

Between Two Fires: Civilian Resistance during Internal Armed Conflict in Peru

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**Abstract**

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Research on internal armed conflict focuses on violence perpetrated by insurgent groups and state security forces, often ignoring other armed civilian actors. However, militias, paramilitary groups, and civilian self-defense forces represent important third parties in most armed conflicts including Mexico, Nigeria, Iraq, and elsewhere. Peruvian civilian self-defense forces played a crucial role in defeating the insurgent threat challenging the state during the 1980s and 1990s. Why did some communities organize self-defense while others facing similar situations did not? I argue that how communities address the tension between their ideas about violence and their own use of violence is key to understanding violent action. Community narratives interpret events and define inter-group relations: narratives that legitimize violence makes violence more likely. The form this resistance takes—whether large-scale mobilization or disorganized

individual acts—depends on a community’s institutional capacity to generate and sustain collective action. I test my argument against realist and rationalist arguments that emphasize power, threat, and opportunism. I use a mixed-methods approach that combines a quantitative analysis of regional violence with historical and contemporary community case studies in the Ayacucho region of Peru. I draw from hundreds of testimonies in the Peruvian Truth and Reconciliation Commission archives, as well as nearly two hundred personal interviews with self-defense force members, community leaders, military officials, and civilians. I also accompanied contemporary self-defense forces on patrol in remote mountain and jungle communities to evaluate hypothesized social processes from my argument. This research has important theoretical and policy implications. I demonstrate the power of community narratives and the causal role of ideas and identities. Understanding the processes driving violent action will provide policymakers with additional tools to manage or prevent it. Armed civilians play a crucial role during most armed conflicts. Peruvian civilian self-defense forces varied in their origins, behavior, levels of support they received from the military, and their post-conflict trajectory. The Peruvian case provides a unique opportunity for policymakers to learn from successes and failures when civilians organize to combat security threats.

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## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this dissertation to the people of Peru. Despite the unimaginable loss and suffering experienced by so many, I am inspired by those who refuse to forget and stand resolute in their pursuit of truth and justice.

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

Research on internal armed conflict focuses on violence perpetrated by insurgent groups and state security forces, often ignoring other armed civilian actors. However, militias, paramilitary groups, and civilian self-defense forces represent important third parties in most armed conflicts. A new cross-national dataset finds evidence of pro-government militias in 88 countries between 1981 and 2007 and militias took part in 81% of civil wars during the same time period.<sup>1</sup> Scholars have started to acknowledge the important role these armed civilian groups play in conflict. Armed civilians affect patterns of violence, they influence how communities interact with rebel groups and the state, and they alter wartime social networks and institutions.<sup>2</sup> Research on their formation, organization, and behavior in civil war will help scholars better understand the causes and consequences of violent conflict.

Existing studies show that militias, paramilitaries, and self-defense forces influence the nature and the intensity of violence during conflict, as well as how the state interacts with civilians. For example, shifting coalitions between governments and militias affect patterns of violence and outcomes of genocide and mass killing.<sup>3</sup> Militias increase the likelihood of state repression and human rights abuses.<sup>4</sup> The proliferation of civilian militias can exacerbate

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<sup>1</sup> Sabine C. Carey, Neil J. Mitchell, and Will Lowe, “States, the Security Sector, and the Monopoly of Violence: A New Database on Pro-government Militias.” *Journal of Peace Research* 50/2 (2013), pp. 249-258.

<sup>2</sup> For a review on militias in civil war see the introduction to a special issue of the *Journal of Conflict Resolution*. Corinna Jentzsch, Stathis N. Kalyvas, and Livia Isabella Schubiger, “Militias in Civil Wars.” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 59/5 (2015), pp. 755-769.

<sup>3</sup> Ariel I. Ahram, “The Role of State-Sponsored Militias in Genocide.” *Terrorism and Political Violence* 26/3 (2014), pp. 488-503.

<sup>4</sup> Neil J. Mitchell, Sabine C. Carey, and Christopher K. Butler, “The Impact of Pro-Government Militias on Human Rights Violations.” *International Interactions* 40/5 (2014), pp. 812-836.

violence related to religious and ethnic polarization.<sup>5</sup> Insurgent groups target civilian populations more frequently when armed civilian groups participate in conflict.<sup>6</sup>

Militias, paramilitaries, and self-defense forces also influence policy outcomes during conflict. For example, successful counterinsurgency campaigns may depend on increased armed civilian participation.<sup>7</sup> Self-defense forces can help develop counterinsurgency resources at the local level, provide community security, and generate increased popular support for the government.<sup>8</sup> States may also delegate violence to militias to avoid accountability for repression.<sup>9</sup> However, introducing alternative security institutions often affects corresponding legal provisions, potentially limiting the state's ability to direct auxiliary forces and manage future policy options.<sup>10</sup>

Armed civilian groups also affect political outcomes. For example, paramilitaries can undermine popular democratic aspirations in fragile states.<sup>11</sup> Armed civilian groups sometimes thwart efforts to build trust. They can spoil negotiations and challenge settlements between militants and the state.<sup>12</sup> The transformation of community-based armed groups into predatory

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<sup>5</sup> Diana Sarosi and Janjira Sombatpoonsiri, "Arming civilians for self-defense: the impact of firearms proliferation on the conflict dynamics in Southern Thailand." *Global Change, Peace & Security* 23/3 (2011), pp. 387-403.

<sup>6</sup> Govinda Clayton and Andrew Thomson, "The Enemy of My Enemy Is My Friend ... The Dynamics of Self-Defense Forces in Irregular War: The Case of the Sons of Iraq." *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 37/11 (2014), pp. 920-935; Jessica A. Stanton, "Regulating Militias: Governments, Militias, and Civilian Targeting in Civil War." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 59/5 (2015), pp. 899-923.

<sup>7</sup> Stephen D. Biddle, Jeffrey A. Friedman, and Jacob N. Shapiro, "Testing the Surge: Why Did Violence Decline in Iraq in 2007?" *International Security* 37/1 (2012), pp. 7-40.

<sup>8</sup> Jon Strandquist, "Local Defence Forces and Counterinsurgency in Afghanistan: Learning from the CIA's Village Defense Program in South Vietnam." *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 26/1 (2015), pp. 90-113.

<sup>9</sup> Sabine C. Carey, Michael P. Colaresi, and Neil J. Mitchell, "Governments, Informal Links to Militias, and Accountability." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 59/5 (2015), pp. 850-876.

<sup>10</sup> Metin Gurcan, "Arming Civilians as a Counterterrorism Strategy: The Case of the Village Guard System in Turkey." *Dynamics of Asymmetric Conflict* 8/1 (2015), pp. 1-22.

<sup>11</sup> Jeb Sprague, *Paramilitarism and the Assault on Democracy in Haiti* (New York: Monthly Review Press 2012).

<sup>12</sup> Matthew B. Arnold, "The South Sudan Defence Force: Patriots, Collaborators or Spoilers?" *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 45/4 (2007), pp. 489-516.

organizations often complicates governance and security in weak states.<sup>13</sup> Changing patterns of relations between state security forces, armed militias, and criminal groups can also create “grey areas” of criminalized politics.<sup>14</sup>

### OUTCOMES OF “CIVILIAN RESISTANCE”

Given the important role of armed civilian groups in conflict dynamics and politics, scholars and policymakers will benefit from insight into the conditions and processes that drive their formation, organization, and behavior. Existing research emphasizes conditions of insecurity, state weakness, or state strength in explaining when armed civilian groups emerge and flourish. For example, Colombian paramilitaries are both a cause and a consequence of insecurity and violence.<sup>15</sup> Many civilians originally organized to protect their communities from insecurity generated by the Armed Revolutionary Forces of Colombia (FARC) and the National Liberation Army (ELN).<sup>16</sup> Insecurity compelled communities to organize. Armed civilian groups can “usurp” security roles driven by opportunism or necessity.<sup>17</sup> In Brazil, paramilitary groups have emerged in areas with a limited state presence. Their leaders and allies continue to thrive in urban slums where a weak state fails to provide public services. Civilians organize to provide security where the state does not.<sup>18</sup> Threat and necessity compel a community to organize on its own initiative from the bottom-up. Alternatively, a strong state can force or facilitate armed organization. Strong states might step in to coerce participation or provide support from the top-

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<sup>13</sup> Moritz Schuberth, “The Impact of Drug Trafficking on Informal Security Actors in Kenya.” *Africa Spectrum* 49/3 (2014), pp. 55-81; Moritz Schuberth, “The Challenge of Community-Based Armed Groups: Towards a Conceptualization of Militias, Gangs, and Vigilantes.” *Contemporary Security Policy* 36/2 (2015), pp. 296-320.

<sup>14</sup> Romain Bertrand, “‘Behave Like Enraged Lions’: Civil Militias, the Army and the Criminalisation of Politics in Indonesia.” *Global Crime* 6/3-4 (2004), pp. 325-344.

<sup>15</sup> Angel Rabasa and Peter Chalk, *Colombian Labyrinth: The Synergy of Drugs and Insurgency and Its Implications for Regional Stability* (Santa Monica, CA: Rand 2001), Chapter 5.

<sup>16</sup> Vanda Felbab-Brown, *Shooting Up: Counterinsurgency and the War on Drugs* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 2010).

<sup>17</sup> For additional examples see Robert Mandel, *Global Security Upheaval Armed Nonstate Groups Usurping State Stability Functions* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press 2013).

<sup>18</sup> F. Daniel Hidalgo and Benjamin Lessing, “Endogenous State Weakness: Paramilitaries and Electoral Politics in Rio de Janeiro.” Unpublished Manuscript (January 20, 2015). <http://www.mit.edu/~dhidalgo/papers/milicias.pdf>

down.<sup>19</sup> Numerous cases in Latin America provide examples of state involvement in organizing paramilitaries or providing resources to armed civilian allies who confront threats to state power.<sup>20</sup>

Although insecurity and state capacity often correlate with the emergence of armed civilian groups, causal explanation may require a focus on processes rather than conditions. My dissertation examines the origins and evolution of civilian self-defense forces in Peru. Communities have a long history of civilian self-defense in Peru. Communities in the Cajamarca region organized *rondas campesinas* in the 1970s to combat rampant cattle thievery. Some credit the presence of these organizations with limiting Sendero Luminoso expansion into the region after it initiated armed struggle in 1980.<sup>21</sup> Another form of civilian self-defense, *comités de autodefensa* (CADs), emerged in the central highlands in the early 1980s to combat the growing Sendero Luminoso insurgency.<sup>22</sup> Armed civilian mobilization played a central role in Sendero Luminoso's defeat.<sup>23</sup> However, not all communities reacted the same. For example, when

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<sup>19</sup> For more on potential conditions for state support of non-state armed groups see Zeev Maoz and Belgin San-Akca, "Rivalry and State Support of Non-State Armed Groups (NAGs), 1946-20011." *International Studies Quarterly* 56 (2012), pp. 720-734. For more on top-down and bottom-up mobilization see Livia Schubiger, "State Violence and Counterinsurgent Collective Action: Evidence from Peru." Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, August 26, 2014.

<sup>20</sup> Julie Mazzei, *Death Squads or Self-Defense Forces? How Paramilitary Groups Emerge and Challenge Democracy in Latin America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press 2009).

<sup>21</sup> *Rondas campesinas* translates to "peasant rounds" and describes both the organization and the act of patrolling. Segundo Vargas Tarrillo, *Crisis, Violencia y Rondas Campesinas, Chota - Cajamarca* (Tacna: Fondo Editorial de la Universidad Privada de Tacna 1994); Orin Starn, *Nightwatch: The Making of a Movement in the Peruvian Andes* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press 1999).

<sup>22</sup> Elsewhere these organizations may also be referred to as *comités de defensa civil, defensa civil antisubversiva* (DECAS), or *rondas contrasubversivas*. I often use Sendero as an abbreviation for the Shining Path's full name: Partido Comunista del Peru – Sendero Luminoso.

<sup>23</sup> For example see Carlos Iván Degregori, José Coronel, Ponciano del Pino, and Orin Starn, *Las Rondas Campesinas y la Derrota de Sendero Luminoso* (Lima: Instituto de Estudios Peruanos 1996); CVR, *Informe Final, Tomo II*, pp. 437-462; Carlos Iván Degregori, "Reaping the Whirlwind: The Rondas Campesinas and the Defeat of Sendero Luminoso in Ayacucho." In *Societies of Fear: The Legacy of Civil War, Violence and Terror in Latin America*, eds. Kees Koonings and Dirk Kruijt (New York: Zed Books 1999); Oscar Espinosa, *Rondas Campesinas y Nativas en la Amazonia Peruana* (Lima: Centro Amazónico de Antropología y Aplicación Práctica 1995); Mario Fumerton, *From Victims to Heroes: Peasant Counter-rebellion and Civil War in Ayacucho, Peru, 1980-2000* (Amsterdam: Rozenberg 2003); Carlos Tapia, *Autodefensa Armada del Campesinado* (Lima: Centro de Estudios para el Desarrollo y la Participación 1995).

Sendero Luminoso expanded its “people’s war” into the mountainous jungles near the Ene River valley, many communities acquiesced to Sendero’s demands, yet many did not. In a particularly dramatic case, a Franciscan priest helped lead an indigenous Ashaninka community’s fight against Sendero. Reverend Mariano Gagnon became a “military leader,” mobilizing Ashaninka to attack Sendero militants with small arms, spears, and bows and arrows.<sup>24</sup> In other cases, missionaries and community members focused on providing aid to those in need and pushed for peace. Some communities refrained from adopting violent strategies while others actively engage in armed resistance by forming or joining civilian self-defense forces. Why do some communities resort to violence while others facing similar situations do not? What explains the emergence and development of civilian self-defense forces in Peru?

I examine outcomes of “civilian resistance,” a term I use to describe a community’s response to insecurity and violence during internal armed conflict. I use Stathis Kalyvas’ definition of internal armed conflict as, “...armed combat within the boundaries of a recognized sovereign entity between parties subject to a common authority at the onset of hostilities.”<sup>25</sup> Violence is an intentional act of physical harm against another actor. Violence includes incidents of murder, disappearance, torture, sexual assault, and other acts of aggression. The civilian resistance concept describes how communities respond to challenges to social order, conditions of insecurity, and conflict. Civilians possess agency and should not be seen solely as victims or potential recruits. During fieldwork in Peru I identified four potential community responses that

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<sup>24</sup> Personal interview with Mariano Gagnon in the provincial capital Satipo, Junín 05/1/2013; Gustavo Gorriti, “Terror in the Andes: The Flight of the Ashaninkas.” *New York Times Magazine* (1990), <http://www.nytimes.com/1990/12/02/magazine/terror-in-the-andes-the-flight-of-the-ashaninkas.html?src=pm>, accessed 8/10/2013; Comisión de la Verdad y Reconciliación (CVR), *Informe Final: Peru, 1980-2000, Tomo III, Capítulo 3.3: La Iglesia Católica y las Iglesias Evangélicas* (2003), pp. 439-440, <http://www.cverdad.org.pe/ifinal/index.php>; Mariano Gagnon, William Hoffer, and Marilyn Mona Hoffer, *Warriors in Eden* (New York: William Morrow and Co. 1993).

<sup>25</sup> Stathis N. Kalyvas, *The Logic of Violence in Civil Wars* (New York: Cambridge University Press), p. 17. Kalyvas uses this definition for civil war. I use the terms civil war and internal armed conflict interchangeably.

capture variation in civilian resistance: violent mobilization, nonviolent mobilization, sporadic individual violence, and acquiescence or collaboration with insurgents. Many residents fled. The concept captures both a community's willingness to use violence and the degree of coordination when it responds.

Existing research focuses on violence and often ignores the potential for nonviolent strategies.<sup>26</sup> The Peruvian experience, along with other cases, suggests that research on civilian responses to security threats should recognize a broader range of outcomes than a dichotomous measure for the presence or absence of armed civilian mobilization. Scholars already recognize varied degrees of participation and support for militant groups and the same holds true for civilian resistance to those same actors.<sup>27</sup> Communities can adopt a number of alternative self-protection strategies instead of armed resistance.<sup>28</sup> For example, civilians in one Colombian community developed local institutional mechanisms to limit violence through peaceful actions.<sup>29</sup> Communities can “nudge” other civilians and armed groups to constrain violence and enhance civilian protection by promoting norms of nonviolence.<sup>30</sup>

The causes and forms of civilian resistance can vary significantly. In the *Melian Dialog*, Thucydides reasons that, “The strong do what they can and the weak suffer what they must.” Instead, I suggest that communities do what they discuss. I argue that how actors address the

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<sup>26</sup> Erica Chenoweth and Maria J. Stephan, “Mobilization and Resistance: A Framework for Analysis.” In *Rethinking Violence: States and Non-state Actors in Conflict*, eds. Erica Chenoweth and Adria Lawrence (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press 2010), pp. 249-275; Erica Chenoweth and Maria J. Stephan, *Why Civil Resistance Works: The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Conflict* (New York: Columbia University Press 2011).

<sup>27</sup> For more on variation in insurgent participation and support see Roger Dale Petersen, *Resistance and Rebellion: Lessons from Eastern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2001); Elisabeth Jean Wood, *Insurgent Collective Action and Civil War in El Salvador* (New York: Cambridge University Press 2003). Note that a community may also be responding to human rights abuses and violence perpetrated by state security forces.

<sup>28</sup> Erin Baines and Emily Paddon, “‘This Is How We Survived’: Civilian Agency and Humanitarian Protection.” *Security Dialogue* 43/3 (2012), pp. 231-247; Betsy Jose and Peace A. Medie, “Understanding Why and How Civilians Resort to Self-Protection in Armed Conflict.” *International Studies Review* 17/4 (2015), pp. 515-535.

<sup>29</sup> Oliver Kaplan, “Protecting Civilians in Civil War: The institution of the ATCC in Colombia.” *Journal of Peace Research* 50/3 (2013), pp. 351-367.

<sup>30</sup> Oliver Kaplan, “Nudging Armed Groups: How Civilians Transmit Norms of Protection.” *Stability: International Journal of Security and Development* 2/3 (2013), pp. 1-18.

tension between ideas about violence and their own use of violence is key to understanding violent action. Community narratives interpret events and define inter-group relations: narratives that legitimize violence make violence more likely. However, whether civilian populations resist with sustained mobilization or disorganized individual acts depends on a community's institutional capacity to generate collective action. Preexisting cooperative relationships and access to resources with affect a community's capacity to initiate and sustain collective action. Table 1.1 summarizes the hypothesized relationships between narratives, community capacity, and outcomes of civilian resistance. I test my argument against realist and rationalist arguments that emphasize power, threat, and opportunism.

**Table 1.1: Narratives, Capacity, and Civilian Resistance**

		Community Capacity	
		High	Low
Violent Narratives	Yes	Violent mobilization	Sporadic individual violence
	No	Nonviolent mobilization	Flee or collaborate with insurgents

I use the term narratives to describe a broader set of communication practices. Community narratives are the stories, myths, and historical experiences communities draw from to contextualize events and define relationships. The narratives *communicate* particular schema, frames, or beliefs through which communities interpret reality.<sup>31</sup> Community narratives map out future strategies. Ordinary people draw from what they already know to assign meaning to their experiences before they take action. Donald Polkinghorne describes the critical role narratives

<sup>31</sup> Narratives are communicative acts and thus observable. Narratives provide a window into related concepts tied to cognition and information processing (e.g. beliefs, frames, scripts, or schema), which can be difficult to identify and categorize independent of subsequent behaviors or outcomes. For a short review on the various terms tied to information processing see Milton Lodge and Ruth Hamill, "A Partisan Schema for Political Information Processing." *American Political Science Review* 80/2 (1986), pp. 505-520.

play for individual and collective decision-making, “We retrieve stories about our own and the community’s past, and these provide models of how actions and consequences are linked. Using these retrieved models, we plan our strategies and actions and interpret the intentions of other actors.”<sup>32</sup> Community narratives interpret events and articulate how a community stands in relation to other collective actors such as militant groups or state security forces. Narratives make events “visible,” even when some members of the community did not witness them.<sup>33</sup> Narratives affect subsequent decisions about collective security strategies, violent or otherwise.

A narratives argument compliments explanations for *why* certain conditions correlate with higher violence levels by demonstrating *how* communities come to adopt violent strategies and organize. A narratives argument challenges the notion that civilians respond uniformly to objective conditions. Differences in the way that communities articulate ideas and identities—along with their institutional and material capacity to initiate and sustain resistance—will influence how they respond to security threats.

The greatest challenge to a narratives argument would contend that these stories are just *post hoc* justifications and that the situation actually compels behavior. A skeptic might contend that communities adopt narratives only to rationalize their actions. Assessing a narratives argument presents numerous empirical difficulties. However, my focus on specific types of narratives and my use of in-depth community case studies allows me to evaluate the causal effects of community narratives apart from community insecurity. First, I evaluate realist and rationalist arguments at the regional and local level. The inability of power, threat, or opportunism to independently account for variation in civilian resistance would suggest that

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<sup>32</sup> Donald Polkinghorne, *Narrative Knowing and the Human Sciences* (Albany: State University of New York Press 1988), p. 135.

<sup>33</sup> Kenneth J. Gergen, *Realities and Relationships: Soundings in Social Construction* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press 1994).

some other factors are at play. Second, I focus on how communities interpret events and define relationships, two observable components within community narratives for both historical and contemporary cases. Community narratives as an independent variable is both conceptually and empirically distinct from the civilian resistance dependent variable under investigation, which helps avoid methodological critiques common in studies of other challenging concepts like culture.<sup>34</sup> Ethnographic research methods and in-depth community case studies allow for a focus on changes in both community narratives and civilian resistance outcomes over time.<sup>35</sup> I use testimonies and secondary source materials from the conflict period, testimonies collected by the Truth Commission in “post-conflict” Peru, as well as personal interviews a decade later. I can compare the various sources for discrepancies to ensure a high degree of reliability for how I classify community narratives, as well as the timing of different community narratives in relation to outcomes of civilian resistance. I provide a validity test for my argument using contemporary cases of civilian self-defense forces in Ayacucho where I spent time with groups to observe hypothesized social processes first-hand.

### **INTERNAL ARMED CONFLICT AND CIVILIAN RESISTANCE IN PERU**

During the conflict period communities made sense of events and other’s actions using imperfect information. Today we have a clearer understanding of Sendero Luminoso revolutionary violence, the state’s heavy-handed counterinsurgency campaign, and the role civilian resistance played in ending Peru’s civil war. Sendero Luminoso initiated “armed struggle” in 1980 during Peru’s transition from military rule to democracy. Philosophy professor

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<sup>34</sup> For more on assessing the causal influence of difficult concepts like culture see Elizabeth Kier, *Imagining War: French and British Military Doctrine between the Wars* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press 1997), pp. 32-34.

<sup>35</sup> For more on the methodological advantages of this approach see Ian Shapiro, *The Flight from Reality in the Human Sciences* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press 2005); Edward Schatz ed., *Political Ethnography: What Immersion Contributes to the Study of Power* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press 2009).

Abimael Guzmán led a vanguard of educators and university students in a violent campaign against anyone who challenge their revolutionary program. The police and Peruvian armed forces responded with an oppressive counterinsurgency. State security forces brutalized, tortured, and murdered militants as well as civilians. Although the public mostly found itself caught in the middle of violent confrontations between Sendero and state security forces, civilians also used violence when they participated in self-defense forces. The Peruvian Truth and Reconciliation Commission (CVR)<sup>36</sup> estimates that over 69,000 Peruvians died between 1980 and 2000, with Sendero Luminoso and the Movimiento Revolucionario Túpac Amaru (MRTA) responsible for more than half of the victims and the armed forces and civilian self-defense responsible for the rest.<sup>37</sup>

The CVR Final Report separates the conflict into five periods.<sup>38</sup> Sendero Luminoso militants committed acts of symbolic violence to mark the beginning of the first period (May 1980 – December 1982). Militants painted graffiti on the walls of remote towns and villages and actively recruited from marginalized communities in the central highlands. Sendero intimidated local political leaders and wealthier residents. Militants targeted local police, causing state representatives to flee before the armed forces arrived to implement their counterinsurgency late in 1982. In reaction to escalating insurgent violence the president declared a “state of emergency,” which marks the beginning of the second phase (January 1983 – June 1986). The second period saw the militarization of the conflict with widespread assassinations, extrajudicial killings, and massacres. Sendero revolutionary violence intensified and the military attempted to crush the insurgency with brute force. Sendero militants and state security forces both targeted

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<sup>36</sup> La Comisión de Verdad y Reconciliación in Spanish.

<sup>37</sup> CVR. *Anexo 2: Estimación del total de víctimas* <http://www.cverdad.org.pe/ifinal/index.php>. The Movimiento Revolucionario Túpac Amaru (MRTA) translates to the Túpac Amaru Revolutionary Movement.

<sup>38</sup> CVR. *Informe Final, Tomo I, Capítulo 1: Los Periodos de la Violencia*, pp. 59-60.

civilians. All parties to the conflict tortured and murdered those they suspected of collaborating with the other side. Although a change in military and presidential leadership helped lower the levels of violence at the end of the second period, violence continued to spread throughout Peru and once again intensified during the third phase (June 1986 – March 1989). Sendero gained momentum and went on the offensive during the fourth period (March 1989 – September 1992), which escalated revolutionary violence and the subsequent state suppression. The military expanded its efforts to assist with armed civilian mobilization. President Alberto Fujimori authorized the armed forces to distribute shotguns in many rural communities. The capture of Abimael Guzmán in 1992 marks the end of the fourth period. Following the capture of Guzmán, the fifth and final period (September 1992- November 2000) saw a decline in insurgent violence in many parts of Peru with an increasingly successful counterinsurgency campaign, the continued expansion of civilian self-defense forces, and offers of amnesty to repentant Sendero militants. However, during this final phase of the conflict, President Fujimori implemented measures that brought increased authoritarianism, widespread corruption, and continued human rights abuses against political opponents and suspected militants.

### **Revolutionary Violence**

Sendero Luminoso's violent strategies varied by region and changed as the conflict progressed. Early acts of violence targeted symbols of power as militants sought to highlight social and economic injustice and the state's inability to address the people's needs. Sendero initiated its campaign by targeting a ballot box in the rural village of Cuschi in the Ayacucho region of Peru in 1980. In subsequent operations Sendero intentionally provoked the state into overreacting and the armed forces arrived as a brutal occupying force. Insurgents primarily used selective violence to intimidate rural government officials and wealthier residents, but they

became increasingly indiscriminate over time. Sendero Luminoso committed especially brutal acts of violence that included torture, beheading, and mutilation. Their victims included men, women, and children, young and old, anyone that stood in the way of the revolution.<sup>39</sup> But, as one U.S. embassy official observed, “Sendero is brutal but not indiscriminate. It is not committing genocide. We are not witnessing pent-up rage exploding. Rather, we are seeing carefully designed and calculated terror. They target individuals in advance, then execute them in ways which have symbolic meaning.”<sup>40</sup> Sendero’s strategic violence became more senseless over time.

Professor Abimael Guzmán exerted absolute influence over the broader Sendero Luminoso revolutionary strategy. He saw himself as the “Fourth Sword of Communism” and served as the architect of a movement that embodied his revolutionary philosophy.<sup>41</sup> Guzmán initiated a rural campaign that stressed the need for violence.<sup>42</sup> The organization convinced militants of the necessity to kill in a systematic and depersonalized way. The “quota” for membership included not only the willingness to die, but also the expectation.<sup>43</sup> Sendero militants had to prepare themselves to commit brutal acts and to lay down their lives for the revolution. Guzmán wholeheartedly believed that without violence one could not break down the old order to make room for the new one.<sup>44</sup> He expected several million Peruvians to die. For

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<sup>39</sup> Cynthia McClintock, *Revolutionary Movements in Latin America: El Salvador’s FMLN & Peru’s Shining Path* (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press 1998), p. 68.

<sup>40</sup> Quoted in Tom Marks, “Making Revolution with Shining Path.” In *The Shining Path of Peru*, ed. David Scott Palmer (New York: St. Martin’s Press 1992), p. 196.

<sup>41</sup> Santiago Roncagliolo, *La Cuarta Espada: La Historia de Abimael Guzmán y Sendero Luminoso* (Barcelona: Debate 2007). The first three “swords” were Marx, Lenin, and Mao.

<sup>42</sup> Abimael Guzmán, “La Entrevista del Siglo: Habla el Presidente Gonzalo.” *El Diario* (July 24, 1988).

<sup>43</sup> Gustavo Gorriti, “The Quota.” In *The Peru Reader: History, Culture, Politics*, eds. Orin Starn, Carlos Iván Degregori, and Robin Kirk (Durham: Duke University Press 1995), pp. 331-342.

<sup>44</sup> Comisión de la Verdad y Reconciliación (CVR), *Informe Final: Peru, 1980-2000, Tomo I, Capítulo 3: Los Rostros y Perfiles de la Violencia* (2003), p. 168.

Sendero Luminoso, violent revolution was the only type of revolution. The movement intended to mobilize the peasantry, surround the coastal cities, and strangle the state into submission.

The MRTA also waged an armed revolutionary campaign in Peru. The group took action in 1982 and prepared for its subsequent armed campaign by robbing banks and stealing weapons. The MRTA began the second phase of its revolutionary program early in 1984 and focused on urban targets in Lima and select regional capitols. Its leadership wanted to provide an alternative to Sendero Luminoso and decided to expand its rural campaign with a guerrilla army in the countryside. The MRTA aimed to inspire and channel revolutionary energy from disparate Leftist groups.<sup>45</sup> The leader of the MRTA, Víctor Polay Campos, observed, “The revolutionary situation was a common question among the Left, all the groups said you had to be prepared to take power. I do not know of a single group at that time that did not suggest revolutionary violence was necessary to take power and build a new society.”<sup>46</sup> The MRTA operated as a military organization to advance social and political revolution.

The MRTA limited its use of assassination and predominantly bombed symbolic targets like banks and business centers to advance “anti-imperialist” demands such as a break with the International Monetary Fund and selective payment of external debt.<sup>47</sup> The MRTA even attacked numerous Kentucky Fried Chicken franchises for “representing the social abyss that separates the people.”<sup>48</sup> The MRTA behaved more like a professional army and committed far fewer atrocities than Sendero in its rural campaign. The group emphasized the need for voluntary

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<sup>45</sup> Gordon H. McCormick, *Sharp dressed men: Peru's Túpac Amaru Revolutionary Movement* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND 1993).

<sup>46</sup> Interview with the CVR on at the Naval Base in Callao on 29 August 2002. CVR, *Informe Final: Peru, 1980-2000, Tomo II, Capítulo 1.4: El Movimiento Revolucionario Túpac Amaru* (2003), p. 382.

<sup>47</sup> *Venceremos* (July 1985) [the official publication of the MRTA]. Found in the “Gustavo Gorriti Collection on the Peruvian Insurrection,” Box 1, Folder 2, Official Publications/Manifestos, Movimiento Revolucionario Túpac Amaru.

<sup>48</sup> “Gustavo Gorriti Collection on the Peruvian Insurrection,” Box 1, Folder 2, Official Publications/Manifestos, Movimiento Revolucionario Túpac Amaru.

collaboration of the masses and minimized its use of violence as a means of social control. Instead its members used “armed propaganda” to communicate the organization’s political agenda.<sup>49</sup>

### **The State Response**

Sendero Luminoso attacked police in remote towns and isolated villages first. Militants attacked symbols of state power and stole weapons and explosives for their nascent campaign. The police proved unprepared and incapable of contending with frequent militant incursions. The police had neither the technical training nor the resources to contend with a guerrilla campaign.<sup>50</sup> It took an hour or more to reach the isolated and remote police outposts with reinforcements. Most police abandoned their posts, leaving many regions with no state presence. Some communities welcomed their departure. Many saw the police as abusive point-men for repression and offered tacit support for Sendero’s early actions.<sup>51</sup> The police remained in regional urban centers and police special forces tasked with counterterrorism operations, the *sinchis*, later coordinated with the military.

Insurgent violence escalated and the government declared many regions “emergency zones,” in December 1982. The state effectively created military-controlled territories and widespread torture and disappearances became common. Counterinsurgency directives encouraged abuses and perpetrator impunity. Efforts to intimidate independent monitors and investigators led to a campaign rife with torture, sexual violence, disappearances, murder, and

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<sup>49</sup> Gordon H. McCormick, *Sharp Dressed Men: Peru's Túpac Amaru Revolutionary Movement* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND 1993).

<sup>50</sup> CVR, *Informe Final: Peru, 1980-2000, Tomo II, Capítulo 1.2 Las Fuerzas Policiales* (2003), p. 138.

<sup>51</sup> Mario Fumerton, “Rondas Campesinas in the Peruvian Civil War: Peasant Self-Defense Organisations in Ayacucho.” *Bulletin of Latin American Research* 20/4 (2001), pp. 470-497.

mass killings.<sup>52</sup> With no clear strategy and a limited understanding of its enemy, the military launched an ill-conceived counterinsurgency to reassert control over territory where Sendero took advantage of contested political space.<sup>53</sup> The situation improved slightly under the leadership of General Adrián Huamán Centeno. He spoke Quechua and had family ties in the near-by Apurímac region. General Huamán recognized the important role civilian self-defense force participation would play from the onset and he brought food and aid to many communities affected by the violence. The General reasoned, “I can destroy Ayacucho in twenty-four hours, but this wouldn’t solve the problem.”<sup>54</sup> State security forces could not limit their role to achieving military objectives.

Violence in Peru spiraled out of control throughout the 1980s. State security forces perpetrated widespread human rights abuses and carried out numerous massacres. The police and military tasked with counterterrorism operations could not distinguish Sendero militants and their supporters from other civilians. Soldiers faced challenges combatting an enemy that did not follow the traditional rules of armed combat. The military established bases in provincial capitals and patrolled in force to bring order to villages that suffered Sendero incursions. The state quickly learned it could not reestablish social order without eliminating the sympathetic “one thousand eyes and ears” Sendero left hidden among the population to provide intelligence.<sup>55</sup> The military sought better intelligence through collaboration with local informants to weed out the Sendero threat. Some communities benefited from military efforts while others suffered punitive

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<sup>52</sup> Amnesty International, *Peru: Human Rights in Climate of Terror* (1991), <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/AMR46/056/1991/en/d1a8bd3f-f941-11dd-92e7-c59f81373cf2/amr460561991en.pdf>.

<sup>53</sup> Carlos Tapia, *Las Fuerzas Armadas y Sendero Luminoso: Dos Estrategias y un Final* (Lima: Instituto de Estudios Peruanos 1997).

<sup>54</sup> Carlos Iván Degregori and Carlos Rivera Paz, *Perú 1980-1993: Fuerzas Armadas, Subversión y Democracia: Redefinición del Papel Militar en un Contexto de Violencia Subversiva y Colapso del Régimen Democrático* (Lima: Instituto de Estudios Peruanos 1993), p. 10.

<sup>55</sup> CVR, *Informe Final: Peru, 1980-2000, Tomo II, Capítulo 1.3 Las Fuerzas Armadas* (2003), p. 264.

violence from one side or the other. The armed forces developed stronger relationships with an increasingly militarized civilian population that soon began to confront insurgent violence with force.

### **Civilian Resistance**

The deeds of revolution did not deliver on Sendero promises to eliminate corruption and rectify inequities and injustices. State security forces committed gross human rights violations as they responded to insurgent violence with torture, forced disappearances, and murder. During dozens of personal interviews, civilians described their situation during the conflict as being caught “between two fires” or “between the wall and the sword.”<sup>56</sup> Militants and state security forces both threatened and terrorized rural communities as they sought to secure collaboration and deter defection. Remote communities faced a life or death situation with only poor choices. Suspected cooperation with one side guaranteed reprisals from the other. Armed actors from both sides forced communities to choose, placing them in a precarious situation that led to widespread civilian victimization and spirals of retaliatory violence.

Some communities began to organize and defend themselves early on in the conflict. Others organized later or with minimal success. The earliest efforts to organize self-defense occurred through a community’s own volition, with great personal risk to participants and general distrust on the part of the state. Stories of civilians confronting Sendero militants reached a confused Peruvian public who had perceived Ayacucho peasants to generally support revolutionary violence. The armed forces encouraged civilians to protect themselves in a handful of cases and to confront Sendero militants that visited their communities. However, as the CVR Final Report explains, “Success or failure aside, the truth is that these efforts by the armed forces

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<sup>56</sup> Interview subjects described the situation as caught “*entre dos fuegos*” or “*entre la espada y la pared*” which capture similar sentiments to English phrases like “between a rock and a hard place” or “between the Devil and the deep blue sea.”

to organize civilian self-defense were a marginal part of the official strategy. The government, their political opponents, many high-ranking military leaders, and the general public were predominantly against arming the population.”<sup>57</sup> Greater support came later.

The armed forces took a more active role in organizing civilian self-defense as the conflict progressed. The armed forces coopted existing organizations or forced civilians to keep watch, to defend their villages, or to accompany the military on patrols to hunt down Sendero militants. During the late 1980s and early 1990s, the armed forces distributed 12-gauge shotguns to civilians to supplement their homemade single-shot guns, knives, spears, and farming tools with which they confronted well-armed militants. Widespread civilian mobilization and the capture of Abimael Guzmán helped turn the tide against Sendero and halt its momentum just as it approached “strategic equilibrium” with the state.

Early research on Peru’s civilian self-defense forces describes the complex situation remote communities faced as they contended with Sendero Luminoso’s demands, navigated delicate relationships with the state, and responded to pressures from other important third-party actors like drug traffickers. Some of the leading scholars on political violence in Peru recognize the important influence that changing community perceptions about Sendero violence had on the formation of civilian self-defense forces. For example, historian Miguel La Serna finds that communities reacted when Sendero militants challenged legitimate local authorities and notions of justice.<sup>58</sup> Notions about legitimacy and justice are not objective conditions, but rather contentious issues subject to interpretation and debate. However, the conventional view simply

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<sup>57</sup> CVR, *Informe Final: Peru, 1980-2000, Tomo II, Capítulo 1.3 Las Fuerzas Armadas* (2003), p. 272.

<sup>58</sup> Miguel La Serna, *The Corner of the Living: Ayacucho on the Eve of the Shining Path Insurgency* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press 2012).

maintains that civilians opted to ally themselves with the armed forces to prevent retaliatory militant violence aimed at communities that organized civilian self-defense forces and patrols.<sup>59</sup>

Anthropologists and historians illustrate the varied circumstances and diverse reactions of the civilian population.<sup>60</sup> Their studies highlight the importance for researchers to move beyond describing civilian self-defense as a counterinsurgency strategy imposed on peasants by security forces. The organizations often emerged through communal initiative and civilian agency. Existing research expertly describes the changing violence, but only a few studies posit causal explanations to answer clear research questions. In one such study, Orin Starn emphasizes the importance of disenchantment with Sendero Luminoso and a new alliance with the military to account for a community's willingness to "revolt against the revolution."<sup>61</sup> He suggests that Sendero's diminished capacity to achieve military victory—as well as ten years of forced recruitment, demands for material support, and summary executions—had pushed the people too far.<sup>62</sup> Starn uses a social movements framework to identify potential causes while recognizing the complexity of civilian mobilization to resist insurgent violence.

Mario Fumerton also identifies the growing disaffection with Sendero Luminoso as one of the principle reasons for "peasant counter-rebellion."<sup>63</sup> Increased violence, confiscations, the strict regulation of social life, and disruptions to local political and economic institutions led to anger in many communities. He argues that the relative intensity of guerrilla pressure and a

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<sup>59</sup> Carlos Iván Degregori, *Qué Difícil Es Ser Dios: El Partido Comunista del Perú, Sendero Luminoso y el Conflicto Armado Interno en el Perú: 1980-1999* (Lima: Instituto de Estudios Peruanos 2011), p. 81.

<sup>60</sup> For example see Carlos Iván Degregori, José Coronel, Ponciano del Pino, and Orin Starn, *Las Rondas Campesinas y la Derrota de Sendero Luminoso* (Lima: Instituto de Estudios Peruanos 1996).

<sup>61</sup> Orin Starn, "To Revolt against the Revolution: War and Resistance in Peru's Andes." *Cultural Anthropology* 10/4 (1995), pp. 547-580.

<sup>62</sup> Orin Starn, "Senderos Inesperados: Las Rondas Campesinas de la Sierra Sur-Central." In *Las Rondas Campesinas y la Derrota de Sendero Luminoso*, eds. Carlos Iván Degregori, José Coronel, Ponciano del Pino, and Orin Starn (Lima: Instituto de Estudios Peruanos 1996); p. 235; Orin Starn, "Villagers at Arms: War and Counterrevolution in the Central-South Andes." In *Shining and Other Paths: War and Society in Peru, 1980-1995*, ed. Steve J. Stern (Durham: Duke University Press 1998), 224-257.

<sup>63</sup> Mario Fumerton, "Rondas Campesinas in the Peruvian Civil War: Peasant Self-Defense Organisations in Ayacucho." *Bulletin of Latin American Research* 20/4 (2001), pp. 470-497.

community's ability to mobilize represent the two most important factors to account for differences in whether civilians defended themselves. Escalating Sendero violence forced communities to respond in kind. Remote Iquichano communities in Ayacucho mobilized first because of greater egalitarianism and fewer cleavages for Sendero to manipulate. Fumerton argues that economic stratification and internal community differences impeded collective resistance to Sendero in other cases.<sup>64</sup> His explanation prioritizes threat and strong preexisting community relationships.

In this dissertation I first test arguments that emphasize power, threat, and opportunism to explain community responses. Increased threat and violence appear to help explain *why* communities organized to address security challenges. But, victimization does not explain *how* communities mobilized. I then test my narratives and community capacity argument. To understand outcomes of civilian resistance, one must investigate the processes by which communities make and unmake violence.<sup>65</sup> To better assess civilian responses I decouple their use of violence from their capacity to mobilize. My civilian resistance concept accounts for greater variation in community responses than a dichotomous measure for the presence or absence of violent mobilization. As seen in Table 1.1, the concept captures both a willingness to use violence and the degree of community coordination when residents responded. During eighteen months of fieldwork in Peru between 2011 and 2015, I found that most rural communities ultimately responded to Sendero violence with violence of their own. Examples of nonviolent mobilization usually occurred in urban environments that depended on the protection of state security forces. In this dissertation I focus on remote towns and villages and emphasize the origin and evolution of civilian resistance *within* individual cases. Although I do look at

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<sup>64</sup> Ibid., p. 479.

<sup>65</sup> Kimberly Theidon, "Terror's Talk: Fieldwork and War." *Dialectical Anthropology* 26/1 (2001), pp. 19-35.

several comparative cases, I prioritize temporal analysis and focus on within case variation since the majority of the communities ultimately ended up with armed civilian self-defense forces of one form or another. I also look at contemporary communities in Ayacucho to better observe processes involved in outcomes of civilian resistance.

### **CHAPTER OUTLINE**

In Chapter 2 I present explanations for civilian resistance from realist and rationalist theories that emphasize power, threat, and opportunism. I then describe my narratives argument and its relationship to community capacity. I review the academic literature on narratives in the behavioral and social sciences and provide examples for how narratives that interpret events and define relationships affect decisions about violent action. I generate hypotheses and discuss testable implications. I finish with a description of the data and methods I use to evaluate the hypotheses.

In Chapter 3 I describe violence in Ayacucho—the region at the epicenter of violent conflict in Peru. I provide a brief historical background for the region and I analyze quantitative data on violence perpetrated by collective actors between 1980 and 2000. I evaluate arguments discussed in Chapter 2 in light of the broader trends militant, state security force, and civilian violence at the provincial and district level. I also identify pervasive narratives for each collective actor and describe how they interpreted the conflict and perceived their relationships with others as the conflict progressed. This analysis provides a preliminary test for my argument that emphasizes communicative practices in community decisions on how to respond to threat and violence. I identify prevalent regional narratives in Ayacucho that influenced responses at the local level.

In Chapter 4 I investigate individual communities located in the mountainous regions of Ayacucho. I compare different outcomes of civilian resistance to examine the hypothesized social processes described in Chapter 2. I begin with the case of Uchuraccay, a community made famous by the murder of a team of investigative journalists in 1983. I discuss developments in the community leading up to this incident and how they affected civilian resistance afterward. I continue with additional community case studies near the provincial and district capital of Huanta. I investigate the origins and evolution of civilian self-defense forces in Maynay, Quinrapa, Macachacra, and Villa Florida to evaluate the hypotheses. I conclude with a discussion of contemporary self-defense forces in the highlands that contend with new security challenges.

In Chapter 5 I examine additional communities in Ayacucho. This chapter focuses on communities located in the jungle region of the Apurimac, Ene, and Mantaro River Valley (the VRAEM). I provide a brief historical background and describe general conditions in the VRAEM during the conflict. I continue to assess hypotheses related to realist and rationalist arguments as well as my narratives and community capacity argument. Communities I investigate include Anchiuay, Pichiwilca, Santa Rosa, Sivia, Llochegua, and Villa Mejorada. I conclude with a short discussion of contemporary security challenges in the VRAEM.

I finish with concluding remarks in Chapter 6. This research has important theoretical and policy implications. I demonstrate the power of community narratives and the causal role of ideas and identities. Understanding the processes driving violent action will provide policymakers with additional tools to manage or prevent it. Armed civilians play a crucial role in conflict dynamics in Mexico, Nigeria, Iraq, and elsewhere. Peruvian civilian self-defense forces varied in their origins, behavior, levels of support they received from the military, and their post-conflict trajectory. The Peruvian case provides a unique opportunity for policymakers to learn

from successes and failures when civilians organize to combat security threats. I discuss the theoretical contributions of my research and the generalizability of my argument. A narratives argument is portable across cases and applicable to other types of armed actors. I conclude with suggestions for future research on civilian self-defense forces. I also discuss methodological innovations that will improve the way scholars can assess a narratives argument in Peru and elsewhere.

# CHAPTER 2

## EXPLAINING CIVILIAN RESISTANCE DURING INTERNAL ARMED CONFLICT

What explains the emergence and development of civilian self-defense forces in Peru? I argue that how communities understand events and define relationships with militant groups and the state plays a crucial role in accounting for diverse outcomes. A community's subjective interpretation of objective conditions explains how it reacts to insecurity and threat. I also contend that a community's ability to initiate and sustain mobilization depends on preexisting cooperative institutions and access to resources. My dissertation contributes to an emerging research agenda focused on militias, paramilitaries, and civilian self-defense forces. This chapter begins with a brief discussion of broader analytical approaches to social and political outcomes. I turn my attention to potential explanations for civilian resistance and describe several realist and rationalist arguments that emphasize power, threat, and opportunism. I then present a narrative argument for violent action and describe its relationship to community institutional capacity. I conclude the chapter with a description of the data and methods I use to evaluate the arguments.

### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

#### **Broader Analytical Approaches**

##### *Rational choice and social constructivism*

I evaluate explanations for civilian resistance within two broader analytical frameworks from the international relations and comparative politics subfields in political science—rationalist and social constructivist approaches. Rationalist approaches explain individual and

social behaviors in terms of goal-seeking under constraints.<sup>66</sup> Constraints include resources, relationships, or institutional structures. Rationalist approaches emphasize incentives and opportunities.<sup>67</sup> Actors make calculations about costs and benefits and pursue their interests accordingly. They pursue goals given fixed identities and preferences, usually deemphasizing the role of normative considerations.<sup>68</sup> Rationalists recognize the importance of ideas and identities, but view these factors as exogenous and static.

A constructivist approach suggests that identities and interests are mutually constituted.<sup>69</sup> Agents both shape and are shaped by material and social structures that populate their world. They update their interests and preferences accordingly. For constructivists, social norms and culture provide conventions that guide appropriate action. Constructivists urge scholars to observe rather than assume how agents act given the environments in which they are embedded.

Despite an extensive academic literature depicting the two approaches as contentious, a focus on how they converge rather than contradict one another will yield greater insight into

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<sup>66</sup> Duncan Snidal, "Rational Choice in International Relations." In *Handbook of International Relations*, eds. Walter Carlsnaes, Thomas Risse-Kappen, and Beth A. Simmons (London: SAGE Publications 2002), pp. 85-111.

<sup>67</sup> For more on rationalist approaches to various puzzles related to violence in civil war see Stathis N. Kalyvas, *The Logic of Violence in Civil Wars* (New York: Cambridge University Press).

<sup>68</sup> Andrew H. Kydd, "Methodological Individualism and Rational Choice." In *The Oxford Handbook of International Relations*. eds. Christian Reus-Smit and Duncan Snidal (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2008), pp. 425-443. Rationalist approaches focus on material interests but may include factors beyond material well-being or self-interest. Social welfare, group interests, and normative goals may also drive actors who behave in a "rational" manner, sometimes blurring the line where rationalist approaches end and constructivist approaches begin. For example, see Margaret Levi, *Consent, Dissent, and Patriotism* (New York: Cambridge University Press 1997); Dipak K. Gupta, *Path to Collective Madness: A Study in Social Order and Political Pathology* (Westport, Conn: Praeger 2001); Margaret Levi, "Inducing Preferences Within Organizations: The Case of Unions." In *Preferences and Situations*, eds. Ira Katznelson and Barry Weingast (New York: The Russell Sage Foundation 2005), pp. 219-246; Ignacio Sánchez-Cuenca, "A Preference for Selfish Preferences," *Philosophy of the Social Sciences* 38/3 (2008), pp. 361-378.

<sup>69</sup> Anthony Giddens, *Central Problems in Social Theory: Action, Structure and Contradiction in Social Analysis* (Berkeley: University of California Press 1979); David Dessler, "What's at Stake in the Agent-Structure Debate?" *International Organization* 43/3 (1989), pp. 441-473; Jeffrey T. Checkel, "The Constructivist Turn in International Relations Theory." *World Politics* 50/2 (1998), pp. 324-348; Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics* (New York: Cambridge 1999).

political questions.<sup>70</sup> Both rationalist and constructivist approaches believe that ideas and social identifications can structure action. For rationalists, ideas may serve as “roadmaps” or “switchmen” that guide the direction of political action. Ideas inform interests when they limit the scope of possible action or become embedded in institutions.<sup>71</sup> Actors navigate a wide range of social and ideational structures. These structures enable or constrain actors, putting both limits on the possible opportunities for action and in defining the desirability, appropriateness, or legitimacy of certain behaviors. Constructivists assign ideas a greater causal role. Changing ideas influence actor preferences, how they process information and make decisions, as well as normative orientations. An effective explanation for human behavior must examine the origins, changes, and the subsequent impact of ideas on behavior.<sup>72</sup> Individuals posit relations between things and people and these ideas inform their actions.<sup>73</sup> However, events do not speak for themselves. Humans communicate ideas in social environments and can be observed through community narratives. Narratives bring meaning to actions, events, and relationships.

### **A “Narrative Turn” in Political Science**

During a recent panel discussion on the state of constructivist scholarship, Ronald R. Krebs commented, “Although political scientists are skeptical of narratives, politicians certainly are not.”<sup>74</sup> Within the international relations subfield he suggests that, “Dominant public

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<sup>70</sup> James Fearon and Alexander Wendt, “Rationalism versus Constructivism: A Skeptical View.” In *Handbook of International Relations*, eds. Walter Carlsnaes, Thomas Risse and Beth A. Simmons (London: Sage Publications, 2002), pp. 52-72.

<sup>71</sup> Judith Goldstein and Robert O. Keohane, *Ideas and Foreign Policy: Beliefs, Institutions, and Political Change* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press 1993).

<sup>72</sup> For a review on ideas in political science research see Alan Finlayson, “Political Science, Political Ideas and Rhetoric.” *Economy and Society* 33/4 (2004), pp. 528-49.

<sup>73</sup> Daniel Béland and Robert Henry Cox, “Introduction: Ideas and Politics.” In *Ideas and Politics in Social Science Research*. eds. Daniel Béland and Robert Henry Cox (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2011), pp. 3-20.

<sup>74</sup> Ronald R. Krebs. “National Security and the Power and Limits of Story-Telling.” Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association. Panel 17-4: New Trends in Constructivist Scholarship: Practice, Habit, and Narratives in International Politics (August 30, 2013).

narratives constitute the boundaries of legitimate politics.”<sup>75</sup> We find narratives in all aspects of our daily lives. We relate stories about our day to family or friends. Lawyers lay out competing arguments in court using narrative. Business executives might use stories to communicate about business environments and potential risks, “I am just a small-town boy from Iowa; my father told me not to jump into a river until I could tell how deep it is.”<sup>76</sup> The executive’s simple story provides insight into organizational culture. The brief excerpt communicates the perceived business environment, the company’s values, as well as desirable actions in the face of changing market conditions. Narratives guide organizational behavior.

We see competing news sources use narratives to describe politically divisive events when they report on Israeli airstrikes in Gaza or describe protests in Ferguson, Missouri after a white police officer killed an unarmed black teenager. These reports bring meaning to the events and affect subsequent developments. Scholars from philosophy, sociology, psychology, and organizational studies have all engaged with narratives. Many academics that study social movements and international politics emphasize the role of narratives in social and political outcomes. These scholars recognize that narratives are not just social artifacts studied by historians and the humanities. Narratives simultaneously provide a fruitful source of data and play an important part in causal explanation.<sup>77</sup>

Narratives contribute to an ideational approach to the study of politics. Ideas not only affect how we perceive the world around us, they also influence our behavior within it.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> Ronald R. Krebs, “How Dominant Narratives Rise and Fall: Military Conflict, Politics, and the Cold War Consensus.” *International Organization* 69/4 (2015), p. 814.

<sup>76</sup> Brenton D. Faber, *Community Action and Organizational Change: Image, Narrative, Identity* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press 2002), p. 24.

<sup>77</sup> Molly Patterson and Kristen Renwick Monroe, “Narrative in Political Science.” *Annual Review of Political Science* 1/1 (1998), pp. 315-331.

<sup>78</sup> See Vivien A. Schmidt, “Taking Ideas and Discourse Seriously: Explaining Change Through Discursive Institutionalism as the Fourth ‘New Institutionalism.’” *European Political Science Review* 2/1 (2010), pp. 1-25;

Narratives draw from cultural resources to aid in situational interpretation and to formulate “strategies of action.”<sup>79</sup> As Elizabeth Kier argues in her study on the determinants of French and British military doctrine during the inter-war period, “rationality is culturally conditioned.”<sup>80</sup> Narratives draw from and communicate particular elements of culture and provide a window into its causal influence. Community members use narratives to make sense of their changing environment and these stories affect how actors make decisions. To understand the logic behind why actors use violence, one must examine the stories in which they interpret events and define relationships.

### *Narratives interpret events*

Humans untangle webs of connected events and bring them together into cohesive narratives. We use narratives as a sense-making tool. Stories fill up our lives. Some stories emerge from our actions, while others give cause to them. Stories, big and small, propel history forward. Narratives make sense of our past, interpret the present, and guide future actions. Narratives relate sequences of events around a problem in order to formulate a plausible and desirable solution or course of action.

Community narratives also communicate principled and causal beliefs, influencing the way we see the world. Principled beliefs are normative ideas that distinguish right from wrong or just from unjust. Causal beliefs provide guidance for individuals on how to achieve their

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Vivien A. Schmidt, “Discursive Institutionalism: The Explanatory Power of Ideas and Discourse.” *Annual Review of Political Science* 11/1(2008), pp. 303-326.

<sup>79</sup> Ann Swidler, “Culture in Action: Symbols and Strategies.” *American Sociological Review*. 51/2 (1986), pp. 273-286.

<sup>80</sup> Elizabeth Kier, *Imagining War: French and British Military Doctrine between the Wars* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press 1997), p. 38.

objectives.<sup>81</sup> Communities propose strategies for the attainment of goals based on their beliefs using narrative. They identify cause and effect and articulate expectations.<sup>82</sup>

We interpret events and place them in context based on what we know. The narratives we use to bring meaning to events are more likely to look one way or another given a particular culture or worldview.<sup>83</sup> Narratives often express a need to act and establish proposed actions as legitimate. For example, when Spanish conquistador Hernán Cortés arrived in the “New World” with his band of “armed entrepreneurs,” they defeated the vastly superior Aztec forces mostly by harnessing resentment over Aztec hegemony throughout central Mexico.<sup>84</sup> The Spanish pushed forward intent on subjugating the population in search of financial gain, but also under the guise of religious providence. The Spanish attributed the relative ease of victory to a “miracle from God” and their “strength of spirit,” fueling a push for further violent conquest.<sup>85</sup> How the Spanish interpreted the events helps to explain their subsequent actions.

In rural Tanzania, spikes in the murder of elderly “witches” correlate strongly with rainfall levels even while other types of murder remain constant.<sup>86</sup> This study shows that economic conditions alone cannot account for local violent practices. Instead, one must understand the narratives this community used to interpret droughts. In Chechnya, refugees draw from myths, folklore, and classic literary texts to explain conflict in the Caucasus. They justify resistance using stories about *Abrek*, a term historically used to describe men hiding from blood

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<sup>81</sup> Judith Goldstein and Robert O. Keohane, “Ideas and Foreign Policy: An Analytical Framework.” *Ideas and Foreign Policy: Beliefs, Institutions, and Political Change*, eds. Judith Goldstein and Robert O. Keohane, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press 1993), pp. 9-10.

<sup>82</sup> Subjective interpretation is a key component of my theory. A variety of psychological biases may lead to differing appraisals or accounts of cause and effect, For example, see Robert Jervis, “Understanding Beliefs.” *Political Psychology* 27/5 (2006), pp. 641-663.

<sup>83</sup> Jerome S. Bruner, “What is a Narrative Fact?” *Annals-American Academy of Political and Social Science* 560 (1998), pp. 17-27.

<sup>84</sup> Matthew Restall and Felipe Fernández-Armesto, *The Conquistadors: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2012), 74.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 73.

<sup>86</sup> Edward Miguel, “Poverty and Witch Killing.” *Review of Economic Studies* 72/4 (2005), pp. 1153-1172.

feuds in the mountains and later to describe those who resisted the Tsarist army and Soviet soldiers.<sup>87</sup> Their stories provide templates to construct the contemporary conflict with Russia as a heroic insurgency in a grand struggle for liberty and justice. The stories help explain violent civilian resistance and Chechen strategies in the asymmetric conflict.

### *Narratives define relationships*

In addition to interpreting events, narratives define relationships. Through narrative we make sense of the world and form our social identities.<sup>88</sup> How actors understand themselves and others influences group behavior.<sup>89</sup> As Abdelal, Herrera, Johnston, and McDermott suggest, “Individuals are continuously proposing and shaping the meanings of the groups to which they belong.”<sup>90</sup> We describe to others what we are and what we are not. Narratives allow us to define ourselves, albeit most often in vague, malleable terms. For example, the Islamic State (IS) in contemporary Iraq and Syria describes a polarized world where you are either in the camp of “Islam and faith” or that of “*kufir* (disbelief) and hypocrisy.”<sup>91</sup> The movement places the conflict in context and defines itself and its enemies using Koranic texts, stories about the prophet, and the words and deeds of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, the deceased leader of al-Qaeda in Iraq. IS uses media outlets, public statements, and speeches to construct its identity. In a 16-minute propaganda video of the beheading of Abdul-Rahman (Peter) Kassig alongside over a dozen Syrians, the Islamic State describes its members as the “sons of Islam” and as “brothers” of

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<sup>87</sup> Aurélie Campana, “Collective Memory and Violence: The Use of Myths in the Chechen Separatist Ideology, 1991-1994.” *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 29/1 (2009), pp. 43-56.

<sup>88</sup> Margaret R. Somers, “Narrativity, Narrative Identity, and Social Action: Rethinking English Working-Class Formation.” *Social Science History* 16/4(1992), p. 600.

<sup>89</sup> John C. Turner, “Towards a cognitive redefinition of the social group.” *In Social Identity and Intergroup Relations*, ed. Henri Tajfel (New York: Cambridge University Press 1982), pp. 15-40; Dominic Abrams and Michael Hogg, “Social Identification, Self-categorization and Social Influence.” *European Review of Social Psychology* 1(1990), pp. 195-228; David D. Laitin, *Identity in Formation: The Russian-speaking Populations in the Near Abroad* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press 1998), p. 20.

<sup>90</sup> Rawi Abdelal, Yoshiko M. Herrera, Alastair Iain Johnston, and Rose McDermott, “Identity as a Variable.” *Perspectives on Politics* 4/4 (2006), p. 700.

<sup>91</sup> “The Return of Khilafa.” *Dabiq* Issue 1 (2014), p. 10. (The Islamic State’s English-language magazine)

anyone victimized by Western aggression or sectarian violence. The Islamic State suggests that it stands beside and defends the community against “the armies of the cross,” “crusaders,” and “apostate rulers.” IS defines an “us” and a “them.”

Narratives play a crucial role within any movement where identity politics help account for violent outcomes. For example, neo-Nazi movement narratives in Germany described continued German subjugation by “foreign enemies” such allied occupiers, communists, and Jews.<sup>92</sup> The movement used narratives that draw from past and present themes in Germany to launch a political project that generated significant amounts of xenophobic violence in the 1990s. Left-wing political narratives in 1970’s Italy described tacit state support for right-wing opposition violence. Legal leftist political organizations in Italy gave way to increasingly radical and violent clandestine groups. They no longer saw themselves as “guides” or “examples” for a revolutionary class, but rather the “last expression of existentialist struggle.”<sup>93</sup> Narratives from clandestine left-wing organizations facilitated violence against new actors when notions of enemy expanded beyond just the “capitalist class” and became something more entrenched in wider society. Narratives that articulate antagonistic relationships justify and facilitate violence.

## **EXPLAINING CIVILIAN RESISTANCE DURING INTERNAL ARMED CONFLICT**

### **Realist and Rationalist Explanations for Civilian Resistance**

Four common propositions unify diverse realist approaches to politics—groupism, egoism, anarchy, and power politics.<sup>94</sup> Realist explanations recognize that politics happens when groups interact. Collective actors pursue their self-interests in absence of an over-arching

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<sup>92</sup> Bradden Weaver, “Violence as Memory and Desire: Neo-Nazism in Contemporary Germany.” In *The Legitimization of Violence*, ed. David E. Apter (New York: New York University Press 1997), pp. 128-158.

<sup>93</sup> Donatella Della Porta, “Left-Wing Terrorism in Italy.” In *Terrorism in Context*, ed. Martha Crenshaw (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press 1995), p. 137.

<sup>94</sup> William C. Wohlforth, “Realism.” In *The Oxford Handbook of International Relations*, eds. Christian Reus-Smit and Duncan Snidal (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2008), pp. 131-149.

authority, which generates constraints and forces groups to pursue self-help strategies. These conditions make groups sensitive to security concerns and changes in relative power. Communities respond predictably to external conditions. Violence is a product of the environment in which they find themselves and the situation compels behavior.

A structural realist theory could explain civilian responses to threat and violence. Environmental conditions, rather than actor characteristics or inner forces, compel actors to take action.<sup>95</sup> For example, a neorealist theory of international politics is a structural theory that assumes rather than describes behavior within the international system. States, the dominant unit in international politics, practice self-help in absence of a central authority (i.e. anarchy). States are rational unitary actors primarily concerned with security and their relative power in the system. The system serves as a socializing force that compels states to compete with one another and behave in predictable ways to ensure survival.<sup>96</sup> A realist explanation prioritizes power in explaining behavior.

Realist theories can apply to international or domestic politics. Actors respond to changes in their environment. Changes in relative power between competing actors generate uncertainty and threat, creating environments more conducive to violence.<sup>97</sup> Threats to a group's survival, as well as changes in material capabilities, generate incentives for actors to match others' relative gains. During internal armed conflict, civilians would respond to their opponent's growing strength. The potential for aggression by political opponents or rival ethnic groups forces a community to act. For example, the South Sudan Defense Force emerged as loosely aligned

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<sup>95</sup> Barry Wellman, "Structural Analysis: From Method and Metaphor to Theory and Substance." In *Social Structures: A Network Approach*, eds. Barry Wellman and S.D. Berkowitz (New York: Cambridge University Press 1988), pp. 19-61.

<sup>96</sup> Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (Reading, Mass: Addison-Wesley Pub. Co. 1979).

<sup>97</sup> Barry R. Posen, "The Security Dilemma and Ethnic Conflict." *Survival* 35/1 (1993), p. 27; Barbara F. Walter, "The Critical Barrier to Civil War Settlement." *International Organization* 51/3 (1997), pp. 335-364.

militia groups (often formed along ethnic factions) that felt threatened by the Sudanese People's Liberation Army political project.<sup>98</sup> In Colombia, civilians frequently made decisions in the context of imminent threat and self-defense became a common security alternative.<sup>99</sup> Civilians adapt to and respond to threat. Hypothesis 1 (H1) predicts that if insurgent groups grow stronger or elicit greater support, then communities will mobilize to combat the growing threat.

In addition to a growing insurgent threat, civilians may also respond to state capacity. A state's inability to control territory, govern its citizens, or provide public goods generates incentives and opportunities for insurgent actors to rebel.<sup>100</sup> State neglect and weak state security institutions force civilians to assume responsibility for their own collective security in violent contexts.<sup>101</sup> For example, hundreds of communities across dozens of municipalities in Mexico have organized to provide for their own security.<sup>102</sup> Criminal gangs operating with impunity pushed many Mexican communities too far. Corrupt police and inadequate military support has led to the proliferation of armed civilian groups determined to confront criminal violence.

In another example, the Sudanese People's Liberation Army (SPLA) attacked many Fertit communities in South Sudan. The region has a long history of precarious rule, oppression, and outside threat. After the SPLA intensified its attacks against police and military in the region during the 1980s, the group perpetrated a raiding campaign that targeted a largely unprotected

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<sup>98</sup> Matthew B. Arnold, "The South Sudan Defence Force: Patriots, Collaborators or Spoilers?" *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 45/4 (2007), pp. 489-516.

<sup>99</sup> Enzo Nussio, "How Ex-combatants Talk about Personal Security. Narratives of Former Paramilitaries in Colombia." *Conflict, Security & Development* 11/5 (2011), pp. 579-606.

<sup>100</sup> James D. Fearon and David D. Laitin "Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War." *American Political Science Review* 97/1 (2003), pp. 75-90.

<sup>101</sup> Mario Antonio Fumerton, "'Rondas Campesinas' in the Peruvian Civil War: Peasant Self-Defence Organisations in Ayacucho." *Bulletin of Latin American Research* 20/4 (2001), pp. 470-497; Danny Hoffman, "The meaning of a Militia: Understanding the Civil Defense Forces of Sierra Leone." *African Affairs* 106/425 (2007), pp. 639-662; Orin Starn, "Senderos Inesperados: Las Rondas Campesinas de la Sierra Sur Central." In *Las Rondas Campesinas y la Derrota de Sendero Luminoso*, eds. Carlos Iván Degregori, José Coronel, Ponciano del Pino, and Orin Starn (Lima: Instituto de Estudios Peruanos 1996), pp. 227-269.

<sup>102</sup> Patricio Asfura-Heim and Ralph H. Espach, "The Rise of Mexico's Self-Defense Forces." *Foreign Affairs* (July/August 2013). <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/mexico/2013-06-11/rise-mexico-s-self-defense-forces>

civilian population. The Fertit communities had to rely on themselves to protect their lives and lands, so they organized militias.<sup>103</sup> A variety of cases suggest that state neglect or police corruption leave communities with few options other than to arm and organize. Hypothesis 2 (H2) predicts that if communities cannot count on state security forces to defend them from insurgent violence, then they are more likely to mobilize and use violence.

Alternatively, a strong state could compel communities to mobilize and fight militants. State presence, as opposed to absence, will affect how a community responds to insurgent threat and violence. Armed state actors can force civilians to participate in the counterinsurgency or provide motivated civilians with assistance to bolster state capacity. Numerous historical and contemporary cases of counterterrorism or counterinsurgency include plans to organize and arm rural populations. For example, over 60,000 Kurdish civilians currently participate in a “village guard” system that helps to combat the PKK in Turkey.<sup>104</sup> In Iraq, the 2007 “surge” found success in part due to the Sunni Awakening, where the U.S. and the Iraqi state organized and incentivized civilian participation in the fight against al-Qaeda in Iraq. The “Sons of Iraq” helped establish greater security and lower violence after several failed attempts.<sup>105</sup> History is full of examples where governments “civilianized” the counterinsurgency.<sup>106</sup> Conflicts in Guatemala, Mexico, Nigeria, Ukraine, and elsewhere have all seen some degree of state involvement in

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<sup>103</sup> Daniel S. Blocq, “The Grassroots Nature of Counterinsurgent Tribal Militia Formation: The Case of the Fertit in Southern Sudan, 1985–1989.” *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 8/4 (2014), pp. 710-724.

