

Militants Going Through Changes: A Qualitative Analysis of Ideological Modification and Group Splintering

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ABSTRACT

The probability of militant group splintering is a relatively rare phenomenon that exponentially increases with the introduction of a peace process and associated negotiations (Duursma and Fliervoet, 2021). Militant groups that do splinter hold the potential for increased violence that can spoil negotiations, prolong conflict, incite more citizens to join militant causes, and erode the credibility of the state (Stedman, 1997; Duursma and Fliervoet, 2021; Rudloff and Findley, 2016; Cronin, 2011). Negotiations inherently require some type of concession from one or more parties involved, and for militant groups, they often require modifying components of or entire ideological objectives. This research explores intergroup dynamics surrounding militant ideological modifications made during negotiations that lead to splintering.

The author examines ideological modification across three militant groups identified through an empirical case selection process: Al-Fatah, the FARC, and the PKK. Diagnostic evidence resulting from congruence procedures coupled with theory-building process tracing allowed for the inference of ‘militant perceived ideological betrayal’ acting as a sufficient causal mechanism that connects negotiations to militant splintering. This dissertation examined intergroup dynamics surrounding ideological modifications, when militants perceive modifications as concessions, and the relative importance of group enforcement measures meant to maintain militant cohesion. Findings provide important evidence related to the relational

nature of militant ideology, and raise credible questions surrounding ideological devotion by hardliners depending upon the framing of changes and their legitimacy, and if said changes occur in the face of an adversary or on the militant group's own accord.

GENERAL AUDIENCE ABSTRACT

Militant splintering is a relatively rare phenomenon that increases with the introduction of a peace process and associated negotiations (Duursma and Fliervoet, 2021). Militant groups that do splinter hold the potential for increased violence that can spoil negotiations, prolong conflict, incite more citizens to join militant causes, and erode the credibility of the state (Stedman, 1997; Duursma and Fliervoet, 2021; Rudloff and Findley, 2016; Cronin, 2011). Negotiations include various concessions from one or more parties involved, and for militant groups they often require modifying components of or entire key ideological objectives. This research explores intergroup dynamics surrounding militant ideological modification during negotiations that lead to splintering.

The author examines changes in militant ideology across three groups identified through an empirical case selection process: Al-Fatah, the FARC, and the PKK. Diagnostic evidence resulting from qualitative case and within-case comparison allowed for the inference of a causal mechanism ‘militant perceived ideological betrayal’ connecting negotiations to militant splintering. This research project examined the intergroup dynamics surrounding when militants change ideological objectives or orientation, when militants perceive these changes as concessions, and the relative importance of group enforcement measures meant to maintain group cohesion. Findings provide important evidence related to the relational nature of militant ideology, and raise credible questions surrounding ideological devotion by hardliners depending upon the framing of changes and their associated legitimacy, and whether said changes occur in the face of an adversary or on the militant group’s own accord.

DEDICATION

For Reyna, Oliver, and Owen

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MILITANTS GOING THROUGH CHANGES:

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Chapter 1

Introduction

All else equal, militant groups that engage in a peace process during conflict increase their likelihood for splintering by five hundred fold, from .06 to 4% (Duursma and Fliervoet, 2021:17). This substantial increase portrayed by a seemingly small percentage carries with it disproportionate potential for increased violence and can significantly complicate conflict dynamics (Crenshaw, 2011). Splintering has created notoriously violent groups who have had detrimental impacts on potential settlements and peace accords, often categorized as a type of ‘spoiler’ (Nilsson, and Söderberg Kovacs, 2011). Moreover, examples of peace processes or negotiations not only coincide with splintering, but are more broadly claimed as fundamental justifications for them throughout modern history, including in recent work examining peace processes and fragmentation in the Philippines (Duursma and Fliervoet, 2021). Groups as notorious as the militant-Palestinian liberation group the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command (PFLP-GC) or the Popular Liberation Army-Megateo (EPL-Megateo) in Colombia, were born from processes that intended peace yet resulted in more violence. Indeed, it research shows that violent splintering is a common outcome of peace processes or forms of negotiations more broadly (Stedman, 1997; Cronin, 2011; Plank, 2017; Duursma and Fliervoet, 2021).

Negotiations inherently require groups to provide some type of concession to meet in the middle, or near a relative middle. How much a group is willing to negotiate and concede, largely depends on if they are negotiating from a position of strength, weakness, or neutrality. Militant groups who offer or are forced into making concessions regardless of power dynamics risk angering individuals, factions, or other sub-groups who may value certain objectives over others, even to the point of non-negotiability. Existing research documents both the exponential rise in potential for splintering when negotiations occur and the existence of hardliner militants, including those who may hold non-negotiable ideals (Duursma and Fliervoet, 2021; Sanin and Wood, 2014; Atran and Ginges, 2015). These findings provide the basis for the research question that inspired this dissertation: *how does ideological modification; as operationalized by negotiations or concessions that change core aspects of the ideology, lead to splintering?* This chapter outlines the importance of this research, discussion of the research question, a definitional overview of key-concepts, and finally, an outline of the remaining chapters.

1.1 Research Importance

Splintering is an important phenomenon because it complicates conflict dynamics by enabling actors to instigate violence that can spoil negotiations or peace processes, spread thin state forces responding to new threats, incite new recruits from the pool of non-combatants, or can further erode credibility of the state to resolve violence (Stedman, 1997; Duursma and Fliervoet, 2021; Rudloff and Findley, 2016; Cronin, 2011). In other instances, splinter groups generate militant infighting by turning against the original organization, joining forces with the state, or aligning with state-affiliated militias (Staniland, 2012; Oppenheim, Steele, Vargas and Weintraub, 2015). Policymakers in the U.S. have a stake in international stability and often take an active role as, or supporting, third-party conflict mediators. Meanwhile practitioners in the

peace and conflict space must prepare for intended and unintended outcomes of programming related to negotiations and related events. U.S. policymakers and peace and security practitioners should therefore be keenly interested in potential interventions and outcomes during these important processes, not the least of which being the potential of violent splintering. Thus, negotiations offer a key testable event during which to study changes in militant objectives or programs of action, and how that relates to splintering.

Yet splintering during negotiations—including various forms of peace processes—implies the most drastic divergence within a group related to some aspect, most likely potential concessions or a type of political outcome (i.e., post-conflict power sharing) (Kydd and Walter, 2002). Oftentimes, splinter groups elucidate this by making explicit a recurring reason: that the parent groups are weakening, or conceding what should be nonnegotiable aspects of their ideological objectives. For example, the Real-Irish Republican Army (Real-IRA) splintered from the Provisional IRA (PIRA, commonly known as the IRA) during the 1997 peace talks. Key individuals involved in splintering attributed it to the ongoing talks having compromised the original position of full Irish unity and independence, which was non-negotiable for those who made up the Real-IRA splinter (English, 2003). However, evidence is scarce in examining what happens at the meso-level (within a group) once these what often appear to be or designated as non-negotiable objectives are in fact, negotiated. Conceding what some militants perceive as immutable ideological objectives is cited as justification for violent splintering, but changes to a militant group's ideology over time is rarely the focus on analytical rigor. In large part, this may be because scholars and policymakers alike are well aware of the difficulties accompanying untangling ideology and ideological commitment in relation to other variables. However, examining ideological *modification* as an independent variable allows moving beyond trying to

untangle ideology, by taking it as a serious element and instead examining what occurs when ideological orientations are changed, or modified. Intergroup dynamics that occur during these changes should then signal how immutable these objectives actually are, and what may influence their relative non-negotiable status among the most stringent believers (or ‘hardliners’), such as if the changes occur in the face of an adversary or on the groups own terms, reflecting perceived agency over the changes. Relatedly, questions remain as to whether ideological modifications are instead used instrumentally, with militants pouncing on perceived changes as windows of opportunity for entrepreneurs of violence who may hold strategic disagreements with leadership; or, a tool of an external state manipulating a foe, for example. These questions remain unanswered surrounding the dynamics of how splintering occurs surrounding negotiations.

1.2 Research Question

Negotiations necessitate; at minimum, consideration of concessions from one or more sides. When militants undertake to modify core objectives, it will have an impact on intergroup dynamics with the potential to create irreconcilable cleavages. Therefore, to reiterate the question posed in the opening paragraph, my research asks *how does ideological modification; as operationalized by negotiations or concessions that change core aspects of the ideology, lead to splintering?* Examining how negotiations and associated ideological modifications lead to splintering provides an important piece to the relatively nascent body of research seeking to better understand the processes leading to splintering. Moreover, my research explores how the independent variable of ideological modification affects group dynamics, providing a better understanding of how commitment across groups varies. This examination of the *modification* of an ideology--as opposed to studying the contested concept of ideology itself--is a unique analytical approach to the subject. Observing inter-group dynamics surrounding ideological

modification can also help inform more targeted prevention models, counter-messaging campaigns, and disengagement interventions that recognize the differences in preferences and objectives amongst members. To paraphrase a statement made by a U.S. Government (USG) development professional on conflict and violence prevention during my preparation for this research, ‘not everyone needs to be de-radicalized, or to the same extent, and doing so in fact undermines reintegration efforts’. Approaching militant groups and former members as holding monolithic ideals to the same relative degree at best misses the mark, and at worse can in fact do harm. Understanding nuances amongst group members is something some agencies and scholars actively take into account, the need to socialize within the USG more broadly remains (see Anwar 2016 for an example of research embedded with this nuanced understanding of militant preference differentials). This is directly relevant to my research. The variety of preferences and objectives held within a group is on display during negotiations, particularly when groups splinter.

1.3 Definitional Overview

This section provides definitional clarity to operationalize the concepts I am researching within this dissertation, specifically splintering, negotiations, and ideology. Militant group splintering is an element within the broader concept of fragmentation; splintering falls within the first component (‘a’) of fragmentation’s definition that will guide my research: “when a segment of a rebel organization formally and collectively exits that rebel organization and either *a) establishes a new rebel organization*, b) joins an existing rebel organization, or c) joins the incumbent government” (italics mine for emphasis) (Woldemariam, 2018:36). Splintering in this proposal refers to when a member(s) within an existing militant group breaks away and forms a unique, new organization, severing all ties related to command and control by the parent

group. I consider the key testable event of negotiations in a broad sense. I use the term negotiations to encompass negotiations between two parties or two parties plus a mediating or brokering entity, peace processes and accords, ceasefires, or secret talks with the state or another adversary, regardless of whether or not the outcome is successful. Finally, I provide a definition of ideology because a focus of my research will be examining how ideological modifications which I also refer to as concessions (independent variable) made during or surrounding negotiations lead to militant group splintering (dependent variable). The working definition of militant ideology in my research is as follows: a documented narrative, framework, or socialized statements and tenants that describe type of rebellion (be it social or political revolutionary, ethno-nationalist, religious, secessionist, others, or multiple), objectives and associated operational approach or plan of action, and outlines a constituency and their grievance(s). This builds on commonly held definitions, and borrows from Sanin and Wood's definition in *Ideology in Civil War: Instrumental adaptation and beyond* (Sanin and Wood, 2014). Importantly, I utilize both 'preferences' and 'objectives' throughout my research when discussing ideological orientation, but they are not interchangeable. Preferences refer to underlying feelings members hold, while ideological objectives refer to the guiding pillars or goals of the group, and usually documented well. Thus, preferences and objectives do not always—and in many cases do not—cleanly align. Preferences may be more or less relevant to those objectives which the group pursues, given individuals join militants for a variety of reasons far from restricted to ideological agreement, as groups are not unitary entities (Anwar, 2016; Kalyvas, 2006).

Splintering is an ideal phenomenon to examine as my dependent variable because it often occurs as the option of last resort for disgruntled militants (Woldemariam, 2018). Furthermore, splinters are typically as violent and, in many cases, more violent than the parent group, as they

often escalate violence and undergo attempts to clearly “signal their dissent” (Crenshaw, 2011; Cronin, 2011:68). Meanwhile, negotiations or peace processes are an important testing moment because evidence points to splintering surrounding them, but lacks a clear understanding of intergroup dynamics that link negotiations to splintering (Steadman, 1997, Duursma and Fliervoet, 2021). Existing research has not clearly unpacked whether negotiated (or perceived) concessions are the impetus for cleavages within groups, or if negotiations are merely an opportunity for entrepreneurs of violence to hide behind a veil of legitimacy and claim notions such as betrayal as justification for the splinter. This research demonstrates the plausibility of ideological modification leading to splintering by way of perceived ideological betrayal, particularly amongst more hardline members.

1.4 Research Outline

This dissertation undertakes a comprehensive examination of militant groups surrounding negotiations in order to determine how ideological modification leads to splintering. I provide a quantitative approach to case selection, examining cases with both the existence and absence of my phenomenon of interest; provide an initial test through congruence procedures; and finally, complement congruence procedures with theory-building process tracing. The outline of my dissertation presents a logical approach to understanding the problem and shortcomings in existing literature, case identification, examination, and discussion. The organization of this dissertation as follows. In Chapter Two I present a literature review focused on understanding splintering in existing theoretical frameworks and where existing frameworks are relevant, as well as where there are theoretical shortfalls that fail to account for my research question. I also attempt to pull back layers encompassing ideology, utilizing recent scholarship to identify the variances in ideological commitment, including its utility as an instrumental tool. Chapter Two

outlines important existing literature in this space that are both deficient in accounting for ideological modification and splintering, and highly relevant. This chapter concludes with the identification of three existing theoretical frameworks that are germane to my research, and explains, based on the existing scholarship, why my research is in fact one of theory development. Chapter Three covers my conceptual framing, outlines my theory, and presents my observable hypotheses. The theory development section will outline my overall theory along with individual hypotheses that are tested and relied upon in my determination that the theory is plausible, and later, credible. This leads to a discussion of methodological approach, and why I have chosen such methods. I explain why I am using an empirical approach to case selection, a qualitative case comparison across three highly relevant and important cases along with the criteria that led to their selection. Finally, this chapter concludes with a discussion surrounding the importance of complimenting case comparison with more in-depth within-case process tracing. This chapter closes out the first half of my research, setting the stage and providing direction for the analytical rigor that will make up the second section.

The next chapter initiates the analytical work at the heart of my research. Chapter Four examines the three selected cases, the Palestinian National Liberation Movement (Al-Fatah), the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), and the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) (Cobban, 1983; Cook, 2011; Jongerden, 2019). This chapter provides an overview of important historical points and events surrounding internal ideological modifications, focused on negotiations, along with inter-group dynamics that preceded, occurred during, and which followed negotiations. It also explores limited instances of ideological modification that occurred outside of formal negotiations, on the militants groups own terms in order to mitigate bias of selection focused solely on the event of negotiations. Finally, I conclude chapter four

with a brief discussion of the three cases along with an outline of where they stand against my stated hypotheses. Chapter Five then provides a more intensive qualitative approach, process tracing. I trace the processes within Al-Fatah surrounding their splintering. Process tracing affords me the ability to explore additive variables than those discussed in chapter four, and allows me to examine hypothesized processes against historical sequencing that allows as a control for mini-checks along the way. Chapter Six offers a reiteration of the original theory and hypotheses, then provides a summary of findings from case comparison and process tracing. This chapter examines research importance and implications, and interpretations of the ‘so what’ for my work. This chapter concludes with an outline of the notable limitations and biases, and the extent to which I provided mitigation measures. Chapter Six concludes with a discussion of future research opportunities. Finally, I offer a conclusion in Chapter Seven that dives into recommendations for policymakers, practitioners, and academics alike to apply my findings.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

2.1. Introduction

Militant splintering is often examined in relation to hardliners breaking off and forming new, more violent groups based distinct from the control and influence of the parent group; acting as spoilers to a peace process; or, as a through a lens of organizational structure or weakness (Crenshaw, 2011; Christia, 2012; Stedman, 1997; Perkoski, 2022). These foci exist for good reason. Militant group strength ebbs and flows with battlefield momentum and organizational strength; negotiations that end in spoiling are associated with instilling a

perception moderated involved in negotiations are weak or untrustworthy; and, militant ideological fragmentation can often lead to splintering (Woldemariam, 2018; Kydd and Walter, 2006; Cohen, Kruglanski, Gelfand, Webber and Gunaratna, 2018). Steadman’s research on ‘spoilers’, or individuals or groups who seek to disrupt a peace process for various reasons, has categorized these hardliners as “total” spoilers. Total spoilers are those who seek total power and hold “immutable preferences” (Stedman, 1997:10). In the context of my research, hardliners make up an important component. Hardliners inherently hold more stringent views (i.e., ‘hard’), and in the case of militants, the views are related to ideological orientation, including objectives. My research takes this importance of ideology in militancy seriously, and directly contributes to Gutiérrez Sanin and Wood’s research agenda outlined in their impactful piece on the topic entitled *Ideology in Civil War* (2014). Gutiérrez Sanin and Wood nuance previous scholarly arguments surrounding ideological hardliners, by explaining that having both hardliners and other instrumental followers is all but foundational for militant organizations, and individuals often shift between categories over time (i.e., loss of romanticism or conversely, adoption of commitment). They describe groups having both hardliners and other followers when a group is formed, including when the group is focused on what they identify as an ideologically “strong program” (Gutiérrez Sanin and Wood, 2014:218). This is an important clarification not only because it’s incredibly difficult to identify hardliners from others within a group, but also because of the implication that members hold a variety of degrees of commitment to or affiliation with an ideological objective and therefore may respond differently to the perception of key ideological tenants under threat.

Meanwhile, instrumental followers are those adhering to what Gutiérrez Sanin and Wood deem a “weak program”, or ideological instrumentality over true belief (Sanin and Wood,

2014:218). The latter of which would include members joining and fighting for reasons outside of ideology, such as for economic incentives, adventurism, revenge, coercion, social-ties, or others. My research on how ideological modification leads to splintering elucidates the variance of preference negotiability within groups, and helps show the extent to which ideology can be malleable when leadership maintains legitimacy and holds credible enforcement measures for cohesion. Specifically, my work contributes to Gutiérrez Sanin and Wood's research call for investigating "the extent and role of normative commitments in the life of armed groups, thereby helping to explain the full spectrum of variation in armed group behavior, even in cases where leaders choose ideologies for purely instrumental reasons" (Sanin and Wood, 2014:223). I respond to this call by drawing on relevant theoretical frameworks while introducing a theory that relies on mechanisms to explain the process of splintering post-ideological modification, including the utility for strong and weak programs alike by examining groups who have shifted ideological footing overtime.

2.2. Deficiencies in Existing Theoretical Frameworks

Prominent theoretical frameworks in the conflict space that could apply to my research surrounding ideological modification and militant splintering include those that seek to capture the initiation and evolution of rebellions. Perhaps the most prominent of the 21st century has been a focus on arguments related to resources and so-called greed over grievance (Kaldor, 1999; McCarthy and Zald, 1977; Collier and Hoeffler, 2004). Other prominent research in this space includes work adapting the principal-actor approach to militant organization decision making and behavioral processes (Gates, 2002; Shapiro, 2013). Meanwhile, scholars have also moved towards inward examination of structural aspects of militant groups as a vantage point to understand and in some cases inform behavioral trajectory, landing on the importance of

networks and linkages between militants, other militant groups, and society in which they operate (Staniland, 2014). Yet each of these falls short in capturing my research question, hence my research is one of theory-building. I therefore begin this section with a discussion of the deficiencies associated with the more prominent theories in this field as mentioned above. I will then conclude this chapter with a discussion of less prominent yet highly relevant work focused on spoilers, sacred values, and legitimacy and framing, which my research will directly contribute.

First, greed-grievances theoretical approaches as advanced by Collier and Hoeffler beginning in the late 1990's with a focus on economic causes of war through examining economic 'constraints', or lack thereof. The original and follow-on work provided that grievances cannot account for initiation or sustainment of rebellion by examining civil wars with at least 1,000 battlefield deaths across civil wars from 1960-1992/99 (Collier and Hoeffler, 1998, 2004). The follow-up piece in 2004 added a necessary softening, with a greater focus on the *opportunity* rather than cause of conflict. Still, glaringly unaccounted for is a lack of examination over multiple 'grievance' related variables, such as civic opportunity or unequal representation or treatment in a given context, not to mention leadership characteristics and framing. Instead, modestly assessed variables such as fractionalization are examined under the scope of ethnic and religious orientation. They further look at population size and polarization superficially, determining that they do not account for conflict. Yet, the authors note that there is explanatory power where there is "ethnic dominance" as "45-90" percent of the population, but then divert to a discussion on 'better' explanatory power from the greed components (Collier and Hoeffler, 2004:35). Besides the obvious point that evidence provided where there is ethnic dominance over a rather large span of 45-90 percent without much further investigation, they

miss a big point in relation to fractionalization. There is no examination of the potential nexus between ethnic-dominance and inequitable treatment, representation, or discrimination.

Additional issues arise from the limited discussion surrounding why geography matters, moving beyond contractions of people and towards strategic importance of geography as well as real or perceived differences across a myriad of variables between rural and urban populations. Finally, the intentional limiting of variables for examination, particularly related to the analysis surrounding grievance, is understandable given the availability of data but nonetheless hurts their findings.

Scholars have provided important and necessary critiques of the greed-grievance construct. Bensted finds a number of limitations concerning, including the limited number of constraint based variables, and inability to examine crucial constraint variables such as opportunities for corruption, leaders and management, along with others (Bensted, 2011). Another set of constructive critiques are within *The Political Economy of Armed Conflict: Beyond Greed and Grievance*. In this work, Ballentine and Sherman provide a critique by way of a historical political-economy, moving beyond the premise of greed and resource-oriented justifications of conflict towards a more holistic understanding placing prominence on political conditions (Ballentine and Sherman, 2003). A later piece by Collier, Hoeffler, and Rohner has provided additional investigation, finding that the crux is actually on conflict *feasibility* (2009). This expanded upon by Hoeffler's own later work on the importance of Collective Action theory, by which *grievance* may indeed provide a reason for coalescence, but *incentives* more broadly, are what drive individuals to actually engage in conflict (Hoeffler, 2011). Thus, although the greed-grievance theory moved the field of conflict studies forward greatly and encouraged more in depth examination both quantitatively and qualitatively, it surely does not fit as an accurate

theoretical framework from which to include research focused on the relationship between ideological modification and militant splintering.

Next, the principal actor theory discusses putting agency into practice. In *The Terrorists Dilemma*, Shapiro explores the principal actor theory in relation to group dynamics of militant groups from anarchist Russian operations of the late 19th century to Al Qaeda's general bureaucratic headaches in the 21st century. His work contributes to uncovering the importance of communication and coordination across groups, along with what he calls "preference proximity" between leadership and foot soldiers (Shapiro, 2013). The latter could be an essential point related to splintering, where the distance between the preferences of leaders and foot soldiers can be aided by indoctrination, geographical control, communication tactics and centralization decisions; all of which are impacted by security considerations, can influence group cohesion or disintegration (Shapiro, 2013; Gates, 2002; Soufan, 2017). In the case of group splinters, principal actor theory would predict that the greater distance of preference between foot soldiers and leadership, along with limited incentives and inability to enforce cohesion (i.e., discipline potential defectors) should increase the likelihood of splinters.

However, principal agency theory assumes agent identities and the importance of preference alignment, without diving into the fluidity of preferences, misalignment between *attitudinal* preferences and actor *behavior*, or the impact of militants disregarding cohesive enforcement mechanisms (i.e., act outside the bounds of normatively assumed rational cost-benefit behavior). For example, militant attitudes are not reliable and at times contradictory to their behavior in conflict, creating an inherent problem with identified preference alignment (Kalyvas, 2006). Moreover, there are a multitude of examples of individuals or small groups breaking with parent organizations with a variety of indoctrination, incentive, and enforcement

mechanisms in place; from IRA to the Karenni National Progressive Party. Finally, principal-agent theory fails to take into account that preferences need not always align for militants to remain in groups or commit violence in their name, or how preferences can align but perceptions of legitimacy or reasoning (i.e., 'traitor' or 'sellout') can be more important.

Next, two theories examine per-war structures to assess group trajectory which includes likelihood of cohesion and splintering alike. The economic endowments argument advanced by Weinstein assesses that pre-war resource availability for a group can determine whether they are more likely to gain opportunists or more committed members. He provides evidence that resource rich groups see the importance of obtaining first mover advantage and through economic incentives are able to quickly acquire opportunist recruits (Weinstein, 2006). Meanwhile, groups with limited resources feel cornered and end up relying upon the instrumentality of ideology to recruit committed members to their cause. This theory would posit that splintering based upon ideological modification would predominantly occur in resource-limited groups who recruited based on commitment to a specified cause in normative terms. These economic and social endowments provide insight insofar as resource poor groups relying on a uniting belief system or identity will execute stricter recruitment for more committed members. Yet Weinstein stops short of examining the inter-group dynamics of what occurs when the most committed members (the true believers) have their convictions confronted. Additionally; and perhaps most importantly, his theory does not allow for discussion of changes in commitment, indoctrination practices, or ideology over time. The economic endowments framework is therefore an interesting one but in application assumes too many variables without fully examining their applicability and potential equifinality.

Prominent scholarship surrounding the importance of pre-war social networks as advanced by Staniland is similarly important literature for consideration. Staniland contends that pre-war social networks help determine the impact of resources on conflict movements, and that the organizational structure (integrated, parochial, vanguard, or fragmented) encourages cohesion or disintegration, thereby relating to my focus on splintering (Staniland, 2014). Staniland's work focuses on an important aspect of organizational structure glossed over in the principal actor framework and greed-grievance: a nature of general fluidity over time. Indeed, any study of conflict must account for the non-linear paths militant groups take, and the internal and external conditions that can shape or change group dynamics over time. Describing organizational fluidity over time and how some groups go from integrated to fragmented, and vice-versa, touches on instances of splintering but avoids directly researching events and processes related to how splintering actually occurs. Yet Staniland's work, specifically in *Networks of Rebellion*, concludes with the acknowledgement that although his research did not intend to explicitly pull out the importance of ideology, it is clearly an important concept and more work needs to be conducted to determine its relevant implications on cohesion and disintegration (Staniland, 2014). Therefore, along with principal agency and endowments-based theories, pre-war social networks cannot be applied to the examination of how ideological modification leads to splintering.

Finally, research surrounding ideology similarly comes up short in providing a framework or theory for ideological modification and splintering. Ideology is typically researched as an independent variable or a descriptive typology for categorization (e.g., Marxist, leftist, or supremacist, among others), but the malleability of an ideological objective or variety of ideological orientations within a group is scarcely discussed. This provides a limited view

that does not examine important micro-foundations of group ideology and its impact on intragroup dynamics. Recent studies on ideology have begun to crack the surface, expanding the examination of elements within ideology and ideological changes (Schubiger and Zelina, 2017; Maynard, 2019). Schubiger and Zelina have presented an approach to examining differences within ideological movements as opposed to solely across movements. They propose external intrusiveness and internal institutionalization of ideology within groups are neglected areas of research, and are critical in examining emotional connections for the promotion of ideas (Schubiger and Zelina, 2017). This important work does not provide sufficient explanation for modifications and changes to ideology over time. In other work, Maynard has discussed how ideology can influence conflict drivers, taking on the role of “commitment, adoption, and instrumentalization” as micro-foundations of ideologies’ role in actor decision making, which also relates to scholarship on increases in devotion over time (Maynard, 2019:639). His work relates to recent scholarship looking at the role of socialization and adoption of ideological commitment over time, and the importance of informal socialization among members and communities to strengthen ties and fidelity (Van Dijk, 2006; Parkinson, 2021). There is no current theoretical conclusion within the study of ideology that sufficiently captures ideological modifications in relation to militant splintering.

2.3. Theoretical Contributions from Current Research

There are important theoretical conceptions (theories and frameworks) ripe for application into my research and for which I anticipate providing indirect contributions. Firstly, scholars have demonstrated the importance of framing theory and legitimacy for militant groups. Framing “refers to the process by which people develop a particular conceptualization of an issue or reorient their thinking about an issue” (Chong and Durkman, 2007:104). Schmidt

aptly identifies that when examined through framing theory, disengagement of militant groups (guerillas and paramilitary alike) in Colombia, it becomes clear that identity, concessions, and options for fighters are perceived differently based on the relative framing (Schmidt, 2021). Indeed, similarly insightful work has shown how more committed members have defected, side-switched, and splinter when they view their organization as having betrayed its core values or objectives (Breen, 1998; Kenny, 2010; Oppenheim et al, 2015; Soufan, 2017). Perceptions of militant leader corruption or betrayal “can lead to the eroding legitimacy of incumbent rebel leaders, steer factional infighting, and explain grassroots support for the more “hardline factions”” (Brenner, 2017:14). Hence, the importance of framing actions within rebel groups matters a great deal when it comes to potential splintering over actions that erode the legitimate credibility of rebel leaders. Informal practices such as discourse or socialization can also be powerful tools in framing leadership or creating cleavages, as exemplified by Parkinson’s work on schism with Fatah in her article *Money Talks* (Parkinson, 2016). As discussed in more detail in the next section, the framing of militant concessions and in turn the perceived legitimacy attached to this, is a key component of splintering which I will be examining.

Next, Stedman’s integral work on spoilers in peace negotiations have given rise to others such as Duursma and Fliervoet’s recent work exploring splintering surrounding negotiations (Stedman, 1997; Duursma and Fliervoet, 2021). Stedman accounted for three types of spoilers in peace negotiations, the limited, greedy, and total spoilers (Stedman, 1997:8). In this account, the total spoilers are parallel to who may be included in the strong program of normative true believers outlined by Gutiérrez Sanin and Wood. This account directly influences my theory because it is precisely group holding—to some degree—immutable objectives, which I am interested in examining. However, scholars have pointed out flaws in Stedman’s analytical

framing of spoilers. For example, Greenhill and Major assess that Stedman misses important aspects associated with spoilers including opportunity for post-conflict power, cost-benefit of continued conflict, and generally that spoiling is “more closely causally linked to strategic exigencies than to individual motivations” (Greenhill and Major, 2007:12). They similarly overlook a few important aspects in their own research, such as how preferences matter and impact objectives amongst members following leaders of spoiler movements (in relation to my interest, splinter groups), and how normative rational choice is not necessarily appropriately applied to militants and militant groups.

Stedman also does not address how spoilers may not impact peace processes between the negotiating groups and instead can result in a new violent group unbound by any negotiated agreement, ceasefire, or other concessions, as in the case of the FARC dissident groups of Colombia. Spoiling or ignoring peace processes while instead perpetuating violence can be a result of internal disagreements. Ideological disagreement is a known factor in group splinters, with prominent examples such as the Basque radicals who continued fighting while the Basque Nation and Liberty Party (ETA) moved toward normalization (Cronin, 2011). Theories on spoiling during peace negotiations are crucial in influencing my research but do not adequately describe processes connecting ideological modification to splintering. My research presented in this dissertation takes beneficial aspects of existing work on spoilers, particularly that surrounding the importance of examining groups and sub-groups with seemingly immutable preferences and their potential role in facilitating splinters.

Finally, the devoted actor theoretical framework outlines how individuals devoted to an ideal(s) or cause can become devoted to the point where they are willing to undertake increasingly drastic actions in defense of group values, including when it comes to the risk of

death (Sheikh, Gomez, and Atran, 2016). The devoted actor framework draws from identity fusion and ‘sacred values’, combining identification with an in-group with values deemed non-negotiable, resulting in a devoted actor. It builds off influences from research on the profane and sacred, sacred values and imperatives (Rappaport, 1984; Ginges and Atran, 2014). Identifying when and why some values change from being sacrosanct to pliable may help shed light on why some ideologically oriented militant groups can shift core aspects of the guiding ideology over time. Depending on the degree of commitment to a value encapsulated in an ideological framework, militants may not be rational actors in the sense of the standard cost-benefit model. For example, Ginges and Atran have demonstrated how when values become ‘sacred’, seemingly rational material incentives can actually backfire regardless of their worth, and instead increase opposition and conflict among actions (Atran and Ginges, 2013). At the same time, non-negotiable or ‘sacred’ values are not static, particularly as it relates to political ideologies, allowing for an examination of changes in core values among groups and their members overtime (Francis, 2016). The devoted actor model has not been applied to militant group splintering, but it relates to my research because it relies on individuals being willing to take increasingly extreme actions in defense of the group’s ideals. Findings in my research provide indirect evidence to the greater tapestry of research related to hardliners and their ideological orientation. Specifically, by examining outward-facing commitment to key ideological tenets amongst militants under pressure of shifting and modifying ideological objectives or programs of action, I provide observable evidence surrounding the dynamics within various contexts of when ideologies may be more or less malleable, even for hardliners. Research on terrorist organizations shows the extreme and rare nature of splintering, and if taken, it is usually with

much discontent to the point of fragmentation turning explosive, to include terrorist ‘outbidding’ (Crenshaw, 2011:84-85).

2.4. Conclusion

The aforementioned research has moved the field of conflict studies forward with meaningful contributions to the study of conflict, rebellion, negotiations, group preferences, and commitment. Still, it is clear that a gap remains surrounding militant splintering as they relate to ideological modifications, specifically concessions as operationalized by negotiations. Select additional scholarship within the field of conflict studies that has helped shape my research includes but is not limited to work negotiations, militant splinter group makeup and trajectory, research on terrorism and radicalization, and nuanced examinations of ideology and ideological commitment (see Kydd and Walter, 2002; Asal et al, 2012; Perkoski, 2015; Bakke, Cunningham and Seymour, 2012; Crenshaw, 2000, 2011, 2012; Schubiger and Zelina, 2017; Ugarriza, 2009; Leader Maynard, 2019; among others). Throughout the next four chapters, this dissertation contributes findings that are of relevance to many scholarly works, most pointedly the devoted actor theory. My findings surrounding the relational nature of ideology under various contexts, and how perceptions of ideological betrayal can be sufficient for militant splintering directly contributes to research on commitment and devotion, highlighting the fluid nature of ideology that requires additional research across various contexts.

Chapter 3

Theory and Methods

3.1. Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of my primary theory and associated hypotheses, case selection, and the methodological selection most appropriate for answering my research question. Ensuring the proper research method is crucial for any research project, and I discuss how I came to the selection of a multimethod approach including an empirical analysis for case selection, and qualitative case comparison through congruence procedures (also referred to as congruence analysis) and theory-building process tracing. Case selection is similarly important. I used an empirical approach that builds off the BAAD2 dataset to guide my selection, narrowing down the pool of potential cases and controlling for key indicators determining important factors, such as longevity, territorial control, and cohesive or multidimensional ideological orientation. The process resulted in my selecting Al-Fatah, the FARC, and the PKK as three the cases for study.

