Sons of the Soil, Immigrants and Civil War

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This is a draft chapter of a book in progress. It assumes the reader is acquainted with the cross-sectional results and theory of earlier chapters. These results emphasize the importance of country poverty and slow economic growth as predictors of civil war. These are country-level variables. The only group-level variables that consistently come out as significant predictors are those associated with the geographical concentration of the group population and the inaccessibility of its terrain. Meanwhile, group grievances, such as economic inequality or cultural suppression, are poor predictors of civil war. In light of these findings, we developed a theoretical model of ethnic rebellion that was motivated by propitious conditions for insurgency rather than the existence of grievances. One purpose of this chapter is to make sense of the group concentration finding that is more consistent with an insurgency than a grievance model. The current version was redrafted on October 24, 2001. This is not for citation, but comments are welcome.

Populations that are concentrated regionally, who populate not only cities but the surrounding rural areas, and who constitute the predominant population in their region, are far more likely to be engaged in sustained rebellion against the state than dispersed or urban-based groups that have no regional base in which they are the predominant group demographically. For purposes of this chapter, groups whose ancestors lived in the region in which they now live, and who constitute the predominant population of that region, have a regional base. When groups that have a regional base face demographic pressure through internal migration, they become likely candidates for rebellion. We call these groups “sons of the soil” (Weiner 1978). Meanwhile, those minority groups whose ancestors arrived in the country since the nineteenth century will be called immigrants. Immigrants, we shall see, are not likely candidates for rebellion. Nor are internal migrants who settle in the regions populated by sons of the soil.

Our state-decade dataset includes all 124 civil wars fought throughout the world since 1945. Sixteen of them have been motivated, at least in part, by sons of soil insurgents. Possible cases of sons of soil insurrections in this dataset include the Chakma peoples in the Chittagong Hills of Bangladesh, the Nagas and other “tribals” in Northeast India, the Moros in the Philippines, the Tamils in the North and East in Sri Lanka, the Uighurs in Xinjiang province in China, a variety of ethnic minorities in Burma, the Sindhis against the Mohajirs around Karachi in Pakistan, the Bougainvilleans in Papua New Guinea, both the West Papuans and Achenese in Indonesia, and the Tuaregs in Mali. The estimated median and mean durations for sons of soil are 29 and 43 years, as compared to 6.2 and 9.2 for all the civil wars in the dataset. Therefore, these wars, while not ubiquitous, are certainly dangerous. This paper will explain why sons of the soil, but not the immigrants who settle in regions populated by ethnic others, are likely to be engaged in rebellion against the state. We will also suggest why these rebellions go on for so long.

1. See James Fearon “Why do Some Civil Wars Go on for a Very Long Time?” Paper presented at the World Bank, DECRG-sponsored conference, “Civil Wars and Post-Conflict Transition” at the University of California, Irvine, May 18-20, 2001. To avoid right censoring of continuing civil wars, Fearon used maximum likelihood to fit a Weibull distribution to the data, and then used the estimated parameters to produce estimates of median and mean duration.
To give a clearer picture of the relationship of sons of soil to rebellion, we rely on our enhanced version of the Minorities at Risk (MAR) data set and the complementary narratives provided at the project’s web site. The MAR(SU) dataset allows us to portray group residence and its propensity to rebellion in a variety of ways. First, it distinguishes groups that migrated to their present country of residence since 1800 (n=50), from those groups whose ancestors lived in their current population centers pre-1800 (n=298). A second way to look at the relationship of residence and rebellion is to ask the degree to which the group is concentrated in a single region. We ask if there is a spatially contiguous region, larger than an urban area, that is part of the country, in which a substantial fraction (25 percent or more) of the group resides and in which the group constitutes the predominant proportion of the population. If the answer is yes, we consider the group to have a “regional base.” A third way to examine the relationship of residence and rebellion is to take those groups that have a regional base, and separate out those that faced, according to MAR coders, competition for vacant land in the 1980s. If there were such competition, we categorize the concentrated group as “sons of the soil.” Table 1 provides comparative means on maximum rebellion scores for groups differentiated by the time in which they arrived in the country and whether they have a regional base. In a regression with maximum rebellion of the group since 1980 as the dependent variable, with country wealth controlled for, each of these variables is independently significant (See Table 2). Long-term connection with the land, high levels of geographic concentration, and competition with other groups for vacant land within the concentrated areas are all are linked to a propensity to rebel.

Table 1
Residence and Rebellion
Mean Maximum Rebellion Scores by Category of Residence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Has the Group Been in the Country Since 1800?</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(n=248)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(n=50)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does the Group have a Regional Base?</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(n=276)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(n=123)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. The unit of analysis in the MAR dataset, originally developed by Ted Gurr and associates at the University of Maryland, is group/country. For the original data set and the commentaries on particular groups, see http://www.bsos.umd.edu/cidcm/mar/. We retain the MAR’s 8-point ordinal scale of group rebellion, going from 0=”None Reported” to 7=”Protracted Civil War.” Our criterion for “significant rebellion” is having a score on the MAR rebellion index of at least “4” for any five-year period. A score of “4” is reached when, according to coders, there is “small-scale guerrilla activity.” While we have left intact MAR specifications of the rebellion score (our dependent variable), under grants from the NSF and the Carnegie Corporation, we have made substantial changes to the case list (to overcome problems of selection bias) of the MAR. We have also recoded or respecified our principal independent variables, including the group concentration variables described in this paper. When referring specifically to our version of MAR, we will label it MAR(SU). Our version includes 407 ethnic, religious, regional, and racial groups from 127 different countries. We are here using an in-progress MAR(SU) dataset “marwork11.dta” Elsewhere, we will explain our variable specifications; later, we will make our data generally available.

3. Our coders were given the following instructions. The concept of a regional base may be operationalized mathematically as follows:

Let: 

- \( m_r \) = minority population in region \( r \)
- \( m_c \) = minority population in country \( c \)
- \( M_r \) = majority population in region \( r \)
- \( M_c \) = majority population in country \( c \)

Definition: Minority \( m \) has a regional base in region \( r \) of country \( c \) iff \( m_r/m_c >> M_r/M_c \) and \( m_r/m_c > .25 \). (”>>” means "is substantially greater than").


For Groups with a Regional Base, Has the Group Faced Competition for Vacant Land in the 1980s?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>3.3</th>
<th>2.3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(n=34)</td>
<td>(n=203)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes for Table 1: (a) Mean rebellion scores for the first two rows are computed as maximum scores for rebellion for each five-year period since 1945; for the final row, because demographic competition data go back only to 1980, the rebellion scores are the maximum since 1980. (b) In the dataset, the variable for time in country is “traditn”; the variable for concentration is “GC2”; the variable for demographic competition is “dmcomp8”.

Table 2
Resistance and Rebellion (II)
OLS Regression on Maximum Rebellion Since 1980

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Variables:</th>
<th>Coefficient</th>
<th>S.E.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is Group Regionally Dispersed? (dummy variable)</td>
<td>-.788</td>
<td>.32**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Was Group In the Country in 1800? (dummy variable)</td>
<td>1.27</td>
<td>.39**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did Group Face Competition for Vacant Land since 1980? (dummy variable)</td>
<td>.416</td>
<td>.18**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control: log GDP in 1980</td>
<td>-.905</td>
<td>.15**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>9.056</td>
<td>.151**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

No. of Observations: 291; R-squared .217

Note for Table 2: (a) Stata command-- reg maxreb80 GC2 ancestral dmcomp8 lgdp80en; (b)**=p<.01

These data are consistent with findings from complementary studies of inter-state conflict, where it has been reported that territorial disputes, in comparison with other issues such as policy or regime type, are far more likely to escalate into warfare. And as would be expected from this finding, a significantly higher percentage of actual interstate wars are associated with territorial disputes than with any other type of issue (Vazquez and Henehan 2001).

The importance of territory for concentrated populations and the perceived threat to those populations by government-induced settlement policies would appear to support a grievance-based explanation for any political or military mobilization by groups that face territorial encroachments. Several analysts have already developed explanations linking sacral views of ancestral homelands to the susceptibility of war should those homelands ever become threatened by immigration (Toft dissertation, Roy 1997, Huth 1996). Vazquez is less willing to attribute his results to the hard-wired territorial nature of vertebrates as suggested by popular classics such as Ardrey (1966). After all, he points out, warfare is too rare a phenomenon to be the result of some innate human drive. Instead Vazquez assumes that humans are genetically or culturally disposed to aggression over territory, and suggests that this disposition leads to both the creation of territorially bounded states and incendiary conflicts over their boundaries (Vazquez, UCSD paper, March 2001). From these works we may infer an explanation for the relationship of geographic concentration of ethnic groups and the likelihood of civil war -- namely, that territorial encroachment by a state on a regional population is a supreme grievance that makes rebellious mobilization more probable. Since the costs of these territorial disputes are often far higher than any calculation of the economic or strategic worth of the land in dispute, these grievance theories rely on
psychological rather than rational approaches to war. Territory thus appears as an exception to our game-theoretically based “insurgency” model of rebellion.

In this chapter, we argue that our basic model of insurgency can help us to account for the powerful cross sectional finding that regional concentration is associated with higher likelihood of rebellion, and the summary analysis above that differentiates the susceptibility of sons of the soil and immigrants to rebellion. To develop this argument, we suggest that regional concentration has a characteristic akin to what we called “rough terrain.” For a state to identify rebels in a sea of their ethnic kin requires them to have good information about this population, and who among them are loyal citizens of the state. A regionally concentrated population is therefore like a minefield for a state, as its agents are subject to ambush and treason in seeking to establish order in a potentially rebellious region. At the same time, a regionally concentrated population is a boon to rebels, as they have easier access to food (available from the farms in the rural areas of their homeland), sufficient space for arms caches, and with high levels of information about the activities of the local population (relative to that of the state), an ability to monitor that population to assure themselves local support. Urban populations can secretly denounce rebels of their own ethnic group to authorities and avoid punishment for it; in the rural zones of regional bases, however, those who denounce rebels to authorities are more easily traced by rebel leaders. That rural populations cannot without a high probability of punishment denounce rebels who are fighting in their name helps explain why a regionally concentrated population with a rural base gives a strategic advantage to rebels.

Meanwhile, immigrant populations live in what is akin to easy terrain. Without a rural base, immigrant rebels face formidable problems in sustaining a rebellion. Insurgents without a regional concentration in a rural homeland will find it difficult to hide from state forces. Furthermore, urban migrants tend to come as individuals, not as communities, and therefore seek individual solutions to political and economic problems they face, such as making private deals for protection with friends or political patrons in the autochthonous group. Rebels from an immigrant group, therefore, will not easily get social support from noncombatants who are ethnic brethren. Most important, migrants often have, compared to the autochthonous population, a relatively cheap alternative to war: viz., exit to their own home area. Among urban immigrant populations, people have transferable skills lowering the costs of exit. This is especially the case for trading communities, the one group of migrants that tends to have dense social networks in the country of residence. If traders face pogroms, they tend to use their networks and their considerable skills to resettle overseas rather than to arm against their assailants.

