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Welcoming Words

We are incredibly pleased and proud to present the 8th edition of the Pax et Bellum Journal. Due to the preceding pandemic, the editing team has been working remotely from several locations, which has enabled a wider range of young research professionals to take part in the editing process. The Journal is overseen and organised by master students from the Department of Peace and Conflict Research at the University of Uppsala and aims to provide a platform to students from all over the world to publish their work. This year's articles tackle a wide variety of topics all relating to peace and conflict using different empirical research methods. We would like to express our utmost gratitude to our excellent authors and reviewers for giving their time to rewrite and review the publications submitted for this edition.

The first contribution is by Johannes Geiger. He received a master's degree in conflict resolution from the University of Essex and just finished a second degree in political science at the University of Bamberg. His paper explores the dynamics of interstate cyber hostilities by combining ideas from traditional conflict research and applying them to the cyber domain.

The second article is by Katherine O'Brien, a master student of Peace and Conflict studies from Uppsala University and a recipient of the Rotary Peace Fellowship. Katerine's article explores qualitatively whether existing theories regarding strategic violence against civilians can account for the case of the "Tham Piu massacre" in 1968.

Third is an article by Francisco Urrutia, also a Rotary Peace Fellow from the Peace and Conflict studies master's program at Uppsala University. Francisco's article is a qualitative analysis of the 2019 protests in Chile, to which he applies correspondence inference theory .

The fourth and last contrubution is by Hayk Smbatyan, a master's student at the department of Peace and Conflict studies at Uppsala University. In his article, he interviews civilian volunteers who fought in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict resurgence of 2020 about their motives for volunteering.

Wishing you a pleasant read!
The Pax et Bellum Editing Team

The Democratic and Capitalist Peace in Cyberspace

JOHANNES GEIGER

Author Biography

Johannes Geiger received a master's degree in conflict resolution from the University of Essex and just finished a second degree in political science at the University of Bamberg. He now works as a cybersecurity analyst in the public sector. His academic interests include state-sponsored cyberattacks, how nation states can defend themselves in cyberspace, and cyber intelligence.

An earlier version of this paper was submitted as Johannes Geiger's master's thesis at the University of Bamberg. He wants to thank his supervisor, Prof. Dr. Thomas Saalfeld, for his outstanding advice and support.

Abstract

This paper explores the dynamics of interstate cyber hostilities by borrowing ideas from traditional conflict research and applying them to the cyber domain. It tries to bridge the gap between these two distinct fields of research. Therefore, its research question is whether the democratic and/or capitalist peace can be observed in cyberspace. The paper tests three hypotheses using logistic regression analysis and there are two main conclusions. First, the data supports the hypothesis that democracy decreases the likelihood that interstate dyads will experience cyber hostilities. Similarly, more economic freedom will also reduce cyber conflict. This suggests that both the democratic and the capitalist peace are observable in cyberspace.

Keywords: cyber conflict, cyberwar, democratic peace, capitalist peace, cyber peace

Introduction

Countries are increasingly adding hacking to their toolkits (Buchanan 2020, 306) and many countries, including all NATO members, have acknowledged cyberspace as the fifth domain of warfare (Reuter et al. 2019, 21). Still, academics and decision-makers alike poorly understand cyber conflict.[1] Especially the connection between conventional hostilities and cyber conflict has received little attention in the academic literature. This paper makes an effort to fill this gap by connecting two previously separate fields of research – cyber conflict and the democratic or capitalist peace.

One of the most established findings in conflict research is the fact that democracies do not wage war against each other (Dafoe and Russett 2013, 111). However, the field at large disagrees agrees about the underlying causes of this observation. More recently, the democratic peace is being challenged by the capitalist peace, which offers an alternative causal mechanism (Gartzke 2007; Gartzke and Hewitt 2010; Gartzke and Li 2003; Mousseau, Orsun, and Ungerer 2013; Weisiger and Gartzke 2016). Proponents of this idea claim that it is not democracy itself

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[1] This paper uses the terms cyber conflict and cyber dispute interchangeably to describe "the use of computational technologies [...] in cyberspace for malevolent and/or destructive purposes to impact, change, or modify diplomatic or military interactions between entities" (Valeriano and Maness 2015, 32). The terms cyberattack and cyber incident[1] refer to isolated and temporally limited operations aimed against states (211). More detailed definitions will follow in the theory section.

but certain economic factors that explain this peace. This paper tests whether the underlying observation for both these models also apply to cyberspace.

The research question is thus: *Does the democratic or capitalist peace exist in cyberspace?* In other words, do regime type or certain economic policies affect the likelihood of interstate cyber incidents? At first glance, it may seem unintuitive to expect cyberattacks to follow similar patterns as conventional warfare. In fact, most scholars believe that cyber conflict is substantially different from physical warfare (Gorwa and Smeets 2019). So, why is this question not only appropriate but highly significant? The current understanding of cyber conflict is limited at best. If it is possible to show that cyberattacks and conventional conflicts occur in similar contexts or actor constellations, this will greatly improve our understanding of *when* and *why* cyber conflict emerges.

When trying to explore a new phenomenon, it is often beneficial to start from something more familiar. Few will deny that cyber conflict differs from conventional warfare but some authors have brought forward arguments, according to which both forms of conflict may be used in similar geopolitical circumstances (Gartzke 2013; Jensen and Valeriano 2019; Valeriano and Maness 2015, 50).

There are three main reasons why cyber and conventional conflicts may occur under similar conditions. First, cyber tools often need to be complemented by conventional power to develop full coercive potential (Gartzke 2013). There are real examples of cyberattacks concurring with physical warfare. For example, in 2007, Israel conducted an air raid against a nuclear facility in Syria and hacked the Syrian air defense systems so they would not intercept the fighter jets (Schörnig 2019, 51).[2] Second, states can resort to cyberattacks as a less risky substitute for conventional warfare (Jensen and Valeriano 2019). The Stuxnet worm, for example, famously crippled an Iranian nuclear enrichment facility. The same result could have been achieved with an airstrike but the risk for escalation and international blowback would have been significantly higher. Third, cyber conflicts always happen for a reason. More often than not, these reasons are found along traditional lines of conflict (Valeriano and Maness 2015, 100; Whyte 2018). States that have no reason to fight, also have fewer reasons to use cyberattacks against each other. The reverse is also true. In 2007, for example, Estonia and Russia had a heated disagreement over the relocation of a Soviet-era monument. This led to widespread distributed denial of service[3] attacks against Estonian banks, government institutions, media outlets, and telecommunication businesses (De Tomas Colatin 2019).

This paper employs logistic regression analysis to model the likelihood that pairs of states experience cyber incidents. Two independent datasets are used, so the results can be cross-checked. The model specifications are similar to the existing literature about the democratic and capitalist peace. This ensures comparability with previous research. There are two main findings in this article. The data supports the notions that both democracy and economic freedom significantly influence the likelihood of cyber conflict. The more democratic an interstate dyads is, the less prone it is to experiencing cyber incidents. The same is also true for economic freedom.

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[2] Note that Israel has confirmed the air raid but has not commented on any hacking involved (Schörnig 2019, 52).

[3] A distributed denial of service (DDoS) attack overloads a server with artificially generated requests. Basically, it temporarily blocks access to an online service like a website, banking services, communications platforms, etc. A DDoS attack does no lasting damage to a system but it disrupts functionality for the duration of the attack.

Literature Review

In the social sciences, cyber conflict is a very new field of study. There were some early publications, most notably a paper entitled *Cyberwar is Coming!* by Arquilla and Ronfeldt (1993). However, these early publications were highly speculative and bear limited relevance to today's realities.

Only after the discovery of Stuxnet in 2010, did the field gain in popularity. Stuxnet was a piece of malware that destroyed Uranium enrichment centrifuges in the Iranian nuclear facility of Natanz. It is believed to have been a cooperative effort by Israel and the US and it sparked widespread attention due to its unparalleled sophistication and impact. Social scientists finally took notice of the impact that cyber tools can have on the international community and a burgeoning field of research has emerged.

Much of the cyber conflict literature has focused on a number of select topics. One very prominent topic is deterrence and whether (or how) traditional concepts of deterrence are applicable in cyberspace. The deterrence doctrine played a central role in shaping our world during the Cold War. However, is it possible to deter cyberattacks? Many scholars argue that deterrence can play a (at least limited) role in cyber strategy (Brantly 2018; Chen 2017; Libicki 2009, 176; Lindsay 2015; McKenzie 2017, 13). However, the literature has identified several key problems.

The first problem is the so-called attribution problem. It is relatively easy to hide one's identity in cyberspace or even make it look like an attack came from an innocent third party. This makes it difficult to credibly identify the perpetrator of a cyberattack (Baram and Sommer 2019). However, if attribution is unreliable, then retaliation is less legitimate (Lindsay 2015) or outright impossible. This means that deterrence lacks credibility.Fortunately, very few actors are both capable and motivated to conduct high-impact cyberattacks. Additionally, as the costs imposed by an attack increase, the victims invest more into cyber forensics. Thus, it the attribution problem decreases at larger scales (Brantly 2018; Lindsay 2015). In fact, the absence of frequent high-profile cyberattacks suggests that deterrence does work at larger scales – just not for low-level incidents (Lindsay 2015).

Valeriano and Maness (2015, 4) disagree with this assessment. They argue that states exhibit strict restraint in cyberspace not because traditional deterrence works but because they fear negative blowback, collateral damage, harming civilians, and losing control over their weapons. Especially the last point is important because one needs to realize that cyber weapons are "use and lose" capabilities (Gartzke 2013). Releasing code into the world means that anyone can repurpose it (Valeriano and Maness 2015, 11) and that many systems are patched against that particular vulnerability. Repurposing malware is incredibly common and Russia, North Korea, and China have all used stolen NSA-code to carry out their own attacks (Perlroth, Sanger, and Shane 2019).Despite all this, deterrence is still the go-to cyber strategy for many states. Not all deterrence policies are the same though. Kania (2016) shows that the US relies primarily on declarations of deterrence, whereas China relies on frequent demonstrations of its capabilities. Which (if any) of these policies is more effective remains to be seen.

A second large stream of literature has explored how cyberattacks are used and how effective they are for different purposes. Buchanan (2020, 164) argues that cyberattacks are ill suited for signaling and, instead, are used for shaping. This means that states can employ cyber

tactics to shape and change realities[4] but that cyberattacks are not good for communicating resolve or intent. Others disagree and claim that cyberattacks can be used as signals that help two states avoid escalation (Valeriano, Jensen, and Maness 2018, 173; Valeriano and Maness 2019).What most researchers agree upon is that cyber operations are not effective tools for coercion. If one seeks to coerce a state into doing (or not doing) something, then cyberattacks are mostly ineffective (Gartzke 2013; Jensen and Valeriano 2019; Kostyuk and Zhukov 2019; Valeriano and Maness 2015, 219).

A third stream of literature has examined what these insights mean for the often-used term "cyberwar"? If cyber operations lack coercive potential, does it even make sense to talk about cyberwar? Most scholars agree that cyberwar falls into the realm of fiction. Thus, the term has fallen out of use since about 2016 (Gorwa and Smeets 2019). Most famous in this regard is Rid's paper "Cyber War Will Not Take Place", in which he states that: "Cyber war has never happened in the past. Cyber war does not take place in the present. And it is highly unlikely that cyber war will occur in the future" (Rid 2012, 6).

It should be mentioned that the US has declared that it would see cyberattacks as acts of war (Maness and Valeriano 2016) and that the Tallinn Manual[5] states that a cyberattack can be considered an armed attack once it causes injury, death, or destruction (Schmitt 2013, 106). This definition is, however, extremely vague and no cyber operation has ever been declared as an act of cyberwarfare (Reuter et al. 2019, 23). In practice, whether an incident is seen as an act of war remains a political decision (Shackelford 2014, 265) and states do not seem to be inclined to declare cyberwar.

The vast majority of publications about cyber conflict fall into one of several broad streams, such as the mentioned fields of deterrence, coercion, or cyberwarfare. Also, the majority of publications focus on theory and do not attempt to conduct qualitative or quantitative empirical research (Gorwa and Smeets 2019). However, some scholars have started to broaden the field by looking into new, less-prominent questions. For example, Baronchelli (2018) uses Social Network Analysis to identify patterns in interstate cyberattacks and shows that the US is the most frequent target, while China is the most active aggressor. Valeriano and Maness (2019) look at the role that mediation can play in resolving cyber conflicts. They conclude that mediation is ineffective in reducing cyber incidents or preventing spill-over into other forms of conflict. In a different publication, they more broadly examine how cyber incidents affect foreign policy interactions between two states (Maness and Valeriano 2016). They uncover that, surprisingly, they have almost no effect at all. Leach (2018) looks at nuclear stability and its impact on the cyber-relations between two states. He finds that (barring a few special circumstances), nuclear stability leads to cyber-instability. Finally, Kostyuk and Zhukov (2019) explore the relationship between cyber operations and physical violence during warfare. Looking at the conflicts in Ukraine and Syria, they find that cyber operatives on all sides appear to be working in their own bubble. Cyberattacks do not have any connection to physical events. Even more surprising, there is no reciprocity, meaning that cyber operations also have no connection to opposing cyberattacks.

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[4] For example, North Korea is estimated to get two out of its 28 billion annual GDP from hacking and cybercrime (Buchanan 2020, 270). That is more than 7% of its overall GDP.

[5] An assessment of the applicability of international law to cyberspace and cyberwarfare. Commissioned by NATO, the document was written by a group of experts and published in 2013. While not legally binding, it is still the most important document on the law of armed conflict and cyberspace.

The field of cyber conflict has many robust connections to traditional conflict studies. The emphasis on concepts like deterrence, warfare, and coercion shows how interconnected these fields of research are. However, the literature about the onset and causes of war has largely been ignored. No paper to date has sought to look at the connections between the emergence of cyber conflict versus conventional conflict. This article will start to fill this gap by connecting cyber conflict with the democratic and capitalist peace.

Most scholars of international relations view the democratic peace as one of the most empirically robust findings in the field (Dafoe 2012). This finding that democracies do not go to war with one another is supported by a swath of publications (e.g., Bremer 1992; Choi 2011; Dafoe and Russett 2013; Hayes 2011). However, it is disputed whether this correlation implies causation. Most causal mechanisms that link democracy and peace are flawed to some extent (Rosato 2003). Instead, some researchers argue that it is actually economic development and market integration that cause peace (Gartzke 2007; Gartzke and Hewitt 2010; Gartzke and Li 2003; Mousseau, Orsun, and Ungerer 2013; Weisiger and Gartzke 2016). This position is known as the liberal/capitalist peace.

Whether traditional peace is caused by democracy or capitalism is not the topic for this paper. However, the empirical reality of this peace-causing dynamic is undeniably important. It tells us that certain types of states do not attack certain other types of states. It can reasonably be expected that this dynamic may hold for cyberattacks as well. After all, if these dyads have no need for conventional conflict, they may also prefer to keep the peace in cyberspace. This connection is, as of yet, unexplored in the literature. Improving our understanding of this connection will allow researchers to develop a better understanding of *when* and *why* cyber conflict occurs.

Theory and Hypotheses

Before mapping out the theoretical arguments, I will define some key concepts used in this article. As explained in the literature review, the term "cyberwar" has rightfully been disused by most academics. This paper is interested in cyber conflict, which differs from cyberwar because the latter requires physical destruction, death, or injury (Shackelford 2014, 265). Cyber conflicts (also called cyber disputes) do not need to be physically destructive and are defined as "the use of computational technologies [...] in cyberspace for malevolent and/or destructive purposes in order to impact, change, or modify diplomatic or military interactions between entities" (Valeriano and Maness 2015, 32). This definition makes it very clear that cyber conflict has a political or military purpose. The motivations are more akin to war, which Clausewitz (1832, 44) has so famously described as "a mere continuation of politics by other means". The terms cyberattack, cyber incident, and cyber operation refer to individual operations (Valeriano and Maness 2015, 8).[6]

The scope conditions for this article are as follows: The initiators of an attack need to be states or entities directly linked to a government. Targets must also be government bodies or entities central to a state's functioning (e.g., critical infrastructure or defense industry). Private

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[6] Note that the distinction between isolated attacks and cyber conflicts is sometimes blurry. Individual cyberattacks can last for weeks at a time and they can have multiple targets. Fortunately, since most of the literature (including this paper) examines cyber conflicts on the incident level, this occasional blurriness is not particularly problematic.

hacktivism[7] may also be political, but it falls outside the boundaries of interstate cyber conflict. Also, I only examine states that have proven to be relevant for the study of cyber incidents. More about this will follow in the methodology section.

The democratic peace literature has proposed several mechanisms to explain the link between regime type and peace. The next paragraphs will outline the essence of these arguments and then I will explain, why they may also predict a democratic cyber peace. One mechanism is the audience costs argument. It states that democratic leaders will only use threats and force if the likelihood of success is high (Hayes 2011). The reason is that leaders who are seen backing down suffer negative audience costs. Countries with stronger domestic audiences (democracies) are, therefore, better able to signal their intentions and resolve because backing down is more costly to their leaders (Fearon 1994). A similar argument by Mesquita and colleagues (1999) also relies on audience perceptions. It states that democratic leaders are much more selective with whom they start a war because their political survival depends on larger winning coalitions and the (perceived) success of their policies.

Another prominent mechanism suggests that shared democratic norms increase trust and reduce the benefits of violence. Within democracies, conflicts are solved through compromise and cooperation (Maoz and Russett 1993). Democracies also externalize these norms to their interactions with other states. Hence, when two countries share these democratic norms, they are better able to resolve conflicts cooperatively and peacefully.

The main point here is that these mechanisms could also predict cyber peace. Audience costs also exist for cyber disputes. Many state-sponsored cyberattacks have targeted private businesses and civilians. For example, the infamous Equifax breach of 2017 has been attributed to China's People's Liberation Army (Barrett 2020). Almost 150 million Americans, which is nearly half of the country, had their personal information stolen in this one instance alone. The notion that cyber operations occur outside of public awareness is misguided. Therefore, audience costs may also predict peace in cyberspace. First, starting a messy cyber conflict carries the risk of upsetting citizens who will then be less inclined to re-elect their leaders. Second, audiences punish elected officials who back down from political demands and this is true regardless of the possibility of conventional or cyber conflict. Thus, the ability to send credible signals reduces the risk of miscalculations and, thereby, the need for hostilities.

