E pluribus unum, ex uno plures:
Competition, violence, and fragmentation in ethnopolitical movements

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Abstract: Why are some ethnopolitical movements divided while others are relatively unified? A growing literature examines the consequences of internal divisions in ethnopolitical movements—and shows that it matters for a range of conflict outcomes—yet the mechanisms causing such divisions remain poorly understood. Our argument emphasizes competitive dynamics between states and self-determination movements and between rival factions within these movements as key determinants of fragmentation. Drawing from literatures on social movements, contentious politics, and civil war, we situate our argument vis-à-vis three alternative and complementary sets of explanations based on theories emphasizing transnational dimensions, political institutions, and structural factors within ethnopolitical groups. Using an original dataset, we test hypotheses explaining movement fragmentation over time and use a case study of Punjab in India to identify specific causal mechanisms and missing variables. Our findings show some support for three of these theories, suggesting that ethnopolitical movements divide as a result of complex and interactive processes. But our findings also underscore that central to explaining fragmentation dynamics are factors capturing competitive dynamics, including repression, accommodation of movement demands, the turn to violence, and the dynamic and changing nature of ethnopolitical demands.

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When and why are opposition movements fragmented, and why are some movements more fragmented than others? An expanding body of work shows that variation in the fragmentation of movements influences important outcomes, including the escalation from non-violence to violence, the likelihood of attaining peace settlements, the scope of concessions within settlements and whether they forestall a return to war, internecine violence, collaboration with the state, and the political and military effectiveness of these movements.[1] Yet despite the centrality of fragmentation as an explanatory factor in recent research, its causes remain poorly understood. Existing work consisting largely of case studies, tends to examine fragmentation as it relates to one of the categories of theory we address here—emphasizing competitive, transnational, institutional, or structural factors—but we know little about relative causal effects or the generalizability of the explanations they invoke.

This article takes a first step towards addressing this gap, focusing specifically on fragmentation in ethnopolitical movements—movements where ethnicity serves as the basis for collective political action. Much research suggests that ethnically based groups have advantages that facilitate in-group cooperation. Yet ethnonationalist mobilization is characterized by significant variation in fragmentation. In Nagorno Karabakh, for example, disparate Armenian militias quickly united under the central command of a formal army as the conflict with Azerbaijan escalated in the early-1990s, then managed to remain united during a tense post-war period. Similarly, Chechen separatists united in their first war against Russia's federal forces (1994-1996), but from 1997 to 1999 the movement fragmented into a number of competing organizations, spurring a second war in 1999. These cases are not unique. Indeed, over 90 percent of all ethnopolitical movements in pursuit of greater self-determination fragment at some point in time (Cunningham 2014).

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[1] See Gates 2002; Weinstein 2007; Wood 2010; Kenny 2010; Lawrence 2010; Cunningham 2014; Pearlman 2011; Christia 2012; Cunningham et al. 2012; Fjelde & Nilsson 2012; Krause 2013; Staniland 2014; Seymour 2014; Phillips 2015; Warren & Troy 2015.

Our central argument is that competitive dynamics *within* ethnopolitical movements and *between* these movements and the states whose authority they contest explain why some movements are more divided than others, and why these movements unite and divide over time. We distinguish between our explanation and three alternative explanations: the influence of transnational actors (particularly in wartime), political institutions, and structural features of the ethnic group a movement represents. Our findings underscore the complexity of the politics of ethnopolitical contention and support our argument about the importance of competitive dynamics as determinants of fragmentation, especially competitive pressures associated with shifts towards or away from violence. A long-standing body of work points to how the state's use of repressive and accommodative strategies, the turn to violence, and the coherence of movement demands affect political mobilization; we find that such interactions shape also the very organizational structure of opposition movements.

Several features make this study unique. First, we employ a nested analysis combining unique data on fragmentation across all movements of self-determination with grounded observations from the struggle in Punjab in north India, allowing us to assess both the correlates and causes of fragmentation. Second, whereas most work examines factionalized civil wars—exclusively violent settings, that is—our empirics capture the diversity of competing actors in self-determination movements, such as armed organizations, political parties, and activist groups. Third, important theories of ethnic politics are premised on the assumption of "groupness," whereby ethnopolitical communities are capable of collective action to redress grievances. Yet our findings point to the variability of ethnic group cohesion, highlighting the frequency with which groups are divided. Finally, our findings point to the interdependent strategies of actors on both sides of self-determination disputes, implying an important role for how policies shape the prospects for unity and division in opposition movements.

Explaining fragmentation: Competitive dynamics

At any time when self-interested rationality is in contradiction with group rationality, cooperation and collective action are puzzling (Olson 1965). The success of movements for social change, then, depends in large part on people's willingness to abjure individually or organizationally profitable opportunistic behavior for the sake of the wider movement. In contentious politics, this tends to imply coming together around movements capable of concentrating actions in pursuit of focused demands against governments.

We examine ethnopolitical movements in pursuit of greater self-determination for the group they claim to represent. Ethnically based movements should have particular advantages promoting cohesion. Ethnic boundaries are based on properties—such as a connotation of common fate, low barriers to communication, physical differences hard to disguise, and correlate with other important factors, such as inequality—that make ethnicity a source of "focal points around which people can coordinate their actions in pursuit of a variety of goals" (Hale 2008, 45). Ethnic homogeneity fosters consensus about the value of public goods, facilitates the operation of selective incentives to ensure their provision, and promotes in-group cooperation through social sanctions (Olson 1982; Fearon & Laitin 1996; Habyarimana et al. 2007). Ethnicity generates cohesion that makes it a *potentially* potent source of collective mobilization.

Nonetheless, the same sorts of conflicts over material and symbolic goods that play out between ethnopolitical movements and the state occur *within* these movements. Efforts to foster unity are regularly set back by the actions of self-interested individuals or organizations whose actions undermine the wider movement's capability. Competition for public office, collaboration with the state, spoiling of peace settlements, leadership rivalries, splintering and turf wars advance narrow interests while potentially setting back the wider movement's cause. Building on insights

from the literature on collective action, we emphasize the importance of relations between the movement and the state, and between competing organizations within the same movement. These relations often create incentives and opportunities to divide movements. Below, we develop our argument. We then situate it vis-à-vis three sets of alternative and complementary explanations rooted in transnational factors, political institutions, and the structural features of ethnopolitical movements.

Relations between ethnopolitical movements and the states they challenge, as well as relations within movements, vary across cases and over the course of a single dispute. The behavior of actors transforms the context within which competition unfolds, shifting incentives for movement fragmentation. Just like interdependent interactions shape collective action (Karklins & Petersen 1993), we argue that the competitive context in which a movement operates, as defined by strategies of both the state and organizations within the movement, shapes its cohesion. Our focus is on how contestation is shaped by pivotal actions such as bloody state crackdowns and roundups of opposition activists, the state's accommodation of movement demands, decisive breaks with non-violent resistance leading to civil war, and movement cleavages over goals. Such shifts have significant implications for movement fragmentation.

