

Comparative Area Studies

*Methodological Rationales
and Cross-Regional Applications*

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Comparing Separatism across Regions

Rebellious Legacies in Africa, Asia, and the Middle East

BENJAMIN SMITH

INTRODUCTION

In January 1946 ethnic Kurds in Iran declared the independent republic of Mahabad, capping a three-decade long period of intermittent rebellion by Kurdish minorities in Iraq, Iran, and Turkey. Within a year this ambitious declaration in Iran's Kurdish region had been crushed and has since been overshadowed by much greater material successes for Kurds in Iraq and Turkey. Do the divergent pathways of Kurdish nationalism in these three states and Syria hold broader insights for scholars studying separatist conflicts? To take one example, could the experiences of Kurdish nationalist movements in Iraq and Turkey help to explain how the Free Aceh Movement in Indonesia survived heavy state repression to win substantial concessions from the central government in 2005? If so, how might we go about exploring comparative dynamics over time?

This chapter outlines the methodological rationales for comparing separatist conflicts across multiple regions, addressing this volume's methodological goals and elaborating them in the case of studying violent ethnic conflicts through comparative area studies (CAS). It does so in a research design aimed at elucidating why it is that ethnic minorities in some settings are able to sustain broad challenges to their governments while other seemingly similar ones fail to do so. First, the centrality of post-imperial ethnic region partitions to the broader project's

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theoretical and methodological framework requires cross-regional inquiry. The partitions that divide ethnic regions into multiple states are relatively rare, all but demanding a cross-regional scope of possible case selection consideration. Drawing first on the division between the two world wars of greater Kurdistan into parts of Iran, Iraq, Syria, and Turkey, I employ the central factors in the theoretical framework in analyzing two other such border creation episodes in the Baloch region of Southwest Asia and the Tuareg region of North Africa. This cross-region, cross-temporal framework makes possible a structured comparison across three coherent ethnic groups/regions that were divided into several states and subjected to varying nation-state building projects. The relationships between these new ethnic minorities and each central state developed into systematic historical trajectories that can be compared not just to other Kurdish, Baloch, or Tuareg minorities in other states but to other groups' new minority regions as well.

Second, incorporating a case from an additional region, in this case Aceh, for analysis at more of a micro-level facilitates the exploration of trajectory effects as they influence decisions by individuals about participating in rebellions. After process-tracing the macro-dynamics in Aceh to assess the argument's purchase on broad trends (an out-of-sample and out-of-region macro-level theory test), I conducted approximately fifty semi-structured interviews with former Free Aceh Movement fighters and leaders, nested in a survey of 1,200 former members. This interview and survey research allowed me to understand how broad historical patterns of resistance helped to shape the choices ordinary Acehnese made to join the movement at great potential cost to themselves. Then, I used the micro-level insights from Aceh to revisit available individual-level data from the Kurdish regions of Turkey and Iraq, again leveraging cross-regional inference but at a second level of analysis.

The comparisons of four Kurdish minorities, comparison of that group to three similar ones in Balochistan and five in Tuareg regions, and then of Kurdish nationalism with that of Aceh, provides some methodological strengths reflective of those in CAS. First, it allows for contextually rich analysis across world "areas," or regions: Ahram's (2011b) conceptualization of regions as analytic categories is at the root of how I discuss them here. Second, these comparisons also highlight a strength of CAS not as yet developed—the ability to take in-depth analysis of multiple regions to explore theories at different initial levels of analysis before then cross-testing at one level at a time. This is perhaps the greatest strength of CAS in that it allows a multilevel comparative approach that would be impossible with cross-country or cross-region regression analysis. Finally, to the extent one is willing to be convinced that important phenomena like center-periphery conflicts might have long-range historical dimensions—so that "secessionist ethnic onsets" in 1926 and 1958 might be closely related rather than isolated—a turn

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SELF-DETERMINATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST,

previous project on the politics of self-determination (Smith 2007)—I was reminded of the declaration of independence by Iraq in 1946, encouraged and supported by

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the Soviet Union, remains to date the most expansive demand for statehood of any of the Kurdish minorities. In fact, Mulla Mustafa Barzani, leader of the Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP) of Iraq, took his militia to Mahabad to stand in arms with the KDP-Iran. Less than a year later, however, the Mahabad movement had been crushed and Barzani and his followers were forced to flee to the Soviet Union.

Today Barzani's descendants lead the Kurdish Regional Government and the KDP-Iraq, one of the two main political parties for Iraq's Kurds. Iran's Kurdish movement has failed to mobilize any subsequent mass movement and has, in fact, often taken refuge in Kurdish Iraq. Why such dramatic reversals of fortune? Why have Kurdish movements in Iraq and Turkey become the central players in Kurdish nationalism, eclipsing their counterparts in Iran and Syria?² More broadly, why do some ethnic minorities succeed in sustaining long-term challenges in the face of heavy state repression while others fail? This set of questions is at the core of a book project titled *History and Rebellion*. In it, I suggest that the persistence of some ethnic nationalist movements into the present is directly related to early post-independence rebellions. One of the book's central methodological approaches is CAS, and it takes two forms: one intra-regional comparative and one cross-regional. It is worth noting that, like my first major research project, this took advantage of the leverage afforded by having extensive academic training, language proficiency, and past fieldwork experience in two regions, the Middle East and Southeast Asia.

