Commitment Problems or Bidding Wars? Rebel Fragmentation as Peace-Building

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Abstract

Though most civil wars end with military victory by the incumbent regime, this rarely implies inflicting comprehensive battlefield defeat on the rebel army. A far more common outcome is selective co-optation of rebel field commanders and "side switching" by fragmented insurgents. This paper presents a simple formal model of civil war settlement as a coalition formation game between various regime and rebel factions in the shadow of war. Hypotheses generated by the model are tested using quantitative and qualitative data from Tajikistan, including an original dataset of warlord incorporation into the state and purges over time. Consistent with the model, the data show that the "master cleavage" of the civil war has no predictive power in determining which warlords manage to keep keep their jobs in the state security forces – that "losers" in the civil war that merged their militias into the state security forces were on average more successful at avoiding purges than "winners" who had been in the state all along. The primary individual characteristics that predict long warlord tenure over numerous rounds of purges are 1) the perceived likelihood that a warlord would support the civilian regime against a foreign-backed coup, and 2) a previous career in the Soviet security services. The model and the data suggest intra-coalitional commitment problems inside the umbrella of the incumbent state or the insurgent group are just as serious as the well-studied commitment problem that exists between the rebels and the incumbents. More systematic research is needed on the institutions used to incorporate rebel groups in the waning phases of civil war.

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"Now we shall live better. We want to live better, the way we did under Communists in the Soviet Union."

– IBDULLO BOIMATOV

February 1996, Dushanbe

1 Introduction

In the freezing Tajik winter of 1996, a coordinated mutiny by ethnic Uzbek field commanders surrounded Tajikistan's capital city of Dushanbe. They seized the airport, cutting off needed supplies of electricity and food. The revolt was led by Ibodullo Boimatov, an exiled warlord whose army had been driven across the Uzbek border in 1994 after he claimed the aluminum smelter at Tursunzoda as his own and declared himself "mayor," and Mahmud Khoudobourdiev, who ruled the southern agricultural hub of Kurgan-Tubbe as an independent city-state. Both warlords had served in the Popular Front and helped to install the president, and both felt they deserved a bigger share of the spoils of victory. Tajikistan's civilian president, Emomalii Rakhmonov, gave in to their warlords' blackmail, appointing Boimatov to the position of special trade envoy for cotton and aluminum (the country's the two largest export items), while Khudobourdiev was appointed as First Deputy of the Presidential Guard. Just over one year later, in August of 1997, Khoudobourdiev raised the stakes with another uprising. With implicit support from Uzbekistan, he declared the establishment of the "Autonomous Defense Council of Central and Southern Tajikistan in Kurgan-Tubbe and Hissor" and tried to rally other warlords to his cause. He failed, and his private army was routed from the field by the new Tajik security forces, now including a number of "United Tajik Opposition" militia leaders who had recently integrated into the state forces. Isolated, Khoudobourdiev fled to Uzbekistan in disgrace. But this unsuccessful uprising was not the second time Khoudobourdiev and his army had switched sides from incumbent to insurgent over the course of the Tajik civil war. It was the fifth.

Mahmud Khoudobourdiev's uneven political fortunes provide a lens through which to view the kaleidoscopic complexity of Tajikistan's warlord politics in the 1990s. Khoudobourdiev served in Soviet military until it's collapse, contracted his services to the elected post-war government (1991), joined the Popular Front and played a key role in installing Rakhmonov as president (1992), withdrew from Dushanbe politics and installed himself as a feudal lord in Kurgan-Tubbe (1993-4), led an Uzbek-backed revolt against the state (1995-6), became a First Deputy in the Presidential guard (1996), and finally led a doomed revolt in

1997. The divergent outcomes of his last two efforts to extort the state demonstrate that the ruling coalition was highly vulnerable to insider extortion before the comprehensive peace agreement, and far more insulated afterwards. It is also clear that while the stakes of war were extremely high, the sides were not fixed. Both of the major factions in Tajik civil war were actually umbrella groups of private armies, and the lines between bandit and bureaucrat were blurred. Understanding the Tajik Civil War and its resolution requires accounting for strategic choices by warlords navigating this uncertain environment.

The phenomenon of side-switching is ubiquitous and well-chronicled in civil wars across the globe. Yet these processes of defection, desertion, and incorporation are rarely placed at the center of strategic analysis. Scholars have neglected coalition-building dynamics in favor of two-player models of civil war settlement as asymmetric bagaining problems. Modeling peacemaking and state-building as *coalition formation* problems makes the identities of the "incumbents" and "insurgents" outcomes of interest, rather than base assumptions of the model. This approach allows scholars to analyze splits in fragile post-war regimes, and transforms the somewhat elusive concept of "state strength" into a something that scholars can seek to explain, rather than simply observe and assume. And it puts the focus of attention on the mechanisms by which independent militias are incorporated, co-opted, and eventually yoked to the governing coalition. This is important for students of contemporary counterinsurgency, since it has become clear that military co-optation – using force to fragment rebel unity and then selectively incorporating the remnants into the regime's governance apparatus – is how most states since 1945 have dealt with armed uprisings in their peripheries. This paper is a modest attempt demonstrate how one such model might function.

I present a formal model of civil war settlement as a process of competitive n-player coalition formation in the shadow of war. In the model some warlords have an incentive to collude together to secure wealth opportunities in a consolidating state, and to exclude other warlords from access to these spoils. The model is meant to be generalizable to any civil war setting where combatants are relatively fragmented, and posits a very different role for international interveners than the role that is typically assumed in the literature. The model generates a number of hypotheses related to process of coalition building and the identity of the warlords likely to emerge in the ruling coalition. These hypotheses are confirmed in the analysis of an original dataset of field commanders incorporated into the Tajik security forces between 1992 and 2006.

This paper proceeds in four parts. The first section will briefly review the literature on civil war settlements. The second section will present the model, discuss key comparative statics, and present a number of testable hypotheses that stem from the model. The third section, after a brief descriptive account of the Tajik Civil War and its settlement, presents and analyzes data from that case. The final section concludes.

2 Literature Review: Commitment Problems and Civil War

A number of independent scholars have confirmed that since 1945 most civil wars end with military victory rather than negotiated settlement (Licklider (1995),Walter (1997), Fortna (2004)) and victory tends to go to the incumbents (Toft (2006)). More recent research suggests that even diplomatic settlements that are usually grouped in the "negotiated" or "military stalemate" category are, upon closer inspection, merely face-saving arrangements that codify de-facto battlefield success (J. D. Fearon (2007), McCormick (2007)). In the last fifteen years, an unusually productive research agenda has emerged to account for these trends – in particular, why it is so difficult to reach a negotiated settlement to extract players from costly civil wars. Borrowing tools from the study of international relations and microeconomics, the most prominent approach to this question has been to model a civil war as a two-player game between an incumbent state and a rebel insurgency. This narrows the analytic focus on particularly intractable aspects of the bargaining that occurs between two armed actors competing to rule a sovereign state.

One of the most powerful insights to emerge from this modeling enterprise is that the negotiations necessary to end a civil war diplomatically differ substantially from the negotiations that would to end an interstate conflict. Ending a civil war nearly always requires one side to lay down its arms; and it is very difficult for their opponents to credibly commit to honor promises that are made once they are the only armed actor in the state.[1] This commitment problem complicates the diplomatic resolution of the civil wars through many mechanisms, rendering rebel disarmament or stable post-war power sharing extremely difficult (Walter (2002), Fearon (2004)). This explanatory framework has left a powerful imprint on practitioners, policy analysts, and the growing community of scholars studying foreign intervention and conflict resolution. Two-player incumbent-insurgent models have also yielded a number of powerful insights related to patterns of violence against civilians (Kalyvas (2006), Weinstein (2006)), and a number of mechanisms distinct from the commitment problem that can sustain extremely long civil wars (Fearon (2005), Walter (2006)).

One of the primary limitations of these two-player approaches is that they fail to persuasively account for the more complex bargaining situations that arise in failed states, where there are often more than two relevant actors. Moreover, as Kalyvas (2003) forcefully articulated, the reductionist impulse to define a war across a "master clevage" is inherently political, often misleading, and has real implications for how a conflict

[1] Fearon and Laitin summarize the core of this asymmetric commitment problem: "Rebel groups aim at regime change because they could not trust the government to implement the policies they desire even if the government formally agreed to do so. After the rebel group disbands, or after the central government regains strength, or because of monitoring problems arising from the nature of the policy aims (for example, redistribution), the central government would renege on policy concessions it made to end a war. Thus rebel groups must often fight for 'all or nothing.'" (Fearon-Laitin 2007, p.2). For a reviews of theoretical and formal literature on commitment problems in civil war, see Walter (2009), Miguel (2009).

is rendered in collective memory.[2] There is nothing intrinsic to a two-player modeling choices that necessarily implies lazy scholarship or a lack of attention to local detail, of course. Yet it is important to recall that *by design* these models tend to yield predictions and policy prescriptions that are analogous to those provided by neorealist international relations scholarship – advice that is abstracted from local particulars and takes a distant and Olympian standpoint epistimology.[3]

Yet it is in the gritty local particulars – which are omitted by "black boxing" local cleavages, history, and identities – that most of the action in civil wars takes place. Rebels employ tactics to exploit friction between rival power centers in the incumbent state (between "the masses" and "the elites" in revolutions, "hard-liners" and "soft-liners" in military coups, "hawks" and "doves" in the extended bargaining dynamics that accompany protracted secessionist wars, etc.). Violence in all of these contexts is instrumental and communicative. Incumbent regimes are generally loathe to acknowledge their opponents as unified or legitimate political movements in an effort to isolate leadership and give subordinates political space to defect. Modern states also have the resources to re-shape the bargaining space in a variety of ways, and often devote huge resources to infiltrating and co-opting radical movements, murdering or imprisoning leaders (and certainly branding them as criminals or terrorists), recruiting "proxy armies" from the same population as the insurgents, mapping the rival power centers in rebel armies, and generally encouraging the fragmentation of insurgencies in any way possible. Rebel groups facing competent enemies invest in ideological indoctrination and intra-factional security to prevent precisely this sort of infiltration and dismemberment.[4]

Indeed, one of the of the most universal and basic components of counterinsurgency is a state's willingness to accept side-switching. Incorporating enemy combatants is a double-win for the incumbent regime, since

[2] See Kalyvas (2003). One explanation for the systematic bias in favor of narratives that emphasize the "master clevage" when the wartime dynamics are far more complex is that journalists and researchers tend to conduct their research in urban areas – where they have access to with english-speaking academics, NGO workers, and state representatives – rather than in rural areas, where the violence takes place. (See Kalyvas (2004).) Another explanation is that civil war actors themselves are often quite sophisticated propagandists, and to attract financial and military from great powers, local allies, or far-flung diaspora groups they misrepresent the content of their motivations or ideology, their unity of command, and frankly any other detail that might confuse a listener with a short attention span.

[3] This is not an accident. Most of these models are explicitly aimed at providing a distant "top down" approach to viewing a conflict, and are meant for consumption in Washington D.C. or the United Nations. This is evident in the assumption that external interveners almost invariably play a benign role, usually as external guarantors of minority rights in either prewar (Fearon (1998)) or postwar (Walter (1997)) settings. A growing empirical literature demonstrates that a combination of UN peacekeepers, third-party security guarantees, and multilateral aid can improve the probability of successful state recovery after civil war (Walter (1997); Fortna (2004); M. Doyle (2006); Fortna (2008); Girod (2008)). Note that this says more about the biases of the intended audience than the models themselves – the same framework can be used to show how expectations of foreign support can contribute to the outbreak of war where otherwise potential rebels would be deterred (see Laitin (2001) and Posen (1993)) The benign narrative of foreign intervention tends to overlook the fact that many of the longest and bloodiest episodes of state failure since 1945 – Vietnam, Afghanistan, Cambodia, Mozambique, Lebanon – were difficult to end precisely because of foreign interventions, and the proxy-war dynamics that emerged with multiple foreign interventions backing different factions.

[4] The fact that fighting groups groups tend to be less-organized, more fragmented, and more criminal in terminally-weak states – the "symmetric irregular" wars in Somalia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Georgia, Tajikistan, Haiti, West Africa, and elsewhere – is at least partially due to the fact that they never had to evolve to survive dedicated efforts by a competent leviathan. See Kalyvas (2006), and Kalyvas and Balcells (ming).

it simultaneously reduces the ranks of the enemy, while introducing soldiers with knowledge of the terrain and tactics to their side. It also mitigates the commitment problem sketched above, since in this case the individual rebel warlord does *not* disarm his militia, and can always threaten to return to the insurgency if he is not well-treated. In virtually every insurgency around the globe, state security forces intentionally create institutions that allow the movement of former combatants into state forces. Russian government employed many rehabilitated Chechen insurgents in the first half of this decade (Balta (2007)), and they seem to be more effective than their Russian counterparts in suppressing insurgent attacks ((Lyall (2009)). Since the 1980s, the government in the Philippines has incorporated entire rebel battalions of rebel forces into "CAFGU" units around Mindinao (Felter (2005)). The "Concerned Citizens Program" in contemporary Iraq, one of the key components of the Anbar Awakening, was explicitly designed to allow former insurgents to reinvent themselves and find employment in the Iraqi Security Forces.[5] The United States strategy for deploying post-conflict aid and rebuilding society on-the-cheap in post-Taliban Afghanistan was contract local security arrangements with local warlords (Rashid (2008), ch.10), many of whom have found their way into the police, private security companies, or into opaque para-statal relationships with the Karzai government.[6] As of yet, there has been little effort to study whether this incorporation into state security structures has implications for conflict resolution or post-war recovery, though states across the globe seem to believe it is a strategy that works. More important for students of conflict, the phenomenon of side-switching has not been incorporated into models of civil war settlement, which is virtually always abstracted to a situation with two actors, fixed identities, and sometimes a benevolent foreign intervener to extract actors from their intractable security dilemmas.

