

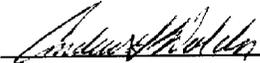
DYNAMICS OF THE CHINESE CULTURAL REVOLUTION
IN THE COUNTRYSIDE: SHAANXI, 1966-1971

A DISSERTATION
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DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Shinichi Tanigawa
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I certify that I have read this dissertation and that, in my opinion, it is fully adequate in scope and quality as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.



Andrew G. Walder, Principal Adviser

I certify that I have read this dissertation and that, in my opinion, it is fully adequate in scope and quality as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.



Doug McAdam

I certify that I have read this dissertation and that, in my opinion, it is fully adequate in scope and quality as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.



Mark Granovetter

Approved for the University Committee on Graduate Studies.

Abstract

This study examines variations in the rural political violence during the Cultural Revolution, with new data taken from county annals (*xianzhi*). Using 93 counties of China's northwestern Shaanxi Province as cases, this study identifies four broad sets of processes and mechanisms involved in the escalation of Cultural Revolution conflict between 1966 and 1971: the diffusion through the "brokerage" of traveling Red Guards, the polarization through power struggle and "security dilemma," the escalation of factional armed battles caused by inconsistent military interventions, and the escalation of repressive violence under partial local governments.

Despite the lingering doubt about the rural reaches of the Cultural Revolution, insurgencies against local (county) governments spread to the vast majority of rural Shaanxi counties by the end of 1966. Moreover, most insurgencies were spread by traveling Red Guards, who purposefully "ignited" (*dianhuo*) insurgency from suburban to remote counties. Victimized students, teachers, and rural officials began to organize themselves against local authority in response to repressive campaigns in the early phase of the Cultural Revolution, rather than on the basis of their positions in the status quo ante. In late 1966, they gradually became united in their demand for rehabilitation (*pingfan*). The "January power seizure" of 1967 changed the momentum and direction of the factional conflict. From then on, the paralysis of local government led to the struggle for power and security, setting in motion the processes of factional polarization. The escalation of factional armed battles after the summer of 1967 was primarily caused by inconsistent interventions by local military units. The policy of the military's "support the left" (*zhizuo*) and the subsequent campaign against "a handful within the military" resulted in the military's embroilment in the polarizing conflict. In those counties where military units intervened coordinately on behalf of local "radical factions," the close relationship between a local military force and a faction resulted in a one-faction dominated government. Severe cases of repressive violence under "revolutionary committees" took place more often under partial local governments.

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Chapter 1 Toward a Dynamic Analysis of the Chinese Cultural Revolution

In the summer of 1967, rural counties of Shaanxi Province were experiencing yet another, but perhaps the most crucial, turning point in the torturous course of the Cultural Revolution. Most of those counties had already gone through insurgencies against the local governments, which culminated in the “January power seizure.” In the first half of 1967, as they competed to fill the political vacuum left by the power seizure, factional organizations became increasingly polarized at the county level. At the same time, the People’s Liberation Army’s (PLA) “Support the Left”¹ (*zhi zuo*) became a hotly contested issue, as factions competed for the support of local units. At this juncture, the “Wuhan Incident” of July 20 and the subsequent campaign to “drag out a handful in the military” (*jiu junnei yixiaocuo*) ruined the legitimacy of the military, the last bastion of the state power structure. Keeping pace with the situation, Jiang Qing introduced a slogan, “Attack with Reason, Defend with Force” (*wen gong wu wei*),² to incite violent conflict among factional organizations. As the whole nation was thrown into a year of civil-war-like armed battle (*wudou*), however, the rapid political changes played out differently across the counties of Shaanxi, leading to varying levels of political violence.

At this critical juncture, decisions by local military units had a decisive impact on the courses of factional conflict in rural counties. In the face of the attempt by Lin Biao and the Central Cultural Revolution Small Group (CRSG) to divide the

¹ See the Center’s “Decision to Provide the Revolutionary Masses of the Left with Firm Support from the PLA,” issued on January 23, 1967 (the Chinese Cultural Revolution Database, hereafter CCRD 2002).

² Jiang Qing made the remark on July 22 when she met a delegate from Henan Province. The slogan was carried in *Wenhui bao*, a Shanghai newspaper, next day.

military, decisions by local military units varied. The following is a brief description of how things unfolded in three geographically diverse counties before and after the summer of 1967. In the suburban county of Sanyuan, military division escalated factional violence; in the southern district center of Ankang, the inconsistent attitude of the local military authorities fueled factional armed battle; and in the northernmost county of Fugu, an intervention coordinated with neighboring units checked the escalation of factional violence.

In Sanyuan County, less than 40 kilometers north of Xi'an, the factional confrontation is reported to have escalated into armed battle after Jiang Qing's bellicose remark in late July. The county's armed battles turned particularly violent, because a rebel organization, the "Red Colum" (*hong zong*), of a military academy³ sided with a different faction from the one supported by the county People's Armed Department (*renmin wuzhuang bu*, hereafter PAD) and participated in the factional conflict with military equipments.⁴ After a few skirmishes between the two major factions—the "Allied Headquarters" (*lian zhi*) supported by the "Red Column" and the "General Headquarters" (*zong zhi*) backed by the PAD—in late July-mid August

³ It was the military academy attached to "Air Force 030" stationed in the county.

⁴ In the county, a power seizure by insurgent students, workers and peasants in late January 1967 led to a counter-mobilization of officials, workers and "poor and lower-middle peasants" (*pin xiazhong nong*). In mid April, the latter rallied other workplace organizations to form the "General Headquarters," with which the county People's Armed Department sided closely. In early May, however, the "Red Column" of the military academy expressed its support to the opposing organizations of students, workers and peasants, which later coalesced into the "Allied Headquarters," thus creating a "serious situation in which both opposing factions associated with different armed units." The "conservatives" berated, "the military academy does not have the duty of supporting the left, and [the cadets] are just college students wearing military uniform." The "radicals" responded by saying, "the county PAD is local officials wearing military uniforms" (Sanyuan XZ 2000: 727).

1967, the first bullet was fired by a cadet of the military academy. On August 19, the "Red Column" of the military academy drove up in an armored motorcar to a flour mill, where a quarrel broke out between cadets and mill workers. After much fussing, a cadet shot and injured a worker. On August 27, hundreds of students and others of the "Allied Headquarters," who had been hiding in the barracks of Air Force 030 after an earlier armed battle, requested a leader of the "Red Column" to issue weapons to them. 400 cadets of the "Red Column" went out of the barracks in 11 armed vehicles carrying guns and live cartridges under the pretext of escorting the members of the "Allied Headquarters" to the county town, and surrounded the county party committee, the people's committee, the residence of county officials, and the county broadcasting station. As forcing their way into the gate of the people's committee, they first fired at officials standing on their way, and then mowed down people at random. 11 people were killed, many others injured, and those alive were taken to the barracks of Air Force 030. The county's armed battles, which involved all kinds of weapons from guns and hand grenades to artilleries and landmines, killed a total of 121 people, and was stopped only by an outside PLA unit in summer 1968 (Sanyuan County Annals, hereafter listed as XZ, 2000: 725-732).

In Ankang County, about 170 kilometers south of Xi'an and separated by the 3,000 meter high Qinling Mountains, the factional conflict also intensified in late July in the wake of the "Wuhan Incident" and Jiang Qing's remark. The Ankang Military Branch District (*jun fen qu*) and the Ankang County People's Armed Department had been unable to decide which faction to support. Informed about the "Wuhan Incident" by "rebel factions" from Wuhan and other cities visiting Ankang to "exchange experiences" (*jingyan jiaoliu*), local factions put pressure on the military

by staging sit-in. On August 20, the first major armed battle broke out, leaving more than 200 people injured. After the incident, the "Six General Headquarters" (*liu zong si*) took control of both new and old county towns, while the "Red No.3 Headquarters" (*hong san si*) retreated to the rural area and created a situation in which "villages encircling cities" (*nongcun baowei chengshi*). On August 23, the both factions began to use guns, which led to a dramatic increase in the numbers of casualties on both sides. On September 5, personnel of the "Six General Headquarters" in 4 trucks robbed the county PAD of 486 rifles, 17 automatic rifles, 55 light machine guns, 14 artillery guns and 42 rounds of shells, and 104,779 rounds of various ammunitions. On the same day, they also snatched 30 pistols from the Ankang Public Security Bureau. Meanwhile, the rival "Red No.3 Headquarters" sent parties to rob weapons from district and commune militia. In the following few months, repeated attempts by the military branch district to mediate between the factions and collect stolen weapons failed due to lack of sincerity on both sides. The both factions continued to build up offensive power and fought internecine armed battles for almost a year. Even the sending of a regular PLA unit (the 282nd unit) by the Center and mediation efforts of Zhou Enlai himself later did not stop the armed battle in Ankang. By the time they were forcibly stopped by another PLA unit (the 8163rd unit) in summer 1968, the county's armed battles killed a total of 478 people (Ankang XZ 1989: 897, 901-906).

A very different situation emerged in the northernmost county of Fugu bordering with both Inner Mongolia and Shanxi Province. In most counties of Yulin District including Fugu, the county PADs expressed their supports (*biaotai*) to local "radical factions" one after another from late August to mid September after the cozy

relationship between the PAD of Mizhi County, another county of Yulin District, and a local “radical faction” (the “101”) was nationally publicized as a model “military support the left.” Like other units of Yulin District, the Fugu PAD bowed to a local faction associated with the “101,” the “Headquarters” (*zhihuibu*). After the announcement of support to its opponent in mid September, the rival “East is Red” (*dongfan hong*) began to crumble. On October 8, on the pretext that one of the members was beaten by the “Headquarters,” many members of the “East is Red” fled out of the county. By the end of the year, the “East is Red” was dismantled, and the county was ruled by the “Headquarters” alone. In the county, no armed battle or casualties from it were reported⁵ (Fugu XZ 1994: 581-585). Thus, a coordinated military intervention checked the escalation of factional fighting in Fugu.

This study is about variations in the rural political violence during the Cultural Revolution. How did the political turmoil started in a few major cities spread to the remotest parts of the country? How did various rebel organizations become polarized in most of the counties? How and why did the factional conflict escalated into bloody armed battles in some counties and not in the others? And how and why did the political repression under the new local government escalated into mass killings and suicides in some counties and not in the others? In short, this study is about why those different forms of political violence escalated in some counties and not in the others.

As the discussion above suggest, those questions requires highly contextualized

⁵ However, in Fugu, the one-faction domination led to the formation of a partial revolutionary committee (*geming weiyuanhui*) in early March 1968, under which a total of 106 people were killed or killed themselves (see Chapter 5 for details).

and relational approaches to come to grip with. Otherwise, we risk missing crucial interactions and environmental changes in which actors were situated. What analytical tools can we bring to bear on explaining those variations? In this introductory essay, I first identify strengths and gaps in the field of Cultural Revolution studies, and then examine the literatures of the state, revolutions and contentious politics, in search for useful ideas and theoretical frameworks.

SOCIETY-CENTERED EXPLANATIONS

Studies on the Cultural Revolution had been dominated by “social explanations” until relatively recently. As a recent stocktaking article by leading scholars points out, the birth of the field itself marked a breakaway from earlier studies focused on the organizational structure and ideology of the Communist state (Esherick et al. 2006: Introduction). For the younger generation of China scholars, the upheaval of the Cultural Revolution presented an unprecedented opportunity to glimpse at divisions and conflict in the Chinese society on a scale unimaginable to the previous generation. In addition to this newfound information, available theoretical framework also contributed to the rise of social structural explanations of Cultural Revolution conflict. The pluralist image of society (Dahl 1961, 1967; Almond and Powell 1966; Lipset 1960), still current in the field of political sociology in the 1970s and the early 1980s, provided the “second generation” of China scholars a theoretical background in which early social structural explanations were developed.

Early studies on the Cultural Revolution appeared in the late 1970s and early 1980s tended to emphasize the importance of social cleavages, based on class background, the occupational hierarchy and others, in accounting for the origins of

the factional conflict. Hong Yung Lee (1978) set the tone by linking factional memberships with divisions between those benefited from the Communist regime and those disadvantaged under its rule. Radical leaders united themselves with those marginalized in their efforts to challenge the status quo, while the Party organization mobilized those benefited under the Communist rule to defend the status quo. Chan, Rosen, and Unger (1980), on the other hand, argued that high school students in Guangzhou were divided between elite student groups—students from revolutionary cadre backgrounds and those from “middle-class” backgrounds—over the competition for scarce educational opportunities (See also Rosen 1982; Unger 1982). Despite the difference, however, they both argued that preexisting social divisions provided bases for mobilization. For the former, the Cultural Revolution provided those disadvantaged an opportunity to challenge the status quo and pursue their interests, while for the latter, it brought out the latent tension between those highly aspiring groups of students.

Another form of social structural explanation was provided by Andrew Walder (1996) who emphasized the importance of Party networks in the factories. Walder argued that factional conflicts in urban factories during the Cultural Revolution were shaped by divisions created by the Party's clientelist networks. Urban factories during the Mao era were characterized by the prevalence of the clientelist system in which individual workers pursued their interests by cultivating ties with authorities with discretionary powers, rather than banding together with fellow workers to advance their group interests (Walder 1986). Cultural Revolution conflicts were fought between those benefited from Party networks and those excluded from them, and successive efforts to defend and attack the networks led to escalating cycles of

violence (1996). In the light of new materials, as I discuss later, Walder developed this earlier structural explanation into one more focused on processes and the roles of state officials.

These studies established that there were competing groups and interests in the Chinese society and those interests fueled the factional conflict of the Cultural Revolution. But they were subjected to some important limitations. Above all, those researchers had to work with data that were far from systematic and limited in scope—émigré interviews in Hong Kong, scattered copies of Red Guard tabloids, wall posters and pamphlets, transcripts of radio broadcasts, and a few others. The limitations in data inevitably narrowed their focus to urban settings. Moreover, as Walder's recent analyses found (2002; 2006a; 2006b), those early social structural explanations lacked consideration of contexts within which those divisions may have played out differently across various settings. As new materials become available, it is a task for future studies to see if those generalizations stand good when they are put into context.

Two other society-centered, or more precisely individual-centered, studies merit mentioning in conjunction with another kind of theoretical tradition. Wang Shaoguang (1995) used Mancur Olson's rational choice model (1971) to address the "collective action problem" of the Cultural Revolution. Wang pointed out that earlier social structural analyses of Cultural Revolution factionalism were based on an unarticulated inference on the correspondence between group interests (presumed from positions in social structure) and collective action (1995: 2-3). Informed by the "cultural framing" perspective (Melucci 1989; Snow and Benford 1992; Tarrow 1992), Elizabeth Perry (Perry and Li 1997; Aminzade, Goldstone, and Perry 2001)

emphasized the importance of “psychocultural orientation” of rebel leaders. Perry argued that “personalities” were a key factor in inclining rebel leaders to adopt the high-risk strategy of challenging Party authority (Perry and Li 1997: 66-69). Both these studies advanced our understanding of the participation in the high-risk Cultural Revolution movement by highlighting individual traits and behavioral patterns. But those individual-level assumptions offer little insight for the problem at hand: the variations in the rural political violence across different locations.

Finally, those few researchers who studied rural conflicts in the Cultural Revolution also tended to focus on social divisions. They argued that rural Cultural Revolution conflicts were based on a very different social structure and principle. In villages, factional conflicts that surfaced during the political movement were rooted in decades long grievances and rivalries among lineages and neighboring villages (Unger 1998; Madsen 1990). The argument is, however, far from conclusive due to lack of systematic data. To verify the argument, we need more evidence not only on factional composition but also the patterns of political violence in rural areas. For example, one can bring evidence on the differential levels of past feuds and the levels of violence during the Cultural Revolution. However, given the great variation in the death tolls from “mass killings” during the Cultural Revolution across provinces (Su 2006), it is difficult to imagine that deeply rooted animosities were found disproportionately in such provinces as Guangxi and Guangdong, and not in Hebei and many other provinces. Rather, it is more appropriate to assume that grievances existed randomly in rural areas, and to look for political causes by tracing political processes closely.

STATE-CENTERED EXPLANATIONS

The “state-centered” explanations are generally based on the assumption that the state and state actors have their own distinctive interests and varying degrees of ability to shape social relations within the claimed territory through administrative and coercive means. Thus, Michael Mann defines the state as a “differentiated set of institutions and personnel embodying centrality, in the sense that political relations radiate to and from a center, to cover a territorially demarcated area, over which it exercises some degree of authoritative, binding rulemaking, backed up by some organized physical force” (Mann 1993: 55). For Mann, the real power of a state rests on “infrastructural power,” the ability to penetrate the society, enforce binding rules throughout the society, and secure the dominance over other social forces, rather than on the monopolization of coercive means. A state is thus considered “strong” to the extent that it enjoys *autonomy* from social forces and has *capacity* to penetrate, rather than to be penetrated by, society, and “weak” when it does not have those qualities (Migdal 1988).

These studies centered on the state’s capacity and autonomy from society are not very useful for the subject at hand. The rapid sequences of events that led to varying intensities of political violence most resemble the processes leading from state disintegration to revolutions. Since Theda Skocpol’s influential study (1979) appeared, studies of revolutions have been focused on various aspects of the state (Farhi 1990; McDaniel 1991; Wickham-Crowley 1992; Skocpol 1994; Foran 1997; Goodwin 2001). “Structural theories of revolutions” departed from the previous generation of theorists on political violence by emphasizing the centrality of

violence. Possible divisions in the local military system and its involvement in the factional conflict may be the key to understand the mechanisms of the violence escalation.

The Cultural Revolution was, of course, different from revolutions in that challengers never sought to overthrow the central government or the Communist regime itself, but confined their targets to local power structures. In fact, all varieties of “rebel organizations” claimed to be genuine followers of the supreme leader, Mao Zedong, and purport to embody his teachings. However, despite the difference in their aims, we can learn useful insights from processes and mechanisms of state disintegration.

Because of the reasons discussed above, researchers on the Cultural Revolution have largely neglected the role of the state and state actors until recently. This has left a big lacuna in our understanding of the political movement. Those few scholars who employed state-centered approaches tended to emphasize the strong and coherent nature of the Chinese state. Zhou Xueguang (1993), for example, argued that collective action in the Communist China was less an organization of purposive and rational individual actions than an aggregation of large numbers of spontaneous individual behaviors produced by the particular state-society relationship.⁷ “The institutional structure of state socialism reduces the barriers to collective action by producing ‘large numbers’ of individuals with similar behavioral patterns and demands that cut across the boundaries of organizations and social groups” (1993: 58). Lynn White (1989) argued that three “administrative policies” of Mao’s

⁷ Thus, in addressing the same issue of the “collective action problem,” Zhou came to a conclusion directly contrary to the one offered by Wang Shaoguang.

state—labeling people, enmeshing them in hard-to-change patronage networks, and legitimating campaign violence—caused the mass violence of the Cultural Revolution. These policies were the means by which the state tried to achieve ambitious goals with scarce resources. But these policies were more costly in the long run. By the mid-1960s in an atmosphere of tension that labeling and patronage policies had brought and after campaigns had legitimated forces in politics, a relaxation of police controls brought an explosion from people who could then use violence for their own purposes. These “strong state” arguments by Zhou and White, however, do not capture the state of anarchy and civil-war-like factional conflict described at the outset.

A more relevant perspective was recently offered by Walder (Walder 2000; see also Su 2003) who argued that defensive actions of state officials led to the factional conflict. Assuming that collective actions emerge from among groups and individuals in society to rise up to challenge the state, society-centered explanations were blinded from the possibility that state officials themselves produced political movements. When threatened by popular attacks initiated by Mao and his associates, insecure state officials responded by mobilizing or cooperating with their loyal followers in order to carry out a mass movement that would permit them to survive. Thus, state officials, rather than students or other social actors, initiated the factional conflict while defending themselves from popular attacks instigated by the central leaders (Walder 2000).

This perspective sheds light on interests and actions of local state officials in Cultural Revolution factional conflict. While Walder’s argument rests on state officials’ role in the creation of the factional conflict in the later half of 1966, it can be

extended to roles of the local military in the early half of 1967. This line of explanation would predict that local military officers similarly under popular attack also defended themselves by cooperating with a faction, and as a result, fueled the factional conflict. At a more general level, this "divided state" perspective posits that under such political uncertainty, the local state, as well as the local military system, would split up, create factional conflict, and further intensify the conflict. But processes and conditions under which those splits would take place and then lead to the escalation of factional conflict still need to be specified.

STATE-SOCIETY RELATIONS IN FLUX

It was not simply that the Chinese state during the Cultural Revolution was divided, but that the state-society relations were in flux. As the local state came to a near-complete breakdown following the "January power seizure" of 1967, state officials and military officers became drawn into the vortex of factional conflict raging all over the country. The ensuing armed battles, I argue, can not be understood without paying attention to the entanglements of state and social actors. Moreover, when reestablished through military control, local governments incorporated rebel leaders as part of a hybrid "three-in-one combination" (*san jiehe*), along with representatives of military officers and "reunited" former officials. The "capacity" of the local state also fluctuated wildly in the span of about two years (summer 1966-summer 1968) from high to very low, and then to somewhere in between, as it was challenged by insurgents, dismantled, and then reestablished by military forces. Thus, we need to go beyond a simple, however detailed, description of the state and society, and observe interactive processes that operate across the

state-society boundary. Concretely, we suggest the following steps to disentangle the state-society relations during the Cultural Revolution.