Repression

The consequences of state repression have been a central theme in research on political violence (Rasler 1996; Davenport 2007), yet scholars propose opposing arguments about its effects on movement unity and collective action. Some find that state repression can generate unity in the face of a common enemy (Simmel 1955; McCarthy & Zald 1977), for example by reinforcing ethnic solidarity (Kalyvas & Kocher 2007), though others suggest that this is contingent on factors such as existing consensus within the movement (Coser 1956), or satisfaction with its institutional

arrangements (McLauchlin & Pearlman 2012). We argue that the conditions under which external repression is likely to boost movement cohesion are relatively narrow (cf. Stein 1976). We expect repression to increase the costs of mobilization and foster internal disagreements about how to deal with these costs (DeNardo 1985), and state forces targeting a movement's leadership may provoke intra-movement competition and splits among rivals vying for power (Lawrence 2010).

   H1a) Repression increases the likelihood that an ethnopolitical movement will be more fragmented.

Accommodation

Accommodation of a movement's demands may also foster divisions. It may seem counterintuitive that both state repression and accommodation shape movement fragmentation, but both strategies alter the context within which movements operate. With accommodation presenting new possibilities for the future, latent divisions within the movement may emerge. An extensive literature on "spoilers" suggests that movements split over peace settlements for a number of reasons, including the ideology and personality of factional leaders (Stedman 1997) and internal competition over representation within movements (Pearlman 2008/2009; 2011). While the intuition would perhaps be that accommodation of a movement's demands would stem grievances, even removing its *raison d'être*, governments typically do not meet the total demands of groups, inciting divisions over whether to accept a settlement and the basis of future conflict (Cunningham 2011).

   H1b) Ethnopolitical movements receiving concessions from the state are likely to be more fragmented.

Diversity of demands

Movement organizations formulate their political demands not only with reference to the state but also to competing organizations within the same movement. They do so under conditions of uncertainty, imperfect information, and divergent assessments of what is possible for the group as a

whole, as well as what is personally and organizationally advantageous. And while there might be consensus about what a movement is fighting *against*, it is harder to force consensus about what they are fighting *for*. The absence of consensus over political demands poses serious obstacles to movement cohesion (Coser 1956). To the extent that organizations of self-determination movements make different demands vis-à-vis the states they challenge—for example, disagreeing over whether to pursue independence, political autonomy, fiscal autonomy, or cultural rights—we expect that an increase in the diversity of preferences will engender greater fragmentation.[2]

> *H1c) An increase in the diversity of demands in an ethnopolitical movement will increase the chance that the movement becomes more fragmented.*

Turns to violence

Employing violent tactics can lead to polarizing debates between so-called moderates and hardliners within movements (della Porta 1995), weakening existing organizations and creating opportunities for new ones to mobilize. Civil war onset militarizes political competition with serious consequences for social cohesion that reverberate within ethnopolitical movements (Wood 2008), particularly when governments seek collaborators from within the opposition, supporting them as factional rivals to their opposition (Lyall 2010). Thus while fragmentation itself is likely to cause violence within movements and against the state (Cunningham et al. 2012), a movement's turn to violence is also likely to engender or exacerbate fragmentation.

> *H1d) The onset of civil war between the state and an ethnopolitical movements will increase the chance that the movement becomes more fragmented.*

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[2] The emergence of new organizations may influence the demands others make if organizations respond to new competitors by differentiating themselves by the nature of their demands.

Alternative explanations

Transnational dimensions

Our explanation emphasizes the domestic competitive context of ethnopolitical movements. In contrast, recent work has emphasized the transnationalization of political contention as movements respond to changing international opportunities and interact with a variety of non-state transnational actors, states, and international organizations (della Porta & Tarrow 2005; Gleditsch 2007; Cederman et al. 2013b; Checkel 2013).

Among the transnational and international influences shaping movement cohesion, we focus on mediation, external support, and of foreign fighters. Mediation can split movements when external parties seek to forge coalitions between moderates that exclude hardliners, manipulating incentives in ways that promote fragmentation (Beardsley et al. 2006). Mediation can also create an opportunity for the state or external parties to use peace talks to induce the defection of opportunistic organizations (Johnston 2007).

Similarly, any kind of external support—troops, weapons, or financial assistance—introduces diversity in preferences (Cunningham 2010), which in turn can foster movement divisions. A form of external support with the potential to be the most divisive occurs when armed actors from abroad join the domestic movement, as they can then have a direct influence on the ground. In particular, the introduction of foreign fighters often brings new ideas about goals and tactics to the conflict, which can engender divisions if they clash with local preferences (Bakke 2014). Troop support from state actors can also play a divisive role, although given that foreign fighters act in a less official (and frequently less disciplined) capacity, their influence might be more divisive.

Transnational assistance might be a force for unity under certain circumstances; external supporters can provide incentives for unity, mediators can bring together feuding organizations, and foreign fighters can bolster movements by bringing along resources. More often, however,

transnational dynamics introduce exogenous interests to the dispute and exacerbate the sorts of competitive dynamics we see as catalyzing divisive tendencies in movements. We therefore expect all three factors to increase fragmentation.

H2) *Ethnopolitical movements receiving transnational assistance in the form of mediation, foreign fighters, or external support are likely to be more fragmented.*

Institutional

Institutions provide one answer to problems of collective action (Ostrom 1990; North 1990). The literature on separatist mobilization, for example, points to institutional mechanisms that shape the prospects for unified collective action by ethnopolitical groups (Bunce 1999), and the social movement and revolution literatures have long suggested that the state institutions that a movement confronts shape its trajectory (Skocpol 1970; Goodwin 2001). Here, we suggest that institutions also shape organizational cohesion.

State capacity

State weakness—the inability of the state to control or "penetrate" society by collecting taxes, enforcing state law, or policing the periphery—creates opportunities for opposition movements to mobilize. Huntington (1968) links weak state institutions to political fragmentation and disorder. Migdal (1988) argues that state (in)capacity is related to the structure of society. State weakness is likely to go hand-in-hand with diffused forms of social control among more or less autonomous local authorities—such as clans, tribes, or ethnic groups—that set the rules of the game, and correspond with lower barriers of entry for groups challenging the state.[3] As such, we would expect

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[3] We emphasize weakness at the national level here, but this could be mitigated by high local control.

that ethnopolitical movements challenging weak states are likely to be divided into a multitude of organizations.

H3a) Ethnopolitical movements in weaker states are likely to be more fragmented.

Sub-national democracy

Sub-national institutions can also play a role in shaping fragmentation. Within states, regional-level democracy and variation in sub-national institutions can influence a number of outcomes. On one hand, institutions might enhance feelings of ethnic solidarity, creating "political-identity hegemony" around regional institutions in ways that increase cohesion, especially when coupled with the organizational resources that flow from control of institutions (Roeder 2007). On the other hand, the creation of a regional level legislature can foster incentives and resources for the emergence of new political actors. Though decentralized institutions are unlikely to have uniform effects on conflict (Bakke & Wibbels 2006; Treisman 2007), research suggests that regional-level autonomous institutions might foster the formation of distinct regional parties competing for power in elections (Brancati 2008).

