

Can Civil Wars Improve Public Goods?

Militias, Security, and Rural Governance in Post-Conflict Peru

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## CURRICULUM VITAE

Nicolas Taccone obtained his B.A. in Political Science at Universidad de San Andrés (UdeSA) in 2014 and his M.A. in Political Science at Universidad Torcuato Di Tella (UTDT) in 2018, both in Argentina. Before coming to Brown University, he worked as a research and teaching assistant in multiple Argentine universities and published articles in Spanish-language journals, including *Desarrollo Económico*.

During his time at Brown, Nicolas designed and instructed three courses of record and served as a teaching assistant for eight courses, leading a total of sixteen discussion sections. In recognition of his efforts, he received the P. Terrence Hopmann Award for Excellence in Teaching from the Department of Political Science. He furthered his pedagogical training by completing a three-part certificate program at the Sheridan Center for Teaching and Learning.

In terms of research, Nicolas served as the lead author on co-authored publications in top area studies journals, including the *Journal of Latin American Studies* and *Latin American Politics and Society*. A single-authored article drawn from his dissertation is forthcoming at *Comparative Political Studies*.

In the upcoming academic year, Nicolas will serve as a Visiting Assistant Professor at Wofford College in Spartanburg, South Carolina.

## Acknowledgements

Seven years ago, I left my hometown, Buenos Aires, Argentina, to pursue an academic career at Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island. Countless things happened since then. Neither in chronological order nor by importance, and at the risk of forgetting many, here is what comes to mind: I moved four times within Providence, played club soccer with the undergrads, fell in love, the pandemic hit, made new friends who feel like family, returned to Buenos Aires many times to recharge, lived in Peru for nine months conducting fieldwork, Argentina won the World Cup, discovered new parts of the U.S. like Minneapolis and Philadelphia, and every now and then took the train to Brooklyn to see a DJ. I got married. Now I am enjoying my final days in Providence, a city I can call home.

Multiple people—family, friends, professors, and colleagues—were part of this “new life” I built. Thank you to my family, who, despite the long distance, managed to visit me and welcomed me with open arms whenever I returned to Buenos Aires. I’m talking about my mother, Mónica; my father, Daniel; and my sister, Luciana. Aunts, uncles, and cousins too, of course—but a special mention goes to my grandparents, Ricardo (who passed away in 2020) and Nené, with whom I speak over Skype almost every week. I felt their presence along the way.

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explore more national parks and discover new places in Argentina and around the world with you. Eva, I love you.

As for friends, Ale and Tomás (and their little dog, Muru) warrant special mention: they've become my Providence family, and I know our bond will persist through our next life chapters. Beenish and Alastair, two of my dearest friends, have also been a constant throughout. And Sofi—my connection to Argentina—has become part of my inner circle here as well. Quality, not quantity, has defined the friendships I've built in Providence.

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Before arriving to Ayacucho, Peru, Everett Vieira III, Omar Coronel, and José “Pepe” Coronel (Omar’s father), guided me on how to approach field research in the region and helped me think through my initial intuitions about militia groups and their post-conflict legacies. They dedicated time to my project without really knowing me, and that generosity is something I will not forget. Also before my arrival, professors at the Instituto de Estudios Peruanos (IEP) and the Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú (PUCP) in Lima were key for several reasons: they connected me with local contacts, pointed me toward relevant literature, and helped me understand how Peruvian politics works “on the ground.” Nancy Vidal, Maritza Paredes, Tomás Dosek, and Ramón Pajuelo stood out among many others.

Conducting fieldwork in Ayacucho was, by far, one of the most challenging and enriching experiences of my life. It started off slowly, without really knowing which doors to knock on or how to select my cases... until I met Henry Pérez, “Enrique,” my research assistant who later became a close friend. Enrique’s help allowed me to reach places I wouldn’t have been able to access on my own—or at least, not without spending five years trying. With him, my fieldwork clicked. We became an unstoppable duo, walking the streets of Ayacucho in search of archives and conducting interviews from dawn to dusk. We would return to our hostels completely exhausted, crash into bed, and wake up the next morning to do it all again. For months. It was quite a ride. Thank you so much, Enrique, for your dedication and hard work, and to your family—Yecica and Sofia—for your warmth and hospitality.

This final paragraph is dedicated to my interviewees. They sat with me for hours to share their stories, often recalling their darkest times when they lost family and friends during the civil war. They wanted their experiences to be heard and their voices to be recognized. They helped me understand their local reality in ways that are unimaginable from afar. By spending time with them—being there, listening closely—I was able to truly grasp the heart of my research: why militias emerge, what they do, how their leaders think, and what communities want and need from them after the conflict. Without them, this dissertation would not have been possible.

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## Chapter 1

### Introduction

Every year, on the first weekend of August, the local population of Llochegua, a district situated on the northeastern border of the Ayacucho department, Peru, gathers at the central square to commemorate the anniversary of the *comités de autodefensa* (CADs).<sup>1</sup> Established by the community in 1982 during the Peruvian civil war (1980-2000), last year marked the 42<sup>nd</sup> consecutive year of these rural militias' existence in Llochegua, a highly disputed area during the conflict. As seen below in Figure 1 and 2, I participated in these celebrations in 2022, where the community organized a soccer tournament on Saturday, August 6<sup>th</sup>, followed by a parade on Sunday, August 7<sup>th</sup>.

During the parade, Adrián Gotzme la Fuente, who served as the district's mayor at the time, paid tribute to the CAD members who had fought against the Shining Path.<sup>2</sup> He also emphasized the CADs' vital role in enhancing rural governance today, in the context of a very weak state, highlighting their dual responsibilities in overseeing security matters and supervising government-led development projects. To conclude his speech, in unison with the local community, he passionately exclaimed three times: “*Que viva el glorioso comité de autodefensa*” (“Long live the glorious self-defense committee”) and “*Todos somos comités de autodefensa*” (“We all are self-defense committees”), echoing their solidarity in both in Spanish and Quechua.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Comités de autodefensa* (CADs, or “self-defense committees” in English) are Peru's militia organizations and the central actors of this dissertation.

<sup>2</sup> The Shining Path (*Sendero Luminoso*) was the main guerrilla actor during the Peruvian civil war.

<sup>3</sup> Participant observation in the field. August 6-7, 2022, Llochegua district (Ayacucho, Peru).

Figure 1: CAD Leaders Watching the Soccer Tournament



Photo taken during my fieldwork in Llochegua (Ayacucho, Peru), August 6, 2022.

Figure 2: CAD Leaders Walking During the Parade



Photo taken during my fieldwork in Llochegua (Ayacucho, Peru), August 7, 2022.

In stark contrast, there are no traces of the *comités de autodefensa* in Los Morochucos today. This district, also within the department of Ayacucho, was historically under insurgent control during the war and has no current presence of CADs. “When the Shining Path disappeared, the CADs disappeared. We have not heard about them for many decades,” declared Buenaventura De la Cruz Altamirano, a former district mayor (1989-1993).<sup>4</sup>

Unlike Llohegua, where the community chants their names in unison, fostering a sense of belonging and participation, Los Morochucos’ community holds somber memories of the CADs. They perceived these militias as an external organization imposed by the Armed Forces, responsible for tragic massacres in their community. Instead of being celebrated as local heroes, most former CAD members in Los Morochucos either left the district or now walk with their heads down, burned by shame over the repressive tactics they once employed against their neighbors.

\* \* \*

This dissertation explores both the varied origins of militias during civil war and their post-conflict trajectories, raising key questions about the inner workings and historical legacies of violence—especially regarding governance in settings where the state is largely absent. First, to reconstruct the comprehensive lifecycle of these organizations, I delve into the conflict period: Why do militias emerge in some areas but not others during civil wars? Specifically, how do their origins and mobilization processes vary in different conflict zones?

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<sup>4</sup> Interview with Buenaventura De la Cruz Altamirano, a former mayor of Los Morochucos.

Second, focusing on the aftermath of violent conflict, I investigate the following questions: Why do some militias disband while others survive once the fighting stops? Among those that survive, under what conditions can they enhance governance in post-conflict settings characterized by minimal state presence? More broadly, through the repurposing of militias, can civil wars paradoxically contribute to the long-term well-being of historically marginalized populations?

I structure the remainder of this Introduction into five parts. In Part 1, I discuss the relevance of militia actors both during and after civil wars, highlighting how my dissertation builds upon and extends existing scholarship. Part 2 introduces my theory of militias formation and mobilization in civil war contexts. Part 3 develops a second framework, focused on explaining the diverse post-conflict trajectories of militias. Part 4 outlines the research design, including case selection, data sources, and methodology. Part 5 previews the dissertation's main theoretical, empirical, and policy contributions. Finally, Part 6 provides a roadmap for the subsequent chapters.

## **1. What Do We Know About Militias During and After Civil Wars?**

### *1.1. The Origins*

Civil wars have become prevalent, persistent, prone to recurrence, and highly lethal. Defined as “extended armed conflicts within a recognized sovereign state between insurgent and state forces” (Blattman and Miguel 2010), this type of violent conflict has affected more than half of all developing nations since 1945, with one-fifth suffering ten or more years of war (Blattman 2009).

Militias, under various labels, have proliferated during civil wars, appearing in 81% of all such conflicts between 1981 and 2007 across both democratic and authoritarian contexts. Defined as “groups or organizations that are not part of the official security forces of a state but are organized in armed self-defense against insurgent groups” (Schubiger 2021: 1385), examples include Nigeria’s Civilian Join Task Forces, civil defense forces in Sierra Leone, paramilitaries in Colombia, the Syrian National Defence Forces, and Peru’s *comités de autodefensa* (Osorio et al. 2021).<sup>5</sup>

Militias play a pivotal role in civil wars, often employed by states to counter insurgent forces, a role widely recognized for its effectiveness (Horne 1987; Richards 1996; Linn 2000). Their effectiveness stems from their deep local knowledge, enabling them to provide valuable intelligence to the military, addressing the “identification problem”—the difficulty states face in distinguishing insurgents from civilians in irregular warfare (Kalyvas 2006). Additionally, militias assist states in deflecting responsibility for human rights abuses during counterinsurgency campaigns (Cohen 2001; Ahram 2011). They also serve as a force multiplier for weak regular Armed Forces, particularly in regions facing domestic rebellions and instability following military purges (Eck 2015).

Despite their recognized importance for the internal dynamics, resolution, and legacies of civil war, militia groups remain surprisingly understudied by conflict scholars, who often approach civil wars as bilateral conflicts between the state and insurgents.<sup>6</sup> The limited body of research on militias has mainly concentrated on individual aspects of

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<sup>5</sup> Militia groups could also emerge in interstate wars and outside armed conflict; however, this dissertation focuses on militias during and after civil wars.

<sup>6</sup> “Insurgents” and “rebels” are used interchangeably in this dissertation.

these organizations, such as their size (Kalyvas and Arjona 2005), recruitment practices (Forney 2015; Cohen and Nordås 2015), internal structure (Escalante 2020), relation to violence (Stanton 2015; Clayton and Thomson 2016), roles or functions (Cohen 2001; Kalyvas 2006; Ahram 2011; Eck 2015), and interactions with the state and society (Jentzsch 2014; Stanton 2015; Carey et al. 2015; Jentzsch et al. 2015).

Unlike these approaches, I provide a comprehensive account of militias' entire lifecycles, beginning with variation in their formation and mobilization processes. Although territorial control is widely acknowledged as a central feature of civil wars (Kalyvas 2006; Kasfir 2015; Arjona et al. 2015), its role in shaping patterns of militia emergence remains underexplored. This is where my research intervenes: I show how the incentives and constraints faced by governments and civilians shape the timing (*when*), location (*where*), and nature (*how*) of counterinsurgent militia emergence across different wartime territories.<sup>7</sup>

Building on the existent distinction between militias that emerge “from below” through community initiatives and those imposed “from above” by the state (Jentzsch et al. 2015), I examine the spatial variation and strategic logic underlying the formation of both types of militias. Prior research emphasizes that grassroots militia groups often arise in response to insurgent violence, with civilians arming themselves against intolerable abuses (Jentzsch et al. 2015). While local factors can complicate this dynamic (Blocq 2014), the prevailing assumption is that grassroots militias emerge primarily from grievances against insurgents. A separate strand of research challenges this view, showing

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<sup>7</sup> While rebel-affiliated militias have been registered in various civil wars (Peic 2014), they fall outside the scope of my theory, which focuses on counterinsurgent militias instead.

that grassroots militias can also form in reaction to state violence, particularly when insurgents fail to protect civilians from military repression (Lyall 2009; Schubiger 2021). While both perspectives are insightful, they tend to isolate insurgent and state violence as separate explanatory forces—focusing on one actor at a time and overlooking how their combined presence may jointly shape civilian behavior. Moreover, they fail to situate militia formation within the geography of conflict, leaving open the question of *where* grassroots militia formation is most likely to occur.

Extending beyond one-sided accounts of grassroots militia formation, my dissertation argues that such militias frequently emerge in response to *simultaneous* violence from both insurgents and the state. I locate this process in a specific type of conflict zone, “disputed areas,” i.e., territories under contested control where civilians endure sustained attacks from both sides. In these areas, the state’s limited reach fails to provide security, while insurgents’ lack of dominance prevents them from deterring armed civilian mobilization. Caught between two hostile forces, civilians face strong incentives to organize militia groups and, compared to areas fully under insurgent control, encounter relatively fewer constraints. This insight clarifies the spatial logic of militia genesis, revealing that grassroots self-defense is most likely where neither the state nor the insurgents exercise full territorial control.

As for state-orchestrated militias (hereafter, SOMs), we already know why states turn to them during civil wars: to gather local intelligence (Kalyvas 2006), deflect blame for human rights abuses (Ahram 2011), and extend their reach into hostile areas (Eck 2015). Cross-national evidence shows that most states confronting insurgencies deploy pro-government militias at some point (Carey and Mitchell 2017, 2021). However, as

with grassroots militia formation, important questions remain about the specific settings—both geographic and temporal—in which states choose to impose SOMs. Why are these militias established in some conflict zones but not others? And when, over the course of a civil war, are states more likely to create them “from above?”

Drawing on the dynamic nature of territorial control during wartime (Kalyvas 2006), I argue that states are more likely to establish SOMs after seizing historically insurgent-held areas. Because such areas are inaccessible while under full insurgent control, the state must first displace insurgent forces through violent incursions from outside. Following this initial shift in control, the state faces both an urgent need and a strategic opportunity to consolidate its gains. In this context, SOMs function as instruments for deterring insurgent resurgence and asserting control over the local population. My theory and findings thus offer a clearer picture of where and when we should expect to observe SOMs’ deployment during civil war. In doing so, I reorient existing work on territorial control by showing that it not only helps explain insurgent behavior—such as patterns of rebel governance, violence, and civilian collaboration (Arjona 2015; Arjona et al. 2015)—but also plays a critical role in shaping state counterinsurgency strategy.

## *1.2. The Aftermath*

Although research on militias in civil wars has expanded in recent years, it remains relatively limited—particularly when it comes to their post-conflict trajectories. Crucially for this dissertation, prior studies have examined militias’ relationships with

both the state and society during wartime (Carey et al. 2015; Jentzsch et al. 2015; Eastin and Zech 2022; Estancona and Reid 2022), advancing our understanding of militia behavior in active conflict settings. However, the impact of these relations on militias' *post-conflict trajectories* remains underexplored. In particular, we know little about how wartime ties to the military and local communities shape militias' prospects for survival—and the form that survival takes—after the fighting stops. My dissertation builds on and extends the existing literature by linking militias' wartime interactions with the state (specifically, the military<sup>8</sup>) and society (the local community) to their post-conflict fortunes.

To lay the groundwork for my argument, I begin by reviewing how the literature has theorized militia-state and militia-society relationships during wartime. The relationship with the state is a key feature of militias. Carey and Mitchell (2017) discuss how states may create and officially recognize militias by law or, alternatively, establish informal links with existing militia groups to pursue common goals. While they focus on the legal (*de jure*) aspects of militia-state relations, distinguishing between semi-official and informal arrangements, I concentrate instead on the *de facto* interactions between these actors, particularly on the level of autonomy militias maintain relative to the state. By examining how these interactions unfold “on the ground” rather than on paper, I seek to provide a more thorough understanding of militia-state relations.

Relatedly, Jentzsch and colleagues (2015) distinguish between militias that are state-sponsored and those formed by local communities. However, they caution that

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<sup>8</sup> I focus on the role of the military in assessing militia-state relations because they frequently serve as the primary state agency responsible for restoring order during civil wars.

militia origins alone are not a reliable predictor of how militia-state relationships will evolve over time. Although community-formed militias might be expected to operate with greater autonomy than those imposed by the state, this is not always the case. For instance, community-initiated militias can be co-opted by the state and lose their independence, while state-imposed militias may achieve operational autonomy via conquest or deliberate disengagement by the Armed Forces (Jentzsch et al. 2015). My theoretical framework builds on this insight by moving beyond militia origins *per se* to examine how militia-state relationships evolve in practice, focusing on the level of autonomy that militias maintain or may (or may not) come to develop.

Importantly, research suggests that the nature of the militia-state relationships significantly influences how militias interact with society. When states control militias, they often direct or tacitly approve their use of violence against civilians as part of counterinsurgency strategies (Valentino 2004; Downes 2006; Stanton 2015). But without state oversight, militias' behavior towards society depends on their community ties (Carey and Mitchell 2017). Militias deeply integrated within local communities face informal accountability mechanisms, often leading them to protect civilians and limit predatory violence (Yoroms 2005; Jentzsch 2022). In contrast, militias disconnected from the communities in which they operate lack local-level monitoring, increasing the likelihood to engage in looting or other predatory behaviors (Daly 2011; Peic 2014; Schuberth 2015).

Despite growing interest in militia organizations, only a few scholars have explored their transitions into post-conflict environments. For instance, Bolte and colleagues (2021) explore why governments terminate or integrate militias into military

structures, focusing on post-conflict factors like ethnic ties with ruling elites and the military's organizational capacity. While this approach sheds light on state-led processes of militia incorporation, it overlooks the influence of local communities on militia trajectories, as well as the broader governance roles these organizations might adopt beyond boosting military capabilities. Moreover, Bolte et al. (2021) do not explore the conditions under which militias persist in ways that can weaken state authority. By shifting attention to militia-military and militia-community wartime relations, my framework provides a more comprehensive explanation of the causes and implications for governance of militia's varied post-conflict pathways.

Multiple studies have highlighted the potential threats to governance posed by militias that do not disband post-conflict. In this view, governments or elite societal groups may use militias as instruments to violate laws of war and human rights (Hugues and Tripodi 2009; Carey and González 2021), perpetuate their dominance (Schlichte 2010), or engage in illegal activities to influence electoral politics (Acemoglu et al. 2013). These actions not only undermine state authority but also threaten civil society and overall governance, potentially reigniting violent conflict. However, this strand of research fails to identify and trace the mechanisms driving these outcomes—mechanisms that my framework seeks to uncover.

Yet militias' post-conflict roles are not necessarily destabilizing. An alternative line of investigation suggests that militias, rather than weakening the state in post-conflict settings, can actually enhance governance (Bateson 2013, 2017; García-Godos 2006). In historically underserved regions referred to as “brown areas” (O'Donnell 1993), where state bureaucracies struggle to provide essential public goods and services, militias can

engage in governance practices that reinforce or complement state-enforced systems of order (Biddle 2008). Bateson's research in Guatemala (2013, 2017) shows how militias (civil patrols) formed during the civil war evolved into enforcers of vigilante justice in the post-war period, improving rural security.

Building on Bateson (2013, 2017), I examine how militias' wartime experiences shape their evolving post-conflict roles. While Bateson's work focuses on vigilante politics, I broaden the scope of militias' post-conflict activities, illustrating the diverse governance roles undertaken by the *comités de autodefensa* in rural Peru. These roles encompass security provision (CVR 2003c), collaboration with judicial authorities, and organization of community fundraisers, among other local development initiatives.<sup>9</sup> Additionally, my framework considers a spectrum of potential post-conflict trajectories for militias, ranging from disbandment to outcomes of governance weakening and strengthening.

## **2. Pathways to Militia Emergence**

To comprehensively address the lifecycle of militias, I first advance a theory on militia formation during civil wars, guided by the following questions: Why do militia originate in some areas but not others? Specifically, how do patterns of territorial control shape where and how they take root? To answer these questions, I link territorial control—a crucial aspect of civil wars—to the processes of militia formation and

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<sup>9</sup> Report on *Comités de Autodefensa* (code SCO\_345\_09; pp. 48-52). *Archivo Central de la CVR, Defensoría del Pueblo*, Lima, Perú.

mobilization. I argue that militia emergence depends on the interactions among three key actors—the state, insurgents, and civilians—across different wartime zones at the subnational level. These zones—*government strongholds*, *insurgent strongholds*, and *disputed areas*—shape each actor’s incentives and constraints to establish, support, or resist militia formation, ultimately producing variation in patterns of militia origins and mobilization.

In *government strongholds*, wartime zones firmly under state control, I argue that militias are unlikely to emerge because neither the state nor civilians face strong incentives to establish them. The state has little need for auxiliary forces in areas it already secures effectively and is more likely to allocate its limited resources toward unstable regions, such as territories recently retaken from insurgents. Civilians, meanwhile, face fewer security threats in these zones and thus have no compelling reason to mobilize self-defense forces “from below,” whether to confront insurgents or protect themselves from a crossfire.

In *insurgent strongholds*, where insurgents maintain firm control, civilians are also unlikely to establish militias “from below.” Simply put, insurgents wield sufficient power to suppress grassroots militia initiatives that might arise in these areas. However, territorial control in civil wars is rarely static; it frequently shifts. Over time, states often regain control of these zones through military offensives, leveraging their superior force capabilities (Meyerson 1970; Kalyvas 2006).<sup>10</sup> If these offensives fail, the area remains

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<sup>10</sup> State war resources are limited, particularly in weak states where civil wars typically break out. As a result, governments cannot reclaim simultaneously or with equal vigor every inch of lost territory. Nevertheless, when they decide to allocate military assets and personnel to attack an insurgent stronghold, the rebels often must withdraw, thus ceding the area (Meyerson 1970).

under insurgent control, where militias are unlikely to emerge. But if they succeed, the area transitions into a *former insurgent stronghold*, where the state often deploys SOMs “from above” to deter insurgent return and consolidate newly regained territory.

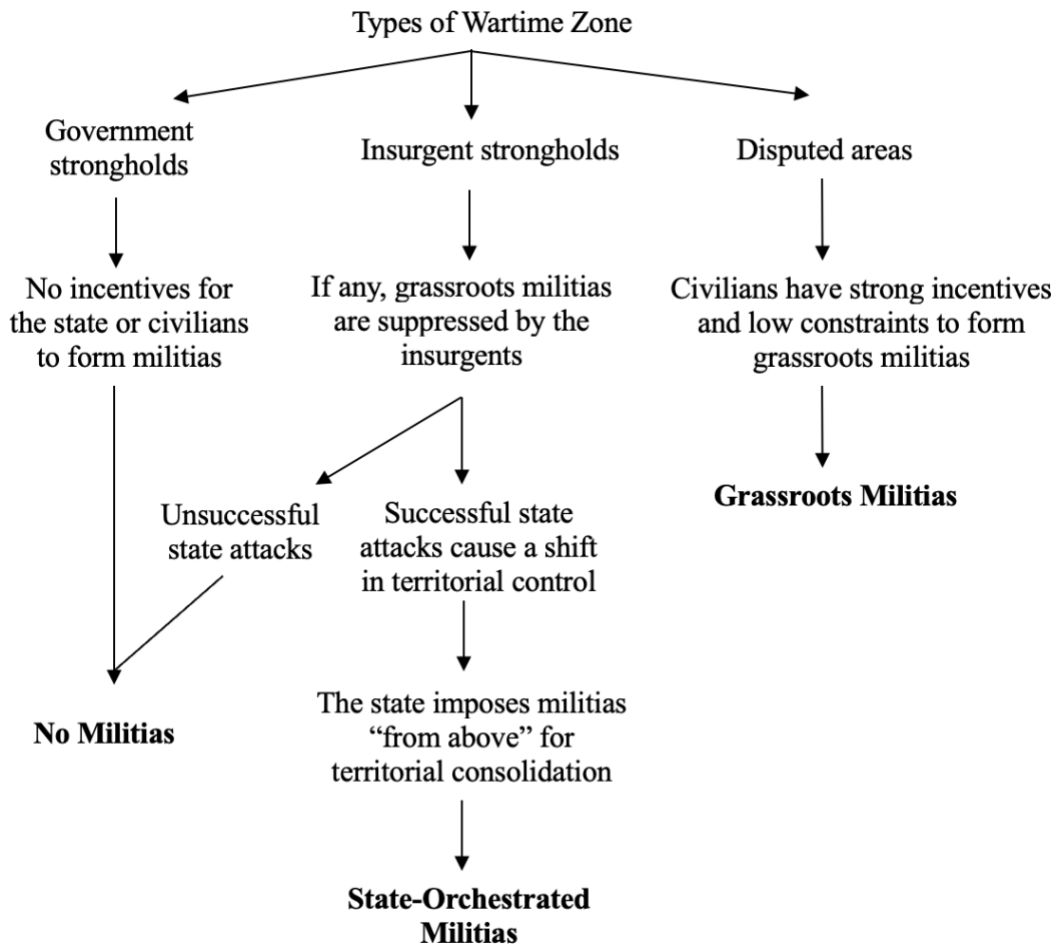
This sequence of events plays out differently in a third type of wartime territory: *disputed areas*, characterized by uncertain sovereignty.<sup>11</sup> In these areas, the most dangerous arenas of struggle, civilians face strong incentives to establish grassroots militias to protect themselves from the crossfire between state forces and insurgents. Moreover, because insurgents do not hold entire territorial control, civilians in disputed areas encounter fewer obstacles in organizing militias compared to those in insurgent strongholds. Therefore, I expect civilians to form grassroots militias in disputed areas.

Figure 3 illustrates the three pathways shaping militia origins. Each begins in a distinct type of conflict zone and outlines an expected—or “ideal-type”—sequence of events leading to one of three outcomes: i) *no militias*, ii) *state-orchestrated militias*, or iii) *grassroots militias*. These “ideal-type pathways,” based on Weberian ideal types, are analytical constructs that simplify reality to highlight key patterns and enable comparison. They are not deterministic or universally observed in practice; rather, they serve as heuristic tools for understanding variation in militia formation during civil wars. Each pathway is grounded in the incentives and constraints that influence the strategic decisions of both state and civilian actors concerning militia formation.

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<sup>11</sup> Conceptually, a disputed area lies in the intermediary space between insurgent and government strongholds.

Figure 3: Pathways to Militia Emergence



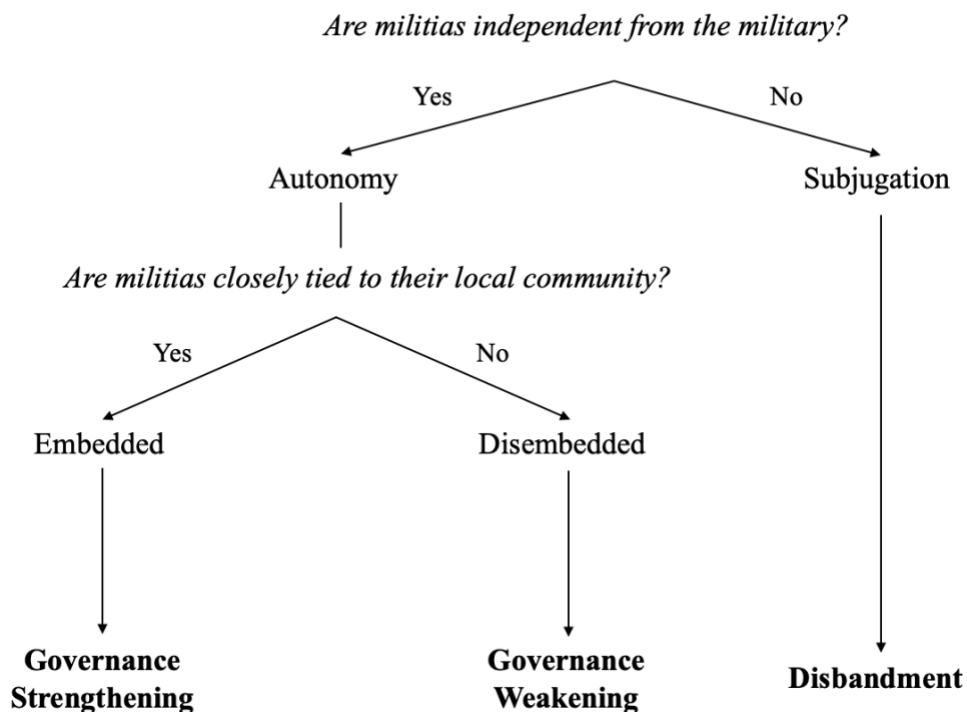
### 3. The Wartime Factors Shaping Militias' Post-Conflict Fortunes

I have already established why militias emerge in some areas but not others during civil wars, as well as their varying formation and mobilization processes. I now introduce a theoretical framework that focuses on explaining militias' post-conflict trajectories. The framework addresses the following questions: Why do some militias

survive while others disband once the fighting stops? Among those that survive, under what conditions do militias weaken or strengthen governance in post-conflict settings?

Figure 4 visualizes this framework, which explains the varied post-conflict fortunes of militias in terms of two critical wartime relationships: militia-military (autonomy vs. subjugation) and militia-community (embedded vs. disembedded) relations. Depending on the nature of these relationships, militias follow three different post-conflict paths: *governance strengthening*, *governance weakening*, or *disbandment*. Below the figure I present a snapshot of the arguments.

Figure 4: Wartime Determinants of Militias' Post-Conflict Paths



I argue that militias that have autonomy from the military *and* strong ties with their local community during civil wars are more likely to transition into post-conflict periods and strengthen rural governance. With operational independence and deep communal embeddedness, these militias tend to protect rather than prey on their communities during warfare (Yoroms 2005; Daly 2011; Peic 2014; Schuberth 2015). Through their protective actions, they gain social legitimacy and institutionalize through a process of “value infusion” (Selznick 1957; Levitsky 1999). That is, both militia members and rural villagers develop a strong sense of identification and commitment with these organizations, thus advocating for their survival and adaptation to governance-enhancing roles in the post-conflict era.

In contrast, militias that operate autonomously from the military but lack embeddedness in their local communities are more likely to undermine governance in post-conflict settings. With operational freedom and weak community ties, these militias remain unchecked in terms of predatory behavior (Carey and Mitchell 2017), thereby weakening governance in the aftermath of civil wars (Hughes and Tripodi 2009; Schlichte 2010; Acemoglu et al. 2013).

Lastly, I contend that militias subjugated by the military are prone to disbandment after civil wars. In this scenario, the extent to which militias are embedded within local communities becomes less relevant because their relationship with the community is largely defined by their subjugation to the Armed Forces. This subjugation typically involves military repression targeting militia members (Jentzsch et al. 2015; Stanton 2015), as well as militia members preying on the local community following military orders (Valentino 2004; Downes 2006). Consequently, neither militia nor community

members support the continuation of these organizations, increasing the likelihood of their post-conflict dissolution.

#### **4. Research Design**

##### *4.1. National and Subnational Case Selection*

Peru's civil war spanned from 1980 to 2000, resulting in nearly 70,000 casualties. Of those killed, 75% were speakers of an indigenous language, with 40% among the country's poorest and most rural populations (CVR 2003a). On May 17, 1980, the Shining Path (*Sendero Luminoso*), the main insurgent group,<sup>12</sup> declared war on the Peruvian state by igniting ballot boxes in Chuschi, Ayacucho, obstructing the country's transition to democracy after over a decade of military dictatorship (Soifer and Vergara 2019). Rooted in Maoist ideology, *Sendero Luminoso* aimed for a social revolution through widespread violence (Gorriti 2000). By 1992, after heightened violence in the mid-1980s, the capture of the Shining Path's leader, Abimael Guzmán, symbolized the defeat of the insurgents. Violence subsided, and the state gradually regained control, reclaiming territory in the Ayacucho highlands and neighboring regions (Degregori et al. 1996; Degregori 1998).

Historical documents<sup>13</sup> and political magazines<sup>14</sup> underscore militias' contribution to defeating the Shining Path. During the conflict, militias (*comités de autodefensa*,

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<sup>12</sup> The Túpac Amaru Revolutionary Movement emerged as another left-wing guerrilla that launched war against the Peruvian state in 1984 (Soifer and Vergara 2019).

<sup>13</sup> *Compendio de Legislación para Víctimas del Terrorismo* (2002). LUM's Documentation and Research Center, Lima, Peru.

<sup>14</sup> *Caretas* (November 22, 1988); *Oiga* (March 27, 1989).

CADs) emerged in some areas but not others. Some were community-led, maintaining autonomy from the military, while others were created in a “top-down” manner and subjugated by the Armed Forces (Schubiger 2021). This variation makes Peru a compelling case for analyzing contrasting patterns of militia formation and mobilization. Furthermore, because the Peruvian internal armed conflict ended over two decades ago, it offers researchers a valuable opportunity to examine its enduring legacies, particularly how wartime factors influence militias’ post-conflict trajectories.

Despite its striking relevance, the Peruvian civil war remains understudied in comparative politics, especially compared to Colombia and Central American cases. While local scholars have produced rich accounts of the conflict (Del Pino 1992; Degregori et al. 1996; Degregori 1998; Starn 1999; Gorriti 2000; Stern 2020), a systematic explanation of the formation of *comités de autodefensa* is still lacking. Moreover, except for Soifer and Vergara (2019), there has been limited research on the legacies of violence from Peru’s civil war. Contemporary research on Peruvian rural politics remains limited and is often shaped by normative or ideological agendas (Seligman 2008). Within this literature, mining conflicts have received disproportionate attention, overshadowing other medium and long-term dynamics in the Peruvian countryside (Asensio 2019), including the fate of the CADs. As of 2019, CADs were officially registered in 24% of Peruvian districts, totaling 453 out of 1874 districts (RENAMU 2019). Understanding why and how they emerged during the conflict, why some continue to exist, and what roles they currently play in rural governance—often undocumented and thus “invisible” from afar—requires close engagement with their local communities.

My subnational case selection strategy centers on two primary cases: the districts of *Los Morochucos* and *Llochegua*, both located within the department of Ayacucho—the epicenter of violence during Peru’s civil war. This strategy allowed me to control for department-level variation from the outset while testing my theoretical expectations. Furthermore, both districts belong to the south-central conflict region, locally referred to as “Ayacucho’s regional space” or the “emergency zone,” and were shaped by specific conflict dynamics distinct from those in other parts of the country (Smith 1992). Using process tracing, I conducted a comparative historical analysis that shows how, across two districts with several shared characteristics—such as minimal state presence, the timing and intensity of violence, and the ethnic and cultural backgrounds of the local population (CVR 2003b)—variation in key explanatory factors yielded contrasting conflict and post-conflict militia outcomes. My level of analysis is the *district* because the incentives and constraints that shape actors’ decisions to form militias in different wartime zones, as well as militias’ wartime relationships with the military and the community, are better captured at a smaller territorial scale.<sup>15</sup> Moreover, it allows for close observation of how militia roles unfolded “on the ground” when they survived post-conflict (as observed in the case of *Llochegua*).

To test my theoretical expectations on militia formation, *Los Morochucos*—an insurgent stronghold at the onset of the Peruvian civil war—serves as a compelling case to illustrate the deployment of SOMs after the state regained territorial control. In contrast, the case of *Llochegua*, situated in a highly disputed area during the war, reveals

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<sup>15</sup> From higher to lower, Peru’s subnational levels of government are: departments, provinces, districts, *centros poblados*, and peasant communities.

the process of grassroots militia formation. To capture variation in patterns of militia emergence, I purposefully selected cases from distinct types of conflict zones for intensive subnational analysis. Throughout the empirical analysis (as seen in Chapter 3), I also reference neighboring areas to show that the dynamics observed in these districts are not isolated but reflect broader patterns of militia formation and mobilization in, respectively, initially insurgent strongholds and disputed areas.