Our insurgency model shows why sons of the soil far more so than immigrants are likely to be engaged in sustained rebellion against the state, and this is supported in our cross-sectional analysis. But neither of these approaches provides the mechanisms through which rebellion is fostered among sons of the soil, but constrained for descendents of migrants. The mechanisms can best be revealed through the telling of a coherent narrative linking migration to rebellion by the autochthonous population. This chapter will provide a type of “analytic narrative” (Bates et al, 1998) to put flesh to the theoretic and statistical analyses already presented.

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4 See Barbara Walter (2001) “Explaining the Intractability of Territorial Conflict”, unpublished manuscript, UCSD. Walter presents a commitment problem model to account for the incendiary character of territorial disputes. But her argument works for any sort of ethnic rebellion, and doesn’t help distinguish ethnic groups with regional bases from those without such bases. The former are more likely to be engaged in rebellion. Here we seek to explain why.
In this chapter, we will in section 1 further analyze the MAR data to compare sons of the soil with immigrants, and both to identify patterns and to address anomalies. In section 2, we provide a narrative of sons of the soil in Sri Lanka, as a preface to an elaboration of the general strategic logic faced by both the state and the sons of the soil. In section 3, we present the strategic logic by which sons of the soil (but not immigrants) fight ethnic wars against the state. As we trace the path of play, we give examples from other cases, to complement the Sri Lankan narrative. We also show why alternative paths are not strategically attractive for either party. Finally, in section 4 we will summarize our findings and conclude.

I. Some Patterns Derived from the MAR(SU) Dataset

In the MAR synopses of the particular cases (with our own interpretations of cases based on secondary source readings), we noted that preceding violence in many cases, there was evidence of migrants (either supported by the state, permitted by the state, or induced by state policy) upsetting the ethnic balance of the region. Going back to the dataset with this insight, we identified thirty-one groups that lived in the country of present residence since 1800, had a regional base, and faced demographic competition for vacant land in the 1980s. Eighteen (or 58%) of these groups that we call sons of the soil have been in significant rebellion against the state since 1980; meanwhile only 28% of the groups that do not meet these conditions have been in significant rebellion against the state since 1980.

Ten of the thirty-one cases of sons of the soil are Asian. They include Tripuras, Bodos, and Assamese in India, Acehnese in Indonesia, Chittagong Hill Tribes in Bangladesh, Malay-Muslims in Thailand, Montagnards in Vietnam, Moros in Philippines, and Sri Lankan Tamils in Sri Lanka. In the ten Asian cases, all have been in rebellion against the state since 1945, and all but the Montagnards have been in rebellion against the state since 1980. (In our civil war dataset as reported in Fearon 2001, 11 of the 16 sons of soil civil wars are in Asia). The following table (Table 3), focusing on comparative regional population densities (data are from 1990, with means computed for all countries in each region) show extreme population pressures in Asia, and give a demographic context for why sons of the soil rebellions are most prevalent there. The average population density of the Asian cases is two and a half times the mean of all cases.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Population Density</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Asia</td>
<td>304</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Democracies</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin America</td>
<td>053</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-Saharan Africa</td>
<td>061</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Africa / Middle East</td>
<td>089</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern Europe and former Soviet Union</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All cases</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
An examination of rebellions inside the former Soviet Union (Table 4) shows that the phenomenon that we are investigating here goes beyond the Asian experience. The four USSR cases that had significant rebellions -- mostly in the years following World War II -- can be understood with a juxtaposition of these cases with the other Union Republics as analyzed by Kaiser (1994). These cases are: Estonians, Latvians, Lithuanians, and Ukrainians. All of these cases are republican insurgencies organized to prevent the (re)-imposition of Soviet rule in what once were (at least in part) sovereign republics. But part of what drove these rebellions is massive Russian settlement into nationality-based states. The values in the column listing the percent of increase of Russians in the population from 1939-59 that are marked by an asterisk signal those republics with high rebellion scores in the early postwar period. They represent four of the five largest population increases of Russians in the republics in the period from before to shortly after World War II. These data do not show that population pressures in these cases played a decisive role in fostering the wars. Nor are these cases precisely that of sons of soil, because Russian migration into the Union Republics was largely to urban areas for industrial employment. But the general pattern of autochthonous populations responding to state supported migration with rebellion may well have relevance to cases beyond Asia.

Table 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Republic</th>
<th>1939 % Titular</th>
<th>1959 % Titular</th>
<th>Russian % increase 39-59</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ukraine</td>
<td>73.5</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>0.625*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belorussia</td>
<td>82.9</td>
<td>81.1</td>
<td>0.907</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>61.4</td>
<td>64.3</td>
<td>0.161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armenia</td>
<td>82.8</td>
<td>88.0</td>
<td>-0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Azerbaijan</td>
<td>58.4</td>
<td>67.5</td>
<td>-0.176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kazakhstan</td>
<td>38.2</td>
<td>60.9</td>
<td>0.060</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uzbekistan</td>
<td>64.4</td>
<td>62.1</td>
<td>0.174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkmenistan</td>
<td>59.2</td>
<td>60.9</td>
<td>-0.070</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tajikistan</td>
<td>59.6</td>
<td>53.1</td>
<td>0.462</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kyrgyzistan</td>
<td>51.7</td>
<td>40.5</td>
<td>0.452</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estonia</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>74.6</td>
<td>3.188*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latvia</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>62.2</td>
<td>1.956*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lithuania</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>79.3</td>
<td>2.269*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moldova</td>
<td>28.5</td>
<td>65.4</td>
<td>0.311</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

But not all cases of sons of the soil led to rebellion. There are thirteen cases in the dataset in which there are sons of the soil that did not have a significant rebellion since 1980. Examining this set of anomalous cases helps us understand better the conditions under which the general pattern holds. First, there were six cases where the sons of the soil worked in premodern economies and were faced by migration of economically advanced settlers, who had such technical superiority that rebellion was not feasible. This subset of sons of the soil are made up of groups that were not exposed to international
trade and world religions until the 19th century, and their history vis-à-vis state builders is different from sons of the soil who were for centuries exposed to the currents of international trade, technologies and religions. Examples of such groups in our data are the San Bushmen in Botswana, the Indigenous Peoples in Argentina, Honduras and Panama, and the Native Hawaiians in the USA. When these aboriginal populations face migration and pressure on their land from settlers coming from industrial societies, they are usually not able to rebel -- except in alliance with non-autochthonous groups mobilizing them in the name of a non-ethnic based rebellion (FARC, Sendero Luminoso, and Zapatistas, all in Latin America). This situation has perplexed many observers. Weiner quotes Christoph von Furer-Haimendorf in his forward to Suresh Singh The Dust-Storm and the Hanging Mist: Story of Birsa Munda and His Movement in Chota Nagpur: “anyone with first hand experience of conditions in areas where aboriginals are subject to exploitation by more advanced populations must be surprised not by the occurrence of uprisings, but rather by the infrequency of violent action on the part of aboriginals deprived of the ancestral lands and the freedom they enjoyed before their contact with populations superior in economic and political power.”

Chota Nagpur is in southern Bihar, with 11 million population, on a plateau, much of it jungle and forest, and a long history of “tribal” populations living there. In 1906 a Parsi businessman opened the Tata Iron and Steel Co, which became the major producer of steel in India. Population and development mushroomed. But for all the growth, it was the migrants to Chota Nagpur (northern Biharis and Bengalis especially) and not the tribals who gained. About one-third of the tribes migrated to Assam (and elsewhere) largely as tea pickers, and by 1961, the percent of tribals in Chota Nagpur was down to 33.9%. The tribals who did not escape into the hills and jungles were in large part incorporated by the Indo-Aryans, and adopted local mores and adapted the caste system as well. Most have become largely Hindu-ized in religion and language. They were mostly rice farmers, but over the past centuries, their land was gradually “bought” from them, despite the attempt by the British in the Chota Nagpur Tenancy Act in 1908 to delimit tribal sales of land, or use of land as collateral for loans.

Tribal protest, as with many of the indigenous peoples in the industrialized world, occurred in the early period of occupation. In Chota Nagpur, violence goes back to the Kol insurrection when the local tax collectors (diku thikadars) were defended by the troops of the East India Company. In 1857 another revolt took place against landlords. The Sardar movement in the 1880s was an anti-diku agitation. In 1899 the Birsa Munda rebellion, led by a religious visionary, called for open rebellion against the British and nontribal landowners. A mission house was attacked on Christmas day. A few policemen were killed by bows and arrows, but hundreds of the rebels were massacred by guns. From 1915 through the 1920s, the Tana Bhagat movement among the Oraons was directed against the landowners, but with little violence (Weiner 1977, 145-52). By then, the capacity of the autochthonous populations to mount a serious attack on the non-autochthonous civilization was miniscule. This story has a general lesson. Indigenous populations of sons of the soil no longer in the post World War II world have the resources to rebel against the forces of a modern state.

To be sure, there are cases in the dataset (e.g. the Chittagong Hills Peoples of Pakistan) where tribal peoples mount sustained rebellions against the state. But this is rare. It seems a more general phenomenon that in the face of modern settlers, indigenous populations put up heroic and fruitless battles (in the mode of the decimation of the Inca armies of scores of thousands by Pizarro’s team of less than 200 men), and remain quiescent for the long future.

Several other cases of non-rebellion among sons of the soil stand out as anomalies. One had a recent rebellion crushed by the state (the Montagnards in Vietnam) and its capacity for further rebellion was weakened. Another is today mounting a rebellion that in future codings will classify it as a significant rebellion (the Palestinians in Israel). There are other cases not so easily explained. But the small set of anomalies should not take eyes away from the clear pattern of rebellion by sons of the soil.

Let us now turn to the other side of the comparison. Migrants, the principal cause of demographic stress, do not fight ethnic wars against the state. In the narratives, there were forty-five groups described as migrants to their present home, with only one having a significant rebellion. Examples of migrants who were never engaged in rebellion against the state include Muslims in France, Roma in many countries, foreign workers in Switzerland, Lezgins in Azerbaijan, Turks in Bulgaria, Russians in the states of the former Soviet Union, Biharis in Bangladesh, Lhotshampas in Bhutan, Vietnamese in Cambodia, Chinese in Indonesia, Malays in Singapore, Mainlanders in Taiwain, Haitians in the Dominican Republic, Antillian Blacks in Panama, and Chinese in Panama. The one case where such a migrant group had a significant rebellion is that of the Mohajirs in Pakistan. This is an interesting anomaly, one that reinforces the general pattern if looked at closely, as we do later. Basically the peculiar nature of their migration (similar to the Zionists in post-partition Jerusalem, whose rebellion against the British is not included in the data set), the Mohajirs claimed they were autochthonous in the newly created Pakistan. Seeing themselves as sons of the soil, they acted as if they were the owners of the Karachi region.

