SECURITY ASSETS OR SECURITY LIABILITIES: THEORIZING CHANGES IN EXTERNAL STATE SPONSORSHIP OF REBEL GROUPS

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Abstract

Why do states change their policy of sponsorship towards rebel groups? Most research on external state sponsorship of rebel groups either assumes that state sponsorship remains unchanged over time or focuses only on changes in support. This thesis examines sponsor state policy towards rebel groups by including both intensity of support and control measures designed to minimize agency loss. It argues that shifts in the sponsor state's perception of rebel groups as either security assets or security liabilities leads to changes in its sponsorship policy. It hypothesizes that states will follow a policy of support when they perceive rebel groups as security assets and a policy of punishment when they perceive them as security liabilities. In between these two extremes, states can also have mixed perceptions which result in policies that combine conciliatory measures with limited sanctioning. Using Syrian and Jordanian sponsorship of the Palestinian Resistance fighters as case studies, this thesis shows that changes in state perception of rebel groups were responsible for adjustments in sponsorship policy for most of the observed time segments. The thesis concludes by suggesting that a sponsor state's proximity to an insurgency may make it more unpredictable as a principal. It also calls upon policymakers to pay greater attention to sponsor state rhetoric and actions when designing counterinsurgency strategies.

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Introduction

The civil war in Syria has shown that several external states sponsor various non-state actors in the conflict that range from those fighting in favor of the Asad regime to those waging an insurgency to topple it. Iran supports Hezbollah, the Lebanese Shia militant group, the Gulf States back jihadi organizations, such as the Jaish al-Islam, and the United States relies on military cooperation with the Syrian Democratic Forces.[1] With the seven-year conflict nowhere near an end, the external backers of these groups have increasingly transformed an internal rebellion into a proxy war for opposing each other.

The Syrian civil war is just one example among many others of external states acting as sponsors to rebel groups. Foreign powers often back rebel groups by granting them political, financial, logistical and military support. Often, domestic conflicts are internationalized when rebels ally with external states to reduce power imbalances.[2] In turn, states support rebel groups to undermine neighboring rivals, enable regime change and demonstrate solidarity for ethnic kin or an ideology.[3] It has been estimated that 134 out of 285 rebel groups have been explicitly sponsored by an external power between the years 1946 and 2003.[4]

Within conflict research, a wide number of studies revolve around the subject of external state sponsorship of rebel groups.[5] According to Byman, sponsorship is a *conscious* decision by

[1]"Who's Who in Syria's Civil War," Council on Foreign Relations, last updated April 28, 2017, https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/whos-who-syrias-civil-war.
[2] William Zartman, *Elusive Peace: Negotiating an End to Civil Wars* (Washington D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1995), 11.
[3] Daniel Byman, *Deadly Connections: States that Sponsor Terrorism* (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 2005), 32-33.
[4] Idean Salehyan, "The Delegation of War to Rebel Organizations," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 54, no. 3 (2010): 497, doi:10.1177/0022002709357890.
[5] Daniel Byman, "Outside Support for Insurgent Movements," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 36, no. 12 (2013): 981, doi:10.1080/1057610x.2013.842132; Idean Salehyan, Kristian Skrede Gleditsch, and David E. Cunningham, "Explaining External Support for Insurgent Groups," *International Organization* 65, no. 04 (2011): 710, doi:10.1017/s0020818311000233; Navin A. Bapat, "Understanding State Sponsorship of Militant Groups," *British Journal of Political Science* 42, no.1 (2012): 2, http://www.jstor.org/stable/41485862; Patrick M. Regan, *Civil Wars and Foreign Powers: Outside Intervention in Interstate Conflict* (The University of Michigan Press: Ann Arbor, 2002), 9;

an external state to augment a rebel group's political and military capabilities.[6] Therefore, it has a number of implications for the dynamics of internal conflicts. For example, scholarship has found that external state support of rebel groups is associated with an increase in inter-state hostilities.[7] In particular, provision of bases to insurgent groups is associated with an increased risk of inter-state warfare.[8] Studies have also noted that civil wars in which rebel groups receive external state support produce greater civilian casualties[9] and longer periods of conflict.[10]

Furthermore, external state sponsorship of rebel groups also makes conflicts harder to resolve. State sponsors complicate bargaining as they make up an additional actor whose demands have to be accommodated in negotiated agreements.[11] One study finds that external states may not credibly commit to reducing support for rebel groups in the absence of monitoring mechanisms.[12] Another finds that weak state sponsors may struggle to ensure a rebel group's compliance with a negotiated settlement.[13] Therefore, examination of external state sponsorship is important, as it has relevance for policymakers looking to end civil wars and prevent mass atrocities resulting from protracted periods of fighting.

Most work on state sponsorship of rebel groups uses the principal-agent framework[14] to illustrate state cooperation with insurgents and investigate problems arising from such a

[6] Byman, *Deadly Connections,* 10.
[7] Kenneth A. Schultz, "The Enforcement Problem in Coercive Bargaining: Interstate Conflict over Rebel Support in Civil Wars," *International Organization* 64 (2010): 296, https://doi.org/0+10170S0020818310000032.
[8] Idean Salehyan, "No Shelter Here: Rebel Sanctuaries and International Conflict," The Journal of Politics 70, no. 1 (2008): 55, http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1017/s0022381607080048.
[9] Idean Salehyan, David Siroky and Reed M. Wood, "External Rebel Sponsorship and Civilian Abuse: A Principal-Agent Analysis of Wartime Atrocities," *International Organization*, 68, no. 3 (2014): 649, http://www.jstor.org/stable/43282121.
[10] Patrick M. Regan, "Third-Party Interventions and the Duration of Intrastate Conflicts," *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 46, no. 1 (2002): 71.
[11] Idean Salehyan, "Transnational Rebels: Neighboring States as Sanctuary for Rebel Groups," *World Politics* 59, no. 2 (2007): 218, https://doi.org/10.1353/wp.2007.0024.
[12] Schultz, "The Enforcement Problem," 284.
[13] Bapat, "Understanding State Sponsorship," 4.
[14] Salehyan, "The Delegation of War," 495; Daniel Byman and Sarah E. Kreps, "Agents of Destruction? Applying Principal-Agent Analysis to State-Sponsored Terrorism," *International Studies Perspectives* 11, no. 1 (2010): 3, doi:10.1111/j.1528-3585.2009.00389.x; Salehyan, Gleditsch, and Cunningham, "Explaining External Support," 711; Milos Popovic, "Fragile Proxies: Explaining Rebel Defection Against Their State Sponsors," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 29, no. 5 (2015): 923, doi:10.1080/09546553.2015.1092437; Ora Szekely, "A Friend in Need: The Impact of the Syrian Civil War on Syria's Clients (A

relationship. States act as principals by choosing to delegate certain foreign policy tasks to rebel groups as a "cost-saving device"[15] that allows them to avoid resource expenditures and deaths resulting from direct confrontation with armed states.[16] Nevertheless, there are two major drawbacks of delegating to rebel groups: adverse selection and agency loss. *Adverse selection* occurs when principals select agents based on imperfect information.[17] In other words, they may end up supporting unreliable rebel groups that shirk responsibility. *Agency loss* (or agency slack) refers to the principal's loss of authority over the rebel group when it pursues a course of action that diverges from the sponsor state's preferences.[18] In order to minimize adverse selection and agency loss, also called moral hazards, states can design screening processes to select reliable agents and monitoring mechanisms to keep an eye on rebel group activity.[19]

However, most principal-agent analyses of state sponsorship implicitly assume that state policy towards a rebel group remains largely unchanged if states are careful in selecting clients with converging preferences and instilling mechanisms of control. Empirical evidence seems to suggest otherwise. For example, India supported the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and granted the group material aid throughout the 70s.[20] Mutual opposition to the Sri Lankan government facilitated an alliance between the sponsor state and the rebel group. However, the Indian state later changed its policy towards the LTTE and engaged in an armed confrontation with the group when it decided to send in a contingent of Indian soldiers to implement a peace agreement.[21]

Principal-Agent Approach)," *Foreign Policy Analysis* (2014): 3, doi:10.1111/fpa.12069; Salehyan, Siroky and Wood, "External Rebel Sponsorship," 638.
[15] Salehyan, "The Delegation of War," 502.
[16] Salehyan, Gleditsch, and Cunningham, "Explaining External," 713.
[17] Salehyan, "The Delegation of War," 502.
[18] Byman and Kreps, "Agents of Destruction?" 6.
[19] Salehyan, "The Delegation of War," 502.
[20] Byman and Kreps, "Agents of Destruction?" 1.
[21] Ibid.

Only a few studies have acknowledged the changing nature of state sponsorship. The change can either come from actions taken by the rebel groups or by the sponsor state itself.[22] From the rebels' side, change can occur when weakly organized groups engage in acts of defiance, oppose sponsor directives or switch to the rival's side.[23] The sponsor state can also enact changes in the relationship when it terminates support for the rebel group, an occurrence more common among state sponsors that lack ethnic bonds with their client or those that have shown a past record of sponsorship termination.[24] One research gives a structural explanation of why state sponsorship has changed over the last two centuries and argues that variation in "great-power competition, norms of national self-determination, and globalization" has led to changing patterns of sponsorship.[25]

However, this strand of scholarship does not explain why an external state's sponsorship *policy* shows changes over periods of time. Mainly, there are two main weaknesses of prior scholarship examining changes in state sponsorship. First, it does not acknowledge that state support, in addition to exhibiting persistence or termination,[26] can also fluctuate. This means that sponsor state support can not only resume after temporarily stopping but also demonstrate variation in *intensity*. For example, what started as primarily economic aid can go on to include political or military support later in the relationship. In contrast, most analyses are concerned with examining changes in binary measures of sponsor support, thus making conclusions about when support started or terminated rather than looking at shifting levels of intensity as well.

[22] Niklas Karlén, "Turning off the Taps: The Termination of State Sponsorship," *Terrorism and Political Violence* (2017): 3, doi: 10.1080/09546553.2017.1282861.
[23] Popovic, "Fragile Proxies," 925.
[24] Karlén, "Turning off the Taps," 14.
[25] Ryan Grauer and Dominic Tierney, "The Arsenal of Insurrection: Explaining Rising Support for Rebels," *Security Studies* (2017): 2, https://doi.org/10.1080/09636412.2017.1386936.
[26] Karlén, "Turning off the Taps," 2.

Second, studies focusing solely on sponsor support do not tell us about the kind of strategy sponsor states are following to manage rebel group behavior. This includes the policy sponsor states have formulated to deal with potential agency loss. Just as state support to rebel groups can terminate or decline, sponsorship policy also exhibits a dynamic pattern consisting of varying strategies for controlling rebel group actions. For example, the Pakistani establishment has allegedly demonstrated a varying policy towards various Kashmiri insurgent groups battling Indian occupation forces in which it appears to back certain groups at different points in time while ceasing support for others.[27] Similarly, Syria supported the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) in 80s and 90s before ceasing sponsorship in 1998.[28] A singular analysis of support incidence and termination does not reveal sponsor state motivations for changing their policy towards the rebel group over the period of the sponsorship. Furthermore, current theories do not provide us with a generalized framework that allows speculation about alterations in sponsorship policy.

Rebel Groups as Assets or Liabilities: Moving Towards a Perception-Based Explanation of State Sponsorship

This thesis is concerned with explaining changes in a state's sponsorship policy towards a rebel group. It seeks to provide an answer to this puzzle by offering a perception-based explanation of state sponsorship policy. The limitations of focusing on sponsor perceptions is acknowledged, as they are difficult to gauge and can be misperceived by observers. However, a focus on sponsor state perceptions is a step beyond prior studies that treat external states as uniform actors harboring a consistent policy on how to best approach their client organizations. Moreover, a perception-based explanation will encourage future studies to pay closer attention towards the speech and actions of sponsor states that are often enablers of the insurgency. Most studies in civil war

[27] "Who are the Kashmir militants?" BBC, August 1, 2012, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-18738906.
[28] Karlén, "Turning off the Taps," 8.

research exhibit a bias for examination of rebel groups rather than external entities granting them resources to fight in the first place.

The thesis posits that the sponsor state leadership perceives rebel groups as either security assets or security liabilities depending upon whether the sponsor state can exert a degree of control over rebel activity. Building on this assumption, I argue that shifts in sponsor state perceptions of the rebel group causes changes in sponsorship policy. Then I build a theoretical model in which sponsorship policy is determined by intensity of support and state control measures ranging from conciliatory to sanctioning. I divide both state perceptions and policy into three types and hypothesize that at the initial phase of the sponsorship, states will perceive rebel groups as security assets and follow a policy of support while implementing minimal or modest controls on the group's activity. If sponsor states face moderate agency loss, they will shift their perception of the group from asset to 'mixed,' a term I introduce in the theoretical section to mean rebel groups seen as occupying a status in between asset and liability. This shift will result in the state also following a 'mixed' policy that combines conciliatory and sanctioning control measures to rein in the group. Finally, if rebels continue to defy the sponsor state and significantly harm its security interests, it will shift its perception of the group from mixed to liability and adjust its policy accordingly, this time focusing on punishing the groups.