3.2. Epistemological Foundation

The theory I propose as a result of congruence procedures and process tracing; *if militant groups modify key tenants of their ideology (IV) and members perceive these modifications as a betrayal, then when conditioned by incapable or non-credible enforcement measures for cohesion, splintering will occur (DV)*, and associated research are grounded in the epistemological school of constructivism. Constructivism can be explained as “human beings construct meaning as they engage with the world they are interpreting” (Creswell and Creswell,

2019). Moreover, meta-theoretical tenets of constructivism hold that the level of observation focuses on the importance of meaning making and application and the social construction of reality. The level of action is then an intersubjective unit of analysis, while theorizing a link between the levels of observation and action (Guzzini, 2000). A constructivist approach that includes scientific realism is one that places emphasis on *causality*, while acknowledging the socially constructed world and associated meaning. Indeed, constructivism “does not challenge science, rationalism, and modernity; it merely makes science more compatible with the constructivist understanding of social reality” (Alder, 2013:114). It is in this space within this practice where the application of scientific realism of case comparison and process tracing fit as appropriate constructivist methodologies. My research question asked *how does ideological modification; as operationalized during negotiations or concessions that change core aspects of the ideology, lead to splintering*, and a constructivist approach allows for an examination of the very significance of non-state actors involved in militant actions on behalf of some sort of ideological orientation, and their relationships with ideas, to the state, citizenry, and other militants. It further allows for the examination of how the conflict space (i.e., a social construction) and associated actions influence relationships amongst militant sub-groups and groups, made up of individuals with agency. The conflict space varies throughout time, and situated within specific social, cultural, geopolitical, and other factors that are unique to those times. Therefore, I pull on influences from historicism to support my research as well.

Historicism underpins the premise that militant groups are making decisions influenced by the interpretation of historical events and circumstances along with then-present conditions, along with the actions of their own group and in relation to other actors, including but not limited to the state. Moreover, in examining my cases for this research, I apply historicist approaches to

examining historical research, statements, and actions, against relevant context, norms, behaviors, and interpretations of the given time period (Cello, 2018). It is important that the scope of my research examines not only the instance of splintering itself, but also the background and context within which militants operate, along with the framing and relevant precedent or importance associated with actions. Historicism allows me to move beyond an analysis of militants in a certain time and place, and instead frame the analysis within the conditions and with considerations from that point in history. In order to successfully apply a constructivist approach that incorporates scientific realism and historicism, the concept of splintering itself needs to be further unpacked.

3.3. Conceptual Framing of Splintering

Splintering is a component of the larger and more widely researched concept of fragmentation. Fragmentation; as stated in my introduction, is defined as “a segment of a rebel organization formally and collectively exits that rebel organization and either a) establishes a new rebel organization, b) joins an existing rebel organization, or c) joins the incumbent government” (Woldemariam, 2018:36). This is the definition of fragmentation for my research, and militant group splintering is therefore well positioned within the concept of fragmentation (within component “a” above). By definition, splintering requires the creation of a new organization, which can take one of two forms: (1) a new organizational name and leadership, or (2) maintaining the same overarching name yet distinctly separating from the parent group with a complete separation in leadership, structure, and operation. An example of the latter formation would be a group like the ‘Fatah Revolutionary Council’, a splinter from Fatah by the same name but which was also known by its unique name, the Abu Nidal Organization. Further, this research specifically explores militant splinters, splinter groups who employ violence as a

primary program of action. Militancy is important because members may leave the group to form non-violent organizations or political entities, which is an important phenomena in its own right but is outside the scope of this research. By focusing on hardliners and use of violence, my research examines intergroup dynamics of those who maintain violence as a program of action and their actions in relation to negotiations and standalone internal ideological concessions.

Relatedly, scholars have used fragmentation as an umbrella concept which incorporates a spectrum of characteristics related to the relative number of organizations, degree of institutionalization, and relative institutional power, with splintering being a *type* of organizational fragmentation (Bakke et al, 2012). The splintering of militant organizations in my research does not include individual defections from the militant group back to citizenry or to an existing militant group, or side-switching to the state. Individual defections and side-switching are phenomena in their own right, and they require a micro-level unit of analysis (individuals) as opposed to the meso inter-organizational and sub-group levels. Finally, it is important to discern between splintering as it is defined above, against the often-misdiagnosed strategic decentralization and operational specialization of militant groups which are not actual ‘splinters’ (Perkoski, 2015). For example, continuing with the example of Fatah above, the creation of the Black September Organization outside of the Fatah and larger Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) banner in order to conduct attacks without the political blowback against the PLO and its militant member groups (Iyad and Rouleau, 1981; Cobban, 1984; Singh, 2015). However, it’s easy to mistake actions such as this for splintering, but evidence indicates that would be at best a mischaracterization.

My research unit of interest; militant groups, are non-state organized groups with a formal name that use violence to achieve a stated objective incompatible with that of the current

state. These are rebellious groups. Militant groups include violent extremist organizations, designated terrorist organizations, and insurgent groups. I have selected the identification of ‘militant groups’ to avoid state-led interpretations of ‘terrorism’ which in some cases can be politically motivated to silence or stigmatize opposition movements or dissidents, and may purposefully or inadvertently target a certain ethnicity, religion, or other identity marker. Moreover, using militants allows capture of relevant groups not designated as terrorists by the U.S. or internationally, but still capture those involved in strategies that deploy terror, rebellion, or other violent actions against a state and/or its citizenry. My use of militant groups includes non-state organizations (such as militias) involved in civil wars. The criteria ‘use of violence’ is important because as stated above, it qualifies militancy.

3.4. Theory and Hypotheses

Theory-building grounds this research, utilizing congruence procedures and theory-building process tracing (Beach and Pedersen, 2012). I apply relevant aspects of existing theoretical frameworks and contribute to theories surrounding splintering as well as ideology, albeit indirectly. Empirical observations allowed for the development of a primary ideational mechanism of *perceived betrayal by militants*, particularly hard-liners, that links ideological modification to militant group splintering. I ascertained this causal mechanism through inductive reasoning from evidence observed in research related to ideological modification and militant splintering. Congruence testing provided evidence that perceived betrayals is the likely causal link between ideological modification and splintering, when conditioned by an absence of credible enforcement mechanisms for group cohesion. I examined this against the key testable event of negotiations. As outlined in the succeeding chapter, diagnostic evidence indicates the causal mechanisms existence and role in the process of splintering. The diagnostic evidence

inferred during congruence analysis that I uncover more fully in process tracing are (1) *militant framing of ideological modifications*, i.e., members view leader reframing or lack of discussion on modifications as concessions to otherwise sacred aspects of the ideological orientation to the group as illegitimate (betrayal, treasonous, self-enriching, etc.); (2) *socialization of legitimacy concerns*, i.e., informal or formal discursive opportunities to unite sub-groups or create situation-focused cleavages; and, (3) conditioned by the *non-credible enforcement measures for cohesion*, i.e., defectors and dissenters within the group are not punished to the point of deterring dissent, infighting, or cleavages, lessening constraints for splintering. Violent militant groups who engage in ideological modification (namely concessions) that militants perceive as a betrayal to the group; are unable to reframe and legitimize the action; and, do not have strong and capable enforcement measures for cohesion, are likely to splinter. These findings directly enabled me to infer the existence of an ideational causal mechanism for theory-building process tracing. I inferred and examined a new causal mechanism of *militant perceived ideological betrayal*, which allowed me to build the aforementioned theory: *if militant groups modify key tenants of their ideology (IV) and members perceive these modifications as a betrayal, then when conditioned by incapable or non-credible enforcement measures for cohesion, splintering will occur (DV)*. The three hypotheses that I test throughout this research directly provided diagnostic evidence applied throughout the duration of process tracing. The core components making up the basis of each hypothesis are each important in their own right, providing a necessary framework for collecting evidence while examining three primary variables for consideration related to splintering.

3.4.1. Militant Framing of Ideological Modifications

When leaders modify ideology, they put to a test of how they communicate and frame the modification across the organization. Ideological modification may be framed as a necessity, as a truer reading of the original objectives, or as an evolution, that still keeps the most sacrosanct of the objectives intact. Militant leaders may also lean into the change in objectives, framing the change as part of a victory, particularly when associated with negotiations. Regardless, if a militant group has normatively true believers with otherwise non-negotiable commitment (often termed hardliners), the groups will need to sufficiently reframe objectives to maintain cohesion or have strong enough enforcement measures to ensure members do not splinter. Incentives for cohesion are important; however, hardliners and true believers may not respond to 'rational' incentivized behavior in the normative sense of cost-benefit analysis (Atran, 2016). In these cases, regardless of the rarity or limited number of most committed, hardline militants, ideological modifications may be deemed illegitimate concessions if leadership is unable to frame the modifications in a way that convinces hardliners of the ideological modifications' value, evolution, or necessity. A leader's qualities affect militant perceptions of legitimacy as well, regardless of ideological purity, such as charisma. The charismatic ruler, in accordance with Weber's writings in *the vocation lectures*, wields significant power over an organization and therefore is more likely to instill legitimacy by their very nature and actions (Weber, 2004). Yet variables like charisma still feed directly into perceptions of legitimacy. I hypothesize that this becomes especially potent when members dissent and form cleavages, thereby socializing concerns amongst other like-minded members.

3.4.2. Socialization of legitimacy and framing of modifications

Socialization of ideological objectives and its justification amongst members, as well as interactions which create shared-bonds through shared experiences, can support the adoption of

ideological commitment over time (Maynard, 2019). Militant groups place a premium on developing bonds and beliefs, strengthening the potential for members to commit violence on their behalf. Socializing ideology also plays a strong role in the process of moral legitimation by providing a narrative foundation to a backdrop of violence helps justify otherwise nefarious actions with a dose of morality. However, militant perceptions of betrayal, moral-corruption, or irredeemable concessions by the group test the romanticism associated with an ideological bond, fighting for friends and community, or belief in doing the right thing. Once the creation of bonds occurs, both amongst members and internally with the operational ideology, feelings of betrayal can become more pronounced and personally impactful. Institutions and informal social settings (to include otherwise negative experiences such as prison) that supported bonds to ideology and/or other militants, can be powerful tools in socializing perceived concerns, dissatisfaction, and unite sub-groups against leaders that can lead to splintering when enforcement measures are perceived as disintegrated or non-credible.

3.4.3 Existence of non-credible enforcement measures for cohesion

The ability of an organization to deter members from defections and dissent across the group is of notable importance for any group wishing to advance a goal or objective without collapsing into itself. When it comes to maintaining unity, one primary measure is the existence of punishment or other deterrents for infighting, dissent, defections, or splinters. Militant groups from the Russia revolutionaries and anarchists of the late 19th century, to the more recent self-proclaimed Islamic State have understood this and applied various approaches to maintaining control and cohesion across their members (Shapiro, 2013). Militant leaders require a degree of oversight of adherence and enforcement of punishment when members step out of line, which that will vary based on their ability to securely do so (e.g., maintain oversight and links with

various fronts while avoiding infiltration, kill or capture), capability of their security apparatus (no matter how formal or informal), loyalty to the group, and perceptions of credibility (Soufan, 2017; Shapiro, 2013). Militant groups send a strong signal when they hold dissenters to account through violence and torture. They also indicate potential weakness when they fail to adequately deal with dissenters, such as when Fatah in the 1970s continued to try and ‘win back’ Sabri al-Bana, when he was directly contradicting and attacking Fatah leadership, eventually splintering and creating the ANO (Seale, 1992). Therefore, it is not only the actual inability of a group to enforce cohesive elements, but also the perceptions by members of whether or not the group can and will enforce cohesion.

In order to build my theory and test the plausibility through a hoop test, I have designed three primary hypotheses that examine the research questions above. In addition to observing whether or not negotiations by militant groups who lack legitimacy and credible punishment for defections can cause splintering, there should also be cases where militant organizations’ ideological objectives are modified and do not lead to splintering. In these circumstances, I observed that leaders are able to adequately reframe ideological objectives and maintain perceived legitimacy and that punishment for dissent is credible. Lastly, it’s true that organizations do adapt and change ideological objectives over time on their own accord that organizations are not static and that does not always result in splintering. Inferences from the cases examined indicate this is because modifying aspects of an ideology on the organization's own accord helps members feel agency regarding the change as opposed to viewing the modification as a concession to an adversary, and instead view it as ideological evolution.

Underpinning my theory and associated hypotheses are variables such as organizational structure and group representation that can contribute as enabling conditions supporting

splintering. Enabling conditions are important because research has demonstrated their ability to increase the likelihood of splintering when present in various contexts:

Table 3.1

Enabling Conditions for Splintering (enabling conditions are not ‘pathways’ to splintering, but have been found to contribute to increased likelihood)		
Organizational Structure	E.g., Asal, Brown and Dalton, 2012	Research from Asal et al indicates that ethno-political organizations across the Middle East (to include violent and non-violent) who splintered were more likely to have factional leadership structures than hierarchical.
Absence of Member-level Representation	E.g., Plank, 2017	Plank’s examination of the Moro militants in power sharing agreements in the Philippines provided evidence that power-sharing agreements that developed without the inner core or inclusion of group members are more likely to splinter.

Considering existing research, my hypothesis tested in this research provided below.

These three hypotheses are key indicators that fed into my development of a theory capturing the relationship between militant group ideological modification and splintering. The next chapter discusses evidence from these hypotheses during congruence procedures, and analyzed more critically through process tracing in Chapter 6. The primary hypothesis are:

Table 3.2

<p>Theory: <i>If militant groups modify key tenants of their ideology (IV) and members perceive these modifications as a betrayal, then when conditioned by incapable or non-credible enforcement measures for cohesion, splintering will occur (DV).</i></p> <p>Scope Conditions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Non-state militant (rebel, violent extremists) groups undergoing asymmetrical conflict o One or more observation of talks (negotiations/peace accords/ceasefires) with an adversarial State o Articulated/identified ideological orientation o Active between 1998 - 2006
<p>Hypotheses</p>

<p>H1 Militant groups often engage in some type of talks with the state, whether negotiation, peace accords, or otherwise, during which any agreement can be perceived as a concession: <i>If a militant organization is perceived to make ideological concessions to an adversary, then group cleavages between hardliners and others within the organization will form.</i></p>	<p><i>Conversely, if a militant group changes their ideological objectives outside of talks with an adversary (i.e., unilaterally), then cleavages are unlikely to form related to ideological modification because members will feel more agency over the changes. The group will be more likely to view changes as appropriate rather than as concessions.</i></p>
<p><u>Observable Implications:</u> <i>Participation in negotiations (peace process, ceasefire, accords); infighting; statements renouncing the process from factions (if present), unsanctioned violence by disgruntled members, internal contestation.</i></p>	<p><u>Observable Implications:</u> <i>Relatively no changes to group cohesion; ideological changes may be viewed as ‘evolutionary’, ‘necessary’, or otherwise deemed acceptable.</i></p>
<p>H2 To prevent internal dissent based on perceived concessions, militant leaders will attempt to reframe existing objectives to maintain their legitimacy: <i>If militant leaders are unable to reframe their ideological objectives to fit the concessions, then internal dissent will occur.</i></p>	<p><i>On the other hand, if leaders successfully reframe their ideological objectives in line with the concessions made, then cohesion will be maintained.</i></p>
<p><u>Observable Implications:</u> <i>Personalities compete with leadership through demeaning statements, sub-groups organize within the group, statements related to ‘betrayal’, ‘sell out’, or ‘treason’; infighting.</i></p>	<p><u>Observable Implications:</u> <i>Public framing of negotiations attempts to align with their ideological narrative; reliance on reviving myths or historical identity narratives to support the actions; general buy-in (i.e., no unsanctioned attacks, rumors, or subversive organizing)</i></p>
<p>H3 Ideological reframing may be sufficient but is not necessary for fending off splinters. Militant leaders can, in addition to reframing or on its own, rely on punishment to maintain cohesion: <i>If militants do not see enforcement measures for cohesion (i.e., punishment (killing, torture)) as credible and capable, splintering will occur.</i></p>	<p><i>However, if enforcement measures are seen as credible and the group as capable, then members are unlikely to attempt forming a splinter group.</i></p>
<p><u>Observable Implications:</u> <i>Membership defections and group splintering (creation of a unique new organization from the original); splinter group use of violence.</i></p>	<p><u>Observable Implications:</u> <i>Attempted defections swiftly dealt with through disappearance, killing, or other punishment; members and former members speak of fear of reprisal for attempted defection.</i></p>

Group splintering is a complex social phenomenon as I discussed in Chapter One. I therefore closely examined other reasons for splintering documented in different circumstances that are unrelated to my hypotheses, and could have disproved my theory. My research question demands a methodological approach focused on the analysis of congruency between my expected theoretical outcomes and actual outcomes across-cases, along with an emphasis on examining fine-grained processes within a case to determine how ideological modification connects to group splintering. I assess findings from congruence procedures along with process tracing against alternative pathways connecting ideological modification to militant splintering in Chapter 5, and demonstrate the implausibility of each.

3.5. Proposed & Existing Pathways toward Splintering

Militant splintering remains under-analyzed in comparison to many other topics in the conflict space, but what scholarship is available has significantly helped guide this research. Current scholarship on ‘how, why, and when’ militant groups splinter focus on battlefield momentum, greed and economic incentives, leadership contestation, and degrees of heterogeneity amongst militants within a group. This current scholarship on pathways towards splintering do not reflect research situated around when ideological modification occurs, or the dynamics surrounding said modification. I therefore propose elevating a pathway to splintering related to militant leader engagement in ideological modification(s) that militants, particularly hardliners, perceive as concessions.

Table 3.3

My Proposed Pathway to Militant Group Splintering		
Ideological Concessions	Militant leaders engage in some type of negotiation and offer modifications that hardliners perceive as ideological concessions, and leaders are unable to (a) reframe the concessions and maintain legitimacy, and (b) adequately enforce (punishment, killing) cohesion within ranks.	
Existing Pathways to Militant Group Splintering		
Territorial gains Survivability & Opportunism	E.g., Woldemariam, 2018	When rebels gain or lose territory/battles, splintering is likely because when rebels lose, splintering provides an option for survivability of members by abandoning the losing group. When rebels are winning, entrepreneurs within the group see an opportunity to splinter in order to gain more for their respective sub-group such as distinct ideological or strategic objectives, resources, power, or a combination of these factors.
Greed / Economics	E.g., Brenner, 2015	Incentives related to business opportunities, resource-grabs, or continuation of illicit activities can encourage splintering because militant actors seek to maintain economic levers that become threatened during events such as ceasefire or power sharing agreements.
Leadership Contestation	E.g., Soufan, 2017	Power-seeking individuals or factions may become unhappy with a group's leader (or new leader, in the case of recent transitions) and believe their program of action, authority, or appeal can succeed, which can then lead to splinter group formation to realize that vision.
Heterogeneity	E.g., Seymour et al, 2016	The introduction of diverse preferences due to heterogeneous recruits such as foreign fighters, can provide competing sub-objectives within a militant group, potentially to the point of irreconcilable differences and lead to splintering.

3.6. Methodological Approach

I applied a multimethod approach to undertake this research. Beginning with empirics for case selection helped to alleviate selection bias that often results from selecting a single or multiple cases based on personal interest or well-documented phenomena. Still, there is inherent selection bias resulting from the world of cases being rather small (within a world of ideological modification), and I inevitably selected cases because of the outcome of interest. Nonetheless, I will have mitigated the bias to the extent possible, and selecting cases for qualitative research based on the phenomenon is necessary, particularly when theoretically derived. As well articulated by Shively, if “working with a theory, then one can deliberately pick cases that are likely to make a particular contribution to that theory” (Shively, 2006:346). This dissertation undertakes case comparison through qualitative methods of congruence procedures across the three cases, followed by a within-case analysis through process tracing. This approach allowed me to investigate my hypotheses and alternative hypotheses more fully, while providing multiple instances to check my logic, theoretical outcomes, and encourage falsifiability.

Coupling cross-case congruence procedures with process tracing strengthens my findings. It allowed me greater ability to control for conditions across cases when making comparisons. Because two cases in conflict studies can virtually never be identical, the addition of process tracing provided data from a within-case examination to identify additional variables along with unique cultural, historical, and other factors that could indicate flaws in my earlier observations. In addition, the necessity of a data-rich case for examination in process tracing will help uncover if multiple alternative pathways exist, helping to control for equifinality (Bennet and Checkel, 2015). Congruence analysis provided observations that clearly indicated the existence of an

ideational mechanism, and theory-building process tracing provided additional evidence for the most likely causal mechanism connecting ideological modification to splintering.

Table 3.4

Ideational Mechanism	Entity Involved
Perceived ideological betrayal by militant hardliners	Hardline Members and/or existing Sub-groups
Observable Diagnostic Evidence	
Development of cleavages post-modification	Militant hardliners
Cleavages exercise dissent, socializing concerns	Militant hardliners
Attempted reframing of modification for legitimization	Leadership
<i>Conditioned by lack of credible and capable enforcement measures for group cohesion, i.e., members have an unimpeded ability to splinter without fear of death or significant reprisal</i>	

3.7. Multimethod Research: Case Comparison and Process Tracing

3.7.1. Case Comparison: Congruence Procedures

In order to assess whether or not my theoretical outcomes aligned with actual outcomes, I employed congruence procedures. Specifically, I employed cross-case congruence procedures or ‘congruence type 2’ (Van Evera, 2016). My research seeks to answer questions related to intergroup dynamics, to uncover how ideological concessions connect to militant splintering. Congruence procedures will enable me to observe whether my theorized outcomes occur in real cases, spanning time and space, strengthening the likelihood of causal

processes. For example, the development of proxy-indicators to observe inferred intent of militant splinters will allow me to examine how likely it is that ideological modification was a catalyst for splinters or if the cause was related to other variables. Perkoski's findings that groups who splinter over ideology tend to be at least as violent after splintering as the parent group; while strategic, personality-based, or other splinters tend to be less violent post-splintering informed my selection of the proxy-indicator examining level of violence post-splinter in instances of positive identifications of splintering (Perkoski, 2015). Another example is assessing personal disagreements and within-group cleavages pre-negotiation. Christia examined sub-cleavages in her research on reasoning behind alliance formation in civil wars, and this is similarly a useful proxy indicator which I can observe through primary and secondary information in my research (Christia, 2008). By triangulating observed actions surrounding splintering groups with information including preexisting fissures amongst eventual splinter leaders, and relative violence post-splinter, I was able to determine whether splintering surrounding ideological modifications was serendipitous or pointed to the existence of a causal mechanism. My research provided somewhat unexpected findings in this regard. Although there were clear cases of splinter leaders holding personal and strategic disagreements, taking in all of the data appears there was a reliance on perceived ideological betrayal in order to legitimize the splinter and bolster the attraction of militants to the group. Findings demonstrate the relational nature of ideology, whereas ideological modifications were substantially more likely to have militants view them as a betrayal when they occurred during or surrounding negotiations with an adversary as opposed to being done internally outside of direct conflict, discussed further in Chapter Six.

In addition, my theory provided for expected outcomes in various circumstances, depending on if my anticipated mechanisms were present. Examining three cases which have atypical x-values and both iterations of y-values allowed me to challenge my theory and offer multiple opportunities for falsifiability. Stephen Van Evera's *Causes of War* is a notable example of how congruence procedures done well, where he examined five hypotheses across multiple cases. Van Evera offers important advice when utilizing this approach, namely to ensure sound case selection (I've addressed in the previous section), to compare cases to 'normal' conditions, and apply within case-comparisons that span time and space (Van Evera, 2013:11-12). My premise provides 'normal' conditions as being militant groups engaged in dyadic conflict outside of peace processes. This condition is based on findings from Duursma and Fliervoet show that "[l]ooking at peace negotiations in general and the time when a rebel splinter group breaks away rather than when it first engages in armed conflict, we find that a peace process makes a rebel group 240% or 656.5% more likely to splinter, depending, respectively, on whether we restrict the analysis solely to active conflict dyad-years or not" (Duursma and Fliervoet, 2021:17). These findings demonstrate the introduction of peace negotiations has a significant impact on increasing the likelihood of splintering, indicating that for congruence procedures examining the key event of peace processes will provide exceptionally high instances of splintering in comparison to militant organizations operating outside of peace negotiations. In compliance with the final suggestion, I conclude multi-case congruence procedures with the application of within-case, theory-building process tracing. Process tracing can undergo three differing approaches based on the purpose: theory testing, theory-building, and outcome explaining (Beach and Pedersen, 2012). Theory-building process tracing is process tracing the most appropriate to answer my research question because I am

seeking to theorize a process connecting ideological modification during negotiation, to group splintering.

To summarize, intergroup relationships and dynamics are long been understood as critical components to understanding violent organizations, and this holds true for militant splintering as well (Tilly, 2005). My theory takes framing and legitimacy, socialization, and enforcement measures into account as primary indicators that I used to determine the causal mechanism between ideological modification and group splintering. A fine grained analysis of processes within groups and an exploration of shared experiences and critical moments surrounding concessions or negotiations allowed me to determine the plausibility of my hypothesized mechanism's role in explaining this important pathway to militant group splintering. Furthermore, by exploring group dynamics surrounding events, I was able to look across the organization outside of solely the framing by the state or elites who typically dictate how something occurred.

This research will not broadly inform a definitive, singular cause to all group splintering. Instead, both congruence analysis and process tracing support determinations surrounding *how* groups splinter under specific boundaries, key to which are when they undergo an ideological modification. Findings show support that not only is my anticipated pathway to group splintering is possible, but also helped to elucidate the most likely explanations for splintering after an ideological modification occurs. These mechanism based explanations are carried well within cases that exhibit similar conditions. Further, macro-level implications of mechanism explanations support cross-case analysis. Mechanisms don't have empirical referents making them "true or false", instead it's possible to examine their "heuristic usefulness in explaining social phenomena across cases or even a class of cases", because of the ability of

process tracing to “abstract practices away from their context” (Bennet and Checkel, 2015:252). The components of social processes and sets of practices hold analytic generalizability, even if the singular causality of the case which I am studying is not only ultimately unobservable, but localized and otherwise non-generalizable (Pouliot, 2015).

3.8. Case Selection

My case selection process applied analytical rigor in order to determine the world of possible cases based on available data. I began by examining the 140 militant groups from the Big Allied and Dangerous (BAAD) Profiles Project. The BAAD 2.0 dataset “features updated, vetted and sourced narratives, and relationship information and social network data on 50 of the most notorious terrorist organizations in the world since 1998, with additional network information on more than 100 organizations” (Asal and Rethemeyer, 2015). Dr. Victor Asal and Dr. R. Karl Rethemeyer created the dataset as the original ‘BAAD1’ in 2005, and have expanded upon it beginning in 2008. The third iteration (BAAD3) is currently under development. BAAD’s web based platform provides the following parameters for event inclusion: if the group committed at least one attack as defined by the Global Terrorism Database (GTD) criteria between 1998 and 2012, and/or was recorded in the Profiles of Incidents involving CBRN by Non-state Actors (POICN) dataset as having used, attempted to use, or pursued a chemical, biological, radiological, or nuclear weapon at least once between 1998 and 2012, and/or was recorded in the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP) Battle Deaths dataset as having committed at least 25 battle deaths in an insurgency between 1998 and 2012; and, (1) was an organization. We excluded individuals, generic groups (“Chechens”, “Palestinians”, etc.), and ad hoc groups that lacked key characteristics of organizations: boundaries to clearly delineate members and non-members, persistence over time, at least minimal internal differentiation

(hierarchy, functional specialization, etc.), and resources held and/or owned for a collectivity rather than for individuals; (2) garnered enough coverage in our various sources to allow us [the BAAD researchers] to characterize a minimal set of variables: name, “home base” country, and ideology (Asal and Rethemeyer, 2015). The BAAD dataset is not perfect, but it’s very strong and contains many significant pieces of information necessary to support my case selection that other existing datasets did not have available.

I reviewed the Mapping Militants Project, (MMP), Minorities at Risk Organizational Behavior (MAROB), and GTD datasets, and selected BAAD because of its variety of organizational typologies (not solely ethnic-group based), expansive geographic coverage, and importantly, existing ideological coding. I rely upon additional datasets for information gathering during research; for example, the GTD provides observable instances of attempted and successful attacks by group; the UCDP provides rich, well-researched attack data and group narratives. Those sources helpfully corroborated information at various points in this research, while I used BAAD as the primary platform guiding my empirically based case selection process. Still, BAAD did not have all of the information that I needed. Therefore, I have taken a few steps to help sort the unique groups in a way that better lends to selection within the larger set. Specifically, I:

(1) Consolidated the existing dataset’s life span code into the number of years (it currently has a unique ID for each year each group was in existence) and pulled out those groups that the dataset categorized as having 'no ideology', leaving 114 groups remaining.

(2) Added two new variables for coding to the remaining 114 groups: (1) any occurrence of a peace process or negotiation (1 = y 0 = n); and, (2) instance of splinter or merger (RMN = remain as is, SPL = splinter, MER = merge, DIS = disengage/dissolve). The criteria used to code

these variables was as follows: (1) peace process or negotiation was the existence of any formal (secret or otherwise) talks with a state, distinctly separate militant group related to the brokering of a type of agreement, formal or otherwise (y/n). This includes formal peace accords; informal secret talks made verifiable through declassification, statements, or public reporting; development of a ceasefire; or negotiation process. (2) Evidence demonstrating individuals from the main organization, often known as the 'parent' group, broke ties and set up a distinct, new entity, coded as "splinters" (y/n). To consider a new organization a splinter, command and control must have been severed from the parent group to avoid miscoding a group that may instead act as a strategic arm of the original organization. Two distinct and separate groups joining were coded as 'mergers'. Merging in this research will have occurred when one group subsumes another, or both groups join under the banner of a new name. I narrowed the field further by filtering the data by the new variables to only those with a positive instance (1=Y) of a peace process or negotiation, and then qualitatively examined group profiles to help me determine if there was a shift (namely concession) during or resulting from talks, regardless of the success or unsuccessful nature of the talks. The code for a positive instance of a peace process or negotiation is intentionally broad. If a group had evidence (scholarly research or dataset findings) of having been involved in some type of negotiations with an adversary, from secret talks that amounted in no results, or negotiated ceasefires, to formal negotiations or peace accords. The reason for the breadth of considerations was in part to ensure a variety of degrees of formalized processes would be available for research, as well as a realistic time constraint in researching every single organization to the extent of obtaining specific information about formal processes and their specific results or outcomes.

Limitation: Based on timing considerations and availability of data for the 114 groups, I coded only positive or negative instances of negotiations and splinters, not the number of times they occurred for each organization. The time and research requirement to code each individual organization by the year of negotiation, splinter, and each instance of splintering demands that beyond the scope of my research. Moreover, as a layman for the majority of the 114 organizations, I relied upon existing datasets and prominent scholarship to provide the additional coded variables, and therefore any omissions within the datasets mentioned above or within prominent scholarship would carry over into my coding. Future research would benefit from a project focused on the expansion of variables within the dataset.

(3) I then put together a simple frequency table based on the number of organizations that had engaged in negotiations at any point during their documented existence (N=69). I disaggregated the groups based on those that had singular ('cohesive') or multi-dimensional (not cohesive) ideological orientation, and whether they had territorial control or not. Ideological cohesion (singular orientation (1) or multidimensional (0)) is important because singular implies a strong coalition around an ideology which could provide maneuverability through intentional breadth; while I would expect to see multidimensional orientations as being more homogenous. For example, a multidimensional orientation would include more than one identity marker such as political ideology and ethnicity. If a group recruits from individuals, who at least nominally have a distinct ethnic background and believe in a certain political orientation, then the group should have a more homogenous makeup of individuals with similar beliefs and greater cultural commonalities. Assessing which may have more importance when it comes to splintering is important for iteratively adapting my theoretical framing. Territory is important because it is often a proxy for power or control, and groups with territory have an easier ability to maintain

communication, control, and more safely socialize ideological tenets formally and informally (Christia, 2012; Shapiro, 2013). Below is the resulting table:

Table 3.5, see Annex I for full militant group listing by quadrant, by name

Splits based on territory and ideology (BAAD Dataset)		
Territory	Ideological Cohesion = 0	Ideological Cohesion = 1
Territorial Control = 1	0% (0 of 5)	47% (8 of 17)
Territorial Control = 0	22% (2 of 9)	58% (22 of 38)
N = 69 (32 SPL, 37 N-SPL)		

This empirical process has shown that out of militant groups who splintered and engaged in some form of negotiations -- from ceasefires to formal peace accords -- the vast majority of splintering occurred in organizations with singular ideological cohesion, where ‘cohesion’ is used to describe organizations with one primary ideological orientation. Within the quadrants representing ideological cohesion, groups without territory splinter the most often. This is unsurprising, as findings related to fragmentation indicate that a lack of territory can lead to a reliance of factions, inhibit command and control, and weaken preference alignment that leaders attempt to push down to militants. Similarly, in a grassroots or bottom up perspective, there would be difficulty in sustained interactions and communal ties with militants constantly on the run or who lack a safe area to routinely socialize and intermingle. Therefore, what is most surprising is actually the substantial percentage of splinters that occurred within groups who control territory. More confounding, groups who control territory only splinter if they had a semblance of ideological cohesion (as quadrant 1 demonstrates no groups splinter with territory and multidimensional ideological orientations).

Based on these findings I have determined the greatest research impact and richness comes from examining the relative effect of ideological modification in relation to splintering. I selected groups from quadrant two, who are ideological cohesive (i.e., primary singular

ideology) and control territory to examine more closely. Al-Fatah and the FARC both reside in quadrant two (1,1) and have a similar longevity; indicating increased opportunities for ideological modifications over time as circumstances change; greater likelihood of negotiation involvement due to sustained rebellion; and, allow for an examination across spatial and temporal distances. Additionally, I have selected a negative case from quadrant one, the PKK (0,1), which shares the above characteristics in terms of lifespan, likelihood of ideological modification over time, and temporal and spatial distance, but differs in the key independent variable of ideological cohesion as the PKK has duality of focus, ethnic and political orientation.

All three cases represent asymmetric rebellions which benefited from external state support, and in the case of the PKK and Fatah, substantial diaspora involvement. Inclusion of a negative case (PKK) will strengthen my tests by providing an examination of intergroup dynamics surrounding negotiations that did not end up in splintering, thereby helping to control against spurious results in the other cases. Furthermore, my hypotheses rest on mechanistic accounts that lead to splintering, the inverse of which provide a bulwark against splintering. Therefore, studying the PKK is necessary to support generation of a medium-range, generalizable theory about mechanisms across cases with specific contextual parameters (Beach and Pedersen, 2019).

