

Exploring Covert Diplomacy: A Large-N Analysis of Negotiations between States and Rebel Groups

by

Sümeyye Kaya Uyar

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**Exploring Covert Diplomacy: A Large-N Analysis of
Negotiations between States and Rebel
Groups**

Koç University

Graduate School of Social Sciences and Humanities

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SÜMEYYE KAYA UYAR

and have found that it is complete and satisfactory in all respects, and that
any and all revisions required by the final
examining committee have been made.

Committee Members:

Assoc. Prof. Belgin Şan Akca (Advisor)

Assoc. Prof. Reşat Bayer

Assoc. Prof. Babak Rezaedaryakenari

Assist. Prof. Merin Angın

Assoc. Prof. Tolga Sınmazdemir

Date: 20 September 2023



To my dearest Bahar, you are my constant source of love, hope, and renewal. Your presence in my life has been a guiding force, filling each day with warmth and brightness. As I embark on this academic endeavor, I dedicate this dissertation to you, my eternal spring. Your unwavering support and unwavering love have given me the strength to pursue my dreams and overcome any obstacles. May your spirit always bloom like the flowers of spring, and may your journey be filled with endless opportunities and joy.

ABSTRACT

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SÜMEYYE KAYA UYAR

**Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science and International Relations
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Armed groups seeking political or territorial change have frequently targeted governments, leading to armed conflicts. However, not all of these conflicts are resolved through definitive victories on the battlefield. Consequently, states have increasingly embraced alternative methods to engage with armed groups in pursuit of conflict resolution. Notably intriguing is the frequent use of secret negotiations by democratic governments, despite their commitment to transparency. This study investigates the influence of secret negotiations conducted by democratic governments with rebel groups on armed conflict processes, outcomes, and the effectiveness of conflict resolution efforts. In focusing on democracies, this study confronts the puzzle of their covert interactions with armed groups, a perplexing paradox within their otherwise transparent governance. It specifically examines the role of government-appointed negotiators as representatives, in shaping the credibility and legitimacy of governments in the eyes of rebel groups. The research argues that the assignment of high-level representatives by governments in the bargaining process significantly contributes to achieving the democracies' primary desire for a state of no violence. These negotiators play a crucial role in establishing trust and enhancing the government's credibility among rebel groups, thereby fostering a conducive environment for conflict resolution. This trust and credibility influence the commitment of rebel groups to the peace process and directly drive the reduction or cessation of rebel violence. On the other hand, the engagement of low-level representatives fails to foster trust, resulting in the continuation of violent activities by rebel groups. The study conducts large_N analysis of a newly collected dataset to test the hypotheses and case analysis to further explore the causal mechanisms. By investigating the influence of representative selection in secret negotiations, this research aims to provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of these negotiations in halting violence.

ÖZETÇE

Hedef Devletler ve İsyancı Gruplar Arasındaki Gizli Diplomasiyi Keşfetmek: Büyük-N Analizi

SÜMEYYE KAYA UYAR

Siyaset Bilimi ve Uluslararası İlişkiler, Doktora 20 Eylül 2023

Bu çalışma, demokratik hükümetler tarafından isyancı gruplar ile gerçekleştirilen gizli müzakerelerin çatışma süreçleri, sonuçları ve çatışma çözümü çabalarının etkinliği üzerindeki etkisini araştırmaktadır. Özellikle, hükümetlerin isyancı gruplar nezdinde itibar ve meşruiyetini şekillendirmede müzakerelere gönderdiği temsilcilerin rolünü incelemektedir. Araştırma, yüksek düzeydeki temsilcilerin katılımının isyancı grupların şiddetinde gerçek bir azalmayı sağlamak için kritik öneme sahip olduğunu savunmaktadır. Bu temsilciler isyancı gruplar arasında güven inşa etmeye ve hükümetin itibarını artırmaya katkıda bulunurlar. Bu güven ve itibar, isyancı grupların barış sürecine olan bağlılıklarını etkiler ve isyancı şiddetinin azalmasını veya sona ermesini doğrudan etkiler. Öte yandan, düşük düzeydeki temsilcilerin katılımı güven oluşturmada başarısız olur ve isyancı grupların şiddet faaliyetlerinin devam etmesine neden olur. Çalışma, yeni bir veri seti kullanarak nicel analiz yapmakta ve vaka analizinden yararlanmaktadır.

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I am deeply grateful for the completion of this study, which coincides with the age of my little daughter. This dissertation represents the culmination of relentless hard work, as I navigated the dual roles of being a devoted mother and a dedicated student simultaneously. Throughout the writing process, I witnessed my daughter's growth and development, and this research, in a way, mirrors her journey as well.

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ABBREVIATIONS

ANC	African National Congress
BCNs	Back-Channel Negotiations
DGS	General Directorate of Security
ELN	The National Liberation Army
EPL	Popular Liberation Army
ETA	Basque Homeland and Liberty
ERP	The People's Revolutionary Army
FARC	The Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia
GAL	Antiterrorist Liberation Groups
GTD	Global Terrorism Database
HD Centre	Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue
ICRC	The International Committee of the Red Cross
IGOs	Inter-governmental Organizations
JCPOA	Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action
LTTE	The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam
MNF	The Mizo National Front
M-19	19th April Movement
NAGs	Non-State Armed Groups
NGOs	Non-governmental Organizations
NIS	National Intelligence Services
NSCN-IM	National Socialist Council of Nagaland-Isak Muivah
PIRA	The Provisional Irish Republican Army
PP	Popular Party
PSOE	The Spanish Socialist Workers' Party
PSE-EE	The Socialist Party of the Basque Country–Basque Country Left
PLO	Palestine Liberation Organization

PKK	Kurdish Workers' Party
TAC	Terrorism in Armed Conflict (TAC)
UNITA	The National Union for the Total Independence of Angola
UCDP	Uppsala Conflict Data Project



Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

“That truce had been discussed by me with some leaders of the Provisional Wing of the IRA on 7th July. I arranged to see them because I have, as the House well knows, discussed these grievous Northern Ireland problems with representatives of many shades of opinion. Any action that I could take that would save life or avoid further damage to property seemed to me should be taken” (Whitelaw, Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, 1972).

In 1999, a startling revelation emerged concerning Margaret Thatcher, the former Prime Minister of the United Kingdom. It came to light that she had authorized covert meetings with the Provisional Irish Republican Army (IRA) starting in the early 1990s and continuing thereafter. This disclosure was particularly surprising given Thatcher's longstanding stance that she had never participated in any discussions with the Provisional IRA (Watt, 1999). However, she was not alone in this regard, as both her predecessors and successors had also been involved in secret contacts with the IRA, which eventually became public knowledge. During the Troubles, a period of political violence and conflict in Northern Ireland, Prime Minister Edward Heath, who was in power at the beginning of the conflict, initiated several secret contacts with the IRA. According to the National Archives and the memoirs of those involved, the first of these initiatives included discussions with the opposition leader Harold Wilson in 1972. This was followed by meetings with MI6 officers, the foreign intelligence agency of the United Kingdom, who paved the way for a secret meeting at a ministerial level in 1972 (Mumford 2011, Moloney 2002, Whitelaw 1989, Powell 2008, Taylor 1997).

In July 1972, William Whitelaw, who served as the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland at the time, made a difficult announcement in the House of Commons. He acknowledged that he had been involved in a secret meeting with IRA leaders, following the IRA's disclosure of the meeting. Remarkably, this meeting was the only secret contact the IRA made public, and the group returned to violence shortly afterward. Whitelaw's memoirs provide an explanation for the meeting, stating:

Those who favoured a meeting with the Provisional IRA believed that no opportunity should be missed, and they would have been bitterly critical of a British Government which refused to talk once a truce had been declared. They included in Northern Ireland the Catholic community led by the SDLP, and a sizeable group of Protestants, mainly those in the business community not closely associated with politics. In the rest of the United Kingdom, I knew that I would lose the support of the Opposition parties at Westminster if I turned down a meeting, particularly since Harold Wilson, as Leader of the Opposition, had already met the Provisional IRA leaders in Dublin in March. Nor did I feel that a British Government would find it easy to explain to world opinion, particularly the Irish community in the United States of America, why it would not talk once the terrorist action had been stopped, even if only temporarily (Whitelaw, 1989, p 99).

The British government maintained covert communication with the IRA in order to bring an end to the violence in the country. This approach of secret dialogue with the IRA continued under the administrations of Thatcher and Major following Prime Minister Heath. John Major, in response to a Member of Parliament advocating for face-to-face talks with the IRA for peace negotiations, made a statement in the House of Commons on November 1, 1993. He expressed his strong opposition to such talks, stating, "Gentleman is very lucid, and as almost ever, he is entirely wrong. If the implication of his remarks is that we should sit down and talk with Mr. Adams and the Provisional IRA, I can say only that that would turn my stomach and those of most hon... I will not talk to people who murder indiscriminately" (UK Parliament, 1993). Interestingly, at the end of the same month, the Observer newspaper published headlines exposing that Major had secret links with the IRA dating back to the beginning of his tenure as Prime Minister (Bevins, Mallie, and Holland 1993). Subsequently, Jonathan Powell, former Chief of Staff to Tony Blair, and the National Archives confirmed that the secret contact had been in place since

1971 and persisted throughout the formal peace negotiations. It became apparent that the peace settlement would not have been possible without this covert channel, which played a significant role in overcoming occasional obstacles (Powell 2008, Watt 2008).

The culmination of these secret and official negotiations ultimately led to a significant outcome: the IRA ceased violence in 1994, and the parties signed a peace agreement in 1998. The IRA declared a permanent ceasefire on August 31, 1994. This ceasefire, known as the IRA's "Complete Cessation of Military Operations," was a significant development in the peace process in Northern Ireland. It represented a commitment from the IRA to end its armed campaign and pursue its objectives through peaceful means. The ceasefire was a crucial step towards creating an environment conducive to negotiations and eventually led to the signing of the Good Friday Agreement in 1998. It is important to note that this ceasefire was not an isolated event but rather the result of discussions and agreements that took place in secret meetings between the parties involved. Through covert channels of communication and secret meetings between the IRA and the British government, ongoing discussions had been taking place to explore the possibility of a ceasefire and a shift towards peaceful means. These clandestine negotiations played a pivotal role in building trust, finding common ground, and laying the groundwork for the eventual declaration of the ceasefire. The IRA's "Complete Cessation of Military Operations" represented a significant commitment by the organization to bring an end to its armed campaign and pursue its objectives through peaceful and political avenues. This decision was instrumental in creating an environment conducive to negotiations, fostering an atmosphere of reconciliation and compromise.

While the Troubles were unfolding in the 1970s in Northern Ireland, a parallel event was taking place in Spain between the Spanish government and ETA (Euskadi Ta Askatasuna). This was a period when Spain was undergoing a fragile transition from the Franco dictatorship to democracy, and the government was grappling with the challenge of dealing with ETA attacks within its borders. In the late 1950s, ETA was formed with the initial goal of defending the Basque language and culture while resisting Franco's regime. ETA's actions were initially non-violent, focusing on advocating for Basque identity. However, their tactics escalated over time,

progressing from property damage to robberies, sabotage, and bombings (Clark, 1990). A pivotal moment came in 1968 when ETA was responsible for the death of a Spanish national police officer at a checkpoint. This incident marked the first instance of ETA taking life and represented a significant shift towards more aggressive and lethal tactics (Mees 2021).

During the late 1970s, ETA intensified its violent activities as Spain transitioned to democracy. Their targets primarily included police officers and politicians, resulting in over 800 deaths. In response to ETA's violence, the Spanish authorities implemented measures to identify and imprison ETA members. However, these measures faced criticism for their perceived heavy-handedness, with reports of detainment and alleged torture of ETA members and supporters while in custody (Amnesty International 2009, Morentin, Petersen, Callado, Idoyaga, & Meana 2008). In addition, the Spanish government allegedly funded a paramilitary group known as GAL (Antiterrorist and Liberation Groups) in 1980s (Woodworth 2001). GAL carried out kidnappings, torture, and murders, primarily targeting Basques in France. Although many of their victims were associated with ETA, some had no affiliation (Hooper 1995).

Alongside these events, the Spanish government held secret contacts with ETA intermittently over the years, characterized by breaks and restarts in the dialogue process with the primary objective of halting ETA attacks and establishing a period of non-violence (Clark, 1990; Bew, Frampton, and Gurruchaga, 2009; Esser and Bridges, 2011; Whitfield, 2014). In late December 1976, following the referendum for a democratic transition in Spain, the first known meeting between the Spanish government and ETA took place in Geneva. ETA designated two representatives known as "polimilis," who had close ties to the leadership of ETA. The specific identity of the Spanish representative remains undisclosed, but it is reported that the representative was likely a member of the armed forces general staff (Clark 1990: 78). During this initial meeting, the participants clearly outlined the conditions necessary for a potential agreement. These conditions included ETA's agreement to a truce and the government's commitment to legalize political parties in Spain. However, the subsequent meetings have proven unsuccessful in either reducing ETA

violence or halting it, despite ETA's occasional ceasefire declarations. Among the ETA leadership, the lack of trust in the Spanish government persisted even after some secret meetings were conducted. ok

There were high-level meetings with ETA leaders, which opened the path for further discussions in Algeria, where prominent ETA figures were in exile. Unfortunately, the talks in Algeria did not lead to any agreement between the conflicting parties. The Spanish government sent police officials and low-level political figures despite one ETA leader's warnings that Spain must send "a political spokesman at the highest level with the objective of initiating a phase of conversations of a political character leading to the preparation of a possible future framework of accords" (as quoted in Clark, 1990, p. 195-196). Spanish governments were often very cautious about who they dispatched as government representatives. According to a former Interior Minister of Spain, the authorization for secret negotiations with ETA was granted to an individual who could be disavowed by the government if the meetings were leaked. The Minister further revealed that the prime minister issued an order stipulating that any affiliation with the central government would be denied or disowned in the event of leaks regarding the operation (Whitfield, 2014). Over time, this approach proved ineffective in establishing trust and fostering goodwill among ETA leaders, resulting in divergent outcomes in the Basque conflict compared to the Irish conflict.

The secret contacts between the IRA and the British government, as well as between ETA and the Spanish government, are just a few examples among many instances where democracies have engaged in covert communications with nonstate armed groups with various results. Similar secret negotiations occurred between the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) and Israel in the late 1990s and led to the sign of the Oslo Accords, officially known as the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements, in Washington, D.C., on September 13, 1993 (Wanis-St John, 2006).

Similarly, in 2007, the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) and Turkey engaged in secret talks that paved the way for the Turkish government to declare the "Kurdish Opening" in 2009. This groundbreaking policy move was a direct result of the series

of covert meetings, often referred to as the "Oslo talks." Although the Oslo talks and the subsequent Kurdish Opening generated hope for progress, the road to peace remained challenging and faced numerous hurdles. While the talks represented an unprecedented attempt at reconciliation, achieving a comprehensive and lasting agreement proved elusive (Ünal 2016, Kadioğlu 2019, Savran 2020).

The peace negotiations between the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) and the Colombian government are another compelling example of secret negotiations that culminated in a historic peace agreement. The peace talks between the Colombian government and the FARC began in earnest in 2012, with both sides showing a genuine commitment to finding a peaceful resolution to the decades-long conflict. However, what the public did not know at the time was that secret negotiations had been ongoing for several months before the official announcement of the talks. The covert meetings were held in Havana, Cuba, and were facilitated by the governments of Norway and Cuba, along with the support of Venezuela and Chile (Segura and Delphine 2017). On August 24, 2016, after four years of secret and public negotiations, the Colombian government and the FARC announced the finalization of the peace agreement.

These examples highlight the utilization of secret negotiations by democratic governments and the potential of these secret engagements as a viable approach to conflict resolution within democratic contexts¹. The focus of this study is on democracies, precisely because the utilization of secrecy in diplomatic negotiations stands in apparent contradiction to the norm of transparency that democracies typically uphold. While it would not be surprising to see autocratic governments engaging in secret negotiations, the intriguing aspect lies in the fact that despite their commitment to transparency, democracies indeed participate in such discreet engagements. This enigmatic puzzle forms the basis for the investigation into the outcomes of secret negotiations between democratic states and rebel groups, with a particular emphasis on understanding the factors that contribute to variations in negotiation outcomes.

¹ This study acknowledges the distinctions that exist between the concepts of conflict resolution and conflict management. In the context of this study, conflict resolution is broadly defined as secret negotiations can be utilized at any stage of resolution processes.

Secret negotiations offer a unique setting where parties can engage in candid exchanges, build trust, and explore innovative solutions away from the public eye, which can be particularly advantageous in delicate and complex conflict scenarios. However, secret negotiations are not without challenges, and the road to peace remains fraught with hurdles and setbacks. This study aims to investigate the outcomes of secret negotiations between democratic states and rebel groups, with a particular focus on understanding the factors that contribute to variations in negotiation outcomes. The research argues that the variation in outcomes is influenced by how governments conduct these negotiations, which, in turn, is contingent upon their cost calculation in the event of public disclosures. To analyze this, the study adopts audience cost theory to examine how governments strategize their negotiation approaches based on the potential consequences of public disclosure. Democratic governments' methods in secret negotiations are significantly influenced by their efforts to mitigate potential costs and repercussions that may arise once the negotiations become public knowledge. While the negotiations remain undisclosed, they do not impose substantial burdens on the parties involved. However, upon revelation, there can be electoral implications and other consequences that governments must confront. To manage these post-leak costs effectively, democratic governments employ a range of mechanisms.

In cases where governments possess substantial political power and resources to handle post-leak costs effectively, they are expected to send high-level government representatives to negotiations. This decision serves as a signal of the government's commitment to the negotiation process and its willingness to address rebel concerns seriously. Conversely, in cases where governments lack strong political backing, they are expected to mitigate potential post-leak costs by dispatching low-level representatives. This approach allows them to maintain plausible deniability and minimize the political and reputational costs associated with secret negotiations. The type of government representative sends a powerful signal to the rebel group regarding the government's intentions in conducting secret negotiations. High-level government representatives are expected to build trust among rebels and increase their commitment level to the secret negotiation process. On the other hand, low-level government representatives are likely to have the opposite effect, leading to

decreased trust and commitment from rebel groups. Rebels who have trust in the government's genuine intention are more likely to decrease their level of violence as negotiations progress, whereas rebels who are skeptical may increase their level of violence and may not adhere to promises, even if they declare ceasefires during the negotiation process.

1.1 Representatives Matter

Engaging in secret contacts does not guarantee success in conflict resolution, despite the numerous advantages it offers. These advantages include the opportunity for clear and direct exchanges, as well as the ability to engage without compromising legitimacy. Secret contacts also create a unique environment where conflicting parties can assess each other's reliability, trustworthiness, and authority. However, the success or failure of secret negotiations relies heavily on how states lead the process. The way in which the negotiations are conducted plays a crucial role in establishing trust between the parties and fostering a sense of commitment to the process. Particularly for democratic states, their approaches to handling secret negotiation processes differ, contingent upon their ability to manage potential public exposure.

Prior to negotiations, both governments and rebel groups carefully consider the potential ramifications of leaks. For democratic governments, the focus lies on anticipating the repercussions of public exposure and conducting a thorough evaluation of their capacity to manage and mitigate any adverse effects. This involves weighing various factors such as public perception, political consequences, diplomatic implications, and the overall credibility and legitimacy of the government. The aim is to determine whether they possess the necessary resources, strategies, and support systems to effectively handle any fallout that might occur due to a leak.

On the other side, for rebel groups, the exposure of secret contacts carries significant risks, particularly when it comes to the safety of their leaders. The fear of becoming targets for rival factions or hardliners within their own ranks, who oppose negotiations, is a genuine concern. A tragic example of this occurred during secret negotiations with the Spanish government, where at least three ETA leaders were

assassinated after their clandestine meetings were made public (Clark, 1990). Moreover, leaks of such negotiations can deeply impact the internal dynamics of rebel groups, potentially leading to divisions within their ranks. For instance, the leader of the IRA chose not to inform the military council about his secret talks with the British government to prevent splintering within the group (Moloney 2002). Thus, safeguarding confidentiality in these negotiations is essential to maintain the cohesion and unity of rebel groups.

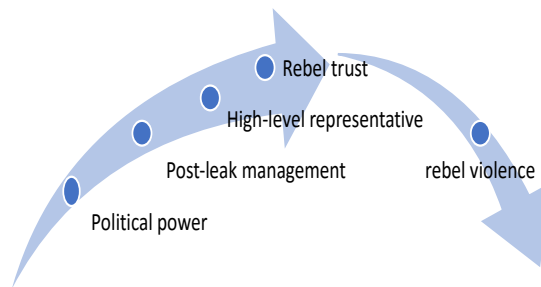
This study contends that the approach of democratic governments in leading secret negotiations is significantly influenced by their strategies for mitigating the potential costs and repercussions that may arise after the negotiations are exposed to the public. As long as the negotiations remain undisclosed, they do not impose substantial costs on the involved parties. However, once the information is revealed to the public, there can be electoral implications and other consequences that governments need to address. To manage these post-leak costs effectively, democratic governments employ various mechanisms. When a government possesses ample political power and resources to handle such situations, it may choose to deploy authoritative representatives in the negotiation process. This decision signals the government's commitment to resolving the conflict and putting an end to violence. By involving high-level representatives, the government demonstrates its willingness to address the concerns of the rebel group seriously and engage in substantive discussions.

By deploying authoritative representatives, the government can foster trust by signaling seriousness and reassuring the rebel group that the negotiations are substantive and capable of addressing their demands. This strategic approach aims to showcase the government's competence and dedication to achieving a peaceful resolution, thereby increasing the likelihood of success in the secret negotiation process.

If a government lacks sufficient political power and resources to manage the potential costs of secret negotiations effectively, it may choose a different approach. In such cases, they may opt for low-level representatives to engage in the negotiations. This strategy allows the government to maintain plausible deniability in case of a leak or public scrutiny. By using low-level representatives, the

government aims to minimize the potential backlash and public perception of their involvement in secret negotiations. These representatives may have limited authority or influence, allowing the government to distance themselves from the negotiation process if necessary. This approach serves as a risk management strategy for the government. By keeping their involvement at a lower level, they can minimize the potential political and reputational costs associated with secret negotiations. It provides them with the flexibility to disassociate themselves from the negotiations if they become public while still having some level of engagement with the rebel group.

Whether a government dispatches a high- or low-level representative affects how secret negotiations unfold. This study argues that the government representatives matter in building trust with the rebels. Trust-building is a complex and delicate process that requires consistent effort and demonstration of goodwill from the government side so that rebels cease violence. The trust and credibility of the government are vital in establishing a lasting commitment to the peace process in secret negotiations. Governments often demand the cessation of violence by rebel groups as a prerequisite for further talks, both in secret and eventually in public. This demand for a cessation of violence has been evident in various cases, such as the UK government's insistence on the Provisional IRA's renouncement of violence in confidential meetings, the Indian government's discussions on a ceasefire with the NSCN-IM, and the Spanish government's requirement for ETA to declare a ceasefire before engaging in secret negotiations. However, rebel groups face challenges in deciding to declare and uphold a ceasefire, as doing so carries the risk of losing support from followers who expect continued pursuit of their goals. The long-term commitment of rebel groups to a ceasefire depends on their trust in the government's willingness to address grievances and accommodate their demands. While rebel groups may make promises and publicly declare ceasefires during secret negotiations, the actual adherence to these commitments varies. In the case of Spain, the government's hesitation to send high-level officials resulted in anger and distrust among ETA leadership, leading to a breakdown in maintaining the ceasefire and sporadic acts of violence. Figure 1.1 offers a brief visualization of the proposed causal mechanisms.

Figure 1.1: A Brief Illustration of Causal Mechanisms

The involvement of low-level participants in secret negotiations can also hinder the decision-making process and prolong the negotiation timeline. For example, in a specific case involving the Portuguese colonial authority in Angola, the use of timber merchants as intermediaries resulted in unanswered questions and uncertainties. This necessitated further engagement and subsequent rounds of discussions, contributing to a prolonged conflict process and increased mistrust among the rebel group. This example underscores the importance of having representatives with sufficient decision-making authority involved in secret negotiations to facilitate efficient and productive dialogue.

In another instance, the direct involvement of the Colombian President in a meeting with the leader of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) played a pivotal role in restarting peace negotiations. Recognizing the significant power held by the FARC at that time, the President's presence demonstrated a genuine commitment to finding a peaceful resolution (Dudley 2004, Kline 2007). This high-level engagement signaled a renewed effort to rebuild trust and engage in substantive discussions, representing a readiness to explore potential avenues for resolving the conflict.

Rebel groups occasionally declare ceasefires; however, these declarations often hold symbolic value as the rebels continue to engage in acts of violence. In this regard, this study underscores the significance of evaluating the success of secret negotiations based on the rebels' dedication to ending violence during the negotiation process, which requires upholding the ceasefires they declare. Such commitment holds the potential to pave the way for establishing lasting peace agreements. The evaluation process involves monitoring the occurrence of violent

incidents or attacks attributed to the rebel group and assessing whether there is a significant decrease in such occurrences.

The effectiveness of a ceasefire by rebel groups is closely linked to the level of trust they have in the government, and this trust is influenced by the selection of government representatives in secret talks. Trust plays a pivotal role in the decision-making process of rebel groups regarding the cessation of violence, as they seek assurance that the government will honor its commitments and engage in genuine negotiations. To demonstrate its seriousness and commitment to resolving the conflict, the governments are expected to choose high-level representatives who possess credibility and the ability to follow through on agreements. This selection sends a strong message to the rebel groups about the government's determination to achieve a peaceful resolution.

1.2 Research Focus and Objectives

This research specifically focuses on the engagement of democratic governments in secret negotiations with rebel groups. The decision to narrow the focus to democratic regimes is motivated by the recognition that non-democracies often employ non-transparent decision-making processes and engaging in secret negotiations may be less surprising in such contexts. In contrast, it is puzzling that democracies would engage in secret talks given their commitment to transparency and accountability.

By examining the dynamics of secret negotiations within democratic systems, this research aims to shed light on the motivations, strategies, and outcomes of these clandestine endeavors. This research aims to answer the following questions:

- (1) What factors contribute to democratic states engaging in secret negotiations with rebel groups?
- (2) What factors underlie the variations in outcomes of secret negotiations between democratic states and rebel groups, particularly in terms of their impact on reducing violence? Why do some secret negotiations result in reducing violence while others do not?
- (3) Under what conditions do rebels commit to secret negotiations?

- (4) How does the rebels' commitment to a ceasefire influence the success or failure of secret negotiations in terms of halting violence?
- (5) How do the ways in which democratic governments conduct secret negotiations affect the behavior and actions of rebel groups following secret contacts, and how do their strategies contribute to the effectiveness of these negotiations in achieving a sustainable cessation of violence?
- (6) What are the roles of government representatives in shaping rebel behavior in terms of adhering to ceasefire declarations?

1.3 Rationale and Significance

Understanding the underlying factors that contribute to variations in outcomes within secret negotiations is of significant importance. It can provide valuable insights into the strategies employed by democratic governments and their impact on rebel behavior. By investigating the selection of government representatives and their role in shaping the rebels' commitment to the negotiation process, this study highlights the significance of representative selection in achieving successful outcomes.

Moreover, exploring the conditions under which rebels commit to secret negotiations is crucial for understanding the motivations and incentives that drive their engagement. This knowledge can inform policymakers and practitioners in designing more effective peace processes and conflict resolution strategies. By examining the nuances and dynamics of secret negotiations, this study aims to contribute to the broader understanding of their roles on conflict resolution in democratic contexts. The implications of the findings from this study have the potential to make a substantial impact on the success rate of future secret peace negotiations and pave the way for longer-lasting non-violent periods, ultimately leading to peace. Ultimately, this research endeavors to make a meaningful contribution to the field of peace and conflict studies, advancing our understanding of the complexities involved in negotiating with nonstate armed groups and paving the way for more effective and sustainable conflict resolution approaches.

1.4 Scope and Limitations

The scope of this study is focused on examining the dynamics of secret negotiations in intrastate conflicts, with a particular emphasis on the role of high-level representatives and their impact on conflict outcomes. The study draws on a diverse range of cases from different regions and time periods, including the Northern Ireland conflict and the Basque conflict, to provide a comprehensive analysis.

However, it is important to acknowledge the limitations of this study. Firstly, the data collected for this study is based on available sources, including declassified materials, investigative journalism studies, memoirs of attendants, and interviews conducted by academic experts on the cases. While these sources provide valuable insights, they may be subject to limitations in terms of data availability, reliability, and completeness. The analysis of secret negotiations inherently relies on limited access to information, as these negotiations are conducted discreetly and often kept confidential. As a result, there may be certain aspects of the negotiations that are not fully captured or understood due to their secretive nature. These limitations may affect the comprehensiveness and accuracy of the findings and conclusions drawn in this study.

Due to time limitations, the dataset used in this study covers a total of 55 rebel groups from various regions, including Europe, Asia, South America, and the Middle East. The inclusion of additional cases and rebel groups would further enhance the breadth and depth of the research, allowing for a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of secret negotiations in intrastate conflicts.

Therefore, a future research plan is to expand the dataset by including a wider range of rebel groups and conflicts to provide a more comprehensive analysis of the topic.

The focus of this study is currently limited to secret negotiations in democracies. However, it is acknowledged that intrastate conflicts and secret negotiations occur in various political contexts, including non-democratic states. In future research projects, there is a plan to expand the scope of analysis to include non-democratic states that are targeted by rebel groups. By incorporating these cases, the research will be able to explore the dynamics of secret negotiations in a broader range of political systems. This expansion will provide a more comprehensive understanding

of how secret negotiations operate and their implications for conflict resolution and peacebuilding in both democratic and non-democratic contexts.

The inclusion of non-democratic states in the analysis will contribute to a more robust and inclusive examination of secret negotiations. It will offer insights into the specific challenges and dynamics that arise when negotiating with rebel groups within authoritarian or non-democratic regimes. By considering the unique political, social, and institutional factors at play in these contexts, future research projects can provide valuable insights for policymakers and practitioners working on conflict resolution and peacebuilding efforts worldwide.

While this study acknowledges the importance of ideological motivations and the presence of a political wing within rebel groups, there are other aspects that warrant further exploration. One aspect that can be considered is the organizational structure and internal dynamics of rebel groups. Factors such as group cohesion, command and control mechanisms, decision-making hierarchies, and the role of key leaders can shape how rebel groups approach and engage in secret negotiations. Understanding these dynamics can provide valuable insights into the decision-making processes within rebel groups.

1.5 Methodology Overview

This study utilizes a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative analysis, to comprehensively examine the dynamics of secret negotiations, government behaviors in conducting such negotiations, and their impacts on rebel behavior and the overall conflict process.

A novel dataset comprising 56 rebel groups was collected, forming the basis for the quantitative analysis. This dataset includes cases randomly selected from various regions and time periods, providing a diverse and comprehensive perspective on secret negotiations. The quantitative analysis aims to identify patterns, trends, and correlations related to the involvement of high-level representatives, negotiation outcomes, and the dynamics of rebel behavior.

In addition to the quantitative analysis, this study includes a detailed case analysis of selected conflict cases. Two prominent conflict cases in Europe, namely the

Northern Ireland conflict and the Basque conflict, are examined in-depth. These case studies provide valuable insights into the specific dynamics of secret negotiations and help with further refining of the causal mechanisms proposed. The case analysis draws on primary and secondary sources, including academic literature, policy reports, and media sources, to gain a comprehensive understanding of the contextual factors, motivations, and consequences associated with secret negotiations.

The mixed-methods approach employed in this study enables a comprehensive exploration of the research questions and allows for a more nuanced understanding of the phenomena under investigation. The quantitative analysis provides a broader perspective by identifying general trends and patterns across multiple cases, while the qualitative analysis delves into the specific details and intricacies of the selected case studies. By integrating quantitative and qualitative analysis, this study aims to contribute to the existing literature on secret negotiations and provide valuable insights into the complexities of conflict resolution processes. The combination of a novel dataset, quantitative analysis, and detailed case studies enhances the robustness and comprehensiveness of the research findings, ultimately advancing our understanding of the dynamics of secret negotiations and their role in conflict resolution.

1.6 Contribution of the Study

The findings of this study make several significant contributions to the field of conflict resolution, the study of secret negotiations, and secret diplomacy in intrastate contexts. Firstly, this study contributes to the field of conflict resolution by examining the role of secret negotiations in intrastate conflicts. While much of the existing literature focuses on formal, public negotiations, this study sheds light on the significance and dynamics of secret negotiations in resolving conflicts. By analyzing the factors influencing the use of secret negotiations and their impact on conflict outcomes, this study adds to our understanding of alternative approaches to conflict resolution. It offers valuable insights into the ongoing interactions between states and rebel groups. The study specifically focuses on understanding the reasoning behind the government's choice of representatives in secret talks and assesses how this decision influences the conflict process. Additionally, it examines the role of these representatives in building trust or exacerbating mistrust with rebel

groups. Through this investigation, the research provides valuable insights into the intricacies of secret negotiations and their potential importance in shaping conflict resolution strategies and outcomes. Furthermore, this study contributes significantly to the research on secret negotiations by offering a comprehensive analysis of their dynamics and implications. The novel dataset compiled for this research includes information on secret negotiations between democratic states and rebel groups from various regions and time periods. This dataset allows for a systematic examination of multiple cases, offering a valuable resource for future research and facilitating comparative analysis.

The dataset's detailed nature is especially noteworthy, providing specific information for each secret engagement between state and rebel pairs. It includes essential details such as the exact time and location of the secret event, the participating government and rebel representatives, and comprehensive information about any intermediaries involved in the negotiations. By harnessing this rich dataset, scholars can identify patterns, trends, and factors that play a pivotal role in shaping the outcomes of secret negotiations. The study's thorough approach and the availability of this detailed dataset offer new avenues for in-depth exploration and understanding of the complexities surrounding secret negotiations in resolving conflicts between democratic states and rebel groups.

Furthermore, this study holds significant value in enhancing our understanding of secret diplomacy within intrastate contexts, an area that has received relatively little attention compared to secret diplomacy in inter-state relations. By exploring the motivations, strategies, and outcomes of secret negotiations, this research sheds light on the intricacies of diplomatic efforts conducted discreetly behind the scenes. It offers insights into how governments and rebel groups navigate the challenges of secret negotiations, maintain secrecy, and manage trust-building processes to facilitate conflict resolution.

Last but not least, the findings of this study hold practical implications for policymakers and practitioners engaged in conflict resolution efforts. By emphasizing the significance of high-level representatives in secret negotiations and the potential risks of their absence, this research offers valuable guidance for policymakers in structuring and conducting effective negotiations. The insights

gleaned from this study can inform decision-making processes and contribute to the development of well-informed strategies that promote successful conflict resolution. Recognizing the importance of authoritative representatives can aid in establishing a conducive environment for meaningful dialogue and trust-building between conflicting parties. Moreover, the study's emphasis on the potential pitfalls associated with the lack of high-level representatives underscores the need for thoughtful and deliberate selection of negotiators. Policymakers can utilize this knowledge to enhance their approach to secret diplomacy, which, in turn, may lead to more productive negotiations and increased chances of sustainable peace in intrastate conflicts. By incorporating the lessons learned from this research, policymakers and practitioners can work towards fostering trust, reducing violence, and ultimately achieving lasting peace in challenging intrastate conflict situations. The practical implications derived from this study offer valuable tools and insights that can be instrumental in shaping conflict resolution efforts and creating a more stable and peaceful future for affected communities.

1.7 Outline of the Study

Chapter 2 of this dissertation embarks on a comprehensive literature review and establishes the theoretical framework that underpins the exploration of secret negotiations between governments and rebel groups. The chapter commences with an introduction, setting the stage for the ensuing analysis. It then delves into an extensive literature review, examining the concept of secret diplomacy in both foreign policy and domestic settings. The review assesses past studies and scholarly contributions, highlighting the complexities and implications of secret negotiations.

Within the theoretical framework section, the chapter scrutinizes key theoretical perspectives that shed light on the dynamics of secret negotiations. Specifically, it explores the debates on democratic response to an insurgency, elucidating how governments engage in clandestine talks to address internal conflicts. Additionally, the audience cost theory is examined to understand the influence of potential leaks on government behavior during secret negotiations. Within this context, the chapter further investigates leak prevention mechanisms and cost mitigation strategies, emphasizing the impact of political support on representative selection during secret

diplomacy. Moreover, the chapter delves into the crucial aspect of the rebel's commitment to the peace process, analyzing how representative selection plays a pivotal role in shaping the negotiation outcomes. This section culminates in the formulation of hypotheses that will be scrutinized and tested in subsequent chapters.

Chapter 3 explores the complexities of the research design adopted to investigate secret negotiations between governments and rebel groups. The chapter commences with an introduction that provides a clear overview of its contents. It then proceeds to define and delineate the concept of a secret contact, laying the groundwork for the subsequent analysis.

The chapter emphasizes the need for a new dataset, prompting a detailed explanation of the development and rationale behind the creation of the "Dataset on Secret Contacts (SECON) between Rebel Groups and Target States." This dataset serves as a crucial resource, enabling a comprehensive examination of the phenomenon of secret negotiations. To facilitate the investigation, the chapter identifies and defines the dependent variable that will be assessed throughout the research. It also presents the main independent variables, which will be pivotal in understanding the factors that influence the outcomes of secret negotiations. Additionally, control variables are introduced and justified to ensure the research considers potential confounding factors. The research method employed in this study is meticulously outlined, elucidating the chosen approach and techniques used to analyze the data collected. This includes a detailed explanation of the statistical methods and models utilized to test the formulated hypotheses rigorously. Furthermore, the chapter provides descriptive statistics, offering a preliminary understanding of the dataset's key characteristics and facilitating the interpretation of the subsequent results and analysis. Overall, Chapter 3 establishes the robustness and validity of the research design, enabling a comprehensive and systematic investigation of the dynamics of secret negotiations between governments and rebel groups.