I use longitudinal analysis and process-tracing to test this hypothesized trajectory of shifts in state perceptions and resultant policy adjustments. My dependent variable is sponsorship policy. In contrast to other studies, I use a non-binary measure of support called intensity adapted from Saideman's work on sponsorship of ethnic groups.[29] In addition to support, I infer the overall value of sponsorship policy by also observing the kind of control measures being used by the state. The

[29] See Stephen M. Saideman, "Discrimination in International Relations: Analyzing External Support for Ethnic Groups," *Journal of Peace Research* 39, no. 1 (2002): 34, http://www.jstor.org/stable/425256.

independent variable of state perception is measured by observing sponsor actions and statements as proxies. I test the theory using Jordanian and Syrian sponsorship of Palestinian guerrilla groups in the late 60s and 70s.

The thesis is divided into three chapters. Chapter 1 presents an overview of literature on external state sponsorship. It highlights a theoretical vacuum when it comes to studying changes in sponsorship policy and proceeds to offer a perception-based theory of studying this phenomenon. It also provides the research design and presents a note on why Jordan and Syria were selected as case studies. After briefly going through some background history, I move on to theory testing in Chapter 2, which covers the Jordanian sponsorship policy. I find that King Hussain's policy towards the rebel groups corresponds to theorized expectations. In Chapter 3, I examine changes in Syrian sponsorship policy and find partial support for confirming the hypothesis because the initial stage of Syrian policy differs from the theoretical expectation. In addition, I find that the theory does not take into account state control over coercive institutions, an important factor that facilitated Syrian control over the guerrillas. The final section concludes the thesis by summarizing the findings and discussing policy implications. I end by suggesting some future avenues for research.

Chapter 1: Theorizing Changes in External State Sponsorship

1.1 Literature on External State Support

In this section, I first provide an overview of the literature on external state sponsorship of rebel groups and point out its limitations. In summary, scholarship does not give us a general theory of when and why sponsorship policy of states backing rebel groups undergoes changes over the course of the relationship. Then I present a theory that seeks to explain changes in external state sponsorship by emphasizing the role of state leadership perceptions of rebel groups as either security assets or security liabilities. I lay out some expectations derived from the theory and present the research design. I also justify the case selection and provide some background information.

The study of state sponsorship of rebel organizations has done in well in explaining what motivates the decision to support these groups and the costs and benefits of such a strategy.[30] States often use rebel groups as a covert strategy to undermine rivals[31] while avoiding the costs associated with inter-state warfare such as troop casualties and governance of enemy territory.[32] Sponsorship can also serve as a way for weak states to extract greater concessions from the rival in bargaining processes.[33]

Most studies use the principal-agent framework to analyze relationships between sponsor states and rebel groups.[34] States act as principals when they task rebel organizations with carrying

[30] Salehyan, "The Delegation of War," 495; Daniel Byman, "Outside Support," 986.
[31] Salehyan, Gleditsch, and Cunningham, "Explaining External," 727; Zeev Maoz and Belgin San-Akca, "Rivalry and State Support of Non-State Armed Groups (NAGs), 1946-2001," *International Studies Quarterly* 56, no. 4 (2012): 720, doi:10.1111/j.1468-2478.2012.00759.x.
[32] Salehyan, "The Delegation of War," 503; Byman, "Outside Support," 986.
[33] Bapat, "Understanding State Sponsorship," 3.
[34] Salehyan, "The Delegation of War," 495; Byman and Kreps, "Agents of Destruction?" 3; Salehyan, Gleditsch, and Cunningham, "Explaining External," 711; Popovic, "Fragile Proxies," 923; Szekely, "A Friend," 3; Salehyan, Siroky and Wood, "External Rebel Sponsorship," 638.

out certain objectives as a means of avoiding the costs of direct confrontation with the rival state.[35] The rebel groups in turn function as agents as they give up a degree of autonomy over decision-making by accepting the sponsor's offer of support.[36] However, despite its benefits, sponsorship has to be weighed against the risks of autonomous agent action. Sponsors might face agency loss, a moral hazard associated with delegation,[37] which occurs when an agent engages in "shirking behavior – the act of an agent seeking to advance his preferences rather than those of the principal."[38] In other words, it entails costs created by "undesired independent action."[39] There are several ways in which agency loss can occur in the context of an external state sponsorship. For example, rebel groups can apply sub-par efforts in fighting the rival state, engage in activities that are opposed to sponsor interests or incite a military response by the rival state by engaging in careless episodes of violence.[40]

Therefore, sponsor states can use three tools to exert control over rebels and minimize agency loss: "screening and selection mechanisms, monitoring, and sanctioning."[41] Salehyan, Gleditsch, and Cunningham have focused on sponsor criteria that determine what kind of groups are more likely to receive state sponsorship over others.[42] They find that moderately strong rebel groups having transnational ties and fighting a state that is engaged in a rivalry possess a greater a chance of being selected as an agent.[43] However, their study suffers from an implicit assumption that state sponsorship tends to be fairly consistent over time if sponsors pick their groups based on

[35] Salehyan, "The Delegation of War," 502.
[36] Salehyan, Gleditsch, and Cunningham, "Explaining External," 717.
[37] Salehyan, "The Delegation of War," 495; Salehyan, Siroky and Wood, "External Rebel Sponsorship," 638; Salehyan, Gleditsch, and Cunningham, "Explaining External Support," 714; Popovic, "Fragile Proxies," 924; Henning Tamm, "Rebel Leaders, Internal Rivals, and External Resources: How State Sponsors Affect Insurgent Cohesion," *International Studies Quarterly* 60, no. 4 (2016): 601 doi:10.1093/isq/sqw033; Byman and Kreps, "Agents of Destruction?" 6;
[38] Byman and Kreps, "Agents of Destruction?" 6.
[39] Ibid.
[40] Salehyan, "The Delegation of War," 504; Byman, "Outside Support," 987; Bapat, "Understanding State Sponsorship," 2.
[41] Ibid., 505.
[42] Salehyan, Gleditsch, and Cunningham, "Explaining External Support," 711.
[43] Ibid., 727.

a careful selection process that minimizes adverse selection and ensures preferences are aligned. This tends to overestimate the effects of certain categories like shared ethnic ties between the sponsor state and the rebel group. For example, divergences between the Taliban and Pakistan do occur despite common ethnic bonds between the insurgents and the Pakistani military.

Byman and Kreps acknowledge that principal-agent relationships undergo periods of tension. Principals face the possibility of agency loss and can devise control mechanisms that "intend to create convergence between agents' behavior and principals' objectives" but "may reduce the benefits that inspire the use of agents at all."[44] These involve institutionalizing principal authority, monitoring, screening, using multiple agents and imposing sanctions.[45] However, the study is unable to explain when state sponsors choose to discipline rebel groups using one control mechanism over another. To counter agency loss, do sponsors go for institutionalization of control over the rebel group or its destruction? To what extent are sponsors willing to incur the costs of managing a group that displays considerable shirking behavior? These are some of the questions that arise from the work.

A few studies have examined why states show changing support for rebel groups. State sponsors can withdraw their support of the rebel group,[46] back internal rivals within the group[47] or shift their support to another rebel group. Karlen finds that an absence of ethnic ties between the sponsor state and the rebel group is a key predictor of unreliable principals.[48] He observes that important triggers such as sanctions on the sponsor state, changes in its political leadership, economic shocks and domestic strife do not in general predict termination and that "support

[44] Byman and Kreps, "Agents of Destruction?" 9.
[45] Ibid., 9-11.
[46] Karlén, "Turning off the Taps," 2.
[47] Tamm, "Rebel Leaders," 602; Byman, "Outside Support," 987; Kristin M. Bakke, Kathleen Gallagher Cunningham, and Lee J. M. Seymour, "A Plague of Initials: Fragmentation, Cohesion, and Infighting in Civil Wars," *Perspectives on Politics* 10, no.2 (2012): 270, doi: 10.1017/S1537592712000667.
[48] Karlén, "Turning off the Taps," 12.

termination is more likely to be connected to changes in a state sponsor's incentive structure rather than its capabilities."[49] Grauer and Tierney offer a structural explanation of long-term changes in sponsorship patterns and argue that great-power rivalries, an increase in norms of self-determination and globalization influence provision of external support.[50]

However, a drawback of most scholarship on sponsor-client relations is that scholars have not explicitly acknowledged state sponsorship as fluctuating between levels of high support and low support. Seeing sponsorship as entailing ups and downs is different from termination. The former suffers from the same shortcoming as studies on support incidence. It examines a singular decision by the state to stop backing a rebel group, thereby ignoring a detailed examination of prior events that motivated it. Moreover, sponsorship policy has received scant attention in the wider literature that mostly focuses on binary measures of state support. For instance, just because a rebel group receives substantial aid from a sponsor state does not necessarily imply that the state's policy towards the group is one of unconditional support. Similarly, less intense forms of support do not necessarily imply that the sponsor state is opposed to the group. Therefore, we require a theoretical framework that reconciles both state sponsor support and policy regarding its client rebel group.

1.2 Theory: Rebel Groups as Security Assets or Liabilities

This thesis makes sponsor policy towards rebel groups its explicit object of analysis and explains what drives states to show changing policies towards rebel groups. It posits that *shifts in sponsor state perception* of the rebel group as a *security asset* or a *security liability* cause changes in sponsor policy. There are three possible policies sponsor states can take with regards to rebel groups: (1) They can unconditionally support the rebel group (2) They can show a mixed strategy in which the sponsor supports the group but at the same time demonstrates disapproval (3) They

[49] Karlén, "Turning off the Taps," 12.
[50] Grauer and Tierney, "The Arsenal," 2.

can punish the rebel group for defying orders and going against sponsor interests. What causes states to demonstrate overwhelming support for the rebel groups at certain times and attempt to restrain or eliminate them at others? In other words, when do states follow one policy over another?

This thesis argues that the answer lies in the sponsor state's perception of the group as a security asset or a security liability. Whether a rebel group is perceived as one or the other or seen as occupying a middle ground between the two is affected by the extent to which the sponsor state can exert a degree of control over the rebel group, or, in other words, able to minimize the moral hazard of agency loss. The principal's loss of control over the rebel group is demonstrated by rebel defiance, "an act of disagreement with the sponsor's policy short of contract termination" or rebel desertion, "an action of contract termination through abandonment or violent confrontation with the sponsor."[51] For example, the Rwandan government created the Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo led by Laurent Kabila who later defected from his state sponsor after taking over the Congolese government from Mobutu.[52] Mobutu's desertion of his Rwandan sponsors is a textbook case of dire agency loss.

States support a rebel group when they see it as a security asset, meaning that the sponsor perceives the rebel group as augmenting sponsor security by presenting a low-cost avenue to oppose a rival with minimal agency loss. It thus backs the group through a number of ways that may include political, financial, military and territorial support. On the other hand, the group is seen as a security liability when it no longer constitutes a low-cost strategy for weakening a rival and defies principal control by following an independent course of action, overlooking orders, engaging in reckless campaigns of violence and generally compromising the security interests of

[51] Popovic, "Fragile Proxies," 925. In defiance, rebels may voice disapproval of sponsor policy and action, disobey orders and refuse participation in negotiations.
[52] Ibid., 931.

the sponsor state. Lastly, a sponsor state can perceive the rebel group as embodying characteristics of both an asset and a liability. This happens when the sponsor state must pay moderate costs for supporting the group and there is a possibility that the group can be reined in by using control measures.

Figure 1 illustrates that sponsor state policy can vary along a spectrum ranging from support on one end, management in the middle and punishment on the other end. Sponsor state policy with regards to the rebel group therefore varies from most favorable, support, to least favorable, punishment. Similarly, the independent variable, sponsor state perception, varies from asset, which implies a sponsorship policy of support and conciliatory measures of sponsor state control, to liability that implies a sponsorship policy of punishment and sanctioning measures of sponsor state control.

