

The Sponsorship Dilemma: State Support for Militant Insurgency

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Abstract

As a tool of coercive diplomacy, states in the international system may support violent insurgencies to destabilize an opponent government. These security arrangements resemble asymmetric alliances consisting of the sponsor as the dominant party and the insurgency as the subordinate. In theory, this represents an efficient exchange: the sponsors outsource the costs of foreign policy to the group while the insurgents gain needed resources. However, theories of alliance politics would suggest that sponsorship agreements would often fail to materialize due to the inability of both sides to credibly commit. Yet, despite the lack of formalization and safeguards, sponsorship agreements continue to form, often at surprisingly strong levels. This paper explores both why sponsorship agreements form as well as why sponsorship agreements exhibit considerable integration of security structures. Using insights from studies of international cooperation, I argue that in the absence of formal structures, sponsors have incentives to over-invest in insurgencies, thereby tying their own hands as well as those of the insurgencies. These predictions are then empirically tested using UCDP data on conflicts involving non-state actors.

1 Introduction

For governments facing insurgency, the prospect that militants will obtain foreign assistance presents a strategic nightmare. State support for militant groups can greatly enhance an insurgency's sophistication, lethality, and durability (Byman 2005; Davis & Moore 1997; Regan 2000). This increase in capabilities can close the power gap between the insurgents and their target (Carment & James 1995; Cetinyan 2002; Enders & Sandler 2002; Salehyan 2007*b*; Zartman 1995). While a target may be able to defeat the insurgents alone, repressing a state supported group becomes much more difficult. The prospect of state sponsorship therefore poses an acute security challenge to states facing insurgency. So much so, targets are often willing to threaten war against potential sponsors. Following the terrorist attacks on 9/11/2001, the Bush Administration made clear that the U.S., "would make no distinction between the groups that commit these acts and the states that harbor them."¹ Like the U.S., several other states warned potential sponsors of their willingness to use military force. In cases such as South Africa, Rhodesia, India, Russia, and Israel; targets of insurgency all threatened war to deter foreign sponsors from assisting militant groups.

Clearly, states believe that state sponsorship of insurgency is a serious threat. Yet, although the prospect of a more powerful insurgency is very troubling, several scholars argue that sponsorship is often *harmful* to the insurgency (Byman 2005; Clapham 1996; Hoffman 1998; Zartman 1995). According to Zartman (1995), once insurgents gain state support, they become expendable bargaining chips. At any time it chooses, the foreign sponsor can cut off the insurgents' support in favor of a deal with the target. If a group is over-reliant on a particular sponsor, this outcome can be devastating. Since there is no formal alliance and agreements between states and insurgents are often kept private, these agreements are inherently unreliable (Ritter 2000). This observation leads several scholars of insurgency to conclude, "every seriously organized guerrilla movement is well advised to rely mainly on its own resources."²

Yet, empirically we observe that insurgents continue to seek foreign assistance, despite the inherent unreliability of such cooperation (Byman et al. 2001; Lake & Rothchild 1998; Salehyan 2007*a*). Additionally, insurgents sometimes yield considerable autonomy to foreign sponsors to procure such support. This seemingly contradictory pattern leads to the question of why state and insurgencies form alliances if such cooperation is unreliable? This research attempts to address these questions by analyzing the dynamics of security cooperation between insurgents and their

sponsors. Specifically, I seek to identify a set of conditions under which sponsorship can occur. However, in addition to explaining formation, this study also attempts to explain the variation within the design of sponsorship agreements. We observe that in some cases, such as Cuba's support of various Communist organizations through Latin America during the Cold War, the level of cooperation between the state and its insurgency remains quite weak. However, in other cases, such as American and Pakistani support of the Afghan *mujahedeen*, cooperation appears to be quite extensive and institutionalized. Presumably, when potential sponsors and insurgencies are considering allying, they not only consider whether or not to cooperate, but also consider *how much* to cooperate. I therefore seek to explain both the formation of sponsorship as well as the depth of this security cooperation using insights from bargaining theory, as well as interstate alliance formation. Following the presentation of these hypotheses, I present an empirical test using data from the Uppsala University/Peace Research Institute of Oslo Armed Conflicts Dataset (Gleditsch et al. 2002). I conclude by discussing the results and their implications for the study of transnational insurgency.

2 Literature Review

To begin the analysis of security cooperation between insurgents and their sponsors, it is first necessary to define security cooperation explicitly. Several scholars conceptualize security cooperation as the enhancement of security through joint production economies (Conybeare 1994; Lake 1996; Lake 1999). Through specialization and coordination of policy, two political organizations can produce greater amounts of security for both members than either could produce alone. While one party may be better able to produce tanks, another party may better be able to produce ships. If both specialize in what they produce best as comparative advantage would dictate, there would be more tanks and ships for both organizations.

Scholars in international politics observe such cooperation in military alliances (Fearon 1997; Smith 1995). In an asymmetric alliance, weaker states are willing to trade some political autonomy in exchange for protection from a stronger partner. Although alliances might make the stronger power less secure, the stronger power gains some control over the politics of its weaker ally. On the other hand, the weaker ally gains the protection of the stronger power's military forces. This trade is referred to as the security/autonomy tradeoff (Altfeld 1984; Morgan & Palmer 2003;

Morrow 1993; Snyder 1984). The stronger power gains political control over the subordinate state, but the subordinate gains the protection of the stronger power.

