

**Come Together To Fall Apart:
Civil War Outbreak Following Wars of Liberation**

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Abstract: This paper examines the relationship between wars of liberation and the outbreak of civil war. Through the qualitative analysis of the case studies of China and Greece, the paper argues that wars of liberation increase the probability for civil war by increasing the capabilities of rebel movements and creating an environment of instability conducive to bargaining problems and the escalation of civil war.

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Part I: Introduction

Motivation of the Paper

On September 19, 1931, in the midst of a bitter civil war between the Chinese Communist and Nationalist Parties, Japan invaded Manchuria. As the Japanese army began a brutal “kill all, burn all, destroy all” campaign against the Chinese people, the Communist Party (CCP) and the Nationalist Party (KMT) took action that was somewhat extraordinary – they suspended their own war and joined together to fight another.¹ In 1936, at the height of Japan’s brutal violence against the Chinese, the CCP and the KMT united to create the (albeit shaky) United Front alliance to defend their communal motherland against a barbaric invasion. Together, they were able to defeat and eventually expel the Japanese from China after nearly a decade of fighting.

In this unique and puzzling case, the invasion of the Japanese suspended the ongoing between the opposing Communist and Nationalist Parties. The Japanese provided a literal common enemy that united both forces to fight for “the defense of the fatherland against alleged domestic traitors or foreign invaders.”² With the invasion of an external enemy, the opposing forces were faced with the choice to either continue fighting each other, which would weaken the state and benefit the third party, or join to form a united front, and together fight for the liberation of their country. Neither the CCP nor the KMT would have benefited from the complete demise and takeover of their country by a third party actor. Each party would have been decidedly worse off if they fought among themselves, and they were both more likely to lose to the Japanese if they remained divided. Therefore, the decision to join forces and

¹ Anthony James Joes. “China: The Long War, 1929-1949,” in *Victorious Insurgencies: Four Rebellions that Shaped Our World* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2010), 38.

² Joes, “China,” 41.

form an alliance to fight a war of liberation was the logical, equally beneficial option for both parties. Rational choice theory asserts “that actors make rational choices in an attempt to reach their most preferred outcome.”³ Assuming each party is a rational actor that acts according to their optimal interests, joining forces to defeat a common external enemy offers each party an opportunity for both survival and eventual power.

However, when the time came to negotiate a peace treaty to officially establish a post-war China, this surprising moment of unity, however uneasy, did not manifest into a lasting peace agreement. Instead, the Nationalist-Communist alliance quickly dissolved, along with any hope for a power-sharing coalition. The inability of each party to compromise led to bargaining failure, which escalated to a bloody civil war that lasted for another four years and caused further destruction in the already war-torn China.

The Sino-Japanese War killed fifteen to twenty million Chinese people, left property irreparably destroyed, and exhausted and demoralized both the Communist and Nationalist armies. So why, then, did the Communists and Nationalists engage in another war, so soon after expelling forces that had taken such a toll on their country? Over the next four years, the civil war left China even more damaged than before, further demolished the Chinese society and economy, and inflicted staggering casualties and losses on each side of the war.

This sequence of events intrigues and begs the question: How recurrent is this pattern of war of liberation alliance to civil war enemies? Is the case of China an anomaly, or is this pattern a common phenomenon through history? If China is an isolated incident, why did relations in that particular case break down, if other countries have been successful in navigating post-war peace efforts? And finally, if

³ Stephen L. Quackenbush, L. “The Rationality of Rational Choice Theory,” *International Interactions* 30 (2004): 103.

post-war of liberation to civil war is a common phenomenon, then what reasons or causal mechanisms can account for this breakdown in relations and onset of war?

This paper will examine this post-liberation to civil war question. Through qualitative research and case studies, this paper will attempt to answer whether or not this seemingly illogical sequence of events is a common phenomenon, and if it is, uncover the reasons why. The first section of this paper will provide operational definitions for the related concepts; explain the initial and revised hypotheses, and present preliminary findings. The second section will review current literature on the subject, and present the research question and hypothesis in the larger context of civil war literature. The third section will then present the research design and the case studies used to test the validity of the hypothesis. The fourth section will explain and analyze the research design's findings to support the hypothesis, and present implications for future courses of study. Finally, the conclusion will reconcile the original research question with the findings and summarize the paper's contribution to the existing civil war literature.

