# INTERNAL SECURITY FORCES:
## THEIR CAPABILITY, LEGITIMACY AND EFFECT ON INTERNAL VIOLENCE

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# Introduction

In January 2012, President Obama introduced new defense strategic guidance, noting that the U.S. was "joining with allies and partners around the world to build their capacity to promote security, prosperity, and human dignity....Meeting these challenges cannot be the work of our military alone."[1] States and regions often build the capability of internal security forces (ISFs) as a way to achieve their stability goals. Yet little quantitative research has focused specifically on how ISFs are related to levels of sub-state political violence. This study examines how civil conflict is shaped by both the quantity and quality of ISFs. In discussing these forces, it becomes clear that attempts to build security capacity require an interagency approach. To be effective, ISFs must operate within legitimate governance and judiciary systems and receive military, peacekeeping, and law enforcement training.

The response to internal violence within a state—caused by insurgents, terrorists, and other violent, civil-political dissenters—is primarily the responsibility of a state's ISFs. While a state's military forces are typically trained and focused on responses to external aggression, ISFs, such as police and paramilitary units, are trained and focused on countering internal aggression against the state. It follows then that the quantity and quality of ISFs are key factors that influence the amount and type of internal violence experienced by a state. However, measures of state ability to suppress internal political violence typically do not draw upon ISF data, but rather rely on indirect proxies such as measures of economic development or military forces.[2] Such proxies are problematic and have exhibited weak or contradictory results in the extant literature.[3]

One of the reasons for the lack of quantitative research on the actual capabilities of police and paramilitary forces—as opposed to proxies—is the paucity of easily available data. In order to address this problem, a new ISF dataset comprised of a combined measure of police and paramilitary forces within a state has been developed. The combined ISF data provide a more direct measure of a state's capability to combat internal security threats. The expectation is that as an ISF increases in size relative to population, the ISF will be more capable of suppressing internal violent expressions of political dissent. The first question this study seeks to answer is: Does the new ISF capability dataset have a significant negative relationship with overall levels of internal political violence?

Beyond the mere number of security forces, however, the legitimacy of ISFs may also affect levels of internal violence. Extant literature provides significant support to the relationship between a state's protections of its populace's physical integrity and overall levels of internal violence.[4] While by no means the only potential measure of state legitimacy, this analysis uses physical integrity rights, because they capture a set of serious violations of state power. Given that ISFs may be perceived as tools of the state and may themselves perpetuate rights abuses, violation of physical integrity rights may lead the populace to perceive the ISF as illegitimate. These violations may actually create or contribute to grievances against the state and, thereby, lead to increased levels of violence against the state by sub-state actors. Thus, the second question this study seeks to address is: Does the interaction between capability and legitimacy of ISFs affect the level of internal violence a state experiences?

Both of these research questions attempt to further an understanding of how and in what ways ISF capability and legitimacy actually affect levels of sub-state political violence. To answer these questions, this analysis utilizes a cross-national, time-series dataset from 1990-2005. Statistical analysis via ordinary least squares (OLS) regression of the dataset indicates support for the relationship between an increase in the capability of ISFs and a corresponding decrease in internal violence. The interaction between ISF capability and legitimacy also matters. When controlling for this interaction, the relationship between internal violence and ISFs is significant only in low legitimacy situations.

This study provides a review of the extant literature on the relationship between ISF capability and internal violence, as well as the interaction between ISF capability and legitimacy on internal violence; forms hypotheses concerning these ISF relationships; outlines a quantitative research design and methodology; and introduces a new variable describing ISFs.

After a discussion of the results from this methodology, this study concludes by discussing the implications of these findings, especially in regard to issues that surround how ISFs can be exogenously affected by actors external to the state.

# Literature Review

Existing literature often assumes that a key variable in determining the amount and type of sub-state violence is the ability of a state to repress or overcome violent dissent, often referred to as state capacity or power.[5] Such state power is "uniquely important because governments specialize in the control of mobilization and collective action."[6] Common measures of state power include military forces and materiel, economic development, or endowments such as natural resources. However, these common measures are, at best, indirect proxies and thus do not provide a precise measure of the ability of a state to put down violent sub-state actors.[7] While military forces can theoretically be used to combat grave, internal security threats, typically such interventions are discouraged by both civilian governments and military leadership. Civilian governments have a vested interest in retaining control over the military to prevent coup d'états, and this risk can be minimized by limiting the military's participation in the domestic political arena.[8]

Military leadership may also strongly wish to avoid involvement in civil strife because of professional ethics or because of a fear of losing popular support as a result of actions it may take against the citizens of its own state (Tbilisi syndrome).[9] "The armed forces have generally been reluctant to take on maintenance of law and order and counterterrorist tasks at home, preferring instead to see themselves as an external agent of the state operating beyond national borders."[10]

Thus, ISFs, rather than military, are generally the primary responders to internal violence. Yet military power is often linked to and analyzed in relationship to sub-state actors, such as rebels, insurgents, terrorists, and other violent political protestors, even though the first responders to violence by such sub-state actors are actually police or paramilitary forces.[11]

Fearon and Laitin attempted to overcome the problems inherent in military proxies of state capacity by instead utilizing a measure of gross domestic product (GDP) per capita. However, using an economic proxy for state capability to put down internal violence requires two major assumptions. The first is that an economic proxy is strongly correlated with military, administrative, and bureaucratic capability, and the second assumption is that there is a high degree of correlation between military, administrative, and bureaucratic capabilities, such that all three can be adequately measured in one economic variable.[12] Neither of these assumptions is necessarily true. As with the use of the military as a state capacity proxy, at issue is the lack of a direct relationship between state internal repressive capacity and economic measures.