H3b) Ethnopolitical movements based in regions with democratically elected regional legislatures are likely to be more fragmented.

Structural

Structural features present constraints and opportunities with implications for unity or division. We focus here on structural features such as diversity of identities among members and the geographic spread of the group. These characteristics shape the prospects for cohesive movements through their effects on the common identities and social networks underlying collective action (Tilly 1978).

Sub-cleavages

Groups vary widely in their essential "groupness" (Brubaker 2004), with nationalism often emerging out of, or in conjunction with, political mobilization rather than preceding it. Ethnopolitical movements are divided along other identity lines—language, tribe, clan, caste, class—that can be at odds with the efforts of nation builders to subsume parochial loyalties into wider identity formations (Belge 2011). To the extent that ethnic identities improve the prospects for unified collective action, salient sub-cleavages increase the probability of fragmentation because they offer alternative identities to mobilize around and provide natural dividing lines in the event of disagreement within a movement (Zald & McCarthy 1980; Staniland 2014).

> *H4a) Ethnopolitical movements with sub-cleavages in the population are likely to be more fragmented.*

Geographic dispersion

Geography shapes the probability of fragmentation through multiple mechanisms. We focus here on the ways that dispersion inhibits the development of strong network ties that provide strategic advantages in coordinating action (Toft 2003; Weidmann 2009). Geographic dispersion promotes fragmentation by complicating centralized control and providing spaces for distinct political organizations to mobilize.

> *H4b) Ethnopolitical movements that are geographically dispersed are likely to be more fragmented.*

Empirical analysis

In testing these explanations, we examine ethnopolitical movements focused on achieving greater self-determination, using movement-year as the unit of analysis. These movements provide an important opportunity for hypothesis testing. Ethnopolitical movements include a number of different types of organizations, including political parties, armed rebels, and nonviolent activists

that tend to be studied separately from one another. At the same time, the collective identity around which these movements mobilize provides a common basis for political action and allows for comparison, even as the role of ethnic identity in structuring contestation varies.

Measuring fragmentation

We measure the *degree of fragmentation* as the number of organizations that make up a specific ethnopolitical movement. This includes all organizations publically making demands pertaining to the status of the group the movement represents (as it relates to its self-determination), coded on a yearly basis from aggregate and news sources. We adjust the raw count of organizations to account for connections between organizations (such as political and military wings). For each movement-year, we take the original count and subtract the number of organizations with an active "wing" (i.e. both organizations are active in that year) divided by two.[4] The appendix provides information about coding criteria, summary statistics, and links between organizations.

Although not the only dimension of a movement's fragmentation (Bakke et al. 2012), the number of organizations is a central indicator. Though this measure does not capture the degree to which one organization is dominant (Krause 2013), or the size of organizations *per se*, existing studies of fragmentation demonstrate that multiple organizations play a key role irrespective of variation in power or size. The number of organizations ranges from one to 38 (the Kashmiri Muslims in 2002) in a given year. Movements are unitary (only one organization) in about 35 percent of all movement-year observations, have two to three organizations in about 35 percent of observations, and four or more in the remaining 30 percent. Figure 1 shows this distribution of movement-year observations up to 15 organizations (about 98 percent of observations).

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[4] Dividing by two includes one but not both wings as unique organizations.

[Figure 1]

Independent variables

Table 1 summarizes the hypotheses in the four sets of arguments and their operationalization.

[Table 1]

Competitive dynamics

Repression: This is a lag (one year) indicating whether the state committed human rights violations against the specific group. This measure is based on the Political Terror Scale, supplemented by the authors' coding. Using State Department Human Rights and Amnesty International reports, we coded whether the state targeted the group (for example, the Algerian government's targeting of Berbers) from 1974 to 2005.[5] This allows us to examine whether the specific ethnopolitical group experienced repression, rather than whether the state repressed the general population. Repression occurred in about 40 percent of movement-year observations. The appendix includes models with alternative indicators of repression.

Accommodation: This is a lagged (one year) movement-level indicator of concessions over self-determination to the group (Cunningham 2014). It includes concessions made over the group's status, ranging from cultural concessions to substantial devolution of power to the group and independence. Concessions were made to groups in the previous year in about four percent of our observations.

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[5] We thank Christopher Fariss for sharing early reports. We included only groups specifically mentioned as victims of repression by the state or state forces.

Changing demands: This a lagged (one year) movement-level measure of the change in number of different demands made by organizations representing the group from the previous year, including differences between demands for status quo, autonomy, independence, union with another state, and a pan-ethnic state.[6] The number of demands made can change as new organizations emerge, but also because existing organizations change their demands or stop making claims that no other organization advocates.[7] It ranges from a decrease in two distinct demands, to an increase of two distinct demands. In about 95 percent of observations, there is no change in the number of demands from one year to the next, with an increase in three percent and a decrease in two percent of observations.

Violence: This is a lagged (one year) movement-level measure of whether there was a civil war onset in the previous year that generated more than 25 battle-related deaths (Gleditsch et al. 2002). This occurred in 2.5 percent of our observations.

Transnational dimensions

Mediation: This measure indicates whether a mediation effort occurred in the movement-year, limited to civil war cases (DeRouen et al. 2011). A mediation effort was made in about 20 percent of observations where a civil war occurred.

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[6] Coded by the authors using the same sources employed to determine the level of fragmentation. See appendix.

[7] For example, the number of organizations remains constant from 1998 to 1999 for the Chittagong Hill Peoples in Bangladesh, but the number of demands decreases. The independence-seeking organization (Shanti Bahini) demobilized and a new organization emerged (United People's Democratic Front), demanding autonomy.

External support: This measure is a lagged (one year) indicator of any external support being made to the movements based on the Uppsala Conflict Data Program external support data. It includes all types of support, excluding alleged support (Högbladh et al. 2011). Some external support was given in in about 55 percent of civil war observations.

Foreign Fighters: This is a lagged (one year) measure of whether foreign fighters were involved in the dispute in a movement-year, limited to civil war cases, based on the Foreign Fighter Project Data (Malet 2013). Foreign fighters are defined as non-state actors voluntarily supporting a non-state actor in a civil war. Foreign fighters were present in about eight percent of civil war observations.

Institutional

State capacity: This is measured as Gross Domestic Product per capita (log transformed), on a yearly basis (Gleditsch 2002). Although this is a blunt measure of state capacity, which runs the risk of picking up mechanisms associated with wealth/poverty, it is one of the few measures available over time for a large number of cases. We check our findings against alternative measures.

