Survival of the Supported
- an Analysis of Secondary Support and the Duration of Intrastate Armed Conflicts

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Key-Words Glossary and Abbreviations

- **Baloch**: ”The Baloch are a people of Iranian ancestry inhabiting the area of Balochistan in the southeast corner of the Iranian plateau in Southwest Asia, including parts of Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan.”¹

- **Kurdistan**: Kurdistan refers to a geo-cultural region in the Middle East, where a majority of Kurds have historically been rooted and formed a language, culture and common national identity. Contemporarily, Kurdistan geographically refers to parts of south-eastern Turkey (northern Kurdistan), northern Iraq (southern Kurdistan), northwestern Iran (eastern Kurdistan) and northern Syria (western Kurdistan) mainly inhabited by Kurds.²

- **Secondary parties, warring**: ”A party that enter a conflict with troops to actively support one of the sides in the conflict.”³

- **Secondary parties, non-warring**: ”A secondary supporting party provides support to a primary party that somehow affects the development of the conflict.”⁴

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¹ Tyagi, 2009, p. 7.
² Craig, Cagan, Turner, Ozment, 2011, p. 618; Cambridge Dictionaries, 2015 [web].
³ PCR 1, 2014 [web].
⁴ Ibid.
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- **BRDs**: Battle-related deaths.\(^5\)
- **CHP**: Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi (in English: Kemalist Republican Peoples’ Party).\(^6\)
- **Islamic State/Da ’ish**: Al Dawla al-Islamyia fil Iraq wa’al Sham (in English: The Islamic State of Iraq and Sham).\(^7\)
- **PDK**: Partiya Demokrata Kurdistanê (in English: Kurdistan Democratic Party).\(^8\)
- **PJAK**: Parti Jiyani Azadi Kurdistan (in English: Free Life Party of Kurdistan).\(^9\)
- **PKK**: Partiya Karkerên Kurdistan (in English: Kurdistan workers’ party).\(^10\)
- **YPG**: Yekîneyên Parastina Gel (in English: People’s Protection Units).\(^11\)

\(^5\) PCR 4, 2014 [web].
\(^6\) Olson, 2001, p. XVI.
\(^7\) NE, 2014 [web].
\(^8\) Högbladh, Pettersson, Themnér, 2011.
\(^9\) Emanuelsson, 2005, p. 20; UCDP 2, 2014 [web].
\(^10\) The Huffington Post, 2013 [web].
\(^11\) Hot Air, 2014 [web].
Abstract

This thesis aims to explain how the involvement of secondary parties affect the duration of intrastate armed conflicts. It argues that the acquisition of secondary support in favor of rebel groups is likely to lead to an extended duration of intrastate armed conflict. By granting a relatively weaker rebel group secondary support, a secondary party ought to directly alter the balance of power and capabilities in benefit for the rebels. The secondary party could thereby be able to level the balance of capabilities between a government and a rebel group, creating a situation in which the, at first, stronger government now have to face a rebel group capable of surviving longer. Using a structured focused comparison on two cases, the results find secondary support in the form of funding or economic support given to relatively weak rebels to be an important influence on extending the duration of intrastate armed conflicts. Nonetheless, further research might have to be made in order to fully understand the even more detailed mechanisms behind the strong influences of economic secondary support on conflict duration.

1. Introduction

During the past year of 2014, highly rated news agencies and social media have frequently been reporting on the islamist terror organization the Islamic State, also known as Da’ish (an acronym for Al Dawla al-Islamyia fil Iraq wa’al Sham), and the organization’s heavy rampaging against minorities not submitting to their harsh translation of Islam in neighboring countries Iraq and Syria.12 One particularly interesting situation within this context was the one in the, by Da’ish, heavily shelled Kurdish inhabited town of Kobane located in northern Syria. The situation seemed hopeless for the local Kurdish Yekïneyên Parastina Gel (YPG), People’s Protection Units in English, and many of the in-town remaining civilians as Da’ish had been closing in on its outgunned and outnumbered foe on every front.13 This before a coalition of nation-states, with the United States at the front, decided to support the Kurdish rebels with logistics, money, heavy weaponry and continuous airstrikes aimed at the fundamentalist organization.14 What was first supposed to be a couple of hours of weak Kurdish resistance had turned into months of fierce fighting as the battle for the besieged town still rages on in a country torn by civil war.

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12 NE, 2014 [web].
13 Hot Air, 2014 [web].
14 Daily Mail, 2014 [web].
1.1 Research Question

Civil war — a puzzling, yet common, global phenomenon which dynamics and outcomes have been the subject of numerous debates regarding the causes of its advent as well as development throughout times. The characteristics of different wars and conflicts can vary greatly and have different ways of affecting their situations, this with one phenomenon in particular being one of the most puzzling and interesting dynamical alterations — conflict duration. Why do some civil wars tend to be longer than others? Although a common subject for discussion, many questions still remain unanswered regarding civil war dynamics, and many debates are still heated by the exchanging of arguments. In trying to understand this phenomenon within civil war and intrastate armed conflict, contemporary as well as previous conflicts might serve as useful sources for gripping a hold of this ever rolling roller coaster that is today’s debate and research on civil war dynamics.

The sudden secondary support being given, the change in conflict dynamics and the turning of the tides in the battle for Kobane, among others, leads to an interesting question fundamental for the understanding of conflict dynamics from a secondary support perspective — how does the involvement of secondary parties affect the duration of an intrastate armed conflict?

Figure 1. The Mechanisms Connecting the Variables to be Clarified.

1.2 Previous Research

Most previous research on the field regarding the effect of secondary support on conflict dynamics as a whole has generally had quite a pegged focus when discussing certain dynamics of conflict in relation to secondary support. Previous studies have, for the most part, been quantitatively conducted and with the aim to point out certain attributes surrounding war, rather than distinct secondary support such as military or economic support, that are connected to the outcome of conflict or the duration of it. Factors such as the ability for rebels to mobilize, to have access to external sanctuaries, the ability for rebels to take advantage of opportunity structures and the effect it might have on the dynamics of armed conflict out of an external and quantitative view have
largely been in the limelight. This is for instance the main focal point of recognized scholars such as David Cunningham, Kristian Gleditsch and Idean Salehyan who examined this by conducting regression models of different dyadic interactions’ effect on conflict duration and outcome.\(^\text{15}\) They have argued: "… that strong rebels, who pose a military challenge to the government, are likely to lead to short wars and concessions."\(^\text{16}\) This due to militarily strong rebels, regardless of them being supported or not, supposedly being more able to obtain concessions from the government thus end conflict faster. Furthermore, they claim that: "Conflicts where rebels seem weak can become prolonged if rebels can operate in the periphery so as to defy a government victory yet are not strong enough to extract concession"\(^\text{17}\) In other words, Cunningham et al. contend that weak rebels’ long-lasting survival is very much dependent on hit-and-run tactics from the hidden periphery to avoid the potentially high costs of conflict while adding to its duration.

The claims made by Cunningham et al. partly goes in line with a statement made by Patricia Sullivan and Johannes Karreth as they, through the results of their regression analysis, contend that all out guerrilla warfare does not win rebels’ wars for them, but might through guerrilla tactics such as hit-and-run attacks prolong the conflict and thus put strain on the government.\(^\text{18}\) Furthermore, Sullivan and Karreth mention that there is a consensus in the literature regarding external support that: "…rebel-biased foreign involvement increases the probability that the outcome will be favorable to the rebels."\(^\text{19}\) Adding to that, they find that secondary support given to rebels from external actors absorb the supported rebels’ costs of war, and therefore the they can afford to wage longer wars.\(^\text{20}\)

This is something that also has been agreed upon before within this field of study when examining the more geography concentrated arguments brought up by Halvard Buhaug, Scott Gates and Päivi Lujala. They claim that conflicts occurring far away from the government controlled state center do last substantially longer than conflicts that do not.\(^\text{21}\) Their empirical regression analysis finds that conflicts with rebels who have access to neighboring international borders last twice as long as

\(^{15}\) Cunningham, Gleditsch, Salehyan, 2009, p. 1-23.

\(^{16}\) Cunningham et al., 2009, p. 23.

\(^{17}\) Ibid.

\(^{18}\) Sullivan & Karreth, 2014, p. 5.

\(^{19}\) Sullivan & Karreth, 2014, p. 2.