Other state capability proxies look at issues such as transportation infrastructure, distance from the capital city, difficulties posed by certain types of terrain (jungle, forest, mountain, urban), and natural resource-factor endowments (gold, diamonds, oil) of the state.[13] These proxies each capture some measure of the ability of the repressive or economic abilities of states or rebel groups, but their focus on a specific narrow measure of overall state capability limits the information that can be garnered from any one of these proxies. Problems also exist with the availability of accurate data and the contradictory findings presented in a number of the studies.

This study argues that a state's ability to repress

internal dissent is better measured using those instruments of a state's power that are created specifically for that purpose, i.e., police and paramilitary units. The ability of a state to train and outfit security forces may indirectly be related to its overall economic condition, but the amount of budget dedicated to ISFs can vary widely even in states that have similar GDPs. Similarly, while military forces can and sometimes do intervene in internal political violence, the "Tbilisi syndrome" in which militaries are typically highly reluctant to undertake internal activities may effectively hinder or disallow such intervention.[14] Finally, while specific measures of the difficulty of penetrating rough terrain or the economic-endowed resources of a state may provide proxies of certain aspects of a state's repressive capabilities, these individual, uncoordinated measures do not provide enough information about overall state repressive capacity.

Quantitative research into the capabilities of a state's ISFs has been lacking despite a growing consensus that police and paramilitary forces are now more than ever responding to national security issues such as insurgencies and terrorism.[15] Fearon and Laitin note that "most important for the prospects of a nascent insurgency, however, are the government's police and military capabilities."[16] Saleyhan finds "the cost of repression" to be critical in explaining when dissent translates into violent action against the state.[17]

Therefore, measuring ISFs should provide a more accurate measure of the power of a state to repress internal political dissent and respond to acts of internal political violence. But what comprises ISFs? This study utilizes a combined measure of police and paramilitary forces within a state. This police plus paramilitary measure is consistent with the literature from the fields of political science and criminal justice, both of which are increasingly recognizing the role that police and paramilitary play in fighting internal state security threats.

Paramilitary forces are able to take on tasks which may be beyond the scope of local police forces but are bounded to activity within the state. They provide an intermediate level of security between the externally-focused military and the locally-focused police. Paramilitary forces "combine the advantages of both types of security forces—like the military, they are readily deployable and well equipped, and like the police, trained to work within the society on internal security tasks."[18] Bigo defines the operating space of paramilitaries as places "where the police dare not go (restoration of order in a crisis situation), and where the military do not want to, or do not know how to intervene (not to kill the enemy, but to control the opponent)."[19]

Roles that paramilitary are particularly well-suited to undertake may include border security, counternarcotic operations, counterterrorism operations (both domestic and international), immigration law enforcement, and peace stability and support operations (especially during or post-civil conflict), including securing critical state infrastructure.[20] Paramilitary forces, then, are well-equipped to handle several types of politicized internal violence, including responses to insurgencies, acts of terrorism, and transnational rebel groups, as well as large-scale riot control. As opposed to military forces, which may only intervene internally during times of major state crises such as intrastate war, paramilitary forces respond to a number of internal security issues that may threaten state stability on many different levels.[21]

Yet, while paramilitary forces may excel at responding to a number of internal security threats, non-militarized police forces may better deal with some security issues. In contrast to paramilitary forces, police forces are generally more focused on crime control rather than existential or transnational threats to the state. The police operating space are more local or community-oriented; one definition of the dividing line between paramilitaries and police is that paramilitaries are classified as "national police," answerable to the central state administration, as opposed to "regular police," which are organized along local levels.[22]

The police, then, can be understood as a more community-oriented security organization. Though crime response is its best known function, several academics have noted that the role of police work has expanded since the Cold War from a response-oriented outlook to more of a preventatively-oriented outlook.[23] This preventative approach has

led to large-scale intelligence gathering operations and increased surveillance of groups considered to present a high security risk. The scope of police work also encompasses first response to emergencies and disruptions of the domestic peace. Therefore, politically motivated violence or homicide(s) may involve the police before—or in lieu of—paramilitary forces.

Because they operate in different spheres and claim primacy in different security tasks, both police and paramilitary forces are critical for maintaining the internal security of a state. Thus, a state's capability to repress internal political violence is best measured by a proxy that captures both types of internal security forces: police and paramilitary forces. Therefore, this study argues that the total number of ISF personnel present within a state can provide a rough measure of a state's internal repressive capability.

