



How are wars fought? Recruitment

POL 126

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Spring 2022

TODAY

Rebel quality

Recruitment and resources

Social cohesion and sexual violence

Recruitment

From Tuesday...

We know that in **irregular wars** combatants depend heavily on civilian population

This has implications for **recruitment** – need careful, disciplined people who will behave with constraint in difficult situations

Who is in the group → how you fight (and treat civilians)

Rebel recruitment

Key problem for rebels:
how to attract **quality** recruits?

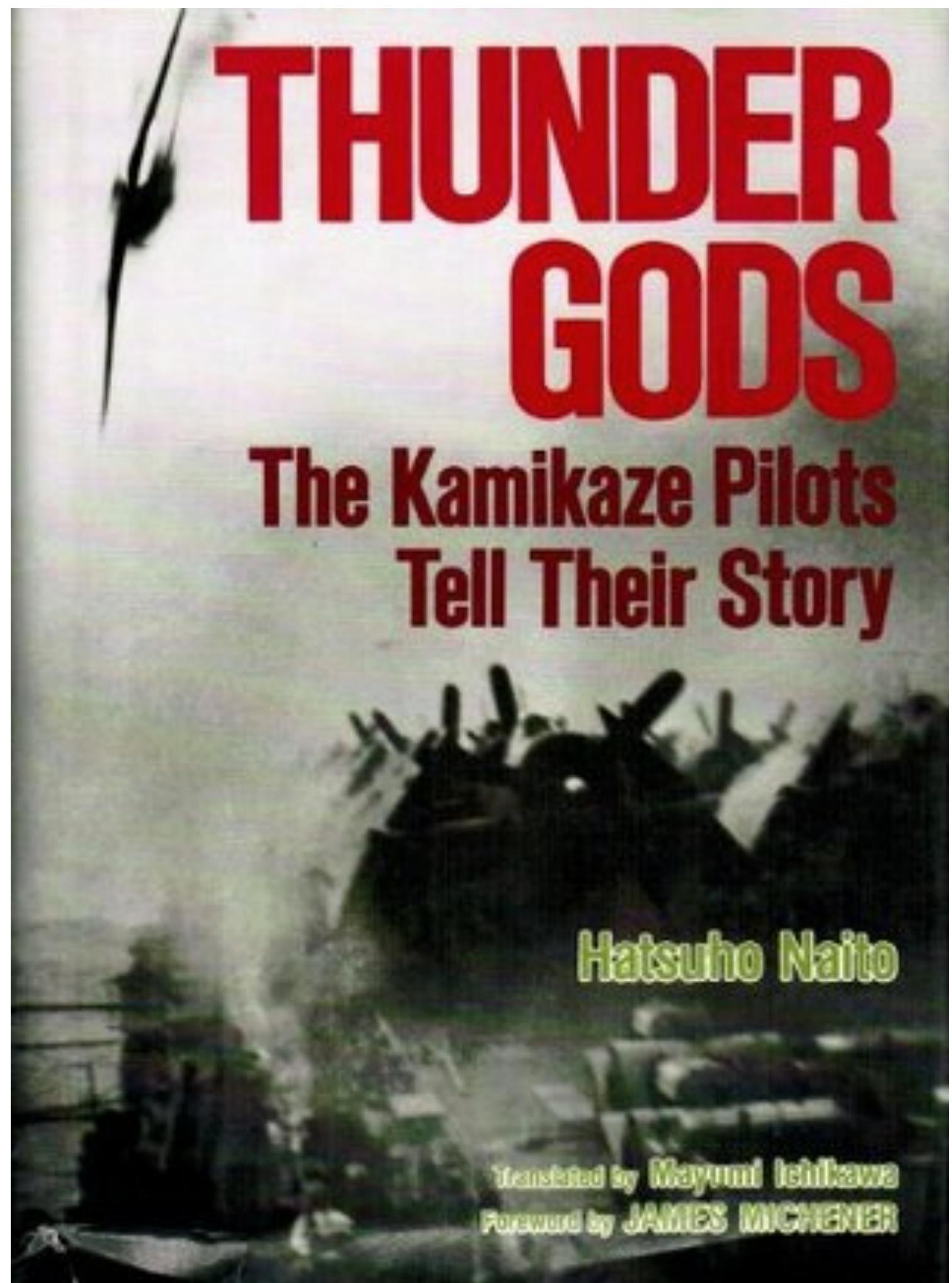
Like any org – identifying
quality is **hard**

Our biggest problem is the hordes of young men who beat on our doors, clamoring to be sent. It is difficult to select only a few. Those whom we turn away return again and again, pestering us, pleading to be accepted.