Democratic norms have a similar effect. They raise trust between democratic leaders and increase their ability to resolve disputes through cooperation and compromise. This leads to stable bargaining outcomes. If democratic dyads are able to reach stable bargaining outcomes, they should have no need for cyberattacks. Cyber operations are costly, risky, and they always carry the danger of escalating a conflict (Valeriano and Maness 2015, 60). Therefore, leaders should prefer to resolve conflicts through bargaining. It follows that democratic dyads should be less likely to experience cyber incidents.

The reverse logic is as follows: Autocratic leaders suffer less from audience costs and are less constrained by democratic norms. Thus, it is more difficult for autocrats to build trust, prevent miscalculations, and negotiate stable agreements. Therefore, autocratic (or mixed) dyads are less capable of reaching stable bargaining outcomes. This increases the risk for hostilities, whether these are physical or digital.

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[7] Private individuals or groups that engage in cyberattacks to further a political or social agenda. The most famous example is the hacker-collective Anonymous.

Overall, I expect that democratic dyads are better able to reach stable bargaining solutions, when compared with autocratic and mixed dyads. This leads to fewer hostilities and fewer cyber incidents.

Hypothesis 1: *More democratic interstate dyads are less likely to experience cyber incidents.*

Next, it has been observed that economic development plays a role in predicting war, even though the direction of the effect is disputed (Boehmer and Sobek 2005; Gartzke 2007; Weisiger and Gartzke 2016). Does economic development also have an impact on the occurrence of cyberattacks between states? Valeriano and Maness (2015, 16) have argued that cyber weapons are so expensive and complex that only highly developed nations have the resources to develop and use them. Similarly, Gartzke (2013) has argued that cyber weapons usually need the backing of physical force (or the threat thereof) to be effective. Thus, he claimed that they are a particularly attractive tool for large states attacking a smaller opponent.

Given the sophistication required to engage in cyber conflict, it would be plausible to assume that only very developed dyads have the funds and the technical capabilities to do so. The cliché of the lone-wolf hacker who takes down a whole country's power grid from the comfort of his basement is a product of Hollywood.[8] Contrary to this view, some scholars have argued that cyberattacks are a means of leveling the playing field (Libicki 2009, 32). They enable smaller states to take on their larger rivals. An example of this is Iran, which has very capable cyber forces that frequently target the United States. However, "small" does not mean poorly developed. In many respects, Iran is a highly developed nation with advanced technological industry and good cyber capabilities. It is hard to imagine poorly developed nations using cyber operations to any real effect.[9]

Overall, it seems reasonable to assume that cyber incidents occur more frequently between wealthy and developed nations. This has two reasons. First, the attacker needs the technical sophistication and the resources to develop effective cyber weapons. Second, the target also needs systems worth attacking. If the target country does not heavily rely on connected digital systems, there are fewer targets worth hitting.[10] For the most part, cyber conflict should be the domain of developed states.

Hypothesis 2: *More economically developed dyads are more likely to experience cyber incidents.*

The final expectation concerns economic policy. States that are better integrated into the global market and that are more economically liberal are more pacific (Dafoe and Kelsley

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[8] Consider the immense efforts that went into developing the previously mentioned Stuxnet worm, which crippled an Iranian Uranium enrichment facility in 2010. The development of the malware reportedly took three years, cost upwards of $300 million, and even involved setting up a separate Uranium enrichment lab for testing purposes (Valeriano and Maness 2015, 152). Not many states have the capability, patience, and resources to pull off an attack like this.

[9] A prominent counterexample for this is North Korea, which is very poor and still boasts an impressive cyber army. However, I would argue that this case represents an outlier. It would be naive to take North Korea as a model case for overarching trends in the international system.

[10] Again, North Korea is an interesting outlier here. It has capable offensive cyber forces but the country itself is almost entirely offline. The country does not rely on many digital systems and, therefore, does not offer many targets for impactful cyberattacks.

2014; Gartzke 2007; Gartzke 2010, 75; Gartzke and Hewitt 2010). This is the key argument of the capitalist peace. There are several reasons for this claim. First, any form of conflict creates uncertainty, to which capital markets respond very negatively (Gartzke and Hewitt 2010). Therefore, leaders of countries with large and liberal capital markets seek to avoid risk and uncertainty wherever possible.

Second, for countries that are strongly integrated into the global economy, there is no such thing as "cheap" talk. Most political demands carry economic costs and, as mentioned above, markets respond to risk. Therefore, integration into the global economy enables credible signaling (Gartzke and Li 2003). By bearing economic costs, leaders can demonstrate their resolve. This form of market-mediated signaling (Dafoe and Kelsey 2014) facilitates bargaining.

I argue that these and similar mechanisms can also explain a capitalist cyber peace. First, leaders seek to avoid uncertainty due to the pressure they face from capital markets. Uncertainty is created by both conventional wars and by cyber conflicts alike. In fact, the effect may even be stronger for cyber disputes because of how vulnerable most businesses are to cyberattacks. Former FBI Director Robert Mueller famously illustrated this point by saying that "[t]here are only two types of companies: those that have been hacked and those that will be" (Cross 2018). Therefore, leaders of countries with powerful capital markets will seek to avoid cyber conflict just as they would conventional warfare.

Second, markets facilitate bargaining by allowing leaders to send credible signals. If leaders can resolve problems through bargaining, they have fewer incentives to initiate cyber hostilities. The third hypothesis states that economic openness and market integration will lead to fewer cyber incidents because leaders need to be responsive to open markets and are better able to reach bargaining outcomes.

Hypothesis 3: *More economically liberal state dyads are less likely to experience cyber incidents.*

Methodology

Data

The three hypotheses from the previous section will be tested against two different datasets. Cyber operations are often shrouded in secrecy, which can inhibit research. There have probably been several large cyberattacks that we, the public, are unaware of. This is an issue that the scientific community must acknowledge and live with.

However, not all is lost. Giles and Hartmann (2019) have observed that states are becoming increasingly transparent. They are disclosing many details about cyber operations that would have been classified in the past. Further, Baram and Sommer (2019) have argued that revealing attacks can even make strategic sense in some situations. Lastly, Valeriano and Maness (2015, 482; 2018) claim that (a) the attribution problem has been overstated and that (b) most attacks will be revealed eventually. There are simply too many parties involved, who have an incentive to go public (e.g., private cybersecurity contractors who want to advertise their achievements).

Despite all this, there is a real and undeniable danger that the publicly available data about cyberattacks is incomplete. Thus, I use two separate and very different datasets. By cross-checking the results, this allows me to better estimate how empirically robust my findings are.

The data only includes affected states, meaning that it only contains countries that were involved in at least one incident within the observation period. I construct all possible dyads from these states. This is one of the scope conditions for this article because I make no statement about countries that have never been involved in any sort of interstate cyber incident. Many dyads in the international system are "immune" because they are irrelevant to the study of conventional and cyber conflict alike. By only including states, which have demonstrated at least some potential for conflict, I focus on "relevant" dyads. [11] Note that the threshold for inclusion in the data is extremely low. Even if, for example, a state experienced no more than a brief and minor defacement of a government website back in 2005, it would still be included in the data. The advantage of this method is that it eliminates a large number of irrelevant cases from the data. The downside is that it also excludes those dyads that could potentially experience conflict and manage to refrain from conflictual behavior altogether. It is an ongoing question in conflict studies whether one should only focus on relevant dyads or whether all dyads need to be considered (Buhaug 2005). I acknowledge that there are good arguments for both sides. However, cyberattacks require very high technical sophistication and only very few states have ever used them. Therefore, I argue that it makes sense to focus on those dyads that have proven to be empirically relevant.

The main dataset I use is the *Cyber Operations Tracker*, short COT, from the Council on Foreign Relations (2020). The COT is continuously updated and contains all publicly known state-sponsored cyberattacks from 2005 onwards. For this paper, I use all operations up to 2019 that directly or indirectly target governments or militaries.[12] This means that I exclude observations where, for example, governments hack internal dissidents. I also drop cases that target organizations such as the EU or the UN. In the end, the dataset contains 220 cyberattacks involving 98 countries. In total, I get 66,975 dyad-year observations (49,234 after excluding cases with missing values on the independent variables).

Note that the COT sometimes codes multiple targets for an attack. This explains why there are more dyads than attacks in the data. A major reason for this is that malware often spreads to many (sometimes unintended) targets. One consequence of this is that viruses and worms will likely be overrepresented in the data (Gorwa and Smeets 2019).[13] A second consequence is that intended and unintended targets are equally present in the data. This means that the COT's coding reflects the dirty and often messy reality of cyber operations.

The second dataset I use is version 1.5 of the *Dyadic Cyber Incident and Campaign Dataset*, short DCID (Maness, Valeriano, and Jensen 2019). This dataset collects all publicly known cyber incidents for rival states from 2000 to 2016. The data generation is rigorous and involves double-verifying sources and even having a team of military officers double-check the coding (Valeriano and Maness 2018). The dataset contains 266 incidents and 26 states. In

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[11] Conventional conflict studies define "relevant" dyads as dyads that include neighboring states or at least one major power (Buhaug 2005). I argue that this operationalization makes little sense for cyberattacks because they are not bound by geographic constraints. The operationalization I use is a heuristic that seeks to approximate "relevance" in cyberspace.

[12] The COT contains operations that are state-sponsored but the targets can also be non-state entities. Categories in the dataset include "Private Sector", "Civil Society", "Government", and "Military". I only include observations for the last two categories in my analysis.

[13] Viruses and worms are types of malware that can spread on their own and, thus, infect many systems. This means that the data will contain more cases of these types of malware. An example for non-spreading cyberattacks are distributed denial of service attacks (DDoS). These attacks can only affect the intended target and cannot spread on their own. Thus, they could be underrepresented in the data.

total, I get 5,525 dyad-year observations (4,699 after excluding cases with missing data on the independent variables).

Note that this dataset codes "rival" states, which means that it only includes dyads with past animosity (Valeriano and Maness 2018). The authors claim that cyber conflict is confined to rivals and that there were no noteworthy cyberattacks outside of rivals (Valeriano and Maness 2015, 211). This narrow focus has the advantage of bringing order to the messy world of cyber operations. In reality, however, attacks often go awry and hit several (unintended) targets. As mentioned above, the COT accounts for this, whereas the DCID does not capture such events.

Overall, the DCID offers more precision and scrutinous coding. However, the fact that only rival dyads are included may reduce reliability by narrowly focusing on a specific subset of states. It is unclear whether lessons learned from the data can be generalized to the entire international community. Also, this limitation dramatically shrinks the number of total observations. On the positive side, validity of the data should be high because of its strict coding rules and because it excludes unintended consequences. Thereby, it captures the actual intentions of states and not random accidents.

The COT data, on the other hand, more accurately reflects the messy reality of cyber incidents. It includes non-rival dyads and also captures unintended consequences. This may reduce validity because it cannot distinguish between intentional and unintentional state behavior. On the upside, the data is likely to be much more reliable and it has almost eight times the number of dyad-year observations. Therefore, the COT is used as the main dataset. The DCID with its more restrictive assumptions is perfect for performing a robustness check.

Dependent Variable and Model Selection

The dependent variable is a binary indicator measuring whether or not a cyber incident occurred for that particular observation. It takes the value 1 if an incident occurred and 0 otherwise.[14] The unit of observation is dyad-year. Out of the 66,975 observations in the COT-data (after cleaning), 501 experienced an incident. In the DCID-data, the incident rate is 129 out of 5,525 observations.[15]

Due to the dichotomous nature of the dependent variable, this paper will use a logistic regression model to test the hypotheses. This way, I explore which independent variables raise or lower the odds of a dyad experiencing a cyber incident.[16]

Independent Variables

The first independent variable measures how democratic or autocratic a country dyad is. This is done with the Varieties of Democracy data (Coppedge et al. 2021; Pemstein et al. 2021). The electoral democracy index (*v2x_polyarchy*) offers a concise measure of the degree to which a country fulfills the ideal of an electoral democracy. It ranges from 0 (low) to 1 (high).

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[14] For cyber operations that spanned more than one year, only the year of the initiation is coded as an event. The reason is that this paper is primarily interested in the initiation of conflict.

[15] Note that missing data points for some independent variables reduce the overall number of usable observations for both datasets.

[16] Due to the nature of the dependent variable, the direction of an attack cannot be modeled. This is not a problem, however, as the research focus lies on interstate dyads and not monadic factors that lead to aggression/victimization. Using this non-directional design is the norm in the literature about the democratic and capitalist peace.

Hypothesis one predicts that more democratic dyads are less likely to experience cyber incidents. $Democracy_{LOW}$ is the lower democracy scores in the state dyad. This is the typical measure of how democratic a dyad is. It is based on the weak-link-assumption, which says that conflict is primarily driven by the less restrained party (Choi 2011; McDonald 2009, 84; Oneal and Russett 1997). In other words, the weak-link-assumption says that the state with the lower regime score dictates how likely conflict is in the dyad. As the variable $Democracy_{LOW}$ increases, the dyad becomes more democratic overall. Thus, according to hypothesis one, I expect a negative impact on the likelihood of cyberattacks.

The second hypothesis predicts that dyads with higher economic development are more likely to experience cyber incidents. I measure economic development using GDP per capita (World Bank 2020). Since the data is heavily skewed to the right, I use the natural log of the variable. In line with the weak-link-assumption, the lower of the two development scores is used to proxy the overall development level of the dyad. If hypothesis two is correct, the effect of GDP per capita should be positive, meaning that higher levels of development make cyber incidents more likely.

The third hypothesis predicts that more economically liberal dyads are less likely to experience cyber incidents. To proxy economic liberalism, I use the Index of Economic Freedom (Heritage Foundation 2020). The variable is called $EconomicFreedom_{LOW}$ and it measures the lower of the dyad's two scores. The reason I am only using the lower score is, again, the weak-link-assumption. If hypothesis three is correct, the effect should be negative, meaning that more economic freedom leads to fewer cyberattacks.

Control Variables

The model will control for several likely confounders. First, I add a second democracy-based variable that controls for political distance. $Democracy_{DISTANCE}$ measures the political distance between both countries *[$Democracy_{HIGH}$ − $Democracy_{LOW}$ = $Democracy_{DISTANCE}$]*. The reason is that larger regime type differences have been found to be destabilizing (Oneal and Russett 1997; Weisiger and Gartzke 2016).[17] Thus, if regime type played a role in predicting cyber conflict, one would expect a positive coefficient, meaning that more political distance would lead to more conflict.

Second, the *MajorPower* variable indicates whether or not a dyad contains a major power. It is a dummy, based on data from the Correlates of War Project (2017). This variable is used in conflict research because major powers are more frequently involved in conflicts. Valeriano and Maness (2015, 100) argue that the same is true in cyberspace and the data also shows that major powers are more frequently involved in cyber incidents. Thus, it is necessary to control for this influence.

The *Alliance* dummy is constructed from the Correlates of War Project (Gibler 2009) and measures whether the two states in a dyad share a formal alliance.[18] The reasoning is simple: States probably do not attack their allies very often.

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[17] There is an ongoing debate whether one should measure political distance through the regime score difference (Choi 2011; Mousseau, Orsun, and Ungerer 2013, 129) or proxy it by including the higher of the two regime scores (Dafoe and Russett 2013, 114; Gartzke 2007; Oneal and Russett 1997). I use the former because it provides a more accurate estimate of the actual regime distance.

[18] Since the formal alliance data (version 4.1) is only available until 2014, I extended it to cover the whole observation period of my data. The alliances were stable for the complete available duration prior to 2014, so I do not expect that significant alterations occurred after that either. Still, if there were alterations between 2014 and 2019, this paper cannot account for them.

The *MilEx~DISTANCE~* variable measures the difference in military expenditure (in millions USD). This proxies the ratio of conventional military power between the two countries. Controlling for capability differences is standard in the conventional conflict literature and it makes equally as much sense when studying cyber conflict. The reason is that conventional capabilities may modulate how well states can use cyber weapons (Gartzke 2013). States with stronger conventional forces may be more confident in using cyber operations compared with their weaker counterparts because they have less to fear from escalation. The data is available from the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (2020). The variable is skewed to the right, so I use the natural log.

The final commonly used control variable, *Neighbors*, indicates whether two states are in geographic proximity with each other. I use the Varieties of Democracy (*e_regiongeo*) data to measure this variable (Coppedge et al. 2021; Pemstein et al. 2021). The reason for this control is that geographically closer states have many more reasons to fight (territory, historical resentment, resources, etc.) than distant states. This likely translates into cyberspace as well. Valeriano and Maness (2015, 213) have found that regionalism dominates cyber conflict. Of course, there are prominent examples of distant states engaging in cyber disputes (the United States and China, for example). Besides a few high-profile cases, however, it is unlikely that most countries have many reasons to target a state half-way around the globe. Therefore, I control for geographic proximity.

One final point to note is that I do not control for time. As Kostyuk and Zhukov (2019) have shown, cyberattacks do not follow predictable patterns. Even in wartime, cyberattacks do not provoke other cyberattacks as retaliation. Also, in the data, there does not appear to be any temporal clustering of incidents. Thus, there is no theoretical or practical reason to control for time effects in my model.

Empirical Results

Results and Discussion

This section presents the results of the regression for the COT-dataset. I interpret the coefficients and decide whether or not to reject the hypotheses. The next section will then test the robustness of these findings. To do this, I estimate the same model again but this time using the DCID-dataset. If both models show similar results, this is an indication that the findings are somewhat empirically robust (at least with these model specifications and the publicly available data).

