THE PRICE OF PROSPERITY

*Investigating Oil Dependence, Ethnic Group Characteristics, and Civil Armed Conflict*

Avan Al-Kadhi

UPPSALA UNIVERSITY

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Department of Peace and Conflict Research
Examiner: Erika Forsberg
Supervisor: Hanne Fjelde
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"O city of black gold,
this flame of yours does not have a hearth
as though your insides burned
blazingly, bursting forth from a closed heart
that complains with tongues of flame superiorly
and the superiority of the complainers is the greatest glory
and it draws with the lights the clearest picture
of what grief and rebellion it suffers."

(Mustafa 1958, 24).
ABSTRACT
This thesis aims to explain why some groups experience civil armed conflict over oil whilst others do not. Given the context argued by previous research which asserts that State oil-dependence significantly increases the risk for civil armed conflict onset, I hypothesize that group actors are likely to experience civil armed conflict over oil when they possess strong group organizational capabilities. I argue this because group actors who do not possess the military resources to go to war would rationally not do it considering the relatively low chance of success of resource-less war-waging. While State oil-dependence theoretically provides group actors with reasons and opportunities to fight by generating greed and grievances, greed and grievances alone are not able to provide the fighting capacity needed for a group to initiate civil war over oil. This implies a need for the group actor to be well-organized in order to have the capabilities to go to war over oil. This study employs a structured focused comparison of four empirical cases, and finds that group actors are likely to experience civil armed conflict over oil when they possess high levels of ethnic homogeneity and pre-existing organizational history.

**Key Words:** oil dependence, civil armed conflict, group organizational capabilities, homogeneity, organizational history
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Glossary and List of Abbreviations ..................................................................V
List of Figures and Tables ..................................................................................VI
1. INTRODUCTION ..........................................................................................1
2. PREVIOUS EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE AND RESEARCH .............................3
3. THEORY ........................................................................................................8
   3.1 The Role of Group Capacity and the Onset of Civil Armed Conflict ..........8
   3.2 Theoretical Conclusion, Claim, and Hypothesis ....................................11
4. RESEARCH DESIGN ....................................................................................13
   4.1 Research Method and Case Selection Strategy ....................................13
   4.2 Scope Conditions, Time Frame, and Case Selection ...........................14
   4.3 Data Material and Source Criticism .....................................................17
   4.4 Operationalization and Indicative Questions .......................................19
   4.5 Structure of the Empirics and the Analysis ..........................................21
5. NIGERIA ....................................................................................................23
   5.1 Case 1: the Ogoni .................................................................................24
   5.2 Case 2: the Igbo ....................................................................................27
   5.3 Nigeria: Summary of Empirical Findings ...........................................30
6. IRAQ ...........................................................................................................32
   6.1 Case 3: the Turkmens .................................................................33
   6.2 Case 4: the Kurds ...............................................................................36
   6.3 Iraq: Summary of Empirical Findings .................................................39
7. ANALYSIS ................................................................................................42
   7.1 Analysis of Critical Findings and Results ...........................................42
   7.2 Additional Observations and Alternative Explanations ....................48
   7.3 Limitations and Potential Bias ............................................................49
8. CONCLUSION .............................................................................................51
Bibliography .....................................................................................................53
GLOSSARY AND LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

**Glossary**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>Treaty of Sèvres</td>
<td>A post-World War I treaty, partitioning the former Ottoman Empire.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pêşmerge</td>
<td>Historically KDP-affiliated Kurdish guerrilla forces. Translates to 'those who face death'.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ta’rib</td>
<td>An Arabization policy carried out in northern Iraq.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kurdistana Başûr</td>
<td>'Southern Kurdistan' (northern Iraq).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republic of Biafra</td>
<td>An Igbo-led, short-lived secessionist State in eastern Nigeria.</td>
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**Abbreviations**

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<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
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<tr>
<td>AG</td>
<td>Action Group</td>
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<tr>
<td>BP</td>
<td>British Petroleum</td>
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<td>EPR</td>
<td>Ethnic Power Relations</td>
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<td>IPC</td>
<td>Iraq Petroleum Company</td>
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<tr>
<td>KDP</td>
<td>Kurdistan Democratic Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAR</td>
<td>Minorities at Risk</td>
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<td>MRG</td>
<td>Minority Rights Group</td>
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<td>MSSD</td>
<td>Most Similar Systems Design</td>
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<td>NCNC</td>
<td>National Council for Nigeria and the Cameroons</td>
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<td>NPC</td>
<td>National Council for Commission</td>
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<tr>
<td>NNPC</td>
<td>Nigerian National Petroleum Company</td>
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<tr>
<td>OEC</td>
<td>Observatory of Economic Complexity</td>
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<tr>
<td>PRIO</td>
<td>Peace Research Institute Oslo</td>
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<tr>
<td>UCDP</td>
<td>Uppsala Conflict Data Program</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LIST OF FIGURES AND TABLES

Figure 1. The Hypothetical Causal Path to be Studied..................................................12
Figure 2. Map of Nigeria and its Oil Fields..................................................................23
Figure 3. Map of Iraq and its Oil Fields.........................................................................32
Figure 4. The Causal Path Based on the Analyzed Results...........................................48

Table 1. Group Organizational Capabilities and Civil Armed Conflict in Nigeria.............31
Table 2. Group Organizational Capabilities and Civil Armed Conflict in Iraq.................41
Table 3. Critical Findings and the Outbreak of Civil Armed Conflict Over Oil...............43
1. INTRODUCTION

Highly significant to the economic development of modern society and often at the center of armed conflict, oil has proven time and time again to be both a blessing and a curse to the world. Ever since its first commercial production, the world demand for oil has sharply risen. At the same time, research studies show that the currently extractable amounts of oil are being depleted, rendering oil a highly valuable, yet increasingly scarce resource globally (Campbell 2013, 4). This blessed and cursed double effect of oil has been especially evident in the oil-rich Middle East (Campbell 2013, 329). While being a central source for the wealth of several Middle Eastern States, increasing oil dependence has concurrently proven to be the main cause for some of the region’s most grueling wars. (Dunning 2008, 283; Craig, et al. 2011, 1049-1050).¹

Commonly expected to shape the behavior of State-actors by turning them from civil guardians to resource predators, thereby rapidly escalating towards civil war, the effects of oil dependence on civil war are often examined from a large-N, State-based point of view, investigating the characteristics of States that experiences civil war specifically over oil (Hegre et al. 2001; Fearon and Laitin 2003; Bates 2008). However, the equally important group-level mechanisms, representing the other end of a civil conflict dyadic relationship displaying the characteristics of groups that experiences civil conflict over oil, is often overlooked in favor of more easily quantifiable State-based attributes. Not all oil dependent States experience civil war over oil (Basedau and Lay 2009, 769; Fjelde 2009, 199; Basedau and Richter 2011, 15). This suggests that significant causes for intrastate armed conflict dyads to break out over oil do not always exclusively emanate from the characteristics of State actors, but perhaps also from the less explored group-related level of analysis. Therefore, given the State actor being oil dependent as a constant, this thesis aims at addressing this research gap by investigating the relationship between group-level characteristics and the onset of civil conflict over oil, and consequently asks the following research question: why do some groups experience civil armed conflict over oil whilst others do not?

This thesis addresses this question by building on the arguments of previous research related to oil, group characteristics and civil war onset. Previous research shows that oil conclusively increases the risk for civil war onset by potentially causing State predation which entails State weakness, corrupt behavior, as well as political exclusion of non-elite group actors (Bates 2008, 19-20, 27-28; Asal et al. 2015, 1344). State predation, which also implies political and economic State instability, is likely to be associated with an unfair distribution of oil-revenues (Bates 2008, 19-20, 27-28). Furthermore, since oil-extraction often causes ecological damage, relatively deprived locals

¹ See the Gulf War (1990), and arguably the invasion of Iraq (2003), inter alia.
with oil reserves on their settlement area may turn on their government and demand State partition, while easily lootable oil-resources such as petroleum may facilitate rebel funding for such a cause if the resource is geographically proximate. Consequently, dependence on oil is argued to remarkably increase the risk for civil war onset. (Bates 2008, 19-20, 27-28; Ross 2008, 4; Basedau and Richter 2011, 7-8; Asal et al. 2015, 1344).

Building on these arguments, I claim that while State oil-dependence presumably may lead to the numerous war-fueling factors mentioned, it is also reasonable to assume that if the group actor does not possess the military resources to go to war, it would rationally not be able to do it. This considering the relatively low chance of success of resource-less war-waging. Also, despite that State oil dependence, in theory, gives group actors reasons and opportunities to fight by generating greed and grievances, greed and grievances alone are not able to provide the fighting capacity needed for a group to initiate civil war over oil. Therefore, I hypothesize that group actors are likely to experience civil armed conflict over oil when they possess strong organizational capabilities.

I test this hypothesized relationship by conducting a structured focused comparison of four cases, two Nigerian and two Iraqi, which reveals that group actors are likely to experience civil armed conflict over oil when they possess high levels of ethnic homogeneity and pre-existing organizational history. Since the study is replicated on a different geographical context and still yields similar results, I also show that these results are generalizable over a cross-national level while also holding alternative factors constant within each set of cases.

I begin the next section by reviewing the previous research on the field of oil and civil war to provide relevant insights on the factors likely to cause intrastate armed conflicts over oil. Second, I discuss the theoretical logic that links strong organizational capabilities to the outbreak of civil armed conflict over oil, and present my hypothesis. Third, I present the research design of this study, and discuss the choice of method for answering the research question, the scope of the analysis, and present the cases to be studied. Fourth, I critically examine the empirical cases, which is then followed up by a thorough analysis, linking theory to empirics in order to assess the main results of this study. Lastly, I conclude the thesis by summarizing the study, and by providing some potentially valuable points for future policy and research.
2. PREVIOUS EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE AND RESEARCH

In order to answer this thesis’ posed research question, it is important to first understand the basic essence of the interplay between State and group characteristics. Without first grasping the foundations of State structure, State attributes and behavior which partly set the conditions for civil war onset themselves, one might find it difficult to grasp the broader relation between how groups are affected by these conditions, and vice versa — they essentially represent two sides of the same oil-drenched coin. Therefore, this section will begin with a thematically divided presentation of previous research focusing on; (1) how oil dependence may shape State characteristics and potentially affect the outlook of civil war onset, and; (2) previous findings related to group-based attributes and civil war onset over oil.

State Behavior — Predation and Guardianship

Approaching the field of oil and intrastate armed conflict from a basic oil-State perspective, previous scientific results on civil war onset have largely pointed out oil-rich State actors as more prone to State weakness, state instability, and political corruption, and thus more prone to civil war in general compared to States not sharing the attribute of possessing significant amounts of oil. This is for instance argued by Robert Bates who discusses the theoretical concept of oil-rich State-actors as predators or guardians, linking oil dependence to civil war by highlighting State economic revenue distributional policies and behavior against group actors as conditional terms for political order or disorder. Seizing control over oil deposits, and changing the direction of the revenue distributional policy towards private goods benefiting elites instead of public goods, is what the author outlines as the difference between States as predators or as guardians (Bates 2008, 27-28).

Further previous findings suggest that oil wealth may cause State instability by shaping the behavior of State actors in engaging in oppressive and greedy behavior against non-State or group actors due to being tempted by the high resource benefits oil revenues bring. Subsequently, while the greedy State actor turns to corruption and predation rather than guardianship by politically and economically excluding non-elites, negatively affected local groups will turn to other guards for protection in exchange for political loyalty. This creates new guardian leaders challenging the State for the monopoly on the legitimate use of violence, thus causing State instability and weakness which creates effectual conditions for civil war onset (Bates 2008, 19-20, 27-28; Asal et al. 2015, 1344).2

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2 Hanne Fjelde presents an interesting finding which, contrary to some of Bates’ arguments, suggests that political corruption is not necessarily linked to a higher risk of civil war onset in oil-possessing States. Fjelde argues that by buying support from key segments of society and offering private privilege in exchange for political loyalty, corrupt and oil-abundant governments can outspend other entrepreneurs of violence such as oppositional rebel groups, effectively placating the opposition leaders and thus silencing potential rebel opposition (Fjelde 2009, 199).
The Weak State and Opportunity Structure

While State weakness may derive from other sources than oil, such as poverty and large populations lowering the costs of rebellion, and rough terrain potentially providing peripheral cover, some scholars studying the influence of oil on State stability find that countries with at least one-third of export incomes specifically from oil have a 21% risk of experiencing civil armed conflict onset measured over a decade compared to the oil-less median’s 10% — more than doubling the risk effect of armed conflict breaking out. This is because oil dependence tends to weaken State capacity by making the State elites in less need of a socially elaborate welfare taxation system to generate revenues. As a taxation-based welfare system erodes due to increasing oil dependence, State capacity becomes increasingly unstable, thus weakening the State. In turn, this increases the risk of opportunistic actors instigating armed conflict against the now weakened State (Fearon and Laitin 2003, 81; Fearon 2004, 406-407). At the same time, oil exports are argued to render insurgency more feasible by providing relatively attractive incentives for rebels to support themselves by controlling the revenues from valuable oil reserves in comparison to other resources (Fearon and Laitin 2003, 85). As State oil dependence ensues, the risk for State instability and weakness increases, and consequently so does the risk for armed insurgency due to oil-opportunism (Ibid.). If fused together, the more general conflict-driving attributes and relatively high income from oil exports comprehensively further increase the risk for the onset of civil armed conflict since they form an opportunity structure of conflict prone conditions, and therefore render States combining these attributes as high-risk cases (Fearon and Laitin 2003, 76, 88).3

Additionally, oil wealth may trigger conflict through three different mechanisms; (1) by causing economic instability; (2) by providing funds for insurgents, and; (3) by encouraging separatism (Ross 2008, 4). First off, as a State’s oil-exports increases, so does the value of the country’s currency, rendering other goods such as agricultural less competitive abroad. This in itself leads to oil dependence which leaves the State more vulnerable to swift changes in the international market, thus causing economic instability. In turn, this generates political instability which provides valuable momentum for opportunistic rebels to attack the State actor (Ross 2008, 3).

Secondly, oil-based resources such as petroleum are considered easy to loot. Stealing and selling such highly sought-after products on the black-market fuels insurgency by providing potential rebels with funding (Ross 2008, 4). Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler assert that group actors need both motive and opportunity for them to initiate violence against the State, and thereby

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3 Notably, some of these State-based contextual factors are themselves not directly oil-related, such as rough terrain for instance. Factors such as these are nonetheless argued by Fearon and Laitin to increase the risk of civil war onset and are claimed to, when combined with oil exports, even more likely to fuel a potential conflict due to creating attractive incentives for opportunistic group actors (Fearon and Laitin 2003, 76,88).
transition from simply group actors to rebels (Collier and Hoeffler 2004, 563). Whilst agreeing with the claims of Fearon and Laitin (2003) regarding how certain State attributes may enable rebellion through group-based opportunism, Collier and Hoeffler add that oil exports increases the risk for civil conflict onset considerably due to the revenue-gaining opportunities that oil exports provide for group actors which makes rebellion more feasible (Collier and Hoeffler 2004, 588).