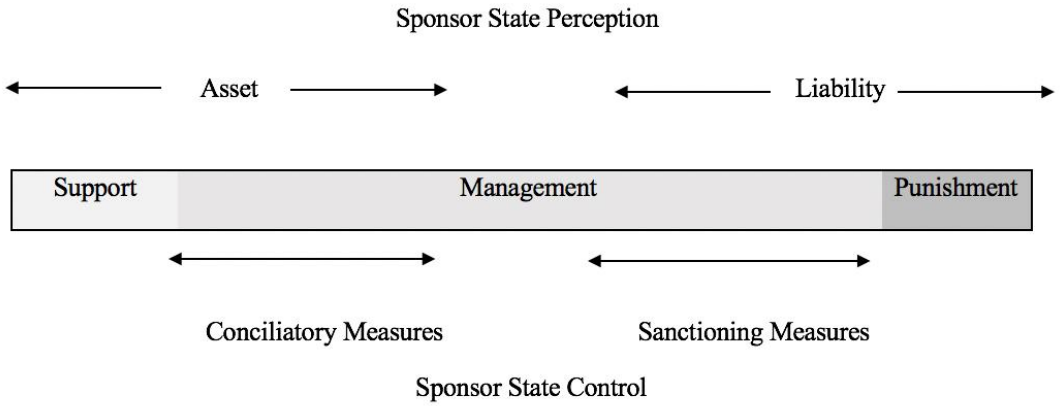

Figure 1 Sponsor State Perceptions and Control Measures

The type of sponsorship policy being followed by the state has implications for the type of control measures it implements to minimize agency loss. Cases falling under support imply that the sponsor state implements minimal control upon the rebel group. These are ideal principal-agent

relationships in which the preferences of the two actors are perfectly aligned and there is no great danger of agency loss. Rebel groups are allowed to operate as they see fit. As we move further along the spectrum, control takes the form of conciliatory measures. These mostly involve the sponsor state attempting to negotiate institutional coordination with the rebel group. For example, agreed-upon principles that regulate rebel group activity staged from the sponsor state's territory and talks that reduce misgivings are examples of conciliatory measures.

The middle segment refers to a policy employing a mixed strategy of supporting the rebel group but also placing constraints on its activity. In this policy, we see control measures that fall in the middle of conciliatory and sanctioning techniques. These include monitoring mechanisms, often involving infiltration of the group, strict regulations on rebel activity and manipulation of the group's organizational structure either by facilitating institutionalization or creating fragmentation by favoring one faction over another. Lastly, sponsor state control can involve sanctioning measures. Engaging in military posturing, supporting a rival organization, closing rebel offices and expelling members of the group from sponsor territory are all examples of sanctioning measures. The most adverse action a principal can take is punishing the agent through military action to liquidate its presence from the sponsor state's territory.

Sponsorship Expectations

The previous section argued that changes in a sponsor state's policy towards a rebel group is caused by shifts in perception of the group as either a security asset or a security liability. It then modelled sponsor state policy and perceptions on a spectrum and posited that the type of policy followed by the sponsor state corresponds to varying methods of control ranging from conciliatory to sanctioning. In this way, the theory makes a case for looking at sponsor state policy, which is different from analyses that look at forms of support only. The former includes an additional

dimension of control measures which highlight how the sponsor state is dealing with agency loss in addition to aiding the rebel group through material or political support.

In this section, I lay out some expectations derived from the preceding theoretical discussion. Figure 2 shows all the possible combinations of state perception values and sponsorship policies. The vertical axis represents the independent variable, state perceptions of the rebel group as either asset, mixed or liability, and the horizontal axis represents the dependent variable, sponsorship policy, that also has three values: support, mixed or punish.

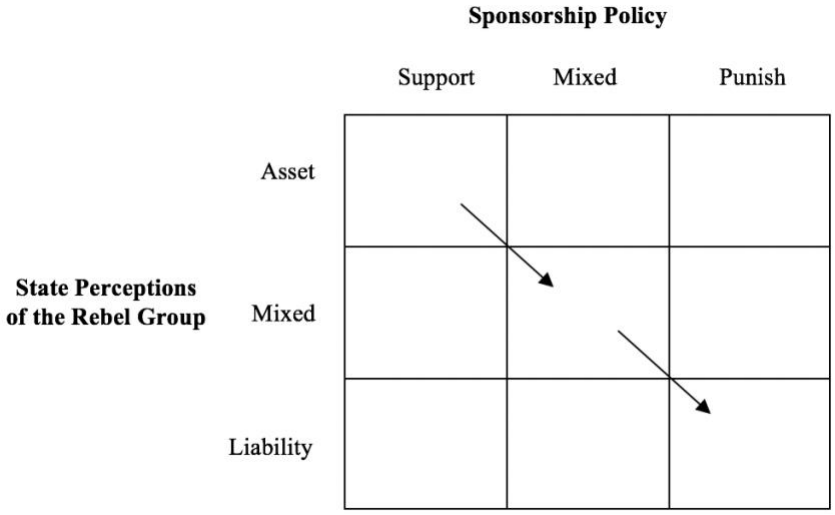

Figure 2 Possible combinations of sponsor state perceptions and sponsor policy

I expect most of the cases to cluster on a diagonal: asset, support; mixed, mixed; liability, punish. The reasoning for this expectation is discussed as follows. At the beginning of the sponsorship, the external state views the agent as a security asset and therefore chooses to support it. Should agency loss result from acts of rebel defiance, the sponsor state will shift its perception of the rebel group from asset to mixed and will attempt to regain lost agency by employing a mixed sponsorship policy. This envisions that sponsor states will use a combination of conciliatory and sanctioning measures to control the rebel group while still supporting it. The last scenario will

involve sponsor failure to minimize agency loss. If rebel groups continue to rebuff the sponsor state and engage in costly acts of defiance that imperil its core security objectives, then it will shift its perception of the group from mixed to liability. The sponsor state will therefore follow a policy of punishment that uses extreme sanctioning measures to prevent the rebel groups from compromising its interests. This will lead to a decline or termination of the support.

1.3 Alternative Explanations

There can be a range of competing explanations as to why external state support does not remain consistent over time. In this section, I choose to highlight two accounts derived from prior literature that can also serve as alternative descriptions of why state sponsors do not show a consistent stream of support towards rebel groups.

Agency Loss

A reasonable objection that might arise is that a separate model is not required to study changes in state sponsorship, since delegation theories proposed by Byman and Salehyan already consider principal-agent friction by noting that agency loss can be punished by the principal through sanctions. When the agent will digress, the state will discipline it through sanctions such as obstructing aid or eliminating the agent altogether.[53] Therefore shirking behavior by the agent would predict punitive actions by the sponsor, thus leading to a change in sponsor support and behavior.

Absence of Ethnic Ties

A second competing explanation is that an absence of ethnic ties leads to termination or fluctuation in sponsor support. If there are no ethnic ties between the sponsor state and the rebel group, the sponsor state tends to show more variation in its support,[54] since a shared ethnicity or

[53] Byman and Kreps, "Agents of Destruction," 11.
[54] Karlén, "Turning off the Taps," 14.

religion reduces the possibility of preference divergence between the two actors and therefore addresses the problem of agency loss.[55] Therefore, it can be hypothesized that states which are not ethnically related to the rebel groups have greater incentives to break off relations when their security is threatened rather than ethnically linked sponsors who will go on paying the costs of client deviation.

1.4 Research Design

In both case chapters, a longitudinal analysis of sponsorship policy is conducted in a fixed time period that is divided into segments based on differing sponsor perceptions. For measuring sponsorship policy, I look at *intensity of support* and *control measures* to infer the type of policy being followed by the sponsor state: support, mixed or punish. The reason for noting sponsor control measures in addition to support intensity is that states, for instance, give intense forms of support to the rebel groups while also constraining it through different mechanisms. Therefore, higher levels of support can be mistaken for a *policy* of unconditional support and vice versa.

I adopt Saideman's variable of support intensity which he devised to examine the "highest level of support" given to an ethnic group by external sponsors[56] for noting the type of support given to a rebel group and whether the level of intensity increased or decreased over the years. I have reproduced the labels and their corresponding descriptions in Table 1. I infer the intensity of support by using descriptive accounts in secondary literature and consulting the UCDP Primary Warring Party Dataset.[57] I also look at sponsor control mechanisms that were detailed in the prior theoretical section. These involve conciliatory measures designed to reach a *modus vivendi* with the organizations such as negotiations over rebel regulation; mixed measures that combine both

[55] Salehyan, Gleditsch, and Cunningham, "Explaining External Support," 715.
[56] Saideman, "Discrimination," 34.
[57] Högbladh, Stina; Therése Pettersson and Lotta Themnér (2011) External Support in Armed Conflict 1975-2009, Version 1-2011. The variable external_type was used to infer the intensity of support. I also use the dataset for noting the starting dates of sponsorship.

conciliatory and coercive techniques like statements signaling sponsor disapproval, organizational infiltration and imposition of restrictions on rebel activities; and, lastly, sanctioning measures that include aid cut-offs, expulsion of personnel, military signaling, support of rivals or elimination of the rebel group.

Table 1 Intensity of Support[58]

Label	**Minorities at Risk label**
None	No support received
Low	Ideological encouragement, diffuse support, other unspecified support
Moderate	Non-military financial support, access to external communications, markets, transport including the hosting of nonviolent exile organizations
Strong	Funds for military supplies, provision of military equipment and supplies, military training in exile, advisory military personnel, peacekeeping observers
Intense	Blockades, interdiction against regime, cross-border sanctuaries for armed fighters, rescue missions in country, cross-border raids in support of dissidents, active combat units in country.

I use the following proxies to infer changes in sponsor perception, the independent variable: sponsor actions and public statements. The choice of relying on public statements as proxies may be questioned since "they are cheap to make" and therefore "may be little more than empty rhetoric or bluffing devices."[59] However, I try, where possible, to link verbal statements issued by state leadership to the second proxy of state sponsor action. This provides greater evidence of a shift in perception having taken place.

[58] Reproduced from Saideman, "Discrimination in International Relations," 34.
[59] Erin K. Jenne, *Ethnic Bargaining*: *The Paradox of Minority Empowerment* (Cornell University Press: Ithaca, 2007), 49.

1.5 Introducing the Case

I test the theory of sponsorship policy by using Syrian and Jordanian sponsorships of the Palestinian Resistance (PR) as case studies. There are three reasons for selecting these two cases from the same conflict. One, they allow for some controls. I am examining two sponsors, Syria and Jordan, that are on the confrontation line, lost territory to Israel, supported the same rebels and housed insurgent bases. For this reason, similar time periods ranging from the end of the 60s till the 70s are selected. Moreover, these time periods also show perplexing sponsorship policies in which both states were simultaneously extending intense levels of support to the *fedayeen* but also criticizing their actions. In both chapters, I begin the analysis from the estimated starting year of the sponsorship. Since Jordanian sponsorship lasted only three years, it makes sense to examine the policy in its entirety. However, a complete examination of Syrian sponsorship policy will require more space. Therefore, I end the case narrative on the year 1978, since the period covered shows one complete cycle of support incidence, decline and resumption. Therefore, it lends credence to the assertion that support fluctuates as opposed to simply terminating.

The second justification revolves around availability of credible descriptive data. The Arab-Israeli conflict has been covered extensively by area specialists that have authored historical accounts based on extensive archival research and first-hand interviews. The third motivation is that the issue of Palestine has still not been resolved, and states in the Middle East continue to sponsor rebel groups in each other's territory as a means of waging proxy warfare. This is important, because, as noted in the introduction, Syria remains a hotbed of conflict involving myriad non-state actors supported by external sponsors. Hence, while I look at two historical cases, there is potential for the model to be applied to contemporary sponsorships when policy documents detailing sponsor activities are unearthed.

I now move on to provide a brief background history of the conflict. The 1967 Arab-Israeli War led to the collective defeat of the three confrontation states, Egypt, Syria and Jordan. Israel was now firmly entrenched in the Golan Heights, the West Bank and the Sinai, three key territories of considerable strategic importance, belonging to Syria, Jordan and Egypt respectively. United briefly by a common goal to retrieve the occupied territories, the post-war period saw emphasis on greater Arab cooperation amongst members of the confrontation line.[60] Significant losses at the hands of their militarily superior enemy meant that the states could not pressure Israel through unilateral efforts and conventional warfare.