Analysts attempting to make sense of failed states in Somalia, Lebanon, Afghanistan, the Congo, and elsewhere often opt to describe the shifting coalitions of warring factions in lieu of defining "the state" as ontologically distinct from the warlords that make it up. Yet this coalition-building approach is rarely applied to the provision of local security in conflicts like Chechnya, Kurdistan, East Timor, Punjab, Kashmir, or Iraq, where there is an internationally-recognized government as one of the primary actors. The ability of local field commanders to defect en masse and join the opponent's side is not controversial in any way to area experts – but it is treated as tertiary to the underlying strategic situation. If the processes of side-switching and defection are put at the center of strategic analysis – an approach which makes the identity of

[5] For example, in Ghazaliya, where the vast majority of the population are Sunni Muslim, including many former insurgents, the "Ghazaliya Guardians" assumed police duties. Shiite officials balked at the rapid switch from labeling them terrorists to supporting them, but to quote U.S. Colonel J. B. Burton: "You're talking with people whove pulled a trigger against American forces? Hell, yeah! Because were fighting a common enemy – Al Qaeda." Some who worked with U.S. military also did extralegal honor killings on the side. See Anchabadze (1999). For a broader (but prescient) statement of the problem, see Cor (2006)

[6] See Jalali (2006), Tarzi (2005).

the "incumbents" and "insurgents" the outcome of interest, rather than a base assumption of the model – peacemaking and state-building can be analyzed as *coalition formation* problems. This approach is useful for identifying the parameters under which cooperation is possible, and what the distributional politics between warlords should look like in different equilibria. It puts the focus on the kinds of friction and commitment problems that occur inside the state (between officials in the state police force and the Ministry of Defense, both of whom want to be able to extract rents from local drug trade, for instance) as well as between the state and the rebels. It also puts a strong emphasis on identifying local arrangements between violence entrepreneurs that are self-enforcing, rather than relying on a foreign intervener to alter incentives.[7] One such model is presented below.

3 The Model

I argue that civil wars end and coherent states emerge when militias and criminal warlords work together to build a coalition with a preponderance of military power. This group can then install a civilian regime in the capital city that is capable of acquiring international recognition and appealing directly to foreign donors. In a sense, the civilian regime is simply a cosmetic legitimizing device for violent thugs: Armed groups do not give up their weapons and they remain poised to re-start the conflict. They can thus extort the civilian regime for offices, privatization rights, and de-facto monopolies in the new state. History has shown that there are real advantages for armed groups that can claim the capital city, install themselves into ministries, and re-appropriate its bureaucratic apparatus, such as the power to re-write history books, define their opponents as terrorists and insurgents, and claim international recognition and aid. In this argument, the emergence of vast, unaccountable patronage networks inside regime ministries – the "systematic corruption" decried by intellectuals and NGOs working in war zones – is the mortar that holds weak states together.

The model also suggests the mechanism by which civilian leaders gradually remove power from the men who hold the guns. Warlords face a difficult collective action problem if they attempt to remove "their" president from power, leaving them vulnerable to divide-and-rule tactics from the civilian regime over time. Foreign governments can also affect the broad contours of the consolidation game with a few crude tools, such as aiding rebel warlords or assisting the state in repressing them (which can affect warlords' self-assessed odds of survival outside the consolidating coalition), and either lending or withholding diplomatic recognition and financial support to the consolidating government. The model suggests a number of testable hypotheses,

[7] The importance of identifying local order-providing equilibria self-encorcing is critical for attracting foreign aid in the first place; otherwise potential interveners will be loathe to commit themselves to interventions in the first place, on the expectation that they will never be able to leave without re-starting the civil war. This problem is raised explicitly in J. Fearon (2004).

including the idea that warlords are interchangeable, that changes in the international environment will affect the size and composite identity of the warlord coalition, that there will be friction between the president and the warlords (and between the warlords and each other) as the president plays the role of peacemaker, and that centralization and legitimization of power ultimately come at the warlords' expense.

3.1 The Model

Consider a simple model of the bargaining situation between warlords in a failed state.

The strategic contest takes place inside a country, which contains lootable resources and government positions worth v. The conflict is over the right to distribute these spoils, through selective enforcement of property rights. The main strategic players in the game are $n > 1$ warlords, $W = \{1, 2 \dots n\}$ who are all locked in a struggle for power. Each warlord i can attempt to capture the capital city and exclude all rivals from power, allowing him and his trusted lieutenants to expropriate all the state wealth v for themselves. Warlords are differentiated by the military and economic resources that they control, which gives each warlord a probability $p_i \in [0, 1]$ of total military victory over his rivals if he chooses to fight to the end.[8] Assume that p_i represents a relatively objective self-assessment of military/political power, such that $\sum_{i=1}^{n} p_i = 1$. Fighting is costly for each warlord and destroys the wealth of the state, imposing costs $c_i > 0$ on each warlord.[9] In a war of all against all, each warlord i expects $p_i v - c_i$.

As an alternative to going alone, warlords can opt to work together and form a coalition. The goal is to create a coalition with a preponderance of domestic armed power in the state, sufficient to attract international recognition and investment. The coalition will then temporarily abjure violence and back the ascension a civilian government, headed by a figurehead ruler F.[10] At the beginning of the game, every warlord in W simultaneously chooses to either try to singularly claim the statehouse or join the ruling coalition. If enough warlords collude together, then a government emerges which contains sufficient domestic power to acquire foreign aid, the country's seat at the United Nations, and foreign investment. Let the variable $s \in [.5, 1]$ be the stability threshold, for how much of the warlords' total armed forces are necessary to coordinate on a single leader in order to establish order.

[8] I assume that it is impossible to peacefully negotiate a power-sharing and disarmament agreement between the various groups because of commitment problems in the postwar period. See Walter (1997) Fearon (1998, 2004); J. D. Fearon (2007).

[9] The ability to effectively wage war is the defining characteristic of a warlord in this game. I assume that the costs of fighting alone are never so high as to deter a warlord from making a bid to seize the state. Formally, $c_i < p_i v$.

[10] It may be more realistic to complicate warlords' coordination and coalition formation problem by imagining the universe of national intellectuals, statesmen, heads of prominent tribes, or mediocre bureaucrats forming a pool of potential figureheads $F = \{f_1, f_2, \dots f_z\}$. In this more complicated and dynamic version of the game, when warlords opt into a coalition, they must not only choose to "fight" or "delegate" to a civilian government, but also to support the same civilian government. Obviously this dynamic game would be more realistic and complex, but for the purposes of simplifying the exposition, I will refer to a generic focal president F rather than f_i herein, referred to as "the ruler" or "the president."

If no coalition forms that passes the threshold s, then v remains unchanged and every warlord who chose diplomacy instead of fighting will have a slightly lower percentage chance of outright military victory. Expected payoffs for a warlord who backed a failed candidate will be represented by $(p_i - m_i)v - c_i$, where $(p_i v - c_i) > m_i v > 0$.[11] If a coalition forms, then foreign investment becomes possible and the total amount of wealth in the country increases from v to a much larger v^*. This new wealth v^* comes into existence in a form that is controlled by the puppet ruler of the new government, who then distributes v^* among the warlords behind the throne. Although in theory the government could transfer wealth to any warlord, in practice the regime should only transfer wealth to those warlords that are in the coalition. We shall call this subset of warlords $W^P \subseteq W$ ($W^P = \{w_i, w_j, \ldots w_q\}$). The puppet president chooses how to distribute v^* among all the warlords and himself, with the decision represented by $\mathtt{x} = (x_1, x_2, \ldots x_n)$. Warlords who chose to fight at the beginning rather than support the president will be cut out of these spoils, and they have no realistic chance of displacing the coalition of warlords that now claims the capital city. Since these warlords mobilized to fight with an extremely small chance of winning, it would be defensible to suggest that they would be forced to settle for 0. But in many parts of the world men who command private armies tend to "retire" as insurgents only to re-emerge as bandits or narcotics traffickers on the fringes of state control, or keep their armies intact and operating across an international border, hoping for eventual state incorporation. The payoff for remaining outside the state in the case where the s threshold is passed will be recorded as a reservation wage r_i.[12]

Warlords in the ruling coalition are not disarmed, however, and the game is rigged for extortion. Each member of W^P observes the distribution of presidential resources, and then can choose to either participate in a palace coup to attempt to seize total power and monopolize power in the state apparatus, or he can accept the wealth transfer passively. Warlord choices are all made simultaneously. If the total strength of warlords supporting the president in the second round is lower than s, then the coalition that initially supported the president crumbles in on itself. In this case, the president receives 0 (becoming a total puppet of a single warlord or being deposed), and warlords $\in W^P$ battle among themselves for dominance of the state apparatus. This shows the powerful gains to cooperation and state seizure: Warlords stand to seize a larger pie v^*, and in most circumstances face far fewer opponents to compete with after a potential coup – factors that combine to give warlords a much larger expected payoff then they could get by simply fighting

[11] Since the sum of warlord probabilities of seizing the state by force must sum to 1, the "lost" probability of m_i for warlord i shall be added to a randomly selected warlord j from $W^F \subset W^P$, the subset of all warlords that opted for fighting instead of diplomacy.

[12] In most circumstances it is reasonable to assume that a warlord who is capable of capturing the capital city and installing himself as president would want to, or that $p_i v - c_i > r_i$. This constraint can be relaxed, however, as will be discussed below. If $r_i \leq 0$ it indicates that a warlord cannot afford to retain his men if he is not a member of W^P.

in the first round. Let y represent the total strength of warlords in W^P. Formally, expected payoffs for warlords in to fighting is $\frac{p_i v^*}{y} - c_i$ if the president is overthrown, and x_i if he is not. After all of the warlords have made this second choice, if there are still warlords with a total strength $\geq s$ who accept their transfers and do not wish to resume the violent contest, then each warlord i receives his share x_i the president's distribution $\mathtt{x}$, minus an additional cost $z_i > 0$ if the warlord attempted a coup that failed.[13] The civilian ruler is allowed to keep whatever is left of v^* for himself.

The appropriate solution concept for this game is a subgame perfect Nash equilibrium, where no player is able to promise or threaten actions that he would not take if presented with the option. Fully analyzing the strategic relationship between the puppet president and the warlords that put him in power is beyond the scope of this paper, but this game contains multiple subgame perfect equlibria.[14] To situation the empirical matter to follow, three equilibria will be defined formally.

PROPOSITION ONE: This game has a subgame perfect equilibrium in which all warlords choose to fight to eliminate each other. They will attempt a coup if a coalition forms off the equilibrium path, but in expectation such a coalition will not form as the warlords drag the state into chaos. Each warlord receives $p_i v - c_i$, and the president receives 0.[15] We will call this the *civil war* equilibrium. *(See Proof 1 in Appendix).*

This is the situation that characterized Georgia and Tajikistan in the immediate aftermath of statehood, and one that should be familiar to students of Lebanese, Somali, or Afghan history. This is an inefficient equilibrium for two analytically distinct reasons. First, the model assumes that $v < v*$, since it should be easier for elites to attract foreign aid and speculative investment to a zone of peace than a zone of war. Second, fighting is costly for each warlord, because warlords cannibalize productive assets to build their armies.[16]

PROPOSITION TWO: The game also has subgame perfect equilibrium which avoids violence, which we will call the *warlord coalition* equilibrium. All warlords know that once they install a civilian government, the figurehead president will attempt to maximize his rents while keeping his position by securing the loyalty a minimum winning coalition of warlords. $W^G \subseteq W$ will be identified that is just enough to cross the

[13] Failed coup attempts invite purges and retaliation from the incumbent ruler and other members of the coalition. If a disloyal warlord is permitted to keep his position, there should be residual costs in the form of lingering mistrust.

[14] Given the complex and overlapping strategy choices available to players the distributional politics part of the games defined here, the game probably has an infinite number of equilibria. For a richer discussion of a refined version of a similar game, see Driscoll (2009), ch. 3.

[15] Though in this equilibrium the president is never given the opportunity to act, a possible off the path strategy for the president could be to distribute $x_i = 0$ to every warlord i and attempt to keep all of v^* for himself.

[16] The term "inefficiency" here only refers to the sense that the total utility is lower in this equilibrium than in alternatives. It is expressly *not* true in the sense of pareto efficiency because warlords who are not in the ruling coalition will often in expectation be better off in the state failure equilibrium than in others where they are forced to settle for their reservation wage.

threshold s, and each warlord in W^G will be paid enough to be made indifferent between attempting a coup and supporting the civilian regime, and they cannot credibly demand more. This leaves the remainder of v^* for the civilian figurehead government – which represents the "rents" that come from securing peace. Remaining warlords not in W^G ($W^{\sim G} \subseteq W$) correctly anticipate that they will be unable to extract more than 0 from the president, so they fight at the beginning of the game to claim their reservation wage r_i. *(See Proof 2 in Appendix).*

This equilibrium also describes a situation that should be familiar to students of conflict resolution across the globe: In the wake of fractious civil violence, a criminal army will endorses leaders from its political wing to make speeches and shake hands with foreign leaders, while gangsters and soldiers quietly loot the state behind the scenes. The threat of violence and the risk of re-starting the civil war hangs over the distributive politics game, placing hard limits on what the president can credibly promise to anyone. Yet even in this situation, note that the warlords do not capture all of v^*, nor are their threats to extort the president past a certain point at all credible – the proposal power of the civilian government allows the unarmed player to pit warlord interests against one other and drive each warlord to accept an amount which is exactly equal to what they would receive by fighting. From the outside it looks as if the warlords have been co-opted, but in reality they have entered into a co-optive relationship with civilian government by the lure of more wealth ($v^* > v$) and permanent security (the constant, credible threat of a coup which keeps the money flowing). Warlords have, in essence, become the state.

