

## ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation:

DIFFIDENT DISSIDENT: HOW CIVIL SOCIETY  
INFLUENCES ARMED INTRASTATE  
CONFLICTS AND POLITICAL VIOLENCE

Davin O'Regan, Doctor of Philosophy, 2020

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The U.S government has for many years extended rhetorical and material support for civil society organizations in many developing country contexts. Part of this support is justified on the basis that it reduces civil conflicts and political violence. This dissertation features three empirical analyses that assess the grounds for such assumptions, including whether the strength of civil society influences the onset of civil conflicts, how civil conflicts unfold (i.e., predominantly violent or nonviolent), and the severity of violence during armed intrastate conflicts. The first and second papers, which employ a large-N statistical analysis complemented by an examination of the case of South Africa during the 1980s, draw on interdependence theory to explain how loss aversion incentivizes well established and economically integrated civil society groups to avoid civil conflict or adhere to mass nonviolent protest methods. The third paper evaluates whether armed rebel groups with organizational roots in civil society have advantages in developing rebel governance and controlling information about their operations that reduce their targeting of civilians and fatalities in battles with government forces. Analysis of armed insurgencies from 1988-2017 finds negligible support for these propositions. Together these essays suggest that policymakers recalibrate their broad expectations regarding civil society's role in political violence.

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# Table of Contents

Acknowledgements.....	ii
Table of Contents.....	iii
Chapter 1: U.S. Policy Toward Civil Society and Civil Conflicts.....	1
What is Civil Society? .....	10
Chapter 2: Mobilizing Structures and Contentious Action: Does Civil Society Influence Civil Conflict Onset and Method of Dissidence? .....	15
Literature Review: Civil Society and Civil Conflict.....	19
Theory: Alternatives to Violence – Advocacy and Loss Minimization .....	26
Advocacy Alternative .....	26
Loss-Minimization Alternative .....	29
Data and Methods .....	36
Model Output and Analysis .....	44
Conclusion and Policy Implications .....	54
Chapter 3: Interdependence and Methods of Resistance in Civil Conflict: The Influence of Loss Aversion in the Case of 1980s South Africa.....	62
Literature Review: Nonviolence, Disruption, and Inconsistent Assumptions.....	65
Theory: Loss Aversion and Nonviolence .....	82
Data, Methods, and Outcomes of Interest.....	95
Background: South Africa’s Civil Conflicts.....	100
South Africa’s Changing Economy and Labor Dynamics.....	106
Analysis: Noncooperation Viability, Loss Aversion, and Forms of Resistance.....	113
Civics and UDF Foundational Organizations.....	114
Labor Unions: FOSATU and SAAWU .....	124
Youth – Universities, COSAS, and Congresses .....	131
Conclusion and Policy Implications .....	143
Chapter 4: Civil Society Roots and The Intensity of Civil Wars.....	149
Literature Review: The Challenges for Armed Insurgents.....	152
Theory: Roots in Civil Society, Rebel Governance, and Information Advantages ....	156
Data and Methods .....	169
Model Output and Analysis .....	178
One-Sided Civilian Victimizations.....	179
Battle-Related Deaths .....	186
Conclusion and Policy Implications .....	190
Chapter 5: Summary of Findings, Policy Implications, and Research Avenues .....	193
Appendices.....	204
Bibliography .....	224

## Chapter 1: U.S. Policy Toward Civil Society and Civil Conflicts

The U.S. government spent over \$3 billion dollars supporting civil society groups in many countries around the world from 2010 through 2016. The funds formed part of the Obama administration's *Stand with Civil Society Initiative*. Officially launched in 2013, this new program justified its focus on civil society for two broad reasons. First, civil society indirectly fuels economic development and governance capacity. "Civil society organizations – such as community groups, non-governmental organizations, labor unions, indigenous groups, charitable organizations, faith-based organizations, professional associations, and foundations – often drive innovations and develop new ideas and approaches to solve social, economic, and political problems that governments can apply on a larger scale." Second, more numerous and active civil society organizations "contributes to stability" and prevents violent conflict. By contrast, President Obama explained that when civil society is suppressed "it fuels grievances and a sense of injustice that over time can fuel instability or extremism. So I believe America's support for civil society is a matter of national security."

The *Stand* initiative was not a partisan take on the role of civil society organizations in stability and civil conflict, but one example of a belief that has become increasingly embedded in U.S. foreign policy. In substantial ways, the *Stand* initiative echoed the logic of the Freedom Agenda, the Middle East Partnership Initiative, and National Security Presidential Directive No. 58 that prioritized support for civil society in "countries at risk of conflict and civil strife," all of which were launched by President George W. Bush from 2003 to 2008 (CRS 2016; Gilley 2013; Yerkes and Wittes 2006).

Though foreign assistance in general has been a lower priority in the administration of President Donald Trump, engaging with civil society organizations ranks among the principles of its Strategic Prevention Project and the Global Fragility Act that focus on violence prevention in fragile and conflict-affected states (State Department/USAID 2019; Welsh 2019). These initiatives from Democratic and Republican administrations alike all aim to strengthen stability in otherwise fragile countries through expanding and supporting local civil society organizations. They represent what has become an article of faith that strong and numerous civil society organizations enhance stability and reduce political violence and armed civil conflict.

These views are based on several interpretations of civil society organizations. First, they are often understood to be primary sites or actors through which individuals are able to influence or constrain their governments and address their grievances. “Through civil society, citizens come together to hold their leaders accountable and address challenges,” according to the 2015 U.S. National Security Strategy, which made “empowering civil society” one of its headline objectives. More importantly, a strong and resourced civil society permits citizens to not only influence government and address grievances, but to do so peacefully rather than resort to violence. Former Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor Tom Malinowski explained in 2016 that it is “civic organizations through which citizens organize themselves against violent extremists, and the political movements that give people the hope that change can be won peacefully.” Likewise, Lorne Craner, one of Assistant Secretary Malinowski’s predecessors who served in the administration of President George W. Bush, stated in 2001 during a hearing on U.S. policy in Central Asia “we will continue our support for

civil society...to enable them to hold their governments accountable and advocate for peaceful change.” The 2015 U.S. National Security Strategy similarly states, “By giving people peaceful avenues to advance their interests and express their convictions, a free and flourishing civil society contributes to stability and helps to counter violent extremism.”

While an emphasis on their policy influence and their peaceful approach is recurrent, U.S. foreign policy does not perceive civil society organizations as inherently quiescent or powerless. USAID’s 2013 Strategy on Democracy described civil society as holding “the power of citizens to sanction, impose costs or to remove government officials for unsatisfactory performance or actions” (USAID 2013). Along with references to civil society’s ability to petition governments and institutions, U.S. policy and policymakers occasionally identify a central role for civil society in mass-based anti-regime protest campaigns. In the Obama administration, approaches to civil society were partly informed by periods of mass protest action against sitting governments, including during the Arab Spring and elsewhere (Lawson and Epstein 2019). The 2013 USAID Strategy on Democracy, which identified civil society organizations as a central engagement partner, explained “Examples of growing civic engagement and expression have emerged across the globe including in parts of the Arab world and in Burma. Where these openings occur USAID supports the aspirations of people to contribute to the decisions that shape their own lives and societies” (USAID 2013). Civil society is depicted as critical to conventional and institutional politics, working to advance its interests and policy preferences, but it is also referenced as the source of challenges to incumbent regimes through more contentious and extra-institutional approaches. These



conceptualizations are not without some inherent tension. Civil society organizations are viewed simultaneously as promoting stable and “normal” policy reform and political processes as well as more assertive and confrontational challenges to the political status quo – a source of civil conflict, albeit nonviolent. Whatever the technique, U.S. policy depicts it as promoting peaceful, nonviolent methods.

U.S. policy initiatives like *Stand* and the thinking behind them raise important research questions. Is there a consistent relationship between civil society and peace? If so, why? More specifically, does variation in civil society and its characteristics influence the incidence of civil conflicts? When these conflicts do occur, does it affect how civil conflicts are waged, such as whether dissidents engage in armed rebellion or adopt nonviolent alternatives? Even amid armed civil conflicts, does the involvement of civil society influence their intensity and the level of violence that occurs, keeping them comparatively more peaceful?

Answers to these questions have significant consequences for conflict prevention and U.S. policy. If a stronger and more capable civil society does reduce civil conflict onset, how they are waged, or the intensity of violence amid armed civil conflicts, then potentially the U.S. and other governments are underinvesting in this sector. Alternatively, civil society may have no appreciable effect on civil conflict occurrence, form, or intensity. Expectations should then be adjusted and, potentially, financial support reconsidered. There is also a possibility that civil society is associated with civil conflict onset or higher levels of violence during civil wars. Under such scenarios, U.S. policy may inadvertently contribute to political violence and exacerbate conflict dynamics. Lastly, U.S. policy views of civil society may be too sweeping. It may be that

certain types of civil society in certain state contexts influence civil conflict and political violence in unique ways.

This dissertation aims to examine the relationship between civil society and these civil conflict dynamics and some of the assumptions driving U.S. policy engagement with civil society, thereby contributing to a clearer understanding of how to engage with these actors. It does so in three separate empirical analyses written as stand-alone studies. The first paper empirically evaluates the broader association between variation in civil society and the onset of civil conflicts and how they are waged – whether as armed rebellions or mass nonviolent campaigns. The second paper delves into a specific case, one rich with civil society organizations and enduring contemporaneous armed and unarmed challenges to the incumbent regime: South Africa during the 1980s. The South Africa case is particularly valuable since it has motivated U.S. policy thinking on civil society. Together, these two papers’ topics and approaches directly complement one another. The first provides a systematic large-N assessment of civil society’s relationship with civil conflict, testing basic propositions distilled from U.S. policy assumptions about the links between civil society and forms of civil conflict. The large-N technique offers breadth and greater external validity. The second paper examines in finer detail the precise links between civil society with violent or nonviolent methods of dissidence. It provides enhanced internal validity by specifying precise causal mechanisms that connect civil society with conflict behaviors and overcomes limitations of the large-N approach, including simple correlational evidence of causal relationships, issues of causal heterogeneity, and potential post-treatment bias, given the potential relationship between civil society and other important conflict factors such as the extent of democratization,

among others. For South Africa's non-white population, there was little access to any democratic institutions, and so the richness of civil society and the variation in dissident methods therein is not a consequence of how civil society and democratic reform are sometimes interwoven. The third paper complements the first and second essays by exploring civil society's role in another aspect of armed civil conflict. It examines the relationship between the origins of armed rebel groups, specifically whether they were founded by pre-existing civil society organizations, and the level of battle-related deaths and civilian victimizations that take place during a subsequent civil war.

While U.S. foreign policy often emphasizes that civil society organizations are peaceful actors, it is rarely explained in detail why this is the case. In my first and second papers, I draw on existing theories of interdependence to explain why civil society organizations are less likely to direct their organizational resources toward violent methods. A major emphasis is on the cost vulnerabilities of pre-existing organizations to political violence and their interest in aspects of the status quo, often prevailing economic conditions. Civil society organizations are created to advance the interests and goals of their members. That they exist and produce these benefits means they have at least some stake in the pre-conflict status quo and the prevailing order – without it their organization may not exist. Therefore, when they do seek to challenge fundamental aspects of the prevailing political arrangement, including who is in power, they turn to methods of disruption that are comparatively more manageable and less likely to jeopardize their pre-conflict social and economic standing. This encourages the adoption of mass nonviolent strategies, which allows them to engage in dissidence while minimizing the potential losses they face from generating widespread disruption. However, when organizations are

formed from constituencies that share fewer interests with political and economic elites, cost vulnerabilities and loss minimization are less salient and the comparative advantage of political violence to increase disruption and coercion over elites and the state increases. In such circumstances, civil society organizations may direct their organizational resources to armed challenges to the political or territorial status quo. I find support for this explanation in both my large-N quantitative analysis and my case study of South Africa. More specifically, it appears that formalized and established civil society organizations are associated with a sharp reduction in the probability of armed civil conflict onset. The relationship is as strong as a major increase in per capita gross domestic product, which has traditionally be one of the factors most predictive of civil war occurrence. In a situation of widespread dissidence, the South Africa case also demonstrates that more established civil society organizations, particularly those from the “middle class,” favor nonviolent methods over political violence. Cognizance of the potential negative effects of violence on their own socioeconomic standing and prospects appears to shape many non-white South Africans’ strategy selection.

The third paper examines how commonly lauded aspects of civil society organizations may influence the intensity of armed civil conflicts. Policy engagement with civil society organizations often praises them for their unique knowledge of local conditions, their connections to pre-existing community networks on the ground, and their “grassroots” representation, which yields higher levels of legitimacy. In the context of an active armed insurgency, these could be interpreted as advantages that facilitate shifts to less violent tactics, enhance resources and capabilities, permit more selective targeting of potential opponents, and provide better protections from government

detection. The result should be less deadly conflicts, both in terms of the extent to which armed rebel groups target unarmed civilians and the battle deaths that result from combat with government forces. Unfortunately, an analysis of these two forms of violence in civil wars between 1988 and 2017 provides no clear empirical support for these theorized relationships. Armed groups formed by civil society organizations appear to engage civilian victimizations as frequently and at levels similar to other armed nonstate groups. Likewise, armed rebel groups that originate from civil society organizations are associated with no significant difference in battle-related deaths.

These papers do not directly assess the impact of specific U.S. programs or support for civil society. Previous studies have conducted such examinations, though the focus is more often on less contentious policy reform initiatives (i.e., those with sub-maximal objectives). The results have often been mixed, at best (Amenta et al. 2010; Barrett et al. 2010; Brown, Brown, and Desposato 2007; Bush 2015; Cooley and Ron 2002; Edwards and Hulme 1996; Fox 2015; Lieberman, Posner, and Tsai 2014; Mendelson 2001; Sheely 2015; Spina and Raymond 2014; Watkins, Swidler, and Hannan 2012). However, civil society's relationship with political violence – especially in civil conflicts – remains understudied (Chambers and Kopstein 2001; Paffenholz 2009; Stacey and Meyer 2005). Underlying assumptions of U.S. policy toward civil society regarding its violence prevention and mitigation properties have not been investigated. As important as it is to understand the effectiveness of specific U.S. programs and initiatives, the assumptions on which these programs are based should also be examined. An evaluation that finds that U.S. civil society support programs do not reduce political violence could be due to the weaknesses of program design or because they are based on

faulty understandings of central conflict dynamics. This dissertation aims to examine these underlying assumptions first, thereby informing whether continued U.S. policy attempts to reduce conflict and political violence through civil society are merited at all.

From a policy perspective, the results of these doctoral essays are somewhat encouraging but also suggest that U.S. policymakers have overestimated the role of civil society in peace and nonviolence. In the aggregate, the extent and density of the landscape of civil society organizations is not consistently associated with nonviolent strategies. These features also do not appear to reduce the onset of armed civil conflicts. However, as noted previously, there is strong evidence that older, more established organizations or those that are more deeply interdependent with political and economic elites are more likely to forswear strategies of political violence. When these groups engage in political violence, however, it appears to be less no less intense and deadly. Efforts to work through civil society to reduce civil conflicts and violence risks would need to focus on older organizations. Ensuring that entities with some level of interests tied to elites, state institutions, or elements of the economic status quo are strong may be the most effective violence prevention strategy that focuses on civil society.

In summary, the results suggest a moderation in U.S. policymakers' and program implementers' views of civil society and its ability to reduce instability and political violence. Civil society may reduce civil conflict onset, particularly armed conflicts, but it is less commonly a source of mass nonviolent resistance. But if armed intrastate conflict does erupt, the involvement of civil society groups in rebellion is not likely to produce less severe fighting. If the intention of a policy intervention is to reduce the likelihood of political violence, working with established, formalized civil society organizations may

be the most fruitful and impactful priority. If instead policymakers are seeking to support nonviolent conflict and nonviolent challenges to the political status quo, the relationship between civil society and mass protest campaigns is less clear.

### *What is Civil Society?*

Before finishing this introduction to these separate empirical analyses of civil society, civil conflict, and political violence, I lay out a definition of the concept. Though it is not without its shortcomings – particularly its breadth – this definition is used because it is common in many other studies of civil society and is reflected in relevant U.S. policy documents. Parts of the specific narrative, definition, and references offered below are repeated in parts of the subsequent empirical essays.

Civil society is a sweeping concept. Generally, it is conceived of as a public space that exists between the household, state institutions, and the commercial marketplace. It is populated by organizations and association of citizens that work collectively to advance or protect shared interests. Their participation in and contributions to these organizations is voluntary, which distinguishes civil society from profit-driven participation in commercial firms or market-based transactions or the political or legal dynamics that govern state institutions, officials, and the civil service. The types of organizations and associations that comprise civil society are variegated. They include labor unions and professional associations, faith-based and religious organizations, nongovernmental organizations, student groups, advocacy and special interest organizations, and a wide variety of recreational, social, cultural, and other entities founded and maintained voluntarily by citizens. In developing countries, more traditional

institutions, such as village associations and chiefdoms, are also considered to constitute associational life. Civil society is often described as strong and vibrant when participation in associations and organizations is high and encompassing.

This conceptualization of civil society as constituted by voluntary organizations and associations – associational life – is “the most common of the understandings” of the concept (Edwards 2009, 19–20). The same conceptualization is regularly used in empirical studies that examine the relationship between civil society, democracy, and governance (Bernhard 1993; Boulding 2014; Bratton 1989; Diamond 2016; Fish 2001; Howard 2005; Kew 2016; Schofer and Longhofer 2011). Each of these emphasizes voluntary, self-governing organizations or associations that are autonomous of state institutions and the commercial marketplace. Likewise, similar conceptualizations have been applied in analyses of civil society’s role in civil conflict termination and post-conflict development. In an analysis of the role of civil society in peace negotiations, one scholar identifies it as “as separate from the state and political parties, and consists of the wide range of voluntary organizations in society such as religious associations, women’s organizations, human rights groups, and trade unions” (Nilsson 2012, 246). Another study of civil society’s influence on military rule identifies it as “the arena where manifold social movements (such as neighborhood associations, women’s groups, religious groupings, and intellectual currents) and civic organizations from all classes (such as lawyers, journalists, trade unions, and entrepreneurs) attempt to constitute themselves in an ensemble of arrangements so that they can express themselves and advance their interests” (Stepan 1988, 4). Other empirical work that examines how civil society may interrelate with inter-communal conflict, individual attitudes toward



violence, and the dynamics of armed conflict draw on these same understandings of the concept (Belloni 2001; Bhavnani and Backer 2007; J. M. Braithwaite and Cunningham 2020; Chapman 2008; Della Porta 2017; Kew and Wanis-St. John 2008; Nilsson 2012; Orjuela 2003; Paffenholz 2009; Paffenholz and Spurk 2006; Tesfaye 2016; Varshney 2001). There are points of divergence, typically over how “political” civil society is, with some definitions including political parties while others ostensibly excluding any entities with ambitions to rule the state or state institutions. Overall, the consequential operative features of the definition are some sort of routinized and persistent collective or organization in which members voluntarily provide resources and time so as to protect or advance shared material or value-based interests.

U.S. policy embraces this same conceptualization of civil society. Citing most of the usual suspects, President Barack Obama identified “community groups, non-governmental organizations, labor unions, indigenous groups, charitable organizations, faith-based organizations, professional associations, and foundations” as the various types of civil society organizations that his administration sought to provide support as part of larger U.S. initiative to strengthen civil society (White House 2014). Often, a focus on the organization as the primary actor within civil society is emphasized. In its 2013 Strategy on Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance, which outlined a plan of “robust support to civil society organizations globally,” USAID defines them as “formal non-government organizations (NGOs) as well as formal and informal membership associations (including labor unions business and professional associations farmers’ organizations and cooperatives and women’s groups) that articulate and represent the interests of their members engage [*sic*] in analysis and advocacy and conduct oversight of

government actions and policies” (USAID 2013). The Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor at the State Department, which is another major U.S. funding agency in the civil society space, offers a similarly encompassing definition of the concept: “Civil society is the collection of social organizations, formed voluntarily by citizens to advance shared goals or interests. This includes independent public policy research organizations, advocacy organizations, organizations that defend human rights and promote democracy, humanitarian organizations, private foundations and funds, charitable trusts, societies, associations and non-profit corporations. It does not include political parties” (DRL 2020).

U.S. policy and programming embraces a definition of civil society similar to that of most academic and empirical studies of the concept. It emphasizes that organizations are the central element of civil society, they are based on voluntary membership, they generally seek to advance or protect an array of material and value-based interests, and they are autonomous from the formal institutions of the state and the marketplace. This definition is not without problems, particularly how broad-based and inclusive it is. The variety of organizations that would fall under it includes some with vastly different resources and interests. Arguably, this complicates their comparability and the ability to generalize about their relationship with certain forms of behavior in civil conflicts (or other political and economic matters). My papers seek to incorporate both the broad-based definition, particularly in the large-N analyses, as well as unpack how different organizations and their features more precisely influence their behavior. The latter is done in the analysis of the South Africa case.

There are other definitions of civil society, which do not apply here but can be a source of confusion. In some uses, civil society refers to anti-government or opposition forces in society. On occasion it is used to refer to protesters and protest organizations. This is sometimes referred to as the “Gramscian” view of civil society (Foley and Edwards 1996, 1998). It is less common in conceptualizations adopted in policy documents and programs nor does it align with how civil society is typically discussed in various academic literatures, which prefer less overtly political and contentious definitions (Bratton 1989). For that matter, it is also less interesting or relevant to explore the relationship of this type of civil society on civil conflict and mass nonviolence since these are essentially synonymous.

## Chapter 2: Mobilizing Structures and Contentious Action:

### Does Civil Society Influence Civil Conflict Onset and Method of Dissidence?

**Abstract:** Many developed country governments provide extensive donor funds and diplomatic support to civil society organizations as a way to prevent the onset of internal armed conflicts or support the adoption of nonviolent alternatives when political and territorial incompatibilities emerge. Such policies are partly informed by anecdotal and case study work on nonviolent action and social movements that demonstrate the role of pre-existing social organizations as key resources for mobilizing large-scale anti-regime and secessionist protest campaigns. However, studies of armed civil conflicts have demonstrated that social organizations are also crucial to the mobilization of armed insurgency for similar goals. This paper contributes two possible explanations, partly distilled from policy assumptions about civil society, for how pre-existing social and civil society organizations might reduce the onset of conflicts in general or promote the use of mass nonviolent campaigns over armed insurgency. It assesses these explanations using multinomial logistic regression and state-level data on four different attributes of civil society from the Varieties of Democracy initiative. The results provide no support for propositions that civil society influence the adoption of mass nonviolence, but older more established organizations are associated with a reduction in the onset of armed civil conflict and the potential effect is substantial. The results suggest that civil society plays a more narrow but still important role in the onset of civil conflicts and their subsequent forms.

Social organizations and networks that pre-date civil conflicts are often mobilized and recruited into their executions (Humphreys and Weinstein 2006; Mark I. Lichbach 1994). Their involvement in contentious action has been studied in armed insurgency (Bultmann 2018; Humphreys and Weinstein 2006; Petersen 2001; Staniland 2014; Weinstein 2007; E. J. Wood 2015) as well as mass nonviolent campaigns (P. Ackerman and Kruegler 1994; Boulding 2014; Chenoweth and Stephan 2011; McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald 1996; Morris 1981). However, whether the structure and landscape of social

organizations influence the onset of contentious action and the form it takes has not been systematically examined. Do the number and composition of pre-existing social organizations and networks influence the onset of civil conflicts or how they are waged?

Policymakers often debate these same issues but in different terms. In recent decades, the potential of a “strong” civil society composed of many citizen organizations and associations to prevent conflict or promote nonviolent action has been embraced by many decisionmakers and donor agencies in developed country governments. Accordingly, increasing amounts of donor funds and diplomatic support has been extended to various women’s and youth organizations, labor and professional groups, sports or cultural associations, and other advocacy and nongovernmental groups in many countries. Such engagement seeks to expand the number of and popular participation in civil society organizations and associations. In the latter half of President Obama’s administration, billions of dollars were provided to such entities as part of a stand-alone initiative to support citizen-led civil society organizations (CRS 2016). Among a variety of political and development objectives, such funding was justified as a means to prevent political violence and instability or ensure that when conflict occurs it is waged nonviolently.

Many examples from past episodes of contentious action appear to support and inform the purported importance of pre-existing social organizations and networks in mass nonviolent campaigns. For example, religious organizations were essential contributors to anti-regime protest campaigns in Iran in 1979, the Philippines in 1986, and South Africa during the 1980s (Chenoweth and Stephan 2011; Schock 2005). Labor unions were a major force in protests in Poland and Zambia during the 1980s (Larmer

2006; Schock 2005). Groups of amateur soccer leagues and fans contributed to the peaceful anti-regime protests in Egypt in 2011. Beyond these examples, there are others in which citizen organizations either engage in routine advocacy and institutionalized politics to improve government transparency or human rights policies, among similar efforts in other issue areas. These and other common examples are often referenced to explain how well-organized and strong citizen-led organizations open alternatives to armed conflict for redressing grievances. “Through civil society, citizens come together to hold their leaders accountable and address challenges that governments cannot tackle alone,” according to a speech given by then U.S. President Barack Obama in 2014.

There are, however, examples of similar social organizations supporting more violent analogs. Religious groups in Algeria during the early 1990s (Hafez 2000), in Sri Lanka during the 1990s (Orjuela 2005), and in Iraq during the 2000s (Pirnie and O’Connell 2008) all played central roles in armed rebellions. A large labor union served as a primary source of recruits for the armed National Liberation Movement in Uruguay in 1965 (Brum 2014), unions were mobilized during the Spanish civil war (Balcells 2010), and a well-organized labor sector did not appear to prevent civil war in Yugoslavia in the early 1990s (Della Porta 2017). Amateur sports leagues formed the backbone of at least one Serbian militia during the war in the former Yugoslavia in the 1990s (Schlichte 2009), and many members of the Gaelic Athletic Association contributed to the armed Easter Rising revolt in Ireland. The future head of the PKK in Turkey was once a member of a progressive student organization (O’Connor and Oikonomakis 2015), and many university students fled into the jungles of Thailand in the 1980s to form militias against the government of Myanmar (P. Ackerman and DuVall

2000). Anecdotally at least, civil society organizations sometimes appear to be associated with armed conflict.

This paper seeks to systematically examine the relationship between the structure and landscape of civil society, conflict onset, and the form such contentious action assumes. Its findings have implications for core precepts that are motivating critical foreign policy decisions and contribute to ongoing debates in relevant academic literatures about pre-existing social organizations and contentious action. It is divided in four parts. First, it reviews how previous studies of social movements, nonviolent action, and armed insurgencies have examined the role of pre-existing social organizations and civil society in contentious action, and some of the shortcomings of the explanations therein. The paper then offers additional theoretical contributions for why variation in civil society and social organizations may be associated with a reduction in the incidence of armed conflict and an increase in the adoption of nonviolent alternatives. Data from the Varieties of Democracy initiative is then used to empirically evaluate this relationship. Finally, the policy and research implications of the results are discussed.

Results suggest that the relationship between civil society and civil conflict onset resides primarily in older and more established groups. By contrast, few of the often-cited civil society attributes, such as participation, diversity, or size, appear to influenced the onset of civil conflicts, whether armed or nonviolent. However, older and more established civil society organizations are negatively associated with the occurrence of violent civil conflicts, suggesting that a more formalized and mature civil society can prevent violent conflict. Overall, the analysis here provides negligible support for the role

of civil society in promoting alternatives to armed conflict. It suggests a deeper critical review of foreign policies that seek to support and strengthen civil society is warranted.

*Literature Review: Civil Society and Civil Conflict*

A number of existing studies have explored the relationship between civil society and contentious action, sometimes using different terminology for the same concepts.<sup>1</sup> I examine them briefly in three groups: research on armed civil conflict, on social movements, and on nonviolent action. First, I offer a definition of civil society, and then demonstrate the theoretical contributions and some shortcomings of these literatures.

Civil society is generally defined as a public space that exists between the household, formal state institutions, and the commercial marketplace. Empirically, it consists of the organizations and associations of citizens that populate this space and that work collectively to advance their shared interests. Participation in and contributions to these organizations is voluntary, which distinguishes civil society from profit-driven participation in commercial firms or remunerated participation in political or legal offices that govern the state. The types of organizations and associations that comprise civil society are variegated. They include labor unions and professional associations, faith-based and religious organizations, nongovernmental organizations, student groups, advocacy and special interest organizations, and a wide variety of recreational, social, cultural, and other entities founded and maintained voluntarily by citizens. In developing countries, traditional institutions such as village associations and chiefdoms are sometimes considered to comprise civil society (Bratton 1989; Varshney 2001). Civil

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<sup>1</sup> These terms include social endowments, social institutions, social organizations, civil society organizations, associational life, or associations. I use these terms largely interchangeably, unless otherwise specified.



society is often described as strong and vibrant when participation in associations and organizations is high and encompassing and bridges ethnic, linguistic, religious, or other divides (Bratton 1989; Kew 2016; Putnam 2001).

This conception of civil society as constituted by voluntary organizations and associations is “the most common of the understandings” of the concept (Edwards 2009, 19–20). It is also consistent with the explicit treatment of civil society in previous research on armed and unarmed conflicts. In an analysis of the role of civil society in peace negotiations, one scholar identifies it “as separate from the state and political parties, and consists of the wide range of voluntary organizations in society such as religious associations, women’s organizations, human rights groups, and trade unions” (Nilsson 2012, 246). Another study of civil society’s influence on military rule identifies it as “the arena where manifold social movements (such as neighborhood associations, women’s groups, religious groupings, and intellectual currents) and civic organizations from all classes (such as lawyers, journalists, trade unions, and entrepreneurs) attempt to constitute themselves in an ensemble of arrangements so that they can express themselves and advance their interests” (Stepan 1988, 4). There are points of divergence, typically over how “political” civil society is, with some definitions including political parties while others ostensibly exclude any entities with ambitions to rule the state or state institutions. Overall, the consequential operative features of the definition are some sort of routinized and persistent collective or organization in which members voluntarily provide resources and time.

A principled embrace of nonviolence is not a defining feature of civil society (Chambers and Kopstein 2001; Stacey and Meyer 2005). While individually some civil

society organizations and their members may adhere to normative preferences of nonviolence, it is not commonly shared across civil society organizations. In fact, analysis of individual attitudes have shown that there is no consistent negative relationship between participation in civil society organizations or associations and support for political violence (Bhavnani and Backer 2007; Chapman 2008). Likewise, civil society organizations have been found to support illiberal and divisive political agenda, such as the strong support that German citizen associations provided the Nazi party in 1930s (Berman 1997) and how a leading architect of South Africa's apartheid system, the National Party, "built up its strength with the support of a plethora of Afrikaner cultural and economic organizations" during the 1920s and 1930s (Thompson 2001, 162). There are no inherent ideological or attitudinal leanings within the concept of civil society that predispose it toward certain political visions or strategic courses of action (i.e., nonviolent protest). Regardless, if there were definitional requirements that civil society be nonviolent and pro-democracy, the question of how civil society influences the adoption of violence or nonviolence would be less interesting or relevant.

Several studies of the dynamics of armed conflict have examined how civil society organizations influence the onset or character of political violence, though they often use different terminology. Drawing on Robert Putnam's classic study of civil society in Italy (Putnam, Leonardi, and Nanetti 1994), Weinstein (2007) argues that the ability of conflict entrepreneurs to recruit through and mobilize pre-existing "social endowments" resolves principal-agent problems and enhances the performance of armed insurgent groups. Staniland (2014) similarly argues that the structure of pre-existing "social institutions" influences the sustainability and performance of armed groups by

increasing information flows, resource management, innovation, and resilience. In his analysis of armed rebellion in the Baltics during and after World War II, Petersen (2001) attributes the onset and sustainability of organized armed militancy in various villages and towns to the existence of strong community organizations. Though these authors disagree in important ways regarding how social organizations and civil society influence the intensity, duration, or viability of armed conflict, pre-existing organizations and associations become important ways to reduce the costs of mobilizing and sustaining armed insurgency. By implication, they may have some impact on the viability of contentious action and the appeal of various strategic choices when conflict entrepreneurs or major political and territorial incompatibilities arise.

These arguments – and the social organizations referenced therein – resemble many studies in social movement literature and those of nonviolent action. According to the resource mobilization theory of social movements, the availability of pre-existing social organizations and “mobilizing structures” reduce the costs of mobilizing support for an anti-status quo agenda (Boulding 2014; McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald 1996; Morris 1981; Tilly 1978). Such pre-existing organizations allow for “bloc recruitment” of entire collectives of people and can simplify coordination of many participants by supporting meso- as opposed to micro-level mobilization (Gerhards and Rucht 1992; Oberschall 1973). They also simplify information flow and coordination, and prompt cascades of protest participation (Granovetter 1973, 1978). Related research on nonviolent action has similarly pointed to the importance of religious organizations, labor groups, professional associations, and various other social organizations to the origins and prosecution of major anti-regime and secessionist nonviolent protest campaigns (P.

Ackerman and Kruegler 1994; Chenoweth and Stephan 2011; Sharp et al. 2005). Nonviolent strategists “need to plan to utilize and extend existing social groups and institutions to engage the widest possible participation” (P. Ackerman and Kruegler 1994, 29). The availability of such social organizations serves as a form of latent power that can dramatically influence the adoption of nonviolent contentious action: “questions of social organization and political technique converge. There may be a causal connection between the relative concentration or diffusion of power in the society and the technique of struggle – political violence or nonviolent action – relied upon to maintain or to change the social system” (Sharp et al. 2005, 427). The role of these social organizations is critical in nonviolent action, since such efforts require far more participation than armed insurgencies to be viable.<sup>2</sup>

Generally speaking, these works on armed insurgency, social movements, and nonviolent action share a central logic: pre-existing social organizations reduce the costs of mobilizing contentious action and executing campaigns. They do so by partially resolving the central challenge of mounting any rebellion, the problem of collective action and overcoming an individual’s rational preference to free-ride on the efforts of others to produce public goods (Mark I. Lichbach 1994; Olson 1971). Since they are voluntary, pre-existing civil society and social organizations have already resolved this collective action problem and have available selective incentives and sanctions to maintain commitment and cohesion in their collective efforts. They therefore may be very helpful in launching viable and effective rebellions, which demand equal amounts if not greater cohesion and commitment.

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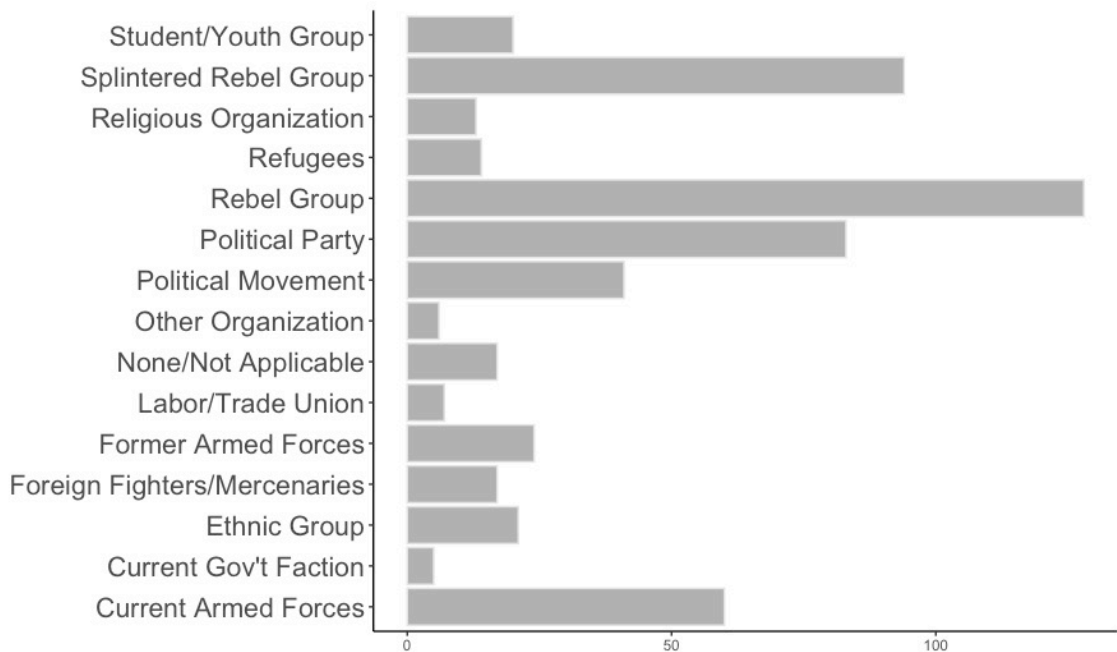
<sup>2</sup> Not all scholars agree about the critical value of pre-existing social organizations. See Pearlman (2020).

There are several shortcomings in these arguments. First, the mobilization benefits of tapping into pre-existing civil society and social organizations appear to accrue equally to violent and nonviolent efforts. They do not resolve whether pre-existing social organizations may be more inclined to adopt one form of contentious action over another, or if other structural features of civil society and the organizations that comprise it may reduce armed conflict while increasing nonviolent action, or vice versa. Rather, the same social organizations are mobilizing into very different forms of contentious action. And yet the organizational origins of insurgent groups appears to indicate that civil society organizations rarely form the backbone of nonstate armed actors. According to data from Braithwaite and Cunningham that identifies the “parent” organizations of various armed rebel groups, student and youth organizations, labor unions, and religious organizations – three types of organizations consistently identified as central elements of civil society – comprise fewer than 10 percent of the foundational organizations of armed insurgencies (see Figure 1) (J. M. Braithwaite and Cunningham 2020). Civil society organizations appear to be rare contributors to armed insurgencies.

Second, to explain the role of pre-existing civil society and social organizations in armed insurgency or mass nonviolence, most studies do not employ large-N analysis that adequately selects on the independent variable but rather rely on single or comparative case analysis. There are exceptions to this, including studies that have focused on explaining the origins of mass nonviolence (Boulding 2014; Butcher, Gray, and Mitchell 2018a; Butcher and Svensson 2016; Chenoweth and Ulfelder 2017). These studies limit their analysis to nonviolent outcomes and exclude armed insurgencies, however. They also focus on specific types of organizations, rather than the full breadth of social

organizations that comprise civil society. A more limited number of studies have systematically studied the correlates of both armed conflict and mass nonviolent alternatives (Asal et al. 2013; D. E. Cunningham et al. 2017; K. G. Cunningham 2013b; Murdie and Bhasin 2011; Thurber 2018). These studies, however, rarely incorporate measures of civil society as explanatory factors in the occurrence of contentious action, but instead use simple proxies such as economic activity in the manufacturing sector or counts of international nongovernmental organizations that are headquartered in developed countries. Better explanations and more systematic focus on the domestic landscape of social organizations are necessary to clarify the role between common conceptions of civil society, civil conflict onset, and the form of contentious action.

**Figure 1. Counts of “Parent” or Pre-Existing Organizations That Launched Armed Rebel Groups**



*Theory: Alternatives to Violence – Advocacy and Loss Minimization*

Pre-existing social and civil society organizations represent a mobilization resource for rebellion, whether armed or unarmed. But there are several reasons why a stronger civil society may reduce the incidence of armed insurgency and possibly favor the adoption of nonviolent mass action as well. There are two in particular, and both involve how variation in civil society affects the viability of strategic alternatives to coercive violence. The first I term the “advocacy alternative,” in which pre-existing organizations increase the viability of institutionalized and semi-institutionalized political work as opposed to contentious action. The second I call the “loss minimization alternative,” in which civil society organizations opt for nonviolent conflict over comparatively more transformational and risky violent alternatives. Both of these broad propositions are rough distillations of two (sometimes competing) logics that accompany policy support for civil society, with the former justifying support for the purported conflict prevention properties of civil society while the latter emphasizes the ability of civil society to promote alternatives to violence. In this section, I first lay out the logic behind each of these propositions and then detail specific hypotheses that will be tested.

*Advocacy Alternative*

Civil society is likely to reduce the onset of civil conflict and contentious action, whether violent or nonviolent, because the presence of many active social organizations furnishes the aggrieved with viable means to pursue their political or policy preferences through conventional political methods. This may occur through formal and observable institutional channels, such as the use of legal strategies, advocacy efforts, political endorsements to advance various state reforms, or small-scale protest efforts to call for

the removal of sub-national officials from positions of power. Influence can also be wielded through less observable but still impactful tacit negotiations and bargaining with states and state institutions.

Previous studies of social movement organizations, including more conventional organizations that exclude protest strategies, have found that they are often successful in achieving a range of reforms related to labor, environmental, women's rights, or other issue areas short of maximalist, anti-regime campaigns (Amenta et al. 2010; Htun and Weldon 2012). Elsewhere, civil society organizations have been critical in lobbying governments to establish national human rights institutions and support their autonomy in monitoring government performance in Malaysia, Nepal, and the Philippines, among other states (Renshaw 2012). The quality of the content and implementation of access to information laws in Mexico, South Africa, Bulgaria, and other countries across Latin America and Eastern Europe have been attributed to the strength and assertiveness of civil society organizations (Ackerman & Sandoval-Ballesteros, 2006; Puddephatt, 2009). With regard to elections, the endorsement and work of pre-existing civil society organizations was critical to elections where entrenched incumbents were defeated, including in Senegal in 2012 and Nigeria in 2015 (Koter 2013; Suberu 2018), or, for that matter, in Germany in the 1930s (Berman 1997) and South Africa during the same period (Thompson 2001).

Civil society organizations may also have less observable but still influential sway over government decisionmakers and policy. Studies of local government in China have found that large encompassing social organizations are associated with higher levels of local government spending on critical social services and better overall governance (Tsai



2007). Furthermore, local and village associations in Colombia and Nepal have also been able to influence and resist the activities by both nonstate armed groups and state security forces (Bohara, Mitchell, and Nepal 2006; Kaplan 2017). More generally, national leaders on down to regional and local bureaucrats often find that they need to engage with pre-existing social organizations in the implementation of their preferred political and policy agenda, and this need to instrumentalize existing social organizations to mobilize support and resources provides the organizations with some leverage over the state and bureaucracy (Migdal 2001). In many ways, then, higher numbers of civil society and social organizations may be able to influence and constrain state behavior to advance preferred policies that lessen the likelihood that an incompatibility may prompt civil conflict. Indeed, some studies have found evidence that pre-existing social and civil society organizations can reduce the likelihood that states will engage in inter-state armed conflict through formal and semi-formal forms of “social accountability” (Håvard Hegre, Bernhard, and Teorell 2019).

Policymakers often cite the ability of civil society organizations to advance “reform agendas” as a rationale for extending their support. By extension, civil society facilitates more conventional political processes as opposed to contentious action. In 2019, the U.S. Agency for International Development justified its support for a “vibrant civil society sector” thusly: “Because civic action and engagement with government can result in political reform, USAID emphasizes support for civil society organizations whose advocacy efforts give voice to citizens and increase their inclusion in the political process” (USAID 2019). Similarly, the European Endowment for Democracy extends financial grants to many new and older civil society organizations as part of its

engagement with civil society. Describing one such program in Belarus, it explained that recipient civil society groups “are defending citizens’ interests, launching local platforms for civic dialogue and advocating very practical areas of legislative reform” (European Endowment for Democracy 2015, 34). It also describes many grantees and civil society groups more generally as “champions of change” and “reformist groups” that set or advance policy agendas even in less-than-open political contexts. From this perspective, civil society organizations enhance institutional methods over more confrontational and contentious alternatives, thereby reducing civil conflict in general – whether violent or nonviolent.

#### Loss-Minimization Alternative

Policy engagement with and support for civil society organizations also frequently alludes to the role these entities play in mass protest campaigns. In this way, a strong civil society can be interpreted as helping ensure that grievance-driven civil conflicts remain nonviolent as opposed to violent. For example, an analysis of European support for civil society organizations in Eastern Europe, the Balkans, and Turkey noted that among such groups there “is a general trend toward more informal activism and more explosive mass protests” (Youngs 2020), and that the EU should engage with such assertive civil society actors. Likewise, U.S. policy documents on civil society reference protest-led regime change and reform efforts. Speaking in May 2011 shortly after the dramatic changes of the Arab Spring in Tunisia and Egypt, President Obama declared, “Across the region, we intend to provide assistance to civil society, including those that may not be officially sanctioned, and who speak uncomfortable truths... For the fact is, real reform does not come at the ballot box alone” (White House 2011). Echoing this statement years later in a

separate speech at a roundtable on civil society issues, President Obama remarked, “civil society led the fight to end apartheid in South Africa. It led the fight to bring freedom to Eastern Europe” (White House 2013), referencing two waves of mass nonviolent regime change in the 1980s. While policy engagement with civil society is often justified on the basis of its ability to advance advocacy, reforms, and more conventional politics, it also references the purported role of civil society organizations in the onset of mass nonviolent civil conflicts and anti-regime protest campaigns.