<sup>104</sup> Metin Gurcan, “Arming Civilians as a Counterterror Strategy: The Case of the Village Guard System in Turkey.” *Dynamics of Asymmetric Conflict* 8/1 (2015), pp. 1-22.

<sup>105</sup> Stephen D. Biddle, Jeffrey A. Friedman, and Jacob N. Shapiro, “Testing the Surge: Why Did Violence Decline in Iraq in 2007?” *International Security* 37/1 (2012), pp. 7-40.

<sup>106</sup> David Kowalewski, “Vigilante Counterinsurgency and Human Rights in the Philippines: A Statistical Analysis.” *Human Rights Quarterly* 12/2 (1990), pp. 246-264; Jon Strandquist, “Local Defence Forces and Counterinsurgency in Afghanistan: Learning from the CIA's Village Defense Program in South Vietnam.” *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 26/1 (2015), pp. 90-113.

armed civilian mobilization. Hypothesis 3 (H3) predicts that if a community has a strong military presence, then they are more likely to mobilize and use violence.

Related rationalist approaches might compliment realist explanations for civilian resistance. Rationalists assume groups act out of self-interest; their desire for security, aversion to risk, and the availability of material incentives explain group behavior. Although a variety of motivations might drive local participation, a rationalist would see threat and incentives as the main factors that determine the willingness for collective actors to mobilize for self-defense. Research on civilian targeting in civil war suggests that opportunistic groups that use violence in an indiscriminate and brutal way will generate greater resistance among civilian populations.<sup>107</sup> This research finds that opportunistic insurgents target civilians with greater frequency than insurgents with strong ideological commitments. Illicit goods attract insurgent recruits who lack ideological motivation and discipline. They differ from others who join in areas without these incentives. Like insurgents, civilians may also exhibit opportunistic behavior. Civilians will seize whatever opportunities their unfortunate predicament may afford them.<sup>108</sup> The same incentives and conditions that account for insurgent violence could explain civilian mobilization when actors pursue self-interested, opportunistic strategies. For example, crossover between Colombian guerrilla, paramilitary, and criminal organizations became common as competing actors fought for control in Medellín.<sup>109</sup> When many of the paramilitaries and self-defense forces in Colombia demobilized, organizations simply transformed into criminal groups as participants continued to pursue material gain through violent means.<sup>110</sup> Hypothesis 4 (H4) predicts that if

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<sup>107</sup> Jeremy M. Weinstein, *Inside Rebellion: The Politics of Insurgent Violence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2007), p. 309.

<sup>108</sup> Stathis N. Kalyvas, *The Logic of Violence in Civil Wars* (New York: Cambridge University Press).

<sup>109</sup> Ramiro Ceballos Melguizo and Francine Cronshaw, "The Evolution of Armed Conflict in Medellín: An Analysis of the Major Actors." *Latin American Perspectives* 28/1 (2001), pp. 110-31.

<sup>110</sup> Douglas Porch and María José Rasmussen, "Demobilization of Paramilitaries in Colombia: Transformation or Transition?" *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 31/6 (2008), pp. 520-40.

communities have greater opportunities to reap material rewards or to settle preexisting disputes, then they are more likely to use violence.

### **Narratives, Community Capacity, and Civilian Resistance**

Realist and rationalist approaches prioritize power, threat, and opportunism. Changing conditions compel people to behave in predictable ways. Self-interested actors respond to security threats and opportunities for material gain or to settle old disputes. Events speak for themselves as communities objectively assess their environments and the capabilities of other important collective actors such as militants and state security forces. Communities react similarly to external conditions and insecure environments lead to violent responses. Alternatively, my narratives argument suggests that actors subjectively interpret changing conditions and relationships. They assign meaning to events and decide on an effective and appropriate response to the actions of others. Insurgent violence and limited governance may compel communities to act, but the form of that action will vary from case to case. When collective actors respond to threats they have a limited number of available repertoires to draw from when they formulate a strategy.<sup>111</sup> Narratives communicate ideas about what is possible, desirable, and effective in achieving collective goals. Communities communicate their evolving notions about violent action and inter-group relations before taking action.

#### *Narratives and violence*

Narratives influence violent outcomes in two ways. First, people use narratives to interpret events. They identify causes and consequences and serve as interpretive devices to bring meaning to novel, uncertain, or terrifying developments.<sup>112</sup> Events do not speak for

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<sup>111</sup> Charles Tilly, *From Mobilization to Revolution* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley Pub. Co. 1978), pp. 151-159.

<sup>112</sup> Francesca Polletta, *It Was Like a Fever: Storytelling in Protest and Politics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press 2006); Donald Polkinghorne, *Narrative Knowing and the Human Sciences* (Albany: State University of New York Press 1988).

themselves. Narratives “give shape to things” in the real world.<sup>113</sup> Culturally prevalent narratives lead actors to interpret information in particular ways. Power matters, but depends on a subjective interpretation of what constitutes power and threat. As cognitive psychologist Jerome Bruner explains, “Navajos, for example, who entertain strong beliefs about witchcraft, are readier to see injurious acts as being initiated by witch agents with malevolent purposes, and they have highly sophisticated procedures for confirming their beliefs. Contemporary Americans prefer bureaucrats to witches and are equally adept in confirming their view of the world.”<sup>114</sup> During crises individuals place experiences into familiar and accessible frameworks.

Narratives might draw from religion, political ideology, indigenous folklore, or historical experience. In the realm of international conflict, narratives about the Korean War among policymakers influenced the decision for U.S. intervention in Vietnam and the form it took.<sup>115</sup> In a more localized conflict, narratives shaped objectives and strategies for Jewish independence movements against the British in Israel. The Lehi drew heavily from stories about “Gentile” efforts to subjugate or eliminate Jewish populations. Lehi narratives transformed British colonization into Roman occupation. British counterrevolutionary oppression became Nazi extermination. The group’s narratives identified heroes and villains and described their current fight as timeless and eternal. The Lehi came to view struggle against the British in terms of confronting the Amalek, an “apogee of evil in tradition and the only nation that the Jews were commanded to completely destroy.”<sup>116</sup> How Jews understood anticolonial struggle affected their

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<sup>113</sup> Jerome S. Bruner, *Making Stories: Law, Literature, Life* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press 2002).

<sup>114</sup> Jerome S. Bruner, "What is a Narrative Fact?" *Annals-American Academy of Political and Social Science* 560 (1998), pp. 24-25.

<sup>115</sup> Yuen Foong Khong, *Analogies at War: Korea, Munich, Dien Bien Phu, and the Vietnam Decisions of 1965* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press 1992), p. 11.

<sup>116</sup> Gerald Cromer, *Narratives of Violence* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate 2001), p. 18.

subsequent actions. Hypothesis 5 (H5) predicts that if communities interpret events through narratives that justify violence, then violent civilian resistance is more likely.

Second, narratives define inter-group relations. Stories that establish in-group and out-group classifications identify friend and foe and shape how groups relate to others. Groups use narratives to designate the “boundaries” of social identity and establish social norms.<sup>117</sup> For example, historical narratives among Israeli and Palestinian youths contribute to the reproduction and intractability of conflict.<sup>118</sup> Jewish Israeli youth narratives generally highlight an identity built around existential insecurity, historical persecution and victimization, and the delegitimization of a Palestinian identity. The narratives stress security concerns tied to Palestinians and the need to achieve strength through struggle. Alternatively, Palestinian youth narratives emphasize loss, injustice, and lack of opportunity as persistent conditions in a Jewish state. The Palestinian narratives also stress insecurity and legitimize resistance to occupation.<sup>119</sup> Identity becomes increasingly important for both perpetrators and victims of violence.

Actor identities are more than just static, essentialist categories. Groups or communities continually renegotiate their meaning.<sup>120</sup> Communities can use “symbolic politics” based on identity to mobilize actors in violent action under conditions of insecurity.<sup>121</sup> For example, the main protagonists in the Sudanese civil war drew from historical legacies and myths to make particular identities more salient. A northern Sudanese narrative based on nationalism, emphasized a “superior” Arab identity and a duty to bring salvation through Islam to southern

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<sup>117</sup> Charles Tilly, *Stories, Identities, and Political Change* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield 2002).

<sup>118</sup> Phillip L. Hammack, "Identity, Conflict, and Coexistence: Life Stories of Israeli and Palestinian Adolescents." *Journal of Adolescent Research*. 21/4 (2006), pp. 323-369.

<sup>119</sup> Phillip L. Hammack, "Narrative and the Cultural Psychology of Identity." *Personality and Social Psychology Review* 12/3 (2008), pp. 222-247.

<sup>120</sup> Stuart Hall, "Introduction: Who Needs 'Identity'?" In *Questions of Cultural Identity*, eds. Stuart Hall and Paul Du Gay (London: Sage 1996), pp. 1-17.

<sup>121</sup> Stuart J. Kaufman, *Modern Hatreds: The Symbolic Politics of Ethnic War* (New York: Cornell University Press 2001); Stuart J. Kaufman, "Symbolic Politics or Rational Choice? Testing Theories of Extreme Ethnic Violence." *International Security* 30/4 (2006), pp. 45-86.

Sudan. The narrative linked Islamic revival to national survival.<sup>122</sup> In southern Sudan, the narrative described the need for unified resistance to subjugation by northern slave-traders. The narrative drew from historical experience and a legacy of colonization and insecurity.<sup>123</sup> How communities view their relationships with other actors constitutes a key component in decisions to engage in violent action.<sup>124</sup> Hypothesis 6 (H6) predicts that if community narratives justify hostility against actors with a particular social identity, then violent civilian resistance against those actors is more likely.

The micro-foundations of a community narratives explanation rest on psychological processes and emotional mechanisms. Narratives shape preferences when they interpret and assign meaning to events.<sup>125</sup> Stories that justify violence against particular identity groups can generate negative emotions such as fear, hostility, resentment, or desire for revenge and mobilize actors in violent action.<sup>126</sup> Narratives not only bring meaning to events, but they also help bring meaning to individual and collective emotions like humiliation and betrayal.<sup>127</sup> How a community feels affects how a community acts. Emotion and moral commitments motivate behavior.<sup>128</sup> Furthermore, actors might draw from stories to alleviate dissonant emotions that the

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<sup>122</sup> Stuart J. Kaufman, "Symbolic Politics or Rational Choice? Testing Theories of Extreme Ethnic Violence." *International Security* 30/4 (2006), pp.60-62.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 63.

<sup>124</sup> Lee Ann Fujii, *Killing Neighbors: Webs of Violence in Rwanda* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press 2009).

<sup>125</sup> Note that preferences are not fixed. One must observe shifting preferences to understanding behavior across time, so I emphasize the importance of temporal variation in community narratives and civilian resistance outcomes.

<sup>126</sup> Roger D. Petersen, *Understanding Ethnic Violence: Fear, Hatred, and Resentment in Twentieth-century Eastern Europe* (New York: Cambridge University Press 2002). Narratives can also generate positive emotions—e.g., heightened sense of solidarity, duty, or moral certitude. Emotions provide information about the appraisal of a situation; they are part of the evaluation, not strictly a consequence of it. See Jonathan Mercer, "Emotional Beliefs." *International Organization*. 64/1(2010), pp. 1-31.

<sup>127</sup> Khaled Fattah and K.M. Fierke, "A Clash of Emotions: The Politics of Humiliation and Political Violence in the Middle East." *European Journal of International Relations* 15/1 (2009), pp. 67-93.

<sup>128</sup> Elisabeth Jean Wood, *Insurgent Collective Action and Civil War in El Salvador* (New York: Cambridge University Press 2003).

prospects for violence might generate in previously nonviolent actors.<sup>129</sup> Stories that provide moral justifications, dehumanize victims, displace or diffuse responsibility, or minimize agency, make violence more likely.<sup>130</sup>

### *Community capacity and mobilization*

While narratives affect whether a community's response is violent and who might constitute a legitimate target, community capacity determines whether the response consists of sustained mobilization or disorganized individual acts. Community capacity includes local institutions that provide social networks that facilitate community cooperation and aid in *overcoming* collective action problems. Communities with strong rural labor unions, cooperative arrangements to manage common-pool resources, or histories of faith-based social welfare organizations should make civilian mobilization more likely. Strong cooperative institutions indicate high community capacity to coordinate activities. Furthermore, a strong state presence coercing or incentivizing action could potentially *eliminate* collective action dilemmas in organizing community security provision. These types of preexisting institutions also may prevent militant actors from gaining a foothold in community affairs to begin with.

Strong institutions constrain insurgent group intervention in local affairs during civil war.<sup>131</sup> Institutions might also enable civilian mobilization against insurgent actors. Community networks facilitate its capacity coerce and help to provide the social and material incentives that

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<sup>129</sup> Albert Bandura, *Social Foundations of Thought and Action: A Social Cognitive Theory* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall 1986); Albert Bandura, "Social Cognitive Theory of Personality." In *The Coherence of Personality: Social-Cognitive Bases of Consistency, Variability, and Organization*, eds. Daniel Cervone and Yuichi Shoda (New York: The Guilford Press 1999).

<sup>130</sup> Ibid.; Bernhard Leidner, Emanuele Castano, Erica Zaiser, and Roger Giner-Sorolla, "Ingroup Glorification, Moral Disengagement, and Justice in the Context of Collective Violence." *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 36/8 (2010), pp. 1115-1129.

<sup>131</sup> For more on institutions and civil war violence see Ana M. Arjona, *Social Order in Civil War* (Dissertation: Yale University 2010).

make collective action more likely.<sup>132</sup> Denser community ties that accompany institutions establish stronger obligations and dependencies, increase the visibility of nonparticipation, and generate greater enforcement capabilities to sanction noncompliance during mobilization.<sup>133</sup> Hypothesis 7 (H7) predicts that if a community has high institutional capacity, then mobilization is more likely.

Community capacity also includes access to resources. Access to weapons, food, medicine, and shelter facilitate sustained community mobilization. Communities with access to weapons through the state, drug trafficking organizations, or arms suppliers, will have higher capacity. Communities that can provide their own resources or receive support through state relief efforts, large religious organizations, NGOs, or foreign aid also have high capacity. Hypothesis 8 (H8) predicts that if a community has greater access to resources, then it is more likely to mobilize. Table 2.1 presents the table from Chapter 1 to once again summarize the hypothesized relationship between narratives, community capacity, and outcomes of civilian resistance.

**Table 2.1: Narratives, Capacity, and Civilian Resistance**

		Community Capacity	
		High	Low
Violent Narratives	Yes	Violent mobilization	Sporadic individual violence
	No	Nonviolent Mobilization	Flee or collaborate with insurgents

<sup>132</sup> Mancur Olson, *The Logic of Collective Action: Public Goods and the Theory of Groups* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press 1965). Olson emphasizes “selective incentives” and coercion, but he recognizes that actors are motivated by, “...prestige, respect, friendship, and other social and psychological objectives” (60).

<sup>133</sup> Michael Hechter, *Principles of Group Solidarity* (Berkeley: University of California Press 1987). For the role of moral obligations see Lily L. Tsai, *Accountability without Democracy: Solidary Groups and Public Goods Provision in Rural China* (New York: Cambridge University Press 2007).

The argument expects that the interaction of community narratives and capacity will lead to a variety of civilian resistance outcomes. For example, violent narratives combined with high community capacity leads to sustained violent mobilization, which is the militarization of community social networks into civilian self-defense forces.<sup>134</sup> Violent mobilization can include armed community self-defense or organizations that actively patrolled the Peruvian mountains and jungles to fight militant groups. Alternatively, high community capacity may also generate nonviolent mobilization. Community networks militarized in some cases but not others. Communities closer to provincial capitals sometimes prioritized a push for peace and reconciliation, protested against insurgent violence and state human rights abuses, or provided aid for victims. In one Peruvian community I visited outside the regional focus of this dissertation, civilians responded nonviolently by coordinating surveillance activities. Community members in Cruzpampa in the mountains of Junín developed a warning system to execute an escape plan to hide from potentially life-threatening encounters with militants or army patrols. Communities with violent narratives and low capacity will see sporadic individual acts of civilian violence as they respond to militant groups with isolated acts of uncoordinated and unsustainable violent resistance. Finally, communities with nonviolent narratives and low capacity would be more likely to acquiesce or collaborate with insurgent actors. These communities experience victimization and adopt strategies to survive or flee in the face of threat.

## **DATA AND METHODS**

To test the hypotheses I adopt a mixed-methods approach that combines the analysis of regional violence data with community case studies. I emphasize in-depth case studies to explain

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<sup>134</sup> For more on the militia concept see Danny Hoffman, “The Meaning of a Militia: Understanding the Civil Defense Forces of Sierra Leone.” *African Affairs* 106/425 (2007), pp. 639-662. In the Peruvian case, violent mobilization can be split into at least two subcategories: defensive mobilization where armed actors respond to insurgent incursions or offensive mobilization where participants actively hunt down insurgents.

the timing of civilian resistance as well as the underlying mechanisms and social processes behind violent action. Testing the arguments involves two steps. First, I perform longitudinal and cross-sectional analysis of violence levels using the Peruvian Truth and Reconciliation Commission's violent events database. I filter these data by location, time period, as well as victim and perpetrator identity categories to illustrate trends in violence levels during the conflict. I examine variation in violence perpetrated by civilians in relation to patterns of militant and state violence.

Second, I use ethnographies, process tracing, and interpretivist methods to examine regional trends and individual cases. I identify changing community narratives based on extensive fieldwork throughout the Ayacucho region of Peru. I use secondary source materials and personal interviews to ascertain local trends in violence, how civilians interpreted that violence, and how communities perceived their relationships with militant groups and armed state actors. I make comparisons between clusters of neighboring towns and villages and focus on variation across time within individual cases. A regional analysis helps identify broad trends in violence, narratives, and civilian resistance. The community-level case studies facilitate the detection of narratives and their effects at the local level.

## **Data**

To assess propositions about civilian resistance I use data collected by the Peruvian Truth and Reconciliation Commission (CVR). In June 2001, the Peruvian government created the CVR to investigate issues related to violence and human rights abuses during the internal armed conflict between May 1980 and November 2000. The Peruvian state created the commission to analyze the conditions that led to violence, to clarify the facts concerning crimes and human rights violations, and to identify the effects of the violence so the state could propose reparations

and national reconciliation strategies. The commission released a Final Report in August 2003 with its findings and recommendations for institutional reforms.

The CVR collected data in numerous regional headquarters around Peru. The commission drew from almost 17,000 personal interviews with victims, their families, and other witnesses to create a violence database. The database contains variables that allow researchers to evaluate who did what to whom during the conflict. In my analysis I filter the quantitative data to identify specific community incidents and to find individual testimonies recounting incident details. I reviewed over three hundred original testimonies at the Defensoría del Pueblo offices in Lima during 18 months of fieldwork in Peru between 2011 and 2015. I also draw from testimonies collected by religious and social service organizations, as well as military and state institutions. Finally, I conducted over two hundred personal interviews with self-defense force participants, victims, witnesses, and perpetrators of violence.

I use civilian-perpetrated violence incidents from the CVR database as a preliminary metric for civilian resistance (the “dependent variable”) in my regional, provincial, and district level quantitative analyses for Ayacucho. I use more precise measures for civilian resistance outcomes in subsequent case studies in Chapters 4 and 5. For the case studies I draw from testimonies and personal interviews with community members to identify the general categorical outcomes of civilian resistance identified in Table 2.1. I also provide detailed accounts for how civilian resistance outcomes may have changed within a single community over time. For example, a particular village that may have organized and resisted Sendero’s political program in 1983 could have abandoned their community in 1985. Alternatively, another village that remained unorganized in 1985 might have taken up arms to fight in 1989. I place communities in the different civilian resistance outcome categories across time based on community members’

chronological accounts of how they responded. Within-community variation in civilian resistance, along with better accounts of changing community characteristics and conditions, allow me to more precisely assess the hypotheses.

I measure violence and threat in my preliminary quantitative analysis using Sendero Luminoso district and provincial violent incident counts across time. I use state security force violence as an indicator for state strength and weakness across districts and provinces. In my community case studies I am able to provide a more precise account of the violence and threat civilians faced by cross-validating the universe of incidents reported to the CVR with personal accounts of community incidents. In the case study chapters I am also able to describe militant and state presence in more detail based on first-hand accounts.

I use existing testimonies and personal interviews to document community narratives. I discern how communities interpreted events and relationships during the internal armed conflict (my principle “independent variable”).<sup>135</sup> I carried out semi-structured interviews, mindful not to steer subject responses. I began with broad questions to elicit general narratives. When I asked direct questions about narratives, the concept proved challenging for many of the interview subjects. I most often asked leading questions about what soldiers or militants might say to the community during a visit. How did the Sendero militants or soldiers explain the conflict and what types of action did they suggest? What kinds of stories did community members use to make sense of the conflict? Did communities meet to discuss events and to deliberate about potential responses? I sought to minimize the risk of “co-creating” a subject’s history during interviews based on my questions and perceived expectations.<sup>136</sup> I draw from interviews with

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<sup>135</sup> This research received Human Subjects approval from the University of Washington Institutional Review Board under application number 43819 and the University of Denver Institutional Review Board number 762873-1.

<sup>136</sup> Janet Hoskins, *Biographical Objects: How Things Tell the Stories of People's Lives* (New York: Routledge, 1998).

numerous subjects in each community to identify narratives that capture how residents interpreted events and defined their relationships with militants, the state, or other important collective actors. For each community I describe narratives based on multiple interview subjects' first-hand accounts, CVR testimonies collected between 2001 and 2003, and in some cases witness accounts collected during the conflict period in the 1980s and 1990s. Multiple interview subjects, repeated visits to a community, varied sources, and accounts from different time periods all increase the reliability and replicability for how I describe community narratives and how residents saw violent action.

I argue that community capacity affects whether civilians can initiate and sustain mobilization. To identify whether a community had high or low community capacity I looked for evidence of pre-existing cooperative institutions. Evidence of rural labor unions, collective management of common-pool resources, or faith-based social welfare organizations all suggest higher levels of community capacity and a greater likelihood of overcoming collective action dilemmas. The absence of cooperative institutions, along with evidence of internal community rifts or contested sources of authority, indicates low community capacity. Access to weapons and other material resources would also suggest higher levels of community capacity. Finally, state intervention and assistance would strengthen community capacity and eliminate many of the challenges associated with collective action.

I documented and assessed what interview subjects chose to reveal, but I also remained mindful of what they did not.<sup>137</sup> How respondents describe the past sometimes depends on the present context. To understand the general phenomenon of civilian resistance, one must spend time in these communities. During interviews with former self-defense force leaders I began to

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<sup>137</sup> For more on the importance of interview subject omissions see Lee Ann Fujii, "Shades of Truth and Lies: Interpreting Testimonies of War and Violence" *Journal of Peace Research* 47/2 (2010): pp. 231-241.

piece together a complicated history of civilian participation in combating insurgent violence in Ayacucho. I also had the opportunity to accompany newly reactivated patrols responding to contemporary security challenges in Ayacucho. The contemporary cases allowed for a glimpse into the actual process of civilian mobilization and I was able to directly observe the storied nature of politics in action.

## **Methods**

I analyze quantitative data to identify regional trends in violence levels and partially evaluate realist and rationalist explanations. I then compare cases with diverse outcomes in civilian resistance and investigate individual communities across time to further assess competing explanations. For cases of sustained violent mobilization or sporadic violent incidents, I am primarily interested in explaining *violent action* as a behavior and not necessarily *violence levels* as a condition. I am most interested in whether civilians became willing to use violence and mobilized and not whether they committed acts of violence. This focus requires an in-depth examination of individual communities instead of relying on violent incident counts at the regional, provincial, or district level.

I focus on communities in Ayacucho because of the importance of these cases in the history of Peru's internal armed conflict. The conflict began in Ayacucho and violence disproportionately affected the region in comparison to the rest of the country. Ayacucho remained the epicenter of violence throughout most of the conflict. Communities in Ayacucho also exhibited significant variation in civilian resistance and the hypothesized independent variables over time, minimizing potential selection bias.<sup>138</sup>

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<sup>138</sup> Barbara Geddes, "How the Cases You Choose Affect the Answers You Get: Selection Bias in Comparative Politics." *Political Analysis* 2 (1990): pp. 131-150.

Figure 2.1: Map of Peru indicating the regional focus of my study<sup>139</sup>



I use detailed case studies to test explanations for civilian resistance. My methodological approach ensures greater validity by identifying the causal mechanisms generating violent mobilization and other community-level outcomes. To assess the causal role of narratives I pay close attention to their timing in relation to civilian resistance. In-depth case studies also allow me to identify how psychological processes may contribute to individual and collective behavior. Focusing on social processes allows researchers to better determine the pathway leading to

<sup>139</sup> This map appears in Cynthia E. Milton, *Art from a Fractured Past Memory and Truth Telling in Post-Shining Path Peru* (Durham: Duke University Press 2014), p. 21. Cartography by Bill Nelson.

different outcomes.<sup>140</sup> Complete explanations demand an account based on statements about dispositions, beliefs, and interrelations of individuals.<sup>141</sup>

Analyzing individual cases across time allows me to identify changing conditions within communities. Process tracing permits researchers to detail endogenous change and to single out causal mechanisms.<sup>142</sup> Qualitative methods can better account for historical and contextual factors often missed in broader quantitative models. Only a rich, context-specific study can tease out these processes in empirical work. Scholars can investigate why actors adopt and reinforce particular aspects of political, social, and economic systems over time.<sup>143</sup> Furthermore, in-depth case studies can minimize the problem of equifinality, where different causal variables lead to the same outcome.<sup>144</sup> In the case of civilian resistance in Peru, most rural communities eventually adopted some form of civilian self-defense by the end of the conflict. I can discover important combinations of conditions and relationships that result in different causal patterns to produce similar outcomes.

### **Testing Realist and Rationalist Arguments**

I test realist and rationalist arguments that emphasize power, threat, and opportunism using several methods. Hypothesis 1 (H1) predicts that if insurgent groups grow stronger or elicit greater support, then communities will mobilize to combat the growing threat. Increased violence

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<sup>140</sup> John Gerring, "The Mechanistic Worldview: Thinking Inside the Box." *British Journal of Political Science* 38/1 (2008), p. 177.

<sup>141</sup> Pierre Demeulenaere, "Introduction." In *Analytical Sociology and Social Mechanisms*, ed. Pierre Demeulenaere, (New York: Cambridge University Press 2011), pp. 1-30.

<sup>142</sup> James Mahoney, "Path Dependence in Historical Sociology." *Theory & Society* 29/4 (2000), pp. 507-548; Kathleen Thelen, "How Institutions Evolve: Insights from Comparative Historical Analysis." In *Comparative Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences*, eds. James Mahoney and Dietrich Rueschemeyer (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press 2003), pp. 208-240; Jeffrey T. Checkel, "Tracing Causal Mechanisms." *International Studies Review* 8/2 (2006), pp. 362-370.

<sup>143</sup> For more on process tracing see Paul Pierson, "Not Just What, but When: Timing and Sequence in Political Processes." *Studies in American Political Development* 14/1 (2000), pp. 72-92; Paul Pierson, *Politics in Time: History, Institutions, and Social Analysis* (Princeton: Princeton University Press 2004).

<sup>144</sup> Alexander L. George and Andrew Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press 2005). Brady and Collier describe this same condition as causal heterogeneity in Henry E. Brady and David Collier, *Rethinking Social Inquiry: Diverse Tools, Shared Standards* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2004).

perpetrated by civilian actors in response to increased militant violence would provide partial support for H1. To evaluate the hypothesis I first test for general correlations between civilian and militant violence. I examine violence levels at the provincial and district level in Ayacucho, the regional focus of my case study chapters.<sup>145</sup> Co-variation between violence levels at the provincial and district level would suggest a tendency for civilians to respond to militant violence with violent action of their own. I also evaluate the relationship between militant and civilian violence by checking for consistency in violence levels across provinces and districts. Hypothesis 1 would expect civilians to respond uniformly to similar levels of militant violence. Inconsistent ratios of militant to civilian violence levels across provinces and districts in Ayacucho would provide disconfirming evidence for H1.

To further test H1 I also evaluate the timing of violence perpetrated by civilians in relation to militant violence. If H1 holds true, militant violence should precede civilian decisions to take action. Communities should be reacting to militant incursions and co-variation in the quantitative data should not be capturing incidents of punitive violence perpetrated by militants in response to their efforts to mobilize and resist. However, incident-level quantitative violence data across time only provide a general indicator for actual militant group strength. Furthermore, these data fail to fully account for the diversity of civilian responses at the community level. To account for these data limitations I prioritize the use of community case studies to evaluate H1. I can assess whether or not a community responded to militant group strength through statements by witnesses and participants. By examining the chronology of events within communities, the timing of incidents provides better insight into the causal effect of threat. If communities reacted differently to similar types of incidents, H1 might not fully explain diverse outcomes of civilian

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<sup>145</sup> Political designations in Peru include multiple levels. From largest to smallest, the designations include region/province/district/community. Peru has 25 regions (formerly referred to as departments). The Ayacucho region has 11 provinces. The Huanta province has 11 districts and the La Mar province has 10 districts.

resistance. Finally, I compare across individual communities to evaluate whether violence and threat are necessary or sufficient conditions to explain civilian resistance outcomes. For example, high levels of militant violence across cases or in a single case across time that resulted in different outcomes of civilian resistance would suggest violence is not a sufficient condition. Low levels of violence in cases where communities still armed themselves and resisted would suggest that violence is not a necessary condition.

Hypothesis 2 (H2) predicts that if communities cannot count on state security forces to defend them against insurgent violence, then civilians are more likely to mobilize and use violence. A weak state would lead a community to take responsibility for its own security and to protect itself against threat. To test H2 I once again examine broad correlations between violence levels perpetrated by the different types of actors at the provincial and district level. Hypothesis 2 would predict an inverse relationship between violence perpetrated by state security forces and civilian actors; lower levels of state violence would be associated with higher levels of civilian-perpetrated violence. Hypothesis 2 expects that civilian groups are more likely to use violence when the state security forces are unwilling or unable to do so on their behalf. State weakness forces the community to act. I look at civilian behavior in relation to overall state violence levels as well as a ratio of state and militant group violence. H2 would expect relative consistency in civilian responses across provinces and districts given similar conditions.

I also test H2 with individual community case studies. Accounts given by community members that suggest state absence forced civilians to take action in the face of insurgent threat would provide partial support for H2. Alternatively, examples where communities resorted to violence even though a strong state was present, or where they did not resort to violence even with a weak state, would provide disconfirming evidence for H2. I gauge state strength based on

accounts of military visits to a community and proximity to regional military bases. If two communities that experienced similar insurgent threat and state presence but one resorted to violence and the other does not would also suggest some other factors lead to civilian resistance.

In contrast to H2, Hypothesis 3 (H3) predicts that if a community has a strong military presence, then civilians are more likely to mobilize and use violence. Hypothesis 3 suggests that state security forces can eliminate collective action dilemmas. Military or police can compel or facilitate the ability of communities to fight on behalf of the government against militant groups. Assessing this proposition with quantitative violence data presents a challenge. If H3 holds true one might expect an inverse relationship between civilian and state violence levels as the military or police use the civilian population as “canon fodder” or as a paramilitary force to combat the insurgency. Alternatively, civilian and state violence levels could exhibit a positive relationship if armed state actors and civilians coordinate and carry out joint operations. Large-N quantitative analysis of violence levels would prove indeterminate, so I prioritize community case studies to evaluate H3. Community members can provide accounts about the role state strength played in their response to insurgent threat. The absence of the state in H2 and a strong state presence in H3 both expect violent community mobilization, perhaps suggesting the need to account for a more complex story. A focus on process tracing within the individual community case studies can identify the distinct causal pathways to outcomes of civilian resistance that violence level metrics fail to capture.

Hypothesis 4 (H4) predicts that if communities have greater opportunities to reap material rewards or to settle longstanding disputes, then they are more likely to use violence. Hypothesis 4 builds on H1-H3, combining conditions of instability with material incentives for participation and opportunistic tendencies. Hypothesis 4 comes from the civil war literature on

civilian targeting by insurgents and applies the same logic to militias, paramilitaries, and civilian self-defense forces. Hypothesis 4 examines civilian mobilization, but with an emphasis on opportunistic and predatory behavior. Material incentives drive individual participation in collective action and will affect the subsequent forms of resistance. Actors exhibit opportunistic behavior and take advantage of instability to settle longstanding disputes, to eliminate rivals, or to seek personal enrichment. To test H4 I compare civilian violence levels in the VRAEM with those in the mountainous parts of Ayacucho to discern the potential effects of illegal coca on civilian behavior. Higher levels of civilian-on-civilian violence in the VRAEM might provide an indication of predatory behavior. Furthermore, personal histories in community case studies can identify community rifts or other general conditions that may incite opportunistic behavior and provide partial support for H4.

### **Testing a Narratives and Community Capacity Argument**

A narratives and community capacity argument decouples violent action from mobilization to explain outcomes of civilian resistance. To test hypotheses related specifically to violent action I use interpretivist methods and process tracing to identify how narratives evolved over time. I describe prevalent community narratives and, through careful examination of existing testimonies and extensive personal interviews, I assess content and causal influence. In Chapter 3 I describe broader regional narratives and provide illustrations from numerous cases in the Ayacucho region to demonstrate the importance of narratives in outcomes of civilian resistance. In Chapters 4 and 5 I direct my attention to specific communities. I draw from secondary sources, CVR testimonies, and personal interviews to identify changes in how communities interpreted events and defined relationships with other actors over time.

I argue that community narratives bring meaning to events and define relationships, but which voices get heard by whom may in part depend on violence already visited upon a community or preexisting social relationships. I use ethnographic and interpretivist research methods to establish causality as I explore how power, violence, and general conditions from the first four hypotheses interact with the social processes inherent in the second set of hypotheses. For example, violence does present a need for a community to respond in some way, but the case studies might provide more insight into actual community considerations when they deliberate and act. Contemporary cases provide an additional window into what factors contribute to community mobilization. I spoke with dozens of current self-defense force participants and accompanied several groups on patrol to observe if and how narratives aid in sustained mobilization.

#### *Interpreting events*

Hypothesis 5 (H5) predicts that if communities interpret events through narratives that justify violence, then violent civilian resistance is more likely. To evaluate H5 I identify the broader regional narratives that existed during the internal armed conflict. I identify civilian understanding of violent conflict at its onset and describe if and how interpretations of events changed over time. I look at narrative content to determine how they might increase or diminish the likelihood for violent action. I also examine shifts in political, social, and economic indicators that suggest a greater prevalence of particular types of narratives in different provinces and districts in Ayacucho. For example, significant conversions to evangelical Christian denominations might lead to different interpretations of militant violence than those by a predominantly Catholic population based on which biblical texts they draw from. A spike in

illegal coca production in the VRAEM could lead to changes in behavior by militant organizations and alter the subsequent interpretation of events by communities in this region.

I also evaluate H5 using individual community cases studies. I examine testimonies and rely on personal interviews to ascertain how specific communities made sense of the conflict. I examine the historical record of violence at the local level and document how individuals assigned meaning to events. I describe everyday representations of events in terms of news, public speeches by authorities, and private discussions among community members. I also investigate cultural resources that contribute to community narratives like religious stories, local myths, and historical analogies.

To identify community narratives I documented how local actors viewed events in the 1980s and 1990s. I asked interview subjects about key local incidents during the internal armed conflict and inquired as to their causes and consequences. I asked whether communities had meetings to discuss local developments, what they discussed during the meetings, and how the community understood the conflict in those years. Relying on an interview subject's memory and discussing the events so many years after the conflict runs the risk of relying on inaccurate information or a revised historical account. During my fieldwork I found that many interview subjects had difficulties remembering the year some events happened, though they mostly provided reliable and consistent accounts of the events themselves. They spoke about events in terms of which president was in office. When interview subjects identified contradictory dates, I drew from multiple accounts to hone in on the most accurate information. To minimize the risk of inaccurate information I compare subject accounts with those found in secondary sources and testimonies from the same community collected by the CVR or other organizations a decade or more prior.

A difference in narratives across time in a single community provides partial support for H5 if these changes correspond with different outcomes of civilian resistance. Identifying a relationship between community narratives and civilian resistance for cases where militant group violence, state strength or weakness, or opportunism cannot account for civilian resistance would further bolster the argument. Shifts in community narratives that do not correspond with changes in civilian resistance strategies would provide disconfirming evidence for H5. The timing of community narratives in relation to civilian resistance outcomes is important. The narratives should precede community decisions and not simply justify them. I remain mindful of the way that preexisting conditions and violent events themselves shape community narratives. I take care to recognize the ways that realist arguments may overlap with explanations tied to community interpretations of events and relationships.

#### *Defining relationships*

Hypothesis 6 (H6) predicts that if community narratives justify hostility against actors with a particular social identity, then violent civilian resistance against those actors is more likely. Differences in narratives for how a single community saw Sendero across time should correspond with different outcomes of civilian resistance.<sup>146</sup> For example, if different outcomes of civilian resistance correspond with the changing content of everyday representations of militant groups as legitimate political actors, “nice people,” or thieves that stole supplies, then H6 will find partial support. I pay special attention to a community’s use of language when its members described events and people. I look for descriptions that indicate community beliefs about themselves and others, especially concerning how they viewed the potential for violent action.

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<sup>146</sup> Comparisons between neighboring communities that vary in narratives and civilian resistance would also provide partial support given sufficient cross-case variation in the variables of interest.

I suspect that relationship-defining narratives generate violent outcomes in three ways: 1) activating a new identity where violence is permissible; 2) reframing violence as an appropriate behavior within an already salient identity; or 3) redefining the identity of another group into an actor that is a legitimate target of violent action given their own identity. For example, communities might redefine themselves as allies to the Peruvian state or cultivate a new self-defense force identity predicated on autonomous security provision. Previously nonviolent religious communities might alter the way they view violent action or recast militants as legitimate targets for violence. I evaluate the relationship between violence and religious practices at the provincial and district levels across time. A broader regional analysis of religion can test for a correlation between one prevalent type of identity narrative and violent civilian resistance. For the community case studies I asked community members direct questions about how they saw themselves and other collective actors throughout the conflict. I asked how they viewed or described the different actors during key events in their community during the conflict period to ascertain how narratives about inter-group relations changed and if they correspond with changes in civilian resistance outcomes. The community case studies help ensure a more detailed examination of the timing of narratives to satisfy scholars who see narratives only as *post hoc* justifications.

Narratives may both cause and rationalize community decisions about civilian resistance. I look for evidence of psychological mechanisms associated with a narratives argument to further evaluate H5 and H6. Research suggests stories that provide moral justifications, dehumanize victims, displace or diffuse responsibility, or minimize agency, make violence more likely.<sup>147</sup>

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<sup>147</sup> Albert Bandura, *Social Foundations of Thought and Action: A Social Cognitive Theory* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall 1986); Albert Bandura, "Social Cognitive Theory of Personality." In *The Coherence of Personality: Social-Cognitive Bases of Consistency, Variability, and Organization*, eds. Daniel Cervone and Yuichi Shoda (New York: The Guilford Press 1999).

Community narratives influence assessments about adhering to or violating social or moral norms about violence. They also provide a coping mechanism to address the potential dissonant emotions counter-normative behavior might generate. Communities may reinterpret or draw from narratives to justify their actions. Communities come to terms with violence in a variety of ways. Narratives will precede and follow community action and I take care to identify which it is and under what circumstances.

Community narratives can include assessments of power relations between those actors. While examining individual communities, I investigate evolving *perceptions* of threat and determine whether or not they correspond to *actual* conditions. If a community experiences increased threat and multiple violent events, how a community talks about the perpetrators could better account for their response than the situation alone. Theories that focus entirely on threatening conditions cannot account for the timing of civilian resistance in the same way as a narratives argument in communities that experience frequent attacks. Shifting narratives that correspond with changes in community action would provide additional support for H6.

Finally, these propositions should hold true for other types of collective actors that used violence apart from civilians. I should see similar processes among state security forces and militant groups in the conflict. I evaluate the plausibility of narratives' causal effect for other armed actors in my general regional evaluation of narratives in Chapter 3. Shifts in collective interpretations of how militants and state security forces saw each other and the civilian population will affect how they use violence. I base my assessments on secondary Spanish-language research, declassified military manuals, Sendero documents and writings, CVR testimonies, and personal interviews.

*Community capacity*

Absence of government does not imply absence of governance. Preexisting institutions and diverse forms of community organization will affect outcomes of civilian resistance. Hypothesis 7 (H7) predicts that if a community has higher institutional capacity, then mobilization is more likely. Individual communities with preexisting institutions that facilitate community coordination through rural labor unions, common-pool resource management, or faith-based social welfare organizations indicate higher levels of community capacity. Internal community divisions related to family land disputes, political rivalries, competing sources of authority, and ethnic or linguistic differences serve as indicators for lower community capacity. I evaluate these factors in case studies.

Hypothesis 8 (H8) predicts that if a community has greater access to resources, then it is more likely to mobilize. I test H8 within my case studies to look at how resources affected collective action. I measure resources in terms of factors that condition a community's ability to carry out its goals. For example, whether or not a community has access to weapons to confront armed militants should affect its ability to sustain violent civilian resistance. Resources might also include material incentives for participation, food, and other supplies. A community might generate its own resources or receive outside assistance from the state, NGOs, drug trafficking organizations, or other sources.

# Chapter 3

## **ARMED CONFLICT AND CIVILIAN RESISTANCE IN THE AYACUCHO REGION**

In this chapter I begin to test hypotheses about civilian resistance from alternative realist and rationalist arguments using provincial and district level data for Ayacucho. I then use broad regional and provincial narratives to provide an initial evaluation of my own argument. I test potential explanations more directly when I investigate individual community cases in Chapters 4 and 5. To fully address the puzzle of civilian resistance, I must first place community responses in context. I begin this chapter by providing a brief historical background for Ayacucho. I describe the origins of violence in the region and chronicle some of the actions of both Sendero Luminoso and the state security forces. I elaborate on Sendero's ideological framework and link its strategies and behavior to the movement's ideas about politics, revolution, and violence. I do the same for the Peruvian state security forces and describe the military's counterinsurgency campaign. I provide a general overview of the behavior and broader narratives for each collective actor over time. I focus on how the militant movement and the state interpreted events and defined how they stood in relation to other actors, as I will do in my subsequent assessment of hypotheses related to civilian resistance. The broader Sendero Luminoso and state security force narratives provide context for my analysis of how civilians as a whole, and individual communities in particular, viewed the armed conflict and their role within it.

### **THE AYACUCHO REGION**

Ayacucho, which translates to “the corner of the dead” in Quechua, seems an apt description for the region at the center of militant and state violence during the 1980s and 1990s.

Its remoteness, widespread poverty, and largely indigenous population proved a fertile environment for Sendero Luminoso to advance its armed revolutionary campaign. The militant group found sympathy for its ideas among an impressionable and increasingly radicalized student base at the San Cristóbal of Huamanga National University (UNSCH) in the Ayacucho capitol. A “provincial intellectual insurgency” emerged in the years leading up to violent conflict. Intellectual figures at the university, like philosophy professor Abimael Guzmán Reynoso and agronomist Antonio Díaz Martínez, held important posts and contributed to the transformation and diffusion of ideas that would later serve as the foundation for Sendero Luminoso’s armed revolutionary campaign.

A rich history and diverse cultures characterize the Ayacucho region. A variety of archeological ruins of earlier civilizations like the Warpa, the Wari, the Chanca, and the Inca can be found throughout the region. Ayacucho also played an important role during the Spanish conquest and the subsequent colonial period. The region served as an important transit site between Lima and the Incan capitol of Cuzco. The Spanish built a regional outpost in Ayacucho to aid in the control of their nascent colonial acquisition and to facilitate the administration of an expansive territory under constant threat of rebellion.<sup>148</sup>

Diverse geography defines Ayacucho. The high Andean mountains run through the region and Ayacucho’s inaccessibility partly explains its long history of isolation and neglect by central authorities. Many of the communities in the mountains have temperate climates, though some of the more remote cases at higher altitudes contend with harsh conditions. In Uchuraccay, for example, strong winds and freezing temperatures leave residents with dark frostbitten cheeks and ears, made worse by malnutrition and the intensity of the sun. Residents largely dedicate

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<sup>148</sup> Antonio Zapata Velasco, Nelson Pereyra Chávez, Rolando Rojas Rojas, and Marcial Molina Richter. *Historia y Cultura de Ayacucho* (Lima: UNICEF and IEP 2008), Chapter 3.

themselves to agricultural production and care for small animals and livestock like sheep and cattle to supplement their harvests. Rural communities in Ayacucho make use of about a quarter of all the land in the region—using the vast majority as pastoral lands to sustain animals and the rest for farming.<sup>149</sup> Many who reside in the more remote communities travel to larger villages and towns to work as agricultural laborers or as construction workers to earn wages to buy the necessities they cannot produce through subsistence farming.

On the other side of the mountains to the northeast of the Huanta and the La Mar provinces, one passes through high jungles before reaching the fertile river valleys below. Most residents also dedicate themselves to agricultural production and many travel back and forth between the mountains and the jungle. They maintain strong relationships with kin in both regions and it is not uncommon for a resident of a mountain community to also have a plot of land down in the jungle to grow other varieties of agricultural goods. Pioneering “*colonos*” traveled down from the mountains and built many of the jungle communities in their search for economic opportunity during coffee, cacao, and coca booms throughout the twentieth century.

Historically, the state presence in Ayacucho outside of the large towns and provincial capitals has been minimal. A recent study of the political history of rural Ayacucho prior to Sendero Luminoso describes the “politics of abandon” that characterized the early twentieth century.<sup>150</sup> However, state neglect did not imply the absence of politics in rural Ayacucho. A variety of movements sought to address the widespread poverty and stark inequality generated by political, social, and economic marginalization. Political parties, a progressive military regime, and popular student movements all took aim at rectifying conditions of inequality and

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<sup>149</sup> Ibid., p. 24. Only 16% of the land they use goes toward producing goods for consumption, the rest is used to sustain their livestock.

<sup>150</sup> Jaymie Patricia Heilman, *Before the Shining Path: Politics in Rural Ayacucho, 1895-1980* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press 2010).

political marginalization. During the second half of the twentieth century residents made significant advances in land reform efforts, achieved greater access to secondary and university education, and initiated social projects aimed at improving life in Ayacucho.

As part of the response to residents' demands, the Peruvian state reopened the San Cristóbal of Huamanga National University in 1959. The history of the institution dates back to 1677 when Bishop Cristóbal de Castilla y Zamora founded the university in the Ayacucho capital, but it closed its door due to insufficient resources in 1885 after the War of the Pacific. Administrators and educators at the newly-opened center for higher education played a central role in regional development projects.<sup>151</sup> Furthermore, the university served as a site of contestation for the direction of the political Left and debate between different factions within the Communist Party of Peru, including Sendero Luminoso. While most of the political Left agreed on the importance of armed action to generate political change in Peru, many disagreed about what that campaign would look like in both theory and practice.

### **VIOLENCE IN AYACUCHO**

Conditions of widespread poverty, state neglect, and a semi-feudal social structure help explain the origins of armed conflict in Peru. These conditions made Sendero promises to eliminate exploitation and inequality more attractive to many peasants struggling to survive. At the onset of armed conflict in Ayacucho, around three-quarters of residents subsisted on small-scale farming, only 14 per cent of households had electricity, and 15 per cent had potable water. Infant mortality in Ayacucho ranked among the world's highest due to an almost complete absence of medical care.<sup>152</sup> The population suffered from extreme malnutrition with reports from

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<sup>151</sup> Antonio Zapata Velasco, Nelson Pereyra Chávez, Rolando Rojas Rojas, and Marcial Molina Richter. *Historia y Cultura de Ayacucho* (Lima: UNICEF and IEP 2008), Chapter 5.

<sup>152</sup> Cyrus Ernesto Zirakzadeh, "From Revolutionary Dreams to Organizational Fragmentation: Disputes over Violence within ETA and Sendero Luminoso." *Terrorism and Political Violence* 14/4 (2002), pp. 66-92.

the period suggesting that some communities subsisted on just a fraction of the World Health Organization's recommended daily caloric intake.<sup>153</sup> However, these conditions alone cannot explain violent conflict in Peru. Sendero support and consolidation differed across regions and over time, despite consistent levels of political and economic marginalization, which suggests that other factors better explain Sendero mobilization, support, and violence.<sup>154</sup> Furthermore, conflict onset did not take place under severe conditions of state repression. Sendero began its revolutionary campaign at the very moment when Peru finalized its transition to democracy and groups from the Peruvian Left gained significant influence within the Peruvian government.<sup>155</sup>

To fully understand the rise of Sendero Luminoso in Peru, one must look to the decade prior to armed conflict. Political developments and social transformations played an important role in the origins and evolution of conflict. Peruvian anthropologist Carlos Iván Degregori links Sendero's rise to state attempts at suspending free education for secondary and technical school students in 1969. Activists confronted a generally unresponsive state. Clashes with the police during subsequent protests and student strikes in Ayacucho and Huanta led activists to believe that traditional political channels would prove ineffective in redressing their grievances.<sup>156</sup> In Huanta, the detention of political leaders, professors, and student activists culminated in the police blindly firing into angry mobs. In the end, the military dictatorship overturned the education fees, but anger and resentment over the state's tactics remained.

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<sup>153</sup> Estimates suggest that residents survived on only 420 calories a day. Roberto Mejía Alarcón, *25 Años Uchuraccay: La Tragedia del 26 de Enero de 1983* (Lima: Fondo Editorial, Asociación Nacional de Periodistas del Perú 2008), p. 35.

<sup>154</sup> Sergio Koc-Menard, "Fragmented Sovereignty: Why *Sendero Luminoso* Consolidated in Some Regions of Peru but Not in Others." *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 30/2 (2007), p. 193.

<sup>155</sup> Jo-Marie Burt, "Shining Path and the 'Decisive Battle' in Lima's *Barriadas*: The Case of Villa El Salvador." In *Shining and Other Paths: War and Society in Peru, 1980-1995*, ed. Steve J. Stern (Durham, NC: Duke University Press 1998), pp. 276-277.

<sup>156</sup> Carlos Iván Degregori, *Ayacucho 1969-1979: El Surgimiento de Sendero Luminoso* (Lima: Instituto de Estudios Peruanos 1990).

Degregori argues that Sendero drew many conclusions about strategy from its experience during the free education movement. The party began to see political conflict as a direct, physical confrontation and concluded that armed struggle would be the best way forward. Furthermore, mass mobilization of peasants in support of the education movement reinforced its belief that the people more than the party would generate popular armed struggle. Sendero Luminoso leadership saw itself as the vanguard that would eventually lead the masses. Sendero would instigate, harness spontaneous action, and direct the masses to confront the state with strategic violence.<sup>157</sup>

Ideological and organizational factors contributed to the onset and escalation of violence in Peru. First and foremost, Sendero Luminoso became determined to incite *violent* political and social change. The movement's objectives and a deep-seated belief about the necessity to use violence in achieving its aims help explain subsequent developments in the conflict. Sendero's "movement frame" consisted of an ideology that emphasized excessive violence, which served as a way to differentiate itself from its Leftist competitors as it sought additional adherents and recruits.<sup>158</sup> Violence served as the primary tool to expand Sendero's revolutionary program through the elimination of what Mao referred to as "antagonisms." The movement not only wanted to coerce the public, but also to tear down competing institutions. Social revolutions require that both social and political structures change together in a mutually reinforcing way.<sup>159</sup> Sendero accomplished only the former, at great cost to Peruvian society.

Sendero Luminoso's interaction with other collective actors in political and social contexts is essential to understanding its use of violence. Sendero sought to coopt, replace, or

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<sup>157</sup> Ibid.

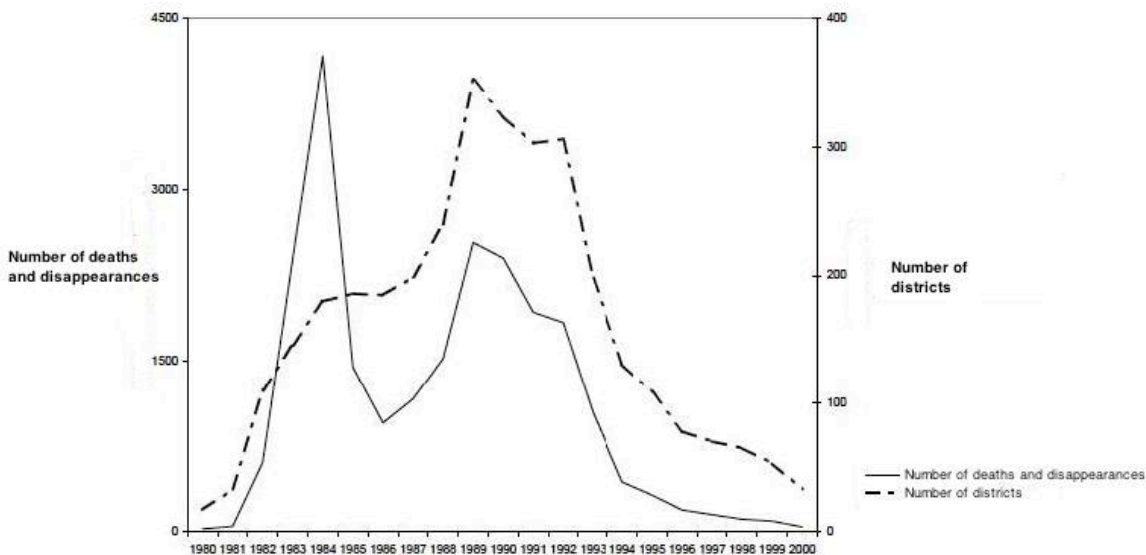
<sup>158</sup> James Ron, "Ideology in Context: Explaining Sendero Luminoso's Tactical Escalation." *Journal of Peace Research* 38/5 (2001), pp. 569-592.

<sup>159</sup> Theda Skocpol, *States and Social Revolutions* (New York: Cambridge University Press 1979).

eliminate competing institutions. The movement used excessive violence against any other collective actor attempting to exert influence over “their *indios*.” Sendero actively targeted local authorities, rural labor organizations, Leftist parties, progressive churches, development NGOs, among others. The movement sought to forge a strong guiding relationship with the masses and would not tolerate competition. It saw the rural indigenous population as clay to be molded by the party and its ideology.<sup>160</sup> However, many of the collective actors Sendero targeted had alternative visions as to how best structure political, social, and economic relations. Many of these actors resisted and provided alternatives to Sendero’s hegemonic ambitions.

Special terrorism police (the *sinchis*) and military interventions aimed at Sendero’s political program generated instability and spirals of violence in the state-declared emergency zones. The intensity of violence peaked in 1983 and 1984, with another spike in 1988 and 1989.

**Figure 3.1: Number of deaths and disappearances reported to the CVR and number of districts where the events occurred between 1980 and 2000 at the district level in Peru by year<sup>161</sup>**



However, the second surge in violence actually reflects the spread of armed action to other regions of Peru and not a greater intensity of violence. Figure 3.1 shows the number of deaths

<sup>160</sup> Carlos Iván Degregori, *Que Difícil Es Ser Dios: Ideología y Violencia Política en Sendero Luminoso*. (Perú: El Zorro de Abajo Ediciones 1989), p. 24.

<sup>161</sup> CVR, *Informe Final: Peru, 1980-2000, Tomo I, Capítulo 3. Los Rostros y Perfiles de la Violencia* (2003), p. 177.

and disappearances by year. Including data on the number of districts where these incidents occurred demonstrates that the second spike in violence actually corresponds with the proliferation of Sendero militancy in other parts of Peru.

Political and economic conditions in the late 1980s exacerbated the conflict. Although political changes under the first Garcia administration (1985-1990) initially led to moderate improvements, economic crisis and rampant inflation created additional fears and hardships for the Peruvian public. Corruption and questions of legitimacy plagued a fragile democracy incapable of ending the political violence. Sendero continued to target competing sources of power at the national and local level. As the movement found the population increasingly difficult to control, Sendero intensified punitive violence against civilians. The organization applied greater pressure on labor syndicates, implemented an “armed strike” to enforce electoral boycotts, and intensified its efforts to foment instability and crisis.<sup>162</sup> Before intelligence services captured Abimael Guzmán in September 1992, Peru teetered on the edge of collapse. After his arrest, the struggle continued. But, a demoralized Sendero movement, coupled with military victories and increased civilian mobilization, helped to turn the tide in the counterinsurgency.

The Peruvian public continues to deal with the effects of armed conflict today. High casualties, displacement, collective trauma, economic devastation, and widespread distrust have complicated efforts to come to terms with and recover from the armed conflict.<sup>163</sup> Furthermore, many communities face new security challenges that partially stem from the effects of armed conflict. For example, the regional capital city of Ayacucho saw an influx of urban migration due

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<sup>162</sup> Instituto de Defensa Legal, *Perú 1989: En la Espiral de Violencia* (Lima: Instituto de Defensa Legal 1990), Chapter 1.

<sup>163</sup> For more on displacement see Isabel Coral Cordero, “Desplazamiento, Inserción y Retorno en Ayacucho (1993-1997).” *Amérique Latine Histoire et Mémoire* 5 (2002). For more on individual and collective trauma and economic loss due to conflict see Cecilia Tovar and Mariella Bazán, *Huellas de la Violencia Política y Respuestas de la Población* (Lima, Perú: Instituto Bartolomé de las Casas 2004).

to displacement. A youth bulge, chronic poverty, broken families, and post-traumatic stress related to the conflict led to a rise in youth gangs, increased urban violence, and crime.<sup>164</sup>

## **SENDERO LUMINOSO**

### **Sendero Luminoso Strategy and Violence**

Peru's civil war began in Ayacucho when Sendero Luminoso burned the ballot boxes in the remote mountain town of Chuschi in May 1980. The act communicated Sendero's disdain for electoral politics and its belief that meaningful change would only come through violent revolution. Sendero Luminoso's first acts of violence announced its arrival on the political scene. Militants targeted symbols of state power while simultaneously building support through a campaign of community indoctrination. The movement painted political slogans on walls, attacked police posts, and stole weapons and dynamite. The militants grew bolder and by year-end they had perpetrated over 200 attacks that included the destruction of banks and electric towers, as well as the torture and execution of a large property owner. Sendero Luminoso killed a police officer in Lima on January 5, 1981, marking the first time Sendero targeted a member of the state security forces—though it would not be the last.<sup>165</sup> By April of the same year, Sendero began to target people more frequently, making torture and murder a prominent part of its violent strategy.<sup>166</sup>

Insurgents mostly targeted rural police stations and government offices in Ayacucho and the surrounding regions. Poorly armed militants threw homemade bombs at police stations and seized additional weapons. They appropriated or sabotaged radio communication and destroyed

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<sup>164</sup> Cordula Strocka, *Unidos Nos Hacemos Respetar: Jóvenes, Identidades y Violencia en Ayacucho* (Lima: UNICEF and IEP 2008).

<sup>165</sup> DESCO, *Violencia Política en el Perú, 1980-1988* Volume 1 (Lima: DESCO, Centro de Estudios y Promoción des Desarrollo 1989), pp. 66-67.

<sup>166</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 69.

state-run economic institutions tied to agricultural markets.<sup>167</sup> Sendero Luminoso disrupted elections, destroyed property and infrastructure tied to the state and local elites, and took steps to elicit an overreaction from state security forces. All the while, Sendero visited rural communities for “chats” in an effort to construct an alternative political, economic, and social order.

The movement moved forward with its strategy to “stir up” and “lay waste to” the countryside while the central state authorities remained largely disinterested and unaware during the initial phase of the conflict. The clandestine nature of the movement and information asymmetries between militants and state security forces helped Sendero achieve early successes. In a January 1983 interview with the news magazine *Quehacer*, the Peruvian Minister of War, Luis Cisneros Vizquerra, explained the challenges police and others tasked with confronting Sendero Luminoso faced:

[W]hile the senderistas know where the [electric] towers are, where the police stations are located, how many men are at each post and their movements, the police forces do not know where to find the senderistas nor how many there are. They do not know when they are going to attack. For the police to be able to succeed they will have to kill both senderistas and non-senderistas because that is the only way to ensure success. They kill 60 people and there are 3 senderistas at best...and surely the police will say they were 60 senderistas.<sup>168</sup>

The Minister remained apprehensive about the armed forces entering the fight under these conditions. Police found themselves outnumbered and vulnerable, frequently abandoning rural police stations. Eventually the government declared a state of emergency and sent in the military to engage a growing insurgent threat that the Peruvian government and its security forces still did not understand.

### **Sendero Luminoso Ideology and Beliefs**

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<sup>167</sup> Gustavo Gorriti Ellenbogen, *The Shining Path: A History of the Millenarian War in Peru* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press 1999), pp. 82-88.

<sup>168</sup> Quoted in DESCO, *Violencia Política en el Perú, 1980-1988* Volume 2 (Lima: DESCO, Centro de Estudios y Promoción des Desarrollo 1989), p. 569.

Abimael Guzmán's strategic position within the San Cristóbal of Huamanga National University facilitated efforts to shape the intellectual and political atmosphere. He and other leading members of the *bandera roja* faction of the Communist Party of Peru held important posts that allowed them to interact with students both intellectually and socially.<sup>169</sup> Sendero Luminoso ideology drew heavily from the ideas of Marx, Lenin, and Mao. The intellectual vanguard also borrowed from the philosophical writings of José Carlos Mariátegui, the founder of the Socialist party of Peru in 1928 that became the Communist Party of Peru in 1930. The revolutionary movement drew from Mariátegui's work and identified tensions between indigenous peasants and regional political bosses as the principle source of discontent in rural Peru. The Sendero Luminoso movement transformed community perceptions of identity previously tied to race and "indigenous" into class-based notions of worker and peasant.<sup>170</sup> Party members took their version of the "shining path of Mariátegui" to the countryside to implement a political project aimed at propelling Peru into modernity. Guzmán sought to generate conditions of *pachacuti*, or the world upside down, as described in Andean mythology. Guzmán viewed revolution as a religious, mystical, or spiritual force and his ideas played a key role in the evolution of violent conflict.<sup>171</sup>

Leading up to the initiation of armed struggle, Abimael Guzmán made arguments to party leadership contending that the right revolutionary conditions existed in Peru. He concluded that the party simply had to take up arms to destroy all remnants of the "old order" and to build a new socialist state on its ruins. A militarized party would exploit tensions and inequalities in the

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<sup>169</sup> Carlos Iván Degregori, *Ayacucho 1969-1979: El Surgimiento de Sendero Luminoso* (Lima: Instituto de Estudios Peruanos 1990). The Maoist *Bandera Roja* (red flag) faction emerged during the Sino-Soviet split within the Communist Party of Peru in 1964. Sendero Luminoso then split off from this faction in 1970.

<sup>170</sup> Marisol de la Cadena, "From Race to Class: Insurgent Intellectuals *de Provincia* in Peru, 1910-1970." In *Shining and Other Paths: War and Society in Peru, 1980-1995*, ed. Steve J. Stern (Durham: Duke University Press 1998), pp. 22-59.

<sup>171</sup> Gilberto C. Aranda, Miguel Ángel López, and Sergio Salinas Cañas, *Del Regreso del Inca a Sendero Luminoso: Violencia y Política Mesianica en Perú* (Santiago de Chile: RIL Editores 2009), p. 122.

countryside to mobilize a revolutionary base of support.<sup>172</sup> They would inspire and lead the masses.

The dogmatic movement expected its members to relinquish many freedoms in service to the revolution. Sendero Luminoso ideology contained fundamentalist elements embodied in the persona of Abimael Guzmán. He fashioned himself the “fourth sword of communism,” following in the steps of Marx, Lenin, and Mao.<sup>173</sup> Guzmán fostered a cult of personality and carefully crafted his persona as a heroic, supreme leader ready to guide the masses through the radical changes on the horizon. Some go as far as to suggest that Guzmán cultivated a “death cult” with his emphasis on violence and sacrifice.<sup>174</sup> He fomented hate and cruelty. Violence became an instrument of revolution and a natural way to accelerate progress. He branded anyone who opposed Sendero as a “revisionist” and “class enemy,” refusing to make political alliances or compromises. Guzmán led a two front war against internal opponents (revisionists not in complete agreement with the party) as well as external enemies (the state, its agents, and supporters).<sup>175</sup>

Sendero educated its members and the public. The organization communicated its ideology and explained the meaning of armed struggle. Its struggle was not only a means, but also an end unto itself. A new order would rise from the ashes of the old, born from armed

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<sup>172</sup> Gustavo Gorriti Ellenbogen, *The Shining Path: A History of the Millenarian War in Peru* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press 1999), p. 24.

<sup>173</sup> Santiago Roncagliolo, *La Cuarta Espada: La Historia de Abimael Guzmán y Sendero Luminoso* (Barcelona: Debate 2007).

<sup>174</sup> Víctor Vich, *El Caníbal es el Otro: Violencia y Cultura en el Perú Contemporáneo* (Lima: Instituto de Estudios Peruanos 2002), p. 30.

<sup>175</sup> Abimael Guzmán Reynoso, Luis Arce Borja, and Janet Talavera Sánchez, *Presidente Gonzalo Rompe el Silencio: Entrevista en la Clandestinidad* (Lima: El Diario 1988).

revolution.<sup>176</sup> Guzmán set the tone for the coming violence when he addressed militants at the First Military School in 1980:

The people rise up, arm themselves and rebel, putting nooses on the necks of imperialism and reaction. The people take them by the throats, threaten their lives and will strangle them out of necessity. The reactionary meat will be trimmed of fat, they will be torn to tatters and rags, the scraps sunk into mire, and the remainders burned. The ashes will be thrown to the winds of the world so that only the sinister reminder of what must never return will remain.<sup>177</sup>

Sendero Luminoso militants took to the countryside and urban centers to garner support from the populous, to incite an overreaction from the state, and to trigger drastic political, social, and economic changes in Peru.

Sendero made exacting demands on the population. The militant organization insisted that rural communities produce only for self-consumption and that they refrain from interacting with neighboring towns or participating in regional markets. Disobedience would lead to punishment. For example, in January 1988 Senderistas attacked a group of *comuneros* from Ancochilcas as they returned from a large regional market in Sacharajay. Eight died during the initial attack and eight more perished as they tried to escape through the perilous rocky landscape. Help arrived from their nearby community. Fifty peasants armed with rocks and slings drove the attackers away.<sup>178</sup> Actions against civilians often solidified community resolve and later helped to generate increased participation in self-defense forces.

Historian Steve J. Stern suggests that Sendero's own ideology kept the group from accurately gauging how its practices and changing revolutionary strategies affected communities. He argues that the movement's rigid, dogmatic ideology eventually alienated the population and

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<sup>176</sup> Juan J. Biondi Shaw and Eduardo E. Zapata Saldaña, *El Discurso de Sendero Luminoso: Contratexto Educativo* (Lima, Perú: Consejo Nacional de Ciencia y Tecnología 1989).

<sup>177</sup> Abimael Guzmán, "We Are the Initiators." In *For the New Flag* (New Flag 1981), pp. 26-27; an alternate translation can be found in Abimael Guzmán, "We Are the Initiators." In *The Peru Reader: History, Culture, Politics* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995), pp. 328.

