

The Process-Based Model of Protraction: Third Party Intervention and Conflict Protraction in Southeast Asian Communist Rebellions

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Around the mid-20th century, the Philippines, Thailand, and Cambodia all became theaters of communist rebellion, availing themselves to the political interests of regional and global powers. Direct and indirect support during these rebellions reiterates the commonplace internationalization of intrastate conflicts. Yet the drastic variations in outcome between these cases introduces an important question: How did third-party intervention affect the tractability of communist rebellions in Southeast Asia? Drawing from archival records and the Uppsala Data Conflict Program's External Support Dataset, this thesis analyzes how third-party intervention transforms the landscape of intrastate conflicts by expanding the network of actor relations beyond the traditional incumbent-rebel dyad. Within this network lie multiple combinations of interdependencies and interactions that impact the balance of power between intrastate parties. Because of this, interstate rivalries between third parties can escalate the stakes of the conflict by shifting the distribution of resources or by altering the bargaining environment. This paper argues that, because of this system of dynamics, protraction is a process that can be incubated by the external party as early as the decision-making phase preceding intervention.

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Introduction

The New People's Army (NPA), the armed wing of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP), has been involved in the world's longest ongoing communist insurgency. This conflict, known as the CPP-NPA-NDF (C/N/N) conflict, can be traced back to the formation of the NPA in 1969 and then-President Ferdinand Marcos' subsequent declaration of martial law. Since then, the Philippine government has failed to entirely suppress the NPA and their affiliate factions. In contrast, regional neighbors such as Thailand and Cambodia have all experienced a definite end to their respective communist rebellions. Thai communist insurgency ended by 1983 shortly after the signing of Order 66/2423, while the Cambodian Civil War concluded with a successful takeover by the Khmer Rouge. Several Philippine administrations have attempted to resolve their ongoing conflict with the NPA, through both coercive and diplomatic means, but have yet to fully quell resistance. Given the similarities in region and nature of conflict, it is worth exploring the conditions creating these varied outcomes. This thesis will attempt to answer the question: How did third-party intervention affect the tractability of communist rebellions in Southeast Asia?

The extant literature regarding third-party intervention can be categorized into two approaches: mechanism-based and actor-based. The mechanism-centric approach focuses on how intervention affects the material conditions of a conflict. Scholars adhering to this framework place the locus of protraction, in the larger context of an internationalized conflict, on the various military and diplomatic implements external actors employ. Distribution of resources, balance of power, and the bargaining environment therefore rise to salience within this school of thought. In contrast, the actor-centric model expands the conflict environment to include the interests and motivations of the parties involved. Literature within this school emphasizes how relationships contribute to the tractability of a conflict by creating networks of dependencies and shaping investment in a conflict. The dynamics between civil parties and

external actors usually take the place of causal mechanism in this model.

This thesis combines characteristics of the two approaches into a singular model. This novel framework, named the process-based model, accounts for the interests and motivations that inform the decision-making process of civil conflict. I argue that during this decision-making process, the actors of interest—in the case of this thesis, the third party—consider domestic conditions, international conditions, interstate relationships, and the material landscape of war. This paper offers four hypotheses which address these four considerations, respectively:

H1: Intervention on behalf of a stable government is more likely to suppress a rebellion.

H2: Stronger interstate rivalries result in sustained intervention, prolonging conflict.

H3: Rivals highly invested in the interests of a civil party are more likely to sustain intervention, prolonging conflict.

H4: Intervention focused on warfighting capacity further necessitates asymmetrical strategies, prolonging conflict.

This research takes a qualitative approach, utilizing case study analysis of the Cambodian Civil War, the Thai communist insurgency, and New Peoples' Army rebellion. Four independent variables (government stability, interstate rivalry, mutual interest, intervention) are operationalized by a set of comparison questions (detailed in Appendix A). These variables are then scored on a scale of high-medium-low. The dependent variable, duration, will simply be measured in terms of overall time. This study uses data from the Uppsala Conflict Data Program's External Support Dataset (UCDP ESD), supplementing certain lapses with information collected from archival data.

Literature Review

The question guiding this paper attempts to gauge the effects of third-party intervention

on Southeast Asian communist uprisings. Literature addressing third-party intervention and conflict duration has predominantly followed two approaches. The first and more traditional approach focuses on material applications of support and their subsequent effects on intervention. Analyses of direct military intervention, economic support, and mediation (among other forms of intervention) are all included within this paradigm. For the purposes of this review, any research focused on intervention altering the material capacity of a conflict party will be classified under the Mechanism-centric Model. Within this classification lie two subcategories: warfighting capacity and conflict management.

The competing framework, the Actor-centric Model, places significant emphasis on the political relationships between internal and external parties. Rather than assessing how material applications alter the course of a conflict, this paradigm opts to identify how motivations, interests, and relationships shape the outcomes of war. This lens necessitates intrastate- and interstate-level analyses since it accounts for the network of actors invested in a conflict, not just the primary civil dyad. Concepts like interstate rivalry, competition, and ideological alignment play a significant role in this framework.

These two schools will be discussed and scrutinized in order to construct a novel framework for this study. The first step to developing this model is determining the topics of contention and consensus within and between both approaches. From there, this review will probe their weaknesses and consider how to build upon existing knowledge.

Mechanism-Centric Model

Before proceeding to a discussion of the general literature, this paper will set an important definition for intervention. This paper will mostly adhere to Uexkull and Pettersson's (2018) interpretation: "access to territory, access to military or intelligence infrastructure, weapons, materiel/logistics, training/expertise, funding/economic support, intelligence material." Generally, scholars have acknowledged that third

parties utilize economic, military, and mixed forms of aid (Regan, 1996; Lockyer, 2011; Black-Lindsay and Enterline, 2000; Cunningham, 2010). Other studies have expanded on traditional definitions and have empirically substantiated their effects on duration (Regan and Aydin, 2006; Cunningham, 2010; Regan, 2002). Therefore, this paper will also acknowledge diplomatic measures such as resolution negotiation, mediation, and proposal of United Nations resolutions as forms of diplomatic intervention. This addition plays an important function in the larger context of the mechanism-centric approach.

The two subcategories that constitute this framework are conflict management and warfighting capacity. Conflict management focuses on how external support bolsters a faction's ability to diplomatically achieve a resolution. Virtually all forms of diplomatic intervention fall under this subcategory. Warfighting capacity, however, is defined more liberally. In essence, this subcategory is comprised of external support that benefits a party's military capabilities. While Uexkull and Pettersson's (2018) definition covers the bulk of this subcategory, this paper will also classify economic aid as a form of material military support. Whether directly or indirectly, economic support bolsters a civil party's ability to wage war. I will elaborate on the soundness of this logic below.

Conflict Management

Civil conflict resolution, at the most fundamental level, either occurs in the form of military victory or peace negotiations. Conflict management attempts to achieve peace by allowing belligerents to bargain. Literature substantiating the effectiveness of conflict management stresses the formative role of third parties in facilitating peace talks between civil parties. Such a role bestows external actors with formidable influence over the duration of civil conflict. This conclusion comes from two premises: first, third parties facilitate peace talks by disclosing information crucial to the bargaining environment (Lake, 2003; Reiter, 2003); second, outside actors mitigate much of the complications surrounding conflict

management between the two civil parties alone, namely their inability to communicate their capacities or demands effectively as well as their unreliability in committing to a post-conflict peace (Fearon, 1988; Walter, 2002).