—A senior member of Hamas as reported by Hassan (2001)

Eager beavers

But nothing in memory quite compares to the hundreds of young Japanese pilots who volunteered to take one-way flights against American battleships in the waning months of World War II. The Japanese literally turned themselves into human torpedoes, poised behind 2,500-pound bombs with gunpowder-fired rockets, ready to blow their lives away on divine winds (the meaning of kamikaze in Japanese.) The pilots who rode them were called "thunder gods." Volunteers were classified as Compliant, Eager, Very Eager and - those who signed their names in blood - Earnest. The Earnest were given the privilege of dying first.



Rebels care about quality

Table 3.4. *Education of Captured Sendero Luminoso Rebels, 1983–1986*

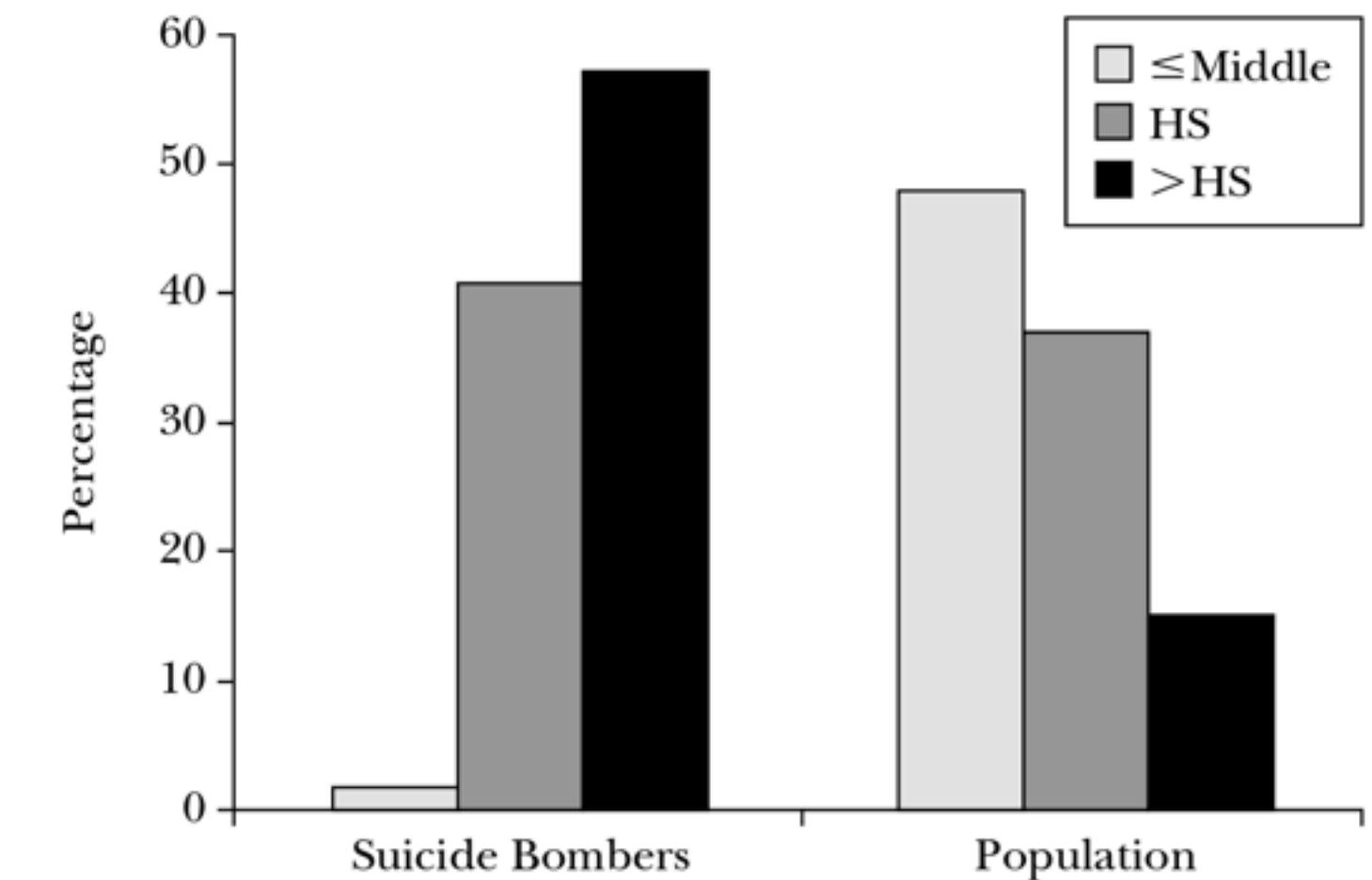
Level of Education	Captured Rebels, %	Criminals, % ^a
No formal education	1.1	0.0
Some primary	16.4	23.4
Some secondary	16.9	46.3
Complete secondary	26.8	24.4
Advanced education (nonuniversity)	1.1	0.0
Some university	29.5	2.5
University degree	1.1	0.0
Postgraduate degree	4.9	0.0
No information	2.2	3.4
TOTAL NO.	183	205

