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Organizing Insurgency

Paul Staniland

Networks, Resources, and
Rebellion in South Asia

How do material resources influence the behavior of insurgent groups? Do diamonds, drugs, state sponsors, and diasporas turn insurgents into fractious, loot-seeking thugs? Or do they help insurgents build disciplined and cohesive organizations? These questions have occupied a central focus in recent research, but no consensus has emerged on the answers to any of them. Some cases suggest that resource wealth encourages the degeneration of armed groups into greed and criminality. For instance, right-wing paramilitaries in Colombia, the Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA), and the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) in Sierra Leone are clear examples of large-scale resources being associated with indiscipline or civilian victimization. Other evidence, however, shows that external sponsorship and criminal activity can help leaders build organizations in the face of state repression. The Taliban in Afghanistan, the Tamil Tigers in Sri Lanka, and the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) forged, and indeed improved, their organizational effectiveness while relying heavily on external support and illicit economic gain.

This article offers a way of integrating these conflicting claims and cases. It outlines a social-institutional theory of insurgent cohesion that explains how the discipline and cohesion of insurgent groups shape the effects of resource flows. The theory argues that the structure of the preexisting social networks upon which an armed group is built determines the organizational integration or fragmentation of the group. Social ties establish how and when robust institutions can be built: rather than being opposing concepts, networks and organizations are tightly intertwined.¹

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1. This approach follows John F. Padgett and Christopher K. Ansell, who argue that scholars must "penetrate beneath the veneer of formal institutions, groups, and goals down to the relational substrata of peoples' actual lives." Padgett and Ansell, "Robust Action and the Rise of the Medici, 1400–1434," *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 98, No. 6 (May 1993), p. 1259.

Institutions, in turn, explain why resources are sometimes harnessed for organization building and why they sometimes become linked to organizational degradation. Insurgent organizations forged through overlapping social bases that pull together both leaders and local communities use their ties to create strong institutions. These integrated organizations may not be widely popular or politically sophisticated, but their ability to tap into and then build on pre-existing networks of collective action can manage and contain the lures of resource wealth. These organizations use resource flows to improve their fighting power and internal control, rather than becoming greedy loot-seekers. By contrast, groups that are built atop socially divided networks cannot control or discipline the use of resources, even when they mobilize popular sentiment or draw on grassroots mobilization. Social division makes it difficult for leaders to construct robust institutions. In these fragmented organizations, resources are more likely to become linked to internal rivalries, parochial individual and local agendas, and purely profit-seeking behavior. The social bases and consequent organizational structure of militant mobilization determine what happens when cash, guns, and narcotics begin to course through a group's veins. These dynamics affect insurgent fighting power, vulnerability to counterinsurgency, and treatment of civilians.

Identifying the mechanisms connecting resource flows and insurgent organization and behavior is crucial for both scholarly and policy purposes. Important research has used the structure of armed groups and movements to explain patterns of human rights abuses, the duration and outcome of conflicts, and the prospects for peace.² Without understanding the causes of insurgent control and fragmentation, however, scholars will struggle to build comprehensive theories about their effects. The connections between resources and armed groups have become particularly salient in modern conflict,

2. Mia M. Bloom, "Palestinian Suicide Bombing: Public Support, Market Share, and Outbidding," *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 119, No. 1 (Spring 2004), pp. 61–88; Dara Kay Cohen, "Explaining Sexual Violence during Civil War," Ph.D. dissertation, Stanford University, 2010; David E. Cunningham, "Veto Players and Civil War Duration," *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 50, No. 4 (October 2006), pp. 875–892; Macartan Humphreys and Jeremy M. Weinstein, "Handling and Manhandling Civilians in Civil War," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 100, No. 3 (August 2006), pp. 429–447; Adria Lawrence, "Triggering Nationalist Violence: Competition and Conflict in Uprisings against Colonial Rule," *International Security*, Vol. 35, No. 2 (Fall 2010), pp. 88–122; Wendy Pearlman, "Spoiling Inside and Out: Internal Political Contestation and the Middle East Peace Process," *International Security*, Vol. 33, No. 3 (Winter 2008/09), pp. 79–109; Abdulkader Sinno, *Organizations at War in Afghanistan and Beyond* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2008); Stephen John Stedman, "Spoiler Problems in Peace Processes," *International Security*, Vol. 22, No. 2 (Fall 1997), pp. 5–53; Jeremy Weinstein, *Inside Rebellion: The Politics of Insurgent Violence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); and Elisabeth Jean Wood, "Armed Groups and Sexual Violence: When Is Wartime Rape Rare?" *Politics & Society*, Vol. 37, No. 1 (March 2009), pp. 131–161.

whether in Afghanistan or the Congo, and policy prescriptions for dealing with these issues rely on implicit theories about how diamonds, external sponsors, and drugs, among other resources, influence insurgent and militia organizations: as Michael Ross writes, “[D]ifferent mechanisms suggest different policy interventions.”³ Explaining how armed groups use resources therefore engages with key academic and policy debates.

Existing empirical research on this question has primarily used comparisons across wars, but the conflicting claims in the literature suggest that exploring more fine-grained variation and probing specific causal mechanisms would be valuable. I examine the validity of my social-institutional theory in a comparative study of armed groups in Kashmir. The insurgency in Kashmir from 1988 to 2003 was primarily funded by Pakistani external aid. Scholars have identified state sponsorship as a trigger for both greater indiscipline and greater resilience. Relying on a variety of sources and fieldwork in the region, I explore the dramatic variation in organizational discipline across armed groups within this conflict. This shared context forms a structured comparative setting in which to parse out how resource flows affect (or do not affect) organizational form and behavior. It reduces the number of confounding variables, allows detailed process tracing, and thus makes inferences more credible. The findings show that careful qualitative research can valuably address methodological problems of sequencing, measurement, and endogeneity.

This article proceeds in six sections. First, it outlines the conflicting state of the field on the relationship between resources and insurgents. Second, it lays out the social-institutional theory of insurgent organizational cohesion and control to explain the differential effects of resource flows. Third, it justifies my research design for probing the plausibility of this theory. Fourth, it engages in a detailed comparative study of the major armed organizations in Indian-administered Kashmir from 1988 to 2003. Fifth, it explores the applicability of the theory to other South Asian insurgencies. Sixth, it concludes with implications for policy and research. Simply relying on drug money, state sponsors, or illicit smuggling has no single consequence for organizational cohesion and discipline: instead, resources are used in different ways by different types of armed actors. More broadly, my argument suggests that scholars need to study the origins and evolution of insurgent groups, and that policymakers and analysts need to broaden their conceptualization of how organizations operate in modern civil wars.

3. Michael L. Ross, “How Do Natural Resources Influence Civil War? Evidence from Thirteen Cases,” *International Organization*, Vol. 58, No. 1 (Winter 2004), p. 37.

Resources and Insurgents

Resources are tightly intertwined with insurgency. Although many accounts of insurgency focus on the voluntary provision of resources by peasants and ordinary people, these contributions are often insufficient to fuel organized violence, particularly in situations with a strong counterinsurgent state, regions lacking significant economic wealth, or intense competition among militant groups. Insurgents frequently look to states, diasporas, and a variety of illicit economic activities for the material underpinnings of their rebellion. These economic endowments are “the resources that can be mobilized to finance the start-up and maintenance of a rebel organization.”⁴ Debates over how these resources influence the origins of civil war have led to few reliable findings amid enduring disagreements.⁵

Scholars and analysts have shifted their attention to the effects of resource flows on insurgent groups, in particular, international political resource flows (from states and diasporas) and illicit economic activities both domestic and international (e.g., narcotics, smuggling, extortion, oil, and minerals). Two conflicting views have emerged about the effects of these resources on insurgents: one paints resource wealth as fuel for resilient rebellion; the other links resource wealth to indiscipline and criminalization in an insurgent variant of the “resource curse.”⁶

A number of scholars and analysts have pointed to external resource flows from states and diasporas as enormously helpful to insurgents, making it difficult for counterinsurgents to starve armed groups of the funds and weapons needed to keep up the fight.⁷ Studies have shown that external state support is a powerful correlate of insurgent victory.⁸ Diasporas can be simi-

4. Weinstein, *Inside Rebellion*, p. 47.

5. Excellent overviews of this line of research are Macartan Humphreys, “Natural Resources, Conflict, and Conflict Resolution: Uncovering the Mechanisms,” *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 49, No. 4 (August 2005), pp. 508–537; Ross, “How Do Natural Resources Influence Civil War?”; and Michael Ross, “A Closer Look at Oil, Diamonds, and Civil War,” *Annual Review of Political Science*, Vol. 9 (June 2006), pp. 265–300. See also Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler, “Greed and Grievance in Civil War,” *Oxford Economic Papers*, Vol. 56, No. 4 (October 2004), pp. 563–595; James D. Fearon and David D. Laitin, “Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War,” *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 97, No. 1 (February 2003), pp. 75–90; and James D. Fearon, “Primary Commodity Exports and Civil War,” *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 49, No. 4 (August 2005), pp. 483–507.

6. The “resource curse” refers to the negative consequences of large natural resource endowments on governance and economic development. See Michael Ross, “The Political Economy of the Resource Curse,” *World Politics*, Vol. 51, No. 2 (January 1999), pp. 297–322.

7. Nathan Constantine Leites and Charles Wolf, *Rebellion and Authority: An Analytic Essay on Insurgent Conflicts* (Chicago: Markham, 1970), p. 76.

8. Daniel Byman, Peter Chalk, Bruce Hoffman, William Rosenau, and David Brannan, *Trends in*

larly important.⁹ Disciplined, politicized, and ruthlessly committed armed groups, including effective organizations such as the SPLA, the Free Aceh Movement, Hezbollah, and the Viet Minh, have been funded by state sponsors and diasporas.¹⁰

Other researchers, however, have identified external support as a trigger for indiscipline and thuggishness, as armed groups shift their behavior to capture more external resources while ignoring the population and eschewing organization building and mass mobilization. Armed groups can become predatory proxy armies waging war with external state or diaspora funding rather than motivated, disciplined rebels.¹¹ The Mozambican National Resistance (known by its Portuguese acronym RENAMO) and proxy militias in eastern Congo are well-known cases of loosely organized, externally funded armed groups. It is hard to reconcile these two views of the effects of external support on organizational structure. External support is plausibly associated with both discipline and indiscipline, both fighting power and militarily inefficient thuggishness.

The same indeterminacy holds for illicit and criminal economic activities such as extortion and the smuggling of oil, diamonds, and narcotics. David Keen hypothesizes that illegal economic gains by rebels “weaken lines of command within military organisations, making it difficult to instill discipline.”¹²

Outside Support for Insurgent Movements (Washington, D.C.: RAND, 2001), pp. xiv–xv; Daniel Byman, *Deadly Connections: States That Sponsor Terrorism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 3; Patrick Johnston, “The Geography of Insurgent Organization and Its Consequences for Civil Wars: Evidence from Liberia and Sierra Leone,” *Security Studies*, Vol. 17, No. 1 (January 2008), pp. 107–137; Jason Lyall and Isaiah Wilson III, “Rage against the Machines: Explaining Outcomes in Counterinsurgency Wars,” *International Organization*, Vol. 63, No. 1 (Winter 2009), p. 90; and Idean Salehyan, *Rebels without Borders: Transnational Insurgencies in World Politics* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2009), pp. 36–40.

9. Fiona B. Adamson, “Globalisation, Transnational Political Mobilisation, and Networks of Violence,” *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, Vol. 18, No. 1 (April 2005), pp. 31–49; and C. Christine Fair, “Diaspora Involvement in Insurgencies: Insights from the Khalistan and Tamil Eelam Movements,” *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics*, Vol. 11, No. 1 (Spring 2005), pp. 125–156.