The first of several substantive chapters focus on Kurdistan, from the early 20th century through post-World War I partition and forward to the present. The creation of four new states—self-made in the cases of Iran and Turkey, foreign-made in those of Iraq and Syria—presents a unique opportunity to explore the historical determinants of long-range mass nationalism within a single ethnic community, holding ethnic identity and history loosely constant. Divided as a minority in four different states, Kurds in each founded Kurdish Democratic Party organizations to represent their interests. In three of these countries—Iraq, Iran, and Turkey—Kurdish leaders mobilized armed groups to challenge new state leaderships. However, only in Iraq and Turkey did Kurdish aspirations continue to produce mass mobilization. In short, this within-region set of four cases provides a strong setting in which to explore answers to the above questions.

At first blush the divergence across these Kurdish minorities fits poorly with extant theories: many of the key cross-national predictors of civil conflict have no

2. One might note usefully here that, even with the support of hundreds of U.S. air strikes in late 2014, Syrian Kurds in Kobane could retake the city only once hundreds, perhaps thousands, of *pesh murga* fighters from Kurdish Iraq, and hundreds more fighters from the Kurdish Workers' Party (PKK) in Turkey crossed borders to fight on their behalf.

real purchase when it comes to explain why some Kurdish minorities have fared so much worse than others. Mountainous terrain, resource wealth in the minority region, and state exclusion all fail to co-vary with the outcomes across these cases. And analyzing the cases with close attention to Middle East-specific contextual factors—in these cases either Ba'ath Arab socialist homogenizing nation-state projects in Iraq and Syria or center-right homogenizing ones in Iran and Turkey—still fails to provide us with a causal starting point. A promising starting point is offered by insights from two bodies of theory: resource mobilization and agrarian political economy. As I detail below, these theoretical foundations also square well with Middle East studies as a substantive field.

The Kurdish rebellions of the late 19th and early 20th centuries were led not by radical urban nationalists, but instead by rural elites. Mustafa Barzani and Ismail Simqu in Iran, for instance, rebelled as much to defend their places atop the hierarchy of social power in the Kurdish countryside as much as anything else. Beginning with that insight, I theorized that quasi-feudal social life might be a key explanatory factor. Indeed, the one Kurdish region not to have given rise to a serious post-independence challenge to central authorities—in Syria—was populated largely by displaced Kurds from Anatolia. The Kurds in Syria, thus, had no established rural hierarchy. I mention this not only because it exemplifies specific cases that run afoul of prominent explanatory theory, but also because it draws heavily on the historiography of Kurdistan, pinpointing here a factor that has been central to many of the canonical works of Kurdish and Middle East history and sociology (Batatu 1982; van Bruinessen 1992; White 2000, 96–100; McDowall 2004).

The highly hierarchical and often near-feudal nature of Kurdish social life meant that those at the top with an inclination to rebel could make use of existing social structures to mobilize peasants for fighting as well as for agriculture, a dynamic often pointed to in the peasant studies research of the 1960s to 1980s but less often in the study of ethnic conflict (Hobsbawm 1959; White 2000). In response to these rebellions, state leaders used heavy force and often subsequently tried forcibly to crush the social power of these lords and other elites. That in turn, along with efforts to commercialize agriculture in order to weaken exactly that social base, led to urban migration in large numbers. It was during this historical period—the 1950s and 1960s in particular—that paths diverged again.

The Kurdish regions of Iraq and Turkey contained multiple sizable urban centers—Diyarbakir, Van, Bitlis, Erbil, and Sulaymaniya, among them—whereas Kurds in Iran and Syria largely had to migrate to ethnic Persian or Arab cities. Noting this—and the new, more politically radical organizations that emerged in Kurdish regions in Iraq and Turkey (foremost among them the Kurdistan Workers' Party or PKK and Patriotic Union of Kurdistan in Iraq)—a set of systematic trajectories of ethnic mobilization or demobilization began to take clear

shape. Drawing on comparative theories, derived in part from literature from Kurdish histories themselves, I work to explain the pathways a figure 10.1 illustrates this. The cases with both historically established and whose region has major urban centers and a geographic capacity to sustain urban centers tend not to sustain

At this point it is worth making clear, first, this comparison of four cases is deeply embedded in the field of Middle East studies, an area of study in the Middle East characterized by the early centrality of colonialism in the region for Western publics (see Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978) in any other regional studies context as a global political force in the Middle East region publicly. More important, the conceptualization of regions as analytic units is theoretically embedded in the political import of tribes and states (Kostiner 1991). Building a theoretical framework for these cases entailed drawing directly from a part of the field of Middle East studies.