<sup>178</sup> Alberto Valencia Cárdenas, *Los Crímenes de Sendero Luminoso en Ayacucho* (Lima: Editorial Impacto 1992), pp. 65-66.

generated peasant resistance. Stern remarks that Sendero “squandered its initial political advantages and legitimacies.”<sup>179</sup>

Despite self-imposed limitations, Sendero Luminoso understood the importance of sharing its political, social, and economic goals with potential supporters. When militants took action they frequently destroyed or co-opted the means of communication. For example, on January 31, 1981 Sendero dynamited the antenna of *Radio Nación* in Tacna. On August 21 the same year, four militants forced the host of a radio show in Lima to broadcast an announcement about armed struggle. A week later six militants stormed the El Sol radio station in Lima and transmitted a six-minute statement aimed at poor and marginalized Peruvians.<sup>180</sup> The militant movement continually communicated its vision for Peru and its desire to spark a global communist revolution. Abimael Guzmán communicated movement beliefs and goals to the population, most notably in his 1988 “interview of the century” with Sendero news journal *El Diario*.<sup>181</sup> He described how Marxism-Leninism-Maoism applied to conditions in Peru and articulated the movement’s position on the importance of a “people’s war.” He described events, contextualized Sendero’s revolutionary actions, and highlighted particular elements of the state response. Guzmán defined the Party’s positions and provided guidance as how to interact with competing Leftist parties, religious groups, labor unions, and other important collective actors. He interpreted events and defined relationships, which structured the movement’s subsequent actions.

## **THE STATE SECURITY FORCES**

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<sup>179</sup> Steve J. Stern, “Shining and Other Paths: The Origins, Dynamics, and Legacies of War, 1980-1995.” In *Shining and Other Paths: War and Society in Peru, 1980-1995*, ed. Steve J. Stern (Durham: Duke University Press 1998), pp. 471.

<sup>180</sup> DESCO, *Violencia Política en el Perú, 1980-1988* Volume 1 (Lima: DESCO, Centro de Estudios y Promoción des Desarrollo 1989), pp. 67, 71).

<sup>181</sup> Abimael Guzmán Reynoso, Luis Arce Borja, and Janet Talavera Sánchez, *Presidente Gonzalo Rompe el Silencio: Entrevista en la Clandestinidad* (Lima: El Diario 1988).

On December 29, 1982 Peru declared a state of emergency in the Ayacucho provinces of Huanta, La Mar, Cangallo, Víctor Fajardo, and Huamanga. General Clemente Noel Moral and the military took control of a region plagued by Sendero armed actions and began to formulate and implement a counterinsurgency plan. The population suffered at the hands of police and the Peruvian armed forces when the state took action. Violence intensified in Ayacucho and beyond as the army and marine infantry inflicted high casualties on suspected militants. State security forces frequently tortured and disappeared suspected Sendero militants and collaborators.

The Peruvian military's counteroffensive suffered early setbacks due to its misunderstanding of the nature of the Sendero threat and a national defense apparatus incapable of effectively executing its strategy.<sup>182</sup> President Belaunde believed they were fighting against a “foreign conspiracy,” and neither General Noel nor his replacement, General Huamán (“el Ayacuchano”), made significant progress in halting Sendero's early expansion. Leadership changes, strategic shifts, and clear variation in the security forces' behavior all speak to a conflict characterized by rapidly changing conditions. The actors, the environment, and the military's mandate continually evolved.<sup>183</sup>

A variety of armed state actors played important roles in the violence. Local police responded to Sendero Luminoso's early actions in isolated mountain villages and urban centers. Sendero attacked the police as a symbol of local authority and the police mission changed from surveillance and protection of the civilian population to actively hunting insurgents and their supporters. Repression, along with detention and interrogation, became the preferred strategy.<sup>184</sup> The *sinchis*, a CIA-trained police counterterrorism force, had trained to combat a Che Guevara

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<sup>182</sup> Carlos Tapia, *Las Fuerzas Armadas y Sendero Luminoso: Dos Estrategias y Un Final* (Lima: Instituto de Estudios Peruanos 1997), pp. 27-33.

<sup>183</sup> Personal interview with a Peruvian Coronel at the “Pentagonito” (the Peruvian equivalent of the Pentagon) in San Borja, Lima March 20, 2013.

<sup>184</sup> CVR, *Informe Final, Tomo II, Capítulo 1.2. Las Fuerzas Policiales* (2003), p. 137.

style revolutionary campaign carried out by guerrilla units. They arrived unprepared for the opposition's Maoist tactics with extensive political groundwork and community infiltration.<sup>185</sup> At first the *sinchis* made efforts to defend the civilian population. They arrived as “protectors and friends” to take care of the people and sought to earn their trust. However, within weeks the *sinchis* employed brutal tactics indiscriminately against civilians they came to see as potential terrorists. One retired police official suggested that the *sinchis* became mechanical killers with no regard for the rules of war.<sup>186</sup> The counterterrorism forces turned into murderers and enforcers that “counter-terrorized” the population. The *sinchis* countered the insurgent atrocities with ferocious acts of their own. They “took off the gloves” to fight fire with fire and contributed to spirals of violence that resulted in a “dirty war.” The police became increasingly alienated from and suspicious of the population. Events like the death of the young revolutionary Edith Lagos led to a massive funeral procession and memorial in the capital of Ayacucho. The police decided to remain in the barracks to prevent a clash with the thousands of civilians that marched through the streets in September 1982. The mass mobilization further fueled antagonism between state security forces and the civilian population as the police interpreted the funeral as a show of general support for the insurgency.<sup>187</sup>

The military did not fare much better than the police. The armed forces arrived unprepared for the realities they faced combatting the Sendero insurgency. Initially, an organization with military objectives (the armed forces) confronted one with political objectives (Sendero Luminoso).<sup>188</sup> A review of declassified military manuals demonstrates an extremely

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<sup>185</sup> Dirk Kruijt, *Perú: Entre Sendero y los Militares: Seguridad y Relaciones Cívico-militares, 1950-1990* (Barcelona: Editorial Robles 1991), p. 103.

<sup>186</sup> For example, see quotes by ex-police officials in CVR, *Informe Final, Tomo II, Capítulo 1.2. Las Fuerzas Policiales* (2003), pp. 150-151.

<sup>187</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 152-153.

<sup>188</sup> Raul Gonzalez, “Y Ahora Qué? El Terror en Ayacucho. El Terror Senderista.” *Quehacer* 30 (August 1984), pp. 6-29.

broad counterrevolutionary strategy. Military doctrine provided only general guidelines before the military rewrote and implemented new strategies aimed specifically at the challenges faced with Sendero Luminoso in the late 1980s.<sup>189</sup> The military envisioned its mission as protecting the population from those who would steer the people away from its democratic and Christian traditions.<sup>190</sup> Military leaders saw the need to suspend certain constitutional guarantees to aid in overcoming the chaos, anarchy, and absence of government. The army had been tasked with overcoming these challenges and reestablishing the rights associated with a liberal democracy.<sup>191</sup> However, military perceptions of the fanaticism and criminality of Sendero militants, combined with confusion about who the enemy actually was, led to excesses in the emergency zones. The official military news publication, *Actualidad Militar*, frequently printed assessments of Sendero ideology and strategy. The military began to construct a clearer notion of how they stood in relation to Sendero Luminoso. A confrontation was underway between two “radically opposed positions.” The military – which saw itself as a Christian institution guided by rationality, restraint, and a true love for the Peruvian nation – professed a desire for peace and social wellbeing. Sendero Luminoso – which the military saw as an atheist organization defined by its irrationality, cruelty, and ruthlessness – operated in a manner devoid of moral sentiment and human values.<sup>192</sup>

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<sup>189</sup> Ejército Peruano, *Guerra Revolucionaria: Guerra Subversiva* TE-41-7 (Chorrillos, Peru: Escuela Superior de Guerra 1966). Starting in 1988 the military circulated additional manuals meant to inform and guide soldiers who would serve in the emergency zone in rural and urban settings. Topics include unconventional warfare, commando operations, terrorism, as well as specifics about Sendero Luminoso and the need to adhere to human rights obligations.

<sup>190</sup> “El Ejército, Ayacucho y La Defensa Nacional.” *Actualidad Militar* No. 308 (November 1984), p. 3.

<sup>191</sup> CrI EP SJE Ernesto Benavente López, “Participación de las Fuerzas Armadas en el Régimen de Excepción.” *Actualidad Militar* No. 315 (June 1985), pp. 15-17; “El Ejército en la Lucha Antisubversiva.” *Actualidad Militar* No. 319 (October 1985), pp. 5-7.

<sup>192</sup> For example see Dr. Pedro Ravén, “Actitud Ideológica del Terrorismo.” *Actualidad Militar* No. 328 (July 1986), pp. 24-25.

The military imagined itself an advocate for democratic governance and the Peruvian people, defending the nation against those who would subvert the rule of law and target the people and institutions that guarantee the nation its dignity and liberty. The state security forces saw a cowardly, aggressive, and brutal enemy with twisted beliefs. Sendero Luminoso militants sowed the seeds of chaos despite their self-identification as proponents of social good. The military believed that Sendero mastered the art of lies and fostered hate amongst the Peruvian people. Peruvian soldiers, on the other hand, would offer their lives for the dignity and liberty of the nation. They stood in defense of the people during an existential crisis. The military believed it had the duty to confront a totalitarian movement masquerading as a proponent for the people.<sup>193</sup>

The military general that led the initial counterinsurgency campaign in Ayacucho describes the threat that he and the nation faced:

[Sendero] had a noble and unarmed people in their hands and they injected them with the virus of class struggle, creating in them a destructive revolutionary consciousness and infecting the minds of those who now lead our nation in a fratricidal struggle. The struggle can only be stopped by removing people of reproachable behavior from politics and journalistic activities, people that are the intellectual and material perpetrators poisoning progress and destroying the country.<sup>194</sup>

In one of the community case studies from Chapter 4, I describe events in Huaychao, where community members reportedly rose up against Sendero militants. The same commander spoke to the press about Huaychao and explained that the population in Ayacucho had grown tired of subversive elements killing their people, stealing their women, taking their children, and robbing

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<sup>193</sup> Roberto C. Noel Moral, *Ayacucho: Testimonio de un Soldado* (Lima, Peru: Publinor, 1989), pp. 16-18.

<sup>194</sup> Roberto C. Noel Moral, *Ayacucho: Testimonio de un Soldado* (Lima, Peru: Publinor, 1989), p. 21.

their food.<sup>195</sup> The general took great care in defining the military's role as an ally to those who might stand against these abuses.

The state security forces took action and, despite their best intentions, the means to achieving a “noble” end often led to widespread civilian victimization and suffering. In “post-conflict” Peru, the Truth Commission documented the state security forces' responsibility in horrific human rights abuses. After the fact, some military officials recognized the mistakes and “excesses” committed during the counterinsurgency campaign and do not try to justify them.<sup>196</sup> Sendero tactics and physical threats to soldiers in the conflict zone fostered distrust of the civilian population. For example, on June 28, 1990 a corporal in the Peruvian army went out on patrol in Ayacucho after a column of Sendero Luminoso militants began to carry out more frequent attacks. He remembers, “On the road I observed a woman passing with a baby in her arms: in reality it was a covered weapon; suddenly a man dressed in a poncho and the woman shot at us. I was hit several times in the stomach and back. It caused severe damage to my central vertebrae, leaving me crippled for the rest of my life.”<sup>197</sup>

Another soldier describes the situation they faced confronting the Sendero insurgency, “You maybe think, well, so Peruvians are killing each other. We're taking down our people. But what can we do, buddy, they're going to take us down, no question. It's the ideology that they have, you know, they don't know the meaning of democracy. The only thing they know is communism and the Shining Path, nothing more.”<sup>198</sup> In contrast to politicians and military leadership, one soldier directly engaged in the fighting did not mention democracy or the

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<sup>195</sup> DESCO, *Violencia Política en el Perú, 1980-1988* Volume 2 (Lima: DESCO, Centro de Estudios y Promoción des Desarrollo 1989), pp. 572.

<sup>196</sup> Edwin Donayre Gotzch and Hilda Balbín Alcócer. *El Silencio de los Héroes* (Lima: Universidad Alas Peruanas 2009).

<sup>197</sup> Testimony in Edwin Donayre Gotzch and Hilda Balbín Alcócer. *El Silencio de los Héroes* (Lima: Universidad Alas Peruanas 2009) p. 108.

<sup>198</sup> ‘Pancho’, “Vietnam in the Andes.” In *The Peru Reader: History, Culture, Politics*, eds. Orin Starn, Carlos Iván Degregori, and Robin Kirk (Durham: Duke University Press 1995), p. 346.

Peruvian nation, instead he emphasized military's principle objective as protecting civilians, "We weren't defending Belaúnde, we were defending the people. Sometimes, we would go to lands devastated by the *terrucos*, women burned alive, pregnant women, they cut them open, slashed their throats. Kids just like my son, dead, throats slit."<sup>199</sup>

Distinguishing militants and their supporters from the rest of the population proved challenging when confronting Sendero. Ideas about whom the military was fighting for and fighting against varied. More and more innocent civilians became suspected "communist savages" amid the chaos and disorder in Ayacucho. The military came to see sites linked to education, such as the San Cristóbal of Huamanga National University, as "centers of production" for Sendero insurgents.<sup>200</sup> Soldiers most frequently came from regions outside of Ayacucho and their distrust of rural communities made the military apprehensive when they contemplated providing arms to civilian self-defense forces as part of the broader counterinsurgency strategy. Although some within the armed forces made conscious efforts to redefine the military's relationship with civilians and to transform the counterinsurgency campaign, widespread abuses caused many to believe that the military came neither to return law and order nor to provide justice, but to balance the scale.<sup>201</sup>

### **THE CIVILIAN POPULATION**

The armed conflict forced rural communities to approach their relationships with state security forces and armed militants with care. Civilians had to maneuver through potentially perilous situations to avoid reprisals from both sides. The challenge frequently proved futile, as neither the state nor Sendero Luminoso saw the possibility of a middle ground. One community

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<sup>199</sup> Ibid.

<sup>200</sup> Eduardo Toche, *Guerra y Democracia: Los Militares Peruanos y la Construcción Nacional* (Lima, Perú: Consejo Latinoamericano de Ciencias Sociales, CLACSO 2008), pp. 231-235.

<sup>201</sup> Dirk Kruijt, *Perú: Entre Sendero y los Militares: Seguridad y Relaciones Cívico-militares, 1950-1990* (Barcelona: Editorial Robles 1991), p. 97.

leader's account of a discussion with Sendero militants clearly illustrates the precarious position. When fifty Senderistas entered the village of Huachuas and demanded to speak with community authorities, the Sendero commander designated the current mayor as the new political representative. The mayor attempted to explain the dangers of his new role:

It's bad that you are making me assume this responsibility. What am I going to say to the higher-ups? What am I going to say to the provincial mayor? How will I explain this to the army? You know that sooner or later the army is going to come to Huachuas. Our community will be accused of having collaborated with Sendero. You should understand this problem. We're not your enemy. We do not have nor do we want to organize civilian self-defense forces. We want to be neutral. We want to live in peace. We need to protect and take care of ourselves. For this reason we do not accept the change in community authorities.<sup>202</sup>

The Senderistas accused the authorities of being part of the old political order and murdered them as "rats." Neither side respected a desire for neutrality. Throughout Ayacucho, both militants and state security forces compelled communities to make decisions in the context of an evolving conflict. In this section I begin to assess civilian responses to insurgent and state violence. What factors explain varied community responses when caught "between two fires"?

Sendero Luminoso and state security force violence and threat compelled communities throughout Ayacucho to respond. Although I emphasize how communities responded to *insurgent* violence, civilians also reacted to state *counterinsurgent* violence. Armed civilians organized to resist Sendero, but they also mobilized to signal allegiance to the state. Communities did not respond in uniform ways and their responses changed over time. Civilians sometimes fled or acquiesced to Sendero demands, voluntarily or otherwise. In some locations, communities fought back in a sporadic manner. Neighboring peasants banded together to temporarily repel insurgent incursions. Most communities made efforts to defend themselves, usually with whatever weapons and tools they had at their disposal. However, not all

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<sup>202</sup> Alberto Valencia Cárdenas, *Los Crímenes de Sendero Luminoso en Ayacucho* (Lima: Editorial Impacto 1992), p. 71.

communities organized self-defense forces at the same time or in the same way. Even when most communities eventually organized armed civilian resistance, explanations for the same outcome may have entailed different conditions and distinct or overlapping causal pathways. What explains differences in civilian resistance?

### **Threat, Insecurity, and Civilian Pragmatism**

General conditions of insecurity and violence might explain community reactions. Civilian self-defense force participants often behaved strategically in the face of threat and violence. For example, one community located in the Huamanga province characterized its relationship with Sendero Luminoso militants as a “strategic coexistence.” They adopted an ambiguous position so as to receive any of the potential benefits the revolutionary group offered while minimizing the likelihood of violent reprisals.<sup>203</sup> The community only adopted a more definitive stance under the new political authority of the state security forces and in light of increased Sendero abuses and greater victimization.

#### *Realist arguments*

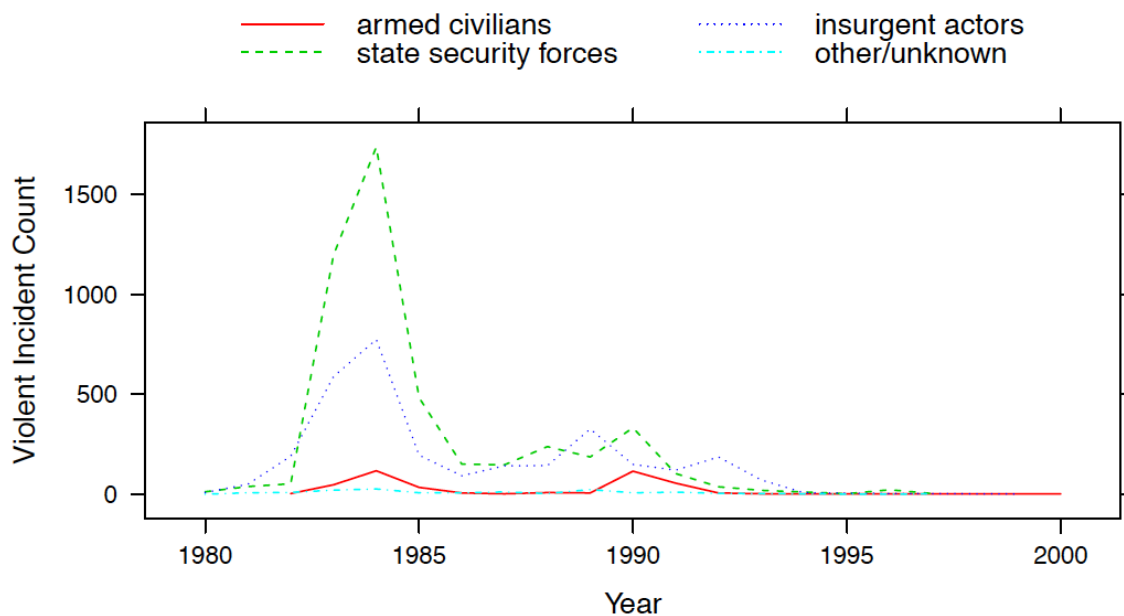
A realist argument expects civilians responded to Sendero’s growing strength. Threats to community survival compel civilians to respond to militant violence with armed resistance. Hypothesis 1 predicts that communities will mobilize to confront a growing threat. An increase in civilian violence levels in response to militant violence would provide partial support for H1. In the same way that the Ayacucho and Junín regions account for a disproportionate amount of the violence in the 1980s and 1990s, the two regions also accounted for 50% of the nation’s

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<sup>203</sup> Ponciano del Pino H. and Kimberly Theidon, “Las Políticas de Identidad: Narrativas de Guerra y la Construcción de Ciudadanía en Ayacucho.” In *Actores Sociales y Ciudadanía en Ayacucho*, eds. José Coronel, Ponciano del Pino and Kimberly Theidon, Iván Caro, and Carlos Iván Degregori (Peru: Grupo de Iniciativa de Institucionalidad Democrática de Ayacucho 1999), pp. 22-23.

civilian self-defense forces.<sup>204</sup> Hypothesis 1 suggests that these higher levels of militant violence compelled communities to respond in kind. Figure 3.2 displays violence levels for the entire Ayacucho region. As seen in the figure, Ayacucho experienced widespread violence during the first spike in the conflict from 1983–1985. Sendero Luminoso, state security force, and civilian violence levels do co-vary across time.

**Figure 3.2: Number of violent incidents perpetrated by armed civilians, state security forces, and militant actors in Ayacucho by year between 1980 and 2000**



Regional co-variation in violence demonstrates a relationship between militant and civilian violence. The data show that civilian violence increased when militants perpetrated a greater number of violent actions.

However, the causal direction of that relationship is unclear. As seen in the figure, Ayacucho experienced a second spike in violence levels from 1988–1990. In 1988, civilians became the primary target for Sendero selective attacks with a spike in both the absolute number of civilians attacked as well as in comparison to other targets like the armed forces, police, and

<sup>204</sup> Eduardo Toche, *Guerra y Democracia: Los Militares Peruanos y la Construcción Nacional* (Lima, Perú: Consejo Latinoamericano de Ciencias Sociales, CLACSO 2008), p. 239.

political authorities.<sup>205</sup> Anecdotal evidence seems to suggest, that in many cases, violent civilian resistance actually preceded militant violence. The causal direction could run in both directions. For example, in Ccarhuapampa the mobilization of armed civilians incited guerrilla reprisals, showing insurgent violence to be both a cause and a consequence of armed civilian mobilization.<sup>206</sup> Sendero militants attacked Toro Toro in the Huanta province because they considered organizing self-defense.<sup>207</sup> The same happened in many of the community case studies in Chapters 4 and 5. If H1 holds true, Sendero violence should precede armed civilian resistance. But, evidence from individual communities throughout the broader Ayacucho region suggests that Sendero victimized many communities specifically because they had discussed organizing resistance to Sendero demands. In the village of Cochas, 120 kilometers outside the regional capital of Ayacucho, Sendero murdered four ronderos and their families. They tracked down the four individuals responsible for proposing the community organize the week prior, despite the community not having access to weapons. Sendero militants lined up and executed the four organizers, also murdering family members who refused to get out of the way.<sup>208</sup> A cursory reading of early reports of violence in Peru provides a substantial number of accounts describing Sendero violence as a response to civilian resistance and not the other way around.<sup>209</sup>

To further assess H1, I examine actual counts of violent actions perpetrated by militant groups and civilians at the provincial level in Ayacucho. H1 would expect civilians to respond uniformly to changing conditions of insecurity and threat. I examine these data to compare rough

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<sup>205</sup> DESCO, *Violencia Política en el Perú, 1980-1988* Volume 1 (Lima: DESCO, Centro de Estudios y Promoción des Desarrollo 1989), pp. 57-61.

<sup>206</sup> Mario Fumerton, *From Victims to Heroes: Peasant Counter-rebellion and Civil War in Ayacucho, Peru, 1980-2000* (Amsterdam: Rozenberg 2003), pp. 90-91.

<sup>207</sup> Testimony 204083.

<sup>208</sup> Alberto Valencia Cárdenas, *Los Crímenes de Sendero Luminoso en Ayacucho* (Lima: Editorial Impacto 1992), p. 46.

<sup>209</sup> See the chronological summaries of violence in DESCO, *Violencia Política en el Perú, 1980-1988* Volume 1 (Lima: DESCO, Centro de Estudios y Promoción des Desarrollo 1989).

ratios of militant and civilian violence across provinces and select districts. Differences in ratios between provinces in a given year would provide disconfirming evidence for H1. The same would hold true for differences in militant to civilian violence ratios in the same province over time. The data suggest that communities actually responded differently to similar threat level.

**Table 3.1: Armed civilian, militant, and state security force violence in Ayacucho at the provincial level by year between 1980 and 2000<sup>210</sup>**

	Huamanga			Cangallo			Huancasancos			Huanta			La Mar			Lucanas			Parinacochas			Sucre			Victor Fajardo			Vilcashuaman			All Provinces		
	armed civilians	militants	state security forces	armed civilians	militants	state security forces	armed civilians	militants	state security forces	armed civilians	militants	state security forces	armed civilians	militants	state security forces	armed civilians	militants	state security forces	armed civilians	militants	state security forces	armed civilians	militants	state security forces	armed civilians	militants	state security forces	armed civilians	militants	state security forces			
1980				3	5					1	2		1														3	5	0	8	12		
1981		2	4	6	4		3			2	14		31											4	16		2	0	50	38			
1982		21	13	16	11		10	1		44	4	2	38	6									1	48	14		13	2	3	190	51		
1983	4	58	236	3	104	326	12	64	29	11	146	170	15	107	61							52	1	94	229	1	12	90	47	587	1193		
1984	11	110	409	10	12	95		19	5	8	246	482	82	252	422	2	11	3		1	6		24	1	75	250	3	24	64	117	774	1736	
1985	13	21	109	1	14	57			7	7	70	90	13	53	55		1								34	21		2	144	34	195	483	
1986	1	14	10		11	34					25	28	4	29	7		1							1	10	7		3	63	6	92	150	
1987		20	17		1	32		4		2	63	17		20	7										11	19		21	47	2	142	139	
1988	3	24	16		8	8		2			83	52	4	14	4		3							6	140	1	5	14	8	143	236		
1989	5	229	68		9	12		3		1	46	39		24	11		5	23		4				1	6		5	27	6	326	186		
1990	74	56	162		6	5				39	38	20		21	4		5	1							16	2	2	1	136	115	143	332	
1991	54	58	31		6	15				1	35	12		7	27									5	14		5	4	55	120	103		
1992	1	35	9	1	5	3		14		2	26	9	1	52	1					1				45	9	1	8	4	6	186	35		
1993		8	2								22			24	2		2	10							1	3	3	1	11	2	2	70	19
1994	2	1	7					2			1			2			1	4												2	7	11	
1995						2				1																				1	0	2	
1996			1								2	2		1	19															0	3	22	
1997										1				3				1									1		2	2	3	3	
1998											1			1																0	2	0	
1999	2										1																		2	1	0		
2000	1																												1	0	0		
Total 1980-2000	171	657	1094	15	201	609	12	119	44	73	852	941	121	680	626	2	34	43	0	8	8	0	24	52	5	352	730	10	115	604	409	3042	4751

There are no patterns in the aggregate or yearly data to indicate that insurgent threat alone can account for differences in civilian violence levels. Civilians within these provinces should generally respond in a similar manner to shifts in militant violence. However, trends in civilian violence do not appear to correspond in a consistent manner to changes in insurgent threat. Table 3.1 displays armed actor violent incident counts by province in Ayacucho.

<sup>210</sup> Note: The table excludes the Paucar del Sara Sara province since there were no observe violent incidents in the CVR database from 1980-2000

I provide additional tests for H1 using rough violence ratios at the district level for the areas of my community case studies. The district-level data presented in Table 3.2 also demonstrate that civilian violent incident counts do not correspond with militant violence levels in predictable ways. Increased militant threat – captured with the violence metric – does not appear to correspond with differences in civilian violence.

**Table 3.2: Armed civilian, militant, and state security force violence in Ayacucho for select districts in Huanta and La Mar provinces by year between 1980 and 2000**

	Huanta			Huamanguilla			Iguain			Luricocha			Santillana			Sivia			Llochegua			San Miguel			Ayna			Santa Rosa			All Districts				
	armed civilians	militants	state security forces	armed civilians	militants	state security forces	armed civilians	militants	state security forces	armed civilians	militants	state security forces	armed civilians	militants	state security forces	armed civilians	militants	state security forces	armed civilians	militants	state security forces	armed civilians	militants	state security forces	armed civilians	militants	state security forces	armed civilians	militants	state security forces					
1980																																	0	1	2
1981		1	9									1	2																				0	2	9
1982		7					5			1			22			1	5					1				4			10	3		0	51	8	
1983	11	48	53		2	7		2	6		12	17		71	31		8	43				1	10		7	8	9	10	4	20	161	179			
1984	8	69	170		8	17		38	17		18	30		50	212		42	20		5	4	3	62	69		16	52		27	14	11	335	605		
1985		18	37		4			1	15		13	20		15	6		3	1	6		7		6		4	7		1	8	4	11	75	90		
1986		4	13		6				8		1	4		2	3		1			1			1	1		5	1	2	4		2	25	30		
1987		9	6					5	5					2	26	6		4								5				3		2	52	17	
1988		10	17					1	21		8			57	12		4					2				2		2	2		1	4	80	55	
1989		11	24		11				6		11	2		3	5		4		1	5			1	3		5			2		1	53	40		
1990	1	5	14		2		3	11	1			3	12	16	2											3			8		16	42	23		
1991	1	10	9					7			1			10			1			1			2			1			1		1	34	9		
1992		2			4									12	9		7	1					1	1		9			19		1	54	10		
1993		2									2						17									18			1		0	40	0		
1994																				1						2					0	3	0		
1995	1																														1	0	0		
1996									2								2								1		1				0	3	3		
1997	1																						1			2					1	3	0		
1998																	1														0	1	0		
1999																			1												0	1	0		
2000																															0	0	0		
al 1980-2000	23	196	352	0	37	24	3	70	81	0	67	76	14	285	288	0	95	69	8	14	13	3	76	85	6	83	66	14	93	26	71	1016	1080		

I also reference violence levels from Table 3.2 to partially assess the other hypotheses from realist and rationalist arguments. Hypothesis 2 expects communities that cannot depend on the state to provide security will be more likely to mobilized against insurgent threats. State weakness compels civilians to take action and protect themselves from danger. An inverse relationship between state and civilian violence levels would provide partial support for H2. However, violence trends in Figure 3.2 show that state security force and civilian violence levels

are positively correlated, providing disconfirming evidence for H2. Hypothesis 2 also expects that higher levels of militant violence in relation to state violence would force communities to take responsibility for their own security. But, as seen in Tables 3.1 and 3.2, higher ratios of militant and state security force violence do not consistently lead to more or less civilian violence.

Alternatively, Hypothesis 3 expects a greater state presence will facilitate civilian resistance. State security forces can eliminate collective action problems or compel communities to participate in counterinsurgency efforts. The Peruvian Truth and Reconciliation Commission identified the presence or absence of the military as a key factor accounting for diverse community responses to insurgent violence in its investigation.<sup>211</sup> The principle thesis for violent civilian resistance argues that civilians opted to ally themselves with the armed forces and fight against Sendero as a result of insurgent abuses and assistance from state security forces.<sup>212</sup> Covariation between civilian and state security force violence in Ayacucho presented in Figure 3.2 suggests that civilians tend to commit more violent acts when state security forces also perpetrate higher levels of violence. Data presented in Tables 3.1 and 3.2 also provide some support for H3. In a given year, more violent civilian actions correspond with higher levels of state security force violence at the provincial and district level—though the ratios do not appear to be consistent.

Anecdotal evidence provides additional support for H3. Community accounts from the conflict period frequently mention the crucial role of the armed forces in organizing civilian self-defense after the initial wave of insurgent violence. Most civilian self-defense forces eventually coordinated with the military. They served as the front line in community defense and constituted an auxiliary force when soldiers actively patrolled to hunt down and engage with

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<sup>211</sup> CVR, *Informe Final: Peru, 1980-2000, Tomo II, Capítulo 1.5. Los Comités de Autodefensa* (2003), pp. 438-439.

<sup>212</sup> Carlos Iván Degregori, *Qué Difícil Es Ser Dios: El Partido Comunista del Perú, Sendero Luminoso y el Conflicto Armado Interno en el Perú: 1980-1999* (Lima: Instituto de Estudios Peruanos 2011), p. 81.

militants. Furthermore, starting in the later years of the Alan García presidency between 1985 and 1990, the state enlisted self-defense forces to assist with the counterinsurgency and began to distribute weapons to civilians that had organized.<sup>213</sup> The state expanded programs to arm civilians during the Fujimori presidency in the 1990s. However, some communities attempted to organize and fight on their own prior to military intervention. Cases in Chapters 4 and 5 provide substantial evidence to suggest that the military contributed to many communities' capacity to confront Sendero, though many initially resisted without pressure or support from the state.

#### *Rationalist arguments*

Hypothesis 4 evaluates the proposition that local opportunism can best account for civilian responses. Individuals will take advantage of insecurity and threat to settle longstanding disputes or to pursue personal enrichment. Hypothesis 4 expects locations with preexisting social cleavages or access to lootable resources to exhibit greater opportunistic behavior when there are high levels of threat and violence. Regions with significant illegal coca cultivation and high levels of drug production will see greater civilian violence. The CVR violence data do not provide evidence that districts with high levels of illegal coca production experienced greater civilian violence. Districts like Llochegua, Sivia, and Santa Rosa in the jungles of the VRAEM, do not stand out as especially violent based on CVR data, despite greater involvement in the illicit drug economy. However, a qualitative investigation into the process of civilian mobilization, the nature of the armed civilian groups, and regional conflict dynamics does provide some evidence of armed civilian opportunism, predation, and rights abuses that make these jungle districts distinct from mountainous districts without coca economies. Some of the

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<sup>213</sup> Instituto de Defensa Legal, *Perú 1989: En la Espiral de Violencia* (Lima: Instituto de Defensa Legal 1990), p. 124.

communities I investigate in Chapter 5 experienced distinct trajectories and did behaved differently than communities from the mountain communities in Chapter 4.

Other coca producing regions during the conflict period, such as the Upper Huallaga Valley in the San Martín region, experienced spikes in violence as corrupt military officials, Sendero militants, and other local interests each made efforts to stake a claim on the millions of dollars in drug production and trafficking profits. However, civilian self defense force ties to the coca economy as a collective actor were not prevalent and those that were might constitute a distinct category to investigate in future research on the various types of armed civilian groups.

A broader analysis of realist and rationalist hypotheses using violent incident counts within these districts shows that a violence metric may not fully capture variation in civilian resistance. As I will demonstrate with the case studies, many communities that mobilized did not perpetrate acts of violence and CVR data may fail to document incidents where armed civilians fought against Sendero militants. The data privilege incidents of human rights abuses and may better capture armed civilian predatory behavior. For example, despite the absence of recorded civilian violence in Huamanguilla, Luricocha, and Sivia, communities formed self-defense forces in these districts and strengthened their relationship with the armed forces as the conflict progressed. Research that examines civilian responses to violence in Peru using these data must compliment broader quantitative analysis with case studies to capture the dynamics of civilian resistance and to address potential issues with measurement validity. A focus solely on civilian violence levels fails to capture how civilians in communities actually responded on the ground.

### **Broader Regional Narratives: Interpreting Events and Defining Relationships**

Violence and threat in Peru may have forced communities to respond, but not in a particular way. Civilian actors in Peru frequently described their situation as being caught

“between two fires.” Militant violence and state abuses led to widespread civilian victimization, but high levels of violence and insecurity do not explain community responses on their own. Incidents where communities reacted differently to similar threats and cases where civilian resistance preceded Sendero violence indicate a need to identify an alternative explanation to realist and rationalist accounts.<sup>214</sup> In this section I begin to examine hypotheses from a narratives argument. Hypotheses 5 and 6 suggest that community narratives conditioned civilian responses. How they viewed the violence and how they came to see other important collective actors influenced their subsequent behavior. In the sections that follow I identify and examine broader regional narratives to provide a preliminary evaluation of hypotheses related to a narratives argument.

*Sendero Luminoso: From noble cause and trusted friend to devil’s spawn*

Sendero Luminoso found acceptance, or at least a large degree of ambivalence, among many communities in Peru’s central mountains early in the conflict. Sendero’s ideas about justice and inclusion resonated with the people who could not yet imagine the campaign of violence that would follow.<sup>215</sup> The organization’s first acts of violence in rural Ayacucho targeted “public enemies” such as cattle thieves from neighboring rival villages, abusive authorities, and adulterers. Sendero cleverly tapped into a history of regional class conflict and a general distrust of established institutions and the military.<sup>216</sup> Sendero Luminoso embodied a positive force for justice and change early on and its actions resonated well with many communities.

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<sup>214</sup> CVR, *Informe Final: Peru, 1980-2000, Tomo II, Capítulo 1.5. Los Comités de Autodefensa* (2003), p. 438.

<sup>215</sup> CVR, *Informe Final, Tomo II, Capítulo 1.1. El Partido Comunista del Perú Sendero Luminoso, Cap. 3: PCP-SL 1983-85* (2003), p. 43.

<sup>216</sup> Billie Jean Isbell, “Shining Path and Peasant Responses in Rural Ayacucho.” In *The Shining Path of Peru* (New York: St. Martin's Press 1992), pp. 59-81.

One community member from Huamanquiua, a town located in the Víctor Fajardo province of Ayacucho, explained that Sendero came early on and spoke with the youth and the *comuneros*. Its members treated them like brothers and helped how they could. The militants spoke frequently about Edith Lagos and they thought she would come and speak with them too, but they learned later that she had died. Edith Lagos was a young Sendero revolutionary who died in 1982 at the age of 19. Journalist Gustavo Gorriti wrote that:

Well before dying, Edith Lagos had touched the fibers from which myth is woven among certain groups of poor people. The image of the polite rebel, the romantic bandit, that arises from almost any civil conflict was in this case a woman. There was nothing romantic about Guzmán or his old guard. Perhaps because of this, a collective longing for a tragic figure in this rebellion had focused on Edith Lagos.<sup>217</sup>

Some claim that almost 30,000 people attended the funeral procession in Ayacucho, though this may be an exaggeration.

The community continually interacted with three young Sendero leaders in Huamanquiua. The resident recalled that they often sang songs, the community with theirs and the militants with their own:

The government makes the prices go up  
You can't even eat bread  
I don't wear clothes from the government  
I wear wool from my sheep  
I'm poor, I live here by my potatoes and my corn  
I'll never have anything  
And someday I'll realize this...<sup>218</sup>

The community member recalled, "Their songs said everything, who one is, how one lived, and about the wealth that never arrived. They sang about this, bringing sadness and melancholy, making you want to cry. They sang in Quechua, they always spoke to us in Quechua. Because of

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<sup>217</sup> Gustavo Gorriti Ellenbogen, *The Shining Path: A History of the Millenarian War in Peru* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press 1999), p. 240.

<sup>218</sup> Testimony in Jorge Bracamonte, Beatriz Duda, and Gonzalo Portocarrero Maisch, *Para No Olvidar: Testimonios Sobre la Violencia Política en el Perú* (Lima, Perú: Red para el Desarrollo de las Ciencias Sociales en el Perú 2003), p. 23. Author's translation.

this we felt comfortable. We didn't suspect a thing."<sup>219</sup> Sendero militants came first as sympathetic friends who sided with the marginalized people against poverty, injustice, and state neglect.

The early community narratives in some cases reflected positive perceptions. Sendero grew closer to communities through a shared understanding of the difficulties that rural communities faced and spoke Quechua to facilitate identification with the movement and its goals. The violence and abuses came later, along with alternative understandings of the community's relationship with the militant group and the state. Sendero also found some degree of legitimation when the military began to invest in civic projects as a means to alter the counterinsurgency strategy. It was not difficult for Sendero to make the connection between the efficacy of armed struggle and receiving state support.<sup>220</sup> The militant group convinced many that the state only responded to their needs and demands because of armed revolutionary action.

However, the civilian population's relationship with Sendero changed over time. After initial civilian support in some communities, Sendero behavior started to demonstrate contradictions between its revolutionary movement and conceptions of peasant justice. Severe punishments, the disruption and reorganization of local economies, and the introduction of competing political authority structures all contributed to a growing rift between Sendero and Ayacucho communities. By the late 1980s, Sendero's relationship with the civilian population became severely strained. Militants forced the population to become complicit in violent

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<sup>219</sup> Ibid.

<sup>220</sup> CVR, *Informe Final: Peru, 1980-2000, Tomo II, Capítulo 1.3 Las Fuerzas Armadas* (2003), p. 270.

atrocities and participate in the public executions of anyone deemed to have committed “faults,” especially those who organized or participated in self-defense forces.<sup>221</sup>

As communities began to resist, Sendero saw the civilian self-defense forces as a threat to its political program and revolutionary goals. Local militants and Sendero’s central political bureau viewed excessive violence as a way to send a clear message to those who would challenge their hegemony. In one such incident of excessive violence, militants massacred 69 villagers in Lucanamarca on April 3, 1983. Militants murdered men, women, and children in response to recent acts of civilian resistance and the execution of a local Sendero leader. Self-defense force participants were among the first victims of the massacre.<sup>222</sup> Sendero actions and words spoke volumes to rural Ayacucho communities that began to get a glimpse of the horrors that would plague the region in coming years. Civilians started to interpret Sendero actions differently and to redefine how they stood in relation to militants, providing some support for Hypotheses 5 and 6.

Many communities started to believe Sendero atrocities revealed the true nature and intentions of the revolutionary movement. Peruvian peasants in the region began to categorize Senderistas in derogatory language that facilitated violent action. They often described *tuta puriq* (night walkers) or *supaypa churin* (devil’s spawn) when they spoke in Quechua about Sendero militants. A narratives argument, which suggests most communities were architects of their own fate, appears to better account for community behavior than realist and rationalist arguments that contend civilians simply responded to emerging threats and incentives. Narratives that articulate

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<sup>221</sup> Ponciano del Pino H., “Family, Culture, and ‘Revolution’: Everyday Life with Sendero Luminoso.” In *Shining and Other Paths: War and Society in Peru, 1980-1995*, ed. Steve J. Stern (Durham: Duke University Press 1998), p. 185.

<sup>222</sup> CVR, *Informe Final, Tomo V, Capítulo 2.2. La Violencia en las Comunidades de Lucanamarca, Sancos y Sacsamarca* (2003), pp. 51-84; Edwin Donayre Gotzch and Hilda Balbín Alcócer. *El Silencio de los Héroes* (Lima: Universidad Alas Peruanas 2009), pp. 262-263.

religious beliefs and reference local myths provide two examples of how a community's understanding of events and relationships conditioned responses to insecurity and threat. Communities placed Sendero behavior in context prior to civilian actions.

### *Religious narratives*

Religion played an important role during the internal armed conflict. The Catholic Church and various evangelical Christian churches maintained an active presence in most regional and provincial capitals, but the degree to which these institutions advocated on behalf of civilian victims varied. Religious leaders frequently found their position in rural communities untenable and had to flee to nearby cities. A large portion of religious leadership came from abroad. Sendero targeted these religious actors as imperialist agents and the armed forces saw them as suspected revolutionary agitators based on an early belief that foreigners had initiated the Sendero revolutionary plot. At the national level, religious leaders predominantly spoke out against and sometimes took actions to defend those in need of assistance, whether physically or spiritually. However, in Ayacucho, Archbishop Juan Luis Cipriani proved an exception to a supportive stance. He thwarted national efforts to denounce and prevent human rights abuses and remained ambivalent about or facilitated violent responses to Sendero Luminoso. Table 3.3 provides data on religious practices for select Ayacucho districts. Evangelical churches found increased support in Ayacucho during the conflict period.

Centralized religious institutions eventually coordinated peace movements and mass mobilizations. They pushed a message of life, peace, and nonviolence.<sup>223</sup> However, contemporary religious leaders recognize that a nonviolent stance did not always realistically address many communities' needs and their desire to escape the horrors of war and defeat the

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<sup>223</sup> CVR, *Informe Final: Peru, 1980-2000, Tomo III, Capítulo 3.3. La Iglesia Católica y las Iglesias Evangélicas* (2003), p. 400.

uncompromising insurgency.<sup>224</sup> In hindsight, some key Catholic and evangelical leaders acknowledge that they might have done more. Renowned evangelical leader and CVR commission member, Humberto Ley, spoke at a religious service days before the presentation of the CVR Final Report:

Like many from the evangelical community, I had not been concerned with the human rights violations during the counterinsurgent struggle from 1980 to 2000 that the CVR was tasked with investigating...this is a sin we must confess and we must ask forgiveness from God for our indifference, especially those who lived in Lima and the large cities in Peru. Our brothers from the interior, who suffered from the violence firsthand, they were active.<sup>225</sup>

While they publically denounced militant violence and state human rights abuses, perhaps religious leadership could have taken more direct action on the ground.

**Table 3.3: Percentages of Catholics and evangelical Christians in Ayacucho for select districts in the Huanta and La Mar provinces, 1981 and 1993<sup>226</sup>**

District	Year	% Catholic	% Evangelical	% non-religious or unspecified
Huanta	1981	89	3	8
	1993	89	10	1
Huamanguilla	1981	84	4	12
	1993	86	14	0
Iguain	1981	60	1	39
	1993	95	4	1
Luricocha	1981	89	3	8
	1993	92	7	1
Santillana	1981	83	6	11
	1993	80	19	1
Sivia	1981	-	-	-
	1993	79	20	1
Llochegua	1981	-	-	-
	1993	-	-	-
San Miguel	1981	89	7	3
	1993	84	14	1
Ayna	1981	80	11	9
	1993	82	17	1
Santa Rosa	1981	-	-	-
	1993	84	16	0
All Huanta province	1981	85	4	10
	1993	85	14	1
All La Mar province	1981	86	8	6
	1993	83	16	1

<sup>224</sup> CVR, *Informe Final: Peru, 1980-2000, Tomo III, Capítulo 3.3. La Iglesia Católica y las Iglesias Evangélicas* (2003), pp. 405-406.

<sup>225</sup> Alfonso Wieland, “Los Evangélicos en el Informe Final de la CVR: Resistencia, Consolación, e Indiferencia.” *Comisión de la Verdad*, p. 36. <http://www.justiciaviva.org.pe/comision/articulos/resistencia.pdf>.

<sup>226</sup> Source: National Census Data from Peru’s Instituto Nacional de Estadística e Informática (INEI). The missing data are a result of inconsistent district-level political boundaries for Sivia (1992), Llochegua (2000), and Santa Rosa (1992).

Of the different religious groups, evangelical Christian leaders were more likely to stay behind in conflict-afflicted areas than their Catholic counterparts. However, even among evangelical groups, certain denominations maintained a stronger presence in remote, isolated mountain and jungle communities. Among these evangelical communities, some placed a greater emphasis on apocalyptic and millenarian teachings (e.g. Pentecostal and Seventh Day Adventist groups), making some communities more likely to respond to Sendero Luminoso with violent strategies than others. Christian communities in rural areas or groups that had weaker ties to the National Council of Evangelical Christians of Peru (CONEP), which maintained a policy of nonviolence, were more likely to exhibit behavior based on local leadership beliefs and interpretations of scripture. CONEP largely prioritized its mission to foster unity among the various churches, to ensure freedom of religious practice within Peru, and to preach the gospel to the masses.<sup>227</sup>

Centralized efforts provided support to victims and their families while local leaders on the ground contended with the exigencies of armed revolutionary violence and state abuses. The historical record indicates that communities responded differently to the same types of threats, highlighting the important role of religious narratives in explaining their actions. Interpretations varied even within a single community, illustrating the dynamic process of how communities come to understand events and their relationships with other collective actors. For example, despite attacks directly targeting Protestants in Chuschi in 1982, some of the faithful held tightly to nonviolent beliefs. The local pastor placed great weight on the power of prayer in keeping the peace. Other Protestants in the community interpreted the brutal confrontation between Sendero and the armed forces as a sign for the approaching apocalypse, the second-coming of Christ, and

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<sup>227</sup> Personal interview with the director of CONEP (Concilio Nacional Evangelico del Peru), Víctor Arroyo Cuyubamba, in Lima, February 20, 2012.

a subsequent utopia.<sup>228</sup> The community was unable to reach a consensus about how to respond and failed to achieve sustained civilian resistance.

Sendero Luminoso actively targeted religious services on numerous occasions and frequently singled out local religious leaders.<sup>229</sup> Both Sendero and state security forces targeted religious actors. Evangelicals were less common in Peru at the beginning of the conflict and the military responded differently to evangelicals than Catholics. Evangelicals worshipped in simple buildings and soldiers commonly mistook prayer gatherings and worship for subversive meetings.<sup>230</sup> Sendero leadership generally maintained a traditional Marxist stance on religion and viewed churches as exploitative and abusive. Abimael Guzmán believed that religious beliefs among the Peruvian peasants remained an obstacle to social progress.<sup>231</sup> But, pragmatism softened his position and Sendero targeted religious actors mostly when private religious beliefs became collective public actions.<sup>232</sup>

Religious narratives played an important role in contextualizing Sendero violence in many parts of Ayacucho. For example, one Pentecostal pastor in Huancaya drew from the story of David and Goliath to contextualize Sendero violence for his congregation and to formulate a response. The pastor explained that when the Philistines persecuted the Jews, David organized small forces to fight the enemies of God.<sup>233</sup> The pastor drew from important themes in the story

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<sup>228</sup> Billie Jean Isbell, "Shining Path and Peasant Responses in Rural Ayacucho." In *The Shining Path of Peru* (New York: St. Martin's Press 1992), p. 69.

<sup>229</sup> Norma Hinojosa, "Violencia y Desplazamiento en los Andes del Perú." In *Hacia una Teología Evangelica Indígena*, ed. Humberto Flores (Lima: CEMAA 1995), pp. 35-50.

<sup>230</sup> CVR, *Informe Final: Peru, 1980-2000, Tomo III, Capítulo 3.3. La Iglesia Católica y las Iglesias Evangélicas* (2003), p. 472.

<sup>231</sup> Abimael Guzmán Reynoso, Luis Arce Borja, and Janet Talavera Sánchez, *Presidente Gonzalo Rompe el Silencio: Entrevista en la Clandestinidad* (Lima: El Diario 1988).

<sup>232</sup> Markus Österlund, *Politics in the Midst of Terror: Religious Beliefs and Political Action in the Peruvian Andes* (Helsinki: Finnish Society of Sciences and Letters 2001), p. 193.

<sup>233</sup> Ponciano del Pino, "Tiempos de Guerra y de Dioses: Ronderos, Evangélicos y Senderistas en el Valle del Río Apurímac." In *Las Rondas Campesinas y la Derrota de Sendero Luminoso*, eds. Carlos Iván Degregori, José Coronel, Ponciano del Pino, and Orin Starn, (Lima: Instituto de Estudios Peruanos 1996), p.159.

to make sense of their dire situation and to inspire action.<sup>234</sup> In other cases, community members drew from the Book of Revelation to interpret and bring meaning to the pervasive violence. Stories that situated current events within the context of an “end-of-days” narrative affected the way people responded. They presented a particular apocalyptic vision to explain extreme social transformations. Narratives presented a millenarian interpretation to cope with a stressful and threatening situation and to aid in formulating a response.<sup>235</sup> Some communities that struggled to make sense of Sendero violence, and originally responded to insurgent actors nonviolently, began to understand the conflict through an alternative interpretation of events. Their narratives transformed Sendero political violence into an attack on Christianity and suggested violent mobilization was necessary and appropriate to defend the faith.

In numerous communities in the Ayacucho jungles—such as Llochegua, Sivia, and Santa Rosa—community civilian self-defense leaders held evangelical Christian beliefs.<sup>236</sup> While many of the leaders had previous military experience and emphasized a secular understanding of the conflict, other community leaders drew more heavily from their religious beliefs.<sup>237</sup> They explained the need to organize in terms of both necessity and religion. Local actors told Sendero that they did not have the right to take a life in that manner. They even prayed for their souls and hoped they would leave the “path of evil.”<sup>238</sup> Their beliefs and narratives affected subsequent behavior, providing partial support for Hypothesis 5.

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<sup>234</sup> For more on important themes in the story of David and Goliath in the Books of Samuel see John A. Beck, *God as Storyteller: Seeking Meaning in Biblical Narrative* (St. Louis, Mo: Chalice Press 2008), Chapter 9.

<sup>235</sup> For more on Sendero Luminoso ideology as a millenarian ideology see James F. Rinehart, *Apocalyptic Faith and Political Violence: Prophets of Terror* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan 2006).

<sup>236</sup> Ponciano del Pino, “Tiempos de Guerra y de Dioses: Ronderos, Evangélicos y Senderistas en el Valle del Río Apurímac.” In *Las Rondas Campesinas y la Derrota de Sendero Luminoso*, eds. Carlos Iván Degregori, José Coronel, Ponciano del Pino, and Orin Starn, (Lima: Instituto de Estudios Peruanos 1996), pp. 117-188.

<sup>237</sup> Personal interviews on May 9, 2013 in Huanta and Luricocha with a “commando” who was in charge of a civilian self-defense force near Sivia from 1985 to 1992.

<sup>238</sup> Ponciano del Pino, “Peasants at War.” In *The Peru Reader: History, Culture, Politics*, eds. Orin Starn, Carlos Iván Degregori, and Robin Kirk (Durham: Duke University Press 1995), p. 379.

Religious narratives also helped redefine identities. Early in the conflict most evangelical Christian communities turned the other cheek in response to Sendero violence, insisting that Sendero members were still “God’s children.” Evangelicals frequently prayed for the souls of senderistas in hopes they would abandoned their unrighteous path.<sup>239</sup> Some research emphasizes the nonviolent nature of evangelical Christian actors’ response to Sendero Luminoso.<sup>240</sup> Numerous texts describe their active role in denouncing human rights violations and nonviolent mobilization aimed at peace and reconciliation.<sup>241</sup> CONEP, the principle organizing body for evangelical denominations, became the first nonpolitical group to denounce Sendero Luminoso by name. Yet, in many communities, evangelical Christians adopted central roles in combating Sendero Luminoso. Local church association leaders who formed an emergency commission to meet in Ayacucho were shocked to learn that some evangelical pastors led civilian self-defense force patrols. On one occasion a pastor surprised the commission stating that what they really needed from CONEP were machine guns.<sup>242</sup> In another community, a pastor blessed 2,500 weapons that had arrived to arm civilian self-defense forces.<sup>243</sup>

There are numerous accounts of Christian communities actively participating in armed struggle against Sendero.<sup>244</sup> Longitudinal analysis within cases suggests that community

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<sup>239</sup> Markus Österlund, *Politics in the Midst of Terror: Religious Beliefs and Political Action in the Peruvian Andes* (Helsinki: Finnish Society of Sciences and Letters 2001), p. 192.

<sup>240</sup> Ernesto Ranly and Julia Yong, *Los Religiosos en Tiempos de Violencia en el Perú: Crónica y Teoría de la No-violencia* (Lima: Congregación de los Misioneros de la Preciosa Sangre and Conferencia de los Religiosos del Perú 2003).

<sup>241</sup> Darío López, *Los Evangélicos y los Derechos Humanos: La Experiencia Social del Concilio Nacional Evangélico del Perú 1980-1992* (Lima: Centro Evangélico de Misiología Andino-Amazónica 1998); Darío López Rodríguez, “Construyendo un Nuevo Rostro Publico. Evangélicos y Violencia Política, 1980-1995.” In *Políticas Divinas: Religión, Diversidad y Política en el Perú Contemporáneo*, eds. Fernando Armas Asin, Carlos Aburto Cotrina, Juan Fonseca Ariza, José Ragas Rojas (Lima: Instituto Riva-Agüero 2008), pp. 347-373.

<sup>242</sup> John Maust, *Peace and Hope in the Corner of the Dead* (Miami: Latin America Mission 1987), p. 65.

<sup>243</sup> CVR, *Informe Final: Peru, 1980-2000, Tomo III, Capítulo 3.3. La Iglesia Católica y las Iglesias Evangélicas* (2003), p. 427.

<sup>244</sup> Fernando Armas Asin, “Libertad Religiosa, Violencia y Derechos Humanos en el Perú de Fines del Siglo XX.” In *La Religión en el Perú al Filo del Milenio*, eds. Manuel M. Marzal, Catalina Romero, and José Sánchez (Peru: Fondo Editorial de la Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú 2000), pp. 109-137; Guillermo Chirinos and Ponciano

narratives changed over time and in some cases, Sendero members ceased to be children of God and instead became devils, the damned, and demons.<sup>245</sup> Narratives reconciled violent action with a religious identity and made senderistas acceptable targets for violent action. One self-defense force organizer and Pentecostal pastor from San Agustín illustrates this new perspective on Sendero, “The Shining Path is like a demon, worse than a devil. They are worse. There is no name for them, because they eat human flesh, the liver...They suck blood.” A Presbyterian evangelist echoed his sentiment, “The *senderista* is diabolical. He is no longer a real man. He is like a dog, that’s how he is. Like an animal. They do not care whether they live or die, it’s all the same to them.”<sup>246</sup> Substantial evidence from Ayacucho illustrates communities redefining their relationship with Sendero and adopting strategies of violent resistance, which provides support for Hypothesis 6. Furthermore, as with the preceding quote, many of the narratives contain dehumanizing language and support propositions about processes underlying H5 and H6.

The director of a religious aid mission to civilians in the emergency zone described a shift to negative perceptions about Sendero as the conflict progressed:

[T]hey [the evangelicals] spoke about the enemy who invaded their territory, their plots of land; the [*senderistas*] assassinated, they killed, they dispersed the people. Thus, they were seen as the Philistines who came to take away the land – their inheritance – which God had given them... If David led an army to defend themselves [the children of Israel] why could we not do the same? If God had given us this [land], why do we not arm ourselves and why do we not fight? We have worked so hard and God is blessing our work.<sup>247</sup>

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Del Pino, “Evangélicos Fueron los Primeros en Luchar Contra la Subversión.” *Caminos* no. 47 (October 1994), pp. 16-17; Ponciano del Pino, “Tiempos de Guerra y de Dioses: Ronderos, Evangélicos y Senderistas en el Valle del Río Apurímac.” In *Las Rondas Campesinas y la Derrota de Sendero Luminoso*, eds. Carlos Iván Degregori, José Coronel, Ponciano del Pino, and Orin Starn, (Lima: Instituto de Estudios Peruanos 1996), pp. 117-188; Darío López Rodríguez, “Evangelicals and Politics in Fujimori’s Peru.” In *Evangelical Christianity and Democracy in Latin America*, ed. Paul Freston (New York: Oxford University Press 2008), pp. 131-161.

<sup>245</sup> Ponciano del Pino, “Tiempos de Guerra y de Dioses: Ronderos, Evangélicos y Senderistas en el Valle del Río Apurímac.” In *Las Rondas Campesinas y la Derrota de Sendero Luminoso*, eds. Carlos Iván Degregori, José Coronel, Ponciano del Pino, and Orin Starn, (Lima: Instituto de Estudios Peruanos 1996), pp. 117-188.

<sup>246</sup> Ponciano del Pino, “Peasants at War.” In *The Peru Reader: History, Culture, Politics*, eds. Orin Starn, Carlos Iván Degregori, and Robin Kirk (Durham: Duke University Press 1995), p. 380.

<sup>247</sup> Markus Österlund, *Politics in the Midst of Terror: Religious Beliefs and Political Action in the Peruvian Andes* (Helsinki: Finnish Society of Sciences and Letters 2001), p. 223.

Communities frequently used religious narratives as one cultural resource to bring meaning to the conflict. However, religious narratives did not always generate violent collective action. Aside from the national and regional religious authorities that pushed for peace, some communities likened their situation to the flight of Jesus' family to Egypt and the need to adapt to unknown lands and new traditions.<sup>248</sup> These communities fled. Neighboring communities could share a religious identification yet still draw from different narratives to explain events and formulate a response.

### *Mythical Executioner Narratives*

Pervasive community narratives also formed around non-religious themes. Though not as widespread, some communities understood the Sendero threat and state human rights abuses in relation to a traditional *pishtaco* or *nakaq* myth. The myth generally describes an outsider with light skin that kills peasants to steal their fat to make medicine and candles. Both Quechua terms describe an executioner or someone that kills and cuts up an animal. A similar myth exists among the Aymara indigenous population that describes the *kharisiri*, or “the meat cutter.”<sup>249</sup> Residents in Ayacucho and elsewhere sometimes used a modern interpretation of the old myth to describe new dangers.<sup>250</sup> The myth dates back to pre-Incan civilizations, but found more prominent use in the colonial period onward in relation to white outsiders perpetrating violence against indigenous populations. Tales of *pishtacos* accompanied early religious evangelism, as well as English and North American imperialism. The mythical executioners usually appear as

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<sup>248</sup> Ibid.

<sup>249</sup> Juan Ansi3n and Eudosio Sifuentes, “La Imagen Popular de la Violencia, a trav3s de los Relatos de Degolladores.” *Pishtacos de Verdugos a Sacaajos*, ed. Juan Ansi3n (Lima, Per3: Tarea 1989), pp. 62-63.

<sup>250</sup> Carlos Iv3n Degregori, “Entre los Fuegos de Sendero y el Ej3rcito: Regreso de los ‘Pishtacos.’” *Pishtacos de Verdugos a Sacaajos*, ed. Juan Ansi3n (Lima, Per3: Tarea 1989), pp. 109-114.

part of the collective imagination to describe instances of exploitation or abuse of Andean peasants.<sup>251</sup>

In modern contexts, the myth has been used to understand the armed conflict as well as to describe imperialist agents and thieves. How communities used the *pishtaco* or *nakaq* myth demonstrates the plasticity of this particular story and how communities use narratives to interpret events and define relationships. During the conflict period in Ayacucho, *nakaq* were tall, white, with blonde hair and sometimes a beard. They spoke with a “gringo accent” and wore long coats and boots. They carried a knife, pistol, and sometimes a machine gun. On occasion they were described as wearing blue jeans and a wool cap.<sup>252</sup> In one study conducted in Huanta, some resident testimonies suggest that peasants had captured individuals they believed to be *nakaq* and turned them over to the military or police. Peasants complained that the captives were later set free; suggesting the strangers might have been in collusion with state authorities. Historically, remote Andean communities used the myth to describe a “common enemy.”<sup>253</sup> *Pishtaco* or *nakaq* are implicitly linked to sources of power and the root of their ability to flourish rested with violence and instability.

The *pishtaco* myth recently reemerged in Peru. The head of the national criminal investigation division of the police made a statement to the press in 2009 that officers had arrested three *pishtacos* in relation to the disappearance of 60 people in the Huánuco region. A special investigation team declared the matter closed after displaying the three perpetrators along with what were presumably bottles of human fat. In reality, some suspect that the police were

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<sup>251</sup> Nelson Manrique, “Violencia e Imaginario Social en el Perú Contemporáneo.” *Tiempos de Ira y Amor. Nuevos Actores para Viejos Problemas*, ed. (Lima: DESCO 1990), pp. 49-75; Nelson Manrique, *El Tiempo del Miedo: La Violencia Política en el Perú, 1980-1996* (Lima: Fondo Editorial del Congreso del Perú 2002), p. 294.

<sup>252</sup> Abilio Vergara Figueroa and Freddy Ferrúa Carrasco, “Ayacucho: De Nuevo los Degolladores.” *Pishtacos de Verdugos a Sacaajos*, ed. Juan Ansión (Lima, Perú: Tarea 1989), pp.125-127.

<sup>253</sup> Ibid.

fabricating a “smoke screen” to try and hide the actions of police death squads who had disappeared suspected delinquents and criminal elements around regions in the north of Peru.<sup>254</sup>

*State security forces: From invaders and abusers to allies in defense*

How civilians viewed the state security forces over time also affected regional and temporal variation in civilian resistance. Forging a strong alliance with the state affected civilian resistance as much as turning against Sendero. Militants overran the police in many remote regions of Peru and policing became increasingly militarized when the *sinchis* took on greater responsibilities in combatting subversion. The counterterrorism units quickly developed a reputation for indiscriminate, extreme brutality. Anecdotal evidence suggests they tortured and abused civilians, and the data lend support to these claims. Communities witnessed the state security forces behave poorly when engaging with the population. Incidents of abuse, sexual violence, harsh interrogations, and disappearances altered the way civilians viewed the *sinchis*, who gained notoriety for their ferocity and cruelty.<sup>255</sup>

However, branches within the armed forces and police behaved differently and, when communities could distinguish between perpetrators of state violence, community perceptions of these actors varied. For example, one witness remembered hearing that torture by the *Policía de Investigaciones del Perú* was preferable to the *Guardia Civil*.<sup>256</sup> Torture, disappearances, and massacres became more frequent as Sendero violence escalated. Incidents of torture were not

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<sup>254</sup> Gonzalo Portocarrero Maisch, *Profetas del Odio: Raíces Culturales y Líderes de Sendero Luminoso* (Lima: Fondo Editorial de la Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú 2012), pp. 19-20.

<sup>255</sup> CVR, *Informe Final, Tomo II, Capítulo 1.2. Las Fuerzas Policiales* (2003), p. 150.

<sup>256</sup> Carlos Flores Lizana, *Diario de Vida y Muerte: Memorias Para Recuperar Humanidad* (Cuzco: Centro de Estudios Regionales Andinos Bartolomé de Las Casas 2004), p. 52.

isolated events only perpetrated by particular officials and their subordinates; torture, excessive violence, and human rights abuses in Peru became common practice.<sup>257</sup>

Soldiers who came predominantly from the coastal regions initially saw the conflict as a general peasant uprising. Soldiers frequently committed brutal acts against perceived “inferior,” Quechua-speaking, rural communities.<sup>258</sup> Civilian perceptions of state security forces reflect these early actions, but changed over time. In some cases, communities could not believe that their fellow-Peruvians could visit such atrocities upon their compatriots. During the preliminary stages of the conflict, and shortly after Peru declared a state of emergency in Ayacucho, a “mythology” emerged among residents near Huanta concerning the marine infantry prior to the army’s arrival. Civilians reasoned that the worst abusers among the military were actually foreign mercenaries.<sup>259</sup>

Some believed that soldiers of fortune had come to Ayacucho to victimize and plunder. One leader outside Huanta’s provincial capital recalled his community’s alarm and fear, as well as how they saw the military:

They lowered the helicopter shooting off their rounds. It could be a leaf that fell off a tree and right away they’d be shooting rounds. They didn’t know how to walk, they didn’t know the terrain, they were leftovers from the Malvinas War who had been asked to advise. They ended up castaways idling their time listening to strange music.<sup>260</sup>

The community leader described the military’s propensity for indiscriminate targeting. He accounted for differences in customs and lack of familiarity with local terrain. The community leader continued:

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<sup>257</sup> For a summary of state torture see Steven T. Zech, “Counter-terrorizing: The Use of Torture in Peru’s Counterterrorism Campaign.” *Terrorism and Political Violence* Vol. 27 (June 2015); CVR. *Informe Final, Tomo VI, Capítulo 1.4. La Tortura y los Tratos Crueles, Inhumanos o Degradantes*, pp. 211-260.

<sup>258</sup> Nelson Manrique, “Domocracia y Campesinado Indígena en el Perú Contemporáneo.” In *Violencia y Campesinado*, eds. Alberto Flores Galindo and Nelson Manrique (Peru: Instituto de Apoyo Agrario 1985), pp. 5-15.

<sup>259</sup> Carlos Iván Degregori, “Harvesting Storms: Peasant Rondas and the Defeat of Sendero Luminoso in Ayacucho.” In *Shining and Other Paths: War and Society in Peru, 1980-1995*, ed. Steve J. Stern (Durham: Duke University Press 1998), pp. 147-148.

<sup>260</sup> Quoted in *Ibid.*, p. 148.

They also had killers (Matadores). They stood in a cage and no more, they did not go out. Through a little window they got food. They were male but they had hair down to here (he pointed to his waist). Once they stuck a terrorist in a cage and they opened his heart and sucked and sucked on the blood that came out, saying “how delicious.”<sup>261</sup>

The military was something to be feared and avoided. The state security forces not only committed monstrous acts, many believed them to be actual monsters or mercenaries from abroad.<sup>262</sup>

Civilians throughout Ayacucho struggled to make sense of an increasingly perilous situation. Many communities witnessed Sendero atrocities and state abuses and disappearances soon followed. When state security forces or militant groups arrived in villages, the armed actors made decisions whether to kill, protect, or put civilians to work. Many credit the leadership change from General Roberto C. Noel Moral to General Adrián Huaman Centeno in 1984 with helping to lower the armed forces’ violence against civilians in the conflict zone. General Huaman shifted focus to a more “traditional” counterinsurgency that focused on gaining the trust of the people, utilizing his family ties in the sierra and his ability to speak Quechua. State security forces started to make better decisions about how to engage with the population and to meet local needs. Despite continued threats from Sendero militants, communities that redefined their relationship with state security forces became more likely to organize, take up arms, and resist Sendero Luminoso.

