
Case Analysis

Ripening Within? Strategies Used by Rebel Negotiators to End Ethnic War

Jannie Lilja

This article explores what strategies rebels use to prepare their ethnic community for negotiated peace. Proposed strategies are distilled from relevant theory and systematically investigated in case analyses of peace negotiations in Sri Lanka, Indonesian Aceh, and Senegal. The empirical findings indicate that although a coercive military capacity underpinned claims to ethnic representation, coercion did not dominate during the prenegotiation phase. During negotiations, noncoercive persuasion, as well as collective and selective incentives, clearly dominated. Moreover, the most important measures were internal to the negotiating rebel group. The successful rebel negotiator appeared to “mobilize in reverse” by initially targeting the core of military leaders followed by competitor groups and constituents. The article systematically examines across cases what measures rebel negotiators have used to “ripen” their own community, how these measures have been sequenced, and against whom they have been directed. The findings have important implications for the concepts of ripeness and prenegotiation and their requirements. The study underscores in particular the relevance of rebels’ nonviolent commitment signals, something that has been largely overlooked in the research on nonstate armed actors. The policy implications suggest the possible benefits of third-party assistance to efforts to promote communication, public outreach, and procedural transparency on the nonstate side in connection with peace talks.

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Introduction

Mobilization for ethnic war is a relatively well-analyzed phenomenon (Horowitz 1985; Kaufman 1996; Fearon 2006), but this is less so when it comes to strategies to end ethnic war through negotiation. The literature on ethnic conflict resolution has focused on “substance” solutions such as partition, regional autonomy, or power sharing (Kaufmann 1996; Sambanis and Schulhofer-Wohl 2009). The literature on how parties get to the negotiating table in the first place and stay there long enough to reach an agreement, however, is less well developed. For this, one needs to consider both obstacles to the commencement of negotiations and hurdles in the actual talks themselves (Saunders 1985).

Negotiation takes place at two levels (Putnam 1988). The first level is what is conventionally referred to as “negotiation” and takes place *between* the parties to the conflict. The focus of this study is, however, on the second level *within* each party. Although both parties are needed to reach a peace agreement, knowledge of how the internal dynamics of each party affect their respective negotiation abilities is incomplete because de-escalation is an intricate business. At level two, the risk of betrayal and double-cross is often omnipresent, which has resulted in a deficiency in “insider” accounts of peace processes (Elder 1992). This study exclusively examines the non-state side in cases of ethnic conflict. Whereas work on individual cases has offered initial insights, systematic cross-case comparisons that also distinguish between different phases of negotiation have been few.

In this study, I explore more specifically how rebel negotiators prepare their own ethnic community for peace talks. In this regard, the rebels face challenges linked to the military struggle. Although only a small number of people are needed to fight, ethnic constituents at large need to at least passively cooperate with the rebels (Lichbach 1995; Kalyvas 2005). When rebel leaders perceive a need to negotiate peace without sacrificing their credibility and the appearance that they are committed to their ethnic community, they must take deliberate measures to compel community members to support the shift from war to peace.

Adopting a top-down perspective, I thus pose this question: what level two strategies do rebels use in connection with negotiations to end ethnic war? Because strategies for war mobilization and conflict escalation are often discussed in terms of “involuntariness” (based on violence) or of “voluntariness” (centered on popular persuasion and positive incentives),

I also make an overarching distinction between coercive and noncoercive approaches.

The main aim of this study is to further the understanding of the strategies that rebels use with their own ethnic community members to negotiate peace. First, I discuss relevant theories and concepts pertaining to peace negotiations, ethnic conflict, and ethnic leadership strategies. On this theoretical basis, I then explore proposed strategies connected to the prenegotiation and negotiation phases by analyzing peace talks in Sri Lanka, Indonesian Aceh, and Senegal.

The empirical analysis, drawing upon novel primary data and secondary sources, highlights two main findings. First, although coercion underpinned claims for ethnic representation and was used in prenegotiation, it did not seem to dominate during this phase. During negotiations, noncoercive persuasion and collective and selective incentives clearly dominated. Second, measures were, to a large extent, internal to the negotiating rebel group. In fact, the successful rebel negotiators appeared to “mobilize in reverse” by initially targeting a small core of military leaders within the rebel group and then extending to competitors and to the broader constituency.

These findings have significant implications for both the theory and practice of peace negotiation. They enhance our understanding of the concepts and requirements of ripeness and prenegotiation, and of “internal ripeness” in particular. Negotiation between the main adversaries is only one element in conflict resolution (Saunders 1985). Some of the most important functions of prenegotiation, such as generating valid spokespersons and building support and coalitions for negotiations, are intraparty in nature. The ripeness concept, as first formulated by I. William Zartman (1985), focused on how adversaries’ perceptions of a mutually hurting stalemate could induce a move from an armed strategy to negotiated peace. As argued by a major contributor to the concept, Stephen J. Stedman (1991), ripeness is a function of internal change (cf. Mitchell 1995). The very nature of this internal change, however, has not been methodically studied for the nonstate side.

This study’s most important contribution is the systematic examination of how internal change may come about through deliberate measures taken by rebel negotiators to “ripen” their own camp. It investigates *what* measures rebels take to act as ethnic representatives and to generate support, active or passive, for negotiations. The study also examines *how* negotiators sequence these measures and against *whom* they direct their efforts. The findings encourage a broadened understanding of what techniques — beyond violence — rebels can use to signal commitment. For policy makers, the findings suggest the possible benefits of third-party assistance to the nonstate side to facilitate communication and procedural transparency in connection with peace talks.

The cases selected for structured comparison are the 2002–2003 peace negotiation between the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and

the Sri Lankan government, the 2005 talks between Gerakan Aceh Merdeka (GAM) and the Indonesian government, and the 2004 negotiation between Mouvement des Forces Démocratiques de la Casamance (MFDC) and the Senegalese government.

Rebels' Level Two Strategies for Peace Negotiations

Before proceeding to rebel negotiators' level two strategies in relation to peace talks, a short account of the temporal and functional dimensions of prenegotiation and negotiation will be provided. Key concepts of ethnicity, ethnic politics, and ethnic mobilization will also be defined and briefly discussed.

Peace Negotiations: Levels and Phases

To situate the strategies used by rebel negotiators in connection with peace talks, this section briefly discusses levels and phases of negotiations. As described earlier, negotiation takes place at two levels: first, *between* the parties to the conflict, and second, *within* each party (Putnam 1988). It is on the second level that competition for ethnic leadership and the building of support for peace negotiations take place. Without intraparty "buy-in" to negotiations, the prospects for success in peace talks will be small.

The negotiation literature distinguishes between two phases: "prenegotiation" and "negotiation." Prenegotiation is a fluid concept, and the prenegotiation phase could extend as far back as when the parties first considered negotiation as a way out of armed conflict and extend forward into the formal bargaining phase. One hallmark article stated that prenegotiation begins "when one or more parties consider negotiation as a policy option and communicate this intention to other parties. Prenegotiation ends when the parties agree to formal negotiations or when one party abandons the consideration of negotiation as an option" (Zartman 1989: 240; see also Gross-Stein 1989; Schiff 2008).

The start of prenegotiation has alternatively been described as a turning point through an "event or change in conditions that triggers a reassessment of alternatives and adds negotiation to the strategies of conflict management that are seriously considered" (Gross-Stein 1989: 475; see also Rothman 1991a). Turning points are those key events instrumental for moving a peace process from one stage to another and less dependent on perceptions. Key events may be external to talks and could include leadership succession, public opinion changes, and the seeking of third-party assistance (Druckman 2005). Negotiation begins when parties formally declare that they will begin.

The functional differences between prenegotiation and negotiation are even more important than the temporal distinctions (Rothman 1991a). The functions of prenegotiation are to: define the boundaries and agenda of talks, assess the risks and costs of negotiations, select valid spokespersons, manage domestic politics, and build coalitions (Gross-Stein 1989; Zartman 1989). Prenegotiation thus has *both* interparty and intraparty aspects

(Rothman 1991b). Some of its most vital functions, however, such as identifying appropriate spokespersons, harnessing domestic support, and building coalitions, are intraparty in nature (Saunders 1985; Gross-Stein 1989; Zartman 1989, 2005). The main function of negotiation, however, is to resolve interparty conflict issues through distributive (zero-sum) or integrative (problem solving) bargaining, although the addressing of intraparty concerns will continue to be important even during formal talks.