Another important component of this framework is its temporally lengthy and historically rich trajectory unfolded over decades rather than years. From the founding rebellions of the 19th century, the trajectories vis-à-vis their respective regions to generate the kinds of macro-level processes and encouraging urban migration and generation of more political space. Individual details of each case are woven into the central analytic framework of the periods and spaces. And it is clear that the causal forces appear to be driven by the actions of ethnic minorities and prevent them from moving toward greater minority rights.

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shape. Drawing on comparative historical analysis of these four Kurdish trajec-
 tories, derived in part from literatures across multiple disciplines and in larger part
 from Kurdish histories themselves, I constructed a long-range historical frame-
 work to explain the pathways along which contentious ethnic politics can travel.
 Figure 10.1 illustrates this. The essentials of the argument are that ethnic minori-
 ties with both historically established social hierarchies (with elites at the top)
 and whose region has major urban centers tend to generate both early rebellions
 and a geographic capacity to sustain rebellions across generations once urbaniza-
 tion takes place. Those groups lacking the strong and historically grounded social
 structure are unlikely to stage any early rebellions, and those that lack major
 urban centers tend not to sustain challenges beyond the first stage.

At this point it is worth making some observations about the CAS framework.
 First, this comparison of four Kurdish regions is both empirically and theoret-
 ically embedded in the field of Middle East studies, perhaps the most tumult-
 characterized area of study in the post-colonial world. In part this is a function
 of the early centrality of colonial-era philology or “Oriental studies” in defining
 the region for Western publics and officials. It is also a function of the fact that
 Edward Said’s *Orientalism* (1978) caused arguably more uproar in this field than
 in any other regional studies community. Following that, the emergence of Islam
 as a global political force in the American public eye has continued to define the
 region publicly. More importantly, and drawing on Ahram’s (2011b) conceptu-
 alization of regions as analytic categories, Kurdish mobilization via social struc-
 tures is theoretically embedded in the anthropological and historical research on
 the political import of tribes and rural notables (see, for example, Khoury and
 Kostiner 1991). Building a theory of persistent separatist rebellion from these
 cases entailed drawing directly on a set of analytic building blocks that have been
 part of the field of Middle East studies throughout its contemporary history.

Another important component of the explanation is that it is both histori-
 cally lengthy and historically rich. It is lengthy in the sense that important causes
 unfolded over decades rather than years, stretching from the 1920s to the pres-
 ent. From the founding rebellions that set some minority groups on contentious
 trajectories vis-à-vis their respective central governments, state responses helped
 to generate the kinds of macro-social changes (especially weakening vertical ties
 and encouraging urban migration) that then helped, in turn, to provide a sec-
 ond generation of more politically radical leaders. Close attention is paid to the
 individual details of each case (ethnic minorities in different states), even as
 the central analytic framework remains the guiding lens of inquiry across many
 periods and spaces. And it is historically rich in the sense that deep historical-
 causal forces appear to be driving long-range contentious trajectories for some
 ethnic minorities and preventing others from ever making significant progress
 toward greater minority rights. As a result, careful comparative historical analysis

