II. Hypotheses**

To explain when big powers delegate or orchestrate to rebel groups, the following section will draw on the theoretical framework to derive hypotheses about when a big power will choose either option. As both yield specific advantages and disadvantages, big powers as rational actors that aim at maximizing their utility, can either use more hierarchical control mechanisms or tap into the rebel groups competencies (Heinkelmann-Wild and Mehrl 2022). This trade-off, also known as the “Governor’s Dilemma” (Abbot et al 2020a, 2020b), shapes the decision on the mode of indirect governance.

It might be easier for big powers to tap into the benefits of orchestration, without losing control over the rebel groups due to their position in the international system. Because of their general power they might be able to operate under a “shadow of hierarchy” (Héritier and Lehmkuhl 2008). This means that they can tap into the benefits of orchestration, like maintaining plausible deniability or smaller costs, while still being able to control the rebel group. This makes it easier to credibly threaten to take away their (meagre) support, due to their status in the international system (Ibid, p.2). Thus, hard control mechanisms will not be needed. This would mean that the governor’s dilemma dissolves; a high degree of competence and a high degree of control can be maintained at the same time. In armed conflict this might only work, if this “shadow of hierarchy” is present in the conflict, since even the influence of a big power might have regional limits or might be stronger in different parts of the world. This means that, the geographically closer a rebel group is, the easier it should be for the state to control them and the further away a rebel group is the harder it is to substitute hard control mechanisms with the “shadow of hierarchy”. In that case, threats by the big power are not credible. The geographically more proximate the rebel group, the more present is the shadow of hierarchy and the more credible are threats to take away support.

*H1: Big powers are more likely to orchestrate (delegate), if the rebel group is geographically proximate (distant).*

Secondly, states sponsor rebel groups because they have local legitimacy, credibility and/or key operational capacities (Byman and Kreps 2010; Salehyan 2010; Salehyan et al 2011). Legitimacy and credibility can only be maintained if the big power does not engage in hierarchical ex-post or ex-ante control mechanisms (Abbot et al 2020b). This is especially important in the context of big power sponsoring because their status in the international system might undermine the rebels' local legitimacy even more than other sponsorships would. Particularly when a conflict already has many parties involved, the legitimacy rebels bring to the table is crucial for winning the conflict, since those rebel groups at least have some part of the population on their side. In a conflict with many parties (e.g., a civil war in a failed state) inside knowledge about the other side or the terrain is very costly to acquire by oneself. Rebel groups already have that kind of knowledge (Salehyan et al 2011; Salehyan 2010), so states can draw on the existing knowledge by delegating certain tasks. Using harder control mechanisms (engaging in delegation) would mean that it would be harder to tap into these competencies of a rebel group. This operational capacity also means that a rebel group has a strong power to resist, affecting the kind of control a state can exercise, so delegation becomes less possible in the first place. A big power must then resort to soft inducements to maintain the effectiveness and to mitigate the risk of resistance (Abbot et. al 2020b). Another reason to orchestrate in a conflict setting with many actors is the possibility of credible threats (Abbot et al 2020a): It is easier for a state/big power to credibly threaten to take away their support because there are alternative rebel groups to sponsor. This is one of the only settings in which credible threats work without having to impose hard control mechanisms on the rebel group, which also means that the Competence-Control trade-off dissolves to some extent. Having many actors involved also means that it is easier to find a rebel group with aligned goals in the first place (see H3). Thus, a big power might be more drawn to orchestration in a conflict setting with many parties involved, to maintain the rebel groups legitimacy, benefitting from their operational capacity as well as being able to credibly threaten to take away their support.

*H2: Big powers are more likely to orchestrate (delegate), if there are many (few) actors involved in the conflict.*

Furthermore, the literature on indirect governance puts a convergence of interests at the centre for the decision on the mode of governance (Abbot et al 2015a, 2015b, 2020a, 2020b). If the governor and the intermediary have converging interests, orchestration becomes more likely, since only then soft inducements are sufficient. If there are no converging interests a big power needs to resort back to harder control mechanisms to make sure the rebel group stays in line. In

the setting of armed conflict those converging interests can have functional reasons, like just having the same enemy or more ideological beliefs like being anti-communist or wanting to install democratic institutions in a previously autocratic state. Both lead to goal convergence, which in turn makes orchestration more likely. For indirect warfare in particular a similar ideology might be very important since only functional goals may be too little insurance for the big power, as these can fluctuate more or change over the course of a dynamic conflict, whereas ideology should be more stable. Another point that may make goal convergence more likely are ethnic ties between the big power and the rebel groups as this may lead to more solidarity and makes ideological convergence more likely as well (Heinkelmann-Wild and Mehrl 2022; Byman and Kreps 2010; Maoz and San-Akca 2012). In the big power context this is quite improbable though, so ideological convergence should suffice as the state can also be certain that the rebel group acts in line and control mechanisms can be relaxed.

*H3: Big powers are more likely to orchestrate (delegate) if the rebel group has a similar (contradicting) ideology.*

Lastly, big powers are concerned with keeping their high status in the international system (Mearsheimer 2001). Being engaged in a conflict, even if it is just indirectly, always poses a certain risk to lose, which could lessen their relative “big power” status. This makes engaging in hierarchical control mechanisms more attractive to the state, even if that means that they must compromise on certain competencies (Abbot et al 2020b). This might be the case if a different big power or rival is also part of the conflict or supports the other side (Maoz and San-Akca 2012), as this adds a level of strategic saliency. The US then might be especially concerned if the opponent was the Soviet Union (during the Cold War) or a fundamentalist Islamic state (after 9/11). If the country in which the conflict takes place would fall into the hands of an opponent, which leads to a relative loss of power, this conflict becomes strategically salient. In this setting the utility of orchestration and soft control mechanisms might be outweighed by the utility of hierarchical oversight to make sure the rebel group does not lose the conflict. So, if a certain conflict is strategically salient, a state might opt for more hierarchical control mechanisms to ensure the rebel group stays in line. If a conflict is not important in that way, this reason to engage in harder control mechanisms (delegation) falls away, since then the costs of hierarchical control mechanisms are too high. The strategical unimportance of the conflict makes hierarchical control mechanisms less useful, especially if this means that the governor has to compromise on certain competencies as well.

H4: *Big powers are more likely to orchestrate (delegate) if the conflict is strategically less salient (salient).*

In sum, I propose four hypotheses with four independent variables that influence the mode of indirect governance a state may use in indirect warfare: (1) geographical distance, (2) the number of actors in a conflict, (3) goal convergence and (4) strategical saliency.

The following section will lay out the research design for the subsequent csQCA on indirect governance in armed conflict.

## **C Research Design**

### **I. Method and Data**

For my Bachelor-Thesis I am conducting a crisp-set Qualitative Comparative Analysis (csQCA). This method allows to find necessary and sufficient conditions for a certain outcome. QCA combines advantages of both qualitative or more case-oriented research as well as quantitative or more variable oriented research. This means that I will still be able to draw some generalisable results from my analysis, but these are more modest and context-sensitive than they would be using quantitative data alone. As it is very unlikely that only one condition influences the decision on the mode of governance, I will be looking at how a combination of all the conditions affects this outcome. These expected multiple causal paths fit very well with the general assumption that QCA is based on: conjunctural causation, meaning that different constellations of factors may lead to the same result. This leaves room for complexity and makes for a more “realistic” approach of the social world as causality is assumed to be context and conjuncture specific (Berg-Schlosser et al 2009). In my thesis I have opted for the “crisp-set” approach which uses Boolean Algebra to “minimize” the causal paths that are obtained through the case-oriented analysis and subsequent truth tables (Rhioux and de Meur 2009) to achieve a parsimonious formula that shows the combination of conditions that lead to the respective outcomes. This means that each variable proposed will be dichotomized to either be present [1] or absent [0], this dichotomization needs to fit with the hypothesised causal direction of each variable. If the presence of a variable is associated with orchestration, it will be coded as [1] and if its presence is associated with delegation, it will be coded as [0]. After each case is coded and dichotomized, they will be put into different groups based on their values for each condition to finally conduct the csQCA through a minimization process that uses Boolean Algebra. This yields a parsimonious but still generalisable result (Rhioux and de Meur 2009).