The fact that migrants do not engage in significant rebellions against the state does not imply that they are politically quiescent. While our data show (see Table 5) that rebellion is more far more likely for the long-settled populations, immigrants and autochthonous have more equal, but somewhat lower, rates of communal conflict and protest. (While there is a significant bivariate correlation between long-standing residence and communal conflict, there is no relationship at all between long-standing residence and protest). We therefore see the basis for our comparison between “Sons of the Soil” (those more likely to be rebellious against the state than immigrants) vs. “Newcomers to the Soil” (low rebellion but nearly equal in political protest).

Table 5

Mean Scores on Protest, Communal Conflict, and Rebellion at Different Levels of Tradition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Maximum Values Since 1980</th>
<th>REBELLION</th>
<th>COMMUNAL CONFLICT</th>
<th>PROTEST</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-1800 Group is within state</td>
<td>2.3 (n=248)</td>
<td>2.5 (n=219)</td>
<td>2.9 (n=245)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group arrives after 1800</td>
<td>.66 (n=50)</td>
<td>1.7 (n=47)</td>
<td>2.6 (n=50)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. Other sons of the soil who haven’t rebelled include five cases from East Africa (the Maasais, Rendille/Borana, and Turkana/Pokot in Kenya; the Karamojong and Kanjo/Amba in Uganda) for which we have no special explanation. There is also the case of the Russians in Kazakhstan, who barely qualify as having a demographic competition for vacant land with the Kazakhs, and are therefore not really an anomaly.
### CORRELATION with PERIOD OF ARRIVAL (significance)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>.24</th>
<th>.13</th>
<th>.07</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.00)</td>
<td>(.03)</td>
<td>(.22)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In marwork11.dta, these variables are: ancestral, maxreb80, mxcomco80, mxpro80

Why are autochthonous populations more likely to rebel than immigrants? It cannot be because of a general acceptance of the status quo, for immigrants are almost equally likely to be engaged in political protest. And why do sons of the soil (i.e. autochthonous populations facing demographic stress) more so than those autochthonous populations not facing demographic stress engage in rebellion? To answer these questions, we now look at an illustrative case to draw out some general principles.

### II. The Sri Lankan Tamils as an Illustrative Case

Sri Lanka, with a population today of about twenty million, received independence from the UK in 1947. The two largest ethnic groups are the Sinhalese, with 74 percent of the population, and the Tamils, with 19 percent. The Tamils are divided between the Sri Lanka Tamils, those from the northeast, who see themselves as indigenous to the island (encompassing about 13 percent of the population), and the Indian Tamils, who arrived as indentured servants to the central plantations in the nineteenth century (encompassing about 6 percent of the population).

The Sri Lankan Tamils were far better educated in British schools than were the Sinhalese, and Tamils dominated both the higher civil service in the capital Colombo as well as in the business world. In 1956, amidst an economic recession, the upstart Sri Lankan Freedom Party (SLFP) defeated the old-guard United National Party (UNP) in large part by blaming the Tamils for getting the best jobs. Shortly after its victory, the new government presented parliament with the Official Language Act, which declared Sinhala the one official language. The act was passed and immediately caused a reaction among Tamils, who perceived their language, culture, and economic position to be under attack. The passage of the Official Language Act induced a satyagraha (nonviolent protest) among Tamils that was answered with violent retributions on the streets by Sinhalese. Concerned with the violence, Prime Minister S.V.R.D. Bandaranaike negotiated with S.J.V. Chelvanayakam, the leader of the Tamil-dominated Federal Party, and agreed to a wide measure of Tamil autonomy in the Northern and Eastern provinces. It also provided for the use of the Tamil language in administrative matters.

But waves of violent rioting continued. In May 1958, a rumor that a Tamil had killed a Sinhalese sparked off nationwide communal riots. Hundreds of people, mostly Tamils, died. The government declare a state of emergency and forcibly relocated more than 25,000 Tamil refugees from Sinhalese areas to Tamil areas in the north. During the 1977 elections, many Tamil youths engaged in extraparliamentary and sometimes violent measures in their bid for a separate state. These measures precipitated a Sinhalese backlash. A rumor that Sinhalese policemen had died at the hands of Tamil terrorists, combined with other rumors of alleged anti-Sinhalese statements made by Tamil politicians, sparked brutal communal rioting that engulfed the island. In June 1981, local elections were held in the north to elect members of district development councils. The TULF (Tamil United Liberation Front, an umbrella party that included the Federal Party) decided to participate. Extremists within the separatist

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movement, however, adamantly opposed working within the existing political framework. They viewed participation in the elections as compromising the objective of a separate state. Shortly before the elections, the leading candidate of the UNP was assassinated as he left a political rally. Sporadic communal violence persisted over the following three months. In July 1983, the most savage communal riots in Sri Lanka's history erupted. Government estimates put the death toll at 400--mostly Tamils. Some 150,000 Tamils fled the island, many across the Palk Straight into the Indian state of Tamil Nadu. The riots began in retaliation for an ambush of an army patrol in the north that left thirteen Sinhalese soldiers dead. The army was reputed to have killed sixty Tamil civilians in Jaffna, but most of the violence occurred in Colombo, where Sinhalese mobs destroyed Tamil shops. More than any previous ethnic riot on the island, the 1983 riots were marked by their highly organized mob violence. Sinhalese rioters in Colombo used voter lists containing home addresses to make precise attacks on the Tamil community. From Colombo, the anti-Tamil violence fanned out to the entire island.

The rising level of violence in 1983 was made possible by Prime Minister of India Indira Gandhi’s new support of the Tamil liberation cause (motivated in large part by his desire to win political favor in Tamil Nadu, a crucial state for Congress’s electoral fortunes). Fear of the consequences of a civil war, the Sri Lankan government passed an amendment to the Constitution banning public appeals in favor of separatism. All sixteen TULF members of parliament were expelled for refusing to recite the necessary loyalty oath. By this time, the government was in full-scale war with the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), the guerrilla faction that outlasted its many competitors.

Our country year dataset indicates 1983 as the start of the civil war, which continues as of today’s writing (2001). Similarly with the MAR dataset. In the early 1970s, the MAR coders ranked the Sri Lankan Tamil rebellion score as a “1” reflecting “sporadic terrorism.” By the late 1970s, the score was “2”, reflecting “campaigns of terrorism”. But in 1983, the rebellion score jumped to the highest level (a “7”), reflecting “protracted civil war.” The war has claimed the lives of 58,000 Sri Lankans, and is therefore one of the longest and most brutal civil wars in our dataset. Yet, as the MAR data make clear, this is not a war between all Tamils against the Sri Lankan state. The Indian Tamils have not participated at all in the war for a Tamil homeland in Sri Lanka. Their MAR rebellion scores have remained throughout the period at zero. While many of them have been victims of Sinhalese communal attacks, they have not been participants in the civil war.

Many factors help account for the Sri Lankan Tamil rebellion, and we will elsewhere highlight the crucial role of India in 1983 in helping to transform what had been a low level rebellion into a major civil war. But a less understood element in the conditions that led to war was the “sons of the soil” dynamic, which requires a retelling of the narrative.

We begin this story in 1949, when the newly independent government of Sri Lanka created the Gal Oya Development Board, for the purpose of settling landless peasants into this fertile area of the Eastern Province. At first, most of the migration was by Tamils and Muslims from poorer areas of the province. But then came a group of “Kandyan” Sinhalese villagers from the Central Province, and then mostly Sinhalese from other provinces. These Sinhalese received the better land (Tambiah 1996, 83-94). S. J. V. Chelvanayagam warned in his inaugural address as Federal Party leader in 1949 that the Sri Lankan government’s resettlement policy was even more dangerous to the Tamil people than the proposed Sinhala-language policy (Tambiah 1996, 83-94).
The migration of Sinhalese into the Eastern Province activated new ethnic entrepreneurs among the Tamils. The sense of demographic threat combined with the fruits of modernity being grasped by the migrants enraged the autochthonous Tamils. So, in the aftermath of the Sinhala-only riot in Colombo in 1956 (in which there were 87 injuries but no deaths), the rioting spread to Eastern Province. In Batticaloa and Gal Oya, somewhere between 20 and 200 were killed. Prior to the June 11, 1956 riot, when the Official Language Act was still being debated, a Tamil burned a Sinhalese shop, and the shop owner shot three Tamils who were watching the shop burn. Tamils then went to the Batticaloa-Amparai road and stoned Gal Oya Board trucks. One of the truck drivers went to Amparai and reported that a Sinhalese girl had been raped by Tamils. This rumor was sufficient to induce general assaults on Tamils in Amparai. That night there were assaults by members of both groups against the other. The next day a rumor spread that a Tamil army was moving into the area, and this created a panic. By the third day, Tamil colonists in Gal Oya headed back to their home villages, and returned in large numbers with guns. In Tambiah’s reports of these riots, he notes that through it all the police force was ineffective, in large part because its members were afraid of intervening into the mobs (Tambiah 1996, 83-94).

Under demographic challenge, protest groups, parties, and self-protection (or provocation) militias began to form. In the Eastern Province, from the early periods of Sinhalese settlement, violence occurred in those divisions where Tamil-speaking people are in the majority and where Sinhalese settlements were established by the government or proposed by the government to be established. Areas that had formerly been Sinhala majority were largely free of violence. “Had the government targeted these Sinhalese-majority divisions,” Manogaran (1994, 116) argues, “rather than Tamil-majority divisions, for the establishment of Sinhalese settlements, the violence of the last two decades may have been avoided.” The threat of losing majority status in one’s homeland, he implies, drove at least some Tamils into direct action.

In the mixed population areas of the Eastern Province, riots, assaults and looting became the stuff of everyday life. Participating in these violent activities were Tamil irrigation workers, construction workers and truck drivers, along with IRC’s (Island Reconvicted Criminals). Tambiah notes that they might not have been directly concerned with the language issue; nor were they dispossessed of land, as these groups were relatively transient (Tambiah 1996, 83-94). These were merely violent incidents that are part of complex multiethnic space, and were complementary to the actions against settlers by outraged autochthonous populations.

These incidents, common to all complex societies but more likely when local militias have formed, raised tensions between the groups. They are usually set off by rumors (e.g. that one of their girls was raped by a member of the migrant community) or discriminatory policies from the political center (e.g. a language policy discriminating against the autochthonous population, or a plan to increase settlement schemes). They tend to become incendiary when rumor is connected to heavy drinking and high unemployment (non-planting season for rural folk). But these incidents and the concomitant riots don’t themselves constitute a civil war. They occur in many multi-ethnic situations. A violent incident and a riot is a “spark”, but it does not necessarily ignite the fire.

With the police in a precarious strategic position, unable to contain the riots, the government had to rely on its armed forces to assure security. In the late 1960s the government provocatively set up an Air Force farm at Morawewa in the Eastern Province, with a commanding position over the sea. More threateningly, all the Sri Lankan security forces built major camps and training academies in
Trincomalee, the largest commercial center of the east coast. The historic Fort Frederick houses one major base. There is another major camp and the Military Engineering College at Plantain Point. The buildings that housed the Sri Lanka Forest College at Monkey Bridge served to quarter another major camp of the Sri Lanka Army. There are innumerable smaller camps all over the district.