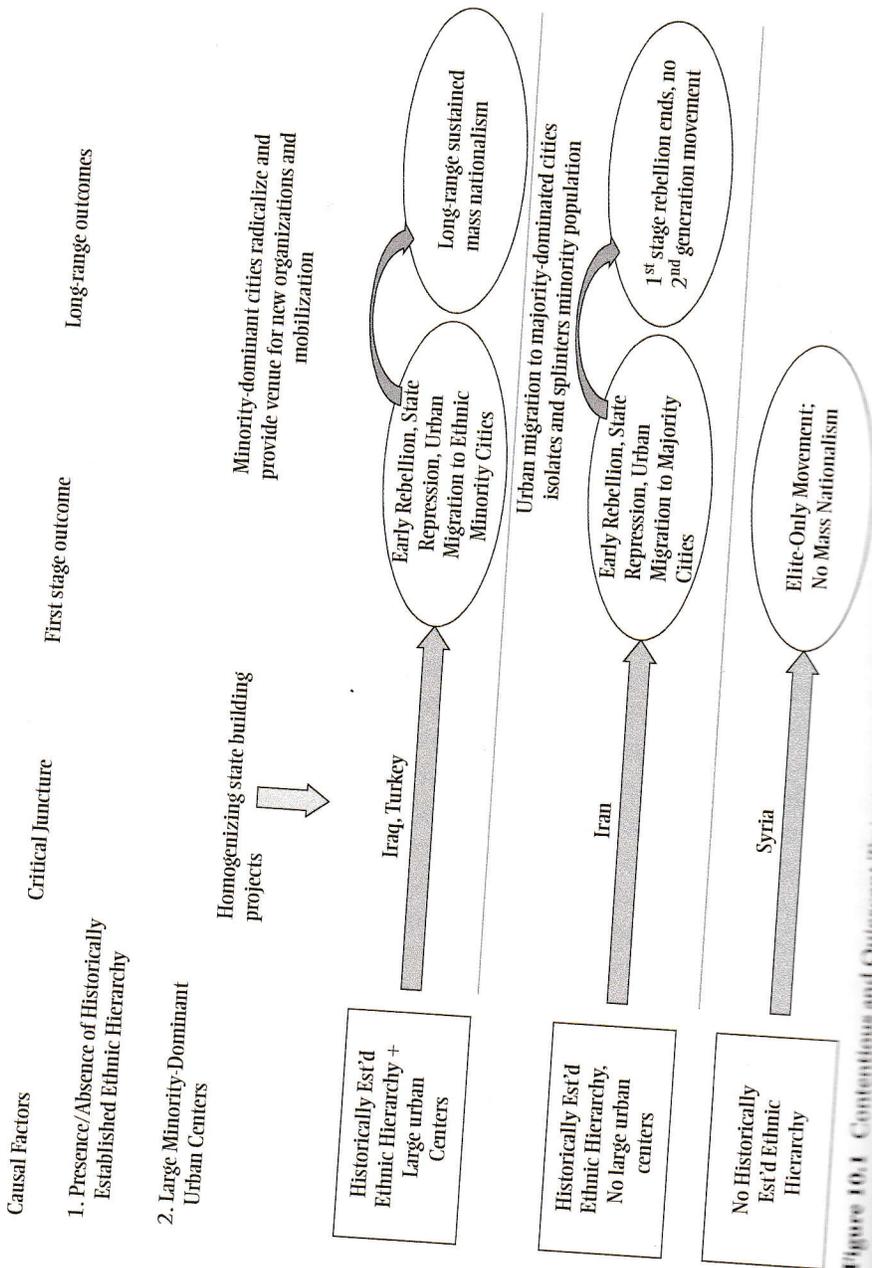


Figure 10.1 Contentious and Quiescent Trajectories in Kurdistan

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of multiple regions—as well as in-depth ethnographic and interview research in still another—requires the kind of attention to both geographic breadth and historical depth for which CAS is arguably a uniquely suited meta-methodological choice.

Both because the initial focus on Kurdistan is inherently delimited and because it is a single region, one could (and I did) raise questions about the extent to which we could be confident of the broader reach of a theoretical hunch derived in part from just one ethnic group. Moreover, the initial argument was pitched at a macro-level, developing testable implications for group changes and contentious politics within states. As a result, the uncertainties about portability involved dynamics (a) at the unit of analysis (whether other *ethnic minorities* would evince similar dynamics), (b) at the regional level (whether groups in *world regions* lacking a strong tribal role would also produce similar trajectories), and finally (c) at the level of analysis (whether the import of early rebellions would manifest in *individuals' decisions* about participating in later ones).

The unit of analysis question could be answered in a number of ways—maximally broad but less causally deep (cross-group or cross-country regression) or less broad but more causally deep (i.e. cross-regional structure comparison). The regional question essentially demands that, given the relatively lesser role played by tribal structures in other regions, we consider a step up Sartori's (1970) ladder of abstraction and ask if other social hierarchies might perform the same mobilizing roles. Finally, the level of analysis question asks whether there are micro-foundations to the macro-argument. If, after all, these early rebellions facilitate later recruitment and mobilization, it would seem to have to do so at least in part at the individual level. The latter two strategies for elaborating the reach of the argument both fall solidly into a CAS approach, and in the next sections I outline the ways in which such an approach helped to navigate these methodological challenges.

CROSS-REGIONAL COMPARISON OF DIVIDED GROUPS: KURDISTAN IN BALOCH AND TUAREG PERSPECTIVE

Seeking first to test the core parts of the argument—with an explicit focus on hierarchical group social structures, early rebellions, and subsequent trajectories—my first step was to look for cases similar to Kurdistan. Analytically speaking, these are ethnic communities with coherent and politically salient identities that during the first half of the 20th century were divided into multiple states following imperial collapse and/or during decolonization. Two in particular—the Tuareg (divided among Algeria, Burkina Faso, Libya, Mali, and Niger) and Baloch (divided among Afghanistan, Iran, and Pakistan)—stood out as potentially promising comparisons.