In Chapter 4, the focus shifts to presenting the results of the investigation into secret negotiations between governments and rebel groups. The heart of this chapter lies in the analysis of the SECON dataset. The chapter explores the relationship between various variables and their impact on the outcomes of secret negotiations. It employs

rigorous statistical techniques to test the formulated hypotheses, drawing meaningful conclusions from the data. The chapter provides a comprehensive discussion of the regression results, offering insights into the factors that contribute to the success or failure of secret negotiations. The findings are presented in a clear and structured manner, allowing readers to grasp the significance of each variable and its implications for understanding the dynamics of secret diplomacy. To enhance the understanding of the results, relevant tables, graphs, and charts are incorporated into the chapter. These visual aids serve to clarify complex data patterns and support the analysis. Moreover, Chapter 4 critically examines the results in light of the existing literature and theoretical framework established in previous chapters. It addresses any discrepancies and discusses potential reasons for observed trends, contributing to the overall coherence of the dissertation's argument. The presentation of empirical evidence enhances the credibility of the study, laying the groundwork for the subsequent case analyses and the formulation of policy recommendations in the subsequent chapters.

Chapter 5 employs a comparative case study approach, analyzing different instances of secret negotiations between governments and rebel groups. It examines the Troubles between the United Kingdom and the IRA, providing a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics and outcomes of secret negotiations in that context. Additionally, the chapter delves into a case study on negotiating with ETA in secret by the Spanish government, shedding light on the unique challenges and outcomes of secret negotiations with this specific rebel group.

Through these case analyses, the chapter offers in-depth insights into the complexities, successes, and failures of secret negotiations. It critically examines the factors that influenced the course of each negotiation, providing valuable lessons and understanding for policymakers and researchers alike. Building upon the findings from the case studies, Chapter 5 presents policy recommendations for future secret negotiations between governments and rebel groups. These recommendations are informed by the empirical evidence and insights gained from the research, aiming to improve the effectiveness and outcomes of such negotiations in the future. Furthermore, the chapter identifies avenues for future research in the field of secret diplomacy, highlighting areas that warrant further exploration and

investigation. It provides a roadmap for researchers interested in expanding the knowledge and understanding of secret negotiations and their implications. Finally, Chapter 5 concludes the dissertation by summarizing the key findings, reiterating the research objectives, and reflecting on the significance of the study. It emphasizes the contributions made to the field, acknowledges any limitations, and concludes with a thought-provoking final statement. The chapter serves as a fitting conclusion to the dissertation, leaving readers with a deeper understanding of the complexities of secret diplomacy and its implications for conflict resolution and peacebuilding efforts.



Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

“The PLO is a terrorist organization with whom there is no point in even deluding ourselves into thinking we can negotiate” (Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs 1985).

“We will never negotiate with terrorists” (Former Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, 2012)

“We will not hold direct negotiations with Russian terrorists” (Ukrainian Prime Minister, Arseny Yatsenyuk, 2014)

2.1 Introduction

In the face of solid statements from government officials of democratic states quoted above, who denounced negotiations with rebel groups, it is intriguing to observe the contrasting reality of actual engagement in talks with such organizations. While leaders like Margaret Thatcher, John Major, and Benjamin Netanyahu vehemently rejected the notion of negotiating with terrorists, their governments have, at times, entered into secret negotiations with these same groups. A prominent and recent example of such secret negotiations is the case of the United States engaging in talks with the Taliban to bring an end to the protracted conflict in Afghanistan. The talks took place over several years, with the earliest meetings in 2010 (Brooking 2022, Sheikh 2013). The negotiations aimed to reach a peace deal that would allow the US to withdraw its troops from Afghanistan and end the conflict. The talks were conducted in secret because of concerns that they could be disrupted by spoilers or other groups opposed to a peace deal. During a visit to Afghanistan in May 2011, while covert negotiations with the Taliban were ongoing, former President Obama publicly expressed a position against the group by stating, "We will not negotiate

with the Taliban." However, despite the initial denial, several rounds of secret talks eventually led to a historic agreement between the US and the Taliban in 2020 in Doha, Qatar. Under the terms of the agreement, the US agreed to withdraw its troops from Afghanistan in exchange for a commitment from the Taliban to prevent terrorist groups from operating in Afghanistan and to engage in peace talks with the Afghan government (Brooking, 2022). These negotiations were conducted in secrecy, with the details only being disclosed after the signing of the US-Taliban agreement. This case represents a successful outcome of secret negotiations, resulting in a tangible agreement. However, it is important to acknowledge that not all secret negotiations yield such positive results, particularly in terms of reaching a peace deal. A pertinent example is observed in the context of the Spanish government's numerous secret negotiations with the Basque separatist group ETA, which ultimately did not culminate in the signing of a peace agreement. What explains this variation in secret negotiations outcome?

This research seeks to understand the underlying factors contributing to the success or failure of secret negotiations and poses the central question of why some negotiations result in agreements while others do not. While existing literature has primarily emphasized the direct effects of secret negotiations on the peace process outcome, this study aims to broaden the theoretical framework by considering the rebels' commitment to a ceasefire as a crucial indicator of success. By evaluating the behavior and actions of rebel groups following secret contacts, we can gain insights into the effectiveness of these negotiations in fostering a sustainable cessation of violence. Secret negotiations cannot be evaluated solely based on the end result of a civil conflict, such as the signing or non-signing of a peace agreement. The gradual and cumulative impacts of these confidential talks play a pivotal role in shaping the overall conflict resolution process. Therefore, to truly understand the success or failure of secret negotiations, examining their cumulative impacts throughout the conflict resolution process is necessary. By doing so, we can gain a more nuanced understanding of how these confidential talks influence the overall trajectory of the conflict.

One example that highlights this phenomenon is the Good Friday Agreement involving the UK. The Good Friday Agreement, signed in 1998, marked a

significant milestone in the Northern Ireland peace process. However, it is crucial to note that the path leading to this agreement was characterized by a series of secret contacts and negotiations that spanned a much longer timeframe. In the case of the Good Friday Agreement, the first known secret contact between various parties occurred as early as 1969, with subsequent secret negotiations occurring intermittently. These secret contacts and negotiations, which began almost three decades before the agreement was signed, were instrumental in building trust, fostering understanding, and laying the groundwork for the eventual resolution of the conflict. The Good Friday Agreement represented a culmination of years of behind-the-scenes efforts, with the secret negotiations as a vital component in building the conditions for a peaceful resolution. Although we cannot definitively assert that secret negotiations were the sole driving force behind the Good Friday Agreement, it is clear that they wielded a substantial impact on the process of conflict resolution. The gradual influence stemming from these confidential discussions and other contributing factors played a significant role in creating the favorable conditions that eventually led to the peace agreement in Northern Ireland. A similar example can be observed in the extraordinary outcome of the secret talks in Oslo between the PLO and the Israeli government, which gained global attention in 1993. Contrary to common assumptions that these contacts had only recently begun in 1992, the progression of these negotiations extended much further back, involving years of building and nurturing relationships (Powell, 2014).

Recent research highlights the significance of secret negotiations on conflict outcomes as a vital precursor to formal talks, acting as a socializing platform for parties to interact confidentially (Doyle and Hegele 2021; Dochartaigh 2021; Pruitt 2006, 2008). Building upon existing studies on inter-state secret negotiations, scholars argue that these covert dialogues facilitate a shift from adversarial bargaining to cooperative problem-solving (Schiff, 2008; Fisher, 1989, 2007; Kelman, 1997; Rothman, 1995). Secret negotiations are also crucial in overcoming deadlocks during official discussions, providing a trustful environment for open dialogue on sensitive matters, and enhancing the likelihood of reaching mutually beneficial agreements (Wanis-St John 2006, Pruitt 2006). However, existing studies have yet to comprehensively explore how various methods of secret negotiations

employed by democracies might influence the initiation of official talks and the resolution of deadlocks throughout the negotiation process. As a crucial gap in the research, understanding the different methods of conducting secret negotiations becomes paramount in elucidating the broader impact of secret negotiations on conflict resolution dynamics. This study aims to address the existing gap by investigating the specific strategies employed by democratic governments during secret negotiations, with a particular emphasis on the strategic selection of government representatives responsible for engaging with rebel groups. This study posits that governments strategically select their representatives and aims to examine how the selection of representatives by democratic governments influences the level of commitment demonstrated by rebel groups during the negotiation process and how this commitment influences the overall outcomes of the negotiations. It is hypothesized that the careful and strategic selection of representatives significantly affects the rebels' commitment to the negotiation process. The major signal a rebel group gets through negotiations is a direct outcome of the type of representative the government in question is assigning for negotiations. The involvement of representatives who possess authority, credibility, and legitimacy increases the rebels' confidence and willingness to engage constructively, thereby leading to more fruitful outcomes and a higher likelihood of decreasing level of violence. By investigating this relationship, the research provides valuable insights into the dynamics of secret negotiations and highlights the significance of representative selection in shaping the ultimate outcomes of these diplomatic endeavors.

In their work on the Oslo talks between the Israeli government and the PLO, Putnam and Carcasson (1997) highlighted the essential role of trust-building in the success of these secret negotiations. They emphasized that trust was cultivated through the representatives' ability to establish their authority, proving their capability to represent and influence their respective governing bodies. Without this legitimacy, the covert channel would have been ineffective, resulting in a lack of substantial agreements. To hold significance, concessions and compromises needed to be perceived as genuine positions endorsed by the actual decision-makers involved. Without considering the role of secret contacts, modeling the effects of other conflict resolution tools on the duration and termination of intra-state conflict is likely to be

incomplete at best. Secret contacts will likely affect the processes and outcomes of mediation, arbitration, third-party interventions, and any diplomatic efforts to bring warring parties to a negotiation table and stop the violence. Most research on civil wars focuses on how external interventions, whether economic, military, or diplomatic, affect the preferences of belligerents and hence alter the course of civil wars. We have a limited number of research considering how the warring parties negotiate in secret and how secret encounters influence the outcome of a violent conflict. This chapter starts with the existing studies on secrecy in foreign policy, with insights from international law literature, and moves to studies specific to the within-state context and existing studies on secret negotiations. Extensive research has examined how democracies utilize secrecy in international politics, but a notable gap remains in understanding how secrecy is employed in domestic politics. The literature review first delves into secrecy in international politics before transitioning to explore secrecy within domestic contexts. By adopting this sequential approach, the chapter aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of existing studies on how democracies utilize secrecy across both international and domestic arenas.

In this chapter, I develop a theoretical framework that integrates relevant literature and serves as the basis for my hypotheses. It involves a comprehensive review of the literature, which I use to inform and refine my theoretical framework. In this study, audience cost theory serves as the foundational framework for examining government behavior in the selection of representatives during secret negotiations. By employing this theoretical lens, the study seeks to elucidate the rationale behind the choices made by governments when appointing representatives for clandestine engagements with rebel groups. Furthermore, the study investigates how the selection of these representatives influences the commitment of rebel groups to the secret peace process. By drawing upon audience cost theory, the study aims to shed light on the role of representative selection in shaping the dynamics and outcomes of secret negotiations, ultimately contributing to a deeper understanding of the complexities involved in conflict resolution efforts. The resulting framework incorporates key concepts and theoretical perspectives from the literature and provides a clear foundation for my hypotheses. This study moves beyond a narrow perspective that only considers the direct effects of secret negotiations themselves on

the ultimate outcome of a peace agreement. Instead, I acknowledge that democratic governments vary in their approach to conducting secret negotiations, and these differences significantly influence the overall negotiation process and its outcome. The manner in which democratic governments engage in secret negotiations shapes the dynamics, strategies, and eventual results of the negotiation process. Understanding and analyzing these variations can provide valuable insights into the effectiveness and outcomes of such negotiations in a democratic context. This expanded framework allows us to assess the long-term impacts of secret negotiations on the conflict resolution process. It acknowledges that sustainable peace relies on the trust and confidence established between the government and rebel groups.

2.2 Literature Review

2.2.1 Secret Diplomacy in Foreign Policy

Secrecy is an important aspect of foreign policy in democratic regimes. Secret diplomacy, also known as clandestine diplomacy, refers to conducting diplomatic negotiations, agreements, or secret information exchanges. This type of diplomacy has been used throughout history and has significantly shaped international relations (Morgenthau 1956). Scholars have extensively written about the reasons for using secret diplomacy, its advantages and disadvantages, and its impact on foreign policy. Studies on the politics of secrecy have developed in isolation in the fields of international law and international relations, with occasional reference to each other. Within international relations, foreign policy, and conflict resolution, scholars primarily study secrecy independently of one another (Thompson 1999, Colaresi 2012, Pruitt 2008, Wanis-St John 2006, Joseph and Poznansky 2017, Cormac and Aldrich 2018). While each of these fields of research has its own specific focus and methods, they share common themes and questions related to secrecy and confidentiality in international contexts. Therefore, research in one field can inform and enrich research in others, leading to a more comprehensive understanding of the role secrecy plays in shaping actors' behavior and the outcomes of their interactions. So far, the interconnectedness of the literature on secrecy hinders its enrichment, as scholars focus more on existing knowledge and research in their field and miss opportunities for cross-disciplinary insights and innovative approaches. By adopting an interdisciplinary approach, this study aims to facilitate the exploration of novel

insights, foster innovative methodologies, and ultimately contribute to a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the significance of secrecy in shaping behaviors and outcomes in international affairs.

Secret diplomacy has been an important tool in foreign policy for centuries (Morgenthau 1956). While it helps preserve a government's reputation, hiding its intentions and avoiding public scrutiny, it also has significant disadvantages, such as a lack of transparency and accountability and a lack of legitimacy and credibility of the process and the outcome. Opposing the secret treaties signed during and aftermath of World War I, Woodrow Wilson stated a plea for open diplomacy in his famous Fourteen Points in 1918 that world peace must include “open covenants of peace, openly arrived at, after which there shall be no private international understandings of any kind, but diplomacy shall proceed always frankly and in the public view.” Thereafter, the definition and utility of secret diplomacy were highly debated in the literature. Some scholars examined the cases of secret diplomacy (Morel 1915, Reinsch 1922, Landler 2014, Kissenger 1985), and some worked on its definition (Gilboa 1998, Berridge and James 2003, Bjola 2016, Murray 2016). There was an outcry for secret negotiations between states since it was against the norms and principles of democratic rule (Reinsch, 1922).

Despite the fundamental principles of transparency and accountability that underlie democratic governance, secret negotiations and diplomacy are often used by democratic states to achieve their foreign policy goals. In many cases, secrecy is deemed necessary to protect the interests of the state and its citizens and to avoid compromising the ability of the government to negotiate effectively. The use of secrecy in democratic regimes has been the subject of much debate, with some arguing that it undermines the principles of democratic governance and limits the ability of citizens to hold their government accountable (Holmstrom, 1999; Fenster, 2006; Haufler, 2010; Scholtes, 2002; Hood, 2006). The debates on how much secrecy is not abusive of democracy, whether secrecy threatens democracy (Sagar, 2013, 2016), whether “unconditional secrecy” is a requirement of democracy (Thompson, 1999), and how to prevent the abuse of power by the politicians in secret policies (Colaesi 2012) continue. Regardless of one's perspective on secrecy in democratic regimes, states use secrecy as a necessary tool for effective

diplomacy, mainly when public negotiations are unlikely to be successful or where the negotiating parties are not ready to engage in public talks.

Almost all democracies around the world have legal regulations to contain national security information within the government. Many use secret acts, executive decrees, and constitutional law provisions which punish the revelation of secret national security information (Colaresi 2014, Thompson 1999, Banisar 2004, Born and Leigh 2007), and keep the budget of national security operations in secret; what is called the “black-budget” (Swab, 2010; Harvard law). Examples are many in inter-state rivalry, where a democracy operated in ultimate secrecy, leaving the public in the dark such as in the Cuban Missile Crisis (Garthoff 1989, 140-42, 145), the Battle of Midway in World War II (Edmonds 1986; Kahn 1991), and the "left hook" maneuver in the first Gulf War. The recent disclosure of a large amount of classified information by WikiLeaks and Cablegate and PRISM by Edward Snowden in 2013 showed us that democracies indeed operate in secret (Roberts, 2012). WikiLeaks has published a number of high-profile leaks over the years, including information about the war in Iraq and the U.S. diplomatic cables. Similarly, PRISM, a secret surveillance program in the U.S., collected data on internet communications from several major technology companies without having to go through legal channels. The U.S. government justified the use of surveillance programs like PRISM as necessary for national security and the war on terror.

Colaresi (2012, 2014) argues that secrecy plays a pivotal role in foreign policy success, contrary to the argument that it is transparency inherited in the nature of democracy that brings foreign policy success (Schultz, 2001; Reiter and Stam, 2002). He points out the paradox democracies face between transparency vs. secrecy costs in foreign policy making. If a democratic state is transparent in national security issues to the public, her enemy is likely to learn the strategies, which would put the country at a disadvantage vis-à-vis her enemy. Some other scholars also point out the benefits of secrecy in decision-making processes for the benefit of the public. Radical transparency might create incentives for politicians to uphold decisions for partisan electoral purposes despite the reasonable arguments of the other voices (Stasavage 2007). They may be afraid of the consequences of policy decisions and changing their views under scrutiny, which all have the potential to

undermine the political system's "capacity to act" (Warren and Mansbridge 2013: 87, Hood 2007, Elster 1998, Meade and Stasavage 2006, Mansbridge 2009).

One main reason for using secret diplomacy is to achieve a tactical advantage (Colaesi 2012, 2014). By negotiating secretly, a government can hide its intentions and bargaining position from its enemies, allowing it to secure more favorable terms (Thompson 1999; Roberts 2006; Curtin 2011; Sagar 2013). This type of diplomacy is often used in sensitive and delicate negotiations where the risk of public exposure could lead to a breakdown in talks or an adverse reaction from other parties. Another reason for the use of secret diplomacy is to preserve the reputation and prestige of a government (Stasavage 2007). By negotiating in secret, a government can avoid public scrutiny and criticism, which can be particularly important in situations where a government is faced with difficult or unpopular decisions. This type of diplomacy also allows a government to pursue its interests without the constraints of public opinion, which can be an essential consideration when negotiating with other countries (Warren and Mansbridge 2013: 87, Hood 2007, Elster 1998, Meade and Stasavage 2006, Mansbridge 2009).

However, secret diplomacy also has its disadvantages. One of the main disadvantages is that it can lead to a lack of transparency and accountability, which can erode public trust in government. When negotiations are conducted in secret, it can be difficult for citizens to assess the outcomes of those negotiations, making it difficult for them to hold their government accountable (Schultz, 2001; Reiter and Stam, 2002). Secret diplomacy can also lead to a lack of legitimacy and credibility. When negotiations are conducted in secret, it can be difficult to determine the legitimacy of agreements and the motives of those involved. This can create a situation where countries are not confident in the validity of agreements, leading to a lack of trust and cooperation between nations. Without the involvement of civil society, media, and other oversight mechanisms, the agreements may be perceived as lacking democratic legitimacy and may face challenges in implementation. This can lead to reluctance or resistance from domestic constituencies, hindering cooperation between states. It may also result in a perception of unequal treatment or favoritism among states. When certain nations engage in secret diplomacy, it raises suspicions and erodes trust among their counterparts. This can lead to a breakdown

in communication and hinder the establishment of cooperative relationships (Sagar, 2013, 2016).

2.2.2 Secret Diplomacy in Domestic Policy

The negotiation literature primarily focuses on the formal onset of negotiations, often overlooking the potential significance of secret encounters in the negotiation process (Zartman 1990, Bapat 2005). Yet, the available evidence suggests that secret meetings between belligerent parties play a crucial role in bringing about official negotiations and peace agreements. The current literature on backchannel negotiations focuses on secret talks that occur before official negotiations, referred to as pre-negotiation efforts. Once parties commence official negotiations, the emphasis on secret talks usually ends (Doyle and Hegele 2021). One potential disadvantage of focusing solely on pre-negotiation backchannel communication and disregarding any subsequent secret talks during official negotiations is that it underestimates the impact of secret negotiations on the ongoing peace process and the conflict outcome. In some cases, secret negotiations continue to play a crucial role in shaping the outcome of the conflict, even after official negotiations have commenced. Therefore, by limiting the analysis to pre-negotiation backchannel communication, research misses essential factors contributing to resolving or escalating the conflict.

Additionally, assuming that secret talks cease once official negotiations begin, the researcher may overlook the possibility that parties sometimes use secret negotiations to overcome deadlocks during official negotiations. Official negotiations may reach an impasse due to various reasons, such as intractable issues or rigid positions of the conflicting parties. In such situations, secret talks can help identify areas of common ground and explore potential solutions that can break the deadlock.

In the case of the Israel-PLO conflict, secret negotiations took place parallel to unproductive official negotiations (Cornin 1994, Savir 2008, Wanis-St John 2006). While official negotiations struggled to progress, secret back-channel negotiations allowed the parties to engage in more candid and open discussions away from public scrutiny and political pressures. The official negotiations were conducted under the framework of the Madrid Conference, which began in 1991. The Madrid Conference

aimed to facilitate peace talks between Israel and its neighboring Arab countries and Palestinian representatives. However, these official negotiations were marked by deep mistrust and limited progress. In contrast, the secret negotiations that led to the Oslo Accords were conducted discreetly in Norway and facilitated by Norwegian diplomats Mona Juul and Terje Rød-Larsen. These secret talks provided an informal and confidential setting where Israeli and PLO representatives could build trust and explore potential solutions to the conflict without the pressures associated with the official negotiations. The success of the secret negotiations in breaking the deadlock and leading to the Oslo Accords highlighted the importance of having parallel communication channels in complex negotiations (Wanis-St John, 2011).

A more recent example is the United States' secret talks with Iran in Oman as part of the negotiations that led to the 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), commonly known as the Iran nuclear deal (Mohammed and Hafezi 2013, Borger and Dehghan 2013). Secret talks between the United States and Iran occurred alongside the official negotiations involving the P5+1 (the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Russia, China, and Germany) and Iran. The international community had longstanding concerns about Iran's nuclear program and its potential to develop nuclear weapons. To address these concerns, the P5+1 engaged in official negotiations with Iran to reach a comprehensive agreement aimed at limiting Iran's nuclear capabilities in exchange for sanctions relief. While the official negotiations were ongoing, the United States and Iran also engaged in secret bilateral talks. These talks began in 2012 in Oman and were facilitated by the Omani government. The secret negotiations provided a more informal and confidential setting where the U.S. and Iranian representatives could discuss sensitive issues, explore potential solutions, and build trust. The secret talks helped overcome deadlocks in the official negotiations by better understanding each side's concerns and priorities. They allowed both parties to progress on critical issues, such as the scope of Iran's nuclear program, the timeline for sanctions relief, and the monitoring and verification mechanisms. The progress made in the secret negotiations laid the groundwork for the eventual success of the official negotiations. The secret talks helped bridge gaps between the United States and Iran, which contributed to building consensus between the P5+1 and Iran. The JCPOA was ultimately signed in 2015, marking a significant breakthrough in the long-

standing dispute over Iran's nuclear program. This example demonstrates how secret negotiations can be used in parallel with official negotiations to address deadlocks, build trust, and facilitate progress in complex international negotiations (Mohammed and Hafezi 2013, Borger and Dehghan 2013).

The existing literature on secret negotiations between a state and a rebel group commonly uses the terms "back-channel communication" or "back-channel negotiation" to denote the discreet communication that occurs between the respective parties. Pruitt (2008) defines back-channel communication as "a secret communication between the leadership of opposing groups (including organizations and nations) that is designed to foster settlement of a conflict between them."

Similar to Pruitt (2008), Wanis-St John (2011) uses the term back-channel negotiations (BCNs) and defines it as "secret, official negotiations among the parties to a dispute that supplement or replace open, existing front channel negotiations" (p. 4). His definition covers secret negotiations that supplement or replace ongoing open negotiations; therefore, he excludes secret negotiations without any open negotiations. He explores the peace process between Israel and the PLO, which simultaneously included open and back-channel negotiations.

Pruitt (2006) and Wanis-St John (2011) have also contributed to the development of a typology for back-channel negotiations. In accordance with Pruitt's classification, back-channel negotiations can be categorized into two types: direct and indirect. Direct back-channel negotiations encompass communication between parties that occurs without the presence of intermediaries. Conversely, indirect back-channel negotiations necessitate the inclusion of at least one intermediary within the communication chain. Wanis-St John (2011) expands upon Pruitt's (2006) typology of back-channel negotiations, incorporating the consideration of both open and secret negotiations. Wanis-St John delineates five distinct types of back-channel negotiations: (1) secret pre-negotiations, either direct or through a third party, aimed at assessing the feasibility of negotiations; (2) direct secret negotiations in the absence of concurrent open activities; (3) mediated secret negotiations without parallel open activities; (4) intermittent and sequential utilization of open and secret negotiation channels, either direct or via a third party; and (5) secret negotiations conducted concurrently with open negotiations, involving direct communication,

third-party mediation, or both (2011:14). This typology extends Pruitt's framework by accounting for the presence of open negotiations and the various communication modalities inherent in back-channel negotiations. In the present study, the term "secret contact" is utilized to encompass the concept of back-channel negotiation described in existing scholarly literature while offering a broader perspective that covers a more extensive range of cases involving covert negotiations.

It is also worth noting that secret contacts differ from Track II diplomacy in two fundamental ways. Track II diplomacy refers to informal and unofficial diplomatic activities that take place outside of formal government channels. Typically, non-state actors such as academics, experts, civil society organizations, and other individuals who have a stake in resolving a conflict conduct track II diplomacy. Track II diplomacy aims to establish a space for dialogue, foster trust, and explore potential solutions to conflicts that cannot be addressed through formal diplomatic channels (Montville, 1981; Fisher, 1997). The primary differences between track II diplomacy and secret contacts are the actors involved and the level of official involvement. Track II diplomacy is typically carried out by non-state actors who are not directly affiliated with the government, whereas government representatives or authorized intermediaries initiate secret contacts. Track II diplomacy is generally more transparent and open to the public, while secret contacts are conducted covertly.

2.3 Theoretical Framework: The Dynamics of Secret Negotiations

Secret negotiations are a commonly employed conflict resolution tool by democratic governments. However, their successful contribution to the conflict resolution process lies in the specific approaches and strategies adopted by democratic governments. The ways in which these governments conduct secret negotiations play a pivotal role in shaping the conflict processes, outcomes, and effectiveness of the overall conflict resolution efforts. This study highlights the significant impact of representative selection on the credibility and legitimacy of governments in the eyes of rebel groups. While rebel groups may declare a ceasefire following secret negotiations as a symbolic gesture, it is the involvement of high-level representatives that brings about an actual reduction in rebel violence. I argue that high-level representatives are essential for establishing trust and increasing the

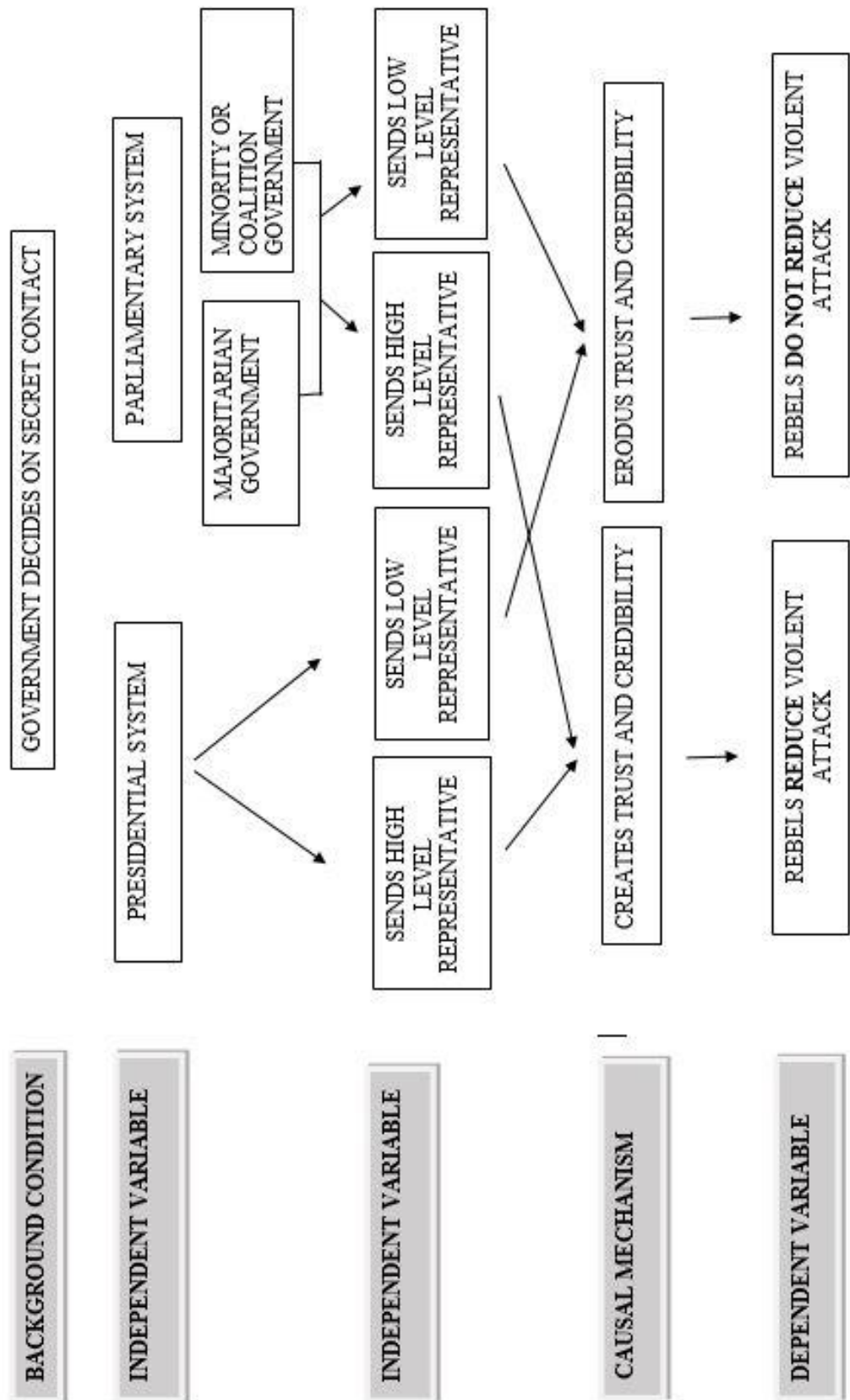
credibility of the government for the rebels and trust and high credibility, in turn, contribute to rebel groups' commitment to the peace process, directly influencing the reduction or cessation of rebel violence. In contrast, the involvement of low-level representatives fails to foster trust, resulting in rebels maintaining their violent activities. Even if rebel groups may initially accept the involvement of low-level representatives, they eventually realize that it is a tactic employed by the government to buy time. In response, the rebels may escalate their violence to pressure the democratic government to take the secret negotiations seriously. For instance, in the context of the Basque conflict, the government's choice to dispatch low-level officials, like police officials, for secret negotiations was interpreted by ETA as a lack of seriousness on the government's part. This perceived lack of commitment from the government led the rebels to escalate violence as a way to display their determination and pressure the government to engage in more substantive discussions (Whitfield 2014).

Both governments and rebels consider the cost of leaks prior to the onset of negotiations. Democratic governments take into account the potential repercussions of public exposure and carefully assess their ability to manage and mitigate any adverse effects. This evaluation involves a thorough consideration of factors such as public perception, political ramifications, diplomatic consequences, and the overall credibility and legitimacy of the government. Through this process, they aim to ascertain whether they have the required resources, strategies, and support systems in place to effectively navigate and address the fallout that may result from a leak. On the rebel side, the exposure of secret contacts can have severe implications, with rebel leaders fearing for their personal safety as they may become targets for rival factions or hardliners within their own group who oppose talking to the enemy. A notable example is seen in the context of secret negotiations with the Spanish government, where at least three ETA leaders were assassinated following the disclosure of their clandestine meetings (Clark, 1990). Additionally, leaks of secret negotiations can significantly impact the internal dynamics of rebel groups, leading to divisions within the group. For instance, in the case of the IRA, the leader refrained from informing the military council about his secret talks with the British government to avoid splintering the group (Moloney 2002). Therefore, maintaining

confidentiality in secret negotiations is also crucial for preserving the cohesion and unity of rebel groups.

This study posits that the assessment of post-leak capability by governments is influenced by the level of political support they enjoy. The level of political support determines the government's perceived capability to handle the costs and consequences of leaks. For instance, presidential systems and single-majority governments within parliamentary systems, benefitting from a strong popular mandate and relatively fewer veto players, tend to believe they possess the capability and resources to manage the costs and consequences of a leak effectively. As a result, they are more inclined to send high-level representatives to negotiations—individuals with the necessary authority and expertise to navigate the process successfully. This choice reflects their confidence in mitigating risks and maintaining control over the negotiation process. Conversely, governments with limited political support, such as minority governments, approach representative selection cautiously. They are more concerned about the potential costs associated with leaks and lack the confidence or resources to manage them effectively. These governments are more likely to opt for low-level representatives in secret negotiations to minimize risks and preserve plausible deniability or detachment from the process. This strategy allows them to minimize direct involvement and potential fallout in the event of a leak, thus mitigating the costs they may incur. Figure 2.1 summarizes the logic of the argument.

Figure 2.1: Causal Logic of the Argument



The selection of high-level government representatives in secret talks who possess credibility and the ability to deliver on agreements is instrumental in building trust (Putnam and Carcasson 1997) and increasing the rebels' confidence in the government's willingness to fulfill its commitments. These representatives serve as trustworthy interlocutors, fostering trust-building between the government and rebel groups and increasing the likelihood of a sustained cessation of violence. While existing literature has primarily emphasized the direct effects of secret negotiations on the peace process outcome, this study broadens the theoretical framework by considering the rebels' commitment to stop the violence. By evaluating the behavior and actions of rebel groups following secret contacts, we can gain insights into the effectiveness of these negotiations in fostering a sustainable cessation of violence. Specifically, we can assess the rebels' commitment to the ceasefire by monitoring any decrease in violent incidents or attacks attributed to the rebel group following the secret negotiation. This provides a tangible measure of success and offers insights into the rebels' trust in the government and their willingness to uphold the ceasefire. By incorporating the evaluation of the rebels' behavior and actions following secret contacts, particularly the observation of a decrease in violent incidents, we gain a more comprehensive understanding of the impacts of secret negotiations. This research provides insights into the effectiveness of secret negotiations in fostering a sustainable cessation of violence. It also highlights the interconnectedness of the selection of government representatives, trust-building and the rebels' commitment to upholding the negotiated ceasefire. The proposed theoretical framework asserts that the choice of government representatives in secret negotiations is influenced by the government's political power and resources to handle post-leak costs effectively. When governments possess significant political backing, they are more likely to appoint high-level representatives, signaling their commitment and genuine willingness to address rebel concerns seriously. In contrast, when governments lack strong support, they tend to deploy low-level representatives to minimize potential post-leak costs and maintain plausible deniability.

The selection of government representatives carries a significant message for the rebel group, reflecting the government's intentions during the negotiations. High-level representatives are expected to foster trust among rebels and increase their

commitment to the secret negotiation process. On the contrary, the involvement of low-level representatives tends to erode trust and commitment from rebel groups. As a consequence, rebels who believe in the government's genuine intentions are more inclined to reduce their level of violence as negotiations progress. However, skeptical rebels may escalate violence and may not uphold promises, even if they publicly declare ceasefires during the negotiation process. The commitment and behavior of rebel groups in secret negotiations are closely linked to the government's choice of representatives and the perceived sincerity of the negotiation process. By considering these dynamics, we deepen our understanding of the complex relationship between secret negotiations, trust-building, and the achievement of tangible outcomes in conflict resolution processes.

The subsequent sections of this chapter delve deeper into the theoretical framework, providing an expanded understanding of the topic. The discussion begins with an exploration of the reasons why democratic governments would choose to engage in secret negotiations with rebel groups. Following this, the chapter delves into the rationale behind governments' secret negotiation strategies. It examines the factors influencing the selection of high-level or low-level representatives and how these choices are contingent upon the government's cost calculation in the event of public disclosures. The chapter then explores the implications of government negotiation strategies on the overall process and outcome of secret negotiations.

2.3.1 Democratic Response to Insurgency: Secret Negotiations

When faced with an insurgency, states typically have two options: repression and concession. Repression, which involves the use of force, is a costly strategy for democratic governments both domestically and internationally. Research indicates that democracies exhibit a slower and less lethal response in the use of force compared to non-democracies (Russett 1993, Bueno de Mesquita Siverson 1995 Gartner and Segura 2000, 1998, Gartner, Segura, and Wilkening Reiter and Stam 1998a). They also tend to engage in longer internal wars and do not achieve victory through repression. (Buhaug et al. 2009, Cunningham et al. 2009, Gleditsch, Hegre & Strand, 2009, Mack 1975a, 1975b, Merom 2003, Arreguin-Toft 2005, Karol and Miguel 2007, Merom 2003, Iyengar and Montan 2008, Caverley 2010, Davenport

2007b, Colaresi & Carey 2008, Bapat 2005, Valentino, Huth & Balch-Lindsay 2004).

One key factor that sets democracies apart from other types of governments in handling war and crisis is the influence of public opinion. Scholars have suggested that public opinion plays a significant role in shaping democratic decision-making during conflicts (Fearon 1994, Baum and Potter 2015, Gelpi 2017). In contrast, autocracies may employ indiscriminate violence against rebel groups and often rely on repression to achieve victory (Davenport & Armstrong 2004, Carey 2010). The case of Argentina's "Dirty War" exemplifies a repressive regime under military dictatorship, where leftist armed groups such as the Montoneros and the ERP were targeted, leading to widespread human rights abuses and forced exile. However, during Argentina's brief period as a democracy in the 1970s, it was the police force, not the military, that primarily focused on maintaining security and combating armed groups. In a democracy, the level of repression witnessed during Argentina's "Dirty War" would be highly unlikely and contradictory to democratic principles. Democracies are characterized by institutions that uphold human rights, establish checks and balances on state power, and prioritize peaceful conflict resolution. Moreover, democratic leaders are often constrained by the need to mobilize public support for decisions related to national security, which discourages conflicts resulting in civilian casualties and high political costs (Siverson, 1995).