For my case-oriented research I relied on the “Dangerous Companions Dataset” (San-Akca 2016) as well as the External Support Dataset by the Uppsala Conflict Data programme (UCDP) (Högbladh et al 2011) to get a general overview over the cases and variables and then relied mostly on qualitative data in the form of scholarly journal articles as well as newspaper reports to acquire the elaborate data that was needed for the case coding. The first dataset aggregates international support of rebel groups or non-state actors that are involved in an armed conflict against one or several governments from 1922 - 2010. It has two parts, one concerned with the different forms of external state support, and one concerned with a profile for each rebel group with information on foundation year, objectives, and ideational characteristics. In addition to that it is also possible to sort the data by state, to get an overview which state supported which and how many rebel groups (San-Akca 2016). For my case selection, I mainly relied on the latter part to look at all rebel groups that were supported by the United States between 1922 and 2010 and chose the ones that best fit into the csQCA. As there are no rebel groups included that were supported by the United States before 1945 the examined time frame will mostly range from 1945-2010. The second dataset by the UCDP provides information on the existence, type, and provider of external support for all parties involved in the conflict between 1975 and 2009 (Högbladh et al 2011), there are two different variations of this dataset: one concerned with the primary warring parties and one better suited for more complex analyses of different supporters (Ibid). For the purpose of this csQCA I relied on the second alternative, the “Disaggregated/Supporter Level Dataset”, as this made it possible to look at the type of support only the USA provided to a certain rebel group (Ibid). As both datasets are mostly intended for quantitative analysis, they did not provide the elaborate and “thick” data that was needed for my csQCA. Therefore I relied on qualitative data in the form of scholarly journal articles or newspaper reports, about U.S. rebel support to find out more about the nature of the conditions I proposed.

## **II. Case Selection**

To conduct the csQCA I have selected 16 cases of rebel groups that were supported by the United States for at least one year since 1945. These cases were mainly drawn from the Dangerous Companions Dataset (San-Akca 2016). It differentiates between “active” and “de facto” support, but this was not as relevant for the case selection of this csQCA as it was mainly about finding rebel groups that had proven support by the United States, since the type of support had to be determined by qualitative literature anyway.

I decided to hold the big power stable to be able to measure the effect of the proposed variables, so that a variance of the governor will not change the effect of the independent variables. As the United States can undoubtedly be considered a big power in the international system all the proposed independent variables are present. Since the U.S. can also be seen as a representative for many Western states, the results obtained from this csQCA should at least be somewhat generalisable beyond the single big power that is examined here. Another reason for choosing the United States – as opposed to the Soviet Union/Russia – is the availability of data, as well as not having to account for the fall of the Soviet Union after 1991.<sup>2</sup> Thus, I will look at the following 16 rebels groups that have received support from the United States: Contras (FDN), National Union for the Independence of Angola (UNITA), Khmer People’s National Liberation Front (KPNLF), National United Front for an Independent, Neutral, Peaceful and Cooperative Cambodia (FUNCINPEC), Forces Armées du Nord (FAN), People’s Resistance Movement of Iran (Jondollah), People’s Mojahedin of Iran (MEK/NLA), People’s Defence Units (YPG), Jamiat-i-Islami, Hizb-i-Islami-yi, Northern Alliance, National Democratic Alliance (NDA/SPLA), Military in Chile, Permesta Movement, Libyan Rebel Movement and Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA). To achieve sufficient heterogeneity in these cases I have tried to be able to account for variance across time and across location as well as including cases with different outcomes. This is why I have included cases of conflicts that took place during the Cold War (e.g. Contras), right after the Cold War (e.g. KLA) and after 9/11 (e.g. Northern Alliance) as well as cases from every continent to have more typical and paradoxical cases included (Berg-Schlosser and de Meur 2009). A very prominent restricting factor in my case selection was the availability of data. Since I needed qualitative data in the form of news reports or scholarly journal articles, I had to review the case selection several times until I arrived at the current one, which is why some of the included rebel groups do not fit into the time frame of the dataset (San-Akca 2016) that was mentioned above and go beyond the year 2010. But as QCA is iterative by nature (Berg-Schlosser et. al 2009) this does not obstruct the quality of the research design but rather helps to find out more about the conditions and the universe of cases in general. Almost all cases are included in one or both datasets, the only exceptions are the People’s Defence Units which was drawn from qualitative literature on state sponsorship of rebel groups (Byman 2013), the Military in Chile, which was drawn from CIA documents concerning covert involvement in Latin American States (Gustafson 2003) and the Libyan rebel movement which was also drawn from qualitative literature on U.S. support for rebel groups

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<sup>2</sup> Nowadays, China could also be considered a “big power” but as their big power status has not been as constant in the time frame for this analysis, using China would not have been sensible.

(Schaller 2016). The lack of these cases in the datasets did not interfere with the general case research and coding since most of the coding process was based on qualitative literature. The next section will now show how the outcome and conditions will be operationalised based on the data that was just laid out.

### **III. Operationalization, Thresholds and Dichotomization**

The first step in a csQCA is building a dichotomous truth table (Rhioux and de Meur 2009). To do that the conditions as well as the outcome need to be operationalised as well as dichotomized, which means that each case is attributed a [1] or a [0] value for the outcome as well as each condition, depending on whether they are present or absent. The dichotomization process in a csQCA is based on thresholds that should be based on natural gaps in the data distribution and should make theoretical and empirical sense (Ibid). Something that is very important in the dichotomization process is that every condition is coded in the right “direction”, this means that their presence [1] should be associated with the [1] outcome.

The dependent variable/outcome in my csQCA is the mode of indirect governance (*INDGOV*)<sup>3</sup>: delegation or orchestration. For this analysis, the main difference between these lays in the degree of control the big power has over a certain rebel group. If the U.S. is delegating, they retain a considerable amount of control over the rebel group. This means that I looked at the type of support the U.S. gave to the rebel groups as well as how involved the US was with the organization of the rebel groups, relying on qualitative data. In this sense, I follow Heinkelmann-Wild and Mehrl (2022) in their operationalization of orchestration and delegation<sup>4</sup>, but I broaden their definition to make room for a deeper analysis since I do not only rely on quantitative datasets but also on qualitative literature for my coding. The reason for that being, that the databases concerned with external state-support do not provide data that is rich enough to account for the amount of control the USA exercised over a rebel group. Of course, this also makes the coding more objective than just relying on big quantitative datasets, but this is necessary in order to actually be able to know which mode of indirect governance was used by the United States.

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<sup>3</sup> As it is easier to refer to the conditions and the outcome with abbreviations in the software that will be used to conduct the csQCA, these abbreviations will be put in brackets when showing the operationalisation.

<sup>4</sup> Heinkelmann-Wild and Mehrl (2022) code a case as orchestration if only material support was provided since this does not allow for hard ex-post control. A case was coded as delegation if a state provided additional support like training, as this allows the state to keep on controlling the rebel group. This data was drawn from the UCDP External Support Dataset (Heinkelmann-Wild and Mehrl 2022).

So, since *delegation* means that the governor used hard ex-post and ex-ante control mechanisms as well as that the intermediary *derives* its authority (at least somewhat) from the governor (Abbot et al 2020b), a case will be coded as delegation if a combination of the following criteria applies: If the U.S. had a centralizing effect on the rebel group like it had with the Contras in Nicaragua (Hoekstra 2021), or was very closely involved with the organization of attacks or missions. This often means that American military personnel or the CIA were also involved in some part of mission control, like they were with the Northern Alliance in Afghanistan (Peltier 2005). Being closely involved with mission control also provides the rebel group with some form of authority from the United States which in turn points to delegation. Overall, for a case to be coded as delegation the U.S. needed to provide more than just material support and should be quite closely involved with the rebel group overall as this points to a considerable degree of control.