Sub-national democracy: This is a measure for whether the regional government was elected in the region where a group resides.[8] This coding is based on Treisman's (2007) data, supplemented with country-specific sources. In any given year, groups receive a score of 1 if either the regional executive is directly elected or chosen by a directly elected assembly or where the regional institutions are directly elected. This coding specifies whether elections occur but not whether they are free and fair. About 77 percent of groups have sub-national governance selected through

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[8] We look at the second highest tier of government (one level below the national level). If groups are geographically dispersed, we look at whether there are regional-level elections in the country as a whole; if the group is concentrated, we code the practices in the relevant region(s). We also take into considerations non-territorial forms of autonomy, such as the Saami parliament in Finland, Norway, and Sweden.

elections at the local level at some point between 1960 and 2005 (about 57 percent of movement-year observations).

Structural

Multiple languages: To measure group sub-cleavages, we measure whether members speak multiple languages using data from Minorities at Risk (MAR). This is only one possible cleavage, but it is easily measurable across groups, unlikely to be endogenous to fragmentation, and substantively important given the centrality of language to nationalism. About 70 percent of the groups in the study speak at least two languages.

Geographic concentration: We measure the geographic settlement patterns of the group using the MAR assessment of group concentration, a four-point ordinal scale going from widely dispersed to concentrated in one region. About 68 percent of groups are considered concentrated, while 22 percent have a majority of the group living in one region, and the remaining groups are dispersed, urban, or have a minority clustered in a region. This measure does not vary over time.

Controls

We control for *group size* and *democracy*. Larger populations pose obstacles to cooperation through unified collective action, such that absolutely larger groups are more likely to be fragmented (Olson 1965; Posner 2004). We measure the size of the group as the total population of the group (log transformed) (data from MAR and Ethnic Power Relations data, see Wimmer et al. 2009). Group size ranges from the smallest group, the Saami in Finland at about 5,000 people, to the largest group, the Bengalis in Pakistan in the 1960s at over 56 million people.

While authoritarian states might foster collective mobilization against the regime due to persistent grievances (Gurr 1970), the limited opportunities for non-state actors to mobilize in authoritarian settings creates an inauspicious environment for the proliferation of organizations. Conversely, democratic states with institutionalized channels of political competition are likely to host diverse political movements (Chenoweth 2010). We measure democracy using the Polity2 score from Polity IV (Marshall & Jaggers 2001), which is a yearly measure for each country. This ranges from -10 (totally closed/autocratic) to 10 (totally open/democratic).

Methods and results

Our data on movement fragmentation allow us to assess the effects of these factors both across self-determination movements and within them, as fragmentation changes over time. Table 2 presents six Poisson regressions.[9] The first four models correspond to the four categories of explanation, controlling for group size and country-level democracy. The fifth model includes all factors associated with the competitive, institutional, and structural hypotheses, which we can examine over the course of time that movements were making claims over self-determination in our dataset. The sixth model includes all factors but restricts the analysis to years in which there was open violent conflict, which matches the data availability for the transnational factors.[10] All models include standard errors clustered on the movement.

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[9] We use Poisson as the Pearson goodness of fit test was not statistically significant.
[10] In the literature, data on mediation, foreign fighters, and external support are collected and analyzed within the context of active civil wars.

In all tests, we control for the previous level of fragmentation with a one-year lag.[11] This allows us to examine the influence of these factors in the context of varying levels of fragmentation and is important given the endogenous nature of fragmentation processes.

[Table 2]

The models in Table 2 show strong support for the influence of competitive dynamics, as well as transnational and institutional factors. Controlling for prior fragmentation, all the variables in Model 1—repression, concessions, changes in the demands of the movement, and the onset of civil war— are associated with a greater degree of movement fragmentation at the 0.05 level of statistical significance. These effects persist when we include structural and institutional factors as well (Model 5). Repression and accommodation have a positive effect on fragmentation, even when controlling for prior degree of fragmentation. Cases where civil war began in the prior year are also associated with a higher degree of movement fragmentation,[12] as are movements with increasingly distinct preferences over self-determination. As expected, the number of organizations in the previous year is positively associated with fragmentation. These findings suggest that the competitive dynamics fostered by the interaction between a state and a movement and by the internal politics of these movements play a strong role in shaping movement fragmentation.

In Model 2, on the civil war cases, we find that, as expected, mediation and foreign fighters are associated with greater movement fragmentation (at the 0.5 and 0.10 levels of significance respectively). The findings are similar in sign in Model 6 when other covariates are included (though mediation loses statistical significance). We do not find an association between fragmentation and

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[11] There is debate over the inclusion of a lagged dependent variable, with the central concern being that the effect of the lag will overwhelm all other effects. However, its inclusion here is theoretically relevant. Appendix Table 4 reproduces these models without the lagged dependent variable.

[12] We ran Model 1 excluding civil war and repression in turn. The effects are similar to Table 2.

external support (typically offered by states) to rebels in Model 2. Though we expect all types of external support to play a divisive role, we argue that armed actors joining the local movement's fighters on the ground is potentially most divisive due to their tendency to alter how the struggle is fought or what it is about, provoking local counter-reactions. The logic underpinning the argument about transnational influences emphasizes diversity in preferences, and both mediation and foreign fighters appear to play this role. Note that these dynamics are consistent with our competitive dynamics argument, with foreign fighters exacerbating within-movement divisions.

In the institutional model (Model 3), we find that state capacity influences the degree of group fragmentation, though in unexpected ways. The greater state strength/capacity (as measured by GDP per capita), the more likely a group is to be fragmented. This finding is at odds with our expectation that weaker states engender fragmented opposition and merits further investigation. It may reflect the greater ability of stronger states to encourage fragmentation as a function of their resources (Kalyvas 2008), as well as incentives for challengers to cooperate when the state is at its weakest. It might also be the case that the GDP per capita measure captures more than state strength; indeed, alternative tests using tax ratios and bureaucratic capacity do not reveal a statistically significant relationship.[13]

Neither of the structural variables in Model 4 have a significant correlation to movement fragmentation. This goes counter to our expectations, which are that groups speaking more languages and are geographically dispersed are likely to be more fragmented. Language is, however, only one potential cleavage on which groups may divide internally. The non-finding on geographic concentration is interesting in light of the importance of geography in political mobilization, but it should be viewed with caution. Self-determination movements tend to be geographically concentrated (especially compared to movements for regime change), so there is little variation in

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[13] Alternative measures of state capacity are suggested by Hendrix (2010) and cover about 75 percent of the observations with GDP data.

the sample. The controls for group size and democracy returned positive coefficients in all models, with varying degrees of statistical significance.

Thus, many of the factors we identify influence movement fragmentation. Our argument emphasizes the competitive dynamics that follow from movement's internal politics and interaction with the state, suggesting that these are likely to have the strongest effect. To assess impact, we calculate the predicted number of organizations at different levels of the significant variables using the CLARIFY program (Tomz et al. 2001), holding all other indicators at their mode or mean.[14] Figure 2 shows a comparison of statistically significant indicators in the competitive, institutional, and structural models.