This study expects that as overall ISF numbers increase relative to population size, the levels of internal political violence will decrease. ISFs can increase the expected cost of taking violent political action via the threat of reprisals. Further, the simple presence of ISFs may make it more difficult for violent dissenters to communicate, plan, or mobilize. This expectation of a negative relationship between ISF capability and levels of internal political violence is in line with extant literature that suggests that the repressive capability of ISFs is an effective deterrent against civil conflict.[24]

Given the above discussion on ISFs and how their capability affects the level of internal political violence, this study will first address the hypothesis: As the capability of internal security forces increases, overall levels of internal violence will decrease.

While the capability of ISFs ultimately depends on their existence as a functioning body within a state, the mere presence of ISFs may not tell the full story. Effective capability is comprised of a number of different factors, such as force training, leadership, organization, equipment, and military technology, all of which may impact the relationship between ISFs and internal violence. Capability may be a necessary but not a sufficient predictor of internal violence.

One factor that could interact with ISF capability to have a serious impact on internal violence is legitimacy. Security force personnel who do not respect the human security norms of the populace may actually contribute to grievances against the state.[25] As Jones et al. put it, "Few would disagree that internal security forces should be judged by their ability to respond effectively to terrorist organizations, insurgents, criminal groups, and other security threats that fall within their area of responsibility...however, they must also be judged according to their accountability and human rights practices."[26]

The perceived legitimacy of ISFs may play into rebel motivation in two ways. First, ISFs may enforce unpopular government mandates upon the state's populace. Police and paramilitary forces are the visible, known enforcers of government policies that limit civil liberties, discriminate against politically disenfranchised groups, commit acts of state-sponsored terror, and override or ignore due processes of law. When ISFs are considered part of an illegitimate state's apparatus—the "enforcers" of the state's will—reprisals or preemptive strikes against the state via attacks on enforcers may occur.[27]

Second, in responding to expressions of dissent from within the state's population, ISFs may actually increase dissenter's grievances and fuel a spiral of conflict.[28] Some terrorist groups have been known to attempt to take advantage of such cycles of action and repression; these groups hope that harsh government reprisals against a population as a whole may sway the population's sympathies toward the terrorist group.[29]

This study expects that at lower levels of legitimacy, internal conflict will increase. Yet, there may be a threshold effect; very low legitimacy within a state may indicate that the repressive ability of the state is great enough that, though grievances exist in the populace, the cost of mobilizing violent opposition to the government is too high.[30]

Thus, the legitimacy—defined in terms of human rights—of ISF operations within a state should also be taken into account when determining the effect of ISFs on levels of internal political violence.[31] In essence, this study expects that the interaction

between ISF legitimacy and capability will have a significant effect on the relationship between ISFs and levels of internal violence. This expectation is in line with extant literature that finds human rights abuses to be positively related to several types of internal political violence.[32]

This study asserts that government violations of physical integrity rights are used as a proxy for legitimacy. State violations of physical integrity rights include torture, extrajudicial killing, political imprisonment, and disappearance.[33] Other proxies for legitimacy could include such factors as civil liberties, political representation, or minority group treatment. However, the choice to utilize government violations of physical integrity rights as a proxy for legitimacy is due to the fact that the violations of those rights may be directly linked to actions taken by ISFs.

Torture, extrajudicial killing, political imprisonment, and disappearance are all activities that ISFs may potentially be perpetrating on behalf of a state government. Even if ISFs are not the ones carrying out such rights violations, the role of ISFs as the coercive power within a state means that if such rights violations are perpetrated by other actors, then ISFs are either complicit in permitting these abuses to occur or too weak to stop violations by other actors. Thus, when such abuses occur, they degrade the legitimacy of ISFs in the eyes of the populace. ISFs will be perceived as actively participating, passively allowing, or incapable of stopping other perpetrators. ISF capability—weak or strong—is expected to interact with measures of legitimacy.

Higher levels of rights violations are expected to correlate with higher levels of violent political protest. However, very high levels of physical integrity rights abuses may actually indicate a state that is so repressive that there is no opportunity to mobilize, and therefore, at very low levels of legitimacy, there may actually be less overall internal violence. Consistent with the expectations for this hypothesis, as ISF capability increases, overall levels of violence are expected to decrease, but this decrease will be modified by the interaction with legitimacy. Low ISF capability is expected to increase levels of internal violence, but when low capability interacts with high levels of legitimacy, violence is expected to decrease. Conversely, when high ISF capability interacts with low levels of legitimacy, violence is expected to increase.

Given the above discussion on how legitimacy may interact with ISF capability to affect the relationship between ISFs and internal violence, this study's second hypothesis asserts that low ISF capability, when coupled with low legitimacy, will be associated with higher levels of internal violence.

# Research Methodology

In order to test these hypotheses, this analysis used a new, unbalanced time-series, cross-sectional ISF dataset, with the country-year as the unit of analysis. Data from 1990-2005 totals 184 countries, with over 2,000 country-year observations.[34] The dataset was limited to years and countries for which there were available data.