To test expectations about militia post-conflict trajectories, the cases of Los Morochucos and Llochegua illuminate how variation in militia-military and militia-community relations during the civil war helps explain militias' divergent post-conflict paths. In Los Morochucos, the CADs' subjugation to the military was a key factor in their disbandment post-conflict. In Llochegua, by contrast, autonomy from the military combined with strong community ties enabled the CADs to survive and bolster governance in the post-war period.

Importantly, I included an additional case, the district of *Luricocha* (also in Ayacucho), as a “shadow case study” (Soifer 2020).<sup>16</sup> This case serves a dual purpose: strengthening both the *external*<sup>17</sup> and *internal* validity<sup>18</sup> of my theoretical claims. Luricocha, also a disputed wartime territory, enhances external validity by showing that

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<sup>16</sup> Soifer (2020: 11) defines the *shadow case study* as “a component of small-N research that entails the examination of an ancillary or peripheral case, drawing inference from the within-case analysis of that case to shed light on the generality of claims most centrally evaluated in the core case.”

<sup>17</sup> *External validity* refers to “the generalizability of the finding of a causal relationship between variables beyond the domain of the actual units, spatial and temporal setting, and specific treatments that are examined” (Munck and Verkuilen 2005: 385).

<sup>18</sup> *Internal validity* could be understood as “a causal relationship between variables in the actual units, spatial and temporal setting, and specific treatments that are examined” (Munck and Verkuilen 2005: 385).

the dynamics of militia formation found in Llohegua are not unique, but closely mirrored in another case. Regarding internal validity, Luricocha highlights the importance of wartime militia-military and militia-community relations in shaping post-conflict militia paths. Like all comparative studies relying on observational data, the comparison between Los Morochucos and Llohegua is not a perfectly controlled experiment; factors such as geography—Llohegua lies in the more economically dynamic jungle, whereas Los Morochucos in the disadvantaged highlands—may confound militia survival prospects by influencing access to financial resources. However, the case of Luricocha offers evidence against this alternative explanation: despite sharing the economically disadvantaged highland geography of Los Morochucos, Luricocha's CADs survived and bolstered governance in the post-conflict period (as in Llohegua), underscoring the explanatory power of wartime state-society relations over economic accounts.

#### *4.2. Data and Methods*

My inductive theory-building is anchored in extensive, multi-sited, and immersive fieldwork conducted in Peru's rural periphery. To construct a "grounded" theoretical framework (Yom 2015), I employed site-intensive methods, including interviews, archival research, and participant observation (Kapiszewski et al. 2015). These methods allowed me to juxtapose my initial theoretical priors, rooted in the political violence scholarship, against empirical observations and insights from the field. The framework is informed by over 90 interviews, the analysis of more than 3,000 formal and informal archival documents, and detailed field notes documenting first-hand observations and participation in militias' post-conflict activities.

I conducted a comparative historical analysis utilizing process tracing<sup>19</sup> to uncover the causal mechanisms<sup>20</sup> linking (i) different types of wartime zones to distinct patterns of militia formation and mobilization, and (ii) militias' wartime relationships with the state (specifically, the military) and society (the local community) to their divergent post-conflict trajectories. Because process tracing relies on abundant, fine-grained diagnostic evidence (Beach and Pedersen 2019), I employed site intensive-methods during nine months of fieldwork. I collected data through multiple qualitative techniques, as noted above, in search of "causal process observations" (CPOs).<sup>21</sup>

To mitigate bias while conducting interviews, I collected evidence both from *various interviewees of the same type* (for example, multiple CAD members) and from *different types of interviewees* (former and current CAD members, local public officials, civil society leaders, and key informants). I conducted two kinds of interviews: i) in-depth, semi-structured interviews and ii) "life story" interviews (Kapiszewski et al. 2015). In-depth interviews revealed the unique perspective of each interviewee, who shared detailed information about different aspects of my theoretical expectations. "Life story" interviews helped me reconstruct the *comités de autodefensa*'s lifecycles in the three districts I study in this dissertation. These interviews explore not only individual

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<sup>19</sup> Collier (2011: 823) defines *process tracing* as the "systematic examination of diagnostic evidence selected and analyzed in light of research questions and hypotheses posed by the investigator."

<sup>20</sup> Following Falletti and Mahoney (2015), I understand *causal mechanisms* as a temporal sequence of events that, divided into different stages, produce a specific result.

<sup>21</sup> A *CPO* is "an insight or piece of data that provides information about context, process, or mechanism, and that contributes distinctive leverage in causal inference" (Mahoney 2010: 124).

biographies but also *organizations' life stories*, offering valuable insights into historical causal processes (Kapiszewski et al. 2015).

I consulted four types of archival sources. First, I examined historical documents from archives in Lima, specifically from the *Archivo Central de la CVR* and the *Lugar de la Memoria, la Tolerancia y la Inclusión Social* (LUM).<sup>22</sup> Second, I referenced written press, including political magazines such as *Oiga* (found at LUM), and *Caretas*, *Retablo*, and *QueHacer* (found at *Casa Matteo Ricci*, a cultural center in Ayacucho). Third, I consulted Llochegua's municipal archives (2010-2022).<sup>23</sup> Fourth, I gained access to informal archives—unmapped, non-systematized collections of materials kept by individuals and groups in the areas under study (Auerbach 2018: 345).<sup>24</sup> Among these, the most prominent were the Llochegua CADs' internal records (2017-2022) and the Luricocha CADs' miscellaneous documents, which I accessed after months of rapport-building with the organizations' leadership in the field. To complement my analysis of archival sources, I thoroughly reviewed Peruvian scholarship on the topic, gathering information from secondary sources (Lustick 1996).

During my fieldwork, I also actively participated in and documented specific events that deepened my understanding of CADs' evolving governance roles in Llochegua. These events included, among others, CADs' anniversary celebrations (a

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<sup>22</sup> These documents consist of specialized reports on the *comités de autodefensa*. They provide information about their legal framework, testimonies from conflict victims, and reflections from specialists on their post-conflict future.

<sup>23</sup> These archives include mayor resolutions, single and multiple correspondence, cooperation agreements, and petitions, among other documents.

<sup>24</sup> Informal archives have proven useful sources for historical data in comparative politics, especially when studying informal places where government data is scant or absent (Auerbach 2018).

soccer tournament and a parade), two informal lunches with the organization's leaders, an "urgent" meeting at the CAD central headquarters, and a day spent collecting crops with a historical CAD leader and former district mayor.

I use diagnostic pieces of evidence to make both descriptive and causal inferences throughout the empirical analysis. Careful description is integral to process tracing (Collier 2011), providing the foundation for analyzing the processes under study. For instance, providing "thick descriptions" that establish whether a wartime territory was disputed or under insurgent control serve as the basis for tracing the rationale behind militia formation." Likewise, detailing CADs' interactions with both the military and the community during the civil war is a necessary descriptive step before drawing causal inferences that connect their wartime experiences to their post-conflict paths.

## **5. Preview of Contributions**

Theoretically, this dissertation contributes to the study of political violence and post-conflict politics by foregrounding militias not as merely auxiliary forces or temporary actors, but as central organizations in both the dynamics of civil war and the construction of post-conflict governance. It introduces a novel framework linking variation in territorial control to contrasting patterns of militia emergence—two key wartime dimensions that have not previously been theorized together. It also advances a theory of how wartime relations with the military and local communities shape militias' post-war trajectories, with some disbanding and others persisting to either undermine or bolster governance. In doing so, the dissertation moves beyond static or intrinsically negative portrayals of militias, rethinking them—under specific conditions—as

organizations capable of providing essential public goods and services in post-conflict settings with weak state presence.

Empirically, my ethnographic field research in Peru's rural periphery uncovered critical variation that would have been imperceptible from afar or through standard datasets. Two districts with seemingly similar wartime militia presence—Los Morochucos and Llohegua—were in fact home to militias with sharply divergent origins, wartime relationships to state and society, and post-conflict trajectories. This divergence was especially puzzling given their geographical proximity and shared regional context. Such differences became visible only through sustained local engagement, which revealed variation that would otherwise be flattened under the broad, simplistic category of “militia presence” during the civil war.

In addition, the project contributes to preserving oral testimonies from historically marginalized populations. I relied heavily on interviews with Quechua-speaking militia members and rural villagers whose experiences remain largely absent from scholarly and official narratives. In a context marked by weak state capacity and scarce written documentation, these testimonies serve as vital historical sources. In Llohegua, in particular, they illuminate how local communities created militias to survive the war and later repurposed them to compensate for the state's continued absence. These oral accounts therefore challenge state-centric narratives of both conflict resolution and post-conflict reconstruction, underscoring the agency of rural actors in shaping their own security and governance.

Policy-wise, the dissertation offers two main insights. First, it sheds light on how different types of militias operate during civil wars. While SOMs may be effective in

confronting insurgents, they often do so at a high human cost, engaging in repressive actions not only against insurgents but also against civilians under military orders. In contrast, grassroots militias—when maintaining operational autonomy and embedded in their local communities—tend to adopt a more protective stance toward civilians. Therefore, supporting such militias may offer a more sustainable and less repressive counterinsurgency approach. Second, in the post-conflict period, my findings highlight the potential for militias to contribute to governance when state capacity remains weak. Rather than uniformly destabilizing governance, some militias help deliver security, infrastructure, and local justice, particularly for populations historically neglected by the state. These findings point to the benefits of incorporating wartime organizations with deep community roots into post-conflict governance frameworks.

## **6. Roadmap**

This dissertation is organized into seven chapters. Chapter 1 serves as the introduction. Chapter 2 presents a theory on militia origins and mobilization during civil war. Chapter 3 advances a framework to explain the diverse pathways militias can take following civil war termination. Together, Chapters 2 and 3 constitute the theoretical foundation of the dissertation. The empirical analysis begins in Chapter 4, which compares the process of militia formation in Los Morochucos and Llohegua, two districts in Peru's Ayacucho department. Chapter 5 extends the comparison by analyzing militias' post-conflict trajectories in these same districts. Chapter 6 introduces an additional case—Luricocha district, also in Ayacucho—to further test and strengthen the

core arguments. Lastly, chapter 7 synthesizes the main findings, highlights the dissertation's contributions, and suggests avenues for future research.

## Chapter 2

### Militia Formation in Civil War

#### 1. Introduction

This chapter advances our understanding of militia formation and mobilization in civil war by examining why these organizations emerge in some areas but not others. Specifically, it asks: *how do patterns of territorial control shape where and how militias take root during civil wars?* Militias have appeared across virtually all types of internal wars<sup>25</sup> (irregular guerrilla warfare, ethnic and separatist conflicts, and anti-occupation struggles), underscoring their ubiquity as key actors in wartime dynamics (Kalyvas 2006; Branch 2007; Kalyvas and Balcells 2010). Yet we still lack a clear explanation for the subnational variation in their emergence. While territorial control is widely recognized as a critical factor in civil wars (Kalyvas 2006; Kasfir 2015; Arjona et al. 2015), its role in shaping militia formation remains undertheorized. In this chapter, I address this gap by analyzing how the varying incentives and constraints faced by states,<sup>26</sup> insurgents, and civilians across different wartime territories influence the formation of counterinsurgent militias.

At the subnational level, wartime territories are not monolithic battlefields; rather, they fall under government or insurgent control, or are actively contested by both. Scholars of civil war have long emphasized that the distribution of territorial control fundamentally shapes the behavior of all key actors—state forces, insurgents, and

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<sup>25</sup> “Civil wars,” “internal wars,” and “internal armed conflicts” are used interchangeably throughout the dissertation.

<sup>26</sup> “State” and “government” are used as synonyms in this dissertation.

civilians—within these zones (Kalyvas 2006; Staniland 2012). For example, when the state or insurgents fully control a territory, they use limited, selective violence; in contested areas, both escalate violence to assert dominance. Civilians, in turn, face heightened risk in contested zones, where they often engage in strategic collaboration with both sides, practice “fence-sitting” (Huseen and Pelham 2004), or adopt various forms of resistance—both nonviolent (Scott 1985) and violent (Lyall 2009; Schubiger 2021)—to survive. However, despite the well-established links between territorial control, patterns of violence, and civilian risk, we know little about how these territorial dynamics specifically affect the incentives and constraints that drive actors to form militia organizations. Building on and extending existing scholarship, this chapter develops a novel theory of militia formation during civil war. In doing so, it identifies three “ideal-type pathways”<sup>27</sup>— i) *no militias*, ii) *state-orchestrated militias*, and iii) *grassroots militias*—to militia emergence across diverse wartime territories.

Unlike previous work on the topic (Lyall 2009; Ahram 2011; Schubiger 2021; Jentzsch 2022), which has tended to focus on only one type of militia formation process—either “from above” (state-orchestrated) or “from below” (grassroots)—this chapter advances a unified framework that explains both *whether* militias emerge and *what kind* of militias take shape in civil war. Specifically, it accounts for variation in militia emergence across multiple wartime zones and differentiates between state-orchestrated and grassroots mobilization. The chapter thus offers a comprehensive map of

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<sup>27</sup> “Ideal-type pathways” refer to Weberian ideal types—analytical constructs that simplify and accentuate certain features of complex phenomena to facilitate comparison and theory-building. These categories are not meant to be deterministic or universally observable; rather, they serve as heuristic tools that help us make sense of variation in militia formation during warfare.

the “universe” of militia formation during internal armed conflicts, especially those characterized by asymmetric warfare.<sup>28</sup>

## **2. The Argument**

### *2.1. Overview*

The formation and mobilization of militias in civil war vary significantly depending on the interactions among three key actors—the state, insurgents, and civilians—across different conflict zones. In *insurgent strongholds*, where insurgents maintain firm territorial control, grassroots militias rarely take root. Despite potential civilian incentives to resist insurgent rule, insurgents typically possess sufficient authority and coercive capacity to suppress militia mobilization “from below.” However, if and when the state regains control of these territories, it can establish militias “from above” as part of its counterinsurgency strategy to consolidate authority and eliminate lingering insurgent influence. In short, while grassroots militias are unlikely to emerge in insurgent strongholds, state-orchestrated militias (SOMs) tend to be introduced following a shift in territorial control, when the state has strategic incentives to consolidate control and reassert political order.

In *disputed areas*, where neither the state nor insurgents maintain clear territorial control, civilians are more likely to succeed in forming militias “from below.” The lack of insurgent dominance reduces constraints on grassroots mobilization, while persistent

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<sup>28</sup> Asymmetrical (non-conventional) internal wars are characterized by irregular or guerrilla warfare. The weaker side, the insurgents, strategically use surprise attacks against the state security forces, which are much better equipped (Kalyvas 2006).

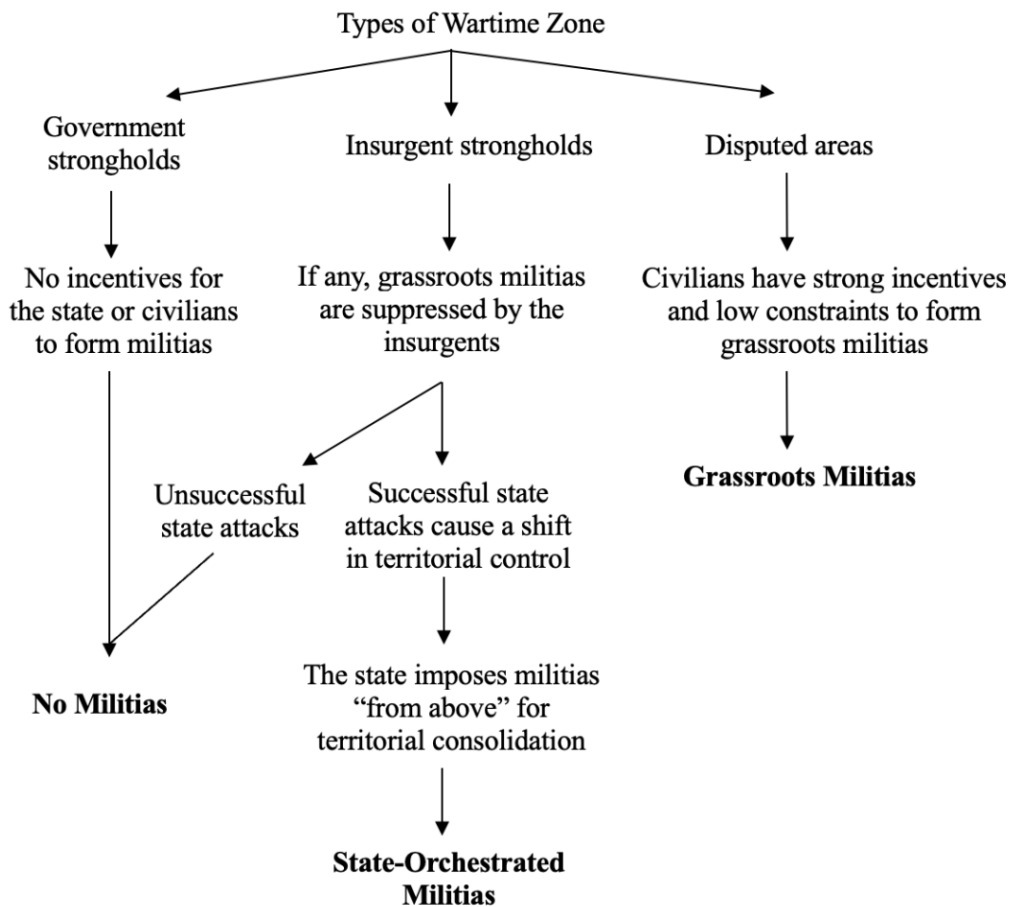
violence from both sides heightens civilians' incentives to establish militias for self-protection. These grassroots organizations emerge as a direct response to the insecurity and threats created by the ongoing struggle for territorial dominance between the state and insurgents. In sum, this context presents high incentives and relatively low constraints for grassroots militia formation, making such organizations more likely to emerge in disputed areas.

Lastly, in *government strongholds*, militias are unlikely to emerge because neither the state nor civilians have strong incentives to create them. The state has little need for auxiliary forces in already secured areas and prefers to allocate its limited resources to more volatile zones, such as recently recaptured insurgent-held territories. Civilians, for their part, benefit from the state's sustained presence and control in these areas, which reduces the need to organize militias "from below" to confront insurgents or shield themselves from violence.<sup>29</sup> Figure 5 illustrates the three "ideal-type" pathways of militia formation in civil war.

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<sup>29</sup> To reduce complexity, my theory assumes that government strongholds remain stable throughout the conflict. While this is not always the case—such areas can, for instance, become disputed or fall under insurgent control—this simplifying assumption allows for a clearer theoretical comparison across conflict zones. Furthermore, in asymmetrical civil wars, it is more common for the government to reconquer insurgent-held territory than for insurgents to capture government strongholds (Meyerson 1970).

Figure 5: Pathways to Militia Emergence



## 2.2. Hypotheses

In total, four observable implications or hypotheses regarding militia origins emerge from my theory. To ensure conceptual clarity, I organized these hypotheses by conflict zone.

Government strongholds:

- *H1: Militias are unlikely to emerge in areas under stable government control.*

Insurgent strongholds:

- *H2: Grassroots militias are unlikely to emerge in areas dominated by insurgents.*
- *H3: Militias are likely to be imposed by the state after recapturing insurgent-controlled areas.*

Disputed areas:

- *H4: Grassroots militias are likely to emerge in areas where neither the state nor insurgents maintain clear territorial control.*

### **3. Territorial Control**

#### *3.1. Why it Matters*

Territorial control is an essential aspect of civil wars. Indeed, it is so crucial that our understanding of insurgent groups is intrinsically tied to it, as these organizations are defined as “consciously coordinated groups whose members engage in protracted violence with the intention of gaining undisputed political control over all or a portion of a pre-existing state’s territory” (Kasfir 2015: 24). Likely to emerge in areas with low state presence, typically in the countryside, insurgents must first secure a populated territory to advance their political agenda as a “counter-state” (Wickham-Crowley 1987). Hence, these groups clash against the state security forces—the Armed Forces and/or the police—to seize territorial and population control (Arjona et al. 2015). Ultimately, civil wars entail a *de facto* territorial division or physical fragmentation of territory between two armed rivals that seize to gain full sovereignty (De Lupis 1987; Schmitt 1976).

Building on Kalyvas' seminal work (2006), which offers evidence from various civil wars globally, I distinguish among three types of territories during the conflict defined in terms of the principal actor in control: *insurgent strongholds*, *government strongholds*, and *disputed areas*.<sup>30</sup> Before linking these wartime territories to patterns of militia formation and mobilization, it is essential to outline their defining characteristics, which I do in the subsections that follow.

### 3.2. *Insurgent Strongholds*

*Insurgent strongholds* are, by definition, areas where these groups are dominant. Effective control over territory allows insurgents to establish governing institutions in which the local population participates. Through violence or the threat of it, insurgents hold a firm grip on power that ensures civilian compliance with their directives, thereby impeding the state from performing basic functions. The so-called “liberated” or “base areas” are the best examples of these territories, often characterized by rough terrain where insurgent groups originate or establish their operational centers. “Rurality” has been documented as a strong predictor of insurgent dominance in civil wars, including examples from Colombia (Fichtl 2004), El Salvador (Stanley 1996), Peru (Manrique 1998), and Vietnam (Elliot 2003). In El Salvador, for instance, insurgents referred to their

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<sup>30</sup> In fact, Kalyvas makes a five-area distinction because, within disputed areas, he distinguishes three types of zones: one where the insurgents enjoy more control than the government but not full control; another where both actors enjoy the same level of control; and another where the government enjoys more control than the insurgents but not full control. However, the author warns us that “descriptions of contested areas typically fail to differentiate between areas of dominant and even control” (Kalyvas 2006: 236). Therefore, I decided to move forward with a three-area distinction, which will suffice to advance my theory.

heartland as “*zonas de control*,” where they exercised full sovereignty with minimal government interference (J. L. Anderson 2004). Despite their violent nature, insurgent groups tend to refrain from using mass violence within these areas (Rosenau 1994; Sánchez 2001; Elliot 2003). In Kalyvas’ words (2006: 220), “full control makes violence redundant.” Deprived of control, the government is the primary perpetrator of violence in insurgent strongholds when launching military offensives attempting to reclaim its dominance.

### 3.3. *Government Strongholds*

Conversely, *government strongholds* are territories under the control of the state security forces. The state’s authority prevails either due to the absence of insurgents in the area—resulting in a lack of significant conflict—or due to the overt domination of insurgents by the military and the police apparatus. Although insurgents’ final goal is typically to establish control over the entire nation-state territory, some areas may be of limited strategic value as they try to expand. Consequently, state control would remain undisputed in such areas. Besides, rebel forces’ conquering quest can falter when faced with the government’s superior combat strategies and capabilities, resulting in the persistence of government strongholds. For example, the state often maintains dominance in urban areas even when insurgents try to challenge it (Elliot 2003). In essence, government strongholds are pockets of territory where the state exercises predominant control due to insurgents’ disinterest or inefficacy. Paralleling the logic of violence in insurgent strongholds, we should observe limited or no violence by the ruling actor—i.e.,

the state—in these areas. Instead, we should observe violent attempts by the rebels to challenge state domination.

### *3.4. Disputed Areas*

*Disputed areas* are territories with no clear sovereignty. Also known as contested or “twilight” zones (Armstrong 1964), these intermediate territories are considered “the most important arena of struggle” (McColl 1969: 624). Conceptually, a disputed area lies in the intermediary space between insurgent and government strongholds. For instance, an area might become disputed after insurgents confront the state security forces with a certain level of success, enabling them to exercise some sovereignty within a former government stronghold. As the state aims to reassert total dominance, political authority often becomes fragmented or ambiguous in these territories.

In disputed areas, neither side is sufficiently powerful to claim complete control, yet both exert *some* degree of influence. For instance, the population might obey the government on specific matters while siding with the insurgents on others, i.e., the Army may rule during the daytime and the rebels at night, as observed in Namibia (Groth 1995), Afghanistan (Borovik 1991), Vietnam (Race 1973), Iraq (Huseen and Pelham 2004), and the Philippines (Berlow 1998). Civilians often find themselves caught between “two fires” as both power contenders launch attacks against each other, creating a classic civil war scenery. Testimonies from numerous internal armed conflicts indicate that both the state and insurgents deploy more violence in contested areas than in their respective strongholds (Dallin et al. 1964; Manrique 1998; Anderson 2004).

### 3.5. Control Transitions: Initial Shift and Consolidation

Territorial control is not constant during civil; it often shifts. For instance, disputed areas might eventually fall under the domain of the state or insurgents. Moreover, insurgents may successfully conquer territories previously controlled by the government; vice versa, the government can terminate insurgent strongholds through successful military interventions. Governments' tactical decisions are typically the primary reason behind control shifts in asymmetrical (non-conventional) internal wars. Given its military superiority in this type of warfare, the state tends to succeed in reestablishing territorial control when it strategically launches offensives in insurgent-held areas (Meyerson 1970). However, governments' war resources are limited, particularly in weak states where civil wars typically break out. As a result, the government cannot reclaim simultaneously or with equal vigor every inch of lost territory. Nevertheless, when it decides to allocate military assets and personnel to attack an insurgent stronghold, the rebels often must withdraw, thus ceding the area.

Control transitions do not happen overnight. This process entails two distinct phases: the *initial shift* and *consolidation* (Kalyvas 2006). The initial shift occurs when one of the conflicting powers mobilizes its military resources to launch a sufficiently effective attack, forcing its adversary to retreat. This takeover is marked by brutal and *indiscriminate* violence. Violence is brutal to make the statement that there is a new "chief in town" and indiscriminate because it is impossible to tell apart friends and enemies "from the outside," in a zone where the new ruler's authority is still unstable. Although both the state and insurgents can make this initial shift, evidence from an

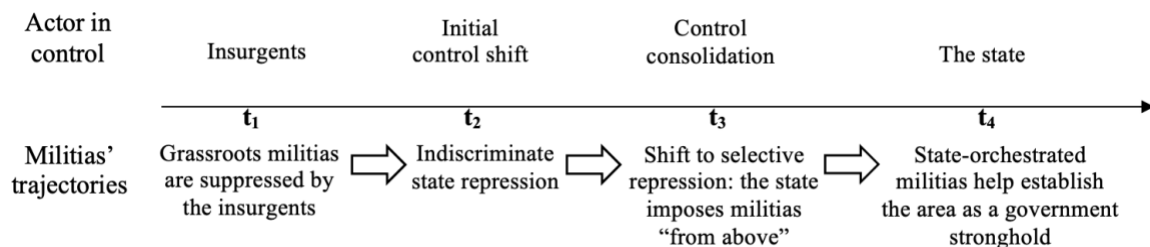
extensive sample of civil wars suggests that the state is more likely to succeed due to its military advantage (Wilson 2002; Ellsberg 2003).

After the initial shift, the consolidation phase begins. Violence can also be brutal during this phase; however, unlike during the initial shift, the key here is that it becomes *selective*.<sup>31</sup> With some control over the area, the new ruler is now better positioned to distinguish between supporters and detractors. Consequently, aggression is targeted at those who refuse to “bend the knee” or surrender, allowing the emerging sovereign to take full control of the area. Once control is consolidated, violence becomes redundant.

#### 4. Militia Formation in (Originally) Insurgent Strongholds

Figure 6 illustrates the process of militia formation and mobilization in initially insurgent strongholds, together with the shifts in territorial control and state repressive strategies. The stages  $t_1$ ,  $t_2$ ,  $t_3$ , and  $t_4$  represent the sequence of events that culminate in the establishment of state-orchestrated militias within these wartime territories.

Figure 6: The Establishment of State-Orchestrated Militias



<sup>31</sup> “Violence is *selective* when there is intention to ascertain individual guilt” (Kalyvas 2006: 142).

#### *4.1. The Failure of Grassroots Militias*

In areas originally controlled by insurgents, the formation of grassroots militias poses considerable challenges. Although there will always be some resistance to rebel governance because “social order is a matter of degree” (Lockwood and Wrong 1994: 9), creating grassroots militias—armed self-defense community organizations whose goal is to challenge and eventually terminate insurgents’ dominance—is fraught with difficulty and danger.<sup>32</sup> Surely, some civilians will engage in everyday forms of resistance (Scott 1985), such as avoiding communal activities or withholding information from insurgents. Just like any other ruler, insurgent groups cannot control every aspect of people’s lives. Yet, they will suppress without hesitation any attempt by the local population to create organizations that violently challenge their authority. “Because militias threaten insurgents, they quickly become their primary targets (Kalyvas 2006: 109).”

In their strongholds, insurgents have sufficient organizational resources and civilian support to suppress the emergence of community-led militias. Numerous insurgent leaders and intermediate ranks reside in these area—alongside military equipment—and a significant portion of the local population backs them out of conviction, coercion, or convenience. Although multiple accounts suggest that only a small fraction of the population is directly involved in the conflict (Lichbach 1995; Fichtl 2004; Greene 1990; Wood 2003), most citizens in insurgent-held areas collaborate with the rebels due to their prevailing control (Kalyvas 2006). Therefore, community efforts to form militias would be outnumbered and outgunned by insurgents and their followers.

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<sup>32</sup> In social orders with either broad (rebelocracy) or narrow (aliocracy) rebel interventions (Arjona 2016), forming militias is a high-risk activity.

Additionally, rebels have informational resources in their fortresses. Embedded within the local population, their informants would alert them to any signs of disobedience, let alone militia formation. For all these severe constraints imposed by the local context, grassroots militias are unlikely to emerge in insurgent strongholds.

#### *4.2. Control Shift: From Insurgent to Government Strongholds*

From the government's perspective, insurgent strongholds are viewed as unified areas where all civilians are either members or sympathizers of the rebels. Despite some residents being against the insurgents, the state treats these zones as homogeneous, failing to differentiate between friends and foes due to the lack of territorial control. This blind spot leads to indiscriminate repression during the initial shift in control transitions. This behavior makes the state the primary instigator of violence in insurgent strongholds, as shown in Colombia (Roldán 2002), Korea (Yoo 2001), and Kenya (Barnett and Njama 1966).

The *initial shift* in control begins with the state's tactical decision to allocate scarce military resources (Trinquier 1964). Often, the government first resorts to bombing from outside the area to instill fear and weaken insurgents. Whenever possible, it establishes a military base and/or police station within the zone to secure a direct presence and thus combat the insurgents to regain territorial control. Military forces enter the area, striving to overcome insurgent resistance and push them out, forcing the rebels to find refuge elsewhere. Although rebels may resist, the government's military advantage usually prevails. Following a successful initial shift, where the government recaptures an insurgent-held area, the state is likely to impose militias "from above" to

consolidate territorial control. However, if the initial shift is unsuccessful, state-orchestrated militias are unlikely to emerge, as the state lacks the foothold needed to recruit, arm, and coordinate local militia forces.

#### *4.3. Control Consolidation: The Formation of State-Orchestrated Militias*

After a successful initial strike, control transitions enter a second phase: *consolidation*. This phase requires eradicating insurgent remnants from the area to ensure that they will not reclaim their lost territory. Deactivating hidden rebel cells and identifying and capturing their key informants are examples of what control consolidation entails for the government, for which selective violence becomes crucial. Once control has shifted due to an initial military strike through indiscriminate violence, the consolidation phase requires the more subtle, fine-grained strategy of selective violence. It is during this phase that SOMs play a critical role in former insurgent strongholds, as the government now has both the incentives and the means to impose them as part of its strategy to solidify control and prevent insurgent resurgence.

The creation of militias “from above” by the state plays a crucial role in counterinsurgency tactics (Hedman 2000; Carey et al. 2013). While there is ample evidence that governments have established these organizations across many civil wars, the specific setting—*timing* and *location*—where SOMs are imposed remains an open question. This is where my theory intervenes. In former insurgent strongholds, I expect the state to form militias that operate as its “extended arm” in consolidating territorial control. These auxiliary forces serve as force multipliers and sources of local intelligence, especially where regular troops lack contextual knowledge (Carey and Mitchell 2021).

Moreover, by coercing or co-opting civilians to fight on its behalf, the state not only enhances its operational capacity but also deprives insurgents of a supportive civilian base (Eck 2015). Finally, employing militias also offers the government plausible deniability for violence against suspected rebels, as any brutal reprisals can be blamed on irregular “volunteers” rather than official troops (Cohen 2001; Ahram 2011). Participation in SOMs is rarely voluntary: recruitment is typically coercive, and refusal could result in severe punishment. As one militia member recalled during the Kurdish insurgency in Turkey (1983-1999): “You really didn’t have a choice... asked what happened to the homes of men in a mountain village, Islamkoy, who declined the government’s ‘offer’... oh, they were burned” (Vick 2002: A18).<sup>33</sup>

Not surprisingly, in formerly insurgent strongholds, many militia members were once insurgent fighters or sympathizers—some continue to support the insurgency even after the shift in control. In some instances, these individuals fight for the state during the day and for the rebels at night (Kalyvas 2008; Otto 2018). The military and police are well aware—or at least strongly suspect—that many locals still sympathize with the insurgents, including those recruited into the militias. As a result, military commanders often maintain strict control over militia activity in these zones to reduce the risk of defection or dual allegiances.

Regardless of their ideological commitments, however, many civilians join militias or collaborate with the state primarily for survival. The initial shift in territorial

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<sup>33</sup> Economic motivations, fear of insurgents, and revenge for insurgents’ past actions can also explain why civilians join pro-government militias. However, coercion prevails as the leading cause of joining (Kalyvas 2006).

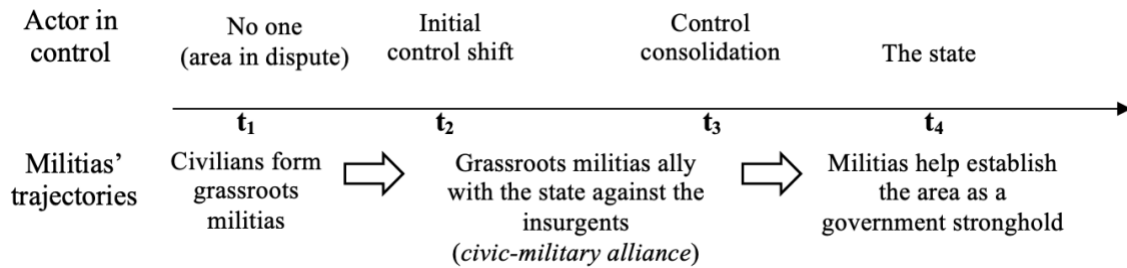
control is often accompanied by brutal and indiscriminate state violence, leaving civilians with little choice but to comply. In Kalyvas' words (2006: 133), "control may trump the political preferences of the population in generating collaboration during the war." In this context, joining a militia may not reflect genuine loyalty to the government, but a strategy to avoid suspicion and stay alive. Once established, SOMs become a valuable asset to the state by helping solve the "identification problem"—the challenge of distinguishing rebels from civilians, which plagues irregular warfare. Because many militia members previously belonged to insurgent networks, they are uniquely positioned to provide intelligence on rebel whereabouts, affiliations, and operations. This information enables the state to employ selective rather than indiscriminate violence, ultimately aiding in its effort to consolidate control.

In sum, the state imposes militias as part of a systematic military strategy to consolidate territorial control in formerly insurgent strongholds. After the initial shift in control, states often compel civilians to join these militias and provide critical intelligence that enables the government to implement selective violence and suppress insurgents' efforts to regain power. While the tactical functions of SOMs—such as intelligence gathering, force multiplication, and plausible deniability for abuses—are not new, my theory contributes by specifying the conditions under which these militias are most likely to be created. Specifically, it predicts that SOMs emerge in territories recently reclaimed from insurgents, where the state faces strong incentives to assert authority and prevent insurgent resurgence.

## 5. Militia Formation in Disputed Areas

Figure 7 illustrates the process of militia formation and mobilization in disputed areas, highlighting shifts in territorial control and the conditions under which militias emerge and consolidate. The stages  $t_1$ ,  $t_2$ ,  $t_3$ , and  $t_4$  represent the sequence of events leading to the establishment of grassroots militias within these wartime territories.