\(^{20}\) Ibid.

conflicts where rebels lack that kind of ability due to rebels gaining easier access to external sanctuaries.22

An additional discussion surrounding the topic of conflict duration is third party interventions and its effect on civil war duration, an argument brought up by Patrick Regan within this debate. Regan, for instance, partly touches upon the main subject of this thesis when he, in his quantitative analysis models, finds: "…that third party interventions [on behalf of the rebels] tend to extend expected durations [of civil conflicts] rather than shorten them"23 This, just as Sullivan and Karreth mentioned, due to the costs of war being cut for rebels when being aided in their struggle, and therefore being able to wage longer wars.24 He additionally finds that whether it be biased economic or biased military intervention made from a third party, either of these types alone have a high probability of greatly extending conflict duration.25 This argument runs partly in line with the main subject of this analysis due to it discussing the effect of certain kinds of external biased support in relation to duration.26 The main difference between this thesis’ focus and Regan’s is the fact that he chose to analyze partial as well as impartial third party interventions in relation to conflict duration, whilst this thesis focuses on secondary support in relation to conflict duration.

Thomas Ohlson once asked himself: “Why do we start fighting?,[sic] Why do we stop fighting…?” He presented his triple-R theory as a way of trying to understand questions like these — questions that very much can be interlinked to the research question of this thesis since the possibilities for starting and ending a conflict indeed ought be connected to the respective parties’ resources for maintaining them, and thus prolong or shorten a conflict. Looking at the causes for armed conflicts to erupt or to reach an end from an overall perspective, previous research within this field, such as Ohlson’s triple-R framework, identify several reasons for the possibilities of one party being able to carry out armed battle, whilst another cannot. Ohlson discusses the causes of armed conflict based on three different arenas. These are the reasons, the resources and the resolve of parties that act as push or pull factors for them to either enter into conflict or to stay out of it.27 The three different arenas in his framework, and the power of their influence, are all very much

26 Ibid.
dependent on each other. This as they all raise questions that are related to each other; "do we want to do it?" (reasons), "can we do it?" (resources), and "do we dare to do it?" (resolve). Obviously, to be able to proceed with an action you would have to want to do it, be able to do it and also dare to do it. Hence they are all related. In the sense that Ohlson’s triple-R theory partly discusses why conflicts end from a resource-perspective, some of his arguments are clearly of great relevance for explaining why some conflicts do last while others do not based on the level of resources held.

Partially in line with Ohlson’s resource-argument, Vally Koubi and Tobias Böhmelt contend that the presence of homogenous ethnic minority groups centered in a particular regional area eases the recruitment of rebels and group mobilization, a theory that was quantitatively analyzed. Furthermore, the relative ease of recruiting rebels and mobilizing as a group would then boost the prospect of providing an organizational infrastructure conducive to preserving military capabilities and resources such as these within the group. This due to communities with a common ethnicity who share similar backgrounds, also tend to support each other in a common struggle when being exposed. So in another sense, they argue that the easing the acquirement of factors such as rebel recruitment and mobilization (factors which can be given as secondary support), the longer the wars tend to be.

1.3 Purpose

Undoubtedly, one could find these discussions, ideas and arguments very fruitful for the understanding of different factors’ effects on the dynamics of armed conflict, whether it be the duration of conflict or relative success of rebel groups that might be the topic under scrutiny. However, none of the previous theories on this field of study completely, on their own, discuss the conception of different types of secondary support in regard to conflict duration in any other fashion than purely quantitatively.

As mentioned, different types of secondary support have been discussed in relation to conflict duration, but rarely, or never, have these different types been put under a qualitative loupe in contrast to each other to see how the nature of secondary support, under specific circumstances, affects the duration of intrastate armed conflict, and why. Without a previously detailed scholarly discussion on the main subject of this thesis, parts of the overall debate have been left hollow. An analysis of the posed research question would therefore possibly contribute to a scholarly debate

which is seemingly yet to completely give an account of the mechanisms behind the involvement of secondary parties, the type of support that they are giving, and the conceivable effect the support might have on the duration of intrastate armed conflicts in the approach of a qualitative research study.

Based on the already existing studies and theories regarding the field of external support and conflict duration, and through the methods of qualitative studies rather than quantitative, the purpose of this thesis is to further add and contribute to the understanding of how external secondary support given to rebel groups affects the duration of intrastate armed conflicts.

1.4 Outline

This thesis begins by presenting and discussing the previously made research relevant for the study and the field of secondary support and conflict duration. With the previous research as a foundational base, the theoretical hypothesis and argument of this thesis is brought forward under the theory-section, followed by a methods section discussing how and why the selected methods are suitable for answering the posed research question and for investigating the hypothetical causal path presented under subsection 2.3. Following this is a critical scrutiny and discussion of the data material and sources used for investigating the empirical cases. Furthermore, the study is delimitated, focusing on certain theoretical key-concepts and tools for investigating the research problem, the independent and the dependent variables with the former being secondary support given to relatively weak rebels, and the latter extended duration of intrastate armed conflict. The key-concepts and tools are then scrutinized in terms of their validity and reliability, and they are operationalized under section 3.3.

In order to answer the posed research question of this thesis, the empirical cases have been selected based on the above mentioned criterial delimitations. Based on the final results and empirical findings made from these cases, the study rounds off with an analytical discussion debating the results in relation to the theoretical framework and potential objections, and finally draws the concluding remarks of this thesis.

2. Theory

The previously brought up theories have been identifying a number of factors as being influential on the duration of armed conflict as a whole. Rebel usage of guerrilla warfare such as hit-and-run tactics from the periphery to keep down the costs of war, rebel access to international borders and
external sanctuaries, and that foreign involvement on behalf of a rebel group increases the probability of them being able reduce their costs of battle and thus improve chances of a successful outcome are all factors argued by the previously mentioned researchers to be highly influential on the duration of intrastate armed conflict.30

2.1 Theoretical Discussion

Despite all the arguments of previous research being somewhat persuading, relevant to the research question of this study and its purpose, not all of the theories made by previous research are fully pleasing since they seldom strive to scrutinize the mechanisms of why and how secondary support affects the duration of conflict. Although one, logically, would agree with these claims for the most part, the need and importance of investigating the more detailed reasons behind the effect of secondary support on conflict duration become apparent.

One could for instance dispute the depth and intensity of the arguments such as that conflicts with weak rebel parties versus a superior government become long wars due to the rebels adopting hit-and-run tactics from the periphery, typical for guerrilla warfare, which not only Cunningham et al. have argued, but also Sullivan & Karreth. Additionally, one could also direct some criticism towards the theories of Buhaug et al. who claim that the existence of opportunity structures such as a mountainous region available to rebels itself prolongs conflict. This is because it could seem hard to believe that a conflict would become long just because a rebel group is relatively weak compared to the superior government and therefore adopts guerrilla tactics to keep down costs, and to stay alive. I argue that there are more factors in play than just the ones mentioned. That is why this thesis will rather follow the already mentioned respective theories of Regan, Ohlson, and Koubi & Böhmelt in the search for an answer to how the involvement of secondary parties affect the duration of an intrastate armed conflict.

Ohlson’s triple-R theory might at a first glance not seem that applicable to this thesis’ posed research question due to the theory originally aiming at explaining what kinds of factors that make parties able and willing to enter a conflict, or pulling out of it, while this thesis aims slightly differently. However, I would like to express the possibility of taking a rather unusual but, in relation to this thesis, highly relevant approach to his triple-R theory. Since the main aim of this thesis is to understand the importance and the effect of external secondary support in relation to conflict duration, the one part of Ohlson’s triple-R framework that becomes utmost relevant is the

30 See subsection 1.2.
one dealing with resources, since this is exactly what secondary support provides — resources from one party to another in order to increase the supported party’s chances of survival, thus potentially affecting the duration of conflict. Furthermore, since this thesis does not intend to explain the causes of armed conflict, which the triple-R framework partly tries to do. Therefore, the theoretical platforms ”reasons” and ”resolve” will not be covered, since the factors within these two are not as relevant to the purpose of this thesis as ”resources” is. Hence, one of the most important as well as relevant pieces of Ohlson’s triple-R theory for this thesis is his discussion of resources in relation to conflict termination, and why conflicts end, rather than conflict initiation.

Ohlson’s concept of resources covers a wide range of capabilities and opportunities that might be held by parties in conflict. More specifically, these resources a party should possess in order to perceive their chances to be good enough to wage war are, firstly, military capabilities such as soldiers, access to weapons and money. Secondly, Ohlson’s resources refer to organizational capabilities of the party such as the ability to mobilize, easing the assembly and preparation of soldiers to deployed into combat. Thirdly, and lastly, there are the opportunity structures which relate to contextual constraints and possibilities. The third concept will in this thesis be divided into the sub-concepts terrain, and adjacent political conditions. This to minimize potential confusion regarding the concept of ”opportunity structure” as it covers multiple attributes, and therefore needs to be more elaborative when discussed.\(^{31}\) The latter sub-concept theoretically refers to regional policies that, for instance, might be influential on parties’ respective possibilities of recruitment, mobilization and organization, as modified and rapidly changing adjacent political situations and conditions can change the outlook of conflict for concerned parties.\(^{32}\)

Despite the fact that Regan’s work deals with partial as well as impartial third party interventions in relation to duration rather than secondary support related to the same, which is the main focus of this thesis, I do consider his theoretical approach to be of relevance to the posed research question of this thesis, as it also aims at explaining how conflicts vary in length based on intervention, though the respective types of intervention in our respective analyses do differ. It would certainly be most interesting to try and assess whether one could make similar conclusions, as far as qualitative analyses go in relation to quantitative such, on the effect of secondary party support on duration as Regan has been able to do on the effect of partial third party interventions on the very same thing.