Part II: Literature Review, Theory, and Hypothesis

Operational Definitions of Concepts

For the purpose of this paper, a *war of liberation* is defined as any large-scale violence between two or more states, with the aggressor state occupying the country in question. This definition extends to include wars for independence, border conflicts, or conflicts situated within the context of a larger war. The definition "wars of liberation" is extended to include struggles for independence, such as the former colony Algeria fighting for liberation from France; border wars, such as the India-Pakistani conflict over Bangladesh; or smaller conflicts within the context of larger war, such as the German

occupation of Greece during World War II. The paper utilizes the definition for civil war from Roy Licklider, whose dataset is used to compile a list of all civil wars between 1945 and 1993.⁴ A *civil war*, as defined by Licklider, is any large-scale violence between groups holding sovereignty within a recognized state, with the following qualifications:

1. Leaders of each opposition group must hold concerns about the possibility of sharing the same political unit with their current enemy once the conflict ends.
2. The region must be subject to multiple sovereignty – that is, the population of the area must recognize and obey more than one institution or party.
3. The large-scale violence, as defined by the Correlates of War Project, must correspond with 1,000 or more battle deaths per year, and involve effective resistance from both sides of the opposition.

These definitions will be used to identify and qualify relevant case studies to test the proposed hypothesis. For our research design, a civil war must begin within five years of the conclusion of the war of liberation to be considered part of the post-war of liberation to civil war phenomenon.

Central Argument and Hypothesis

The initial hypothesis held that China was an anomaly, and that a war of liberation would decrease the likelihood of a future civil war. If there is a war of liberation, the hypothesis proposed, then it would expose the population to both to the overwhelming costs of war and each opposing groups' capacity for violence, thus lessening the potential for bargaining problems and decreasing the likelihood of a future civil war:

War of liberation □ **Exposes costs of war, opposing groups' capabilities** □ **decrease bargaining problems** □ **power sharing agreement, peace**

⁴ Licklider, "Consequences of Negotiated Settlements," 681-690.

The escalation of civil war is often attributed to bargaining failure, which arises when neither side is willing to reach a mutually respected compromise. The bargaining theory asserts that, “given its costs, war should occur only when at least one state is uncertain about the capabilities or resolve of the other, or when otherwise unwilling or unable to comply with a negotiated settlement.”⁵ The initial hypothesis argued that a war of liberation would work to prevent bargaining problems and escalation to civil war via two separate mechanisms. First, the war would expose the capabilities of each group that fought in the conflict, thus lessening perceived uncertainties between the two groups, and decreasing the chances for bargaining problems. The second mechanism revolves around the high costs of war. There is no dispute that war, civil or otherwise, is expensive. In addition to significantly weakening a country financially, war is costly both politically and socially. Both the Communist and Nationalist Parties in China would have weathered fewer economic and strategic losses if they had taken the resources they had previously invested in to defeat the Japanese and divided them among themselves, rather than engaging in a civil war. In a civil war especially, each side stands more to lose – there is a greater likelihood of loss for each side when the fighting is internal. Therefore, the second mechanism argues that a war of liberation would discourage future conflict because it tangibly conceptualizes the damages and costs of war.

Thus, the initial hypothesis claimed that after fighting a war together, each party would be cognizant of both each other’s capabilities of violence and of the staggering costs of armed conflict. Both of these mechanisms – the known costs of war and the mutual transparency in capability – would work to prevent a civil war from occurring again, or at least from occurring in the immediate future. If

⁵ Christopher Butler and Scott Gates. “Asymmetry, Parity, and (Civil) War: Can International Theories of Power Help Us Understand Civil War?.” *International Interactions* 35 (2009): 330.

each party is aware of the other's capabilities, this decreases the "unknown" mechanism of the bargaining problem. If the initial hypothesis held true, and the Chinese Civil War was simply an extraordinary case, then two parties would be able to reach a fair, balanced power-sharing agreement, and establish a stable government peacefully, without succumbing to bargaining problems.