While most scholars within this school agree on these premises, there exist certain nuances that slightly distinguish their findings. Doyle and Sambanis (2000) argue that treaties are “highly correlated” with an end to violence (p. 795). Like Fearon (1988) and Walter (2002), Doyle and Sambanis (2000) emphasize the capacity of third-party actors to “foster peace by substituting for limited local capacities and alleviating factors that feed deep hostility” (p. 795). In short, external intervention holds both civil actors accountable to their negotiated peace. Regan and Aydin (2006) found that diplomatic interventions had a profound effect on the course of a civil war, given that they are coordinated with other forms of intervention in a timely fashion. This conclusion places importance on the strategic application of diplomatic intervention.

As seen in the literature, this approach does well in substantiating the effectiveness of diplomatic intervention. Third parties, especially international organizations, can dictate peace talks because they act as a reliable sources of alternative information and can safeguard the vulnerabilities of either civil party. Furthermore, it would be reasonable to assume that third parties, regardless of their military or economic power, would opt to seek diplomatic measures first. Taking this assumption as truth, however, poses serious complications.

An identifiable weakness of this approach, and perhaps even both sub-schools, would be their inability to account for the actors’ intentions. Smith and Stan (2003) note that a mediator’s intentions alter the credibility of the information they share. For example, a partial mediator would prioritize information that favors their preferred outcome or party. The actor-centric model accounts for this weakness by way of its design. Under this alternative framework, interveners’ motivations, interests, and relationships offer much more explanatory value.

Additionally, information can only do so much

to shape belligerents’ expectations. Perception of one’s ability to achieve military victory can be easily skewed, and the easiest way to determine the validity of this perception would be to engage in violent combat (Smith and Stan, 2003). This is why, although primarily a diplomatic mechanism, conflict management is a surprisingly material venture. Effective bargaining requires consensus, or at the very least, a baseline understanding shared between parties. This cannot be realistically achieved without direct engagement with the material conditions of the conflict environment.

Another potential complication would be the nature of success as defined within these parameters. Negotiations may be explicit, like the Paris Peace Accords, and immediately result in a cessation of violence. However, more ambivalent decisions like Thailand’s Order No. 66/23 may complicate definitions of peace. Although the order was passed in 1980, the insurgency did not officially end until 1983. This characteristic reiterates the paradoxical centrality and ambivalence of conflict management on conflict resolution. Diplomatic intervention can completely alter the material reality of a conflict but fails to assuredly provide one or a combination of the following: certainty, permanence, and immediacy.

Warfighting Capacity

The alternative to conflict management, warfighting capacity, stresses the military and economic mechanisms external parties use to influence the course of civil conflict. Simply put, this framework makes sense of the relationship between distribution of military and economic power and the duration of civil conflicts. Regan (1996) iterates the effectiveness of a “mixed strategy,” or intervention incorporating both military and economic support. Perhaps this points to the dynamic and unpredictable nature of civil conflict itself. If a power were to effectively augment an incumbent government or rebel group’s ability to wage war, it must fully understand the demands of the conflict environment.

Lockyer (2010; 2011) argues that the distribution of resources fluctuates throughout

the duration of a conflict, thus altering a party's total capabilities and the balance of power between belligerents. Therefore, it is entirely possible for a conflict to fluctuate throughout the conventional-asymmetric spectrum given the material conditions of either side. This is why Regan's (1996) emphasis on mixed strategy intervention appears so effective—it offers flexibility for a problem that requires multiple solutions. As Jentleson et al. (1992) note, “foreign military interventions are an especially dynamic phenomenon” (p. 303). Dynamism demands constant strategic adaptation and reorientation, meaning the protractive qualities of foreign military intervention cannot always be boiled down to a singular instance.

Some scholars have argued that military intervention has produced empirical effects on the outcome of conflicts. Sullivan and Karreth (2015) found that foreign support on behalf of the rebel group drastically increases the prospects of rebel victory. Additionally, intervention in support of the incumbent state produces favorable outcomes for government forces in cases where combatants possess relatively equal military capacities. Mehrl and Thurnder (2020) also observe that arms transfers have a conditional effect in intrastate conflicts, benefiting government forces facing equal-to-stronger rebel militaries. These observations foreground power balancing in military applications.

Earlier in this review I incorporated economic aid into my definition of warfighting capacity intervention. Taken at face value, an increase in financial resources naturally results in greater warfighting capacity. For incumbent governments this may be the case, but according to Sawyer et al. (2017), rebel forces face a more complicated situation. They argue that rebel factions cannot convert financial resources predictably because they are dependent on black markets and usually bear costs largely dictated by the state. Therefore, while it is important to acknowledge the implications of economic support on military capabilities, it must be cognizant of the material conditions of the conflict and its belligerents.

Upon reflection, it is clear that support aimed at altering a faction's warfighting capacity is

wholly dependent on the existing balance of power. Third parties can tip the balance of power depending on who they choose to support and how they choose to support them. With that in mind, analysis centered solely around the intervention mechanism only provides partial answers. Recalling Jentleson et al. (1992), military intervention does little to address the internal political complexities that foment civil conflict. The motivation behind entering, staying in, and exiting a civil conflict require a careful consideration of domestic and international conditions. Intervention does not begin and end with the how—the why plays an equal, if not greater, role in shaping certain outcomes. The actor-centric model shifts the lens of analysis to address this point.

Actor-Centric Model

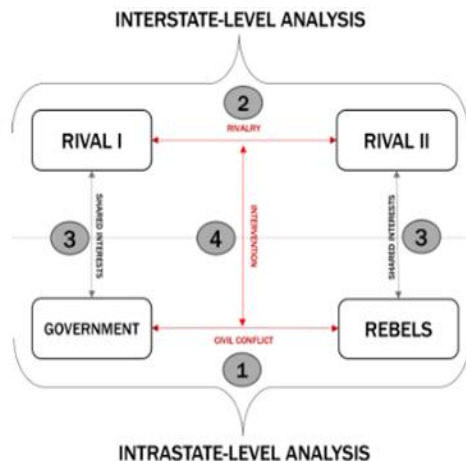
At its very core, civil conflict is a phenomenon deeply associated with uncertainty, dynamism, and fluctuation (Jentleson et al., 1992; Lockyer, 2010; Lockyer 2010). The mechanism-centric literature is particularly weak in making sense of a civil conflict in totality; in fact, its analytic weaknesses allude to alternative forces beyond intervention methodology which contribute to conflict protraction in equal or greater magnitude. It is important to understand that intervention mechanisms do not materialize by themselves—the decision on how, when, and why to intervene is dually a political and economic decision. Jentleson and Levite (1992) posit that foreign interventions are comprised of a three-step decision-making process: getting in, staying in, and getting out. Therefore, in order to truly respect the complexity of a conflict, one must map the interests, motivations, and relationships that inform the implementation of certain intervention mechanisms.

The foundational inquiries that motivate actor-centric research attempt to address the why, when, and who of third-party intervention. Findley and Teo (2006) propose, in the paper which bestows the name of this approach, a rather concentrated and totalizing answer: “states with divergent interests are more prone to intervention” (p. 836). This is because interests tend to manifest

themselves in conflict intervention, especially when an antagonistic counterpart is involved. Aydin (2012) offers a corroborating account as to who intervenes, arguing that states compelled by national interests are more likely to involve themselves in armed conflicts. Furthermore, Balch-Lindsay and Enterline (2000) stress how interests that motivate intervention also pose potential protractive effects on conflicts. The finding supposes that interests ultimately inform state behavior, thus resulting in intervention strategies that prioritize these motivations over resolution. Taken altogether, these findings indicate that third-party intervention create additional processes in conjunction with ongoing civil conflict that have tangible implications on resolution and other related outcomes.