### Dependent variable

Internal political violence within a state is the dependent variable. Both hypotheses look at the effect of ISFs on levels of internal political violence with the dependent variable battle deaths, which is a measure of the total number of fatalities from internal conflict per year. The data for this variable are based on intrastate war data from the Uppsala Conflict Data Program and Peace Research Institute Oslo (UCDP/PRIO) Armed Conflict Dataset (ACD).[35] Conflicts in the ACD are defined as "a contested incompatibility that concerns government and/or territory where the use of armed force between two parties, of which at least one is the government of a state, results in at least 25 battle-related deaths."[36] This dataset classifies conflicts into four different types, two of which are intrastate conflict: internal armed conflict and internationalized internal armed conflict. Battle deaths data used in this study come from the battle deaths dataset (BDD),[37] which was

developed to be compatible with the ACD dataset described above. Battle deaths are defined as "deaths resulting directly from violence inflicted through the use of armed force by a party to an armed conflict during contested combat"[38] The battle deaths variable used for analysis is the count of total number of battle deaths (best estimate) for all instances of internal conflict (internal armed conflict and internationalized armed conflict per the ACD definitions) per year.

Analysis of the total number of fatalities can provide more information on the level or intensity of internal violence that a state is experiencing than can a simple dichotomous variable that simply measures the presence or absence of internal conflict. This utilization of a count of fatalities as a measure of the level of intensity of a conflict is consistent with methodology used by other researchers.[39]

### Independent variable

The independent variable is assigned based on the number of ISFs within a state. This variable is determined by the numbers of police and paramilitary personnel within a state in a given year. One of the problems with utilizing measures of police or paramilitary is that no generally accepted academic definitions of those forces exist.[40] However, the datasets from which these measures were compiled provide adequate definitions for the purposes of this study.

Paramilitary data is compiled from The International Institute for Strategic Studies' yearly *Military Balance* (MB) publication, which provides information on military composition and military spending for the majority of the world's states.[41] In these publications, paramilitary forces are a distinct category separate from regular army, naval, and air forces. They are also not local or "beat" police forces, since the MB excludes such forces from its analysis. Thus, the paramilitary numbers from this publication are defined as a measure of the armed forces of a state other than regular military or police. This is consistent with the approach to understanding MB data taken by Colaresi and Carey.[42]

Since the MB paramilitary data exclude regular police, police data was obtained from the United Nations World Crime Surveys (WCS), which is "the only major source of international data on police strength."[43] WCS provides data on police forces from countries around the world. This data includes total number of police employees and does not differentiate between sworn officers and civilian employees. Use of the total police force as a dataset variable is consistent with the theoretical basis of this study, as the capability of a police force to repress is dependent upon both those officers who are permitted to use force and those who provide administrative support to armed officers.

The data from MB and WCS as described above were compiled per country-year and then divided by the total population of the state in that year to create the ISF variable.[44] This variable is, thus, a yearly measure of all paramilitary and police personnel as a percentage of the total state population. Since the capability of an ISF rests in part on the total presence of an ISF within a state, the ISF is, therefore, an estimated measure of the total ISF capability.

In order to determine the legitimacy of ISFs, it is necessary to provide a measure of the human rights abuses the state is perpetuating against its citizens. For the legitimacy control variable, this analysis uses the Physical Integrity Rights Scale (PIRS) scale from the Cingranelli-Richards (CIRI) Human Rights Data Project.[45] One benefit of utilizing this dataset is that rights violations in state are only included if they are perpetrated by agents of the government, excluding rights violations committed by non-state actors.[46] The PIRS measures four types of gross violations of human security (torture, extrajudicial killing, political imprisonment, and disappearance) perpetuated by the government of a state against its populace. All of these human security violations are actions that are perpetrated by the state typically via their ISFs and are, consequently, a good way to operationalize the popular legitimacy of an ISF. The PIRS variable is an additive index that ranges from 0 (no legitimacy of action) to 8 (full legitimacy of action).[47]

In order to look at the interaction of ISF capability with legitimacy, an interaction variable is created by multiplying the ISF variable with the legitimacy variable to create the capability/legitimacy interaction variable. In the second

hypothesis, this analysis uses the capability/ legitimacy interaction to determine how different levels of legitimacy affect the relationship between ISF and battle deaths.

## CONTROL VARIABLES

For all hypotheses, the relationship between the dependent and independent variables must be controlled for the effects of four other measures of state repressive capability commonly found in the literature: total population, total GDP, total military force, and polity type.[48] The total population variable is a measure of a state's total population, taken from the World Development Indicators provided by the World Bank.[49] While some of the other variables are divided by population in order to develop percentage measures, including total population by itself is also necessary, as states with larger populations typically have more violence than states with smaller populations.[50] The total

GDP variable is a measure of the total purchasing power of a state, which is also taken from the World Development Indicators provided by the World Bank.[51] While states may vary in the percent of their budgets devoted to funding ISFs, the overall economy of a state provides a limiting, "ceiling" factor on how many ISFs that state can afford. Total military force, the third control variable, is the percentage of all military personnel (army, air force, navy) within a state. The total numbers of military personnel are taken from the National Material Capabilities dataset provided by the Correlates of War Project.[52] These numbers are then divided by the total population of the state in order to form the percentage variable. The polity type variable controls for effects on ISFs associated with government type. The coding of the Polity IV scale, from which the polity variable is derived, classifies states on a scale of more democratic (to a max of +10) or more autocratic (to a min of -10).[53]

| Variable | Observations | Mean | Standard Deviation | Minimum | Maximum |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Battle-Deaths | 2426 | 227.050 | 1339.216 | 0 | 30000 |
| Internal Security Force | 2505 | .005 | .014 | 0 | .195 |
| Capability/Legitimacy Interaction | 2322 | .216 | .056 | 0 | .592 |
| Legitimacy | 2345 | 4.866 | 2.303 | 0 | 8 |
| Total Population (logged) | 2505 | 15.878 | 1.757 | 10.275 | 20.988 |
| Total GDP (logged) | 2440 | 23.449 | 2.183 | 17.690 | 30.042 |
| Military Force | 2445 | .006 | .007 | 0 | .076 |
| Polity | 2285 | 2.993 | 6.732 | -10 | 10 |