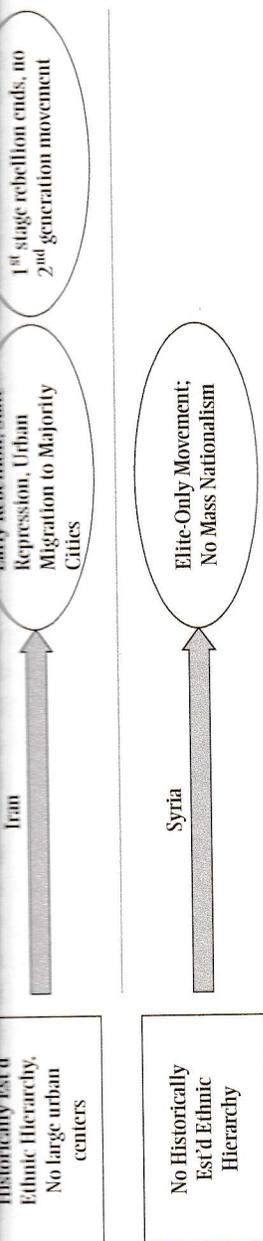


Figure 10.1 Contentious and Quiescent Trajectories in Kurdistan

Although Balochistan is fairly close to Kurdistan (comprising southeastern Iran where Kurdistan occupies part of western Iran), the additional variations posed by lengthy British colonial experience provides another set of political priors, and *ceteris paribus* would increase confidence in the theory's purchase should its main implications find support here too. While by necessity the comparative exploration of three Baloch communities and five Tuareg ones is much briefer than the Kurdistan study, it provides in the book two additional sets of new ethnic minorities against which to compare. And, it provides supportive evidence for the link between social hierarchy and mobilization: only in Pakistan, where the Princely State of Khalat was based, were Baloch able to mount initial, effective challenges to the central government there. Unlike the much weaker movements in the Baloch regions of Iran and Afghanistan, in Pakistan Baloch nationalism has been a present force since independence. However, it has been limited in scope. Demography suggests an important part of the answer. Pakistan's Baloch population, occupying the largest region in the country but making up less than 5 percent of the total population, have been hampered in the effort to build a mass-based opposition movement by the increasing trans-migration of ethnic majority Punjabis into Balochistan's few urban centers. Like the city of Urumqi in the ethnic Uighur region of Xinjiang in western China, government policies aimed at diluting minority predominance by importing ethnic majority Pakistanis have dampened second-generation nationalist mobilization.

Among the Tuareg, a more uniformly hierarchical clan-based social structure is found across the now five regions, so much so that early European ethnologists classified its divisions as feudal in the early modern European sense (Lecocq 2010). The Tuareg region was divided among five independent states in the early 1960s: Algeria, Burkina Faso, Libya, Mali, and Niger. Following independence, Tuareg minorities rebelled in Mali and Niger, but only in Mali has Tuareg nationalism persisted as a mass phenomenon. It has done so in part as a function of cross-generation mobilization, which as in Kurdistan and Balochistan was first largely rural and in the 1990s and beyond mostly urban.

In this volume Sil argues for a mode of comparative analysis termed cross-regional contextualized comparison (CRCC), noting that regional speciality can often be built into a more broadly comparative set of cases in which subsequent cases are explored in less depth. While Sil focuses on this sequence in the context of a single research project, looking back at some central figures in the field of comparative politics it is possible to see this as a research agenda-level sequence as well. We have in fact several decades of noteworthy scholars as exemplars of this intellectual dynamic. Robert Bates's landmark *Markets and States in Tropical Africa* (1981) has its analytic origins in an ethnographic study

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of industrial workers in rural Zambia. David Laitin's (1977) early research on language policy and ethnic politics in Somalia shaped his subsequent work on the roles of states in ethnic politics around the continent and then around the world. What this iterated mode of "branching out" comparison offers is an initially very deep, very contextual exploration of causal hunches (more formally, hypotheses), first-stage confirmation (internal validity tests) followed by a less in-depth assessment in a broader but still causally deep set of case studies. On the one hand, Sil argues that Millian concepts of small-n comparative analysis generally stay close to the nomothetic end of the nomothetic-ideographic continuum. Comparative studies can be found across the continuum, depending on the representativeness of the cases and the generalizability of the mechanism. On the other hand, comparative studies are "area-bound" only until we engage a case or cases outside that area. Only the first stage of the analysis, geared to generating hypotheses or establishing internal validity, need be circumscribed spatially or temporally. In fact, this boundedness allows for more rigorous inductive testing of rival hypotheses. Given a commitment to more, rather than less, extensive theoretical reach, not all of these contextual factors turn out to be causally relevant.

COMPARING REGIONS I: AFRICA AND SOUTHEAST ASIA IN MIDDLE EAST PERSPECTIVE

Because these ethnic region partitions are relatively rare phenomena, studying them comparatively is by definition a cross-regional endeavor. And, to reiterate, studying different ethnic groups across those regions is, in part, an analysis of the regions themselves. The often-shared imperial, colonial, religious, and linguistic legacies within regions just as often mean that one of them—a strong role for feudal social structures or for a particular kind of religious organization to take two examples—may play an important role in shaping post-independence politics in a number of states.

It also means, however, that we must be careful about overstretching concepts originally derived and initially tested in a single setting or sample (Sartori 1970; Collier and Gerring 2009). Just as Sartori originally warned about the analytic problems in taking hasty steps up the ladder of abstraction, crossing regional boundaries means not just that we face increasing numbers of complex causal factors, but also that we must think seriously about the portability of the original concepts. In this case my original focus was on Kurdish rural social structures—a rough combination of tribalism and feudalism that produced a strong set of mobilizing resources that could be put as readily to armed struggle as to agricultural production. The persistent political importance of tribes in the Middle East has few parallels in other regions (but see Collins 2006 on Central Asia), and so

it is necessary to think about different kinds of social forms that could facilitate the same level of mobilization.