This study treats the start of prenegotiation as a key event or change in conditions that leads the nonstate party to reassess its alternatives and, in a manifest fashion, to consider negotiation as a desirable alternative. The primary focus here in the prenegotiation phase is on intraparty aspects such as the identification of ethnic representatives (i.e., appropriate spokespersons) and the harnessing of ethnic community support (active or passive, including preventing spoiling negotiation). Prenegotiation ends when formal interparty negotiation begins. "Negotiation" here denotes the period of formal political settlement talks.

Ethnic Conflict

The negotiations studied here represent attempts to politically settle protracted ethnic conflicts. "Ethnicity" may be defined as collective identity comprising group-oriented behavior driven by a commonality of fate; ethnic categories can have intrinsic importance, can serve as a "rule of thumb" in social interaction, and correlate with other categories that could serve as a rule of thumb in social interaction (Hale 2008; cf. Horowitz 1985). "Ethnic politics" is driven by interests that concern ethnic group members' access to wealth and power (Hale 2008).

Ethnic identity transforms into ethnic politics when it is used by leaders as a master narrative. "Ethnic conflict" can thus be nonviolent — for example, when competition between ethnic political parties occurs in peace-time politics — or violent, as in ethnic war. Ethnic identity may encourage ethnic groups to pursue their interests politically, and conversely, ethnic politics may affect people's sense of their ethnic identity (Gurr 2000; Hale 2008).

The Rebel–Ethnic Community Relationship after the Breakout of War

Armed conflict situations obviously differ from peace-time politics. War entails more constraints, less consent, and higher stakes for the people involved (Kalyvas 2005). Connected to this is the issue of representation and leadership on the nonstate side. Nonstate leaders may choose not to seek election because electoral participation could legitimize a prevailing political order that they consider to be unjust. But leaders will still need to earn public legitimacy in some fashion. Competing claims by a group about the right to represent an ethnic community may be made on military, religious, or customary grounds (Darby 2001; Chowdhury and Krebs 2009).

Rebel leaders can enhance their power through violence and by framing issues in ethnic terms. Therefore, if they believe that ethnic war advances their interests, they may be unlikely to promote negotiation. Leaders are also sensitive to public opinion on issues that could be used by rival leaders to unseat them (Hale 2008). Concerns about losing popular support may affect decisions on negotiation (cf. Wood 2000). To wage ethnic war, rebels need to mobilize (i.e., motivate or recruit) ethnic community members for the military struggle (cf. Gurr 2000). Only a small core of people is needed to fight, but the broader ethnic constituency must cooperate exclusively with the rebels — for example, through information provision — for their efforts to succeed (Lichbach 1995; Lilja 2009). The “ethnic community” ranges from fighters, resource sponsors, and political activists to the broader constituent population. During war, rebels typically use a mix of persuasion and coercion for mobilization purposes. Violence may, however, prove to be a more efficient means of mobilizing (Kalyvas 2006).

The challenge for rebel leaders is that even if they would like to negotiate peace, they cannot afford to appear uncommitted to their ethnic constituency (Mitchell 1981; Gurr 2000). Rebel leaders may be tied to the beliefs of their coethnics who view negotiations with the government as dealing with the devil (Horowitz 1985; Kelman 1997). Therefore, the rebel negotiator must act strategically both against the government counterpart and against actors in the nonstate camp who challenge the negotiator’s commitment and credibility to lead the ethnic community out of the war (Stedman 1991).

Coercive versus Noncoercive Level Two Strategies

Broadly speaking, rebels typically choose between two possible strategies to attain and maintain ethnic community leadership: coercion and non-coercion. Each strategy is manifested through different tactics. The coercive strategy largely relies on violence, whereas the noncoercive strategy is based on persuasion and the use of positive incentives.¹

The two strategies have been documented in different literatures, the former primarily in the work on ethnic outbidding and terrorism. Noncoercive methods are described in the guerilla and collective action literatures. Distilling insights from these bodies of theory, in the next section of this article, I describe strategies that rebel negotiators are likely to use. The coercive approach entails tactics ranging from open violence to passive coercion. Examples of open violence are the killing, injury, or abduction of community leaders and constituents on the nonstate side. More passive methods include intimidation, threats, or harassment (Schelling 1960). But because these methods *per se* are unlikely to be viewed as legitimate by ethnic constituents, rebels may justify them with claims that the victims are enemies to the ethnic cause.

This brings us to “ethnic outbidding,” the theory that aspiring ethnic leaders compete in using escalating nonconciliatory and ethnically directed

deeds and discourse to demonstrate commitment to their ethnic constituency. Outbidding is often directly targeted against rival politico-militant groups but with ethnic constituents as an audience (Horowitz 1985; Kaufman 1996; Bloom 2004; Rabuschka and Shepsle 2009). In peace time, outbidding normally consists of ethnically oriented discourse, portraying competitors as uncommitted to the interests of the ethnic community. During armed conflict, however, ethnic outbidding is likely to become violent, including the mere elimination of competitors on pretexts of ethnic solidarity (Kydd and Walter 2006). Coercive outbidding may also be directed at government constituents to provoke retaliatory attacks on rebel constituents to make them rally around the hardliners (cf. Byman 2002; Kydd and Walter 2002, 2006).

Military success and violent “acts of martyrdom” may be used as signals of ethnic commitment (Bloom 2004; Bueno de Mesquita and Dickson 2007). Coercive outbidding applies particularly when violence resonates “positively” with constituents. There is a clear interparty logic to constituent support for militancy. A demonstrated capacity for violence could improve the nonstate side’s negotiating position (cf. Wood 2000). Hardliners with a tough reputation may appear more credible than softer leaders, and therefore better as peacemakers (Schultz 2005). Should the rebel leadership make it to political office, previous demonstrations of commitment and sacrifice could also be seen as reducing the risk of future corruption (Kydd and Walter 2006).

The noncoercive approach largely involves verbal persuasion and the use of collective and selective incentives. The first method, persuasion or propaganda articulated by a charismatic nonstate leader, has received the most attention in the classic literature on rebellion (Guevara 1965). The rebel negotiator needs to convince ethnic constituents that negotiation will serve their collective interest. The leadership’s authenticity is crucial (Gurr 2000; Aminzade et al. 2001). The advantages of negotiation need to be explained to the larger ethnic constituency. As the rebels move into the negotiating stage, however, they will try to downplay the importance of ethnic politics, which could have an adverse effect on their relationship with the government. At this stage, they may frame the decision to negotiate as the result of changes in external conditions or from superordinate goals (Darby 2001; Hale 2008). Alternatively, negotiations may be portrayed as an opportunity to push hard for ethnic policy positions. The rebel negotiator must also manage information to gain an understanding of competitors’ capability to unseat the negotiator to be able to mitigate these threats (cf. Weeks 2008). Information about significant negotiating concessions should not be made public, but if they are, the negotiator needs to convincingly explain the rationale behind these concessions to prevent constituents from feeling betrayed (cf. Mitchell 1981; Pruitt 1997; Bueno de Mesquita 2005).

A second noncoercive measure is the generation and distribution of collective or selective incentives connected to negotiations (cf. Olson 1965; Wickham-Crowley 1991; Lichbach 1995; Wood 2003).² Incentives could consist of political or economic benefits from the government or from a third party. Collective incentives pertain to the ethnic community at large, for example, through ethnic minority political or economic rights or benefits. Selective incentives are directed at subgroups or individuals within the ethnic community, for instance, through special compensation to combatants or war victims. A related third measure is to form coalitions with actors inside or outside of the nonstate camp to outmaneuver competitors (cf. O'Donnell and Schmitter 1986; Gross-Stein 1989; Gurr 2000). External alliances, such as with foreign countries, could render leadership recognition and material resources (Zartman and Anstey Forthcoming).

Proposed Level-Two Strategies in Prenegotiation and Negotiation

Given that a rebel group wants to negotiate an end to ethnic war and given the presence of rival groups competing for ethnic leadership, I have distilled from the literature strategies for achieving these ends.

Because both coercion and noncoercion may be used, what is especially interesting is what seems to make one approach more dominant than the other. The proposed strategies will be linked to the two phases of negotiation and subsequently assessed in relation to the LTTE, GAM, and MFDC cases. Rebels face different challenges in prenegotiation and negotiation, which they can be expected to address through different types of measures.