There are two potential problems with this perspective. First, it seems internally incongruent, since civil society is embraced as a way to prevent civil conflict by supporting conventional advocacy efforts, yet it is acknowledged and even lauded as a crucial actor by which nonviolent conflict emerges. Strictly speaking, this places policy support for civil society in the uncomfortable position of supporting civil conflict, albeit nonviolent conflict. Second, it is rarely made clear why civil society organizations gravitate toward nonviolence as opposed to violent strategies. As discussed in the preceding literature review, the appropriation of pre-existing social organizations into armed insurgency can produce benefits in terms of performance and sustainability. Policy support for civil society organizations rarely explains why these groups do not direct their organizational resources toward violent strategies.

I propose an explanation that is rooted in the observation that most voluntary organizations like civil society groups likely have inherent or functional value for their members – why else would such voluntary organizations exist? – and that these members would act to protect the organization if its continued existence is threatened. Adopting violent strategies and tactics, however, poses such a threat by requiring dramatic internal

transformation. Mounting an armed insurgency is a process that involves dramatic changes that may be difficult to reverse for some pre-existing organizations. Most voluntary civil society and social organizations are not organized in a manner that is immediately conducive to executing an armed insurgency. New specialized skills must be acquired, new organizational forms may be necessary for operational coordination, and fundamental aspects of the lives and experiences of an organization's participants will be changed. Launching an armed insurgency involves transformational processes that "reconfigure social networks in a variety of ways, creating new networks, dissolving some, and changing the structure of others, as when the local clients of a patron are mobilized into an armed network with a new central figure" (E. J. Wood 2008, 540). Pre-existing social hierarchies and long established norms and values are often entirely changed as armed insurgencies emerge and become dominant forces in a social context. To maintain themselves, armed groups "cut their activists' other social ties and connections or subdue and integrate the respective social institutions" and attempt to "eliminate competing loyalties" (Schlichte 2009, 155).

From the perspective of a civil society or social organization, this prospect must be very unappealing. Meso-mobilization into armed insurgency potentially poses an existential risk. The organization and the purpose it previously served may be wholly undermined by its transformation into an armed group, or by the emergence and prosecution of an armed conflict against the government that makes assembly and normal function impossible. This may incline groups to avoid violent mobilization, and this inclination may be even more heightened among more mature, embedded, and formalized civil society and social organizations. Such was observable in the different courses of

action that newer Kenyan civil society organizations pursued during the armed Mau Mau rebellion of the 1960s compared to similar but more established social groups in the Philippines that prosecuted a nonviolent uprising in the 1980s. “In Kenya, few established political associations existed on the eve of the [Mau Mau] episode,” compared to the Philippines where the long-established church was able to support a mass nonviolent campaign in 1986. This may be because “formal organizations may be more inclined to avoid violence.... The assumption here is that formal organization tends to imply some greater stake in the system and, thus, less willingness to deploy violence in the service of movement aims” lest that stake be jeopardized (McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly 2001, 121).

The adoption of mass nonviolence is less transformational for the organizations that comprise a nonviolent movement. Organizations that are mobilized into supporting campaigns of mass protest and noncooperation are able to return to their pre-conflict social settings and organizational forms with comparatively less disruption or loss of social structure. For instance, the church groups in the Philippines, the labor unions in Zambia, or the civic organizations of 1980s South Africa returned to their normal operations after those nonviolent conflicts ceased. The difference between the organizational continuity in violent and nonviolent conflicts is perhaps most demonstrable in the fact that not a single nonviolent conflict has prompted a “demobilization and reintegration” program. Nonviolent campaigns do not require demobilization, and in fact many remain integrated into their pre-conflict civil society and social organizations. When political and territorial incompatibilities do emerge, ones that cannot be managed through available institutional modes or forms of advocacy, the

comparatively less transformational nature of nonviolent methods should make them a more preferable alternative to armed insurgency for pre-existing civil society groups.

These factors imply several hypotheses about the relationship between the strength of civil society and the onset and form of political conflict. They are detailed below and divided based on whether they exemplify an “advocacy alternative” or a “loss-minimizing alternative” explanation of civil society’s influence on contentious action. First, a strong civil society composed of many organizations and widespread participation by citizens in such organizations should reduce the onset of armed insurgency and increase the adoption of mass nonviolent action in the event that deep political or territorial incompatibilities emerge.

	Armed Conflict	Nonviolent Campaigns
Advocacy Alternative	<i>Higher participation in civil society organizations should <b>decrease</b> the probability of armed conflict onset</i>	<i>Higher participation in civil society organizations should <b>decrease</b> the probability of mass nonviolent action</i>
Loss-Minimizing Alternative	<i>Higher participation in civil society organizations should <b>decrease</b> the probability of armed conflict onset</i>	<i>Higher participation in civil society organizations should <b>increase</b> the probability of mass nonviolent action</i>

The avoidance of armed conflict and preference for nonviolent alternatives is also likely a function of how well established such civil society organizations are. The more mature and formal these entities, the more likely they are to fear the transformational effects of mobilizing into violent rebellion. Therefore, the older and more established the landscape of civil society organizations is, the less likely that armed conflict is to occur and the more likely that mass nonviolent methods will be adopted.

	Armed Conflict	Nonviolent Campaigns
Advocacy Alternative	<i>Higher numbers of more established civil society organizations should <b>decrease</b> the probability of armed conflict onset</i>	<i>Higher numbers of more established civil society organizations should <b>decrease</b> the probability of mass nonviolent action</i>
Loss-Minimizing Alternative	<i>Higher numbers of more established civil society organizations should <b>decrease</b> the probability of armed conflict onset</i>	<i>Higher numbers of more established civil society organizations should <b>increase</b> the probability of mass nonviolent action</i>

The avoidance of armed conflict and adoption of nonviolent alternatives, however, may be influenced by some core attributes of civil society and the organizations that comprise it. Homogenous groups that are comprised of single or few identity groups are disconnected from other social organizations and networks. As a consequence, the requisite mobilization potential necessary for the adoption of mass nonviolence may be more costly. Without broad-based connections that are inclusive of other groups, nonviolence may indeed be a less viable alternative method of challenging the political or territorial status quo. Exclusion or marginalization of identity groups may also form the basis for an incompatibility, or such social cleavages may be reflected in existing political institutional divisions that incentivize rebellion (Oberschall 1973; Putnam 2001). Thus, more inclusive and diverse membership in civil society organizations should reduce the adoption of armed insurgency and increase the use of nonviolent methods when incompatibilities emerge.

	Armed Conflict	Nonviolent Campaigns
Advocacy Alternative	<i>Higher inclusivity of membership in civil society organizations should <b>decrease</b> the probability of armed conflict onset</i>	<i>Higher inclusivity of membership in civil society organizations should <b>decrease</b> the probability of mass nonviolent action</i>
Loss-Minimizing Alternative	<i>Higher inclusivity of membership in civil society organizations should <b>decrease</b> the probability of armed conflict onset</i>	<i>Higher inclusivity of membership in civil society organizations should <b>increase</b> the probability of mass nonviolent action</i>

A modicum of cohesion across civil society organizations may also be a component of civil society’s ability to mitigate the onset of armed conflict and promote the viable execution of mass nonviolent campaigns. Previous research has identified that fragmentation of mass movements between competing sub-units often leads to the adoption of political violence. Such fragmentation has been a recurring source of the onset of armed conflict in the occupied territories of Palestine (Pearlman 2011) as well as the emergence of violence in Francophone Africa (Lawrence 2010). Moreover, competition between organizations for adherents and members has also led to the adoption of dramatic tactics and spectacles, including violent attacks, so as to “outbid” one another and emerge as a leading organization within a larger political conflict (Bloom 2004). This suggests that when larger organizations comprise civil society, there is likely a higher level of cohesion and unity within and across civil society that prevents such violence-inducing fragmentation. Similarly, a greater degree of pre-existing cohesion and unity should lower coordination problems and costs within a prospective nonviolent anti-status quo campaign.

	Armed Conflict	Nonviolent Campaigns
Advocacy Alternative	<i>When larger organizations predominate in civil society, the probability of armed conflict onset should <b>decrease</b></i>	<i>When larger organizations predominate in civil society, the probability of nonviolent campaigns onset should <b>decrease</b></i>
Loss-Minimizing Alternative	<i>When larger organizations predominate in civil society, the probability of armed conflict onset should <b>decrease</b></i>	<i>When larger organizations predominate in civil society, the probability of nonviolent campaigns should <b>increase</b></i>



### Data and Methods

To explore the relationship between civil society and contentious action, new cross-national data on civil society is combined with previously available data on armed conflict and mass nonviolent campaigns. Multinomial logistic regression is employed to analyze any association between these phenomena at the country-year level of analysis.

Data on civil society is obtained from version 10 of the Varieties of Democracy (VDEM) initiative (Coppedge et al. 2018). The VDEM dataset features over 450 variables that capture dozens of different facets of political and social life in more than 200 countries and autonomous regions annually from 1900 through 2017. The variables are calculated based on the aggregation of survey responses from country experts. Some of these survey questions capture country-expert perceptions of the quality and extent of civil society (Bernhard et al. 2017). The VDEM instructions incorporate a broad definition of civil society, which is consistent with previous discussion: “Civil society is populated by groups of citizens organized to act in pursuit of their interests, broadly conceived (both material and ideal). We refer to these groups of self-organized interested citizens as civil-society organizations (CSOs). CSOs include, but are by no means limited to, interest groups, labor unions, religious organizations, foundations, think-tanks, social movements, professional associations, charities, and other non-governmental organizations” (Bernhard et al. 2017, 346). Specific ideological preferences or normative leanings toward nonviolence are not a definitional requirement of civil society in VDEM.

A reasonably straightforward proxy for overall popular participation in civil society organizations is available. VDEM features a variable on a four-point ordinal scale that includes response options that range from negligible civil society participation, to

minimal participation and few organizations, to minimal participation and many organizations, to frequent participation among many organizations. This variable is recoded as a dichotomous variable, in which “frequent participation” is coded as 1 and all other responses are collapsed into 0. This should directly assess whether a more populated and dense set of civil society organizations is associated with lower levels of armed conflict onset or to launching mass nonviolent campaigns. Country-year scores for this variable are used to test the first set of hypotheses related to participation in civil society and contentious action.

To test the second set of hypotheses regarding the maturity or longevity of civil society organizations, a new dichotomous variable is coded based on the participation variable. If participation remains at or above a score of 2 (“many organizations and minimal participation”) for five consecutive years, then this dichotomous variable is scored as a 1. This variable is used to examine whether a well-established, more formalized civil society reduces the likelihood that violent methods are adopted and/or increases the probability that nonviolence is employed in the event of a civil conflict. Several analytic techniques are used to ensure that this variable does not interfere with or correlate too closely with the variable from which it is derived. These are detailed in the results section.

Capturing the inclusivity of membership within civil society organizations to test the third set of hypotheses is more complicated. No VDEM survey question explicitly asks whether participation in CSOs regularly includes representation across ethnic, racial, linguistic, or other identity groups within a country. However, country experts are asked to provide scores for the extent to which women are excluded from civil society

organizations. This score ranges on a five-point ordinal scale from almost always to almost never. This variable is recoded as a dichotomous variable in which scores of “about half the time” or higher (2 or higher) are scored as a 1, and all other options are collapsed as a 0. This dichotomous variable is used as a proxy to test hypothesis 2. This is not an ideal proxy for inclusivity of membership, but it may suffice in lieu of alternatives. According to the VDEM dataset, women’s civil liberties index scores and measures of the level of equal protection of civil liberties across all ethnic, race, or identity groups at the country-year level are highly correlated ( $\rho=0.72$ ). Given this correlation, I assume that the inclusion of women in civil society organizations demonstrates overall inclusivity of identity-group membership across civil society.

The VDEM dataset also features a variable that captures the typical scope or size of civil society organizations. One survey question asks country experts to determine whether “large CSOs” predominate, and their answers are averaged into a continuous score from 0 to 1.0. This variable is used to test the fourth set of hypotheses. The influence of the scope of CSOs may be contingent on the overall rate of participation in civil society. Thus, participation is interacted with this variable to explore this possible conditional effect.

Data on armed conflict onsets is drawn from the UCDP/PRIO Armed Conflict Dataset (N. P. Gleditsch et al. 2002). Only internal or intra-state conflicts are included while inter-state and extra-systemic wars are excluded. An onset of an armed internal conflict is defined as the year when a country experiences at least 25 battle-related deaths in fighting between a nonstate armed group and the security forces of an internationally recognized state government. The violence must also be the result of a contest over the

political control of the state or its territorial boundaries. Data on mass nonviolent campaigns is obtained from version 2.0 of the Nonviolent and Violent Campaigns and Outcomes (NAVCO) initiative. Under NAVCO coding thresholds, an onset of mass nonviolence occurs when at least two coordinated nonviolent events such as protests or strikes occur within 12 months of one another, each involves 1,000 or more participants, and the same claims or agenda are advanced at both events (Chenoweth and Lewis 2013).

The unit of analysis is the country-year, and all available observations from the year 1950 through 2004 are used. According to data from the Peace Research Institute of Oslo, there are 7,585 country-year observations across this time period. Several issues reduce the number of observations available for analysis to 5,864. First, all country-years that feature an ongoing armed conflict or nonviolent campaign were eliminated from analysis to minimize potential endogeneity. Roughly 700 observations feature ongoing armed conflict and just under 100 involve an ongoing nonviolent campaign. Second, data on key control variables, such as GDP per capita, population, and regime type, are unavailable for approximately 600 observations and data on civil society is unavailable for nearly 500 some country-years. Observations often are missing for several variables at once. In total, this reduces available data by approximately 1,700 observations to 5,864.

The loss of observations due to the exclusion of ongoing conflict years and missing data also results in a loss of some conflict onsets. According to the UCDP data, approximately 302 armed groups emerged to challenge the political or territorial status quo of a internationally recognized state between 1950 and 2004. However, 47 of these groups emerged in the same year as another armed group in the same state, and 56 other

armed groups emerged during an armed conflict that was already underway. Since these armed groups were launched during an ongoing armed conflict or contemporaneously with another conflict onset, they are excluded from analysis. This leaves only 199 armed conflict onsets from the UCDP data that are used. Of these, another 20 onsets are lost due to missing data among one or more independent variables, leaving just 179 armed conflict onsets available for analysis.

Similar challenges lead to the exclusion of some nonviolent conflict onsets. In the NAVCO 2.0 data, 100 nonviolent campaigns were launched between 1950 and 2004. Only 63 of these were anti-regime or secessionist campaigns, and therefore are comparable to conventional inclusion criteria that define armed conflicts as incompatibilities over political control of a government or a state's territorial boundaries. Anti-colonial or anti-occupation campaigns (i.e., extrasystemic conflicts) or protests over sub-maximal policy reforms are excluded. Additionally, 12 nonviolent campaigns were launched during an ongoing armed conflict, and therefore were excluded. Finally, due to missing data for independent variables, 4 additional nonviolent campaign onsets were lost for a final figure of 47 nonviolent campaign onsets used in analysis here.

Several other macro-level factors are included as control variables in the analysis. Per capita income and population have been among the most robust predictors of the onset of armed conflict (Chenoweth and Lewis 2013; Håvard Hegre and Sambanis 2006), and data on these variables are drawn from the latest 2014 release from Gleditsch (2002). These variables are transformed to the log scale. Additionally, regime type and whether a country shares a border with another state experiencing armed conflict are also included to capture other important structural or diffusion effects (Goldstone et al. 2010; H. Hegre

2014). Data on these variables are drawn from the Polity IV and the Major Episodes of Political Violence (MEPV) datasets, respectively. The Polity2 index variable from the Polity IV dataset is used and transformed into two dichotomous variables. Country-years with a score of 5 and above are coded as a democracy, country-years with a score between -5 and 5 are coded as an anocracy, and autocracies with a score less than -5 are held as a reference group. A count of bordering countries currently experiencing some “ethnic or societal” conflict is used from the MEPV dataset. This controls for the diffusion of armed conflict, which may lower the costs of mounting an armed insurgency (Salehyan 2007). Many nonviolent campaigns appear to be inspired by or receive direct transmission of skills and resources from nearby and recent protest movements (P. Ackerman and DuVall 2000; D. E. Cunningham et al. 2017), such as the color revolutions in Ukraine, Georgia, and Kyrgyzstan or the Arab Spring civil resistance campaigns in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, and elsewhere. To capture this influence a variable codes the number of nonviolent campaign onsets in a world region (i.e., “Western Africa,” “South-East Asia,” “Oceania”, etc.) using the 19 different regions delineated by the United Nations Statistics Division. Coding by region will better capture the ability of nonviolent campaigns to spread not just across shared borders but throughout a wider geopolitical space, such as the spread of the Arab Spring from Tunisia, to Egypt, and then into the Arabian peninsula in 2011 or the expansion of Georgia’s Rose Revolution to Ukraine’s Orange Revolution in 2004. Dissidents may also learn from past campaigns within their country. I include a count of the years since a termination of a past violent or nonviolent campaign in each country to factor in such effects. I also add a square of this count since the influence of such past experiences may reduce quickly over time.

Two variables from VDEM are used to control for some of relational dynamics between the government and civil society. For example, governments often try to repress civil society organizations, from intimidation, detention, or the use of physical force against members of organizations to the use of quasi-legal restrictions on the ability of organizations to register, fundraise, or operate (Carothers and Brechenmacher 2014). Such efforts, particularly more forceful repression of civil society activism, may prompt organizations to substitute nonviolent strategic approaches for ones that draw on violent repertoires regardless of participation, size, or other prevailing attributes within civil society (K. G. Cunningham and Beaulieu 2010; Mark Irving Lichbach 1987; Pinckney 2016). To account for contentious action that may be driven by government repression, VDEM's civil society repression variable is included in modeling analysis. By contrast, certain government leaders or institutions may be more inclined to proactively engage with civil society in policymaking, effectively making the choice to institutionalize civil society regardless of its strength or structure. VDEM features a variable that accounts for how frequently civil society is included in policymaking, and this is also used to control for a government's outward inclusion of civil society.

To reduce issues of simultaneity, all variables other than the count of years since past conflicts are lagged two years. For all country-year observations, dummy variables are coded per Hegre and Sambanis (2006) for each decade and for geopolitical region to control for factors that may influence onset or type of contentious action separate from other included controls. Descriptive statistics for civil society and key control variables are included in Table 1.1.

**Table 1.1. Descriptive Statistics for Explanatory and Control Variables**

Statistic	N	Mean	St. Dev.	Min	Pctl (25)	Pctl (75)	Max
CSO Participation	5,864	0.222	0.416	0	0	0	1
Sustained CSO Participation	5,864	0.462	0.499	0	0	1	1
CSO Inclusivity/Diversity (Gender)	5,864	0.763	0.425	0	1	1	1
Large CSOs Predominate	5,864	0.309	0.260	0.000	0.111	0.500	1.000
CSOs Consulted in Policymaking	5,864	0.722	0.756	0	0	1	2
Gov Repression of CSOs	5,864	1.668	1.352	0	0	3	4
Democracy (dichotomous)	5,864	0.387	0.487	0	0	1	1
Anocracy (dichotomous)	5,864	0.144	0.351	0	0	0	1
Armed Conflicts in Bordering States	5,864	0.689	1.024	0	0	1	7
Nonviolent Campaign in Region	5,864	0.053	0.247	0	0	0	3
GDP Per Capita	5,864	8,142.59	20,651.39	132.82	1,461.35	9,354.08	632,239.50
Population (1,000s of persons)	5,864	26,310.15	94,663.08	118.21	2,523.10	17,855.25	1,263,413.00

A multinomial logistic regression technique is employed for analysis. This is consistent with previous theoretical work that has conceptualized armed rebellion, mass political protest, engaging in conventional politics, or abstaining from any form activism as separate courses of action whose adoption may be influenced in part by structural conditions (Chenoweth and Lawrence 2010; McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly 2001; Sharp et al. 2005). Since many conflicts are nonviolent and do not feature armed insurgency, and others feature only armed rebellion without mass nonviolent tactics, there appears to be no natural ordering of these types of contentious action. With multiple possible outcome variables and no clear rank arrangement among them, the multinomial technique is most appropriate (Long 1997). It also aligns with previous analysis that has explored how factors might affect the adoption of violent and nonviolent methods, albeit most of these test different explanatory variables and/or operate at a different levels of analysis (Asal et al. 2013; Butcher and Svensson 2016; D. E. Cunningham et al. 2017; K. G. Cunningham 2013b; Thurber 2018). The three possible outcomes in the multinomial model include the



onset of a nonviolent campaign, the onset of an armed conflict, or the absence of either. The latter may signify several possible outcomes, including satisfaction with the prevailing political or territorial status quo, a preference for institutionalized politics to advance preferred reforms or changes, or a decision to disengage from politics despite existing grievances.

The analytic approach used here does have important limitations. First, the analysis focuses on a high level of aggregation, contrary to some trends in conflict studies to concentrate on dyads of state and nonstate actors or on specific insurgent organizations (Cederman and Gleditsch 2009; D. E. Cunningham, Gleditsch, and Salehyan 2009). However, it does allow for a focus on the conditions that may influence conflict onset as opposed to the dynamics of ongoing conflict or existing dyads of contention. The analysis may overlook important sources of causal heterogeneity within civil society. By lumping together many different types of organizations, potentially with different interests and capabilities, salient differences may be overlooked or counteract one another, producing null results where important causal effects are present. Nonetheless, the approach may unearth important structural features of civil society, shared sources of influence that are present across many types of civil society organizations, and test broad assumptions about the relationship between civil society and civil conflicts.

### *Model Output and Analysis*

Model results provide only some support for the influence of civil society on civil conflict onset or the form of contentious action. I review them in three parts. First, I evaluate the coefficient estimates produced from the multinomial logistic regression

output. Second, to more rigorously evaluate their potential relationship on the onset of armed conflict and nonviolent campaigns I use a bootstrapping procedure to estimate the marginal effects of several civil society variables on these outcomes. The results indicate that only the existence of an established and mature collection of civil society organizations consistently affects the onset of armed insurgency. No other variable of interest appears to positively or negatively influence the incidence of nonviolent campaigns or armed conflict. Lastly, I discuss several procedures used to check the robustness of the model output.

Output from several multinomial logistic regression model specifications is displayed in Table 1.2 and a plot of coefficient estimates from the preferred specification that includes all explanatory and control variables is available in Figure 1.2. Geographic and temporal control variables are not displayed but were included in all model runs. To establish baselines for comparison and reveal whether loss of observations due to missing data was skewing results, initial models were run first with control variables only (M1) and then with all civil society variables and no controls (M2). Output in M1 is fairly consistent with previous empirical analyses of the onset of nonviolent campaigns and armed conflict (Chenoweth and Lewis 2013; K. G. Cunningham 2013b; Håvard Hegre and Sambanis 2006), suggesting that loss of data due to missing observations is not skewing results. The third model in Table 1.1 (M3) features a specification containing all civil society and control variables together. Coefficient estimates for most civil society and control variables are fairly consistent across M1, M2, and M3, though there are three notable exceptions. Across the models the statistical significance and the calculated value of the participation coefficient on armed conflict onset increases, while the coefficient

value and statistical significance of the diversity/gender variable on nonviolent campaign onset falls. These shifts could be an indication of bias or inefficiency resulting from collinearity. However, the changes in the coefficient values are small and may be a result of the inclusion of appropriate controls. Further detailed analysis of collinearity is discussed below, though for the most part the modeling output appears stable.

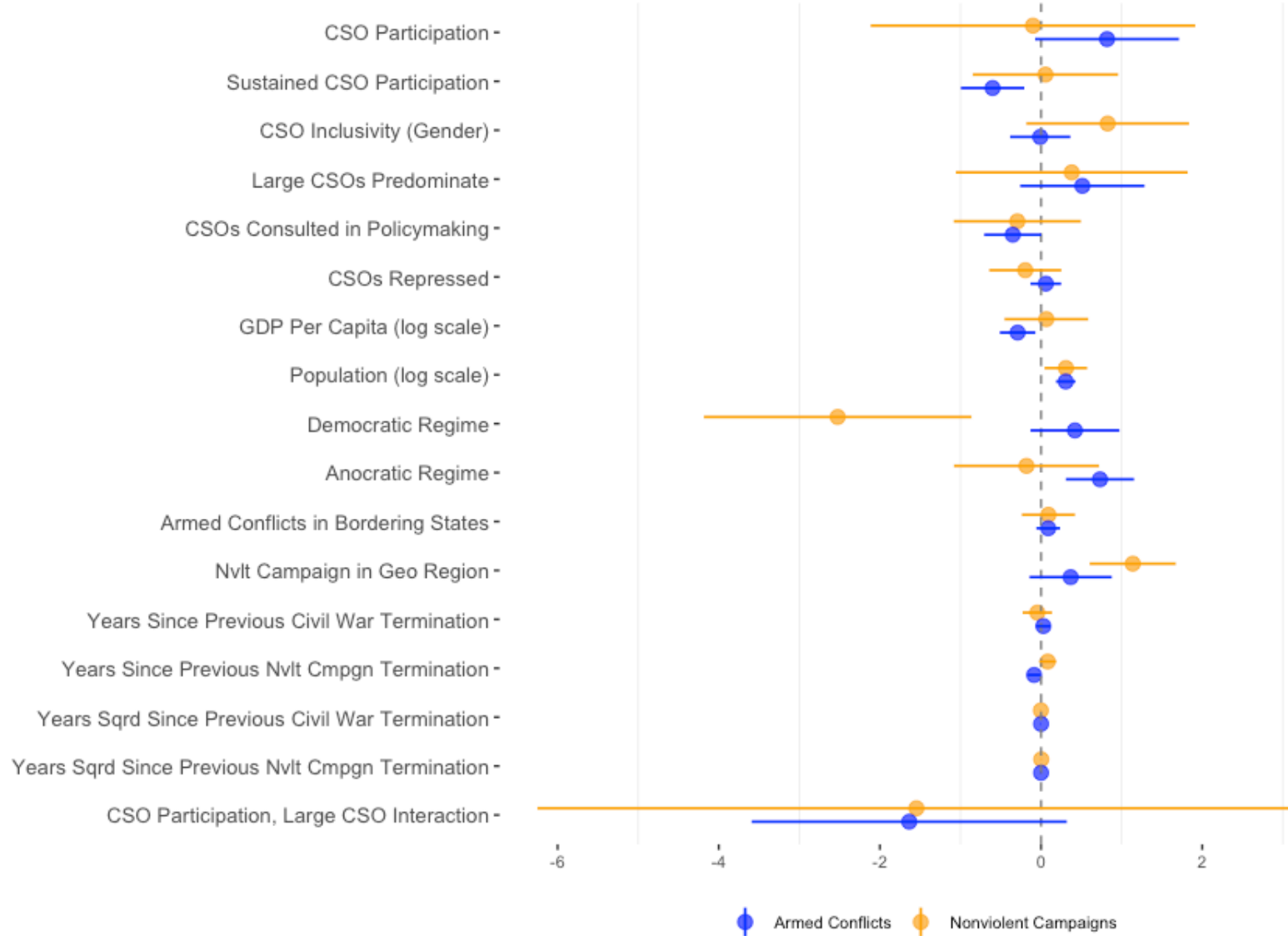
Figure 1.2 contains coefficient estimates and confidence intervals for M3. Few of the estimates display a statistically significant relationship with the onset of mass nonviolent campaigns. An increase in popular participation in civil society organizations is not consistently associated with an increase in the log odds of a nonviolent conflict onset. Even when participation is sustained and formalized in more established organizations, nonviolent campaign occurrence appears no more likely. Neither do predominantly large civil society organization reduce the probability of a nonviolent campaign occurrence, nor when these organizations feature high participation (interaction term). Only the degree of inclusivity among civil society organizations approaches a consistently positive relationship with the onset of mass nonviolence campaigns, though this estimate does not cross even low levels of confidence ( $\alpha = 0.10$ ). Overall, the model results appear to contradict claims that a stronger civil society lays the basis for or influences the adoption of nonviolence. The initial model output does not provide support for the “lesser-evil alternative” hypotheses.

The output provides mixed support for the potential of civil society to mitigate political violence. A mature and established civil society does reduce the likelihood of armed conflict onset. However, inclusivity and the size of civil society do not consistently reduce the probability of armed conflict onset. This runs contrary to

theoretical expectations. More concerning is the potential that high levels of participation in civil society are associated with the onset of armed conflict, though the coefficient estimate for this variable is significant at only a low level ( $\alpha = 0.10$ ) and appears somewhat unstable across model estimates. Additional techniques below further explore this relationship. Overall, no civil society variable appears to simultaneously influence the onset of armed conflict and nonviolent campaigns, a further indication that variation in civil society may not prompt a shift in methods of contentious action and a lack of support for the “lesser-evil alternative” explanation offered here.

A bootstrapping procedure combined with the observed-values approach of calculating predicted probabilities was employed to calculate the marginal effect of each civil society variable on the onset of contentious action (Hanmer and Ozan Kalkan 2013). This procedure can provide a more precise assessment of the relationship between explanatory variables and observed outcomes, potentially revealing significant and substantive effects that are lost when the uncertainty around coefficient estimates are ignored or control variables are held at mean values to calculate marginal effects. Table 1.3 displays the difference in the mean predicted probabilities of armed conflict or nonviolent campaign onset for a simulated one-unit increase in each civil society variable using the bootstrap procedure. Since most variables are dichotomous, this is a simulated increase from lowest value to highest for each civil society variable. The “Large CSOs” variable is continuous, and so the marginal effect here is calculated as a simulated one standard deviation increase in the observed value of this variable. All other variables are held at observed values. Figure 1.3 provides a visualization of these calculated marginal effects of changes in civil society on civil conflict onset for several variables.

**Figure 1.2. Coefficient Values and 95% Confidence Intervals (M3 Output)**



**Table 1.2. Output for Multinomial Logistic Regression Models**

	M1		M2		M3	
	Armed Conflict	Nonviolence	<i>Dependent variable:</i>		Armed Conflict	Nonviolence
			Armed Conflict	Nonviolence	Armed Conflict	Nonviolence
CSO Participation			0.598 (0.410)	0.261 (0.926)	0.819* (0.456)	-0.101 (1.028)
Sustained CSO Participation			-0.572*** (0.197)	-0.420 (0.408)	-0.602*** (0.201)	0.055 (0.460)
CSO Inclusivity (Gender)			-0.160 (0.181)	0.931** (0.466)	-0.010 (0.191)	0.827 (0.515)
Large CSOs Predominate			0.465 (0.368)	0.447 (0.712)	0.512 (0.394)	0.381 (0.734)
CSOs Consulted on Policy			-0.333* (0.172)	-0.615 (0.379)	-0.351* (0.181)	-0.294 (0.403)
Gov Represses CSOs			-0.030 (0.088)	0.181 (0.180)	0.059 (0.097)	-0.196 (0.228)
Participation: Large CSOs (Interaction)			-0.967 (0.904)	-2.367 (2.102)	-1.636 (0.998)	-1.547 (2.400)
Armed Conflict in Bordering States	0.098 (0.074)	0.073 (0.166)			0.089 (0.075)	0.091 (0.168)
Nvlt Campaign in Region	0.348 (0.260)	1.106** (0.271)			0.367 (0.260)	1.138** (0.273)
GDP Per Cap (log)	-0.322*** (0.109)	0.076 (0.257)			-0.291*** (0.113)	0.065 (0.265)
Democracy	-0.192 (0.225)	-2.532*** (0.612)			0.421 (0.281)	-2.524*** (0.847)
Anocracy	0.488** (0.192)	-0.036 (0.409)			0.731*** (0.216)	-0.181 (0.459)
Population (log)	0.324*** (0.059)	0.327** (0.128)			0.306*** (0.061)	0.308** (0.135)
Years Since Nvlt Termination	0.022 (0.044)	-0.037 (0.089)			0.029 (0.045)	-0.046 (0.093)
Years Since Armed Conflict Termination	-0.077* (0.040)	0.090* (0.054)			-0.086** (0.040)	0.083 (0.054)
Years Since Nvlt Termination (Sq)	-0.001 (0.002)	-0.003 (0.002)			-0.0003 (0.002)	-0.003 (0.002)
Years Since Armed Conflict Termination (Sq)	-0.0003 (0.001)	0.002 (0.002)			-0.0003 (0.002)	0.002 (0.003)
Constant	-3.366*** (1.052)	-7.738*** (2.442)	-2.831*** (0.391)	-5.000*** (0.810)	-3.561*** (1.150)	-7.624*** (2.598)
Observations	5,864		5,864		5,864	
Akaike Inf. Crit.	2,101.881	2,101.881	2,205.832	2,205.832	2,042.249	2,042.249

Note:

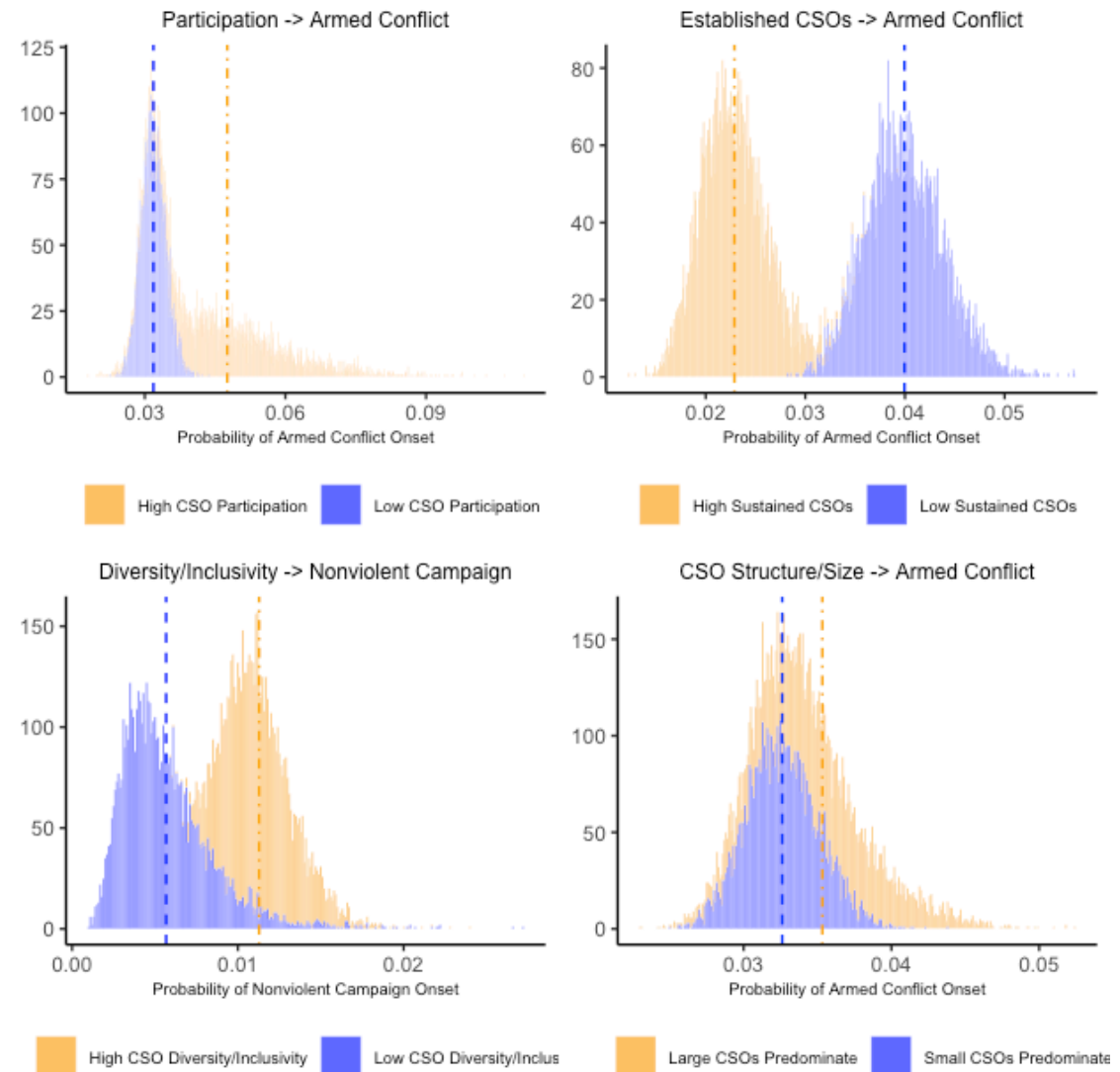
\* p<0.1; \*\* p<0.05; \*\*\* p<0.01

Only one civil society variable demonstrates any significant or substantive impact on conflict onset. Sustained CSO participation reduces the onset of armed conflict by 1.71 percentage points. This reduction is substantial considering that the probability of an armed conflict in most country-years is often well under 10 percent. This effect is displayed in the upper right corner of Figure 3. The calculated effect is actually greater than a one standard deviation increase in the real GDP per capita of a country-year, which only reduces armed conflict onset by 1.5 percentage points. The existence of a well-established network of active civil society organizations in a country appears to have a strong negative relationship with the onset of armed conflict. An established civil society does appear to have conflict mitigating or prevention properties. However, the existence of these same organizations is not associated with the incidence of mass nonviolent campaigns. The change in the probability of a mass nonviolent campaign from an increase the existence of a sustained and established group of civil society organizations is near zero.

**Table 1.3. Marginal Effects (Difference in Mean Values of Bootstrapped Probabilities) of Civil Society on Conflict Onset, With 95% CIs**

	<i>Armed Conflict</i>			<i>Nonviolent Campaign</i>		
	Marginal Effect	Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Marginal Effect	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Participation	1.58%	-0.95%	4.10%	-0.20%	-1.52%	1.12%
Inclusivity/Diversity	-0.07%	-1.23%	1.09%	0.56%	-0.10%	1.22%
Sustained Participation	-1.71%	-2.78%	-0.63%	0.11%	-0.79%	1.01%
Large CSOs	0.27%	-0.34%	0.88%	0.10%	-0.34%	0.53%
Participation:Large CSOs (Interaction)	0.49%	-1.52%	2.49%	-0.35%	-1.69%	1.00%

**Figure 1.3. Histograms Comparing Marginal Effects of Select Civil Society Variables on Civil Conflict Onset, Form (Dashed Line Represents Mean Values)**





No other civil society variable displays a strong influence on the onset of civil conflicts, whether armed or nonviolent. However, the effect of high participation in civil society on armed conflict onset is somewhat puzzling. In Figure 1.3, the distribution of bootstrapped probabilities of armed conflict onset amid high levels of civil society participation is highly positively skewed – especially when compared to the far more normally distributed probabilities with low levels of civil society participation. Several explanations are possible for this. A certain subset of the sample of observations with high levels of participation in civil society may also include variables that increase the predicted probability of onset, such as low levels of GDP per capita, high population, or anocratic governance systems. However, a brief comparison of the distribution of these variables across observations with and without high-predicted probabilities of onset amid high civil society participation does not indicate that these are different. Relatedly, problems of collinearity may lead to inflated parameter estimates for certain variables, which in turn produces high predicted probabilities of armed conflict onset.

Several approaches were employed to explore such collinearity and the robustness of model output in general. First, variance inflation factors were calculated for the M3 model. No scores were in excess of 10 for any civil society variable, suggesting collinearity is not strongly influencing coefficient estimates. Still, there is a degree of inevitable collinearity in a model that contains interaction terms, particularly those that feature dichotomous components. Indeed, when a version of M3 is rerun excluding the interaction term, the coefficient estimate for the effect of civil society participation on armed conflict decreases substantially and becomes non-significant. This may explain the subset of high-predicted probabilities of armed conflict onset in Figure 3, but it also

indicates that civil society participation does not consistently influence the onset of armed civil conflicts.

Aspects of civil society may correlate with one another or with other prevailing political conditions within a state, such as regime type or degree of modernization and wealth. To test whether this may be a source of collinearity that affected coefficient estimates, I ran several alternative model specifications. First, I ran versions of M3 without regime type variables, and none of the results produced significantly different coefficient estimates. I then used specifications that excluded GDP and population data. These estimates for the civil society variables were also largely similar to M3. Civil society attributes may correlate with one another, and so I ran several model specifications that included just a single civil society attribute along with all control variables. I also ran specifications with no regime type variables and just single civil society variables. None of these results produced coefficient estimates that differ substantially from M3. Overall, collinearity does not appear to be influencing modeling output. Relevant model output is included in an appendix.

Several other model robustness checks were also employed. Using the same specification as model M3, the multinomial logit procedure was rerun using the higher 1,000-battle-deaths threshold of civil war onset common in other studies of armed conflict (Fearon and Laitin 2003; Goldstone et al. 2010). Most coefficient estimates do not change as a result, though the significance of established and sustained civil society organizations decreases. This does align with my theory, however. Formalized and established civil society groups seek to reduce the onset of any armed conflict but may be unable to operate once violence is high and widespread. Hence, many of these established

groups may have already been dispersed as preceding violence approached 1,000 battle deaths. Another model specification was employed to explore whether the small number of nonviolent campaigns included in the dataset was producing skewed results. Specifically, the conditions around one or several campaigns may have been exerting high leverage or influence over the coefficient estimates. Model M3 was rerun 46 separate times with one campaign excluded in each iteration to explore whether specific campaigns were skewing coefficient estimates. None of the resulting coefficient estimates changed in the statistical significance across any of the 46 sets of model output. In summary, the model output was robust to several different model specifications.

### *Conclusion and Policy Implications*

Two broad explanations were offered for the potential influence that civil society and pre-existing social organizations exert on the onset of armed conflict or the adoption of mass nonviolent campaigns. First, a strong civil society may support forms of institutional and semi-institutional advocacy efforts to advance political and policy reforms, thereby reducing the need to engage in contentious action. In this sense, a strong civil society prevents civil conflict in all its forms. Second, in the event that grievances and circumstances do prompt some form of contentious challenge to the political or territorial status quo, the transformational consequences of adopting armed insurgency should prompt pre-existing civil society and social organizations to apply their mobilization resources toward mass nonviolent methods as a “loss-minimization” alternative.

Systematic analysis of the role of civil society in civil conflicts provides very limited support for either of these explanations. Table 1.4 reviews the attributes of civil society examined here, their hypothesized effects on civil conflicts and contentious action, and the resulting findings. Only one aspect of civil society – how mature or established civil society organizations are – appears to reduce the occurrence of armed civil conflicts. However, no other variable is associated with a change in the probability of either armed conflict and nonviolent campaign onset. More surprisingly, none are associated with both a reduction in armed conflict and an increase in nonviolent methods. The possible broad-based effects of civil society on nonviolent campaigns in particular remain negligible. Together, these findings yield no clear support for either the “advocacy” or “loss minimization” explanations of how civil society influences contentious action. An established civil society appears to consistently reduce the onset of armed civil conflicts, but it neither consistently increases nor decreases mass nonviolent action.

**Table 1.4. Summary Model Results, Hypotheses, and Theoretical Explanations**

Variable	<i>Armed Conflict</i>		<i>Nonviolent Campaigns</i>		Theoretical Explanation	Result
	Hypothesized Effect	Model Output	Hypothesized Effect	Model Output		
Participation	-	None	-	None	<i>Advocacy Alternative</i>	Unsupported
Sustained CSOs	-	-	-	None		Mixed Support
Inclusivity	-	None	-	None		Unsupported
Large CSOs	-	None	-	None		Unsupported
Participation	-	None	+	None	<i>“Loss-Min.” Alternative</i>	Unsupported
Sustained CSOs	-	-	+	None		Mixed Support
Inclusivity	-	None	+	None		Unsupported
Large CSOs	-	None	+	None		Unsupported

This relationship may occur as the result of several possible causal mechanisms. First, established civil society organizations may be opting for advocacy efforts to advance their reform or regime change preferences. With more experience and age, these organizations may have already developed stronger connections with or leverage over state institutions and/or officials, thereby increasing their preference to lobby preferred issues through institutional or semi-institutional channels. If operative, however, this mechanism should likely be reducing the onset of nonviolent campaigns as well. Second, these organizations opt not to resort to armed rebellion due to the broader disruption and losses this would entail to their status as well established civil society organizations. This does not forestall the ability of other dissident groups to rebel. These more established organizations may actively work to prevent other aggrieved constituencies from resorting to political violence. Perhaps through their membership or broader legitimacy these older organizations are able to isolate and ostracize would-be rebel leaders or undermine their ability to mobilize support and resources. By redirecting resources away from armed rebellion, they spare themselves the wider negative consequences of civil war onset. Under all three possible causal mechanisms, experienced and older organizations may be incentivized to eschew or reduce armed conflict given the organizational gains they have developed in an environment free from the widespread disruption that accompanies political violence. Regardless of its causal operation, the negative relationship between these established civil society organizations and a lower likelihood of armed civil conflict is fairly robust.

Such a finding should encourage advocates of policy engagement with civil society as a means to reduce armed civil conflict. The presence of established civil

society groups may reduce the onset of political violence more than even large increases in per capita income. But there are additional findings that should give such advocates pause. Contrary to expectations, participation in civil society organizations is not associated with conflict onset reduction. In fact, high participation in civil society is not entirely without risk, however. Based on the bootstrapping technique, high levels of civil society participation may be associated with higher probabilities for armed civil conflict in certain but unclear conditions.