Table (1) shows the results of the regression for the COT-dataset.[19] The main independent variables are added step-by-step. As I add more variables, the number of observations will slightly fall due to missing values. Model A-1 only includes the controls and the two variables measuring regime type. Model B-1 adds in *GDPperCapita~LOW~* and Model C-1 adds in *EconomicFreedom~LOW~*. Model C-1 is the main model, which is used to test the hypotheses.

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[19] Odds ratios, confidence intervals, and p-values are printed in table (2) and will be discussed at a later point.

Table 1 Logistic Regression Results (COT-Dataset)

	Dependent variable:		
	Cyber Incidents		
	Model A-1	Model B-1	Model C-1
DemocracyLOW	-2.293***	-2.580***	-1.534***
	(0.262)	(0.280)	(0.310)
GDPperCapitaLOW (log)		0.258***	0.240***
		(0.051)	(0.051)
EconomicFreedomLOW			-0.045***
			(0.004)
DemocracyDISTANCE	0.233	-0.046	0.175
	(0.230)	(0.246)	(0.251)
MajorPower	1.418***	1.456***	1.412***
	(0.109)	(0.115)	(0.117)
Alliance	-0.948***	-1.062***	-1.040***
	(0.316)	(0.318)	(0.318)
MilExDISTANCE (log)	0.707***	0.733***	0.760***
	(0.038)	(0.041)	(0.042)
Neighbors	1.325***	1.292***	1.285***
	(0.147)	(0.154)	(0.159)
Constant	-11.822***	-14.167***	-12.219***
	(0.439)	(0.586)	(0.623)
Observations	53,864	50,207	49,234
Log Likelihood	-1,918.914	-1,709.164	-1,650.515
Akaike Inf. Crit.	3,851.827	3,434.329	3,319.030
Note:			*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Hypothesis one predicted that more democratic dyads would be less likely to experience cyber incidents. *Democracy$_{LOW}$* is negative and significant at the 99% confidence level. This means that more democratic dyads do appear to be less likely to engage in cyber operations. Thus, the data appears to support hypothesis one.

Note that *Democracy$_{LOW}$* maintains its significance, even after adding in the two economy-focused variables. This means that there appears to be something akin to the democratic peace in cyberspace. The capitalist peace argues that the effect of democracy on peace is spurious and that capitalism is the real explanation behind the democratic peace. At least for cyberspace, this does not appear to be the case. If the capitalist peace were true, the significance of *Democracy$_{LOW}$* should have gone away after adding in *GDPperCapita$_{LOW}$* and

EconomicFreedom$_{LOW}$. Since it remained significant, there does appear to be a genuine effect of democracy on the likelihood of interstate cyber incidents.

Hypothesis two predicted a positive effect of economic development. *GDPperCapita$_{LOW}$* is positive and significant at the 99% confidence level. This means that hypothesis two is supported by this data. Dyads with higher economic development are more likely to engage in cyber operations. This confirms a previous finding by Valeriano and Maness (2015, 16), namely that cyber power appears to be the domain of wealthy, developed nations.

Finally, hypothesis three stated that more economically liberal dyads are less likely to experience cyber incidents. The coefficient for *EconomicFreedom$_{LOW}$* is negative and significant at the 99% confidence level. This means that this hypothesis is supported and that more economic freedom corresponds to a decreased likelihood of cyberattacks within a dyad. This, coupled with the effect of economic development, means that the capitalist peace can also be observed in cyberspace. However, it does not replace the democratic peace. Rather, they appear to complement each other. Regime type and economic factors both have genuine effects on how likely an interstate dyad is to engage in cyber operations.

It is always beneficial to also look at the control variables in a model. *Democracy$_{DISTANCE}$* is insignificant across all three models. The existing literature finds that *Democracy$_{DISTANCE}$* is usually positive because more political distance leads to more conflict. This effect does not seem to exist in cyberspace. It appears that regime type has different effects in cyberspace and the physical world. While dyads with high political distance are extremely conflict-prone in the conventional domain, this trend does not carry over into cyberspace.

The *MajorPower* control variable is positive and significant (99% confidence level) across all three models. This means that dyads containing major powers are more likely to experience cyber incidents. The opposite effect is observed for *Alliance*. Unsurprisingly, I find that states that share a formal alliance are significantly less likely (99% confidence level) to confront each other in cyberspace.

The coefficient for *MilEx$_{DISTANCE}$* is positive and significant at the 99% confidence level. This means that conventional power inequalities exacerbate cyber conflicts. This suggests one of two possible conclusions. First, cyberspace may be used by weaker states to level the playing field against their stronger opponents (Libicki 2009, 32). Small states that are facing a more powerful rival may use cyberattacks as a less risky substitute for physical warfare. Alternatively, more powerful states may be able to employ cyberattacks more effectively against smaller foes (Gartzke 2013) and may do so more often. Since my model contains no information about which state in a dyad initiated an incident, it cannot be said which of these arguments is true. However, there is definitely some potential for future works to examine how cyberattacks are used on a tactical level.

Finally, the *Neighbors* variable is positive and significant (99% confidence level). States from the same geographic region are more likely to attack each other in cyberspace. This is not surprising because geographically proximate states have many more reasons to fight than states that are half-way around the globe. This also confirms Valeriano and Maness's (2015, 213) finding that cyber conflict is usually a regional phenomenon.

So far, I have only discussed effects in terms of significance and direction. The reason is that the coefficients for logistic regressions are not substantively meaningful in any intuitive way. Thus, table (2) presents the odds ratios, confidence intervals, and exact p-values for Model C-1.

Table (2) Indicators for Model C-1 (COT-Dataset)

Predictors	Cyber Incidents		
	Odds Ratios	CI	p
Intercept	0.00	0.00 – 0.00	**<0.001**
Democracy (LOW)	0.22	0.12 – 0.40	**<0.001**
GDPperCapitaLOW (log)	1.27	1.15 – 1.41	**<0.001**
Economic Freedom (LOW)	0.96	0.95 – 0.96	**<0.001**
DemocracyDISTANCE	1.19	0.73 – 1.96	0.486
Major Power	4.11	3.27 – 5.19	**<0.001**
Alliance	0.35	0.18 – 0.63	**0.001**
MilEx (DISTANCE + log)	2.14	1.97 – 2.32	**<0.001**
Neighbors	3.62	2.63 – 4.91	**<0.001**
Observations	49234		
R^2 Tjur	0.089		

The odds ratios can be interpreted to get the effect sizes. For example, a one-unit increase in *Democracy$_{LOW}$* lowers the risk of cyberattacks by about 78%. Similarly, a one-unit increase in *EconomicFreedom$_{LOW}$* lowers the risk of experiencing an incident by a factor of 1.04 (=1/0.96) or 4%. Given the variable's scale of 0 to 100, this effect is not as small as it appears on first glance. Raising a dyad's economic freedom by about a third of the scale (by 30 points) would increase the odds of *not* having a cyber incident by a factor of 3.320 or more than 300%.[20]

Since *GDPperCapita$_{LOW}$* is log-transformed, it requires a little bit of extra math to interpret intuitively. Increasing GDP per capita by 10%, raises the odds of a cyber incident by a factor of 1.023 or 2.3%.[21] Increasing GDP by 50% increases the odds of a cyber incident by a factor of 1.102 or 10.2%.[22] For a relatively rare event, this effect size can be quite meaningful.

Overall, I find that the COT-data supports all three hypotheses. The effects of democracy, economic development, and economic freedom are all statistically significant and substantively meaningful. This means that these variables appear to have tangible impacts on the likelihood of cyber disputes. Democracy and capitalism both seem to reduce cyber incidents, whereas economic development increases the likelihood of cyber incidents. The question remaining is how robust these findings are. The next section will repeat this analysis but using the DCID-data. It checks whether the results can be replicated with this different dataset.

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[20] 3.320 = 1 / [exp(-0.04 * 30)]

[21] 1.023 = exp[ln(1.27) * ln(1.1)]

[22] 1.102 = exp[ln(1.27) * ln(1.5)]

Robustness Check

This section replicates the analysis using the DCID-dataset. Table (3) presents the results of this replicated regression model. The specifications for Models A-2, B-2, and C-2 are equivalent to Models A-1, B-1, and C-1 respectively. Note that the very limited nature of the DCID data leads to a reduced number of observations. Thus, the results of this robustness check should be taken with appropriate caution. As before, the main model of interest is Model C-2.

Table (3) Logistic Regression Results (DCID-Dataset)

	Dependent variable:		
	Cyber Incidents		
	Model A-2	Model B-2	Model C-2
DemocracyLOW	-2.404***	-2.565***	-1.521**
	(0.553)	(0.578)	(0.644)
GDPperCapitaLOW (log)		0.088	0.096
		(0.094)	(0.093)
EconomicFreedomLOW			-0.040***
			(0.008)
DemocracyDISTANCE	0.590	0.413	0.759
	(0.531)	(0.544)	(0.561)
MajorPower	0.619***	0.665***	0.581***
	(0.204)	(0.208)	(0.210)
Alliance	-0.158	-0.132	-0.102
	(0.376)	(0.377)	(0.380)
MilExDISTANCE (log)	0.567***	0.537***	0.548***
	(0.074)	(0.077)	(0.077)
Neighbors	1.748***	1.702***	1.846***
	(0.222)	(0.229)	(0.237)
Constant	-9.770***	-10.054***	-8.560***
	(0.865)	(1.004)	(1.041)
Observations	4,862	4,699	4,699
Log Likelihood	-450.613	-439.869	-429.114
Akaike Inf. Crit.	915.226	895.738	876.227
Note:			*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

The coefficients for *Democracy_{LOW}* are significant across all three models. The DCID-dataset, therefore, shows support for the first hypothesis at the 95% confidence level. This is not true for *Democracy_{DISTANCE}*. The signs point in the correct directions but the data does not support the idea that larger regime type differences have an effect on cyber conflict.

Hypothesis three is also supported by the data. *EconomicFreedom_{LOW}* is negative and significant at the 99% confidence level. As with the first dataset, this suggests that economic freedom reduces cyber conflict on a dyadic level.

The only main variable that loses significance is *GDPperCapita_{LOW}*. It fails to surpass the 95% significance threshold in all models. This means that hypothesis two is not supported by this data. This may be due to the smaller sample size of the DCID data or it may be indicative of the proliferation of cyber tools to less-developed states. Either way, with this data and these model specifications, the support for hypothesis two is not robust. There is no sufficient evidence to conclude that more economic development would lead to more cyber incidents on the dyadic level.

As before, the coefficients for *MajorPower, MilEx_{DISTANCE},* and *Neighbors* are significant at the 99% confidence level. This means that these effects are robust across both datasets. The *Alliance* variable, however, loses its significance completely. This is puzzling as it contradicts the assumption that allied states would refrain from attacking one another. Given that the DCID data only includes 26 states, however, this conclusion should be taken with extreme caution. This result may very easily be an artifact of the small sample size and self-selection effects into the sample. Further research is needed to shed light on this outcome.

Overall, the empirical section of this paper has led to a number of interesting observations. First, the COT-data supports all three hypotheses. Regime type and economic factors seem to have genuine effects on the likelihood of cyber incidents. As *Democracy_{LOW}* and *EconomicFreedom_{LOW}* remained strongly significant in both tests, I can conclude that there does appear to be a democratic as well as a capitalist peace in cyberspace.

Hypothesis two is supported by the COT-data but not by the DCID-data. This means that the effect of economic development does not appear to be robust. However, given the limitations of the DCID dataset and the small number of observations, one should not draw any definite conclusions yet. As more data becomes available, this and other results may still change.

With regards to the controls, I found three robust effects. Power disparities, the presence of a major power, and geographic proximity all seem to influence the likelihood of conflict in cyberspace. Only the effect of military alliances was not robust.

Conclusion

This paper sought to answer the question: Does the democratic or capitalist peace exist in cyberspace? Few researchers have explored the similarities between cyber conflict and conventional conflict. As I have argued in this paper, many of the mechanisms that link democracy and/or capitalism to peace could also explain peace in cyberspace.

The hypotheses in this article drew from existing insights about conventional conflicts and built upon the democratic and capitalist peace literature. These insights were then applied to cyberspace. The first hypothesis predicted that more democratic dyads would be more pacific. The second stated that economic development makes dyads more likely to experience

cyber incidents. The third hypothesis predicted that more economically liberal dyads would be less conflict-prone.

There are a few main takeaways from this paper: First, both datasets support the notion that the democratic and capitalist peace exist in cyberspace. Democracy and economic freedom have statistically robust impacts on the likelihood of cyber incidents. The more democratic a state dyad is, the less likely it is to engage in cyber operations. The same is true for economic freedom. The second key takeaway is that economic development does not appear to have a significant impact on cyber conflict. At least with the data and model specifications used in this paper, the expected effect was not robust. This suggests that cyber operations may not be a phenomenon exclusive to highly developed nations. Instead, there may be a proliferation of such tactics used by or against less-developed countries. The intersection between economic development and cyber operations certainly poses exciting questions for future research.

Overall, this article has shown that the dynamics of cyber conflict and traditional warfare follow similar patterns. Democracy and capitalism seem to influence which state dyads are more likely to experience cyber conflicts. Also, a number of the control variables (the presence of a major power, military power differences, and regionalism) had the same effects as they do for physical warfare. All of this taken together means that cyber conflicts are not a phenomenon that should be viewed in complete isolation from traditional warfare. The dyads that are particularly vulnerable to traditional conflict appear to be similar to the ones that are prone to experiencing cyber incidents.

This paper is a very early attempt in bridging the gap between the study of cyber disputes and the study of conventional conflicts. It is the first study that asked whether democracy and capitalism influence how conflict-prone a dyad is in cyberspace. It is also one of the few quantitative papers in a field that is dominated by qualitative designs (Gorwa and Smeets 2019). Hopefully, future researchers will find it worthwhile to build upon the insights gained here and explore more of the idiosyncrasies of interstate conflict in cyberspace. The more we understand about the *when* and *why* of cyber conflict, the better we may be able to prevent cyberattacks in the future.

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Tragedy at Tham Piu: Examining Mass Violence Against Civilians in the Secret War

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Author Biography

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Abstract

Almost fifty years after the end of the Secret War, tactics used by the Central Intelligence Agency and the United States Air Force during covert bombing operations continue to have devastating effects on human security and development in Laos, and strategic implications for United States military engagement globally. This article explores whether existing theory regarding strategic violence against civilians can account for the case of the "Tham Piu massacre" in 1968, considered locally to be a war crime, for which the United States has never claimed responsibility. Analysis points to multiple distinct causal mechanisms which may have been present, including a *loyalty logic*, indiscriminate violence, and reckless endangerment of civilians. Further research is needed to determine the legal and political implications of the Tham Piu massacre, and how the logic(s) which motivated this attack may be better understood to prevent similar tragedies in the context of current US automated warfare.

Keywords: Violence against Civilians, Strategic Violence, Laos, Secret War

Introduction

> *"In the region of Xieng Khouang there came to be a lake of blood and destruction. For there were airplanes and the sound of bombs throughout the sky and hills. All we had were the holes." – Refugee from the Plain of Jars*[23]

Although violence against civilians in the context of war is prohibited by customary international law, it is so widespread that understanding this phenomenon remains crucial for peacebuilding researchers and practitioners alike. The United States military in particular displays an unsettling pattern of violence against civilians, especially when

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[23] From *Voices from the Plain of Jars: Life Under an Air War, p. 81*

engaged in clandestine operations, a legacy some would argue began with the Secret War[24] in Laos[25] (Kurlantzick, 2017, p. 11). The United States dropped 2.1 million tons of lethal ordnance on Laos between the years of 1964 and 1973 alone, killing tens of thousands of innocent civilians (Khamvongsa & Russell, 2009, p. 281). Unexploded ordnance (UXO) still contaminates roughly half of the country (Khamvongsa & Russell, 2009, p. 282). And by a recent "conservative" estimate, at least 600,000 gallons of herbicides such as Agent Orange and the even deadlier Agent Purple were also unleashed on the fields, forests, and villages of Laos (Black, 2021). Explosives and chemical weapons alike have now endangered four generations of Laotians and claimed the lives of over 20,000 people since the end of the war alone—many of whom were not alive when the bombs, napalm, and chemical defoliants originally fell (Peachey, 2016, p. 37; Black, 2021; Dunst, 2019).

And yet, the United States Air Force (USAF) recently published a volume dedicated to praising and preserving the history of USAF conduct during the Secret War in Laos with the purpose of training today's American soldiers involved in "irregular warfare," (Celeski, 2019, p. xvi). Not only have USAF tactics during the Secret War taken an extreme toll on civilians in Laos for almost 70 years, but these tactics will also inform current and future US military tactics. Because current leadership of the USAF look to the Secret War as a positive example to guide future US military strategy in "irregular warfare," (Celeski, 2019) continued scholarship on the motivations for US mass violence against civilians in Laos is of crucial importance. Likewise, given that the US has a unique history of covert interventionism in the political affairs of other states, study of the historical foundations and legacies of covert operations waged by the US military and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) is warranted.

This article will therefore explore the question: *what logic(s) motivated the United States to deliberately target civilians in Laos in the context of the Secret War?*

To contribute to this important line of inquiry, I explore the assertion made by American whistleblower, Fred Branfman, that the USAF and CIA deliberately attacked civilians in Laos in the context of the Secret War with the strategic aim of weakening the communist Pathet Lao[26] insurgency—and by extension communist advances in Southeast Asia (Branfman, 2013). One particularly deadly attack is known locally as the "Tham Piu massacre," named for the cave in Xiengkhouang province where a single US airstrike is said to have killed between 200-400 civilians in November 1968 (Tappe, 2013, p. 434; Kiernan, 2012, p. 240). According to USAF documents (see figure 2), this case was located within territory held by the Pathet Lao at the time of the bombing (Anthony & Sexton, 1993) and was possibly thought to be a Pathet Lao military hospital (Kiernan, 2012).

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[24] The term "Secret War" refers to the circumstances of US engagement in Laos, which was done covertly via the CIA rather than officially declaring war against the Pathet Lao or an alliance with the anti-communist forces in the context of Laos' ongoing civil war. It is often stated that the CIA kept operations in Laos secret from the US congress, but the extent to which US lawmakers were unaware of covert operations in Laos is debated. In Laos, the Secret War is often referred to as the 'American War.'