\(^{31}\) Ohlson, 2008, p. 138-139.

\(^{32}\) Ohlson, 2008, p. 139.
Koubi and Böhmelt’s argument that the existence of regionally centered homogenous ethnic minority groups, which are defined by the authors by their lingual and cultural similarities, makes mobilization and recruitment of rebels easier is a theory that, as previously mentioned, is very similar to that of Ohlson when he discusses military capabilities as a cause of both conflict initiation and termination, depending on the amount of it being held by a warring party.\textsuperscript{33} Despite Koubi and Böhmelt’s argument being slightly more specified than Ohlson’s, they all aim at a factor that would seem very interesting to keep in mind when dissecting the duration-influencing variables of the research question in this thesis — namely that military power in a rebel recruiting sense and the ability for a group to mobilize, two factors which Ohlson defined as important resources to endure war, is affected by the homogeneity of a certain, possibly conflict-exposed, group.

2.2 Theoretical Key Concepts

As Regan’s, as well as Koubi and Böhmelt’s, arguments are very connectable to Ohlson’s theory regarding military capabilities since they define their respective key-concepts in a very similar fashion to Ohlson’s rather more enclasping and applicable approach to the concept, this thesis will follow the definition of the concepts provided and theorized by Ohlson. This as it is very applicable to the notion of conflict termination and the reasons behind it, which is of most importance to understand when analyzing the reasons behind conflict duration.

Since the concepts relative military power (defined by Ohlson as the amount of soldiers relative to an opposing party), access to weapons, money,\textsuperscript{34} ability to mobilize and the utilization of opportunity structures (which will be more practically referred to as local terrain and adjacent political conditions) are partially relative to conflict termination and can therefore also serve as an indicator for conflict duration, they will all be considered as key-factors and included in the thesis’ case studies. These concepts are not necessarily based on secondary support, but instead gives us a lead on the situation similarities between the cases before the support has been given, which also serves as an important aspect concerning the original balance of power in a conflict dyad before any given secondary support. This will however be further discussed under the coming research design section.\textsuperscript{35} Important to note here is that both secondary warring party support as well as secondary

\textsuperscript{33}Koubi & Böhmelt, 2013, p. 7.

\textsuperscript{34}\textit{Note:} Money will, in the coming tables, refer to the primary parties’ respective incomes/expenditures during their respective conflicts’ peaks, which will be based on the year in conflict with highest battle-related deaths (BRDs). This to condignly illuminate relative differences between parties at similar points in their respective conflicts as the duration of their respective conflicts may differ.

\textsuperscript{35}Note the difference between the concepts ”sub-section” and ”section”.
non-warring party support, state-based as well as non-state-based, is taken into consideration for the analysis of this thesis. This as all types, whether it be about troops or money, supportive rebels or states, are argued to have a potential impact on the duration of armed conflict by previous research. This since the types of support discussed in previous theories could come from any of these parties. These terms will, in this thesis, thereby be considered as and fall under the term secondary support.

2.3 Theoretical Conclusion, Claim and Hypothesis:

By using previous research on the field of conflict duration in relation to resource- and opportunity-based reasons behind the phenomenon, I have illuminated the different causal variables and directions that might be of influential effect to the duration of intrastate armed conflict; relative military power, access to weapons, money, ability to mobilize, terrain, and adjacent political conditions.

Based on Thomas Ohlson’s theory on resources as a reason for conflict initiation/termination, and Patrick Regan’s theoretical approach towards external support as a reason for prolonged/shortened conflicts, the main argument of this thesis is one that partially follows in line with both authors’ theoretical reasoning — namely that the acquisition of secondary support in favor of rebel groups is likely to lead to an extended duration of intrastate armed conflict. Important to mention here is that, logically, the balance of power and capabilities between a rebel group and a government should directly be influential to the duration of intrastate armed conflict as the parties’ relative strength are the main indicators of a conflict outcome sans support. However, intrastate conflict dyads are usually played out between a stronger government and a weaker rebel group, a base from which Cunningham et al. for instance took off from and a base from which this thesis will take off from. I state my claim based on the belief that by actively supporting a relatively weaker rebel group and working on their behalf, a secondary party are directly altering the balance of power and capabilities in benefit for the rebels. I argue that the secondary party can thereby level the balance of capabilities between a government and a rebel group, creating a situation in which the, from the start, stronger government now have to face a rebel group more capable of surviving, thus prolonging the conflict. This theoretical argument leads to the following hypothesis:

36 See note 4
Hypothesis: Secondary support given to relatively weak rebels extends the duration of intrastate armed conflicts.

Figure 2. The Hypothetical Causal Path to be Studied.

3. Research Design

3.1 Method

To be able to answer how the involvement of secondary parties does affect the duration of an intrastate armed conflict as well as assessing the correctness of the hypothesis, this thesis is conducted as a structured focused comparison, a method that in this case asks the same questions of each of the study’s cases regarding the previously identified conflict duration affecting key factors, thereby standardizing the data collection in order to make a systematic comparison between the cases. The analysis will be conducted as a small $n$ study, and shall therefore aim to collect data on, and ask the same questions based on the very same variables across the cases that are selected for the study. These questions will be presented further on.

In the analysis the main examination will partly be based on the different critical junctures and chronological events relatable to secondary support in an attempt to possibly illuminate why a conflict might have continued or why it might have ended. First off, the examination of the cases

38 King, Keohane & Verba, 1994, p. 45.
will be based on two important aspects in time — the conflict situation before the support was given, and after it was given. This to more clearly see the how the support, from before it was given, possibly might have changed the dynamics of the conflicts. Additionally, it serves a good purpose for complementing the time periods of the cases which are set to be before the acquisition of support, and until the conflict is terminated, something that will be further discussed under the coming subsection. The critical junctures fill a purposeful meaning in the analysis of this thesis in the sense that they hopefully will determine why a conflict might have ended at a certain point in time or why it continued, and thereby illuminate a reason behind the continuation or termination of conflict. The cases will then be compared to each other for the sake of possibly finding one, or multiple, protruding points in the support that has been given, something that might provide and answer for this thesis’ posed research question.

A recommended method of analysis when a conducting structured focused comparison is Mill’s method of difference, an approach that aims at comparing cases by their similarities relative to each other, but where there is still a difference between them regarding the independent variable which is thought to have influenced the between-case differentiating dependent variable of the study.\textsuperscript{39} The idea of this method is that by emanating from the variation between the cases in the dependent variable, one might find another dissimilarity among their supposedly many similarities that could be pointed out as the independent variable causing an effect to the dependent one, thereby potentially highlighting the importance of a specific independent variable.\textsuperscript{40}

Mill’s method of difference fits well as the method of analysis for this study since the research question emanates from a puzzling question that does regards the dependent variable conflict duration of conflict dyads and how the duration in these dyads is affected by the secondary support which is considered the independent one. Therefore, the variation in the dependent variable becomes central to an intensive-type study such as this one. As possibly noted, the units of analysis in this study are the respective dyads, and the supportive focus will lie on the rebel groups.

### 3.2 Delimitations, Criteria and Case Selection

In order to create a focused scope on the key elements of the research question some delimitations as well as selections have been made regarding the design of this research. To begin with, this thesis will focus on examining two cases which have been strategically selected based on a number of

\textsuperscript{39} Teorell & Svensson, 2013, p. 226.

\textsuperscript{40} Ibid.
The first and capital criterion when selecting the cases for this study is that the respective cases should be intrastate armed conflicts — a conflict dyad between a superior government and a rebel group. Secondly, the selection of cases is also based on both examined dyads being considered conflicts over territory. This to facilitate the understanding of the possible effect of the secondary support, as well as avoiding potential confusion over the different effects secondary support might have on different types of conflicts. Furthermore, the choice of picking similar types of conflicts is to reduce the exposure of the study being confronted with potential intervening variables that might cloud the effect that is supposed to be examined.

Thirdly, the cases will be selected based on whether there has been any secondary support for the rebels, not the governments. This to minimize the risk of running into potential intervening variables such as different types of secondary support for the different governments that, similarly to the third criterion, might significantly shroud the effect of the support given to the rebels.