In assuring security to settlers, the government was giving license to settlers to provoke autochthonous Tamils, and providing rioting Tamils a clear set of new targets. From the time of the original Air Force farm, emboldened Sinhalese settlers and some Air Force personnel initiated small-scale attacks on local Tamils. Intimidated, the proportion of Tamils in the district population began falling. More Sinhalese were brought in under the Mahadivulweva (Periyavilankulam) scheme and their proportion rose to majority status in Trincomalee District, counting the near 10,000 military personnel, where they had been only a small minority a decade earlier. With the general violence in Sri Lanka of the 1980s, the gradual displacement of Tamils became a full-scale retreat. Tamil refugees escaped to the forests to the west and up north to the Jaffna peninsula, many joining rebel bands. And the rebel bands had easy targets in the state army personnel quartered in military camps.

Sri Lankan military camps in the Eastern Province were immensely provocative. Consider K.T. Pulendran, a future leader of the Tamil Tigers. He was from Palayootru, near Trincomalee, and was affected when his village was attacked by Sinhalese colonists in 1977 when the ashes of the TULF leader S.J.V. Chelvanayakam were brought to Trincomalee. These colonists would have been less bold had they not had assurance of protection from military personnel. The resulting incidents created refugees, some of them becoming leading guerrillas. Pulendran joined the LTTE and rose to become a local leader credited with the Habartana massacre of 1987. Prabakaran’s closest associate in the LTTE, Selan (born Charles Lucas Anthony) was, like Pulendran, from Trincomalee (Swamy 1994, xxx). Sri Lankan military camps in Tamil-populated areas emboldened settlers, created guerrillas, and also set up state army personnel as targets for Tamil insurgents.

Concern for the interests of the settlers fed government policy in a way that perpetuated the civil war. In September, 1987, violence broke out in Eastern Province where Sinhalese and Muslim settlers were protesting the provisional merger of the Northern and Eastern provinces. They recognized that because the Northern Province was overwhelmingly Tamil, a merger of the two provinces would result in their minority status. Bandaranaike’s then-opposition SLFP skillfully capitalized on this atmosphere of panic, allying itself with influential Buddhist monks, who together mounted a well publicized campaign against the government’s “betrayal” of the non-Tamil population of the Eastern Province. No incumbent government could survive without providing security to the settlers. Protection of the settlers could only be assured with military participation, but military participation escalates vigilante action by sons of the soil into ethnic rebellion.

The Sri Lankan government continued to support Sinhala settlement in Tamil areas even though its officials understood its incendiary implications. A major reason for this is that it was popular among land-hungry southerners; a second reason is that it made sense for economic development. Thus there was an official plan in the mid-1980s to settle 30,000 Sinhalese in the dry zone of Northern Province, giving each settler land and funds to build a house and each community armed protection in the form of rifles and machine guns. Tamil spokesmen accused the government of promoting a new form of

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"colonialism." The government of Prime Minister Jayewardene, which was oriented mostly toward economic development and structural adjustment, asserted that no part of the island could legitimately be considered an ethnic homeland and thus closed to settlement from outside, especially if it were done in the name of development.

The opportunity for bands of Tamil protesters to attack army personnel, and the need for the use of army personnel to protect the migrants, however, was a formula for escalation. Tamil insurgent killing of Sri Lankan soldiers invited indiscriminate reprisals. But military actions to avenge rebel killings created new motivations for guerrilla attacks on the army. To be sure, full-scale escalation only occurred after Indian intervention. However, the processes of significant rebellion were hastened by the spiral of violence that was induced by the provocative settlement schemes, the violent incidents that could not be cauterized by the local police, the protection of settlers through the placement of military camps near the settlements, the incentives provided by the military protection for settlers to provoke the autochthonous populations, and the easy targets for insurgents provided by the military stationed in local camps.

III. Generalizing the Narrative

We propose to show that the features highlighted in the case of the Sri Lankan Tamils are not unique to Sri Lanka. In this section, we seek to generalize the logic by going down a game tree, as illustrated in Figure 1. For each node in this tree, we will draw upon other cases to illustrate the generality of the sons of the soil dynamic.

The game tree is an analytic representation of the Sri Lankan sons of the soil narrative. At the top node, the state decides whether to induce migration to a sparsely populated region, or whether to allow that region to remain outside of the (hoped for) modern economy and modern state. If the state induces such a migration, potential rebel leaders among the autochthonous population need to assess their ability to recruit a following. If their assessment is positive, they can provoke a series of incidents that will look like street level crime or gang related violence. In fact, insurgent provocation is hardly necessary, as multi-ethnic communities generate endogenously low level violence (Fearon and Laitin 1996). At this point, the police come into play, and they need either to monitor this sort of violence so that it doesn’t spiral into communal warfare, or they can add fuel to the fire by closing their collective eyes to that violence. If the police are ineffective, the army becomes the last line of defense to maintain order. The state can support either the overall position of the autochthonous, whereupon the defenseless immigrants can either return to their home areas or face uncontrolled pogroms from members of the autochthonous population. If the state favors the interests of the immigrants (e.g. by attacking rebels or even by remaining neutral and making sure that all residents’ security is protected), the autochthonous can either accept their losses or challenge the forces of the state, who are now allied with the immigrants. In such cases, the likelihood that members of the autochthonous gangs (or militias) will kill soldiers is high; and if this happens, the army is likely to respond with indiscriminate violence against the autochthonous population, which becomes the first salvo in an escalating ethnic rebellion against the state.
Tracing the Path of Play

State chooses whether to induce migration

Migrants from within the country settle in a new area, often induced by state policy, where there is a sparse autochthonous population. The population is ethnically homogeneous, distinct from the migrants, and distinct as well from the dominant groups of the country (and in our cases, the migrants are usually from the dominant groups of the country). These migration patterns are associated with low GNP countries, as they are the result of schemes designed to reduce extreme poverty in overpopulated areas, and to develop regions that are not part of the modern economy. This is fundamentally rural-to-rural migration rather than rural-to-urban migration. This violence-inducing sequence is virtually never put in motion in rich states, where migrations tend to be of the latter type.

In the Sindh province of Pakistan, the Partition was the exogenous factor (rather than state policy) that induced massive migrations. In 1947, 95 per cent of the population was Sindhi; by 1951, according to the population census, 50 per cent of the urban population in Sindh was made up of those whose mother tongue was Urdu (and called Mohajirs); this proportion reached 80 per cent in Karachi and 66 per cent in Hyderabad. These migrants also took over the property of the Hindus who had fled to India. But state policy quickly entered the equation as early as July 1948 when the Governor General of Pakistan ordered the separation from Sindh of Karachi (and the surrounding district), the seat of its provincial government, turning Karachi into a separate federal area under the jurisdiction of the central government. This also meant a considerable financial loss for Sindh, since "through the acquisition of Karachi by the centre, Sindh was deprived of its most highly productive area from the point of view of its revenue yielding capacity..." As a result, the urban-rural divide in terms of development widened, with Karachi receiving, almost exclusively, infrastructural support as well as new investment in industry and the manufacturing sectors, and rural Sindh being almost entirely ignored. The abstraction of a centre dominated by Punjabis was now literally brought home to the Sindhis in the form of Punjabi landholders who were occupying a substantial portion of the choicest lands in Sindh (Rashid and Shahhed 1993). But the Partition and its after-effects was not the entire story of migration into the Sindh. As with the case of Gal Oya in Sri Lanka, the Punjabis, when they ruled Pakistan in alliance with the Mohajirs, pushed a Kalabagh dam project that diverted water from the Indus away from Sindhi agricultural lands, and opened up the hinterland to migrant farmers (Tambiah 1996, 168). The Sindhis thus began to see themselves as sons of the soil, demographically challenged by Mohajirs and Punjabis.

India has some similar cases. Once pacified by the British in the 1820s, Assam became a center for settlers from many other states, but mostly Bengal, as Assam was part of the Bengal province until 1874 (Weiner 1978, 80). In the Brahmaputra Valley there are large migrant tea plantations, with a mostly Bihari workforce. In the 1830s, the Governor General Lord William Bentinck worked to bring tea to Assam, and it became a booming business, but lack of labor was the key drawback. The indigenous population was decimated by the aftershocks of the Burmese invasions and infectious disease from contact with the British; besides the valley Assamese did not want to work in the jungles. Getting workers proved difficult, until British contractors recruited indigent tribesmen from the hill areas of southern Bihar, called Chota Nagpur. By 1921, the census estimated that tea migrants and their descendents were 1.3 million, about 17% of the state’s population. British colonial officials found the local high-ranking Ahom officials unreliable for management of the estates, in part because Ahomese never maintained written records. Thus the British trained Bengali officers to work in Assam, and their
descendants, educated in British schools, became the first generation of professionals in Assam. These Bengalis convinced the British that Assamese was a poor dialect of Bengali, so the latter became official standard (until 1871, when an American missionary group persuaded the British to give Assamese official status). With Bengali the official language, young Bengalis flooded Assam in search of middle class jobs. To make matters even worse for the autochthonous, when the Muslim League got control over the state government in 1936, it pushed hard for more immigration to assure themselves of a Muslim majority (Chattopadhyay 1990, 22). Muslim Bengalis turned Assamese into sons of the soil.

Changed boundaries can turn migrants into locals, unnerving the locals. Hyderabad in the Telugu speaking area of India was once a Mughal governing center, and after independence within Hyderabad state a policy administered by autochthonous Telanganas sent non-mulkis (i.e. non-locals) back to their respective states. But when Hyderabad became the capital of an enlarged Andhra State, government officials from outside were transferred within, and “Andhra colonies” sprung up in the city. In 1961, a quarter of the population were Andhra migrants, and most of them were well educated, and in government service. Political power went to the Andhras as well, as the first chief minister was Andhra, as was the leader of the ruling Congress, and most of the portfolios were in Andhra hands. Here a change in boundaries induced a flood of Andhras into Hyderabad, and the locals, the Telanganas (who are of the same nationality group), defined themselves in reference to those Andhras as sons of the soil.

On the island of Mindanao in the Philippines, the Moros (who constitute 13 linguistic groups) were once the majority; by 1980, they were only about 23% of the island’s population. This goes back to the colonial period, as the Spanish relocated Christian Filipinos from the overcrowded and poorer islands in the north to the unpopulated frontier of Mindanao. This continued under the American administration. In the Public Land Act of 1919, the state took control over all public land, and thus Moro “ancestral land” was ceded to the state. Worse, Muslims were entitled to buy only ten hectares of land while Christians were permitted twenty-four. And with the independent Philippine government the process was intensified. In 1972, 30% of the Moros had land under their name; by 1982 it was down to 17%. Many of the new landowners were Christians, as were the plantation workers in the coconut, sugar, rubber, and pineapple export sectors (Che Man 1990, 20-24). Government policies turned the Moros into sons of the soil.