Thirdly and lastly, on-shore oil production often tends to generate significant amounts of revenue for central governments, but it produces few jobs and generally causes great property and environmental damages for locals. Overturning the imbalance, locals may seek autonomy, often through violent means (Ross 2008, 4). This separatist conflict-approach further suggests that oil renders insurgency feasible because it triggers greedy motives among group actors, making independence more desirable for them in regions that are oil-abundant (Ross 2006, 267; Ross 2008, 4).

While it has been argued that oil-possession may cause State predation, government corruption, and rebel greed, other literature suggests that it is specifically oil dependence that highly increases the risk of civil war onset. This since oil dependence is argued to cause such States to be greedy, and more vulnerable to potential price-shocks and economic crises, which in turn makes the outbreak of intrastate armed conflict more likely (Basedau and Richter 2011, 7). In other words, the lack of natural or agricultural resources other than oil produces high-risk scenarios, and increases the risk of civil war onset over oil (Basedau and Richter 2011, 12).

**Oil, Conflict and Group-level Variables**

As previously brought up, previous literature on oil and armed conflict onset has tended to mainly focus on State attributes rather than on the characteristics of the non-State side to explain why oil rich and oil dependent States see a higher risk of experiencing civil armed conflict. While this may be so, some exceptions exist. Basedau and Richter (2011) argue that the combination of oil reserves located in a homogeneous ethnic group settlement area within a State with higher levels of ethnic heterogeneity is a particularly unstable combination regarding the onset of intrastate armed conflict. This as it may provide a significant motive for the homogeneous group actors to instigate secessionist conflict over what the group may perceive as its own rightful resources (Basedau and Richter 2011, 8). Previous political aggravation is likely to further increase this risk, while resources proximate to exasperated group actors may contribute to insurgency by providing the financial means necessary for instigating insurgency (Basedau and Richter 2011, 12).

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4 Important to note is that “motives and opportunities” are essentially based on State behavior against a group actor. They emanate from motives through greed-based gains, and opportunities through weak State structure.

5 See Iraq, Iran, Nigeria, and Sudan, inter alia (Ross 2008, 4).
Philipp Hunziker and Lars-Erik Cederman add to the literature by further building on the ethnic identity aspect of civil armed conflict onset. They find that: "Petroleum extraction within the settlement area of ethnic groups that are excluded from State power makes violent organized resistance more likely." (Hunziker and Cederman 2012, 1). This is argued to be because of the increased risk of grievance-based relative deprivation from excluded ethnic groups receiving no or an unfair share of oil revenues, which consequently leads to a grievance-inflicted group actor being increasingly inclined to instigate violent resistance against the perceived oppressor (Ibid.). Also, State resources located in a region that does not acquire a fair share of resource revenues may suffer from ecological stress, worsening intergroup relations and thus creating theoretically harmful conditions, potentially putting a State at high risk for experiencing intrastate armed conflict (Basedau and Richter 2011, 8).

Previous Research Summary
Previous research on oil and civil war largely highlights oil dependence as indirectly influencing the onset of civil armed conflict by initially causing or fueling other contextual conditions such as State weakness which brings about group actor opportunism, group actor greed due to the relatively high lootability of petroleum, and group actor grievances due to oil causing State actor greed, corruption and predation. This implies that oil dependence has the potential to provoke underlying tensions as well as providing conflicting parties the reasons and partially the resources to initiate and maintain a state of war.

By dividing the findings of previous arguments into condensed arguments, oil is claimed to conclusively increase the risk for civil war onset by potentially causing State predation which entails State weakness, corrupt behavior, as well as political exclusion of non-elite group actors (Bates 2008, 19-20, 27-28; Asal et al. 2015, 1344). State predation, which entails political and economic State instability, is likely to be associated with an unfair distribution of oil-revenues (Bates 2008, 19-20, 27-28). Furthermore, since oil-extraction often causes ecological damage and is considered a somewhat easily lootable resource, relatively deprived locals may turn on their government and demand State partition, while oil-resources such as petroleum may facilitate rebel funding for such a cause if the resource is geographically proximate. Consequently, dependence on oil is argued to greatly increase the risk for civil war onset. (Bates 2008, 19-20, 27-28; Ross 2008, 4; Basedau and Richter 2011, 7-8; Asal et al. 2015, 1344).

While the factors highlighted by previous research display several ways of how oil-possession relates to civil war onset, they evidently do so largely through large-N analyses
primarily investigating State behavioral mechanisms. Of the attributes mentioned by other scholars, the only direct group-based characteristic discussed is ethnic homogeneity through 'higher levels of regional concentration of ethnic homogeneity' which entails strong group organizational capabilities, theoretically providing ethnic group actors with the resource to fight (Basedau and Richter 2011, 12; Hunziker and Cederman 2012, 1; Koubi and Böhmelt 2013, 4). Some of the scholars addressing this group-related factor highlight the combination of proximately located oil reserves in ethnically homogeneous regions within ethnic fractionalized States as particularly unstable since it provides a significant greed-based motive for ethnic group secessionism for the resource-rich group (Collier and Hoeffler 2004, 570, 588; Basedau and Richter 2011, 8). This thesis builds on these group actor-related arguments, and develops them further.

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6 These factors implicate State predation and corruption, economic and political exclusion of oppositional groups, State oil dependence, unfair oil-revenue distribution.
**3. THEORY**

While State attributes remain important for explaining the onset of intrastate armed conflict over oil to a certain extent, the main analytical focus of this thesis lies on the relatively unexplored group-level to further illuminate potentially crucial mechanisms that may contribute to previous research by providing a deeper understanding for the reasons behind civil armed conflict onsets over oil. Therefore, in the sections to follow, I mainly focus on developing an oil-related argument to further build on the single group characteristic identified by previous research as influential on the onset of civil war over oil — *strong group organizational capabilities*.

I first display a research gap in the previous research, and consequently contribute to it by presenting a theoretical argument through a framework that shows how group characteristics hypothetically may interplay to lead to civil war onset over oil. Secondly, I conceptualize the theoretical key concepts deriving from my theoretical argument. Conclusively, I outline this thesis’ main argument through a hypothesis followed up by a causal mechanism clearly highlighting the hypothetical link between the independent and the dependent variables.

**3.1 The Role of Group Capacity and the Onset of Civil Armed Conflict**

Deriving from the previous research on the matter of oil and civil armed conflict onset, the relatively unexplored role of the group actor in previous studies — which presents a slight gap in the research — provides an opportune platform from which could be theoretically contributed to and built on.

Oil dependence is argued to cause State political and economic instability, while oil in itself causes local ecological damage when extracted, and is — in the form of petroleum — considered an easily lootable resource. This creates opportunity structures facilitating potential rebel insurgencies, allows for tensions to escalate, and is therefore to be considered a core high-risk factor to set up civil war onset over oil. (Bates 2008, 19-20, 27-28; Ross 2008, 4; Basedau and Richter 2011, 7-8; Asal et al. 2015, 1344).

Analyzing the arguments of previous scholars discussed in section 2, I argue that — given the effects that oil dependence arguably may generate — a rational group actor would only have the complete resolve to fight an oppressive State actor if it has the resource capabilities to defend its aspirations. I argue this because without resource capabilities, which influence group actors’ ability to rebel if need be, incentive-based factors such as grievances from unfair oil-revenue sharing provide little or no substantial fighting ability. Therefore, such incentive-based factors should logically not be enough to cause civil war on their own. Simply put, if one does not possess the resources to go to war, one would rationally not do it, considering the relatively low chance of success of resource-less war-waging.
Building on the arguments of previous research relating to oil, group characteristics and civil war onset, I claim that higher levels of regional concentration of ethnic homogeneity provides group actors with the potential to effectively organize themselves. In turn, the group’s strong organizational capabilities facilitate rebel mobilization if needed, and thereby the group increases its military capabilities. Through this mechanism, group actors may have the military resource and potential to defend their aspirations, and go to war with a State actor.

I do not propose that strong group organizational capabilities alone cause violence. Rationally speaking, group actors that possess strong organizational capabilities while perceiving their situation as satisfactory would arguably not have a cause for initiating an insurgency against the State just because they have the potential power or the opportunities to do it. Rather, what I conclusively argue is that strong group organizational capabilities and the onset of violence are joined together when political order crumbles under State instability-based factors such as greed and grievance caused by State oil dependence. Qualitative analyses studying the outcome of this combination are seemingly rare, by the looks of the previous research. Therefore, this thesis aims at contributing to the scientific field of peace and conflict research by over-bridging this research gap and by adding to the seemingly lacking qualitative viewpoint on the matter of interest.

Conceptualizing Strong Group Organizational Capabilities
Extending the ethnic identity argument, some scholars argue that the presence of significantly large homogenous ethnic minority groups concentrated in regional settlement areas eases potential rebel recruitment as well as rebel mobilization (Collier and Hoeffler 2004; Basedau and Richter 2011; Hunziker and Cederman 2012; Koubi and Böhmelt 2013). In turn, this is argued to facilitate the acquisition and preservation of proximate resources, as well as further increasing the military capabilities of the rebel group. This is because communities with a common ethnicity who share similar backgrounds, also tend to support each other in a common struggle, giving way to increasingly strong group organizational capabilities when being exposed to violence from other parties (Koubi and Böhmelt 2013, 4). Generally, it has been found that societies that are ethnically fractionalized run a bigger risk of experiencing civil armed conflict, especially if such societies contain groups that are homogeneously concentrated in different regions of a country. The reason for this is that ethnically diverse societies may generate augmented competition over scarce resources and political influence, while regional ethnic homogeneity facilitates the establishment of potential recruitment pools, making insurgency more feasible (Collier and Hoeffler 2004, 570, 588; Basedau and Richter 2011, 8).

This thesis’ conceptualization of strong group organizational capabilities follows the notion of high geographic concentrations of homogeneous ethnic minority groups defined by Koubi and
Böhmelt as an appropriate interpretation of group organizational strength. While other types of groups, religious for instance, might yield similar outcomes, the previous findings which this thesis builds on largely discuss group organizational capability in relation to ethnic groups (Collier and Hoeffler 2004; Basedau and Richter 2011; Koubi and Böhmelt 2013). Discussed in greater detail, the strength in regional concentration of a homogenous ethnic minority group lies in the common identity shared by individuals of this group; relatively easy communication due to sharing a common language, and a sense of belonging and identity due to sharing a common culture and history. This increases in-group trust, makes rebel recruitment easier, and facilitates rallying behind common cultural ideals and symbols a potential prospect in the face of a common threat, facilitating group organization. Hence, ethnic group-actors’ costs of rebellion are lowered, and their warring capacity is strengthened, providing resources necessary for launching a potentially successful insurgency (Koubi and Böhmelt 2013, 4).

Important to add is a clarification concerning the fact that most ethnic groups themselves do not mobilize to fight without an organized subgroup taking the reins and claiming to fight for the ethnic group’s cause, as the ethnic group itself is not a rebel organization per se. An ethnic group’s organizational capabilities may however facilitate the opportunities of such a sub-organization to be created, to fight on the behalf of the ethnic group, and to recruit from it, thus bridging the gap between ethnic group and organized rebellion (Vogt et al. 2015). Furthermore, while not clearly discussed by the mentioned previous research, one could reasonably argue that having a history of previously organizing, politically for instance, may represent a certain facilitation concerning group organizational capabilities. This since having pre-existing organizations logically may facilitate the creation of new organized groups as well as ease community mobilization, thus also strengthen the group’s organizational capabilities. This will however be discussed in a more extensive manner under section 4.4.

This thesis’ notion of strong group organizational capabilities is always discussed relatively to the other end of the dyad, namely the State actor’s strength — this mainly in terms of population size. Thus, strength concerning organizational capabilities is considered a comparable, context-based term held relative to the State actor in this analysis. The idea of population size follows the notion Fearon (2004) who find that group actors that constitute at least 1% of a country’s population are significantly large enough to instigate armed conflict when certain conditions are present (Fearon 2004, 408).7

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7 These conditions are basically the ones brought up by other authors in section 2, relating to a group’s language, common cultural history, homogeneity, and regional concentration.
**Conceptualizing Outbreak of Civil Armed Conflict**

Realistically, different armed conflicts take different shapes, and may have different outcomes depending on the number of active primary warring parties or the involvement supportive actors for instance. This thesis looks at dyadic armed conflicts that are between one ethnic group and one State actor, and does not include the apparent involvement of any other major actor. This is because in order to concretely find clear evidence to assess the correctness of the hypothesis stated under section 3.2, without having potentially intervening factors potentially clouding the causal mechanism of interest. Other than for the sake of clarity, the notion of civil armed conflict is shaped in this way in order to maintain the scope of this study.

Furthermore, while this thesis takes cases subjected to different sorts of violence into consideration, it does not include one-sided violence in its conceptualization of the dependent variable, *outbreak of civil armed conflict over oil*. This is because one-sided violence implies that only one actor is physically oppressive, and that the party exposed to the violence cannot effectively defend itself (DPCR 2017 A). While this type of violence is not uncommon, it does not adhere to the main purpose of this study, which is to further contribute to previous research by answering this thesis’ stated research question. That is why the concept of *civil armed conflict outbreak* is defined as a dyadic armed incompatibility between one ethnic group and one State actor.

**3.2 Theoretical Conclusion, Claim and Hypothesis:**

In line the arguments of previous research, and following up on the theoretical discussion in the previous section, the core argument of this thesis emanates from the assumption that State oil dependence may lead to State actor parsimony, and State political and economic instability, while petroleum is easily lootable for potential rebels if proximate, and the extraction of the resource causes local ecological damage. While so, it is logical to assume that the unfair distribution of oil-revenues due to State actor parsimony as well as the oil dependence-based factors State instability, petroleum lootability, and ecologically damaging oil-extraction cause affected groups grievances, gives potential rebels opportunities, greedy incentives, and willingness to demand autonomy. (Bates 2008, 19-20, 27-28; Ross 2008, 4; Basedau and Richter 2011, 7-8; Asal et al. 2015, 1344).

While State oil-dependence presumably may lead to the numerous war-fueling factors mentioned, it is also reasonable to assume that if the group actor does not possess the military resources to go to war, it would rationally not be able to do it, considering the relatively low chance of success of resource-less war-waging. Furthermore, while State oil dependence theoretically provides group actors with war-fueling reasons and opportunities by generating greed and grievances, greed and grievances alone are not able to provide the fighting capacity needed for a group to initiate civil war over oil.
Emanating from the arguments made in the theory section, I contend that civil armed conflict over oil will not commence without group actors having enough resource strength to accompany their incentives to fight. This leads us to this thesis’ main claim. I argue that, given the circumstances of political order crumbling under State oil dependence as a constant, strong group organizational capabilities will trigger civil war onset over oil. Deriving from this theoretical argument, I will test the following hypothesis:

_Hypothesis: Group actors are likely to experience civil armed conflict over oil when they possess strong organizational capabilities._

![Diagram](image)

*Figure 1. The Hypothetical Causal Path to be Studied.*
4. RESEARCH DESIGN

In order to answer this thesis’ posed research question — why do some groups experience civil armed conflict over oil whilst others do not? — as well as determining the accuracy of the hypothesis — group actors are likely to experience civil armed conflict over oil when they possess strong organizational capabilities — the methodological design of the analysis must strive for a combination of high validity and high reliability, comprehensively linking theory to empirics (Johnson and Reynolds 2012, 133-138).