The fourth criterion that is important to keep in mind is that the cases that are to be studied both have to be similar to each other with regard to, relative strength and fighting ability. This to more clearly illuminate the effect of the secondary support to the outcome of the duration in the respective conflict dyads as examining two cases starting from a similar mark highlights the effect of the identified key factors. This will however be further discussed under the operationalization subsection.

Additionally, the fifth criterion is that the cases need to be in proximate in time to each other. The purpose of this is that choosing cases from completely different eras would not be optimal as the very notions of conflict and war constantly seem to change over the years.41 Choosing cases that are not proximate in time in relation to each other might therefore cause problems when analyzing the results of the analysis. This also leads to another type of delimitation with regard to the analysis of the cases — namely the time period concentration. Additionally, the main sources for finding secondary support within the conflicts used in the analysis, which will be presented under subsection 3.3, started recording secondary support in armed conflicts in 1975.42 Due to the time frame set up by these boundaries, the conflicts will be chosen from between the years 1975 until today.

Since this study aims at understanding differences in conflict duration — a time aspect —

41 Kaldor, 2012, p. 15.
42 PCR 2, 2014 [web].
the exact periods of time which are to be studied may vary from case to case depending on the cases’ respective conflict length. Furthermore, as the study focuses on how the duration is affected by secondary support given to rebels, the time period will start at the very beginning of each conflict, highlighting the situation before the support, stretching as far as to the conflicts’ respective ends or current situations in order to illuminate a potential causality between the variables.

Strategically selected based on the previously mentioned criteria, the cases that will be analyzed in order to answer the posed research question of this thesis are (1) the intrastate conflict dyad between the rebel group the PKK and the Turkish government, and (2) the intrastate conflict dyad between the PJAK and the Iranian government.

3.3 Data Material and Source Criticism

One of the most central data material sources for providing answers to the type of supportive that has been given and to whom is the Uppsala conflict data program’s (UCDP) external support primary warring party dataset. The dataset, and its codebook, elucidates what type of support that has been given from a secondary party to a primary party, how it has been given, and does so based on analyses made by the UCDP. The credibility of a source such as the UCDP would in most cases be considered very dependable and solid, as it is an internationally well renowned source, and receives financial support and funding from the Swedish government due to the data program’s accurate contributions to the knowledge of international conflicts. The UCDP’s database documentation over battle-related deaths (BRDs) in certain conflicts will also serve the analysis as an indicator of the conflict intensity as the number of deaths might give away hints regarding at what point in time the critical junctures that are to be examined are located.

Additionally, to be able to determine how much the governments spend on their respective conflicts, and thereby be able to assess approximately how much that factor might influence these conflicts, the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute’s (SIPRI) Military Expenditure Database has been used. The Database provided by SIPRI covers a broad and consistent time series dedicated to present the military spending of a wide number of countries since 1988 until today. It is an independent institute devoted to peace and conflict research, and is highly respected.

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43 PCR 3, 2011 [web].
44 PCR 2, 2014 [web].
45 PCR 4, 2014 [web].
Another source of information used in order to find results and answers to the posed key-concepts that have not been found in other sources are interviews. The interviews that have been conducted for the sake of the analysis have been semi-structured, shaped by structurally posed questions with conversational answers in order to keep the interview from becoming either too rigid or too free for the informant, thereby giving the informant the possibility to answer as independently and detailed as possible. Although this source should be considered valuable due to its relative closeness to the source and the relatively high level of details, interviews might possess a problem in terms of bias and interview effects. In this particular case I have chosen to interview two persons (wanting to remain anonymous), informant one, ”board member”, from PJAK’s committee in Sweden (PJAKs Sverigekommité), and informant two, ”article writer” from the Kurdish national association in Sweden (in Swedish: Kurdiska riksförbundet; in Kurdish: Federasyona Komeleyên Kurdistanê li Swêdê). It is of some importance to be aware of the potential bias, not only informants might be possessing, but also one self as my attitude or my personal opinions, as the interviewer, might affect the results in a way that could damage the credibility of the analysis.

As previously brought up, the sources for the definitions of the different key-concepts are based on the theoretical arguments of previous research. These definitions are mainly based on the theories of Thomas Ohlson, Patrick Regan, and also Vally Koubi and Tobias Böhmelt. One could argue that these should solely be viewed as subjective sources with agendas of their own, thereby also be biased in part. However, since the theoretical arguments of these scholars connect well with each other concerning their arguments, one could also claim that the consensus between them all would improve the reliability of them as sources.

3.4 Operationalizations, Validity, Reliability and Concepts of Secondary Support

To be able to assess the theoretical key-concepts into empirically observable factors to be seen within the cases, it is of great importance that the concepts are thoroughly discussed to clear up possible misinterpretations.

Important to mention is that to avoid putting focus on less important findings when

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46 SIPRI, 2014 [web].
48 Teorell & Svensson, 2013, p. 91.
49 See subsection 2.3.
analyzing the cases under subsection 5.2, the discussion of the analysis will be limited to focusing only on the findings which actually makes the cases differ in a way that could influence the respective cases’ duration. For instance, if all parties have shared a specific duration-influencing attribute, then that obviously does not lead to any decisive finding that could explain a potential difference between the cases in terms of conflict duration.

Based on the reason for it being clear-cut, the notion of conflict termination will follow the definition set up by Regan. Therefore, a conflict will be considered terminated and ended when military aggression between the parties has halted for a period of six months.50

It is of great importance for the understanding of this thesis to grasp the notion of relative weakness that will be used put into focus in the analysis and discussion; how does this analysis discuss the terms ”relatively weak rebel group” and ”relatively strong government”? What has been mentioned under subsection 3.2 is that the cases partly should be selected based on their similarities in relative strength and fighting ability. This will be related to the concepts and factors brought up previous theories as variables influencing the duration of armed conflict. Relative strength and fighting ability will in this thesis relate to the relative military power of a party. In this study, the concept will follow Ohlson’s operational definition as the amount of soldiers held by a group relative to an opposing party, while also adding access to weapons which will be operationalized based on the type of weapons equipment at disposal for the respective parties. These will range from light arms (referring to rifles and minor explosives) to heavy arms (armored vehicles, combat aviation and major explosives).

The theoretical concept of money will be operationally defined as the amount of money held and earned annually by the groups, and used for military purposes. The concept ability to mobilize will follow Koubi and Böhmelt’s definition, and will thus be operationally based on the respective groups’ ability to recruit new fighters for their cause. This attribute will be ranging from low to high. Finally, the more dynamic terms local terrain and adjacent political conditions will be concretely put down as whether the respective rebel groups have any surrounding terrain such as a mountainous region which they can retreat to, and the latter will be referred to as whether any surrounding political situation in for instance neighboring countries affects the conflict situation between the rebel groups and their various governments. This might for instance be if a neighboring country offers a rebel group an external sanctuary, lets them cross the borders into their lands to regroup, or possibly whether the adjacent countries instead might support the government in their

50 Regan, 2002, p. 66.
conflict against the rebel group, potentially altering the situation in that sense.

The concept of military power and its magnitude will in this thesis be defined by its relative quantity in relation to an opposing party. This since relative party strength could very well have an influential effect on the length of a conflict, seeing that, for instance, Cunningham et al. argue that armed conflicts where relatively weak rebel groups fight a superior government tend to be longer due to the rebels’ relative weakness leading them to adopt guerrilla tactics, thus prolonging war.\textsuperscript{51}

Obviously factors, such as local terrain or adjacent political situations and such opportunity-based circumstantial attributes, unable to be prepossessed by the manipulation of secondary support, are still considered key mainstays of this thesis due to their, according to previous research, effect on the duration of conflict. They are however, viewed as possible intervening variables to the causal story due to their disconnection to secondary support which is one of the major elements this thesis aims to deal with. To clarify, opportunity-based circumstantial attributes cannot be based on secondary support, but might be able to affect the duration of conflict, and might therefore possibly intervene in the theorized causal mechanism that links the acquisition of economic secondary support to an extended duration of intrastate armed conflict.

Furthermore, fundamental for this study is the examination of the cases out of the perspective of the key-concepts identified as variables affecting conflict duration to see whether they exist within these cases, and if so where there might be a difference between the cases.

Since the cases are supposed to be investigated both before any secondary support was given as well as after, an additional set of key-concepts dealing with the type of support given ought to be mentioned for the analysis of the secondary support. The UCDP’s external support primary warring party dataset, and its attached codebook, identifies a number of the most common types of secondary support given in conflicts globally.\textsuperscript{52} As we are yet to know exactly what type of support that the selected cases have been experiencing, it might be of relevance to mention these common types of support, and then further on add descriptions of new ones, if other uncovered types of support would occur.