The Malay-Muslims of the Patani region of Thailand trace their past to the ancient Malay kingdom of Langkasuka. Founded in the 1st century AD, it was a major commercial port, and served later in the Arab/China trade. By the end of the 12th century, there was much conversion to Islam. Patani fell under Thai control in 1786, in part because of a civil war from 1729, which severely weakened it. Nonetheless, rebellions against Thai authority continued. In 1816 Siam divided Patani into seven provinces, and for a century a newly constituted “Area of Seven Provinces” was inexorably incorporated into the Siamese state. Patani is rich, with fertile land, fishing grounds, and tin, gold and other rich mineral deposits. However, the Muslim-Malays are smallholders. Since 1961, 100,000 Thai-Buddhists have been relocated to the Patani region and the government announced plans for yet another half million, thereby creating a disaffected group of sons of the soil.

In the Chittagong Hill Tracks of Bangladesh, there are some 400,000 Bengali immigrants who settled there with promises of land and money. To get this process under way, the Pakistani state built a hydro-electric project at Kaptai (funded by the US AID, begun in 1959 and completed in 1963), displacing about 100,000 tribespeople. Of the 100,000 displaced hills people, 60,000 received no
compensation and another 10,000 migrated to India. Those who had no property rights and farmed the hillsides were ignored. More and more people farmed fewer plots resulting in overcultivation and erosion. The government then tried to stimulate industry by making the Kaptai region a tax-free development zone, but the new companies looked to Bengalis for labor, leading to more migration. The Department of Fisheries denied the rights of Hill tribesmen to fish freely in the dam’s reservoir. Many of the Hill tribesmen lost all their rights to land in civil suits. Thus the Hill tribespeople became, in the words of a local intellectual, “not only a minority in their own ancient homeland, but a depressed and impoverished lower stratum, often the servants of those who have taken their lands.” As part of Pakistan, the Hill tracks lost their limited autonomy it had under British rule. President Ayub Khan’s Basic Democracies Order of 1959 militarized the Hill Tracks. In 1964 their special status was abolished, opening the Hill tracts to outside migration without need for permit. Locals received only low-grade positions in the administration. In June 1981 the District of Bandarban was carved out of the Chittagong Hill District. In 1983 a third district was carved out. With more districts, Muslim-majority districts got increased funds. This was clearly a government-sponsored policy to foster migration into an autochthonous homeland (Anti-Slavery Society 1984, 7, 16, 20, 36).

In Xinjiang Province of China, there has been since the 1950s massive immigration of Han Chinese into the Uighur regional base. Many came due to the famine associated with the Great Leap Forward, and then to escape from the excesses of the Cultural Revolution. Still others came because the state invested heavily in cotton production, in which Xinjiang has the highest yields in the country (see http://www.fas.usda.gov/pecad/highlights/2001/10/Chcot/cot.htm). Government actions, indirectly and directly, induced massive numbers of Hans into the regional base of the Uighurs, thereby creating out of a new group united as sons of the soil.

The post World War II cases in the Soviet Union -- and especially the cases of Estonia and Latvia, are without doubt the result of state supported migration of Russians and other Slavic peoples into the Baltic states. This was a provocative act, as Taagepera analyzes it, as “it made no economic sense to deport tens of thousands of skilled people from a labor-short area to destinations [prison camps] where their skills went largely unused, and then import so many more Russians” (1993, 82). This massive wave of those whom the titular populations called “colonists” and “occupational forces” was considered by the sons of the soil Balts as a form of genocide.

Autochthonous population decides whether to challenge this intrusion

The autochthonous population is usually threatened by this intrusion. Its leaders fear demographic suicide (with the concomitant loss of representational power), and this is the point where they organize the autochthonous population into self-help militias. Weiner’s classic book on Sons of the Soil claims that there will be political turmoil “when migrants of one or more ethnic communities are economically successful, in apparent contrast to the lack of success among the native population of another ethnic group” (1978, 77). This political awakening by the autochthonous population might be considered the opening point of our basic model of insurgency. Here members of the minority group decide whether to become rebels.

As was the case of Federal Party leaders in Sri Lanka, Tambiah reports Sindhis in Pakistan feared “of becoming minorities in their own provinces,” as they were losing out in land allocation policies, favoring armed-forces personnel and refugees. In the words of Anwar Syed, “The `old
Sindhis’… have been reduced to a minority in their cities and larger towns. They fear that they may soon become a minority in the province as a whole.” Rashid and Shaheed report that a substantial proportion of lands mortgaged to Hindu money-lenders did not revert back to their original (Sindhi) owners despite a proposal to this effect in the Sindh Assembly. Instead, almost 40 per cent of these two million acres went to the Mohajirs. The initially accommodating Sindhis saw their province and resources literally taken over by others, first Mohajirs and second the Punjabi élite, and found themselves in a constant battle with the centre and with the centre's representatives in the province (Rashid and Shahhed 1993, xxx). A radical organization formed in 1972 called the Jiye Sind Mahaz (JSM) under the leadership of G. M. Syed sought an independent state for the Sind, and advocated guerrilla warfare to achieve it. The social basis of the JSM was educated students and middle-class professionals. There were several other Sindhi parties, however, and less radical than the JSM. More conservative Sindhis, through their Pakistan National Party, demanded in 1987 that migration be stopped, that employment be connected to knowing Sindhi language, and that the dam project be abandoned, but did not push for guerrilla warfare. (Tambiah 1996, xxx). Thus, this issue of land threat seemed to attract the attention of even the least radical elements among Sindhis.

In Assam, most of the tribal groups in the highlands were immediately threatened by Bengali migration. For example, the Bodo political leaders helped form the Tribal League in 1933 to participate in the forthcoming elections. One of the biggest issues for the tribals, according to Bhattacharjee’s account (1996, 85) was the inflow of immigrants from East Bengal.

In the post-Soviet Baltic states, guerrilla warfare against Soviet re-occupation began almost immediately. Much of it was organized by German collaborators who were scared that they would be killed by the Soviet occupying administration. Those Balts who had openly spoken up for membership in the Western European democratic world also feared for their lives. In Estonia and Latvia, these marked men organized “forest brethren” to challenge militarily Soviet occupation, hoping for immediate western assistance (Misiunas and Taagepera 1983, 81-82). While it would be incorrect to say that the migration of Russian speakers into these republics was the mechanism that incited guerrilla activity, it would be fair to say that the facts of the migration helped the forest brethren gain near universal support among the autochthonous populations.

It should be noted that threats of outside domination need not involve any notions of ethnic difference, or be connected with a nationalist program; rather it is an issue of being challenged by some “other” on one’s own turf. Consider the ethnic violence in the Osh oblast of Kirgizia in the former Soviet Union. Osh oblast has 1.3 million inhabitants, with Kirgiz having 60%, Uzbeks 26%, and Russians 6%. The Kirgiz live mostly in the mountains and foothills, the Uzbeks in the plains. Although the cultural differences between Kirghiz and Uzbeks are slight, and mostly fostered by Soviet nationalities policies, there was keen competition for plots of land, and the riots induced by the Kirghiz were part of a strategy to get Uzbeks to return to their republic. The victims were mostly Uzbek men from outside the area, and they were considered “aliens” by the Kirghiz. Similarly the cultural differences between the Telangana autochthonous and the Andhra immigrants were negligible. In situations of migration, aliens need not differ culturally from the autochthonous; and the sense of threat may be built upon a foundation of newly constructed cultural differentia (Barth 19xx).

The sense of outrage and mobilization described in this section reads like a “grievance” rather than an “insurgency” story. Yet what must be explained is why grievances related to land invasion into a
rural population base have incendiary implications for rebellion, while other sorts of grievances do not. There is a substantive and a methodological answer to this question. On substantive grounds, policies that turn rural men into refugees make them natural recruits for insurgencies, as they have few other opportunities in life, especially if the country economy is poor. This helps explain why sons of the soil wars tend to last so long. With migrants occupying the homesteads of the rebels, rebels have little choice but to make rebellion their way of life, their career. With no chance to return home, the rebel band becomes the rebel’s home. Under these conditions, high costs and low rewards for continuing civil wars are no longer deterrents. The theoretical answer here is that grievances may well be a necessary condition for rebellion, but since grievances are nearly ubiquitous, this isn’t very much of a restriction. It is only certain types of grievance that motivate insurgency. The following decision nodes address the translation of grievance into insurgency.

Violent incidents are the stuff of daily life

A series of incidents, common to all complex societies but more likely when local militias have formed, raises tensions between the groups. As discussed in the Sri Lanka narrative, these incidents can be based on all sorts of rumors that are elaborated with alcohol. Other examples abound. In 1988 Sindhi militants opened fire on Mohajirs killing more than 250, and the following day Mohajirs killed 60 Sindhis. Authorities sent in troops, and the elites from both groups signed a pact to reduce the tensions. But in July 1989 Sindhi students at the University of Karachi killed a few Mohajir student activists, and this opened up wide scale violence. Tambiah reports that “in both cities [Hyderabad and Karachi] the clashes took a familiar form once they got under way: armed battles between the police and Mohajir militants, attacks on Sindhi and Mohajir localities by gunmen belonging to the rival ethnic group, and widespread incidents of arson and looting, along with the occasional rape” (Tambiah 1996, 176).

The Mohajirs were unwanted immigrants into Karachi from the point of view of the Sindhis; but as the “returning” Muslims from India at the time of the Partition they developed a clear sense of Pakistan as “their” homeland. Early on, they were in alliance with the ruling Punjabi elite of Pakistan with the goal of making their country Muslim in religion and Urdu in language. They faced a setback in 1971 after the civil war with East Pakistan and the emergence of Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, a Sindhi, as Pakistan’s Prime Minister. But when he was overthrown and hanged by General Zia, the Mohajirs were back in favor. The Mohajir Quami Movement (MQM) emerged in 1984, in large part a result of Zia’s wanting to create a counterweight to the Sindhis, and he brought the Mohajir’s charismatic guerrilla leader Altaf Hussain out of jail to allow him to organize his community. By the mid 1980s, it was the Mohajirs themselves who were the sons of soil defending “their” Karachi turf against Pashtun migration coming from the Northwest Frontier Province, and enriched by the drug and armament trade that was a by-product from the Soviet Afghanistan war. Tambiah reports that from January 1986 to August 1987 there were 242 incidents of rioting in Karachi, many of these triggered by accidents by Pakhtun minibus drivers inflicted on innocent Mohajirs. In 1986 after a riot that was sparked by a railway accident, gangs of Mohajirs specifically targeted Pashtun shops while the police looked on. In subsequent riots, MQM gangs clashed with police. In an historical twist of fate, the Mohajirs who had been the immigrants challenging the autochthonous Sindhis became in a quarter of a century the autochthonous Karachians challenged by the immigrant Pashtuns. By the 1990s they were (now as autochthonous, no longer as immigrants) creating violent incidents as sons of the soil.
In Assam, violent incidents between locals and immigrants were part of the warp and woof of daily life. Assamese regularly staged political processions to fulfill their culturalist agendas, which went against Bengali interests. After two years of steady protest rallies, on May 21 1961 in Shillong, a procession of minorities marched against the Assamese demand. The following month there were, according to the Inquiry Commission, several aggressive acts by Bengalis that provoked Assamese students. There were assaults and counter-assaults at rallies, including the burning of imported Calcutta newspapers by Assamese student agitators. The police started shooting the protestors at Gauhati on July 4, and killed one student. The riots continued for a month (Chattopadhyay 1990, 57-59). And not only Bengalis were involved. In the division of labor in Assam, Assamese control state-level administrative jobs, but lose out, mostly to Marwaris, in all-India administrative positions and jobs in the private sector. In the 1960s, a Food Movement was directed against the non-Assamese (mostly Marwari) trading community, with agitators burning minority shops and houses before the eyes of the police who acted de facto as pro-Movement agents. This was followed in May 1967 by a hate campaign against the Marwaris (Chattopadhyay 1990, 59; Weiner 1997, 124). By the 1970s incidents involved all foreigners. Chattopadhyay (1990, 77) reports on a series of agitations, highlighting a poster campaign in July 1978 with inscriptions such as “Assam for the Assamese” and “Indian Dogs, quit Assam.”