For a case to be coded as *orchestration*, the rebel group should rely on the United States mostly for funding and material support, like the FAN in Chad (May 1988). There should be no American personnel involved when it comes to the organizational aspects of missions or attacks, since the rebel group does not derive its authority from the governor, nor is it subject to hard ex-post or ex-ante control mechanisms (Abbot et al. 2020b). Since a big advantage of orchestration is the possibility of plausible deniability a case will also be coded as orchestration, if the type of support was channelled through other countries first, like the U.S. did with UNITA in Angola (Hoekstra 2018). Using other countries to covertly support a rebel group also means that it would be quite difficult for the U.S. to control the rebel group anyway. So, if there was overall not really a close involvement a case will be coded as orchestration. For the purpose of dichotomization, a case of orchestration will be coded as [1] and a case of delegation will be coded as [0]. Thus, if a proposed condition is coded as [1] it is expected to lead to orchestration and if it is coded as [0] it is expected to lead to delegation. The four proposed conditions/independent variables<sup>5</sup> are operationalised as follows:

The first condition refers to the *geographical distance* (DIST) between the U.S. and the rebel group, to measure the “shadow of hierarchy”. I expect a state to orchestrate if the rebel group is closer to the United States. I measure said distance in kilometres (km) using Google Earth. Using the software, I tried to find the shortest distance between the rebel groups location and

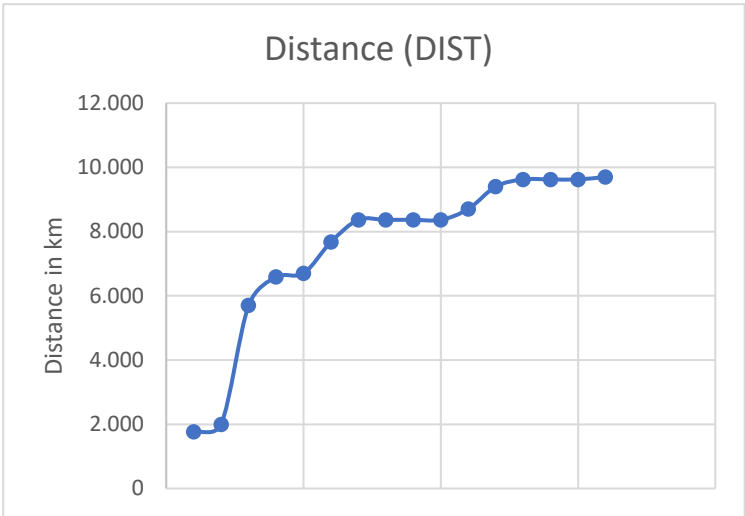
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<sup>5</sup> QCA uses the term “condition” when referring to independent variables (Rhioux and de Meur 2009), this is why this term will additionally be used in the following sections.



the United States while still trying to have the data make empirical sense. This means that I did not define Hawai'i or Alaskan islands as a feasible U.S. location and concentrated on the mainland. Of course, this method is somewhat subjective and not based on completely “hard data” but since I also want to measure a perceived “shadow of hierarchy” I have quite a big margin of error, since a few 100km should not obstruct this perception. Table 1 shows the distribution of the variable on the y-axis. This variable ranges from around 2000km to 10.000km and there are not really any natural gaps where one could define a threshold (Rhioux and de Meur 2009).

**Table 1 – Distance**



The gap between 2000 and around 6000km would not make any empirical sense since the variable would not vary enough for conducting a csQCA and all cases except the Latin American ones would be put into the same group. Thus, there are two options left: There are two less obvious gaps in the data where the graph jumps up: (1) between around 7600 km and 8400 km and (2) the other one between around 8700 km and 9400. I will choose the first gap, since it is bigger. Plus, putting the threshold there means having most of the African countries coded closer to the US than countries in the Middle East. As this also means differentiation between different continents it makes sense to put the threshold there.<sup>6</sup> Thus, the condition

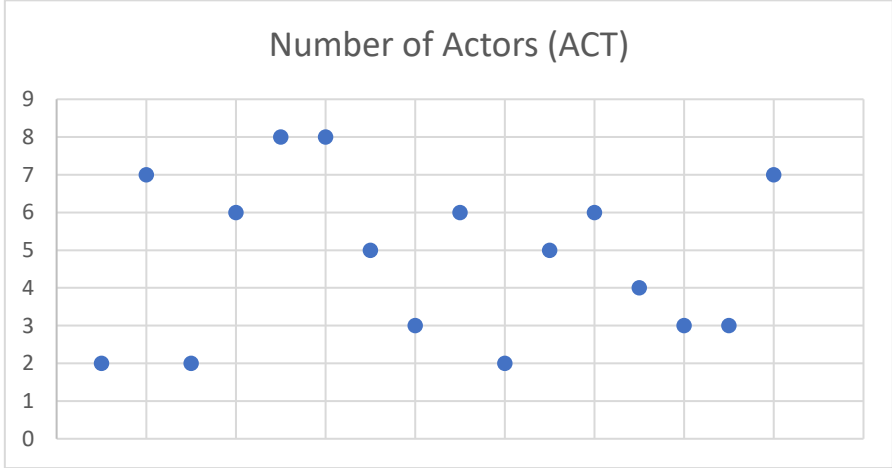
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<sup>6</sup> In some cases ( e.g. YPG or Northern Alliance) the United States used its own aircraft flown by army personnel, to aid the rebels. One could thus argue that this might make the perceived control stronger since the U.S. was actually present. This might be true but still I decided to not take this into account since most of those cases are considered “close” due to the threshold.

DIST will be coded as [1] if the country is less than 8400 km away from the US, and [0] if the country is further than 8400 km away.

The second condition I propose refers to the *number of actors* involved in the conflict (*ACT*). I generally expect a big power to be orchestrating if there are many actors involved since it is (1) easier to find an actor that has similar goals, (2) it is easier to threaten the rebel group to take away the support since there are other valuable actors and (3) easier for an orchestrating big power to not interfere with the local legitimacy of a rebel group. For this variable I mainly relied on qualitative data, like journal articles, concerned with a specific conflict and counted the actors that were mentioned in the literature. Obviously, this is not perfect since the literature might omit certain actors that were not deemed “important” enough or were not relevant for the research in that case. To control for that I relied on at least 2 different sources per case. Table 2 shows the distribution of this variable, with the number of actors shown on the y-axis. Concerning the threshold there was no natural gap with this variable either, but in most cases, there were either 3 or less actors or 5 or more actors involved (see Table 2). Therefore, I decided to put the threshold at 5. This choice is also supported by the average (4.8) and the median (5). Thus, a case will be coded as [1] if there are 5 or more actors involved and as [0] if there are less than 5 actors involved.

**Table 2 – Number of Actors**



The third condition measures the *goal convergence* of governor and intermediary (*CONV*). I expect the big power to orchestrate if there is goal convergence since then harder control mechanisms will not be necessary because the rebel group has the same goals as the big power. In other analyses of indirect warfare through rebel groups, goal convergence is often measured

through ethnic ties between the state and the rebel group (Heinkelmann-Wild and Mehrl 2021; Byman and Kreps 2010; Maoz and San-Akca 2012). Since this thesis uses the United States as its big power it is very unlikely that there are ethnic ties to the rebel group. Therefore, I decided to measure goal convergence through ideological convergence. I will not take functional goals into account, since it is quite common in a conflict to have the same “enemy” (e.g. wanting the incumbent to step down) but states and big powers in particular may have a heightened interest about the long term development of a certain country. This also means that only functional goals are insufficient over the long term because those goals are more likely to be realised if the state and the rebel group have the same or a similar ideology. In the case of the United States, I will code goal convergence to be present if the rebel group is anti-communist/Marxist, pro-democratic or generally western/liberal oriented and/or secessionist in the sense that they are pressing their right to self-determination. I will code goal convergence to be absent if the rebel group follows fundamental principles of Islam, if it is communist or follows a politically left ideology. If there is no coherent ideology existent, I will also code it as no convergence, since there is no reason to believe that the ideology of the rebel group was crucial in deciding the mode of indirect governance. This data was once again drawn from qualitative literature on each case as well as the Dangerous Companions Dataset (San-Akca 2016) as this provided data on the goals of the rebel group for at least some cases. Following the logic of dichotomization for a csQCA this variable will be coded as [1] if goal convergence is present and as [0] if goal convergence is absent.

The last condition I propose is the *strategic salience* (*SAL*) of a conflict. To code this variable, I once again looked at qualitative data about the conflict. If the rebel group that received support by the U.S. was fighting against the Soviet Union directly or against a different actor that was involved in the conflict but supported by the Soviet Union/Russia, I assume that is important for the U.S. to win this conflict since losing would also mean losing relative power vis-à-vis their adversary. I assume the same mechanism if the rebel group was fighting against a fundamentalist Islamic State (i.e., the Northern Alliance in Afghanistan), since the U.S. publicly waged their global “war on terror” after 9/11, which also meant that losing to a rebel group would most likely harm their relative power which in turn makes such a conflict strategically salient. Saliency is thus measured through the presence or absence of a different big power or the War on Terror in the conflict. Of course, there are other ways to measure strategic salience, but in a realist big power logic, the presence of a different big power should at least make a conflict more strategically salient than others. So, a case will be coded as [0] if the Soviet

Union/Russia was involved in the conflict or if it took place in the context of the war on terror and as [1] if that was not the case.