So, to empirically determine what kind of mechanisms that are at play, and how the independent and dependent variable might be connected to one another, the following questions will in the analysis be asked of each case:\textsuperscript{53}

\textsuperscript{51} Cunningham et al., 2009, p. 23.
\textsuperscript{52} Croicu, Högbladh, Pettersson, Themnér, 2011, p. 17-20.
\textsuperscript{53} For notes on the definitions of each type of support, see subsection 2.3.
• *Troops*. Has the primary party been given troops as support from a secondary party? Troops as a secondary warring party indicates whether a supportive actor has sent fighting combat troops to fight on a primary warring party’s side in a conflict.

• *Access to military or intelligence infrastructure*. Has the primary party been given any access to military or intelligence infrastructure as support from a secondary party? Access to military or intelligence infrastructure refers to whether a primary party has been given access to use a supportive party’s bases or intelligence information as a means of support.

• *Access to territory*. Has the primary been given any access to territory as a means of support from a secondary party? Access to territory refers to a secondary supporting party allowing a primary party to have external sanctuaries, set up bases of their own and move through the supportive party’s territory.

• *Weapons*. Does the primary party receive weapons as support from a secondary party? Weapons as support aims at donations or loans of weapons from a secondary party to a primary one.

• *Materiel/logistics support*. Has a secondary party been giving the primary any materiel or logistics support? This type of support covers non-weaponry supplies such as donations of vehicles, field hospitals, food and shelter.

• *Training and expertise*. Has a secondary party been giving the primary party, and its fighters, any training or military expertise? Training and expertise refers to whether personnel from a secondary party has been sent to train the soldiers of a primary party or not.

• *Funding or economic support*. Has the primary party received any money from a secondary party as a means of support? This type of support refers to any form of financial support such as donations or loans given from a secondary party to a primary one.

• *Intelligence*. Has the primary party been given any intelligence information as support from a secondary party? Intelligence refers to whether a secondary party has given a primary party access to satellite imagery or the positions of enemies and their capabilities in conflict.

These definitions of concepts and methods of measuring provided by the UCDP external support project primary warring party dataset’s codebook will be followed and operationalized in the same fashion in this analysis, aiming at improving the validity as well as the reliability of the analysis.
This since all of these concepts and factors have continuously been argued to have an effect on the duration of armed conflict which is exactly what is to be analyzed in this thesis — the effect of support (such as the previously mentioned factors) on conflict duration, improving the validity of this analysis. Additionally, since the concepts are based on the thorough and solid computations of the well regarded UCDP, conducting an identical analysis as this one under similar circumstances ought to give similar results, thus highlighting the reasonably proper reliability of this study.54

4. Case Studies

Under the coming empirical research, both the cases the PKK - Government of Turkey and the PJAK - Government of Iran will, under their respective subsections, first be discussed from a historical point of view, presenting the foundations from which both conflicts stem from. Followed by that, the cases will be discussed based on critical events and moments in a chronological order, highlighting the respective types of secondary support given to the rebel groups, and how the dynamics of the respective cases evolved from this. Finally, the section ends with two tables summarizing the empirical results, providing a simplified overlook on all the cases, the surrounding factors influencing conflict duration, and the support acquired by each party respectively.

Figure 3. Map of Greater Kurdistan.55

55 Anandaroop Roy, 2008 [web].
4.1 PKK - Government of Turkey

As the Ottoman Empire came crashing down at the end of World War I, the birth of a new state influenced by patriotism, loyalty to the nation and a homogenous ethnicity came to be — Turkey. Already at its formation by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, founder and former leader of the nationalist-oriented CHP (short for Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi), also known as the Kemalist Republican Peoples’ Party, patriotism and nationalism was, and to some extent, still is an important part of the structure that is the state of Turkey, a structure that posed a great threat to the ethnic minorities existing within the new state borders. For the country’s biggest minority who make up about one fifth of Turkey's presently 75 million inhabitants, the Kurds, it meant denying and abandoning their own ancient culture, language and identity to embrace the ones set out by the, at the time, Kemalist Turkish authorities. This in order to be done by as true Turks and looked upon as equals under the rule of the new Turkish society.

It was out of dissatisfactory and perceivably oppressive circumstances such as these the Kurdistan worker’s party, or the PKK (short for Partiya Karkerên Kurdistan) was formed in 1978 as a student-led, pro-Kurdish militant separatist group aspiring for Kurdish autonomy on Turkish soil. The armed struggle between the Turkish government and the PKK was however set ablaze in 1984, with the PKK targeting bands of Turkish army soldiers, and has despite sporadic untenable cease-fires been trapped in a conflict-heavy spiral until this very day, claiming over 40 000 lives over the years. The PKK are branded as a terrorist group by all members of NATO as well as a score of other nation-states around the globe.

1978 — 1983, The Pre-Support-era: Despite the fact that the PKK had been officially existing as an armed separatist since 1978, it took a lengthy six years for the rebel group to draw first blood in what was to be a 30 years long, and ongoing, civil war. The dynamics of the conflict pro 1984 were such that the PKK had during the group’s early years been hiding, planning their coming attacks from the mountain ranges at the border shared by Turkey and Iraq where the Turkish military

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57 Olson, 2001, p. XVI.
58 Landguiden 1, 2013 [web].
60 The Huffington Post, 2013 [web].
The PKK had previously been unsupported by other surrounding actors in the region, and although no armed conflict had been instigated as of before 1984, many PKK fighters were gunned down by Turkish army patrols if found, as pro-Kurdish activities were strictly banned in Turkey.\textsuperscript{62} At its very initial steps, the conflict was heavily tilted in favor of the government as the, at the time, young rebel group was small, and it was pinned back in attack after attack. Since previous Kurdish insurgencies had been used as a puppets fighting proxy wars before, it was not long until other surrounding states had gotten their eyes up, seeing the PKK as a possibility to destabilize Turkey power and influence in the Middle East, as a means of tilting the balance of power in the region.\textsuperscript{63}

**1984 — 1987, A Struggle for Success:** It was not until the mid-1980’s that the PKK would be supported by secondary parties. Syria, Iraq, Iran and Turkey had all had their own problems with containing their respective Kurdish minorities, and were all time and time again facing uprisings of their own.\textsuperscript{64}

Although ostensibly discreetly, the government of Syria befriended the PKK in 1984, providing them with secondary support in form of territorial access provided by the Syrian government while the PDK (short for Partiya Demokrata Kurdistanê), also known as the Kurdistan Democratic Party, in Iraq only briefly provided the PKK with access across international borders into their territory in northern Iraq during the years 1984 — 1985.\textsuperscript{65} The conflict in itself saw an intensification as the government of Turkey realized the increasingly problematic situation being drawn up by the armed rebel group with fighters not only located in hidden areas in the mountains, but also in the streets of Turkish cities. Despite the support given to the PKK, they struggled with keeping up with the attacks of the Turkish army, and were still trying to cope with proving themselves as a competent fighting force.

Although the apparent advantage the PKK had of using the mountains as shelter, the Iraqi government supported Turkey by giving them access to Iraqi soil, and the USA provided them with weapons, materiel and logistics, training, and money, a support that was to be longstanding from the

\textsuperscript{61} Marcus, 2009, p. 52.
\textsuperscript{62} Marcus, 2009, p. 97.
\textsuperscript{63} Marcus, 2009, p. 98-99.
\textsuperscript{64} Marcus, 2009, p. 2.
\textsuperscript{65} Högbladh, Pettersson, Themnér, 2011.
Losing the brief support given by the PDK, the PKK had, besides Syria, found a new ally in the Iranian government which, by 1986, took over the PDK’s role as providers of territorial access. Additionally, by late 1986 — early 1987 fundings and economic support, a type of support that also was starting to be channelled though PKK supporters from the Kurdish diaspora in several countries around Europe, was becoming a more frequent method of support as the conflict between the rebels and the government was still alive and kicking.67

1988 — 1998, The Escalation: With the newly found support from Iran and the Kurdish diaspora, the PKK could afford starting a propaganda war aiming at gaining as many supporters as possible among Kurds throughout the Middle East as well as Europe. The financial support for the PKK increased dramatically during the late 1980s as their number of supporters increased, pumping in donations from their own businesses and pockets. As they continued to receive financial support from Iran until 1990, and continuously from the global Kurdish diaspora, the tactics of the rebel group shifted, as they were now able to control parts of Turkey’s eastern border.68

By 1990, Drug trafficking and increased tax-like donations from supporters in Europe and the Middle East became instrumental for the PKK’s prosperities as the number of PKK-rebels boomed at the very same time.69 At the height of their financial support, the PKK reportedly received donations at a sum equal to €15m annually.70 As the financial support for the groups stabilized, instead of sharing too few weapons on a bit too many fighters, the rebels were able to purchase Kalashnikovs, machine guns and grenades enough for everyone.71