Preliminary research, however, did not uphold this hypothesis. Though a complete dataset of all wars of liberation was not available for use, a comparison of Roy Licklider's data from his research on negotiated settlements following civil wars and Michael Clodfelter's comprehensive dataset of all armed conflicts from 1945 to 1991 showed that 58 countries have experienced civil war between 1945 and 1993.⁶ Of those 58 countries, 19 have experienced wars of liberation within five years prior to the civil war outbreak.⁷ These cases indicate that rather than decrease the chances of civil war outbreak, wars of liberation could rather increase its likelihood. In light of these new discoveries, the hypothesis is adjusted. The revised hypothesis argues that wars of liberation ripen conditions conducive to civil war, and increase the likelihood of its outbreak in the future. This paper will argue that wars of liberation increase political instability and the capabilities of rebel movements, which in turn increase a state's vulnerability to civil war.

This revised hypothesis argues that a war of liberation increases the probability of civil war through two separate causal mechanisms as well:

War of liberation □ **political instability, increased capabilities** □ **bargaining problems** □
greater likelihood of civil war

⁶ Roy Licklider, "The Consequences of Negotiated Settlements in Civil Wars, 1945-1993," *The American Political Science Review*, 89 (1995): 681-690.

Michael Clodfelter, *Warfare and Armed Conflicts: A Statistical Reference to Casualty and Other Figures, 1618-1991* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland, 1991): 976-978.

⁷ Please see the endnotes, Table 1, for a complete list of these countries.

First, the increased capabilities of each side – the accumulation of resources, popular support, and power – only exacerbate the mechanisms behind bargaining failure, and do not ease the problem. Rather, the revised hypothesis argues that the previous external war acts as an enabler, and provides each opposing party with the means to produce violence and wage a future civil war. In their conflict with an external enemy, each opposing party obtained the resources necessary to wage (and eventually win) a war of liberation, thus giving them each the capability to produce a significant level of violence. Additionally, each party gained the support of the people, which in turn provided them with both power and confidence in their capabilities. In the end, two sovereign forces were left to rule an unstable country, making conditions ripe for the outbreak of another civil war.

As previously discussed, all wars inflict grave tolls on the country. The revised hypothesis argues that wars of liberation destabilize a country to such a degree that it renders its institutions unable to effectively lead its country into an age of post-war peace and stability. Ravaged by violence, the population is left demoralized and mistrusting toward the state's weakened institutions. Fearon and Laitin identify political instability as a condition particularly indicative of civil war outbreak in their 2003 paper, and Dixon recognizes the variable's high positive relationship with civil war outbreak in his comprehensive research on civil war determinants.⁸ As exemplified in China, whose population and government was ravaged by the invasion of the Japanese, wars of liberation inflict heavy losses upon the country's society and further heightens conditions conducive to civil war, increasing the probability of its outbreak.

⁸ David Laitin and James Fearon, "Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War," *American Political Science Review* 97 (2003): 75-90.

Jeffrey Dixon, "What Causes Civil Wars? Integrating Quantitative Research Findings," *International Studies Review* 11 (2009): 707-735.

The initial hypothesis argued that following a war of liberation, two groups would be able to recognize their weakened state and the outstanding costs of war, and would enter into a more permanent alliance post-wartime, decreasing the likelihood of civil war. The revised hypothesis, and the hypothesis which will be tested by the following research, argues that wars of liberation increase the likelihood for civil war by providing each party with the capabilities for violence, and increasing the environment of instability and chaos conducive to civil war.

Literature Review

Though several authors have written at length on different determinants of civil war, there are virtually no articles that specifically examine the effect of wars of liberation on civil war outbreak. As Jeffrey Dixon remarks in his 2009 paper on the many causes of civil wars, “There has been surprisingly little cumulation of knowledge about the relationship of domestic and international insecurity to civil war.”⁹ Though authors have examined the effects of previous civil wars on the likelihood of its future occurrence, only a handful of authors have examined the effects of international conflict on the probability of civil war. Research from Hegre et al. has claimed that involvement in an interstate war and locational proximity to rivals may increase the probability of civil war, but there is an overall absence of literature directly examining the relationship between wars of liberation and the onset of civil war.¹⁰

⁹ Dixon, “What Causes Civil Wars?”, 717.