Recalling Balch-Lindsay and Enterline (2000), interventions are a process which involve the “strategic and interdependent interests and behavior of third parties and potential third parties, as well as the geopolitical environment within which civil wars are embedded” (p. 638). Figure 1 is a model borrowed from Palik (2021) which analyzes the “networked interdependencies” that constitute a third-party civil conflict (p. 46).

Figure 1. *Multi-level Analysis of Third-Party Intervention*



This structure pays attention to the different permutations of interstate and intrastate relations that constitute these networked

interdependencies. The mechanism-centric approach isolates material intervention as the most temporally consequential factor in internationalized civil conflicts (link 4). In contrast, the actor-centric approach attempts to account for the civil dyad (link 1), the civil party-sponsor dyad (link 3), and the interstate rival dyad (link 2). While Palik (2021) utilized this analytic framework to identify how interstate rivalries impacted relations in both a micro and macro scale, it could also be pertinently applied to how the relationships entangled within third-party intervention are similarly impacted throughout the course of a conflict.

Answering the why, when, and who of third-party intervention requires an assessment of national interest. Cunningham (2010) argues that external states intervening to achieve an independent agenda prolong the duration of conflict. Lootable resources, like diamonds or oil, would be a rather salient motivator for intervention (Findley and Marineau, 2015; Bove et al., 2014). Koga (2011) poses an interesting condition in that autocracies are more likely to pursue intervention in an effort to gain access to natural resources. Additionally, there are crucial political objectives made achievable through intervention, especially for world powers. In the context of these communist conflicts, status quo states are compelled to quell ideological revolutions (Linebarger et al., 2019). Although Linebarger et al. (2019) argue that these status quo states are primarily driven by proximity of revolution, Clare and Danilovic (2022) posit that intervention is highly contingent on the geopolitical importance of a conflict region. External states also have to consider how interstate rivals use civil conflict to shift the strategic advantage (Mitton, 2017). Clearly, the literature points to political objectives and interstate rivalries as interrelated motivating factors for intervention. Once involved, rivals become entangled in “competitive intervention,” which escalates the civil conflict by making military advantage more unattainable, subsequently complicating the domestic bargaining process (Anderson, 2019; Balch -Lindsay et al., 2008; Colaresi and Thompson, 2002; Smith and Stan, 2003). Intractability then becomes a natural

feature of the mutually exclusive interests which constitute an international rivalry.

The actor-centric focus thoroughly emphasizes the protractive effects of competitive intervention. Anderson (2019) underscores the strategic dilemma introduced by competitive interventions: “the contradiction inherent in the desire to intervene and the need to control the risk of enlarged conflict warps positive objectives of winning into negative objectives of not losing” (p. 701). This produces the protractive conditions mentioned earlier—complications to gaining a military edge and negotiating settlements. Balch-Lindsay et al. (2008) corroborates this point by establishing that interventions on behalf of incumbent and rebel sides increases time until a diplomatic resolution. Smith and Stan (2003) may provide insight into this trend: “Unfortunately, when one or both sides to a conflict are overly optimistic about their chances in a possible war, conflict negotiations become more difficult and peaceful settlements become less likely” (p. 131). Studies like Colaresi and Thompson (2002) accentuate the escalatory qualities of interstate rival interventions.

Clearly, this approach has produced a strong consensus regarding the importance of actors’ relationships and interests in the protraction of civil conflict. Because of this, this paper will adopt a similar approach. Aspects of the mechanism-centric approach still remain relevant in this model, as shown by link 4 in Figure 1, but it will not be the central focus. Instead, the intervention mechanism will act as a conduit of the various interests that motivate external states during the decision-making phase of intervention. The following section will expand further on this model.

Methodology

This thesis will explore the effects of third-party intervention on communist uprisings in Southeast Asia through a primarily qualitative approach. Before describing the dependent and independent variables in question, it is important to reiterate the research question guiding this analysis: How did third-party intervention affect the tractability of communist uprisings in

Southeast Asia? Approaching this inquiry requires a careful operationalization of both independent and dependent variables. While the third-party intervention surely plays a formative role in these conflicts, it is not the only variable at play. The networked interdependencies woven throughout the fabric of intervention require careful consideration in this research design. The extant literature indicates that variations in duration between each conflict cannot be pinpointed to one single variable. Therefore, these variables—and by extension, the hypotheses they address—function more as a determinant of a general relationship rather than a causal effect.

However, key definitions and concepts must be established before developing an approach. Firstly, while the cases observed in this paper are solely concerned with communist conflict, it would be important to introduce a general term that encompasses all conflicts of this type. This design adopts a definition of intrastate conflict proposed by Regan (1996): “...Armed, sustained combat between groups within state boundaries in which there are at least 200 fatalities” (p. 338). Intrastate conflict as defined by Regan (1996) works particularly well within this study in that it is divided into ethnic, religious, and ideological conflicts. The cases in question—Cambodia, Thailand, and the Philippines—are distinctly ideological conflicts given they are communist rebellions.

Specifying the type of third-party intervention is also important in the methodological approach of this paper. This study will use the Uppsala Conflict Data Program’s (UCDP) External Support Dataset triad-year dataset (ESD TY) compiled by Uexkull and Pettersson (2018). The ESD TY provides information on sponsors, recipients, and types of external support in conflicts on an annual basis between 1975 and 2017. Information about the Philippines and Thailand are included in this dataset and cover at least five years of their respective communist conflicts. Available year-to-year data from 1975 will allow for analysis for how consistency, provider, or duration of aid shape resolution outcomes. Information preceding 1975, which includes the entirety of the Cambodia Civil War,

will be collected separately through primary and secondary documents. This information will then be compiled and added to the existing UCDDP dataset.

Variables

As shown in Figure 1, there are three dyadic relations that make up the network of civil conflict intervention. The extant literature, namely in the actor-centric model, references multiple points within and without the civil war process which produce protraction. The first three variables—government stability, rivalry intensity, and mutual interest—address the civil conflict dyad, interstate rival dyad, and sponsor-civil party dyad, respectively. The fourth point, intervention mechanism, will acknowledge how shifts in the balance of power and distribution of resources have calculable effects on the course of war. Through these variables, all potential influences within the analytic framework introduced by Palik (2021) are adequately accounted for. Each variable will be assessed through comparison questions graded on a high-medium-low scale. Appendix A outlines the questions asked in all three cases.

Independent Variable #1 – Government Stability

Conceptually, government stability is the durability of a status-quo government. Given that the extant literature has placed an emphasis on how the effects of support are condition by the recipient (e.g. Sullivan and Kareth, 2015; Gent, 2008), I have decided to designate this variable to examine the state of relative power within the civil conflict dyad. Incumbent governments can be thoroughly analyzed in that they have a set and usually more transparent political infrastructure. Locating the source and extent of an incumbent's political authority is more achievable than attempting to map a rural rebellion's power projection. Because of this, the guiding questions center the incumbent government and its ability to withstand a rebellion. Three factors are operationalized within this variable: strength of political institutions, legitimacy, and control.