By 1992, the conflict intensified in an explosive fashion, going a low-intense conflict with a reported 200-300 battle-related deaths per years to a blazing hot civil war with over 1500 deaths in combat, and it the number of dead fighters would come to grow even more.72 As of 1993, the PKK had expanded to Greece, setting up recruitment camps around Athens, gaining territorial support

66 Ibid.

67 Ibid.


71 Marcus, 2009, p. 186.

72 UCDP 1, 2014 [web].
from the Greek government, and between 1994 — 1997 the conflict intensity had reached its peak, recording a staggering approximate of 3000 - 5000 BRDs.\textsuperscript{73} Despite numerous officially proclaimed ceasefires, the high number of deaths never stopped at the time.\textsuperscript{74}

1999 — , The PKK Setback and Reconstruction: As the leader and credited founder of the PKK, Abdullah Öcalan, who had been living in exile was finally found and caught by agents sent out by the Turkish government, his capture proved a major setback for the rebels, seemingly marking an end to their guerrilla warfare.\textsuperscript{75} By the change of the millennium, the PKK’s previously reported secondary parties tried to clear their names by officially distancing themselves from the rebel group, leaving the rebel group, by all appearances, to die out alone, leading to the dramatical drop in BRDs from reportedly 1403 BRDs in 1999 to 173 in 2000.\textsuperscript{76}

As the PKK after the capture of Öcalan in 1999 and the decline in 2000 was seemingly left only to disband, they did not. The only remaining source of support still came from the Kurdish diaspora as the donations for the rebel group did not stop, and the armed conflict, although not being intense, continued, keeping the conflict between the PKK and the government of Turkey alive even until this very day.\textsuperscript{77} Later on the PKK was to gain support from the PJAK whom they since 2005 have shared military and intelligence structures with.\textsuperscript{78} The latest recorded numbers of BRDs per year were a reported 811 in 2012, an escalation in conflict intensity when put in relation to the previous three years’ 128 - 599 BRDs.\textsuperscript{79}

4.2 PJAK - Government of Iran

The nation-state of Iran is an ethnically, culturally and linguistically diverse country, housing many different ethnic groups under one banner which has been the case since ancient times.\textsuperscript{80} Throughout the past century, the Iranian government has faced numerous ethnically driven, and eventually

\textsuperscript{73} Högbladh, Pettersson, Themnér, 2011; UCDP 1, 2014 [web].
\textsuperscript{74} Marcus, 2009, p. 221; UCDP 1, 2014 [web].
\textsuperscript{75} Marcus, 2009, p. 278.
\textsuperscript{76} Högbladh, Pettersson, Themnér, 2011; UCDP 1, 2014 [web].
\textsuperscript{77} Daily Sabah (2014) [web]; Högbladh, Pettersson, Themnér, 2011; UCDP 1, 2014, [web].
\textsuperscript{78} Högbladh, Pettersson, Themnér, 2011.
\textsuperscript{79} UCDP 1, 2014 [web].
\textsuperscript{80} Global Britannica, 2014 [web].
brutally cracked down, uprisings mainly constituted by representatives of the country’s Kurdish population aspiring for the goal of Kurdish autonomy.\textsuperscript{81} The government of Iran has, since before the country’s islamic revolution in 1979, been infamous for their lawful suppressive management of ethnocultural and political opposition, employing methods such as torture and execution as ways of punishing opposers of the government.\textsuperscript{82}

Due to the governments harsh methods of ethnocultural suppression, different Kurdish militant separatist groups claiming to represent the nation’s Kurdish minority, who make up about 10\% of the country’s population of roughly 77 million inhabitants, have been sporadically engulfed in conflict with the Iranian state.\textsuperscript{83} This eventually shaped the more modern conflictual context of the Kurds’ fight for cultural freedom and autonomy in Iran with the armed struggle between the Free Life Party of Kurdistan, or PJAK (short for Parti Jiyani Azadi Kurdistan), and the government of Iran.\textsuperscript{84}

PJAK instigated their armed struggle against the government of Iran in 2005, eight years after the group’s birth in 1997.\textsuperscript{85} Inspired by the PKK, their initial goal has been to establish Kurdish autonomy on what currently is Iranian soil as well as influencing, or even overthrowing the current government in Iran, making the conflict one over territory as well as partly over governmental power.\textsuperscript{86} Just like the PKK, the PJAK are branded terrorists by the US among several other countries.\textsuperscript{87}

\textbf{1997 — 1999, The Pre-Support-era:} The PJAK movement started its campaign against the Iranian government in the late 1990s, taking to the streets of the Kurdish majority cities in western Iran. Like previous pro-Kurdish protests before them, they were brutally cracked down and their protest-plans were thwarted by the government, leading to many of the activists illegally emigrating from the cities to the foothills of Mount Qandil in Iraq to hide from authorities, planning and setting up

\textsuperscript{81} UCDP 2, 2014 [web]
\textsuperscript{82} Landguiden 2, 2011 [web].
\textsuperscript{83} Emanuelsson, 2005, p. 20; Landguiden 3, 2011 [web].
\textsuperscript{84} Emanuelsson, 2005, p. 20; UCDP 2, 2014 [web].
\textsuperscript{85} Brandon, 2006, p. 2; UCDP 2, 2014 [web].
\textsuperscript{86} BBC 2, 2011 [web]; Brandon, 2006, p. 2; UCDP 2, 2014 [web].
\textsuperscript{87} Reuters, 2009 [web].
more rallies from there.\textsuperscript{88}

As the early PJAK established themselves on Mount Qandil by 1999, they had started to adopt more and more of the PKK’s ways, leading to the planning of guerrilla warfare, and attacks within Iran from the relative safe periphery of Iraq. Kidnappings of Iranian soldiers, often accused of crimes committed against the Kurdish people, by the PJAK were becoming a regular way for the rebel group to taunt the government, exploring holes in Iran's border security.\textsuperscript{89}

\textbf{2000 — 2004, The Build-Up:} The group was neither big nor strong enough to risk taking on the government militarily by the shift of the millennia. At the time however, much to the disliking of the Iraqi government, the PJAK were openly granted refuge by Iraqi Kurdistan and no longer had to secretly hide in the Qandil, making the presence of the PJAK within Iraqi borders a rather peculiar situation.\textsuperscript{90}

Similarly to the PKK, in the early 2000s the PJAK started to deal with drug smuggling from the Iranian borders over to Turkey which became their main financial source, reportedly making estimably €5m/year from drug trade. It was a common method often used by insurgent groups in the region to try to consolidate a steady financial situation as well as finding other helpful connections, trading drugs with other rebel groups such as the PKK and some Baloch insurgents from other parts of Iran.\textsuperscript{91}

By 2004, the PJAK had become strong enough to attract more recruits to their cause, consisting of an approximate 3000 members at the time.\textsuperscript{92} As they held their first ever congress, now officially stating their aspirations and goals, the PJAK was seemingly growing to be a formidable force, armed with Kalashnikovs, grenades, Russian-made rifles and more light weaponry to help them on their way versus the Governments heavy arms.\textsuperscript{93}

\textbf{2005 — 2010, The Armed Struggle:} As a young member of the PJAK was killed in clashes with Iranian security forces in July 2005, the tensions between the PJAK and the government of Iran

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{88} Brandon, 2006, p. 2.
\item \textsuperscript{89} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{90} Interview with article writer: PJAK’s Committee in Sweden, 2014.
\item \textsuperscript{91} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{92} Renard, 2008, p. 6.
\item \textsuperscript{93} Renard, 2008, p. 6; UCDP 2, 2014 [web].
\end{itemize}
escalated into an armed conflict as a small crowd of 28 people were killed in the battle-related events between the rebels and the government forces. At the very same time supporters of both sides started to show up, providing support for each primary party.

The PJAK were allowed access to PKK-bases and infrastructure in northern Iraq, they were given military training by the more conflict-hardened PKK, and were also aided with troops from the very same organization. Iran, on the other hand, were given access to Iraqi territory and the go-ahead by the Iraqi government to shell PJAK positions inside Iraqi Kurdistan. As the problem with the Kurdish insurgent groups seemed to be tiresome for the region’s major powers, Iran and Turkey conducted joint offensives in 2008 against the PJAK and the PKK respectively, sharing Turkish intelligence information with Iran in a bet to end the PJAK-conflict. At the very same time, the PJAK officially lost their access to Iraqi Kurdistan’s territory as the Iraqi Kurdish leaders felt pressured by the presence of both Iran and Turkey on their soil, looking to avoid altercations.