## D csQCA of Indirect Governance in Armed Conflict

The following section will now be structured as follows: First I will lay out the raw data and the coding of the 16 rebel cases, that are part of the csQCA, then I will solve possible contradictions in the subsequent truth table and finally conduct the csQCA and interpret the results. This interpretation will on the one side try to unfold the causal mechanism and a causal explanation for when big powers decide to orchestrate or delegate and on the other side re-evaluate the hypotheses from the beginning.

### I. Raw Data and Coding

After laying out the thresholds and dichotomization process it is now time to code the already researched Raw Data of each case into the csQCA typical binary code. To code all the 16 cases in a binary manner, I followed the framework that was laid out in the previous section. Table 3 shows all 16 cases in alphabetical order with their raw data and the respective qualitative sources this data was drawn from.

**Table 3 – Raw Data**

CASEID	INDGOV	DIST	ACT	CONV	SAL	References
Chile	Delegation	5700km	2	no	SU	Gustafson (2003); Shiraz (2011); Flynn (2014); Hersh (1974).
FAN	Orchestration	7676km	7	yes	NO	May (1988); Giroux et al (2009); Kelley (1985).
FDN	Delegation	1.770km	2	yes	SU	Hoekstra (2021); Beardsley and Skrede Gleditsch (2004).
FUNCINPEC	Orchestration	8367km	6	yes	SU	Menon (1986); Teik Soon (1982); Babcock et al. (1985).

Hizb	Orchestration	9624km	8	no	SU	Hughes (2008); Alexiev (1988); Coll (2004).
Jamiat	Orchestration	9624km	8	yes	SU	Hughes (2008); Alexiev (1988); Coll (2004).
JONDOLLAH	Orchestration	8366km	5	no	NO	Brown et al (2012); Asgharirad (2012); Reuters (2009); ABC News (2007); Perry (2012), Hersh (2008).
KLA	Delegation	6586km	3	no	NO	Craig (1999); Beaumont et al (2001); Bardos (2002); Webber (2009).
KPNLF	Orchestration	8367km	6	yes	SU	Menon (1986); Teik Soon (1982); Babcock et al. (1985).
Libya	Delegation	6700km	2	yes	NO	Emadi (2012); Myre (2014); Hosenball (2011); Sherwood (2011).
MEK	Orchestration	8366km	5	no	NO	Hersh (2008); Masters (2014); Cohen (2018); Goulka et al (2009); Piazza (1994); The Associated Press (2021); Khalaji (2008).
NDA/SPLA	Orchestration	9400km	6	yes	NO	Rolandsen (2005); Meteltis (2004); Hamilton (2011,2012); Collins (2007).

Northern Alliance	Delegation	9624km	4	no	WoT	CBS (2001); Cohen (2001); Peltier (2005); Bosin and Peceny (2011).
Permesta	Orchestration	8700km	3	yes	NO	Mann (1994); McMahon (1994).
UNITA	Orchestration	9.700km	3	yes	SU	Minter (1991); Hoekstra (2018); Wright (1989).
YPG	Delegation	2000km	7	yes	WoT	Byman (2013); Fumerton and van Wilgenburg (2022); Apuzzo and Mazetti (2016); Itani (2017); Ergun (2018); BBC (2017).

Source: Author's presentation

INDGOV corresponds to the outcome of this csQCA – the mode of indirect governance. DIST corresponds to the distance in kilometres between the U.S. and the rebel group. ACT shows the number of actors involved in the conflict and CONV shows whether there was ideological convergence between the U.S. and the rebel group. The last variable displayed is SAL, which corresponds to the saliency on the conflict, SU or WoT indicate that either the Soviet Union was involved with the other side or that the conflict took place in the greater scope of the War on Terror, if none of this was the case NO was displayed. CASEID shows the name of the 16 different cases. Since most names of the rebel groups are too long to fit into a simple table abbreviation are used.<sup>7</sup>

The next step in this csQCA is the dichotomization following the framework that was laid out in the previous section. Table 4 shows all 16 cases and the 4 variables as well as the outcome dichotomized. Something to look for is the sufficient variance in between each variable, for

<sup>7</sup> Chile: Military in Chile; FAN: Forces Armées du Nord; FDN: Fuerza Democrática Nicaraguense; FUNCINPEC National United Front for an Independent, Neutral, Peaceful and Cooperative Cambodia; Hizb: Hizb-i-Islami-yi, Jamiat: Jamiat-i-Islami; JONDOLLAH: People's Resistance Movement of Iran; KLA: Kosovo Liberation Army; KPNLF: Khmer People's Liberation Front; Libya: Libyan Rebel Movement; MEK: People Mojahedin of Iran; NDA/SPLA: National Democratic Alliance; Northern Alliance: United Islamic National Front for the Salvation of Afghanistan; Permesta: Permesta Movement; UNITA: National Union for the Independence of Angola; YPG: People's Defence Units.

each condition there should be at least a third represented by either [1] or [0] (Rhieux and de Meur 2009).

**Table 4 – Dichotomized Data**

CASEID	INDGOV	DIST	ACT	CONV	SAL
Chile	0	1	0	0	0
FAN	1	1	1	1	1
FDN	0	1	0	1	0
FUNCINPEC	1	0	1	1	0
Hizb	1	0	1	0	0
Jamiat	1	0	1	1	0
JONDOLLAH	1	0	1	0	1
KLA	0	1	0	0	1
KPNLF	1	0	1	1	0
Libya	0	1	0	1	1
MEK	1	0	1	0	1
NDA/SPLA	1	0	1	1	1
Northern Alliance	0	0	0	0	0
Permesta	1	0	0	1	1
UNITA	1	0	0	1	0
YPG	0	1	1	1	0

Source: Author's presentation, created with QCA-Add-In for Excel (Conqvist 2019a).

A first look at the data shows, that there are only 2 cases that correspond perfectly to the theory: FAN and the Northern Alliance, both show only [1] and [0] respectively for their outcome. But as I expect different combinations of conditions to lead to the same outcome, this first look only

underlines the fact that a csQCA is a valuable method for my research question. In ten out of 16 cases the United States orchestrated, this corresponds to 62.5% which also means that in 37.5% the U.S delegated to a rebel group, which works with the above-mentioned variance of cases. Every condition also shows a sufficient variance, so that it is possible to go onto the next step of the csQCA.

## II. Solving Contradictions and Simplification

The next step will now be constructing a truth table from the raw data table. This shows the different configurations for each outcome that are present in the data, if some cases have the exact same configurations on the outcome and variables they are put into groups. A truth table also shows if there are any contradictions, meaning that if there are cases that have the same configuration of conditions but lead to a different outcome (Rhioux and de Meur 2009). These would have to be solved first before being able to use Boolean Algebra to minimize the results. Table 5 shows the truth table for this analysis. It was obtained using the QCA Excel tool (Cronqvist 2019).

**Table 5 – Truth Table**

CASEID	DIST	ACT	CONV	SAL	INDGOV
Northern Alliance	0	0	0	0	0
UNITA	0	0	1	0	1
Permesta	0	0	1	1	1
Hizb	0	1	0	0	1
JONDOLLAH, MEK	0	1	0	1	1
FUNCINPEC, Jamiat, KPNLF	0	1	1	0	1
NDA/SPLA	0	1	1	1	1
Chile	1	0	0	0	0
KLA	1	0	0	1	0
FDN	1	0	1	0	0



Libya	1	0	1	1	0
YPG	1	1	1	0	0
FAN	1	1	1	1	1

Source: Author's presentation, created with QCA-Add-In for Excel (Cronqvist 2019a).