The theoretical work on interstate alliances provides a starting point for the study of state/insurgent security cooperation. State support bears several similarities to asymmetric interstate alliances (Byman 2005; Byman et al. 2001). We can think of a sponsorship agreement as security cooperation between a stronger power (the sponsor) and a weaker party (the insurgents).³ From the alliance, insurgents gain security benefits in the form of money, guns, training, safe haven, and in some cases, direct military support. In exchange, the insurgents provide the sponsor with some control over the group's decision-making. Since the sponsor expends resources fueling the insurgency, the sponsor becomes entitled to some control over how these resources are used. With this exchange, cooperation provides mutual benefits. The insurgents improve their ability to fight and survive. The sponsor gains a surrogate army and is able to outsource conflict (Henderson 2007; O'Brien 1996). Through cooperation, both sides improve their joint welfare.

Yet, a key difference between interstate alliances and state sponsorship of insurgency is that interstate alliances often contain safeguards to ensure the credibility of the participants (Leeds 2003; Morrow 1991; Morrow 2000). Security cooperation can only succeed if both sides believe that their partner will credibly fulfill their obligations as part of the agreement (Downs, Roake & Barsoom 1996; Kydd 2005; Leeds 1999). Yet, in the case of sponsorship, both sides face the strong possibility that if the costs of cooperation become excessive, their partner would opportunistically renege on the terms of the agreement. In the case of sponsorship, the insurgents must fear that the sponsor will abandon them in times of crisis. On the other hand, the sponsor must worry that its support for the group might produce moral hazard, which would ultimately result in the sponsor's loss of control over the group (Miller 2005). If this occurs, continued attacks might provoke a military response from the target, thereby pulling the sponsor into war (Snyder 1997).

Given these dangers, it is surprising to observe any cases of sponsorship. If both sides anticipated that their prospective partner would abuse cooperation, neither side would have any rational incentive to form such cooperation. However, studies demonstrate that states may be given disincentives to break from cooperation if an alliance contains proper safeguards against defection. With interstate alliances, safeguards are often provided by making agreements public. The public nature of alliance commitments imposes costs on leaders that choose not to fulfill their obligations. Leaders that renege on their commitments may suffer costs in terms of both international and

domestic standing (Fearon 1994; Schultz & Weingast 2003). By violating the terms of the alliance, the two sides face public retribution. For additional credibility, the two sides often engage in public displays of cooperation, such as joint exercises, the deployment of tripwire troops, or the placing of subordinate troops under the command of the dominant power's military forces (Conybeare 1992; Lake 1999). Public events may prevent both sides from breaking their commitments.

However, in examining security cooperation between sponsors and insurgent groups, such public commitment may not exist. Agreements are often made in private with no specific terms of obligation. While interstate alliances are made strong by public disclosure, there is no formal contract to specify the terms of state sponsorship. Additionally, there are often no public safeguards to impose costs for defection. Frequently, sponsors often prefer to maintain plausible deniability. Insurgents, on the other hand, must also avoid the appearance that they are simply minions of the foreign power, and therefore also have incentives to keep their ties to the sponsor private.

Insert Figure 1 about here

Given the absence of any public commitment or safeguard, it would be surprising to observe any cases of security cooperation during insurgencies. Yet, consider the results presented in Figure 1. In their study of insurgency, Byman et al. (1999) examine the level of cooperation between states and insurgent groups. This variable is coded on a 1-3 scale ranging from minor support, such as political inspiration, to moderate support, including the provision of intelligence, and ending with critical support, such as direct military aid and basing rights. According to the credible commitment explanation, we would predict that the modal type of sponsorship would be minor, such as to protect both the sponsor and the insurgency from their respective partners' opportunistic behavior. Yet, from the Byman data presented in Figure 1, we see that if sponsorship occurs, it is typically in the critical category. This demonstrates that insurgencies not only actively seek support from sponsors, but often appear so confident in their sponsors that these groups develop heavy dependence on their patrons. For example, during the Vietnam War, the Vietminh and the National Liberation Front (NLF) subordinated its commanders to the direction of the North Vietnamese government. For its part, North Vietnam did not abandon its demand that any peace settlement had to include the Communist guerrillas as part of the legitimate government in the South. In this case, security cooperation between the Vietnamese Communists flourished throughout the war. The Vietminh and the government of North Vietnam were so heavily intertwined that they appeared to be the

same entity.

Although critical alliance agreements appear to be the most frequent, we also see a number of minor cooperative agreements, with the moderate category being the least frequent. This bimodal distribution suggests that while some insurgents are willing to sacrifice considerable autonomy, others are willing to sacrifice very little. The variation in the depth of sponsorship suggests that the decision may be more complex than the simple choice of whether or not to form an alliance. Instead, insurgencies might strategically trade autonomy based on their perceptions of sponsor credibility (Kydd 2005; Lake 1999). If the group believes the sponsor is trustworthy, the group might allow itself to become more dependent on its sponsor. However, even if the sponsor is not trustworthy, insurgencies may compensate by limiting, but still accepting, some assistance from the sponsor state. The critical decision is therefore not whether to cooperate, but rather *how much* cooperation yields the optimal benefits. While some insurgents prefer tighter alliances, other insurgents may prefer looser confederations.