On the other hand, democracies also face challenges in providing concessions. Engaging in negotiations and acknowledging non-state armed groups as negotiation partners may confer legitimacy upon them and increase their bargaining leverage (Lacqueur 1977; Netanyahu 1986; Clutterbuck 1992; Chellany 2001; Pillar 2001). It may also be perceived as a sign of state weakness, potentially motivating other groups to mobilize insurgencies (Neumann 2007, Pruitt 2007). State leaders often reject talking to non-state armed groups for various reasons. The most cited reason is the asymmetric relationship in civil conflicts in which states have the upper hand. This asymmetric power structure makes it harder for the states to negotiate with the rivals as it may mean weakness at domestic and international levels (Asal et al. 2019), and providing legitimacy to the actor and its cause has the potential for other would-be challengers resort to violence for concessions; therefore,

negotiations do not seem plausible (Wilkinson 2001, Ward-law 1989, Alexander 2002, Narveson 1991, Weinberg & Davis 1989, Neumann 2007, Zartman 1990). Supportively, state leaders often dehumanize armed groups, label them as terrorists and reject negotiation when it comes to negotiating with non-state armed organizations (Toros 2008, 2012, Bapat 2005, Kirkpatrick 2018). Such proclamations of “no negotiations with terrorists” generate what Fearon theorized as the audience cost mechanism that ties the hands of state leaders in conducting official negotiations. If state leaders back down and sit at the table with those actors, they are likely to pay the cost in the elections. This is especially true for democratic governments as they have electoral institutions. Consequently, secret negotiations often emerge as the preferred approach for democracies in seeking to halt violence.

Democratic governments often encounter significant difficulties in publicly acknowledging their involvement in negotiations with rebel groups, especially when these groups persist in perpetrating acts of violence that result in the loss of innocent lives. In November 1993, John Major declared his strong aversion to engaging in talks with the Provisional IRA and Mr. Adams. Unknown to the public he was secretly corresponding with Martin McGuinness at the same time. In March 1993, while this confidential communication was ongoing, the IRA carried out a devastating bombing, killing two innocent children in Warrington. Had Major's secret talks with the IRA been exposed, there would have been overwhelming pressure to halt them immediately and call for his resignation after the attack. This then could have made it nearly impossible to persuade the IRA to declare the crucial ceasefire in 1994 (Powell 2014). As Spector pointed out earlier that in circumstances where the enemy is “villainized,” informal talks give a chance to the leaders to villainize and negotiate at the same time (1989: 44). The incumbents may continue their rhetoric of never talking to the antagonists in public while discussing terms of a possible agreement with them in secret. Case studies indicate that secret negotiations have become increasingly common in democratic states as a preliminary step to official talks (Pantev, 2000; Gewurz, 2000; Stein, 1989a, 1989b; Schiff, 2008; Zartman, 1989, Tomlin, 1989; Cohen, 1997; Fisher, 1989), as a parallel discussion to official talks (Wanis St John), or as a backup when official talks fail. However,

the current body of literature falls short of providing comprehensive studies that thoroughly explore the specific behaviors exhibited by governments during secret negotiations and their consequential impact on the negotiation process and ultimate outcomes. This research gap underscores the need for further investigation to better understand the factors that shape government behavior and their implications for clandestine engagements with rebel groups.

To address this gap, the present study adopts audience cost theory as a foundational framework for examining government behavior in the selection of representatives during secret negotiations. By applying this theoretical lens, the study aims to uncover the underlying rationale behind governments' choices when appointing representatives for secret engagements with rebels. Furthermore, the research investigates the influence of representative selection on the commitment demonstrated by rebel groups toward the peace process. The study endeavors to shed light on the pivotal role of representative selection in shaping the dynamics and outcomes of secret negotiations, ultimately contributing to a deeper understanding of the complex dynamics involved in conflict resolution efforts.

2.3.2 Audience Cost Theory: Effects of Leak Calculation on Government Behavior

Several studies have utilized the audience cost theory in the context of intra-state conflicts to shed light on various aspects. For instance, Clayton (2022) examines the application of this theory to explain the initiation of ceasefires. Carson and Yarhi-Milo (2017) and Yarhi-Milo (2013) explore the credibility of reassurances within secret negotiations. Leventoglu and Tatar (2005) investigate the use of public commitments as a means to address the issue of suboptimal outcomes. Furthermore, Browne and Dickson (2010) delve into the impact of publicly denouncing the enemy on the behavior of parties involved in secret negotiations. The audience cost theory is often used to explain why states may engage in brinksmanship, make credible commitments, or take costly actions necessary to signal their resolve or deter their opponents. Audience cost theory provides a useful framework for understanding how states make foreign policy decisions and how they balance the need to maintain their legitimacy and political power with the need to engage in negotiations or take actions that may be perceived as costly or controversial (Fearon 1994). By considering the potential audience costs of their actions, states can make more

informed decisions about how to advance their interests in the international arena. The theory argues that a state's reputation for resolve and ability to threaten the use of force credibly can be valuable in international relations. By making a public commitment to take a particular course of action, a state ties its own hands and increases the costs associated with failing to follow through on that commitment. The theory also explains why states engage in secret or back-channel negotiations with non-state actors rather than public negotiations (Morrow 1999, Leventoglu and Tatar 2005, Kuruzaki 2007, Yarhi-Milo 2013).

Audience cost theory is a theoretical framework used in international relations to explain how states behave in situations where their actions are visible to domestic and international audiences. The theory is based on the idea that states have a domestic audience, composed of voters, interest groups, and other domestic actors, who evaluate their actions and can impose political costs on them if they believe that the state is acting in ways that are inconsistent with their preferences or expectations (Fearon 1994). According to audience cost theory, states take into account the potential costs that their actions may have on their domestic audience when making foreign policy decisions. The theory posits that states are less likely to make commitments or take actions that are perceived as weak or inconsistent with their preferences if they believe that their domestic audience will impose political costs on them. This includes costs such as losing political support, facing opposition from interest groups, or incurring economic losses.

Within the framework of audience cost theory, the tying hands argument refers to the idea that public commitment to take a certain course of action increases the state's incentives to follow through on that commitment, even in the face of changing circumstances or opposition. This is because the state's reputation and credibility are at stake, and the costs associated with reneging on a public commitment are higher than the costs associated with modifying a private commitment. For example, if a state publicly commits to using military force to protect its interests, it increases its incentives to follow through on that commitment because the costs of failing to do so (in terms of lost credibility and reputation) are high. In contrast, if the state had made a private commitment to using military force, it would be more flexible in modifying that commitment if circumstances changed.

However, what brings about cooperation between adversaries is the cost associated with the commitments made in public, and therefore private commitments are regarded as cost-free signals or “cheap talk” in the literature. There is also a risk in private commitments that the adversary will not take them seriously. If one party does not believe that the other party is committed to a particular course of action, they may be less willing to negotiate or cooperate with them. This can lead to a breakdown in communication and impede the ability of the parties to reach a mutually beneficial outcome. Yet, this study argues that private or secret initiatives to solve the conflict between belligerents are costly initiatives and can credibly signal the benign intention of the initiator based on some conditions.

In the context of strong domestic opposition, Yarhi-Milo (2013) discusses the credibility of secret diplomacy. She argues that secret diplomacy credibly signals the benign intention of a state towards its adversary. Even though the state does not assure the adversary in public, and her assurances seem to be “cheap talk,” secret engagements carry two risks that make them costly for the initiator. First, the initiator knows that the adversary can strategically reveal her secret move, and he then faces domestic audience costs. Second, secret initiatives may be leaked to the public by other actors, such as the media, and the initiator again pays the cost. The risk of a leak makes the secret initiatives with the enemy costly, and the adversary understands that the initiator is sincere in its move. She also argues that democratic leaders have a greater risk as they have less control over the media and many other actors with access to secret information. The potential risk of the talks being revealed to the public, particularly in democratic contexts, is what drives the costs associated with secret negotiations. Case studies show rebels often keep the process confidential. Nevertheless, even if rebels may strive to keep secret negotiations confidential, it is still a challenging and expensive endeavor for governments. Democratic governments are well aware of the inherent risk of secret negotiations being exposed to the public, which can lead to substantial repercussions. As a result, they undertake various measures to prevent such leaks from occurring. However, what these governments critically assess is their ability to effectively handle the potential fallout that may arise in the event of a leak. In their evaluation process, democratic governments consider the possible consequences of public exposure and

carefully weigh their capacity to manage and mitigate any negative impacts. They assess factors such as public perception, political backlash, diplomatic implications, and the overall credibility and legitimacy of the government. By conducting this assessment, they aim to determine whether they possess the necessary resources, strategies, and support systems to effectively navigate and address the fallout that may result from a leak.

Democratic governments critically assess their ability to manage and mitigate potential fallout resulting from secret negotiations being exposed to the public. Democratic governments consider factors such as public perception, political backlash, diplomatic implications, and the overall credibility and legitimacy of the government. By conducting this evaluation, these governments aim to determine whether they have the necessary resources, strategies, and support systems to effectively navigate and address the negative impacts that may arise from a leak. The assessment process helps democratic governments balance their interests in engaging in conflict resolution through secret negotiations while minimizing potential risks to their reputation and political power.

Leak Prevention Mechanisms

In secret negotiations between states and rebel groups, leaks are infrequent, although not entirely unprecedented. The disclosure of these confidential talks can arise from various factors, including deliberate or accidental divulgence by individuals internal or external to the negotiation process. Among 229 secret contacts in the dataset, 46 (approximately 20%) of secret contacts were leaked to the media, and out of the 46 leaks, 11 (approximately 24%) were caused by rebel groups. For example, ETA, a prominent Basque separatist group, exemplified a strong dedication to secrecy in their engagement with the Spanish government. An internal document within ETA, drafted in the first half of 1987, came to light following the arrest of ETA leader Santiago Arrospe, also known as "Santi Potros," by French police. This document underscored ETA's commitment to maintaining the utmost secrecy regarding any contact with the Spanish government until formal proposals could be presented and jointly discussed (Clark 1990).

It is important to note that states and non-state armed groups take secret negotiations seriously and understand the potential risks and consequences associated with leaks.

They are willing to take significant precautions to maintain the confidentiality of the negotiation process. While leaks can and do occur in some cases, parties engaging in secret negotiations are highly motivated to prevent them. This is because leaks can damage the credibility and reputation of the parties involved and can even lead to the breakdown of negotiations altogether. In the context of the Basque conflict, the firm stance of former Spanish Prime Minister Aznar against negotiating with terrorists was widely perceived as a strong electoral advantage for his party (Tremlett, 2004). Consequently, Aznar's decision to engage in secret negotiations with the Basque separatist group ETA the following year represented a significant political gamble (Wood, 2006).

In the worst-case scenario, secret negotiations with the enemy in pursuit of peace can cost leaders' lives, as it did with Yitzhak Rabin and Anwar Sadat. Yitzhak Rabin, the Prime Minister of Israel, was assassinated in 1995 by a Jewish extremist who opposed Rabin's peace initiatives with the Palestinians. Rabin had signed the Oslo Accords with the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), which included secret negotiations and concessions on both sides. Anwar Sadat, the President of Egypt, was assassinated in 1981 by Islamic extremists who opposed Sadat's peace treaty with Israel. The peace treaty was signed in 1979 and included secret negotiations between Egypt and Israel. In both cases, the leaders' efforts to negotiate peace with their enemies were seen as a betrayal by some within their own country, particularly those who opposed making concessions to the other side. This opposition was fueled by extremist groups who believed peace negotiations threatened their interests or ideology. Rabin and Sadat's assassinations demonstrate the risks leaders take when engaging in secret negotiations with their enemies. From the rebel side, leaks can also have significant consequences for their leaders. Rebel leaders may be hesitant to disclose their secret contacts with their members. This is particularly true in cases where hardliners within rebel groups are unwilling to engage in dialogue with the enemy, preferring instead to pursue their goals through armed struggle.

Furthermore, rebel leaders may be concerned about the personal safety implications of a leak, as they may be targeted by rival factions or in-group hardliners. In the case of the Mizo National Front (MNF) fighting against India, the leader was ousted from

office after their secret contacts with the government were leaked on March 20, 1978. This demonstrates the potential risks that rebel leaders face when engaging in secret negotiations, as leaks can damage their credibility within the group and result in the loss of their position or even their life. In the context of peace negotiations with the Spanish government, ETA leaders and individuals serving as mediators were assassinated following the disclosure of their secret meetings (Clark 1990). These instances demonstrate the importance of maintaining a high level of secrecy in the process of peace negotiations and the potential consequences of any breaches of confidentiality. In addition, leaks of secret negotiations can significantly impact the internal dynamics of rebel groups, potentially leading to splits within the group. This has been observed in both official talks and in the aftermath of peace agreements (Duursma and Fliervoet, 2021), highlighting the importance of maintaining confidentiality in secret negotiations to preserve rebel groups' cohesion and unity. Therefore, governments and rebel groups have the motivation to keep the process confidential to a greater extent. What are some of the mechanisms that democratic governments use to prevent leaks?

Democratic states differ in their ability to limit access to classified materials to authorized individuals. The extent to which a democratic state can effectively control access to classified information depends on various factors, including the strength of its institutions, the level of transparency and accountability, the robustness of its security measures, and the culture of adherence to protocols and procedures. Some democratic states have well-established systems and institutions in place to handle classified information, such as intelligence agencies or specialized government departments responsible for managing national security matters. These states have rigorous security clearance processes, strict compartmentalization of information, and comprehensive protocols for handling and storing classified materials. They also have well-trained personnel who understand the importance of confidentiality and the consequences of unauthorized disclosures (Joseph, Poznansky, and Spaniel 2022, Moberly 2012, Sagar 2013). On the other hand, some democratic states face challenges in effectively limiting access to classified materials. Factors such as bureaucratic inefficiencies, insufficient resources, weak institutional frameworks, or a lack of adherence to protocols can contribute to

vulnerabilities in safeguarding classified information. In such cases, the risk of unauthorized disclosures or leaks may be higher due to inadequate security measures or the potential for individuals within the system to abuse their positions or engage in misconduct. Highly democratic states tend to have more functioning institutions to limit access to classified materials to authorized individuals. Those democracies are characterized by strong democratic institutions, separation of powers, an independent judiciary, and robust systems of checks and balances. These features contribute to the establishment of effective mechanisms for safeguarding classified information and controlling its access. In high-level democracies, there are well-defined protocols and procedures for handling classified materials. Government agencies and departments responsible for national security and intelligence have specific regulations and guidelines in place to ensure that access to sensitive information is granted only to authorized individuals who have undergone security clearance processes. These institutions often have well-established protocols for handling, storing, and disseminating classified materials, including using security systems and physical facilities. Moreover, highly democratic states prioritize protecting classified information through legal frameworks and oversight mechanisms. They have laws and regulations that govern the handling of classified materials, with penalties for unauthorized disclosure or misuse.

Additionally, oversight bodies such as parliamentary committees, independent commissions, or intelligence review boards may exist to scrutinize and oversee classified information practices, ensuring compliance with legal and ethical standards. Therefore, highly democratic states will calculate the leak risk as minimized thanks to its functioning institutions and mechanisms. When the democracy level starts decreasing, we tend to observe fewer functioning institutions and mechanisms. However, in less democratic systems, governments often have more centralized control over information and a greater capacity to restrict access to classified materials. In countries with lower levels of democracy, the concentration of power and limited checks and balances can enable governments to exert greater control over classified materials. They may have the authority to classify a broader range of information and limit access to a select few individuals or a specific group within the government. In such environments, the government's ability to restrict

access to classified materials is generally less transparent, and oversight mechanisms are weaker. Whistleblowers or individuals with privileged access to classified information may face significant risks and obstacles in disclosing sensitive information to the public or external organizations. Therefore at lower levels of democracy, the governments believe they can keep the process secret, and the risk of leakage of information is again minimized.

It is fair to say that governments can employ various strategies to mitigate the risk of leaks, regardless of whether they rely on democratic mechanisms or other means of information control. One crucial factor that can significantly impact governments' cost calculations in the event of a leak is the presence of actors who have the ability to keep the matter in the spotlight and disseminate the news to a larger audience, including the general public. These actors play a crucial role in holding governments accountable for their actions. In highly democratic states, these actors include independent media outlets, investigative journalists, civil society organizations, opposition parties, and concerned citizens. They play a crucial role in bringing a violation to the public's attention. Their ability to disseminate leaked information widely has significant implications for the government, as it may result in public scrutiny, political backlash, erosion of public trust, and potential legal or ethical consequences. The existence of such actors acts as a check on government behavior and ensures a certain level of transparency and accountability. It forces governments to consider a leak's potential costs and repercussions, as the information may become public knowledge and subject to public scrutiny.

In contrast, in less democratic settings, the government may have greater control over the flow of information and be able to suppress or manipulate the dissemination of leaked information. State-owned media outlets, censorship, propaganda, and restricted media freedom can limit the ability of independent actors to bring leaks to light and disseminate them widely. Hence, governments can avoid the cost of a leak in low-level democracies easier than in high-level democracies. However, if the incumbent government has sufficient political power to control the narrative of the leaked information, highly democratic governments can also escape or minimize the costs.

Cost Mitigation Strategies: Effects of Political Support on Representative Selection

The key factor influencing the cost-minimizing power is the incumbent government's level of political support. The level of political support is the vote share the ruling party, or the coalition receives. The vote share directly affects the legislature's composition and subsequently determines the type of government that can be formed. In a majority government, where the ruling party or coalition holds a significant majority of seats in the legislative body, the government typically enjoys a higher level of political support compared to a minority government. This is because they have a stronger mandate from the electorate and a more remarkable ability to pass legislation and implement their policy agenda. The more extensive support base provides the government with more resources, stability, and legitimacy, which can translate into greater resilience in the face of a leak. It also allows the government to maintain a cohesive and unified front, as they have a higher likelihood of having members within their own party or coalition who are aligned with their agenda and less likely to undermine or publicly criticize the government.

On the other hand, in a minority government, where the ruling party or coalition does not hold a majority of seats, the level of political support is typically lower. The government relies on the support of opposition parties or independent lawmakers to pass legislation and govern effectively. In this situation, the government may face more significant challenges in maintaining political support, as they need to negotiate and compromise with other parties to advance their agenda. This can make them more vulnerable to internal disagreements and dissent as opposition parties may have their own agendas and interests that may not align with the government. In a coalition government, where multiple parties form an alliance to govern, the level of political support can be complex and varied. It depends on the dynamics within the coalition and the level of cohesion among the different parties. If the coalition is cohesive and united, with a shared policy agenda and a high level of trust and cooperation, the government can benefit from a broader support base and increased resilience. Overall, the level of political support can fluctuate in different government types, with majority governments generally enjoying higher levels of support and potentially greater resilience, while minority and coalition governments

may face more challenges in maintaining political support and managing the aftermath of a leak.

In a presidential system, the dynamics of political support and its impact on the government's vulnerability to leaks can differ from parliamentary systems. The direct election of the president and the popular mandate they receive can contribute to their overall level of support. However, the nature of political support in a presidential system can further be influenced by the relationship between the president and the legislature, particularly when the president's party holds a majority. This can provide the president with more resources and support to respond and manage a leak's consequences effectively. The president can rely on their party members in the legislature to help mitigate the fallout, control the narrative, and coordinate a unified response. This can minimize the potential damage and cost associated with the leak. In contrast, if the president's party does not hold a majority in the legislature, the level of political support may be more fragmented. The government may face challenges in garnering sufficient support to manage the cost of a leak effectively. Coalitions or negotiations with other parties may be necessary, and differing interests and priorities among these parties can complicate the government's response. This can increase the cost of a leak, as the government may struggle to present a unified front and effectively address the consequences.

This cost calculation affects the governments' behavior in how they conduct secret negotiations. Governments employ different strategies and approaches based on their perception of the potential costs. Incumbent governments with high political support often adopt a more proactive and confident approach to secret negotiations. The dataset used in this study demonstrates that single-majority governments exhibit a three-fold higher frequency of sending high-level representatives compared to minority governments. This is attributed to the high motivation of majoritarian governments, as they believe they can effectively handle any potential repercussions that may arise from a leak or disclosure. By sending high-level representatives, the government enhances its credibility and demonstrates a genuine commitment to the negotiation process. This helps establish trust and facilitate productive discussions with the rebel group. On the other hand, governments with lower levels of political support adopt a more cautious and risk-averse approach. They are more concerned

about a leak's potential costs and send low-level representatives to the secret negotiations. By doing so, they aim to maintain plausible deniability in the event of a leak, as low-level representatives do not have the same level of authority or influence within the government. The table 2.1 shows participants from both government rebel sides. High-level government representatives include a president, a prime minister, a minister, a high-rank military official and intelligence officers.

Table 2.1: Secret Contact Participants				
Government Participant	Meeting	Letter	Phone Call	Total
<i>President</i>	3.73	27.37	7.14	9.83
<i>Prime Minister</i>	2.05	4.26	0.00	2.57
<i>Minister</i>	18.86	14.36	14.29	17.61
<i>Military Officer</i>	3.42	0.00	0.00	2.51
<i>Member of Parliament</i>	7.17	0.00	0.00	5.26
<i>Intelligence Officer</i>	8.36	3.70	14.29	7.30
<i>Other</i>	43.63	29.26	35.71	39.81
Rebel Participant				
<i>Leadership</i>	30.64	40.11	28.57	33.02
<i>Military Cadre</i>	22.78	21.15	17.65	22.24
<i>Member</i>	30.91	2.67	35.71	23.97
<i>Political Party Official</i>	9.06	4.28	0.00	7.70
<i>Other</i>	24.95	11.70	7.14	21.30

Lax and Sebenius (1986) highlight the significance of representatives in sensitive negotiations, where states can detach themselves from the process through careful

selection. The strategic choice of representatives allows governments to maintain a degree of distance and plausible deniability, enabling them to disavow the negotiation's existence should the need arise. Plausible deniability is a tactic used by governments to maintain a degree of deniability and avoid accountability for their actions (Poznansky 2020). It allows those responsible for denying any involvement or knowledge of an action, even if they were the ones who authorized or carried out the action. The goal is to create enough ambiguity and uncertainty about the government's role and actions to allow it to avoid any negative repercussions if things do not go as planned. In the context of negotiating in secret by sending low-ranking representatives, the government's objective is to create a perception that the lower-ranking officials involved do not have the authority or mandate to make significant decisions or commitments on behalf of the government. The government can make it clear that the lower-ranking officials are participating in the negotiations in their personal capacity or as technical experts rather than as government representatives. The government can distance itself from the negotiations and any potential leaks by emphasizing that its involvement does not reflect official endorsement or approval. Lower-ranking officials may be granted access only to specific information or have limited knowledge of the broader negotiation strategy. This approach restricts their ability to disclose sensitive details or make substantial commitments without higher-level authorization, reinforcing the notion that their involvement is peripheral to the government's decision-making process. In the event of a leak, the government may employ narratives that downplay the significance of the lower-ranking officials' involvement. They may claim that these officials acted outside their scope or exceeded their authority, portraying them as rogue actors rather than representatives of the government's official position. If a leak occurs, the government may attempt to shift blame onto the lower-ranking officials or portray them as acting on their own accord. By attributing the leak to individual misconduct or unauthorized actions, the government can distance itself from the event and maintain plausible deniability. However, this creates a perception on the rebel side that the government is not fully committed or genuine in the negotiation process, leading to breakdowns and restarts in the secret talks.

(H1): Democracies with a presidential system are more likely to send high-level representatives compared to those with a parliamentary system in secret negotiations.

Governments' perceptions of potential costs associated with leaks influence their behavior and strategies during secret negotiations, leading to different approaches based on their level of political support. Specifically, democracies with a presidential system are more likely to send high-level representatives compared to those with a parliamentary system in secret negotiations. This is because presidential systems often concentrate executive power in a single individual, allowing for more decisive action and greater control over the negotiation process. The perceived lower risk of leaks and stronger executive authority in presidential systems increase the government's confidence in managing the potential consequences of leaks, making them more willing to dispatch high-level representatives.

(H2): Within parliamentary systems, majoritarian governments are more inclined to send high-level representatives compared to coalition or minority governments in secret negotiations.

Majoritarian governments typically enjoy a higher level of political support and stability, as they hold a majority of seats in the legislature. This increased political support provides them with greater confidence in managing any potential fallout from leaks during secret negotiations. In contrast, coalition or minority governments face the challenge of maintaining consensus among multiple parties, making them more cautious in sending high-level representatives who may be seen as representing a specific party or interest group.

An illustrative example of the strategic selection of representatives as a deliberate strategy to maintain plausible deniability and mitigate the potential consequences of a leak is the Spanish government's appointment of a member of parliament from the Socialist Party. When the government was ruled by the minority government of the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party (PSOE) in 2005, the government chose a member of parliament, Jesús María Eguiguren, from its regional affiliate, the Socialist Party of the Basque Country. When queried about the rationale behind this choice, the then Interior Minister, Alfredo Pérez Rubalcaba, explained that the government

authorized Eguiguren for secret negotiations with ETA because, in the end, Eguiguren was representing “the Socialist Party, but if pushed, only the Basque Nationalist Party” (Whitfield 2014: 150). Rubalcaba also said the then Prime Minister, Zapatero, issued an order stating that in the event of any leaks regarding the existence of the operation, the responsibility would be attributed solely to the PSE. Any connection to the central government would be denied or disavowed (Whitfield 2014).

By opting for a lower-ranking representative like Eguiguren, the government hoped to create a narrative that the negotiations were conducted by a party representative rather than a government representative. This strategy allows the government to deflect blame or responsibility in case of a leak by emphasizing that the negotiations were carried out independently by the party and not on behalf of the government. This approach allows the government to maintain flexibility and minimize potential backlash or political fallout if the negotiations are revealed to the public. It also provides the government with a degree of deniability regarding the specific details and outcomes of the talks, as they can claim that the representative did not have the authority to make binding commitments on behalf of the government. Overall, the decision to send a lower-ranking representative like Eguiguren reflects a calculated effort by the government to reduce the potential cost of a leak and maintain a level of plausible deniability in their engagement with the rebel group.

Case studies provide evidence that secret negotiations between democratic governments and rebel groups frequently occur, which aligns with existing literature highlighting democracies' aversion to violence and their utilization of various tools to address intra-state conflicts. However, the manner in which democratic governments conduct these covert negotiations exhibits significant variation. This study argues that the government's conduct of secret negotiations plays a critical role in determining the outcomes of these engagements, specifically in terms of persuading rebel groups to cease violence. The conduct and approach taken by governments during these confidential negotiations influence the willingness of rebel groups to halt their violent activities.

The selection of government representatives differs significantly among governments, and the anecdotal evidence emphasizes the pivotal role these

representatives play in establishing trust and garnering the rebels' commitment to the peace process. Consequently, the government's choice of representatives dramatically influences the success of secret negotiations. This study argues that representative selection significantly impacts the government's credibility and legitimacy in the eyes of the rebel group. If the government fails to send representatives with authoritative power, rebel groups are unlikely to trust their intentions. In contrast, negotiations that involve high-level representatives from the government side tend to lead to more favorable outcomes, as they significantly contribute to fostering the commitment of rebel groups to the peace process. This increased commitment, in turn, directly impacts reducing or even ceasing the level of violence perpetrated by rebel groups. The question arises: why do some democratic states opt for high-level representatives while others do not? The selection of representatives hinges on the government's assessment of its ability to manage the costs associated with a potential leak. While all democracies seek to minimize the occurrence of leaks, their primary concern lies in their ability to mitigate or minimize the costs if preventive measures fail, as discussed in detail above. In this regard, the level of political support the incumbent government enjoys emerges as a significant determinant. Governments with substantial political support believe that they have the capability and resources to effectively manage the costs and consequences that may arise if a leak occurs. As a result, they are more inclined to send high-level representatives to the negotiations who possess the necessary authority and expertise to navigate the process successfully. Conversely, governments with limited political support face a different set of considerations. They are more cautious about the potential costs associated with a leak and lack the confidence or resources to manage them effectively. In order to minimize the risks and maintain plausible deniability, these governments are more likely to opt for low-level representatives in secret negotiations. This approach allows them to minimize their direct involvement and potential fallout in case of a leak, thus mitigating the costs they may incur. How does the government's representative selection impact the outcome of their secret negotiations?

2.3.3 *Rebel's Commitment to the Peace Process: Effects of Representative Selection*

Negotiation in secret can be a form of a costly signal, but it is not inherently a costly signal in and of itself. Costly signals are actions or behaviors that are costly to the signaling actor, and as such, they communicate credibility to the recipient.

Negotiating in secret is a form of costly signal if it involves taking actions that are costly to the actor, such as taking risks to build trust with the other party. In the context of secret negotiations with rebel groups, the use of high-level representatives is considered a costly action for the government by the rebels. By sending high-level representatives, the government communicates its seriousness and commitment to the negotiation process, thereby enhancing its credibility in the eyes of the rebel group. Governments strategically send high or low-ranking officials as their representatives. The choice of sending high-level or low-level representatives has implications for the dynamics of the secret negotiations. High-level representatives signal the government's seriousness and help foster a more productive atmosphere for reaching a peace agreement. Conversely, low-level representatives undermine trust and confidence, potentially leading to a less successful outcome.

The role of authoritative representatives in secret negotiations is crucial for determining the success of such talks in intrastate conflicts. These representatives possess the power and legitimacy to make decisions on behalf of their respective parties, which can directly impact the negotiation process and its outcome. Authoritative representatives are mandated to make decisions and commitments during negotiations, enabling the process to move forward and reach an agreement that both parties can accept. Their credibility lends weight to the negotiation process. When negotiators are perceived as capable of implementing the agreed-upon terms, both parties are more likely to invest time and resources in the negotiations and make concessions. Trust-building is facilitated by authoritative representatives who can demonstrate commitment to the negotiation process and the ability to deliver on promises made during the talks.

Additionally, these representatives can garner internal support for the negotiation process within their own party or organization, ensuring that the negotiation outcomes are more likely to be accepted and implemented, thereby reducing the risk of internal

dissent or opposition to the agreement. Authoritative representatives also play a critical role in overcoming deadlocks during negotiations, as their ability to make decisions and concessions can help break impasses and pave the way for a mutually acceptable agreement. The presence of authoritative representatives in secret negotiations also signals a commitment to the opposing party, encouraging both sides to engage more constructively in the negotiation process. Lastly, high-level representatives convey a sense of importance and priority to the rebel group, indicating that the government values the negotiation process and considers it a significant avenue for achieving a peaceful resolution. This can help build trust and confidence between the negotiating parties, as the rebel group sees that their demands and grievances are being taken seriously at the highest levels of government.

The trust and credibility of the government in the eyes of rebel groups play a pivotal role in fostering commitment to the peace process. A key demand from the government is often the cessation of violence by the rebels in secret negotiations to proceed with more talks in secret and then in public. The UK government officials demanded the cessation of violence from the Provisional IRA in every secret meeting. The Indian government held secret meetings regarding the possibility of a ceasefire with the NSCN-IM (National Socialist Council of Nagaland-Isak Muivah) on multiple occasions starting in late June 1995. These secret meetings, including one attended by the Prime Minister, P. V. Narasimha Rao, preceded the signing of a ceasefire agreement between India and NSCN-IM in 1997 (Prakash 2006, Balachandran 2015). The Spanish government requested a ceasefire from ETA (Euskadi Ta Askatasuna) through intermediaries, stipulating it as a pre-condition for any secret meetings at the governmental level. The Spanish government consistently reiterated the demand for the cessation of violence in the preceding confidential discussions with ETA (Reiss 2010, Clark 1990). However, the decision for rebel groups to declare and implement a ceasefire is challenging as it carries the risk of losing support from their followers, who expect active pursuit of their goals. This may result in hardliners splitting or joining other existing rebel groups with similar objectives (Cunningham 2016). The rebels' decision to uphold a ceasefire and their long-term commitment to it hinge upon their trust in the government's willingness to

address their grievances and accommodate their demands, in addition to the presence of a centralized chain of command structure.

During secret negotiations, rebel groups make promises of ceasefires and, at times, publicly declare these ceasefires. Nevertheless, the actual adherence to these ceasefires varies. In the case of Spain, the government's hesitation to send high-level officials caused anger and distrust among ETA leadership and undermined the maintenance of a ceasefire and the cessation of violence (Whitfield 2014). The group declared ceasefires on multiple occasions but was not consistently respected. ETA continued to engage in sporadic acts of violence and attacks, even during periods when truces were officially declared.

The case studies serve as illustrations of how the involvement of low-level participants in secret negotiations results in limited decision-making authority, causing the process to last longer. In a specific instance, the Portuguese colonial authority in Angola utilized timber merchants as intermediaries in their interactions with an envoy representing UNITA's leader. However, upon the authority's report to Lisbon, it became evident that further engagement was required to address the uncertainties and ambiguities arising from the meeting between the Portuguese timber merchants and the group's envoy:

The loggers' statements left a lot of questions unanswered and many obscure points. This is why the president of the Group dismissed them and told them that in due time they would be convened for another meeting through the DGS (General Directorate of Security), and they would be given more instructions to pursue the contacts (Minter 1988, p. 47).

These back-and-forth interactions contributed to a prolonged conflict process and increased mistrust on the rebel side. As a result, the leader of the group felt compelled to address a letter to a higher authority, expressing frustration with the lack of progress in previous correspondence and seeking to engage with decision-makers who possessed the necessary authority (Minter 1988). The involvement of low-level participants and the need for multiple rounds of discussions prolonged the negotiation process, hindered effective communication, and heightened mistrust. The case illustrates the importance of having representatives with sufficient decision-making

authority involved in secret negotiations to facilitate more efficient and productive dialogue.

In another example, in May 1998, the Colombian President met with the leader of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) in an effort to restart the official peace negotiations that had broken down in June 1997. Recognizing the significant power held by the FARC at that time, the presence and direct involvement of the President were crucial to convincing the rebel leader to consider a restart of the peace process. By personally attending the meeting, the President demonstrated a willingness to engage in dialogue and address the grievances and concerns of the FARC. This direct engagement from the highest level of government conveyed a seriousness of intent and a genuine commitment to finding a peaceful resolution. Despite the previous breakdown in negotiations, the decision to meet with the FARC leader represented a renewed effort to overcome the challenges and rebuild trust between the government and the rebel group. It signaled a readiness to reengage in substantive discussions and explore potential avenues for resolving the conflict (Dudley 2004, Kline 2007).

Democratic governments prioritize achieving a ceasefire with rebel groups as a primary objective in secret negotiations and rebels occasionally declare ceasefires. However, they are mostly symbolic and rebels continue their violent attacks on civilians. Therefore, evaluating the success of secret negotiations should involve monitoring rebels' commitment to the cessation of violence following the secret negotiation, which may produce peace agreements later on, not whether they declare a ceasefire or not. This includes looking for a decrease in violent incidents or attacks attributed to the rebel group. The applicability of a ceasefire by rebel groups is contingent upon the level of trust they have in the government, which is influenced by the selection of government representatives in secret talks. Trust plays a crucial role in rebel groups' decision to halt violence, as they seek assurance that the government will fulfill its commitments and negotiate in good faith. By choosing high-level representatives who are credible and capable of delivering on agreements, the government can demonstrate its seriousness and commitment to resolving the conflict. Rebels face various challenges when they stop violence for a long time. They may lose inside and outside supporters.

(H3) Secret negotiations are more likely to reduce the level of violence caused by the rebel groups if governments choose to send high-level representatives to these negotiations.

(H4) The initiation of secret negotiations is expected to lead to an increase in rebel violence until the government sends high-level representatives and perceived as trustworthy in its secret initiatives with the rebels.

(H5) Ceasefires declared following secret negotiations are less likely to reduce rebel violence.

The hypotheses suggests that to reduce violence effectively, the involvement of high-level government representatives in secret negotiations is crucial. It is argued that the presence of authoritative representatives signals seriousness and enhances the commitment of rebel groups to the negotiation process. The lack of trust once secret negotiations were commenced can have reverse effects on insurgents' attacks. This was evident in the case of the IRA, which declared two ceasefires following secret negotiations in 1972. However, rather than leading to a decrease in violence, this period witnessed the highest level of violence throughout the Troubles. This outcome is attributed to the IRA's skepticism and lack of trust in the British government (Moloney 2002, Mumford 2011). This example suggests that once democratic governments initiate secret negotiations with the rebel groups, they are more likely to experience a higher number of rebel attacks as rebels may instrumentally use violence to force the government to be serious on this journey and send authoritative representatives. Low-level engagements is likely to signal lack of seriousness which in turn decreases the level of trust rebels have towards the government in question. Similar dynamics were observed in the context of the Basque conflict, where secret negotiations experienced periods of both breakthroughs and breakdowns. Interestingly, during the year of secret negotiations, there was a significant upsurge in ETA's attacks and a pioneering scholar on this conflict concluded that ETA strategically utilized violence as a means to pressure the Spanish government into resuming secret negotiations, but this time with a more serious agenda at hand (Clark 1990).

The literature on the impacts of formal negotiation processes on rebel violence frequently examines the concept of spoilers. The spoiler effect refers to the actions taken by certain individuals or groups to undermine the negotiation process and disrupt peace efforts (Stedman 1997, Gunning 2004, Newman and Richmond 2006). Within rebel groups, hardline factions or extremist elements may oppose negotiations and see them as a sign of weakness. These spoilers may engage in acts of violence to undermine the negotiation process and assert their power and influence. In the context of secret negotiations, it is common for the parties involved to keep the existence of these negotiations hidden, particularly from hardliners within their own groups. The purpose of this secrecy is to allow the negotiations to progress without interference or opposition from those who are opposed to the idea of negotiating. By maintaining confidentiality, the parties can build momentum and make significant progress before revealing the talks to a wider audience. In cases where spoilers are unaware of the ongoing negotiations, it is often the leadership of the rebel group who may promote increased acts of violence.

This study argues that the leadership level of rebel groups may encourage heightened violence if they perceive that their demands are not being met or are unlikely to be met. The presence of authoritative government representatives in the negotiations is believed to influence this perception. When high-level government representatives are lacking, rebels may resort to escalating violence as a means to exert pressure and force the government to engage with individuals who possess the necessary authority and influence. This dynamic underscores the complex interplay between negotiations, rebel violence, and the role of government representatives. It suggests that the absence of credible government representatives increases the risk of violence as rebels attempt to strengthen their position and compel the government to negotiate with individuals who have the necessary authority to address their demands.

(H6) Rebel groups are more likely to declare a ceasefire following secret negotiations as a symbolic gesture.