Note: ^aThese criminals were incarcerated for assault or for robbery.

Source: Dennis Chávez de Paz, *Juventud y terrorismo: Características sociales de los condenados por terrorismo y otros delitos* (Lima: Instituto de Estudios Peruanos, 1989).

Figure 2

Comparison of Educational Distribution for Palestinian Suicide Bombers and Palestinian Population of Comparable Age



Terrorist operatives tend to be “higher status” than general population – sorting for quality

A signaling game

How to identify quality recruits?

Problem: quality is not **directly** observable

Alternative: look for characteristics
correlated with quality (commitment, ideology, etc.)

Problem: these can be **faked** –
by pretenders (or spies!)

Who to trust?

This [recruitment] method relies on conventional techniques, based on presenting the cause to someone you trust. However, before we start, who are the special people to whom we present the cause? In other words, what are the characteristics that make us trust some people, and not others?

From ‘Method of recruiting elements for a cell’, posted by ‘Taha’ on the online jihadi discussion forum *al-Muhajirun*, 3 March 2006.¹

Screening

Some groups spend considerable effort **screening** candidates

1. Identifying the candidate.
2. Initiating contact (if contact didn't exist already).
3. Building rapport and friendship.
4. Advancing friendship and trust, introducing ideological indoctrination, and playing to emotions.
5. Isolating the recruit and advancing indoctrination to networking with other terrorists and associations.
6. Reinforcing the assumption of a new identity.
7. Introducing the recruit to simple terrorist activities such as demonstrations and social media posts.
8. Assigning candidates to different parts of the terrorist organization.

From an Al Qaeda recruitment manual

Slow, risky process

Al-Qaeda calls this stage “The Awakening of Iman” and advises its recruiters not to

“show the candidate any jihadi videos, audios, etc. except when his Iman (faith) is at a high level, and when he is in a state of tranquility in order to have the best effect on him and on his heart. And don't let him listen to anything (i.e. videos or audios) when he is bothered or sad because it will be of no benefit for him.”³⁸

Think: all this – for one person! Who might get killed, or quit

Recruitment process



Costly induction

Groups also screen for quality by asking recruits to commit crimes, “burn bridges”

Inside MS-13's secret initiation rituals and internal feuds

Court records shed light on the inner-workings of the violent street gang along the East Coast.



Members of the MS-13 gang are detained near the crime scene where two men, Jose Wilfredo Navidad and Nestor Alexander Rivera, were killed as they rode a motorcycle on their way to work, in San Salvador, El Salvador January 26, 2016.

—Reuters/Jose Cabezas

Recruitment strategies

These strategies are (more or less) within a group's control — and groups vary in how effective they are doing them

But what about the things groups have less control over?

Weinstein on endowments

Some groups have no access to resources early on
(e.g., Shining Path)

Others have lots of resources early on
(e.g., groups in the Central African Republic)

How do these differences in environments
shape how groups recruit?
And how does recruitment → behavior?