10. See Edward Aspinall, *Islam and Nation: Separatist Rebellion in Aceh, Indonesia* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2009), p. 119; Shane Joshua Barter, “Resources, Religion, Rebellion: The Sources and Lessons of Acehese Separatism,” *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, Vol. 19, No. 1 (March 2008), pp. 39–61; Christopher Clapham, “Introduction: Analysing African Insurgencies,” in Clapham, ed., *African Guerrillas* (Oxford: James Currey, 1998), p. 16; William J. Duiker, *The Communist Road to Power in Vietnam*, 2d ed. (Boulder, Colo.: Westview, 1996), p. 150; and Augustus Richard Norton, *Hezbollah: A Short History* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2007), p. 72.

11. See Weinstein, *Inside Rebellion* (particularly his research about RENAMO) on external support; on diasporas and greed, see Kyle Beardsley and Brian McQuinn, “Rebel Groups as Predatory Organizations: The Political Effects of the 2004 Tsunami in Indonesia and Sri Lanka,” *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 53, No. 4 (August 2009), pp. 624–645; and Collier and Hoeffler, “Greed and Grievance in Civil War,” pp. 574–575.

12. David Keen, *The Economic Functions of Violence in Civil Wars* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 25.

Jeremy Weinstein powerfully argues that resource wealth leads to the collapse of insurgents' political focus and institutional control. Resources undermine incentives to treat civilians well or to build enduringly disciplined organizations. As a result, groups with access to substantial resources prey on civilian populations for easy gain. Weinstein argues that "groups commit high levels of abuse not because of ethnic hatred or because it benefits them strategically but instead because their membership renders group leaders unable to discipline and restrain the use of force."¹³

As resource flows become more plentiful, insurgents become increasingly depoliticized. Involvement in illicit economies undermines organizational discipline, which leads to human rights abuses, breakdowns in command and control, and a shift toward profit over politics.¹⁴ The RUF in Sierra Leone, various Burmese drug warlords, Serb militias in Bosnia, and UNITA in Angola are armed groups in which these mechanisms appear to have operated. Weinstein also identifies cases in which groups shifted over time toward weaker discipline as resources swamped original organizational structures.¹⁵ Portrayals of armed groups as loot seekers, thugs, and criminals pursuing resources at the expense of politics find their roots in studies of these types of organization.¹⁶

Other scholars have persuasively argued that drugs and crime can be helpful resources for building robust insurgencies. Some attribute the fighting power and endurance of the Taliban and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia in part to their ability to generate vast amounts of revenue from the drug trade.¹⁷ The involvement of the Provisional Irish Republican Army (PIRA) in large-scale smuggling and extortion did not induce significant organizational degradation; instead, it fueled the PIRA's military and political mobilization.¹⁸ More broadly, Vanda Felbab-Brown finds that involvement in

13. Weinstein, *Inside Rebellion*, p. 20.

14. See, in particular, Mary Kaldor, *New and Old Wars: Organized Violence in a Global Era* (Cambridge: Polity, 1999); and John Mueller, "The Banality of 'Ethnic War,'" *International Security*, Vol. 25, No. 1 (Summer 2000), pp. 42–70. For a critical overview, see Karen Ballentine and Jake Sherman, eds., *The Political Economy of Armed Conflict: Beyond Greed and Grievance* (Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner, 2003).

15. The study of the Huallaga Valley branch of the Shining Path, which became involved in drugs, highlights this mechanism. See Weinstein, *Inside Rebellion*.

16. A popular account that portrays the Taliban as a drug-driven organization is Gretchen Peters, *Seeds of Terror: How Heroin Is Bankrolling the Taliban and Al Qaeda* (New York: St. Martin's, 2009).

17. Francisco Gutiérrez Sanín studies variation in the operations of different Colombian armed groups, showing dramatic differences despite a shared resource environment and reliance on illicit economic activities. Gutiérrez Sanín, "Telling the Difference: Guerrillas and Paramilitaries in the Colombian War," *Politics & Society*, Vol. 36, No. 1 (March 2008), pp. 3–34; and Gutiérrez Sanín, "Criminal Rebels? A Discussion of Civil War and Criminality from the Colombian Experience," *Politics & Society*, Vol. 32, No. 2 (June 2004), pp. 257–285.

18. Brendan O'Leary, "IRA: Irish Republican Army," in John Tirman, Marianne Heiberg, and

narcotics can provide armed groups with political capital and social support, rather than turning them into predatory warlords. In these cases, crime and illicit resource flows seem to have made it easier for insurgent groups to pursue their military-political goals rather than depoliticizing and fragmenting them.¹⁹

It is hard to square this circle: resource wealth on its own is associated with both undisciplined fragmentation and disciplined organization building. Monocausal explanations that link resource flows to patterns of organizational form and behavior can offer valuable insights into particular cases, but they are insufficient when considered in comparative perspective.

A Social-Institutional Theory of Insurgent Organization

This section offers a theory of insurgent cohesion and discipline that can explain the different relationships between resources and organizations. Scholars have many theories of civil war, insurgent participation, and patterns of violence, but few that take insurgency seriously as a problem of organization building.²⁰ Insurgent groups are distinctive because they rely heavily on social resources for both their founding and survival: they must be able to draw on support from communities and on trust and communication among group members in the face of risk and repression. I argue that the structure of the social ties on which an organization was originally built shapes the new institutions that emerge. Social divisions and cleavages that existed at the time of organizational founding create enduring internal fissures and indiscipline, whereas overlapping social networks makes it possible to create new institutions able to control violence.²¹ These institutions determine whether resource flows will help or hinder the group: fragmented groups tend to be unaffected or undermined by resource wealth, whereas integrated groups tend to be helped. Discipline and control are functions not of resource endowments, but

O'Leary, eds., *Terror, Insurgency, and the State: Ending Protracted Conflicts* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), p. 207.

19. Vanda Felbab-Brown, *Shooting Up: Counterinsurgency and the War on Drugs* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2010), p. 19. On greed and war, see also Stathis N. Kalyvas, "'New' and 'Old' Civil Wars: A Valid Distinction?" *World Politics*, Vol. 54, No. 1 (October 2001), pp. 99–118.

20. Important exceptions include Sinno, *Organizations at War in Afghanistan and Beyond*; Weinstein, *Inside Rebellion*; and Timothy Wickham-Crowley, *Guerrillas and Revolution in Latin America: A Comparative Study of Insurgents and Regimes since 1956* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1992). See also Scott Gates, "Recruitment and Allegiance: The Microfoundations of Rebellion," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 46, No. 1 (February 2002), pp. 111–130.

21. My approach is different from Jeremy Weinstein's influential theory, which argues that there is a distinction between groups built around networks and those built around resources. Weinstein, *Inside Rebellion*, p. 50. My argument is that all groups have some social underpinning and some resource endowments: the crucial issue is how they interact.

instead of the ability of insurgent social networks and organizations to harness resources.²²

My social-institutional theory emphasizes the embeddedness of organizations in social networks and institutions.²³ To underpin new forms of collective action, leaders and organizers trying to build an insurgent organization “socially appropriate” the networks within which they are enmeshed.²⁴ Pre-existing networks are particularly useful because starting wholly new organizations is difficult in the face of state repressive power.²⁵ The foundational social base of an armed organization dominates its leadership cadres and establishes, or fails to establish, central organizational processes to make and implement decisions and to create local institutions for disciplining and socializing influxes of new fighters. As Kathleen Thelen argues, “[K]nowing how institutions were constructed provides insights into how they might come apart.”²⁶

These foundational social bases vary dramatically in their manifestations, including political parties, religious organizations, kinship ties, veterans’ networks, and other forms of collective life. The vast majority of these bases are not built in anticipation of violence; instead, they are reconfigured, appropriated, and converted for new functions of insurgency.²⁷ Social bases tend to be contingently and historically determined and not subject to rapid or easy change.²⁸ As a social movement scholar summarizes existing research, “[T]he

22. This insight also finds support in Anoop Sarbahi, “Insurgent-Population Ties and the Variation in the Trajectory of Peripheral Civil Wars,” Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles, 2011. Sarbahi contrasts “anchored” and “floating” armed groups, but focuses on the overall political trajectories of peripheral conflicts, whereas this article explores patterns of organizational cohesion and internal control.

23. Mark Granovetter, “Economic Action and Social Structure: The Problem of Embeddedness,” *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 91, No. 3 (November 1985), pp. 481–510; and Charles Perrow, *Complex Organizations: A Critical Essay*, 3d ed. (New York: Random House, 1986), chap. 5.

24. Doug McAdam, Sidney Tarrow, and Charles Tilly, *Dynamics of Contention* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 115.

25. Roger Petersen, *Resistance and Rebellion: Lessons from Eastern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. 15–16.

26. Kathleen Thelen, “Historical Institutionalism in Comparative Politics,” *Annual Review of Political Science*, Vol. 2 (June 1999), p. 400.

27. Crucially, it is possible to observe differences between prewar social bases and wartime insurgent organizations: the functions and forms differ dramatically, and there is space for other theories to operate in ways that undermine continuity between prewar collective action and wartime institutions. My theory can therefore be disconfirmed. One can also measure social bases independently of any future war.

28. On the origins of variation in networks, see Mario Luis Small, *Unanticipated Gains: Origins of Network Inequality in Everyday Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009). On social infrastructures, see John D. McCarthy, “Constraints and Opportunities in Adopting, Adapting, and Inventing,” in Doug McAdam, McCarthy, and Mayer N. Zald, eds., *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements: Political Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Cultural Framings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 141–151. Although networks have generally been used to study

structures of everyday life may ultimately be changed by collective action, but in the short run they are relatively fixed, and serve as the relational underpinning for most collective action.²⁹ It is often impossible *ex ante* to predict the trajectory of an escalating conflict, so one should not expect leaders to be able to easily create or reshape optimal new networks amid deeply uncertain strategic situations. Militants go to war with the networks they have.

All insurgent organizations are built on social linkages, though they vary dramatically in their strength and structure.³⁰ I focus on the ties that connect nascent organizers horizontally with one another and vertically with local communities.³¹ Variation in social bases can be identified by examining patterns of social connections and interactions across organizers and within local communities prior to war.³² For the purposes of this article, I distinguish between overlapping and divided social bases.³³ Overlapping social bases are preexisting networks that combine strong horizontal links that pull together organizers across localities with vertical ties that embed them in local communities. A classic example is a cadre-based political party, which links members across space through training and events while retaining strong local linkages. By contrast, divided social bases are characterized by weak horizontal ties across organizers (as in a religious party with a collection of parochial power centers), weak vertical embeddedness within communities (as in a group of

micro-level involvement in violence and rebellion, my contribution is using them to explain organization. On individual and small group participation, see Roger V. Gould, "Multiple Networks and Mobilization in the Paris Commune, 1871," *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 56, No. 6 (December 1991), pp. 716–729; Peter S. Bearman, "Desertion as Localism: Army Unit Solidarity and Group Norms in the U.S. Civil War," *Social Forces*, Vol. 70, No. 2 (December 1991), pp. 321–342; Karen Barkey and Ronan Van Rossem, "Networks of Contention: Villages and Regional Structure in the Seventeenth-Century Ottoman Empire," *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 102, No. 5 (March 1997), pp. 1345–1382; Petersen, *Resistance and Rebellion*; and Marc Sageman, *Understanding Terror Networks* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004).

29. McCarthy, "Constraints and Opportunities in Adopting, Adapting, and Inventing," p. 147. On collective action, see Mancur Olson, *The Logic of Collective Action: Public Goods and the Theory of Groups* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1965).

30. This contrasts with distinctions between networks and organizations such as those found in Francisco Gutiérrez Sanín and Antonio Giustozzi, "Networks and Armies: Structuring Rebellion in Colombia and Afghanistan," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, Vol. 33, No. 9 (September 2010), pp. 836–853.