Another finding that runs contrary to indications from other case study work (Pearlman 2011; Thurber 2018) is that neither the size of civil society organizations nor their inclusivity or diversity bears any consistent relationship with either form of contentious action. Even large civil society organizations with high participation do not seem to influence the onset of mass nonviolent campaigns, though such a resource would seem critical to the high-mobilization demands of mass protest strategies. While the inclusivity and diversity of organizations would also seem to create recruitment pathways to larger pools of the population, this factor does not appear to influence the emergence of nonviolent dissident campaigns. At least two possible reasons may explain these ambiguous results. First, as has been pointed out by others, structural factors may prove less critical to mass nonviolent campaigns than agentic or at-the-moment strategic decisions of nonviolent dissident leaders (Chenoweth and Stephan 2011; Chenoweth and Ulfelder 2017; Sharp et al. 2005). This is still hard to reconcile with claims from many nonviolent action scholars that good nonviolent dissident leaders ally with pre-existing social organizations to mount successful campaigns (P. Ackerman and Kruegler 1994; Sharp et al. 2005). Another possible explanation for these results is poor

operationalization of the underlying concepts. The use of gender inclusion as an overall proxy for inclusivity and diversity in civil society organizations may be an inappropriate one. Better data on civil society is needed to truly evaluate broader forms of inclusivity regarding religious, ethnic, linguistic, or other commonly salient identity features. Still, that gender inclusion does not appear to influence forms of contentious action in the modeling here contradicts findings in other studies that explore how inclusion serves as a normative and ideological constraints on the targeting of others with violence and suggests the need for further examination (Asal et al. 2013). Overall, much of the modeling output does not reinforce policy expectations about civil society and contentious action. Policymakers may benefit from revisiting their engagement with civil society with regards to conflict prevention and management. The linkages at the macro level are less clear than is often assumed.

One additional implication from the model output is less directly related to civil society's relationship with civil conflict and contentious action. The results from M3 and several other analyses of armed and nonviolent civil conflicts all indicate that democratic forms of governance have a strong negative association with mass nonviolent campaigns when compared to autocratic states, but that no concomitant relationship between democratic governances and armed conflict exists (Chenoweth and Lewis 2013; K. G. Cunningham 2013b). The measured effect of democratic governance on nonviolent campaigns is also far greater than any other variable, suggesting how important this feature is for mass nonviolence. The results imply that many of those who would employ nonviolent strategies to challenge the political or territorial status quo of a state are willing to forgo extra-institutional methods when they can operate through democratic

institutions and conventional politics. By contrast, the lack of a significant effect of democracy on armed insurgency suggests that would-be armed actors may be less willing or able to operate through democratic institutions if the opportunity exists. The presence of democracy seems less pertinent to their behavior. Why? One possibility is that the groups that gravitate toward armed insurgency are different from those that employ nonviolent strategies in important ways. They may have different views of the feasibility, accessibility, or efficacy of operating through democratic institutions when they are available. Additionally, if these groups are different in how they view the viability of conventional politics and democratic institutions, then it is possible that they also view armed insurgency and nonviolence as less interchangeable or comparable than is often assumed in many theoretical or empirical analyses, including this one.

It should be reemphasized that contrary to trends in conflict studies, the analysis here operates at the macro level. The data codes civil society attributes as static state-level aggregates, and this may overlook important nuances, including variation in civil society participation within the state and interaction among civil society groups and with their opponents. For example, it may be that in some states high civil society participation could be concentrated in areas where grievances remain low, while organization is less common in marginalized and alienated communities. By contrast, in other states organization may be prevalent in certain high-grievance geographical areas and increasing the ability of aggrieved actors to engage in nonviolent or armed rebellions. The data here would not be able to adequately capture these substantive differences and would instead indicate that there is no consistent relationship between civil society participation and conflict onset. Likewise, the findings cannot be applied to the behavior



of specific civil society organizations, but only to the overarching landscape of civil society groups. And how CSO-government relations evolve during iterative interaction cannot be examined with this data and analytic technique. While the robustness checks employed ensure that the results are valid to different model specifications and sufficiently free from any influence associated with collinearity, they do not compensate for potential variation within the state, across civil society groups, or relational dynamics. The tests and level of analysis used in the model are congruent with the assumptions voiced by policymakers, but important linkages between civil society and violent and nonviolent conflict remain unexamined.

The ambiguity in some of the modeling output could be improved with more detailed data. More precise information on the composition of civil society and social organizations may alter the results. If different social organizations are inclined toward different forms of contentious action, then this causal heterogeneity may be contributing to some of the mixed or inconsistent results produced here. Indeed, there is some evidence that different types of organizations interact differently with distinct types of political environments (Schofer and Longhofer 2011). Variables that decompose civil society by the balance of youth, women's, labor, or professional associations, to name a few common examples of civil society organizations, and the degree of participation within these groups would furnish the ability to better understand how types of civil society organizations and combinations thereof contribute differently to forms of contentious action. Additionally, the VDEM data often lumps distinct aspects of civil society into single variables. More precise and focused data on the number of participants in civil society organizations as well as the overall number of active civil society

organizations would allow for clearer analysis. Currently these two aspects are combined into one variable. While VDEM includes data on the size and breadth of CSOs, additional information on their geographic concentration or spread particularly across urban and rural areas, the frequency with which they cooperate or collaborate with other CSOs, and how often they autonomously lobby state institutions would help unpack some previously noted important dynamics they could influence how civil society influences the incidence and form of civil conflicts.

More precise outcome variables would also increase the ability to isolate how variation in civil society influences different forms of political behavior, specifically whether they engage in contentious action such as armed conflict or mass nonviolent campaigns, resort to advocacy efforts and institutional politics, or disengage in general and opt not to act on their political preferences. The data used here is less able to differentiate between these possible explanations. A more precise and discerning outcome variable is needed to do so, one that includes options for armed insurgency, mass nonviolence, or conventional politics alongside a “do nothing” base case.

Such data improvements would provide greater insights into the relationship between civil society and forms of contentious action. The results here do provide some support for policy engagement with civil society organizations as a means to prevent political violence, but also caution policymakers from imbuing these entities with outsized importance regarding civil conflicts and their emergence.

## Chapter 3: Interdependence and Methods of Resistance in Civil

### Conflict: The Influence of Loss Aversion in the Case of 1980s

#### South Africa

**Abstract:** Studies of dissident behavior have identified a variety of factors that may influence the adoption of nonviolent over violent strategies and tactics. One popular explanation draws on concepts of interdependence to argue that politically excluded constituencies are more likely to use mass nonviolence amid civil conflict because economic ties and shared interests with elites avail them of powerful latent noncooperation capabilities. This paper argues that this is an insufficient explanation for the adoption of nonviolence. It extends the interdependence model and argues that an additional causal mechanism underlying interdependence motivates the adoption of mass nonviolence and discourages the use of violent strategies: loss aversion. The paper employs process tracing to demonstrate empirically the operation of this causal mechanism on the forms of anti-regime methods and strategies used by multiple voluntary organizations during South Africa's anti-apartheid movement of the 1980s.

Why are some insurgencies waged as violent armed internal conflicts while others draw primarily on strategies of mass nonviolent action? Previous studies of nonviolent action campaigns and armed insurgencies have offered a variety of explanations for the initiation of such conflicts and the strategies adopted to execute them. One common explanation among them draws on interdependence theory to argue that certain constituencies in society can leverage pre-existing economic relationships with political and economic elites to engage in effective nonviolent noncooperation. For example, many industrializing states have large, labor-intensive, and concentrated manufacturing sectors and therefore a pre-formed network of organized labor. Because of its importance to industrial and overall economic output, these labor organizations can more easily engage in impactful strikes and boycotts to impose costs on political and economic elites.

This, in turn, allows labor constituencies to coerce significant structural reforms and political accommodations without resort to armed conflict.

While interdependence offers a plausible theoretical framework for explaining the adoption of nonviolence in civil conflicts, I argue that previous interdependence models of dissident behavior are incomplete. Specifically, the logic and causal mechanism implied in these explanations – noncooperation viability – still leaves open several pathways to violence. I propose an additional, complementary causal mechanism to complete the applicability of interdependence theory to nonviolent civil conflict: loss aversion. Among many constituencies with high economic interdependence and political grievances, there is often not only a substantial capability for disruptive nonviolent tactics such as strikes and boycotts but also high cost vulnerabilities to the adoption of armed militancy. As a consequence of this combination of capabilities and vulnerabilities, these constituencies adopt nonviolence *and* avoid violence. In the absence of a loss aversion mechanism, however, noncooperation viability is insufficient for explaining the avoidance of violent strategies and tactics given many assumptions about dissident behavior common in nonviolent action and armed insurgency scholarship. I argue that this expanded interpretation of interdependence and the complementary mechanisms of noncooperation viability and loss aversion better explain the sole adoption of and adherence to nonviolent strategies.

To explain these mechanisms empirically, I employ process tracing to analyze the behavior of various sets of social organizations in the case of South Africa during the 1980s. South Africa's experience during the 1980s offers useful within-case variation. During this period, there were contemporaneous armed and mass nonviolent campaigns

as well as periods of more emergent violent protests all seeking to displace the incumbent government and apartheid system of governance. Additionally, while more than three quarters of all South Africans were politically excluded from the apartheid system, within this group there were significant differences in terms of employment status and economic position. By examining how various social organizations and constituencies within the politically excluded population of black South Africans engaged in different strategies of resistance, it is possible to compare and isolate the causal mechanisms that influenced which anti-regime strategies were adopted: violent, nonviolent, or a mixture of both.

Broadly speaking, constituencies and organizations composed of black South Africans who were more economically integrated in terms of their income, assets, and employment prospects, and therefore more interdependent with political and economic elite interests, were not only better able to engage in noncooperation but also disinclined to participate in or materially support violence. By contrast, some constituencies that were less economically integrated engaged in impactful noncooperation but also supported different forms of violence, including armed insurgency. Others, particularly youth organizations whose members were primarily unemployed, often self-mobilized into armed insurgency, were regular participants in violent protests, or founded local militia. Among those groups that adhered predominantly to nonviolence, both noncooperation viability and loss aversion were activated by high levels of interdependence with elites.

This paper is organized in seven parts. First, I review previous explanations of the adoption of nonviolent methods over armed insurgency in anti-regime and secessionist civil conflicts and their causal mechanisms. The second section draws on and expands

one of these previous theories. Specifically, it lays out the role of loss aversion within models of interdependence and strategy selection in civil conflicts. The third section explains the selection of South Africa as a case, the suitability of process tracing to analyze this case, the data used in analysis, and the precise outcomes of interest and operationalization of interdependence. The fourth section provides descriptive background on the various anti-regime campaigns in South Africa during the 1980s and the fifth section discusses the prevailing economic conditions for black South Africans. The sixth section comprises the bulk of the analysis. It explains how differing economic positions and levels of economic interdependence among black South African constituencies and social organizations influenced whether they materially supported armed insurgency. It emerges that loss aversion was an important inhibiting factor among groups that focused solely on nonviolence, but even some groups that were plausibly capable of noncooperation still extended some material support to violent groups. The sixth section also engages with potential alternative explanation of behavior during this period, drawing on the arguments laid out in the literature review. The seventh section concludes by proposing some possible policy implications of this research as well as remaining unanswered lines of inquiry.

#### *Literature Review: Nonviolence, Disruption, and Inconsistent Assumptions*

This section reviews previous studies and explanations of mass nonviolent action and armed insurgency to achieve three goals. First, it describes two shared assumptions that underlay many studies of nonviolent action: 1) nonviolent campaigns are coercive and seek to maximize the level of disruption and losses they impose on their opponents,

and 2) they are strategic, rational actors that use nonviolence for instrumental and amoral reasons. I argue that these assumptions are difficult to reconcile with these campaigns' singular reliance on nonviolent methods of resistance. Second, I review three possible explanations for this reliance on nonviolent methods that are common in nonviolent action literature: 1) the participation advantage; 2) pre-existing social organization; and 3) interdependence. Some possible limits within these explanations are then discussed. Third, I review two other common explanations of nonviolent protest onset that are common in broader literature on civil wars, political violence, and social movements. I summarize this section with a table covering all five of these theoretical explanations, their related causal mechanisms, and some relevant limitations.

During the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the first few decades of the 21<sup>st</sup> there have been dozens of primarily mass nonviolent campaigns seeking to unseat incumbent governments, to oust occupying forces, or to alter the territorial boundaries of internationally recognized states through the use of peaceful protests, boycotts, strikes, or sit-ins. Prominent examples include successful protest movements in the Philippines, Zambia, Guatemala, and Ukraine, among others. By one measure, about half of these nonviolent campaigns achieved their goals (Chenoweth and Stephan 2011). These campaigns have been described as “functional equivalents” of armed insurgencies (Schock 2013), given that they broadly share maximalist anti-status quo objectives. While some of these campaigns appear to mix tactics, drawing on both nonviolent repertoires as well as more purposely violent and destructive methods, many more – over 80 campaigns since 1945 – have maintained more a less a singular focus on mass nonviolence. This has stimulated a growing array of research that seeks to explain the

comparative impacts of these campaigns and their origins (A. Braithwaite and Braithwaite 2018; Chenoweth and Cunningham 2013; Nepstad 2015).

Before reviewing previous scholarship on nonviolent action, it is worth reviewing the fuzzy temporal scope condition of this concept. An increasingly common unit of analysis or observation when studying nonviolent action is the campaign (Chenoweth and Lewis 2013). A campaign features repeated use of nonviolent tactics often by a named organization or leadership cadre in an effort to advance demands against the political or territorial status quo of an internationally recognized state. This requires explaining not just the adoption of nonviolence at the moment of campaign onset but why and how actors reevaluate their campaign and remain nonviolent through the course of a civil conflict. Without this more expansive explanation, arguments about nonviolent action risk focusing on just those factors influencing the selection of tactics for a single event, not a campaign. As a result, the arguments advanced here and many of the relevant scholarly works reviewed sometimes emphasize the origins of nonviolent campaigns while others identify factors that influence switching from nonviolent to violent strategies during ongoing civil conflicts. Considering both onset and the dynamic process of civil conflict is required to better understand the salient features that lead to the adoption of nonviolent methods. The subsequent theory section provides a diagrammatic explanation of these scope conditions and the relevant outcomes of interest and explanatory processes that are investigated in the analysis here.

The most prominent theoretical and empirical works on nonviolent action share several core assumptions (P. Ackerman and DuVall 2000; P. Ackerman and Kruegler 1994; Chenoweth and Stephan 2011; Nepstad 2011; Schock 2005; Sharp 1973; Sharp et



al. 2005; Zunes, Asher, and Kurtz 1999). First, studies assume that these nonviolent campaigns are driven by a strategic, rationalist logic rather than a normative one. “Strategic nonviolent resistance can be distinguished from principled nonviolence, which is grounded in religious and ethically based injunctions against violence” (Stephan and Chenoweth 2008, 10). The adoption and application of nonviolent strategies is instead more commonly driven by a focus on objectives, effectiveness, and functionalism. “In most cases, people who wage nonviolent struggle are doing so instrumentally, rather than because of a moral commitment to avoid arms” (Chenoweth and Cunningham 2013, 273). Ackerman and Kruegler similarly explain that a rationalist logic grounds nonviolent campaigns: “most of the known cases of nonviolent struggle have been motivated by the need to defeat a particular opponent with the most effective and least costly means at hand” (1994, 4). Schock described the majority of instances when nonviolent strategies were adopted as the “pragmatic approach” to the conflict (Schock 2005, 37). Nonviolent strategies and tactics are adopted because of their perceived efficacy and efficiency, not because their users are pacifists or inherently opposed to the use of force and violence. More specifically, the adoption of and adherence to nonviolent strategies is a strategic one that focuses on ends and means and is compatible with rational actor assumptions and explanations of behavior.

Another central assumption of these works is that nonviolent strategies achieve their objectives by generating disruption, thereby coercing their opponents to accommodate their demands or to collapse entirely (Sharp 1973). “If violence works because it is disruptive, and since nonviolent action has the potential to be as disruptive as violence, it may be a functional equivalent to violence in producing political change in

some context” (Schock 2005, 48). Chenoweth and Stephan also explain “Although nonviolent resisters eschew the threat or use of violence, the ‘peaceful’ designation often given to nonviolent movements belies the often highly disruptive nature of organized nonviolent resistance. Nonviolent resistance achieves demands against the will of the opponent by seizing control of the conflict through widespread noncooperation and defiance” (Stephan and Chenoweth 2008, 10). They continue elsewhere by explaining that, rather than relying on arms, “the systematic application of nonviolent sanctions by large numbers of people allow nonviolent campaigns to maximize leverage over their adversaries, even when their adversaries appear to have an advantage in terms of military prowess, resources, and other forms of power...The results of sustained disruption include the failure of the government to perform basic functions, a decline in GDP, investment, and tax revenues, loss of power by government elites, and the breakdown of the normal order of society” (Chenoweth and Stephan 2011, 41). This characterization of the disruption nonviolent action seeks to generate is remarkably similar to that of armed insurgencies, which aims “to discredit [the incumbent regime], isolate it, wreck its credit, undermine its economy, overextend its resources, and cause its disintegration” (Taber 2002, 16). Both nonviolent campaigns and violent armed insurgencies seek the same intermediate strategic objectives: win by causing disruption. Other scholars of nonviolence similarly emphasize the centrality of disruption to the logic of nonviolent action. In describing the effectiveness of the civil rights protests against policies of racial subjugation in the United States during the 1960s, Ackerman and Duvall explain that “mass civic disruption broke it down through sit-ins, boycotts, and marches, driving the cost of the system sky-high, city-by-city and state-by-state” (P. Ackerman and Duvall

2006, 36). Gene Sharp explicitly drew comparisons between nonviolent disruption and armed conflict, noting “the general similarities of nonviolent action to military war. Nonviolent action is a means of combat, as is war” (Sharp 1973, 67). Notions of coercion and collapse are recurrent in Sharp’s descriptions of nonviolent action. Martin Luther King Jr. also famously explained in his Letter from a Birmingham Jail that his strategy involved creating a situation that was “crisis packed” in order to compel accommodations to the civil rights movement’s political demands. Disruption, coercion, and generating costs for opponents are central to the logic of nonviolent campaigns, as they are in armed insurgency and political violence.

These two assumptions – that campaigns 1) are largely rational actors that 2) focus on generating disruption to achieve their objectives – are difficult to reconcile with nonviolent campaigns’ sole adherence to nonviolent strategies. An instrumentalist or functionalist approach to conflict should be more willing to consider alternative strategies or mixtures of tactics to optimize the ability to generate disruption. With no normative objections to sets of tactics, groups that are seeking to maximize disruption should be drawn to the potential of violence to further increase disruption and costs for their opponents. Tactical innovation and diversification has also been emphasized in previous analyses of nonviolent campaigns (K. G. Cunningham, Dahl, and Frugé 2017; Schock 2005). “The more diverse the tactics and methods implemented, the more diffuse the state’s repressive operations become, thus potentially lessening their effectiveness” (Schock 2005, 52). Despite the importance of tactical diversification and an emphasis on the importance of generating disruption, many campaigns remain persistently nonviolent. Dozens of anti-regime, secessionist, or anti-occupation campaigns – many of which

continue for years – have remained overwhelmingly reliant on nonviolent strategies (Chenoweth and Lewis 2013; Chenoweth and Stephan 2011). Past experience has demonstrated that in many campaigns this commitment to nonviolence is a choice made through careful deliberations. Some campaigns have publicly declared their adherence to nonviolence. Political groups in Nepal debated the value of nonviolent strategies after years of protests during the 1960s against the government (Thurber 2019), and West Papuan activists collectively analyzed the relative costs and benefits of nonviolent and violent strategies prior to launching their own campaigns against the government (K. G. Cunningham, Dahl, and Frugé 2017). Based on these debates and broader environmental, situational, or resource conditions, many campaigns launch and maintain a reliance on nonviolent methods.

By contrast, many common explanations of political violence and armed insurgency do not require or expect such campaigns to adhere to one set of tactics. Like studies of nonviolent campaigns, these explanations assume that actors are rational and focus on disruption (Blattman and Miguel 2010; Fearon 1995; Walter 2009). On the basis of these same assumptions, however, these theories argue that nonstate organizations may be incentivized to use more extreme and violent tactics to signal greater strength and resolve to their opponents, improving their bargaining position and ability to coerce accommodations. And many nonstate armed actors have also mixed nonviolent tactics in with their overall strategy to generate disruption. Hamas in the Gaza Strip (Ibish 2018), militia groups in Iraq (Craig and Majeed 2011), the Irish Republican Army (Power 1972), and armed insurgents in El Salvador (E. J. Wood 2003), among others, have all instigated, supported, or employed nonviolent protest efforts as a complement to armed

insurgency within their overarching anti-regime campaigns. This introduces a puzzle regarding the predominant adherence to nonviolent tactics in many maximalist anti-regime and secessionist campaigns. Why do supposedly rational and strategic dissident organizations focused on generating disruption limit their tactical focus to nonviolent methods?

This puzzle is further confounding when one considers how nonviolent campaigns generate disruption. It is true that nonviolent protest is disruptive. Large numbers of people marching through a street can interrupt normal economic, political, and social activities, generating costs for political leaders and other elites. Frequently, scholars like to point out that there is a wide variety of available nonviolent tactics. Most often cited are the 198 nonviolent methods detailed by Gene Sharp (Sharp et al. 2005), and many nonviolent scholars explain that the list is actually “limitless” due to the innovativeness of nonviolent activists (Schock 2005, 16). These tactics are grouped into three types: protest and persuasion (e.g., street marches), noncooperation (e.g., labor strikes), and intervention (e.g., sit-ins and nonviolent occupations). However, the list includes many actions for which the disruptive potential is highly questionable. “Letters of opposition or support,” “symbolic sounds,” “stand-in,” “ride-in,” and “wade-in,” among other examples from Sharp’s 198 methods, may be more consistent with conventional political activities than extra-institutional contentious action. Realistically they impose only negligible direct costs or consequences for an incumbent government and its institutions. Of course, these tactics may serve mobilizing and solidarity functions, but the claim that they are part of a disruptive effort is debatable. Indeed, Sharp has acknowledged that methods of protest and persuasion are “the weaker methods” and that for tactics of

nonviolent intervention it “may not be possible to maintain these methods for long periods of time. Casualties may be severe” (Sharp et al. 2005, 44). The menu of options for nonviolent campaigns to generate disruption may be more limited than is often discussed, and in particular are limited to noncooperation. This further compounds the puzzle of why campaigns restrict themselves to these strategies if many of their disruptive effects are limited and unsustainable.

Scholars of nonviolent action have offered several possible explanations for why organizations and actors may singularly focus on nonviolent tactics in their anti-regime and secessionist campaigns, several of which will be considered in the analysis here. First, a strong adherence to nonviolence generates a “participation advantage” for anti-status quo campaigns (Chenoweth and Stephan 2011). “The moral, physical, informational, and commitment barriers to participation are much lower for nonviolent resistance than for violent insurgency” (Chenoweth and Stephan 2011, 10). Thus, because nonviolence does not require persons to contravene common moral barriers to physically harm or kill others and requires few of the specialized skills, physical demands, or risky clandestine activities of guerilla warfare, it naturally draws a larger number of persons from a wider pool of potential participants (i.e., the elderly, physically less able, etc.). A participation advantage is especially critical, because the per participant disruptive effect of violence is higher for violent strategies than nonviolent ones. “A single person with a gun is sufficient to execute an attack. A tiny cell of militants can carry out terrorism that alters the course of a conflict decisively. A small group of people going out into the street, however, does not make a protest event, much less a protest campaign” (Pearlman 2011, 11; see also Dahl et al. 2014). However, the participation advantage allows the

cumulative disruptive effect of nonviolence to greatly surpass violence, which can include only so many people because of its inherently limited pool of participants. “If they [i.e., nonviolent protesters] do this [i.e., protest] in sufficient numbers for long enough, that government or hierarchical system will no longer have power” (Sharp 1973, 64). By this logic, it makes sense to limit a campaign’s tactical focus to nonviolent methods since it draws more resources, support, and participants to the campaign, which cumulatively generates larger disruptive effects.

Empirically, it is not clear that nonviolent campaigns do generate higher participation levels than violent ones (Wittels 2016), but even theoretically the relationship between nonviolence and participation is questionable. Participation comes in many forms. A study of 80 different armed nonstate actors found that “It is almost always impossible to draw a clear line between members and non-members of insurgencies as forms of participation differ appreciably” (Schlichte 2009, 19). Indeed, armed guerilla fighters and other violent nonstate actors rely on the contributions of many unseen noncombatants for their effectiveness and performance, not just those who carry and fire a weapon. “The [armed] guerilla...fights with the support of the noncombatant civilian populace: It is his camouflage, his quartermaster, his recruiting office, his communications network, and his efficient, all-seeing intelligence service” (Taber 2002, 12). Many of these noncombat roles are essential force multipliers for armed nonstate actors, and they have far lower physical and moral barriers given that they are not frontline positions. The support of business and local community groups has been critical to successful militia groups in Somalia (Ahmad 2015) and broader social and familial networks were important for informational and logistical support for armed actors for

Lebanese armed nonstate groups (Parkinson 2013). In El Salvador's civil war during the 1980s, many *campesinos* who were unable to serve in armed insurgent groups extended support in other ways. One activist explained: "There were roles for those too old to take up arms. Those who could not join the organization [the FMLN] formed cooperatives" to provide resources and intelligence to the rebels (E. J. Wood 2003, 173). Many different forms of individuals and social organizations can contribute critical "rear area" resources and functions to support armed insurgencies without the moral or physical demands of actual combat. Nonviolent action may hold less of an inherent "participation advantage" than is often claimed, given the broad array of ways in which individuals and organizations can contribute to armed insurgencies.

Other studies have emphasized the importance of organization in nonviolent action campaigns, both in terms of the extent of organization within the campaign itself and the campaign's ability to recruit and appropriate pre-existing social organizations. The role of organization works by enhancing cohesion, facilitating mobilization, and preventing fragmentation, all of which are intertwined and conceptually overlapping. These mechanisms increase the likelihood that a civil conflict remains a nonviolent campaign as opposed to a violent armed insurgency. Cohesive organizational structures with "some leadership and an institutional framework" are what "facilitates mass mobilization. To the degree that a movement has a unifying sense of collective purpose, it will be more capable of rallying a broad base of the population rather than merely narrow sectors or select recruits...Mass mobilization is more critical for strategies such as civil disobedience and labor strikes than for armed struggle" (Pearlman 2011, 11). Similarly, other studies also emphasize the importance of social capital (i.e., interpersonal trust and



norms of reciprocity) in contributing to organizational cohesion and the availability of pre-existing social organization as critical for efficient and sustained recruitment in nonviolent campaigns (P. Ackerman and Kruegler 1994; Chenoweth and Stephan 2011; D. E. Cunningham et al. 2017; Morris 1981; Oberschall 1973; Sharp et al. 2005; Sutton, Butcher, and Svensson 2014; P. B. White et al. 2015). Organization also promotes resilience and discipline in the face of repression, reducing the likelihood that the campaign will resort to violent strategies when facing detentions or casualties or fracture into more militant factions (Pinckney 2016; Schock 2005). By contrast, a fragmented and less organized opposition movement or one that is effectively fragmented through repression is likely to turn to armed struggle. Empirical analyses have found evidence that supports arguments that smaller groups are more prone to “radical” agendas or that a fractious opposition will struggle to communicate shared goals, resulting in bargaining failures with the government (Chenoweth, Perkoski, and Kang 2017; K. G. Cunningham 2013a; Lawrence 2010; Pearlman 2011; Regan and Norton 2005).

While the importance of organization to mounting effective nonviolent campaigns is understandable, the causal role of organization on strategy selection remains unclear. Organization may stimulate (or simply be an observable indication of) political and operational cohesion or social capital, but its existence alone does not necessarily suggest why certain tactics are used and others avoided. Leadership, institutional frameworks, cohesion, and resilience are useful for any difficult or complex enterprise, whether violent or nonviolent. At most, the existence and extent of cohesive social organization within an already nonviolent campaign may explain why the adoption of violence is sidelined or delayed, but not why the strategy was selected at the outset of a conflict.

Likewise, mobilization does not accrue solely to nonviolence. The availability of social organization has been critical to the effectiveness of and recruitment into armed insurgent groups, as has been demonstrated in empirical studies of Eastern Europe conflicts, the Kashmiri and Sri Lankan armed insurgencies, and in previous civil wars in Uganda and Peru, among other contexts (Humphreys and Weinstein 2008; Petersen 2001; Staniland 2014; Weinstein 2007). Cohesion, social capital, fragmentation, and similar organizationally-oriented explanations do not appear to offer a complete explanation for the adoption of and adherence to nonviolent strategies by rational actors seeking to maximize disruption.

Another set of explanations of the adoption and persistence of nonviolent strategies draws on interdependence theory. The concept of interdependence, which describes relationships of mutual exchange or dependence between two or more parties, is often applied to interstate relations (Keohane and Nye 2011). It is typically framed in terms of the level of trade between two or more countries, with countries that engage in large amounts of international trade said to be highly interdependent. Such trade purportedly creates unique constraints or incentives that shape how states behave during disputes (Copeland 2015; Gartzke and Li 2016; Mansfield and Pollins 2001; Maoz 2009; Milner and Moravcsik 2009). When extended to civil conflicts, interdependence between aggrieved constituencies and political or economic elites create opportunities that reduce the likelihood that civil conflicts turn violent (Butcher, Gray, and Mitchell 2018b; Butcher and Svensson 2016; Chenoweth and Stephan 2011; Schock 2005; Sharp 1973). Specifically, organizations that are interdependent with elites may be able to access latent forms of power and influence that obviate the need for violence as they seek to generate

disruption. “Organizations that the regime depends upon have higher leverage, usually because the individuals mobilized by these organizations produce economic, social, or symbolic resources that the regime needs. ... Thus, organizations that are interdependent with the regime socially or economically are most useful for nonviolent forms of dissent” (Butcher, Gray, and Mitchell 2018, 304, emphasis in original). For example, large labor-intensive manufacturing sectors with substantial unionization create the opportunity for highly impactful forms of nonviolent noncooperation, specifically boycotts or strikes. In such circumstances, “the state is likely to be dependent upon either trade (domestically or internationally) in manufactured goods or on the wage earnings of manufacturing workers, as the size of the manufacturing sector grows in relation to GDP. These dependencies can be leveraged through strikes and boycotts, in addition to participation in rallies and tax noncompliance” (Butcher and Svensson 2016, 318). In other words, high levels of economic interdependence make possible effective forms of noncooperative strikes and boycotts. Such noncooperation is disruptive and costly for elites, and therefore nonviolent methods are more viable for organizations and constituencies that are interdependent with elites.

The interdependence explanation offers additional clarity on how specific organizational types or constituencies may be better placed to generate disruption through nonviolent noncooperation. Threatening the profits and wealth of economic elites or the tax revenues that state institutions rely on should be highly costly and disruptive to a regime in power. This option may only be available to constituencies or organizations that can leverage such interdependent relationships, rendering their involvement a critical component for mass nonviolent campaigns. However, it still does not explain why these

same organizations do not seek to diversify or optimize their ability to generate disruption. Why not engage in strikes and boycotts as well as support armed attacks on the state? The per-participant disruptive effect of such violent strategies may be greater than that of noncooperation tactics. Nor would business, labor, or consumer groups, to cite three possible examples, need to directly involve themselves in such attacks. They could instead merely support armed attacks materially or indirectly, thereby signaling higher resolve and greater abilities to their opponents in power. The existence of interdependence makes effective noncooperation tactics viable, but it does not explain why these are the only methods adopted by rational actors seeking to maximize disruption and costs for the state. And yet it appears correct that many organizations that enjoy high levels of interdependence and latent noncooperation leverage are rarely linked to strategies of armed insurgencies. According to the Foundation of Rebel Group Emergence dataset, of 430 armed nonstate groups active from 1946 through 2011, only 6 involved a labor union at their initiation. Current applications of interdependence theory to the onset of mass nonviolent campaigns explain why they are viable, but not why these campaigns remain predominantly nonviolent and eschew violent strategies.

There are additional common explanations of how nonviolent and violent strategies unfold or alternate during civil conflicts. I briefly review two here so that they may be referred to later in the paper as additional rival explanations against which case data is assessed. These are repression and ideology. Repression has been argued to influence methods of resistance in several ways. First, it can promote substitution of nonviolent protest for violent armed attacks (K. G. Cunningham and Beaulieu 2010; Mark Irving Lichbach 1987; McAdam 1983; Moore 2000). As nonviolent dissidents

encounter recalcitrant and aggressive security force responses, they abandon nonviolence and adopt more extreme and disruptive violent tactics. Repression can fragment larger nonviolent campaigns into smaller factions that are more prone to radical, militant agendas, including those that employ violence (Della Porta 1996, 2017; Lawrence 2010; Pearlman 2011; Pinckney 2016; Young 2013). However, repression of nonviolence has not always led to fracturing of a campaign or to the adoption of violent strategies (Chenoweth and Stephan 2011; Schock 2005). Sometimes it stimulates the so-called “punishment puzzle,” in which repression leads to the breakdown and radicalization of nonviolent campaigns in some cases while in others it only catalyzes further and broader mobilization (Chenoweth, Perkoski, and Kang 2017; Davenport 2007; Kurzman 1996; R. W. White 1989). Regardless, the role of repression on violent and nonviolent campaigns in South Africa will be assessed.

Ideological explanations of resistance methods are rooted in the notion that certain beliefs reduce normative constraints on the use of violence more than others. For example, campaigns that hold strong religious- or leftist-based ideologies may view their opponents as intrinsically different and irredeemable, and therefore are less restrained from targeting opponents with armed violence to advance their goals. By contrast, groups that share a more inclusive ideology may feel stronger normative restraints on the use of violence (Goodwin 2007; Sanín and Wood 2014; Thaler 2012). Some evidence suggests that ethnopolitical organizations in Middle Eastern countries that hold more gender inclusive perspectives are less likely to use violence, supporting the role of ideology in the adoption of resistance methods (Asal et al. 2013). However, armed rebellions that lead to civil wars have been driven by a large variety of ideological outlooks, including

groups seeking to advance democratic aims, ethnic homogeneity, human rights, or leftist and Marxist ideologies. While it does appear that there are more armed nonstate actors that advance exclusionary ideologies than mass nonviolent anti-regime or secessionist campaigns, ideological perspectives do not appear to preclude organizations from employing violent or nonviolent methods.

There have been dozens of episodes of mass nonviolent campaigns seeking to oust incumbent regimes or secede from internationally recognized sovereign states. However, most explanations of why these campaigns remain nonviolent are somewhat incomplete. These theories and their shortcomings are summarized in table 2.1. In the next section, I build on these theories, starting with several of their core assumptions, to provide a modified explanation of why rational, strategic actors seeking to maximize disruption would limit their tactical focus to mass nonviolent methods.

**Table 2.1. Explanations of Selection of Nonviolent Methods in Civil Conflicts**

<b>Theory / Explanation</b>	<b>Causal Mechanism(s)</b>	<b>Shortcomings</b>
Nonviolence (Inherent advantages)	Participation advantage	Narrow view of “participation”
Organization	Cohesion	Observable in nonviolent and violent campaigns
	Resilience	Observable in nonviolent and violent campaigns
	Social capital	Observable in nonviolent and violent campaigns
Interdependence	Noncooperation viability	Incomplete; does not meet rational actor, disruption maximization assumptions
Repression	Tactical Substitution	“Punishment puzzle”
	Organizational Fragmentation	“Punishment puzzle”
Ideology	Normative restraints	Observable in nonviolent and violent campaigns

*Theory: Loss Aversion and Nonviolence*

This section builds on and expands previously detailed interdependence explanations of nonviolent methods adoption. It proposes that a critical additional causal mechanism activated by interdependent relationships better explains why some organizations and actors rely solely on mass nonviolent methods during civil conflicts: loss aversion. I argue that this modified explanation helps clarify the selection of nonviolent dissidence and is more consistent with assumptions of rational actors seeking to maximize disruption and minimize costs amid civil conflict, assumptions that underlay most nonviolent action scholarly work. Given this modified explanation, I then detail expectations of how it operates among dissident organizations within a civil conflict. This lays the basis for how the case of South Africa is later analyzed.

First, I identify several assumptions and scope conditions for my argument. I seek to explain how actors select between violent and nonviolent strategies in civil conflicts, which are disputes in which organized nonstate actors make demands for changes to the political and territorial status quo of internationally recognized sovereign states and employ extra-constitutional methods to advance those claims. These are similar to the phenomena explained in most studies of mass nonviolent conflict and armed intrastate conflict (Chenoweth and Lewis 2013; N. P. Gleditsch et al. 2002). Violent methods include the intentional use of force against the state, its institutions, or supporters to advance political or territorial claims. This can include armed insurgency, the use of terrorist-style tactics, violent riots, or other forms of violence that are used for a political purpose. Mass nonviolence is the use of protests, boycotts, strikes, or sit-ins to advance

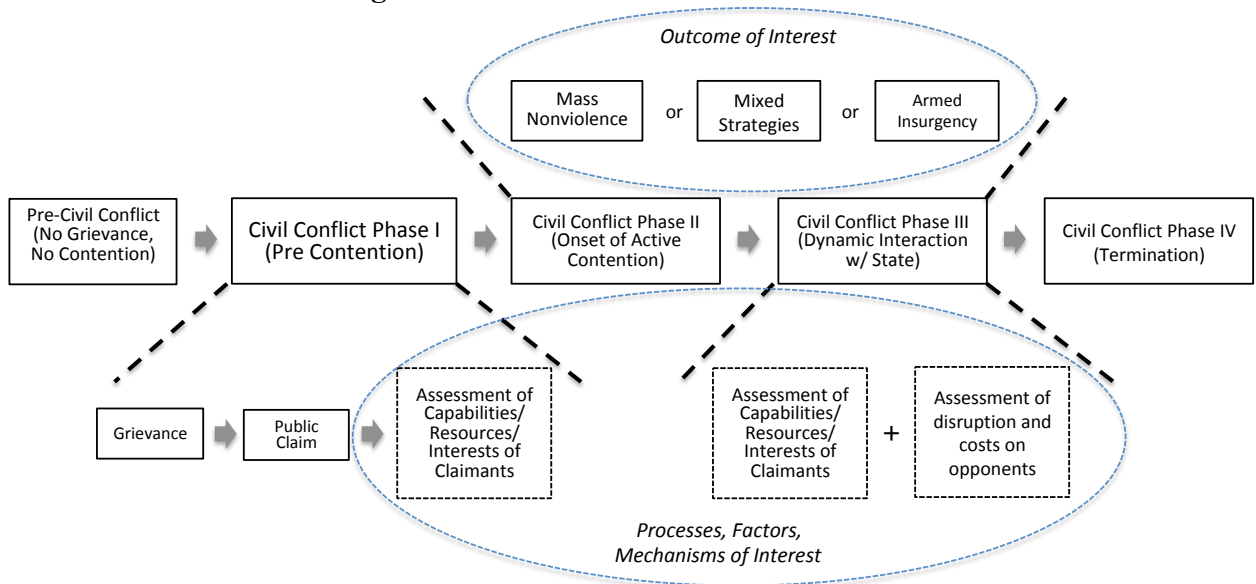
political or territorial objectives. A third possible strategy of dissidence mixes these sets of tactics or strategies.

The adoption of a dissident strategy is an ongoing process that begins at the onset of civil conflict and persists through dynamic interaction with the state as the conflict unfolds. To better explain this process, I draw on and expand conceptual models used in previous analyses of nonviolent and violent methods adoption in civil conflict (D. E. Cunningham et al. 2017; P. B. White et al. 2015). Figure 2.1 lays out this multi-phase sequence of civil conflict. First, actors, often social organizations or collectives of individuals, become aggrieved over aspects of prevailing political, economic, or social arrangements in their country. These actors or organizations then announce a public claim against the status quo, seeking some political or territorial change or transformation. Once this demand is made, these actors or organizations subsequently adopt and employ some method by which they seek to coerce the state to accede to their demands. In this last step, aggrieved actors and organizations can select between primarily nonviolent strategies, violent methods such as armed insurgency, or some mixture of these strategies. As strategies are put into practice a threshold (i.e., 1,000 nonviolent protestors in two separate coordinated actions per Chenoweth and Stephan (2011) or 25-battle related deaths in a year (N. P. Gleditsch et al. 2002)) of disruption is crossed, a civil conflict has begun. Prior to this, there are many opportunities for conflict to be avoided, including decisions by the aggrieved not to make a public claim, to not act on a claim that has been made public, to adopt purely institutional and conventional methods (i.e., petitioning for change through existing institutions, fielding candidates for office, etc.) to advance their claim, or for the grievance to never manifest. The state may



also accede to the claim once it is made but before coercion is employed, though this seems unlikely. After onset, most civil conflicts involve repeated interaction between nonstate actors and state institutions or forces, and so there are numerous opportunities for nonstate actors to shift strategies or adopt new tactics as they assess their resource positions or the effects of the conflict on their interests or that of their opponents. Thus, my theory and accompanying empirical analysis attempt to explain both the strategy adopted at the onset of civil conflict as well as the continued reliance on nonviolent methods during the course of conflict. My theory focuses on the second and third phases of civil conflicts: I seek to explain how actors assess their resources, capabilities, and interests and adopt and maintain a dissident strategy at the onset of a civil conflict – more specifically a consistently nonviolent set of dissident methods. However, grievances, claims, and their origins are not explained, nor why or how civil conflicts end.

**Figure 2.1. Phases of Civil Conflict**



I argue that interdependence largely explains the adoption of a strategy of predominantly nonviolent methods. As discussed in the previous review of literature, interdependence is understood as relationships of mutual dependence or reciprocal effects between two or more parties. In domestic contexts, this literature has pointed out that political and economic elites are often dependent on certain constituencies because of their importance to continued economic growth, state revenues, and overall financial and business stability.<sup>3</sup> The classic example is labor groups in the manufacturing sector of export-oriented economies. Nonviolent action scholars have argued that these actors have significant noncooperation leverage that can be used to coerce elites to accommodate political demands. Without the continued compliance and production of labor groups, political and economic elites face resource constraints and instability. Interdependence thus activates a noncooperation viability mechanism during civil conflicts that may lead to the adoption of mass nonviolent methods. However, nonviolent scholars have not fully emphasized that the relationship is interdependent, and therefore these same groups and constituencies are dependent on elites. Labor constituencies, for example, require a modicum of order and stability so that manufacturing can continue and their comparatively more prosperous and stable positions in society can be maintained. They too are vulnerable to significant disorder. This interdependence and vulnerability activates an additional causal mechanism, loss aversion, which influences the behavior of these actors when they engage in dissidence. This mechanism is discussed in greater detail below.

Interdependence is a broad concept, but when applied to analysis of interstate relations various measures of international trade (i.e., absolute value of bilateral trade,

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<sup>3</sup> Interdependence is not inherently limited to economic relationships, but those are often a focus of study.

value of bilateral trade as proportion of GDP, value of all trade as proportion of GDP, etc.) are used as a common proxy. In domestic contexts, income or occupational/professional status, which should strongly correlate with one another, should capture the degree of interdependence between various constituencies and groups and political and economic elites that dominate the state. In the example of labor groups in developing country contexts, these are often in-demand jobs because of their relatively decent wages. Interdependence between groups or constituencies with even higher earnings and high professional status (i.e., doctors, lawyers, managers, etc.) with elites may also be stronger, given that the former are already in high demand (as indicated by their higher wages) and may be more difficult to fill and replace in many developing countries. Higher levels of income and professional status should therefore proxy for levels of interdependence between various constituencies, societal groups, or social organizations and political and economic elites.

As is common in nonviolent action scholarship, I assume that prospective dissidents are rational actors. The selection of nonviolent, violent, or mixed strategies of resistance against the state is therefore a product of at least a rough cost-benefit analysis of each alternative. Indeed, some dissident groups have expressly engaged in cost-benefit analyses when considering their options for confronting the state (K. G. Cunningham, Dahl, and Frugé 2017; Thurber 2019). As a result of such analyses, the alternative with the highest net benefit should be adopted. For dissidents the “benefit” of a method is the amount of per-participant disruption generated, which can act to coerce the state and elites to accommodate to dissident demands or to collapse outright. This disruption “benefit” has two components: the immediate disruption in terms of the short-term losses

caused by specific attacks or protest events and the medium term losses if the attacks or events destroy or disable essential infrastructure, personnel, or confidence in the state for months or even years. The costs of a dissident method also have two components: the short-term immediate costs to dissidents of executing an attack or nonviolent event and any subsequent costs that undermine the interests of dissidents that accrue in the months or years after the attack or event.