Brustein and Levi (1987) point to feudalism as key to explaining why some peripheral regions in early modern Europe rebelled against nascent nation-state leaders, and, in fact, the key characteristics of it are close to those in Kurdish tribal structures. Co-ethnic vertical bonds, strong notions of hierarchical status, and expectations of loyalty enable the recruitment of potential fighters from lower strata. Tuareg social structure, as mentioned briefly above, is so typified by these traits that European ethnologists scarcely bothered to explore how it might differ from their own continent's feudal structures (Lecocq 2010). Alone among the three Baloch regions of Southwest Asia, the Princely State of Khalat in what is now Pakistan was characterized by a historically established and clear hierarchy with the royal family and nobility at the top, in contrast to a much more fluid and mobile social organization in the now Iranian and Afghani regions of greater Balochistan.

COMPARING REGIONS II: EXPLAINING LATIN AMERICA'S "MISSING" SEPARATIST WARS AND AFRICA'S SECESSIONIST DEFICIT

Turning to the question of why some postcolonial regions have many separatist conflicts while others—Latin America—have none, we find an opportunity to use the insights generated at the level of ethnic groups recursively to analyze regions. Early in the process of collecting aggregate data for this project, I sought to limit the sample to groups that could plausibly be expected to rebel.³ I found that no dominant groups, unsurprisingly, had ever rebelled in the 20th century. But another large set was entirely missing: Latin America, everything south of the U.S.-Mexico border. As mentioned above, this has not gone unnoticed: Michael Ross (2015) has asked where the region's "missing" separatist wars are, given that center-seeking civil wars have been common in the last one hundred years. Similarly, why has sub-Saharan Africa, with the volume of civil conflicts it has suffered in the last fifty years, seen only a small handful of viable separatist conflicts, in South Sudan, Eritrea, and the Tuareg region of northern Mali?

The explanation for persistent separatist mobilization under discussion here—that it is a function first of a strong, historically established social hierarchy within ethnic groups—may help us to understand these regional disparities. Latin America saw its indigenous regions socially pulled apart under Spanish and Portuguese colonial rule, with mestizo elites forcibly installed at the top of rural

3. This is essentially a variant of the possibility principle, as outlined in Mahoney and Goetz (2004).

4. See especially Fearon and Laitin

social strata. This new vertical cleavage meant that, unlike, for example, Kurdish elites who held tremendous social authority over Kurdish peasants, mestizo elites had no such legitimacy over peasants and, in fact, regularly required states to maintain the hierarchy by force. In short, Latin America more than any other colonial region today has a legacy of cross-ethnic rather than co-ethnic hierarchy in the countryside, making viable separatist mobilization all but impossible.

The explanation in sub-Saharan Africa is similarly related to rural social structures. In much of the region, As Hyden (1980) and many others have detailed, the territorial and social subordination of the peasantry to a landed nobility simply never was accomplished. As a result, no deep-rooted ties of obligation held small farmers to co-ethnic lords across most of the region, with just a few exceptions. These exceptions were Rwanda and Burundi, the Horn of Africa, and the Tuareg region of the Sahel. In the first of these, as Straus (2006) has noted, a long tradition of peasant obedience to authority served state power and even facilitated mass violence. In the latter two, strong vertical ties within ethnic regions made possible the successful war for Eritrean independence and a long-running insurgency in northern Mali's Tuareg region.

The explanation at work in this study helps to square the reality of few separatist wars in Africa compared to center-seeking ones with a broader research program on civil conflicts. Englebert and Hummel (2005) have suggested that the dearth of secessionist conflicts in Africa is a function of weak states unable to do much to pacify minority regions. But this logic directly contradicts much of what we continue to find about civil wars writ large: that weak states make civil wars more, not less, likely by impeding public goods provision (creating grievances) and by hindering state efforts at direct rule of their territories (creating incentives).⁴ On the other hand, if the prospect for separatist rebellion by ethnic minority groups is tied to the ability of ethnic minority elites to mobilize followers on the basis of vertical legitimacy and obligation, then its relative scarcity in Africa can go far to help explain why separatist struggles are also so rare.

This exploration of regions highlights another strength of CAS: the capacity of in-depth analysis of one set of regions to shed light on the dynamics of others. As the range and quality of explanatory frameworks for answering "big" questions at the core of the field of comparative politics improves, we can bring them to bear on refining the scope of our inquiry. To take one of these out-of-sample regions, noting that not once since 1900 has Latin America had a serious separatist conflict, scholars of separatist conflict broadly can feel justified in excluding the region both from the samples in quantitative data projects and from comparative area or other smaller-N research designs. To the extent that Latin America's

4. See especially Fearon and Laitin (2003) and Dixon (2009).

missing separatists are a systematic function of ethnic minority social structures, this affords us not just greater “area” understanding but better understanding of regions as “theoretically grounded analytic categories” (Ahram 2011b). In doing so, employing CAS as a distinct approach to comparative analysis helps in refining econometric study of cross-region dynamics.

THE MICRO-LOGIC OF MACRO-REBELLIONS: HISTORICAL LEGACIES AND RECRUITMENT IN THE ACEH CONFLICT

The Dutch began imposing direct rule on the East Indies colonies in the mid-19th century. The Sultanate of Aceh was among the last holdouts to Dutch rule. The sultanate played a key role during the Indonesian war of independence (1945–49), providing funding, men, and even fighter planes. Because of this outsized contribution to the independence effort,⁵ Aceh was one of only two provinces of Indonesia to receive “Special District” status in 1949.