The selection of high-level government representatives in secret talks who possess credibility and the ability to deliver on agreements is instrumental in building trust and increasing the rebels' confidence in the government's willingness to fulfill its commitments. These representatives serve as trustworthy interlocutors, fostering

trust-building between the government and rebel groups and increasing the likelihood of a sustained cessation of violence. While existing literature has primarily emphasized the direct effects of secret negotiations on the peace process outcome, this study broadens the theoretical framework by considering the rebels' commitment to stop the violence. By evaluating the behavior and actions of rebel groups following secret contacts, we can gain insights into the effectiveness of these negotiations in fostering a sustainable cessation of violence. Specifically, we can assess the rebels' commitment to the ceasefire by monitoring any decrease in violent incidents or attacks attributed to the rebel group following the secret negotiation. This provides a tangible measure of success and offers insights into the rebels' trust in the government and their willingness to uphold the ceasefire. By incorporating the evaluation of the rebels' behavior and actions following secret contacts, particularly the observation of a decrease in violent incidents, we gain a more comprehensive understanding of the impacts of secret negotiations. This research provides insights into the effectiveness of secret negotiations in fostering a sustainable cessation of violence. It also highlights the interconnectedness of trust-building, the selection of government representatives, and the rebels' commitment to upholding the negotiated ceasefire. By considering these dynamics, we deepen our understanding of the complex relationship between secret negotiations, trust-building, and the achievement of tangible outcomes in conflict resolution processes.

2.3.4 Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: Democracies with a presidential system are more likely to send high-level representatives compared to those with a parliamentary system in secret negotiations.

Hypothesis 2: Within parliamentary systems, majoritarian governments are more inclined to send high-level representatives compared to coalition or minority governments in secret negotiations.

Hypothesis 3: Secret negotiations are more likely to reduce the level of violence caused by the rebel groups if governments choose to send high-level representatives to these negotiations.

Hypothesis 4: The initiation of secret negotiations is expected to lead to an increase in rebel violence until the government is perceived as genuine in its secret initiatives with the rebels.

Hypothesis 5: Ceasefires declared following secret negotiations are less likely to reduce rebel violence.

Hypothesis 6: Rebel groups are more likely to declare a ceasefire following secret negotiations as a symbolic gesture.



Chapter 3

RESEARCH DESIGN

“We do not negotiate with terrorists” (Former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher 1984).

3.1 Introduction

The research design chapter provides a comprehensive overview of the key components and methodology employed in this study. The chapter begins by defining the concept of secret contact. It then introduces the dataset on Secret Contacts (SECON) between rebel groups and target states and highlights the motivation behind the creation of this new dataset. Subsequently, the chapter delves into the identification of the dependent variables and main independent variables that are central to the study. Furthermore, control variables are introduced to account for potential confounding factors that may influence the relationship between independent and dependent variables. The chapter proceeds to discuss the research method employed in this study, which combines quantitative analysis with qualitative insights. It outlines the approach and strategies utilized to analyze data, providing a framework for investigating the research questions and testing the hypotheses. Descriptive statistics are then presented to offer a detailed overview of the dataset, providing insights into the characteristics and patterns observed in secret contacts between rebel groups and target states. This section aids in establishing a foundation for the subsequent analysis and interpretation of the findings.

3.2 What is Secret Contact?

"There are known knowns. There are things we know we know. We also know there are known unknowns. That is to say; we know there are some things we do not know. But there are also unknown unknowns, the ones we don't know we don't know" (Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, news briefing, 12 February 2002).

In the present study, the term "secret contact" is utilized to encompass the concept of back-channel negotiation as described in existing scholarly literature while also offering a broader perspective that covers a more extensive range of cases involving covert negotiations. This concept is defined as a contact, manifesting as a meeting, phone call, or letter, between a rebel group and the state it targets, which occurs without public notice, with the aim of resolving the conflict between the involved parties. The focus is specifically on contacts that take place between state representatives and non-state armed groups (NAGs) representatives. NAGs are defined as organized entities that employ violence to pursue their objectives against a state (San-Akca, 2009). Secrecy pertains to the act of concealing the existence, presence, or occurrence of contact from domestic public. The term "contact" is employed to denote various forms of communication between a state and a NAG, including message delivery, even in the absence of the involved parties' physical presence. It should be noted that the government must approve all such contacts, either prior to or following the communication and any initiatives or contacts initiated by individuals acting in a private capacity will be excluded from this study. This definition ensures that the analysis focuses solely on official, government-sanctioned contacts between a state and a NAG. For instance, on one occasion, a former British General engaged in an unofficial dialogue with an IRA army council member. After contacting him through a phone call, he told the secretary of state that the IRA was willing to negotiate, and the secretary of state asked him to withdraw from any further contacts. I excluded this initiative since it was not approved in the first place by the government. Examples of government approval directly extracted from the sources include: "The first secret talks with the IRA came when opposition leader Harold Wilson, with the permission of Prime Minister Edward Heath [*then prime minister of the United Kingdom*], attended a meeting with the leadership of the IRA while on a visit to Dublin in March 1972" (Mumford, 2011 p 634, italics added), "In conditions of utmost secrecy, Zapatero [*then prime minister of Spain*] authorized initial meetings between Jesus Eguiguren and ETA, facilitated by the HD Centre, in June and July 2005" (Whitfield, 2014, p 150, italics added). Some secret contacts were acknowledged by governments at later stages, while others came to light through media leaks and approved by the government.

The sources, comprising declassified materials, investigative journalism studies, personal memoirs of participants, and interviews conducted by academic experts specialized in the subject, contribute a wealth of intricate information concerning the governmental approval of these covert interactions.

In the dataset, secret contacts have been excluded if their existence is acknowledged, despite the specific details regarding their date and location remaining undisclosed. For instance, the dataset does not include the following news report about a meeting between the Colombian government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) as an example of a secret meeting:

Members of the Peace Commission had said that the Commission and leaders of guerrilla groups, including the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) and the 19th April Movement (M-19), would meet next week, at a time and place which had been determined but which would be kept *secret*, according to Emisoras Caracol Network (Bogota). The public would be informed about the meeting only after it had been held and journalists would not be permitted to attend (BBC, 1984, *Italic added*).

Despite the fact that the public is unaware of the time and location of the aforementioned meeting, it is not categorized as a secret meeting in this study since its existence was publicized prior to the event. The authorities maintained secrecy regarding the date and location of the meeting for security reasons. Colombian government's secret negotiations with the FARC starting in September 2012 in Havana, Cuba, which lasted until negotiators declared a final agreement on August 24, 2016, are excluded since the government made the process public before the secret meetings. Nonetheless, what is incorporated into the dataset with respect to FARC and Colombia is that the secret contacts took place in Cuba from 24 February 2012 until the government's announcement date of 28 August 2012. The same applies to the talks with the National Liberation Army (ELN) in Colombia. On June 10, 2014, the president disclosed that the negotiations were ongoing and would proceed in secret, making the negotiations known to the public on this date. Therefore, the subsequent secret meetings are not included in the dataset. Prior to the announcement date, the dataset contains information about 95 secret contacts with the ELN commencing from 1982. The Colombian government had many secret

meetings with the 19th of April Movement (M-19) and Popular Liberation Army (EPL), but the government announced beforehand that they would have those meetings in a secret location on an unknown date. These meetings are excluded from the dataset.

A secret contact can take on any of the following three forms: meeting, exchange of letters, and phone call. A secret contact is a meeting when at least one authorized representative from the non-state armed group and the target state is physically present in the same location. In the case of secret meetings, it is required that at least one participant or representative authorized by both the NAG and the target state be present. Examples of secret meetings include Secretary of State for Northern Ireland William Whitelaw's meeting with six Provisional Irish Republican Army (IRA) leaders for three hours on July 7, 1972, at the house of junior minister Paul Channon in London. The preliminary contacts to Whitelaw's meeting by MI6 agents with the IRA leaders are also considered a meeting when both sides met in a location. Another example of a secret meeting is the African National Congress (ANC) deputy-president Mandela's meetings with the South African government. Mandela met with President Botha and some other ministers in the president's office for forty-five minutes on the 5 of July 1989, and the National Intelligence Service (NIS) officers arranged several meetings with the ANC leadership in exile in Switzerland in 1990. Three Spanish government representatives' meeting with the ETA leadership in Switzerland in May 1999 is another example of a secret meeting. In contrast, if an intelligence officer meets with an intermediary and provides a letter to be delivered to the NAG, this is not considered a meeting because the NAG is not present in the encounter between the officer and the intermediary. For instance, MI6 officer Michael Oatley met with intermediary Brendan Duddy multiple times in Northern Ireland and handed him letters to deliver to the IRA leadership. Therefore, Oatley's meetings with Duddy are not regarded as secret meetings since no representatives of the IRA were present. Rather, these instances are categorized as secret letters.

Secret letters refer to sending messages in written or verbal forms in which the sender and the receiver are from both sides or authorized to report to the parties. The above-given example of Oatley introducing notes to Duddy to deliver them to the IRA illustrates this type of secret contact. Mandela, the then deputy-President of the ANC,

had sent several letters to the South African ministers and presidents while he was in prison. If one side sends a letter but does not receive an answer in the form of a letter, I still consider such occasions as letter delivery because the answer may take different forms. For instance, the government responded to Mandela's letters by taking actions based on his demands in the letters, like arranging a meeting between Mandela and the ministers. A note of "from-to" is taken to understand who the sender and receiver are. In verbal forms, an intermediary meets one of the parties and forwards messages. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) had once acted as an intermediary between the Sri Lankan President and the LTTE leader Prabhakaran in 1994-1995 by carrying verbal messages. An example secret letter between UNITA and a merchant is given to distinguish if the parties authorized a letter. In the letters, two timber merchants (who later played an intermediary role in exchanging information between Portugal and UNITA) said their leaders were unaware of these letters and if the NAG side were serious, then they would let the leaders know:

I am writing to you without the backing or knowledge of our authorities, whether they be civil or military, but I know that if the agreement that you seek aims at an unconditional, honest collaboration and for the future, then they possibly will not think ill of us (Minter, 1988, p. 35).

General Director of Security in Angola for Portuguese colonial authorities summarizes the situation in Angola to the Minister of Overseas in Lisbon by saying:

This is what seems to be deduced from the letters, photocopies of which are enclosed, sent by a UNITA soldier to a logger from Cangumbe whose replies are also enclosed in photocopies (Minter, 1988:43).

Based on these letters, it is concluded that the state authority was aware of the correspondence.

A phone call is referred to as a secret if the call involves both sides and is kept secret from the public. Phone calls usually happen through hotlines between an intelligent officer and a NAG member to have contact in urgent cases. In this type, both sides must be involved in the calling. For example, in a secret meeting between government officials and the IRA leadership, they established a telephone hotline

between an IRA member and an MI6 officer to defuse tension and sort out misunderstandings on the 7th of July 1972. This hotline was then used two days later to prevent an outbreak of violence related to Catholic families' move towards the empty houses in the loyalist area.

3.3 Dataset on Secret Contacts (SECON) between Rebel Groups and Target States

I have collected a dataset on secret contacts between 56 randomly selected non-state armed groups (NAGs) and the states they targeted for 1970-2015. I kept the sample limited given the time constraints for completing this dissertation. The data is available in two versions, each differing in its unit of analysis. Based on a secret contact event, the first version documents instances of secret contacts between NAG-Target dyads. The second version adopts a dyad-year unit of analysis and records secret contacts between NAG-Target dyads across the aforementioned period. I rely on the UCDP/PRIO dyadic dataset to identify the universe of dyads. UCDP/PRIO's criteria for inclusion is that a conflict must pass a 25-battle-related death threshold. However, a secret contact might occur at any stage of the conflict after a rebel group is formed and named itself. For this reason, I use the NAG Dataset for group foundation years and observe the dyad as soon as the NAG is active within the scope of this study. The dataset is limited to the period up to 2015, as it is necessary for sufficient time to have passed for materials to be declassified. Due to time constraints, not all dyads including a democratic government in the UCDP/PRIO dataset could be covered, and therefore, a region-based coding process was initiated. The list of groups covered and the detailed codebook is in the Appendix A.

I used a sampling process that combined elements of both random selection and systematic coding. I first created a list of democracies in Europe, Middle East, Asia, Western Hemisphere, and Africa based on the Polity V dataset. The inclusion criteria for a dyad was that the target state should score six or above in the POLITY V dataset to be considered a democracy. These democracies were subsequently cross-referenced with the UCDP dyadic dataset to identify instances where they were targeted by rebel groups. I assigned numerical values to each region on my list, allowing for the random selection of regions to be coded and made successive

selections. The first selection resulted in the choice of Europe, followed by the second selection which led to the identification of the Western Hemisphere, then Asia, Middle East and Africa as the last region. Within each region, I implemented an alphabetical arrangement based on the names of countries and rebel groups. This approach guided the systematic progression of my coding efforts. I successfully completed coding for all the rebel groups in Europe and the Western Hemisphere. However, with a total of 57 rebel groups in Asia, I had to halt the coding process due to the time limitations I was facing.

In total, the dataset covers 56 rebel group-target state dyads. The number of observations for the event data is 856, and 1257 for the year-based time-series version. However, some countries experience regime transitions, which make them a democracy for some time and then a non-democracy after a while. Therefore, the list comprises countries that scored five or above anytime between 1970-2015. Inclusion of all years helps us observe states' behavior based on their level of democracy, and analysis is possible for the years while states are a democracy. Another practical concern was that NAGs are formed and survive irrespective of the democracy level of target states. The observation starts if the NAG is active from 1970-2015 without looking at the target's democracy level. So, both versions include observations of dyads from the foundation year of NAGs until 2015 as soon as the NAGs exist in the NAGs Dataset. For instance, the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria was founded in 1991 and targeted Russia until 2007. Within this period, Russia was a democratic country between 2000 and 2006. Although Russia received polity scores lower than six in 1993-1999, observations for this dyad started in 1991 and ended in 2007 based on the found-end years of the rebel group.

Secret contact event dataset codes for the following information: Types of secret contact (meetings, letters, and phone calls), exact start date available (day-month-year or month-year or only year), location (exact location if the event took place in an outside state), participants from the government side (president, prime minister, minister, member of parliaments, military personnel, intelligence officer and specified other attendees), participants from the rebel side (rebel leadership, rebel political party, rebel military cadre, rebel member and specified other attendees). I coded for whether an intermediary was used to conduct the secret contact event and,

if it was a meeting, whether the intermediary was present or not. I also coded whether the secret contact event was leaked to the media in the following days. The determination of whether a secret contact has been leaked to the media hinges on specific criteria. To qualify as a leak, the secret contact must be publicly disclosed in a newspaper before the dyad terminates. Instances where a secret contact appears in a newspaper after the dyad in question becomes inactive are not considered leaks. Instead, such occurrences serve as a means to code the secret contact in the dataset. For instance, let's consider the case of UNITA's leader, who engaged in extensive correspondence with Portuguese colonial authorities from 1971-1972. The Portuguese weekly *Expresso* published these letters on 8 July 1974, subsequent to UNITA signing a truce agreement on 14 June 1974. Given that the dyad of Portugal and UNITA concluded in 1974 with the independence of Angola, the publication of these letters in *Expresso* is not classified as a leak of secret letters. Instead, they are coded as secret letters, with *Expresso* serving as one of their sources.

Government announcements are not considered leaks and are noted as announcements as a different variable. The dataset includes information on the leak date and reactions of governments and rebels. Did the government and the rebel confirm or deny what has leaked to the media? As this study works on clandestine events, a critical piece of information to include is the source of each secret contact. I cited all the relevant sources written about each secret contact and its details.

The time-series format codes secret contacts as a binary variable for a dyad-year and the number of times they occurred. Using the information on the start and end dates of conflict dyads between a state government and a rebel group, I constructed a cross-sectional time series dataset in which the unit of observation is a dyad-year. However, some rebel groups fought for many years, while others were active for only one year, making the dataset unbalanced. The dependent variable is *Secret Contact*, a binary indicator equal to 1 if the dyad has a secret contact in a given year and 0 if otherwise. Concerning the characteristics of representatives, I created a binary variable based on whether a secret contact included a high-level representative from the government and the rebel side to make it a time-variant. High-level representatives from the government side refer to the president, prime minister, minister, and military personnel. High-level representatives from the rebel

side include rebel leaders and military commanders. The dataset does not code rebel political party representatives as high-level representatives from the rebel side.

A comprehensive list of data sources was compiled, including primary sources such as declassified government documents and public statements and secondary sources including books, memoirs, biographies, and personal accounts of key actors, articles, academic papers, and reports from NGOs, research institutions, and other organizations.

Why a new dataset?

The only dataset that closely aligns with the research conducted in this study is the pre-negotiation dataset compiled by Doyle and Hegele (2021). This dataset draws its information from the Yearbook of Peace Processes, a publication that has been offering comprehensive insights and analyses of peace processes and negotiations across the globe since its inception in 1997.

However, a significant concern regarding the Yearbook revolves around its lack of transparency regarding the sources of the data it presents—an issue that the authors themselves have acknowledged. The absence of clear information about the origins of the data complicates the assessment of the dataset's reliability and credibility. This opacity in data sourcing undermines the confidence that can be placed in the accuracy of the information presented.

Furthermore, the scope of the pre-negotiation dataset by Doyle and Hegele is specifically tailored to cover secret negotiations that take place prior to the official negotiation phases. Regrettably, this dataset does not extend its tracking beyond the initiation of the official negotiations. This constraint can limit the depth of insights into the subsequent stages of negotiation and the potential outcomes that might have emerged.

It is important to note that the pre-negotiation dataset compiled by Doyle and Hegele encompasses a broader array of dyads compared to the dataset employed in the current study. However, this dataset is bounded by a temporal constraint, focusing exclusively on the period between 2005 and 2015. This limitation in time scope could potentially impede the examination of long-term trends or changes that

occurred outside this specified timeframe. As this investigation delved into the complex dynamics of secret contacts, incident counts, and ceasefire declarations by rebel groups, it became apparent that a new dataset was essential to comprehensively address the research questions.

3.4 Dependent Variables and Summary Statistics

Total Incidents: I use Terrorism in Armed Conflict (TAC) dataset by Fortna, Lotito, and Rubin (2022). The TAC dataset matches rebel organizations from the Uppsala Conflict Data Project (UCDP) dataset with events recorded in the Global Terrorism Database (GTD) within the time frame of 1970-2016². By establishing these connections, TAC effectively links and associates the activities of rebel groups documented in the UCDP dataset with specific events and incidents documented in the GTD at dyad-year level. The GTD is a comprehensive database coding terrorists attacks and incidents. While the armed groups in my dataset are listed in the GTD and classified as terrorist groups, I have chosen to refer to them as "non-state armed groups" for the purposes of this study. The TAC project aligns the GTD data with the UCDP to compile annual incident statistics. They also create specific variables for their research, which they define as "indiscriminate terrorist attacks." In my study, I have opted to utilize the total count of all incidents without restricting the analysis solely to indiscriminate terrorist attacks.

Table 3.1 is the summary statistics for the number of incidents variable and reveals that the dataset consists of 983 observations for this variable. On average, rebel groups were involved in approximately 32 incidents, with a standard deviation of 41.28. The minimum number of incidents recorded was zero, while the maximum reached 338. This indicates considerable variability in the frequency of incidents attributed to rebel groups.

Table 3.1: Summary Statistics for Number of Incidents by Rebel Groups

Variable	Obs.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Number of Incidents	983	31.99695	41.28214	0	338

² The Global Terrorism Database lacks information for the year 1993, therefore in the analysis the year 1993 is coded as missing.

Ceasefire: It is coded as dummy variable indicating whether the rebel group declared a ceasefire in a given year. I use the Civil Conflict CeaseFire (CF) dataset by Clayton et. al 2022. The CF dataset encompasses a comprehensive collection of ceasefires observed in civil conflicts between 1989 and 2020. It includes a diverse range of ceasefire arrangements, including multilateral, bilateral, and unilateral agreements, spanning from verbal understandings to detailed written accords. As a result, the analysis that incorporates ceasefires as a variable begins from 1989, aligning with the available data in the CF dataset. The Table 3.2 represents the summary statistics for ceasefire declarations by rebel groups.

Table 3.2: Summary Statistics for Ceasefire Declaration by Rebel Groups

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Ceasefire	1,244	.1125402	.316157	0	1

3.5 Main Independent Variables

Secret Contact: In this study, the variable "Secret Contact" is coded as a binary variable, indicating the presence or absence of secret contact. The governments are divided into two categories: presidential and parliamentary systems. This categorization was based on the information obtained from the IDB dataset, which identifies the government systems. Furthermore, within the parliamentary systems, an additional classification was made based on government types. Governments were categorized as either minority or majority governments, providing a more nuanced understanding of the variations within parliamentary systems. These categorizations, namely the distinction between presidential and parliamentary systems, as well as the classification of parliamentary systems into minority and majority governments, serve as independent variables in the analysis.

High-Level Government Representatives: The dataset categorizes government representatives according to their positions, roles, titles, and names, utilizing the information available for each individual. It designates an individual as a "high-level representative" if they are involved in a secret contact and hold any of the following positions: the president, secretary to the president, prime minister, a minister, or intelligence officer.

3.6 Control Variables

In this analysis, several control variables are incorporated to ensure a rigorous examination of the relationship between the number of incidents by a rebel group (dependent variable) and secret contacts, as well as the impact of secret contacts on ceasefire declarations by the rebel groups. The control variables integrated into the analysis include factors such as the presence of territorial conflict, rebel group's political wing, centralized command structure, democracy score, ethnonationalist rebel group categorization, mediation, media freedom, external support, and the number of veto players. These variables are introduced to ensure a rigorous examination of the relationships between incident counts by rebel groups, secret contacts, and ceasefire declarations. By accounting for these control variables, the analysis gains depth and comprehensiveness, offering a holistic understanding of the intricate dynamics at play in secret negotiations and conflict resolution.

Incompatibility: In the context of territorial conflicts, reaching a compromise becomes more challenging, and rebel groups with territorial claims may be more prone to engaging in violent attacks (Mitchell, 1991; Zartman, 1989, 1993). In scenarios where rebel groups have territorial claims, governments might adopt a more cautious approach when selecting representatives for secret negotiations. The heightened potential for violent actions from rebel groups with territorial claims could lead governments to prioritize representatives who possess a certain level authority. Additionally, taking into account the insights of Lax and Sebenius (1986), if belligerents have a history of intense and highly contentious conflicts, they are likely to seek detachment from ongoing clandestine discussions. This variable is taken from UCDP/PRIO.

Political Party: This is a binary indicator coding whether the rebel group has a political wing during the time of secret contacts. It might be easier to point out whom to talk to for the governments if the NAG has a political wing. The existence of a political party also creates an opportunity for democratic states, in case of a leak of secret contacts, to defend themselves by stating they never talked to the NAG but an officially recognized political party. Given these dynamics, it becomes important to consider the influence of a rebel group's political wing on the selection of representatives by a government.

Centralized Command Structure: I aimed to control for whether a rebel group had a clear centralized command chain structure, as it could have affected their commitment to a ceasefire. A centralized command structure tends to provide greater coherence, coordination, and control over the group's actions, making it potentially more conducive to maintaining a ceasefire. On the other hand, decentralized structures may struggle with internal divisions and less cohesive decision-making, making them more prone to challenges in upholding ceasefire commitments. I utilized data from the NSA dataset (Cunningham, Gleditsch, and Salehyan, 2013) to explore this relationship. However, the dataset revealed limited variation, with approximately 95 percent of the observed rebel groups having a centralized command structure.

Democracy Score: I use the Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem)'s polyarchy score in the analysis. The V-Dem's Polyarchy (v2x_polyarchy) score is a metric used in the Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) dataset (Coppedge, 2023). It quantifies the level of democracy or polyarchy in a particular country for a given year. The score is based on a scale that ranges from 0 to 1, where higher values indicate a higher level of democratic practices and institutions. The polyarchy score takes into account various aspects of democracy, including political competition, the extent of civil liberties, and the inclusiveness of political participation. It serves as a useful tool for comparing the degree of democracy across different countries and over time.

In the appendix, I provide supplementary analyses utilizing both V-Dem's and Polity V's democracy scores. In addition to assessing the quantity of democracy, I have incorporated a control variable to evaluate the quality of democracy by considering the age of a country's democratic system.

Ethnic Rebel Group: This is a binary variable denoting whether the rebel group is categorized as an ethnonationalist group in the NAGs dataset. Ethnonationalist rebel groups often have distinct motivations and goals compared to other types of rebel groups. By including this control variable, I aim to assess whether the presence or absence of ethnonationalist identity within a rebel group has a significant impact on the government representative selection process and ceasefire declarations by the rebel groups. Scholars argue that ethnic groups exhibit greater cohesion and resilience due to their strong ideological bonds (Davis and Moore, 1997; Vanhanen,

1999). While Bapat (2005) does not identify any notable effects of the ethnic conflict variable on the initiation of official negotiations or the timing of rebel group dissolution, it is plausible that this variable might play a role in the government representative selection.

Mediation: For the mediation variable, I make use of the Civil War Mediation dataset developed by DeRouen et al. (2011). This dataset is instrumental in capturing the effect of mediation. When analyzing ceasefire declarations by rebel groups, it becomes imperative to account for the influence of mediation. This is because ceasefire declarations can be intertwined with mediation processes, where the declaration of a ceasefire might be a component of the overall mediation efforts. Therefore, considering the mediation variable is crucial for a comprehensive analysis of ceasefire dynamics.

Media_freedom: To account for the potential influence of media freedom on the visibility of secret negotiations, I include media freedom as a control variable in the analysis. This variable indicates the media freedom score of the target state and is obtained from the Freedom House starting from 1972. I transferred the letter grades NF (not free), PF (partly free), and F (free) to numeric categories as NF: 0, PF:1, F:2.

External support: I use external support variable from the NAG dataset to capture the potential power of rebels (San-Akca 2016). It is plausible that NAGs receiving foreign assistance could be perceived as more potent by the state, potentially prompting them to engage with high-level representatives. The NAGs dataset provides a breakdown of external support into various types, while also spanning a significant period of time. I created a binary variable if a NAG has support from major powers, namely China, France, Germany, Russia, the United State and the United Kingdom, in a given year.

Conflict intensity level: : The conflict intensity level, a commonly employed control variable in civil war research using the UCDP/PRIO dataset, categorizes cases based on battle-related deaths within a given year. A value of 1 indicates instances with 25 to 999 battle-related deaths, while a value of 2 corresponds to situations involving 1000 or more such deaths. Despite its significance in civil war

studies, this variable did not exhibit substantial variation in my dataset. Consequently, I opted to exclude it from the analysis.

Rebel Strength: Scholars use the NSA dataset to control for the relative rebel strength vis-à-vis the target state (Cunningham, Gleditsch and Salehyan, 2013). This variable is a binary indicator, assuming a value of 1 when a rebel group holds greater strength than the government. However, given the lack of significant variation observed for this variable within my dataset, I made the decision to exclude it from the analysis.

Veto Player: In the analysis of secret contact onset, the concept of the number of veto players serves as a control variable. For this purpose, I utilize the checks and balances indicator from the IDB database as the representative measure of veto players. The quantification of the number of veto players follows a distinct pattern in both presidential and parliamentary systems. In presidential systems, specific conditions trigger an increase in the number of veto players. Firstly, this occurs when the president's party lacks a majority in the lower house and a closed list system is in effect. Additionally, if there are parties aligned with the president's party, but their ideological orientation is closer to the main opposition party rather than the president's party, the veto player's value raised by one. This underscores situations where party affiliations and ideological proximity contribute to the complexity of presidential power dynamics. In contrast, the dynamics differ within parliamentary systems, where the number of veto players is influenced by distinct factors. Specifically, the veto player value sees an increment for each party within the government coalition, provided their presence is essential to maintaining a legislative majority. Moreover, if their economic stance aligns more closely with the largest opposition party rather than the executive's party, a corresponding increase of one point takes place in the veto player value. This framework emphasizes the nuanced nature of power distribution within parliamentary systems.

3.7 Research Method

This study primarily employs a quantitative research method to analyze the data collected. The quantitative approach allows for the systematic examination of the variables and their relationships, providing statistical evidence to support the

findings. In addition to quantitative analysis, this study also incorporates a qualitative component in the form of case analysis. The case analysis provides a detailed examination of specific cases related to the research topic. This qualitative approach allows for a deeper exploration of the context, dynamics, and underlying factors that may influence the quantitative findings.

Quantitative Analysis

In analyzing the impacts of secret contacts on the declaration of ceasefires, a logistic regression model was employed due to the binary nature of the dependent variable. The data were clustered at the dyad level, which takes into account the interdependence of observations within dyads. Additionally, to address the issue of temporal dependency and potential autocorrelation in the data, the BTSCS (Binary Time Series Cross-Sectional) approach was utilized (Beck, Katz, and Tucker 1998). The BTSCS approach allows for the control of temporal dependencies by incorporating lagged variables and modeling the dynamics of the dependent variable over time. By considering the lagged effects and capturing the temporal dynamics, the BTSCS approach helps to account for potential biases arising from autocorrelation and temporal dependencies in the data.

I used a fixed-effect Poisson regression model, which is particularly well-suited for panel data analysis when the dependent variable involves count data³. Analyzing the count of incidents attributed to rebel groups as the dependent variable demanded meticulous attention to both the variable's characteristics and the dataset's structure. In the context of panel data analysis, where the data involves observing the same entities over multiple time periods, and the dependent variable represents counts of incidents, Poisson regression was selected as the fitting method. This choice was driven by the suitability of Poisson regression for modeling count data, making it a suitable approach for analyzing the panel dataset's characteristics and the specific nature of the dependent variable. Panel data involves observing the same entities over multiple time periods. Poisson regression can accommodate time-varying

³ An alternative approach to explore is employing the negative binomial regression (NBREG) model. However, I chose not to utilize the negative binomial regression (NBREG) model because it cannot accommodate a fixed effect model; it only allows for the use of conditional fixed effects.

covariates and time-fixed effects to control for time-specific and entity-specific influences. I conducted a Hausman test to compare fixed effects with random effects, and the outcome of the test recommended the utilization of fixed effects for my analysis the Hausman test result is in the Appendix B. By incorporating fixed effects, I can effectively address unobserved individual-specific attributes that might impact the number of incidents within the panel data.

Another approach would be to use a zero-inflated negative binomial (ZINB) regression model but the ZINB model is more conventionally applied to cross-sectional data. This modeling approach is suitable for handling the specific characteristics of the dependent variable if it exhibits excessive zeros and overdispersion. The presence of numerous observations with zero incidents and a larger standard deviation than the mean necessitates a modeling approach that can appropriately address these peculiarities. Therefore, a zero-inflated negative binomial (ZINB) model was also employed in addition to Poisson regression model to check if the results were too different. The ZINB model incorporates two distinct processes: one process captures the occurrence of zero counts (excess zeros), while the other process models the count of non-zero incidents. Using a fixed effect Poisson regression and checking the zero-inflated negative binomial regression model, this study provides a robust approach to analyzing the number of incidents by rebel groups, considering the unique characteristics of the data and gaining insights into the factors driving the occurrence of incidents. The results of the ZINB model can be found in Appendix B.

Case Analysis

This study's analytical framework incorporates a large-N dataset and an in-depth exploratory case study research of the Northern Ireland conflict between the United Kingdom and the Provisional IRA and the Basque conflict between Spain and ETA to explain causal mechanisms. While the large N dataset provides a broad perspective on secret negotiation processes in conflict resolution, the case analysis of conflicts including the United Kingdom and Spain offers specific evidence to complement and enrich the findings. By examining these two cases in detail, this study aims to identify common patterns and themes in the secret negotiation processes employed by the British and Spanish governments in their respective

conflicts. The case analysis delves into the intricacies of these negotiations, assessing their impact on the conflict process and evaluating the factors that contributed to their success or failure in achieving resolution. The primary objective of this analysis is to clarify the causal mechanisms that were identified within the broader large-N analysis.

Through the integration of quantitative analysis from the large N dataset and qualitative insights from the case analysis, a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics and outcomes of secret negotiations can be attained. This combined approach allows for the identification of generalizable lessons and insights that can inform future conflict resolution efforts. The evidence derived from the case analysis serves as valuable empirical support for the broader analytical framework. It enhances the study's ability to draw meaningful conclusions by providing concrete examples and real-world illustrations of the complex dynamics at play in secret negotiations. These case analyses contribute to the body of knowledge on secret negotiations and offer practical implications for policymakers, researchers, and practitioners engaged in conflict resolution endeavors.

3.8 Descriptive Statistics

The summary statistics present in Table 3.3 the distribution of the secret contact variable on a yearly basis. With a total of 1,244 observations the mean proportion of instances with secret contact is approximately 18.41%.

Table 3.3: Summary Statistics of Secret Contact (Yearly)

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Secret Contact	1,244	.1840836	.3877082	0	1

The table 3.4 illustrates the frequency of secret contact by type based on the event version which shows the total number of meetings, letters, and phone calls. Secret Meetings with a percentage of 71.26% shows that meetings are the most common mode of secret contact, followed by letters at 26.75% and phone calls at 1.99%.

Table 3.4: Frequency of Secret Contact Type (Event Version)

Secret Contact	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
Meeting	610	71.26	71.26
Letter	229	26.75	98.01
Phone Call	17	1.99	100.00
Total	856	100.00	

Table 3.5 displays the distribution of secret meetings' locations, delineating whether they occurred within the target country or in a third state. Remarkably, around 38% of these meetings were conducted in foreign countries, while roughly 30% took place within the borders of the target country.

Table 3.5: Secret Contact Location (Meeting) (Event Version)

Location	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
Outside	324	37.81	75.96
Inside	253	29.52	38.16
Total	577		

The next Table 3.6 show the representatives of governments and rebel groups in secret contacts. The table illustrates that from the government side, the president participated in these secret contacts 9.83% of the time, while a minister attended 17.61% of the time. Other government officials, whose specific roles are also defined in the dataset, attended in a total of 39.81 percent. The results are not mutually exclusive, and a secret contact event might be participated by more than one representative from the government side at the same time. Other government officials include government advisors, delegations, officials from the state security department, and the high commissioner for peace if the institution exists in the target country (ex., Colombia with ELN and FARC). Interestingly, intelligence officers

were sent as the government's representative only 7.30 percent of the time. The intelligence agency is the first institution to conduct secret operations and usually conducts covert operations in foreign policymaking (Cabrini and Born, 2007). States in the dataset prefer ministers to attend secret meetings more than intelligence officers.

We can observe the percentage of rebel participants in different categories (Leadership, Military Cadre, Member, Political Party Official, and Other) who met with Government participants through different communication channels (Meeting, Letter, Phone Call). The highest percentage of rebel participants meeting with government participants was in the leadership category at 33.02%. This suggests that government officials are more willing to communicate and negotiate with rebel leadership figures and/or rebel groups prefer the leadership attending secret contacts. Military cadres had the second-highest percentage of meetings with government participants at 22.24%, indicating that they play an important role in the rebel group's operations and decision-making. Rebel members had a relatively high percentage of contact with government participants through meetings and letters (24.95% and 11.70%, respectively). It is again worth noting that these results are not mutually exclusive, meaning that a secret contact event may involve multiple representatives from the rebel side. In many instances, rebel members are present alongside other types of participants during these events. The data presented in the table indicates that political party officials had a comparatively low rate of engagement in secret contact with government participants, with only 9.06% participating in face-to-face meetings and 4.28% communicating through letters. This is a noteworthy finding given that, in general, a political wing may facilitate the establishment of secret channels of communication with the government. However, the low rate of political party officials' engagement with government participants through these channels suggests that they are not actively participating in these secret contacts despite their presumed role in creating and facilitating them. Several factors, such as opposition within the rebel group to such engagements or a lack of recognition by the government of the political wing as a key player in the conflict, could explain this finding. The "Other" category had relatively high percentages of contact with government participants, exchanges of letters, and phone calls (24.95%,

9.65%, and 11.70%, respectively). The table suggests that government participants mostly meet with rebel leadership in secret meetings.

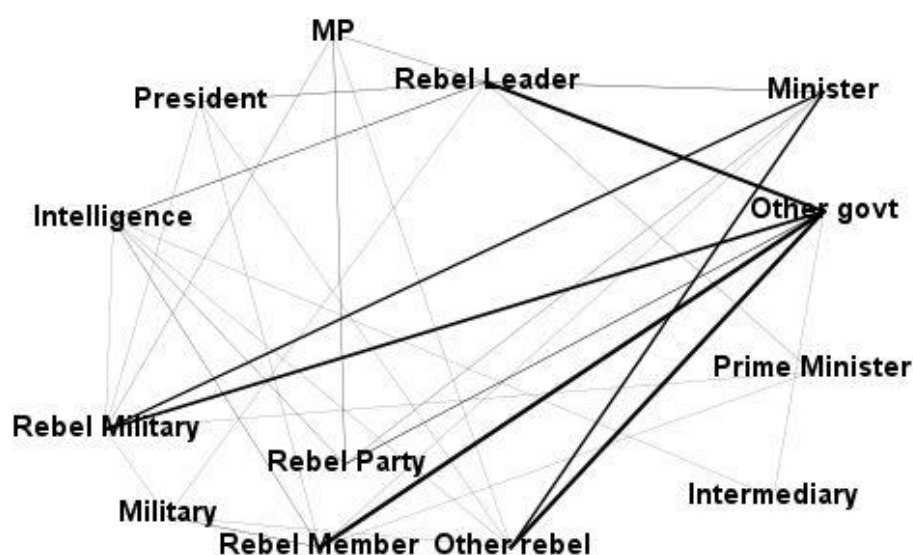
Table 3.6: Government and Rebel Representatives in Secret Contacts				
Secret Contact Participants (Event Version)				
Government Participant	Meeting	Letter	Phone Call	Total
<i>President</i>	3.73	27.37	7.14	9.83
<i>Prime Minister</i>	2.05	4.26	0.00	2.57
<i>Minister</i>	18.86	14.36	14.29	17.61
<i>Military Officer</i>	3.42	0.00	0.00	2.51
<i>Member of Parliament</i>	7.17	0.00	0.00	5.26
<i>Intelligence Officer</i>	8.36	3.70	14.29	7.30
<i>Other</i>	43.63	29.26	35.71	39.81
Rebel Participant				
<i>Leadership</i>	30.64	40.11	28.57	33.02
<i>Military Cadre</i>	22.78	21.15	17.65	22.24
<i>Member</i>	30.91	2.67	35.71	23.97
<i>Political Party Official</i>	9.06	4.28	0.00	7.70
<i>Other</i>	24.95	11.70	7.14	21.30

The table 3.7 presents the summary statistics on high-level representation by the government.