This Truth Table shows that there is still a considerable amount of heterogeneity, in the cases that were examined. Only five cases were grouped into two groups which both have orchestration as their outcome, these cases are Jondollah, MEK, FUNCINPEC, Jamiat and the KPNLF. Since none of the delegation cases have the exact same value for each condition, we can see that there are a lot more different combinations of conditions that lead to delegation, thus it is quite likely that the results are not very parsimonious. Something that is visible here, as well as in Table 4, is the fact that in some cases seemingly only one variable led to a change in the outcome. In the case of UNITA for example goal convergence seemed to have been a crucial factor in the decision to orchestrate, since the value for all other conditions point to delegation. For YPG the variable that seemed to heavily influence the decision to delegate was the strategic salience, since all other conditions would rather point to orchestration. These two cases would then make an interesting choice for a more single-case-oriented analysis and research design. Looking at these cases underlines that QCA in general stays very case oriented which helps to find out more atypical cases that may need further investigation. Looking at the Truth Table we can also see that there is still enough cross-condition diversity as well as enough variance (Rhieux and de Meur 2009). There are also no contradictions which would need to be solved first. In earlier versions of this Truth table there were some contradictions present but they were solved by re-evaluating thresholds and coding of the cases, which led to the operationalization, thresholds and coding that were already outlined in chapter C.III.<sup>8</sup> Since there are no contradictions, enough variance and cross condition diversity as well as no counterintuitive configurations (Rhieux and de Meur 2009), the next step is the minimization process as well as the interpretation of results.

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<sup>8</sup> This contradiction was between Northern Alliance and UNITA, since I first coded goal convergence to be present for the Northern Alliance. After reviewing my coding for all cases I re-coded the Northern Alliance, since the U.S. supported them mainly because they were the only capable rebel group and not for their actual ideology (Peltier 2005).

### III. Minimization and Results

For the following minimization of results Rhioux and de Meur (2009) propose that a minimization procedure should be run for each outcome, as QCA does not expect causal symmetry (Rhioux and de Meur 2009). Since the research question for this thesis is concerned with both delegation and orchestration this would have been done anyway. Analyses for both outcomes should also be run twice: once with logical remainders included and once without logical remainders included. Logical remainders are non-observed cases, that are logically possible from the coding of the variables. These can help to achieve a more parsimonious result, as they make it possible to express the results as part of a “broader zone”. If logical remainders are included the software selects only those that are useful for obtaining a more minimal solution and makes simplifying assumption (Rhioux and de Meur 2009). So, they should only be used if their inclusion helps with obtaining a more parsimonious result.<sup>9</sup> For now, I will start to run the minimization process first for delegation [0] and then for orchestration [1] to decide, whether including logical remainders is a viable option.

#### Delegation

Running the minimization process for the [0] outcome, without including logical remainders yields the following results: <sup>10</sup>

<b>act*conv*sal +</b>	<b>DIST * CONV * sal +</b>	<b>DIST * act</b>
Chile+Northern Alliance	FDN+YPG	Chile+FDN+KLA+Libya

All lower case letters correspond to a [0] coding in the truth table and capital letters correspond to a [1] coding in the truth table. Looking at this result shows that it is obviously not very parsimonious, since all proposed variables are present, and it is very long. So, it is a viable option to include logical remainders in the next round to see if this can make the result more parsimonious. But before that it might still be interesting to take a quick look at this first minimized formular: The three different combinations cover all six cases between them. The first one (*act\*conv\*sal*) corresponds to only two cases (Chile and Northern Alliance) and fits my theoretical expectations very well, as few actors, no goal convergence and a high saliency of the conflict correspond to the causal direction. As Chile is also covered by one other

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<sup>9</sup> For this analysis, a screenshot that visualizes the logical remainders that were included will be provided in Appendix F.

<sup>10</sup> Screenshots of the TOSMANA Results for all minimization procedures will be included in the Appendix.

combination, only the Northern Alliance is fully represented by the first combination. The next two combinations show two interesting results. The second one (DIST\*CONV\*sal) – covering two cases – puts goal convergence and a high geographical proximity as well as a high saliency as sufficient conditions for delegation. The distance condition goes against my initial theoretical expectation, and thus will need further evaluation in the next section. The third combination (DIST\*act) which is represented by four cases also puts geographical proximity as a sufficient condition for delegation. As this variable is included in two out of three combinations it seems to be quite important. Further evaluation of this will take place in the next section. For now, I will run a second analysis for the [0] outcome, this time *including* logical remainders. This yields the following results:

**DIST \* act + DIST \* sal + act \* conv**  
 Chile+FDN+KLA+Libya Chile+FDN+YPG Chile+KLA+Northern Alliance

Including logical remainders, has indeed made the minimal formular more parsimonious. Of course, there are still three different combinations, which is not ideal but makes for a better formular than the previous one. This means that the next section will be dedicated to interpreting this formular and work out the causal mechanisms. But first, the [1] outcome for orchestration needs to be minimized.

### **Orchestration**

The minimization process without logical remainders for the [1] outcome yields the following result

**ACT \* CONV \* SAL + dist \* CONV + dist \* ACT**  
 (FAN+NDA/SPLA) (FUNCINPEC,Jamiat ,KPNLF+NDA/SPLA+Perm ,KPNLF+Hizb+JONDOL  
 esta+UNITA) LAH,MEK+NDA/SPLA)

In this combination all proposed variables are present, which shows rather limited parsimony. The first combination (ACT\*COV\*SAL) covers two cases and corresponds fully to my theoretical expectations: many actors, goal convergence and no salience led to orchestration. The other two combinations cover six (dist\*COV) and seven (dist\*ACT) cases, respectively. Both name a big geographical distance as a sufficient condition for orchestration, which goes against my initial theoretical expectation. But as this corresponds to the minimal formular

obtained by minimizing the [0] outcome it is important to investigate this further. Another aspect that is visible here is that the last combination (dist\*ACT) is the exact opposite of one combination in the minimized formular for delegation, which shows at least some causal symmetry. But since the above obtained minimal formular is still quite broad the next step will be running the same analysis with logical remainders included.

This leads to the following result:

<b>dist * ACT +</b>	<b>dist * CONV +</b>	<b>ACT * SAL</b>
(FUNCINPEC,Jamiat ,KPNLF+Hizb+JONDOLL AH,MEK+ NDA/SPLA)	(FUNCINPEC,Jamiat, KPNLF+NDA/SPLA+ Permesta+ UNITA)	(FAN+JONDOLLAH,MEK+NDA/S PLA)

<b>dist * CONV +</b>	<b>ACT * conv +</b>	<b>ACT * SAL</b>
(FUNCINPEC,Jamiat ,KPNLF+NDA/SPLA+Perm esta+ UNITA)	(Hizb+JONDOLLAH,M EK)	(FAN+JONDOLLAH,MEK+NDA/S PLA)

The software offered two different minimal formulars that both minimize the above mentioned one, which are both more parsimonious than before. To obtain only one, the researcher must now draw on their case-based knowledge to decide which one is the more viable option, as QCA is still very case-oriented (Berg-Schlosser et al 2009). To do that, the differing combinations are examined: dist\*ACT, is the same one as mentioned above and covers seven out of the ten cases that were examined for orchestration. The second combination (ACT\*conv) only covers three out of seven cases and all of those seven cases are also covered by the previous combination. Since the goal for a QCA is also to be able to have some modest generalizations (Berg-Schlosser et al 2009), choosing the combinations that covers more cases seems more viable. Therefore, the minimized formular for orchestration, that will be interpreted in the next section, is the following one:

**dist \* ACT +**

(FUNCINPEC,Jamiat  
,KPNLF+Hizb+JONDOLLAH,  
MEK+ NDA/SPLA)

**dist \* CONV +**

(FUNCINPEC,Jamiat  
,KPNLF+NDA/SPLA+  
Permesta+ UNITA)

**ACT \* SAL**

(FAN+JONDOLLAH,MEK+  
NDA/SPLA)

#### **IV. Interpretation of Results**

This section will be dedicated to interpreting the obtained minimal formulas for each mode of indirect governance, delegation and orchestration. For some parts of the interpretation I drew on the guiding questions by Legewie (2013). First, I will look at the single combinations in each formula and examine the underlying causal mechanisms and then I will try to paint a broader picture to show which conditions may be more important than others in the big power’s decision to delegate or orchestrate.

##### **Delegation**

The choice for delegation is represented by the following minimal formula:

**DIST \* act + DIST \* sal + act \* conv**

Chile+FDN+KLA+Libya Chile+FDN+YPG Chile+KLA+Northern Alliance

Looking at this there are three different combinations that can either separately or in combination with each other lead to delegation. So, either being close and having few actors involved in the conflict or being close and the conflict being highly salient or having few actors and no goal convergence lead to delegation. As this is obviously still a very bulky answer, we will first look at each combination separately and then work out a broader answer. Surprisingly, the distance variable goes against the initial theoretical expectation.<sup>11</sup> Being geographically proximate is a sufficient condition in two out of three combinations, whereas I expected it to be the exact other way round when it comes to delegation. But this result still works with the general indirect governance theory, since it might also be easier to control a rebel group if it is geographically close which in turn makes delegation more likely.