Independent Variable #2 – Rivalry Intensity

Conceptually, rivalry intensity describes the competitive relationship between interstate parties. As shown in the review, rivalries transform the landscape of a civil conflict (Colaresi and Thompson, 2002; Maoz and San-Akca, 2012; Mitton, 2017; Palik, 2021). The logic behind the implementation of this variable asserts that rivals intervening in civil conflicts utilize it as an arena to gain a strategic advantage (Clare and Danilovic, 2022). Intense rivalries add greater political value to civil conflicts because—in addition to potential access to resources, ideological contagion, or increased regional influence—subversion of international rivals is a valuable political end in itself. This value then draws more resources to intervention, thus contributing to fluctuations in the balance of power. This concept is operationalized through ideological polarity, investment in outcome, and historical tension between rivals.

Independent Variable #3 – Mutual Interest

The concept of mutual interest relates to the strength of the sponsor-recipient relationship. This operationalization is driven by the assumption that cooperative actors engage in more exchanges of support. Since these conflicts began during the height of the Cold War, the ideological adjacency between intervening and civil actors must be adequately weighed. With that said, reciprocity comes at a certain price, especially for the sponsor. For that, it is also important to accurately determine how successful intervention accomplishes the third party's most salient objectives. Therefore, the degree of alignment between the civil conflict actor and the intervener's interests can explain, at least to some level, the amount or duration of support committed. The questions operationalizing this variable surround cooperation, ideological similarity, and stakes in outcome.

Independent Variable #4 – Intervention Mechanism

Intervention mechanism concerns the methodology and frequency of third-party support. This variable conceptually functions as the direct manifestations of the previous three

variables (see Figure 2). Lockyer's (2010; 2011) emphasis on the balance of power deserves to be respected in this analysis. This variable functions not as a primarily causal property but rather as the material link between the previous three explanatory variables and the dependent variable. In many respects, interveners' domestic politics alongside the conditions of civil conflict dictate the application of intervention. However, this does not completely negate their effects on protraction. As the extant literature has argued, intervention mechanism produces material consequences. Because of this, the comparison questions for this variable will attempt to map the ramifications of certain intervention strategies throughout incremental stages of a conflict rather than in aggregate. This method allows for a more sustained observation of the balance of power as it shifts throughout the course of intervention.

Dependent Variable – Duration of Conflict

This paper will measure protraction in terms of conflict duration. Before expanding on operationalization, I will first substantiate the selection of temporality as the sole dependent variable. Protracted conflicts, as specified by Azar et al. (1978), exhibit five qualities:

1. Sustained high-stakes conflict
2. Fluctuating intensity and frequency of warfare
3. Spillover into every aspect of society
4. Equilibrating forces that contain conflict to the "Normal Relations Range" (NRR)
5. No clear termination

All three cases shared the first four qualities, as discussed in the following subsection. The primary divergence, which is the puzzle driving this research, is the final point. Unlike the Cambodian Civil War and Thai insurgency, the NPA rebellion has failed to conclude. While it disqualifies the two former conflicts from being considered protracted as present, Azar et al.'s (1978) definition offers a standard to refer to during any point in the conflicts studied.

To make the leap towards operationalization, I considered how external parties shape these five

characteristics. The first three aforementioned independent variables (government stability, rivalry intensity, and mutual interest) shape external and civil parties' decision-making, thus informing the fourth variable, intervention mechanism. Figure 2 illustrates this process-based model. Measuring how applications of intervention relate to the duration of a conflict offers insight into how third-party intervention directly contributes to the conditions which produce protraction. Specifically, homing in on this approach allows for a more quantifiable analysis of conditions 1, 2, and 5 of Azar et al.'s (1978) definition.

Figure 2. *Conceptualization of Intervention Process*



Simply put, duration does not capture the entire nature of protraction. It is definitely a large part, but fluctuations in engagement intensity and ceasefires must be at least somewhat accounted for. Therefore, this paper will also include ceasefires and instances of reduced intensity in the calculus of protraction. More precisely, the duration between intervention and shifts in engagement intensity or subsequent instances of support will be accounted for.

Case Selection

The ideological character of intrastate conflicts in Southeast Asia during the mid- to late-20th century made them valuable theaters for the political struggle between Cold War powers. Both belligerents involved in communist uprisings often lent themselves to external interventions considering how ideological contagion shaped superpowers' foreign policies. In the case of Southeast Asia, colonial history and geopolitical importance made the region highly susceptible to third-party intervention. Vietnam, Myanmar, Laos, Cambodia, Thailand, and the Philippines all engaged in intrastate conflicts that involved military, economic, or diplomatic support from external states in some capacity.

Southeast Asia is undoubtedly an important setting to assess ideologically driven civil conflict. For example, the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the Communist Party of the Philippines have been engaged in the longest ongoing communist insurgency in the world (Santos et al., 2010). This prolonged conflict and external presence make the CPP/NPA conflict an interesting case to study the relationship between third-party intervention and the tractability of communist uprisings. This paper also considers the Cambodian Civil War, which was much shorter and concluded through insurgent takeover. While both sides experienced external military presence and benefitted from some form of external aid, belligerents received asymmetrical support in terms of scale and duration (Paul et al., 2013). This brings us to the final case of Thailand. Adjacent insurgencies spilled over onto Thai borders while American sponsorship bolstered the incumbent regime. The Thai military shifted its counterinsurgency methodology from enemy- to population-centric in 1980 with the passing of Order No. 66/2523 (Thomas, 1986), virtually eradicating Communist resistance within three years. It is important to note how the North Vietnam-United States interstate rivalry presented itself in competitive intervention throughout all three conflicts.

The influence of third-party influence in these rebellions cannot be ignored. Even a brief history of these three cases warrants further inquiry into how third-party interventions interface with conflict resolution. All of these civil conflicts share crucial similarities: they are rural-based rebellions initiated during the mid- to late-1960s driven, at least in part, by external support. The most glaring divergences lie in the nature of resolution or protraction. For Cambodia and Thailand, civil conflict ended in the overthrow or retention of the anti-communist regime. However, the Philippines, despite bearing a

certain likenesses to these conflicts, has failed to find its conclusion.

Results and Analysis

Government Stability

Cambodia – Predominantly Low Stability

Leifer (1968) opens his paper on political institutionalization in Cambodia with the statement: “The political system of Cambodia is often—and not inaccurately—described as one of the most stable in Asia” (p. 125). This was primarily due to the “relative absence of upheaval and disturbance which have been the fate of several new Asian states” (p. 125). Leifer (1968) associates this common inference to the perpetuation of French colonial institutions and Norodom Sihanouk’s tenure as figurehead. Cambodia benefits in the measure of institutional durability because of this history. Regardless of suspect democratic practices or personality politics, the institutions that formed a majority of Cambodia’s structural political identity remained consistent. However, a failing economy and lack of development soured favor towards Sihanouk in both the constituency and government (Kiernan, 2002). Lon Nol, a former Prime Minister and political rival to Sihanouk, would lead a 1970 coup which intensified elements of instability. The establishment of the Khmer Republic, despite urban and student support, resulted in the deterioration of influence over the countryside (Benzaquen-Gautier, 2021). This would result in the complete unravelling of governmental control over the countryside, which deepened faults in the incumbent government’s durability. Cambodia earns a medium for institutional durability. Sihanouk’s decades-long presence as figurehead and delicate statecraft slightly improve Cambodia’s score on institutional durability; however, Lon Nol’s hasty decision to side with the United States immediately after an unstable

Table 1. *Results of variable comparison questions – Government Stability.*

Question	Cambodia (Mostly Low)	Thailand (Very High)	Philippines (Mostly Medium)
Institutional durability	Medium	High	High
Territorial control	Low	High	Medium
Legitimacy of authority	Low	High	Medium

transfer of authority cost the country the balance of power.