First, we need to disaggregate the state. While that the state is not unitary actor is by no means a new argument (Migdal 1994; 2001), the distinctions among sectors and levels of the state are crucial in analyzing the Cultural Revolution. One can even plausibly argue that the Cultural Revolution was conflicts among segments and levels of the state: the central government dominated by Mao and the CRSG versus the local government, units of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) controlled by Lin Biao versus other local units, and so on. After all, the Cultural Revolution was started as a massive purge of "power holders" within the Party and state apparatus who deviated, or more precisely were regarded deviated, from Mao's thinking. Divisions within the state therefore were intrinsic in the political movement, not marginal or accidental. The central leaders intentionally instigated students and others to attack local officials and military officers. Thus, at the minimum, we should watch for possible struggles between state organizations: between the CRSG and local government, between the levels of local government (provincial, district, and county party committees), the PLA versus the local military system (i.e., the PAD), and so on. More importantly, we need to pay particular attention to conflicts arising within state organizations—within the county government, among party secretary, vice-secretaries, county magistrate (*xian zhang*) and vice-magistrates, and within the local military unit, PAD chief, vice-chiefs, and political commissar.⁸ These kinds of divisions among state actors had crucial

⁸ To make things even more complicated, there were overlaps in personnel between county-level political and military positions. Most notably, a county party secretary

bearing on local processes of Cultural Revolution factional conflict.

Second, the boundary between the state and society should not be considered as clearly demarcated and impermeable, but viewed as blurred and porous. The boundary became fluid, as state actors became caught up in factional struggles. Social actors—members of rebel organizations—were also later co-opted into the new local government. In other words, Cultural Revolution conflicts were fought *not within the society but all across the state-society boundaries.*⁹ Moreover, the distinction between “institutionalized politics” and “contentious politics” also became blurred, as rebel members were incorporated into the local government and advanced their interests through their positions in the government.

Third, we would be better off focusing on the intersection between the state and society. This is where we can observe entangled relationships between the state and society. This study’s focus on counties (*xian*), rather than high schools, universities, factories, large cities or provinces, gives a unique opportunity to observe interactions between state and social actors. Counties were the arena where rebel factions struggled for domination, where the People’s Armed Departments—the lowest

often served as a political commissar to the county PAD. See Chapter 4 on the implications of the personnel overlaps between the county political and military organizations.

⁹ In his early seminal work, Hong Yung Lee offered a similar model that cuts across the boundaries between “elites” and “masses” (1978: Introduction). My model differs from Lee’s in three important respects. First, unlike Lee, I do not assume that the elite-mass alliances centered around the “radical”/“conservative” axis or the attitude toward the status quo. I consider them formed in the context of the ongoing interactions between various actors. Thus, secondly, the elite-mass alliances described by Lee were based on pre-Cultural Revolution structural positions, while my model focuses on emergent interactions. And finally, as stated earlier, I do not see the “Party,” the “government,” and especially the “Army” during the Cultural Revolution as coherent and independent actors but as disorganized and penetrable actors.

echelon of the military system and a key player in the factional armed conflict —were stationed, and above all where we can observe great variations in the level of political violence.

Finally, the state and society should be placed in the developing context of Cultural Revolution conflict. The rapid sequence of events and the fluidity of the state-society relations call for an analytical strategy centered on emergent contexts, rather than preexisting structures. Because this is the most important strategy, I discuss this in the following section.

IN SEARCH OF PROCESSES AND MECHANISMS

It should be clear by now that the state-society relations during the Cultural Revolution were in flux. Most local state officials were purged, civil-war-like armed battles ensued, and the vacancies were later filled by rebel leaders. In such a state, social and state structural factors thus far identified need to be situated in the contexts, or local dynamic processes, of the Cultural Revolution. We cannot take it for granted that structural divisions and interests, however real, existed *prior to the Cultural Revolution*, directly caused the factional conflicts. In general, “initial conditions” were transformed by decisions and events to produce various outcomes (Goldstone 1998). This is especially true in the highly uncertain context of the Cultural Revolution (Walder 2002; 2006a; 2006b). Simple general-law-like relations between structural causes and dyadic effects do not capture great twists and turns of the Cultural Revolution. We need to situate state and social actors in the contexts of the Cultural Revolution.

Andrew Walder has already embarked on a new interpretation of Red Guard

factionalism based on a relational and contextualized approach (Walder 2002; 2006a; 2006b). Reviewing new documents on the Beijing Red Guard movement, he found that factional formations in Beijing universities were not based on prior social and political structures but on students' reactions to the work teams (*gongzuo dui*). In the highly ambiguous context, students did not necessarily perceive their interests in terms of their positions in the status quo ante. But in the high risk situation, students' choices bound them in such a way that students had to defend them at any cost because one political mistake could ruin their lives. Thus, the factional alignments were based on the choices made by students in the ambiguous political context and not on preexisting structural divisions (Walder 2006b). Walder's new findings suggest that we pay more attention to relational and emergent factors, rather than preexisting structures, in analyzing the factional conflict of the Cultural Revolution. He also calls attention to the "path-dependent" nature of the processes of factional formation by emphasizing the centrality of choice and context, rather than structure and interests derived from structural positions. Thus, Walder's recent studies mark a clear departure from earlier structural analyses of Cultural Revolution factionalism. In this study, I seek to extend his approach to other issues of the Cultural Revolution, including the factional violence in summer 1967-summer 1968 and the subsequent repressive violence under revolutionary committees.

A recent transition in the field of "contentious politics" provides a valuable guidance to the subject at hand. In the past few years, leading scholars of social movements broke away from the well-established theoretical tradition they themselves created (McAdam 1999, Introduction to the Second Edition; McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly 2001; Tilly 2003, 2005). They set aside, while by no means

discarded, the conceptual building blocks of the theoretical tradition—political opportunities, mobilizing structures, and cognitive framings (Tilly 1978; McAdam 1982; Tarrow 1994; McAdam, McCarthy and Zald 1996), calling them static, unitary and western-biased, in favor of a more dynamic model built around emergent and relational properties. Specifically, they call attention to *processes* and *mechanisms* that operate within various contentious *episodes*. Here mechanisms are defined as “a delimited class of events that alter relations among specified sets of elements in identical or closely similar ways over a variety of situations.” Processes are “regular sequences of such mechanisms that produce similar (generally more complex and contingent) transformations of those elements.” And episodes are “continuous streams of contention including collective claims making that bears on other parties’ interests” (McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly 2001: 24). The strategy is that we first identify processes within a contentious episode that constitute or produce the problematic feature of the episode, and then search out the causal mechanisms within those processes (29). I expect that this kind of attempt at middle-range theorizing would be most useful in the analysis of the Cultural Revolution.

What kinds of processes and mechanisms do we expect to find in the episodes of Cultural Revolution conflict in the countryside? In this introduction, I highlight four broad sets of processes and mechanisms in conjunction with the chapters that follow. Needless to say, however, that these abstract concepts are meant not to constrain but only to give broad guide to the analyses to follow.

Diffusion of Insurgencies through the Brokerage of Urban Red Guards

In chapter 2, I examine how insurgencies against local (county) governments

spread from urban centers to rural areas in the later half of 1966. The diffusion of Cultural Revolution turmoil has largely been neglected, since a classical study by Baum (1971) set a parameter by observing that the Cultural Revolution was “primarily an urban phenomenon.” To the extent it spread to rural areas, it spilled over, like “ripples in a pond,” to the suburbs and along major transportation links, but not to remote areas. While subsequent revelations of mass killings in remote rural areas (Zheng 1993, 1996; Song 2002a), as well as studies based on county annals data (Walder and Su 2003; Su 2003; 2006), cast doubt for Baum’s observation,¹⁰ there is still widespread doubt among China scholars about the reach of the conflict into rural areas (for example, Unger 1998).

Contrary to the earlier view, I found that insurgencies spread to the vast majority of Shaanxi counties even before the “January power seizures” of 1967. As for the diffusion processes, I argue that a “brokerage” role of urban college students provided a key mechanism through which insurgencies against local governments spread from urban centers to the remotest parts of the country. “Brokerage” here means “linking of two or more currently unconnected social sites by a unit that mediates their relations with each other and/or with yet another site” (McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly 2001: 157). Insurgencies were carried into rural counties by purposeful agents—urban college students—rather than were “spilled over” amorously from urban centers to the suburbs. Generally regarded higher in authority than local officials, those college students from large cities were able to

¹⁰ Baum himself qualified his point. He observed that the Cultural Revolution was primarily an urban phenomenon *from the spring of 1966 until the mid-autumn of 1968*—i.e., from the beginning of the Cultural Revolution to the end of factional armed battles, and before the political repression under the revolutionary committee. This study finds widespread turmoil in remote rural areas as early as the end of 1966.

convince locals to challenge local authority. The diffusion pattern shows that urban college students systematically “ignited” (*dian huo*) insurgency to one rural county after another from the suburbs to remote rural areas.

*Rebel Identities as Social Relations*¹¹

Chapter 3 considers the processes from the emergence of various oppositions to local authority to the formation of factional coalitions. I found the causes of opposition not unitary but multiple, but all of them—the sending of work teams to schools, the “summer reeducation camp for teachers” (*jiaoshi xiaqi jixunhui*), the Socialist Education Movement (*shehui zhuyi jiaoyu yundong*, hereafter SEM)—can be traced to initiatives from above in the early phase of the Cultural Revolution (or in the case of the SEM, immediately before the Cultural Revolution). These campaigns gave rise to oppositions from different segments of the rural society—students, teachers and rural officials. In late 1966, those disparate groups began to unite in their demand for rehabilitation (*pingfan*), while rural officials also rallied supporters using their networks of “poor and lower-middle peasants” and “preparatory committees” (*choubei weiyuanhui*)—a student organization set up by work teams.

The processes were identical to the pattern in Beijing universities described by Walder (2002; 2006a; 2006b). Students there became divided over their reactions to the work teams. In rural counties, middle school students, teachers, and rural officials were split by the work team, the teachers’ reeducation camp, and the SEM,

¹¹ An idea that identities arise from social interactions and thus should be viewed as a property of social relations is found in Tilly (2005) and McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly (2001: 133-134).

respectively. In either case, oppositions emerged not from their inferior statuses in the status quo ante, but in the face of their sudden loss of statuses. To the extent factional compositions reflected prior statuses, it was not because those with inferior statuses mobilized themselves against the status quo, but because authorities in charge used those status categories to divide those groups in the early phase of the Cultural Revolution. The fact that those different groups became united in their demand for *rehabilitation* in late 1966, after the sudden reversal of policy by the campaign against the “bourgeois reactionary line,” supports this argument. Thus, rebel identities should be viewed as arising from interactions between social actors and local authorities, and not from one’s prior statuses.

*“Conflict Calls for Allies”*¹²

The latter half of Chapter 3 deals with a distinct process: factional polarization. The “January power seizure” of 1967 changed the momentum and direction of Cultural Revolution conflict. From then on, the paralysis of the local government led to the struggle for domination among factional groups, and set in motion the processes of coalition formation at the county level. An implication here is that the “radical”/“conservative” divide stressed in earlier studies became less clear after the power seizure as the rivalry between the authorities and rebel challengers disappeared and factional organizations of all varieties tied up with one another in their pursuit for power. Despite the three different paths identified in relations to different forms of power seizures—insurgent, “workplace” and “combined,” they resulted in factional polarization invariably in most counties. The mechanism at work in this conjuncture

¹² This is the phrase used by Coser (1956) for the title of Chapter 8.

is analogous to "proposition 16" of the Simmer-Coser social conflict theory (Coser 1956). It states:

Struggle may bring together otherwise unrelated persons and groups. Coalitions and temporary associations, rather than more permanent and cohesive groups, will result from conflicts where primarily pragmatic interests of the participants are involved. ... The unifying character of conflict is seen more dramatically when coalitions and instrumental associations produce agreement out of relationships of competition or hostility. Unification is at a minimum level when coalitions are formed for the purpose of defense. Alliance, then, for each particular group reflects the most minimal expression of the desire for self-preservation. ... Most coalitions between already existing groups, especially between numerous groups or between those that differ widely from each other, are formed for defensive purpose only, at least in the view of those who enter the alliance. Alliance, even when not formed for the purpose of conflict, may seem to other groups a threatening and unfriendly act. This very perception, however, leads to the creation of new associations and coalitions, this further stimulating social participation (148-149).

This statement captures the spiraling process in which conflict spurs the formation of opposed factional coalitions, which in turn further intensifies the conflict. A similar process, in combination with the competition for power, I argue, led to the formation of two opposed factions at the county level, after the disappearing of the presiding authority caused by the January power seizure of 1967. The formation of two

opposed factions set stage for the escalation of factional armed battle.

A "State of Anarchy" and Inconsistent Military Interventions

In Chapter 4, I examine relationships between the forms of military intervention and the escalation of factional violence, perhaps one of the least studied issues in sociology. It has been noted by some sociologists that state repression often results in more protest, rather than less (Goldstone and Tilly 2001), and more to the point, inconsistent use of repressive force by the state invited more militant and greater challenges (Timberlake and Williams 1984). But sociologists since Hobbes generally assumed the existence of some form of sovereign authority. For near complete breakdown of the authority, we have to look for insights of other disciplines—most notably those of international relations—to capture the processes of violence escalation between the summer of 1967 and the summer of 1968. I expect that the escalation processes were analogous to the mechanisms of “security dilemma” and “inconsistent interventions.” Theories of security dilemmas (Jervis 1976, 1978; Snyder and Diesing 1977), a subtype of the famous non-zero-sum “prisoner’s dilemmas” (Rapoport and Chammah 1965), posit that in absence of powerful third parties—police, the courts, military forces—as characteristic in international relations, rational actions of each party to secure themselves in the situation of insecurity and distrust lead to an escalating cycle of conflict preparations and actual conflict. Similar processes of “arms races,” alliance building, and a cycle of retaliatory violence were found in the episodes of the Cultural Revolution. The disintegration of the military system after the summer of 1967 had varying effects across counties. In some counties, a near complete breakdown of the military fueled

factional armed battles, while in others continued coordination among local units prevented further escalation of factional conflict. Thus, the presence or absence of local military authority as a "powerful third party" was the key to understand the escalation of Cultural Revolution factional violence.

Another, even more crucial mechanism of violence escalation was inconsistent interventions set off by the disintegration of the local military system. The chapter finds that the death tolls from armed battles were much higher in areas where local military units were divided than in the other areas where they remained united. With each side of contending factions supported by different military units, inconsistent interventions, similar to third world interventions during the cold war, led to the escalation of armed battles, not only by militarizing factional organizations but also by expanding the horizon of the conflict across county borders. Thus, the security dilemma faced by factional organizations and inconsistent military interventions in combination led to the escalation of armed battles. It is also argued that the decentralized and quasi-political nature of the system of the People's Armed Department contributed to the disintegration of the local military system, and thus to the escalation of the factional violence.

"Coordinated Opportunistic Violence" under the One-Faction Dominated Government

In Chapter 5, I identify major patterns of the escalation of repressive violence in conjunction with the processes of demobilization and the reestablishment of local governments. The processes of demobilization determined the forms of new local government, which in turn conditioned the degree of repressive violence under its

rule. In some counties where one of the factions attained dominance with the support of the county People's Armed Department, positions in the "revolutionary committees" (*geming weiyuanhui*) were monopolized by the dominant faction, while in others where armed battles were prolonged to the summer of 1968 and only stopped by regular PLA units, military mediation led to evenly represented governments. Severe repressive violence often took place under the governments monopolized by a faction, while the escalation of violence was checked by balanced governments. I also provided an account on why one-faction domination led to the escalation of repressive violence. The perception of threat from the opposition, the repressive organization that incorporated members of a dominant faction, and factional leadership all combined to cause the escalation of repressive violence under the local government monopolized by a faction.

I term the escalation of repressive violence under partial local governments "coordinated opportunistic violence" from the two concepts created by Charles Tilly (2003): "coordinated destruction" and "opportunism." "Coordinated destruction" is defined as "persons or organizations that specialized in the deployment of coercive means undertake a program of damage to persons and/or objects; examples include war, collective self-immolation, some kinds of terrorism, genocide, and poljicide—the programmed annihilation of a political category's members." And "opportunism" is "a consequence of shielding from routine surveillance and repression; individuals or clusters of individuals use immediately damaging means to pursue generally forbidden ends; examples include looting, gang rape, piracy, revenge killing, and some sorts of military pillage" (Tilly 2003: 14-15). The term may sound a little contradictory because "opportunism" connotes lack of organization and

premeditation. But it captures well the nature of repressive violence under the circumstances: It can be regarded as "coordinated destruction" because the violence was committed by a specialized repressive organization (that incorporated factional members) under the name of local government. But at the same time it was "opportunistic" because it was not only shielded from the surveillance of the central government, but also tinged with revengeful violence by a dominant faction against an inferior faction. Moreover, a dominant faction took advantage of the opportunity presented by its political domination to take revenge on the opponents. Cases of "coordinated opportunistic violence" were a product of local processes, in which a victorious faction monopolized positions in the local government, often with the support of a local military force. They took place in the aftermath of the anarchic armed battle, and often in blind spots from the central government.

PERIODIZATION

The broad periodization scheme used in this study is as follows. The period under study—between the spring of 1966 and 1971—is divided into three periods:

- 1) From the beginning of the Cultural Revolution in spring 1966 to the power seizures of early 1967;
- 2) From the power seizures to the establishment of county revolutionary committees in December 1967-September 1968; and
- 3) From the birth of county revolutionary committees to the end of 1971 when all the violent campaigns under the revolutionary committee—the "Cleansing of Class Rank," the "One Strike, Three Antis," and others—subsided.

The “power seizure” and the establishment of “revolutionary committees” marked major turning points in the course of the Cultural Revolution. Breaking down the local power structure, the power seizure of early 1967 changed the course of the political movement from the struggle against local authority to the conflict between factional organizations. From then on, factional organizations became increasingly polarized, and then were plunged into internecine armed battles. The establishment of county revolutionary committees marked the ending of anarchic armed battles and the beginning of political repression under the name of the “new red government.” While factional struggle continued in varying intensities, the foundation of revolutionary committees clearly changed not only the political context but also the form of political violence.

Finally, it should be noted that this study’s focus on processes and mechanisms calls for particular attention to timing and event sequences, within and across those three broad periods. Thus, all the subsequent chapters include sub-periods, while Chapter 3 extends over the two broad periods—the first and the second. A close examination of the timings and event sequences reveal many previously unknown patterns and processes.

COUNTY ANNALS DATA

Most of the data used in this study are taken from the volumes of county annals (*xianzhi*), published by the counties of Shaanxi Province between the late 1980s and the early 2000s. Shaanxi is a northwestern province of 21.9 million population in 1966. 87 percent of the population, or 19 million, was registered as “agricultural

population" (*nongye renkou*). There were 93 counties and 4 cities in Shaanxi in 1966 (Table 1.1).¹³ Relevant pages of all the 93 county annals were photocopied and coded into data by a Stanford team led by Andrew Walder including myself. I exclude 4 cities—Xi'an, Xianyang, Tongchuan, and Baoji—from the analyses unless relevant, because this study concerns rural, rather than urban, conflicts.¹⁴ The first stage of data coding conducted by the team included such information as the timings of major events of the Cultural Revolution—"power seizures," "first armed battles," and the "founding of revolutionary committees"—and the magnitudes of political violence—the numbers of those killed, injured and politically persecuted—committed in the three periods mentioned above. On the basis of these, I later added many variables—the timings of "first insurgencies," demographic features, the magnitudes of violence in the sub-campaigns (the "cleansing of class ranks," "one strike, three antis, and others), the forms of military interventions, the forms of representation in county revolutionary committees, and others—from the county annals as well as some other sources.¹⁵ I will explain the rules of coding in the respective chapters those variables are used (see also Appendix 1).

¹³ See Shaanxi sheng difangzhi bianzuan weiyuanhui, *Shaanxi shengzhi, xingzheng jianzhi zhi* (*Shaanxi Provincial Annals, Administration Building Annals*) (Xi'an: Sanqin chubanshe, 1992), pp. 8-9.

¹⁴ There is another, more practical, reason for excluding the cities. City annals (*shizhi*) are generally less informative about the Cultural Revolution than county annals.

¹⁵ Other sources of data include volumes of provincial annals (*shengzhi*), district annals (*diquzhi*), as well as scattered volumes of county (and city) military annals (*junshizhi*) and the materials of party organizational history (*dang zuzhi shi ziliao*). Demographic data are also taken from Shaanxi sheng tongji qu, *Shaanxi sheng di shi xian lishi tongji ziliao huibian* (*Compilation of Historical Statistical Materials on the Districts, Cities, and Counties of Shaanxi Province*) (Zhongguo tongji chubanshe, 1991).