¹⁰ Havard Hegre, Tanja Ellingsen, Scott Gates, and Nils Petter Gleditsch, “Toward a Democratic Peace? Democracy, Political Change, and Civil War, 1816-1992,” *The American Political Science Review* 95 (2001): 33-48.

In their 2009 paper, for example, Collier, Hoeffler and Rohner identify the variable “prior civil war” as potentially conducive to civil war, though their ultimate conclusions are ambiguous.¹¹ Collier, Hoeffler and Rohner introduced three relevant legacies of previous civil wars that implicate the future for potential conflict, and are relevant for the purposes of this paper: the psychological, such as internal hatreds, or a sense of “never again”; the material, such as supply of weapons; and finally the organizational, such as the already-mobilized rebel army.¹² Though their variable “Prior War” refers solely to previous civil wars with internal actors in the particular state, and not wars of liberation with external forces, these established constructs will be useful in the examination and analysis of the selected case studies for this paper.

Similarly, in research for their 2003 paper, Fearon and Laitin found that the likelihood of civil war onset is estimated at a 5.25 times greater during the first two years of a country’s independence.¹³ While the paper’s operational definition of *wars of liberation* extends to wars for independence, thus making their research and findings pertinent to this paper, they do not distinctly address the effects of the wars of all liberation in their full capacity. This paper will attempt to address the full effects of wars of liberation, not merely limited to those struggles for independence, and thus expand on the current civil war literature available for this particular subject.

In addition, there is a wealth of existing literature that has examined the causal mechanisms behind the bargaining problem, which, as previously discussed, overwhelmingly attributes for the breakdown in relations between two former allies and the resulting outbreak of civil war. Barbara F. Walter, for example, has written extensively on the mechanisms that lead to the bargaining failure

¹¹ Paul Collier, Anke Hoeffler, and Dominic Rohner, “Beyond Greed and Grievance: Feasibility and Civil War,” *Oxford Economic Papers* 61 (2009): 1-27.

¹² Collier, Hoeffler, and Rohner, “Beyond Greed and Grievance,” 10.

¹³ Fearon and Laitin, “Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War,” 85.

between opposition groups. She argues that civil war negotiations fail not because of indivisible stakes, irreconcilable differences, or high cost tolerances, as other scholars have argued, but because the combatants themselves cannot guarantee a credible arrangement.¹⁴ Walter's arguments will be utilized later on in this paper to better understand how wars of liberation exacerbate the bargaining problem, and increase the probability of the outbreak of civil war.

Observable Implications of the Hypothesis

There are two parts of observable implications that the paper expects to find to confirm the validity of the proposed hypothesis. Most obviously, if the theoretical expectation holds that wars of liberation leads to an increased probability of war, then a war of liberation should precede the outbreak of civil war within five years to confirm this claim. The second part of these observable implications accounts for the causal mechanisms behind the hypothesis. The hypothesis argues that wars of liberation increase the probability for civil war by creating political instability and increasing the capabilities for violence of each opposing party. If these claims are true, then the paper expects to find the following observable implications:

Theoretical Expectations	Observable Implications
Wars of liberation lead to political and societal instability, increasing civil war risk.	The absence of a strong national power and the presence of multiple groups vying for power.
Wars of liberation provide opposing parties with the capabilities to wage a future war, increasing the probability of civil war.	The rebel groups gain increased numbers in membership and soldiers.

If the hypothesis that wars of liberation increase the likelihood of civil war is true, then research will discover the presence of these variables in the separate case studies.

¹⁴ Barbara F. Walter, "The Critical Barrier to Civil War Settlement," *International Organization* 51 (1997): 335-64.

Part III: Research Design

In order to evaluate validity of the proposed hypothesis, this paper will select two case studies that have waged their own wars of liberation, and then qualitatively compare each of these cases. The paper will examine the respective levels of the causal mechanisms, political instability and group capability, following wars of liberation in China and Greece. In both of these countries, there was an outbreak of civil war immediately following the conclusion of the war of liberation. This paper will systematically examine each case study and compare the levels of political instability and group capability in alignment with the proposed hypothesis. Higher levels of political instability and group capability – measured through state control and strength of opposition parties – would indicate the destabilizing and civil war-inducing effects of wars of liberation.