(Two) shining paths



Coca in Alto Huallaga

Table 3.7. *Labor Returns in Alto Huallaga, 1992*

Region of Origin	Principal Activity	Annual Returns, \$US
Highlands	Coca production (avg. 2 hectares)	2,000
	Agricultural worker, coca farm	1,500
	Cocaine production	5,400
	Teacher	1,200
Coast	Agricultural worker, coca farm	1,500
	Government employee (professional)	2,400
	Government employee (nonprofessional)	1,600
	Short-term laborer	2,000
Jungle	Coca production (avg. 1 hectare)	1,000
	Production of food crops	700
	Teacher	1,200
	Agricultural worker, coca farm	1,200
	Small-scale business owner	900

Source: Information gathered from local researcher in Tingo María, November 13, 2001. Data reported in Fundación para el Desarrollo Nacional, *Plan de ejecución del proyecto de desarrollo rural integral del Alto Huallaga* (Lima: Fundación para el Desarrollo Nacional, May 1981).

Alto Huallaga

UNCLASSIFIED

[REDACTED]
n/a

Case Number: S200200010

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THE SCENE OF THE HUANUCO JUNGLE MASSACRE IN THE HUALLAGA VALLEY GAVE A MOVING ACCOUNT OF THE DEATH AND DESTRUCTION CAUSED BY A MAJOR ARMY OPERATION AGAINST SENDERO LUMINOSO'S STRONGEST MILITARY COLUMNS. THE JOURNALIST AND SEVERAL OTHER COLLEAGUES, THE ONLY OUTSIDE GROUP TO HAVE PENETRATED INTO THE CONTESTED AREAS TO DATE, WERE CAREFUL TO STATE THAT THEY ONLY SAW SEVEN BODIES AND TWO GRAVES. WHILE THE CASUALTY TOLL MAY BE SIGNIFICANTLY HIGHER, THEY ARE CONCERNED THAT UNFOUNDED REPORTS OF "HUNDREDS OF DEAD" MAY DAMAGE THE CREDIBILITY OF CHARGES AGAINST THE ARMY AND MINIMIZE THE IMPACT OF THE INCIDENT. STILL, THE JOURNALIST COLLECTED AUDIO AND VIDEO EVIDENCE FROM AN ARMY OFFICER OF INDISCRIMINATE MILITARY ACTION THAT KILLED WOMEN, CHILDREN AND AGED PERSONS, AS TROOPS BURNED VILLAGES AND USED HELICOPTERS WITH ROCKETS AND MACHINE GUNS IN WHAT MAY BE AN ONGOING ARMY OPERATION.
END SUMMARY.

Some of the worst civilian abuses took place in Alto Huallaga

The opportunists

But why would opportunists *necessarily* be more abusive though?

A vicious cycle

Abusive groups may get caught in bad feedback loops

Act of indiscipline → No repercussions → Reputation for brutality



Who wants to join group

Social cohesion and sexual violence

Wartime sexual violence

A caveat on the writing in Cohen

Why do some groups rely on sexual violence but not others?

Assumption in literature that sexual violence serves no strategic purpose but alienates civilians (a kind of “error”)

Social cohesion

How does Cohen connect **social cohesion** to wartime sexual violence?

Cohesion

Low cohesion

Opportunists,
anyone joins,
coercive (abduction)

No training, no ideology

RUF in Sierra Leone,
militants in Bosnia

High cohesion

Dedicated,
select recruits

Training, ideology

FARC, Shining Path

Shining path cohesion



NORMS OF BEHAVIOR FOR A SENDERO LUMINOSO COMMANDER

- (1) Know your function.
- (2) Know yourself and work to improve yourself.
- (3) Know your men and look after their well-being.
- (4) Keep your men well-informed.
- (5) Act as an example to your men.
- (6) Ensure that the orders are understood, controlled, and followed.
- (7) Train your men as a team.
- (8) Take decisions correctly and in a timely manner.
- (9) Act with initiative and develop a sense of responsibility among your subordinates.
- (10) Employ their unity and agreement to achieve all that is possible.
- (11) Assume the responsibility for their actions.

The problem with low cohesion

Strong association between groups who rely on **abduction** and sexual violence

“Hence, armed groups face a central challenge: how to create a coherent force out of a group of frightened strangers who feel no loyalty toward the group of which they are now a member.”

Sexual violence “helps” groups create cohesion

Costly induction

Asking recruits to commit
heinous crimes may
also build **cohesion**

Sense of “in-group”

Shared “risk”

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—Reuters/Jose Cabezas

Recap

Armed groups face trade-off between fighting and not alienating civilians (likely depends on goal!)

Who armed groups recruit has implications for their treatment of civilians

Groups flooded by opportunists, or who have low cohesion → abusive

How much control do groups really have over this though?