Table 1.1 about here

The county annals of Shaanxi counties provide by far the richest account on the Cultural Revolution among those of all the provinces, autonomous regions and “provincial-level cities” (excluding Tibet). On average, Shaanxi county annals spend almost three times as many characters on the Cultural Revolution as those of all the provinces.¹⁶ This gives a unique opportunity to reconstruct processes of Cultural Revolution conflict in Shaanxi counties.

A few words need to be added about the use of county annals data. First, we should be careful about possible underreporting due to self-censorship or inadequate data collection.¹⁷ Walder and Su (2003) found that the numbers of reported victims (those killed, injured, and persecuted) were positively correlated to the number of words devoted to the Cultural Revolution. Given the relatively “high quality” of Shaanxi county annals, I do not adjust those numbers by weighting the length of the accounts, as Walder and Su did in their estimates. Instead, I employ the following measure. Whenever using statistical methods, but not when I describe qualitatively,

¹⁶ Shaanxi county annals spend an average of 11,087 characters on the Cultural Revolution, while the overall average is 4,066. See Table 1 in Walder and Su (2003: 81) for the comparison of the numbers of characters devoted to the Cultural Revolution across provinces. See also Appendix 1 for more details on Shaanxi county annals.

¹⁷ It is difficult to imagine the possibility of “overreporting” in this particular case. Given China’s current political climate, local officials have little to gain from exaggerating what happened during the Cultural Revolution.

the state in the making of revolutions (Goldstone 2003; Wickham-Crowley 1997).⁶

Probably the two most useful ideas that we can draw from theories of revolutions are the vulnerability of “neo-patrimonial” states (Eisenstadt 1978) and the disloyalty and disorganization of the army (Russell 1974). The former argues that states characterized by a high degree of patronage are particularly vulnerable to economic and military crises. This is because the patronage networks through which the states rule crumble in face of those crises. The internal divisions and corruption of the bureaucracy and armed forces in those states may lead to a sudden deflation of state power. This view sheds fresh light on the possible weakness of the patrimonial state-society relationships in Mao’s regime (Walder 1986; Oi 1989). The patron-client networks that penetrated in both urban factories and rural villages may have been shattered, rather than maintained, in the face of the uncertainty and rapid changes of the Cultural Revolution. And the weakness of the patronage-ridden bureaucracy and military system may have contributed to the enormous disorder.

The allegiance of the army to the state weakens to the extent that the army identifies with other social forces. More concretely, the disorganization of the military system can result if some elements of the system had other objects of allegiance. The cases described at the outset suggest that we need to take this insight seriously in our search for a better understanding of Cultural Revolution

⁶ Goldstone points out, “revolutions often began not from the acts of a powerful revolutionary opposition but from the internal breakdown and paralysis of state administrations, a condition that rendered states incapable of managing normally routine problems. The general theories of revolution and collective violence provide no help in understanding the conditions behind the internal breakdown of states” (2003: 6). Structural theories of revolutions alert us to three possible causes of state weakening: elite challenges, international competition, and the alienation of the army.

and relational approaches to come to grip with. Otherwise, we risk missing crucial interactions and environmental changes in which actors were situated. What analytical tools can we bring to bear on explaining those variations? In this introductory essay, I first identify strengths and gaps in the field of Cultural Revolution studies, and then examine the literatures of the state, revolutions and contentious politics, in search for useful ideas and theoretical frameworks.

SOCIETY-CENTERED EXPLANATIONS

Studies on the Cultural Revolution had been dominated by “social explanations” until relatively recently. As a recent stocktaking article by leading scholars points out, the birth of the field itself marked a breakaway from earlier studies focused on the organizational structure and ideology of the Communist state (Esherick et al. 2006: Introduction). For the younger generation of China scholars, the upheaval of the Cultural Revolution presented an unprecedented opportunity to glimpse at divisions and conflict in the Chinese society on a scale unimaginable to the previous generation. In addition to this newfound information, available theoretical framework also contributed to the rise of social structural explanations of Cultural Revolution conflict. The pluralist image of society (Dahl 1961, 1967; Almond and Powell 1966; Lipset 1960), still current in the field of political sociology in the 1970s and the early 1980s, provided the “second generation” of China scholars a theoretical background in which early social structural explanations were developed.

Early studies on the Cultural Revolution appeared in the late 1970s and early 1980s tended to emphasize the importance of social cleavages, based on class background, the occupational hierarchy and others, in accounting for the origins of

the factional conflict. Hong Yung Lee (1978) set the tone by linking factional memberships with divisions between those benefited from the Communist regime and those disadvantaged under its rule. Radical leaders united themselves with those marginalized in their efforts to challenge the status quo, while the Party organization mobilized those benefited under the Communist rule to defend the status quo. Chan, Rosen, and Unger (1980), on the other hand, argued that high school students in Guangzhou were divided between elite student groups—students from revolutionary cadre backgrounds and those from “middle-class” backgrounds—over the competition for scarce educational opportunities (See also Rosen 1982; Unger 1982). Despite the difference, however, they both argued that preexisting social divisions provided bases for mobilization. For the former, the Cultural Revolution provided those disadvantaged an opportunity to challenge the status quo and pursue their interests, while for the latter, it brought out the latent tension between those highly aspiring groups of students.

Another form of social structural explanation was provided by Andrew Walder (1996) who emphasized the importance of Party networks in the factories. Walder argued that factional conflicts in urban factories during the Cultural Revolution were shaped by divisions created by the Party's clientelist networks. Urban factories during the Mao era were characterized by the prevalence of the clientelist system in which individual workers pursued their interests by cultivating ties with authorities with discretionary powers, rather than banding together with fellow workers to advance their group interests (Walder 1986). Cultural Revolution conflicts were fought between those benefited from Party networks and those excluded from them, and successive efforts to defend and attack the networks led to escalating cycles of

violence (1996). In the light of new materials, as I discuss later, Walder developed this earlier structural explanation into one more focused on processes and the roles of state officials.

These studies established that there were competing groups and interests in the Chinese society and those interests fueled the factional conflict of the Cultural Revolution. But they were subjected to some important limitations. Above all, those researchers had to work with data that were far from systematic and limited in scope—émigré interviews in Hong Kong, scattered copies of Red Guard tabloids, wall posters and pamphlets, transcripts of radio broadcasts, and a few others. The limitations in data inevitably narrowed their focus to urban settings. Moreover, as Walder's recent analyses found (2002; 2006a; 2006b), those early social structural explanations lacked consideration of contexts within which those divisions may have played out differently across various settings. As new materials become available, it is a task for future studies to see if those generalizations stand good when they are put into context.

Two other society-centered, or more precisely individual-centered, studies merit mentioning in conjunction with another kind of theoretical tradition. Wang Shaoguang (1995) used Mancur Olson's rational choice model (1971) to address the "collective action problem" of the Cultural Revolution. Wang pointed out that earlier social structural analyses of Cultural Revolution factionalism were based on an unarticulated inference on the correspondence between group interests (presumed from positions in social structure) and collective action (1995: 2-3). Informed by the "cultural framing" perspective (Melucci 1989; Snow and Benford 1992; Tarrow 1992), Elizabeth Perry (Perry and Li 1997; Aminzade, Goldstone, and Perry 2001)

emphasized the importance of “psychocultural orientation” of rebel leaders. Perry argued that “personalities” were a key factor in inclining rebel leaders to adopt the high-risk strategy of challenging Party authority (Perry and Li 1997: 66-69). Both these studies advanced our understanding of the participation in the high-risk Cultural Revolution movement by highlighting individual traits and behavioral patterns. But those individual-level assumptions offer little insight for the problem at hand: the variations in the rural political violence across different locations.

Finally, those few researchers who studied rural conflicts in the Cultural Revolution also tended to focus on social divisions. They argued that rural Cultural Revolution conflicts were based on a very different social structure and principle. In villages, factional conflicts that surfaced during the political movement were rooted in decades long grievances and rivalries among lineages and neighboring villages (Unger 1998; Madsen 1990). The argument is, however, far from conclusive due to lack of systematic data. To verify the argument, we need more evidence not only on factional composition but also the patterns of political violence in rural areas. For example, one can bring evidence on the differential levels of past feuds and the levels of violence during the Cultural Revolution. However, given the great variation in the death tolls from “mass killings” during the Cultural Revolution across provinces (Su 2006), it is difficult to imagine that deeply rooted animosities were found disproportionately in such provinces as Guangxi and Guangdong, and not in Hebei and many other provinces. Rather, it is more appropriate to assume that grievances existed randomly in rural areas, and to look for political causes by tracing political processes closely.

STATE-CENTERED EXPLANATIONS

The “state-centered” explanations are generally based on the assumption that the state and state actors have their own distinctive interests and varying degrees of ability to shape social relations within the claimed territory through administrative and coercive means. Thus, Michael Mann defines the state as a “differentiated set of institutions and personnel embodying centrality, in the sense that political relations radiate to and from a center, to cover a territorially demarcated area, over which it exercises some degree of authoritative, binding rulemaking, backed up by some organized physical force” (Mann 1993: 55). For Mann, the real power of a state rests on “infrastructural power,” the ability to penetrate the society, enforce binding rules throughout the society, and secure the dominance over other social forces, rather than on the monopolization of coercive means. A state is thus considered “strong” to the extent that it enjoys *autonomy* from social forces and has *capacity* to penetrate, rather than to be penetrated by, society, and “weak” when it does not have those qualities (Migdal 1988).

These studies centered on the state’s capacity and autonomy from society are not very useful for the subject at hand. The rapid sequences of events that led to varying intensities of political violence most resemble the processes leading from state disintegration to revolutions. Since Theda Skocpol’s influential study (1979) appeared, studies of revolutions have been focused on various aspects of the state (Farhi 1990; McDaniel 1991; Wickham-Crowley 1992; Skocpol 1994; Foran 1997; Goodwin 2001). “Structural theories of revolutions” departed from the previous generation of theorists on political violence by emphasizing the centrality of

the state in the making of revolutions (Goldstone 2003; Wickham-Crowley 1997).⁶

Probably the two most useful ideas that we can draw from theories of revolutions are the vulnerability of “neo-patrimonial” states (Eisenstadt 1978) and the disloyalty and disorganization of the army (Russell 1974). The former argues that states characterized by a high degree of patronage are particularly vulnerable to economic and military crises. This is because the patronage networks through which the states rule crumble in face of those crises. The internal divisions and corruption of the bureaucracy and armed forces in those states may lead to a sudden deflation of state power. This view sheds fresh light on the possible weakness of the patrimonial state-society relationships in Mao’s regime (Walder 1986; Oi 1989). The patron-client networks that penetrated in both urban factories and rural villages may have been shattered, rather than maintained, in the face of the uncertainty and rapid changes of the Cultural Revolution. And the weakness of the patronage-ridden bureaucracy and military system may have contributed to the enormous disorder.

The allegiance of the army to the state weakens to the extent that the army identifies with other social forces. More concretely, the disorganization of the military system can result if some elements of the system had other objects of allegiance. The cases described at the outset suggest that we need to take this insight seriously in our search for a better understanding of Cultural Revolution

⁶ Goldstone points out, “revolutions often began not from the acts of a powerful revolutionary opposition but from the internal breakdown and paralysis of state administrations, a condition that rendered states incapable of managing normally routine problems. The general theories of revolution and collective violence provide no help in understanding the conditions behind the internal breakdown of states” (2003: 6). Structural theories of revolutions alert us to three possible causes of state weakening: elite challenges, international competition, and the alienation of the army.

violence. Possible divisions in the local military system and its involvement in the factional conflict may be the key to understand the mechanisms of the violence escalation.

The Cultural Revolution was, of course, different from revolutions in that challengers never sought to overthrow the central government or the Communist regime itself, but confined their targets to local power structures. In fact, all varieties of “rebel organizations” claimed to be genuine followers of the supreme leader, Mao Zedong, and purport to embody his teachings. However, despite the difference in their aims, we can learn useful insights from processes and mechanisms of state disintegration.

Because of the reasons discussed above, researchers on the Cultural Revolution have largely neglected the role of the state and state actors until recently. This has left a big lacuna in our understanding of the political movement. Those few scholars who employed state-centered approaches tended to emphasize the strong and coherent nature of the Chinese state. Zhou Xueguang (1993), for example, argued that collective action in the Communist China was less an organization of purposive and rational individual actions than an aggregation of large numbers of spontaneous individual behaviors produced by the particular state-society relationship.⁷ “The institutional structure of state socialism reduces the barriers to collective action by producing ‘large numbers’ of individuals with similar behavioral patterns and demands that cut across the boundaries of organizations and social groups” (1993: 58). Lynn White (1989) argued that three “administrative policies” of Mao’s

⁷ Thus, in addressing the same issue of the “collective action problem,” Zhou came to a conclusion directly contrary to the one offered by Wang Shaoguang.

state—labeling people, enmeshing them in hard-to-change patronage networks, and legitimating campaign violence—caused the mass violence of the Cultural Revolution. These policies were the means by which the state tried to achieve ambitious goals with scarce resources. But these policies were more costly in the long run. By the mid-1960s in an atmosphere of tension that labeling and patronage policies had brought and after campaigns had legitimated forces in politics, a relaxation of police controls brought an explosion from people who could then use violence for their own purposes. These “strong state” arguments by Zhou and White, however, do not capture the state of anarchy and civil-war-like factional conflict described at the outset.

A more relevant perspective was recently offered by Walder (Walder 2000; see also Su 2003) who argued that defensive actions of state officials led to the factional conflict. Assuming that collective actions emerge from among groups and individuals in society to rise up to challenge the state, society-centered explanations were blinded from the possibility that state officials themselves produced political movements. When threatened by popular attacks initiated by Mao and his associates, insecure state officials responded by mobilizing or cooperating with their loyal followers in order to carry out a mass movement that would permit them to survive. Thus, state officials, rather than students or other social actors, initiated the factional conflict while defending themselves from popular attacks instigated by the central leaders (Walder 2000).

This perspective sheds light on interests and actions of local state officials in Cultural Revolution factional conflict. While Walder’s argument rests on state officials’ role in the creation of the factional conflict in the later half of 1966, it can be

extended to roles of the local military in the early half of 1967. This line of explanation would predict that local military officers similarly under popular attack also defended themselves by cooperating with a faction, and as a result, fueled the factional conflict. At a more general level, this "divided state" perspective posits that under such political uncertainty, the local state, as well as the local military system, would split up, create factional conflict, and further intensify the conflict. But processes and conditions under which those splits would take place and then lead to the escalation of factional conflict still need to be specified.

STATE-SOCIETY RELATIONS IN FLUX

It was not simply that the Chinese state during the Cultural Revolution was divided, but that the state-society relations were in flux. As the local state came to a near-complete breakdown following the "January power seizure" of 1967, state officials and military officers became drawn into the vortex of factional conflict raging all over the country. The ensuing armed battles, I argue, can not be understood without paying attention to the entanglements of state and social actors. Moreover, when reestablished through military control, local governments incorporated rebel leaders as part of a hybrid "three-in-one combination" (*san jiehe*), along with representatives of military officers and "reunited" former officials. The "capacity" of the local state also fluctuated wildly in the span of about two years (summer 1966-summer 1968) from high to very low, and then to somewhere in between, as it was challenged by insurgents, dismantled, and then reestablished by military forces. Thus, we need to go beyond a simple, however detailed, description of the state and society, and observe interactive processes that operate across the

state-society boundary. Concretely, we suggest the following steps to disentangle the state-society relations during the Cultural Revolution.

First, we need to disaggregate the state. While that the state is not unitary actor is by no means a new argument (Migdal 1994; 2001), the distinctions among sectors and levels of the state are crucial in analyzing the Cultural Revolution. One can even plausibly argue that the Cultural Revolution was conflicts among segments and levels of the state: the central government dominated by Mao and the CRSG versus the local government, units of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) controlled by Lin Biao versus other local units, and so on. After all, the Cultural Revolution was started as a massive purge of "power holders" within the Party and state apparatus who deviated, or more precisely were regarded deviated, from Mao's thinking. Divisions within the state therefore were intrinsic in the political movement, not marginal or accidental. The central leaders intentionally instigated students and others to attack local officials and military officers. Thus, at the minimum, we should watch for possible struggles between state organizations: between the CRSG and local government, between the levels of local government (provincial, district, and county party committees), the PLA versus the local military system (i.e., the PAD), and so on. More importantly, we need to pay particular attention to conflicts arising within state organizations—within the county government, among party secretary, vice-secretaries, county magistrate (*xian zhang*) and vice-magistrates, and within the local military unit, PAD chief, vice-chiefs, and political commissar.⁸ These kinds of divisions among state actors had crucial

⁸ To make things even more complicated, there were overlaps in personnel between county-level political and military positions. Most notably, a county party secretary

bearing on local processes of Cultural Revolution factional conflict.

Second, the boundary between the state and society should not be considered as clearly demarcated and impermeable, but viewed as blurred and porous. The boundary became fluid, as state actors became caught up in factional struggles. Social actors—members of rebel organizations—were also later co-opted into the new local government. In other words, Cultural Revolution conflicts were fought *not within the society but all across the state-society boundaries.*⁹ Moreover, the distinction between “institutionalized politics” and “contentious politics” also became blurred, as rebel members were incorporated into the local government and advanced their interests through their positions in the government.

Third, we would be better off focusing on the intersection between the state and society. This is where we can observe entangled relationships between the state and society. This study’s focus on counties (*xian*), rather than high schools, universities, factories, large cities or provinces, gives a unique opportunity to observe interactions between state and social actors. Counties were the arena where rebel factions struggled for domination, where the People’s Armed Departments—the lowest

often served as a political commissar to the county PAD. See Chapter 4 on the implications of the personnel overlaps between the county political and military organizations.

⁹ In his early seminal work, Hong Yung Lee offered a similar model that cuts across the boundaries between “elites” and “masses” (1978: Introduction). My model differs from Lee’s in three important respects. First, unlike Lee, I do not assume that the elite-mass alliances centered around the “radical”/“conservative” axis or the attitude toward the status quo. I consider them formed in the context of the ongoing interactions between various actors. Thus, secondly, the elite-mass alliances described by Lee were based on pre-Cultural Revolution structural positions, while my model focuses on emergent interactions. And finally, as stated earlier, I do not see the “Party,” the “government,” and especially the “Army” during the Cultural Revolution as coherent and independent actors but as disorganized and penetrable actors.

echelon of the military system and a key player in the factional armed conflict —were stationed, and above all where we can observe great variations in the level of political violence.

Finally, the state and society should be placed in the developing context of Cultural Revolution conflict. The rapid sequence of events and the fluidity of the state-society relations call for an analytical strategy centered on emergent contexts, rather than preexisting structures. Because this is the most important strategy, I discuss this in the following section.

IN SEARCH OF PROCESSES AND MECHANISMS

It should be clear by now that the state-society relations during the Cultural Revolution were in flux. Most local state officials were purged, civil-war-like armed battles ensued, and the vacancies were later filled by rebel leaders. In such a state, social and state structural factors thus far identified need to be situated in the contexts, or local dynamic processes, of the Cultural Revolution. We cannot take it for granted that structural divisions and interests, however real, existed *prior to the Cultural Revolution*, directly caused the factional conflicts. In general, “initial conditions” were transformed by decisions and events to produce various outcomes (Goldstone 1998). This is especially true in the highly uncertain context of the Cultural Revolution (Walder 2002; 2006a; 2006b). Simple general-law-like relations between structural causes and dyadic effects do not capture great twists and turns of the Cultural Revolution. We need to situate state and social actors in the contexts of the Cultural Revolution.

Andrew Walder has already embarked on a new interpretation of Red Guard

factionalism based on a relational and contextualized approach (Walder 2002; 2006a; 2006b). Reviewing new documents on the Beijing Red Guard movement, he found that factional formations in Beijing universities were not based on prior social and political structures but on students' reactions to the work teams (*gongzuo dui*). In the highly ambiguous context, students did not necessarily perceive their interests in terms of their positions in the status quo ante. But in the high risk situation, students' choices bound them in such a way that students had to defend them at any cost because one political mistake could ruin their lives. Thus, the factional alignments were based on the choices made by students in the ambiguous political context and not on preexisting structural divisions (Walder 2006b). Walder's new findings suggest that we pay more attention to relational and emergent factors, rather than preexisting structures, in analyzing the factional conflict of the Cultural Revolution. He also calls attention to the "path-dependent" nature of the processes of factional formation by emphasizing the centrality of choice and context, rather than structure and interests derived from structural positions. Thus, Walder's recent studies mark a clear departure from earlier structural analyses of Cultural Revolution factionalism. In this study, I seek to extend his approach to other issues of the Cultural Revolution, including the factional violence in summer 1967-summer 1968 and the subsequent repressive violence under revolutionary committees.