31. Thus, this theory attempts to identify, in Roger V. Gould's evocative words, a "deep structure to human conflict that is masked by observable cultural variation." Gould, *Collision of Wills: How Ambiguity about Social Rank Breeds Conflict* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), p. 101.

32. The political salience of social ties will differ: many prewar networks and organizations cannot be linked to an insurgent political agenda. Here, I study social ties that are relevant to rebellion and assess the impact of their structure on organizations.

33. I conceptualize initial social bases and organizational outcomes in more detail in Paul Staniland, "Networks of Rebellion: Explaining Insurgent Cohesion and Collapse," University of Chicago, 2012.

urban students trying to mobilize socially distinct rural peasants), or both. Overlapping social bases may be unpopular, led by uncharismatic leaders, or inactive in providing services, but they can nevertheless provide specific resources for collective action; divided social bases may be popular and active in local grassroots mobilization, but they lack existing social connections that link the local and extra-local.

As a conflict escalates, new insurgent organization building follows lines of social connection. Groups created by insurgent leaders embedded in overlapping social bases use preexisting ties of information and commitment to rapidly “layer” new or modified formal institutions atop prior social relationships.³⁴ They leverage horizontal ties to build strong central control processes and vertical ties to forge robust local institutions. This contributes to lasting organizational cohesion, even though the new functions of insurgency fundamentally differ from the prior activities of the social base. Relatively high levels of internal control are put in place that endure over time. Organizations built around divided networks struggle to forge integrated institutions because of the social fissures and gaps in collective action within the organization. When horizontal linkages are weak, central control will be lacking and elite feuding and splits thus more likely. When prewar vertical linkages are weak, leaders struggle to establish consistent discipline and control on the ground. Fragmented, fragile organizations will emerge that reflect the divided social bases on which they were built.³⁵ The social and the institutional are intertwined.

This organizational structure determines the impact that resource endowments have on discipline and behavior. When resources flow into cohesive organizations that are built around overlapping social bases, they will enhance the groups’ fighting power, organizational capacity, and internal discipline. Even large and rapid increases in wealth will not trigger fragmentation and indiscipline but instead contribute to building institutions. Resources that flow into fragmented organizations will not fundamentally change the organization’s structure. They may initially be useful to hold together a loose coalition, but over time they can exacerbate preexisting conflicts over control and distribution that lead to unrest and indiscipline within the group. State sponsorship, diaspora mobilization, drug smuggling, and extortion are compatible with both

34. On “layering,” see James Mahoney and Kathleen Thelen, “A Theory of Gradual Institutional Change,” in Mahoney and Thelen, eds., *Explaining Institutional Change: Ambiguity, Agency, and Power* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 15–17.

35. Integrated and fragmented organizations are not the only types of insurgent organizations that exist, but for the purposes of this article, they represent useful extremes.

disintegrative thuggishness and disciplined effectiveness. Doug McAdam's insight into social movements applies to armed rebellions: "[R]esources do not dictate their use, people do."³⁶

My theory prioritizes structure, but endogenous change and leadership adaptation are certainly possible.³⁷ Social innovation is constrained, however, by the group's social-organizational underpinnings.³⁸ The pathways of likely change are determined by the original structure of the organization. Armed group leaders cannot make institutions as they please, even if these leaders are broadly popular, following ideological precedents, or facing a weak state. A careful study of foundational social infrastructures provides powerful insights about organizational trajectories. I next explore in greater detail how social bases, organizational structures, and resources relate to one another.

INTEGRATION AND RESOURCE FLOWS

Insurgent organizers embedded within overlapping social bases have a rich set of preexisting relationships to one another and ties to local communities through which they can construct nascent organizations. The horizontal ties among organizers provide the basis for central processes of organizational control, and vertical linkages help to create local institutions. These overlapping social ties reach horizontally across localized divides to aggregate smaller social blocs into a larger structure of political/military cooperation. Organizations built around these social networks are more likely to be characterized by a unified central authority and by local institutions of training, discipline, and combat. Integrated organizations can coordinate and implement policies both at the leadership and unit levels.

Preexisting social ties contribute to trust and unity of purpose, mitigating fratricide and dissension while facilitating the creation and effectiveness of institutions for strategy and control. This social base provides the foundation for controlled expansion of the group over time, including thorough and effective homogenization of new fighters. New social ties, organizational commitments, and ideological worldviews can be instilled once reliable organizational pro-

36. Doug McAdam, *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, 1930–1970* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), p. 21.

37. On mechanisms of change in civil war, see Elisabeth Jean Wood, "The Social Processes of Civil War: The Wartime Transformation of Social Networks," *Annual Review of Political Science*, Vol. 11 (June 2008), pp. 539–561; Paul D. Kenny, "Structural Integrity and Cohesion in Insurgent Organizations: Evidence from Protracted Conflicts in Ireland and Burma," *International Studies Review*, Vol. 12, No. 4 (December 2010), pp. 533–555; and Claire Metelits, *Inside Insurgency: Violence, Civilians, and Revolutionary Group Behavior* (New York: New York University Press, 2010).

38. I address the issue of change in Staniland, *Networks of Rebellion*. The most important changes over time should arise from shifts in underlying social coalitions and linkages, whether through the formation or the destruction of vertical and horizontal ties undergirding formal institutions.

cesses are put in place.³⁹ The organization can refill its leadership ranks in the face of decapitation and attrition.

This institutional context plays a crucial role in controlling resources. When resources, such as money collected in the diaspora or profits from drug smuggling, enter these integrated organizations, they flow along robust lines of both social and organizational loyalty and monitoring, thus disciplining and mitigating the lures of material gain. The organization can harness growing resource flows over time through institutions.⁴⁰ Rather than acting as substitutes, as scholars such as Jeremy Weinstein and Paul Collier suggest, social and material endowments can be powerful complements. Integrated organizations should not suffer from looting and indiscipline, even if the group was born with access to resources or becomes increasingly wealthy over time. Instead, resources are valuable tools for acquiring weaponry, paying fighters and caring for their families, bribing government officials, and providing services to the civilian population. This type of organization deploys resources for political and organizational tasks rather than becoming a band of greedy thugs.

FRAGMENTATION AND RESOURCE FLOWS

By contrast, insurgent groups constructed on the basis of divided social bases—even if highly popular or ideologically pure—will face enduring problems in managing leadership tensions and socializing new fighters. Institutions will be difficult to construct where social ties are absent or diffuse. Organizations are often built with weak horizontal or vertical ties or both: combining urban intellectuals with socially distant peasants; aggregating localized pockets of collective action under a loose organizational umbrella; mobilizing populations with little in common beyond ideological preferences; or brokering mergers among distinct linguistic, caste, or class factions. Frag-

39. On social dynamics within organizations, see Chester Irving Barnard, *The Functions of the Executive* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1938); Ronald Burt, *Structural Holes: The Social Structure of Competition* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1992); David Kreps, "Corporate Culture and Economic Theory," in James Alt and Kenneth Shepsle, eds., *Perspectives on Positive Political Economy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 90–143; and Philip Selznick, *Leadership in Administration: A Sociological Interpretation* (Evanston, Ill.: Row, Peterson, 1957).

40. Weinstein explores change but reiterates that organizations are heavily path-dependent. See Weinstein, *Inside Rebellion*, pp. 260–265. He writes that "if a group manages to maintain selective recruitment . . . the leadership can protect the long-term orientation of the membership" (p. 263), but he does not systematically explain when one should expect this outcome other than in cases of contingent leadership. He concludes that overall "it is more likely that activist groups will turn into opportunistic organizations than vice versa" (p. 264). By contrast, I argue that foundational networks should indicate how recruitment will be carried out and how institutions will be structured over time, unless there is a shift in the social ties that underpin formal organization.

mented organizations emerge because social resources do not exist to quickly construct durable organizational processes in the face of state repression.

Organizations are built through divided social bases, despite their liabilities, for two reasons. The first is structural: the ties within which nascent insurgent leaders are embedded are difficult to rapidly change and optimize in the face of state violence and deep uncertainty. Repression, contingent events, and broader political dynamics can restrict what leaders can do even if they desire change. Second, some leaders miscalculate their future needs when engaged in prewar political mobilization. They are often surprised by the onset of protracted insurgency even if they expected some form of conflict. Both structural constraints and strategic miscalculations create gaps between the social infrastructure that rebels can rely on and the actual needs of war that they face.

The social origins of fragmented groups have enduring implications for their structure and functions. Although their leaders can try to innovate and adapt, their underpinnings are hard to completely change. Weak preexisting horizontal ties among leaders create internal cleavages that are likely to persist and discourage the creation of central institutions for making and implementing decisions. This makes future leadership splits and feuds more likely. Weak vertical ties undermine the creation of local institutions. Revolts, indiscipline, and defiance from below are the result.⁴¹ The fissures built into the organization increase the probability of defection and unrest over time, especially when the organization is facing a resolved counterinsurgent state.⁴²

Fragmented insurgent groups respond to infusions of external aid, drug money, or diamonds in ways different from integrated groups. They are characterized by less discipline, weaker military power, and more unsanctioned defiance. Social division limits the institutional mechanisms that leaders can create to motivate and monitor commanders and fighters, making it more likely that resources will become objects of contestation and sources of indiscipline. Internal conflicts will seize on the distribution of resources, among other issues, and resources can therefore become associated with fragmenta-

41. On the broader political and military implications of movement factionalization (often a consequence of organizational splits and infighting), see Kathleen Cunningham, Kristin Bakke, and Lee Seymour, "Shirts Today, Skins Tomorrow: Dual Contests and the Effects of Fragmentation in Self-Determination Disputes," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, prepublished February 29, 2012, DOI:10.1177/0022002711429697; Cunningham, "Veto Players and Civil War Duration"; Pearlman, "Spoiling Inside and Out"; Theodore McLauchlin and Wendy Pearlman, "Out-group Conflict, In-group Unity? Exploring the Effect of Repression on Intra-movement Cooperation," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, prepublished December 25, 2011, DOI:10.1177/0022002711429669; and Lawrence, "Triggering Nationalist Violence."

42. They become "self-undermining," in the words of Avner Greif, *Institutions and the Path to the Modern Economy: Lessons from Medieval Trade* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 220.

tion and lack of control. To the extent that resources are useful, it is to hold together fluid coalitions rather than to build organizations. My argument is that thuggish proxy armies, undisciplined looters, and groups abandoning revolutionary purity for the lures of wealth arise not because of resources per se, but because of the relationships between resources and social bases. When social ties are insufficient to build strong organizations, resources become linked to preexisting conflicts and cleavages.

Within- and Cross-Conflict Comparisons in South Asia

Scholars have primarily studied the links between resources and insurgency using cross-national comparisons. These findings have been valuable in identifying and framing the puzzle addressed in this article. A serious probe of my argument, however, requires detailed information about prewar social ties, wartime organization, and the sequencing and effects of resource endowments. If my theory is right, robust organizations should emerge in some circumstances and not others according to the structure of foundational social bases. These social and institutional differences should drive variation in whether resource flows are associated with undisciplined thuggishness or effective warfare. If either link in this chain is clearly not observed, my argument will find little support. This pattern should hold even when comparing armed groups within the same ethnic or class category, the same war, and the same political economy.

WITHIN-CONFLICT COMPARISONS IN KASHMIR

My theory requires data about prewar social and political structures, the central and local processes of insurgent organizational control over time, and the origins and effects of resource endowments. Cross-conflict quantitative data on insurgent organizations does not exist at this level of detail. I instead use comparative case studies to gather this information and assess the plausibility of the argument. I focus on the insurgency in Indian-administered Jammu and Kashmir (IJK) from 1988 to 2003. The indigenous armed groups in Kashmir received the bulk of their material funding from Pakistan's intelligence services because Kashmir itself lacks lootable resources and Kashmiri civilians are impoverished and under tight surveillance by Indian security forces. The pervasiveness of Pakistani funding allows a clear examination of the impact of this particular form of aid. There was variation in outcomes across organizations within the same broad ethnolinguistic group and political economy, while fighting the same Indian state, and both across and within ideological categories. Organizational variation, holding many other factors constant, presents

an interesting puzzle. This conflict therefore allows for tight comparisons of divergent outcomes within a shared context.