Figure 7: The Emergence and Consolidation of Grassroots Militias



### 5.1. The Origins of Grassroots Militias

Civilians are caught between “two fires” in disputed areas, suffering violence from both sides—the insurgents and the state—as these actors try to achieve complete territorial control. Existing evidence indicates high levels of violence in these territories, perpetrated by both political factions (Kalyvas 2006). The local population experiences a deep sense of uncertainty and fear as they receive accusations from both armed rivals of cooperating with the opposite party. Testimonies corroborating these experiences have been collected in disputed areas across several conflicts, including the cases of

Guatemala (Warren 1998), Algeria (Faivre 1994), Afghanistan (Sengupta 2005), Namibia (Groth 1995), and Greece (McNeill 1978).

Unsurprisingly, many locals decide to leave the area in search of peace and safety. Others stay and either try to remain as neutral or uninvolved as possible, or even engage in “fence-sitting” behavior—assisting both sides simultaneously to maximize their survival chances (Figs 1996; Livanios 1999; Huseen and Pelham 2004). However, these strategies are hazardous. From the perspectives of both the government and insurgents, neutrality is often interpreted as alignment with the opposing faction. Thus, neutrals become perceived enemies for both political actors, leaving minimal space for nonalignment under such circumstances (Giustozzi 2000; Lubkemann 2005). Besides, fence-sitting is like walking on thin ice and comes together with increased fear, stress, and anxiety as civilians carry out a “double-life.” This behavior becomes particularly risky when civilians are unaware of the ongoing power shifts and thus miscalculate when, to whom, and to what extent they should lie (Race 1973). Furthermore, as evidence from China (Chang 1992) and Kenya (Barnett and Njama 1966) shows, fence-sitting is severely punished if discovered.

To protect their lives, families, and assets both from state and guerrilla violence, civilians can form grassroots, community-led militias in disputed areas.<sup>34</sup> These militias originate “from below,” signifying autonomy from the state—indeed, civilians create them in part to shield the local community from state oppression. This logic parallels

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<sup>34</sup> Studying when civilians decide to form militias and when not in disputed areas is outside the scope of my investigation. Instead, my research aims to contrast the process of militia formation and mobilization in disputed areas vis-à-vis insurgent strongholds.

broader patterns observed by scholars who have noticed the emergence of civic society organizations under conditions of political repression (Wade 1988; Skocpol 1996; Ostrom 1996).

Unlike civilians in insurgent strongholds—who are either disinterested in or incapable of forming militias—their counterparts in disputed areas face both stronger incentives and fewer constraints to do so. First, because insurgent control in these zones is incomplete, civilians have a broader window of opportunity to organize without immediate suppression. Second, the dual threat of violence from both state and insurgent forces creates an urgent need for self-defense. Whereas insurgents typically govern their strongholds through the threat of violence—resorting to repression when necessary (Arjona et al. 2015)—these areas remain relatively stable and predictable for civilians, so long as they do not openly challenge insurgent authority. By contrast, disputed areas are more volatile and lack a clear governing force, exposing civilians to heightened insecurity. As a result, the motivations and feasibility of militia formation differ markedly between the two contexts. While only a small subset of dissidents might attempt (and often fail) to establish militias in insurgent strongholds, a broader segment of the population in disputed areas is more likely to succeed in building grassroots organizations to protect themselves from crossfire. Thus, my theory predicts that grassroots militias are more likely to emerge in disputed territories, where neither the state nor insurgents maintain uncontested control.

## 5.2. *The Civic-Military Alliance*

Nevertheless, establishing militias in disputed territories is fraught with risks. For instance, state security forces can mistake civilians militias for insurgent groups, leading to deadly encounters. This problem is especially acute in irregular civil wars, where switching sides is frequent and “who fights who” becomes fuzzy (Kalyvas 2006). Furthermore, insurgents often target militia members for refusing to join their ranks, viewing them as traitors or collaborators with the government.

To survive and consolidate, militias often find it necessary to align with one of the two main armed actors. Remaining autonomous carries the risk of being crushed by either side—or both. As the state’s military capabilities and resources typically exceed those of the insurgents, militias are more likely to ally with the state than with insurgents. Not love or ideological affinity, but self-interest and a shared fear of a common enemy brings grassroots militias and the state together.<sup>35</sup> By siding with the state, militias avoid being targeted by the state security forces—often the greater threat—and might gain access to material resources that bolster their ranks and enhance their ability to protect local communities from insurgent abuses. Although grassroots militias initially form to defend civilians from both state and insurgent violence, this alliance transforms them into primarily anti-rebel (or pro-government) forces. This shift reflects the survival-driven logic of militia behavior in the volatile of civil war, particularly in disputed areas.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> As Argentine writer Jorge Luis Borges famously wrote in his 1963 poem *Buenos Aires*, “*No los une el amor, sino el espanto*” (“It is not love but fear that unites them”)—a line that aptly captures the underlying logic of the civic-military alliance.

<sup>36</sup> According to Schubiger’s conceptualization (2021: 1385), militias are defined as armed groups that fight on behalf of the state. In this chapter, I complicate that definition by theorizing that

From the government's perspective, this alliance is also desirable because it improves its chances of defeating the insurgents. Through the civic-military alliance, the military not only increases its manpower to combat the guerrilla but also gains invaluable intelligence about the battlefield and the enemy. As in formerly insurgent strongholds, militia members in disputed areas serve as crucial local insiders, providing vital informational resources. They possess an intimate knowledge of the rough terrain where the conflict unfolds: where a creek begins and ends, the secret paths connecting highlands, and the caves or hidden shelters in the wilderness.

Beyond terrain knowledge, militia members hold critical information about the identities of insurgents and their supporters. In tightly-knit communities, relationships run deep: the insurgents and their followers are often the neighbors, friends, or even family members of militia members. Militias can thus identify or “put a name and a face” to an elusive enemy that otherwise would remain invisible to the state, proving their worth in the civic-military alliance. Discrimination—the ability to distinguish between insurgents, their supporters, and uninvolved civilians—is essential for effective violence (Kalyvas 2006), and militias play a crucial role in enabling the state to target insurgents with precision. For example, in Guatemala, local militias known as “civil patrols” provided the Army with key information about rebel movements (Carmack 1988).

By addressing the “identification problem,” militias offer the state a critical advantage. As an American officer patrolling an Afghan village described: “Two out of ten people here hate you and want to kill you. You just have to figure out which two”

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grassroots militias in disputed areas—initially formed to protect local communities from both state and insurgent violence—can evolve over time to align fully with state objectives.

(Zucchini 2004: A8). Even well-resourced states often fail to suppress insurgencies without such local intelligence. However, once identified—largely due to militias’ efforts—insurgents become highly vulnerable. Prior research confirms militias’ effectiveness in weakening rebel forces (Richards 1996; Horne 1987; Linn 2000; Jentzsch et al. 2015).

In summary, I expect militia formation and consolidation in disputed areas to differ from that in formerly insurgent strongholds. Caught in the crossfire of state and insurgent violence, I theorize that civilians in disputed areas form grassroots militias as a means of self-defense. Over time, these militias are likely to ally with the state to ensure their survival. This civic-military alliance shields militias from state repression and often grants them access to material resources and logistical support. In return, the government gains invaluable intelligence, enabling it to target insurgents more effectively and ultimately helping it transform the disputed area into a government stronghold. While the roles of militias in counterinsurgency have been acknowledged in prior work (Hedman 2000; Carey et al. 2013; Eck 2015; Carey and Mitchell 2021), my contribution lies in theorizing the conditions under which different types of militias emerge. Specifically in this subsection, I have explained *why* and *where* grassroots militias are most likely to form: in disputed areas, where no actor exercises full territorial control.

## **6. Conclusion**

This chapter has introduced a comprehensive theory of militia formation in civil war. The central argument is that the emergence and evolution of counterinsurgent militias depends on the interactions between the state, insurgents, and civilians across

diverse subnational conflict zones. In short, militia formation is shaped by the varying incentives and constraints these actors face within three distinct wartime territories: government strongholds, insurgent strongholds, and disputed areas.

In government strongholds, militias (whether grassroots or state-orchestrated) are unlikely to emerge because neither the state nor civilians have strong incentives to establish them. In insurgent strongholds, grassroots militias, if formed at all, are likely suppressed by the insurgents, who wield enough resources to crush them within their domain. However, after successful government offensives to regain territorial control, an initial shift in control may occur, prompting the state to impose militias “from above” (i.e., SOMs) as a means of consolidating its authority. In disputed areas, by contrast, civilians face strong incentives and relatively fewer constraints to form grassroots militias in order to protect themselves from both state and insurgent violence. Over time, these grassroots militias are likely to establish a civic-military alliance with the state against insurgents, securing their position and ensuring their survival.

The next chapter turns to what happens after the fighting stops. It advances a framework for understanding militia post-conflict trajectories in terms of two critical wartime relationships: militia-military (autonomy vs. subjugation) and militia-community (embedded vs. disembedded) relations. Depending on the nature of these relationships, militias can follow three different post-conflict paths: *governance strengthening*, *governance weakening*, or *disbandment*. By studying militias from their origins to their post-conflict termination or transformation, this dissertation provides a comprehensive account of their lifecycle and long-term impact on governance.

## Chapter 3

### Militia Trajectories *After* Civil War

#### 1. Introduction

This chapter develops a framework to explain militias' varied post-civil war trajectories, ranging from disbandment to outcomes of governance weakening and strengthening. *Why do some militias disband in the post-conflict period while others persist? Under what conditions do militias undermine or, conversely, enhance governance in the aftermath of violent conflict?* To answer these questions, I focus on two critical wartime relationships: (i) militia-state relations, specifically with the military, and (ii) militia-community relations. Specifically, I examine whether militias are autonomous from or, alternatively, subjugated to the military and the degree to which they are embedded within local communities during civil wars.<sup>37</sup> Different combinations of these factors explain militias' varied post-conflict paths: *disbandment*, *governance weakening*, and *governance strengthening*.

Existing research often links the post-conflict persistence of militias to challenges in achieving political stability, socio-economic development, and effective governance (Hughes and Tripodi 2009; López Hernández 2010; Acemoglu et al. 2013). However, some studies highlight militias' evolving roles in governing rural peripheries, where weak state institutions and limited public services create a demand for collaboration between states and non-state actors (Goodwin 1998; Cammett and McLean 2014). In such

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<sup>37</sup> These categories are Weberian “ideal types.” While militias may not be entirely subjugated to or autonomous from the military in every aspect, this distinction is useful because it illuminates different real-world patterns.

contexts, militias can take on governance roles, providing security, infrastructure, and local justice (García-Godos 2006; Bateson 2013, 2017). Repurposing wartime institutions like militias to enhance rural governance can improve the quality of life for historically marginalized populations. This chapter examines the wartime conditions that enable such repurposing efforts, while also investigating the factors that lead militias to either persist and undermine governance or disband in post-conflict periods.

## **2. The Argument**

### *2.1. Overview*

The trajectories of militias after civil war depend on two critical wartime relationships: militia-military (autonomy vs. subjugation) and militia-community (embedded vs. disembedded) relations. Conditional upon the nature of these relationships, militias follow three different post-conflict paths: *governance strengthening, governance weakening, or disbandment*.

I argue that militias subjugated to the military are prone to disbandment after civil wars. In these cases, the extent to which militias are embedded within local communities becomes less relevant because their relationship with the community is largely defined by their subjugation to the Armed Forces. This subjugation typically involves military repression targeting militia members (Stanton 2015), as well as militia members preying on the local community following military orders (Valentino 2004; Downes 2006). Consequently, neither militia members nor local villagers support the continuation of these organizations, leading to their post-conflict disbandment.

In contrast, militias that operate autonomously from the military but lack embeddedness within their local community can undermine governance after civil wars end. With operational freedom and weak community ties, militias remain unchecked in terms of predatory behavior (Carey and Mitchell 2017), thereby weakening post-conflict rural governance (Hughes and Tripodi 2009; Schlichte 2010; Acemoglu et al. 2013).

Lastly, militias that maintain autonomy from the military *and* are embedded within their local community are more likely to survive and adopt governance-enhancing roles in post-conflict periods. With operational autonomy and strong communal ties, militias tend to protect rather than prey on their communities during civil war (Yoroms 2005; Daly 2011; Peic 2014). Through their protective actions, militias gain social legitimacy and become institutionalized through a process of “value infusion” (Selznick 1957; Levitsky 1999). Both militia members and local residents develop a strong commitment and identification with these organizations, thus advocating for their survival and adaptation to improve post-conflict governance.

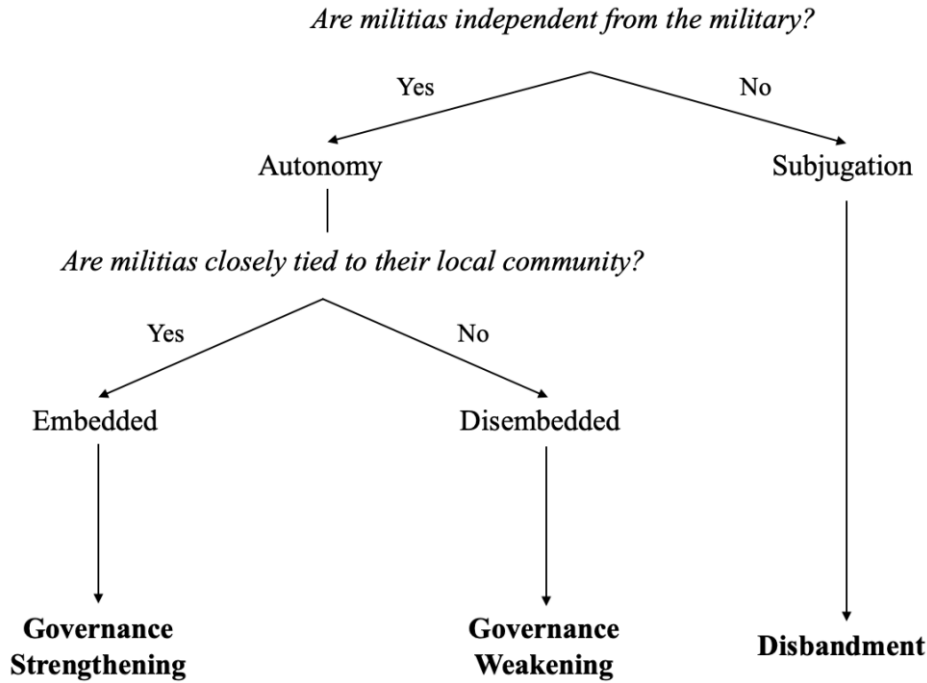
Figure 8 introduces a novel theoretical framework that explains militias’ diverse post-conflict pathways. To build this framework, I draw from ethnographic fieldwork within Peru.<sup>38</sup> Through a process of inductive iteration (Yom 2015), I developed a theory grounded in empirical research rather than preconceived hypotheses, integrating theories

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<sup>38</sup> Bateson (2013) and Forney (2015) advance similar approaches to studying militias in, respectively, Guatemala and Sierra Leone.

and findings from the existing scholarship on political violence with my own field research insights.<sup>39</sup>

Figure 8: Wartime Determinants of Militias' Post-Conflict Paths



## 2.2. Hypotheses

In total, three observable implications or hypotheses regarding militia trajectories after civil wars end emerge from my framework. Such hypotheses are:

<sup>39</sup> As Yom puts it (2015: 617), "qualitative scholars conducting immersive fieldwork frequently revise their causal propositions after discarding old assumptions and uncovering new mechanisms from interviews and archives."

- *H1: Militias subjugated to the military during civil wars are more likely to disband in the post-conflict period.*
- *H2: Militias with autonomy from the military and weak community ties are likely to persist and weaken post-conflict governance.*
- *H3: Militias with autonomy from the military and strong community ties are likely to persist and strengthen post-conflict governance.*

### **3. Disbandment**

I argue that militias subjugated to the military during civil wars are prone to post-conflict disbandment. Examples include the Southwestern Militias in Cote d'Ivoire, El Salvador's Civil Defence Patrols, Special Force Vigilante groups in Uganda, People's Militias in Mozambique, Government of Liberia militias, and Burundi's Guardians of Peace, among others (Carey and Mitchell 2021).<sup>40</sup>

State-orchestrated militias, typically created by the military to counter insurgents,<sup>41</sup> operate under tight supervision (Hedman 2000; Carey et al. 2013). They exhibit low independence, serving as extensions of the Armed Forces to address tactical challenges during warfare. Military oversight encompasses control over militias' internal operations, firearm possession, and mandatory reporting to military barracks (Stanton 2015). Coercive recruitment ensures participation, with non-compliance resulting in

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<sup>40</sup> While exceptions like The Popular Mobilization Forces in Iraq and the Popular Defence Forces in Sudan exist, state-orchestrated militias generally dissolve once the fighting stops, as documented in the Pro-Government Militias (PGM) guidebook. This guidebook provides information on pro-government militias worldwide from 1981 to 2014, including their origins, purposes, and termination.

<sup>41</sup> Originally grassroots militias may also become subjugated to the Armed Forces during the conflict (Jentzsch et al. 2015).

repression by the military (Jentzsch et al. 2015). Evidence from civil wars in Guatemala (Stoll 1993), Mozambique (Cann 1997), and Uganda (Stanton 2015) also portray these militias as a form of unpaid (*corvée*) labor, entailing repression of militia members by military officers.

When the military controls militias, they frequently direct them to inflict violence on civilians as part of broader counterinsurgency strategies. As Stanton shows (2015), governments tend to repress civilians during civil wars, with militias under military command mirroring these repressive tactics. Following directives from the Army, militias such as Uganda's Special Force Vigilante and Burundi's Guardians of Peace engaged in indiscriminate violence in the countryside, targeting civilians suspected of collaborating with rebels (Carey and Mitchell 2021). This use of militias enables governments to reap the benefits from harsh counterinsurgency campaigns while disavowing responsibility for resulting human rights abuses (Carey et al. 2015). Consequently, when militias are subjugated to the military, their interactions with the community often become predatory (Valentino 2004; Downes 2006).

This cycle of repression, originating from military officers and transmitted through militia members onto civilians, hinders "value infusion institutionalization" (Selznick 1957), thereby contributing to militias' post-war disbandment. Forced participation, absence of decision-making autonomy, and the reality and constant threat of repression prevent militia members from developing a sense of belonging or personal satisfaction within the organization (Huntington 1968). When militias lack intrinsic value, members are inclined to abandon them after achieving their military-imposed goal of countering insurgents.

Moreover, militias' predatory actions delegitimize them in the eyes of local communities, which perceive them as externally-imposed agents of repression. For instance, in Burundi, the Guardians of Peace terrorized communities under the pretext of rooting out rebel collaborators. Likewise, the Government of Liberia militias have been accused of killings, beatings, and acts of sexual violence against civilians, cementing their reputation as agents of oppression rather than protection (Carey and Mitchell 2021). As a result, local residents show no interest in repurposing these militias in the post-conflict phase; instead, they welcome their disbandment. After militias fulfill their repressive mission during the conflict, the Armed Forces often deactivate them by withdrawing logistical and material support (Aliyev 2019; Schubiger 2021).

#### **4. Governance Weakening**

As depicted in Figure 8, I argue that militias that operate autonomously from the military but lack strong ties to local communities can pose significant threats to governance in post-conflict settings. In this scenario, militias operate without oversight: the Armed Forces cannot exert control over their actions, and the local community cannot hold them accountable through informal mechanisms of social sanctioning (Peic 2014; Clayton and Thomson 2016). Consequently, militias' behavior goes unchecked, increasing the likelihood of predation towards civilians during the conflict and paving the way for post-conflict activities detrimental to governance, such as forging alliances with or transforming into criminal gangs or drug cartels (Aliyev 2019).

Militias can attain operational autonomy from the state in several ways, including unauthorized control over territories, strategic disengagement by military forces, or organic emergence with minimal interaction with the government (Stanton 2015). In either case, autonomous militias often resort to indiscriminate violence when they lack strong community ties or operate beyond their immediate communities. This detachment from the local populace is critical because militias with limited or no community embeddedness often prioritize their own agendas over community safety (Schubert 2015). Furthermore, militia members might belong to a different ethno-religious group than the rest of their community, or they may be deployed with no oversight by the state or their own leaders to other regions or even countries (Clayton and Thomson 2016). This lack of accountability to local populations, exemplified by the Mai-Mai militia groups in the Democratic Republic of Congo (Human Rights Watch 2009), enables these organizations to engage in predatory conduct such as extortion or looting for personal gain.

Despite their contextual differences, the Janjaweed militias in Sudan and paramilitary forces in Colombia illustrate how militias with operational autonomy and disconnected from local communities can weaken post-conflict rural governance. Both groups maintained significant autonomy from their respective Armed Forces and were notorious for committing atrocities, especially outside their recruitment areas (Amnesty International 2006; Human Rights Watch 2010). For instance, the Janjaweed militias targeted non-Arabic communities, with whom they lacked ethnic and cultural ties, leading to mass displacement and humanitarian crises (Flint and De Waal 2008). Similarly, various paramilitary groups coalesced into the United Self-Defense Forces of

Colombia, extending their influence beyond their immediate communities and asserting territorial control through violence and intimidation (Hristov 2009).

Despite state efforts to demobilize or integrate these militias into government-aligned roles after civil war termination, their remnants remained active, posing numerous challenges to governance in rural areas, including influencing electoral politics through violent means, becoming involved in drug trafficking, violating human rights, and obstructing humanitarian aid (Flint and De Waal 2008; Hristov 2009; Acemoglu et al. 2013). Ultimately, their presence may increase the likelihood of violent conflict reemergence (Carey and González 2021).

## **5. Governance Strengthening**

During civil wars, civilians often establish community-led militias independently of the state to safeguard their lives, families, and assets from violence (Blocq 2014; Schubiger 2021; Jentzsch 2022). These grassroots militias typically draw members from the local population and may strategically collaborate with the Armed Forces to combat insurgents while preserving operational autonomy. As observed by Jentzsch and colleagues (2015: 759), “a state’s strategic collaboration with or tolerance of militias does not mean that it necessarily has complete control over their formation and activities.”

I argue that grassroots militias, deeply embedded within their local communities during civil wars, exhibit protective conduct towards their community when they maintain operational autonomy from the military. Rooted within their community, militias are subject to informal mechanisms of accountability and social control, which shape their behavior toward civilians (Daly 2011; Peic 2014; Schuberth 2015; Clayton

and Thomson 2016). Accountable to their fellow rural citizens, such militias tend to adopt a selective and targeted approach to violence, prioritizing the protection of the local community over predatory actions (Yoroms 2005). As described by Spires (2011: 11), grassroots organizations “are providing a much-needed service to people like themselves.” Importantly, as these militias are not subjugated to the military, they can refrain from using indiscriminate violence against civilians following military orders, a practice often observed during warfare (Stanton 2015).

Through their protective conduct, militias gain widespread acceptance and social legitimacy within their communities. This legitimacy means that militias’ actions are perceived as appropriate or desirable within the community’s norms and values.<sup>42</sup> As a result, these militias become more established and institutionalized through a process known as “value infusion” (Selznick 1957), positively influencing their internal workings, social cohesion, and long-term survival. Value infusion institutionalization involves a focus on “self-maintenance,” transforming organizations from disposable tools into sources of personal satisfaction (Selznick 1957). Consequently, militia members develop a personal stake in the organization’s survival, motivating them to preserve it even if their original goals have been achieved or evolved. As militia organizations institutionalize, they develop a strong sense of purpose, thereby enhancing their flexibility, adaptation, and resilience in new environments (Huntington 1968; Levitsky 1998).

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<sup>42</sup> Suchman (1995: 574) defines *social legitimacy* as a “generalized perception or assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper, or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs, and definitions.”

The acquired legitimacy of militias not only motivates their members but also prompts the local community to repurpose them for new tasks in the post-conflict era. Militias' legitimacy grants them significant popular support, allowing them to establish community-wide ties or horizontal linkages within the social landscape where they operate (Lu and Tao 2017). These connections, spanning militia members, their families, friends, and broader social networks at the local level, foster a profound identification and support from the community towards these organizations. This symbiotic relationship between militias and the local community facilitates their adaptation to changing environments (Jennings and Seaman 1994; Sarta et al. 2021).

In rural areas where militias typically emerge, the absence or weakness of the state compels local communities to take proactive measures to improve their well-being (World Bank, 2000). Past experiences with armed mobilizations help communities overcome collective action challenges, build intergenerational trust networks, and preserve wartime institutions for pursuing new long-term objectives (Osorio et al. 2021). Instances of militias' "institutional conversion" (Mahoney and Thelen 2009; Hacker et al. 2015) across diverse contexts, such as Mexico (Osorio et al. 2021), Guatemala (Bateson 2013), and parts of Asia (Ahram 2011), demonstrate their capacity to repurpose skills gained during armed mobilization for purposes beyond violent conflict, including, but not limited to, patrolling or surveillance. Moreover, when states' bureaucratic infrastructure is underdeveloped, they have incentives to leverage militias to extend their authority (Staniland 2015), complementing or supplementing government functions in remote rural areas.

## 6. Scope Conditions

It is essential to define the framework's scope conditions, which set the boundaries of its applicability. The overarching "macro scope" condition is *rural settings with weak state presence*, as opposed to urban areas where state authority is typically stronger. This condition is central to understanding the framework's primary outcome: militias' post-conflict contributions to governance by addressing gaps left by absent or inadequate state institutions. Since civil wars predominantly occur in rural areas historically neglected by the state (Blattman and Miguel 2010), and militias frequently arise in precisely these settings, this scope condition provides a strong foundation for applying the framework to cases beyond Peru.

In addition to the "macro scope" condition, two *specific* scope conditions further refine the framework's generalizability. First, the framework assumes a relatively cohesive local community, not divided by significant socio-economic or ethnic cleavages that could lead to severe fragmentation. This condition is critical because fragmentation may compel militias to align with specific segments of the population, undermining their capacity to maintain broad-based ties to the community. For example, the United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia were formed by local elites to protect resources like cattle, frequently to the detriment of non-elite groups. While no community is entirely free from divisions, the framework applies where societal cleavages do not decisively shape militia-community relations. Even in regions with moderate socio-economic or ethnic fragmentation, the theory holds as long as militias are embedded in and serve the interests of the community at large. However, in cases of acute fragmentation—such as entrenched

ethnic or class divides—militias may protect one segment of the population while preying on others, complicating the mechanisms of embeddedness explored in this dissertation.

Second, the framework assumes that the military possesses both the capacity and intent to supervise the militias they create in a “top-down” manner during civil war, orchestrating their behavior and minimizing their operational autonomy. This assumption is critical because tight state control over militias underpins the post-conflict disbandment pathway, which involves the military’s withdrawal of logistical and material support from militias and the termination of their conflict-specific repressive roles. While this assumption holds in many cases, as states often seek to mitigate the risks of militia autonomy, Thomson and Pankhurst (2022) observe that state-militia relationships frequently fall along a spectrum. For instance, military forces might intentionally maintain detachment to achieve plausible deniability for militias’ violent actions or, alternatively, lack the capacity to exert full control over militias, leading to *de facto* autonomy. In such contexts, where the military is either unwilling or unable to tightly supervise militias, post-conflict disbandment may not occur. Instead, militias may persist, taking on alternative roles such as engaging in organized crime or providing localized security services. My framework offers guidance for explaining varied scenarios such as these: if militias do not disband, the nature of their relationships with local communities should have a pivotal impact on their post-conflict trajectories and, in turn, on their impact on rural governance.

## 7. Conclusion

This chapter has examined the varied trajectories that militias, often overlooked yet crucial actors in civil wars, can follow in the aftermath of violent conflicts. It advances a theoretical framework that explains how wartime dynamics impact militias' post-conflict pathways. Developed through inductive theory-building, the framework focuses on two critical wartime relationships: (i) militia-military (autonomy vs. subjugation) and (ii) militia-community (embedded vs. disembedded) relations. The interplay of these factors leads to three distinct post-conflict paths for militias: *disbandment*, *governance weakening*, and *governance strengthening*.

Militias subjugated by the military typically disband after civil wars, regardless of their degree of community embeddedness. Military officers tend to repress these militia members and force them to victimize civilians, making militias illegitimate actors in the eyes of the community. Consequently, neither militia members nor local villagers seek to repurpose these organizations, leading to their post-conflict disbandment.

In contrast, militias can persist and weaken post-conflict governance when they maintain autonomy from the military but are disembedded from local communities during civil wars. The combination of autonomy from the Armed Forces and weak community ties allows militias to act without restraint, leading to predatory behavior that may persist into post-conflict environments, yielding unfavorable governance outcomes.

Lastly, militias can persist and bolster post-conflict rural governance when they preserve autonomy from the military and are embedded within their local community during civil wars. Strong communal ties, along with autonomy from the Armed Forces,

prompt militias to protect the local community. This earns them substantial social legitimacy and facilitates their institutionalization, where militia and community members come to value the organization for its intrinsic worth rather than its original purpose. As a result, they advocate for the persistence of militias, adapting them to strengthen governance in post-conflict periods.

The next chapter transitions to the empirical portion of the dissertation, focusing on Los Morochucos and Llohegua, two districts within Peru's Ayacucho department—the epicenter of civil war violence. Specifically, it traces and compares the process of militia formation in an originally insurgent stronghold (Los Morochucos) and a disputed area (Llohegua). The comparative historical analysis shows how differing incentives and constraints faced by the state and civilians across these wartime territories led to the imposition of state-orchestrated militias in the former and the emergence of grassroots militias in the latter.

## Chapter 4

### Formation in Los Morochucos and Llohegua: State-Orchestrated vs. Autonomous

“The Army forced us to form the comités de autodefensa and treated us badly. They barely gave us (the CADs) weapons because they thought we’d turn against them. For them, we were all terrorists here.”

Celedonio Auqui, alias “*Comando Toccto*,” former CAD leader from Los Morochucos.

“We were caught between two fires: insurgents on one side and the military on the other, both annihilating the peasantry. So, we organized in autodefensas to protect the lives of our families and friends.”

Jorge Quispe, alias “*Comando Choque*,” former CAD leader from Pichiwillca and Llohegua.

#### 1. Introduction

This chapter investigates the process of militia formation in Los Morochucos and Llohegua, two districts within Peru’s Ayacucho department. While Los Morochucos was under insurgent control at the onset of the Peruvian civil war (1980–2000), Llohegua was a disputed area. Drawing on comparative historical analysis via process tracing, I test the theoretical expectations developed in Chapter 2 using fine-grained qualitative data.

The analysis proceeds in two steps. First, I demonstrate that Los Morochucos and Llohegua correspond to two distinct wartime territories: respectively, an insurgent stronghold and a disputed area. This territorial distinction forms the empirical foundation for applying my theory of militia formation in civil war. Second, I examine how the process of militia formation and mobilization in each district align with the theory’s

predictions. To recap: in insurgent strongholds like Los Morochucos, I expect grassroots militias to—if present at all—be quickly dismantled by insurgents, and state-orchestrated militias (SOMs) to be imposed by the government after retaking territorial control. In disputed areas like Llochegua, by contrast, I expect grassroots militias to emerge “from below” as a means of local self-defense against civil war violence.

Figure 9 situates both districts within Peru’s national and regional context. Insights from primary sources and secondary literature (Starn 1998; Degregori et al. 1996; Degregori 1998; Gorriti 2000; Soifer and Vergara 2019) identify the south-central provinces of Ayacucho—Cangallo, Victor Fajardo, Vilcashuamán, and Huancasancos—as historically insurgent-controlled areas. Although this chapter centers on Los Morochucos (hereafter, LM), it draws on parallel developments in nearby areas to highlight that militia formation in LM was not anomalous, but instead part of a broader pattern characteristic of insurgent strongholds.

Similarly, the northern provinces of Huanta and La Mar—particularly their jungle areas—were key disputed territories during the conflict. According to the Peruvian National Commission of Truth and Reconciliation (*Comisión de la Verdad y Reconciliación*, CVR) (2003), these territories fall within the Apurímac, Ene, and Mantaro River Valley (*Valle del Río Apurímac, Ene y Mantaro*, VRAEM), a conflict zone where the *comités de autodefensa* played a vital role in defeating the insurgency. While the main focus is on Llochegua, I also incorporate comparative references to nearby areas to show that its experience reflects broader patterns typical of militia formation in disputed territories.

Figure 9: Los Morochucos and Llochegua from a Geographical Perspective



The left-hand map highlights Ayacucho in red. The right-hand map marks Los Morochucos with a red “x” and Llochegua with a green “x.”

## 2. Territorial Configurations in Ayacucho: Grounding the Theory

### 2.1. *Los Morochucos: An Insurgent Stronghold under Shining Path Control*

Table 1 summarizes the evidence to infer that LM was an insurgent stronghold based on three key indicators of territorial control: i) Shining Path’s participation and influence over the education system, ii) insurgent leadership presence in the district’s urban and rural areas, as well as in neighboring provinces, and iii) public goods and services provision by this insurgent group.

Table 1: Los Morochucos: A Focal Point of Insurgent Activity

| Empirical Claim                       | Evidence/CPOs                                                                                                  | Data Sources                                                                                                    |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>LM was an insurgent stronghold</i> | Shining Path's participation in education protests before the conflict and influence over the education system | -Interviews (key informants)<br>-Archives (written press)<br>-Secondary sources                                 |
|                                       | Presence of the Shining Path's leaders in LM's urban area, peasant communities, and nearby provinces           | -Interviews (key informants, civil society leaders, public officials, and ex-CAD members)<br>-Secondary sources |
|                                       | Public goods and services provided by the Shining Path                                                         | -Interviews (key informants and public officials)<br>-Secondary sources<br>-Archives (written press)            |

Founded on April 12th, 1957, Los Morochucos is one of the six districts of Cangallo province in the south-central region of Ayacucho, Peru. Elevated at 3,300 meters above sea level, LM is among the highest peaks of the Ayacucho's highlands. According to the 2017 Peruvian census (INEI 2018), a total of 7,463 people live in the district. Over 95% of its population's ethnic origins is Quechua, 65% of the district's area is rural, and poverty and food insecurity rates are among the highest in the country. LM comprises six *centros poblados* and 32 peasant communities.

Insurgent groups often thrive in rural mountainous terrain (Wickham-Crowley 1987), and Los Morochucos was no exception. Testimonies reveal that the Shining Path started organizing cadres and committees in the early 1960s in the area, nearly two decades prior to the civil war's onset. Max Aguirre, a philosopher of the University of Cuzco, recalls attending a Shining Path meeting in 1962, only a few blocks from Cangallo province's central square, unaware of the insurgents' identity or precise

objectives at the time. He later realized the area was a “*senderista* nest.”<sup>43</sup> Marcelino Hinostroza, another key informant, highlights the deep penetration of the Shining Path’s leftist ideology in Cangallo and its surroundings long before the conflict began:

“In the early 1970s, my schoolmates and I used to read a Maoist-oriented political magazine, ‘*Reconstruye*,’ where we saw Chinese people smiling in a grassy field. We also read red-covered books in school with Marxist-Leninist content, mostly literature. At the age of 13 or 14, we fell in love with the Shining Path’s ideals.”<sup>44</sup>

Numerous archival and secondary sources have documented the Shining Path’s influence in the educational system as a mechanism of recruitment and ideological diffusion (De la Cadena 1998; Rénique and Lerner 2019).<sup>45</sup> A few years before the civil war started, between 1977 and 1978, several teacher strikes (*huelgas magisteriales*) took place in the urban centers of Cangallo and its neighboring province to the south, Victor Fajardo. Young students from surrounding districts and rural outskirts gathered at *María Parado de Bellido*, the only educational institution in the area, supporting the teachers’ grievances against the Morales Bermudez administration (1975-1980) (Degregori 1988). It was an open secret that both teachers and students either sympathized or were direct members of the insurgent group. Max Aguirre remarked, “Every single professor in those strikes conveyed *Sendero*’s revolutionary discourse.”<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Interview with Max Aguirre (key informant). The translation from Spanish to English is mine, like with all the interview and archival excerpts of this dissertation. *Senderista* refers to the Shining Path’s members and/or followers.