Table 3.7: Summary Statistics for High-Level Representation from the Government					
Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
High-level	1,231	.0869212	.2818341	0	1

Additionally, a network analysis was conducted to visualize the participants from both sides involved in the secret negotiations. The network analysis was performed using Gephi, a widely used software for network visualization and analysis. The network analysis provides a visual representation of the relationships and connections between the participants in Figure 3.1. Through the use of Gephi, the network analysis showcases the nodes representing the participants, with lines or edges indicating their connections or relationships. This visualization allows for a better understanding of the key actors involved.

Figure 3.1: Network of Secret Contact Participants



The Table 3.8 presents the summary statistics for instances of leak. findings suggest that the probability of leaked secret contacts is relatively low. This is attributed to the precautions exercised by both governments and rebel groups to maintain the

confidentiality of their secret engagements, owing to the potential costs that leaks could incur for both parties.

Table 3.8: Summary Statistics for Secret Contact Leak (Yearly)		
Leak	Frequency	Percent
Not Leaked	183	79.91
Leaked	46	20.09
Total	229	100.00

The Table 3.9 shows the percentages of intermediary use in secret contacts with various categories. The categories include local, foreign State, NGO, IGO, church, and Other. According to the results, the majority of secret contacts, 70.48%, were conducted without any intermediary. Local intermediaries were involved in 5.67% of secret contacts, while foreign states and NGOs were involved in an equal proportion of 10.51% of secret contacts. Church intermediaries were involved in 2.24% of secret contacts, and a negligible proportion of secret contacts involved other types of intermediaries (0.47%). These findings suggest that the majority of secret contacts are conducted directly between the parties without any intermediary. However, the involvement of the local, foreign state, and NGO intermediaries suggests that third-party facilitators play a role in facilitating secret contacts between government and rebel groups.

Table 3.9: Intermediary Use in Secret Contacts (Event Version)

Intermediary	Percent	Cum.
No Intermediary	70.48	70.48
Local	5.67	76.15
Foreign State	10.51	86.66
NGO	10.51	97.17
IGO	0.12	97.28
Church	2.24	99.53
Other	0.47	100.00

Table 3.10: List of How Many Times Governments Conducted Secret Contacts⁴

Target	Rebel Group	Time Period	Total Secret Contact
Government of Philippines	CPP	1970-2015	11
Government of India	PWG	1980-2004	1
Government of India	MCC	1970-2004	1
Government of India	CPI-Maoist	2004-2015	1
Government of Guatemala	URNG	1982-1996	6
Government of Israel	PLO	1970-1995	70
Government of Argentina	ERP	1970-1977	1
Government of Argentina	Montoneros	1970-1977	0
Government of India	NNC	1970-1975	2
Government of India	NSCN-IM	1980-2015	10
Government of Portugal	FNLA	1970-1974	2
Government of Portugal	MPLA	1970-1974	2
Government of Portugal	UNITA	1970-1974	47
Government of Colombia	FARC	1970-2015	126
Government of Colombia	ELN	1970-2015	88
Government of Colombia	M-19	1970-1990	11
Government of Colombia	EPL	1970-2015	16
Government of Indonesia	OPM	1970-1998	0
Government of Peru	Sendero Luminoso	1980-2015	6
Government of Peru	MRTA	1982-1997	0
Government of India	MNF	1970-1986	28
Government of Philippines	MNLF	1972-1996	10
Government of Philippines	MILF	1984-2015	10
Government of United Kingdom	PIRA	1970-2004	24

⁴ This list is structured using day-month-year data. The analysis is performed on an annual basis, and when I aggregated the dataset by dyad-year, those exhibiting a substantial number of secret negotiation incidents, such as FARC, do not appear as statistical outliers.

Government of United Kingdom	RIRA	1997-2015	0
Government of Bangladesh	JSS/SB	1973-1997	19
Government of Indonesia	CNRT(Fretilin)	1975-1999	6
Government of India	TNV	1978-1988	15
Government of India	ATTF	1990-2010	8
Government of India	NLFT	1990-2004	2
Government of Spain	ETA	1970-2015	131
Government of South Africa	ANC	1970-1993	41
Government of India	PLA	1978-2015	0
Government of India	UNLF	1970-2009	0
Government of India	KCP	1980-2012	3
Government of India	PREPAK	1977-2015	0
Government of India	Sikh insurgents	1980-1993	28
Government of Sri Lanka	LTTE	1972-2009	86
Government of Indonesia	GAM	1976-2006	14
Government of Romania	NSF	1989-1989	0
Government of Georgia	Republic of South Ossetia	1991-2008	3
Government of Moldova	PMR	1990-1997	2
Government of Russia (Soviet Union)	Chechen Republic of Ichkeria	1991-2007	4
Government of North Macedonia	UCK	1996-2001	1
Government of India	ABSU	1970-1996	8
Government of India	NDFB	1986-2005	1
Government of India	NDFB-RD	2008-2011	2
Government of Russia (Soviet Union)	Forces of the Caucasus Emirate	2007-2015	0
Government of India	KNF	1988-2015	3
Government of Bangladesh	PBCP	1972-2015	1

Government of India	NLFT-B	2003-2015	2
Government of India	CPI-ML-J	1992-2015	0
Government of India	GNLA	2009-2015	0
Government of Bangladesh	PBCP-J	2003-2015	1
Government of India	NDFB-S	2013-2015	2
			856

Descriptive statistics of Main Dependent and Independent Variables

The Table 3.11 displays the percentage of high level representation by the governments in secret contacts. In almost 50 percent of the time the governments dispatched high level representatives in their secret contacts with the rebel groups.

Table 3.11: Descriptive statistics of Main Dependent and Independent Variables					
Variable	Obs.	Mean	Std. Deviation	Min	Max
Secret Contact	1,244	.1840836	.3877082	0	1
High Govt Represent	1,231	.0869212	.2818341	0	1
Presidentialism	1,227	.4572127	.498369	0	1
Majoritarian Govt	1,107	.5400054	.4984576	0	1
Number of Incidents	991	31.83956	41.25929	0	338
Ceasefire Declaration	1,244	.5209003	.4997639	0	1

Table 3.12: Tabulation of Secret Contact and High-Level Government Representative (yearly)

High Level Government Representative	Secret Contact		Total
	0	1	
0	1,015 (100%)	109 (50.46%)	1,124 (91.31%)
1	0 (0%)	107 (49.54%)	107 (8.69%)
Total	1,015 (100%)	216 (100%)	1,231 (100%)

Table 3.13: Tabulation of Presidentialism and High-Level Representative (yearly)

Presidentialism	High Level Representative		Total
	0	1	
0	611 (55.19%)	48 (44.86%)	659 (54.28%)
1	496 (44.81%)	59 (55.14%)	555 (45.72%)
Total	1,107 (100%)	107 (100%)	1,214 (100%)

Table 3.14: Tabulation of Majoritarian Government and High-Level Representative (yearly)

Majoritarian Government	High Level Representative		Total
	0	1	
0	463 (46.63%)	34 (33.66%)	497 (45.43%)
1	530 (53.37%)	67 (66.34%)	597 (54.57%)
Total	993 (100%)	101 (100%)	1,094 (100%)

This original dataset helps figure out many other research questions such as under what conditions and in what forms democracies initiate secret contacts. The dataset can be utilized further for the following questions:

- (1) What are the conditions that increase the likelihood of democracies initiating secret contacts with non-state armed groups?
- (2) Does the level of democracy impact the probability of secret engagements between democracies and non-state armed groups?
- (3) How does the political system within democracies affect their decision to establish secret contacts with rebel groups?
- (4) To what extent do rebel ideology and objectives impact government decisions to establish secret contacts with them?
- (5) How do democratic states manage the secret contact process in terms of the composition of representatives, location, and use of intermediaries? Does their choice of representatives, location, and intermediaries affect the outcome of the conflict?

- (6) What is the impact of secret contacts on conflict processes? Do they contribute to conflict resolution, and if so, in what ways?
- (7) What are the circumstances under which public exposure or leaks occur in secret contacts? What is the impact of leaks on the outcome of the conflict?

3.9 A Brief Discussion on Secret Contact Onset

Regarding the onset of secret negotiations illustrated as the background condition in the theoretical framework, the dataset helps to have statistical findings on under what conditions democracies lead to secret negotiations with the rebel groups. The logistic regression the Table 3.15 presents the results of the effects of government types (presidentialism vs parliamentary and majoritarian vs minority or coalition government in parliamentary system), and rebel characteristics on the likelihood of secret contact onset.

The results suggest that government type has no significant effects on the onset of secret negotiations for democracies. Neither presidentialism nor majoritarian government within parliamentary system provided a statistically significant results. The analysis also incorporated a broader variable, the number of veto players, which spans across different government types. This addition arises from the understanding that not all presidential or majoritarian government setups possess equal capabilities to uphold secrecy in negotiations or manage the aftermath of public exposure.

Intriguingly, the negative coefficient pertaining to the number of veto players is coupled with a lack of statistical significance. This implies that, while relevant, this variable fails to exert a significant influence on the initiation of secret contacts. A remarkable observation emerges from the democracy level of target states.

According to the Table 3.15, democracies engage in secret contacts irrespective of how democratic they are.

Turning to rebel characteristics, one would assume that democratic governments are more inclined to initiate secret talks with ethno-nationalist rebel groups, given their territorial demands often defy conventional peace agreements. However, the analysis reveals that the classification of rebel groups as ethnic does not significantly impact the initiation of secret negotiations. This suggests that governments might not

discriminate among various rebel ideological aspirations when considering secret dialogues.

Other two important aspects of rebel groups are whether they have a central chain of command structure and a political party affiliation. The central chain of command might signal to the governments prior to secret contact onset that the group is able to apply the decisions taken in the secret negotiations to the entire group. This is important because governments might hesitate to approach rebel groups with a decentralized command structure, decision-making and authority are distributed across multiple leaders or local units. This structure can result in more autonomous decision-making at different levels of the organization. However, this variable also statistically not significant. The political party affiliation is another rebel characteristics that could influence governments' decision to approach to the rebel group in secret. First, it is easier to create a channel of communication with the rebel groups in the first place. Rebel groups generally operate secretly. The British government created a sound chain of communication through the IRA's political wing, Sinn Fein. Second, the political party affiliation might help the government in case of a public exposure. The government may try to legitimize its untransparent initiative by saying that it only talked to a political party not with a rebel group. This variable also does not show significant impact on governments' decision on secret negotiations onset.

In contrast, two control variables exhibit noteworthy impact. The presence of external state support and the number of incidents caused by rebel groups within a year significantly contribute to the initiation of secret contacts. The former variable, highlighting major power backing, emerges as a crucial consideration for governments and warrants further exploration. Similarly, the correlation between the number of rebel incidents and secret contact initiation suggests that heightened violence attracts government attention and prompts negotiations to quell the turmoil. In the model, there is an additional control for the level of media freedom in the target states. This control is incorporated to address the potential bias stemming from the possibility that information about secret contacts could be more accessible in countries with higher levels of media freedom, as opposed to those with lower levels. However, the analysis reveals that the level of media freedom does not yield

statistically significant results.

The results affirm the argument raised in the study that democratic governments utilize secret negotiations irrespective of the government system they operate in. We see variations in government behavior not in secret contact onset but in secret contact process. The variation in the process determines the outcomes of their secret encounters which are affected by the method they use in conducting secret negotiations. The nature of the government holds significant sway in shaping how these negotiations play out. Governments decide whether to dispatch high-ranking officials based on their political clout, a decision that carries substantial implications.

The political support a government possesses becomes pivotal as it factors in the calculation of potential post-leak repercussions, directly impacting their representative selection. When governments are confident in their ability to manage the potential costs that might arise following a leak of their covert initiatives, they are expected to choose to send high-level representatives. If governments lack this confidence, they are more likely to select lower-level representatives. This deliberate selection serves the purpose of creating distance between the government and the initiative, allowing for the preservation of plausible deniability in case of any repercussions following a leak.

Table 3.15: Logit Analysis of Secret Contact Onset

VARIABLES	Secret Contact
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Government Type

<i>Presidentialism</i>	0.477 (0.410)
<i>Majoritarian Government</i>	0.116 (0.278)
<i>Veto Player</i>	-0.0471 (0.0366)
<i>Democracy Score</i>	0.930 (1.163)

Rebel Characteristics

<i>Ethnic</i>	0.289 (0.419)
---------------	------------------

<i>External Support</i>	0.599** (0.241)
<i>Central Command</i>	-0.246 (0.672)
<i>Political Party</i>	0.282 (0.287)
<i>Incompatibility</i>	0.265 (0.400)
<i>Number of Incidents</i>	0.00323* (0.00182)
<i>Media Freedom</i>	0.0879 (0.162)
No Secret Contact Years	-1.130*** (0.240)
_spline	-0.0859*** (0.0327)
_spline	0.0155* (0.00854)
_spline	0.000823 (0.00104)
Constant	-1.204 (1.307)
Observations	869

Chapter 4

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

4.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the results and analysis based on the novel dataset specifically created for this study. The dataset serves as a valuable resource for examining the dynamics and outcomes of secret negotiations between governments and rebel groups. By analyzing this unique dataset, the study aims to test several hypotheses that shed light on various aspects of these covert negotiations.

The first hypothesis, Hypothesis 1, explores the role of political systems in shaping the behavior of democracies during secret negotiations. It suggests that democracies with a presidential system are more likely to send high-level representatives compared to those with a parliamentary system. By investigating the impact of different political systems on the involvement of high-level representatives, we can gain insights into how institutional structures influence government strategies in confidential talk.

Moving within parliamentary systems, Hypothesis 2 examines the influence of government composition on the likelihood of sending high-level representatives. Specifically, it posits that majoritarian governments, which hold a majority of seats in the legislature, are more inclined to dispatch high-level representatives compared to coalition or minority governments. This hypothesis delves into the dynamics of political support and decision-making processes within parliamentary contexts.

The focus then shifts to the outcome of government representative selections. Hypothesis 3 pertains to the circumstances that facilitate the successful

reduction of rebel violence through secret negotiations. It argues that the presence of high-level representatives sent by the government to these negotiations plays a crucial role in achieving a reduction in violence by enhancing trust and credibility. This hypothesis highlights the importance of representative authority and its impact on the negotiation process. Furthermore, Hypothesis 4 delves into the temporal dynamics of secret negotiations and their effects on rebel violence. It posits that the initiation of secret negotiations may initially lead to an increase in rebel violence until the government is perceived as genuine in its secret initiatives with the rebels. This hypothesis acknowledges the challenges and complexities that may arise during the early stages of secret negotiations.

The analysis then shifts its focus to explaining rebel behavior following secret negotiations. Hypothesis 5 suggests that rebel groups are more likely to declare a ceasefire as a symbolic gesture after engaging in confidential talks with governments. This hypothesis delves into the strategic considerations and symbolic significance of ceasefires within the context of secret negotiations. Given the similarity of the dependent variable with Hypotheses 3 and 4, the analysis for these hypotheses is presented jointly. Contrasting with Hypothesis 5, Hypothesis 6 challenges the effectiveness of ceasefires declared following secret negotiations in reducing rebel violence. It proposes ceasefire declarations may not always lead to the intended outcome of reducing violence and seeks to analyze potential limitations or complications associated with such ceasefires.

4.2 Regression Results

Hypothesis 1: Democracies with a presidential system are more likely to send high-level representatives compared to those with a parliamentary system in secret negotiations.

Hypothesis 2: Within parliamentary systems, majoritarian governments are more inclined to send high-level representatives compared to coalition or minority governments in secret negotiations.

The Table 4.1 presents the outcomes of the analysis conducted to evaluate Hypotheses 1 and 2. In this analysis Rare Event Logistic Regression (relogit) model was utilized. The dependent variable, the presence of high-level government representative, is a rare event, with only 108 occurrences out of a total of 1,231 observations. The majority of observations (1,123) correspond to the non-event outcome. The relogit model is a specialized form of logistic regression tailored to situations where the event of interest is rare. It is particularly useful when the outcome variable is binary, such as success/failure or yes/no, but the occurrence of the event is infrequent compared to the non-event outcome. This modeling approach accounts for the rarity of the event and provides more accurate estimates of the effects of independent variables on the probability of the rare event occurring (Toms, King and Zeng 2003).

The results indicate that democracies with a presidential system are more likely to send high-level representatives in secret negotiations compared to those with a parliamentary system. The coefficient for presidentialism in Model (1) shows that when the government system is a presidential one, we expect a 1.058164 increase in the log-odds of the dependent variable, high-level representative selection. The result is statistically significant at the 0.01 level. However, majoritarian governments within parliamentary systems have no significant effect on the representative selection.

In Model (2) I added the veto player variable to include all government systems without categorizing them as presidential and parliamentary. It might also be the case that not all presidential systems have equal levels of political power. While categorizing democracies as presidential or parliamentary systems serves as a useful starting point for understanding their governance structures, it is essential to recognize the limitations of such a binary classification. When the data is extended, the future plan is to have a distinct category for semi-presidential systems as the authoritative power differs. While presidentialism concentrates executive power in a single president, semi-presidentialism divides executive authority between a president and a prime minister. The analysis in the appendix shows that when semi-presidentialism is treated as a distinct government type, presidentialism continues to

demonstrate statistical significance and exhibits a positive correlation with the selection of high-level representatives. The results present that the presidential system is still statistically significant in influencing the selection of high-level government representatives. The odds ratio even increased to 1.274, indicating that presidential systems result in a 1.274 increase in the log-odds of high-level representative selection. In the third model, I added the interaction of presidentialism and the number of veto players. The interaction variable did not yield significant result but the presential system is still statistically significant. This suggests that the type of democratic system has an influence on the selection of high-level representatives during secret negotiations. All three models incorporate a set of control variables specific to the target state and rebel groups. Regarding the state, it includes the state's democracy level and the nature of incompatibility. With respect to rebel characteristics that might influence the government's selection of representatives, the models take into account whether the group exhibits ethnonational traits, possesses a political wing, maintains a central chain of command structure, and if it has a major power as an external supporter for a given year. This comprehensive approach ensures that pertinent and influential variables are integrated into the analysis, facilitating a more precise assessment of the relationships under investigation. To control for temporal dependency, the models include the consecutive years of no high-level representatives were send and three splines. Given the dyadic nature of the data, clustering effects were taken into account to address potential correlations or similarities within the dyadic clusters.

Among the control variables, democracy level, ethnonationalism, and external support illustrate statistically significant results.

Table 4.1: Logit Analysis of Government High-Level Representative Selection

VARIABLES	Model(1) Government Type	Model(2) Veto Player	Model(3) Presidentialism& Veto Player
<i>Presidentialism</i>	1.058*** (0.297)	1.274*** (0.345)	1.226* (0.627)
<i>Majoritarian</i>	0.430	0.334	0.347

<i>Government</i>			
	(0.272)	(0.309)	(0.338)
<i>Veto Player</i>		0.0230	0.0230
		(0.0471)	(0.0473)
<i>Presidentialism&Veto Player</i>			0.0175
			(0.159)
<i>Democracy Score</i>	0.130***	0.134***	0.133***
	(0.0344)	(0.0332)	(0.0349)
<i>Incompatibility</i>	0.707**	0.836**	0.837***
	(0.318)	(0.325)	(0.318)
Rebel Characteristics			
<i>Ethnonational</i>	1.393***	1.546***	1.552***
	(0.371)	(0.391)	(0.360)
<i>Political Party</i>	0.402	0.496*	0.501*
	(0.320)	(0.300)	(0.297)
<i>Central Command</i>	-0.287	-0.595	-0.610
	(0.725)	(0.608)	(0.612)
<i>External Support</i>	0.599**	0.565**	0.563**
	(0.238)	(0.254)	(0.256)
No high-level representative years	-0.120	-0.102	-0.100
	(0.185)	(0.199)	(0.200)
_spline	0.00682	0.00437	0.00445
	(0.0146)	(0.0159)	(0.0159)
_spline	-0.00618	-0.00434	-0.00438
	(0.00733)	(0.00790)	(0.00787)
_spline	0.00219	0.00163	0.00163
	(0.00156)	(0.00161)	(0.00160)
Constant	-5.371***	-5.699***	-5.691***
	(0.963)	(1.043)	(1.047)
Observations	1,094	1,065	1,065

Hypothesis 3: Secret negotiations are more likely to reduce the level of violence caused by the rebel groups if governments choose to send high-level representatives to these negotiations.

Hypothesis 4: The initiation of secret negotiations is expected to lead to an increase in rebel violence until the government is perceived as genuine in its secret initiatives with the rebels.

Hypothesis 5: Ceasefires declared following secret negotiations are less likely to reduce rebel violence.

The Table 4.2 presents the results of the effects of secret contacts and high-level

representatives on the likelihood of the number of incidents. The subsequent analysis aims to test the hypothesis that secret contacts are more likely to decrease rebel violence when high-level government representatives are involved. By including high-level government representatives in the secret contact process, it is anticipated that the government can establish a stronger foundation of trust and credibility, which may lead to more positive outcomes in terms of reducing rebel violence.

A fixed-effects Poisson regression model was used as the dependent variable is a count variable and the data has a panel structure. The first model tests the effect of secret contact on the number of incidents while accounting for the one-year lag of incidents. One potential concern in investigating the relationship between secret contact and the count of incidents is the possibility that secret contact might be influenced by, or occur concurrently with, changes in the incident count. This temporal relationship raises apprehensions about reverse causality or endogeneity, where the direction of causality becomes unclear.

To address this potential endogeneity concern, I incorporated the lagged variable of the incident count in the analysis. By introducing the lagged incident count, the goal was to account for the time sequence between secret contact and the count of incidents. This approach helps mitigate potential bias arising from reverse causality, providing more reliable insights into how secret contact affects the count of incidents by rebel groups. This strategic utilization of the lagged incident count enhances the robustness of the findings and contributes to a more accurate assessment of the relationship under investigation.

The analysis of the incident count reveals important insights into the relationships between predictor variables and the likelihood of incidents by rebel groups. Supporting the hypothesis 3, the positive and statistically significant coefficient for secret contact implies that for a one-unit increase in this variable, the log odds of the incident count is expected to increase by 0.210, holding other predictors constant. However, the inclusion of a one-minus-year lag of secret contacts reveals a reduction in the incidents conducted by rebel groups, and this outcome is statistically significant. Nonetheless, this pattern shifts when considering the inclusion of the high-level representative variable and its lag in

the analysis. In Model 2, where the high-level representative variable and its lag are incorporated alongside other control variables, the findings evolve.

Specifically, the results demonstrate that secret contact continues to exert a positive influence on the number of incidents carried out by rebel groups.

Meanwhile, the statistical significance previously observed in the role of the lag of secret contact in reducing incidents loses its significance. The inclusion of the high-level representative variable in the analysis has contributed to explaining part of the relationship that was initially attributed to lagged secret contact variable.

The following results in the Model 2 do not provide evidence of a significant effect of the presence of a high-level representative in secret contacts on the number of incidents in the year that governments send high-level representatives. This finding suggests that the immediate impact of high-level attendance in secret contacts is not statistically significant in reducing rebel violence. However, the results do reveal an interesting pattern. The lagged presence of a high-level representative shows a statistically significant negative association with the current number of incidents. This suggests that the effects of high-level attendance manifest over time.

In Model 3, an interaction variable of the lagged secret contact and lagged high-level representative is included. The coefficient for this interaction variable (Secret Contact & High-Level(t-1)) is negative and statistically significant, suggesting that the combination of these two factors in the previous year is associated with a decrease in the log-odds of incidents⁵. The combined influence of two variables produced an effect greater than their individual effects on the incidents count compared to the results in the model 2. In sum, the Poisson regression estimate indicates that, while holding the other variables constant in the model 2, the difference in the logs of expected counts is anticipated to be 0.143 units lower when considering high-level representation compared to no high-level representation by the government in secret contacts. Furthermore, for the interaction variable in the Model 3, the expected difference in the logs of

⁵ Coefficient plot for this interaction variable is in the appendix.

counts is projected to be 0.314 units lower.

This analysis also helps to observe the effect of ceasefire declarations by the rebel groups on the number incidents. Hypothesis 5 posits that ceasefire declarations primarily serve as symbolic gestures rather than effective measures to reduce rebel violence. To examine this hypothesis, the analysis assesses whether the ceasefire declarations following secret negotiations lead to a decrease in rebel violence. Model 1 indicates that a ceasefire declared in the preceding year is associated with a decrease in the number of incidents perpetrated by rebel groups. However, with the incorporation of the high-level representative variable and its lagged value in Model 2, the significance of the ceasefire's influence on rebel incident counts diminishes. This outcome aligns with the hypothesis, suggesting that ceasefires declared following secret negotiations are less likely to have a substantial impact in reducing rebel violence. Ceasefire declaration gains significance in the third model with the inclusion of interaction term of secret contact and high-level representative. This implies that if the government engaged in secret contact with high-level representatives in the previous year, the rebels uphold the ceasefire declared in the same year. It becomes evident that ceasefire declarations hold significant weight in quelling rebel violence only when governments actively engage in the dispatch of high-level representatives for secret negotiations.

Control variables were incorporated into the analysis to investigate their impact on the number of incidents by rebel groups. The analysis revealed a statistically significant positive relationship between the democracy level of the target state and the number of incidents by rebel groups. This suggests that higher levels of democracy are associated with an increase in rebel violence. External support positively and significantly increases the number of incidents. Amidst the significance of these factors, the outcomes validate the underlying hypothesis: the presence of high-level representatives is associated with a mitigating effect on the incidence counts. The inclusion of variables related to ethno-nationalist rebel groups and territorial conflicts did not show statistically significant effects on the number of incidents. This finding supports the idea that sustained engagement and trust-building through high-level representatives can contribute

to reducing rebel violence over time. The significance of the lagged high-level representative variable in the clustered analysis strengthens the evidence for its importance in understanding the dynamics of rebel violence. It highlights the significance of long-term engagement and consistent efforts in maintaining communication and trust-building between governments and rebel groups. Overall, the consistently significant and negative coefficient of the lagged high-level representative variable across the clustered models underscores its importance in mitigating rebel violence and reinforces the notion that sustained diplomatic efforts can yield positive outcomes in conflict resolution.

Table 4.2: Poisson Regression Results of Number of Incidents by Rebel Groups

VARIABLES	Model(1) Secret Contact	Model(2) High-Level	Model(3) Secret Contact & High Level
<i>Number of Incidents(t-1)</i>	0.00836*** (0.000111)	0.00840*** (0.000112)	0.00849*** (0.000111)
<i>Secret Contact</i>	0.210*** (0.0168)	0.171*** (0.0215)	
<i>Secret Contact(t-1)</i>	-0.0359** (0.0176)	0.0304 (0.0219)	0.167*** (0.0211)
<i>High-Level Representative</i>		0.143*** (0.0244)	
<i>High-Level Representative(t-1)</i>		-0.276*** (0.0257)	-0.0504 (0.0794)
<i>Secret Contact&High-Level(t-1)</i>			-0.314*** (0.0834)
<i>Ceasefire Declaration</i>	0.0225 (0.0195)	-0.00463 (0.0203)	
<i>Ceasefire Declaration(t-1)</i>	-0.0585*** (0.0204)	-0.0337 (0.0225)	-0.0426** (0.0203)
<i>Incompatibility</i>	0.0792 (0.0895)	0.00369 (0.0898)	0.0508 (0.0893)
<i>External Support</i>	0.406*** (0.0650)	0.475*** (0.0653)	0.542*** (0.0647)
<i>Ethnonational</i>	-0.0525 (0.130)	-0.0408 (0.130)	0.0408 (0.130)
<i>Central Command</i>	0.229 (0.342)	0.242 (0.342)	0.365 (0.342)
<i>Democracy Score</i>	1.743*** (0.0692)	1.791*** (0.0704)	1.780*** (0.0703)

Hypothesis 6: Rebel groups are more likely to declare a ceasefire following secret negotiations as a symbolic gesture.

The aim of this analysis is to examine the impact of secret contact on the likelihood of observing a ceasefire in state-rebel group dyads. Given the dyadic nature of the data, clustering effects were taken into account to address potential correlations or similarities within the dyadic clusters. To control temporal dependency, the models include the consecutive years of no ceasefire declarations and three splines. Table 4.3 presents the findings for the effect of key independent variables on the likelihood of ceasefire declaration.

A logistic regression analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between secret contact and the likelihood of observing a ceasefire in state-rebel group dyads. The first model included the one year plus lag of binary dependent variable ceasefire declaration, representing the presence or absence of a ceasefire by the rebel group in a given year. One potential concern in studying the relationship between secret contact and ceasefire is the possibility that secret contact occurs as a response to or in conjunction with rebels declaring a ceasefire. This temporal relationship raises concerns about potential reverse causality or endogeneity, where the direction of causality becomes unclear. To address this endogeneity concern, I lagged the ceasefire year one plus year. By incorporating the lagged variable, I aimed to control for the temporal ordering between secret contact and the ceasefire declaration. This approach helps reduce potential bias from reverse causality and provides more reliable inferences about the impact of secret contact on the likelihood of a ceasefire.

In Model 1, there is a bivariate analysis between ceasefire declaration and secret contact. The results show that secret contact demonstrates a statistically significant positive relationship, and we expect a 1.079 increase in the log-odds of the ceasefire declaration.

In Model 2, the aim was to control the effects of mediation on the likelihood of a ceasefire. The analysis reveals that the presence of mediation has positive and

statistically significant influence on the likelihood of ceasefire declaration by rebel groups. If there is a mediation effort between the government and the rebel group, we expect a 0.525 increase in the log-odds of the ceasefire declaration, other variables remaining constant. The results show that secret contact still has a positive and significant impact on the likelihood of ceasefire declaration, even after accounting for mediation. In the second model, if governments engage in secret contacts with the rebels, we expect a 0.582 increase in the log-odds of rebels' ceasefire declaration.

In Model 2, the analysis was also extended to incorporate additional control variables. These variables encompassed the democracy level of the target state, the nature of the conflict between the government and the rebel group, the presence of a clear central chain of command within the rebel group, the availability of external support for the rebels, their ethnonationalist aspirations, and their affiliation with a political party. Interestingly, none of these variables demonstrated statistically significant associations with the declaration of a ceasefire by the rebel groups. The statistically significant coefficient for the secret contact variable suggests that secret contacts continue to play a significant role in ceasefire declarations even after considering other factors.

The models achieved pseudo R² values ranging from 0.2522 to 0.2374, indicating the percentage of variance explained by the models. The goodness of fit statistics suggests reasonable fits for the two models. In all models, secret contacts consistently demonstrate a statistically significant effect on the likelihood of a ceasefire declaration. This consistency across models suggests a robust and reliable relationship between secret communication and ceasefire outcomes. This finding aligns with the hypothesis, indicating that rebels are more likely to declare ceasefires after engaging in secret contacts. Conversely, the significance of ceasefire declarations appears to be largely symbolic, as evidenced by the findings presented in the Table 4.2. The analysis highlights that rebel groups tend to persist in their acts of violence unless governments engage in the practice of sending high-level representatives. In this context, ceasefire declarations gain substantial meaning in curbing rebel violence, provided that governments take the initiative to dispatch high-level

representatives to engage in secret negotiations.

Table 4.3: Logit Analysis of Ceasefire Declaration by Rebel Groups

	Model(1)	Model(2)
VARIABLES		
<i>Secret Contact</i>	1.079*** (0.212)	0.582*** (0.225)
<i>Mediation</i>		0.525** (0.249)
<i>Democracy Score</i>		0.751 (0.511)
<i>Incompatibility</i>		-0.311 (0.367)
<i>Central Command</i>		0.213 (0.356)
<i>External Support</i>		0.303 (0.294)
<i>Ethnonational</i>		-0.331 (0.370)
<i>Political Party</i>		-0.269 (0.273)
<i>No ceasefire years</i>	-0.587*** (0.208)	-0.517*** (0.185)
<i>_spline</i>	-0.00238 (0.0159)	0.00185 (0.0164)
<i>_spline</i>	-0.00589 (0.00757)	-0.00772 (0.00806)
<i>_spline</i>	0.00348*** (0.00135)	0.00369** (0.00145)
Constant	-1.145*** (0.324)	-0.938 (0.584)
Observations	1,244	849

In conclusion, the findings shed lights on the complex relationship between secret negotiations, ceasefire declarations, and rebel violence in democratic conflict settings. The analysis explored various hypotheses and employed rigorous statistical models to examine the selection of government representatives, the consequences of secret contacts involving both high-level and non-high-level officials, and other relevant factors on the likelihood of ceasefire declarations and the reduction of rebel violence.

The results support the hypothesis that secret contacts are more likely to lead to

symbolic ceasefire declarations by rebel groups. These declarations often do not result in a tangible decrease in rebel violence. It is crucial, therefore, to evaluate the success of secret negotiations based on the rebels' commitment to the cessation of violence and the subsequent decrease in violent incidents attributed to the rebel group.

Furthermore, the presence of high-level government representatives in secret negotiations was found to be crucial in reducing rebel violence over time. While immediate effects may not be statistically significant, the lagged presence of high-level representatives demonstrates a consistent and significant negative association with the number of incidents by rebel groups. This highlights the importance of sustained engagement, trust-building, and consistent efforts in maintaining communication between governments and rebel groups.

The results suggest that ceasefire declarations alone do not lead to a reduction in the number of incidents, highlighting the limited effectiveness of ceasefires in curbing rebel violence. Additionally, the presence of secret contacts appears to have a reverse effect, actually increasing the number of incidents. The findings suggest that the mere existence of secret contacts are not sufficient to mitigate rebel violence. Instead, it is crucial for governments to invest in trust-building measures and demonstrate their commitment to resolving the conflict through the involvement of high-level government representatives. By doing so, governments can potentially create an environment conducive to successful secret negotiations and a subsequent reduction in rebel violence.

The analysis revealed that democracies with a presidential system are more likely to send high-level representatives compared to those with a parliamentary system. Within parliamentary systems, majoritarian governments do not seem to be inclined to select high-level representatives compared to coalition or minority governments. These findings emphasize the influence of the type of democratic system and the political context in shaping the selection of high-level representatives during secret negotiations.

Overall, the analysis helps in understanding of the dynamics involved in secret negotiations and their impact on rebel violence. The findings highlight the

importance of carefully selecting high-level representatives, fostering trust and credibility, and engaging in sustained diplomatic efforts to achieve meaningful and long-lasting conflict resolution.

4.2.1 Analysis for the Interaction of Government System and High-Level Representative Selection

Although presidential systems are inclined to appoint high-level representatives for secret negotiations, the research findings indicate that there is a positive and statistically significant correlation between the presence of a presidential system and the rebel violence when high-level representatives are involved. Interestingly, when it comes to parliamentary systems, the earlier results suggested that they are less prone to sending high-level representatives. However, when parliamentary systems do opt for high-level representation, there is evidence of a reduction in rebel violence. Within parliamentary systems, it's noteworthy that majoritarian governments do not yield statistically significant results in terms of representative selection. Nonetheless, in cases where majoritarian governments do appoint high-level representatives, there is a slight increase in rebel violence.

This pattern might be attributed to the notion that both presidentialism and majoritarian governments are relatively at ease when deploying high-level representatives, potentially due to their greater control over post-leak processes and cost-avoidance strategies. It appears that rebels are well aware of this dynamic. Therefore, powerful and robust governments may need to invest more effort in building trust with rebel groups, as their selection of high-level representatives might be seen as low-risk and cost-effective by the rebel groups.

Table 4.4: Poisson Regression Results of the Interaction between the Government Type and High-Level Representatives on Rebel Violence

Number of Incidents	(1)	(2)	(3)
VARIABLES	Presidential	Parliamentary	Majoritarian
Number of Incidents(t-1)	0.00840*** (0.000112)	0.00839*** (0.000112)	0.00766*** (0.000218)
Secret Contact	0.162*** (0.0216)	0.161*** (0.0216)	-0.123*** (0.0383)
Secret Contact(t-1)	0.0264	0.0343	0.0709*

	(0.0218)	(0.0218)	(0.0367)
High Level Representative	0.148***	0.145***	0.394***
	(0.0244)	(0.0244)	(0.0449)
High Level Representative(t-1)	-0.395***	-0.225***	-0.524***
	(0.0373)	(0.0290)	(0.0630)
High Level*Presidentialism	0.170***		
	(0.0459)		
High Level*Parliamentary		-0.170***	
		(0.0459)	
High Level*Majoritarian			0.182**
			(0.0723)
Ceasefire (dummy)	-0.00771	-0.00672	-0.170***
	(0.0197)	(0.0197)	(0.0313)
Territorial Claim	0.00249	-0.00749	0.0634
	(0.0898)	(0.0898)	(0.0910)
External Support	0.491***	0.480***	-0.331*
	(0.0654)	(0.0654)	(0.173)
Ethnonationalist	-0.0367	-0.0509	
	(0.130)	(0.130)	
Central Command	0.261	0.248	
	(0.342)	(0.342)	
Democracy Score	1.671***	1.654***	-0.567*
	(0.0728)	(0.0728)	(0.302)
Observations	882	882	436

Standard errors in parentheses

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Chapter 5

CASE ANALYSIS**5.1 Introduction**

In the preceding chapter, the analysis delved into the complex dynamics of secret negotiations, ceasefire declarations, and rebel violence within democratic conflict settings. Valuable insights were uncovered into the factors influencing these processes, including the selection of government representatives and the consequences of secret contacts. The focus now shifts to the examination of real-world case studies that illustrate the nuances and ramifications of these findings. In particular, attention will be given to two historically significant conflicts: the United Kingdom's struggle with the nationalist armed group, the Provisional Irish Republican Army (PIRA), and Spain's enduring battle with the Basque nationalist organization ETA. These case studies provide a compelling backdrop against which to apply the insights gleaned from the previous chapter's analysis. They demonstrate how the principles explored in the preceding chapter played out in these real-world contexts, impacting societies and shaping the trajectories of peace and stability amid years of violence, political turmoil, and societal divisions. This chapter serves to elucidate the impact of different parliamentary systems, including majoritarian, minority, and coalition governments, on the strategies employed for representative selection by governments. The United Kingdom, renowned for its history of majoritarian governments, frequently demonstrates a tendency to dispatch high-level representatives. In contrast, Spain, characterized by its history of minority governments, offers a case study illustrating a preference for sending representatives at a lower level.