Some communities in the mountainous regions around Huanta saw the central state as an ally in a fight against *gamonalismo*, a system defined by local abusive powers and large landowners. These communities would serve as the base when the state sought to mobilized peasants to aid in the fight against Sendero Luminoso. The population often saw Sendero as a

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<sup>261</sup> Ibid.

<sup>262</sup> For more on anecdotes about Argentine mercenaries see William P. Mitchell, *Voices From the Global Margin: Confronting Poverty and Inventing New Lives in the Andes* (Austin: University of Texas Press 2006), pp. 129-130.

threat when the movement began to commit abuses and mistreat the population. But, more importantly, they also began to view the state as an ally. Many communities viewed their present circumstances through an historical framework of insecurity and conflict tied to land reform, political marginalization, and legal rights.<sup>263</sup> Communities asked themselves how they stood in relation to the government and its agents, armed or otherwise. President Fernando Belaúnde supported early indigenous community efforts when they made collective demands for change. He was the face of government in the early years of Sendero mobilization, but many peasants also remembered Belaúnde from his tenure as president during early reform efforts and peasant mobilization between 1961 and 1964, which led to agrarian reform under the subsequent military regime. Despite broader regional perceptions of inequality and injustice, many began to see the state as the best way forward.

Particular civilian actors in Ayacucho helped facilitate stronger relationships with the state. For example, *licenciados*, a term that refers to civilians with previous military service, may have played an important advisory role in formulating how the military would interact with their communities.<sup>264</sup> Few scholars mention their importance in explaining the history of civilian involvement in resistance to Sendero Luminoso.<sup>265</sup> However, as I describe in the subsequent community case study for Uchuraccay, community political authorities with previous military experience exerted substantial influence over how a community might interpret the actions of armed actors and how they would respond. Well-positioned community members may have held disproportionate sway in how a community navigated its relationships with both armed militants

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<sup>263</sup> Ponciano del Pino H., “En el Nombre del Gobierno: Políticas Locales, Memoria y Violencia en el Perú del Siglo XX” In *Las Formas del Recuerdo: Etnografías de la Violencia Política en el Perú*, eds. Ponciano del Pino and Caroline Yezer (Lima: Instituto de Estudios Peruanos and Instituto Francés de Estudios Andinos 2013), pp. 27-70.

<sup>264</sup> Personal interview on May 18, 2014 in Huanta with the former regional president of the licenciados.

<sup>265</sup> An exception would be José Coronel, “Actores Sociales: Sociedad Rural Ayacuchana y Comunidad Campesina.” In *Actores Sociales y Ciudadanía en Ayacucho*, eds. José Coronel, Ponciano del Pino and Kimberly Theidon, Iván Caro, and Carlos Iván Degregori (Peru: Grupo de Iniciativa de Institucionalidad Democrática de Ayacucho 1999), p. 20.

and state security forces, demonstrating how preexisting community power structures might make particular community narratives more important than others.

Stronger relationships and trust between communities and the armed forces sometimes led Sendero columns to deceive civilians. Sendero patrols recognized the importance of shifting identity politics and in some cases started to disguise themselves as soldiers. For example, the well-organized self-defense force in Ccanchiccasa fell victim to a Sendero attack in January 1988 because their attackers arrived in military uniform. Community members had their suspicions that something was unusual about the visit. The community did not recognize the officers and the unit started to round up self-defense force members to detain them. Some escaped, but most met their end to the screams of, “Traitors die like this!” Twenty-six community members lost their lives.<sup>266</sup> Many community self-defense forces met with similar fates lining up with pride and reverence for military patrols that ultimately turned out to be disguised Sendero columns.

#### *A new rondero identity*

Community narratives also cultivated a new *rondero* identity that expected violent action.<sup>267</sup> Narratives not only influenced how communities saw others, they also influenced the way communities saw themselves. Narratives redefined many people’s role in their communities and how they viewed particular actions. A new rondero identity signaled an alliance with the military and the Peruvian state, regardless of the degree of autonomy an armed civilian group maintained. Community participation in armed civilian resistance fostered stronger ties with the

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<sup>266</sup> DESCO, *Violencia Política en el Perú, 1980-1988* Volume 1 (Lima: DESCO, Centro de Estudios y Promoción des Desarrollo 1989), p. 169; Alberto Valencia Cárdenas, *Los Crímenes de Sendero Luminoso en Ayacucho* (Lima: Editorial Impacto 1992), pp. 66-67.

<sup>267</sup> “Rondero” refers to a member of armed civilian patrols. For more on rondas campesinas identity and religion see Ludwig Huber, *Las Rondas Campesinas de Piura: Después de Dios y la Virgen Está la Ronda* (Lima: IEP 1995), though this book focuses on early rondas campesinas in the north of Peru.

state and military leaders led programs partly focused on working closely with self-defense forces to “make Peruvians.” An emerging *rondero* identity elicited a violent response from Sendero militants, further reinforcing notions in many communities that they stood in opposition to Sendero Luminoso. The militants viewed participants in civilian resistance efforts as *yana umas*, or “black heads,” a Quechua term to describe armed civilian patrols clad in black ski masks to hide their identity and keep them warm during the cold sierra nights. Direct participants, along with entire communities mobilized in auxiliary support, cultivated a pride in resistance and contributed to efforts aimed at supporting the state and combatting the insurgency.

The use of symbols and ceremonies helped to develop an identity based on patriotic resistance. In their study of the effects of war on power and gender relationships, Ponciano del Pino and Kimberly Theidon describe a process where “the people started to act tough.”<sup>268</sup> *Rondero* flags displayed male figures with sombreros and guns. Communities hung the flags during celebrations, fearful of accusations that they might be terrorist sympathizers. Community narratives helped generate and reinforce particular understandings of the conflict. The prevalent narrative surrounding a new *rondero* identity contained elements of hyper-masculinity, despite evidence of widespread female participation. In many cases, community narratives described citizens-as-warriors who frequently adopted a *nom de guerre* tied to ferocity and toughness. Combatants frequently assumed fighting names like Beast, Tiger, and Wolf.<sup>269</sup>

Entire communities contributed to self-defense and came to view themselves as pillars holding up the Peruvian nation. In “post-conflict” Peru, one self-defense force leader from

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<sup>268</sup> Ponciano del Pino H. and Kimberly Theidon, “Las Políticas de Identidad: Narrativas de Guerra y la Construcción de Ciudadanía en Ayacucho.” In *Actores Sociales y Ciudadanía en Ayacucho*, eds. José Coronel, Ponciano del Pino and Kimberly Theidon, Iván Caro, and Carlos Iván Degregori (Peru: Grupo de Iniciativa de Institucionalidad Democrática de Ayacucho 1999), pp. 21-35.

<sup>269</sup> Ibid.

Vinchos explained, “We are the defenders of peace.”<sup>270</sup> Community narratives during the armed conflict celebrated peasant resistance as a virtuous and heroic feat. Ronderos became those who would protect the nation and democracy, a notion that many towns and villages commemorate and reinforce today. For example, in contemporary Peru, civilian self-defense forces gather annually to celebrate the role they played in defeating the Sendero Luminoso insurgency. Participants come together to compete in sporting events, to parade through the regional capital, and to reaffirm a strong relationship with the military.<sup>271</sup> These contemporary gatherings resemble events from the early years of civilian mobilization when communities in Ayacucho attended mandatory weekend training sessions at local military bases. Activities during these reunions further reinforced elements of an emerging rondero identity, socialized participants, and strengthened the relationship between the military and civilians.

*Narratives in “post-conflict” Ayacucho*

Hypotheses related to a narratives argument should hold true in “post-conflict” settings as well. How civilian populations viewed Sendero militants or unknown actors passing through their communities reflected new understandings of events, relationships, and ideas about how they should respond. The same narrative process that explains whether communities were more or less likely to adopt violent strategies during the conflict can also explain their behavior after. Anecdotal evidence drawing from specific cases does suggest that community narratives played an important role in moving communities toward and away from violence both during and after armed conflict. For example, Kimberly Theidon relates a story she heard during field research for her work on post-conflict Peru. An unknown “crazy” person passed through a Peruvian community in 1999, mumbling things no one could understand. The community housed and fed

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<sup>270</sup> CVR, *Tomo I, Capítulo 1.5. Los Comités de Autodefensa* (2003), p. 437.

<sup>271</sup> The author participated in one such conference in Huanta, May 17-18, 2014.

her. In the past they detained and questioned strangers; they requested identity documents. After four days the woman disappeared. Theidon asked community members why they were not afraid of her as in the past. One resident reasoned that, “*La loca* was a test from God. God sent her. Don’t you know who she was?” Theidon did not. “That was a saint or maybe even Jesúcristo in disguise. God sent *la loca* to see if after all the things we’ve done to each other here, are we still capable of having *caridad* for our fellow creatures.”<sup>272</sup> Community narratives differed in 1999 from years earlier. Narratives helped to (re)construct political practices and citizenship in post-conflict Ayacucho.<sup>273</sup>

### *Community Capacity*

Simply describing general conditions across cases in Ayacucho cannot provide a satisfactory test for hypotheses related to community capacity and sustained mobilization. I test Hypotheses 7 and 8 specific to individual communities in the sections that follow. H7 expects that communities with more prevalent cooperative institutions are more likely to mobilize in sustained civilian resistance, violent or otherwise. A variety of organizations and institutional arrangements in Ayacucho might help to account for higher or lower levels of community capacity. The presence or absence of religious institutions, aid organizations, education centers, communal labor organizations, and agricultural markets affected community capacity to initiate and sustain mobilization. Preexisting tensions rooted in land disputes and contentious political representation lowered community capacity in many cases and weakened their ability to organize a unified front in the face of militant and state violence.

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<sup>272</sup> Kimberly Susan Theidon, *Intimate Enemies: Violence and Reconciliation in Peru* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press 2013), p. 316.

<sup>273</sup> Ponciano del Pino H. and Kimberly Theidon, “Las Políticas de Identidad: Narrativas de Guerra y la Construcción de Ciudadanía en Ayacucho.” In *Actores Sociales y Ciudadanía en Ayacucho*, eds. José Coronel, Ponciano del Pino and Kimberly Theidon, Iván Caro, and Carlos Iván Degregori (Peru: Grupo de Iniciativa de Institucionalidad Democrática de Ayacucho 1999), pp. 21-35.

H8 suggests that greater access to resources will facilitate mobilization. H8 expects that violent and nonviolent mobilizations alike will benefit from access to greater resources. For example, communities are more likely to mobilize in armed self-defense when they have weapons and other material resources at their disposal. Communities that prioritize nonviolent resistance or that focus on peace-building through reconciliation efforts and development projects need resources to implement those programs. I did not find support for H8 support when analyzing the general Ayacucho region. Community mobilization was not directly tied to available resources. Existing research and my own fieldwork in the region both suggest that in cases of armed civilian resistance, communities frequently fought with knives, rocks, and sticks despite facing well-armed militants. Their means of production transformed into their means of protection as civilians used tools to fight back. Non-violent mobilizations, which took place predominantly in district and provincial urban centers, did not have access to abundant resources either. Although mobilization frequently occurred in absence of resources, they affected the efficacy of community actions. Specific community cases better illustrate the relationship between resources and the capacity.

# Chapter 4

## ARMED CONFLICT IN THE CENTRAL HIGHLANDS

In this chapter I test explanations for civilian resistance using community case studies in the Ayacucho highlands. I examine levels of threat and violence individual communities and clusters of neighboring villages faced in the Huanta province during the 1980s and 1990s. The Huanta province experienced some of the highest levels of violence and its communities became the earliest sites of armed civilian resistance to Sendero Luminoso. I examine variation in civilian resistance between cases, as well as across time within individual communities. A change in civilian resistance over time within a single community allows me to control for other factors while I assess the potential causal effects of threat, violence, narratives, and community capacity. In addition to historical cases, I describe and analyze contemporary civilian self-defense forces in the region. Contemporary groups confront ongoing security challenges related to crime, corruption, and drug trafficking. I spoke with dozens of active participants and accompanied groups on patrol. Contemporary cases provide a unique opportunity to observe narratives in action.

I found that many CVR testimonies and interview subjects reference increased Sendero and state violence as the reason *why* communities had to act. Security threats forced communities to respond, one way or another. However, I found that violence, threat, and state capacity are neither necessary nor sufficient conditions for armed civilian resistance. Furthermore, victimization does not explain *how* communities mobilized. Explanations where the situation compels behavior ignore the social processes crucial to fully understanding variation in community response. The community case studies in this chapter support an explanation that

prioritizes social processes. Community narratives better account for the nature and timing of civilian resistance. Although civilians responded to increased violence and threat in many communities, the conditions alone do not fully account for outcomes. An argument that examines how communities interpreted events and defined relationships with militants and state security forces compliments realist arguments.

### UCHURACCAY

*“Memory is a complicated thing, a relative to truth but not its twin.”<sup>274</sup>*

Uchuraccay remains one of the most widely discussed communities from the conflict period and a single event punctuates the community’s complicated history. On January 26, 1983 residents murdered a small contingent of press correspondents and their guide.<sup>275</sup> The journalists traveled to the highlands in the Huanta province of Ayacucho to investigate contradictory reports surrounding a rise in Sendero Luminoso violence and community reactions. The group set out from the Ayacucho capital to Huaychao, where on January 20<sup>th</sup> the residents rose up in violent opposition to the insurgency and killed seven Sendero militants. The team of reporters went to verify military officials’ version of events. When the reporters passed through Uchuraccay en route to Huaychao, residents murdered the reporters. What factors led to the tragic event?

Just prior to the murder of the journalists in Uchuraccay, the regional commander of the armed forces discussed reports from Huaychao at a press conference in the Ayacucho capital. General Noel appeared seated at a table with a “grin from ear to ear.”<sup>276</sup> Noel echoed president Belaunde’s words of encouragement for rural communities to take justice into their own hands

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<sup>274</sup> Barbara Kingsolver, *Animal Dreams: A Novel* (New York, NY: Harper Collins 1990), p. 49.

<sup>275</sup> Victims include Eduardo de la Piniella, Pedro Sánchez and Félix Gavilán from *El Diario Marka*, Jorge Luis Mendivil and Willy Retto from *El Observador*, Jorge Sedano from *La República*, Amador García from *Oiga* magazine and Octavio Infante from the daily *Noticias de Ayacucho*. Their guide, Juan Argumedo, and a local resident, Severino Huáscar Morales, also died.

<sup>276</sup> “Todo Comenzó con la Matanza de 7 Niños.” *Kausachum Perú* (May 27, 1983). Reprinted in *Uchuraccay, o, El Rostro de la Barbarie*, ed. Juan Cristóbal (Lima: Editorial San Marcos 2003), pp. 39-41.

and to fight back. The General expressed his approval of the events that transpired in Huaychao and likened the “brave peasants” to heroes of Peruvian independence at the historic battle for Ayacucho in 1824.<sup>277</sup>

Several journalists from opposition newspapers identified contradictions in the General’s account. The journalists questioned the spontaneous and voluntary nature of the community’s response.<sup>278</sup> Some of the journalists believed the state security forces staged the events in Huaychao to cover up military atrocities. The journalists decided to travel to Huaychao and investigate. They believed official accounts did not tell the entire story. According to reports, the residents of Huaychao received the suspected terrorists with applause. They invited them in and went along with the various shouts of “long live armed struggle and President Gonzalo.” The residents closed in on the senderistas as they lowered their guard. The community disarmed the militants and killed them with rocks.<sup>279</sup>

The journalists never made it to Huaychao to ascertain the truth. Their group entered Uchuraccay on the afternoon of January 26, 1983. Accounts differ as to how the community initially reacted to their arrival. The absence of consistent first-hand accounts has hindered investigations into events in Uchuraccay. Two decades of accusations, intrigue, and silence suggest we may never know the whole truth. In a press conference held in Ayacucho four days after the incident, General Noel suggested that the community confused the photographers’ telephoto lens for weapons and that the journalists carried a red flag, an item Sendero usually raised in towns they visited. Despite what he saw as understandable confusion, Noel concluded

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<sup>277</sup> Hiroshi Hosoya, *La Memoria Post-colonial: Tiempo, Espacio y Discursos Sobre los Sucesos de Uchuraccay*, Document de Trabajo 134 (Lima: Instituto de Estudios Peruanos 2004).

<sup>278</sup> Julio Falconí Gonzales, *El Caso Uchuraccay: Las Claves de un Complot Contra la Libertad de Expresión (Ayacucho-Perú, Enero de 1983)* (Lima: Fondo Editorial, Asociación Nacional de Periodistas del Perú 2010).

<sup>279</sup> Gustavo Gorriti, “Trágicos Linchamientos.” *Caretas* (January 31, 1983). Reprinted in *Uchuraccay, o, El Rostro de la Barbarie*, ed. Juan Cristóbal (Lima: Editorial San Marcos 2003), pp. 42-44; for a slightly different account see Miguel La Serna, *The Corner of the Living: Ayacucho on the Eve of the Shining Path Insurgency* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press 2012), pp. 176-178.

that responsibility for the murders still ultimately lay with community members.<sup>280</sup> The press emphasized confusion as the principle reason for the events in Uchuraccay and the public believed, “The catastrophe of Uchuraccay, with all the elements of a Greek tragedy and the heartbreaking brutality of a Goya etching, occurred because a town that liberated itself from terrorism made the mistake of confusing the journalists for their tormentors.”<sup>281</sup>

Nobel Prize winning author Mario Vargas Llosa led an investigative team to ascertain the truth immediately after the incident. The controversial Vargas Llosa report describes local peasants mistaking the journalists for Sendero militants. The report argues that community beliefs played a causal role based on forensic evidence found during the excavation of the journalists’ remains. The report points to escalating violence and describes the incident as a response to Sendero threat. A violent environment, extreme poverty, and geographic isolation all contributed to the murders. Investigators also attributed the community’s actions to traditions of violent conflict and an historically bellicose disposition. The commission largely absolved the state, prioritizing an explanation based on fear, confusion, and indigeneity.<sup>282</sup>

Academics, the media, and the public criticized the Vargas Llosa report and the way investigators essentialized the Andean “other” as something outside of modern Peru. The report described a rural Peru of subsistence and superstition. Vargas Llosa concluded that the incident in Uchuraccay resulted from a “regrettable error.” Despite criticism, the report provided the official account. A misunderstanding led to the murders. Confusion, compounded by the perpetrators “primitive culture,” led the community to mistakenly kill the journalists despite the

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<sup>280</sup> DESCO, *Violencia Política en el Perú, 1980-1988* Volume 2 (Lima: DESCO, Centro de Estudios y Promoción des Desarrollo 1989), p. 572.

<sup>281</sup> Víctor Peralta Ruiz, *Sendero Luminoso y la Prensa, 1980-1994: La Violencia Política Peruana y su Representación en los Medios* (Cuzco, Peru: Centro de Estudios Regionales Andinos “Bartolomé de las Casas” 2000), p. 67. Also see “La Guerra Sucia,” *El Comercio*, (February 6, 1983).

<sup>282</sup> *Informe de la Comisión Investigadora de los Sucesos de Uchuraccay* (Lima, March 1983). Note: an extensive debate as to the primordialist (and potentially racist) conclusions of the commission ensued following the report’s publication.

fact that they carried photography equipment and not firearms. Fear, rage, religious belief, and mysticism unleashed latent peasant ferocity.<sup>283</sup> Regardless of the exact causes, the community forced the restrained victims to their knees and delivered forceful and decisive blows. Community members deliberately murdered the journalists. Understanding what motivated their response will provide a causal explanation not just for the murdered journalists, but civilian resistance in Uchuraccay more broadly. The murders illustrate the violent and unsustainable civilian resistance that characterized the Uchuraccay case before residents ultimately abandoned their community.

### **Civilian Resistance in Uchuraccay**

The journalists' murder is just one event in a series of tragedies that touched the lives of Uchuraccay residents during the conflict period. Many residents died before the massacre and 135 died afterward.<sup>284</sup> Uchuraccay all but disappeared by the end of 1983 with mass displacement. Following the murder of the journalists—and acts of retribution by Sendero militants, the military, and neighboring civilian self-defense forces—remaining residents decided to flee to nearby communities, Huanta, Ayacucho, or Lima. Of the 470 inhabitants that resided in the community in 1981, only a few individuals stayed behind and hid in the surrounding mountains. Almost a decade passed before two-dozen families coordinated with social service

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<sup>283</sup> Santiago López Maguiña, “Arqueología de una Mirada Criolla: El Informe de la Matanza de Uchuraccay.” In *Batallas por la Memoria: Antagonismos de la Promesa Peruana*, eds. Marita Hamann, Santiago López Maguiña, Gonzalo Portocarrero, and Victor Vich (Lima: Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú 2003), pp. 257-273.

<sup>284</sup> The CVR states that 135 people died. A list of 137 victims from Uchuraccay can be found in Roberto Mejía Alarcón, *25 Años Uchuraccay: La Tragedia del 26 de Enero de 1983* (Lima: Fondo Editorial, Asociación Nacional de Periodistas del Perú 2008). Conversations with residents in Uchuraccay place the total number throughout the entirety of the conflict at 380 residents, though this number would include a much more expansive geographic space than that used in official estimates. Interview subjects estimate that there were around 600 families and 2,500 individual residents in the surrounding area at the onset of conflict.

organizations, neighboring self-defense forces, and the military to return to Uchuraccay in 1993.<sup>285</sup>

Uchuraccay provides important within-case variation on the dependent and independent variables. Civilian resistance in Uchuraccay changed over time. Placing a community in a single category of civilian resistance proves difficult. Civilian resistance in Uchuraccay predominantly consisted of sporadic violent actions. Some members of the community took up arms and perpetrated violent acts against suspected Sendero militants, yet the community did not achieve a unified response despite early initiatives to lead surrounding communities. Frequent attacks and widespread victimization eventually forced residents to abandon their homes. Table 4.1 describes civilian resistance outcomes in Uchuraccay, along with different conditions of violent narratives and community capacity.

**Table 4.1: Narratives, community capacity, and civilian resistance outcomes in Uchuraccay 1980-2000**

		Community Capacity	
		High	Low
Violent Narratives	Yes	Violent mobilization (After 1993)	Sporadic individual violence (1982-1983)
	No	Nonviolent mobilization (N/A)	Flee or collaborate with insurgents (1980-1982 and after 1983)

Based on secondary accounts of journalists, witness testimonies, and personal interviews with community authorities, I evaluate arguments related to civilian resistance in Uchuraccay. I spent time in the community twice during my fieldwork in Ayacucho, once in 2013 and again in 2014. I coordinated my visit with community authorities and they received me with a mixture of curiosity, suspicion, and a touch of opportunism.

#### *Realist and Rationalist Explanations*

<sup>285</sup> CVR, *Informe Final: Peru, 1980-2000, Tomo V, Capítulo 2.4. El Caso Uchuraccay* (2003), p. 123.

Geographic isolation made communities like Uchuraccay more vulnerable to Sendero incursions. Remote communities near Apu Razhuillca, the tallest mountain in Ayacucho, could not depend on the state security forces for protection. Sendero militants visited these communities early on and forced residents to gather for meetings. Many residents who worked the scattered plots of land around Uchuraccay sympathized with the revolutionary movement. Others did not. If residents resisted their political program, waves of senderistas passed through villages and murdered those unable to escape and set fire to homes. Abuse and kidnapping became common practice. The extent of community response for some entailed burying the dead and coping with the destruction.<sup>286</sup> Dozens of stories provide accounts of civilian victimization. However, in some cases, communities near Uchuraccay went out on patrol armed with sticks, knives, and farming tools.

Hypothesis 1 expects a militant group's growing strength to compel a community response. However, increased violence levels alone do not appear to correlate with early efforts to mobilize and resist insurgent threats in Uchuraccay. Civilian resistance changed across time and, although early efforts at community organizing may have reflected assessments of Sendero's growing capabilities, actual Sendero Luminoso violence in Uchuraccay appears more a *consequence* of community resistance than a *cause* of it. Militants punished leaders and other residents for collaborating with the military and for planning to organize self-defense. The most notable incidents of violence came as reprisals against those who dared to challenge Sendero. Militants targeted anyone who took a stand against Sendero leaders and indoctrination efforts, especially individuals who held sway over public opinion and local decision-making. Sendero selective violence helps explain the absence of organized civilian resistance before the community had to flee. During a visit to Uchuraccay in 2013, one local political authority

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<sup>286</sup> Testimony 204073.

explained the community's fate in the simplest of terms, "Sendero Luminoso attacked. They killed. People left."<sup>287</sup> But, the bulk of militant violence came after residents had abandoned any hope of organizing to resist Sendero. Hypothesis 1 would also expect similar reactions from neighboring communities given similar levels of threat and violence. However, by all accounts, Uchuraccay and Huaychao faced comparable Sendero threats in the early 1980s and had different civilian resistance outcomes.

Hypothesis 2 and 3 examine state capacity in terms of state weakness and state strength respectively. Hypothesis 2 predicts that state absence will force civilians to provide for their own security under increased threat. Militant violence against farmers near Uchuraccay, coupled with state security forces' limited presence, would compel civilians to fight back. I found only minimal support for H2. Although residents observed clear indicators of state abandon, the community in Uchuraccay did not achieve sustained mobilization. The community knew that the state would likely fail to come to its aid. State security forces offered sympathy and encouragement, but no direct assistance.

During an interview with current community authorities, an elderly man who witnessed many of the tragedies in Uchuraccay echoed persistent claims that the military had notified the community they would only arrive by helicopter.<sup>288</sup> Soldiers suggested senderistas would arrive on foot and encouraged the community to use lethal force against any unknown visitor, potentially explaining their "mistake" when the community murdered the journalists. Famed investigative reporter Gustavo Gorriti visited Huaychao just after community members killed the

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<sup>287</sup> Personal interview on May 30, 2013 in Uchuraccay with a community authority.

<sup>288</sup> Personal interview on May 22, 2014 in Uchuraccay with a research assistant translating from Quechua to Spanish. While I maintain the anonymity of interview subjects in most of my research, in the Uchuraccay case, Emiliano Ramos Chavez, Leoncio Quispe Morales, and Julian Quispe Duran (the current mayor, the current president, and an elder who was a first-hand witness to events in the early 80s respectively) insisted that I include their names.

suspected Sendero militants and just prior to the murder of the journalists in Uchuraccay. He flew in on a military helicopter and remembers clearing the high peaks before setting down in a valley. As the helicopter made the approach, Gorriti saw civilians walking in lines along two of the ridges and they converged with remarkable speed on their position when they set down in the valley. He could sense the fear and desperation among the small group of peasants that surrounded the helicopter. As the visitors climbed out, the locals complained in Quechua of the increasing danger. The peasants pleaded with Gorriti and the soldiers to send assistance, but they came to understand that they were alone in their fight. Scattered communities throughout the remote region sent *chaskis*, or runners carrying messages, to warn their neighbors of impending Sendero violence. Residents anticipated militant retaliation for resisting in Huaychao. The entire region was on high-alert.<sup>289</sup> Yet, in neighboring Uchuraccay, the community did not organize a self-defense force.

Communities needed to respond to Sendero threats and violence in some way. Without state support, civilians around Uchuraccay had to decide what course of action would best ensure survival. Communities near Uchuraccay were better prepared to defend themselves just prior to the murder of the journalists in January 1983, though levels of threat and violence increased afterward. State absence remained relatively consistent across time, though some military advisors visited communities in the surrounding area by helicopter on several occasions, including one visit to Uchuraccay. An explanation for civilian resistance that focuses solely on conditions like threat, violence, and limited state support help describe conditions that may compel civilian action, though they do not fully account for community civilian resistance outcomes. Civilians made a greater effort to mobilize when violence and threat were lower in Uchuraccay and state neglect remained constant.

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<sup>289</sup> Personal conversation on July 15, 2015 in Lima with Gustavo Gorriti.

Hypothesis 3 predicts that communities with a strong state presence are more likely to mobilize. State security forces can compel or facilitate community action. I found partial support for H3 in Uchuraccay. Although the *sinchis* (counterterrorism police) and the Marines visited the community and encouraged civilians to defend themselves by any means necessary, they did not maintain a sustained presence in the remote mountainous region. A schoolteacher assigned to Uchuraccay testified that the initial patrols arrived in May 1981. The *sinchis* returned several more times, passing through the community every two months through the end of the year. She neither witnessed nor heard news of visits to the community in 1982. Residents reported that the *sinchis* or Marines came by helicopter just once in the month prior to the murder of the journalists on January 26, 1983.<sup>290</sup> After that incident, state security forces perpetrated numerous abuses in the community and did not take significant steps to organize the community to repel frequent Sendero incursions, suggesting that perhaps early encouragement helped motivate some level of community organizing that faltered as the state directly targeted the community later on. The military came only to inspect and to observe as violence claimed more residents' lives. State security forces informed the community in a town meeting that soldiers would only come by air in a helicopter and that anyone else that passed through would be a terrorist.<sup>291</sup>

Some accounts insinuate that a community authority in Uchuraccay directed a band of civilians acting at the behest of the military. Fortunato Gavilán García (the lieutenant governor) and Silvio Chávez Soto (community secretary) could have been “paramilitary” leaders helping to implement a new state counterinsurgency campaign.<sup>292</sup> Gavilán, along with several other community members, received training for obligatory military service at the military academy in

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<sup>290</sup> *Informe de la Comisión Investigadora de los Sucesos de Uchuraccay* (Lima, March 1983).

<sup>291</sup> Personal interview on May 22, 2014 with community authorities in Uchuraccay.

<sup>292</sup> Julio Falconí Gonzales, *El Caso Uchuraccay: Las Claves de un Complot Contra la Libertad de Expresión (Ayacucho-Perú, Enero de 1983)* (Lima: Fondo Editorial, Asociación Nacional de Periodistas del Perú 2010), p. 64.

Chorillos (Lima) years prior. He became an honored *licenciado* for his previous service.<sup>293</sup> However, most accounts speak to the autonomy of decision-making regarding scattered incidents of civilian resistance before residents abandoned the community. In an illustrative account, a woman describes the events before and after the murder of her brothers in 1984 at the hands of Sendero militants in a valley below the high mountain peaks of Razhuillca. She remembers military visitors who came once to encourage the remote communities to organize. But, the woman explained, “There were already groups. We got together to meet and took care of ourselves.”<sup>294</sup> The evidence does not support Hypothesis 3. Groups had already attempted to organize on their own without direct support or encouragement from state security forces. Men from the neighboring villages patrolled early on. The military did not facilitate organization to the same degree as later in communities closer to Huanta or in Uchuraccay when residents returned in 1993.

Hypothesis 4 predicts that opportunism will facilitate violent community mobilization. Material incentives for participation did not play a role in Uchuraccay. Although preexisting tensions help explain internal community divisions and militant violence, civilians did not use self-defense forces to settle long-standing disputes. Violence between neighbors happened outside of formal organizations. A desire for personal enrichment did not motivate civilians to organize and participate in self-defense.

#### *Narratives and Community Capacity*

A narratives argument suggests that how a community understands events and defines relationships will explain how it uses violence. In Uchuraccay, the argument can provide insight into the specific incident of the murdered journalists, as well as different outcomes of civilian

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<sup>293</sup> José María Salcedo, *Las Tumbas de Uchuraccay: Treinta Años Después* (Iquitos, Peru: Tierra Nueva 2013), p. 154.

<sup>294</sup> Testimony 200670.

resistance. Hypothesis 5 expects that distinct interpretations of violent events will lead to different community behavior. Looking back on the events in the early 1980s we know that Sendero initiated armed conflict and sought support among rural mountain communities. However, one must remember that at the time, local populations found it difficult to understand events. They heard rumors and stories. Bits of information reached a confused population. When asked about the senderistas' presence prior to attacks on her community, one woman confirmed, "Yes, they were there, but they did not do anything to us. They walked at night, but we did not know who they were. They told us that they were from Sendero, but, in our ignorance we said, 'Who are they and what is that?'"<sup>295</sup> Many residents in Uchuraccay described Sendero militants as *tuta puriq*, or those who walk at night, without fully understanding who they were or what they were doing. In the first years of the conflict, peasants in the region relied on word of mouth accounts for news and information about the insurgency.

Rumors reached the community of Huaychao about murdered authorities in neighboring villages. One resident recalled:

We had heard that the terrorists were walking around at night and killing authorities and rich folks.... A while later, people started talking about how they appeared in Iquicha, Carhuahurán, and Uchuraccay. People told us: 'They walk around with knives and guns, they say they will kill us,' and we wondered, 'Do they have horns and tails or something? We decided that they must be [real] people and that if we all prayed we could probably figure it out.'<sup>296</sup>

Residents spoke with neighbors about who the senderistas were and how best to respond to the emerging threat. Residents in Huaychao also began to interpret Sendero actions and intentions

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<sup>295</sup> Ibid.

<sup>296</sup> Interview with Alejandra Ccente in Huaychao on May 21, 2006 found in Miguel La Serna, *The Corner of the Living: Ayacucho on the Eve of the Shining Path Insurgency* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press 2012), p. 174.

through a gendered lens. Community narratives linked socialist and communist ideology to notions about external sexual threat against village women.<sup>297</sup>

In some cases, communities around Uchuraccay interpreted the emerging conflict in terms of what Ponciano del Pino refers to as the “law of the landowner.” Residents in the region fought a bitter battle with large landowners to take possession of their communities years prior. Large landowners had appropriated communal and family lands in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Del Pino describes the importance of this great “deceit” on collective memory where outsiders took advantage of peasants’ political inexperience.<sup>298</sup> Leadership from communities near Uchuraccay drew parallels to the emerging challenges they faced with a growing Sendero Luminoso presence. They likened militant demands for material support and recruits to the large landowners’ demands for rents and free labor. Community narratives often described events in the 1980s through this particular lens. Framing the subsequent developments in terms of exploitative practices in 1982 and 1983 made resistance to Sendero’s revolutionary campaign more likely. Sendero actions did not match up with its rhetoric about equality and justice. Community discussions highlighted the inconsistencies. One community authority explained, “They came and said, ‘How much do matches cost? We will improve your lives. Rich or poor, we will all be equal.’ Anybody might believe this.”<sup>299</sup> But, the movement began to attack the people and their lands, “revealing their true nature.”

In addition to how a community understood events, a narratives argument expects that the way a community defines its relationship with other collective actors will explain if and when it

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<sup>297</sup> Ibid., p. 186.

<sup>298</sup> Ponciano del Pino H. “‘In the Name of the Government’: Community Politics, Violence and Memory in Modern Peru.” Agrarian Studies Series at Yale University. Unpublished manuscript.

<http://agrarianstudies.macmillan.yale.edu/sites/default/files/files/colloqpapers/23delpino.pdf>

However, Del Pino notes that not all land acquisitions were of a dubious nature. Many willingly sold their land and strategically facilitated claims against neighbors’ plots.

<sup>299</sup> Personal interview on May 22, 2014 with community authorities in Uchuraccay.

uses violence. Hypothesis 6 predicts that changing relationships with Sendero militants and the armed forces would influence the likelihood that a community used violence. Narratives that facilitate violence against a particular kind of actor make violence more likely. Changing ideas of how a community stood in relation to Sendero Luminoso made militants legitimate targets of violence as the conflict progressed. Sendero established close ties with some Uchuraccay residents and built a support base in the years around the start of its armed campaign. During a visit to the community in 2013, I spoke with one resident who lived in Uchuraccay in the early 1980s before the entire population fled. He remembered, “In reality, this was a ‘red zone’ and many people accepted the words of Sendero Luminoso.”<sup>300</sup>

Sendero Luminoso establish a presence in the mountains around Uchuraccay in 1979, prior to the onset of armed conflict. Their program did not affect most people at first. They focused on political indoctrination and recruitment. During early visits they asked for shelter during the rains and left afterward. They held assemblies in some of the villages and made promises to the population. Members raised flags portraying the hammer and sickle in the mountains at night and they shouted slogans. When members visited villages to speak with the population, they usually disappeared before sunrise. One Uchuraccay resident remembered, “They said that they were fighting for peasants and the poor. When they came to power, everyone would be equal. We trusted them at first. They came peacefully. Then they started to kill children, old people, and above all, local authorities. We saw this with our own eyes. They revealed their true nature.”<sup>301</sup> Sendero behavior changed. Arbitrary violence and imposed

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<sup>300</sup> Personal interview on May 30, 2013 in Uchuraccay with a former-resident and ex-school teacher. An area thought to support Sendero was labeled as a *zona roja*, or red zone.

<sup>301</sup> Personal interview on May 22, 2014 in Uchuraccay with an elderly resident.

limitations on trade revealed contradictions in its professed goals and many civilians started to resist.<sup>302</sup>

Vargas Llosa and the other investigators from the Uchuraccay commission pointed to “essentialist” descriptions of a “bellicose” Iquichano identity as a causal explanation for civilian violence. Many from the public, press, and academia correctly criticized the argument.<sup>303</sup> However, residents of Uchuraccay know their own history. In a community that remained relatively isolated, local oral histories play a significant role in how communities interact with others. As a generalization, communities in this region are conservative—they historically aligned with the existing power structures.<sup>304</sup> To speak about the “bellicose nature” of these communities would be erroneous, but one must recognize that civilians in the region viewed violence as an important part of power relations. Historically, the “gamonalismo” that structured power relations in the communities around Uchuraccay included notions of power based on the use of physical violence and notions of race, gender, and political relations. These conditions contributed to a “culture of violence” that allows for violent action as a component of conflict resolution.<sup>305</sup> Violence became a legitimate and appropriate response.

Sendero upset pre-existing power relations when it began to target civilians and perpetrate acts of violence against community authorities. Sendero militants murdered esteemed local leaders that enjoyed high standing in the community.<sup>306</sup> Some communities in the region

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<sup>302</sup> Henri Favre, “Peru: Sendero Luminoso y Horizontes Ocultos.” *Cuadernos Americanos* 4/4 (July/August 1987), pp. 29-58.

<sup>303</sup> Uchuraccay residents, along with other communities in the region, identify ethnically as Iquichano and have a long tradition of collective participation in conflict from the colonial period through more contemporary cases of armed insurrection.

<sup>304</sup> Juan José Vega, “Uchuraccay, Proceso al Perú.” *La República* (March 6, 1983). Reprinted in *Uchuraccay, o, El Rostro de la Barbarie*, ed. Juan Cristóbal (Lima: Editorial San Marcos 2003), pp. 16-24.

<sup>305</sup> Deborah Poole, *Unruly Order: Violence, Power, and Cultural Identity in the High Provinces of Southern Peru* (Boulder: Westview Press 1994), p. 5.

<sup>306</sup> José Coronel, “Violencia Política y Respuestas Campesinas en Huanta.” In *Las Rondas Campesinas y la Derrota de Sendero Luminoso*, eds. Carlos Iván Degregori, José Coronel, Ponciano del Pino, and Orin Starn, (Lima: Instituto

organized and patrolled. Those in Uchuraccay initially helped to organize regional resistance efforts but could not sustain participation. One man I spoke with described internal community divisions and overt antagonism between some prominent community members. Sendero supporters denounced those who cooperated with the state security forces to Sendero militants. Dogs appeared hanging from tree branches with threatening notes stating that, “Snitches die like this.” The notorious “one thousand eyes and ears” of Sendero listened and watched the community. And in Uchuraccay, mouths also whispered rumors that Sendero would visit the community again and again to eliminate those who stood against them.<sup>307</sup> Some still supported Sendero’s political program, but many started to view the militants in a negative light.

In the communities surrounding Uchuraccay, how civilians viewed their neighbors also affected decisions to take action. One woman described early actions in villages near the peaks of Razhuillca. Poorly armed peasants went out together to round up and detain the “reds.” She recalled that, “They took away those who didn’t organize a group.”<sup>308</sup> The civilian patrols believed that those who did not participate in early self-defense efforts sympathized with the Sendero revolutionary program and confronted them. Failure to take action against perceived threats signaled militant support. However, when the poorly armed civilians eventually came up against actual Sendero militants, they could not contend with their superior firepower. Sendero used violence more frequently to prevent civilians from collaborating with the military or to punish those who had. As communities discussed the possibility of resisting, spies within the community informed militants. A resident of Uchuraccay explained, “There were terrorists

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de Estudios Peruanos 1996), pp. 29-116; Mario Fumerton, “Rondas Campesinas in the Peruvian Civil War: Peasant Self-Defense Organisations in Ayacucho.” *Bulletin of Latin American Research* 20/4 (2001), pp. 470-497; Mario Fumerton, *From Victims to Heroes: Peasant Counter-rebellion and Civil war in Ayacucho, Peru, 1980-2000* (Amsterdam: Rozenberg 2003).

<sup>307</sup> Personal interview on May 30, 2013 in Uchuraccay with a former-resident and ex-school teacher.

<sup>308</sup> Testimony 200670.

among the people. Sendero used these people as a source of information. They would identify residents that wanted to provide information to the military.”<sup>309</sup>

Some community members believe that in Huaychao, and later in Uchuraccay, violent civilian resistance came as a response to Sendero incursions and their actual or attempted forced recruitment of the young—the community met violence with violence. However, individual support within the community differed. The conditions alone cannot account for violent resistance. Understanding how factions within the community viewed their relationship with Sendero better accounts for their subsequent actions. The militants also demanded material support in the form of food and animals, so the community had a meeting where they decided to resist in Huaychao.<sup>310</sup> Many in the community began to see militants as petty thieves and disagreed with Sendero’s notions of justice and harsh punishments.

In Uchuraccay, Sendero visited more frequently and became more aggressive in 1982. They often came well-armed. Sendero had local contacts and supporters that held meetings and organized sympathizers. The militants began to lead popular schools for the women at night, which some authorities opposed. The community had an internal discussion about events in the community, and those who opposed the senderistas appeared dead days later.<sup>311</sup> The murder of the community president in December 1982 came as a final straw for many. Dozens of militants took him from his home in the middle of the night, held a “popular trial,” and then executed him in the center of town the next day.<sup>312</sup> After this murder, civilian attitudes about lethal violence changed from two months prior. In October 1982 Sendero’s local leader, Martín, and five young Sendero members found themselves in an altercation with a large number of peasants at the

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<sup>309</sup> Personal interview on May 22, 2014 in Uchuraccay with an elderly resident.

<sup>310</sup> Testimony 201700; Gustavo Gorriti, “Trágicos Linchamientos.” *Caretas* (January 31, 1983), p. 44.

<sup>311</sup> Testimony 201690.

<sup>312</sup> Testimony 201692; Roberto Mejía Alarcón, *25 Años Uchuraccay: La Tragedia del 26 de Enero de 1983* (Lima: Fondo Editorial, Asociación Nacional de Periodistas del Perú 2008).

popular school for women. Community authorities wanted to kill the senderistas, but the rest of the community decided to pardon them if they promised never to return.<sup>313</sup> The community would come to regret that decision and soon abandoned reservations about using violence to confront Sendero threats. How the communities saw Sendero affected how they responded to the insecurity the movement generated.

How the community saw itself in relation to the state also played a role in early decisions to resist Sendero. Official state narratives reminded residents of previous incidents where people directly participated in defending the nation from threat. The political-military commander related the president's national narratives to the population during commemoration events that referenced civilian participation in the final stage of the war with Chile in 1879. He made analogies to the current situation with Sendero, "Today more than ever we cannot, nor should we, forget that the unity between the Peruvian people and their armed forces should be an ongoing and enduring project for the betterment of the nation."<sup>314</sup> Soldiers that visited remote communities on patrol or by helicopter shared similar sentiments. They fostered new cooperative relationships as they implemented a new counterinsurgency campaign. The armed forces encouraged direct civilian participation in matters traditionally monopolized by the state.

Interactions in Huaychao illustrate the effects of community and state relations on its subsequent actions. For example, individuals in Huaychao who held authority positions challenged Sendero indoctrination efforts. When militants discussed the overthrow of the Peruvian state, local leaders in Huaychao saw themselves as representatives of the government,

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<sup>313</sup> Testimony 201695; Roberto Mejía Alarcón, *25 Años Uchuraccay: La Tragedia del 26 de Enero de 1983* (Lima: Fondo Editorial, Asociación Nacional de Periodistas del Perú 2008), pp. 78-79.

<sup>314</sup> Quote from a speech given by General Noel in the presence of president Belaunde, ministers, and other authorities on January 15, 1983. Found in *El Peruano* (January 16, 1983), p. 1 and cited in Julio Falconí Gonzales, *El Caso Uchuraccay: Las Claves de un Complot Contra la Libertad de Expresión (Ayacucho-Perú, Enero de 1983)* (Lima: Fondo Editorial, Asociación Nacional de Periodistas del Perú 2010), p. 55.

which complicated any program that advocated its dissolution.<sup>315</sup> When community members in Huaychao deliberated, they decided to take armed action against Sendero militants. Residents murdered numerous Sendero militants and took their weapons. They dug in and prepared for the inevitable retaliations.<sup>316</sup>

Peruvian historian Ponciano del Pino found additional supporting evidence for the importance of a community's relationship with the state in the case of Uchuraccay. He reviewed the original transcripts and audio recordings from the Vargas Llosa commission. He identified key elements left out of the final report. Additional factors motivated community members' violent actions against the journalists they had mistaken for militants. Residents suggested they took violent action, "on behalf of the government," "to defend the government," and "to support the President." The commission ignored their motivation to act as political agents tied to the state.<sup>317</sup> However, to understand the community's violent actions, one must examine local beliefs about the conflict and their relationship with the military. The military, especially in the early 1980s, saw the insurgency in terms of a struggle against the Left, socialists, and communists. The military generally saw civilians unsympathetic to Sendero as natural allies in a fight against those responsible for terrorism in Peru.<sup>318</sup>

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<sup>315</sup> Testimony 201700 cited in Ponciano del Pino H. "'In the Name of the Government': Community Politics, Violence and Memory in Modern Peru." Agrarian Studies Series at Yale University. Unpublished manuscript, pp. 28-29. <http://agrarianstudies.macmillan.yale.edu/sites/default/files/files/colloqpapers/23delpino.pdf>

<sup>316</sup> For more details on the Huaychao case see testimony 201700; Miguel La Serna, *The Corner of the Living: Ayacucho on the Eve of the Shining Path Insurgency* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press 2012); Miguel La Serna, "En el Nombre del Gobierno: Políticas Locales, Memoria y Violencia en el Perú del Siglo XX" In *Las Formas del Recuerdo: Etnografías de la Violencia Política en el Perú*, eds. Ponciano del Pino and Caroline Yezer (Lima: Instituto de Estudios Peruanos and Instituto Francés de Estudios Andinos 2013), pp. 71-102.

<sup>317</sup> Ponciano del Pino H., "Una Brutalidad Propia de Hombres Cavernarios: Conflict de Género y Lucha Armada en Ayacucho (1940-1983)." In *Las Formas del Recuerdo: Etnografías de la Violencia Política en el Perú*, eds. Ponciano del Pino and Caroline Yezer (Lima: Instituto de Estudios Peruanos and Instituto Francés de Estudios Andinos 2013), p. 32.

<sup>318</sup> Julio Falconí Gonzales, *El Caso Uchuraccay: Las Claves de un Complot Contra la Libertad de Expresión (Ayacucho-Perú, Enero de 1983)* (Lima: Fondo Editorial, Asociación Nacional de Periodistas del Perú 2010), p. 17.

Furthermore, the community in Uchuraccay saw explicit approval for their Huaychao neighbors' violent actions with whom they had previously coordinated. President Fernando Belaunde and the regional political-military command lauded the actions of the community when they murdered suspicious visitors allied with Sendero militants. Belaunde believed their actions could serve as a model that should be followed elsewhere. In Uchuraccay, relations between community authorities and Sendero leadership grew tense after an incident in 1981. An altercation between one faction of community members and the local Sendero commander divided residents. Divisions worsened when Sendero militants killed the community president in December 1982.<sup>319</sup> The state security forces' recent helicopter visit, along with news of civilian resistance in neighboring communities like Huaychao, encouraged some in Uchuraccay to take a stand and protect themselves against the inevitable Sendero attacks. The "mistaken" murders took place in this context.

Evidence of deliberative practices in the community just prior to the murder of the journalists helps to account for how civilians reacted. Testimonies contend that community authorities gathered at the home of then lieutenant governor, Fortunato Gavilán García, to discuss the possibility of Sendero reprisals for events in Huaychao. They recognized that the community not only had to prepare itself for external attacks, but also had to watch out for subversive collaborators within. Yet threat alone does not account for how the community reacted. The authorities drank alcohol during the meeting they received as payment that morning to exonerate a young man for collaborating with Sendero. They discussed complaints levied against a community member who had been accused of helping Sendero steal a horse. Around 3

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<sup>319</sup> Testimony 201692.

or 4pm someone raised alarm outside with screams that, “The terrorists are coming!”<sup>320</sup> Other peasants appeared, armed with sticks, hatchets, rocks, and rope. Witnesses describe a community conversation before they began to abuse the strangers. Some believed they should turn their captives over to police in Tambo. The secretary of the community decided they had captured terrorists and ordered the group to be killed instead.<sup>321</sup>

How the community described the conflict, as well as its relationship with Sendero and the state, helps explain the journalists’ murder. Many residents claim the military had told the community they would always arrive by helicopter. They would wear uniforms and the community should not trust outsiders.<sup>322</sup> Some claim the military told them to kill any strangers that arrived to Uchuraccay.<sup>323</sup> Anyone on foot would be a terrorist. Pictures developed from the murdered photographer’s camera, as well as later testimonies, confirm a dialog took place between villagers and the journalists prior to their deaths. They tried to explain their objective of reaching Huaychao and clarified that they were “periodistas” and not “terroristas.”<sup>324</sup> Regardless, a community leader from the period maintains, “The journalists mistakenly arrived in town and the people, by mistake, killed them. They confused them with terrorists since when they arrived they identified themselves as journalists and to the peasants, journalist and terrorist were all the

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<sup>320</sup> Wilfredo Kapsoli, “Uchuraccay: Historia y Memoria.” In *25 Años Uchuraccay: La Tragedia del 26 de Enero de 1983*, ed. Roberto Mejía Alarcón (Lima: Fondo Editorial, Asociación Nacional de Periodistas del Perú 2008), p. 37.

<sup>321</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 38.

<sup>322</sup> CVR testimony 201679; Personal interview on May 22, 2014 in Uchuraccay with the mayor, president, and a town elder.

<sup>323</sup> CVR testimony 201690, 201691

<sup>324</sup> These are the Spanish words for journalists and terrorists respectively. To a Quechua-speaking villager without a strong command of Spanish, the words may have sounded very similar. Many suggest confusion over the professed identity of the journalists could have been a contributing factor to the murders. A variety of sources cite this confusion as the principle reason for the murder of the journalists. Community authorities confirmed this account during a personal interview on May 22, 2014 in Uchuraccay.

same.”<sup>325</sup> Residents saw the journalists as terrorists and murder had become the appropriate and desirable response.

According to one resident, the “mistake” had more to do with disbelief. The witness, along with several others, claims the community mistook the journalists for terrorists because their guide had previously led small groups of Sendero militants through the surrounding hillside. They recognized the guide and assumed his companions were another group of senderistas.<sup>326</sup> The community identified the journalists as Sendero militants and reacted in a manner they deemed appropriate. The journalists had also implored the young resident who had been accused as a Sendero sympathizer that morning to help explain their presence in the community. He spoke Spanish well, so the journalists assumed he could help them communicate their objectives. But, his efforts only hurt their case as the villagers assumed that the accused militant sympathizer defended the journalists because they were senderistas themselves.<sup>327</sup> Although the journalists explained their intentions, residents did not believe them. Internal community divisions, coupled with their understanding of the conflict and the actors involved, led to this tragic incident of violent civilian resistance.

Additional evidence supports the proposition that how the community saw Sendero helps to explain its violent actions. Anthropologists with the Vargas Llosa commission argue that the way the community killed and buried the eight journalists may indicate that they viewed the victims as “devils” or those who made a deal with an evil spirit. The investigators suggested that the devil is associated with the image of an outsider or foreigner. The forensics team observed that the corpses showed significant damage around the mouths and eyes, leaving the deceased

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<sup>325</sup> CVR testimony 201691

<sup>326</sup> Personal interview on May 22, 2014 in Uchuraccay.

<sup>327</sup> Miguel La Serna, *The Corner of the Living: Ayacucho on the Eve of the Shining Path Insurgency* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press 2012), p. 134.

unable to identify or speak about their victimizers. The villagers broke the victims' ankles so they couldn't come back to bother those who killed them. The perpetrators also supposedly washed and then burned the victims' clothing in an act of exorcism and purification.<sup>328</sup>

Uchuraccay could not sustain civilian self-defense efforts like some neighboring communities after the incident. A narratives argument decouples violent action from mobilization. Organizing and sustaining self-defense depends on a community's capacity to do so. Hypothesis 7 expects low institutional capacity to hinder a community's ability to maintain mobilization. Internal divisions related to issues like land disputes or political rivalries would stunt cooperative relationships. Uchuraccay's low community capacity partially explains its inability to contend with Sendero threats and increasingly distrustful and abusive soldiers. Political rivalries and fractured political leadership can be traced back to land reform under General Velasco. As the old haciendas started to transform into peasant communities, traditional power structures changed in Uchuraccay. New institutional practices emerged that corresponded with the bureaucratic state, which generated discord about legitimate authority and community decision-making in Uchuraccay.<sup>329</sup> The transition introduced new positions like the community president and lieutenant governor, a figure in charge of community order. The new posts existed alongside traditional positions dating back to the colonial period like the *varayoc*, who served as maximum communal authority, acted as a judge in conflict resolution, and took charge in organizing collective labor and community festivals.<sup>330</sup> Sendero intentionally upset traditional hierarchies and generated tensions when it attempted to exert control. It aimed to create rifts that

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<sup>328</sup> *Informe de la Comisión Investigadora de los Sucesos de Uchuraccay* (Lima, March 1983), p. 37. Again, many criticized the commission's conclusions, but the forensic evidence is suggestive.

<sup>329</sup> For more on this socially disruptive change see Chapter 5 in Olga M. González, *Unveiling Secrets of War in the Peruvian Andes* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press 2011).

<sup>330</sup> Hiroshi Hosoya, *La Memoria Post-colonial: Tiempo, Espacio y Discursos sobre los Sucesos de Uchuraccay*, Document de Trabajo 134 (Lima: Instituto de Estudios Peruanos 2004), p. 18.

would affect a community's capacity and desire to organize and resist. Divided authority structures indicate a lower community capacity and help explain the community's failure to organize and sustain resistance.

Sendero Luminoso took advantage of local tensions and fostered antagonisms where economic, social, and political interests collided. Despite land reform, the previous landowner from Uchuraccay lived in Huanta and maintained some property and influence in the community. Alejandro Huamán, who served as community president and a representative of the landowner, likely invited Sendero retaliation when he accused and punished a political rival of stealing horses. The accused, Serevino Morales Huáscal Ccente, allegedly served as the point-man for Sendero in Uchuraccay. Sendero murdered Huamán shortly before the incident with the journalists, perhaps weakening the community's anti-Sendero camp and diminishing its capacity to organized resistance.<sup>331</sup> As historian Miguel La Serna argues in his account of civilian resistance in Huaychao, culturally rooted conceptions of power, justice, and community influenced decisions to resist Sendero.<sup>332</sup> Pre-existing authority structures and justice mechanisms to sanction social transgressions remained strong in Huaychao while deteriorating in Uchuraccay. Huaychao held less ill-will toward powers associated with remaining landlords, which affected community capacity to resist. Huaychao achieved sustained armed civilian resistance when Uchuraccay did not based partly on strong socioeconomic and familial networks with neighboring communities. Greater community capacity facilitated coordination and helped to clearly identify potential friends and foes. Furthermore, better ties to neighboring communities and traders like salt merchants provided intelligence and warning about impending Sendero

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<sup>331</sup> Ibid.

<sup>332</sup> Miguel La Serna, *The Corner of the Living: Ayacucho on the Eve of the Shining Path Insurgency* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press 2012), p. 182.

incursions.<sup>333</sup> Higher community capacity helps account for different outcomes in Huaychao and Uchuraccay as Hypothesis 7 expects.

Hypothesis 8 predicts inadequate resources would further inhibit community efforts to achieve collective goals. The military did not provide material support to residents. They passed out weapons only years later. Soldiers did not train communities how to fight. They offered mostly words of encouragement and informal authorization for communities to defend themselves. Actual support rarely came early on and residents learned they could not count on the police and military. For example, one community sought help after a confrontation between civilians and senderistas. A woman described her community's plight and an unresponsive state:

They went to the soldiers and told them, 'Up in the highlands we had a battle.' The soldiers responded, 'People are having these troubles everywhere we go out and we're tired.' [Soldiers] went up a ways on the road and couldn't go any further, gunfire made them turn back. 'We're tired, very tired. We're coming back from other parts where we patrolled and so we're tired and we can't go.'<sup>334</sup>

After the confrontation and unwillingness of the military to support the civilian efforts, they went on fewer patrols. They had neither the skills nor the resources to engage with Sendero militants.

The Vargas Llosa investigative commission turned in its Uchuraccay report to the president on March 4, 1983. Sendero publically criticized the findings for fifteen minutes over the airwaves from a seized radio station two days later. Sendero promised revenge on Uchuraccay, Huaychao, and Yacchuas for their paramilitary actions.<sup>335</sup> Uchuraccay suffered three severe incursions after the incident with the journalists. The community's actions had signaled to Sendero that many sided with the state so armed insurgents attacked the community during festivals throughout 1983. In the first attack on May 20<sup>th</sup>, militants killed at least twenty

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<sup>333</sup> Ibid., pp. 191-192.

<sup>334</sup> Testimony 200670.

<sup>335</sup> DESCO, *Violencia Política en el Perú, 1980-1988* Volume 1 (Lima: DESCO, Centro de Estudios y Promoción des Desarrollo 1989), p. 95.

residents from various villages as they celebrated the Espiritu Santo festival. They performed a house-to-house search looking for people by name. They shouted in Quechua, “To those of Uchuraccay, we’re going to wipe out all of you, we’re going to drink alcohol and blood from your skulls.”<sup>336</sup> The militants had just slaughtered 80 civilians in San José de Secce before their attack in Uchuraccay.<sup>337</sup> During the second attack on July 16<sup>th</sup> fifty senderistas stormed the Virgen de Carmen festival at midnight. The militants killed around twenty people, including many of the men who fell asleep after heavy drinking. The victims met horrific ends. Militants forced one man to his knees and murder him with a shotgun blast to the head. They shot another in the stomach and one resident remembers the next morning hogs pulled out his intestines. Finally, during the third attack on Christmas Eve militants murdered eight residents in the community school.<sup>338</sup> Each attack occurred during a religious celebration when the community congregated en masse. Increased confusion with the alcohol, fireworks, music, and bullfights, along with relaxed security, made the community more vulnerable.

The state security forces and self-defense forces from neighboring communities also targeted Uchuraccay residents with violence. Internal divisions made others suspicious. The military frequently killed without restraint and perpetrated acts of indiscriminant violence against suspected militants without fully understanding the operational context. Residents in Uchuraccay and the surrounding farms suffered victimization from both sides. For example, in June 1983 Sendero kidnapped a young girl and her brother and took them to a camp near Razuhuilca. Sendero militants held them against their will. Their captors threatened and insulted them, “You

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<sup>336</sup> Testimonies 201695 and 201679; Roberto Mejía Alarcón, *25 Años Uchuraccay: La Tragedia del 26 de Enero de 1983* (Lima: Fondo Editorial, Asociación Nacional de Periodistas del Perú 2008), p. 90.

<sup>337</sup> DESCO, *Violencia Política en el Perú, 1980-1988* Volume 1 (Lima: DESCO, Centro de Estudios y Promoción des Desarrollo 1989), p. 100.

<sup>338</sup> Testimonies 201695 and 201679; Roberto Mejía Alarcón, *25 Años Uchuraccay: La Tragedia del 26 de Enero de 1983* (Lima: Fondo Editorial, Asociación Nacional de Periodistas del Perú 2008), p. 90.

wretches, here blood will flow like water, we're going to spill the blood of the yana umas and roll around in it."<sup>339</sup> Moments later ten pancho-clad "senderistas" descended the mountain toward their camp. When the group got closer, the actual senderistas realized too late that the small contingent had really been a group of soldiers in disguise. The soldiers began killing militants and captives alike. One young girl witnessed her brother take a bullet. When she went to his aid, several bullets hit the ground at her feet and forced the girl to flee for her life. She crossed paths with another wounded captive who hid in a cave during her escape. Miraculously she made it to a neighboring village and they helped her complete the rest of her journey. Surrounding communities searched among the bodies for their loved ones the next morning and found many in unmarked mass graves.<sup>340</sup>

A handful of residents stayed behind to watch over their land and care for livestock, but the military killed most of them assuming that they sympathized with Sendero Luminoso. The soldiers also stole their animals. By 1984 no one remained in what had been Uchuraccay.

A group of former residents returned to their decimated village on October 10, 1993 and founded the "new" Uchuraccay. Ten young ronderos from Huaychao, an academic, and a couple of representatives from Peru's evangelical Christian association accompanied the group. They reconstruct the village under the banner of a new common faith; forty percent of the population self-identified as evangelical Christians among communities of the high Andean regions after 1984.<sup>341</sup> Narratives also played an important role in the resettlement process. The largely evangelical population compared their own experience to the children of Israel, returning to their home from captivity in Babylon. They would start fresh and new cooperative relationships with

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<sup>339</sup> Testimony 201998.

<sup>340</sup> Ibid.

<sup>341</sup> Ponciano del Pino, "Uchuraccay: Memoria y Representacion de la Violencia Politica en los Andes." In *Luchas Locales, Comunidades e Identidades*, eds. Ponciano del Pino and Elizabeth Jelin (Madrid: Siglo Veintiuno de España Editores 2003), p. 17.

the state and outside support ensured they could organize and sustain community self-defense. The new community tried to avoid old community divisions, but found it difficult to shake the stigma from its troubled past. Many in Peru, and even in the nearby provincial capital, continue to see those from Uchuraccay as “savage Indians”<sup>342</sup>

Uchuraccay remains geographically remote and isolated. But, the community has created stronger ties to larger towns in the region like Huamanga , Huanta, and Tambo. Local political authorities make trips to Lima and have taken steps to improve economic development and attract tourism. The community continues to reconcile with its past and each year joins with families of the victims and an association of journalists to commemorate the massacre. And at least one day a year, when the community remembers the events from its troubled past, they greet visitors who arrive on foot with flowers.<sup>343</sup> Uchuraccay exemplifies the notion of a community caught “between two fires” and residents eventually had to abandon their homes. They constructed the new Uchuraccay on a different plot of land and contemporary political authorities’ primary concerns focus on creating a better future for their community and overcoming the stigma of its troubled past. Peru recently designated Uchuraccay a political district in 2014 which will ultimately help with these goals, as they now receive direct financial support from the state.

### **COMMUNITIES NEAR HUANTA**

Communities in the Huanta and Luricocha districts suffered disproportionately during the internal armed conflict. Civilians suffered severe and unrelenting violence at the hands of both Sendero militants and state security forces. They feared the inevitable reprisals for appearing sympathetic to either side. Victims and their families had little recourse as the tally of atrocities

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<sup>342</sup> Ibid, p. 23.

<sup>343</sup> Francesca García D., “Uchuraccay: El Pueblo que Recibe con Flores a Quienes Llegan a Pie.” *La Republica* (January 28, 2015), <http://www.larepublica.pe/28-01-2015/el-pueblo-que-recibe-con-flores-a-quienes-llegan-a-pie>.

accumulated in the early conflict years. The military could not adequately defend remote communities from Sendero Luminoso attacks and militants failed to defend communities from the military's punitive violence against those seen to support the revolutionary cause.

The military set up two separate strongholds in the city of Huanta: a temporary base at the local stadium and the Castro Pampa military base, which still exists today. The military restricted civilian mobility, denied access to parts of the city, and prohibited individuals from taking pictures or even looking at soldiers and the bases. The military set up surveillance posts, manned checkpoints, and enforced a curfew.

Sendero militants increased their incursions into communities around Huanta starting in the early 1980s. Small groups or entire columns of senderistas entered towns and villages to discuss their struggle against the state and to punish opponents. The militants declared in Quechua that they were "killing all the wretches." One witness remembered how Sendero demanded support and recruits from her village. Her husband explained that he had to stay behind because of her failing health and they labeled him as a "two-faced" traitor and accused him of playing both sides. The militants came for the entire village on one occasion and took them into the mountains. The senderistas murdered her husband and left his body along the way. They did not bother to bury him, "because that was a job for the Marines."<sup>344</sup> A relative found her husband's remains but she never went to collect them because of persistent dangers in the region.

Sendero Luminoso arrived in the valleys near Huanta more frequently around 1981, especially near Cangari, Quinrapa, and Chiwa. Sendero militants blocked roads leading in and out of areas where they maintained a strong presence. These towns and villages became known as "red zones," or areas the revolutionary group controlled. Sendero's initial armed actions

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<sup>344</sup> Testimony 200579.

disrupted daily life and provoked the state. For example, on August 24, 1982 twenty dynamite explosions shook Huanta, leaving the city in complete darkness. In coordination with these explosions, Sendero militants attacked the police station up the road in Luricocha and tightened their grip over the local population.<sup>345</sup> Months later an armed group attacked the “Carmen” estate in Luricocha and newspapers reported the murder of its owner and the destruction of many of the administrative buildings.<sup>346</sup>

The owner and his wife did not die in the attack. Investigative reporter and historian, Gustavo Gorriti, visited the estate to speak with the German owner and his wife, a Huanta native. Gorriti found the battle-worn couple fatigued and anxious from fending off Sendero attacks. Sendero leadership marked the couple for death and neither the police nor neighbors seemed willing or able to come to their aid. The middle-aged couple repelled Sendero advances in a defiant act of resistance to the “tyranny of terror.” Augusta la Torre (aka Comrade Norah)—Guzmán’s first wife, Sendero Luminoso’s second in command, and niece of the German’s wife—had come years before to purchase their weapons prior to armed conflict. His refusal sparked the later attacks. The couple eventually abandoned their home and left Peru.<sup>347</sup>

Civilians closer to Huanta organized and protected themselves through their own volition less frequently than communities in more remote areas like Huaychao in the early 1980s. However, state security forces, specifically the Army, played an active role in mobilizing communities around between 1989 and 1991. Soldiers at the Castro Pampa base helped with the formal organization of civilian self-defense forces. The military made radio announcements and visited villages to spread the word about a meeting at the base. The military eventually forced all

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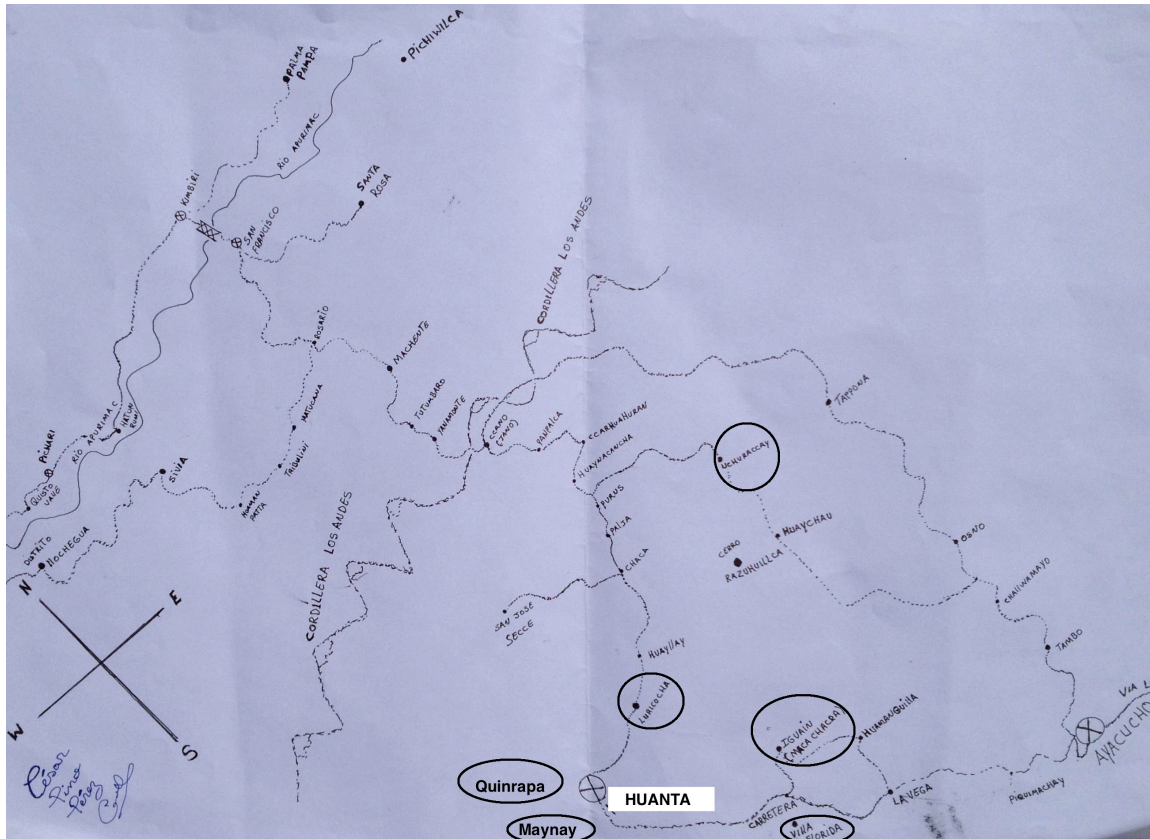
<sup>345</sup> DESCO, *Violencia Política en el Perú, 1980-1988* Volume 1 (Lima: DESCO, Centro de Estudios y Promoción des Desarrollo 1989), p. 86.