Cambodia's geopolitics requires a careful consideration of regional actors. North Vietnam and the United States allowed their conflict to seep deep into Cambodian borders and, naturally, politics. Sihanouk maintained a secret working relationship with the North Vietnamese, essentially extorting them for territorial access (Kiernan, 2002). Then, in 1967, the Kingdom of Cambodia successfully suppressed a rebellion in the northwestern province of Smlaut. Paul et al. (2013) describes this event as "the opening act in what would, in time, become a much more consequential insurgency" (310). Cambodia's labyrinthian countryside allowed the Communist Party of Kampuchea to recover, reconvene, and recruit with the assistance of the North Vietnamese (Paul et al., 2013). NVA presence in Cambodia reached a point critical enough to warrant the Cambodian Incursion, a devastating bombing campaign on the Khmer-Vietnamese border perpetrated by the United States (Kiernan, 2002; Paul et al. 2013). Upon assuming power, Lon Nol's regime became hostile towards North Vietnam and subsequently sided with the United States. This did little to push the balance of power in the incumbent government's favor for, at this point, the Cambodian periphery had become an arena for a uniquely internationalized civil conflict. The Khmer Republic's decision to side with the United States only motivated heightened NVA support for the Khmer Rouge (Paul, 2013). After American withdrawal, the communist coalition boasted a more capable fighting force and a firmer grip on the countryside. By 1971, rebels dominated the country's outskirts (Gordon and Young, 1971). For this, Cambodia scores low on territorial control.

Prior to 1970, citizens in conflict areas regarded Sihanouk's regime as legitimate (Paul et al., 2013). The Cambodian left's increase in influence, the urban elite's growing displeasure, and Sihanouk's slipping authority made Cambodian neutrality all the more unsustainable (Paul et al., 2013). Subsequently, the Vietnam War encroached further into Cambodian soil and as previously discussed, dispossessed Lon Nol's regime

of the countryside. Widespread corruption, facilitated by the provision of American aid, allowed the theme of political decomposition to take hold throughout the country (Kiernan, 2002). The transition from kingdom to republic only implemented cosmetic changes as much of the rifts which led to Sihanouk's collapse endured. Elites benefitted from this imperfect government, as they were primarily responsible for the corruption that delegitimized the post-Sihanouk regime (Kiernan, 2002). Coupled with the unfavorable views towards the government held by the population occupying the conflict area (Paul et al., 2013), the Khmer Republic's claim to legitimacy atrophied. Because of this, the Khmer Rouge merely had to wait for the Republic's "imminent disappearance" (Kiernan, 2002, p. 462). Therefore, Cambodia scores low on legitimacy of authority.

Thailand – Very High Stability

Much like Cambodia, Thailand earned a reputation for stability. A record of independence, flexible responses to regional power dynamics, and ethnoreligious homogeneity have historically produced stable political conditions (Neher, 1975). Despite experiencing 19 coups since 1912, the institutions foundational to this stability existed relatively unscathed. Monarchic influence, military political intervention, and elite interests have defined the essence of Thai governance throughout its various authoritarian, military, and democratic iterations (Hewison and Kitirianglar, 2010; Girling, 1977; Farrelly, 2013). Coup-making is normally symptomatic of political instability—in Cambodia it had a direct hand in the dwindling durability of the incumbent government—but in Thailand it is a natural product of its core properties. Neher (1992), on this point, points to a lack of an institutionalized succession process that gives way to coup culture. Furthermore, they add that a strong bureaucracy and weak party institutionalization contribute to policy continuity between instances of military-led succession. This concentration of power possibly contributed to the comprehensive military response and effective pivot to sociopolitical solutions. Because of how relevant Thailand's

stabilizing characteristics remained throughout the course of the CPT insurgency, it scores a high in government stability.

Communist insurgency in Thailand manifested mostly along its borders. By 1978, the Thai People's Liberation Army, the CPT's militant wing, spread to two-thirds of the country's provinces and boasted approximately 15,000 guerrillas (Weatherbee, 1983). Initially, Thailand opted for a highly militarized response with some ancillary developmental improvements (Thomas, 1986). The northeastern region of Nakae acted as the nexus of the Thai insurrection and faced a sweep-and-encircle military offensive that severely crippled the movement (Casella, 1970; Thomas, 1986). Unlike Cambodia, Thailand exercised military control over its problem areas. Additionally, the government implemented locally-recruited counterinsurgency units called Rangers to ensure its military presence secured itself in perpetuity (Thomas, 1986). Thailand scores high in territorial control.

Part of Thailand's stability can be explained by a ubiquitous acquiescence to military control. Neher (1975) notes that Thai people believe their government is capable of solving problems, most effectively so under an authoritarian structure. Military authoritarianism was privileged in Thailand, for it had offered the country a lasting conservative stability. The coups that represented a shift to bureaucratic rule in the 1970s did little to redefine the nature of Thai political legitimacy (Marks, 1980). Prime Minister Prem Tinsulanonda issued the directive largely responsible for slowing, if not entirely halting, the insurgency. Order 66/2523 offered amnesty for insurgents and, consistent with Tinsulanonda's parliamentary emphasis, offered democratic alternatives to armed rebellion. The shift towards a parliamentary framework accommodated the elite and middle class to coincide with that of the military, bureaucracy, and monarchy (Ramsay, 1987). Considering this, Thailand scores high on legitimacy of authority.

Philippines – Predominantly Medium Stability

Several scholars have identified the Philippines as a "weak state" (Kraft, 2003; Montinola, 1999;

Abinales, 2008). The archipelagic state has earned this designation through its faltering, yet somewhat persistent, democratic institutions (Montinola, 1999). The United States' footprint exists contemporarily in terms of democratic institutional influence—the Philippine government emulates the presidential political system and maintains many aspects of American colonial rule. Elite dominance over democracy, provincial politics, patron-client networks, weak ideology, and powerful presidency are hallmarks of Philippine democracy directly derived from American colonial institutions (Hutchcroft and Rocamora, 2003; Abinales, 2008). Such conditions, despite the changes wrought by the Marcos regime and the People Power movement, warrant a high score for institutional durability.

Buhaug et al.(2009) underscore how geography factors into the relative military power of both the incumbent government and rebel groups. They write: "Short of victory or surrender, the decision to continue to fight is shaped by the ability to wage war. In this regard geography plays a critical role in determining the dynamics of armed civil conflict" (566). Evidenced by the protraction of this conflict, both sides have maintained the ability to wage war. The NPA has historically used the country's mountainous topography to clandestinely organize new cadres and initiate broad offensives while still remaining inaccessible (Kessler, 1989). Questions surrounding the control other rebel groups exert over their respective regions also destabilize governmental claims on legitimacy. The allocation of autonomous regions to the Bangsamoro people, although providing peace to an extent, does not bode well for the government's control over territory or overall claim to legitimacy. Taking domestic and international relationships together, the Philippine incumbent government cannot be earnestly described as capable of weathering multiple rebellions on its own.