The information used in this case is drawn from extensive interviews in New Delhi, three trips to the Kashmir Valley, and a study of sources from a wide variety of perspectives. Although many of the individual sources are biased or incomplete, the overall picture I construct was confirmed by interviews and the literature. I examine prewar social ties, the conversion of these ties into new or reformed insurgent organization, and their consequent interaction with resources. Sequencing is crucial: if the introduction of resources has a consistent effect, it should lead to noticeable differences from prior social and organizational processes. A detailed study of a small number of cases allows process tracing of how organizations were built and evolved in a comparative setting that reduces the number of credible alternative explanations.

CROSS-NATIONAL COMPARISONS IN SOUTH ASIA

I then briefly extend the scope of comparisons to other South Asian wars. These include different political contexts from both one another and from Kashmir. If ideology, state policy, regime type, or political economy is driving variation, the patterns in these wars should look dramatically different. I explore other resource flows in these cases, particularly diaspora funding, drug cultivation and smuggling, and illicit economic activities such as extortion. This mix of within-conflict comparisons, diverse cross-conflict comparisons, and process tracing allows qualitative methods to make a substantial contribution to explaining trajectories of militancy.⁴³

War and Wealth in Kashmir

Within the Kashmir conflict, I compare six armed insurgent groups: the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF), Hizbul Mujahideen (Hizb), the Muslim Janbaz Force, Ikhwan-ul Muslimeen, al-Umar Mujahideen, and Al Jihad. All received their primary material support from Pakistan during the late 1980s and early 1990s. Pakistani sponsorship and manipulation were pervasive, making this an easy case for theories that attribute a clear effect to external resources. If I can show, by contrast, that social bases played an important role in

43. On the uses of comparative case studies in the study of civil war, see Ross, "How Do Natural Resources Influence Civil War?"; Nicholas Sambanis, "Using Case Studies to Expand Economic Models of Civil War," *Perspectives on Politics*, Vol. 2, No. 2 (June 2004), pp. 259–279; Weinstein, *Inside Rebellion*; and Sidney Tarrow, "Inside Insurgencies: Politics and Violence in an Age of Civil War," *Perspectives on Politics*, Vol. 5, No. 3 (September 2007), p. 596.

shaping how armed organizations were built even amid pervasive external involvement, it will add plausibility to my theory.

I focus on the two most politically and militarily significant organizations: the JKLF and Hizb. The JKLF was the most popular and mass mobilization-oriented armed group, and it launched the rebellion in pursuit of an independent Jammu and Kashmir. Even when it had significant Pakistani support, however, the JKLF was unable to create robust processes of internal control, and it was torn by splits and internal defiance. External aid created incentives for people to join the JKLF but did not build strong organizational structures or tight internal discipline. The Hizb, by contrast, represented a less popular Islamist ideology and did not embrace a mass mobilization strategy. Nevertheless, it was able to take advantage of Pakistani aid while building a relatively cohesive organization that emphasized control and discipline. Crucially, the Hizb was also superior to other Pakistan-backed, Islamist indigenous groups in discipline and fighting power.⁴⁴

I argue that the fragmentation and collapse of the JKLF and the comparative cohesion of the Hizb, even when both had access to resource wealth, can be explained by studying the social bases on which they were built. The same holds for the other pro-Pakistan organizations. Each group drew on a distinct set of networks, particularly political parties and informal social ties, that shaped the possibilities for organization building in the face of counterinsurgency. Pakistani support was undoubtedly important, but on its own, it did not determine the fates of insurgents in Kashmir. The fragmentation of the JKLF shows that organizational resilience is not a simple function of popular support, initial Pakistani aid, and grassroots mobilization. The inability of the pro-Pakistan groups other than the Hizb to take advantage of Pakistani aid suggests that large-scale material support was insufficient to underpin organization building. Instead, the distinct social origins of the armed groups created fundamental differences in their ability to control inflows of Pakistani guns,

44. This article does not consider the Pakistani groups that came to dominate the insurgency by the late 1990s, including Harakatul Mujahideen, Lashkar-e-Taiba, and Jaish-e-Mujahideen. I focus on tight comparisons across indigenous groups within a difficult military environment. Unlike the Pakistani organizations, which were built in and drew manpower from a friendly Pakistan, the indigenous groups recruited and operated in areas where the Indian security forces were contesting their power. This created fundamentally different organizational challenges. On the Pakistani groups, see Paul Staniland, "Explaining Cohesion, Fragmentation, and Control in Insurgent Groups," Ph.D. dissertation, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2010. For other works on these organizations, see Muhammad Amir Rana, *A to Z of Jehadi Organizations in Pakistan* (Lahore: Mashal, 2004); Zahid Hussain, *Frontline Pakistan: The Struggle with Militant Islam* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007); and Arif Jamal, *Shadow War: The Untold Story of Jihad in Kashmir* (New York: Melville House, 2009).

money, and training; to survive counterinsurgency; and to build enduring institutions of discipline and unity.

BACKGROUND: SOCIAL BASES AND ORGANIZATIONAL FORMATION

Jammu and Kashmir was a princely state under British colonial rule that was divided in war between India and Pakistan at partition in 1947.⁴⁵ IJK, Pakistan-administered “Azad” Jammu and Kashmir (PJK), and the Pakistan-administered Northern Areas are the respective political units, divided by the Line of Control (LoC). No insurgency emerged on the Indian side of the LoC until 1988, after a rigged 1987 election. Kashmiri Muslim men began crossing into PJK to receive training and arms. This was matched by a growing tide of mass protest, particularly in Srinagar, the Kashmir Valley’s major city. A violent crackdown ensued in 1990, and an intense insurgency raged until 2003, when violence began to drop in the context of an India-Pakistan cease-fire.⁴⁶

The insurgent groups that emerged “came up because of the pre-existing fault lines in the valley’s politics.”⁴⁷ In the uncertain environment of 1988–90, success seemed likely: costs to recruitment were low, and as a result, numerous nascent groupings made a bid for militancy.⁴⁸ A variety of networks and strategies were thrown into the war, first in the urban center of Srinagar and then in more rural areas. Political parties, religious organizations, and informal networks had become the bases of major armed groups by 1990. As Sumantra Bose writes, “Different pro-‘self-determination’ political groups from the pre-1990 period, and factions thereof, tended to spawn their own tanzeems.”⁴⁹ These were mostly parties and organizations with little or no previous record of serious militancy; partially excluding the JKLF, nonviolent networks were converted into the underpinnings of rebellion.

At the same time, Pakistani aid began to flow across the LoC in 1987–88.⁵⁰ The JKLF was initially the most favored organization, but the Pakistanis soon made material support widely available in hopes of finding a group or groups that could fight India while advancing Pakistani goals.⁵¹ This support was im-

45. For background, see Andrew Whitehead, *A Mission in Kashmir* (New Delhi: Penguin, 2007); and Sumantra Bose, *Kashmir: Roots of Conflict, Paths to Peace* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2003), chaps. 1–2.

46. Violence continues, but it is at a low level and primarily carried out by the Pakistani groups, not the indigenous organizations that are the focus of this study.

47. Manoj Joshi, *The Lost Rebellion: Kashmir in the Nineties* (New Delhi: Penguin, 1999), p. 52.

48. Bose, *Kashmir*, p. 125.

49. Sumantra Bose, “JKLF and JKHM: Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front and Jammu and Kashmir Hizb-ul Mujahideen,” in Tirman, Heiberg, and O’Leary, *Terror, Insurgency, and the State*, p. 240. “Tanzeem” is a word for armed group in this context.

50. For an overview, see Byman, *Deadly Connections*, pp. 166–186.

51. Joshi, *The Lost Rebellion*, p. 86.

portant because, in Iffat Malik's words, "no militant group can operate for long [in Kashmir] without outside funding, training and arms."⁵²

THE RISE AND FALL OF THE JKLF

The JKLF had existed since the 1960s, with a history of occasional militancy, sporadic mass protest, and potent symbolic, though not military, power. In the wake of Indian repression, JKLF leaders took refuge in England and Pakistan. Leadership struggles were recurrent within the group, and during the 1970s and most of the 1980s, the JKLF had few recruits and weak ties to Indian-administered Kashmir itself.⁵³ Although a few of the top leaders knew one another well, they lacked embeddedness in the local communities in whose name they struggled. As Bose notes, "[U]ntil the late 1980s [the JKLF] had negligible presence and support on the Indian side of the LoC."⁵⁴ Arif Jamal writes that during the mid-1980s it was "ineffectual."⁵⁵

The spark for a renewed militant campaign came from the rigged 1987 state assembly election. Young Kashmiri men began crossing the LoC into Pakistan-administered Kashmir in search of guns and training.⁵⁶ The JKLF, led in PJK by Amanullah Khan, was the natural destination for the new fighters despite its lack of size, military capacity, or links to the Indian-controlled Kashmir Valley.⁵⁷ Pakistan's military dictator, Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq, put Pakistan's Inter Services Intelligence (ISI) agency behind the JKLF.⁵⁸ Alongside this Pakistani patronage was genuine popular support.⁵⁹ In the early 1990s, Balraj Puri argued that "the predominant battle cry in Kashmir [was] azadi (freedom) and not a merger with Pakistan,"⁶⁰ and, according to Ashutosh Varshney, "the JKLF, a secular militant group, [was] by far the most popular."⁶¹ JKLF support was clearly far greater than that of its militant contemporar-

52. Iffat Malik, *Kashmir: Ethnic Conflict, International Dispute* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 298.

53. Bose, "JKLF and JKHM," p. 233.

54. Sumantra Bose, *Contested Lands: Israel-Palestine, Kashmir, Bosnia, Cyprus, and Sri Lanka* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2007), p. 179.

55. Jamal, *Shadow War*, p. 123.

56. An explanation of this mobilization can be found in Sumit Ganguly, "Explaining the Kashmir Insurgency: Political Mobilization and Institutional Decay," *International Security*, Vol. 21, No. 2 (Fall 1996), pp. 76–107.

57. Bose, "JKLF and JKHM," p. 233.

58. David Devadas, *In Search of a Future: The Story of Kashmir* (New Delhi: Penguin, 2007), p. 159.

59. Malik, *Kashmir*, p. 300; and Jonah Blank, "Kashmir: Fundamentalism Takes Root," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 78, No. 6 (December 1999), p. 40.

60. Balraj Puri, *Kashmir towards Insurgency* (New Delhi: Orient Longman, 1993), p. 4.

61. Ashutosh Varshney, "Three Compromised Nationalisms: Why Kashmir Has Been a Problem," in Raju G.C. Thomas, ed., *Perspectives on Kashmir: The Roots of Conflict in South Asia* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview, 1992), p. 221. See also Julian Schofield and Reeta Tremblay, "Why Pakistan Failed: Tribal Focoism in Kashmir," *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, Vol. 19, No. 1 (March 2008), p. 33.

ies.⁶² In 1995, roughly 70 percent of Kashmiris claimed to favor independence, the JKLF's goal, rather than India or Pakistan.⁶³

This popular support and large-scale Pakistani support might intuitively suggest resilience and fighting power; it certainly calls into question the claim that reliance on external aid is necessarily depoliticizing. The key issue, however, is the specific social infrastructure on which the renascent JKLF in the Kashmir Valley was built. Praveen Swami notes that there is "almost no literature on the precise social composition" of early militants, but we do know something about the overall process of JKLF social mobilization.⁶⁴ The revived JKLF in IJK was created by four men: Ashfaq Majid Wani, Hamid Sheikh, Yasin Malik, and Javed Mir.⁶⁵ They had enthusiastically created the Islamic Students' League in the mid-1980s and then became the leadership of the new-look JKLF in IJK.⁶⁶ There is no evidence that they were centrally tied into any of the major political or social networks in the Kashmir Valley.