<sup>44</sup> Interview with Marcelino Hinostroza, a well-recognized lawyer of Cangallo province (key informant).

<sup>45</sup> Renowned for its investigative journalism, the political magazine *Caretas* revealed several years later that a high percentage of the captured *senderistas* were teachers who belonged to the labor union SUTEP (*Sindicato Único de Trabajadores de la Educación del Perú*). *Caretas*, July 23, 1984.

<sup>46</sup> Interview with M. Aguirre.

Figure 10: School “María Parado de Bellido”



Photo taken during my fieldwork (September 23, 2022).

Across the entirety of Cangallo province, including LM, as well as the neighboring provinces of Vilcashuamán to the east and Victor Fajardo to the south, the Shining Path's message was spreading quickly. Several accounts unveil Umaro as the guerrilla's center of operations (*núcleo de operaciones*), a current *centro poblado* of Vischongo district in Vilcashuamán province, around 60km away from LM. "It was a perfect hiding spot," revealed Jorge Sáez (key informant), as "it had a tunnel through the highlands right next to a waterfall where the *senderistas* could meet without being seen and talk without being heard."<sup>47</sup> Prominent figures within the insurgent inner circle, including Dr. Mara (the Shining Path's doctor), Augusta la Torre (wife of Abimael

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<sup>47</sup> Interview with Jorge Saez (key informant).

Guzmán, the Shining Path's supreme leader), "El Pata" Mesich, and the Quispe Palomino brothers, were frequently spotted in the area by the local villagers.<sup>48</sup>

Specifically within Los Morochucos, Buenaventura De la Cruz Altamirano, former district mayor during the civil war (1989-1993), recalled the early presence of "the reds" (*los rojos*) in Incaraccay, a nearby peasant community situated just 2-3km from Pampa-Cangallo, the district's capital and urban center. Mr. Altamirano, who used to cultivate potatoes and oca on his small farm (*chacra*) in Incaraccay, recounted instances of the Shining Path storing weapons and holding meetings in villagers' homes during the 1970s. He noted, "Initially, we believed they were police officers... but they weren't. They started indoctrinating people from an early stage." Mr. Altamirano further added, "The *senderistas* instructed students at the *Miguel Bastidas* public school, Incaraccay's only educational institution. The *camaradas* Caseli and Cristal, two *Sendero*'s leaders, were famous in the community."<sup>49</sup> Additional testimonies corroborated the profound presence of the Shining Path in Incaraccay and in the peasant communities of Huahuapuquio, Mollibamba, and Jochapata, among others, surrounding the district's urban area.<sup>50</sup>

Lorenzo de la Vega, another former mayor of LM during the conflict era (1985-1989), noted that many neighbors supported the guerrilla movement without formally joining it. While Mr. de la Vega indicated that most villagers left for Lima or Huamanga

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<sup>48</sup> Interview with Edwin Castro (civil society leader). Mr. Castro is the former leader of two civil society organizations: Cangallo's province *Frente de Defensa* (2018-2021), and Cangallo's district *Junta Vecinal* (2015-2018). He proudly showed me both credentials during the interview.

<sup>49</sup> Interview with B. De la Cruz Altamirano. *Rojos* refers to the Shining Path members. Mr. De la Cruz Altamirano gently reviewed my notes to ensure I correctly spelled the names of the people and peasant communities he mentioned. He had to correct me many times.

<sup>50</sup> Interview with Amador Orosco, ex-militia member of LM.

(Ayacucho's department capital) when the conflict started, he emphasized that of the approximately 400-500 people who stayed in Pampa-Cangallo (LM's capital), at least half were either active or passive supporters of the Shining Path. Additionally, a small group of teachers held leadership positions within the organization. Professors Dionisio Meneses Morales and Jesus Mitma Huamaní, who lived together in the bodega "*Red Rural*" (in front of the old district's municipality), were among these leaders.<sup>51</sup>

During the initial years of the civil war, between 1980-1982, insurgents started providing and redistributing goods and services to rural citizens, including weapons, land, and security.<sup>52</sup> Javier Romero, the Prosecutor of Cangallo province, reflected, "*Sendero* was accepted here: it resolved land and cattle rustling (*abigeato*) conflicts among neighbors."<sup>53</sup> On November 1982, Carlos Cappeletti Cisneros, a former national deputy for Ayacucho, affirmed in a Congress speech that the government had lost control of the provinces of Victor Fajardo and Cangallo, where *Sendero Luminoso*'s semi-clandestine government not only controlled the area militarily but also administered justice.<sup>54</sup> In essence, insurgents operated as a third-party enforcer, i.e., a counter-state, to address communal disputes (Gorriti 2000).<sup>55</sup>

In summary, the Cangallo-Vilcashuamán-Victor Fajardo triad within Ayacucho's south-central region was a consolidated insurgent stronghold at the start of the civil war. The Shining Path extended its influence through the education system decades before the

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<sup>51</sup> Interview with Lorenzo de la Vega (local public official). The bodega still exists, but now it is called "*Bodega Antonio*."

<sup>52</sup> Interview with Alfredo Mendoza de la Cruz, an ex-military official of *La Oroya* barrack, LM, Cangallo.

<sup>53</sup> Interview with J. Romero.

<sup>54</sup> *Caretas*, November 29, 1982.

<sup>55</sup> Interview with José "Pepe" Coronel (key informant).

conflict started. In Los Morochucos' urban center and rural communities, the Shining Path played a prominent role in the early stages of the civil war. The insurgent leaders provided public goods and services to the local population.

## 2.2. Llohegua: A Wartime Disputed Territory

Table 2 summarizes the evidence supporting the claim that Llohegua was a contested area during the civil war. This claim is substantiated using two crucial indicators of territorial control typical of such wartime zones: i) the simultaneous influence exerted by both the state (through the military) and the Shining Path over the territory, and ii) the repression inflicted on local communities by both sides in their efforts to achieve full territorial control.

Table 2: Llohegua: A Highly Contested Area During the Conflict

| Empirical Claim                     | Evidence/CPOs                                                 | Data Sources                                                      |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Llohegua was a disputed area</i> | Both actors wielded some degree of control over the territory | -Interviews (CAD members; public officials)<br>-Secondary sources |
|                                     | Repression by both sides on local communities                 | -Interviews (CAD members; key informants)<br>-Secondary sources   |

Llohegua is one of twelve districts in Huanta Province, located on the northeastern border of the Ayacucho department in Peru. It shares its borders with the Cusco department and lies within the *Valle de los Ríos Apurímac, Ene y Mantaro*

(VRAEM) geopolitical region, characterized by its subtropical climate and jungle terrain. Over 65% of Llohegua's population identifies as being of Quechua ethnic origin. As of 2017, the district had a population of 10,058, distributed across thirty-three *centros poblados* and their associated peasant communities (INEI 2018).

Back in the day, in the early 1970s, Llohegua was very different from today. It was not developed enough to be a district;<sup>56</sup> it was predominantly a virgin forest with dense vegetation and tall weeds. The area was sparsely populated, with only indigenous communities living along the banks of the Llohegua River. In their native Quechua language, they referred to this river as “*Llochema*,” which roughly translates to “there is fish,” highlighting its importance for their livelihood.<sup>57</sup> By the mid-1970s, like other places in the VRAEM, Llohegua experienced a significant rural migration process. During this period, peasants from the Ayacucho highlands moved to the jungle to work in coca plantations, contributing to Llohegua's economic and population growth (Del Pino 1996; Willems 2020).

However, the promising expansion of Llohegua was abruptly interrupted by the violent clash between the Shining Path, the primary insurgent group during Peru's internal armed conflict, and the Peruvian Armed Forces. Many testimonies point to 1978 as the year when *Sendero Luminoso* began its violent seizure of territorial control in the area.<sup>58</sup> In the remote jungle heights, including the *centros poblados* of Corazón Pata,

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<sup>56</sup> Llohegua became officially a district on September 14, 2001, when Alejandro Toledo's national administration (2001-2006) implemented a decentralization reform. Before, it was part of the Santillana and the Sivia districts of Huanta province (Ayacucho, Peru).

<sup>57</sup> Interview with Pedro Lette, a former CAD leader during and after the conflict from Llohegua.

<sup>58</sup> Interviews with Adrián Gotzme la Fuente, former mayor of Llohegua district (2019-2022); Juan Chimayco, ex-CAD member of Llohegua; and P. Lette.

Junín, San Antonio, Villa Mejorada, and Yaruri, insurgents forcefully entered people's homes at night, posing a menacing question to local residents: "Are you with us or not?" When met with ambiguous responses or resistance, the *senderistas* resorted to theft of vital food supplies, physical violence, or even cold-blooded killings.

Through this coercive process, the insurgents began to gain followers. Those who refused to join them and were fortunate enough to escape descended from the jungle heights to the central area of what is now the Llochegua district. Pedro Lette and Grovi Soto, former CAD leaders during and after the conflict from Llochegua, recall that in the early 1980s, families fleeing insurgent violence sought refuge in Llochegua's central area. These families carried white flags, symbolizing their peaceful intentions and disassociation from the insurgents. By 1980-1982, *Sendero Luminoso* had firmly established territorial control over most of Llochegua's *centros poblados* and peasant communities. Those who remained in the jungle heights, either by force or conviction, supported the insurgents.<sup>59</sup>

State security forces, including the police and Armed Forces, disputed the Shining Path's territorial control through violent methods. The military maintained dominance over Llochegua's central region, using it as a base to launch indiscriminate military assaults on the *centros poblados* and peasant communities in the jungle highlands, where the Shining Path had established control.<sup>60</sup> Military officers pressured local residents to provide information about the insurgents, yet many hesitated due to the fear of reprisals

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<sup>59</sup> Interview with Grovi Soto, a CAD leader of Llochegua during and after the conflict. Mr. Soto is the Vice-president of Llochegua's CAD *Cercado*, representing the urban area within the district.

<sup>60</sup> Interview with J. Coronel.

by *Sendero Luminoso*, who infiltrated the area and executed those accused of being “snitches” (*soplones*) (Degregori et al. 1996). Despite the villagers’ resistance to cooperate, the military persisted in its demands. Sergio Martínez, a historical CAD leader from the VRAEM, revealed: “The Army coerced the most vulnerable, threatening them at gunpoint to extract information, which led to many illegal killings and forced disappearances of peasants.”<sup>61</sup> Typical of disputed areas, Llochegua’s rural citizens experienced a deep sense of uncertainty and fear as they faced accusations from both factions of collaborating with the opposite side. In this context, the creation of grassroots militias became a compelling strategy for self-preservation.

### **3. Pathways to Militia Formation: Comparative Evidence from LM and Llochegua**

#### *3.1. Los Morochucos: The Failure of Grassroots Militias and the Imposition of SOMs*

Although most civilians accepted (either by will or by force) living under the Shining Path’s rule, there is evidence that around 1983, groups of men coalesced not only in LM but also in certain districts of neighboring provinces—such as Lucanamarca in Huancasancos and Huancaraylla in Victor Fajardo—to build self-defense groups organically. These groups emerged spontaneously and lacked robust organization. Importantly, they operated independently of political and military authorities, who had nothing to do with their creation.<sup>62</sup> These men moved like a blur (*como una mancha*) across the territory, aiming to catch the *senderistas* off-guard.<sup>63</sup> Referred to as

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<sup>61</sup> Interviews with Sergio Martínez, a former CAD leader from the VRAEM (Puerto Mayo, Cusco) and Raúl Ore, a former CAD leader from Vischongo, Vilcashuamán.

<sup>62</sup> Interviews with J. Sáez and M. Hinostroza.

<sup>63</sup> Interview with Percy Huayhua (local public official).

“*montoneras*,”<sup>64</sup> these groups primarily conducted nocturnal patrols and were armed with improvised weapons like wooden spears, machetes, *cocobolos*, *huaracas*, and *hechizos*.<sup>65</sup>

However, these community efforts to form grassroots militias were short-lived in the area. As Percy Huayhua, the General Secretary of Cangallo’s municipality, succinctly stated, “*Sendero* killed all its members.”<sup>66</sup> The lack of coordination and resources among these militias rendered them ineffective in countering the insurgents. In their strongholds, insurgents possess enough power, resources, and popular support to suppress grassroots militias, which inevitably become their primary targets (Kalyvas 2006). Although only a minority of the population directly participates in the conflict (Greene 1990; Wood 2003), most residents in insurgent-held areas, such as LM and neighboring districts, collaborate with insurgents due to their territorial dominance. As a result, grassroots militias were vastly outnumbered and overpowered by both the Shining Path and their local collaborators, leading to their ultimate failure.

Table 3 synthesizes evidence on the historical process behind militia formation in LM. A temporal sequence of three events constitutes this process: i) military “blind” indiscriminate assaults to debilitate the insurgents, followed by ii) deployment of troops in the area and installation of headquarters, and, finally, iii) the formation of SOMs “from above” by the Army.

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<sup>64</sup> Report on *Comités de Autodefensa* (code SCO\_345\_09; p. 4). *Archivo Central de la CVR, Defensoría del Pueblo*, Lima, Perú.

<sup>65</sup> Interview with Dionisia Calderón (civil society leader). Those arms are some examples of rustic, self-made weapons typical from the area whose historical origins go back to Peru’s battles over independence and even the Wari and Inca empires.

<sup>66</sup> Interview with P. Huayhua.

Table 3: Historical Process of Militia Formation in LM

| Empirical Claim                                                                                            | Evidence/CPOs                                                        | Data Sources                                                                                         |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>After indiscriminate military strikes, the Army imposes militias to consolidate territorial control</i> | The government launched military attacks in the area                 | -Interviews (key informants)<br>-Archives (public funds and written press)<br>-Secondary sources     |
|                                                                                                            | The military installed headquarters in the zone, specifically, in LM | -Interviews (key informants, public officials, and ex-CAD members)<br>-Secondary sources             |
|                                                                                                            | Army officers force civilians to organize CADs in LM                 | -Interviews (public officials and ex-CAD members).<br>-Archives (public funds)<br>-Secondary sources |

The police's spectacular failure in fighting the Shining Path required a different government initiative (Degregori and Rivera 1994). After approximately two years of denying and underestimating the guerrilla threat, Belaúnde Terry's national government put the Armed Forces in charge of the political situation (December 21, 1982).<sup>67</sup> Through a series of legislative decrees, nearly all Ayacucho was placed under a state of emergency, leading to the restriction of civil liberties. Furthermore, these decrees granted special faculties to the Armed Forces to restore political order. On December 27, 1982, a political report published in *Caretas* highlighted, "We enter a new and decisive phase in the counterinsurgency campaign, not exempt from risks and that both the government and

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<sup>67</sup> *Documento de Trabajo* consulted at José María Arguedas' public fond (*Casa Matteo Ricci*) on counterinsurgency strategy and Armed Forces during Fernando Belaúnde's (1980-1985) and Alan García's (1985-1990) administrations.

the Army would have wanted to avoid... but that the terrorist escalation made indispensable.”<sup>68</sup>

By the end of 1982, General Luis Cisneros Vizquerra, former War Minister, commented to a journalist about what he would do if he were to fight the guerrilla in Ayacucho: “I would establish a curfew and shot everyone who moves at night. What other repressive measure could we take if we do *not* know who the terrorists are?” (Degregori and Rivera 1994: 9).<sup>69</sup> Gral. Cisneros indeed predicted what was about to happen. Without territorial control, the military launched “blind” indiscriminate attacks on entire villages and rural communities, particularly in Ayacucho’s south-central provinces, the Shining Path’s operational center. The CVR final report (2003) collected testimonies on several military massacres in the area. “When they could not find the Shining Path leaders, they murdered the entire community,” indicated Marcelino Hinostroza (key informant). From the government’s perspective, Los Morochucos and neighboring regions were seen as unified territories where all civilians are either members or sympathizers of the Shining Path. Therefore, the Army officers relied on indiscriminate violence to decrease guerrilla power under no territorial control. Not surprisingly, the violence peaks in this region occurred between 1983-1985, with an average of 2,271 deaths per year (CVR 2003a).

After weakening the Shining Path through indiscriminate assaults, around 1984-1985, the Armed Forces began to install headquarters in the area to consolidate territorial

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<sup>68</sup> *Caretas*, December 27, 1982.

<sup>69</sup> The use of italics is mine. In this context, *terrorist* is an alternative way of referring to the Shining Path’s members.

control. Initially, many infantry units relocated from Lima and Huamanga to Cangallo's city, the most significant urban center in Ayacucho's south-central provinces. From that strategic point, they expanded their presence by building barracks in the nearby districts of Huancapi, Hualla, Canaria, and Cayara, all within Victor Fajardo province. Additionally, similar military facilities were established in Totos and other districts within Cangallo province.<sup>70</sup>

As the political situation in Cangallo's capital became relatively stable by the mid-1980s, the Armed Forces strategically redeployed human resources, transferring many military troops from the city's headquarters to Los Morochucos. In 1986, in the absence of an existing garrison in the district, the infantry troops were stationed in the kindergarten in front of LM's central square. Lorenzo Ruiz de la Vega, ex-LM's mayor during those years, recalled that Lieutenant "*Rodillo*" led the Army when the troops arrived. Soon after their arrival, the military authorities summoned villagers from five *centros poblados*—Jusaymarca, Hualchancca, Ñuñunhuaycco, Chanquil, and Satica—to inform them about the forthcoming construction of a military barrack in the district. Responding to that call, Jusaymarca's villagers and LM's municipality provided the Armed Forces with thirty-two hectares of land for building the barrack. After six to eight months of hard communal work, the population built the Countersubversive Battalion (*Batallón Contrasubversivo*) #34, commonly referred to as "La Oroya," in record time by 1987.<sup>71</sup> Subsequently, the infantry troops moved from the kindergarten near LM's central

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<sup>70</sup> Interviews with J. Sáez; M. Hinojosa; and A. Mendoza de la Cruz.

<sup>71</sup> Interview with A. Mendoza de la Cruz. Jusaymarca's villagers donated some of their common lands (*tierras comunales*) to the military.

square to the new district's garrison. The recently established military headquarters in LM became quickly known for its brutal tactics.<sup>72</sup>

Figure 11: Countersubversive Battalion #34, “La Oroya”



Photo taken during my fieldwork (September 22, 2022).

By mid-1987, after securing the military presence in the district, the Army started organizing the *comités de autodefensa* (CADs). This marked the second phase of a twofold military strategy: first, the so-called “*arrasamiento*” (clearing the area of

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<sup>72</sup> LM's military base centralized several garrisons in the south of Ayacucho's department, including the provinces of Vilcashuamán, Victor Fajardo, Huancasancos, Lucanas, Parinacochas, and Paucar del Sara Sara. In Ayacucho's department, the chain of command was as follows: the general barrack of Huamanga, Ayacucho's capital, was the highest in the hierarchy; below it was LM's barrack, which was the second in the command chain, centralizing all the garrisons in the southern provinces. Within those provinces, some examples of the regiments that reported to LM's barrack are Canaria (Victor Fajardo), Coracora (Parinacochas), Sachabamba (Lucanas), Pausa (Paucar del Sara Sara), and Accomarca (Vilcashuamán). Interview with Martín Espósito (pseudonym), alias “*Comando Puma*,” former CAD President of LM.

*senderistas* through massive attacks); second, organizing the local peasants into a “*defensa civil*” to give *Sendero Luminoso* the final strike.<sup>73</sup> Amador Orosco, a former militia lower-ranking member (patrolman), recalled that the military officers—led by the Commander “Butler,” Captain “Lobo,” and Lieutenant “Rodillo”—convened the local population in LM’s central square.<sup>74</sup> Those residents who failed to assemble were forcefully dragged to the square by the military or directly considered *terrucos* and subsequently murdered.<sup>75</sup> Pascual Bautista and Gregorio Calderón, both ex-patrolmen from the district, revealed that military leaders threatened to steal their cattle if they refused to participate in the CADs, making evident the mandatory nature of recruitment.<sup>76</sup> During the assembly, the Army officials handpicked the next district leader of the militias. Antonio García, named “Comando Águila” by the military officers, was the chosen leader.<sup>77</sup> According to some sources, Mr. García was a civil society leader, well-respected among the local population.<sup>78</sup> He presided over the CAD organization for four years, between 1987 and 1991.

This series of events—starting with the Army launching indiscriminate attacks to weaken the Shining Path, followed by the establishment of military regiments in the area,

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<sup>73</sup> *Retablo*, November 24, 2010.

<sup>74</sup> Interview with A. Orosco.

<sup>75</sup> Interview with D. Calderón. *Terrucos* is a colloquial term for terrorists, which refers to the Shining Path members.

<sup>76</sup> Interviews with Pascual Bautista and Gregoria Calderón, two former militia men from the district.

<sup>77</sup> B. De la Cruz Altamirano, a former district mayor (1989-1993), elucidated that during that time, “Everyone had their nickname (“*chapa*”) here, both the military officers and the CAD members.” In irregular civil wars, characterized by guerrilla warfare, using labels instead of real names has the dual purpose of shielding the identities of military and militia members from insurgents and allowing them to perpetrate human rights abuses with more impunity.

<sup>78</sup> Mr. García used to live in front of LM’s central square, where the current betting office (*casa de apuestas*) is, and, in his backyard, he served food. Back in the day, it was the only restaurant in the district.

and culminating with the state-imposition of militias to solidify territorial control—illustrates the causal mechanisms that drove militia formation in Los Morochucos.

### 3.2. Llochegua: The Genesis and Consolidation of Grassroots Militias

Table 4 outlines the process of militia formation and mobilization in Llochegua, a wartime disputed territory. This process unfolded in two different phases: i) the initial formation of militias by community members seeking protection from both state and insurgent violence, and (ii) the establishment of an alliance with the Armed Forces to counter the insurgents.

Table 4: Grassroots Militia Emergence and Consolidation in Llochegua

| Empirical Claim                                                                       | Evidence/CPO                                                                              | Data Sources                                                      |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Grassroots militias emerged and consolidated during the civil war in Llochegua</i> | Civilians organized militias in response to crossfire between the military and insurgents | -Interviews (CAD members; public officials)                       |
|                                                                                       | Partnership with the state against insurgents ( <i>civic-military alliance</i> )          | -Interviews (CAD members; public officials)<br>-Secondary sources |

Testimonies from former militia leaders in the VRAEM region offer profound insights into the motivations behind the formation of grassroots militias. Jorge Quispe, known locally as “*Comando Choque*” and Vice-president of the CADs’ central base in Pichiwillca from 1988 to 1995, vividly described the dire circumstances faced by local communities. Holding a stone in each hand, Quispe symbolized their predicament: one

stone representing the looming threat of the *senderistas*, and the other the oppressive presence of the military forces locked in a violent confrontation. Scattered on the ground between these two forces, he gathered smaller rocks to represent the peasantry, trapped in the crossfire of violence. He then explained, “We were between the ‘sword and the wall’ (*entre la espada y la pared*).<sup>79</sup> That’s why we organized ourselves into militias: out of sheer necessity, to protect our lives and possessions from these two criminal actors.”<sup>80</sup> Sergio Martínez, another prominent CAD leader in the VRAEM during the conflict, echoed Quispe’s sentiments. He emphasized how local communities came together “autonomously and spontaneously,” forming a third-party force to shield themselves from the relentless abuses inflicted by both major parties in the early stages of the civil war.

Llochegua was not exempt from these broader regional dynamics in the VRAEM that shaped the formation of grassroots militias. In 1982, grassroots militia organizations emerged in Llochegua’s central area, known as *la parte baja* (“the lower part,” as opposed to the jungle heights), in 1982. These militias, referred to as *defensa civil* (“civil defense”), operated informally and without any official registration or legal recognition. Entirely autonomous, they functioned without any coordination or oversight from the state.<sup>81</sup>

In his testimony, Vicente Kitazono (known as “*el Chino*”), the most prominent figure associated with Llochegua’s militias during the conflict, explained that the *comités*

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<sup>79</sup> “Between the sword and the wall” is a literal translation of the popular Spanish phrase “*entre la espada y la pared*,” which alludes to being in an extremely difficult or precarious situation. Mr. Quispe also held leading positions in the Llochegua CAD.

<sup>80</sup> Interview with Jorge Quispe (alias “*Comando Choque*”), a CAD leader from the VRAEM region during the civil war.

<sup>81</sup> Interviews with P. Lette and G. Soto.

*de autodefensa* primarily served as “warning systems” to prevent surprise attacks by either the insurgents or military forces. Typically, a group of around twelve to fifteen men guarded the area, strategically positioning themselves to raise the alarm. Using secret codes or phrases such as “*tigre rugiendo*” (tiger roaring) or “*perro ladrando*” (dog barking), they signaled community members to flee or seek cover. These militias also cleared pathways connecting the *parte baja* to the jungle heights, creating escape routes and hiding spots for the local population. Despite possessing some homemade weapons, the CADs’ limited firepower rendered them incapable of launching offensive operations against insurgents or the Armed Forces. Instead, their primary mission was to avoid confrontations and, in the unfortunate event of an encounter, defend themselves with their rudimentary weapons.<sup>82</sup> Alongside Kitazono, other key figures in the early days of Llohegua’s CAD included Moisés Pérez (“*Comando Saccaco*”) Héctor Talavera (“*Comando Chuko*”), Raúl Cárdenas, alias “*el Loco*,” Mauro Araujo (“*Comando Goliat*”), and Jaime Huarcaya (“*Comando Simón*”).<sup>83</sup>

In 1984, these groups partnered with the state, establishing a civic-military alliance to combat the insurgents. This development marked the third stage in the formation and mobilization of militias in Llohegua. V. Kitazono, the leading figure of Llohegua’s CADs, explained the rationale behind this decision:

“When we faced threats from both sides, we realized we could no longer stand alone. We had to align ourselves with one of the two factions: either the Army or ‘the reds’ (*los rojos*). So, which option was more convenient for us? Well, the Army was more powerful and better organized than the insurgents.”<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> Interview with Vicente Kitazono (alias “*el Chino*”), a historical CAD leader from Llohegua.

<sup>83</sup> Interview with Rover Huaman, former sub-prefect of Llohegua district (2017-2020).

<sup>84</sup> Interview with V. Kitazono. ‘The reds’ (*los rojos*) is another way of referring to the Shining Path members.

Pedro Lette, a former militia leader from the district, recounted the changes that unfolded once they forged a civic-military alliance with the Armed Forces. According to Lette, after approaching the military barracks to seek collaboration, the military welcomed militia members into their fold. However, there was one crucial condition: they had to register every community member, from infants to the elderly, residing within their homes. This registration effectively signaled to the Army that these areas should be spared from military attacks. The Army automatically classified anyone not included in this registration process as an insurgent and thus faced significant risks. Lette further explained that, while the alliance was generally collaborative, tensions arose as militias requested armament—granted only gradually—and sought military personnel to assist with operations in neighboring areas.<sup>85</sup>

Initially, the local villagers were wary of the civic-military partnership due to the military's historically heavy-handed and repressive interactions with the peasant community. However, this skepticism began to shift in 1983 when a captain known as “Amador,” stationed in the neighboring district of Sivia, entered the area under the oversight of Commander “Vik,” who led the military's efforts against the insurgents. At the same time, Lieutenant León assumed leadership in Llochegua, marking the beginning of a new approach by the Army. Under León's guidance, military officers gradually convened community members for open discussions and collaborative decision-making, particularly regarding the role of militias in military counterinsurgency operations.<sup>86</sup> This shift represented a critical turning point in the relationship between the community,

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<sup>85</sup> Interview with P. Lette.

<sup>86</sup> Interview with P. Lette, ; A. Gotzme la Fuente; and V. Kitazono.

organized in grassroots militias, and the military. It marked a clear departure from the past, when the peasantry had endured neglect and repression at the hands of the military, to a new era of formal partnership aimed at jointly confronting the insurgent threat.

#### **4. CADs' Organization and Roles During Warfare**

##### *4.1. Los Morochucos: Military-Imposed Structure and Local Intelligence*

*Comités de autodefensa* are organizations with seven members in leading positions, also known as the *junta directiva* (board of directors): the President, Vice-president, central commander, sub-commander, treasurer, secretary, and vocal.<sup>87</sup> This organizational structure in Los Morochucos was imposed by the Armed Forces. The President and Vice-president oversee the overall welfare of the organization and make the final decisions. The central commander and sub-commander coordinate the patrols and security checkpoints, thus managing the organization's activities on the ground. The treasurer administers the organization's financial resources, while the secretary schedules the working agenda. The role of the vocal is akin to a "spare tire" (*rueda de auxilio*), assisting other members in their various activities. CAD authorities tend to rotate in different positions within the organization every four years. In addition to the seven committee members, CADs have patrolmen and women (*patrulleros de base*) who

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<sup>87</sup> *Compendio de Legislación para Víctimas del Terrorismo*, consulted at the LUM's Documentation and Research Center (2002: 80). Unlike state-orchestrated militias, grassroots militias that arise in disputed areas typically exhibit a more loosely organizational structure, especially in their initial stages of development.

protect the perimeter against potential insurgent attacks and find insurgents' remnants or hiding places.<sup>88</sup>

LM's central CAD comprised the district's eight neighborhoods or "sectors." In this rural context, back in the late 1980s (when the area "looked like a desert"<sup>89</sup>), each sector comprised no more than five or six blocks. Curaspampa, Orccohualccanja, Huerta Huayjo, Manzanaccoy, Huancasaya, Chucllapampa, Ullucopata, and Barrio Centro were the district's eight sectors. As noted by "*Comando Toccto*," former CAD leader of the district, "we had a minutes book (*libro de actas*) to register each sector's population." This population control mechanism was vital to organize the patrols (*rondas*), the CADs' primary activity. These patrols took place typically at night, between 6pm and 6am, Mondays through Saturdays, and occasionally on Sundays. Men and women above the age of 12, including the mayor, were forced to secure the district's perimeter by the Army leaders, who also went on patrol. The local population rotated in their patrolling duties by shifts; for example, if twenty individuals lived in Curaspampa, ten would patrol on Monday and the remaining ten on Tuesday. Without cell phones or walkie-talkies, each neighborhood let the CAD directive authorities, who convened in the municipality, know they were patrolling using light signs—by pointing their flashlights to the night sky. In addition to patrolling, the CAD protected strategic points within the district, e.g., the medical post, the school, the church, and the municipality building, among others (places where the Shining Path may attack to try to regain territorial control).<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> Interview with Celedonio Auqui, "*Comando Toccto*," a historical CAD leader of LM.

<sup>89</sup> Interview with C. Auqui.

<sup>90</sup> Interview with A. Orosco.

Not only did LM's central CAD organize and control the aforementioned sectors, but it also had authority over the "mini-CADs" of each peasant community annexed to LM's district. After imposing LM's central CAD, the military organized the local branches of the organization within the various peasant communities, replicating the process at a smaller territorial scale. Mirroring the hierarchical and decentralized structure prevalent within the Armed Forces, the military officers in LM imposed a self-defense committee per peasant community, which responded to LM's central CAD. Like the central CAD, these "mini-CADs" were also constituted by seven committee members, who organized their patrols similarly.<sup>91</sup>

As local insiders, militia members in LM managed to mitigate the "identification problem" (Kalyvas 2006), i.e., putting a name and a face to the insurgents and revealing their whereabouts to the military. Their deep knowledge of the terrain and the local community proved invaluable to the military officials (Degregori et al. 1996), making an "undeniable contribution in the defeat of the Shining Path."<sup>92</sup> This assertion was underscored by Marcial Berrocal, current economic development manager of LM (public official), who remarked, "Without the CADs, the military would not have been able to cover the terrain as effectively as they did."<sup>93</sup> Specifically, the CADs allowed the military to implement the so-called "*rastrillaje*" technique, enabling them to patrol in a dispersed manner—resembling the tines of a rake—while searching for *senderistas* in the highlands. Without the CADs' assistance, the Armed Forces patrolled in line instead, one

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<sup>91</sup> Interview with Jaime Pacheco (key informant).

<sup>92</sup> Report on *Comités de Autodefensa* (code SCO\_345\_09; p. 2). *Archivo Central de la CVR, Defensoría del Pueblo*, Lima, Perú.

<sup>93</sup> Interview with Marcial Berrocal (local public official).

behind the other, given their little to no knowledge of the routes connecting the mountains.<sup>94</sup>

Similarly, Lorenzo Ruiz de la Vega, a former district's mayor during the conflict, emphasized how challenging it was for the Armed Forces to capture the insurgents' higher ranks: "*Sendero's* leaders vanished into Vilcashuamán and the Umaro mountains when they knew the Army troops were coming for them. The military caught, at best, *Sendero's* followers, but never the leading group."<sup>95</sup> However, Mr. de la Vega affirmed that the situation began to change after the CADs' formation because their members effectively identified the *terrucos*. Amador Orosco, a former militia member of LM, contributed another perspective, remarking that most soldiers who came to the district were originally from Lima and other coastal departments; therefore, they did not know the people or the area well. In contrast, he and his fellow militia members could tell who behaved strangely or looked at them badly, effectively identifying the Shining Path's remnants in the district. Mr. Orosco eloquently stated, "Between villagers, we know each other," reaffirming the importance of militias' insights into the local context in countering the insurgents.<sup>96</sup>

Not only were many militiamen and women familiar with the Shining Path's leaders and adherents because they were local residents, but also because many of them were former guerrilla supporters or members themselves (CVR 2003c). Switching allegiances is a notable feature of irregular civil wars, where conflict dynamics are fluid,

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<sup>94</sup> CADs' *rastrillajes* were also registered in several districts within Ayacucho, including the communities of Ccaccas, Ocanis, Patasucro, Uchupata, San Miguel, and Chancara (close to Huanta province). *Caretas*, February 11, 1985.

<sup>95</sup> Interview with L. Ruiz de la Vega.

<sup>96</sup> Interview with A. Orosco.

and the alignment of factions is subject to change. Transitions in territorial control help explain this phenomenon, as the local populations typically adapt their ideological preferences to collaborate with the actor in control (Kalyvas 2006). In LM, despite their pre-existing ideological leanings, most rural citizens had initially supported the insurgents but shifted their allegiance towards the government in response to shifts in territorial control. Put differently, although most civilians in LM were not sympathetic towards the government, “if you’ve got them by the balls, their hearts and minds will follow.” Javier Romero, the current general prosecutor of Cangallo province, affirmed that “several CAD members were ex-*senderistas* who switched sides once *Sendero Luminoso* started losing its grip on power.”<sup>97</sup> Testimonies from other local public officials, key experts, and civil society leaders have pointed in the same direction, indicating that the CAD members had vital information on the Shining Path’s hiding places, food and weapons storages, and war tactics because of their guerrilla past.<sup>98</sup> The military quickly dismantled the Shining Path forces thanks to the CADs’ “intelligence service,” proving as the most effective response to the terrorist phenomenon.<sup>99</sup>

#### *4.2. Llochegua: From Informal Networks to Structured Self-Defense and Counterinsurgency Operations*

In contrast to Los Morochucos, the self-defense committees in Llochegua emerged “from below,” without initial coordination from the Armed Forces. Between

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<sup>97</sup> Interview with J. Romero.

<sup>98</sup> Interviews with Marcial Berrocal; J. Sáez; and D. Calderón.

<sup>99</sup> *Oiga*, 27 March, 1989.