[25] The official name of Laos since 1975 is *The Lao People's Democratic Republic* (Lao PDR). However, *Laos* is commonly used in English for grammatical ease. *Laos* will be used throughout this paper to refer to the country which is now the *Lao PDR*.

[26] Pathet Lao literally translates to "The Lao Nation," and is the name of the military and political movement to establish an independent socialist state in Laos. The movement was born in the mid 1900's under French colonialism and culminated in the creation of the present-day Lao PDR.

Further, it is reported by local accounts to have been a shelter for civilians from the ongoing US bombing campaign (see Appendix 2 & 3).

Previous scholarship has suggested various explanations for the strategic use of violence against civilians with the ultimate goal of weakening enemy combatants (Race, 1973; Kalyvas, 2006). In this article, I propose that the perception of civilian loyalty to enemy combatants played a central role in driving strategic mass violence against civilians. This mechanism, introduced by Schwartz and Straus (2018) is in line with Fred Branfman's assertion.

This mechanism is clarified, elaborated upon, and tested via process tracing of declassified US military records and other historical accounts of the Secret War in order to shed light on the possible motivation(s) for the Tham Piu attack. The results of this analysis cannot determine the presence or absence of the specific causal mechanism in question due to a lack of reliable firsthand information from USAF officials, indicating a need for further primary research. Not only does such an investigation have the potential to make practical and theoretical contributions to the field of peace and conflict studies, but examination of the Tham Piu massacre also has legal and historical implications due to this attack's disputed status as a war crime.

Theory

It is widely accepted that violence against civilians in the context of armed conflict and civil war can be explained by strategic objectives of the perpetrators (Kalyvas, 2006; Valentino, 2014; Schwartz & Straus, 2018, p. 222). This theoretical framework for understanding such violence is in contrast to earlier trends in literature attributing phenomena such as mass killings of civilians, genocide, and terrorism to "barbarism," (Kalyvas, 2006, p. 52) and base human desires such as seeking revenge or ethnic hatred (Berkeley, 2001; Frijda, 1994, p. 264; Valentino, 2014, p. 92). Less consensus exists relative to the level of specificity on types of violence against civilians, and especially the corresponding hypothesized mechanisms. The most common forms of deliberate violence against civilians can be grouped into two major categories, selective and indiscriminate (Kalyvas, 2006). Both are aimed at controlling the behavior of civilian populations for the ultimate strategic aims of establishing territorial control and other advantages over enemy combatants (Race, 1973, p. 146; Kalyvas, 2006, p. 119).

Selective Violence

Kalyvas (2006) indicates broad consensus among both combatants and scholars that selective violence is "the most efficient way to deter defection" (Kalyvas, 2006, p. 144). Defection in this sense refers to a transfer of support to the rival combatant group. He also differentiates selective violence from indiscriminate violence on the basis that it provides an incentive for civilians to modify their behaviors in an attempt to guarantee their own safety (Kalyvas, 2006, p. 144). The motivation behind using violence and the threat of violence to control civilian populations is attributed to the strategic need for control of the civilian population, either for their material support, or at a minimum to prevent civilians from supporting enemy combatants (Tilly, 1978, p. 201; Jones & Molnar, 1966, p. 25). However, selective targeting of civilians based on their allegiance to or sympathy for a combatant group is complicated by the dubious nature of both defining and establishing such allegiances. Accurately identifying the preferences of civilian populations based upon

behavior is challenging in the limited and often compromised intelligence scenarios created by conflict environments (Kalyvas, 2006, p. 101). Furthermore, such preferences or loyalties do not exist in a perfect fixed dichotomy, but rather on a dynamic spectrum (Petersen, 2001, p. 8). Government militaries facing "major guerilla insurgencies" are also theorized to have a particular incentive to target the potential civilian base of support for enemy combatants, due in part to the aforementioned issues in differentiating between combatants, active collaborators, and non-collaborating civilians (Velentino, Huth, & Balch-Lindsay, 2004). This tendency may lead to decreasingly selective—i.e. increasingly indiscriminate—forms of violence against civilians, whether they actually support the enemy or not.

Indiscriminate Violence

By contrast, indiscriminate violence is characterized as being among the most hazardous wartime strategies (Lichbach, 1987, p. 287; Kalyvas, 2006, p. 151). But though morally repugnant and potentially counterproductive, Kalyvas (2006) argues that there are still several logics motivating indiscriminate violence against civilians. One logic rests on the premise that if the enemy combatants or "guilty" civilians who truly support them cannot be accurately identified, any "innocent" civilians who are in some way associated with the enemy may be targeted to pressure civilians and combatants alike into changing behavior or allegiance (Kalyvas, 2006, p. 150). Perhaps because of the aforementioned limitations in determining the true identities and allegiances of populations in the midst of civil war, perpetrators often take a zero-sum approach to calculations of civilian loyalty and collaboration with enemy combatants (Kalyvas, 2006).

The 'loyalty logic'

In their 2018 article, Schwartz and Straus attempt to bring specificity to the broad claim that violence against civilians is often strategic by utilizing a "mechanism-based approach" to probe this relationship (Schwartz & Straus, 2018, p. 223). They proceed to test four causal mechanisms based in existing theory, including logics of coercion, deterrence, civilian loyalty, and genocide. These mechanisms are explored via an empirical case study of Operation Sofía, a specific campaign during the Guatemalan civil war (Schwartz & Straus, 2018, p. 223).

One such mechanism is of particular relevance to the case of the Secret War in Laos, as it links selective targeting of civilians to the perception of perpetrators that a civilian population is sufficiently loyal to enemy combatants that they are considered "functionally equivalent" to the enemy (Schwartz & Straus 2018, 230). I therefore refer to this mechanism as the *loyalty logic*. Schwartz and Straus (2018) also imply that conflation of civilians with enemy combatants alone cannot account for mass violence, violence against the conflated civilian/enemy combatant group must also be a strategic attempt to weaken enemy combatants in some capacity (p. 224).

This logic is consistent with the few official statements by US military officials directly involved in the Secret War regarding the strategic agendas for the USAF, CIA, and Royal Lao Army (RLA) against their Pathet Lao, South Vietnamese and Soviet Union opponents. While US officials, both military and political, have cautiously avoided a direct admission of targeting civilians in the Secret War (Branfman, 2013), representatives did speak publicly in the late sixties describing strategy in Laos to be "to destroy the physical and social infrastructure of Pathet Lao held areas" (Chomsky, 1971, p. 37).

Research Design

Methodology and Case Selection

This inquiry seeks to examine the causal mechanism at work in a pre-determined case, the Tham Piu massacre in Laos. Therefore theory selection is based on the empirical elements of this case, rather than basing case selection upon theory. The method of process tracing is useful to operationalize and analyze the explanatory power of the causal mechanism in question, the *loyalty logic.* Thus, theory-testing process tracing is used to identify whether the *loyalty logic* holds explanatory power in the case of the Tham Piu massacre.

The 'Loyalty logic' interpreted

Schwartz and Straus do not directly indicate an independent variable (IV) and dependent variable (DV) in their investigation of Operation Sofía. However, I interpret that the IV is the strategic objective, and the DV the phenomenon of mass violence against civilians (Schwartz & Straus, 2018, p. 223). I have assigned summary titles to these indirectly presented variables:

IV: Strategic objective

DV: Mass Violence

In terms of the IV and DV in this case, there is a well-documented strategic military objective associated with US Air Force bombings in Laos during the Secret War (Kurlantzick 2017, 3; Anthony & Sexton 1993; Khamvongsa & Russell 2009, 287), determining the presence of the IV. Additionally, a geological survey of Lao caves found damage and markings within Tham Piu consistent with a bombing (Kiernan, 2012, p. 240). Likewise, presence of the DV is evidenced by documentation from multiple sources of the high number of civilian casualties associated with this attack (Tappe 2013, 434; Kiernan 2012, 240).[27]

Strategic Objective

Schwartz and Straus (2018) define a strategic objective for violence as "strategic in the sense that the purpose of violence is to advance the military or political objectives of those who commit the violence" (225). This strategic purpose is then operationalized as contextualized knowledge about the goals of the perpetrator military, drawing inferences based on known conflict dynamics at the time of the mass violence, and documentation regarding the violence in military reports (where available). In this investigation, the IV will be measured in terms of presence or absence of evidence for the perception of functional equivalency (Schwartz & Straus, 2018, p. 224) between Lao civilians and Pathet Lao combatants, as documented in military reports, news articles, and interviews or public statements by top US government and military officials. This measurement is subject to variance in terms of reliability depending on the subjective interpretation of data, and possible validity issues depending on the accuracy of the source.

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[27] See also Appendix 1 & 2.

Mass violence

Mass violence is defined as "a conceptualization of violence [specifically murderous violence] that is both large-scale and selective, in that it targets a specific category of the population" (Schwartz & Straus 2018, 223). The "specific category" of the population is Lao civilians living within Pathet Lao-controlled territory.

Causal Mechanism: the 'loyalty logic'

Schwartz and Straus define the *loyalty logic* as evidence for perpetrator perception of functional equivalency between civilians and the insurgency (Schwartz & Straus 2018, 230). According to Schwartz and Straus (2018), perception of functional equivalency may be operationalized based on descriptions conflating civilians with the enemy from reports made by military officials, knowledge of civilians providing material aid to combatants, civilian voting records (or other evidence of civilian political support for enemy combatants), or assumptions made about the loyalty of ethnic or social identity groups (p. 224). These same operationalizations will be utilized in this paper.

There is a second element to the *loyalty logic*, which is equally necessary, but not clearly defined or operationalized by Schwartz and Straus. This is the strategic element of the logic, that violence perpetrated must seek to weaken enemy "military capacities" (Schwartz & Straus 2018, 224). Based on this indirect description, I will term and operationalize "weaken enemy military capacity" as: mass violence which must further some short-term strategic aim which is situated within the macro-level military objective, such as individual attacks aimed at the depletion of troops, destruction of military infrastructure, food supplies, or supply chains, etc. Such short-term or smaller-scale objectives focused at "weakening the enemy" would by extension serve to further a larger goal such as establishing control over territory or forcing enemy retreat or surrender from a strategic location. This component is necessary to distinguish the *loyalty logic* from a genocidal logic of violence against civilians in which murderous violence against the targeted group is both a means and the ends (Schwartz & Straus, 2018, p. 224).

Operationalization

I elaborate on my interpretation of the definitions and operationalizations utilized by Schwartz and Straus of the independent variable (IV) and dependent variable (DV) and to the *loyalty logic* causal mechanism below, utilizing Coleman's model (Coleman, 1990, p. 10) to provide a visual representation of how the causal mechanism is theorized to function. Coleman's model provides a visual representation of how macro and micro-level phenomena are linked, in this case the mechanism explores how the desire to meet a macro-level strategic military objective (such as stopping the spread of communism in southeast Asia) may be linked to a micro-level objective (such as destroying a cache of weapons or supplies).
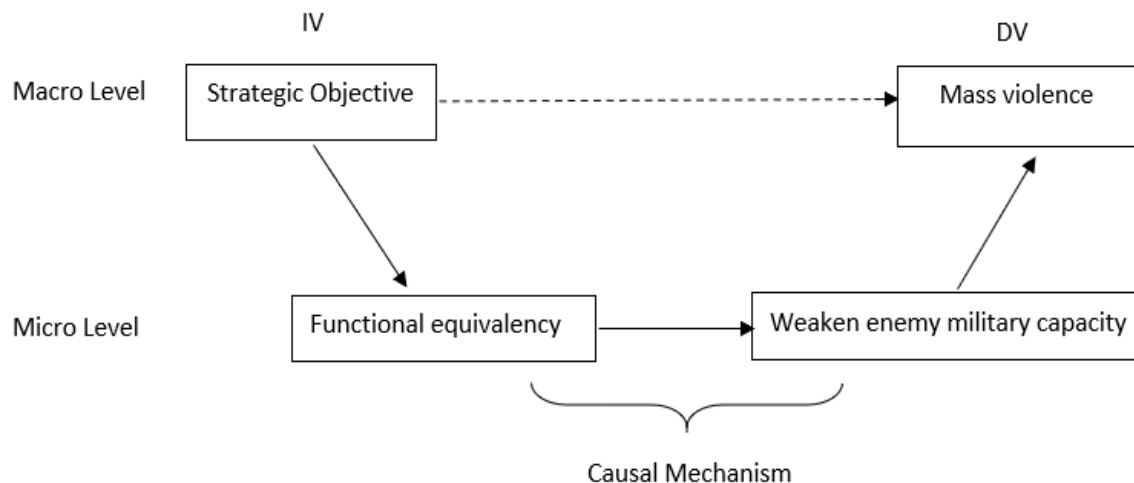
Figure 1 Author's interpretation of the 'loyalty logic' causal mechanism (Schwartz & Straus, 2018), model based on Coleman (1990)

The macro-level strategic military objective as theorized by the *loyalty logic* would therefore lead to the outcome of mass violence against civilians, in the case that civilians are determined to be "functionally equivalent" to enemy combatants. Likewise, the outcome of the attack should also serve to weaken the enemy's "military capacity" (Schwartz & Straus, 2018, p. 224).

Analysis

Background

The US government has repeatedly denied deliberate targeting of civilians in Laos (Branfman, 2013, p. 7), yet survivors of US bombings, the Lao government, American whistleblowers, and international observers have all claimed otherwise. Survivor interviews conducted by Fred Branfman, and even surveys conducted by the US State Department depict a bloodbath in Northern Laos where 80 percent of the bombing victims were innocent civilians (Branfman, 2013, p. 27). Meanwhile, Pathet Lao and North Vietnamese soldiers—ostensibly the targets of this bombing campaign—remained largely out of reach in the mountains and thick jungle canopies of Northern Laos (Branfman, 2013, p. 6).

The 1962 Geneva Accords designated Laos a neutral country in the ongoing conflict in Vietnam, prohibiting the presence of a foreign military on Lao soil (Khamvongsa & Russell, 2009, p. 282). This is precisely why the Secret War was mainly a covert operation managed by the CIA, who not only continued but escalated the bombing campaign, regardless of international treaties (Kurlantzick, 2017, p. 11). President Dwight D. Eisenhower considered the tiny nation of Laos a crucial roadblock against the global spread of communism according to his famous 'domino theory[28]' (Celeski, 2019, p. 24). Preventing a communist victory in Laos' civil war became so important to the United

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[28] The argument that the spread of communism from China and Vietnam into Laos would endanger adjacent Southeast Asian countries such as Thailand, Cambodia, etc., and even India. If one country fell, those around it would fall, like dominoes.

States, that by the time the Tham Piu massacre took place, in 1968, the CIA had a budget of over $500 million annually to wage clandestine war in Laos (Kurlantzick, 2017, p. 5). The stakes were growing ever higher, as was the imperative for even a "secret" victory in Laos given the looming possibility of a very public defeat in Vietnam.

Functional Equivalency

In his history of the 1964-75 air war in Laos, retired USAF colonel Joseph Celesky states that Pathet Lao forces operated in several types of units, one being the "village militia," described as plainclothes guerrilla units of both men and women (Celeski, 2019, p. 42). Celeski (2019) claims it was not possible to estimate how many civilians were supporting the Pathet Lao, or to what extent (p. 42). According to his interviews with USAF servicemen, "many" villagers served as guides or lookouts, and provided financial support to the militants by collecting taxes from their neighbors (Celeski, 2019, p. 43). This provides slight evidence that USAF officials and pilots regarded many everyday Lao villagers as complicit with the Pathet Lao, but also raises the possibility that USAF were unable to distinguish between civilians and enemy combatants—a separate causal mechanism. Elsewhere, two incidents of "accidental" mass violence against civilians (in 1965) are openly described, and Celeski claims that the Lao prime minister and the RLA pressured the USAF to suspend air strikes as a result (Celeski, 2019, p. 113). However, a pattern immediately continues of USAF and allied forces admonishing pilots for killing civilians and dropping munitions outside of "approved areas," and the US ambassador to Laos, William Sullivan, documented his concern about such issues during the mid-sixties (Celeski, 2019, p. 115). Ambassador Sullivan later testified before congress that bombing in populated areas was "restricted" (Branfman, 2013, p. 5) but failed to mention his direct knowledge of the numerous times this policy had been violated, indicating he (or someone above him) understood the US military and government would be held to account for these civilian deaths.

George Chapelier, then Belgian United Nations adviser, wrote a detailed study of refugees within Laos who fled the Xiengkhouang region stating that by 1968 "no organized life was possible in the villages," and the bombing reached a peak in 1969 "aimed at the systematic destruction of the material basis of the civilian society" (Branfman, 2013, p. 27). Likewise, paintings depicting the Tham Piu massacre at the one-room visitor's center at the foot of Tham Piu cave tell an even more explicit story of deliberate civilian targeting including "habitations, schools, hospitals, temples, citizens and all civilian properties" (Appendix 2). Additionally, Branfman argues that civilians were deliberately targeted by the Air Force to compensate for the "weakness" of US and allied ground troops in Laos (Branfman, 2013, p. 7). This indicates that there is also evidence overall in the air war of civilians being targeted accidentally, and outright, rather than due to a perception of "functional equivalency."

Weakening the enemy

Although many bombing missions targeting caves in Xiengkhouang province were documented in now-declassified US military logs and histories, no event which seems to specifically match the Tham Piu massacre is specified (Kiernan, 2012, p. 240; Anthony & Sexton, 1993). However, local accounts give specific details about the attack, including that it happened on November 24, 1968, and that exactly 374 people were killed (Tappe 2013, 434; Appendix 3).