This simple cost-benefit formula is detailed in formula 2.1, and includes expanded details in terms of immediate and medium-term benefits and costs in formula 2.2. The “benefit” in this equation is the disruption generated, and so in formula 2.2 this is denoted by “D” and costs by “C.” For each aspect there is an immediate ( $t$ ) and medium-to-long-term ( $t + 1$ ) component. “NVA” designates nonviolent action, “V” designates violent strategies, and a mixed strategy is not featured for simplicity’s sake. These figures depict a situation in which the net benefit of nonviolence is higher and therefore it is selected over violence. No formal model of strategy selection is implied here and the formulas are used merely to structure the proceeding narrative.

$$Benefit_{nva} - Cost_{nva} > Benefit_v - Cost_v \quad (1.1)$$

$$(D_t + D_{t+1})_{nva} - (C_t + C_{t+1})_{nva} > (D_t + D_{t+1})_v - (C_t + C_{t+1})_v \quad (1.2)$$

I first discuss the relative levels of disruption generated by each method. Violent strategies and tactics have obvious advantages over nonviolent methods. Per participant, armed actors are able to create far more disruption than individual nonviolent protestors. An armed attack, a bombing, or other violent tactic also has more enduring disruptive impacts, as infrastructure, personnel, and confidence must be rebuilt or replaced and

therefore losses mount in the interim. Indeed, armed insurgency potentially generates severe and lasting losses. Countries that experience civil wars face significant contractions in their gross domestic product (GDP), capital flight, and increases in inflation (Collier 1999). The destruction is also persistent. Post-civil war GDP growth rates typically remain depressed relative to comparable countries that experience no conflict at all, and for countries that endure a lengthy and violent civil war, average growth rates remain negative for years after the end of fighting even when pre-conflict economic performance is included in the analysis (Kang and Meernik 2005). The economic costs of civil war are observable not only at the macro-level. During post-war recovery, individual businesses in war-affected regions tend to be smaller and find it more difficult to hire skilled employees than those in regions less affected by war-related violence (Collier and Duponchel 2013). Job prospects and wages in general are likely similarly affected. Beyond direct macro- and micro-level economic losses, civil wars worsen post-conflict mortality and disability rates and can lead to higher youth and old-age dependency ratios, creating additional socioeconomic burdens for working-age populations (Chen, Loayza, and Reynal-Querol 2008; Hoddie and Smith 2009).

By contrast, the per-participant disruptive effects of a nonviolent protest or a labor strike are often lower, particularly in the medium and longer term. To be sure, a large-scale march can generate disorder and can signal to political leaders that a significant segment of the population is willing to take action on dissatisfaction with leadership and policies. Forms of noncooperation, such as strikes and boycotts, may be even more disruptive and costly for elites, depriving them of vital revenues and resources, than protests. And this disruptive impact may be further enhanced if such strikes and boycotts

are employed by well-positioned laborers or comparatively well-heeled consumers – they have more to withhold or withdraw. In other words the same number of participants in noncooperation tactics can have a higher disruptive impact on elite interests the higher their interdependence with elites. This may explain why so-called “middle class” participants are seen as particularly important to and impactful for nonviolent campaigns. For example, successful anti-regime protests in Guatemala in 2015 were organized and initiated by a group of middle class professionals (ICG 2016; Nolan 2015), and in Sudan repeated protest events and political violence over the last decade were unsuccessful but “the protest movement [in 2019] that ultimately forced [President] al-Bashir to fall was led by a new group, the Sudanese Professionals Association, which was born of Sudan’s frustrated middle classes” (D. Walsh and Goldstein 2019). It is also the logic of the “noncooperation viability” mechanism highlighted in nonviolent action literature. As disruptive as such nonviolent events may be, however, the per-participant disruption generated remains lower than violent strategies. For example, nonviolent campaigns have been shown to produce no detectable change in foreign direct investment flows when compared to states experiencing no civil conflict at all, while countries that experience a civil war onset register on average a 15 percentage point decline in foreign direct investment (A. Braithwaite, Kucik, and Maves 2014). The effects of mass nonviolent tactics or events are largely confined to the immediate event itself and do not endure into the medium or long term. Normal economic and social activity can resume shortly after nonviolent strikes, boycotts, or other events finish.

The costs of executing these strategies also influences which is selected. For the immediate execution of an attack, violent methods require some degree of specialized

skills (i.e., familiarity with small arms), resources (i.e., weapons), and training (i.e., operating in units). These are not insignificant costs. Many nonviolent methods, such as protest marches and strikes, are comparatively intuitive though they may still require some transportation, communication, and other costs. The immediate per participant costs of a nonviolent event should be lower than violent attacks, and these should diminish as participation increases as well.

To summarize the cost-benefit analysis so far:

- The immediate per participant disruption of nonviolent tactics is generally lower than violent alternatives;  $(D_t + D_{t+1})_v$  is always greater than  $(D_t + D_{t+1})_{nva}$ .
- Nonviolent disruption may be a function of the type of participants in the nonviolent event; per participant  $(D_t + D_{t+1})_{nva}$  is higher when participants are more interdependent with elite interest.
- Medium-term disruption of nonviolent strategies may be negligible; the value of  $(D_{t+1})_{nva}$  is low and may be near zero.
- The immediate costs of mounting a violent strategy may be somewhat higher than employing nonviolent methods.

Even factoring in the relatively higher immediate costs of violent tactics, the comparative net benefit of these strategies appears to lean in favor of violent strategies.

The medium-to-long-term costs of violent and nonviolent methods, however, differ substantially, are often a function of interdependence, and may exert a very strong influence on the adoption of nonviolence. This is where the loss aversion mechanism is activated. As discussed previously, violent methods such as armed insurgency create

widespread disruption to economic activity and social life. In many civil wars, few corners of the economy or society are unaffected. For prospective dissident actors who have a stake in such economic activity and social life, such widespread disruption leads to severe blowback. In other words,  $(D_{t+1})_v$  directly raises  $(C_{t+1})_v$ . This is especially true for actors and organizations that are interdependent with elites and whose interests are to some extent reciprocal. An effort to disrupt elite interests therefore results in shared losses and sacrifices. In many cases,  $(C_{t+1})_v$  for dissidents may be larger than  $(D_{t+1})_v$ . In many developing country contexts, even relatively higher wage earners or those who enjoy comparatively better professional status may be more exposed to sudden shifts in economic fortunes than elites. For example, even as the so-called “middle class” has been expanding in many developing countries around the world, many members of this group remain vulnerable to backsliding (Ravallion 2010). “Being a new member of the global middle class is a precarious thing. An illness, a recession, an ecological or natural disaster can all plunge new middle-class members back into poverty” (Desai 2018). The same precariousness is also likely in the event of an armed insurgency. Elites may be harmed by losses associated with any disruption generated by a violent insurrection, but non-elites may be pushed to the brink. Factory workers may lose jobs as production is shuttered, merchants and traders may experience disruption to their supplies, professionals such as doctors and lawyers face reduced demand for their services, and inflation rapidly erodes the value of what meager assets or bank deposits are held. To the extent that members of “middle class” occupations comprise the politically aggrieved networks that are challenging the political or territorial status quo, methods of political violence represent substantial threats to their interests given that their current and



continued quality of life relies on a modicum of order for the broader economic system. As a consequence, they may be deterred from employing violence to advance their anti-status quo claims and will seek out alternative strategies. Fortunately, as other nonviolent scholars have pointed out, by dint of their comparably better position in society – their interdependence with elites – they are also more able to engage in impactful nonviolent noncooperation. Interdependence becomes a simultaneous form of power (noncooperation viability) and vulnerability (loss aversion).

The same may not be true for groups that are less interdependent with elite interests, such as the under or unemployed or groups who face continued or even further marginalization and losses in the future regardless of the effects of political violence or instability. These groups may be less deterred by any medium- or long-term costs resulting from violent strategies. In other words,  $(C_{t+1})_v$  is naturally low for these groups. They therefore may be more drawn to the higher disruptive and coercive benefits of violent strategies, and less averse to any associated losses.

In sum, for dissident organizations and groups that are interdependent with elite interests:

- $(D_t + D_{t+1})_v - (C_t + C_{t+1})_v$  drops rapidly as  $(C_{t+1})_v$  rises and potentially surpasses  $(D_{t+1})_v$ .
- $(D_t + D_{t+1})_{nva} - (C_t + C_{t+1})_{nva}$  increases as interdependent actors have inherently higher leverage over elite interests.

This logic informs the primary hypothesis of this theory: *higher levels of interdependence between dissident organizations and elites increase the likelihood that dissident organizations will adopt and adhere to primarily nonviolent methods of*

*resistance*. More specifically, the primary causal mechanism at work within this hypothesized relationship is not just noncooperation viability – it is not simply that these groups *can* engage in impactful strikes and boycotts because of their unique access to leverage over elite interests – as argued by other nonviolent action scholars. Rather, interdependence also activates the causal mechanism of loss aversion. Groups and organizations are deterred from employing violence because of its potential to harm their own medium- and long-term interests. If correct, this mechanism should produce particular dynamics within dissident networks during civil conflicts. These include:

- Groups may be reluctant dissidents, delaying their involvement in dissidence and limiting it to nonviolence
- Groups should express concern about the use of violence in strategic debates about dissident methods. Their concerns should be rooted in the possible costs of violence.
- Groups should attempt to constrain or restrain other dissidents that appear to lean toward or adopt violent methods, out of concern for the disruptive effects of such action will negatively impact their interests. Groups will not even support violence against their opponent for which they could plausibly deny responsibility out of fears of the broader consequences of such violence.
- Groups should be observed to be protecting or advancing the interests they share with elites, even while engaging in efforts that seek to support their anti-status quo political or territorial objectives.

Stricter tests for the importance of loss aversion to the adoption of and adherence to nonviolent methods should also result in several specific observable actions. Even well

organized dissident groups that have plausible noncooperation leverage (i.e., something to withhold from elites) may engage in or support anti-regime violence if their interests are already low or are likely to be threatened in the future regardless of their dissidence. Additionally, differences between groups that do and do not engage in violent and nonviolent methods should not be fully attributable to different perceptions of or experiences with repression, ideology, organization, tactical “participation advantages,” or other common alternative explanations of dissident strategy adoption.

This theory of the adoption of and adherence to nonviolent methods during civil conflicts provides several contributions to previous literature on nonviolent action. First, it builds on and is consistent with central assumptions in much nonviolent scholarly work: dissidents are rational actors that rely on disruption to coerce their opponents to accede to their goals. The emphasis here on interdependence and loss aversion provides additional clarity for why such rational and strategic actors focused on disruption would eschew highly impactful and efficient tactics, including violence. It is also a simple and intuitive extension of previous explanations of nonviolent methods that stress noncooperation and interdependence. The theory does have limits, however, including its inability to explain the origins of grievances or how attributes of grievances may influence strategy selection. Interdependence itself is also plausibly related to grievances, since those who are more intertwined with the interests of elites may be less dissatisfied overall. Likewise, interdependence offers less clarity on how groups select between predominantly violent strategies and a mixture of violent and nonviolent tactics. Its explanatory power focuses mainly on the sole use of mass nonviolent methods.

### *Data, Methods, and Outcomes of Interest*

In this section of the paper I identify the outcomes of interest and behavior I am seeking to explain, the evidence I use in my analysis, the rationale for the process-tracing approach, and the selection of South Africa as my case.

My dependent variable includes three types of anti-regime dissident behavior that predominated in South Africa during the 1980s: mass nonviolent action, organized armed insurgency, and a mixture of political violence and nonviolence. Mass nonviolence includes the coordinated and repeated use of various nonviolent action methods, such as street protests, demonstrations, strikes, and sit-ins. This outcome corresponds to the definition of nonviolent campaigns used by Chenoweth and Stephan and related data initiatives (Chenoweth and Lewis 2013; Chenoweth and Stephan 2011). Armed insurgency involves the use of force by a nonstate armed organization whose stated goal is to alter the political or territorial status quo of a country. The definition largely corresponds with concepts from the Uppsala Conflict Data Program and the Nonstate Actor data initiative (D. E. Cunningham, Gleditsch, and Salehyan 2013; Harbom, Melander, and Wallensteen 2008). Mixed repertoires include those that support or participate in both mass nonviolent campaigns and actions by armed insurgent organizations. Additionally, I consider other forms of mixed repertoires, such as groups that participate in mass nonviolence but also engage in targeted violence against state institutions but do not formally affiliate with an armed insurgent organization or groups that form local militia to support a central armed insurgent organization but do not become integrated into its structures. In South Africa, these three outcomes of interests – mass nonviolence, armed insurgency, and mixed repertoires – roughly correspond to the

strategies employed by the nonviolent United Democratic Front, the MK armed rebel group, and the events that transpired in certain communities during the 1984-1986 township revolts, respectively. More details on these actors will be provided in the next section.

My unit of analysis is the social organization, such as a named voluntary organization or association initiated and collectively maintained by individuals. Studies of conflict dynamics and contentious politics often assume that pre-existing organizations are central actors (Mark I. Lichbach 1994; Tilly 1978). In South Africa during the 1980s, there were also myriad different types of such local and regional organizations that were founded and maintained by independent citizens. These groups, which included so-called “civics”, youth congresses, various ethnically-defined organizations (i.e., the Natal Indian Congress), or labor unions, were created to protect or advance the shared interests of their members. Such organizations were nodes of opposition politics during this period:

The early 1980s were a time of organizational effervescence, as well as political alienation. The period witnessed a veritable explosion in associational life. It gave birth to new organizations of every variety – community, youth, women’s, labor, student, political – which by mid-decade honeycombed the social fabric of all but the smallest and most remote townships... These new organizations while serving somewhat different geographical, class, gender, or functional constituencies, shared a central and all-important feature – they mobilized their members in opposition to the limited form of inclusion that was Pretoria’s vision of a reformed South Africa (Price 1991, 160).

I seek to explain how interdependence shaped whether these various organizations directly engaged in or extended material support to either of the three forms of anti-regime dissidence that serve as my outcomes of interest: nonviolent, violent, or mixed strategies. By engaged I mean that an organization was a direct participant in the consequential activities of these groups, such as nonviolent protests or boycotts under the

UDF, attacks or bombings carried out by MK, or various forms of violence prosecuted by ad hoc groups during the township revolts. By material support I mean that an organization intentionally and knowingly provided resources to supplement these various dissident efforts. For example, material support to the MK could involve the provision of information that would enable or enhance attacks, the storing or transporting of weapons or personnel, or the facilitation of recruitment.

In interstate relations, a country's trade relative to its overall economy, its relative dependence on trade vis-à-vis other countries, or the price elasticity of traded goods and services are the primary ways in which interdependence is operationalized (Mansfield and Pollins 2001). Potential analogs in domestic contexts might be the occupations and wages/income of various aggrieved constituencies. Those groups that earn higher incomes from higher-status occupations are presumably in higher demand by major industries and producers, and may also be an important source of tax revenue and broader economic stability from the perspective of the state. Minimal systematic data is available on wages and professional positions of blacks in South Africa during the 1980s (see below). The analysis here relies on references to occupational status, income, and/or behaviors associated with wealth (i.e., home ownership, private schooling, etc.) in available surveys, historical accounts, or interview data to determine level of interdependence with political and economic elite interests.

Process tracing was chosen as the analytic approach for three reasons. First, data on the South Africa case and many of the consequential actors during the conflicts of the 1980s is limited. Specifically, though it is commonly accepted that there were at least hundreds of various independent organizations and associations that were active in South

Africa during the 1980s there is no reliable systematic information on their dates of origin, scope, membership, purpose, location, issue areas, objectives, or other critical attributes (Kessel 2000; SA Scholar 2 2019; Seekings 2000b; Swilling 1988). Documentation from these organizations is also extremely limited and not easily accessed, with existing studies relying on interview data and contemporaneous accounts (Adler and Steinberg 2000). More broadly, there remains no comprehensive event data on the location of MK attacks or peaceful protests, boycotts, or other forms of nonviolent actions. Data on MK membership also remains unavailable to the public,<sup>4</sup> making it difficult to get a sense of the demographic profiles, geographic origins, or social networks of recruits. Given their marginalization by the state, surveys of the political, economic, or social behaviors or preferences of black South Africans were irregular and usually conducted at the initiative of academics (Mariotti and Fourie 2014; Seekings and Natrass 2005). In short, systematic analysis of various organizations and how salient attributes, including interdependence with elite interests, influence behavior is not possible. Second, what data is available is spread across different, incommensurate types of sources: contemporaneous journalistic accounts, interview transcripts, historical analyses, and episodic surveys. Such diverse forms of evidence and data are far more conducive to process-tracing techniques (Brady and Collier 2010; Gerring 2007). Lastly, the process-tracing technique privileges internal validity. It permits a more in-depth assessment of the linkages between phenomena and the precise reasons why behavior occurs as opposed to broad associations or average effects estimates. Process tracing is more suited to an

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<sup>4</sup> South Africa's Council of Military Veterans Organizations has repeatedly delayed a definitive answer to requests for access to information on MK structures and membership during the time of demobilization in the early 1990s.

examination of what causal mechanisms influenced the behavior of social organizations in South Africa during the 1980s.

To support my arguments about the behavior of these various organizations, I draw on an array of sources and data. These include: contemporaneous accounts and analyses from journals such as the *Indicator South Africa*, the *South Africa Labour Bulletin*, the *South African Institute of Race Relations*, and several other related sources; contemporaneous surveys conducted by South Africa's Human Sciences Research Council, the Bureau of Manpower Research, and South Africa's Department of Labour Statistics; historical accounts of the UDF, MK, civics, labor groups, and youth congresses; interview transcripts made available from previous research; and 10 original interviews conducted by the author with either South African activists involved with the UDF, MK, civics, and related organizations or South African scholars who have researched the era.

I chose the case of South Africa during the 1980s for several reasons. First, it is commonly upheld by proponents of nonviolent resistance given the strength and brutality of the apartheid regime that sought to oppress non-white South Africans and the breadth and resilience of efforts by nonviolent groups during this period (P. Ackerman and DuVall 2000; Schock 2005; Zunes 1999; Zunes, Asher, and Kurtz 1999). Additionally, the country experienced several distinct forms of anti-regime resistance, each of which I argue below is sufficiently partitioned to allow comparison of how various groups viewed and engaged with them. That these campaigns all unfolded within the same state during the same period controls for important structural factors, including state strength and regime type. South Africa's experience during the 1980s has also motivated policy views



of nonviolent resistance and civil society during civil conflicts, particularly in the United States. In a speech discussing a new multi-billion dollar initiative to support civil society organizations in various countries around the world, then President Obama explained that “civil society led the fight to end apartheid in South Africa,” while going on to cite other nonviolent protest movements in Eastern Europe, Latin America, and Asia (White House 2013). A deeper and more critical analysis of civil society organizations and how they engaged in dissidence in South Africa can help inform more nuanced and calibrated policy support for such groups.

*Background: South Africa’s Civil Conflicts*

This section provides background on the anti-regime campaigns in South Africa during the 1980s. It briefly reviews the general political arrangement in South Africa, including the political exclusion that laid the basis for political grievances among non-white South Africans. It also reviews the origins and approaches of the United Democratic Front, MK, and more emergent, ad hoc forms of political violence during the township revolt of 1984-1986. The information provides useful context for subsequent discussion of how different organizations and constituencies adopted distinct forms of dissidence.

The system of apartheid in South Africa was one of racially based political exclusion and economic control in which whites held near total control of the state apparatus. There were four basic population groups identified under government policy. In the 1980s, black Africans constituted just over 70 percent of the population of South Africa (including the so-called “independent homelands” or Bantustans), whites about 17

percent, so-called “coloureds” of mixed-race individuals were about 8 percent of the population, and Asians of predominantly Indian origin comprised 3 percent.<sup>5</sup> The traditional system of apartheid (an Afrikaner word loosely meaning “apartness”) that had developed over the course of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was embodied in the Group Areas Act, influx control regulations, and racially-based job reservation policies that strictly controlled where non-white South Africans could live, work, or start a business and whether they were able to move or travel. In addition to being economically marginalized and dominated, non-whites were excluded from voting and political institutions in general.

During the late 1970s and early 1980s a series of targeted reforms were instituted to the apartheid system that attempted to respond to already shifting economic relationships while largely maintaining political exclusion. The various initiatives were called the “Total Strategy” and were designed by the government of Prime Minister P.W. Botha, newly elected in 1978. They aimed to combine light economic integration of some parts of the non-white population with an increase in repression of politically active blacks and exiled opposition groups in an effort to forestall broader opposition to apartheid (R. H. Davies, O’Meara, and Dlamini 1988; Gerhart and Glaser 2010; E. J. Wood 2000). The economic aspects of the Total Strategy were driven in part by labor and skills shortages in the manufacturing, mining, and services industries, while the focus on repression was based on fears that the collapse of the Portuguese colonial authorities in 1975 in neighboring Mozambique and Angola created new opportunities for rebel sanctuaries. Additionally, a major student uprising in the latter half of 1976 that left

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<sup>5</sup> During this time period, the term “black” referred to any non-white South African, including Asians and coloureds. “Black African” referred more specifically to individuals whose ancestry was more deeply rooted on the continent.

hundreds of black South Africans dead during security efforts to regain control of restive townships fueled a belief that opposition sentiments needed to be confronted more proactively (Price 1991). Lastly, constitutional reforms passed by whites in 1982 created a new tri-cameral parliament with legislative chambers for whites, coloureds, and Asians. These reforms were partly designed to dampen criticism from international trading partners and allies. However, seats were reserved at a ratio of 4:2:1 for whites, coloureds, and Indians, ensuring white domination. During this period, a newly enacted Black Local Authorities Act instituted elections for local councilors in African townships. Beyond this, however, African populations could not vote, and all non-whites were still subject to restrictions on where they could live or travel.<sup>6</sup> For all intents and purposes, non-whites remained excluded from state institutions and politics.

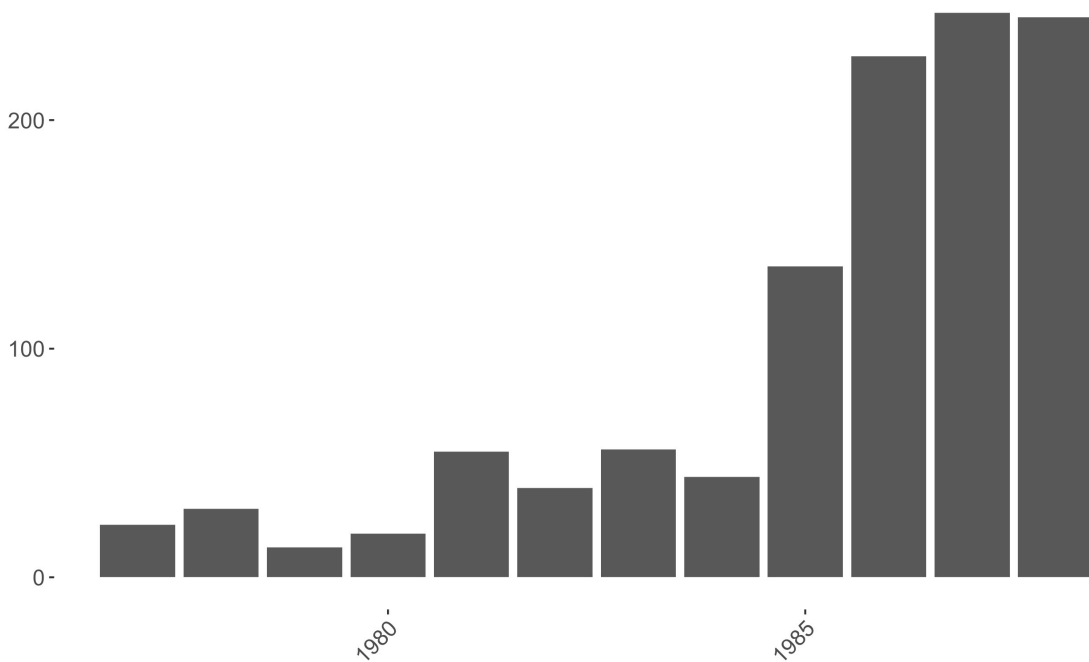
As these reforms unfolded, an armed insurgency reemerged. Beginning in 1977, *Umkhonto we Sizwe* (“Spear of the Nation”) or MK renewed its operations in South Africa after more than a decade of near complete inaction within the country. Attacks ramped up over the subsequent decade and surged to over 200 per year in 1985 until a ceasefire was declared in August 1990 (see Figure 2.2). The dramatic increase in attacks in 1984 coincided with a shift in strategy from a focus in 1977-1983 on armed propaganda, including dramatic bombing attacks on major economic infrastructure, military installations, and government offices, to one of guerilla warfare involving hit-and-run attacks on security forces in 1984-1990 (Lodge and Nasson 1991; Slovo 1983). In an explicit attempt to replicate the 1968 Tet Offensive in Vietnam, MK launched in 1986 a multi-year operation to secretly embed senior MK leaders as well as arms caches throughout South Africa to prepare for a large-scale, multi-location attack on South

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<sup>6</sup> Influx control and pass laws were liberalized in 1986.

African authorities (Barrell 1993; Maharaj 1990; O'Malley 2007). MK has been described as a modest armed insurgency that fared very poorly in infrequent engagements with South African security forces (Barrell 1993; Cherry 2012). However, it also attracted numerous and eager recruits, with a force of nearly 10,000 by the time it demobilized in the early 1990s, was able to infiltrate security institutions, and executed several large-scale attacks on critical infrastructure and security installations (Mashike 2008; Motumi 1994; Williams 2000).

**Figure 2.2. Annual Attacks Attributed to MK**



Source: Adapted from (Lodge and Nasson 1991, 178).

In August 1983 in Cape Town, tens of thousands of people attended the official launch of the United Democratic Front, an umbrella organization representing 545 civic, youth, student, women's, religious, labor, and political organizations from across South Africa. Since roughly 1979, citizen organizations that advocated for housing,

transportation, or education services as well as labor unions seeking improvements in working conditions and wages had changed local and regional politics in South Africa (R. H. Davies, O’Meara, and Dlamini 1988; Karis and Gerhart 1997; Lodge and Nasson 1991; Maree 1987; Marx 1992; Price 1991; Swilling 1988). A diverse array of these organizational types attended the UDF launch (see Table 2.2). Labor unions were a central focus of the UDF, and would later become critical when they merged efforts in 1988 as the Mass Democratic Movement. At its height, the UDF would claim a membership of over 700 organizations with 2 million members (Kessel 2000). In his keynote address at the launch of the UDF, Alan Boesak, the president of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, declared that the UDF would pursue its goal through the “politics of refusal.” Boycotts, strikes, stayaways, and other forms of noncooperation would eventually become tactical mainstays of the UDF and its affiliates (Lodge and Nasson 1991; Seekings 2000b). While certain UDF members were eventually linked to incidents of violence, the organization, its main leaders and founders, and its strategies emphasized various forms of mass nonviolent resistance (Schock 2005; Seekings 2000b).

**Table 2.2. Counts of UDF Organizations and Region of Origin at UDF Launch, August 1983**

	Transvaal	W. Cape	Natal	Other	Total
Civic	29	27	24	2	82
Student	10	23	9	4	46
Youth	14	36	15	14	79
Women’s	7	20	3	2	32
Labor	7	2	4	4	17
Religion	2	4	5	6	17
Other	22	12	17	5	56

Source: (UDF 1983).

Though the UDF and MK were the central actors<sup>7</sup> in the decade's civil conflict, other major consequential episodes occurred without any direct impetus from either group. The Vaal uprising and subsequent township revolt was the most significant example. In mid-1984, the Vaal Civic Association and local affiliates of the Congress of South African Students (COSAS), a UDF affiliate led by secondary school students, called for stay-aways from school and work in protest of poor educational services, rent increases, and dissatisfaction with the local municipal councilors. As the stay-aways intensified, some local youths enforced them aggressively, which prompted police to intervene. Several youths were killed, and street demonstrations turned violent. Battles with police unfolded, buildings were burned, and mobs attacked municipal councilors, killing several (Lodge and Nasson 1991, 178). The uprising spread to townships across the country, prompting the government to deploy the army to retake control of some townships and to declare a national state of emergency. Both the UDF and MK were caught unaware by the township revolt. Internally, MK leaders lamented the lack of sufficient prepositioned arms to distribute to the many people involved in the chaotic events (Kasrils 1989; Maharaj 1990). In internal memoranda, the UDF lamented that it was "trailing behind the masses" and had not foreseen or supported the township revolts (Seekings 1992). There was substantial violence employed during the revolts, much of it directed at government institutions or government agents. However, most townships also erected "Organs of People Power" that provided rudimentary governance after state institutions were displaced and were seen as another form of mass nonviolent resistance (Cherry 2012, 2013; Seekings 2000a). The result was often a mixture of violent and

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<sup>7</sup> There were other marginal anti-regime groups, such as the Pan African Congress and its militant wing or the National Forum, which was a rival of UDF, but they were of minimal influence and initiated at most a dozen violent or nonviolent events throughout the decade.

nonviolent forms of resistance. However, the revolts were independent of the coordinated resistance of MK's armed insurgency or the predominantly nonviolent UDF. Such episodic or ad hoc violence represented a parallel form of anti-apartheid dissidence and resistance.

### *South Africa's Changing Economy and Labor Dynamics*

This section explains several changes to South Africa's economy and labor sector that unfolded during the 1970s and early 1980s. These changes had a major impact on many groups of non-white South Africans. These include: significant increases in the numbers of non-whites in white collar, semi-professional, and semi-skilled occupations; wage and benefit improvements that were concentrated in these occupations among non-white constituencies; and the emergence of a "dualistic" labor market within non-white constituencies with high demand for skilled occupations and stagnant demand for low-skilled labor and increasing numbers of unemployed individuals.

While South Africa's economy is most often associated with mining of primary commodities such as gold and diamonds, this changed significantly in the postwar period. By 1950, the manufacturing sector surpassed the mining sector in terms of its share of the economy and by 1970 it was larger than the agricultural and mining sectors combined (J. Nattrass 1981). Nearly half of all employees in South Africa worked in the manufacturing, commerce and finance, and services sectors in 1970 (J. Nattrass 1981, 54). A period of steady growth from the 1960s through the mid 1970s also led to increasing demand for labor, particularly in these growth industries. In the immediate post-war period a so-called "Poor Whites Problem" (J. Nattrass 1981), in which there

existed substantial numbers of unemployed and poor white South Africans, fed these growing industries with labor. During the 1960s and into the 1970s, however, employers encountered difficulties as apartheid-based job reservation statutes limited their ability to fill positions and available whites became scarce and more expensive (Hofmeyr 1994). As a result, non-whites were increasingly absorbed into South Africa's growth industries. The labor shortages led to the relaxing of race-based job reservations, which were removed entirely in 1979, the same year that non-white labor unions were recognized and allowed to participate in industrial councils and bargaining frameworks (Maree 1987; J. Nattrass 1981). The government and employers also responded to this labor shortage by emphasizing mechanization and productivity over a reliance on labor (Crankshaw 1993; N. Nattrass and Seekings 2011).

The composition of employment changed accordingly. Many non-whites experienced occupational upward mobility, albeit within various legal and cultural limits fostered by South Africa's apartheid system. The emphasis on mechanization in manufacturing also fed a rising need for semi-skilled positions (i.e., heavy/complex machine operators) but demand for unskilled manual labor stagnated. Many new semi-skilled openings were filled by blacks and specifically black Africans. In 1965, only 38 percent of machine operator positions were held by Africans, but by 1989 Africans filled 77 percent of these jobs (Crankshaw 1993). Non-white South Africans also saw gains in white collar, supervisory, and specialized positions (N. Nattrass and Seekings 2011). In a detailed analysis of South Africa's biennial Man Power Survey, which catalogues employment across 600 occupational types, Owen Crankshaw found large increases in the numbers of Africans in so-called "middle class" positions. Between 1965 and 1990,



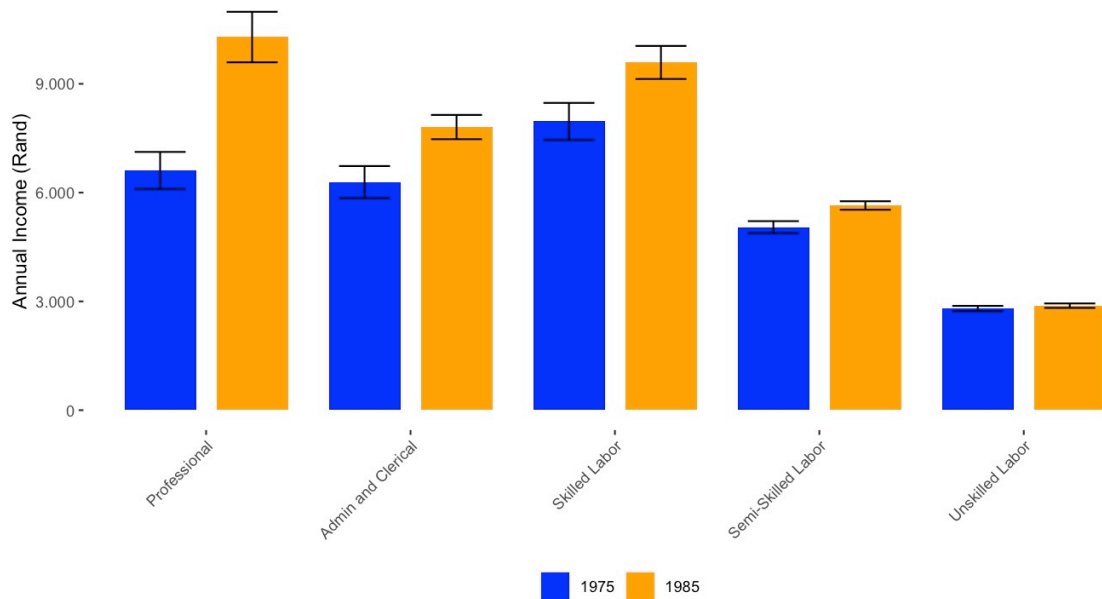
the proportion of positions held by Africans in semi-professional jobs (i.e., nurses, technicians assistants, teachers, medical assistants) increased from 24 to 41 percent; in white collar employment (i.e., cashiers, general clerks, office machine operators) rose from 15 to 30 percent; and in frontline management positions (i.e., supervisors, foremen) increased from 13 to 30 percent (Crankshaw 1996). These numbers likely undercount non-whites in these positions, since they exclude coloureds and Indians, who typically were better educated and historically less affected by job reservation statutes. Even in so-called professional positions, such as attorneys, doctors, and accountants, Africans held 11 percent of all such jobs by 1989. While still vastly disproportionate to their representation within the broader population, these changes were significant nonetheless.

By contrast, unskilled manual labor positions, which would have served as entry-level positions for many poorly educated or under-skilled non-whites, shrank. In 1965, 28.5 percent of all positions were unskilled, but by 1992 these occupations comprised only 18 percent of employment (Seekings and Natrass 2005). Numerous Africans worked as low-paid domestic servants or in agriculture in the rural areas as well. But these opportunities were not growing. In fact, the rate of African unemployment grew between the late 1960s into the 1980s, even as many non-whites moved into higher-skilled positions (Crankshaw 1996). Non-whites in semi-skilled and “middle class” positions were in demand and saw rising opportunities in the 1970s and early 1980s while the unskilled and unemployed faced comparatively tenuous circumstances or shrinking fortunes.

Wage improvements and overall changes to quality of life also appeared to favor semi-skilled, semi-professional, and professional positions. In the late 1970s and into the

early 1980s, Africans in these positions tended to see the highest real wage increases among all employed Africans (Hofmeyr 1993). Wages among unskilled workers stagnated or fell. The situation was even more precarious for workers outside of the manufacturing and services industries. For example, laborers in the construction and building sector, which employed many low-skilled Africans, saw falling real wages in the 1980s. Figure 2.3, drawing on randomized surveys conducted by South Africa's Human Sciences Research Council in non-white communities in 1975 and 1985, demonstrates the strong positive relationship between occupational skill level and wage increases among non-white South Africans. Non-white unskilled workers saw essentially no increases in wages for a decade. Gains for higher-status occupations became more modest amid instability of the mid-1980s anti-apartheid campaigns, but even semi-skilled positions held by Africans continued to see marked improvements, partly as a consequence of increasingly effective bargaining and pressure by unions (Hofmeyr 1993).

**Figure 2.3: Change in Average Annual Income of Non-White South Africans, 1975-1985**



*Source:* Data drawn from Bureau of Market Research, University of South Africa (UNISA). All figures adjusted to 1985 rand values using inflation data from the South African Reserve Bank. Occupational status as identified in survey instrument. Unemployed respondents are excluded.

Among those who experienced such wage gains and upward occupational mobility, new opportunities emerged. First, while many non-white South Africans outside the homelands lived in squatter shacks or rental units operated by state-run local housing authorities, more well-off non-white South Africans were able to purchase their own homes. Restrictions on landownership by non-whites outside the homelands made home ownership difficult, but these were relaxed in the 1980s and commercial lending to non-whites began during the middle of the decade. By 1991, between 60 and 75 percent of African foremen, training officers, and clerks (so-called “white collar” and supervisory positions) owned homes purchased through the private market, according to one union survey (Crankshaw 1993). The rates may have been higher for non-whites in skilled and professional positions given their higher wages. A third of Africans in semi-skilled positions also owned their own homes, and many who did not expressed plans to

purchase their own homes (Crankshaw 1993). In general, during the 1980s “in the townships, an emerging black middle class was able to buy, improve, or build higher-quality housing” (Goodlad 1996, 1634). Home ownership in townships like Soweto and Alexandra were not uncommon in the 1980s (Marks 2001; Mayekiso 1996). Likewise, comparatively more affluent black South Africans began to send their children to private schools during the 1980s. The South African government funded public education for non-whites, but at low levels. Even though the gap between funding for white and non-white educational institutions closed during the 1970s and 1980s (N. Nattrass and Seekings 2011), schools remained crowded and the quality of education remained poor. Many black “middle class” households switched to private alternatives. By the end of the 1980s, some Africans, Indians, and coloureds were able to send their children to white private schools, and many more began sending their children to new private “street academies” that began emerging in major cities (Parnell and Webber 1990). These were of lower and more variable quality compared to many white private schools, but they were often better than publicly funded alternatives. They also remained very popular and over-subscribed by non-whites.

Taken together, these changes in South Africa’s labor market and economy led to sharply bifurcated experiences among non-whites. Many experienced upward occupational mobility, rising real wages, and the ability to acquire homes or purchase private education for their children, even while they remained politically marginalized and excluded. In 1993, 63 percent of households in South Africa’s ninth income decile and 24 percent of those in the 10<sup>th</sup> decile were non-white (Table 2.3a). There were approximately twice as many non-white households in South Africa’s top three income

deciles as there were white households (Table 2.3b). Meanwhile, many unskilled and unemployed non-whites saw stagnant or falling wages, struggled under high inflation, and remained comparatively more dependent on low-quality public housing and schooling that struggled to serve a rapidly growing population. Due to apartheid’s racially-based restrictions and oppression, South Africa was a highly unequal society with wealth concentrated among the white population and millions of extremely poor non-white (mostly black African) households. However, by the end of the 1980s, inequality within non-white groups was as high as that across all racial groups (Mariotti and Fourie 2014; N. Nattrass and Seekings 2011, 562). There was an increasingly “dualistic labour [*sic*] market in which a smaller number of people were permanently employed, increasingly in semi-skilled, better-paid employment, whereas others were excluded entirely” (N. Nattrass and Seekings 2011, 557). This dualism, in turn, influenced how non-whites resisted apartheid and pressed claims for changes to the political status quo.

**Table 2.3a. Composition (%) of Income Decile population by Racial Group, 1993**

Income Decile	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Rand/month	0-199	200-369	371-499	500-679	680-899	900-1,199	1,200-1,669	1,700-2,599	2,600-4,699	4,700+
African	95	97	93.5	94	89	87	80	66	37	11
Coloured	3	1.5	4	5	7	7	11	14	18	5
Indian	0	0.5	0.5	0.5	1	2	3	5	7	8
White	2	1	2	0.5	3	3	6	14	37	77
Total (%)	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

**Table 2.3b. Approximate Number of Households by Racial Group And Income Deciles, 1993**

Income Decile	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Rand/month	0-199	200-369	371-499	500-679	680-899	900-1,199	1,200-1,669	1,700-2,599	2,600-4,699	4,700+
African	2,642,790			2,032,773		1,082,109		733,131	410,998	81,459
Coloured	78,682			133,297		116,635		155,513	199,945	37,027
Indian	9,257			16,662		32,398		55,540	77,756	59,243
White	46,284			38,878		58,317		155,513	410,998	570,213
Prct. of all households in income decile(s)	30%			24%		14%		12%	12%	8%

Source: Counts approximated from Seekings and Nattrass (2005, 190 & 198) using population and demographic data from Statistics South Africa's October Household Survey, 1996.

*Analysis: Noncooperation Viability, Loss Aversion, and Forms of Resistance*

This section examines how three different sets of social organizations or constituencies in South Africa engaged in anti-regime dissidence. First, it examines how the organizations that founded and led the United Democratic Front typified South Africa's "black middle class" and that this status empowered them to adopt nonviolent strategies, discouraged them from more disruptive violent approaches, and incentivized them to try and reduce certain violent challenges to the government. Contemporaneous documents, survey data, and interview material indicate the strong relationship between the economic position of these groups and their preference for nonviolent methods. Second, two highly similar trade unions are examined. The comparatively restrained Federation of South African Trade Unions (FOSATU), which was initially suspicious of political nonviolent militancy but later became the backbone of union-based political dissidence, is contrasted with the South African Allied Workers Union (SAAWU), which advocated militant resistance and clandestinely extended material support to MK. The

third set of organizations reviewed are students and youth groups, including the university-based Azanian Students Organization (AZASO), the secondary-school based Congress of South African Students (COSAS), and various local youth congresses that represented school-leavers and unemployed youths. Within these sets, I demonstrate that those most economically integrated with relatively high current or likely future earnings prospects were the most likely to adhere to nonviolence and resist forms of violence. Those with lower and weaker prospects were drawn to violent strategies or mixed repertoires. Other factors, such as ideological orientation, experience with repression, the existence of pre-existing social organization, membership age, or political access cannot explain the divergent behavior within these sets of organizational types. Rather, organizations that adhered to nonviolence were strongly influenced by a sense of threat to their economic interests and interdependence with elites.

#### Civics and UDF Foundational Organizations

The UDF was a coalition or umbrella group comprised of hundreds of affiliated organizations. Among these were a core group that helped found and shape the UDF's early efforts and made up its leadership, including early civics and several Indian and coloured organizations. These included the Natal Indian Congress (NIC), the Transvaal Indian Congress (TIC), the Transvaal anti-SAIC Committee (TASC), the Soweto Civic Association (SCA), the Port Elizabeth Black Civic Organization (PEBCO), and the Cape Areas Housing Action Committee (CAHAC).

These organizations and the UDF leadership as a whole represented South Africa's emerging black middle class. "[Tranvsaal] leaders, like Dr. Nthato Motlana,

chairman of the Soweto Civic Association (SCA), tended to come from a middle-class background” (Lodge and Nasson 1991, 55). In 1987, Motlana formed a business with other Soweto notables to purchase assets of foreign companies that were leaving South Africa as a consequence of sanctions and instability (Lodge and Nasson 1991, 130). The Eastern Cape and Western Cape UDF leadership had some more working class roots, but leadership among key organizations like PEBCO and CAHAC also had strong middle class links. The first PEBCO board included doctors, lawyers, and other professionals (PEBCO activist 2020). The leadership of CAHAC, a highly centralized umbrella group representing dozens of civics in the coloured communities in the Cape Town area, “came from working-class backgrounds, but their families’ standard of living had steadily improved in the 1970s whilst they themselves had studied at the universities of the Western Cape (UWC) or Cape Town” (Seekings 2000b, 79).

Among the UDF’s founding organizations and leaders, coloured and Indians were over-represented as a proportion of their population in South Africa. In general, at the UDF’s launch “there were more organisations [*sic*] from coloured and Indian areas, or with predominantly coloured and Indian members, than predominantly African organisations (although some of the African organisations had much larger memberships)” (Seekings 2000b, 60). This too was a sign of the role of a strong middle class orientation in the UDF. Coloureds and Indians tended to enjoy higher average income levels and better qualities of life than many black Africans (see Table 2.3a). Central UDF founding organizations such as TIC and NIC “remained an elite body, strongly influenced by middle-class professionals” (Gerhart and Glaser 2010, 10). Much



of the organizational and leadership core of the UDF was strongly middle class and among the upper socioeconomic tiers of non-white South Africans.