In prenegotiation, the main challenge for rebels is that of beating rivals for the role of *representing* the nonstate side. They must make it to the negotiation table without being ousted as leaders by competitor groups. Given the war context, a rebel group may gravitate toward coercion because violence can manifest as ethnic commitment. Militant hawks may be better peacemakers than noncoercive doves because they have more credibility with constituents. A reputation for militancy enhances the bargaining position against the government. Moreover, if the most coercive group is left to negotiate, competitor groups are far less likely to seriously spoil the talks. In prenegotiation, the negotiating group would carry out showcase attacks and use coercion against rival groups on the pretext that the rival groups are ethnic traitors. Importantly, complementary noncoercive measures would seek to control information to discern upcoming competitor threats, and to explain the rationale for talks to constituents as caused by changes in external conditions. The latter kind of public persuasion is necessary. What is most imperative in this phase, however, is that the rebel group has attained a position in which competitors to ethnic representation are effectively neutralized. My proposition is therefore that *in prenegotiation, a coercive strategy will dominate*.

During negotiation the main challenge for the rebels is to reach a *compromise* with the government without being ousted as leaders. Given the risk of competitor outbidding, the rebel negotiator may continue a hostile ethnically colored discourse and use violence parallel to talks (Darby 2001; Höglund and Zartman 2006; Höglund 2008; Donohue and Druckman 2009). But the interparty dynamics take on more importance during negotiations. The negotiating rebel group may therefore be constrained in its use of violence because the government may interpret it as evidence of a lack of control over the nonstate side (Kydd and Walter 2002). The rebel negotiator must also factor in what possible events could occur during the postnegotiation period, such as postwar elections. This suggests that the negotiator should rely more on popular persuasion, for example, by downplaying compromises and portraying them as advantageous to the ethnic community's interests. In connection with talks, the rebel negotiator would try to generate collective incentives to the ethnic community along with such selective incentives as special compensation to combatants. The negotiator would attempt to control the information flowing from the negotiations (cf. Bueno de Mesquita 2005; Weeks 2008). My second proposition is therefore that *during negotiations, a noncoercive strategy will dominate*.

The LTTE, GAM, and MFDC Peace Negotiations

Given that this article's aim is to map out the types of methods that rebel negotiators use in relation to their coethnics, I have taken a structured comparative case study approach. I have studied peace negotiations involving three rebel groups — the 2002–2003 negotiation between the LTTE and the Sri Lankan government, the 2005 talks between GAM and the Indonesian government, and the 2002–2004 negotiation between the MFDC and the government of Senegal. The three cases are comparable and analytically equivalent in representing peace negotiations to end protracted ethno-separatist wars (cf. George and Bennett 2005).³

Multiple cases are drawn upon to create richness and variation in the measures used. The cases vary in their negotiation outcomes. For the LTTE, the negotiations collapsed; for the MFDC, a peace framework treaty short of a final status agreement was concluded, whereas GAM attained a final-status peace treaty. The data consist of interviews, about seventy interviews in all with a minimum of twenty for each case, complemented by secondary sources. The semistructured interviews lasted one to two hours each and were tape-recorded by agreement with the informant. Interviews took place in Sri Lanka, Indonesian Aceh, Senegal, the United Kingdom, Sweden, and Norway. The interviewees were involved in the respective negotiation processes and included rebels, government representatives, and third parties. By agreement with the informants, most of the sources for the Aceh case have been disclosed. Many subjects, however, agreed to be interviewed

only on condition of anonymity. For the still not settled conflicts in Sri Lanka and Senegal, disclosure is impossible as it could put respondents at risk. Complementary secondary references for the anonymous interviews have been provided to the largest extent possible.

For each case, I report the empirical data in three sections. Each section comprises

- a background sketch of the history of the conflict and previous peace-making attempts along with a brief account of the war mobilization used by the negotiating rebel group;
- a short description of the prenegotiation and negotiation phases; and
- descriptions of rebel negotiators' strategies during these phases.

To assess whether the coercive or noncoercive approach is dominant, I analyze each individual case in terms of the relative proportion of numbers and intensity of tactics used. Different tactics are, in turn, associated with the two strategies.

Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam and the Tamils in Sri Lanka

Background: Conflict, Previous War Mobilization, and Peace Attempts

Put simply, the conflict is between the Sri Lankan government, dominated by an ethnic Sinhalese majority, and an ethnic Tamil minority represented by the LTTE. The large-scale armed conflict commenced in July 1983 with anti-Tamil riots. Its political form, however, dates back to the time of Sri Lanka's independence from British colonial rule in 1948. The conflict largely revolves around Tamil minority rights and issues pertaining to constitution, language, education, and land (Wilson 2000). Since 1983, the conflict has witnessed five negotiations (Shanmugaratnam 2008). The LTTE served as the main negotiator for the Tamils from 1990 onward (Perera 2006). The negotiation under study here produced a cease-fire agreement in 2002. The ensuing peace negotiations effectively broke down in 2003. In April 2004, the LTTE deputy leader, Karuna, defected to the government. This leadership split had a decisive impact on the entire course of the conflict. With Karuna's assistance, the government could recapture territory from the Tigers, which resulted in the military defeat of the LTTE in 2009. The political incompatibilities, however, remain.

The LTTE's main reason for representing the Tamils in political negotiations with the government has been its military strength (Anonymous Interviewee 5 2008). Whereas numerous Tamil militant groups emerged after the 1983 riots, the LTTE had been the only group refusing a political solution short of a separate state. Throughout the conflict, the goal of a

future Tamil state came to play a key role in the LTTE's military mobilization. Recruits were required to pledge their lives to it (Anonymous Interviewee 5 2008; Anonymous Interviewee 6 2008). The LTTE branded other Tamil groups as ethnic traitors and carried out large-scale attacks against them, killing hundreds in 1986, which caused shock and fear in the Tamil community (Lilja and Hultman Forthcoming; cf. Whitaker 2007). The LTTE became the only Tamil group fighting the government militarily. Other Tamil groups were forced to seek state protection (UTHR 1989; Swamy 2003).

During the 1990 talks with President Premadasa, a rift developed within the LTTE. Whereas deputy LTTE leader Mahattaya wanted to explore the possibilities of a peace settlement, Prabakharan was concerned about slackening the military momentum and wanted talks to be called off. Based on his military credentials and popularity, Mahattaya posed a challenge to Prabakharan's leadership. On the pretext of being an intelligence collaborator, Mahattaya was tortured and killed on Prabakharan's orders (Swamy 2005; Jayatilleke 2006; Anonymous Interviewee 7 2007). In addition, the Tigers demanded that the government should not engage in dialogue with competing Tamil groups (Jayatilleke 2006).

The LTTE pointed to the sheer number of combatants as evidence of its deep Tamil ethnic commitment and sacrifice relative to rival groups, which would give Tamils a "moral obligation" to support the LTTE (Schalk 1997; Anonymous Interviewee 50 2007; Anonymous Interviewee 51 2007; Anonymous Interviewee 8 2008; cf. Swamy 2005). Prabakharan was considered to be a heroic militant leader who was not driven by self-interest and had the status of a feared demigod (Swamy 2005; Anonymous Interviewee 9 2007; Anonymous Interviewee 8 2008).

The Prenegotiation and Negotiation Phases

For the LTTE, the 2002–2003 negotiation represented the culmination of a series of informal peace-dialogue meetings from 1999 onward. Prenegotiation began following a key external event in 1999 when the LTTE sought third-party assistance from Norway to evacuate the LTTE chief negotiator, Anton Balasingham, from Sri Lanka. The Sri Lankan president subsequently announced on television that secret peace talks were underway (Martin 2006; Rupesinghe 2006). In November 2000, LTTE leader Prabakharan stated that LTTE would hold unconditional talks (Uyangoda 2006; Anonymous Interviewee 10 2008).

Soon thereafter, Prabakharan declared a unilateral cease-fire, but it ended in April 2001 and the second half of 2001 saw LTTE military advances, including a spectacular bombing of the Sri Lankan civilian air fleet (Hopgood 2005; Uyangoda 2006). In January and February 2002, another cease-fire agreement (CFA) was negotiated through Norwegian shuttle diplomacy in only a month's time. With the CFA coming into force in February 2002, the political negotiation commenced, divided into five

rounds. The LTTE's initial position was the normalization and improvement of economic conditions in the war-affected areas (Balasingham 2004; Anonymous Interviewee 11 2009; Anonymous Interviewee 13 2009). By round three, in December 2002, Balasingham publicly declared LTTE's openness to explore a federal solution, which was confirmed by Prabakharan (TamilNet 2002a,b; Anonymous Interviewee 12 2009). This was the first time that the LTTE openly deviated from its stand on separate Tamil statehood, which represented a major shift.