Territorial control and legitimacy are heavily intertwined in the case of the Philippines. Its constant engagements with Islamic, separatist, and communist insurgents cannot be sustained without external aid, specifically from the United States. Kraft (2003) diagnoses the persistence

of rebel groups in the Philippines as not the cause of instability, but rather a symptom of certain governmental weaknesses. Kraft (2003) reports the lack of economic development in the periphery as a major impediment to the Philippine government's legitimacy. Tusalem (2020) dubs this tendency the "imperial Manila syndrome," giving name to the positive relationship between capital proximity and provision of development aid. We can see why unrest and dissatisfaction brew in the fringes of the country: the further a province is from Manila, the less likely it is to receive development funds. Understanding that the NPA operates primarily through the countryside (Santos et al., 2010), it is imperative for the incumbent government to reinforce legitimacy and combat radicalization in these areas. Philippine authority is barely passable in these areas, and a prolonged inability to offer any comprehensive political, economic, or social solutions to areas ripe for rebellion would put the last two criteria for this variable in legitimate crisis. As it currently stands, though, the Philippines earns a medium in both territorial control and legitimacy of authority.

Rivalry Intensity

Cambodia, Thailand, and the Philippines – Very High Rivalry Intensity

All three conflicts score very high on all three metrics of rivalry intensity. The shared geopolitical context offers a strong explanation for this continuity. As mentioned in my case selection, ideological intrastate conflicts often found themselves internationalized given the global reach of capitalist-communist competition. Instead of disaggregating analysis by country, this section will examine the most prevalent interstate rivalries present throughout this case. Two actors in particular were involved in competitive interventions throughout all three cases: the United States and Vietnam. This dyad will receive the most attention because it

accounts for a majority of the rivalry intensity shared between each conflict.

Major Rivalry – The United States (Incumbent) vs. North Vietnam (Rebel)

What began as an endeavor of containment turned into an unpredictably multifaceted conflict that far surpassed its original boundaries. Ho Chi Minh's (HCM) Marxist-Leninist leanings placed him diametrically opposite to the liberal democratic ideology that drove American foreign policy. HCM viewed the capitalist project as imperialist encroachment denying the Vietnamese people the right to self-determination (Kahn et al., 1970, p. 69), while western liberals believed Communism to be their greatest existential threat (Nixon et al., 1970, p. 256). To avoid belaboring the point, these actors harbored an intractable antagonism, easily earning a high on ideological polarity.

Both parties had ample reason to invest highly in the outcome of these conflicts. For one, Vietnam shares a border with Cambodia, is one country away from Thailand, and is across the South China Sea from the Philippines. Facilitating a victory for their benefactors would establish a crucial strategic foothold in an already ideologically contentious region. Maintaining or overthrowing an incumbent government meant expanding their sphere of influence while minimizing rival presence. Vietnam and the United States considered their rival's involvement as part of their policy calculus, echoing Mitton's (2017) analysis of competitive intervention. I will discuss which specific interests motivated each rival's outlook on intervention and how they congruently escalated their regional competition.

The American-Vietnamese engagement threatened to destabilize the Indochinese region. President Nixon, Clark Clifford, and even the Foreign Ministry of the DRV all expressed awareness to the urgency of a peace resolution

Question	Cambodia (Very High)	Thailand (Very High)	Philippines (Very High)
Ideological polarity	High	High	High
Investment in outcome	High	High	High
Historical tensions	High	High	High

(Kahn et al., 1970; Nixon et al., 1970). Nixon's indecision on whether to reinforce or withdraw troops stems from his concerns regarding sanctuaries on the Cambodian-Vietnamese border (Kahn et al., 1970, p. 254). Both nations had considerable stake in the domestic conditions of Cambodia because it bore serious implications on how to solve the "Vietnamese problem." The eradication of these sanctuaries would have at least somewhat altered the balance of power in the direct conflict involving these two parties.

But what about the Philippines and Thailand? For the United States, the gravity of ideological containment molded their foreign policy: "During the Cold War, [America] saw itself as having a responsibility to mobilize and defend the non-communist world, including the Southeast Asian region, against the communist powers" (Landé, 2001, p. 524). American Cold-War statecraft espoused a by-any-means approach, even resorting to supporting right-wing authoritarian regimes in the Philippines and Thailand to stave the threat of communist spread. This policy paid potent dividends, as now the United States gained valuable access to the region through these allies (Landé, 2001; Hewison, 2020). In contrast, the communist strategy in Southeast Asia was far more straightforward and reactionary: the goad of Western imperialism necessitated a revolutionary response (Sacks, 1950, p. 247). To summarize, the combination of direct and ideological conflict made the larger battle of Southeast Asia imperative for both rivals. The U.S.-Viet rivalry had progressed into war for over a decade during the onset of the conflicts being observed, evidencing the intensity of the tensions. For these reasons, this rivalry receives a high measure in both investment in outcome and historical tensions.

Minor Rivalries – China, Libya, and Laos

Aside from the U.S.-Vietnam dyad, other actors offered support. Appendix B outlines the external actors present in each conflict, with interstate rivals italicized. The three actors discussed will be pro-rebel governments competing against the United States. For the sake of brevity, these countries will not be discussed in the same length

as the preceding analysis and will be instead assigned an overall score.

China and the United States have a medium intensity rivalry. China and the United States endured a period of heightened competition that tapered into neutrality starting in the 1970s (Terrill, 1980). Terill (1980) posits that China no longer worried about American hegemonic expansionism due to their recent failure in Vietnam and the diversifying basis of power in the East Asian region. Although China did competitively intervene against the United States, the intensity of their rivalry wavered.

Libya and the United States have a medium intensity rivalry. Tensions between Libya and the United States spiked exponentially after Muammar al Qadhafi's assumption of power. The nationalization of Libyan oil, sponsorship of anti-West rebel groups, and killing of Libyan dissidents fostered animosities between the two nations (Blanchard and Zanottie, 2011). However, the Qadhafi regime altered its posture towards America after the turn of the century, inviting a more positive political relationship (al-Qadafi, 2003).

Laos and the United States have a medium intensity rivalry. Like China and Libya, Laos did not have a favorable relationship with the United States. An extensive air raid campaign, thorough clandestine involvement, and American furtiveness about CIA operations soured U.S.-Laos relations (Zasloff, 1973). The process of diplomatic warming began in the 1980s after domestic pressure in the United States pushed for joint MIA/POW searches in Laos (Thayer, 2010). Shortly after the end of the Thai insurgency, the United States and Laos engaged in more joint recovery efforts, eventually appointing ambassadors (Thayer, 2010).

Mutual Interest

Cambodia – Mixed Mutual Interest

Cambodia's unique circumstances originate from the tumultuous Khmer-Sino-Viet triad following the First Indochinese War. An uneasy partitioning of colonial territory brewed resentment between the three states, resulting in claims of betrayal decades after the Geneva

Question	Cambodia (Mixed)	Thailand (Very High)	Philippines (Very High)
Cooperation	Low	High	High
Ideological similarity	High	High	High
Equal stakes in outcome	High	High	High

Conference of 1954 (Nguyen-vo, 1992). The ideological ties which bound these three nations would be thoroughly tested during the course of the Second Indochinese War. In the early stages of conflict, the Sihanouk regime facilitated PAVN access into South Vietnam through sanctuaries on the Cambodian border (Henderson and Pike, 1971). Sihanouk's regime, while aiming to satisfy American demands of neutrality, secretly partnered with the North Vietnamese to exchange territorial access for a cut of smuggled materiel (Paul et al., 2013). Nevertheless, this cooperation rested on shaky perceptions of mutual benefit as the Khmer Rouge were wary of Vietnamese support from the start, even committing acts of fratricide as early as 1970 (Nguyen-vo, 1992, p. 68). Kampuchean anxieties were undoubtedly related to strongly held beliefs of Vietnamese betrayal in Geneva. According to Nguyen-vo (1992):

Pol Pot's group even cynically attributed Hanoi's desire to halt the advance of the revolution in Kampuchea to Vietnamese fears of an early KCP victory in which case Cambodia could not be made into a Vietnamese satellite. (p. 71)

By the second stage of the Cambodian Civil War, Cambodian-Vietnamese relations had become so contentious that the DRV essentially isolated the Khmer Rouge after signing the Paris Peace Accords.