These leaders linked up with other small factions, led by Hilal Beg, Abdul Ahad Waza, and others, that coalesced under the broad JKLF banner. The JKLF in IJK was reborn and had to establish new relationships with the older leaders in PJK: "[T]he first JKLF organizational unit was established in Srinagar only in early 1988, by a new generation of radicalized young men," writes Bose, and "this core of militants made contact with the existing JKLF organization across the LoC during 1987–1988."⁶⁷ A new JKLF insurgent organization in the Kashmir Valley was built despite weak horizontal ties across leaders beyond the tiny initial core. Although the JKLF's project was popular, it was forced to grow without preexisting ties on which to build central institutions of control.

There was also little vertical embeddedness in rural areas. P.S. Verma writes that "most of the top JKLF militants belonged to the capital city of Srinagar and its periphery."⁶⁸ This limited access to rural communities and made it difficult to engage in a centrally controlled organization-building effort beyond Srinagar. According to Bose, the JKLF had an "overly Srinagar-centric

62. Sati Sahni, *Kashmir Underground* (New Delhi: Har-Anand, 1999), p. 37; and Harinder Baweja, "The War Within," *India Today*, July 15, 1994.

63. "Till Freedom Come," *Outlook*, October 18, 1995.

64. Praveen Swami, *India, Pakistan, and the Secret Jihad: The Covert War in Kashmir, 1947–2004* (London: Routledge, 2007), p. 168.

65. Azam Inquilabi, a rather nomadic early JKLF/Al Fatah/People's League member, claims to have arranged their meeting with Amanullah Khan in Muzaffarabad; apparently, they simply "approached me for initiation into the gun culture." Quoted in Pradeep Thakur, *Militant Monologues: Echoes from the Kashmir Valley* (New Delhi: Parity, 2003), p. 35. On Javed Mir joining with a group of friends, see Thakur, *Militant Monologues*, pp. 121–122.

66. A.G. Noorani, "Contours of Militancy," *Frontline*, Vol. 17, No. 20 (September/October 2000).

67. Bose, "JKLF and JKHM," p. 233.

68. P.S. Verma, *Jammu and Kashmir at the Political Crossroads* (Delhi: Vikas, 1994), p. 277.

and Valley-centric focus and organization. All four of the JKLF's top commanders in the early phase of the uprising were from Srinagar (the JKLF's other stronghold in the early 1990s was Anantnag, the main town in the southern part of the Valley) and the group failed to develop and sustain an effective organizational structure outside Srinagar, in the smaller urban centers and the rural areas."⁶⁹

These social gaps made it necessary to allow factions to join from outside the original leadership core. New factions started to ignore the high command and to take weapons from Pakistan for their own use, even before Pakistan began undermining the group. Weakly embedded on the ground, the JKLF ended up accepting and training a variety of individuals and groups that did not share the organization's commitments, were not indoctrinated or socialized in the course of their relatively brief training, and operated in an autonomous manner.⁷⁰ A few examples illustrate how the JKLF was forced to expand. Mushtaq Ahmed Zargar joined the JKLF through a connection to a member of the People's League—a deeply divided, though popular, political party—rather than through any strong ties to actual JKLF members.⁷¹ Hilal Ahmed Baig was a tin salesman who joined the organization after meeting some JKLF members at a protest; he had no previous connections to the small original set of founders.⁷² Unlinked to the core leadership, Zargar and Baig would later break away from the JKLF as major factional leaders.

Strategically joining the JKLF to obtain weapons and training was not a rare phenomenon: A.Q. Noorani quotes a pro-Pakistan insurgent leader as saying, "I agreed to send some of our boys to Pakistan for training [in JKLF camps] in handling sophisticated weapons as it would have helped us in our plans."⁷³ Ghulam Rasool Shah, a senior commander of Jamiat-ul-Mujahideen, stated, "[W]e took training from [the JKLF], but made it clear that we stand for merging Kashmir with Pakistan."⁷⁴ The JKLF even agreed to train Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) and People's League loyalists, a step that introduced yet more networks into the organization that were socially distinct from the leadership.⁷⁵ The emerging cadres of the JKLF were highly heterogeneous, both socially and

69. Bose, "JKLF and JKHM," pp. 240–241.

70. For instance, Devadas suggests that Waza, an early faction leader, "had no time to indoctrinate every bunch of boys." Devadas, *In Search of a Future*, p. 162.

71. Praveen Swami, "Crime as Business," *Frontline*, Vol. 17, No. 1 (January 2000), <http://www.hindu.com/fline/fl1701/17010160.htm>.

72. Devadas places him as joining JKLF in early 1988, just as the mobilization was beginning. Devadas, *In Search of a Future*, p. 160.

73. A.G. Noorani, "The Betrayal of Kashmir: Pakistan's Duplicity and India's Complicity," in Thomas, *Perspectives on Kashmir*, p. 263.

74. Taimur Siddiqui, "A Profile in Passion," *Newsline*, February 2001, p. 34.

75. Devadas, *In Search of a Future*, p. 164.

ideologically.⁷⁶ To paraphrase one interviewee, the JKLF “didn’t have a base, but an idea.”⁷⁷

This approach to growth, relying on weak ties and amalgamating different factions, was necessary because the JKLF did not have a preexisting social infrastructure to draw on, but, according to David Devadas, it “turned out to be a big mistake.”⁷⁸ Despite surging mass popular support, Pakistani backing, and the advantages of being the first mover, the JKLF was unable to forge an integrated organization.⁷⁹ Stable expansion and organizational control would suffer as a result, despite initial Pakistani aid and popular support.

What was the effect of resource flows from Pakistan on this socially divided institution? The JKLF became neither a resilient organization nor a set of greedy thugs afflicted by the resource curse. Instead, its structure and behavior reflected its social base. Resources followed the lines of social cleavage, rather than creating new incentives or patterns. Pakistani patronage initially provided material incentives for foot soldiers and factional leaders to join and stay with the JKLF, showing the loose factional coalition underpinning the group.⁸⁰ These material resources (and military training) could not overcome the disparate social blocs built into the JKLF organizational structure. Unrest within the JKLF developed fairly quickly: Alexander Evans notes that “almost as soon as the insurgency had begun, one of its central weaknesses was underlined: division.”⁸¹ Suspicion and poor information were endemic within the JKLF, and autonomy consequently high. For instance, Hilal Baig’s JKLF student wing, the Jammu and Kashmir Students’ Liberation Front, acted largely on its own by planning and executing operations when and as it saw fit.⁸²

Even when it was the favored ally of Pakistan, the JKLF allowed recruits to drift in and out of the organization. After Ishfaq Majid Wani, the first military commander of the JKLF in IJK, was killed in 1990, leadership struggles within the JKLF broke out. As members of the small group of original leaders were killed or arrested, there was no stock of loyal second-rung leaders enmeshed within a shared network who could take over command.⁸³ Splinter groups began to emerge in late 1989 and early 1990, including the Awami

76. Sinha suggests that “when the militants had arrived in ‘azaad’ Kashmir, they had arrived together. Yet when they sat down to discuss matters, there [were] disagreements, and they came apart.” Aditya Sinha, *Death of Dreams: A Terrorist’s Tale* (New Delhi: HarperCollins, 2000), p. 45.

77. Author interview, Srinagar, Jammu and Kashmir, May 2008.

78. Devadas, *In Search of a Future*, p. 164.

79. Bose, “JKLF and JKHM,” pp. 240–241.

80. Noorani, “The Betrayal of Kashmir,” p. 263. See also Siddiqui, “A Profile in Passion,” p. 34.

81. Alexander Evans, “Kashmir: The Past Ten Years,” *Asian Affairs*, Vol. 30, No. 1 (Spring 1999), p. 49.

82. Devadas, *In Search of a Future*, p. 181; and Sahni, *Kashmir Underground*, p. 44.

83. Harinder Baweja suggests that the Indian government even tried to resuscitate the JKLF in

Action Committee-linked al-Umar Mujahideen, led by Mushtaq Zargar, in Srinagar.⁸⁴ Members would also break away to join Hizbul Mujahideen. Pakistan shaped the overall battlespace, but the JKLF's social base and the processes of mobilization that resulted from it were crucially important in determining organizational patterns.

This fragmentation accelerated from late 1990 onward when the Pakistani ISI marginalized the JKLF.⁸⁵ As the ISI shifted favor to the pro-Pakistan forces, including Al-Umar, the Muslim Janbaz Force, and Hizbul Mujahideen, it began to cut off the JKLF.⁸⁶ Defecting JKLF members helped to form the Jammu and Kashmir Students' Liberation Front (later to become the Ikhwan-ul Muslimeen) and Al Barq, the armed wing of the People's Conference.⁸⁷ The original divergence between JKLF and Pakistani war aims had been accepted by the Pakistani security establishment as a necessary compromise in the insurgency's early days, but once a full-blown revolt had erupted, there was an opportunity to push for Kashmir to join Pakistan.⁸⁸ The JKLF withered on the vine as Indian counterinsurgency took advantage of its splintering.⁸⁹

There is no doubt that the loss of Pakistani support contributed to JKLF fragmentation, but a more robust organization could have adapted by trying to maintain a low-level military struggle, transitioning into a coherent nonviolent opposition group, or in some other way remaining in the struggle without collapsing. Instead, the JKLF continued to fragment because there were few social or institutional incentives to remain in the organization. Falling back on peasant support was impossible because of the JKLF's weak vertical links to rural communities, while leadership unity was undermined by the lack of integrated second-tier leaders. Internal divisions created "pliable elements" vulnerable to Pakistani manipulation.⁹⁰ Internal tensions undermined diaspora mobilization as well.⁹¹

some form in 1994, but that it failed. Baweja, "A Calculated Gamble," *India Today*, June 15, 1994, p. 67.

84. Joshi, *The Lost Rebellion*, p. 49.

85. Bose, "JKLF and JKHM," p. 237.

86. Joshi, *The Lost Rebellion*, p. 90.

87. Devadas, *In Search of a Future*, p. 214; and Joshi, *The Lost Rebellion*, pp. 49–51. Several future Hizbul Mujahideen commanders and Jamaat members, including Maqbool Ilahi and Mohammed Ashraf Dar, were also trained by the JKLF, as was Abdul Bangroo, who later became a key member of Nasir-ul Islam.

88. Jamal, *Shadow War*.

89. On Indian counterinsurgency operations, see Sumit Ganguly, "Slow Learning: Lessons from India's Counterinsurgency Operations in Kashmir," in David Fidler and Ganguly, eds., *India and Counterinsurgency: Lessons Learned* (New York: Routledge, 2009), pp. 79–88.

90. Bose, *Kashmir*, p. 126.

91. There were social gaps between the Kashmir JKLF and its British diaspora because of the primarily Mirpuri composition (from PJK) of the latter.

From 1991 to 1994, the military cohesion of the JKLF evaporated. Indian counterinsurgency, Hizbul Mujahideen fratricide, and recurrent internal splits and abandonments broke the back of the organization. The group was simply unable to manage this military pressure, particularly the challenge of leadership attrition: “[I]nternal rivalry among the commanders of the organisation,” Sten Widmalm writes, “was one of the causes of the decline.”⁹² As Harinder Baweja noted in 1993, the “JKLF, though keeping its popularity intact, has lost its military edge” to the Hizb.⁹³ In 1994, the JKLF suffered a final split that essentially ended its war.⁹⁴ Consequently, Yoginder Sikand states that “by 1995, the JKLF as an armed group was no longer a force to seriously reckon with, although its agenda for a free, independent Kashmir still fired the hearts of many, if not most, Kashmiris.”⁹⁵ The nonviolent JKLF in Indian J&K has further splintered and reconstituted among different personalized factions.⁹⁶

The JKLF was unable to build cohesion while backed by Pakistan or to prevent fragmentation once it was abandoned. Nor could it take organizational advantage of mass mobilization and popular support. A key, though obviously not all-encompassing, cause of this failure can be found in the divided, distinct social networks that nestled uncomfortably under the JKLF’s banner. Weak social ties beyond the original founders undermined leadership continuity and the construction of institutions to indoctrinate and control new fighters. Resources did not turn the JKLF into a group of greedy thugs, nor did they underpin robust organization building. Instead, social-institutional processes of organizational formation and collapse took center stage.