The issue of the occupied territories thus raised the strategic importance of the *fedayeen*, the Palestine Resistance fighters, who employed guerrilla tactics to wrest control of the West Bank and Gaza Strip from Israel. Convergence of objectives led to an alliance of the confrontation states and the *fedayeen*, as the liberation of *Filastin* now overlapped with the liberation of the occupied territories.[61] Following the defeat of '67, Egypt, Syria and Jordan became the principal benefactors of the *fedayeen* that were mostly organized under the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) composed of eight rebel organizations.[62]

Two caveats are in order. First, I will not give a detailed examination of all the ways in which Syria exerted influence over the organizations, since such an endeavor is outside the scope of this paper. For instance, Syria sponsored some leftist factions such as the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine – General Command (PFLP – GC) to balance against the predominance of Yasser Arafat's Fatah in the PLO; at other times it sponsored both Fatah and the PFLP-GC; and at others it sanctioned both.[63] Second, instead of referring to the collection of the Palestinian rebels

[60] Stephen M. Walt, *The Origins of Alliances* (Cornell University Press: Ithaca, 1987), 111.
[61] Moshe Shemesh, *The Palestinian Entity 1959-1974: Arab Politics and the PLO* (Frank Cass: London, 1996), 96.
[62] Aaron David Miller, *The PLO and the Politics of Survival* (Praeger Publishers: New York, 1983), 55.
[63] Shemesh, *The Palestinian Entity*, 121.

as simply the PLO, I will use the terms "*fedayeen"*, "Palestinian Resistance fighters", "guerrillas" as well as "the PLO" interchangeably depending on whether a particular situation warrants the general label as opposed to a more specific one. For instance, when it was clear to me that Syrian actions were specifically directed towards Fatah, I use Fatah instead of *fedayeen.*

Chapter 2: Jordan as a Sponsor

The Jordanian sponsorship presents a striking case of how sponsor-client relations can gradually descend into armed confrontation. Despite a similar aim of wresting the West Bank from Israel, the sponsorship only lasted a volatile three years during which Jordanian state support changed from provision of cross-border sanctuaries into client liquidation. Despite King Hussain's numerous attempts to reach a *modus vivendi* with the *fedayeen*, the relationship ended on a bloody note as the Jordanian Army (JA) started to eliminate Palestinian bases from Jordan in 1970. This chapter shows how Jordan altered its sponsorship policy from the start of support towards its termination. It tests the theory of sponsorship policy laid out in the previous chapter by doing a longitudinal analysis using three years of Jordanian sponsorship of the Palestinian Resistance groups from 1968 till 1970. It examines this particular time period, because the short-lived sponsorship demonstrates how support can turn towards termination in response to shifting perceptions of the sponsoring actors. It therefore makes a case for paying greater attention to the dynamics of state sponsorship.

The sponsorship period is divided into three time segments, the divisions of which mark variations in sponsor perceptions of the *fedayeen*. The first segment, starting from the year of incidence 1968 and lasting till March, involves Jordan following a policy of support with minimal control and allowing the *fidai* organizations to establish bases in the East Bank since Hussain perceived them as a security asset. The second segment involves Hussain shifting his perception of the *fedayeen* to mixed following an Israeli retaliatory airstrike that accounts for his mixed sponsorship policy of attempting to negotiate a regulatory framework for *fidai* activity while applying restrained military pressure. The third segment shows how Hussain's perception of the rebel groups shifted from mixed to liability that led to a policy of punishment after excessively

defiant rebel actions threatened to derail Jordan's diplomatic opening towards regaining the West Bank and appeared to pose a danger to the Jordanian regime itself. After examining the time segments, the chapter concludes with a discussion that connects the case narrative to theoretical expectations and assesses them against the competing explanations.

2.1 Jordan and the *Fedayeen*

2.1.1 January 1968-March: The Fidai in the East Bank, a 'Risky' Security Asset

Jordan was regarded as the *al-qa'ida al-amina* (the "safe base") by the *fidai* organizations.[64] A wide refugee presence that allowed for support networks, the longest confrontation line with Israel, a physical connection with the West Bank and the largest Palestinian population residing in an Arab state meant that Jordan was an ideal base of operations for the PLO from where it could follow through on its aim of armed struggle and a 'people's liberation war'.[65] After being driven from the West Bank by the Israeli army during its campaign in the occupied territories, the PLO established its first base in Karama on the East Bank as well as a number of others along the border villages located in the Jordan Valley.[66]

After the '67 war, Jordanian leadership began to regard the *fedayeen* as 'risky' security assets since their sanctuaries had an adverse effect on state security. Cross-border raids, shelling and terrorist activities mounted by the organizations consistently put Jordanian security on the line by inciting Israeli counter-attacks. They caused entire villages to empty as Jordanian residents moved out of rebel areas of activity to avoid being killed in the fighting.[67] In addition, JA units

[64] Shemesh, *The Palestinian* Entity, 132.
[65] Ibid.; Helena Cobban, *The Palestinian Liberation Organization: People, Power and Politics* (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 1984), 46; Anat N. Kurz, *Fatah and the Politics of Violence: The Institutionalization of a Popular Struggle* (Sussex Academic Press: Brighton, 2005), 51.
[66] Jillian Becker, *The PLO: The Rise and Fall of the Palestine Liberation Organization* (St. Martin's Press: New York, 1984), 62; Shemesh, *The Palestinian Entity*, 133.
[67] Becker, *The PLO*, 62.

posted in the confrontation areas paid the costs of answering Israeli reprisal firing provoked by *fedayeen* actions.

Nonetheless, Hussain demonstrated solidarity with the *fedayeen*, as shown by his public extension of support to the PLO "without reservation" on 21 January.[68] Both strategic concerns shaping Jordanian security strategy after its defeat in '67 and domestic political imperatives preventing outright opposition motivated the decision. PLO militancy was a means to prevent the ceasefire lines from congealing into stable borders[69] in addition to constituting a potential bargaining chip in negotiations with Israel. Moreover, Jordan had to contend with the vast presence of Palestinians inside its territory. It housed the largest concentration of Palestinians among the Arab states and many these were refugees residing in the East Bank.[70] Many of the JA's cadres were also Palestinian. As far as Hussain saw, the guerrillas constituted a security asset, since they kept the border 'hot,' raised his image among the Palestinians in Jordan and facilitated an alliance with President Nasser of Egypt, leveraging the Kingdom geopolitically.

However, this did not prevent Hussain from occasionally voicing his misgivings about *fedayeen* operations that teetered on the edge of pulling Jordan into a military confrontation with Israel. Responding to *fedayeen* attacks on Israel that were staged from the East Bank, Hussain publicly admonished the organizations as early as September 1967, saying that the autonomous course of militancy pursued by them "was not part of a comprehensive Arab plan" for liberating the occupied territories.[71] Hussain's fears were not unfounded, as Karama was hit by an Israeli

[68] Yazid Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for State 1949-1993* (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 1997), 177.
[69] Paul A. Jureidini and William E. Hazen, *The Palestinian Movement in Politics* (D.C. Heath and Company: Lexington, 1976), 49.
[70] Ibid., 41; Malcolm H. Kerr, *The Arab Cold War: Gamal 'Abd al-Nasir and His Allies, 1958-1970* (Oxford University Press: London,1971), 132.
[71] Quoted in Sayigh, *Armed Struggle*, 177; Kerr, *The Arab Cold War*, 140.

airstrike on 15 February 1968 and led to armed clashes between the JA and the IDF that led to the deaths of 20 soldiers and the evacuation of the village by the majority of its 15,000 residents.[72]

The Karama attack marked the turning point after which the monarch insisted on some form of control on *fedayeen* activity, thus illustrating a perceptible shift towards *desiring* control of the rebel groups though falling short of implementing it. Harsh words of warning issued to the organizations demonstrate this. Hussain and his Minister of Interior indirectly threatened the *fedayeen* that the Jordanian state "would strike down with an iron fist on all who harmed security".[73] The king also stated that "any loyal and purposeful action…*must come through us and within what we design and plan* (emphasis added)…Any party that ignores this stand from now on and that adopts a different approach is not of us".[74] In contrast, prime minister Talhuni and the wider public harbored a positive outlook as demonstrated by approval for the resistance organizations at an assembly on 21 February.[75] Divergence over the issue of guerrilla activity within the Jordanian governing circle thus prevented translation of rhetoric into control measures.

In any case, the PLO response to the Israel Defense Forces' (IDF) Karama operation on 21 March obstructed potential moves to limit guerrilla independence due to heightened popularity of the *fedayeen* among the pro-*fidai* bloc in the government, the Jordanian public and the Arab world in general. With no curbs on their activity, *fedayeen* attacks rose through early 1968[76] and the guerrillas became bolder in their confrontation. This included a terrorist attack by Fatah that bombed a school bus in Negev on 18 March and prompted Israel to launch a military operation to

[72] Becker, *The PLO*, 62; Sayigh, *Armed Struggle*, 177.
[73] Quoted in Shemesh, *The Palestinian Entity*, 134.
[74] Quoted in Sayigh, *Armed Struggle*, 177.
[75] Quoted in Shemesh, *The Palestinian Entity*, 134.
[76] Sayigh, *Armed Struggle*, 177.

liquidate Fatah's main base at Karama as a reprisal.[77] An IDF contingent consisting of helicopters, tanks and armored columns made its way to Karama across the river and was repelled by both the JA and PLO soldiers though much of the fighting was borne by the JA's 1st Infantry Division.[78] However, the PLO came out as victors of the conflict and gained greater recognition across the Arab world for their 'heroic' stand against the incursion.[79]

Hussain was now in a dilemma with regards to his policy on the Palestinian guerrillas. On one hand, he wanted to protect Jordan from Israeli retaliation. On the other, he was compelled to demonstrate support for the *fedayeen* cause to Egypt whose support he required for a solution on the occupied territories. Consequently, Hussain went on to make his (in)famous statement in support of the *fedayeen*: "The inhabitants at Karameh put up a courageous resistance. It is difficult to for me to distinguish between *fedayeen* and others. We may reach a stage soon when we shall all become *fedayeen*".[80] Nevertheless, he qualified his praise by warning against "intensification" of military action and highlighting the need for "full coordination of fidai activity".[81] This new emphasis on coordination might have also been a result of his meeting with Nasser in April in which the Egyptian premier shot down the notion of restricting the Palestinian Resistance's actions and instead called for synchronizing JA activities with Fatah.[82]

2.1.2 May 1968-June 1970: Appeals for Coordination

Following Karama, the *fedayeen* grew in size, influence and scale of activity, thus prompting Hussain to intensify his efforts of enforcing a regulatory framework on the

[77] Kurz, *Fatah*, 54; Becker, *The PLO*, 62; Miller, *The Politics of Survival*, 25; Nigel J. Ashton, "Pulling the Strings: King Hussein's Role during the Crisis of 1970 in Jordan," *The International History Review* 28, no.1 (2006): 99, http://www.jstor.org/stable/40110724.
[78] Sayigh, *Armed Struggle*, 178.
[79] Sayigh, *Armed Struggle*, 179; Becker, *The PLO*, 64; Kerr, *The Arab Cold War*, 141.
[80] Quoted in Becker, *The PLO*, 64; Sayigh, *Armed Struggle*, 179; Shemesh, *The Palestinian Entity*, 134; Cobban, *The Palestinian Liberation Organization*, 48.
[81] Quoted in Shemesh, *The Palestinian Entity*, 134.
[82] Ibid.

organizations' military actions. In this period, Hussain's perception of the guerrillas shifted from asset to mixed, as the Israelis stepped up reprisal attacks following unregulated *fedayeen* incursions. Therefore, Hussain also followed a mixed sponsorship policy in which he unsuccessfully attempted to reach an agreed-upon framework for *fedayeen* coordination with the JA and applied limited military pressure to coerce the organizations into accepting Jordanian restrictions.

The PLO started expanding its presence beyond the border areas to urban civilian centers and refugee camps in addition to establishing an office in Amman.[83] Salt in the north became its new major camp after the destruction of Karama.[84] The extent of the growth was unprecedented, and it was estimated that that the PLO contained a total of 3,000 troops in June 1968 which it divided among sectors, bases, squads and units stretching from the north towards the south of Jordan.[85] Enhanced military organization was also accompanied by the development of parallel state structures by the middle of 1969. These included separate police units, dispute resolution mechanisms and an altogether distinct legal system.[86] For Hussain, *fedayeen* institutionalization was a threat to his claim of representing the Palestinian people and aim of retrieving the West Bank. This time Hussain was not the only one irked by the Palestinians blatantly flexing their muscles in the face of Jordanian authority. The JA begrudged the *fedayeen* taking sole credit for thwarting the IDF at Karama[87] despite the Jordanian forces suffering greater losses and shouldering the bulk of the military efforts. The Jordanian security forces were further emasculated by the

[83] Iris Fruchter-Ronen, "Black September: The 1970–71 Events and their Impact on the Formation of Jordanian National Identity," *Civil Wars* 10, no.3 (2008): 247, doi: 10.1080/13698240802167991; Joseph Nevo, "September 1970 in Jordan: A Civil War?" *Civil Wars* 10, no.3 (2008): 221, doi: 10.1080/13698240802168056; Sayigh, *Armed Struggle*, 179.
[84] Becker, *The PLO*, 64.
[85] Sayigh, *Armed Struggle*, 181.
[86] Ibid., 244; Shemesh, *The Palestinian Entity*, 132; Becker, *The PLO*, 65.
[87] Ashton, "Pulling the Strings," 100.

fedayeen freedom of action within Jordan that saw them set up their own checkpoints, issue vehicle licenses and fire on policemen and soldiers.[88]

The IDF responses crystallized Hussain's shift in perception of the *fedayeen* from asset to mixed and raised the urgency of devising a formal mechanism of JA military coordination with the guerrillas. The latter half of 1968 saw him attempting to negotiate a *modus vivendi* with the *fedayeen* who agreed in word but diverged in practice. After the IDF shelled Irbid on June 4, Fatah shrugged off Jordanian security fears even after agreeing to Hussain's demands for greater coordination.[89] Another IDF attack on Salt and shelling by the *fedayeen* from the East Bank led to another agreement in September on coordination with the JA and new restrictions on using the East Bank as a staging ground.[90] This was also violated by the resistance groups. When Hussain tried to force implementation, accusations of cooperation with Israel emerged, and this downward spiral into open hostility was aggravated by Fatah launching a rocket from Aqaba into Israel and street protests in support of the *fedayeen* in November.[91]

When conciliatory measures failed to restrain the *fedayeen*, Hussain proceeded towards applying limited military pressure to extract an agreement from them. The military attacked Fatah and Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) bases in Amman and Zarqa and forced the *fedayeen* to come to an agreement on 16 November whose major points included: limitations on bearing weapons, arresting persons and recruiting deserters from the army; coordination with the JA commanders on infiltration and prohibition of shelling Israel from the East Bank; and creation of a coordinating committee for resolving tensions between the guerrillas and the

[88] Becker, *The PLO*, 65; Sayigh, *Armed Struggle*, 243.
[89] Shemesh, *The Palestinian Entity*, 135.
[90] Ibid.
[91] Ibid.; Becker, *The PLO*, 66;

regime.[92] The organizations violated it soon after it was devised, probably because of the severe limitations it placed on their operational capacity.