In the following sections, I present the selected research method of choice for this thesis, and a clear structure of conditions and criteria from which the selection of my cases are based. Furthermore, discussions concerning source material, as well as the operationalization of theoretical key factors are made ahead of the upcoming research analysis.

4.1 Research Method and Case Selection Strategy

To be able to empirically test the posed hypothesis, which may answer why some groups experience civil armed conflict over oil whilst other do not, the method of the analysis is conducted as a small-N structured focused comparison. The method structured focused comparison is designed in such a way that it asks the same questions of each of the selected cases concerning their common comparative key-factors,8 which in this case theoretically influence the onset of civil war over oil, thus making a systematic structured between-case comparison by standardizing the data collection (King, et al. 1994, 45; George and Bennett 2005, 67). Additionally, the method thoroughly focuses on specific critical junctures being studied relative to a specific time frame (George and Bennett, 70). The advantage of this particular methodological tool is that it, based on previous research, allows for collection of detailed and comparable research-based data, compilation of empirical evidence, and analytical scrutiny (Ibid., 67). Therefore, this method provides a solid foundation for analyzing the posed hypothesis.

Furthermore, the reasons for choosing a small-N comparative case study design such as structured focused comparison for this thesis’ analysis are three: (1) this thesis aims at explaining variation of civil war onset over oil in conflict dyads between ethnic groups oil dependent States. In order to accomplish such a between-case investigative study, it is necessary that it allows for detailed analytical scrutiny, which the structured focused comparison method does; (2) a qualitative small-N research method is selected over a quantitative large-N design since underlying character-based mechanisms, which this thesis aims to investigate, are harder to evaluate through quantitative methods. A qualitative research design such as the one selected allows for studying group-level

8 These key-factors are further elaborated upon under section 4.4.
mechanisms and characteristics on a more detailed scale than a large-N study ever would. An assessment based on qualitative methods simply allows for a more thoroughgoing, and detailed analysis of the hypothesized relation between strong group organizational capabilities and the outbreak of civil war over oil in oil dependent States; (3) as pointed out earlier, most of the previous research made on the subject of oil and civil war onset has been quantitative and extensively focused. Analyzing this subject from a different perspective and through a different method might therefore add further nuances to previous findings.

A particular method of analysis that goes well in line with the design of structured focused comparison is the Most Similar Systems Design (MSSD), also known as Mill’s method of difference. This approach aims at analytically comparing cases based on their factorial comparative alikeness in theory, but where the cases’ hypothetical independent variable differs or interplays differently in order to change the cases’ respective outcomes (Teorell and Svensson 2013, 226-227). By theoretically emanating from the variation in the dependent variable, one may discover an additional difference in a variable among the other supposedly similar between-case factors. Thereby, one may highlight that difference as an independent variable with the leverage to influence the outcome of the dependent variable (Ibid.). With this in mind, the MSSD becomes well apt as the method of choice for this study. This due to the fact that this thesis’ research question derives from an empirical puzzle that mainly concerns the outcome factor, namely civil war onset over oil, and how potentially leveraging variables may interplay in order to create such an outcome. Therefore, studying the theoretically identified variation in the dependent variable becomes essential to this analysis (Teorell och Svensson 2013, 224).

Compared to a large-N quantitative study which eliminates the problem of case selection bias by allowing for the use of random sampling of cases, the deliberate and limited case selections that small-N qualitatively designed analyses potentially exposes the researcher to the risk of selection bias (Collier and Mahoney 1996, 59; George and Bennett 2005, 80; Teorell och Svensson 2013, 222). While this may especially be true for the MSSD due to the fact that it is based off of a limited number of cases selected based on the dependent variable, two particular strategical measures may be used in order to avoid this problem: (1) the fallout concerning the dependent variables of the cases need to be relevant to the posed theoretical argument — simply that the cases are able to display differentiating outcomes, in this case concerning civil war onset over oil; (2) one must make sure that the conditions constituting the causal mechanism which links the independent variable to the dependent variable are as similar as possible in all cases in order to potentially display an influential effect (Collier and Mahoney 1996, 67-69).

With these conditions in mind, it may be noted that this thesis aims at analyzing variation in the onset of civil war over oil, which is the dependent variable. Primarily, this implies the need to
analyze cases that do not display civil war dyads over oil as an outcome, and cases that do. Secondly and as mentioned, the cases that ultimately are selected need to be as similar as possible concerning the theoretically based key-factors discussed in section 2 and 3.1.

Since the stated research question presumes a variation in the dependent variable (outbreak of civil armed conflict over oil), and since the selected structured focused comparison infers between-case comparisons, a minimum of two cases is needed in order to display this variation in the analysis (Teorell and Svensson 2013, 226). While two cases are considered the smallest number needed to explain a between-case variation, the issue of low external validity stemming from this method remains (Teorell and Svensson 2013, 55-59). However, replicating the study with data from a second set of cases in a slightly different setting may partially mitigate this issue. If the findings prove to be identical in the second set of cases with slightly different settings, then the replication instead improves the analysis’ generalizability over more levels (Johnson and Reynolds 2012, 41). Therefore, this thesis will select a total of four cases to be investigated. The first set of cases will display two relatively similar cases, but where one group experienced the onset of civil conflict, whereas the other group did not. Subsequently, this investigation is replicated on a second set of relatively similar cases but in a different contextual setting. This in order to thoroughly illuminate the hypothetical causal path previously displayed while also potentially improving the generalizability of the findings over further environmental settings.⁹

### 4.2 Scope Conditions, Time Frame, and Case Selection

Following the discussion on methodology and strategic case selection, in order to set a clear and unbiased foundation for the selection of cases, certain criteria have been set in order to create a fully focused scope on the key-factors shown in the theoretical framework under section 3.2.

Based on the arguments of previous research on oil and State instability, the case selection process initially needs to focus on a dyadic relationship between a group actor whose common identity lies in its ethnic characteristics, and an ethnically fractionalized State actor that is dependent on the incomes from exports of on-shore crude oil (Bates 2008, 19-20, 27-28; Ross 2008, 4; Basedau and Richter 2011, 7-8; Asal et al. 2015, 1344).⁰ This outlines the first criterion for selecting cases for this study. The factual interpretation of oil dependence follows the evidence laid out by Fearon and Laitin (2003) which shows that countries with at least one-third of export incomes from oil are to be considered dependent (Fearon and Laitin 2003, 81). Since State oil

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⁹ See figure 1.

⁰ The reason for discussing oil possession in terms on on-shore oil is because on-shore oil production generally causes great property and environmental damages for locals while also providing limited job opportunities, which makes it more conflict-fueling than its off-shore counterpart (Ross 2008, 4).
dependence theoretically implies State instability (Ibid.), selecting cases based on this criterion highlights the respective cases’ contextual similarities in this regard. This helps to avoid potentially systematic measurement errors while also adding to the cases’ key-similarities.

The second criterion targets cases where there are significant quantities of oil located in the relevant ethnic group settlement area. This scope condition is used in the case selection process since it follows the conclusive arguments of previous research on the high-risk factors for the onset of civil armed conflicts over oil (Collier and Hoeffler 2004, 570, 588; Basedau and Richter 2011, 8).

Thirdly, in order to avoid confusion over the potentially different effects oil may have on varying types of disputes, the case selection will also be based on disputes over territory. While oil logically also may spur conflicts over governmental power, previous research on this matter largely discuss the onset of ethnic secessionist and territorial conflicts in direct relation to these kinds of oil-based disputes (Ibid.).

Also, selecting similar types of conflicts reduces the risk of this study encountering intervening variables potentially clouding the hypothetical effect that is supposed to be examined.

The fourth criterion will focus on selecting cases where the group actors are concentrated in regions with rough terrain. While this is not a directly oil-related condition, it serves well as a control variable. This since rough terrain proximate to group actors is claimed to increase the risk for insurgency by providing contextual opportunities that facilitates guerrilla warfare (Fearon and Laitin 2003, 81; Basedau and Richter 2011, 7-8).

Keeping this constant, the potentially intervening effect rough terrain might have on the onset of civil conflict is neutralized.

The fifth and final case selection criterion concerns respective cases’ time periods. The notion of war and armed conflict seemingly changes over time, with the late 20th century arguably being the current era of warfare (Kaldor 2012, 15-16). This implies that in order to keep the focus of the between-case comparison and avoid problems in the conclusive analysis, the selected cases need to be relatively proximate in time. Nonetheless, as it has been argued by previous research, the start of oil exports proves a critical juncture in time for where the general risk for armed conflict gradually increases due to enlarged opportunity structures, among other factors (Fearon and Laitin 2003; Collier and Hoeffler 2004; Ross 2008). Due to the fact that the start of oil exports naturally varies from State to State, so will also the time periods of the respective cases naturally do.

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11 See the previous research summary under section 2.
12 Previous research generally discusses rough terrain in terms of mountainous terrain, jungles, or swamps.
13 Important to keep in mind is that many of the negative grievance-based effects of oil exports from oil dependent States may take some time before they surface. While oil exports may provide a starting point for conflict risk to escalate, it does not necessarily imply that armed conflict occurs one or two years after exports has ensued, but perhaps ten or twenty years after. This since the negative effects of oil exports may vary on multiple other factors which largely fall outside the scope of this thesis, and will therefore not be investigated in the analysis.
Steered by the suggestions of Kaldor regarding relevant time proximity, and by the natural between-case variations in the commencement of oil exports, the case selection is based on oil-exporting countries from the latter part of the 20th century and onward (1950—) (Kaldor 2012, 16; Simoes et al. 2014). The ending point of the time frame is naturally determined by the prevalence of the dependent variable. The ending points for the two cases that do not display civil armed conflict onset over oil will be determined by the case that displays the longest time frame until armed conflict breakout out of the two that do. Since the case with the longest time frame until armed conflict breakout of all selected cases is eleven years, all other cases are studied during a maximum time frame of eleven years as well. This is partly because none of the two cases that have not seen armed conflict within their respective time frame have experienced war over oil as of yet according to studies, and partly because it is reasonable to investigate all cases within the same time frame (1950—) (Gledtisch et al. 2002). Conclusively, the selected cases are cases of ethnic groups with significant petroleum resources on their respective territories, who are located in an ethnically fractionalized and oil-dependent State. The cases also display disputes over territory, and are located in regions with rough terrain.

Chosen based on the above discussed selection criteria, the four selected cases are the *Ogoni* (1958-1969) and the *Igbo* (1958-1967) in Nigeria, as well as the *Turkmens* (1950-1961) and the *Kurds* (1950-1961) in Iraq. Aside from following the presented criteria for case selection, these cases are selected for their relative similarities regarding both their group-characteristic and the between-State similarities, since the intrastate analyses create a near-identical setting for the two sets of cases respectively. Furthermore, selecting four cases that are divided in sets of two for each country may prove beneficial for two reasons: (1) it creates near-identical contextual conditions for each set of cases due to having the ethnic groups deal with the same State actor under a similar time period; (2) replicating this on another set of cases in a different geographical context may improve the analysis’ generalizability over a cross-national level if the empirical results from both sets of cases provide similar outcomes due to similar reasons, while also holding alternative factors constant within each set of cases.14

### 4.3 Data Material and Source Criticism

The most relevant data material needed in order to be able to answer the posed hypothesis of this thesis concerns the stated independent and the dependent variables — *strong group organizational capabilities* and *outbreak of civil armed conflict over oil*. One of the most essential data material

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14 See the discussion on study replication and external validity under section 4.1.
sources for assessing the conditions of politically significant ethnic minority groups around the world is the Minorities at Risk Project database (MAR). The database is a well-renowned source that provides records on 284 politically active ethnic group actors globally from 1945 until present time, reporting on their geographic concentrations, their collective status within the State, and whether or not their situation creates a basis for increased group organization and heightened conflict risk (MAR 2009 A). Regarding information availability, the data available through the MAR goes well in line with the time frame set out under section 4.2.

While the MAR does cover a large number of ethnic groups over a significant period of time, the database alone does not cover all of the group-related information sufficiently needed, creating a problem concerning cross-case comparability. This displays the need for additional data and data triangulation. To triangulate and complement the data provided by the MAR, information from the Ethnic Power Relations’ GROW\textsuperscript{16} database (EPR), and Minority Rights Group’s (MRG) directory will be utilized.\textsuperscript{15}

While essentially covering the same type of information as the MAR does, the EPR and MRG respectively provide additional information on the locations, geographical concentration and collective status on certain ethnic groups not covered by the MAR. This way, the issue concerning cross-case comparability and potential bias is circumvented. Furthermore, the data material from these three sources should be considered very reliable. The MAR project collects and analyzes data on ethnic groups and national minorities, and has been based at the University of Maryland since 1986 (MAR 2009 A). The EPR’s GROW\textsuperscript{16} database was constructed at ETC Zürich together with several other conflict acclaimed researchers from other universities, UCLA and Uppsala university among them (Girardin et al., 2015). Aside from being used for data triangulation together with data from MAR and MRG, EPR provides the ACD2EPR dataset which effectively categorizes organizations that fight on the behalf of a specific ethnic group within a State. This by displaying whether or not an organization claims to fight on the behalf of one ethnic group, whether or not that organization has strong support from the ethnic group, and whether or not the organization recruits fighters from the ethnic groups. This dataset thus provides the analysis with a link between the ethnic group, its organizational capabilities, and factual organization and fighting mobilization (Vogt et al. 2015). Finally, the MRG is an international NGO working first-hand with the United Nations’ Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), and the African Commission for Human and Peoples’ Rights in gathering detailed information on minority groups globally (MRG 2017 A).

The source used for assessing State oil dependence is the Observatory of Economic

\textsuperscript{15} In avoiding the issue of running into potentially biased source information, the data utilized in this thesis has been triangulated whenever possible, and multiple sources have largely been used in order to gather single pieces of information.
Complexity’s (OEC) dataset, based at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). The dataset is partly based on information from the UN, and provides credible product-based information on shares of State exports and imports, as well as general economic trade information between 200 different countries from 1962 to 2014 (Simoes et al. 2014; OEC 2017). While not completely covering the full time frame set out under section 4.2, the Peace Research Institute Oslo’s (PRIO) Petroleum Dataset, and Campbell’s Atlas of Oil and Gas Depletion (2013), complement this by providing the information necessary for covering the rest of the time period concerning the export quantities. Furthermore, PRIO and Campbell’s Atlas of Oil and Gas Depletion (2013) together provide the necessary information on the exact locations of oil reserves, oil type, as well as information on oil discoveries, State oil production and export history (Lujala et al. 2007; PRIO 2007; Campbell 2013).