<sup>346</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 89.

<sup>347</sup> Gustavo Gorriti Ellenbogen, *The Shining Path: A History of the Millenarian War in Peru* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press 1999), p. 256.

the communities around Huanta to organize and they split the groups into geographic zones A through D.

**Figure 4.1: Map of the mountainous region near Huanta<sup>348</sup>**



Soldiers organized civilians according to village when they arrived at the base. Soldiers recorded the names of people who did not attend the meeting. Hooded men identified and separated some attendees from the rest of the group. One witness remembers, “During my time at the base I saw army vehicles bring in people alive, wrapped in blankets, some covered in blood, and they put them in rooms at the base.”<sup>349</sup> The witness knew neither the fate of those who went to the rooms nor those whom the hooded men pulled from the crowd, but she never

<sup>348</sup> Map drawn by César Pérez.

<sup>349</sup> Testimony 200613. The witness discusses the beginning of the self-defense forces in 1985, though she is mistaken in terms of the date. She references “Centurion” as being in charge. He did not arrive until at least 1989 and he was not in charge, though many considered him a commander despite lack of rank. All the witnesses I spoke to who went to the base suggest that military organizing occurred in 1989.

saw them again. As the woman left the base, she saw her husband among the line of detainees soldiers rounded up for not attending the meeting. He had been out drinking the night before and refused to wake up when she went to the base that morning. Her husband hobbled by with only one shoe, his hands tied behind his back, and his head partially covered. When she returned to the base to make inquiries about her husband's detention the new president of the self-defense force central command in Huanta confirmed that her husband, along with many others, would be punished for not attending the meeting.<sup>350</sup>

Military-led mobilization efforts expanded to places with a stronger Sendero presence, like neighboring Luricocha. In the late 1980s community members coordinated with the military and took a more active counterinsurgency role. The ronderos formed a belt around Huanta, protecting their own communities and serving as a buffer to limit Sendero attacks in the city.<sup>351</sup> Participants kept watch day and night and accompanied military patrols when required. One witness remembered his mother, an evangelical Christian, "She was a brave person, at home every night chewing coca leaves with a pile of small rocks at her side keeping watch. She kept the stack of stones handy in case she needed them to throw at insurgents that might show up at her home."<sup>352</sup> Everyone did his or her part. Others remembered the difficulties associated with participation in community self-defense, "Those who did not attend the meetings were considered terrorists. Men and women patrolled from six to twelve at night armed with sticks and knives. If we did not go out on the patrol our own neighbors looked to kill us."<sup>353</sup> Nonparticipation would raise suspicion.

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<sup>350</sup> Ibid.

<sup>351</sup> Personal interview in Huanta on May 8, 2013 with a municipal administrator who lived in Huanta during the conflict.

<sup>352</sup> Testimony 200643.

<sup>353</sup> Testimony 200717

The military and their new civilian allies intensified efforts to weed out Sendero supporters and to hunt down its leaders and active participants. Civilians went from paralysis to proactive with some forceful nudging by state security forces. They hunted militants down one by one and after years of escalating violence, soldiers finally killed “Percy” and “Raul,” the last Sendero leaders in Huanta. Soldiers strapped dynamite to the militant leaders and blew them up in a park near the central market while still alive for the entire town to see.<sup>354</sup> Civilians played a crucial role in Sendero’s defeat. The president of an association of Huanta’s former self-defense force participants explained to me, “If the self-defense forces weren’t out in front, the army wouldn’t have moved forward.”<sup>355</sup>

### **Civilian Resistance in Maynay**

Maynay appeared different in the 1980s. Today the center of town has a small school and multi-use community building in front of a massive green space. Homes surround the perimeter. The area consisted of only small farms in prior years. People in Maynay initially sided with Sendero Luminoso and state security forces considered Maynay a “red zone.” In addition to overt participation and support, Sendero’s 1,000 eyes and ears kept the militant organization informed about potential resistance in Maynay.

Many Peruvians’ lives changed dramatically in a single day during the conflict period. For example, one woman in Paquecc, a town near Maynay, recalls that at 11 p.m. on July 25, 1984:

Fifteen hooded people came into my home. They shined a light on my face and took away my husband. They struck him and gagged his mouth. One of them kept watch over me and covered me with a blanket on the bed. Two hours later they went away and my sister asked about my husband. The two of us went out to look for him and we found him

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<sup>354</sup> Testimony 200643.

<sup>355</sup> Personal interview in Huanta on June 14, 2015 with the president of the *Pacificadores* (the “Peacemakers”) and two dozen other participants. I spoke with some of the participants individually and others collectively.

lying on the highway. They had strangled him with a rope and then stuck a knife in his heart.<sup>356</sup>

Any number of factors could provide motive for this type of violence. In this particular case, the witness' father-in-law gave soldiers oranges and firewood when they came to his home the month before. The woman's other in-laws met a similar fate the same night Sendero murdered her husband. She made her way home after discovering her husband's body and found that Sendero stole all their possessions. The woman remembered that en route, "Near the Paquecc cemetery I saw a man lying on the ground. I realized it was my father-in-law. He was dead. They had stabbed him in the heart."<sup>357</sup> She also found her mother-in-law hanging from a tree near by. A simple act like giving oranges and firewood to soldiers (or insurgents) could turn a life upside down.

Sendero Luminoso controlled most of the villages below Huanta throughout the 1980s. Members started to visit Paquecc and other villages near Maynay in the late 1970s and came more frequently in the early 1980s to ask for support. Militants targeted authorities and specific individuals with selective violence starting in 1984 and many communities became Sendero strongholds. Sendero labeled those who did not attend meetings as "*iskay uya*" or hypocrites.<sup>358</sup> The state security forces also came a handful of times to gather information and weed out suspected insurgents. When state security forces visited they arrived with the idea that they were entering hostile territory. Police and soldiers assumed widespread support for the militant movement among residents and perpetrated abuses.

Sustained self-defense forces did not form in Maynay, Paquecc, and other neighboring villages until 1989 and 1990. Although I heard accounts of individual resistance in these

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<sup>356</sup> Testimony 200516.

<sup>357</sup> Ibid.

<sup>358</sup> Testimony 200671.

communities prior to 1989, they did not organize or achieve sustained mobilization until the military provided direct assistance and support. However, although the military served as an important ally to facilitate or compel civilian resistance to Sendero violence, state intervention does not account for the entire story.

**Table 4.2: Narratives, community capacity, and civilian resistance outcomes in Maynay 1980-2000**

		Community Capacity	
		High	Low
Violent Narratives	Yes	Violent mobilization (After 1989)	Sporadic individual violence (N/A)
	No	Nonviolent mobilization (N/A)	Flee or collaborate with insurgents (1980-1989)

### *Realist and Rationalist Explanations*

Sendero Luminoso forced many residents to support its revolutionary campaign, though some willingly aided the movement. Reluctant community authorities received warnings to denounce their positions. Speaking against the party usually led to lethal consequences. Hypothesis 1 expects increased threat and violence to motivate communities to resist. Growing Sendero strength would compel civilians to respond to changing conditions. I did not find sufficient support for H1 in Maynay. When civilians mobilized in the late 1980s, violence levels and threat were much lower than years prior. Furthermore, like so many of the community case studies in my research, much of Sendero's violence came as a consequence of civilian resistance and not a cause of it. Militant attacks intensified as communities around Maynay started to mobilize and resist.<sup>359</sup>

The Maynay case highlights some of the conceptual and theoretical challenges in research on civilian responses to community insecurity. In Maynay and neighboring

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<sup>359</sup> Testimony 200694.

communities, most civilians did not resist Sendero Luminoso early in the conflict. Instead, many sympathized with its political objectives and looked to Sendero Luminoso to protect them as the state targeted suspected Sendero supporters. A number of residents originally sided with Sendero out of agreement with its professed ideology. Ideas and not insecurity explain civilian behavior. They could not “revolt against the revolution” because in the eyes of many, they *were* the revolution. Threat and violence did not compel opponents to respond, but instead to stay silent so their neighbors would not denounce them to the militant movement.

Civilian ambivalence or acquiescence in Maynay and other communities might be understood as a matter of pragmatism and fall under the general explanatory power of realist arguments. However, differences in individual responses when faced with the same types of threat would challenge realist arguments. Some renounced positions of authority, while others continued to stand resolute in the face of threat and violence. Some remained silent, while others reported Sendero actions to the military and police, despite warnings not to.<sup>360</sup> Other factors appear to have influenced decisions to resist Sendero demands when facing similar conditions.

The current regional leader for the self-defense forces in Huanta remembered his own experiences in Maynay during the conflict years where his father served as a community authority, “The Army couldn’t protect Maynay. Many were afraid of both the armed forces and Sendero Luminoso. It was a delicate experience and most were not really with one or the other.”<sup>361</sup> Violence and threat cannot explain community outcomes, but it can account for some individual actions. The history of civilian resistance in Maynay is largely the story one man. “Zorro,” or Fox, almost single-handedly initiated and developed a unified community self-

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<sup>360</sup> Personal interviews in Huanta on May 10, 2013 and May 14, 2014 with the daughter of a murdered authority from Paquecc.

<sup>361</sup> Personal interview in Huanta on May 20, 2014 with the current president of the broader Huanta self-defense force leadership committee.

defense force in Maynay. Although his ultimate success came with the support of soldiers from the Castro Pampa military base, he resisted Sendero early on and attempted to organize his neighbors prior to military involvement.<sup>362</sup>

Sendero came for Zorro in 1985 when word spread in the community that he opposed the militant movement. Zorro fled for Lima temporarily, but life was difficult for displaced people in the capital and he returned shortly after. In 1986 and 1987 militants began to cut the electric lines near Maynay with machetes. On August 24, 1987 the militants shot at the poles holding up the lines and came after Zorro with rocks the same evening. He avoided capture by Sendero but the military took him away shortly after. One of the few community members reluctant to support Sendero became the guilty party in these acts of sabotage. Double agents denounced him to the military in an attempt to eliminate him. He described his experience, “As a prisoner at the base, they did everything to me. I was tortured. I left with two broken ribs after fifteen days. It was bad at Castro Pampa, but the Marines that already left [Huanta] were even more savage [than the Army].”<sup>363</sup>

Zorro returned to his home and spent the next couple of days in bed recovering from the physical and psychological trauma. After three days militants came to his home. He recalled:

The leader placed a revolver on top of a towel and sat across from me at the table. Most of them stayed outside keeping watch and said, ‘Kill him already!’ But, why would they kill me if I hadn’t done anything? I had a knife underneath a blanket and I decided that I would kill one of them before they did me in. That was my decision. A few minutes passed and we spoke face to face. Then there was a noise and another senderista came in and said, ‘Hurry, the wretches are coming!’ Some friends were coming to visit me and one was teaching another how to drive and the car was old. The car backfired and made a noise that startled the senderistas and seemed like a gunshot. They thought the military was coming.

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<sup>362</sup> Personal interview in Maynay on June 7, 2015 with Zorro.

<sup>363</sup> Ibid.

Zorro felt fortunate. He took the mud from his shoes and put it in the river for luck in an act of superstition.

The military returned for him once again, but he sat alone with his baby daughter this time and the soldiers did not want to deal with the child. Shortly after, militants took his neighbor away on February 2, 1989 and Zorro explained, “I went to look for him. I asked, ‘Why don’t we do something like in Pichiwilca?’ So we met down by the water repartition, but a rat turned us in. There were about twenty people down there, but who knew that at least one would betray us?”<sup>364</sup> Zorro referenced Pichiwilca in their conversations, which is a town in the VRAEM well known for mobilizing a civilian self-defense force and actively combatting Sendero militants.

The militants’ punitive violence worsened and out of desperation he went to speak with the commander at Castro Pampa. They turned him away at first, but his persistence won Zorro an audience with the base commander. He explained the precarious situation in Maynay. Like so many other civilians “caught between two fires,” Sendero and the military both threatened his life. He convinced the commander to provide him with assistance despite initial distrust and Zorro collaborated with the military. They fed him and he stayed at the base overnight. Soldiers provided Zorro with a map to identify villages with a strong militant presence and asked about specific names. The following day he took a group of soldiers to Huansa, a village bordering Maynay. He accompanied soldiers door-to-door as they searched many of the homes. They found subversive propaganda hidden inside bags of dry beans and detained some residents.

The group made its way to Maynay next. The soldiers dressed Zorro in a military uniform and covered his face. Soldiers rang a bell and lined up every member of the community. The lieutenant in charge of the excursion introduced Zorro as a former terrorist:

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<sup>364</sup> Ibid.

He told the people, ‘Everyone that worked with him on this side, and the rest over here.’ Then they took off my hood and I could see the fear! Only a few had not participated. The lieutenant told them, ‘We know you are all terrorists here. No one can claim to be a saint.’ He picked out six men from the crowd to go back with them to the base and said, ‘You six are going to take care of this man. If he dies, all of Maynay will disappear.’ The commander put me in their care and we returned to Maynay to begin our work.<sup>365</sup>

The six men never left his side. They accompanied Zorro everywhere and Maynay remained casualty-free for the remainder of the conflict after they organized. Civilians made tirachas, or single-shot homemade guns, from pipes to fight. A mechanic from Huanta taught them to make the weapons at the base. The military provided rifle ammunition for the tirachas and the Army distributed several Mossberg shotguns the following year.

Hypothesis 2 expects that state weakness will force civilians to provide for their own security. I found some support for H2, but not for the conflict period. Conditions of state weakness existed before the armed conflict and civilians in Maynay took steps to provide for their own security with civil defense prior to Sendero Luminoso violence. State neglect led to previous instances of community mobilization to contend with other security challenges like animal theft. Key participants in these earlier groups allied with Sendero Luminoso from the onset of armed conflict. The revolutionary movement coopted influential community members and autonomous community self-defense ceased to exist until Zorro reorganized the community in 1989. Local Sendero allies created new dangers for those who would resist Sendero’s revolutionary political program in Maynay like Zorro. State weakness led to inaction by those who would oppose Sendero.

Alternatively, hypothesis 3 expects state strength to lead police and soldiers to utilize civilians as a paramilitary force. I found support for H3. The military played a significant role in mobilizing civilians to resist Sendero Luminoso. Soldiers from the Castro Pampa military base

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<sup>365</sup> Ibid.

forced a repentant community to organize rondas and participate in self-defense.<sup>366</sup> But, two factors complicate this explanation for armed civilian mobilization. First, the army had a strong presence in Huanta from 1985 onward, yet they did not coordinate with local communities to mobilize and maintain strong civilian self-defense until 1989. Second, a more detailed look at the process of mobilization in the late 1980s suggests that civilian resistance efforts preceded mass mobilization and that initial coordination with the military in Maynay came through civilian and not state initiative. For example, Sendero murdered one man back in January 1985 near Maynay for his short-lived attempt to organize neighbors in self-defense.<sup>367</sup> Residents like Zorro who eventually succeeded asked for support and the military eventually came to their aid before taking a more proactive position.

When the military took action, it implemented policies such as the establishment of checkpoints in 1990. They required civilians to acquire travel passes to restrict mobility and to detect unknown elements in the region. Although the military required leaders from all the self-defense forces to attend weekly meetings at Castro Pampa, the responsibility for implementing self-defense fell on civilians. The military provided some degree of supervision and assistance, but as Zorro recalled, “In Maynay, men and women, young and old, we all worked together.”<sup>368</sup> The community constructed four watchtowers to help with security. They stationed residents at each tower and in the evening sentinels worked six hour shifts that changed at 6pm, midnight, and 6am. Everyone contributed to the self-defense efforts. The elderly kept watch too and would signal for aid from armed commandos using whistles. Residents between 18 and 30 years old

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<sup>366</sup> Testimony 200671.

<sup>367</sup> Testimony 205329.

<sup>368</sup> Personal interview in Maynay on June 7, 2015 with Zorro.

sometimes went out on patrols for several days with neighboring self-defense forces and soldiers to look for Sendero militants.<sup>369</sup>

Hypothesis 4 expects opportunism to play a role in civilian mobilization. Material incentives did not influence decisions to organize in Maynay, although self-defense forces from neighboring communities coordinated to do each other's dirty work on several occasions. Instead of opportunism for material gain and local rivalries, these outcomes of violence had more to do with distrust and revenge against community members that had originally sided with Sendero. They targeted individuals with violence on behalf of new allies in neighboring communities and sometimes attempted to get the military to do it for them. For example, in one instance three rondero leaders from Paquecc turned a suspected Sendero sympathizer from their ranks over to the self-defense force leader from Cangari. He took the man to Castro Pampa and was never seen again. They told his wife he ran off to the mountains to join up with Sendero, though a soldier eventually confirmed he had been taken to the mountains near Razuhuillca and killed.<sup>370</sup> Discerning the truth about whether the man actually sympathized with Sendero is impossible. Some met their end at the hands of trusted neighbors and not murderous strangers.

#### *Narratives and Community Capacity*

Zorro provides an account of community behavior in Maynay that demonstrates civilian pragmatism in the face of threat while also highlighting the important role of communication and changing interpretations of events and relationships. During an interview he shrugged and lamented, "The people went [with Sendero] out of fear and not from the heart. They later

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<sup>369</sup> During my fieldwork I found that most communities described participation in self-defense as compulsory. Everyone participated regardless of gender and age, though responsibilities differed. The official age of participation ranged from 18 to 65, though many children and teens also contributed to defense efforts.

<sup>370</sup> Testimony 200671.

understood it was right to defend themselves instead. They all came around.”<sup>371</sup> He described the importance of threat, but also a process where community narratives changed alongside efforts to organize civilian resistance. A major ideological rift separated Zorro and some of his friends from community members who acquiesced to Sendero control. The current self-defense force leader in Maynay speculated, “It’s possible that maybe only five percent actually understood and believed in the politics.”<sup>372</sup> A resident from the neighboring village of Huansa supported this statement when she described the murder of a neighbor by Sendero militants, “She didn’t even know how to read, what did she have to do with politics?”<sup>373</sup> Many looked to local leaders for guidance. Community voices that held greater sway in early decisions to support Sendero had to contend with increased internal opposition as the conflict progressed. Speaking against Sendero remained extremely dangerous, but new conflict narratives challenged the movement and facilitated resistance.

Threat and violence forced communities to react, but does not fully explain how civilians responded in Maynay and neighboring communities like Paquecc, Huansa, and Cangari. Sendero Luminoso’s political project and initial ties to the community differed from Huaychao and Uchuraccay. Resistance to Sendero politics came from only a limited number in Maynay and the changing nature of civilian resistance had more to do with ideas and identities than objective conditions of insecurity. Hypothesis 5 expects that changing interpretations of events in conflict will affect civilian resistance outcomes. How civilians in Maynay understood Sendero actions affected their initial response to Sendero politics. A significant number of residents benefited from land reform under policies implemented by progressive military regimes during the 1970s. Many new landowners sent their children to the city to attend better secondary schools and to

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<sup>371</sup> Personal interview in Maynay on June 7, 2015 with Zorro.

<sup>372</sup> Personal interview in Maynay on June 7, 2015 with the current self-defense force president of Maynay.

<sup>373</sup> Personal interview in Huansa on May 10, 2013 with a group of residents from the community of Huansa.

study at the university. Sendero linked its early revolutionary actions to narratives about popular events that occurred in Huanta and the Ayacucho capital prior to armed struggle. For example, Sendero connected its political program to struggles for land and education reform. Some saw their children's future tied to the movement.<sup>374</sup> Communities around Maynay held former activists that played an active role in popular struggles in high regard. Despite limited links to Sendero, many residents mistakenly connected incidents of Sendero violence to prior popular movements. These types of narratives influenced the way communities interpreted Sendero actions.

Changes in how narratives described the Maynay community's relationship with Sendero and the state security forces also played a crucial role in explaining outcomes of civilian resistance. Maynay provides an illustrative case for a two-way street in defining relationships—how the community viewed Sendero and how Sendero viewed the community both influenced resistance outcomes. When Maynay initially sided with Sendero Luminoso, some of its militant ranks came as friends of residents' children from the university. They established contacts with influential families of young movement leaders and assisted farmers with agricultural projects. Sendero gained favor by opposing the collective administration of lands. Peasants had recently overcome conditions of servitude on large haciendas through their own initiative and preferred to remain as small, independent landowners.<sup>375</sup> The community viewed Sendero as an advocate and as a means to improve the position of peasants in local and regional politics.

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<sup>374</sup> José Coronel, "Violencia Política y Respuestas Campesinas en Huanta." In *Las Rondas Campesinas y la Derrota de Sendero Luminoso*, eds. Carlos Iván Degregori, José Coronel, Ponciano del Pino, and Orin Starn, (Lima: Instituto de Estudios Peruanos 1996), pp. 90-91.

<sup>375</sup> José Coronel, "Violencia Política y Respuestas Campesinas en Huanta." In *Las Rondas Campesinas y la Derrota de Sendero Luminoso*, eds. Carlos Iván Degregori, José Coronel, Ponciano del Pino, and Orin Starn, (Lima: Instituto de Estudios Peruanos 1996), pp. 90-91.

How the communities viewed Sendero changed over time. Militant behavior did not align with local notions of justice and even those who supported the political project did not always approve of methods militants used to achieve it. For example, one resident from Maynay described the death of her parents in Paquecc where her father was a community authority:

More than 60 senderistas came for my mother and father at night. They stabbed my parents and cut my father's throat. The terrorists threatened to kill anyone who reported the murders and I wasn't able to dig up their remains to move them to the cemetery for two years. Around Maynay, dead bodies hung from trees along the trails with signs that said, 'snitches dies like this.' What could you do? You didn't dare to take them down. I remember Sendero butchered six others and there were pieces everywhere. We saw so many sad cases.<sup>376</sup>

Militants had warned her father to renounce his position and to refrain from talking about the party. It became dangerous to speak out and Sendero violence became synonymous with butchery.

The situation worsened in Paquecc and people believed Sendero revealed its true nature. When militants came to "ask for" a cow to support the revolution, refusal brought harsh consequences. The movement burdened civilians in Paquecc and other communities near Maynay with financial difficulties and new risks. Sendero continued to profess, "We're fighting for you. We're fighting for a better life." But things got worse and not better for most. The community discussed its situation in meetings and described Sendero's transformation into the same abusive and corrupt state it fought to eliminate.<sup>377</sup> Militants seized part of the corn and wheat harvests. They stole cows, chickens, pigs, and goats. They kidnapped the 14-year-old brother of the woman who lost her parents and demanded a ransom for his safe return. Security concerns limited work hours from 10am to 3pm and significantly reduced harvests. Senderistas became murderers, thieves, and opportunists that took advantage of the situation and placed

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<sup>376</sup> Personal interview in Huansa on May 10, 2013 with a resident of Maynay and former resident of Paquecc.

<sup>377</sup> Personal interview in Huanta on May 14, 2014 with a resident of Maynay and former resident of Paquecc.

unnecessary hardships on the lives of peasants.<sup>378</sup> Their violence affected not only opponents, but also supporters. Civilian resistance became more likely in communities near Maynay that came to see Sendero promises as lies.

Sendero also began to view residents in the communities around Maynay differently. It previously saw potential recruits and a base of support for its political program. However, the “1,000 eyes and ears” that informed the movement on community developments reported more incidents of resistance and greater collaboration with state security forces. Sendero interpreted any actions the community took to provide for its own security as actions against the movement and responded with punitive violence. What had previously been a “red zone” became a contested site where civilians navigated complicated relationships with Sendero and the state security forces. Many residents had sticks and machetes to protect themselves. They slept in the mountains and remained vigilant. Sendero began to leave warning notes for those suspected of opposing its goals. One woman received a note that warned, “We’re going to cut your throat.” Militants sometimes came in force and accused residents of being “yana umas,” the Quechua phrase referring to state security forces or self-defense force participants that wore black knit balaclavas. Militants accused residents of providing information to the police and military. They would shout, “Long live Gonzalo!” in reference to Sendero Luminoso leader’s *nom de guerre* and asked, “Do you know him? Whom do you fight for?”<sup>379</sup> The community’s loyalty came into doubt and the militants did not tolerate debate. You either supported the militant movement or not. Sendero’s changing views of communities around Maynay affected relationships and outcomes of violent civilian resistance.

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<sup>378</sup> Ibid.

<sup>379</sup> Ibid.

Changes in how communities viewed their relationship with the state security forces also corresponded with changes in civilian resistance outcomes. Residents in Huanta and the surrounding communities held negative impressions of the state security forces during the initial stages of the insurgency. Prior to armed conflict, civilians experienced abandon and neglect, punctuated by “sporadic bursts of punitive violence” when state security forces responded to social unrest.<sup>380</sup> Rumors circulated among civilians regarding abuses and military leadership’s horrific actions. Their reputation for brutal violence and excessive cruelty spread fear among the population. Whispers about leaders at the Castro Pampa military base still circulate today, passed down to the children of those who lived through the horrors. Residents described “ojos del gato,” or “ojos del búho,” the man in charge of Castro Pampa in the mid- and late-1980s. He had a reputation as a vicious man who dressed as a civilian. Residents described him as tall, thin, and white, probably coming to Ayacucho from the coast. They also mentioned “mata perro” and the infamous “Centurion,” who may have all been the same person. Military figures frequently changed their combat names to maintain anonymity. One Huanta resident explained, “He killed everyone, he was an animal. That’s what they said at least.”<sup>381</sup> Perhaps a real figure like Centurion is both a man and an idea—that of an abusive military commander responsible for widespread civilian victimization.

Some residents in communities around Maynay ceased to focus on state security force abuses and began to describe the military as an ally against militants. These new narratives helped contribute to the development of civilian self-defense forces. The military also changed

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<sup>380</sup> Jaymie Patricia Heilman, *Before the Shining Path: Politics in Rural Ayacucho, 1895-1980* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press 2010), p. 9.

<sup>381</sup> Personal interview on May 1, 2014 with a resident of Huanta who is too young to have witnessed specific events from the late 1980s, but recalls growing up with the second-hand accounts from his relatives who all lived in town during the conflict years. The names used to describe the military commander translate to cat eyes, owl eyes, dog killer, and Centurion respectively. He also mentioned the term “lechosa” which referred to the commander’s “milky white” skin.

its view of civilians in Maynay. The community transformed from a “red zone” into a space for “making Peruvians.” When Zorro initially went to the Castro Pampa base to ask for help in organizing armed civilian resistance, the soldiers saw him as a potential infiltrator. Military leaders remained vigilant and distrustful of communities when they worked with new allies and repentant militants. During the initial phases of civilian organizing at Castro Pampa in 1989, the military cataloged and vetted entire communities. Leadership committees from community self-defense forces attended mandatory meetings to receive updates, to participate in training exercises, and to strengthen civic-military relations. Zorro described a harsh socialization process where military and civilian leaders forged new relationships.

The military began to see significant defections from Sendero militants who renounced the movement to collaborate with the military and local self-defense forces. Hundreds of repentant militants helped to bolster the counterinsurgency. They shared information and guided patrols to hunt Sendero militants. Military leaders had new authorization to facilitate Sendero defection under repentant terrorist laws enacted by the Fujimori government. Soldiers worked with repentant senderistas and established stronger ties to communities they recently “liberated” from militant control.

How the communities saw themselves also facilitated violent resistance to Sendero Luminoso around Maynay. For example, Zorro described a priest who frequented the community to give Mass and often mentioned the importance of self-defense, further facilitating and justify their actions. Although the military played a role in mobilization through punishment for nonparticipation, self-defense forces operated with a large degree of autonomy. Communities like Maynay, Quinrapa, and Cangari worked together to strengthen fortifications, build watchtowers, and to patrol the countryside. When civilian leaders made the decision to go out on

patrol, neighboring villages would each contribute men. The rest of the village stayed behind to keep watch and provide defense in the event of an attack. The military provided auxiliary support when ronderos went out on patrol, but civilian participation far surpassed that of state security forces. Civilian patrols would send *chaskis* to scout, share information, and to prepare other communities. The term references the long distance messengers from the Incan Empire and provides another illustration how civilians contextualized their role in civilian self-defense as a new manifestation of existing traditions. Civilian self-defense forces became the heroes of Maynay, the Ayacucho region, and all of Peru. Civilians reduced violence in ways that the police and military could not. Civilians came to view themselves as the architects of their own fate.

Community narratives helped civilians make sense of events and define relationships with Sendero and the military. The narratives affected the likelihood of violent civilian action. However, hypothesis 7 expects community capacity to account for whether civilians achieved sustained mobilization. H7 predicts that high community capacity helps civilians overcome collective action problems. I found support for H7 in Maynay. Weak local institutions and contested authority structures indicate low community capacity and help explain Sendero's early success in establishing support. Even when community narratives about Sendero began to change, civilians failed to mobilize and resist its revolutionary program.<sup>382</sup> Despite attempts by Zorro and others to organize resistance during the 1980s, they failed. Residents did not have pre-existing institutions to facilitate cooperation. The Church did not maintain a strong presence, there was no central meeting point in town, and residents did not engage in community-wide collective work projects. Maynay residents viewed themselves as a collection of neighboring farms rather than a unified community.

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<sup>382</sup> José Coronel, "Violencia Política y Respuestas Campesinas en Huanta." In *Las Rondas Campesinas y la Derrota de Sendero Luminoso*, eds. Carlos Iván Degregori, José Coronel, Ponciano del Pino, and Orin Starn, (Lima: Instituto de Estudios Peruanos 1996), pp. 90-91.

The military eventually stepped in to eliminate collective action problems and compel civilian participation. The military played an important role in civilian mobilization by providing the organizational and technical expertise necessary for sustained resistance. Furthermore, the military used threats against some community members, “Leaders and others were forced to go to the base. Those who didn’t want to participate would be punished. There was no other option. When they spoke to us there was lots of shouting. It was severe and harsh.”<sup>383</sup> Despite the physical force required to initially motivate some residents, the military came at the request of others. Although the military counterinsurgency benefited from armed civilian mobilization, Zorro’s efforts demonstrate the importance of civilian agency. Residents increased community capacity by leveraging coercive military force. Zorro coupled changing beliefs about Sendero and the state with new means for mobilization in Maynay.

Hypothesis 8 expects that communities with greater resources are more likely to achieve sustained mobilization. I found only some support for H8. When Zorro and other civilians in Maynay had no weapons, they attempted to organize and resist without success. Access to weapons might have helped them to successfully resist Sendero earlier in the 1980s. When the military provided several shotguns and taught them to make single-shot homemade rifles they achieved sustain resistance. However, in the neighboring village of Huansa, the community did not receive shotguns at first like Maynay. The village’s 18 participants still resisted as best they could without the same resources at their disposal. Resources provided by the military helped, but organizational capacity played a more significant role than resources to sustain civilian resistance.

### **Civilian Resistance in Quinrapa**

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<sup>383</sup> Personal interview in Maynay on June 7, 2015 with Zorro.

Sendero Luminoso found support among many residents in Quinrapa during the early 1980s. Young students spoke about Maoism and promised to improve their lives. Early Sendero violence targeted community leaders and reluctant residents. The military visited shortly after, going after students and anyone seen to support the movement. A steady wave of violence hit Quinrapa beginning in 1983. The Marine infantry stationed in Huanta's stadium committed vicious acts when they journeyed down the dirt road into Quinrapa. One woman recalled how the soldiers broke down the door to her shop in the middle of the night on July 2, 1984. When her husband awoke and investigated the disturbance, a soldier shot him in the leg. Startled by the noise, the soldiers shot one of her sons in the leg, hand, and shoulder amid insults and shouts. The soldiers entered the room of her daughters and killed them both in their beds. In her disbelief the woman asked the marauding soldiers, "Why, sir? What have we done?"<sup>384</sup> The soldiers demand silence and threatened to kill her. The woman's small children clung to her legs crying as the soldiers left.

The next morning she went to Huanta to report the incident. The police offered no assistance and suggested she speak directly with the Marines since they had been responsible for the crime. She confronted a group of soldiers cleaning their guns at the base. She remembers them appearing sleepy. She insisted the soldiers "go pick up what they had done in Quinrapa." An officer accompanied her to Quinrapa in an armored truck. They took her husband and son to the hospital and her two daughters to the morgue. She visited her husband and son in the hospital everyday. A few weeks later she arrived to find that soldiers had kidnapped her son in the night despite protests from the doctors and nurses on duty. They rolled he son out in a wheelchair and she never saw him again.<sup>385</sup>

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<sup>384</sup> Testimony 200314.

<sup>385</sup> Ibid.

Descriptions of Quinrapa during this period differ from case to case, but most residents remember a community “caught between two fires.” One interview subject shared a horrific ordeal in November 1988 when Sendero militants murdered her mother. They tied her up against a wall and shot her in the head. They also killed her 17-year-old brother who came to her aid. The 20 year-old witness denounced the murders to authorities and Sendero militants returned to Quinrapa to punish her. Senderistas tied the woman to a tree and made her suffer with a knife. The military saved her life and soldiers took her away in a truck. She continues to suffer trauma from the experience. Although the military came to her aid, she also described a different group of soldiers that came to the community in 1984 when she was a teenager. They killed numerous university students as terrorists, including one of her brothers.<sup>386</sup> Police and soldiers frequently targeted students in Ayacucho. They viewed the university as a “nest for terrorism.”<sup>387</sup> Civilian resistance in Quinrapa resembled Maynay. During the 1980s both militants and soldiers victimized residents. Some civilians collaborated with Sendero and many fled. Residents relocated the entire town in 1990 to fortify their position and thwart attacks using geographical features and massive cactus gardens. They constructed protective fences and watchtowers for additional protection. The current community president estimates that 300 people lived in Quinrapa when the conflict started and only 200 remained by 1990. The military helped to organize and outfit the community in 1990, but understanding civilian resistance requires a more nuanced investigation.

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<sup>386</sup> Personal interview in Huanta on May 15, 2014 with a resident of Quinrapa.

<sup>387</sup> Personal interview in Huanta on May 18, 2014 with a teacher who was a university student at San Cristóbal of Huamanga National University in Ayacucho during the 1980s.

**Table 4.3: Narratives, community capacity, and civilian resistance outcomes in Quinrapa 1980-2000**

		Community Capacity	
		High	Low
Violent Narratives	Yes	Violent mobilization (After 1990)	Sporadic individual violence (1985-1990)
	No	Nonviolent mobilization (N/A)	Flee or collaborate with insurgents (1980-1985)

### *Realist and Rationalist Explanations*

Hypothesis 1 expects increased threat and violence to compel the community to respond. Sendero Luminoso and state security forces used violence against the community in similar ways. Although the community suffered Sendero attacks and selective killings, civilians did not resist in the worst years of threat and violence. Some residents I spoke with remembered severe violence in the valleys below Huanta and one interview subject reasoned, “If God existed he wouldn’t have allowed these things.”<sup>388</sup> Figure 4.3 shows that the bulk of Sendero (and state) violence took place between 1983 and 1985.

**Table 4.4: Armed civilian, militant, and state security force violence in the Huanta district by year between 1980 and 2000**

	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	Total
<b>Armed Civilians</b>				11	8						1	1				1		1				23
<b>Militants</b>		1	7	48	69	18	4	9	10	11	5	10	2	2								196
<b>State Security Forces</b>		9		53	170	37	13	6	17	24	14	9										352

I found some support for H1. A community leader in Quinrapa explained, “Violence and threat came from both sides. Terrorists attacked us. Then the army came and accused us of being

<sup>388</sup> Personal interview in Huanta on May 14, 2014 with a resident of a neighboring village. *Agrupación* refers to the fortification and relocation of Quinrapa into a fenced collection of buildings with watchtowers.

involved in terrorism. To not lose any more family we had to create the organization.”<sup>389</sup> The situation compelled the community to take action, though they did not actually achieve sustained civilian resistance until violence and threat levels had subsided years later. The interview subject described conditions in the early 1980s to explain their actions years later between 1988 and 1990.

Many fled or suffered through the brutal incursions, though some civilians in Quinrapa responded at the height of the violence and threat. One resident explained:

We started to get together in 1984 or 1985. But then Sendero killed the lieutenant governor and a neighbor. This made everyone afraid and we stopped trying to keep watch. We had organized to keep watch and patrol in the night to keep an eye on things. We stopped after the deaths and then we didn't organize again until 1990 when we banded together to form an *agrupación*.<sup>390</sup>

Some members in the community decided to resist Sendero early on. Their attempts to protect themselves from Sendero correspond with indicators of increased Sendero violence. Yet, other anecdotal evidence challenges the direction of causation between violence and civilian resistance—the spike in Sendero violence in 1984 and 1985 included many retaliatory acts against opponents of its political program.

Quinrapa residents I spoke to shared stories about the dangers they faced. Civilians “caught between two fires” had to respond and the current community president of Quinrapa explained, “You really didn't have much of a choice. If you were young and out working and the terrorists came, they insisted that you come along. You had to go with them because they were armed. In the same way, the military came along and took you for a terrorist. You couldn't go with one side or the other. It was complicated.” Pragmatic residents did what they could to survive, though they lacked the capacity to sustain resistance.

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<sup>389</sup> Personal interview in Quinrapa on June 8, 2015 with the current community president of Quinrapa and former self-defense force participant.

<sup>390</sup> Personal interview in Huanta on May 15, 2014 with a resident of Quinrapa

Hypothesis 2 expects state weakness to force a community to protect itself from threat. I found some support for H2. Community members in Quinrapa could not count on police or military for protection and attempted to resist Sendero in 1984 and 1985. However, state weakness did not drive early attempts to mobilize. A strong and abusive state inflicted even greater harm on the community than Sendero at this time. The community abandoned collective efforts to resist Sendero, although some civilians resisted individually in nonviolent ways. For example, one man burned all the brush and shrubbery in a nearby field where Sendero Luminoso militants frequently gathered to hold meetings. This act of defiance placed the man directly in Sendero's crosshairs but demonstrated to the state that not all residents supported the militants as soldiers had initially believed.<sup>391</sup>

H3 expects a strong state to compel civilians to mobilize and assist with its counterinsurgency campaign. The official account of civilian resistance in Quinrapa identifies the military as a critical component of civilian mobilization. Armed civilians coordinated with soldiers at the Castro Pampa base and regained control of the region. But, Quinrapa's initial attempts to organize took place in the mid-1980s prior to military intervention. Furthermore, Quinrapa residents describe a mobilization process between 1988 and 1990 that put civilians at the center of the story. Civilian initiative and not just military pressure led to sustained mobilization. As one community leader recalled, "In 1985, the Army didn't really patrol; there was too much terrorism. The Army did not necessarily start the organizations. They came later to support us."<sup>392</sup> He continued to explain:

We had conversations among small groups to organize. We also copied those from Pichiwilca. My brother saw this and we learned how to start. He was in the military too: a licenciado. He served back in 1979. Right as terrorism was starting he was finishing up

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<sup>391</sup> Testimony 200533.

<sup>392</sup> Personal interview in Quinrapa on June 8, 2015 with the current community president of Quinrapa and former self-defense force participant.

service and he had this experience. He served as a commando in the self-defense force from the beginning right up until his death in 2000.<sup>393</sup>

Residents armed themselves with homemade weapons, single-shot guns, spears, sticks, and knives to fight Sendero. Residents coordinated with the military, but also with neighboring communities. I spoke with several people in Quinrapa that described a close relationships with other civilians in Maynay and Villa Florida, a case I will examine in the next section. The communities helped each other to fortify their towns, shared information, coordinated patrols, and came to each others aid in the event of militant attacks. Civilians continued to gain strength and coordinated to a greater extent with the military after 1990.<sup>394</sup> The military played a crucial role in achieving sustained civilian resistance, but does not account for the whole story.

Hypothesis 4 expects opportunism to influence civilian resistance outcomes. Civilians sometimes used the conflict in Peru opportunistically to settle old scores or for personal enrichment. However, self-defense forces did not become a means for opportunistic behavior in Quinrapa as H4 predicts. Community members that exhibited opportunism usually went with Sendero Luminoso after militants made promises for increased riches. Opportunism usually took the form of denunciation to Sendero as a snitch or to the military as a militant supporter.

#### *Narratives and Community Capacity*

How residents in Quinrapa understood events and defined relationships, along with their capacity to sustain mobilization, can better explain civilian resistance outcomes. Hypothesis 5 predicts that if communities understand events through narratives that permit violence, then armed civilian resistance is more likely. Residents received visits from Sendero militants who shared their political program. They arrived in Quinrapa armed with words and weapons.

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<sup>393</sup> Ibid.

<sup>394</sup> For example, see Testimony 200683 which describes a group of ronderos from a nearby community responding to cattle theft by Sendero and engaging in a firefight.

Sendero visited scattered farms to speak with residents and promise positive change. Not everyone could make sense of the Sendero actions and beliefs and some made sense of the conflict within existing myths and religious teachings.

During fieldwork in the region only a couple of residents mentioned the pishtaco and nakaq myths I described in Chapter 3. A trusted friend from the area revealed that his mother believed I was a pishtaco during earlier visits, perhaps suggesting reluctance on the part of elderly community members to share these kinds of stories with an outsider. However, other sources from the conflict period indicate these types of stories served an important role in contextualizing events. One resident in Quinrapa described the dangers in his community. The 65 year-old farmer lamented, “We’re scared with the pishtaco walking about. They’ve already killed two: a young pregnant woman and “opa” who was walking around at night. They cut open his belly to take out the fat.” The old man described the suspected perpetrator:

There was a *gringo* with long hair, wearing a coat down to his knees and boots. He had a knife and a pistol. In the evening he walks through the small farms, picking fruit, looking to kill anyone who walks at night, the *terrucos* they say. They always take the fat, surely to send abroad with the president’s permission, he is a friend of the Apristas.”<sup>395</sup>

The old man described a specific incident in which he encountered the pishtaco in Quinrapa:

The other day I was milking my cow to take to Huanta. At that moment he appeared asking about the teacher. What time does she come? Does she work everyday? He asked about everything. What a fright! How could I answer? He had a gringo accent when he spoke. I was so scared that when he asked me for milk I gave him the whole pot. He drank the whole thing down. He wanted to pay me, but I didn’t want his money. I was very frightened and believed he would kill me.<sup>396</sup>

The man also inquired about his neighbors. He asked whether or not he observed others going out at night, something the military advised them against. He knew walking around at night

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<sup>395</sup> Interview in Quinrapa on August 23, 1987 found in Abilio Vergara Figueroa and Freddy Ferrúa Carrasco, “Ayacucho: De Nuevo los Degolladores.” *Pishtacos de Verdugos a Sacaojos*, ed. Juan Ansión (Lima, Perú: Tarea 1989), pp.130-131. Peasants frequently described senderistas as “those who walk at night” and “terrucos.” Some believed that president Garcia and his APRA government (Apristas) sent the fat abroad to pay foreign debt.

<sup>396</sup> Ibid.

could get you killed. He answered the strange man in Quechua. The man thanked him and left. Stories about Pishtacos helped some residents understand events, but did not prescribe a particular response.

Religious narratives also helped contextualize events and in some cases facilitate armed resistance. For example, once armed mobilization became more common around 1990, a Presbyterian pastor in Huanta described how neighboring communities struggled with decisions about taking up arms to defend against Sendero violence. He explained how they sought advice concerning violence and armed civilian resistance:

[M]any times when we met the people, they asked us, this was the moment when local self-defense groups were introduced by the government, with which power they were to do it [take up weapons and kill]...many times they said to us that they are required to take part in the local self-defense group... 'But I, as a Christian, am afraid to take up a weapon and kill.'<sup>397</sup>

The pastor did not have a clear answer and responded ambiguously, suggesting that a concern with biblical teachings should find balance with the actual dangers that the community faced. He prayed for the communities and the decisions they made based on their own interpretations of religious teachings.

Hypothesis 6 expects community narratives that justify violence against particular actors to make violence more likely. Violence became an acceptable response to Sendero threat and violence early on in Quinrapa. One woman who participated in the Quinrapa civilian self-defense force described Sendero militants, "It started in 1980. They walked around. They walked like any other person. Who could tell who they were?" Within a few years it became apparent the militants were not who they professed. She continued, "I had my store and one day and they came to ask for support. They took goods by force." The woman paused before adding, "They

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<sup>397</sup> Interview found in Markus Österlund, *Politics in the Midst of Terror: Religious Beliefs and Political Action in the Peruvian Andes* (Helsinki: Finnish Society of Sciences and Letters 2001), p. 217.

had some politics we didn't know anything about too."<sup>398</sup> I asked the woman about Sendero's visits to the community and she emphasized later extortion efforts, "They forcefully entered homes, threatened residents, and took what they pleased. They behaved like bandits. We basically looked at them as thieves. We didn't know who they were; criminals, terrorists, how could we identify them?"<sup>399</sup> The community equated militancy with criminal acts.

Quinrapa's current community president provided another description of how they saw Sendero militants:

The entire lower valley was a "red zone" because [Sendero] attacked down here. They walked around and assumed people supported them. But, we just kept our mouths shut for fear. They would come and say, 'hey, give me your shoes.' And you would give them your shoes because they had a gun. The military might see that as support. But there you were, simply a person without shoes. One time I was with some friends and a group of senderistas came. One asked to borrow some shoes from one of us to play soccer and said he would give them back. He just went off with them. Never saw those shoes again. They were terrible really. They'd take cloths, jackets, watches, whatever.<sup>400</sup>

Community members who opposed Sendero saw the militants in a negative light early on and led to active resistance by a select few.

How the community defined its relationship with state security forces also influenced civilian resistance outcomes. Residents in Quinrapa initially saw the military in a negative light. The military committed horrific abuses and murdered innocent residents. Community members not sympathetic to Sendero Luminoso viewed the military with just as much distrust as militants. Fearsome mid-level military commanders like Centurion presided over Huanta and neighboring districts. The military levied accusations against civilians despite professions of innocence. One self-defense force participant remembered, "A lot of people died, so the military came. They

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<sup>398</sup> Personal interview in Huanta on June 14, 2015 with a former self-defense force commander and current president of the *Pacificadores* (Peacemakers) association who fought in Quinrapa.

<sup>399</sup> Ibid.

<sup>400</sup> Personal interview in Quinrapa on June 8, 2015 with the current community president of Quinrapa and former self-defense force participant.

took out whoever they wanted and could make them disappear. It was both sides, but the majority by the soldiers. Most of the people they killed or disappeared were innocent.”<sup>401</sup> Peasants from communities around Huanta ended up in military custody at Castro Pampa where soldiers tortured, murdered, and disposed of their wards.

A resident from a neighboring community shared their impression of the soldiers during the early part of the conflict period, “The sinchis and the Marines came in like mercenaries. They were especially brutal and took everything they could. When I was just a child they stuffed their pockets with the toffee I sold on the street.”<sup>402</sup> The soldiers exhibited ferocity if militants visited a community before they arrived. Sendero would sometimes distribute goods they stole from local business owners. The militants sought to gain favor with the population and to make the community complicit in crimes to invite military intervention. The same boy saw his father hung by sinchis in the plaza because his brother allegedly supported Sendero Luminoso. In another incident the sinchis dragged a neighbor behind a car to the neighboring town. They pulled out his fingernails and burned him alive. Excessive, visible acts of violence by state security forces hindered their ability to establish positive relationships in many communities.

Numerous stories of loss and suffering at the hands of the military circulated among villagers in communities like Quinrapa. For example, one witness shared accounts of his father’s death at the hands of soldiers at Castro Pampa. His father disappeared when he went to get his hair cut. An acquaintance informed the witness he had seen the military torturing his father and another prisoner as suspected senderistas. Another man stated that he saw the body of his father while searching for his own son, so he went to the site of the murders at a later date when things calmed a bit. He remembers the horrific smell of the putrefying bodies. Dogs had gnawed on

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<sup>401</sup> Personal interview in Huanta on June 14, 2015 with a former Quinrapa self-defense force participant.

<sup>402</sup> Personal interview in Luricocha on April 26, 2014 with the son of a victim.

some. He went back a second time and someone had removed all traces of the bodies. They heard stories that the military took the group of suspected senderistas to a small family farm near the banks of the Cachi River in Huanta. They fed the blindfolded captives oranges and told them to run if they wanted to live. The soldiers opened fire and killed all but one based on the orders of Centurion. The shots hit one victim in the leg and stomach and he pretended to be dead. The wounded man hid and later made his way to his brother's home in Quinrapa. He shared the tale with his brother before soldiers found him and slit his throat.<sup>403</sup>

Residents witnessed the state security forces perpetrate horrific acts as they scoured the countryside looking for senderistas and their sympathizers. Even those who played critical roles in civilian resistance efforts and later became crucial allies to the military saw the abuses first-hand. One self-defense force participant described her brother's experiences before the community organized. Soldiers detained the 28-year-old in 1983. They took him to the Huanta stadium and later to the base in the Ayacucho capital. As a child her brother had an accident that left his finger slightly disfigured. Soldiers suspected he injured himself participating in Sendero attacks. The soldiers planned to kill her brother and throw his body in the Huatatas River, a place where state security forces frequently disposed of bodies. She recalled:

They gave him a pen and paper to write a goodbye note and then they shot him. They left him for dead, but he survived. I dreamt about him at night and I knew he was alive. I woke up and went to look for him. We got word that over 60 people had been killed down by the Huatatas River. I went to look for him there. I carried his clothes and shoes with me because when they took him away he was wearing only his underwear. I found bodies, some burned and in horrible states, they seemed like roasted pigs. They burned them. My brother got away. He had escaped and arrived to a place where a woman was grazing her animals. My brother was so brave...<sup>404</sup>

She paused before continuing:

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<sup>403</sup> Testimony 200533.

<sup>404</sup> Personal interview in Huanta on June 14, 2015 with a former Quinrapa self-defense force participant.

There were so many dead when I looked for him. I went from body to body turning over one, turning over another, and I didn't find him. I thought that my brother was no long with us. I walked around searching, carrying my eight month old baby. One day on the way to the investigative police station I heard someone call my name. I turned around and saw my brother. He had been severely mistreated. We went together to speak with the police and they took his statement. That same night a police officer accompanied us to Ayacucho and we sent my brother on his way to Lima, where he stayed until 1991. He had dressed as a woman to increase his chances of escape. That same night my brother escaped, I don't know how the senderistas came to know, but they came looking for him before dawn, accusing him as a yana uma.<sup>405</sup>

When I asked the ex-self-defense force participant directly about the most important factor in achieving civilian resistance in Quinrapa, she responded, "Here it was about the military convincing the people they were their allies." After such heinous crimes and abuse, the military had to win the people over to its cause and convince the community that they could become their ally in defense.

The transition between the Marines and the Army around 1985 helped to improve civil-military relations. The *sinchis* and Marines had been especially abusive and often applied indiscriminate repression. When the Army took control of counterinsurgency, the situation improved slightly.<sup>406</sup> They committed few abuses, but continued incidents of detention, torture, disappearance, and murder hindered coordination between the military and civilians for several years after the Marines' departure.

In some neighboring communities like Chacco, their view of the military remained critical the entirety of the conflict. However, even narratives about the military in Chacco began to change. Residents excused the military's harsh treatment of civilians as a necessary evil to turn the tide in a struggle against militants. A former self-defense force participant in Chacco described numerous interactions he had with soldiers who screamed at them using derogatory

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<sup>405</sup> Ibid.

<sup>406</sup> José Coronel: "Todavía Es un Proceso Abierto." In *Hablan los Ronderos: La Búsqueda por la Paz en los Andes*, ed. Orin Starn (Lima: IEP 1993), p. 49.

language and beat them with large sticks. He remembered having to go to Castro Pampa on the weekends, “They summoned us and you had to go every Saturday. I always got hit on Saturday. Saturdays, Saturdays, all those Saturdays...I remember that if you arrived late you got hit with a stick on the ass!” He slapped himself, animated by the memory. The man described another incident where soldiers kicked him in front of his young children while out milking a cow. He rubbed his leg as if alleviating the pain and explained, “We needed this though. The people didn’t respond to kindness. [The soldiers] had to get tough.”<sup>407</sup> He suggested that the soldiers ultimately had their best interest in mind.

How residents in Quinrapa came to view themselves also helped to encourage civilian resistance. When Quinrapa self-defense force participants spoke with the military they brought a new message back to their community to share with neighbors. After they spent time at the base each Saturday they came back as the defenders of Quinrapa. Inspired by their new role, self defense force participants encouraged collective resistance, “We had to defend our families from the terrorists. The terrorists would come to kill you for whatever reason, as if you were simply an animal. “Tigre” [Quinrapa’s self-defense force leader] would talk to everyone about this. He had the military experience. He would go to the base, get information, and then direct us.” They would also create lists of people in the village and keep track of who went out. Travel required a special pass so communities could track people’s movements, restrict mobility, and limit assistant to Sendero militants.

New communal work projects tied to self-defense efforts and community improvement created additional solidarity and helped foster a new *rondero* identity in Quinrapa. Authorities gained more respect and once again spoke as representatives of the community despite continued threats from Sendero. Self-defense force participants saw themselves as the frontline in a broader

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<sup>407</sup> Personal interview in Chacco on June 8, 2015 with the president of Chacco’s self-defense force.

national project to save the Peruvian state. One leader from a neighboring community who worked with the presidents of all the neighboring self-defense forces described their important work, “It was not just the defense of our own lives, but for that of the [Peruvian] nation.”<sup>408</sup>

Quinrapa also established stronger ties to neighboring communities and saw itself forging new partnerships in a unified struggle against Sendero militants. When I spoke with a notorious self-defense force participant from Villa Florida, he remembered his allies from Quinrapa fondly. He explained, “They helped us a lot. I remember they came and provided support on numerous occasions. They were actually there when we laid the first stones and built Villa Florida. [Quinrapa] provided security as we began that endeavor.”<sup>409</sup> Self-defense force leaders worked closely with other leaders in Maynay and neighboring communities in their mutual struggle against terrorism. New allies from Villa Florida and Maynay also helped Quinrapa when the community relocated the town 500 meters to a site where they had better natural protection. On April 5, 1990 everyone carried their things over and lived in a campsite as they began to reconstruct the town and the watchtowers that would strengthen their ability to protect against Sendero incursions.

Hypothesis 7 expects a community’s institutional capacity to affect its ability to initiate and sustain mobilization. In addition to the transformative role of narratives in how communities understood events and relationships, H7 predicts that cooperative arrangements and other factors that facilitate collective action will increase the likelihood of sustained civilian resistance. I found some evidence for higher levels of community capacity in Quinrapa. For example, the “Grupo Campesino,” or Peasant Group, included twenty-five farmers that worked collectively on

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<sup>408</sup> Personal interview in Huanta on June 14, 2015 with a former self-defense force commander and current president of the *Pacificadores* (Peacemakers) association.

<sup>409</sup> Personal conversation in Quinrapa on June 8, 2015 with a self-defense member from Villa Florida who also fought in the VRAEM.

community projects. This association could indicate community solidarity, though associations that did not include the entire community may have fostered inter-community competition and factionalization. For example, on May 27, 1989 two men armed with machine guns shot three residents as they worked together to harvest beans and black corn under the midday sun. Sendero may have seen the danger in community cooperation and punished them. But, witnesses saw two other members of the community riding along the road on a motorcycle around the time of the murders. When a member of the Quinrapa self-defense force captured the senderista known as “Raul” seven months later he turned him over to the military authorities. The wife of one of the victims remembers the feared military commander Centurion hitting and kicking the captured Sendero militant while he was on the floor. Centurion asked why they had killed the peasants in Quinrapa to which he confessed that the two men seen riding off on the motorcycle had paid them to murder the community members.<sup>410</sup>

Other factors played a more important role in achieving sustained mobilization in Quinrapa. New relationships with the military helped develop new obligations, oversight, and accountability that eliminated collective action problems. For example, ex-soldiers adopted a more proactive role in resisting Sendero’s campaign. Important allies to communities on the outskirts of Huanta helped to facilitate mobilization and build greater trust in communities like Quinrapa. Networks among former soldiers facilitated relationships between emerging self-defense force leaders and the military. One interview subject related an intriguing tale about the origins and evolution of self-defense forces near Huanta. He suggested that *licenciados*, or

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<sup>410</sup> Testimony 200560.

soldiers that had completed their military service, took an advisory role behind the scenes to help formulate a strategy to defeat Sendero.<sup>411</sup>

Key figures among ex-soldiers near Huanta had lengthy involvement in political struggles dating back to the 1970s when Sendero laid the groundwork for its political struggle. The head of the licenciados organization in Huanta explained, “I was a leader among the miners’ union during strikes in the early 1970s before a lot of my military work. I went to a secret meeting outside Lima and Sendero’s leader Guzmán was there. He spoke about armed strikes and preparing the organization for a people’s war.”<sup>412</sup> The interview subject claims that Sendero’s leader spoke about improving conditions in Peru and how they would have to kill community leaders and take weapons from police. Guzmán anticipated an inevitable high death toll in the countryside and the former soldier recalled, “He said they were worthless people without value. We didn’t like this and it made us uncomfortable. [Other union activists] had a meeting the next day and we thought it was unrealistic to confront the armed forces. They just wanted to use us. What role would we play in [Sendero’s] government?” He stressed the importance of informing the people that Sendero’s actions revealed their true intentions. He attributed his efforts to oppose Sendero to Guzmán’s belief that people in the countryside held no value. He convinced the military and trusted local leaders in communities like Maynaya and Quinrapa that Sendero would have to “fall under their own weight” when faced with opposition from an informed, unified citizenry.<sup>413</sup>

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<sup>411</sup> Some scholars mention the importance of the licenciados in passing. For example, Degregori emphasized their role in the 1990s as part of an increased military presence. See Carlos Iván Degregori, “Harvesting Storms: Peasant Rondas and the Defeat of Sendero Luminoso in Ayacucho.” In *Shining and Other Paths: War and Society in Peru, 1980-1995*, ed. Steve J. Stern (Durham: Duke University Press 1998), p. 146.

<sup>412</sup> Personal interview in Huanta on June 18, 2014 with the former head of the Army licenciado association in Huanta.

<sup>413</sup> Ibid.

Hypothesis 8 predicts that material resources such as weapons make sustained civilian resistance more likely. I found some support for H8, but access to weapons was neither a necessary nor sufficient condition for violent civilian resistance. Some civilians in Quinrapa attempted to resist well-armed militants early on in 1985 without access to weapons. Perhaps if community members had access to resources at that time they may have had greater success in resisting Sendero. Some members of the community resisted several years later, once again without access to the necessary resources. Then the military provided material support to the emerging organization. One participant remembered, “When we organized the town, the Army accompanied and encouraged us. They gave us two or three shotguns—Mossbergs—what they call ‘duck-hunters.’ And these weapons helped.”<sup>414</sup> Access to better weaponry influenced their capacity in terms of sustained mobilization, though it did not appear to enter into calculations when some members in the community decided to resist. Their capacity to organize and their relationships with the military and neighboring communities played a greater role.

### **COMMUNITIES IN IGUAÍN**

The town of Villa Florida lies along the new paved “highway” connecting the regional capital of Ayacucho to the provincial capital of Huanta. In recent years Villa Florida received international support from a German development organization to also pave the road leading into its central plaza, a feature that sets the town apart from many of its neighbors. Located within the Iguaín district, Villa Florida feels closer to the provincial capital of Huanta than the district capital of Macachacra. The political designation of the Iguaín district dates back to the end of 1926, but Villa Florida emerged only recently during the conflict period when four smaller annexes banded together and built the town in 1990. In the 1980s the town of Villa Florida

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<sup>414</sup> Personal interview in Quinrapa on June 8, 2015 with the current community president of Quinrapa and former self-defense force participant.

consisted of a collection of small farms. The farmers would gather at an encampment at night to limit their vulnerability and to find a small degree of protection.

Many farmers near Villa Florida made their way up the steep road to Macachacra to sell their goods at the Sunday market during the conflict period. Residents attempted to go about their daily lives as best they could despite growing threats from Sendero in the early 1980s. Accounts of individual and collective tragedies provide only an idea of the challenges that residents faced in Iguaín. Like so many parts of Peru, civilians caught “between two fires” had to make difficult decisions.

Sendero came to Villa Florida without weapons early on in the conflict. The people knew who they were because the community consisted of just a small settlement in the early years. Many residents fled when the militants insisted they make a choice about supporting the movement. They relocated to family farms in the jungle region, but as violence also worsened in the VRAEM, some returned to Villa Florida and faced new violence there. Residents lived through a “time of fear.”<sup>415</sup> Sendero militants attacked Macachacra and murdered community authorities more frequently than in Villa Florida. Both communities contended with violence from militants and the state security forces.

### **Civilian Resistance in Macachacra and Villa Florida**

Marines and militants alike came to the Iguaín district in the early 1980s. Rumors circulated first and the “compañeros” arrived shortly after to ask for support. Residents remember living in a constant state of fear after 1980 as Sendero rounded up community members for nighttime meetings. They forced everyone to attend gatherings and threatened “to

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<sup>415</sup> *Manchay tiempo*, or “time of fear,” is a mixture of Quechua and Spanish that describes the escalation of violence in 1983 through the end of the 80s.

bring an end to those who do not collaborate with the party.”<sup>416</sup> The military also rounded up residents. The first soldiers to engage with communities in Ayacucho believed all the residents supported terrorist violence. Soldiers detained large groups of men from Macachacra and abused them on the grounds of an old hacienda. Sendero murdered several mayors in Macachacra to intimidate the population and punished those who resisted.

Sendero attack strategies varied. During some incursions the militants kept their distance and violence escalated as they slowly approached the town. Residents became aware of the attack when Sendero shot from afar and threw grenades. Terror spread quickly. Most of the population hid and hoped for the best. Community members offered little resistance at first. Some of the villages around Macachacra attempted to organize and resist after the police and soldiers set up a station in town during the 1980s. A few residents made single-shot homemade guns and others fought with slings and spears. The town eventually organized a formal self-defense force in 1991. During Sendero attacks the self-defense forces prepared and waited. Some participants would take a few ineffective shots with one of the four shotguns the army had given them to share. However, they knew not to waste their precious shells, quite aware of their weapons’ ineffectiveness at distance. Others might use slings to launch stones. The community would send for help, knowing full-well that military support might takes hours to arrive, if at all. Perhaps a neighboring community might come to their aid. Children would cry, adults would scream with fear, and the militants would shout insults and political slogans throughout the ordeal.

Authorities became the principle target for Sendero militants in Macachacra and Villa Florida. One farmer who served as mayor of Macachacra received at least eight anonymous letters threatening violence. Militants tried to blow him up with dynamite on three separate

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<sup>416</sup> Testimony 200737.

occasions and the third attempt completely destroyed his home. Sendero searched for him at town festivals but he always managed to escape unharmed. His luck ran out on April 15, 1987 when two senderistas dressed as civilians with nylon stockings on their heads stopped his car traveling from Huanta. They referred to him as a “yana uma” and commented, “So many times he has escaped...” They stabbed him thirteen times in the chest according to the driver. He fought back trying to defend his family in the car. The senderistas fled as another car approached. After his death another man assumed the position of mayor. Sendero slit his throat and crushed his head with a rock a year later in 1988.<sup>417</sup> During the conflict, many community authorities in the district shared similar fates.

Sendero militants demanded material support and young recruits. Many complied with the requests out of fear. A select few stood defiant and refused to cower before their would-be oppressors. Refusal brought retaliation. At times retaliatory violence bordered on the bizarre. In one instance Sendero used a “burro-bomba” to terrorize the population during the hoisting of the national flag in Macachacra’s central plaza on August 3, 1987.<sup>418</sup> The militants sent in a donkey strapped with explosives and detonated the bomb during weekend civic-military relations to deter further collaboration.

### *Realist and Rationalist Explanations*

Hypothesis 1 expects civilians to respond to increased threat and violence. Macachacra and Villa Florida both experienced widespread victimization and high levels of Sendero violence. Militants frequently murdered or disappeared community members in near-by villages. Sendero exerted direct control over Macachacra and had considerable influence in Villa Florida.

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<sup>417</sup> Testimony 200696.

<sup>418</sup> DESCO, *Violencia Política en el Perú, 1980-1988* Volume 1 (Lima: DESCO, Centro de Estudios y Promoción des Desarrollo 1989), p. 165.

Many who did not obey Sendero’s appointed authorities fled instead of resisting.<sup>419</sup> One community member lamented, “We didn’t have anyone in Lima, so we couldn’t escape.”<sup>420</sup> Others coped with the violence and did the best they could to survive the unfortunate circumstances.

The levels and timing of violence in the Iguaín district do not support testable implications from H1. A spike in militant violence in 1984 does not correspond with civilian efforts to mobilize in either Macachacra or Villa Florida. District-level data indicate greater levels of violence years prior to the formation of self-defense forces. A second increase in violence levels around 1990 and 1991 corresponds with civilian mobilization, but anecdotal evidence identifies Sendero violence at this time as a consequence rather than a cause. Sendero tried to punish civilians for organizing and collaborating with the military. Conditions of threat and insecurity do not explain subsequent civilian decisions on their own.

**Table 4.5: Armed civilian, militant, and state security force violence in the Iguaín district by year between 1980 and 2000**

	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	Total
<b>Armed Civilians</b>											3											3
<b>Militants</b>			5	2	38	1		5	1		11	7										70
<b>State Security Forces</b>				6	17	15	8	5	21	6	1						2					81

Although actual violence remained minimal within Villa Florida during the conflict, the timing of civilian mobilization corresponds with the two instances when Sendero militants directly attacked the community.<sup>421</sup> However, conversations with residents from Villa Florida,

<sup>419</sup> Testimony 201892.

<sup>420</sup> Personal interview in Huanta on May 18, 2014 with a woman who lived in Parhay during the conflict.

<sup>421</sup> Personal interview in Huanta on April 26, 2014 with the community president of Villa Florida.

Macachacra, and surrounding villages all emphasized the punitive nature of Sendero violence. They remember threat and violence from Sendero's early efforts to proselytize and recruit, but most emphasized the fury militants exhibited when communities attempted to organize and resist. The direction of causality between violence and civilian resistance runs both ways. Violence was both a cause and an effect.

In Huayhuas, a community between Villa Florida and Huanta, one witness recalled his father's death in a confrontation between ronderos and Sendero Luminoso militants. Militants came to punish the community for organizing a self-defense force. His family fled to Huanta early on but returned in 1989 when the community began to organize. In 1991 40 militants attacked the town in the evening. People ran as militants shot at them and threw explosives. They burned homes and hung around eating their food. Several hours later the ronderos from Macachacra and Villa Florida came to the community's aid and a battle ensued. Militants shot the witnesses father in the throat during the fighting. Another rondero and a Sendero militant also died. The military arrived the following morning. Soldiers ordered the community to bury the dead and reprimanded them for not knowing how to take care of themselves. They buried the Sendero militant in a vertical position because according to local beliefs the militants would attack again if they did not.<sup>422</sup>

Hypothesis 2 expects state weakness to force civilians to take responsibility for their own protection. I did not find evidence for H2 in Macachacra or Villa Florida. The state maintained a strong presence in Macachacra by establishing a police and Marine headquarters at the municipality office early in the conflict. In theory civilians could depend on the police presence and military support. In practice the state security forces also targeted the population. In Villa Florida, state absence led to minimal civilian organizing. Those able to flee abandoned their

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<sup>422</sup> Testimony 200513.

homes and those who stayed behind did not organize effectively without assistance from the state years later.