As China serves as the motivating case for this study and proposed hypothesis because of its distinct war of liberation-to-civil war pattern, it will be the first case examined, and then compared to the case of Greece. In Greece, guerilla armies fought with the Greek government to expel the occupying German forces from their borders during World War II, only to declare civil war once the Germans were expelled. The following section will provide further details regarding historical information and contextual relevance for each case.

A. China

As discussed in the introduction, civil war began in China prior to the Sino-Japanese War, then resumed following the war's conclusion. The major players in this conflict included the Communist Party (CCP) and Nationalist Party (KMT), both of whom fought together in an alliance to expel the Japanese from Chinese borders. Following the withdrawal of Japanese forces in 1945, the CCP and

KMT were unable to reach a compromise for a peace treaty, despite the efforts of third party ambassador General George C. Marshall, who was sent by the United States government to facilitate a smooth and stable peace agreement. Instead, the CCP and KMT declared civil war in March 1946, which lasted for another four years and further ravaged China. The civil war finally ended in China on October 1, 1949, when the KMT fled to Taiwan, and the CCP took control of Beijing.¹⁵

B. Greece

Nazi Germany invaded Greece on April 6, 1941 during World War II. For the next three years, two principal Greek guerilla forces, the Communist-led National Popular Liberation Army (ELAS) and the Greek Democratic National Army (EDES) fought against German occupation alongside each other.¹⁶ Though these two armies never entered into an official alliance, they occasionally cooperated in action to fight German forces.¹⁷ When the Germans officially withdrew in October of 1944, these two armies had already begun fighting their own civil war. In early 1944, before German withdrawal, the communist ELAS, the military branch of the Communist National Liberation Front (EAM), had set up their own provisional government in the Greek mountains, and disowned by both the Greek monarchy and the Greek government. After the final withdrawal of German troops from Greece in October, British envoys attempted to bring the communist and royalist Greek guerillas together under a coalition government. This uneasy arrangement only lasted a few weeks, however, before the communist party's refusal to disband their guerilla forces resulted in its

¹⁵ June Grasso, Jay Corrin, and Michael Kort, *Modernization and Revolution in China: From the Opium Wars to the Olympics* (New York: M.E. Sharpe, Inc., 2009), 129.

¹⁶ David H. Close, *The Origins of the Greek Civil War* (New York: Longman, 1995), 60.

¹⁷ "Greek Civil War 1944-1949," Armed Conflict Events Database, last modified December 16, 2000, accessed December 14, 2012. <http://www.onwar.com/aced/chrono/c1900s/yr40/fgreece1944.htm>.

disintegration. On December 3, 1944, a bitter civil war between the two forces broke out in Athens. Though British forces managed to suppress the immediate insurrection, the ELAS managed to flee to the mountains of Macedonia, where they rearmed and reorganized into the Democratic Army, despite agreeing to disband their forces at conference in February 1945.¹⁸ A year later, in 1946, the Democratic Army led another full-scale guerilla war against the Greek monarchy, and steadily grew in strength and determination. British forces, overwhelmed by economic woes at home, officially withdrew from Greece in 1947, only to be replaced by the staunchly anti-communist United States. In the same year, the communist forces had established a provisional government in Macedonia, and continued to terrorize both the Greek mainland and Macedonia. After two more years of fighting, and an estimated 50,000 combatant casualties, the Greek communist army announced their surrender on October 16, 1949, and many of the remaining communist fighters fled to the neighboring Albania.¹⁹ Total casualties of the conflict have been estimated at staggering 158,000, and the guerilla warfare that characterized the war left the country immediately ravaged by violence, and established a lasting legacy of animosity between certain sectors of the Greek population.²⁰

Part IV: Evaluating the Hypothesis

Strength of Opposing Organizations

The hypothesis argues that a war of liberation increases the likelihood of civil war by acting as an enabler for rebel groups. If there is a war of liberation, then the rebel groups will accumulate increased strength and power in order to fight the immediate enemy, increasing the probability of

¹⁸ Clodfelter, *Warfare and Armed Conflicts*, 976-978.