BUILDING HIZBUL MUJAHIDEEN

There is a consensus among scholars and analysts that the Hizbul Mujahideen had “highly disciplined cadres, better equipment, and better military strategy” than the JKLF.⁹⁷ The Hizbul Mujahideen relied heavily on Pakistani aid, sanctuary, and training. This resource endowment actually helped the Hizb be-

92. Sten Widmalm, *Kashmir in Comparative Perspective: Democracy and Violent Separatism in India* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 132.

93. Harinder Baweja, “Losing Control,” *India Today*, May 31, 1993, p. 41.

94. This split was between Amanullah Khan in PJK and Yasin Malik in IJK; a bloc of JKLF members in IJK led by Shabbir Siddiqui remained loyal to Khan but were wiped out in 1996.

95. Yoginder Sikand, “The Emergence and Development of the Jama’at-i-Islami of Jammu and Kashmir (1940s–1990),” *Modern Asian Studies*, Vol. 36, No. 3 (July 2002), p. 748.

96. For instance, “JKLF Splits for Second Time,” *Indian Express*, October 31, 2002.

97. Navnita Chadha Behera, *State, Identity, and Violence: Jammu, Kashmir, and Ladakh* (New Delhi: Manohar, 2000), p. 204. For similar assessments, see Navnita Chadha Behera, *Demystifying Kashmir* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2006), p. 154; Noorani, “Contours of Militancy”; Rana, *A to Z of Jehadi Organizations in Pakistan*, p. 440; and Varshney, “Three Compromised Nationalisms,” p. 221.

cause, unlike the JKLF, it channeled this aid through a strong organizational structure built on prior social linkages. The variation compared with the JKLF, and with other Islamist pro-Pakistan groups, is dramatic.

Why did the politically unpopular Hizb become more resilient and more powerful than either the highly popular JKLF or the other Islamist, pro-Pakistan armed groups that also had periods of Pakistani support? In line with the social-institutional theory outlined above, I argue that its social base in the Jamaat-e-Islami religious organization/political party allowed the Hizb to take advantage of large-scale Pakistani support to forge a cohesive and effective insurgent group. In the words of an interviewee, it was built “totally differently” than the JKLF.⁹⁸ The key to understanding the rise of the Hizb, and its ability to productively use resource flows, is the JI’s social structure: not broadly popular, but deeply embedded within and across local communities. JI’s party cadres and their kin and sympathizers provided horizontal and vertical social ties that the Hizb leadership could use to build new and modified insurgent institutions, even though Bose notes that it “could not aspire to the same degree of spontaneous popular support enjoyed by JKLF insurgents in their prime.”⁹⁹

The Jamaat-e-Islami was formed in Kashmir in the 1940s, and followed an intentionally nonviolent mobilization model that aimed to Islamize society through middle-class piety and infiltration of state institutions. It had a base of former Sufi pir families and middle-class cadres.¹⁰⁰ This social base, combining different forms of traditional religious and economic local authority, would lend considerable mobilization power to the JI, and was linked to a system of Jamaat-run schools.¹⁰¹ The structure of the JI was, and remains, highly institutionalized and hierarchical, with multiple tiers of members as well as various circles of lesser affiliation.¹⁰² These cadres became enmeshed over time and space in the broader Jamaat social milieu through meetings, travel, and intermarriage.¹⁰³ Importantly, this was a resolutely nonmilitant strategy; it sought

98. Author interview, Srinagar, Jammu and Kashmir, May 2008.

99. Bose, “JKLF and JKHM,” p. 243.

100. Pirs are Sufi notables. On JI social composition, see Devadas, *In Search of a Future*, pp. 77, 115; Sikand, “The Emergence and Development of the Jama’at-i-Islami of Jammu and Kashmir (1940s–1990s),” p. 720; and G.N. Gauhar, “Jammat-I-Islami of Jammu and Kashmir,” in Avineet Prashar and Paawan Vivek, eds., *Conflict and Politics of Jammu and Kashmir: Internal Dynamics* (Jammu: Saksham, 2007), p. 77.

101. Joshi, *The Lost Rebellion*, p. 11; and Malik, *Kashmir*, p. 270.

102. On the Pakistani Jamaat, see Seyyed Vali Reza Nasr, *The Vanguard of the Islamic Revolution: The Jama’at-i-Islami of Pakistan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994).

103. Basharat Peer, *Curfewed Night: One Kashmiri Journalist’s Frontline Account of Life, Love, and War in His Homeland* (Noida: Random House India, 2008), p. 183; Gauhar, “Jammat-I-Islami of Jammu and Kashmir,” p. 81; Sahni, *Kashmir Underground*, p. 122; and Sikand, “The Emergence and Development of the Jama’at-i-Islami of Jammu and Kashmir (1940s–1990s),” p. 710.

change through schools and bureaucracies, not the gun. The party's ideology, however, was unpopular in the Kashmir Valley, which had stronger traditions of Sufi Islamic practice and a large constituency that preferred independence to merger with Pakistan.¹⁰⁴ JI's minority political position endures to the present.¹⁰⁵ Bose notes that in South Asia "the JI shows a uniform pattern: a committed, hard-core following that amounts to only a small fraction of the population."¹⁰⁶

It was this set of overlapping ties and nonviolent organizational structures that provided the social base of the new Hizbul Mujahideen insurgent group formed in 1989. The Hizb built its leadership around JI cadres, particularly at the level of district administrator and above. The preexisting networks were fused with the new organizational structure, linking the local to the central. They would provide the cooperation and control to take advantage of the vast quantities of guns and money that Pakistan pumped into the organization.

An early version of Hizbul Mujahideen emerged during the upsurge of militant mobilization in 1989.¹⁰⁷ The Jamaat-e-Islami was not an original sponsor of this group, but the Hizb's founders included several JI members and affiliates; for instance, Muzamil Jaleel notes that one of its key leaders, Master Ahsan Dar, "used to teach in a Jamat-run school before his foray into militancy."¹⁰⁸ As the JKLF surged, pro-Pakistan Kashmiris looked for a counterbalance. The Hizb was a natural partner for the Jamaat.

The JI took over the Hizb from within by placing loyal personnel in key positions and by creating central institutions built around the JI core. When Yusuf Shah, a former candidate in the rigged 1987 elections, was released from prison, he became amir of the Hizb.¹⁰⁹ Shah was a JI member who had been actively involved in the party since college. He deployed JI members within the armed Hizb structures.¹¹⁰ The network was clearly used to consolidate the Jammu and Kashmir Hizb-ul Mujahideen's (JKHM's) organization.¹¹¹ Hizb's high command was intertwined with the JI's preexisting shura council in J&K, and its decisions were enforced on the ground by local party members.¹¹²

104. Bose, *Kashmir*, p. 130.

105. Peer, *Curfewed Night*, p. 186.

106. Bose, *Kashmir*, p. 234.

107. Joshi, *The Lost Rebellion*, p. 48; and Devadas, *In Search of a Future*, p. 180.

108. Muzamil Jaleel, "Spawning Militancy: The Rise of Hizbul," *Indian Express*, May 22, 2003.

109. He renamed himself Syed Salahuddin as a *nom de guerre*.

110. Devadas, *In Search of a Future*, p. 237.

111. Jaleel, "Spawning Militancy." Robert Oakley, former U.S. ambassador to Pakistan, argued that the "Jamaat, for one, has been very active." Quoted in Shekhar Gupta, "The ISI Has Hurt Pakistan," *India Today*, May 15, 1994, p. 53.

112. This is drawn from numerous author interviews in New Delhi, India, and Srinagar, Jammu and Kashmir, 2007–11.

Jaleel argues that the Hizb came to resemble the Jamaat: "The administrative wing, manned by Jamat-e-Islami leaders, controlled the military commanders in the field. District administrators, who were always senior Jamat activists, were also appointed."¹¹³

The Hizb was not totally free of internal contestation. An Ahl-e Hadith founding member, Nasir-ul Islam, left the Hizb to start his own tanzeem, Jamiat-ul-Mujahideen.¹¹⁴ In 1991, Ahsan Dar was expelled from the Hizb in favor of imposing the command of a JI-dominated shura council.¹¹⁵ Ahsan Dar took a small group of loyalists away to form the Muslim Mujahideen. Unlike the JKLF, which was unable to control its splinters, the Hizb shattered and intimidated these breakaway groups.¹¹⁶ These tensions had nothing to do with greed or resource flows. The Hizb's high command was dominated by JI members well out of proportion to their representation in Kashmiri society: Bose notes that "there is a clear pattern of top positions in the JKHM hierarchy being occupied by JI members, usually of long standing, and JI families and schools contributing their sons and pupils to the JKHM."¹¹⁷

On the ground, the Hizb mobilized JI party and social networks to establish a robust local presence across the Kashmir Valley.¹¹⁸ The Hizb spread out into the valley, and then beyond into the mountainous Doda district of northern Jammu. These vertical ties into local communities allowed organization building in rural Kashmir. Incorporation of new recruits occurred through this social infrastructure, which also maintained a check on local greed and indiscipline.¹¹⁹ Although most of the foot soldiers were not themselves JI members, they were often recruited and controlled by members and sympathizers of the party.¹²⁰ The JI student wing was also involved in mobilization.¹²¹

Material resources were provided by large-scale, sustained Pakistani support.¹²² The Pakistani security apparatus, Manoj Joshi argues, "assisted by steering some of these militants [usually former JKLF-ers] towards the J&K

113. Jaleel, "Spawning Militancy." "Jamat" is an alternative spelling for "Jamaat." See also Swami, *India, Pakistan, and the Secret Jihad*, p. 178.

114. On the byzantine workings of these power struggles, see "The Tanzeems and Their Leaders," *Frontline*, September 19, 2000; and Siddiqui, "A Profile in Passion," pp. 33–34.

115. Joshi, *The Lost Rebellion*, p. 187.

116. *Ibid.*, p. 103.

117. Bose, "JKLF and JKHM," p. 235.

118. Devadas, *In Search of a Future*, p. 240.

119. Thakur, *Militant Monologues*, p. 127.

120. Behera, *State, Identity, and Violence*, pp. 178–179.

121. Amelie Blom, "A Patron-Client Perspective on Militia-State Relations: The Case of the Hizbul-Mujahidin of Kashmir," in Laurent Gayer and Christophe Jaffrelot, eds., *Armed Militias of South Asia: Fundamentalists, Maoists, and Separatists* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), p. 146.