An important limitation to understand moving forward is that the frequency table does nothing to detect the relative level of territorial control or ideological rigidity/strength within a group. For example, although the Fatah has a singular primary ideological objective, the liberation of Palestinians, Arafat opted for a broad ideology specifically for resilience against splinters (Cobban, 1984). Meanwhile, multidimensional ideologies such as the ethnic and

political focus of the PKK, implies more discrimination in recruitment by having to fit a certain identity while also adhering or supporting a specific political movement, thereby drawing from a more homogeneous militant pool and potentially more rigidity within the groups objectives. On the other hand, territorial control ebbs and flows over time. Research in the Horn of Africa shows how territorial gains and losses affect fragmentation broadly, while territorial stalemates bode well for cohesion (Woldemariam, 2018). Thus, the frequency table is helpful in so far as limiting selection bias and providing general patterns across two important variables, but in-depth small-N case analyses are necessary to draw any conclusions.

3.9. Conclusion

This chapter presented my research as based in constructivism and influenced by historicism. I provided an overview of the concept of splintering followed by the discussion of three hypotheses that I test during analysis to determine the existence of a causal mechanism and eventually, culminate in the building of a new theoretical pathway towards militant group splintering. I also presented existing pathways in this space for clear delineation and demonstrated the added-value of my research. Findings in this dissertation utilize a mixed-methods approach to the research. My application of a quantitative approach to case selection complemented by qualitative methods for case comparison, both congruence procedures and process tracing, each help ensure the validity of my findings while providing multiple opportunities for falsification along the way. In the next chapter, I dive into the research as set forward in Chapter Three beginning with the application of congruence procedures.

Chapter 4

Case Analysis: Congruence Procedures

4.1. Introduction

The case selection process discussed in the previous chapter identified Al-Fatah, the FARC, and the PKK as primary cases for analysis. This section in my research moves beyond the simple frequency table capturing ideological cohesion and territorial control (or lack thereof) that helped to identify cases. Now, I focus on the dynamics within the selected organizations to indicate how leadership directed modifications in ideological orientation manifest in splintering. I use this chapter to examine whether or not there is general congruence between my hypotheses and actions taken by these three militant groups in specific observable circumstances, such as negotiations and other key events where groups perceived to have made ideological concessions. In order to demonstrate congruence, I employ a methodical approach examining key events during which ideological modification, such as changes to foundational objectives (for example, objectives outlined in initial doctrine) have occurred.

This chapter proceeds with a discussion of the parameters for congruence testing, and provides a summary of my findings (table 4.1) as a reference point to help guide the discussion. Next, each case contained within this chapter will begin with a presentation of the events selected, followed by a brief background on the organization, an overview of the groups respective ideological orientation and indoctrination practices, followed by analysis of each event. Finally, each section will conclude with a brief discussion examining my findings against my hypotheses. Evidence obtained in this chapter acts as diagnostic evidence in Chapter Five that supports my inference of the existence of a causal mechanism leading to splintering in the

circumstances studied. I rely on reported statements, datasets, publications, existing research and historical analysis, archives, and other data to compare the hypothesized outcomes against those observed.

4.2. Congruence Testing Parameters

The timeline parameters for congruence analysis in this chapter required the identification of particular historical points where observations surrounding ideological modification are possible. I limited my examination to three key time-bound instances per organization capturing key observable instances relevant to this research. Nine total instances consisting of three per organization allow for multiple test points across cases, with distinct opportunities to examine my primary hypotheses and alternative hypotheses, increasing the validity of my findings confirming or falsifying each. They also support gathering adequate data from which I was able to infer the existence of a causal mechanism, and eventually build my theory as it stands.

The nine events allowed me to directly assess the following three hypotheses, observations from which provided critical data for the remainder of my research:

(H1) If a militant organization is perceived to make ideological concessions to an adversary, then group cleavages between hardliners and others within the organization will form;

(H2) If militant leaders are unable to reframe their ideological objectives to fit the concessions, then internal dissent will occur; and

(H3) If enforcement measures for cohesion (i.e., punishment (killing, torture)) are not credible, splintering will occur.

Moreover, by examining nine data points across time and space, I was able to encompass a variety of conditions; from the influence of geopolitics of the cold-war, or changes in domestic socio-economic environments, to shifts in militant momentum and their organizational structure. Further, I have identified a mix of points in time that include at least one formal negotiation with an adversary per group, along with three ideological modifications that occurred on respective militant groups' own accord. Selected time bound events cover over four decades, from 1974 - 2016.

The first three events analyzed across the cases included Yasser Arafat's speech to the United Nations General Assembly (U.N.G.A.) in 1974 that some hardliner militants viewed as betraying the militant cause by legitimizing the U.N. showing a willingness to negotiate directly with the Israelis; the FARC's reversal from viewing the illicit drug business as counter-revolutionary to embracing the economic advantages and framing support to the common agricultural worker; and, the PKK's 'Principles of Solidarity' agreement with the KPD who adhered to typical practices counter to those of the PKK. The 1974 U.N.G.A speech by Arafat triggered the splintering of the Abu Nidal Organization, and was the only event which had a positively assessed result for each of my three hypotheses:

Table 4.1

Militant Group	Al-Fatah	FARC	PKK
Events 1-3	1974: Arafat's U.N.G.A Speech	1982: FARC reversal on the illicit drug business	1983: PKK signs the 'Principles of Solidarity'
<i>H1. (Ideological Modification as Concession(s))</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes
<i>H2. (Reframing Fails & Hardliners Dissent)</i>	Yes	No	No
<i>H3. (Non-Credible Enforcement Measures)</i>	Yes	No	No
Splinter	Yes	No* *a splinter occurred unrelated to this event examined	No

Next, I examined the U.S. brokered ceasefire in Lebanon that forced and aided Fatah's retreat in 1982; FARC negotiations with the government of Colombia following the collapse of the Soviet Union and thereby a global shockwave to Marxist organizations including the FARC; and, the arrest of PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan and his subsequent public plea focused on maintaining Turkey's borders as opposed to a liberated independent state. Again, Fatah is the only splinter across these three events and similar to the first set of events, observations indicate positive findings related to each of my three hypotheses:

Table 4.2

Militant Group	Al-Fatah	FARC	PKK
Events 4-6	1982: Fatah accepts a brokered ceasefire	1991: Negotiations following Soviet collapse	1999: PKK leader Ocalan arrested
<i>H1. (Ideological Modification as Concession(s))</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes
<i>H2. (Reframing Fails & Hardliners Dissent)</i>	Yes	No	Yes
<i>H3. (Non-Credible Enforcement Measures)</i>	Yes	No	No
Splinter	Yes	No	No

Finally, the third set of events across cases include Fatah’s participation in the Oslo Accords (‘Oslo 1’) after suffering two instances of splintering referenced above; the FARC’s participation in the final negotiations with the Government of Colombia that led to their official demobilization as well as the creation of splinter dissident groups; and, the PKK’s formal switch to the ideological orientation of Democratic Confederalism. These final three events triangulated my observations again confirming the positive result for my three hypotheses, with the FARC being the only case to have a positive outcome for each of the three as well as the only splinter:

Table 4.3

Militant Group	Al-Fatah	FARC	PKK
Events 7-9	1993: Fatah participates in Oslo Accords	2016: Final peace process before FARC demobilization	2005: PKK's 'Democratic Confederalism'
<i>H1. (Ideological Modification as Concession(s))</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes
<i>H2. (Reframing Fails & Hardliners Dissent)</i>	No	Yes	Yes
<i>H3. (Non-Credible Enforcement Measures)</i>	Yes	Yes	No
Splinter	No	Yes	No

Instances selected for congruence procedures corroborate that when militants perceive ideological modification as concessional and hardliners dissent within the group, often forming cleavages; and, enforcement measures for cohesion are non-credible, conditions are sufficient for splintering. Congruence procedures leave a gap for my ability to examine more fine grained details because I am focusing on three cases and nine events. I balance this in Chapter 5 where I have undertaken targeted process-tracing. In addition to identifying mechanism-based processes to answer my research question, process tracing allowed me to provide additional controls and build upon my initial findings from congruence analysis. The cases presented in this chapter for congruence procedures provide an attempt to discern basic logic through a hoop-test. A hoop-test is used because it is the appropriate test for theory development, helping determine whether or not my hypotheses as outlined indicate they are at minimum 'necessary' in terms of the necessary-sufficient model for evidence (Mahoney, 2012; Collier, 2011; Bennet, 2008; Van

Evera, 1993). Conversely, examining these nine specific instances offer the opportunity to close the door on my hypotheses and look to other possible theoretical reasoning, if it becomes clear they do not hold water in the initial congruence analysis.

The cases examined clearly demonstrate the theoretical passing of a hoop test. The logic surrounding my hypotheses holds up in each instance. Specifically, (1) when militants perceived ideological modifications that occurred during or surrounding negotiations as *concessions*, it created or brought to the surface in-group cleavages; (2) when militants perceived modifications as concessions and created or elevated cleavages, militant groups attempted to reframe concessions positively as legitimacy courses of actions (e.g., evolution, success); and, (3) when militants viewed ideological modifications as concessions and leadership reframing was unsuccessful or viewed as illegitimate, splintering was most likely to occur when militant enforcement measures for cohesion were non-credible. The cases similarly examined scenarios in which modifications occurred outside of negotiations with an adversary. These modifications did not create cleavages, and did not cause dissent rising to the degree of necessary enforcement measures. Thus, legitimacy of the modifications appears to have been more easily justifiable if not readily accepted, and militant perceptions of enforcement measures less relevant. These findings are important because they demonstrate the degree to which ideology matters may be more contextually dependent than acknowledged, that hardliners and non-negotiable ideals may in fact be negotiable depending on the circumstance and degree of control and interest over the changes. It also reinforces the notion that militant hardliners are more likely to be opposed to negotiations that target key tenants of their ideological orientation, providing evidence for expanding existing theories such as the devoted actor theory.

4.3. Al-Fatah (Fatah)

Fatah focuses on three key events spanning from 1974 - 1993, in adherence with the scope conditions laid out earlier in this research. These events provide observable ideological modifications, and associated group actions. Events each hold methodological and analytical value in this analysis. Yasser Arafat's infamous U.N. General Assembly (UNGA) speech in 1974 holds intrinsic importance with negative Palestinian feelings towards the U.N., given their role in both partitioning Palestine and their endorsement of Israel without acknowledgement of Palestinians in UN Resolution 242 (Irfan, 2020). Upon Sabri Khalil al-Banna's formation of the first splinter group from Fatah, the Fatah-the Revolutionary Council, he cited the UN speech as a primary betrayal (Melman, 1986). Fatah's (via the PLO's) acceptance of the 1982 expulsion from Lebanon and of the brokered ceasefire (however brief) was selected due to the nature of the negotiation occurring with the input from the West, its proximity to the atrocities targeting Palestinians at Sabra and Shatila refugee camps, and visible internal personality disagreements both before and after their expulsion (Shahid, 2002; Hudson, 1997). Finally, the Oslo Peace Accords in 1993 provide a formal negotiation point, during which the PLO, within which Fatah held the reigns, formally recognized Israel's right to exist and renounced the use of terrorism (Khalil, 2013). This final event offers one of the most important formal concessions by Fatah, specifically contradicting their founding ideological doctrine, Fatah's Constitution.

Fatah takes its name from the reverse-abbreviation of the Arabic *Harakat al-Tahrir al-Filistani* (Palestinian National Liberation Movement), or Hatf (Cobban, 1983). Fatah in the literal Arabic translation can mean 'opening' or 'conquering', with founding members such as Salah Khalaf '(Abu Iyad)' attributing 'conquering' as the intended meaning (Iyad and Rouleau, 1981). Conquering was a fitting term given since its inception, Fatah and the armed struggle

were one. The armed struggle was the program of action in pursuit of achieving Palestinian liberation through revolution. Active militancy was the core of their founding around 1959 (or early 1960s, depending on the recollection of the original members), when a core group of Palestinians including Yasser Arafat, Abu Wazir, and Salah Khalaf developed the group as an out-birth of a familiar path for militants: student/youth groups (Singh, 2014; Iyad and Rouleau, 1981). The creation based on student/youth groups is important because it provided a basic organizational structure and networks for the militants upon inception. Like many militant Palestinian organizations, the founding of Fatah was set in motion by Israel’s mass expulsion of Palestinian Arabs from the territory under the British mandate in 1948, also known as the Nakba or catastrophe (Rabinovich, 2012). By the 1950s, multiple organizations had organized both militantly and/or politically, pursuing various political and regional avenues including communism, pan-Arabism, and Islamism as—often indirect—solutions to the plight of Palestinians. Fatah’s founders intentionally structured the organization as being apolitical to focus on ethnic liberation and self-determination for the Palestinian homeland, not political-ideology like communism, socialism, or democracy.

4.3.1 Foundational Ideological Tenets

Fatah’s original constitution, also referred to as the ‘original charter’ from the early 1960s (date not published) provides the organizational and ideological foundation for the group. Specifically, the top goals outlined as Article 12 and 13, are the “[c]omplete liberation of Palestine, and eradication of Zionist economic, political, military and cultural existence”, and “[e]stablishing an independent democratic state with complete sovereignty on all Palestinian lands, and Jerusalem is its capital city, and protecting the citizens' legal and equal rights without

any racial or religious discrimination”, respectively. It also provides “armed revolution” as the means to liberating Palestinians (Fatah online website archive, 2005). Importantly, when reading the articles related to goals and membership, the ideological orientation is clearly focused on placing a prominence on the Palestinian revolution and member characteristics in line with willingness to engage in the revolution (such as through self-sacrifice). The lack of an ethnic or religious requirement or political affiliation, provides for a significant broad swath of the population from which to recruit.

Indeed, Arafat and the other Fatah founders kept the ideological orientation intentionally broad in order to support cohesion and protect against the splintering of, or factions within the organization (Melman, 1986). This was not due to a lack of religiosity amongst the founders; Islam was “central to Fatah’s ethnic’ and also used as an important tool for recruitment (Zelkowitz, 2015). However, Fatah’s founders made a determination that the benefits of engaging as many people as possible outweighed a more heavily discriminated approach, opting for the vagueness associated with a big tent approach to support. Fatah’s constitution did not allow for just anyone to join, members needed to have ‘credibility’, a ‘good reputation’, and ‘leading qualifications’ to demonstrate ‘awareness’, ability to take on ‘responsibility’, and have an ‘amicable personality’ (Article 35). These attributes are highly subjective and would allow Fatah members and leaders ultimate discretion, something necessary for a clandestine militant organization. Nonetheless, this left the potential recruitment pool rather open in their constitution. I examine the relative lack of discrimination in their recruitment qualifications later during instances of splintering. Additionally, their structure seeks to underpin unity, applying democratic voting for leadership responsibilities and various councils, while also leaving a

somewhat contradictory door open to objective modifications by placing an emphasis on following the direction of the leadership council and majority decisions (Article 30, a & b.1-7).

4.3.2. Internal Recruitment & Indoctrination

Fatah targeted recruitment efforts on Palestinian diaspora, exiles, and refugees outside of Israel and Palestine, creating and leveraging connections with Palestinian associations and student groups (Zelkovitz, 2015). Initial recruitment strategies focused on individuals already ideologically opposed to Zionism or those negatively impacted by its effects, such as prisoners, who would have made for sympathetic recruits with a strong likelihood of existing grievance against Government Israel and their security apparatus. Recruitment is a social act with members of Fatah often relying on existing networks to identify recruits that are likely to be ideologically in line with Fatah's program, and could be generally (or at least modestly) trusted to a certain extent from the beginning. Indeed, as referenced in Article 35 of Fatah's doctrine recruits must already have credibility and good standing as determined by Fatah. Recruits ebbed and flowed throughout Fatah's lifespan, with significant up-ticks after certain events such as the Battle of Karamah that were at times associated with more relaxed recruitment scrutiny (Cobban, 1984; Singh, 2015). Following recruitment members underwent indoctrination practices aimed at ensuring adherence to the group and providing general ideological guidance for militants.

Militant groups rely on indoctrination for cohesion, to provide a program of action, maintain unified belief in or support of an objective for both fighters and local populations, amongst other reasons (Schubiger and Zelina, 2017; Balcells and Kalyvas, 2015). Fatah is no different. From their inception in the late 1950s and in the early 1960s, they relied on internal and external facing publications such *Our Palestine (Filastinuna)* which launched in 1962 and

has become known as their ideological debut. They also relied heavily on *Revolutionary Lessons and Trials* pamphlets to relay ideological arguments to susceptible Palestinians and internally for members, and from which leadership could draw to stay on message (Harkabi, 1968).

Fatah leveraged state support for their struggle, engaging formally with Cuba for years, who provided Marxist political thought as well as military training (Pons, 2001). They found similar support from Maoists in China, where militant training and political influence had made its way into Fatah (Sing, 2013). They also engaged with Algeria, whom Arafat and others idealized for their recent (at the time) successful revolution (1962), and trained in Syria (Al-Hameh, near Damascus, known for recruits as young as fourteen or fifteen) and elsewhere over the course of their existence (Harkabi, 1968; Seale, 1992).

At the same time, their reliance on propaganda and utilizing external states for camps and training of their ranks, along with positioning Fatah members forward in various countries invited conflict. For example, recruits would sometimes come apprised of false narratives related to events and decide against supporting Fatah, or, prisoners and others have joined out of incentives rather than commitment, making them less reliable during internal conflict (Hakbari, 1968). Another example explored deeper below, is Sabri Al-Banna's station in Iraq as a Fatah representative furthered his relationships with the Ba'ath party, and helped provide him space to begin planning and recruitment for his splinter organization (Melman, 1986).

One of the shortcomings in approaching indoctrination is the inevitable ebb and flow of recruits, resources, and time (often constrained by conflict or need to pump out fighters with urgency). In the case of Fatah, the perceived success in the Battle of Karameh in 1968 brought in a renewed sense of pride and hope into the Palestinian (and broader-Arab) movement.

Successes against Israel in Karameh came on the heels of the abysmal 1967 Six-Day War, during which Israel achieved a decisive victory against the Arab world. Fatah's successful guerilla attacks demonstrated that militant groups can have an impact and don't need to rely on Arab regimes, and led to an influx of new members. The increased volunteering had a more lax indoctrination procedures, with Fatah forced to accommodate lectures for "100 at one time", unlike their usual more intimate, unlike their preference for cell indoctrination (Cobban, 1984:49). Volunteering would continue in its fluidity moving forward, from competing groups in the early years like Habash's PFLP, or decades later, with the introduction of militant-Jihadi groups like Hamas or the Palestinian Islamic Jihad eventually competing for recruits, with very different ideological approaches to Palestinian liberation.

4.3.3. 1974 Arafat Affirms the Role and Legitimacy of the U.N.

In November 1974, Yasser Arafat, then head of both Fatah and the umbrella PLO, affirmed the role and legitimacy of the U.N. by attending the General Assembly session and giving a 90 minute speech on the plight of the Palestinians at the hands of the Zionists. His speech went down in history for the closing remarks, where he stated "[t]oday I have come bearing an olive branch and a freedom-fighter's gun. Do not let the olive branch fall from my hand. I repeat: do not let the olive branch fall from my hand" (United Nations verbatim record, 1974). This event has been pointed to as a betrayal to the revolutionary fight by other militant Palestinians, so far as to claim that Sabri al-Banna splinter from Fatah because of his perceived betrayal by Arafat legitimizing the U.N. offering a path towards engaging directly with Israel. While I do not seek to assign agency to individuals, evidence indicates that militant perceptions of the event as an ideological concession was exploited, more so than the *reason* itself for the

splinter. This is important because the framing surrounding ideological splinters lends itself to the idea of hardliners breaking off due to non-negotiable beliefs, implying a common degree to which ideology matters and extent to which radicalization of members occurred. However, as discussed under the previous chapters, not radicalization does not occur across all militants to the same degree nor do they necessarily believe or support foundational objectives, as there are often other reasons at play.

Sabri Al-Banna, later known infamously by his nom de guerre Abu Nidal, led the first major internal revolt against Arafat's Fatah resulting in the formation of a splinter group, Fatah the Revolutionary Council. The Revolutionary Council quickly took on a life of its own and became more formally recognized as the Abu Nidal Organization, or ANO (Melman, 1986). The ANO would unfortunately go on to be one of the most lethal terrorist organizations of the 20th century. Abu Nidal was a member of Fatah in the late 1960s, and had multiple, documented personal and strategic conflicts with Fatah leadership from the late 1960s through the early 1970s (Seale, 1992).

Nidal's primary objective for the ANO was complete destruction of Israel through armed struggle, as the only way to achieve Palestinian liberation (Melman, 1986). It is within this framing it might appear that Fatah's willingness to engage in political processes and work with the U.N. through the PLO was out of step with armed revolt as the only way for liberation. It is also apparent, as described above, that Fatah's willingness to engage with the U.N. and carry a potential 'olive' branch, is out of step with their foundational program of action as armed revolution. However, it's important to note that Arafat's speech did not in fact renounce terrorism or the armed revolt more broadly, and takes pains to ensure he explicitly notes that strategy is still on the table until a peace arrives. Nidal did not only disagree with the perceived

treachery of Fatah's engagement with the U.N. and thereby openness to 'negotiating with the Zionists', but also expressed a much more Arab-state centric idea of revolution. He believed in not only liberating Palestine, but liberating it as part of a greater-Syria, while then setting the next objective on the destruction of "reactionary regimes" in Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and Lebanon (Melman, 1986:77). There is clearly merit to the argument that the speech by Arafat was the culmination—at that time—of Fatah's movement towards openness to a political solution. Yet even from the U.S. political perspective, however biased Kissinger likely was in order to support U.S.-Israeli policy objectives, Kissinger noted he did not in fact see any real change in the PLO's position in relation to Israel in Arafat's speech. He read it as a call for a new state without explicitly calling for the existence of Israel, clearly keeping a flexible response that could include more extreme measures (Khalil, 2016). Nidal nonetheless exploited that key moment of treachery, while his personal and strategic disagreements with Fatah and Arafat in particular, go back further.

In 1970, with fears of Jordanian attacks pending against the guerilla movement in the then-chaotic country, Fatah needed someone in Baghdad to ensure the Iraqis would support the Fedayeen in the event of a Jordanian strike. Abu Iyad, who had an open ear to Nidal's posturing for the position, passed on the recommendation in discussions with Arafat, who agreed and Nidal went to Baghdad. Yet Nidal's presence proved too little too late, Jordan attacked and the Iraqis stood by, as it would come to light after a previous agreement between Iraq and Jordan was already in place to ensure they would not support the guerillas. At this time, Abu Nidal was levying additional attacks Baghdad against Fatah, and was critical of Fatah in the prominent *Voice of Palestine* (Seale, 1992). Arafat, in consultation with Abu Jihad, decided Nidal should face expulsion from the group. However, after much discussion, Abu Iyad who had initially

supported Nidal's going to Baghdad on behalf of Fatah, instead pushed for containing any harm he might otherwise cause and instead pulled him back into the Fatah fold. By late 1971, Nidal went from a source of internal conflict to having moved "beyond verbal criticism and was actually plotting against them [Fatah]" (Seale, 1992:86). It is clear that Fatah's lack of willingness to actually enforce cohesion and punish or otherwise deal with Nidal (i.e., forcefully expel, imprison, or kill) enabled him to plot and move forward as a splinter. By the time Fatah took significant actions against Nidal, sentencing him to death in absentia, it was far too late.

Then in 1974, two significant events took place in advance of the Arafat U.N. speech that helped create the conditions for the transition into political engagement. First, the Palestinian National Council agreed to the ten point plan that led the militants down a road towards political participation. Second, at the Arab Summit in Rabat Arab leaders agreed henceforth the PLO would be the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian movement. Rumors indicate coercion by the PLO's sending a hit-team to be prepared to violently move against leaders who disagreed helped secure the agreement, but nonetheless was successful (Seale, 1992). The PLO's agreement and Arab leader support for the PLO as the representatives on the Palestinian issue further enabled Arafat to frame and legitimize the transition to opening a political option for peace. He was in fact buttressing the betrayal some militants perceived by providing the authority and legitimacy to make the claim in advance of actually making it. Additionally, the invitation to speak at the U.N provided when Algeria held the General Assembly's presidency, an important factor for Fatah and the larger Palestinian Resistance, who held Algeria in high-esteem for their guerrilla-led revolution (Khalil, 2016). This appears to have gone over generally well, but it nonetheless provided Abu Nidal the opportunity to exploit Arafat's action. Additionally, Abu Nidal captured the inherent romanticism with the struggle in the face of defeat

amongst Palestinian culture. At the same time, top leadership in Fatah were socializing the legitimacy of the political option as the realistic next step in pursuing Fatah's objectives. In doing so they plead their case as rather than treachery, it was the most appropriate way to adapt tactics to meet multiple aspects of Fatah's strategic objectives, including the potential for the return of some of Palestinian homelands and international recognition of Palestinians and their struggle, which had for so long been out of their grasp. Indeed, Abu Iyad spoke to student groups in Beirut, Arab leaders, and militants in the Rejectionist Front to frame the political option as a victory in and of itself, and the momentum it might carry (Iyad and Rouleau, 1981).

Meanwhile, Abu Nidal was able to socialize his beliefs or at least, offer an opportunity for continued armed struggle through his position in Iraq, where he undertook his primary recruitment efforts targeting its Palestinian community. He also leveraged militants who recently found themselves both "unemployed since the dissolving of Black September" and, if ideologically committed, without a means to continue pursuit of Palestinian liberation (Melman, 1986:78). Abu Nidal was able to utilize his post as a Fatah representative in Baghdad to actively recruit and begin structuring his organization under Fatah's nose, from a safe distance away, and with the endorsement of the Baath party in Iraq. At the same time, his potential recruits were engaging with him at a safe distance from Fatah, providing for immediate safety concerns and insulated against immediate blowback from affiliating with Abu Nidal during the splinter. Abu Nidal's focus on a more violent, seemingly no-holds endorsement of violence articulated as rooted in unrelenting support for Palestinian liberation.

A relatively important incident occurs in the late 1970's that shows how Fatah was able to impose enforcement measures for cohesion in a manner they were unable to do in 1974 that further supports the importance of said measures. In 1978, Fedayeen guerillas set off skirmishes

and hijackings of civilian buses that resulted in an Israeli occupation of Southern Lebanon using “disproportionate violence” against Palestinians and Lebanese (Seale, 1992:113-114). Seale describes in *Abu Nidal: A Gun for Hire* how Fatah’s eventual agreement to a ceasefire with Israel divided Fatah, but in this instance, Arafat employed enforcement measures for cohesion. Specifically, Arafat and Fatah were able to identify and jail ANO members who infiltrated Fatah, who were conducting attacks under militia leader Abu Dawud (Seale, 1992). This event is worth considering as another potential rupture point for Fatah. Fatah was quick to employ measures of enforcement for cohesion unlike the previous event that led to splintering. The group jailed and interrogated suspected ANO militants, and set about determining loyalties of suspected participants. In this instance, Fatah demonstrated credible enforcement measures for cohesion.

4.3.4. 1982 Fatah (as part of the PLO) Retreats from Lebanon

The Lebanese civil war in 1975 quickened the erosion of Lebanese support for the Palestinian Resistance, certainly Fatah, along with Palestinians residing and operating in the country. It is true that even in the very early 1970s after Black September in Jordan, skirmishes had started breaking out within Lebanon between Palestinian militants (to include Fatah) and adversaries, and the Palestinian resistance continued launching attacks against Israel from Lebanon. Yet the events of the Cairo Agreement that provided PLO authority over refugee camps in Lebanon along with Black September, led to a strengthened Palestinian position in Lebanon (Wahyudi, 1989). It was in this context that by 1975, Palestinians in Lebanon were operating a ‘mini-state’, challenging sovereignty and resulting in persistent cynicism (Suleiman, 2011). The sentiment of increased Palestinian influence on Lebanon was characterized even more strongly in the view of some Israelis, calling it ‘insidious’, with influence over their

primary area of operations earning the reference ‘Fatahland’ (Erlich, 2019). Meanwhile, Fatah’s internal organization was brewing resentment and competition. The internal confrontation that began to take a more public shape in 1975 would become the foundation for a full schism in the early 1980s. Not dissimilar to Abu Nidal’s criticisms of Fatah’s interest in conceding (some) violence for a political outcome, Abu Saleh, Abu Moussa, and Naji Alloush banded together an internal rejectionist front of their own, known as The National Democratic Current (NDC). Arafat and his allies quickly squashed the agitators, sidelining a major splinter for the time, but inadvertently caused Alloush to start his own faction (Ghanem and Khayed, 2003). Similar yet again, to how Fatah dealt with Abu Nidal, Fatah sidelined Alloush and squashed the NDC internally, but did not enforce strict punishment to the extent of exiling or severely punishing the members involved in the dissent.

By the early 1980s, Israel had already intervened heavily in the Lebanese conflict with their previous invasion in 1978, which left behind a pro-Israel militia in the South Lebanon Army (SLA) that was well-positioned to strengthen their position in country. The early 1980s had witnessed the SLA, PLO, Lebanese, and Syrians routinely having open clashes (Tinas, 2017). Then in 1982, the Fatah splinter ANO attempted to assassinate the Israeli Ambassador in London, Shlomo Argov, which helped to trigger a second Israeli invasion, ‘Operation Peace for the Galilee’ (Council on Foreign Relations, 2009; Erlich, 2019). This invasion was much more successful for Israel than earlier interventions in the conflict, which drove out the PLO’s leadership from Lebanon and severely degraded any remaining Palestinian resistance in the country. This was a critical juncture for Fatah leadership. They assessed the pitfalls of a mini-army approach to attacking Israel’s modern military, in comparison to successes of targeted

guerilla attacks. The outcome made it clear that a return to a program of guerilla militancy was necessitated (Cobban, 1984).

The departure of the PLO (thereby Fatah) from their strongholds in Lebanon across a negotiated border, part of a bigger U.S. (envoy Philip Habib) brokered-plan that included eventual withdrawal of Syrian, Israeli, and the Western multinational forces (MNF) (Archives, United Press International, 1983). A critical part of the agreement for the PLO and Fatah to leave Lebanon, was Arafat's point that his militants would leave 'without any conditions, but we want an American-international guarantee for the security of the civilians in Beirut' (Cobban, 1984:123). Thus, the MNF had to oversee not only the PLO's evacuation, but also with ensuring the safety of Palestinian refugees. Unfortunately, the MNF's departure occurred before then-President Bashir Gemayel's assassination in Beirut (Al-Shaikh, 1984). The instantaneous political and sectarian crisis resulting from the assassination put Israel's policy priorities in Lebanon in peril, and they surely would have realized one potential outcome of the instability could be the absence of a friendly government with a favorable view of Israeli interests. Yet some research indicates Israel had planned an intervention even prior to the assassination (Shahid, 2002). Nonetheless, the IDF crossed the negotiated border, securitizing Lebanon and providing checkpoints and at times shelling, enabling Israeli-aligned Phalangist militias to raid camps. Phalangist raids included the infamous massacres at Sabra and Shatila, where eye-witness accounts painted a picture of primarily Palestinian elderly, women, and children killed, along with Shiite refugees mistaken as Palestinians (Shahid, 2002; Al-Shaikh, 1984). The perception that the PLO's trust in a brokered evacuation that transferred security of Palestinian camps over to the MNF enabled the massacres was not lost on dissenters, particularly given Arafat's one non-negotiable point of requiring the safety of civilians in Beirut. As one resident

of Shatila who lost her husband and house put it in an interview recounted by Shahid “[w]e turned in our weapons; we trusted the Lebanese authorities. Abu Am- mar [Yasir Arafat] had signed an agreement with the government that no one would touch the camps after the fighters left. We believed that. The result? They betrayed us.” (Shahid, 2002:57).

In parallel to the defeat of Arafat’s Fatah under the PLO in Lebanon, was the introduction of Reagan’s Peace Plan in 1982. Reagan’s plan to build off the Camp David Accords with Egypt in 1978 intended supporting a peaceful resolution to the Palestinian problem, but was naive to the degrees of commitment and value placed on the region by both the Palestinians and Israel. Arafat appeared more willing to engage in discussion surrounding the plan, but refused Jordan’s bid to speak on behalf of the Palestinians (Montgomery, 1983). Arafat’s walking the line on the Reagan Plan was associated with significant discontent within Fatah related to his willingness to engage in discussions with Hussein of Jordan whatsoever, considering the events of Black September only a decade earlier (Raj, 1983). The aforementioned events of Gayamel’s assassination and the massacres at Sabra and Shatila largely pushed the Reagan Plan to the side, and reporting in early February 1983 demonstrated that in addition to Israeli condemnation of the Plan, the PLO sensed the internal pressures associated with their own affiliation of the plan. According to the *New York Times*, the PLO’s representative Abdel Rahman stated: “[y]ou say that the P.L.O. should stop playing consensus politics and take a clear-cut decision no matter what the price...” “...But why should we go through the trauma of splitting up our organization debating whether or not to get on a bus that does not have a motor in it?” (Friedman, 1983).

This backdrop in 1983–Fatah’s evacuation from Lebanon, Arafat’s strategic blunders and reengagement with Jordan, perceived abandonment of Palestinian camps in Lebanon, and the PLOs flirtation with considering the Reagan Peace Plan—is necessary to frame the splintering led

by Col Said al-Muragha, nom-de-guerre Abu Moussa. Col. Said al-Muragha (Abu Moussa, the name by which I will refer to him in this research) established Fatah Intifada. He articulated direct opposition to Arafat's decision—for Fatah and the larger PLO—to accept an agreement to the process of a forced-evacuation from Lebanon (Krause, 2017:54; Rubin, 1994). In addition to the retreat itself, fighters within Fatah viewed Arafat's promotion of individuals within the PLO who acted poorly during the war as inappropriate if not tone-deaf. Fatah was factional prior to and during the conflict in Lebanon, but the context surrounding the retreat was seemingly the last straw. Like the ANO, Fatah Intifada formed not only with heavy criticism of Fatah's trajectory and ideological concessions, but also direct condemnation of Arafat.

Abu Moussa's group was far from the only one to label Arafat as a dictator, and there were clearly supporters and detractors of Fatah based on his persona (Said, 1998). Indeed, even during their retreat from Lebanon, leaders like Nimr Saleh (one of the founders of Fatah Intifada) shifted support away from Arafat to a pro-Syrian stance early, but the Fatah leadership was able to “isolate the effects of his succession” at the time (Cobban, 1984:248). Fatah Intifada had another commonality with the ANO: foreign support. Abu Moussa's group had clear backing from the Syrian government, who were always looking for ways to control the Palestinian movement (Ghanem and Khayed, 2003; Napolitano, 2013). Unfortunately for Fatah, the splinter ended up being an intense, violent process that led to the so-called ‘war of the camps’, during which refugee camps in Lebanon divided into a personalized conflict between supporters and opponents of Arafat and Fatah Intifada (Ghanem and Khayed, 2003).