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics

## METHODS

For both hypotheses, the dependent variable is the number of total battle deaths per country-year. These hypotheses are tested with a time-series, cross-sectional, ordered least squares regression model with population averaged effects clustered on country and robust Huber-White standard errors. The models were run both with and without

a one year lag. This is theoretically consistent, for state capability to repress internal dissent may affect both ongoing internal conflict as well as future conflict.[54] The regression was checked for multicollinearity with the variance inflation factor test.[55] The control variables of total GDP and total population were logged across all models to contain

their large variance from the mean. Findings from this statistical analysis for the first hypothesis are presented in Table 2, and findings for the second hypothesis are presented in Table 3.

# Empirical Analysis and Discussion

The results of the regression models for the first hypothesis support the argument that increasing ISF capability has a negative effect on the overall intensity of internal political violence. In Table 2, as expected, the Model 1 coefficient for ISFs is negative and significant; if ISF increases by one percentage point of the total population of a state, we would expect the number of battle deaths from internal conflict that year to decrease by about 2,145 deaths, ceteris paribus. In this model, the only control variable that has a significant relationship to the dependent variable is legitimacy. If legitimacy increases by 1 point, the number of battle deaths from internal conflict that year would be expected to decrease by about 142 deaths, ceteris paribus. The other control variables of total population, total GDP, military force, and polity are all insignificant in the model.

| | Model 1 | Model 2 (L1) |
|---|---|---|
| **Variables** | Coefficients (P>\|z\|) | Coefficients (P>\|z\|) |
| **Internal Security Force** | -2154.495* (.067) | 996.265 (.353) |
| **Legitimacy** | -142.340*** (.000) | -55.299** (.017) |
| **Total Population (logged)** | 96.141 (.165) | 191.400* (.056) |
| **Total GDP (logged)** | -16.937 (.360) | -49.265 (.118) |
| **Military Force** | 11469.440 (0.177) | 9173.383 (.183) |
| **Polity** | 5.073 (.270) | 3.673 (.333) |
| **Constant** | -274.462 (.394) | -1486.724 (.128) |
| | | |
| **Wald chi²** | 20.89 | 15.63 |
| **Prob>chi²** | 0.0019 | 0.0159 |
| **Observations** | 2050 | 1893 |
| **N Groups** | 148 | 146 |

* p<.10   **p<.05   ***p<.01  (one-tailed)

**Table 2: The Impact of ISF Capability on Levels of Internal Violence**

Interestingly, in opposition to the results of the basic regression model, in the lagged Model 2, the ISF variable is not significant. This suggests that what happened in the recent past in terms of ISF capability does not have a significant effect on current levels of violence. Overall, then, it appears that ISF capability does have a significant negative relationship to level of violence after controlling for other variables of interest. Yet this relationship is very fluid, and what matters is only the current level of ISF capability and not past levels. This finding is in line with Tilly's mobilization argument, in which rebellion occurs when states lack the ability to repress it.[56] However, the legitimacy variable remains negative and significant in the lagged Model 2. This suggests that the effect of physical integrity rights abuses by a state against a population may contribute to longer-held grievances against the state.