PROPOSITION THREE: In the special case where $r_i \leq 0$ for every warlord, the game may also have a third subgame perfect equilibrium, which we shall define as a *civilian government* equilibrium. In this equilibrium, all warlords opt to join the presidential coalition at the beginning of the game. One of the striking aspects of the the *civilian government* equilibrium is that the presence of a large number of passive, counterrevolutionary warlords in W^P force the members of W^G to make do with a much smaller division of state spoils than in the *warlord coalition* equilibrium above, watching helplessly while the president pockets v^* for himself. Indeed, since no warlord is pivotal, the president will be tempted to single out warlords in W^G and chisel their transfers and gradually drive x_i to zero for all warlords i and keeping the full pie v^* for himself. And because all warlords are non-pivotal supporters, so no one has an incentive to unilaterally sponsor a failed coup and pay z_i. This would, in expectation, lead members of the W^G coalition to fight at the beginning rather than support the civilian president – if they could coordinate their actions to defect collectively. But the fact that there are many warlords means that an individual defection does not stop the stability threshold s from being passed. *(See Proof 3 in Appendix).*

This equilibrium represents the extreme case of warlord atomization, but it clarifies that the central strategic problem for warlords is collective action. When no warlord is individually capable of re-starting the civil war, they have to work together to effectively extort the civilian government. If not, all warlords would all be better off in the *state failure* equilibrium – though, again, that choice might not exist. Though it is beyond the scope of the game as presented, it should be clear that if warlords could make credible commitments to act in unison in either the first or second stage of the game, it would vastly complicate the president's ability to chisel their wages. Though the game provides no formal account of these politics, the non-institutionalized structure of the game is itself a clue: The violent descent into civil war destroys the formal institutions that would normally be useful to manage bargains between elites (which is in some sense why private armies come into existence in the first place). With formal institutions defunct it is informal institutions – such as clans or pre-existing criminal networks – that provide templates for cooperation.[17]

Before moving on to testable hypotheses, one should note that the second and third equilibrium contains an informal account of how states emerge from violent anarchy without total military victory or foreign intervention. Warlords initially collude to provide order, gain access to international wealth, and gain monopoly rents from the state apparatus that falls under their control. The model also contains an implicit account of how the political wing of a movement seizes power from the men with guns. The model reveals three analytically distinct sources of civilian power. First, anyone who can credibly claim to speak for a plurality of warlords can woo bilateral donors and international investors. The promise of increasing the lootable wealth inside the capital city (v to v^*) is the bait that draws warlords into the cooperative state-building in the first place.[18] Second, the civilian government gains a pool of "rents" by offering warlords the ability to loot the state peacefully, sparing everyone the costs of war. Third and finally, the model brings the role of the reservation value r_i into sharp focus. When trying to determine what the "next best" thing one can do with an army really is, one of the obvious questions is whether neighboring states with adjoining territory will give shelter and protected space for warlords. Civilian governments, using skillful diplomacy with international actors and incorporated warlords, can shrink the reservation wage for unincorporated warlords such that $r_i \leq 0$. When reservation wages are negative, even warlords who expect nothing from the civilian government (since they correctly anticipate that they are are not part of W^G) will join the coalition. With more warlords than he needs, the presidential figurehead has both the ability and incentive to play

[17] This equilibrium reveals that the civilian president, in contrast, should attempt to fragment warlord coalitions and weaken individual warlords, since this equilibrium is only possible if no single warlord (or "blocking coalition" of warlords) has enough strength to unilaterally dictate terms to the winning coalition. Formally, this equilibrium only holds if $p_i \leq (1 - s)$ for every warlord i or blocking coalition W^B.

[18] Note that in the *warlord coalition* equilibrium warlords expect to do better than in the *state failure* equilibrium even if $v^* = v$. See Proof 2 in Appendix.

warlords against each other, ensuring that each member of the winning coalition is bought off at the lowest possible price. In this model a civilian government never truly establishes a Hobbesian monopoly over force, but by manipulating the game by which the provision of order is contracted the president and his cronies incrementally strip the bargaining power away from the men with guns.

3.2 Observable Implications of the Model: Testable Hypotheses

Modeling the intra-factional politics between civil war actors turns the traditional two-player bargaining model on its head. Instead of treating the armed strength of a rebel challenger as an exogenous model parameter, this approach seeks to explain variation in the relative size and strength of the incumbent and insurgent coalitions. The central strategic choice in the game is whether a warlord will choose to contribute his armed forces to the emerging warlord coalition (the state) or remain outside this coalition (as a rebel). The model highlights that today's insurgent can be tomorrow's rural policeman, and vice-versa. It also highlights the inter-temporal commitment problems that exist between armed factions and the civilian government they install. The most obvious testable implications of the model relate to the comparative statics for the equilibria identified (e.g., variation in the reservation wage r_i and the stability threshold s). But at a more basic level, the model also generates a number of testable predictions about the nature of the post-war coalition formation process that that are very different that those which are taken for granted in the two-player models of civil war settlement.

First, the model assumes that warlords are fundamentally interchangeable. This is assumption should be controversial to many scholars of ethnic conflicts, who tend to treat the identities of the combatants as relatively static. Yet in this model warlords are distinguished only by characteristics related to their military prowess – not their ideology or ascriptive identity. This prediction is that that regardless of the social bases used to recruit militias initially, sustainable coalitions should emerge that cut across these divisions. It also makes a stronger prediction. The model predicts that ideological and ethnic ties *will not bind* – as more and more warlords join the state, the civilians will be increasingly tempted to break promises to the coalition that installed them and seek new allies to stay in power at a lower cost. Two hypotheses emerge from this insight:

> *Hypothesis 1: The coalition of warlords that emerges in the ruling coalition will not reflect the "master clevage" of the civil war.*
>
> *Hypothesis 2: Warlords from the militarily victorious side of the civil war are no more likely to emerge in the ruling coalition as warlords from the losing side.*

Second, the model emphasizes the role of coalition building, side-switching, and collusion at the expense of raw strength. The model acknowledges that certain distributions of forces are so favorable to a single powerful warlord that he becomes a de-facto member of any winning coalition, capable of single-handedly dictating war or peace through the threat to bring down the coalition by unilateral action.[19] But the model explicitly assumes that a number of small warlords working together should be able to defeat a large one. This implies that being militarily powerful is neither necessary nor sufficient to emerge in the winning coalition. Articulated as a third testable hypothesis:

> *Hypothesis 3: Warlords that control large armies during the civil war are ultimately no more likely to emerge as members of the ruling coalition than warlords with relatively small armies.*

Third, as discussed above, the commitment problems in the game stem from the fact that there is no external power or set of formal institutions capable of ex-ante agreements. The equilibria identified above reveal that with the assumption of perfect information and costless transactions, warlords should successfully identify the unique minimum winning coalition W^G and base their strategies accordingly. While in the real world the assumption of perfect information is obviously untenable, in the real world nor are social actors completely atomized from each other and incapable of coordinating their actions to protect against ex-post defection. Two warlords should be able to "play" as a team, pooling their armed strength and treating a defection against one of them as a defection against both to avoid being chiseled by a ruthless ruler.[20] Uncertainty about whether those alliances will stick introduces considerable uncertainty into the game. This is why in practice trust, luck, and charisma are required to build a stable coalition, and the human drama that unfolds is the stuff of real politics. Yet with no rules to structure coalition-building, no authority to enforce contracts between warlords, and the constant possibility that intrigue or accidental gunfire would eliminate a key coalition member, warlords are forced to fall back on whatever social ties they can find to make promises stick. In the Former Soviet Union it was not uncommon to see politics break down lines of family, clan lines, cadre, criminal group, academic organization, or business network. Thus the fourth hypothesis:

> *Hypothesis 4: Pre-war informal networks should be robust predictors of coalition membership.*

Fourth, the model suggests a number of mechanisms by which international actors can help or hinder

[19] Formally, the conditions for this are that $p_i \geq (1 - s)$. Note that if there is a single warlord whose strength is this great, the *civilian government* equilibrium becomes impossible, since this warlord will always have a pivotal role in the second-stage distributional politics game. This suggests a strong incentive on the part of civilian governments to dismember powerful warlords – a point which is treated explicitly in Driscoll (2009), ch. 5.

[20] For an explicit treatment of this problem in a two-player context, see Weingast (1998).

in the consolidation process.[21] The most insidious role that they can play is by supporting warlords in their efforts to either extort the coalition from within, or to convince them not to join in the first place. Recall that when warlords who are not in the minimum winning coalition W^G have high (or simply positive) reservation values, the model predicts either the *civil war* or the *warlord coalition* equilibria described above, since losing warlords can profitably retreat to mountains without disbanding their armies. Support from foreign governments for recalcitrant warlords can have the effect of raising r_i. Moreover, if any warlord i has enough power p_i to single-handedly topple the coalition, then the *civilian government* equilibrium is not sustainable (since that warlord must always be paid off and can never be purged – see Proof 3 in Appendix). If this is combined with the ability to act in concert and coordinate their demands, the logic could extend to any "blocking coalition" of warlords. Warlords with foreign backing, in other words, are dangerous coalition partners because it is easier to construct situations where they would rather topple a government and return to war than for their counterparts with low reservation wages.[22] This suggests that the civilian government should be extremely wary of bringing warlords with a powerful foreign patron into the state since they will not be reliable coalition partners over the long term.

> *Hypothesis 5: Warlords that are isolate-able – i.e., that lack independent resource bases or foreign ties – should be relatively attractive to civilian governments as coalition partners relative to warlords with strong foreign backing.*

Finally, the logic of the model suggests that the time just before a peace process should be a time of fierce competition between opposition and incumbent warlords, since the latter will do strictly worse as more armed social capital is incorporated into the state.[23] The model implies that each warlord $i \in W^G$ should not want to lose his pivotal role in the ruling coalition. It may make sense, in fact, to keep the war going, rather than risk a slow slide into full warlord incorporation and a *civilian government* equilibrium where they

[21] The model identifies three analytically distinct roles that the international community plays in coalition formation: aiding or isolating warlords (which affects the reservation wage r_i for every warlord i), providing reconstruction aid and investment (raising $v^* > v$, which can lure warlords into collusion with the state), and recognizing a warlord coalition as the legitimate rulers inside the recognized state borders (essentially setting the precise stability threshold s for recognition and aid).

[22] Formally, one might note that if there is at least one member i of W^G for whom the reservation wage r_i is higher than $\frac{p_i v^*}{y} - c_i$, then *civil war* emerges as the only supportable Nash subgame perfect equilibrium, since this pivotal warlord cannot be induced to join the winning coalition in the first round. While the game specified in this paper is played with perfect information, a similar general point could be made if we were to imagine a game of incomplete information where v^* is drawn from a distribution, and many warlords might anticipate that $v^* \leq v$, because the particular identity of the warlord coalition is so unsavory to key foreign donors (who are more likely to invest in backing rebel groups than aid that the regime can control). In this case, the *civil war* equilibrium might be expected to endure longer than it would otherwise.

[23] As the third equilibrium demonstrates, as warlords' reservation values drop to zero, warlords outside of W^G become indifferent between *warlord coalition* and *civilian government* equilibria, and should be tempted to opt in to the president's coalition. Also, the "opposition" moniker is not a fixed characteristic of particular warlord factions, but emerges endogenously over the course of the game.

receive nothing.[24] Though peace with full warlord incorporation is theoretically Pareto optimal, the fact that incorporated warlords will be vulnerable to divide-and-rule tactics by the civilian government makes it impossible for the civilian regime to pre-commit to a distribution of benefits where any warlord is actually paid. The game thus sheds light on the mechanisms undergirding the well-studied "spoiler problem" in civil wars (Stedmen (1997)). The following hypothesis stems from these insights:

Hypothesis 6: Intra-factional violence, side-switching, and arms-racing (to ensure a positive reservation wage) should accelerate in the time leading up to a foreign-imposed peace agreement.

Evaluating these hypotheses requires empirical data on sub-factional loyalty structures in regime and rebel groups, which are difficult to collect in a replicable, transparent, and safe manner. Rebel groups and incumbent regimes also have strong incentives to intentionally misrepresent ideological cohesion and unity. In many of best-known cases of state failure in Africa and Asia, armed groups with close ties to the regime do not necessarily find an advantage in formalizing their relationship with the regime, and instead opt to operate in informal parastatal relationships, which are extremely difficult to observe or code (see Reno (1998)). The fundamental difficulty with studying the way that shadow states consolidate in the wake of war is data availability. When the state is too weak for formal institutions to have meaning, ministry positions cannot anchor inferences about which warlord are actually wielding power; once this problem is solved, hierarchies are rarely transparent to outsiders and the process of consolidation is probably complete.[25]

The incorporation of warlords into the state in Tajikistan offers a rare opportunity observe the process of warlord coalition formation, allowing statistical tests the theory of presented above. Field commanders and militia captains were socially recognized as relatively autonomous actors, which has allowed the research community to identify over one hundred independent warlords. More importantly, as these men were invited to join the state (under the auspices of initial regime formation or the 1997 Peace Process), they were slotted into relatively transparent, yet functionally irrelevant, formal institutions essentially inherited from Soviet times. This makes it possible to engage in a rigorous evaluation of how long warlords managed to retain

[24] One way to think of this is to imagine that they prefer that r_j be positive for every other warlord $j \in W^{\sim G}$. This could in practice translate into striking informal bargains, colluding to allow "opposition" warlords to keep lucrative rural fiefdoms untouched in exchange staying out of politics in the capital. Maximally, they may see an interest in over-turning civilian rule and returning to war, since their wartime payoff $p_i v - c_i$ is greater than their expected payoff in a *civilian government* equilibrium.