In Bangladesh, a Chittagong leader led a delegation to the Prime Minister demanding autonomy and a return to the British-decreed 1900 Regulation blocking settlement. This was outrightly rejected, and anti-tribal persecution was stepped up. Many hillmen fled into the forests and in 1972 the Chittagong Hill Tracts Peoples Solidarity Association (PCJSS), was formed, and it acts as an unofficial local government. It has an armed wing known as Gono Mukti Fouj or Shanti Bahini (Peace Force), formed in 1972. It is lightly armed, having bought weapons in the market, as they were openly available after Bangladesh’s civil war against Pakistan. Shanti Bahini leaders frequently cross into India and get support from tribal refugees, and its parent organization gets funds from the Indian government (Anti Slavery Society 1984, 64).

In Kirghizia, Soviet authorities carefully investigated the spark for one riot. Local Kirghiz were stirred by rumors that Uzbeks had massacred all Kirgiz in the town of Uzgen, and were on the road to kill those in the village of Dzhylsandy. Rumors (that were unfounded) spread in other Kirgiz towns, and many sent their families to the mountains. The vision of fellow Kirgiz escaping to the hills created panic, and young men organized to attack the homes of Uzbeks they had previous conflicts with. Information could not be passed between Uzbek and Kirgiz friends that would be credible. Because of Soviet state intervention, this incident, as was the case for a plethora of such incidents in the late Soviet period, was cauterized. But if Soviet troops had defended the Uzbeks and indiscriminately attacked the Kirghiz, in an attempt to resettle Kirghizia with Uzbeks, this incident could have become the spark that set off a Kirghiz rebellion.

Not in all cases do the locals treat the migration as a threat to their futures. In the well-known cases of Catalonia and Basque country in Spain, immigrants became a profitable work force for the autochthonous industrialists. This is generally the case with rural to urban migrants in rich industrial societies. But it may also be the case in Asian settings that look like the incendiary ones discussed in this chapter. For example, the Thai government was successful in defusing unrest among the Malay-Muslims in Patani. With independence to Malaya that did not include Patani, many Thai Muslims moved to Malaya (where they were welcomed, and as a result pressure was taken off of Thailand); yet many others sent their children to Thai schools and took on Thai names. One reason for this is that the Thai
government increased expenditure enabling Thai medium of instruction in public education, and has reserved places for Muslims in institutes of higher learning. In this way, Muslims have entered the Thai bureaucracy. A state that is able to provide substantial opportunities for social mobility to autochthonous populations whose own regions are being populated by outsiders can defuse unrest (Che Man 1990, 163-64).

**Police successfully or unsuccessfully cauterize the violence**

When riots break out, the police (who tend to be drawn from the autochthonous population) enter the scene. If they cauterize the violence, “create order” in the sequencing of choices on the decision tree, there is no escalation. But incidents will recur; in subsequent riots the police may fail. (In rich countries the police will be paid sufficiently not to seek alliances with only one side in the conflict, and will be sufficiently professional to succeed in creating order with a high probability. Our cross sectional data show the low likelihood that such sparks would create fires in rich countries.) In Sri Lanka, we noted that the police were unable to contain the violence that erupted in the Eastern Province. In reference to the Assamese riots against the Marwaris in what was known as the Food Movement, the police stood by through much of this violence without acting, or dispersing the crowds (Chattopadhyay). The police are the weak link in assuring that ethnic riots do not escalate into ethnic rebellion.

**The state decides whether to send in its army, and with which side to ally**

If police fail to cauterize the violence (which is more likely in poor countries, where they are likely to be recruited from the autochthonous population, and are willing to watch the immigrants get beaten; and where they are poorly trained and poorly paid, and have no interest in paying the real cost for order), the state has to decide whether to send in reserve troops. If it doesn’t, escalated communal violence ensues.

**If state supports autochthonous, immigrants decide whether to exit or live with pogroms**

If the state enters, it can side with the interests of the autochthonous or the migrants. If it sides with the autochthonous population (re-equipment of the local police and helping them beat upon the immigrants), the violence ends, but the immigrant population begins a return migration (sometimes with state support) back to its overpopulated home area. In Assam after the Partition, there was no more threat to the Assamese from Muslims, and communal clashes between Bengali Muslims and Assamese Hindus subsided. The 1950 ‘Immigrants (Expulsion from Assam) Act’ provided for the expulsion of ‘infiltrators’ (meaning Muslim Bengalis) who threatened the interests of the general public (Weiner 1977, 110). The Indian state, by siding with Assamese over Bengali Muslim migrants, forestalled further sons of the soil conflict.

This settlement, however, opened up a chasm between the Assamese and Bengali Hindus, who were formerly united against the Bengali Muslim presence in Assam. Here again, however, the state protected the interests of the autochthonous. The Bengal Hindu had many of the top jobs, to the chagrin of the indigenous Assamese. The Indian constitution severely limits the ways in which a state government, then controlled by the Assamese, can remedy a perceived imbalance. They cannot bar migration (except to tribal areas); and they cannot restrict employment. But language discrimination is legitimate. In 1972, the sons of the soil organized large-scale anti-Bengali riots in the Brahmaputra
valley. In June, the Academic Council of Gauhati University passed a resolution calling for the introduction of Assamese as the medium of instruction, with English to be maintained for a transition period, and examinations to be written in either English, Assamese or Bengali. Assamese students rioted against the option of taking exams in Bengali. The Academic Council then met and caved in, withdrawing Bengali as an option for exams. In Cachar district, a group of Bengali leaders sought legal remedies, and filed a petition in the Supreme Court claiming that the decision by the University violated Article 30 of the Indian Constitution that protects minority language communities, and a stay order was granted by the court. The Assam state legislature then responded by reaffirming the decisions of the academic councils of the two universities against Bengali exams, but provided for a third university in Cachar which would have Bengali instruction. This reactivated the All Assam Students Union against the state government, and the Union threatened “direct action”. Violence broke out first in the university towns and then throughout the state, burning Bengali properties. Mrs. Gandhi visited the state and brokered a deal that allowed for the state government to accept the recommendation of the two universities and also introduce Assamese as a compulsory subject in all non-Assamese secondary schools in the state. One Bengali wrote in a letter to the editor of the Amrita Bazar Patrika on Nov. 4, 1972 that “the recurring disturbances are aimed not at usurping the Bengali language but at driving out the entire Bengali population from Assam” (Weiner 1977, 116-20). The point here is that when the state supported autochthonous interests, the immigrants sought legal action and mediation by central authorities; but in response to nativist provocations, they did not organize a rebellion against (the Assamese) state authority. The Bengali letter writer implicitly accounts for why no such rebellion was organized -- the costs of exit were low.

In Andra Pradesh, after the anti-mulki rulings of the Indian Supreme Court undermined the state’s commitment to protecting locals’ jobs, an elite compromise brought a constitutional amendment to continue the agreement earlier brokered by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. Also, Gandhi’s government put Telanganas into stronger positions in the state party and government positions, thus coopting them, and defusing their demands for a separate state. A series of presidential orders further protected the Telanganas, mostly by dividing the state into districts and requiring a high percentage of locals in each district’s educational institutions and jobs, with no sunset provision for these reservations. With constitutional guarantees, the state’s support for the autochthonous was secure, and the Telangana movement subsided (Weiner 1978, 254). The Andhras could merely accept their reduced possibilities.

In the face of Mohajir migration, our decision tree predicts a Sindhi rebellion, but it was short-lived. At first, the Pakistani government (ruled by Punjabis) favored the interests of the Mohajirs. This drove the Sindhis into early rebellion against the new state, a rebellion that was not sustained. The civil war in 1971 with the subsequent independence of Bangladesh might have given the Sindhis a new opportunity to challenge the state, especially with the discrediting of the Punjabi elite. However, the Sindhis accomplished their goals through the polls, as the party of Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, a Sindhi, won the subsequent election. The Bhutto regime appeased Sindhi grievances, on jobs and the language issue, and the share of Mohajirs in government services declined. Once the government sided with the autochthonous, there was no cause for a Sindhi rebellion.

If state supports immigrants, autochthonous decide whether to accept state order or to fight

If the state sides with the immigrants (and it is likely to do so if the migrants are of the same ethnic group as or in political alliance with the state leadership), the autochthonous population can either
give up to state power (in which case there is uneasy peace, going back to low grade communal violence), or it challenges the state.

If the autochthonous population challenges the state (which is in alliance with the immigrants), their militias are likely to attack the state army. If they are successful, the army, due to lack of information as to who is a rebel and who a loyal citizen, will likely respond by killing locals indiscriminately, creating a spiral of violence (Fearon and Laitin 1996). This, as we saw in Sri Lanka’s Eastern Province, is the opening salvo in an ethnic rebellion.

In the Chittagong Hill Tracts, the Shanti Bahini in 1980 successfully decimated a Bangladeshi army patrol, in response to the sudden infusion of thousands of impoverished Bengali settlers streaming into the hills. In immediate reaction, there was a subsequent massacre of 300 hillmen, perpetrated by the army in cahoots with Bengali settlers. The army commander then requested tribal leaders to attend a meeting to restore law and order at the Buddhist temple, and once all were gathered there, the army opened fire killing all the attending hillmen. This was followed by settler riots. Settlers attacked tribal families, burning houses, and destroying temples. Not a single Bengali house was burned. The indiscriminate response by settlers (who formed “home guards” to assure that Bengali property was not threatened) supported by state armies set off a rebellious spiral (Anti Slavery Society 1984, 55, 6x; for fuller documentation, see Amnesty International 1986, 13-23).