Hypothesis 3 expects a strong state to force the community to mobilize as an auxiliary force. I found mixed support for H3 in Macachacra. Macachacra's current self-defense force president described threats the community faced and explained, "Thanks to [the military] we were able to organize. They split the Huanta region into multiple sectors for counterterrorism in the early 1990s."<sup>423</sup> They forced the villagers around Macachacra to form rondas campesinas. Everyone got together on Saturdays at the Castro Pampa military base. They received training that also included strenuous exercises. Failure to perform to standards led to abuses. On June 20, 1990, community members from Macachacra went to the base at 10 a.m. and a hooded woman selected twenty young men and women. They went through extreme physical exercises while soldier screamed and beat them. Community members ran through lines of soldiers who threw dirt in their faces and screamed. They finished the day when a soldier brought out a man from a cell to identify any "senderistas" among them. Some disappeared and one young woman died.<sup>424</sup>

Macachacra had the police and Marine headquarters early on and the state did not officially organize the community until years later. Some civilians coordinated with police and soldiers in the 1980s, but civilians only sporadically fought Sendero prior to sanctioned civilian resistance in 1992. Furthermore, conversations with residents and self-defense force participants also suggest some civilians made autonomous efforts to organize locally in Macachacra independent of the state.

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<sup>423</sup> Personal interview in Huanta on May 17, 2014 with the current self-defense forcer president.

<sup>424</sup> Testimony 200696.

The military also used coercive tactics to help mobilize and sustain civilian self-defense in Villa Florida. One interview subject remembered, “Sometimes the military would show up and surprise us. If we weren’t vigilant they would beat us with sticks.”<sup>425</sup>

An ex-soldier who worked as a laborer on an old hacienda when the conflict turned violent remembered the forced nature of his initial participation, “I was nothing to them. The military came for me and took me down by the river. They bound and beat me and held a knife to my throat.”<sup>426</sup> He fought in a self-defense force and takes pride in his participation in defeating the insurgency. However, he suffers from some degree of incapacitation from his service and military abuses contributed to his current condition.

The military forced many residents to organize in Villa Florida, but some in the community responded to the threat and organized prior to military intervention. The community did not develop a self-defense force in the 1980s, instead some residents remained vigilant and established a surveillance network to protect against Sendero threats. The current community president in Villa Florida provided some confirming evidence for hypotheses about threat and disconfirming evidence for H3:

When Sendero first started to organize, many people that went with them did so under threat. At that time we all lived independently on our farms. We decided to protect ourselves and would need to come together. It was in this way that we began to organize. We used to set up people to watch down by the church and if Sendero came they would blow a whistle to let the people know that they needed to escape.

One of the leaders of the self-defense force in Villa Florida described civilian resistance prior to state intervention. He recalled that when farmers all gathered at a central camp at night, some

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<sup>425</sup> Personal interview in Villa Florida on June 13, 2015 with a town founder and self-defense force leader.

<sup>426</sup> Personal interview in Huanta on June 14, 2015 with a member of the former self-defense force participant association, the “Pacificadores.”

residents patrolled the surrounding area with sticks. He shrugged, “We were foolish, but what could you do?”<sup>427</sup>

When the military intervened in Macachacra and Villa Florida residents built watchtowers and barriers for protection. They built the watchtowers and people watched over the town in shifts. In Macachacra one man and one woman stood guard at each of four towers from 7 p.m. to midnight and then midnight to 6 a.m.<sup>428</sup> In Villa Florida they stationed two people at each of their five towers from 6pm to midnight and then midnight to 6 a.m.<sup>429</sup>

Hypothesis 4 expects opportunism to help explain civilian behavior and efforts to mobilize. Some residents in Villa Florida and Macachacra behaved opportunistically. They used the climate of fear and insecurity to denounce neighbors and to settle old disputes. Land, livestock, and jealousy motivated some residents. For example, one interview subject recalled how his cousin went to a party near Macachacra in 1988 and a skirmish broke out between his cousin and another man with ties to the police. His cousin and the girl disappeared later that night.<sup>430</sup> The current community president of Villa Florida remembers residents from a village near Macachacra taking advantage of the chaos and stealing their livestock.<sup>431</sup> Residents faced additional threats from neighboring communities. For example, civilians from Huamanguilla, a town up the mountain from Macachacra, recognized some people from near Villa Florida as part of a group that had attacked their town. Their ronderos raided farms around Villa Florida in retaliation and stole some goods. However, in Villa Florida and Macachacra these types of considerations did not motivate or facilitate civilian resistance. In these particular cases material incentives did not drive the mobilization and subsequent actions of the self-defense forces. One

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<sup>427</sup> Personal interview in Huanta on June 6, 2015 with a self-defense force participant from Villa Florida.

<sup>428</sup> Testimony 200555.

<sup>429</sup> Personal interview in Villa Florida on June 13, 2015 with a town founder and self-defense force leader.

<sup>430</sup> Personal interview in Huanta on May 9, 2013 with the relative of a victim.

<sup>431</sup> Personal interview in Villa Florida on April 28, 2014 with the current community president of Villa Florida.

of the town's founders and a member of the self-defense force central command in Villa Florida laughed off the notion of opportunism, "No, that would have been against custom."<sup>432</sup>

### *Narratives and Community Capacity*

Hypothesis 5 expects community narratives that interpret events in a way that permits violence to make violent civilian resistance more likely. Hypothesis 6 expects community narratives that facilitate violence against a particular type of actor will make violent civilian resistance more likely. Communities collectively interpret events that threaten their safety and wellbeing. They share the perceived meaning behind actions and communicate their experiences with others. They continually negotiate and define relationships. In Macachacra and Villa Florida fear limited how the communities spoke about the violence, Sendero, and the military. Having opinions put you in danger and one resident explained, "We got used to talking in whispers."<sup>433</sup> Residents took care when they talked about the violence, but continued to interpret events and relationships during the conflict despite the risks.

Residents in Macachacra and Villa Florida began to recognize their precarious situation. They saw the dangers they faced from both sides and did not have a clear strategy to survive being caught "between two fires." The communities understood early on that armed actors drew lines and forced others to choose sides. For example, Sendero Luminoso placed individuals, and entire communities, into absolute categories—those who held ideas contrary to their own became "yana-umas" and "wretches."<sup>434</sup> Conversations quickly devolved into coercion. In Villa Florida a leader explained, "At first Sendero came to inform us about its struggle and that they fought for the good of the people. But it became very clear that if you disagreed they would kill you.

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<sup>432</sup> Personal interview in Villa Florida on June 13, 2015 with a town founder and self-defense force leader.

<sup>433</sup> Personal interview in Huanta on May 6, 2014 with a resident of Villa Florida and two other community members.

<sup>434</sup> Edilberto Oré Cárdenas, *Ayahuanco: Bajo de la Sombra de Sendero: Un Testimonio de Parte Sobre la Violencia* (Lima: Instituto de Defensa Legal 2001), p. 31.

Because of this the community began to see them as an enemy. Their actions brought everything to the light.”<sup>435</sup> How civilians viewed Sendero affected decisions about violence, but their capacity to resist remained limited.

Sendero militants that came to the Iguain district behaved poorly. Militants who visited Macachacra made no effort to conceal their intentions and demonstrated the consequences if communities refused to collaborate. One resident remembered a few “terrorists” coming in 1981.

She described the visitors:

They were strangers, in charge of raising awareness among the people. They didn’t cover their faces and they walked around freely asking for support, food, and other supplies. The people had to support them for two years for fear of their threats. The visitors warned the population, ‘Tell neither the police nor the military that we are here or that would be proof that you are black sheep.’ If we didn’t do what they said, they told us they would kill us.<sup>436</sup>

The brazen behavior of the militants and state inaction signaled not only that Macachacra could not count on the military to protect them from the outsiders, but that the militants would use violence and impose hardships on civilians.

The witness’ husband served as mayor. He received threatening letters from Sendero Luminoso insisting that he renounce his position. He succumbed to their demands. The Marines came shortly after, set up operations at the municipality office, and began actively searching for militants house by house. She recalled, “We couldn’t do anything, we were threatened from both sides.”<sup>437</sup> One night fifteen hooded soldiers came and took her husband away. The soldiers ignored inquiries for information about his whereabouts and then detained his elderly mother as well. A goat herder later found their bodies among others in a ravine up in the hills.<sup>438</sup>

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<sup>435</sup> Personal interview in Villa Florida on April 28, 2014 with the current community president of Villa Florida.

<sup>436</sup> Testimony 200555.

<sup>437</sup> Ibid.

<sup>438</sup> Ibid.

The communities had strained relationships with both militants and the military. Threat and violence became inextricably linked to ideas and relationships. The militants continued to make significant demands of the population and demonstrated rigid, inflexible beliefs. They put the community's children in danger when they took them at night and brought them back tasked with certain jobs. If the children failed to carry out what had been asked of them, senderistas labeled them as sympathetic to the "yana umas" and "wretches."<sup>439</sup> Inaction was one thing, but any hint at opposition was another. One resident from Macachacra explained, "If you talked to the military or police you wouldn't be seen again."<sup>440</sup> Militants with dogmatic, uncompromising beliefs murdered residents who did not support their movement or collaborated with state security forces.

Civilians in Villa Florida also had strained relations with Sendero. One resident remembers "Raul," one of Sendero's key leaders in the region. He would brazenly hold meetings in front of a nearby church, "It was visible to passing soldiers!"<sup>441</sup> They put the community at risk with little regard for the well-being of local farmers. Militants knew their actions would invite military reprisals and did not seem to care. When community members began to view Sendero in a negative way they took preliminary steps to resist.

Civilians in the Iguain district generally had a negative view of the state security forces early in the conflict. The communities saw the armed forces arrive as prejudiced, abusive outsiders. For example, one local resident provided testimony about her detention and torture at the hands of Marines. The woman recalled how in 1984 they took her from a stand where she sold goods at the Sunday market in Macachacra. That morning word spread among the vendors that infantry had taken control of the area. She saw two tall, white, bearded men in ponchos and

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<sup>439</sup> Testimony 200663.

<sup>440</sup> Personal interview in Macachacra on May 26, 2014 with a self-defense force participant.

<sup>441</sup> Personal interview in Huanta on May 6, 2014 with a resident of Villa Florida and two other community members.

leather sandals walking through the market. The witness remembers that the two soldiers commented, “I’ve never seen ‘chititos’ dress like this and with these sort of characteristics.”<sup>442</sup> The community understood that the soldiers viewed them with suspicion and as an inferior “other.”

The soldiers pointed their weapons at her temple. She protested and they assailed her with insults and threatened, “Stop now *chola*, or we’ll shoot you in the head.” Before they took the woman away, she grabbed her baby and told her 13-year-old daughter to get word to her husband, who had been an instructor at the military school. The soldiers took her to the local municipality offices in Macachacra where the Marines had set up a temporary headquarters for local operations. The woman described her treatment, “They took hold of my hair, slamming my head against the wall and said, ‘You supply the terrorists...you know the ones that come to buy from you.’”<sup>443</sup> They demanded information and cooperation. Soldiers hit her head against the wall again and tried to force her to let go of her baby. She clung tightly to the child as if her and the child’s lives depended on it, which may very well have been the case. Another soldier intervened. They dragged her around a room filled with detainees asking if they knew who she was. They all responded that she worked at a stand in the market and they knew her as customers. The commander arrived and took her statement. When he learned that her husband had been an ex-official he apologized and released her after she signed a blank piece of paper.

The incident in Macachacra provides an example of military actions that contributed to how communities initially viewed state security forces. Civilians in what would become Villa Florida also saw state security forces as an abusive force during the early 1980s. The military lacked solid intelligence and faced an enemy that avoided direct confrontations. Frustrated

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<sup>442</sup> Testimony 200577. “Chititos” is a pejorative used to describe peasants from the high Andes.

<sup>443</sup> Testimony 200577.

soldiers responded with a “dirty war.” In one instance, the Marines came down from Huamanguilla to the road near the Huayhuas village that borders Villa Florida. The soldiers detained and disappeared a man following a battle that occurred the previous night. A witness remembers, “Because of this [the Marines] came with all their rage and they did not know where to direct their fury.”<sup>444</sup> Another witness described how armored military transports from Huanta would go out at night and kill people on their farms and along the road. Soldiers took some detainees back to the military base at the stadium and they disappeared. She explained how the Marines, “Killed them at night and then picked them up the next day saying the terrorists had murdered them.”<sup>445</sup>

Not all the soldier behaved badly and some residents approached the military outsiders as individuals. For example, one community member in Parhay remembers two soldiers that stayed a week inside the old chapel near Villa Florida before Sendero militants eventually burned it to the ground, “They were scared and we took them food under the cover of night. You couldn’t go with one side or the other, but they always came so tired. It was tough to know who was who.”<sup>446</sup> The soldiers eventually understood the importance of ideas and relationships in transforming the community from opponents to allies. Military leaders began to understand the pressures communities faced internally and from Sendero militants. Disparate farmers grouped together in a central town not only to help with the practical matters of civilian protection, it to ensure hat the community cut off communication with the revolutionary movement.<sup>447</sup>

The state security forces became allies in self-defense when civilians began to resist Sendero Luminoso. Communities professed identity through action. Organizing and participating

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<sup>444</sup> Ibid.

<sup>445</sup> Testimony 200740.

<sup>446</sup> Personal interview in Huanta on May 18, 2014 with a woman who lived in Parhay during the conflict.

<sup>447</sup> Personal interview in Villa Florida on June 13, 2015 with a town founder and self-defense force leader.

in civilian self-defense demonstrated community opposition to the insurgency. Residents in Villa Florida with previous military experience helped the community coordinate with the Army and overcome barriers to trust. A new *rondero* identity emerged in Villa Florida as they strengthened ties to Castro Pampa and self-defense forces in neighboring towns like Maynay and Quinrapa. The self-defense force detained suspected Sendero militants and handed them over to their new allies at the base. Sendero retaliated against the new community organization and its participants, further alienating the population and strengthening its relationship with military allies. For example, the wife of one self-defense force participant in Villa Florida remembers the community organizing in 1990. Her husband stood watch over the town, either taking up post in a watchtower or patrolling the town perimeter. Several months after he detained a suspected militant and handed him over to the military in Huanta, Sendero retaliated. Militants shot him in the face only a few meters from his front door when he returned home around midnight after standing watch in the self-defense force tower on September 20, 1990.<sup>448</sup>

The victim's wife went outside her home to investigate the gunshot and found her husband's lifeless body on the ground. The impact of the bullet had destroyed his face. Around twenty young *senderistas* lingered about, their faces hidden behind bandanas. The woman admonished the young men and women for killing her husband. One of the militants pointed a weapon at her head, but another woman interceded on her behalf. The other woman pointed out that they had already killed her husband and the children would need their mother, so perhaps they should simply burn down the home instead. Two other community members died that night. *Senderistas* stabbed another man, along with an old woman who tried to defend him with a rock.

Participation in self-defense did not diminish threat and violence in the short term. The community took steps to break the cycle of victimization but incited Sendero militants to punish

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<sup>448</sup> Testimony 200525.

new resistance efforts. The violence came from both sides, but narratives that described Sendero as the villain and excused state transgressions became more pervasive. Violence perpetrated by the military against civilians started to diminish as they came to recognize that all civilians in Iguain did not support Sendero militants. State security forces strengthened their relationships with civilians in Villa Florida starting in 1989 and helped to physically build the town.

Civilian resistance in Macachacra proved more challenging than Villa Florida. The current president of Macachacra's self-defense force described incidents of atrocity and murder from both sides through the early 1990s. I spoke with victims and their families as they recounted tales of torture, sexual violence, and murder. The self-defense force leader shook his head and lamented, "So many died at the hands of military and Sendero Luminoso." The police killed his parents during the conflict and he admitted that many collaborated with both sides out of necessity. He described the importance of cultivating a *rondero* identity in Macachacra because the community still viewed militants and the military as abusive and predatory. Their view of the military eventually softened, though community narratives about how they saw themselves influenced decisions about civilian resistance more than how they viewed militants and state security forces, "Many worked with militants and the military as spies, but ultimately neither was good and we decided to work for the people."<sup>449</sup> The community began to see self-defense as the means to autonomous security provision with narratives that stressed the importance of community independence and agency.

Hypothesis 7 expects that community capacity will affect the likelihood of sustained civilian resistance. I found support for H7. Neither town had high community capacity. The president of the Macachacra self-defense force described the community as divided in the

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<sup>449</sup> Personal interview in Macachacra on May 26, 2014 with the president of the self-defense force.

1980s.<sup>450</sup> In another interview he stressed the importance of community capacity and insisted that, “Only an organized town can move forward.”<sup>451</sup> Sendero violence targeted political authorities in Macachacra and local governance all but disappeared when militants murdered several mayors and other leaders renounced their positions.

Poor community organization and the absence of cooperative relationships also hindered early efforts to resist Sendero Luminoso in Villa Florida. One resident recalled, “From 1980 to 1990 the people were divided. Very divided. Being threatened by Sendero wasn’t enough to organize. A lot of people fled to Lima and Huamanga.”<sup>452</sup> The small farms surrounding present-day Villa Florida emerged as a result of land reform efforts in the 1970s and land take-overs in the early 1980s. When the former owner of the large hacienda passed away without children, in-laws left the area and residents began to independently farm corn, wheat, quinoa, and other crops on the land. Everyone lived individually in the 1980s and Sendero sympathizers resided among the local farmers. Sendero militants appropriated land parcels to harvest crops in support of the movement and they continued to gain strength in the area through the mid-1980s.<sup>453</sup>

The town of Villa Florida developed within the conflict space during the 1980s without official political authorities until the founding of the town in 1990. Residents in Villa Florida received support from political allies and military authorities in Huanta that helped to eliminate collective action problems and to sustain civilian resistance to Sendero Luminoso. Furthermore, many of the self-defense force participants had previous military experience and helped to

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<sup>450</sup> Personal interview in Macachacra on May 26, 2014 with the president of the self-defense force.

<sup>451</sup> Personal interview in Huanta on May 17, 2014 with the president of the Macachacra self-defense force.

<sup>452</sup> Personal interview in Villa Florida on April 28, 2014 with a resident of Villa Florida.

<sup>453</sup> Personal interview in Villa Florida on May 4, 2014 with the community president of Villa Florida and three other residents.

organize, to foster discipline, and to train other civilians to defend their community.<sup>454</sup> Greater institutional capacity corresponds with sustained mobilization.

Hypothesis 8 expects greater access to resources to increase community capacity and make sustained civilian mobilization more likely. Like most communities I examined, access to resources in Macachacra and Villa Florida helped improved the efficacy of civilian resistance. However, civilians resisted well-armed Sendero militants without adequate weapons. Communities organized self-defense forces before the military gave each community four shotguns to share among the participants.<sup>455</sup> The shotguns only complimented the watchtowers, fences, surveillance, and a new will to fight.

### **CONTEMPORARY COMMUNITY SELF-DEFENSE FORCES**

Peru has a long history of self-defense and communities continue to provide autonomous security provision when faced with contemporary challenges. In Northern Peru, rondas campesinas play a critical role in providing community security. They confront thieves and other criminals, operating as an alternative justice institution with a state mandate. Rondas campesinas differ from civilian self-defense forces in that they do not coordinate with the military and have the authority to exact punishment. Self-defense forces in Ayacucho do not usually carry out acts of vigilante justice and try to abstain from direct confrontation with armed actors. In rare cases, groups in Ayacucho, Cusco, and Junín confront well-armed drug-traffickers and mercenaries that protect the production and transport of illicit narcotics.<sup>456</sup> The greatest threat to community security in the mountainous regions of Ayacucho involves criminal gangs that steal animals and other property. Armed bandits rob residents, threaten their safety, and generate a climate of fear.

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<sup>454</sup> Personal interview in Villa Florida on April 28, 2014 with the current community president of Villa Florida.

<sup>455</sup> Personal interview in Huanta on April 28, 2014 with self-defense force participant from Villa Florida.

<sup>456</sup> For example, see María Elena Hidalgo, "Comités de Autodefensa Solo Tienen 18 Escopetas para Combatir al 'Camarada Gabriel'," *La República* (July 16, 2012), <http://www.larepublica.pe/16-07-2012/comites-de-autodefensa-solo-tienen-18-escopetas-para-combatir-al-camarada-gabriel>.

Trafficking and violence tied to the illicit drug economy has become increasingly common. A recent confrontation between ronderos and armed drug traffickers near Macachacra demonstrates the new threat many communities face in the region.<sup>457</sup>

Current manifestations of Peruvian civilian self-defense forces provide a unique opportunity to examine processes that lead to armed civilian mobilization. Although the self-defense forces in the mountainous region of Ayacucho never fully deactivated, many have become increasingly vigilant, go out on patrol, and have set up roadblocks in the last few years to address new violence and threat. A current self-defense force leader who also fought in the 80s and 90s explained, “In the past we fought for peace. The approach was tough but good. We may need to do this again. Now it’s criminals and delinquency.”<sup>458</sup> Another leader near Huanta discussed the need for self-defense and the future of such organizations, “[The self-defense forces] will always go on. They’re a people’s organization and are all around Huanta.”<sup>459</sup>

I spent time with former and current self-defense force participants to learn about the past, present, and future of autonomous security provision in Peru. By spending time with contemporary civilian self-defense forces I could observe the narrative process first-hand and accurately account for narrative content. Not only do these narratives allow communities to interpret events and define relationships with other collective actors, those who mobilize civilians to confront security challenges provide examples of the nonmaterial incentives that drive participation. People often rise to the occasion and become what a situation needs them to become. Communities adapt in the face of great challenges. However, they also consider the future and take action driven by notions of justice and the greater social good. They think about

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<sup>457</sup> “Huanta: Un Rondero y un Narcoterrorista Muertos Tras Balacera.” *El Comercio* (November 11, 2015) <http://elcomercio.pe/peru/ayacucho/ayacucho-huanta-rondero-y-narcoterrorista-muertos-balacera-noticia-1855317>.

<sup>458</sup> Personal interview in Huanta on May 9, 2013 with a Luricocha self-defense force leader.

<sup>459</sup> Personal interview in Huamanguilla on June 1, 2013 with a former self-defense force leader.

the next generation with a longer time horizon. Comando Bigotes, a leader within the contemporary Luricocha self-defense force, explained, “If not me, then who? I do this for my children’s future.” He remained pensive and calm. As he spoke I could detect a degree of resignation to the challenges faced by his community. He seemed to have accepted that this was the world he lived in. These were the trials and tribulations he now faced. He met them stoically and with good humor.

Contemporary self-defense forces provide an additional test for hypotheses deduced from theories of civilian resistance. Scholars who focus on historical contexts may find the necessary materials to examine ideas about meaning and intergroup relations elusive. Contemporary community narratives in “post-conflict” Peru should work in similar ways. How these communities understand events and define relationships will also influence subsequent behavior. In this section I evaluate threat, power, incentives, and social processes to assess hypotheses related to civilian resistance today.

### **Civilian Resistance in Contemporary Huanta**

Many policymakers oppose efforts to arm civilians for self-defense. The press, politicians, and academics often debated the matter in the media during the internal armed conflict. Some feared that by supplying rural communities with weapons they would arm the same militants they sought to defeat. In some cases, civilian militia leaders committed human rights abuses or became involved in drug trafficking. Their fears never materialized for the most part and armed civilians never took on a large political role in communities during the post-conflict period even though many local authorities also serve as self-defense force leaders. Peru developed a legal framework regarding civilian self-defense that facilitates state oversight and control. Although the groups operate autonomously, they coordinate with the armed forces. For

example, groups near Huanta carry out joint patrols with others and meet once a month at a local military base for training and weapons maintenance. Groups from the region also meet annually to commemorate their role in the initial defeat of Sendero Luminoso and reaffirm their support for the armed forces and police in pacification efforts.

Civilian self-defense initiatives continue to collaborate with state security forces to provide security and generate better human intelligence. Community members who organize and participate in civilian self-defense know the terrain and the people and they often share their knowledge with security forces. They also cater security provision to local needs. Civilian self-defense has generated stronger relationships between local intermediaries and the state to help coordinate and implement social programs and development efforts.

#### *Realist and Rationalist Explanations*

Hypothesis 1 expects communities to respond to higher levels of threat and violence. The situation will compel communities to reactivate and increase civilian self-defense force activity. I found some support for H1 in communities near Huanta. Many participants see a storm brewing. The deaths of several police officers and numerous civilians in recent years have put some residents on edge. Yet, not all communities have remobilized despite a general increase in threat and violence across communities in the Ayacucho highlands and jungles. Data on crime in Ayacucho corresponds with the reactivation of self-defense forces between 2010 and 2011. Disaggregated data suggest that some communities reactivated self-defense forces at the same time they experienced higher instances of car theft, sexual violence, and drug trafficking arrests.<sup>460</sup>

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<sup>460</sup> I describe trends based on data collected by the Instituto Nacional de Estadística e Informática (INEI), Peru's national data collection agency. <https://www.inei.gob.pe/estadisticas/indice-tematico/seguridad-ciudadana/>

**Table 4.6: Reported incidents of crime in the Ayacucho region between 2006 and 2014<sup>461</sup>**

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
<b>Reported incidents of crime</b>	2,119	2,185	2,221	2,124	1,856	3,798	4,855	4,541	4,885

Some areas have experienced a resurgence in self-defense forces while other have not. Without more fine grain data at the local level I cannot effectively assess actual levels of threat and violence. I spoke with one participant in Luricocha after a visit to the military base. He reflected on the contemporary security threats they face, “Today we are okay, but we need to be preparing again.”<sup>462</sup> The man suggested they mobilize in anticipation of things to come. *Perceptions* of threat rather than actual *conditions* explain variation in self-defense force mobilization for many communities. The interview subject fought down in the VRAEM during the internal armed conflict. He made comparisons to the threat they faced then and emphasized the importance of preventative action.

Most of the current participants I spoke with referenced recent incident of crimes in nearby communities. During my first night on patrol with the Luricocha self-defense force, the group set up a make-shift roadblock on the highway leading down to the jungle. At one point in the night a truck driven by a man without papers ran the checkpoint. One self-defense force participant shot his 12-gauge in the air as a warning to the 4x4 that took off into the night. The leader explained to me that several police and a couple of civilians had been killed last year and that the driver was a known criminal thought to be responsible for the murders, “We don’t want this to get any worse. We take action for our children and because we’re tired of it. If you leave a wound open it will just keep bleeding.”<sup>463</sup>

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<sup>461</sup> Ibid.

<sup>462</sup> Personal interview in Huanta on May 17, 2014 with a self-defense force participant from a village near Luricocha.

<sup>463</sup> Personal interview out on patrol on May 29, 2013 with a Luricocha self-defense force participant.

Hypothesis 2 expects civilians to assume responsibility for their own security when the state is either unwilling or unable to provide security. I found mixed results for H2. State security forces have a relatively strong presence in the region, though special police units and the military focus their efforts on particular problems like drug trafficking. For example, in the town of San José de Secce in the neighboring district of Santillana, the community does not benefit from a stronger presence of state security forces. A counter-narcotics police special operations (DINOES) base located in the community does not help with the crime. Civilians take care of themselves. Residents set up gates to control access to their town at night and participants remain on alert to respond to a variety of emerging security threats. A central directive committee coordinates with several dozen communities to deter crime where the state does not. During an interview, the district self-defense force president shook her head and described the latest threat, “These criminals are invading and killing again. They stop you and take everything, down to your socks. If you object, they kill you. I’ve been threatened and we’re at risk, especially the leaders. They’d kill you for 10 soles (~\$3.50). They could be worse than the terrorists.”<sup>464</sup> The community contends with increased threat and a state that appears unwilling to take action.

In Putis, the largest of ten remote communities farther up in the mountains from Santillana, civilians confront contemporary security challenges tied to crime and a small number of Sendero Luminoso militants. However, unlike communities closer to the district capital, self-defense forces here have neither the weapons nor the necessary communication capacity to call for assistance. Residents of Putis resettled the community in 1997, years after abandoning their homes following a massacre in 1984 where the armed forces killed over one hundred peasants and buried them in mass graves. Self-defense forces in Putis received shotguns from the state when they resettled in 1997, but remnants of the Sendero insurgency quickly stole the shotguns

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<sup>464</sup> Personal interview in San José de Secce on June 7, 2015 with the president of the Santillana self-defense forces.

from the community and today residents protect themselves with only spears, slings, and other homemade weapons. Putis' current self-defense force president explained, "Telephone lines and cellular signals do not reach the community. We are all alone."<sup>465</sup> There is no military or police presence. When a community near Putis comes under threat, residents send a rider on horseback like a modern-day Paul Revere to provide warning and to request assistance from neighboring villages.

Many communities have organized to combat increased threat and violence, driven in part by limited state action to protect communities. However, neighboring communities that face the same threats have failed to mobilize. For example, Luricocha, Macachacra, and other towns actively patrol, while other communities like Maynay and Villa Florida do not. Self-defense force leaders and military officials maintain close working relationships as well, raising doubts about an argument based on state absence. The Peruvian government also recently enacted legislation that authorized the military to provide support to police in an effort to establish and maintain social order in seven regions, including Ayacucho. A police authority explained, "The actions of the armed forces are aimed at securing the right to freedom and personal safety, free access to roads, and basically to protect the critical elements for citizen's to go about their normal lives."<sup>466</sup> The state operates dozens of counterterrorism and counter-narcotics bases in the jungle regions of Ayacucho. So perhaps the state elects to demonstrate strength only in the context of particular types of security challenges like terrorism and drug trafficking.

Hypothesis 3 expects civilian mobilization through coercion by a strong state. The state may compel communities to organize as an auxiliary force. I did not find evidence to support H3.

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<sup>465</sup> Personal interview in San José de Secce on June 7, 2015 with the president of the Putis self-defense force.

<sup>466</sup> "Jefe Policial Indica que Presencia de Militares solo Será en Puntos Específicos," La Republica (may 27, 2015). <http://larepublica.pe/impresasociedad/3181-jefe-policial-indica-que-presencia-de-militares-solo-sera-en-puntos-especificos>. The state enacted Resolución Suprema N° 118-2015-IN in May and June 2015.

Unlike the conflict period in the 1980s and 1990s, contemporary security challenges in highland communities do not usually come from groups with anti-state political objectives. Community self-defense forces often approach the military for support, not the other way around. Participation in the self-defense forces remains voluntary and I did not find evidence for compulsion or coercion on behalf of military or police. The military works closely with the self-defense forces and has established a liaison in charge of civic-military relations. Officers and soldiers at the Castro Pampa base in Huanta provide oversight and assistance. Soldiers help coordinate training and weapons maintenance.

Hypothesis 4 predicts a certain degree of opportunism to drive armed civilian mobilization. H4 expects groups to take advantage of insecurity for personal gain. However, community self-defense forces near Huanta confront forms of this very opportunism. The civilian self-defense forces near Huanta do not abuse the limited powers they possess nor do they reap financial rewards for the services they provide. Self-defense forces near Huanta are not predatory organizations.

Some residents do not support the idea of autonomous armed civilians performing tasks they believe fall under the purview of the state. Others view their expansion with suspicion and disapprove of the recent construction of a permanent checkpoint on the road leading to the jungle. The self-defense forces charge each automobile a “tip” equivalent to one U.S. dollar when they pass through the checkpoint. A critic might view the collection as a form of extortion, while a supporter might see it as a creative way to offset the costs associated with public goods provision. The cars traveling this road directly benefit from the increased security and reduction in robbery incidents. A network of villages rotate each month in providing a total of twelve self-defense force members to man the checkpoint. They use the collected funds to offset costs to

participants incurred for not working their farms. I have not heard of any incidents of self-defense force members in the highland region around Huanta abusing their power.

*Narratives and Community Capacity*

I found objective conditions of threat and violence did not dominate a decision-making space, but rather subjective interpretations of those conditions. Self-defense force participants communicate ideas about contemporary security challenges to make sense of events and define relationships with other collective actors. Their narratives suggest particular solutions. One night while on patrol with the Luricocha self-defense force, Comando “Bigotes” stood in front of six men armed with 12-gauge Winchester shotguns. His audience listened intently as they shifted about trying to stay warm in the frigid night air. Several headlamps and electric lanterns illuminated the dirt highway that runs from the mountains down into the Peruvian jungle.

Comando Bigotes explained to his audience, “We need to be prepared for these Senderistas. They’re getting stronger. They’re starting again.”<sup>467</sup> He paused to let the words sink in and continued in a solemn tone:

The first months they are going to try to mislead us. Just like it started in the 80s and why we fought with them then. At first they just fought with police and the army, nothing more. Then, after two or three years passed, it affected everybody my brothers. I remember, first it was the landowners and those who had a bit of money. They came for these people, carried away all their things, and then took them off and killed them. Bah! Bah! Bah!<sup>468</sup>

Comando Bigotes described Sendero Luminoso’s strategy and how the movement started its campaign with political indoctrination in remote communities. The campaign escalated as Sendero punished or eliminated social deviants and state representatives. It sought to erase all elements of the “old order” and eventually began to target civilians. Comando Bigotes explained

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<sup>467</sup> Comando Bigotes speaking to the contemporary Luricocha self-defense force while out on patrol May 29, 2013. “Bigotes” means mustache.

<sup>468</sup> Ibid.

to his audience, “And this is going to happen now.” He seemed to plead with the armed men, his voice changing pitch as he warned of the coming danger, “You can’t believe the words coming out of their mouths. These people are poisonous...treacherous...nothing more. Don’t trust them! We say this because we lived through it. I have seen this play out from beginning to end.”<sup>469</sup>

Comando Bigotes and the contemporary Luricocha self-defense force patrol the highway between Huanta and the jungle region of Ayacucho. The highway connects the highlands to the VRAEM jungle, the center of cocaine production and one of the last strongholds of Sendero Luminoso militants. The contemporary patrols provide a window into how participants contextualize and interpret contemporary security challenges and emerging threats to social order. In reality, the “Sendero threat” Bigotes spoke about is not necessarily tied to the terrorist organization in Luricocha. He uses the Sendero analogy to highlight the importance of confronting widespread crime and armed thieves in communities surrounding Luricocha. Sendero Luminoso remains most active a day’s journey down the dirt highway where heavily armed militants protect the illicit narcotics economy as a mercenary force.

Yet, he described their opponents, “As the saying goes, the wolf was disguised as a sheep. Because of this we say you can’t trust them. At first their words will be sweet and marvelous. But later they’re going to bring out the claw again.” He made a slight animal noise and swiped his hand through the air like a claw and warned, “We’re going to see the wolf once again pretty soon damn it. They are ferocious when the claws come out! They will come for the little sheep and lambs and when they can no longer control the people, that is when the claw comes out.” He made another animal noise and concluded, “Damn, it won’t be long until we have to react. We have to be careful.”<sup>470</sup>

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<sup>469</sup> Ibid.

<sup>470</sup> Ibid.

Comando Bigotes has made dozens, if not hundreds, of speeches to municipal government employees, other civilians, and self-defense force participants. He speaks to his own community and neighboring communities to communicate the need to mobilize for self-defense. The civilian leader uses narrative to bring meaning to the current insecurity using the recent national trauma of internal armed conflict with Sendero Luminoso militants in the 1980s and 1990s. He relates stories to interpret local developments and to identify who the other actors are and what kind of behavior to expect. He assigns responsibility and prescribes the need for specific actions. Other self-defense forces in highland communities around Huanta exhibit the same tendency to frame contemporary security challenges in terms of their experiences with Sendero Luminoso in the 1980s and 1990s.

Bigotes shares narratives that also help to construct a new *rondero* identity and that described who they are in relation to others. He describes self-defense force goals and their duty to the community in creating a culture of peace grounded in traditional values and righteous living. He described their role as *ronderos* to a crowd of self-defense force participants at a checkpoint on the highway leading to the VRAEM, “The military and the police are doing their jobs but we also play an important role as civilians in the face of this wave of crime and other problems. We have risen up to confront these challenges.”

Bigotes describes who they are and their responsibility to the community to defend their way of life:

The countryside. We’re from the countryside! We come from farms. I am the son of woman that tended to her land and a man that did the same. I’m from the highlands. So, our native music comes from the harp and violin. Our ancestors, who we don’t always remember, our grandparents, they celebrated their holidays and parties like this.”

Bigotes lamented that today many see things differently. He did his best impression of hip-hop dancing and hand gesturing to critique trends in urban culture and a move away from tradition.

He implied that this was the culture of the new enemy they faced. The crowd laughed in approval and nodded their heads in agreement. He continued:

We have to practice and grow what is ours! Our culture. Today our countrymen no longer wear the traditional knit caps, other traditional hats, jackets woven with sheep's wool like before, and the old style of pants. Little by little culture is dying; it's going away. All of a sudden like the Incas and the Chaskis, it will be no more. We need to value our culture because it's OURS!

He smiled at me and asked the crowd, "Why would we copy the gringos with their sweatshirts?"

The crowd laughed. "It's fine; he is himself. We are us!"<sup>471</sup> The self-defense force participants not only aim to confront security threats, but also to defend traditional culture and a way of life contemporary Peru sometimes fails to value.

The Luricocha self-defense force strives to maintain an environment of fairness and fraternity as part of a *rondero* identity. For example, when they scheduled participants to man the checkpoint on Mother's Day, instead of selecting just a few members to forego spending the day with loved ones, they had everyone show up. Entire families brought food and entertainment to celebrate together at the check point. The movement has adopted principles from the *rondas campesinas* movement that emphasize horizontal power relationships to make self-defense forces more democratic and to avoid abuses of power. Bigotes explained to participants:

We have to continue to build trust and solidarity among ourselves. There should be openness and accountability. If I do something wrong, tell me. If he does something wrong, tell him. In this way we learn and can improve and overcome problems. If we keep our mouths shut we will never find a solution or resolve our issues. And worst of all, it will foster antipathy and resentment.

Hypothesis 7 predicts that high community capacity through preexisting cooperative institutions will facilitate sustained mobilization. I found support for H7 with contemporary self-defense forces. Shared experiences with community self-defense during the 1980s and 1990s provide a template for communities to remobilize to confront contemporary security challenges.

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<sup>471</sup> Speech at the checkpoint outside Luricocha on May 8, 2014 by a self-defense force leader.

Established relationships with the military at the Castro Pampa military base facilitate organizational capacity as well. However, even if communities have the capacity to organize it does not mean that they will. Most communities have high capacity to organize armed groups to resist criminal gangs that threaten public safety. The important difference rests with narratives and how communities come to understand the contemporary threats, the actors responsible, and the appropriate and desirable actions to take.

Hypothesis 8 expects that access to resources will affect community capacity to sustain civilian self-defense force mobilization. Although resources do help, they are not a necessary condition. Many organizations reemerged and have persisted regardless of access to sufficient resources. The case of Putis I describe above illustrates continued civilian resistance and self-defense force participation without access to resources like weapons. Resources facilitate participation and contribute to group efficacy, but do not appear to directly affect decisions to mobilize. Resources did not affect initial efforts to reorganize in places like Luricocha, Macachacra, and Santillana. Obsolete or ineffective weapons have not prevented participants from meeting new challenges.<sup>472</sup> Communities took steps to mobilize first and later addressed concerns about to outfit participants with gear and weapons, to train participants, and to obtain transportation to areas that need more frequent patrolling. The groups adapted as particular needs arose. Leadership lobbied for external support, strengthened existing relationships, and developed new and creative ways to better serve their communities and strengthen collective capacity.

Self-defense forces struggle to obtain the resources they need but continue nonetheless. During my first visits with contemporary self-defense forces, I also accompanied to observe political efforts to gain additional recognition and support. In one meeting at the local

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<sup>472</sup> Personal interview in Santillana on May 23, 2014 with the president of the self-defense force.

municipality in Luricocha, a self-defense force participant spoke to other attendees and bureaucrats:

We continue to keep watch today with no support from the state. We don't have any money and we receive no pay. We want the state to see the need, to see the problem, and to understand. We're not required to do this. We're out there all night in the cold, sometimes without ponchos, coats, scarves, and hats. I have a bit of a throat ache because of this. But, if any problem arises we'll be there.<sup>473</sup>

I spoke with the mayor of Huanta, who recognizes many of the hardships participants face. He has taken steps to alleviate some of the burdens but it remains a challenging political environment.

One of the biggest problems is that people in the city are not familiar with the work that they do. They're out there morning and night, in the cold and the rain. Sometimes we do not value their work and they help us all. The government says that terrorism is a thing of the past. That's what they think in Lima. The problems haven't all gone away, they've just transformed.<sup>474</sup>

The self-defense forces have their critics. Not everyone in larger communities support their efforts. In remote villages the entire community belongs to and participates in the self-defense force when required, leading to almost universal support. However, in larger urban centers like Huanta and Luricocha, some do not see self-defense forces as the solution. One resident complained, "They do this because they have nothing else to do." They complain about the new "tip" collected at the checkpoint on the road. Critics believe the police, military, and local municipal security should take care security issues. The current officer in charge of civil-military relations at the Castro Pampa base in Huanta reasoned, "[Self-defense forces] fill a need. When

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<sup>473</sup> Comments by self-defense force leader during a meeting for the Commission for Peace in Luricocha May 9, 2013.

<sup>474</sup> Personal interview in Huanta on June 11, 2015 with the mayor.

they are no longer necessary, they will likely deactivate. They serve their community. They serve as a source of authority, represent the state, and provide needed defense.”<sup>475</sup>

Most participants belong to groups that continue to make demands for more expansive reparations for past service and want to implement legislation to provide new benefits for current participants. The current president of the regional self-defense force leadership committee in Huanta lamented, “We’re worried about the future and all the red tape from the state. They used us as canon fodder and they never followed through with all the reparations. Today the state is passing delinquency and crime off onto us with no salary and little support. We need transportation. We need better weapons, more munitions, and additional training.”<sup>476</sup> The regional self-defense force president, local leaders, and participants all mention a desire for better institutionalization of autonomous security provision. As they fill a role traditionally carried out by state security forces, participants also expressed a desire for health and life insurance to help their families if something goes wrong. Those who fought during the armed conflict want legal advice and psychological help to continue to deal with past traumas.

Civilian self-defense forces fill a void left by a state and will play an important security role in the near future. “The organizations will always continue; it’s a people’s organization.”<sup>477</sup> Participants continue to make personal sacrifices for little reward. Bigotes lamented, “Sometimes my wife cries when I go out at night. She asks, ‘Why you?’ I do this because I love my community and I love my children. Thanks to our work its not like it was before. The streets and roads are safer.”

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<sup>475</sup> Personal interview at the Castro Pampa military base in Huanta on June 20, 2014 with the base commander, the officer in charge of civil-military relations, and several self-defense force leaders.

<sup>476</sup> Personal interview in Huanta on May 20, 2014 with the current president of the broader Huanta self-defense force leadership committee.

<sup>477</sup> Personal interview in Huanta on May 9, 2013 with the president of the former self-defense force participant association, the “Pacifadores.”

# Chapter 5

## ARMED CONFLICT AND CIVILIAN RESISTANCE IN THE VRAEM

In this chapter I focus on communities located in the jungle regions of the Huanta and La Mar provinces of Ayacucho. I examine individual communities and clusters of neighboring villages in the lowland jungles and the “ceja de selva” of the Apurímac, Ene, and Mantaro River Valley (the VRAEM).<sup>478</sup> Residents mostly cultivate coffee, cacao, and tropical fruits. The region also produces a large quantity of coca and currently grapples with challenges that accompany the illicit drug economy and state counter-narcotics campaign.

Residents experienced horrific conditions in the VRAEM throughout the conflict period. Mass displacement and intense violence brought perpetual insecurity. Some communities organized to fight early in the 1980s. Armed civilian groups that mobilized in the VRAEM, known as *Defensa Civil Antisubversiva* (DECAS) or Comités de Defensa Civil (CDCs), behaved more like a network of mobile militias than the self-defense forces near Huanta or the rondas campesinas in Northern Peru.<sup>479</sup> Civilian self-defense forces made a significant contribution to the eventual defeat of Sendero Luminoso. However, participants from the VRAEM lament the forgotten role they played in the conflict and criticize accounts that portray them as “bad guys” due to reports of civilian-perpetrated human rights abuses.

### AYACUCHO: COMMUNITIES IN THE VRAEM

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<sup>478</sup> The term “ceja de selva” translates to “eyebrow of the jungle” and describes where the jungle and mountains meet. The topography and vegetation change at this point.

<sup>479</sup> Mario Fumerton, *From Victims to Heroes: Peasant Counter-rebellion and Civil War in Ayacucho, Peru, 1980-2000* (Amsterdam: Rozenberg 2003), Chapter 4.

Communities in the VRAEM sit at the intersection of the Ayacucho, Cusco, and Junín regions. I focus on armed civilians in the Huanta and La Mar provinces of Ayacucho where communities first resisted Sendero militants in the VRAEM. The VRAEM is home to some of the final remnants of Sendero's revolutionary campaign and armed actors with previous ties to the insurgency provide protection to traffickers, defend production facilities, and deter state coca eradication efforts that threaten their operations in the region. Sendero still maintains some territorial control in the VRAEM. During my first fieldwork trip to the region I caught a ride with a 4x4 truck to visit a remote coca plantation. I explained to my fellow-passengers that I had come to research the self-defense forces and to write about violence during the 1980s and 1990s. One woman joked to others in the truck, "We should send him to Vizcatán." Everyone laughed. Vizcatán has a reputation as a Sendero stronghold. Journalists report on persistent terrorism in the VRAEM, profile elusive Sendero leadership, and publish photographs of young soldiers training in remote camps.<sup>480</sup>

Communities in regions with large illicit coca economies faced distinct challenges during the conflict period. For example, Sendero Luminoso consolidated control in the Upper Huallaga Valley during the mid-1980s when a large number of militants from the Ayacucho highlands fled the military's brutal counterinsurgency. Sendero militants adjusted their policies to win support from a pre-mobilized peasantry that opposed aggressive state eradication programs. Militants protected coca growers, taxed the sale of coca paste to traffickers, and charged fees to protect processing facilities and cocaine labs. They charged thousands of dollars for each plane that took off from airstrips under their control and generated millions of dollars in revenue to aid their revolutionary cause. Trafficking organizations had to register and pay fees to militants. Sendero

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<sup>480</sup> In September 2015 the Peruvian Congress voted to make Vizcatán its own political district within the Satipo province in neighboring Junín, an important first step to better incorporate remote communities and improve services like electricity, communication, and transportation.

diversified its services and also provided currency exchange to Colombian traffickers who needed to make transactions in local currency. Their involvement in the illicit drug economy significantly improved Sendero's military capabilities.<sup>481</sup> Conflict in the region involved better weapons, more frequent engagements, and increased lethality. The inaccessible region became the center of illegal coca cultivation and civilians dealt with many of the same issues as the VRAEM.

A team of Sendero Luminoso political organizers arrived in the VRAEM in the early 1980s and armed militants followed soon after. The movement sought to expand its campaign from the Ayacucho highlands. However, Sendero found less voluntary support among communities in the VRAEM than the highlands during the preliminary phase. Sendero relied on coercive violence and the military arrived soon after. Decisive military violence pushed Sendero militants out of many communities and their initial retreat provided space for some communities to organize armed resistance.

Conflict dynamics in the VRAEM reflected preexisting tensions and power-struggles. Farmers and laborers from the neighboring mountains traditionally emigrated to the VRAEM to cultivate its fertile valleys. Pioneers looked for new economic opportunities and settled jungle communities at the edge of the Peruvian state. Many of the remote communities in the VRAEM developed collective organizations to address the absence of social service provision related to health, education, and transportation. Residents frequently came together to resist and denounce abusive police and to confront exploitation by powerful business interests that sought to monopolize regional production and trade.<sup>482</sup> One particular organization, the Peasant Federation

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<sup>481</sup> Vanda Felbab-Brown, *Shooting Up: Counterinsurgency and the War on Drugs* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press 2010), pp. 42-44.

<sup>482</sup> Instituto de Defensa Legal, *Perú 1989: En la Espiral de Violencia* (Lima: Instituto de Defensa Legal 1990), p. 125.

of the Apurímac River Valley (FECVRA), worked with important national-level peasant associations and other local labor syndicates to make demands on the state.

FECVRA took steps to weaken local monopolies and disrupt consolidated commercial interests until Sendero started to target businesses with violence. Commercial interests seized the opportunity to link Sendero attacks and raids on their stores to FECVRA and its leaders. Business owners denounced and persecuted union leaders that threatened their interests.<sup>483</sup> The federation disintegrated early in the conflict under the state of emergency that began at the end of 1982.

Self-defense forces emerged as an alternative form of peasant organization in the vacant space left by associations like FECVRA.<sup>484</sup> In coordination with the military, and at times independently, the local remnants of labor interests organized and participated in civilian defense efforts. Strengthened by their history of autonomy and organizing experience, some communities transformed local cooperative institutions and conflict resolution mechanisms into platforms for organized civilian resistance. The military worked with early self-defense forces to push armed militants out of many southern VRAEM communities. Sendero's retreat in 1984 further facilitated independent community mobilization of local *montoneros*, a term referring to groups of local men who organized to protect their villages from Sendero militants.

The state pulled back and Sendero Luminoso initiated a counteroffensive in 1986 and 1987. The military engaged emboldened militants less frequently and civilians suffered a new wave of Sendero violence. Communities with *montoneros* reorganized and expanded their self-defense forces in 1988 and 1989. Communities with organized civilian resistance became the primary targets for Sendero punitive violence in their reinvigorated campaign to control the

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<sup>483</sup> Ibid.

<sup>484</sup> Carlos Iván Degregori, "Resumen final." In *Hablan los Ronderos: La Búsqueda por la Paz en los Andes*, ed. Orin Starn (Lima: IEP 1993), pp. 66-68.

Peruvian jungle. For example, Sendero killed 24 civilians in the village of Chacas located in the La Mar province in January 1988. Two days later, a Sendero column disguised as soldiers detained another group of *ronderos*, line them up, and murdered 24 participants on the spot.<sup>485</sup> Despite the increased threat, well-organized communities expanded their reach and began to visit neighboring villages to facilitate or compel additional civilian mobilization. The groups moved to other parts of the VRAEM and create a vast network of armed civilians determined to confront the militant threat and restore peace and order to the region.

Although increased threat and violence in the VRAEM forced civilians to take action, preexisting cooperative institutions and mechanisms for conflict resolution help account for the origins and evolution of civilian self-defense in the earliest cases such as Anchiway and Pichiwilca. Civilian resistance in other parts of the VRAEM would benefit from their early experiences and assistance. Community narratives also help explain the timing of civilian resistance and how communities used violence. New narratives that interpreted events and redefined relationships with important armed actors affected community decisions about violent action. Amid the chaos and disorder, communities in the region made sense of their shattered lives and the incomprehensible loss as best they could. One witness remembers how small children viewed the Sendero insurgency. In 1986, primary school students who learned that the “terrorists” moved about in their communities thought the term seemed humorous and strange. They joked and called each other “terrorists” until a teacher forbid them. The children believed the *senderistas* walked about in metal shoes and dressed all in red.<sup>486</sup> Stories about Sendero circulated among the population. People tried to make sense of events in the VRAEM in all sorts of ways.

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<sup>485</sup> DESCO, *Violencia Política en el Perú, 1980-1988* Volume 1 (Lima: DESCO, Centro de Estudios y Promoción des Desarrollo 1989), p. 169.

<sup>486</sup> Testimony 720034.

When Sendero visited communities in the VRAEM they justified violent actions as necessary to correct injustices, to incite political change, and to improve the lives of poor farmers. In 1986 a group of well-armed Sendero militants addressed a community near Kimbiri, a larger town across the Apurimac River from San Francisco, “Our entire lives we’ve been poor, working without getting ahead, while the millionaires have money and cars. If we win, we will have the money and the cars.”<sup>487</sup> Sendero promised the poor farmers a better life and material reward if they supported its struggle. As the conflict progressed civilians generated alternative narratives about Sendero, the military, and their own role in the context of armed conflict.

### **ANCHIHUAY AND PICHIWILCA**<sup>488</sup>

Sendero Luminoso began to visit the communities in 1982. At first they asked for support peacefully. Violence came at the same time civilians started to organize self-defense.<sup>489</sup> Sendero Luminoso attacked villages near Anchiuay and Pichiwilca before and after civilian resistance. The movement targeted local authorities, perpetrated abuses, and committed numerous large-scale atrocities. For example, on Christmas Eve 1987 Sendero militants entered a small town near Pichiwilca called Rinconada. They arrived at 4 a.m. and asked for the village authorities. They rounded up the mayor, the governor, and the president of the self-defense force. Without explanation they murdered the authorities. Some of their wives and children met similar fates because they refused to leave their side. The insurgents also kidnapped fifteen teenaged boys and girls.<sup>490</sup> One of the female revolutionary leaders explained to the community, “These young men and women will form part of the “pioneers” of the People’s Guerrilla Army. With them we will build a new Peru. When they come back you won’t recognize them because they will have

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<sup>487</sup> Testimony 200652.

<sup>488</sup> Many write the name as “Pichihuillca,” though the name of the town is pronounced the same.

<sup>489</sup> Testimony 204722.

<sup>490</sup> Alberto Valencia Cárdenas, *Los Crímenes de Sendero Luminoso en Ayacucho* (Lima: Editorial Impacto 1992), pp. 62-63.

become soldiers in the New Republic.” If a community did not contribute recruits willingly, Sendero often abducted any child over twelve years old to bolster its ranks.<sup>491</sup>

The military provided assistance and helped facilitate civilian resistance, but also abused and targeted civilians as suspected insurgents. When armed civilians mobilized they behaved in the same way. Self-defense forces protected residents, but armed civilians also committed abuses in their campaign to bring stability to the region. Communities in the VRAEM experienced over a decade of violence and deprivation in their struggle for peace and security.

### **Civilian Resistance in Anchohuay and Pichiwilca**

Groups of *montoneros* first organized in Anchohuay. Residents organized local civilian resistance to Sendero militants and expanded to neighboring villages and hamlets. The *montoneros* from Anchohuay primarily performed spontaneous defensive actions before the community decided to go on the offensive. They helped to organize neighboring villages, sometimes by force, and actively hunted down, killed, or captured Sendero militants starting in late 1983 and early 1984.<sup>492</sup> The groups spread throughout the entire VRAEM by the end of the 1980s and created a vast network of militias that at times moved as a force of several thousand participants. *Montoneros* from Anchohuay visited neighbors in Pichiwilca to help organize early in 1984 and Pichiwilca became the center of civilian self-defense force efforts in the VRAEM by 1988.

Civilians worked with Marine infantry and police to fight Sendero militants during early mobilization efforts. Witnesses who provided testimonies for the CVR described the important

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<sup>491</sup> Ibid. p. 63.

<sup>492</sup> CVR, *Informe Final: Peru, 1980-2000, Tomo II, Capítulo 1.5 Los Comités de Autodefensa* (2003), p. 440. The term *montoneros* refers to a “group of people” describing a large number of people taking part in an asymmetric conflict. The term was often employed to describe the self-defense forces in the VRAEM.

assistance provide by a Major *Vic* in expanding the civilian initiative.<sup>493</sup> State security forces assisted civilians to push Sendero back and create a “space for action” during the militants’ temporary retreat.<sup>494</sup> The military also pulled back and provided less assistance to civilians during the mid-1980s when tensions developed between President Garcia and military commanders. Soldiers spent more time at bases and engaged less frequently with Sendero militants. Civilian leaders from communities like Anchiuay and Pichiwilca expanded self-defense initiatives during this time. The most important actor, Antonio Cárdenas (Comandante Harry), was only 19 years old in 1984 when he helped organize and lead the Pichiwilca self-defense force. He received posthumous recognition for service to the Peruvian state.<sup>495</sup> Cárdenas and other leaders organized neighboring communities to stand against Sendero’s political ambitions and they became targets for punitive violence when Sendero renewed its campaign in the VRAEM.

Sendero attacked villages in the surrounding communities to kill authorities, self-defense force participants, and civilian opponents. In one historic confrontation, 40 armed Sendero militants accompanied 400 peasant recruits from the surrounding area and attacked the self-defense force regional command center in Pichiwilca. On April 13, 1988 the force attacked 100 ronderos who confronted the superior force armed with homemade single-shot weapons, hunting shotguns, tools, and several grenades left by the military. Allies in Anchiuay got news of their predicament and came to their aid with a platoon of Marines. The reinforcements surprised the attackers and a bloody battle ensued. The soldiers and armed civilians got the upper hand and forced Sendero militants to abandon their conscripts and leave fallen comrades behind. The

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<sup>493</sup> Ibid., p. 441

<sup>494</sup> Mario Fumerton, *From Victims to Heroes: Peasant Counter-rebellion and Civil War in Ayacucho, Peru, 1980-2000* (Amsterdam: Rozenberg 2003), p. 115.

<sup>495</sup> Gustavo Gorriti, “Muere Antonio Cárdenas: Líder Histórico de la Guerra Contra SL en el VRAE.” *IDL-Reporteros* (November 1, 2012), <https://idl-reporteros.pe/muere-antonio-cardenas/>.

soldiers and self-defense forces pursued the attackers for 15 days and nearly wiped them all out.<sup>496</sup>

The infamous Comandante Huayhuaco became an important leader in the self-defense force movement around this time. Javier Pompeyo Rivera Terres (Huayhuaco) joined up with Antonio Cárdenas and other community leaders near Pichiwilca. Prior to his prominent role as a rondero leader, Huayhuaco served time in prison for possession of one and a half kilos of cocaine paste. He spent several years behind bars in Lima before his conditional release in 1986. Huayhuaco broke his parole and left Lima to return to the VRAEM in 1987. Many suspect he worked with Sendero prior to his arrest in 1983 or perhaps had associations with militants in prison where Sendero controlled many of the cellblocks. He may have even interacted with Sendero militants shortly after his return to the VRAEM. Regardless, the ex-school teacher, amateur dentist, and drug trafficker joined up with the self-defense force movement in May 1988 and became an important leader in the fight against Sendero Luminoso.<sup>497</sup>

Huayhuaco and other ronderos may have been repentant Sendero collaborators who switched sides to lead the self-defense forces. Many participants I interviewed described ronderos from communities around Pichiwilca as “changing shirts” during the early years of the conflict. Huayhuaco had additional legal troubles related to allegations of civilian abuses, embezzling organization funds, and continued links to drug trafficking in the VRAEM during the early 1990s. At the first Ayacucho self-defense force regional conference in September 1993 the

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<sup>496</sup> Mario Fumerton, *From Victims to Heroes: Peasant Counter-rebellion and Civil War in Ayacucho, Peru, 1980-2000* (Amsterdam: Rozenberg 2003), pp. 122-123; Oscar Espinosa, *Rondas Campesinas y Nativas en la Amazonia Peruana* (Lima: Centro Amazónico de Antropología y Aplicación Práctica 1995), pp. 150-151; Ponciano del Pino, “Tiempos de Guerra y de Dioses: Ronderos, Evangélicos y Senderistas en el Valle del Río Apurímac.” In *Las Rondas Campesinas y la Derrota de Sendero Luminoso*, eds. Carlos Iván Degregori, José Coronel, Ponciano del Pino, and Orin Starn, (Lima: Instituto de Estudios Peruanos 1996), p.150.

<sup>497</sup> For a short biography and excerpts from an interview with Huayhuaco see Mario Fumerton, *From Victims to Heroes: Peasant Counter-rebellion and Civil War in Ayacucho, Peru, 1980-2000* (Amsterdam: Rozenberg 2003), pp. 123-130. Also see Instituto de Defensa Legal, *Perú 1989: En la Espiral de Violencia* (Lima: Instituto de Defensa Legal 1990).

participants unanimously expelled Huayhuaco from the organization and declared him *persona non grata*.<sup>498</sup> Regardless, he played a significant role in the expansion of self-defense forces from Pichiwilca to other parts of the VRAEM.

Huayhuaco served as second in command of the regional organization based in Pichiwilca and led the self-defense force from Rinconada Baja, the community where he lived. Huayhuaco developed a broad network of armed peasants to patrol the region, to help organize additional communities, and to hunt down suspected militants and sympathizers. The Peruvian media printed Comando Huayhuaco's confident claims that he could defeat the Sendero insurgency within a year if the government supplied 500 rifles to arm the peasants he organized in 62 communities near the Apurímac River.<sup>499</sup> His bold assertions even caught the attention of President Garcia in Lima and he gifted Huayhuaco a pistol. Comando Huayhuaco coordinated with state security forces to help mobilize thousands of residents to fight the insurgency and wrest control of the region from Sendero militants. He worked tirelessly on the ground to organize communities, as well as through political channels to acquire rifles and restructure the relationship between the self-defense forces and military allies.

The nature of the self-defense forces changed in 1989. The groups had greater support and political will from the Peruvian government, including President Garcia. President Fujimori provided additional state support in the early 1990s. Pichiwilca continued to serve as the central command location and a parallel armed force developed to help defeat Sendero Luminoso and bring greater security the VRAEM. What factors best account for civilian resistance outcomes in the region?

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<sup>498</sup> CVR, *Informe Final: Peru, 1980-2000, Tomo II, Capítulo 1.5 Los Comités de Autodefensa* (2003), pp. 442.

<sup>499</sup> Jaime de Althaus and Jorge Morelli Salgado, "Comandante Huayhuaco (Ardilla), Jefe de los Ronderos del Río Apurímac: 'Denme 500 Fusiles y Libero Ayacucho en un Año,'" *Expreso* No. 10084 (March 25, 1989), 5-8.

**Table 5.1: Narratives, community capacity, and civilian resistance outcomes in Anchiuay and Pichiwilca 1980-2000**

		Community Capacity	
		High	Low
Violent Narratives	Yes	Violent mobilization (after 1984)	Sporadic individual violence (N/A)
	No	Nonviolent mobilization (N/A)	Flee or collaborate with insurgents (1982-1983)

*Realist and Rationalist Explanations*

Hypothesis 1 expects communities to organize and resist in response to increased threat and violence. Sendero violence increased around the same time that communities began to organize in communities near Anchiuay and Pichiwilca. One woman described when the senderistas first came to Anchiuay, “They asked the people to collaborate. They punished the authorities and took their things...they kicked them repeatedly.”<sup>500</sup> Militants took some of the young people and explained that the children would walk alongside them. They killed or disappeared those who resisted. The militants killed the woman’s husband on May 22, 1983. He served as a political authority and Sendero threatened him in the middle of the central plaza. They described her husband as a *yana uma* who had been talking about them, so the senderistas shot the man and left his body next to a nearby river.

An elderly woman described how the senderistas walked at night in the surrounding area, lived hidden in caves, and sometimes attacked the communities. The witness and her neighbors lived in terror. She gave her testimony in Quechua, “The *puriq* would shout, ‘*Tia*, where is the food?’ and make other demands.” Residents fled the community in fear to hide in the mountain.

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<sup>500</sup> Testimony 201312.

They came back the next night and the militants had taken many of the men by force and promised to return in 15 days.<sup>501</sup>

Another witness who lived in Anchiuay with her parents and six siblings described when the terrorists came and made residents attend meetings. She also mentioned them taking young people by force. Militants came to town in large numbers and searched homes looking for recruits to fill their ranks. In 1984 they came armed with guns, knives, and sticks. She recalled how many residents fled to the mountain and the senderistas stayed in town for two days. She remembered militants taking her neighbor to a corral. She heard screams and they eventually killed her, probably with a knife because there was no gunshot.<sup>502</sup> The same witness went to the hills with her family and neighbors to live for more than three months, afraid they would become victims if they stayed in their homes. Over three hundred displaced people gathered together several hours away.

Other residents described early decisions to flee and hide. One remembered when the “terrucos” came to her home, killed animals, cooked, and ate. Many residents fled their small farms to hide and sleep in the hills out of fear. Sendero came for the children and parents feared they might be kidnapped or killed. Sendero wanted to take her 17-year-old brother, but her parents objected and they hid along with other families. Sendero and state security forces came looking for groups of people in the hills and both sides murder civilians.<sup>503</sup>

The community did not immediately respond with violent civilian resistance. Many of the community members fled and hid in the nearby hills. But, others stayed behind. Some community members banded together and attempted to rid the community of suspected Sendero

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<sup>501</sup> Testimony 200001. Puriq describes people “of the night.” Tia means “aunt” but is a familiar term to refer to a woman who is their senior.

<sup>502</sup> Testimony 203768.

<sup>503</sup> Testimony 202992.

sympathizers that served as the revolution’s “1,000 eyes and ears.” Rumors circulated in the community about Sendero prior to the militants’ arrival. They heard neighbors say, “There are people fighting for the poor.” Some civilians took action when violence escalated. For example, local ronderos from one community coordinated with the Anchiuay self-defense force to disappear two men on June 28, 1984.<sup>504</sup> A woman in another community testified that local ronderos disappeared her husband as a preemptive act the year prior on July 16, 1983.<sup>505</sup> Decisions about how to respond in the face of threat and violence varied in Anchiuay, Pichiwilca, and neighboring communities. Community actions suggest that civilian resistance is a process rather than a single action or event.

**Table 5.2: Armed civilian, militant, and state security force violence in the Anco district by year between 1980 and 2000**

	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	Total	
<b>Armed Civilians</b>			2		61	2																	65
<b>Militants</b>		3		19	24	8	4	6	7			1	2										74
<b>State Security Forces</b>				7	32	8	2	3															52

Table 5.2 contains violent incident counts reported to the CVR for the Anco district (Anchiuay). These data illustrate violence trends around Anchiuay rather than provide a comprehensive. The spike in civilian perpetrated violence in 1984 corresponds with civilian mobilization and follows high levels of militant violence the year prior. However, I spoke with two men from Anchiuay who helped organize the community’s initial civilian resistance and they described several key incidents that motivated the community to resist. Threat and violence already affected the lives of many residents in Anchiuay and neighboring communities.

<sup>504</sup> Testimony 203857.

<sup>505</sup> Testimony 201662.

Specific incidents perpetrated by militants against community authorities and religious leaders inspired resistance when higher levels did not.<sup>506</sup> *How* and against *whom* the militants used violence mattered more.

The direction of causation also runs in the opposite direction. Sendero violence increased dramatically as militants punished communities that did not support the revolutionary campaign. They sought to deter organization efforts. Sendero spies informed the movement when communities met to discuss self-defense. Punitive violence dealt crippling blows to Anchiuay in late August 1984 when Sendero killed 30 to 40 residents. One leader explained, “They came to kill everyone because we had organized. No more forgiveness. No more just carrying people off.”<sup>507</sup> Sendero also visited nearby Palmapampa the same year to punish residents who collaborated with state security forces and discussed resistance.<sup>508</sup>

Hypothesis 2 expects state absence to force residents to take responsibility for their own security. A weak state unwilling or unable to come to their aid would compel residents to take action. One of the principal organizers in Anchiuay reasoned, “The community might have ended but [its residents] would not stop. We did not give up. We kept moving forward. We escaped as victims at the time. The state did not help us. We were afraid. No help would come. We had to defend ourselves.”<sup>509</sup> Another man showed me his calf that had been torn apart by several bullets during a Sendero attack and added, “We saw them passing through, burning and destroying everything. We had to band together.”<sup>510</sup> However, I also heard first-hand accounts that described the state security forces as playing a significant role in civilian mobilization.

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<sup>506</sup> Personal interview near Quinoa on June 13, 2015 with two leaders of the Anchiuay self-defense force.

<sup>507</sup> Ibid.

<sup>508</sup> Testimony 201191.

<sup>509</sup> Personal interview near Quinoa on June 13, 2015 with two leaders of the Anchiuay self-defense force.