[Figure 2]

Consistent with our claim that competitive dynamic are primary drivers of fragmentation, we find the largest substantive effects for repression, civil war, accommodation, and change in demands. Setting all variables at their mean, mode, or median, the model predicts about 2.4 organizations. All of the competitive dynamic factors lead to an increase in number of organizations. Figure 2 also shows that movements in states with a higher capacity have a higher expected level of fragmentation, and more populous groups are more fragmented than less populous ones.

Examining civil war cases only, Figure 3 demonstrates the effect of the significant transnational variables from Model 2, as well as the role of democratic institutions. The predicted number of organizations in self-determination movements during wartime—with all factors held at mean, median, or mode—is about 3.3 organizations. As the figure shows, movements with foreign fighters demonstrate the highest expected level of fragmentation, followed by those with mediation.

[14] Based on Models 2 and 5 in Table 2.

Movements in more democratic states have higher predicted fragmentation than in less democratic states, though the expected level of fragmentation is lower in both high and low democracy scenarios than in cases where there are foreign fighters or mediation.[15]

[Figure 3]

In sum, consistent with our expectation we find strong support for the role of the competitive dynamics we argue drive fragmentation. Changes in the preferences of movements, outbreak of large-scale violence, concessions to the movement, and repression all alter the competitive context in ways that undermine cohesion. We find strong support for the role of international/transnational influences that, consistent with our explanation, might alter the competitive context by introducing diversity of preferences to the struggle. Indeed, our findings overall underscore the difficulties movements have in managing competitive pressures associated with shifts towards or away from violence, whether domestic or international/transnational.

Evidence from Punjab

The statistical analyses suggest several correlates of fragmentation. To better identify causal mechanisms, we turn to case study evidence from Punjab. Our model predicts the case well, making it the sort of "on-the-line" case suitable for model testing (Lieberman 2005).[16] The case also provides temporal variation in the factors central to our argument about competitive dynamics. The number of organizations is, on average, higher than in our sample, but the case includes significant within-case variation, encompassing both political parties and armed groups engaged in violent,

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[15] See Appendix Figures 2 and 3 for a presentation of marginal effects, drawn from the same models.
[16] We determined "on-the-line" cases by comparing correlations between our organization count dependent variable and expected level of fragmentation based on Model 5 in Table 2. The correlation is 0.92 for Punjab.

militant, and peaceful contestation.[17] Finally, familiarity with the case bolsters confidence in our interpretation.[18] Figure 4 shows the fragmentation trend for the Sikhs from the large-n data, as well as trends in repression, civil war onset, and accommodation.

[Figure 4]

Since India's independence, the Sikhs' struggle for self-determination has gone through periods of both non-violent and violent opposition. The largely non-violent resistance that emerged in the 1950s ended with the reorganization of Punjab state in 1966, creating a Sikh-majority state. However, reorganization left contentious issues unresolved, spurring the reemergence of self-determination demands in the 1970s and a violent struggle with Delhi from 1984 to 1993. Sikh demands ranged from greater fiscal and policy autonomy within India to independence for a Sikh state, Khalistan. The Sikh movement is well known for factionalism (Brass 1991), and the violent struggle in the 1980s was the result of Sikh militant organizations fighting the Indian state as well as one another (Pettigrew 1995; Judge 2005).

The main political party representing the Sikhs' interest has been the Akali Dal, but it has long struggled with splits and challenges from militant groups. The fragmentation of the Sikh self-determination movement sheds light on multiple facets of our competitive dynamics argument. From the mid-1980s, failed negotiations with the central government and the turn to large-scale violence led to a rapid rise in organizations representing Sikh demands. There were two key critical points: the Indian army's attack on the Golden Temple in Amritsar in 1984 and the signing and subsequent failure of the Rajiv-Longowal Accord in 1985.

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[17] In Punjab, there is a mean organization count of about 3.8 for the first two decades of the movement (1961-1981), and it then fragments with a mean of 13.9 (1982-2005).
[18] The findings are based on secondary sources and three months of fieldwork conducted by Bakke in Punjab in 2005 (Bakke 2015).

In June 1984, the Indian army attacked the Golden Temple in Amritsar, the holiest Sikh shrine. Per official estimates the attack killed hundreds, mainly civilians, but many claim the death toll was several thousand (Singh 2000, 162-163; Singh 2008, 43-33). Since 1982, the militant Sikh preacher Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale and his followers had set up camp in the Golden Temple, and the 1984 attack, known as Operation Bluestar (or, more infamously, the Golden Temple massacre), was a response to the previous year's growth in militant violence in Punjab's villages. The militants had been targeting people considered to be enemies of the Sikhs, including Hindus, police officials thought to be informers (also Sikhs), and political figures (Tully & Jacob 1985, 130-131).

Operation Bluestar was followed by a series of violent events—Indira Gandhi's assassination by two Sikh members of her own bodyguard and ensuing anti-Sikh riots in Delhi, killing thousands—that further alienated the Sikhs from the central government and radicalized demands (Singh 2008, 43-45; Biswas 2014, 27-28). Yet rather than fostering organizational cohesion in the Sikh movement, Operation Bluestar and its aftermath engendered an upsurge in militant organizations in Punjab. Indeed, while militant organizations had emerged in the early 1980s already, in part helped by the central government trying to weaken the "Akalis" by backing Bhindranwale (ibid., 66-72), the 1984 attack led many Sikhs to conclude that that the conventional politics advocated by the Akali Dal were insufficient. Consistent with our expectation for repression and civil war onset (H1a and H1d), the Indian army's attack on the Golden Temple was a key event in the trajectory of the Sikh movement, subsequently developing into a large-scale war in 1988. The attack fueled divisions between the more moderate Akalis and the militants (Pettigrew 1995), and until the war's end in 1993, Punjab was a scene of spiraling violence between militants and the state, *and* among various militant organizations.

We find further evidence of the role of accommodation (H1b) and the turn to large-scale violence (H1d) promoting fragmentation in the late 1980s. After Operation Bluestar, the Akali Dal

president, Harcharan Singh Longowal, negotiated an accord with Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, which gave in to many of the Akalis' autonomy demands. Although the government did not concede to all the demands, it agreed to later take them into consideration. The accord was promising. However, some Akali leaders were left out of the negotiations, and some militant organizations opposed the accord as a sell-out by power-hungry Akalis. Sikh militants assassinated Longowal a month after the accord was signed, and the government reneged on the deal—that is, the state did not accommodate in the end. This failure of implementation nourished factionalism within the Akali Dal and was further proof to the militant organizations that the party was simply not fit to represent the Sikhs' interest (Bakke 2015).