Sources within the US military indicate that the region in which this attack took place was one of the two most strategically important (and actively contested) areas in the country (Celeski, 2019, p. 29). Furthermore, in November 1968, the US dramatically increased its bombing campaign in Northern Laos due to a ceasefire in Vietnam (Branfman, 2013). The strongest indication that the bombing of Tham Piu cave could have had a specific, short-term strategic military purpose to weaken the Pathet Lao comes from the visitor's center at the cave, which states the cave was an active hospital serving both military wounded and civilians in the surrounding area (Appendix 1). It is also mentioned that unspecified "voices" in the US have argued Tham Piu was a military facility or military hospital, but the source of these claims is not given (Kiernan, 2012, p. 241).

Maps from the USAF's own records of enemy territory in 1968 (Figure 2) place Tham Piu cave securely within territory "communist controlled area" when compared to a geological survey map indicating the location of Tham Piu (Figure 3). Additionally, Appendix 1 which visualizes recorded USAF bombing missions in Laos for the entirety of the "Secret War," indicates heavy bombing in the area where Tham Piu is located.

A local perspective on this period of the war is captured in the description of a painting of the Tham Piu massacre at the visitor's center at the base of the cave. The caption describes the intensification of the US bombing campaign from 1964 and claim that the USAF and allied troops launched a "strategic operation" in Xiengkhouang with the

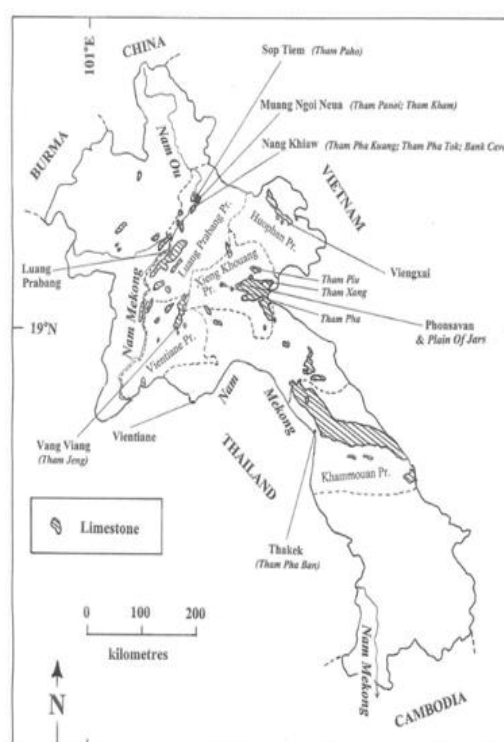Figure 2 Laos, Summer 1968 (Anthony and Sexton, 1993)   Figure 3 Map showing location of Tham Piu (Kiernan, 2012)

objective of "full killing, destroying and exterminating." (Appendix 2). The same placard also mentions a US "strategy of elimination."

Rather than any strategic objective that could logically be linked to "weakening enemy military capacity," further evidence for the mechanism Cronin (2013) calls "reckless endangerment" can be seen in USAF reports during the time in which the Tham Piu

massacre occurred that missions routinely targeted "fixed targets, which [they] could hit, rather than individuals hiding in the jungle, which [they] could not" (Anthony & Sexton, 1993, p. 284). Further evidence for this logic, is presented in Branfman (2013) Kurlantzick (2017) provides further support for this mechanism with his claim that top US military leadership were only concerned with Laos to the extent that engagement there could drain North Vietnamese military resources and had no regard for the cost this incurred on either lao civilians or their Lao military allies (p. 139).

Evidence for a 'loyalty logic'

Functional Equivalency

The few references found in US military records regarding civilians in connection with the Pathet Lao could be interpreted to suggest either "functional equivalency" or a distinct logic by which perpetrators are not able to differentiate between civilian and enemy combatant (Schwartz & Straus, 2018, p. 225). Accounts from both the Lao government and UN adviser George Chapelier suggest a motivation for civilian targeting which is in line with what Schwartz and Straus call a 'genocidal logic' (Schwartz & Straus, 2018, p. 224). Military records of repeated "accidental" mass violence against civilians are more consistent with "reckless endangerment[29]," (Cronin, 2013) than with the "functional equivalency" aspect of the 'loyalty logic.'

There is not sufficient evidence to determine whether the USAF perceived a "functional equivalency" between the civilians at Tham Piu and Pathet Lao combatants, and thereby account for the spatial element of where this attack occurred (and against whom). There is abundant evidence for the counterfactual, however it cannot be confirmed due to the same lack of evidence. It is, however, important to consider the significance of well-documented duplicity on the part of US military and government officials in relaying the events of the "Secret War." What is left undocumented and unsaid also warrants consideration, and points to at least the possibility of deliberate attacks on civilians.

Weakening the enemy

Evidence for this aspect of the causal mechanism can account for both the timing and location of the Tham Piu attack. There is abundant evidence that the USAF carried out extensive bombing in the area surrounding Tham Piu, but in the absence of a firsthand US military record this conclusion is not definitive. The description of the context surrounding the Tham Piu massacre found in Appendix 2 suggests that the Pathet Lao perceived this attack as more than just a strike on a military facility, but part of a campaign to destroy civilian society, in line with a more indiscriminate logic of strategic violence (Kalyvas, 2006, p. 150).

An additional causal mechanism which may explain both the Tham Piu massacre and countless others, is "reckless endangerment," or a wonton disregard for civilian life (Cronin, 2013, p. 176). Evidence for this mechanism is suggested by US military reports of repeated failure to prevent and punish civilian casualties, reports of bombing targets which were convenient rather than strategic, and disregard for the cost of the Secret War to the Lao people (Anthony & Sexton, 1993). Interviews with USAF officers left Branfman (2013) with the impression that in the minds of those directly responsible for conducting the bombing missions, Lao civilians were "not even regarded as human beings, their lives worth no more than those of chickens, pigs, or water buffalo" (p. 18). One American pilot

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[29] When civilians are killed accidentally, but due to a lack of serious precautions.

Branfman interviewed in Saigon while the Secret War was ongoing remarked, "[i]n a guerrilla war, the civilians are going to pay a price. War has now progressed to a point where you're going to bomb civilian targets and that's it. I'll be frank. I'm trained to kill people" (Branfman, 2013, p. 16).

Perhaps the most sinister potential mechanism to emerge from this analysis is the possibility that the US executive branch, Air Force, and CIA, came to view the campaign in Laos as primarily a testing ground for new forms of weapons and warfare. This mechanism warrants further exploration beyond the scope of this analysis, but indication exists that this sentiment existed in the minds of soldiers, as one USAF pilot interviewed at Da Nang airbase ca. 1970 remarked "The Russians are going nuts over what we're learning out here. They're dying that they can't test their stuff out" (Branfman, 2013, p. 17). Furthermore, declassified military records reveal that the USAF was a hair's breadth away from deploying nuclear weapons in Laos in order to achieve swift and decisive victory with minimal loss of *American* lives (Anthony & Sexton, 1993, p. 56). The conclusion that higher levels of leadership were concerned primarily with testing the efficacy of aerial bombardment as a primary form of offensive strategy (rather than as a support to ground troops), with no concern for the "collateral damage" to civilians is echoed by numerous scholars, and warrants deeper analysis (Branfman, 2013, p. xiv; Chomsky, 1971; Kurlantzick, 2017).

Limitations

Lack of first-hand accounts of how CIA, USAF, and allied forces viewed Lao civilians in terms of their connection with the Pathet Lao is arguably the greatest limitation in investigating the explanatory power of the *loyalty logic* in the case of the Tham Piu massacre.

Conclusion

The explanatory power of the *loyalty logic* in the case of the Tham Piu massacre cannot be determined without further investigation. Due to a lack of firsthand accounts from US military on their perception of Lao civilians, "functional equivalency" cannot presently be established. The *loyalty logic* appears sufficiently robust to differentiate between multiple logics. Therefore, the difficulty establishing strong evidence for the *loyalty logic* in the absence of sufficient primary data is a strength of both the mechanism and operationalization.

Stronger evidence for "weakening enemy military capacity," exists in accounts of high-level US military strategic objectives at the time of the attack and evidence placing Tham Piu cave within known bombing zones, but perpetrator accounts of a strategic purpose for this specific attack cannot presently be verified. Firsthand accounts from US military sources and survivors point to multiple distinct causal mechanisms which may have been present in concurrence with or in place of the 'loyalty logic,' These mechanisms include an inability to distinguish between civilians and Pathet Lao, "reckless endangerment," and an "indiscriminate logic" of mass violence. A possible mechanism which especially demands closer investigation is the experimentation in novel forms of arial and automated warfare. As Alfred W. McCoy ominously stated in his introduction to *Voices from the Plain of Jars,* "Laos served as a testing ground for forging this new global strategy [of automated and arial-based warfare] and thus offers the rest of the world an

eloquent but cautionary message about U.S. foreign policy, today and in the future." (Branfman, 2013, p. xv).

Further collection and examination of primary data could fill certain gaps regarding this and other questions relating to the high number of civilian casualties throughout the Secret War. Time is of the essence to conduct additional interviews with both perpetrators and survivors, before their first-had testimonies are lost to history. Finally, the controversy surrounding the status of this attack as a war crime (Kiernan, 2012, p. 241), underscores the significance and relevance of serious consideration and further study of this case.

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Appendix

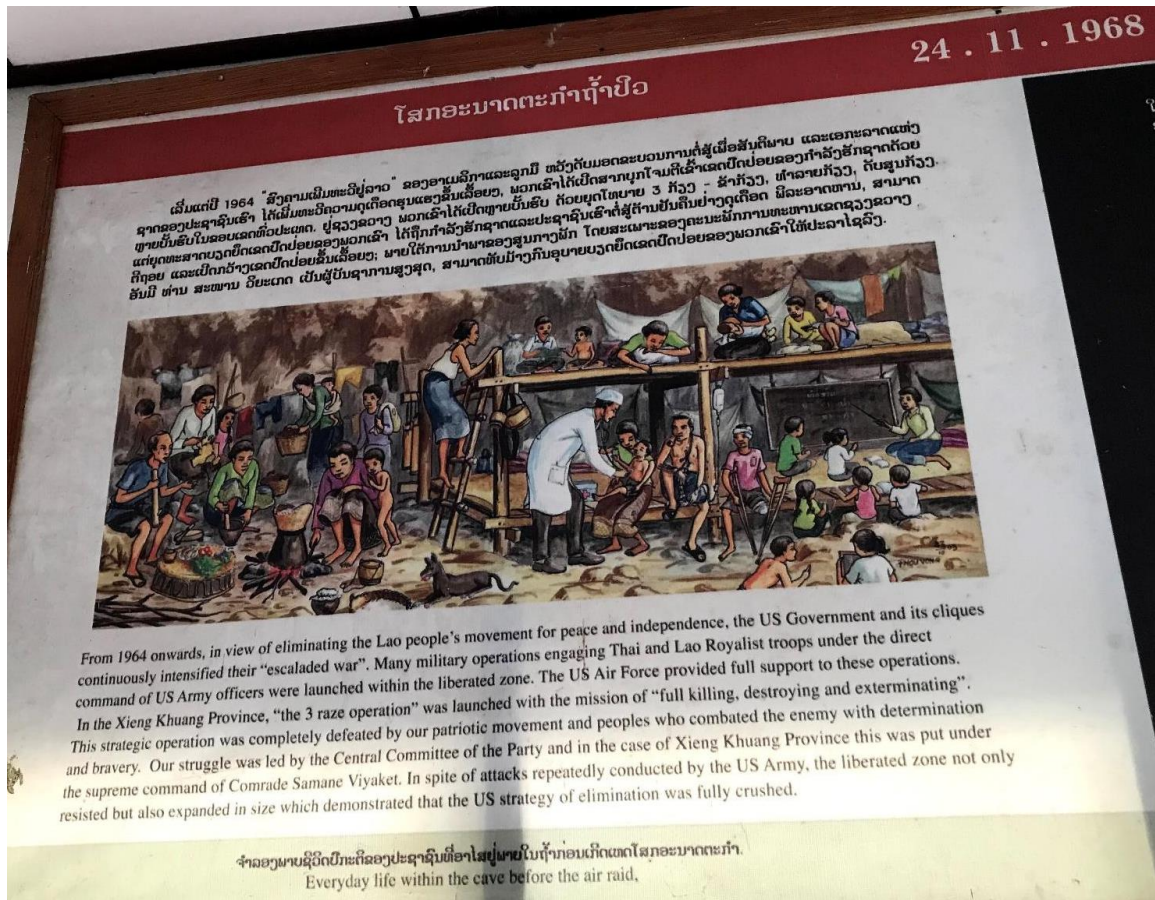1. UXO Lao visual map of USAF bombing data
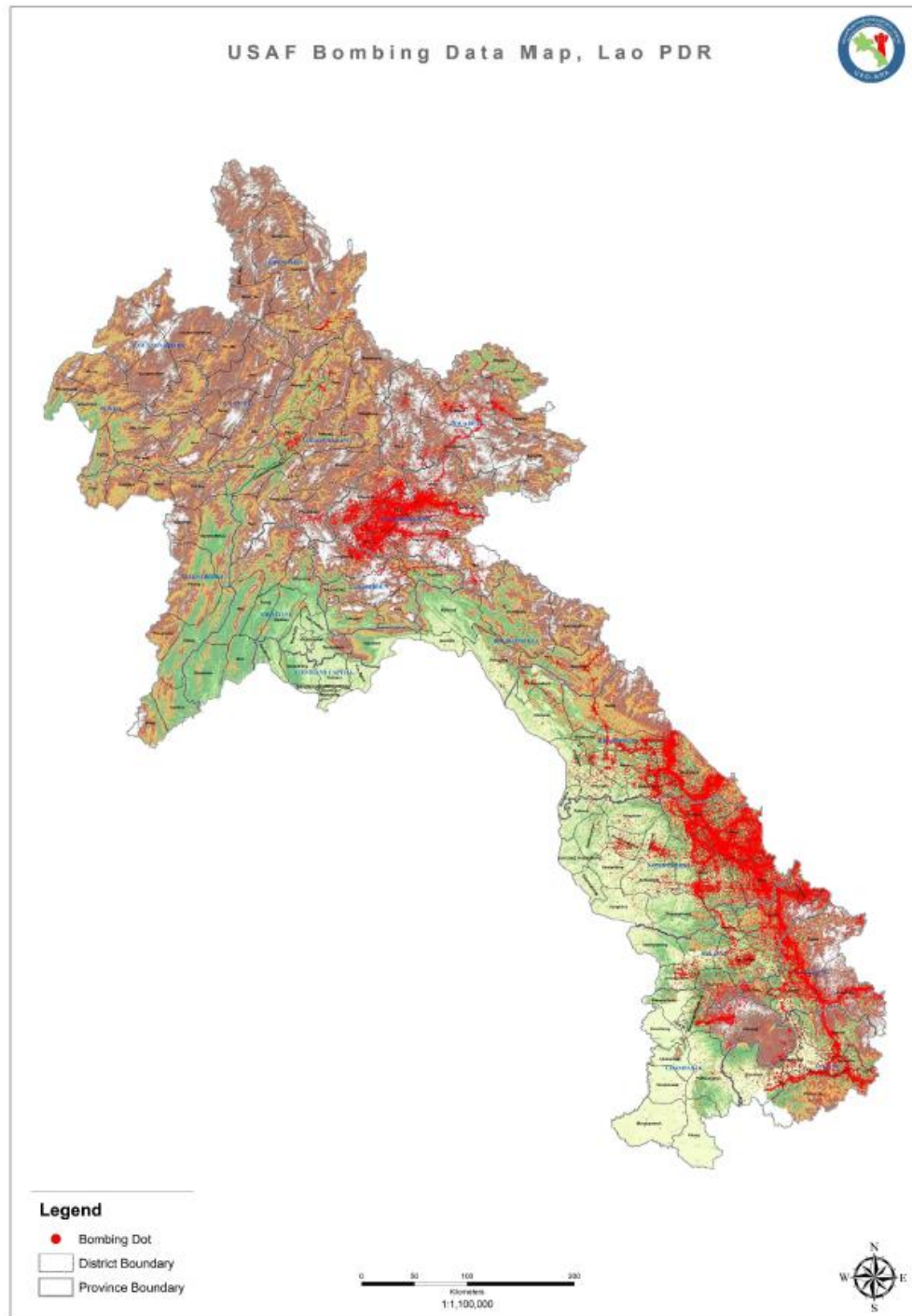
2. Tham Piu Visitors Center: Image 1

Figure 4 Everyday life within the cave before the air raid. Photo courtesy of Erica Buller (2018)

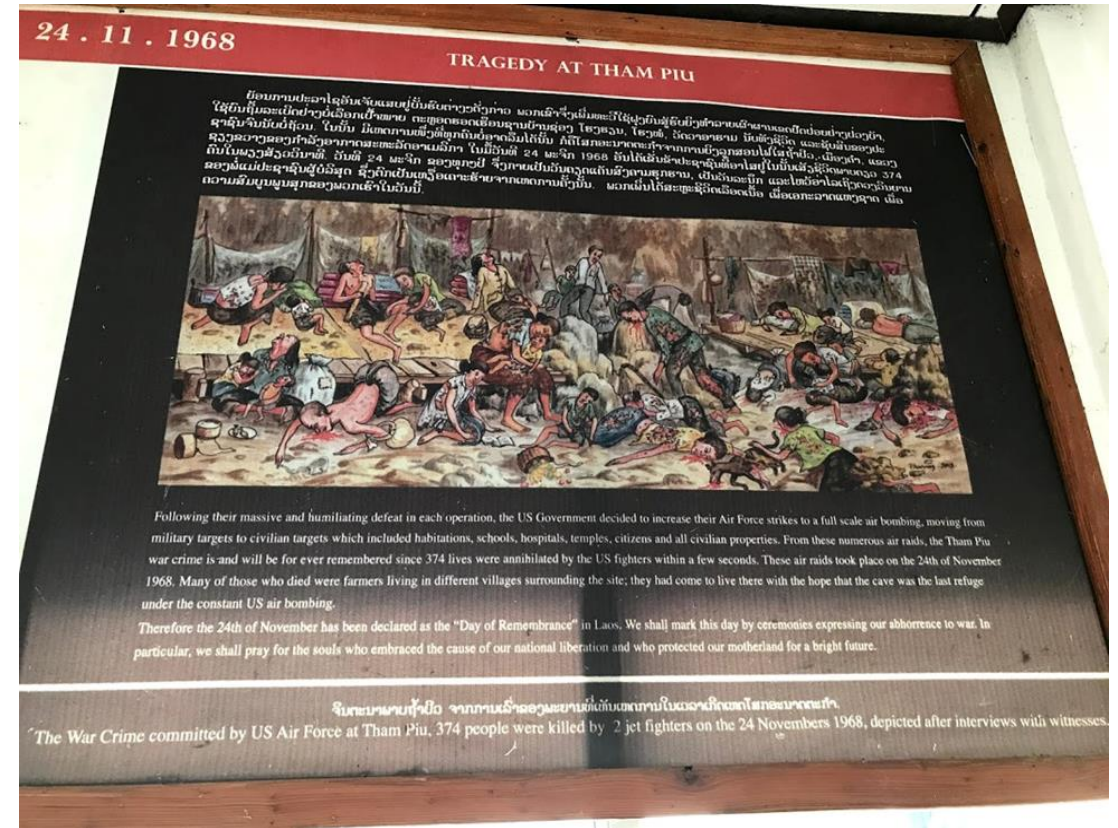2. Tham Piu Visitors Center: Image 2

Figure 5 The War Crime committed by US Air Force at Tham Piu, 374 people were killed by 2 jet fighters on the 24 Novembers[sic] 1968, depicted after interviews with witnesses. Photo Courtesy of Erica Buller (2018)

'The More, the Merrier' and its Implication in the Success of Non-violent Protest

FRANCISCO URRUTIA

Author Biography

Francisco is a Mexican Peace Fellow and a student in thePeace and Conflict master's program at Uppsala University. He is interested in the intersections between peace and development; particularly in the role that public policies play in creating just and equitable societies for vulnerable populations. Francisco has worked in civil-society organizations with the design and execution of violence prevention and human security projects in Mexico, Colombia, and the United Kingdom. He has also participated in mediation and dialogue processes collaborating with multiple NGOs, international organizations, and state institutions. He has also been involved in international consultancy projects on HIV prevention and LGBTQ+ rights.