Providing detailed information regarding conflict type and topographical contexts, for the sake of between-case similarity, is the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP), and the Central Intelligence Agency’s (CIA) World Factbook. Together with PRIO’s battle deaths dataset, the UCDP also provides large-scale information concerning battle related death figures of an extensive number of conflicts in numerous intrastate and interstate armed conflicts from 1946 to 2015, effectively covering the relevant time period that the cases have been selected from (Gleditsch et al. 2002; PRIO 2008; CIA 2017 A; DPCR 2017 B). Furthermore, this information also helps to clearly assess whether or not an incompatibility has broken into an armed conflict between an ethnic group and the State actor of interest, effectively displaying critical junctures necessary to identify for the sake of the analysis. The UCDP, the CIA, and the PRIO are generally considered highly credible and dependable sources of information. This since all three sources are internationally well known, and frequently used by members of the research community and policymakers (PRIO 2008; CIA 2013; DPCR 2017 B).

4.4 Operationalization and Indicative Questions

To test the stated hypothesis, the theoretically defined concepts of strong group organizational capabilities and outbreak of civil armed conflict need to be thoroughly translated into fully operational factors, physically visible in empirical settings. Under this section, a set of indicators for the independent and dependent variable are established in order to coherently link the theory to the empirical cases that are analyzed. In line with the selected method of structured focused comparison, the indicators will subsequently be formulated as a set of indicative questions to be consistently asked of each case (King, et al. 1994, 45; George and Bennett 2005, 67).
Operationalizing Strong Group Organizational Capabilities

While the theoretical understanding of the concept strong group organizational capabilities is based on the coherent definitions provided by previous research (Collier and Hoeffler 2004; Basedau and Richter 2011; Koubi and Böhmelt 2013), the indicators concretely manifesting the notion of strong group organizational capabilities are inspired by the measurements utilized by the MAR to assess the organizational capacities of ethnic groups. Following the same path as previous research, the MAR also focuses on the collective social behavior of ethnic groups, geographical distribution, and population size, when analyzing the degree of organizational strength of ethnic groups (MAR 2009 B). Hence, the variable strong group organizational capabilities is not to be operationalized dichotomously, but rather as a nuanced concept based on a number of factors that may provide more detail to the conclusive findings of the analysis. This also applies to the upcoming operational indicators, they are not all dichotomous. Therefore, some of them will be concluded as having low, moderate, or high levels of a certain trait for the study to be as thorough and explanatory as possible.

In accordance with the operational definitions that previous research and the MAR data coherently provide, the indicators as well as the indicative questions for assessing strong group organizational capabilities are as follows:

- Sociocultural plurality. Does the ethnic group share a collective historical background, and common sociocultural customs? Sociocultural plurality refers to the groups’ ethnocultural history and their level of social and cultural plurality that historically ties members of the ethnic group together.

- Lingual practice. Do the members of the ethnic group share a common language that is commonly used? Lingual practice refers to what extent the members of the ethnic group use commonly shared communicative means to facilitate the development of a strong in-group organizational structure.

- Population. Does the ethnic group constitute at least one percent of the country’s total population? Population refers to the ethnic group’s potential recruitment pool and sizable significance relative to the rest of the country’s population\(^\text{16}\)

\(^{16}\) For more specific information on the selection of ethnic groups constituting ‘at least one percent of the country’s total population’, see section 3.1, specifically under ‘Conceptualizing Strong Group Organizational Capabilities’.
• **Geographical cohesiveness.** Is the ethnic group geographically cohesive? *Geographical cohesiveness* refers to the ethnic group’s extent of topographical spread, and whether the group’s prevalence is geographically linked or not.

• **Homogeneity.** Do the members of the ethnic group live in an ethnically homogeneous region? *Homogeneity* refers to the level of concentration of the ethnic group’s members, and whether or not they constitute the majority of the total population in their general settlement area/s.

• **Organizational history.** Does the ethnic group have any pre-existing organizational structure? *Organizational history* refers to what extent an ethnic group has a history of political or organizational structure which may further facilitate the creation of new organizations.

**Operationalizing Outbreak of Civil Armed Conflict**

While the notion of *strong group organizational capabilities* is considered a multi-layered concept, and therefore operationalized through a number of indicators that together form the concrete concept as a whole, *outbreak of civil armed conflict* is operationalized as a dichotomous variable. This is because the onset of armed conflict arguably indicates the use of violence as a means to kill. It essentially generates one question concerning whether or not violence has been conducted in order to achieve a goal — a yes or a no. As discussed under section 4.3, in order to assess whether or not an ethnic group has experienced civil armed conflict as previously presented in the causal mechanism,\(^\text{17}\) this study uses the measurement approach offered by the UCDP and the PRIO for when operationalizing intrastate armed conflict. Thus, the indicator as well as the indicative question for assessing *outbreak of civil armed conflict* is as follows:

• **Outbreak of civil armed conflict.** Has the ethnic group experienced the outbreak of civil armed conflict? *Outbreak of civil armed conflict* refers to intrastate armed conflicts that display the use of armed force between one ethnic group and one State actor, and results in at least 25 battle-related deaths during the period of one calendar year.

4.5 **Structure of the Empirics and the Analysis**

Under the following empirics section, the four selected cases — the Ogoni (1958-1969) and the Igbo (1958-1967) in Nigeria; the Turkmens (1950-1961) and the Kurds (1950-1961) in Iraq — are

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\(^{17}\) See section 3.2.
separately investigated in the empirical analysis, structurally following the steps of the operational assessment of *strong group organizational capabilities*, under subsections divided between the two States involved in the empirical analysis. Each set of cases is initially introduced with a brief background overview of the States they respectively reside in. This in order to provide a clear foundation for the more case-specific empirics that are to be investigated in detail. Furthermore, each case is then initially presented from a historical perspective, and investigated based on the same set of questions presented under section 4.4. Subsequently, data concerning the final operational point of whether or not the case has experienced an *outbreak of civil armed conflict* over oil is presented, allowing for the empirical study to transition over to the between-case analysis.

After the empirical presentation, the analysis initially starts off by briefly evaluating each case in a logical manner. This in order to see whether or not a case-specific interaction between *strong group organizational capabilities* and the *outbreak of civil armed conflict* over oil exists. While this process allows for the detection of potentially additional factors that may affect the results, it may also illuminate issues that possibly are relevant to consider when concluding the study and assessing the precision of the hypothesis, and therefore perhaps contribute to a more nuanced picture in the research field concerning oil and intrastate armed conflict.

The analytical between-case comparison constitutes the most central part of the analysis, and is divided into a process of four stages; (1) an initial detailed investigation of the cases’ respective organizational capabilities is made in relation to their respective outcomes to fully evaluate the potential influence of the independent variable on the dependent, and to examine the potential differences in organizational capabilities between the respective group actors; (2) the outcome of the first step is subsequently followed up by a comparison with this thesis’ stated hypothesis in order to assess to what extent the explanatory power of the causal mechanism holds true; (3) a slightly extended analysis focusing on additional observations made in relation to the main findings. Furthermore, alternative explanations to these potentially additional observations are made in order to clarify their role in potentially affecting the end result of the analysis; (4) in order to account for potential bias, the final section of the analysis addresses some of the limitations of this thesis with regard to its theory, the chosen research design, as well as the empirics presented.
5. NIGERIA

The first commercial discovery of oil in Nigeria — a British protectorate at the time — dates back to 1956 when British Petroleum (BP) and Royal Dutch Shell jointly operated in the densely-populated Niger Delta in search for the resource that quickly would become the country’s largest export product (Oyefusi 2007, 2; The Guardian 2011). Aside from being the most populous State on the African continent, Nigeria is one of Africa’s most ethnically fractionalized States, with approximately 250 different ethnic groups inhabiting the country (Girardin et al., 2015; CIA 2017 B). In 1958, only two years after the discovery of oil in the Niger Delta, Nigeria begun producing and exporting their crude petroleum through foreign companies, thereby quickly becoming the largest oil-producer and exporter in Sub-Saharan Africa. This while also becoming increasingly dependent on the revenues generated from oil exports, which already by the late 1950s accounted for approximately 40% of Nigerias exports, a figure which eventually reached 90% by the mid 1960s (Akindele 1986, 10; Rogerson 1999, 329; Lujala et al. 2007; Oyefusi 2007, 2; Campbell 2013, 52; Simoes et al. 2014).

![Figure 2. Map of Nigeria and its Oil Fields](Harvard University 2017) 18

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18 Blue signifies crude petroleum, red signifies gas.
5.1 Case 1: the Ogoni

Ethnic Background

Having settled in the ethnically heterogeneous Niger Delta region over 2,000 years ago, the Ogoni of Nigeria belong to one of the oldest ethnic groups in the eastern Niger Delta region, hailing from a common sociocultural tradition of being an agriculturally dependent people investing in livestock and crop farming (Kpone-Tonwe 1997, 130-135). Establishing themselves in a small, territory of oil-rich land characterized by dense forests and mangrove swamps east and north of Port Harcourt, the Ogoni are a relatively homogeneous ethnic group and made up approximately 900,000 (2%) of Nigeria's total population of roughly 45 million inhabitants in 1960 (Girardin et al. 2015; MRG 2017 B; The World Bank 2017). While being relatively old, the main branch of the Ogoni language, Beneu-Congo, is divided into multiple different, yet related languages, most notably Eleme, Khana, and Gokana. Although related through history, the languages are today mutually unintelligible (MAR 2006 A). Additionally, the use of Beneu-Congo as a language has been in a rapid decline during the last century. This since many of the Ogoni adopted English as a first language, influenced by the British colonization of Nigeria in the early 1900s, increasingly dividing the Ogoni’s lingual communication (Ibid.). In similar fashion, the traditional Ogoni socio-religious customs of honoring the land, adhering to the Yaa tradition, has been steadily declining since the colonial times due to Christian missionaries effectively converting significant parts of the Ogoni population from Yaa to Christianity (Ibid.).

Before the British colonization of Nigeria in 1914, the Ogoni people had autonomy over their ethnic settlement area. While much of the Ogoni culture was subjugated under British rule post 1914, the Ogoni at the time were fiercely resistant in their bid for further independence to separate from the unified Nigeria envisioned by Great Britain. As the colonization of Nigeria eventually ensued, it consolidated the different autonomous regions of the Niger Delta into their Nigerian protectorate, held together by the imperial and commercial interest of the British. For the Ogoni, it meant that they lost control over their territory to the British, who instead were favoring the larger ethnic groups, Igbo and Yoruba among others (MAR 2006 A; UNPO 2008).

Oil Struck in Ogoniland (1958-1960)

In 1958, large quantities of petroleum were discovered in several parts of Nigeria, most notably in the highly significant Afam and Bomu fields of Ogoniland, east of Port Harcourt where the clear majority of the Ogoni reside (Lujala et al. 2007, 42-43; Ite et al. 2013, 80). The extensive potential for wealth that the petroleum findings could bring was not taken for granted by the oil companies in the petroleum sector nor by the Nigerian State, as oil exports began almost immediately, which
would come to shape the political and economic destiny of Nigeria in the following years (Ite et al. 2013, 80; NNPC 2017).

As the British withdrew in 1960, leaving a shambled Nigeria to become an independent State, the future of the Ogoni was initially looking prosperous due to the vast revenues that the large amounts of oil reserves were starting to generate (Campbell 2013, 52; Ite et al. 2013, 80). Oil production on Ogoni-majority lands accelerated as more multinational oil companies, besides Shell and BP, began to explore, develop and produce petroleum in the resource rich region. This subsequently strengthened the position of petroleum as the dominant export resource in the Nigerian economy, as the oil companies recorded extensive profit in their collaboration with the Nigerian State in exploiting the Ogoni lands (Ite et al. 2013, 80). The vast incomes generated from petroleum exports continuously pushed Nigeria further towards oil dependence, as petroleum by the late 1950s to the early 1960s accounted for approximately 40% of Nigerias exports (Akindele 1986, 10; Simoes et al. 2014; Oyefusi 2007, 2).

At first sight, the intense oil-boom in the Niger Delta should have seen Nigeria experience a strong economic increase. This since the oil production in Ogoniland, and in the Niger Delta rapidly expanded during 1958-1960. Instead, the industry itself was sinking deeper into controversy just as quickly as petroleum exports were turned into profit.

**The Ogoni Petroleum Curse (1961-1966)**

As the oil industry in Nigeria rapidly expanded, much due to the vast oil discoveries made in Ogoniland in previous years, benefits aimed towards the Ogoni were barely seen. By 1961, financial proceeds were lost to government corruption rather than being turned to royalties and rents for the Ogoni people living in the areas of oil production (GPF 1999; BBC 2009; The Guardian 2011). Interethnic competition over the resource revenues caused sporadic one-sided violence in Ogoniland, and saw the bigger ethnic groups gaining most of the incomes from oil-exports, since relatively many members of the larger ethnic groups were holding elite positions in the Nigerian government. Since the Nigerian government elites held the majority shares in the profits generated from oil production and exports, government officials belonging to the larger ethnic groups got to keep nearly all revenues, thereby becoming the prime beneficiaries of the gains made from the multinational oil industry in the Niger Delta. (BBC 2009; MRG 2017 B). By that, the Ogoni did not gain any socioeconomic benefits from the revenues of the oil produced on what they perceived as their land. Since little of the wealth generated from oil production and exports seeped down to the Ogoni, their economic rights and social healthcare remained largely unfulfilled (Ibid.).

Further in to the 1960s, the petroleum exploitation on Ogoni territories had already turned the region into a polluted wasteland, turning an initial national treasure into a symbol of agony for
the Ogoni people. By 1966, repeated blow-outs and oil-spillages close to Ogoni settlement areas, causing environmental degradation, led to the devastation of Ogoni farmlands, wildlife and ecosystem, as the sensitive mangrove swamps of the eastern Niger Delta were polluted by oil leftovers and acid rains (GPF 1999; The Guardian 2011). Hailing from a sociocultural tradition that is heavily reliant on agriculture and farming, the way of life for many of the Ogoni was ruined by the constant oil spills and poor pipeline maintenance. Farmlands, forest and inland waters were covered in oil, leaving the Ogoni impoverished and partly unable to sustain their traditional way of life (Kpone-Tonwe 1997, 130-135; Free Word, 2015).

**The Occupation of Ogoniland (1967-1969)**

The systematic exclusion from power that the Ogoni endured at the hands of larger ethnic groups, together with the environmental destruction of their ethnic settlement areas around the eastern Niger Delta, led to increasing Ogoni grievances. While the Ogoni were one of the main ethnic groups paying the highest price for the prosperity that oil was supposed to bring to Nigeria, the weak ruling foundations left by the British in 1960 which favored certain ethnic groups over others subsequently caused government in-fighting and conflict escalations (MAR 2006 A). While this provided some opportunities for the Ogoni to reclaim some of the autonomous power they had previously lost, the Ogoni were left weakened by the negative impacts of oil pollution and environmental degradation which had caused significant portions of the Ogoni population to become impoverished, and move from their traditional lands (Free Word 2015). While the Ogoni in 1967 became increasingly vocal through minor protests for Ogoni autonomy and against the abuse they were receiving from the exploits of multinational oil companies and the Nigerian government, they were politically inactive at the time and had no form of collective ruling administration to turn to (MAR 2006 A; Girardin et al. 2015).