This could suggest that current ISF capability may limit or discourage expressions of violent political dissent, but actions taken by a state against its population that are perceived as illegitimate may contribute to long-term underlying grievances. The total population variable becomes significant in the lagged model; for a one percent increase in the total population of a state, we expect battle deaths to increase by about 2 deaths.
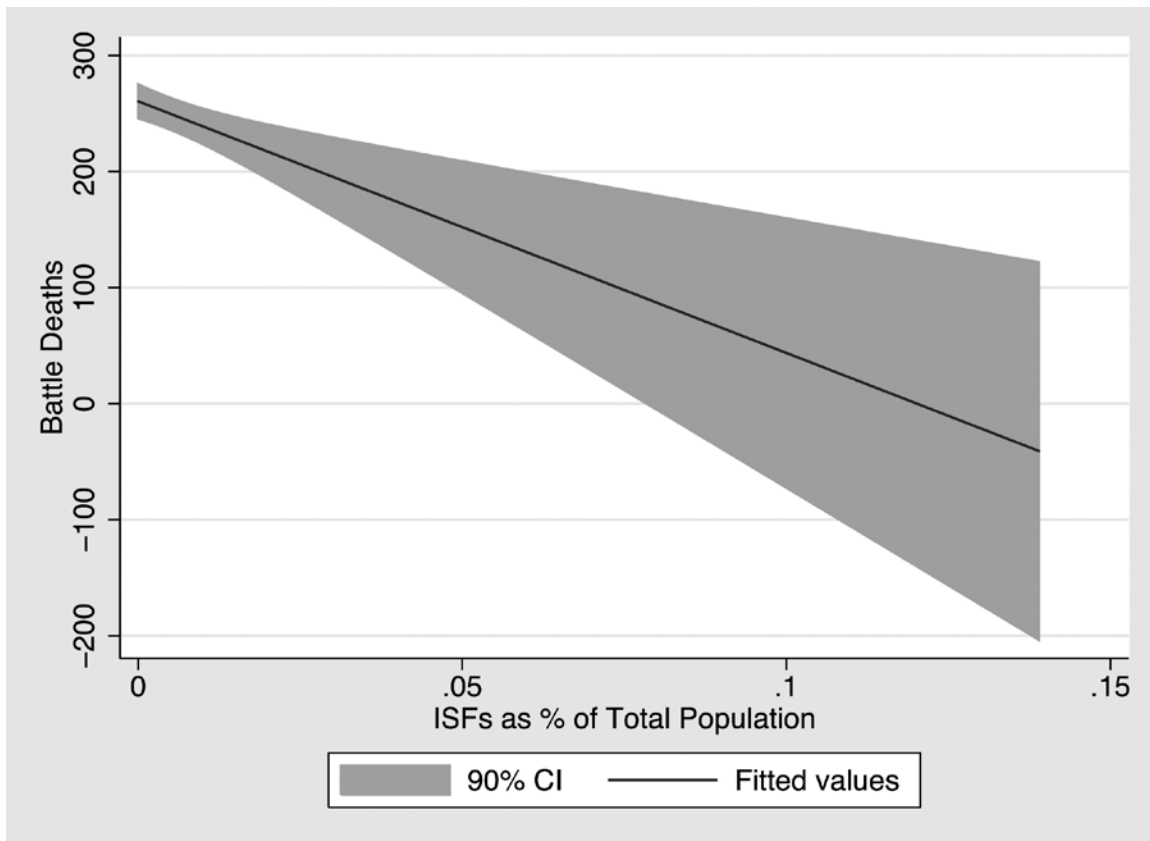


**Graph 1: The Relationship between Levels of Internal Violence and ISF Capability**

For the second hypothesis, legitimacy appears to have a modifying, interactive effect on the relationship between battle deaths and ISFs. The capability/legitimacy interaction variable is significant, and thus the regression results support the argument that there is an interactive relationship between ISF capability and legitimacy. This modifying relationship is plotted out in Graph 2 (page 10).
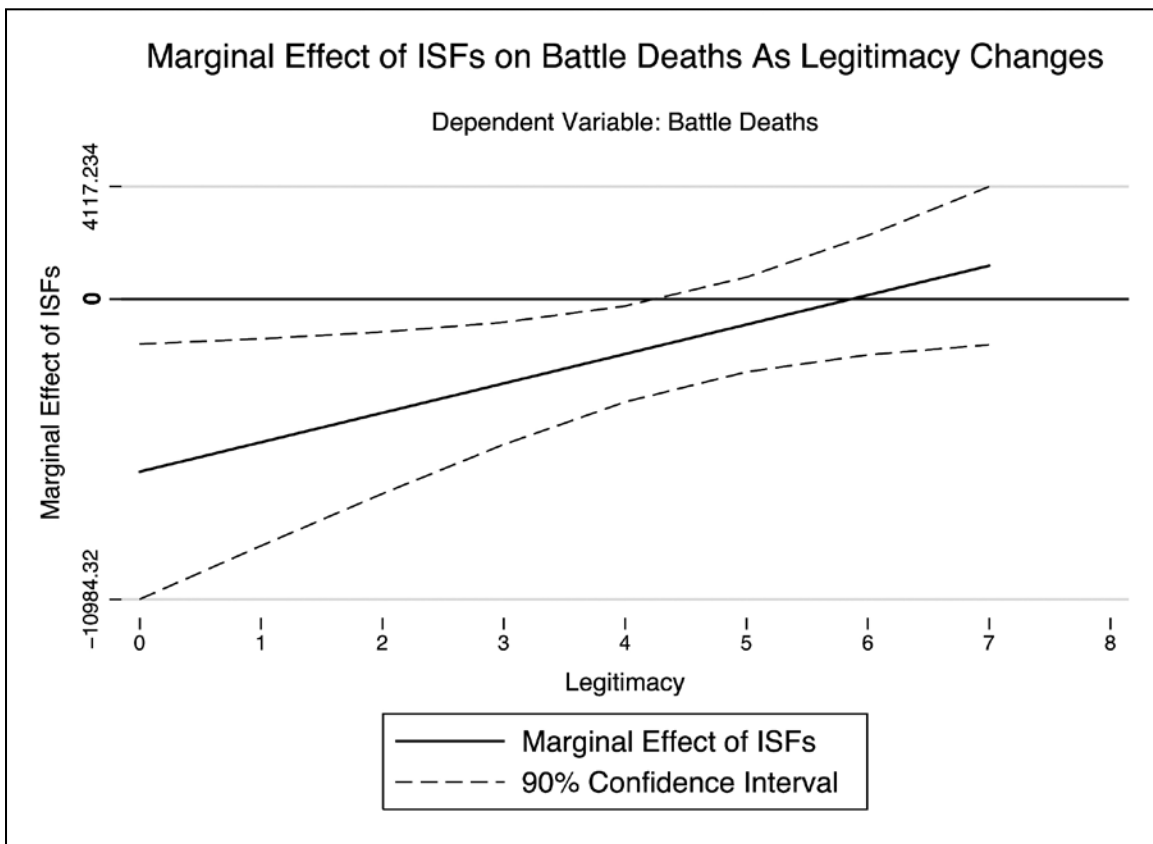
**Graph 2: Impact of ISFs, Conditioned by Legitimacy, on Levels of Internal Violence**