Abstract:

The studies of non-violent conflict have made an important contribution to the understanding of the dynamics that lead to the success of protests in achieving their political objectives. This paper contributes to the discussion by arguing that *massive* participation will increase the likelihood of the protest's success. Through a qualitative single case study, Chile's protests of 2019 are used to show how the participation of a wide range of actors, and their massive involvement in non-violent protests, increase the movement's legitimation, and their chances of government's concessions. Analyzing human rights reports, international and local newspapers through the lenses of correspondence inference theory, the evidence seems to suggest that the success of non-violent protests might be related to the level and diversity of participation, the legitimacy the movement gains, and the elevated costs for the government of violent repression.

Key words: protest, Latin America, mass mobilization, concessions, success.

Introduction

The study of non-violent conflicts, and specifically of civil resistance, has gained relevance since the mid-20th century onwards after non-violent resistance became a common technique across the globe in different struggles and movements (Schock, 2013, p278). Within peace and conflict research, the study of civil resistance has focused, among other things, on understanding the factors that contribute to the success or failures of these movements (See Sharp, 1973; Chenoweth and Stephen, 2008, 2011; Sutton *et al.,* 2014). Continuing that debate, the present paper focuses on analyzing *how does mass mobilization affects non-violent protest's success?*

This paper aims at testing the pathway between mass-mobilization and success by looking at one of its key mechanisms: legitimization. Correspondence Inference theory will be used as a reference framework, by arguing that non-violence is effective in increasing the protest's persuasion capacity by undermining the regime's capacity of response (Stephan and Chenoweth, 2008). Chile's mass protests of 2019, which at its peak gathered

approximately 1.2 million people (BBC, 2019a), will be selected as a case study for three reasons. First, the wide variety of population sectors that participated and their resistance strategy makes it a good example of a non-violent protest with massive mobilization. Second, it has a clear beginning and a defined end. Lastly, it had clear outcomes like the government's decision to allow a referendum on Chile's constitution. (Economist Intelligence Unit, 2019, p4).

This paper will be divided into five sections. The first part consists of a review of the Correspondence Inference theory and the presentation of the causal mechanism and the hypothesis. The second part describes the methodological approach of the research and the operationalization of variables; the arguments for the case selection; and the sources and materials used. The third section analyses how the selected theory can be applied to the case study, its limitations, and alternative explanations. The fourth section assesses the strengths, weaknesses, and an alternative explanation of the present theory. Finally, the last section contains the final remarks and conclusions.

Literature review

Before starting, it is important to define three concepts that are key to the present paper and its theoretical background: mass mobilization, success, and non-violent campaigns. Mobilization can be understood as "the process of acquiring resources, people, and support for a campaign" (Schock, 2013, p282). This process then becomes massive when "large numbers of people in key sectors of society stop obeying and engaging in prolonged acts of social, political, and economic disruption, they may fundamentally alter the relationship between ruler and ruled" (Chenoweth and Stephen, 2011, p93). Thus, mass mobilization can be interpreted as a group that is diverse in the sectors of the population comprising it, and that effectively changes its relationship to the government from ruler and ruled to ruler and challenger. Another key concept for this paper is non-violent protest, or the characteristic of not-raising-in-arms will be defined as the use of psychological, social, economic, and political methods without the use of physical violence against others (Sharp, 2008, p1373). Lastly, success should be understood as the ability (of protesters) to accomplish their stated goals (Orazani, 2018, p.690) in a time period no greater than two years (Stephen and Chenoweth, 2008, p17). It should be noted that this is just one definition and that the concept might require further research and space for problematizing it.

Correspondence inference theory:

Correspondence inference theory has been selected as it has a clear focus towards explaining why mass support in non-violent protests creates more favorable conditions for the campaign's success. Non-violent protest might be more appealing to the public because it is perceived as non-threatening and more amenable to negotiation techniques (Stephen and Chenoweth 2008, p13). Also, generalized support for non-violent protests is more likely to facilitate a shift of loyalties from civil servants, limiting the control power of the government and undermining its power, making them more likely to succeed (*idem*) than non-massive protests. Although correspondence inference theory shows a link between the broad support for non-violent protests and their success, there is a gap in explaining why non-violent protests become *massive*.

This gap can be complemented with Stephen and Chenoweth's research findings to make a more robust proposition: First, that the non-violent component of a protest enhances

its domestic and international legitimacy, encouraging more broad-based participation and constraining the regime's power. Second, they also found that violent counterattacks to non-violent movements are more likely to backfire on the regime, increasing the protests' appeal and facilitating the concessions through bargaining (*idem,* p.9). Both legitimacy and backfire could explain why a non-violent protest grows until having mass participation, and why this makes them more likely to succeed than non-massive and violent protests. Thus, correspondence inference theory could be reinterpreted as follows: non-violent protests that have mass mobilizations are more likely to succeed in obtaining concessions from the regime because they constrain the government's ability to repress it violently.

Causal Mechanism

The causal story behind why massive protests are more successful has two steps: legitimacy and government power. The probability of success of massive non-violent protest is higher than for protests with less participation, as they are perceived as less threatening for protesters, lowering what Schock refers to as *barriers of participation* (2013, p283). The expected outcomes – or rewards – such as government concessions appear to be higher than the costs of participation, enabling it to overcome the collective action problem (Kalyvas and Kocher, 2007 p179), and making them multitudinous. Then, by having the participation of larger and more diverse sectors of the population, the protest will be perceived as more legitimate to the eyes of the public by encompassing demands of a wide spectrum of ideological, age, and occupational backgrounds.

Legitimacy – as the rationale that justifies resistance techniques through normative standards like justice (Zlobina and Gonzalez, 2018, p234)- becomes crucial, as it makes it more difficult for the government to repress the protest due to a possible backfire. As explained by Stephan and Chenoweth: "the political costs of repressing one or two dozen activists, easily labeled 'extremists,' are much lower than repressing hundreds or thousands of activists who represent the entire population" (2008, p42). On the other hand, by choosing not to repress, the government also loses the capacity for reaction, as there are few viable options to eradicate the protest. Finally, the leverage (Schock 2003, p283) created by the *mass participation* of the protest constrains the ability of the government to use its sources of power, increasing the likelihood of the government to concede as a viable option to end the protests.
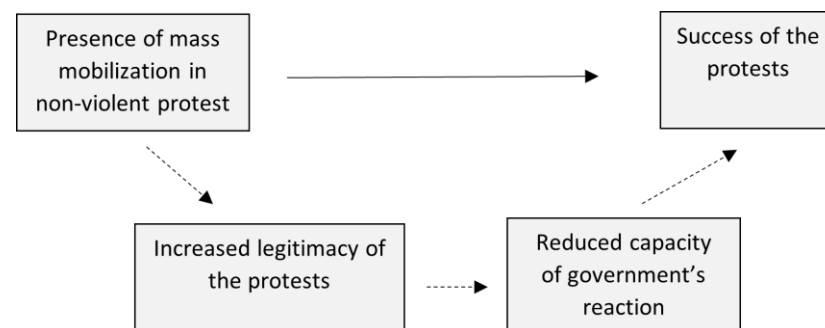

Figure 1: Causal mechanism (own elaboration)

Based on the theoretical framework, the expected relation between the level of mass participation in non-violent protests and its outcome can be formulated in the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis: *Non-violent protests with mass mobilization are more likely to succeed in forcing the government to make concessions than non-massive protests.*

Limitations

There are several theoretical limitations in the present framework, like its inability to explain what processes lead to some non-violent protests becoming more massive and diverse in terms of their participants than others, which also limits the explanatory power of the causal mechanism. Similarly, the theory focuses on the connection between the legitimacy of mass mobilization and the success of the protests, but it does not contemplate alternative factors that can contribute for a government to decide to concede, like the level of democracy in the country where protests are held or the nature of the demands which can make a government more or less prone to concede (pressure for constitutional reforms might be substantially different than pressures for a government to step down). Finally, the theory is unclear regarding the bargaining process between the government and protestors, making it difficult to find alternative explanations of the success of the protest, like skillful leadership for the protesters.

Research design

Case selection process

Considering Gerring's definition of a case as a "spatially delimited phenomenon (a unit) observed at a single point in time or over some period of time" (Gerring, 2006, p19), the case selection process must ensure that the analysis has clear visibility of the phenomena, but also a thorough analysis of the complexities behind it. To have a better understanding of the mechanism involved in the success of non-violent massive protests, a single case study will be used, as it focuses on studying "the plausibility of a theory or tracing the causal mechanism at play in a particular context" (Ruffa, 2020, p1139). This makes it a suitable option for this research, by enabling a more focused study of the phenomena looking at the dependent variable (DV) and independent variable (IV).

This research will make use of the diachronic within-case analysis, meaning one that focuses on "observing the case or some subset of within-case units over time" (Gerring, 2006, p21). This approach makes it possible to explore our case with more depth and to consider the causal steps in the mechanism. Also, Chile's protests are particularly suitable for this purpose because they have a clear beginning – from October to November 2019 – allowing for analysis and measurement of both variables in a more accurate way across the duration of the case, which contributes to identifying if they are related.

To properly address the steps of the causal mechanism, process tracing will be used to operationalize and study the different steps involved. Process tracing was selected because it focuses on the "series of links within an event—the processes that led to a particular outcome—to determine whether support for a theory exists" (Powner, 2015, p.130). Pointing out a relation between variables would be fruitless if the theory lacks an explanation of the outcome, which makes this tool necessary to provide a clear link on the

theoretical explanation -emphasizing the *why* or the causal story- and the observed phenomena. In this particular case, as important it is to determine that *massive mobilization* contributes to the *success* of protest; theory could not be complete if the role of legitimization of the non-violent protests and the subsequent decrease of power from the government was not established as well, as many other alternative explanations could account for the same outcome.

It is important to mention that, although single case studies have higher levels of conceptual validity, they are not the strongest method to account for confounders (Ruffa, 2020, p1139). To minimize the risks of confounders, the case study will be complemented with a small counterfactual analysis, to show how 2019 Chile's protests had different outcomes to the ones organized in 2018, where the participation was lower and less diverse.

Operationalization: Variables & Causal Mechanism

To operationalize the independent variable the point of maximum estimated participants will be used as a reference point to identify the presence or absence of different key actors. A protest should be considered *to have mass mobilization* when, at the maximum point of participation two criteria are met: one is the involvement of people across different ages, professional backgrounds (workers, medical staff, social workers, etc.); and the inclusion of students, unions, and non-state actors like CSOs. The second key component is that the protests alter the relation between the ruler and ruled (Chenoweth and Stephen 2011, p93), meaning that the protesters achieve to trigger a response from the state through disruption or non-cooperation (Fishman and Everson, 2016; Parkin, 2016), like the presence of security forces, closure of streets, among others -which would entail an explicit recognition of the protest in itself-.

For the operationalization of the dependent variable, *protest success*, Stephen and Chenoweth have identified two criteria that can be used in the present research. The first one relates to the timeframe: a campaign will be categorized as successful when its stated objective, meaning the concessions of the government that they were looking to obtain, are met in a time no greater than two years (2008, p18). For the operationalization it means that the goals of the protests have to be identifiable and that the concessions address them accordingly in less than two years from the beginning of the protests. The second condition is about the role of the mobilization on the outcome: the protest needs to have a discernible effect on the government concessions (*idem).* This criterion will be operationalized as identifiable statements from media outlets or academics of the direct role the protest had in the proposed changes. As explained before, the present definition is not exempt from problematization, and further development, although this rather delimited notion is used to define a useful parameter in terms of operationalization.

As shown in Figure 1, the causal mechanism consists of two steps. First, the *legitimacy of the protest,* meaning how just is the movement perceived (Zlobina and Gonzalez, 2018, p236) is analyzed through the news media coverage of the protest, to identify the presence or absence of international and domestic support for the protesters and their claims, using both reporters' statements and quotes from their pieces. Second, to assess whether this reduces the *government's capacity of reaction*, government statements made through new media and reports of NGOs and research centers will be analyzed to determine if the increased participation and support for the protest reduces the government capacity of repression as a form of reaction to the protest. This is done by looking at the

chronological order of said statements, and how both the increase in participation and in supporting changes the government's attitude and actions towards protesters.

Validity, reliability, and source material

There are a few methodological caveats that are worth mentioning around the resource's material and the validity and reliability of the variable measurement. The data sources for the present research are entirely *secondary:* international and national media coverage of protests, human rights reports made, and economic reports by research institutes and think tanks. This type of source is more susceptible to bias as "who describe events that they themselves have not taken part in or witnessed" (Hoglund and Oberg, 2011, p36).

Regarding the concept's validity, there is a theoretical gap in the measurement of *massive mobilization:* there is no theoretical consensus of the number of people or the type of key actors needed for a protest to be considered to have mass participation, which makes reliability a challenge (Adcock and Collier, 2001, p529). A broad literature review for the operationalization process addresses this challenge by incorporating common elements to the measurement of massive protest and presenting an alternative operationalization (thus making a small contribution for further research). In regard to reliability, the single case approach makes it difficult to replicate measurements to compare and test "the generalizability potential of the theory to a population of cases" (Ruffa, 2020, p1138), as it focuses on a single observation. To address this problem, the present paper incorporates a counterfactual case at the end of the analysis.

Finally, the present paper´s theoretical framework works in countries where participating in a non-violent protest is less dangerous than in a violent campaign. It also applies only to protests that are about domestic issues: massive support protests to issues unrelated to the country where the protests are happening are outside scope conditions, as the local government has no possibility of conceding.

Analysis

Case study: Chile's 2019 protests

According to different academics, (Fraser, 2019; Gonzalez and Moran, 2020; Palacios-Vadallares, 2020) the origin of 2019 protests can be traced to October 4th, when "the expert panel in charge of setting the fare of the Metropolitan Public Transport Network in Santiago decided to increase the subway fare from about USD 1.12 to USD 1.16" equivalent to around 0.3% of the minimum wage (Gonzalez and Moran, 2020, p3). Three days later, the Student Coordinating Assembly[30] (AES) called for the evasion of payments, as a form of protests against said increases. This event was derived in a series of escalatory phases of the protest: the presence of *carabineros[31]* in the stations lead to clashes and eventually to the complete closure of the entire subway system (*idem*).

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[30] Gonzalez and Moran also indicate the role of students from *Instituto Nacional* (National Institute) as one of the first groups to start avoiding subway payments.

[31] Chilean national security force

The protests grew in intensity, disruptiveness, and geographical location, incorporating different resistance forms like banging pots and pans in the streets[32], pacific gathering on the streets, and more disruptive forms like looting and damage of the public infrastructure, which resulted in President Sebastian Piñera's declaring a national state of emergency on October 20th (Gonzalez and Moran, 2020, p4). Despite it, protests continued to grow up to 1.2 million people in the capital on October 25th, incorporating broad demands for the population like costs associated with health care, education, and a general discontent towards the pension system (Fraser, 2019, p1697). This diversity of petitions derived from the demand for a new constitution. Several concessions and reforms followed were gained at different periods of the protest, culminating on November 15th in the so-called *Agreement for Peace,* backed by almost all political parties that guaranteed a referendum on a new constitution and drafting mechanisms (Gonzalez and Moran, 2020, p4).

IV: Is Chile 2019 a case of mass protests?