From the literature on joint production economies, we would expect that deeper cooperation would lead to greater benefits. Yet, the mutual fear of defection on the part of insurgencies and sponsors might prevent both sides from fully integrating. Additionally, informal alliances would require considerable governance costs to maintain safeguards and provide disincentives against defection. Given the steep potential price of sustaining cooperation, it is very likely that the costs of sponsorship would outweigh the benefits of this activity. This raises the question: when does the benefit of sponsorship outweigh the significant costs of sustaining cooperation? In the next section, I apply studies of cooperation to develop testable hypotheses concerning sponsor/insurgent cooperation.

3 Trust under Anarchy

Given that cooperation is off the record, sponsors and insurgencies must develop some mechanism to signal credibility to their prospective partner. For an agreement between sponsor S and insurgency I to be credible, it must be true that for both S and I , the costs of renegeing on the alliance outweigh the benefits of doing so. To establish this, both sides must either demonstrate some concern for the prospect of future interaction, or develop some punishment mechanism to make defection costly.

3.1 Shadow of the Future

Let us first examine the former proposition. One of the most seminal findings in international relations is that cooperation is likely to emerge if two parties repeatedly engage each other (Axelrod 1984; Axelrod & Keohane 1985; Koremenos 2005; Kydd 2005). The repeated interaction between parties establishes a long shadow of the future, and a concern for protecting one's reputation so as to guarantee prolonged cooperation. However, in the case of sponsors and insurgencies, establishing this long shadow of the future will be quite difficult (Bueno de Mesquita 2005; Enders & Sandler 2005; Kydd & Walter 2002; Walter 1997). The overwhelming majority of insurgencies collapse at the hands of their target government (Bapat 2005; Byman 2005; Zartman 1995). If this is true, it is unlikely that a group will value future interactions versus the short term. Moreover, sponsor states are often weaker states that do not have functional military forces (Brown 1996; Clapham 1996; Henderson 2007). Many sponsors face either internal rebellion, operate in a condition of state failure, or find themselves lacking any sort of legitimacy as sovereign over their territory (Englebert 2000; Jackman 1993; Lemke 2003; Clapham 1996). Therefore, the states that seemingly have the greatest incentive to sponsor insurgencies have the least ability to signal credibility. However, if it is true that both the sponsor and the insurgency can demonstrate longevity, both should be able to cooperate under anarchy.

Hypothesis 1: Alliances between insurgencies and sponsors are likely to form if the insurgency is likely to persist.

Hypothesis 2: Alliances between insurgencies and sponsors are likely to form if the sponsor is a stable government.

Yet, if these conditions are met, one must ask the question: why would these parties would pursue sponsorship to begin with? As part of a sponsorship agreement, both sides must agree to distort their agenda in order to maximize the survival of the group. But, if the group is likely to survive anyway, why would the group agree to sacrifice autonomy to the sponsor? From the sponsor's perspective, it would make little sense to outsource the job of fighting to an insurgency if the sponsor were already stable and had a functioning military force. Therefore, stable sponsors would also have a disincentive to employ insurgencies as foreign policy tools.

This appears to raise puzzle. From the cooperation literature, we would expect parties with longer shadows of the future to cooperate. Yet, in terms of sponsorship, parties with longer shadows of the future may have disincentives to cooperate. On the other hand, the parties that

seemingly do not exhibit a long shadow of the future are often the parties that so desperately need to cooperate. Weaker groups may require sponsorship to stave off their collapse, but may be unable to convince a sponsor that they are credible. Sponsor governments that lack adequate conventional forces might share the same problem, as they are unable to convince an insurgency that they are interested in long term cooperation. To solve this problem, both sides must develop a tying hands signal that will ensure credibility.

3.2 Credible Commitment

How are the parties able to do this? It is rare to see a formal institution between sponsors and insurgencies.⁴ It is also rare to even observe the sponsor admitting that it is supporting an insurgency, thereby precluding the sponsor from generating audience costs that will deter defection. So, if the sponsor cannot institutionally tie itself, and cannot bind itself by generating audience costs, how can sponsors signal credibility?

In his study of military mobilization, Slantchev (2005) argues that states are capable of binding credibly committing themselves in the absence of audience costs through military mobilization. While military mobilization is typically seen as a sunk cost, the act of sinking costs increases the state's payoff for conflict, thereby allowing the state to credibly commit to using force (Slantchev 2005). In a sense, states that invest in military mobilization tie their own hands by creating a larger potential payoff in the event of war. If this insight is empirically correct, it might also be the case that sponsors can tie their own hands by over-investing in insurgencies. By providing insurgencies with extensive support, sponsors might improve the prospect that the group will survive, and possibly ultimately succeed. If the group does so, it will continue to deliver foreign policy benefits so long as it is able to survive. In many ways, the heavy initial investment into an insurgency can be compared to a buyer's initial investment in property. At first, the price of buying property is likely to be quite high. However, if the buyer maintains the property for an extended period, the property will eventually produce positive returns.

For example, consider the case of Iran and Hezbollah. Though the initial cost of assisting in Hezbollah's formation might have been considerable, presently Iran has a viable foreign policy instrument and ally that provides it with influence across the region (Byman 2005; Achcar & Warschawski 2007). This illustrates a case where sponsorship of an insurgent movement produced not just a sunk cost, but an investment effect. By sinking resources into Hezbollah, Iran's sponsor-

ship blossomed into a beneficial foreign policy investment that continues to afford Iran bargaining power throughout the greater Middle East.