1982 and 1984, these grassroots militias were loosely organized, operating with minimal hierarchy and relying on informal, community-based practices to respond to insurgent and state violence. Leadership roles were fluid, and patrols were irregular. Over time, however, and particularly after the establishment of the civic-military alliance, these militias gradually adopted more formal structures. By the late 1980s, Llohegua CADs increasingly mirrored the model found in Los Morochucos: with defined leadership positions—such as a President, Vice-president, and commanders—regular patrol routines, and stronger integration into the military’s broader counterinsurgency apparatus. This evolution reflected a shift from spontaneous civilian protection to routinized collaboration with state forces.<sup>100</sup>

Before the establishment of the civic-military alliance, as previously noted, grassroots militias in the district operated primarily as reactive “warning systems,” aimed at protecting the community from both insurgent and state violence. However, after aligning with the Armed Forces, the CADs’ security roles evolved into proactive patrols that supported the military in addressing the “identification problem” by aiding in the capture of insurgents. These patrols extended beyond Llohegua’s urban center into remote peasant communities where the Shining Path had a strong presence, with the primary objective of capturing or directly eliminating its members to disrupt their activities and diminish their influence in the region.<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> Participant observation in the field. Informal conversation with V. Kitazono, former CAD leader and district mayor, while collecting crops in his farm. August 13, 2022, Llohegua (Ayacucho, Peru).

<sup>101</sup> Interview with Rory Quintanilla, former CAD lower-ranking member from Llohegua.

Former CAD leaders in Llochegua and neighboring areas of the VRAEM have shed light on the challenges of conducting “mixed patrols,” where military officers collaborated with CAD members. Military personnel often struggled with the rugged jungle terrain. Sergio Martínez, a former CAD leader from the VRAEM, humorously recalled an incident in which a log fell, prompting the soldiers to nearly open fire on it, mistaking it for a threat. During these joint patrols, CAD members played critical roles as guides, leading the way into the remote “*parte alta*” of Llochegua to track down *senderistas*. Mauro Araujo, known as “*Comando Goliath*,” who held various leadership positions in Llochegua’s CAD during the conflict, highlighted the difference between military officers and CAD members while patrolling from the perspective of the insurgents. In his own words:

“The *senderistas* derogatorily referred to the soldiers ‘*chanchos del monte*’ (mountain pigs) because they walked slowly and opened the path wide, leaving traces and revealing their position. In contrast, they called us, the CAD members, ‘*capis*’ or ‘*macizos*,’ likening us to small mountain rodents because we could slip through the bushes and remain elusive.”

CAD members’ deep familiarity with the terrain was complemented by their intimate knowledge of the Shining Path’s members and strategies. Vicente Kitazono, former President of Llochegua’s CAD during the conflict, emphasized their role in mitigating the “identification problem,” a common challenge in civil wars where the state—specifically, the Armed Forces—struggle to distinguish between insurgents and civilians. Kitazono elaborated, “The Army was prepared for conventional war. But we, the self-defense committees, were prepared for unconventional warfare. We could put a face to the ‘faceless enemy’ and pinpoint the insurgents’ bases in the wilderness.” This ability to identify insurgents stemmed from the fact that CAD members were often part of

the same communities as the Shining Path members, giving them unparalleled insight into who they were and where they operated.

## **5. Conclusion**

Through a comparative analysis of Los Morochucos and Llochegua, this chapter has illuminated the distinct pathways through which militia organizations form in territories controlled by insurgents versus those that are actively disputed. In insurgent strongholds, grassroots militias struggle to take shape because insurgent forces—such as the Shining Path—actively repress local organizing efforts. Yet this does not mean militias cannot emerge in these regions. Rather, they are established “from above” by the state after the area is recaptured through military force. The creation of CADs in Los Morochucos exemplifies this process: state-orchestrated militias deployed to consolidate newly gained territorial control. In such contexts, militias play a pivotal role in entrenching the state’s presence and securing the shift in control.

In contrast, in conflict zones where control is fragmented—where neither the insurgents nor the state dominate—communities face powerful incentives to organize for self-protection. In Llochegua, grassroots militias emerged as community-driven efforts to survive the dual threat posed by insurgents and the state. Over time, these militias formed a strategic alliance with the military—what became known as the “civic-military alliance”—to ensure their continued survival. This collaboration allowed them to avoid targeting by state forces, while also securing resources and personnel to resist insurgent incursions.

The next chapter turns to the post-conflict trajectories of militias in both districts. Drawing on in-depth comparative historical analysis, I show that militias in Los Morochucos were dismantled in the post-conflict period due to their subjugation to the military. By contrast, militias in Llohegua persisted and enhanced rural governance thanks to their autonomy from the military and strong community ties.

## Chapter 5

### Post-War Trajectories in Los Morochucos and Llohegua: Disbandment vs. Survival and Governance Roles

“When *Sendero Luminoso* disappeared, the CADs disappeared. We have not heard about them for many decades.”

Buenaventura De la Cruz Altamirano, former mayor of Los Morochucos (1989-1993).

“The comités de autodefensa remain indispensable in our district. They have reconverted to combat common delinquency and assist the government in different tasks. Without them, things simply wouldn’t work here.”

Honorato Cabezas, Justice of Peace from Llohegua.

#### 1. Introduction

This chapter explores the trajectories of militias after civil wars end in Los Morochucos and Llohegua, two districts in Peru’s Ayacucho department. Its primary objective is to evaluate my theoretical framework on militia pathways in the aftermath of violent conflict. Drawing on a historical paired comparison and process tracing, I analyze how variation in two key wartime relationships—(i) militias’ relations with the military (autonomy vs. subjugation), and (ii) with local communities (embeddedness vs. disembeddedness)—account for their diverse post-war paths. I theorize that militias subjugated to the military are unlikely to persist after the war, while those that maintain autonomy from the military and deep ties to their community are more likely to survive and transition into governance-enhancing actors.

Consistent with these expectations, I find that the CADs in Los Morochucos were disbanded after the conflict. Subjugated to the Armed Forces, their legitimacy was undermined not by military repression against militia members (Stanton 2015), but also by acts of repression committed by the militias against the local population (Valentino 2004; Downes 2006). As a result, neither militia members nor local residents supported the continuation of militias after the war.

By contrast, in Llochegua, grassroots militias that maintained their autonomy from the military and were embedded in the community endured and became institutionalized. Their operational autonomy and protective role during the conflict earned them social legitimacy (Yoroms 2005; Daly 2011; Peic 2014), leading to what Selznick (1957) and Levitsky (1999) describe as a process of “value infusion” institutionalization. Both community members and ex-combatants came to view the CADs as a legitimate local organization and advocated for their continuation in the post-war period, where they contributed to rural governance by providing public goods and services in the absence of a strong state.

## **2. Militia-Military Relations During Warfare**

### *2.1. Los Morochucos: Repressive Military Control and the Subjugation of the CADs*

Table 5 compiles various fragments of evidence to substantiate the descriptive claim that the Armed Forces exercised repressive control over the *comités de autodefensa*, subjugating them to their command and severely limiting their operational autonomy. This evidence includes: i) instances of physical and psychological abuses

inflicted by military officers on CAD members, ii) the CAD's lack of autonomy in carrying out their assigned duties, and iii) the context surrounding the construction of Los Morochucos' central square.

Table 5: Military Control over CADs in LM

| Empirical Claim                                             | Evidence/CPOs                                                             | Data Sources                                                                                             |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>The military subjugated the CADs under harsh control</i> | Physical and mental abuses suffered by CAD members from military officers | -Interviews (ex-CAD members, public officials)<br>-Archives (historical documents)<br>-Secondary sources |
|                                                             | The CADs lacked operational autonomy                                      | -Interviews (public officials and ex-CAD members)<br>-Archives (historical documents)                    |
|                                                             | LM's central square building process                                      | -Interviews (public officials and ex-CAD members)                                                        |

The relationship between the military and the *comités de autodefensa* has been generally described as one of “vertical control, with a subordination of the *ronderos* to the Armed Forces, expressed in the coercion used by the Armed Forces to organize them, the control over their guns, and *ronderos*' obligation to report to the barracks from time to time and to go out on patrol, often being utilized as human shields.”<sup>102</sup> But how was it in LM, specifically? Aligned with the previous quote, the Army held militias under harsh control in Los Morochucos. Such “harsh control” encompassed two facets: i) mistreatment and abuses of CAD members by military personnel and, crucially, ii) a marked lack of operational autonomy for the CADs. Illustrating the repressive tactics

<sup>102</sup> Report on *Comités de Autodefensa* (code SCO\_345\_09; p. 28). *Archivo Central de la CVR, Defensoría del Pueblo*, Lima, Perú. *Ronderos* is an alternative way to refer to CAD members.

employed by military officers over the CADs in LM, Marcelino Arango de la Cruz and Amador Orosco, both former lower-ranking CAD members, recalled the consequences for rural citizens who refused to patrol:

“Commander Butler obliged us, the patrol members, to make a ‘dark alley’ (*callejón oscuro*) to the neighbors who did not attend the patrol. This punishment consisted of making them walk between two lines of patrollers. Butler made us punch them and kick them on the floor to ‘teach them a lesson.’”<sup>103</sup>

“The military officers knocked on each door to ensure no one missed the patrols. When people did not respond to their knock, they broke the door down and dragged people by their hair out of their houses.”<sup>104</sup>

In that context, falling asleep or missing the patrols was considered a severe offense that warranted punishment.<sup>105</sup> Among the collective recollections of former CAD members, Commander Butler stood out as the most abusive military leader in the district. Many former CAD members, including Amador Orosco, Marcial Berrocal, Juan Pérez, and Martín Espósito, along with two former district mayors, Lorenzo Ruiz de la Vega and Buenaventura De la Cruz Altamirano, recounted numerous instances of abuse suffered by former militia members at the hands of this Commander. Buenaventura De la Cruz Altamirano recounted an incident when Butler had invited the militiamen and women to a barbecue at the recently built headquarters. By the end of the meal, he laughed and exclaimed, “How did you find meat? Enjoyed it? Well, it was *terruco*’s meat.”<sup>106</sup> Undeniably, serving human food without consent is another manifestation of the

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<sup>103</sup> Interview with Marcelino Arango de la Cruz, ex-CAD lower rank of LM.

<sup>104</sup> Interview with A. Orosco.

<sup>105</sup> Report on *Comités de Autodefensa* (code SCO\_345\_09; p. 27). *Archivo Central de la CVR, Defensoría del Pueblo*, Lima, Perú.

<sup>106</sup> Interview with B. de la Cruz Altamirano.

psychological and physical abuses that CAD members suffered from the Armed Forces. This shocking incident captures a broader pattern of the repression experienced by these individuals.

In terms of operational autonomy, following their “top-down” imposition, the Army leadership did not concede the CADs in LM with a high degree of independence; instead, they firmly established the organization’s subjugation to military authority. Alfredo Mendoza de la Cruz, a former military official from *La Oroya* barracks, revealed that Army generals ordered CAD members to report their daily positions and convened them to mandatory meetings at the headquarters, the central square, or the municipality every two or three days. Additionally, after the CADs started using firearms, the Army required members to document the number of report cartridges used and the intended purpose. Martín Espósito (pseudonym), LM’s ex-central CAD President, emphasized that the CADs did not function according to its own methods or discretion; instead, they operated under the resolution of the Ayacucho’s Infantry Brigade (Huamanga Headquarters).<sup>107</sup> He further noted that Butler and the other Army leaders imposed a fee of two *soles* and fifty cents for every unjustified wasted cartridge. They also threatened to revoke CAD members’ credentials (authorization to work in the organization) and prosecute them for any perceived misconduct. These examples illustrate the extent to which the Army orchestrated and controlled the functioning of the CADs.

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<sup>107</sup> Interview with A. Mendoza de la Cruz. That barrack controlled the entire Ayacucho department, including LM’s headquarters, which managed the military bases in Ayacucho’s southern provinces.

The CADs' lack of operational autonomy was further reflected in their limited control over material resources, which remained tightly managed by the Army. In LM, the self-defense committees operated with minimal logistical support and were not authorized to independently acquire or allocate essential tools for their defense. As a result, they relied heavily on improvised weaponry, such as sharp sticks, spears, and slings (*hondas*), to conduct patrols. Marcelino Arango de la Cruz, a former lower-ranking CAD member, vividly described crafting makeshift weapons from wood and stones at the town's blacksmith, underscoring how the self-defense committees' dependence on rudimentary tools stemmed not only from resource scarcity but from the Army's refusal to grant them autonomy in decision-making and provisioning.<sup>108</sup>

This externally imposed dependency extended beyond weapons to basic infrastructure and logistics, reinforcing the CADs' subordination to military authority. CADs in Los Morochucos lacked vehicles, uniforms, and even a dedicated headquarters—a "CAD house"—to support their operations. Instead, militia members traveled on foot, wore their everyday clothing, and held meetings at locations chosen by the military, such as the central square, the municipal building, or the Army's own headquarters. The fact that even meeting spaces were dictated from above illustrates how little discretion CADs had in organizing their activities or asserting control over their internal affairs.

The story behind the construction of LM's central square helps illustrate the tight vertical control the Army exercised over the self-defense committees. "The way you see

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<sup>108</sup> Interview with M. Arango de la Cruz.

the central square now... oh, it wasn't like this. The CADs built it all," commented Lorenzo Ruiz de la Vega, a former district mayor (1985-1989).<sup>109</sup> Back in the day, the area where the central square stands today used to be a grass-covered plain (*pampa*), prone to turning into mud after rainfall, which hampered the military convoys' circulation and even made walking difficult. For this reason, between 1988 and 1989, military officials ordered CAD leaders and patrollers to rebuild the central square. The specific directive was for each CAD member to find suitable stones for paving the area. The military officers often accompanied the *ronderos* in search for rocks to the city outskirts and peasant communities because they did not trust them to go on their own. This collective effort, known as "*faena comunal*," occurred every Sunday over several months. But the CAD members could not just find any rock: the rocks must meet specific characteristics. As described by Amador Orosco, a former patrolman in the district, "The rocks had to be neither too big nor too small, and they needed to be mostly flat." Mr. Orosco also recounted the repercussions faced when the *ronderos* could not find the appropriate stones:

"When we could not find a suitable rock, there were consequences. Commander Butler punished us, the CAD members, in different ways, from ordering us to lie on the ground while placing his boot on our heads, to firing a shotgun right next to our ears—causing temporary to indefinite deafness—or simply kicking us on the ground or striking us with his belt."<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>109</sup> Interview with L. Ruiz de la Vega.

<sup>110</sup> Interview with A. Orosco.

Figure 12: LM's Central Square



Photo taken during my fieldwork in Los Morochucos (September 19, 2022).

Former CAD leaders Juan Pérez and Martín Espósito corroborated these accounts surrounding the construction of the central square. Taken together with the documented abuses, these narratives paint a comprehensive picture of the Army's dominance over the CADs—a subjugation marked by severe repression and the systematic restriction of their operational autonomy.

### *2.1. Llochegua: CADs' Autonomy Under the Civic-Military Alliance*

Militia-military relations in Llochegua were fundamentally different than in Los Morochucos. In Llochegua, militias operated autonomously, free from military subjugation. Initially, grassroots militias arose autonomously from the state to safeguard the community from both insurgent and state violence. Importantly, the establishment of the civic-military alliance and subsequent collaboration between the Army and the

militias in counterinsurgency efforts did not compromise militias' operational autonomy. Militias in Llochegua maintained significantly higher levels of autonomy compared to those in LM, as evidenced by their independent patrols—conducted without military oversight—and the establishment of their own headquarters to coordinate security operations.

Table 6: CAD Autonomy from the Military in Llochegua

| Empirical Claim                                             | Evidence/CPOs                                                     | Data Sources                                                |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>The CADs have operational autonomy from the military</i> | The CADs conducted independent patrols                            | -Interviews (CAD members, public officials)                 |
|                                                             | CADs established a separate headquarters to coordinate activities | -Interviews (CAD members, public officials, key informants) |

Two prominent CAD leaders from the district, Pedro Lette and Vicente Kitazono, along with Juan Chimayco, a lower-ranking militia member, emphasized that the CADs consistently conducted independent patrols, even after formalizing their partnership with the military. While mixed patrols—where militia members and military personnel worked together—did occur, independent patrols remained a constant throughout the civil war. Reflecting on this, Chimayco stated, “We were faster and more effective than the military... we knew what we were doing.”<sup>111</sup>

Former military officials stationed in the region corroborated this account, acknowledging the autonomy of the CADs. Captain Luis Vargas, who served in the nearby district of Sivia, noted that while the Army provided logistical support and some

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<sup>111</sup> Interview with J. Chimayco.

strategic guidance, “the CADs operated on their own terms. They knew the terrain better than we ever could and often acted without waiting for orders.”<sup>112</sup> Similarly, Colonel Héctor Palomino, who oversaw operations in the VRAEM region, recalled instances where the militias led reconnaissance missions entirely independently: “They didn’t need us to tell them what to do. Many times, they scouted insurgent hideouts and reported back only after they had secured the area.”<sup>113</sup>

Another clear indication of the CADs’ operational autonomy was establishing a separate base or headquarters, distinct from the military barracks. CAD leaders demonstrated their independence from the Army by acquiring vacant plots and building Llohegua’s central CAD headquarters between 1987 and 1988.<sup>114</sup> As described by CAD members of various ranks, these headquarters served as a multifunctional hub. It was a space where the organization conducted regular meetings, maintained internal records, stored weapons, provided accommodations for members during rest periods between patrols, and held insurgents as prisoners. On a day-to-day basis, CAD members convened at their base to coordinate their activities independently, without needing to involve Army leaders, underscoring their preserved autonomy.<sup>115</sup> Captain Luis Vargas recalled how the establishment of the CAD headquarters exemplified their autonomy: “The Army had its barracks, and the CADs had their own base. They didn’t rely on us to give them a place to operate—they built it themselves, managed it themselves, and ran it according to their

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<sup>112</sup> Interview with Captain Luis Vargas, a military leader from Sivia district (22 km away from Llohegua) who served during the conflict.

<sup>113</sup> Interview with Colonel Héctor Palomino, a military officer who served in the VRAEM region during the conflict era.

<sup>114</sup> Interview with Alejandro Garcia, key informant.

<sup>115</sup> Interview with V. Kitazono.

needs.”<sup>116</sup> This experience sharply contrasted with that of CADs in Los Morochucos, where the absence of a dedicated facility reflected their diminished autonomy.

### 3. Militia-Community Relations During Warfare

#### 3.1. Los Morochucos: CADs as Agents of State Violence Against Civilians

The relationship between the *comités de autodefensa* and the community in LM is also marked by a history of repression and abuse. This dynamic creates a double-layered repression scenario: first, between the Armed Forces and the CADs; second, between the CADs and the community. A resident of Vinchos, a district located 60km from LM in Huamanga, Ayacucho, succinctly captures this situation: “They have been murderers, first as *senderistas*, and then as *ronderos*!”<sup>117</sup> This sentiment is echoed by various testimonies from LM, which agree on the fact that the CAD members were not exactly “*bebés de pecho*,” implying that they were not innocent or free from guilt.<sup>118</sup>

During patrols, under the coercive direction of military officers, the CADs committed various crimes, including robberies, *abigeato*, and physical and psychological abuses. A key expert from the area emphasized, “They stole valuable horse saddles, radios, hens and guinea pigs... oh, they were terrible”.<sup>119</sup> Celedonio Ludeña, a peasant from LM, captured the cycle of repression, stating: “The state orchestrated militias to

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<sup>116</sup> Interview with L. Vargas.

<sup>117</sup> *Archivo Central de la Comisión de Verdad y Reconciliación (CVR)*, Defensoría del Pueblo. Report on *Comités de Autodefensa*, code SCO\_345\_09 (p. 4).

<sup>118</sup> Interview with J. Romero; J. Sáez; and M. Aguirre.

<sup>119</sup> Interview with M. Hinostroza.

massacre the peasant society: through them, they instigated the masses, or peasants, to turn against one another.”<sup>120</sup>

Similarly, Dionisia Calderón, a prominent civil society leader within LM, underscored that the villagers who joined the CADs became very cruel. Mrs. Calderón stressed, “Together with the military, the CAD members stole our money, violated women, and made people disappear for personal reasons. They also forced us to keep our homes unlocked and did not allow us to light candles at night, condemning us to several hours of darkness.”<sup>121</sup> This hostile environment explains why, in the view of Marcial Berrocal (local public official), many former CAD leaders left LM after the conflict and, those who stayed, walk with their heads-down, avoiding eye contact with the rest of the community because ‘they know what they did.’”<sup>122</sup>

Numerous former CAD leaders in LM are currently facing legal trials for human rights abuses. While the CVR (2003b) has documented this phenomenon throughout the country, my interviews have confirmed it to be particularly pronounced in LM. After the civil war, some civilians in LM—Dionisia Calderón included—traveled to Lima and Huamanga (Ayacucho’s capital) to bring the ex-CAD members to court and require the CVR to compile testimonies from victims in LM. According to Mrs. Calderón, the neighbors who declared to the CVR lied or withheld crucial information. Many local villagers toned down their accounts regarding the *comités de autodefensas*’ abuses to the CVR investigative team because numerous former CAD members threatened them and,

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<sup>120</sup> Interview with Celedonio Ludeña, resident of LM.

<sup>121</sup> Interview with D. Calderón.

<sup>122</sup> Interview with M. Berrocal.

in many cases, still carried guns.<sup>123</sup> Consequently, several civilians were biased against the Shining Path during their testimonies, omitting many atrocities committed by the CADs under the directive of the Armed Forces from the official records.<sup>124</sup> While many former CAD members could allege that they were following orders from Army leaders, it remains evident that the organization served as an illegitimate and repressive “extended arm” of the Armed Forces in the eyes of the local population. Even Amador Orosco, a district’s former lower-ranking militiaman, admitted that the organization did “terrible things.”

### *3.2. Llochegua: Autonomous Militias That Protected Their Community*

The second critical wartime relationship that, coupled with CADs’ autonomy from the military, explains their persistence and transition into post-conflict governance roles of Llochegua CADs is their protective behavior toward the local community during wartime. In contrast to Los Morochucos, where CADs operated under strict military control and engaged in predatory actions against civilians, the autonomy of Llochegua militias allowed them to avoid such behavior. Deeply rooted in their grassroots origins and embedded within the local community, these militias initially served to protect civilians from both insurgent and state violence. Over time, their focus shifted to

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<sup>123</sup> Interviews with D. Calderón and M. Berrocal.

<sup>124</sup> For this reason, it was challenging to interview former CAD members in LM. Marcial Berrocal, a district’s current public official, gently introduced some ex-CAD leaders who, at first, were reluctant to speak with me. After they noticed that I had been in the district for several weeks and had me insisting a few times, they finally agreed to give me their testimony. Some of them mentioned that they were under judicial trial during the interview. Following IRB protocol, I used pseudonyms when corresponding.

combating insurgents exclusively and, ultimately, they played a pivotal role in bringing the civil war to an end. This protective behavior not only safeguarded the community during the war but also laid the foundation for their post-conflict roles in rural governance.

Llochegua's militias avoided indiscriminate violence, opting instead for a targeted and selective approach to combat insurgents. Américo Ludeña, a key figure in militia formation and deployment in the district, attributed this restraint to the militias' deep roots in the community: "If you misused your power today, the community knows who you are and would either ostracize you, causing you to walk with your head down in shame, or even take revenge against you." This strong accountability mechanism effectively deterred abuses of power within the organization, particularly among its leaders and commanders (*comandos*).

Furthermore, the entire community, including men and women over the age of twelve, actively participated in rotating patrol duties, fostering collective involvement and reinforcing a shared responsibility to protect one another. This widespread participation strengthened the bond between the militias and the community, ensuring their actions aligned with communal needs and values. Over time, the militias' protective behavior earned them significant social legitimacy, becoming institutionalized as trusted actors. Their conduct came to embody the socially constructed norms of both the community and the organization itself, making their actions not only acceptable but also desirable.

Testimonies from militia members reflect this profound sense of commitment and identification with the organization: "This organization was our life," "we were either

patrolling or at the headquarters all day,” and “the *comités de autodefensa* was the difference between life or death.”<sup>125</sup> These accounts illustrate how the militias evolved into central pillars of the district’s survival and collective identity, transcending their wartime role to become enduring symbols of community resilience.

Militias in Llochegua had a profound impact not only in their members but also on the local community. Before their formation, Llochegua’s community was caught in the crossfire between the Armed Forces and the Shining Path, living under constant uncertainty and fear. However, after the militias were established, life began to stabilize. Rebecca Paredes, a local civil society leader, observed, “Life returned to the district, and we were able to resume a relatively normal way of life.”<sup>126</sup> Local public officials, civil society leaders, and key informants widely agreed that the CADs significantly reduced violence and restored peace within the district, earning them lasting popular support.<sup>127</sup>

While isolated instances of excessive behavior by individual CAD members in Llochegua were acknowledged,<sup>128</sup> these were sporadic and not part of a systematic repressive strategy. Overall, the CADs were viewed as a stabilizing force, significantly reducing fear and uncertainty within the community. This legitimacy and the trust they cultivated explain why Llochegua’s community sought to repurpose the militias for governance roles in the post-conflict era. In stark contrast, the CADs in Los Morochucos

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<sup>125</sup> Interviews with P. Lette; G. Soto; and J. Chimayco.

<sup>126</sup> Interview with Rebecca Paredes, civil society leader of Llochegua. Mrs. Paredes is the President of the “Mothers’ Club,” an NGO dedicated to assisting the district’s most vulnerable people.

<sup>127</sup> Interviews with Robert Huamán, public official; Rebecca Paredes, civil society leader; and Gabriela Zamora, key informant. While oral testimonies for reconstructing historical accounts can be shaped by selective memory or the passage of time, their remarkable consistency across diverse first-hand actors and witnesses of the conflict lends credibility to these findings.

<sup>128</sup> Interviews with V. Kitazono; A. Gotzme la Fuente; and R. Paredes.

were perceived as military-imposed actors who exacerbated violence and deepened divisions among rural villagers.

#### 4. The Post-Civil War Era

##### 4.1. Los Morochucos: CADs' Disbandment

Table 7 presents the sequence of events to affirm that the CADs in Los Morochucos disbanded in the post-conflict era. Their dismantlement unfolded in three distinct phases: i) gradual *de facto* dissolution, ii) formal or *de jure* termination through a disarmament process, and iii) the absence of communal initiatives to repurpose the organization for new roles following the end of the civil war.

Table 7: CADs' Post-Conflict Disbandment in LM

| Empirical Claim                          | Evidence/CPOs                                                                              | Data Sources                                                                              |
|------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>The CADs disbanded post-civil war</i> | CAD members stopped participating in the organization ( <i>de facto</i> )                  | -Interviews (key informants, public officials, ex-CAD members)                            |
|                                          | Disarmament process ( <i>de jure</i> )                                                     | -Interviews (ex-CAD members; public officials)                                            |
|                                          | Neither community nor militia members aimed to “re-tool” the organization for new purposes | -Interviews (key informants, public officials, civil society leaders, and ex-CAD members) |

In the early 1990s, political violence significantly declined across Peru, particularly in LM and highlands of Ayacucho.<sup>129</sup> For instance, the area's annual average

<sup>129</sup> Report on *Comités de Autodefensa*, code SCO\_345\_09 (p. 7). *Archivo Central de la Comisión de Verdad y Reconciliación* (CVR), Defensoría del Pueblo.

deaths dropped to 429 between 1991-1993, a dramatic decrease compared to the peak period of 1983-1985, when the average was 2,271 (CVR 2003a). By this time, most of Shining Path's leaders and members had been killed, captured, or had fled Ayacucho's south-central provinces—their historical operational center—for Lima or remote areas of the Peruvian jungle (CVR 2003a). Except for 1989, when the Shining Path unsuccessfully attempted to regain territorial control by bombing the Ministry of Agriculture within the municipality, LM has remained free of insurgent forces for years.<sup>130</sup> Both primary and secondary sources widely recognize the critical role CADs played in reclaiming territorial control for the state, transforming former insurgent strongholds like Los Morochucos into government-controlled areas (Degregori et al 1996; Degregori 1998; Soifer and Vergara 2019).<sup>131</sup>

By 1993-1994, approximately seven to eight years after their establishment by the Army, the CADs in LM began to scale down their activities. “The CADs’ golden years were between 1987 and 1990; after that, our patrols became infrequent,” recalled Amador Orosco, a former lower-ranking militia member.<sup>132</sup> Although the official narrative marks the year 2000 as the end of the Peruvian internal armed conflict (CVR 2003b), the political situation in Ayacucho, particularly in Los Morochucos, had largely stabilized by the early 1990s.<sup>133</sup>

“While the CADs weren’t officially disbanded, *in practice*, the organization stopped holding regular meetings, organizing patrols, or engaging in security tasks,”

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<sup>130</sup> Interview with B. de la Cruz Altamirano.

<sup>131</sup> *QueHacer*, June 18, 1989.

<sup>132</sup> Interview with A. Orosco.

<sup>133</sup> Interview with L. Ruiz de la Vega.

noted Alfredo Mendoza de la Cruz, a former military official in the district.<sup>134</sup> The Army officers sporadically summoned CAD members for specific events, such as guarding communal gatherings, but their services were no longer regularly required. After the Shining Path's remnants were either captured or killed in the area between 1987 and 1989, insurgent activities diminished to negligible levels, rendering the CADs obsolete in LM. The militias had accomplished the purpose for which they were created: assisting the Armed Forces in defeating the insurgents.

During the second half of the 1990s, the CADs were entirely inactive. While no official records document the organization's formal dissolution or "death certificate,"<sup>135</sup> multiple testimonies suggest that the disarmament process, marking the CADs' formal termination, took place in the early 2000s.<sup>136</sup> As levels of violence began to decline, the Armed Forces deactivated militias in LM by withdrawing logistical and material support. This strategy not only allowed the government to reallocate limited resources but also served as a preemptive measure to mitigate the risk of the CADs turning against the state.

Martín Espósito ("*Comando Puma*"), the last President of LM's Central CAD, and Juan Pérez ("*Comando Rambo*"), his former Vice-president, received an official notification from Lima's national headquarters instructing all militia members to return their weapons to the military. Following this directive, the two CAD leaders visited every peasant community in the district to collect the arms held by the "mini-CADs," the local

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<sup>134</sup> Interview with A. Mendoza de la Cruz.

<sup>135</sup> Alfredo Mendoza de la Cruz, an ex-military official of *La Oroya* barrack, told me that most communications during those years were oral—only a few were typed. When the barrack stopped functioning in the early 2000s, most archives were burned either to hide controversial evidence or because they were cumbersome to transport to the General Warehouse of Ayacucho's Barracks (Huamanga). If any, there are only a few written records from that period.

<sup>136</sup> Interviews with A. Orosco; B. de la Cruz Altamirano; A. Mendoza de la Cruz.

branches of the organization. Both Mr. Espósito and Mr. Pérez described the challenges they faced, particularly the reluctance of many villagers to comply. “We tried to explain to the community members that this wasn’t our decision, and that if they didn’t return the arms willingly (*‘por las buenas’*), the military generals would come and take them forcefully (*‘por las malas’*),” said Mr. Pérez. Despite their efforts, some weapons “magically” disappeared, complicating the process.<sup>137</sup> Ultimately, most of the arms were retrieved and returned to the *La Oroya* barracks under Espósito and Pérez’s leadership, symbolizing the formal termination of the CADs in Los Morochucos.

Past communal narratives portray the CADs as an external imposition by the Armed Forces that escalated violence within the district. These sentiments were echoed not only by local public officials and civil society leaders but also by militia members themselves, who described the organization as “a curse,” “a place of abuse,” and “a means for the military to torment peasants.”<sup>138</sup> This profound lack of legitimacy prevented any efforts to repurpose the CADs for alternative roles in the post-conflict era. During the CADs’ dormant years (1995–2000) and following their disbandment in the early 2000s, the community showed no inclination to “re-tool” the organization, despite the resurgence of common delinquency—particularly *abigeato* and road assaults—after the civil war ended.

In my interviews sample, out of the fifteen interviewees who are not former CAD members, thirteen considered the CADs had an overall negative impact on LM’s society (86% consensus). Table 8 synthesizes this information.<sup>139</sup>

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<sup>137</sup> Interview with J. Pérez.

<sup>138</sup> Interviews with A. Orosco and C. Ludeña.

<sup>139</sup> The two public officials who did not hold a negative view of the CADs’ impact on the district valued their role in terminating with *Sendero Luminoso*.

Table 8: Evaluation of the CADs in LM

|                     | Public Officials | Key Informants | Civil Society Leaders | Total (%)        |
|---------------------|------------------|----------------|-----------------------|------------------|
| Negative Assessment | n = 5/7          | n = 6/6        | n = 2/2               | <b>n = 13/15</b> |
| Total (%)           | 71%              | 100%           | 100%                  | <b>86%</b>       |

The following testimonies from Dionisia Calderón, LM's civil society leader, and Buenaventura De la Cruz Altamirano, a former district mayor (1989-1993), further develop the community's negative assessment of the CADs in the district. These past communal narratives shed light on the rationale behind rural villagers' lack of interest in redeploying the organization in the aftermath of violent conflict. For most of the local community, the CADs were nothing more than a repressive and illegitimate actor:

“Before the Army arrived to LM, the situation wasn't that bad. But when they came, our worst nightmare began. They created the *comités de autodefensas* to make peasants kill other peasants (...). Both the military and the *comités de autodefensas* repressed us for ‘*terrucos*’.”<sup>140</sup>

“The *ronderos* became evil when they patrolled with the military. They used to be common people, good people... we were all neighbors. But they did a lot of damage when the military used them. They turned against their own community.”<sup>141</sup>

In sum, various types of observations provide evidence of the causal process that led to the eventual disbandment of the CADs in the district. Several testimonies emphasize that, after its peak period (1987-1990), the CADs' activities started

<sup>140</sup> Interview with D. Calderón.

<sup>141</sup> Interview with B. De la Cruz Altamirano.

gradually declining. The organization's effective (*de facto*) disbandment in the early 1990s preceded its formal (*de jure*) dismantlement by the military approximately a decade later, in the early 2000s through the disarmament process. The local community demonstrated no intent to repurpose the *comités de autodefensa* for alternative roles (e.g., fighting everyday crime or enhancing rural governance) in the post-conflict era. Instead, there was a prevailing sense of relief when the militias stopped operating due to their predatory behavior towards the community during the civil war.

#### 4.2. Llochegua: CADs' Adaptation and Persistence

In the mid-1990s, political violence in Peru began to subside, and the Shining Path became less of a threat.<sup>142</sup> As the official end of the conflict approached in 2000, a critical question arose: What should be done with the *comités de autodefensa*? In 2002, a meeting was held in Ayacucho's main military headquarters (known as *Los Cabitos*), involving government officials, professionals from Lima (such as doctors and psychologists), and CAD leaders, including representatives from Llochegua. The main agenda was to discuss the possibility of disbanding the CADs in favor of "development committees" (*comités de desarrollo*).<sup>143</sup>

During the meeting, the prominent CAD leader "Comandante Huayhuaco" removed his shirt to reveal numerous bullet wounds on his body. He declared, "These

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<sup>142</sup> Report on *Comités de Autodefensa* (code SCO\_345\_09; p. 7). *Archivo Central de la CVR, Defensoría del Pueblo*, Lima, Perú.

<sup>143</sup> Interviews with Américo Ludeña, CAD leader from Llochegua in the early 2000s; Feliciano Tello, key informant; and Britner Pérez, local public official.

scars won't be erased by a 'development committee'." He further emphasized, "The *comités de autodefensa* will never die; we have protected our families and the community from death, prevented the rape of women, and even located 'disappeared' individuals." At that moment, other CAD leaders created noise by rattling the cartridges inside their guns, demonstrating their support for the organization's continuity.<sup>144</sup> CAD leaders unanimously agreed that if there was a desire to establish these new development committees, they should coexist alongside the *comités de autodefensa*, rather than replace them. These expressions and actions underscore the profound commitment and personal attachment that CAD members felt towards the organization, thereby facilitating its preservation.

Many of the key figures in the early days of Llochegua's CAD, such as Vicente Kitazono, Mauro Araujo, Grovi Soto, and Pedro Lette, Moisés Pérez, Héctor Talavera, Raúl Cárdenas, and Jaime Huarcaya, assumed leadership roles in their late teens or early 20s.<sup>145</sup> Importantly, these leaders continued to rotate through various high-ranking positions in the post-conflict period, ensuring the organization's continuity.<sup>146</sup> Over time, their children, younger family members, and trusted neighbors also joined the CADs, reflecting an intergenerational and communal transmission of values and responsibilities that has both sustained and revitalized the organization's membership.