In regard to the diversity of the protest, the participation of a wide variety of sectors of the population was documented by local and international media. Marches had the presence of students, teachers, health workers, and the largest union organization in Chile: *Worker's United Centre of Chile[33]* (Montes, 2019b; BBC, 2019a). Some articles even cited the presence of dozens of CSOs and Unions taking part in the demonstrations (Carranza, 2019; Agencia EFE) in what is now known as *Chile's biggest protest* (Deutsche Welle, 2019a). These articles seem to indicate that these mobilizations were reflective of the larger population in Chile in terms of age, gender identity, and working background, with demands ranging from improvement of equality to the environment and even rights for the LBGTQ community (Franklin and Bruna, 2019), being consistent with the present article's theoretical definition of *mass mobilization.*

In terms of the ability to alter the relation between the ruled and the ruler, the theory seems to be able to explain the change in the Chilean government and the protestors' relationship. The reaction of Chile's authorities to the protesters can be interpreted as a sign of the change in said relation, visible in official statements like President Piñera´s phrase: "Chile is at war with a powerful enemy who respects no one"[34] (Deutsche Welle, 2019b), where citizens were seen as a visible and unitary opposing figure to the government. Also, the display of power and the presence of *carabineros,* and military personnel (Bonnefoy and Krauss, 2019; Deutsche Welle, 2019c) deepens this change of status quo. It does so by causing a tangible reaction to the government: an open confrontation with protesters with a gruesome toll for a non-violent movement. The protests left at least 3,442 injured people, 23 open investigations for homicides, and 568 alleged victims of torture and other inhuman treatments (INDH, 2019).

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[32] Casserole, or *cacerolazo* in Spanish is a popular form of protest consisting of people making noise by banging pots and pans with kitchen utensils to make noise and disrupt normality in the public space.

[33] "Central Unitaria de Trabajadores de Chile" in Spanish. One of the most important umbrella organizations for Chile's unions and workers.

[34] Authors own translation from the Spanish original article.

DV: Is there a relationship between the mass mobilizations and the government concessions?

The relationship between mass mobilization and government concessions is reflected in three key government concessions to the protesters: The reforms package on wages and pensions, the resignation of a large portion of Piñera's cabinet, and the *Agreement for Peace*. According to Palacios-Vadallares, "unable to quell protests by force, the government offered concessions (…) improvements to pensions and health insurance, [and] the creation of a guaranteed minimum wage" (2020, p221). Her analysis is consistent with different newspapers' visions (Cordoba, 2019; Montes, 2019b; Figuerdo, 2019) that see reforms as a form of decreasing the people's discontent. When these reforms prove to be ineffective, Piñera opted to concede even further by changing his cabinet, which was interpreted by domestic international journalists not only as a direct consequence of October's protests but also as a symbol of the impact they had on the government's legitimacy (BBC, 2019b; Minay, 2019).

Lastly, the decision of holding a referendum for a new constitution is perhaps the most telling for two main reasons: first, it is documented by news outlets that Piñera conceded after the explicit denial of any constitutional reforms at the beginning of his term (Ward, 2020), which makes the relationship with the protests difficult to ignore. Second, according to different academics, it reflects a joint concession of the main political forces (Sehnbruch and Donoso, 2020; Gonzalez and Moran, 2020) and implicit recognition of the legitimacy those claims had in Chile's historical and political scenario. It should be considered that statements made by media outlets are not always founded in empiric research, which limits the ability to identify additional variables that could act confounders, making the need for other forms of data gathering and research methods important for further research.

Causal mechanism: Were legitimacy and power constraint part of the outcome?

The causal mechanism also seems to be able to explain the relationship between the IV and the DV. As protests became clearer on their political agenda, meaning to reform an unequal and unfair system, the support both on the street and in international media became clearer, having media outlets like the Guardian referring to protesters as "a movement against inequality" (McGowan, 2020)*,* or a "campaign for economic and social equality" (Ward, 2020) in the platform *Vox.* The decline in Piñera's popularity -in October 2019 his approval rating dropped to 14%- is also telling about how the demonstrations capitalized a legitimate claim of society and transformed into a single petition: a new constitution. It is worth noting that the wide disapproval (both in local and international media) of the destruction of public and private property evidence the need to theorize about the limits of disruption (Stephen and Chenoweth, 2008, p13) and violence.

Regarding the constraints the protests posed to the government in repressing the mobilizations, there is a clear link on how the repression from the state, which involved the deployment of *carabineros* and the military, were ineffective in diminishing the protests in numbers and intensity (La Vanguardia 2019a, BBC, 2019). The UNHCHR issued a report highlighting the action of Chile's security forces (2019, p9) being contrary to international law, and regional bodies like the EU condemning the violence and death of people during October demonstrations (La Vanguardia, 2019b). The lack of the government's power to

repress becomes evident in the sense that the state of emergency lasted just 10 days and ended with president Piñera apologizing for his "lack of vision" (BBC, 2019d). Thus, it can be argued that both steps of the causal argument are useful in explaining the outcome: the actions from the government show how legitimacy played a significant role in constraining the government's ability to repress the protests, up to the point of leaving no feasible option but to concede as a way of ending the conflict.

Counterfactual: Chile 2011

An article from Guzmán-Concha shows that in Chile's protests in 2011, mobilizations had a very similar beginning to the ones in 2019: both were initiated by students, increased in participation despite government's repression, and demands evolved during the protests until consolidating in the need for constitutional reform (2012, p410). Nevertheless, participation failed to incorporate sectors outside education -meaning teachers and students- and numbers never exceeded 100,000 participants in the highest intensity point. The result was minor concessions that fail to achieve meaningful political change (Puga, 2016, p265). The fact that the protests were unable to mobilize different actors of the population seems to have made the causal chain absent in the 2011 protests, which could explain the lack of important concessions from the government Given the similarities between the departure point of the two cases, it can be argued that the absence of the IV – and the causal mechanism – might have affected the success of the protests in achieving the desired confessions from the government.

Discussion: does correspondence inference theory can explain the relationship between variables?

With this particular case study, the theory seems to be able to explain the relationship between *massive mobilization* and the *success* of non-violent protests, both in the DV and IV and through the causal mechanism. The proportion and diversity documented in October's protests, seem to fit in the theoretical definition and criteria selected for the IV on the operationalization section. Similarly, the theory seems to predict the observed change in the relation between the ruled and the ruler, in this case, protesters and Piñera's government, and to a larger extent, the population affected in the 10 days period of the state of emergency (Gonzalez and Moran, 2020, p4). The violent reaction from the security forces is also a useful indicator of how the backlash or *political jiu-jitsu* (Sutton, *et al.* 2014) is present in the causal mechanism empirics, where repression affects the regime's legitimacy and constrains its power (Schock 2003, p283). *Carabinero's* deployment and fast retrieve exemplify how public support and massive participation forced the government to constrain its use of public force to stop protests. Finally, the chronological sequence between the protest escalation and the concessions of the government seems to indicate that in fact, the increase in the protests *massification*, led to the government making concessions as theory suggests.

There are three limitations on this research worth mentioning: First, the theory is weak to address actions like vandalizing public infrastructure, lootings, and other forms of violence, diminishing the strength of the first step of the causal mechanism. The distinction between violent campaigns, where "violent insurgents the lives of regime members and security forces" (Sthepen and Cenoweth, 2008, p13) and nonviolent ones -meaning campaigns that do not raise in arms against the government-, is clear, yet a theoretical

explanation of the aforementioned events will strengthen the theory's thickness by addressing situations that are not atypical in non-violent protests. Second, the causal story does not identify what makes some protests more massive than others with similar political demands. This affects the theories' ability to generalize, as it does not account for factors that might explain the presence of the DV in other places. Alternative explanations could be the level of democracy, where more democratic countries are accountable to their citizens, thus making protests more likely to be successful. International pressure could have played a decisive role -and not how *massive* the protest was- constituting another alternative explanation for its success.

Conclusions

This paper analyzed *how does mass mobilization affects non-violent protest's success.* By using correspondence inference theory, the research intended to show that the presence of massive mobilization increases legitimization of the protest and reduces the capacity of the government to repress, making concessions the only available option, increasing the movement's success. The theory there seems to help explain the present case study: The presented theoretical and methodological approach seems to be able to explain how mass mobilization affects the protests outcome, using evidence of international and national newspapers articles, as well as different reports from Chile's protest as an example of how the movement's ability to obtain concessions increased as mobilizations became more massive.

Although there seems to be support for the theory and causal mechanism (meaning that protests legitimization played a substantial role in the inability of the government to repress, Therefore, contributing to the success of the campaign), the lack of theoretical clarity on disruptive activities like public property damage weakens the causal story and also constrains the explanatory power of the mechanism. Further research is recommended to test the hypothesis on a deeper level and to engage with the four causal hurdles. Finally, a large-N study could increase the theory's explanatory power and generalizability capacity.

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Civilian Participation in Interstate War: Unfolding Voluntary Collective Action in Nagorno-Karabakh War

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Author biography

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Abstract

This article covers the results of a small-scale single-case study[35] on civilian participation in interstate war. Looking at the case of the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh war, I am exploring the reasons and motives why civilians volunteer for joining the armed forces during war. In this qualitative analysis of in-depth interviews with war volunteers from Armenia, I mainly rely on Elisabeth Wood's theory on insurgent collective action, additionally drawing on the observed phenomenon from the perspective of Max Weber's social action theory. Based on the results of the study, I argue that emotional and moral motives, rather than rational intentions are what shape the decision to volunteer for going war. Withal, the paper exhibits that Wood's theory, contingent upon relevant conceptual and contextual expansions, has a significant explanatory power even outside of its original scope conditions.

Keywords: *voluntary collective action, Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, emotional and moral motives*

Introduction

The puzzle of collective action in violent conflict circumstances has been under the focus of numerous researchers. Some scholars take on the Marxian stance and explain revolutions and peasant rebellions with the underlying class conflict, mainly arguing that it is the shared experience of being exploited by the proletariat that leads to social mobilization. For example, Paige (1975) argues that the more the landlords depend on income from land, the higher the chance peasants will participate in revolution. Others take on a somewhat utilitarian approach, explaining "high-risk activism" with "selective incentives", namely material and non-material benefits that are either only offered to those who participate (Olson, 1971; Popkin, 1979) or "collective incentives", i.e. public goods made accessible in the areas controlled by a given insurgent group (Skocpol, 1982; Goodwin & Skocpol, 1989). Some other explanations of this puzzle include protection from

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state violence (Mason & Krane, 1989), preexisting horizontal social networks (Morris, 1984), and widening of political opportunity (McAdam, 1982; Kitschelt, 1986), to name but a few. All of these approaches draw on important aspects of collective mobilization, however departing from presupposed rationality of actors, they tend to overlook the emotional and moral motives of social groups. The latter is discussed by Elisabeth Wood in her work "Insurgent Collective Action and Civil War in El Salvador" attempting to explain the collective action by emotional, moral, and conventional interests. By doing so, this theory challenges the widespread notion among researchers arguing participant motivations to be limited to "canonical self-regarding preferences, such as material benefits, defined over the consequences of one's actions" (Wood 2003, 13).

Although this theory is normally to be understood in the context of civil wars, it would be valuable to test its explanatory power outside of its scope conditions. Thus, this paper is an attempt to investigate the motivations of civilians to participate in the Nagorno-Karabakh (NK) conflict. To this end, I use a theoretical framework derived from Wood's theory on collective action. Specifically, I have look at the recent escalation of the NK conflict (27 September – 10 November 2020), during which a large number of civilians decided to voluntarily join the army. Here, the freedom of choice lies in the heart of this puzzle, creating a need to explain the reasons why one would volunteer to fight in a war while having the freedom not to. Hence, the research question that this paper aims at investigating is as follows: Why do civilians volunteer for joining the armed forces during an interstate war?

The paper begins with a discussion of the theoretical underpinnings of this study, as well as the possibilities of expanding the theoretical settings. The theoretical section is followed by a description of the research design, including the strategies of case selection, data collection, sampling, and operationalization. I then proceed to the analysis of the collected data largely through the prism of Wood's theory, complemented by some sociological interpretations of the observed phenomenon. The paper wraps up with a brief discussion and conclusion on the results of the study.

Theory

Elisabeth Wood's theory on collective action constitutes the main theoretical underpinnings of this paper. It is important to note that this theory originally illustrates the causes of peasant participation in civil insurgencies, and does not have explanatory claims on other types of conflicts. Therefore, in this section I first discuss the main arguments Wood lays out in the work "Insurgent Collective Action and Civil War in El Salvador" in its provisional theoretical context, and secondly, I draw on the advantages and limitations of taking this theory outside of its original scopes.

Theorizing Collective Action in Civil Wars

In contrast to the commonly used argument of selective incentives, Wood suggests an alternative explanation to why people join the insurgency. In her case study from El Salvador, Wood argues (2003, 2) that although material grievances do play their part, emotional and moral motives are essential in terms of the "emergence and consolidation of insurgent collective action" in the studied areas. According to the interviewed rural informants, the central reasons for insurgent collective action during the civil war were moral commitments and emotional engagements (Wood 2003, 18).

The factor of circumstances of high risk is a crucial aspect of this theory. According to the author (Wood 2003, 227-228), there is little the conventional explanations and selective benefits could illuminate about the Salvadorian insurgency since the possibility of being affected by the violent circumstances would normally be a challenge to the presupposed rationality of collective action.

As a result of interviews with 200 participants and nonparticipants of the 1987-1996 insurgency in El Salvador, Wood synthesizes three main reasons of support for insurgent mobilization, terming those **participation**, **defiance**, and **pleasure in agency**. Additionally, the author suggests two path-dependent aspects of civil war, those being *local history of violence* and *proximity to insurgent forces* (2003, 231).

Firstly, we can observe that participation for the sake of participation is one of the main reasons for joining the insurgency since Wood notes that many of the interviewees reported having had participated in the movement due to valuing the participation per se (2003, 232). Another reason for participating in the insurgency is the refusal to acquiesce in the state's position. In this, the author especially highlights the moral commitment of individuals to continue the struggle for the sake of the previously fallen family members and fellow activists (Wood 2003, 234). The third and final reason for insurgent action Wood discusses is the pleasure in agency. This is observed in that participants express great joy and pride in both their participation and effectiveness, or as the author puts it, "positive affect associated with self-determination, autonomy, self-esteem, efficacy, and pride that come from the successful assertion of intention" (Wood 2003, 235).

Importantly, as Wood is convinced (2003, 237), the reasons discussed in the work are to be viewed as 'ideal types' in Weberian terms, meaning that in reality they would most often be observed in inter-embedded forms rather than in pure mutual exclusion.

Expanding the Context

There are a number of limitations in applying this theory to the Nagorno-Karabakh case, that needs to be acknowledged. These limitations derive from the deviations I take from the original theory, in order to achieve more reasonable explanations.

Firstly, as noted previously, Wood's theory on collective action fits to explain a civil war, with the example of the El Salvador case, and is not *a priori* suitable for explaining interstate wars. However, the possibility of finding support to this theory even outside of its original scopes and thus enlarging its explanatory power makes this theoretical-methodological trial worthwhile.

Secondly, the author interprets support for the insurgency in a rather wide understanding, including not only direct participation but also "provision to the insurgents of information and supplies beyond the contribution necessary to remain in contested areas, and the refusal to give information and supplies to government forces beyond the necessary contribution" (Wood 2003, 17). In this study, I am deviating from this approach and focusing specifically on direct military participation in the war.

Finally, the author distinguishes three levels of support for insurgencies including (1) unarmed and unorganized opposition to the regime, (2) direct support of or participation in a local armed organization, and (3) membership in a mobile armed organization (Petersen 2001, 8-9, as cited in Wood 2003, 17). Wood's analysis mainly focuses on the second level, when in my study the above-mentioned second and third levels are merged since the subject matter here is a unitary military entity (i.e. state armed forces).

Although these limitations are obvious and logically derive from the theory's scope conditions, I am inclined to presume that this theory provides an excellent model for understanding especially those conflicts that arise in societies characterized by strong socio-cultural ties and accentuated communal identity. In particular, Wood's theory in many ways strongly resonates with how one could explain similar collective voluntary action in the case of the Nagorno-Karabakh (NK) conflict.

Herewith, I suggest that, in order to achieve a relative theoretical convergence, an expansion of the context must take place. To do this, I attempt to replace Wood's original conceptualizations of 'insurgency/civil war', 'peasants', and 'local' respectively with those of 'interstate war', 'civilians', and 'state'. By expanding the context, I view Armenia as one locality (analogical to one rural area in Wood's) characterized by a small population of civilians (analogical to peasants in one rural area in Wood's) and strong communal ties. Moreover, the path-dependent aspects that Wood draws on in the original theory (i.e. local history of violence and geographic proximity to armed forces) additionally strengthen the expanded context, as both are highly distinctive of the NK case.

Bearing in mind the logic of expanding the context, this study uses the theoretical framework of collective action theory by Wood, in order to explain an interstate war. Here, I do not study the path-dependent aspects specifically, since they are background explanations of individual motives, and could have been misleading in case the effects of the independent variable were not observed. Instead, I will reflect on these aspects retrospectively based on the gathered data as necessary.
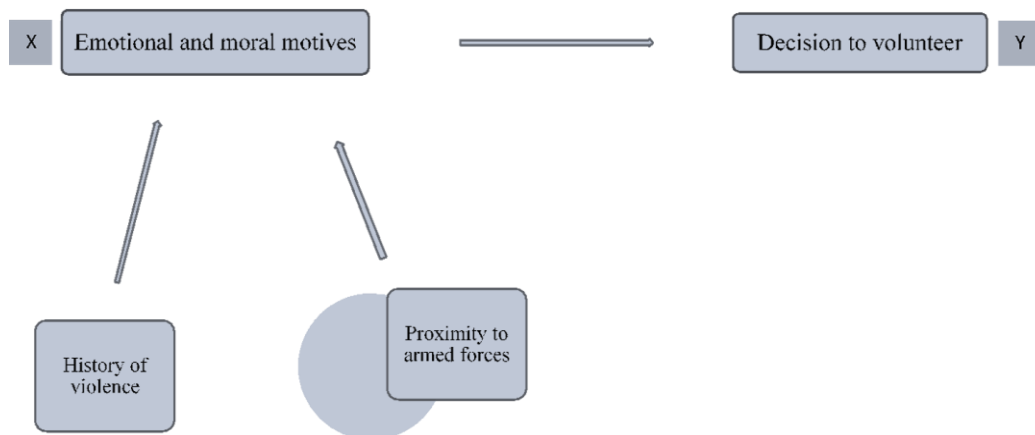

Figure 1. Causal Mechanism from Emotional and Moral Motives to Decision to Volunteer

Following the discussed theoretical considerations and the theorized causal mechanism, this paper anticipates testing the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis: *The decision to volunteer is shaped by emotional and moral motives.*

Research Design

Case Motivation

In order to probe the hypothesized relationship between emotional/moral motives (IV) and the decision to volunteer (DV), this paper covers a qualitative single-case study that is going to look at the recent large-scale escalation (27 September – 10 November 2020) of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. This is a typical case, as it "exemplifies what is considered to be a typical set of values, given some general understanding of a phenomenon" (Gerring 2008, 650).