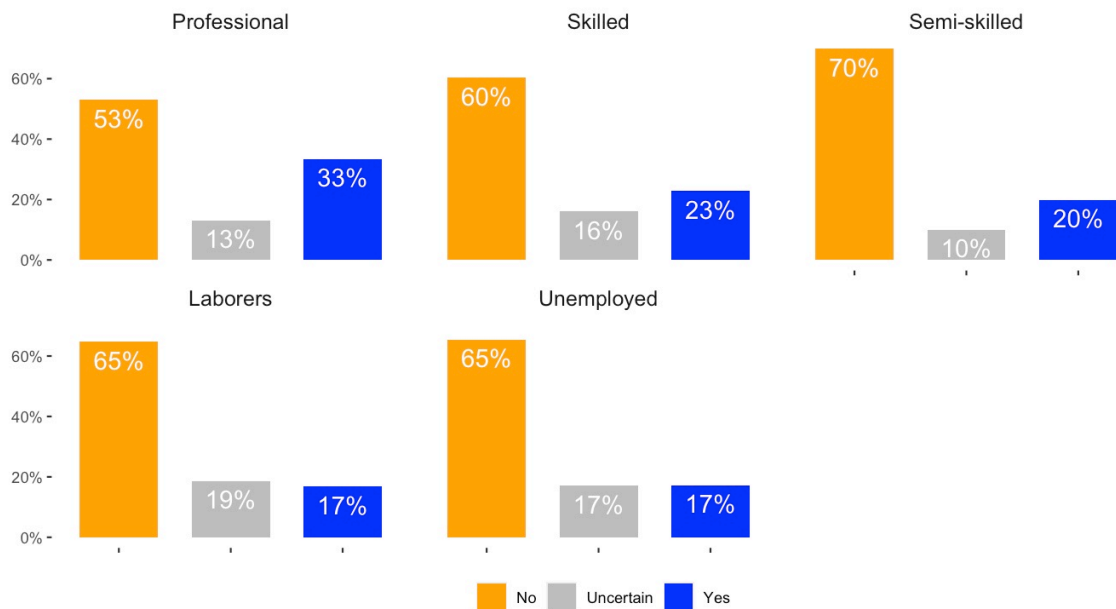
These same organizations were the strongest adherents of nonviolent strategies throughout the 1980s. “CAHAC's methods of demanding redress of its problems never included violence, but instead nonviolent direct action,” though “this was not induced by an ideological conviction of their effectiveness” (Maseko 1997, 354–55). Civics in general “avoided active involvement in violent confrontation” and their approach “contrasted with both the strategy of armed struggle pursued by the ANC and the confrontational approach of many ANC supporters inside South Africa” (Seekings 2000a, 54–55). Coloured and Indian organizations, including the NIC and TIC, strongly avoided violence and worked to prevent UDF affiliates from engaging in it. During the violent township revolts, the ANC lamented in contemporaneous internal reporting that “there is no ungovernability in Indian and Coloured areas: how to bring it? Are there grassroots structures? What is the extent of involvement in combat actions and the underground in general?” (ANC 1987). In separate internal documents, the ANC further reported that a TIC conference had advocated “strongly against youth forming self-defence units – if they [the youth] engage in any form of violence they would have to move out of the TIC.” The document further stated that these organizations “advocate nonviolence or underplay armed struggle...even to the extent of cautioning comrades against underground work/involvement [with the ANC]” (ANC 1986). Though they remained inactive during the more violent episodes of the 1984-1986 township revolts, these same organizations did not remain neutral nor did they shrink from anti-apartheid campaigns. During the climax of nonviolent anti-apartheid protests at the end of the 1980s, these

groups were core contributors. “In the Defiance Campaign of 1989” which was organized by the UDF “it is likely that support was derived primarily from the coloured and Indian middle classes” as well as similarly wealthy black African members of UDF affiliates (Seekings 2000b, 316).

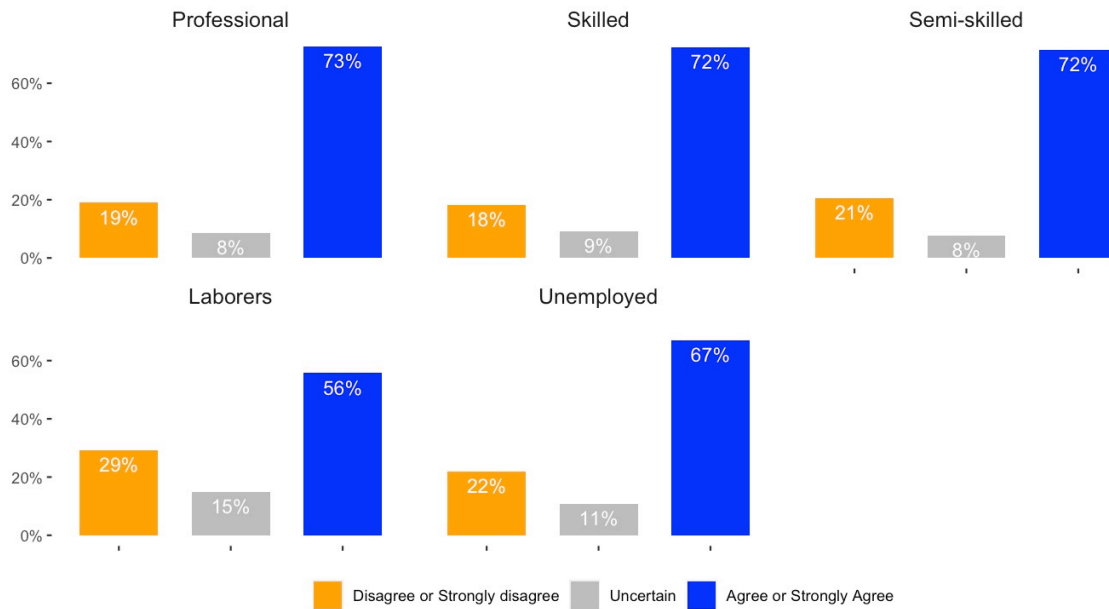
These general descriptions of preference for nonviolent over violent methods of resistance among these organizations – particularly those representing coloured and Indian constituencies – is echoed in contemporaneous survey data. Surveys of non-white South Africans were rare during apartheid, particularly on subjects of political attitudes and behavior. However, in October 1983, just two months after the launch of the UDF, 2,218 Indian and coloured South Africans were surveyed in a random selection process and completed anonymous self-administered written questionnaires developed by South Africa’s independent Human Sciences Research Council (De Kock 1983). Several questions pertained to views and support for nonviolent and violent forms of resistance to the state. The results indicate that occupational status and income correlated positively with support for methods of noncooperation such as strikes and boycotts but negatively with support for violence. Self-described “professionals” including doctors, attorneys, engineers, and various technicians were the most supportive of strikes and boycotts (see Figure 2.4). Skilled and semi-skilled respondents in the manufacturing or services sectors were also relatively more inclined to strikes and boycotts, whereas laborers and the unemployed were less certain of their support for such tactics. An inverse relationship emerges regarding views of violent strategies. Respondents in higher income and higher status occupations expressed the strongest opposition to the use of violence to advance political change (see Figure 2.5). By contrast, higher proportions of laborers and the

unemployed respondents were open to the use of political violence. Responses may have been affected by social desirability bias given the sensitivity of the questions, but it seems unlikely that such bias would influence certain socioeconomic categories more than others. The relative differences in attitudes toward nonviolence and violence should reflect real preference differentials. Together, this data indicate that groups in higher occupational status and income correspond not only to support for nonviolent noncooperation but also to reduced support for violent strategies. It appears that individuals with higher incomes and higher status positions were more sensitive to the prospective losses of violent strategies and more supportive of nonviolent methods.

**Figure 2.4. “Would You Be Prepared to Participate in a Sit-In Strike/Boycott to Bring About Political Change?”**



**Figure 2.5. “The Use of Violence to Bring About Political Change is Wrong?”**



*Source:* Survey data from Human Sciences Research Council, 1983. Survey respondents were offered list of 16 different occupational options, and occupations were collapsed based on categories in enumerator documentation and occupational information from South African Institute of Race Relations.

Beyond a preference for nonviolent strategies, many founding organizations and UDF leaders actively sought to reduce the use of violence by UDF affiliates or in prominent UDF areas. Albertina Sisulu, a copresident of the UDF, explained that “restraining mass militancy was part of the motivation for founding the Front” (Marx 1992, 134). More specifically, nonviolent action was sometimes coordinated with a view to limiting unrest. Boycotts and other forms of noncooperation “were advocated in part to restrain people from resorting to violence against the state” (Seekings 2000b, 151) as much as they were for pressuring political and economic elites. In 1984 during the initial township revolts, supporters of more extreme tactics within the UDF in Soweto, including the local youth congress, urged leaders to recreate the conditions that led to violent clashes in the Vaal. Prominent UDF leaders and the Soweto Civic Association sought to discourage such action (Seekings 2000b, 126). Instead, a short stay-away and

brief consumer boycott during Christmas was organized by the UDF so as to avoid more “revolutionary protests” that might lead to violence (Seekings 2000b, 129). When severe repression of protesters in Sekhukhuneland in northeastern Transvaal in 1985 resulted in deaths of prominent locals, suggestions of more militant actions were suppressed or ignored by UDF leaders: “Precisely which affiliates had lobbied the UDF [for violent tactics] remains obscure, and there is no evidence of any discussion of violent alternatives. The UDF’s stance reflected internal pressures rather than a clear assessment of possible alternatives [like violence]” (Seekings 2000b, 182).

Activists from the period also recounted in interviews how the focus on nonviolence seemed partly motivated by the economic interests of many leaders and leading organizations in the UDF. A regional leader of the United Democratic Front in who was simultaneously an underground member of the ANC recalled in interviews that among the UDF, members’ economic standing influenced their disinclination toward more confrontational strategies. It was “the objective realities that determine someone’s thinking. It is like, guys getting better salary, surely their attitudes will be different. They’ve got something to lose. There will be people who because of their social and economic conditions would not be as committed... Some of them even have houses. Surely they will not be as involved. They have something to lose if this system is destroyed” (UDF activist 2020). One former member of the Congress of South African Students (COSAS) similarly explained that the relative wealth and occupational status of some leading activists appeared to shape their views of different resistance methods. “There were people that were, in an existential sense, they were so rooted in conditions of oppression that the only way to come out of it was to use all means necessary. There is

not debate about this or that means [i.e., dissident methods]. Then there were those who had material comfort and they were just frustrated with skin color issues.... Your positionality [*sic*] affects the kind of decisions being made” (COSAS activist 2020). This inclination to use methods that could compel change without dismantling the economic system were a strong narrative within debates among leading UDF organizations and leadership. “The middle-class nationalists in the UDF were basically fighting to establish their place in the socioeconomic system, not to destroy the system” (Kessel 2000, 78). Their occupational and socioeconomic status both empowered them to engage in impactful noncooperation, but it also made them averse to the losses that more widespread violence could trigger.

Other possible reasons for the focus on nonviolence and active efforts to reduce more disruptive agitation and violence appear less convincing. One argument advanced is that social organizations may have viewed violence or support for violent groups like MK as more likely to face violent repression (Cherry 2013; Houston 2010; Lodge 2009; Seekings 2000b). However, the UDF and its allies were not spared legal or violent repression because of their emphasis on nonviolence. Within a year of its founding, most of its leadership had been arrested and put on trial for treason. Some regional UDF leaders were killed, as were figures in the labor movement. The Congress of South African Trade Union’s offices were bombed in 1987. During states of emergency in 1985 through 1987, roughly 20,000 UDF members were detained, and the organization was ultimately banned in 1988 (R. H. Davies, O’Meara, and Dlamini 1988; Marx 1992). Still, remaining UDF leaders and those released from detention formed a new nonviolent entity in 1988, the Mass Democratic Movement, and organized more mass nonviolent protests

in 1989. Ultimately, they reassumed the UDF brand when it was later unbanned. Most leaders and leading organizations in the UDF faced substantial repression from the moment they were formed. The focus on nonviolence provided them minimal protection from legal or physical consequences of repression, yet the commitment to mass nonviolent methods remained unchanged.

Another possible counterargument posits that social organizations that affiliated with and supported the UDF were not exactly committing to nonviolence but merely one strain of effort within a broader, coordinated effort. The ANC explicitly adopted a component of “mass mobilization” in its four-pronged strategy, and in 1979 it resolved to create an above-ground popular front in South Africa (Barrell 1993). For that matter, both organizations were strongly aligned ideologically. Many of the social organizations that founded the UDF were sympathetic to the ANC and shared its support for the “Freedom Charter” document that called for non-racial democracy in South Africa, which was first created by the ANC in 1955. Was the UDF merely one element of the ANC’s campaign against the apartheid government, a complement to MK, its military wing? In reality, the UDF and MK were fairly distinct. Top leaders in the ANC were surprised when the UDF was announced in 1983 (Seekings 2000, 47–48). Communications between the ANC and UDF were also minimal and irregular until 1988. Despite its more expansive four-pronged strategy, the ANC remained highly focused on armed struggle – to a fault, some argue (Barrell 1993). One exhaustive effort to interview various leading activists, MK members, and ANC officials during the early 1990s to chart the development of ANC strategy concluded that the UDF was autonomous of the ANC and MK: “What is clear is that the UDF, the front that is formed, is not ANC property. There are clearly a number of

independent, innovative minds who are coming up with the same requirement [for a front, as the ANC did in internal documents in 1979]” (Narsoo 1990; see also Wood 2000, 141). That the UDF was autonomous of the MK while simultaneously adhering to the same ideological principles of the Freedom Charter also suggests that ideological differences were not responsible for the different dissident strategies employed by these groups.

During the 1970s and increasingly during the 1980s, there were many foreign governments and other transnational actors that became involved in South Africa’s anti-apartheid campaigns. Some of this support, particularly international boycotts, divestments, and sanctions, sought to directly pressure the government to pursue more democratic reforms. However, many international actors also provided funding to dissident groups. Previous research has argued that such funding may influence how dissidents behave, specifically that they will moderate their behavior in order to attract and retain such fund support (Haines 1984). However, the availability of external support did not appear to be a strong consideration for activists working to challenge and overthrow the apartheid regime in Pretoria. The UDF benefited from a large and steady stream of funding from foreign governments. By 1987, the nonviolent UDF had an annual budget of nearly \$1 million, the majority of which was donated by European governments (Marx 1992, 139–40). The ANC received direct financial support as well. The Swedish International Development Agency provided \$12 million to the ANC, much of which went to housing, feeding, and providing political education for MK cadres. It was also understood that up to a quarter of these funds would support “home front” ANC activities in South Africa (Macmillan 2009). This funding was on top of training and



support that the ANC/MK received from eastern European governments and the Soviet Union. Neither the violent nor nonviolent campaigns against the apartheid government lacked for external financial support, and therefore the availability of such funding does not appear to have influenced the methods of dissidence adopted by the UDF, MK or other actors.

In summary, many of the central organizations that founded and led the UDF were rooted in the non-white middle class. These groups were strongly supportive of nonviolent approaches to anti-government resistance, and appeared to actively work to reduce violent resistance. These strategies were rooted in a preference for a challenge to the system of governance and a place in the political system and leadership, but not a revolutionary threat to prevailing economic arrangements from which they benefited. That they were organized availed them of effective nonviolent noncooperation strategies, but their level of economic interdependence with elites and the elite economic system disinclined them toward the losses that would attend violent strategies of resistance. Interdependence triggered a loss aversion mechanism that drove their adoption of predominantly nonviolent methods. Neither experiences with repression nor ideological differences can explain why these organizations focused on nonviolence over violent dissidence.

#### Labor Unions: FOSATU and SAAWU

The South African government passed the Industrial Conciliation Act in 1979 and allowed non-whites to register trade unions. Official recognition resulted in substantial growth in the size and activity of dozens of unions during the 1980s. During the early

1980s, two of the biggest were the Federation of South African Trade Unions (FOSATU) and the South African Allied Workers Union (SAAWU). Both claimed nearly 100,000 members by 1982 and represented many members from the automobile sector, which paid some of the highest wages among manufacturers (Cooper et al. 1986; Maree 1987).<sup>8</sup> In other words, both unions exemplified noncooperation viability, and utilized such leverage during strikes throughout the 1980s. FOSATU never affiliated with UDF, but it did cooperate in several UDF strikes and eventually became one of the biggest members of the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), whose activism during the late 1980s had significant effects on political and economic elite perspectives. Though labor overall was a smaller component of the UDF's base until 1987, SAAWU was the largest labor affiliate in the UDF at the Front's launch in 1983.

The unions differed in other aspects of their role in South Africa's civil conflicts. While FOSATU hued closely to nonviolent and noncooperation strategies, senior and local representatives of SAAWU clandestinely linked with MK and provided logistical and informational support as well as safe houses to its cadres in South Africa (Mangashe 2018; MK cadre 2020; SAAWU activist 2020). By contrast, until 1984 FOSATU resisted becoming involved in politics and expressed skepticism of both the ANC and UDF, despite attempts from both to court FOSATU's support (Maharaj 1990; Marx 1992). Subtle differences in FOSATU's interdependent relationship with the state and economic status quo may explain these different approaches. Specifically, FOSATU's early political diffidence and reaction to violent events demonstrates that it was averse to losing gains and benefits it had previously won from employers and the state. While,

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<sup>8</sup> Counts of membership may be more reliable in FOSATU's case, which more rigorously tracked and released membership sign-ups and dues-paying members. SAAWU released only bulk numbers.

FOSATU and SAAWU were very similar in many respects – including size and member composition – their different strategies of dissidence are explained primarily by their differing levels of interdependence with elites. While both had high potential noncooperation viability, loss aversion appeared to influence their distinct adherence to nonviolence.

In the early 1980s, FOSATU faced criticism for its decision to register as a union with the state, which required that it provide annual updates on its organizational constitution and membership size and fees. In 1982 and 1983, FOSATU decided to limit its involvement in any demands for major political reforms, specifically those associated with the ANC and the Freedom Charter. In a major address titled “Where Does FOSATU Stand?” in 1982 the head of the union explained that the organization was committed to achieving non-racial democracy in South Africa. However, it expressed skepticism of more assertive political activism. “For worker leadership in a capitalist society, their everyday struggle is related to their job and therefore their wage and therefore their very ability to survive.... So worker leadership cannot be wasted by opportunistic and overly adventurous actions” (Foster 1982). Joe Foster, the general secretary of FOSATU at the time, warned that the union “needs to avoid simple removal of regime without the protection of worker interests post-removal.” Such sentiments were not a reflection of timidity or an unwillingness to protest. FOSATU was active in 65 percent of all strike actions in 1981-1982 and 30 percent of all strikes in 1983, and FOSATU was often more disciplined and suffered lower strike attrition (Howe 1984). But FOSATU also appeared more averse to losing wage gains, employment benefits, and other improvements it had realized. In contrasting the FOSATU and SAAWU, a labor analyst at the time wrote that

“FOSATU unions continue to rely on the organised [*sic*] strength of their members for support - but they do not sacrifice their members unnecessarily” (Innes 1984, emphasis in original). Many union members appeared to agree, with a survey of black African workers in Durban showing that the majority did not expect unions to be politically active in their communities while most preferred they focus on wages and dismissals (Schlemmer 1984). Political dissidence was seen as threatening economic and occupational losses.

FOSATU’s stance shifted in late 1984 after the township revolts. In November of that year, it engaged in a work stay-away that advanced explicit political demands on the state. The episode was a reaction to the violent township revolts that began in the Vaal in September after students had protested against low school quality and high rents. However, FOSATU’s involvement continued to demonstrate a reticence about political activism and concerns about broader instability. Alec Erwin, a senior FOSATU official, explained at the time that part of FOSATU’s participation was driven by an interest in reducing political violence in the townships. “The situation in the Transvaal is in our view close to civil war and needed clear protest action...The stayaway was a very clear show of mass discontent with specific government policies” (Howe 1985). FOSATU’s participation in the stayaway was motivated by non-political factors as well. The stayaway demanded that older black Africans be allowed to enter secondary school programs. FOSATU saw age restrictions on secondary school enrollment as a threat to members’ interests since “age restrictions on students would force them onto the labour [*sic*] market during a period of high unemployment” (Freund et al. 1985). In other words, they were trying to provide alternatives to labor among potential competitors that might

drive down wages. In apartheid South Africa, the decision by a non-racial union with black members to engage in political activism was a dangerous one, but FOSATU's decision to do so seemed at least partly motivated by an interest in preventing further instability and accompanying threats to its economic interests. FOSATU's position furnished it high nonviolent noncooperation capabilities, but loss aversion influenced its decisions significantly.

Despite their strong similarities, FOSATU may have had more to protect than comparable unions like SAAWU. It registered with the state and participated in related labor institutions such as Industrial Councils. There is no detailed data available on wages within and across labor unions in South Africa during the 1980s, and SAAWU did have a presence in high-paying manufacturing sectors. Additionally, SAAWU's near complete lack of documentation makes any such comparison almost impossible.<sup>9</sup> However, other analyses of labor dynamics from this period state that "Coloured and Indian unions participated in industrial councils, which offered benefits that contributed to widening of the wage gap between different races" (Ndlovu and Sithole 2010, 918). FOSATU's participation in these same councils, and its use of labor courts, may have generated higher relative incomes and benefits for its members than organizations, like SAAWU, that eschewed such institutions (S. D. Byrne 2011; R. H. Davies, O'Meara, and Dlamini 1988, 336; Webster 1983). SAAWU was also more concentrated in the Eastern Cape region (R. H. Davies, O'Meara, and Dlamini 1988; Maree 1983), where incomes tended to be below national averages (Seekings and Natrass 2005, 259–60). In an interview, a former activist in SAAWU also acknowledged that FOSATU likely was comprised of

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<sup>9</sup> Some FOSATU archives at the University of Witswatersrand are currently only available in hard copy and inaccessible by the author.

members with higher incomes: “they had steady income, unlike us who rejected stop order system and registration” (SAAWU activist 2020).

It also appears that a portion of SAAWU’s support was drawn not just from active factory workers. The union’s membership included African workers from other non-factory employment, whose wages may have been relatively lower, as well as from unemployed inhabitants from area townships such as Mdantsane and in the Ciskei Bantustan (R. H. Davies, O’Meara, and Dlamini 1988, 338; Maree 1983, 38–39). SAAWU’s leadership “were all younger men in their 20s without any trade union experience” and its more politically assertive style may have been used to mobilize more support in the area of East London (Lodge and Nasson 1991, 72–74; Maree 1983, 42). The union, in general, appeared less of an effort to protect and advance the wages of semi-skilled members, but rather an amalgamation of factory workers and other East London township inhabitants, many of whom may have been under or unemployed. “Sometimes, honestly, we were not always good about setting up trade union structures in the workplace,” according to a former SAAWU activist (SAAWU activist 2020).

FOSATU’s perspective and behaviors in 1982 through 1984 may have influenced its initial decision to avoid political activism and later, unlike SAAWU, to engage with MK/ANC. It appears it did not want to jeopardize the gains and benefits it had realized, whereas SAAWU and its members had less to protect by comparison. Like FOSATU, other major unions appear to have been similarly guarded about their position and advancement in South Africa’s economic system. “A CUSA [Council of Unions of South Africa] affiliate that showed a greater concern for ‘bread and butter’ issues was the newly formed National Union of Mineworkers, which grew quickly, later abandoning its

insistence on black leadership and breaking away from CUSA” (Marx 1992, 199). The stronger adherence to nonviolent noncooperation during the 1980s exhibited by FOSATU, the National Union of Mineworkers, and others appears to have been driven as much by their aversion to sacrificing economic gains as it was its ability to engage in impactful forms of noncooperation.

Other arguments have attributed the differences in FOSATU’s and SAAWU’s political activism and engagement in anti-regime dissidence to different factors. Specifically, some have argued that the two unions exemplified distinct ideological views, with FOSATU adopting a “workerist” perspective on politics. This involved a strong emphasis on maintaining strictly factory worker based organizations that avoided politics until they were sufficiently large enough to seek a stronger socialist transformation in the system of governance in South Africa (S. D. Byrne 2011; Maree 1987). This contrasted with a more avowedly “Charterist” perspective of unions like SAAWU, which drew on the 1955 Freedom Charter, developed by the ANC-led Congress Alliance, that emphasized democratic nonracialism along with a socialist economic vision as the centerpiece of its vision for political change. “What is obvious and glaring in that camp [i.e., FOSATU] is the workerist tendency,” according to a former SAAWU activist (SAAWU activist 2020).

These apparent distinctions in ideological perspectives or political visions, however, may not have been particularly salient. In the 1980s, speeches by its officials and union reports did emphasize a “workerist” narrative (Foster 1982; Hindson 1987), but FOSATU leaders later acknowledged that these views were not driving consequential decisions about how to engage in political activism. Rather, “FOSATU tended to be very

pragmatic and short-termist, downplaying theory as ‘esoteric,’ leading to a ‘loose and fuzzy’ theoretical basis” (S. Byrne and Ulrich 2016, 382). As one former FOSATU official recalled in discussions about workerism, “we just didn’t spend a lot of our time trying to think through things that we saw being not practical at that time” (S. Byrne and Ulrich 2016, 381). FOSATU focused on protecting and advancing the material interests of its members, and “workerist” ideologies were adopted but may have been less determinative of the actions taken. In fact, FOSATU would become a leading force in the creation of COSATU, a massive umbrella organization for many unions that publicly adopted the Freedom Charter in 1987. Eventually, the more socialist and workerist aspects of the Freedom Charter were abandoned during the ANC-led transition to democracy, even as many COSATU members took on political roles in the party and the government (S. Byrne and Ulrich 2016; E. J. Wood 2000). Any “workerist” tendencies appear to have been abandoned, another indication that they may not have proved especially important in shaping FOSATU’s strategies during the 1980s.

#### Youth – Universities, COSAS, and Congresses

Beyond the trade unions, civic associations, and the predominantly Indian or coloured organizations, various youth and student groups were another prominent organizational form in South Africa’s civil conflicts during the 1980s. Three types predominated. There were university-level student entities, such as the Azanian Students Organization (AZASO), which represented tertiary students on blacks-only university campuses and those admitted to “open” multi-racial universities (i.e., University of Witwatersrand, University of Cape Town, etc.). At the secondary level, the Congress of



South African Students (COSAS) was formed in 1979 and had a national presence and representative branches in many towns across the country. However, due to South Africa's large and growing youth population, a growing number of black South African youths either left secondary school, failed exams, dropped out, or never attended. Many of these youths formed so-called "youth congresses," with as many as 200,000 members in potentially hundreds of local youth congresses operating around the country by 1987 (Kessel 2000). I briefly discuss each of these three sets of youth organizations and their involvement in anti-regime resistance efforts, both violent and nonviolent. Broadly, all three included members in the same approximate age ranges – members of some youth congresses were as old as 38 (Carter 1991; Kessel 2000) – but they represented constituencies who had sharply differing levels of interests and prospects in the prevailing economic system. These differences shaped how they engaged in resistance. That they all existed as organizations, some including huge numbers, provided them potential cohesion, resilience, social capital, and nonviolent noncooperation abilities, but it was prospective losses that appeared to shape how these organizations engaged in dissidence.

Before detailing the differences in these sets of youth organizations, it is worth revisiting the income and employment implications of education levels in South Africa during this era. Schooling had profound impacts on wage prospects. This was especially true for non-white South Africans on account of South African industry's increasing emphasis on skills and productivity over unskilled labor during the 1970s and 1980s and the changing but still prevalent race-based restrictions and hurdles to employment and hiring. At the end of apartheid, this meant that each additional year of secondary and

post-secondary schooling for African males increased wage earnings by 17 and 34 percent, respectively, according to one estimate (Mwabu and Schultz 2000, 314). The effects of schooling on income for African females was even higher. These effects were far higher than inter-ethnic differences in other developing countries. Coloureds and Indians saw high wage increases with additional schooling as well, though not as large as Africans. A broader analysis of the vast differences in average wages between racial groups from a random survey of South African households during the post-apartheid transition found that 50 percent of the differences were attributable to differences in years of education (Mwabu and Schultz 2000). Attending school, particularly post-secondary education, profoundly changed black South Africans' position within the economy. Moreover, black attendance at secondary and post-secondary institutions changed dramatically in the 1970s and 1980s. In 1980, Africans, coloureds, and Indians represented a fifth of all university attendees. Roughly 13 percent of university students were African. By 1990, blacks made up half of all university attendees, and Africans were one-third of the total (Moodie 1994). Life and opportunities for blacks remained distinctly worse, even at so-called "open" universities and more so at the many overcrowded and poorly resourced secondary schools throughout the country. However, education represented a hugely effective and increasingly accessible means of economic elevation and integration. It was also competitive given rising unemployment for the unskilled, particularly black Africans.

The Azanian Students Organization (AZASO) was founded in 1978 to replace the South African Students Organization (SASO), a prominent Black Consciousness (BC) organization, which had been recently banned. AZASO, however, drifted away from BC

ideology and toward more Charterist and non-racial visions for South Africa. Eventually in 1986 it changed its name to the South African National Students Congress (SANSCO), thereby disassociating itself with BC ideology and adopting a more recognizably Charterist label (Cele and Koen 2003; Heffernan 2016). Despite this affinity for the core vision and principles of the African National Congress, AZASO was rarely involved in the most militant or violent forms of resistance that occurred during the anti-apartheid struggle. It focused on “education as a field of struggle.” Beginning with its first campaigns in 1980, AZASO focused its activism on university policy matters, including preventing quotas that would limit the number of blacks admissible to multi-racial universities as well as curtailing the ability of universities to arbitrarily expel students (Badat 1999). AZASO was also an early, active member and large affiliate of the UDF. It provided canvassing support for a “Million Signatures Campaign,” that ultimately was deemed a failure by the UDF (Badat 1999; Seekings 2000b). AZASO students still engaged in contentious action, and were prominent participants in the Second Defiance campaign marches and rallies in 1989 (Badat 1999). But the organization did not appear to provide direct or indirect support to MK, and within its meetings leaders often rejected the idea of supporting the armed struggle (Badat 1999, 322). Rather, its activism was largely confined to campus protests and campaigns, as well as support for UDF campaigns (Bot 1984). Youths, generally speaking, were a prominent participant in the township revolts, and AZASO was familiar with the townships through its regular canvassing work for the UDF, but AZASO members were not deeply involved in the often violent episodes that erupted in many townships in 1984-1986.<sup>10</sup> Moreover, police

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<sup>10</sup> There were exceptions: an AZASO member was involved in a petrol bombing near the University of the North, a member of AZASO at University of Natal was linked to MK, and AZASO was also involved in

and army presence on university campuses was not uncommon during the state of emergency, but AZASO was rarely associated with violent methods of resistance here.

Its focus on nonviolence may have been due to its members' comparatively brighter economic prospects. In fact, the organization's leaders explicitly warned prospective members against focusing excessively on their privileged status and developing skills for high-paying employment. In a printed address to incoming students in the fall of 1983, Joe Phaala, then the president of AZASO, advised students to avoid becoming "the get-rich-and-die-early lot of doctors and lawyers" and that "we essentially form the potentially co-optable middle class."

The challenge is therefore on us to decide whether we are going to be part of the oppressive system or part of the oppressed majority. Some people amongst us [i.e., black university students] wrongly assume that this is a challenge facing whites only, when we have all the signs before us to show that some black people also form an important part of the oppression machinery... Some of us also hang on this assumption very consciously out of the fear that joining [*sic*] hands with the very majority of our exploited people will mean losing our privileged positions. If we want to be part of the oppressed, then we must turn all privileges granted us into instruments of strengthening the struggle for democracy as some white patriots have done in the past and continue to do today (Phaala 1983).

Phaala's address reflected the unique position of non-white university students in South African society: individuals on the brink of privilege and income gains, but ones that could be reversed by challenging the prevailing economic system within which they had risen. This may explain a focus on the forms of resistance that AZASO emphasized: "passive resistance" such as mobilizing and protests as well as "strikes and boycotts," typically on campuses over education policies (Phaala 1983). The focus on nonviolence was a way to leverage their privileged status but also avoid overthrowing the economic

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several violent confrontations with a rival student group, AZASM (Heffernan 2016; Kessel 2000; Sithole 2010).

system in which they were rising. Still, AZASO held a strong principled ideological stance, drawn mostly from the ANC's Freedom Charter. But in contrast to previous black university student organizations, AZASO was "by temperament much more strategically calculating" and "this disciplined activists to assess seriously the political and organisational [*sic*] costs and risks attached to collective actions, the possible gains, and to also give attention to questions of trade-offs between gains and costs" (Badat 1999, 359). Such circumspection was reflected in another aspect of AZASO's outlook, where debates over views of white students and alliances with the predominantly white National Union of South African Students (NUSAS) were questioned. Engagement was controversial, but fears about engendering militancy shaped AZASO's decision to work with NUSAS. "It was argued that there was a danger of creating 'a monster which we cannot control' if initially SANSCO [AZASO] were to say 'we are organising to fight whites' and then later to declare that 'no, we are actually fighting the system'" (Badat 1999, 318). In general, caution was often widely shared among non-white students. At Rhodes University in the early 1980s debate emerged over whether black university students should support ongoing consumer boycotts and solidarity strikes in the Western Cape by boycotting exams. The debate was motivated by reports of state repression targeting Congress of South African Students (COSAS) for being active participants in the consumer boycotts. But Rhodes students were reluctant to be involved, many arguing "this would achieve little, and only result in students missing a year of their studies... This issue was debated fiercely, and late into the night. Eventually the latter position [i.e., no boycott] won out, to the relief of many students" (Pillay 2005, 187).

AZASO's constituency was politically excluded but also a relatively economically integrated group within South African society. Radical thinking and outgoing activism was common, and some AZASO members were detained or arrested for their work. AZASO was a vital affiliate of the UDF and active in many protest events, particularly on university campuses. But within this broader constituency a significant priority was placed on finishing university, and this shaped how the organization engaged in anti-government resistance, specifically a preference for nonviolent forms of resistance and a cognizance of various gains and tradeoffs of militancy. Overall, many appeared swayed by concerns over losing the privileges they had earned and envisioned by matriculating to university. This translated into a focus on nonviolence and noncooperation. AZASO was not a completely inactive and quiescent organization, but did appear disinclined to support violent methods.

Where AZASO demonstrated a stronger adherence to nonviolence, its organizational counterpart at the secondary level was more apt to mix forms of resistance targeting the South African government. The Congress of South African Students (COSAS) was founded in 1979 to represent high school students' interests in improving the quality of education and their involvement in politics more generally. Its activism began in 1980 with a series of protests and walkouts at various high schools around the country, and it also supported major worker strikes in 1981 and 1982. COSAS was among the largest voluntary organizations in South Africa and among the few with a truly national presence. When it joined the UDF upon the Front's launch in 1983 it was immediately its biggest member.

Though it made no position public, COSAS was a significant resource of support for MK. Several leaders and founders of COSAS later left South Africa to obtain military training with MK and returned to the country (Carter 1991; Cherry 2010, 2018; TRC Commission 1999). Many COSAS members served in MK's grenade squads, small units that were provided short training courses to bomb local government buildings and the homes of police and state officials (Barrell 1993). Some were arrested or died in attempted attacks (Simpson 2009). Ultimately, COSAS was banned in 1985 and hundreds of its members detained as the township revolt worsened, and its members joined other organizations or carried out work clandestinely (Marks 2001). COSAS straddled a divide between violent and nonviolent forms of resistance to the state.

As the organization that represented secondary-level black students, its constituency featured those who had comparatively better prospects of economic gains if they could obtain quality training and complete school. While the South African government had provided increasing resources to black high schools during the 1970s and 1980s, it could not match the growing numbers of secondary-level or older black South Africans seeking to obtain a high school degree. The number of those enrolled in non-white secondary-level schools roughly doubled between 1980 and 1984 (Gerhart and Glaser 2010, 60), and the South African government sought to put an age limit on those who could attend to keep enrollment and costs down, an issue that became the basis of protest campaigns (J. Davies 1996; Hyslop 1988). Amid these conditions, failure rates for black students in secondary-level schools were 50 percent or higher for many years throughout the 1980s (Parnell and Webber 1990). This meant that COSAS represented a constituency that sought out the income and employment benefits that secondary-level

education could provide in South Africa's skills-based economy, but that many of them were likely to leave school early or fail to matriculate. This may have contributed to COSAS's involvement in a mixture of forms of resistance to the state.

This mixture of strategies and interests led to adjustments to COSAS's strategic focus during the 1980s. After years of increasing involvement in broader political matters and militancy, most observable through COSAS solidarity school boycotts during worker strikes in 1980-1982 as well as a rising membership base comprised of youth who had left school or were unemployed, the organization redoubled its attention on education policy in 1982 and began to use boycott tactics more sparingly (Gerhart and Glaser 2010, 59). It also sought to limit membership to those who were enrolled in secondary school (COSAS activist 2020; Price 1991, 172). COSAS found that "discipline" was becoming an issue and "it became clear that the interests of secondary school students diverged substantially from those of unemployed school-leavers, to whom educational issues were usually irrelevant" (Gerhart and Glaser 2010, 99). COSAS branches around the country began to help construct alternative organizations for out-of-school and jobless youth. These organizations proliferated quickly, and many townships and communities became the sites of locally based youth congresses (i.e., Utienhage Youth Congress, Alexandra Youth Congress, Port Elizabeth Youth Congress, etc.). By 1987 these organizations included hundreds of thousands of official members.

These youth congresses provided many of the self-described "shock troops" or "young warriors" of the township revolts (Lodge and Swilling 1986). Youths from the congresses were often involved in petrol bombing the homes of local government officials and police. They also targeted patrolling police vehicles, and many youth



congresses became the source of militants for local self-defense units and so-called *amabutho* (the name for a regiment or military formation in Zulu) paramilitary militia. Their tactics and discipline were often crude and rudimentary, but many groups did obtain arms and grenades, some seized from the police (Cherry 2018; Gerhart and Glaser 2010). Contemporaneous descriptions from well-established scholars styled them as “unemployed, virtually illiterate, the offspring of broken or scattered families, living in packs 100 or 200 strong in what they call ‘bases’ on the fringes of poorer squatter camps....They may not have a program but they do have guns and grenades” (Lodge and Swilling 1986). They were also the perpetrators of targeted attacks on alleged “collaborators” with the regime, often burning victims alive. These groups made many townships and communities “ungovernable,” as the ANC had called upon them to do via a widely circulated address by leadership in April 1985 roughly six months after the revolts had started.

While doubtless there were individual members of COSAS and AZASO who participated in the township revolts, including its more violent episodes, the violence was largely led by the youth congresses. Enrollment in school created a sharp division, according to analysis from the period. In coverage of the township revolt, it was noted that “the school movement [i.e., COSAS] was more articulate...[while] the other section of the youth movement is provided by the youth congresses” (Lodge and Swilling 1986). Events of the northern Transvaal reflect these distinctions. Local COSAS and AZASO branches had worked to organize out-of-school youths in 1984 by mentoring the Sekhukhuneland Youth Congress (SEYO). As the township revolt unfolded, SEYO eclipsed these groups and they were unable to maintain influence. According to one local

youth activist “When SEYO came, then COSAS activity died” (Kessel 2000, 104, 113). Relations between the youth congress and other voluntary organizations and UDF affiliates deteriorated as the township revolt led to widespread violence. Local leaders created a new organization to reestablish control over the youth congresses: The Sekhukhune Parents’ Crisis Committee (SPCC). According to one of its founders,

‘The sole purpose of the SPCC was: to prevent violent activity of youth from penetrating in the business community.’ The SPCC was formed in 1985 at the initiative of Sekhukhune Chamber of Commerce after consultations among businessmen on the proper modes of defensive action. Some favored a violent response to ransacking youths, whereas others pleaded for consultation with youth leaders” (Kessel 2000, 113).

This effort by existing voluntary organizations to forestall further youth congress violence was emulated elsewhere. In Soweto, the National Education Crisis Committee (NECC) was created in 1985 to manage youths who had declared they would no longer return to school. In early 1987, a new organization had been founded by UDF leaders, for whom “reining in the youthful crusaders was to become one of their main priorities” and “its main function was to bring the youth into line” (Lodge and Nasson 1991, 102–3). After its first meeting at the University of the Western Cape, the South African Youth Congress (SAYCO) counted 1,200 affiliates with 500,000 signed-up members and a larger base of up to 2 million youths in a federated structure (Seekings 2000b, 210).

In much the same way that the NECC stepped into a leadership vacuum in school politics, SAYCO hoped to regroup youth organizations and give direction to the insurrectionary youth constituency. While attempting to establish a disciplined organizational structure, SAYCO’s radicalism allowed it to maintain credibility among its following...In terms of formal alliances, however, SAYCO remained firmly within the multiclass UDF (Gerhart and Glaser 2010, 102–3).

Youth were a major component of the various forms of resistance and activism that unfolded in South Africa during the 1980s. There was no shortage of organization

among this constituency, as the work of AZASO, COSAS, and the youth congresses make clear. These should have provided necessary cohesiveness that prevented fragmentation and escalation, resilience to repression, and social capital to instill effective forms of coordinating nonviolent noncooperation activities. However, these groups diverged significantly in how they engaged in dissidence, with some remaining predominantly nonviolent while others gravitated to violent riots and armed insurgency. That these organizations represented youths with varying prospects and integration within the South African economic system appears to have shaped their divergent willingness to engage in militant and disruptive forms of activism, particularly political violence. COSAS represented a more mixed form of resistance, with strong engagement in UDF activities as well as support for MK and the township revolts. Its leadership attempted several times to refocus the organization on its primary focus of improving secondary education, but its variegated membership shifted its involvement in dissidence. Meanwhile, youth congresses represented largely excluded groups, and this seemed to incline them more to violent forms of resistance. Debates within AZASO and within COSAS over whether to adhere to nonviolence also seemed shaped by an understanding that more violent challenges to the state could jeopardize their positions and prospects in the economy. This motivated efforts to contain more radical and militant youth, first by establishing youth congresses, then the creation of crisis committees, and eventually a more federated youth congress structure.

Two mechanisms operated to influence how these organizations engaged in resistance. Each represented relatively cohesive organizations, imbuing them with viable noncooperation options, though the comparatively wealthier AZASO and COSAS may

have used these tactics to greater effect. This potential does not explain their varying behavior, however. The aversion to losses that different forms of resistance implied for the interests within the organizations, particularly in AZASO and to a lesser extent COSAS, appeared to shape their engagement in South Africa's various resistance campaigns. Meanwhile, lacking few prospects and little leverage due to their lack of interdependence with elite interests, the school leavers and unemployed youths that comprised the youth congresses more readily turned to political violence.

### *Conclusion and Policy Implications*

This paper has sought to reevaluate the application of interdependence theory in shaping the adoption of forms of resistance during civil conflicts. While previous research has emphasized nonviolent noncooperation viability as the primary way in which interdependence produces nonviolent strategies, this explanation alone may not be entirely sufficient. That groups have organizational resources and links with political and economic elite interests to use noncooperation tactics such as boycotts and strikes does not explain why they also avoid the adoption of strategies of violence. Rather, the prospect of losses associated with political violence ensures that such organizations and constituencies both engage in nonviolent action and avoid or seek to minimize violent resistance. The case of anti-government resistance in South Africa during the 1980s was used to empirically assess how these causal mechanisms operate to influence forms of resistance. It was demonstrated that pre-existing voluntary organizations that adhered more closely to nonviolent strategies appeared motivated in part by loss aversion: they feared the negative effects of violent challenges to the government on their position

within the socioeconomic system and their material interests. Indeed, some groups sought to minimize violent resistance by others so as to protect their economic interests.

These findings have important implications for policy toward nonviolent anti-regime movements and voluntary social organizations. In fact, the latter are often supported financially and diplomatically by developed country governments as a means to ensure that civil conflicts remain nonviolent when they emerge in developing countries. This is often described as support for civil society and the voluntary organizations that comprise it. It appears, though, that whether voluntary civil society organizations engage in violent or nonviolent forms of resistance is partly influenced by their level of economic integration within the prevailing society and interdependence with political and economic elites. In simple terms, “middle class” entities tend to be the most strongly motivated to adhere to nonviolent forms of resistance, whereas others may be relatively more inclined to mix strategies or support political violence. Given that support for civil society is often extended to the grassroots, and, at least rhetorically, is emphasized for the most marginalized constituencies so as to empower them, such engagement may not ensure that resistance remains nonviolent in the event that broader political incompatibilities produce a civil conflict. In South Africa, it is not entirely clear whether support for youth congresses would have produced lower levels of violence during the townships revolts or reduced inclination to support MK.