A recent transition in the field of "contentious politics" provides a valuable guidance to the subject at hand. In the past few years, leading scholars of social movements broke away from the well-established theoretical tradition they themselves created (McAdam 1999, Introduction to the Second Edition; McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly 2001; Tilly 2003, 2005). They set aside, while by no means

discarded, the conceptual building blocks of the theoretical tradition—political opportunities, mobilizing structures, and cognitive framings (Tilly 1978; McAdam 1982; Tarrow 1994; McAdam, McCarthy and Zald 1996), calling them static, unitary and western-biased, in favor of a more dynamic model built around emergent and relational properties. Specifically, they call attention to *processes* and *mechanisms* that operate within various contentious *episodes*. Here mechanisms are defined as “a delimited class of events that alter relations among specified sets of elements in identical or closely similar ways over a variety of situations.” Processes are “regular sequences of such mechanisms that produce similar (generally more complex and contingent) transformations of those elements.” And episodes are “continuous streams of contention including collective claims making that bears on other parties’ interests” (McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly 2001: 24). The strategy is that we first identify processes within a contentious episode that constitute or produce the problematic feature of the episode, and then search out the causal mechanisms within those processes (29). I expect that this kind of attempt at middle-range theorizing would be most useful in the analysis of the Cultural Revolution.

What kinds of processes and mechanisms do we expect to find in the episodes of Cultural Revolution conflict in the countryside? In this introduction, I highlight four broad sets of processes and mechanisms in conjunction with the chapters that follow. Needless to say, however, that these abstract concepts are meant not to constrain but only to give broad guide to the analyses to follow.

Diffusion of Insurgencies through the Brokerage of Urban Red Guards

In chapter 2, I examine how insurgencies against local (county) governments

spread from urban centers to rural areas in the later half of 1966. The diffusion of Cultural Revolution turmoil has largely been neglected, since a classical study by Baum (1971) set a parameter by observing that the Cultural Revolution was “primarily an urban phenomenon.” To the extent it spread to rural areas, it spilled over, like “ripples in a pond,” to the suburbs and along major transportation links, but not to remote areas. While subsequent revelations of mass killings in remote rural areas (Zheng 1993, 1996; Song 2002a), as well as studies based on county annals data (Walder and Su 2003; Su 2003; 2006), cast doubt for Baum’s observation,¹⁰ there is still widespread doubt among China scholars about the reach of the conflict into rural areas (for example, Unger 1998).

Contrary to the earlier view, I found that insurgencies spread to the vast majority of Shaanxi counties even before the “January power seizures” of 1967. As for the diffusion processes, I argue that a “brokerage” role of urban college students provided a key mechanism through which insurgencies against local governments spread from urban centers to the remotest parts of the country. “Brokerage” here means “linking of two or more currently unconnected social sites by a unit that mediates their relations with each other and/or with yet another site” (McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly 2001: 157). Insurgencies were carried into rural counties by purposeful agents—urban college students—rather than were “spilled over” amorously from urban centers to the suburbs. Generally regarded higher in authority than local officials, those college students from large cities were able to

¹⁰ Baum himself qualified his point. He observed that the Cultural Revolution was primarily an urban phenomenon *from the spring of 1966 until the mid-autumn of 1968*—i.e., from the beginning of the Cultural Revolution to the end of factional armed battles, and before the political repression under the revolutionary committee. This study finds widespread turmoil in remote rural areas as early as the end of 1966.

convince locals to challenge local authority. The diffusion pattern shows that urban college students systematically “ignited” (*dian huo*) insurgency to one rural county after another from the suburbs to remote rural areas.

*Rebel Identities as Social Relations*¹¹

Chapter 3 considers the processes from the emergence of various oppositions to local authority to the formation of factional coalitions. I found the causes of opposition not unitary but multiple, but all of them—the sending of work teams to schools, the “summer reeducation camp for teachers” (*jiaoshi xiaqi jixunhui*), the Socialist Education Movement (*shehui zhuyi jiaoyu yundong*, hereafter SEM)—can be traced to initiatives from above in the early phase of the Cultural Revolution (or in the case of the SEM, immediately before the Cultural Revolution). These campaigns gave rise to oppositions from different segments of the rural society—students, teachers and rural officials. In late 1966, those disparate groups began to unite in their demand for rehabilitation (*pingfan*), while rural officials also rallied supporters using their networks of “poor and lower-middle peasants” and “preparatory committees” (*choubei weiyuanhui*)—a student organization set up by work teams.

The processes were identical to the pattern in Beijing universities described by Walder (2002; 2006a; 2006b). Students there became divided over their reactions to the work teams. In rural counties, middle school students, teachers, and rural officials were split by the work team, the teachers’ reeducation camp, and the SEM,

¹¹ An idea that identities arise from social interactions and thus should be viewed as a property of social relations is found in Tilly (2005) and McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly (2001: 133-134).

respectively. In either case, oppositions emerged not from their inferior statuses in the status quo ante, but in the face of their sudden loss of statuses. To the extent factional compositions reflected prior statuses, it was not because those with inferior statuses mobilized themselves against the status quo, but because authorities in charge used those status categories to divide those groups in the early phase of the Cultural Revolution. The fact that those different groups became united in their demand for *rehabilitation* in late 1966, after the sudden reversal of policy by the campaign against the “bourgeois reactionary line,” supports this argument. Thus, rebel identities should be viewed as arising from interactions between social actors and local authorities, and not from one’s prior statuses.

*“Conflict Calls for Allies”*¹²

The latter half of Chapter 3 deals with a distinct process: factional polarization. The “January power seizure” of 1967 changed the momentum and direction of Cultural Revolution conflict. From then on, the paralysis of the local government led to the struggle for domination among factional groups, and set in motion the processes of coalition formation at the county level. An implication here is that the “radical”/“conservative” divide stressed in earlier studies became less clear after the power seizure as the rivalry between the authorities and rebel challengers disappeared and factional organizations of all varieties tied up with one another in their pursuit for power. Despite the three different paths identified in relations to different forms of power seizures—insurgent, “workplace” and “combined,” they resulted in factional polarization invariably in most counties. The mechanism at work in this conjuncture

¹² This is the phrase used by Coser (1956) for the title of Chapter 8.

is analogous to "proposition 16" of the Simmer-Coser social conflict theory (Coser 1956). It states:

Struggle may bring together otherwise unrelated persons and groups. Coalitions and temporary associations, rather than more permanent and cohesive groups, will result from conflicts where primarily pragmatic interests of the participants are involved. ... The unifying character of conflict is seen more dramatically when coalitions and instrumental associations produce agreement out of relationships of competition or hostility. Unification is at a minimum level when coalitions are formed for the purpose of defense. Alliance, then, for each particular group reflects the most minimal expression of the desire for self-preservation. ... Most coalitions between already existing groups, especially between numerous groups or between those that differ widely from each other, are formed for defensive purpose only, at least in the view of those who enter the alliance. Alliance, even when not formed for the purpose of conflict, may seem to other groups a threatening and unfriendly act. This very perception, however, leads to the creation of new associations and coalitions, this further stimulating social participation (148-149).

This statement captures the spiraling process in which conflict spurs the formation of opposed factional coalitions, which in turn further intensifies the conflict. A similar process, in combination with the competition for power, I argue, led to the formation of two opposed factions at the county level, after the disappearing of the presiding authority caused by the January power seizure of 1967. The formation of two

opposed factions set stage for the escalation of factional armed battle.

A "State of Anarchy" and Inconsistent Military Interventions

In Chapter 4, I examine relationships between the forms of military intervention and the escalation of factional violence, perhaps one of the least studied issues in sociology. It has been noted by some sociologists that state repression often results in more protest, rather than less (Goldstone and Tilly 2001), and more to the point, inconsistent use of repressive force by the state invited more militant and greater challenges (Timberlake and Williams 1984). But sociologists since Hobbes generally assumed the existence of some form of sovereign authority. For near complete breakdown of the authority, we have to look for insights of other disciplines—most notably those of international relations—to capture the processes of violence escalation between the summer of 1967 and the summer of 1968. I expect that the escalation processes were analogous to the mechanisms of “security dilemma” and “inconsistent interventions.” Theories of security dilemmas (Jervis 1976, 1978; Snyder and Diesing 1977), a subtype of the famous non-zero-sum “prisoner’s dilemmas” (Rapoport and Chammah 1965), posit that in absence of powerful third parties—police, the courts, military forces—as characteristic in international relations, rational actions of each party to secure themselves in the situation of insecurity and distrust lead to an escalating cycle of conflict preparations and actual conflict. Similar processes of “arms races,” alliance building, and a cycle of retaliatory violence were found in the episodes of the Cultural Revolution. The disintegration of the military system after the summer of 1967 had varying effects across counties. In some counties, a near complete breakdown of the military fueled

factional armed battles, while in others continued coordination among local units prevented further escalation of factional conflict. Thus, the presence or absence of local military authority as a "powerful third party" was the key to understand the escalation of Cultural Revolution factional violence.

Another, even more crucial mechanism of violence escalation was inconsistent interventions set off by the disintegration of the local military system. The chapter finds that the death tolls from armed battles were much higher in areas where local military units were divided than in the other areas where they remained united. With each side of contending factions supported by different military units, inconsistent interventions, similar to third world interventions during the cold war, led to the escalation of armed battles, not only by militarizing factional organizations but also by expanding the horizon of the conflict across county borders. Thus, the security dilemma faced by factional organizations and inconsistent military interventions in combination led to the escalation of armed battles. It is also argued that the decentralized and quasi-political nature of the system of the People's Armed Department contributed to the disintegration of the local military system, and thus to the escalation of the factional violence.

"Coordinated Opportunistic Violence" under the One-Faction Dominated Government

In Chapter 5, I identify major patterns of the escalation of repressive violence in conjunction with the processes of demobilization and the reestablishment of local governments. The processes of demobilization determined the forms of new local government, which in turn conditioned the degree of repressive violence under its

rule. In some counties where one of the factions attained dominance with the support of the county People's Armed Department, positions in the "revolutionary committees" (*geming weiyuanhui*) were monopolized by the dominant faction, while in others where armed battles were prolonged to the summer of 1968 and only stopped by regular PLA units, military mediation led to evenly represented governments. Severe repressive violence often took place under the governments monopolized by a faction, while the escalation of violence was checked by balanced governments. I also provided an account on why one-faction domination led to the escalation of repressive violence. The perception of threat from the opposition, the repressive organization that incorporated members of a dominant faction, and factional leadership all combined to cause the escalation of repressive violence under the local government monopolized by a faction.

I term the escalation of repressive violence under partial local governments "coordinated opportunistic violence" from the two concepts created by Charles Tilly (2003): "coordinated destruction" and "opportunism." "Coordinated destruction" is defined as "persons or organizations that specialized in the deployment of coercive means undertake a program of damage to persons and/or objects; examples include war, collective self-immolation, some kinds of terrorism, genocide, and poljicide—the programmed annihilation of a political category's members." And "opportunism" is "a consequence of shielding from routine surveillance and repression; individuals or clusters of individuals use immediately damaging means to pursue generally forbidden ends; examples include looting, gang rape, piracy, revenge killing, and some sorts of military pillage" (Tilly 2003: 14-15). The term may sound a little contradictory because "opportunism" connotes lack of organization and

premeditation. But it captures well the nature of repressive violence under the circumstances: It can be regarded as "coordinated destruction" because the violence was committed by a specialized repressive organization (that incorporated factional members) under the name of local government. But at the same time it was "opportunistic" because it was not only shielded from the surveillance of the central government, but also tinged with revengeful violence by a dominant faction against an inferior faction. Moreover, a dominant faction took advantage of the opportunity presented by its political domination to take revenge on the opponents. Cases of "coordinated opportunistic violence" were a product of local processes, in which a victorious faction monopolized positions in the local government, often with the support of a local military force. They took place in the aftermath of the anarchic armed battle, and often in blind spots from the central government.

PERIODIZATION

The broad periodization scheme used in this study is as follows. The period under study—between the spring of 1966 and 1971—is divided into three periods:

- 1) From the beginning of the Cultural Revolution in spring 1966 to the power seizures of early 1967;
- 2) From the power seizures to the establishment of county revolutionary committees in December 1967-September 1968; and
- 3) From the birth of county revolutionary committees to the end of 1971 when all the violent campaigns under the revolutionary committee—the "Cleansing of Class Rank," the "One Strike, Three Antis," and others—subsided.

The “power seizure” and the establishment of “revolutionary committees” marked major turning points in the course of the Cultural Revolution. Breaking down the local power structure, the power seizure of early 1967 changed the course of the political movement from the struggle against local authority to the conflict between factional organizations. From then on, factional organizations became increasingly polarized, and then were plunged into internecine armed battles. The establishment of county revolutionary committees marked the ending of anarchic armed battles and the beginning of political repression under the name of the “new red government.” While factional struggle continued in varying intensities, the foundation of revolutionary committees clearly changed not only the political context but also the form of political violence.

Finally, it should be noted that this study’s focus on processes and mechanisms calls for particular attention to timing and event sequences, within and across those three broad periods. Thus, all the subsequent chapters include sub-periods, while Chapter 3 extends over the two broad periods—the first and the second. A close examination of the timings and event sequences reveal many previously unknown patterns and processes.

COUNTY ANNALS DATA

Most of the data used in this study are taken from the volumes of county annals (*xianzhi*), published by the counties of Shaanxi Province between the late 1980s and the early 2000s. Shaanxi is a northwestern province of 21.9 million population in 1966. 87 percent of the population, or 19 million, was registered as “agricultural

population" (*nongye renkou*). There were 93 counties and 4 cities in Shaanxi in 1966 (Table 1.1).¹³ Relevant pages of all the 93 county annals were photocopied and coded into data by a Stanford team led by Andrew Walder including myself. I exclude 4 cities—Xi'an, Xianyang, Tongchuan, and Baoji—from the analyses unless relevant, because this study concerns rural, rather than urban, conflicts.¹⁴ The first stage of data coding conducted by the team included such information as the timings of major events of the Cultural Revolution—"power seizures," "first armed battles," and the "founding of revolutionary committees"—and the magnitudes of political violence—the numbers of those killed, injured and politically persecuted—committed in the three periods mentioned above. On the basis of these, I later added many variables—the timings of "first insurgencies," demographic features, the magnitudes of violence in the sub-campaigns (the "cleansing of class ranks," "one strike, three antis, and others), the forms of military interventions, the forms of representation in county revolutionary committees, and others—from the county annals as well as some other sources.¹⁵ I will explain the rules of coding in the respective chapters those variables are used (see also Appendix 1).

¹³ See Shaanxi sheng difangzhi bianzuan weiyuanhui, *Shaanxi shengzhi, xingzheng jianzhi zhi* (*Shaanxi Provincial Annals, Administration Building Annals*) (Xi'an: Sanqin chubanshe, 1992), pp. 8-9.

¹⁴ There is another, more practical, reason for excluding the cities. City annals (*shizhi*) are generally less informative about the Cultural Revolution than county annals.

¹⁵ Other sources of data include volumes of provincial annals (*shengzhi*), district annals (*diquzhi*), as well as scattered volumes of county (and city) military annals (*junshizhi*) and the materials of party organizational history (*dang zuzhi shi ziliao*). Demographic data are also taken from Shaanxi sheng tongji qu, *Shaanxi sheng di shi xian lishi tongji ziliao huibian* (*Compilation of Historical Statistical Materials on the Districts, Cities, and Counties of Shaanxi Province*) (Zhongguo tongji chubanshe, 1991).

Table 1.1 about here

The county annals of Shaanxi counties provide by far the richest account on the Cultural Revolution among those of all the provinces, autonomous regions and “provincial-level cities” (excluding Tibet). On average, Shaanxi county annals spend almost three times as many characters on the Cultural Revolution as those of all the provinces.¹⁶ This gives a unique opportunity to reconstruct processes of Cultural Revolution conflict in Shaanxi counties.

A few words need to be added about the use of county annals data. First, we should be careful about possible underreporting due to self-censorship or inadequate data collection.¹⁷ Walder and Su (2003) found that the numbers of reported victims (those killed, injured, and persecuted) were positively correlated to the number of words devoted to the Cultural Revolution. Given the relatively “high quality” of Shaanxi county annals, I do not adjust those numbers by weighting the length of the accounts, as Walder and Su did in their estimates. Instead, I employ the following measure. Whenever using statistical methods, but not when I describe qualitatively,

¹⁶ Shaanxi county annals spend an average of 11,087 characters on the Cultural Revolution, while the overall average is 4,066. See Table 1 in Walder and Su (2003: 81) for the comparison of the numbers of characters devoted to the Cultural Revolution across provinces. See also Appendix 1 for more details on Shaanxi county annals.

¹⁷ It is difficult to imagine the possibility of “overreporting” in this particular case. Given China’s current political climate, local officials have little to gain from exaggerating what happened during the Cultural Revolution.

I exclude those county annals without an independent section or chapter on the Cultural Revolution. Because those county annals with an independent section without exception provide basic numbers and timings of our interests, in addition to the description of events and background in varying detail, we can assume that estimates derived from the sample are not seriously biased.¹⁸ Excluding 18 county annals without an independent Cultural Revolution section leaves 75 cases in the sample. Needless to say, however, that this study is based first and foremost on my close reading of historical accounts given in the county annals, in which Shaanxi county annals excel the others.

¹⁸ I also conducted a statistical testing on the possible "confounding" relationship between the numbers of characters and the numbers of deaths due to the Cultural Revolution. While the relationship was also found in 93 volumes of Shaanxi county annals, it disappeared after excluding the 18 county annals without an independent Cultural Revolution section.

Chapter 2 The “Exchange of Experiences” and the Diffusion of Insurgencies against the Local Government

The Chinese Cultural Revolution was a nationwide upheaval that involved not only urban cities but also rural counties. Despite the lingering doubt about the reach of the Cultural Revolution into the countryside,¹⁹ a recent study demonstrated with systematic evidence that the human impact of the Cultural Revolution in the countryside was as severe as, if not more severe than, that in cities (Walder and Su 2003). One of the unsolved mysteries in its complex history, then, is how the great power struggle started at some urban centers spread to the remotest parts of the country. Unless accepting the theory of spontaneous outburst of discontent²⁰ everywhere in a short time in this vast continent, we have to ask how and by what means the conflict spread from the center to the peripheries.

Due to lack of systematic data, and, as a result, the urban focus of past studies, researchers have not paid much attention to issues related to the rural Cultural

¹⁹ Some 30 years since Richard Baum’s excellent study (1971) appeared, the debate on the rural impact of the Chinese Cultural Revolution lit up again between leading researchers on the subject (Unger 1998; Walder and Su 2003). With recent publications of documentary evidence on rural atrocities also serving as a backdrop (Zheng 1996; Song 2002a), the debate centered on the reach of the conflict into the countryside—whether it stopped at the country-level or penetrated into villages—and the sources of the conflict—those rooted in local “tradition” vs. in Party-state structures. Before engaging in the debate on these issues, however, we need to accumulate more evidence.

²⁰ According to the “classical model” of social movements—“mass society theory,” “status inconsistency,” and “collective behavior,” structural strains—“systemic strain,” social isolation, or “status inconsistency”—would cause mass movements. These strains would result in disruptive psychological states—alienation, cognitive dissonance, normative ambiguity, which drive individuals into extreme behavior—mass movements. See McAdam (1999: 5-19) on the classical model of social movements and its weaknesses.

Revolution, including that of the diffusion of the conflict from the urban to the rural areas. The only existing model, provided by Richard Baum (1971), was in fact a model of non-diffusion, rather than diffusion. Constructing data from contemporary Chinese media reports, as well as Hong Kong newspapers and Red Guard tabloids, he found that the diffusion pattern of Cultural Revolution conflict was that of "spillover" from major urban centers to the surrounding areas. Like "ripples in a pond," conflict radiated outward over time from urban centers to the suburbs in more or less concentric circles. To the extent that the turmoil reached rural areas, it was limited to suburban communes and villages, leaving the vast majority of the rural hinterland spared of the violence. The Cultural Revolution was therefore "primarily an urban phenomenon."

By using 93 mostly rural counties of Shaanxi Province as examples, this study not only shows that the Cultural Revolution made a strong impact on a vast majority of counties even before the onset of "power seizures" in early 1967, but also tries to reconstruct carefully the patterns of the diffusion. To this end, I chose the "first insurgency against the local government"²¹ as the example of Cultural Revolution conflict. Among a variety of events in the Cultural Revolution, "first insurgency" marked the earliest incident in which students, as well as other groups/individuals, rose up against the local political leadership. "First insurgencies" took place in the vast majority of the counties (86 percent) between August and December 1966 (Table 2.1 and Figure 2.1). This was before a nationwide tumult of "January power

²¹ Operationally, "first insurgency" refers to the first instance in which students, officials, or any other groups (or individuals) attacked the county party committees (i.e., the center of power in counties) by means of physical violence (beating, forcible abduction, confinement, and others of the secretaries or vice-secretaries), or verbal or written statements (chanting of slogans, posters, handbills, and so on).

seizures swept all over the country in early 1967.