In Assam, local police harassed Bengalis with the threat of taking away citizenship papers in the late 1970s. With 47,000 complaints received by the police, 26,000 names were struck off the voters’ lists as foreigners. Assamese agitators began to terrorize foreigners, especially the tea garden laborers. By the end of 1979, a general strike showed that the movement was a success. However, India’s Central Reserve Police entered the fray on the side of the immigrants. In the course of their peace keeping (i.e. ending the pogroms against the immigrants) they killed an Assamese agitator K. Talukdar, and he became a martyr. Assamese militants then attacked minority communities. By early January 1980, in what has become known as the Kamrup massacre, local people killed about 200 Assamised Bengali immigrants, and massacres of other minorities followed. The Assam police helped in the killing. Altogether there were about 1,000 deaths that year, and by 1985, the number reached 7,000 (Chattopadhyay, 1990, 81-83). When the army supports the immigrants, ethnic violence spirals into ethnic rebellion.

In the case of the Sindh, the Sindhi rebellion that would have been predicted by the sequence of events that we outlined did not occur; but this because Zulfikar Ali Bhutto captured state power and represented Sindhi interests at the level of the state. However, with Prime Minister Bhutto assassinated and power in the hands of General Zia, the Mohajirs, in alliance with some police and their own militia, gunned down Sindhis. This brought the Sindhis back into rebellion now against the Zia regime. In 1983, a mass civil disobedience campaign called by the Movement for the Restoration of Democracy solidified anti-Punjabi sentiments in Sindh and has contributed to a serious disintegration of social order in the rural areas where armed bands of “dacoits” (bandits) have instituted a reign of terror that transformed into a significant rebellion.

In regard to the Moros, the Philippine Constabulary (PC) at the height of Moro insurrection gave its support to the “Ilaga terrorist squads” that fought against the Moros. The Armed Forces of the Philippines joined on the same side after martial law was declared in 1972, and large scale conventional
military campaigns followed until 1976 with the signing of the Tripoli agreement, which established Autonomous Governments in the region. The Moros could set up Shar’ia Courts, got the right to tax, and could retain their own Special Security Forces. But a series of presidential decrees circumscribed the autonomy, and the insurgency persisted (Che Man 1990, 149). The alliance between the militias of the immigrants and the forces of the state turned communal warfare into rebellion.

In Xinjiang, disturbances against the Han settlers are addressed by the quasi-military Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps, made up of demobilized soldiers from the People’s Liberation Army, former Guomindang soldiers and armed Han settlers. These officers provide easy targets for Uighur separatists. In the spring of 1996, for example, Uighur insurgents opened fire of police officers in several cities. Because these officers were Han and representatives of the military, the killings were immediately coded as rebellion. The government responded with massive searches of people’s homes seeking out separatist sympathizers, and official state sources spoke of a “steel wall” to protect the stability of the province. With settler populations being protected by militias representing the dominant ethnic group of the country, those militias are both vulnerable to attack and these attacks can all too easily escalate low level terrorism into civil war.

In Bougainvillea, an Australian-based company set up shop to mine copper in the early 1970s. Local villagers (who received almost no royalties) noticed that the once-rich Jaba river was turning into liquid mud. Fish disappeared. Local rebels began killing provincial officials. The Papua/New Guinea government supported the company and its migrant workforce. The Papuan Defence Forces began to shell the rebels into submission. In response, the rebels consolidated as the Bougainvillea Revolutionary Army and confronted the Papuan armed forces. Here again, the need for the state army to protect migrants and their property turns local battles into civil wars.

Strategic queries about this decision tree

Why would the state support immigrants if they can get peace by siding with the autochthonous? Or why would the state allow for this kind of migration in the first place?

The answer to these questions is that preventing civil war may not be the sole goal of state authorities. They may be interested in “rationalizing” the state culturally, in the sense of seeking to induce all members of the population to have the same national characteristics of the dominant group in the society. Sending people of the majority culture into minority regions can be part of a strategy of assimilation, or nation building, that is making all permanent residents of the state into a shared nationality group through strategic assimilation. The Mohajir migrants into the Sindh gave the Pakistani government a plausible nation-building story to further their political and economic aims. They put forward the theory that the adoption of a single language, Urdu, would guarantee national integration. In doing so, the government managed to put all those whose mother tongue was Urdu (including the Mohajirs but not the Sindhis) at a net advantage in terms of educational opportunities and jobs. More abstractly, because of the critical role of the Mohajirs in the creation of Pakistan, the political élite saw itself as the standard bearer of the Pakistan “idea” (Rashid and Shaheed 1993). In regard to the Moros of

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the Philippines, rebellions against state authority go back a few hundred years. The Americans, especially under the governorship of Taskir Bliss, tried to incorporate the Moros into the Philippine nation. A Moro Province was created in order to aid in its integration into a future Philippine state. Common law was introduced, slavery outlawed, schools were built, a head tax was instituted, and Filipino Christians from the northern provinces were encouraged to migrate. The long-term goal of nation-building was at least part of the motivation in the encouragement of further migration (Che Man 1990, 49).

“Nation building” is often thought of as the benign cousin of “state building” (Tilly 1985). But filling the lands within state boundaries of a population representing the nation-bearing population has its gory character. In regard to the Chittagong Hills, Mey lists a plethora of state provocations against the Hill people from December 1977 through July 1983. On December 25, 1977, he writes, “The army…in a convoy of … 1,000 personnel…set fire to all the houses and temples on both sides of the road and asked the Bengali settlers to loot the properties of the tribals. The tribal people fled away into the jungle for safety…a public meeting of the Muslim and tribal people was organized by the army….General Manzoor … stressed that the settlers were poor and landless and should be given shelter…he shouted [to the tribals] ‘We don’t want you. You can go wherever you like but we want your land.’” He notes further that “the Bangladesh government secretly circulated a letter to every army officer now stationed in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, encouraging them to marry tribal girls with a view to assimilating the tribal people.” He claims as well that there is evidence of forced sterilization, amounting to 50-55 women per day. (Mey 1984, 150-56). These actions represent the dark side of nation building.

In another report from Laogang, an army officer told the settlers working with the army “to start killing men but to take away women so that at least the next generation of Chakmas will behave like good Bangladeshis” (Amnesty International 1986, 22).

Alternatively, governments may be appeasing the vocal elements in their support base by giving poor members of the dominant ethnic group opportunities to get land. Thus, the migration policy of the state could well be popular within the heartland of the country, and help legitimate the government. For example, in 1979 President Ziaur Rahman presided at a secret meeting to settle 30,000 Bengali families living in the Chittagong Hills Tracts, and given the popularity of this scheme, the government upped the number to 100,000, and gave generous grants for resettling there. By 1982, a third phase envisioned another 250,000 (from Anti-Slavery Society reports). Gaining popularity among members of the majority group (the migrants) may make the costs of counter-insurgency (against the autochthonous) appear to the government to be small.

State authorities may also be interested in inducing economic development, and that might entail the development of regions in the country that have vast economic potential that the autochthonous population did not exploit. The state may thus be reluctant to give in to autochthonous demands. In Sri Lanka, the British as far back as 1935 enacted the Land Development Ordinance (#19) in the Dry Zones with the hope of reducing unemployment in the Wet Zone, increasing total rice production, and in the course of meeting those goals, to develop infrastructure and eliminate malaria in the Dry Zones (Gold 1977, 57). Although the independent Sri Lankan government has been often accused of continuing this settlement for purposes of nation building, it was at least a plausible response that the government was seeking economic development. In rural Sindh a major source of grievances emerged with the controversial allotments, to military and civil bureaucrats, of land brought under cultivation by the construction of barrages. Fifty-nine percent of the land made cultivable by the Ghulam Muhammad
Barrage was allocated to defense personnel, tribesmen of Quetta and the Frontier, and settlers from East Pakistan. Fifty percent of the Guddu Barrage land was allocated to defense personnel, civil bureaucrats and families displaced by the construction of the new capital, Islamabad (in Punjab), and the Tarbela and Mangla dams (in Punjab and the North West Frontier Province). Forty-six percent of Sukkur Barrage land was given to army personnel. In most instances "defense personnel" was synonymous with Punjabis. Migrants, from the point of view of the state, are more likely to take advantage of infrastructural investments such as barrages, and induce a lift to GDP that would not be possible if the newly cultivatable land were given to the autochthonous population. In Papua, the population is about 1.8 million, with about 770,000 people migrants brought into the territory under the government’s ‘transmigration’ policy, supported by the World Bank. World Bank support suggests that there has been at least some element of economic development goals in the state support for the migrants. About 10,000 families per year were government “sponsored,” though many others come on their own accord. Papuans have been projected to become a minority in their own territory. Indonesian authorities did not provide legal protection for local property rights (Suter 1997, 23). It is in this context that the Free Papua Movement (OPM) arose, which was in guerrilla action against and has now declared independence from the Indonesian state.

State authorities may therefore be fulfilling other goals in the course of threatening the demographic advantage in their region of sons of the soil.

If the state does support the right of migrants to settle in the autochthonous region, why can’t the state and the autochthonous population agree to a bargain (e.g. how much migration will be permitted) that will have lower costs than an ethnic war?

One answer to this question is that the state can’t credibly commit to limiting future migration. First is the problem that it is implausible for the state to identify potential rebels in order to make a bargain. If all sons of the soil are potential rebels, the costs of such a bargain would be exorbitant. Even if the state could find a party with which to bargain, its commitments would not be credible. This is so in large part because early migrants work hard to induce friends and relatives to follow their path, even if the state seeks to delimit further migration. Even if the state promises not to permit future migration, sons of the soil should be skeptical. If they accept government assurances, officials are likely to take this as a signal of quiescence, and reneg on their promise by supporting higher levels of migration.

Consider the problem the British faced in regard to the Bengali peasants migrating to Assam. These cultivators slowly began moving into the Sylhet and Gaolpara districts of Assam when health conditions improved in the late 19th century. Newer migrants moved up to the Brahmaputra valley, always moving into waste lands and settling there. Migration increased during the Bengal famine of 1942, and continued in the 1950s when the migration became international (and illegal). Many Assamese complained that the Muslim League was encouraging the migrants. Yet once the migration route was established by state authority, it developed a momentum of its own. The British tried to stem the migration tide. The Line System in 1920 prevented migrants from entering some tribal areas. But this merely redirected migrants from the hills to the plains. (Weiner 1977, 95-102, 109).

States may try to commit, but without success. In Assam, with Janata in power in both Delhi and Assam, local police were instructed to find and deport “foreigners”. But with the fall of Janata in 1983, massive violence recurred. Assamese rebels blamed what they reckoned as illegal voting registration of
Bengali foreigners on the government. Thus the Janata policies of the 1970s could not commit the Indian state in the 1980s (Chattopadhyay 1990, 4-5). In Telangana, the Congress and the Communists supported the idea of a united Andhra state called Visalandhra. To smooth the way and to alleviate Telangana fears of massive immigration into Hyderabad by job-seeking Andhras, a “Gentlemen’s Agreement” provided for safeguards giving preference to locals (mulkis) who were born in Hyderabad, lived there for 15 years, or met other criteria for membership as a local. However, the “Gentlemen’s Agreement” was subverted through the production of bogus domicile certificates (Weiner 1977, 221-23). Furthermore, what the state authorities work out may be undermined by other branches of state power. The “Public Employment (Requirement as to Residence) Act” of 1957 permitted the Andhra government to impose domicile rules for lower level government employees (the NGOs, or nongazeted officers). But this was undermined by a decision of the Andhra High Court in 1969 that the State Electricity Board did not come under the purview of the act. This ruling set off the violence of 1969. A few months later India’s Supreme Court declared that portion of the act unconstitutional, since residence requirements within a state was not permissible. Another round of violence ensued.