The conflict between the United Kingdom and the Provisional IRA primarily began

in the late 1960s when tensions escalated between Irish nationalists seeking independence and the British government's presence in Northern Ireland. The Provisional IRA emerged as a prominent nationalist armed group during this period and played a central role in the subsequent years of violent conflict. Similarly, Spain's conflict with ETA traces its origins back to the late 1950s when Basque nationalist sentiments gained momentum. ETA, an acronym for Euskadi Ta Askatasuna (Basque Homeland and Liberty), was formed in 1959 and began its armed campaign for Basque independence and self-determination. The conflict between Spain and ETA spanned several decades, characterized by acts of terrorism, bombings, and assassinations.

In response to these enduring conflicts, secret negotiations emerged as a vital strategy employed by the governments to address the violence problem. The British government initiated secret talks in the early 1970s, while the Spanish government began their negotiations immediately after the collapse of the Franco regime in 1975. These covert talks provided a discreet platform for discussions, enabling the exploration of sensitive issues and the formulation of potential solutions. However, the outcomes of these secret negotiation processes varied in their effectiveness. Some negotiations led to significant breakthroughs, contributing to the reduction of violence and the path toward peace, while others faced substantial challenges and yielded limited results. Understanding the factors that influenced these divergent outcomes is essential in order to extract valuable insights and lessons learned.

This case analysis chapter aims to examine the secret negotiation processes undertaken by the United Kingdom and Spain in their respective conflicts with the Provisional IRA and ETA. By analyzing the historical context, the challenges encountered, and the specific strategies employed, this study seeks to gain a deeper understanding of the complexities involved in resolving conflicts involving nationalist armed groups. Furthermore, this analysis will explore the contrasting results of these secret negotiation processes, identifying the factors that contributed to their success or limitations. By studying these cases side by side, this chapter aims to highlight the diverse outcomes and draw valuable lessons that can inform future approaches to conflict resolution.

The peace process in Northern Ireland culminated in the signing of the Good Friday

Agreement in 1998, effectively ending the conflict. The belligerent parties were able to reach a negotiated settlement. In contrast, the Basque conflict experienced a different outcome, with negotiations failing and ETA declaring a unilateral ceasefire in 2011 before disbanding in 2018. In Northern Ireland, the British government and the IRA engaged in negotiations to find a resolution and halt the violence. In contrast, in the Basque conflict, ETA's decision to end its armed struggle was primarily driven by factors unrelated to negotiations. The group gradually faded away, with the loss of support from its constituency playing a significant role (Murua 2017b).

5.2 The Troubles: A Brief Historical Background of the Conflict between the United Kingdom and the Provisional IRA

The Troubles refer to a turbulent period of conflict and political violence primarily occurring in Northern Ireland from the late 1960s to the late 1990s. Rooted in the complex historical and political context of Ireland and the United Kingdom, the Troubles emerged as a result of deep-seated divisions between the nationalist and unionist communities (Moloney 2002, Coogan 2002).

The origins of the Troubles can be traced back to the partition of Ireland in 1921 when the predominantly Protestant and unionist population in Northern Ireland remained part of the United Kingdom, while the predominantly Catholic and nationalist population sought independence and reunification with the rest of Ireland. This division created a profound religious, political, and cultural divide between the two communities. Tensions escalated in the 1960s when the nationalist community, inspired by the civil rights movements of the era, began advocating for equal rights and an end to discrimination. However, their demands were met with resistance from the unionist establishment, leading to violent clashes and increasing polarization within society. In the late 1960s, the situation deteriorated further as the Provisional Irish Republican Army (IRA), a nationalist armed organization, emerged. The IRA pursued armed struggle as a means to achieve Irish reunification and launched a campaign of bombings, assassinations, and other acts of violence. The Troubles witnessed a significant escalation in violence throughout the 1970s and 1980s. The conflict became increasingly sectarian, with frequent attacks targeting civilians, paramilitary groups, and security forces. The British Army was

deployed to Northern Ireland to maintain order but faced considerable challenges in dealing with the complex and volatile situation. The conflict took a heavy toll on both communities, with thousands of lives lost and many more injured or displaced. Sectarianism, deep-rooted mistrust, and political deadlock perpetuated the cycle of violence and hindered efforts to find a peaceful resolution.

Throughout the Troubles, various attempts were made to engage in negotiations and find a way forward. Secret talks between the British government and the IRA and public negotiations involving political parties sought to address the underlying grievances and achieve a lasting political settlement.

Notable Secret Meetings

This section provides examples of the British government's representative selection and examines their impacts on IRA violence and the overall trajectory of negotiations. Specifically, the focus is on the role of high-level representation in these negotiations. The analysis delves into the consequences of the British government's decision to send high-level representatives, which facilitated an uninterrupted chain of communication at the leadership level, effectively addressing various obstacles in the negotiations. Conversely, it explores the outcomes when the British government opted not to dispatch high-level representatives, resulting in an intensification of violence by the IRA as a response. Additionally, it investigates the impact of abruptly halting the secret negotiations process, which led to a resurgence of IRA violence.

At the beginning of March 1972, the IRA accepted four days unilateral ceasefire in a secret meeting in Dublin with a member of parliament at the Northern Ireland government directly ruled by the UK and paved the way for another meeting during the ceasefire days. The next meeting was held between the opposition leader in the British parliament, with the approval of the Prime Minister in Dublin on 13 March 1972. During the meeting, the IRA presented a list of five key demands, with the withdrawal of British forces from Northern Ireland standing out as the most crucial demand. After four hours of discussions, the two parties' positions were vastly divergent. One of the IRA participants later recalled that the meeting was a mere "talking shop" as the British participants did not possess the authority to negotiate or

make deals on behalf of the British government (Anderson 2002: 245). As a result, the IRA informed their guests that not only was the meeting concluded, but also the ceasefire that had been declared in the previous meeting (Rees 1985).

After the conclusion of the March ceasefire, the resumption of violence was swift and marked by a significant upsurge in IRA activities. The month of May 1972 witnessed an alarming escalation, with the IRA undertaking approximately 1,200 operations, a number that continued to rise in the ensuing month (Moloney 2002). However, Ed Moloney, an investigative journalist documenting the history of the IRA, argued that the mounting violence also affected the Catholic communities forcing them to live in a war zone (2002). Hence, moderates within the Catholic community began exerting pressure on the IRA to engage in negotiations with the British government. These moderate voices recognized the toll the violence was exacting on their communities and saw the need for a peaceful resolution to the conflict.

In the midst of this tense climate, the IRA leadership made a significant move by organizing a public press conference in mid-June held in Derry. During the conference, they publicly expressed their desire to meet with William Whitelaw, the newly appointed secretary of state for Northern Ireland. They proposed a temporary suspension of all military operations for a period of seven days, with the condition that Whitelaw accepts their offer within the next 24 hours. However, Whitelaw dismissed their ultimatum, emphasizing his refusal to engage with terrorists who were responsible for causing harm to innocent civilians in Northern Ireland and attacking British troops. Despite the public rejection, he instructed two department members, including a senior M16 officer, to initiate a secret meeting with the IRA (Mumford 2011).

On June 20, 1972, a meeting took place in Londonderry. It involved Philip Woodfield, a representative from the Northern Ireland Office, and Frank Steele, an MI6 officer representing the government. On the rebel side, senior IRA leaders, including Gerry Adams, who had been temporarily released from Long Kesh prison for the purpose of assisting in the negotiations, also attended the meeting (Reiss 2010, Mumford 2011, Dochartaigh 2011). The IRA agreed on a ceasefire and the parties also decided to establish a telephone "hot-line." This direct line of

communication would serve as a means to defuse tensions, address misunderstandings, and facilitate dialogue between the IRA and the British government (Taylor 2014). Six days later, the IRA announced the ceasefire as a gesture of upcoming Whitelaw meeting.

The Whitelaw Talks

On July 7th, the meeting took place between six prominent IRA figures and William Whitelaw in the Chelsea home of junior minister Paul Channon in London. The IRA group comprised three senior members from the IRA's Belfast command, namely Ivor Bell, Seamus Twomey, and Gerry Adams. Martin McGuinness, the commander of the IRA's Londonderry battalion, Daithi O'Connell, a member of the IRA Army Council, and Sean MacStiofain, the IRA Chief of Staff, who publicly called for Whitelaw to come to Northern Ireland for open discussions in June, were also present. Acting as the delegation's secretary, Myles Shevlin, a Dublin lawyer, completed the group of seven participants in the meeting. This gathering marked a significant milestone in the negotiation process, bringing together key figures from both sides to engage in direct discussions. Yet, it did not yield fruitful results in terms of maintaining the declared ceasefire. In his memoirs, Whitelaw stated that the IRA's demands were far from acceptable. One of their demands concerned the status of Northern Ireland, which, according to the UK constitution, could only be changed through a majority vote. The IRA also insisted on the withdrawal of British forces from Northern Ireland by January 1, 1975, and the cessation of internment. Additionally, they called for a general amnesty that would apply to all prisoners, detainees, and wanted individuals (Whitelaw 1989). Many reports that these unfruitful results were due to the IRA's lack of experience in negotiating (Moloney 2002, Reiss 2010). Before the Whitelaw talk, in the early 1970s, the UK dissolved Stormont, a governing system that granted Northern Ireland a measure of self-governance, and imposed Direct Rule, assuming direct control over the region's administration from Westminster, London, due to an escalation of sectarian violence in the region. This move was perceived as a victory by some young IRA leaders, leading them to believe that intensifying acts of violence might pressure the British government to withdraw from Northern Ireland. The IRA could not achieve anything from this ministerial-level meeting. Despite the challenges during the

meeting, the two sides managed to reach an agreement on a four-point plan. This plan involved the immediate suspension of offensive activities for a week and the commitment to further negotiations following this period of cessation. The outcome of the meeting was considered constructive, particularly because it marked the first face-to-face encounter between the republican movement seeking a united and independent Ireland and British government officials since Michael Collins and David Lloyd-George met in 1921 to bring an end to the Irish War of Independence (Coogan 2002: 393).

The ceasefire started the day after the Whitelaw talks on July 7th. However, it only lasted two days due to a violent incident in the Lenadoon housing estate in Belfast where Catholic families moved to empty houses on July 10th. The secret hot-line was utilized to solve the problem but with no success. The IRA interpreted the British army's response to the unrest as a signal that the ceasefire was no longer in effect. Consequently, the IRA made the decision to publicize the Whitelaw meeting, which was a unique occurrence in their history. However, this public exposure and the subsequent return to violence played into the hands of the British government, strengthening their determination to employ military force against the IRA.

On July 31, 1972, the British army conducted Operation Motorman, which is considered the largest military operations in the modern history of the Troubles. Thousands of troops, along with demolition vehicles, were deployed to regain control over areas that were under IRA influence. This operation significantly diminished the IRA's power and influence. It became apparent that the British had achieved a position of military strength and had regained the initiative in the conflict (Mumford 2011).

After the public exposure of the Whitelaw talks, the British government became resolute in maintaining strict control over public perception of direct negotiations. This cautious approach persisted when the Labour Party formed a minority government with Harold Wilson as Prime Minister in March 1974. In April 1974, when the IRA leadership contacted the Northern Ireland Office, requesting the release of imprisoned IRA members, a deliberate decision was made to neither respond nor acknowledge their communications. The government clearly understood that even a response to routine matters could be misinterpreted or misrepresented as

negotiations between the British government and the IRA (Taylor 2014).

The Whitelaw Talk left a significant impact on the IRA, fostering a genuine belief that the British government was willing to engage in substantive and meaningful discussions. The leak by the IRA was attributed to the group's relative lack of experience in handling sensitive negotiation processes effectively (Powell 2014). The IRA leader's acknowledgment of his young age, stating, "I was just twenty-three" at the time of the incident, highlights the inexperience within the IRA's leadership during that period (Powell, 2014, p. 125). Following the public exposure, the British government made efforts to prevent official-level meetings with the IRA, but the group had many attempts to reignite the negotiation process. This determination demonstrated the IRA's continued faith in the potential for genuine dialogue with the British government. It also indicated their belief that the government did not harbor hidden agendas during their secret engagements with the IRA. Overall, the Whitelaw talks served as a pivotal moment in shaping the IRA's perceptions and approach to future negotiations with the British government.

The Church Initiative

After the unsuccessful Whitelaw meeting in June 1972, there were no reported secret contacts between the parties until late December 1974. In December of that year, secret meetings began in Feakle, County Clare, facilitated by a group of Protestant clergymen from the Irish Council of Churches. These meetings brought together senior IRA leaders and Sir Frank Cooper, a British civil servant serving as the Permanent Secretary to the Northern Ireland Office in Stormont. As a result of these initial talks, the IRA declared a ceasefire, which remained in effect from December 22, 1974, until January 16, 1975 (Barton 2009). Why did the British government come to accept the resumption of negotiations less than two years after the failure of 1972? What factors and developments influenced the government's decision to embrace negotiations once again?

In the year preceding the clergy initiative, John Hackett, a retired General Officer Commanding (GOC) Northern Ireland, engaged in personal dialogues with a member of the IRA Army Council. Hackett conveyed to Whitelaw that the IRA expressed interest in recommencing negotiations with the British government.

However, Whitelaw firmly rejected the notion of Hackett as the initiator and stated that the government would not engage in negotiations with the IRA. Fast forward to 1974, a group of religious individuals took the initiative, and this time the government responded positively. In 1973, the British government sought to address the political and sectarian tensions in Northern Ireland through political means. The idea was to establish a shared governance structure that included representatives from both nationalist and unionist communities, promoting cooperation and reconciliation. However, this strategy ultimately failed due to the resistance and unwillingness of hardliner Unionist factions, leading the British government to reassess its approach and consider alternative methods of resolving the conflict (Moloney 2002, Mumford 2011). When the British government was presented with the Church initiative they decided to give it another try. In 1974, the British government was not solely reliant on the Church initiative for communication with the IRA. The newly appointed director of the intelligence service for Northern Ireland established three different channels of communication. The first involved an English businessman who had connections to Daithi O'Connell, a member of the IRA Army Council. The second channel was established through the former commander of the IRA's Belfast Brigade. The third channel, considered the most significant and continuous, involved a local businessman in Derry. This channel of communication remained active and uninterrupted for several years, lasting until 1993.

The Contact: A Local Businessman's Role as an Intermediary

Brendan Duddy, who was known as “the Contact” until 2008, was a Londonderry businessman with close ties to the President of Sinn Féin, political wing of the IRA, Ruairi O’Bradaigh (Ó Dochartaigh 2021). He was an intermediary between the parties from late 1974 until 1993. Through the involvement of Duddy, an M16 officer and an official from the Foreign Office managed to organize a meeting on January 18, 1975, with Sinn Féin and the commander of the IRA’s Belfast Brigade. This new initiative yielded concrete results, including another IRA ceasefire in February and the establishment of local Incident Centres tasked with monitoring ceasefires. During the period from February 1975 to early October, the Incident Centres addressed numerous complaints related to ceasefire violations. However,

despite their promising start, both the ceasefire and the Incident Centres were unfortunately brought to an end in October 1975 due to internal conflicts within the IRA over the cessation of offensive actions. Nevertheless, these early initiatives served as important examples of "confidence-building" measures, which later proved to be pivotal in peace-building discussions, contributing to more enduring outcomes in the following decades, particularly during and after the 1990s (Moloney, 2002; Mumford, 2011).

While Duddy was a channel, a Catholic priest, Alec Reid was also in contact with the IRA leader, Gerry Adams. He played a crucial role in building an unbroken chain of information between the government and the IRA in 1986-1988. Reid put forward several reasons for advocating significant involvement of the church in the peace process. Firstly, he highlighted that the IRA had a higher level of trust in Catholic intermediaries compared to others. There was a positive track record of priests, acting as messengers and mediators during the prison hunger strikes and disputes between rival republican factions. Adams himself had been involved in such activities and placed great trust in the individuals involved, particularly Reid. Reid confidently asserted his influence over Adams' leadership, making it clear that he had more regular and intimate contact with them than any other priest and perhaps even any individual outside of the IRA, as reported by a government source (Moloney, 2002:237).

Reid also argued that the church would bring a unique dimension to the peace efforts by virtue of its extraordinary and centuries-old influence over Irish society. He believed that this influence would grant the church a moral authority and stature that would not only legitimize the peace process but also exert pressure on republicans to respond positively. Furthermore, Reid's third point built upon this notion, emphasizing that the church's role in providing a neutral setting for the negotiations would offer cover and protection to other political parties engaged in discussions with Adams and his colleagues. In the event of a leak or breach of confidentiality, responsibility could be shifted onto the church, not to the government or the IRA.

By 1986, the history of interactions between the IRA and the British government had been long and filled with dissatisfaction. As early as June 1972, during the first IRA cease-fire, British ministers, including then Northern Ireland secretary William

Whitelaw, held meetings with a delegation of IRA leaders, including Gerry Adams and Martin McGuinness, in London. In 1975, further contacts took place, but this time British politicians were not directly involved. Instead, discussions occurred between British officials and representatives of the Army Council. However, both sets of talks ended in bitter accusations and blame. In 1972, the cease-fire collapsed within days of the contact, with the IRA accusing the British of acting in bad faith. Similarly, in 1975, Adams and others alleged that the British had deceived the IRA into the cessation as a tactic to gain time to devise the IRA's defeat. Officially, by 1986, the Army Council was vehemently opposed to the idea of another cease-fire and pledged never to engage in further talks with the British unless the discussions revolved around the British withdrawal from Ireland.

The exact timing of the IRA's new contact with the British government is uncertain, but the available evidence strongly indicates that at some point in 1986, thanks to Reid's involvement, a highly secret means of communication was established between the Northern Ireland secretary, Tom King, and the leader of Sinn Féin (Moloney 2002: 247). This secret contact continued with Tom King's successors. The IRA Army Council remained unaware of the ongoing communication between Tom King and Adams. While the Army Council persisted with its armed attacks, King and Adams engaged in clandestine discussions at a high level, involving a British minister and the leader of the IRA. This marked a significant shift, as the negotiations now took place between prominent representatives on both sides.

In 1994, the IRA announced a complete cessation of military activities. For Reid and Adams, this represented a truly remarkable achievement resulting from their secret diplomacy efforts. This cease-fire differed significantly from any previous ones because it was built upon a secret series of agreements that, if implemented, had the potential to not only bring an end to the Troubles but also potentially conclude the long-standing tradition of armed struggle within Irish republicanism (Moloney, 2002).

Concluding Remarks: High-Level Representation and PIRA Violence

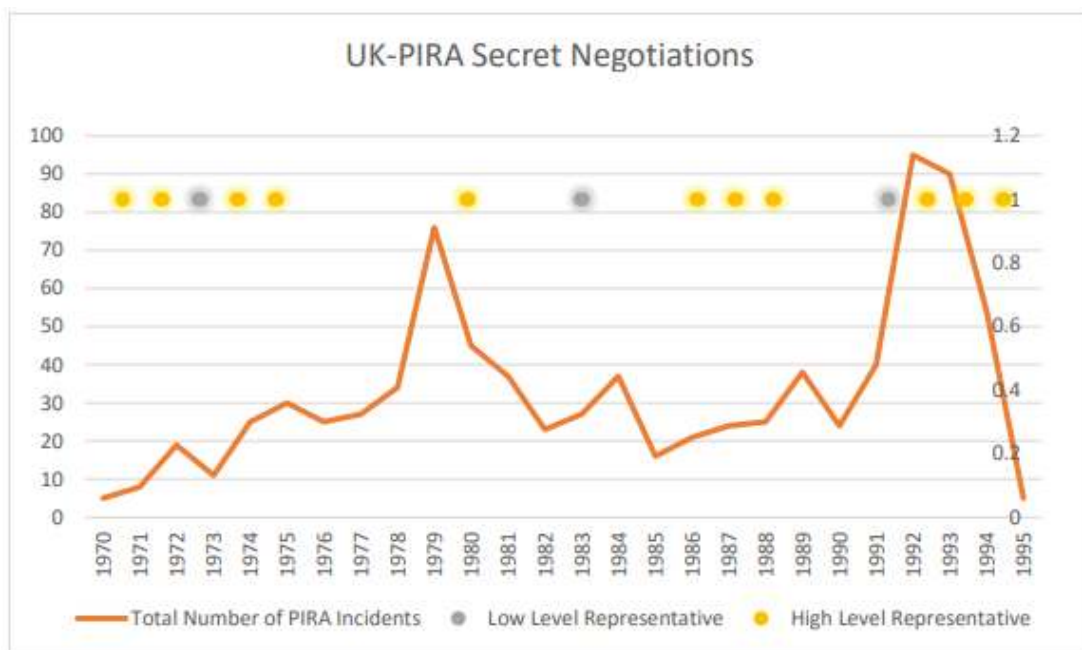
The Irish case serves as an informative example of how the government's choice of representatives can impact their effectiveness in reducing violence. In 1974, the

United Kingdom witnessed two general elections, one held in February and the other in October. These elections did not yield an outright majority for any single political party in the House of Commons, leading to the formation of minority governments that persisted until 1979. Notably, during this period, there is evidence of secretive negotiations occurring only twice. Consequently, the UK-PIRA case does not serve as a representative example of a selection strategy based on government power.

Nevertheless, it provides valuable insights into the impact of the government's choice of high or low-level representatives on the level of violence. The figure 5.1 illustrates that in 1973 and 1991, only on three occasions, the UK government did not dispatch authoritative representatives, resulting in an upward trajectory in IRA's campaign in subsequent years. In other secret negotiations, there was at least one high-level government representative among the participants.

The violence trend continued to escalate until 1975 when the UK government sent a high-level representative, leading to a decrease in the number of incidents in the following year. Similarly, the choice of high-level representatives after 1991 once again resulted in a reduction of violence, culminating in a significant ceasefire declaration by the group in 1994.

Figure 5.1: UK-PIRA Secret Negotiations 1970-1995



In conclusion, the negotiations between the IRA and the British government during

the Troubles in Northern Ireland were marked by complexity and challenges. The involvement of prominent figures such as Tom King, William Whitelaw, and other government ministers brought a new level of seriousness and legitimacy to the negotiation process. Their participation demonstrated the government's willingness to engage directly with the IRA leadership, indicating a commitment to finding a peaceful resolution. By engaging in high-level discussions, these government representatives conveyed a sense of authority and decision-making power, which played a crucial role in building trust with the IRA. The IRA leadership recognized that negotiating with individuals who held prominent positions within the government carried more weight and credibility than engaging with lower-level officials. This, in turn, made the IRA more inclined to consider negotiation as a viable option, as they perceived the government's commitment and seriousness.

The role of the intelligence service

An almost distinctive feature of the secret process in the UK case was the significant role assigned to the intelligence services. What makes this particularly unique, in my view, is that, according to the SECON dataset, the utilization of intelligence services is relatively rare, accounting for only 7.3 percent among all the representative cases covered. Throughout the Troubles, the intelligence services played a crucial part in maintaining contact with key IRA leaders. In addition to facilitating communication, employing intelligence officers for these meetings had the added advantage of gathering valuable intelligence. The British were able to acquire a deeper understanding of the IRA's intentions, goals, leadership structure, and internal divisions during these encounters. Each meeting or negotiation served as an opportunity for intelligence gathering, essentially functioning as a counterterrorism exercise. The personal insights and impressions of the agents complemented other intelligence sources, such as electronic surveillance and informants (Reiss, 2010). Undoubtedly, delving into the role of intelligence services in secret processes across other cases presents a promising research avenue. The exploration of different instances and how intelligence services are employed can offer valuable insights into how diverse countries and governments handle delicate and clandestine affairs. Through comparison and contrast, this research can provide a broader perspective on their approaches to such matters.

5.3 Basque Separatist Conflict

The Basque conflict, which lasted for many years, had a significant impact on Spain's political landscape and social fabric. At the heart of this conflict was the Basque separatist group ETA. With a strong desire for an independent Basque state, including the Basque Country and Navarre regions in northern Spain, ETA emerged as a nationalist armed group with a vision rooted in self-determination. (Beck, 2005; Reiss, 2010; Clark 1990).

The origins of the ETA conflict can be traced back to the early 20th century when Basque nationalism began to take shape as a response to perceived political and cultural oppression. Fueled by a deep-rooted sense of identity, the Basque people sought greater autonomy and the preservation of their language, culture, and heritage. The ETA conflict entered its violent phase in the late 1960s, as ETA shifted from peaceful activism to armed struggle. Convinced that armed resistance was necessary to achieve their political goals, the group embarked on a campaign characterized by bombings, assassinations, kidnappings, and acts of terrorism. Their targets ranged from politicians and law enforcement officials to journalists and other symbols of the Spanish state.

Throughout the 1980s and early 1990s, the ETA conflict reached its peak, marked by a series of devastating attacks that resulted in loss of life and widespread fear. The conflict perpetuated a vicious cycle of violence and repression, deepening the rift between Basque nationalists and the Spanish government. Amidst the bloodshed, the Spanish government responded with a combination of law enforcement measures, intelligence operations, and legal prosecutions to dismantle ETA's infrastructure and curb its violent activities. However, these efforts faced significant challenges, as finding a path to the resolution required balancing the aspirations of the Basque nationalist movement with the principles of the Spanish constitution and the preservation of national unity.

The early 2000s proved to be a turning point in the ETA conflict. A shift in public sentiment, both within the Basque Country and across Spain, increasingly rejected violence as a means to achieve political objectives. This growing consensus against ETA's tactics created an environment conducive to dialogue and negotiation. In

2011, ETA declared a permanent ceasefire, signaling a willingness to put an end to armed struggle. Subsequent years witnessed a series of negotiations and initiatives aimed at achieving a definitive resolution to the conflict. Finally, in 2018, ETA formally disbanded, signaling the conclusion of one of Europe's longest-running separatist conflicts.

Early Contacts

All Spanish governments between 1977 and 2007, irrespective of their political orientations, have made concerted efforts to end the violence through dialogue with ETA. However, despite their collective goal of resolving the conflict, these endeavors have ultimately proven unsuccessful (Dominguez 2008). Initial contacts between the Spanish government and ETA took place in 1975, shortly after the death of General Francisco Franco. A Spanish government emissary was reportedly visiting the Nafarroa bookstore in Biarritz, France, which was run by Basque refugees Fermin Elizari and Eusebio Iriarte. The bookstore served as a place where individuals could establish initial contacts with ETA. The Spanish government emissary inquired about meeting with ETA, and the bookstore owners provided instructions on making such arrangements. These early contacts were part of an attempt to explore the possibility of negotiations between the Spanish government and ETA. The government contacted ETA's leader, Argala, in 1977 and 1978. After initial contacts in 1977 and preliminary talks through 1978, Argala died in France from a car bomb. There were further talks reportedly taking place between ETA leadership and the highest-level officials from Spain and these talks paved the way for the talks in Algeria (Clark 1990: 177).

During the period from November 1986 to late February 1987, there was a notable attempt at direct communication between the Spanish government and ETA in Algeria. Initially, an official from the interior ministry represented the government in these talks, but later, police officials took over. Algeria talks took place in three phases, with the first phase happening from November 1986 to February 1987, followed by the second phase occurring between July 1987 and February 1988, and concluding with the third phase happening from January to April 1989 (Clark 1990). Despite several meetings, the negotiations did not lead to any agreement. The new leader of ETA suspected that the government's true intention was to exploit divisions

within the group, given the presence of police officials at the meetings. Regrettably, the talks eventually collapsed, prompting ETA to resume violent activities (Whitfield 2014). In response, the Spanish government took decisive actions, including expelling ETA's negotiating delegation and dispersing ETA prisoners to various prisons across Spain. The absence of authoritative representatives from Spain during the talks in Algeria proved to be a critical limitation, as it hindered the establishment of trust and credibility between the two parties. The lack of high-level engagement raised suspicions within ETA about the government's true intentions, leading to a breakdown in communication and the ultimate collapse of the negotiations (Powell 2014).

During the first phase of the talks in Algeria, the Spanish government opted to send police officials as its representative, and this phase was cut short by the unexpected death of ETA leader Iturbe, who was participating as the representative of ETA in the negotiations. Iturbe had been recently expelled from France and relocated to Gabon before eventually settling in Algeria (Clark 1990). The Spanish government's choice of representative reflected their approach to the talks as a police matter not a political concern.

ETA's stance on negotiations during this period became evident through an internal document discovered in the first half of 1987 when ETA leader Santiago Arrospeide, also known as "Santi Potros," was arrested by French police on September 30. The document outlined ETA's negotiation strategy, outlining a six-step negotiating process. The initial step involved preliminary contacts to determine the participants' identities and their level of representativeness (Clark, 1990: 188). Subsequently, the process moved on to agree on the principal negotiator, establishing a commission, and establishing procedural rules. The next stages included presenting and discussing proposals, analyzing partial agreements and their potential consequences, and ultimately reaching a final agreement that encompassed follow-up and control measures. The document also revealed ETA's intention to keep these contacts confidential until step four when formal proposals were to be presented and debated (Clark 1990).

The onset of the second phase came with a devastating car bomb attack by ETA in Barcelona. The Spanish government had not given negotiations with ETA a high

priority until June 19. On that day, ETA carried out the car bomb attack in the crowded parking garage of a supermarket called Hipercor in Barcelona. This horrifying explosion resulted in the loss of twenty-one lives and inflicted injuries upon thirty-nine individuals. The incident served as a turning point, compelling the Spanish government to reevaluate its approach and return to the negotiation table with ETA (Clark 1990, Whitfield 2014).

Spain wanted to restart negotiations and decided to transfer Eugenio Etxebeste, a prominent leader of ETA who was in exile, from Ecuador to Algeria. Iturbe, the former ETA leader who had participated in the first phase of Algeria talks, had specifically requested Etxebeste to join him in the negotiations. However, the government did not appear to consider this request seriously. There were doubts about Etxebeste's suitability as a negotiator and his influence with the current ETA leadership, as he had been out of direct contact with the organization for several years. Nevertheless, following the devastating car bomb attack in Barcelona, Spain swiftly took action to resume negotiations. On July 9 or 10, Etxebeste left Ecuador for Algeria, marking the beginning of the second phase of the Algerian connection. In the initial three meetings, the ETA leader had discussions with the state security director and later with a delegate from the Spanish government representing the Basque Autonomous Community on two occasions. However, the ETA eventually decided to cancel any further meetings. There were several reasons for this decision. Firstly, the discussions did not lead to any agreements on ETA's demands. Additionally, the ETA felt dissatisfied with the composition of the Spanish delegation, which mainly consisted of police officials and low-level representatives. The spokesperson of the Spanish government further complicated matters by publicly announcing the ongoing secret contacts but emphasizing that their purpose was solely to halt violence and not engage in political negotiations.

During a press conference on August 28, Javier Solana, the official spokesperson of the Spanish government, publicly acknowledged that there had been ongoing contacts with ETA. Solana made it clear that the primary objective of these meetings was to convince ETA to renounce violence and relinquish their weapons and explicitly ruled out the possibility of engaging in political negotiations. In response, ETA's executive committee held an emergency meeting in Paris on August 30.

During this meeting, they firmly rejected any dialogue with the Spanish government that did not include political negotiations. As a consequence, Antxon Etxebeeste reportedly decided to terminate any further contact with Spanish representatives.

It is common for governments to maintain a public stance of refusing to negotiate with rebel groups, and ETA was well aware of this rhetoric. While publicly stating their non-engagement, the governments would often, behind closed doors, behave differently and send authoritative representatives and actively listen to the demands of the rebel group. Both in public and in secret, ETA perceived that the government's negotiation efforts were not sincere. This perception of a lack of genuine engagement from the government contributed to the eventual breakdown of the negotiations. ETA observed a consistent alignment between the government's public rhetoric of non-negotiation and their actions in the secret talks. This was evident in the government's choice of sending police officials and low-level delegations with limited decision-making capacity, which resulted in no tangible outcomes. These actions by the Spanish government reinforced ETA's belief that the negotiations were not progressing effectively. This is also evident in the communique ETA published in response to the government's announcement.

In its communique published on September 5, ETA accused the government of being uncompromising and lacking a genuine desire to negotiate a settlement. They criticized the government for treating the insurgency as exclusively a police issue, as evidenced by their choice to send only police officials to Algeria for the talks. ETA asserted that they were the ones committed to continuing the dialogue and demonstrated an open willingness to negotiate.

On September 18, Etxebeeste and Ballesteros convened in Algeria for their second meeting. During this encounter, the ETA leader reiterated the importance of Madrid dispatching a political official of the highest authority with the objective of initiating a phase of political discussions aimed at laying the groundwork for potential future agreements. In the subsequent meeting, Spain did send a politician for the first time, although the delegation was not composed of individuals from the inner circle of the ruling party (this happened when the same party won the second general election and formed a majority government). ETA criticized this appointment, viewing the representative as disconnected from the leadership of ruling party, PSOE, and

lacking the necessary authority to negotiate on behalf of the government. Once again, despite the meeting, no ceasefire was established, and no agreement was reached concerning the resolution of conflicting interests. The discussions did not lead to any concrete outcomes in this regard.

After the failed Algiers negotiations, ETA resorted to violence in an attempt to force the Spanish government into new talks. They focused their efforts on the year 1992, which held great importance for Spain as it held the title of the cultural capital of Europe with Madrid, hosted the Summer Olympics in Barcelona, and organized an International Expo in Seville. Spain had a unique opportunity to showcase its progress in social and political matters, its thriving economy, and its rich cultural heritage, along with the international recognition garnered by Prime Minister Felipe González. However, ETA viewed these events as vulnerable targets. Between the breakdown of the Algeria talks and the end of 1992, ETA unleashed a wave of violence, carrying out 386 armed actions that resulted in the loss of 115 lives. They also executed high-profile kidnappings and launched attacks in Italy and Germany, aiming to draw international attention to their cause. The Spanish police were determined to prevent ETA from disrupting the 1992 festivities and took decisive measures and captured important ETA figures (Withfield 2014).

Total Battle Against ETA: The Aznar and Zapatero Government

In the general elections of 1996, the conservative Popular Party (PP) led by José Maria Aznar emerged as the victorious party. The Aznar government adopted a firm position of refusing negotiations with ETA and instead focused on applying pressure through law enforcement measures (Tremlett 2004). However, despite initially taking a tough stance on engaging in talks with ETA, the government later showed a willingness to explore the possibility of initiating contact with the group after a few years.

In 1997, following the release of a prison official who had been held captive by ETA, the Basque separatist group kidnapped Miguel Angel Blanco, a young People's Party official, demanding the transfer of ETA prisoners to jails closer to the Basque region. There was an outrage in public protests, and the government refused to negotiate, Blanco was killed. The Aznar government used the strong anti-ETA

sentiment to adopt a tougher stance and requested the extradition of ETA members living abroad. ETA responded with assassinations of PP officials, but their violent actions did not increase support for their cause or bring independence closer in the Basque country (Murua 2017, Mees 2021).

Surveys conducted in the Basque Country since 1981 have provided insights into the decreasing trend of popular support for ETA, primarily attributed to their indiscriminate acts of violence (Sánchez-Cuenca 2007). In the early 1980s, there was significant local support for ETA and its political wing, HB (Herri Batasuna), which reached its peak in 1987 with nearly 20% of the vote in the Basque Country. However, a decline in support began shortly after a car bomb attack in Barcelona in the same year. The use of car bombs and indiscriminate killings by ETA contributed to the decline in public support. The decline was temporarily halted in 1998 when ETA announced a truce, leading to a peak in popular support in 1999 when no killings occurred. However, support declined again after the truce ended. In the 1998 Basque regional elections held during the truce, HB's share of the vote rose to 17.7%, the highest increase in the party's history, but dropped to 10% in the regional elections of 2001 after the truce was called off (Sánchez-Cuenca 2007).

The 1998 ceasefire was a result of the secret meetings between the Basque Nationalist Party (PNV) and ETA, without the involvement and knowledge of the Spanish government. ETA, this time, tried to exploit Basque nationalism to further its own agenda (Alonso 2004). During secret talks, two outcomes emerged. The Basque nationalist parties, including those affiliated with ETA, drafted the Estella Agreement, which was announced in September 1998. This agreement was influenced by a flawed interpretation of Northern Ireland's Good Friday Agreement. It proposed that all parties involved in the conflict should come together without preconditions, based on mutual respect, to pursue a negotiated political solution. However, no Spanish government could agree to these terms, as they were fundamentally incompatible with their position (Murua 2017).

This development was also linked to the Irish peace process. Basque actors closely observed the developments in Ireland, with HB (Herri Batasuna) maintaining constant contact with Sinn Féin. The apparent success of the Irish peace process had a profound impact on Basque politics. In February 1998, HB invited all political

parties, trade unions, and other organizations to participate in a forum aimed at discussing the lessons learned from the Irish process and its potential application to the Basque situation. Many of the same actors who had participated in the event organized by ELA (Basque Workers' Solidarity) in Gernika accepted the invitation, leading to the creation of the Ireland Forum (Murua 2017, Reiss 2010). ETA declare a ceasefire following these developments.

ETA and Spanish political advisors held a meeting in Geneva, Switzerland in May 1999 following the truce declaration. Despite the ETA's insistence on the presence of high-level government representatives, Spain sent political advisors to engage with ETA. The talks quickly collapsed as ETA persisted in demanding Basque independence and the potential inclusion of Navarre in the Basque region. After the Geneva meeting, the Aznar administration chose to publicly acknowledge the secret talks with ETA through a press release. The intention behind this disclosure was for Aznar to demonstrate his unwavering control over the negotiations without compromising on ETA's demands. However, ETA responded to the breakdown of the talks and the subsequent public disclosure by resuming violent activities, thus bringing an end to the fourteen-month ceasefire (Murua 2017). Following the breakdown of the ceasefire, the years that followed were marked by significant turmoil. ETA launched an aggressive campaign, primarily targeting politicians from various parties and individuals associated with the media, judiciary, and law enforcement. This resulted in numerous casualties, including members of political parties, police officers, and journalists.