The negotiations effectively collapsed, however, in April 2003 with the LTTE's indefinite suspension of talks. The Tigers said they suspended the talks because of their exclusion from a major donor peace-building conference and because of issues related to the high-security zones (Balasingham 2004). Well-informed sources, however, have suggested that the federalism statement was the actual reason (Manoharan 2006; Anonymous Interviewee 11 2009; Anonymous Interviewee 78 2009). The negotiations created a decisive split in the LTTE leadership by giving Karuna, as the only LTTE military negotiator, the opportunity to interact with the government to which he subsequently defected in the spring of 2004. As noted earlier, this split later contributed to LTTE's military defeat.

Strategies in Prenegotiation (1999–February 2002)

In the prenegotiation phase, the LTTE employed additional specific arguments for representing the Tamils in addition to the group's military superiority, which was still the main pretext. The Tigers' *de facto* territorial control since the early 1990s of parts of Northern and Eastern Sri Lanka made it difficult for the government to circumvent the group for negotiation purposes (Perera 2006). The LTTE interlocutor, Balasingham, was London-based but in daily contact with Prabakharan in Sri Lanka (Anonymous Interviewee 11 2009; Anonymous Interviewee 12 2009). Balasingham presented another reason: administrative structures. "You are not dealing with a political party," he said. "We have a judicial system, various structures where civilians are participating. So you have to take us seriously, that is what we say, just don't ignore us" (Rajanayagam 2006: 219; cf. Sivaram 2006). The LTTE's more immediate explanation for the 2002 cease-fire was to give the population a respite from the war (Sivaram 2006: 175–177; Anonymous Interviewee 5 2008; Anonymous Interviewee 10 2008; Anonymous Interviewee 13 2009).

The quick cease-fire negotiation was apparently a unilateral decision made by Prabakharan and his tight-knit handful of military commanders. The cease-fire, however, happened to be consistent with long-standing civilian calls to try the negotiating option, including the advocacy of Balasingham. Balasingham alone carried out the cease-fire talks by articulating Prabakharan's position. He was in close telephone contact with Prabakharan but apparently not with the other military leaders (Anonymous Interviewee 11 2009).

Both the substance of the cease-fire agreement and the process leading up to it created relatively few problems for the LTTE military leadership with regard to Tamil representativeness. On substance, the agreement officially acknowledged the LTTE's *de facto* land holdings by demarcating lines of territorial control, which helped advance the claim that the Tamil state was a matter of fact: "[h]earts and minds have to do with making a state. We have a Tamil Eelam and it works" (Anonymous Interviewee 50 2007). The non face-to-face and low-key nature of the cease-fire negotiation downplayed its risks. The Tigers made military advances before the 2002 negotiations (Lilja 2009).

In conclusion, during prenegotiation and before, the LTTE had used a predominantly coercive strategy. The LTTE's military capacity had — apart from the assumption of territorial control — resulted in violent outbidding against Tamil competitor groups and LTTE second-tier commanders who were deemed disloyal to the highest leadership. Before the 2002 cease-fire, the LTTE demonstrated unilateral control by escalating violent attacks, including some spectacular ones, and thereafter unilaterally declaring its cessation. Whereas the LTTE used persuasion by demanding to be the sole Tamil negotiator on the basis of an evolving *de facto* state, the proximate explanation for entering talks was to give the population a respite from the war. The LTTE was already a repeat negotiator on behalf of the Tamil community. No particular internal coalition building seemed necessary to start the peace talks as the willingness to commence negotiations came from the highest military leaders.

Strategies in Negotiation (February 2002–April 2003)

During negotiations, the LTTE continued to signal its coercive capacity by keeping Tiger cadres in a combat mode and by letting them carry out "graduation work" incidents (Swamy 2005; Anonymous Interviewee 5 2007, 2008). The LTTE kept on selectively killing or abducting members of rival Tamil groups between February 2002 and April 2003. Violence against Tamil civilians started about half a year into the peace processes, but this was to remobilize for war rather than to galvanize support for negotiated peace (Höglund 2005). Another coercive measure was to prevent or to limit Tamil constituents' freedom of movement out of LTTE-controlled areas (Anonymous Interviewee 50 2007; cf. Lilja 2009).

During talks, however, the LTTE tried to generate collective incentives in the form of noncoercive on-the-ground measures. The Tigers' initial negotiation position on improved economic living conditions and increased aid (Gooneratne 2007) — aside from having a confidence-building function *vis-à-vis* the government — was a way to convince LTTE combatants of the utility of talks and to generate tangible public benefits for the Tamil community.

The LTTE also offered other collective incentives in the form of service delivery to the Tamil population. For example, in LTTE-controlled areas, the

Tigers built bridges and water facilities (Anonymous Interviewee 16 2008). The Tigers offered to settle family disputes for free in a more expeditious manner than the regular courts (Anonymous Interviewee 19 2007). Tiger cadres underwent training to learn how to “act more democratically” toward the Tamil public. The LTTE developed its civil administrative structures in line with the cease-fire agreement provisions (Anonymous Interviewee 13 2009).

When it came to popular persuasion, the LTTE — apart from Balasingham’s declaration — was rather silent. Tamil media reported a visit by the LTTE negotiators to Switzerland to study federalist systems on December 11, 2002 (TamilNet 2002b). Some weeks later, however, public statements by Balasingham seemed to exclude the political option by again stressing the primacy of normalizing economic and humanitarian conditions before “core” (political) issues could be discussed (TamilNet 2002c).

A second set of noncoercive measures were internal to the LTTE. Balasingham, who had Prabakaran’s trust, communicated with the Tiger leader, who would in turn consult with his circle of military commanders (Anonymous Interviewee 12 2009; cf. Manoharan 2006). Prabakaran would make the ultimate decisions (Anonymous Interviewee 20 2009). Balasingham’s statement about exploring a federal solution caused repercussions among the military commanders (Anonymous Interviewee 5 2008; Anonymous Interviewee 6 2008; Anonymous Interviewee 12 2009). The idea of a separate Tamil Eelam state had long played a key role in war mobilization, and LTTE recruits were obliged to pledge their lives to it. Prabakaran supported Balasingham’s federalism statement when it was issued, but it is not evident that he foresaw its disruptive impact within the LTTE (Anonymous Interviewee 6 2008; Anonymous Interviewee 11 2009). The LTTE leader needed to address the motivations of military commanders and fighters who were reportedly disillusioned by the “negotiation show” (Swamy 2005; Anonymous Interviewee 15 2007; Anonymous Interviewee 54 2007; Anonymous Interviewee 5 2008 (quote); Anonymous Interviewee 10 2008).

It is unlikely that Balasingham or other members of the LTTE negotiation team could effectively persuade the LTTE’s highest military leaders, who had all been absent from the negotiation table, to maintain the compromise stand on federalism. One important reason is that LTTE civilian and military leaders did not have direct communication. Prabakaran did not find it necessary. Instead, civilian leaders would interact with the international community and the military leaders with their government counterparts. The superior command would, however, be military (Anonymous Interviewee 13 2009). Therefore, as the LTTE military leaders perceived that the political peace process did not yield the expected on-the-ground outcomes, they simply decided to revert back to a military strategy (Anonymous Interviewee 11 2009).

In sum, the LTTE used coercive measures parallel to many noncoercive methods during negotiations. The Tigers killed and abducted rival Tamil

group members and restricted Tamil civilians' freedom of movement out of LTTE-controlled areas. Importantly, though, the Tigers made significant efforts to generate and distribute collective incentives in connection with the negotiations. At the table, the LTTE demanded tangible economic deliverables from the government. Within the LTTE, the separation between the civilian and military functions, combined with the importance of the idea of a free, separate Tamil state in the military mobilization, appeared to complicate attempts by the negotiators to persuade the military wing to make political compromises.