However, Egyptian influence pushed Hussain into diluting his stance towards the organizations following his inability to reach a political solution on the territories on his own. Fearing that Nasser might undertake unilateral talks with Israel, Hussain kept the IDF busy on the border, reinforced his support for the *fedayeen* by publicly stating that they received help from the JA and even consented to Fatah's request for restarting financial aid in February 1969.[93] The looser leash upon the *fidai* operational activities can be gauged from the fact that guerrilla activities peaked to an average of 203 in 1969, and the IDF responded by targeting Jordanian infrastructure, such as the strike on the Aqaba port after a guerrilla attack on Eliat in April, to pressure Hussain into controlling the insurgents.[94]

The impact of Israeli retaliation was not lost on Hussain, however, who took steps to strengthen Jordan's security and intelligence forces in anticipation of conflict with the organizations.[95] To counter Fatah influence inside the army, Hussain undertook a campaign in which he bolstered ties with the Trans-Jordanians, who provided the majority of the JA's commanding officers and the rank-and-file, and depicted the *fedayeen* as godless heathens while raising the nationalist, religious and traditionalist credentials of the Hashemite monarchy.[96] He also established a separate intelligence wing called the Special Branch led by his uncle and Commander-in-Chief, Nasir Bin Jamil.[97] .

[92] Shemesh, *The Palestinian Entity*, 135; Becker, *The PLO*, 66; Kurz, *Fatah*, 59.
[93] Shemesh, *The Palestinian Entity*, 136.
[94] Sayigh, *Armed Struggle*, 202.
[95] Shemesh, *The Palestinian Entity*, 137; Sayigh, *Armed Struggle*, 245.
[96] Sayigh, *Armed Struggle*, 245; Fruchter-Ronen, "Black September," 249.
[97] Ibid.

The Rogers Plan announced in December 1969 after American politicking in the Middle East convinced Hussain that the *fidai* organizations had to be constrained if negotiations over the West Bank were to ever transpire. It called for an end to the Egyptian-led War of Attrition against Israel since'67 defeat, Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories and implementation of UNSC resolution 242.[98] Hence, it provided an impetus for Hussain to prove to the US that he could stop the *fedayeen* from operating on the East Bank at least.[99] The security advantage of using the groups for applying pressure on Israel had considerably declined by then because a strategy aimed at coercing Israel into complete withdrawal from the occupied lands was leading nowhere. Moreover, competition between Hussain and the organizations over the right of Palestinian representation also negated their importance for the Jordanian regime. This was illustrated by Hussain's silence on the matter in the Rabat Summit in December in which the Arab states implicitly recognized the PLO as the Palestinian representative.[100]

Fearing that the *fedayeen* would contest his claim on the West Bank and sabotage Jordan's chances for a settlement, Hussain again turned towards regulation of *fedayeen* activity that was vehemently opposed by the organizations. He published a set of governmental decrees that were stricter than the 1968 limitations on the organizations, since they also imposed restrictions on public demonstrations, publications and political parties.[101] The announcement resulted in an eruption of conflict between the regime and the *fedayeen* as Hussain attempted to forcefully implement the decrees and only ended when Iraq stepped in to mediate a ceasefire.[102] Talks between Arafat and the King led to the PLO agreeing to regulate *fedayeen* action in urban centers

[98] Resolution 242 was opposed by the Palestinian groups since it required recognition of Israel and depicted the Palestinians as refugees rather than a people seeking a separate state. See Becker, *The PLO*, 75.
[99] Shemesh, *The Palestinian Entity*, 137.
[100] Ibid., 131.
[101] Sayigh, *Armed Struggle*, 247; Ashton, "Pulling the Strings," 100; Shemesh, *The Palestinian Entity*, 137.
[102] Shemesh, *The Palestinian Entity*, 138.

and Hussain removing his anti-guerrilla interior minister in exchange for the concession.[103] The reason behind this questionable placatory move was to avoid backlash from pro-PLO figures in his cabinet such as Talhuni.[104]

While an understanding developed to some extent between Hussain and Fatah, the anti-regime stance of the radical organizations eliminated any prospects of the Jordanian regime ever reaching a *modus vivendi* with the organizations. Demonstrations by the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) and a break-in by the group at the American embassy caused under-secretary of state, Joseph Sisco, to call off his visit to Jordan in April 1970.[105] The leftist organizations also engaged in inflammatory anti-regime rhetoric. PFLP leader George Habash called upon the Palestinian resistance to "respond to every plot and blow with two blows in return."[106] The organizations started to openly talk of regime removal, including Fatah which replaced calls of the "Palestinian resistance" with those of "the Palestinian revolution".[107] Then, the JA and the guerrillas engaged in series of deadly clashes in June after the PFLP took 88 hotel guests as hostages, and Fatah fired at the palace as a reprisal for the government military action.[108] Wanting to defuse tensions, Hussain attempted to lull the organizations once more by offering concessions and avoiding all-out war. These included the offer of a government post to Arafat (which he declined), the resignation of Commander-in-Chief Nasir Bin Jamil and the formation of a pro-*fidai* cabinet that increased aid to the organizations.[109] Arab pressure and the prospect of Iraqi intervention had apparently forced Hussain to adopt a conciliatory stance.[110] This could not

[103] Ibid.; Sayigh, *Armed Struggle*, 247.
[104] Shemesh, *The Palestinian Entity*, 138.
[105] Sayigh, *Armed Struggle*, 251; Shemesh, *The Palestinian Entity*, 139; Jureidini and Hazen, *The Palestinian Movement*, 57.
[106] Quoted in Sayigh, *Armed Struggle*, 251.
[107] Nevo, "September 1970," 225; Abu Iyad, a *fidai* operative, later admitted that there had indeed been a plan for a coup. See Becker, *The PLO*, 75.
[108] Sayigh, *Armed Struggle*, 252; Charles D. Smith, *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict* (St. Martin's Press: Boston, 2010), 321.
[109] Shemesh, *The Palestinian Entity*, 139; Sayigh, *Armed Struggle*, 252; Jureidini and. Hazen, *The Palestinian Movement*, 55.
[110] Sayigh, *Armed Struggle*, 252.

hide that Hussain perceived his submission to the organizations as a harsh blow. In response to the sacking, Hussain warned the *fedayeen* that "this is the last chance after which there is no other."[111]

2.1.3 July 1970-July 1971: Black September and Fidai Liquidation

Jordan's acceptance of the Rogers Plan on 26 July, thus following Egypt in declaring a ceasefire with Israel, resulted in Hussain's shift in perception of the groups from mixed to liability. The radical organizations labelled Hussain's political move as an act of treason and used it as an opportunity to further intensify activity, thereby going against the tacit agreement reached between Hussain and Arafat after the previous confrontation.[112] For example, the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PDFLP) declared its intention to transform Jordan into "an Arab Hanoi."[113] This time the organizations also criticized Egypt, which led to Nasser expelling members of the PFLP and the PDFLP from Egypt.[114] Nasser's disapproval of the *fedayeen* provided Hussain the green light he had been looking for to start moving against the organizations. In a meeting on 21 August, Hussain pressed upon Nasser that he could no longer tolerate *fedayeen* misbehavior, saying "there is a limit to my patience" and interpreted the talk as allowing him to target the PFLP and the PDFLP.[115] Moreover, Nasser was engaged in his own negotiations with Israel, and overtly supporting the dissenting groups was not a move he was likely to consider at this point.[116] Therefore, Hussain no longer felt constrained by regional forces and had consolidated control over the JA. All he needed was a trigger.

The leftist groups would provide the Jordanian regime with a pretext for crushing the movement once and for all. Intermittent clashes between the JA and the *fedayeen* spiraled into

[111] Quoted in Sayigh, *Armed Struggle*, 253.
[112] Kurz, *Fatah*, 61.
[113] Quoted in Shemesh, *The Palestinian Entity*, 142.
[114] Sayigh, *Armed Struggle*, 253-54; Shemesh, *The Palestinian Entity*, 109.
[115] Quoted in Shemesh, *The Palestinian Entity*, 142.
[116] Becker, *The PLO*, 75.

continuous fighting by the end of August.[117] In the midst of the combat, there was an attempt, apparently by the PFLP, to assassinate Hussain on 1 September while he was traveling to the airport.[118] Then on 6 September the PFLP was involved in hijacking four airplanes and landing two of them in an airfield, located some miles away from the Jordanian palace, where the planes were destroyed and the passengers were taken as hostage.[119] After the hijackings, Hussain declared, "Things cannot go on. Every day Jordan is sinking a little,"[120] thus signaling his exasperation.

Hussain resolved to punish the organizations for what he considered was a blatant violation of Jordanian sovereignty. Moreover, inability to exercise control over the *fedayeen* at this point would have derailed the developing rapprochement with the United States and Israel. Having brought the JA under his command, the monarch moved to liquidate the guerrillas. On 17 September, the military launched an offensive against the organizations and started to cleanse Amman of the rebel sanctuaries.[121] It targeted guerrillas in Irbid and Zarqa and drove them towards their northern strongholds. The operation would continue until the *fedayeen* were completely eradicated despite the negotiation of an agreement on 27 September at the behest of Arab pressure. It should be noted that Arab states engaged in political maneuvering but fell short of intervening in favor of the guerrillas with the sole exception of Syria. Nasser told Hussain to refrain from eliminating the groups,[122] and the Cairo Summit was held to broker a truce between Hussain and the PLO. However, the Egyptian leader passed away the next day. His death made it all the easier

[117] Sayigh, *Armed Struggle*, 259.
[118] Sayigh, *Armed Struggle*, 259; Fruchter-Ronen, "Black September," 249; Becker, *The PLO*, 755-76.
[119] The exact details of the hijacking vary from source to source. See Smith, *Palestine*, 321; Fruchter-Ronen, "Black September," 249; Sayigh, *Armed Struggle*, 257; Becker, *The PLO*, 74; Mishal, *The PLO under Arafat*, 14; Kurz, *Fatah*, 61; Cobban, *The Palestinian Liberation Organization*, 49.
[120] Mishal, *The PLO under Arafat*, 15.
[121] Becker, *The PLO*, 76; Kurz, *Fatah*, 61; Fruchter-Ronen, "Black September," 250.
[122] Cobban, *The Palestinian Liberation Organization*, 207.

for Hussain to continue pursuing the organizations. He proclaimed on 27 September, "I can understand the term 'Palestinian resistance' but not 'Palestinian revolution.'"[123] The JA uprooted the guerrillas from the northern bases of Jarash and Ajlun in June 1971 and the main PLO office in the capital was shuttered,[124] thus completing their elimination from the *al-qa'ida al-amina*.

2.2 Changes in Jordanian Sponsorship Policy

In this section, I connect changes in Jordan's sponsorship policy to theoretical expectations laid out in the previous chapter. Table 2 shows values for both state support intensity and state control measures along with the overall value of sponsorship policy for each of the three time segments.

Table 2 Dependent Variable: Jordanian Sponsorship Policy, 1968-1971

Period	**Intensity of State Support**	**State Control Measures**	**Sponsorship Policy**
January 1968-March 1968	Intense	Conciliatory	Support
May 1968-June 1970	Intense	Mixed	Mixed
July 1970-July 1971	None	Sanctioning	Punish

The case narrative shows that Jordanian sponsorship policy follows theorized expectations regarding shifts in state perceptions of the rebel groups (see Figure 3). Hussain's sponsorship policy and perceptions of the *fedayeen* change according to the hypothesized direction illustrated in the previous chapter.

[123] Quoted in Nevo, "September 1970," 225.
[124] Kurz, *Fatah*, 62.