Despite the joint operations, the conflict which by 2009 had seen approximately 200 BRDs, was not over. At the beginning of the new decade the conflict saw an almost eventless first year and dipped in intensity, although battles were still sporadically ongoing between the rebels and the government.

**2010 — 2011, The End:** As 2011 approached, the PJAK had regrouped in several strategic positions in the Qandil on Iraqi Kurdish soil, given access to it from the Kurdish Regional Government despite the official statement condemning the PJAK, and started launching attacks from there, targeting Iranian forces, leading to a dramatic rise in BRDs (reportedly 219) during that year.

As the beginning of 2011 was marked by a rise in BRD’s and conflict intensity, the end of it would come to be dominated by the government's counter-attacks on the PJAK insurgency. Intense

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94 UCDP 2, 2014 [web].
97 The Jamestown Foundation 2, 2008 [web].
98 Cagaptay, 2008, p. 22.
99 UCDP 2, 2014 [web].
100 Press TV, 2010 [web].
101 Interview with board member: FKKS, 2014; UCDP 2, 2014 [web].
clashes between the sides causing the PJAK heavy damage made them withdraw all their troops from Iranian soil and effectively surrendering leading the conflict to an abrupt end after more than six months of non-violent activity.\textsuperscript{102}

### 4.3 Summary of Results

Table 1. Duration-Influencing Factors of Relative Power Held Sans Secondary Support.\textsuperscript{103}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Duration-Influencing Factors of Relative Power</th>
<th>PKK</th>
<th>PJAK</th>
<th>Government of Turkey</th>
<th>Government of Iran</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Relative Military Power</td>
<td>~10,000 fighters</td>
<td>~3,000 fighters</td>
<td>~500,000 fighters directly involved</td>
<td>~15,000 fighters directly involved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to Weapons</td>
<td>Light arms</td>
<td>Light arms</td>
<td>Light arms Heavy arms</td>
<td>Light arms Heavy arms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Money</td>
<td>Drug smuggling: ~€15m annually, '90—'00</td>
<td>Drug smuggling: ~€5m annually, '00—'11</td>
<td>Country’s total military expenditure in €: €26.6bn; '94.</td>
<td>Country’s total military expenditure in €: €6.9bn; '11.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to Mobilize</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High (given that the conflict is taking place on Turkish territory)</td>
<td>High (given that the conflict is taking place on Iranian territory)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Terrain</td>
<td>Mountainous</td>
<td>Mountainous</td>
<td>Mountainous</td>
<td>Mountainous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjacent Political Conditions</td>
<td>None identified in particular</td>
<td>The PKK’s inspirational prosperities in Turkey by '90—'97</td>
<td>Neighbors wanting to destabilize each other, attempting to shift the regional power balance</td>
<td>Neighbors wanting to destabilize each other, attempting to shift the regional power balance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{102} Tehran Times, 2011 [web]; UCDP 2, 2014 [web].

Table 2. Types of Secondary Support Received by the Primary Parties During What Years.\textsuperscript{104}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>PKK</th>
<th>PJAK</th>
<th>Government of Turkey</th>
<th>Government of Iran</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Support received</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X = No support</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Troops</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>From: PKK; '05-'11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to Military or Intelligence Infrastructure</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>From: PDK; '84-'85</td>
<td>From: PKK; '05-'11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>✓</td>
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<td>From: Kurdish diaspora ~€15m annually since '86</td>
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<td>From: USA — No officially reported sum; '91-'09</td>
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\textsuperscript{104} PKK: Högbladh, Pettersson, Themnér, 2011; See note 55.
Government of Turkey: Ibid.
Government of Iran: Högbladh, Pettersson, Themnér, 2011; See note 86.
5. Analysis and Discussion

After examining the conflict dyads, the empirical facts show that the rebel groups in the respective conflicts are, in terms of support and relative power, relatively equally strong and pose an equally threatening risk for the governments in both cases. This can be explained partly by examining tables 1 and 2 under subsection 4.3, which clearly summarize all factors, support-based and non-support-based, that has been identified as being influential on conflict duration based on previous theory.

5.1 Main Findings

By researching the selected conflict dyads for this study, and connecting the empirical evidences to the theory on the field, some main findings for answering the posed research question of this thesis have been unveiled. Looking at the different cases, the first and foremost variation and difference between them is based in what this thesis identified as its dependent variable, the duration of intrastate armed conflict. While it is obvious that the formerly presented case, PKK - Government of Turkey, has lasted over 30 years since its initial outbreak in 1984, the latter case, PJAK - Government of Iran, lasted only seven years. Although the main focus of this thesis mainly lies on the parties’ acquirement of secondary support, it is of importance to assess whether other, non-support-based, potentially intervening variables might have been influencing the cases’ outcomes.

At its peak, the PKK bolstered with almost four times as large military power in relation to the PJAK with its ~10,000 against ~3,000 fighters. With this in mind, one must also add the differences in military power of their respective adversaries. While the PJAK faced an Iranian force of ~15,000 strong, the relative gap in military power between the PKK and the Turkish government was much larger with Turkey bolstering around a remarkable ~500,000 fighters. Cunningham et al. argued that when rebels are relatively strong in relation to their governments, conflicts are more likely to quickly lead to concessions, and thereby become short compared to conflicts with relatively weaker rebels. As clearly shown by the empirical evidence, this claim was not completely applicable to this particular case. Yes, the conflict between the PJAK - Government of Iran was terminated faster. Yes, the gap in military power between the directly involved Iranian soldiers and the PJAK was much smaller compared to the PKK and Turkey, but the PJAK’s conflict did not end due to concessions or due to the government yielding. It ended through a military victory for the government of Iran, thereby partly questioning that particular theoretical claim made by Cunningham et al.

Cunningham et al., 2009, p. 23.
In broad terms, there was a relatively small difference between the cases in terms of money, income and military expenditure as both the parties in the PKK - Turkey case made and spent roughly three times as much on the war compared to their peers in the other case.

All of the parties’ respective abilities to mobilize were considered to be high. Regarding the rebel groups, the decision of them being considered as having high abilities to mobilize was based on them being ethnically driven groups centered in a particular region, speaking the same language and sharing the same culture. That, in turn, was based on Koubi and Böhmelt’s argument regarding the existence of ethnocultural factors, such as the ones mentioned, as easing rebel recruitment and mobilization and thereby prolonging conflict.\textsuperscript{106} Regarding the governments, they were considered to have high mobilization abilities simply due to them running nation-states with compulsory military service.\textsuperscript{107} However, the similarity between the cases on this factor does, in this particular study, rule it out since the cases varied in conflict duration.

Examining the support given to the respective governments, it is plain to see that Turkey not only gained the same type of support as Iran, but exceeded the amount of commonly acquired support. Besides that, Turkey gained several other types of support from the US. Despite this, the government of Iran managed to defeat the PJAK. Looking at the support given to the respective rebels, the only real difference in type of support gained was the PJAK’s acquirement of troops, and training and expertise as secondary support which, on beforehand, ought to be seen as factors boosting their chances of survival. This was however not the case, as mentioned.

Although the PKK gained relatively more access to territory as support in comparison to the PJAK, and could therefore be seen as having an advantage in broadening their operation, it must be noted that the PJAK gained the same type of support (although not as much) and gained other types of support which the PKK did not even get to see. One could argue that this outweighs the PKK’s small hypothetical advantage in access to territory.

The final, and seemingly most differing, factor of secondary support separating the cases the PKK - Government of Turkey from the PJAK - Government of Iran is the PKK’s acquirement of funding or economic support equivalent to ~€15m annually from the Kurdish diaspora. With the cases put in relation to each other, it is clear that the PKK held a stronger financial position in relation to their adversary due to additional financial secondary support compared to what the PJAK had in relation to the government of Iran. Further explained, the conflict between the PKK and the

\textsuperscript{106} Koubi & Böhmelt, 2013, p. 6.
\textsuperscript{107} CIA, 2014 [web].
Turkish government could be seen as to have become longer than the conflict between the PJAK and the government of Iran due to the PKK being able to survive thanks to their economic support. An additional argument regarding the critical junctures of the cases which further strengthens the role of the newly found independent variable of economic support is the fact that when the PKK leader Öcalan was captured in 1999 and as the organization was seemingly done for with almost all of their secondary supporting parties abandoning them by the year of 2000, the only remaining support at the time was the financial secondary support provided by the Kurdish diaspora. When the PJAK were situated in a similar situation in 2011, they collapsed despite having several types of support available. In contrast to the PKK, what the PJAK did not have was financial secondary support. This is considered a very critical aspect of the empirical findings as it indicates the importance of financial secondary support given to relatively weak rebels for extending and intrastate armed conflict.