Gerakan Aceh Merdeka and the Acehnese in Aceh

Background: Conflict, Previous War Mobilization, and Peace Attempts

The conflict, in short, has revolved around Acehnese economic and religious grievances and discontent with Indonesian central government policies. The political conflict dates back to Indonesia's independence from Dutch rule in 1949 but did not take violent form until 1982 when GAM, established in 1976 by Hasan di Tiro, launched an armed struggle against Indonesian security forces (Miller 2009).

The conflict has witnessed three sets of peace negotiations. The first negotiation took place after the lifting of the military emergency rule in August 1998. GAM, under di Tiro, represented the Acehnese in all these negotiations. The third peace process, which is under study here, formally commenced in January 2005 in Helsinki and resulted in a substantive peace treaty, the Memorandum of Understanding, the same year.

GAM's mobilization strategy during the armed conflict had been largely based on popular persuasion — underpinned by military strength. GAM had been keen to communicate the personal commitment and sacrifice of its charismatic historical leader, Hasan di Tiro, with a reported ancestry to the last ruler of Aceh. The mythology of di Tiro's semi-religious leadership was reinforced by his exile in Sweden since 1980 (di Tiro 1984; Anonymous Interviewee 21 2008; Abdullah, B. 2008 and Abdullah, Z. 2008). GAM's claims to represent the Acehnese were supported by the group's military strength. Short of territorial conquest, GAM had assumed control over the local administration through persuasion, replacements, and abductions of lower-level officials (HRW 2001).

Hence, GAM was the only Acehnese group that fought the state militarily and had an organization that covered most of Aceh. In connection with the first instance of negotiation with the government, GAM had used coercive measures against a breakaway faction, MP-GAM. Lacking di Tiro's endorsement, MP-GAM had expressed its willingness to negotiate to a third-party facilitator. As a result, one MP-GAM member was assassinated, while others were silenced and sidelined (Miller 2009; Anonymous

Interviewee 21 2008). “Old GAM” under di Tiro issued an ultimatum to the third party to either negotiate “with us or them” (Abdullah, Z. 2008). It became clear that only the di Tiro faction had the power to direct the GAM military in Aceh (Anonymous Interviewee 22 2008).

GAM had, however, also used its armed capacity to protect other Acehnese groups that had emerged by 1998 by allowing these groups greater mobility and freedom of expression. Sentral Informasi Referendum Aceh (SIRA), a popular pro-referendum student movement, was one of them, and its members sought protection from GAM during security force crackdowns in 2003 (Anonymous Interviewee 21 2008). GAM, through its exiled leadership, took opportunities to speak on behalf of the Acehnese who could not publicly voice dissenting opinions without getting arrested (Anonymous Interviewee 22 2008). At the time of the 2005 talks, GAM was a repeat negotiator (Schulze 2007).

The Prenegotiation and Negotiation Phases

The negotiation began in Helsinki in January 2005, just after the December 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami that claimed an estimated 130,000 Acehnese lives. The negotiation had, however, been preceded by an informal dialogue between GAM and the government that began in mid-2004 (Schulze 2007; cf. Kingsbury 2006; Morfit 2007). The start of prenegotiation followed a key external event: a GAM leadership meeting on strategy that took place in Stockholm with a neutral third party present (Anonymous Interviewee 22 2008). After the tsunami, GAM unilaterally declared a cease-fire (Abdullah, B. 2008; Abdullah, Z. 2008).

At the start of the formal talks, GAM called for Acehnese independence (Anonymous Interviewee 25 2008; Yusuf 2009). This was in spite of Finnish mediator Marti Ahtisaari’s opening remarks that any agreement would be “within the Indonesian constitution” (Morfit 2007: 119). The negotiation was divided into five rounds. By round three, GAM had abandoned its demand for a separate Acehnese state in favor of the concept of “self-government” (Enia 2006; Abdullah, B. 2008; Abdullah, Z. 2008.). The negotiations resulted in a peace treaty signed in August 2005.

Strategies in Prenegotiation (Mid-2004 through January 2005)

GAM’s strategy during prenegotiations was predominantly noncoercive. Forces within GAM’s exiled political wing had attempted to internally prepare for negotiations by mid-2004. The idea of a negotiated solution short of independence had been floated in internal discussions, particularly among GAM civilian leaders, although it did not receive much support (Schulze 2007; cf. Kingsbury 2006; Morfit 2007). In the fall of 2004, the government had made unsuccessful attempts to negotiate directly with GAM military leaders in Aceh who reportedly referred political decision making to the exiled leadership in Stockholm. GAM’s internal decision-making rules stipulated that individual

GAM leaders could not interact with the government without the approval of the other leaders (Husain 2007; Saman 2009).

Although GAM's representation of the Acehnese was based on its military capacity and on the opportunity afforded its exile wing to freely voice opinions that Aceh-based actors lacked, GAM used more specific persuasion to initiate the negotiations. First, the tsunami disaster was an important change-in-external-conditions event. The tsunami, moreover, enabled GAM to outmaneuver competitor groups such as SIRA, who were preoccupied with their criticism of Ahtisaari's position on federalism (Abdullah, Z. 2008; Anonymous Interviewee 29 2009; Anonymous Interviewee 32 2009; Yahyah 2009). A second argument that GAM used to persuade its constituency involved both collective incentives and coalition formation: GAM portrayed negotiations ending in a settlement as a promise of international community assistance to Aceh (Mahmud 2009).

In sum, GAM's prenegotiation strategy was predominantly noncoercive and consisted of attempts at intragroup persuasion and coalition formation. GAM relied on its relative military strength, its standing as a repeat negotiator, and on the ability of its exile leadership to voice political concerns. Intragroup persuasion and coalition-forming processes were underway in the prenegotiation phase. GAM took the political opportunity created by the tsunami and used it as an "external conditions" argument to initiate talks (Anonymous Interviewee 29 2009; Anonymous Interviewee 32 2009; Abdullah, Z. 2009; Yahyah 2009).

Strategies in Negotiation (January 2005 through August 2005)

During negotiations, GAM used such noncoercive measures as persuasion and collective incentives. Interestingly, most of the persuasion efforts were directed internally. The proposition to abandon the claim for a separate Acehnese state created tensions within GAM's military wing (Abdullah, B. 2008; Husain 2009; Anonymous Interviewee 25 2008). Military district commanders in Aceh had the capacity to spoil any deal struck in Helsinki (Yusuf 2009).

To manage internal resistance, the GAM negotiators enhanced transparency and facilitated communication with the military commanders. They continuously provided the commanders with updates on GAM negotiating positions and allowed them to provide feedback (Abdullah, B. 2008; Husain 2009; Anonymous Interviewee 25 2009). The chief negotiator, Malik Mahmud, continually sought approval from the military before making decisions (Mahmud 2009). Because GAM's intelligence chief, Irwandi Yusuf, had joined the negotiating team by the third round, telephone conferences with all district commanders could take place in real time (Husain 2009; Yusuf 2009; Anonymous Interviewee 25 2009). GAM's internal code of conduct, stipulating that negotiation decisions could only be taken in the presence of all GAM core negotiators, eased the fears of the militants in Aceh (Abdullah, Z. 2008; cf. Husain 2007).

GAM also used persuasion *vis-à-vis* Acehese civil society groups and businesses through a series of consultations in which it outlined the group's negotiation positions and elicited community members' opinions (Kingsbury 2006; Morfit 2007; Abdullah, B. 2008; Anonymous Interviewee 25 2008). For the first consultation, about fifteen participants were invited, including representatives of SIRA. A second meeting with twenty-five participants also included some GAM critics. A third session with approximately one hundred fifty participants was held shortly before the peace treaty signing (Kingsbury 2006; Anonymous Interviewee 29 2009).

GAM, however, also extended its persuasion campaign to target the broader Acehese constituency. GAM's presence in the villages throughout Aceh, together with its influence over the local government, helped to popularize the messages. GAM had a communication outreach capacity that the competitor groups lacked. Even the big mosque in Banda-Aceh was used to make announcements on negotiations (Abdullah, B. 2008; Anonymous Interviewee 25 2009).

One main message of the communication campaign revolved around the collective incentives, in the form of external assistance and international presence, that the Acehese could expect as a result of a future agreement. The benefits of the continued presence of international actors, who had previously been prevented from entering the province during the emergency but were allowed in with the tsunami, were stressed (Abdullah, Z. 2009).