[25] It has been established in many context that most of the fighting cohesion in large armies is found at the unit level; even in large modern armies soldiers fight for their friends and commanders, and only secondarily for the grand goals of the state military forces. See Browning (1998); Janowitz (1960); Stouffer (1949); Department of the Army (2004). This is obviously even more true in the poor and fragmented armed forces found in the developing world, or in rebel groups with strong incentives to stay small and avoid detection Fearon (2005)).

their positions in the state before being purged. In the next section, the paper will present the results of statistical analysis of an original dataset of warlord biographies for the full set of field commanders that fought in Tajikistan between 1992 and 2006.

4 Evidence from Tajikistan

In the spring of 1992, after months of escalating tensions and street confrontations between urban mobs supporting, Tajikistan exploded into civil war. The master cleavage of the civil war was between the largely unreformed Communist government of Tajikistan and a loose coalition of opposition parties. The opposition was organized principally by region and vaguely united under a desire for Islamic reforms and democratic representation. Local strongmen cannibalized local military garrisons to create "voluntary village defense units," which quickly became the primary actors in the civil war.[26] Both sides were coalitions of militias, and recruitment for the two sides splintered down roughly regional lines with Khojand, Hissor, and Kulyob representing the old guard, the highlands of Gharm and Gorno-Badakshan supporting the opposition, and Khatlon divided.[27] After a few months of terribly brutal war, the Popular Front of Tajikistan (PFT) – a coalition of militias dominated by field commanders from the southern agricultural region of Kulyob – won a decisive military victory. The PFT drove opposition forces out of the capital of Dushanbe, established control over the population centers in the lowlands, and waited out the opposition freezing in the mountains. Emomali Rahmonov, a completely unknown farm director from the region of Kulyob, was installed as the ruler. Opposition forces regrouped in Northern Afghanistan and launched an insurgency based in the country's mountainous eastern regions and – now politically reborn as the "United Tajik Opposition,"

[26] While elites on both sides projected the impression of unity, the practical size of a fighting force was 40-100 men. The militias that fought in the Tajik civil war often reported being recruited through dense family and clan ties, social clubs (especially karate clubs), or other informal networks. The author interviewed 89 former combatants who fought in the Tajik civil war, and over half of them had at least one extended family member serving in the same militia group. This seemed to be more the case for the Hissori, Uzbek, and Kulyobi militias of the Popular Front than for the Khojandi militias, or the with opposition field commanders that composed the so-called "United Tajik Opposition" (UTO). The armed social capital of the UTO was extremely fragmented at the beginning of the war, and grew increasingly so as they began to recruit from refugee camps in Afghanistan and become involved in the heroin trade from Afghanistan. See Driscoll (2009), ch. 3.

[27] It is beyond the scope of this article to review the scholarship on the root causes of the Tajik civil war, but a brief discussion of the role of "region" and "clan" are appropriate. Previously excluded groups recognized that the transition to independence was a rare window of opportunity to re-negotiate the terms of the regionally-based patronage networks that kept rural populations – especially in the rural south and mountainous east – dependent on networks of urban elites in Dushanbe and Khojand with ties to the outside world (Dudoignon (1998), Rubin (1998), Roy (2000), Whitlock (2005), Collins (2006)). Because the recruitment for militias happened by using these regionally-based patronage networks that connect the *kolkhoz* farms to one another, it is tempting to argue that the civil war was *really* about clan and regional politics. For textured meditations on use and misuse of "clan politics" as an explanation for the war in in Tajikistan, see Roy (2000) 14, 92-100, Rubin (1998) 147-52 and Akiner (2001) 26-7, 65. With that said, in an original attempt to explain why Tajikistan fell prey to civil war while other states managed to maintain order, Kathleen Collins argues that Tajikistan was unique among the Central Asian republics in that it was the only republic where inter-clan "pacts" were never forged in the 1980s, mostly because of Moscow's desire to keep a state free of any groups that might have ties to Afghanistan (Collins (2006)). For a general discussion of Soviet failure to penetrate the clan structures in Tajikistan and how family networks skewed development in the Soviet period, see Rakowska-Harmstone (1970).

continued to wage war against Rakhmonov's regime. There was no real coherence to the opposition militias, which remained organized around the warlords that recruited them. From the perspective of civilians living in highlands, this was a time of unchecked banditry, looting, and terror. A peace deal was signed in Moscow in 1997.

[[Insert "Map of Tajikistan" About Here]]

Most treatments of the civil war's conclusion emphasize the shuttle diplomacy that took place between elites, particularly the bargaining that took place between representatives of Saiyd Abdullo Nuri and Emomali Rakhmonov.[28] Parallel to the high-level diplomatic negotiations was a process of warlord incorporation, negotiated between various Tajik warlords 1995 and 1997. These agreements were reached piecemeal at first, but once the state had reached a number of side-agreements and the UTO warlords began to feel that the writing was on the wall they began to come forward to negotiate collectively in two separate, yet informal, roundtables in the summer of 1996. In virtually all cases these arrangements explicitly allowed warlords to keep their armies intact, which made the bargains self enforcing (since the rebel leader could, in principle, return to his former life as an insurgent at any time). The rebels chose to agree to a settlement because the warlords that were fighting on their behalf had abandoned them, striking side-deals to keep their drug routes, rural fiefdoms, or positions in the lucrative state ministries. Despite the presence of a large U.N. force to observe the implementation of the peace treaty, the Rakhmonov regime simply did not implement aspects of the agreement that they did not like. Yet the civil war did not re-start because, in the words of one U.N. representative, "the UTO forces that you would need on your side much happier with their state roles than the would have been returning to the mountains."[29] In practice, many of the incorporated warlords remained in the mountainous periphery of the state, opting to integrate their militias into the border patrol or assume local policing functions and participate in the burgeoning Afghan heroin trade. When a warlord did not join the state it usually meant that he was killed in the course of civil war violence, though a small-number of non-joiners fled to Afghanistan, disappeared into the criminal underworld, or simply refused to disarm or compromise.[30]

[28] See, for instance, Brenninkmeijer (1998) for a representative review of the International treatment of the conflict up until the time of the 1997 Peace Process. Akiner (2001) for what is certainly the most-cited general review of the politics surrounding the Peace Process. For a magisterial and critical insider's view of the implementation of the Tajik Peace Process, see Nakaya (2009), and Heathershaw (2008).

[29] Interview with Waldemar Rokoszewski, 8/15/05. See also, generally,Lynch (2000); Roy (2000).

[30] Even after 1997, many warlords continued to control territory in which neither the government nor United Nations Peacekeeping observers could enter without the permission and escort of these warlords. The most prominent of these locations were Darband (controlled by Mullo Abdullo), Tavildara (home of the Minister of Emergency Situations Mirzo Zioyev), and even the Leninsky District, about 20 kilometers from downtown Dushanbe (controlled by Rakhmon "Hitler" Sanginov).

Once inside the state, most warlords and lieutenants secured huge sums of money at the top of these militia hierarchies from controlling smuggling operations, the lucrative drug trade, control of bazaars, gray-market bottlenecks, or as power-brokers for elites who had money and connection but wanted additional guarantees for their investment.[31]The "shadow state" that emerged parallel to regular state institutions remains impenetrable to outside observers, but the basic contours looked much the same for warlords as for voters. The most important thing for any businessman was "a roof" – a patron with ties to the shadowy political superstructure. Criminal kingpins and warlords were the pivot-players in this relationship, so long as they were permitted to manage armed forces in sufficient quantity to bringing the whole system down if they wanted to. In general terms: The emerging political class used their militias as a source of bargaining power with each other, trying to keep themselves in the winning coalition through the implicit threat of re-starting the civil war if they were cut out of the spoils of privatization. The regime bought-off field commanders by allowing them to generate private revenue streams from the provision of public goods.[32] These were the bargains the bargain that produced of order.

Therefore, the process of state reconstruction offered military commanders a rare opportunity to improve their lives. Their challenge was to convert their pivotal position and armed social capital into wealth, dignity, and security over the long term. The consolidation period was rightly viewed as an extremely high-stakes game between the warlords: Winners would receive a position in a government security ministry, gain control over a populated fiefdom (often a privileged position in a wealthy *kolkhoz*, or de-facto mayoral rights over a small town or city), receive monopoly taxation rights for a bazaar or a lucrative gray-market bottleneck, or obtain the ability to dictate property rights over cash crops and mineral deposits in far-flung rural hinterlands. Losers faced exile, prison, or worse. Because of the opaque nature of wealth and power in post-independence Tajikistan – with a "favor economy" dominating all decisions, dozens of black- and gray-market economic bottlenecks, partial privatization schemes designed to dupe IMF and World Bank auditors, and overlapping systems of extortion and racketeering – it is very difficult to generate reliable estimates of warlords' wealth beyond individual anecdotes. It is also extremely difficult to make inferences about a field

[31] Cotton mono-cropping dominates the Tajik economy, so to this day the most lucrative creation opportunities came from brokering deals with rural kolkhoz in the unconvertible local currency, then re-selling the final products on the world market and banking the profits in an offshore foreign account. For a detailed discussion of this system, see Van Atta (2008).

[32] See Pirseyedi (Pirseyedi); Torjensen (2005); Akhmedov (1998); ICG (2004); Nourzhanov (2005); Rubin (1998). As the security services formed and re-formed, commanders used their armies to jockey for power, influence, and privileged jobs. The most coveted positions were in subsections of the Ministry of the Interior and the Border Guards, since these could be immediately converted into tax farming and smuggling rents. The worst jobs tended to be in the army, since it often left soldiers stationed outside the capital or tasked with conducting grinding counter-insurgency operations in the poorest parts of the country. Thus the army became a dumping ground for the least politically connected militias. This process turned violent almost immediately, as arms-race dynamics inside the winning coalition led to a rapid influx of new militia members from rural areas, civil war refugee populations, and previously depoliticized slums surround Dushanbe. See Driscoll (2009), ch. 4.

commander's income flow from his formal place in the state hierarchy since pedestrian positions in the middle of the bureaucracy often had operational jurisdiction over lucrative trade bottlenecks and higher positions often served a purely ceremonial purpose.[33]

Rather than attempt to untangle the shadow economy on its own terms to measure the degree of warlord success, this paper makes the simplifying assumption that *any association* with the state's formal security apparatus was an opportunity for wealth creation. The basic assumption is that it is always better to be leeching off the state from within, which is relatively uncontroversial to observers of the Post-Soviet space. There was great variation how long warlords were allowed to keep their association with the state before they were purged, and this paper exploits that variation to make inferences about the nature of the warlord coalition protecting the shadow state.

4.1 Data on Warlord Incorporation

Using Russian- and Tajik- language newspaper archives and embassy reports, a team of Tajik researchers employed by the Small Arms Survey compiled a list of the most prominent "field commanders" that fought in the Tajik Civil War (Torjensen (2005)). Their report identifies 70 field commanders and provides brief biographical data for prominent warlords. With the aid of research teams based in Bishkek and Dushanbe, I revisited the Small Arms Survey's secondary source materials with the aim of identifying additional characteristics of each field commander's private army and resolving a number of inconsistencies in the application of coding categories in the final project report. Additional interviews with a number of former combatants, area specialists and journalists were added to triangulate multiple sources of data on field commanders to code different warlord characteristics, with all final coding decisions approved by consensus of the research team. A decision was made to include additional field commanders to the data if (1) it was possible to find at least three secondary or two primary sources that confirmed that an individual was acting autonomously; (2) we could confirm that the "new" warlord was not simply a pseudonym for a different warlord; and (3) the warlord was leading at least 40 men. An additional 27 field commanders were identified by these coding rules, and it is believed that these 97 warlords represent the full sample of civil war field commanders.[34]

[33] Burihon Djobirov, the former head of Nabiev's "Presidential Guard," seated himself happily as the President of the Tajik Institute of Physical Culture and Sports, as well as the President of the National Olympic Committee – both institutional positions that allowed him to keep former combatants, weightlifters and wrestlers on his personal payroll to manage a healthy racketeering business on the side. Rahim Karimov, who became the Deputy Head of the Agency on Drug Control, was rumored to make at least twice what the actual Head of the Agency was extracting from the drug trade because of an entrepreneurial decision to use contacts from his previous position in the Customs commmittee to essentially auction forged transport documents to migrant laborers in rural areas. Dozens of similarly colorful anecdotes can be extracted from the dataset, and the lack of transparency ultimately led to the pooling on the simple "time in state" coding rule.

[34] When the data collection effort began in the spring of 2006, it was far more ambitious in scope and scale. The project was an attempt to gather information on recruitment techniques, control of resources, political connections to groups in the

Between 1992 and 1997, 58 of the 97 field commanders that led armies in the Tajik Civil War took positions in a security ministry or otherwise reported to political leaders in Dushanbe. Thirty four warlords formed the core of the military coalition that seized the capital city in 1992; most of these warlords were members of the Popular Front or opportunistic affiliates with ties to Soviet security services. The next major wave of warlord integration came with the 1997 Peace Accords, which guaranteed 30% of the positions in the "Power Ministries" (State Security, Defense, and Interior) to members of the United Tajik Opposition and facilitated the integration of an additional 24 field commanders into the state apparatus.[35] The data analysis that follows will focus on these incorporated field commanders.