The potential for positive returns in the future, coupled with a heavy investment that is likely to accelerate that process, might bind sponsors into sustaining cooperation rather than opportunistically defecting. If a sponsor were to defect, it would essentially be selling before its investment could mature and yield positive dividends. Given the potential benefits that might accrue, particularly if a sponsor initially over-invests, sponsors may have incentives to maintain cooperation and sustain an alliance with an insurgent group. In this sense, by sinking a great deal of costs, sponsors signal credibility by demonstrating that they must sustain cooperation for the long term. This illustrates a way that weaker sponsors can use the terms of cooperation to signal cooperation in the absence of a written agreement or audience costs. By over-investing, weaker sponsors tie themselves into a policy of cooperation over the long run such that the investment eventually bears fruit. We would therefore expect that while weaker sponsors are less likely to form cooperative agreements, the agreements they do form are likely to be deeper levels of cooperation than those of their stronger counterparts.

Hypothesis 3: The depth of alliance cooperation is likely to increase as the weakness of the sponsor increases.

While over-investment ties the hands of the sponsor, we are still left with the problem of the insurgency's lack of credibility. If the sponsor's hands are tied, we would intuitively think that the insurgency would have an even greater incentive to abuse cooperation, and that this agreement would be sure to produce moral hazard. However, if a sponsor over-invests, it showers the group with greater security benefits than the group might desperately need. If the group defects, it will lose benefits from cooperation for a long period of time. Moreover, if the group continues to receive this stream of benefits, it is likely to persist over time, giving it an incentive to continue cooperation. Therefore, since sponsorship promises continued security benefits, the group will have an incentive to sustain sponsorship such that it can maximize its security over the long run. While over-investment ties the hands of the sponsor, it also provides a powerful incentive for weaker groups to maintain cooperation.

Hypothesis 4: The depth of alliance cooperation is likely to increase as the weakness of the group increases.

3.3 Insights from Cooperation

The cooperation literature gives us two main insights into state sponsorship of insurgency. First, we should not expect state sponsorship of insurgency to materialize if either a sponsor is weak, nor if a group is weak. Given that both actors have short term views, and incentives to break cooperation, we would expect that both sides would avoid entering into cooperative agreements that might leave them open to exploitation. However, given that these are the very groups that need cooperation, these groups might overcome their commitment problems using over-investment as a tying hands mechanism. An over-investment in an insurgency ties the hands of the sponsor by increasing its potential payoff for support, and creating a need to see returns on the investment. Similarly, an over-investment creates an incentive for the group to sustain cooperation in order to continue receiving larger benefits over the long run than the immediate satisfaction of defection. In short, while intuition tells us that these alliances should be limited to ameliorate the potential damage of defection, the over-investment argument would suggest that weaker potential sponsors can establish credibility for both themselves and the insurgency by deepening levels of cooperation.

The idea of over-commitment might help us explain why states appear to target weaker groups for sponsorship. Frequently, allying with a weaker insurgency will require quite an extensive initial investment from the sponsor. Yet, this investment both signals that the sponsor is credible, and induces the insurgency to remain faithful in order to preserve itself. By sinking heavy costs, the sponsor prolongs the duration that it requires to make back its investment. Perhaps more importantly, however, the heavy investment allows the sponsor to buy extensive autonomy from the group, and compel the group to continue abiding by the sponsor's directives in order to stave off collapse.

4 Research Design

The dataset to test the hypotheses is the UCDP Armed Conflict Dyadic Dataset (Gleditsch et al. 2002), which contains information on conflicts from 1989-2002.⁵ These data present dyads that consist of two opposing actors in an armed conflict where at least one party is the government of a state. From this set of information, I identify the set of active violent non-state actors engaged in conflicts, and potentially looking for sponsorship. To test the formation hypotheses, however, I must also identify the set of *potential* sponsors, some of which chose to support the various non-

state actors and others that did not. To identify potential sponsors, I organize the data into yearly dyads consisting of insurgencies and each state in a politically relevant dyad with the group's target government. The set of states that are politically relevant to the target government allows us to identify potential sponsors, as well as many of the states that chose to engage in sponsorship. In total, I determined that approximately 96% of sponsors are involved in politically relevant dyads with the target, which consist of either bordering states or major powers. We therefore conclude that using politically relevant dyads is an appropriate indicator of states that are potential sponsors. Table 1 presents a sample of the dataset and its organization.

Insert Table 1 about here

4.1 Dependent Variables

After organizing the dataset into politically relevant dyads, each potential sponsor was investigated to determine if there was any evidence of sponsorship, and to estimate the level of sponsorship using the Byman (2005) classification scheme. Byman (2005) defines sponsorship as "the *intentional assistance* to a terrorist group to help it use violence, bolster its political activities, or sustain the organization." Although Byman refers to only terrorists in this work, this definition also appears to be applicable to studies of insurgencies in general. Byman creates a scale measuring the depth of support, which is coded as follows: 1. minor support 2. moderate support 3. critical support. Minor support is defined as a form of political inspiration, or a loose franchise structure. Moderate support is classified as the sharing of intelligence or the provision of fighters. In the final category, critical support involves the provision of bases or direct participation in the group's operations. In these data, there are 24 cases of minor levels of support (32%), 9 cases of moderate support (12%), and 42 cases of critical support (56%).