Looking at the first combination (*DIST\*act*) – which represents four out of the 6 cases that were examined for delegation – this mechanism becomes even clearer. The combination shows that

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<sup>11</sup> This is already visible in Table 4 and Table 5 as most cases with a [0] outcome show [1] on the distance condition and are thus closer to the United States.

being geographically proximate and few actors involved in the conflict leads to delegation. As already mentioned, being close makes it easier and less costly to employ hard control mechanisms like training or indoctrination and it is also easier to send own military personnel to “check” on the rebels. Overall, being geographically proximate makes harder control mechanisms less costly than they would be in more distant settings. In Chile for example, military personnel were trained in the U.S. which made it easier to influence them at a later stage (Shiraz 2011), this training was less costly to realise due to the relative proximity of both states. The leaders of the Contras in Nicaragua also partly sought refuge in the U.S. and were in close contact with the CIA (Hoekstra 2021), which in turn led to U.S. officials telling them what to say during a press conference (Ibid). If this geographical proximity is combined with only few or even only one actor that poses a viable option, a state or a big power is basically forced to delegate as then, goal convergence also becomes less likely.

For the second combination (*DIST\*sal*) being geographically close leads to the same causal mechanism as mentioned above but when combining it with a highly salient conflict another layer is added: On top of the fact that a big power does not want to lose a conflict to a different big power, a conflict that takes place in a neighbouring or close state becomes geographically salient as well, which heightens the security perception of said state. This makes using harder control mechanisms even more important and due to being geographically close they become less costly and thus easier to employ. Examples for this mechanism are once again the military coup in Chile and the Contras in Nicaragua. Both countries are geographically close to the U.S. and in both cases the rebel groups were fighting a Marxist government (Hoekstra 2021; Gustafson 2003) during the Cold War. The geographical proximity led to a heightened security perception by the U.S., as they did not want any Communist states who were supported by the Soviet Union or Cuba (Hoekstra 2021) in their imminent neighbourhood. This in turn made it more important for that the rebel group won the conflict and underlined the importance of hierarchical control mechanisms. Being close then made employing these control mechanisms less costly which is why the United States were delegating.

The last combination (*act\*conv*) shows that few actors and low or non-existent goal convergence lead to delegation. This just underlines the general expectation of indirect governance theory (Abbot et al 2020a). Both variables in combination make softer control mechanisms and thus orchestration less viable for a big power, since they still want to achieve their interests. This does not work if they cannot rely on shared goals with the rebel group or if they cannot even find a group that has converging goals due to very little actors. This was the

case with the Northern Alliance in Afghanistan, the United States relied on them in their conflict with the Taliban not because of ideological convergence (the Northern Alliance was a group mostly made of similar ethnic groups with no real ideology) but because they were the only rebel group that had the military capacity to put up with the Taliban (Peceny and Bosin 2011). The lack of ideological goal convergence and the lack of actors made delegation the only viable option for the United States.

Looking at the minimal formula and the causal mechanisms that were just laid out for each combination it is visible that there are two variables that seem to be more important: geographical proximity and few actors.<sup>12</sup> They show up in all three combinations and combined they cover four out of six cases, the only case that is not covered by either of them is the Northern Alliance, but in this case a lot of American military personnel was present over the course of the conflict which could at least somewhat substitute a geographical proximity. This means that overall, the combination of geographical proximity and few actors have a huge impact on the decision to delegate as they make the employment of harder control mechanisms more important (due to few actors) but also less costly (due to geographic proximity). They are accompanied by a high salience and lack of goal convergence, which respectively reinforce their impacts, as was laid out above.

**Orchestration**

A big power’s choice for orchestration is represented by the following formula:

<b>dist * ACT +</b>	<b>dist * CONV +</b>	<b>ACT * SAL</b>
(FUNCINPEC,Jamiat ,KPNLF+Hizb+JONDOLLAH,M EK+NDA/SPLA)	(FUNCINPEC,Jamiat ,KPNLF+NDA/SPLA+Per mesta+UNITA)	(FAN+JONDOLLAH,MEK +NDA/SPLA)

Once again there are three separate combinations that explain the big power’s decision to orchestrate. Either a high distance in combination with many actors and/or a high distance in combination with ideological goal convergence and/or many actors and a conflict with low salience lead to orchestration. Taking a first look shows us, that the first combination (*dist\*ACT*) is the exact logical opposite of the first combination in the minimal formula for delegation and that goal convergence is only present in one combination, even though the theory

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<sup>12</sup> Rhioux and de Meur (2009) underline the fact that one should not engage in an analysis of a causal mechanism for single conditions. But as these two conditions are sufficient and most likely more important than the others a tentative examination seems viable.

expects it to be a crucial factor in the decision on which mode of governance a big power will engage in. Instead, the number of actors and the geographical proximity are once again present in two out of three combinations respectively, their impact will be examined later. First, I will look at each combination separately and work out each causal mechanism to get a broader picture in the end.

The first combination (*dist\*ACT*) shows that a big geographical distance and many actors involved in the conflict lead to orchestration. It represents seven out of the ten cases that were examined for orchestration. The distance variable also goes against the initial theoretical expectation, but as laid out above this mechanism still works within the theory for indirect governance (Abbot et al 2020a). If a big power is far away from the rebel group and the conflict, hard control mechanisms are a lot more costly than they would be if the conflict were closer. This means that it is also harder to send own military personnel or communicate with the rebel group, which in turn makes being in control over military missions very unlikely and costly. These costs can be reduced if aid is channelled through states that are neighbours to the conflict country, but this also means that being in control of the rebel group is less likely as well, which makes orchestration the only available mode of indirect governance. If this is paired with many actors involved in the conflict, there is even less of an incentive to use harder control mechanisms since the big power can credibly threaten to support a different group which keeps the current rebel group in line, and it is generally more likely that both share the same ideological goals which makes delegation unnecessary. So, due to many actors it is less urgent to use harder control mechanisms and due to being geographically close it is less viable to do so, which makes orchestration the better option for a big power. This was the case with the U.S. involvement in Cambodia in the 1980s. Since there were so many actors involved it was very easy for the U.S. to find groups that were pro-Western and democratic (KPNLF and FUNCINPEC) but since these groups were so far away the U.S. even channelled aid through Thailand as this was less costly and also meant that they didn't have to control these groups (Menon 1986).<sup>13</sup> This same mechanism can be seen with the covert aid the U.S. gave to the Mujahedin in Afghanistan, as the Mujahedin was composed out of seven rebel groups it was easier to find a rebel group that had the same goals (Jamiat) but even if there was no goal convergence like with Hizb-i-Islami it should have been very easy to threaten to just support a different rebel group (Hughes 2008). An added bonus with this mechanism is the fact that many actors and a high geographical distance facilitate upholding plausible deniability, which made

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<sup>13</sup> Of course channelling through other countries also gives states and big powers a better plausible deniability but as this is also less costly one can argue that this also plays into that decision.



it easy for the U.S. to remain distant and vague concerning their support e.g., of the MEK in Iran (Piazza 1994).

The second combination (*dist\*CONV*) shows that being geographically distant but having converging goals leads to orchestration. This is because the big geographical distance makes it more costly to use hard control mechanisms but if both big power and rebel group share the same goals there is less of a need to control the group since the state can be relatively sure the rebel group will act in line anyway. Goal convergence makes the already existing inability to control less relevant which in turn makes orchestration a better option. For example, the U.S. supported UNITA in Angola, because it was a very openly anti-Marxist group (Hoekstra 2018). This made the high distance between Angola and the United States less important since the U.S. could be sure UNITA would act in line due to their shared goals, hierarchical control mechanisms which would have been very costly anyway, became basically obsolete since the U.S. could be sure of goal convergence. Plus, not having to engage in hierarchical control meant the U.S. did not interfere with any niche skills (e.g. knowledge of local terrain and population) UNITA brought to the table.