Of the 58 warlords that joined the state through the 1992-1997 period, by December 2006 only 16 remained. The variable *years*, which will serve as the dependent variable in the following statistical analysis, is constructed by simply counting the number of years, rounded up, that a warlord served along with his army in an official capacity. A few of the warlords departed voluntarily and successfully "retired" as militia captains by removing themselves from politics. Others were transferred to a non-security ministry or fired outright, which meant they effectively lost their private army but were allowed to remain in public life. These purged warlords were often killed, imprisoned, exiled, or simply disappeared in the years after they lost their political protection. In roughly a quarter of the cases, the warlord's exit from state security services was due with his death.[36]

[Insert "Table 1: Summary Statistics By Region" About Here]

Compared to the thankless task mapping paramilitary captains' trajectories through the maze of security institutions, the independent variables used in the data analysis were easily found and coded. "Islamists" vs. "rump Communists" was the master cleavage of the civil war, and is quite easy to observe. A binary *UTO* variable was created that was coded "1" if a warlord joined the state as part of the 1997 peace accords.[37] Since militias were all essentially fighting with identical weapons technology using light infantry tactics, an

capital city, methods of financial support, and characteristics of command and control for each warlord who fought in the Tajik civil war. Missing and unreliable data for the majority of warlords made this task impossible. See Driscoll (2009), ch. 1.

[35] Shuttle diplomacy and secret negotiations between representatives of Rakhmonov's regime and individual field commanders had been taking place through the spring and summer of 1996, against the backdrop of the high-profile peace talks between the political wing of the UTO and the government. Rather than code warlords entry into the dataset by these informal arrangements, or the actual date that a rural lord received papers and an official title and codification of the suzerainty arrangement (which was often 1998), the 1997 Peace Process is coded as the date of formal incorporation for all UTO warlords.

[36] It is always difficult to make inferences based on the official narrative of departure or unravel the particulars of the innuendo behind a warlord's departure. Initial efforts to code whether a purge was violent (e.g., whether the warlord was actually killed) created too many ambiguous cases to maintain inter-coder reliability.

[37] This almost certainly over-states the true size and strength of the United Tajik Opposition, since it is no longer controversial that many of the warlords were functionally bandits that used the political conflict as cover. Given the extremely decentralized command structure of the UTO and the criminal components of its "ideological core" membership, we could not devise a non-arbitrary way to parse this variable further.

estimate of the total number of men under a warlord's command is a defensible measure of the warlord's overall power. A measure of *troop strength* at the time of integration with the state was triangulated through a variety of sources. As an additional indicator of military strength, a binary variable was created for warlords who had careers in the Soviet security forces (the Red Army, police, or KGB). The *Soviet Security* variable was intended to serve as a proxy for leadership and tactical training beyond the standard single tour of conscripted service.

Finally, the deep regional cleavages that were exacerbated by the violence of the civil war made the warlord's home region an important control. As the Soviet Republic with the highest percentage of its citizens living in rural poverty, Tajikistan's clan structure was relatively static and fixed by geography. This is convenient for foreign researchers, for it means that the impenetrable social networks used for initial militia recruiting can be crudely mapped by the birthplace of the field commander. The bulk of the fighters were from either Kulyob/Khatlon or the region surrounding Hissor for the Popular Front, or from the Pamiri mountain range or the highlands of Gharm for the UTO. Warlords that were born in Dushanbe, Leninobod (Khojand), or elsewhere were grouped in a residual category.[38]

4.2 Empirical Patterns

Using these coding criteria, the simple median and mean duration of warlord tenure in the state before being purged are 7 and 6.4, respectively. But these are misleading numbers, since nearly 30% (16/58) were still official members of the state at the time of coding. Dropping them before computing the mean and median would not be a good solution, because the 6 warlords with the longest tenure are still in the state. A better approach is to fit a Weibull distribution to the data (including the censored observations and without covariates), and then use the estimated parameters to produce estimates of median and mean duration. This yields estimates of 6.7 and 8.1 years for median and mean warlord tenure, respectively. Figure 1a shows the proportion of warlords purged by year (using the non-parametric Kaplan-Meier estimate).

[38] There were only 13 warlords (all the heads of relatively minor militias) for whom it was not possible to determine a precise place of birth. In these cases, two additional criteria were employed. For eight of the observations if it was possible to determine the area where the field commander's men were primarily recruited (from interviews with former combatants). For the remaining five we coded based on the region of the country where the warlord was known to carry out operations, on the assumption that his men were probably relying on nearby family for shelter and aid. This criteria may would have the effect of slightly inflating the percentage of Gharmis in the dataset. Additionally, there were five warlords where birthplace data existed but was contradictory, and we had no trusted source to settle the issue. Five warlords were coded as having multiple birthplace regions. "Zhaloi" is recorded as being either Gharmi or Pamiri; Zhamsuddin Shamsuddinov is recorded as either from Badakshan or from Khatlon/Kulyob; Usmon Khodjaev as either Gharmi or Hissori; Mullo Aburahim as either from Badakshan or from Khatlon/Kluob, and Shodmon Yusuf as either from Badakshan or Kulyob/Khatlon. In the summary statistics in Table1, for these warlords the duplicate birthplaces are "double-counted" in the cumulative statistics, and the effects of the additional dummy variables are incorporated into the Weibull simulation results (the first and final columns). For the other, each warlord was only counted once (based on the author's judgement).

The data presented here is not organized for time-series analysis, though if purges were more common or less common in the early 1990s than the late 1990s it would be "picked up" by the *UTO* variable. The survival curves in Figure 1b are suggestive in this regard, indicating that purges were marginally more common in a given year for warlords that joined the state in 1992 than warlords that joined in 1997 (discussed below). Casual observation of the trends over time reveals reveals no obvious patterns in warlord fate, though it is somewhat unclear from casual inspection whether this holds for warlords from different regions. The simple average of purges per year would be 3.2, and a simple glance at Figure 2 indicates that warlords were purged at a rate of about 3 per year.

[[Insert "Figure 1a-f and Figure 2" About Here]]

4.2.1 Warlords With Strong Ties to Uzbekistan Are Purged Quickly

The district of Hissor, to the west of Dushanbe, produced a number of prominent warlords in the Tajik Civil War – most famously Safarali Kenjayev, the original founder of the Popular Front, and Ibod Boimatov, one of the leaders of the 1996 mutiny.[39] The Soviets also relocated several semi-nomadic Uzbek tribes (Lakai, Kungrat, and Durman) to the agricultural lowlands of Southern Tajikistan near Kurgon-Tubbe, creating local frictions over access to scarce land and water. The most prominent warlord to emerge from this region was Mahmud Khoudobourdiev, the commander of the First Brigade at Kurgon-Tubbe. During the heady days of Tajik nationalism in the late-Soviet period – when it became clear that Russian-enforced cosmopolitanism was breaking down and no one could predict what would replace it – these Uzbek groups were natural recruits for counter-revolutionary militias. Conservative elites in Tashkent, who feared that Islamic regime would invite the conflict in Afghanistan northward, were interested in helping local co-ethnics gain influence and establish a protectorate. Yet once the Popular Front established itself in the capital city, the dominant Kulyobi faction saw these field commanders as a potential fifth column for Uzbek influence in the consolidating state, or as likely allies for a power-grab by the northern Khojandi faction (which enjoyed close ties with Moscow and Tashkent). Thus they became early targets for purges and persecution.[40]

The dataset confirms this broad narrative. Ten warlords are identified as being born in one of the Uzbek-dominated southern regions of the country, and nine of them were affiliated with (indeed founding members of) of the Popular Front. These Uzbek warlords formed nearly a quarter of the warlords in the initial ruling

[39] The district of Hissor is identified by Olivier Roy as a textbook example of the irrationality of the Soviet Border system – it is a district with approximately 60% Uzbek speakers facing directly across the border with the region of Sukhan Darya, a majority Tajik-speaking enclave in Uzbekistan (68-9).

[40] See Driscoll (2009), Chapter 5.

coalition. The Uzbek Government made no secret of the fact that they saw their weak neighbor Tajikistan as a natural protectorate, and these warlords thought that their affiliation with a powerful foreign patron would help them. Yet rather than acting as a security guarantee, this support backfired. The data trends make it clear that these warlords were singled out for elimination. The estimated median and mean survival times for Uzbek warlords are 2.4 and 2.5 years, contrasted with 8.3 and 8.4 for other warlords. These are substantively large differences, as illustrated in Figure 1c. The longest surviving warlord from this group, Sefarali Kenjayev, who was murdered outside his home (along with his bodyguard and driver) on March 30, 1999. This distant outlier – with a 7-year tenure in the state – was still purged faster than the average warlord with no ties to Uzbekistan, despite the fact that he literally *founded* the political movement that captured the state apparatus.

4.2.2 Warlords from Pamiri Ethnic Minority Group Are Unusually Successful Survivors

The Gorno-Badakshan Autonomous Province makes up 45% of the land area of the Tajik state, but only contains 3-4% of the population. This inhospitable mountain range is the home of the Pamiris, a distinct ethnic group distinguished by language (Shugni), religious sect (Ismaili), and physical appearance. Though Pamiri cadres were purged from the upper echelons of power in the Tajik state in 1937, the unusually strong cultural value placed on education led Pamiris to be over-represented in professional classes that were dominated by Russians and East Germans – doctors, academics, and civil servants. As the Soviet war in Afghanistan escalated through the 1980s, Soviet security services heavily recruited from this population, which was (correctly) identified as being linguistically proficient in Persian and Dari yet less prone to being cultural sympathetic with the Sunni Tajiks in Afghanistan. This meant that Pamiris were relatively over-represented in the state security forces at the time of independence. After the Popular Front seized the capital city in December of 1992, the militias that had supported the previous government fell back to the impenetrable Pamiri mountains, while in the capital hundreds of Pamiris were targeted for ethnic cleansing, and their homes and property were expropriated by the victorious Kulyobi militias. Shortly thereafter, the Autonomy of Gorno Badakshan was rescinded in Dushanbe; representatives in the regional capital of Khorog responded by declaring independence. In the spring of 1993 a compromise was reached. Gorno Badakshan agreed to recognize the suzerianty of Dushanbe in exchange for a return to autonomous status, a promise to not disrupt the activities of the Aga Kahn (who was delivering aid to the starving populations), and a promise not to dispatch the state's armed forces into the region. This bargain generally held through the civil war, and the autonomous status persists to this day.

As with the Uzbek enclaves, the birthplace-rule provides a robust predictor of initial civil war membership – of the 25 Badakshani-born warlords identified in the data, none of them served in the Popular Front. As Figure 1d demonstrates, these warlords are unusually capable political survivors, especially considering that nearly all of these warlords took up arms against the regime that currently dominates the state apparatus. The estimated median and mean survival times for former field commanders from Gorno-Badakshan are 8.8 and 10.1 years, contrasted with 5.1 and 6.4 for other warlords. Half (8/16) of the warlords that were still "active" members of the state security apparatus in December of 2006 were Pamiris.[41]

4.2.3 A Career in the Soviet Security Services Is A Robust Predictor of Survival

The secondary literature makes it clear that most of the fighting that took place in the Tajik Civil War was chaotic and disorganized, as improvised armies brushed up against each other with weapons looted from Soviet garrisons. Many of the most prominent warlords came from humble origins or criminal backgrounds, but during the breakdown of social order they discovered a talent for organizing logistics or leading large groups of unemployed men. A number of prominent field commanders on the Popular Front side – Mahmud Khoudobourdiev most prominently – emerged as focal figures in the chaos precisely because of their privileged access to heavy weapons and existing bureaucratic military structures. The initial decision to code whether a warlord had substantial military, KGB, or security experience was initially intended as a supplemental variable to "troop strength." Two interesting trends are worth noting.

First, although the secondary literature notes that these commanders had little training, it is still striking how few of the field commanders had any real military expertise before the fighting broke out. Despite the fact that one would think military and police professionals would be perfectly positioned to take advantage of the breakdown of order, only 13 of the 97 warlords identified by the coding project had previous experience in the Red Army or the KGB, and 11 of the 58 analyzed in the sub-sample of "joiners" came out of the security structures. The armies that these men led were no larger on average than the armies of their counterparts

[41] It is beyond the scope of this paper to theorize about why the Pamiris had a particular advantage over other domestic groups, but some general notes are appropriate. First, simple geography helps make bargains self-enforcing: The impassable mountains make self-governing arrangements a practical necessity, which reduces a warlord's fear of regime re-neging down the road. On the regime side, it is unlikely that an uprising by a coalition of police chiefs in a distant mountain villages poses the same sort of existential threat as a coup by military generals in the capital city. Second, the fact that the they have no foreign patron and are deeply resented by most ethnic Tajiks in Dushanbe – who are quick to fall back on old stereotypes of the insular religious group as wealthy elitists – makes it almost unthinkable for this group to seize national-level political power. Third and finally, the narcotics trade from Afghanistan provides strong incentives for cooperation and opportunities for personal enrichment along the few roads that connect Afghanistan to Tajikistan's northern border. Any risk that the profitable drug transit corridor would be disrupted by violence outweighs any possible gain to Rakhmonov that could come from targeting a particular field commander's career. The fact that there is nothing in Badakshan worth taxing or harvesting other than this drug trade – where transit is guaranteed by local agents but brokered in Dushanbe – gives the state no reason to renege on the initial autonomy agreements. See Driscoll (2009), Ch. 5 for ethnographic and interview data to confirm this stylized interpretation.

who lacked their institutional advantages. One explanation for this might be that the Russian army stayed carefully neutral in the Tajik Civil War until a clear military victor emerged and it could play kingmaker, and career military officers within the army unlikely to be identified as "warlords" precisely because they had the resources to remain aloof from consolidation politics and keep their names out of the newspapers.[42] Another potential explanation for the unusual trend in the data is that training in the security services allowed unusual social mobility – languages, contacts, and access to foreign currency – which allowed these men to flee the state with their families during the 1988-1992 exodus of the Russian professional class.[43] In any case, it does not seem to be an exaggeration to suggest that combatants learned military tactics largely through trial and error.