As disputes between the Hausa-Fulani, who were largely the government-ruling ethnic group at the time, and the Yoruba and Igbo further escalated, their dispute over governmental power spilled over into Ogoni territory. In 1967, the Ogoni eventually experienced increased repression of their people, as their lands became occupied by government military troops subjecting them to one-sided violence resulting in high civilian casualties, displacements and damages to proximate oil facilities, further harming the living environment of Ogoniland (MAR 2006 A; UNEP 2011, 24-25; Girardin et al. 2015). While the territorial occupations of Ogoniland lasted until 1970, the Ogoni people themselves did not revolt against the occupants, nor did they revolt against the Nigerian government during this time period (MAR 2006 A). Despite the destruction of much of the Ogoni settlement region as well as the unfair distribution of oil revenues, and demands for territorial self-rule, the Ogoni would not find themselves experiencing civil armed conflict over the vast petroleum
resources of the eastern Niger Delta (Gleditsch et al. 2002; MAR 2006; Girardin et al. 2015; Vogt et al. 2015).

5.2 Case 2: the Igbo

*Ethnic Background*

Not unlike other ethnic groups found in the Niger Delta region, the Igbo (or Ibo) people trace their origins back thousands of years in present-day Nigeria. While located highly concentrated in the oil-rich south-eastern rainforest regions of Imo and Anambra, north of Port Harcourt, (together also known as Igbo-land) the Igbo have long been considered a trading and farming people with traditional folklore and sociocultural customs that differentiates from other Nigerian ethnic groups (MAR 2006 B; Encyclopædia Britannica 2017; CIA 2017 A). Igbo-land itself is one of the most densely populated parts of sub-Saharan Africa, and although divided into several different dialects, the fragmented parts of the Igbo language, collectively called Asusu Igbo, are mutually intelligible, and is the main language spoken by the Igbo of Nigeria, despite cultural and lingual influences from other ethnic groups and colonists (Fardon and Furniss 1994, 66-67; UCDP 2017 A).

In connection with the British colonization of Nigeria in 1914, the Igbo initially resisted, but were nonetheless one of the first groups to adopt the religious traditions imposed by the colonists, with a large majority portion of the Igbo converting to Christianity early on in comparison to other Nigerian ethnic groups. Despite this, the Igbo language still managed to maintain its position as the key-language among the Igbo population (MAR 2006 B; MRG 2017 C; UCDP 2017 A). While the ruling British colonists’ missionary activities were largely successful, it subsequently led to them favoring the larger Nigerian ethnic groups Hausa-Fulani, Yoruba, and Igbo (the least populate group of the three), by placing them in low-level ruling governmental positions (MAR 2006 B; UCDP 2017 A). Before the arrival of colonists, the Igbo, who constituted approximately 4,5 million (10%) of Nigeria’s total population of roughly 45 million during 1958-1967, were politically fragmented, and ruled their traditional lands through several smaller kingdoms (Miers and Roberts 1988, 437). While losing some of the de-centralized rule that the Igbo people previously had in the Imo and Anambra regions, they still had some governing positions in the Nigerian State held together by the British colonists (Miers 1988, 437; MAR 2006 B; UCDP 2017 A).

*Igbo-land Oil Discovery (1958-1960)*

With Nigeria already being ranked as one of the biggest oil-producing States in the world after the enormous on-shore petroleum discoveries made in the Niger Delta in the late 1950s, it came as no surprise when multiple large oil reserves were discovered in southern Igbo-land in 1956 (Lujala et al.
2007; Campbell 2013, 52). While making its first shipment abroad in 1958, the initial effects of the revenues from petroleum exports produced in southern Nigeria led to well-developed economic, social and political competition amongst the country’s larger ethnic groups, as low-level governmental ruling leadership granted by the British colonists led to the formation of three political parties in the country largely based on ethnic affiliation — the Hausa-Fulani-based National Populations Commission (NPC), the Yoruba-based Action Group (AG), and the Igbo-based National Council for Nigeria and the Cameroons (NCNC) (Girardin et al. 2015; NNPC 2016). With the ethnic groups-affiliated political parties in mind, the parliamentary rule in Nigeria was shaped by the British in such a way that the number of seats were given based on the relative size of the political parties’ respective ethnic group that they were affiliated with (De Waal 1997; MAR 2006 B; New World Encyclopedia 2015). This put the Igbo, who were the least populate of the three larger ethnic groups, in a precarious position concerning the distribution of the revenues generated from petroleum exports, as most of it came from Igboland, compared to the lesser resources held by the Hausa-Fulani and Yoruba (MAR 2006 B).

Prior to the discovery of oil in the Niger Delta, the central source of Nigerian wealth came from the agricultural sector, a product source which was largely spread out all over the country. Contrary to this, the petroleum sector which was rapidly developing into the sole dominant source of income for Nigeria was specifically located in the southern and south-eastern parts of the country, much of it in Igboland. This cased ambiguity surrounding the regional distribution of the revenues from the petroleum-exports. Additionally, these uncertainties were increased after the British, who had imposed their cultural and political rule for roughly 60 years, left Nigeria in 1960 — simply leaving the three ethnic groups, Hausa-Fulani, Yoruba and Igbo, to compete over the political power void left by the British colonizers.

**Intrigues Over Oil and Political Competition (1961-1965)**

As the petroleum-sector quickly became the leading force in the Nigerian economy, there were increasing fears from the Igbo community of the south-east that the politically dominant northern and western regions, mainly inhabited by Hausa-Fulani and Yoruba respectively, would strip the south-east of the oil-riches to benefit their own struggle for more power (MAR 2006 B; New World Encyclopedia 2015). After Nigeria had gained its independence from the British in 1960, a political party coalition constituted by political representatives from NPC, AG, and NCNC negotiated to politically divide the country into three, partially self-ruling, federal entities within the Nigerian State. This to hinder the respective groups’ fears of unfair revenue-distribution and total corruption from becoming a reality after the vast amounts of oil had been discovered, much of it on Igbo territory (MAR 2006 B; Lujala et al. 2007; Campbell 2013, 52; Girardin et al. 2015, 1077). Despite
this, regional tensions increased in 1961 as Nigerian politicians from fought for the spoils of
government office — an acute issue which was fueled by the fear of being carved out of the
petroleum-deals made between the three bigger political parties (MRG 2017 C).

In 1963, the party coalition successfully elected Nnamdi Azikiwe as the first president of the
Nigerian federal State. Largely viewed as politically neutral, Azikiwe nonetheless lost power to the
Hausa-Fulani-based NPC’s strong-man Bala in the highly controversial 1964 elections, just one
year into his rule. (Girardin et al. 2015, 1077). Claims of electoral fraud paired with the systematic
exclusion of Yoruba and Igbo from powerful ruling-positions in the government sparked a post-
electoral political crisis in the country (Girardin et al. 2015, 1077; MRG 2017 C). This tempted the
oil-rich south-east, which was now politically discriminated, to annex the Niger Delta region and
become economically self-sufficient, leaving the rest of Nigeria to fend for itself (MAR 2006 B;
Campbell 2013, 52; Girardin et al. 2015, 1077; New World Encyclopedia 2015).

Igbo Coup d'État and the Outbreak of the Biafran War (1966-1967)
While being systematically marginalized from political power, the Igbo were not receiving what
they viewed as a fair share of the revenues from petroleum-exports, petroleum which was largely
produced in their settlement region in the upper Niger Delta. The perceived relative deprivation
combined with political discrimination would subsequently initiate a vicious cycle of ethnic and
economic conflict between the Hausa-Fulani-based government of the north and the Igbo people of
the south (MAR 2006 B; CGA 2016).

In January 1966, an Igbo-based military faction, led by the Igbo Patrick Nzeogwu, carried
out a coup to take control over the government. Although initially successful in removing the
Hausa-Fulani government policy-makers from their offices, the Igbo coup was met by a counter-
coup and reprisal anti-Igbo attacks mainly led by Hausa-Fulani loyalists in July 1966. This resulted
in the Nigerian government subjecting Igbo, and other ethnic groups in the Nigerian south-east, to
one-sided violence, massacring approximately up to 30 000 Igbo just in Igboland (Gleditsch et al.
2002; MAR 2006 B; Campbell 2013, 52).

The one-sided violence sparked by the coup prompted the Igbo of the oil-rich south-east to
attempt secession from the Nigerian State in 1967 to create the Republic of Biafra (MAR 2006 B;
Campbell 2013, 52). Aside from seceding from the State of Nigeria, the Igbo-led Biafran army also
occupying the nearby petroleum-rich Ogoniland in an attempt to strengthen their economic power
relative to Nigeria (MAR 2006 A; MAR 2006 B). Launching a 'police action’, the Nigerian military
attacked the newly formed State of Biafra in order to retake the seceded south-east (Girardin et al.
2015, 1077-1078; New World Encyclopedia 2015). The Biafran military, consisting of ethnic Igbo
recruits, responded by initiating attacks against the north, quickly escalating the conflict into a civil
war over the oil-rich territory which resulted in roughly 15,000 battle-related deaths only in 1967 (Gledtisch et al. 2002; Achunonu 2012, 68; Vogt et al. 2015).

5.3 Nigeria: Summary of Empirical Findings

As evident from the two Nigerian cases presented, both the Ogoni and the Igbo hail from distinct sociocultural traditions that go back thousands of years in existence (Kpone-Tonwe 1997, 130-135; Encyclopædia Britannica 2017). This arguably provides members of respective groups with some form of common ethnocultural history that ties them together. While so, it is clear that the Ogoni, although lingually distinguishable from other Nigerian languages, were strongly influenced by the British early on concerning their spoken tongue. While the Igbo largely kept speaking Asusu Igbo — a divided yet mutually intelligible language — during and after the British colonization, the Ogoni, whose language was divided into multiple unintelligible dialects, lost parts of their lingual tradition by adopting to the English language (Fardon and Furniss 1994, 66-67; MAR 2006 A; UCDP 2017 A).

While the Igbo had an ethnic population constituting roughly 10% of Nigeria’s total population, the Ogoni constituted about 2% of it, rendering both ethnic groups as significant relative to the approximately 250 other ethnic groups in Nigeria between 1958 and 1969 (Miers and Roberts 1988, 437; Girardin et al. 2015; MRG 2017 B; The World Bank 2017). Despite there being a difference in population size between the Ogoni and the Igbo, their respective population sizes relative to other Nigerian ethnic groups imply that they are both significantly large, this also compared to the total population size of Nigeria.19

While living geographically concentrated in their small region, the Ogoni were surrounded and influenced by multiple other ethnic groups in their surroundings, implying a rather low level of homogeneity among their population. This was eventually further fueled by many of them leaving their traditional settlement areas after the arrival of new settlers and oil companies, heavily contaminating Ogoniland with oil-spillages and blow-outs turning parts of the small region into a wasteland. Additionally, the one-sided violence caused by the Nigerian government further added to this issue as a significant portion of the population fled from the assaults. Although the Ogoni still constitute the small majority in Ogoniland, their small settlement area in addition to outside influences has ultimately affected the demographics of the area, lowering the level of Ogoni homogeneity in the region. The Igbo, while also settled in the ethnically diverse Niger Delta, had a strong presence in their region relative to other ethnic groups in the area. They were settled further

19 See the discussion on ‘Conceptualizing Strong Group Organizational Capabilities’ under Section 3.1 (Fearon 2004, 408).
north, isolated from the cultural influences of most other groups, and thus held a high level of lingual and cultural homogeneity (Fardon and Furniss 1994, 66-67; MAR 2006 B; MRG 2017 C; UCDP 2017 A). Despite also experiencing the arrival of oil companies and being subjected to violence from the Nigerian government, the Igbo did not find themselves dispersed after being attacked. Rather it seemed to fuel their aspirations for further autonomy (MAR 2006 A; MAR 2006 B; UNPO 2008).

Looking at the organizational history of the Ogoni, they did display some form of organizational structure in the past by having autonomy in the south-east of Nigeria before the British colonization. Nonetheless, the only modern indications of organizational history evident throughout the timeline of interest was shown in the low-level protests conducted by the Ogoni against the State and the oil-companies operating in Ogoniland (MAR 2006 A; Girardin et al. 2015). In contrast, the Igbo were well-organized politically in both before and after the British colonization of Nigeria (Miers 1988, 437; MAR 2006 B; Girardin et al. 2015; NNPC 2016 UCDP 2017 A). Conclusively, the only group to engage in civil armed conflict with the government was the Igbo, instigating the Biafran War in 1967 (Gleditsch et al. 2002; Vogt et al. 2015).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group Organizational Capabilities and the Outbreak of Civil Armed Conflict</th>
<th>Ogoni</th>
<th>Igbo</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sociocultural plurality</td>
<td>High level</td>
<td>High level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lingual practice</td>
<td>Low level</td>
<td>High level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population (≥1%)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geographical cohesiveness</td>
<td>High level</td>
<td>High level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homogeneity</td>
<td>Moderate level</td>
<td>High level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational history</td>
<td>Low level</td>
<td>High level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outbreak of civil armed conflict Over Oil</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. Group Organizational Capabilities and Civil Armed Conflict Onset in Nigeria.
6. IRAQ

Following the downfall of the Ottoman Empire at the end of World War I, the exploration of oil the newly formed nation of Iraq, unified by the British, was diligently undertaken by the Iraq Petroleum Company (IPC) in the northern regions of the country — a region which houses a wide mosaic of different ethnic groups whose regional coexistence can be dated back thousands of years (Campbell 2013, 286; UCDP 2017 B). This exploration was rewarded in 1927, when the IPC discovered the vast on-shore Kirkuk oil field in northern Iraq. Despite the early discovery, the petroleum found was not significantly extracted or exported until 1950 partially due to the break-out of World War II hampering the process (Dunning 2008, 285; Oil Almanac 2012, 11; Campbell 2013, 286).

While roughly 70-75% of Iraq’s total population 7.3 million are Arab, the remaining 25-30% consist of a wide variety of minority groups, ethnically fractionalizing the State of Iraq. The two largest of these minority groups, Iraqi Turkmens and Kurds, live around the northern parts of the country, stretching east and west across the vast oilfields of the Kirkuk region (McDowall 2004, 8-11; CIA 2017 C). Since only some exclusive parts of northern Iraq are considered fertile for agricultural farming, the country quickly became dependent on the incomes from international crude petroleum exports, which, at the time, made up roughly 90% of Iraqi exports (Simoes et al. 2014; CIA 2017 C).

Figure 3. Map of Iraq and its Oil Fields (Harvard University 2017).