These findings, however, remain limited by several factors. First, the case of South Africa may be unique in several ways that could limit generalizability. While political exclusion is common in many states, it rarely is as deeply institutionalized as it was in the apartheid system of government in South Africa. Moreover, South Africa’s

economy was also a mixture of a highly modern financial and commercial base among mostly white South Africans and a deeply poor and underdeveloped system among many non-whites. Together, these political and economic eccentricities may have uniquely shaped the interests, perspectives, and strategies of key actors and organizations in South Africa's civil conflicts. This may have generated substantially strong grievances and incentives among excluded groups, prompting them to employ noncooperation in order to overturn the prevailing political arrangement. Such grievances may not be as significant in other contexts, and many constituencies may opt to avoid all forms of resistance – whether violent or nonviolent. In other words, loss aversion may dampen entirely any appetite for resistance among politically excluded but economically integrated constituencies, leaving the political status quo unchallenged. Additional process tracing of various nonviolent and violent anti-regime campaigns in the Philippines, Iran, Ukraine, or other episodes would be required to demonstrate the influence of loss aversion on strategy selection. Moreover, a focus on constituencies or voluntary organizations that opt to remain neutral would be necessary to understand factors influencing such behavior and whether loss aversion is a salient source of influence.<sup>11</sup>

Lack of detailed data and the variety of forms of resistance that occurred in South Africa during the 1980s raise further questions as well. At times, it is difficult to determine how internal organizational processes of groups like the civics or unions influenced the perception of and support for UDF, MK, or local resistance during the township revolts. A reliance on first-hand accounts from histories or interviews to understand how whole organizations operated has obvious limits, but the unavailability of

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<sup>11</sup> Subjects interviewed for this paper were asked if they knew of organizations or individuals that opted to avoid engagement with any violent or nonviolent forms of resistance, but no referrals were offered.

details on organizations complicates an effort to generate clearer depictions of behavior at this level. Other cases may provide more detailed evidence on how pre-existing voluntary organizations reacted to and engaged with different forms of resistance during civil conflicts. Likewise, it appears that many organizations in South Africa either adhered to nonviolence through support for the UDF or COSATU, or they engaged in mixed forms of resistance, such as COSAS's support for both UDF and MK. Did any adhere solely to violence? Is this a consequence of South Africa's rare experience of simultaneous armed and unarmed conflicts? Or are their unique pathways by which pre-existing voluntary organizations mobilize into or establish armed insurgent groups that preclude engagement with nonviolence? Is a more engaged political wing needed to manage the separate efforts of armed insurgency and mass nonviolent strategies? Moreover, what is the relationship between the violent episodes of the township revolts, many of which were akin to riots or highly localized political violence, and more organized and country-wide armed insurgent campaigns? Do these represent distinct forms of political violence with different determinants or separate steps on a pathway toward more organized armed resistance? Comparison across cases or more detailed data may help answer such questions.

There was a remarkable consistency in the preferred strategies of the predominantly nonviolent UDF and its major affiliates as well as the ANC's emphasis of armed struggle through MK. In other contexts, dissident groups may be more prone to shift strategies as they consider the reaction of governments and other dissident actors to various protest events or campaigns. The UDF remained nonviolent from its founding in 1983 through the Second Defiance campaign of 1989 despite targeted assassinations,

government reforms to influx control, the creation of the COSATU federation of unions, and mass detentions and bannings in 1987-1988. For its part, MK shifted from a focus on bombing major infrastructure to guerilla attacks when the township revolts revealed potential greater potential support within townships. Different dynamics may have prompted different behaviors, and the theory advanced here may point to some possible evolutions. Had the South African government pursued a different track vis-à-vis economic and labor relations policy, putting in place more stringent restrictions and limits on opportunities for the “black middle class,” the mechanism of loss aversion may have been less active and many dissidents less inclined to avoid violence. Had MK been a more effective insurgency, causing more frequent and more costly damage to South Africa’s state institutions and economy, it is possible that the interdependent relationships that linked many civics, unions, and other civil society groups with economic elite interests would have been severed. The influence of loss aversion and restraint on broader support for armed struggle may have diminished as a consequence. Alternatively, had the campaign against the government continued for much longer, perhaps deep into the 1990s had hardline factions in the National Party managed to maintain an on resistance to democratization, it is possible that such continued recalcitrance by the government may have signaled to predominantly nonviolent groups that the future of the economy and their position therein was less certain. As a consequence, they would have had less to lose from adopting a more disruptive set of strategies. Such evolving circumstances between the government and dissident actors may explain escalation from nonviolent to violent strategies in the civil wars in Syria in 2011, to cite one example. While South Africa experienced only more subtle shifts in dissident actors’ behaviors, the theory of



interdependence and the causal mechanism of loss aversion does accommodate potential shifts in how dissidents adopt or mix nonviolent and violent strategies. Additional theorizing on how dynamics between state and nonstate forces alter the nature of interdependence or loss aversion and what relevant thresholds would prompt dissidents to switch to violence are necessary, but theory might accommodate more dynamic interaction and relational components to explain changes in behavior during the course of a dissident campaign or civil conflict.

Lastly, while the discussion in this paper has focused on how interdependence and its accompany causal mechanisms influence the form of resistance during civil conflict how interdependence affects the origins of civil conflict has been left aside. Perhaps interdependence introduces unique types of threats or signals that trigger civil conflicts that by their very structure remain nonviolent. Understanding how interdependence influences how civil conflicts first emerge may further clarify the dynamic process of how dissidents behave during their progression.

## Chapter 4: Civil Society Roots and The Intensity of Civil Wars

**Abstract:** Do the pre-conflict organizational roots of armed nonstate actors influence the level of subsequent violence during civil wars? This paper theorizes that armed nonstate actors with origins in civil society organizations such as student groups, labor unions, religious entities, or advocacy organizations have informational and legitimacy advantages that reduce their reliance on coercive violence against civilians and their vulnerability to government detection and attack. Statistical analysis of cumulative battle-related deaths and civilian victimizations across armed intrastate conflicts from 1989 through 2017 provides negligible support for these propositions. Armed nonstate actors with roots in civil society target civilians at similar rates to other armed nonstate groups. Deaths resulting from battles with state security forces are also largely unchanged. Civil society origins do not appear to influence the intensity of civil wars.

Do the origins of armed rebel groups influence how violent civil wars are? Some armed intrastate conflicts feature frequent combat, targeting of civilians, and significant fatality totals. For instance, civil wars in Sri Lanka, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Colombia involved thousands and even tens of thousands of battle-related deaths. By comparison, previous armed insurgencies in Mali and Nicaragua resulted in just hundreds of dead. Was the violence in these civil wars different because they were fought by different types of insurgents?

Even countries that experience multiple simultaneous armed civil conflicts see substantial differences in the death tolls associated with each armed insurgent group. In Algeria during the 1990s, for example, the GIA (Groupe Islamique Armée) rebel group was notorious for its operational aggressiveness and its targeting of civilians. Sometimes dozens or hundreds would die during single engagements by the GIA. Fatality counts resulting from operations by the AIS (Armée Islamique du Salut), which was active during the same period, were a fraction of those committed by the GIA (Hafez 2000). The AIS included thousands of combatants, but these resources resulted in fewer battle

deaths and civilian victimizations. Why was it so much less violent than the GIA? The GIA was founded by groups of Islamist militants returning from the war against Soviet forces in Afghanistan. The AIS emerged from a domestic Algerian Islamist movement known for earthquake relief and providing social services to poor neighborhoods in Algiers before it campaigned during the country's first multi-party elections in 1990 and 1991 (Hafez 2000; Mortimer 1991). Given that both groups fought against the same government in the same country at the same time, structural factors cannot explain their differing approaches. Did the contrasting origins of these two armed organizations shape how they operated during Algeria's ensuing civil war?

Previous research on armed conflict dynamics has attributed variation in their intensity to assorted factors. Some have emphasized the role of structural and macro-level variables (Fearon 2004; Fearon and Laitin 2003; Lacina 2006), others focus on conflict processes (Balcells 2010; Kalyvas 2006; Kaplan 2017; Lawrence 2010; Pearlman 2011; R. M. Wood, Kathman, and Gent 2012), and some emphasize group- or meso-level characteristics (D. E. Cunningham, Gleditsch, and Salehyan 2009; Staniland 2014; Weinstein 2007; Worsnop 2017). Among these many factors, two challenges for armed nonstate actors are recurrent: the need to consolidate control of populated territory and the management of information about rebel positions, personnel, and operations. The resolution of both is contingent on how armed nonstate actors establish relationships with noncombatant populations. Whether they are resolved greatly influences the extent to which armed rebels target civilians with coercive violence and their vulnerability during battles with government forces.

The analysis here investigates whether organizational origins of armed militant groups provide advantages in resolving these challenges. Specifically, it argues that civil society organizations have extensive experience working with grassroots actors, providing local services, and accessing bottom-up channels of information on citizen preferences. Armed groups with roots in civil society can leverage these advantages to switch more rapidly and effectively from the use of coercive violence against civilians to governance tactics to consolidate control over territory. Their superior local connections and ability to build grassroots knowledge also allow them to build a “shield of secrecy” in which civilians are less likely to provide government forces information about their movements and location. By leveraging these advantages, overall levels of violence, both in terms of battle-related deaths during engagements with state armed forces and the perpetration of one-sided civilian victimizations by armed nonstate actors, is reduced.

These propositions and analysis contribute both to academic scholarship on the dynamics of civil conflict and to policy interests. First, it complements an increasing focus on group-level attributes and rebel governance in civil conflict dynamics (J. M. Braithwaite and Cunningham 2020; Cederman and Gleditsch 2009; D. E. Cunningham, Gleditsch, and Salehyan 2013; K. G. Cunningham and Loyle 2020). Second, it investigates the implications of broad-based policy assumptions about the peacebuilding contributions of civil society, albeit within a unique context – armed rebel groups (Barnes 2006; Paffenholz 2009; Paffenholz and Spurk 2006; Tocci 2013).

This paper is written in five parts. In the first section, I review existing research on civil conflict dynamics and identify two challenges that influence the intensity and severity of violence during armed intrastate conflicts. Next, I detail my explanation as to

why armed groups formed from civil society organizations are better positioned to resolve these challenges and therefore employ coercive violence and fall victim to government attack less frequently, resulting in less severe conflicts. Third, I explain my large-N analytic approach and the source of data therein. The fourth section reviews the modeling results and various validity and robustness checks. Finally, I review the broader policy and research implications of the findings.

*Literature Review: The Challenges for Armed Insurgents*

This section draws on existing scholarly work on civil war dynamics to identify two common and interrelated challenges that armed nonstate actors face. How and whether these challenges are resolved can affect the extent of fatalities and severity of civil wars, both in terms of deaths resulting from battles with security forces and how armed nonstate actors target civilians with violence. These challenges are 1) consolidating control of populated territories and 2) protecting information about rebel positions, personnel, and operations.

Kalyvas argues that the extent of indiscriminate violence in civil war is a function of whether and how well a group controls a populated territory (Kalyvas 2006). When armed nonstate actors first operate in a territory, they encounter an “identification problem:” new to a region they are unaware who is a supporter and who is a loyalist of the incumbent regime. This problem is exacerbated in territory that remains somewhat contested since government forces may still be present, creating an ongoing threat and emboldening noncombatant loyalists. Additionally, local civilians can exploit armed nonstate groups’ weak knowledge of local conditions and settle scores with their personal

rivals by denouncing them as government supporters. Deprived of adequate information and knowledge about the local landscape and its people, rebels may be less discriminating in their use of violence in an effort to eliminate possible enemies and consolidate control. Indiscriminate violence is costly and often counterproductive since it can reduce willing local collaboration with their efforts, so rebels would prefer to be more selective in their application of violence. However, “high levels of indiscriminate violence emerge because no actor has the capacity to set up the sort of administrative infrastructure required by selective violence” to resolve the identification problem (Kalyvas 2006, 171). Lacking information about who are real supporters and who are incumbent loyalists, rebels may be more likely to engage in excessive amounts of violence targeting civilians.

The emerging literature on rebel governance points to similar challenges in consolidating control of populated territories. Kalyvas implies that the establishment of effective rebel “administrative infrastructures” can generate local information and resolve the identification problem. And across civil wars, armed rebels have engaged in varying degrees of service provision, local administration, and governance of territory they control (Arjona 2016; Mampilly 2011). Some groups have even held local elections, relinquishing some authority to local civilians (K. G. Cunningham, Huang, and Sawyer 2020). But the decision to establish rebel governance institutions can be costly and poses tradeoffs for rebels. First, without some form of governance administration, armed groups are vulnerable. “Rebels that fail to develop adequate institutional arrangements could face recalcitrant civilian populations who threaten the rebel agenda through outright hostility or by throwing their support, either overt or covert, to the incumbent side” (Mampilly and

Stewart 2020, 4). Second, establishing governance institutions involves risk too, since armed groups may find they relinquish critical authority and control to other structures and leaders. “Rebels can reduce the degree of coercion [i.e., violence] by relying on local civilian authorities who already possess legitimacy but in so doing sacrifice oversight and direct control” (Mampilly and Stewart 2020, 10). A key factor that simplifies the challenge of rebel governance and consolidating control of territory then is whether the rebels have some pre-existing level of local legitimacy, can generate legitimacy easily, or are experienced in working with local sources of legitimacy while establishing rebel governance. With such experience and attributes, the need to employ coercive violence against local civilians to consolidate and exercise control of populated territory is reduced and establishing rebel governance is simplified. Without it, armed nonstate actors may more frequently fall back on coercive violence rather than cede any authority to local civilians or resolve the identification problem.

A second and related challenge that armed nonstate actors face during civil conflicts is managing information about themselves. This too is greatly influenced by their relationships with local populations. All nonstate actors typically start at a disadvantage to the government, which has superior conventional operational capabilities and security institutions. This is borne out in battle-death ratios in many conflicts. For example, during some of the most deadly fighting in Colombia’s civil war from 1988 through 2003, three times as many guerillas died as government forces (Restrepo, Spagat, and Vargas 2006).<sup>12</sup> In Nepal, as many as five times the number of rebels were killed as government forces each year during the late 1990s and early 2000s (Bohara, Mitchell, and Nepal 2006). This vulnerability increases the importance of reducing detection by

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<sup>12</sup> Author’s calculation based on dataset accompanying this reference.

government forces. Indeed, the ability to manage information about their location, personnel, and overall organizational development has been shown to be critical to the transition of small inchoate networks of committed fighters into active armed nonstate rebels organizations (Lewis 2017). “*Rebels need secrecy from the government* about their identities, their location, and even their intent to form an organization to violently challenge the state” (Larson and Lewis 2018, 876–77, emphasis in original). Accordingly, when civilians withhold suspect information about rebels from the government, they extend a “shield of secrecy” that reduces rebels’ vulnerability to state forces’ operational advantages. The decision to withhold information by noncombatants can be fraught and dangerous. Effective policing by the regime can lead to pervasive efforts to identify rebel sympathizers, while rebels may actively target individuals to deter informers (Petersen 2001). Lewis (2017) has argued that local ethnic homogeneity and strong local kinship networks increase the likelihood of such a shield being extended. “Ethnicity can play a subtle role as a technology of coordination,” helping rebels manage and control information flow through reliably mum local networks of noncombatants (Lewis 2017, 1427). Managing and controlling information, then, is hugely important to rebels. Ethnicity may be one way to resolve the information challenge and build a “shield of secrecy,” but there may be alternative coordination resources or technologies. Doing so should influence the number of fatalities rebel groups face, rebalancing an unfavorable ratio of battle-deaths that are common in civil wars and potentially yielding a net reduction in battle deaths.

These two challenges – how armed rebels consolidate control over populated territories and how they manage information about their organization and operations –



influence the extent to which they use violence against civilians and are vulnerable to government attacks. By extension, how and whether they are resolved should influence the level of violence during civil wars. These are not the only factors that affect conflict intensity. Important structural factors include the type of prevailing political regime or the availability of lootable resources, conflict processes such as third-party intervention, and group-level attributes such as the extent of rebel cohesion and material capabilities should also affect the severity of civil war violence, among many other salient variables (Bakke 2014; Balcells 2010; Fearon 2004; Lacina 2006; Weinstein 2007; R. M. Wood, Kathman, and Gent 2012; Worsnop 2017). However, resolving the challenges identified here should have an independent effect on the level of violence in civil wars. One area from which they may seek resources or coordination technologies may be their pre-conflict social roots and organizations. Other scholarly work has examined how pre-existing community connections and political entities shape and steer the capabilities and behavior of rebels (J. M. Braithwaite and Cunningham 2020; Petersen 2001; Staniland 2014). These pre-conflict resources may also influence how violence is used and its severity during civil wars.

*Theory: Roots in Civil Society, Rebel Governance, and Information Advantages*

This section of the paper explains why armed rebel groups that are founded by pre-existing civil society organizations (CSOs) may provide advantages that resolve the previously identified challenges of consolidating control over populated territory and

managing information on rebel organizations. Specifically, CSOs are often described as enjoying three common attributes: 1) unique access to local information, even in conflict contexts, 2) deep experience in providing services and basic governance at the local level; and 3) ability to represent and partner with other organizations from high-level forums to the grassroots in ways that foster legitimacy and local ownership. Extrapolating from these observed CSO advantages, I argue that armed rebels with roots in civil society should be better able to resolve the challenges of consolidating control over populated territory and managing information. I then offer several examples of armed nonstate groups leveraging these advantages. I conclude by identifying specific propositions implied by this discussion and potentially important conditional effects.

A central advantage of civil society organizations is their purported proximity to non-elite citizen networks, even in conflict contexts. “The importance given to civil-society actors in peacebuilding generally derives from their being representative of, or in touch with, ‘the people’” (Orjuela 2003, 197). This proximity produces valuable experience and advantages for armed actors with roots in civil society. Three specific examples stand out. First, due to their access to the “people” CSOs often have unique knowledge of and abilities to access local preferences and information. Indeed, CSOs are often sought out in civil war contexts by actors seeking such information. For example, in peacekeeping efforts, counterinsurgency operations, or other interventions in fragile or conflict-affected areas, CSOs have been identified as essential contacts to better learn the local context, culture, and people that are shaping the dynamics of armed conflict (Penner n.d.; Stime 2017; Tocci 2013; UN Security Council 2015). Civil society organizations have also been described as critical channels of information for various armed conflict

“early warning” systems: “civil society organizations, linked to local communities that provide them with comparative advantages in accessing open-source information on potential conflict, can usefully contribute to strengthening the early-warning and response mechanisms established at [the African] continental and regional levels” (Affa’a-Mindzie 2012). CSOs therefore have unique access to information. A lack of knowledge or access to information about local preferences is a major challenge that compels armed nonstate actors to employ less discriminate violence as they seek to consolidate control over populated territories. Those armed groups that have roots in civil society may have an advantage in surmounting this informational shortcoming, thereby reducing their need to target civilians.

Second, civil society organizations are commonly observed providing basic services to citizens, including financial, educational, health, dispute resolution, or public safety solutions that are otherwise unavailable or of insufficient quality (Boulding 2014; Bratton 1989; Clayton, Oakley, and Taylor 2000; Ingram 2020; Paffenholz 2009). “The direct provision of services to the citizens forms an important part of the activities of civil society associations, e.g. self-help groups. Especially [*sic*], in cases where the state is weak it becomes a basic activity to provide shelter, health or education” (Paffenholz and Spurk 2006, 13). As noted previously, many armed nonstate actors attempt to build governance structures in areas where they are seeking to establish control, often by providing basic services to earn trust and willing support for their agenda. Since many civil society organizations often have pre-existing experience in generating and administering basic social services, armed nonstate actors with roots in civil society should face fewer costs and difficulties in creating such rebel governance and

administrative frameworks to provide such services in areas they seize. As a consequence, the need to rely on coercion and violence to establish and maintain control and authority should be reduced.

Third, CSOs are often praised for their ability to connect with, represent, and even shape local-level preferences. This dynamic has been observed in conflict contexts, specifically civil war peace negotiations. “Civil society actors may engage in [negotiations] so as to contribute to creating legitimacy and ownership of the peace process,” according to an empirical analysis of the outcomes of various civil war peace processes when they include civil society groups (Kew and Wanis-St. John 2008; Nilsson 2012, 247). They do so in a variety of ways, including representing or channeling local-level interests of citizens into high-level political processes or by facilitating “direct participation by actors at the grassroots level engaging in intercommunity meetings and other public fora” (Nilsson 2012). In other words, civil society actors have unique skills in building trust and legitimacy in high-stakes political processes on account of their ability to access and channel information and interests into and between high-level political forums and the grassroots community level. This ability may resolve the tradeoff rebel groups face as they share power with local sources of legitimacy when building governance structures to consolidate control over populated territory. Powersharing arrangements poses tradeoffs to rebels, since it may be difficult, costly, or risky to cede authority to locals, but civil society organizations may be better able to generate legitimacy directly with locals or to network and partner with pre-existing sources of legitimacy as they construct rebel governance structures. The result should be a reduced

need to rely on violence or coercion to build local administrative frameworks or compel cooperation from (or eliminate) pre-existing sources of legitimacy.

In addition to supporting armed nonstate actors efforts to consolidate control of populated territory, the advantages and attributes of CSOs should help armed nonstate actors resolve the challenge of managing information about their organizational development, personnel, and operations. With strong access to local information networks, the ability to serve local needs and govern grassroots matters, and experience partnering with other local sources of legitimacy, armed nonstate actors with roots in civil society should be able to access the shield of secrecy and reduce the ability of government forces to obtain information about the rebels. As a consequence, these rebels should be less vulnerable to government attacks. While these informational benefits may also enhance rebel abilities to inflict losses on government forces, given the high fatality ratio that armed nonstate actors face during civil wars the net result should be a reduction in battle-related deaths.

Several examples from armed intrastate conflicts in Mexico, Algeria, and El Salvador provide useful context for how the preceding discussion of how civil society attributes can resolve critical challenges that armed nonstate actors face.

The ability to leverage grassroots connections and pre-existing reservoirs of legitimacy may explain why the AIS in Algeria was comparatively less violent than the GIA during the country's civil wars of the 1990s. Born from the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) movement, the AIS enjoyed ready support at its founding. It built large zones of control in both Western and Eastern Algeria, often in areas where it had already been operating as a humanitarian and religious organization as well as where some members

had run for local office. In fact, the FIS did not even plan to launch a bona fide armed militant wing during the initial phases of its challenge to the government following a coup d'état that annulled FIS's members' victory in national elections in 1992. "The complacency of the FIS was perhaps based on its belief that its legitimacy in the political arena earned it the loyalty of [existing] armed Islamists" (Hafez 2000). Later, the AIS also explicitly renounced the use of violence against many targets, including civilians, scholars, foreigners, and others, focusing instead on "legitimate" targets in the security forces and state institutions (Ashour 2008). Nonetheless, the AIS still operated as a capable armed force. The group was "able to hold its positions in the face of the ANP [Algeria's National Popular Army] strikes, and the latter was unable to destroy it" (Ashour 2008). The AIS was also more discerning and precise in its reliance on violence than its primary rival armed nonstate group, the GIA. It was even able to seize some areas controlled by the armed nonstate group GIA in 1996 and 1997, not through force but because it was seen as more legitimate than the GIA, which had relied almost entirely on coercive violence to control its territory (Ashour 2008). By 1997, however, the excessive violence of the GIA had begun to harm even the AIS's own strategy of armed resistance to the government. When it finally declared a ceasefire unilaterally in 1997, an AIS commander gave an interview saying "there was consequently no point in continuing the fight against the regime, due to the waning in popular support" for any challenge to the government (Ashour 2008). Though it took up arms against the government, the AIS was more calibrated in its use of force throughout Algeria's civil war. It relied focused on rebel governance and cultivating local legitimacy, methods it developed prior to the

conflict as a civil society organization, rather than coercive violence to consolidate control over populated territory.

One example where an armed nonstate actor's roots in civil society may have allowed it to cultivate a "shield of secrecy" is the Zapatista militant group FLN/EZLN in Mexico. The FLN/EZLN was founded by an urban-based student organization that relocated to the Chiapas region where they had no social roots. The group was nearly destroyed initially when the military attacked their locations after locals informed on their whereabouts. It overcame these problems, however, by developing better knowledge about local communities. "It had become clear that, as a group that was exogenous to the Selva [region], the FLN would need to strike up local contacts, in contrast to past failed efforts... This allowed the FLN to better understand the needs of its inhabitants, and led to the "indigenization" of the FLN/EZLN both in terms of discourse and internal organizational processes" (O'Connor and Oikonomakis 2015, 386). The approach, which eschewed high levels of violence, was a successful one: "By 1988, the EZLN had rapidly expanded and exerted almost complete control over the Selva, consolidating a "safe territory" and using it as a base from which to expand. At this stage, the Zapatista militants could move openly from community to community" (O'Connor and Oikonomakis 2015, 393; N. Ross 2019). The result was superior protection for the FLN group as well as better control over territory. By drawing on civil society tactics of grassroots outreach and partnering with local source of legitimacy, it was able to better protect itself from government detection. Fewer battle deaths with state security forces and minimal needs for coercive violence against civilians were an outgrowth of this effort.

Though they did not directly originate from civil society organizations, armed nonstate actors active during El Salvador's civil war in the late 1970s through the 1980s did frequently leverage civil society tactics and groups. It was common for groups like the FPL (Fuerzas populares de liberación) and the ERP (Ejército Revolucionario del Pueblo) to build community-based *campesino* organizations or integrate with formalized nongovernmental organizations to enhance local service provision, access information on local civilians, and control intelligence on rebel positions and identities. For example, the FPL faction "encouraged residents to participate in local organizations called *poder popular local* (local popular power). The purpose of these organizations was to provide goods and health care to local residents as well as guerilla forces.... The FPL also believed that participation in such organizations would politicize residents" (E. J. Wood 2003, 126). The ERP was even more actively integrated with various civil society organizations. "Under the leadership of nongovernmental organizations allied to the ERP – whose leaders were in some cases strategically placed ERP political officers – the cooperatives would form a network of overt organizations and expand ERP influence" (E. J. Wood 2003, 167) These connections provided real benefits for the ERP, FPL, and other armed nonstate actors. First and foremost, *campesino* cooperatives and more formal civil society organizations provided essential intelligence to ERP, FPL, and other groups. "The principal contributions of the residents of the case-study areas was 'silence,' the refusal to inform on guerrillas.... According to a ERP leader active in Tres Calles area in the late 1970s, *campesinos* consistently lied to the security forces concerning the degree of subversive [civil society] organizing.... Silence also protected the leaders of some nongovernmental organizations who were full-time ERP militants" (E. J. Wood



2003, 126). The political sensitization and informational protection resulting from civil society organizing compensated for the group's inferiority in military capabilities. The group's "rural political capacity appears to have been significantly stronger than that of the government. The latter's decisive advantages in numbers, training, and technology suggests that insurgent political capacity accounts for the ongoing military stalemate" (E. J. Wood 2003, 126–27).

These networks of CSOs also provided essential information that strengthened rebel control of various territories in El Salvador. "Overlapping networks of military and political cadres and militant *campesinos* organized in insurgent as well as reform cooperatives, *campesino* federations, nongovernmental organizations, and the guerrilla's military structure ensured a continual flow of information concerning successful activities" (E. J. Wood 2003, 190). With access to such information, these groups could be more selective in their application of violence. In fact, government informers were not nonexistent, and alleged informers were identified and investigated with some frequency (E. J. Wood 2003, 126, 155–56). At least 300 targeted disappearances occurred in rebel held areas, according to El Salvador's post-conflict Truth Commission. The ERP, the militant faction most active in civil society organizations, was believed to a major perpetrator of such investigations and targeted assassinations (Betancur, Planchart, and Buergenthal 1993). Given the extent to which the ERP relied on civil society organizations for information, material support, and political sensitization, it seems more than likely that these networks and resources were leveraged during such investigations. While many persons were tragically killed as a result, the killings appeared targeted rather than indiscriminate.

This history of disappearances in El Salvador highlights that fact that lower levels of indiscriminate violence is not the same as no coercive violence at all. It also introduces an important caveat about the relationship between civil society and civilian victimizations. As in most civil wars, armed nonstate actors will try to eliminate threats from suspected informers, traitors, or supporters of their enemies. To do so they will leverage available informational and organizational resources, including those they may draw from civil society roots. Indeed, Balcells has argued that civil society organizations may become both a key resource for identifying local supporters of an armed nonstate actor's opponents or a useful shorthand for identifying a citizen's sympathies with either side (i.e., membership in certain organizations implies one's political preferences). During the Spanish civil war of the 1930s, there were frequent killings of an opponent's local supporters by both rebels and government forces. Civil society groups facilitated this "sweeping the rear" of noncombatant opponents: "both trade unionists and priests were crucial collaborators for the militias from the left and right, respectively" (Balcells 2011, 206). Thus, civil society may in certain circumstances increase the selective targeting of civilians by armed nonstate groups. Importantly, however, this is conditional on the local balance of supporters for rebel and incumbent forces (Balcells 2010, 2011). In areas that are more evenly split between opponents, armed nonstate actors and government forces alike have an incentive to reduce the numbers of their opponent's supporters so that in a post-conflict environment there exists a majority of one's own supporters to dominate political matters. Where the pre-conflict balance of power already heavily favored one side or another, the value of targeting noncombatant supporters of your enemy is minimized and so violence against civilians is reduced.

I incorporate Balcells's argument into my analysis by conditioning the decision of an armed nonstate actor's roots in civil society to target civilians with violence on the actor's political ideology. This is admittedly a blunt and imprecise approach to addressing Balcell's point. The Spanish civil war involved clearly delineated sides that were largely in place due to high levels of pre-conflict political partisanship. Ideology is a much more vast and variegated concept, and therefore may incorporate a range of different factors and mechanisms that influence rebel behavior. However, the existence of a strong ideology may reflect strong differences with perceived political rivals. It has also been identified as potentially important in the prospects for establishing effective rebel governance. As rebels seize territory and create governance institutions to consolidate local control, they must choose whether to integrate pre-existing institutions, such as state institutions and representatives, and whether to include formerly excluded populations, such as marginalized ethnic or other identity groups (Mampilly and Stewart 2020). A group's political ideology may shape their openness to such inclusivity and integration. "Certain extreme forms of revolutionary ideology could lead to more exclusionary forms of governance" and obviate any integration or inclusion (Mampilly and Stewart 2020, 14). This reduces the likelihood of successful adoption of governance tactics and a greater need to rely on violence to resolve the identification problem. A strongly ideological group, then, would target civilians opposed to that ideology – and leverage resources such as information from civil society actors to do so. By contrast, a group with a more flexible ideology may be less reliant on coercive violence. For example, part of the success of the FLN/EZLN in establishing roots in Chiapas was its ideological adaptability. It was "less blindly loyal to Marxist-Leninist doctrine" that it often espoused

(O'Connor and Oikonomakis 2015, 386). Though the group lacked any social connections to the region that had fairly strong representation for both the ruling party in power and opposition groups,<sup>13</sup> which Balcells might predict would lead to more targeting of noncombatant supporters of one's opponents, the FLN/EZLN leveraged its civil society advantages to integrate pre-existing local sources of legitimacy while adapting its ideological position to do so. In summary, the potential effect of civil society roots on the use of coercive violence against civilians by an armed nonstate actor may be conditional on whether that actor espouses clear and strong ideological preferences.

The preceding discussion indicates several hypotheses regarding the relationship between civil society and civil war intensity. First, civil wars that feature armed rebels composed of civil society forebears should be less intense and severe. Specifically, these organizations will rely more on governance tactics and less on forms of coercive civilian victimization to consolidate local control. They will also have information advantages that allow them to be more selective in their use of coercive violence. This implies that:

*Hypothesis 1a. Armed conflicts in which nonstate armed actors are formed from civil society organizations should result in fewer civilian victimizations.*

The effect of civil society origins on violence, however, may be conditional on other factors. Relatively new civil society organizations that rapidly transition into armed nonstate actors may lack valuable pre-existing links with other social networks, know-how in cultivating grassroots support, or familiarity with delivering services. Thus, the ability to access local information, leverage pre-existing legitimacy, or to partner with

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<sup>13</sup> Vote returns disaggregated to the regional level are inaccessible when the Zapatistas were first operational in Chiapas, but in the 1994 election Chiapas had the second highest vote for the opposition party as a proportion of votes for the incumbent PRI party among any state in Mexico. Votes for the opposition were over 70 percent of the votes tallied for the PRI.

and grassroots actors and local sources of legitimacy may be enhanced the longer a civil society organization exists prior to civil conflict onset.

*Hypothesis 1b. The longer the period of time that armed nonstate actors exist as civil society organizations prior to armed conflict onset, the fewer civilian victimizations will occur during the armed conflict.*

Armed nonstate actors with roots in civil society have an advantage in building governance frameworks, often by integrating with preexisting local forms of governance. This sometimes involves including otherwise alienated or marginalized groups in territory it controls. However, integration and inclusion may be less likely if an armed organization is ideologically vehement and fixated on precise visions of political or social transformation. Such vehemence will make the adoption of inclusive governance tactics over coercive violence less viable in areas under their control. Ideological civil society organizations may leverage their informational advantages in “sweeping the rear” efforts as a consequence. The violence mitigating potential of roots in civil society may therefore be conditional on how ideological an armed nonstate actor is.

*Hypothesis 1c. Armed nonstate actors with roots in civil society and strong ideological preferences are likely to see higher levels of civilian victimizations during an armed intrastate conflict.*

Beyond civilian victimizations and one-sided violence, civil society organizations superior ability to consolidate and control territory as well as manage information about their operations should provide them a “shield of secrecy” which reduces their vulnerability to government attack. This should reduce their vulnerability to government operations that lead to high fatalities in battle-related deaths. Since most civil conflicts feature highly adverse fatality ratios between insurgents and government forces, the result should be an overall reduction in battle deaths and a less intense and severe civil war.

*Hypothesis 2a. Armed conflicts in which nonstate armed actors are formed from civil society organizations should result in fewer battle-related deaths.*

As with civilian victimizations, experience should also factor into how well armed nonstate actors are able to manage information about their operations and noncombatants' willingness to withhold intelligence from the government. Older civil society organizations that have deeper roots in the population should benefit from a stronger and broader shield of secrecy.

*Hypothesis 2b. The longer the period of time that armed nonstate actors exist as civil society organizations prior to armed conflict onset, fewer battle-field deaths will occur during the armed conflict.*

It is unclear what effect ideology may have on how armed nonstate actors with roots in civil society engage government forces. Previous research has found that nationalist civil conflicts are longer given that the combatants have more at stake in the dispute and that groups with strong ideological preferences are in general more prone to violent tactics (Asal et al. 2013; Fearon 2004). However, whether this interacts with an armed nonstate actor's organizational form is unclear. I offer no hypothesis on the effect of ideology among civil society organizations specifically on battle-related deaths but do include it in subsequent empirical analysis.

### Data and Methods

This section reviews the data, the large-N statistical technique, and model specifications employed for empirical analysis of the previously stated hypotheses.

My unit of analysis is the nonstate actors that engage in armed combat with internationally recognized sovereign states to advance anti-status quo political or

territorial claims. It largely comports with common definitions and thresholds used to define armed intrastate conflict, but I focus primarily on armed nonstate actor attributes (N. P. Gleditsch et al. 2002). I use two dependent variables in my analysis, which are drawn from the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP). I first model the correlates of cumulative battle deaths in an intrastate armed conflict from the year of onset to its end year (when battle deaths fall below the 25 annual deaths threshold). Battle deaths are all deaths caused by warring parties that can be directly related to combat. This can include combatants from the armed nonstate group or the state security forces or civilians killed in the course of fighting, bombardments, or other armed engagements (Lacina and Gleditsch 2005; Pettersson 2019a; Pettersson, Högladh, and Öberg 2019). All intrastate conflicts that were active in 1988 through 2017 are used in analysis. My second dependent variable is cumulative civilian deaths during one-sided violence in an armed intrastate conflict. These civilian victimization totals include all civilians killed by nonstate armed actors in episodes other than combat that resulted in at least 25 fatalities. I use UCDP data on one-sided civilian deaths from all intrastate armed conflicts that were active in 1988 through 2017 (Eck and Hultman 2007; Pettersson 2019b).

My key explanatory variable is the so-called “parent” organization of the armed nonstate actor involved in the conflict. Armed rebel organizations typically have forebears that predate a civil conflict. These come in various forms, including organizations of foreign fighters, groups composed of former military or security force agencies, or pre-existing civil society organizations such as labor unions, youth groups, or religious organizations. I draw on the Foundations of Rebel Group Emergence (FORGE) dataset to identify whether armed rebel groups were formed by pre-existing

civil society organizations (J. M. Braithwaite and Cunningham 2020). The FORGE data categorizes organizational forbears of rebel groups into 14 different types, four of which align with commonly cited civil society organizations. This includes labor unions, student organizations, religious organizations, and political movements that were involved in advocacy or lobbying but did not organize as a formal political party to contest for state office. I collapse these options into one dichotomous “civil society” variable that captures whether any type of CSOs were involved in the origins of an armed rebel group. I include a variable that captures the age in years of the organizational forebears of an armed nonstate actor prior to the onset of an armed civil conflict. FORGE includes information on the ideological orientation of armed nonstate groups, and I generated a dichotomous variable if an armed nonstate actor espoused a leftist, rightist, nationalist, or religiously-oriented ideology at the time of conflict onset. This variable reflects whether an armed nonstate actor may be more inclined to engage in “sweep the rear” operations. To reiterate a point made earlier, ideology is a complex concept and so aggregating this factor into a binary variable may conceal important nuances in how it influences violence during civil war. For my purpose, it may help proxy for the degree of pre-existing partisanship at the onset of civil conflict that can influence strategic decisions about targeting civilians or the ability to partner with local sources of legitimacy in erecting local administrative frameworks to forestall the use of coercive force to govern territory.

Other macro- and group-level variables are included in the analysis as controls. The duration of an armed conflict obviously has a significant impact on cumulative fatalities, and so the length of a conflict in years as documented in the UCDP Armed Conflict Dataset is included in the model (N. P. Gleditsch et al. 2002). Likewise, more



populous countries are more likely to feature armed conflict, and they may also experience more widespread battle and greater opportunity for civilian victimizations. A logged count of a country's populations at the onset of armed intrastate conflict is included in the model. How democratic a state is may influence whether a prevailing political regime would lose popular support should battle deaths mount and motivate it to find accommodation, or it may incentivize armed rebels to pursue institutional as opposed to contentious methods of action (Lacina 2006). By contrast, it may incentivize the targeting of civilians so as to compel the government to accommodate rebel aims (Hultman 2012). A state's score on the polity2 index variable from the Polity IV dataset is transformed into two dichotomous variables. Countries with a score of 6 or higher at the onset of conflict are categorized as democracies and those with a score of -5 to 5 are considered anocracies. Aside from serving as the base for a specific armed rebel group, the broader strength and depth of civil society across a country may influence violence during civil wars by opening opportunities for communities to resist and deflect security force and/or armed nonstate actor interventions (Arjona 2016; Kaplan 2017). To capture this dynamic I draw on the Variety of Democracies (VDEM) dataset's four-point ordinal variable that reflects the number of and participation in civil society organizations at the onset of a civil conflict. I recode the score during the year of civil conflict onset as a dichotomous variable that captures whether participation in civil society organizations was "high" or not.

Stronger states with more well-resourced institutions may be able to better manage or prevent the threats posed by armed rebels (Fearon and Laitin 2003; Håvard Hegre and Sambanis 2006). Real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita at the onset

of armed intrastate conflict is included as a proxy for overall state strength and is log transformed. GDP and population information for the year in which a conflict was initiated were obtained from the latest version of Gleditsch's data (K. S. Gleditsch 2002). The strength of an armed rebel group, as measured by its ability to obtain arms, mobilize fighters, command units, and effectively engage the state's security forces, is included. This data is obtained from the Nonstate Actor dataset and features five different rankings of rebel strength relative to state capacity: much stronger, stronger, parity, weaker, and much weaker (Cunningham, Gleditsch, and Salehyan 2009). I collapse these into three categories: stronger, weaker, and parity strength. The category for "parity" is used as a reference. I also created a binary variable to reflect whether a rebel group was at any time active contemporaneously with other armed conflicts within the state where it operated. Such dynamics might lead to competitive mobilization of popular support through "outbidding" and higher levels of violence (Bloom 2004). Likewise, I created another dichotomous variable if there was more than one "parent organization" at the launch of an armed nonstate actor. Fragmentation, factionalism, or low cohesion have been demonstrated to lead to higher levels of violence during civil conflicts, and these may be more common in multi-organization coalitions (K. G. Cunningham 2013a; Lawrence 2010; Pearlman 2011). Third-party intervention to assist rebels or the government has been shown to influence levels of violence and duration of conflicts (Bakke 2014; D. E. Cunningham 2010; Doctor and Willingham 2020; R. M. Wood, Kathman, and Gent 2012). I control for intervention by creating a dichotomous variable from the Nonstate Actor dataset if any such support was received by the government or nonstate actors over the course of the conflict. Some armed intrastate conflicts have periods in which fighting

falls below the 25 battle-deaths threshold or in which periods of ceasefires or peace are followed by a resumption of fighting. I include a dichotomous variable to reflect such conflict recurrence. Involvement in looting of natural resources or other forms of contraband trafficking may lead to higher levels of violence (Fearon 2004; M. L. Ross 2004; Weinstein 2007; R. M. Wood 2014), and so a dichotomous variable was created if an armed nonstate actor was involved in any form of looting or trafficking according to the Rebel Contraband dataset (J. I. Walsh et al. 2018).

For those conflicts that began before 1988 but continued during and after that year, I have only partial battle-deaths and civilian victimization data. To capture whether these conflicts are systematically different, I added a dummy variable to my analysis. It is possible as well that this variable could capture effects related to the end of the Cold War, which has been shown to be associated with a drop in number and character of armed civil conflicts (Lacina, Gleditsch, and Russett 2006). Finally, to capture any other effects that may be linked to unobserved spatial or temporal factors, I include dummy variables for the geographic region of a country experiencing intrastate conflict and for the decade in which a conflict was initiated (the 1990s, 2000s, or 2010s).

When merging the UCDP, FORGE, and related data for control variables, my dataset for battle deaths contains 185 observations – that is 185 distinct armed nonstate actors challenging the political or territorial status quo of a sovereign state. Of these 185, 31 (approximately 17 percent) were launched by at least one civil society organization. That armed rebellions appear to be launched by civil society organizations rarely may be a weak indication that these groups are less inclined to violence.

There is more limited data available for civilian victimizations. Just 73 of more than 200 nonstate armed organizations active since 1988 in the FORGE data set appear in the UCDP data on one-sided violence against civilians victims. The inclusion threshold in the UCDP data is 25 civilian deaths in a single incident, so it is possible that some nonstate armed organizations did not engage in any civilian victimizations, engaged in civilian victimizations but did not meet this threshold, or that some incidents were never captured in the newswire reports or secondary sources from which UCDP collects its data. Rather than exclude nonstate armed organizations that do not appear in the UCDP one-sided violence dataset, I include them and code their civilian victimization fatalities as zero. When I then merge FORGE, UCDP civilian victimization data, and control variable data sets, my analysis includes 186 armed nonstate organizations, of which 31 are founded by a civil society organization.<sup>14</sup>

The data for my outcomes of interest are both count variables: all observations are positive integer values truncated at 0 or 25 deaths. Count data are often modeled using Poisson regression, or negative binomial regression when the outcome features a high variance. Table 3.3 and 3.4 include cumulative battle deaths and cumulative civilian victimization data, and both variables appear overdispersed so negative binomial regression is more suitable. Previous empirical analysis of battle deaths and civilian victimization have also used a negative binomial procedure (Balcells and Kalyvas 2014; Hultman 2012). However, other studies have treated cumulative battle deaths as a continuous log-transformed variable and regressed using an Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) technique (Lacina 2006). In my analysis, I apply both techniques for various

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<sup>14</sup> There is one observation in the civilian victimization dataset that does not appear in the battle-related deaths dataset. This is the Kuki National Front's armed conflict with India, which commenced in 1993. The KNF does not appear in the UCDP battle-deaths data for unknown reasons.

robustness and validity checks. Descriptive statistics for all dependent and independent variables are available in Tables 3.3 and 3.4.