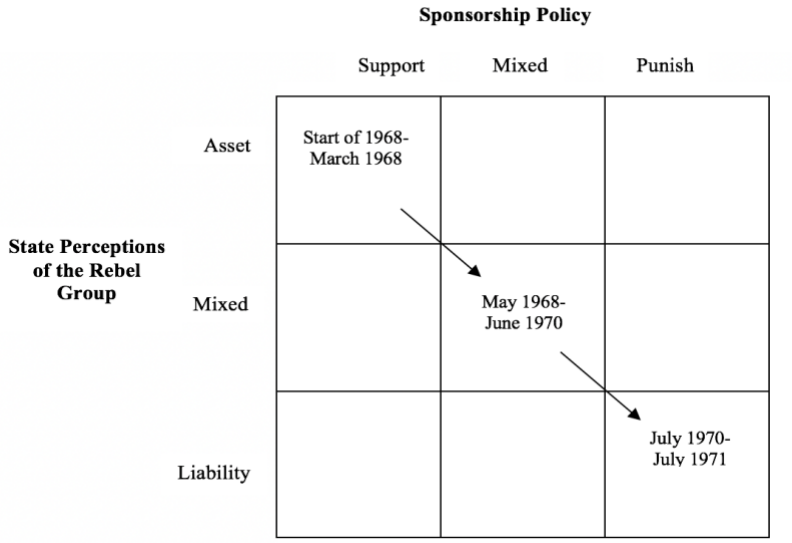

Figure 3 Jordanian State Perceptions and Policy

He began the sponsorship by perceiving the *fedayeen* as a security asset and imposed limited controls on their activity while allowing them to use Jordan as a cross-border sanctuary. He expected benefits from sponsoring the *fedayeen*, as they provided a low-cost means of exerting military pressure on Israel and were widely supported among Arab circles. However, the Karama airstrike highlighted the risks of agency loss over *fedayeen* operations. Therefore, Hussain signaled his disapproval for the organizations but was unable to implement state control measures, because pro-*fedayeen* sentiment at home and abroad prevented him from reining in the guerrillas. After their successful stand in Karama against the Israeli incursion, it would have been political suicide for Hussain to go against popular sentiment.

It might be objected that Hussain's perception of the group had already been that of mixed or liability at the very start of the sponsorship. It is important to see that it is hard to argue this with conviction at the initial stage when attitudes, actions and rhetoric have not crystallized and the

possibility of exerting greater control over the organizations is still in the horizon. In other words, it was too early for Hussain to call the organizations a liability, evict them from Jordan and call it a day without having no military alternative to contest Israeli control over the West Bank and risking opposition from pro-Palestinian actors in the JA, his cabinet and the regional neighborhood.

In the second segment, Hussain's perception of the groups shifted to mixed as a response to intensification of unregulated rebel activity that resulted in an increased number of reprisal attacks by Israel. This shift also led to Hussain changing his sponsorship policy to mixed. The policy included conciliatory control measures, such as trying to devise agreements that circumscribed the manner and extent of fidai activity, in addition to limited sanctioning measures like the JA's targeting of rebel bases in Amman. However, the level of support remained intense, a trend that mainly arose out of the guerrillas' continued use of Jordan as a sanctuary. Strangely, cancellation of the US under-secretary's visit and increasingly hostile activity by the *fedayeen* did not precipitate a policy of punishment. The preventative factor though might have been the same as the earlier period: wider Arab stance on the organizations, domestic pressures and inability to command the JA. However, Hussain initiated reforms that consolidated his control over the military. Thus, while no steps were taken that affected the organizations directly, he used other channels to counter future agency loss.

Rebel defiance took on a new dimension in the third segment. A prolonged armed clash between the JA and the guerrillas, an attempt on Hussain's life, rumors of a *fedayeen* takeover of the Jordanian regime and large-scale terrorist activity caused the Jordanian leadership to shift its perception of the rebel groups from mixed to security liability. This shift was responsible for the policy of punishment Hussain followed to end *fedayeen* presence from Jordan, as the groups had gone beyond the point at which he could have managed to keep their behavior controlled. The JA

operation directed towards eliminating the *fedayeen* from Jordan also resulted in loss of cross-border sanctuaries. Support thus declined from intense in the previous year to none in 1970. Two additional factors facilitated a policy of punishment: the 'green light' from Egypt created by the Rogers Plan and consolidation of control over the military.

How do the alternate explanations fare in accounting for changes in Jordanian sponsorship? In keeping with the agency loss argument, Hussain attempted to counter his lack of control on the *fedayeen* through control mechanisms. However, agency loss alone does not provide an explanation of when and why control mechanisms changed from negotiated agreements to sanctioning. The perception theory of sponsorship policy sheds comparatively greater light on when we could have expected Jordanian vulnerability to translate into extreme sanctioning behavior aimed at ending the relationship. In contrast, agency loss would expect support to decline in the level of intensity and state control measures to intensify following the first Israeli reprisal attack. The theory of sponsorship policy, on the other hand, provides a nuanced explanation of how sponsorship policy changes by placing emphasis on how the sponsor state perceives rebel defiance and the extent to which it is willing to tolerate it before resorting to punishment.

The ethnic ties argument also receives limited support. MAR data notes that the Jordanians and Palestinians share significant linguistic and religious beliefs.[125] Moreover, Jordan contained a wide Palestinian population within its borders. Therefore, while ethnic similarities may have prompted Hussain to support the organizations at points, the relationship still demonstrated much volatility and bad blood. When it comes to pressing security concerns such as the survival of the regime itself, continuing to support disobedient rebels that are liabilities becomes out of the

[125] Minorities at Risk Project. (2009) "Minorities at Risk Dataset." College Park, MD: Center for International Development and Conflict Management. Retrieved from http://www.mar.umd.edu/ on: Assessment for Palestinians in Jordan.

question as the premier is forced to prioritize the survival of the state over ethnic loyalties. However, a detailed analysis is required to tease out the exact role ethnic ties had to play in the sponsorship, since political dynamics in the occupied territories may have had implications for the sponsorship. This is beyond the scope of the thesis. What it can assert with a degree of certainty is that security concerns trump ethnic identity at least for this case.

Chapter 3: Syria as a Sponsor

Syria was called "the land of the sanctuary" by the *fedayeen*, a name that highlighted its material rather than political significance.[126] From the late 60s till the early 70s, Syria provided political support, sanctuary and military training to the *fedayeen* in addition to acting as a conduit for arms supplies arriving from other state supporters.[127] In contrast to Jordan, Syrian sponsorship survived military confrontation, and its overall sponsorship policy in the time period under observation fluctuated between periods of cooperation with an intense confrontation in between.

The case narrative is divided into four time segments based on changes in the Syrian leadership's perception of the *fedayeen*. Unlike Jordan, Syrian sponsorship policy towards the groups was mixed from the starting point of support till the first major shift in February 1976 when President Asad saw the groups as 'mixed' rather than assets. In this way, Syria deviated from the hypothesized trajectory, because it started supporting the *fedayeen* with several state control measures on their activities. The second and third segments demonstrate greater evidence for theoretical expectations, as shifts in perception of the rebel groups from assets to mixed and then liabilities account for policy changes in the predicted directions of mixed and punish respectively. However, the investigation finds that the difference between the sponsorship policies of Syrian and Jordanian leadership could possibly be attributed to the actors' varying control over the state military command. As far as the alternative explanations are concerned, I find support for the agency loss argument but note that it alone does not allow observers to predict the type of policy followed by Syria, while I find no convincing evidence for the ethnic ties argument.

[126] Shemesh, *The Palestinian Entity*, 113.
[127] Ibid., 118-117; Their supply route going through Syria was called the Yasser Arafat Trail. See Becker, *The PLO*, 93.

3.1 Syria and the *Fedayeen*

3.1.1 January 1968-Januray 1976: Supporting the Palestinian Armed Struggle

Although the Baath regime perceived the guerrillas as security assets and granted them extensive political, military and territorial support, it also institutionalized control over *fidai* activity and thus exhibited a mixed sponsorship policy from the starting point of support. The regime extolled the *fedayeen* cause of a "people's liberation war" against Israeli occupation and proclaimed, "every fidai is part of the strategy of the popular liberation war."[128] It also gave the *fedayeen* weapons supplies, logistical support and bases for training.[129] However, the Syrian leadership's policy was 'mixed' rather than one of support, because it used a number of state control measures to ensure Syrian say over PLO decisions and undercut Egyptian patronage of the *fidai* organizations, primarily Fatah.

The civilian wing of the Baath regime led by Salah Jadid created the Organization of the Vanguards of the Popular Liberation War, also known as the al-Saiqa forces, in December 1968,[130] which joined the PLO and acted as a mouthpiece for Syria. It was formed to steer the course of the Palestinian Resistance in accordance with Syrian aims and counter Egyptian influence on the mainstream Fatah leadership. Despite recognizing Fatah as the leading group in the PLO at the Rabat Summit of December 1969, Syria used Saiqa presence in the legislative and executive bodies of the PLO for exercising indirect authority over their decisions.[131] Organizational infiltration was complemented by Syria's sway over the Palestinian Liberation Army (PLA), which had its headquarters in Damascus. According to the Syrian leadership, the headquarters were "extraterritorial terrain," implying that Chief-of-Staff appointments for the PLA must first be

[128] Shemesh, *The Palestinian Entity*, 113.
[129] Ibid., 118.
[130] Ibid.
[131] Ibid., 116.

approved by the Syrians.[132] This gave Syria exceptional control over the *fedayeen*, and it would use the PLA to intervene in support of and against the *fedayeen* in the Lebanese civil war.

Furthermore, several regulations governed Palestinian operations in Syrian territory. The Baath regime kept *fidai* activity in the Golan Heights tightly regulated. It also prohibited Fatah from recruiting Syrians, so they could be directed towards joining Saiqa instead, monitored the entry and exit of Fatah members and made attacks launched from Syria conditional on prior approval from state leadership.[133] Moreover, during his tenure as Defense Minister, Hafez al-Asad issued a decree in 1969 that limited the number of *fidai* groups in the country and only allowed favored clients like Saiqa and Fatah to operate there.[134] It also enhanced *fedayeen* military coordination with the Syrian army, increased the intelligence service's surveillance of the groups and made cross-border raids subject to prior approval from Asad.[135] Although Syria was the only Arab state that intervened on behalf of the Palestinian guerrillas in the Jordanian civil war, the manner of its intervention was itself constrained and limited to deployment of some PLA units. Some accounts note that Asad was hesitant in drawing the Syrian air force into battle during Hussain's clampdown on the organizations.[136] The modest nature of the foray was dictated by Asad's fear of a *fedayeen* spillover into Syria creating the same set of issues that faced by Jordan.[137]

Even though Syrian leadership changed after Asad staged a coup in November 1970, sponsorship perception did not vary significantly and the *fedayeen* were still perceived as security assets by Asad. However, he also intensified state control measures on the groups after witnessing

[132] Shemesh, *The Palestinian Entity*, 117.
[133] Ibid., 119-120.
[134] Ibid., 120.; Patrick Seale, *Asad: The Struggle for the Middle East* (University of California Press: Berkeley, 1989), 156.
[135] Ibid.
[136] Seale, *Asad*, 158.
[137] Jureidini and Hazen, *The Palestinian Movement*, 57; Other accounts mention the US lobbying the Soviets to stop the Syrians from advancing and the deterrent effect of Israeli deployment of soldiers on the Jordanian border. See Cobban, *The Palestinian Liberation Organization*, 51; Miller, *The Politics of Survival*, 31; Becker, *The PLO*, 76.

the Jordanian debacle, which highlighted the consequences of agency loss for sponsor state sovereignty. This meant Asad continued the Baath regime's 'mixed' sponsorship policy and continued to use Saiqa as a means of influencing *fedayeen* decisions, but he placed it under the direction of the army to reduce Baath party control over it. Consequently, the group echoed the Syrian leader's preferences as highlighted by its calls for formalizing the organizational structure of the PLO, greater unification among the organizations and strengthening the PLA.[138] Second, the Syrian state's opposition to Jordan continued. For example, Asad off ties with Hussain in 1971 to demonstrate solidarity with the guerrillas. The *fedayeen* were also granted sanctuary in Syria in September 1972 when the Jordanian offensive was in its last stages, and this allowed them to establish core areas of operation in Lebanon from the safety of their Syrian refuge.[139] In another example, the May of 1973 saw Asad assuring the *fedayeen* of his support in their struggle against the Lebanese Army: "We are with you beginning with political pressure, including closure of the border with Lebanon, and ending the fighting beside you."[140]

However, Asad also took occasional sanctioning measures to signal that he would not tolerate an independent course of action. For him, Syrian sponsorship of the *fedayeen* existed to further Syrian security objectives, not to support the cause of Palestinian liberation *per se.* For instance, in contrast to Jordan, the frequency of *fidai* attacks staged from Syria only increased or decreased with prior Syrian approval.[141] Asad also repeatedly criticized guerrilla tactics and terrorism as a strategy, because he wanted a greater role for the Syrian military in the struggle against Israel. He gestured towards displacing the *fedayeen* groups as the primary means of exerting military pressure on Israel by saying, "one should not put the burden of liberating the