Table 2.1 and Figure 2.1 about here

This study finds that the “great exchange of experiences” (*da chuanlian*), a form of “brokerage,” provided a powerful mechanism for the diffusion of insurgency. Insurgencies against local governments spread from urban centers to the remotest parts of the country, through the “brokerage” role of urban college students. “Brokerage” here means “linking of two or more currently unconnected social sites by a unit that mediates their relations with each other and/or with yet another site” (McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly 2001: 157). Traveling Red Guards set the fire of insurgency one after another rather systematically from the suburban counties to the inland counties. The unveiled image of the diffusion is neither “spontaneous eruptions of local discontents” nor “ripples in a pond,” but a “series of incendiary fires” set systematically by traveling Red Guards. While indigenous dissatisfactions may well have existed, they did not surface spontaneously. Nor did many local people take risks in response to the manipulation of “frames” at the Center, by way of “direct communication” through the centralized media system. It took the instigation by human agents—traveling Red Guards—for a majority of rural residents to rise up against the political leadership.

THE EXCHANGE OF EXPERIENCES

The Chinese word *chuanlian* literally means “linking up with one another in turn.” During the Cultural Revolution, the word was widely used to express the “exchange of experiences,” or journeys aimed at it, among students from all over the country. The policy of the “revolutionary great exchange of experiences” (*geming da chuanlian*) generated a nationwide wave of insurgencies against the local political leadership by legitimizing the free travel of Red Guard students.

The policy of the exchange of experiences originated in July 1966, when Mao Zedong criticized the ways of sending work teams and prohibiting the link-ups among schools and departments as “oppressing students.” In early August, students from middle schools and universities in Beijing began to go out of campuses and “exchange experiences” with one another, and laid blame on the work teams.

On August 18, Mao received nearly a million Red Guards in Tiananmen Square, marking the first of a series of such mass receptions participated by a total of 11 million students and teachers from all over the country.²² Mao’s first mass reception officially started a nationwide movement of the “exchange of experiences.” On the same evening, the first groups of middle school students set out in two separate directions—to the northwestern cities of Xi’an and Lanzhou, on the one hand, and for the southern cities of Hubei, Hunan, Guangdong, and Guangxi, on the other.²³ In mid-late August, Red Guards from Beijing were making trouble in various parts of

²² In total, the mass reception was held 8 times—on August 18, August 31, September 15, October 1, October 18, November 3, November 11, and November 25-26—by the end of November (Chen et al 1996: 489).

²³ Most of the early traveling Red Guards were the sons and daughters of “revolutionary cadres.” While supposed to travel at their own expense, they were received by the party committees of places they visited (Chen et al 1996: 460).

the country. In Xi'an, Tianjin, Changsha, Zhengzhou, Qingdao, and Hefei, Red Guards attempted to attack leaders of the provincial and municipal party committees, and met the counterattack of local students, workers and peasants—calling themselves “Scarlet Guards” (*chiweidui*)—organized by the party committees.²⁴

At the same time, the number of students visiting the capital from other parts of the country became increasingly larger. On August 31, during Mao's second reception of Red Guards, Zhou Enlai declared that the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party (Party Center) would invite middle school and university students from all over the country to Beijing. On September 5, the Party Center and the State Council issued the “Notice on Organizing Revolutionary Teachers and Students from Outside to Visit Beijing to Observe the Cultural Revolution Movement” (the Chinese Cultural Revolution Database, CD-ROM, hereafter CCRD, 2002). It asked students from outside Beijing to visit the capital in an organized way for the “exchange of experiences.” The travel fare, food expenses, and the other costs of living are all paid by the state. The notice led to a dramatic increase in the number of traveling students from all over the country. The “reception centers for Red Guards” were set up everywhere. Trains, automobiles, and passenger boats were all packed with Red Guards. In addition, tens of millions of students painfully walked around the country. Popular destinations were large cities such as Beijing and Shanghai, and revolutionary sacred grounds such as Yan'an, Shaoshan and

²⁴ In mid August, some students from Xi'an, as well as Changsha and others, were already in Beijing, reporting on local situations and demanding for the rehabilitation from “persecution” (Chen et al. 1996: 460-461). Observing big character posters in the streets of Beijing, a Japanese journalist reported that instigated local college students of Xi'an came to blows with workers and peasants shouting “Defend the County Party Committee to Death” (Takada 1971).

Jinggangshan.

Pressed by troubles caused by the overcrowdedness of the nation's transportation system, on October 28, Zhou Enlai proposed at the Central Work Conference that the "great exchange of experiences" be all conducted on foot. An editorial of the *People's Daily* also called for traveling on foot, "Red Guards Are Not Afraid of the Hardships of the Expedition."²⁵ Despite the request, the number of students taking free rides did not decrease. On November 16, the Party Center was compelled to declare the suspension of the "exchange of experiences" by April next year. While the suspension was never lifted,²⁶ the "exchange of experiences" among "rebel factions" continued for years to come.

Besides causing a serious industrial bottleneck by overcrowding the country's transportation system, and thus squandering the nation's wealth, the policy of the "exchange of experiences" created political upheavals all over the country. In Qufu, Shandong, the home of Confucius (*Kong Zi*), "Jinggangshan" Red Guards of Beijing Teachers' College smashed cultural assets; in Shanghai, Red Guards of Beijing University instigated the overthrowing of the municipal party committee; and Red Guards of Nankai University visited various cities under the direction of Kang Sheng, and dragged out "traitors" among local leading officials (Chen et al. 1996: 460-461). This study seeks to determine how the policy of the "exchange of experiences" and the development of insurgencies in inland counties are related. By tracing the footprint of Red Guards traveling across the counties of Shaanxi, I reconstruct processes of the diffusion of insurgencies against local governments.

²⁵ *People's Daily*, October 22, 1966 (CCRD 2002).

²⁶ On March 19, 1967, the Party Center issued "Notice Concerning the Halting of the Nationwide Exchange of Experiences" (CCRD 2002).

PRELUDE TO INSURGENCY

Campaign against the "Three Family Village": Mid-May to Early-June 1966

In the counties of Shaanxi, like many other places in China, the "May 16 notice"²⁷ issued by the Party Center started a long and torturous process of the Cultural Revolution. The notice suggested that the target of the "Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution" was anti-party and anti-socialism "academic authorities," whose "bourgeois reactionary thoughts" were corrupting the country's academic and art circles. In the later half of May, county party committees convened a meeting and communicated the "May 16 notice." In schools, school party officials directed a campaign for criticizing the "Three Family Village" (*san jia cun*), a group of writers/officials whose writings were accused of a veiled assault on the sacred precepts of the Party. With the approval of the school party branch, students produced large numbers of big character posters denouncing the "Three Family Village" and their supposed associates in their own schools.

While the campaign was directed by school party branches, latent tension was already simmering under the surface. The following account captures the difficulty school officials faced in directing student activities. In mid May 1966, a student at Yanchuan Middle School was refused by a school's political commissar, Liu Weihua, to put the school's seal to his big character poster "Question Peng Zhen." The student immediately posted another poster titled "Question Liu Weihua," who was criticized for subscribing to the *Beijing Evening Paper* and clipping "Yanshan

²⁷ "CCP CC (Chinese Communist Party Central Committee) circular with the original appendix 2"; *zhongfa* [66] 267 (CCRD 2002).

Yehua,"²⁸ and then recommending them to students. Liu became the county's first 'company of Deng Tuo' (Deng Tuo was an alleged member of the "Three Family Village," along with Wu Han and Liao Mosha.) Before long, the targets were extended to teachers of "undesirable backgrounds" (Yanchuan County Annals, hereafter XZ, 1999: 823).

In early June, after Nie Yuanzi's big character poster criticizing Beijing University's "reactionary academic authority" was broadcasted and then published in the *People's Daily*, the targets of the campaign were expanded to include not only teachers but also school and county) officials. In some counties, middle school students responded to this latest development in Beijing. In Xunyi County,²⁹ soon after the Central People's Broadcasting Station aired Nie's big character poster on June 1, posters criticizing school officials and teachers by name appeared in schools (Xunyi XZ 2000: 744). Meanwhile, in neighboring Bin County, a teacher committed suicide in protest against incriminating posters posted by students (Bin XZ 2000: 577). In Long County, about 200 kilometers northwest of Xi'an, students of Long County Middle School and others responded to Nie's poster appeared on the *People's Daily* on June 2, and put up a poster criticizing school party officials (Long XZ 1993: 688).

In at least two counties, student criticism spilled out of the schools, and was directed at the county party committees. In Yulin County, a northern district center of 213,000 people bordering with Inner Mongolia, 11 students of Yulin Middle School put up a poster "Yulin District Party Committee Is a Big Black Shop" on June

²⁸ "Yanshan Yehua" is a series of essays written by Deng Tuo.

²⁹ Xunyi is located about 110 kilometers north of Xi'an, and had the total population of 160 thousands.

1.³⁰ This was followed by another big character poster attacking the county people's committee posted by some 40 officials and construction workers (Yulin City Annals 1996: 477). In Yao County, some 70 kilometers north of Xi'an and a southwestern neighbor of the coal mining city of Tongchuan, on June 19, some upper-grade students of Yao Middle School took the lead in putting up the county's first big character poster attacking the school party branch. Before long, three students of Xi'an Jiaotong University "returned home and ignited fire" (*huixiang dianhuo*). They posted a poster "Bombard the County Party Committee" (Yao XZ 1997: 478).³¹ Except for these, however, there were no other reported cases of students "going out" of schools and directing criticism at county party committees. In the vast majority of the counties, therefore, student criticism was limited within schools and directed at "bourgeois academic authorities"—teachers and school officials.

Moreover, county annals suggest that even after Nie Yuanzi's big character poster, student activities were not only confined within schools but also directed by school party officials. In many counties, they were still limited to formalized composition, poster writing, criticism rallies, and others aimed against the "Three Family Village." In an inland county of Jingbian, 370 kilometers north of Xi'an, a student of Jingbian Middle School posted the first big character poster denouncing a teacher on June 3, with the approval of the party branch (Jingbian XZ 1993: 333). In most counties, student attacks against teachers and school officials intensified only

³⁰ At that time, the political leadership of Yulin County was taken over by the Socialist Education General Work Team of the Yulin District Party Committee. This is why student criticism was directed at the district party committee, rather than the county party committee.

³¹ In another county, leading county-level officials in charge of education were attacked in early June (Huanglong XZ 1995: 674).

after work teams took over school party branches.

Work Teams Sent to Schools: Mid-June

Unlike Beijing, where school party branches under student attack asked the higher levels to send out work teams (*gongzuo zu* or *dui*) (Walder 2002: 443-451; Lee 1978: 27-31), many Shaanxi counties seem to have sent them out in response to the order from above, rather than to the developments in schools. There were not many reported cases of students challenging the school party branches before the sending of work teams.³² Nor, as I describe below, in most schools did students challenge the work teams after their arrival.

In Shaanxi, most of the county party committees sent out work teams to schools and other "cultural institutions" in the middle of June, with the first work team arriving in school on June 2 (Fu County) and the last on July 12 (Yao County). The numbers of officials sent as work team personnel ranged from 3 to 18,³³ varying probably with the size of student populations in schools. Work teams were usually led by a leading county-level official such as a county magistrate (*xian zhang*), a vice-party secretary, a chief of education or propaganda department.³⁴

³² A possible caveat is that county annals are not very detailed on developments within schools, and thus a possibility that I underestimate the extensiveness of student revolt against the county party branch before the arrival of work teams. But I regard this possibility as slim, because the activities of work teams and students after the arrival of the work teams were described in a more detailed manner.

³³ For example, the work teams of Yulin and Mizhi Counties consisted of 3 to 5 members; those of Yanchuan County 3 members; a work team of Linyou County 15 members; and that of Fugu County 18 members. In Zichang County, a 3-men work team was originally sent to Zichang Middle School on June 11. Two weeks later, the number of officials was increased to more than 30, apparently to tighten their grip on rebellious students (Zichang XZ 1993: 828).

³⁴ For example, Yanchuan County Party Committee dispatched work teams to two

In schools, work teams relied on a tested means of mass campaigns under Mao's regime. They typically set aside the school party branches,³⁵ and led mass criticism of teachers and school officials. In Dingbian County, for example, the county party committee dispatched work teams to Dingbian Middle School, Xiangyang Elementary School, and a county troupe, making them the "experimental points" (*shidian danwei*) for the Cultural Revolution. Among them, Dingbian Middle School was the top priority (*zhongdian*). The work team used the experiences of the Anti-Rightist and Socialist Education movements as guidelines, and, after entering the school, "rooted themselves deeply into the school" (*zhagen*) and "linked up" (*chuanlian*) with informants (Dingbian XZ 2003: 763). Elsewhere, a work team sent to a county middle school used classes (*ban*) as a unit, and organized "leftist" students to disclose teachers' problems in teaching and lifestyle, using "big contending, big letting go, and big character posters (*da ming, da fang, da zi bao*) as weapons." At the same time, the work team set restrictions on student activities by ordering that they "not post big character posters on the street (out of the campus), distinguish between inside and outside, and not go out to hold rallies and stage demonstrations" (Fugu XZ 1994: 576)

When selecting targets, work teams most often used teachers' class

middle schools—Yanchuan Middle School and Yongping Middle School. The work team to Yanchuan Middle School was composed of the vice-county magistrate, Ma Cunli, and two others, and that to Yongping Middle School the head of the propaganda department, Bai Yisheng, and two others (Yanchuan XZ 1999: 823).

³⁵ There is at least two counties in which the work teams did not replace the school party branches but cooperated with them in leading the campaign (Mizhi XZ 1993: 389; Zichang XZ 1993: 828). There is not enough evidence to explore implications of this interesting point: whether work teams replaced or worked together with school party branches. See the discussion on the cases of Beijing universities in Walder (2002: 446).

backgrounds, past histories, and attitude (both in class and in private) as criteria. In Dingbian Middle School, the work team divided teachers and students into “leftists” and “rightists,” according to their class backgrounds and attitude toward the Cultural Revolution. Some 40 teachers and students were singularly criticized as “reactionaries” (Dingbian XZ 2003: 763). In another county middle school, teachers and school officials who were from “landlord, rich peasant, reactionary and bad element” (*di fu fan huai*) backgrounds, had “complicated social relations” (*shehui guanxi fuzha*), and had bad working attitude (*gongzuo biao xian cha*) or lifestyle (*shenghuo zuofeng buhao*) were singled out as targets for criticism (Mizhi XZ 1993: 389). Elsewhere, a work team instigated students against teachers by publicizing teachers’ personal dossiers (Yichuan XZ 2000: 588-589).

In a more incriminating case, a rumor of a spying activity in Jingbian Middle School led the work team to conduct a massive search involving the entire school. By early July, 16 out of 42 teachers and staff members were deemed “anti-party and anti-socialism black gang elements,” and 8 were placed under “isolated investigation” (*geli shencha*). In addition, more than 20 students received various forms of criticisms and struggles (Jingbian XZ 1993: 333).

In some middle schools, defiant students confronted work teams, in a much similar way to Beijing college students. In Hua County, a work team headed by the chief of the county education bureau was sent to Xianlin Middle School on June 21. Upon arriving, he set aside the school party committee, declaring that his work team would direct the Cultural Revolution in the school, and began to discipline students. At that point, a student put up a poster disclosing problems of a class chief. The work team instructed him not to put up big character posters. The disgruntled

student then posted a poster, "Work Team Suppressed Student Movement," on the front gate of the building where the work team head resided. Learning that the work team unofficially decided the student in question a "rightist," some students and teachers rose up against the work team. In mid August, the work team was ordered to engage in public self-criticism and withdraw from the school. The county party committee replaced the work team with liaison personnel, who would inform on activities in the school (Hua XZ, unpublished manuscript, 5-6). In Zizhou County, a few students of Shuanghuyu Middle School posted a big character poster opposing the work team in mid July. The work team immediately organized loyal teachers and students to struggle against those defiant students by turns (Zizhou XZ 1993: 558).

Despite these cases, the confrontations between work teams and students similar to those that took place in Beijing universities seem to have been rare *before mid August*. It was only after mid August, when the "Sixteen Points"³⁶ was announced and Red Guards from Beijing began to arrive with the news of Beijing students dispelling work teams, that the confrontation spread to a larger number of schools. Moreover, a considerable number of counties did not pull back work teams even after August 1966.³⁷ It seems, therefore, that the confrontations between work teams and students in rural Shaanxi did not develop internally but were in many cases triggered by external developments. Before getting into a crucial juncture of

³⁶ See later discussion on the "Sixteen Points."

³⁷ There are at least 6 such counties, among which 2 counties did not pull work teams out until November 1966. In Mian and Qishan Counties, the work teams remained in schools until September (Mian XZ 1989: 454; Qishan XZ 1992: 23); in Mizhi and Yan'an until October (Mizhi XZ 1993: 319; Yan'an City Annals 1994: 825); in Lingyou and Suide until November (Lingyou XZ 1993: 415; Suide XZ 2003: 814).

mid-late August, however, I need to touch on another form of institutionalized campaign used against teachers.

Summer Reeducation Camp for Teachers: Mid-July

In mid July, the political movement against “bourgeois academic authorities” took a more formalized form. As schools broke up for the summer, elementary and middle school teachers were gathered en masse in a “reeducation camp.” In the “summer reeducation camp for teachers” (*jiaoshi xiaqi jixunhui*), all the teachers of elementary and middle schools in each county were concentrated in one place, usually in a middle school in the county town or in other isolated facilities, and placed under custodial investigation for 1-3 months.³⁸ There they were joined by a work team—usually much larger in size than those sent to middle schools—as well as activist students, workers and peasants.³⁹

Compared to the sending of work teams to schools, the “summer reeducation camp” provided a closed, and thus much more controlled, setting for the work teams

³⁸ The duration of the camps seems to have depended on the distance from Xi’an, the provincial center. In the counties of districts closer to Xi’an, the camps were broken up after about a month, but in inland counties, they lasted for about 3 months.

³⁹ In Fugu County, 592 teachers (among them 236 were “*gongban*,” or on the payroll of the county, and 356 were “*minban*,” or hired by villages and towns) were gathered and divided into 18 small groups. The work team in charge was composed of 35 officials (among them 15 were officials of the bureau or higher levels). In addition, 3 workers, 26 peasants, and 20 students participated in the camp (Fugu XZ 1994: 576). In Ningqiang County, the county party committee put together 120 officials into a work team, which took charge of the reeducation camp of 1,100 teachers (Ningqiang XZ 1995: 670). In Dali County, 2461 teachers were put into the camp. 33 workers, 325 “poor and lower-middle” peasants, and 467 student representatives were sent there to engage in various forms of investigation and persecution (Dali XZ 1994: 725). In Long County, 945 teachers were joined by 81 representatives of workers, peasants and students (Long XZ 1993: 688).

to carry out persecution. This has several implications. First of all, the work teams did not have to deal with possible student protest against their handling of teachers' problems. Supported only by loyal "leftist" students, as well as peasants and workers, the work teams had a free hand in the persecution of teachers. Moreover, the persecution of teachers and school officials was conducted in a more regimented way, and as a result, became much severer. Teachers were usually classified into several groups—"leftists" (*zuo pai*), "middle of the roaders" (*zhongjian pai*), "rightists" (*you pai*), "black gang elements" (*heibang fenzi*) and so on—according to their past histories and class backgrounds.⁴⁰ Teachers of "bad class backgrounds" (*jiating chushen bu hao*) and those with past "problems" (*you wenti*), as well as school officials, were often singled out and exposed to "soul touching" (*chuiji linghun*) criticism and corporal punishment. While varying across counties, about 15 to 30 percent of all the teachers and school officials were struggled against, and labeled as "rightists," "spies," "monsters and demons" and others.

The case of Qian County provides a good insight into how the "reeducation camp" was conducted in the counties of Shaanxi. On July 25, the "teachers' reeducation meeting" was started in the county town, where those teachers deemed the "Three Family Village," the "Four Family Shop"⁴¹ (*si jia dian*), and the "bourgeois black line" were disclosed and criticized. In the initial phase, the

⁴⁰ For example, in the reeducation camp of Fugu County, teachers were classified into four categories: "leftists," "middle of the roaders," "those with serious problems" (which nonetheless came under "contradictions within people"), and "black gang elements" ("contradictions between enemies and friends") (Fugu XZ 1994: 25, n. 3).