Looking at Graph 2, it appears that when controlling for the interaction effect between ISFs and legitimacy, at lower levels of legitimacy an increase in ISF capability will actually lead to a decrease in total numbers of battle deaths. This finding is contrary to the expectations of the second hypothesis that predicted an increase in levels of violence at low levels of legitimacy and high levels of ISFs. In other words, when legitimacy levels are low and ISF capabilities are also low, the magnitude of internal violence is likely to be greater than when ISF capabilities are high but legitimacy is low.

Thus, low levels of legitimacy do not incite more violence when combined with high levels of ISF capability, but instead the combination appears to lead to a more repressive impact on levels of violence. Why does violence actually decline? The statistical findings could offer support for Tilly's mobilization theory, in that the combination of high ISF capability and low state legitimacy are actually capturing a situation in which rebel mobilization becomes more difficult even though grievances against a state may be high.[57]

Interestingly, this relationship only holds when legitimacy is low (less than 4 on a 0–8 scale), and the magnitude of this negative effect on levels of internal conflict becomes smaller as legitimacy increases. When the legitimacy score is at one, increasing ISF capability has a greater negative effect on internal conflict than when ISF capability is increased but legitimacy is at a score of three. Above legitimacy levels of four, the relationship between ISFs and levels of internal conflict is no longer significant. This suggests that overall ISF capability matters most when levels of legitimacy are low, and that once a baseline threshold of moderate legitimacy is reached, the relationship between ISFs and internal violence shifts in a way that is not captured by the data used in this analysis. None of the control variables—total population, total GDP, military force, and polity—were significant in Model 3.

In the lagged Model 4, the same overall results were found as in lagged Model 2. Both the ISF and the capability/legitimacy interaction variables lose their significance, while legitimacy remains

significant but changes in magnitude of effect. For Model 4, when legitimacy increases by one point, the number of battle deaths decreases by about 58 deaths, ceteris paribus. As with Model 2, total population again becomes significant in the lagged model. For Model 4, with a one percent increase in the total population of a state, the expected result would be a battle deaths increase by about 2 deaths.

| | Model 3 | Model 4 (L1) |
|---|---|---|
| **Variables** | Coefficients (P>\|z\|) | Coefficients (P>\|z\|) |
| **Internal Security Force** | -6314.615** (.042) | -1836.008 (.322) |
| **Capability/ Legitimacy Interaction** | 1076.772* (.076) | 729.957 (.246) |
| **Legitimacy** | -146.403*** (.000) | -58.064*** (.009) |
| **Total Population (logged)** | 98.077 (.160) | 192.805* (.057) |
| **Total GDP (logged)** | -18.616 (.346) | -50.469 (.116) |
| **Military Force** | 11330.620 (.179) | 9118.780 (.184) |
| **Polity** | 5.223 (.263) | 3.816 (.325) |
| **Constant** | -251.105 (.402) | -1471.245 (.128) |
| | | |
| **Wald chi²** | 21.38 | 15.69 |
| **Prob>chi²** | 0.0033 | 0.0281 |
| **Observations** | 2050 | 1893 |
| **N Groups** | 148 | 146 |

* p<.10  **p<.05  ***p<.01  (one-tailed)

**Table 3: The Impact of ISF Capability and Legitimacy Interaction on Levels of Internal Violence**

The results of the statistical analysis of the interaction term did not support the second hypothesis. However, further research in this area could serve to clarify the relationship between legitimacy and ISF capability. In this study, the battle deaths variable served as a measure of the magnitude of internal violence but only at higher levels of violence, since this variable does not have values of less than 25. Lower levels of violence may have a different relationship with ISF capability and legitimacy. Another way to research this relationship would be to break down internal violence by type to see how the onset of different types of violent political protest such as civil war, terrorism, or violent political protest related to ISF capability and legitimacy.

# Conclusion and Implications

This research furthers the field of internal security research and introduces a new ISF dataset comprised of numbers of police and paramilitary personnel. ISFs can provide a more accurate description of a state's actual capabilities to effectively deal with internal political violence than military or economic proxies of state capability. Researchers can use this dataset to more exactly quantify how and in what ways ISFs affect internal security and state stability. Measuring a state's ISFs provides direct analysis of the personnel responsible for responding to internal security threats.