[138] Shemesh, *The Palestinian Entity*, 211-212.
[139] Ibid., 208; Seale, *Asad*, 282.
[140] Shemesh, *The Palestinian Entity*, 202-203.
[141] Ibid., 215; Seale, *Asad*, 282.

occupied territories on the PR [Palestinian Resistance] alone; that is the task of regular forces."[142] He also warned the radical organizations to "abstain from marginal wars" and "futile suicidal acts."[143] Furthermore, after tensions heightened on the Syrian-Israeli border around the end of 1972, Syria had the *fedayeen* move further away from the confrontation line in order to establish a 15-kilometer buffer zone.[144] In another intimidating tactic, Asad expelled 15 leading members of Fatah in early 1973 as a sanction for taking part in a protest against the government.[145]

A major part of Asad's sponsorship policy revolved around *fedayeen* presence in Lebanon. After their ejection from Jordan, the Palestinian guerrillas established their principal base of operations on Lebanese soil. The *fedayeen* were mainly concentrated in the south, Arqub near the Syrian border and West Beirut where the headquarters of the PLO were located. Much like eastern Jordan, guerrilla presence coincided with intensification of Israeli reprisals. From 1969 to 1974, the Israelis conducted forty-four attacks on Lebanon that were responsible for a total of 880 civilian deaths.[146]

The conflict between the IDF and the guerrillas aggravated sectarian tensions in Lebanon. Though the Palestinian guerrillas were perceived as natural allies for the Lebanese National Movement (LNM) formed in 1973 by Kamal Junblatt, their presence irked the Christian Maronites led by Pierre Jumayil's Christian Phalanges Party that considered them as threats to Lebanon's security. In April 1975, the two sides descended into armed conflict, and the *fedayeen* allied with the LNM against the Christian Maronites that threatened to divide the country into separate Muslim and Christian enclaves.

[142] Quoted in Shemesh, *The Palestinian Entity*, 213.
[143] Ibid., 216.
[144] Ibid.; Sayigh, *Armed Struggle*, 314.
[145] Malcolm H. Kerr, "Hafiz Asad and the Changing Patterns of Syrian Politics," *International Journal* 28, no. 4 (1973): 705, see note 10.
[146] Seale, *Asad*, 275; Becker, *The PLO*, 93.

This went against Asad's regional security objectives. He considered civil strife in Lebanon as a prelude to an Israeli takeover of its weaker neighbor. The Syrian leader wanted to maintain Lebanon's territorial integrity since he regarded the country as an integral component of Syria's Western flank of defense against Israel.[147] This implied quelling any moves towards a *de facto* partition of the country.[148] Asad worried that a Christian dominated Lebanon might turn towards Israel[149] and give it a foothold in Syria's own backyard. Equally disturbing to him, however, was the notion of an Israeli invasion brought on by the victory of the Palestinian-backed Muslim Front.[150] Either way, Syria would have to contend with the Israeli military ensconced in Lebanon right next to Syrian territory.

The events of December 1975 were important in hardening Asad's determination to maintain a balance of power in Lebanon and prevent partition. In the backdrop of Maronite targeting of the Palestinians and the blockade of Beirut, he resolved to prevent Lebanon's truncation by hinting at the Syrian state's willingness intervene militarily on behalf of its Palestinian clients. Doubts regarding Syrian intentions were cleared when Asad had PLA units deployed in the Beqaa Valley on 22 December, and Foreign Minister Khaddam remarked, "Any plan to partition Lebanon will lead to instant Syrian intervention and annexation of Lebanon."[151] Following a brief show of force by the PLA in January that included positioning of the Qadisiyaa unit around the Beirut PLO headquarters,[152] Syria hoped to drive home the message that it was not averse to direct engagement in the conflict to prevent Lebanon's confessional balance from altering. In the same month, the PLO assaulted Christian militias in the coastal area of Damur as a

[147] Laurie A. Brand, "Asad's Syria and the PLO: Coincidence or Conflict of Interests?" *Journal of South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies* 14, no.2 (1990): 24; Sayigh, *Armed Struggle*, 323.
[148] Seale, *Asad*, 270; Sayigh, *Armed Struggle*, 376.
[149] Raymond Hinnebusch, *Syria: Revolution from Above* (London: Routledge, 2002), 131; Sayigh, *Armed Struggle*, 376.
[150] Seale, *Asad*, 276.
[151] Ibid.
[152] Ibid.

final step, taking many hostages and leading to a relative quiet during battle that allowed Asad to step in and mediate an end to the crisis.[153]

Wanting to defuse tensions and reach a political settlement, the final solution mediated by Asad engendered even more grievances. The Constitutional Document, negotiated under threat of possible partition from Jimayel's Maronite camp, was inadequate in the eyes of the LNM because it completely disregarded most of the reforms demanded by the Muslim front. The document's only major overhaul involved an adjustment of the Muslim share of parliamentary seats to a proportion equal to the Christians. The *fedayeen* were also embittered by Asad agreeing to such a settlement, as they were wary of possible attempts by the Maronites to limit their freedom of action in Lebanon.[154] However, Asad thought it to be a "less than ideal" though still "reasonable" settlement.[155]

3.1.2 February 1976- March 1976: Preventing Escalation and Reining in the Fedayeen

The settlement soon fell apart as both sides targeted each other in new attacks and violated the ceasefire. While in the previous round Asad had worried about a Maronite take-over of the state, this time his suspicions fell upon the LNM-Palestinian alliance that he saw compromising Syrian security interests in Lebanon. The reason was a number of defiant acts by the *fedayeen*, which they took to demonstrate solidarity with the LNM and show their disapproval for Syrian imposition of peace and interference in *fidai* affairs. Their disregard for Asad's calls to stop hostilities led to a shift in his perception of the groups from asset to 'mixed'. Seeing the organizations as spoilers of *Pax Syriana*, Asad therefore followed a 'mixed' sponsorship policy combining conciliatory control measures with mild sanctioning.

[153] Sayigh, *Armed Struggle*, 376; See also Cobban, *The Palestinian Liberation Organization*, 66.
[154] Ibid., 376.
[155] Ibid.

Though the *fedayeen* had been willing to forgo autonomy because of their heightened dependency upon Syria after Egypt's rapprochement with Israel following Arab defeat in the third Arab-Israeli war, this time they were determined to protect their independence in Lebanon, especially after the loss of Jordan as a sanctuary. Therefore, the *fedayeen* criticized Syrian interference by taking steps that went against their sponsor's essential foreign policy objective of maintaining a stable Lebanon and preventing Israeli intervention. First, Fatah accepted military aid from Egypt in the form of a PLA unit in January 1976 that aroused Syrian anxiety since it was not on good terms with Sadat following the conclusion of a disengagement agreement between Israel and Egypt in December 1975. [156] As a response, Syria organized a number of attacks on the newspaper offices of the PLO to showcase its displeasure.[157] It also sent PLA units to the Beqaa Valley and Tripoli as a means of warning "any" group against altering the status quo.[158] Then, in March Fatah helped the Arab Army of Lebanon (AAL), a Lebanese Muslim opposition group, capture army barracks in Tripoli and the south, facilitated a failed coup and published scathing critiques of a Syrian conspiracy to stop the Palestinian revolution in the PLO's magazine.[159]

For bringing the *fedayeen* back under Syrian influence, Asad applied a strategy that combined conciliatory control measures with limited coercion. For example, the months of March, April and May were marked by meetings with Arafat in which he tried to persuade the Fatah leader to drop militancy and exercise restraint.[160] As a show of reassurance, he ordered Saiqa to aid the opposition forces fighting the Maronites.[161] At the same time, Syria also closed Fatah's military

[156] Sayigh, *Armed Struggle*, 378.
[157] Ibid.
[158] Ibid., 379.
[159] Ibid., 380-81; More details on the coup are given in Cobban, *The Palestinian Liberation Organization*, 71; Becker, *The PLO*, 128.
[160] Seale, *Asad*, 283.
[161] Sayigh, *Armed Struggle*, 381.

academy in Damascus to pressure the leading *fidai* organization into reconciliation.[162] It has been argued that Arafat, too, wanted to prevent escalation beyond an "unspoken Syrian 'red line'."[163] However, a coalition consisting of the radical *fedayeen* organizations, the LNM and the Soviet faction of Fatah extended military activity towards the predominantly Maronite areas[164] instead of heeding Asad's calls to drop the fighting. This was confirmed through a meeting between Junblatt and Asad on 27 March, which revealed the LNM leader's insistence on continuing the conflict.[165] Asad then met separately with Arafat and the two decided on a ceasefire and terms of compromise involving the resignation of President Franjiyya.[166]

3.1.3 April 1976-October 1976: Siding with the Enemy, Asad's Policy of Punishment

However, Asad's efforts to reach a compromise with the mainstream Fatah leadership fell apart when the radical groups refused to obey a Syria-brokered agreement. The PFLP announced its rejection of the ceasefire agreement, saying "no to the ceasefire, no to the Syrian initiative, yes to the [military] decision," and continued assaulting the Maronite heartlands.[167] Now that the guerrillas had started to openly defy him, and he gained very little from continuing to back a warring side that risked drawing in the IDF to prevent Muslim domination of Lebanon, Asad viewed the *fedayeen* as a security liability. His sponsorship policy thus changed from a 'mixed' one to that of punishment.

This was evident by Asad's warnings to the *fidai* groups and increased Syrian military presence in Lebanon. He proclaimed in a speech on April 12: "We are against those *who insist on continuing the* fighting. A great conspiracy is being hatched the Arab nation…Our brothers in the

[162] Sayigh, *Armed Struggle*, 381.
[163] Ibid., 382.
[164] Ibid.; Becker, *The PLO*, 129.
[165] Sayigh, *Armed Struggle*, 382.
[166] Ibid., 383.
[167] Ibid.

Palestinian leadership must understand and be aware of the gravity of this conspiracy. They are prime targets."[168] Moreover, Syrian military build-up in Lebanon had already started around the beginning of April. Still wanting to avoid large-scale fighting, Arafat and Asad moved again to deescalate tensions on 16 April by negotiating a compromise agreement that promised Syrian withdrawal in exchange for *fedayeen* approval of the Constitutional Document and the election of a new president.[169] However, the Soviet Fatah faction ignored it and continued fighting. The leftist groups also targeted Saiqa in May, leading the secretary-general of the group to warn the *fedayeen* of possible intervention by its patron: "Since when is Syrian occupation of Lebanon rejected by its people, and what is patriotism if Lebanon is not part of Syria and its steadfastness against Israel?"[170] In a climatic act of rebellion, Khalaf, one of Fatah 's leading members, launched an opprobrium of Syrian military activity in Lebanon during a joint demonstration with the LNM on 15 May.[171]

Realizing that the *fedayeen* were beyond his control and talks and warnings were not going to prevent the Palestinian-LNM alliance from taking over the Lebanese state, Asad moved his troops into Lebanon to punish the *fedayeen* on 31 May.[172] June was marked by battles between the Syrian army and the PLO-LNM forces. A decisive moment of the conflict was the combined Syrian and Christian siege on the Palestinian camp of Tel al-Zaatar from 22 June to 12 August that resulted in the deaths of thousands of inhabitants.[173] Other Syrian offensives mounted in September and October further deteriorated the Palestinian position. Arafat then issued urgent appeals to the Saudi prince Fahd who responded by calling for a summit in Riyadh on October 16,

[168] Seale, *Asad*, 283.
[169] Alan Hart, *Arafat: A Political Biography* (Indiana University Press: Bloomington, 1984), 425; Sayigh, *Armed Struggle*, 386; Edgar O'Ballance, *Civil War in Lebanon 1975-92* (Palgrave Macmillan: New York, 1998), 50.
[170] Quoted in Sayigh, *Armed Struggle*, 389.
[171] Ibid.
[172] Cobban, *The Palestinian Liberation Organization*, 71.
[173] Becker, *The PLO*, 133-134; Cobban, *The Palestinian Liberation Organization*, 73.

the same day Asad announced the end of the offensive.[174] The settlement resulting from the Riyadh summit essentially legitimated Syrian military presence on Lebanese territory. One of its notable features, as far as the *fedayeen* went, was tasking the Syrian dominated Arab Deterrent Force (ADF) with administering implementation of the 1969 Cairo Agreement, that was formulated to regulate guerrilla activity in Lebanon, and ensuring that the PLO "affirms its respect for the sovereignty and integrity of Lebanon."[175]

3.1.4 1977-78: Reinstating Ties

Illustrating the fluctuating nature of Syrian sponsorship policy, the PLO-Syria rapprochement was motivated by Asad's shift in perception of the group as a 'mixed' asset again. Therefore, Syrian sponsorship policy went back to its prior form of combining higher levels of support and mixed state control measures. The establishment of the ADF gave Asad direct means to oversee *fedayeen* activity in Lebanon. This partly explains why after punishing the *fedayeen* in 1976, Asad sought an ally in them from 1977 till 1978 to counter the Egyptian-Israeli peace process.[176] Another impetus for resurgence in the relationship was the Israeli invasion of southern Lebanon in March 1978 and its alliance with a Christian militia called the Southern Lebanon Army.