The last combination (*ACT\*SAL*) shows that many actors and a conflict that is not very salient lead to orchestration. If there are many actors a state is more likely to find an actor with converging goals and if this is combined with a less salient conflict a big power might be less inclined to use harder control mechanisms in the first place. If they then do not even have to engage in hard control mechanisms because there are other options (e.g. threats) to control the rebel group, the big power will engage in orchestration. This was the case with the NDA/SPLA in South Sudan during the Second Sudan Civil War. In the 1990s the U.S. did not have any big adversaries in the international system. This meant that the intervention in South Sudan did not pose a big risk to lose a strategically salient conflict, which made the use of harder and more costly control mechanisms less important. In addition, the Sudanese Civil War was composed of many actors who were also engaged in fights within each faction (Collins 2007). This also implies that it should have been very easy for the U.S. to threaten to support a different rebel group. Furthermore, the SPLM/A's programme for a new liberal civil government in a war zone was a very unique goal (Rolandsen 2005) and aligned very well with general U.S. goals of establishing democracy in a war ridden country. This meant that the unattractiveness of hard control mechanisms due to a low saliency of the conflict and many actors involved was only enforced by already existing goal convergence and the possibility of credible threats, which made orchestration the better option in that conflict.

In all three combinations either the distance variable, the actor variable or both are present. Both conditions are sufficient but not necessary and represent 11 out of the 16 cases that were examined. This shows their relative importance vis-à-vis the other variables. So, many actors involved in a conflict and a big geographical distance between big power and rebel group seem to be the most important factors when it comes to the decision on the mode of indirect governance. This corresponds to result that was gained for delegation, which is the exact logical opposite. Separately, the two variables make orchestration more costly (due to big geographical distance) and more effective (because there are credible threats possible with many actors) and in combination they reinforce their respective benefits as was already outlined for the causal mechanism of the first combination. They are then accompanied by a low salience and goal convergence which respectively have their own and combined impact on the decision to orchestrate. As already mentioned, this result is the exact causal opposite from the minimization formula for delegation which only reinforces the notion that the number of actors and/or the distance between big power and rebel group seem to be important for the decision on a mode of indirect governance. As we have now obtained a result for when big powers decide to delegate or orchestrate, the next section will re-evaluate the initial hypotheses and theory as well as look at the limits of the obtained result.

## **V. Implications and Limitations of Results**

The now conducted csQCA resulted in a better understanding of when big powers delegate or orchestrate. But since QCA in general is iterative by nature and calls for a newer inductive theory after the analysis (Berg-Schlosser et al 2009; Rhioux and de Meur 2009), the following section will evaluate the hypotheses and conditions that were posed at the beginning of this thesis. H1 theorized that a big power is more likely to orchestrate if the rebel group was geographically proximate. The underlying mechanism this was supposed to measure was the “shadow of hierarchy” as a rebel group might then follow orders without hard control mechanisms because a big power could issue credible threats. This hypothesis did not hold, instead we saw the exact opposite mechanism of the one that was theorised: if a rebel group was far away from the United States it was orchestrating. One could thus argue that the shadow of hierarchy does not have any influence on the mode of indirect governance and distance purely leads to a cost-benefit analysis on the big power’s side. An alternative explanation could argue that this hypothesis did not hold due to the operationalization that was used in this thesis. There may be better ways to measure the presence or absence of a “shadow of hierarchy”, as this has

a lot to do with perception on the part of the rebel group which is hard to measure with absolute numeric values like the distance in kilometres. Still, this analysis has shown that merely being geographically distant is more likely to lead to orchestration than delegation. Due to the high importance of the distance variable, it is important to mention that the threshold that was chosen for this condition is not ideal, since it is not at a very clear natural gap in the data, so a different threshold may lead to other results. But this does not change the validity of the argument that a high geographical distance means that engaging in hierarchical control mechanisms becomes a lot more costly for a state and that there is a possibility of them not being as effective due to the big distance. If this is combined with any of the other conditions proposed, it is very unlikely that the big power will use these hard control mechanisms.

All other hypotheses worked exactly the way they were theorised, which shows that the initial theoretical expectations were mostly valid and good at explaining when big powers decide to delegate or orchestrate. Still, these results are only modestly generalizable due to the nature of QCA (Berg-Schlosser et al 2009) since it is still a very case-oriented and qualitative method. The obtained combinations can explain all of the 16 cases that were examined and is thus generalisable for those cases. This would not have been possible in a mere case-comparison. The case selection also makes the results obtained through this csQCA somewhat generalisable for cases beyond the ones that were examined. The variance across time and location shows that the obtained explanation can be used for a broad variance of cases with different external circumstances. This makes a good argument that other cases that were not included may also be explained by the formulas that were obtained.

For now, it is definitely viable to say that being far away in combination with many actors or goal convergence and/or many actors and a low saliency lead to *orchestration*. Being close in combination with a high saliency or few actors or low goal convergence and few actors lead to *delegation*. To get clearer and more parsimonious results, future analyses could include more cases on delegation, as these cases were very spread out and it was not possible to group them in a truth table. Due to time constraints and the lack of qualitative data this was not possible for this thesis but could be a viable option for future research. It would also be interesting to run a similar comparative research design with different variables, since there may also be other factors that influence the decision to delegate or orchestrate. During the case-oriented research I noticed several factors that may be interesting to include: Most rebel groups were not supported by the U.S. alone, and sometimes the other state engaged in more strict control mechanisms or gave a lot more financial aid than the U.S. Examples would be UNIITA or the

KPNLF (Hoekstra 2021; Menon 1986). In other cases, the rebel groups or their supporters were explicitly lobbying in the U.S. to acquire financial or military aid (Hamilton 2012; Hoekstra 2018). Previous military involvement in a state may also influence whether a big power orchestrates or delegates, since there may already be ties established which could lead to mutual trust or familiarity, making orchestration more likely. Analysing these potential variables did go over the limits of this Bachelor Thesis and would not have been a viable option, since the inclusion of more variables would have made the result even less parsimonious. Still, the analysis in this thesis led to explanations of when big powers decide to orchestrate or delegate and is modestly generalisable.

## **E Conclusion**

The goal of this Bachelor thesis was to find out when big powers delegate or orchestrate, as existing theories on indirect warfare and indirect governance expect big powers to mostly delegate. As we see empirical variance instead, this thesis was set out to solve that empirical puzzle. By conducting a crisp-set Qualitative Comparative analysis the goal was to find out necessary and sufficient conditions for a big power's decision on each mode of governance. While it was not possible to obtain fully necessary conditions for each mode of indirect governance, the conducted csQCA still made it possible to find sufficient conditions for the decision on the respective modes of governance and showed which conditions are more important than others when it comes to big power's decision on which mode to employ. The minimized formula for delegation shows that a state chooses to *delegate* if the rebel group is close and there are few actors involved in the conflict or the conflict is highly salient and/or if there is no goal convergence and few actors. *Orchestration* occurs if the rebel group is far away in combination with many actors or goal convergence or if there are many actors involved in the conflict and it is not very salient. The two conditions that have the largest impact on the mode of indirect governance are thus the number of actors involved in a conflict and the geographical distance between the rebel group and the big power. Overall, the outcome of 11 out of the 16 cases that were examined can be explained by the combination of geographical distance between big power and rebel group and the number of actors involved in the conflict. The hypotheses and the subsequent csQCA was able to further develop the insights gained by the literature on Indirect Warfare and Indirect Governance Theory, by adding more theoretical depth and a more nuanced understanding on how different variables influence the degree of control a big power exercises over a rebel group. It reveals that not only one condition is relevant for the decision on a certain mode of governance but rather different conditions in

combination with each other. Furthermore, the result also shows, that orchestration in many cases is a choice that may not only be based on goal convergence but also on reduced costs. As the United States can undoubtedly be considered a big power these results can justify a modest generalization beyond the cases that were examined and beyond the U.S. as the delegating or orchestrating big power. Engaging in indirect warfare is not specific to the United States and the results obtained in this thesis can (tentatively) be applied to other big powers as well.

Future research could engage in more case-oriented research to work out the causal mechanisms in specific cases where one condition seemed to have a bigger impact than others (e.g. the YPG or UNITA) as already pointed out in the descriptive analysis of Table 4. Another path for future research would be to include the above-mentioned alternative conditions that may also be relevant for the decision to delegate or orchestrate.

Indirect Warfare was the source of the conflict in Ukraine we are witnessing right now. The support for separatist groups by the Russian Federation is only one example for this mode of warfare that has been and will be relevant in the future. The 16 cases examined in this thesis represent only a fraction of the rebel groups supported by states and big powers (especially the United States) all over the world. The armed conflicts these rebel groups and states are involved in pose real security risks for all the civilians that are affected by human rights abuses and the violation of international law. These unjustifiable violations are visible in Europe today but have been ongoing in every part of the world. Understanding why and when big powers chose to wage war indirectly and how much control they use thus also has direct implications for the security of countless civilians all over the world.