Second, whether they allied their armies with the Popular Front or with the UTO, field commanders with experience in the Soviet security services were especially adept at avoiding subsequent purges and making themselves invaluable to the Tajik state.[44] For example, Mahmud Khoudobourdiev, at five years, had the shortest affiliation with the regime of any warlords in this subset. The estimated median and mean lengths of time in the state are 11.6 and 12.8 years for these warlords, as opposed to 6.3 and 6.1 years for all others (see Figure 1e). Five of these eleven warlords still held official state positions at the time that the data was coded. Only two of the eleven are confirmed dead, putting their physical survival rate far above average. While it is a difficult argument to falsify, I conjecture that the informal network of former-Soviet security officials probably gave these men access to special kinds of information, and made them marginally more capable of coordinating their actions to bargain together and find lucrative yet unthreatening niches inside the regime.[45]

4.3 Testing the Hypotheses

Table 2 displays a number models employing multivariate Weibull analysis of the variables described above.[46] Multivariate analysis allows researchers to assess the relative strength of the bivariate relationships

[42] For a more thorough discussion of the passive and permissive role of the Russian military in the Tajk civil war, see Akiner (2001); Gretsky (1995); Orr (1998); Rubin (1994, 1998); Zviagelskaya (1998).

[43] I am grateful to Sergei Gretsky for this insight.

[44] Five of the eleven warlords who joined the state fought with the Popular Front; five with the UTO; one remained aloof from the Popular Front but was incorporated into the state in 1992 along with the Popular Front in order to secure state investment capital for his family's cotton holdings.

[45] In post-Soviet Central Asia "informal network" is often just code for "clan and family networks," but I believe that this finding represents powerful (if indirect) evidence that certain structures inherited from Soviet times can lower the risks of cooperation between actors who cannot trust formal institutions. This is fertile ground for future scholarship. For an excellent overview of the various sorts of efficiency losses associated with the use of informal institutions, see Dixit (2004), especially chapter 3 and 4.

[46] The results using the Cox proportional hazards approach, which does not assume a particular form for the baseline hazard rate, are similar, but it does not allow for estimates of mean and median warlord tenure for different warlords.

reported above and to check wither the effects of factors are independent from each other. The reported coefficients are expressed as the multiple by which a field commander's expected time in the state will change when the factor is present. For example, according to Model 1, a Hissori or Uzbek would be expected to be purged from the state about three times faster than average.

[[Insert "Table 2" About Here]]

All three of the variables identified above – the binary variables coded for a warlord born in a Hissori/Uzbek enclave, in Gorno-Badakshan, or a career in the Soviet security services – retain their substantive and statistical significance in most of the model specifications.[47] Pamiris and individuals from the Soviet security structures last about 50% and 100% longer than average, respectively; warlords with ties to Uzbekistan tend to last about a third of the time of an average warlord. These three are the only variables in the multivariate analysis offer any reliable predictive power on the duration of warlord tenure. One can quickly "read across" the table and see that the inclusion of additional variables has no consistent or substantive effect on the three variables discussed above, interpreting the non-findings is relatively straightforward from a statistical perspective. The substantive implications of the non-findings will be discussed in the language of the hypotheses generated by the model above.

Hypothesis 1, which suggests that the the "Master Cleavage" of the civil war should not have any predictive power in determine which determining which warlords survive in the ruling coalition and which are purged, finds a great deal of support in the Tajik data. Whether one believes that the civil war was defined by competing ideologies ("Islam vs. Rump Communists") or regional politics ("Kulyobi, Hissor, and Khojand vs. Gharm and Pamirs"), in the aftermath of the war the coalition formation process clearly broke in a manner that transcended those divisions. Model 3 and 7 in Table 2 demonstrate that warlords who joined the state as part of the 1997 Peace Process were no more likely to be purged in a given year than warlords from the Popular Front. This suggests that the Kaplan-Meier Probability Estimate in Figure 1b – which shows that warlords from the UTO who joined in 1997 tend to last longer than the Popular Front warlords who joined in 1992 – simply reflects the fact that Hissoris and Uzbeks tended to join in the first wave and Pamiris tended to join in the second. But this the particular characteristics of those *sub-components* of the winning and losing coalitions that are driving the results, not the cleavage between the coalitions themselves.

Hypothesis 2, that the "winners" in the civil war should be no more likely to survive as coalition members

[47] A partial exception is for men born in Gorno-Badakshan, a variable which hovers on the edge of standard levels of statistical significance in Model 1, Model 5, and Model 7 in Table 2, due to the relatively small number of observations.

than "losers," is also broadly confirmed by the data presented. Subsections of the winning and losing sides of the civil war tended to be more likely to survive, but not in a manner that was predictable in advance. Note that while this does not indict the core logic of the "commitment problem" framework, it suggests that on the ground, intra-coalitional commitment problems are at least as important as analyzing commitment problems across the battle lines defined by foreign observers. This is a particularly notable finding for Tajikistan, which tended to be grouped in the 1990s along with the various wars in Yugoslavia and the Caucasus as case where ascriptive identity is purported to make the stakes of conflict especially violent and intractable.[48]

The fate of the 20 warlords from the region of Kulyob demonstrates a more direct implication of the model. All observers of modern Tajikistan note that the resources of the contemporary Tajik state are skewed towards the enrichment of a small group of men from the region of Kulyob. Given the strong regional and clan ties that divide the country, it would be easy infer from this that the Kulyobi armed groups should have been more capable of profiting from their military victory than others. Yet by the measure of success defined herein, this is not the case. Figure *4* makes it clear that Kulyobi warlords are purged at a fairly constant rate throughout the observation time, right along with everyone else. Models 4, 5, and 7 in Table 2 suggest that Gharmi warlords that recruited their soldiers in the Afghan refugee camps and mounted a 5 year insurgency in the highlands were, if anything, marginally *more likely* to keep their jobs in a given year as the Kulyobi warlords that captured the capital city alongside with Rakhmonov. But warlords in the "militarily victorious" side of the coalition – even if they had clan ties to members of the politically ascendent sub-section of the coalition – were ultimately just as vulnerable to purges as the warlords they fought against and coerced into joining.

Hypothesis 3, that strong warlords should be no more or less likely to survive for long periods of time than weak warlords, is the easiest hypothesis to accept.[49] In a sense this is not terribly surprising: In a country awash with weapons and seething with family and clan vendettas, being a socially-recognized warlord was a somewhat dangerous profession. For example "Baba" Sangak Safarov, the most powerful and popular field commander in the Popular Front was killed in a shootout with a far less influential warlord, Fayzullah Saidov.[50] Attempts by the author to map the political intrigue between warlords during this period failed

[48] See Caselli (2006); Oberschall (1993).

[49] Although the results are not presented here, the log of troop strength was also included in regressions as a robustness check, with similar non-results.

[50] Experts still disagree on the precise details of Safarov's death. Olivier Roy (Roy (2000)p.49) and a few others argue that their argument escalated over accusations that the former was "too soft" on returning Gharmi refugees coming down from the mountains of Afghanistan. Safarov feared that with the Gharmis driven from the region, the ethnic balance would shift in favor of the Uzbeks in the areas around Kurgan-Tupe; Saidov's mother was Lakai Uzbek, and he rejected any right of return for the Gharmis. Another plausible explanation is that this was a dispute about control of the new national army (Gretsky

due to the fluid patterns of alliance and deterrence, personal friendship and betrayal, and a host of other complex unmeasurables. But this complexity is itself a kind of data – the politics would have been much simpler if there were a few warlords with large enough or strong enough armies to make serious bids for power on their own.[51] In the end, it seems that a small number of strong warlords (controlling large armies) are ultimately no more likely to emerge as members of the ruling coalition than a large number of weak warlords (controlling small armies). This is direct and persuasive evidence that the mechanisms identified in the model are at work.

Hypothesis 4 suggested that pre-war informal institutions should serve as strong predictors for coalition membership. Informal institutions are notoriously difficult to identify and code in a transparent and replicable manner; the labyrinthine complexity of clan and family politics in Tajikistan would have been particularly difficult to unravel. A warlord's region of birth and a warlord's participation in Soviet security services are the two measures used in this data analysis to proxy for informal institutional ties. Superficially, the hypothesis is strongly supported by the data. As the discussions above make clear, the it likely that the mechanisms that account for the patterns in the multivariate statistical analysis can be attributed to pre-war informal institutional ties between warlords. A critic might not that strong informal ties between warlords may predict coalition membership robustly, but not in a manner that can be predicted ex-ante – a criticism which is probably fair.[52] It is easy to spin retrospective stories about why the Uzbeks were purged and the members of the Soviet security forces were maintained, and if the opposite pattern had emerged there would be a different post-hoc narrative to explain it. Still, even if the hypothesis is not articulated with sufficient precision to falsify, it is revealing that patterns in the data conform substantially with the mechanisms implied by the model.

The discussion of the fates of the Hissori-Uzbek warlords suggests that *Hypothesis 5* meets with strong support. The sub-coalition of warlords that was most threatening to the Tajik government were those warlords, like Khoudobourdiev, who could act as agents of Uzbekistan, and they were broadly the first to go. The decision by Rakhmonov and the hard-line Kulyobi warlords of the Popular Front to jettison the

(1995)). Nourzhanov (2005: 118) articulates the consensus belief on the deaths of Safarov and Saidov in general terms: "the whole accident was planned in Dushanbe and that the Kulyobi commanders were liquidated by the very same people whom they had put in power."

[51] An additional factor to consider is that the optimal size for a private army probably varies substantially depending on whether a warlord is more interested in seizing the state capital against another army (large), bargaining for power inside the ruling coalition (as large as possible), using guerilla tactics in difficult terrain (small), or managing a drug-transit syndicate with control over a network of highways (very small). See Driscoll (2009), ch. 4, Fearon (2007).

[52] This criticism implies that researchers should be expected to not only find clever ex-ante measures of informal institutions, but also a theory that makes ex-ante predictions about *which* informal institutions are likely to lead to conflict or collusion. The theory presented in this paper is far more modest, as the author is skeptical about whether any theory could make granular ex-ante predictions about coalition membership.

Hissori Uzbek warlords from the coalition was a calculated gamble that the Uzbek government in Tashkent would lack the will or the resources to make good on those guarantees, and decided that the risk of an Uzbekistan-backed coup down the road outweighed the risks of re-starting the civil war. Indeed, this turns the traditional logic of the security dilemma on its head – the Hissori/Uzbek warlords were the ones who could not credibly commit to the *regime* because of their patrons in Tashkent, so the best solution was to eliminate them from the state, with Russian support, as soon as it became prudent.[53] The fact that the Pamiris – a small and disliked ethnic minority on the periphery of the state with no foreign patron to speak of – tend to survive in the state apparatus is also indirect support for this hypothesis.

The model presented in this paper has quite different observable implications related to the role of foreign interveners than those in the models presented by Fearon (1998) and Walter (2002). Those models predict that security guarantees to a minority group should have the effect of easing inter-temporal commitment problems and helping weak states to emerge from civil war. Yet there is little evidence that the most publicized international intervention – the United Nations Mission of Observers to Tajikistan (UNMOT) or the United Nations Tajikistan Office of Peace Building (UNTOP) – served a role in guaranteeing the security of demobilized combatants. Political scientists typically code Tajikistan as a success for U.N. peacekeeping, since there were two large missions deployed to implement variety of confidence-building tasks since 1994. Yet most of the security guarantees of the peace accord were simply never implemented (most famously, the clause of the peace treaty which guaranteed that one of the three main security ministries would be headed by a UTO field commander), or implemented and then flagrantly reneged upon.[54] If the civil war zone is itself the site of regional competition between multiple potential interveners, foreign security guarantees have a Janus-faced element. Further scholarship will be required to generate more precise theories of which of foreign-aided informal institutions are "good" or "bad" for predicting coalition membership and warlord survival in different contexts.

The dataset is not organized to systematically test *Hypothesis 6*, which relates to intra-factional violence and side-switching that occurs during the coalition formation process, nor is it a hypothesis that lends

[53] Geopolitical competition between Russia and Uzbekistan lurked behind nearly every aspect of the Russian intervention into the Tajik civil war. The worst case scenario at the time that if Iranian or Afghan-backed guerillas had been able to use the impenetrable Pamiri mountains as a base to spread war into Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, the Uzbek government would have redrawn the map of Central Asia by forcibly incorporating the Tajik region of Khojand – or perhaps all of the Ferghana Valley – as a new buffer state. The rise of Uzbekistan as the pivotal regional hegemon would have unpredictable effects on Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan, with their abundant oil and gas reserves, and would have certainly come at the expense of Russian influence. For more on this point, seeAtkin (1997); Akbarzadeh (2001); Pierre Centlivres (1998); Dudoignon (1998); Gretsky (1995); Nassim Jawad (1995); Zviagelskaya (1998).