Moussa's group also demanded reforms within the PLO and Fatah, believing Arafat and his core-leadership were corrupt and calling for power-sharing and a rejection of the peace process (Friedman, 1983). During the war of the camps, Fatah Intifada's socialized their

message largely, as Fatah's territorial dominance in Lebanon was severely diminished, and Fatah leadership had largely fled the region. Moreover, Arafat's consideration of Reagan's Peace Plan led to criticism that he was prioritizing a potential negotiation to include King Hussein of Jordan, over the struggle against Israel (Capitanchik, 1984).

Evidence of attacks as documented by the GTD seems to at least corroborate the intention of militant violence against the 'Zionist entity' in broad terms: all documented attacks from 1986 onwards conducted by Fatah Intifada (which includes attacks under other names affiliated with the group, including the 'Abu Moussa Group' also reported as 'Musa' or 'Mousa', and under the name 'Fatah Uprising') were directed against Israeli interests (Global Terrorism Database 1970-2020, 2022). In fact, most of the documented attacks in the data set seem to have been targeting the military or government entities. There was also the issue of corruption. However, Abu Moussa and his co-founders of the splinter took pains to criticize perceived shortcomings of Fatah officials. Abu Moussa blatantly blamed Arafat in particular his individual monopolization of everything from political to financial decisions (Ghanem and Khayed, 2003). Arafat's framing of Abu Moussa and his collaborators as mutineers did not do much to halt perceptions of treachery and poor leadership influencing the schism, which appears to have been far more intense for Fatah and made Arafat more personally vulnerable than did the 1974 splinter with the ANO. Like the ANO, we saw Fatah attempt to sideline the primary dissidents without taking much force or seemingly understanding the signs that dissent was building towards a breaking point. Abu Moussa was able to take advantage of he and the group's founders having been sidelined within Fatah, while able to access the network of militants and move about freely, including joining the PNC discussions (even when Nimr Saleh was barred from participating) (Ghanem and Khayed, 2003). One major difference in Fatah's initial response to Fatah Intifada

and the ANO was that Fatah was fresh off a military defeat and did not have the same credibility they had in the early 1970s coming off positive receptions from Karamah. In 1983, Fatah faced the reality that their peak influence and might of the late 1970s had been spiraling.

Abu Moussa's splinter took what he and other hardline militants perceived as failures of Fatah in adhering to Fatah's foundational ideological objectives and program of action, and offered themselves in the form of Fatah Intifada as an alternative. The PFLP, DFLP, and ANO amongst others were already in existence at the time, some of which held extreme Marxist-Leninist, hardline anti-Israel, and other viewpoints. Yet similar to Abu Nidal, Abu Moussa and his co-founders decided to start a new group rather than gravitate to competitors already active in the space. One of the key differences with Abu Moussa's group was the aim of launching a group that intended to get back to the original purpose upon which Fatah was founded, and should have remained, rather than a reorientation towards a different set of or modified objectives. Fatah Intifada was also associated with Syria from the beginning, who provided staunch support to the militants. Fatah had received support from Syria during their lifespan as well, along with that from the Soviet Union, China, Cuba, and others as discussed earlier in the chapter. Foreign support aside, Fatah believed in non-reliance on Arab countries and being the sole-representative of the Palestinian people, wielding the PLO to achieve that goal. Meanwhile, Moussa's personal vendetta against Arafat is not surprising. As hardliners identify an internal adversary whom they perceive as a traitor, personal attacks are expected. The personal disagreements and dislike between Moussa and other founders and Arafat along with his leadership circle is important, but evidence presented in this section indicates Fatah Intifada member's perception of ideological betrayal was the motivating factor for the time and process of splintering.

Overall, the evidence indicates Abu Moussa was able to leverage Fatah's strategic blunder and exploit the elements that fell out of line with Fatah's foundational ideological orientation. Fatah Intifada exploited perceived concessions from the Lebanon withdrawal and involvement in considering the Reagan Plan. The substantial support from Syria where observers viewed them as doing Syria's bidding, previously documented personality disputes with Arafat including the inner-circle's perceived corruption, along with the decision to begin their own organization are key considerations in examining Fatah Intifada. The evidence is clearer that in this instance ideology appears to have played a greater role in the reasoning for the founders of the splinter, but like the ANO, Abu Moussa exploited ideological concessions. The ability to exploit Fatah's concessions was possible by multiple factors: Syria's backing, personal disdain for Arafat across ranks, the lack of an agreeable alternative within the existing ecosystem of militants are all important considerations. Like the ANO, the role of perceived ideological concessions appears to have acted as a catalyst for the splinter, although in this case, it appears the focus of the splinter was more on the actual concession of ideological objectives, supported by other variables such as personality, corruption, and strategic blunders that helped enable the splinter.

4.3.5. 1993 Fatah (through the PLO) engaged in the Oslo Peace Accords

The 1993 Oslo Peace Accords was the first formal direct pact between the PLO (with Fatah at the helm) and Israel, during which the PLO officially recognized Israel's statehood in exchange for their own recognition and the beginnings of the Palestinian Authority, the apparatus for future self-rule (Khalil, 2013). In assessing perceived ideological concessions that could cause internal dissent and strife for Fatah, this was at the time the biggest opportunity for

significant dissent since Fatah's founding. The complexity surrounding Oslo was significant. Leading up to 1993 was the rise of Hamas as a challenger to Fatah, the Gulf War and inter-Palestinian dynamics surrounding the U.S. invasion and Saddam's defeat, and the Madrid Conference. My examination of the Oslo Accords therefore begins with a constructivist approach to situating Fatah in the middle of this complexity. Specifically, I offer an examination of the rise of Hamas as a competitor to Fatah, to demonstrate the tenuous situation Fatah by way of the PLO found themselves in by 1993. As part of the PLO with the leading member, Fatah was hanging on to their importance and relevance to the Palestinian question. Moreover, militant and non-militant Palestinians would view any negotiations by 1993 under a new prism of progress that put secular and religiously oriented militants in conflict with one another. As I demonstrated in the points examined above, dissidents looking to splinter with the parent group use militant perceived ideological concessions as an opening, even when other mounting pressures may be the primary reason for hardline leaders. Thus, the 1993 decision to engage with Israel and recognize their right to existence (thereby conceding the goal of liberating all of former Palestine) should have been a monumental ideological concession opening the door to further cleavages within Fatah. Yet, Fatah maintained overall unity, even if beset by intragroup and inter-Palestinian friction surrounding the negotiations.

Beginning with the first intifada in 1987, Fatah began to experience more competition from militant Palestinian groups than it had since the rejectionist front of the 1970s. Harakat al-Muqawam al-Islami, a shoot-off from the Muslim Brotherhood, officially took the name Hamas, an acronym for the Islamic Resistance Movement, and 'zeal' in Arabic (Abu-Amr, 1993:11). Hamas rose as the primary challenger to Fatah's ideological stance and program of action. Hamas matters because unlike the primarily secular militant-Palestinian climate of the 1970s and

1980s, Hamas brought a militant Islamist element into the fold in late 1988 and throughout the 1990s, challenging Fatah's militant hegemony amongst Palestinians (Schanzer, 2003). The late 1980s-early-1990s introduced Hamas as an increasingly powerful competitor to Fatah, with a different ideological underpinning that called for not only ending occupation as Fatah and others have, but also more explicitly militant-Islamist with the establishment of an Islamic state in Palestine (Abu-Amr, 1993). They held more hardline views, a higher level of militant discrimination—the opposite of Fatah's big tent approach to secular militancy—and importantly, held sway with the increasingly religiously-oriented youth of the post-1967 era.

Fatah leadership appeared reluctant to capitalize on the spontaneous rebellion that was the first intifada. Meanwhile Hamas leaned into the atmosphere surrounding the rebellion, harnessing the anger and action demonstrated by Palestinian youth and traditional groups like Fatah's pragmatic stance of secular national liberation was at the same time challenged by Hamas' militant Islamist orientation (Schanzer, 2003). Fatah saw youth who were increasingly looking towards more aggressive and conservative messages to go in the direction of Hamas (Abu-Amr, 1993). It did not take long for the Fatah leadership to see the increasing popularity and strength of Hamas posed a significant threat to Fatah (Schanzer, 2003).

Arafat took the opportunity to try to win Hamas over by engaging them in participation with the PLO, which would socialize amongst Fatah and the larger PLO a united Fedayeen with Hamas, leaving Arafat at the helm. But Hamas rebuked Arafat and did not join the PLO (Schanzer, 2003). Instead, Hamas remained on the outside as they had begun, becoming more outspoken during Arafat's decision to endorse a Palestinian delegation to the 1991 Madrid Conference with claims that he was betraying the cause by 'selling the land'. By the 1993 Oslo Accords, the disdain for what many militants perceived as Fatah's weak course of action

engaging in negotiations had boiled over and Hamas joined the rejectionist front, supporting attacks against Israel in part to spoil any potential negotiation (Schanzer, 2003). Yet during this period, Fatah's ranks remained generally cohesive. Fatah leadership very much framed the Oslo Accords as progress towards Palestinian liberation, and observations of general unity indicate that was largely accepted.

The initiation of the first iteration of the Oslo Accords of 1993 (also known as 'Oslo I') provided an opportunity for the PLO and Fatah to achieve what was perceived as real, tangible advancement towards Palestinian national liberation. Arafat and then-Prime Minister Rabin had an exchange of letters documenting mutual recognition. Arafat's letter in part read the PLO "'recognizes the right of the State of Israel to exist in peace and security;" "commits itself to ... a peaceful resolution of the conflict between the two sides and declares that all outstanding issues relating to permanent status will be resolved through negotiations;" and "renounces the use of terrorism and other acts of violence" (Letter from Arafat to Rabin, in 1993, as cited by Kittrie, 2002:1667). Oslo allowed Arafat and Fatah leadership to frame the accords as they wished because of the associated ambiguity. In fact, a large part of the accord's progress was the associated gradualism and open-endedness allowed both sides to avoid immediate concessions while for Arafat and the PLO, providing a meaningful way forward for Palestinians (Kittrie, 2002). It also presented Fatah with an opportunity to take a bigger role in the administration of the territories through the Palestinian Authority structures. Meanwhile, opposition and denunciation aimed at the accords was swift. The PFLP, Hamas, and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad condemned the accords, with the latter groups conducting attacks seeking to undermine the potential peace (Celso, 2003). Fatah's own Fatah Hawks who Fatah eventually charged with policing Palestinian areas in West Bank Gaza openly expressed dissent.

Yet Fatah didn't back off from violence completely. Instead, the leadership circle kept militancy as an active alternative to strategically deploy as necessary similar to Arafat's vocalizing of an 'olive branch and a gun' during the U.N.G.A almost two decades before. In this instance however, cohesion remained, compared to the violent splinters experienced following 1974. I am unable to observe within the evidence examined at the meso-level whether this was because hardliners truly believed in this stated process; or, because of the killings of original ideologues and hardliners, already splintered to the ANO or Fatah-Intifada, or otherwise defected. Nonetheless, ranks remained strong.

Because of Oslo, many of Fatah's forces integrated into the Palestinian Authority's structures, but Fatah maintained some armed groups, as evidenced by continued attacks and Arafat's public reactivation of the Fatah Hawks to confront Islamists (Clubb, 2009). This not only signaled to adversaries their intent to remain as the leading militant group, regardless of international negotiations, but also demonstrated internally to members that the group would not simply drop their preferred program of action unless they were successful enough to do so. Observing the differences between 1974 and 1993, it is apparent that Fatah's claim to maintain the potential use of violence were very different. In 1974 for example, Fatah dissolved the BSO. This sent a signal counter to that of maintaining the 'gun', even if it was only a small faction within Fatah. In 1993, unlike the dissolution of a militant wing, Fatah reactivated the Fatah Hawks, while giving them a meaningful focus on countering militant Islamist groups. Moreover, Fatah's framing of the negotiations as victorious placed any militant perceptions of concessions of giving up violence or recognition of Israel next to the greater objective of national liberation. A top Fatah official in Amman spoke with *Reuters* in December of 1993 and was quoted as stating "[w]e have started to take measures to suspend armed struggle as we enter the

new stage of building a state”, continuing that Fatah’s militants will shift to “political rather than military functions”, and the new program of action is geared towards “achieving independence, democratization, and economic development” (“Fatah freezes armed struggle, shifts to politics”, 1993). Fatah was clearly framing the negotiations as a positive step, as any militant group would do. However, unlike previous attempts to reframe concessions in the 1970s and 1980s, members seemed to receive the idea of switching to a political program of action in exchange for standing up the Palestinian Authority much better. Moreover, holding the militant option in reserve complements the framing, Arafat would have certainly understood was an important way to maintain support from more militant members of the organization.

Fatah’s framing looks to have largely worked, at least in tandem with active signs of credible and capable enforcement measures. Important yet narrow cleavages still occurred, but nothing that resulted in an additional splinter. As reported by the *Financial Times* in 1993, three foundational members and leaders of Fatah publicly denounced the Accords, while *Reuters* reported the resignations of senior Fatah leaders Tawfik Abu Khousa and Zhakaria Talmas (Andoni, 1993; Burston, 1993). Reporting and interviews with active militants surrounding the Accords demonstrate that many Fatah Hawks harbored resentment of negotiations. The Fatah Hawks were engaged in active attacks as soon as six months following the initial accords, attacking an Arab policeman cited as working for Israelis and a Hamas associated health clinic and kindergarten (Global Terrorism Database, 1970-2020, 2022). These attacks raise questions related to Arafat’s hold on decision making, but they could also demonstrate Fatah’s willingness to continue sanctioning violence to appease hardliners. It is possible Fatah began ordering attacks to demonstrate the option of violence remained on the table, or that leadership simply had a loose grip on direction of actions.

The tension surrounding the negotiations did at one point pose a threat to the cohesion of Fatah. Arafat appointed a 13-member council to lead the organization in Gaza, but his selection of members did not reflect militants with strong reputations for fighting in the intifada. In December of 1994, a handful of militants resigned, with some stating there was a “crisis of confidence between the younger generation and the old-style leadership, which could lead to an explosion inside Fatah”. The same reporting documented Arafat’s public response, promising “serious changes will be carried out” in an attempt to maintain cohesion (Fatah Crisis, 1994).

Fatah had been in existence for 30 years by the time of the onset of the Oslo Accords and had experienced two significant splinters with multiple instances of factionalization that did not reach the scale of splintering. As uncovered in the examination of ANO and Fatah Intifada, both Abu Nidal and Abu Moussa introduced narratives of Fatah’s treachery and weakness due to their perceived willingness to make ideological concessions. These narratives were likely appealing to members who may have held non-negotiable, ‘strong program’ views related to their objectives, and for those without an ideological underpinning, narratives nonetheless allow for legitimization (Sanin and Wood, 2014). Longevity is inherently associated with increases in splinters because by virtue of being around longer, there are more opportunities for splinters. However, what I failed to initially account for is the possibility that hardliners had multiple options to splinter earlier in Fatah’s life, both to join the ANO and Fatah Intifada, in addition to opportunities for deserting or side-switching on an individual basis. Additionally, the emergence of the competing group Hamas, which was arguably more discriminate and appealing than other secular rejectionists (like the DFLP or PFLP), provided another option for hardliners. Thus, a key consideration for Fatah’s ideological concession in the early 1990s would be that those who remained in Fatah had already made multiple concessions and either found Arafat’s concessions

as legitimate in the broader strategic lens which he justified, or otherwise supported Fatah for reasons beyond the stated objectives as originally articulated. Additionally, Arafat clearly played to any hardliners or proponents of violent action by ensuring the use of violence remained in Fatah's repertoire. Fatah was; intentionally or unintentionally, making a better case for persuading those who might consider leaving by focusing on incremental achievements and progress towards key objectives, while still wielding militancy when doubts or competition arose.

4.3.6. Discussion

Fatah splintered when they modified core components of their ideology and militants viewed these modifications as concessions, while Fatah did not maintain credible enforcement mechanisms for cohesion. Congruence testing identified clear alignment between my three hypothesized outcomes and those that occurred throughout multiple points in history amongst three militant groups specific points in time. Indicators encompassing attacks levied by the splinter groups, relative efficacy of enforcement measures, and socialization of dissent all conformed to important aspects of the logic around my initial hypotheses. Comparing the results of congruence testing across my three hypotheses provided evidence supporting the plausibility of ideological modifications leading to splintering.

I expected to see (H1) (a) militant perceptions of ideological concessions to an adversary lead to group cleavages between hardliners and others within the organization; or, (b) alternatively, if concessions had taken place outside of negotiations with an adversary, on the militant organization's own accord, then cleavages would not form as changes would be viewed as intentional and appropriate, rather than as a concession. It was clear in Fatah that this held in

each of the three instances to varying degrees. In 1974, perceived ideological concessions did in fact exacerbate existing, as well as create new cleavages between hardliners and others. Abu Nidal was already on his own within Fatah, and had existing confrontations with Fatah leadership, yet Arafat's 1974 speech provided a perfect opportunity to point to treachery based on the foundational principle of the armed revolution as the means to Palestinian liberation. Not only did this serve Abu Nidal in starting a more state-aligned and sponsored, violent organization with him at the helm, but also provided framing and legitimacy to recruit members to join him.

Fatah's 1983 retreat from Lebanon was an even clearer example of militants perceiving ideological concessions leading to cleavage formation. The Fatah-Intifada splinter leaders appear to have held more hardliner views than Arafat, or even that of Nidal. Fatah's acceptance of their brokered retreat from Lebanon, particularly with the hindsight of massacres like Sabra and Shatila, caused the soon to be Fatah-Intifada founders to create a cleavage within the group and to create their own faction. They then broke away and formally splintered. Had Fatah reduced the perceptions of corruption and offered even a soft, tacit resistance as opposed to accepting defeat outright, the group may have maintained more legitimacy in the face of Abu Moussa's criticisms.

The third event studied was the 1993 Oslo Accords Peace Process, which offered perhaps a larger example of a major ideological concession in the face of an adversary (the recognition of Israel). The rise of Hamas as a challenge to Fatah's ideological framing and legitimacy amongst Palestinians preceded the framing of the peace process. Fatah did not experience more than a modest observable cleavage brought on by different ideological perspectives. One cleavage that occurred within the Fatah leadership was that of the resignations surrounding the talks, but did

not result in observable lasting cleavages nor did it become irreparable in the immediate term. H1 therefore held in each of these three instances examined.

Next, I anticipated (H2) (a) if militant leaders were unable to reframe and legitimize concessions made to an adversary as a result of negotiations, then I should see internal dissent within the organization; or (b), if leaders were able to successfully reframe concessions and legitimize them, then internal cohesion should maintain as it is, at least in relation to the ideological modification. Abu Nidal and Abu Moussa's groups expressed dissent prior to splinters and began socializing their frustrations when leadership attempts to reframe and legitimize their actions was perceived to have fallen short. In the event of the Oslo Peace Accords, the main criticism was laying down weapons and recognizing Israel and Fatah responded quite differently than they had in 1974. I showed how Arafat's framing of Oslo accompanied a pointed focus on progress, and that Fatah leadership reactivated the Fatah Hawks. Fatah leadership sent a message of reinvestment in potential militancy, unlike the dissolution of the BSO that aided Abu Nidal's recruitment efforts. Fatah appeared to have had a greater ability to frame Israeli recognition of Palestinians as a victory and step towards Palestinian liberation, while also signaling Fatah's willingness to continue utilizing violence as necessary. As noted under the discussion of H1 above, members of Fatah's leadership circle did resign and were publically speaking out against negotiations. Yet it remained peaceful, and evidence does not appear to demonstrate that it crossed the threshold of disparaging the group publically or organizing for potential breaks in the group to the degree of splintering.

Overall H2 has also positively shown congruence. Abu Nidal did not accept Fatah's framing and attempted legitimization of what Nidal perceived as a non-negotiable concession. In 1974, Al-Banna exploited the concessions he and other hardliner militants perceived from

Arafat's U.N. speech, while Fatah's attempts to signal the potential for continued armed revolution were not sufficient to appease him or his followers. Fatah's recent dissolution of the Black September Organization (BSO), a more clandestine arm of Fatah, provided newly unemployed hardliners ripe for recruitment as well (Singh, 2015). For Abu Nidal, Fatah's framing and legitimization may have been irrelevant, as once the concessionary act occurred, opposition held the upper hand in framing the action. Observations of the formation of ANO in advance of the 1974 speech indicates that the conditions for splintering had been created in the years preceding the speech but that the militant perceived ideological betrayal during the speech was the spark that Nidal was able to exploit and lent legitimacy to his recruitment messaging for the ANO.

Finally, the absence of credible and capable enforcement measures (H3) should encourage splintering. H3 provided that (a) if credible and capable enforcement measures did exist, then splintering should not have occurred; or alternatively, (b) if enforcement measures are seen as credible and the group as capable, then members are unlikely to attempt forming a splinter group. Fatah's three analytical points all demonstrated confirmation of this hypothesis, albeit to varying degrees. All three had a clear absence of militant perceived credibility in Fatah's pushing swift and harsh enforcement measures, with the third demonstrating it may not have been absolutely essential in that instance. Fatah's pace of attacks was relatively slow leading up to Madrid, with seven from 1989 - 1991, but increased with another six in 1992 alone, including attacks against members of militant Palestinian rejectionists (Global Terrorism Database, 1970-2020, 2022). Following the Oslo Accords, Fatah continued to engage in violence through Fatah Hawks and other elements, targeting groups like Hamas. Yet when a handful of members resigned from Fatah positions in 1994, Arafat's public messaging was one

of reconciliation and offering organizational concessions to the younger generation, a carrot as opposed to a stick. Fatah clearly maintained the ability to wield violence, but again chose not to push strong enforcement measures or set a violent example to a group of their own. My findings demonstrated how Fatah's framing and pursuit of the ideological modification made by Fatah helped avoid serious cleavages that could have led to a need for credible enforcement measures, but in this instance, it does not appear they were necessary. The degree to which Fatah's reframing worked and legitimized their actions against the potential use of violence requires additional research. I am unable to explore variables such as how many hardliners died, defected, or splintered (as part of the ANO or Fatah Intifada) by the 1990s within the scope of this research but these are clearly relevant for future research projects amongst scholars.

One interesting result observed in the data was that credibility may be more important than capability when it comes to enforcement measures. For example, Fatah's reach was that where enforcement appears to have been more than capable in 1974, yet multiple occasions of leadership deciding to look the other way, trying to pull Abu Nidal back into the fold, and only threatening violence after he had long left and initiated the ANO likely enabled Abu Nidal to move forward with his group. For multiple reasons, from personal to political Fatah did not swiftly deal with Abu Nidal, even though the group had the capability to do so (Iyad and Rouleau, 1981). This supports my initial framing of hypotheses three, focusing on examining whether enforcement measures are in fact "credible".

4.4. The Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia

My examination of the FARC takes place over three key events that span from 1982 to 2016. Each event presents a unique opportunity to undertake congruence testing against my

hypotheses, offering a case temporally and spatially distinct from Fatah and the PKK. Within this case, I have selected three events for their analytical value under varying circumstances within the FARC's nearly sixty years of existence. The first is the group's initial foray into the illicit drug business, where the FARC's stance went from viewing engagement in the drug trade being 'counter revolutionary' as rooted in their ideological underpinnings, to quickly being embraced (Molano, 2018; Brittain, 2010; Otis, 2014). This is an important event because it demonstrates the FARC's undergoing of a clear ideological modification *outside* of talks with an adversary, thereby less likely for militants to label it as a concession. I expected to see observable indications that ideological modifications made outside of negotiations present better maneuverability for militants to frame them as necessary or an evolution, rather than having militants perceive modifications as a concession to an enemy, making splintering less likely. Next, I looked at the negotiations with the Government of Colombia in the early 1990s after the Soviet collapse. Militants felt the local impact of the Soviet geopolitical and ideological failure globally, the Soviets supported many, both ideologically and militarily, and FARC was no exception (Ugarriza, 2009). The negotiations in the early 1990s allowed for an examination of the role of ideological modifications in the face of a reshaped global order and the necessary reframing by the FARC. Lastly, I examined what occurred surrounding the last set of negotiations between the FARC and the Government of Colombia starting in 2016, which resulted in eventual implementation of a cautious peace and the reintegration of fighters into society (Kline, 2020). This final event also coincided with an instance of splintering from the FARC, where members splinter during disarmament, rearming under a FARC dissident banner (Munck, Sankey, and Gutiérrez, 2020).

The Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (translated as the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia) or FARC, sprang from the Marxist inspired peasant militias of *La Violencia* (Cook, 2011). It was during the FARC's second Conference of the Southern Bloc, when participants agreed Government of Colombia attacks on Marquetalia in 1964 constituted the official founding of the FARC (Johansson, 2021; Abraham, 2022). The Southern Guerilla Bloc had been a gathering of armed peasants to provide unified objectives and coordination (Marulanda, 1973). The second conference provided not only the formal formation of the FARC, but also established the initial leadership structure with Manuel Marulanda Valez (formerly Pedro Antonio Merin, also endearingly referred to by guerillas as Tirofijo, or 'sure shot') at the helm (Molano, 2000). Marulanda had already been actively involved in the Colombian Communist Party (PCC) (Kline, 2020; Leech, 2011; Brittain, 2010). Bolstered by Soviet and Eastern Bloc ideologies of the 1940s through the early 1960s, the FARC's structure and messaging leaned on historical communist influence in Colombia from the early 1900s (LeGrand, 2003). Moreover, the successful Cuban Revolution in 1959 was a regional program of action and fresh motivation for guerrillas in Colombia and Latin America more broadly (Johansson, 2021).

4.4.1. Foundational Ideological Tenets

The FARC's ideological foundation was built upon the historical legacy of communist influence in Colombia since the early 1900s (LeGrand, 2003; Brittain, 2010). Indeed, according to Brittain's thorough research on the group, communist activity in Colombia even predated Soviet-influence, unlike many communist leaning rebel groups during the 20th century (Brittain, 2010). Central to the FARC's Marxist-Leninist ideological orientation was a focus on

agrarianism, including substantial weight on the topic land-rights; and, the idea of a collective society with adequate provisions that transcended classes (Gutierrez, 2020; Cortéz, 2017). A focus on agrarianism was logical if not expected, given the Marulanda's preceding endeavor leading the Agrarian Movement of Marquetalia (*Movimiento Agrario de Marquetalia*). The Agrarian Movement of Marquetalia's central objectives were "...for revolutionary agrarian reform, land for those who actually work it, technical assistance and grants, education and healthcare in the countryside, reasonable prices for agricultural and livestock products, protection and respect for indigenous communities, and the formation of an inclusive and single people's front" (Villamizar 2017, as cited by Johansson, 2021:113). Marulanda's new group, the FARC, carried a similar socio-political orientation, with intentionality behind agrarianism and the return of land to farmers, but this time with greater organization surrounding the emphasis on how it would govern revolutionary militancy. He was quoted as stating "military structure is guided by conscious revolutionary military principles, adjusted to our form of guerrilla force", they "raise and support the immediate and fundamental demands of the masses", and will "go forward guided by the orientation of the only party that has always been with us: the Communist Party" (Marulanda, 2003, as cited by Brittain, 2010).

Two primary actors provided the ideological leadership of the FARC, Marulanda and the charismatic ideologue Jacobo Arenas. They guided the guerilla organization and developed the first socio-economic guidelines, training programs, and propaganda. Marulanda was the central authority of the FARC until his death, while Arenas was supporting ideological foundations since the time of the self-defense groups (Molano, 2000). The FARC's ideological position built in a strong degree of flexibility since their beginning, enabling the group to flex into multiple pathways to achieve their overall objective of assuming power in Colombia (Johansson, 2021).

For example, by leaning on the need for offensive and defensive militancy while also discussing the importance of leaving open multiple routes towards power, including negotiations, the FARC built themselves as a militant revolutionary group that could exercise the option of politics on a whim

The ideological malleability exercised by the FARC underpinned their revolutionary struggle, providing for necessary flexibility and shifts as the group evolved to survive. For example, members of the leadership would routinely discuss their Marxist-Leninist principles as intended specifically for the Colombia context. Gary Leech quotes a joint communique by then-commander Ivan Rios and Fenando Ciacedo in his book *The FARC: The Longest Insurgency*, where they stated “we believe that it is from the basis of the principles set out by Marx, without taking them as schemes or formulas or completely fashioned doctrines but as guides ... that the model for Colombian reality will have to emerge ... we speak of socialized revolution. If it will be communist or not is a question to be decided later on” (Leech, 2011:151). As will be discussed later, they employed flexibility often to their benefit, such as in their pivot towards a stronger focus on Bolivarianism in the early 1990s after the fall of the Soviet Union.

One of the more significant ideological shifts came in the 1982, with Arenas discussed the outcome of the Seventh National Conference of the FARC stating “however, the most important to come out of this conference was the FARC’s political strategy of seeking a political resolution to the social, armed conflict by creating the conditions for a durable peace with social justice”, and that the “FARC-EP’s goal was taking control of the country by military strategy as well as other forms of struggle of the masses (Arenas 1985, as cited by Johansson, 2021:118). The statement from the Seventh National Conference cannot be overemphasized, this enabled a

justifiable framing for concessions to the government to come, enabling the FARC to lean on their articulation that other forms of struggle as not only appropriate, but premeditated.

4.4.2. Internal Recruitment & Indoctrination

Rural peasants made up the primary recruitment pool for the FARC's original membership. It was those who took up arms during the infamously bloody period known as *La Violencia*. The assassination of Liberal leader Gaitan in Bogota put *La Violencia* in motion with bloodshed quickly pouring outward into rural regions (Ospina, 2016). During this period, the conservative government and elites provided weapons to conservative-supporting peasants and National Police, leading many liberal peasants to join communities with local self-defense groups (Molano, 2007). Marulanda organized the communities along with the charismatic ideologue Marxist Jacobo Arenas on principles of “economic self-management and military defense” (Molano, 2000:279). They developed military groups that later turned into the core of FARC membership (Richani, 2013; Ospina, 2016; Gutierrez, 2020; LeGrand, 2003). By 1982, the FARC took on the expanded name FARC-EP following their seventh congress, with the addition of ‘EP’ standing for Ejército del Pueblo, translated as ‘People’s Army’ (note for the purpose of continuity in this research, I will reference the FARC-EP with the shorthand of ‘FARC’ for the duration of this paper for both pre-and-post 1982) (Leech, 2011).

The FARC relied heavily upon enforcement of rules and norms, training, and lived experiences to support the indoctrination of Marxist socio-political ideals amongst fighters. Training was widespread, and although specifics varied from region to region, it included everything from the use of weapons and fighting, to literacy and political education. Ideological training and indoctrination included a lived communal experience, an important component as

ideological commitment can be developed and adapted through informal, social experiences (Parkinson, 2021; Maynard, 2019). Militants would “get up at 5.00am every day and all of them - men and women - share equally in performing daily duties such as patrols, guard duty, training exercises, and kitchen duty” (Leech, 2011:51). Additionally, FARC fronts would provide more “academically mature members” with readings in Marxism-Leninism (FARC-EP 2001:14-15; Wickham-Crowley 1992, as cited by Brittain 2010:188). Given the physical separation of fronts due to difficult terrain in between, it is no surprise that variations of collective life were practiced among them. There is further evidence in some areas of mandatory political classes (Gilhodés, 1970, as cited by Brittain, 2010). Enforcement of rules and norms came in various forms, one of which being the existence of the *Secretariado*. The *Secretariado* provided significant oversight and enforcement of resource accumulation and other finance related activities. As explained by Sanin, the FARC “leaders are highly aware that a luxurious lifestyle and the enjoyment of pantagruelic rents can not only undermine the organization’s cherished unity, but also slacken its combativeness. Thus, strong bureaucratic and normative constraints imposed over the militants, especially those who more exposed to temptation (Sanin, 2003:11). Thus, the ability to provide stringent oversight and enforcement of financial responsibility in line with communal ideals acted as a significant guardrail against personal enrichment and greed. Additional guardrails included mandates against looting for bounty, strict adherence to the cause above family and other commitments, enforced by vigilant oversight and chain of command within ranks (Sanin, 2011).

Of course, militant groups cannot accomplish ideological indoctrination without some type of basic social infrastructure. In the early 1970s, the FARC developed a ‘National School’, which enabled them to undergo more systematic indoctrination and by “politicizing their

discourse and military and action with public life in the country (Arenas, 1985, as cited by Johannson, 2021:116). Observations across conflicts indicate that institutions are often a strong contributor to the longevity of militant groups including the FARC. The FARC has also been fortunate enough to have the space to conduct intensive training, with the geographic reality of difficult terrain providing isolation, natural barriers, and numerous fronts stretched from mountains, to jungles, to plains. Moreover, by the 1980s, communities in the countryside where the government never truly exercised control left the FARC as the de facto source of governance as they expanded across the country (Leech, 2011).

In addition to formal institutions and classes or training on politics and ideology, and informal aspects of social interactions and day-to-day communal living, the FARC employed discipline to support the indoctrination of militants. In the FARC, they did not allow female to bear children, with forced abortions occurring rather routinely (Stanski, 2006). The sole focus on the revolutionary struggle for militants meant they were primarily militants for like. The FARC pulled militants away from spouses, and cut-off from external familial and community links (Sanin, 2003). Normal fighters outside of leadership positions experienced limited to no pay, meager clothes and food, and hard repercussions for breaking rules or stepping out of line. Overall indoctrination became more relaxed and weaker over time, particularly in the early 2000s as the capture and killing of original ideologues and leaders was occurring, and it simply became clear that after decades of conflict the installation of a revolutionary communist regime was not coming to fruition. Interestingly, when it comes to external supporting states, the FARC did not receive much training or resources from actors such as Cuba or others in the Eastern Bloc, which is relatively unique in comparison to other militant groups of the 1960s-80s (Otis, 2014). They did however benefit from porous borders and direct cover from neighboring

Venezuela, where former president Chávez was reported to have strong ideological support and potentially been providing resources to the militants as reported by BBC surrounding the International Institute for Strategic Studies findings based on rebel documents in 2008 (*Colombian Farc rebels' links to Venezuela detailed*, 2011). .