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<sup>144</sup> Interview with A. Ludeña.

<sup>145</sup> Interviews with Moisés Pérez, alias "*Comando Saccaco*," and Mauro Araujo, alias "*Comando Goliath*," two historical CAD leaders from Llochegua.

<sup>146</sup> Interviews revealed that Vicente Kitazono served as CAD President from 2000 to 2003; Pedro Lette was treasurer from 2007 to 2010 and Vice-president from 2010 to 2013; Grovi Soto succeeded him as Vice-president from 2014 to 2017; and Mauro Araujo rotated between commander and sub-commander from 2000 to 2010.

In the early 2000s, the post-conflict period in Llochegua saw the resurgence of various security threats, including *abigeato*, house burglaries, and street robberies. Faced with these challenges, the local community turned to the CADs for help. Community members would visit the homes of the organization's leaders or go directly to the CAD headquarters seeking assistance.<sup>147</sup> CADs' social legitimacy, earned through their protection of the community during the conflict, prompted local villagers to rely on them again. A local merchant, Rory Quintanilla, emphasized this sentiment by stating: "The CADs brought an end to the internal armed conflict. Now, we need them to address common delinquency (*delincuencia común*) and the everyday needs that arise in our community."<sup>148</sup> Nélica Aguirre, one of Llochegua's most prominent civil society leaders, reinforced this by saying, "The CADs are an organization created by the people and for the people. They always know how to serve us."<sup>149</sup> These testimonies highlight how militias' essential role in protecting rural citizens during the civil war earned them trust and a strong sense of belonging in the community, facilitating their repurposing for post-conflict governance roles.

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<sup>147</sup> Interview with Ronald Gamaniel, civil society leader from Llochegua.

<sup>148</sup> Interview with Rory Quintanilla, merchant from Llochegua.

<sup>149</sup> Interview with Nélica Aguirre, civil society leader from Llochegua. Mrs. Aguirre serves as the President of the *Asociación de Padres de Familia*, an NGO responsible for supervising education in the district.

## 5. Llochegua Today: The Evolving Roles of CAD in Post-Conflict Governance

### 5.1. Internal Structure and Day-to-Day and Functioning

In addition to the seven committee members or authorities on the board of directors (*junta directiva*)—the President, Vice-President, central commander, sub-commander, treasurer, secretary, and *vocal*—who serve in different organizational roles on a rotating basis every four years and work *ad honorem*,<sup>150</sup> the CADs in Llochegua include a specialized group of patrolmen known as “*tigres*” (tigers). This elite group is tasked with more demanding security responsibilities and dedicates itself full-time to the organization’s mission. The *tigres* play a pivotal role in executing the decisions made by the *junta directiva*. In recognition of their contributions, they receive a monthly salary ranging from 1,200 to 1,500 Peruvian soles.

At the base level, the CADs are supported by a broader group of patrolmen and women, referred to as “*patrulleros de base*” (base patrollers). These community members participate in a rotational system, taking turns to patrol and contribute to the CADs’ security operations, ensuring collective involvement and reinforcing the organization’s embeddedness within the local community.<sup>151</sup>

CADs’ internal organization in the present follows a well-defined hierarchical structure that can be traced back to the conflict period. In its inception in the early 1980s, the organization’s structure was relatively loose or improvised; however, over the years, it has evolved to adopt the following structure. At the apex is the central headquarters

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<sup>150</sup> Interview with Mario Salinas, President of Llochegua Central CAD.

<sup>151</sup> Interviews with V. Kitazono and A. Ludeña.

(see Figures 13 and 14 below), referred to as Llochegua “Central CAD,” which holds the highest authority in the district. Its primary responsibility is to oversee security and governance throughout the entire district, encompassing both the urban and rural areas—the rural areas comprise thirty-three *centros poblados*.<sup>152</sup>

Figure 13: Central CAD Headquarters



Figure 14: Internal Patio



Photos taken during my fieldwork in Llochegua (August 8, 2022). Constructed in 1987-1988 during the conflict period, the headquarters remain largely unchanged, with only minor refurbishments over time.

Within Llochegua’s Central CAD, there are three smaller subdivisions in the organizational structure. First, there is the “CAD Cercado,” tasked with ensuring security in Llochegua’s urban area, specifically in the neighborhoods surrounding the central square and municipal zone. For Llochegua’s rural areas, the central CAD further divides

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<sup>152</sup> Llochegua municipal archives. *Internal Records*, January 18, 2011.

into two zonal committees: “Zone Choymacota”<sup>153</sup> and “Zone Ipabamba”<sup>154</sup> (see Figures 15 and 16 below). Each of these zonal subdivisions bears the responsibility of providing security and local governance to a designated group of *centros poblados* under their jurisdiction. Lastly, at the most localized level, each of the thirty-three *centros poblados*—such as Buenos Aires, Gloria Amargura, and Villa Mejorada, etc.—establishes its own CAD. The *centro poblado*-based CADs, locally referred to as “mini-CADs,” are also entrusted with maintaining security and managing governance exclusively within their respective central areas and peasant communities,<sup>155</sup> operating at a smaller territorial scale.

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<sup>153</sup> *Centros poblados* under Zone Choymacota’s jurisdiction: Cercado Llohegua, Periavente Baja, Periavente Alta, Nueva Esperanza Alta, Chihuillo Bajo, San Antonio, Arequipa, Yaruri, Pulpito Baja, Pulpito Alta, Villa Mejorada, Matucana, Corazón Pata, Chongos, Carmen Pampa, Chola Valdivia. Source: Central CAD internal records. *Control de Asistencia de las Asambleas* (Attendance Control at Assemblies), 2018.

<sup>154</sup> *Centros poblados* under Zone Ipabamba’s jurisdiction: Puerto Amargura, Mayapo, Gloria Amargura, Buenos Aires, Nuevo Amanecer, Sol Naciente, Los Ángeles de Montevideo, Unión San Miguel, Nuevo Progreso, Junín Libertad, Rosario Santillana, Virgen Ccasa, Nuevo Horizonte, Santa Teresa, Pampas Vista Alegre, Ccerobamba, and Mohina Pampa. Source: Central CAD internal records. *Control de Asistencia de las Asambleas*, 2018.

<sup>155</sup> *Centros poblados* are the fifth layer of government in Peru, preceded by the national, departmental, provincial, and district levels. Some *centros poblados* have peasant communities or annexes, constituting a six layer of government, while others do not.

Figure 15: Zone Choymacota Office

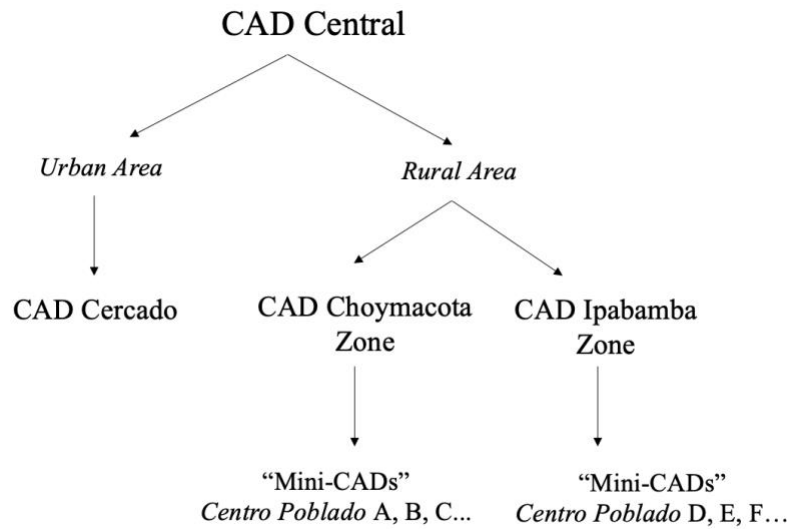


Figure 16: Zone Ipabamba Office



Photos taken during my fieldwork in Llochegua (August 21, 2022). These offices serve as the main administrative hubs for their respective zonal committees and are situated within the Central CAD headquarters.

Figure 17: CADs' Internal Organization in Llochegua



The central CAD exercises strict vertical authority through a strategy that combines incentives and penalties over its smaller subdivisions, particularly CADs operating in the *centros poblados*. For instance, it has the power to threaten confiscation of weapons or direct intervention if these subdivisions fail to actively engage in organizational activities, such as failing to make their monthly payments or participate in patrolling efforts. In the event of non-compliance, a fine of three hundred Peruvian *soles* can be imposed on “each base,” referring to CADs at the *centro poblado* level. Furthermore, the Central CAD can alert the Army Civil Affairs unit, which authorizes CADs’ tasks in the present,<sup>156</sup> to remove weapons or credentials from non-compliant groups or individuals. Conversely, when “mini-CADs” perform their duties effectively, the Central CAD may reward them with additional weapons, exemplifying a “carrots and sticks” approach. The initial allocation of weapons to CADs at each *centro poblado* is contingent on population size, typically ranging from three to seven weapons—these weapons consist of Mossberg and Winchester armaments.<sup>157</sup>

According to the Central CAD statute, a set of strict rules applies to the twenty-one stable directive members within the rural jurisdiction. This group comprises seven members from Zone Choymacota, seven from Zone Ipabamba, and seven top members of the Central CAD committee. The statute outlines a disciplinary framework with escalating consequences for infractions. For the first offense, which may involve missing a meeting or a patrol, the consequence is a warning. Upon a second offense, the penalty

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<sup>156</sup> The barracks # 42 located in Pichari, Cusco, holds authority over CADs in Llohegua.

<sup>157</sup> Central CAD internal records. *Asamblea Extraordinaria, Verificación del Mantenimiento de los Armamentos* (Extraordinary Assembly, Verification of Armaments Maintenance). Oct 16, 2021.

takes the form of three whippings or confinement in a dungeon, located in the CADs main headquarters. In the case of a third offense, a Dismissal Act is drafted, leading to the removal of the individual from their duties within the CADs. The CAD Cercado in Llohegua's urban area, as well as each "mini-CAD" at the *centro poblado* level, have their own internal statutes, which specify their respective sanctions and disciplinary procedures.<sup>158</sup>

## 5.2. Security Provision

The CADs in Llohegua perform a wide range of security tasks, primarily focused on addressing common security issues such as theft, domestic violence, and minor offenses. Their responses to these incidents are largely *ad hoc* and reactive, designed to provide immediate resolution to conflicts as they arise. In addition to these reactive measures, the CADs also conduct preemptive routine patrols, known locally as "*bajadas de base*," to oversee and maintain security throughout the district.

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<sup>158</sup> Interview with Herbert Graciano, Vice-president of Llohegua Central CAD. This account was corroborated in a separate interview with Arturo Ludeña, President of the Pichari district CAD.

Table 9: CADs' Post-War Security Tasks in Llohegua

| Empirical Claim                                          | Evidence/CPOs                                                                      | Data Sources                                                                                                                          |
|----------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>The CADs have reconverted to address common crime</i> | Evidence of CADs addressing cases of thefts, domestic violence, and minor offenses | -Interviews (CAD leaders; public officials; civil society leaders)<br>-Archives (Llohegua's municipal archives; CAD internal records) |
|                                                          | CADs carry out patrols and "bajadas de base" for common delinquency purposes       | -Interviews (CAD leaders; public officials; civil society leaders)<br>-Archives (Llohegua's municipal archives; CAD internal records) |

Initially, CADs informally addressed common crime on an *ad hoc* basis.

Testimonies from CAD members and public officials suggest that shortly after the end of the civil war, around 2004-2005, these new security tasks were formalized through official contracts with the local government, symbolizing the repurposing of the CADs organization.<sup>159</sup> These contracts have been renewed annually since then. In recognition of their contributions, the local government provides the organization with a monthly equivalent of 1,000 Peruvian *soles* in-kind, mainly consisting of food supplies like rice, milk, fruits, vegetables, potatoes, and chicken (depending on availability, the specific items may vary from month to month).<sup>160</sup> Archival records from the municipality indicate that such contracts have been consistently renewed since 2010.<sup>161</sup> One notable aspect of

<sup>159</sup> Interviews with Maribel Salinas, public official; P. Lette; and A. Gotzme la Fuente.

<sup>160</sup> *Convenio de Cooperación Interinstitucional entre la Municipalidad Distrital de Llohegua y el Comité de Autodefensa*. Llohegua's municipal archives (2010-2022).

<sup>161</sup> There are no municipal archives available before 2010. Due to a lack of storage space, the municipality disposed of records.

these agreements is that CADs are granted the authority to detain individuals suspected or confirmed to have committed a crime for a certain time before handing them to the police station.<sup>162</sup> As CADs' primary focus today revolves around addressing common security threats, a domain closely related to the police, they collaborate closely with the police force.

CADs' internal records (see Figure 18 below) offer invaluable insights into the common delinquency issues they address, including apprehending suspects involved in thefts, intervening in domestic violence cases, and handling minor offenses.<sup>163</sup> In the realm of thefts, motorcycle robbery and cattle rustling are frequent occurrences.<sup>164</sup> Cases of domestic violence are often linked to husbands' alcohol consumption and mistreatment of their wives.<sup>165</sup> Minor offenses typically involve children referred to as "spoiled" (*malcriados*) who display disrespect towards their parents,<sup>166</sup> as well as cases of marriage infidelity,<sup>167</sup> reflecting Llochegua's traditional values.

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<sup>162</sup> Evidence suggests that CADs occasionally exceed their authority with these "prisoners." Robert Moralez, the senior police authority in the district, expressed concern, stating, "They can be a bit too rough, almost reminiscent of an old-school approach as if they were still in the wartime era."

<sup>163</sup> This information, spanning from 2017 to 2022, has not been digitized or systematically organized, making it a prime example of an informal archive (Auerbach, 2018). The CAD keeps these records for internal documentation and does not intend to make them publicly accessible. I was granted access to these documents after building rapport with organization leaders over several weeks.

<sup>164</sup> Intervention Acts (*Actas de Intervención*), CAD internal records. Some specific dates when these thefts occurred include July 23, 2018; November 18, 2018; September 24, 2021; and January 13, 2022.

<sup>165</sup> *Actas de Intervención*. Dates of these registered incidents include November 28, 2021; April 29, 2022; and May 20, 2022, among others.

<sup>166</sup> Commitment Acts (*Actas de Compromiso*), CAD internal records. These incidents highlight CADs' authority within the district, as parents turn to them for guidance in raising their children.

<sup>167</sup> *Actas de Compromiso*. Dates include January 26 and 30, 2022; March 13, 2022; and August 5, 2022, among others.

Figure 18: Example of CADs' Internal Records

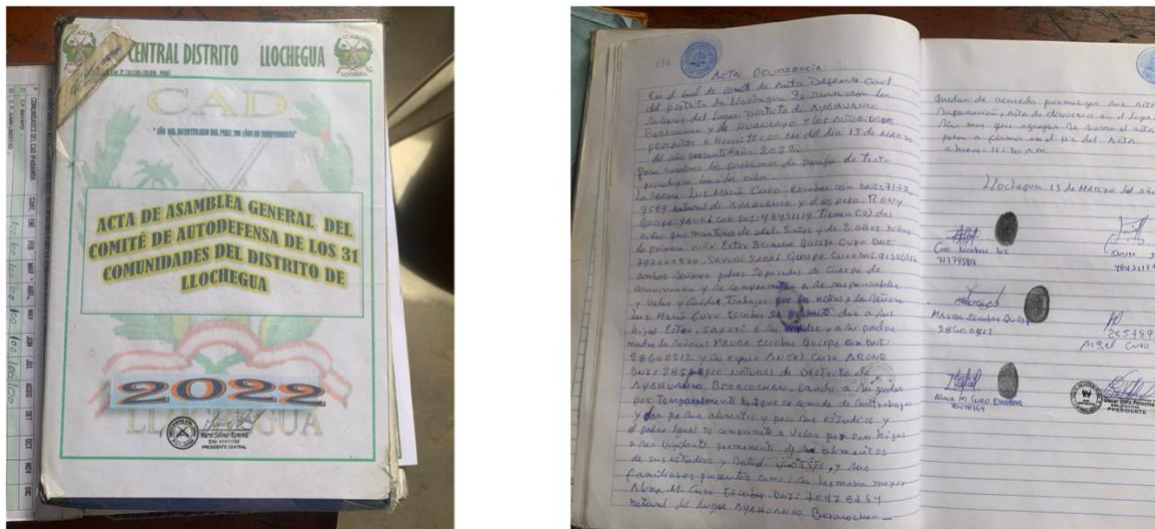


Photo taken during my fieldwork in Llohegua (August 22, 2022).

Until the establishment of a police station in 2017, CADs were the only security provider in Llohegua, compensating for the lack of a state security apparatus.<sup>168</sup> They remain the primary security provider, with residents holding a more favorable view of the CADs compared to the police.<sup>169</sup> They find CADs more efficient, responsive, and community-oriented. Indeed, many households display CADs' logo stickers and contact numbers for direct communication in case of emergencies (see Figure 19 below).<sup>170</sup> Honorato Cabezas, the local justice of peace (*juez de paz*), emphasized that CADs respond promptly at any hour, unlike the police, who are reluctant to venture out after 6

<sup>168</sup> Interview with César Acero, police officer from Llohegua.

<sup>169</sup> All public officials, civil society leaders, and key informants from Llohegua agreed on this point.

<sup>170</sup> Participant observation in the field (August 12, 2022). Lunch with the organization's leaders.

pm.<sup>171</sup> Police presence is confined to the urban area, leaving rural communities underserved.

Figure 19: CAD Logo Sticker: House Under Surveillance



Photo taken during my fieldwork in Llochegua (August 24, 2022).

In addition to reactively dealing with *ad hoc* security threats, proactive patrolling remains a fundamental aspect of the CAD organization.<sup>172</sup> However, compared to patrols during the conflict period, there have been some notorious changes, particularly in their frequency and nature. During the conflict, daily patrols chasing the insurgents were a standard practice, making CAD membership a full-time commitment. In contrast, in contemporary times, patrols are expected to occur once a week within each *centro poblado*, with each mini-CAD assuming responsibility for their respective areas. In

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<sup>171</sup> Interview with Honorato Cabezas, *juez de paz* (top judicial authority) of Llochegua.

<sup>172</sup> Interview with H. Graciano. Participant observation in the field (August 21, 2022). “Urgent” meeting at the Central CAD headquarters.

Llochegua's urban area, the CAD Cercado oversees the patrol duties. Llochegua's central CAD complements and supports these weekly patrols by visiting various *centros poblados* over the weeks. These patrols are typically conducted on foot, with CAD members walking along the perimeters of their respective *centros poblados* (or the urban area, in the case of the CAD Cercado). Their primary objective is, rather than chasing insurgents, to check on common criminals and supervising that no one is infringing the law. As articulated by Mario Salinas, the Central CAD President, the patrol's primary focus is to "*chapar a los chorros*" (apprehend criminals), thereby underscoring the organization's transition from chasing insurgent groups to addressing common criminal activities. These patrols are proactive, deterring criminal activities and reminding the local community that the CADs are actively monitoring and ensuring their safety.<sup>173</sup>

Weekly patrols are further complemented with the so-called "*bajadas de base*," meaning patrols covering all *centros poblados* two to three times a year. Herbert Graciano, the Vice-president of Llochegua's Central CAD, confirmed this practice, mentioning that, for example, in 2022, they planned to conduct these *bajadas de base* twice. These comprehensive patrols, originating from Llochegua's urban area with Central CAD and spanning across each of the district's *centros poblados* along the way, serve a dual purpose. First, they enhance security, but beyond that, they play a crucial role in ensuring that each *centro poblado*'s CADs adhere to their mandated activities, effectively checking on the organization's inner workings. In their specialized terminology, these visits or "*bajadas de base*" serve the vital function of identifying and sanctioning the so-called "*morosos*" (defaulters) within the organization. This term refers

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<sup>173</sup> Interviews with M. Salinas and H. Graciano, leaders of Llochegua Central CAD.

to CAD members who fail to comply with the organization's rules. According to Mr. Graciano, *morosos* are individuals—whether CAD leaders or lower-ranking members—who “relax,” treating their responsibilities like “a game,” crossing a line. These infractions typically manifest in failure to participate in required patrols or contribute their monthly payments or dues to the organization.

The *bajadas de base* are typically unannounced visits to the *centros poblados*, designed to prevent *morosos* from escaping or evading sanctions before they can be held accountable. These visits occur early, between 4 and 6 am, often on Sundays. Central CAD members arrive at the *centros poblados* and strategically position their “*tigres*” at critical locations in the terrain to prevent the *morosos* from fleeing. Highlighting the pivotal role of social order instilled by the CAD, upon their arrival at a *centro poblado*, they shout, “*zafarrancho! zafarrancho!*”—a colloquial expression to alert community members that they have arrived. Immediately, people leave their homes and assemble in a structured manner, forming a military-like formation.<sup>174</sup>

Notably, gender roles in this rural context are clearly defined, with women taking on the role of preparing a communal meal in a large pot as a welcoming gesture to the Central CAD members. These members often arrive hungry and cold after waking up early to reach their destination before sunrise. Central CAD leaders convene with the mini-CAD leaders from the *centro poblado*, either at the mini-CADs' base, typically a small rustic wooden house, or directly in the *centro poblado*'s central square if no dedicated base exists. During these meetings, the CAD leaders at the *centro poblado*

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<sup>174</sup> Interview with H. Graciano.

provide updates on their activities, share the challenges they have recently encountered, and report on the identities of *morosos*, among other relevant information.<sup>175</sup> As stated in the Central CAD internal records, sanctions against *morosos* usually involve mandatory patrolling duties lasting twelve days, covering each *centro poblado* within the district.<sup>176</sup>

In many instances, Central CAD members are required to spend the night at the *centros poblados*, using mattresses laid on the floor at the mini-CADs' base or in the homes of community members. Afterward, they continue with the *bajada de base* in other communities for an additional two or three days. Mario Salinas, President of Llochegua's central CAD, succinctly conveyed the essence of the *bajada de base* experience: "We are one with the local community."<sup>177</sup>

### 5.3. Governance Roles Beyond Security

The CADs in Llochegua play a multifaceted role in rural governance, extending beyond security provision to support government mechanisms and civil society development. Their roles include: i) participating in policy design and implementation, particularly in socio-development and symbolic projects; ii) engaging in claim-making and political brokering in *centros poblados* to secure resources for the community; iii) collaborating with local judicial authorities to mediate disputes and maintain order; iv) organizing fundraisers (*colectas populares*) to support community members; v) arranging

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<sup>175</sup> Central CAD internal records. *Acta de Entrega de 'Faltones'* (Act of Defaulters). November 29, 2018.

<sup>176</sup> Central CAD internal records. *Acta para Bajada de Bases* (Act for *Bajada de Bases*). August 29, 2021.

<sup>177</sup> Interview with M. Salinas.

social events, such as CAD anniversaries, to strengthen community ties; vi) cooperating with civil society organizations to address shared challenges; and vii) managing health crises like Covid-19 through resource coordination and community support. These activities demonstrate the CADs' evolution into key governance actors, complementing and even substituting local government efforts in critical areas.

Table 10: CADs' Multifaceted Governance Roles in Llochegua

| Empirical Claim                                                                                          | Evidence/CPOs                                                                                                                               | Data Sources                                                                                                               |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>The CADs complement and even substitute the local government by assuming various governance roles</i> | Participation in policy design and implementation (e.g., socio-development and symbolic projects)                                           | -Interviews (CAD leaders; public officials; civil society leaders)<br>-Archives (Municipal archives)                       |
|                                                                                                          | Claim-making and political brokering in <i>centros poblados</i>                                                                             | -Interviews (CAD leaders; public officials; civil society leaders)<br>-Archives (Municipal archives; CAD internal records) |
|                                                                                                          | Collaboration with judicial authorities (e.g., trial notifications delivery, control inspections, and “ <i>levantamientos de cadaver</i> ”) | -Interviews (CAD leaders; public officials; civil society leaders)<br>-Archives (CAD internal records)                     |
|                                                                                                          | Organizing fundraisers (“ <i>colectas populares</i> ”) for neighbors in need                                                                | -Interviews (CAD leaders; public officials; civil society leaders)<br>-Archives (Municipal archives; CAD internal records) |
|                                                                                                          | Arranging social and communal events (e.g., CADs' anniversary)                                                                              | -Interviews (CAD leaders; public officials; civil society leaders)<br>-Archives (Municipal archives; CAD internal records) |
|                                                                                                          | Collaboration with civil society organizations (e.g., <i>Club de Madres</i> )                                                               | -Interviews (CAD leaders; public officials; civil society leaders)<br>-Archives (Municipal archives; CAD internal records) |
|                                                                                                          | Responding to the challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic                                                                                       | -Interviews<br>-Archives (Municipal archives; CADs internal records)                                                       |

Llohegua's municipal archives offer invaluable insights into the CADs' active engagement in governance. These records, spanning from 2010 to 2022, reveal a consistent pattern of CADs participating in decision-making and policy implementation within the district.<sup>178</sup> Adrián Gotzme la Fuente, who served as the Llohegua's mayor from 2019 to 2022, emphasized the breadth of their involvement, noting, "CADs are involved not only in security, but also in social, development, and symbolic projects." The Central CAD and CAD Cercado, in particular, play prominent roles alongside the district mayor, governor, justice of peace, and presidents of prominent civil society organizations such as the Mothers Club (*Club de Madres*) and the Glass of Milk Program (*Programa Vaso de Leche*). Together, these actors constitute the district's "leadership circle," a collective that shapes and implements political decisions at the local level.

Mayors in Llohegua have frequently convened the CADs at the municipality's auditorium to spearhead social initiatives, such as organizing street cleaning campaigns aimed at fostering a "hygienic culture" within the community.<sup>179</sup> Additionally, CADs actively participate in workshops addressing pressing development issues, including traffic safety and child malnutrition.<sup>180</sup> Notably, they played a pivotal role in designing and enforcing a traffic plan to prevent underage children from driving motorcycle taxis (*mototaxis*),<sup>181</sup> among other responsibilities.

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<sup>178</sup> Prior to 2010, there are no municipal archives available. Due to a lack of storage space, the municipality disposed of records, either by discarding them or through incineration.

<sup>179</sup> Llohegua's municipal archives. *Oficios Múltiples* (Multiple Correspondence). Multi-sectoral meeting, July 12, 2010; September 14, 2012; December 16, 2013; and October 24, 2016, among others.

<sup>180</sup> Ibidem, June 27 and July 18, 2013.

<sup>181</sup> Ibidem, *Oficio Simple* (Single Correspondence). March 29, 2010.

Beyond these practical initiatives, CADs in Llochegua play a significant governance role in symbolic governance that shape the cultural and civic life of the community. For instance, CAD members served as part of the jury, alongside other local authorities, to select the logo that would officially represent Llochegua as a district.<sup>182</sup> This historic decision-making process, documented in municipal meetings held in 2010—one year before Llochegua officially became a district—culminated in the adoption of the slogan “*cuna de la pacificación*” (literally, “cradle of pacification”). This slogan underscores Llochegua’s critical role, particularly that of the CADs, in ending the civil war and restoring peace in the district. Since then, CADs have been consistently invited to participate in the annual civic parade commemorating Llochegua’s anniversary as a district.<sup>183</sup> In 2012, they also served as members of the jury responsible for selecting Llochegua’s anthem,<sup>184</sup> further solidifying their involvement in shaping the district’s cultural identity and heritage.

At the *centro poblado* level, the subnational branches of the organization, known as “mini-CADs,” take on an equally, if not more, critical governance roles. In *centros poblados*, the mini-CADs are, together with the lieutenant governor (*teniente gobernador*), the most prominent political authority. This prominence is evident in the formal communication channels between *centros poblados* and Llochegua’s municipality, where the CADs’ stamp and signature consistently appear in official correspondence. As political brokers, the *centro poblado* CADs represent their local

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<sup>182</sup> Ibidem, *Oficio Multiple* (Multiple Correspondence) 53, September 2, 2010.

<sup>183</sup> Ibidem, *Oficio Multiple* (Multiple Correspondence) 69 and 281 (respectively, September 2, 2012; September 2, 2013).

<sup>184</sup> Ibidem, *Resolución de Alcaldía* (Mayoral Resolution) 237, October 1, 2012.

communities in claim-making disputes with the district municipality. To provide a few examples, the CADs from the *centro poblado* Periavente Baja advocated for a machine to pave the roads and prevent flooding;<sup>185</sup> the CADs from Villa Mejorada requested water tubes to repair the community's water and drainage systems;<sup>186</sup> and the CADs from Puerto Amargura sought assistance from Llochegua's mayor to address issues of usurpation of communal agricultural land.<sup>187</sup>

Another critical facet of CADs' governance functions is their close collaboration with Llochegua's top judicial authority, the justice of peace (*juez de paz*). The CADs play a pivotal role in facilitating the delivery of judicial notifications to individuals summoned for local trials within the district. As Honorato Cabezas, Llochegua's *juez de paz*, explained, "When we need to notify someone, we draft the notification, and the CADs deliver it to the intended recipient." He elaborated further on the process:

"Imagine one of the parties approaches me and says, 'Mr. Judge, I no longer want to live with my partner. I want a separation, but my partner is unwilling to appear.' In such cases, I prepare a judicial notice, schedule an appointment, and call the CADs to facilitate the delivery to the other party."<sup>188</sup>

In essence, the CADs act as intermediaries, ensuring the timely and accurate delivery of legal documents. They personally deliver the notifications, collect signatures to confirm receipt, and return the completed documents to the magistrate's court. In a context where state resources for the local justice system are severely limited, the CADs

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<sup>185</sup> Ibidem, *Petición a la Municipalidad* (Petition to the Municipality). March 5, 2012.

<sup>186</sup> Ibidem, March 9, 2012.

<sup>187</sup> Ibidem, December 17, 2012.

<sup>188</sup> Interview with H. Cabezas.

step in to bridge this gap, providing essential mobility infrastructure to ensure the functioning of the legal system.

The close relationship between the CADs and the justice of peace extends beyond the delivery of trial notifications. CADs also participate in control inspections, which fall under the jurisdiction of the local justice system. These inspections encompass a variety of commercial and agricultural entities, including businesses, restaurants, farming properties, and reforestation projects. For example, when the justice of the peace needs to inspect a farming property to ensure compliance with regulations,<sup>189</sup> he bypasses the police and directly coordinates with the Central CAD President through phone calls or WhatsApp. This process highlights the level of trust and reliance placed on the CADs. These inspections, typically informal and without paperwork, involve the justice of the peace, a representative from the Ministry of Agriculture in the municipality, and the CAD President, working together to ensure compliance with local protocols.

Similarly, the local judge places greater trust in the CADs than in the police for the delicate task of *levantamientos de cadáver*, which involves the removal of deceased individuals from private residences or public areas. For instance, in the event of a fatality caused by a traffic accident, the district prosecutor typically instructs the justice of the peace to contact the police for assistance. However, the police often fails to respond promptly, leading the local judge to rely on the CADs instead. Mr. Cabezas, the district's justice of the peace, highlighted this disparity, stating, "The police do not extend their

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<sup>189</sup> Examples of such protocols include the implementation of security measures in the event of a wildfire, among others. Interviews with Mario Cubas and Jhoselin Ayala, agricultural engineers from Llochegua within the economic development office (public officials).

reach to the *centros poblados*; their operational scope is confined to Llohegua's urban center." Additionally, the police operate on fixed schedules, primarily during daytime hours, which limits their availability for emergencies. In contrast, CADs offer a broader geographical reach and greater flexibility, making them far more responsive to sensitive situations like *levantamientos de cadáver*.<sup>190</sup>

In addition to their close collaboration with the local justice system, the *comités de autodefensa* organize fundraising events (*colectas populares*) to aid community members in need. Rory Quintanilla, a local merchant from the district, explained that when a neighbor faces severe health issues, CADs often take the lead in fundraising efforts to complement state and NGO social programs. CAD members go door to door, collecting contributions to help cover the cost of essential medications. In addition to monetary aid, they frequently gather provisions such as food and basic household items to assist the district's most vulnerable residents, particularly those who have recently lost their jobs or are facing acute financial hardship.<sup>191</sup> While these acts of community support are regular, they are typically informal and undocumented. However, CADs' internal records occasionally provide glimpses into the nature of their contributions. For example, on July 22, 2018, the Central CAD officially recorded a donation of 200 Peruvian *soles* to assist Raúl Cárdenas, alias "*El Loco*," a historic CAD leader battling a severe illness. To mobilize these funds, the Central CAD organized a *colecta popular* across each *centro poblado*.<sup>192</sup>

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<sup>190</sup> Interview with H. Cabezas.

<sup>191</sup> Interview with M. Salinas.

<sup>192</sup> Central CAD internal records. *Acta de Reunión de las Autoridades* (Minutes of Authorities' Meeting), July 22, 2018.

CADs contribute to the community's social fabric not only through fundraising and individual assistance but also by organizing social and communal events. Examples include soccer tournaments and civic parades to commemorate the organization's anniversary (see Figures 20 and 21 below). Every year, on the first weekend of August, the entire Llohegua community gathers in the central square to participate in these festivities.<sup>193</sup> The celebrations begin on Saturday with an all-day soccer tournament, where CADs from each *centro poblado* compete in the "inter-community sports tournament." While the men take to the field, women prepare a communal *pollada*—a traditional chicken dish—cooked in massive pots. Families and children cheer from the sidelines, exemplifying the essence of community building.<sup>194</sup>

Celebrations extend into Sunday with a traditional morning parade. The day begins with the singing of the national anthem and the ceremonial hoisting of the Peruvian flag, followed by speeches from both the Central CAD President and the district mayor. These speeches serve a dual purpose. First, they reinforce the communal memory of the CADs' "glorious past," passing down their historical role in defeating the Shining Path to younger generations. Second, they emphasize CADs' enduring importance to the community, highlighting their ongoing contributions to security and governance. In unison with the community, these speeches conclude with three resounding cheers, first in Quechua and then in Spanish: "Long live the self-defense committee!" "Long live Llohegua!" "Long live Peru!"<sup>195</sup>

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<sup>193</sup> Archival records from the municipality show that the parade has occurred uninterrupted since 2010.

<sup>194</sup> Participant observation in the field. August 6, 2022.

<sup>195</sup> Participant observation in the field. August 7, 2022.

The Central CAD leads the parade following the speeches, with *centro poblado* CADs marching behind them. In a dramatic display, they reenact the capture and subduing of insurgents, symbolizing their pivotal role during the civil war and commemorating their contributions to the community's history. Each community proudly showcases its unique attire, weaponry (ranging from real to toy), and flags bearing the CAD insignia, symbolizing their identity and sense of belonging (see Figure 22 below).<sup>196</sup> The parade culminates in the awarding of prizes to the most outstanding CADs. According to municipal records, the winning *centro poblado* CAD is typically rewarded with a giant pig valued at 900 Peruvian soles (see Figure 23 below), while the second-place team receives a sheep. Smaller prizes, such as a sack of rice, are distributed to the third and fourth-place teams, reinforcing the spirit of friendly competition and community pride.

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<sup>196</sup> Participant observation in the field. August 7, 2022.

Figure 20: CAD Soccer Tournament



Photo taken during my fieldwork in Llohegua (August 6, 2022)

Figure 21: People Waiting for the Parade to Start



Photo taken during my fieldwork in Llohegua (August 7, 2022).

Figure 22: San Antonio's *Centro Poblado* CADs During the Parade



Photo taken during my fieldwork in Llochegua (August 7, 2022).

Figure 23: Winning Prize



Photo taken during my fieldwork in Llochegua (August 7, 2022).