122. Tavleen Singh, *Kashmir: A Tragedy of Errors* (New Delhi: Viking, 1995), p. 235.

Jamaat by providing them funds as well as ready access to training and weapons.”¹²³ The ISI pumped huge sums of guns and money into the Hizb, seeing it as a counterbalance to the JKLF and a formidable means of bleeding Indian security forces. This Pakistani strategy was not initially isolated to the Hizb, however. In the crucial early years of the insurgency, Pakistan also spread support to a variety of other pro-Pakistan organizations, as discussed below. Pakistan did not intend the Hizb to become the only pro-Pakistan indigenous group; this outcome was an unforeseen consequence of the Hizb’s ability to organize and fight better than the other groups, and to target them for fratricidal attacks.¹²⁴

The Hizb did not become an undisciplined, greedy proxy army. Although the group was inundated with external support, Joshi notes that it became “a sophisticated political movement, not just a bunch of gun-toting thugs.”¹²⁵ Its resources were deployed and controlled through existing networks and organizational structures that reduced indiscipline and the pursuit of material gain. Instead of economic endowments generating predatory indiscipline, they fueled strategic political violence and organizational effectiveness. Among leaders, preexisting ties facilitated continued cooperation rather than debilitating feuds over distribution, while robust local networks kept control of fighters on the ground. As Amelie Blom persuasively argues, although the Hizb relied on Pakistan in important ways, it was not a “puppet” proxy warrior of the ISI.¹²⁶

The structured, disciplined Hizb could keep its fighters in line and regenerate new manpower by building new organizations atop old networks despite its political weaknesses, brutal state repression, and a heavy reliance on Pakistani aid.¹²⁷ It remains the case that, according to Bose, “despite difficult times and setbacks, the JKHM has, unlike the JKLF, survived as an insurgent force and continued guerrilla warfare” and, in Blom’s words, is “solidly embedded” in IJK.¹²⁸ Appropriation of Jamaat-e-Islami networks, which had originally emerged for different, nonviolent purposes, let the Hizb more easily

123. Joshi, *The Lost Rebellion*, p. 48.

124. On fratricide between the Kashmiri Islamist insurgents, see Paul Staniland, “Between a Rock and a Hard Place: Insurgent Fratricide, Ethnic Defection, and the Rise of Pro-State Paramilitaries,” *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 56, No. 1 (February 2012), pp. 16–40.

125. Joshi, *The Lost Rebellion*, p. 86.

126. Blom, “A Patron-Client Perspective on Militia-State Relations,” p. 143.

127. Joshi, *The Lost Rebellion*, p. 51. The Jamaat’s importance can be found in the discussions by senior Indian security force officials involved in counterinsurgency in Kashmir. For instance, K.V. Krishna Rao, *The Genesis of the Insurgency in Jammu and Kashmir, and in the North East, and Future Prospects* (New Delhi: United Service Institution of India, 1997), p. 42.

128. Bose, “JKLF and JKHM,” p. 247; and Blom, “A Patron-Client Perspective on Militia-State Relations,” p. 150.

create an integrated organization able to use guns, weapons, and sanctuary for political-military purposes.¹²⁹

OTHER PRO-PAKISTAN PARTIES: TRAJECTORIES OF AID AND FRAGMENTATION

Two alternative explanations for this JKLF-Hizb variation immediately suggest themselves. The first is that Islamist ideology had a particular organizational effect: religiously motivated fighters were perhaps more ruthless and disciplined than the nationalist JKLF. The second is that the JKLF's loss of funding from the ISI was what led to the profound difference. The second point is weakened by the fact that the organization had suffered internal dissension and fragmentation even before the ISI abandoned it, but it retains plausibility. Helpfully for research design purposes, the conflict in Kashmir involved several other significant indigenous groups, all of which were generally "Islamist" and pro-Pakistan and had access to Pakistani material support during their origins. The Muslim Janbaz Force, the Ikhwan-ul Muslimeen, al-Umar Mujahideen, and Al Jihad fit this profile. As Joshi notes, "[T]he ISI encouraged them all."¹³⁰ Although space constraints allow for only a brief survey, their comparative trajectories provide important insights.

In the early days of the insurgency, these groups were very prominent, but all had broken apart by 1996 in a haze of indiscipline, splits, and, in the case of Al-Umar, civilian victimization. Their fates show that Islamist ideology and Pakistani support did not determine organizational structure and behavior. These groups struggled to take advantage of funding flows when they had them, and their ideological beliefs did not translate into robust institutions. Indeed, Pakistani attempts to hold them together actually failed, revealing the limits of state sponsorship.¹³¹ They lost sponsorship as a result of their organizational weaknesses, providing further evidence that resources do not speak for themselves but instead are shaped by social-institutional context.

Al Jihad and the Muslim Janbaz Force (MJF) were built around factions of the People's League. Both followed the course of their party patron, splintering into internal dissent and organizational fragmentation despite large-scale Pakistani aid.¹³² The more Islamist, and equally Pakistan-backed, Ikhwan-ul

129. There has been some change over time toward fragmentation as a result of Indian counterinsurgency directly targeting Jamaat networks. Nevertheless, the group endures without comparatively major feuding. On Hizb change, see Staniland, "Explaining Cohesion, Fragmentation, and Control in Insurgent Groups."

130. Joshi, *The Lost Rebellion*, p. 78.

131. *Ibid.*, p. 88. Harinder Baweja notes that Indian government officials saw Pakistan's strategy as being "to motivate and arm different groups." Baweja, "The War Within," *India Today*, July 15, 1994, p. 63.

132. Sinha, *Death of Dreams*, is the biography of MJF's leader, and it shows how the organizations

Muslimeen was a rural-based JKLF splinter that tried to aggregate distinct rural enclaves into an overarching organization. Its commanders and fighters had their primary links to local communities, however, and were loosely linked to one another. This created weak central institutionalization and a deeply divided command elite that would go to war with itself and with other armed groups in 1995–96.¹³³ The Al-Umar Mujahideen was a localized group tied to downtown Srinagar that was never able to reliably expand beyond its base and was quickly marginalized amid brutal internal violence and civilian victimization. Al-Umar, despite having the same resource flows as the Hizb in its early days, was far closer to the stereotypically thuggish resource wealthy organization.¹³⁴

Comparisons with the other Islamist, Pakistan-backed armed groups in Kashmir suggest that Islamism and external support were individually and jointly insufficient to forge a disciplined insurgent organization. These groups drew on fractured political parties and ad hoc collections of personal networks. Economic endowments did not dramatically help or hinder them; instead, resources followed lines of internal social division and became mapped onto organization rather than determining it. Crucially, the ISI wanted to keep these other groups alive as part of a fractured movement more amenable to its control. The Hizb opposed this approach and defied its sponsor by targeting these more fragmented rivals in fratricidal offensives.¹³⁵ Social bases shaped organizational structure and thus directed how resources were (and were not) used. Divided social bases created fragmented organizations that were unable to take advantage of their Pakistani support and were vulnerable to both the Indian state and militant rivals.

Comparative Evidence from South Asia: Other Cases and Resources

In a first step toward a broader assessment of my argument, this section briefly probes the social-institutional theory in other South Asian wars. It uses comparisons across and within conflicts to show the diverse relationships between

faltered and collapsed. The political interpretations are not necessarily very credible, but the factual information is useful.

133. The fragmentation of Ikhwan was crucial to Indian counterinsurgency. For a deeper discussion of how fragmentation was used by state forces, see Ganguly, "Slow Learning"; and Staniland, "Between a Rock and a Hard Place."

134. Bose, *Kashmir*, p. 126. Author interviews in Srinagar in Jammu and Kashmir in 2008 and 2009 indicate that Al Umar was seen as an unpredictable, predatory, and undisciplined organization.

135. Jamal notes that "Hizbul Mujahideen opposed the ISI's move to fracture the militant movements." Jamal, *Shadow War*, p. 150.

armed groups and resource endowments. These cases move beyond state sponsorship to also explore resources from diasporas, criminal and black market activities, and illicit networks. I focus on Afghanistan, India, and Sri Lanka. The aim is to show, beyond Kashmir, that variation in how resources are used by insurgents appears to be linked to their social origins and organizational forms.

In Afghanistan, armed groups have drawn on numerous resource endowments, including external aid, drug economies, extortion, and black markets.¹³⁶ Yet, similar to Kashmir, one observes dramatic differences across groups: some leaders have forged enduring war machines whereas other groups with similar resource profiles have experienced endemic organizational indiscipline. For instance, the Hezb-e-Islami of Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, the Taliban, and Ahmad Shah Massoud's armed group all relied heavily on resources other than voluntary contributions from the grassroots peasantry, yet they were characterized by comparative cohesion. By comparison, the Jombesh-yi Milli-yi Afghanistan, led by Abdul Rashid Dostum, and the Harakat-I Inquilab Islami-yi Afghanistan were unable to translate resource endowments into organizational control. This pattern does not support arguments about either the degrading effects of resource accumulation or the clear strategic benefits of external aid and illicit economies.

The social origins of armed groups can help to explain these differences. Gilles Dorransoro argues that "the social backgrounds of these leaders [militant commanders] provide an explanation of the different kinds of organisations which were set up."¹³⁷ The Taliban's ability to create and maintain both central and local institutions was facilitated by its access to an overlapping social base of Islamists linked to one another through the camps and schools of western Pakistan while remaining embedded in local communities.¹³⁸ Indeed, Thomas Ruttig explicitly echoes the theory offered here: "The combination of vertical (religious/ideological) and horizontal (tribal) structures gives the Taleban movement a high degree of cohesion while maintaining organisational elasticity."¹³⁹ Massive drug money and Pakistani aid have consequently

136. For an excellent overview, see Felbab-Brown, *Shooting Up*, pp. 113–150.

137. Gilles Dorransoro, *Revolution Unending: Afghanistan, 1979 to the Present* (New York: Columbia University Press 2005), p. 93.

138. As Dorransoro argues, "[T]he social origin of its officials showed a high level of uniformity, and this consistency of membership was the source of the movement's unity." Dorransoro, *Revolution Unending*, p. 273. This is a case of social bases being transformed in war through the massive social dislocations of the 1980s; however, it was unintentional and involuntary.

139. Thomas Ruttig, "How Tribal Are the Taleban?" (Kabul: Afghanistan Analysts Network, 2010), p. 2, <http://aan-afghanistan.com/uploads/20100624TR-HowTribalAretheTaleban-FINAL.pdf>.

been funneled through this social infrastructure and have forged a “disciplined, motivated, and ruthless” organization.¹⁴⁰

Even within the same broad ethnic and resource categories as the Taliban, other armed groups were unable to establish similar levels of control. Pashtun armed groups of the 1980s and early 1990s did not tap into the same kinds of overlapping networks of organizers embedded in local communities and in relationships to one another. Relying on patron-client relationships or localized clerical ties, groups such as Ittihad-I Islami Bara-yi Azadi-yi Afghanistan and Harakat-I Inqilab Islami-yi Afghanistan were able to capture support from external backers but could not convert these resources into deeply rooted, institutionalized warfare.¹⁴¹ Hekmatyar’s Hezb-e-Islami, despite its strong leadership core, was consistently undermined by its weak vertical linkages in rural areas, leading to fragile local organization. There was similar variation among armed groups in non-Pashtun areas, from the embedded organization of Ahmad Shah Massoud in the Panjshir Valley to the fissiparous, fluid coalitions underpinning Dostum’s militia around Mazar-i-Sharif.¹⁴² The same basic set of resources has been deployed and used in profoundly different ways in Afghanistan. Access to narcotics, smuggling, and external aid has had no single effect on organizational form or behavior.¹⁴³

Across conflicts in India, similar variation is evident. Naga armed factions have leveraged tight social networks and robust organizations to capture gains from control of cross-border smuggling routes, extortion, and black markets, as well as cross-border sanctuaries.¹⁴⁴ Although there have been some splits, these groups have been able to adjust to shifts over time in the policy of China and the Burmese military junta and the rise of new resource flows without collapse or militarily debilitating fragmentation. This organizational ability reflects deep social embeddedness and the mobilization of overlapping networks that tie together commanders while retaining local links to Naga

140. Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil, and Fundamentalism in Central Asia*, 2d ed. (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2010), p. 33. On Taliban resources, see Seth G. Jones, *In the Graveyard of Empires: America’s War in Afghanistan* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2009), pp. 194–195; and Rashid, *Taliban*, pp. 223–224.

141. On the Harakat and Ittihad, see Barnett Rubin, *The Fragmentation of Afghanistan: State Formation and Collapse in the International System* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1995), pp. 211–213, 220–221. An overview of the 1980s mujahideen can be found in Sinno, *Organizations at War in Afghanistan and Beyond*, chap. 6.