Just a few years later, however, President Sukarno folded Aceh into the province of North Sumatra, abnegating for the first (not the last) time a central grant of special autonomy to Aceh. Acehnese viewed themselves not just as ethnically separate and more pious in their practice of Islam, but also historically central to Indonesia’s independence struggle, thus deserving of recognition. Acehnese leaders joined the multiregion Darul Islam rebellion of 1953–59, which sought to reinvigorate the Islamic nature of the Indonesian state. The ultimate settlement of that conflict spelled out substantial new concessions to Aceh, first being the reinstatement of special provincial status, but extending much further to cultural autonomy and indigenous education. Like the independence-era commitments, Sukarno’s successor, President Suharto, failed to fulfill these promises. In the mid-1970s, following the discovery of massive oil and natural gas fields off the coast of Aceh, Hasan di Tiro founded the Free Aceh Movement (Gerakan Aceh Merdeka, or GAM). Di Tiro was the great-grandson of Teungku Cik di Tiro, the leader of the resistance to the Dutch during the Aceh War. Hasan himself had fought in the Darul Islam rebellion, as had most of his original GAM leadership, who were also related to, in some cases veterans of, that earlier rebellion.

GAM’s war against the Government of Indonesia (GoI) persisted off and on until 2005. Nine months after the Boxing Day tsunami that killed roughly 200,000 Acehnese, negotiators from GAM and the GoI signed a comprehensive peace agreement that again guaranteed substantial autonomy for the region. In addition to returning the vast majority of oil and gas revenues to Aceh, GAM was

5. Aceh comprises less than two percent of the country’s population.

allowed the special right to form a regionally specific parties had been granted Islam, and so this was an exception, some improvements have been made in Aceh, now dominated by GAM. GAM has rebounded impressively.

Because this conflict has been documented, because of the improvement in data, for many scholars to conduct field research, I conducted nearly fifty semi-structured interviews with military and civilian officers from the Gayo Highlands. My main goal in this book is to explore the implications of the book’s central argument: the historical legacy of rebellions. Ultimately, the macro-dynamic could not be reduced to social structural and demographic factors. The micro-level argument is that the historical legacy facilitates individual recruitment. That is, it suggested, in essence, that the knowledge of the historical legacy is a valuable resource for ethnic elites in crafting their mobilization.

To be transparent about my early work, the implications of this hypothesis to be tested during the course of the interview research. Data in a World Bank survey of roughly 100 villages (see Collier et al. 2009; Tajima 2010), was a richer source of data on the knowledge of Aceh’s rebellious legacy. Along a loose continuum from ethnic elites to highly instrumental-rational, individuals who were active in Darul Islam, and finally GAM’s war against the GoI, to ordinary Acehnese, to a better understanding of the legacy gained outside GAM, to a coherent framework gained by resisting state coercion, a family of arguments with an emotive appeal to Acehnese nationalism and a finding pushes against the reductivist generalization of Collier and Hoeffler to explain civil war (Collier and Hoeffler also Tezcür 2016). Rather, an array of motivations, allowing for a wide array of individual motivations, how rebellious legacies fit into those motivations, and an explanation of why people choose to participate in rebellion for themselves and their families. Here it enabled me

and village levels the role that rebellious legacies play in facilitating mobilization. In the same way that mass education has been found to “carry” national identity forward in time (Darden 2010; Darden and Gryzmala-Busse 2006), in ethnic minority communities banned from including their own narratives in official curricula families and villages were the vehicles for transmitting identity to successive generations.

As with the cross-region, cross-group comparisons discussed above, explaining yet another ethnic group’s rebellion at another level of analysis also makes possible to then revisit the macro-dynamics in Aceh, as well as to use the micro-implications of Aceh recursively in the Kurdish cases. Did social structures in Acehnese society and early rebellions catalyze the same basic contentious trajectories that I analyzed in Kurdistan, Balochistan, and the Tuareg regions? With some contextually specific differences, the answer is affirmative. The main contextual difference is that, during the 1940s an effective social revolution took place in Acehnese society. A cadre of Islamic leaders, the *Persatuan Ulama Seluruh Aceh* (PUSA, the All Aceh Ulamas’ Association) with the aid of a number of youth militias including its own, took advantage of the lapse between the Japanese surrender and the Allied effort to reestablish Dutch colonial control to stage a social conquest of Aceh’s landed nobility, the *uleebalang*. In large part they mobilized using the social authority of ulama around Aceh, building on a consensus that jihad was warranted to establish armies loyal to individual ulama (Reid 1978: 189–245). By the time formal independence arrived in 1949, this movement had become the social center of Acehnese society.

In effect, the ulama usurped the hierarchical position of the landed elite. This explains the unique Islamic outlook of the DI movement. Subsequent to its resolution in 1959, central government investment in Aceh led to substantial urban expansion along the coast. While retaining ties to the ulama who had been the key social gravity actors, this new urban Acehnese population also diversified, similar to the process of urbanization in Kurdistan. Urban centers provided the recruiting ground for GAM as a second-generation vehicle for Acehnese nationalism. The same essential trajectory of contentious politics as a function of social and demographic change carried Acehnese nationalism forward into the late 20th century.