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20 Blue signifies crude petroleum, red signifies gas.
6.1 Case 3: the Turkmens

Ethnic Background

The Turkmens of Iraq have long historical roots in the region, reaching beyond the introduction of Islam (UNPO 2007, 3). While ethnically tied to the Ottomans, the Turkmens hail from the Turkic Seljuks, Mongols, and Safavids from the easternmost parts of the Middle East region, and central Asia (Blaum 2007, 41; MRG 2014 A). With a long ethnocultural background in the region, the Turkmens were largely organized in tribes guarding the Ottoman caliphate, and mainly settled in the Iraqi cities of Tal Afar, Mosul, and Kirkuk — cities belonging to Iraq’s mountainous steppe regions (Salman 2005, 1; Blaum 2007, 41; UNPO 2007, 3). Furthermore, many of them served as politicians, and have long been present in larger Iraqi districts such as Salah al-Din, and Diyala during the rule of the Ottoman Empire (UNPO 2007, 3). The Turkmens are the third largest ethnic group in Iraq after the Arabs and Kurds, making up roughly 800,000-900,000 (11%) of Iraq’s total population in the 1950s and 1960s (Salman 2005, 1; The World Bank 2017). In some of these cities and districts the Turkmens make up significant parts of the population, most notably in Tal Afar where they the Turkmen population have long been the majority (UNPO 2007, 3; MRG 2014 A).

The Iraqi Turkmen settlement area stretches like a belt form east and west across the Kirkuk region, forming a strip-like settlement area, known to Turkmens as Turkmeneli, between what is considered northern and southern Iraq (McDowall 2004, 8-11; UNPO 2007, 3; MRG 2014 A; CIA 2017 C). While being the majority in some parts of the Turkmen ethnic group settlement area, their geographical influence has still somewhat declined over the years since the fall of the Ottoman Empire, as increased marginalization has caused their populate concentration in the region to be less homogeneous over the years (UNPO 2007, 3). Whilst only being the majority population in several specks of land in northern Iraq, the Turkmens in the 1950s-1960s still constituted a significant part of the cohesive geographic settlement areas where they live, stretching from Kirkuk in the east to Tal Afar in the west (Ibid.).

Decreasing influence is something that has affected the Iraqi Turkmen language, Turkoman, over the years. Turkoman is considered a dialect of Istanbul Turkish, despite the two largely being mutually distinguishable. While so, Turkoman is often considered more closely related to Azeri spoken in Azerbaijan than to Turkish spoken in Turkey (Salman 2005, 1; UNPO 2007, 3-6).

Despite speaking an intragroup cohesive language, distinguishable from most other spoken tongues in the proximate region, the presence of other ethnic groups and their respective influences have caused Turkoman to gradually decrease amongst other languages in Iraq. This as increasingly many Turkmens opted for Arabic, Kurdish, or Iranian Farsi when communicating. Nonetheless, their language has still persisted greater influence of other groups, and is generally spoken amongst Turkmens in Iraqi Turkmen communities (Salman 2005, 1-2; UNPO 2015). This is likely to be
much because of the geographical proximity to other Turkic languages in the neighboring countries, facilitating the persistence of the Iraqi Turkmen tongue.

*Kirkuk’s Burgeoning Oil Industry: a Turkmen Perspective (1950-1955)*

There are few cities in the Middle East that match the historically demographic and economic complexity of city of Kirkuk and its surrounding province. In 1950, the city of Kirkuk was, as it long had been, divided between rivaling ethnic groups, with the Turkmens constituting a narrow majority of the city’s population, while the Kurds and Arabs were their two main rivaling ethnic groups at the time (McDowall 2004, 3). The origins of the city had long been disputed. Turkmens wanted to claim it as they constituted the majority of Kirkuk’s population at time, while the Arabs, who had government power monopoly, wanted to increasingly ’nationalize’ the city by assimilating the population as a means of their nationalist agenda for the future Iraq (McDowall 2004, 3; Anderson 2011, 20). While the respective ethnic groups rivaled over the cultural identity of the city, the IPC just started to develop Iraq’s first oil field in the Kirkuk region, as commercial exports began in 1950, 23 years after it initially had been discovered in Baba Gurgur, close to Kirkuk (Lujala et al. 2007; Oil Almanac 2012, 11). The vast amounts of petroleum found in the area, and the commercial exports of the product, were quickly foreseen as to transform Iraq from just being the cradle of past civilizations to one of the world’s most rich and valuable countries in the near future (Anderson 2011, 20; Oil Almanac 2012, 11).

In the following years, the riches gained from Kirkuk’s petroleum exports rapidly expanded the city’s importance. With the country’s relatively recent independence in mind, the Arab-led Iraqi government wanted to convey a strong sense of nationalism, and thus take actions in such directions. Turkmen political organizations were strictly prohibited in Iraq, Turkmen schools were shut down, and Turkmen villages were renamed (UNPO 2014). Eventually, these actions would come to strongly influence the ethnocultural future of Iraq’s Turkmen population.

*Demographic Shifts and Ethnic Tensions (1956-1958)*

As the importance of the city of Kirkuk grew after the oil-boom in the first half of the 1950s, Turkmen influence gradually decreased in the region by 1956, as other minorities began emigrating to Kirkuk in large numbers in search for better living standards, and jobs in the growing oil sector (Salman 2005, 2; UNPO 2007, 3). This exposed the Turkmen settlement areas, Kirkuk most notably, to rapid demographic changes which led to increased ethnic tensions that frequently resulted in low-level inter-communal violence between Iraqi Turkmens and other groups (UNPO 2007, 3).
The growing ethnic tensions in Iraq were further fueled by the nationalist agenda of the Iraqi government at the time. As the importance of Kirkuk and its oil was quickly recognized by most parties, the government initiated a ‘ta’rib’ (an Arabization-process) of the oil-rich areas in the north, with the city of Kirkuk being the main target. With little political leverage, Turkmen activists became easy targets and were frequently jailed and tortured. Turkmen cultural rights were gradually removed, and their language was restricted by the governing rulers, causing many to forcibly assimilate and adopt Arabic as their main language (Mufti and Bouckaert 2004, 7; UNPO 2007, 3-6). These actions were coupled with forced evictions and displacements aimed specifically at rapidly changing the oil-rich northern region’s demography, as Iraqi Turkmens among other groups were replaced by economically incentivized Arabs from the central and southern parts of Iraq (Mufti and Bouckaert 2004, 7; UNPO 2007, 6). The goal of the Iraqi government’s ta’rib was mainly to consolidate Arab control over the valuable petroleum and oil-resources located in Kirkuk and the surrounding areas (Mufti and Bouckaert 2004, 7).

As Iraq, after a coup d’état in 1958, transitioned from a monarchy to a republic, these tensions continued to escalate in the new era. The tensions created from the nationalistic agenda of the Iraqi government had successfully fueled the respective historical narratives of the regionally proximate ethnic groups which politicized the region further. The already damaged educational, cultural and lingual identities of the Turkmens made withstanding the Iraqi governments aggressive assimilation-assaults increasingly difficult to manage (Mufti and Bouckaert 2004, 7; Güclü 2007; UNPO 2007, 3-6).

**The Kirkuk Massacre and the Aftermath (1959-1961)**

As the ta’rib issued by the Iraqi government had started to take hold in major northern cities such as Tal Afar, Mosul and Kirkuk, the high levels of repression against Turkmens eventually led to full-blown violence conducted by the government. In 1959, scores of former Turkmen leaders and officials were killed in Kirkuk in one-sided attacks issued by Iraqi forces (UNPO 2007, 3; Entessar 2010, 70-71). These attacks quickly escalated and became increasingly extensive, leaving numerous Turkmen dead, effectively destroying significant parts of the Turkmen civil society, language and culture.

Between the time of the massacre in Kirkuk and 1961, the ta’rib process continued, forcibly assimilating and displacing multiple ethnic groups in the region, Turkmen among them (Salman 2005, 2; Güclü 2007; UNPO 2007, 3-6; Entessar 2010, 70-71; Anderson 2011, 25-27). Despite the numerous attempts and attacks on Turkmen ethnic identity in Iraq at the time, there were never any significant or organized violent responses conducted from the Turkmens’ side (Vogt et al. 2015). Repressions continued, and would even escalate during this time period and onward, leaving the
Turkmens of Iraq in a forcibly inflicted identity crisis which they seemingly could not deal with on their own (Ibid.).

6.2 Case 4: the Kurds

Ethnic Background

The presence of the Kurds in modern-day Iraq stretches back to the Indo-European Kardaks who inhabited northern regions of Iraq, to Kurds also known as Kurdistana Başûr (Southern Kurdistan), as early as 3000-5000 BC (Entessar 1992, 3; Aziz 2011, 46-50). With strong historical ties to the region, the Kurdish people of Iraq have largely been a tribally organized people considered socioculturally as well as lingually distinctive in relation to the neighboring ethnic groups (McDowall 2004, 13). The Kurds have previously ruled themselves by a number of smaller kingdoms, and have had several more 'modern’ eras of ruling autonomously partially due to the region’s mountainous and geographically strategic location (Entessar 1992, 3).

As the Ottoman Empire was partitioned by the end of World War I, the Kurds, who initially were to be granted statehood in the Treaty of Sèvres, were instead divided between states and lost the autonomy they previously have had (Entessar 1992, 51; McDowall 2004, 125; Kerim and Blass 2007, 11-13). Aside from encouraging the national spirit of the newly formed States, the era of State nationalism post-World War I fueled Kurdish ethnonationalism21, pro-Kurdish political activism and increased Kurdish awareness of their own distinctive language and culture which shared more similarities with Indo-European traits rather than with most ethnic groups in their geographic proximity (McDowall 2004, 287, 295; Aziz 2011, 46-50; MRG 2014 B).

Constituting around 1.3 million (18%) of Iraq’s total population of approximate 7.3 million inhabitants during the 1950s to 1960s, the Kurds are the largest ethnic minority in the country, and largely inhabit the mountainous, oil-rich northern parts of the country, principally settling down in a geographically cohesive area covering northern Iraq from the Syrian border to Iran. (McDowall 2004, 9-12; CIA 2017 C; The World Bank 2017). They make up a vast homogeneous majority of the population in the region north of Kirkuk, particularly in cities such as Erbil (Hewlêr) and Duhok, and constitute a significant part Kirkuk’s population together with Arabs and Turkmens (McDowall 2004, xiv).

Despite having a relatively large and homogeneously concentrated population, the Kurdish language in Iraq is divided into two major dialects — Kurmanji spoken by Kurds in northernmost Iraq, and Sorani spoken by the southern Kurds near the Sulaymaniya and Kirkuk areas (McDowall

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21 Usually mistaken for ‘loyalty to the State’, the term ‘ethnonationalism’ rather implies loyalty to the ethnic group and intragroup awareness, focusing on common historical traits, language, and culture. As such, ‘ethnonationalism’ should be distinguished from more State-focused terms such as ‘patriotism’ and ‘nationalism’ (Aziz 2011, 3).
2004, 9-10). While the dialects do differ in terms of grammar and vocabulary to a certain extent, the two dialects are mutually intelligible, and are both extensively used among practically all Kurds in Iraq (Ibid.).

*Kirkuk’s Burgeoning Oil Industry: a Kurdish Perspective (1950-1954)*

The demographic complexity of the city of Kirkuk is a phenomenon which has involved historical and populate claims to the city. Whilst being one of Iraq’s most ethnically fractionalized cities with disputed origins, the Kurdish presence in Kirkuk historically predates the other ethnic groups in the area at the time (Talabany 2007). Despite the Kurds having the historically longest ties to the city, Kirkuk in the 1950s had a Turkmen majority population in the urban areas which further intensified the rivalry of the city between Kurds, Arabs and Turkmens (McDowall 2004, 3; Bet-Shlimon 2012, 920).

The massive oil-wealth located in the Kirkuk region was in no way news for Iraqi government officials by the 1950s, and neither was it to other ethnic groups (Campbell 2013, 287). But as increasingly large quantities of petroleum were being commercially exported by the IPC from the Kirkuk oil-field, the city of Kirkuk took on a whole new significance to Iraq’s population, and many Kurds from the poorer rural areas around Kirkuk moved to the city to take part in Iraq’s growing oil-industry (Lujala et al. 2007; Bet-Shlimon 2012, 920-921).

With Kirkuk’s newly gained popularity, the Kurdish Sulaymaniya-based political party Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP), created in 1946 and led by Mulla Mustafa Barzani, started expanding its political activities to the city by 1952, thereby acting as a de facto power rival to other significant actors in the area (McDowall 2004, 295, 297-299). The rapid population increase following the large-scale production and exports of petroleum in Kirkuk posed a threat to the Iraqi government who generally viewed the Kurds as autonomously minded partially due to their previous unwillingness to take part in the Arab-led nationalization process of the Iraqi State post-independence (McDowall 2004, 287-289; Bet-Shlimon 2012, 919).

*Political Demography and Oiling the Way Towards Civil War (1955-1957)*

In 1955, the Arab presence in the northern Iraqi region was relatively low compared to the other ethnic groups. But as the economic prosperity of northern Iraq was rapidly changing due to the vast oil-discoveries made in around the Zagros Fold Belt, so would eventually the demographics of Kirkuk (Bet-Shlimon 2012, 921).

As increasingly large quantities of petroleum were being commercially exported by the IPC from the Kirkuk oil-field in 1956, the importance of the Kirkuk region to the Iraqi State and its people grew. The post-World War I epoch in Iraq was characterized by Arab nationalism, which led
the increasing presence of Kurds and Kurdish political activists in Kirkuk to be perceived as potentially threatening, and at the expense of Arabs and Turkmens (Bet-Shlimon 2012, 924; Campbell 2013, 287). A potentially rebellious Kurdish political base in the city known for its massive oil-wealth was simply not to be tolerated by the Iraqi government. No matter the ethnonationalist narratives of Kirkuk’s rivaling ethnic groups, the Arab-led Iraqi government issued oil-propaganda campaigns around Kirkuk, painting nationalist and anti-Kurdish zero-sum scenarios over Kirkuk’s future, stating that Kurds, inter alia, would "hoard oil wealth for themselves.” (Dunning 2008, 285; Anderson 2011, 25-27). These propaganda campaigns acted as a start-off for the Iraqi government’s extensive ta’rib focused at systematically and forcibly evicting Kurds, as well as other ethnic minority groups, from their homes as a means to change the demographics of the city, as control over Kirkuk’s oil remained the government’s main goal of the campaign (Mufti and Bouckaert 2004, 7).

The ta’rib, aiming to Arabize the northern Iraqi regions, was not a completely new phenomenon for the Kurds in the area, but a process that had been on-going to a certain degree since at least the 1930s (Mufti and Boackaert 2004, 2). However, during the time period between 1955 and 1957 the process escalated, coinciding with the rapidly expanding incomes from petroleum-exports (Dunning 2007, 285; Bet-Shlimon 2012, 924; Campbell 2013, 287). Kurds, and other minorities, were forcibly removed from their homes in Kirkuk to make way for previously landless Arabs who had been brought in from the southern parts of Iraq (Mufti and Bouckaert 2004, 2; Entessar 2010, 87). The use of the Kurdish language was forbidden in schools, Kurdish land titles were invalidated, and their land declared government property only to be leased to newly settled Arab farmers (McDowall 2004, 308; Entessar 2010, 89).