Sihanouk's regime set Khmer-American relations to a difficult start. Sihanouk's inability to restrict North Vietnamese access through the Cambodian bordered broke the country's carefully curated diplomatic independence, resulting in a severance of ties with the United States (Paul et al., 2013; Kiernan, 2002). As Pol Pot's rebellion rapidly intensified, largely in part of the neighboring conflict entering Cambodian territory, American policymakers began seriously considering supporting the Khmer Rouge's incumbent opposition. U.S. involvement first manifested through the Cambodian Incursion but would turn into provision of materiel and

financial aid in 1970 (Gordon and Young, 1971). Considering the troubled relationship between Khmer and Vietnamese communists and the limited history of cooperation between the incumbent government and the United States, Cambodia scores a low in cooperation.

The next two measurements have been examined in depth through the preceding discussion. A brief summary would suffice in justifying this selection. First, the Khmer Rouge and North Vietnamese political ideologies overlapped nearly entirely due to their communist identities. For the United States, supporting Lon Nol's regime meant containing the ideological spread of communism, aligning with the fulcrum of its foreign policy. As far as stakes go, the outcome of a civil conflict is naturally of utmost importance for both states since victory ultimately decides which party has the ability to determine national identity. For Vietnam and the United States, controlling NVA sanctuaries meant altogether eradicating Cambodia's inadvertent obstruction of peace resolutions (Nixon et al., 1970). Cambodia scores a high on ideological similarity and equal stakes.

Thailand and the Philippines - Very High Mutual Interest

Since both countries share identical scores, they will be recounted in tandem. Filipino-American relations sustain a colonial dynamic which, as Abinales (2008) notes, is evident in the former's contemporary institutions and governances. However, this paper will start at the Manila Pact of 1954, which marked the creation of the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) and serves as the origination point for U.S.-Thai and U.S.-Philippine security relations (Chanlett-Avery and Dolven, 2012). This symbolized their respective governments' alignment with the west in the larger overarching conflict of the Cold War. Unlike Cambodia, these two nations displayed no hesitation in courting American sponsorship.

This behavior will be explained further later. On the rebel side, both the Communist Party of Thailand (CPT) and Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) began their armed struggle with Maoist inclinations (Weatherbee, 1983). This aligned them initially with Vietnam, but as Sino-Viet relations worsened, both countries reevaluated their ideological lines (Weatherbee, 1983). Although rebel-side cooperation was not as thorough, both countries receive a high cooperation rating due to the incumbent government's long-standing relationship with the United States.

Analysis of ideological similarity and equal stakes will be compounded given the unique circumstances of American presence. American partiality in these two countries' governments can be attributed to long periods of American influence. Hewison (2020) reveals how American involvement in Thai domestic politics catalyzed the country's propensity for conservative and authoritarian military regimes. U.S. decision to back such regimes came as a reactionary response to Pridi Banomyong's anti-imperialist sympathies (Hewison, 2020). In the Philippines, however, policy stances were arranged according to the pillar of American support. Not only did the Philippines inherit the bulk of its political identity from American institutions, but it also developed a political subservience stemming from its manifold dependencies on the United States (Sen, 2005). American centrality in Philippine foreign relations earned the country a reputation for being "a spokesperson for American interests" (Sen, 2005, p. 85). Because U.S. interests were so integral to the political calculus of Thailand and the Philippines' incumbent government, regardless of the shaky ideological links between Vietnam and the CPT/CPP, both receive a high rating in ideological similarity. In addition, the previously asserted point of the existential nature of civil conflicts, coupled with the dependence between the U.S. and incumbent governments, warrant a high equal stakes in outcome score.

Intervention Mechanism

Table 4. Results of variable comparison questions - Intervention Mechanism.

With respect to the intervention process model (Figure 2), I will use this portion to present collected data and contextualize the previous three variables. Table 4 presents higher levels of variation between cases because they reflect the nature of actors' decision-making in totality. In other words, each conflict contains a set of conditions, idiosyncrasies, and variables in addition to the four proposed which add attendant nuance. Regardless, this paper will make sense of this data within the appropriate scope.

Cambodia – Highly militarized, medium-term commitment, and incumbent-heavy

Cambodia's low intervention diversity means the external parties engaged in the conflict with a highly militarized portfolio. North Vietnamese backing of Khmer Rouge began in 1970 after the recently ousted Sihanouk decided to form the National United Front of Kampuchea (FUNK) with the Khmer Rouge, Khmer Rumdos, and Khmer Issarak (Nguyen-vo, 1992; Henderson, 1971). Rebel-side assistance manifested in three ways: joint military operations, provisions of small arms, and military training (Nguyen-vo, 1992). On the "incumbent" side, America declared its support for the Khmer Republic in 1970 (Nixon et al., 1970). Domestic tensions resulted in a short-lived U.S. ground operation which was succeeded by a devastating bombing campaign (Kiernan, 2002). According to Kiernan (2002) this operation killed 100,000 total Cambodians, inadvertently radicalizing countless others into the armed communist struggle. Between 1973-1975, the United States continued providing "large-scale...military assistance to the Republican forces based in the cities" (Kiernan, 2002, p. 485). Provision of rebel-side aid barely lasted three years, as Vietnamese forces basically withdrew after the signing of the Paris Peace

Question	Cambodia	Thailand	Philippines
Intervention diversity	Low	Low	Low
Intervention commitment	Medium	High	Medium
Intervener parity	Low	Low	Low

Accords, aside from some sporadic support in the countryside (Kiernan, 2002). Vietnamese presence, which barely accounted for 60% of the duration of rival interventions, lowers the commitment level of Cambodia's intervention. Sustained levels of support from the United States even out the overall score to a medium. Additionally, the drastic asymmetry in resources and military power brings intervener parity down to a low.

Analyzing my hypotheses within this case gives insight into the merits of the process-based model. Cambodia, or the Khmer Republic, earned a mostly low categorization for government stability. The aspects of this variable key to this case, territorial control and legitimacy of authority, seemed to play an important role in defining the incumbent government's weaknesses. Vietnamese sanctuaries and the bolstered optics of the Khmer Rouge resulting from American strikes undermined the stability of the Lon Nol regime, making it highly susceptible to rebel takeover.

The next two variables, however, do not fare as strongly. While the interstate rivalry between the United States and Vietnam was incredibly contentious, it did not result in heightened NVA presence for the last two years of the conflict. The United States retained a more visible presence, perhaps because of its investment in the persistence of the Khmer Republic. Yet the explanatory value of variable 3 (mutual interest) cannot be confidently asserted if only one rival party remained engaged in intervention.

Finally, variable 4 (intervention methodology) produces mixed results. On one hand, American sanctuary strikes mobilized the peasantry to join the armed struggle. This produced an unexpected effect. The subsequent change was not a more asymmetric conflict but rather a landslide movement in the balance of power. Kubota (2011) notes that the Khmer Rouge capitalized on ideological appeal, socioeconomic reforms, Sihanouk's reputation, and resentment towards the United States to their recruitment efforts. By 1973, they boasted a fighting force formidable enough to have exhibited complete control over the Cambodian countryside, positioning them strongly for their advance into Phnom Penh.