Our argument emphasizes the role that accommodation can play in creating divergent preferences and fragmentation (H1b), and the Punjab case demonstrates this in a more nuanced way. When accommodation looked like it was a reality, it encouraged reactions from those opposed to the deal. Moreover, the failure to fully implement the accord also generated intense internal competition that led to further fragmentation. Thus, the case suggests that it is not only accommodation *per se* that spurs fragmentation, but shifts in preferences related to movement expectations. The Rajiv-Longowal Accord increased people's expectations that their grievances would be accommodated, but the failure of implementation undermined the parties taking part in the negotiations, in turn engendering splintering. Indeed, the case points to a complex process through which failed or partial implementation and fragmentation fuel one another, and the absence of movement cohesion undermines prospects for full implementation.

From the mid-1980s, Punjab saw a proliferation of Akali organizations. Ahead of the 1992 elections, as many as seven splinter groups of the party were active (Sidhu 1994). At the same time, the number of militant organizations had been growing, chief among them the Babbar Khalsa, the All India Sikh Students Federation, the Khalistan Commando Force (KCF), and one of KCF's

splinter organizations, the Bhindranwale Tiger Force for Khalistan. Almost 20 different militant organizations, excluding the various Akali organizations, were active in Punjab over the course of the 1980s. While the splintering of the Akali Dal in 1986-1987 was driven by the prospect of accommodations through the Rajiv-Longowal Accord and its ensuing failure, the continued proliferation of both Akali and other militant organizations up until 1991 suggests that the turn to large-scale civil war in 1988 (H1d), which included a counter-insurgency campaign notorious for one-sided violence in the form of extrajudicial killings (H1a) (Kumar et al. 2003), gave birth to a growing number of competing organizations striving for dominance. Again, despite the fact that the state's use of violence strengthened Sikh alienation from the center, that common identity did not translate into organizational cohesion.

The state's use of repression, the emergence of a civil war, and the failed implementation of the Rajiv-Longowal Accord fueled heterogeneity in demands from the mid-1980s onwards (primarily over autonomy versus independence), as the conflict escalated to civil war,[19] suggesting a degree of endogeneity between diversity of movement demands (H1c) and the movement's interaction with the state (H1a, H1b, and H1d). That said, the movement was divided from the outset by heterogeneous demands. In part, this was the result of the central government's effort to weaken the Akali Dal by backing Bhindranwale, as noted above, but it also reflected class-based cleavages in Punjab and the Akalis' efforts to cast their struggle as a non-religious one. Whereas the Akali Dal drew support from the well-to-do landowning Sikhs, the militant and pro-independence groups drew support from the poorer strata of small farmers and rural laborers (Telford 1992; Pettigrew 1995). These militant organizations were disillusioned both with the central government *and* the Akali Dal. Moreover, because of the Indian government's unwillingness to give in to religiously-based demands, from the 1970s the Akalis framed the struggle as one waged in the name of Punjab,

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[19] Notably, the militants did not *officially* state that they wanted to create an independent Sikh state, Khalistan, until April 1986, after the attack on the Golden Temple and the failure of the Rajiv-Longowal accord.

not only the state's Sikh population, while the militants put more emphasis on a struggle fought in the name of the Sikhs.

The case of Punjab in many ways emphasizes the importance of competitive dynamics in fostering and fueling fragmentation, and violent competition more specifically, but it also sheds light on dynamics missed in our large-n analysis. Our statistical analysis finds no support for linguistic sub-cleavages promoting fragmentation (H4a), but the case suggests the role of other sub-group divisions, such as the economic and class ones highlighted above, both in fueling demands and outright splits. Indeed, it is difficult to understand the pattern of fragmentation without considering how class-based identities cut across the religious one. Moreover, among scholars of Punjab politics, a key explanation for Sikh factionalism is the organization of Sikhism itself. Since 1925, the Shiromani Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee (SGPC) has managed Sikh temples, *gurudwaras*, and the Akali Dal has been considered the SGPC's political arm. In elections to the SGPC, competition takes place among organizations of the Akali Dal, thus pitting different Akali leaders against one another and fostering fragmentation (Brass 1974). While our analysis of institutional variables focuses on overall state capacity (H3a) and regional-level elections (H3b), none of which yield findings consistent with our expectations, the case suggests that an institutional framework that encourages in-group competition—in this case, the SGPC—fosters fragmentation. That is, further research might want to further examine the effects of social institutions governing relationships *within* the group a movement represents.

In sum, the causal dynamics of fragmentation in the Sikh self-determination movement are largely consistent with our statistical analysis. At the same time, it suggests avenues for further research, in particular concerning implementation of agreements and movement structures fostering within-group competition.

Conclusions

This study makes a first step towards understanding the complex dynamics fostering fragmentation in opposition movements. It identifies avenues for future research for social movements, ethnic politics, and the study of fragmentation more generally. Our findings underscore the importance of the competitive context of contentious politics as organizations struggle against one another and the state, fostering fragmentation. Repression, accommodation, diversity in movement demands, and the onset of violence are key factors shaping a movement's cohesion and fragmentation. Similarly, considering the transnational context, foreign fighters may spur fragmentation by exacerbating competition through the introduction of diverse preferences into the struggle. While recent research has emphasized the role of group identity (Roessler 2011; Cederman et al. 2013a), this work is premised on the relatively uniform ability of ethnic groups to act collectively. We show that group cohesion varies and shapes prospects for cohesive collective action. Indeed, our explanation for this variation underscores the role of competition within ethnic groups as much as their struggle with the state.

The findings above advance our understanding of the causes and consequences of non-state actor fragmentation, but clearly more can be done to clarify the complex dynamics at work. Repression, accommodation, the turn to violence, and the competition over movement preferences shape fragmentation, but interaction between these factors merits further attention. For example, state capacity affects government decisions about whether, how, and whom to repress or accommodate, while influencing the likelihood of collective violence. The case study points to the importance of factors the literature has paid relatively little attention to. Testing hypotheses about a variety of different types of sub-cleavages or variations in within-movement institutional arrangements is complicated in a comparative setting, but recent projects gathering sophisticated cross-national data provide guidance in aggregating country expertise with generalizable theory.

Finally, our findings suggest the importance of the contingent strategies of movement and government leaders. In other words, fragmentation is not an inevitable feature of ethnopolitical mobilization in even the most inauspicious conditions. Elites on both sides can shift movements in the direction of greater unity or division in short time frames. Even as structural, institutional, and may transnational constraints push ethnopolitical groups towards fragmentation, the interdependent strategies of ethnic elites and state leaders can counteract forces of division. More concretely, our research points to added incentives for states to refrain from using violence against opposition movements, given research showing that fragmented challengers make for more violent conflicts (Cunningham et al. 2012). The analysis also suggests that accommodations, whether intentionally or not, can engender fragmentation. Insofar as higher degrees of movement fragmentation increase the chance of war, leaders in states and challenging movements need to focus on the delicate politics of implementing agreements.

Replication data

Data and the online appendix can be found at http://www.prio.no/jpr/datasets.