[54] Worse, it could be argued U.N. actually provided political cover for domestic purges of incorporated militia members who officially joined the state in the framework of comprehensive peace. When the United Nations Observer Mission criticized corrupt practices and intransigence on the part of incorporated UTO militia members in 2001, Rakhmonov seized the initiative and fired anyone suspected of disloyalty from the ranks of the Ministry of Defense and Ministry of the Interior.

itself to simple testing or falsification. Yet even a cursory review of Tajik politics between 1994 and 2006 suggests that the model's implications hold true. One of the defining features of Tajikistan's politics in the mid-1990s was the uncertainty over the degree of foreign support that the government would receive from Russia and Uzbekistan, which would in turn determine what the minimum threshold of domestic warlords would be necessary to achieve stability. There was a great deal of inter-Kulyobi violence during the 1992-1994 "Time of Troubles" in Tajikistan, when the Popular Front was transforming itself into a governing coalition. Sangak Safarov and Fayzullah Saidov are two of the most prominent Kulyobi warlords to have been killed during this period, but for a time there were dozens of mid-level lieutenants and militia members being killed every week, often in public spaces.[55] Rakhmonov's decision to purge the state of well-connected Khojandis apparachiks in 1994, and subsequent purging of warlords with ties to Uzbekistan, led directly to the 1996 uprising by Khoudobourdiev and Boimatov described above. It also nearly led to the secession of the northern region of Khojand, when the only bridge on the only road connecting the northern regional capital of Leninobod (Khojand) was destroyed. After the 1997 peace process, subsequent fear that the new UTO warlords' integration into the state would weaken the bargaining position of established players was what fueled Khoudobourdiev's failed 1997 uprising. The fact that it was put down so quickly and decisively by re-incorporated warlords is wholly consistent with the logic of the model, and the decisive military defeat of such a powerful, charismatic, and politically connected warlord sent a powerful message to other potential challengers that they could not unilaterally dictate terms to the coalition. But also consistent with the model, in the years to follow, the incorporated warlords found themselves extremely susceptible to divide-and-rule tactics and the state slid into the "civilian rule" equilibrium quite quickly.[56] The totality of power consolidation by Rakhmonov became transparent in 2003, when the government proposed 56 amendments to the Constitution. Hidden among the list was a clause to extend the current presidential term to the maximum of two seven-year periods, making it possible for Rakhmonov to stay in power until 2020.[57] In the cabinet reshuffle of December 2006, the last remaining UTO representative, the Minister of Emergency Situations

[55] See Driscoll, (Forthcoming) and Driscoll, (2009) ch. 4.)

[56] The three most prominent Popular Front warlords that spearheaded the government assault on Khoudobourdiev in 1997 were all Kulyob. All managed to rise from relative obscurity to prominence during the consolidation phase, and were all subsequently purged from the Rakhmonov regime. Ghaffor Sedoi Mirzoyev, who guaranteed security at the largest bazaars in Dushanbe, had been the Head of the Presidential Guard since 1995; Sukhrob Kasimov, a commander of the Special Forces of Dushanbe Police in 1992-1994 was promoted to the head of the Ministry of the Interior Rapid Deployment Brigade by Rakhmonov to "keep Mirzoyev under control" (Nourzhanov 2005:120); and Sulton Kuvvatov, the former head of the Ministry of the Interior's Unit of Combatting Economic Crimes, and the Head of the Tax Committee since 1995. Kasimov was dismissed in 2005, a year after Mirzoyev was arrested and sentenced to life imprisonment. Kuvvatov was dismissed in 1998, stripped of the parliament seat in 2002, and placed under arrest for the vague charges of "insulting Rakhmonov" and "inciting ethnic hatred" in 2005.

[57] To their credit, after the facade of the 1999 presidential election both the United Nations and OSCE declined to dignify or legitimize this latest electoral referendum; the government claimed led to 96 percent voter turnout and 93 percent approval of the amendment.

Mirzo Ziyoev, was discharged. Virtually every prominent warlord in the Popular Front that installed him has either retired from politics, fled the country, landed in jail, or died under mysterious circumstances.

Returning to Table 1, the final column gives the predicted median and mean duration estimates for warlords from each of the regions, using the multivariate method above. There are no surprises at this point, but the table provides a provocative window into the contemporary Tajik shadow state, and implies a fairly straightforward explanation of how a relative monopoly on the use of force emerged. Militias were incorporated, allowed to loot the state from within for a few years, and then rotated out. A mix of luck and ingenuity might allow a warlord to survive longer than average, but eventually all succumbed to the same basic divide-and-rule tactics as the others. The big winners in the shell game are the Gorno-Badakshanis, who were mostly incorporated in 1997; the big losers are the Hissoris, who were purged immediately. It suggests a very thin and brittle basis for social power, resting on a few hand-picked appointees from the region of Kulyob, a handful of incorporated Pamirs who provide security along the drug routes of Badakshan, and handful of well-placed survivors who rely on their transnational network of former KGB associates.

These data support the view that intra-coalitional commitment problems between warlords and the civilians they install are at least as serious as the overall commitment problem that exists between the winners and losers in the civil war. And recall from above that at least for the case of Tajikistan, the most vulnerable warlords (the Hissori/Uzbeks) "won" the war, and the most insulated warlords (the Pamiris) "lost." This is a significant pattern, and one that directly contradicts the central problematic that motivates the two-player commitment models of civil war settlement, which would predict that in the absence of an external guarantor, the regime should eventually give in to temptation and renege on promises to political opponents.

5 Conclusion

In the closing phases of the Tajik Civil War, rebel fragmentation was a critical component of peace-building. The war itself consisted of a decentralized set of battles among militias and remnants of state authority. Amidst the chaos, several militias, calling themselves the Popular Front, colluded together and invited in a civilian leader. A set of bargains were struck whereby the warlords provided protection to this civilian government in return for a promise of control over security ministries, allowing them to loot the state from within. As it became clearer that warlords outside of this initial coalition – who had organized and re-named themselves the United Tajik Opposition – could not shoot their way into power, the civilian regime

moved quietly to selectively incorporate militia leaders into the state apparatus. This gave the president and his apparatchik cronies a counterweight to the Popular Front warlords that originally backed his rise to power. The competition that followed between old warlords and the fragmented remnants of the rebel opposition was a complex, brutal, and highly contingent process which has not been studied.

This paper's theoretical contribution is a stylized mathematical model to illuminate the contours of the bargaining that took place during this chaotic period. This model generates transparent ex-ante expectations of how different kinds of changes in the the foreign and domestic bargaining environment should shape the state consolidation, and when civilian authority is most likely to be challenged by coup attempts from within. The model is meant to be generalizable to other cases of state failure and recovery. The paper's empirical contribution is the presentation of a comprehensive dataset on warlord integration into the Tajik state. The most surprising pattern in the data is that the winners and losers in the state consolidation process were not necessarily the winners or losers of the civil war. This is a pattern that is consistent with the model presented here, but inconsistent with the central predictions of other prominent models of civil war resolution.

The data presented in this paper obviously make no pretense at external validity outside of Tajikistan. There are likely many cases where the incorporation process between states and rebels is weighted towards the victors, more complicated, or more opaque. The findings in this paper are intended as an invitation to more research on the global variation in the kinds of post-war coalitions that form and endure. The failed states of the Former Soviet Union provide a particularly transparent environment for the study of these bargains, since the process of political consolidation and economic liberalization happened simultaneously. But there is no reason that variation in regime incorporation strategies cannot be studied using public sources and archival data. There has been no systematic effort to code characteristics of rebel integration into state armed forces across space and time, which is a striking omission from the conflict resolution research agenda. The model presented in this paper might anchor these future endeavors in a common theoretical frame.

Finally, the paper suggests that while a singular focus on "state strength" may be helpful in explaining susceptibility to violence, it tends to yield tautological and unsatisfying accounts of how order actually emerges. The analytically simple proposition that when states are strong militias are weak may be true, in general. But once the ontological existence of "the state" is contested, this framework becomes meaningless, or even misleading. The basic analytic framework that it implies – with rebel militias locked in zero-sum competition with state institutions to provide public goods – is relevant for counterinsurgency or asymmetric warfare, but deeply misleading in situations of state failure. Indeed, one way to interpret the closing phases of the Tajik civil war is that opposition militia members were engaged in months of grueling and destructive

attrition warfare in the hopes of *being admitted to* the state apparatus with a sufficiently large side payment. Any model that does not account for the possibilities of tactical cooperation and long-term collusion between the state and militia actors in these environments is radically incomplete. It is also likely to yield counter-productive interventions. Clan-based militias, criminal networks, and national/religious extremist networks may be natural competitors with strong state institutions in some contexts. But these same groups may also become vital agents of regime interests in others. Historically state-building has always been a process of contracting, bargaining, and co-optation.[58] This implies an extremely different set of policy recommendations than simply sending aid to strengthen a weak state's counterinsurgency capabilities. If formal state institutions have already been captured by militia interests, then bilateral aid may indirectly benefit the extortionists. If militias have decided to battle for total control, aiding the regime may simply reminds all actors of the high value of the prize being fought over.

6 Appendix

6.0.1 PROOF FOR PROPOSITION 1:

One has only to consider a single-period defection by a single warlord. If every warlord knows that all of the others will choose to fight, then he knows that the threshold s will not be crossed, and he is making a strict comparison between $p_i v - c_i$ and $p_i v - c_i - w_i$. Fighting is the dominant strategy.

6.0.2 PROOF FOR PROPOSITION 2:

The strategies that support such an equilibrium are as follows. The president selects the uniquely determined sub-coalition $W^G \subseteq W$ such that the cumulative power of W^G has the smallest total power greater than or equal to s. At the beginning of the game, all of the warlords that are members of W^G support a president, so that $W^P = W^G = \{j, k, \dots q\}$. Let y represent the total strength of warlords in W^P, $\sum_{i=1}^{q} p_i$. If any of these warlords receives less than $\frac{p_i v^*}{y} - c_i$, they back a coup in the second part of the game. All other warlords $W^{\sim G}$ choose fight at the beginning of the game (to claim their reservation wage r_i), and try to coup the president off the equilibrium path. The president distributes exactly $\frac{p_i v^*}{y} - c_i$ to each warlord i in W^G, distributes zero to the warlords who did not join the government, and keeps $\sum_{i=1}^{q} c_i$ for himself.

First, consider a defection by warlord i who is a member of W^G. On the equilibrium path the warlord receives $\frac{p_i v^*}{y} - c_i$, which is a "wage" exactly equal to his expected utility in a coup. Fighting at the beginning

[58] See Spruyt (1994); Barkey (1994).

would only net the warlord $p_i v - c$, which is less than he receives in any other outcome.[59] If he joins the government and accepts less than $\frac{p_i v^*}{y} - c_i$, then he could improve his situation by choosing to participate in a coup, since a single defection by a single member of W^G would put the regime under the threshold s.

Second, consider a defection by warlord j who is not a member of W^G. Since W^G is a uniquely determined combination of warlords that is the minimum necessary to keep the president in power, he will transfer every other warlord 0. So long as $r_j > 0$ fighting in the first stage of the game strongly dominates entry into the presidential coalition.

Third, consider a defection by the presidential player. He can guarantee himself $\sum_{i=1}^{q} c_i$ on the equilibrium path. If he transfers any amount less than $\frac{p_i v^*}{y} - c_i$ to any warlord i in W^G, that warlord will prefer to attempt a coup, which will succeed and leave the president with 0. Since the president gets to keep all of v^* that he does not redistribute, transferring any amount greater than $p_i v^* - c_i$ to any warlord in W^G, or any amount greater than 0 to any other warlord, makes the president strictly worse off.

Note that even if $v = v*$, this equilibrium is still supportable. Joining the presidential coalition is attractive for the members of W^G, since $\frac{p_i v}{y} - c_i$ will be greater than $p_i v - c_i$ in every case where $s < 1$.

6.0.3 PROOF FOR PROPOSITION 3:

The strategies that support such an equilibrium are as follows. Each of the warlords supports the president in the first round, and does not attempt a coup in the second round. The president distributes all of v^* to himself.

Consider a defection by a single warlord i in the final stage. So long as warlord i does not have the power to unilaterally bring down the winning coalition through defection – formally, that $1 - s > p_i$ – he can do no better than remaining passive, since his defection will not displace the president, and only cost him $-z_i$. But if he anticipates a payoff of zero joining the presidential coalition, might the warlord be better off not joining the coalition in the first round? The warlord faces a situation similar to the collective action problem in the first equilibrium: A single defection alone will not stop the presidential coalition from forming, so the only thing that warlord i has to consider is his expected wage in a *civilian government* coalition (0, from above), and his reservation r_i. If $r_i = 0$ then the decision to join a presidential coalition weakly dominates remaining outside the coalition (since the president might misplay or offer him something small). If $r_i < 0$, the decision to join the presidential coalition obviously strongly dominates the alternative. The president,

[59] Technically, $p_i v - c_i$ would be augmented by the possible inclusion of the "suckers penalty" m_i accrued to the other members of W^G who opted for diplomacy but were forced to fight – this would be a gnarly equation to write, so I'm leaving it for now.

knowing that every warlord will be making the same passive calculation, can only make himself worse by sharing v^* with the warlords. The conditions for this strategy to form subgame perfect equilibrium are that for every warlord i,

$$1 - s > p_i \tag{1}$$

$$0 \leq r_i \tag{2}$$

The first condition guarantees that the coalition is not vulnerable to extortion "from within" by a strong warlord; the second condition guarantees no warlord will not be tempted to remain outside the coalition and try to topple it "from without."