4.4.3. The FARC's Foray into the Drug Trade

The 1970s brought about a significant economic shift across Colombia, with the global (and certainly United States) appetite for drugs—namely cocaine—sparking and fueling the illicit drug trade in Latin America. Initially opposed to the drug trade on ideological grounds of staying true to revolutionary principles, the FARC was hesitant to get involved (Cook, 2011; Leech, 2011). In fact, until the early 1980s the FARC was adamantly against the involvement in the drug trade, due to the nature of drug trafficking being an inherently capitalist economic model (Brittain, 2011; Cook, 2011). After that initial opposition, including harsh parameters such as the expulsion and assassination a former militant who experimented with extortion of drug traffickers, the FARC condoned taxing traffickers (Otis, 2014). Their endorsement, however, came with the caveat that funds would go to the Secretariat, rather than to the enrichment of individual members or fronts (Ospina, 2016). The group quickly began to increase profits because of their new involvement in the illicit drug trade, taxing and extorting producers and traders (Molano, 2000).

Their involvement in the drug trade accompanied the provision of justifications focused on the legitimacy for the change. In part, this was simple happenstance, rural areas without state presence where the FARC was already active, were areas that were well-suited for cultivating coca, and under then-present market conditions, coca was one of few economically viable

products for peasant subsistence (LeGrand, 2003; Richani, 2013). They also applied a new framing that transitioned away from viewing the drug trade as a capitalist, classist economic model of exploitation to one of enabling the peasantry to engage in prosperity, thereby gaining equity. Indeed, the view of supporting peasant farmer ability to engage in agriculture as a socio-economic reality of their supporters took root in the organization. This argument builds off of Lenin's notion that guerilla movements should adapt to the social environments of the working class they support and seek to represent (Brittain, 2010).

Involvement in the drug trade did not appear to create any significant division within the FARC in the form of cleavages between hardliners and other militants. Observations of outward focused narratives included clear alignment of endorsement by FARC leadership, as evident by the then-new policy enabling the organization to profit off illicit drugs (via a tax on production and various other fees) as made during the Seventh Conference. FARC leadership included some of the group's primary ideologues, logically dictating if hardliners would oppose, that would have been a likely venue for opposition. Yet, there is no evidence of significant opposition or cleavages that resulted from the new policy. It's important to note that this ideological modification came about at the FARC's own initiation, to their financial benefit and to maintain support from farmers, rather than as a concession during negotiations with an adversary. The decision was also an outcome of a guerilla conference, and although difficult to confirm the actual level of input from lower-level militants, there would undoubtedly be a stronger degree of agency associated with the decision during an internal conference than a forced or coerced concession.

After the FARC's engagement in the drug business, some scholars and governments alike started viewing them as a network of criminals or a pseudo-cartel, and this view would hold for

the next thirty years (LeGrand, 2003; Kline, 2020). However, arguments for viewing the FARC as a cartel or related economically-oriented drug organization disposed of ideological merit are misplaced and do not hold up to analytical rigor. The substantial economic incentives provided through the drug trade were certainly a critical component to their sustainable insurgency in Colombia. Yet the FARC existed before the drug trade, and even after their entrance into the trade, not all Fronts engaged in the practice, thereby demonstrating at the absolute minimum, ideological underpinnings degraded in particular fronts. Indeed, according to Molano, the notion of reducing guerillas to narco guerrillas is simply inaccurate. “Cultivation of illegal crops was established in the colonization areas not simply because of weak army presence but because colonists were on the brink of ruin. And the guerillas were in the colonized regions long before coca cultivation appeared. Their growth was due mainly to the repression unleashed against popular protest, and by the growing impoverishment of the population—not to their participation in the drug trade” (Molano, 2000:27).

More compellingly, after the 1982 agreement by the FARC to exploit the drug trade to fuel their insurgency, they nonetheless signed the Uribe Accords under negotiations with the Betancur administration focused on political and socio-economic grievances in 1984 (Leech, 2011). If the sole purpose of the FARC had evolved from an ideological oriented guerilla movement to a band of narco guerrillas, entering a peace process that included a cease-fire and success would likely remove their economic incentive, would be illogical. Nonetheless, it is certainly possible individuals were drawn to the economic incentive rather than the ideological, namely those involved in the reverse migration to support the coca boom. As Richani summarizes “coca and other illicit plantations generated a reverse migration process; the unemployed migrated from cities to areas of colonization. The sociopolitical implications of

such processes have been multifaceted...”, “...The 'coca culture' lives in tension with revolutionary ideas based on self sacrifice for the cause of radical change" (Richani, 2013:69, 70). It would therefore be unsurprising if individuals similarly joined the FARC for economic subsistence in some cases, as we know this is true with militant groups globally, regardless of ideological orientation. Regardless, the engagement in the drug trade did not create observable cleavages or dissent between hardliners and other guerillas.

Following the engagement into the drug trade, looking out over the next couple of years it evidence still does not demonstrate longer-term fissures resulting from the modification of allowing engagement in the trade. In fact, observational data from the early 1980s surrounding the splintering between the FARC and Ricardo Franco Front indicates the breakdown stemmed from the unwillingness by the FARC to adjust strategic plans towards increased urban activity, as opposed to the ideological shift regarding drugs. The splintering of the Ricardo Franco Front, named for a former FARC commander who died in action, was therefore more closely tied to the attempted further modification by a group within the FARC as opposed to a reaction from the actual modification by the FARC in 1982 (Osterling, 1989). In the case of the Ricardo Franco Front, what little has been examined of the small, short-lived breakaway group, indicates their ideological orientation swayed towards a mix of Maosit-Geuverianist ideals, claiming a more hardline version than that of the FARC (Osterling, 1989; Sanin, 2011). The Ricardo Franco Front has benefited from only limited research. When the Front is the subject of note, it is typically constrained to a discussion on their Stalin-like internal purge, massacring over a hundred of their own members under suspicion of treachery known as the *Massacre of Tatueyó* (Civico, 2011). More research surrounding the proclaimed reasoning, statements, or additional

primary source documents from key founders like Javier Delgado (aka Jose Fedor Rey) or Hernando Pizarro Leongomez should be undertaken (Osterling, 1989).

One year after the Ricardo Franco splinter and two years after the FARC's decision to engage in the illicit drug business, the Government of Colombia, led by President Betancur, initiated the 1984 Uribe Accords with guerillas across the country. The FARC (along with the EPL and M19) signed the accords, and they initiated a ceasefire and opening for political dialogue, along with amnesty to any militants who would take it. The Accords also recognized socio-economic grievances of the FARC and offered the potential for a peaceful resolution through dismantling militant groups (Leech, 2011). Economic grievances included the FARC's long standing objectives surrounding agrarianism and land rights, which overlap with the claimed necessity of farmers to engage in illicit crops to make ends meet. As Rodrigo Granda, former convicted member and spokesman for the FARC stated in a 2008 interview on their relationship with coca: "[t]here is no doubt that the face of Colombia was transformed by the neoliberal policies imposed through terror that ruined the countryside forcing thousands of poor peasant families to survive by producing for this economy so as not to starve to death...", and that the "...FARC-EP is chiefly a rural movement and we are in direct contact with that reality, but we have no authority to force people to abandon so-called illicit crops without giving them an alternative" (Batou, para.13, 14).

The FARC's entry into negotiations in such close proximity to their entrance into the drug trade would have constituted an opportunity for hardliners who opposed the ideological modification to exploit negotiations as a means to express their dissent. Instead, it appears the FARC took advantage of the government's legitimizing aspects of their cause and openness to negotiate to start a political party. In 1984, they created the Patriotic Union (UP) which took up

operations in 1985, with support from the Communist Party (Americas Watch Committee, 1986; Molano, 2007; Leech, 2011). Yet as Brittain's well researched *Revolutionary Social Change in Colombia* notes, "[t]he most important point to understand is that the UP was never a political arm of the FARC-EP", and considering it as such would "negate the lateral support and unification of various elements of Colombian civil society" (Brittain, 2010:207). Brittain's overall point here is important, there were clearly elements of Colombian civil society, and moderate leftists who opposed the armed struggle that made up the majority of the UP. Nonetheless, observable evidence indicates the FARC was able to leverage the UP for their bidding, including socializing and spreading communist political thought across populations which the FARC had an interest in maintaining or increasing social support (Leech, 2011). The advent and operationalization of the UP is important because as mentioned earlier, at the same conference which endorsed the FARC's involvement in the drug trade laid the groundwork for legitimate pursuit of political programs towards achieving their objectives.

In reference to the Uribe Accords and the creation of the UP, one FARC former Front Commanders—and eventual leader of a Dissident Front—stated "[a]fter this agreement, the guerrilla started a process of more integration with the masses, with other left-wing movements, even the well-known political party Patriotic Union was born. It grew up so much. Day by day the guerrilla movement has advanced" (Edison Romaña, as cited by Cortéz, 2017). Yet elections in 1986 saw President Barco voted into power in Colombia, effectively destroying any potential momentum, withdrawing the government from the Uribe Accords (Hough, 2011; Leech, 2011). Barco's administration also brought with it a fierce war against the UP, and in 1987 had government and paramilitaries conducting assassinations, systematically murdering the UP presidential candidate in 1987, three victors of mayoral elections killed in 1988, and hundreds of

UP members killed each year (Leech, 2011). The FARC's struggles after the scrapping of the Uribe Accords and subsequent systematic killing of UP leaders would be complicated with the collapse of the Soviet Union. Nonetheless, for the moment the FARC would remain cohesive in the face of an ideological reversal related to involvement in the illicit drug business.

4.4.4. Negotiations of 1991 and the Collapse of the Soviet Union

The Gaviria administration (1990-1994) had a unique opportunity to address the FARC's struggle in the early 1990s. The fall of the Soviet Union in Eastern Europe had a significant impact on rebellions worldwide that relied upon the Soviets not only for financial and militant support (training, weapons), but also for their underlying ideological principles of struggle. In Colombia, the Gaviria Administration viewed the FARC as all but common criminals after the fall of the Soviets, but still decided to enter negotiations. Meanwhile, the FARC may have appeared ideologically vulnerable, but still had significant militant power in the form of arms, fighters, territory, and funding, and believed they could win (Kline, 2020). Contrary to outside assumptions, their ideological foundation proved quite resilient as well. It was in this context the FARC not only remained viable, but thrived while many other guerillas across the region (with few exceptions, namely Peru's Sendero (also commonly known as The Shining Path) entered negotiations with governments and faded (Radu, 2000).

The FARC's response to the fall of the Soviet Union was not to set aside their long-held Marxist-Leninist tenants, but rather infuse them with regional folklore and nationalist sentiment by incorporating discourse surrounding national hero Simon Bolivar (Ugarriza, 2009). They modified their ideological orientation to continue reference to Marxist-Leninist ideals, but now included a greater narrative focus on regional elements, incorporating Bolivarianism. This was a

clear example of what is termed ‘memory work’, relying on discourse and symbols of the past to shape, and often legitimize, the present (Schwart, 1996; Gurbuz, 2014). The benefit of infusing Bolivarianism into the FARC’s ideological orientation was twofold: it allowed for a narrative focused on the continued discussion of communism without renouncing or acknowledging implausibility; and, allowed them to capitalize on widely supported emotional and nationalist rhetoric that was hard to be in opposition with in Colombia. Moreover, Bolivarianism at this time was not only “useful to place the organization historically in times of crisis, but also to connect with the anti-imperialist movement that sprang-up around the globe in the 1990s” (Ugarriza, 2009:97). In this way, the FARC was able to actually use the fall of the Soviets as a way to breathe fresh life into their ideological movement, framing their guerilla movement in a way that was locally appealing as well as geopolitically relevant. The FARC was able to therefore continue justifying their Marxist-Leninist ideals by tailoring the armed struggle to the specificity of context within Colombia that initiated the conflict and caused the rebellion, for as long as the longstanding grievances remained (Leech, 2011). I should also underscore that by the early 1990s, the FARC’s ranks were strong, well-financed from coca and ransoms, and they remained a serious militant threat to the Government of Colombia. That fact undoubtedly played a role in supporting their legitimacy as they reframed their orientation in light of the collapse of the Soviets. Regardless, they were able to maintain cohesion within their ranks, including those hardliners, during this change in ideological positioning.

The FARC faced not only necessary ideological repositioning or modification in the early 1990s, but also began modest talks with the government following the failure of Barco’s administration in getting the FARC to participate in negotiations alongside other guerilla groups. Talks under Gaviria were significant insofar as the FARC and government officials met to

discuss terms, but resulted in only minimal meetings and nothing more than deadlock. Most tellingly however, is that the FARC's stated aim in those talks was pushing for government concessions rather than a real negotiated settlement that would cause concessions on their end. Specifically, they sought government concessions in "Colombian polity and economy, which was at odds with the fact that a legitimate and popularly elected National Constituent Assembly had just drafted a new political constitution in the context of a successful peace negotiation with other rebel groups" (Palacios, 2012, as cited by Nasi, 2018). The FARC's continued push for political and economic transformation in line with some of their most salient, long standing ideological tenets clearly demonstrated that the global failures of communism were not going to cause seismic shifts within the FARC or their aim. A historical lens shows that the ideological modifications bringing their Marxist-Leninist principles under a local framing of Bolevariansim were not only minor in the grand scheme of their aims, but also potentially unnecessary given their strength and legitimacy at the time.

Furthermore, the FARC's ability to conduct attacks showed no signs of stopping, indicating that operationally and internal dissent was likely minor or squashed relatively soon. Over the years of 1991 and 1992, the FARC's attacks were bloodier than the three preceding, with 540 deaths attributed to the FARC in 1991 and 1992 against 503 for 1988, 1989, and 1990 combined (note four attacks, three of which in 1988 and one of which in 1991, were attributed to multiple guerilla groups including the FARC) (Global Terrorism Database 1970-2020, 2022). As with reference to attacks undertaken by Fatah, correlations of attacks against ongoing political or ideological machinations do not demonstrate any causality, but provide another piece of information to examine the larger picture. Still, this information clearly holds observable

merit in demonstrating the ability of the FARC to plan, finance, order, and carry out violence against their enemies, namely the government, across a variety of locales during this period.

4.4.5. Negotiations of 2016 and Subsequent Peace Accords

In 2012, the initiation of secret talks between the FARC and Government of Colombia that would lead to the most significant peace process involving the oldest armed insurgency in Colombia had begun. The secret talks turned into public negotiations, led by Ivan Marquez in close coordination with then-leader Rodrigo Londono Echeverri, alias Timochenko on the FARC side, and representatives of the Santos administration for the Government of Colombia (Kline, 2020). Negotiations followed preparatory meetings in 2011, with determinations surrounding guarantor countries (Segura and Mechoulan, 2011). The negotiations in 2012 were conducted in Havana with mediation efforts supported by guarantor countries of Norway and Cuba, with Venezuela, and Chile playing accompanying roles (Segura and Mechoula, 2011; Nasi, 2018:37). By September of 2016, the FARC and Government of Colombia had signed the ‘Final Agreement to End the Conflict and Build a Sustainable and Lasting Peace’ (Echavarría, Esguerra-Rezk and McQuestion, 2020). The Santos administration determined it was best to provide a referendum on the agreement given the scathing criticism from Uribe and other prominent ‘no’ voices that mobilized against the agreement. The public referendum ended up with a ‘no’ vote in October 2016, a determination that forced the parties to apply modifications to appease some of the no voices while avoiding having to re-litigate the entire deal (Nasi, 2018). The agreement was sent to the congress after revisions were completed, where it was finally passed in November of 2016.

By the initiation of the final agreement between the FARC and Government of Colombia in 2016, the FARC was in a far different position than in negotiations in the 1990s, with the recent Plan Colombia having taken a serious toll on the FARC's fighting force. Nonetheless, the FARC possessed enough of an ability to return to violence that a complete breakdown in negotiations would have led to continued conflict. The government clearly saw an opening to engage in negotiations from a point of relative strength post-plan Colombia, but also acknowledged the grievances and potential for continued insurgency by the FARC, as evidenced by concessions in the agreement. The agreement had six major provisions, some of which appeased the FARC, and some the government, with most meeting in the middle, as with most negotiations. These primary agreements covered rural reform, political participation (and representation), ceasefire and disarmament, illicit drugs, implementation mechanisms, and integral reparation for victims (Kline, 2020; Revelo and Scottilotta, 2020:3). Many of these agreements could be viewed as significant wins for the FARC, including the extent to which guerillas would be able to reintegrate into society under various conditions, so long as major human rights violations hadn't occurred, and the application of transitional justice that seemed to be less about punishment for the sake of it and more about justice for victims and support for pathways to reintegration (Kline, 2020). Rural reform was also an important aspect given it dated back to the formation of the FARC in relation to land rights and longstanding objectives surrounding an agrarian platform. However, the agreement was clearly never going to--and did not--support any type of social or political revolution, or change of government. Thus, there was a clear and observable softening of the FARC's ideological program of action. In addition to the inability of the FARC to obtain systematic political change, the capitalist economic model wasn't going anywhere. And perhaps most importantly, land issues would be addressed through

tribunes as opposed to rural revolution fully empowering rural land-owners, a modification to the long-standing orientation for the FARC where the “agrarian program is central to its identity” that could be framed as a success by the FARC or easily used as a flounder or betrayal by opponents (Nasi, 2018:40). To make these concessions palatable, the FARC focused on their ability to obtain political influence through a guaranteed 10 seats in parliament for five years, at which time voters would decide the number of seats; the fact that tribunes for land issues was a success in the sense of supporting agrarian reform efforts; and, their achievements in the space of transitional justice that provided a degree of general amnesty along with short sentences for the majority of guerillas (Nasi, 2018).

Meanwhile the FARC's fronts were still capable of conducting violence, and there was to be a significant negative economic impact on the fronts that relied on the illicit drug trade. It is not surprising then that some members refused to lay down their arms or that members splintered to start new groups under the banner of the FARC dissidents. Before the agreement was finalized fronts began dissenting publicly, with the Armando Rios First Front formally transmitting intent not to demobilize as early as June of 2016 (CeDeMa archive, 2016). Timochenko attempted and failed to settle the dissent by sending a veteran FARC member known as Gentil Duarte to regain cohesion but instead reports documented that Duarte betrayed the FARC and took up positions with the dissidents (Dalby and Villalba, 2022). The dissident fronts grew, and attempted to structure a coordination body known as the Central General Staff (or Estado Mayor Central, the EMC), which had some success in coordinating many but not all dissidents. Additionally, after the signing of the peace agreement in 2016 the Martin Villa 10th Front dissidence group emerged in a splinter that saw members from the 10th, 28th, 38th, 45th, and 56th fronts unite under the new splinter organization (10th front ex-farc mafia, 2022). These

were two of the larger immediate impacts on internal cohesion amongst the FARC as they negotiated and signed the peace negotiations.

As implementation of the peace process had begun, another significant break occurred when Luciano Marin Arango, aka Ivan Marquez, an influential former FARC leader involved in the negotiations, announced the Second Marquetalia would return to arms. This move was far more concerning to the FARC than the few hundred who refused to disarm (Gutierrez, 2020). They announced their return to arms in 2019, when they released a video declaration rife with pictures and references to Marulanda, drawing back to the legitimacy of their charismatic founder. The slow, highly criticized initial implementation of the peace negotiation, including the camps for reintegrating fighters was part of a larger claim of betrayal by the government not aligning with the outcome of the negotiations. This betrayal paved the way for the Second Marquetalia to regroup as “heirs to the legacy of Manuel Marulanda Velez”, according to the former leader (Second marquetalia, 2022). Moreover, because the FARC’s strength and cause for growth since the 1980s had been tied to the grievances surrounding agrarian inequities, along with an exclusionary political system that had many believing the armed struggle was an appropriate and legitimate response, something which continued to strike a chord with many post-agreement (Gutiérrez, 2019). This was particularly true in some of the rural coca areas that entered a vacuum of governance after the FARC militants began demobilizing, with other militants and cartels competing for the territory. Since these issues were somewhat addressed in the final agreement and implementation would be difficult and long-term, it was not surprising that the perception by some for the need to continue an armed insurgency remained (Gutiérrez, 2020). Still, the FARC made a pointed attempt to frame the agreement as a legitimate end to the struggle and a victory on multiple fronts. Timochenko started framing the peace process as

legitimate in early 2016, fifty years after Castro's 'Palabras a los intelectuales' or 'Words to the Intellectuals'. Timochenko's call was to 'reimagine Colombia' in his address 'Letter to the Artists and Intellectuals of Colombia', through which he leaned on the legacy of Castro for legitimacy and revolutionary framing, as reported by the *Latin America Bureau* (Burnyeat, 2019). The reframing clearly resonated with many guerillas, whether in terms of true belief, moral legitimization, or simply an opportunity to exit conflict.

Johansson documents how the framing of the negotiated agreement maintained an air of legitimacy amongst former guerillas years later. She documents that the sentiment took hold amongst fighters in their own words, quoting one ex-guerilla from Medellín in 2020 as stating "I think that since FARC's origin, back then in 1964 in Marquetalia in Tolima, from then until now the FARC has said: we are armed, but our goal is not war, if we didn't fight, well we didn't take up arms because we wanted to or because that was the desire: live in war, no, back then our objectives were political, clearly, with arms, we were obligated to take up arms from '64 until thereafter but we never lost our horizon, the goal was peace, and based on that idea, in the camps, we always took part in political analysis of Colombian reality" (Johansson, 2021:174).

Regardless of the exact personal motivations, which likely range significantly, militants leveraged the ideological modification for justification for those returning to arms. Yet unlike the previous case of Fatah, concessions during negotiations were not the sole breaking point, as the Second Marquetalia splintered years later as a (stated) result of the failure of the government to implement the agreement. Evidence surrounding the splintering that had occurred after the signing of the negotiation, was the perceived concessions made were not reciprocated as agreed upon, that the government reneged and failed to live up to their end of the deal. Also unlike Fatah, the FARC built in peace as a legitimate means towards achieving their objectives in

Colombia very early during their insurgency, which provided the leadership with an ability to pivot towards a negotiated peace without risking a fundamental betrayal. Noticeably, there was no internal consternation when their plan incorporated peace. It also clearly did not provide enough of a bulwark to prevent splinters during and following the 2016 agreement.

One key confounding variable not yet examined in the case of the FARC is that by the early 2000s, many of the founding leaders and original ideologues had been killed or captured. Not only was the FARC without some of the original hardline members, but others had been fighting in the insurgency with little to show for it in terms of political and socio-economic achievements, and were simply exhausted from the decades of conflict (cite - multiple). All of these factors may play an important role in exploitation of ideology and why it occurred differently in the FARC than Fatah and perhaps other militants. Observable evidence points to the FARC dissidents regrouping along areas with high coca cultivation (Triana and Rios, 2022). This is only a correlation and does not explain the variety of potential reasons, namely the possibility of ensuring financing to continue a revolution, or simply economic and illicit interests. Regardless of the reasoning for splintering--illicit economics, enduring grievances, personality or strategic disagreements--it is clear that evidence demonstrates the ideological modifications made during the negotiation process and in the final agreement provided the launch pad for the splintering of the FARC in 2016. Unlike the ideological modifications in 1982 and 1991 that were made internally on the FARC's own accord, in line with their personal interest with the benefit of missing any perception of concessions to an adversary, the concessions in 2016 resulted in numerous splinters. After the FARC began implementing the peace agreement, they began (eventually) laying down their arms and demobilizing. This took

away any potential for meaningful enforcement of cohesion. At such a point, dissident splinters would instead face the government forces, something which they had already endured.

4.4.6. Discussion

Congruence testing identified clear alignment between my hypothesized outcomes and those that occurred throughout multiple points in history amongst three militant groups during specific points in time. Indicators supported initial aspects of my hypotheses encompassing attacks levied by the splinter groups, relative efficacy of enforcement measures, and socialization of dissent. However, the examination of two hypotheses raised additional considerations to further explore as well.

The case of the FARC offered two examples of the alternatives to H1 because of the absence of militant perceived concessions. I expected that if concessions were to take place outside of negotiations with an adversary, on the militant organization's own accord, then cleavages would not form as militants would view changes as intentional and appropriate, rather than as a concession. This hypothesis held in both instances, with a clear associated ideological framing accompanying the changes made on the groups own accord. In 1982, the FARC's stark reversal of ideological framing related to the illicit drug trade as a capitalist tool and initiation of their infamous coca-tax and other involvement was determined internally during a guerilla conference. The following year a splinter did occur, when the prominent members broke away from the FARC to form the Ricardo Franco Front. However, the splinter offers no observable evidence that ideological modification in 1982 played a contributing role. In fact, the Ricardo Franco Front's interest in closer relations with other guerillas and shifting towards a greater

focus on an urban strategy, were modifications the splinter group was pushing for, as opposed to reactions from modifications made by the FARC (Osterling, 1989).

Meanwhile, the fall of the Soviet Union acted as an adversarial pressure point for the FARC given it was a direct demonstration of the failure of a Marxist-Leninist structure, but the FARC's reaction was one pivoting away from allowing the failure of the Soviets to appear to be a concession to the West or Government of Colombia. The FARC's modification of their ideological orientation to one more focused on Bolivarianism demonstrated they had a clear understanding of the importance of legitimizing any shift. Talks began during this pivot, with secret talks in the early 1990s with the government that resulted in nothing more than a continued stalemate and did not stem fighting. In both instances, the FARC framed ideological modifications as their own, as appropriate and legitimate, and avoided any major internal cleavages. The third instance examined negotiations beginning in 2016. This provided clear observable evidence that concessions made during negotiations caused internal cleavages between hardliners and others within the FARC.

Next, I anticipated (H2) if militant leaders were unable to reframe and legitimize concessions made during negotiations with an adversary, then I should see internal dissent within the organization. The FARC's shifting stance in 1982 and early 1990s were accompanied by strong endorsements from the helm of the organization, including ideologue Jacobo Arenas and other top leaders. The first shift offered a modification that appears to have well-received by the group in the first place, allowing for greater economic injections into the group while also supporting a crop that many rural farmers supported as a means for livelihoods, though likely without the foresight of cartel-guerilla violence and increased protection and cultivation taxation. Still, there was no discernable opposition or cleavages because of the shift, and the FARC's

choosing to vote on and discuss the decision during their conference certainly would have provided additional credibility and cross-organization buy-in for the decision. In the early 1990s, it does appear that the existential question related to the potential success of communism was largely overshadowed by the growing number of guerillas and increased strength of the organization overall. Nonetheless, militants clearly understood the ideological importance, with FARC leadership addressing the question with a localized infusion of Bolevariansim into their Marxist-Leninist ideological orientation.

The period surrounding the third event, the 2016 peace accord, caused clear dissent. Members were unwilling to accept the terms of the agreement as evidenced by those who refused to lay down their arms, and those who splintered shortly thereafter under various dissident banners. The FARC leadership clearly made efforts to demonstrate the legitimacy of negotiations, with key leaders playing a role and characterizing the negotiation as a successful transition into *political* legitimacy with small gains in agrarianism and elsewhere. Moreover, unlike the initial attempt at integrating the FARC into the UP which resulted in routine assassinations, the FARC's transition under the peace accord provided for security and guaranteed representatives for five years. Framing attempted by supporters of the FARC, with the Cuban Government--who successfully came to power through their own revolution the FARC often attempted to mimic--playing a key role of guarantor. Still, due to the transition of the FARC into a more node-like structure in order to maintain operations and survive during Plan Colombia, the framing and legitimacy should be explored in future research to determine if the FARC faced a hurdle too high to transmit and push framing in remote areas and to fronts with a degree of autonomy. It is also worth noting that by the time of the framing in 2016 and

beyond, Marulanda, who was at the helm since the FARC's inception, was no longer alive or able to thrust his support.

Finally, the absence of credible and capable enforcement measures (H3) should encourage splintering. In 1982 and the early 1990s, the FARC's ranks had grown significantly from their humble beginnings of a few hundred members, and their ideological indoctrination was part of an ingrained practice. Enforcement measures for cohesion were woven throughout everyday life, including the use of various forms of punishment. In 2016, the group laid down their arms as part of the negotiations, which also hamstrung their credibility to enforce cohesion through coercion or violence. Perhaps most surprisingly was the case of Marquez, who was an actor in the negotiation process yet ultimately became so disillusioned with the process he turned back to taking up arms. Similarly, Gentile Duarte's example of the FARC's sending him to enforce the concurrence of the First Front ended with dissident's recruiting him, or somehow otherwise convincing him to rejoin the conflict as a dissident. The data available does not demonstrate that the lack of enforcement was necessary for the splintering, particularly considering the Ricardo Franco Front splinter in the early 1980s when the FARC was strong enough with credible and capable enforcement measures in place. It does however show that potentially when part of the larger sequence including militant perceptions of ideological concessions and a failure of leadership to adequately reframe the modification, that the absence of credible enforcement measures can be an integral part of sufficiency.

4.5. The Kurdish Workers Party

The case of the PKK allows me to take my research a step beyond similar case comparison by adding an organization with ideological non-cohesion (more than one primary

ideological orientation) that has not splintered (yet) over the course of its lifespan. Removing the outcome or phenomenon of interest helps me to better control for selection bias of the outcome oriented cases (Seawright and Gerring, 2008). Additionally, by examining the PKK in relation to Fatah and the FARC, I am able to look at intergroup actions and narratives surrounding PKK ceasefires and their initiated concessions to the Government of Turkey (formally ‘Türkiye’), along with changes in their ideological orientation overtime. I expected to see the PKK leadership -- Abdullah Ocalan in particular -- successfully reframe the focus and objectives with more ease than that of Fatah or the FARC. Indeed, from Ocalan’s own writings and the steadfast support from the PKK, it is clear that the PKK shifted their ideological orientation and objectives since their founding in the late 1970s while maintaining cohesion (Ocalan, 2017; Ocalan, 2011; Ocalan 2006 and Happel 2007). In line with my hypotheses, the PKK possessed a strong ability to reframe concessions positively, to socialize said framing across the organization with legitimacy, and maintained credible and capable enforcement measures for cohesion in the event members did not get in line and support various ideological shifts. My focus on Ocalan as the leadership of the PKK more so than that of Arafat in Fatah, or Marulanda (prior to his death) in the FARC, is largely because unlike those groups Abdullah Ocalan is *the* charismatic leader. While Fatah and the FARC had leaders along with important leadership circles and commanders, Ocalan is the leader of a persona-centered militant group. Even over the past two decades under imprisonment on Imrali Island, he has continued to steer the group while modifying the ideological underpinnings and group objectives.

This section focuses on three primary events throughout the course of the PKKs lifespan; the signing of the Principles of Solidarity with the KDP in 1983; Ocalan’s arrest in 1999; and, the PKK’s transition to a full-throated focus on Democratic Confederalism. The first provides an

interesting look into what was then an embryonic organization forced to make an agreement for a safe haven from which to stage attacks against Turkey following a brutal crackdown. As a new militant group during a turbulent time in Turkey, with leadership that had fled in 1979 after only a year of existence letting many members get rounded up by the government, the PKK's ability to maintain cohesion and sign a beneficial agreement with the KDP is likely a substantial reason they continue to exist today. Next, Ocalan's capture in Kenya and return to Turkey put the PKK's charismatic leader behind bars for good (until the present day, at least). Coinciding with his capture and testimony that was in all likelihood at least in part to save himself from the death penalty, Ocalan turned against many of the group's original ideological objectives, softening tone and pushing for sovereignty and recognition within the bounds of the State of Turkey. This offers an opportune time to observe his public statements surrounding an ideological modification in the face of imprisonment by their key adversary, and the militants in the PKK reaction which was one of general endorsement. Finally, Ocalan's transition to the idea of Democratic Federalism, the final nail in a decade-long transition from fighting for national liberation to a self-actualized community within Turkey provides an example of significant concessions put in place by Ocalan while still in prison. Evidence to date indicates the PKK has never incurred a formal violent splinter, although they lost numerous members to defections, creation of non-militant political parties, and to other militant groups; therefore presents a comparison that lacks the outcome of interest for which to help demonstrate the validity of my findings in the previous two cases.

The *Partiya Karkeren Kurdistan*, known in English as the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) and referred to by other names as the group evolved; including Kodek and more recently, Kongra-Gel before returning to the name of PKK, was founded in southeast Turkey (Diyarbakir)

in 1978 (Jongerden, 2019; Ocalan, 2011). Numerous political non-violent and violent groups have stood up in the 20th and 21st century, and in terms of militant movements the PKK presented arguably the most comprehensive violent rebellion since Kurdish revolts against the Kemalist cleansing campaigns in the 1930s. The PKK originated between 1974-1976 from a group of likeminded rebels. Their formation followed the 1970 military coup that led to a brutal government campaign clamping down on student organizations (Černý, 2014). Their initial group that pre-dated the PKK included a central committee including Abdullah Ocalan, Haki Karer, and Kamer Ozkan (Ozcan, 2012:82). The philosophical underpinnings arose from the discourse of the 1960s and 1970s that began framing the Kurdish question as one driven by identity, challenging the common notion that Kurds were Turkish and putting forward the national liberation alternative (Gunes, 2013). The group quickly moved to create a formal party for greater stature and prominence, which formally became the PKK. The PKK's first congress in 1978 was held in secret, during which an election named Abdullah Ocalan as the leader of the PKK (Abramowitz, 1998). Ocalan would remain at the helm of the organization until present day, doing so from behind bars over the past two decades where despite isolation has used his cult of personality to continue providing direction as the group's leader (Cline, 2004). The PKK stood up a military wing, known first as the Kurdistan Liberation Front (HRK) then in 1986 the People's Liberation Army of Kurdistan (APRK), but the PKK provided direction and was the primary group in practice (White, 2015). Publications, reporting, and narrative from the Government of Turkey, Kurdish diaspora, and allies of the PKK speak largely of militant actions as undertaken by the PKK broadly. For this reason, when discussing militant actions I will be referencing the PKK as the primary group.

Turkey saw a renewed outbreak of political violence between leftist and rightist groups by the late 1970s, and only one year after the PKKs formation Ocalan fled to safe haven in Bekaa Valley Lebanon, then under Syrian control. Meanwhile, many PKK members did not possess the foresight to flee and ended up being killed or captured by the new military government (Černý, 2014). Another coup d'etat occurred in 1980, accompanied by the imprisonment and attacks against left-wing groups and any Kurds not aligned with the military government. By 1984, the PKK was in position for a sustained rebellion and had advanced from primary involvement in inter-Kurdish rivalries, to the initiation of full-scale attacks against the Turkish army and state security forces (Leezenberg, 2016; Gunes, 2013:248). This was the start of the true insurgency that would ebb and flow for another four decades.