In sum, during negotiations, GAM used uniquely noncoercive measures centered on "sequenced persuasion," procedural transparency, and collective incentives. The group placed a great emphasis on intragroup measures through information dissemination to, and communication with, military commanders. It attained intragroup transparency through internal rules that constrained negotiator decision making. Via staged consultations, GAM leaders extended their persuasion campaign to competitor groups and to the Acehese constituency. Collective incentives were generated both through the government in terms of political and economic concessions and from such external parties as international donors and relief organizations. Selective incentives to combatants and victims were also provided.⁴ The tsunami kept competitors occupied, which facilitated GAM's negotiation compromises but was reportedly not a decisive factor in concluding the negotiations (Anonymous Interviewee 29 2009; Husain 2009; Yahyah 2009).

Mouvement des Forces Démocratiques de la Casamance and the Casamançais in Senegal

Background: Conflict, Previous War Mobilization, and Peace Attempts

The conflict between Senegal and MFDC revolves around grievances on the part of the Casamançais pertaining to central government policies, notably

policies concerning land rights and natural-resource management (Hauge 2002; Evans 2004). The political conflict stems back to Senegal's independence in 1960. In 1982, growing discontent with the central government erupted in mass demonstrations in the Casamance region of Senegal, which had previously been a Portuguese colony, while the remainder of Senegal had been under French control.

The Senegalese government needed an instigator to hold responsible for the protests. A Catholic priest, Augustin Diamacoune, had been the first person to publicly call for Casamance independence. Diamacoune was therefore imprisoned and thus "made" into MFDC leader (Foucher 2007; Anonymous Interviewee 3 2008; Anonymous Interviewee 35 2008; Anonymous Interviewee 36 2008; Anonymous Interviewee 37 2008). The MFDC's military wing, Atika, was established in 1985 by Sidy Badji while Diamacoune was still in prison (Hall 1999; Evans 2004; Anonymous Interviewee 36 2008; Anonymous Interviewee 46 2008). The armed conflict has since then witnessed numerous negotiations. Diamacoune has been the signer of most of the agreements (Evans 2004; Foucher 2007). The negotiation studied here began in 2001 with a cease-fire treaty and resulted in a peace framework agreement in 2004 that came short of a final settlement.

The MFDC has been the only group representing the Casamançais. The complication, however, was that the MFDC can be seen as a collection of separate organizations. From the first split in its military wing in 1991, different MFDC factions have demonstrated different patterns of resource dependence while maintaining a common MFDC banner. The inability of the MFDC political wing to preserve its fundraising capacity has helped weaken the MFDC command structure (Evans 2003, 2004; Foucher 2007).

Despite this, Diamacoune's role as the main MFDC leader has never been openly challenged (cf. Evans 2004; Anonymous Interviewee 35 2008; Anonymous Interviewee 39 2008). Badji and his deputy military leader, Léopold Sagna, were, however, themselves challenged by other MFDC militants in 1991. Badji had concluded a cease-fire with the government while Diamacoune was imprisoned. On the basis of this, another militant, Salif Sadio, accused Badji of corruption and called for his replacement (Hall 1999; Evans 2004; Anonymous Interviewee 40 2008).

In April 1992, Badji escaped and formed Front Nord (FN), which adhered to the 1991 cease-fire (Anonymous Interviewee 40 2008; cf. Humphreys and ag Mohamed 2003). The remaining military faction, Front Sud (FS), under Sagna, was still at war (cf. Hall 1999). A second cease-fire was reportedly signed both by Diamacoune and Sagna in 1993, turning Sagna into Sadio's next target (cf. Hall 1999; Evans 2004; Anonymous Interviewee 41 2008). Sadio proclaimed himself as FS leader and placed Sagna under house arrest on treason and corruption charges (Anonymous Interviewee 1 2008; Anonymous Interviewee 41 2008; Anonymous Interviewee 42 2008).

Because some FS militants opposed Sadio's brutal methods, the FS split in two in 1999, and the FS-"Kassolol" faction was created. Violent military infighting followed in 2000 (Evans 2004; Anonymous Interviewee 1 2008; Anonymous Interviewee 3 2008; Anonymous Interviewee 40 2008).

Diamacoune either lacked the ability or the will to control the infighting among the MFDC militants, continuously asking them to select their own commander-in-chief whom Diamacoune would recognize (Hall 1999; Humphreys and ag Mohamed 2003; Anonymous Interviewee 1 2008; Anonymous Interviewee 3 2008; Anonymous Interviewee 37 2008; Anonymous Interviewee 40 2008; Anonymous Interviewee 41 2008; Anonymous Interviewee 43 2008). Diamacoune was placed under house arrest by the government in 1993, which limited his direct contact with the militants (Foucher 2003). Previous cease-fire negotiations had taken place directly between MFDC military faction leaders and the government in closed-door settings and without a third party. This had spurred an outbidding dynamic within the military wing in which nonnegotiating militants accused the negotiating militants of treason and corruption. This explains why Sadio, the most hard-line faction commander, stayed away from negotiations altogether — to keep himself "pure."

The Prenegotiation and Negotiation Phases

In 2000, in the context of intensified MFDC military wing struggles, newly elected Senegalese president Abdoulaye Wade invited Diamacoune to participate in cease-fire negotiations. Diamacoune's acceptance of this invitation is viewed as the key event that started the prenegotiation phase. At the time, the MFDC military wing was divided into three factions: Front Nord, Front Sud-Sadio "hardliners," and the Front Sud-Sagna/Kassolol "moderates" who were supporting Diamacoune (Foucher 2003). Wade also tried to initiate direct parallel talks with the military faction leaders (Foucher 2003; Evans 2004). It was Diamacoune, however, who came to sign the cease-fire agreement of March 2001, which he and the president followed by issuing a joint declaration in December 2001 on the opening of peace negotiations (Foucher 2003).

The peace negotiations that started in 2002 resulted in a peace process agreement in 2004. Military wing infighting continued throughout the talks. In December 2004, Diamacoune signed the treaty, which renounced armed struggle and stipulated the holding of final status negotiations. In the negotiations leading up to this, Diamacoune had called for separate Casamance statehood (Anonymous Interviewee 37 2008). On the day of signing, however, the police separated Diamacoune from his negotiation team, except for two reportedly government-friendly MFDC advisors (Anonymous Interviewee 40 2008; Anonymous Interviewee 41 2008; Anonymous Interviewee 45 2008; Anonymous Interviewee 46 2008). The MFDC militants believed that Diamacoune had been forced to sign, but

lacked opportunities to stop him, because they were under security force surveillance (Anonymous Interviewee 44 2008). Diamacoune reportedly found it difficult to refuse to sign the agreement for fear of being accused of opposing peace (Anonymous Interviewee 45 2008).

Some MFDC members have reported that, to show his defiance, Diamacoune distorted his own treaty signature (Anonymous Interviewee 46 2008). In February 2005, a meeting in Foundione was planned to decide the sequence of future talks, but none of the important MFDC military leaders were present (Anonymous Interviewee 3 2008; Anonymous Interviewee 37 2008). Shortly thereafter, the peace process stalled, and Diamacoune died in 2007.

Strategies in Prenegotiation (2001–2002)

Prenegotiation, Diamacoune used noncoercive persuasion and verbal outbidding to establish himself as the Casamance representative. Underpinning Diamacoune's claim to represent the Casamançais, both to fellow MFDC members and to constituents, was his past reputation of historical forerunner and nonmilitant "martyr" for the Casamance cause (Anonymous Interviewee 37 2008; Anonymous Interviewee 44 2008; cf. Evans 2004). In early 2001, Diamacoune first used outbidding by accusing the FN of collaborating with the government and by condemning the FS-Sadio faction for its brutal methods (Anonymous Interviewee 55 2008; cf. Foucher 2003). Diamacoune had an evident public communication advantage over the MFDC militants who lacked media access (Anonymous Interviewee 40 2008; Anonymous Interviewee 44 2008), which he used to try to convince the Casamance constituency that negotiations would give them a respite from the war (Anonymous Interviewee 47 2008).

Diamacoune's intra-MFDC communication consisted of sending messages through envoys to the military faction about both the need to negotiate and to inform them of which government representatives he was meeting (Anonymous Interviewee 36 2008; Anonymous Interviewee 43 2008; cf. Faye 2006). The latter could be seen as a way to control information to prevent possible corruption allegations. At the same time, Diamacoune never contradicted military wing allegations of having been pressured by the government into talks (Anonymous Interviewee 43 2008).