In 2001, amidst a wave of significant attacks by ETA, efforts were made by individuals to seek a resolution to the conflict. Otegi, the leader of Batasuna, a party affiliated with ETA, and Eguiguren, the leader of the PSOE's Basque branch, engaged in secret meetings to explore potential approaches for a future peace process. Eguiguren informed Zapatero, the newly elected leader of the PSOE, about these discussions, sharing the details of their dialogue. Meanwhile, ETA established communication with the Center Henri Dunant for Humanitarian Dialogue, an international mediation agency, in 2003, as part of the groundwork for a potential peace process. Shortly after Zapatero assumed office in August 2004, ETA sent him a letter expressing their willingness to engage in a peace process. Subsequently, in

June 2005, Eguiguren held meetings with ETA representatives, Josu Urrutikoetxea (known as "Josu Ternera") and Jon Iurrebaso, in Geneva under the mediation of the Center Henri Dunant. Over the course of two weeks, they developed a draft agreement, referred to as a "road map." In November, they reconvened in Oslo to finalize and ratify the agreement, which outlined a methodology and conditions for a peace process. As a result of the negotiations, ETA announced a ceasefire in March 2006.

When questioned about the motivation behind Eguiguren's involvement with ETA, the former Interior Minister explained that one of the key reasons was to maintain plausible deniability for the central government. In the event that the secret negotiations were exposed, the government would be able to deny any direct connection to the talks. The prime minister, Zapatero, further reinforced this strategy by issuing an order that clearly stated that if any leaks about the operation occurred, the responsibility would solely rest with the Basque branch of the government, effectively shielding the central government from direct involvement or association (Whitfield, 2014).

Under the influence of international actors, including Tony Blair's cabinet, Zapatero reluctantly agreed to one final attempt at negotiations. In May 2007, representatives from Batasuna, PSE-EE, the Spanish government, and ETA convened in Geneva with the facilitation of the Center Henri Dunant. Despite the four-day meeting, the deep-seated lack of trust between the parties remained unresolved. Consequently, the peace process reached an impasse, and on June 5, 2007, ETA declared an end to the ceasefire (Murua, 2017).

Additional secret talks took place in 2009, following the pattern of previous negotiations, ultimately resulting in failure. Engaging in dialogue with ETA has not proven effective in persuading the group to alter or abandon its demands, with the exception of talks in the late 1970s and early 1980s where Spanish government was considered as genuine. Despite occasional ceasefires, ETA has consistently engaged in acts of violence. Both sides have been unable to reach a mutual understanding and adjust their demands in a way that could be accepted by the other party. ETA's campaign for Basque independence ended in October 2011, not as a consequence of political negotiations but as the result of a unilateral decision. Some scholars argue

that ETA ended because it was defeated by the state-of-law (Alonso, 2011). According to Crenshaw, what primarily drives the cessation of rebel groups is the withdrawal of support from their own bases rather than a decrease in support from the general population (1996: 264–268). This perspective is relevant when examining ETA's ultimate choice to cease its activities. Understanding the crucial role of the withdrawal of support within their own support network provides valuable insights into the dynamics surrounding ETA's decision to halt its actions. Determining the exact timing and level of support within the Nationalist Left for ETA's cessation is a complex task. It involved a gradual progression influenced by significant events in the past peace processes. Notably, the breakdown of the Algiers talks eroded confidence in the negotiation strategy, while the 1992 arrests sparked doubts regarding ETA's perceived invulnerability against law enforcement. However, it was the collapse of the Estella process in the late 1990s that marked a crucial turning point in how the Nationalist Left perceived the armed struggle. These events collectively shaped the evolution of the Nationalist Left's stance on ETA's activities (Murua, 2017b).

Under Franco's regime, ETA's use of violence against the dictatorship was considered morally justified (Muro, 2008) and perceived as a means to express opposition to the state's legitimacy (Conversi, 1997). However, as democratic institutions took hold and state repression became more selective, coupled with ETA's expanded range of targets, the perspectives of Spanish and Basque societies gradually shifted regarding the legitimacy of ETA's violence and the state's repressive measures. In an evolving global context that emphasized democratic principles, respect for human rights, and pacifism, while witnessing a decline in revolutionary ideals, ETA faced increasing difficulties in justifying its armed struggle (Zabalo and Saratxo, 2015). The changing societal values made it progressively more challenging for ETA to maintain support, as doubts arose regarding the legitimacy of its violent actions.

5.4 Concluding Remarks: What went wrong in the Basque Conflict? Lessons from the Irish Conflict

The attempts to negotiate a resolution between the Spanish government and ETA have been fraught with challenges and ultimately unsuccessful. While the initial

contacts in 1975 held some promise, the subsequent talks in Algeria during the late 1980s were marred by deep-seated mistrust, a lack of meaningful engagement from high-level officials, and mutual suspicions. The decision of the Spanish government to send police officials and low-level representatives only served to reinforce ETA's belief that the negotiations were insincere and primarily aimed at quelling violence rather than pursuing genuine political dialogue.

ETA's internal document outlining their negotiation strategy revealed their intention to keep the contacts confidential until formal proposals were presented, highlighting their desire for privacy and discretion. However, the breakdown of the talks in Algeria, which was a result of high-level representatives from the government in the secret Geneva talks previously, and the Spanish government's public acknowledgment of the secret contacts further deepened the mistrust between the two parties. Contrary to the British government's case, there was no continuous and unbroken chain of secret communication between the highest authorities of both sides even for a period, akin to the ongoing communication between Adams and Secretaries of State for Northern Ireland. The secret talks were repeatedly interrupted, with representatives from both sides frequently changing. While governments resisted sending authoritative representatives, the rebel side also experienced fluctuations in its leadership. These changes in the rebel leadership were significantly influenced by the deaths of at least four ETA leaders who had participated in negotiations. These incidents occurred under suspicious circumstances, which has led to strong beliefs that the identities of these leaders became known to the government during the negotiations, and as a result, they were subsequently killed (Clark 1990).

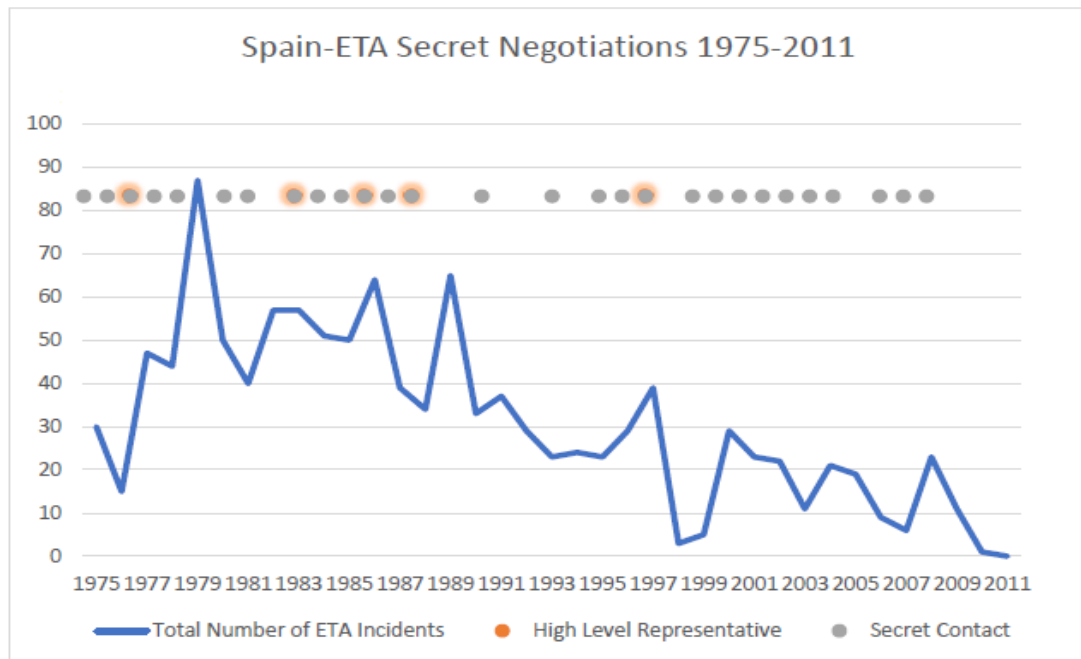
The IRA made considerable efforts to keep the secret discussions hidden from its military council, which favored active fighting against the enemy. As a result, sporadic clashes continued to occur, despite the promises made behind closed doors. However, whenever issues arose, both the British government and the IRA managed to establish communication and clarify the matters at hand during the course of secret talk. This allowed them to address and navigate the contradictions between the public and secret realms of realities they were dealing with. This was never achieved in the ETA case.

The lack of trust, incompatible demands, and a deep-rooted belief in non-negotiation rhetoric from both ETA and the Spanish government have hindered any meaningful progress towards a resolution. Despite intermittent periods of ceasefire and secret negotiations, ETA has consistently maintained its demands for Basque independence, showing unwavering determination in its goals. Secret negotiations have failed to sway the group to alter its course. The most important reason for this lack of success for this study is the Spanish government's decision not to send authoritative delegations aimed at persuading ETA to change its stance. Spain did not utilize its intelligence service to maintain the secrecy of the meetings and the identity of representatives. According to the SECON dataset, the intelligence services were present in only approximately 6.8% of the total meetings, with their attendance recorded in 11 out of 161 meetings.

By not engaging with high-ranking representatives, the government missed an opportunity to present a more compelling case and find common ground for resolving the conflict, or least convincing ETA to reduce violence.

On five occasions, the Spanish government dispatched high-level representatives, with three of these instances occurring during periods of majority government. The figure 5.2 illustrates the Spanish government's conduct of secret negotiations with ETA. According to the figure, the initial high-level representation took place in 1977, leading to a modest reduction in the level of violence. However, subsequent secret negotiations without high-level representatives were followed by a significant surge in ETA violence.

In 1997, a secret negotiation with the attendance of a high-level representative once again resulted in a decrease in ETA's attacks. However, in the subsequent years, the Spanish government opted to send low-level representatives. Eventually, the group waned as it lost support within the public, marking the decline of ETA's activities.

Figure 5.2: Spain-ETA Secret Negotiations 1975-2011

The violent actions carried out by ETA, including car bomb attacks, assassinations, and kidnappings, aimed to force the Spanish government into negotiations but ultimately resulted in a decline in popular support for the group. The Aznar government adopted a firm stance against negotiations and focused on law enforcement measures, while the subsequent Zapatero government reluctantly engaged in secret talks and attempted a peace process, which eventually failed.

Another reason for this mistrust was the deaths of at least four ETA leaders who had participated in negotiations at different times. These incidents occurred under suspicious circumstances. Additionally, a fifth leader survived an attack that tragically resulted in the loss of his wife's life. It is reasonable to speculate that after these individuals became known to the government due to their involvement in negotiations, it could have led to their untimely deaths (Clark 1990). The history of negotiations between the Spanish government and ETA underscores the complexity and challenges involved in resolving conflicts with militant groups. It highlights the importance of trust, high-level engagement, and a genuine willingness to explore political solutions. Ultimately, the failure to reach a negotiated settlement has perpetuated the cycle of violence and prolonged the suffering for both sides.

In conclusion, this chapter highlights a distinct pattern in the approach of the United

Kingdom and Spain towards the selection of government representatives in dealing with rebel violence. The UK, known for its history of majoritarian governments, consistently opted for high-level representatives. This approach proved effective, as it facilitated the establishment of a relatively continuous channel of communication at the leadership level and bolstered the government's credibility with the IRA leadership.

Conversely, Spain, characterized by its history of minority governments, took a cautious stance by appointing low-level representatives. However, this cautious approach had its drawbacks, as it aimed to minimize potential post-leak costs. Unfortunately, it resulted in a lack of reconciliation between the parties involved and the absence of a peace agreement.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

In the realm of international politics, the prevalence of secrecy extends beyond domestic governance to include various aspects of state interactions, negotiations, and decision-making processes. While democratic governments often advocate for transparency in public affairs, the reality is that secrecy continues to permeate political institutions at both the national and international levels.

Instances of secrecy and covert actions regularly capture media attention, revealing the existence of hidden activities that challenge the ideals of open government. Examples abound, such as the exposure of secret CIA detention facilities by the Washington Post or the revelation of collaborative efforts in the Terrorist Finance Tracking Programme by the New York Times. Leaks and whistleblowing incidents, such as those related to trade negotiations or the disclosures made by WikiLeaks and Edward Snowden, further underscore the prevalence of institutional opacity and the culture of secrecy within democratic states.

Despite efforts to promote transparency through legislative measures and initiatives, the persistence of state secrecy remains evident. Classified intelligence programs, covert military operations, diplomatic discretion, closed-door political negotiations, and bureaucratic opacity are just a few manifestations of this enduring culture of secrecy. The inherent tension between the democratic principles of transparency and the necessity for confidential exchanges and strategic decision-making continues to shape the dynamics of governance and international relations.

Within this context, the study on secret negotiations sheds light on the intricate processes and dynamics involved in clandestine interactions between democratic states and rebel groups. By delving into the realm of secret negotiations, the study highlights the nuanced role of secrecy in reducing violence and achieving conflict

resolution. It recognizes that while transparency is championed as a fundamental democratic value, there are instances where secrecy becomes a necessary tool for fostering trust, promoting dialogue, and reaching mutually beneficial agreements.

Understanding the complexities and implications of secrecy in political negotiations is crucial for policymakers and stakeholders. It allows for a more nuanced approach to governance, recognizing that while transparency is vital for accountability and public participation, there are instances where discreet channels of communication and confidential exchanges can contribute to effective diplomacy and conflict resolution.

The hypotheses in this study proposed several key relationships between democratic governments' conduct of secret negotiations and their impact on rebel behavior. It was hypothesized that governments with stronger political backing are more likely to deploy higher-level officials in secret negotiations. This hypothesis aimed to examine the association between political support and representative selection in confidential dialogues with nonstate armed groups.

The study also suggested that secret negotiations might lead rebel groups to declare ceasefires as a symbolic gesture, but such ceasefires might not necessarily lead to a reduction in rebel violence. Additionally, the research proposed that the effectiveness of secret negotiations in reducing rebel violence is contingent on governments choosing to send high-level representatives. Furthermore, the initiation of secret negotiations was expected to initially trigger an increase in rebel violence until the government was perceived as genuine in its covert peace efforts. This hypothesis explored the dynamics of trust-building and commitment between the conflicting parties during secret negotiations.

Consistent with the hypotheses, it was found that democratic governments with stronger political support were indeed more likely to dispatch higher-level representatives in secret negotiations. This indicates that the level of political backing plays a crucial role in shaping the approach taken by governments during confidential dialogues with nonstate armed groups.

Notably, the study revealed that secret negotiations often led to rebel groups declaring ceasefires as a symbolic gesture. However, these ceasefires did not always

result in a substantial reduction in rebel violence, highlighting the importance of further examining the motivations and commitments of both parties during the negotiation process. The analysis confirmed the hypothesis that secret negotiations have a greater potential to reduce rebel violence when governments choose to send high-level representatives. This underscores the significance of representative selection in influencing the effectiveness of secret negotiation outcomes.

The findings of this dissertation provide valuable insights into the conduct and outcomes of secret negotiations between democratic governments and rebel groups. The empirical analysis confirmed the proposed hypotheses, shedding light on the complex relationship between representative selection, political backing, ceasefire declarations, and the reduction of rebel violence. Additionally, the findings supported the hypothesis that the initiation of secret negotiations may initially lead to an increase in rebel violence until the government is perceived as genuinely committed to resolving the conflict. This emphasizes the delicate nature of trust-building and the need for sustained efforts to establish a conducive environment for successful negotiation outcomes.

The IRA conflict showcased the significant role of secret negotiations in facilitating peace processes. Through the involvement of high-level representatives and intermediaries, such as political leaders and non-governmental organizations, trust was established, and dialogue was fostered. The ceasefire declarations that followed these negotiations marked important milestones in the conflict resolution process, leading to a reduction in violent incidents attributed to the IRA. The lessons learned from the IRA conflict highlight the importance of sustained engagement, trust-building, and political concessions in achieving long-term peace.

The case of the Basque conflict, particularly the ETA's involvement in secret negotiations, provides valuable insights into the complex dynamics that unfold when such discussions are initiated and subsequently disrupted by the government. This case highlights how the rebels' response to the breakdown of secret negotiations often involves an acceleration of attacks, aimed at pressuring the government to resume the discussions.

In the Basque conflict, the government's decision to send low-level officials, such as

police officials, to engage in secret negotiations was seen as a signal of a lack of seriousness on the part of the government by ETA. This perceived lack of commitment by the government prompted the rebels to resort to increased violence as a means to demonstrate their resolve and to compel the government to engage in meaningful discussions. The analysis also confirms this point that secret contacts have the danger of increasing rebel violence because the choice of low-level officials are potentially interpreted by the rebels as a deliberate attempt by the government to avoid the costs associated with leaks or to gather intelligence to undermine the rebel group. Rebels again may resort more violence as a means to convince the government to be serious in the discussions and dispatch authoritative political officials.

The rebels often interpret the use of deniable representatives as a strategy employed by the government to gain a tactical advantage rather than a genuine commitment to the negotiation process. This perception fuels their mistrust and skepticism, leading them to question the government's sincerity and commitment to resolving the conflict through secret negotiations. The rebels view these actions as attempts to weaken their unity, incite infighting, or extract valuable information that could be used against them in the future.

The consequences for rebel leaders involved in secret negotiations can be severe, with some even losing their lives once their participation in the talks becomes public knowledge. The revelation of their secret engagements with the enemy exposes them to significant risks and can lead to internal power struggles within the rebel group. These risks further compound the rebels' concerns about the government's intentions and reinforce their suspicion of ulterior motives behind the use of deniable representatives.

The Northern Ireland conflict serves as a compelling case study in the realm of secret negotiations. Following the declaration of a truce by the IRA in 1971, the British government recognized this development as an opportunity to explore the possibility of engaging in discussions with the group. In their pursuit of a peaceful resolution, the British government employed various channels of communication to establish a line of dialogue with the IRA.

One significant milestone in the secret negotiations process was the participation of high-level political representatives from the British government, specifically through the minister for Northern Ireland. This marked a notable shift towards more substantive and formal discussions between the conflicting parties. The involvement of high-level representatives signaled the government's commitment to engaging in meaningful dialogue with the IRA, demonstrating a desire to address the underlying issues and work towards a resolution.

Among the various channels of communication that were explored during the secret negotiations in the Northern Ireland conflict, one particular secret channel emerged as highly fruitful. This channel involved direct engagements between the leader of the IRA and different Secretaries of State for Northern Ireland representing the British government. Operating at the highest level of engagement between both sides, this channel enabled sustained communication and facilitated a deeper understanding of each other's perspectives. Over the course of years, this secret channel played a crucial role in fostering trust, building rapport, and maintaining ongoing dialogue.

The findings of this dissertation shed light on the complex relationship between secret negotiations, ceasefire declarations, and rebel violence in democratic conflict settings. The analysis explored various hypotheses and employed rigorous statistical models to examine the impact of secret contacts, high-level government representatives, and other relevant factors on the likelihood of ceasefire declarations and the reduction of rebel violence. The results support the hypothesis that secret contacts are more likely to lead to symbolic ceasefire declarations by rebel groups. These declarations often do not result in a tangible decrease in rebel violence. It is crucial, therefore, to evaluate the success of secret negotiations based on the rebels' commitment to the cessation of violence and the subsequent decrease in violent incidents attributed to the rebel group.

6.1 Policy Implications

The findings of this study indicate that careful selection of representatives for secret negotiations can contribute to efforts by democratic governments to halt or stop violence in conflicts. It is crucial for governments to ensure that their negotiating

teams possess the necessary authority and credibility to engage in meaningful discussions that can effectively address the underlying causes of the conflict. By appointing high-level representatives who are empowered to make decisions on behalf of the government and who demonstrate a genuine commitment to finding a peaceful resolution, there is a greater potential to bring an end to the violence.

One significant lesson to be drawn from this analysis is the importance of trust and credibility in negotiations. To inform future practices, governments should prioritize initiatives aimed at building trust between conflicting parties. Confidence-building measures can play a crucial role in creating an atmosphere conducive to open dialogue and cooperation, thereby increasing the chances of effectively halting or stopping violence. By investing in activities that foster trust, governments can lay the groundwork for more constructive and sustainable negotiations that are aimed at de-escalating the conflict and achieving a lasting peace.

In addition, policymakers can gain valuable insights by studying successful negotiation processes from other conflicts worldwide. Analyzing these processes can help inform the design of effective strategies that are tailored to the specific context of the conflict at hand. By drawing lessons from past successes, governments can refine their negotiation approaches and increase the likelihood of effectively halting or stopping violence.

By considering these policy implications, democratic governments can improve their conflict resolution efforts and take significant steps towards halting or stopping violence in conflicts. Through careful selection of representatives, building trust between conflicting parties, and learning from successful negotiation processes, governments can contribute to the broader goal of achieving peace and stability in regions affected by armed conflicts.

6.2 Future Research

Future research should delve deeper into exploring the characteristics of intermediaries in secret negotiations between democratic governments and rebel groups. The available dataset, which indicates whether an intermediary was involved in initiating and facilitating these negotiations, presents a valuable opportunity for investigation. To enhance our understanding, researchers could focus on identifying

and analyzing specific attributes of intermediaries that may influence the outcomes of backchannel communications. One avenue of exploration could be to assess the level of authority and influence possessed by the intermediaries, differentiating between those with significant leverage ("mediators with muscle") and those with limited control ("mediators with less muscle") (Touval and Zartman 1985, Fisher and Keashly 1991). Understanding how the varying degrees of authority impact the negotiation dynamics and outcomes can offer valuable insights. Additionally, researchers could investigate the communication style and tactics used by intermediaries. Some mediators may adopt a more assertive approach, emphasizing deadlines, penalties, and a focus on reaching mutual agreements, while others may adopt a more facilitative role, allowing the conflicting parties greater autonomy in the negotiation process. Identifying patterns in the effectiveness of different communication strategies could shed light on the most successful approaches. Moreover, exploring the background and expertise of intermediaries could be essential. Assessing whether intermediaries have prior experience in conflict resolution, knowledge of the specific region or issues at hand, and their affiliations with relevant organizations or governments could provide valuable context for understanding their impact on negotiations. Finally, future research could investigate the level of trust and credibility attributed to intermediaries by the conflicting parties. Understanding how the parties perceive the neutrality and reliability of the intermediaries can help elucidate the factors that contribute to successful dialogue and resolution.

Future research on the location of secret meetings in negotiations between democratic governments and rebel groups can be a valuable avenue of exploration to understand better the dynamics and motivations behind the choice of meeting locations. The dataset's information on whether secret meetings occur inside the target country or outside of it presents an intriguing opportunity for analysis. One possible factor that researchers could investigate is the role of third-party states in facilitating these secret negotiations. Examining why specific third states are chosen as meeting locations can provide insights into the considerations and preferences of the conflicting parties.

An additional hypothesis of this study could be that *the lack of high-level*

representatives in secret negotiations is likely to result in the involvement of third parties as facilitators and guarantors of the process. The use of high-level representatives is also likely to prevent the use of external assistance in creating trust with the rebels. Cases illustrate that states hesitate the use of external assistance. Withfield also notes that the issue of external involvement in internal conflicts is a sensitive issue (2014). Countries like Colombia, Indonesia, and Sri Lanka, while considering the involvement of external actors, limited the extent of their participation to mere facilitation (Withfield 2014). For instance, in the negotiations between the Free Aceh Movement (GAM) and the Indonesian government, non-governmental organizations played only a facilitating role. Similarly, the government of Norway served as a limited facilitator in the talks between the Sri Lankan government and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) (Goodhand, Klem, and Sørbo 2011, Salter 2015). According to the SECON dataset of this study, the majority of secret negotiations, accounting for 70.48%, did not involve any intermediary. This suggests that the conflicting parties directly engaged with each other without the involvement of a third party. The cautious management of external involvement reflected these governments' desire to uphold their autonomy and maintain a sense of control in resolving internal conflicts. However, there are cases when intermediaries were used. Local actors were involved in 5.67% of cases, while both foreign states and NGOs had equal involvement at 10.51% each. International governmental organizations (IGOs) had a minimal presence, accounting for only 0.12% of cases, and religious institutions, represented by the Church, were involved in 2.24% of cases.

Seeking external assistance and internationalizing the problem would elevate it to an issue that necessitates a combination of security and political measures while also highlighting the state's inability to resolve it independently. Based on anecdotal evidence, it is observed that in certain cases where the involvement of third parties is utilized, it is because the rebels themselves request their participation. Specifically, when the government fails to establish trust and maintain credibility in the initial talks, rebels are more likely to ask for the involvement of a trusted third-party state. This was observed in the cases of ETA and FARC. ETA sought the participation of the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue (HD Centre), while FARC requested Cuba to

act as the facilitator. The representatives of both ETA and FARC faced risks such as arrest or harm when their identities became known to the target state. These past experiences compelled them to seek a guarantor third-party to ensure their safety and to ascertain the government's commitment to the secret contacts.

The hypothesis posits that the lack of high-level representatives in secret negotiations is likely to result in the involvement of third parties as facilitators and guarantors of the process. This hypothesis highlights the importance of high-level representation in establishing trust and credibility, as the absence of such representation may necessitate the inclusion of external actors to ensure the successful progression of secret negotiations. The dataset and anecdotal evidence show that it is very rare for democracies to seek external help for their internal conflicts with the rebels. Cases in this study also reveal that it is the rebel side who ask for external assistance in cases of distrust towards the intention of the state.

A preliminary analysis as shown in the Table 6.1 shows that although the lagged effect of a high-level government representative is not statistically significant, the negative coefficient suggests a potential negative relationship between the lagged high-level representative and the likelihood of involving any intermediary in secret negotiations. This aligns with the hypothesis that the lack of high-level representatives in secret negotiations is likely to result in the involvement of third parties as facilitators and guarantors of the process.

The use of more disaggregated data, such as monthly data, may indeed provide a more detailed and nuanced analysis of the relationship between lagged high-level representatives and the involvement of intermediaries in secret negotiations.

Monthly data can capture more fine-grained variations and dynamics that may not be captured in the current analysis using aggregated data.

By examining the data at a monthly level, it may be possible to identify specific time periods or patterns where the involvement of intermediaries becomes more prevalent or where the presence of high-level representatives has a more pronounced impact. This could help uncover temporal dynamics and provide a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between these variables.

Table 6.1: Logit Regression Analysis of Intermediary Involvement in Secret Contacts

VARIABLES	Model(1)	Model(2)
	Intermediary Binary	External State Intermediary
High Level Representative	2.620*** (0.431)	2.951*** (0.592)
High Level Representative(t-1)	-0.0201 (0.320)	-0.00259 (0.644)
Ethnonational	-0.922 (0.619)	-1.344** (0.677)
Democracy Score	1.443 (1.262)	-0.390 (1.409)
Political Party	-0.182 (0.683)	-0.335 (0.674)
Incompatibility	-1.059* (0.551)	-1.308** (0.611)
No Intermediary Years	-0.149*** (0.0290)	
No State Intermediary years		-0.542*** (0.176)
_spline1	-0.00146 (0.00251)	-0.00652 (0.00560)
_spline2	0.000689 (0.00282)	0.00209 (0.00377)
_spline3	-0.000112 (0.00154)	0.000147 (0.00124)
Constant	-1.928* (1.146)	-0.330 (1.015)
Observations	1,217	1,219

Discussions on the Onset of Secret Negotiations: Do Rebels Always Accept Secret Offers?

Although this study focuses on the impacts of secret negotiations on the rebel's behavior in terms of reducing violence, it can offer hypothetical scenarios for its onset. A striking question is: Under what conditions do rebels accept a secret negotiation offer? As a first step we can consider the governments as the initiator and the rebel group as the recipient. The act of initiating a secret move by the government gives the rebel group the power of public exposure, which makes it a

costly signal. Initially, the rebel group does not bear a cost if it leaks the government's secret move. However, a third party may disclose the secret contact between the rebel group and the government, resulting in the rebel group paying a cost for secretly negotiating with the enemy state. Consequently, rebel groups engage in a critical assessment of two primary factors: the expected cost to the initiator if a leak occurs and the initiator's capacity to prevent leaks. When the expected cost of a leak is high, initiators are more motivated to take measures to prevent leaks and avoid publicly acknowledging the existence of secret negotiations. The level of democracy in the initiator state significantly influences the expected cost of leaks. In highly democratic countries, violations of transparency and accountability norms can result in public backlash, making leaks more punishing for the initiator. Moreover, consolidated democracies often possess robust institutional frameworks that facilitate the maintenance of confidentiality within the government. As the level of democracy declines, the power of public exposure also diminishes. Governments operating in lower levels of democracy may resort to less transparent and accountable methods to manage public exposure, thereby minimizing the potential costs associated with leaks. Consequently, rebels are less likely to accept offers from low-level democracies to engage in secret negotiations. A future plan is to examine the decision-making processes of rebels when considering governments' offers to engage in secret negotiations.

6.3. Limitations

One limitation of this research is its reliance on annual data, which offers an aggregated view of the variables but may overlook shorter-term fluctuations and nuances. Utilizing more granular data, such as monthly data, could provide a more in-depth understanding of the temporal variations and dynamics between secret meetings and the number of incidents, allowing for a more nuanced analysis of their relationship.

Another limitation of this study is its exclusive focus on the decision-making process of government entities when selecting representatives for secret negotiations. It does not delve into the decision-making process of rebel groups in choosing their representatives. While it is common for rebel groups to participate in

negotiations at the leadership level, there are instances where they were reluctant to send high-level representatives due to past negative experiences with the government. For example, the Free Aceh Movement (GAM) provides an illustrative case. Their leader decided against sending a high-level member to negotiations based on previous encounters with the government. Concerns arose from the fact that, following earlier meetings, the Indonesian government had arrested the group's representatives. This particular example underscores the potential significance of understanding the decision-making processes of rebel groups, as it can offer valuable insights into the overall dynamics of the negotiation process. By acknowledging this limitation, the study recognizes the importance of considering both government and rebel groups' perspectives to gain a more comprehensive understanding of secret negotiation processes.

While this study takes into consideration rebel ideology and objectives, exploring additional rebel characteristics, such as organizational structures, decision-making processes, factionalism, leadership dynamics, and internal power struggles, could enrich the analysis and shed light on how rebel groups respond to offers of secret negotiations and their commitment to the peace process. Understanding the internal dynamics within rebel groups can illuminate the factors influencing their decision-making during secret negotiations, leading to a more comprehensive understanding of the negotiation process as a whole. By considering these additional factors, researchers can gain deeper insights into the complexities of rebel behavior and their responses to government overtures, ultimately contributing to a more nuanced and informed examination of secret negotiation processes in conflict resolution.

Contextual factors are also deserving of further exploration. Examining how the nature of the conflict, historical grievances, and socio-political dynamics interact with rebel characteristics could offer a deeper understanding of the motivations, priorities, and constraints faced by rebel groups during secret negotiations.

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Appendix A: Codebook**List of Target States and Rebel Groups by Region**

REGION	Group Name
EUROPE	
Government of United Kingdom	PIRA
Government of United Kingdom	RIRA
Government of Georgia	Republic of South Ossetia
Government of Macedonia, FYR	UCK
Government of Spain	ETA
Government of Moldova	PMR
Government of Portugal	UNITA
Government of Portugal	FNLA
Government of Portugal	MPLA
Government of Rumania	NSF
Government of Russia (Soviet Union)	Chechen Republic of Ichkeria
Government of Russia (Soviet Union)	Forces of the Caucasus Emirate
Western Hemisphere	
Government of Argentina	MONTONEROS
Government of Argentina	ERP
Government of Colombia	EPL – Megateo
Government of Colombia	FARC

REGION	Group Name
Government of Colombia	ELN
Government of Colombia	M-19
Government of Colombia	EPL
Government of Guatemala	URNG
Government of Peru	Sendero Luminoso
Government of Peru	MRTA
Government of Trinidad and Tobago	Jamaat al-Muslimeen
MIDDLE EAST	
Government of Israel	PLO
ASIA	
Government of Bangladesh	PBCP
Government of Bangladesh	PBCP-J
Government of Bangladesh	JSS/SB
Government of India	GNLA
Government of India	ABSU
Government of India	CPI-ML-J
Government of India	PWG
Government of India	MCC
Government of India	CPI-Maoist
Government of India	NNC
Government of India	NSCN-IM

REGION	Group Name
Government of India	MNF
Government of India	NLFT-B
Government of India	TNV
Government of India	ATTF
Government of India	NLFT
Government of India	PLA
Government of India	UNLF
Government of India	KNF
Government of India	KCP
Government of India	PREPAK
Government of India	Sikh insurgents
Government of India	NDFB-S
Government of India	NDFB
Government of India	NDFB – RD
Government of Indonesia	OPM
Government of Indonesia	Fretilin/CRNT
Government of Indonesia	GAM
Government of Philippines	CPP
Government of Philippines	MNLF
Government of Philippines	MILF
Government of Sri Lanka	LTTE

List of Variables and Short Descriptions

Here is the list of variables followed by their definition:

Variables in the Dyadic Dataset: Event and Dyad-Year Versions

Variable Short Name	Variable Long Name & Measurement
UCDP/PRIO Variables	
Dyad_id	Dyad identifier – UCDP / PRIO Dyad Code
ConflictID	Conflict identifier – UCDP PRIO Conflict ID
Location	Country name whose government has a primary claim to the incompatibility
Side_a	Government side
Side_a_id	Unique identifier for the government side
Side_b	Short name of the NAG
Side_b_id	Numeric UCDP/PRIO code of the NAG
Incompatibility	Conflict issue between the dyad, ranges from 1 to 3: 1. Incompatibility about territory, 2. Incompatibility about government, 3. Incompatibility about government AND territory
Territory_name	Name of territory under dispute
Intensity_level	1: less than 1000 battle-related death in a given year (minor), 2. 1000 or more battle-related death in a given year (war)
Type of conflict	Intrastate types are included: 1, 3, and 4 (2 is inter-state conflict).
Startdate1	The year in which at least one battle related death is observed

Startdate2	The year in which at least 25 battle related deaths are observed
gwno_a	The Gleditsch and Ward state identifier
gwno_loc	The Gleditsch and Ward state code of the incompatibility.
Region	The region of the incompatibility: 1 = Europe (GWNo: 200-399) 2= Middle East (GWNo: 630-699) 3= Asia (GWNo: 700-999) 4= Africa (GWNo: 400-626) 5= Americas (GWNo: 2-199).
Version	22.1
The NAG Dataset Variables (<i>only for the dyad-year version</i>)	
Target	Target country name
NAG_name_short	Abbreviation for NAG name
NAG_name_full	Full name of NAG in English
NAGcode	Numeric code of the NAG
Year	The year of observation (1970-2015)
Foundyear	The year group was formed
Endyear	The year group was terminated
NAGID 1-5	NAG's identity: 1- NOID, 2- Ethno-nationalist, 3-religious, 4- leftist, 5- other
NAGObj 1-6	NAG's objective: 1- toppling an existing leadership, 2- change of regime type (transition from autocracy to democracy or the reverse regime change), 3- demands for autonomy, 4- secession/territorial demand, 5- demands for policy change, 6- Other – specify. Each category is coded as separate binary variables. A group may have more than a single objective.
NAG_pol_party	Whether group has a political wing in a given year (dummy)

Secret Contacts Dataset Variables - Event Version and Dyad-Year Version	
Target_dem	Polity V score of the target government
Sec_cont	Secret contact: 1-Meeting, 2- Letter 3- Phone Call
Precision_sec_cont 1-4	Precision level for secret contacts
Howmanytimes_secon	<i>Only in the time series version</i> How many times secret contacts took place in a given year
Startdatecontact	start date of secret contact
Location	Location country of the secret meetings. 1-Within the target country (specify if the exact location is known), 2-Outside of the target country (specify if the outside country is known), and Missing (.) meetings. NA is coded for letters and phone calls. <i>Note: A dummy variable for outside location is coded in the time series version.</i>
President_par	Whether the president of the target state was a participant of secret contact (binary)
PM_par	Whether the Prime Minister of the target state was a participant of secret contact (binary)
Min_par	Whether a minister of the target was a participant in secret contact (binary)
Military_par	Whether a military personnel from the army of target state was a participant of secret contact (binary)

Intelligence_par	Whether an intelligence officer was a participant of secret contact (binary)
MP_par	Whether a member of parliament was a participant of secret contact (binary)
Other_govt_par	Other than the above representatives from the government side (specify in a different column)
High_level_rep_govt	<i>Only in the time series version</i> Whether a high-level representative was involved in the secret contact from the government side. This variable is coded 1 if <i>President_par</i> , <i>PM_par</i> , <i>Min_par</i> , <i>Military_par</i> are coded as 1.
NAG_polparty_par	Whether the NAG's political wing was a participant in secret contract (binary)
NAG_leadership	Whether there was a participant from the NAG's leadership cadre (binary)
NAG_military	Whether there was a participant from the NAG's military cadre (binary)
NAG_member	Whether there was a participant from the NAG's membership cadre (binary)
Other_NAG_par	Other participants from the NAG side (specify in a separate column)
High_level_rep_rebel	<i>Only in the time series version</i> Whether a high-level representative was involved in the secret contact from the rebel side. This variable is coded 1 if <i>NAG_leadership</i> and <i>NAG_military</i> are coded as 1.
Intermediary_type	Type of intermediary: 1: Local Civilian (businessman, academic, etc.), 2: Foreign State Official, 3: NGO, 4: IGO,

	5: Church, 6: Other. Specify all in a separate cell.
Intermediary_use	Whether there is an intermediary from the below categories.
Intermediary_par	Whether there was an intermediary as a participant (binary)
Discussion 1-7	0-No conflict-related issues discussed 1- Unilateral ceasefire 2-Bilateral ceasefire 3- Decisions related to NAG's prisoners including the release of NAG's prisoners or uplifting the conditions of NAG's prisoners 4- Decisions related to formal negotiations (who's going to sit on the table from both sides, where, when, what to discuss) 5- Arrangements of secret contacts 6. drafting a peace accord-peace agreement related decisions 7. Other (specify in a different column)
Any_agreement	Whether parties agreed on the six categories of discussion variable (binary)
Announcement_govt	Whether government announced the secret contact
Announcement_date	Date of government announcement
Leak	Leaking of the secret contact to the media (binary)
Leakdate	Date of leak
Confirm_govt	Whether the government confirmed the leaked contact (binary)
Confirm_NAG	Whether the NAG confirmed the leaked contact (binary)
Deny_govt	Whether the government denied the leaked contact (binary)

Deny_NAG	Whether the NAG denied the leaked contact (binary)
Source	Book, Journal Article, Interview, Memoirs of Witnesses, News in LEXISNEXIS
The Database of Political Institutions (IDB) Variables	
Parliament	Whether the government is parliamentarism (Dummy variable created based on system variable of IDB dataset)
Majoritarian	Whether the government in the parliamentary system holds the majority of the seats
Minority	whether the government in the parliamentary system fails to hold the majority of the seats
Presidentialism	Whether the government type is presidentialism (Dummy variable created based on system variable of IDB dataset)
Polity V Variables	
Democracy_Score	from -10 to + 10
Executive_Constraint	executive constraint on the chief executive from 1 (unlimited authority) to 7 (subordinated)
Media_freedom	Not free: 0, partial free: 1, free: 2 based on Freedom House's letter points.