**Table 3.1. Cumulative Battle Deaths By Organizational Origins of Armed Rebel Groups**

	Mean (Std. Dev.)	Min.	1 <sup>st</sup> Quartile	3 <sup>rd</sup> Quartile	Max.
Civ. Soc. Origins	2,759.10 (5,670.90)	39	233	2,561	30,118
Other Origins	3,473.8 (8,204.62)	25	137	3,322	60,674

**Table 3.2. Cumulative One-Sided Deaths (Civilian Victimizations) By Organizational Origin of Armed Rebel Groups**

	Mean (Std. Dev.)	Min.	1 <sup>st</sup> Quartile	3 <sup>rd</sup> Quartile	Max.
Civ. Soc. Origins	221.30 (518.43)	0	0	98	1,889
Other Origins	664.10 (3,088.86)	0	0	197	35,126

**Table 3.3. Descriptive Statistics, Battle-Related Deaths**

Statistic	N	Mean	St. Dev.	Min	Pctl (25)	Pctl (75)	Max
Cumulative Battle Deaths	185	3,354.07	7,828.76	25	144	3,045	60,674
Civil Society As Parent Org	185	0.168	0.374	0	0	0	1
Organization Age	185	3.654	5.972	0	0	4	35
Ideology	185	0.524	0.501	0	0	1	1
Real GDP Per Cap	185	3,518.93	4,723.58	244.45	1,030.62	3,631.46	26,861.76
Population	185	97,569.56	241,153.10	582	6,197.80	47,285.70	1,207,740
Democracies	185	0.222	0.416	0	0	0	1
Anocracies	185	0.497	0.501	0	0	1	1
Duration (Years)	185	7.243	8.844	0	1	10	29
High Participation in Civil Society	185	0.205	0.405	0	0	0	1
3 <sup>rd</sup> -Party Intervention	185	0.751	0.433	0	1	1	1
Contemporaneous Armed Conflicts	185	0.676	0.469	0	0	1	1
Multiple Parent Orgs	185	0.232	0.424	0	0	0	1
Conflict Recurrence	185	0.232	0.424	0	0	0	1
Rebel Strength (0=Weak, 2=Strong)	185	0.178	0.461	0	0	0	2
Conflict Began Before 1988	185	0.200	0.401	0	0	0	1
Loot & Contraband	185	0.622	0.486	0	0	1	1

**Table 3.4. Descriptive Statistics, Civilian Victimization Fatalities**

Statistic	N	Mean	St. Dev.	Min	Pctl (25)	Pctl (75)	Max
Civilian Victimizations	186	590.34	2,830.77	0	0	160	35,126
Civil Society As Parent Org	186	0.167	0.374	0	0	0	1
Organization Age	186	3.661	5.956	0	0	4	35
Ideology	186	0.527	0.501	0	0	1	1
Real GDP Per Cap	186	3,507.11	4,713.55	244.45	1,038.18	3,628.43	26,861.76
Population	186	102,035.50	248,092.90	582	6,204.20	47,351.60	1,207,740
Democracies	186	0.226	0.419	0	0	0	1
Anocracies	186	0.495	0.501	0	0	1	1
Duration (Years)	186	9.452	12.896	0	1	11	53
High Participation in Civil Society	186	0.215	0.412	0	0	0	1
3 <sup>rd</sup> -Party Intervention	186	0.747	0.436	0	0.2	1	1
Conflict Recurrence	186	0.231	0.423	0	0	0	1
Contemporaneous Armed Conflicts	186	0.677	0.469	0	0	1	1
Multiple Parent Orgs	186	0.231	0.423	0	0	0	1
Conflict Began Before 1988	186	0.199	0.400	0	0	0	1
Reb Strength (0=Weak, 2=Strong)	186	0.177	0.460	0	0	0	2
Loot & Contraband	186	0.618	0.487	0	0	1	1

*Model Output and Analysis*

This section details the results of the regression analyses of one-sided violence (i.e., civilian victimization) and battle-related deaths. It first reviews the model output and estimated coefficient values of nonstate armed actor organizational origins in civil society on civil war intensity. It then discusses various robustness checks and the performance of the modeling techniques used. I close by offering estimates of the marginal effects of civil society and other variables on levels of violence. Since I employ two dependent variables – one-sided civilian victimizations and battle-related deaths – to analyze my hypotheses, I discuss these in turn. In general, it appears that civil society origins have no

appreciable influence on the intensity of either battle deaths or civilian victimizations during civil wars.

### One-Sided Civilian Victimizations

As discussed previously, data on civilian victimizations includes large numbers of zero values given that there are many armed rebel groups for which there were no recorded episodes of one-sided violence. To model this data more accurately, I use a zero-inflated negative binomial regression model (ZINBM) to account for these excess zeroes. This procedure generates two sets of coefficient estimates, one that models the probability that a given observation will produce a zero value (i.e., no civilian victims) and another that produces estimates of the number of civilian victimizations that the armed group will perpetrate during a civil war.

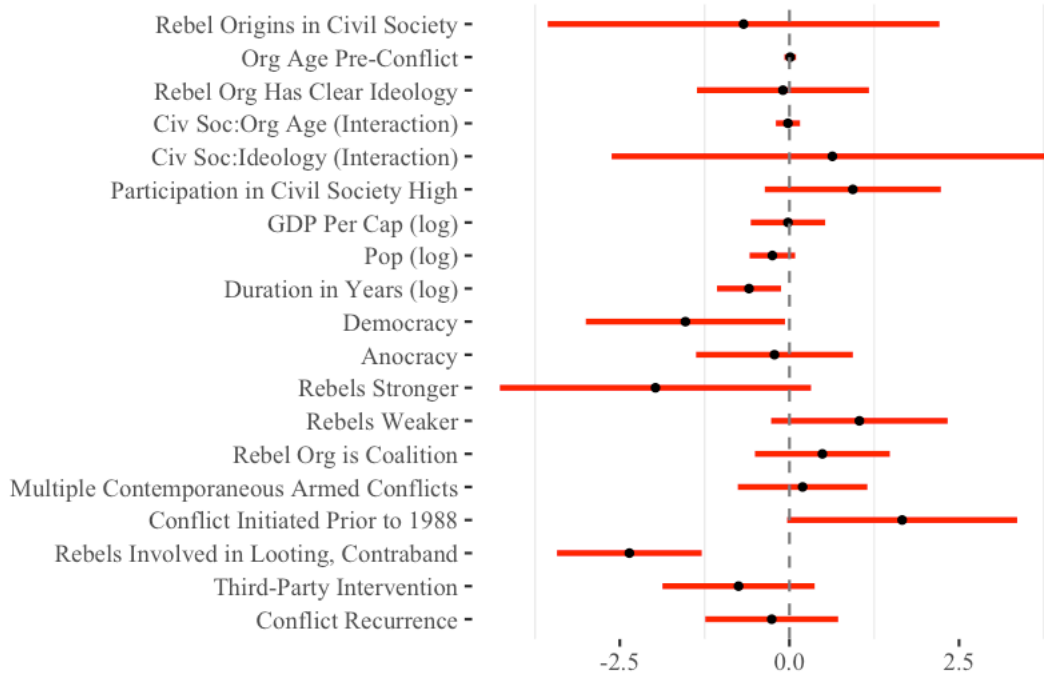
Figures 3.1 and 3.2 display the coefficient estimates and confidence intervals for the logit (probability of zero victimizations) and the negative binomial (NBM) modeling results, respectively. Figure 3.1 indicates that armed rebel groups that originate from civil society organizations are no more likely to entirely forgo the targeting of civilians than other actors. Neither does a civil society organization's age prior to the onset of conflict nor whether it espoused a clear political ideology during the conflict influence the likelihood that it will eschew the use of one-sided violence against civilians. It seems that armed nonstate actors with roots in civil society are as likely as others to engage in targeting of civilians during armed civil conflicts, regardless of their age or ideology. This suggests that there are may be no normative factors inherent to civil society that constrain the use of force against civilians. Instead, strategic and instrumental



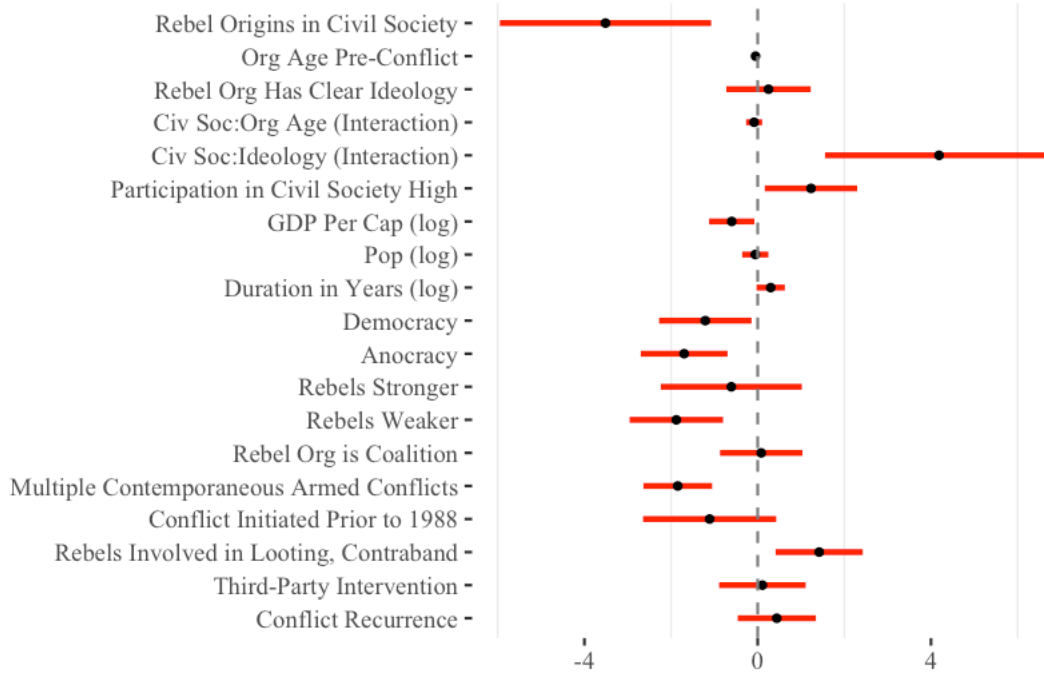
considerations may influence whether armed nonstate groups consider one-sided violence.

Figure 3.2 features coefficient values that estimate the count of civilian victims perpetrated by armed nonstate groups. Several of the coefficients are statistically significant and in the hypothesized direction, but as discussed below the combined effects of these coefficients largely offset one another. An armed nonstate actor's pre-conflict organizational roots in civil society is associated with a reduction in the number of civilian victimizations perpetrated by that armed group. A group's age, however, does not appear to be influential. As expected, the ideology of civil society forebears of armed groups also influences the targeting of civilians with violence. If the armed nonstate actor rooted in civil society also had a clearly espoused political ideology, there is a substantial increase in the number of civilian victimizations associated with the group. In fact, it greatly outweighs the potential violence mitigating impact of civil society roots; the coefficient value of the interaction term is double the absolute value of the civil society coefficient. Therefore, when activated together, civil society organizations with a strong ideology appear to engage in more civilian victimizations than armed nonstate actors with roots in other types of pre-conflict organizations. The model and data provide provisional support for hypotheses 1a and 1c, but together the effect is largely washed out.

**Figure 3.1. Coefficient Estimates & 95% CIs,  
Probability of Zero Civilian Victimizations (Logit Model)**



**Figure 3.2. Coefficient Estimates & 95% CIs,  
Count of Civilian Victimizations (Negative Binomial Model)**



The uncertainty around coefficient estimates in Figures 3.1 and 3.2 are quite high. This could be due to the small sample size and the use of interaction terms, or it may be an indication of some source of bias. A matrix of Pearson correlation coefficients across all observations indicates no strong relationships between variables. The correlation between whether an armed nonstate group was formed by a civil society organization and whether it espoused a strong political ideology is just 0.13. Correlation coefficients are similarly low across most variables. Collinearity does not appear to be producing biased or inefficient estimates.

To further investigate the results in Figures 3.1 and 3.2, I ran several additional model specifications. A simplified model including just the explanatory variables of interest and the regional and temporal controls largely comports with the estimates from Figures 3.1 and 3.2. The null results may be driven by several observations with particularly high counts of civilian victimizations. A plot of fitted counts of victimizations against observed counts does suggest that the model produces increasing levels of residuals when civilian victimizations surpass roughly 500 deaths, for which there are 28 observations. To account for potential skewed results due to these high-count observations, I reran the model excluding these 28 observations. The results remain largely the same, though the value of the ideology variable flips and becomes negative and statistically significant. Still, the net effect of civil society, ideology, and their interaction term appears to largely cancel each other out.

I then regressed several transformations of the count of civilian victimizations on various model specifications using an Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) technique. First, I regressed on a binary dependent variable to compare results with the logit output in

Figure 3.1, and the results remain similar. Next, I regressed all non-zero victimization values using OLS robust standard errors and the specification in Figure 3.2. The civil society variable remains negative and statistically significant but at a reduced confidence level ( $p\text{-value} < 0.10$ ), while the interaction term for ideology and CSOs is no longer statistically significant. These results may be an artifact of the reduction in degrees of freedom from the exclusion of zero values. These model results provide no indication that the results in Figures 3.1 and 3.2 are invalid. Along with these model results, a Pearson correlation matrix and these additional model output is available in an appendix.

The estimated coefficient values for many control variables in Figures 3.1 and 3.2 are consistent with previous findings and seem logical. Democracies are more likely to experience civilian victimizations by armed nonstate groups, but the comparatively lower sensitivity to civilian deaths leads to no increased probability of civilian victimizations in anocracies. Conflicts between nonstate actors and state security forces that are more evenly matched experience more civilian victimizations as armed nonstate actors potentially attempt operations other than combat to erode support for their opponent. More developed and wealthier countries feature fewer civilian victimizations. Longer conflicts have more civilian victimizations. These estimates are as expected, further suggesting the results in Figures 3.1 and 3.2 are fairly reliable.

What is the calculated effect of the civil society variables on the numbers of civilian victimizations in civil wars according to these models? Figure 3.3 displays the mean counts of victims and levels of uncertainty using the model specification from Figures 3.1 and 3.2 while simulating one-unit shifts in key explanatory variables (i.e., civil society origins, organization age, and ideology) across all observations. Since age is

a continuous variable, I simulate a one standard deviation increase in this variable for each observation. Table 3.5 includes the precise calculated marginal effect in these variables of interest as displayed in Figure 3.3. This is the difference in the mean of all observations across each model simulation.

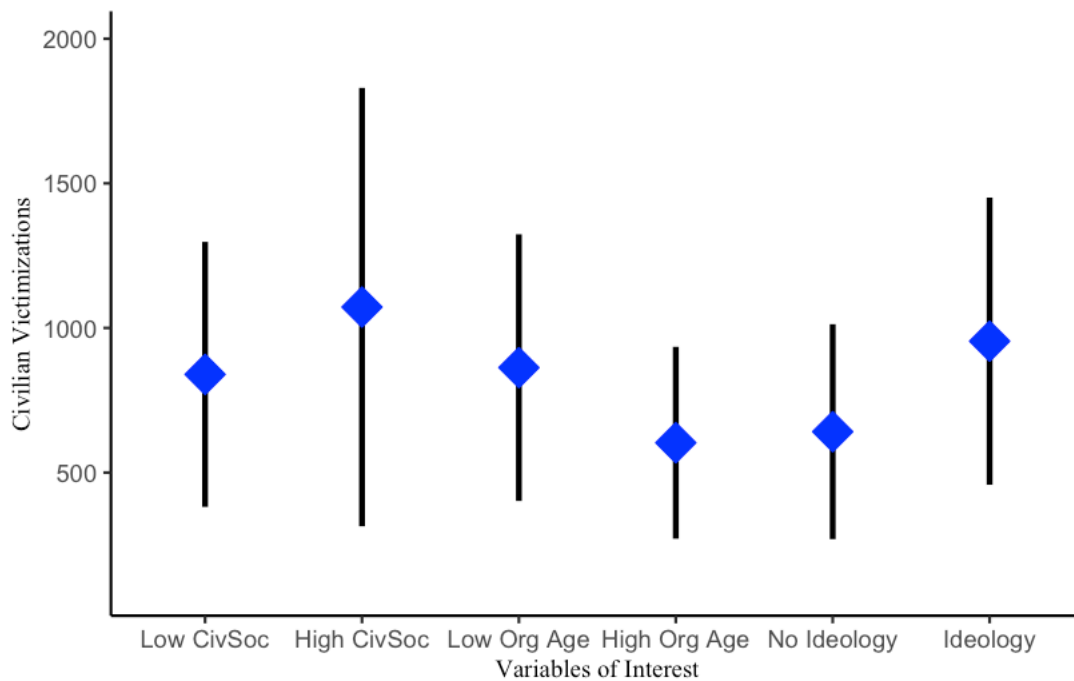
The calculated effects of the civil society and other variables of interest appear negligible. This is due primarily to the uncertainty around the estimates, which render the estimated marginal effects not statistically significant. However, it is noteworthy that, in contrast to the civil society variable's negative coefficient estimate in Figure 3.2, the calculated marginal effect of civil society origins is an *increase* in civilian victimizations. As discussed previously, this somewhat unexpected outcome is due to the role of the interaction between civil society origins and ideology. For those armed nonstate actors that espouse some sort of political ideology – which is roughly two-thirds of all groups included in the dataset here – the effect of roots in civil society activates both the coefficient for the civil society variable and the civil society/ideology interaction term. Even though the civil society variable is negative, together with the interaction term the net effect is an increase in civilian victimizations. For armed nonstate actors with no clear political ideology, origins in civil society should reduce civilian victimizations, but such groups are rare. In the end, it appears that civil society origins, organizational age, and ideology bear no clear association with civilian victimizations in civil wars, given the uncertainty around the marginal effects estimates. There is no support for hypotheses H1a, H2a, or H3a.

**Table 3.5. Mean Predicted Civilian Victimizations, 95% Confidence Intervals, and Marginal Effects of Simulated One-Unit Differences in Variables of Interest**

	Mean	Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Marginal Effect (Difference in Mean Deaths)
Civil Society Origins	1,072.27	314.40	1,830.13	+ 233
No Civil Society Origins	839.47	381.18	1,297.75	(Not Sig.)
CSO & Org Age	862.92	401.82	1,324.02	- 260
CSO & Org Age + Std Dev(Org Age)	603.14	271.31	934.98	(Not Sig.)
CSO & No Ideology	641.38	269.76	1,012.99	+ 313
CSO & Ideology	954.29	457.90	1,450.68	(Not Sig.)

Note: For interaction terms, only a one-unit shift in the organizational age or ideology is calculated. The civil society variable is left at the observed value.

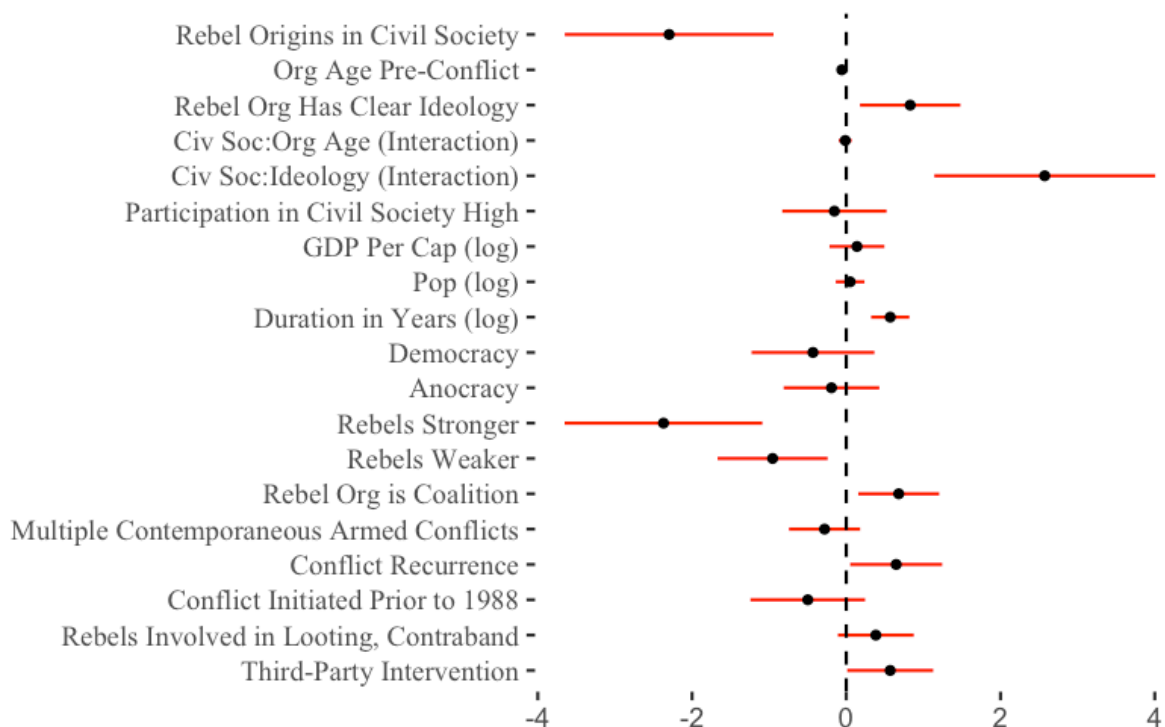
**Figure 3.3. Calculated Marginal Effect of Simulated One-Unit Changes in Variables of Interest on Counts of Civilian Victimizations (Difference in Mean Counts)**



## Battle-Related Deaths

In contrast to the available data on civilian victimizations, there are no observations of armed intrastate conflict with zero battle-related fatalities. The zero-inflated modeling technique is not necessary. However, data on battle-related deaths remains highly overdispersed, and so I use a negative binomial regression (NBM) technique to model counts of deaths complemented by additional OLS regression analysis. The same specification of variables is used to model both battle deaths and civilian victimizations. Plots of NBM model coefficient estimates are displayed in Figure 3.4.

**Figure 3.4. Coefficient Estimates & 95% CIs,  
Count of Battle Deaths (Negative Binomial Model)**



While the model results provide some initial support for my hypotheses regarding civil society origins and pre-conflict organizational age on battle deaths, as with the

civilian victimization data there is no detectable statistically significant marginal effect of civil society origins on battle deaths. The coefficient estimate for the civil society variable is negative and highly significant in Figure 3.4, but the ideology variable and the relevant interaction term are positive and largely nullify any effect of civil society origins. Table 3.6 displays the simulated effects of one-unit change in civil society origins, organizational age, and ideology. Civil society is associated with an increase in the average number of battle deaths, though the calculated marginal effect is not statistically significant. Any reduction in deaths due to the negative value of the civil society variable in Figure 3.4 is undone by its interaction with ideology. In fact, the role of ideology on battle deaths is substantial. When armed nonstate actors espouse a clear political ideology, civil wars experience on average an increase of roughly 2,800 battle deaths. The data and modeling technique provide no support for H2a and H2b: an armed nonstate group's origins in civil society, even for more established and older organizations, does not result in fewer battle deaths in civil war.

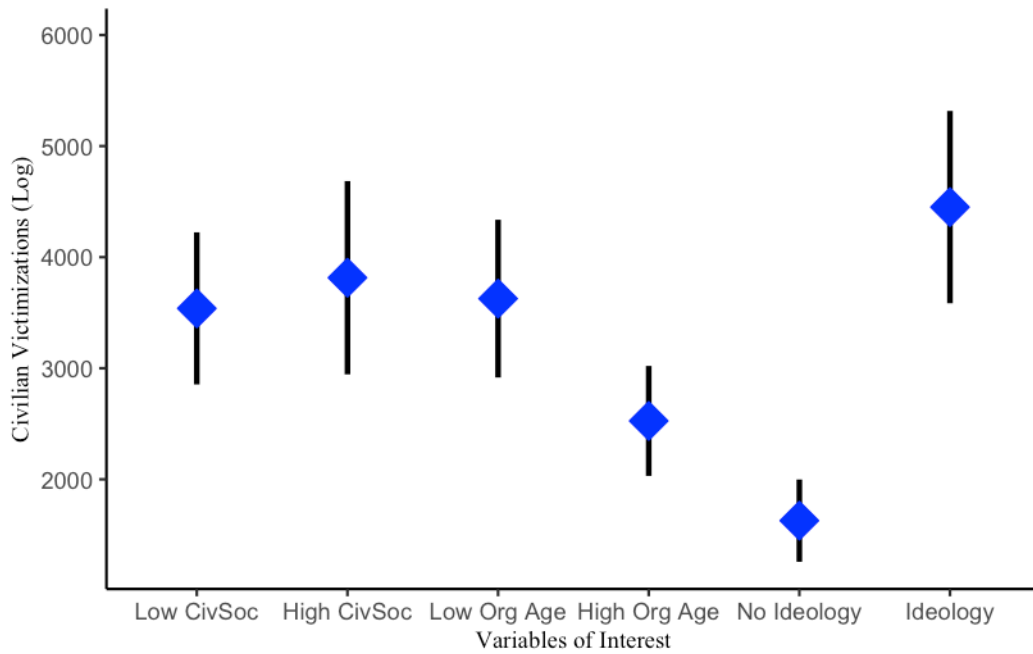


**Table 3.6. Mean Predicted Battle Deaths, 95% Confidence Intervals, and Marginal Effects of Simulated One-Unit Differences in Variables of Interest (Bootstrapped Robust OLS Output)**

	Mean	Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Marginal Effect (Difference in Mean Deaths)
Civil Society Origins	3,814.80	2,944.37	4,685.23	+ 277
No Civil Society Origins	3,538.61	2,853.68	4,223.54	
Org Age	3,626.82	2,916.54	4,337.09	- 1,101
Org Age + Std Dev(Org Age)	2,525.79	2,030.60	3,020.99	
No Ideology	1,628.0	1,257.49	1,998.55	+ 2,823
Ideology	4,450.70	3,584.50	5,316.89	

Note: Only a one-unit shift in the civil society variable is calculated. The rebel strength variable is left at the observed value.

**Figure 3.5. Calculated Marginal Effect of Simulated One-Unit Change in Civil Society Origins (Bootstrapped Robust OLS Output)**



I employed several alternate specifications to further probe any relationship between civil society and battle-related deaths and to assess the robustness of the model results in Figure 3.4. First, I ran a more simple specification that excluded interaction terms to determine whether some aspect of collinearity was biasing the results. This did not alter the statistical significance of the civil society variable. I then logarithmically transformed the battle-deaths data and used OLS regression and the specification in Figure 4. This produced fairly similar results to the NBM technique. In fact, the OLS technique reduces the significance of some key variables: while Figure 4 indicates that armed nonstate actors rooted in civil society and that hold strong political ideologies are associated with an increase in battle deaths, the OLS results produce an estimate that is not significantly different from zero. The use of robust standard error OLS estimation also produced similar results. There are a few civil wars that were particularly deadly. Only 12 of the 185 observations had battle fatalities over 10,000, and some of these featured multiples of these amount. I reran the NBM model using the full specification in Figure 4 but excluded observations with more than 10,000 battle deaths. The results are largely stable, with both the civil society and organizational age estimates remaining unchanged and statistically insignificant.

As a final effort, I reran the NBM model with several interaction terms to determine whether the effect of an armed group's origins in civil society was conditional on other factors. Given its strong influence on battle deaths, I interacted a civil war's duration with the civil society variable, but this did not produce a meaningful change in the modeling results. I then interacted civil society origins with rebel strength, since the latter strongly influences the extent of battle deaths. The results do not yield substantively

different results. There appears to be no support for hypotheses 2a and 2b: neither civil society origins nor an organization's pre-conflict age influence the number of battle deaths that occur during civil war.

### *Conclusion and Policy Implications*

This paper examined the relationship between armed rebel groups' origins in civil society and the intensity of violence in ensuing civil wars. It theorized that civil society organizations' unique experience working on-the-ground with local populations provides it benefits in accessing and protecting information and establishing rebel governance institutions. These advantages were argued to reduce armed groups' use of coercive violence as they consolidate control of territory and reduce their vulnerability to government detection. Large-N statistical analysis of armed intrastate conflicts from 1988 through 2017 provided no empirical support for the propositions advanced. Armed nonstate actor origins in civil society are not associated with substantial reductions in the targeting of unarmed civilians during civil wars. However, there is some evidence that a group's ideology does influence battle deaths. When an armed nonstate actor espouses a clear political ideology, average battle-related deaths increase by over 2,800.

The paper and its findings contribute to broader scholarship in several ways. Research on civil war and armed nonstate actors has increasingly emphasized the role that territorial control, rebel governance, and information networks play in civil war dynamics. Previous analysis has often investigated how other factors, particularly ethnicity, may influence how these challenges are resolved. The argument here explores alternative resources that armed nonstate groups can employ to resolve these challenges and enhance their performance and reduce their use of coercive violence. Likewise, it identified potentially counterintuitive

implications of common assumptions about civil society organizations when considered in civil war contexts. The results do not suggest that there is a clear association between civil society origins and violence during civil war, but there may be other important factors that influence how armed nonstate actors are able to resolve the “identification problem,” switch to governance tactics, and manage information about their operations in ways that do influence battle fatalities and civilian victimizations. The paper also drew from common assumptions about the strengths of civil society to identify potentially surprising implications when considered in the context of civil wars. While civil society groups are often praised for their “peacebuilding” roles, the attributes for which they are praised could arguably serve a different purpose during armed insurgencies. While the results of the analysis here suggest there is no relationship between civil society origins and how deadly armed intrastate conflicts are, the role that civil society resources might play in rebellion may warrant careful consideration about engaging such groups in highly fragile and high-grievance contexts.

Additional research would help tease out any potential relationships between organizational origins and civil war intensity. The analysis here is limited due to high levels of aggregation. Many previous studies have analyzed factors that influence deaths at more precise geographic levels (i.e., province or municipality) and more exact temporal units (i.e., year or month). Organizational origins are time invariant, and so there are limits to the extent that they can be linked to discrete changes in violence over time periods or across locations within a single civil war. For lengthy civil wars, it can stretch plausibility that pre-conflict factors influence violence 5-10 years later, though many studies have analyzed how pre-conflict social resources shape the behavior of armed insurgents (Arjona 2016; Petersen 2001; Staniland 2014; Weinstein 2007). Violence during civil war is also partly a function of

dynamic interaction between insurgent groups and the state (and possibly other insurgent organizations). The “ideology” variable was used as a rough way to capture inherent divisions that may shape this interaction, but analysis could also be further refined by looking at violence during more discrete units of time, the initiators of violent episodes, and the relevant tactics used to better unpack such iterative exchanges and their influence on the use of violence. Additionally, the concept of civil society could be decomposed to analyze whether different kinds of civil society sub-types produce different civil war dynamics. Armed nonstate actors appear to partner with civil society organizations in civil wars, as examples in the Spanish civil war and El Salvador’s conflict make clear. The origins of such partnerships and their relationship with civil war intensity and other conflict dynamics would also be valuable to better understand. More in-depth analysis of specific cases of civil society behavior during civil wars could supplement the large-N approach used here. Several mechanisms were advanced by which civil society origins influence civilian victimizations and battle deaths: informational advantages, governance capabilities, and post-conflict mobilization opportunities. Analysis of specific armed groups is necessary to more precisely identify whether these mechanisms influence the use of violence against civilians and operations against government forces. Whether groups with more sophisticated and effective governance structures should increase the selective use of violence against civilians. With regards to battle deaths, evidence that groups that actively work to cultivate a “shield of secrecy” complicate government efforts to obtain actionable intelligence on armed nonstate groups could identify how armed nonstate actors successfully manage their operational security.

## Chapter 5: Summary of Findings, Policy Implications, and Research Avenues

Strong U.S. government engagement with civil society groups in developing countries appears set to continue into the near term. There are no doubt significant differences between the focus of their efforts and scope of engagement, but both the Trump administration and the presidential campaign of Joe Biden have embraced civil society organizations as key on-the-ground allies in such contexts, including to stem political violence. The Trump administration identified civil society as critical to its Strategic Prevention Project (State Department/USAID 2019). Meanwhile, one of candidate Biden's recurring foreign policy commitments upon his assumption of office, first made in mid 2019 and reaffirmed in April 2020, is to convene a Summit for Democracy. The summit would aim to galvanize "significant new country commitments in three areas: fighting corruption, defending against authoritarianism, and advancing human rights in their own nations and abroad" (Biden 2020). Among the central partners to advance this agenda are civil society groups: "The Summit for Democracy will also include civil society organizations from around the world that stand on the frontlines in defense of democracy." Likewise, the Global Fragility Act, crafted in the House of Representatives and signed into law in December 2019, obligates the State Department and U.S. Agency for International Development to lay out 10-year engagement strategies in countries at risk of instability, including outbreaks of political violence. The legislation requires such engagement to include civil society actors both in the formulation of strategies and their implementation (Eliot 2019; Welsh 2019).

What can the next administration expect from this kind of engagement with regards to civil conflict and political violence? And what considerations should it be mindful of as it shapes specific interventions and programs? Together, the papers and their findings suggest that policymakers moderate their expectations regarding the role of civil society in civil conflict onset and methods of dissidence. While these papers are limited by certain methodological shortcomings, they suggest that most policy assumptions about civil society's violence prevention or mitigation qualities lack a clear empirical basis. In addition to their policy implications, the papers also contribute to academic scholarship on the role of civil society in civil conflicts, strategy adoption in nonviolent protest campaigns, and how organizational resources influence the use of violence during civil wars.

A central finding from the first paper in this dissertation indicates that countries with more formalized and established civil society sectors appear to exhibit a reduced likelihood of experiencing armed conflict onset. The relative reduction in armed conflict risks that attend such civil society conditions may be as high as major improvements in poverty alleviation (i.e., large increases in GDP per capita). This finding provides some support for advocates of civil society engagement as a method for reducing armed conflict onset. However, these positive implications are limited by at least three factors. First, while important, it provides only imprecise direction to policymakers. The finding is drawn from a variable operating at a high level of abstraction, lumping all organizations into one state-level aggregate, and it essentially uses age as a proxy for maturity and depth. This offers only vague guidelines on how to distinguish between "mature" and "well-established" organizations and those that are newer or less

formalized. That said, this is the level of analysis at which policymaker assumptions operate. The results are a useful flag that policymakers not overlook older organizations when directing their financial and diplomatic support to civil society. This is particularly important given increasing calls among advocates of U.S. engagement with civil society to emphasize other constituencies. A recurring criticism of U.S. policy toward civil society groups is that it is often directed at well-established organizations as opposed to newer, emerging activist networks. “Funding mainly goes to large, high-profile NGOs, whereas those on the front lines of change have minimal access to resources,” according to one policy analysis that advocated for a shift in emphasis to “building movements” in fragile state contexts (Stephan 2016, 4; see also Branch and Mampilly 2015 and Youngs 2017, 2020). However, in terms of preventing instability or reducing political violence, there is real value in reinforcing the well-established civil society organizations in fragile and developing countries.

Second, why older and more established civil society organizations lead to lower risks of armed civil conflict onset requires some further in-depth examination. Are older civil society organizations leveraging stronger competencies in advocacy and lobbying work and therefore avoiding rebellion because it is unnecessary? Are they actively working to undermine would-be armed rebel groups and leaders to protect themselves from the wider disruptions of civil war? Are they less aggrieved overall? Evidence from the analysis of South Africa’s civil conflict does suggest that more well-established organizations do work to try and undermine groups that rely on violent strategies out of an aversion to losses that attend widespread violence. However, South Africa’s civil conflict featured a contemporaneous nonviolent campaign. More in-depth analysis of



cases of how and why mature civil society networks forestall political violence onset in high-risk contexts where no contention takes place is needed to identify other possible causal mechanisms at work. In the meantime, the findings here provide evidence that more well-established civil society networks are associated with lower likelihoods of armed conflict onset, but do not offer precise explanations for these relationships that policymaker can leverage as they set priorities or make choices about engagements on the ground in fragile contexts.

Third, the paper's other findings offer very little support for the many assumptions on which U.S. policy engagement with civil society is based. Many other macro-level attributes of civil society, including participation by citizens in CSOs, how diverse that participation is, and the size of CSOs demonstrate no clear influence on civil war occurrence. Moreover, when they do become involved in armed insurgencies, civil society actors appear no less violent than other groups, per the findings in the third paper. This undercuts core assumptions underlying U.S. policy toward civil society – assumptions that are often expressed in sweeping terms as critical structural determinants of stability and peace – and suggests that policymakers need to recalibrate their expectations about civil society, civil conflicts, and political violence. Simply increasing membership in CSOs, scaling up their size, or bridging their connections with other identity groups may not mitigate political violence. The results offer a mixed assessment on the relationship between civil society and civil conflicts. The existence of older and more well-established organizations is associated with a lower probability of armed intrastate conflict onset, but most other factors have no relationship with political violence. While the analysis here explicitly excludes an assessment of U.S. civil society

engagement programs, it does not find a strong evidentiary basis for the assumptions on which this support is based. Policymakers should be more circumspect in their expectations about the relationship between civil society, instability, and political violence.

Many promoters of donor support for civil society organizations frame such efforts with a stronger emphasis on CSOs relationship with mass nonviolent anti-regime campaigns. Funding and technical assistance support for established civil society organizations and for newer actors is advanced as a critical means to assist various campaigns for reform in developing countries, including large-scale efforts to displace undemocratic regimes (Boulding 2010; Stephan, Lakhani, and Naviwala 2015). As President Obama remarked in May 2011 during an official address on his administration's policy toward the Middle East and North Africa amid the ongoing Arab Spring revolutions, "we intend to provide assistance to civil society, including those that may not be officially sanctioned, and who speak uncomfortable truths.... For the fact is, real reform does not come at the ballot box alone" (White House 2011). There may be two possible advantages to such support. First, for those seeking to advance democratic reforms in countries where incumbent regimes may exercise some authoritarian tendencies, support for civil society groups may be an important avenue for realizing such changes. From the perspective of governments where such donor funding and training for civil society groups is directed, the purpose of such support is sometimes interpreted as an unsubtle effort at regime change (Carothers and Brechenmacher 2014). Second, by supporting the mobilizing structures that underlay mass nonviolent campaigns, any future grievances that lead to a broader civil conflict may be more likely

to unfold as a nonviolent movement as opposed to a armed insurgency. Potential violence is prevented by shaping the method that is adopted if and when civil conflict does emerge.

The analysis here finds only meager support for such views. In general, there appears to be no strong relationship between various attributes of civil society and the onset of mass nonviolent campaigns. Higher levels of participation, greater diversity among participants, and the size and scope of civil society organizations are not associated with the emergence of mass anti-regime or secessionist campaigns. To the extent that U.S. material and diplomatic support for civil society is aiming to increase these attributes, the result may not necessarily be an increase in the likelihood of a nonviolent campaign occurrence.<sup>15</sup> Governments in Russia, China, and elsewhere that are worried about the implications of more numerous and participatory civil society organizations for the stability of their political arrangements may be somewhat assuaged by these results as well. That said, these findings may be limited by the available data and the simplicity of the variables used to capture complex dynamics. The data has a low level of precision – most variables are dichotomous – and so may overlook important nuances. Additionally, by lumping many different types of organizations together, it may be missing important drivers of causal heterogeneity. For instance, the role of labor unions and networks of church groups in countries where nonviolent campaigns emerged may be cancelled out by large numbers of chambers of commerce and elite-captured organizations in another even if the extent and degree of civil society as well as other relevant structural factors are similar. This is supposition, but it cannot be discounted.

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<sup>15</sup> In practice, it is also debatable whether support for civil society groups inclines them to adopt more confrontational approaches to incumbent regimes or incentivizes them to adopt more quiescent demands and strategies (Bush 2015).

Still, policymakers often speak in sweeping ways about the importance of civil society in protest movements. The evidence here does not show that such broad-based assumptions are accurate.

Even if funding to help broaden participation in civil society groups and enhance their organizational structures may not increase the likelihood of mass nonviolent campaign onsets, could it at least ensure that civil society organizations are more likely to adhere to nonviolence if civil conflict is triggered by some other event or factor? While some previous scholarship has argued that the availability of external funding prompts dissident groups to adopt more moderate rhetorical and dissident methods to ensure future streams of support (Bush 2015; Haines 1984), others have also found evidence that foreign financial support for domestic activists is frequently associated with higher levels of violent protests (Murdie and Bhasin 2011). In South Africa, both the ANC/MK and the UDF received substantial external assistance, and so it does not appear that it significantly influenced whether groups engaged primarily in violent or nonviolent strategies. It is not clear that the extension of foreign funding for dissident groups affords funders substantial leverage over how these groups behave. In general, the negligible relationship between pre-existing civil society organizations and mass nonviolence as well as the questionable influence of foreign funding on how civil society actors behave reinforces the need to think carefully about engagement with civil society groups.

The evidence from South Africa does indicate that more established civil society groups, particularly those with interests that overlap with political and economic elites, may be more likely to engage in mass nonviolence than adopt violent alternatives. MK was a modest armed insurgency and its strategies were criticized as overly restrained and

questionably executed, but it did launch a range of sophisticated attacks against high-value military and economic targets. Its occasional targeting of civilians was not necessarily unpopular with the non-white population at large, and it never lacked for individual recruits. Even after Nelson Mandela was released from prison in 1990, the preparations for one of its boldest operations – Operation Vula – continued for months before it was uncovered. And yet large numbers of active voluntary organizations in South Africa stuck with the nonviolent UDF throughout the decade of conflict. Rather than direct their organizational resources to support MK, these groups often discouraged or sought to reign in members or peer organizations from engaging in violence, though with varying degrees of success. These groups' comparatively advantageous position in society deterred them from adopting methods that could sow wider disruption, disruption that would undermine their own economic stakes and future prospects. Their interdependence with aspects of the economic status quo influenced their preference for nonviolent forms of disruption to challenge the political status quo. Policymakers seeking to ensure that civil conflicts remain nonviolent could seek to ensure that similar such organizations are sufficiently supported. Such efforts may not increase the likelihood of a nonviolent challenge to the political status quo will occur, but it may reduce the probability that violence will be adopted should a civil conflict occur.

Civil society organizations are often praised for their ability to network with and channel the views of “the people,” their delivery of basic services and representation at the grassroots and community level, and their legitimacy in the eyes of citizens more generally. However, advocates of civil society should be mindful that these are all attributes that can support a very effective armed insurgency, including the ability to

seize and hold territory as well as operate with reduced risks of government detection. In the rare instances that civil society groups have laid the organizational basis for an armed challenge to a sovereign state, however, there appears no real change in the level of coercive violence that these groups use against unarmed civilians nor in the deaths associated with battles with security forces. For donors and program implementers seeking to work in fragile and conflict affected contexts, there should be circumspection about how actors on the ground are treated and what they are valued for, lest groups with valuable resources for insurgency be inadvertently supported. Likewise, examining the pre-conflict organizational resources that newly formed armed insurgent groups bring to a conflict may provide some indications about how they will wield violence and their prospects against government forces.

In addition to the policy insights they provide, these papers also contribute to several ongoing academic debates about civil society and civil conflict, mass nonviolent campaigns, and the organizational origins of armed insurgencies. The first and second paper attempt to integrate separate research tracks that have examined how pre-existing social organizations relate to armed insurgency and mass nonviolent campaigns. In doing so, these papers demonstrated the shortcomings of previous explanations about the adoption of mass nonviolent methods, particularly the purported inherent participation advantages of nonviolence or tendencies of pre-existing organizations to gravitate toward nonviolent strategies. Rather, the papers emphasize how cost vulnerabilities of pre-existing civil society organizations influence method of dissidence, and specifically that interdependent relationship with political and economic elites activate not only an ability to engage in impactful noncooperation but an incentive to avoid disruption. The latter is

often overlooked in nonviolent action scholarship. The third paper identified unique ways in which organizational origins may resolve informational disadvantages that influence how armed insurgent groups employ violence to consolidate control over territory and how vulnerable they are to attack. It integrated emerging scholarship related to rebel governance and rebel origins with commonly lauded attributes of civil society to test how CSOs may resolve these challenges. In doing so, it pointed out how the roots of armed rebels may influence their ability to build administrative structures and their access to noncombatant informational networks and preferences. Previous research has often identified ethnicity, specifically ethnic homogeneity, as important for resolving these challenges. My paper attempted to point to other sources of resolutions for armed insurgent groups. Additional research into these aspects could further contribute to ongoing debates about conflict dynamics, the adoption of nonviolent tactics, and violence during civil wars.

The role of civil society organizations in civil conflict would benefit from further investigation. As noted in the preceding essays, better data on organizational types, participation, and forms would support a better understanding of their contributions to conflict onset and methods of dissidence. This should include better delineation between underemphasized political tracks, such as organizations that opt for more conventional and institutional political channels to advance change during civil conflict and those that remain aggrieved but choose to remain neutral and take no action at all. These options pose challenges for observation. But in analyses of previous civil conflict episodes, including South Africa during the 1980s, these behaviors remain often overlooked leaving important alternatives under researched. Case work on civil society organizations

in civil war and how they draw on pre-conflict connections to influence the use of violence would offer a strong complement to the final essay. It would also fit well within the growing literature on rebel governance and organizational factors in conflict dynamics.

To better understand the specific role of donor support for civil society organizations, it would also be productive to review the form and extent of material and political support that the U.S. or other donor governments have previously extended to civil society actors in the years leading up to recent civil wars. For example, Mali was a recipient of extensive economic and political support prior to the onset of its civil war in 2011. A review of the organizations that did receive support, what that support aimed to achieve, how it was used, what organizations did not receive support, and other engagements may shed light on whether and how specific civil society support programs can influence civil conflicts and their dynamics. Likewise, other conflicts may provide rich contexts for such inductive research.

Commitments to and belief in the role of civil society organizations as key actors in the prevention and reduction of political violence is likely to persist among U.S. policymakers as well as in other developed country governments. These essays have offered an initial assessment of these dynamics, but there remains a range of paths for further inquiry. Such research is unlikely to have continued relevance to policy, whether from the perspective of donor country interests or for the many persons experiencing the effects of fragility on the ground in countries at risk of wider political violence and conflict.