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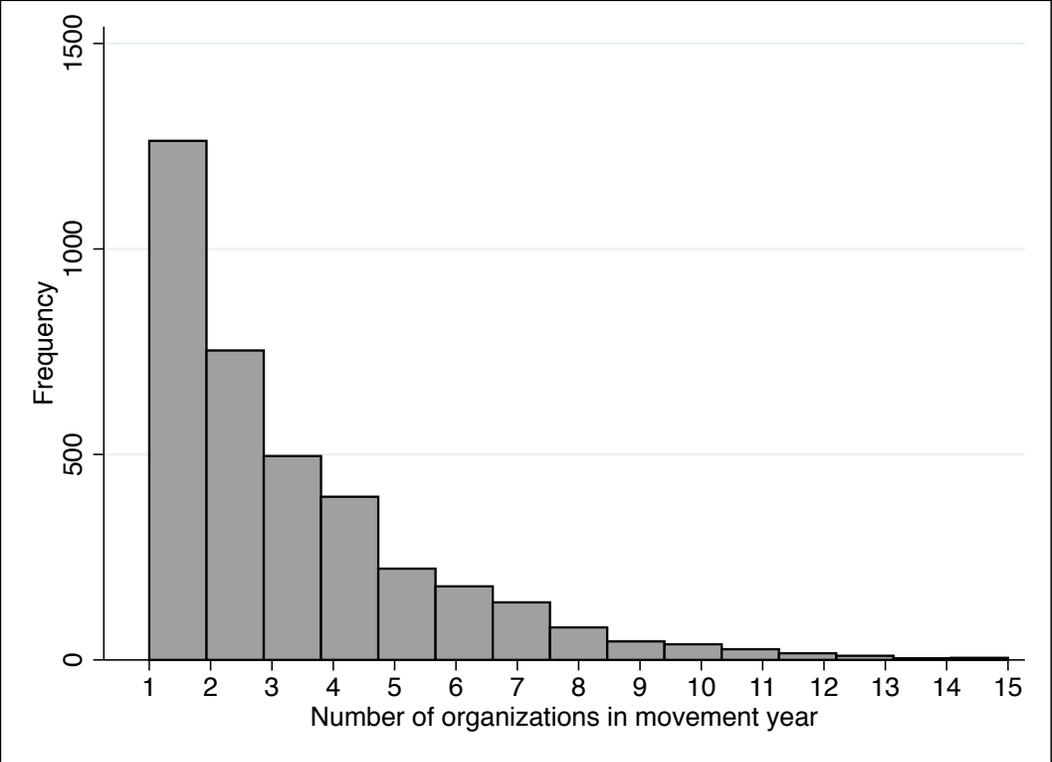
Figure 1. Distribution of movement fragmentation

Table 1. Hypotheses and operationalization

Explanation	*Hypothesis*	*Operationalization*
Competitive	1a. Repression	Human rights violations against group (lag)
	1b. Accommodation	Concessions (lag)
	1c. Diversity of demands	Change in demands from previous year
	1d. Turn to violence	Civil war onset (lag)
Transnational	2. Transnational actor influences	Mediation
		Foreign fighters (lag)
		External support (lag)
Institutional	3a. State capacity	GDP per capita
	3b. Sub-national elections	Elections in sub-national region
Structural	4a. Sub-cleavages	Multiple languages
	4b. Geographic dispersion	Concentration index

Table 2. Predicting fragmentation of SD movements, based on Poisson regression (DV: Number of organizations in movement-year)

VARIABLES	(1) Competitive	(2) Transnational, wartime	(3) Institutional	(4) Structural	(5) Combined, all years	(6) Combined, wartime
Number of organizations (lag)	0.09**	0.08**	0.10**	0.10**	0.09**	0.07**
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Repression (lag)	0.16*				0.20**	0.17*
	(0.07)				(0.06)	(0.07)
Concessions (lag)	0.09*				0.08*	0.00
	(0.04)				(0.04)	(0.07)
Change in demands (lag)	0.08**				0.08*	0.06
	(0.03)				(0.03)	(0.05)
Civil war onset (lag)	0.19**				0.20**	0.08
	(0.05)				(0.04)	(0.05)
Mediation		0.18*				0.12
		(0.08)				(0.08)
Foreign fighters		0.13+				0.22+
		(0.07)				(0.13)
External support		0.08				-0.09
		(0.08)				(0.06)
GDP per capita (log)			0.10**		0.06+	-0.01
			(0.03)		(0.03)	(0.07)
Sub-national democracy			-0.12		-0.12	-0.08
			(0.08)		(0.08)	(0.11)
Multiple languages				-0.09	-0.11	-0.12
				(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.10)
Geographic concentration				-0.04	-0.03	-0.07
				(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.07)
Group size	0.04+	0.06	0.06**	0.04	0.05+	0.03
	(0.02)	(0.04)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.04)

37

Democracy	0.02**	0.03**	0.01	0.01*	0.01	0.03*
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Constant	0.48**	0.44	-0.35	0.64**	0.18	1.15+
	(0.14)	(0.30)	(0.21)	(0.20)	(0.37)	(0.67)
Observations	2,623	698	3,275	2,845	2,300	553

Robust standard errors in parentheses; ** $p<0.01$, * $p<0.05$, + $p<0.1$.
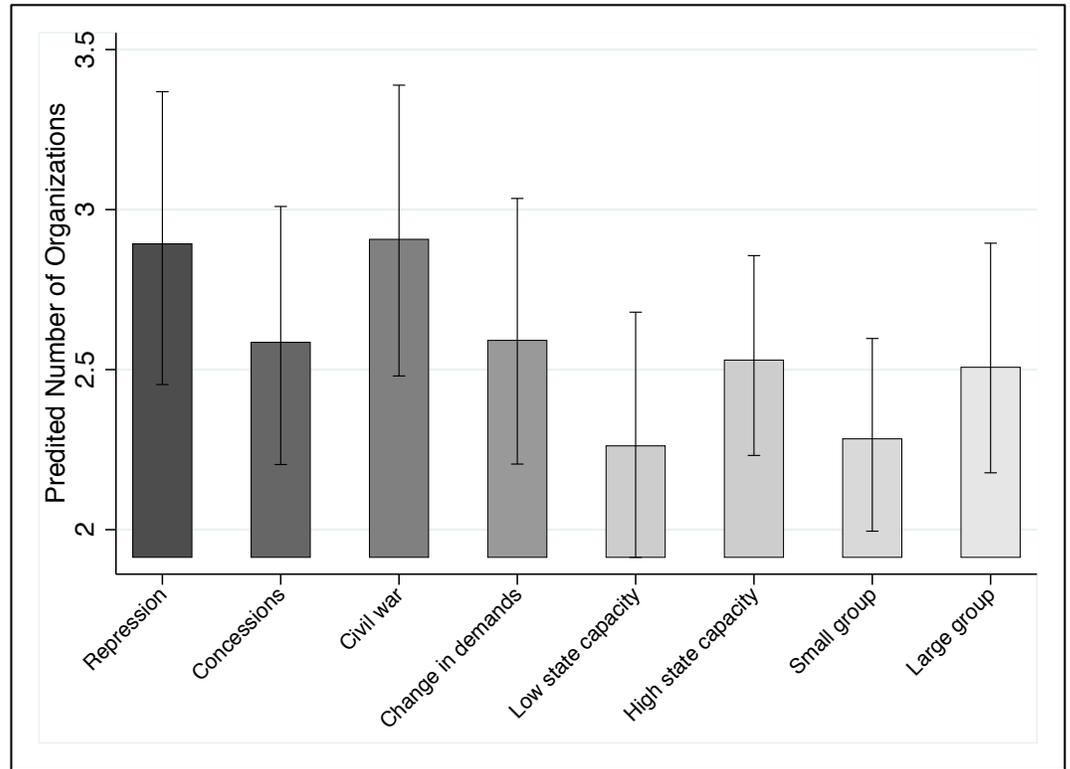
Figure 2. Predicted levels of fragmentation by factor in all years