¹⁹ Clodfelter, *Warfare and Armed Conflicts*, 978.

²⁰ "Greek Civil War 1944-1949."

bargaining failure and the outbreak of civil war. If this claim is true, then we will see an increase in number in rebel groups over the course of the liberation conflict. This section compares the strength of rebel groups before and after wars of liberation in China and Greece.

A. China

During the Sino-Japanese War, the Communist party attained massive amounts of civilian support, especially among peasants, which later translated into increased military power as peasants enlisted in the communist Red Army. A statistical comparison between the CCP's respective conditions before and after war with Japan demonstrates how the war increased the strength of the rebel organization, thus increasing the likelihood of bargaining failure and civil war in the future. In 1937, prior to the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War, the CCP controlled a small rural backwater populated by about 1.5 million deeply impoverished peasants.²¹ Its battered, worn army stood at about 80,000, and total party membership consisted of a relatively small 40,000.²² By 1945, after a brutal war and Japanese-sponsored terror campaign, more than 90 million Chinese people lived under Communist control. The Red Army stood at an astounding 900,000 soldiers, and was supported by more than 2 million troops.²³ The CCP had expanded to include more than 1.2 million members at the end of Japan's occupation of China, and continued to grow afterward. In the fall of 1948 alone, reports indicate that 1.6 million peasants joined the CCP's Red Army.²⁴ "In the midst of a nation struggle for survival, the CCP...found the wherewithal to survive and become the most powerful political source in China, one that was capable of winning a civil war," Grasso, Corrin, and Kort wrote of China's war of

²¹ Grasso, Corrin, and Kort, "Modernization and Revolution in China," 115.

²² Grasso, Corrin, and Kort, "Modernization and Revolution in China," 116.

²³ Grasso, Corrin, and Kort, "Modernization and Revolution in China," 116.

²⁴ Grasso, Corrin, and Kort, "Modernization and Revolution in China," 127.

liberation and the CCP's increased power. The CCP's remarkable growth in strength and capability, largely due to the chaos created by Sino-Japanese War, increased the potential for bargaining problems and civil war later on.

B. Greece

Similar to the case of China, the Communist Party in Greece expanded from a small sect to a mass party, the Communist National Liberation Front (EAM), while Greeks fought against the German occupation of their country. In December 1942, a year after Germany occupied Greece during World War II, the Communist Party had only 12,000 members. By mid-1943, the party grew to 56,000 members. By June 1944, a few months before Germany completely withdrew from Greece, party growth snowballed to include 250,000 members, and party membership continued to rapidly expand following Greece's liberation.²⁵ Additionally, the growth of guerilla armies sympathetic to the communist cause increased the Communist Party's capabilities following the conclusion of German occupation. The armed branch of the EAM, the National Popular Liberation Army (ELAS), expanded to incorporate these guerilla armies into their forces. In February 1943, the ELAS had total of about 2,000 effective combatants. Over the course of the next two years, this number rapidly increased, to 12,000 later that June, then to 25,000 in January 1944, and eventually to approximately 50,000 in September 1944.²⁶ This significant membership was further bolstered by a 5,000-strong police force and the Communist Party's growing support among the Greek population. As the ELAS expanded, so did tension with the anti-communist, British-backed Greek government. By February 1943, before the

²⁵ Close, "The Greek Civil War," 69.

²⁶ Close, "The Greek Civil War," 100.

Germans officially withdrew from Greece, violence in the country became widespread, putting Greece one step closer to civil war.

Analysis of Evidence

In both China and Greece, the future civil war aggressors grew rapidly in membership strength and military capability over the course of their wars of liberation. The environment perpetuated by these wars of liberation both bred an environment of chaos and instability and weakened the state government, which in turn benefited the rebel movements. The following section will address *how* wars of liberation act as enablers that strengthen rebel power. This increased capability, though seemingly transparent, increased the potential for bargaining problems later on. Equipped with more power, and with the capabilities they felt necessary to wage a civil war, these rebel groups were less likely to willingly enter into a power-sharing arrangement when they felt they had the resources necessary to completely consolidate power.