Diamacoune took the political opportunity to launch talks with the government against the backdrop of MFDC military infighting, which kept combatants preoccupied. The Diamacoune-Wade cease-fire of 2001, however, was not apparently respected by any of the militant factions. One FS militant said of the cease-fire that "the government is able to do whatever it wants to devalue its commitments on the ground . . ." (Anonymous Interviewee 42 2008). Therefore, according to an FN member, "there will always be people (militants) who do whatever they want" (Anonymous Interviewee 40 2008).

In sum, in prenegotiation, the MFDC negotiator did not manage to build any active support for the peace process among the more militant factions, but rather took advantage of the military wing infighting to initiate talks. As the latter were unable to physically stop Diamacoune, and also dependent on not weakening him for their own legitimacy's sake, he was free to begin negotiations without open protest from military leaders but also without their endorsement. While using noncoercive measures to persuade the general public of the need for peace, Diamacoune communicated poorly within his own MFDC group. He directed verbal outbidding messages against fellow MFDC military faction leaders, calling them traitors and condemning their violence while dispersing some procedural information on the talks.

Strategies during Negotiation (2002–2004)

During talks, it became obvious that Diamacoune's intra-MFDC persuasion approach differed from his public one. He reportedly sent letters to military faction commanders, encouraging them not to give up fighting (Anonymous Interviewee 37 2008; Anonymous Interviewee 41 2008; Anonymous Interviewee 42 2008). The MFDC had significant internal communication problems, which were both a cause and effect of the movement's fragmentation (Hauge 2002). Diamacoune hardly consulted with military faction leaders on the substance of the 2004 peace framework agreement (Evans 2004; Anonymous Interviewee 3 2008; Anonymous Interviewee 40 2008; Anonymous Interviewee 43 2008). He did invite the militants to join his negotiation team in July 2004, but the offer was declined because their security could not be guaranteed (Anonymous Interviewee 40 2008; Anonymous Interviewee 46 2008; cf. Evans 2004).

The military factions never managed to formulate a common negotiating position (Evans 2004). Front Nord also split, and the military wing was now divided into four factions (Foucher 2007). The MFDC negotiator continued to use abstract pro-peace rhetoric, targeting the Casmançais general public (cf. Foucher 2003). By 2003–2004, accusations of lenience by external wing MFDC members in Paris were handled by Diamacoune through verbal outbidding — branding the diaspora leaders as traitors (Anonymous Interviewee 48 2008).

The disconnect between MFDC civilian and military leaders during the negotiation is noteworthy. In particular, only Diamacoune and MFDC civilian leaders participated in the conclusion of the 2004 treaty. While Diamacoune considered that the Casamance struggle could not be carried out without the MFDC combatants, the latter viewed the negotiations as the domain of the political leaders and thus disregarded any agreements made by the “politicos” (Anonymous Interviewee 37 2008).

The MFDC negotiator tried to use selective and collective incentives during talks while still relying on public persuasion tactics. The government

boosted Diamacoune's leadership by providing deliverables such as a reduction in arrests of MFDC members and reduction of violence (Anonymous Interviewee 37 2008; Anonymous Interviewee 41 2008; Anonymous Interviewee 47 2008). To retain leadership over MFDC militants, Diamacoune and his political wing tried to acquire material resources from interveners in the peace process for distribution to the combatants (Foucher 2007). The peace process treaty itself provided for some selective incentives to the militants through stipulations on income-generating initiatives, although the provisions are rather unclear (Accord General de Paix 2004). The treaty also contained collective benefits within its economic provisions (Accord General de Paix 2004). Front Nord supported the 2004 agreement because it did not want to be excluded from the spoils of peace in the form of international assistance (Humphreys and ag Mohamed 2003; Anonymous Interviewee 40 2008; Anonymous Interviewee 49 2008), while the FS factions adopted a wait-and-see approach. Although Sadio was against the agreement, he had made enemies throughout MFDC, and he would have risked complete dissociation from it if he had denounced Diamacoune (Anonymous Interviewee 3 2008; Anonymous Interviewee 35 2008; Anonymous Interviewee 37 2008; Anonymous Interviewee 44 2008).

Comparing Level Two Strategies for Peace Talks

Rebel negotiators direct different strategies toward their ethnic community members in connection with peace talks. A first general observation drawn from data on conflicts in Sri Lanka, Aceh, and Senegal is that noncoercive methods have been used extensively. The three rebel groups had historically centered their persuasive discourses on the deep commitment of their charismatic leaders and group members. The LTTE and GAM made an "entitlement-to-represent" argument based on their long-standing risk taking and "investment in lives" for the ethnic community relative to competitor groups. The LTTE discourse on martyrs was perhaps the most salient example of this.

Another measure common to all groups had been to demand to be the sole nonstate negotiator. After the groups served this role for some time, their focus then shifted from representation to building support for actual negotiation positions.

The rebel negotiators were also political opportunists. Both GAM and the MFDC negotiated when competitors were preoccupied — GAM in the tsunami aftermath and the MFDC leader against the backdrop of military wing infighting. The key events that started the prenegotiation phase in the respective cases were set to allow for relatively long prenegotiation periods and hence for more expected coercive practices. Still, noncoercive tactics seemed to prevail in this phase.

A second overall finding is the importance of measures used within the negotiating rebel group. The GAM and LTTE cases demonstrated that the

decision to initiate negotiations needed the buy-in of the highest rebel leadership. When second-tier leaders acted as negotiation proponents contrary to the highest leader's preferences, the former were considered "internal" traitors and subjected to coercion. Also during talks, intragroup methods were significant. The internal communication was weak both in the LTTE and the MFDC. In the LTTE, the functional separation between the military and civilian wing complicated the civilian negotiators' persuasion efforts. A failure to convince the high military commanders made subsequent efforts to persuade the foot soldiers difficult. In contrast, GAM negotiators used widespread persuasion within their own organization. The measures used by the rebel negotiators in each phase are captured in the matrix in Table One below.

Strategies in Prenegotiation and Negotiation: Propositions versus Reality

Whereas coercion was used prenegotiation, particularly by the LTTE, it did not seem to dominate this phase. Noncoercive persuasion and political opportunism marked the approach of GAM and the MFDC in prenegotiation. Military capacity and a reputation for militancy, however, were still underpinning LTTE and GAM claims for representation. The LTTE conformed most closely with the proposed coercive strategy. Although the LTTE's unilateral demonstrations of force through escalations and de-escalations of violence — including a spectacular airport attack half a year before talks commenced — were directly aimed at government targets, they had the Tamil constituency as an important audience. GAM was the only Acehnese group with a military capacity, and it had used coercion against second-tier GAM leaders in connection with previous negotiations.

During negotiations, the approach was predominantly noncoercive, centered on persuasion and collective incentives in line with the proposition. For the LTTE, noncoercive measures dominated as they tried to produce and distribute collective material incentives connected to talks and sought to enhance the economic opportunities that the peace process made possible. For example, eased mobility restrictions facilitated external aid initiatives in LTTE areas. (Tamil residents, however, found their mobility restricted.) Also for the LTTE, intragroup factors gained salience during talks. The Tiger leadership needed to deal with the motivation of military commanders and fighters, which may have undergirded the push for tangible deliverables. The LTTE negotiator's declared openness to discuss political alternatives short of a separate state, however, sparked off repercussions within the military wing, which reportedly induced the LTTE's walkout of the peace process.