Insert Figure 2 about here

Using these definitions, a coder searched through historical archives for each of the conflicts identified by UCDP to determine the cases both where a politically relevant state chose to sponsor the non-state actor, and the level of support that was given. The coder next examined historical accounts from Byman et al (2001), *Keesing's Record of World Events*, *Lexis-Nexis*, *Facts on File*, and the *SIPRI Yearbook*. In cases where the coder could identify support, the sponsorship variable

was coded as 1, and 0 otherwise. The coder then used the Byman coding scheme to measure the depth of support. If the sponsorship variable was determined to be 0, the depth variable was coded as missing. The distribution of support from the data collection effort is replicated in Figure 2. We see that in the set of relevant dyads, the distribution of the depth of support variable somewhat mirrors that of Byman et al (2001), though some differences do exist. In total, there are 123 (34%) cases of minor support, 92 (25%) cases of moderate support, and 146 (41%) cases of critical support. In comparison to the Byman data, these data appear to have similar levels of minor support, but more levels of moderate support and fewer cases of critical support. Additionally, 361 cases of sponsorship are identified, compared to 75 in Byman, which represents a 381% increase in the instances of sponsorship. Of the 13,225 dyad years from 1989-2005, there were only 361 cases of sponsorship, which amounts to about 3% of the dyads, which supports the premise that sponsorship is a rare event.

4.2 Independent Variables

To test Hypotheses 1-2 concerning both the likelihood of formation, we require some measure of the strength of the insurgency as well as the strength of the sponsoring state. However, given the extreme incentives of insurgencies to misrepresent their true capacities, and the lack of strong data on insurgent power, I focus the data analysis solely on the strength of the sponsoring state.⁶ In the future, I hope to expand the analysis to include measures of the strength of insurgencies, but for now, I only include measurements for the strength of the sponsor. We would predict that while stronger states are more prone to forming sponsorship agreements due to their longer shadows of the future, weaker sponsors will create sponsorship agreements with greater depth.

4.3 Theoretical Variables

I measure the power of the sponsor to conduct insurgency operations in several ways. First, I use the Polity IV dataset, which contains information on each regime during the period of interest (Marshall & Jagers 2002). To effectively restrain and disarm an insurgency, it must be true that the sponsoring regime is stable and can resist attempts by its former proxy to destabilize its government structures. Numerous studies indicate that regime stability is enhanced if the state is either a pure democracy or pure autocracy, but not a mixed regime (Davenport 1995; Lichbach 1995; Moore 1995;

Moore 1998). To capture this, I create two versions of the stability variable. First, I subtract the state's autocracy score from its democracy score, and square the result. If the government is either a pure democracy or a pure autocracy, this will produce a value of 100. As the state's score tends to zero, this indicates that the regime is increasingly mixed, and therefore increasingly unstable. If the state has a score of 100, this indicates that the regime is relatively more stable, and is capable of disarming its non-state actors. As a second test, I create two dichotomous variables: pure democracy and pure autocracy. I code pure democracy as 1 if state's score of the democracy-autocracy scale is greater than or equal to 7, and 0 otherwise. Similarly, I code pure autocracy as 1 if the state's score on the democracy-autocracy scale is less than or equal to -7, and 0 otherwise. This creates two ways of capturing the ability of the state to survive attempts at suppressing the non-state actor, and the non-state actor's attempts at resisting. I test both of the indicators in separate models.

However, the effect of this variable will be conditioned by the state's preferences to support insurgency. To account for the willingness of a state to resort to support for militant groups, I interact the Polity indicators with the state's S score with the global leader (Signorino & Ritter 1999). This captures the revisionist nature of the supporting state, with the argument being that as the supporting state becomes more status quo oriented, it should be less willing to resort to insurgency (Byman et al. 2001). On the other hand, if the supporting state is revisionist, it should be more willing to resort to insurgency. The interaction terms are used to estimate both the likelihood of formation, as well as the depth of cooperation.

4.4 Control Variables

I also use several controls in estimating both the decision to support and the depth of support. In numerous studies, scholars argue that support for insurgencies is a response to an unfavorable power disparity between a potential sponsor and the target. Therefore, to control for this effect, I include the power ratio between the target and the potential sponsors. To capture the power difference between the potential sponsor and the target, I use the ratio of the target's Composite Indicator of National Capabilities score to the sum of total power in the dyad (Singer 1987).⁷ . In the support equation, I also include a measure of distance between the target state and the potential sponsor's capitol cities.

4.5 Method

To test the sponsorship hypotheses, I use a BTSCS design with robust standard errors (Beck, Katz & Tucker 1998). I further include t , t^2 , and t^3 in the regression to correct for temporal dependence (Carter & Signorino 2007). In this case, t represents the period of time in which there has been no evidence of sponsorship within a particular dyad. Additionally, I exclude major powers as potential sponsors. Although the results are robust to major powers, excluding these states represents a more difficult test of the model's predictions, and guards against the possibility that some artifacts of the data might influence the results. To give an example, all of the major powers are overrepresented in the sample due to the use of relevant dyads. Additionally, the U.S. appears to have a particular affinity for supporting various insurgencies. In principle, that is not a problem. However, if we are using the S score correlated with the system leader to measure costs, the score for the U.S. would always be 1, which would seem to bias the results. To prevent this, I simply exclude all of the major powers. To test the depth of support hypotheses, I use an ordered probit model with robust standard errors. As in the previous case, I exclude major powers due to their over-representation, and the potential for bias in the results. Again, the results are robust to major powers, but I believe the test using only the minor powers presents the more convincing results. An alternative method might be to use a unified selection model to capture both the decision to support, and the level of depth. In my examination of the selection model, the value of ρ was consistently insignificant. I therefore present the results of the probit models for the first stage and the ordered probit for the second.