<sup>510</sup> Personal interview near Quinoa on June 13, 2015 with two leaders of the Anchiuay self-defense force. Other residents would come stop, listen momentarily, and contribute their thoughts and experiences.

Soldiers and police supported civilian resistance efforts to varying degrees over the years and in many cases compelled communities to organize. Civilians took responsibility for their own protection, but the Marine infantry and police had a strong presence in the VRAEM even at the beginning of the conflict. Despite a relatively uniform presence, the actions state security forces took with regard to civilian protection varied. Although the self-defense forces expanded even further when the military spent less time fighting militants and more time in their bases after 1985, the expansion of civilian resistance had more to do with greater political space with Sendero's preliminary retreat.

Hypothesis 3 expects greater civilian resistance with a strong state that compels participation and uses armed civilians as an auxiliary counterinsurgency force. I found some support for H3, though civilian agency also contributed to coordinated actions with the state. Self-defense forces and military allies worked together to force Sendero out of the VRAEM. One witness remembers the military helping to organize resistance in 1984. On one occasion the witness and three companions went to Anchiuay to sell goats. The self-defense forces detained the merchants and took them to the Luisiana military base. When the soldiers released the men, the same montoneros came looking for them at night two days later.<sup>511</sup> Civilians worked in coordination with state security forces, but with a large degree of operational and decision-making autonomy.

In another instance, the police and military found a large group of civilians in the hills and one witness remembers them killing seven neighbors and taking the rest back to Anchiuay to help defend against Sendero attacks.<sup>512</sup> Civilian self-defense force had just started to take

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<sup>511</sup> Testimony 201191. Also see Testimony 203842 for another example of coordination between police and ronderos.

<sup>512</sup> Testimony 203768.

shape and state security forces rounded up residents that fled to the hills and brought them back under force to receive directions from those who organized and led civilian resistance.

The consolidation and expansion of civilian resistance efforts despite less military support provides disconfirming evidence for H3. Anchiuay and other VRAEM communities demonstrate that high (or low) state capacity is neither a necessary nor sufficient condition in explaining civilian resistance outcomes. Other armed civilians from Anchiuay, and later Pichiwilca, played an even greater role than the state in pressuring civilian resistance in neighboring communities. Ronderos from communities around Anchiuay and Pichiwilca applied pressure to coerce other communities. One witness recalls the process later in the conflict, “Everyone was afraid of Comando Huayhuaco. He forced the villagers to go out on patrol. If they resisted he punished them and forced them to do a month of work on his farm for free, with fifty lashes on top.”<sup>513</sup> Civilians organized autonomously during the earliest mobilization efforts and then participants “village hopped” from Anchiuay to organize in San Martin, San Antonio, Monterrico, Palmapampa, and then on to Pichiwilca.<sup>514</sup> One of the original organizers from Anchiuay described “bad elements” in some villages that did not agree to organize. They has to “apply pressure” to convince them.<sup>515</sup> In an extreme case, a resident from the Palmapampa community remembers ronderos threatening, “If you do not agree to organize we’re going to cut your throats with chainsaws.”<sup>516</sup> Civilian and not state strength explains the expansion of civilian resistance.

Hypothesis 4 expects opportunism to motivate participants and facilitate violent civilian resistance. I found some support for H4 in the case of Pichiwilca. Pichiwilca’s self-defense force

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<sup>513</sup> Testimony 200237.

<sup>514</sup> Mario Fumerton, *From Victims to Heroes: Peasant Counter-rebellion and Civil War in Ayacucho, Peru, 1980-2000* (Amsterdam: Rozenberg 2003), p. 116.

<sup>515</sup> Personal interview near Quinoa on June 13, 2015 with two leaders of the Anchiuay self-defense force.

<sup>516</sup> Testimony 205255.

had ties to the illicit drug economy prior to the conflict. Some interview subjects claim that their leaders sympathized with Sendero Luminoso early on and only changed sides opportunistically as a matter of survival and economic enrichment. Although difficult to ascertain true motivations, it should come as no surprise that perpetrator accounts of violence highlight positive aspects of their behavior and justify their actions while accounts provided by victims differ and reveal the darker side of civilian resistance.

One witness spoke about her father who bought and sold livestock around the La Mar province. He often carried large sums of cash. In May 1984 ronderos detained her father and three other men he contracted to transport animals for a sale. The self-defense force worked with the police. The ronderos took the men to a station and confiscated their identification and money. The police and ronderos tortured their wards and forced the men to dig the pit in which they were shot and buried.<sup>517</sup> Opportunism worsened after self-defense and state security forces took control of the VRAEM. Some self-defense force participants used their positions for personal enrichment. For example, accusations against self-defense force leaders in Palmapampa illustrate a community where the organization strengthened ties with drug traffickers to finance self-defense operations in the VRAEM and generate additional personal income.<sup>518</sup> Ties to traffickers to sustain and arm civilians created greater opportunism in the jungle than the mountainous communities in Chapter 4. However, opportunism in most cases occurred once the organizations had mobilized and not as a driving force to resist Sendero violence.

### *Narratives and Community Capacity*

Civilians in Anchiuay and Pichiwilca became defenders of the Peruvian nation. Many civilians crafted a fiction and preformed the part until it became reality. Objective conditions of

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<sup>517</sup> Testimony 203842.

<sup>518</sup> “‘Narcorondas’ Deben Desarmarse en el Apurímac.” *Expreso* No. 12044 (August 28, 1994), A8-A9.

threat and violence forced civilians to respond, but their subjective interpretations of events and relationships played a crucial role in resistance. Hypothesis 5 predicts that if communities understand events through narratives that permit violence, then armed civilian resistance is more likely. Civilians in Anchiuay and Pichiwilca did not always understand events in their community during the early stages of the conflict. One elderly woman gave her testimony in Quechua and remembered neighboring villages always talked about “senderistas” and “terrucos” and that the “the terrucos were killing people in the jungle.” She did not know who they were, though they came to the community twice. The first time thirty senderistas came and the second time they ask the community to relocate to another spot. So they left along with several neighboring villages. The community discussed its decision to leave, “It will be okay, [the senderistas] say that death is coming, because of this they’re asking us to leave to save our lives.” Militants killed her neighbor that day which frightened everyone and they decided to go.<sup>519</sup>

The woman’s account illustrated the confusion people experienced during their encounters with Sendero militants. The community left during the potato harvest and the population reluctantly abandoned their farms. The militants asked, “Which do you value more, your products or your lives. Life is precious and if you don’t leave you’re all going to go to join Saint Peter.” The people asked, “What do you mean by joining Saint Peter?” Militants used the phrase to describe death. So the community left and her husband went back two weeks later to see what became of the animals and harvest. A helicopter with soldiers came by air and ronderos by land. Soldiers asked about “unknown people” and inquired about “those who killed.”<sup>520</sup> The farmers made sense of the events as best they could.

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<sup>519</sup> Testimony 201662.

<sup>520</sup> Ibid.

Hypothesis 6 predicts that if narratives define a community's relationship with other actors in ways that justify violence, then violence is more likely. In Anchiuay, where civilians first resisted Sendero militants, the community understood events through a strong evangelical Christian lens. Militant actions became an assault on their faith when senderistas physically abused an important religious figure. Their aggression and disrespect toward an evangelical pastor helped spawn new community narratives. Sendero significantly disrupted life in Anchiuay, Pichiwilca, and surrounding communities. Militants attempted to incite internal community divisions. However, when Sendero targeted important religious and political authorities, the movement became an antagonistic force. Sendero rhetoric did not match its behavior. One of the self-defense force organizers from Anchiuay remembered, "We all lived in rural areas and people arrived talking about politics. In reality it wasn't like they said. They started killing authorities."<sup>521</sup> Community narratives about Sendero shifted when militants targeted two particularly important local authorities; an evangelical who served as president of the communal directive and the evangelical pastor. Their actions strongly influenced the way the community viewed the movement and its militants and affected decisions about violent civilian resistance.

Violence of a particular kind against specific targets changed the way the community viewed Sendero and its revolutionary campaign. I found support for both H5 and H6. In 1983 militants killed the evangelical president of the communal directive in front of the village. Sendero gathered everyone to speak about the revolution and a witness remembered, "The militants dragged the evangelical pastor out of the church. We didn't like that. It all started with this. With all the other leaders of the annexes too; we couldn't live with [Sendero's actions] and

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<sup>521</sup> Personal interview near Quinoa on June 13, 2015 with two leaders of the Anchiuay self-defense force.

we organized.”<sup>522</sup> Anchiuay provides support for historian Ponciano del Pino’s account of the important role religion played during conflict in the VRAEM. Residents began to view Sendero militants as devils, the damned, and demons.<sup>523</sup> Anchiuay has a large Pentecostal population and religion affected the way residents described the conflict. Evangelical from Anchiuay prayed, but they also participated. One resident emphasized the importance of God’s will to protect them from Sendero, but their own actions in His name facilitated the organization of armed civilian resistance.

Defending communities became linked to notions about defending their faith. Evangelical beliefs became a central theme in the way participants viewed and described the conflict. One self-defense force participant believed, “I was no longer a simple fighter, but a fighter for God, under God’s protection.”<sup>524</sup> A participant from Anchiuay described an incident where a group of well-armed Sendero militants surrounded his brother’s house. He prayed and the militants believed they saw armed soldiers in the house and fled. The man explained, “That was God’s protection. In truth they weren’t soldiers. They were heavenly armies protecting those who fear God.”<sup>525</sup> The self-defense force’s struggle against Sendero transformed into a crusade against God’s enemy and they became the instruments of His will in this fight.

Residents also described Sendero as a force that interfered with their livelihoods and destroyed families. New narratives counteracted Sendero’s message of sacrifice for a new and improved Peru. Residents linked the movement to loss and suffering. Farmers could not tend to their land and animals. Their children could not go to school and went to bed hungry. They

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<sup>522</sup> Ibid.

<sup>523</sup> Ponciano del Pino, “Tiempos de Guerra y de Dioses: Ronderos, Evangélicos y Senderistas en el Valle del Río Apurímac.” In *Las Rondas Campesinas y la Derrota de Sendero Luminoso*, eds. Carlos Iván Degregori, José Coronel, Ponciano del Pino, and Orin Starn, (Lima: Instituto de Estudios Peruanos 1996), pp. 117-188.

<sup>524</sup> Ponciano del Pino, “Peasants at War.” In *The Peru Reader: History, Culture, Politics*, eds. Orin Starn, Carlos Iván Degregori, and Robin Kirk (Durham: Duke University Press 1995), p. 396.

<sup>525</sup> Ibid.

viewed Sendero's violence as futile and senseless acts. One self-defense force participant who fought in both the mountain and jungle regions remembered, "[In Pichiwilca] it started with only seven men. Sendero killed just to kill, that's why Pichiwilca changed sides."<sup>526</sup> Sendero militants became murderers who committed acts of violence as an end unto itself.

Residents remember the ferocity and the senselessness. The politics and goals of the revolution ceased to enter into descriptions about events and those responsible for the horror. One woman remembers senderistas telling them that they only wanted to punish their parents. They bound the children and covered them up. She heard shots and when they got free she found her parents on the patio with their faces beaten and gunshot wounds to the stomach. They also found their older brother who had also been shot and his head appeared to have been split apart with a hatchet.<sup>527</sup> Their violent acts tore a family apart and orphaned the woman and her siblings. In another case Sendero militants ambushed a joint rondero patrol from Palmapampa, Pichiwilca, Arhuire, Palestina, Monterrico, and Anchiway. Militants killed one participant. Every loss contributed to the collective trauma and affected how residents described Sendero. During the rondero's funeral his youngest son fainted. He asked to be buried with his father. They had to carry him out of the cemetery. He continued to visit his father's grave day and night. His death left his wife alone to care for their ten children.<sup>528</sup> Every community had similar stories.

How communities saw their relationship with the state security forces also affected civilian resistance outcomes and how they used violence. Residents viewed the military and police in different ways and community narratives came to reflect their complicated relationship with the state security forces. Relations with the military and police improved when communities

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<sup>526</sup> Personal interview in Huanta on June 20, 2014 with a former participant and current self-defense force leader in Luricocha.

<sup>527</sup> Testimony 203857.

<sup>528</sup> Testimony 201191.

organized self-defense and took steps to clearly demonstrate opposition to Sendero's political project. Communities signaled opposition through actions and community transformations led to Sendero punitive violence. For example, Sendero militants came to Palmapampa in 1984. A witness described how senderistas came for her husband one morning at the local medical post. Militants took him away to "bring him to justice" for working with the military and police. One of the militants promised her, "He's a good person who wants to bring progress to the town; they won't kill him." However, the witness' nephew, one of the senderistas, hit her husband with the butt of his rifle and insisted his uncle collaborated with the military and police. She remembered that her husband stood tall and brave in the face of death and when the senderistas went to blindfold him he insisted, "If you want to kill me, kill me with my eyes open. I'm brave and I'm going to die like Maria Parado de Bellido."<sup>529</sup> Another senderista leader decided to spare his life because of family ties. They thought about leaving afterward, but traveling also brought risks so they stayed. The montoneros had just started to organize and they found comfort in that.

The man referenced Maria Parado de Bellido, an indigenous Quechua-speaking woman who sacrificed her life in the name of liberty and independence in colonial Peru. Sendero became a threat to those ideals and the state became an ally. Relations with the state security forces warmed over time, especially with the civilian self-defense forces. Armed civilians became a central component in the counterinsurgency by the late 1980s. President Alan García visited the La Mar province to distribute weapons to armed civilian organizations to assist them in their struggle against Sendero militants. He described their actions as a form of "democratic insurrection" and stressed their important role Peruvian security. The president reaffirmed a desire to strengthen the state's relationship with armed civilian groups and sought to shape public

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<sup>529</sup> Ibid.

notions about the future of civilian self-defense forces. He provided additional weapons to groups led by Comandante Huayhuaco and President García praised communities for taking a stand against the insurgent threat. He commented that once the communities in the region had organized in self-defense, Sendero Luminoso would be finished. President García defended his decision to distribute weapons to civilians and reaffirmed the state's commitment to strengthen community capacity, "They always say that if we give weapons to the peasants maybe they're going to use them to cause harm and I say: What reason do we have not to put our trust in them?"<sup>530</sup> The distribution of arms by President García and President Fujimori created a regional narrative about a united front between civilians and the state to defeat terror that persists today.

How communities saw themselves also affected civilian resistance and how they used violence. Communities cultivated a new *rondero* identity in Anchiuay, Pichiwilca, and other nearby villages. The community of Pichiwilca remains synonymous with armed civilian resistance in contemporary Peru. Every conflict needs its heroes, and leaders like Comandante Huayhuaco became living legends. Modern myths circulated among the public. However, like most larger-than-life figures, Huayhuaco represent different aspects of the conflict to many. Stories portrayed him simultaneously as a hero, villain, and national savior all wrapped into one. He found success partly in his capacity to cultivate his legend. He became a national celebrity in 1989 and frequently appeared in the Peruvian news with descriptions of the dire situation civilians faced in the VRAEM. He proposed solutions and promised results. He facilitated self-defense force expansion and participants imagined themselves as a unified force on the front line in the struggle to save the Peruvian nation.

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<sup>530</sup> Instituto de Defensa Legal, *Perú 1989: En la Espiral de Violencia* (Lima: Instituto de Defensa Legal 1990), p. 124.

Participants coordinated with neighboring communities and became allies in defense. They experienced strong notions of solidarity and camaraderie. They shared ideas about a common fate and followed through on promises of mutual assistance. How the self-defense forces saw themselves made them all the more formidable and dangerous. Civilian self-defense forces enjoyed prestige and legitimacy in their own communities, although some came to see the organizations as abusive. Some self-defense forces behaved poorly. One witness remembers, “They cut off some people’s ears.”<sup>531</sup> Armed civilians in the VRAEM committed acts of excessive violence and human rights abuses during their push to eliminate the Sendero threat. One witness remembers:

The *ronderos* came from Pichiwilca in 1989. They killed twenty people, accusing them of terrorism. They caught one terrorist alive after a battle that killed five *ronderos*. They dragged him around town tied to the back of a car while he screamed. They told the town that this is what happens to people who support the terrorists. They then doused the victim in gasoline and burned him alive.<sup>532</sup>

Pichiwilca became synonymous with civilian resistance, but to many it brought up stories of torture and civilian terror. When Huayhuaco exerted less influence over the network of self-defense forces after legal troubles in 1990, many self-defense forces reorganized to give community members more direct input into leadership selection. Their behavior improved and the organizations became more accountable to the communities they sought to defend.<sup>533</sup>

Narratives about the role of self-defense forces shifted as the organizations transformed into alternative institutions and provided services that traditionally fall under the purview of the state. They not only provided collective security to residents in the VRAEM, but other social services. For example, in April 1992, the Pichiwilca self-defense force organized the

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<sup>531</sup> Testimony 200007.

<sup>532</sup> Personal interview in Maynay on May 10, 2013 with a witness. The witness lived near San Francisco during the conflict, one of the larger towns located in the VRAEM.

<sup>533</sup> Hugo Huillca, “El Diálogo con Sendero Es Imposible.” In *Hablan los Ronderos: La Búsqueda por la Paz en los Andes*, ed. Orin Starn (Lima: IEP 1993), pp. 44-45.

construction of a health clinic.<sup>534</sup> They did not request help from the state, demonstrating local autonomy and decentralization in providing for a community's collective needs.

Community narratives about events and relationships influenced decisions about violence. Hypothesis 7 expects community capacity to affect mobilization and predicts that preexisting cooperative institution will facilitate sustained resistance. I found clear support for H7 in Anchiuay. Successful civilian resistance in VRAEM is a story about the transformation of local institutions that allowed some communities to initiate and sustain mobilization. Communities south of Santa Rosa like Anchiuay differ drastically from cases I examine in the subsequent sections in this chapter. Anchiuay had especially strong local institutions that helped to overcome collective action problems and facilitate cooperation in resisting Sendero threat and violence. Anchiuay stands apart as unique in its early possession of land title in 1951. The community had a *junta directiva comunal*, or a directive to distribute communal land among community members and settle land disputes. Institutionalized mechanisms for communal cooperation and conflict resolution provide evidence for higher community capacity and a greater likelihood that they could initiate and sustain armed civilian resistance. Furthermore, local institutions facilitated community gatherings where the montoneros would then take an active role in continued recruitment and mobilization.<sup>535</sup> They convinced the community to support collective efforts to resist Sendero militancy through armed action. The community directive also served as an organizational model for the self-defense force leadership.<sup>536</sup> Existing research identifies six positions that include a president, vice-president, secretary of acts,

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<sup>534</sup> Ponciano del Pino, "Peasants at War." In *The Peru Reader: History, Culture, Politics*, eds. Orin Starn, Carlos Iván Degregori, and Robin Kirk (Durham: Duke University Press 1995), p. 382.

<sup>535</sup> Mario Fumerton, *From Victims to Heroes: Peasant Counter-rebellion and Civil War in Ayacucho, Peru, 1980-2000* (Amsterdam: Rozenberg 2003), pp. 115-116.

<sup>536</sup> *Ibid.*

treasurer, organizational secretary (*comando operativo*), and a security officer (*sub-comando*). All the committees I spoke to identified seven positions, which included a spokesperson (*vocal*).

When I spoke with political authorities and self-defense force leaders from Anchiuay, they described a well-organized and unified community. They maintain a communal land system, which differs from most communities. They hold a common land title and do not own individual plots. They have expanded slightly to accommodate children and the community directive assigns labor tasks and land possession. The community took it personally when Sendero murdered authorities and sought to impose its own vision for order and production.<sup>537</sup>

Two additional factors contributed to even greater community capacity in Anchiuay: 1) a unified evangelical population with shared values and strong inter-community ties, and 2) previous experience resisting other violent actors linked to the illicit coca economy. Both factors strengthened community capacity to organize resistance to Sendero militants.<sup>538</sup> Strong religious unity and evangelical leadership had a clear vision about the future of their community and facilitated cooperation. Civilians in Anchiuay organized resistance and began “village hopping” to assist or compel neighboring villages passing the baton of resistance throughout the jungle.

The military and police also provided assistance which helped to eliminate collective action problems in neighboring communities. Fluctuation in military support to civilian self-defense forces over time affected their ability to sustain mobilization. Earlier efforts to train participants, provide support, and accompany the groups on patrol, made civilian resistance more likely. The military also contributed material support and technical expertise.

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<sup>537</sup> Personal interview near Quinua on June 13, 2015 with two leaders of the Anchiuay self-defense force.

<sup>538</sup> Ponciano del Pino, “Tiempos de Guerra y de Dioses: Ronderos, Evangélicos y Senderistas en el Valle del Río Apurímac.” In *Las Rondas Campesinas y la Derrota de Sendero Luminoso*, eds. Carlos Iván Degregori, José Coronel, Ponciano del Pino, and Orin Starn, (Lima: Instituto de Estudios Peruanos 1996), p. 146.

Hypothesis 8 expects that greater access to resources makes sustained civilian resistance more likely. The military provided shotguns to many communities in the late 1980s and early 1990s, which corresponds with the expansion and greater success of civilian self-defense. However, early mobilization occurred without access to adequate resources. Weapons and other resources make self-defense forces more capable but are not a necessary condition for sustained civilian resistance. Organizational capacity and technical expertise played a more important role. Sendero Luminoso may also have inadvertently helped make civilians more capable. Leaders like Huayhuaco and repentant militants had some familiarity with Sendero's guerrilla tactics, which gave them greater capacity. Early self-defense forces moved in large forces. Over time they became more selective and set up traps and ambushes instead of actively hunting Sendero militants.<sup>539</sup> Participants better utilized local knowledge and employed counterintelligence to identify Sendero spies and informers.

Better access to weapons improved their capacity to carry out armed operations. Weapons from President Garcia and President Fujimori helped, but they only provided a few shotguns to most communities. The communities themselves collected funds to compensate full-time civilian participation in some cases and to buy additional weapons. Comando Huayhuaco facilitated the purchase of more advanced weaponry to level the playing field. Those with money arranged to purchase weapons for community defense and offensive operations.<sup>540</sup> Furthermore, ties to drug traffickers provided additional funds to buy weapons.<sup>541</sup>

## **SANTA ROSA**

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<sup>539</sup> Mario Fumerton, *From Victims to Heroes: Peasant Counter-rebellion and Civil War in Ayacucho, Peru, 1980-2000* (Amsterdam: Rozenberg 2003), p. 128.

<sup>540</sup> Testimony 200237.

<sup>541</sup> CVR, *Informe Final: Peru, 1980-2000, Tomo II, Capítulo 1.5 Los Comités de Autodefensa* (2003), pp. 441-442; Ponciano del Pino, "Peasants at War." In *The Peru Reader: History, Culture, Politics*, eds. Orin Starn, Carlos Iván Degregori, and Robin Kirk (Durham: Duke University Press 1995), p. 399.

Accounts of violence near Santa Rosa describe a special kind of brutality and horror. Many residents believed they confronted “evil” in the villages near Santa Rosa, though perhaps they simply faced bad situations with even worse choices. One man described continuous incursions by Sendero Luminoso and the state security forces, “Each group came and made the people gather together. You couldn’t trust anyone.”<sup>542</sup> Fearful residents came into town from their farms in the evening to find some degree of police or military protection. Sendero militants controlled the territory outside of Santa Rosa in the early years of the conflict. Residents went out during the day to farm their land and to care for their animals. Night proved more dangerous and militants commonly robbed and murdered civilians.<sup>543</sup>

Sendero Luminoso targeted police and the state security forces reacted in kind. Spirals of retaliatory violence left a brutal mark on villages. Testimonies describe horrific actions levied against suspected militants. For example, in October 1983 the special counterterrorism police detained a man, along with his family and a woman. The police suspected that someone from their community killed an officer while he played soccer and the police wanted revenge. The police tortured all the detainees at the station and sexually assaulted the woman. The following day they took their captives to a more remote location and murder them. They never found the man’s body. The *sinchis* executed the children and one victim had 25 gunshot wounds. They cut the woman’s mouth and stabbed her in the chest.<sup>544</sup>

A variety of factors motivated violence around Santa Rosa. Residents became accustomed to civilian targeting by both Sendero Luminoso and state security forces in their battle for control of the VRAEM. However, sometimes opportunistic or vengeful neighbors made denunciations to let others do their dirtywork. The wife of a murdered self-defense force

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<sup>542</sup> Testimony 200171.

<sup>543</sup> Testimony 100005.

<sup>544</sup> Testimonies 204625 and 205131.

leader explained, “Some people died because of jealousy. You couldn’t disagree with or fight with anyone. If you did, you ran the risk that they would denounce you to Sendero and they would put you on a list and kill you.”<sup>545</sup> In another example, a witness described a feud between her father and a man who coveted their small farm outside of town. She believes the man denounced her brother to the military, leading to his arrest and disappearance. The following year, the same neighbor came to their farm accompanied by a group of ronderos from several villages. The man shot her father. He likely would have done the same to her sister who attempted to flee, but the other ronderos intervened. They took her sister to the military base instead, along with the severed hand of her father as proof that they had killed a “terrorist.” She suspects the military tortured, raped, and discarded her sister in the Apurimac River.<sup>546</sup> Dozens of testimonies describe similar incidents.

Fear, anger, and despair dominated the collective mood. One witness remembered finding her husband alone crying one morning. She asked what happened and he explained that he knew he was going to be killed by Sendero Luminoso. However, he put on a brave face and assured her that they would have to do so with a bullet because he could certainly defend himself against as many as ten senderistas if they came after him with a knife. Unfortunately for her husband, a Sendero militant laying in wait shot him through the chest on the road outside Santa Rosa a month later in June 1984.<sup>547</sup>

### **Civilian Resistance in Santa Rosa**

Many of the communities around Santa Rosa organized self-defense forces early to counteract insecurity and violence. Civilians caught “between two fires” attempted to organize self-defense forces in 1983 and 1984, although some instances of resistance occurred even

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<sup>545</sup> Testimony 204651.

<sup>546</sup> Testimony 204726.

<sup>547</sup> Testimony 204647.

earlier.<sup>548</sup> Civilians mobilized to protect themselves shortly after Sendero started to target communities in the region. Militants forced many civilians to accompany them into the mountains where they lived under fear and duress until some started to “come out against the senderistas.”<sup>549</sup> Groups of poorly armed civilians defended their communities and occasionally patrolled with the police, the military, or a larger group of ronderos from neighboring communities near Santa Rosa. Residents emulated early efforts to resist in Anchiuay, Pichiwilca, and other villages a short distance down the river.

Residents in Santa Rosa asked for help at the military base. Police and soldiers provided some assistance with local self-defense efforts in town. Sendero intensified attacks and bombed Santa Rosa in 1984. The police had to retreat. Sendero killed the Justice of the Peace the same year, blowing him up with dynamite. One resident described a horrific incident when militants murdered an evangelical Christian for attempting to organize resistance. She also witnessed the murder of her mother and brother. The attackers shot her during the attack. She remembers a police captain visiting her in the hospital to inform her they caught the attacker. He asked if she wanted to take his eye or something. She declined. The woman feels fortunate that at least she knows where her mother is buried so that she can visit her grave with flowers.<sup>550</sup>

Sendero attacked surrounding villages at night. Long lines of militants with lit candles came down from the hills to inspire terror. Fifty senderistas attacked the village of Rumi Pata. They killed four residents and kidnapped many of the children. The town held a meeting the next morning. Residents decided they could not contend with the well-armed militants. Many farmers

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<sup>548</sup> Testimonies 204720, 204670, 203441, 200204.

<sup>549</sup> Testimony 205144.

<sup>550</sup> Personal interview in Huanta on June 12, 2015 with a woman who lost her family and was wound in Santa Rosa during a Sendero attack in 1984.

in the small villages abandoned their homes and sought refuge in larger towns around the VRAEM like Santa Rosa, San Francisco, and Llochegua.<sup>551</sup>

The military prepared civilians who stayed for future attacks. They helped make spears. The military showed them how to fortify the town. They taught residents to construct homemade weapons and to organize self-defense. However, any opposition to Sendero invited even greater violence. The military helped communities like Santa Rosa because of its proximity to the Luisiana military base that housed Marines, sinchis, and Republican Guard police. Former soldiers in the community facilitated coordination with the state security forces and the military provided a few grenades to use during Sendero attacks. Residents kept watch in towers day and night and patrolled the perimeter of the town in shifts.<sup>552</sup>

Don Victor helped organize self-defense in Santa Rosa and led the organization from 1984 to 1990 before his murder. Sendero murdered Victor along with two other community authorities while the group worked their lands in April 1990.<sup>553</sup> One witness remembers the organization forging a strong relationship with the military because of their proximity to the Luisiana base.<sup>554</sup> Other villages proximate to Santa Rosa also organized self-defense. They went out in turns, usually ten to fifteen at a time. The community organizations restricted movement and required residents to ask for permission to travel or to work on their farms outside of town. Men who did not adhere to the 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. curfew would receive physical punishment for the violation, and women would receive additional communal chores.<sup>555</sup>

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<sup>551</sup> Personal interview in Miraflores (near Santa Rosa) on June 9, 2015 with a local farmer who participated in self-defense efforts.

<sup>552</sup> Personal interview in Huanta on May 17, 2014 with a resident from Santa Rosa who participated in self-defense efforts.

<sup>553</sup> Testimony 200002. I use Victor's name because the CVR testimony is part of public record and he passed away.

<sup>554</sup> Testimony 100005.

<sup>555</sup> Testimony 200237.

The expansion of self-defense forces from Pichiwilca led to significant mobilization around Santa Rosa and brought greater security. Residents coordinated with other communities and patrolled the surrounding areas. They kept watch over local communities and frequently engaged with Sendero militants who ambushed or directly confronted the ronderos.<sup>556</sup> Some communities joined with other armed civilians and the military to carry out extended missions and “liberate” communities up in the mountains near Huanta. A wave of repentant Sendero militants and their captives began to come down to Santa Rosa in the early 1990s under the new repentance law. Men, women, children, and the elderly arrived, suffering from malnutrition and dressed in rags.<sup>557</sup> New arrivals registered with authorities. The violence subsided. A later participant in the self-defense forces described some of the changes around Santa Rosa in the 1990s, “The self-defense forces brought new order to the region. There weren’t even thieves.”<sup>558</sup> The man explained how the self-defense forces punished adultery using ants. They levied public punishment if you stole crops. Residents could cultivate coca, but could not use drugs. In one instance ronderos took a man who smoked drugs to the base where they made him eat feces and shaved his head. He stopped using drugs after that.<sup>559</sup>

**Table 5.3: Narratives, community capacity, and civilian resistance outcomes in Santa Rosa 1980-2000**

		Community Capacity	
		High	Low
Violent Narratives	Yes	Violent mobilization (after 1984)	Sporadic individual violence (N/A)
	No	Nonviolent mobilization (N/A)	Flee or collaborate with insurgents (1981-1983)

<sup>556</sup> For example, in Testimony 205152 an old woman recalls the death of two of her children in 1984 during a Sendero ambush in the village of Sirenachayoq, just outside of San Francisco in the La Mar province. The Red Cross attended to another child of hers who had been wounded on patrol near Santa Rosa.

<sup>557</sup> Testimony 204729.

<sup>558</sup> Personal interview in Huanta on June 13, 2015 with a former self-defense force participant and participant in the coca trade.

<sup>559</sup> Ibid.

Santa Rosa experienced similar outcomes of civilian resistance as Anchiway and Pichiwilca. Many civilians fled or made pragmatic decisions to accommodate the militants to survive. Santa Rosa and neighboring villages established a stronger unified defense in 1984. Santa Rosa organized shortly after Anchiway in 1984, although there were sporadic incidents of individual violence and earlier efforts to organize. Although both communities organized around the same time, Santa Rosa relied more heavily on state assistance and force during the mobilization process.

*Realist and Rationalist Explanations*

Hypothesis 1 expects civilian resistance to correspond with increased threat and violence. Communities will resist Sendero to counteract its growing strength. The situation compels behavior. I find some support for H1. Community members observed Sendero's incremental escalation of violence. One resident described three major Sendero attacks. The first involved the violent incursion when militants murdered the Justice of the Peace and burned government documents. Sendero attempted to murder the lieutenant governor during the second attack and took away all the Peruvian flags that hung from homes to celebrate a national holiday. They kidnapped a large number of women and children before leaving and murdered many along the road. Militants attacked the evangelical place of worship during the third attack. They sacked the town and killed men, women, and children before setting homes ablaze. The survivors met in a nearby field to survey the damage. Over thirty had been killed and many more wounded. The Sendero militants stole their animals and other possessions before they left.<sup>560</sup>

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<sup>560</sup> Testimony 200002.

Increased threat and violence forced civilians to respond. As one resident from the region remembered, “I remained neutral until I found myself on the front line.”<sup>561</sup> However, residents in Santa Rosa began to resist Sendero prior to the more threatening and violent militant actions. Sendero visited Santa Rosa and neighboring villages to share its political message and indoctrinate potential supporters before it used violence, although admittedly the movement did not carry out the same level of preliminary political work as it did in the highlands. Some of Sendero’s first significant actions in communities around Santa Rosa did not include violence. For example, as early as 1980 Sendero visited the village of Miraflores. One afternoon a group of young men playing soccer heard from a friend that Sendero Luminoso would visit their village that night. Under a full moon nearly 400 people came and leaders spoke with the community about politics. A witness recalled, “The visitors were not really armed and did not make threats against the community.”<sup>562</sup> Yet, residents asked for help at the Luisiana base after the visit and they took preliminary steps to organize prior to overt threat and violence.

Militant violence incident counts in Table 5.4 show a spike in violence around the same years civilians increased resistance to Sendero. However, these data include other villages in the Santa Rosa district outside the main town. Evidence points to the nature of Sendero actions during incursions and not just the frequency or intensity of the attacks. Residents in Santa Rosa might have been reacting to perceptions of threat and violence as they heard accounts of more frequent violence in neighboring villages. Subjective interpretations of threat and violence rather than objective conditions compelled residents to act. Furthermore, many residents did not resist and choose to flee instead. Civilian pragmatism inspired many to escape the potential violence. The population in Santa Rosa dropped from 3,500 residents in 1981 to 540 in 1985. The

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<sup>561</sup> Quoted by Carlos Iván Degregori, “Resumen final.” In *Hablan los Ronderos: La Búsqueda por la Paz en los Andes*, ed. Orin Starn (Lima: IEP 1993), p. 68.

<sup>562</sup> Personal interview in Huanta on May 17, 2014 with a long-time resident of Miraflores and Santa Rosa.

population grew back to its original levels shortly after as the community built protections and incorporated new residents displaced from surround villages.<sup>563</sup>

**Table 5.4: Armed civilian, militant, and state security force violence in the Santa Rosa district by year between 1980 and 2000**

	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	Total	
<b>Armed Civilians</b>				9		1	2		2														14
<b>Militants</b>			10	10	27	8	4	3		2	8	1	19	1									93
<b>State Security Forces</b>			3	4	14	4			1														26

Hypothesis 2 predicts that state absence will force residents to take responsibility for their own security. A weak state unwilling or unable to come to their aid would compel residents to take action. Events in Santa Rosa provide partial support for H2. The Marines and other state security forces arrived early in the conflict when the government declared a state of emergency, indicating a relatively strong state presence. When militants started to target local authorities, residents sought additional support from state security forces. One participant explained, “We organized ourselves but we started to ask for help from the military.”<sup>564</sup> But, communities close to Santa Rosa could not always count on state security forces to provide protection early in the conflict. The state had not yet established a military base in Santa Rosa and other state security forces at the Luisiana base took time to provide support. The nascent self-defense forces provided the only defense against immediate threats to the community.<sup>565</sup>

Hypothesis 3 expects greater civilian resistance when a strong state compels participation. The state uses armed civilians as an auxiliary force. I found some support for H3.

<sup>563</sup> Mario Fumerton, *From Victims to Heroes: Peasant Counter-rebellion and Civil War in Ayacucho, Peru, 1980-2000* (Amsterdam: Rozenberg 2003), p. 118.

<sup>564</sup> Personal interview in Huanta on May 12, 2013 with a self-defense force participant from Santa Rosa.

<sup>565</sup> Testimony 200171.

The frequency with which communities requested support from the police and military provides disconfirming evidence for an argument that prioritizes state coercion. However, when civilians initially approached state security forces they asked for protection. Instead, soldiers taught them how to sharpen sticks and to fortify their towns to withstand militant attacks. Villages near Santa Rosa organized self-defense forces; sometimes voluntarily and other times not.

They acted in coordination with the state and sometimes autonomously. For example, on May 22, 1985 soldiers rounded up local ronderos to go out searching for terrorists. A witness explained that around two hundred self-defense force participants accompanied sixty soldiers up into the mountains four or five hours away on foot. She claimed the military took six civilians from each of the neighboring villages, including her son. She protested, “I don’t want to let my son go. He’s not going. He studies (in primary school) and has to work.”<sup>566</sup> The soldiers insisted he had to go because she was a property owner. They returned the body of her son to her later that day draped over a mule. Self-defense forces implemented mandatory participation requirements and residents had to accompany the groups or pay someone to take their place. One witness recalls the military forcing their community’s self-defense force to steal coffee so that soldiers could sell it through a third party to supplement their income.<sup>567</sup>

In other cases the self-defense forces coordinated with the military, but might not necessarily have been simply an auxiliary force. For example, after the military established a base in Santa Rosa base, soldiers disappeared two residents in Rinconada Alta. The victims’ relatives solicited help from a local self-defense force to help find the bodies.<sup>568</sup> The group took autonomous actions apart from state coercion too.

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<sup>566</sup> Testimony 100005.

<sup>567</sup> Testimony 204672.

<sup>568</sup> Testimony 204673.

Hypothesis 4 expects opportunism to motivate participants and facilitate violent civilian resistance. I read about numerous acts of vengeance, opportunism, and jealousy in testimonies collected by the CVR. One witness from the area described the ronderos from San Francisco, “They did whatever they wanted, they killed anybody that stood up to them.” She recalled an incident when the ronderos murdered a man and took his money. A fearsome rondero took advantage of the situation. The witness explained, “[He] murdered a lot of people and had many complaints against him. The people didn’t want to say anything about his actions because if he heard any rumors, he’d come for you in the night and make you disappear.”<sup>569</sup> Although predatory behavior became a common outcome during the conflict I did not find evidence in Santa Rosa that it motivate civilians to mobilize and fight Sendero.

Mobilizing to resist Sendero during the conflict endowed participants with additional powers with limited oversight. Multiple motivations often drive human behavior. Civilian self-defense forces that confronted Sendero militants could have taken action to defeat the insurgency while simultaneously using the situation as a pretext for personal enrichment or to settle old scores. For example, one woman described her sister’s experiences in a village near Santa Rosa. Her sister lived with her husband and twelve children. A member of the Santa Rosa self-defense force shot her husband in the head and mutilated his body with a hatchet. Sendero militants members killed all but one of her children during the conflict period. Her sister hid in the hills with her one remaining son trying to avoid ronderos, soldiers, and Sendero militants alike. When ronderos captured her sister as a suspected senderista they murdered her in front of her six year old son. The witness accused the local authorities of stealing her sister’s lands under the pretext of caring for them until the one remaining child came of age.<sup>570</sup>

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<sup>569</sup> Testimony 201417.

<sup>570</sup> Testimony 200002.

In another case, ronderos came across a large group of civilians returning to their village from a Sendero camp in the mountains. The militants sent them to collect food. A group of ronderos from Santa Rosa, San Francisco, and Kimbiri captured them, abused them, and killed several among the expeditionary force. The ronderos killed six of their wards as they passed through their village en route to the Santa Rosa military base. They took their captives animals and possessions as well.<sup>571</sup> Based on conversations with participants and witnesses, self-defense forces around Santa Rosa largely abstained from predatory behavior but cases do exist.

### *Narratives and Community Capacity*

Hypothesis 5 predicts that if communities understand events through narratives that permit violence, then armed civilian resistance is more likely. Many residents did not understand events in the 1980s. Santa Rosa and neighboring villages speculated about the militant and state violence that ravaged their communities. During a meeting about human rights abuses with communities leaders from the region, one authority recalled:

When the whole district of Santa Rosa was combed in 1982 or 1983...the rumors that were going around were that they were foreign troops. They weren't afraid of anything. Not anything. That was the time when they killed the peasant leaders, the school teachers, and many, many other people who were blamed for bringing guerrilla ideas. As many as twenty or thirty people were killed every day.<sup>572</sup>

Another community leader spoke out, "But most of them are foreign, right? They don't speak Quechua. They're from the other side." An investigator documenting the testimonies asked them to further describe the perpetrators. The first authority responded, "They were more ruthless; they dressed in a different style;...[they were] more...savage; they demonstrated that they were not Peruvians."<sup>573</sup> Community leaders viewed events in Santa Rosa during the early 1980s as so

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<sup>571</sup> Testimony 205244.

<sup>572</sup> An interview from 1986 found in Billie Jean Isbell, "Shining Path and Peasant Responses in Rural Ayacucho." In *The Shining Path of Peru* (New York: St. Martin's Press 1992), p. 75.

<sup>573</sup> Ibid.

horrific and incomprehensible that only an unfamiliar foreign party could commit the atrocious acts.

Hypothesis 6 predicts that if narratives define a community's relationship with other actors in ways that justify violence, then violence is more likely. How villages near Santa Rosa came to see Sendero affected decisions about violent civilian resistance. Residents worked as farmers and lived peacefully prior to the conflict. In 1980 residents started to hear rumors about Sendero Luminoso. Militants attacked some of the outlying communities and moved closer to Santa Rosa in 1982. Violence escalated sharply in 1984.<sup>574</sup> Sendero only visited villages to speak with residents and ask for support at first. Violence followed soon after. A resident from the Rumi Pata village remembered, "They always spoke about equality. But the people started to understand, they weren't really there for good. They started to kill people."<sup>575</sup> They also began kidnapping local residents and taking them off to the mountains.<sup>576</sup> Sendero militants quickly earned a reputation for brutality and ruthlessness.

One witness described her time in captivity when Sendero kidnapped her, along with her husband and three children. She saw how the militants behaved and interacted with a group of nearly 10 captives they referred to as the "masses." The witness recalls a woman that would visit the camp who seemed to occupy a high leadership position. The witness took notice of the woman's strong character and remembers that she gave speeches to the masses and the other Sendero militants. They respected and obeyed her commands. The witness described her overall impression, "They hated evangelicals and they didn't know how to pray. They weren't afraid to

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<sup>574</sup> Testimony 205147.

<sup>575</sup> Personal interview in Miraflores (near Santa Rosa) on June 9, 2015 with a local farmer who participated in self-defense efforts.

<sup>576</sup> Testimony 204651.

go up against anyone. They weren't afraid to kill and they lived like animals."<sup>577</sup> They lived in the camps under plastic tents, with pots, pans, blankets, and their small children. Sometimes they gave water with a little bit of salt to their children to help with the hunger. She explained, "Sometimes we were in the mountains for five days without anything to eat. If they brought you food you would eat, if not, then no."<sup>578</sup> Sickness and hunger tore the camp apart. When ronderos came across the camps they grabbed their children and fled into the jungles. Some of the captives escaped, a few at a time, taking with them stories they shared with the military and their communities.

Community narratives began to describe Sendero militants as thieves and criminals. The daughter of a prominent district authority recalled widespread criminality in 1982. The militants made off with all the goods from large stores. They robbed and murdered her father on the side of the road when they stopped their vehicle returning from Ayacucho. They found his naked body the next day, covered in stab wounds and part of his buttock cut away.<sup>579</sup>

Sendero also practiced extortion. One woman remembers twenty senderistas who came to her home outside of Santa Rosa in the village of Jahuasana. They offered to work on the farm in exchange for the right to sleep and camp on their land. The head of the family agreed to the arrangement, but within a few months the militants had taken charge. The woman and her family lived in a state of constant fear and felt like hostages. In 1984 the sister of the witness sought help from the police, but the entire family had been branded as terrorists.<sup>580</sup>

Community narratives about Sendero developed over time. They interpreted Sendero actions and divined the movement's intentions. Violence aimed at evangelical Christians fostered

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<sup>577</sup> Testimony 204669.

<sup>578</sup> Ibid.

<sup>579</sup> Testimony 204640.

<sup>580</sup> Testimony 100202.

religious narratives that justified armed civilian resistance in many communities. A woman who witnessed one such attack as a child recalled the events of August 16, 1984 when Sendero militants attacked a congregation in Santa Rosa:

I was playing with my friends next to the evangelical church where [the congregation] met and sang. I always liked listen to them sing. It was interesting and we would go to watch. It was there when one hundred and twenty terrorists attacked and the people became frightened. There were a lot of people in the congregation; at least eighty. There were women with their husbands and children. The people said, 'They're attacking, they're blowing up dynamite.' Everyone left the church to go out to a field and I also left. At that moment I didn't know what to do; if I should run or just stay still. As I stood there, I caught a bullet in the shoulder. I saw a bone coming out of my arm. The impact of the bullet threw me back, but I didn't lose consciousness. Some old women took me into the church. I went into the building along with others and the senderistas got closer. I got under the pews and the senderistas shot at us from behind. They didn't come inside; instead they stood at the door and fired from there. I turned around to what was happening and saw they had lined up at the door and were shooting inside. The senderistas were in shorts, t-shirts, and sneakers like they were about to play a game. They had large weapons."<sup>581</sup>

Fifty members of the congregation remained inside the church and the rest had been able to escape. She thought it would never end, but a local man threw two grenades. The explosions cause the senderistas to flee, believing the military had arrived. The young girl's mother and siblings came and carried her away, her arm hanging by the skin "as if it were a piece of elastic." They used her father's truck to take some of the wounded to the Luisiana military base. They remained stranded at the base without medical attention. An armed strike closed down the roads and no one dared to travel. Eventually they got her to San Francisco on a small boat. She estimates that fifty people were wounded in the attack and many people died.<sup>582</sup> Numerous incidents of violence against evangelicals incited the population around Santa Rosa.

How civilians viewed state security forces and ronderos from other communities also affected civilian resistance outcomes. Some soldiers viewed the civilian population as a nest of

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<sup>581</sup> Testimony 200171.

<sup>582</sup> Ibid.

possible subversion early in the conflict. Soldiers committed abuses and mistakenly targeted innocent civilians in Santa Rosa. One woman spoke in Quechua about the military men who came for her son as, “those who wore the two-colored cloths—green and black.” She did not understand who the armed actors were or why they took her son.<sup>583</sup> The state had to forge new cooperative relationships and build trust when they began to coordinate with civilians to provide security in the VRAEM. However, some communities did not want to organize in armed civilian resistance. They experienced threat and violence to the same degree as everyone else in the region but opposed armed civilian mobilization because they still understood public security provision as the responsibility of the state. One civilian feared community members fighting each other and reasoned, “That’s not good, and they’ve decided against it. The militia is useless. People have to serve in it day and night, for nothing. The police, the Guardia Civil, not the militia are responsible for watching over the town. That’s what they get paid for. What’s the Guardia going to do if the militia is responsible for security? Nothing!”<sup>584</sup>

Most communities supported armed civilian resistance and participants developed a new pride in resistance. Civilian self-defense served as a new focal point for collective identity among many communities in the VRAEM. Early reactive armed civilian mobilization transformed into something more organized and disciplined.<sup>585</sup> Continuous Sendero ambushes and the movement’s focus on targeting rondero increased their solidarity and gave participants even greater resolve. But, self-defense forces around Santa Rosa also committed abuses and the

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<sup>583</sup> Testimony 205146.

<sup>584</sup> Interview found in William P. Mitchell, *Voices From the Global Margin: Confronting Poverty and Inventing New Lives in the Andes* (Austin: University of Texas Press 2006), p. 140.

<sup>585</sup> Ponciano del Pino, “Tiempos de Guerra y de Dioses: Ronderos, Evangélicos y Senderistas en el Valle del Río Apurímac.” In *Las Rondas Campesinas y la Derrota de Sendero Luminoso*, eds. Carlos Iván Degregori, José Coronel, Ponciano del Pino, and Orin Starn, (Lima: Instituto de Estudios Peruanos 1996), p. 155.

way that some civilians viewed ronderos in neighboring villages affected their own decisions about civilian resistance efforts.

Hypothesis 7 expects community capacity to affect mobilization and predicts that preexisting cooperative institutions will facilitate sustained resistance. Santa Rosa had lower community capacity than a community like Anchiuay that had well-established mechanisms to facilitate cooperation and resolve conflict. But, numerous factors point to high levels of community capacity in Santa Rosa as well. Even in the face of increased violence and incursions by militants, military, and police, some towns and villages in the Santa Rosa district maintained cooperative relationships and coordinated to provide public goods. For example, in September 1984 the San Pedro community came together to build a schoolhouse.<sup>586</sup> Unfortunately, on the same occasion, military and police attacked the town and accused residents of aiding the insurgency. Smoke from the burning huts and screams for help attracted the attention of the neighboring village of Huanchi. Twenty-one residents went to aid their neighbors, some carrying machetes and a white flag. The state security forces killed numerous residents as suspected senderistas when they arrived to help.<sup>587</sup> The unfortunate events illustrate the precarious nature of life in this remote region, but also demonstrate the strong communal ties and capacity for cooperation among villages near Santa Rosa. Other nearby villages had established agricultural cooperatives that also helped communities to coordinate.<sup>588</sup>

Hypothesis 8 predicts that communities with greater resources are more likely to mobilize and sustain civilian resistance. Community resources varied significantly over the course of the conflict, especially with regards to weapons. However, access to weapons does not seem to have had a significant impact on a community's capacity to initiate and sustain self-defense forces.

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<sup>586</sup> Testimony 204663; Testimony 204704.

<sup>587</sup> Testimony 204711.

<sup>588</sup> Testimony 204647.

For example, in the neighboring village of Rinconada Alta, residents armed themselves with sticks, knives, and slings in 1984 to confront Sendero militants that frequently visited their community.<sup>589</sup> Participants gained access to better weapons through the state and bought additional weapons through resources derived from the illicit drug economy. Civilian representatives went to the capital city of Lima to plead for support and additional weapons. One such advocate explained to a journalist at the time, “We don’t want to be canon fodder.”<sup>590</sup> Many residents believe Fujimori’s assistance to the people in this region helped win the war. But, as the current self-defense force president in Santa Rosa explained, “The peasant masses won this war, not Fujimori. Only two or three people in some self-defense forces had shotguns, but they had a strong will to fight and win.”<sup>591</sup> Access to resources like weapons improved their ability to fight but was not a necessary condition for armed civilian resistance.

### **SIVIA**

On the night of June 23, 1984 a menacing band of armed Sendero militants descended on the town of Sivia. The militants came searching for a former police officer they suspected of providing information to the security forces. The former officer and his wife heard a knock at the door around 9 p.m., shortly after they closed their restaurant. Four men armed with shotguns enter the home and several more waited outside. The intruders demanded to speak with her husband and she told them he was away. The senderistas knew he was home, so the victim came out from the bedroom where he watched over his two small children. The militants insisted he accompany them outside for a talk.

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<sup>589</sup> Testimony 204673.

<sup>590</sup> Quote in Francisco Reyes, “Los Neutrales Han Muerto.” In *Hablan los Ronderos: La Búsqueda por la Paz en los Andes*, ed. Orin Starn (Lima: IEP 1993), p. 60.

<sup>591</sup> Personal interview in Santa Rosa on June 9, 2015 with the current Santa Rosa self-defense force president and leadership committee.

The man refused to follow them outside and stood in the doorway. He asked why the militants came and insisted he had nothing against the movement. If they wanted something sorted out he would be happy to answer their questions. The militants became more aggressive. They pointed their guns at his head and forced him outside amid protests from his terrified wife. He sat against the wall outside holding his two young children. The man's wife pled for his life and asked to speak with their leader. A female militant brought the leader and the man's wife implored him not to kill her husband. She offered money and swore they would leave town and go far away. The indignant leader scoffed at her offer. He replied that they did not want their money; they simply wanted to get rid of snitches. They would take him as a hostage.

The militants led the former police officer off with one of his children still perched on his shoulders. Several minutes later the wife heard three shots form the edge of town. Dynamite explosions echoed up towards the hills and she could hear shouts of, "Long live the armed struggle!" She assumed the worst. The militants left the child near the house and he made his way back home. However, to the woman's surprise, her husband reappeared a couple minutes later. He stumbled through the garden and fell to the floor holding his stomach. The man had been shot three times: once in the temple, the shoulder, and the stomach. He bled profusely and the couple heard shouts from the militants in the distance when they realized he did not die. Fifteen senderistas returned to the house looking for her husband. Despite his grave wounds, the victim climbed to the second story of the home and slipped out the back. He made his way back to the hills. The militants tore up the house searching for the man until they heard warnings of an approaching boat on the river full of soldiers. The senderistas fled.

The woman and her two children searched for her husband in the hills. They helped him to the house of a neighbor, fearful the senderistas would come back to finish the job. They spent

the night with the neighbor and returned home in the morning. The town nurse gave him painkillers and they began a long journey to seek medical attention. Access to communities deeper in the jungle took more time. They crossed the river and traveled by car for two hours to the hospital in San Francisco. The woman filed a report at the police station and officers used the radio to request a helicopter from Ayacucho. Rebel activity delayed the helicopter's arrival until late in the afternoon. They arrived in Ayacucho that evening and he underwent an operation at a police hospital.

He survived the operation and spoke to his wife shortly after. The victim felt extremely weak and asked for water to help quench his thirst. He wanted papaya juice but the nurse informed him that it was forbidden after the operation. He began to experience stomach cramps and severe chest pain. The doctor observed a drop in blood pressure and started to make arrangements to get the patient to Lima. The doctor sent the man's wife to get some additional supplies and by the time she returned her husband had passed away. The devastated woman never recovered from the loss. She moved to Huanta with her young children to live with relatives, afraid to return to Sivia to collect her possessions.<sup>592</sup>

When the strong prey on the weak without mercy or remorse, not everyone has the will and the know-how to resist. The victim might have helped the community stand defiant against the movement, so Sendero took eliminated the potential threat. The militants' barbarism forced his family to explore the frontiers of loss and anguish that night and in the subsequent years.

Sendero murdered residents near Sivia from the onset of conflict in 1980. Sendero targeted anyone who opposed the movement or provided assistance to the military. For example,

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<sup>592</sup> This story comes from a letter written by the victim's wife to the victim's mother in Lima, addressed from Huanta on July 8, 1984. I also spoke with one of the children who shared the letter with me, now an adult living in Huanta. He remembers witnessing the events leading up to the murder of his father when he was young. Personal interview on May 8, 2013 in Huanta.

militants threatened one woman who worked at a restaurant. The establishment served food to soldiers and rented them rooms. She ignored their warnings so Sendero abducted and murdered her in 1982.<sup>593</sup> The police and armed forces responded in kind. They frequently detained, tortured, and murdered suspected Sendero sympathizers. Direct confrontations between militants and state security forces led to deaths in the street and along trails outside of town. Sendero ambushed soldiers near the Pichari military base across the river from Sivia. On one occasion in 1983 bodies lay in the street for several days so nuns collected them and buried them in a mass grave.<sup>594</sup>

In May 1983 the military stationed at the Luisiana and Pichari bases coordinated a raid in Sivia to capture militants responsible for killing four soldiers. A group of 35 soldiers arrived by boat and helicopter to round up 300 civilians and hold them at an airstrip outside of town. They lined up the detainees and beat them and walked on top of them. After an entire day of interrogations and abuses, the soldiers took 70 detainees back to the base in Pichari. Soldiers later murdered dozens of the detainees and buried them in a mass grave near the base.<sup>595</sup> Sendero violence continued to escalate. State security forces operated with imperfect information and in the “fog of war” it became impossible to see. State security forces committed gross human rights abuses in Sivia. Their counterinsurgency campaign detained, tortured, disappeared, and murdered civilians in alarming numbers. Residents commonly came across bodies in various states of decomposition with missing appendages.

### **Civilian Resistance in Sivia**

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<sup>593</sup> Testimony 202234.

<sup>594</sup> Testimony 205301.

<sup>595</sup> For more on the incident see testimonies 100856, 101329, 200079, 200335, 200788, 200878, 202819, 202821, 202831, 202867, 203489, 205195, and 205293.

Like most communities in the region, civilians played a crucial part combatting Sendero Luminoso in villages around Sivia. One self-defense force leader from Sivia laments, “They give credit to the generals and to Fujimori [for defeating the insurgency]. But it was us who were on the ground. We were always hungry, patrolling and fighting in the rain, completely wet. It’s left us traumatized and suffering.”<sup>596</sup> Civilians mobilized to confront increased threat and Sendero violence. They also organized to demonstrate allegiance to the Peruvian state and opposition to Sendero’s revolutionary political program.

Ronderos from neighboring communities accompanied military patrols around the Sivia district during the early 1980s. Witnesses report rondero patrols detaining suspected Sendero sympathizers and turning them over to soldiers at military bases or performing extra-legal executions.<sup>597</sup> However, self-defense forces from villages around Sivia also provided assistance to their neighbors. When a community heard about Sendero attacks in other villages they organized and sent support. The military could not always respond in a timely manner and soldiers sometimes only showed up the next day to document the incident and help bury the dead. Self-defense forces expanded during the 1980s and participants coordinated with the regional central command led by Antonio Cárdenas and Comandante Huayhuaco. The self-defense forces went on the offensive and created “liberated zones” in the Sivia district by May 1990. Violence continued in Sivia into the early 1990s and Sendero militants found refuge in remote pockets of the Sivia district.

The conditions and experiences with civilian resistance in Sivia resemble those in Santa Rosa more than Anchiuay and Pichiwilca. Although individuals pushed for civilian resistance and opposed the Sendero insurgency through their own initiative, the town’s proximity to and

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<sup>596</sup> Personal interview near Quinoa on June 13, 2015 with a group of 15 self-defense force participants from Sivia.

<sup>597</sup> For example, see Testimony 200040 for a case in October 1984.

interactions with the military and police strongly influenced the origins and evolution of self-defense in Sivia.

**Table 5.5: Narratives, community capacity, and civilian resistance outcomes in Sivia 1980-2000**

		Community Capacity	
		High	Low
Violent Narratives	Yes	Violent mobilization (after 1984)	Sporadic individual violence (N/A)
	No	Nonviolent mobilization (N/A)	Flee or collaborate with insurgents (1982-1983)

### *Realist and Rationalist Explanations*

Hypothesis 1 expects civilian resistance to correspond with increased Sendero threat and violence. The situation will compel civilians to respond and H1 expects a positive correlation between violence levels and civilian resistance. Communities will organize to counteract Sendero's growing strength. I found some support for H1, but other factors better account for civilian resistance in Sivia. The leader of Sivia's self-defense force from 1985 to 1992 provided comments that support a realist argument. He explained, "We had meetings and decided that the Sendero attacks all had to stop. It was like Vietnam—there were booby-traps, tunnels, and serious jungle."<sup>598</sup> Increased violence and threat became so bad that the community had to resist with violence. However, some of the greatest threats communities faced when civilians first organized came from the state security forces. Military and police visited communities to track down and eliminate Sendero militants in villages around Sivia. They murdered many innocent civilians. The spike in militant violence seen in Table 5.6 occurred when civilians started to collaborate with the state. Civilians attempted to demonstrate their support for the police and military's counterinsurgency efforts. Some villages around Sivia participated in patrols with state

<sup>598</sup> Personal interviews in Huanta and Luricocha on May 9, 2013 with a leader of a self-defense forces near Sivia from 1985 to 1992.

security forces and began to organize self-defense. Sendero violence did not cause civilian resistance, but instead came as a consequence. Militants punished civilians for efforts to resist their revolutionary program.

**Table 5.6: Armed civilian, militant, and state security force violence in the Sivia district by year between 1980 and 2000**

	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	Total
<b>Armed Civilians</b>																						14
<b>Militants</b>			1	8	42	3	1	4	4	4		1	7	17			2		1			93
<b>State Security Forces</b>			5	43	20	1																26

Hypothesis 2 predicts that state absence will force residents to take responsibility for their own security. A weak state unwilling or unable to provide community security would compel residents to take action. I did not find support for H2. The Peruvian state maintained a strong police and military presence near Sivia. Residents often worked with state security forces.

Hypothesis 3 expects greater civilian resistance when a strong state compels participation. The state might use civilians as an auxiliary force during a counterinsurgency campaign. I found support for H3 in Sivia. One of the original leaders of Sivia's self-defense force described the importance of a military captain who helped the community organize in July 1984.<sup>599</sup> Threats from a strong state sometimes proved more dangerous than threats from Sendero militants. The police and military forced many civilians to provide assistance the struggle against Sendero Luminoso. Including civilians in their fight led to the militarization of daily life in Sivia. Civilians with previous military experience took on greater leadership roles in the community. The town built watchtowers and defensive structures to protect itself from

<sup>599</sup> Personal interview near Quinua on June 13, 2015 with a group of 15 self-defense force participants from Sivia.

attack. The military inserted itself in communities throughout the VRAEM. Soldiers expected subordination. On joint patrols the civilians went in front and served as “shields” and “canon fodder” during confrontations with Sendero militants.<sup>600</sup> The military expanded its campaign and employed armed civilians as an integral part of Sendero’s defeat in Sivia.

The ronderos from Anchiuay and Pichiwilca also influenced civilian mobilization in the Sivia. The first groups of armed civilians helped the military to develop civilian resistance efforts as they expanded their network. Incidents of military and civilian cooperation did not always imply a strong relationship. Police and military did not trust most civilians. However, they worked with “known elements” in the community like ex-soldiers to create stronger cooperative ties over time.

Hypothesis 4 expects opportunism to motivate and facilitate violent civilian resistance. I did not find support for H4. Civilians in Sivia exhibited opportunistic behavior, but opportunism did not provide motivation to organize and participate in civilian resistance efforts. The insecurity provided occasions for personal enrich or to settle old scores, but individuals acting opportunistically usually made denunciations to benefit from military or Sendero violence. For example, a land dispute developed between neighbors in a small village near Sivia in 1984. One party to the conflict threatened to denounce a woman’s husband to his son-in-law, who was a Sendero leader. Twenty well-armed militants came to her farm when the dispute escalated. The leader threatened the woman, “You yana umas are causing problems over a piece of land, if this continues you will both die.”<sup>601</sup> They murdered her husband, or “sent him to see St. Peter.” In this case the militant leader knowingly used his position to solve a dispute not related to the

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<sup>600</sup> CVR, *Informe Final: Peru, 1980-2000, Tomo II, Capítulo 1.5 Los Comités de Autodefensa* (2003), p. 451.

<sup>601</sup> Testimony 202646.

political campaign. In many other cases neighbors denounced a rival to the military as terrorist sympathizer, or to Sendero as a military informant.

### *Narratives and Community Capacity*

Hypothesis 5 predicts that if communities understand events through narratives that permit violence, then armed civilian resistance is more likely. I found some support for H5 in Sivia. Some of the residents in Sivia understood events during the conflict through a religious lens like many other communities in the VRAEM. However, one of the principal leaders of the self-defense forces in Sivia related a more secular understanding of the conflict. Religion played a part in some residents' lives, but he remembered more practical and reasoned discussions. Some of the most important moments in the conflict came early on when Sendero's recruiting efforts failed to win the support of soldiers finishing their military service. The self-defense force leader from Sivia served in the armed forces from 1980 to 1983. Sendero attempted to recruit him when he left the army. He saw Sendero's armed campaign and the people involved in a negative light and their pitch failed to gain his support.<sup>602</sup>

The ex-soldier described the important role of emotion in decisions about civilian resistance and combat more broadly. Confronting Sendero and standing resolute in the face of its gruesome violence demanded every ounce of courage the community could muster. The fear was contagious. The population struggled to find the fortitude to stay and fight. The leader of the self-defense force also participated in the central command and described importance of words in motivating people to take action. He drew his lessons from experiences in the army. He explained, "We had to motivate each other. It was a delicate balance to not think about your

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<sup>602</sup> Personal interviews in Huanta and Luricocha on May 9, 2013 with a leader of a self-defense forces near Sivia from 1985 to 1992.

family but to remember you were doing this for them. We tried not to be afraid.”<sup>603</sup> Their words to each other gave them the will and the motivation to act.

Hypothesis 6 predicts that if narratives define a community’s relationship with other actors in ways that justify violence, then violence is more likely. I found support for H6 in Sivia. How the community viewed Sendero influenced their decisions to fight back. Sendero did not respect local authorities. Who militants targeted influenced how communities saw them and their political objectives. Their actions suggested they would not become a voice for the people. They sought to silence legitimate community voices. Coming to understand Sendero as illegitimate facilitated resistance to a brutal force that sought to impose its will on the population. The former self-defense force leader described events during a large counteroffensive, “We began our offensive in the morning at 6 a.m. and luckily the terrorists were eating breakfast. We came from above and there was blood everywhere—lots of dead terrorists. We lost eight of our own.” He paused and felt the need to add, “They were all ‘reds’ and that’s it; they were all terrorists in this area. You had to believe this.”<sup>604</sup> The “reds” and everything the term entailed became a legitimate target of violence.

How some civilians viewed notions of fairness and proper conduct also affect their willingness to use violence against Sendero. One self-defense force participant that currently lives near Huanta, spent several years fighting in the VRAEM during the conflict period. He described the difficulty in those years. He was exhausted and hungry, armed only with his homemade single-shot gun. The self-defense force participant described his changing impression of Sendero after they began to steal from and abuse the population. They committed atrocities and behaved inexcusably. He concluded, “How are you going to call me a comrade and talk to

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<sup>603</sup> Ibid.

<sup>604</sup> Ibid.

me about politics and behave this way? They came at us with machine guns and we had knives. A man should fight weapon against weapon.”<sup>605</sup> Sendero did not behave honorably. A critic of a narratives argument might suggest that the man’s complaints about honor simply justify his actions after the fact. However, when I spoke with self-defense force participants that provide justifications, I always took care to discuss when they began to develop their opinions and how.

A self-defense force leader from Sanamarca, a village of less than three hundred residents located in the Sivia district, described how many communities made decisions during local assemblies. They asked each other how to respond to conditions of insecurity. The man described the deliberative process, “Well, there is this, this, and this. We have to decide. Are we going to defend what’s ours and defend democracy, or are we with Sendero?” The leader reasoned, “A community like Sanamarca, or any other community in the middle of a war, can’t be neutral.” He stressed the point that, “[The decision] has to come from the people themselves, it can’t be imposed. In this area nobody can be neutral. They’ve already killed off all those who were neutral. We’ve had to react within this context.”<sup>606</sup> The man explained that the Army did not organize the town. They chose their own leaders and decided to fight. They knew the strengths and weaknesses of the people in their own communities and had to fight for their land and their children. They fought against Sendero, but they also fought for democracy and their community.

How they viewed the state security forces also affected civilian resistance outcomes. The self-defense force leader from Sivia fought for eight years and remembers, “Between 1982 and 1986 you would see bodies floating down the river. [The military] came in like mercenaries by

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<sup>605</sup> Personal interview in Huanta on May 17, 2014 with current self-defense force participant from a village near Luricocha.

<sup>606</sup> Hugo Huillca, “El Diálogo con Sendero Es Imposible.” In *Hablan los Ronderos: La Búsqueda por la Paz en los Andes*, ed. Orin Starn (Lima: IEP 1993), p. 45.

parachute. They killed everyone, down to the dogs, children, and elderly.”<sup>607</sup> The military did not behave better than Sendero, before mobilization or after. On one occasion they buried a large group of detainees alive in Sivia. They bulldozed dirt over rows of suspects and they suffocated under the weight of the earth.<sup>608</sup> State security forces targeted civilians less and committed fewer human rights abuses. Communities learned to demonstrate opposition to Sendero and express identity through action. Civilian resistance became as much about avoiding military and rondero abuses as Sendero Luminoso defeat. The police and soldiers continued to commit horrific acts of violence, but their record improved with stronger ties to communities and better access to intelligence. They limited incidents of violence against mistaken targets and outsourced some of the violence to their civilian allies.