Causal Mechanisms: Levels of Violence and Political Instability

The egregious levels of violence during the war of liberation further turned an increasingly discontent and marginalized population toward rebel mobilization in favor a civil war. This level of discontent is further exacerbated if the party in power does not effectively protect and provide relief for the population. Rebel movements have the opportunity to gain more power and support if the war is particularly brutal against the civilian population, and if the official state government does not effectively protect the population, thus increasing the level of instability and discontent following the conclusion of the war.

A. China

The “burn all, kill all, destroy all” campaign inflicted by the Japanese during the Sino-Japanese “aroused a potent hatred and national feeling ripe for mobilization and direction.”²⁷ It was in this war torn, physically and psychologically beaten environment that the CCP grew in strength and number. Japan’s indiscriminate bombing, wholesale slaughter of civilians, use of poisonous gas, and rampant rape and torture took the lives of over 15 million Chinese civilians over the course of the eight-year war. As war and destruction swept the country, massive food shortages led to widespread starvation. The Nationalist government’s inability to respond adequately to the devastating conditions further instigated political instability in China. “Notorious corruption [in the Nationalist government] resulted in hoarding and profiteering while millions of peasants starved,” Grasso, Corrin, and Kort write of the conflict.²⁸ The brutality and violence of the Sino-Japanese War, combined with the incompetence of the Nationalist government, allowed the CCP to mobilize into a force that was capable of waging, and eventually winning, a civil war following the war of liberation’s conclusion.

B. Greece

In Greece, the original purpose of the Communist Party was to provide economic relief for the “casualties of the [German] invasion.”²⁹ In May 1941, barely a month into German occupation, the Communist Party set up National Solidarity, a relief organization that provided food and shelter for refugees, demobilized soldiers, prisoners of war, and eventually all those who were affected by the war. National Solidarity made the communist rebel groups the National Liberation Front (EAM) and the National Popular Liberation Army (ELAS) hugely popular among the Greek population, and offered essential relief that the Greek government was unable to provide. The Communist Party won over

²⁷ Grasso, Corrin, and Kort, “Modernization and Revolution in China,” 117.

²⁸ Grasso, Corrin, and Kort, “Modernization and Revolution in China,” 113.

²⁹ Close, “The Greek Civil War,” 71.

additional support of the population by organizing resistance against the government's plan to further restrict the availability of food among the population by imposing levies on agricultural produce during the war-imposed food shortage.³⁰ As a result of the widespread food shortage throughout Greece, communist guerilla armies conducted raids on food stores to provide the population with food, and some began to set up provincial governments in villages to help provide basic needs for inhabitants living in wartime.³¹ By early 1943, these ELAS-led governments were fulfilling popular needs in large areas of Greece, indicating both high levels of political instability and increased group capability.

Theoretical Implications

The hypothesis argues that if there is a war of liberation, then the probability for civil war increases. Wars of liberation increase each party's capability for violence, and create an environment of instability and chaos that increase the feasibility of civil war.

Collier, Hoeffler, and Rohner first introduced the concept of a "conflict trap," the theory that if a country stumbled into civil war, "there was a danger it would enter a dysfunctional cycle in which the legacy of war was a heightened risk of further conflict."³² These legacies, they argued, increased the probability of civil war occurring in the near future. The organizational legacy proposed that the likelihood for civil war is increased by a previous civil war because the rebel army is already mobilized. Likewise, a previous war of liberation increases the probability of civil war when rebel armies fought against the external aggressor. Additionally, as the China and Greece studies demonstrated, the strength and reach of rebel armies can increase during wars of liberation due to intense violence and societal

³⁰ Close, "Greek Civil War," 73-74.

³¹ Close, "Greek Civil War," 74.

³² Collier, Hoeffler, Rohner, "Beyond Greed and Grievance," 14.

unrest. As the strength of the rebel movement increases, so does their capability to produce violence, creating further opportunities for bargaining problems, and increasing chances for civil war.