142. Antonio Giustozzi, *Empires of Mud: War and Warlords of Afghanistan* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009).

143. On alliances among Afghan armed groups, see Fotini Christia, “The Closest of Enemies: Alliance Formation in the Afghan and Bosnian Civil Wars,” Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, 2008.

144. An overview of the insurgent groups in the Northeast is Sanjoy Hazarika, *Strangers of the Mist: Tales of War and Peace from India’s Northeast* (New Delhi: Viking, 1994). Sarbahi, “Insurgent-

society. By contrast, the deeply fractious and internally divided Sikh militant movement in Punjab saw Pakistani aid and local illicit economies fuel criminalization and depoliticization over time.¹⁴⁵ Sikh militancy was built on a set of strong but parochial networks that made it difficult to surmount localism; this social structure reflected historical patterns of factionalism in Sikh politics. Social division undermined central discipline and control and allowed some units and leaders to engage in unrestrained extortion and predation that, in turn, undermined the struggle.

Dramatic differences in reactions to resource flows can also be found in Sri Lanka. Indian state sponsorship and diaspora aid were provided to several Tamil armed groups in the 1980s. Scholars of Tamil rebellion in Sri Lanka point to differing caste bases as having been important in shaping the discipline of the resource-rich Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) relative to other externally backed groups such as the Tamil Eelam Liberation Organization.¹⁴⁶ After destroying its fragmented rivals in the 1980s and losing Indian aid, the LTTE relied heavily on diaspora flows and illicit activities for its resources. Yet the huge scale of this resource endowment did not induce indiscipline or depoliticization. Instead, resource wealth fueled more organization building and more intense fighting.¹⁴⁷ There was not a “crowding out” effect in Sri Lanka;¹⁴⁸ rather than apolitical thugs pushing aside political groups, the most socially embedded, disciplined organization shattered its rivals by using resources to create military strength. Moreover, India was unable to control the LTTE, with the Tigers successfully turning against it despite their previous use of Indian support. State sponsors are important but not all-powerful because insurgent organizations can possess social autonomy from external manipulation.

These examples, from different types of conflicts and armed groups, suggest that the case of Kashmir is not unique or selected simply because it supports

Population Ties and the Variation in the Trajectory of Peripheral Civil Wars,” also shows that resource endowments alone do not explain their behavior or state responses to them.

145. On fragmentation and criminalization in the Sikh movement, see C. Christine Fair, “Lessons from India’s Experience in the Punjab, 1978–1993,” in Ganguly and Fidler, *India and Counterinsurgency*, pp. 107–126.

146. Dagmar Hellmann-Rajanayagam, *The Tamil Tigers: Armed Struggle for Identity* (Stuttgart: F. Steiner, 1994); Chris Smith, “The LTTE: A National Liberation and Oppression Movement,” in Gayar and Jaffrelot, *Armed Militias of South Asia*, p. 93; and A. Jeyaratnam Wilson, *Sri Lankan Tamil Nationalism: Its Origins and Development in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (New Delhi: Penguin, 2001), pp. 20–24.

147. Fair, “Diaspora Involvement in Insurgencies,” p. 140. Other budget estimates can be found in Brendan O’Duffy, “LTTE: Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam,” in Tirman, Heiberg, and O’Leary, *Terror, Insurgency, and the State*, p. 272.

148. Weinstein, *Inside Rebellion*, p. 331.

my argument. Indeed, Will Reno finds similar patterns in Africa: “[R]esources alone do not determine the behavior of rebels.”¹⁴⁹ Insurgent organizations are neither collections of loot-seeking thugs preying on civilian populations nor seamless manifestations of mass grievance. Instead, social ties are transmission belts of lethal rebellion that shape the discipline of organizations and the consequent impact of resources.

Conclusion

The theory and evidence offered in this article complicate simple arguments about the relationship between insurgent groups and resource flows. Being awash in cash and AK-47s has no single impact on how groups are built and behave. Material resources have fundamentally different effects depending on the social-institutional context into which they flow. This article has shown that whether or not an insurgent resource curse afflicts armed groups hinges on their levels of integration. Organizations built through strong preexisting ties can rapidly absorb and use large resource endowments without losing discipline, whereas fragmented groups built on weak social ties fall prey to military ineffectiveness and internal conflict. Social dynamics are the crucial conditioning variable that tells scholars and analysts how resources and organizations intersect.¹⁵⁰

This article used the social-institutional theory to address an endemic debate in the literature, but it has much broader implications for scholars’ understanding of civil conflict. I do not argue that other variables are unimportant in explaining insurgent organization, but instead that they are powerfully shaped by the social “building blocks” available to the group. It is difficult to forge a Leninist combat party out of a loose warlord coalition or to represent the median citizen while trying to bridge leftist university students and socially autonomous peasant communities. Successful mass mobilization is often a consequence of prior organization and networks rather than a simple cause. Social services tend to follow organizational cohesion, given that an organization must exist in the first place to provide services.¹⁵¹ Movements may have

149. Will Reno, *Warfare in Independent Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), p. 160.

150. As Sidney Tarrow notes, “[I]t is not quantities but *interactions* that are the key to the dynamics of violence in civil wars.” Tarrow, “Inside Insurgencies,” p. 596 (emphasis in original). A given stock of resources is not meaningful on its own terms.

151. Eli Berman argues that social services hold together armed groups. Berman, *Radical, Religious, and Violent: The New Economics of Terrorism* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2009). Dan Slater, however, notes that in the state-building context, “elites must be effectively arranged and capable insti-

varying ideological profiles but nevertheless share underlying social-structural similarities. Arguments focused on state regime type and policy as shapers of insurgent organization must grapple with variation across insurgent groups within the same conflict and the same state.¹⁵² While acknowledging the potential importance of these other factors, my argument shows that the social terrain of war—the ties that leaders can call upon when making and reshaping organizations amid violence—is centrally important to explaining insurgency.

DIRECTIONS FOR RESEARCH

A number of research agendas emerge from this study. First, scholars should pay closer attention to the ways that leaders of insurgent movements try to change social ties over time in an effort to shift their organizational form. Insurgency includes successful innovation, failed adjustment to new circumstances, and strategic interactions between insurgents and counterinsurgents. Although I have focused on structural conditions, there is an important role for agency and adaptation. Specifying when and how leaders can change their group's social linkages and consequent organizational processes would be a major contribution.

Second, my theory has emphasized variables on the insurgent side of the equation, but state policy is clearly important in shaping the broad trajectories of a conflict.¹⁵³ More nuanced arguments can pull together the state and its foes into an integrated theoretical framework. In particular, my argument suggests that state strategies will have very different effects on different types of groups. States' ability to crush insurgents will be determined in part by the discipline and internal control of the insurgent organization itself, but states can nevertheless play a key role in causing insurgent change. Taking both sides of this conflict seriously is necessary to understand the dynamics of irregular war.

Finally, my findings echo work on other topics that shows no straightfor-

tutions must be constructed before any predictable system of public provision can be effectively implemented." Slater, *Ordering Power: Contentious Politics and Authoritarian Leviathans in Southeast Asia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 11–12. The same applies to insurgency: goods provision is created by organizations, which means that scholars need to start by explaining organizational coherence and capability to provide services.

152. This variation is a challenge to state-centric accounts such as Jeff Goodwin, *No Other Way Out: States and Revolutionary Movements, 1945–1991* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

153. Fearon and Laitin, "Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War"; Goodwin, *No Other Way Out*; Lawrence, "Triggering Nationalist Violence"; and Paul Staniland, "Cities on Fire: Social Mobilization, State Policy, and Urban Insurgency," *Comparative Political Studies*, Vol. 43, No. 12 (December 2010), pp. 1623–1649.

ward relationship between material resources and political organizations, whether states, regimes, or political parties.¹⁵⁴ How resources are used hinges crucially on the political and social contexts into which they flow. There is intellectual space for more integrated, ambitious research on how resources and political institutions are related that transcends conventional subfields. In pursuing all of these questions, scholars should use both qualitative and quantitative methods to deal with pervasive problems of sequencing, endogeneity, and causal mechanisms.

IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY

If armed groups are shaped by their social underpinnings, scholars should focus on the networks and institutions on which organizations rest to assess organizational cohesion and control. Several specific lessons arise from the theory and evidence presented here. First, state sponsors are important but often lack the power to tightly control groups, as seen in Kashmir and in Sri Lanka.¹⁵⁵ They will be most effective at manipulation when able to exploit fissures and cracks within groups, but when facing a cohesive organization there are limits to their powers. At the extreme, sponsors may experience “blow-back” and lose control despite previously providing resources.

Second, criminality does not imply criminalization. It is entirely possible for armed groups to exploit drugs, smuggling, and extortion without becoming motivated by these activities. Resources do not speak for themselves: simply engaging in criminality does not mean that an armed group exists to be criminal. Painting insurgents who have access to these resources with a broad brush as thugs, looters, narco-guerrillas, and unemployed young men looking for cash will not help to create smart policy. Instead, policymakers and analysts should put their focus on the specific mechanisms that are used to mobilize and control resource flows.¹⁵⁶

Finally, the search for “best practices” in counterinsurgency will be elusive. Different types of groups pose different types of problems. I have shown that there is significant variation in organizational cohesion and in the ability of

154. Recent research has shown how complex the relationship between resource endowments and political outcomes can be. See Thad Dunning, *Crude Democracy: Natural Resource Wealth and Political Regimes* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008); Martin Shefter, *Political Parties and the State: The American Historical Experience* (Princeton N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1994); and Benjamin Smith, *Hard Times in the Lands of Plenty: Oil Politics in Iran and Indonesia* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2007).

155. On the power that sponsors can have over armed groups, see David Carter, “A Blessing or a Curse? State Support for Terrorist Groups,” *International Organization*, Vol. 66, No. 1 (January 2012), pp. 129–151.

156. See also Gutiérrez Sanín, “Telling the Difference,” pp. 27–29.

groups to use similar resources. There will be no single doctrine that can encompass these fundamental differences. To deal with this heterogeneity in insurgent capabilities and strategies, counterinsurgency should be conceptualized as a diverse array of possible strategies.

The relevance of my argument can be found in contemporary cases. The dramatic differences between the Shiite militias of the Badr Brigade and the Jaish al-Mahdi in Iraq, despite shared ethnicity, Iranian support, and involvement in illicit activities, can be traced in part to variation in the structure of their underlying social bases.¹⁵⁷ Analyzing these two groups simply as Shiite or Iranian-backed militias tells scholars little about their actual organization, and certainly less than comparing the fine-grained clerical, social, and institutional underpinnings of their power. The mobilization of Badr around a tight cadre party allowed enduring discipline even in the face of changing contexts, whereas the looser linkages underpinning Muqtada al-Sadr's organization created problems of control and coordination. These organizational profiles gave rise to varying possibilities—both better and worse—for political expansion, relationships with state power, and grassroots mobilization.

Good theory also allows scholars and analysts to predict the impact of shifting resource endowments over time. The growth of the narco-economy in Afghanistan has different implications depending on whether it will undermine or increase the organizational power of the Taliban. The arguments here suggest that the links between the Taliban and illicit economies should create greater cohesion and military power rather than undisciplined criminalization and fragmented competition over resources. Put simply, the Taliban's political-military project is compatible with its deep involvement in illicit economic activities.¹⁵⁸ The answers to policy questions hinge critically on answers to broader scholarly puzzles, and this article has offered one step toward improving understanding of both.

157. For an overview of Sadr's movement, see International Crisis Group, "Iraq's Muqtada Al-Sadr: Spoiler or Stabiliser?" Middle East Report, No. 55, July 11, 2006. On the Badr Brigade and its Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq parent party, see International Crisis Group, "Shiite Politics in Iraq," Middle East Report, No. 70, November 15, 2007.

158. Felbab-Brown, *Shooting Up*, pp. 150–151.