

Abstract Submitted
for the MAR10 Meeting of
The American Physical Society

Modeling Insurgent Network Structure and Dynamics¹ MICHAEL GABBAY, ASHLEY THIRKILL-MACKELPRANG, University of Washington — We present a methodology for mapping insurgent network structure based on their public rhetoric. Indicators of cooperative links between insurgent groups at both the leadership and rank-and-file levels are used, such as joint policy statements or joint operations claims. In addition, a targeting policy measure is constructed on the basis of insurgent targeting claims. Network diagrams which integrate these measures of insurgent cooperation and ideology are generated for different periods of the Iraqi and Afghan insurgencies. The network diagrams exhibit meaningful changes which track the evolution of the strategic environment faced by insurgent groups. Correlations between targeting policy and network structure indicate that insurgent targeting claims are aimed at establishing a group identity among the spectrum of rank-and-file insurgency supporters. A dynamical systems model of insurgent alliance formation and factionalism is presented which evolves the relationship between insurgent group dyads as a function of their ideological differences and their current relationships. The ability of the model to qualitatively and quantitatively capture insurgent network dynamics observed in the data is discussed.

¹This work has been supported by the Office of Naval Research.

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Date submitted: 20 Nov 2009

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