These developments compelled Asad to rely on the *fedayeen* as 'mixed' assets again. The PLO now received access to the Syrian held areas of Lebanon that were under ADF control such as the north, the Beqaa Valley and Beirut, where it could set up bases and training camps.[177] The ADF obviously served a key monitoring function, hence the mixed nature of the sponsorship policy. Otherwise, the guerrillas would not have been allowed to set up bases and governance structures in Syrian held areas. When Syrian control over parts of Lebanon coincided with the twin

[174] Cobban, *The Palestinian Liberation Organization*, 75.
[175] Ibid., 76; Becker, *The PLO,* 135; Seale, *Asad*, 283.
[176] In 1978 President Sadat of Egypt made the landmark decision to sign the Camp David Accords with Israel.
[177] Sayigh, *Armed Struggle*, 449.

objectives of preventing partitioning moves and repelling the IDF, then the PLO once again started to receive support from Syria.

3.2 Changes in Syrian Sponsorship Policy

In contrast to Jordan, the intensity of Syrian support fluctuated between intense and none. Moreover, Syrian sponsorship policy showed an overall consistency as it mostly hovered around mixed with one case of punishment rather than Jordanian sponsorship policy that showed incremental changes from support towards mixed and punish. The values for the levels of Syrian support intensity and its control measures are given below in Table 3.

Table 3 Dependent Variable: Syrian Sponsorship Policy, 1968-1978

Period	**Intensity of State Support**	**State Control Measures**	**Sponsorship Policy**
1968-January 1976	Intense	Mixed	Mixed
February 1976-March 1976	None	Mixed	Mixed
April 1976-October 1976	None	Sanctioning	Punish
1977- 1978	Strong	Mixed	Mixed

The case narrative of Syrian sponsorship policy deviates slightly from theorized expectations, because, contrary to the prediction that sponsor state perceptions of the rebel group as an asset will lead to a policy of support at the beginning, Syrian perception of the group as a security asset led to a 'mixed' policy (see Figure 4). The *fedayeen* were a means to counter Egyptian influence over the Palestinian guerrillas and obstruct Nasser's strategy that favored diplomacy rather than armed confrontation, especially after the Arab defeat in the war of '73. Hence, the guerrillas were perceived as a security asset rather than mixed. Moreover, since the core of the guerrilla operations was in Jordan and Lebanon rather than Syria, it made sense for the

Syrians to give intense levels of support, consisting largely of military and logistical aid, to the *fedayeen* even under a mixed policy. Unlike its neighbors, Syria was not the *key* staging ground for the majority of the *fidai* operations. Therefore, Syria's mixed sponsorship policy was designed to capitalize on *fedayeen* strategic utility by controlling them through stronger state control measures such as voicing disapproval through Saiqa, military posturing by the PLA and strict regulations on activities while facilitating their establishment in Jordan and Lebanon to prevent Syria itself from becoming the guerrillas' principal base.

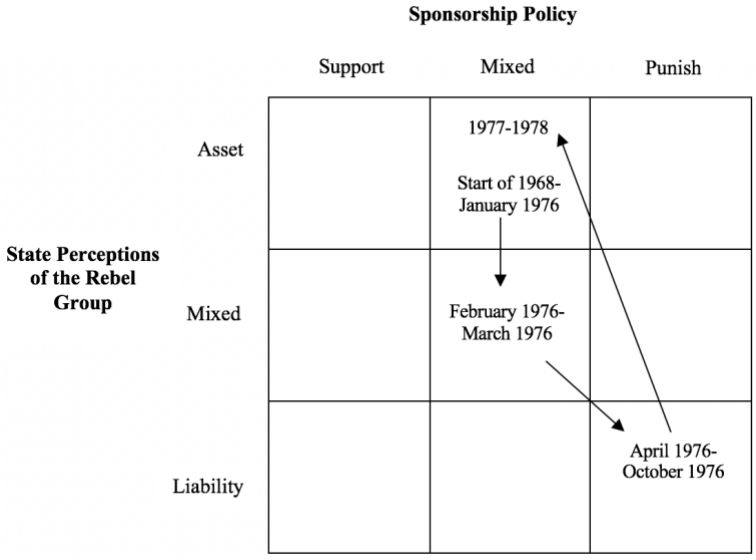

Figure 4 Syrian State Perceptions and Policy

However, the analysis also points out a crucial intervening variable that facilitated stricter control by the Syrian leadership and instead compelled Jordanian leadership to rely on verbal warnings and compromise solutions was variation in the leadership's hold over coercive state institutions. The fact that the Asad started his sponsorship with a strong hold over the military that, unlike Jordan, did not contain a significant Palestinian presence functioning as an autonomous

node of support for the rebels made it easier for Asad to enforce restrictions on the *fedayeen.* The proposed theory does not model for sponsor state's centralization of power and therefore overlooks an important variable that affects whether sponsor state perceptions could be translated into the leader's desired policy line. For example, a leader may perceive the rebel groups as mixed and will want to apply limited sanctioning to discipline the rebel groups but might follow a policy of support due to lack of control over the military command.

On the other hand, Syrian sponsorship policy in the second segment shows correspondence with the hypothesized trajectory. Asad's perception of the groups shifted from asset to mixed in this segment because striking instances of rebel defiance, like the Fatah facilitated coup, highlighted Syrian loss of agency over the *fedayeen* that Asad saw as potentially leading towards a *de facto* partition of Lebanon. However, still hoping to rein in the *fedayeen*, Asad used a combination of conciliatory control measures that included talks with the mainstream *fedayeen* leadership and limited sanctions such as the closure of the Fatah military academy. Thus, sponsor perception and the policy line emerging from it were in line with theoretical expectations which posited that sponsor states perceiving rebel groups as mixed will also follow a mixed sponsorship policy.

However, the radical factions defied Asad's calls for halting violence and rejected the compromise agreement proposed. The Syrian leader now perceived the groups as a security liability as all his attempts to reach an agreement with the groups had failed, and their offensive on the Maronite areas of Lebanon risked bringing about the feared partition and drawing in the Israeli army. There are doubts regarding the triggering event of Asad's military alliance with the Maronites in targeting the *fedayeen.* As noted in the case narrative, the Syrian military was positioned around Lebanon from April. This implies that Asad had realized that the rebel groups

needed to be reined earlier on before the offensive. I argue that public demonstrations against Syria by the leftists solidified Asad's perception of the rebel groups as security liabilities and led to the eventual military intervention in May, which he had been planning some time before.

The last brief segment is added to show the volatile nature of Syrian sponsorship and the fact that armed confrontation between the principal and the agent did not lead to a clean, sustained break in the relationship as in the case of Jordan. The Israeli-Egypt peace process and the IDF presence in south Lebanon altered Asad's perception of the groups as liabilities and led him to consider them as assets again. Asad was aware that he should support the *fedayeen* but not without control measures, as experience in dealing with the guerrillas had taught him. Therefore, Syrian support intensity spiked once more to a strong manifestation while the ADF allowed the *fedayeen* to cross into Syrian held areas of Lebanon under its gaze. If perceptional shifts are not considered, then the resumption of Syrian support poses as a perplexing choice given that Asad had just recently faced the Palestinian groups in a stand-off.

Agency loss does provide an explanation for why Syria shifted its perceptions of the *fedayeen.* However, agency loss, by itself, provides a less satisfactory account of Syrian sponsorship policy, because it could not have predicted when Syria would have followed a mixed versus a punish policy. When we factor in the additional variable of state perceptions of the rebel group, the predictive capacity of agency loss is improved as we can speculate about the kind of policy followed by the principal based on its perception of the rebel group. For example, in the second and third segments, it was rebel defiance resulting in agency loss that caused Asad change his stance on the organizations both times. However, the perception theory of sponsorship policy also allowed us to predict when agency loss would have resulted in a mixed policy versus when it would have resulted in a punish policy. Since Asad incrementally shifted his perception of the

rebel groups, first from asset to mixed, then from mixed to liability, and then to asset again, we could predict that military interdiction would be used as solution of last resort when the sponsor state would perceive the rebel groups as security liabilities rather than as an immediate response for countering rebel defiance. In summary, agency loss is part of the explanation of what causes sponsors to change policy, but it does not allow for speculation on what type of policy would be followed in each scenario.

Some accounts contend that Syrian intervention against the *fedayeen* was motivated by Asad's fear of Lebanon being solely dominated by Druze and Sunni groups opposed to the Alawite religious minority.[178] If we follow the ethnic argument, it makes sense for him to ally with the Christian Maronites in 1976. However, this line of argument does not explain why Asad consistently gravitated towards Fatah, in particular, Arafat, for defusing tensions and negotiating ceasefires. Moreover, his intervention in favor of the *fedayeen* against the Christian Maronites would not make sense in an ethnicity-based argument and neither would his support of the Fatah-dominated PLO in the first place. It was the Syrian leadership's differing perception of the *fedayeen* that determined whether and how state policy line towards them changed.

[178] Becker, *The PLO*, 129.

Conclusion

This thesis provides an answer to the question of why state sponsors change their policy towards rebel groups, a query that has not received much attention in prior scholarship on principal-agent analyses of external state support. The central argument of the thesis stated that shifts in sponsor state perceptions of the rebel groups as either security assets or security liabilities lead to alterations in the type of sponsorship policy followed by the sponsor state. By seeing sponsorship policy as entailing both intensity of support and control measures devised to minimize agency loss, this study departs from previous theories that only look at instances of support. Using Syria and Jordan as case studies, the thesis showed that changes in the state's perception of the *fedayeen* were responsible for adjustments in sponsorship policy for most of the time segments under observation.

Moreover, it demonstrated that agency loss alone explains part of the story of changes in rebel sponsorship but does an inadequate job in addressing when agency loss translates into state sanctioning measures versus when it translates into conciliatory or mixed control measures. Ethnic ties were even less successful in predicting the behavior of the two sponsor states, as both considered state security to be more important than obligations arising from ethnic bonds. However, the investigation also unearthed that state control over the military influences sponsorship policy. Therefore, a perception-based explanation, while certainly constituting a step forward, did not foresee the decisive impact a state's internal consolidation of power could have on its sponsorship policy.

There are some implications that arise from the analysis which hint at how sponsors closer to insurgencies might behave differently from those situated farther away. As illustrated in chapters 2 and 3, Syria and Jordan were located on the confrontation line with Israel and allowed

the rebels to operate from their respective territories. In Jordan, the regime begrudgingly allowed establishment of cross-border sanctuaries, while Syria facilitated *fedayeen* establishment in Lebanon which it considered as part of the Syrian sphere of influence. However, what made the sponsors into sources of intense support also eventually led them to harden their sponsorship policies over time. In Jordan, the *fedayeen* drew the ire of the Israeli military in the form of reprisal attacks. In Lebanon, Asad feared that they would alter the sectarian balance of power and compromise Syrian influence over the country. Both states militarily intervened against their agents and showed a seemingly sudden turn in sponsorship approach. This implies that states which house rebels, and are nearer to insurgencies in general, tend to be unreliable principals since their perception of rebel groups as security assets is likely to shift towards a perception of liability if cross-border rebel activity increasingly threatens their security. In contrast, sponsor states that do not have to deal with the blowback associated with provision of intense support are likely to be more consistent in their perception of the group as a security asset and hence show a relatively consistent policy of rebel group sponsorship. While not examined in the analysis, Pakistan's inconsistent policy towards Kashmiri insurgents may be connected to its role as a source of cross-border sanctuary. Future research should therefore consider whether proximity to insurgencies leads to greater variations in sponsor policy.

The findings also suggest that policymakers should pay greater attention towards the rhetoric and actions of external state sponsors. The investigation implies that external sponsors exhibiting an ambivalent stance on their client rebel groups could be lured in giving up support for the organizations if appropriate concessions are given to them. For a rival state hoping to defeat insurgencies, identifying when tensions are flaring up between the sponsor and the rebel group can help it devise a strategy for triggering liquidation of rebel bases by the host state. Furthermore, if

proximity is indeed found to influence sponsor policy, then it allows states battling an insurgency to take moderate levels of support originating from distant sponsor states as seriously as intense levels of support from states in the immediate vicinity, as the former may be more stable over time and responsible for continuation of the insurgency. In short, more rigorous research needs to be conducted to shed light on policy-relevant implications that arise when we move beyond the assumption that state policy towards rebel groups tends to be consistent. Evidence has shown that indeed it is not, and therefore we need to develop a fuller understanding of its changing nature.

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