This inability of the state to commit to a policy of restricting all future migration into areas claimed by sons of the soil provides yet another explanation for the significant duration of this type of civil war. If duration were merely a function of showing resolve, as Fearon (2001) points out, after several years all possible information about resolve would have been revealed. Yet the Moros have been fighting for 30 years, the West Papuans for 35, and some of the Burmese sons of soil for a half-century. But if duration is a function of the inability of the government to commit to a peace agreement, a negotiated settlement can hardly be sustained. This especially burdensome commitment issue for sons of soil type civil wars helps explain not only their outbreak, but their duration as well.

A second answer to the question of why bargained solutions don’t end these wars is that the state all too often overestimates its power vis-à-vis the guerrillas. Given information asymmetries, the autochthonous population is in far better strategic position in a war against the state than state authorities might have calculated. Regional concentration of the autochthonous population provides potential guerrillas a powerful network of information concerning the whereabouts of government troops and the identification of government informants. Reprisals by local guerrillas are therefore less likely to hit innocents than actions by government troops, whose leaders lack the textured knowledge of communities that would allow for well-targeted actions against guerrillas. Reports from most of these rebellions are consistent on this point, emphasizing how indiscriminate the state reprisals are. For example, in Comillatilla-Taidong in the Chittagong Hills in May 1986, a group of tribals was fleeing in the forests, and was ambushed by government troops. The soldiers “are reported to have fired indiscriminately at the group,” and after the damage was done, nontribals further attacked the group, killing about 200. Indiscriminate killing (a necessity, given the difficulty for state authorities or settlers in distinguishing rebels from nonrebels among the autochthonous population) tends to raise rather than lower the level of rebellion, as it tends to harden ethnic antipathies and to enrage innocents. Thus states may not appreciate fully the weakness of their bargaining position with rebels, and therefore offer rebels far less than rebels should accept, if they correctly calculated their relative power.

Third, any bargain must be based on an assessment of how much damage the other side is willing to incur. The greater the resolve, the better deal that side should receive. However, neither side at the beginning of the war can credibly reveal its resolve. If insurgents had only limited resolve and revealed it, the state would not bargain. Thus insurgents have an interest in mimicking insurgencies with high
resolve. Furthermore, resolve changes in the course of an insurgency. In Petersen’s study of insurgencies against occupying states, he identified a phenomenon that he calls the “tyranny of sunk costs”. Insurgents who kidnap, maim, rape, and kill will have in the course of their actions higher levels of resolve in part due to the expected state responses to their predatory actions if the country returns to peace. A plausible interpretation of V. Prabhakaran’s refusal to bargain with a conciliatory Sri Lankan Prime Minister in late 1999 and early 2000 is that the sunk costs of his many massacres (against other Tamils as well as Sinhalese) makes any willingness to accept a bargained solution all too risky for him personally.

Fourth, states that give into the demands of autochthonous groups to limit migration face a reputation problem (Walter 2001). Rulers may fear that concessions to autochthonous groups might help activate other groups into sons of the soil movements for economic gain at the expense of perceived exploiters. States can face a never-ending spiral of sons of the soil movements. For example, India conceded to the nativist Assamese local autonomy. But the victory of the Assamese launched a counter attack by the Bodo Sahitya Sabha, pressing for the creation of a union territory of the Bodo regions outside the ambit of Assam. One Bodo leader wrote in the Indian Express (Dec. 3, 1972) “the Assamization policy of the government…had forced [tribal peoples] to learn through the medium of Assamese…when all along they had been demanding the retention of English.” In the late 1980s, when Upendra Nath Brahma became president of the ABUS (All Bodo Students’ Union), he led the entire movement, with diatribes against “Assamese Chauvinism”. Rajiv Gandhi’s government, however, paid little attention to this issue. In 1987 the ABUS held a big rally in Gauhati with a 92-point program, and upon returning home, one group of Bodos was attacked by a group of Assamese youth, and there was much violence with one death (Bhattacharjee 1996, chap. 4). In 1989 after considerable terrorist violence, the ABSU was able to form a Bodoland Autonomous Council (BAC), giving Bodos maximum autonomy for social, economic, educational, ethnic and cultural matters. But then the aboriginal Koch-Rajbongshi population mostly within now-official Bodoland staged a protest demanding their right to self-determination. Of the 1.8 million people living in the Bodo villages, 1.2 million are Koch-Rajbongshi, and now their fate was, according to one spokesman, “at the mercy of the Bodo leaders in the name of geographical contiguity of the BAC area…” Other Bodo organizations argued about getting as yet excluded villages into the zone of the BAC. State authorities, to the extent that they side with the autochthonous, are in for a never-ending set of autonomy demands. In Assam, it wasn’t only Assamese, Bodos and Koch-Rajbongshis. The Nagas pressed for Nagaland and other tribal groups did similarly, with the result that Assam has been broken up into discrete cultural-political units (Weiner 1977, 120-22).

If the state and the autochthonous group cannot reach an agreement concerning limits to migration, why can’t the state compensate the autochthonous group for the costs it will pay for the migration?

As we described in the case of Malay-Muslims in Thailand, it is possible to pay off the autochthonous population in public goods (an excellent school system in the dominant language, one that provides good social mobility prospects) to stave off rebellion. It is theoretically possible to pay off the most disaffected among the autochthonous in private handouts in order to alleviate pressures for rebellion. Ian Lustick in Arabs in the Jewish State analyzed an entire system of mechanisms of control, one element of which was co-optation of elites. This system of control pacified the indigenous Arab population that was outraged by the massive migration of Zionists into Palestine.
There are two possible reasons – one empirical and one theoretical -- why this did not occur in the cases in which rebellion reached high levels. The empirical reason is connected with the cross-sectional findings concerning country wealth and economic growth. Poor states are less able to provide satisfactory compensations to disaffected groups than are richer states. The success of the Thai economy not only allowed for social mobility hopes for Malays within Thailand, but it allowed for private pay-outs to disaffected Malays (though we do not know if such pay-outs were in fact made). Certainly the costs to Israel of buying off the Arabs were heavy, and largely paid for by the Jewish diaspora. The theoretical reason has to do with the problem of incentives. To the extent that a state announces that it will provide handouts to disaffected autochthonous populations, people who were unaffected by the migration will have an incentive to become disaffected. Furthermore, it is dangerous for states to reward citizens for claiming that they have been injured by state policy. It might lead those who are quiescent, for example because they believed there wasn’t a critical mass of potential rebels, to update their reckonings as to how many of their fellow citizens are disaffected, and to become rebels.

Why is this mechanism unleashed by migrants and not in any case of mixed population rural areas?

Mixed population rural areas are not immune from ethnic violence. In the MAR data set there are thirty-seven non-migrant groups (i.e. were settled in the state before 1800) that have not been in significant rebellion against the state (i.e. have maximum rebellion scores since 1980 at less than the level “4”), yet have been at high levels of communal conflict with neighboring groups (i.e. with communal conflicts scores reaching at least the level of 4 since 1980).¹¹ In this class of cases include several groups in central and western Kenya, the Roma in Spain and Italy, the Xhosas and Zulus in South Africa, the Northern Ireland Catholics in the UK, and the indigenous populations of Colombia and Peru. Communal conflicts between settled groups in the countryside can be settled by mechanisms that have been in place before the emergence of a centralized state apparatus (Fearon and Laitin 1996). The state does not have an interest in getting drawn into these conflicts, and it can generally serve as a neutral third party in seeking to ameliorate the violence.

Migrant groups that arrive due to state policy are in a very different position. They do not have institutions for resolving the inevitable violent skirmishes that mark inter-ethnic cohabitation. They are vulnerable to pogroms, and therefore will seek protection from the state. And the state has an obligation to them, if only to appease the core group of the migrant populations that is likely to be a support group of the government. Thus the state gets implicated into sons of the soil conflicts with migrants; but it can keep out of, or neutral in, communal conflict between autochthonous groups in multi-ethnic rural areas.

Why don’t immigrants rebel?

If the state supports the autochthonous population, an immigrant rebellion faces formidable difficulties. For one, immigrants lack a rural base in which to hide from state forces, get support from noncombatants, and receive protection from neighbors who are tied together in dense social networks. As Weiner recognizes, “Migrant communities, and their descendants, have a limited capacity to fight back.”

¹¹ Non-migrant groups are those with values of 1 or 2 on the MAR variable TRADITN. High levels of communal conflict are defined as having a maximum value greater than 3 on COMCO from 1980 through 1998.
Second, compared to the autochthonous population, they have a relatively cheap alternative to war: viz., exit to their home area. As Weiner concludes, in all cases of nativism the migrants are mobile while the autochthonous have lower migration levels. In cases where there is in-migration, but where the autochthonous are also mobile (as in Punjab and West Bengal), there is no evidence of nativism (Weiner 1977, 278). Mobile populations, he generalizes, do not rebel. Even while the Bangladeshi government was supporting the settlers in the Chittagong Hills, as the army distributed weapons to the settlers, many of the settlers are oriented toward a “return” if things got dangerous. The Shanti Bahini give “quit” notices to settlers, and if they agreed to evacuate, they were promised safe passage. In 1981 some 2,000 Bengalis returned this way (Mey 1984, 133).

Third, for urban trading groups, where there are strong social networks that cross borders, exit is especially easy. In regard to challenges from “sons of the soil,” Weiner speculates, “The Marwaris and other business communities may choose to invest elsewhere.”

IV. Conclusion

Under conditions of low GDP, populations that are concentrated in a rural base are likely to become embroiled in a rebellion against state forces when threatened by state supported migration. These are “sons of the soil” rebellions. Meanwhile, migrants themselves, while they are almost equally likely as sons of the soil to be engaged in political protest, are far less likely to become embroiled in a rebellion against the state. This chapter has provided both analysis and a set of vignettes of particular cases to show why this is so. The fundamental point is that states have a variety of incentives to support migrants when they face low-level pogroms by threatened members of the autochthonous population. If local police are unwilling or unable to cauterize inevitable local incidents, state forces ally with migrant militias to bring order. Under those conditions, autochthonous militias are likely to target the armed forces of the state. If they succeed, the army -- facing informational deficits in distinguishing rebels from nonrebels among the autochthonous population -- is likely to respond through indiscriminate punishment. Such punishment has the effect of mobilizing a wider set of the autochthonous against the migrants and the state. This is the beginning of a violent spiral of ethnic war.
Figure 1

- State
  - Induce Migration
    - Autochthonous
      - Challenge
        - Police
          - Profit from chaos
            - Support immigrants
              - Autochthonous
                - Accept
      - Support autochthonous
        - Immigrants
          - Exit
          - Pogroms
            - Accept
              - Fight