Although this additional observation and differentiating empirical finding between the cases does not completely support the stated hypothesis of this thesis which was that secondary support given to relatively weak rebels extends the duration of intrastate armed conflicts, it does add some detail to it due to it being an utmost interesting finding located within the notion of secondary support. Considering Ohlson’s theoretical discussion on the quantity of resources held by a group and its effect on conflict initiation or termination, it should not be discarded but rather be elevated as he does argue for monetary gains as a way of avoiding conflict termination, which seems to be correct when following the results of this study.108

Regarding the use of Regan’s theoretical approach, it seems as if secondary party interventions in favor of rebels, just like third party interventions in favor of rebels, seems to at least have some kind of duration-increasing effect. In this case, economic secondary support was found to be an important factor in the mechanism connecting secondary support given to rebels to the extension of armed conflict duration. This was also the case in Regan’s study on third party interventions on behalf of rebels as he did argue that third party economic interventions on behalf of the rebels does have a high probability of extending conflict duration.109 Thus it looks as if Regan’s theoretical approach regarding his theories on third party interventions seems to be relevant even in this case as his approach appeared to be applicable in this study given the conditions and results presented throughout the whole case study and analysis.

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108 See note 21.
109 See note 15.
5.2 Potential Objections and Alternative Explanations

Like all analyses and studies that are made, even this one might contain potential flaws, intervening explanations or ways that some critics might find distasteful. Since the analysis of this thesis is qualitatively conducted, questions over the contrafactual differences, variable isolation and selection bias might be raised as an issue. For example, there are some strong recommendations from, for instance King et al., that selecting cases on the basis of the dependent variable leads to selection bias, influencing the analysis in a way that gives inaccurate results.\textsuperscript{110}

Answering this type of objection, I would argue that information based on the knowledge of the dependent variable is very useful for cases that are strategically selected such as the cases selected in this study. As this is a qualitatively conducted study aiming at understanding the mechanisms at play between variables, selecting the cases on a random basis without having any information on the dependent variable would rather make us run a higher risk of getting non-representable results for cases similar to ours. The whole point of the reliability of the study would be shattered to pieces and thus also the very same regarding the generalizability. Asking oneself why two cases differ so much despite their many similarities, and trying to understand the mechanisms behind that difference therefore requires information on the dependent variable. Thus,

\textsuperscript{110} Teorell & Svensson, 2013, p. 222-224.
the argument that studies conducted like this one runs a high risk of being infected with selection bias does not necessarily apply for cases that are strategically selected, showing that having information on the cases’ dependent variable could be very useful for a study such as this one.

The use of interviews as a source of information has long been, and is, rightfully positively and negatively criticized as there are many ups and downs with a source based on subjective views and manifestations. Obviously, extracting objective and unbiased information from an interview is an impossibility, and the use of the source could always expose parts of the study regarding the reliance of the used information, and this will always be something to consider when using interviews as a means of getting empirical information on a case. For this study, the interviews had been used solely for the case of the PJAK and the Iranian government as some of the valuable information regarding the questions that were to be asked of the cases were lacking. I defend my use of interviews in this case due to that deficiency, as the informants were both deeply well-grounded in the subject.111 The interview information used in this thesis became central for the understanding of the relative capabilities of the parties and thereby also the understanding of conflict duration, and thus filled a good purpose for the understanding of the cases.

The interpretation of the empirical results in relation to the theoretical framework of this analysis could of course also face some potential objections. For instance, the conflictual length of the cases could be seen as a question of interpretation, since the case of the PJAK and the Iranian government might have been a lot shorter if the rebels had not been given any secondary support at all. Additionally, one might deem other attributes not included in this analysis as influential on the duration of intrastate armed conflict and submerge even deeper into the details of conflict dynamics. However, arguing in favor of using additional theoretical duration-increasing attributes would require a lot of additional research. The ones included in this thesis are the ones considered as most important when in relation to conflict duration by previous research, keeping the study clean and focused on those particular factors deemed crucial.112 Even though there might exist some attributes able to influence the duration that are not considered, this thesis bases all of its knowledge regarding duration-increasing attributes on highly relevant previous research and theories, strengthening the idea of the factors used in the study.

Furthermore, there is an alternative interpretation that could be made from the results. Although the PJAK did not receive any funds as secondary support while the PKK did, some might

111 Well-grounded for reasons which were to be held classified, and not exposed in this study.

112 See notes 39, 40, 41.
argue that the additional access to territory from multiple secondary parties given to the PKK over the years in relation to the PJAK, who had one supporter in that sense, might be the real reason for why the PKK’s conflict has lasted longer in comparison to that of the PJAK.

I do believe that there are many factors such as access to territory that are influential to the duration of armed conflict, but just that economic support evidently seems to be an important finding for explaining why the case of the PKK and the Turkish government has become so much longer than the one of the PJAK and the government of Iran. This as when both groups were seemingly down and out, on their knees, the PKK in 2000 and the PJAK in 2011-2012, the financial secondary support given to the former seemed capable enough to make the PKK conflict avoid a certain end, while the latter case without financial secondary support — despite it having several other types of support at hand — simply ended.

6. Summary and Conclusions

This thesis has attempted at exploring and answering the posed research question how does the involvement of secondary parties affect the duration of an intrastate armed conflict? The main purpose and aim of the research has been to provide a deeper, more detailed understanding of the causal mechanisms at play within the intriguing relation between the acquisition of secondary support and conflict duration, since most previous research had been researching this field of study from a more quantitative perspective.

The study’s theoretical argument lies based on submerged parts of previously made research and theories surrounding the selected subject such as mainly Ohlson’s arguments relating resources held by a warring party with conflict initiation or termination, Regan’s arguments and approach relating third-party interventions on the behalf of rebels to an extended duration of conflict, and Cunningham et al. relating the relative strength of warring parties in intrastate conflicts to the outcome in conflicts regarding their duration. This, with the addition of the previous research conducted by Buhaug et al., Sullivan and Karreth, and Koubi and Böhmelt, the previous research made on the area and used in this thesis has helped create a near systematic theoretical framework built off of different attributes and factors argued as being influential on conflict duration, and from which the investigation of the empirical cases has been based.

In order to accomplish the stated purpose and aim of the thesis, the study has methodologically been conducted as a structured focused comparison following the ways of Stuart Mill’s method of difference, comparing two seemingly very similar cases but with different
outcomes, PKK - Government of Turkey and PJAK - Government of Iran, that provided us with the kind of puzzle from which the purpose of the thesis derives. By making a systematic comparison, based on the theoretical framework explained in the paragraph above as well as focusing on certain critical moments in both cases, the results presented by this study has highlighted the importance of funding and/or economic secondary support given to relatively weak rebels as a factor extending the duration of intrastate armed conflict. The empirical results came to show that despite the acquisition of several different types of support during harder times, the PJAK’s struggle was terminated while the PKK, in a similar position, lived on despite only being supported with finances. Despite only partly supporting the posed hypothesis, the results relate to the general research problem as it does explain that the involvement of secondary support — in this case more specifically financial such — affects the duration of intrastate armed conflicts in such a way that it prolongs them.

Through this, the thesis has contributed to the general field of research as it not only shows that Regan’s argument that third party economic interventions of behalf of the rebels does have a high probability of extending conflict duration also does apply on cases where secondary parties are involved similarly, but additionally highlights the effect of it on the duration of intrastate armed conflict if given to relatively weak rebels in their struggle against their government.

Acknowledging this, I would also like to make an important statement on behalf of this thesis. The study does not aim to isolate a certain variable correlation or highlight the influential power of a certain factor and compare it to others with regard to conflict duration. Rather, this study has, with the presented results, highlighted the cruciality of economic secondary support as an important mechanism at play, affecting the duration of intrastate armed conflict. Just as mentioned in subsection 5.2, It is of great importance to acknowledge the impact of other factors such as access to territory that are influential to the duration of armed conflict, despite the cases differing because of what has been interpreted as the difference in economic secondary support. This does not mean that economic secondary support is the only factor that matters, and it is not what this thesis is trying to prove.

So, why does economic secondary support extend the duration of intrastate armed conflicts? Maybe it works similar to most modern societies who base their foundations on strong monetary standing grounds and a free market economy. In that sense, the survival of rebel groups ought to be partly based on a steady economy that, in turn, is able to further strengthen and ease the access to other important attributes such as mobilization abilities, recruitment possibilities, and access to weapons — attributes that all theoretically can help sustain the structure of the constitution that, in
this case, is a rebel group, and aid them in enduring long wars. This might however be something for further research to develop since despite having clarified the posed research question of this thesis, we have also been left with some questions as there are still more puzzles to clear up in this field of research.

Finally, what this thesis has been able to do is to highlight the influence of economic secondary support on the duration of intrastate armed conflict, and thereby also underline an important reason behind the survival of the supported.
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7.4 Interviews

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7.5 Datasets