5 Results

Insert Table 2 about here

In Table 2, I present the results from the support probit model. The first model uses the two dummy variables pure democracy and pure autocracy, while the second model presented uses the squared term as the indicator of sponsor strength. We see that in both models, the results support the theoretical predictions. Each of the coefficients is in the anticipated direction and is statistically significant. We can also see some interesting results from the control variables. The most interesting of these is the capability balance variable, which is negative and significant. This

suggests that if a power disparity does exist between the target and the potential sponsor, the potential sponsor is *less* likely to support an insurgency. The typical argument, however, suggests the opposite: weaker states are likely to turn to insurgencies, given their own inability to pursue coercive diplomacy against stronger states. This result is significant in both models, and adds an interesting insight. It appears as if support for insurgencies is not necessarily the tool of the weak, but rather, it can be a tool of stronger states seeking to outsource the pursuit of change in the international system. While stronger states might focus their conventional power on certain goals, these states may turn to insurgencies to pursue some of their other foreign policy objectives.

Although the indicators appear to support the theoretical predictions, the presence of the interaction terms requires closer attention. Using the second model, we can estimate the effect of regime strength as:

$$\frac{\partial Y}{\partial \text{Regime Strength}} = -.01 + .02(\text{Status Quo Orientation}) \quad (1)$$

We therefore see something rather interesting. It appears as if increases in regime strength do increase the probability of support, but only if the potential sponsor is status quo oriented. It is interesting to note that this finding remains robust, despite the fact that major powers, including the U.S. were dropped from the analysis. Using Condition 1, we can predict the likelihood of support. At the baseline value, holding all variables at their mean except for distance, which is held at 200, I estimate a likelihood of support of .052. If we increase the stability of the regime by increasing regime strength by one standard deviation, the likelihood of support increases to .054. This is obviously quite small, and amounts to only about a 4% increase. However, if we increase the status quo orientation by one standard deviation and repeat the procedure, the likelihood of support increases from .051 at the baseline value to .064, representing a 25% increase.

Again, while this is not a very large change, it is significant, and it does support the prediction of Hypothesis 2. We see that if a potential sponsor has a longer shadow of the future, they are better able to form initial agreements with insurgencies. The states with greater regime strength are more likely to enter into sponsorship agreements, possibly because these states are better able to exhibit longer shadows of the future, and are therefore more likely to be trustworthy. On the other hand, weaker regimes with greater reason to support insurgencies often do not do so due to the mutual fear of exploitation. In dealing with weaker states, insurgencies have less

willing to trust that these states will remain credible, and therefore have less reason to ally. We see that despite the fact that weaker states probably gain more from sponsorship than stronger states, weaker states are less likely to form sponsorship agreements.

Insert Table 3 about here

That said, we see from the depth models in Table 3 that if weaker states form sponsorship agreements, they are more likely to over-invest in the insurgencies. This is consistent with the theoretical predictions. We again see that in both permutations, the results are significant and in the anticipated direction. Again, we see that capability balance weakens the level of cooperation. One explanation for this is that if a sponsor is weaker relative to the target, the insurgency will know that a sponsor will be prone to abandoning the group should the target initiate military threats. Therefore, to sustain the alliance in this shadow of punishment, cooperation must stay limited. As in the previous case, we can interpret the effect of increasing regime strength by examining the marginal effect of the squared term. This effect is:

$$\frac{\partial Y}{\partial \text{Regime Strength}} = -.03 + .04(\text{Status Quo Orientation}) \quad (2)$$

Insert Figure 3 about here

Figure 3 presents estimated likelihoods at several values of both regime strength and status quo orientation. From this Figure, we can see clear support for Hypothesis 4. As the group becomes weaker, or as the Polity² → 0, the likelihood of critical support increases, and does so for each status quo orientation. This is not particularly large in comparing weaker governments with their stronger counterparts when both are status quo oriented. However, if the state is revisionist, we see that the model predicts a likelihood of .97 for critical support if the sponsor is politically weak. This demonstrates the key insight of the sinking costs explanation. Since the sponsor is weak, it is not likely to be trustworthy. Therefore, to obtain a functioning alliance, the sponsor is compelled to overinvest in the group to create the conditions of mutual credibility. On the other hand, stronger states appear more likely to choose moderate sponsorship versus critical. We see that for the strongest governments, the likelihood of critical support is only .33 These governments appear more likely to offer strong support rather than critical support, despite their low value for the status quo.

This evidence provides support for the over-investment explanation. We see that uniformly, weaker sponsors are more likely to offer either moderate or critical support versus minor support. By contrast, in two of the three states, stronger supporters are more likely to offer major versus both minor and critical support. To some extent, the demonstration that minor support has the lowest likelihood of occurring in any of the states suggests that all states feel some need to over-invest to signal credibility. However, weaker states appear to feel this pressure the most, as they are always more likely to offer critical versus major support. These results strongly support the idea that sponsors sink costs by over-investing in their respective insurgencies, but this overinvestment ties the hands of both the sponsor and the group, thereby producing a credible commitment.

6 Conclusion

This study began with the question of when state support for insurgency would emerge. A key problem for both sponsors and insurgents is that such cooperation, given the lack of any formalization, is prone to opportunistic behavior on both sides. Simply put, cooperation between state sponsors and insurgents does not seem to constitute a credible commitment. Yet, empirically, we observe that states do support insurgencies, and insurgencies are often more than willing to accept support.