⁴¹ "Four Family Shop" is a disgraceful label given to Peng Zhen, Luo Ruiqing, Lu Dingyi, and Yang Shangkun. These leading party officials were criticized along with the writers of the "Three Family Village."

readings of Yao Wenyuan's "Criticizing the New Historical Play 'Hai Rui Dismissed from Office'"⁴² and *People's Daily* editorial "Sweep Away All Monsters and Demons"⁴³ were linked with the criticism of the "Three Family Village" and the disclosure of problems among teachers. On the third day, after having been criticized, a teacher of Fengyang Commune killed himself by jumping into a well. When the dead teacher was provided for further criticism and denunciation, it created a high tide of disclosure and criticism. Many teachers were exposed. They accused one another, exaggerated and dogmatized small matters, and even cooked up false stories and slandered maliciously. Every teacher felt threatened and feared for their own safety. On August 9, when the "Sixteen Points" was published in the *People's Daily*, the persecution of teachers became even more violent. Accused teachers were subjected to many forms of ill-treatment: yelled at, ganged up on, beaten and kicked, and so on. Some even could not eat because of cuts and bruises on the head and body. After 63 days, the "summer reeducation camp" came to a forced end on September 25, because of the opposition of rebel students. In the end, more than 400 elementary and middle school teachers, or 30 percent of them, were censured, and among them 120 were dismissed. At the same time, more than 100 new public school "teachers" were hired among peasant activists. More than 20 teachers with "serious problems" continued to be detained and interrogated until November 21 (Qian XZ 2003: 479-480).⁴⁴

⁴² Published on November 10, 1965 in Shanghai's *Wenhui bao* (CCRD 2002).

⁴³ Published on June 1, 1966 (CCRD 2002).

⁴⁴ In January 1967, the summer reeducation camp was regarded as the "bourgeois reactionary line" and the attack against the masses. A meeting was held to rehabilitate persecuted teachers, burn the materials (*cailiao*) collected during the meeting, and dismiss those newly hired peasant-teachers. Major leaders committing

Similar persecutions were repeated in almost every county. Among 945 teachers gathered in the camp in Long County, 310 were struggled against in various meetings and attacked with big character posters, and more than 150 were rendered "rightists," "counterrevolutionaries," "monsters and demons" (Long XZ 1993: 688). In Qianyang County, teachers who were hired before the Liberation and were of "exploiting" class origins were targeted (Qianyang XZ 1991: 279). In Yao County, all the teachers other than those of Yao Middle School, or 780 of them, were sent to the camp. Among them, more than 200 were struggled against or criticized, and 3 killed themselves. Teachers of Yao Middle School were taken to a separate camp, in which more than 60, or two-thirds, were made "black gangs" or those "with problems" (Yao XZ 1997: 478). In Yanchuan, a total of 813 teachers, educational and cultural officials, and student representatives participated. 70 teachers and educational officials were singled out, and then criticized and struggled (Yanchuan XZ 1999: 823).

The summer reeducation camp may well have served the purpose of the county party leadership in two senses. First, county leaders could use it to turn the brunt of student attack against "bourgeois academic authorities." By "making teachers the object of attack first" (*cong jiaoshi kaidao*), county party officials tried to deflect student attacks by diverting them against teachers. Second, they could also enhance its control over the political movement by shielding teachers and school officials from recalcitrant students and containing the campaign within a closed setting.

the "bourgeois reactionary line" were criticized, and paraded in public with a large nameplate.

THE FIRST WAVE OF INSURGENCIES

Officials and Students Responding to the "Sixteen Points": Early-Mid August

On July 18, Mao, who had been watching for an opportunity in Hangzhou, returned to Beijing, and went on the offensive.⁴⁵ Shortly after his return to Beijing, Mao decided to pull back work teams and lift the ban on the "exchange of experiences."⁴⁶ These moves were no doubt intended to unleash students' energy to carry out the Cultural Revolution. In early August, in the 11th Plenum of the 18th Chinese Communist Party Central Committee, he succeeded in selling a crucial document to central leaders. The "Decision Concerning the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution" (also known as the "Sixteen Points"), adopted by the Central Committee on August 8 and published in the *People's Daily* next day, stated that "[t]he emphasis of this political movement is to punish (*zheng*) those power holders within the Party who take the capitalist road."⁴⁷ Thus, in a matter of three weeks, the prime target of the movement was changed from "bourgeois academic authorities" to "power holders who take the capitalist road," and students and the masses were freed from restraints to attack the newly designated target.

⁴⁵ Mao was not in Beijing, but in Hangzhou and Shanghai, from late May to mid July. After Peng Zhen and his "Cultural Revolution Five-person Small Group" were brought down on May 16 (by the "May 16 Notice"), Liu Shaoqi and his associates were trying to hold grip on developments in middle schools and universities in Beijing, in opposition to Kang Sheng, Jiang Qing and other members of the new "Central Cultural Revolution Small Group" (CCRG).

⁴⁶ These two methods—the sending of work teams to schools and the ban on the "exchange of experiences"—were viewed as associated with the "Liu-Deng bourgeois reactionary line."

⁴⁷ The document also demanded to criticize "bourgeois reactionary academic authorities." This ambiguity may have left some leeway for party officials to maneuver. Even after the "Sixteen Points," some county leaders tried to divert popular criticism against "academic authorities."

In the northwestern province of Shaanxi, these changes did not bring an immediate or uniform impact on all the counties across the province. Rather they were accompanied by substantial time lag, and produced various impacts across counties. In some counties, local students who took cue from the developments in Beijing challenged the authority of the party committees immediately after the announcement of the "Sixteen Points," by revolting against work teams or breaking into "summer reeducation camps for teachers." In others, those new "frames" were brought by traveling Red Guards from Beijing, and then Xi'an, in the wake of Mao's first mass reception of Red Guards in mid August. In those counties, visited by traveling Red Guards from major urban centers, local students were either instigated by or cooperated with traveling Red Guards to attack the political leadership. This early agitation by urban (and in many cases college) students often led to violent clashes between students and the "masses"—peasants, workers and teachers—mobilized by party officials. But in yet many other counties, the party committees were spared of student rebellion for another few months. In those counties, work teams continued to operate in schools as well as in teacher's reeducation camps as if no policy change took place. In this and the following subsections, I describe the processes that led to the first wave of insurgencies against the county party committees. In doing so, I pay particular attention to the reactions of both county officials and local students to the rapidly changing environments, and the movement of traveling Red Guards from Beijing, Xi'an and others.

In general, the reversal of policies at the Center caught local leaders off-guarded. County party officials were following the order from above when they first sent out work teams. They were now told to pull them back because the policy

was a "mistake." The change prompted some county leaders to pull back work teams hurriedly. In Fugu County, following the publication of Mao's big character poster, "Bombard the Headquarters," on August 5 and a meeting of the Northwestern Bureau in mid August, the county party secretary suddenly pulled the work team out of Fugu Middle School, leaving others perplexed. On 20th, the provincial party committee ordered by phone that work teams make self-criticism in front of all students and teachers. On 23rd, the county party committee decided that the work team members who had been stationed in Fugu Middle School return to the school to receive the criticism of "revolutionary teachers and students" (Fugu XZ 1994: 576). In Chengcheng County, on August 8, the day the "Sixteen Points" was announced, the county party committee decided to pull back work teams, and replace them with liaison personnel. On 16th, the "Preparatory Committee for the Cultural Revolution" (*wenhua geming choubei weiyuanhui*) was formed in Chengcheng Middle School (Chengcheng XZ 1991: 429). In Yulin County, the county party committee and the Socialist Education work team sent by the district party committee⁴⁸ decided to pull back work teams on August 6, even before the issuance of the "Sixteen Points" (Yulin City Annals 1996: 477).

In other counties, however, party officials were outpaced by politically savvy students. Taking their cue from the latest changes, students started to challenge work teams and even county party committees. In Ningqiang No. 1 Middle School, students defined that the "work team oppressed their revolutionary actions, and created a situation in which students fought against students, and the masses against

⁴⁸ In the early phase of the Cultural Revolution, the county party committees in some counties were being taken over by Socialist Education work teams sent by the district party committees.

the masses.” Students asked the work team, “What did you come to do?” and shouted, “We need ‘Sixteen Points,’ not ‘work team!’” Pressed by the situation, the county party committee withdrew the work team, and the county party secretary and a vice-secretary made public self-criticisms (Ningqiang XZ 1995: 670). “Summer reeducation camps for teachers” were also attacked by students who had learned about the developments in Beijing. In Pucheng County, when the news that Beijing students dispelled work teams reached the county, students broke into the reeducation camp, claiming that the sending of work teams and the summer reeducation camp were the “bourgeois reactionary line” and binding the masses’ hands and feet. The reeducation camp came to a forced end. Later, criticized teachers organized themselves into a rebel group, and demanded rehabilitation. From August to October, the work team heads made self-criticism in a series of criticism rallies in schools and communes, and “black materials” (*hei cailiao*) were burnt (Pucheng XZ 1993: 1 in the appendix).

In some counties, the revolt against work teams escalated into the attack against the county Party Committees. In Dali County, the news that the Red Guards of the Middle School attached to Qinghua University gained support of the Central Cultural Revolution Group (CCRG) was brought from Beijing, Red Guard organizations sprung up in schools, and began to strike at the educational institutions and the Party and government organs (Dali XZ 1994: 726). In the evening of August 26, “rebel” students of several local schools, teachers from the “reeducation camps,” as well as some masses—more than 2,000 in total—surrounded leaders of the county Party Committee and People’s Committee, shouting slogans, “Bombard the Northwestern Bureau!” “Bombard the Shaanxi Provincial Party Committee!” “Bombard the Dali

County Party Committee!" "Overthrow the Northwestern Bureau!" "Revolution is No Crime!" "To Rebel is Justified!" They blamed the county Party Committee for "blocking Chairman Mao's voice," and demanded 100 automobiles to go to Xi'an to "rebel." The disturbance lasted until the next noon, resulting in a few shattered windows and lights. It is important to note, however, that there were a limited number of cases⁴⁹ in which students revolted against the county Party Committees "spontaneously" in response to the policy changes or developments in Beijing.

The Exchange of Experiences and the First Wave of Insurgencies: Mid-Late August

On August 18, Mao met one million Red Guards in Tiananmen Square for the first time. At the same time, Mao unleashed eager Red Guards by sanctioning the "exchange of experiences" among students from all over the country. As seen above, the first groups of Beijing Red Guards departed for Xi'an, and for other cities, in the same evening. Xi'an City Annals also reports the arrival of Beijing Red Guards immediately after Mao's first reception (1996: 151). In mid-August to early-September, Beijing students joined forces with local students in their rebellion against the provincial party committee and the Northeastern Bureau, as well as the *Shaanxi Daily*.

The effect of the first flow of Beijing Red Guards was not limited to Xi'an, however. Shaanxi county annals reveal that this early "exchange of experiences" not only affected the provincial center, but also "spilled over" to suburban counties. Figure 2.1 shows that insurgencies against county party committees reached its first

⁴⁹ Among 26 counties that underwent insurgencies in August 1966, only 2 cases, or 8 percent, followed this pattern.

peak in August 1966.⁵⁰ Insurgencies were reported in more than one third of the counties in August alone.⁵¹ As the later analysis shows, most of the insurgencies took place in the surrounding area of Xi'an and were instigated by traveling students from Beijing and Xi'an. For now, I provide some examples to illuminate the point.

In mid August, Red Guards from Beijing and Xi'an Jiaotong University visited Qian County, some 70 kilometers northwest of Xi'an, to "stir things up" (*shan feng dian huo*).⁵² Officials in charge of the "summer reeducation camp for teachers" immediately organized loyal teachers to surround those students. On August 25, students of Qian County Teachers' College and the County First Middle School took to the streets. After copying central instructions and directives concerning the Cultural Revolution, they put up big character posters: "Revolution is No Crime, To Rebel is Justified" and "Bombard the Qian County Party Committee." In the evening of August 28, a large-scale clash between students and the masses took place in the county town. Rebellious students propagandizing in the street were ganged up on by the masses and teachers from the reeducation camp. On the next day, organized by commune officials, peasants were lined up and entered the county town to oppose rebellious students. Carrying bamboo brooms, meaning to sweep away "monsters and demons," they opposed to student rebellion. In many parts of the county, students were surrounded and beaten by peasants. These incidents caused

⁵⁰ Most of the insurgencies in August took place after the 18th, when the first group of Beijing Red Guards left for Xi'an after Mao's first reception of Red Guards in Tiananmen Square. Among 19 counties for which dates are available (among the total of 26 counties that underwent insurgencies in August), 17, or 89 percent, underwent insurgencies after August 18.

⁵¹ That is, 26 out of 75 counties (35 percent) of the counties in the sample.

⁵² The following account is based on Qian County Annals (2003: 480).

the secretary of the Xianyang District Party Committee to come to Qian to order the county party committee to stop the attacks against students immediately. In early September, despite the district party secretary's warning, the incidents of peasants surrounding and beating students continued to take place in some production brigades.⁵³ These incidents led the district party committee to dismiss the county party secretary, Wang Jinbang, as the chief of the county's Cultural Revolution Leading Small Group on October 7. In the meantime, student rebellion gave a shock to the teachers' reeducation camp. To maintain the order, officials tightened their grip on accused teachers by stepping up the level of criticisms and cruelties. In September, upon returning from the capital where they were received by Mao, some students of the County Teachers' College and the First Middle School started agitation: "Bombard the Bourgeois Headquarters," "Rebel against Capitalist Roaders within the Party." Many were perplexed by the latest development. But some others who had not understood student rebellion changed their position from opposing to supporting the students, shifting the course of the Cultural Revolution dramatically.

In Liquan, a southeastern neighbor of Qian, they were visited by native students of Xi'an universities. Those students of Xi'an Jiaotong University and Northwestern University (*Xibei daxue*) organized the "Strike Back at Liquan Combat Team." Their arrival on August 13 coincided with the "summer reeducation camp for teachers." Along with local middle school students, they posted a big character

⁵³ In Haozhi Production Brigade of Yanghong Commune, peasants extorted a confession from a Red Guard student, and made him attempt to kill himself. Meanwhile, the commune was still organizing peasants to enter the county town and confront students.

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poster "Revolution is No Crime, To Rebel is Justified!" They then rushed into the reeducation camp, and argued that "the course of the teachers' reeducation camp is incorrect." Four teachers then stood up to write a big character poster "Teachers Disciplining Teachers Does Not Correspond to the Content of the Sixteen Points!" Some "bank workers" countered by putting up a poster "Opposing the Teachers' Reeducation Camp is Opposing the County Party Committee, and That is Counterrevolutionary!" On August 20, a middle school student, who climbed up on the archway of a Xinhua bookstore and posted Mao's "Bombard the Headquarters—My First Big Character Poster," was pushed down and injured by uncomprehending masses. In late August, some teachers from the teacher's camp linked up with students and rural activists, and held a 10,000-people rally denouncing leading officials of the county party committee and the people's committee (Liquan XZ 1999: 993, 995).

In Bin County, some 120 kilometers northwest of Xi'an, two students of No. 2 Attached Middle School of Shaanxi Teachers' College came to "exchange experiences" and "ignite fire." They urged students of Bin Middle School and Bin County "Minban" Middle School to go out of the school gates and "rebel." They then staged sit-in in front of the gate of the county party committee, surrounded its leaders, and blamed them for sending out work teams and "suppressing the revolutionary mass movement." This incident was followed by the dispelling of work teams and the surrounding of officials in some places. This led to the withdrawal of work teams one by one (Bin XZ 2000: 579).

Most of these early insurgencies took place in the area relatively close to Xi'an. On average, those affected counties are located 156 kilometers, or a little less than

100 miles, from Xi'an (Table 2.1). Moreover, two-thirds of them were located in the "central plain" region.⁵⁴ Besides closer to the provincial capital, the "central plain" is the most urbanized and accessible region among the three diverse regions of Shaanx—the "northern loess plateau," the "central plain," and the "southern mountains."⁵⁵ It covers the plain area in the middle of the province, in the hinterland of Wei River. It was also the only region that had a major railroad system running through the area and connecting its major centers in 1966.

While most of the insurgencies in August took place within the accessible "central plain" region, a few urban students made their way into further inland. Among three such cases, Mizhi County lies by far the farthest, about 400 kilometers north from Xi'an.⁵⁶ The development of insurgency in this rural county of 140,000 people represents a unique case. At the time when Xi'an students were making troubles in suburban counties, they were already in Mizhi as members of a Socialist Education work team. Those students of the Northwestern Telegraph Construction Academy⁵⁷ (called *Xijundian*) were learning about the latest developments in Beijing and Xi'an through telegram. In the evening of August 29, some of the *Xijundian* students rushed into the county broadcasting station, and forcibly broadcasted "an extra on Scorching the Northwestern Bureau, Bombarding the Shaanxi Provincial

⁵⁴ The central plain region includes Xi'an, Xianyang, Weinan, and Baoji districts.

⁵⁵ See Appendix 2 for details on the geographical features of the regions.

⁵⁶ The other two counties—Long and Nanzheng—were visited not by Xi'an students but those from other regional centers closer to them, Baoji and Hanzhong.

⁵⁷ The official name, as well as its supervising bodies, of the academy was changed several times before 1966. But it seems always known as the abbreviation, *Xijundian*, or Xi'an Military Telegraph. The name was changed again in 1988 to the Xi'an University of Electronics Science and Technology, and remains the same to this date.

Party Committee, the Yulin District Party Committee, and the Mizhi County Party Committee,” in which they declared, “A single bourgeois reactionary black line penetrates through from up to bottom.” The “extra” caused a strong tremble throughout the county. Students were immediately taken to the county party committee for a “debate,” and criticized for making a “Hungary incident” (Mizhi XZ 1993: 390).

In this tumultuous month of August, insurgencies against the county party committees already affected a considerable part of Shaanxi Province. By the end of August, student insurgencies spread to nearly 40 percent of the counties (Table 2.1). As I discuss it in detail later, most of these early insurgencies were triggered by traveling Red Guards from a few urban centers—Beijing and Xi’an—suddenly set free by Mao and his associates in mid August. The incursion of outside college students provoked the opposition of local masses—peasants, workers, as well some teachers, who were in many cases mobilized by county party officials. In sum, the first wave of insurgencies was set off by traveling Red Guards from major urban centers, who visited the suburban counties of Shaanxi in mid-late August. The agitation by those urban students caused the countermobilization of the masses by county party officials.

“Destroying the Four Olds” and Early Victimization: September

Shortly after this initial surge, the spread of insurgencies (i.e., first insurgencies) temporarily halted in September (Figure 2.1). This recess is probably related to two new developments. First, the campaign for “destroying the four olds” (*po sijiu*)—old thoughts, old culture, old manners and old customs—was started on

August 20 in Beijing, and quickly spread to the whole nation. In the counties of Shaanxi, students also frantically smashed relics and antiques, changed the names of stores and streets into those with revolutionary flavor, and checked on the dress and appearance of passer-bys.

The start of the new campaign once again suggested a shift of the targets. This time, they were so-called “five black categories” (*wulei fenzi*) and “monsters and demons” (*niugui sheshen*). “Five black categories” were former landlords, former rich peasants, counterrevolutionaries, criminals, and rightists. “Monsters and demons” included those from “exploiting-class” backgrounds and “bourgeois academic authorities,” and did not usually include officials persecuted during the Cultural Revolution—i.e., “capitalist roaders.” Thus, there are overlaps between “five black categories” and “monsters and demons.” Officials who had been persecuted in the earlier campaigns—most notably the Anti-Rightist and Socialist Education movements—were also targeted. In most counties, they were brought to denunciation meetings, paraded in dunce caps, ganged up on, and in some cases beaten to death. Thousands of houses were searched, and valuables were “confiscated.” For county leaders, however, this shift in target may well have given time to catch breath. As long as students were absorbed in destroying the “four olds,” they were spared of being targeted.

Another possible reason for the temporary subsidence is a shift in tides of students traveling to and from Shaanxi counties. While in August student movements were by and large limited to those from urban areas—most notably Beijing and Xi’an—to rural areas, after the official sanctioning of the “exchange of experiences” on September 5, they were joined by an even larger flow of rural

students heading to Beijing and other major cities. In the counties of Shaanxi, members of official Red Guard organizations were first selected to go to Beijing to attend Mao's reception in Tiananmen Square. Later, those who had not been selected went out anyway to many parts of the country on their own, by train or on foot. The policy of "free traveling" produced a massive movement of students not only to Beijing but also to any other popular destinations. This massive outflow of local students initially may have proved opportune for county leaders, because it enabled them to send recalcitrant students out of their counties. The "destroying the four olds" and the outflow of local students therefore temporarily suspended the spread of insurgencies.

In a few counties, during the "destroying the four olds" campaign, Red Guards committed terrible atrocities against targeted people. In those counties, but not in many others, student violence turned into a lethal victimization of targeted categories of people: the "five black categories," "monsters and demons," and in some cases "capitalist roaders." Though the small number of the cases precludes any systematic analysis of these early Red Guard atrocities, here I provide the accounts of a few outstanding cases, which otherwise might sink into oblivion.⁵⁸

In Ningqiang County, the "five black categories" and "monsters and demons" were struggled against, beaten and subjected to many kinds of abuses. 1,199 people were struggled against, 709 inflicted "cruel corporal punishments," 144 detained, 59 left paralyzed, and 53 killed. In addition, by December 4, Red Guards ordered 1,772

⁵⁸ Here I do not intend to "explain" why the atrocities took place in those counties, but not in the others. To do so needs more information—either more detailed accounts on the individual cases or a larger number of such cases. I will deal with the issue of repressive violence in chapter 5.

(439 households) town residents of “five black categories” and their families to engage in labor reform in rural villages, where they were left without electricity, water, and food (Ningqiang XZ 1995: 671).