How communities came to see themselves and their new role as ronderos also affected how they used violence. Participants took pride in resistance and the sacrifices they made in defense of the Peruvian nation. Participants spent weeks at a time patrolling the hills. They wore black shirts, carried a backpack, and sometimes wore a mask and camouflage. They carried a basic first aid kit and never had enough to eat. The ronderos drank a mixture of something that resembled oatmeal and sugar to keep their energy up. Ronderos chewed coca leaves to help stay awake. They became soldiers.

Hypothesis 7 expects community capacity to affect mobilization and predicts that preexisting cooperative institutions will facilitate sustained resistance. The town of Sivia had low community capacity, though some of the neighboring villages had communal farming arrangements and conflict resolution mechanisms that may have helped overcome collective action problems. The military and police played a more important role in achieving sustained

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<sup>607</sup> Personal interview near Quinoa on June 13, 2015 with a group of 15 self-defense force participants from Sivia.

<sup>608</sup> Personal interview in Huanta on June 6, 2015 with a self-defense force participant from Villa Florida who also served in the VRAEM in the early 1990s.

mobilization by eliminating collective action problems. Furthermore, when the military helped communities like Sivia organize, they also helped leaders from different parts of the VRAEM coordinate. Through continued interactions self-defense forces developed stronger relationships and increased trust.

Hypothesis 8 predicts that communities with greater resources have high community capacity and are more likely to mobilize and sustain civilian resistance. Access to resources improved over time, but does not correspond with a greater likelihood for sustain mobilization. The community organized and operated without adequate weaponry and supplies, suggesting that resources are not a necessary condition. However, the acquisition of better weapons and materials improved the self-defense force's ability to fight and contributed to its ability to effectively confront Sendero militants. The self-defense force in Sivia received several shotguns from the government and other basic weapons through ties to the broader regional militia movement. The November 1991 legislative decree 740 under President Alberto Fujimori helped to further facilitate arming civilian self-defense forces.

Self-defense forces learned to do the best they could with the resources they had at their disposal. Participants sometimes overcame limits to capacity with experience and ingenuity. For example, the majority of ronderos only carried homemade single-shot tirachas. A former self-defense force leader shook his head and lamented, "Everyone carried their tirachas, but sometimes they shot forward, and other times they shot backward."<sup>609</sup> Patrols that went out into the jungle to confront well-armed militants learned to use psychological tricks to overcome their disadvantage. They would coordinate their single shots to appear as if someone let off a burst of rounds from a machine gun so that they might pass for a well-armed military patrol.<sup>610</sup>

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<sup>609</sup> Personal interview near Quinua on June 13, 2015 with a group of 15 self-defense force participants from Sivia.

<sup>610</sup> Ibid.

## **LLOCHEGUA AND VILLA MEJORADA**

An influx of new labor and money tied to the illicit drug economy makes contemporary Llochegua feel like a growing frontier town. Travelling to the region presents numerous challenges. The journey from Huanta to Llochegua takes as few as seven hours or as many as fourteen. The trip involves travel by bus or truck along a dirt highway currently under construction. The state continues to work on paving the road to improve access, though the project suffered numerous attacks and acts of sabotage by forces tied to the illicit drug economy that resist state penetration and access to the VRAEM. Depending on the route, most travelers will cross over a bridge into the Cuzco region, head north, and take a skiff back across the river to Llochegua on the Ayacucho side. The journey today is much easier than the trip in the 1980s.

Llochegua served as the only town and commercial center for the small farms scattered in the valley and surrounding hills. Roads did not reach Llochegua and residents made the journey predominantly by boat and on foot with donkeys and mules to carry their goods. Llochegua grew rapidly in the early 1980s when farmers abandon their lands to seek refuge from Sendero threat and violence. Some fled to highland communities near Huanta and others stayed in the growing town to contend with new hardships as refugees. Around 6,000 people settled near Llochegua in conditions of extreme poverty with limited access to food.

### **Civilian Resistance in Llochegua and Villa Mejorada**

Residents in communities near Llochegua did not organize independent self-defense forces early on like those in Anchiuay and Pichiwilca. However, isolated incidents of resistance to Sendero militants laid the groundwork for later civilian organizing. Some of the farmers with previous military experience fought back against Sendero as early as 1982 when the militant movement murdered authorities and started to terrorize civilians unwilling to support its

revolutionary cause. Communities sought refuge in Llochegua where the military later compelled civilians to participate in self-defense efforts. After 1985 many civilians decided to return to their farms. They organized civilian resistance efforts to provide security during resettlement. A key figure behind civilian self-defense near Llochegua originally fled when Sendero targeted farms outside Llochegua. The man hid his machines and tools after Sendero's preliminary indoctrination efforts. He packed up what he could and left his village in the VRAEM. He went to Huamanguilla, the capital town of a district near Huanta and Macachacra in the highlands.

The highlands calmed slightly in 1985 and the man return to the VRAEM. He saw that most people moved to Llochegua for protection. Community authorities from surround villages renounced their leadership positions. Poverty, hunger, and sickness decimated the population. He spoke with former neighbors and as a well-known, respected member of the community he assumed the role of lieutenant governor. He coordinated with three other leaders and set out to rebuild and reclaim their land. He adopted the name of "Comando Ayala" and prepared to resist the inevitable confrontations with Sendero Luminoso. Civilians faced an existential crisis in Llochegua. They could contend with hunger, disease, and malnutrition, or defend themselves back on their farms.

Civilian resistance began with 50 poorly armed civilians who decided to take a stand. Neighbors from abandoned villages in the hills attempted to rescue forced Sendero recruits. One former participant recalled, "Love and a shirt is all we had."<sup>611</sup> Civilians return to their lands in 1985 and 1986 and began to stay in the hills at night instead of returning to Llochegua for increased safety. Residents contended with Sendero attacks as they resettled their farms and

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<sup>611</sup> Personal interview in Llochegua on May 15, 2013 with two members of the contemporary self-defense force who lived in the community during the conflict.

rebuilt their lives. A thousand residents across six annexes coordinated to create Villa Mejorada and took steps to improve collective security against Sendero attacks.

Community self-defense forces coordinated with other armed civilians such as Comandante Huayhuaco. He led offensive operations as far as Canayre and Vizcatán, where Sendero had an even stronger presence. When rondero patrols moved closer to Canayre they met fierce resistance. In one incident, twenty Pichiwilca rondero recruits went on an extended patrol that lasted several weeks. As the group returned through territory around Canayre over one hundred Sendero militants ambushed them outside of Llohegua. Three ronderos lost their lives. Some escaped in the river and others went to the mountain to request military assistance.<sup>612</sup> The self-defense forces and the Marines made significant advances in their struggle against Sendero by the end of 1989. Sendero retreated deeper into the jungle and planted mines and other booby traps to deter pursuit. Some semblance of peace returned to Llohegua, Villa Mejorada, and the surrounding communities in the early 1990s.

**Table 5.7: Narratives, community capacity, and civilian resistance outcomes in Llohegua and Villa Mejorada 1980-2000**

		Community Capacity	
		High	Low
Violent Narratives	Yes	Violent mobilization (after 1985)	Sporadic individual violence (1982-1984)
	No	Nonviolent mobilization (N/A)	Flee or collaborate with insurgents (1980-1982)

### *Realist and Rationalist Explanations*

Hypothesis 1 expects communities to respond to increased threat and violence in predictable ways. H1 suggests that communities will organize to resist increased threat and violence to counteract Sendero's growing strength. Communities near Llohegua faced

<sup>612</sup> Testimony 200237.

significant threats from Sendero militants and responded pragmatically. Most civilians abandoned remote farms and grouped together in town for greater security. However, some residents fought back before they fled. Late in 1982 Sendero militants increased attacks on communities near Villa Mejorada. Civilians abandoned their farms and congregated in one village. After eight days over 100 senderistas attacked at 6am while they prepared breakfast. I spoke with one man who fought the militants. He had a shotgun and many of the militants carried rifles and machine guns. They shot him seven times and he still has three bullets lodged in various parts of his body. He escaped and Sendero pursued him to other towns seeking revenge.<sup>613</sup>

District-level data on violence incidents in Llochegua do not accurately capture levels of threat and violence communities faced during the conflict period. The Peruvian state did not establish its political designation as a district until the year 2000. Witness testimonies and incident reports used to generate the violence CVR database in 2001 and 2002 do not capture experiences in Llochegua and Villa Mejorada. Violence spiked in the early 1980s and a handful of civilians resisted Sendero's ambitions. One of the key figures that helped organize self-defense explained, "What choice did we have? We had to defend ourselves. They killed my dad and were right on top of us."<sup>614</sup> Civilians reacted to the situation they faced.

However, two periods of increased threat and violence punctuate local histories in communities around Llochegua. In the early 1980s Sendero militants began to target rural villages and only a few civilians defended themselves. Civilians had other choices and decided to flee. Most civilians did not decide to oppose Sendero or align with the military stationed in a

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<sup>613</sup> Personal interview in Huanta on May 24, 2014 with an ex-soldier and leader of the self-defense force near Villa Mejorada.

<sup>614</sup> Personal interview in Pampay on June 8, 2015 with a founder and leader of the self-defense forces near Llochegua.

remote base near Villa Mejorada. Civilians did not have a clear idea of who Sendero militants were and why they brought such devastating violence to their communities.

The second wave of increased Sendero violence occurred when civilians returned to their farms to rebuild. Militants visited the new communities. Unreceptive residents did not support Sendero's political goals and expressed their desire to live in peace on their farms. They chose to side with "neither God nor the Devil" and began to organize self-defense. Civilian resistance inspired Sendero retaliation and punitive violence. Decisions to organize came prior to increased threat and violence. Violence came as a consequence rather than a cause of civilian resistance.

Residents returned to their farms. They fortified a central town they named Villa Mejorada which was comprised of six neighboring villages: Pulpito, Rinconada, Mejorada, Mata Cana, Arequipa, and Buena Vista.<sup>615</sup> Neither the military nor the newly formed ronderos from other parts of the VRAEM could adequately protect the people. Sendero attacked the new town several times. The military suggested they sharpen sticks and place them around the town. Sendero continued to visit and give talks. On one occasion they used dynamite to destroy the community bell because residents had used it as a warning system. Sendero discouraged and punished attempts at vigilance.

Hypothesis 2 predicts that state absence will force civilians to take responsibility for their own security. Civilians would organize to combat the growing Sendero threat and increased violence. I did not find support for H2. Civilians did not organize to protect themselves during periods of state absence. When Sendero threatened communities in the early 1980s, the military had a base in Corazón Pata near the remote villages that fled and later returned to form Villa Mejorada. In Llochegua, which had a limited state presence until the sinchis increased patrols

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<sup>615</sup> Leaders proposed several names for the new town including Villa Esperanza, Villa La Paz, Corazon Mejorada until deciding on Villa Mejorada.

and the military arrived in greater numbers after 1985, civilians did not mobilize to fulfill security needs. Civilians could not count on the state to defend them from Sendero attacks, yet they did not resist Sendero violence until later when the state increased its presence.

Hypothesis 3 predicts that state strength will increase the likelihood of violent civilian resistance. A strong state can compel civilian mobilization and use armed civilians as an auxiliary force. I found some support for H3 in Llochegua. When Marines arrived to assist the police, they simultaneously organized civilians to aid in counterterrorism efforts. The military pressured civilians to organize and provided assistance. Residents participated in self-defense efforts in 1986 and the military expanded civilian responsibilities in 1987 when local authorities had to provide additional bodies to supplement state forces. Ronderos from other parts of the VRAEM also came and applied pressure. Furthermore, the police and military also brutally repressed civilians as suspected insurgents. Peruvian security forces represented a key challenge for peasant security and inspired mobilization to signal state allegiance.

However, some civilians participated as an auxiliary force in earlier counterinsurgency efforts around Llochegua. When residents decided to return to their farms and resettle in Villa Mejorada they did autonomously. Civilian resistance in Villa Mejorada did not come about through military orders or support. Instances of civilian resistance in Villa Mejorada provide disconfirming evidence for H3.

Hypothesis 4 expects opportunism to motivate participants and facilitate violent civilian resistance. Llochegua and surrounding villages experience some of the same incidents of opportunism as other communities in the VRAEM. Individuals sometimes took advantage of the insecurity and lawlessness to exact revenge against a rival. Some residents denounced neighbors for personal gain or stole livestock. However, in Villa Mejorada civilian motivations to mobilize

did not include opportunism. Their actions advanced self-interest, but not opportunistically. Some of the farmers developed links to drug traffickers later on and helped some of the militias from Pichiwilca defend illicit interests in exchange for financial support. Some of the leaders like Huayhuaco and participants from Palmapampa took advantage of their leadership positions for financial gain. However, their actions came later after mobilization and did not drive early civilian resistance decisions. Most participants did not benefit financially from their participation.

### *Narratives and Community Capacity*

Hypothesis 5 predicts that if communities understand events through narratives that permit violence, then armed civilian resistance is more likely. How communities saw events affected civilian resistance outcomes. Sendero political indoctrination did not resonate with residents in the villages that united to form Villa Mejorada. A former self-defense force leader asked, “What did these people know about politics? These were poor farmers on their land working with some foreign ideology misapplied in Peru. What opinion could you have if you didn’t know anything about either side?”<sup>616</sup> Residents made decisions in a context they sometimes did not understand. Community narratives helped them to make sense of the events and influenced decisions about civilian resistance.

Religious narratives strongly influenced how the community interpreted events in Villa Mejorada. “Charismatic communities” tied to evangelical denominations like Pentecostalism expanded in the VRAEM during the 1980s. When priests fled and local religious leaders stayed behind, they influenced narratives.<sup>617</sup> The primary architect of civilian resistance in Villa

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<sup>616</sup> Personal interview in Huamanguilla on June 11, 2015 with the former leader of the Villa Mejorada self-defense force.

<sup>617</sup> Tomás Gutierrez Sánchez, *El “Hermano” Fujimori: Evangélicos y Poder Político en el Perú del ’90* (Lima: Ediciones AHP), pp. 34-35.

Mejorada is a devout evangelical Christian. Comando Ayala led the community and his neighbors looked to him for help and guidance. He had some medical training and commanded respect from residents that worked as farmers and did not have formal education. The people trusted him. He remembered, “For me there was no terror, because I have faith. We were going back to our land to find life once again. To recover our faith.” He gave his neighbors confidence and held sway over how they viewed the insecurity and violence in Llochegua and Villa Mejorada.

Comando Ayala understood threat and insecurity through the Bible and recalled the story of David. He concluded, “Sometimes you have to defend yourself. God also helps those who help themselves.”<sup>618</sup> He spoke with neighbors about the need to take action and stand against those who would harm the community. Comando Ayala helped organize and lead civilian defense. He explained, “There are two parts to man: the material and spiritual. And they come together as one fist.” He elaborated on God’s role, “He is our refuge, helper, and savior. The word of God sustained us. God is our weapon, our ammunition, and our foxhole. I don’t have confidence in man, only God.”<sup>619</sup> So we went to Lima to get weapons. Each community bought two or three weapons to share and protect themselves from Sendero militants.

Sendero reacted harshly to the prevalence of religious narratives that encouraged opposition. For example, in February 1989, Sendero militants murdered 25 members of the Assembly of God evangelical church in the town of Canayre.<sup>620</sup> In the town of Ccano, on the

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<sup>618</sup> Personal interview in Huamanguilla on April 28, 2014 with the former leader of the Villa Mejorada self-defense force.

<sup>619</sup> Personal interview in Huamanguilla on June 1, 2013.

<sup>620</sup> CVR, *Informe Final: Peru, 1980-2000, Tomo III, Capítulo 3.3. La Iglesia Católica y las Iglesias Evangélicas* (2003), p. 470.

road to Huanta, Sendero killed 34 civilians at a Pentecostal church in February 1991.<sup>621</sup> Sendero's violent actions against the faithful only fueled religious narratives that linked Sendero violence to an attack against Christianity.<sup>622</sup> The religious narratives provided a framework to understand events and fostered a deep sense of spirituality that gave communities like Villa Mejorada resolute in the decision to resist Sendero Luminoso. A self-defense force participant in Llochegua remembered the fatalism and faith of religious participants, "They would say, 'Take my life, what do I care? Off I go.' They thought they'd go to heaven."<sup>623</sup>

Hypothesis 6 predicts that if narratives define a community's relationship with other actors in ways that justify violence, then violence is more likely. How communities saw Sendero militants through new narratives affected decisions about violent civilian resistance. Militants first came with words and promises. They visited the communities in the hills outside Llochegua in 1981. The militants' actions did not match their professed goals. The former self-defense force leader from Villa Mejorada explained, "[Sendero] talked about true democracy, but in reality they were dictators." Sendero insisted the farmers only grew what they needed for subsistence. Militants forbid residents from selling their goods at the market so they would not enrich those who sought to exploit them.<sup>624</sup> Sendero watched over everything and punished disobedience. He described

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<sup>621</sup> For more on this event see Testimonies 201689, 201693, 201965, 202947, 203952, 203953, 203954, 203955, 203956, 203960, 203961, 203962, 203965, 203966, 203967, 203968, 203969, 203970, 203972, 203978, 203979, 203980, 203985.

<sup>622</sup> Ponciano del Pino, "Tiempos de Guerra y de Dioses: Ronderos, Evangélicos y Senderistas en el Valle del Río Apurímac." In *Las Rondas Campesinas y la Derrota de Sendero Luminoso*, eds. Carlos Iván Degregori, José Coronel, Ponciano del Pino, and Orin Starn, (Lima: Instituto de Estudios Peruanos 1996).

<sup>623</sup> Personal interview in Llochegua on May 15, 2013 with two members of the contemporary self-defense force who lived in the community during the conflict.

<sup>624</sup> Personal interview in Huamanguilla on June 1, 2013 with the former leader of the Villa Mejorada self-defense force.

their situation, “The militants came and they had their foot on our necks.”<sup>625</sup> They viewed Sendero militants as abusive liars and remembered the pastors warning the community about the promises the movement made, “They said they were fighting for the poor and the poor are the ones that died.”<sup>626</sup> Sendero Luminoso created new burdens for the community and the self-defense force leader shared lessons he drew from Paul’s letters to Timothy in the New Testament about “opposing false teachers.” He referred to encouraging words from Proverbs to remain steadfast, to move forward, and stay true to your heart.

The community began to describe Sendero militants as roving bandits rather than revolutionaries. In 1982 and 1983 senderistas visited villages in the hills outside Llochegua more frequently and made greater demands on the population. You could not refuse their requests and they became increasingly abusive. A resident of a village near Villa Mejorada remembered “They behaved like animals. There was no law and they stopped speaking with us. They accused, abused, and disappeared. They did not seem to have a plan and relied on force.” He continued, “You would nod your head and listen. When they made demands you did it. You would never challenge them or it meant death.”<sup>627</sup> No one wanted to live under the new government that Sendero Luminoso envisioned.

Sendero actions inspired indignation among key civilian resistance leaders. The self-defense force leader remembered their vulnerability when the community returned to their farms and organized the new town in Villa Mejorada. One particular incident revealed Sendero’s true nature and inspired resistance, “It really upset me when I saw a woman with her baby killed. A

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<sup>625</sup> Personal interview in Huamanguilla on April 28, 2014 with the former leader of the Villa Mejorada self-defense force.

<sup>626</sup> Personal interview in Huamanguilla on June 11, 2015 with the former leader of the Villa Mejorada self-defense force.

<sup>627</sup> Personal interview in Pampay on June 8, 2015 with a founder and leader of the self-defense forces near Llochegua.

bullet shot through her head like it was a melon and hit her baby in the satchel on her back. I asked myself, ‘What is she guilty of?’ I would defend them even if I had to give up my life.”<sup>628</sup> He believed violence became an end unto itself for Sendero.

As the state security and armed civilians pushed the militants deeper into the jungles and mountains, the senderistas destroyed farms, stole animals and belongings, and mistreated civilians.<sup>629</sup> In the early and mid-90s, Sendero militants crossed the Ene River into the Cusco region or continued north to the jungles of Junín. They continued with their normal routine, but at this point in the conflict, convincing anyone about the merits of their revolutionary cause proved futile. The senderistas just perpetrated further violence on a new population. The militants appeared to abandon all righteous pretenses and simply victimized the people and imparted empty rhetoric. Their previous visions of social justice had devolved into promises of material reward and divisive identity politics. One man remembered a forced meeting in 1994 in his village in the Apurímac Valley. The militants declared, “We will kill the millionaires and afterward we will pick up their cloths.” He remembers the armed insurgents telling him, “We are going to fight to have a car.” They killed a few people as they left for not agreeing with their “politics” and accused them of being *yana umas*.<sup>630</sup>

Sendero militants became notorious for kidnapping and forcing civilians into servitude. For example, in the village of Mantaro across the river from Llochegua, they took away a number of residents. The community had organized a self-defense force prior to a large-scale attack on March 1, 1991. Six months before the community built watchtowers, grouped together their homes for increased security, and raised funds internally to acquire some weapons. When

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<sup>628</sup> Personal interview in Huamanguilla on June 11, 2015 with the former leader of the Villa Mejorada self-defense force.

<sup>629</sup> Testimony 102096.

<sup>630</sup> Testimony 302460.

the senderistas approached through surrounding farms, they surprised the watchmen. However, they were able to signal danger with whistles as the invading insurgents swarmed the town. The militants killed without restraint and more than a dozen residents died. Outnumbered ronderos battled nearly 100 senderistas for several hours.<sup>631</sup>

Ronderos from Santa Rosa came to their aid. The ronderos fired on the militants from the watchtowers as the senderistas rounded up civilians. One community member remembers an insurgent yelling at his elderly father in Quechua, “Old man, we have to go!” The man’s father responded, “I’m already an old man, where do I have to go?” The senderista forced his father to the ground, face in the dirt, and struck his neck with a machete. Two “natives” saw that his father was still alive and shot him with a couple of arrows.<sup>632</sup> Sendero brought anyone that failed to escape to the center of town. They lined everyone up, celebrated their victory, and murdered the president of the community and a rondero leader in front of the town. They took their captives with them when they left.

Those who had escaped to the mountain returned two hours later. They found many wounded and dead. Their homes had been burned. At least sixteen lost their lives and forty-one community members had been taken as hostages. Neighboring ronderos helped to clean up the mess and they chopped off the heads of three fallen senderistas to take them to the military base as proof of the battle. Two years later 20 community members returned home, sick and suffering from severe malnutrition. They revealed that the other captives died of hunger and disease, held against their will in a Sendero camp.<sup>633</sup>

Sendero Luminoso failed to maintain a link between its actions and its professed political objectives. “Everyone lived by what the jungle provided and Sendero wouldn’t leave us alone to

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<sup>631</sup> Testimony 200889.

<sup>632</sup> Testimony 203413. “Natives,” or *nativas* in Spanish, refers to Ashaninka Indians in this context.

<sup>633</sup> Testimonies 200889, 203413.

work.”<sup>634</sup> The people blamed Sendero for their horrific conditions. The ronderos had to suffer through extended miserable campaigns in the jungle. They never had enough to eat and lacked basic necessities like oil to cook with. One self-defense force participant I have known for several years reflected on the concept of “community narrative.” After three years of friendship he once conclude a discussion about life during the 1980s and 1990 in the VRAEM, “If I had to describe a narrative, it was anti-terrorist.”<sup>635</sup>

Community narratives about state security forces also changed as they forged new cooperative relationships with the military. However, the state committed significant human rights abuses during the early conflict years. State security forces viewed civilians in Llochegua with distrust. They labeled many residents as Sendero sympathizers; killing some and throwing others in caged holes they dug into the ground. Civilians viewed the police and military with wariness. However, many community leaders who helped mobilize civilian resistance developed stronger relationships with police and military. Some of the individuals who made up the leadership committee of the new self-defense forces had previous military experience and helped change community relationships with state security forces. Greater support from President Garcia in the late 1980s and President Fujimori in the early 1990s also changed the way civilians described the state. Better state relations and cooperative arrangements between soldiers and ronderos made entre communities into allies in defense. Residents today lament the “excesses” committed by the state, but most former self-defense force participants applaud the support shown by Fujimori, complain about his later incarceration, and describe the need for a “strong hand” to maintain security in a place like the VRAEM.

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<sup>634</sup> Personal interview in Huanta on April 28, 2014 with a former self-defense force participant in Villa Florida and later in Villa Mejorada.

<sup>635</sup> Ibid.

How communities described themselves as *ronderos* and their connections to other armed civilian “allies” also affected civilian resistance efforts and the way they used violence. Self-defense force participants around the town of Llochegua had a negative view of the *ronderos* from Pichiwilca. The organizer and former leader of a self-defense force recounted when the “thugs” from Pichiwilca came to Llochegua, “They came hooded; or at least the leaders did. They were ferocious. They came to help us organize and then they left.” The former leader continued, “The Pichiwilca *ronderos* abused a lot of people in the area, but they behaved better with us in Villa Mejorada.”<sup>636</sup> Communities that viewed the *ronderos* from Pichiwilca as allies instead of abusers had more success in mobilizing and fighting Sendero.

Hypothesis 7 expects community capacity to affect mobilization and predicts that preexisting cooperative institutions will facilitate sustained resistance. I found some support for H7. Neighboring villages around Villa Mejorada existed as separate, scattered, and disorganized farms in the mountains. Most residents abandoned their small farms early on and returned later. When civilians fled their communities all around Llochegua the population ballooned into a mix of refugees and displaced people with few ties and pre-existing relationships. Coordination in Llochegua proved difficult among distrustful strangers in the early part of the conflict. Some new residents came from other parts of the VRAEM.

The military helped to eliminate collective action problems. They worked with nontraditional allies and coordinated to fight a common enemy they all came to see as a source of misery. The military facilitated cooperation with untraditional allies. One participant described an occasion where he and 120 other *ronderos* accompanied 15 to 20 soldiers on patrol. They linked up with approximately 320 armed Ashaninka who guided them to the hidden base of

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<sup>636</sup> Personal interview in Pampay on June 8, 2015 with a founder and leader of the self-defense forces near Llochegua.

a Sendero commander and his son hiding in the jungles. The group surrounded the senderistas. He remembered, “The soldiers took them off and they disappeared.”<sup>637</sup> New cooperative relationships evolved alongside new coordinated security efforts.

In the case of Villa Mejorada, the new community had to do everything themselves when they built the town. Residents built the school together and practiced reciprocity in large-scale collective farming efforts. Thirty community members planted, harvested, and fumigated the coffee and cacao crops in the lower elevations. They also worked together caring for the coca, banana, and yucca in the higher elevations.<sup>638</sup> New security institutions evolved alongside other elements of community building.

Hypothesis 8 expects access to resources like weapons will make armed civilian resistance and sustained mobilization more likely. Civilians In Villa Mejorada resisted Sendero violence both before and after they had better access to resources like weapons. Better access to resources is not a necessary condition for sustained mobilization. However, like other communities in the VRAEM, when the self-defense force gained access to better weapons, its efficacy improved. The self-defense force in Villa Mejorada received aid from the military and other self-defense forces from communities near Pichiwilca. Comando Ayala and his colleagues approached Huayhuaco for assistance and he helped coordinate an arms deal in Lima. The community had to pay for its ammunition and residents gathered money to purchase weapons. Comando Ayala and another leader traveled to Lima, purchased the guns, and brought them back to the jungle on a military plane among a large shipment of medicine.

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<sup>637</sup> Personal interview in Villa Florida on April 28, 2014 with a former self-defense force participant in Villa Florida and later in Villa Mejorada.

<sup>638</sup> Personal interview in Pampay on June 8, 2015 with a founder and leader of the self-defense forces near Llohegua.

Some additional resources from links to drug trafficking organizations also helped some of the self-defense forces in the area. Colombian traffickers that had been targeted by Sendero sought protection from the self-defense forces. Farmers and traffickers that made a living from the illicit drug economy had to obey Sendero militants that controlled significant amounts of territory where they grew coca. Providing resources to self-defense forces allowed them greater autonomy as the armed civilians expanded their reach and pacified the region.<sup>639</sup>

### **CONTEMPORARY COMMUNITY SELF-DEFENSE FORCES**

Communities in the VRAEM confront a wide range of contemporary security challenges. Residents contend with similar threat and violence without the politics of Sendero's campaign. Policymakers and state security forces see the potential benefits of coordinating with community self-defense forces to complement current counterterrorism and counternarcotics operations, but the state has offered only minimal support in terms of financial resources.<sup>640</sup> Some community self-defense forces in the jungle limit the scope of their activities to dealing with domestic disturbances and issues like theft. They generally stay clear of insurgents and drug traffickers.<sup>641</sup> For example, I spoke with a self-defense force leader in Pichari, across the river from Sivia and Llohegua on the Cusco side of the river. He sat with his arms crossed and his eyes closed as he spoke, "We dealt with this shit and it was horrible. [The military] needed to trust us and believe that we knew how to fight them." Organizing came slow in Pichari during the conflict years with less direct leadership and more communal decision making through meetings and consensus. Today the self-defense force coordinates with police and contends with minor issues related to

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<sup>639</sup> Personal interview in Huanta on May 24, 2014 with two leaders from a self-defense force near Villa Mejorada.

<sup>640</sup> Personal interview in Luricocha on May, 9, 2013 with a self-defense force leader during a municipal government meeting of the "Commission for Peace in Luricocha." The interview subject suggested that the reasons for the lack of support reflects a combination of limited resources, corruption in the allocation of funds, and prioritizing the funding of state-controlled institutions.

<sup>641</sup> I base this observation on comments during personal interviews in Llohegua on May 13 and 15, 2013 with self-defense organization leaders.

public order. They still do patrols, but very rarely. The leaderships describes self-defense as more of a response organization.<sup>642</sup>

Alternatively, some civilians in VRAEM communities with greater involvement in the illicit drug economy feel they are once again caught “between two fires,” fearful of violent reprisals from traffickers and Sendero mercenaries. They also fear state security forces that direct an increasingly militarized counter-narcotics campaign. One coca farmer in the VRAEM explained the dangers of leaving his modest wooden home during the night and warned, “You should not use a candle or flashlight.” He pointed up into the hills to the north and explained, “The military controls that area over there.”<sup>643</sup> Then he pointed toward the hills to the west, “And Sendero controls that area over there. Either one of them might take a shot at you if they see a light.”<sup>644</sup> Many of the civilians in communities affected by contemporary violence in the VRAEM face a difficult situation with few options to ensure the safety of their families and improve their lives. Remote communities take care to avoid accusations and physical attacks from two fronts: state security forces and resurgent Sendero militants. For example, during a spike in violence in 2008, the military killed numerous villagers in one VRAEM community they labeled as “subversives.”<sup>645</sup> Months later, guerrillas accused the village leader of collaborating with the military and abducted him.<sup>646</sup> Today, some communities continue to aid the remnant Sendero Luminoso militants out of fear.<sup>647</sup> Punitive violence from both Sendero and state security forces, combined with more frequent drug eradication interventions that threaten some

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<sup>642</sup> Personal interview in Pichari on May 14, 2013 with a self-defense force leader at the central command.

<sup>643</sup> Personal interview near Villa Mejorada on May 14, 2013 with a coca farmer.

<sup>644</sup> Ibid.

<sup>645</sup> Simon Romero, “Cocaine Trade Helps Rebels Reignite War in Peru,” *New York Times* (March 17, 2009), <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/03/18/world/americas/18peru.html>.

<sup>646</sup> Ibid.

<sup>647</sup> “En el Vraem Hay Pobladores que se Sienten Obligados a Ayudar a SL, Dice José Cueto,” *El Comercio* (August 20, 2013), <http://elcomercio.pe/politica/gobierno/vraem-hay-pobladores-que-se-sienten-obligados-ayudar-sl-dice-jose-cueto-noticia-1619937>.

farmers' livelihoods, has left many communities in the region exasperated and they simply want to be left alone.<sup>648</sup>

Recent developments in the VRAEM promise to bring the topic of civilian self-defense to the forefront of political debate in Peru, especially in the jungle region. There are over five hundred active self-defense forces throughout the VRAEM, and in May 2015 the Ministry of Defense sent letters to the leadership of these organizations. Members of the central committee in Santa Rosa showed me a letter from the Peruvian state informing them of plans to deactivate the organizations. Leaders expressed their concerns about disarming and demobilizing the self-defense forces, "It's not like before, terrorism is gone except in a few places. But, we still need our weapons. It's about prevention, we need to be prepared."<sup>649</sup> The specter of widespread victimization still haunts their community. Civilians will not voluntarily relinquish their weapons while they still perceive the potential for murder, assault, and theft, which they believe remain under control only through their own organizations' efforts.

Furthermore, and more importantly, they see ulterior motives behind the state's request to disarm and deactivate civilian self-defense forces. Residents in the VRAEM wonder why the government would deactivate groups in their communities but not up in the highlands. They suspect that the decision to take away their weapons coincides with plans to intensify coca eradication efforts. Eradication threatens everyone's livelihood. Residents throughout the VRAEM continue to discuss how they should respond to the state demands. Narratives about their relationship with the Peruvian state are in flux. In my research on civilian self-defense force mobilization during the 1980s and 1990s I found that how communities interpreted events and

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<sup>648</sup> A teacher in one community stated, "What we want is that neither side interrupts our lives." Joshua Partlow, "In Peru, a Rebellion Reborn," *Washington Post* (November 12, 2008), <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/11/11/AR2008111102867.html>.

<sup>649</sup> Personal interview in Santa Rosa on June 9, 2015 with the current Santa Rosa self-defense force president and the leadership committee.

defined their relationships with other important collective actors affected how civilians responded to security challenges. Whether their fears about the state are justified or not is inconsequential. One can already observe increased civilian distance and distrust based on these new state demands.

# Chapter 6

## CONCLUSION

Discoveries are rare in political science. Like all social sciences, the endeavor is more about refinement and repackaging. Scholars organize the complexities of social life to make them more accessible to interpretation and understanding. However, academics should take care not to simply translate existing knowledge into a preferred terminology if humans do not actually behave that way.<sup>650</sup> Nor should scholars simply shoot holes in a fence and paint bull's-eyes around them.<sup>651</sup> Strict rationalist approaches and broad cultural arguments suffer from unrealistic assumptions and underspecified causal logics respectively. A simple explanatory account of civilian resistance remains elusive. Conflicts continually evolve and multiple logics motivate people to take violent action, complicating academic efforts to formulate a parsimonious causal explanation. In this concluding chapter I describe my research findings, highlight my theoretical contributions, and identify policy implications. I finish with a brief discussion of avenues for future research.

Communities found themselves caught “between two fires” in the 1980s and 1990s when Sendero Luminoso’s revolutionary violence and the armed forces’ heavy-handed counterinsurgency campaign led to widespread murder, torture, and forced disappearance. Neutrality became impossible. Communities had to respond to militant threat and violence and navigate a delicate relationship with state security forces who viewed residents in remote

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<sup>650</sup> For a more detailed discussion on this tendency see Ian Shapiro, *The Flight from Reality in the Human Sciences* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press 2005), p. 11.

<sup>651</sup> Clifford Geertz makes this analogy in Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays* (New York: Basic Books 1973).

Ayacucho towns and villages with suspicion. Most communities eventually developed civilian self-defense forces, although their path to violent sustained resistance varied.

All communities experienced increased Sendero threat and violence in the early 1980s. Regional violence levels indicate a general correlation between insurgent, state, and civilian violence levels over time. However, regional anecdotal evidence and my community case studies provide evidence to suggest that the timing of mobilization did not usually correspond with the highest levels of threat and violence. Furthermore, most Sendero attacks came as punitive violence against communities for preliminary efforts to organize, suggesting that the causal direction between violence and civilian resistance runs in the opposite direction.

I did not find substantial support for the argument that state weakness forces communities to assume responsibility for their own security. State weakness was neither a necessary nor sufficient condition for violent civilian resistance to Sendero Luminoso. I found some support for the argument that state strength makes civilian resistance more likely. The military forced many communities to organize and participate in the counterinsurgency as an auxiliary force. However, upon closer examination in the case studies, I found that many of the same communities attempted to organize on their own prior to state intervention and that many initially requested state support. The military compelled some civilians to participate, but mostly coopted and supported nascent organizations.

Opportunism did not motivate self-defense force participation in the communities from my study. In some cases civilians took advantage of the insecurity to settle old scores. Civilians denounced neighbors for land, livestock, and lust. However, opportunism usually took place in the context of denunciation to Sendero or the state security forces. When self-defense forces in

the VRAEM established links to drug trafficking organizations for financial gain, they did so years after initial mobilization efforts and it benefited the broader self-defense force movement.

I found considerable support for my narratives argument. Evidence usually suggested that subjective interpretations and not objective conditions influenced community responses to insecurity during the civil war in Peru. Communities interpreted events, assigned meaning to actions, and defined their relationships in new ways over time and changing narratives correspond with new civilian resistance efforts. Religious stories, local myths, and general descriptions of events and people influenced decisions about desirable and appropriate responses to threat and violence.

In some cases a change in narrative was not enough to inspire civilian resistance. Some times community members only carried out sporadic acts of resistance. Community capacity played a significant role in mobilization efforts. The earliest cases of civilian resistance occurred in towns and villages that had preexisting cooperative relationships that facilitated collective action. The military also helped to eliminate collective action dilemmas when it aided or compelled community mobilization. Resources also affected community capacity. However, access to resources such as weapons did not affect mobilization, only the efficacy of civilian groups that confronted well-armed opponents.

## **THEORETICAL CONTRIBUTIONS**

*“For it is clear enough that under certain conditions men respond as powerfully to fictions as they do to realities, and that in many cases they help to create the very fictions to which they respond.”*<sup>652</sup>

*“We don’t see things as they are, we see them as we are.”*<sup>653</sup>

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<sup>652</sup> Walter Lippmann, *Public Opinion* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company 1922), p. 14.

<sup>653</sup> Anais Nin, *Seduction of the Minotaur* (Denver: Alan Swallow 1961), p. 124.

Threat, violence, and state strength or weakness are neither necessary nor sufficient conditions in explaining civilian resistance in Peru. My research prioritizes the role of community narratives in the process of moving toward or away from violence as opposed to identifying the various conditions, goals, or motivations that groups have for using it. In this project I developed a diagnostic theory, rather than a predictive one. During preliminary fieldwork, community members shared stories about their decisions to resist Sendero militants. It became apparent that how they came to understand events and relationships, rather than objective conditions, influenced how they responded to threat and violence. A theory of civilian resistance tied to community narratives prioritizes a subjective interpretation of conditions. The way communities viewed their experiences with Sendero Luminoso and state security forces, as well as their capacity to mobilize and sustain collective action, better explains civilian resistance across cases and within individual communities over time than realist and rationalist accounts.

### **Ideas, Identities, and a Framework for Human Action**

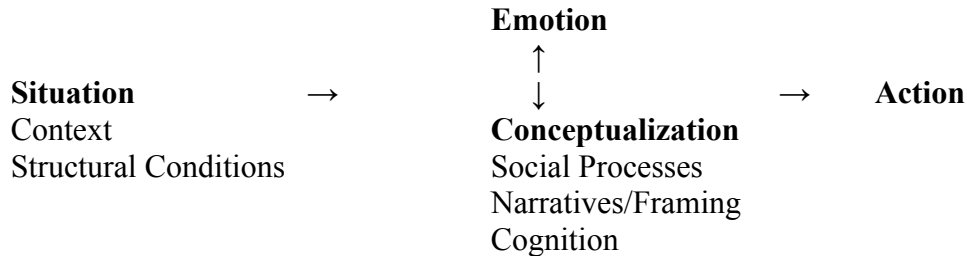
Threat, violence, and insecurity may have forced communities to respond, but community narratives and capacity influenced what that response looked like. Ideas and identities, along with institutions and resources, affected the range and desirability of particular actions. Communities made strategic decisions based on their interpretation of events and relationships. I provide evidence that illustrates what other social scientists' recognize as the storied nature of social life and narrative as an ontological condition.<sup>654</sup> Narratives provide a useful starting point to better assess the role of ideas and identities on outcomes like violence. However, community narratives are part of a more complex framework to explain social action. Strategic decisions include both computation and culture. Any explanation for human behavior must simultaneously

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<sup>654</sup> Margaret R. Somers and Gloria D. Gibson, "Reclaiming the Epistemological 'Other': Narrative and the Social Constitution of Identity." In *Social Theory and the Politics of Identity*, ed. Craig Calhoun (Oxford, UK: Blackwell 1994), pp. 37-99.

account for the situational factors, emotions, and conceptualization processes. Figure 6.1 presents a framework for social action.

**Figure 6.1: Framework to explain action in social situations**<sup>655</sup>



This dissertation contributes to our understanding of the role that ideas and identities play in human action and highlights the importance of communication. Narratives can enable or constrain behavior, making them central to any causal explanation that focuses on processes. Narratives also provide a window into the informal logic of human behavior and preference formation that can improve our understanding of how actors actually make “rational” decisions.

I also contribute to empirical research on social identity. Existing scholarship recognizes that individuals hold multiple, and sometimes competing, social identities that can become more or less salient. However, to better employ “identity as a variable” requires greater conceptual clarity. The concept should include beliefs, relational comparisons, and cognitive models, as well as social contestation over these elements.<sup>656</sup> My focus on how community narratives interpret events and define relationships, along with how they change over time, fits well within this conceptualization and provides a way to more rigorously assess the causal role of identity.

<sup>655</sup> I adapt this framework from Roger D. Petersen, *Understanding Ethnic Violence: Fear, Hatred, and Resentment in Twentieth-century Eastern Europe* (New York: Cambridge University Press 2002). While Petersen privileges emotions in explaining action, I emphasize the importance of social processes in determining the range of potential or appropriate actions open to individuals before they act. Community narratives affect conceptualization. Note, the arrows between context and conceptualization, as well as conceptualization to action, may also run in the other direction within a constructivist framework.

<sup>656</sup> Rawi Abdelal, Yoshiko M. Herrera, Alastair Iain Johnston, and Rose McDermott, “Identity as a Variable.” *Perspectives on Politics* 4/4 (2006), pp. 695-710.

Findings from this dissertation help decouple a theory of violence from a theory of conflict. Individual and collective actors have a broad range of potential strategies in conflict situations. Research on violence in civil war often focuses on structural conditions like pre-war political alignments or territorial control to explain violent actions such as civilian targeting.<sup>657</sup> Establishing a link between two conditions provides a first step in causal explanation. For example, smoking kills and consuming fruit and vegetables prevents scurvy. While both statements may be true to some degree, they leave out crucial elements of a causal explanation. Studies that link smoking to lower life expectancy and higher rates of cancer or heart disease establish a probabilistic relationship between smoking and death. However, a significantly more complicated chain of behavioral and physiological cause-effect relations ultimately lead to cancer and death.<sup>658</sup> A Spanish fleet sailing up the Pacific coast of Mexico in 1602 found that cactus fruit helped to prevent scurvy, a mysterious disease that caused body pain, purple spots, and death. Two centuries of experience helped sailors to link fruits and vegetables to preventing scurvy. Ships began to travel with gallons of lemon juice. But, it was not until 1928 that a Hungarian biochemist discovered that vitamin C prevented scurvy.<sup>659</sup> Narratives are the vitamin C of violent action.

While many studies recognize the complex nature of violence, they do not pay sufficient attention to social processes germane to adopting violent strategies. A narratives argument provides a more nuanced explanation for the level and nature of violent action that an approach

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<sup>657</sup> For example see Laia Balcells, *Rivalry and Revenge: The Politics of Violence in Civil War* (New York: Cambridge University Press 2016); Stathis N. Kalyvas, *The Logic of Violence in Civil War* (New York: Cambridge University Press 2006).

<sup>658</sup> Jon Elster, *Explaining Social Behavior: More Nuts and Bolts for the Social Sciences* (New York: Cambridge University Press 2007), p. 33.

<sup>659</sup> Carl Zimmer. "Vitamins' Old, Old Edge." *New York Times* (December 9, 2013). [http://www.nytimes.com/2013/12/10/science/vitamins-old-old-edge.html?smid=fb-nytimes&WT.z\\_sma=SC\\_VOO\\_20131210&bicmp=AD&bicmlukp=WT.mc\\_id&bicmst=1385874000000&bicmet=1388638800000&fblinkge0&r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2013/12/10/science/vitamins-old-old-edge.html?smid=fb-nytimes&WT.z_sma=SC_VOO_20131210&bicmp=AD&bicmlukp=WT.mc_id&bicmst=1385874000000&bicmet=1388638800000&fblinkge0&r=0).

focused on conditions cannot. For example, throughout Missouri's guerrilla conflict during the American Civil War, while the mutilation and killing of male enemy soldiers became quite common, "Conversely, there was a concomitant, rigorously observed ban on raping, killing, or mutilating white women."<sup>660</sup> Republican soldiers exhibited similar restraint during the Spanish Civil War where, despite widespread clerical violence targeting Catholic priests, they did not target nuns in the Spanish civil war.<sup>661</sup> Explanations focused solely on conditions cannot always account for the nature of violence and target selection while ones that looks at ideas and identities can. Their narratives communicate appropriate and feasible actions in light of how they interpret events and relationships. Community narratives provide a window into how communities both make and unmake violence. Community discussions, rumors, gossip, and stories used to describe events and people give ideas and identities power.<sup>662</sup>

### **Generalizability**

A narratives explanation also applies to other collective actors like states and organizations. For example, a state's decision to pursue nuclear weapons may stem from how it viewed the international system and its neighbors rather than a foreign policy model based on objective security conditions. States like India that interpreted their security situation through "oppositional nationalist" narratives were more likely to go nuclear.<sup>663</sup> During the Cold War, dominant U.S. national security narratives like the "Cold War consensus" directly influenced

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<sup>660</sup> Michael Fellman, *Inside War: The Guerrilla Conflict in Missouri during the American Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press 1989), p. 189.

<sup>661</sup> Mary Vincent, "The Keys to the Kingdom: Religious Violence in the Spanish Civil War, July-August 1936." In *The Splintering of Spain: Cultural History and the Spanish Civil War, 1936-1939*, eds. Chris Ealham and Michael Richards (New York: Cambridge University Press 2005), pp. 68-93.

<sup>662</sup> Kimberly Theidon, "Terror's Talk: Fieldwork and War." *Dialectical Anthropology* 26/1 (2001), pp. 19-35.

<sup>663</sup> Jacques E. C. Hymans, *The Psychology of Nuclear Proliferation: Identity, Emotions, and Foreign Policy*. Cambridge (New York: Cambridge University Press 2006).

how the state understood other actors, security conditions, and desirable outcomes.<sup>664</sup> Different state narratives led to different foreign policy outcomes even while the conditions remained constant.

Narratives within organizations such as militant groups or state security forces also affect behavior. For example, changing narratives within armed groups like the Provisional Irish Republican Army (PIRA) help account for evolving strategies in Northern Ireland.<sup>665</sup> The organization's "justice" narrative helps to explain continued violence despite a low likelihood of campaign success and widespread support among the population for the 1998 Belfast Agreement for peace.<sup>666</sup> How the Basque Homeland and Freedom (ETA) organization defined its nationalist project in relation to the changing Spanish state influenced political demands and the way it used violence.<sup>667</sup> Subcomandante Marcos, a guerrilla leader from the Zapatista movement in Mexico's southern state of Chiapas, used narratives to contextualize rural community marginalization and to define potential supporters' relationship to Mexican power. The movement identified itself as the contemporary vanguard in a 500-year struggle fought by the poor, the exploited, and the dispossessed. They were patriots in a national struggle against an elite, illegitimate, and corrupt "dictatorship" protected by the federal army and a political police force.<sup>668</sup> How organizations interpret events and define their relationships with other actors affects their subsequent behavior.

## **PORTABILITY AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

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<sup>664</sup> Ronald R. Krebs, "How Dominant Narratives Rise and Fall: Military Conflict, Politics, and the Cold War Consensus." *International Organization* 69/4 (2015), pp. 809-845.

<sup>665</sup> For an historical account of changing narratives within the IRA see Ed Moloney, *A Secret History of the IRA* (New York: WW Norton & Company 2002).

<sup>666</sup> Rogelio Alonso, "The Modernization in Irish Republican Thinking Toward the Utility of Violence." *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*. 24/2 (2001), pp. 131-144.

<sup>667</sup> Goldie Shabad and Francisco José Llera Ramo, "Political Violence in a Democratic State: Basque Terrorism in Spain." In *Terrorism in Context*, ed. Martha Crenshaw (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press 1995), pp. 410-469.

<sup>668</sup> Charles Tilly, *Stories, Identities, and Political Change* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield 2002), pp. 6-7.

A narratives argument is “portable” to other cases. Understanding how civilians respond to threat, as well as the origins and evolution of civilian self-defense, will help policymakers implement strategies to combat emerging security challenges in Peru and elsewhere. My research demonstrates that security does not always depend on a strong state. Autonomous and state-led civilian self-defense forces helped to defeat the insurgency, reduce violence, and reinvigorate civil society in rural Peru.<sup>669</sup> Civilians play a critical role in confronting a broad range of security threats. Typologies of armed civilian groups demonstrate the volume, diversity, and complexity of cases involving armed civilians.<sup>670</sup>

### **Portability**

Armed civilians represent important third party actors in most conflicts. This research can improve policies aimed at reducing drug violence that has led to tens of thousands of deaths in Mexico since 2006. As many Mexican communities organize “self-policing” efforts to combat drug traffickers, policymakers will benefit from a better understanding of civilian mobilization. Journalistic accounts of “vigilante” groups in rural Mexican villages suggest the situation itself compels the community to act. One resident explained, “We are tired of so much crime. The drug gangs have killed lots of people. But, all the soldiers are so far away. They don’t bring them to justice.”<sup>671</sup> However, clear differences in community responses demand explanation. Many, but not all, communities have taken up arms to fight drug cartels and criminal affiliates. In January 2014, the Mexican government deployed the military to force self-defense groups to

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<sup>669</sup> Orin Starn, “Senderos Inesperados: Las Rondas Campesinas de la Sierra Sur Central.” In *Las Rondas Campesinas y la Derrota de Sendero Luminoso*, eds. Carlos Iván Degregori, José Coronel, Ponciano del Pino, and Orin Starn (Lima: Instituto de Estudios Peruanos 1996), pp. 253-254.

<sup>670</sup> Moritz Schuberth, “The Challenge of Community-Based Armed Groups: Towards a Conceptualization of Militias, Gangs, and Vigilantes.” *Contemporary Security Policy* 36/2 (2015), pp. 296-320.

<sup>671</sup> “Vigilantes Tackle Mexico’s Drug Gangs,” *BBC News* (January 21, 2013), <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-latin-america-21136877>.

integrate into “rural defense forces” with state oversight and their fate is uncertain.<sup>672</sup> Other communities took up arms and mobilized to combat looters after hurricane Odile hit Baja California.<sup>673</sup> More recently, communities mobilized to search for 43 students who went missing in Iguala.<sup>674</sup> The Mexican state might learn from the Peruvian case and examine how various legal decrees and military coordination efforts have prevented armed civilian actors from devolving into predatory organizations. The communities themselves, which continue to struggle with security challenges, might learn how to effectively organize and sustain local armed organizations for self-defense.

Civilian militias in Nigeria have organized to protect themselves against the Islamist terrorist group Boko Haram.<sup>675</sup> Armed civilian groups emerged in Colombia after the government dismantled the United Self-Defense Forces (AUC) paramilitary coalition between 2003 and 2006.<sup>676</sup> In contemporary Peru, civilians contend with renewed Sendero insurgent violence, criminal organizations, and an increasingly militarized state counter-narcotics policy.<sup>677</sup> In some communities, armed civilians continue to defend themselves against militants and new threats to social order. Civilian actors know the terrain and the people. Directly working with

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<sup>672</sup> For more on cases of Mexican communities organizing “self-policing” efforts see Karla Zabudovsky, “Mexican Violence Prompts Self-Policing by Civilians,” *The New York Times* (January 26, 2013), [http://www.nytimes.com/2013/01/27/world/americas/mexico-violence-prompts-self-policing-by-civilians.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2013/01/27/world/americas/mexico-violence-prompts-self-policing-by-civilians.html?_r=0); Linda Pressly, “Mexico’s Vigilante Law Enforcers,” *BBC News Magazine* (April 16, 2013), <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-22066082>; Katie Orlinsky, “Mexico’s Female Vigilante Squads,” *The Daily Beast* (October 5, 2013), <http://www.thedailybeast.com/witw/articles/2013/10/05/mexico-s-female-vigilantes-take-justice-and-safety-into-their-own-hands.html>.

<sup>673</sup> “Mexican Vigilantes Tackle Looting after Hurricane Odile.” *BBC News* (September 18, 2014), <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-29264066>.

<sup>674</sup> “Mexico Missing Students: Nationwide Protests Held.” *BBC News* (October 8, 2014), <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-29538079>; For more on the missing student incident see Francisco Goldman, “Crisis in Mexico: The Protests for the Missing Forty-three.” *The New Yorker* (November 12, 2014), <http://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/crisis-mexico-protests-missing-forty-three>.

<sup>675</sup> For more on the case of civilian self-defense and an emerging “vigilante war” in Nigeria see “Nigeria’s Vigilantes Take on Boko Haram,” *BBC News* (July 23, 2013) <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-23409387>.

<sup>676</sup> Human Rights Watch, *Paramilitaries’ Heirs: The New Face of Violence in Colombia* (New York, NY: Human Rights Watch 2010).

<sup>677</sup> Steven T. Zech, “Drug-Trafficking, Terrorism, and Civilian Self-Defense in Peru.” *CTC Sentinel* 7/4 (April 2014), pp. 18-22.

civilian self-defense forces can generate stronger relationships between local intermediaries and the state to increase security, to coordinate local development efforts, and to foster more democratic local governance.

### **Policy Implications**

#### *“Post-conflict” environments*

Civilian self-defense forces represent new sources of political power. A better understanding of armed civilian involvement in counterinsurgency will help policymakers prevent self-defense forces from turning to predation. Civilian self-defense forces continue to play an important role in Peru and diverse forms of armed civilian groups contend with contemporary security challenges. The organizations largely differ based on their origins, objectives, and relationship with the state. All the organizations share a concern for issues of community security but differ primarily in their mandate to administer justice. Self-defense forces in the mountain and jungle regions of Peru coordinate with the state security forces. Legislative decree 740 allowed groups in the emergency zones during the conflict period to acquire weapons and munitions under the supervision of the state security forces to fight terrorism. Decree 741 permitted civilians to perform supervised counterterrorism operations. Self-defense forces differ from rondas campesinas in the north of Peru that operate with greater autonomy under the Rondas Campesinas Law 24571 from 1986. Rondas have the right to administer punishment for transgressions. In addition to rural self-defense, a new vigilante justice movement called “catch your thief” has started to spread in urban Peru where residents detain and punish alleged criminals.<sup>678</sup> My research speaks to questions of autonomous security

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<sup>678</sup> Michael Fraiman, “Peru's Pitchfork Politics: The Rise of Vigilantism and the Right Wing.” *Foreign Affairs* (November 2, 2015), <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/peru/2015-11-02/perus-pitchfork-politics>.

provision more broadly as the state must take action in the context of greater community militarization.

Civilian participation in security provision can result in significantly different outcomes. While the Peruvian case generally saw fewer instances of predatory behavior by armed civilian self-defense forces, in other cases these types of groups exacerbated existing armed conflicts. Scholars and policymakers should not make broad generalizations about the benefits of armed civilian mobilization. The conditions in which armed civilian groups emerge often affect their goals and behavior. For example, in Colombia, AUC paramilitaries emerged to defend against violence tied to revolutionary groups and the drug trade. Armed civilian defense mostly formed to protect private interests in conflict areas like landowners, cattle ranchers, or other business elites.<sup>679</sup> Alternatively, in Peru, communities and small landowners coordinated together to mobilize and protect their own collective interests. The formation of civilian self-defense forces in Peru must be understood as “the expression of a massive, autonomous decision on the part of the rural population.”<sup>680</sup> Continued coordination with state security forces and legal accountability helped minimize the risk of rogue paramilitary mobilization.

### *Moving toward and away from violence*

Understanding the narrative processes that move actors *toward* violence will help us move those same actors *away* from violence. In a case like Peru, if scholars can understand “how we learned to kill our brother,” they may simultaneously improve post-conflict reconciliation strategies for sustained peace.<sup>681</sup> Research on dehumanization suggests that the “humanization”

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<sup>679</sup> Vanda Felbab-Brown, *Shooting Up: Counterinsurgency and the War on Drugs* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press 2010), p. 94.

<sup>680</sup> Carlos Basombrío, “Militarization of Public Security in Peru.” In *Crime and Violence in Latin America: Citizen Security, Democracy, and the State*, eds. Hugo Frühling, Joseph S. Tulchin, and Heather A. Golding (Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press 2003), pp. 161.

<sup>681</sup> Kimberly Theidon, “‘How we learned to kill our brother’?: memory, morality and reconciliation in Peru.” *Boletín Del Instituto Francés De Estudios Andinos* (2004).

of actors will lessen aggression toward those subjects.<sup>682</sup> Recognizing the importance of community narratives in understanding events and defining relationships can help policymakers “un-make terrorists” and reintegrate former combatants into communities after the cessation of armed conflict.<sup>683</sup> The construction and diffusion of reconciliation narratives in communities attempting to reintegrate former combatants will residents move away from violence. The story I shared from Kimberly Theidon’s fieldwork in Chapter 3 about the stranger who passed through a Peruvian community in 1999 illustrates a shift in community narratives that facilitate peace and nonviolence in post-conflict Peru. Residents housed and fed the “crazy woman” instead of detaining and questioning her. She became a “test from God” about their humanity instead of a threatening outsider. Narratives became an important part of reconstructing peaceful social and political relations in post-conflict Ayacucho.<sup>684</sup>

### **FUTURE RESEARCH**

Scholars should incorporate additional actors into their analyses of “armed politics” and move beyond a focus on civilian victimization.<sup>685</sup> Examining civilian self-defense forces and other important third-party actors provides a more accurate account of conflict dynamics than studies focused solely on insurgent groups and the state. The potential for civilian resistance

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<sup>682</sup> Albert Bandura, Bill Underwood, and Michael E. Fromson, “Disinhibition of Aggression through Diffusion of Responsibility and Dehumanization of Victims.” *Journal of Research in Personality*. 9/4 (1975), pp. 253-269; Jasminka Majdandžić, Herbert Bauer, Christian Windischberger, Ewald Moser, Elisabeth Engl, Claus Lamm, and Alessio Avenanti, “The Human Factor: Behavioral and Neural Correlates of Humanized Perception in Moral Decision Making (Humanized Perception in Moral Decision Making).” *PLOS ONE* 7/10 (2012), E47698. For a review of dehumanization see Nick Haslam and Steve Loughnan, “Dehumanization and Infrahumanization,” *Annual Review of Psychology* 65 (2014), pp. 399-423.

<sup>683</sup> Scott Atran, *Talking to the Enemy: Faith, Brotherhood, and the (Un)Making of Terrorists* (New York: Ecco Press 2010).

<sup>684</sup> Kimberly Susan Theidon, *Intimate Enemies: Violence and Reconciliation in Peru* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press 2013), p. 316; Ponciano del Pino H. and Kimberly Theidon, “Las Políticas de Identidad: Narrativas de Guerra y la Construcción de Ciudadanía en Ayacucho.” In *Actores Sociales y Ciudadanía en Ayacucho*, eds. José Coronel, Ponciano del Pino and Kimberly Theidon, Iván Caro, and Carlos Iván Degregori (Peru: Grupo de Iniciativa de Institucionalidad Democrática de Ayacucho 1999), pp. 21-35.

<sup>685</sup> Paul Staniland, “Militias, Ideology, and the State.” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 59/5 (2015), pp. 770-793.

plays an important role in how armed groups make strategic decisions.<sup>686</sup> Understanding how armed civilians behave, as well as how other groups interact with them, will prove crucial in answering questions about conflict, violence, and social order.

### **In Search of a Concept: Security Institutions**

Research on internal armed investigates a variety of puzzles related to topics like conflict onset, civil war recurrence, and variation in violence levels. Recent studies have started to fill an important gap by examining other important non-state actors that influence the trajectory of armed conflict such as civilian groups, labor unions, and NGOs, just to name a few. In this study I examine civilian self-defense forces and explain different outcomes of “civilian resistance” as a community-level outcome. In her study of “social order,” Ana Arjona examines the interaction between insurgents and the civilian population as a key factor influencing the degree of rebel governance.<sup>687</sup> Oliver Kaplan focuses on strategies of “civilian autonomy” in Colombia.<sup>688</sup>

Future research might benefit from a new concept to unify an emerging research agenda on self-defense forces. I contend that a focus on “security institutions” would better capture the diversity of security arrangements in communities I visited. The new focus will draw from a rich, well-developed academic literature in the comparative politics and international relations subfields of political science. This literature examines the origins and evolution of institutions and provides a framework to evaluate how distinct institutional arrangements affect outcomes such as democratization or economic development. The security institutions concept captures notions about the legitimate use of violence in society and might range from absolute state monopolization to autonomous security provision by civilians at the local level. Scholars might

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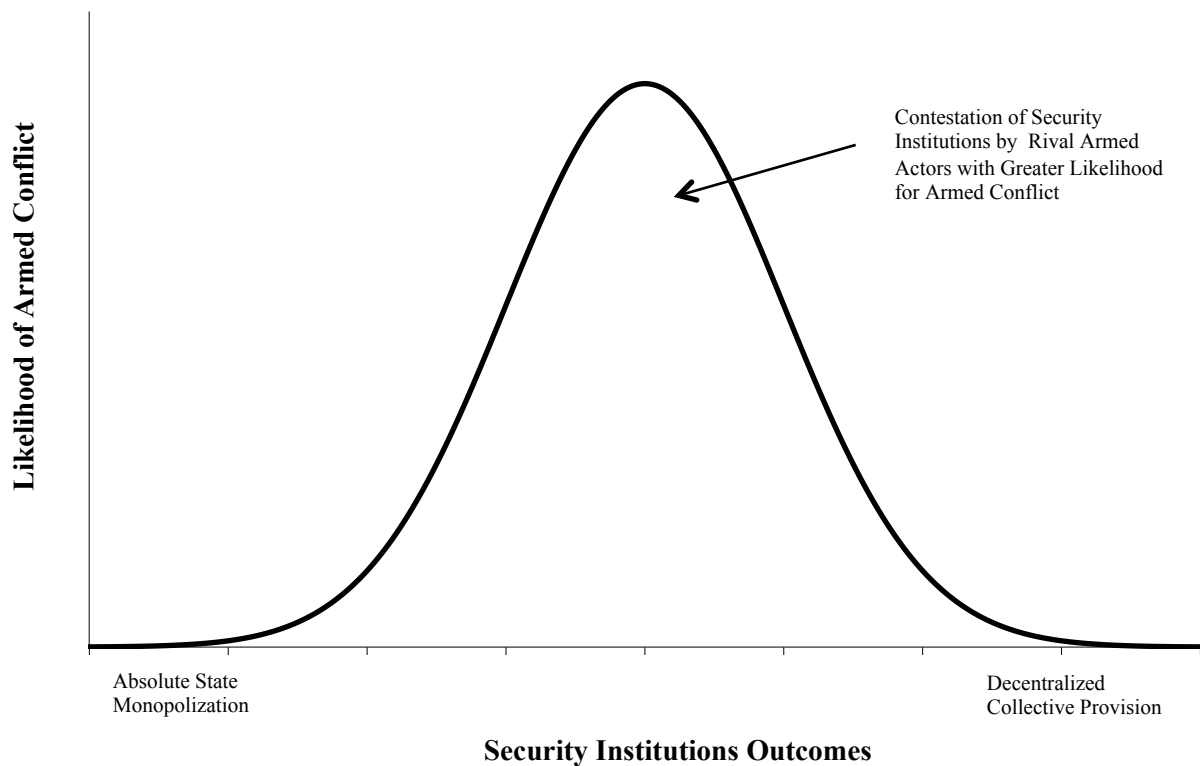
<sup>686</sup> Ana M. Arjona, *Social Order in Civil War* (Dissertation: Yale University 2010).

<sup>687</sup> Ibid.

<sup>688</sup> Oliver Kaplan, “Protecting Civilians in Civil War: The institution of the ATCC in Colombia.” *Journal of Peace Research* 50/3 (2013), pp. 351-367.

examine how security institutions relate to other important outcomes in armed conflict. For example, as seen in Figure 6.2, one might hypothesize an inverted U-curve relationship between security institutions and the likelihood of internal armed conflict. A security institutions concept could open up interesting lines of investigation in civil war research where armed actors often fight to establish control over the legitimate use of violence. The state, insurgent groups, or civilians can provide diverse forms of public security.

**Figure 6.2: Hypothesized relationship between security institutions and war recurrence**



A security institutions concept will inform research on other important questions in comparative politics and international relations. There is a rich tradition of research on the relationship between war and state-making.<sup>689</sup> The characteristics of emerging security

<sup>689</sup> For example see Charles Tilly, *Coercion, Capital, and European States, AD 990-1990* (Cambridge, MA: B. Blackwell 1990); Miguel Angel Centeno, "Blood and Debt: War and Taxation in Nineteenth-Century Latin America." *American Journal of Sociology* 102/6 (1997), pp. 1565-1605; Robert H. Bates, *Prosperity and Violence: the Political Economy of Development* (New York: W.W. Norton 2001); Brian D. Taylor and Roxana Botea, "Tilly

institutions in post-conflict states are critical for future political development, the likelihood of renewed armed conflict, and the role of the military in the emerging state. Understanding which factors influence institutional outcomes will help states and international organizations make better informed policy decisions during disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration processes as well as security sector reform initiatives common to post-conflict environments.

### **Methodological Advances**

Future research will benefit from new methodological tools to further evaluate a narratives argument. My dissertation theory is portable to other contexts and, when combined with new methodological advancements in data collection, it will provide insight into related research agendas. For example, in other research I expand on my dissertation theory and use insurgent rhetoric to generate quantitative measures for how militant groups frame their political goals and which actors constitute legitimate targets for violence. The measures use narratives to capture dynamic identity change and how groups understand events in conflict. The study will lead to a better understanding of how actors actually use violence during internal armed conflict.<sup>690</sup> Scholars can use new tools to generate quantitative measures for conflict frames and targeting policies to examine intra-movement contests over identity and how ideational and relational variables influence outcomes like cooperation, alliance formation, and violent action.

Future work on the Peru case will benefit from automated data collection techniques and might capture changing Sendero Luminoso narratives through key speeches by Abimael Guzmán to identify new interpretations of events and relationships. For example, Sendero Luminoso

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Tally: War-Making and State-Making in the Contemporary Third World.” *International Studies Review*. 10/1 (2008), pp. 27-56.

<sup>690</sup> For example see Michael Gabbay and Ashley Thirkill-Mackelprang, “Insurgent Operational Claims and Networks.” Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, September 2-5, 2010; Michael Gabbay, Zane Kelly, and Steven T. Zech, “Ideology, Identity, and Militant Group Networks in Iraq.” *Working Paper*.

viewed religion and drug traffickers differently over time. The movement had official political magazine that provide details about changing Sendero narratives. The military published similar magazines and will provide useful information to expand the scope of the study.

Militants, state security forces, and civilians used narratives to bring meaning to their worlds. Humans use narratives to interpret events and to define relationships with others. In extreme cases narratives contribute to some of history's greatest atrocities and acts of barbarism. Alternatively, stories can help unite populations to achieve noble goals. José Carlos Mariátegui, the founder of both the Socialist Party and Communist Party of Peru, made significant intellectual contributions to Abimael Guzmán's revolutionary ideology. In 1925 Mariátegui wrote, "The force of revolutionaries is not in their scholarship; it is in their faith, in their passion, in their will. It is a religious, mystical, spiritual force. It is the force of the Myth."<sup>691</sup> The expression of ideas is a powerful force that Guzmán used to expand revolutionary violence. I am sure he never expected civilian counter-narratives to hold the same powerful force as towns and villages in rural Ayacucho resisted and defeated the revolutionary movement.

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<sup>691</sup> Quoted in Simon Strong, *Shining Path: The World's Deadliest Revolutionary Force* (London: HarperCollins Publisher 1992).