The PKK's reach extends well beyond the territory known as Kurdistan, the region in which the majority of Kurds live encompassing Southeastern Turkey, Northern and Western Iraq, and parts of Northern Syria (Jongerden and Akkaya, 2016). Indeed, their reach included a significant diaspora population spread across Europe. Research also indicates at least one camp in the Nagorno-Karabakh region benefiting from Armenian support (Criss, 1995). They have used roots in Europe as a springboard for narcotics trafficking, spreading propaganda, protesting for European political support, and other actions deemed helpful to the PKK's cause (Cagaptay, 2007). Regional actors have helped the PKK as well, with connections to Tehran and Damascus in particular as having supported the PKK when opportune for their interests in provoking Turkey or battling other adversaries. The global interventions from other actors including the U.S. during the Gulf War and War on Terrorism, along with linkages to Kurdish militants battling ISIS in the mid-2010s have all affected the local context and PKK's operations.

4.5.1. Foundational Ideological Tenets

The PKK's original ideological orientation was national liberation and Marxist-Leninist. The main ideological objective was clear at the onset: violent pursuit for the "creation of an independent Kurdish state", what's more, a "political and social revolution among the Kurds" (Barkley and Fuller, 1997:23). Their original manifesto discusses class, capitalism, the colonization of Kurdistan and outlines an ideological framework that "[t]he Kurdistan revolution...is a part of the world proletarian revolution" (Ocalan [1978] 1993:133, as cited by Schoon, 2015:276). Even before the groups founding in 1978, the PKKs original leadership circle had begun socializing objectives and plans by education would be political entrepreneurs and sending them off to Kurdish towns to build an "infrastructure along Maoist lines" (Roman, 2006:73). The PKK clearly relied upon their existing networks from student groups and associations held by the founding members, while also seeking to create new networks for what would eventually become a sustained rebellion lasting over four decades. Still, the foundational ideological orientation and overall goal have in fact changed rather substantially over time.

Ozcan's research includes an examination of the PKK, and notes "[t]he PKK's manifesto was written in 1978 and included the slogan of "Independent, United and Democratic Kurdistan". It also stated that "the other theses and forms of solution (referring to "regional autonomy" and "federal unity"), for they do not tend to disturb the existing State borders, are reformist, and consequently reactionary views' (Manifesto 204). So attempting to solve the Kurdish question within the borders of the colonialist states would mean they would become the *uşak* (servant-collaborators) of the 'bourgeoisie of the sovereign nation" (PKK Kuruluş Bildirisi [1978] 1984:50, as cited by Ozcan, 2012:90). This provides explicit mention of the idea of an independent Kurdistan. Further, the final point in the reference provides the foundational

ideological justification for the initial attacks on other Kurdish groups deemed in conflict with the PKK's vision moving forward.

My review of the English translation of the PKK's founding manifesto (translated in 1983) also explicitly lays clear their intention for a revolution would exploit the grievances of impoverished peasants, much like the initial framings from the FARC. They would for example seek to destroy the feudal system of land ownership, supporting peasants as part of the Stalinist paradigm of a two stage revolution. Specifically, concerning the workers revolution the manifesto provides a call to “[c]onfiscate the lands of landowners collaborating with the colonialists in the course of the struggle and to distribute them among the landless peasantry” (founding manifesto translation by Weşanên Serxwebun, 1983). The incorporation of land rights issues and calls for economic upheaval of the feudal system seen as oppressing Kurdish peasants was an important one as it provided an avenue to support the PKK for those beyond Kurds who felt an ideological closeness to other aspects of the PKK.

The groups' already personified foundational ideological tenets became more so in the early 1990s. A breakdown in focusing on the philosophical and moral components of ideological education began to occur with an increase in recruits. The general educational approach focused on the foundational ideological tenets started to weave in a greater focus on incentives and objectives against the enemy (Ozcan, 2006). As is discussed in the following sections, the change in the early 1990s was only the start. Ocalan's personal shift led the PKK to change their thinking on the objectives of independence for a national liberation movement, and at times questioned the militant aspects of the group, and even would go so far as to discuss the perversion of the group that followed his lead.

4.5.2. Internal Recruitment & Indoctrination

The PKK's recruitment focuses on ethnic-Kurds who have experienced a form of repression or otherwise hold existing grievance. It also attempts to wield propaganda and messaging to push grievances on Kurds more broadly. The process of recruitment and indoctrination contains a heavy ideological focus by the PKK. The history of the Kurdish experience in Turkey undoubtedly acted as a springboard for the PKK's narrative. Between the routine oppression of Kurds since the fall of the Ottoman Empire, and multiple attempts at Turkification and Kemalist-led cultural genocide, seeking to expunge the language, traditions, and sense of identity from Kurds in Turkey while incorporating forced assimilation; plenty of space for cultural and historical exploitation of grievance existed (Gunes, 2014; Černy, 2014; Barkley and Fuller, 1997). The PKK leveraged this history and even the legitimate grievances of oppressed Kurds, including in their exploitation of youth. The Patriotic Revolutionary Youth Movement, the youth wing of the PKK, supports a pipeline of younger militants into the organization. Amnesty International has reported on the continued, and often extensive use of child soldiers by the PKK, including recruitment efforts amongst diaspora, such as in Swedish schools (Amnesty International, 2008).

The PKK provides ideological orientation at the onset of recruitment and it helps to socialize the main lines of their cause. Through materials not limited to the publication of what were for a long time two primary magazines, "Serxwebu'n (Independence, 1982–present) and Berxwedan (Resistance, 1982–1995)". Both of which "were widely distributed in Europe and clandestinely in Turkey" (Gunes, 2014:250). Tools such as these provide a flexible platform from which to perpetuate propaganda and reach diaspora audiences across Europe, some of whom provide political and monetary support through protests or donations on the PKKs behalf.

The PKK operated training camps that provided a heavy dose of ideological study, as well as the added benefit of social and informal indoctrination by virtue of social and community connections within the PKK. The PKK cut off militants from family and friends, and militants were expected to provide absolute loyalty to the cause and organization, above other relationships and responsibilities (Laizer, 1996). Like the FARC and at times Fatah (such as their time operating in so-called 'fatahland'), the PKK also had access to poorly accessible areas within the mountainous regions of Southeast Turkey that enabled training and supported indoctrination (Cagaptay, 2007). Poorly accessible or ungoverned areas are of course an important factor in providing a degree of security for what can be more sustainable camps, without immediate threat of security services or other adversaries coming in and taking it down.

More importantly for the PKKs ideological orientation however, was Ocalan himself. His personal, charisma, leadership or what have you, instilled a god-like reverence amongst his followers. The PKK had what has been referred to as a "Stalinist personality cult around its leader", with various dissidents and opponents within the PKK being "successfully sidelined, or, in some cases, eliminated" (Çürükkaya, 1996 and Van Bruinessen, 2000, as cited by Leezenberg, 2016) Indeed, such reverence when to the extent of his eventual capture having "provoked dozens of Kurds to self-immolate in protest" (Černý, 2014:147).

Ocalan is well aware of his personal impact as a charismatic leader, he has an endearing persona and acolytes who refer to him as 'Apo', an abbreviation for Abdullah as well as Kurdish for 'uncle' (Barkley and Fuller, 1997). He has used psychological tools that supported indoctrination not only to the group but to himself in particular. For example, he is known to demean subordinates in public, requires self-confessionals from higher militants and "taken self-criticism to new heights" (Barkley and Fuller, 1997:40). Clinical psychology examines self-

criticism, where a “key component of internal shame” is “self devaluation and self-criticism” (Gilbert and Procter, 2006:354). This is a tool similarly used by charismatic leaders in militant groups and non-militant alike, such as Marlene Dixon of the Democratic Workers Union (DWU, also known as the Democratic Workers Party or DWP) of the 1970-80s, which was later researched as a political cult (Sanin and Wood, 2014; Lalich, 1992). Ocalan clearly maintains the Weberian notion of ‘charismatic authority’ outlined in *the vocation lectures* (Weber, 2004). Ocalan was also not an experienced combatant that wielded mythology earned in battles, like that of Marulanda or Arafat, instead he tended to refrain from much personal risk. This however did nothing to slow his ruthlessness in instilling loyalty. For instance, he would habitually have dissidents “hunted down and killed” (Černý, 2014:147). Thus, not only was he a charismatic leader who personified the ideological leanings and instruction to militants, he also set a clear tone that whether indoctrinated or not, betrayal and challenges would not be tolerated.

External state-support was a critical component enabling the provision of financial and strategic support to the PKK. Since their inception, states have viewed the PKK as a readily made tool for states threatened or in conflict with Turkey, including receiving funding and training support from the Soviets (pre-collapse), Iran, Iraq, and most notably from Syria (Barkley and Fuller, 1997; Cagaptay, 2007). Similar to Fatah and the FARC, this provided the PKK with the opportunity to rely on friendly states for support and safe-haven to maintain training camps across borders. The PKK’s interactions with Palestinian militants goes well beyond similarities, they even received training support from militants like the PLO, within which of course Fatah was a primary group.

As is the case with many militant organizations including my previous examinations of Fatah and the FARC, the PKK’s indoctrination practices ebbed and flowed over time. The types

of recruits created different indoctrination environments based on the interests, backgrounds, and perceived intent. Observations from analysis of the PKK demonstrate that in the early 1990s following the *Serihildans* or ‘uprisings’, the PKK began receiving ‘raw’ recruits drawn to the groups as a result of the energy from the *Serihildans* as well as in response to Turkey’s ham-fisted response. The sheer volume of recruits made the then-typical inculcation process too difficult resulting in many untrusted recruits the PKK dealt with in various ways, from distancing and biased treatment, to elimination in various forms, from expulsion and murder (Marcus, 2009; Ozcan, 2006). Substantial increases in flows of recruits affect not only their own indoctrination process, but also organizations more broadly as other militants from the lowest groupings to leadership adjust as well. I examine below how the changes within the PKK in the early 1990s influenced the ideological evolution and related framing.

4.5.3. PKK’s ‘Principles of Solidarity’ with the KPD in 1983

Shortly after the founding of the PKK, Ocalan’s group found itself in the precarious situation of operating in martial-law Turkey. Ocalan and some followers fled to Syria-controlled Lebanon (Beqaa Valley) where they enjoyed support from Jalal Talabani, the leader of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK). The relationship provided access to additional support and training facilities, and were further able to strengthen Syrian connections that would serve the PKK for the next forty years (Černý, 2014). Around the same time, Turkey’s 1980 coup-d’etat provided even more repressive government clamp-downs and round-ups of members in various groups deemed potentially subversive to the government, including the PKK. According to writings by post-coup President Evren, his military coup was largely in response to the perception the RPP [Republican People’s Party] government was unable to control or adequately respond to violent Kurdish separatism (Demirel, 2003:259). The post-coup leadership set out to

resolve that quickly, applying pressure on known and suspected militants along with any potentially subversive group. During this period, any PKK members or supporters remaining in Turkey were under constant threat, with the government rounding up and imprisoning many (Romano, 2006).

While the PKK's Ocalan and militants who were able to get into Beqaa Valley operated from a safe haven, they were unable to launch attacks out of Syrian concern about poking Turkey to the point of potential military reprisals (Čerony, 2014). At the same time, the PUK had begun falling out with Damascus in the early 1980s by initially siding with Iraq, angering Iran and impacting the PUK's relationship with their host in Damascus (Artens, 2012). The PKK needed to find another ally and a location from which to not only train but actually launch attacks into southeast Turkey. The Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) enjoyed a degree of freedom in their mountainous camps on the Iraqi side of the Turkey-Iraq border. By the summer of 1983, the PKK had been strengthening relations with the KDP, and the respective leadership (namely Ocalan and Massoud, the son and de facto leader in Iraq of Mustafa Barzani's KDP) signed what the Principles of Solidarity (Černy, 2014; Artens, 2012; Gunter, 1995 & 1996). The agreement included unification against imperialism ('namely American'). The KDP and PKK also documented their willingness to cooperate "with other revolutionary forces in the region and the creation of new alliances" (Gunter, 1995:58). The Principles of Solidarity was drafted in a manner that kept the internal affairs of the respective groups outside of the others interest, and a release valve in article eleven allowing for their group to leave subsequent to another being out of alignment and ignoring a warning (Gunter, 1995). The accord's eleven article declaration allowed the PKK to use KPD territory for training and launching attacks directly into Turkey

from the safety of the mountains in Iraqi Kurdistan, a massive lifeline allowing the PKK to continue their embryotic rebellion (Černý, 2014).

Although the accords may at first blush appear commonsensical for the PKK, in preserving their existence and ensuring a continuation of training while obtaining a region that would enable direct attacks against Southeastern Turkey, the underpinning ideological differences between the KDP and PKK were significant. For one, the PKK's foundational othering of *aghas*, tribal leaders and elites across Kurdistan, including many who 'emulated the KDP' was turned on its head (Arten, 2012:14). Additionally, with Iran worried about the PUK's ability to field attacks, it was within their interest to encourage the KDP to support the PKK out of utility, rather than, as Arten notes, out of ethnic kinship (Arten, 2012). Throughout this period preceding and following the accords, the Ocalan was also moving to consolidate power over the PKK causing friction within the ranks. Dissent occurred in the form of militants leaving the PKK and joining other militant groups, something that would continue throughout the PKK's lifespan, particularly after Ocalan's arrest in 1999 and in the early 2000s¹ (Criss, 1995; Marcus, 2009). In this instance however, survivability and ability to demonstrate legitimacy as a capable militant group appear to have removed any interest in the PKK's ranks for dissenting. Indeed, PKK members continued to hold the longstanding view that the agreement was necessary and evolved as a group thanks to the accord. In an interview from 2020, the Firat News Agency quoted PKK Central Committee member Duran Kalkan as stating "... [T]he KDP gained a great political achievement from it. The PKK, practically, also made important and developed relations in the framework of the agreement" (Dri, 2020). Additional framing did not appear

¹ See Criss 1995:19 for a mention of unclear potential splinters forming 'new organizations in Europe' without further elaboration, and an inability to triangulate with multiple sources.

necessary on the part of the PKK's leadership, and enforcement capabilities at this appeared credible.

Marriages out of convenience rarely turn out well in the end. Relations between the KDP and PKK would get rocky and would ebb and flow throughout the 1990s, with a series of alliances and more often than not, direct confrontation and fighting between the two (Gunter, 1996). Regional conflicts involving the PKK, KDP, PUK and at times Turkish interventions between 1991 and 1995 further complicated the PKK's relations with the KDP. At one point in 1993, the PKK surrendered to the PUK, which counterintuitively helped mend the relationship by giving the PUK an advantage against other adversaries. Yet throughout this alliance of convenience, the internal dynamics of the PKK remained cohesive enough to avoid splintering with no observable attempted power grabs or splinter groups forming resulting from the 1983 Principles of Solidarity. The accord agreed to under the PKK's own interest. The PUK's falling out with Damascus forced the PKK into a searching for an alliance, but there was no direct adversary pushing them into an agreement. The full insurgency against the Turkish state (as opposed to violence within Kurdish tribal conflicts) was able to launch in 1984, which for the PKK was likely a strong marker of success.

4.5.4. PKK leader Ocalan is arrested in 1999 and offers an ideological modification and ceasefire

Ocalan's capture and imprisonment in 1999 had a significant impact on the PKK. Not only was the leader arrested and humiliated, but he offered an apology and call to transition away from violence to the extent of asking some leaders to even turn themselves in (Rubin, 2016). After two decades of militancy, there was at first an open question as to whether or not any sub-groups within the PKK or other prominent voice would pounce on an opportunity to exploit

uncertainty, or who may have felt betrayed by Ocalan. Instead, no serious challenges were posed to his leadership, including the PKK's military commander Cemil Bayik, who may have been well-positioned to do so (Leezenberg, 2016). There are documented reports of Bayik ignoring Ocalan's initial call for a ceasefire (justifying it could be the result of torture), but by releasing statements Ocalan was able to maintain the strategic direction of the group (White, 2015). Perhaps the closest was when Ocalan's brother, Osman, challenged Murat Karaliyan (also a co-founder) who had been supporting Ocalan's transformations, to no avail (Rubin, 2016). It was clear that there would be no successful, meaningful challenge to Ocalan at this time, and he appeared to maintain PKK-friendly Kurdish support, with around 75 people committing self-immolation between October 1998 and February 1999 in the "protest at the hunting down of the PKK leader" (Akkaya and Jongerden, 2011:144). Thus, with no successful, meaningful challenges to his ideological leadership or strategic decision making at the forefront, Ocalan would continue informing the trajectory of the organization from imprisonment.

Ocalan took pains to frame his ideological transitions as not only justifiable, but in line with the evolutionary course, he had previously set. His 1999 written declaration on the democratic solution of the Kurdish question dedicates substantial space for justification, explaining the time has come for evolution beyond the dogmatic approach of Kurdish-Turkish relations and socialist thought of the 1970s. He calls for dramatic change to be realized: "It should develop a political programme based on the concepts of a democratic Republic and a common country, giving up the demands of the utopian period which are no longer the only form freedom can take and, in any case, no longer work and have been abandoned, and opting instead for the notion of free union" (Ocalan, 1999:29). In contrasting the perceived ideological betrayal by Ocalan to the PKK against that of other militant groups, such as Arafat's public shifts of

Fatah; whether under duress from his imprisonment or not, it is striking how the PKK managed to maintain general cohesion without serious issue. There were voices that pointed to defeat, to treason and betrayal of the PKK's ideals, but nothing that amounted in any serious militant splinter or threat to their existence (Akkaya and Jongerden, 2011).

Michael Rubin's well researched work on the Kurdish movement notes how to outside observers, it seemed that following Ocalan's trial his stance shifted simply out of self-preservation, essentially to avoid the death penalty (Rubin, 2016). Regardless of whether or not outside observers agreed with that sentiment, it doesn't hold up under scrutiny. Scholars have rightly pointed out that Ocalan's ideological transition had been occurring since at least the early and mid-1990s (Leezenberg, 2016). This ongoing transformation over time within the group may be part of the reason the ideological modification did not result in stronger internal condemnation. In 1991, one of the first observed public references to modifying the ideological objectives from independence arose. Ocalan began referencing a preference for a political solution, through which the recognition of identity, culture, and language as a means to Kurdish freedoms within Turkey as opposed to an independent state (Rubin, 2016). Open source reporting has quoted Ocalan at one point as explicitly stating "[t]hey say we are separatists and want to separate. That is nonsense! We have nine hundred years of togetherness with Turkey" (Gunter, 1996:53). By 1995, Ocalan was signaling willingness for peace and an openness to alternative ends for Kurdish freedom. During a press conference in 1995, he stated "[t]he 10-year war has claimed the lives of 34,000 people. The war has never been the choice of our party. It was imposed on our people. We state categorically: We want this war to end and we are in favor of a democratic, equitable, and legal solution" (The Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) issued the statement at a press conference in Geneva on January 24, 1995). The PKK's original

manifesto provided an option for a non-violent resolution to the Kurdish question if the government made such an opportunity was available, but it also was clear on the necessity of violence. The more important point in this statement however, was the implication that an ‘equitable and legal solution’ may take different forms than a free and independent Kurdistan. Ocalan used the opportunity to call for a potentially peaceful process that did not infringe upon the Turkish borders, rather than calling for revolutionary principles, independence, or violence.

In examining the PKK’s internal response at the time, the group was largely following Ocalan’s direction. An initial round of PKK revenge attacks followed the arrest (White, 2015; Reed, 1999; Anadolu News Agency (Factiva). However, the Global Terrorism Database levels are low as they do not appear to have confirmed PKK guerillas as the source of many attacks that occurred throughout 1999. While it is apparent that there is an undercounting in reporting on PKK attacks by the GTD, triangulating GTD data against local reporting and scholarly work in the field does in fact demonstrate a barrage of attacks after Ocalan’s arrest followed by eventual endorsement of the ceasefire push from Ocalan, albeit slowly (Global Terrorism Database, 1970-2020, 2022; Rubin, 2016; White, 2015; Uppsala Conflict Data Program, 2022). They did slow and eventually appear to largely respect and endorse the ceasefire (which was also acknowledge by Ocalan through his lawyer, stating “[t]he statements of General Staff say that the attacks decreased 90 percent” (Anatolia news agency, Ankara). There are however strong indications that the PKK maintained a balance of supporting the ceasefire as called for by Ocalan while experiencing his first year of imprisonment, trials, and appeal, and the potential to use violence again in the future. The PKK announced shortly after the ceasefire that a vague group of dissidents splinter and are not the PKK’s responsibility, and may still wield violence (Demir, 2000). There is not much reporting on this in 2000 and based on the internal tension that was

observed initially following Ocalan's calls for a ceasefire, it is likely that this was either a handful of guerillas expressing dismay with the ceasefire, or, a tool for the PKK in the event more attacks were necessary as an arm's length from the PKK. Dynamics surrounding the dissidents would benefit from further investigation; while no observable evidence gathered through this research indicates a splinter group formed because of the dismayed dissidents, the implication is that if they engaged in violence it could have been a splinter group. I am unable to completely rule out the possibility in this research. Instances of splintering for appearances have occurred within the PKK, and as such that would not be shocking either. In the early 2000s, the Kurdish Freedom Falcons (TAK, also known under the name of Kurdish Freedom Hawks) were formed and reporting found a strong likelihood that the TAK was in fact a tool of the PKK (Gurcan, 2016; U.S. labels Kurdish PKK affiliate Terrorist Group, 2008). Militant groups have often used the public perception to their advantage by creating distinct elements not within their formal umbrella, but operating clandestinely at the will of the parent organizations leadership. In the case of the TAK, researchers have questioned the assessment that they were under Ocalan and the PKK's direction, namely White in his thoroughly researched 2015 book *The PKK: coming down from the mountains*. White describes the TAK as possibly being a tool of the PKK as described above, but goes on to say they could have been a true splinter from disgruntled members, or even a tool of Turkey to discredit the PKK (White, 2015:46). However, even White acknowledges their true purpose is impossible to glean, and when investigating reporting along with other scholarship, I assess the TAK as a tool of the PKK. The TAK is potentially semi-autonomous, possessing an ability to plan and undertake their own actions while being subordinate to the upper PKK echelons, as the Government of Turkey and others suggest (Gurcan, 2016).

Despite the initial challenges in relaying direction from prison, under Ocalan's reframing PKK would now be publicly fighting for freedoms within Türkiye, for a 'democratic Turkey' as opposed to a 'Kurdish state', and instituting the ceasefire called for by their imprisoned leader (Rubin, 2016:35). The position of pursuing a democratic republic was formally adopted in 2000 during the PKK's Seventh Extraordinary Party Congress, and was accompanied by a campaign of "militant re-education" (Akkaya and Jongerden, 2011:148). The culmination of this transformation was the establishment of the Kurdistan Freedom and Democracy Congress (aka KODEK) in 2002 (White, 2015; Rubin, 2016). KODEK proved short-lived, with another rebranding occurring in 2003, the group taking on the name Kongre-Gel (Rubin, 2016). Throughout this time period in the early 2000s, Ocalan continued to put a great deal of effort into framing the ideological machinations that had been occurring, whether for better comforts in prison or out of true belief is irrelevant, the importance being his framing and the internal actions of the militants during this period.

4.5.5. PKK undergoes another major shift to the concept of 'Democratic Confederalism'

In the years leading up to 2005, the PKK had been in a seemingly perpetual state of rebranding since Ocalan's arrest in 1999. There was also a significant test of unity within the PKK, when in 2004 Ocalan's brother Osman, along with Mizamettin Tas, and Shahnaz Altun among others, established a new political organization advocating for non-violent confrontation, the Partiya Welatparezen Demokratên Kurdistan (PWDK, or Patriotic and Democratic Party of Kurdistan) (White, 2015; Marcus, 2009). The PWDK's expression of non-militant nature is not in line with the militant splinter focus of this research, but their existence is worth mentioning nonetheless as it demonstrates the significance of dissidence at this time, resulting in a formal splinter of a new political entity. The PWDK was short-lived when Ocalan convinced Osman to

reconcile and come back to the PKK, and in brutal PKK fashion, killing the PWDK coordinator Hikmet Fidan and at least three others (Cagaptay, 2007; Marcus, 2009). The disorienting era of the early 2000s for the PKK resulted in dropping of the guise of KODEK and Kongre-Gel and moving back to the PKK (Rubin, 2016). Ozcan provides a detailed analysis based on source documents like meeting notes, where Ocalan provided direction for a “re-foundation of the PKK”. He goes on to discuss the apparent contradiction in Ocalan’s earlier points when ‘dissolving’ the PKK for KODEK, that the PKK had ‘accomplished its mission’ (Ozcan, 2006:114,120). The reestablishment of the PKK is part of a transformation into the concept of radical democracy that Ocalan had been developing and expanding upon over the previous few years. While in prison Ocalan made contact with a little-known American socialist-libertarian named Murray Bookchin, whose writings had influenced his thinking on Democratic Confederalism (Leezenberg, 2016). With Bookchin’s influence, Ocalan narrowed and refined the philosophical and ideological orientation of the PKK with a more pronounced focus on Democratic Confederalism, pushing the pivot fully in 2005 (Leezenberg, 2016; Akkaya and Jongerden, 2012). The PKK’s membership had been in decline since Ocalan’s capture, losing some 1,500 militants between 2003 and 2005 (White, 2015). From an organizational stand point, this clearly could have provided additional impetus for Ocalan and leadership to forcefully do *something* in terms of additional strategic direction, maintaining legitimacy of the party. It was also in the early 2000s, when the PKK created the Party for Free Life in Kurdistan (Partiya Jiyana Azad a Kurdistanê) or PJAK, an affiliate in Iran (International Crisis Group, 2012; Marcus, 2009; Cagaptay and Eroglu, 2007). Scholars recognize the attempts by PJAK to avoid public connection with the PKK, but recognize the abundance of connections including their following of the strategic and ideological lead of Ocalan (Kaya and Lowe, 2017).

Ocalan's ideological shift in the early 2000s was essentially pushing for the notion of a bottom-up system of democratic autonomy and self-governance defined in relation to but not dictated by the state, nor confined to state borders. Democratic Confederalism was a grass-roots oriented and managed system of democracy rather than a confederation of states or top-managed representation, thereby allowing for the unification and self-organization of inter-state Kurdish communities) (Akkaya and Jongerden, 2012). This came with a thick degree of irony, because as noted by Leezenberg the PKK itself had a top-down hierarchical chain (2016). The PKK's internal response to this further ideological modification from Ocalan was one of endorsement and quick action, insofar as observable evidence and writings conclude. The PKK's reconstruction congress in 2005 formally reestablished the PKK, doing away with Kongra-Gel, and framed the reversal as an ideological and philosophical evolution rather than a step backwards or platform focused on violence (Ozcan, 2006; White, 2015). 2005 also marked the initiation of the Association of Communities in Kurdistan Koma Civakên Kurdistan (KCK, initially named the Council of Associations of Kurdistan or KKK before becoming the KCK) Contract, an umbrella for the recently formed bottom-up assemblies of united Kurdish groups across the region (Akkaya and Jongerden, 2012; White, 2015). The KCK was described by the PKK as the "KCK is a movement which struggles for establishing its own democracy, neither ground on the existing nation-states nor see them as the obstacle" (PKK 2005: 175, as cited by Akkaya and Jongerden, 2012)". The KCK would support self-governance and embody democracy as power rather than a form of purely systemized government recognized wherever Kurds live (Akkaya and Jongerden, 2012). Thus, actions of the PKK during this building instance of ideological modification seem to be in alignment and after initial tensions, general cohesion. Eventually, the push would gain greater traction, with the initiation of the new pro-

Kurdish Demokratik Toplum Partisi (DTP, or Democratic Society Party) which would see deputies elected in the 2007 national and 2009 local elections (Akkaya and Jongerden, 2012). Schools would also be set up focused on PKK orthodoxy (White, 2015).

Simultaneously, the Government of Turkey certainly did not pause to allow the PKK to undergo a transformation that painted Ocalan as a leader pushing for peace. The PKK billed increased fighting as self-defense, but whether framing or actual self-defense, clashes clearly escalated (Akkaya and Jongerden, 2011; Global Terrorism Database 1970-2020, 2022). A closer examination based on reporting in the GTD indicates self-defense was unlikely the entire purpose of the increased attacks, with the PKK and TAK attacking citizens and business interests as well, albeit to a far lesser extent than those pointed at military or government targets (Global Terrorism Database, 1970-2020, 2022).

4.5.6. Discussion

I expected to see (H1) perceptions of ideological concessions to an adversary lead to group cleavages between hardliners and others within the organization. Alternatively, if concessions had taken place outside of negotiations with an adversary, on the militant organization's own accord, then cleavages would not form as militants would view changes as intentional and appropriate, rather than as a concession. The three events examined in this case illuminated both sides of this hypothesis. The 1983 negotiations with the KDP resulting in the accord known as the Principles of Solidarity had the potential for militants to perceive it as a modification to their program of action incorporated in their ideological underpinnings related to fighting elite and *aghas* for the have-nots. Instead, the apparent existential necessity of establishing themselves as militants capable of initiating attacks against Turkey required an

alliance of convenience. The accord largely held and militants did not exploit it as an opportunity to sow discord amongst the PKKs ranks, by the time the PKK and KDPs relations soured again, it was unrelated to internal dynamics resulting from any militant perceived ideological softening. In 1999, Ocalan's arrest presented what has arguably been the largest opportunity for within group divisions. In the hands of the enemy, Ocalan issued statements seen as soft, as a betrayal, and saving his own skin. As I expected, this did create initial cleavages within the PKK. Finally, in 2005, contrary to the ideological modification that militants could perceive as forced by an adversary, PKK militants largely endorsed Ocalan's ideological shift further to the left as an evolution of the struggle's objectives.

Next, I anticipated (H2) if militant leaders were unable to reframe and legitimize concessions made to an adversary during negotiations, then I should see internal dissent within the organization. Alternatively, if leaders are able to successfully reframe modifications as legitimate (evolution, transformation, etc.) then the group will maintain cohesion. All three instances assessed corroborated the alternative hypothesis to varying degrees. The first and third strongly corroborated it, while the second initially causes cleavages while the PKK leadership was reframing and getting members back in line. In the early 1980s, there was no issue legitimizing the Principles of Solidarity, there was not an explicit need related to the ideological direction that was seemingly irreconcilable, thus dissent did not occur. In 1999, the evidence I provided demonstrated dissent stretched years. Cleavages formed in the form of the initial avoidance of adhering to Ocalan's call for a ceasefire, as well as through the creation of Osman Ocalan's political party. The 2005 re-establishment of the PKK had significant framing push by Ocalan and through the PKK structures, resulting in rapid implementation of the new direction, and accompanied by re-education initiatives. The origination of the TAK around this time was

complementary. The PKK's disinterest in framing or reigning he TAK in likely helped their restructuring while having the ability to maintain TAK as a tool, without having to demonstrate credibility (assessed in the next paragraph).

Finally, the absence of credible and capable enforcement measures (H3) should encourage splintering. The PKK, more so than the previous two cases, demonstrated strong enforcement measures throughout their existence. From there the mass execution of recruits suspected of subversion, to hunting down and killing dissidents. The relevant event with regards to the third hypothesis would be the 1999 imprisonment of Ocalan and subsequent attempted creation of a new political party by Osman Ocalan and others, who were not only continued to come back to the PKK without fear of reprisal so long as they did, but also the assassination of the PWDK coordinator who did not return to ranks. The PKK's use of continued violence under the guise of self-defense likely further legitimized the group by demonstrating amongst more hardline members that the use of violence was still on the table in some capacity.

4.6. The Relevance of Ideological Cohesion and Territorial Control across Cases

My quantitative approach to determining case selection included two key indicators for consideration: ideological cohesion and territorial control. It is worth revisiting those variables to determine whether they appear they have provided for meaningful case selection criteria. In fact, examining the relevance of these variables after conducting congruence procedures provides for an interesting result for ideological cohesion. Ideological cohesion was an important consideration because among other reasons discussed in Chapter Three, ideological dimensionality through recruitment discrimination can drive the homogeneity of militants. However, single (cohesive) versus multidimensional ideological orientation (non-cohesive)

carries another important consideration; multidimensional orientation encourage sub-groups based on the appeal of sub-objectives more than others, foreign fighters are a prime example (Seymour, Bakke, and Cunningham, 2016). Foreign fighters can be attracted to a foreign conflict based on a specific objective or sub-objective that the militant group may not hold as dearly as foreign fighters. Therefore, the potential impact of ideological cohesion on a militant group's conditions for splintering is of a compound nature: multidimensional ideological orientation can provide greater recruitment discrimination and encourage more in-group homogeneity.

At the same time, singular, ideological cohesion can provide a big-tent approach to militancy but is likely to result in greater heterogeneity which can be linked to fragmentation more broadly (not necessarily splintering). My findings demonstrate how Fatah conceptualized a big-tent approach to ideology, a cohesive, singular orientation by design at the earliest stage in their formation (Cobban, 1984). Clearly, this did not work as designed. Congruence procedures showed that Fatah splintered in two of the three instances observed, explicitly related to (or incited by) militant perception of ideological betrayal. The big tent approach to militancy did not provide immunity from splintering. Meanwhile the PKK's multidimensional, more discriminate recruitment and operationalization of the group was not associated with splintering. Ocalan's cult of personality and ever-changing political orientation, combined with a liberation based objective which also continued to change, ended up being the most resilient to splintering of the three cases. My findings indicate that singular ideological orientation (i.e., ideological cohesion) may actually support an environment in which splintering is more likely.

Meanwhile, I examined territorial control because of its importance in demonstrating the legitimacy of an organization, is associated with survivability, and provides greater resilience for

the recruitment, indoctrination, and training of militants (Christia, 2012; Shapiro, 2013). All three groups were associated with positive observations of the importance of territorial control in their operations, and did not indicate whether territorial control would be a detriment or benefit against splintering. Fatah's ability to operate as a state within a state as 'fatahland'; the FARC's compounds across treacherous Colombian terrain; and, the PKK's operations in the Southeast and safe harbor in places like Syria or Iraq supported their ability to indoctrinate, train, and survive. Therefore, findings related to territorial control were as expected, but future research would benefit from an exploration of cases without territorial control. Nonetheless, both criteria served a useful purpose in case selection and the research has benefited from their initial parameter setting.

4.7. Conclusion

The focus of this chapter has been on examining congruence or lack thereof between nine events within the three cases selected and my hypotheses. The observational evidence gleaned from first hand writings and accounts, a multitude of researchers with a strong pedigree on each case, empirical data corroborating findings where necessary primarily from the GTD, UCDP, and open-source reporting from both reputable news organizations and the USG (including archives), clearly demonstrates congruence. Militant groups engaging in ideological modification on their own accord appear to have a much greater ability to steer the modification while maintaining cohesion than those who undertake modifications while undergoing talks or negotiations with an adversary. Examining these modifications during and surrounding negotiations elucidated that many of the same hardliners who maintained group support during internal shifts, even when they appeared dramatic or non-negotiable, were more likely to splinter when the modification would be perceived as a concession. Evidence therefore points to

ideology as being relational as opposed to non-negotiable, for hardliners and other militants alike. This is an important finding related to understanding how policymakers view hardliners and considerations related to the degree of which members may be more prone to support a change in various circumstances.