Walter outlines the basic mechanism behind bargaining failure in her paper: bargaining problems arise when neither side can ensure a credible arrangement. Neither side can reach a credible agreement because of uncertainty regarding each other's capabilities. In cases of post-liberation wars, especially in the cases of China and Greece, capabilities on both sides were exposed during the conflict, yet both times negotiations failed. Despite the presence of third part negotiators, the overwhelming political instability and weak government perpetuated by the war of liberation created a disadvantageous environment to negotiate a compromise. Instead, bargaining problems arise as each group holds increased capability in a politically and societal unstable environment.

In both China and Greece, the brutal violence inflicted on the population, and the governments' inability to protect its people, further pushed the population into the arms of the rebel movements. Additionally, this state failure weakened the absolute power of the government, and further generated an environment of increased instability.

Collier, Hoeffler, and Rohner argue that when civil war is feasible, it will undoubtedly occur.³³ Feasibility factors, or conditions that make a country prone to civil war include, among others, previous civil war, low income level, social fractionalization, and geography. Wars of liberation also increase the feasibility of war by establishing an organizational legacy of war in the rebel movement, creating an environment ripe with discontent and instability, and weakening state institutions that could effectively guarantee a credible peace arrangement between opposing parties.

³³ Collier, Hoeffler, and Rohner, "Beyond Greed and Grievance," 1-27.

Part V: Conclusion

This paper examined the hypothesis of whether wars of liberation increase the likelihood for civil war through the examination of two separate case studies, China and Greece. Both China and Greece have experienced their own wars of liberation, only to engage in civil war following their conclusions. Wars of liberation help to increase the capability of rebel movements by pushing the population toward mobilization after intense violence and war. They further create an environment of instability that allows rebel movements to consolidate power, by weakening the state government.

Although both Greece and China demonstrate these causal mechanisms, these are only two cases that serve as a preliminary basis for future study. Though these case studies present interesting evidence, and back the proposed hypothesis, more evidence is needed to confirm the hypothesis. In the future, researchers should compile a dataset of all wars of liberation, to effectively confirm the risk of the wars of liberation on the probability of civil war. Though Licklider and Clodfelter's research was beneficial in recognizing the potential relationship between wars of liberation and civil war, more research is needed to further define this relationship. Since no prior research exists primarily dedicated to this theory, there is an opportunity for original contribution on the subject of wars of liberation and civil wars.

“The prevention of civil war is a key priority for international attention,” Collier, Roeffler and Rohner wrote in their 2009 paper.³⁴ Since World War II, civil war has replaced international war as the most common form of large-scale violence in the modern world. Harder to stop, more destructive, and ten times longer than international wars, the prevention of civil war is essential to creating a more peaceful world.³⁵ By identifying numerous conditions that increase the probability of civil war, these

³⁴ Collier, Hoeffler, and Rohner, “Beyond Greed and Grievance,” 1.

³⁵ Collier, Hoeffler, and Rohner, “Beyond Greed and Grievance,” 2.

scholars urged the international community to take steps toward the prevention of their manifestation. Likewise, the international community should recognize the destabilizing and civil war-inducing effects wars of liberation have on a country (even if the country is victorious), and take steps toward the rebuilding of the nation and prevention of possible civil war.

Table 1: Cases of Wars of Liberation and Civil War

Case	War of liberation	Combatant	Civil War
Afghanistan	1979-1980	Soviet Union	1978
Angola	1961-75	Portugal	1975
Burma	1942-45	Japan	1948
Chad	1975	Libya	1980-87
China	1937-44	Japan	1945-50
Croatia	1991	Serbia	1991
Cyprus	1960	Great Britain	1963-64
Ethiopia	1977	Somalia	1967-91
Georgia	1990-91	Soviet Union	1992
Greece	1941-44	Germany	1945-49
India	1947	Great Britain	1946-48
Jordan	1967	Israel	1970
Laos	1954	France	1959-1972
Malaysia	1946	Japan	1948-1959
Morocco	1975	Spain	1975-91
Mozambique	1975	Portugal	1981-92
Syria	1940-1945	Axis powers; France and Britain	1979-82
Vietnam	1954-56	France	1957-74

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