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Reference Map: Tajikistan (Coding Regions Noted)

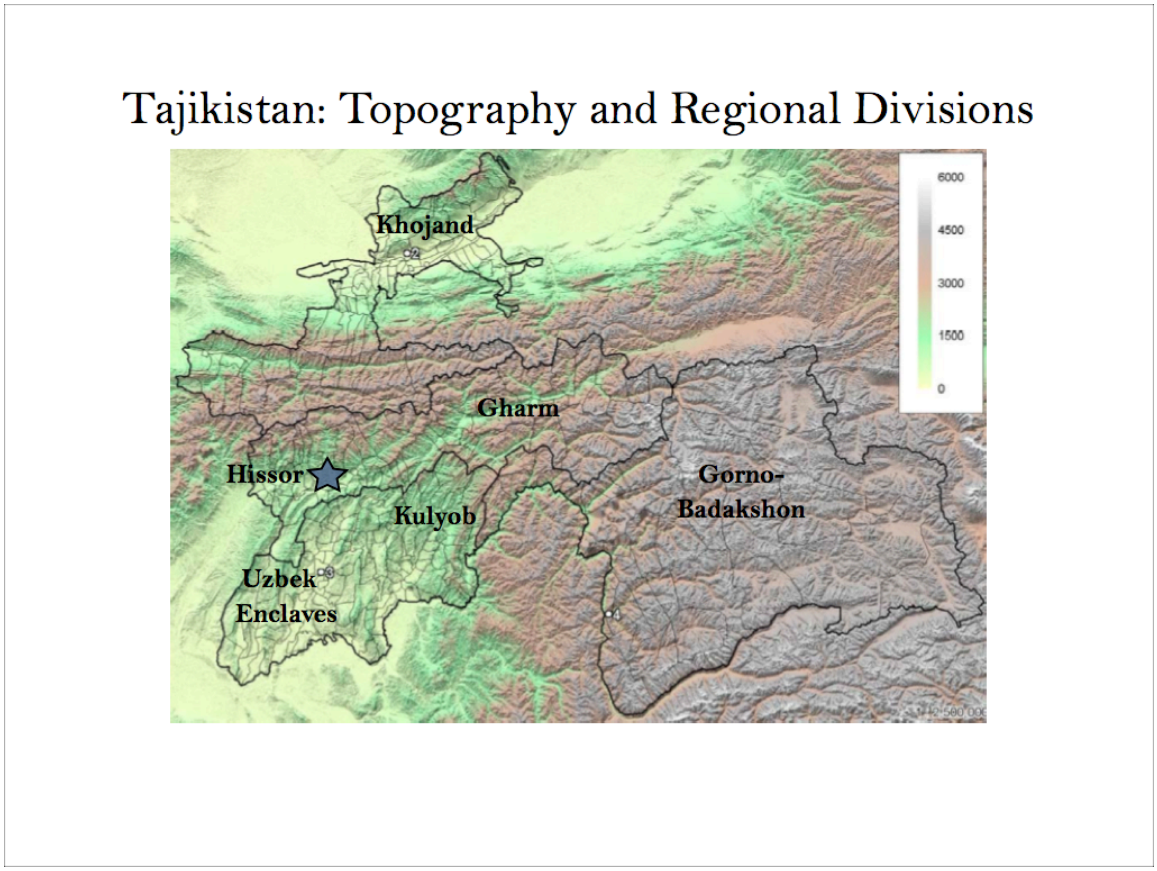
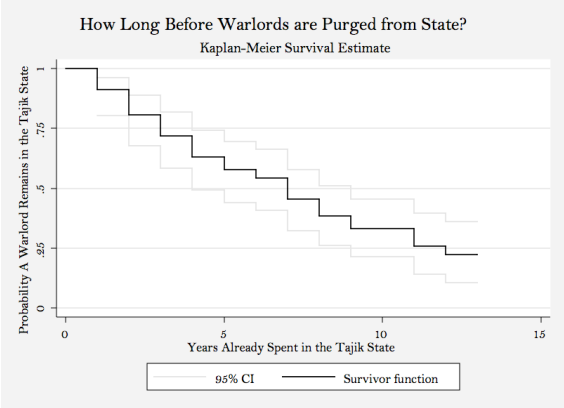


Table 1: Warlord Summary Statistics, by Region

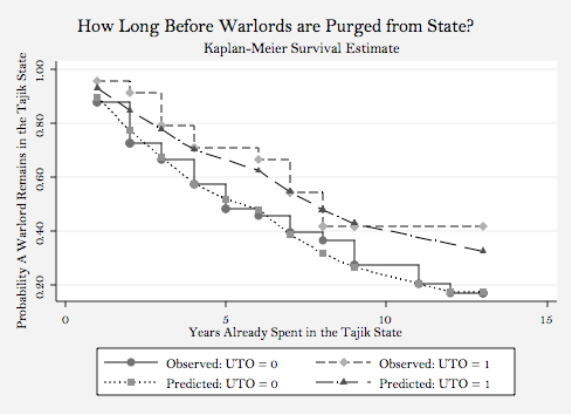
Region	Number of Warlords Born in This Region who Fought in the War	Number of Warlords Born in this Region Who Fought in the Opposition	Number of Warlords Born in this Region who Fought in the Popular Front	Number of Warlords from this Region Joined State in 1992-4	Number of Warlords from this Region Joined State in 1996-7	Average Number of Years Before Incorporated Warlords are Purged, Imprisoned, Exiled
Kulob	24	5	18	13	3	6.7
Gharm	18	13	5	3	8	6.2
Hissori	10	1	9	8	0	2.5
Gorno-Badakshon	25	21	0	0	14	7.6
Other	20	3	8	7	1	7.3

Figures 1a-1f: Variation in the Kinds of Warlords that Survive State Consolidation in Tajikistan

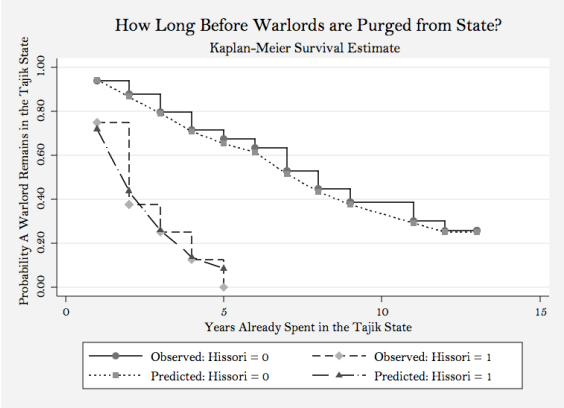
1a. The Full Data



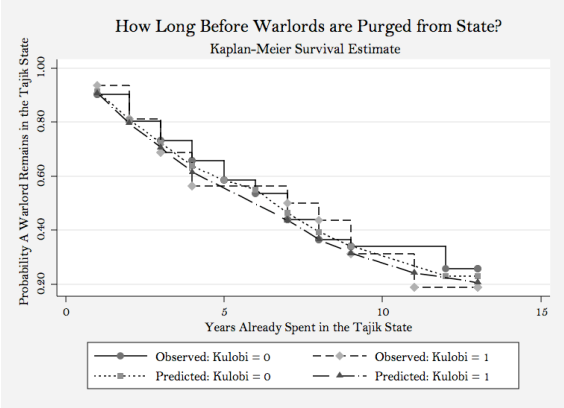
1b. Opposition Warlords (from the UTO)



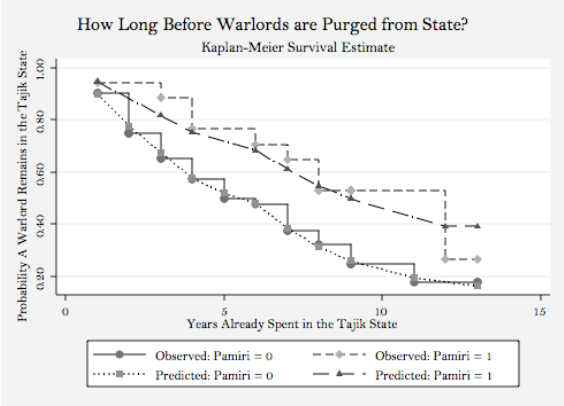
1c. Hissori/Uzbek Warlords



1d. Kulobi Warlords



1e. Gorno-Badakshani (Pamiri) Warlords



1f. Soviet Security Background

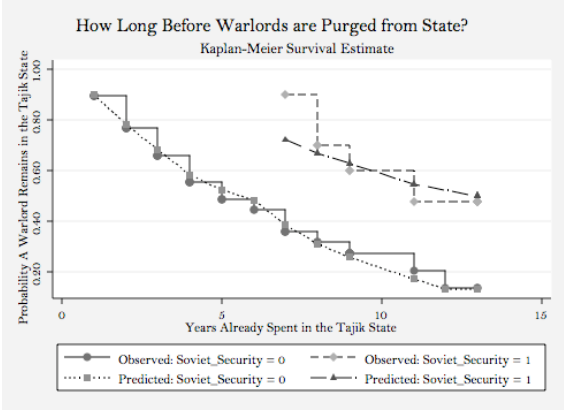


Figure 2: Warlord Purges Over Time

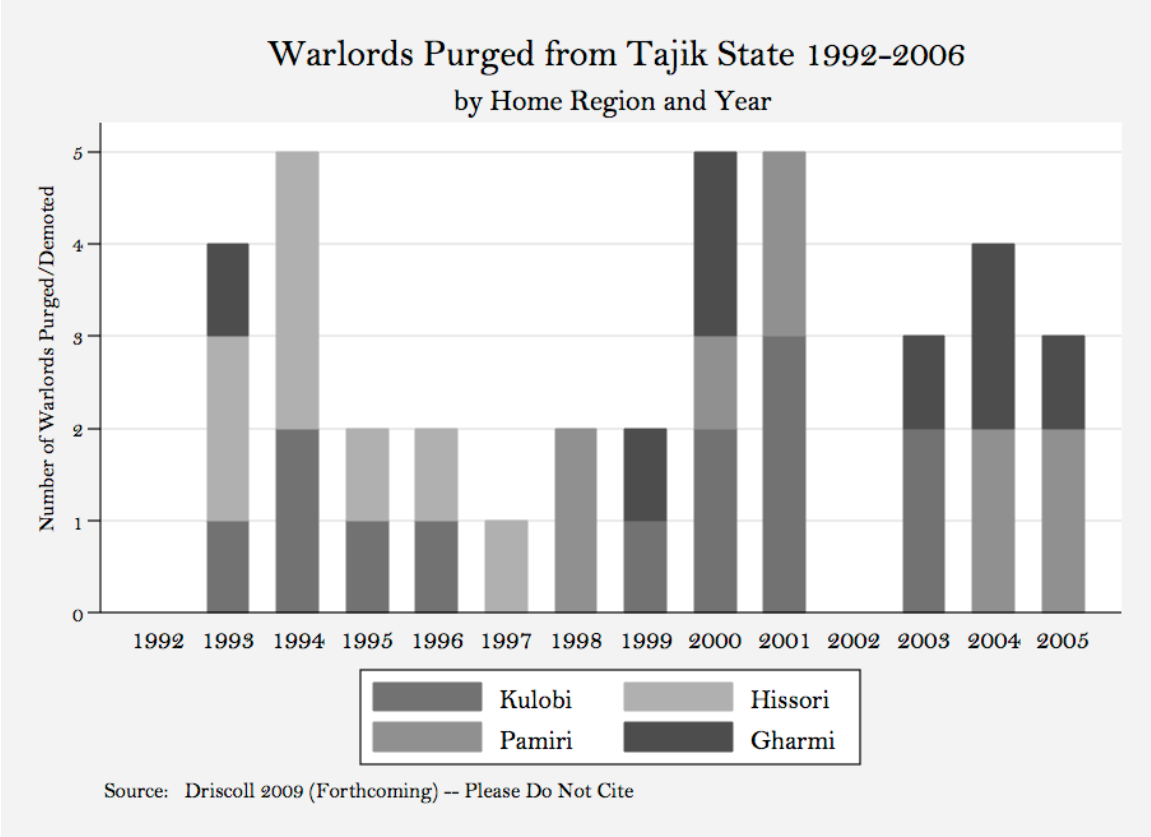


Table 2: Multivariate Regression Results

	(1)	*(2)*	*(3)*	*(4)*	*(5)*	*(6)*	*(7)*
Hissori/Uzbek	0.294**	0.375**	0.363**	0.367**	0.355**	0.375**	0.304**
	(0.076)	(0.092)	(0.092)	(0.093)	(0.098)	(0.95)	(0.102)
Gorno-Badakshan (Pamiri)	1.292	1.501++	1.586++	1.494++	1.438	1.510++	1.414
	(0.321)	(0.358)	(0.401)	(0.356)	(0.377)	(0.384)	(0.422)
Soviet Military/KGB		2.091**	2.098**	2.064**	2.110**	2.092**	2.103*
		(0.618)	(0.614)	(0.613)	(0.628)	(0.646)	(0.662)
Political Opposition (UTO)			0.884				0.844
			(0.196)				(0.209)
Gharmi (from Gharm region)				0.919			0.854
				(0.220)			(0.248)
Kulobi					0.897		0.781
					(0.213)		(0.228)
Strength/Troop Estimate						1.000	1.000
						(0.000)	(0.000)
p	1.595	1.702	1.718	1.707	1.694	1.702	1.712
se*(p)*	0.213	(0.224)	(0.228)	(0.132)	(0.223)	(0.225)	(0.226)
N	57	57	57	57	57	57	57
N(ended)	41	41	41	41	41	41	41

Weibull regression with length of time serving in the state, or in cooperative arrangement with state officials (measured in years) as the dependent variable. Coefficients in the table report the estimated multiplicative effect of a one-unit change in the independent variable on the average duration that a warlord will remain in the state; e.g., .294 means that a one-unit change is associated with a reduction in the mean length of time in the state by a factor of three. *t*-statistics are in parentheses. ++ $p < .1$; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$.