In the next chapter, I examine the case of Al-Fatah more closely, applying a within-case analysis through process tracing. I explore my hypothesized mechanism of *perceived ideological betrayal by hardliners* because of ideological modifications by the group. Using information from this congruence testing I apply the observations of *perceptions of illegitimacy in framing ideological modifications; socialization of legitimacy concerns; and, enforcement of punishment measures perceived as disintegrated or non-credible* as diagnostic evidence to explore further. Congruence testing allowed me to examine an increased number of events across time and space thereby strengthening the validity of my findings, yet as discussed in the introduction to this chapter it left my fine-grained analysis wanting. Being unable to unpack the impact of atrocities for example, whether it be the impact of PKK's hanged bodies stuffed with money on an internal signal that could have outweighed any ideological orientation in maintaining cohesion, or the FARC's use of cylinder bombs against civilians and how that may have been morally justified by members of the guerilla organization (Marcus, 2009; Amnesty International, 2008). The application of process tracing in Chapter Five helps to unpack two specific events within the case of Fatah, following the sequence of events within their existing context and looking at interactions through a closer lens.

Chapter 5

Theory-Building Process Tracing

5.1. Introduction

Process tracing (sometimes expressed in the shorthand of PT by scholars) is “the systematic examination of diagnostic evidence selected and analyzed in light of research questions and hypotheses posed by the investigator” (Collier, 2011:823). Put differently, process tracing can be expressed through its foundation in cognitive psychology as “the examination of intermediate steps in a process to make inferences about hypothesis on how that process took place and whether and how it generated the outcome of interest” (Bennet and Checkel, 2014:6). Process tracing can take one of three forms, theory-building, theory-testing, or explanatory. I have employed theory-building process tracing in this research as my method of choice for its relevance and appropriateness in answering my research question, which is inherently ‘theory-building’ within a bounded context related to splintering. Indeed, the “aim of theory-building PT is to build a middle-range theory of a causal mechanism that is expected to function within a bounded context” (Beach and Pedersen, 2011:17). In this chapter, I applied a theory-building process tracing focusing on uncovering an ideational mechanism, or a cognitive process separate from material incentives. The challenges associated with process tracing ideational mechanisms include capturing a broad enough temporal scope that doesn’t only focus on a singular choice made by key-actors; avoiding full reliance on key actor reasoning given incentives for reasoning to be biased; obtaining evidence of an ideational mechanism influencing an outcome; and, observing the independent variable associated with ideational mechanisms, among others (Jacobs, 2014). I mitigate these by ensuring a temporal timeline that includes preceding and subsequent internal actions by the groups; complementing process tracing initially with

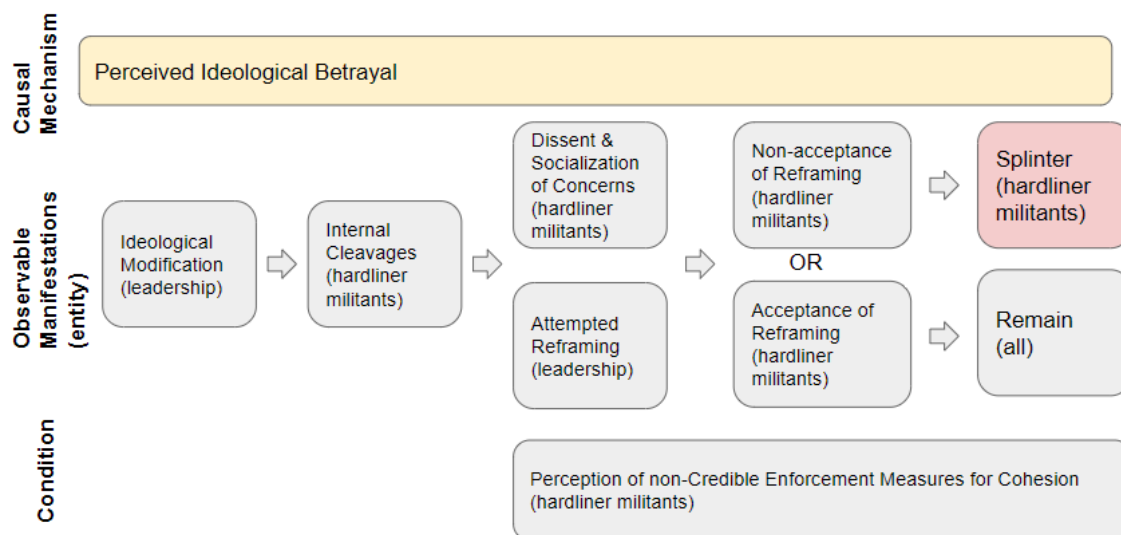
congruence testing for greater obtainment of evidence; and, operationalizing ideological modification as talks, negotiations, and other observable public changes to ideological orientation.

In Chapter Four, I obtained observations that have allowed me to confirm my initial hypotheses and infer the key pieces of diagnostic evidence that appear to occur during events in which splintering has been the outcome of ideological modification. This evidence pointed to the existence of an ideational causal mechanism that connects ideological modification and splintering. Theory-building process tracing has then provided me with additional evidence to complement congruence analysis, from which I am able to infer the causal mechanism of militant perceived ideological betrayal. In doing so, I've followed the general practice recommended for theory-building process tracing: collecting data, observing evidence and inferring observable manifestations, finally, inferring causal mechanisms based on manifestations (Beach and Pedersen, 2011:18-19).

This chapter now applies process tracing within the case of Al-Fatah, referred to by the short-hand of Fatah. I examine the plausibility of militant perceived ideological betrayal in action as the primary ideational mechanism linking ideological modification with militant group splintering. Diagnostic evidence for this finding obtained from observations between acts of ideological modification (IV)--whether formal and explicit or operationalized without acknowledgement, and militant group splintering (DV). Congruence procedures demonstrated that key diagnostic evidence for militant hardliner perceptions of betrayal should include inferences based on the occurrence of (1) internal cleavage development post-ideological modification; (2) dissent and thereby socialization of concerns amongst members, hardliners in particular; (3) attempts by leadership to reframe and legitimize actions; and, either (4a) militant

acceptance of ideological reframing and legitimization or (4b) non-acceptance. Evidence further demonstrated that the existence of credible and capable enforcement measures conditions this mechanism. I also obtained evidence that indicated the potential for two alternative pathways from ideological modification to splintering that had been unaccounted for during my research design and held the potential to be confounding: external state support encouraging or enabling militant splintering; and, competing views of strategic direction as opposed to ideological meaning. These alternatives held the greatest plausibility to falsify my inferred causal mechanism by demonstrating that it may be external actors manipulating or buttressing splinters, or disagreements on strategic decisions causing personalities to clash and therefore splinter. Theory-building process tracing determined these are important for future testing to determine the extent to which they may be relevant as variables, however, they do not hold up to scrutiny as causal mechanisms and instead appear exogenous to the process at play. Instead, inferences from process tracing demonstrated perceived ideological betrayal as the relevant theorized causal mechanism, demonstrated as:

Figure 5.1



Militants perceive ideological betrayal most often when the modification of foundational tenets of a militant groups guiding ideology outside of the group's terms. When militants; particularly hardliners, experience an ideological change as the result of a negotiation with an adversary resulting in concessions, apparent coercion, or cowardice against an enemy (such as retreat or failures preceding or coinciding with the modifications), ideological betrayal is most likely to be perceived. In these instances, when conditioned by poor or nonexistent enforcement measures of cohesion for the group, this ideological betrayal can be sufficient for militant splintering. My findings presented below bolster research that shows ideology as relational, as well as demonstrating how it can be malleable over time depending on circumstances (Sartori, 1979; Crenshaw, 2000; Maynard, 2019; Blaydes and Rubin, 2008).

The chapter has three sections. First, I offer shortfalls within existing research as it relates to understanding ideological changes over time within militant organizations that necessitate my application of process tracing. Next, I provide a description of my application of theory-building process tracing that incorporates relevant existing theories and infer the causal mechanism of perceived ideological betrayal as linking ideological modification and splintering. I complement this section with an analysis of alternative explanations and provide observational evidence that rejects their merit. Finally, I offer a conclusion of the relative importance of my findings that will feed into the discussion provided in Chapter 6.

5.2. Shortfalls in Existing Explanations

Not all militants are heavily indoctrinated nor do they necessarily hold uncompromising allegiance to an ideological orientation or group, as documented in my introduction to this research (see for example Sanin and Wood, 2014; Crenshaw, 2011; Neuman, 2013, among

others). Many militants possess only tacit endorsement and join for alternative reasons, or adopt ideals and become more committed over time (Maynard, 2019). However, research has also elucidated the existence of hardliner militants, particularly those involved in long and seemingly intractable conflicts, that appear to hold non-negotiable devotion to morally entwined ideals (Sanin and Wood, 2014; Atran, 2015 & 2016). Existing literature surrounding militant splintering tends to focus on splintering as a secondary or tertiary result outside of the primary areas of research, such as negotiations and their success, or militant spoilers (Pearlman, 2009; Kydd and Walter, 2002; Stedman, 1997). In cases where splintering is explored explicitly, it is largely the conditions and identifiers of militant organizations that splinter, their trajectory, or dimensions of fragmentation and internal infighting (Asal et al, 2012; Perkoski, 2015; Bakke, Cunningham, and Seymour, 2012). Compelling work has been done in related topics that offer tangentially related findings, including Staniland's theory of fratricidal flipping, Pischedda's work on window theory, or Woldemariam's research on insurgent fragmentation related to battlefield status, but none explicitly explore the linkage ideological modification and splintering (Staniland, 2012; Pischedda, 2018; Woldemariam, 2018). As such, there is a dearth of current research focusing on both ideological modification and splintering.

Most relevant to my research is expanding the view of the devoted actor theory. The devoted actor theory elucidates an understanding of why some individuals, particularly in protracted conflicts and of ideological militant groups, do not respond to typical 'rational' incentives or are more inclined to engage in self-sacrifice and political violence (Ginges and Atran, 2013; Atran, 2016). Atran explains that "[d]evoted actors represent a dimension of thought and behavior distinct from instrumental rationality in resisting material compromises over such values" (Atran 2016:192). The theory does not however explore what occurs during

ideological modification, or how devoted actors may affect splintering in such contexts. It remains highly relevant given the exploration of actors holding non-negotiable ideals and leaders who may frame operations or actions around such deontic ideals.

5.3. Theory-Building Process Tracing: The Case of Fatah

The case of Fatah provides an opportunity to deploy theory-building process tracing by examining diagnostic evidence observed before, during, and after instances of ideological modification. In Chapter Four, I showed how in 1974, 1982, and 1993, ideological modification occurred. Two of the three instances (1974 and 1982) resulted in splintering. Chapter Four also demonstrated similarities between Fatah and the FARC when militants splinter in line with my hypotheses put forward in Chapter Three. Namely, (1) each instance of splintering had a perceived ideological modification by militant leadership; (2) militant hardliners dissented and formed internal cleavages within the group; and, (3) groups wielded non-credible enforcement measures for cohesion. Meanwhile, my analysis of the PKK provided constraints which likely supported cohesion; specifically, a lack of internal cleavages and dissent when modifications occurred outside of negotiations, more readily-accepted reframing from PKK leadership (i.e., Ocalan), and demonstrably strong enforcement measures for cohesion. The case of the PKK confirmed my alternative hypotheses which I expected to occur in instances where militant actions did not follow my primary hypotheses related to splintering. Specifically, related to (1) militants ideological modification occurring on their own accord (i.e., not involving an adversary) and therefore do not perceive said modification as a concession; (2), when leadership successfully reframes ideological objectives in line with modifications and achieves legitimacy, maintaining cohesion; and (3) attempted defections are dealt with swiftly through credible enforcement mechanisms such as members are killed or otherwise severely punished.

In the following section, I further unpack the aforementioned three primary hypotheses and their observational manifestations during each of the two instances of splintering within Fatah. I also provide an examination of additional diagnostic evidence against potential alternative pathways inferred from congruence analysis. Examining additional potential pathways from ideological modification to militant splintering is necessary to provide additional scrutiny against my findings with the potential to falsify my theorized causal mechanism, militant perceived ideological betrayal. This theory-building research focused on the two within-case instances of splintering amongst Fatah contribute to the purpose of demonstrating plausibility of theory as opposed to a more fulsome process tracing test or outcome explanation (Mahoney, 2012).

As evidenced in the previous chapter, Fatah demonstrated resilience and adaptability with Yasser Arafat at the helm, pivoting between attacks and negotiations, from militancy as the only option to increased moderation and openly holding the olive branch. Yet Fatah emerged scathed, with notable splinters occurring in 1974 with the ANO and again in 1983 with Fatah Intifada (aka Abu Moussa Faction). These splinters came during tumultuous political-military periods, testing the unified advantage Fatah had sought to achieve in the militant Palestinian nationalist movement. This chapter unpacks a longer timeline surrounding both events while seeking to understand the relative role, if any, of potential alternative explanatory variables.

Israel's victory in the Six-Day War over an Arab-state coalition in 1967 had a significant impact on Fatah beyond the actual battlefield losses. For one, the defeat of a joint Arab coalition by Israel confirmed Arafat's belief that Fatah should not rely on an Arab state and that they were too weak to defeat Israel conventionally; and two, it had a significant emotional impact. Singh describes this as the Arab world becoming one filled with "gloom and hopelessness" for

Palestinians (Singh, 2014:773). Arafat routinely stated his view that the Palestinians cannot rely on Arab states for liberation. That did not mean they had no Arab supporters, indeed, conservative Arab states did support Fatah since their inception (Hassan, 2000). Arafat and the Fatah leadership may not have wanted to rely upon external state support, but they understood the importance of the Arab states recognizing them as the leaders of the Palestinian cause. Moreover, they recognized the importance of garnering support from the international community to ensure legitimacy of the group (Pearlman, 2009). The latter understanding led Arafat to deliver the now infamous ‘olive branch and gun’ speech in 1974 (Irfan, 2020). The speech would set in motion a violent splinter with Abu Nidal at the helm. Later, Arafat’s acceptance of a U.S. brokered retreat complemented by hearing out President Reagan’s plan for peace provided another example of ideological modifications militants perceived as betrayals and set the splintering of 1983 in motion.

5.3.1. Fatah and the Abu Nidal Organization

The ‘doom and gloom’ felt after the loss of the Six-Day War made the battle of Karameh the following year (1968) more important, where what objectively appeared to be essentially a stalemate at best was instead framed by Fatah as a massive victory. The Israeli victory in the Six-Day War is an important starting point for understanding Black September in 1970, and eventually, Arafat’s endorsement of the UN’s role and legitimacy in determining political realities for Palestinians in the West-Bank and Gaza. The framing demonstrated the Fedayeen could stand toe to toe with the IDF, and provided for a psychological win following the Six Day War. Moreover, it solidified Arafat’s credentials as a guerilla leader and contributed to his persona of a leader standing up against Israel. It was also because of Karameh, that the guerillas

enjoyed a massive recruitment influx and were better empowered, and more confident in their attacks from Jordan's soil moving forward (Singh, 2015). There are theoretical underpinnings to this observation as well, the devoted actor model suggests that perceived spiritual formidability is an important motivating factor for devoted militants (Gomez, Lopez-Rodriguez, Sheikh, Ginges, Wilson, Waziri, Vazquez, Davis, and Atran, 2017). Findings emphasize this showing the linkage between ideology and emotions, with both the Six Day War and Karameh being highly emotional events (Schubiger and Zelina, 2017). Spiritual formidability and emotional ties to events like this are critical to understanding splintering, particularly because I'm examining an ideational mechanism removed from physical material incentives. The emotional and spiritual boost portraying the stalemate as a victory provided evidence that the ideological objective of Fatah remained alive, and provided a renewed hope for the eventual Palestinian liberation for a broader Palestinian population outside of Fedayeen. The importance of this cannot be understated. Even King Hussein of Jordan who remained at odds with the Fedayeen, is cited as having exalted Karameh as a victory (Iyad and Rouleau, 1981).

In 1970, Fedayeen attacks began to escalate (Lucas, 2008). Not only had they become more brazen, such as the PFLP's hijacking of planes, but they also resulted in direct conflict with the Hashemite monarchy. Some factions of Fedayeen went further with provocations, with skirmishes erupting and exacerbating tensions between Jordan's military and various Fedayeen militants (Iyad and Rouleau, 1981). As a result, the Jordanian military forced out the guerillas and killed thousands of Palestinians, in a period known as 'Black September', and forced an exodus of Palestinians from Jordan.

The PLO, including Fatah, was one of the major perceived threats to the Hashemite crown, with many Fatah's power-grabbing and politically oriented activities described as putting

Black September in motion (Karsh, 2014). Black September is an important point in assessing the processes surrounding the ideological modification four years later, as Black September demonstrated a clear defeat to Fatah by way of the PLO, without resulting in a significant break in ranks. Younger Fatah militants attempted to leverage the defeat at the hands of Jordan to pry influence away from Arafat. In 1971, a cleavage had formed in Fatah, with the younger generation questioning Arafat's decisions. Singh notes that "a group of younger members, who called themselves the Free Officers, attacked Arafat for having lost touch with the membership and creating a "cult of personality." Arafat quickly suppressed them. Arafat's control over Fatah was ensured" (Singh, 2015:139). Fatah avoided a potential internal catastrophe while on their heels. This attempt on Arafat's power fell short, and Arafat was able to enforce measures for cohesion though it's not completely clear what 'suppressing them' entails. Importantly, there is no discussion of ideological modification from the Free Officers, instead the focus is on Arafat's decisions and his cult of personality. Nonetheless, Fatah remained cohesive for another day.

Evidence outlined in Chapter Four showed how Fatah clandestinely created the BSO following Black September, and how their immediate attacks that may have appeased some hardline members within Fatah who may have otherwise looked for an alternative (Seale, 1992). Although some scholars believe the BSO was less a clandestine-endorsed arm of Fatah, and more a type of faction that leadership did not necessarily endorse but instead felt compelled to provide political cover to until they could be dissolved, the BSO served a useful purpose at Fatah's direction without splintering (Seale, 1992). The BSO provided an opportunity for hardline militants who were not prepared to let their vengeance drift from the events of Black September. Most importantly, Fatah's ranks remained cohesive following Black September and the exodus from Jordan.

Fatah maintained operations following Black September and Arafat used the subsequent years to continue consolidating power. The Geneva Peace Conference in 1973 convened Arabs and Israelis, without Fatah. Fatah was however interested in joining a subsequent Geneva Conference that never came to fruition, but their interest alone spurred opposition from other Fedayeen within the PLO (Pearlman, 2009). Through the internal contestation surrounding the prudence of Fatah joining a potential second Geneva Conference Fatah maintained cohesion. One critical juncture presented around this was Fatah's implicit signaling of recognition of Israel and opting for a structured authority in the territories. Violence accomplished this. Pearlman's well researched scholarship on spoilers examined Fatah during this timeframe, and expresses how they engaged in violence to "appease hard-line opinion" internally (Pearlman, 2009:94). In this instance, the internal conversations surrounding the ideological modification caused significant heartburn amongst some militants, but did not result in splintering. Instead, Fatah's consolidation of power proved fruitful, achieving international recognition in speaking on behalf of Palestinians through his 1974 UN speech. Arafat's speech announced the PLO's openness to a political alternative to the Palestinian question, while legitimizing the UN and thereby at least tacit recognition of Israel. Yet Fatah's framing of the potential to revert-back to violence in this instance (i.e., gun and olive branch) was not sufficient to stem the internal dissent of hardliner Sabri Al-Banna, aka Abu Nidal, and his followers after this public ideological concession.

Summarizing additional details from Chapter Four, 1974 introduced two significant events preceding Arafat's U.N. speech: the Palestinian National Council's acceptance of a ten point plan towards political participation, and Arab leader's agreement that the PLO would be the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian movement at the Arab Summit in Rabat (Seale, 1992). Arafat understood the pragmatic shift from the foundational ideological program

of action and basic tenets of liberation was not without challenges. It was clear to Arafat that it left the door open to calls of betrayal. Fatah leadership's framing however, was bolstered by the fact that the U.N. invitation was provided when none other than Algeria held the General Assembly's presidency. Algeria was still a model for guerilla movements across the world in the 1970s (Khalil, 2016). Abu Iyad had also set out on his circuit of speaking engagements supporting the modification, and leadership remained mostly united in moving forward (Iyad and Rouleau, 1981). At the same time, Abu Nidal's dissent had been festering since the early 1970s with his critiques of Arafat, and Fatah's determination to attempt to contain him was short-lived. By 1971, the Eight Palestinian National Conference had adopted that the armed struggle would from then on be the 'principle way' towards liberation, providing a clear ideological shift in the program of action for the PLO from violence being the sole program (Hassan, 2000:1138). Observations do not indicate that substantive dissent occurred at that time, but that determination laid the groundwork for Arafat's public shift towards the olive and gun in the subsequent years. While in Iraq, Nidal used his position to recruit and enlist members of the then-dissolved BSO who were ideologically committed, if not just looking for continued work (Melman, 1986). Nidal specifically cited the 'treachery' of engaging with the U.N. and therefore negotiating with 'Zionists' (Melman, 1986). As further discussed in the previous chapter, it's also apparent that the post-splinter use of violence by the ANO is out of alignment with a focus on hardliner ideological objectives related to Palestinian liberation and anti-Zionism. Fatah's Congress of 1972 would implement the concept of Democratic Centralism for the first time. This meant that voting would select Fatah leadership and congressional delegates, providing additional agency to militant members and an out-sized voice through representation (Iyad and Rouleau, 1981). It is unknown if militants were aware in 1971 that democratic centralism would be implemented the

following year, and what if any impact that could have had on determinations related to sub-group cleavages or dissent.

The events leading to the splintering of the ANO from Fatah present all of the observable diagnostic evidence I expected while providing greater chronology to enhance my observation of the process of post-ideological modification in the face of an adversary. Firstly, Abu Nidal already had disagreements with the Fatah leadership, and the modification provided an opportunity to seize hardliners who might agree. Article 12 and 13 of Fatah's original charter did in fact state key objectives to include "[c]omplete liberation of Palestine, and eradication of Zionist economic, political, military and cultural existence" (Fatah online website archive, 2005). Prior to the U.N. General Assembly speech, Arafat and Iyad had been actively attempting to reframe the modifications to "allay fears among rank and file" of "surrender or betrayal" (Baffum to Kissinger 1973, as cited by Khalil, 2013:2).

Secondly, Abu Nidal's dissent and framing of Fatah's modification as a concession rising to that of 'treachery', is an explicit statement of betrayal that I infer also aimed to help legitimize his decision amongst recruits. Arafat attempted to condition the modification as accompanied by the 'gun', but that fell short with Nidal and those would follow Nidal and make up the ANO. Although Fatah leadership understood the necessity to "demonstrate moderation" for international and broader Palestinian support, they were unable to do so in a manner that legitimized the decision amongst all hardliners (Pearlman, 2009:90). Abu Nidal in particular had "possessed strong convictions against negotiations with Israel, which led to a predisposition toward violence for any group who would negotiate with Israel", even if he also harbored ill-will against Arafat (Warikat, 2020:96). Fatah meanwhile was unable to provide adequate enforcement measures to maintain cohesion - instead of eliminating Nidal when he began

dissenting and recruiting for his own future group well in advance of the actual splinter, Fatah attempted to contain him. The approach of containment for cohesion backfired, demonstrating he could get away with a significant amount of nefarious actions without serious reprisal. Prior to the now famous U.N. General Assembly speech and internal chaos from Abu Nidal, Fatah dissolved the BSO. This was the pragmatic choice for Fatah leadership (with Arafat being the leader for both Fatah and the PLO), and demonstrated movement towards moderation to the international community to encourage additional support. Yet that decision also removed a tool that may have been influential in maintaining cohesion by endorsing operations for hardliner appeasement by holding onto the BSO as a militant tool and safety-net for violence.

The findings are interesting because they point to the existence of a causal mechanism of perceived ideological betrayal as linking ideological modification to splintering, yet the degree to which the perception is *believed* by the *initiating* militant(s) remains questionable and worthy of future analysis. It is clear that perceived ideological betrayal accounts for Nidal's impetus of the splinter and when it occurred, and can account for the process of militants, particularly more hardline militants from the BSO or elsewhere in the Palestinian movement, joined his ranks. Fatah leadership also clearly recognized the importance of perceived ideological betrayal and they attempted to get ahead of it and accompany the modification with a significant degree of reframing and attempted legitimization. However, Nidal himself was critical of Arafat for years preceding Fatah's modification, and it's a simple inference to take away regardless of how Fatah's leadership justified and framed the modification, Nidal was unlikely to accept their framing as legitimate.

Additionally, these findings offer evidence that should be further investigated with relation to the devoted actor theory. Although Abu Nidal may have focused on exploiting

perceptions of ideological betrayal to legitimize the timing of his splinter and sway other hardliner militants, it would be interesting to assess hardliners with varying devotions and how those individuals or sub-groups respond to changes in ideology. It's also telling that one leader who poses as a hardliner (whether a true believer or not), can wield influence over those who may be hardliners, also known as true believers.

5.3.2. Fatah and Fatah-Intifada, aka the Abu Moussa Faction

The ANO splinter came right before the outbreak of Lebanon's civil war in the spring of 1975. Similar to examining the full scope of the formation of the ANO, it's important to go back to the early 1970s when examining the splinter of Fatah-Intifada. Black September caused sporadic outbreaks of violence amongst Palestinian militant factions and adversaries in Lebanon while Palestinian militants continued attacks against Israel (Singh, 2015). The Cairo Agreement between Arafat and the Egyptian General Bustani and his delegation underpinned the fighting. The delegation provided control to the newly formed Palestinian Armed Struggle Command that coordinated between the PLO and PLA over refugee camps in Lebanon in 1969 (Ramadan and Fergonese, 2017). The Cairo Agreement provided significant endorsement of the PLO and by which, Fatah was a main faction and shared leadership of the PLO, providing yet another source of legitimacy for Arafat. Arguments have been put forward that the PLO and Fatah's wielding of their influence and attempted meddling in politics helped facilitate the Lebanese civil war (Karsh, 2014).

Cairo also increased the ability of the Fedayeen to operate in Lebanon and provided more support with Lebanon agreeing to facilitate commando activity. The accord set the groundwork for the increased Palestinian militant operations including the area known as 'fatahland' because

of the number of Fatah militants and reign they exercised within (Erlich, 2019). The increased operations included reports of corruption and violence against local populations, with scholars like Karsh pointing out the PLO exercised “flagrant violations of Lebanese sovereignty” with roadblocks, driving out residents, participating in extortion, and committing atrocities (Karsh, 2014:29). To reiterate observations articulated in Chapter Four, Palestinians militants were viewed as running a mini-state in Lebanon by 1975 (Suleiman, 2011). Indeed, Abu Iyad’s own recollection included criticism of how more extremist elements within the Palestinian resistance played continuous one-upmanship with other guerilla elements. The competitive out-bidding included criticism of the Lebanese government, and insinuations as well as direct statements reflecting greater interests in power for Palestinians in Lebanon (Iyad and Rouleau, 1981).

Internally, Abu Saleh, Abu Moussa, and Naji Alloush created the NDC rejectionist front within Fatah that was quickly repressed (Ghanem and Khayed, 2003). As touched on in Chapter Four, the three were contained internally, and were not exiled or executed, or punished. In 1983, Moussa and Saleh would raise their hands against Arafat again, this time with a lasting splinter. They directed their units in Bekka Valley against Arafat, out of an unhappiness with Arafat’s decisions, including his ‘diplomatic maneuvering’ (Strindberg, 2000:70). Fatah-Intifada’s justification years later indicates the intention of at least ensuring a perception of ideological betrayal following Arafat’s actions. Specifically, noting “[w]e do see ourselves as the Fatah movement because we believe in its principles and its aims and objectives”, clearly poking at Fatah as the responsible party for changing direction. He continued “and we also [base ourselves heavily on its tradition in the field of struggle. The executive leadership defected from the principles that had already been agreed upon and canceled the national program”, and “abandoned the idea of armed struggle” (Abu Fakhr interview, 1999, as cited in Strindberg,

2000:70). Again, this explicitly shows the public justification; their intension to convey Fatah's ideological defection while they would remain true, or devoted, was relevant for militants who joined as well as potential future recruits, and the public

Looking at a more detailed view of the events that created the conditions for the splinter, and observations strengthen the inference of perceived ideological betrayal as the mechanism linking the modification and splinter. After Israel's Operation Peace for Galilee in 1982, Fatah's leadership was vulnerable to determinations of strategic incompetence, demonstrating that shifting away from guerilla militancy was an ill-advised option for the Fedayeen (Cobban, 1984). The PLO's (including Fatah's) forced evacuation from Lebanon in defeat was a double-edged sword. For one, it put Arafat in a significant bind, having lost a substantial number of militants and his being forced into an embarrassing evacuation brokered by the U.S., of all states. Alternatively, however, Palestinians viewed the PLO and Fatah as having fought while Arab states sat on the sidelines. Arafat unsurprisingly attempted to spin the loss as part of the necessary 'long struggle' for the PLO, including holding the subsequent sixteenth session of the PLO's parliament in exile from Algiers to signal eventual liberation, in emulation of Algeria (Honig, 2013). Arafat surely recognized the organizational setback of the defeat, and was actively working to maintain legitimacy over the Palestinian movement into the 1980s. Reagan's Peace Plan in September 1982 complicated matters for Fatah leadership, Arafat in particular. Arafat's apparent willingness to engage in the plan at all created internal tensions in Fatah as it would not only require concessions, but also engagement with King Hussein only a decade post-Black September (Montgomery, 1983; Raj, 1983). Reagan's plan however fell apart; with no serious follow-through or funding, and the events in Lebanon including the forced reengagement of US troops in Beirut following the assassination of President Ghannouchy, along with the

massacre at Sabra and Shatilla (which was another black-eye for Arafat, thinking he negotiated refugee safety upon evacuation) (Eisenberg and Caplan, 2010).

This backdrop in 1983—Fatah’s evacuation from Lebanon, Arafat’s strategic blunders and reengagement with Jordan, perceived abandonment of Palestinian camps in Lebanon, and the PLOs flirtation with considering the Reagan Peace Plan—is necessary to frame the splintering led by Col Said al-Muragha, nom-de-guerre Abu Moussa. Additionally, Abu Moussa articulated direct opposition to Arafat’s decision—for Fatah and the larger PLO—to accept an agreement to the process of a forced-evacuation from Lebanon (Krause, 2017:54; Rubin, 1994). In addition to the retreat itself, fighters within Fatah viewed Arafat’s promotion of individuals within the PLO who acted poorly during the war as inappropriate if not tone-deaf. Fatah was factionious prior to and during the conflict in Lebanon, but the context surrounding the retreat and perceived infringement upon their authorities and ‘violation’ of bylaws and political program was seemingly the last straw. This was explicitly apparent in the splinter’s first formal communique:

“Our movement aims at reinstating the Central Committee and the Revolutionary Council who have failed to carry out their roles as leading bodies as their authorities were infringed upon and dangerous stands were imposed on them, which represents a violation of our bylaws and political program, as a result of the autocracy of an individual who takes major and crucial decisions after consulting with only a few other individuals” (Ghanem and Khayed, 2003:42).

Fatah’s modification of their ideological orientation provided the impetus and opportunity for the splinter. Shortly after the Fatah described mutiny, Nimer Saleh further claimed Fatah Intifada was directly responsible for scuttling negotiations with Reagan that would

have compromised their foundational goals, stating to al-Kifah al-Arabi “[i]f we hadn’t moved, Arafat would be in Washington” (Kawar, 1983). The framing has held over the years. In statements as recent as a December 2018, an interview with a commander in Fatah Intifada related to their support for Syria still held to the sentiment “[w]e in the Fatah al-Intifada movement consider ourselves to be the Fatah that was launched in 1965, as it defined its aim as liberating Palestine- all of Palestine- and it defined the method of liberation”, the source continued, according to al-Tamimi “that is, the armed struggle that it chose as a strategic path for that, and it considered the Zionist entity to be a usurping entity and what was taken by force could only be recovered by force” (al-Tamimi, 2018).

5.3.3 Examining Alternative Pathways for both Splinters

Fatah’s ideological modifications translated into militant perceived ideological betrayal across Fatah in both instances examined above. Leadership recognized the importance of militant perceptions across Fatah, and undertook the challenge of reframing the modification as a necessary step towards progress for the Palestinian struggle. Furthermore, observable evidence allows for the inference that the ideational mechanism of militant perceived ideological betrayal appears to plausibly connect the modification to splintering. These findings are further validated when there is a lack of credible enforcement measures to maintain cohesion. Still, there it is necessary to examine plausible alternatives to ensure that my research is not overlooking multiple paths towards the same phenomenon, or that I have missed an important variable.

This section assesses alternative explanations to determine whether other causal mechanisms have the potential to connect modification and splintering that would thereby falsify my theorized process and inferred mechanism. Specifically, I examine the relative merit of two

leading potential alternatives based on inferences from congruence analysis and demonstrated as relevant from existing research (see Perkoski, 2015; Plank 2017; Salehyan, Gleditsch, and Cunningham, 2011; Asal et al, 2012, as relevant): external state manipulation or encouragement, and strategic disagreements between militant members or foot soldiers and leadership.

The first alternative pathway that congruence analysis pointed to is that of external support manipulating or otherwise underpinning and decision of militant faction-leaders Abu Nidal and Abu Moussa for the splinters. Abu Nidal had strong relations with Iraq prior to splintering from Fatah (Melman, 1986). As previously discussed, he obtained a post in Baghdad as Fatah's representative in the country, from which Nidal would direct criticisms against Fatah from a safe haven along with later using it as a recruitment base. Moreover, elements of the ANO for example appeared to be almost entirely supporting Iraq's objectives, but Nidal did not personally view himself as "anyone's agent", that he entered a "partnership with them, founded on his personal friendship" (Seale, 1992:105-106). The second alternative pathway of strategic disagreements also comes up short in offering a more credible causal mechanism linking ideological modification to splintering. Examining the first official communique by Fatah Intifada through the perspective of strategic disagreement for instance, provides reason to focus on the claimed cause. The claim was that the splinter occurred "as a result of the autocracy of an individual who takes major and crucial decisions after consulting with only a few other individuals" (Ghanem and Khayed, 2003:42). Yet that would force the total disregard of the preceding line that speaks to the 'violation of bylaws and political program', which was of course the shift in the foundational ideological orientation. Looking across the sequence of events against diagnostic evidence reveals that in each instance of splintering, perceived ideological betrayal as the impetus for and legitimacy of the eventual splinters.