In Mian County, besides surrounding and beating up the ill-fated “five black categories,” Red Guards made some officials and masses wear various “hats”: some officials and masses were made “monsters and demons,” “traitors,” and “spies”; some leading officials “capitalist roaders”; some teachers and doctors “bourgeois reactionary academic authorities.” Those “nine kinds of people”⁵⁹ (*jiuzhongren*) were not only forced to make false confessions, or simply given false charges, but also paraded with placards and physically abused. The number of those persecuted reached several thousands. Among them, more than 20 people were killed and nearly 100 left disabled (Mian XZ 1989: 454-455).

In Zhashui County, five types of people were targeted and struggled against (Zhashui XZ 1998: 464):

- 1) There were “rightists whose hats had been taken off” (*zhaimao youpai*), “middle rightists” (*zhongyou*); officials whose past issues had been already settled; teachers “connected with foreign countries”; and former Nationalist (*Guomindang*) soldiers who had later risen against the Nationalist. These groups of people, 178 of them, were made “monsters and demons,” and struggled against and punished.
- 2) Those teachers, officials, and commune workers who had lectured on the

⁵⁹ They are landlords, rich peasants, counterrevolutionaries, criminals, rightists, traitors, spies, capitalist roaders, and bourgeois reactionary academic authorities.

contributions of ancient thoughts and figures, or who had chatted about foreign affairs reported in newspapers. 179 such people were regarded “promoting feudalism, capitalism and revisionism” (*xuanyang feng zi xiu*) and “communicating secretly with foreign countries” (*litong waiguo*), and struggled against.

- 3) Those officials and commune workers who had grumbled about the Great Leap Forward, the great iron smelting, the communization, and the public dining halls. 936 of them were made “anti-Party elements” and were struggled against.
- 4) Those who believed in Buddhism and Islam, and those who recited mourning songs for the deceased. 167 such people were made “monsters and demons,” and struggled against many times and beaten.
- 5) Revengeful framing-ups (*Cong baofu chufa, wuzhong shengyou.*). Some resulted from differences in opinion at work, while others had grudge against brigade leaders. There were 469 such victims, who were made “anti-Party bad guys” (*fandang huai jiahuo*) and struggled against.

In this county, the total of 1,929 officials, teachers and commune workers were struggled against by various means—“pouring into human feces” (*guan dafen*), “lighting the top lamp” (*dian tiandeng*, pouring burning oil on the head of victims), “hanging gate doors” (*gua menshan*), “hanging black signboard” (*gua heipai*), “jet plane” (*penqishi*), “letting snakes bite” (*fang she yao*), parading them in dunce caps, and so on. During the period, 73 people were either killed or kill themselves. In Chunhua County, similar repressive violence by Red Guards was responsible for the

suicides of 74 middle and low level officials and masses (Chunhua XZ 2000: 786).

While appalling to anyone, these cases of Red Guard atrocities are exceptions rather than the norm. There were only 4 counties that reported more than 10 deaths during the Red Guard period (May-December 1966). More than half of the counties reported no death during the period.⁶⁰ In a majority of the counties, therefore, the “destroying the four olds” stopped short of outright massacre.

THE SECOND WAVE

Attack against the “Bourgeois Reactionary Line”: October-December

Starting in October 1966, the second wave of insurgencies took over further inland counties. This wave was initiated by Lin Biao’s proclamation at the 17th National Foundation Day rally on October 1: “The struggle between the proletarian revolutionary line representing Chairman Mao and the bourgeois reactionary line is still continuing.” *Red Flag (Hongqi)*⁶¹ two days later carried the full text of Lin’s speech and an editorial elaborating Lin’s point. These texts together called for students and the masses all over the country to criticize the “bourgeois reactionary line.” But how was it possible for the wave of mass insurgencies to reach remote inland counties—often hundreds of kilometers away from urban centers—without access to major transportation links? And how was the second swell different from the first?

We have seen that the first wave of insurgencies was triggered by students from Xi’an, as well as Beijing, visiting suburban counties. In the second wave, three

⁶⁰ The average number of deaths per county in this period is 4.4.

⁶¹ “Forward Along the High Road of the Mao Zedong’s Thought,” *Hongqi (Red Flag)*, No. 13, October 3, 1966 (CCRD 2002).

currents of traveling students gathered in force to create another upsurge of insurgencies (Figure 2.1). First, Xi'an students continued to advance inland, setting fire to those remote counties. For example, Luonan County is not very far away, 110 kilometers east of Xi'an, but separated from the urban area by the 3,000 meter high Qinling mountains. The county's first insurgency was caused by a teacher and a student of a Xi'an college (Northwestern Industrial College) who had been punished during the Socialist Education movement in Luonan. On October 29, they called together some 400 teachers and students of the Xi'an college, and announced, "Go back to Luonan and carry through the revolution to the end!" Upon arriving, they put up slogans, "Bombard the Luonan County Committee!" "Defeat [county party secretary] Li Wei!" "Defeat [acting governor] Yuan Shengyu!" They also pressed the Socialist Education general team (*shejiao zongdui*) to self-criticize (*jiantao*) the mistake of committing the "bourgeois reactionary line," and rehabilitate the punished teacher and student (Luonan XZ 1999: 423-424).

In Yan'an County, 262 kilometers north of the provincial capital, Xi'an students began to arrive in September.⁶² In October, students from Xi'an colleges came to Yan'an, and incited officials of party and government organs to raise the banner of rebellion from within. The slogan, "Kick Open the County Party Committee and Make Revolution!" appeared quickly in the streets of the county town. The "bourgeois reactionary line" of the levels of party committees became the target of rebel groups. The county town was filled with slogans, handbills, and big character

⁶² As a sacred ground of the Chinese Communist Revolution, Yan'an became one of the most visited places in the entire country. From October 1966 to March 1967, the county hosted more than 200,000 Red Guards from all over China, and spent 102,080 yuan.

posters: "Bombard the Yan'an District Party Committees!" "Bombard the Yan'an County Party Committee!" "Bombard the Power Holders within the Yan'an County Party Committee Who Take the Capitalist Road!" (Yan'an City Annals 1994: 825).

Link-up journeys of Xi'an students also took a more organized form. In November, Luochuan County, 172 kilometers north of Xi'an on the way to Yan'an, was visited by students of three Xi'an colleges⁶³ organized themselves into the "Northbound Igniter Team" (*beishang dianhuo dui*). They posted a big character poster denouncing the county party secretary, Liu Xinhuai, and stirred up local "rebel" groups to put up the slogans, "Bombard the Headquarters!" "Scorch the County Party Committee!" (Luochuan XZ 1994: 199). To the south, there was also the "Southbound Rebel Corps" (*nanxia zaofan tuan*) of Xi'an colleges. The Corps systematically set fire in at least 3 counties—Langao, Pingli, and Yang (Langao XZ 1993: 588; Pingli XZ 1995: 698; Yang XZ 1996: 865). By the end of the year, Xi'an students were making troubles in almost every corner of the province. They instigated insurgencies in such remote counties as Suide, 376 kilometers north of Xi'an, and Zichang, 325 kilometers north, in late November, Baihe, 193 kilometers south, in early December, and Ansai, 290 kilometers north, in December.

Another current that jointly produced the second wave of insurgencies was local students returning from their journeys. There were two kinds of students who left rural counties for their "exchange of experiences." One was the group officially organized by county authorities to attend Mao's reception in Beijing, while the other consisted of various groups who went out on their own to anywhere they wished.

⁶³ They are: Xi'an Jiaotong University, Northwestern Telegraph Construction Academy, and Northwestern Agricultural Academy.

After the central notice on September 5 that sanctioned free travel of Red Guards to Beijing, “preparatory committees” (and work teams where they were still in schools) selected a group of students based on class background and “political attitude,” and sent them to Beijing to “acquire experiences” (*qu jing*) and attend Mao’s reception. They were often accompanied by some teachers and in some cases by work team officials.

Later, other students also demanded to go out to travel: “if not the exchange of experiences, then rebel” (*bu rang chuanlian jiu zaofan*). Thereafter, not only the students of “five red categories” but also any others freely band together in groups, and without asking for permission, set out on foot or by train for every part of the country. In a county, 80 percent of 875 “complete middle school”⁶⁴ students went on trips (Fu XZ 1994: 554). They went to almost every part of the country—Beijing, Tianjin, Lanzhou, Xi’an, Nanjing, Shanghai, Chongqing, Guangzhou, and others. Even some upper-grade elementary school students also set out on their journeys.

As we have seen earlier, county leaders may have felt it opportune at first to send restless students away to Beijing, or to any other places, when they received the central directive on the “exchange of experiences” in early September. It soon became apparent, however, when those students gradually returned home after October 1966, that the policy posed an even more serious threat to the county political leadership.

Returning rural Red Guards brought back not only handbills and copies of big character posters, but also live stories about how Red Guards elsewhere attacked local

⁶⁴ “Complete middle schools” (*wanquan zhongxue*) are those combining lower and upper middle schools.

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officials. When students of Baihe County returned from their journey, they wore a full of Mao badges on their chest, carried back Red Guard handbills collected along the way, and brought amazing stories from various places—some leaders were “spies” and “traitors”; a person leaped to death; the political power of a province was seized; and so on (Baihe XZ 1996: 634). In Huangling County, students went to such major cities as Xi’an, Beijing, Shanghai, Hangzhou, Tianjin, and Chongqing, and brought back many “experiences of struggle” (*douzheng jingyan*). With those “experiences,” they started to struggle against county leaders upon returning home (Huangling XZ 1995: 758).

In Hua County, the county authority sent 555 students and 54 teachers to Beijing on October 13. On November 26, they were met at the train station by leading officials who had been waiting anxiously for returning Red Guards, along with the masses beating gongs and drums. The leaders listened to the students’ experiences of the capital’s Cultural Revolution. On the next day, however, they helplessly watched slogans attacking them appear in the streets (Hua XZ, unpublished manuscript, 10-11). Returning local students rebelled against the county political leaderships in five other counties.

The third “current” consisted of a mixture of traveling students from various parts of the country. In the last three months of 1966, traveling students visiting rural counties of Shaanxi not only increased dramatically but also became diversified in their origins. Almost all the counties of Shaanxi were visited by outside Red Guards by the end of 1966, while nearly one-third of them reported the arrival of

students from outside the province.⁶⁵ Some counties received tens of thousands students, while Yan'an, the most favorite destination, was visited by more than two hundred thousands.

For example, Shenmu County, a northern county bordering with Inner Mongolia, was visited by Red Guards of Inner Mongolia Agricultural College in late 1966. They regarded the Cultural Revolution in Shenmu as "very calm" (*tai wen*), and instigated students of Shenmu Middle School to set up their own rebel organization, the "Defend the East Commune" (*Wei dong gongshe*). On December 28, the "Defend the East Commune" held a "rally for bombarding the headquarters of the county party committee." They then struggled against the county party secretary, the county magistrate and other leading officials for the first time. This marked the beginning of "struggling against black gangs" (*jiu heibang*) in the county (Shenmu XZ 1990: 411).

Lueyang County, 277 kilometers southwest of Xi'an, was visited one after another by students from Hanzhong County, Xi'an City, Lanzhou City (in Gansu Province), and Xinjiang Province in late 1966. They linked up with local Red Guards, and created a wave of attacks against the "bourgeois reactionary line." They blamed the county party committee for "pitting masses against masses" and "repressing the revolutionary movement" (Lueyang XZ 1992: 387). In Foping County, situated in the mountains, 120 kilometers southwest of Xi'an, students from several different places—Hanzhong County, Xi'an City, Inner Mongolia, and

⁶⁵ 95 percent of the counties in the statistical analysis (71/75) were visited by outside Red Guards. Among them, 30 percent (21/71) included those from outside the province. I presume that the actual number of the counties visited by Red Guards from outside the province is much higher, because county annals tend to report the origins of traveling Red Guards only if they were involved in significant events.

Guizhou Province—arrived one after another, and stirred the masses up against the county leadership (Foping XZ 1993: 12). In the last three months of 1966, the political situation in Shaanxi counties became increasingly fluid and volatile as traveling Red Guards moved freely across county boundaries. They linked up with other Red Guards of “corresponding viewpoints” (*guandian xiangtong*) as they moved from a place to another, and then participated in the attacks against the local political leaderships (Yanchuan XZ 1999: 824, Fu XZ 1994: 554).

These three currents of traveling Red Guards—Xi’an students advancing into inland counties, returning local students, and students from various parts of the country—jointly produced a wave of insurgencies even more devastating to the local political structures than the previous one. In the last three months of 1966, another 40 percent of Shaanxi counties underwent insurgencies (Table 2.1). By the year’s end, the vast majority (86 percent) of the counties were affected by the waves of insurgencies. If a massive and violent overhaul of the local party organization was the purpose of Maoist leaders, it was the policy of the “exchange of experiences” that made that happen. Rural students were aroused by traveling Red Guards to rebel against the local political leadership. Without the “exchange of experiences,” the manipulation of “frames”—through the centrally controlled media system—and the direct “personal networks” of CCRG leaders—a notable factor in the cases of Beijing and a few other major cities—alone would not have caused such general waves of insurgencies covering every corner of an inland province.

PROCESSES OF INSURGENCY DEVELOPMENT

We have seen how insurgencies spread in the northwestern province of Shaanxi.

From mid August to December 1966, the waves of insurgencies against the county party committees swept over nearly 90 percent of the counties. They first spread to the surrounding area of Xi'an, and then to the inland counties. The temporal pattern of diffusion indicated that the waves of insurgencies coincided with the flows of traveling Red Guards—not only from urban centers to rural counties but also, in the case of rural students, on their way home from urban centers. More importantly, a number of accounts in county annals attested that traveling Red Guards were deeply involved: they set the fire of insurgency on one county after another. This section conceptualizes the processes of the diffusion of insurgencies. Table 2.2 compares the primary causes of insurgencies listed in the county annals for two periods—August-September 1966 (the first wave) and October-December (the second wave).⁶⁶ They suggest five distinct patterns of insurgency development. The first three constitute “external causes” of insurgencies, while the others “internal causes.”

Table 2.2 about here

⁶⁶ The “primary causes” listed in this table are not mutually exclusive. For example, while not explicit in the county annals, “internal conflicts” could have developed into insurgencies, only after potential “insurgents” took their cue either from visiting Red Guards, through the centralized communication system—transmitting changes in policy, or through any other possible means. If more than one reasons for insurgency are listed, I chose the cause that the county annals emphasizes most. Nor does it suggest that they are the only causes of insurgencies. There could be other causes not listed in the county annals for some reasons. In short, these categories derive from the accounts of the county annals and my reading of them.

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Pattern 1: Traveling Red Guards from urban cities instigated rural students to attack the county political leadership.

In both of the periods, by far the largest proportions (about 50 percent) of insurgencies were caused at the instigation of traveling "outside Red Guards." This suggests that traveling Red Guards played a key role in the diffusion of insurgencies in the early phase of the Cultural Revolution.

Looking closer at the traces of traveling Red Guards (Table 2.3), among the cases instigated by outside Red Guards in the first-wave period, 10 were caused by students from Xi'an, 4 from Beijing, and 4 from the district centers of Baoji and Hanzhong.⁶⁷ It seems that the first wave of insurgencies was set off by the first group of Beijing Red Guards visiting Xi'an and a few other suburban counties in mid August, and then was carried over by Xi'an, as well as Baoji and Hanzhong, students to the surrounding counties. In the second wave, students from Xi'an caused 12 cases, Hanzhong 2, Beijing 1, and other provinces 2, including some overlaps. Xi'an students continued to advance inland and make troubles in those counties. The involvement of Red Guards from the other provinces suggests a generalized scope of the "exchange of experiences" in the second wave. But by far the largest number of insurgencies were caused by Xi'an students in both of the periods. This finding suggests a systematic way in which Xi'an students—mostly from universities and colleges such as Xi'an Jiaotong University, Northwestern University, Northwestern Telegraph Construction Academy, Shaanxi Teachers' College, and others—spread insurgencies one county after another from suburban to inland

⁶⁷ There are some overlaps in number. Three counties were visited by students from both Xi'an and Beijing.

counties.

Table 2.3 about here

County annals suggest two major patterns through which urban Red Guards spread insurgencies to rural counties. First, urban college students organized formal "expedition teams" to stir things up in rural counties. The "Northbound Igniter Team" and the "Southbound Rebel Corps" of Xi'an college students systematically set fire on rural counties one by one (Luochuan XZ 1994: 199; Langao XZ 1993: 588; Pingli XZ 1995: 698; Yang XZ 1996: 865). Second, urban students who had previous ties to rural counties returned to the familiar places. For example, students of Xi'an colleges often went back to their native counties to instigate local students (Liquan XZ 1999: 993, 995; Mian XZ 1989: 455). College students who had participated in the Socialist Education Movement in a rural county as a part of the work team also went back and rebelled against the local authority (Luonan XZ 1999: 423-424). Thus, urban Red Guards used both formal organization and previous ties to spread insurgencies to rural counties.

When they arrived in rural counties, traveling Red Guards rarely acted alone, but first "linked up" with local students, and then stirred them up against the local Political leadership. Thus, the process repeated in many counties is:

Arrival of urban Red Guards → “Linking up” with local students and stirring them up → insurgency against the county party committee.

The way of arousing local masses against their “evil masters” is perfectly consistent with Mao’s precept on the guiding role of communist officials in rural revolution. More importantly, however, as the examples above suggest, independent action of “outsiders” would have invited strong opposition from local masses. It would have given a pretext to local officials for counter-mobilization based on “countrymen’s spirit.”

Conflicts between local students and county party officials may have existed before the arrival of traveling Red Guards, but they would have not surfaced without the “exchange of experiences” with outside Red Guards. Not only the temporal pattern of insurgency outbreaks—the “waves of insurgencies”—but also the accounts of the county annals—on the instigating role of traveling Red Guards—strongly suggest that the waves of insurgencies were created by traveling Red Guards.

Pattern 2: Local students returning from their journeys rebelled against the county political leadership.

This pattern became noticeable only after October 1966, as a part of the “second wave,” when rural students began to arrive home from their “link-up” journeys. “Returning local Red Guards” are reported to have caused nearly 20 percent of insurgencies in October-December (Table 2.2). As we have seen above, two kinds of students set out on their journeys. Some middle school students from good class households were officially selected to go to Beijing, while many others set

out anyway without permission of local authorities. Despite the difference, both groups of returning local students similarly revolted against the county political leadership. In the example of Hua County above, county party officials welcomed the student delegate at a station. Ironically, however, the officials helplessly watched posters attacking them appear in the streets next day. In Huangling County, students brought back many “experiences of struggle” from their “unofficial” journeys around the country, with which they started to struggle against county leaders.

Returning students were now fully equipped not only with the “frame” of criticism against the “bourgeois reactionary line” sweeping all over the country, but also with a “repertoire”⁶⁸ of rebellion against “power holders”—putting up big character posters, appropriate vocabularies used to attack them, dragging them to public criticism meetings, parading them in dunce caps, etc. Similar patterns were repeated in many counties, not only where the political leaderships had been spared of being targeted but also where they had already been under attack. Upon returning, students put up a big character poster “Bombard the County Party Committee!” They aimed directly at the political leadership, and its “bourgeois reactionary line.” Students blamed county leaders for repressing spontaneous mass movements by sending work teams, and “setting masses against masses” in teachers’ reeducation camps.

⁶⁸ According to Charles Tilly (1995: 26), the word “repertoire” identifies “a limited set of routines that are learned, shared, and acted out through a relatively deliberate process of choice. Repertoires are learned cultural creations, but they do not descend from abstract philosophy or take shape as a result of political propaganda; they emerge from struggle.....At any particular point in history ... they learn only a rather small number of alternative ways to act collectively.”

Pattern 3: Local students, or the masses, responded to the pronouncements of policies and developments in Beijing.

In both periods, some of the insurgencies were caused by local students, or the masses, responding to latest developments at the center. It suggests that some people were not only more attuned to developments at the center, but also more willing to take risks in the midst of uncertainty.⁶⁹ Besides personal traits, some contingent factors may have made "direct communication" between the center and rural counties possible. Most of all, the proximity to urban or regional centers may have provided local students better access to the centralized communication system. In general, students' rebellious activities developed earlier in counties closer to urban and regional centers. Among the four cases, two—Dali and Huayin—are located in the accessible "central plain" region; another—Ankang—itself is a regional (district) center; and another—Yang—is situated near a southern regional center of Hanzhong.

For example, in a southern regional center of Ankang, the news that Red Guards of Beijing University dispelled the work team reached Ankang in late August. "Rebel factions" of local middle schools attacked the work teams, accusing them of committing the so-called "Liu-Deng reactionary line." On August 26, students of an agricultural school struggled against and paraded the head of the district bureau of agriculture and forestry, responsible for sending the work team in the school. On 30th, students of Ankang Middle School revolted against the district party committee (Ankang XZ 1989: 899). Students of Huayin County also reacted to the incident at

⁶⁹ This latter point is emphasized by some of the previous researchers (Chan 1985; Perry and Li 1997).