**The Iraqi Coup d’État and the First Iraqi-Kurdish War (1958-1961)**

The 1958 coup d’État, carried out by forces led by Brigadier Abd al Karim Qasim, initially promised a brighter future for the Kurds who were now perceiving themselves of having gotten rid of an oppressive government (McDowall 2004, 302). Qasim, who had now formed a new ruling cabinet, pledged democratic rights to all Iraqis, and promised an end to the ta’rib and the expanding Iraqi nationalism. Nonetheless, the Kurds were excluded on all aspects, leaving them in a similar position from where they left off with the previous government (McDowall 2004, 308). This instantly flared up tensions between the new government and the Kurds who perceived themselves as entitled to a chunk of the lands and petroleum-riches of the regions from which they had been evicted, Kirkuk most of all (Ibid.).

In 1960, the KDP — the Kurds’ only political authority at the time — were claiming regional autonomy for the Kurds, territorial claims over a region that included the oil-rich land of
Kirkuk. Unsurprisingly, Qasim, who was unwilling to part with what was considered Iraq’s future, officially outlawed the KDP and increased the military presence in northern Iraq in an attempt to hinder any potential uprisings from Kurdish areas outside Kirkuk and northward (Ibid.). By continuing the process of ousting the Kurds from the Kirkuk area, which caused high unemployment amongst Kurds, and then also outlawing the only Kurdish political authority, Qasim further alienated himself from the Kurds who initially saw the Iraqi Revolt of 1958 as a sign of a better future (McDowall 2004, 310).

Kurdish tribal leaders viewed the Iraqi government’s actions against the Kurds in Kirkuk as a threat to themselves as well, especially since Iraqi military presence had increased further north. While tribally organized, the Kurds nonetheless rallied under the KDP-leader Barzani and his Pêşmerge forces (Ibid.). In December 1961, the Kurdish-based KDP initiated a territorial civil war against the Iraqi regime, an insurgency that last until 1970 and ultimately resulted in approximately 100,000 battle-related deaths (Gleditsch et al. 2002; McDowall 2004, 310; MAR 2010; PNW 2014; Vogt et al. 2015).

6.3 Iraq: Summary of Empirical Findings

The empirical findings made regarding the Turkmens and the Kurds of Iraq suggest a number of similarities between the ethnic groups, but also certain differences. The Turkmens and the Kurds respectively hail from distinctive sociocultural backgrounds that largely differentiate from the ethnic backgrounds of others in the local area. While the Iraqi Turkmens trace their ethnic and lingual identity from central Asian Turkic tribes and from the Turks in Anatolia, Kurdish history largely trace the Kurds and their language from Indo-European origins. Both are distinctive to Iraq’s ethnic diversity, which makes these groups protrude amongst others (Entessar 1992, 3; McDowall 2004, 13; Salman 2005, 1; Blaum 2007, 41; UNPO 2007, 3).

Collectively tracing their historical ties to the Ottoman Empire, the history of the Turkmens in Iraq displays a high sense of sociocultural plurality and also a history of lost autonomy due to the fall of the Ottoman Caliphate. Additionally, the Turkmens in Iraq displayed relatively high levels of lingual practice despite repressions from the Iraqi regime at the time of the studied chronological period (Salman 2005, 1; Blaum 2007, 41; UNPO 2007, 3-6). The Kurds — tracing their history as far as the early tribal epoch of the Middle East — were not too different from the Turkmens in this regard. Whilst hailing from a history of tribalism, the Kurds still shared a large sense of sociocultural unity due to their common history of struggle against invasive empires, and due to the strong bonds created by their common language (McDowall 2004, 9-10). Despite the relatively distinct dialectal division of the Kurdish language in Iraq, the respective subgroups of the Kurdish
are mutually intelligible, and that fact does not seem to have negatively affected intra-Kurdish sociocultural relations over time (Ibid.).

The Turkmens and the Kurds each make up the third largest and the second largest ethnic groups in Iraq respectively, with the former constituting roughly 11%, and the latter approximately 18% of Iraq’s total population in 1950-1960 (McDowall 2004, 9-10; Salman 2005, 1; CIA 2017 C; The World Bank 2017). The sheer size of each group arguably renders both of them sizably significant in relation to other groups in the country, including the Arab majority who led the country during the time frame that has been studied (McDowall 2004, 9-10, Salman 2005, 1; CIA 2017 C).

Although, both ethnic groups are settled in regions that geographically overlap each other’s respective settlement area, they both display a relatively high degree of geographical cohesion. The Turkmen ethnic group has its specific strip-like settlement area stretching from Kirkuk in the south-west to Mosul and Tal Afar in the north-east of Iraq (McDowall 2004, 8-11; UNPO 2007, 3; MRG 2014 A; CIA 2017 C). The Kurds, also extending from Kirkuk which in some senses overlaps the traditional Turkmen areas, are cohesively settled in the entire region north of the Turkmens, more specifically in Sulaymaniya and Erbil (Hewlêr) (McDowall 2004, 9-12).

While virtually similar in the senses brought up, the two ethnic groups did differ in terms of homogeneity. Although the Turkmens made up the slight majority of Kirkuk’s urban areas until around 1958, they only constituted the majority population in a few other places, most notably Tal Afar (McDowall 2004, 3). Considering this, the Turkmens were not especially homogeneous as they mostly settled areas that, between 1950 to 1961, were ethnically mixed with Kurds, Arabs, and other minorities, something which might have influenced their organizational potential (McDowall 2004, 3; Mufti and Bouckaert 2004, 7; Güclü 2007; UNPO 2007, 3-6). The Kurds in comparison constituted the vast concentrated majority of the whole region north of Mosul and Kirkuk, making them highly homogeneous in larger parts of their ethnic group settlement area (McDowall 2004, 9-10).

Additionally, the Turkmens were evidently lacking any significant form of leading administration to champion their political rights, partly due to previously low organizational history and partly due to being prohibited from forming new organizations (Mufti and Bouckaert 2004, 7; UNPO 2007, 3-6; UNPO 2014). Meanwhile, the Kurds had the KDP to push Kurdish demands forward, and to politically organize them if need be (McDowall 2004, 297-299). The Kurds were the only group of the two to display any form of modern political organization before the events of 1950, thus displaying a proximate history of organizing which may have influenced the differentiating outcome between the Turkmens and the Kurds relative to the Iraqi State at the time (McDowall 2004, 295).
The Iraqi Turkmens and the Kurds both faced harsh government-base oppression of their respective ethnocultural identities, and were forcibly evicted from their homes in the oil-rich Kirkuk area in connection with the increasing value of Iraqi petroleum exports (Mufti and Bouckaert 2004, 7; UNPO 2007, 3-6; Dunning 2008, 285; Entesar 2010, 87; Anderson 2011, 25-27). Despite this, the Kurds were the only ones who managed to mobilize against their perceived oppressors, as the KDP’s Pêşmerge forces instigated a territorial armed conflict against the Iraqi State in 1961 (Gleditsch et al. 2002; McDowall 2004, 310; MAR 2010; Vogt et al 2015).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group Organizational Capabilities and the Outbreak of Civil Armed Conflict</th>
<th>Turkmens</th>
<th>Kurds</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sociocultural plurality</td>
<td>High level</td>
<td>High level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lingual practice</td>
<td>High level</td>
<td>High level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population (≥1%)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geographical cohesiveness</td>
<td>High level</td>
<td>High level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homogeneity</td>
<td>Low level</td>
<td>High level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational history</td>
<td>Low level</td>
<td>High level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outbreak of civil armed conflict Over Oil</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

_Table 2. Group Organizational Capabilities and Civil Armed Conflict Onset in Iraq._
7. ANALYSIS

After collecting data and examining the four selected cases for this study, this section analytically investigates the empirical evidence to determine to what extent the precision of the posed hypothesis, *group actors are likely to experience civil armed conflict over oil when they possess strong organizational capabilities*, holds. The following section interprets the factorial results presented under sections 5 and 6 by highlighting the critical differences between the cases to determine whether or not an empirical correlation between *strong group organizational capabilities* and *outbreak of civil armed conflict over oil* can be established. Due to a number of research limitation, the empirical evidence must however be cautiously treated. Therefore, additional observations, alternative explanations, the limitations of the research design, and potential bias are thoroughly discussed throughout the following section.

7.1 Analysis of Critical Findings and Results

By investigating the selected dyadic disputes for this study, and connecting the empirical findings to the theoretical arguments on the field of group actor characteristics and intrastate armed conflict onset over oil, critical findings for answering the posed research question have been found. Regarding the between-case variation of the dependent variable, the cases that displayed an *outbreak of civil armed conflict over oil* were the Igbo and the Kurds respectively. This while the Ogoni and the Turkmens did not engage in civil armed conflict over oil with their respective State actors. Although an essential part of the focus of this thesis lies on this particular part of the study, the multiple indicators underlying the independent variable — *group organizational capabilities* — are equally essential to assess. This to grasp the underlying mechanism at play between theory and empirics.

While some operationalizing indicators displayed in the empirical analysis are similar across all four cases, certain indicators protruded to display interesting between-case variations that may have influenced the dependent variable outcomes of the respective cases. Based on the empirical findings displayed in table 2, the specific indicators highlighting the level of group organizational capabilities that notably vary between the cases are *lingual practice, homogeneity,* and *organizational history.*
Table 3. Critical Findings and the Outbreak of Civil Armed Conflict Over Oil.

**Lingual Practice**

Evident from the empirical cases examined, the only case displaying a low level of lingual practice was the Ogoni, who also did not engage in civil armed conflict over oil with the Nigerian State. As shown in the empirical case study, the spoken language of the Ogoni, Beneu-Congo, is divided into multiple different dialects that are mutually unintelligible, despite belonging to the language of the same ethnic group. Additionally, most Ogoni adopted English as their first language after the British colonization of Nigeria in 1914, which further decreased the use of Beneu-Congo among the Ogoni (MAR 2006 A).

Although demonstrating a similar outcome in the dependent variable as the Ogoni, the Turkmens did not show any moderate or low levels of lingual practice (Salman 2005, 1; Blaum 2007, 41; UNPO 2007, 3-6). Despite displaying a decrease in the use of Turkoman due to various types of lingual and cultural discrimination, the Turkmens, like the Igbo and the Kurds respectively, still practiced their distinct language as their main communicational tool. Similar to the Igbo and the Kurds, Turkoman was still consistently and commonly spoken amongst the members of their ethnic group, implying that the Igbo, the Kurds, and the Turkmens all showed high levels of lingual practice (Fardon and Furniss 1992, 66-67; McDowall 2004, 9-10; Salman 2005, 1; Blaum 2007, 41; UNPO 2007, 3-6; UCDP 2017 A).

In connecting back to the arguments of previous research and theory, Koubi and Böhmelt discussed the value of common lingual capacity as an important part of facilitating communication, which in turn strengthens intragroup identity and trust. Thereby, a distinct language as a tool for common intragroup communication would make rallying behind a common cause easier and facilitate rebel mobilization (Koubi and Böhmelt 2013, 4). While the theory and the hypothetical framework of this thesis argues in line with Koubi and Böhmelt, the empirical between-case

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Lingual Practice</th>
<th>Homogeneity</th>
<th>Organizational History</th>
<th>Outbreak of Civil Armed Conflict Over Oil</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ogoni</td>
<td>Low level</td>
<td>Moderate level</td>
<td>Low level</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Igbo</td>
<td>High level</td>
<td>High level</td>
<td>High level</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkmens</td>
<td>High level</td>
<td>Low level</td>
<td>Low level</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kurds</td>
<td>High level</td>
<td>High level</td>
<td>High level</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
variation in lingual practice presents an observation that is relevant to the study in the sense that it questions the significance of lingual practice on the outcome of the dependent variable. This is highlighted by the fact that, out of all four cases, only the Ogoni empirically displayed a low level of lingual practice. This while both the Ogoni and the Turkmens did not engage in civil armed conflict, despite the latter displaying a high level of lingual practice. This implies that lingual practice does not seem to be a significantly influential factor on the outbreak of civil armed conflict over oil in this case.

**Homogeneity**

Partly due to them being settled in a relatively small area surrounded by a variety of other influential ethnic groups, the Ogoni demonstrated a moderate level of homogeneity. Despite constituting the majority of the population in Ogoniland, the influences of various surrounding groups combined other ethnic groups occupying the settlement area as well as environmental degradation causing emigration from the region, partially hampered the homogeneity of the ethnic Ogoni in the Niger Delta. The Turkmens, whilst barely constituting the majority of a few northern Iraqi cities, did not display a consistent level of homogeneity across their ethnic group settlement area, and therefore demonstrated a low level of that indicator.

Following in line with previous research, the theory of this thesis argued that ethnic groups with high levels of homogeneity increased the risk for intrastate armed conflict onset.\(^2\) This especially if the host country was ethnically fractionalized (heterogeneous), and the homogeneous group’s settlement area is located near oil reserves controlled by the State, as higher levels of ethnic homogeneity provides ethnic group actors with the potential to effectively organize themselves, thereby facilitating rebel mobilization if need be.\(^3\) Through this mechanism, ethnic group actors are argued to have the military potential to defend their aspirations, and go to war with the State. While ethnic fractionalization of the state and oil reserve proximity were factors constant for all four cases, only two cases experienced the outbreak of civil armed conflict over oil, namely the Igbo and the Kurds.

Whilst sharing the fact that they both engaged in civil armed conflict over oil against their respective States, the Igbo and the Kurds both also demonstrated high levels of homogeneity due to them constituting the clear majority of their respective ethnic group settlement areas. This while the Ogoni (moderate level) and the Turkmens (low level) did not see dyadic armed conflict with the State. Despite all four cases generally sharing similar traits relevant to this study, the outbreak of

\(^2\) See Collier and Hoeffler 2004, 570, 588; Basedau and Richter 2011, 8, 12; Hunziker and Cederman 2012, 1; Koubi and Böhme 2013, 4.
\(^3\) See section 3.1 on "The Role of Group Capacity and the Onset of Civil Armed Conflict".
Civil armed conflict over oil was only evident in the cases that displayed high levels of homogeneity. By emanating from these findings, and by analyzing them in relation to the theoretical arguments of this thesis, the results indicate that high levels of homogeneity do have a significant influence on the outbreak of civil armed conflict over oil. This suggests that the empirical results partly go in line with the theoretical arguments and the hypothetical framework presented in this thesis.

Organizational History

While the Ogoni case did display some form of organizational structure in the past by having autonomy in the south-east of Nigeria before the British colonization, it is nonetheless arguably insignificant to their situation in 1958 to 1969. This since the only relatively modern indication of Ogoni organization occurring throughout the timeline of interest was the low-level protests conducted by them against the State and the oil-companies operating in the oil-rich Ogoniland (MAR 2006 A; Girardin et al. 2015). These protests were not pre-existing events occurring before the timeline, nor did they consequentially lead to any future form of larger mobilization of the Ogoni, despite the Ogoni being harshly oppressed and attacked by the Nigerian State. Therefore, organizational history of the Ogoni is perceived as being on a low level (Ibid.).