This research offers an explanation as to why insurgent groups seek sponsorship despite the problem of credible commitment. Given the informal nature of this cooperation, states and insurgencies must often rely on trust. This trust can be enhanced if both sides foresee the prospect of future interactions and a long shadow of the future exists. However, frequently, it is the states that do not have long shadows of the future that wish to sponsor insurgencies, and it is the weak insurgencies on the brink of collapse that desperately need sponsorship. Therefore, the parties that truly need cooperation must develop some form of costly signal to tie their hands into compliance. Following the logic of military mobilization, I argue that potential sponsors can tie their hands by sinking a large investment into the insurgency. In doing so, the sponsor will both keep the group alive, which will increase the group's likelihood of compliance, and create an investment incentive for the sponsor. The more the sponsor sinks into the group, the greater the sponsor's incentive will be to sustain cooperation in order to make up for its initial investment. Additionally, by over-investing, insurgencies will have an incentive to maintain compliance in order to continue receiving support

from the sponsor. Somewhat surprisingly, one possible to solution to the very severe commitment problem appears to be to over-commit, in an effort to tie both the hands of the sponsor and the insurgency.

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Notes

¹Ian Christopher McCaleb. 2001. "Bush: US feels 'quiet, unyielding anger.'" CNN. <http://www.cnn.com/2001/US/09/11/white.house/>

²Chaliand 1987

³While the state is almost always the stronger party that is responsible for exchanging security for autonomy, on some rare occasions, it is possible that the roles between the state and the non-state actor are reversed. For example, some scholars argue that in the case of the Taliban, it was al Qaeda that provided security to the Taliban in exchange for autonomy over the Taliban's foreign policy. However, these cases appear quite rare.

⁴Although it is extremely rare, there have been instances where cooperation with non-state actors is formalized in an international institution. One example of this is the Arab League, which has included the Palestinian Liberation Organization since 1964.

⁵For the purposes of this test, I exclude all of the pure interstate conflicts from the analysis, and focus only on the cases of internal conflict and/or internationalized internal conflict.

⁶Several other studies use proxies for insurgent strength by relying on target state indicators (Benson & Kugler 1998; Fearon & Laitin 2003). For this analysis, however, I focus only on the sponsor state indicators.

⁷These indicators, along with the Polity IV variables, were generated using the EUgene software (Bennett & Stam 2000)

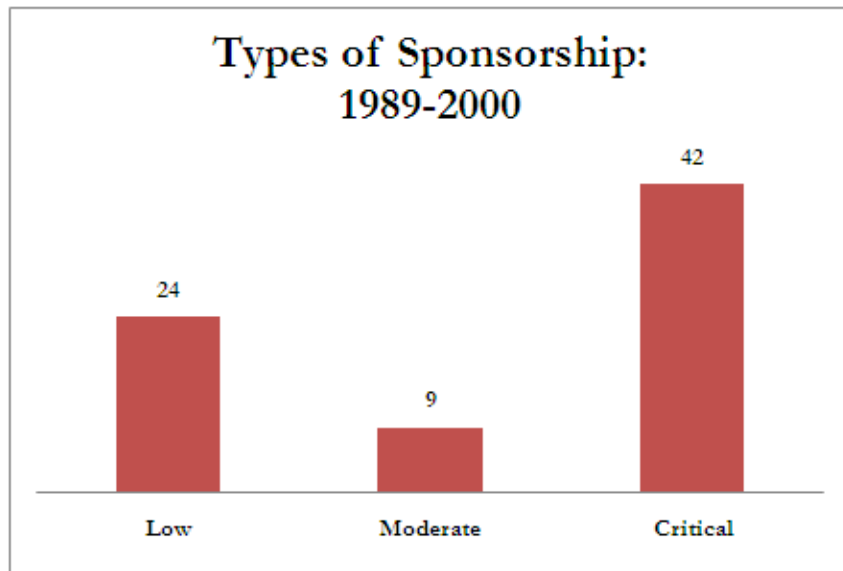


Figure 1. Byman et al. (1999) Sponsorship Classifications (1989-2001)

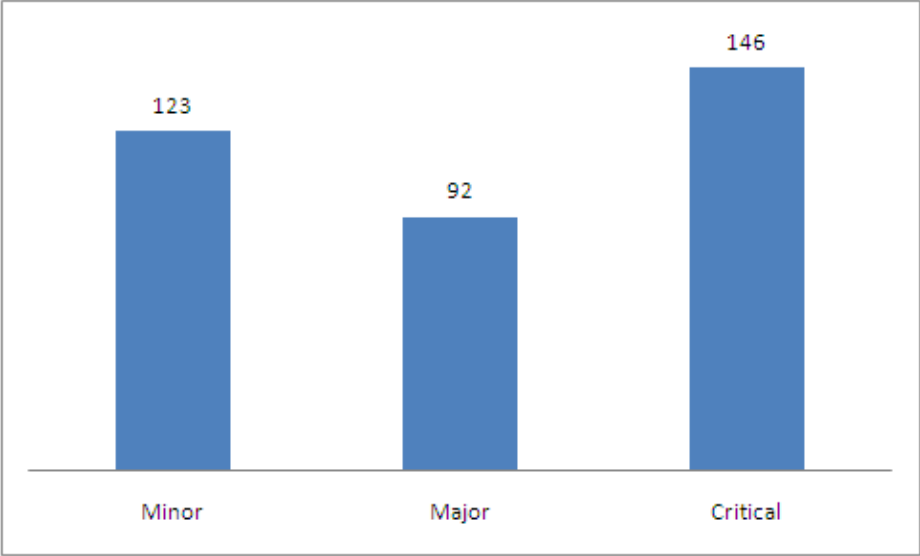


Figure 2. UCDP Sponsorship Classifications (1989-2002)