Thailand – Highly militarized, long-term commitment, incumbent-heavy

Like Cambodia, the Thai communist insurgency is defined by highly militarized forms of intervention. The United States had always regarded the northeastern region of Thailand as an important security threat (Hewison, 2020). America, throughout its patronage of Thailand during this conflict, offered the military works: training, funding, intelligence, and provision of materiel (Uexkull and Pettersson, 2018; Hewison, 2020). Support for the CPT came primarily in the form of weapons, materiel, training, access to territory, and recruitment opportunities (Uexkull and Pettersson, 2018; Hewison, 2020). Laos also contributed a smaller, yet crucial, form of support by offering sanctuary for CPT along their border supply routes (Hewison, 2020). China's response to the Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia disrupted the CPT's external support network entirely. Meanwhile, the United States maintained its influential grip on Thailand through continued military aid. While rebel-side support wavered, the amount of resources poured into Thailand and the relatively heightened engagement from both sides makes for high intervention commitment.

Needless to say, the United States was the most capable party out of all external actors. To spare redundancy, the sheer scale of resources and influence at American disposal skews parity heavily in favor of the United States. The unstable Khmer-Sino-Viet triad compromised the reliability of rebel-side support, notwithstanding the comparatively strained resources shared between this network. As global hegemon, the United States was willing to invest incredible amounts of military and financial support into the region to fortify its presence in Indochina.

I will now discuss my hypotheses in the context of the Thai incursion. Variable 1 (government stability) appears to be a strong indicator of how third-party intervention affects tractability. The incredibly stable government of Thailand, buoyed by tremendous amounts of American support, weathered both the political pressure and military offensives of the CPT. To a similar end, the abrupt cessation of external support

end, the abrupt cessation of external support for the rebel side essentially guaranteed a power balance favorable to the incumbent government (Thomas, 1986). Bilateral support remained consistent until 1972, when CPT's sponsor network crumbled (Uexkull and Pettersson, 2018; Hewison, 2020). A few inferences can be drawn from this trend: first, that the process of protraction had taken hold as the conflict had persisted for seventeen years; second, that the Vietnam-U.S. rivalry was strong enough to warrant long-term involvement; third, that both sponsor-civil party dyads shared enough mutual interest to maintain such a presence. The only external factor that the model does not account for are potential competitions between allied intervenors. These observations make a strong case for the explanatory value of variables 2 (rivalry intensity) and 3 (mutual interest). Variable 4 (intervention mechanism) requires careful consideration. The CPT opted to engage in guerilla warfare at the start of the war (Hewison, 2020), so attributing that development to intervention produces only suspect conclusions. Perhaps future framing of this variable would consider the nature of combat at the onset of conflict

Philippines – Highly militarized, long-term commitment, and incumbent-heavy

The Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) has benefited from third-party support the most out of all incumbent governments. The United States provided access to infrastructure, joint operations, weapons, materiel, funding, and training (Uexkull and Pettersson, 2018). The NPA has also benefitted from warfighting-focused support: intelligence, funding, training, weapons, and access to infrastructure (Uexkull and Pettersson, 2018). In line with Cambodia and Thailand, the Philippines' received support is largely militarized.

As seen in Appendix B, the New Peoples' Army has received aid from multiple sources. A quick glance at these third parties would do much to substantiate the low parity score—none of those nations, at least in the time frame of their involvement formidably challenged the United States. Furthermore, according to the UCDP

database, a majority of Libyan support for the NPA is alleged. If this is true, then the NPA have been cut off from interstate support since 1990, drastically lowering their intervener commitment. Unlike Thailand, level of U.S. involvement does not adequately offset the rebel-side absence to justify a high score. Thirty years of absent rebel-side conflict bring the Philippines' intervention commitment metric to a medium.

The GRP's stability does not paint the entire picture of its ability to withstand rebellion. While its institutions are strong, the GRP's lack of comprehensive territorial control impede its ability to challenge rebel authority in certain areas (Holden, 2013; Rubin, 2020). Additionally, for variable 2 (rivalry intensity), perhaps the logistical difficulties of providing support across the South China Sea prevented Vietnam and China from full committing to a comprehensive intervention. For variable 3 (mutual interest), the NPA's emphasis on Maoist principles may have altered their interdependency with Vietnam. Lastly, like the case of Thailand, associating causality of asymmetric tactics to militarized intervention ignores the starting conditions of conflict. It is important to note that, although rival-side support has ceased over the last three decades, the conflict remains protracted. The cessation of third-party support for the NPA somewhat coincides with the bilateral Comprehensive Agreement to Respect Human Rights and International Humanitarian Human Law (CARHRIHL) effort issued in 1998 (Marchadesch, 2017). One-sided intervention therefore does not always produce the expedited conclusion observed in Thailand.

Conclusion

This thesis advocates for a process-based approach to analyzing the protraction of intrastate conflicts. Instead of observing protraction as a phenomenon with a singular discernable root, this thesis accounts for the interplay between actors' decision-making and the material conditions of a conflict. Government stability, interstate rivalry, and mutual interest make up the guiding logic of intervention which then manifests in the particular intervention approaches adopted in the civil conflict. To briefly summarize the outcome

of my hypotheses: the case studies offered strong arguments in support of H1, weak arguments on behalf of H2 and H3, and revealed a need to re-frame H4.

This paper determines that government stability, namely its ability to control territory and establish legitimacy, are strong indicators of conflict tractability. Stable governments, once sponsored, are more likely to shift the balance of power in their favor. Furthermore, it identifies that interstate rivalry and mutual interests were, for the most part, closely tied between these cases. Ideological similarities oftentimes lead to congruent policy interests, thus translating into similar levels of investment in conflict and stakes in outcome. This relationship cannot be posited with ultimate certainty, however, as the continuity of rivals and regional politics distorts the generalizability of this claim. Finally, this paper asserts the importance of contextuality in observing the material implications of intervention. Changes in the conflict landscape will appear opaque if the independent variable is framed in a way that glosses over its initial state.

Approaching protraction in terms of duration poses complications for these conclusions. One on hand, Thailand's lopsided balance of power allowed the incumbent government to eradicate communist opposition. However, in the case of Cambodia, one-sided intervention on behalf of a failing government resulted in a swift conclusion, but on behalf of the rebel group. Finally, in the case of the Philippines, although rebel-side support ceased nearly three decades ago, the conflicts persists.

Future research should continue to explore this process-based approach. Firstly, subsequent works in this field should reframe the variable of intervention method to acknowledge the initial state of a conflict. Instead of assuming an inherent necessitation of asymmetric tactics, future research could explore the directionality of highly militarized intervention. Since this thesis opted for a qualitative approach, additional research can utilize quantitative methodology to explore this model. Using the UCDP database or expanding it may provide further insight into the relationship between third-party intervention and

conflict duration.

One final and crucial consideration would be to disaggregate civil dyads under this process-based approach. A major flaw in this thesis' research design is the designation of an overall score for a variable made of three separate components accounting for two actors. To reduce such complex networks of relations and interdependencies to a "low-medium-high" scale removes the nuance necessary to approach a confident conclusion. Future designs should disaggregate the civil dyad to identify how different incumbent or rebel conditions shape the decision-making process of interstate rivals.

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