The Igbo, on the other hand, were evidently well-organized, partially due to them being among the groups that were ‘politically groomed’ and favored by the British colonizers which arguably gave them an organizational boost (Girardin et al. 2015; NNPC 2016). The formation of the Igbo-led NCNC party before 1958 highlights their relatively strong organizational capabilities, capabilities which seemingly also carried on into the post-British era of Nigeria (Ibid.). As disputes erupted between the Igbo and the Hausa-Fulani-based Nigerian government over Igboland oil-revenue distributions, the Igbo were politically organized enough through the NCNC to attempt secession from the Nigerian State and initiate the Biafran War in 1967 (Gleditsch et al. 2002; Vogt et al. 2015).

This pattern is visible among the two cases in Iraq as well. Previous to the timeline, the most proximate Turkmen organizational structure of significance existed during the Ottoman era, before World War I (UNPO 2007, 3). In relevant proximity to the timeline, the Turkmens lacked significant forms of leading organizational or political administration in northern Iraq, as most political authority in Iraq belonged to the Arab-led government (Mufti and Bouckaert 2004, 7; UNPO 2007, 3-6; UNPO 2014). Despite being attacked and displaced by government forces, the Turkmens did not engage in dyadic armed conflict with the State. These results indicated a low level of relevant organizational history among the Turkmens of Iraq at the time, which may have influenced the outcome of the dependent variable in this case.
In contrast to the Turkmens, the KDP (founded in 1946) arguably provided the Kurds with politically administrative leadership relevant to the studied timeline (McDowall 2004, 297-299). Like the Turkmens, the Kurds were under attack, and were forcibly being expelled from the oil-rich city of Kirkuk by government forces (McDowall 2004, 308). The Kurds however, unlike the Turkmens, managed to draw on the pre-existing organizational capabilities of the KDP which arguably facilitated the mobilization of the Kurdish tribes against a common threat. The armed wing of the KDP in Iraq, the Pêşmerge, were able to mobilize Kurds to fight over the control of the oil-rich Kirkuk as well as for Kurdish territorial secession between them and the Iraqi State, which indicated a high level of organizational history among the Kurds during the studied time period (McDowall 2004, 295). Hence, the KDP who represented the Iraqi Kurdish population, initiated the First Iraqi-Kurdish War in 1961 (Gleditsch et al. 2002; Vogt et al. 2015).

The theory section of this thesis argued that having a history of previously organizing (politically for instance) may represent a certain facilitation concerning group organizational capabilities, since having pre-existing organizations logically may promote future community mobilization and potentially ease the creation of new organized groups. Notably, the only cases displaying high levels of this trait, namely the Igbo and the Kurds, also experienced the outbreak of civil armed conflict over oil. This whilst the Ogoni and the Turkmens, who displayed low levels of organizational history did not experience any armed conflict dyad with their respective State actor. This indicates that the empirical findings do go in line with the initial theoretical argument of this thesis, suggesting that high levels of organizational history may facilitate group actors’ organizational capabilities, and thus ultimately also increase their possibility of engaging in civil armed conflict if need be.

Analytical Conclusion of the Main Results

Whilst initially arguing that group actors are likely to experience civil armed conflict over oil when they possess strong group organizational capabilities, the empirical findings in connection with the theory suggests that a more nuanced approach to the argument should be taken.

As previously mentioned, the indicators used to operationalize strong group organizational capabilities were mainly based on the findings and arguments of previous research, on database material, and on the theoretical arguments posed in this thesis. While so, the two cases (Ogoni and Turkmens) which did not experience an outbreak of civil armed conflict over oil evidently did display some higher levels of organizational capabilities in indicators similar to those cases that did instigate armed conflict (Igbo and Kurds). This as they collectively only differed in the sense of

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24 See section 3.1 on ‘The Role of Group Capacity and the Onset of Civil Armed Conflict’.
lingual practice, homogeneity, and organizational history. This indicates an implication for the theory that the posed independent variable, strong group organizational capabilities, is a slightly wide concept that must be approached in more detail to better explain the causal mechanism. While the hypothesis stated that group actors are likely to experience civil armed conflict over oil when they possess strong organizational capabilities, the empirical findings suggest that this is only partially true. This since two of the five studied operational indicators collectively constituting strong organizational capabilities proved to be enough for a case to experience an outbreak of civil armed conflict over oil.

Whilst sharing a number of operationalizing indicators for strong group organizational capabilities, the cases examined in the empirical analysis displayed a significant finding more nuanced than initially hypothesized. Since the two cases experiencing civil armed conflict were the only cases to display high levels of homogeneity and organizational history, it implies that when these two indicators of strong groups organizational capabilities interplay under the circumstances which were studied in Nigeria (1958-1969) and Iraq (1950-1961), the outbreak of civil armed conflict over oil becomes more likely. The reasons for this are two: (1) higher levels of ethnic concentration and homogeneity provides ethnic group actors with the potential to effectively organize themselves, thereby facilitating rebel mobilization. Through this mechanism, ethnic group actors are argued to have the military potential to defend their aspirations as well as their homogeneous territory, and go to war with the State if need be; (2) by having some form of pre-existing organizational structure, community mobilization is further facilitated, and may also simplify the creation of new organizations within an ethnic group’s spectrum, thereby strengthening the group’s overall organizational capabilities. Thus, the outbreak of civil armed conflict over oil becomes more likely under the studied circumstances.

While these are the main results of this study, it is important to emphasize that the generalizability of these results adheres to a particular population. All cases are cases of ethnic groups with significant petroleum resources on their respective territories, who are located in an ethnically fractionalized and oil-dependent State. The cases also display disputes over territory, and are located in regions with rough terrain. Furthermore, since Nigeria and Iraq do provide different settings geographically, and since the empirical case studies from both countries yielded similar results despite their different contexts, the results are generalizable over a cross-national level while also holding alternative factors constant within each set of cases (Johnson and Reynolds 2012, 41).

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25 The Ogoni differed in all three aspects, while the Turkmens differed in the two latter.
7.2 Additional Observations and Alternative Explanations

In extension to the relevant empirical findings presented and the main results analyzed under section 7.1, an additional observation relevant to discuss in relation to the analysis was made. While the Igbo and the Kurds both displayed civil armed conflict onset in their separate dyads, these groups were also more populous than the Ogoni and the Turkmens respectively. While this thesis emanated from the arguments of previous research in its analytical definition of population, and defined a sizably relevant group as constituting at least 1% of the country’s total population, large population differences between the groups may be seen as undermining the actual role of population size in the study. While population in this analysis is intended to grasp a group actor’s possible recruitment potential, it is reasonable to object that interpretation and argue that the larger the population size, the higher the recruitment potential. Since population does not account for population size other than including groups with a minimum of 1% of the country’s total population, the operational indicator can be argued to be lacking in this regard.

However, in response to such objections on this matter, the empirical findings do actually suggest otherwise. While the Ogoni made up roughly 2% of Nigeria’s total population, the Turkmens approximately constituted a rather contextually large 11% of Iraq’s total population during their respective time periods — yet none of the cases engaged in armed conflict (Miers and Roberts 1988, 437; Girardin et al. 2015; MRG 2017 B; The World Bank 2017). Furthermore, since Nigeria roughly consists of a massive 250 different ethnic groups and had a much larger population than Iraq during the studied time period, it is reasonably to argue that 2% in relative terms should be seen as a significantly large ethnic group in such an ethnically fractionalized context.
Also, while the Turkmens constituted around 11% of Iraq’s total population, the Kurds made up roughly 18%, which reasonably is not that much of a difference, especially since Iraq all in all consists of fewer, yet relatively large ethnic groups when compared to Nigeria. Although I interpret the logics of ‘the larger the ethnic group population, the higher the recruitment potential’ as very reasonable for cases such as the ones studied, the empirical findings point towards the combination of homogeneity and organizational history as more significant in relation to the outbreak of civil armed conflict over oil under the circumstances that set the scope condition for this study.26

7.3 Limitations and Potential Bias

Like most scientific studies made, this analysis also contains potential flaws, minor issues, and certain interpretations that others may find objectionable. Looking at the limitations of the theory in this thesis, the concept of ‘regime type’ is something that comes to mind when making cross-case comparison where more than one State actor happens to be involved. Regime type is a theoretical condition often used as a case selection criteria for comparative case studies such as this one. While authoritarian regimes may often be considered ‘stable’ due to the presence of one strong elite actor strictly suppressing oppositional group actors, the negative effects of oil dependence nevertheless destabilize such regimes for instance due to the increasing economic instability that follows the heavy reliance on oil (Bates 2008, 19-20, 27-28; Ross 2008, 4; Basedau and Richter 2011, 7-8; Asal et al. 2015, 1344).

Following the theoretical argument of previous research and mine own, it is reasonable to argue that while a state may be authoritarian, it will simultaneously also be unstable if oil dependent, and thus increasingly exposed to armed rebellion. That is why this thesis conditions itself based on oil dependence-based state instability rather than regime type, which has partly been discussed under section 4.2. Furthermore, regardless if the two sets of cases varied regarding their respective states’ regime types, they still managed to display similar patterns and outcomes in the independent variable and dependent variable. This suggests that this thesis’ argument still holds even when not analyzing over different regime types as long as the selected scope conditions, such as oil dependence, are constant.

As previously discussed briefly under section 4.1, the deliberate and limited selection of cases that qualitative small-N analyses require may expose the researcher to selection bias (Collier and Mahoney 1996, 59; George and Bennett 2005, 80; Teorell och Svensson 2013, 222). The selected method of analysis, MSSD, is especially prone to such selection bias since it is based off a

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26 See section 4.2 for the scope conditions and circumstances for the type of cases/populations which this thesis’ results are generalizable to.
limited number of cases selected based on the dependent variable (Ibid.). However, this potential problem can be overcome by utilizing two particular strategical measures: (1) by selecting cases that are able to display differentiating outcomes in the dependent variable, and; (2) by making sure that the conditions constituting the causal mechanism which links the independent variable to the dependent variable are as similar as possible in all cases in order to potentially display an influential effect (Collier and Mahoney 1996, 67-69).

This thesis has taken both measures in order to minimize the potential bias in the analysis. The four selected cases have, in sets of two, displayed variations in the dependent variable, whilst also being as highly similar based on the case selection criteria and scope conditions stated under section 4.2. This is evident in the fact that the four selected cases are all cases of ethnic groups with significant petroleum resources on their respective territories, who are located in an ethnically fractionalized and oil-dependent State (Ogoni and Igbo in Nigeria, Turkmens and Kurds in Iraq). All cases display disputes over territory, and are located in regions with rough terrain.

Furthermore, while it can be argued that the MSSD generally does not provide good external validity (Teorell and Svensson 2013, 55-59), replicating the study with data from a second set of cases in a slightly different setting may partially mitigates this issue if the findings prove to be similar in the second set of cases with slightly different settings (Johnson and Reynolds 2012, 41). Nigeria and Iraq do provide different settings geographically, and the empirical case studies from both countries did yield very similar results, indicating that the analysis did have a relatively solid external validity for being a MSSD type of study.
8. CONCLUSION

Although previous research, largely through extensive analyses, has argued that oil-dependence causes resource predation, greed, and thereby greatly increases the risk for armed conflict onset (Hegre et al. 2001; Fearon and Laitin 2003; Bates 2008), empirical evidence shows that not all oil-dependent States experience civil war over oil (Basedau and Lay 2009, 769; Fjelde 2009, 199; Basedau and Richter 2011, 15). This implies that not all significant causes for dyadic intrastate armed conflict over oil exclusively emanate from the characteristics of State actors, which have largely been the focal point of most studies on this matter, but perhaps also from the less explored characteristics of group actors inside the State. Therefore, in order to contribute to the research field, the aim of this thesis was to bridge that research gap by studying the group-related level of analysis, and ask the following research question: why do some groups experience civil armed conflict over oil whilst others do not? Deriving from the collective arguments of previous research and from research-based independent theoretical reasoning, this thesis hypothesized that group actors are likely to experience civil armed conflict over oil when they possess strong organizational capabilities.

Analyzing this argument by conducting a structured focused comparison of the Ogoni (1958-1969) and the Igbo (1958-1967) in Nigeria, and the Turkmens and the Kurds in Iraq (both 1950-1961) reveals a more nuanced result than initially hypothesized — namely that group actors are likely to experience civil armed conflict over oil when they possess strong organizational capabilities specifically in the shape of high levels of homogeneity and organizational history. This implies that some of the empirical evidence found do support the posed hypothesis, as the two of the indicators constituting strong group organizational capabilities, high levels of homogeneity and organizational history, were found to cause the outbreak of civil armed conflict over oil in the cases where they were present.

Since the general findings imply that the hypothesis was supported to a rather ascertainable extent, the results of this study have contributed to the field of oil and intrastate armed conflict by highlighting the importance of group-level characteristics in understanding oil-related intrastate conflict contexts. While State-related characteristics remain important for explaining of civil armed conflict onset over oil to a certain extent, this study contributes to the research field by providing observable results that emphasize the significance of the role played by the less-explored group-level characteristics in the outbreak of civil armed conflicts over oil. In contrast to the extensive research designs utilized by in most of the studies in this field of research, this study’s qualitative approach contributes with a more detailed in-depth understanding of the reasons behind civil armed conflict onset over oil. Also, since the study was made on four different cases in two different countries that still yielded similar outcome patterns, the results are generalizable over a cross-
national level while also holding alternative factors constant within each set of cases. By providing a more nuanced understanding of oil-related intrastate armed conflict, these findings, and their generalizability, may be of use for future policy-making in the field.

Based on the findings provided from this research, as well as on the alternative observations made and alternative explanations suggested, it can be said that future research is needed in order to fully address some of the aforementioned alternative explanations. First, the role of population in this field of research can be rewarding to investigate. This is because the two cases not experiencing civil armed conflict onset over oil in the analysis both displayed smaller populations relative to their intrastate counterparts. As this potentially clouds the effect of population it could be profitable to further examine the role of this particular factor in oil-related conflicts. Also, since the results of this study provided two underlying nuances together constituting strong group organizational capabilities which determined the outcome of the dependent variable, it would be interesting to further examine the respective effects of homogeneity and organizational history, independent of each other, on the outbreak of civil armed conflict over oil in future research.

By displaying that oil-rich ethnic group actors are only able to fight for their riches if they are highly homogeneous and have a strong pre-existing organizational history, this thesis has shown that having the capability to organize and the need to arm oneself in defense often is the price of prosperity. "The price of prosperity is being prepared to fight. In a world in which people provide their own protection, if they wish to accumulate wealth, they must be prepared to defend it. They must be willing to pick up arms.” (Bates, 2008, 138-139).
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