Note: The bar height indicates the predicted number of organizations when that varaible
changed. Dichotomous indicators are changed from 0 to 1, and continuous indicators are
1st to 3rd quartile. All other factors are held at mean or mode. Model predited mean valu
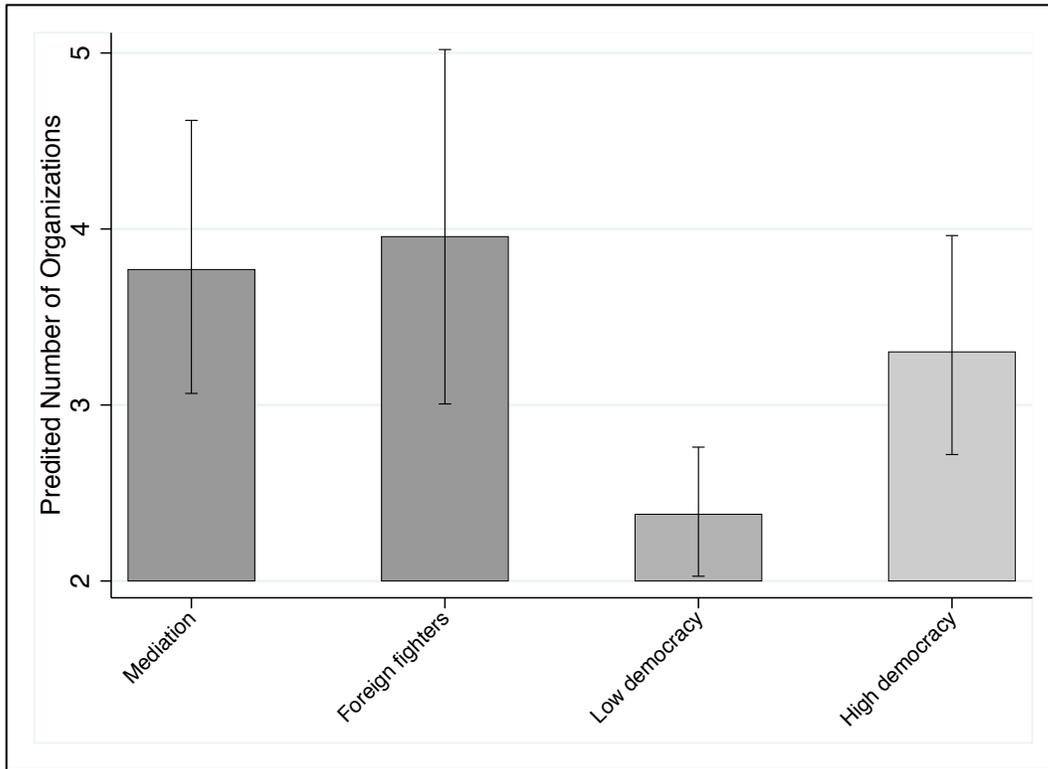factors held at mean, median, or mode is 2.4 organizations.

Figure 3. Predicted levels of fragmentation by factor in wartime

Note: The bar indicates the predicted number of organizations when that varaible's value is changed. Dichotomous indicators are changed from 0 to 1, and continuous indicators are shown at 1st to 3rd quartile. All other factors are held at mean or mode. Model predicted mean value with all factors held at mean, median, or mode is 3.3 organizations.
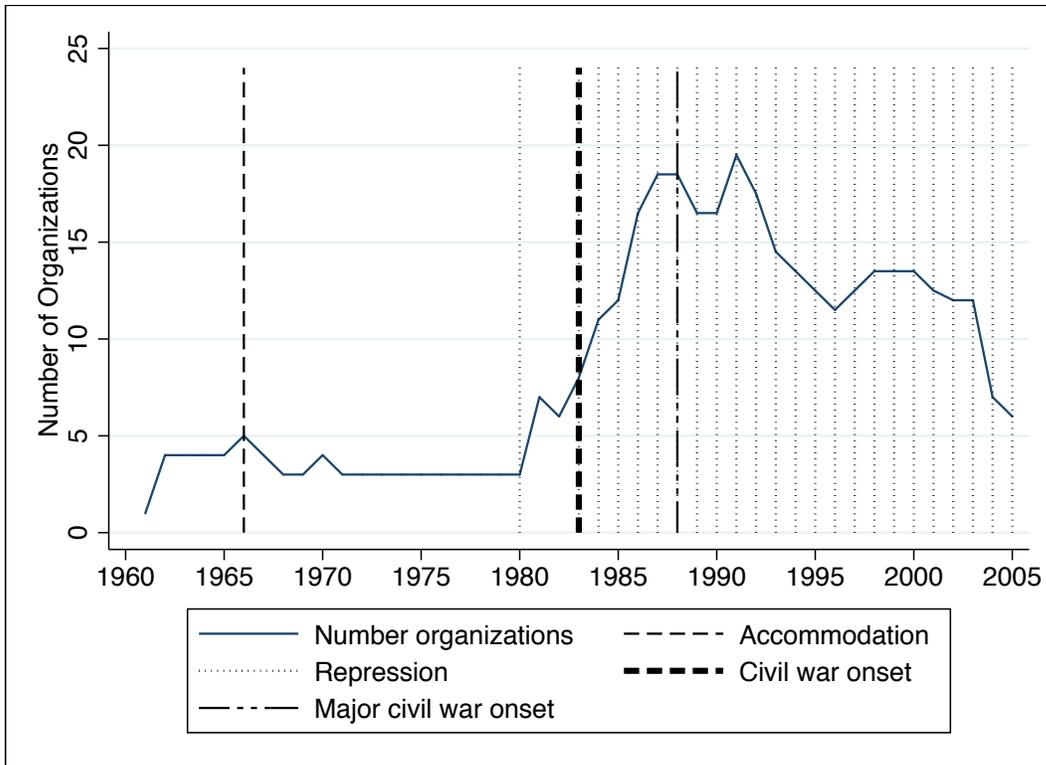
Figure 4. Fragmentation trends in Punjab

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