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## G Appendix

### Appendix A: TOSMANA Output (Cronqvist 2019b) for [0] outcome without logical remainders

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Settings:

Minimizing: 0

including:

#### Truth-Table:

CASEID	DIST	ACT	CONV	SAL	INDGOV
Northern Alliance	0	0	0	0	0
UNITA	0	0	1	0	1
Permesta	0	0	1	1	1
Hizb	0	1	0	0	1
JONDOLLAH, MEK	0	1	0	1	1
FUNCINPEC, Jamiat , KPILF	0	1	1	0	1
NDA/SPLA	0	1	1	1	1
Chile	1	0	0	0	0
KLA	1	0	0	1	0
FDN	1	0	1	0	0
Libya	1	0	1	1	0
YPG	1	1	1	0	0
FAN	1	1	1	1	1

#### Result(s):

$DIST * act + act * conv * sal + DIST * CONV * sal$   
(Chile+FDN+KLA+Libya) (Chile+Northern Alliance) (FDN+YPG)

Created with Tosmana Version 1.61

**Appendix B: TOSMANA Output (Cronqvist 2019b) for [0] outcome including logical remainders**

**Settings:**

Minimizing: 0

including: R

**Truth-Table:**

CASEID	DIST	ACT	CONV	SAL	INDGOV
Northern Alliance	0	0	0	0	0
UNITA	0	0	1	0	1
Permesta	0	0	1	1	1
Hizb	0	1	0	0	1
JONDOLLAH, MEK	0	1	0	1	1
FUNCINPEC, Jamiat , KPILF	0	1	1	0	1
NDA/SPLA	0	1	1	1	1
Chile	1	0	0	0	0
KLA	1	0	0	1	0
FDN	1	0	1	0	0
Libya	1	0	1	1	0
YPG	1	1	1	0	0
FAN	1	1	1	1	1

**Result(s):**

DIST \* act + DIST \* sal + act \* conv  
 (Chile+FDN+KLA+Libya) (Chile+FDN+YPG) (Chile+KLA+Northern Alliance)

Created with Tosmana Version 1.61

## Appendix C: TOSMANA Output (Cronqvist 2019b) for [1] outcome without logical remainders

### Settings:

Minimizing: 1

including:

### Truth-Table:

CASEID	DIST	ACT	CONV	SAL	INDGOV
Northern Alliance	0	0	0	0	0
UNITA	0	0	1	0	1
Permesta	0	0	1	1	1
Hizb	0	1	0	0	1
JONDOLLAH, MEK	0	1	0	1	1
FUNCINPEC, Jamiat , KPRLF	0	1	1	0	1
NDA/SPLA	0	1	1	1	1
Chile	1	0	0	0	0
KLA	1	0	0	1	0
FDN	1	0	1	0	0
Libya	1	0	1	1	0
YPG	1	1	1	0	0
FAN	1	1	1	1	1

### Result(s):

$\text{dist} * \text{ACT} + \text{dist} * \text{CONV} + \text{ACT} * \text{CONV} * \text{SAL}$   
 (FUNCINPEC,Jamiat ,KPRLF+Hizb+JONDOLLAH,MEK+NDA/SPLA) (FUNCINPEC,Jamiat ,KPRLF+NDA/SPLA+Permesta+UNITA) (FAN+NDA/SPLA)

Created with Tosmana Version 1.61

## Appendix D: TOSMANA Output (Cronqvist 2019b) for [1] outcome including logical remainders

### Settings:

Minimizing: 1

including: R

### Truth-Table:

CASEID	DIST	ACT	CONV	SAL	INDGOV
Northern Alliance	0	0	0	0	0
UNITA	0	0	1	0	1
Permesta	0	0	1	1	1
Hizb	0	1	0	0	1
JONDOLLAH, MEK	0	1	0	1	1
FUNCINPEC, Jamiat , KPRLF	0	1	1	0	1
NDA/SPLA	0	1	1	1	1
Chile	1	0	0	0	0
KLA	1	0	0	1	0
FDN	1	0	1	0	0
Libya	1	0	1	1	0
YPG	1	1	1	0	0
FAN	1	1	1	1	1

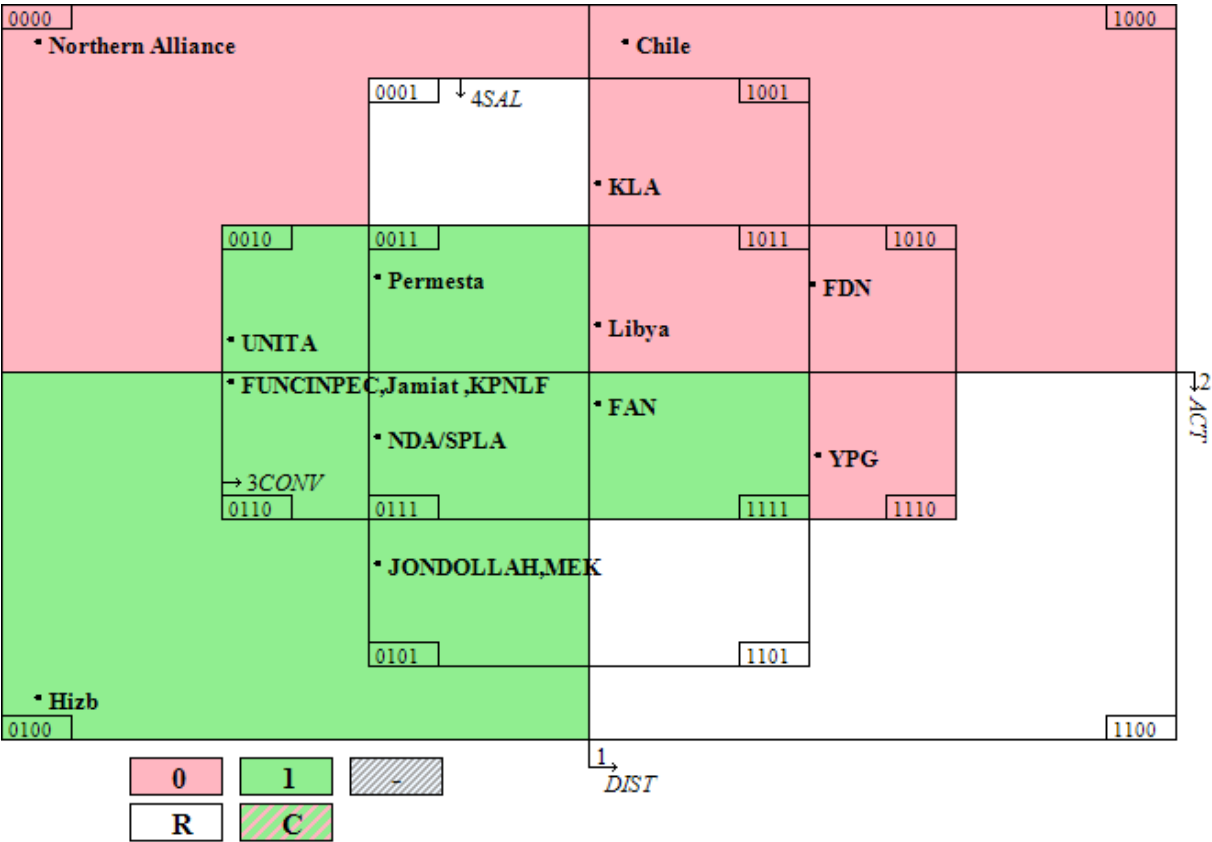
### Result(s):

$\text{dist} * \text{ACT} + \text{dist} * \text{CONV} + \text{ACT} * \text{SAL}$   
 (FUNCINPEC,Jamiat ,KPRLF+Hizb+JONDOLLAH,MEK+NDA/SPLA) (FUNCINPEC,Jamiat ,KPRLF+NDA/SPLA+Permesta+UNITA) (FAN+JONDOLLAH,MEK+NDA/SPLA)

$\text{dist} * \text{CONV} + \text{ACT} * \text{conv} + \text{ACT} * \text{SAL}$   
 (FUNCINPEC,Jamiat ,KPRLF+NDA/SPLA+Permesta+UNITA) (Hizb+JONDOLLAH,MEK) (FAN+JONDOLLAH,MEK+NDA/SPLA)



**Appendix E: Visualization of Results, shows the logical remainders that were included (white background) (Cornqvist 2019b).**



Green: Orchestration; Red: Delegation