Another vital governance role that the *comités de autodefensa* take on is supporting the operations of other civil society organizations within the district. In an

impoverished rural setting with limited state resources, organizations like the “Mothers’ Club” (*Club de Madres*) or the “Parent Association” (*Asociación de Padres de Familia*) frequently depend on the CADs to sustain their activities. Rebecca Paredes, the President of the *Club de Madres* in Llohegua, highlighted this enduring partnership, stating, “Our organization has a long-established and strong partnership with the CADs; we turn to them whenever we face difficulties because they provide solutions.” For instance, when the *Club de Madres* delivers food to the soup kitchens (*comedores populares*) it manages weekly, Mrs. Paredes contacts the Central CAD President to request assistance in unloading the food from trucks. Furthermore, since the *Club de Madres* also supports abused children suffering from domestic violence, the CADs inform Mrs. Paredes when they handle such cases. Unfortunately, Mrs. Paredes also noted that when food supplies are stolen, she directly relies on the CADs to address the issue.

CADs also collaborate closely with the Parent Association, a civil organization responsible for overseeing kindergarten, primary, and secondary education in the district. Nélida Aguirre, the President of the Parent Association, shared several examples of their cooperation. CADs provide security during school events, both within and outside school premises, ensuring the safety of students and staff. Every morning, they place a rope across the street to prevent motorcycles and cars from passing through as children enter the Pedro Ruiz Gallo school, located near the Central CAD headquarters. This precaution is especially critical given the school’s location on a sloped street. Furthermore, in cases where students leave the school grounds without permission, teachers alert Mrs. Aguirre, who contacts the CADs to locate the children and ensure their safety. Additionally, CADs

safeguard the school on weekends, when classes are not in session, preventing unauthorized access to the premises.<sup>197</sup>

Last but not least, the CAD organization complemented the Llochegua government in addressing the significant challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic. Testimonies from civil society leaders and local public officials highlighted the essential governance functions undertaken by the CADs, particularly in enforcing quarantines in *centros poblados* where state presence is minimal. During the initial months of the pandemic, the CADs controlled vehicular movement at all entry and exit points in the district, ensuring compliance with public health measures. Moreover, they collaborated with the municipality to distribute food and medical supplies directly to residents' homes. Rebecca Paredes, President of the *Club de Madres*, stated on this point: "CAD members did not rest during the Covid-19 crisis; they were either in the streets, ensuring compliance with quarantines, or at their headquarters, preparing food to deliver."<sup>198</sup> Adrián Gotzme la Fuente, the district's former mayor (2019-2022), also emphasized CADs' effectiveness in containing the virus, praising their commitment during this crisis.<sup>199</sup>

## 6. Conclusion

This chapter has examined the post-conflict trajectories of rural militias, using empirical evidence from two districts—Los Morochucos and Llochegua—within the

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<sup>197</sup> Interview with N. Aguirre.

<sup>198</sup> Interview with R. Paredes.

<sup>199</sup> Interview with A. Gotzme la Fuente.

department of Ayacucho, Peru. The post-conflict disbandment of militias in Los Morochucos can be explained by their wartime interactions with the military and the local community. These militias lacked operational autonomy and, acting under military orders, preyed on the very communities in which they operated. Military officers coerced militia members into repressing civilians, thus undermining their legitimacy in the eyes of the local population. As a result, neither the militia members nor the community sought to repurpose these organizations after the civil war ended, leading to their eventual disbandment.

In stark contrast, Llohegua militias during the civil war maintained significant autonomy from the military while remaining deeply embedded within their local communities. This dual characteristic—autonomy from the Armed Forces and strong community ties—was key to their survival and evolving roles in strengthening post-conflict rural governance. Strong communal ties provided mechanisms of social accountability and control at the local level, which constrained militias' predatory behavior and fostered their protective actions within the community. Crucially, their independence from military directives prevented the repression of the local community, unlike in the case of Los Morochucos, where military-aligned militias carried out such oppressive actions. Militias' protective behavior towards the community earned them substantial social legitimacy in Llohegua, facilitating their institutionalization and prompting both the community and militia members themselves to recognize the organization as valuable beyond its original purpose. Over time, this legitimacy translated into the adaptation of militias to bolster rural governance in the post-conflict era.

In Llochegua, the repurposing of militias for governance encompassed a diverse and evolving set of roles. These included not only the provision of security—shifting from combatting insurgent violence to addressing common delinquency—but also stepping in to complement and even substitute the government in areas with weak state presence. Militias contributions to governance ranged from designing and implementing public policies to collaborating with judicial authorities and organizing community fundraisers, among many other activities. By adapting to these roles, militias in Llochegua demonstrated their capacity to function as key actors in post-conflict rural governance.

To enhance both the theory's internal and external validity, the next chapter introduces an additional case: Luricocha district. This case serves two main purposes. First, it bolsters the external validity of the first part of the theory (laid out in Chapter 2), showing that the patterns of militia formation and mobilization observed in Llochegua also took place in another disputed area, Luricocha. Second, it reinforces the internal validity of the second part of the theory by highlighting the crucial role of militia-military and militia-community relationships in shaping long-term militia pathways. In doing so, it diminishes the significance of access to economic resources as a potential confounding factor.

## Chapter 6

### Strengthening the Argument: Luricocha as a Shadow Case

#### 1. Introduction

This chapter introduces a third case into the dissertation: the district of *Luricocha*,<sup>200</sup> also located in Peru's Ayacucho department. Unlike Los Morochucos and Llohegua, which serve as the primary cases to test the dissertation's central propositions regarding militia formation and post-conflict trajectories, Luricocha plays a different yet significant role. Rather than being a primary case, Luricocha functions as a "shadow case study" (Soifer 2020), allowing for additional empirical leverage to assess the generalizability and causal mechanisms of my argument. This chapter shows how Luricocha contributes to the dissertation's arguments in two key ways.

First, Luricocha supports the first part of the theory on militia formation by extending its *external validity*. If my theoretical framework holds, we should observe similar processes of militia emergence in other disputed areas beyond Llohegua. Luricocha provides precisely such a test. As a disputed area during Peru's civil war, Luricocha mirrors the process of militia origins seen in Llohegua. This process unfolded in a remarkably similar manner, providing additional evidence that these patterns are not

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<sup>200</sup> Luricocha, one of the twelve districts of the Huanta province within Ayacucho department, lies approximately five kilometers from Huanta's capital and primary urban center. The district's demographic composition is characterized by a significant Quechua ethnic presence, constituting around 66% of the population. Moreover, 61% of the district's inhabitants reside in rural areas. According to the 2017 Peruvian census (INEI 2018), the district is home to 5,490 residents, distributed across Luricocha's urban center and twenty-eight peasant communities.

unique to Llochegua. By showing that this phenomenon also occurred in another disputed area, the case of Luricocha reinforces the credibility of the theory beyond a single-case analysis.

Second, beyond its role in testing militia formation, Luricocha strengthens the *internal validity* of my theoretical framework on militias' post-conflict trajectories by emphasizing the pivotal role of militia-military and militia-community relationships during civil war. As in Llochegua, militia autonomy from the military and strong community ties in Luricocha were crucial for their post-conflict survival and repurposing for security and governance, reinforcing the broader significance of these wartime relationships in shaping long-term militia outcomes. At the same time, Luricocha challenges the alternative explanation that economic factors tied to geography drive militia post-conflict persistence. Despite being in the economically backward highlands—like Los Morochucos—Luricocha's militias endured, further underscoring the analytical leverage of my framework. If economic resources were the primary determinant of militia persistence post-conflict, Luricocha should have followed the same trajectory as Los Morochucos—yet it did not.

Figure 24: Welcome to Luricocha



Photo taken during my fieldwork in Luricocha (July 18, 2022). The road was blocked due to a transport workers' strike (*paro de transportistas*) protesting the rise in gas prices.

## **2. Militia Formation in Disputed Areas: Extending External Validity with Luricocha**

### *2.1. A Disputed Territory: Luricocha at the Onset of the Civil War*

Like Llochegua, Luricocha became a contested battlefield as the civil war spread across the Peruvian countryside. Located in the Ayacucho department—the epicenter of violence—Luricocha exhibited the characteristic features of a disputed wartime zone. The community was deeply divided, with loyalties split between the Peruvian state and the Shining Path insurgents. By the mid-1970s, years before armed conflict officially began, Shining Path cadres were already active in Luricocha, recruiting young volunteers.

Among them was “Los Durán,” a prominent *senderista* family linked to the group’s leadership. Between 1977 and 1978, they held regular meetings at *Hacienda de Iribamba*, an estate owned by Augusta la Torre’s family. As the wife of Shining Path leader Abimael Guzmán, La Torre played a key role in the group’s expansion. When the civil war started in 1980, local testimonies suggest that Luricocha’s roughly 600 families were evenly divided between support for the Shining Path and opposition to it.<sup>201</sup>

Luricocha soon became trapped in a prolonged struggle for territorial control. Between 1980 and 1982, the Shining Path launched nighttime ambushes targeting state institutions, including the municipality, police station, and “*Casa Hogar*”—a church-run administrative office—to erode the government’s presence. As the two factions vied for dominance, some villagers weaponized these tensions for personal gain. In land disputes, for instance, one individual might report their rival as a *senderista* to the police or, conversely, accuse them of being an *anti-senderista* to the Shining Path. Such allegations often provoked violent retaliations, creating a climate of mistrust and fear. Under the uncertainty of living between “two chiefs in town,” the local community—much like in Llohegua—faced strong incentives to form grassroots militias.

## 2.2. *The Rise and Development of Grassroots Militias*

In 1984, three local leaders—Antonio Gavilán, Alejandro Cárdenas, and Freddy De la Cruz—organized Luricocha’s first militia groups. De la Cruz recalled, “We

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<sup>201</sup> Interview with Manuel León (pseudonym), a former militia leader from Luricocha. Interview with Yuri Barboza, a civil society leader from the district.

knocked on the doors of neighbors, cousins, and trusted family members to help us ‘raise the alarm’ when the police or the *senderistas* came for us.” Initially known as “*ronderos*” for patrolling (*rondar*) the district’s perimeter, the militia began with 12 to 15 members focused on preventing ambushes. Additionally, grassroots militias in Luricocha built hidden basements to help locals evade detection by police or the Shining Path. Rodrigo Palomino, a former district mayor, recalled that militia members also guided residents to remote mountain routes and provided advice on crafting improvised weapons for self-defense.<sup>202</sup>

As in Llochegua, militias in Luricocha emerged not only to combat the Shining Path but also to protect the community from state security forces, particularly the police. What is more, not only do the initial community efforts to build self-defense organizations mirror each other, but also the subsequent stages of militia development, providing strong evidence of recurring patterns in militia origins across disputed areas. In 1986, frustrated by the police’s ineffectiveness in countering the insurgents, the Armed Forces entered Luricocha as part of a counterinsurgency campaign under Alan García’s administration (1985–1990).<sup>203</sup> Upon arrival, Army leaders discovered that militias were already active. Recognizing this existing structure, they convened with militia leaders to propose a collaboration against the Shining Path. This alliance provided the Army with invaluable insights into the challenging terrain and insurgent strategy, knowledge shared by local militia members. In turn, the militias avoided being targeted by the military and

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<sup>202</sup> Interview with Rodrigo Palomino, a former district mayor from Luricocha (1999-2002).

<sup>203</sup> *Documento de Trabajo*, José María Arguedas’ public fond (*Casa Matteo Ricci*).

secured additional resources, strengthening their organization and enhancing their influence within the district.<sup>204</sup>

### *2.3. Comparing Patterns: Luricocha and Llohegua*

In sum, despite some differences between the two cases—such as the Army’s early presence in Llohegua versus its later arrival in Luricocha, or the militias in Llohegua actively seeking Army support versus the Army initiating collaboration in Luricocha—the broader patterns of militia formation remain consistent in both disputed areas. In both districts, grassroots militias emerged organically in response to the existential threat posed by the dual pressures of insurgent violence and abusive state institutions. Under the conditions of fractured sovereignty and intense uncertainty—what villagers often described as being “between two fires”—community members in both places responded by creating bottom-up defense groups designed to protect themselves and preserve some form of local order.

## **3. Reinforcing Internal Validity: Militia Post-Conflict Paths in Luricocha**

### *3.1. Methodological Rationale*

One key challenge for the second part of my theory, which examines the diverse trajectories of militias after civil war termination, is the possibility that economic factors, particularly access to financial resources driven by geography, are the primary “causal

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<sup>204</sup> Interview with Freddy “Bigotes” De la Cruz, a former CAD leader from Luricocha.

force” behind post-conflict militia outcomes, rather than their wartime relationships with the military and the community. While the dissertation’s two primary cases, Los Morochucos and Llochegua, share several relevant characteristics—minimal state presence, timing and intensity of violence, and a common ethnic and cultural background (CVR 2003b)—my comparative historical analysis, like all observational studies, cannot fully control for confounding factors. Put differently, not every aspect of these cases is held constant except for the critical wartime relationships of interest; therefore, factors beyond militia-military and militia-community relations may also shape militias’ post-conflict trajectories. This raises the question: could the post-conflict trajectories of militias be primarily driven by economic factors rather than by their wartime relationships?

An important distinction between these two cases is their economic geography: Los Morochucos, located in Ayacucho’s highlands, has historically been more economically marginalized, while Llochegua, situated in the coca-producing jungle region, benefits from a more dynamic economy. Therefore, a plausible alternative explanation for my argument is that the *comités de autodefensa* disbanded in Los Morochucos simply because they lacked the economic resources to sustain the organization, whereas in Llochegua, access to financial resources allowed them to persist.

However, militias in both Los Morochucos and Llochegua have operated—and in Llochegua, continue to operate—under highly precarious economic conditions, relying on minimal funds or *ad honorem* work (it is not as if militias in Llochegua are rich!). Moreover, even if geographic variation influences militias’ durability in Llochegua, it

fails to account for the *nature* of this durability, i.e., why militias transformed into governance-enhancing actors rather than destabilizing post-conflict governance.

To further strengthen my counterarguments, I introduce Luricocha as an additional case. Like Los Morochucos, Luricocha is also located in the Ayacucho highlands—not the jungle area—yet militias survived after the conflict and enhanced rural governance, despite operating with minimal financial resources. Consequently, this case provides crucial evidence against the argument that economic factors driven by geography explain militias' post-conflict paths. If economic geography was the decisive factor, we would expect Luricocha militias to have disbanded, mirroring Los Morochucos, rather than persisting like those in Llohegua—but this is *not* what we observe.

In the following subsections, I show that militia-military and militia-community relations in Luricocha closely resembled those in Llohegua, further reinforcing their role as key drivers of the post-conflict outcome of militias strengthening governance.

### *3.2. Collaboration without Subjugation: Militia-Military Relations in Luricocha*

The relationship between militias and the military in Luricocha followed a pattern similar to that of Llohegua but differed significantly from Los Morochucos in two crucial ways. First, militias in Luricocha emerged organically from within the community rather than being imposed “from above” by the Armed Forces, as was the case in LM. When the Army entered Luricocha in 1986 as part of its counterinsurgency campaign against the Shining Path, it did not establish militias from scratch. Instead, it leveraged

the preexisting grassroots militias, recognizing their organizational structure and local knowledge as assets in combating insurgents.<sup>205</sup> Second, despite their alliance with the military, the militias retained operational autonomy akin to those in Llochegua. Rather than imposing strict oversight, the Army integrated militias into its counterinsurgency strategy while allowing them to remain “self-governed.”

For militia leaders, forming an alliance with the Army was primarily a survival strategy—shielding them from military targeting while securing material and logistical support. Freddy De la Cruz, one of Luricocha’s historical militia leaders, recalled that initial interactions with the military occurred informally on the streets of Luricocha. The Army first approached militia leaders, requesting them to later present themselves at the nearby Huanta district headquarters to formalize the alliance. For the militias, collaboration was not a matter of ideological alignment but a pragmatic decision, dictated by the logic of war: “If you cannot beat the enemy, join them.” As Mr. De la Cruz recounted, “When the Army entered, we were terrified. We had already seen what the police could do to our community. The Army was more organized and lethal; we wouldn’t have been able to counter them.”<sup>206</sup>

For the Armed Forces, the strategic value of the existing militias lay in their embeddedness within the community and their ability to operate in rural terrain. At a meeting in Huanta’s barracks, military officials—led by commander Hurtado Robles and his trusted technician, known as “Centurión”—sought to integrate the militias into

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<sup>205</sup> Interview with Captain Jorge Rivera, military officer from Huanta during and after the conflict.

<sup>206</sup> Interview with F. De la Cruz.

counterinsurgency efforts. The Army tasked militia leaders with expanding their presence into unorganized areas and maintaining a detailed registry of local residents and militia members—essentially, an internal census—used to track patrol participants and monitor community involvement.<sup>207</sup>

By 1987, Luricocha’s urban center militia functioned as the district’s central militia organization, coordinating with smaller units across peasant communities. While militias reported to the Army for coordination purposes when conducting patrols, they retained significant operational autonomy. According to multiple militia leaders, joint operations with the Army were rare and only occurred when the location of a Shining Path base was known in advance. Otherwise, militias conducted patrols independently, making tactical decisions without military oversight.<sup>208</sup>

Internal militia meetings further reinforced this autonomy. Each week, Luricocha’s central CAD convened representatives from “mini-CADs” and smaller branches of the organization based in *centros poblados* and peasant communities. These gatherings, held either at the municipal building or a communal space (see Figure 25 below), served as forums for planning operations, addressing logistical challenges, and exchanging intelligence. Discussions often included the coordination of night patrols, the allocation of limited ammunition, and the identification of suspected insurgent activity across different communities. Mario Arroyo, a former militia leader, recalled, “It was us—the militia members—who came together to discuss what was best for the well-being

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<sup>207</sup> Interview with M. León (pseudonym).

<sup>208</sup> Interview with Esteban Huamán, Mario Arroyo, and F. De la Cruz, former militia leaders from Luricocha during the internal armed conflict.

of Luricocha. The military provided some weapons, but we tracked down the *senderistas* and restored peace.”<sup>209</sup>

Figure 25: Communal Space Used for CAD Meetings During the Conflict



Photo taken during my fieldwork in Luricocha (July 1, 2022).

To sum up, militia-military relations during the conflict in Luricocha followed the same logic as in Llohegua. Initially formed by the community to counter both insurgent and state violence, Luricocha militias later aligned with the military to combat the Shining Path. However, this alliance did not place the militias under direct Army control. Instead, the *comités de autodefensa* retained significant autonomy, shaping their own organizational structure and decision-making processes. While the Army provided weapons and logistical support, it did not dictate militia operations on the ground.

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<sup>209</sup> Interview with M. Arroyo.

### 3.3. Militia-Community Relations: Strong Ties to Ensure Protection

Reflecting militia-community relations in Llohegua during the civil war, the *comités de autodefensa* in Luricocha were deeply embedded in the local community. Combined with their autonomy from the military, this embeddedness fostered protective behavior toward the very community they emerged to defend. From their inception, these self-defense groups were formed by trusted neighbors in a small scale, close-knit community that valued mutual protection. As described by Spires (2011: 11), grassroots organizations “are providing a much-needed service to people like themselves.”

This close connection between Luricocha’s militias—whose members were neighbors who took on leadership roles during the community’s darkest hours—and the community was not interrupted by the civic-military alliance. When the Army entered the district, it did not introduce outsiders to work in the militias. Instead, it built upon the existing grassroots organizational structure. Original militia leaders expanded the organization by helping establish new branches in *centros poblados* and peasant communities across the district, recruiting notable local figures to take on leadership positions within the growing network. These recruits—locally referred to as *comandos*—had strong social ties to the community. They were family members, friends, coworkers, and trusted neighbors who assumed leadership roles to protect the community’s property and “way of life.”<sup>210</sup> This emergence of leadership from the “bottom-up” ensured that the CADs remained closely aligned with the community’s interests and needs throughout the conflict.

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<sup>210</sup> Interview with Marcelino Montero, key informant.

While isolated incidents of CAD members misusing their authority and exploiting community members did occur,<sup>211</sup> this behavior was far from being a systematic issue within the organization. Esteban Huamán, a former CAD member from the district, explained:

“Those who misused their power—we all knew who they were. In a community like ours, you can’t just ‘*hacerte el loco*’ (act crazy) and think nothing will happen. We didn’t tolerate it. The whole community made sure they were punished, and those people were kicked out of the organization”<sup>212</sup>

As this quote illustrates, social monitoring and accountability at the local level acted as a powerful deterrent against predatory behavior. The fact that no one in the community was “anonymous” served as a protective mechanism, preventing abuses of power by the *comandos*. Notably, after approximately four years, these leaders stepped down from their positions and transitioned to being ordinary, low-ranking members, rotating in patrolling duties alongside the rest of the community. This collective involvement in the organization ensured that those in leadership roles faced ongoing checks on their behavior, reinforcing accountability and reducing opportunities for misconduct.

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<sup>211</sup> For example, Henry Antayhua (civil society leader) and Yuri Barboza (former CAD member) recalled instances where CAD members abused their authority, using their positions to settle “personal vendettas” by stealing animals or crops from neighbors they disliked.

<sup>212</sup> Interview with E. Huamán.

### 3.4. *Militias' Evolving Roles in the Post-Conflict Era*

Thanks to their protective behavior, local testimonies revealed a positive assessment of the CADs' role in the district, highlighting their critical contribution to shielding the community from the crossfire between the Shining Path and the police. Their efforts were also pivotal in capturing Shining Path remnants, ultimately bringing the civil war to an end. Cristian Pacheco, a local public official, underscored this protective role, stating, "The CADs took care of us; they knew us and protected us. Thanks to them, we could keep living."<sup>213</sup> Similarly, John Garmize, a civil society leader from the district, estimated that over 80% of Luricocha's community holds a favorable view of the CADs, crediting their legitimacy to the fact that they risked their lives "when the community needed them most."<sup>214</sup>

Building on this foundation of trust and legitimacy, it is not surprising that the community turned to the CADs when new issues arose in the post-conflict era. Almost identical to what occurred in Llohegua, new community needs emerged in Luricocha amidst a virtually absent state as violence started to subside. Between 2002 and 2005, a few years into the post-conflict phase, local testimonies remarked on the resurgence of common security threats in Luricocha, particularly road assaults and cattle rustling. This phenomenon was not unique to Luricocha; in my two main case studies—Los Morochucos and Llohegua—rural villagers similarly reported that, as life normalized after the civil war, common delinquency reemerged. However, a crucial difference stood

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<sup>213</sup> Interview with Christian Pacheco, public official from Luricocha.

<sup>214</sup> Interview with John Garmize, civil society leader from the district. Mr. Garmize is the President of the *Frente de Defensa y Desarrollo*, a local civic society organization that—in his own words—"oversees the district's political and social development."

out: while the community in Los Morochucos did not turn to the CADs for assistance, those in Llohegua and Luricocha did, further demonstrating the enduring trust and relevance of these organizations.

Against this backdrop, between 2005 and 2006, as the collective memory of the CADs persisted in the district, civil society leaders—including Miriam Utos, coordinator of the “Vaso de Leche” program<sup>215</sup> and Henry Antayhua, President of the Irrigation Commission<sup>216</sup>—took action to address the worsening security situation. Concerned about rising crime, they convened the local population in Luricocha’s central square to discuss solutions. Zósimo Barbosa, a former public official who attended the meeting, recalled several women voicing concerns about *mototaxis*<sup>217</sup> breaking into their small ranches (*chacras*) and stealing livestock, particularly sheep, chickens, and guinea pigs.<sup>218</sup> Among those present were the former CAD leaders Antonio Gavilán and Freddy De la Cruz, well-respected members of the community. In the central square, rural villagers turned to these leaders, urging the continuity of the *comités de autodefensa*. With no police station in the district and the nearest one located in Huanta—often taking over two hours to respond—locals emphasized the need for a community-based solution.<sup>219</sup> The CAD leaders, deeply embedded in the community, expressed their willingness to

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<sup>215</sup> Interview with Miriam Utos, civil society leader from the district. The program provides food items, including a 410-gram can of Gloria evaporated milk and a “7-seed flour” mix (a dairy-based product) for preparing breakfast. It targets populations living in extreme poverty, specifically pregnant mothers and children under six years of age.

<sup>216</sup> The President of the Irrigation Commission of the Luricocha Basin is responsible for resolving conflicts related to water allocation. This includes managing disputes over irrigation schedules and water distribution, which often arise—even among relatives.

<sup>217</sup> Small, three-wheeled motorized vehicle commonly used for short-distance transportation.

<sup>218</sup> Interview with Zósimo Barbosa, local public official from Luricocha.

<sup>219</sup> Interviews with Y. Barboza, H. Antayhua, and M. Utos.

repurpose the organization to address common crime. However, they also stressed the need for support from the local government to facilitate such repurposing efforts.<sup>220</sup>

Following the gathering in the central square, De la Cruz requested a meeting with the mayor and district authorities, which took place in Luricocha's auditorium in mid-2006. Representing the CADs, De la Cruz and Gavilán met with Américo Ludueña, the district's mayor, and the five district councilors (*regidores*). During the meeting, the CAD representatives detailed the worsening security issues in the post-war period. To strengthen their proposal of redeploying the CADs to address common crime, De la Cruz emphasized the organization's past success against the Shining Path, stating, "If we could confront such a dangerous armed adversary, how could we not handle common criminals who are few in number and poorly organized? We are ready to defend our community once again."

Although the mayor expressed support for their proposal, the district's limited resources constrained his response. He rejected demands for direct financial contributions and in-kind payments like food and beverages but agreed to provide a vehicle and gasoline to support their mobility.<sup>221</sup> This compromise reflected both the mayor's recognition of the CADs' importance and the district's resource-strapped reality. Crucially, it also underscores that, in the precarious context of Luricocha (much like Llohegua), the organization's survival was not dependent on an influx of economic resources. Instead, it endured because of the legitimacy it had earned during the conflict and the shared value placed on it by both militia and community members. In LM,

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<sup>220</sup> Interview with F. De la Cruz.

<sup>221</sup> Interview with F. De la Cruz.

however, neither community members nor CAD leaders pursued comparable repurposing efforts, as the organization was widely regarded as repressive and illegitimate, failing to garner the trust or support necessary for its continuation.

Through proactive patrols, similar to those conducted during the conflict period, and by recruiting young patrolmen from the community to serve *ad honorem* for a few hours, the CADs transformed participation in their organization into a communal responsibility, akin to a *faena* (a shared community chore). By leveraging the leaders' organizational know-how and social legitimacy, the CADs successfully mobilized the community. From 2007 onwards, numerous testimonies from key informants, public officials, and civil society leaders attributed the significant decline in cattle rustling to the repurposing of the CADs.<sup>222</sup>

To tackle roadway assaults, in October 2010, CAD leaders submitted a petition to the municipality of Huanta province, requesting the installation of a vehicular stop gate (*tranquera*) at Ocana—a critical entry and exit point of the district. They argued that the *tranquera* was essential for preventing criminal activities, particularly during nighttime hours when assaults were most frequent. Following negotiations, the CADs received approval by March 2011 to construct and operate the *tranquera*. Twelve CAD members, rotating on a monthly basis, manned the *tranquera*, resuming regular patrols and other organizational duties during their off-rotations. The stop gate operated from 6 pm to 5 am, allowing unrestricted daytime passage for vehicles with proper documentation but limiting nighttime access to political authorities, including the mayor, *regidores*, and

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<sup>222</sup> Interviews with Zhamna Khelye (civil society leader), J. Coronel (key informant), Arturo Vidal (public official), and C. Pacheco (public official).

justice of peace. Besides, the CADs collected a small toll (*propina*) of three Peruvian soles or equivalent in-kind contributions from each vehicle to sustain their operations.<sup>223</sup>

Figure 26: The *Tranquera*: Securing Luricocha's roads



Informal archive collected during my fieldwork in Luricocha (June 23, 2022).

Figure 27: Toll Receipt for Passage through the *Tranquera*



Informal archive collected during my fieldwork in Luricocha (June 23, 2022).

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<sup>223</sup> Interview with Z. Barbosa.

Throughout the 2010s, the CADs remained active in the district, addressing cattle rustling and road assaults. Much like their counterparts in Llochegua, they also organized community fundraisers to support neighbors in need.<sup>224</sup> However, in 2019, the organization faced a significant setback when the *tranquera* ceased operation. The local government revoked the agreement, deeming it no longer necessary, which drastically reduced the CADs' activities. Since then, the CADs have largely remained dormant, with their role limited to *ad hoc*, reactive measures when neighbors report incidents of *abigeato*, mostly in remote peasant communities.

Despite their diminished role today, the enduring legacy of the CADs in Luricocha became evident during the Covid-19 pandemic. Similar to their counterparts in Llochegua, former CAD members coordinated vehicular traffic at key entry and exit points in the district, aiming to prevent outsiders from entering and help contain the spread of the virus. On May 22, 2020, Freddy De la Cruz, the former CAD secretary, formally requested permission from the National Ministry of Defense to resume vehicular control activities, which was granted during the pandemic. This highlights the trust and importance the CADs in Luricocha continued to hold in addressing community challenges during critical moments.<sup>225</sup>

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<sup>224</sup> Interview with Gilberto Delgadillo, local public official (police officer from Huanta province).

<sup>225</sup> *Oficio* #39, correspondence between the Hugo Herrera Cabana (Ministry of the Defense) and former CAD leader, Freddy De la Cruz. Huanta Province (May 22, 2020).

#### 4. Conclusion

This chapter has analyzed the case of Luricocha with the dual purpose of extending the external validity of the first part of my theory on militia formation and reinforcing the internal validity of the second part of my framework on militia post-conflict trajectories. By serving as a “shadow case study” (Soifer 2020), Luricocha engages with my primary cases—Los Morochucos and Llohegua—to broaden the empirical scope and strengthen the theoretical robustness of my argument.

In terms of *external validity*, Luricocha shows that my theoretical expectations for militia formation in disputed areas during civil war hold beyond Llohegua. While some context-specific details of the militia formation process differed—such as the initial presence of the police rather than the Army—the case of Luricocha reveals a clear, recurring pattern. This pattern consists of two key processes: first, grassroots militia groups emerging, and second, these groups forging alliances with one of the main power contenders—in this case, the police forces. Consequently, Luricocha provides additional empirical support for my theory of militia formation.

Regarding *internal validity*, Luricocha reinforces the importance of militia wartime relationships with the military and the community in shaping their post-conflict trajectories. It strengthens my theoretical framework by showing that, as in Llohegua, militia autonomy from the military and strong communal ties were crucial for their survival and repurposing for post-conflict governance roles. Moreover, it counters the alternative explanation that militia persistence is primarily driven by economic resources. The concern that militias in Llohegua persisted and transitioned into governance-enhancing actors due to greater economic resources—being situated in a more

economically dynamic jungle region—compared to their disbandment in Los Morochucos, located in the impoverished highlands, is weakened by the case of Luricocha. Situated in the similarly resource-scarce highlands, Luricocha's militias persisted post-conflict because, like in Llohegua, the nature of their wartime relationships with the military and the community proved decisive.

The next and final chapter concludes this dissertation by summarizing its main findings, highlighting its theoretical, empirical, and policy contributions, and outlining future avenues of research. In doing so, it situates this investigation within broader debates in the comparative politics of civil war and the enduring legacies of violent conflict.

## **Chapter 7**

### **Conclusion**

This dissertation has advanced a novel theory to explain the entire lifecycles of militias, a crucial yet often overlooked actor in civil war internal dynamics, resolution, and legacies. Militia organizations do not emerge or persist uniformly; they take root in some wartime territories but not others, and, after civil wars end, some disband while others persist—either weakening or strengthening governance in post-conflict environments. Militia emergence and post-conflict trajectories, thus, exhibit significant variation. Drawing on a process of inductive iteration (Yom 2015) through extensive, multi-sited, and immersive field research in Peru’s rural periphery, I have developed novel theoretical frameworks that account for such variation, specifically: i) why militias arise in some areas but not others during civil war, ii) why some disband while others persist post-conflict, and iii) among those that persist, why some undermine rural governance while others enhance it.

In this final chapter, I first review my dissertation’s core theoretical claims on militia formation, followed by those on militias’ post-conflict trajectories. I then summarize the empirical evidence supporting my theoretical frameworks. Finally, I conclude by outlining the dissertation’s key theoretical, empirical, and policy contributions and discussing potential directions for future research.

## **1. Militia Formation: Core Theoretical Insights**

The first part of my theory has focused on militia formation. I have argued that explaining the divergent patterns of militia formation during civil war requires understanding the incentives and constraints faced by three key actors—the state, insurgents, and civilians—across different wartime zones. These actors either facilitate or obstruct militia development based on their strategic interests and available resources, which vary across the three “classic” arenas of civil war: government strongholds, insurgent strongholds, and disputed areas. In other words, militias do not arise in a vacuum but emerge through complex, localized interactions shaped by territorial control dynamics in civil war.

The framework predicted no militia emergence in government strongholds because neither the state nor local communities have sufficient incentives to form them. While militia formation is typically driven by one of these actors, both lack strategic or security-related incentives to do so in these areas. State resources are limited, and during civil wars, the state prioritizes deploying them to establish militias in other wartime areas to regain or consolidate territorial control, rather than in its own strongholds, where such organizations are less necessary due to the relative security of the area. Similarly, local communities have little incentive to form militias in government strongholds, as they face neither the immediate threat of insurgent attacks nor the risks of crossfire between state and insurgent forces, as often occurs in disputed areas.

In contrast, I hypothesized that the state will create militias “from above” in another wartime zone: originally insurgent strongholds. After disrupting insurgent territorial control through indiscriminate violence, the state may establish militias to

solidify its hold on the area, providing the final push to weaken insurgents and transform former insurgent strongholds into government-controlled territories. State-orchestrated militias (SOMs) play a crucial role in this territorial shift, reinforcing state authority and helping to secure the newly acquired zones.

Last but not least, the framework predicted that grassroots militias are most likely to emerge in disputed areas, where neither the state nor insurgents hold absolute territorial control. In these contested zones, local communities find themselves caught in a crossfire, as both warring parties compete for dominance. Faced with persistent threats from both sides and chronic insecurity, their incentives to form militias for self-protection are high. Moreover, they have a window of opportunity to do so as both the state and insurgents are preoccupied with fighting each other, reducing their capacity to prevent or suppress local militia formation. This power vacuum enables communities to organize militias, not only to assert control over their own security and survival but also to negotiate with or strategically align with one of the warring parties to maximize their protection and influence in the conflict.

## **2. Militias After Civil War: Key Theoretical Claims**

My dissertation has also examined what happens to militias after civil wars end. The post-conflict trajectories of militias, I have argued, depend on their wartime relationships with both the military and the local communities in which they operate. Militias can be either autonomous or subjugated to the military and can have either strong or weak ties to local communities during civil wars. Different combinations of these

wartime factors shape militias' post-conflict outcomes, which fall into three categories: i) *disbandment*, or ii) survival with *governance-weakening* or iii) *governance-strengthening* roles.

I theorized that militias subjugated to the military during warfare are more likely to disband once the fighting stops. This subjugation often entails military repression targeting militia members (Stanton 2015) and militia members themselves preying on local communities under military command (Valentino 2004; Downes 2006). As a result, these organizations are widely perceived as repressive and illegitimate at the local level, leading to a lack of support from both militia and community members, ultimately driving their post-conflict disbandment.

Militias that are autonomous from the military, on the other hand, are more likely to persist into post-conflict settings, either undermining or enhancing governance depending on their wartime relationship with the community. When such autonomy is coupled with weak community embeddedness, militias operate unchecked: neither the military exerts control over them, nor can the local community hold their members accountable through informal mechanisms of social sanctioning (Peic 2014; Clayton and Thomson 2016). Consequently, these militias are more prone to engage in predatory behavior (Carey and Mitchell 2017) and weaken post-conflict governance (Hughes and Tripodi 2009; Schlichte 2010; Acemoglu et al. 2013).

But when militias' autonomy from the military is instead coupled with strong ties to the local community, these organizations are more likely to survive and adopt governance-enhancing roles in the post-conflict era. During warfare, such militias tend to protect rather than prey on the communities where they operate, earning substantial

legitimacy and becoming institutionalized through a process of “value infusion” (Selznick 1957; Levitsky 1999). As a result, both militia and community members come to value and identify with the organization itself, advocating for its continuation to strengthen post-conflict governance.