Statistical analysis suggests that the capability of an ISF has a significant negative linear relationship with the intensity of internal conflict. Mere capability of ISFs, however, do not tell the full story, as the interaction between legitimacy and ISF capability also plays a role in determining when ISF capability has a significant relationship with internal violence. The interaction between high levels of ISF capability and low levels of legitimacy appears to correspond to a decrease in levels of internal violence.

In this analysis of the ISF data, both capability and legitimacy are important aspects of understanding ISF effectiveness, which may raise further considerations when planning intervention operations in states experiencing internal violence. As part of their mandate, peace building or military intervention missions often stress the buildup and training of ISFs. This has led to a developing "norm of intervention."[58] While intervention in ISFs by an external state is not a new concept, the rise in the number of those interventions, especially following the Cold War, has been marked.[59]

This external influence may come about for a variety of reasons. Neighboring states may attempt to change ISF makeup in order to hamper transnational or cross-border groups, such as insurgents or terrorists, that they perceive as threatening to their own state's security.[60] Regional or global powers may intervene in ISF makeup as part of larger intervention strategies in order to provide assistance to allies or to shore up weak or failing states that may harbor groups that are perceived as international security threats.[61] Such exogenous intervention efforts may focus on increasing capability and/or legitimacy.

The typical objective of ISF reform via external intervention is to decrease state fragility by creating more professional ISFs that are better able to combat violent sub-state actors.[62] However, there may be unintended consequences of such efforts if legitimacy-building efforts fail but capability-building efforts succeed. In that case, ISF intervention may help "only to produce more professional human rights abusers," as Australian Prime Minister Gareth Evans described Western intervention efforts with Indonesia's ISFs.[63] As discussed above, the interaction between low legitimacy and high ISF capability may decrease levels of violence, but even if maintaining or improving legitimacy is stressed during an intervention, once foreign interveners leave, there is no guarantee that the newly trained ISFs—now presumably better trained and with better equipment—will continue to abide by strict rules of engagement or underneath the aegis of a judicial system.[64] This raises the specter of even greater human rights abuses.

While there is no doubt that foreign intervention may strengthen ISFs that are then able to provide increased domestic stability, a second unintended consequence of exogenous ISF intervention may be to support an unpopular state leader or administration, which could hurt the international standing of the intervener as well as negatively impact the population within the intervened state. Interveners may find themselves helping to perpetuate the reign of a dictator instead of encouraging economic growth or socio-political reforms.[65]

The results of ISF intervention by external states is mixed in the extant literature. Peksen[66] finds that interventions that increase a state's coercive power can lead to decreased levels of human security. This finding is backed up by historical reviews of past intervention outcomes.[67]

While negative consequences in terms of human rights abuses are often observed, ISF intervention can also lead to the successful establishment

of stability in frail states.[68] ISF interventions by external states, even when imperfectly conceived or implemented, have resulted in some successes.[69] ISF interventions can work to prevent expanded civil conflict or outbreaks of interstate war. Though it is significantly difficult to prove that a war would have occurred if ISF intervention had not taken place, that claim was made by former U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates: "U.S. strategy is to employ indirect approaches—primarily through building the capacity of partner governments and their security forces—to prevent festering problems from turning into crises that require costly and controversial direct military intervention."[70]

Developing ISF capability may also provide more rapid path to increased state stability. Recall that ISF capability was not significant in statistical analysis of either of the lagged models, but was significant in the unlagged models. This suggests that efforts to increase ISF capability may result in changing the tactical operating environment in a matter of months, not years.

The capability/legitimacy challenge faced by external ISF intervention efforts is one that appears to be best addressed by interveners who develop a multi-agency approach.[71] Celeski, utilizing the U. S. as an example, suggests exploiting a number of different organizations during the course of such a mission.[72] The Justice Department and the State Department can work to create a strong judiciary, which can then hold police and paramilitary forces accountable to the rule of law, which should increase ISF legitimacy.

While the military, due to the nature of its resources, may take the lead in training police and paramilitary forces, policing agencies within the state may also be called upon to utilize their expertise.[73] National Guard units may also provide deployable individuals who have been or currently are employed in law enforcement careers.[74] At the international level of intervention, Maley et al. suggest utilizing international nongovernmental organizations and tribunals to simultaneously ensure security, enforce the rule of law, and build up administrative and judicial capacity.[75]

Though such interagency efforts may create logistic annoyances for intervening states, the potential benefits of developing such coordination are great.[76] ISFs that are capable of successfully quelling sub-state violence may prevent the spread of rebels, insurgents, or terrorist groups to neighboring states; in effect, state internal security may be a direct contributor to regional stability.[77] Furthermore, the potential negative consequences of poorly managed exogenous interventions—increasingly effective but judicially unrestrained ISFs that provide support for dictators or autocratic regimes—are grave enough that such interventions should only be undertaken after serious thought has been expended on the ways in which a potential intervener can assure that both capability and legitimacy concerns are adequately addressed.

The interaction between ISF capability and legitimacy is thus important for both internal and external outcomes. These research findings indicate that legitimacy has an important, modifying effect on how able ISFs are to suppress internal violence. Ultimately, how ISFs interact with their domestic population will affect state, regional and, potentially, even international security issues. For this reason, further research on ISFs and legitimacy is not only desirable but vitally necessary. **IAS**

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