Did the same micro-dynamics uncovered in GAM recruitment and mobilization evince in the Kurdish regions of Iraq and Turkey? Not having conducted research of this sort in Kurdistan, I faced a necessary trade off in CAS and had to rely on secondary research. But at least in the case of PKK mobilization in Turkey the dynamics are very similar. Moreover, that they are similar despite the PKK’s heavy anti-traditional elite origins suggests a role for these rebellious legacies that survives even in the face of such a dramatic ideological change across generations and organizations. In-depth research by Tezcür (2016), Marcus (2007) and

CONCLUSION

Studying separation in the analytic frame requires comparison. This offers a number of insights. First, the relationship between the value of the case and the value of the case is whether they are similar, we take whether we have whether the trajectory of the argument’s broader

Second, a CAS theory at different Kurdistan and Aceh of Africa in less detail of a trajectory from language from (Indonesia) made uncovered a number of that, in turn, allowed the dynamics at the level. This may be case of moving beyond theory. On the one which would be important, comparative external validity through within a single

Third, the insight into the world and at understanding. The Middle East and Southeast Asia and Africa, helps to explain

others suggests a powerful role for both family and village networks in facilitating participation as well as an individual calculus that is shaped in part by knowledge of rebellious Kurdish legacies in southeastern Turkey.

CONCLUSION

Studying separatist conflict across multiple regions of the world, especially when the analytic framework indicates deep historical origins of conflict, by definition requires comparing deeply across those regions. The variant of CAS discussed here offers a number of payoffs to research that other approaches would arguably lack. First, the relative rarity of ethnic region partitions in the postcolonial world and the value of them for comparative analysis demands that we be willing to search for the cases of partition wherever we find them, and explore later to ascertain whether they are appropriate for inclusion. It also demands that where we find them, we take the time to engage in careful historical analysis, asking not just whether we have fit at the start and at the end of theorized trajectories but also whether the trajectories appear to unfold in systematically comparable ways. It is this prioritization of historical-causal depth that enables compelling evidence of the argument's breadth.

Second, a CAS approach allows scholars to engage in recursive testing of theory at different levels. In this instance comparing macro-dynamics across Kurdistan and Aceh in depth, and then across Balochistan and the Tuareg region of Africa in less depth, led to much greater confidence about the comparative fit of a trajectory framework. At the micro-level, extensive prior fieldwork experience, language facility, and contextualized knowledge of a particular country (Indonesia) made possible in-depth ethnographic and interview research that uncovered a number of unexpected implications of the theoretical framework. That, in turn, allowed a return to the original cases in Kurdistan to see if similar dynamics at the individual, family, and village levels obtained as they had in Aceh. This may be the greatest strength of a CAS approach—namely the relative ease of moving between levels of analysis to explore multiple implications of a theory. On the one hand, we can explore those multilevel inferences in depth, which would be impossible with cross-country or cross-group regression. On the other hand, comparison across multiple regions affords much more assurance of external validity than would be plausible in a similarly small- or medium-N setting within a single region.

Third, the insights generated by studying groups across several regions of the world and at multiple levels provides valuable region-level conceptual understanding. The dynamics of separatist mobilization in the Middle East and Southeast Asia, counterposed with analysis of a particular ethnic region in Africa, helps to explain both the relative paucity of such mobilization in Africa

as well as the complete absence of it in Latin America. It also, though, explains why Latin America's civil war have tended to be center-seeking, rather than secessionist in nature. To the extent that subsequent inquiry approaches the selection of cases without prior assumptions, it is valuable to know why Latin America has had no separatist wars in recent decades and why Africa has had so few. All of these constitute contributions to comparative inquiry for which CAS is uniquely suited.

Finally, the historical richness of a CAS approach, paired with its geographic breadth, holds much promise in uncovering the reasons why many of today's most persistent civil conflicts have "deep historical roots" (Fearon and Laitin 2014; Dincecco, Fenske, and Onorato 2014). Political scientists and economists deploying historical statistical data increasingly find powerful long-range relationships between pre-colonial sociopolitical factors and contemporary conflict risks, but they have a limited ability to produce compelling explanations for these distant historical causes of present outcomes. To the extent that scholars using CAS approaches engage similar questions, we stand to have solid explanations for those long-range correlations as well as to know how those long-gone causes continue to reproduce their effects over decades or even centuries.

Gaining by Shedding Strictures

*Natural Resource Booms
in Latin America and Africa*

RYAN SAYLOR

INTRODUCTION

The "small-N problem," who wants to generalize from a handful of founding variables with a small number of cases. Case study researchers face a small-N problem. Foremost among the problems are cases that are similar in important ways (Fearon 2007, 131–139). The selection: that we should control for confounding variables in the analysis (Slater and Zenger 2012). The historical analysis designs (e.g., Liekeberg 2012).

This gold standard design often differs from the standard design in that it integrates the historical context, integrating the historical context of their independence.