Howmanytimes_secon: This variable shows the number of times secret contacts took place in a given year for the dyad and is used for the time-series analysis.

Startdatecontact: the date, as precise as possible, the secret contact started.

Location: A categorical variable for the location country where the secret contact took place.

- (1) Within the target country (specify if the exact location is known in a separate column)
- (2) Outside of the target country (specify if the outside country is known in a separate column)

If the place is not known, I coded missing (.). This applies only to secret meetings. NA is coded for letters and phone calls. For extra systemic conflicts, I coded 1 if the secret contact took place within the country over which the conflict is fought for. For instance, UNITA {Angola} attacked Portugal in 1966-1974, and Portuguese authorities had secret contacts with UNITA within Angola most of the time.

President_par: A binary variable indicating whether the president of the target state was a participant in the secret contact.

PM_par: A binary variable indicating whether the Prime Minister of the target state was a participant in the secret contact.

Min_par: A binary variable indicating whether a minister of the target was a participant in the secret contact.

Military_par: this is a binary variable taking 1 if a military personnel from the target's country military was among the government representatives in the secret contact.

Intelligence_par: A binary variable indicating whether an intelligence officer was a participant in the secret contact.

MP_par: A binary variable indicating whether a member of parliament was a participant in the secret contact from the government side.

Other_govt_par: A government representative other than the representatives mentioned above.

High_level_rep_govt: A dummy variable coded for *the time series version* indicating whether a high-level representative was involved in the secret contact from the government side. This variable is coded 1 if *President_par*, *PM_par*, *Min_par*, *Military_par* are coded as 1.

NAG_polparty_par: Whether the NAG's political wing was a participant in a secret contract (binary).

NAG_leadership: Whether there was a participant from the NAG's leadership cadre (binary).

NAG_military: Whether there was a participant from the NAG's military cadre (binary).

NAG_member: Whether there was a participant from the NAG's membership cadre (binary)

Other_NAG_par: Other participants from the NAG side.

Intermediary_type: This is a categorical variable: 1: Local Civilian (businessman, academic, etc.), 2: Foreign State Official, 3: NGO, 4: IGO, 5: Church, 6: Other. I specified each category in detail in a separate cell. An intermediary is a third party outside the political spectrum that carries messages between the target and the NAG. The UK government used a businessman, Brendan Duddy, as a go-between in its secret contacts with the IRA. He helped arrange the meeting places, let two parties know about these places, and delivered messages to both sides. If an intermediary like Duddy is involved in the occurrence of a secret contact, this variable is coded as a local civilian intermediary. Similarly, Henry Acosta, a Colombian citizen, an economist, and a former agriculture expert at the United Nations, facilitated the start of secret meetings between the Colombian government and the FARC militants and exchanged information between 2009-2011. Again this is coded as a local civilian intermediary. I do not code government officials as intermediaries, even if they arrange the contact. For instance, in 1972, a

parliament member at Stormont met with the IRA leadership and arranged a meeting the next week with the opposition leader in the UK parliament, who attended with the prime minister's permission. Although sources mention the member of parliament who initiated the meeting between the IRA and the UK government at that time, I do not consider him as an intermediary. When the LTTE targeted the Sri Lankan government, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) exchanged messages between the President and the LTTE leader in 1994. For those secret information exchanges, the ICRC is coded as the intermediary. However, when UCK targeted Serbia, the US engaged in secret meetings with the Yugoslavian government and the UCK. Nevertheless, there is no report about exchanges of information between the rivals by the US in its secret initiatives. The US took the role of secretly mediating the conflict on its own. There are various examples of intermediary roles played by the Norwegian government between the PLO and Israel and the LTTE, and Sri Lanka Norwegian efforts are coded as foreign state officials intermediating the secret contact. Priests also intermediate secret contacts. Two priests met with the ETA leader, Txomin Iturbe, in France in 1984 with the acknowledgment of the Spanish government. This is an example of the church as an intermediary. Efforts of the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, or HD Centre, in Geneva for the Spain-ETA conflict are coded as an NGO intermediary.

Intermediary_use: A binary variable coding whether any intermediary is involved.

Intermediary_par: This binary variable indicates whether there was an intermediary as a participant. Intermediaries may only establish the communication channel and leave the rest to the rivals, or they may continue to participate in the meetings.

Discussion: This variable is about whether the parties discussed the following. They may have discussed more than one category below. Therefore, each category is coded as a separate variable:

- (1) None of the below was discussed during the secret contact. This does not necessarily mean the parties did not discuss anything. In many secret

contacts, parties come together and get to know each other. In such instances, they may not discuss the incompatibilities and conflict-related issues.

Mandela's first meeting with the South African President was one example.

The meeting lasted 45 minutes, and according to the sources from both sides, they did not discuss politics or serious matters.

- (2) Unilateral ceasefire
- (3) Bilateral ceasefire
- (4) Decisions related to NAG's prisoners, including the release of NAG's prisoners, uplifting the status of NAG's prisoners
- (5) Decisions related to formal negotiations (who's going to sit on the table from both sides, where, when, what to discuss)
- (6) Arrangements of secret contacts
- (7) Drafting a peace accord- peace agreement related decisions
- (8) Other (specify in a different column)

Any_agreement: Did the parties agree on any of the above discussion categories during the secret contact? This is a dummy variable indicating whether parties agreed on the six discussion variables' six categories. This variable is also helpful for the time-variant version of the dataset to show if a dyad agreed on something in a given year.

Announcement_govt: This variable codes whether the government announced secret contact with the NAG. On some occasions, secret contacts occur, and then the government makes announcements the following day or week, pointing to the security concerns for the NAG leadership in their contacts with the state. The state then does not intend to hold the secret contact confidential; she just wants to build trust with the NAG leadership, who are afraid of being assassinated by paramilitary groups or accused of betrayal by the hardliners. For instance, the then President of Colombia, Pastrana, had a meeting with the top leader of the FARC on 2 May 1999 and the government announced the following day that the meeting had taken place. Previously, the FARC leader refrained from

attending the official meeting in January 1999, worried about being assassinated. This case is an example of a government announcement. On another occasion, the government kept the contact secret, but a newspaper announced that the government met with the FARC in secret, and the government officials were expected to give a report. This is an example of a leak.

Announcement_date: The date a government official announces the secret contact.

Leak: Whether a secret contact was leaked to the media. The secret contact must appear in a newspaper to be considered a leak. Government announcements of previous secret contacts are coded as announcements. See below *announcement_govt* variable for further explanation of the difference between leak and announcement. Another important point for the leak variable is the news publication date. If a secret contact appears in a newspaper after the dyad becomes inactive, this is not a case of a leak. Rather this news is a source to code the secret contact for the dataset. For instance, UNITA's leader exchanged many letters with the Portuguese colonial authorities from 1971-1972. Portuguese weekly *Expresso* publicized these letters on 8 July 1974, after UNITA signed a ceasefire agreement on 14 June 1974. The dyad of Portugal and UNITA ended in 1974 with the independence of Angola, and these letters in *Expresso* were not coded as leaks of secret letters. They are coded as events of secret letters and *Expresso* as one of their sources.

Leak_date: Exact date of the leak.

Confirm_govt: A dummy variable coding whether the government confirmed the secret contact after it was aired in the news.

Confirm_NAG: A dummy variable coding whether the NAG confirmed the secret contact after it was aired in the news. This information comes from the news following the leak.

Deny_govt: A dummy variable coding whether the government denied the secret contact after it was aired in the news. This information comes from the news following the leak.

Deny_NAG. A dummy variable coding whether the NAG denied the secret contact after it was aired in the news. This information comes from the news following the leak.

Source: What is the source for the secret contact?: Book, journal article, interview, memoirs of witnesses, news in LexisNexis. Code in detail in a separate cell.

Parliamentary: This is a binary variable coding whether the government type is parliamentary in a given year. The IDB dataset started coding in 1975, and I coded myself for the government type and electoral system for the missing years 1970-1974.

Majoritarian: Calculated based on the total seats in the parliament and the seats won by the governing party.

Minority: Calculated based on the total seats in the parliament and the seats won by the governing party.

Presidentialism: This variable codes whether the government type is presidential in a given year. The IDB dataset started coding in 1975, and I coded myself for the government type and electoral system for the missing years 1970-1974.

APPENDIX B: SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS

Marginal effects for H1-H2

Predictive margins		Number of obs = 1,213					
Model VCE: OIM							
Expression: Linear prediction, predict()							
Delta-method							
	Margin	Std. Err.	z	P> z	[95% Conf. Interval]		
_cons	-2.44471	.1140898	-21.43	0.000	-2.668322	-2.221098	

Average marginal effects		Number of obs = 1,213					
Model VCE: OIM							
Expression: Linear prediction, predict()							
Delta-method							
	dy/dx	Std. Err.	z	P> z	[95% Conf. Interval]		
Presidentialism	.8386901	.2586855	3.24	0.001	.3316759	1.345704	
Democracy_score	.0808079	.0272467	2.97	0.003	.0274054	.1342104	
Political_party	.2888854	.2348489	1.23	0.219	-.17141	.7491807	
Incompatibility	-.3144714	.2374013	-1.32	0.185	-.7797694	.1508267	
Spline	-.2458726	.0803205	-3.06	0.002	-.4032979	-.0884472	
spline2	.0175046	.0076274	2.29	0.022	.0025552	.032454	
spline3	-.0003496	.000184	-1.90	0.057	-.0007101	.000011	

Hausman Test Results				
Coefficients				
	(b) fixed	(B) Random	(b-B) Difference	Sqrt(diag (V_b- V_B) S.E.
N of incidents	.0083543	.0083788	-.0000245	.00001
secret_contact	.2126635	.2106347	.0020289	.
seclag	-.0536482	-.0349182	-.0187301	.
cease_dummy	.0072337	.0235224	-.0162887	.
ceaselag	.0534122	-.0580986	.1115108	.
externalsup	.4453619	.3719213	.0734407	.0193973
ethno_national	-.0491145	-.0986502	.0495357	.0627808
centralcommand	.2045025	-.0903552	.2948577	.2203212
v2x_polyarchy	1.747045	1.752512	-.0054678	.0089692

b = consistent under Ho and Ha; obtained from xtpoisson

B = inconsistent under Ha, efficient under Ho; obtained from xtpoisson

Test: Ho: difference in coefficients not systematic

$\chi^2(8) = (b-B)'[(V_b-V_B)^{-1}](b-B)$

= 13.85

Prob>chi2 = 0.0858

(V_b-V_B is not positive definite)

Average marginal effects H3,H4,H5						
Model VCE: OIM						
Expression: Linear prediction, predict()						
Delta-method						
	dy/dx	Std. Err.	z	P> z	[95% Conf. Interval]	
N of incidents	.0084048	.0001121	74.99	0.000	.0081851	.0086244
secret_contact	.1714342	.0215231	7.97	0.000	.1292497	.2136187
seclag	.0304491	.0218985	1.39	0.164	-.0124712	.0733694

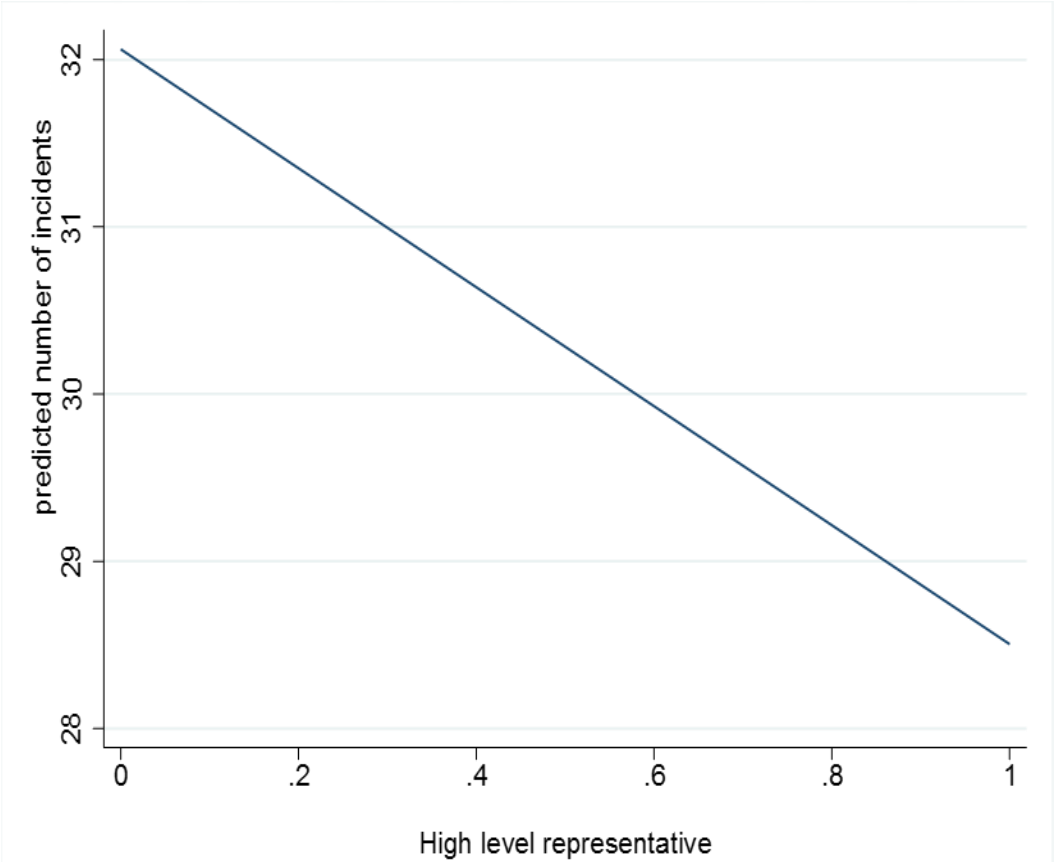
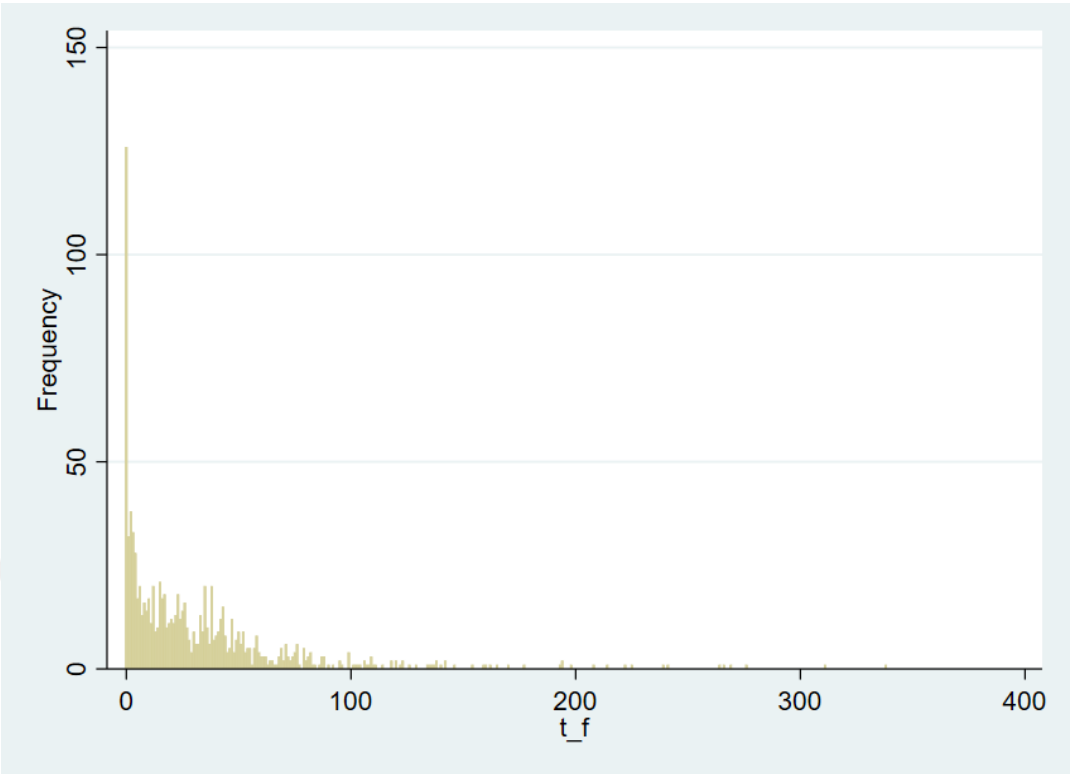
highrep	.1428021	.0244135	5.85	0.000	.0949525	.1906516
highreplag	-.2755007	.025677	-10.73	0.000	-.3258268	-.2251746
cease_dummy	-.0046318	.0202883	-0.23	0.819	-.0443961	.0351325
ceaselag	-.0336946	.0224514	-1.50	0.133	-.0776987	.0103094
incompatibility	.003692	.0898404	0.04	0.967	-.1723919	.1797759
externalsup	.4747226	.0652637	7.27	0.000	.3468082	.602637
Ethno_nationalist	-.0407507	.1301444	-0.31	0.754	-.2958291	.2143277
Centralcommand _nsa	.2418547	.3423704	0.71	0.480	-.4291789	.9128883
v2x_polyarchy	1.790998	.0704045	25.44	0.000	1.653008	1.928989

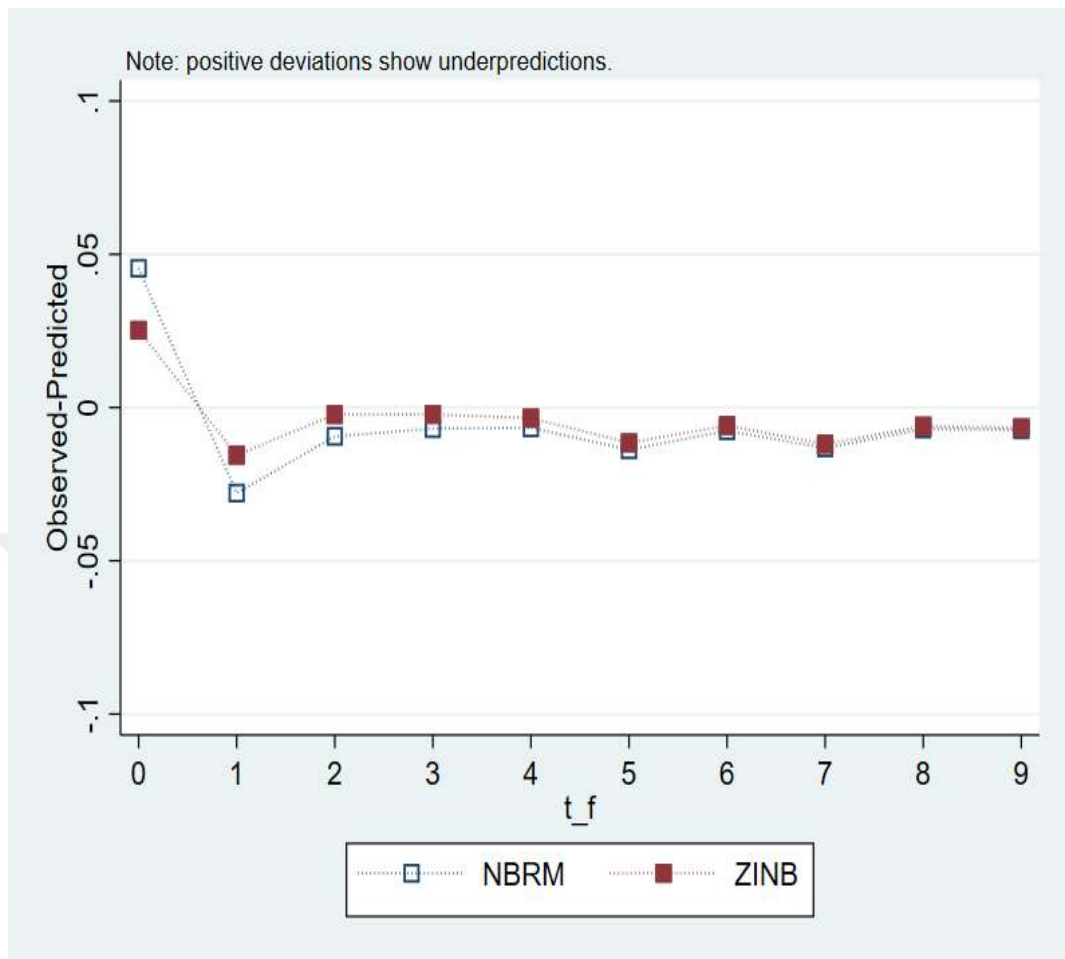
Average marginal effects H6 Number of obs = 849 Model VCE: Robust						
Expression: Linear prediction, predict() Delta-method						
	dy/dx	Std. Err.	z	P> z 	[95% Conf. Interval]	
secret_contact	.0670451	.0249476	2.69	0.007	.0181487	.1159416
Mediation	.0604137	.0276228	2.19	0.029	.0062741	.1145534
v2x_polyarchy	.0864655	.0594443	1.45	0.146	-.0300433	.2029742
Externalsup	.0349428	.0350058	1.00	0.318	-.0336673	.1035528
Incompatibility	-.0358443	.0426486	-0.84	0.401	-.1194341	.0477455
Centralcommand _nsa	.0245009	.0419747	0.58	0.559	-.0577679	.1067698
Ethno_nationalist	-.038104	.0434011	-0.88	0.380	-.1231687	.0469606
Political_party	-.030967	.0327779	-0.94	0.345	-.0952105	.0332764
Nocease	-.0595634	.0213606	-2.79	0.005	-.1014295	-.0176974

Spline1	.0002126 .0018878 0.11 0.910 -.0034874 .0039126
Spline2	-.0008891 .0009364 -0.95 0.342 -.0027244 .0009463
Spline3	.0004253 .0001719 2.47 0.013 .0000884 .0007622

Average marginal effects on Secret Contact Onset Number of obs = 869 Model VCE: Robust						
Expression: Linear prediction, predict() Delta-method						
	dy/dx	Std. Err.	z	P> z	[95% Conf. Interval]	
Presidentialism	.061412	.0527422	1.16	0.244	-.0419607	.1647848
Majoritarian	.0149792	.0357834	0.42	0.676	-.055155	.0851134
Checks	-.0060664	.0047284	-1.28	0.200	-.0153339	.0032012
Ethno_nationalist	.0371807	.05435	0.68	0.494	-.0693434	.1437048
Externalsup	.0771507	.0300662	2.57	0.010	.0182221	.1360793
Centralcommand _nsa	-.0316616	.0868275	-0.36	0.715	-.2018404	.1385172
Political_party	.0363802	.0368331	0.99	0.323	-.0358113	.1085716
Incompatibility	.0341915	.0513846	0.67	0.506	-.0665204	.1349034
v2x_polyarchy	.119809	.1502797	0.80	0.425	-.1747337	.4143518
media_freedom	.0113289	.020919	0.54	0.588	-.0296716	.0523294
t_f	.0004166	.0002375	1.75	0.079	-.000049	.0008821
Nosecretyears	-.145627	.0273601	-5.32	0.000	-.1992518	-.0920023
Spline1	-.0110694	.0039604	-2.80	0.005	-.0188317	-.0033072
Spline2	.0020017	.0010565	1.89	0.058	-.0000689	.0040723
Spline3	.0001061	.0001355	0.78	0.434	-.0001595	.0003717

Histogram of Number of Incidents





Network Analysis Results

Id	Label	eccent r	closness	harmoni c	betweenes s	weig t
1	President	3	0.54545 5	0.638889	1.335994	28
2	Prime Minister	3	0.5	0.583333	0.57619	12
3	Minister	3	0.6	0.694444	3.275388	202
4	Military government	3	0.54545 5	0.638889	1.335994	32
5	MP	3	0.54545 5	0.638889	1.925656	41

6	Intelligence	2	0.66666 7	0.75	8.275388	69
7	Other government	2	0.66666 7	0.75	8.275388	531
8	Rebel Leader	2	0.70588 2	0.791667	8.733244	216
9	Rebel Political Party	3	0.52173 9	0.625	1.916667	70
1 0	Rebel Military	2	0.70588 2	0.791667	8.733244	210
11	Rebel Member	3	0.63157 9	0.736111	5.983512	179
1 2	Other rebel	3	0.63157 9	0.736111	5.466667	234
1 3	Intermediar y	3	0.44444 4	0.513889	0.166667	8

Zero Inflated Negative Binomial Regression Model

The following analysis shows the findings of a zero-inflated negative binomial regression model. Given that approximately 11.4% of the total observations consist of zero counts and the variance exceeds the mean, a zero-inflated negative binomial (ZINB) model needed to be concerned for analyzing the outcome variable. The ZINB model incorporates two distinct processes: one process captures the occurrence of zero counts (excess zeros), while the other process models the count of non-zero incidents. This modeling approach combines a binary component, which models the excess zeros (zero-inflation), with a count component that follows a negative binomial distribution to model the positive counts. Consequently, we can capture the underlying data generation process, considering both the excess zeros and the variability beyond what would be expected from a Negative Binomial distribution. However, it's worth noting that the ZINB model is generally not recommended for analyzing count variables. Nevertheless, both the fixed-effects Poisson model and the

ZINB model used in this study lend support to its main argument. Specifically, the study suggests a meaningful and statistically significant correlation between secret contacts and incident counts, unless the involvement of high-level government representatives is at play. The incorporation of these two models serves to enhance the overall robustness of the findings.

Table: Zero-Inflated Negative Binomial Analysis of Number of Incidents

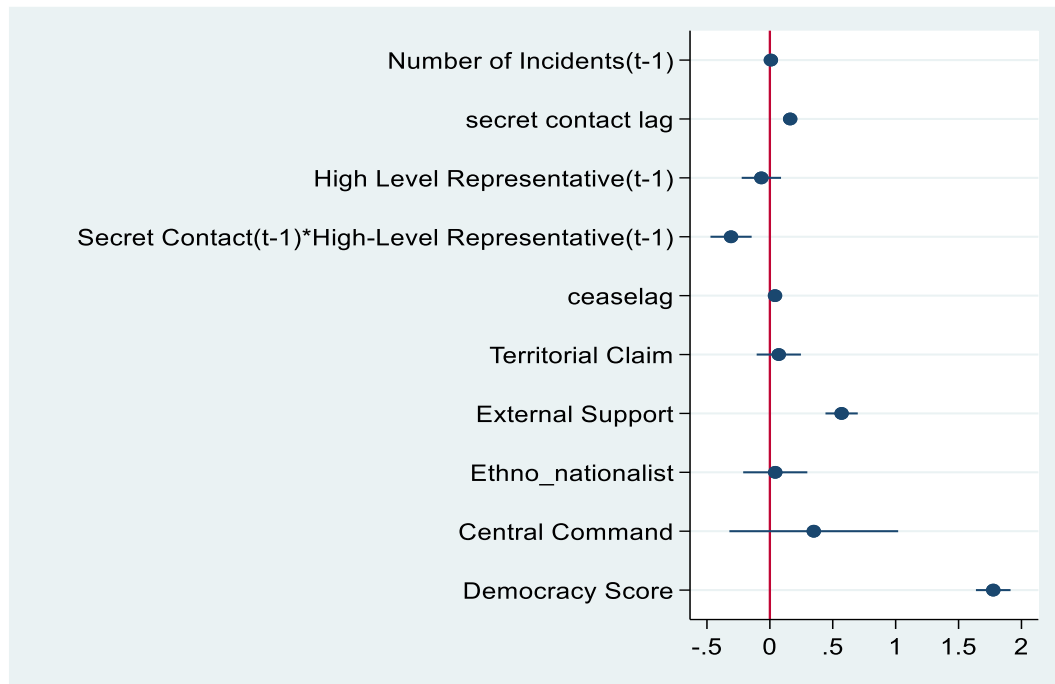
	Model(1)	Model(1)
Number of Incidents		
<i>Number of Incidents(t-1)</i>	0.0171*** (14.01)	0.0160*** (14.35)
<i>Secret Contact</i>	0.264** (2.95)	0.0960 (0.94)
<i>Secret Contact(t-1)</i>	-0.0869 (-0.93)	
<i>High-level Representative</i>		0.188 (1.43)
<i>High-level Representative(t-1)</i>		-0.295** (-2.76)
<i>Ceasefire</i>	0.162 (1.52)	0.0423 (0.40)
<i>Ceasefire(t-1)</i>	0.0174 (0.16)	0.0127 (0.12)
<i>Incompatibility</i>	0.278** (2.58)	0.111 (1.08)
<i>Democracy Score</i>	1.928*** (15.28)	0.107*** (9.38)
<i>External Support</i>	-0.0745 (-1.10)	-0.0327 (-0.51)
<i>Central Command</i>	-0.277 (-1.73)	-0.168 (-1.11)
<i>Ethnic Rebel Group</i>	-0.0600 (-0.62)	-0.0663 (-0.66)
Constant	1.483*** (5.77)	2.100*** (10.21)
Inflate		
Outcome	0.0712 (0.12)	0.191 (0.33)
Constant	-2.648*** (-10.15)	-2.712*** (-11.85)
Inalpha	-0.228** (-3.13)	-0.334*** (-5.00)
N	928	910

t statistics in parentheses

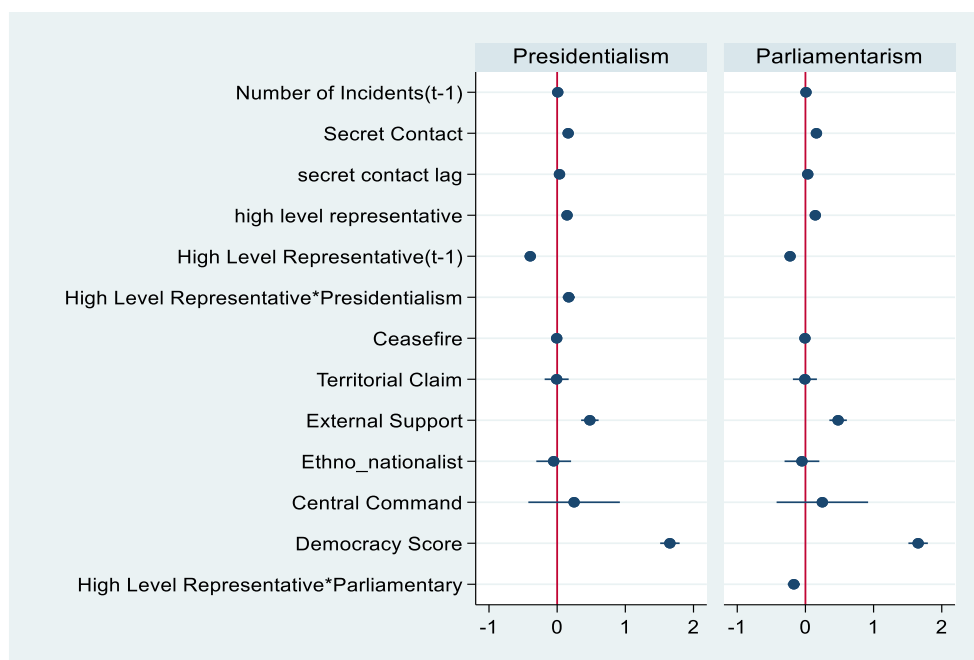
*** p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001**

Secret contact high level representative's coefficient plot:

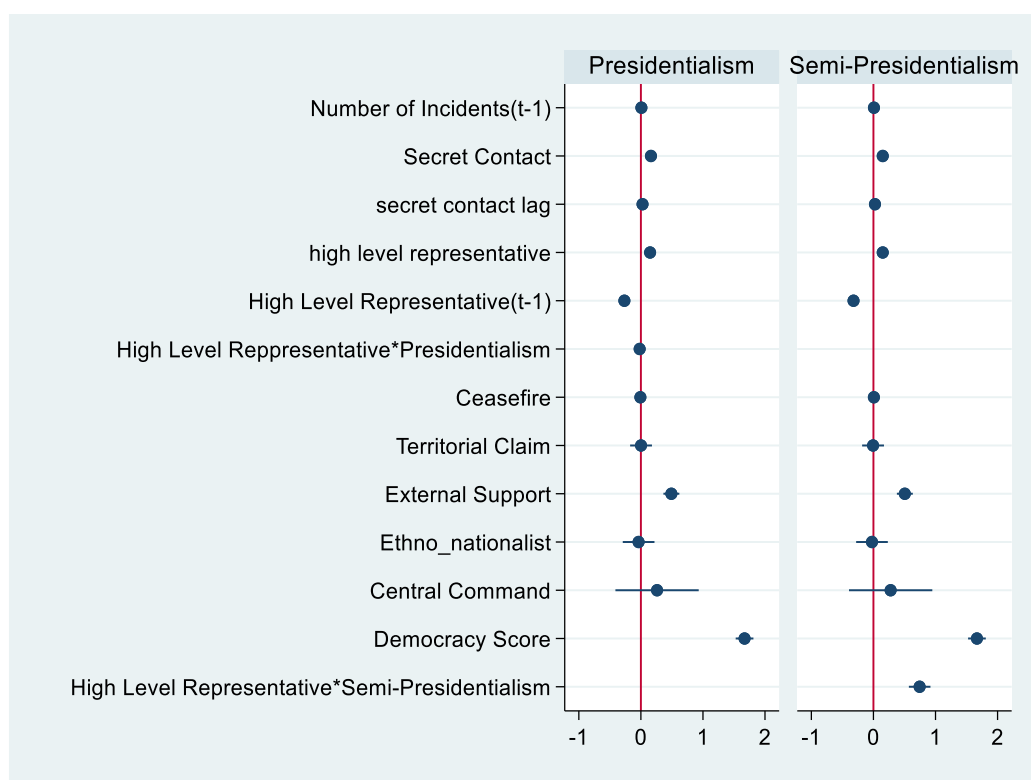
As the coefficient plot shows below the interaction variable of the lags of secret contact and high-level representative selection is negatively and significantly associated with the number of incidents.



Coefficient plots for the interaction of high-level representative with presidentialism and parliamentarism



Coefficient plots for semi-presidentialism:



Assessing both V-Dem and Polity V and Quality of Democracy:

In addition to V-Dem's democracy score (Model 1), I have run the analysis with Polity V (Model 2). The following table shows that the results for the main dependent and independent variables are affected by this change. Lastly, I controlled the impact of quality of democracy by including an uninterrupted years of democracy variable. The table also illustrates this addition in Model 3 that how old democratic a country is has a positive impact on rebel violence. The main argument of the study, high-level representatives likely to reduce rebel violence, still negatively and statistically correlated in all three models.

VARIABLES	(1) Democracy (V-dem)	(2) Democracy (Polity V)	(3) Uninterrupted Years of Democracy
Number of Incidents(t-1)	0.00841*** (0.000112)	0.00832*** (0.000113)	0.00830*** (0.000113)
Secret Contact	0.171*** (0.0215)	0.184*** (0.0215)	0.165*** (0.0215)
Secret Contact(t-1)	0.0261 (0.0217)	0.0449 (0.0215)	0.0125 (0.0219)
High Representative	0.145*** (0.0244)	0.152*** (0.0245)	0.159*** (0.0245)
High Representative(t-1)	-0.280*** (0.0255)	-0.276*** (0.0256)	-0.267*** (0.0256)
Ceasefire	-0.0120 (0.0197)	-0.0526* (0.0199)	-0.0263 (0.0198)
Territorial Claim	0.000767 (0.0898)	0.195* (0.0900)	-0.0554 (0.0903)
External Support	0.475*** (0.0653)	0.661*** (0.0649)	0.414*** (0.0660)
Ethnonationalist	-0.0407 (0.130)	-0.0538 (0.130)	-0.0750 (0.130)
Central Command	0.237 (0.342)	0.215 (0.342)	0.253 (0.342)
Democracy (V-dem)	1.779*** (0.0699)		1.622*** (0.0742)
Democracy (Polity V)		0.0911*** (0.00292)	
Uninterrupted Years Democracy			0.00559*** (0.000916)
Observations	897		897

High-Level Representative Selection by Government Type

According to the following table, when semi-presidentialism is treated as a distinct government type, presidentialism continues to demonstrate statistical significance and exhibits a positive correlation with the selection of high-level representatives.

High-Level Representative Selection	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
VARIABLES	Presidential	Semi- Presidential	Parliamen tary	Majoritarian
Presidentialism	0.758*** (0.225)			
Semi- Presidentialism		1.073 (0.800)		
Parliamentarism			-1.149*** (0.324)	
Majoritarian				0.477 (0.370)
Democracy Score	0.0575* (0.0297)	0.0773 (0.0514)	0.100*** (0.0372)	-0.0893 (0.0770)
Incompatibility	0.580 (0.430)	0.509 (0.412)	0.392 (0.354)	-0.175 (0.493)
Ethnonationalist	1.222*** (0.428)	0.632 (0.434)	1.202** (0.469)	0.856* (0.457)
Political Party	0.587* (0.319)	0.420 (0.325)	0.533* (0.308)	0.428 (0.527)
Central Command	-0.0683 (0.781)	-0.111 (0.591)	-0.0481 (0.828)	-0.837* (0.480)
External Support	0.650*** (0.225)	0.642*** (0.242)	0.653*** (0.229)	0.588 (0.365)
No high level representative years	-0.161 (0.178)	-0.135 (0.175)	-0.144 (0.178)	-0.169 (0.197)
_spline	0.00126 (0.0139)	0.00347 (0.0144)	0.00139 (0.0139)	0.0101 (0.0182)
_spline	-0.00316 (0.00699)	-0.00411 (0.00733)	-0.00297 (0.00696)	-0.00863 (0.00984)
_spline	0.00156 (0.00150)	0.00169 (0.00159)	0.00144 (0.00150)	0.00287 (0.00227)
Constant	-4.461*** (1.111)	-3.768*** (0.978)	-3.603*** (1.108)	-1.311 (1.232)
Observations	1,213	1,213	1,213	645