### **3. Summary of Empirical Findings**

To test my theoretical expectations, I meticulously traced the full lifecycle of militias—also known as *comités de autodefensa* (CADs)—in two districts within Ayacucho, the epicenter of violence during Peru’s internal armed conflict (1980–2000). Despite several shared characteristics, including the timing and intensity of violence, the absence of a strong state, the ethnicity of the local population, the CADs in Los Morochucos—an originally insurgent stronghold—emerged through a markedly different process than those in Llochegua, a historically disputed area. As shown in Chapter 4, the state (specifically, the Armed Forces) established militias in Los Morochucos “from above” in 1986, following years of indiscriminate violent assaults (1983–1985) aimed at challenging the Shining Path’s dominance. These attacks initiated a shift in territorial control, which then allowed the state to impose militias as a strategy to consolidate its newly gained foothold.<sup>226</sup> In contrast, grassroots militias emerged in Llochegua by mid-1982, forming organically and independently from the Armed Forces. Initially, the community organized CADs to protect itself from both major actors in the conflict—the state and the Shining Path—as each sought to assert control over this contested territory.

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<sup>226</sup> Notably, early grassroots militia efforts in Los Morochucos failed, as the Shining Path was strong enough in its strongholds to crush community-led violent resistance.

Over time, Llochegua CADs strategically allied with the military to counter the insurgents, securing their position.

The evidence documenting the post-civil war trajectories of the *comités de autodefensa* in both districts was presented in Chapter 5. While the CADs disbanded in Los Morochucos after the conflict, they survived and strengthened governance in Llochegua. I have shown that these contrasting long-term outcomes stem from differing militia-military and militia-community relations during the war. In LM, the CADs were subjugated by the military, which not only subjected militia members to violence from military officers but also compelled them to prey on the community under military orders. This cycle of repression eroded the organization's legitimacy within the community; as a result, neither militia members nor rural villagers had an incentive to push for the CADs' continuation after the conflict. Conversely, militias in Llochegua protected the community from civil war violence. Initially, their autonomy from the military prevented them from inflicting violence on the local population under military command, a common practice during warfare (Stanton 2015). Furthermore, their strong community ties fostered a sense of moral obligation and adherence to "good behavior," reinforced by local monitoring and informal social sanctioning. This protective role earned militias legitimacy and facilitated their institutionalization, as both militia members and the community actively worked to repurpose the organization post-conflict, adapting its functions to new community needs and strengthening governance.

Table 11 summarizes key evidence from Los Morochucos and Llochegua, the primary cases of this dissertation, highlighting the critical factors and mechanisms that shaped their distinct militia formation processes and post-conflict trajectories.

Table 11: Militias’ Lifecycles: Comparative Evidence from LM and Llochegua

|                                                                     | <b>Los Morochucos</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | <b>Llochegua</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Wartime zone*</i>                                                | Insurgent stronghold                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Disputed area                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <i>Militia formation process</i>                                    | <p>“Top-Down:” The state imposed militias to consolidate territorial control as part of a counterinsurgency strategy, following prior indiscriminate assaults that weakened the insurgents.</p> <p>Earlier grassroots militia efforts in the district had been crushed by the Shining Path.</p> | <p>Grassroots: The community organized militias to defend against attacks from both the state and insurgents as they fought for territorial control.</p> <p>Over time, these grassroots militias allied with the state against the Shining Path to strengthen their position.</p> |
| <i>Militia-military and militia-community wartime relationships</i> | Militias were subjugated to the military, operating without autonomy.                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Militias maintained operational autonomy from the military and were deeply embedded in the local community.                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <i>Mechanisms driving militias’ post-war trajectories</i>           | The military repressed militia members, who, in turn, preyed on the community under military orders. This cycle of repression rendered the organization illegitimate and undesirable to both its members and the community, neither of whom advocated for its continuation after the conflict.  | <p>The militias protected the community, gaining legitimacy and becoming institutionalized.</p> <p>Consequently, both militia and community members sought to repurpose the organization for post-conflict governance roles.</p>                                                  |
| <i>Militias’ post-war trajectories</i>                              | Disbandment                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Repurposing for Governance                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |

\*Refers to the wartime zone at the onset of the civil war (throughout the conflict, both districts eventually became government strongholds).

In addition to the two primary cases, I traced the full lifecycle of militias in another district within Ayacucho: Luricocha. Evidence from this auxiliary case, or “shadow case study” (Soifer 2020), reinforced both the internal and external validity of

my theoretical claims. Regarding internal validity, while developing theories through inductive iteration in the field helps control for multiple alternative explanations by ensuring a thorough understanding of the cases (Yom 2015), the threat of confounding variables is never fully eliminated in observational studies. Specifically, the alternative explanation that CADs in Los Morochucos disbanded due to their highland location—which limited access to financial resources compared to the more economically dynamic jungle region of Llohegua—is significantly weakened by the case of Luricocha. Despite also being in the economically disadvantaged highlands, CADs in Luricocha survived and strengthened governance post-conflict, challenging the notion that financial resources determined militias’ long-term trajectories. Furthermore, an in-depth analysis of Luricocha reinforces the central role of militias’ wartime relationships with the military and the community in shaping their post-conflict pathways.

For external validity, the case of Luricocha strengthens the generalizability of my arguments on militia formation. It illustrates that in another contested area—like Luricocha—the origins and mobilization of militias followed a strikingly similar pattern to those in Llohegua. In other words, the process of militia formation in Llohegua were not merely context-specific but also replicated in another disputed territory during the conflict.

#### **4. Theoretical, Empirical, and Policy Contributions**

My dissertation makes significant theoretical, empirical, and policy contributions. *Theoretically*, it advances the political violence literature by deepening our understanding of civil war dynamics and legacies, particularly through the study of militia

organizations—a crucial yet often overlooked actor in conflict research. My work not only examines *where*, *how*, and *why* militias emerge during civil wars but also provides insights into their diverse post-conflict trajectories. Prior studies have not systematically examined the connection between patterns of territorial control during warfare and militia formation processes, nor have they explored how militias’ wartime interactions with the state (specifically, the military) and society (the local community) shape their post-conflict trajectories. By addressing these theoretical blind spots and bringing together previously separate strands of research, my dissertation offers novel insights into the full life cycle of militias, expanding upon previous scholarship that has primarily examined isolated aspects of these organizations (such as their recruitment practices [Forney 2015; Cohen and Nordås 2015], relationship to violence [Stanton 2015; Clayton and Thomson 2016], and functional roles [Cohen 2001; Eck 2015], among others).

Moreover, my research addresses a crucial yet understudied distinction in the literature: the difference between community-led (grassroots) and state-orchestrated militia formation and mobilization processes. This issue has been mentioned in passing but recognized as deserving further attention (Starn 1998; Manrique 1998; Degregori 1998; Cornejo 2015; Jentzsch et al. 2015; Escalante 2020). I unpack the logic behind these two processes, showing that grassroots militias are more likely to emerge in disputed areas where communities seek protection from both warring parties, while state-orchestrated militias tend to form in former insurgent strongholds as part of state-led counterinsurgency efforts. In doing so, my research examines the geographic and strategic factors that shape the emergence of each type, moving beyond mere

acknowledgment of their existence to a deeper understanding of the rationale behind their origins and mobilization patterns.

Another theoretical contribution of my dissertation is to the study of the historical legacies of violence (Balcells 2012; Weintraub et al. 2015; Lupu and Peisakhin 2017). While civil wars' destructive consequences across political, socio-economic, and public health domains are well-documented (Ghobarah et al. 2003; Collier et al., 2003; Chen et al., 2007), studies have also identified some favorable long-term outcomes of violent conflict, including increased prosocial behavior, democratic promotion, and income redistribution (Wood 2003, 2008; Blattman 2009; Gilligan et al. 2013). By scrutinizing militias' post-conflict paths, this paper adds to both research traditions. Depending on their wartime relations with the military and local communities, militias can either threaten post-conflict rural governance, exacerbating harmful legacies, or enhance governance and benefit marginalized populations, fostering positive long-term outcomes.

The paper also contributes to theories of institutional change (Mahoney and Thelen 2009) and critical junctures (Collier and Munck 2022) by illustrating their applicability to real-world phenomena. It shows how militias, initially created for specific wartime purposes, can adapt their goals to survive in new environments. Through a compelling case of institutional conversion (Mahoney and Thelen 2009; Hacker et al. 2015), militias can shift from counterinsurgency roles during civil wars to governance activities post-conflict. Additionally, it demonstrates how militias' wartime state-society relations can operate as historical critical junctures, shaping "big" political developments such as the strengthening or weakening of governance in the long run.

*Empirically*, this project's immersive fieldwork in rural Peru has yielded several key contributions. First, it has allowed me to unpack the causal mechanisms underlying long-term historical processes—specifically, militias' "life stories"—through a variety of site-intensive methods, including interviews, archival research, and participant observation (Kapiszewski et al. 2015). Understanding militia formation and post-conflict trajectories required identifying the key actors driving these processes, along with their interactions "on the ground," the resources at their disposal, and the strategies they implemented to achieve their goals—insights that could only be gained through direct immersion in the local contexts where these events unfolded.

Peru, in particular, provided an especially rich and underutilized empirical setting for this kind of inquiry. Because the civil war ended over two decades ago (1980-2000), the Peruvian case offered a unique opportunity to investigate both the inner workings and enduring legacies of violent conflict—particularly the origins and trajectories of militias after violence subsides. During the war, some *comités de autodefensa* (CADs) emerged organically to protect their communities, while others were created in a "top-down" fashion by the state and subordinated to the Armed Forces (Schubiger 2021). This variation offered the empirical leverage needed to trace divergent militia lifecycles in depth. While the dissertation has advanced a broader theoretical framework, its core insights are grounded in the empirical richness and complexity of the Peruvian case.

Fundamentally, fieldwork enabled me to detect subnational variation that would have been imperceptible from afar. In two districts located close to each other within the same department, I initially classified both as having militias during the conflict. However, after months of sustained engagement in the field, it became clear that while

both had militias, their origins, initial roles, and relationships with the state and the community were strikingly different. From a distance, both cases might have been coded as a simple “1”—indicating the presence of militias—much like viewing them through a satellite image that flattens local complexity. However, fieldwork revealed that these militias were not the same; rather than both being a “1,” they represented qualitatively distinct phenomena. Crucially, these differences shaped their post-conflict trajectories: while militias in Los Morochucos disbanded, they survived and bolster governance in Llohegua.

Additionally, my research provides a crucial empirical contribution by documenting the oral testimonies of historically marginalized populations in Peru’s rural periphery, which were essential for understanding how militias formed, operated, and evolved after violent conflict. Over nine months in 2022, I conducted more than 90 interviews with militia and community members of Quechua ethnic origins and accessed informal, unsystematized archives in the field. These individuals had firsthand experience with militia organizations, yet their perspectives remain largely absent from scholarly production. In a context where written records are scarce, official statistics are unreliable due to a weak state, and state-produced narratives often minimize the role of local actors in shaping security and governance (Wedeen 2015), these testimonies serve as crucial historical sources, preserving accounts that would otherwise be lost. While my research obviously cannot alter the material conditions of my interviewees or alleviate their suffering, it ensures that their experiences are acknowledged and made visible. These testimonies extend beyond recounting the history of militia organizations—they reveal how rural communities adapted, resisted, and navigated extreme insecurity in the absence

of a strong state. In doing so, they challenge state-centric narratives of conflict and governance, highlighting the agency of those living on the margins of state authority.

In terms of *policy implications*, two main findings emerge from my dissertation. First, regarding counterinsurgency strategies during civil war, my research underscores that while state-orchestrated militias can be effective in combating insurgents, they often do so at a significant human cost, engaging in repressive behavior not only against insurgents but also against local populations under military directives (Hedman 2000; Carey et al. 2013; Stanton 2015). In contrast, grassroots militias, which are deeply embedded within their local communities, tend to exhibit protective behavior toward civilians—particularly when they maintain operational autonomy from the military. Supporting preexisting grassroots militias and preserving their autonomy—while providing material and financial assistance—appears to be a more effective strategy for protecting local populations from insurgent violence. This approach also offers a more sustainable and less repressive pathway to ending civil wars, as opposed to imposing state-directed militia organizations “from above” and deploying them to repress communities historically associated with insurgent activity.

Second, regarding post-conflict reconstruction, my research reveals how wartime organizations, such as militias, can contribute to governance strengthening. While existing studies often emphasize cases where militias undermine governance and foster political instability (Schlichte 2010; Acemoglu et al. 2013; Carey and González 2021), as seen in contexts like Iraq (Hugues and Tripodi 2009), Colombia (Hristov 2009), or Sudan (Flint and De Waal 2008), my findings highlight their potential to enhance governance after civil war. In areas where state capacity remains weak, militias embedded within

local communities can fill governance gaps, provide security, and support the delivery of public goods and services, particularly for populations historically neglected by the state. By leveraging their local knowledge and community trust, post-conflict states can expand their reach through collaboration with militia actors in ways that complement state functions without undermining authority.

## **5. Future Directions of Research**

While I have made a significant effort in this dissertation to test the multiple expected outcomes of my theory on both militia formation and post-conflict trajectories, I recognize that some theoretical propositions were not directly tested in this research. One area for future inquiry is the formation of militias in government strongholds during civil wars. Although my framework suggests that militias are unlikely to emerge in these territories—where the state is less inclined to allocate scarce resources to militia formation and local communities face fewer security threats that would justify organizing militias—this assumption warrants further empirical investigation. A systematic analysis of whether militias have, in fact, been registered in government-controlled areas across civil wars globally could provide critical evidence to validate or challenge the generalizability of this theoretical proposition.

Moreover, another theoretical expectation that remains untested in this project is the potential for militias to weaken governance in the aftermath of violent conflict. While cases of “governance weakening” are well-documented in the literature (Flint and De Waal 2008; Hristov 2009; Hugues and Tripodi 2009; Schlichte 2010; Acemoglu et al. 2013; Carey and González 2021), the specific wartime relationships and causal

mechanisms proposed in this dissertation as drivers of this outcome have not been empirically examined. Therefore, future research could test whether the nature of militia-military and militia-community during civil war explains instances of militias undermining governance across post-conflict settings.

Future comparative work could further assess the external validity of my framework—both in terms of militia origins and long-term trajectories—while paying close attention to its detailed scope conditions outlined in Chapter 3. While the “shadow case” of Luricocha provided an initial test, future research could extend this framework beyond the Peruvian context, either through a large-N quantitative analysis of multiple cases or a thorough qualitative examination of a select few. Such studies would strengthen the framework’s generalizability, which currently benefits from strong internal validity due to an inductive iterative process in the field (Yom 2015) but, naturally, requires further empirical testing to establish external validity.

Furthermore, this dissertation opens new avenues for future research on the impact of militias on post-conflict societies. Militias’ post-conflict governance roles resonate with a broader array of instances where non-state actors provide public goods and services in rural areas (Cammatt and McLean 2014). For example, traditional rulers or “chiefs” across Africa collect taxes, allocate land, and, akin to CADs in present-day Llohegua, operate as “development brokers” (Logan 2013; Baldwin 2016). Integrating these non-state actors within a unified framework of governance providers could yield valuable insights into rural peripheries worldwide.

Upcoming investigations should consider not only historical wartime causes but also contemporary factors that may shape militias’ lifecycles. Contemporary security

threats, leadership transitions, and domestic or foreign government policies may also influence militia pathways after civil wars. While this research has advanced a helpful framework for understanding long-term patterns in militia trajectories, it is not deterministic—these patterns remain susceptible to change. Therefore, future comparative research could explore how present-day factors may alter militia trajectories.

## Appendix

### *Fieldwork Note*

During my nine-month fieldwork in Peru, I spent a month and a half in Los Morochucos (Cangallo, Ayacucho) across two field trips. I stayed at “La Casona” hostel, located at the corner of Cangallo central square. The first trip lasted fifteen days in mid-June 2022, primarily for interviews with key informants. The second trip lasted a month in September 2022, during which I conducted interviews with local public officials, civil society leaders, and former militia members. Each morning, I took a thirty-minute combi ride from Cangallo central square to Los Morochucos.

I spent two and a half months in Llochegua (Huanta, Ayacucho) during two field trips. I stayed at “Hotel Bercu,” a few blocks from Llochegua municipality. The first trip lasted for two months, in July-August 2022. During that trip, I conducted most of my interviews, consulted formal and informal archives, and took field notes through multiple instances of participant observation in post-conflict militia activities. The second trip lasted for fifteen days in mid-October 2022, mainly for interviewing or re-interviewing key subjects I could not contact during my first field trip.

I also conducted research in Luricocha (Huanta, Ayacucho) across four field trips totaling three months. These trips took place periodically in April, May, June, and November 2022. In all four, I stayed at a friend’s home in Huanta city, located about 20 minutes from Luricocha by *mototaxi*. My research in this area consisted primarily of interviews, as well as archival work in formal collections in Huanta (*Casa Matteo Ricci*) and informal archives in Luricocha generously shared by former CAD members.

Finally, in between my fieldwork trips to different parts of Ayacucho in rural Peru, I spent time in Lima, the country's capital, where I was affiliated with the *Instituto de Estudios Peruanos* (IEP). I conducted research in Lima during March and December 2022, bookending my nine months of fieldwork. Over the course of those two months, I interviewed key informants and worked in several archival collections, including the *Lugar de la Memoria, la Tolerancia y la Inclusión Social* (LUM), the *Defensoría del Pueblo del Perú*, and the *Instituto de Defensa Legal* (IDL), among others.

### *Interviews*

For this dissertation, I referenced 91 interviews (most conducted in person, with a few over Zoom or by phone) I conducted with four different types of actors—key informants, local public officials, former and current CAD members, and civil society leaders.<sup>227</sup> Many interviewees are native Quechua speakers born and raised in the fieldwork locations. I initially approached the local public officials and key informants, who then facilitated connections with civil society leaders and former/current militia members through a “snowballing” sampling method.

Henry Pérez, my research assistant, was crucial in addressing my outsider status and fostering rapport with the interviewees. He introduced me to the interviewees, explained my research objectives, and helped me bridge the gap in terms of cultural differences. Initially, some individuals assumed I was from the U.S.

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<sup>227</sup> While not all interviewees cited in the list below (see *Full List of Interviewees*) are directly quoted in the dissertation, each provided valuable background information that informed the analysis and is therefore referenced.

due to my white appearance, often calling me “*gringo*” or “*gringuito*.”

However, speaking Spanish and mentioning my Argentine background helped establish a closer connection with the local community.

Regarding recording interviews, I chose not to record most of them due to positionality and confidentiality concerns (Adebayo and Njoku 2023). Given the disparities in class, race, and power between myself and the interviewees, recording might have made conversations seem more “professional” or less informal, potentially increasing the perceived distance between me and the local community. Moreover, many former CAD members (particularly in Los Morochucos), a critical subset of my interviewees, were facing or had faced legal actions related to human rights violations. Key informants advised against putting their statements on record. To comply with IRB protocols, I used pseudonyms when necessary.

Oral sources have proven extremely valuable in studying civil wars (McKenna 1998; Thaxton 1997). With limited written documents from Los Morochucos and Llochegua during the conflict years, and in the absence of a strong state capable of producing reliable statistics, oral sources are essential to capture dynamics “on the ground” (Fraser 1993) and preserving the story of post-conflict societies. While human memory can be fragile, people tend to remember traumatic, life-changing events accurately (Gilmore 1987; Green 1995). Nearly all individuals I interviewed were first-hand witnesses of the civil war, having experienced the loss of close family members and friends. This close relationship to violence gave people a vivid memory of the period under study.

### *Full List of Interviewees*

1. *Omar Coronel*, sociologist (key informant). Date: March 29, 2022. Location: Zoom interview. Duration: 1 hour and 30 minutes.
2. *Ponciano del Pino*, historian (key informant). Date: March 30, 2022. Location: Zoom interview. Duration: 30 minutes.
3. *Eva Willems*, historian (key informant). Date: April 1, 2022. Location: Zoom interview. Duration: 55 minutes.
4. *Mari Burneo*, anthropologist (key informant) Date: April 2, 2022. Location: “La Postrería Café, Lima. Duration: 1 hour and 30 minutes.
5. *Maritza Paredes*, sociologist (key informant). Date: April 3, 2022. Location: Zoom interview. 1 hour.
6. *Sinesio López*, sociologist (key informant). Date: April 5, 2022. Location, Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú (his office). Duration: 1 hour.
7. *Tomás Dosek*, political scientist (key informant). Date: April 5, 2022. Location: Pontificia Universidad Católica del Peru, Lima. Duration: 1 hour and 15 minutes.
8. *Javier Torres*, journalist (key informant) Date: April 6, 2022. Location: Zoom interview. Duration: 45 minutes.
9. *Paulo Vilca*, political scientist (key informant). Date: April 6, 2022. Location: Zoom interview. Duration: 1 hour.
10. *Eduardo Dargent*, political scientist (key informant). Date: April 25, 2022. Location: Zoom interview. Duration: 45 minutes.

11. *Paula Muñoz*, political scientist (key informant) Date: April 25, 2022. Location: Zoom interview. Duration: 1 hour.
12. *Rodrigo Palomino*, former mayor of Luricocha (public official). Date: April 26, 2022. Location: Jirón Héroes Cenepa 66 (his home), Luricocha . Duration: 1 hour.
13. *Yuri Barboza*, carpenter (civil society leader). Date: May 2, 2022. Location: Recreo “Villa Barboza,” Luricocha. Duration: 55 minutes
14. *Everett Vieira III* (key informant). Date: May 2, 2022. Location: Zoom interview. Duration: 1 hour and 10 minutes.
15. *Mario Arroyo*, peasant (former CAD leader of Luricocha). Date: May 2, 2022. Location: “Casa Comunal CAD,” Luricocha. Duration: 1 hour and 20 minutes.
16. *Freddy De la Cruz*, merchant (former CAD leader of Luricocha). Date: May 3, 2022. Location: Jirón Carlos Espinosa s/n<sup>228</sup> (his home), Luricocha. Duration: 3 hours and 20 minutes.
17. *Jorge Sáez*, teacher (key informant). Date: June 22, 2022. Location: Law firm in front of Cangallo central square. Duration: 1 hour.
18. *Percy Huayhua*, general secretary of Cangallo province (public official). Date: June 22, 2022. Location: “Café Artesanía,” corner of Cangallo central square. Duration: 50 minutes.
19. *Raúl Ore*, peasant (former CAD leader of Vischongo, Vilcashuamán). Date: June 23,

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<sup>228</sup> “s/n” stands for “*sin número*” (without number), which is common for the streets in rural areas where I conducted fieldwork.

2022. Location: “Café Artesanía,” corner of Cangallo central square. Duration: 55 minutes.
20. *Javier Romero*, prosecutor of Cangallo province (public official). Date: June 23, 2022. Location: “Café Artesanía,” corner of Cangallo central square. Duration: 4 hours.
21. *Edwin Castro*, computer technician (civil society leader). Date: June 23, 2022. Location: Av. Pedro C. Cárdenas s/n (his bar), Los Morochucos. Duration: 1 hour and 10 minutes.
22. *Marcelino Hinojosa*, lawyer (key informant). Date: June 25, 2022. Location: Law firm in front of Cangallo central square. Duration: 1 hour and 30 minutes.
23. *José Coronel*, anthropologist (key informant). Date: June 30, 2022. Location: Jirón María Parado de Bellido 283 (his home), Huanta. Duration: 2 hours and 30 minutes.
24. *Mauro Araujo*, peasant (former CAD leader of Llochegua). Date: July 25, 2022. Location: Calle s/n, Santa Teresa neighborhood (his home), Llochegua. Duration: 1 hour and 20 minutes.
25. *Sergio Martínez* (pseudonym), peasant (former CAD leader from Puerto Mayo, Cusco). Date: July 26, 2022. Location: “Café La Glorieta,” Alameda Márquez de Valdelirios 784, Huamanga. Duration: 3 hours and 15 minutes.
26. *Jorge Quispe*, construction worker (former CAD leader from Pichiwillca, Ayacucho). Date: July 30, 2022. Location: Restaurant “Samay Wasi,” Abancay 177, Huamanga. Duration: 30 minutes.
27. *Ruiz Vilchez*, military lieutenant from Llochegua (public official). Date: July 31,

2022. Location: Countersubversive Battalion #4, Llochegua. Duration: 1 hour and 5 minutes.
28. *Moisés Perez*, peasant (former CAD leader of Llochegua). Date: July 31, 2022.  
Location: Huamanguilla central square, Huanta. Duration: 1 hour and 50 minutes.
29. *Vicente Kitazono*, peasant (former CAD leader of Llochegua). Date: August 7, 2022.  
Location: Av. Huanta s/n (his home), Llochegua. Duration: 1 hour and 20 minutes.
30. *Alejandro Garcia*, sociologist (key informant). Date: August 8, 2022. Location:  
Llochegua municipality. Duration: 45 minutes.
31. *Manuel Seoane*, combi driver (civil society leader). Date: August 8, 2022. Location:  
Llochegua central square. Duration: 50 minutes.
32. *Rebecca Paredes*, ama de casa (housewife) (civil society leader). Date: August 8, 2022. Location: Calle s/n (her bodega), Llochegua. Duration: 45 minutes.
33. *Robert Huamán*, former subprefecture of Llochegua (public official). Date: August 8, 2022. Location: Street 9 N1H1N, corner of Llochegua central square. Duration: 1 hour.
34. *Nélida Aguirre*, political entrepreneur (civil society leader). Date: August 9, 2022.  
Location: Jirón Ayacucho y Nueva Urbanización, Llochegua. Duration: 1 hour and 50 minutes.
35. *Pedro Lette*, truck driver (former CAD leader of Llochegua). Date: August 9, 2022.  
Location: Choymacota y La Marina (his bodega), Llochegua. Duration: 1 hour and 25 minutes.

36. *Adrián Gotzme la Fuente*, former mayor of Llochegua (public official). Date: August 10, 2022. Location: Llochegua municipality. Duration: 25 minutes.
37. *Honorato Cabezas*, Llochegua's justice of peace (public official). Date: August 12, 2022. Location: *Juzgado de paz* (magistrate's court). Duration 1 hour and 25 minutes.
38. *Grovi Soto*, construction technician (CAD leader of Llochegua). Date: August 13, 2022. Location: Av. Comercio s/n (his home), Llochegua. Duration: 1 hour and 30 minutes.
39. *Ronald Gamaniel*, merchant (civil society leader). Date: August 15, 2022. Location: "Miskita Café," Av. Héroes de la Pacificación, Llochegua. Duration: 1 hour and 25 minutes.
40. *Rory Quintanilla*, merchant (former CAD lower-rank of Llochegua). Date: August 15, 2022. Location: "Miskita Café," Av. Héroes de la Pacificación, Llochegua. Duration: 1 hour.
41. *Mauro Cubas*, Llochegua's economic development assistant manager (public official). Date: August 15, 2022. Municipal office, ex-World Vision headquarters, Llochegua. Duration: 40 minutes.
42. *Jhoselyn Ayala*, Llochegua's economic development manager (public official). Date: August 15, 2022. Municipal office, ex-World Vision headquarters, Llochegua. Duration: 25 minutes.
43. *Maribel Salinas*, Llochegua's social development assistant manager (public official). Date: August 17, 2022. Location: Llochegua municipality. Duration: 40 minutes.
44. *Celedonio Ludeña*, peasant (former CAD lower-rank of Los Morochucos). Date:

- September 18, 2022. Location: Calle s/n (his home), LM. Duration: 1 hour.
45. *Lorenzo de la Vega*, former mayor of Los Morochucos (public official). Date: September 20, 2022. Location: “Café Delycioso,” Calle s/n, LM. Duration: 1 hour and 20 minutes.
46. *Marcial Berrocal*, economic development manager of LM (public official). Date: September 20, 2022. Location: LM municipality. Duration: 30 minutes.
47. *Pascual Bautista*, peasant (former CAD lower-rank of LM). Date: September 21, 2022. Location: LM central square. Duration: 30 minutes.
48. *Gregorio Calderón*, peasant (former CAD lower-rank of LM). Date: September 21, 2022. Location: LM central square. Duration: 25 minutes.
49. *Dionisia Calderón*, president of a local women’s rights NGO (civil society leader). Date: September 21, 2022. Location: Av. 24 de Junio – block 1 (her bodega), LM. Duration: 1 hour and 15 minutes.
50. *Alfredo Mendoza de la Cruz*, former military officer from LM (public official). Date: September 22, 2022. Location: Instituto Público Superior, LM. Duration: 1 hour.
51. *Buenaventura De la Cruz Altamirano*, former mayor of LM (public official). Date: September 23, 2022. Location: Av. Basileiro Auquihuataya – block 5 (his home), LM. Duration: 1 hour and 30 minutes.
52. *Marcelino Arango de la Cruz*, peasant (former CAD lower-rank of LM). Date: September 23, 2022. Location: Calle s/n (his home), LM. Duration: 30 minutes.
53. *Amador Orosco*, peasant (former CAD lower-rank of LM). Date: September 24,

2022. Location: Military register officer, in front of LM's central square. Duration: 55 minutes.
54. *Martín Espósito* (pseudonym), peasant (former CAD leader from LM). Date: September 25, 2022. Location: Calle s/n (his home), LM. Duration: 50 minutes.
55. *Celedonio Auqui*, peasant (former CAD leader from LM). Date: September 26, 2022. Location: "Café Delycioso," Calle s/n, LM. Duration: 40 minutes.
56. *Juan Pérez* (pseudonym), mechanic (former CAD leader from LM). Date: October 12, 2022. Location: Av. Naciones Unidas 1, Huamanga. Duration: 50 minutes.
57. *Max Aguirre*, philosopher (key informant). Date: October 13, 2022. Location: Phone interview. Duration: 1 hour.
58. *Gabriela Zamora*, anthropologist (key informant). Date: October 14, 2022. Location: "ViaVia Café," Huamanga. Duration: 2 hours.
59. *Mariano Aronés*, anthropologist (key informant). Date: October 14, 2022. Location: "ViaVia Café," Huamanga. Duration: 1 hour and 30 minutes.
60. *Britner Pérez*, former general secretary of Llochegua (public official). Date: October 18, 2022. Location: Llochegua central square. Duration: 1 hour and 50 minutes.
61. *Mario Salinas*, peasant (President of Llochegua CAD). Date: October 19, 2022. Location: Central CAD headquarters, Llochegua. Duration: 1 hour.
62. *Herbert Graciano*, peasant (Vice-president of Llochegua CAD). Date: October 19, 2022. Location: Central CAD headquarters, Llochegua. Duration: 45 minutes.
63. *Robert Morález*, police officer from Llochegua (public official). Date: October 20,

2022. Location: Llochegua police station. Duration 1 hour.
64. *César Acero*, police officer from Llochegua (public official). Date: October 20, 2022.  
Location: Llochegua police station. Duration 1 hour.
65. *Américo Ludeña*, mechanic (former CAD leader of Llochegua). Date: October 20, 2022. Location: Av. Huanta s/n (his home), Llochegua. Duration: 1 hour.
66. *Arturo Ludeña*, construction worker (CAD President of Pichari). Date: October 21, 2022. Location: Pichari central square. Duration. 1 hour and 20 minutes.
67. *Juan Chimayco*, peasant (former CAD lower-rank of Llochegua). Date: October 22, 2022, Location: Av. Huanta s/n (his home), Llochegua. Duration: 1 hour and 45 minutes.
68. *Luis Vargas*, former military officer from Sivia (public official). Date: October 22, 2022. Location: “Hotel Bercú,” Calle 11, Llochegua. Duration: 1 hour and 50 minutes.
69. *Héctor Palomino*, former military officer from the VRAEM (public official). Date: October 22, 2022. Location: Llochegua central square. Duration: 1 hour and 20 minutes.
70. *Henry Antayhua*, President of the Irrigation Commission of Luricocha (civil society leader). Date: October 24, 2022. Location: Jirón Pachapunya, Cuadra 7 (his home), Luricocha.. Duration: 1 hour and 15 minutes.
71. *Christian Pacheco*, psychologist (public official). Date: October 24, 2022. Location: Resto-Café “Portal Huanta,” Jirón Razuilca 5121. Duration: 1 hour and 5 minutes.

72. *John Garmize*, President of Luricocha's *Frente de Defensa* (civil society leader).  
Date: October 24, 2022. Location: Restaurant "Como en Casa," Luricocha central square. Duration: 1 hour and 40 minutes.
73. *Arturo Vidal*, psychologist (public official). Date: October 26, 2022. Location: Av. San Antonio s/n (his office), Luricocha. Duration: 55 minutes.
74. *Zósimo Barboza*, former councilman from Luricocha (public official). Date: October 26, 2022. Location: Luricocha central square. Duration: 2 hours.
75. *Manuel León* (pseudonym), peasant (former CAD leader of Luricocha). Date: November 2, 2022. Location: Jirón 7 de Junio 170, Huanta. Duration: 1 hour and 25 minutes.
76. *Esteban Huamán*, peasant (former CAD leader of Luricocha). Date: November 3, 2022. Location: Restaurant "Como en Casa," Luricocha central square. Duration: 1 hour.
77. *Marcelino Montero*, journalist (key informant). Date: November 5, 2022. Location: "Indiana Café," Av. San Martín 241, Huanta. Duration: 55 minutes.
78. *Sonia Meneses*, teacher (civil society leader). Date: November 5, 2022. Location: Huanta central square. Duration: 2 hours.
79. *Enrique López*, *mototaxi* driver (civil society leader). Date: November 6. Location: Luricocha central square. Duration: 1 hour and 15 minutes.
80. *Miriam Utos*, President of the *Vaso de Leche* program (civil society leader). Date: November 6, 2022. Location: Luricocha municipality. Duration: 45 minutes.

81. *Zhamna Khelye*, environmental engineer (civil society leader). Date: November 7, 2022. Location: Luricocha central square. Duration: 45 minutes.
82. *Gilberto Delgadillo*, police officer from Huanta (public official). Date: November 11, 2022. Location: Av. San Martin 372, Huanta police station. Duration: 55 minutes.
83. *Gilbert Berrocal*, police officer from Huanta (public official) Date: November 11, 2022. Location: Av. San Martin 372, Huanta police station. Duration: 1 hour and 10 minutes.
84. *Feliciano Tello*, journalist (key informant). Date: November 13, 2022. Location: Jirón Cahuide 278, Huanta. Duration: 1 hour and 25 minutes.
85. *Jorge Rivera*, military officer (public official). Date: November 14, 2022. Location: Castropampa military barracks, Huanta. Duration: 1 hour and 15 minutes.
86. *Javier Castillo*, military officer (public official). Date: November 14, 2022. Location: Castropampa military barracks, Huanta. Duration: 40 minutes.
87. *Ramón Pajuelo*, historian (key informant) Date: November 14, 2022. Location: Instituto de Estudios Peruanos, Lima. Duration: 1 hour.
88. *Raúl Asensio*, historian (key informant). Date: November 16, 2022. Location: Zoom interview. Duration: 45 minutes.
89. *Devin Finn*, political scientist (key informant). Date: November 17, 2022. Location: Zoom interview. Duration: 40 minutes.
90. *Ricardo Caro*, sociologist (key informant). Date: November 17, 2022. Location: Zoom interview. Duration: 40 minutes.

91. *Steve Zech*, political scientist (key informant). Date: December 7, 2022. Location:  
Zoom interview. Duration: 1 hour and 5 minutes.

Table 12: Summary of Interviews

| Category of Actor     | Number of Interviewees | Average Interview Length (minutes) | Total Minutes |
|-----------------------|------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------|
| Public Officials      | 25                     | 74                                 | 1,850         |
| CAD Members           | 27                     | 70                                 | 1,890         |
| Key Informants        | 26                     | 67                                 | 1,742         |
| Civil Society Leaders | 13                     | 73                                 | 949           |
| <b>Total</b>          | <b>91</b>              | <b>71</b>                          | <b>6,431</b>  |

The total number of interview minutes conducted exceeds 6,400, equivalent to approximately 107 hours of conversation.

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