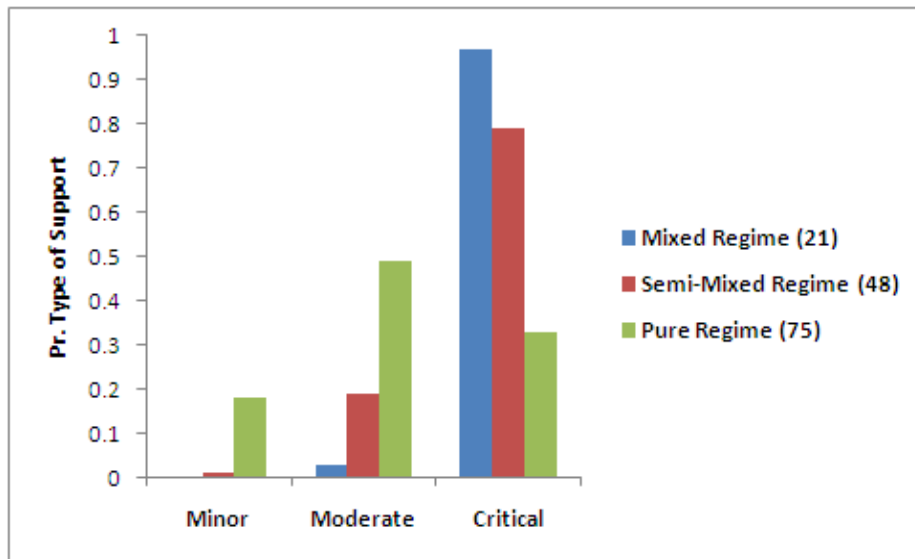


Figure 3. Effect of State Strength on Depth of Sponsorship*

Regime Strength (Polity ²)	Weak	Moderate	Critical
Mixed Regime (21)	.001	.003	.97
Semi-Mixed Regime (48)	.01	.19	.79
Pure Regime (75)	.18	.49	.33

Insurgency	Country	cocode1	Insurgents	Host	Support	Year
1	Afghanistan	700	Taliban	Pakistan	3	1989
1	Afghanistan	700	Taliban	United States	3	1989
2	Afghanistan	700	Northern Alliance	Iran	3	1989
2	Afghanistan	700	Northern Alliance	Pakistan	3	1989
2	Afghanistan	700	Northern Alliance	Russia	3	1989
2	Afghanistan	700	Northern Alliance	United Kingdom	3	1989
2	Afghanistan	700	Northern Alliance	United States	3	1989
2	Afghanistan	700	Northern Alliance	Uzbekistan	3	1989
5	Angola	540	UNITA	Namibia	3	1990
5	Angola	540	UNITA	South Africa	3	1990
5	Angola	540	UNITA	Tanzania	3	1990
5	Angola	540	UNITA	Zambia	3	1990
6	Azerbaijan	373	Armenian Separatist	Armenia	3	1992
6	Azerbaijan	373	Armenian Separatist	Russia	3	1992
7	Bosnia	346	Bosnian Croats	Croatia	3	1993
8	Bosnia	346	Bosnian Serbs	Yugoslavia	3	1992
13	Croatia	344	Serb Revolt	Yugoslavia	3	1992
14	Democratic Re	490	Pro-Kabila Forces	Rwanda	3	1996

Table 1. Sample Data

Table 2. Sponsorship

Variable	Model 1	Model 2
Status Quo Orientation	-1.00 (.34)***	.834 (.194)***
Target Affinity	.148 (.077)*	.110 (.077)
Pure Democracy	—	-.761 (.270)***
Pure Autocracy	—	.948 (.183)***
(Dem.-Aut) ²	-.007 (.002)***	—
Status Quo * Democracy	—	.652 (.407)
Status Quo * Autocracy	—	-2.49 (.542)***
Status Quo * (Dem.-Aut) ²	—	—
Distance	-.0006 (.0001)***	-.0002 (.000)***
Capability Balance	-.879 (.185)***	-1.01 (.189)***
Constant	-.39 (.199)	-1.04 (.264)
<i>N</i>	10,267	11,212
<i>Log Likelihood</i>	-939.82	-990.65
<i>Wald chi²</i>	365.70	430.26
<i>Pr. > chi²</i>	.000	.000

* $p < .1$

** $p < .05$

*** $p < .01$

Table 3. Alliance Depth

Variable	Model 1	Model 2
Status Quo Orientation	-3.23 (1.27)**	-2.11 (.535)***
Target Affinity	-.863 (.216)***	-1.07 (.225)***
Democracy	-2.01 (.814)**	-
Autocracy	-1.77 (.689)**	-
(Dem.-Aut) ²	-	-.016 (.007)**
Status Quo * Democracy	4.55 (1.47)***	-
Status Quo * Autocracy	2.85 (1.30)**	-
Status Quo * (Dem.-Aut) ²	-	.033 (.008)***
Capability Balance	-1.61 (.437)***	-1.72 (.434)***
<i>N</i>	125	121
<i>Log Likelihood</i>	-107.99	-105.63
<i>Wald chi²</i>	46.53	56.24
<i>Pr. > chi²</i>	.000	.000

* $p < .1$ ** $p < .05$ *** $p < .01$