The sequence of events begins with Israel's defeat of the Arabs during the Six Day War and associated downward trajectory of Arab militaries, gloom felt by Palestinians, and black-eye on the Fedayeen. Emotions ran high and there was a need for a psychological victory. The battle of Karameh the next year provided for that need, offering a chance for Palestinian militant pride in holding their own against the Israeli Defense Forces. Following the battle of Karameh Fatah's popularity--and that of Arafat in particular--strengthened significantly. In the event an external actor was looking to break Fatah apart and leverage internal conflict, this would not have been an opportune time to do so. The case for attempting to undermine Fatah and Arafat's credibility during the post-Karameh period in an attempt to stem their momentum and create chaos within their ranks could be made, but that would have likely been an uphill battle given Fatah's popularity and support at that juncture.

Next, the period of Black September in 1970-1971 presented more compelling opportunities. Black September caused a significant reduction in strength across the PLO and certainly Fatah, and caused Arafat to give up his foothold in Jordan for one in Lebanon. This created an opportunity to exploit Arafat and Fatah as power-seekers at the expense of the Palestinian struggle, as a threat to Arab regimes, and facilitate a splinter while Fatah was still regathering strength and sitting on their heels. There is little to infer that the U.N. speech by Arafat would have been any more of an opportune time to manipulate Nidal into splintering than the events following Black September, nor are the accounts of the arrogance and pragmatism of Nidal indicative of being manipulated. Black September's exiling of Palestinians and Fedayeen from Jordan helped to facilitate the creation of the militant BSO under the clandestine wing of Fatah. The BSO's utility as a hardline arm of Fatah and the PLO enabled Fatah to appease hardliners and conduct attacks at an arm's-distance from Fatah. However, in attempting to

solidify the international legitimacy and credibility after the U.N. speech in 1974, Fatah dissolved the BSO the following month. The U.N. speech by Arafat that provided the ideational perception of ideological betrayal for Nidal, and the dissolution of the BSO eliminated an avenue for hardliner appeasement through continued violence.

Furthermore, diagnostic evidence surrounding both splinters does not hold-up under examination related to state manipulation. For instance, initial dissent observed by both eventual ANO and Fatah Intifada members appears largely organic and at the initiated socialization from Nidal and Moussa (along with Saleh and Alloush). Internal leadership framing was also not focused on demonizing external states, which if evidence of state manipulation was suspected by Fatah, one would expect that to be present in their internal and public framing. Instead, there were not strong denunciations of Iraq or Syria interference surrounding the splinters. Finally, state manipulation would have been able to preempt enforcement measures, such as by providing proxy militant forces to support and build the capacity of the ANO and Fatah Intifada pre-splinter, which does not appear to have occurred. External states would have had greater opportunities to help create the conditions for splinters or in manipulating (or directing, for that matter) faction leaders to move during more opportune occasions, such as when Fatah was weaker, scrambling during retreats, or facing heavy intra-Palestinian infighting.

The second alternative pathway worth examining is that of strategic disagreements amongst leadership and faction-leaders (i.e., future leads of splinter groups). I clearly demonstrated how both Nidal and Moussa held Arafat in disdain and retained strong disagreements with Arafat and other leaders of Fatah. Abu Moussa and his group for instance were also openly critical of Arafat and Fatah leadership well in advance of the splinter, when they formed their internal NDC, a Fatah-housed rejectionist front against Fatah leadership.

Indeed, even during the eventual splinter of Fatah Intifada, they pointed out personality and organizational flaws--namely corruption--that are tangentially related to any ideological modification of foundational principles. Moreover, cleavages began forming within Fatah that did not result in splinters, related to the armed struggle of earlier members and personality conflicts between generations. As described by Parkinson, “the armed struggle from the 1970-80s created internal divisions as well, with those who participated during that time frame as the Fatah ‘old guard’, who did not splinter but nonetheless held internal divisions within Fatah” (Parkinson, 2016:977).

5.4. Discussion

Congruence procedures indicated the potential for a pathway to militant splintering resulting from the confirmation of my three hypotheses presented in Chapter Three. It also provided for the plausibility of two potentially competing alternative pathways for militant splintering. Through process tracing in this chapter I have presented findings that confirm the validity of my hypotheses holding their merit while rejecting the two alternatives inferred, external state support or manipulation, and personal or strategic disagreements.

Fatah faced down two significant internal divisions that resulted in splintering, in 1974 and 1982. Process tracing provided me with the ability to trace the chronology of events against important variables not fully assessed during congruence procedures, including external state support and personal and strategic disagreements. In the first instance (1974), the militancy of the late 1960s into the early 1970s went from being defined by the Israel’s defeat of the Arab coalition and gloom felt by Palestinians, to pride following Karamah and the public-facing international legitimacy of the PLO’s call for Palestinian Liberation during Arafat’s U.N.G.A.

speech (Singh, 2014 & 2015) . The speech also provided for internal turmoil, serving Abu Nidal an opportunity to capitalize on what he and other militants perceived as Fatah making an ideological concession equating to treason (Melman, 1986). Abu Nidal had been dissenting in the years leading up to his group's splintering, and at no point did Fatah take credible enforcement measures to ensure group cohesion.

In the second (1983), I presented a similar process that resulted in splintering following events leading up to Fatah's brokered retreat from Lebanon. Fatah recovered from the violence against Palestinians during Black September in Jordan, gaining influence and control in Lebanon to the point of creating a 'Fatahland' within Lebanese borders (Elrich, 2019). This so-called mini-state began to implode as Lebanon, similar to Jordan, became skeptical of Fedayeen's interest in the country. Around this time Saleh, Moussa, and Alloush banded together in creating the NDC in opposition to Arafat, but was sidelined by Fatah and it would only be later that their opposition would find results (Ghanem and Khayed, 2003). Fatah extinguished the NDC but there were no observable enforcement actions taken against any of the members other than sidelining some from militant conferences. Israel's invasion of Lebanon in 1982, the Fedayeen's retreat, Reagan's proposal for peace, and the massacre at Sabra and Shatila added complexity and a heightened emotional element to militant perceptions of Arafat and Fatah's leadership. Within this context, and the other co-founders of Fatah Intifada splintered in 1983 and publicly communicated their dismay with Arafat and Fatah leadership, and claimed they had lost their way, violating bylaws and political program upon which Fatah was founded (Ghanem and Khayed, 2003). Thus in 1974 and 1983, I showed how militant perceptions of betrayal within specific contexts supported a process that resulted in splintering of militants.

Theory-building process tracing of the multiple events within the case of Fatah resulted in my examination of the causal mechanism of *militant perceived ideological betrayal*. My ability to examine this mechanism further allowed me to tie together my research presented in this work, building a theory that *if militant groups modify key tenants of their ideology (IV) and members perceive these modifications as a betrayal, then when conditioned by incapable or non-credible enforcement measures for cohesion, splintering will occur (DV)*. This mid-sized theory within the context of militant groups engaging in negotiations with an adversary, can be sufficient for group splintering.

Additional information uncovered during this chapter provided for important future considerations, namely that relative commitment and belief amongst hardliners. This finding is important and recommended for further researched in follow-on projects. This is highly relevant for existing scholarship, namely the devoted actor theory. Expanding the scope of the devoted actor theory to militants involved in negotiations and ideological modification may provide for a more enhanced understanding of the relational nature of militant ideology. My research indicated hardliners may splinter when militants perceive ideological betrayal, but they are open to ideological modification on their own accords, outside of negotiations with adversaries. Moreover, in the case of the ANO, Abu Nidal's disdain for Arafat reflected a situation in which Nidal may have been waiting for an event that he could exploit due to militant perceptions of ideological betrayal. These are relevant to the devoted actor theory which posits why some militants will not respond to rational incentives and would rather engage in violence (Atran, 2016).

One of the most important findings in this chapter accompanying the causal mechanism and proposed theory is that of the relational nature of militant ideology. Ideological malleability

appears to be greater when militants engage in shifts of their own accord, when members and leadership alike have agency in making determinations. This finding aligns with evidence related to power sharing agreements, where grassroots involvement made for more sustainable agreements (Plank, 2017). I explore this notion of ideological malleability more thoroughly in Chapter Six.

5.5. Conclusion

This chapter presented the findings from theory-building process tracing and reflected the plausibility of the ideational causal mechanism *militant perceived ideological betrayal* connecting ideological modification to group splintering. Findings utilized diagnostic evidence to infer the causal mechanism presented above in line with theory-building best practices (Beach and Pedersen, 2012). I further relied upon evidence obtained during both congruence procedures and process tracing to devise a new theory in this space reflecting how militant ideological modification can lead to splintering in certain contexts. In the next chapter, I provide a discussion surrounding a summary of the primary findings and their theoretical relevance in the field, their direct implications on policy and programming, and outlines opportunities for future research projects to enhance evidence in this space.

Chapter 6

Discussion

6.1. Introduction

Militant groups that engage in ideological modification that militant hardliners perceive as concessions can lead to splintering when there is a lack of credible enforcement measures for

cohesion. These conditions are not necessary, but can be sufficient for splintering. Congruence procedures demonstrated this across nine events within three cases. The procedures further provided diagnostic evidence, from which I was able to infer the existence of a causal mechanism connecting ideological modification to militant group splintering. I then examined the diagnostic evidence more fully through theory-building process tracing, allowing for the examination of my proposed causal mechanism and corroborating the likelihood of its existence. Combined, the evidence throughout this research corroborates my hypotheses and allows my proposed theory to pass the hoop test for plausibility concerning ideological modification and splintering, while also providing evidence of potential sufficiency of the causal mechanism for militant splintering more broadly. Many of my findings merit consideration of future research focused on testing. Moreover, it has provided ample evidence worthy of recommending continued research into the relationship between ideological modification and splintering. It is apparent that there is importance in approaching the study or programming at militant groups in the conflict space with a more nuanced approach to understanding how ideological objectives may have shifted within certain contexts and allow for a greater likelihood for splintering than in others. The additional finding my research provides related to the relational nature of ideology is an important one that can support more targeted counter messaging or de-radicalization programming, along with researching the role of ideological modification more broadly. Academic theories in this space including the devoted actor framework, framing theory, and spoilers and the peace process can benefit from my exploration of the ideational mechanism of perceived ideological betrayal in connecting modifications to splintering.

6.2. Summary of Findings

Congruence analysis provided evidence that supported my initial hypotheses related to

groups that undertake ideological modifications that militants perceive as concessions; hardliner dissent and cleavages; and, the importance of credible enforcement mechanisms for cohesion. These three hypotheses provided observable diagnostic evidence from which I was able to infer a causal mechanism of *militant perceived ideological betrayal* linking ideological modification to group splintering. Theory-building process tracing further allowed me to propose a new theory in this space, that *if militant groups modify key tenants of their ideology (IV) and members perceive these modifications as a betrayal, then when conditioned by incapable or non-credible enforcement measures for cohesion, splintering will occur (DV)*.

My research contributed to the call for additional study by Gutiérrez Sanin and Wood outlined in Chapter Two, to examine the full spectrum of variation in armed group behavior. In large part I have answered this call, looking at not only ideological modification and concessions in the context of a strong (hardliner, non-negotiable) program, but also in apparent instances of groups holding more weak programs (the instrumentality of ideology) (Gutiérrez Sanin and Wood, 2014). In examples such as Fatah's dramatic shift away from the seemingly non-negotiable complete defeat of Israel and reestablishment of Palestine to the recognition of Israel and a call to adjusted borders for Palestine; or the PKK's shift away from national liberation with an independent Kurdish state to territory within the boundaries of Turkey; to more instrumental shifts of the FARC's loose stance in the illicit drug business; I have explored a full range of variations of armed group behavior surrounding ideological modification.

Indeed, my findings provide support to scholarship on framing and legitimacy, devotion and non-negotiable ideals, and spoilers. To reiterate theoretical relevance from scholars highlighted in Chapter Two, perceptions of leadership shortcomings such as corruption or betrayal can lead to viewing them as illegitimate, shaking the core of the group (Brenner, 2017).

Fatah and the FARC's ideological modifications surrounding both instances of splintering were viewed as such. Stedman's work on spoilers along with scholars like Greenhill and Major and Duursma and Fliervoet identify how hardliners or militant entrepreneurs can act to sabotage negotiations. In the case of the FARC, that was an important factor that can be further assessed, as the dissidents that perceived an ideological betrayal were motivated by a continuation of the armed conflict and therefore, spoiling a lasting peace. Beyond seeking to spoil negotiations for power, continued illicit income flows, or other determinations however, is the ideational element of perceived betrayal and its impact on militants. Regardless of whether or not splinter leaders fully embrace the ideological orientation; such as Sabri Al-Banna, aka Abu Nidal given his well-documented personality conflicts with Arafat and attacks seemingly on behalf of state actors, they are clearly skilled in leveraging its importance amongst followers in order to gain legitimacy and engender support. Finally, as referenced throughout the previous chapter, the devoted actor theory remains highly relevant insofar as understanding the relevance of actors who hold non-negotiable ideals in the face of potential tangible incentives or benefits for negotiations.

My research expands on this, showing how even more devoted actors within certain scenarios appear more willing to engage in ideological modification so long as it is outside of negotiations or apparent concessions to an adversary. Thus raising the question of to what extent ideals are inherently non-negotiable at all, and why in certain circumstances ideology tends to be more malleable than others. I pointed out how in the three cases certain variables are present, the charismatic leadership of Ocalan, or opportunities for sustaining and increasing militant capabilities and community support by the FARC's engagement in the coca trade.

6.3. Theoretical Relevance and Interpretations

My research elucidates meso-level group and intergroup dynamics resulting from ideological modification, and although not a panacea for causality surrounding splintering it clearly demonstrates the plausibility of my hypothesized pathway outlined in Chapter 3: *Militant leaders engage in some type of negotiation and offer modifications that hardliners perceive as ideological concessions, and leaders are unable (a) to reframe the concessions and maintain legitimacy, and (b) to adequately enforce (punishment, killing) cohesion within ranks, provide sufficient conditions for splintering.* I can soundly point to the passing of a hoop test as a reason for continued examination, and my introduction of the unique analytical variable of ideological modification as opposed to ideology has the potential to advance the field if further research is in fact undertaken.

The devoted actor framework advanced by Atran amongst others focuses on how individuals may come to drastic, extreme measures in response to a threat against sacred values or morally intertwined ideas and ideology (Atran, 2015 & 2016). My research points to the importance of expanding this type of work into an examination of hardliners and their actions related to ideological modification, and how militant entrepreneurs may wield the non-negotiable nature of ideological tenets for the utilitarian purpose of garnering support for their own interests, which in relation to this research was the fomenting of splinter organizations.

These findings are also beneficial to research in the conflict space that pulls from framing theory and how the reorientation of an event or issue can have an impact on individuals (Chong and Durkman, 2007). How militant leaders responded to what militants would clearly perceive as ideological betrayals or concessions to an enemy was illuminating. In some instances, the reliance on a heavy-handed and internal violence underpinned narrative from leaders justifying

actions (i.e., Ocalan's storied history of internal violence against dissenters). In others, groups seemingly took a full-court press approach pushing the justification to members and social supporters (i.e., Abu Iyad's presses to university students and other fora). Framing was also different depending upon whether or not the ideological modification occurred in the face of adversaries or internally, within the groups own agency. In instances of the former, ideological betrayal was most likely to be perceived by militants and the position of militant leaders was one of defense, attempting to justify actions to members often during or after the concession as opposed to obtaining grass-roots level buy-in prior to undertaking the modifications.

Research on spoilers can similarly benefit from my findings. Splinter leaders I examined made determinations to splinter surrounding key moments of ideological modification, rather than moments of group weakness upon retreat or defeat. This is supported in existing research, as discussed earlier Woldemariam's scholarship on fragmentation in the Horn of Africa demonstrated that splintering was most likely to occur in that context when battlefield momentum was stagnant. Still, the argument that the acceptance of concessions during a negotiation, or even the need to engage in a negotiation at all signals a weakening of position (or strengthening, depending on the position within negotiations) could be made, and in which case would complicate the ability of Woldemariam's findings to travel in this context. Nonetheless, understanding when any how intergroup dynamics shift resulting from militant perceived ideological betrayal is critical to understanding potential ramifications of negotiations, and of potential spoilers. Finally, spoiler research has shown how spoiling can generally be more about externalities than individual preferences (Greenhill and Major, 2006). External events and opportunities are clearly important when it comes to splintering in particular, as demonstrated by the ANO's timely splintering post-ideological concessions in 1974, but preferences are important

as well when it comes to splintering in order to provide militants with a perception of legitimacy.

Finally, existing research has focused on ideology as a key variable, with extremely limited space dedicated to the malleability of ideology over time. Similarly, research that examines splintering tends to do so as an examination of variables defining qualities of a group, as a jumping off points for post-splinter lifespan, or tangentially as it relates to another phenomenon, such as leadership decapitations, negotiations and mediation efforts, or battlefield momentum. Findings outlined in this dissertation can be used to better assess ideological change over time, and add a different perspective from which to study militant ideology and its seemingly relational nature for militants depending on their ability to determine changes in its orientation or objectives, the impact of adversarial pressures, and militant perceptions related to betrayal or legitimacy.

6.4. Implications

I outlined the existing research and evidence based pathways for splintering, and examined the relevant literature in the space of negotiations and splintering. After presenting a sound argument for alternatives that could disprove my proposed pathway to splintering, I presented three testable hypotheses to obtain diagnostic evidence to assess further. Reviewing group doctrine, research, militant datasets, personal statements and biographies, and formal communique for Al-Fatah, the FARC, and the PKK corroborated my three hypotheses. They similarly provided me with adequate data to infer the existence of a causal mechanism: *militant perceived ideological betrayal*, particularly amongst hardliners. Finally, my theory-building approach to process tracing allowed me to obtain additional observations from which to infer a theory of *if militant groups modify key tenants of their ideology (IV) and members perceive these modifications as a betrayal, then when conditioned by incapable or non-credible enforcement*

measures for cohesion, splintering will occur (DV). The evidence obtained through congruence procedures and process tracing clearly indicate the plausibility if not likelihood of ideological modification leading to splintering due to the creation of an opportunity for militant-entrepreneurs to exploit perceptions of betrayal, selling-out, or cowardice, while hiding behind a veil of legitimacy to entice true believers to join them in splintering.

My research in congruence analysis provides some interesting implications, including the degree to which a popular, charismatic leader may be more successful than otherwise; the importance of *continued* ideological indoctrination and training; the longevity of a militant group and the impact that decades of conflict, decapitation, and different generations have on the group; and, the degree to which militant structure in terms of centralized, decentralized, or a hybrid mix plays a role. Another important implication worth considering is the degree to which individuals are in fact, radicalized to violence as non-negotiable hardliners. My research adds to the larger area of scholarship demonstrating not all militants are in fact radicalized to the same degree and belief in various objectives and aspects of ideological orientation to differing levels. A potential cross-discipline implication for US policymakers is one related to framing all terrorists and violent extremists as non-negotiable actors radicalized to violence while the reality is much more nuanced, and some reasons for those who commit violence are less or unrelated to key ideological objectives. My research exemplifies this by showing even hardliners within an organization are open to ideological changes under the right circumstances with the right framing. Specifically, this impacts of governments like the US and her allies depict violent extremist organizations as entirely ideologically radicalized, when they should consider various grievances for violence beyond assuming all are ideological hardliners.

The research I've presented in this dissertation overall provides further findings that are

widely relevant beyond connecting the IV and DVs. Uncovering observable evidence that adds to the nascent tapestry on the relational nature of ideology is important for policymakers, academics, and practitioners alike. The idea that ideology is malleable based on the context, even for more hardliner militants, is an important consideration for researchers and analysts in this space. Focuses on negotiation and mediation, intentional policymaking targeting fragmentation, or researching devotion, ideology, or intergroup dynamics all stand to benefit from this type of research. This research provides an important piece to the mosaic of scholarship surrounding militant splintering in the conflict space.

6.5. Limitations

The scope of my research necessitated selecting specific events and associated timeframes, thereby leaving many actions and behaviors by the respective militant group unexamined. However, by leaning on my initial quantitative analysis for case selection and applying congruence analysis across nine events within three cases spanning across South America, Eurasia, and the Middle East, from 1974 - 2016, I applied rigorous constraints to control for selection bias and strengthen the reliability of my findings. Selected cases focused on a few important instances and the periods surrounding them, leaving out other events that could merit analysis. Important events such as the impact of the second-intifada or the Camp David peace accords on Fatah; FARC's first negotiation in 1983 with the Government of Colombia, negotiations under the Samper (1994) and Pastrana (1998) presidencies; the fragile ceasefire of the early 1990s between the PKK and Turkey, or ceasefire and talks between the two in 2009. Examining a single case would have allowed me to go into greater depth examining more points and events throughout a respective group's history. However, by examining multiple cases and events within them, I gained an ability to engage in theory-building research by controlling for

multiple variables across time and space. I made the methodological determination that the data richness gained from examining all three groups over time outweighs that of undertaking a much more in depth examination of a single group.

Still, there are key limitations and potentials for bias in this chapter that require address. My case selection began with a quantitative analysis of 114 militant groups as categorized by the BAAD dataset with supporting data gleaned primarily from the MMP, MAROB, UCDP, and GTD to support the coding of additional variables. My reliance on existing datasets means that any limitations or shortcoming within those datasets spills over into my case selection. Still, selecting these highly credible, publicly available and examined datasets, while triangulating data between them and at times against independent research as well, provides a degree of mitigation that I am comfortable with for this research.

I am also relying on historical analysis, and therefore there is the potential that my research carried over bias from previous scholars by virtue of utilizing secondary sources. I have sought to control for this to the greatest extent possible by drawing from premier scholarship in the field and from some of the most-researched scholars surrounding the cases selected. I then complimented my sources with an analysis of attack data, and examining a larger sphere of research cutting across disciplines such as political science, economics, international relations, rebellion, conflict, and terrorism among others, to help triangulate findings and confirm likelihood of accurate interpretations of events. Another limitation associated with any reliance on various historical accounts, is that a good deal of the material is in the original language. My research identified cases through an initial quantitative review, the benefits of which in terms of reducing selection bias outweighed the limitation of translation. Across my three cases, I encountered archival and historical information in English, Spanish, Turkish, and Arabic, among

others. I am not familiar with these languages (outside of rudimentary Arabic) and am by no means qualified to provide any sort of translation—let alone professional—in any of the three. I therefore relied on translated pieces and in some rare circumstances, open source tools like Translatium for phrases, which I compared to articles that provided translation when necessary. This shortfall was partially mitigated by the fact that the three cases are all widely researched and had equities across states, including English speaking state, with in some cases meaningful material having been initially provided in English along with the original language, or formally translated. For example, Yasser Arafat’s speech at the United Nations was professionally translated, and multiple journalists and researchers with native-language ability reviewed and wrote about them.

Additionally, I do not solely rely on first-hand accounts for a number of reasons. For one, the nature of examining historic events significantly elevates the burden of recall bias if I was in fact to interview individuals at this point, in 2023. Further, although I utilize existing quotes from interviewed militants, personal correspondence when available, and books by militants of the groups I’ve examined, the context within which most were written (such as framing their legacy, in prison, or avoiding admission of guilt of horrendous acts) necessitates caution from personal biases among the authors. For example, although there are a litany of surveys of former FARC guerillas, many of whom are integrated into society and are therefore unlikely to categorize their actions as anything that may jeopardize their recounting of their actions to the Government of Colombia, or risk inflaming tensions. There is also the issue of moral legitimization, where militants turn to leaning on ideological underpinnings heavier after the fact as a way to put a militants mind at ease with horrific actions they have engaged in or otherwise supported. Still, ideology is inherently public-facing and the words of leaders, and

public justifications of splinters by those who splintered are incredibly important, and each case relied upon them as core pieces of evidence in numerous instances. In these circumstances, whether or not an individual was providing intentionally misleading information is less relevant than what they are attempting to socialize publicly, as it is in fact that public justification and framing that is so highly relevant in my study precisely because of the outward facing nature of ideological framing.

Finally, I must address some limitations and weaknesses in the data. One is the available information on under researched events, oftentimes overshadowed by bigger events. In Colombia, the Ricardo Franco Front is an under researched splinter group from the FARC, and what is researched is largely surrounding the heinous internal purge of suspected traitors with little surrounding other intergroup dynamics. Additionally, the database I relied upon for attacks conducted by the cases examined in some cases list probable attacks by multiple groups, with the cases examined being potentially one of many. The inability to pull a substantially larger amount of qualitative information from each attack limits my ability to accurately determine the intended purpose of the attacks. The selected database, GTD, is incredibly comprehensive and does provide limited qualitative information within the dataset, however it's not plausible that it would contain all of the necessary information for my undertaking. Therefore, important data provided by the GTD provided ground truth to other findings, but should not be solely relied upon for this research or viewed by readers as the end all be all with relation to the attacks documented. This was clear in my examination of the PKK. The PKK had a notable instance of attacks documented in existing research and reported on in open source news sources were not included in the dataset. There is also the consideration of inextricably linked concepts like identity formation, which in relation to ideology, framing and legitimacy, and intergroup

machinations, remain underexplored. Significant pieces of scholarship surround identifying formulation as a distinct issue of research, and I do not attempt to further analyze it here within the parameters of my dissertation.

Chapter 7

Conclusion

7.1. Introduction

I began this research seeking an answer to the research question of *how does ideological modification; as operationalized during negotiations or concessions that change core aspects of the ideology, lead to splintering?* This was an interesting question and allowed me to design a unique approach to determining a plausible answer, one that included an examination of three complex cases that offered intriguing evidence throughout. The analytical question of ‘how’ the process occurs directed my methodological selection to examining case studies, a qualitative approach to research (Creswell and Creswell, 2018). The application of an empirical approach to case selection followed by the use of two qualitative research methods. Congruence procedures and process tracing, helped me to uncover an answer. Ideological modification is sufficient to lead to splintering when militants (particularly hardliners) perceive ideological betrayal by the militant group, and there is an absence of credible enforcement measures for cohesion to halt the dissenters before splintering occurs. The findings are interesting and relevant across disciplines, and I hope that researchers in anthropology, peace and conflict studies, and psychology are able to observe data of added-value in my findings. Academics, policymakers, and practitioners alike can apply this research in the study of ideologically motivated rebellion, terrorism and violent

extremism, along with negotiations and group splintering. In the following section, I provide an overview of topline recommendations in the research, policy, and programming spaces.

7.2. Recommendations

7.2.1. Research

I encourage researchers to continue examining the malleability of ideology in various contexts, under different pressures, and through the incorporation of additional variables. One clear opening is for research to move beyond the observable event of negotiations, and analyze more thoroughly into how ideological orientation shifts in times of militant peace or internal deliberations. My research touched on this insofar as to include events like the FARC's reversal into the narcotics business to strengthen the validity and reliability of my findings, but plenty more can be done to a far greater degree.

Future research would also be well-positioned to further explore the impact of singular and multidimensional ideological orientation across militant groups, both quantitatively and qualitatively. I focused on two groups (Fatah and the FARC) with general ideological cohesion, a singular ideological orientation; and one group (PKK) with what I termed a multidimensional or non-cohesive ideological orientation. Findings explicitly indicated a big tent approach to militant ideological cohesion that valued broad appeal over that of one with a heightened discrimination associated with a multidimensional ideological orientation, corroborated with all instances of splintering examined. Follow-on research projects could explore singular and multidimensional ideological orientations in far greater depth, such as through a large-N sampling followed by a small-N analysis focused on any potential deviant or outlier cases if they present themselves. As similarly discussed in Chapter Four, the limited scope of examining

cases who all possessed some type of territorial control can benefit from additional work on cases without territorial control.

Opportunities also exist in relation to the potential to generalize the process in studies of radicalization to violence, particularly in the examination of violent extremist organizations. The existence of hardliners is an important consideration, but the degree to which hardliners hold non-negotiable ideals should be further investigated, as demonstrated through apparent hardliner willingness to engage in ideological modification when it occurs on the militant's terms, outside of negotiations with an adversary.

Finally, there is a significant and difficult opportunity that remains in examining what it means to be a militant hardliner in an organization with a charismatic leader whose persona ties to the essence of the group. Ocalan's reach and guiding of the PKK from its foundation through his imprisonment has been heavy-handed, and violence meets militant dissent. Hardliners in the PKK must have evolved their focus on various ideological objectives in line with how Ocalan continued to shape and reshape them. I'm not attempting to assign levels of commitment, its possible hardliners are still just as committed to the original objectives and simply falling in line in terms of behavior as opposed to belief. Nonetheless, assessing individual dynamics and implications of militant hardliners within groups who have charismatic leaders in near total or total control of the organization will help to better examine the relational nature of ideology and the fluidity of commitment. Research surrounding ideology would also benefit from such an investigation, and it is highly relevant for researchers examining ideological commitment or adaptation over time (see Zelina and Schubiger, 2017 or Maynard, 2019, for example).

7.2.2. Policy & Programming

Policymakers and practitioners should consider militant agency more thoroughly when developing counter-militant policy (such as CVE or CT) and programs. Specifically, there should be a greater focus on the full range of militant preferences and sub-group makeup within militant groups. Previous research has already demonstrated that militant groups are not monolithic entities who align to a single ideological line, and are unitarily committed to an ideological orientation. My research nuanced this even further, demonstrating how these differences can play out in times of negotiation and internal deliberations alike, and practitioners and policymakers can apply that knowledge to shape mediation efforts and violent extremism or counter terrorism policy.

Mediators may pay particular attention to framing talks and supporting militant leaders eager for peace by supporting their framing of outcomes. Policy makers and program implementers should better tailor alternative messaging programs away from counter-messaging and (i.e., fact based) and towards nuanced messages that are as fluid as the conflict context and reach a variety of preferences within a group. During negotiations, it may for example be helpful for governments to articulate government concessions publicly, supporting militant negotiators as they attempt to reframe internal concessions to appease hardliners. So-called de-radicalization programming should also be more tailored, with a clear understanding that not all militants are ‘radicalized’ to the same extent (or at all, in some cases), and their ideological objectives may be more or less impactful by member (Horgan, 2008). Programming should look at the variety of factors involved in a given conflict, related to incentives, grievances, ideology, and networks, targeting limited resources in ways that can be most impactful.

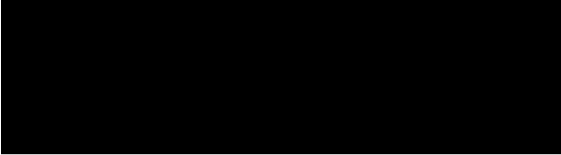
7.3. Conclusion

Militant engagement in negotiations can lead to peace or end up in increased violence through splintering. This dissertation has provided a contribution to the study of a unique variable, ideological modification, and presented a process by which splintering can occur surrounding negotiations. A sound understanding of the relational nature of militant ideology and the circumstances in which splintering may become more likely is essential for researching, developing policy, or implementing programming within the conflict space. Any research that can potentially help alleviate suffering and support peace is research worth undertaking. As discussed in this dissertation the creation of splinter groups has the potential for numerous impacts on the conflict space including increased violence, spoiling of negotiations, and sustaining conflict and therefore necessitates a better understanding. I hope this study is able to contribute in a space that has the potential to positively influence approaches to negotiations, and to better understand and prepare for both intended and the unintended consequences of negotiations with militants.

Annex I: Raw Data for Splintering Frequency Table

QUADRANT 1	QUADRANT 2
Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA)	M23
Justice and Equality Movement (JEM)	Ansar Al-Dine (Mali)
Hamas (Islamic Resistance Movement)	National Congress for the Defense of the People (CNDP)
Free Aceh Movement (GAM)	Convention of Patriots for Justice and Peace
Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK)	Umbrella Group Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP)
	Kurdistan Free Life Party
	Umbrella Group The Northern Alliance (or United Islamic Front for Salvation of Afghanistan - UIFSA)
	Taliban
	Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA)
	Hizballah
	Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE)
	Popular Liberation Army (EPL)
	National Liberation Army of Colombia (ELN)
	Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC)
	Kachin Independence Army (KIA)
	Al-Fatah
	Karen National Union (Armed Wing: Karen Natinoal Liberation Army)

QUADRANT 3	QUADRANT 4
Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army	South Sudan Liberation Army (SSLA)
National Socialist Council of Nagaland-Isak-Muivah (NSCN-IM)	United Front For Democratic Change (FUC)
Bunda Dia Kongo (BDK)	Democratic Karen Buddhist Army Brigade 5
Lord's Resistance Army (LRA)	Movement of Niger People for Justice (MNJ)
Kangleipak Communist Party (KCP)	South Sudan Defence Movement/Army
United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA)	Garo National Liberation Army
Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF)	Sudan Liberation Movement/Army-Unity
Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF)	Umbrella Group Union of Forces for Democracy and Development (UFDD)
Mujahedin-e Khalq (MEK)	Front for the Restoration of Unity and Democracy - Ahmed Dini Faction
	Niger Delta People's Volunteer Force (NDPVF)
	Mahdi Army
	Sudan Liberation Movement
	Umbrella Group Union of Democratic Forces
	Umbrella Group United Tajik Opposition (UTO)
	Boko Haram
	Umbrella Group until merged, leaving FN Forces Nouvelles
	Ivorian Movement for the Greater West (MPIGO)
	Links to Fatah Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade
	Baloch Liberation Army (BLA)
	Congolese Rally for Democracy (RCD)
	Communist Party of Nepal- Maoist (CPN-M)
	National Liberation Army (NLA) (Macedonia)
	Restoration Council of Shan States
	National Council for Defense of Democracy (NCDD)
	Tehreek-e-Nafaz-e-Shariat-e-Mohammadi (TNSM)
	National Liberation Front of Tripura (NLFT)
	People's War Group (PWG)
	National Socialist Council of Nagaland-Khaplang (NSCN-K)
	National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB)
	Front for the Liberation of Cabinda / Cabinda Armed Forces (FLEC-FAC)
	Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF)
	The Front for the Liberation of the Cabinda Enclave - Renewed (FLEC)
	Movement of Democratic Forces of Casamance
	Al-Gama'at Al-Islamiyya (IG)
	Shining Path (SL)

	National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA)
	Shan State Progressive Party
	Karenni National Progressive Party

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