The MFDC negotiator employed popular persuasion rhetoric during negotiations and tried to use the peace process to generate selective

Table One
Level Two Tactics

	LTTE	GAM	MFDC
Prenegotiation	<p>Coercion Violence: Signal commitment to constituents through spectacular terrorist attacks, and through unilateral escalation and de-escalation of violence.</p> <p>Noncoercion Persuasion: Give the population a respite from the war; take control of territory and administrative structures.</p>	<p>Noncoercion Persuasion: Change in external conditions (tsunami catastrophe). Persuasion/Collective Incentives: Promise of future international assistance. Coalition Formation: Create political and military alliances through meetings; develop an internal code of conduct. Other/Political Opportunism: Start negotiations when rivals are preoccupied.</p> <p>Noncoercion Persuasion: Stress the benefits of a future political-economic settlement short of independence. Collective Incentives: Generate political and economic rights from the government; generate external assistance and international presence linked to the peace process. Coalition Formation: Sequence persuasion and buy-in from military commanders, to competitors, and last to constituents; enhance transparency through information management; allow military commanders to influence positions. Other: Abide by decision rules.</p>	<p>Noncoercion Persuasion: Give the population a respite from the war; condemn and verbally outbid MFDC military faction leaders; unilaterally disperse information to MFDC military factions. Other/Political Opportunism: Start negotiations when rivals are preoccupied.</p> <p>Noncoercion Persuasion: Stress the general need for peace and development; verbally outbid and condemn external MFDC members. Selective Incentives: Generate material resources from the peace process to reestablish control over MFDC militants.</p>
Negotiation	<p>Coercion Violence: Kill rival Tamil group members. Passive Coercion: Abduct rival Tamil group members; restrict constituent mobility.</p> <p>Noncoercion Persuasion: Stress the need for (economic) normalcy. Collective Incentives: Generate economic and political concessions from the government; generate external assistance from the international community; improve service delivery in Eelam areas (e.g., reconstruction, sanitation, dispute settlement, and democratization training of LTTE cadres).</p>		

LTTE, Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam; GAM, Gerakan Aceh Merdeka; MFDC, Mouvement des Forces Démocratiques de la Casamance.

incentives — in part to regain control over the MFDC militants. The negotiator was communicating poorly internally, however, and reports conflict on whether or not he encouraged the MFDC militants not to give up the armed struggle. The militants did not openly denounce the negotiator but dissociated themselves from the talks.

GAM used a uniquely noncoercive approach during talks and distinguished itself from the other rebel groups through more targeted and sequenced persuasion. GAM started its convincing campaign internally by targeting military leaders and then extended it to competitors and community members. The GAM negotiator pushed his government counterpart both for collective and selective incentives. The former addressed political rights along with the distribution of natural resource revenues. Selective incentives pertained to combatant and victim compensation. In addition, GAM used a set of intragroup decision-making rules during the negotiations, for example, by only allowing decisions to be made in the presence of all negotiators and in consultation with GAM military leaders.

The more fine-grained picture of level two measures that emerges from the case comparisons provokes the question of who needs to be convinced to actively or passively support peace negotiations. GAM's extensive use of intragroup persuasion interestingly lends theoretical support to Mark Lichbach's "5 percent rule." The rule stipulates that rebels — to wage war — need the active support from a "5 percent" core of fully committed people but the passive support of the "95 percent population" at large (Lichbach 1995).

In other words, the measures that GAM negotiators targeted to the core of the most active and committed participants, notably key military commanders, may have contributed to the group's success in getting to a final status treaty. The same actors who needed to be mobilized to sustain the war also needed to be persuaded to support a negotiated end to it. To attain effective and targeted intragroup persuasion and support building, the presence of a communication infrastructure within GAM seemed crucial. The LTTE and MFDC, in contrast, had intraorganizational communication problems partly due to the physical isolation of their highest leaders and to the strong separation between the civilian and military wings.

Rebels' inability to resolve intragroup discrepancies through effective communication and coalition building in connection with peace talks can be witnessed in other cases. For instance, in the negotiations involving the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) in the Philippines in the late 1980s, the MNLF leadership decided to accept a deal with the government, but a breakaway faction, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), chose not to adhere to the cease-fire (cf. Wright-Neville 2004). Although the exact extent to which MNLF leaders tried to persuade the MILF activists is unclear,

communication attempts may have been hampered by the geographic separation between the MNLF and MILF leaderships.

Conclusion

The preceding analysis highlighted two main findings. The first is the vast repertoire of noncoercive methods and their frequent use by rebel groups seeking to persuade their ethnic constituencies to support peace negotiations. Coercion is used in prenegotiation but does not seem to dominate this phase. During negotiations, noncoercive tactics of persuasion and the use of collective and selective incentives tend to dominate, as predicted. The second finding is the importance of extensive measures to win support within the negotiating rebel group. Successful rebel negotiators appear to “mobilize in reverse” by initially targeting the core of military leaders within their own group for persuasion and thereafter competitors and the constituency at large.

These findings have important implications for the understanding of “internal ripeness” and prenegotiation. The ripeness concept, as originally formulated by I. William Zartman (1985), focuses on the perception of the adversary parties of a mutually hurting stalemate that induces them to move from an armed strategy to negotiated peace.⁵ Ripeness theory has, however, generally neglected the influence of intraparty factors on this change of strategy (Kleiboer 1994; Mitchell 1995; Schiff 2008).

Stephen J. Stedman has argued that because “parties” are not unitary actors, perceptions of a mutually hurting stalemate are a matter of internal bargaining (Stedman 1991; Kleiboer 1994). Previous research has pointed to the need for leadership consolidation and the framing of de-escalation messages (Aggestam 2005). Stedman’s pioneering study of the negotiations in Zimbabwe revealed that ripeness does not need to be perceived by everyone, but leaders, and particularly military leaders, do need to support a peace process. Observable indicators of ripeness may thus be inferred from changes in leadership, according to Stedman (1991). By extending Stedman’s single-case study approach to a systematic cross-case comparison, this study underscores that internal ripening is about the persuasion efforts that rebel negotiators direct toward other leaders — and specifically toward military leaders within their own group.

The findings here, however, challenge Stedman’s argument that internal ripeness is mainly observable through changes in leadership, that is, by *who* negotiates. Instead, internal ripeness may be observable through *what* existing leaders do to promote negotiation. The findings hence systematize and deepen the understanding of the intraparty dimensions of prenegotiation as rebel leaders attempt to bolster legitimacy to act as valid spokespersons, build coalitions, and harness support. As the cases indicate, there is nothing automatic about this process, which goes on both in prenegotiation and during talks. Moreover, the study points to the relevance of *how*

rebel negotiators make their co-ethnics actively or passively support a peace negotiation and against *whom* measures are directed. The sequence appears to be important — going from the inner core of military and civilian rebel leaders to the ethnic constituency at large. In short, the study shows how intraparty change may come about through deliberate measures undertaken by rebel negotiators’ to “ripen” the ethnic minority camp.

The rich repertoire of noncoercive measures puts into question the notion that violence would be rebels’ principal tool once war has broken out. Although violence may serve to signal ethnic commitment, nonviolent measures may constitute functional equivalents. Negotiation implies close interaction with the government “enemy,” which brings to the fore the authenticity and ethnic commitment of the rebel negotiator. The rebel negotiator tries to convince ethnic community members that she will act in their best interest to negotiate compromises on their behalf (cf. Sztompka 1999). Whereas LTTE nurtured a suicide martyr cult, signals of ethnic commitment took largely nonviolent forms for MFDC and GAM. The latter findings are in line with work in sociology pointing to signaling through various kinds of performance, reputation, or mere appearance (cf. Sztompka 1999).

Future research should more rigorously test the possible causality between the type of level two strategy and negotiation outcomes, and between the strategy and the durability of peace agreements. The findings have various policy implications. Third-party assistance and support to the communication and outreach capacity of rebel negotiators may be useful. The relevance of procedural transparency and information control was highlighted in the MFDC case in which treason and corruption allegations were aggravated in the absence of a third party. Moreover, unofficial mediators may be instrumental in the process of reorienting perceptions within a rebel group (Zartman and Touval 2007). Third parties may thus be able to assist the process of internal ripening, equipped with a stark awareness of its intricacies.

NOTES

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1. The distinction between coercive and noncoercive approaches to collective action is not confined to the study of ethnic conflict but is found throughout the social sciences (cf. Olson 1965).

2. On selective incentives, see Olson (1965) and Lichbach (1995); on collective incentives, see Wickham-Crowley (1991) and Wood (2003).

3. The main criteria for case selection were: the negotiations had political substance and that the rebel group participated directly. Although the Casamançais do not count as an “ethnic community,” they still count as an ethno-political group in that they are regionally concentrated,

they have a history of organized political autonomy, and they perceive themselves as culturally distinct from the people of the north (Gurr 2000).

4. The MoU (2005) stipulated economic facilitation to ex-combatants and pardoned political prisoners.

5. A ripe moment is when parties are locked into a mutual, hurting stalemate marked by a recent or impending catastrophe, when unilateral solutions are blocked and joint solutions become conceivable, or when the “ups” and “downs” start to shift their relative power positions (Zartman 1989).

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