## Appendices

### Essay 1

#### Matrix of Pearson Correlation Coefficients, Key Variables, Essay 1

	CSO Participation	Sustained CSOs	Inclusive CSOs	Large CSOs	CSO Consultation	CSO Repressed	GDP PC	Neighboring Conflict	Pop.	Dem.	Anoc.	NVA in Region
CSO Participation	1											
Sustained CSOs	0.46	1										
Inclusive CSOs	0.25	0.29	1									
Large CSOs	0.33	0.3	0.15	1								
CSO Consultation	0.63	0.59	0.36	0.37	1							
CSO Repressed	-0.55	-0.62	-0.36	-0.39	-0.74	1						
GDP PC	0.15	0.13	-0.03	0.11	0.17	-0.17	1					
Neighboring Conflict	-0.15	-0.15	-0.13	-0.13	-0.21	0.18	-0.11	1				
Population	0.01	-0.04	0.06	-0.03	-0.02	0.05	-0.02	0.36	1			
Democracy	0.53	0.58	0.32	0.32	0.7	-0.73	0.13	-0.21	0	1		
Anocracy	-0.12	0.01	0.03	-0.05	-0.08	0	-0.08	0.06	-0.05	-0.33	1	
NVA in Region	-0.02	-0.02	0.01	-0.02	-0.01	0.02	-0.03	0.01	0.01	-0.02	0	1

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>					
	<u>High Death Threshold</u>		<u>No Interaction Term</u>		<u>No Regime Type</u>	
	Armed Conflict	Nvlt Campaign	Armed Conflict	Nvlt Campaign	Armed Conflict	Nvlt Campaign
CSO Participation	-0.090 (0.930)	0.402 (0.862)	0.187 (0.275)	-0.662 (0.665)	0.772* (0.460)	0.172 (1.043)
Sustained CSO Participation	-0.447 (0.307)	0.042 (0.440)	-0.615*** (0.201)	0.053 (0.461)	-0.566*** (0.194)	-0.396 (0.422)
CSO Inclusivity (Gender)	-0.281 (0.253)	0.862* (0.514)	0.007 (0.190)	0.834 (0.515)	0.037 (0.188)	0.774 (0.478)
Large CSOs Predominate	1.022* (0.542)	0.207 (0.724)	0.252 (0.365)	0.236 (0.708)	0.439 (0.388)	0.304 (0.761)
CSOs Consulted on Policy	-0.150 (0.266)	-0.220 (0.385)	-0.333* (0.181)	-0.305 (0.404)	-0.351** (0.176)	-0.757* (0.399)
Gov Represses CSOs	0.125 (0.146)	-0.209 (0.218)	0.042 (0.096)	-0.214 (0.227)	-0.042 (0.090)	0.023 (0.199)
GDP Per Cap (log)	-0.307* (0.163)	-0.028 (0.257)	-0.287** (0.112)	0.070 (0.264)	-0.224** (0.111)	0.003 (0.254)
Population (log)	0.369*** (0.089)	0.342*** (0.131)	0.303*** (0.061)	0.309** (0.135)	0.308*** (0.061)	0.282** (0.128)
Democracy	0.100 (0.428)	-2.589*** (0.821)	0.367 (0.282)	-2.590*** (0.849)		
Anocracy	0.496 (0.310)	-0.186 (0.443)	0.715*** (0.216)	-0.187 (0.459)		
Armed Conflict in Bordering States	0.086 (0.104)	0.015 (0.164)	0.081 (0.075)	0.089 (0.168)	0.120 (0.074)	0.080 (0.163)
Nvlt Campaign in Region	0.480 (0.375)	1.163*** (0.265)	0.372 (0.260)	1.140*** (0.273)	0.312 (0.258)	1.113*** (0.264)
Years Since Nvlt Termination	0.110 (0.096)	-0.053 (0.093)	0.040 (0.045)	-0.041 (0.094)	0.024 (0.045)	-0.079 (0.086)
Years Since Armed Conflict Termination	0.010 (0.045)	0.068 (0.052)	-0.084** (0.040)	0.084 (0.054)	-0.082** (0.040)	0.070 (0.052)
Years Since Nvlt Termination (Sq)	-0.001 (0.002)	-0.002 (0.002)	-0.0003 (0.002)	-0.003 (0.002)	-0.001 (0.002)	-0.003 (0.002)
Years Since Nvlt Termination (Sq)	-0.005 (0.005)	0.002 (0.003)	-0.001 (0.002)	0.002 (0.003)	-0.0001 (0.002)	0.004 (0.002)
Participation: Large CSOs (Interaction)	-1.277 (1.929)	-2.781 (2.340)			-1.548 (1.009)	-2.308 (2.403)

Constant	-5.525*** (1.672)	-7.022*** (2.495)	-3.419*** (1.143)	-7.559*** (2.599)	-3.554*** (1.143)	-7.439*** (2.413)
Akaike Inf. Crit.	1,338.210	1,338.210	1,976.569	1,976.569	2,038.935	2,038.935
<i>Note:</i>					*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01	

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>	
	<u>No GDP, Population Variables</u>	
	Armed Conflict	Nvlt Campaign
CSO Participation	0.251 (0.275)	-0.664 (0.674)
Sustained CSO Participation	-0.657*** (0.201)	-0.020 (0.451)
CSO Inclusivity (Gender)	-0.047 (0.272)	1.309* (0.719)
Large CSOs Predominate	0.076 (0.625)	1.424 (1.707)
CSOs Consulted on Policy	-0.329* (0.178)	-0.203 (0.393)
Gov Represses CSOs	0.077 (0.096)	-0.159 (0.221)
Democracy	0.338 (0.281)	-2.533*** (0.845)
Anocracy	0.738*** (0.215)	-0.207 (0.458)
Armed Conflict in Bordering States	0.249*** (0.069)	0.232 (0.147)
Nvlt Campaign in Region	0.414 (0.257)	1.194*** (0.270)
Years Since Nvlt Termination	0.054 (0.044)	-0.032 (0.093)
Years Since Armed Conflict Termination	-0.050 (0.041)	0.094* (0.053)
Years Since Nvlt Termination (Sq)	-0.001 (0.002)	-0.003 (0.002)
Years Since Armed Conflict Termination (Sq)	-0.001 (0.002)	0.002 (0.003)
Participation: Large CSOs (Interaction)	0.320	-1.195

	(0.740)	(1.829)
Constant	-3.297***	-5.026***
	(0.484)	(1.077)
<hr/>		
Akaike Inf. Crit.	2,008.499	2,008.499
<hr/>		
Note:	* p<0.1; ** p<0.05; *** p<0.01	

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>					
	Just Participation Variable		Just Sustained CSO Variable		Just Inclusivity Variable	
	Armed Conflict	Nvlt Campaign	Armed Conflict	Nvlt Campaign	Armed Conflict	Nvlt Campaign
CSO Participation	0.106 (0.243)	-0.607 (0.651)				
Sustained CSO Participation			-0.658*** (0.197)	0.049 (0.456)		
CSO Inclusivity (Gender)					-0.167 (0.179)	0.824 (0.515)
GDP Per Cap (log)	-0.323*** (0.109)	0.087 (0.257)	-0.295*** (0.111)	0.086 (0.256)	-0.319*** (0.108)	0.067 (0.262)
Population (log)	0.322*** (0.059)	0.339*** (0.131)	0.304*** (0.061)	0.328** (0.128)	0.326*** (0.059)	0.293** (0.129)
Democracy	-0.219 (0.235)	-2.308*** (0.636)	0.135 (0.244)	-2.525*** (0.714)	-0.160 (0.227)	-2.686*** (0.625)
Anocracy	0.483** (0.193)	-0.008 (0.410)	0.619*** (0.205)	-0.016 (0.432)	0.514*** (0.194)	-0.126 (0.410)
Armed Conflict in Bordering States	0.099 (0.074)	0.065 (0.168)	0.092 (0.075)	0.081 (0.166)	0.092 (0.074)	0.094 (0.167)
Nvlt Campaign in Region	0.348 (0.260)	1.109*** (0.270)	0.360 (0.260)	1.119*** (0.271)	0.348 (0.259)	1.122*** (0.273)
Years Since Nvlt Termination	0.021 (0.043)	-0.042 (0.090)	0.036 (0.044)	-0.038 (0.089)	0.021 (0.043)	-0.021 (0.092)
Years Since Armed Conflict Termination	-0.078* (0.040)	0.089* (0.053)	-0.083** (0.040)	0.087 (0.054)	-0.076* (0.040)	0.084 (0.053)
Years Since Armed Conflict Termination (Sq)	-0.001 (0.002)	-0.003 (0.002)	-0.0003 (0.002)	-0.003 (0.002)	-0.001 (0.002)	-0.003 (0.002)
Years Since Nvlt Termination (Sq)	-0.0002 (0.001)	0.002 (0.003)	-0.001 (0.001)	0.002 (0.002)	-0.0002 (0.001)	0.001 (0.003)
Constant	-3.345*** (1.054)	-7.906*** (2.455)	-3.316*** (1.087)	-7.854*** (2.435)	-3.286*** (1.052)	-8.013*** (2.505)

Akaike Inf. Crit.	2,039.383	2,039.383	1,967.099	1,967.099	2,036.745	2,036.745
<i>Note:</i>					* p<0.1; ** p<0.05; *** p<0.01	

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>					
	Just Structure Variable		Just CSO Repression Variable		Just CSO Consultation Variable	
	Armed Conflict	Nvlt Campaign	Armed Conflict	Armed Conflict	Nvlt Campaign	Armed Conflict
Large CSOs Predominate	0.110 (0.362)	0.522 (0.678)				
Gov Represses CSOs			0.106 (0.083)	-0.151 (0.199)		
CSOs Consulted on Policy					-0.349** (0.157)	-0.181 (0.367)
GDP Per Cap (log)	-0.321*** (0.109)	0.086 (0.259)	-0.309*** (0.109)	0.064 (0.259)	-0.303*** (0.109)	0.092 (0.258)
Population (log)	0.325*** (0.059)	0.331** (0.131)	0.322*** (0.059)	0.337*** (0.128)	0.328*** (0.059)	0.337*** (0.129)
Democracy	-0.169 (0.233)	-2.348*** (0.648)	-0.010 (0.265)	-2.871*** (0.765)	0.071 (0.252)	-2.317*** (0.753)
Anocracy	0.490** (0.193)	-0.027 (0.409)	0.582*** (0.206)	-0.174 (0.451)	0.582*** (0.196)	0.029 (0.427)
Armed Conflict in Bordering States	0.098 (0.074)	0.077 (0.167)	0.092 (0.074)	0.085 (0.164)	0.086 (0.074)	0.071 (0.166)
Nvlt Campaign in Region	0.351 (0.260)	1.106*** (0.270)	0.353 (0.259)	1.115*** (0.270)	0.361 (0.259)	1.108*** (0.271)
Years Since Nvlt Termination	0.022 (0.044)	-0.046 (0.089)	0.026 (0.044)	-0.041 (0.090)	0.027 (0.045)	-0.040 (0.090)
Years Since Armed Conflict Termination	-0.078* (0.040)	0.090* (0.053)	-0.079** (0.040)	0.092* (0.054)	-0.079** (0.040)	0.087 (0.054)
Years Since Armed Conflict Termination (Sq)	-0.001 (0.002)	-0.003 (0.002)	-0.001 (0.002)	-0.003 (0.002)	-0.001 (0.002)	-0.003 (0.002)
Years Since Nvlt Termination (Sq)	-0.0003 (0.001)	0.002 (0.003)	-0.0003 (0.001)	0.002 (0.002)	-0.0003 (0.002)	0.002 (0.003)
Participation: Large CSOs (Interaction)	-0.281 (0.550)	-1.808 (1.514)				
Constant	-3.410*** (1.057)	-7.992*** (2.465)	-3.727*** (1.089)	-7.343*** (2.524)	-3.383*** (1.048)	-7.892*** (2.448)

Akaike Inf. Crit. 2,042.326 2,042.326 2,038.256 2,038.256 2,035.239 2,035.239

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

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>							
	Just Participation No regime type		Just Sustained CSO No regime type		Just Inclusivity No regime type		Just Structure No regime type	
	Armed Conflict	Nvlt Campaign	Armed Conflict	Armed Conflict	Nvlt Campaign	Armed Conflict	Armed Conflict	Armed Conflict
CSO Participation	0.036 (0.234)	-1.325** (0.617)						
Sustained CSO Participation			-0.622*** (0.181)	-0.815** (0.392)				
CSO Inclusivity (Gender)					-0.115 (0.176)	0.473 (0.475)		
Large CSOs Predominate							0.124 (0.360)	-0.182 (0.691)
GDP Per Cap (log)	-0.288*** (0.105)	-0.131 (0.238)	-0.232** (0.108)	-0.112 (0.243)	-0.281*** (0.104)	-0.257 (0.238)	-0.279*** (0.105)	-0.149 (0.236)
Population (log)	0.314*** (0.059)	0.304** (0.124)	0.305*** (0.061)	0.288** (0.121)	0.315*** (0.059)	0.280** (0.121)	0.318*** (0.059)	0.307** (0.123)
Armed Conflict in Bordering States	0.133* (0.073)	0.095 (0.160)	0.121 (0.074)	0.086 (0.159)	0.128* (0.073)	0.121 (0.158)	0.133* (0.072)	0.102 (0.161)
Nvlt Campaign in Region	0.318 (0.257)	1.122*** (0.261)	0.315 (0.258)	1.116*** (0.260)	0.313 (0.257)	1.149*** (0.262)	0.314 (0.257)	1.127*** (0.261)
Years Since Nvlt Termination	0.012 (0.043)	-0.087 (0.083)	0.030 (0.044)	-0.062 (0.085)	0.013 (0.043)	-0.068 (0.081)	0.014 (0.043)	-0.089 (0.080)
Years Since Armed Conflict Termination	-0.075* (0.039)	0.075 (0.052)	-0.079** (0.039)	0.082 (0.052)	-0.073* (0.039)	0.074 (0.052)	-0.075* (0.039)	0.072 (0.052)
Years Since Armed Conflict Termination (Sq)	-0.001 (0.002)	-0.003 (0.002)	-0.001 (0.002)	-0.003 (0.002)	-0.001 (0.002)	-0.003 (0.002)	-0.001 (0.002)	-0.003 (0.002)
Years Since Nvlt Termination (Sq)	0.0001 (0.0001)	0.004 (0.004)	-0.0003 (0.0003)	0.003 (0.003)	0.0001 (0.0001)	0.003 (0.003)	0.0001 (0.0001)	0.004 (0.004)

	(0.001)	(0.002)	(0.001)	(0.002)	(0.001)	(0.002)	(0.001)	(0.002)	
Participation: Large CSOs (Interaction)							-0.413	-3.079**	
							(0.534)	(1.487)	
Constant	-3.550***	-6.582***	-3.599***	-6.394***	-3.495***	-5.986***	-3.648***	-6.457***	
	(1.049)	(2.207)	(1.082)	(2.237)	(1.047)	(2.209)	(1.053)	(2.194)	
Akaike Inf. Crit.	2,110.160	2,110.160	2,033.689	2,033.689	2,114.421	2,114.421	2,112.377	2,112.377	
<i>Note:</i>								*p<0.1; ** p<0.05; *** p<0.01	

## Essay 3

**Matrix of Pearson Correlation Coefficients for Variables Used in Battle-Deaths and Civilian Victimizations Models**

	Reb CSO	Org Age	Org Ideology	Part. in Civ Soc	GDP PC	Pop.	Duratr n	Dem.	Anoc.	Reb Strength	Reb Coalitn	Sim. Conflicts	Recur	Conflict Pre-1988	Loot	Interven.
Reb CSO	1															
Org Age	0.14	1														
Org Ideology	0.14	0.12	1													
Part. in Civ Soc	-0.08	0.09	0.19	1												
GDP Per Cap	0.09	-0.01	0.33	0.12	1											
Population	-0.08	0.18	0.17	0.59	-0.09	1										
Duration	0.03	0.21	0.18	0.13	0.01	0.23	1									
Democratic	-0.03	0.19	0.22	0.53	0.29	0.54	0.3	1								
Anocratic	-0.1	-0.2	-0.24	-0.16	-0.14	-0.28	-0.39	-0.53	1							
Rebel Strength	-0.02	-0.17	-0.22	-0.05	-0.11	-0.13	-0.24	-0.21	0.18	1						
Reb is Coalition	0.16	-0.12	-0.04	-0.12	-0.05	-0.16	-0.08	-0.08	0.09	0.12	1					
Simul. Conflicts	0.03	0.06	0.03	0.12	-0.08	0.21	0.19	0.15	0	-0.08	0.05	1				
Recurrence	0.13	0.17	0.17	0.01	0.11	-0.07	0.34	0.2	-0.32	-0.21	-0.06	0.11	1			
Pre 1988 Conflict	0.1	0	0.07	0.08	0.06	0.09	0.52	0.32	-0.42	-0.16	0.01	0.03	0.3	1		
Loot, Contraband	-0.01	0.11	0.24	0.23	0.13	0.2	0.39	0.28	-0.18	-0.16	0.01	0.15	0.3	0.2	1	
Intervention	-0.01	-0.17	0	-0.08	-0.11	-0.12	0.12	-0.05	-0.03	0.01	0.05	0.03	0.14	0.16	0.17	1



## Robustness Checks: Negative Binomial Models, DV = Battle Related Deaths

<i>Predictors</i>	<b>Main Model</b>			<b>No Interaction Terms</b>			<b>Deaths &lt; 10k</b>		
	<i>Log-Mean</i>	<i>CI</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>Log-Mean</i>	<i>CI</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>Log-Mean</i>	<i>CI</i>	<i>p</i>
(Intercept)	5.79	2.31 – 9.27	<b>0.001</b>	5.85	2.24 – 9.45	<b>0.001</b>	8.77	5.80 – 11.75	<b>&lt;0.001</b>
civsoc	-2.30	-3.65 – -0.94	<b>0.001</b>	-0.09	-0.71 – 0.54	0.789	-1.67	-2.84 – -0.49	<b>0.005</b>
org_age	-0.06	-0.10 – 0.02	<b>0.004</b>	-0.06	-0.10 – 0.03	<b>0.001</b>	-0.03	-0.07 – 0.01	0.205
ideology	0.83	0.18 – 1.48	<b>0.013</b>	1.06	0.41 – 1.71	<b>0.001</b>	0.18	-0.43 – 0.79	0.568
rgdppc [log]	0.14	-0.22 – 0.49	0.446	0.09	-0.27 – 0.46	0.619	-0.18	-0.48 – 0.12	0.248
pop [log]	0.05	-0.14 – 0.24	0.600	0.06	-0.13 – 0.25	0.507	-0.18	-0.37 – 0.00	0.051
log_duration	0.57	0.32 – 0.82	<b>&lt;0.001</b>	0.57	0.32 – 0.83	<b>&lt;0.001</b>	0.53	0.32 – 0.74	<b>&lt;0.001</b>
dem	-0.43	-1.23 – 0.36	0.288	-0.37	-1.17 – 0.42	0.361	-0.72	-1.55 – 0.11	0.090
anoc	-0.19	-0.81 – 0.43	0.544	-0.18	-0.82 – 0.45	0.572	-0.26	-0.77 – 0.24	0.307
rebstrength2 [stronger]	-2.37	-3.65 – -1.09	<b>&lt;0.001</b>	-2.23	-3.54 – -0.92	<b>0.001</b>	-1.72	-2.89 – -0.54	<b>0.004</b>
rebstrength2 [weaker]	-0.96	-1.67 – -0.24	<b>0.009</b>	-0.87	-1.60 – -0.14	<b>0.020</b>	-0.56	-1.19 – 0.07	0.083
civsoc_prtcept	-0.15	-0.83 – 0.52	0.655	-0.14	-0.82 – 0.55	0.692	0.13	-0.52 – 0.78	0.701
coalition	0.68	0.16 – 1.20	<b>0.011</b>	0.54	0.01 – 1.07	<b>0.045</b>	0.40	-0.10 – 0.91	0.118
simul_conflicts2	-0.28	-0.74 – 0.18	0.231	-0.20	-0.66 – 0.27	0.410	0.32	-0.12 – 0.76	0.150
recur	0.65	0.05 – 1.24	<b>0.033</b>	0.55	-0.04 – 1.15	0.069	0.25	-0.29 – 0.80	0.360
pre1988_conflict2	-0.50	-1.24 – 0.24	0.188	-0.44	-1.19 – 0.31	0.252	-1.03	-1.60 – -0.45	<b>&lt;0.001</b>
loot3	0.38	-0.11 – 0.88	0.127	0.35	-0.16 – 0.85	0.175	0.32	-0.18 – 0.82	0.207
intervention	0.57	0.01 – 1.13	<b>0.045</b>	0.50	-0.07 – 1.08	0.085	0.70	0.22 – 1.17	<b>0.004</b>
geo1	-4.20	-6.06 – -2.34	<b>&lt;0.001</b>	-4.24	-6.11 – -2.37	<b>&lt;0.001</b>	-1.31	-3.00 – -0.22	0.129

		2.34			2.37			0.38	
geo2	-1.21	-2.20 – 0.22	<b>0.017</b>	-1.10	-2.10 – 0.09	<b>0.032</b>	0.06	-0.86 – 0.98	0.898
geo34	-0.97	-1.91 – 0.03	<b>0.044</b>	-0.89	-1.86 – 0.08	0.072	-0.06	-0.94 – 0.82	0.893
geo57	-1.03	-1.72 – 0.34	<b>0.004</b>	-1.10	-1.79 – 0.40	<b>0.002</b>	0.15	-0.54 – 0.83	0.670
geo69	-1.06	-2.08 – 0.05	<b>0.041</b>	-1.06	-2.11 – 0.02	<b>0.045</b>	0.51	-0.51 – 1.52	0.329
nineties	0.27	-0.63 – 1.17	0.562	0.21	-0.72 – 1.14	0.659	0.65	-0.13 – 1.44	0.104
aughts	-0.50	-1.33 – 0.33	0.236	-0.56	-1.41 – 0.29	0.195	0.15	-0.59 – 0.90	0.684
civsoc * org_age	-0.01	-0.10 – 0.07	0.758				-0.04	-0.11 – 0.03	0.263
civsoc * ideology	2.57	1.14 – 4.01	<b>&lt;0.001</b>				1.95	0.67 – 3.23	<b>0.003</b>

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Observations	185		185		172
R <sup>2</sup> conditional / R <sup>2</sup> marginal	NA / 0.710		NA / 0.691		NA / 0.607

### Robustness Checks: Negative Binomial Models, DV = Battle Related Deaths

<i>Predictors</i>	<b>Civ Soc:Duration (Interaction)</b>			<b>Civ Soc:Reb Strength (Interaction)</b>		
	<i>Log-Mean</i>	<i>CI</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>Log-Mean</i>	<i>CI</i>	<i>p</i>
(Intercept)	5.75	2.25 – 9.26	<b>0.001</b>	5.87	2.42 – 9.32	<b>0.001</b>
civsoc	-2.29	-3.65 – -0.94	<b>0.001</b>	-3.18	-4.92 – -1.44	<b>&lt;0.001</b>
org_age	-0.06	-0.10 – -0.02	<b>0.004</b>	-0.06	-0.10 – -0.02	<b>0.003</b>
ideology	0.81	0.13 – 1.49	<b>0.019</b>	0.80	0.15 – 1.45	<b>0.016</b>
rgdppc [log]	0.14	-0.22 – 0.49	0.445	0.16	-0.20 – 0.51	0.388
pop [log]	0.05	-0.14 – 0.24	0.585	0.05	-0.14 – 0.23	0.621
log_duration	0.57	0.32 – 0.82	<b>&lt;0.001</b>	0.59	0.34 – 0.84	<b>&lt;0.001</b>
dem	-0.42	-1.23 – 0.38	0.305	-0.46	-1.25 – 0.34	0.259
anoc	-0.20	-0.82 – 0.43	0.534	-0.24	-0.86 – 0.38	0.451
rebstrength2 [stronger]	-2.37	-3.65 – -1.09	<b>&lt;0.001</b>	-2.50	-3.88 – -1.12	<b>&lt;0.001</b>

rebstrength2 [weaker]	-0.97	-1.70 – -0.24	<b>0.009</b>	-1.09	-1.85 – -0.34	<b>0.005</b>
civsoc_prtept	-0.16	-0.85 – 0.52	0.640	-0.13	-0.80 – 0.55	0.710
coalition	0.69	0.15 – 1.22	<b>0.012</b>	0.64	0.10 – 1.18	<b>0.020</b>
simul_conflicts2	-0.29	-0.77 – 0.18	0.230	-0.29	-0.75 – 0.18	0.226
recur	0.64	0.04 – 1.24	<b>0.037</b>	0.65	0.05 – 1.24	<b>0.033</b>
pre1988_conflict2	-0.49	-1.25 – 0.28	0.212	-0.51	-1.25 – 0.24	0.183
loot3	0.39	-0.11 – 0.88	0.126	0.35	-0.14 – 0.85	0.162
intervention	0.57	0.01 – 1.13	<b>0.045</b>	0.53	-0.04 – 1.09	0.068
geo1	-4.21	-6.09 – -2.34	<b>&lt;0.001</b>	-4.23	-6.08 – -2.38	<b>&lt;0.001</b>
geo2	-1.21	-2.20 – -0.22	<b>0.016</b>	-1.16	-2.17 – -0.16	<b>0.023</b>
geo34	-0.94	-1.94 – 0.06	0.064	-0.99	-1.93 – -0.05	<b>0.039</b>
geo57	-1.03	-1.72 – -0.34	<b>0.003</b>	-1.03	-1.72 – -0.35	<b>0.003</b>
geo69	-1.07	-2.10 – -0.05	<b>0.040</b>	-1.04	-2.06 – -0.02	<b>0.045</b>
nineties	0.29	-0.66 – 1.24	0.549	0.30	-0.60 – 1.20	0.519
aughts	-0.48	-1.35 – 0.39	0.284	-0.51	-1.33 – 0.32	0.230
civsoc * org_age	-0.01	-0.10 – 0.08	0.823	-0.03	-0.11 – 0.06	0.557
civsoc * ideology	2.62	1.05 – 4.20	<b>0.001</b>	2.08	0.37 – 3.79	<b>0.017</b>
civsoc * log_duration	-0.05	-0.63 – 0.53	0.877			
rebstrength2 [stronger] * civsoc				1.34	-2.27 – 4.95	0.467
rebstrength2 [weaker] * civsoc				1.48	-0.72 – 3.69	0.187
Observations	185			185		
R <sup>2</sup> conditional / R <sup>2</sup> marginal	NA / 0.706			NA / 0.727		

### Robustness Checks: OLS Models Output, DV = Battle Deaths (Log)

	(1)	<i>Robust SEs</i> (2)	<i>Duration Interaction</i> (3)	<i>Reb Strength Interaction</i> (4)
GDP Per Cap (log)	-0.064 (0.198)	-0.107 (0.208)	-0.065 (0.200)	-0.034 (0.203)
Pop (log)	-0.039 (0.109)	-0.105 (0.114)	-0.039 (0.109)	-0.039 (0.110)
Duration in Yrs (log)	0.666*** (0.148)	0.694*** (0.155)	0.667*** (0.152)	0.669*** (0.149)
Democracy	-0.705 (0.460)	-0.708 (0.483)	-0.705 (0.462)	-0.726 (0.462)
Anocracy	-0.294 (0.345)	-0.311 (0.362)	-0.295 (0.347)	-0.311 (0.347)
Rebels Stronger	-1.379* (0.768)	-1.479* (0.807)	-1.377* (0.771)	-1.642* (0.839)
Rebels Weaker	-0.780* (0.406)	-0.810* (0.426)	-0.781* (0.407)	-0.936** (0.437)
Rebel Origins in Civil Society	-1.117 (0.825)	-1.018 (0.867)	-1.111 (0.836)	-1.891* (1.132)
Org Age	-0.028 (0.025)	-0.025 (0.027)	-0.028 (0.026)	-0.029 (0.026)
Org Ideology	0.493 (0.367)	0.586 (0.385)	0.491 (0.370)	0.458 (0.369)
Participation in Civ Soc High	-0.048 (0.397)	-0.078 (0.417)	-0.049 (0.399)	-0.041 (0.399)
Reb Org Is Coalition	0.473 (0.302)	0.429 (0.318)	0.474 (0.304)	0.417 (0.309)
Multiple Conflicts	0.208 (0.284)	0.346 (0.298)	0.208 (0.285)	0.245 (0.289)
Conflict Recurrence	0.371 (0.330)	0.315 (0.347)	0.372 (0.332)	0.366 (0.331)
Conflict Onset Pre-1988	-0.709* (0.397)	-0.786* (0.417)	-0.707* (0.400)	-0.693* (0.399)
Rebs Loot, Contraband	0.502* (0.287)	0.474 (0.302)	0.502* (0.288)	0.488* (0.289)
3rd-Party Intervention	0.714** (0.318)	0.838** (0.334)	0.713** (0.319)	0.648** (0.325)
Geol	-2.156* (0.318)	-1.746 (0.334)	-2.154* (0.319)	-2.177* (0.325)

	(1.171)	(1.230)	(1.175)	(1.180)
Geo2	-0.166 (0.560)	-0.138 (0.588)	-0.165 (0.562)	-0.120 (0.567)
Geo34	-0.322 (0.598)	-0.345 (0.629)	-0.318 (0.605)	-0.349 (0.607)
Geo57	-0.718 (0.435)	-0.681 (0.457)	-0.716 (0.437)	-0.712 (0.439)
Geo69	-0.155 (0.618)	0.069 (0.649)	-0.156 (0.620)	-0.150 (0.627)
Nineties	0.892* (0.501)	0.905* (0.526)	0.893* (0.503)	0.943* (0.506)
Aughts	0.438 (0.516)	0.483 (0.542)	0.439 (0.518)	0.461 (0.519)
Civ Soc:Org Age (Interaction)	-0.036 (0.048)	-0.044 (0.051)	-0.036 (0.050)	-0.045 (0.049)
Civ Soc:Org Ideology (Interaction)	1.631* (0.866)	1.392 (0.910)	1.645* (0.915)	1.192 (0.963)
Duration:Civ Soc (Interaction)			-0.015 (0.313)	
Reb Stronger:Civ Soc (Interaction)				1.996 (2.236)
Reb Weaker: Civ Soc (Interaction)				1.297 (1.299)
Constant	5.740*** (1.937)	6.461*** (2.035)	5.749*** (1.952)	5.683*** (1.955)
Observations	185	185	185	185
R <sup>2</sup>	0.407		0.407	0.411
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.309		0.304	0.305
Residual Std. Error	1.582 (df = 158)	1.438 (df = 158)	1.587 (df = 157)	1.586 (df = 156)
F Statistic	4.162*** (df = 26; 158)		3.983*** (df = 27; 157)	3.886*** (df = 28; 156)
<i>Note:</i>	* p<0.1; ** p<0.05; *** p<0.01			

## Robustness Checks: Zero-Inflated Neg Binomial Models, DV = Civilian Victimizations

<i>Predictors</i>	Main Model			Simple Model			Model Excluding High-Value Outcomes (Deaths > 500)		
	<i>Log-Mean</i>	<i>CI</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>Log-Mean</i>	<i>CI</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>Log-Mean</i>	<i>CI</i>	<i>p</i>
(Intercept)	13.85	7.97 – 19.73	<b>&lt;0.001</b>	7.51	6.57 – 8.45	<b>&lt;0.001</b>	2.91	-2.42 – 8.25	0.284
rgdppc [log]	-0.60	-1.12 – 0.08	<b>0.024</b>				-0.01	-0.46 – 0.44	0.959
pop [log]	-0.06	-0.36 – 0.25	0.719				0.33	0.09 – 0.57	<b>0.007</b>
log_duration	0.30	-0.03 – 0.63	0.071				0.27	0.10 – 0.45	<b>0.002</b>
dem	-1.21	-2.28 – 0.14	<b>0.026</b>				-0.01	-1.03 – 1.01	0.987
anoc	-1.70	-2.70 – 0.70	<b>0.001</b>				-0.52	-1.25 – 0.22	0.171
rebstrength2 [stronger]	-0.61	-2.24 – 1.02	0.464				-0.70	-1.90 – 0.51	0.258
rebstrength2 [weaker]	-1.88	-2.96 – 0.80	<b>0.001</b>				-0.28	-1.17 – 0.62	0.545
civsoc	-3.51	-5.95 – 1.07	<b>0.005</b>	-2.73	-5.31 – 0.15	<b>0.038</b>	-1.76	-3.39 – 0.13	<b>0.034</b>
civsoc_prctpt	1.23	0.16 – 2.30	<b>0.024</b>				0.41	-0.50 – 1.31	0.381
org_age	-0.05	-0.11 – 0.01	0.103	-0.13	-0.20 – 0.06	<b>&lt;0.001</b>	0.04	-0.00 – 0.08	0.081
ideology	0.25	-0.72 – 1.22	0.615	0.95	0.07 – 1.83	<b>0.034</b>	-1.42	-2.20 – 0.64	<b>&lt;0.001</b>
coalition	0.08	-0.87 – 1.03	0.866				0.95	0.18 – 1.72	<b>0.016</b>
simul_conflicts2	-1.84	-2.64 – 1.05	<b>&lt;0.001</b>				-0.73	-1.44 – 0.02	<b>0.044</b>
recur	0.44	-0.46 – 1.34	0.338				-0.00	-0.43 – 0.43	0.998
pre1988_conflict2	-1.11	-2.65 – 0.43	0.157				-1.32	-2.33 – 0.31	<b>0.010</b>
loot3	1.42	0.41 – 2.43	<b>0.006</b>				-0.49	-1.14 – 0.15	0.133
intervention	0.11	-0.89 – 1.11	0.831				1.54	0.83 – 2.26	<b>&lt;0.001</b>
geo34	0.28	-1.17 – 1.73	0.707	-1.85	-2.90 – 0.80	<b>0.001</b>	1.38	0.27 – 2.50	<b>0.015</b>

geo2	0.77	-1.33 – 2.87	0.473	-2.90	-4.32 – 1.49	<b>&lt;0.001</b>	0.75	-0.79 – 2.29	0.342
geo57	-0.60	-1.57 – 0.37	0.224	-1.15	-2.09 – 0.21	<b>0.017</b>	-0.47	-1.54 – 0.60	0.386
geo69	1.13	-0.79 – 3.06	0.250	-0.33	-2.02 – 1.37	0.706	-1.93	-3.63 – 0.23	<b>0.026</b>
nineties	-0.61	-1.91 – 0.68	0.353	0.11	-0.72 – 0.93	0.797	-0.52	-1.34 – 0.30	0.212
aughts	-0.44	-1.89 – 1.01	0.551	-1.06	-2.12 – 0.00	<b>0.050</b>	-1.26	-2.20 – 0.32	<b>0.008</b>
civsoc * org_age	-0.08	-0.27 – 0.10	0.386	0.21	-0.16 – 0.57	0.264	-0.27	-0.39 – 0.15	<b>&lt;0.001</b>
civsoc * ideology	4.19	1.55 – 6.82	<b>0.002</b>	1.70	-1.69 – 5.09	0.327	2.91	1.05 – 4.77	<b>0.002</b>
<b>Zero-Inflated Model</b>									
(Intercept)	5.47	-0.31 – 11.25	0.064	1.29	0.38 – 2.21	<b>0.005</b>	10.83	3.06 – 18.60	<b>0.006</b>
rgdppc [log]	-0.02	-0.57 – 0.53	0.938				-0.44	-1.17 – 0.28	0.232
pop [log]	-0.25	-0.59 – 0.08	0.142				-0.20	-0.65 – 0.25	0.381
log_duration	-0.60	-1.07 – 0.12	<b>0.013</b>				-0.22	-0.80 – 0.37	0.468
dem	-1.53	-3.00 – 0.07	<b>0.041</b>				-2.88	-5.13 – 0.63	<b>0.012</b>
anoc	-0.22	-1.38 – 0.93	0.708				-1.37	-3.01 – 0.26	0.100
rebstrength2 [stronger]	-1.97	-4.27 – 0.32	0.091				-1.86	-4.91 – 1.18	0.230
rebstrength2 [weaker]	1.03	-0.27 – 2.33	0.120				0.46	-1.22 – 2.13	0.592
civsoc	-0.68	-3.56 – 2.21	0.646	0.16	-2.26 – 2.59	0.894	-2.44	-5.66 – 0.78	0.138
civsoc_prctpt	0.93	-0.36 – 2.23	0.158				1.10	-0.78 – 2.98	0.250
org_age	0.01	-0.07 – 0.10	0.800	-0.02	-0.10 – 0.06	0.579	0.03	-0.08 – 0.14	0.592
ideology	-0.10	-1.36 – 1.17	0.882	-0.65	-1.55 – 0.26	0.162	-0.50	-2.12 – 1.12	0.544
coalition	0.49	-0.51 – 1.48	0.338				1.59	0.01 – 3.17	<b>0.049</b>
simul_conflicts2	0.19	-0.76 – 1.15	0.690				-0.65	-1.94 – 0.65	0.327

recur	-0.26	-1.24 – 0.72	0.601				-0.11	-1.40 – 1.19	0.872
pre1988_conflict2	1.66	-0.03 – 3.36	0.055				2.63	0.41 – 4.85	<b>0.020</b>
loot3	-2.36	-3.43 – 1.29	<b>&lt;0.001</b>				-2.22	-3.54 – 0.90	<b>0.001</b>
intervention	-0.75	-1.87 – 0.37	0.190				-1.74	-3.29 – 0.18	<b>0.029</b>
geo34	0.59	-1.19 – 2.38	0.516	0.03	-1.08 – 1.14	0.964	1.03	-1.25 – 3.31	0.376
geo2	1.48	-0.30 – 3.25	0.103	1.56	0.28 – 2.84	<b>0.017</b>	1.54	-0.65 – 3.73	0.168
geo57	0.60	-0.68 – 1.87	0.361	-0.13	-1.05 – 0.78	0.775	-0.07	-1.91 – 1.77	0.941
geo69	1.33	-0.67 – 3.33	0.193	0.81	-0.54 – 2.16	0.238	1.69	-1.55 – 4.93	0.308
nineties	-0.88	-2.28 – 0.52	0.217	-0.73	-1.51 – 0.05	0.065	-0.64	-2.40 – 1.12	0.475
aughts	-0.89	-2.43 – 0.65	0.258	-0.70	-1.65 – 0.26	0.153	-0.88	-2.81 – 1.06	0.374
civsoc * org_age	-0.02	-0.20 – 0.16	0.809	0.07	-0.08 – 0.21	0.348	-0.24	-0.53 – 0.06	0.120
civsoc * ideology	0.63	-2.62 – 3.89	0.703	-0.36	-2.92 – 2.20	0.784	2.26	-1.47 – 6.00	0.234
Observations	186			186			158		
R <sup>2</sup> conditional / R <sup>2</sup> marginal	NA / 0.592			NA / 0.504			NA / 0.499		
AIC	1314.194			1372.737			687.786		

### Robustness Checks: OLS Output, DV = Civilian Victimizations

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>				
	binary_deaths <i>OLS</i>		log_cum_deaths <i>OLS</i>		<i>robust linear</i>
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
log(rgdppc)	0.022 (0.048)	-0.628 (0.387)	-0.276 (0.295)	-0.823** (0.400)	-0.309 (0.307)
log(pop)	-0.038 (0.029)	-0.023 (0.203)	0.303* (0.179)	-0.076 (0.210)	0.350* (0.187)
log_duration	-0.104** (0.040)	0.413* (0.214)	0.819*** (0.247)	0.492** (0.221)	0.915*** (0.258)



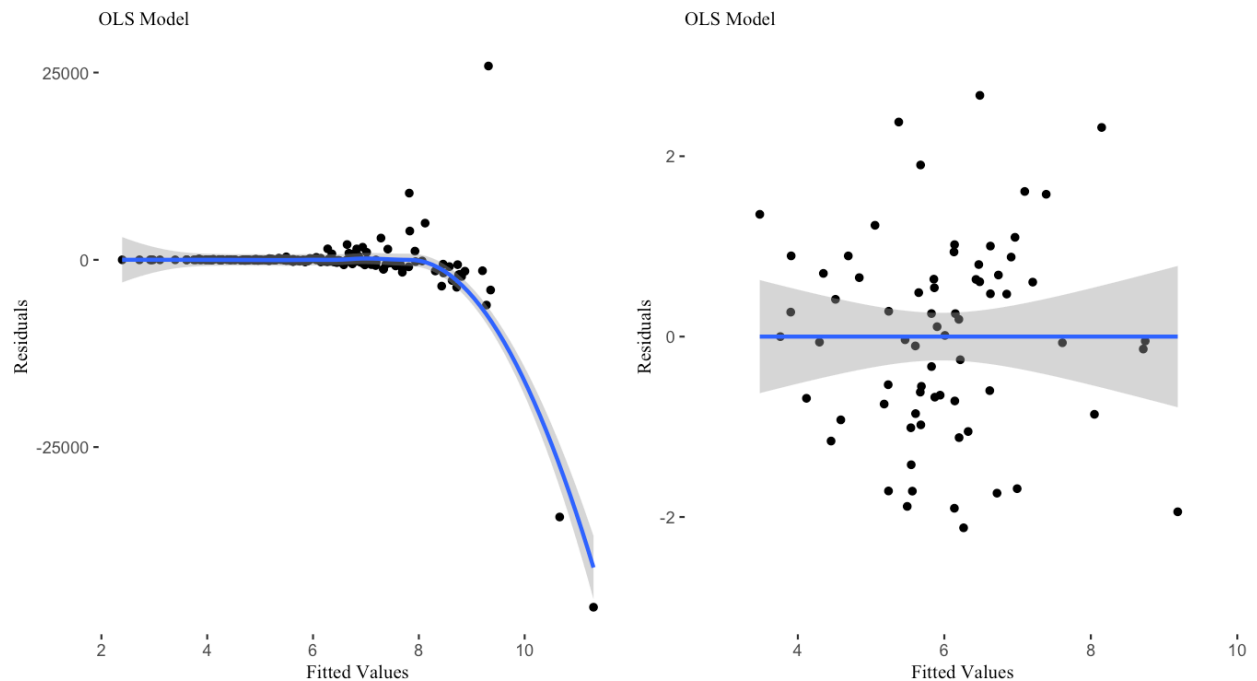
dem	-0.259** (0.126)	-0.749 (0.845)	1.343* (0.777)	-0.527 (0.874)	1.534* (0.811)
anoc	-0.049 (0.092)	-0.937 (0.583)	-0.022 (0.567)	-1.161* (0.603)	0.071 (0.592)
rebstrength2stronger	-0.281 (0.208)	-0.294 (1.092)	1.468 (1.281)	-0.647 (1.130)	1.496 (1.336)
rebstrength2weaker	0.143 (0.110)	-1.392** (0.651)	-1.454** (0.677)	-1.515** (0.674)	-1.555** (0.706)
civsoc	0.014 (0.222)	-2.975 (1.822)	-0.888 (1.366)	-3.122* (1.885)	-0.809 (1.426)
org_age	0.003 (0.007)	-0.042 (0.038)	-0.038 (0.043)	-0.038 (0.039)	-0.032 (0.044)
ideology	-0.023 (0.100)	-0.170 (0.592)	-0.016 (0.612)	-0.243 (0.612)	-0.145 (0.639)
civsoc_prtcp	0.120 (0.110)	1.032 (0.753)	-0.590 (0.675)	0.855 (0.779)	-0.690 (0.705)
coalition	0.069 (0.082)	0.516 (0.589)	-0.221 (0.502)	0.662 (0.610)	-0.137 (0.524)
simul_conflicts2	0.065 (0.076)	-1.660*** (0.519)	-0.851* (0.467)	-1.535*** (0.537)	-0.832* (0.487)
recur	-0.040 (0.088)	0.518 (0.521)	0.386 (0.544)	0.548 (0.539)	0.374 (0.568)
pre1988_conflict2	0.240* (0.138)	-0.964 (0.908)	-1.714** (0.851)	-0.957 (0.939)	-1.829** (0.888)
loot3	-0.360*** (0.077)	0.862 (0.674)	2.226*** (0.475)	0.615 (0.697)	2.275*** (0.496)
intervention	-0.089 (0.086)	0.081 (0.584)	0.451 (0.527)	0.271 (0.604)	0.530 (0.550)
geo34	0.052 (0.147)	1.167 (1.077)	-0.290 (0.908)	1.587 (1.114)	-0.018 (0.947)
geo2	0.202 (0.142)	0.890 (1.410)	-1.115 (0.873)	1.648 (1.459)	-1.066 (0.911)
geo57	0.108 (0.112)	-0.019 (0.729)	-1.038 (0.690)	0.251 (0.754)	-1.044 (0.720)
geo69	0.146 (0.155)	1.004 (1.399)	-0.858 (0.956)	1.041 (1.447)	-0.687 (0.997)
nineties	-0.185 (0.117)	-0.284 (0.760)	1.120 (0.720)	-0.177 (0.786)	1.401* (0.751)
aughts	-0.198 (0.126)	-0.560 (0.860)	0.904 (0.774)	-0.213 (0.890)	1.222 (0.807)

civsoc:org_age	0.012 (0.013)	-0.048 (0.144)	-0.045 (0.080)	-0.071 (0.149)	-0.057 (0.083)
civsoc:ideology	-0.097 (0.233)	3.099 (1.917)	1.252 (1.433)	3.033 (1.983)	1.016 (1.495)
Constant	1.187** (0.472)	12.348*** (4.126)	0.264 (2.905)	14.088*** (4.268)	-0.367 (3.031)
Observations	186	70	186	70	186
R <sup>2</sup>	0.327	0.528	0.356		
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.222	0.260	0.256		
Residual Std. Error	0.428 (df = 160)	1.373 (df = 44)	2.637 (df = 160)	0.999 (df = 44)	2.516 (df = 160)
F Statistic	3.113*** (df = 25; 160)	1.968** (df = 25; 44)	3.545*** (df = 25; 160)		

Note:

\* p<0.1; \*\* p<0.05; \*\*\* p<0.01

### Plot of Residuals, ZI NBM Model and OLS Model



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