The case has been selected strategically for two particular reasons. Firstly, since the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh war happened just recently, there has been almost no scientific inquiry on the escalation from the perspective of peace and conflict studies. Secondly, due to the completely new level of involvement of external actors (i.e., Turkey, Syrian jihadists, Russian peacekeepers), this conflict is considered to have transformed from a local territorial dispute into a regional one with the potential threat to regional security.

Given that there is no data available on the subject matter to explore my research question, I have conducted semi-structured in-depth interviews among civilians who had volunteered to join the armed forces of the Republics of Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh during the war. The interviews have been conducted online via Zoom, in Armenian language.

Data Collection and Ethical Considerations

Since there is no sampling frame available, the research participants have been selected based on the "snowball" sampling technique. Particularly, I have used my personal networks to identify men who had volunteered to join the army.

Initially, I was planning to incorporate the quota sampling strategy to try to represent categories that I considered important in this study, including age group and phase of the war of joining the army. However, during the first attempts of participant recruitment, many people from my personal network reported of post-traumatic stress and anxiety among the potential research participants. I decided to avoid making contact with these people, to prevent possible traumatization, yet also realized that using a too-specified sampling approach would be hardly feasible. Therefore, considering this serious challenge of participant availability, I had to stand back from the quota sampling strategy and rely solely on the "snowball" sampling technique.

Data collection continued until the point when the information began to repeat itself with every new interview. As a result, I conducted in-depth interviews with seven war volunteers.

In this study, I have held the dependent variable constant (i.e. positive decision to volunteer) and measured variation only in the independent variable. To do so, I have relied on the operational framework suggested by Wood (2003, 231-232), as presented in Table 1.

Indicator	Definition	Qualitative measurement[36]
Reasons for acting	Values, norms, commitments, emotions, material interests, and aversions	Q2, Q5, Q6, Q7, Q8
Beliefs	Understandings of the probable consequences of various courses of action	Q3, Q5, Q6
Practices	Culturally meaningful activities (e.g. rituals)	Q4, Q9

Table 1. Operationalization

As mentioned previously, this is a qualitative study which in turn highlights the importance of a number of methodological considerations. Since this is a single-case study, it does not claim for external generalizability. What it offers instead, is a unique glimpse into the motivations of civilian participation in the NK conflict, and the theory underlying reasoning.

The nature of the study also brings up a number of ethical considerations[37] that are crucial to be discussed and acknowledged.

Risk of traumatization. Considering that the war ended shortly before the intended fieldwork, its psycho-social effects were still fresh among the respondents. Thus, asking them to recall the pre-war and war contexts could pose a risk of potentially traumatizing them. In order to address this issue, I combined the following measures:

- I used a questionnaire that was structured in a sensitive way, i.e. easy and/or factual questions in the beginning and the end, and rather difficult and sensitive ones in the middle.
- I conducted the interviews and asked the questions in a way that helped the respondents to transcend the conflict as much as possible and reflect on their experiences "from above."
- During the introduction of the interview, all respondents were clearly communicated about their right to refuse to answer any question, take a break or stop the interview at any point without having to reason their decision.

Receipt of sensitive information. I acknowledged that during the interviews, I might have ended up unintentionally receiving sensitive information, e.g. personal confidential or identifying information, military secrets, etc. In cases like this, I have made sure to destroy the evidence as soon as the interview was finished, to prevent any possibility of information leaks.

Risk of bias. The research has a qualitative design and it explores a context that I have a personal attachment to, which could potentially pose objectivity issues. In order to address this and reach relative objectivity, I have used a semi-structured interview

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[36] See Annex (In-depth Interview Guide)

[37] Considering that the study intended data collection from human subjects and touched a sensitive and recent topic, I underwent an ethical review process, and received approval from the Ethics Committee of the DPCR on December 2nd, 2020, before beginning the fieldwork.

questionnaire, as well as strongly relied on my previous experience in qualitative research on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

Analysis

Background

Up till September 2020, Nagorno-Karabakh (NK) was a landlocked region in the South Caucasus of the former Soviet Union, subject to a major territorial armed dispute between Armenia and Azerbaijan since 1988, termed neutrally as Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict. The NK region was considered an unrecognized or self-proclaimed state officially part of the territory of Azerbaijan, with the majority of its population being ethnic Armenians. Both Armenia and Azerbaijan are former USSR members each having had their official dispositions about the region; the Azerbaijani side referred to it as a disputed territory, and an integral part of the Republic of Azerbaijan, demanding the return of the territories allowing the forcibly displaced persons to get back to the places of their former residence; Armenian side demanded a right for independence and self-determination of the people living in the region.

On September 27, 2020, a large-scale war began between the parties, leading to a 44-day long violent armed operations in and around the NK region. In response to this, a large wave of voluntary action emerged instantly, with regular civilians getting voluntarily registered to join the armed forces. This process went on until November 10, when a peace deal was signed between the parties and Russia involved as a mediator, stopping the shootings and effectively leading to the majority of the NK regions being passed to Azerbaijan (see the map below), as well as the displacement of the local Armenian population.
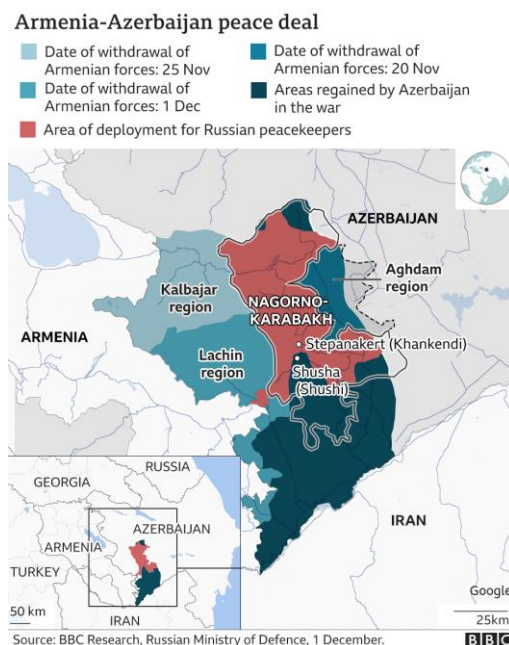

Figure 2. Map of Armenia-Azerbaijan peace deal

Same War, Different Experiences: Conceptualizing the Volunteer Identity

Why are people sometimes "brave to the point of foolishness," bearing risks not explicable on the basis of expected outcomes? (Calhoun 1991, 51, as cited in Wood 2003, 227)

Before proceeding to explore the implications of this theoretical question, it is important to draw on the ways war volunteers conceptualize their own identity. This happens mainly by contrasting their self-perception with the perceived identity of regular soldiers.

Based on the interviews with volunteers, the most essential difference between themselves and soldiers, mainly concern the ways they perceive war. Civilian volunteers generally view war as an extraordinary and immense event that is happening outside of their definition of 'normal', rather than as a completely new context. In contrast, soldiers, according to volunteers, mostly see war as just another part of their military service, a segment or an episode of an already existing context, rather than a new one.

This means that for soldiers, values, meanings, roles, and actions standing behind individual motives are not contextualizing the conflict, but are rather manifested in the context of the conflict. This characteristic once again underlines the different yet important outlook that the war volunteers provide in terms of understanding what constitutes the decision to fight a war while having the option not to.

There was this soldier with us that once said, "So what, if it [the war] ends, brother? I'm a demobee, had it lasted until the end of January, I'd get done with this and go home." He did not see war in a nationwide context, he saw it as a part of his service, for him it was normal [because] his service time went fast.

NK War Volunteer, Armenia, December 2020

Importantly, experiences guided by this perspective on war need to be and are in fact considered as a context when discussing how civilians decide to volunteer for joining the armed forces.

Deciding to Volunteer: Investigating Individual Motives

The study revealed that emotional and moral motives do play a major role in shaping the decision to volunteer. Material and more or less rational grievances have been mentioned very rarely, and rather in the context of post-war expectations for compensation (e.g. psychological, employment, financial, etc.) that apply to some volunteers only, according to the respondents. Instead, the key reasons for voluntary collective action during the second NK war were moral commitments and emotional engagements with the conflict, similar to the case analyzed by Wood.

You have no moral right not to go [to war]. There is this inner feeling of responsibility and duty. There was really no time to think – the fighting's begun, we go.

NK War Volunteer, Armenia, December 2020

The respondents were not only asked to explain the reasons behind their own decision to volunteer but were also invited to reflect on what they thought had motivated other people to join the collective action. Hence, the analysis that follows is based on the condensed interpretations of individual motives provided by the research participants.

Generally, individual motivations can be grouped into six categories (three dyads) that I have come to realize analogically fall one way or another into the concepts proposed by Wood, as shown in Table 2.

Reasons for volunteering	Reasons for joining the insurgency (Wood)
1. Pure interest	Participation
2. Peer reciprocity	
3. "Superpatriotism[38]"	Defiance
4. Loss appreciation	
5. Desire for heroism	Pleasure in Agency
6. Restoring justice	

Table 2. Reasons for volunteering in analogy to Wood's theory

The first dyad of reasons mainly implies participation for the sake of participation, or as Wood puts it, 'participation per se' (2003, 232). This means that the fact of participation itself or the opportunity of its later acknowledgment is being valued in two particular ways. First, volunteering is being discussed as a result of pure interest, meaning that war is viewed as an "apogee" of life and death that effectively plants a sort of internal excitement and curiosity among people. Second, civilians decide to volunteer as part of a presupposed peer reciprocity, essentially replicating the decision of their peers – *"everyone volunteers, I will too."* Furthermore, as Jasper observes while explaining the pleasures of protesting, this is largely about "companionship, a sense of community and identity, the euphoria of crowds (what Emile Durkheim called "collective effervescence"), all of which are also available at soccer matches" (Jasper 1997, as cited in Wood 2003, 233).

> *A war has begun, and everything at all times is connected to that. It's like a big concert which the whole country participates in, and you cannot be uninvolved in that, and the deeper you dig, the more you want to personally experience what is going on.*
>
> NK War Volunteer, Armenia, December 2020

The second dyad of reasons is highly analogical to what Wood terms as defiance. This implies a refusal to acquiesce, observed in two specific forms. First, some civilians are governed by their "superpatriotism" that forms their self-defined duty to protect the land and the nation, eventually providing a "consistent and meaningful interpretation of violence and death" (Wood 2003, 233). Second, the decision to volunteer is shaped by a loss of appreciation, in other words, a moral commitment to fight for the sake of the ones

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[38] The concept has been taken from a respondent's definition.

who fell in the war. Wood similarly interprets this as "if family members and fellow activists were not to have died in vain, those remaining must not forsake the struggle for justice but continue it" (2003, 234).

> *… Paying respects to those people, who gave their life in the past to keep even a small piece of land […], to continue their mission, so that at least those human losses do not get meaningless.*

NK War Volunteer, Armenia, December 2020

The third dyad of reasons can be explained as pleasure in agency in Wood's terms, defined as the "positive affect associated with self-determination, autonomy, self-esteem, efficacy, and pride that comes from the successful assertion of intention" (2003, 235), and referring to forms of pleasure that civilians experience when playing an important for them role in the war. First, this is observed in the desire for heroism, especially in terms of gaining the tag or the social status of a hero in contrast to the rest of the society. Second, this pleasure in agency is explained as a collective experience aimed at restoring justice, or in Wood's words, "redrawing of boundaries and reshaping of history […] a history they perceived as more *just*" (2003, 235).

> *At that moment, he [a volunteer] understands that he means much more in the "eye" of the community […], he knows that he will be considered as different, will have a bigger role, a bigger respect.*

NK War Volunteer, Armenia, December 2020

Discussion

The reasons for volunteering discussed in the previous section were often observed in a merged form, which was also the case for Wood's theory. However, synthesizing these patterns into provisional dyads of categories and analyzing the characteristics and differences thereof allows adequately depicting the phenomenon this study explores. The analysis also suggests that Wood's theory has a considerably high explanatory power in studying the voluntary collective action that emerged during the 2020 NK war, proving that its theoretical scopes do have the potential to be even more widened.

It is important to acknowledge that Wood's theory does not have claims on explaining interstate wars. Hence, its explanatory power should be judged only provided that a contextual expansion of Wood's theory is accomplished in advance, as discussed earlier in the paper.

Alternatively, it also could be interesting to throw a generic glance on the three dyads from the perspective of Max Weber's social action theory that suggests (1991) four types of social actions, including instrumentally rational action[39], value-oriented action[40], traditional action[41], and affectual action[42]. The former three in different combinations fit the discussed categories of reasons for volunteering, participation being both affectual and

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[39] Highly goal-oriented action based on rational calculations of the most efficient means of achieving a goal.
[40] Action aimed at fulfilling a value that of a relative socio-cultural importance.
[41] Repetitive action guided by tradition, custom or habit.
[42] Action based solely on emotions.

traditional, defiance being both traditional and value-oriented, and pleasure in agency being value-oriented and affectual (see Figure 3). Weberian interpretation of social actions could be an alternative theoretical approach useful for further analysis of especially the rationality component in the decision-making process.
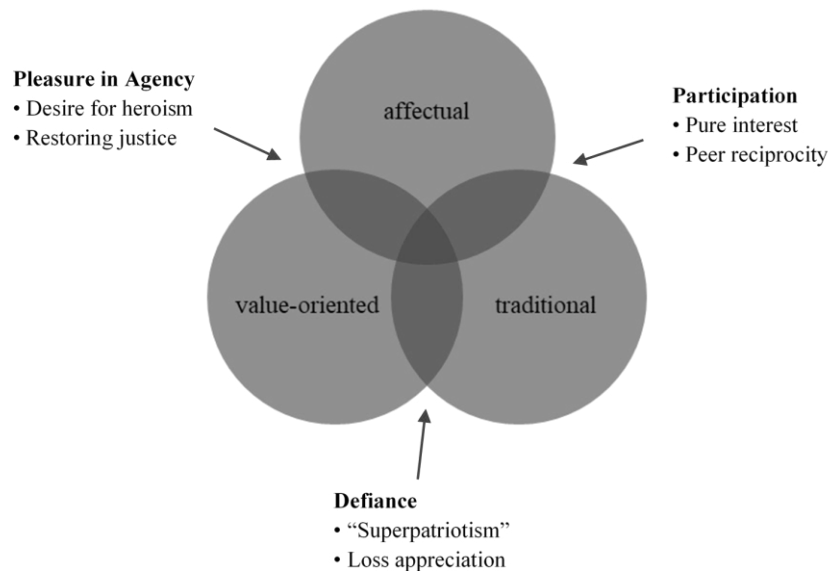

Figure 3. Reasons for volunteering and Weber's typology of social action

Given the results of the analysis, as well as the relevant theoretical considerations and limitations, I can state that within the settings of Wood's theory on collective insurgent action, I have found general support for the posed hypothesis (**H1**: *The decision to volunteer is shaped by emotional and moral motives*).

Conclusion

This paper was an effort to test Wood's theory of collective action on a case of interstate war. In particular, I have conducted small-scale qualitative research attempting to investigate why civilians volunteered for joining the armed forces during the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh war. The main puzzle that formed the basis of this study was the freedom of choice posing a need to explore the reasons why civilians would choose to fight in a war while having the option not to.

Based on the operationalization provided by Wood and with the use of a semi-structured in-depth interview guide, data was collected from war volunteers. As a result of analyzing the gathered data, I propose and analyze a typology of case-specific motives grouped into three dyads analogical to the model suggested in the original theory.

To conclude, this paper presents sufficient qualitative evidence bringing about considerably strong support for the hypothesized causal relationship between emotional and moral motives (X) and the decision to volunteer (Y). Furthermore, the paper shows that Wood's theory can have a significant explanatory power even when taken out of its original scope conditions. However, in order to achieve a high level of generalizability, a quantitative analysis would be needed, hence this paper could potentially serve as a basis for further inquiries on the subject.

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Appendix

In-depth Interview Guide

Hello. I am Hayk Smbatyan. I am currently enrolled in the Master program in Peace and Conflict Studies at Uppsala University. As part of my coursework, I am conducting a small-scale study interviewing volunteers of the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh war, trying to explore how and why civilians take the decision to volunteer for joining the army. You have been recommended as a research participant by _____. I am really interested in your experience and thoughts about this subject. I will be asking you some questions, and your honest and clear answers to them will be truly valued. With your permission, I will record the interview in order not to miss any important reflections of yours in the phase of data analysis. The information you provide will only be used in a generalized and anonymous way, and no identifying information will appear anywhere. I appreciate your time and contribution. Do you have any questions you would like to ask, before we begin?

1. How did you find out that military activities had begun on the line of contact? Could you, please, recall what feelings you experienced at that moment?
2. Why did you take the decision to volunteer? What or who led to you to that decision? Please, exemplify your answer.
3. What was the reaction of your family and friends to your decision?
4. Please, describe the process of registering as a volunteer. Who did you approach and what was required to be able to volunteer?
5. In what conditions would you decide not to volunteer? What would happen if you did not volunteer?
6. In what case do you think you would regret your decision to volunteer?
7. How would you describe a war volunteer in general? Why do civilians decide to voluntarily join the army?
8. What do you think makes a volunteer different from a regular soldier?
9. What was the first thing you did after returning from the frontline? How did you re-adapt to the civilian life?
10. What needs do you and other volunteers have that you believe should be taken care of? Who do you think is responsible for that?
11. How do you feel right now? Is there anything else you would like to share?

Thank you very much for your time and participation.

For the submissions criteria and instructions, please visit our webpage at
http://www.paxetbellum.org/journal/