Beijing University. Upon hearing the news, Red Guards of Huayin Middle School began to attack the county party committee on the charge of sending a work team, and committing a "Liu-Deng line" (Huayin XZ 1995: 858).

Later in the year, two policy pronouncements⁷⁰ at the Center in mid December led to a dramatic increase in the "exchange of experiences" among officials, workers and peasants in Yang County. Many "rebel" organizations sprung up over night, and their "brunt of struggle" (*douzheng de maotou*) was directed at "capitalist roaders" of the county party committee and people's committee (Yang XZ 1996: 865).

Pattern 4: Lower-level officials revolted against the local leadership.

In both of the periods, a little more than 10 percent of insurgencies were caused by rebellious officials. A closer look at accounts of county annals suggests two underlying motives for the revolt of lower-level officials: opportunism and personal animosity. "Opportunism" here refers to those self-interested actions of individuals, or groups of individuals, in which they take advantage of political developments to pursue narrow, personal ends. The concepts of "opportunism" and personal animosity are not mutually exclusive, but are, in reality, intermingled with each other.

There are accounts in county annals that some officials and "activists" (*jiji fenzi*) took advantage of political developments to revolt against the county leadership. In Jingbian County, a "political commissar" for the official Red Guard organization suddenly rose up against the county party committee. Commanding Red Guards, he

⁷⁰ Those are, "(draft) Ten-point Regulations on Grasping Revolution and Stepping Up Production" and "(draft) Instructions on the Cultural Revolution in the Countryside," issued by the Party Center on December 9 and 15, 1966, respectively (CCRD 2002).

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gained upper hand over the county party secretary, and engaged in "beating, smashing, stealing, and confiscating" at will (Jingbian XZ 1993: 334).

Some lower-level officials of the county party committees and other government organs revolted against the leadership "from within." On August 29, some officials at the "county-level organs" (*xianji jiguan*) of Heyang County dragged the county party secretary, Dong Jichang, home from Weinan, where he was conducting the Socialist Education Movement. Dong was then paraded in a dunce cap with a large signboard hanging from the neck. This prompted the rebellion of teachers and students gathered for the "teachers' reeducation camp." On the next day, they swarmed into the building of the county party committee, and threatened a takeover. Rebellious officials of the county party committee, the people's committee and some other organs established "combat teams," and sharply confronted "power holders" and "capitalist roaders" (Heyang XZ 1996: 924). In Zhen'an County, a "rebel faction" of the county party committee put up posters, "Kick Open the County Party Committee and Make Revolution!" "Scorch the Zhen'an County Party Committee!" on November 15. At a "criticism and struggle" (*pidou*) rally, they declared "step down" (*kaobian zhan*) the county party secretary and the county magistrate (Zhen'an XZ 1995: 638-639).

Officials and "activists" of the Socialist Education Movement also rebelled in some counties. In December, some officials of Lingyou County, who had been participating in the Socialist Education Movement in Baoji, organized a rebel organization, the "Mao Zedong Thought Rebel Team" (*Mao Zedong sixiang zaofan dui*), and headed back home. Upon returning to Lingyou, they started to level criticisms at the "bourgeois reactionary line" committed by the county party

committee.⁷¹ The party committee attempted to label the work team officials as a "counterrevolutionary gang" on charges of "three assaults" (*san chong*)—the assaults against the internal disciplinary office, the prison, and the People's Armed Department (*renmin wuzhuang bu*)—and "one anti" (*yi fan*)—anti-Army, but failed to gain approval from the upper level. Thereafter, not only the streets of the county town but also those of the other towns and villages were filled with posters criticizing leading officials. Most leading officials of the county party committee and the communes were paraded in dunce caps, subjected to ill-treatment, and dismissed from the offices (Lingyou XZ 1993: 415-416). Officials of Socialist Education work teams rose against the county leadership in two other counties (Qianyang XZ 1991: 279; Huanglong XZ 1995: 674).

Some accounts also suggest the involvement of personal animosity. In October, a family member of a county official in Langao County posted a big character poster "Bombard the County Party Committee, Scorch [county party secretary] Zhang Ruqian!" in the street of the county town. The county party committee and the people's committee hurriedly dispatched work teams to the residence of officials of the county people's committee and to the town government. After having been struggled against several days, the family member was dismissed from the position of town representative (Langao XZ 1993: 588).

These accounts suggest that some officials, as well as their family members,

⁷¹ In November 1966, Lingyou County was visited incessantly by Red Guards on their way to Beijing from Qinghai, Gansu, Ningxia and others. Influenced by these outside students, who "ignited fires" everywhere they went, local Red Guards took the lead in debating on the meaning of the "bourgeois reactionary line," as well as on the "direction of the struggle." But they stopped short of criticizing the county party committee.

acted with ulterior motives—opportunism and personal revenge. But given that personal animosity and opportunistic personality always exist to an extent, we have to ask what “precipitating events” led to insurgencies. If personal animosity and opportunistic motives were to materialize into a revolt, those officials would have had to take their cue on latest developments from the centralized communication system, traveling Red Guards, or any other carrier of the information. This process of internal conflicts leading to insurgency, in short, is not independent but complementary to other processes.

Pattern 5: Local students revolted “spontaneously” against the county political leadership.

Finally, less than 10 percent of the insurgencies are reported to have resulted from “spontaneous” actions of local students. In these cases, students revolted against the county political leadership on their own without explicit intervention of outside Red Guards. The confrontation between local students and party officials over work teams and “teachers’ reeducation camp” developed into the insurgency against the county party committee. The process is a reminiscence of the attacks against central ministries by Beijing college students (Walder 2002: 451-453). While the central ministries were held responsible for sending work teams to Beijing universities and colleges, county party committees were the authority in charge of dispatching work teams to county middle schools. Thus, where Beijing college students thronged to ministries that had sent work teams to their schools, middle school students of Shaanxi counties rushed onto county Party Committees.

In Sanyuan County, in the suburbs of Xi’an, for example, the development of

insurgency followed a pattern similar to Beijing universities. In Nanjiao Middle School, confrontation among students and teachers had been developing over the work team. The county party committee withdrew the work team on August 17, and left a few personnel as “observers” (*guanchayuan*). Three days later, some students of the middle school went to the county party committee to stage a sit-in, and demanded that the county party committee publicly admit committing a mistaken line of sending a work team to the school; withdraw the “observers”; recognize student rallies and demonstrations as revolutionary actions; have the work team return to the school to receive criticism; and so on. The sit-in lasted a week. The party committee was compelled to write self-criticism, and ordered officials of the work team to go back to the middle school to give self-criticism. At the same time, big character posters attacking the county party committee appeared everywhere in the county town (Sanyuan XZ 2000: 724). In another suburban county of Wugong, a crush between students and teachers at the “teachers’ reeducation camp” led to a street demonstration and sit-in in the front of the county party committee (Wugong XZ 2001: 850).

Similarly to the pattern of students responding to developments in Beijing, the pattern of “spontaneous insurgencies” often took place in counties near urban centers, where students were more sensitive to urban developments. All the three cases of “spontaneous insurgency” in the first wave period took place within a radius of 100 kilometers from of Xi’an. Further inland, however, few insurgencies followed the same pattern. There the torch of insurgency had to be carried by human agents—traveling Red Guards—to spread. As a result, “spontaneous insurgency” did not constitute a dominant pattern in an inland province of Shaanxi.

CONCLUSION

In the northwestern province of Shaanxi, the insurgencies against the local political leadership took place in the vast majority of the counties by the end of 1966 (Table 2.1). If this is applicable to the other provinces, then, the Cultural Revolution affected not only cities and the suburbs but also rural counties, even before the onset of "power seizures" in early 1967. The pattern of insurgency diffusion resembled a "series of incendiary fires" set systematically by traveling Red Guards one after another from the suburban to the inland counties. While apparently similar to Baum's "spillover model," or that of "ripples in a pond," my finding is different in one important aspect: the fires of insurgency did not spread automatically like a brush fire, but were set one by one by human agents—traveling Red Guards.

This point is also confirmed by the accounts of Shaanxi county annals that emphasize the "external causes" of insurgency over the "internal causes." One may be tempted to conclude that the waves of rural insurgencies in the latter half of 1966 were brought from without, rather than erupted from inside. But the five patterns of insurgency development I described above should not be interpreted as separate processes. Like any other historical account, county annals tend to emphasize some aspect of more complicated processes as they saw fit. Neither may it be wise to ask whether those cases of insurgencies were caused internally or externally. It may well be that "precipitating events"—the instigation by traveling Red Guards, the manipulation of "frames" at the Center, and so on—almost always came from outside, but internal tension—between local students and officials, teachers and officials, and among officials, over work teams and other issues—also existed there. Thus, a

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more relevant question to ask here is how the spark of insurgency spread from the suburbs to the remotest corners of the province.

This study found that by far the most frequent pattern of insurgencies was the instigation of local students by traveling outside Red Guards (Table 2.2). Combined with the instigation by local students returning from their "link-up" journeys, about two-thirds of insurgencies were brought from outside by traveling students. In comparison, the cases of local students responding directly to developments at the Center constituted only a fraction. An implication of this is that the manipulation of "frames" at the Center, and the advertising of them through the centralized communication system, alone could not have caused a nationwide uprising. But those "frames," as well as specific "repertoires" of insurgency, had to be carried to inland counties by human agents—traveling Red Guards. Insurgency is a risky business, and it is even so in a country like Mao's China in which one political mistake could ruin one's entire life. Thus, rather than communicated through the centralized media system, new "frames" had to be carried in person by traveling Red Guards to convince skeptical rural residents to rise up against the local political leadership.

Traveling Red Guards, on their part, did not act alone but almost always "linked up" with local students, as well as the masses, and then stirred them up into rebellion. To act alone would have been contrary to Mao's teaching, and more importantly invited the countermobilization of local masses by officials. Traveling Red Guards exploited local disputes—those between students and officials over work teams, teachers and officials over the "summer reeducation camp," and personal animosity and opportunism among officials—and set local people against the county

political leadership. It was at this juncture that the "exchange of experiences" between locals and traveling urban Red Guards became most explosive. "Ignition of fire" by traveling Red Guards would not have proved effective, if there had been no latent tensions among local people, who would otherwise have been united by the bonds of fellow countrymen. The "exchange of experiences" therefore not only linked rural residents and urban students, but also united discontents among rural residents with new "frames" of insurgency against the local leadership.

Chapter 3 From the Emergence of Oppositions to Polarization

Studies of the Cultural Revolution have long been focused on social structures—social status and networks—in their search for causes of the factional conflict. These “social interpretations” of Cultural Revolution factionalism were recently challenged by Andrew Walder (2000; 2002; 2006a; 2006b) who emphasizes the importance of interaction and process. Focusing on interactions at the county level, rather than the organizational level, this chapter finds evidence that lends itself to “process interpretation” rather than “social interpretation.”

In the counties of northwestern Shaanxi Province, oppositions formed as a result of state-initiated campaigns—the sending of work teams (*gongzuo dui*) to schools, “summer reeducation camps for teachers” (*jiashi xiaqi jixunhui*), and the Socialist Education Movement (*shehui zhuyi jiaoyu yundong*, hereafter SEM). In late 1966, various oppositions bred by these campaigns began to converge on their demand for rehabilitation of their lost statuses caused by the “bourgeois reactionary line.” “Power seizures” of early 1967 set in motion processes of factional polarization by sweeping away the local power structure. From then on, the intensification of factional conflict and processes of polarization progressed hand in hand generated processes of coalition formation. The rapid sequence of events and policy changes. The disintegration of the local state structure caused by subsequent elite-initiated campaigns pushed the processes of factional polarization step by step from the end of 1966 to the later half of 1967. Moreover, historical contingencies stopped the processes of polarization in some parts of the province, sparing those counties much of factional violence.

Before explicating those processes, let me briefly explain what I mean by polarization. According to McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly (2001: 322), polarization is “widening of political and social space between claimants in a contentious episode and the gravitation of previously uncommitted or moderate actors toward one, the other, or both extremes.”⁷² In studies of the Cultural Revolution, it is important to distinguish polarization from “factionalism.” “Factionalism” is processes in which a group, or groups, forms within a larger social group—political party, workplace, school, or the state—usually with different ideas from the main group. In theory, factionalism does not have to involve “widening of political and social space between claimants”—factions can coexist within a social group with varying distances from one another. Or the “gravitation of previously uncommitted or moderate actors toward one, the other, or both extremes”—individuals feel less “gravitation” toward factions. More importantly, factionalism may or may not give way to polarization depending on other political and ideological factors. Radicalization of ideology, for example, may widen the space between factions and gravitate the uncommitted to the extremes. In this study on the Cultural Revolution, I focus on political processes that drove factions into two extremes.

Putting them in more concrete terms, this chapter first identifies various oppositions that formed against the local political leadership in the later half of 1966. Focusing on the county level, this chapter does not directly deal with “factionalism” within organizations. Instead, the emphasis is put on processes of factional

⁷² McAdam et al. (2001: 322) continue: “When it occurs, polarization is an important accompaniment to contentious episodes because it vacates the moderate center, impedes the recomposition of previous coalitions, produces new channels for future ones, fills even the most concrete of policy issues with ideological content which can block their solution, and can lead to repression, armed conflict, and civil war.”

polarization at the county level. Within the span of a year (late 1966-late 1967), polarization took place in the vast majority of Shaanxi counties.⁷³ Factional polarization not only radicalized local conflict but also set the stage for factional violence—armed battles (*wudou*)—that devastated much of the province from summer 1967 to summer 1968. Processes of polarization, therefore, provide a crucial node in the relationship between factionalism and factional violence.

VARIOUS CAUSES OF OPPOSITION

While not ideal for an inquiry on organization-level factionalism,⁷⁴ county annals provide valuable clues on causes and processes of opposition formation at the county level. In most of the counties, oppositions emerged in the later half of 1966 (Figure 3.1).⁷⁵ The first peak of opposition emergence came in September, about a month later than the first wave of insurgencies against the county political leadership initiated by the “Sixteen Points” and the policy of the “exchange of experiences” (*chuanlian*) (see Chapter 2). The second peak (November-December) almost

⁷³ In this study, the “timing of polarization” is operationally defined as formation of two diametrically opposed factions (or coalitions of factions) at the county level. Because there was usually time lag between the formations of the first and second factions, I took the establishment of the second faction as the timing of polarization in a county. Defined in this way, 92 percent (69 out of 75) of the county annals with an independent Cultural Revolution section reported factional polarization at one point or another.

⁷⁴ Previous studies on the Cultural Revolution found complexity of factional composition across various organizations—middle schools (Chan, Rosen, and Unger 1980; Rosen 1982), universities (Walder 2002, 2006a, 2006b; Andreas 2002), urban factories (Walder 1996), and production brigades (villages) (Unger 1998). Those organizational settings produced different forms of factional conflict.

⁷⁵ The “emergence of oppositions” is defined as the first appearance of an organized group opposed to the local political leadership. Thus, this definition excludes “official” Red Guard and rebel organizations set up by work teams or other authorities.

corresponded to the second wave of insurgencies. The campaign against the “bourgeois reactionary line” started in early October caused not only a wave of insurgencies but also that of opposition formation. Thus, oppositions formed either immediately after or almost concurrently with outbreaks of first insurgencies.

Figure 3.1 about here

This temporal pattern suggests that processes of opposition emergence were also largely determined by elite initiatives, which made latent local tensions overt. But what caused tensions in the first place? Prior studies tended to emphasize the importance of preexisting social divisions, based on class background, positions in the occupational hierarchy, Party networks, and so on. Based on accounts in county annals, I argue that persecutions *after the beginning of the Cultural Revolution* (or in the case of the SEM immediately before it) caused oppositions. Besides influence from outside, a common factor in rural counties, there were three causes of oppositions in rural counties—work teams and “preparatory committees” (*choubei weiyuanhui*), “summer reeducation camps,” and the Socialist Education Movement. Each of these campaigns and methods generated oppositions within a different segment of society—students, teachers, and rural officials.

Work Teams and Preparatory Committees

Echoing Walder’s recent finding (Walder 2002, 2006a, 2006b), work teams, as

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well as "preparatory committees" left behind by them, caused cleavages in rural middle schools in the early stage of the Cultural Revolution. As chronicled in the previous chapter, work teams were dispatched to county middle schools in mid June and stayed there until between mid August and November. There were three ways in which work teams created divisions among students. First, work teams, and/or preparatory committees, created an original Red Guard organization by co-opting students of "five red categories" (*hong wu lei*). County annals often report that work teams/preparatory committees began to organize Red Guard organizations by selecting students of "five red categories," in response to Mao's first inspection of Red Guards in Tiananmen Square on August 18.⁷⁶ Red Guards were then directed to "criticize and struggle against" (*pidou*) teachers and "destroy the four olds" (*po sijiu*).

The conduct of work teams drove a wedge between those included in the high-status organization and those excluded from it. Only sons and daughters of "revolutionary backgrounds" were allowed to wear a prestigious Red Guard arm band and military attire and participate in the revolutionary movement. In a county middle school, proud of wearing the arm band, students of poor- and lower-middle-peasant backgrounds looked down on those of landlord and rich-peasant backgrounds as "five black categories" (*hei wu lei*) and "offspring of dogs" (*gou zai zi*). They also demanded to the education bureau that "five black

⁷⁶ About one third (33 percent, or 25 out of 75) of county annals with independent sections on the Cultural Revolution reported that work teams/preparatory committees selected "five-red-category" students to form a Red Guard organization. For example, in a middle school in the northern county of Jingbian, the work team, along with the "preparatory committee," started to organize a Red Guard organization with about 50 students (about 5 percent of all the students and teachers) of "five red categories," after Mao's first inspection of Red Guards in Tiananmen square on August 18 (Jingbian XZ 1993: 334).

categories” go back to the countryside to engage in physical labor (Nanzheng XZ 1990: 484).

In some counties, the “class” division reportedly provided a major fault line along which the polarization of factions at the county level took place. In Ganquan County, for example, the conduct of a work team gave rise to division between “five red categories” and “seven black categories,” along which variously named “combat corps” (*zhandou dui*)—an often used name for oppositional Red Guard organizations—later formed. Those student organizations then gradually bifurcated into two major contending factions, the “Lu Xun Army Corps” (*Lu Xun bingtuan*) and the “Red Stream Battalion” (*hongliu da dui*). Later, “rebel organizations” of the county party committee and the people’s committee expressed their supports to different Red Guard organizations one after another by putting up posters, “Supporting the Revolutionary Acts of Red Guard Little Generals!” (Ganquan XZ 1993: 485-486) A similar development, in which the division between students of “five red categories” and those of “seven black categories” developed into two major factions, was reported in a few other counties (fore example, Langao XZ 1993: 587).

Another distinct kind of cleavage left by work teams/preparation committees was the division between those who actively cooperated with work teams and those who antagonized them. This is the point raised by Walder in his study on Beijing Red Guard factionalism (2002, 2006a, 2006b). A few county annals report a similar confrontation between work teams and recalcitrant students. For example, in Shuanghuyu Middle School in Zizhou County, a few students put up a big character poster opposing the work team in mid July. The work team immediately responded by organizing activist students and teachers to struggle against defiant students by

turns. In this school, not only cases of students struggling against teachers but also those of students struggling against students became increasingly frequent (Zizhou XZ 1993: 558).

In another county middle school, the work team divided teachers and students into “leftists” and “rightists,” based on their class backgrounds and attitude toward the Cultural Revolution. The work team then relied on the leftists to criticize and struggle against the rightists. Some 40 “reactionary teachers” and “reactionary students” were disclosed, with the cooperation of leftist students and teachers. In this county, rival factions took shape from late November to December, when students returned from link-up travels. One of the factions was formed around those “leftist students” groomed by the work team, and the other was centered around those “reactionary students.” The latter accused the former of “government-controlled Red Guards” and a “conservative faction” (Dingbian XZ 2003: 763-4).

A sudden change in policy, rather the interactions between work teams and students, may also have caused division. Before early August, when Mao suddenly ordered the pullout of work teams, only a handful of county annals report confrontation between students and work teams.⁷⁷ This suggests that in many rural middle schools, students opposed work teams not because they confronted work teams on their own but because they learned that it was a correct political line advocated by Mao.⁷⁸ Thus, it was not work teams per se that caused student

⁷⁷ Evidence from county annals does not allow a full examination of interaction at organizational level. Thus, this study does not directly address a major research question—whether factionalism (at the organizational level) resulted from preexisting social structure or the interaction between students and work teams.

⁷⁸ It was suggested, therefore, that it was not work teams that caused a student division but the sudden change of policy initiated by Mao and a few others.

division but the sudden change of policy initiated by Mao and his associates.

In Huaying County, for example, when the news of Beijing University students dispelling the work team reached the county, students of a county middle school began to criticize the "Liu-Deng line" and attack the school's work team. In late August, they dragged out the chief of the education bureau (probably the head of the work team) and paraded him on the streets (Huaying XZ 1995: 858). In another county, Pucheng, oppositions formed in schools, as well as in factories and administrative organs, as it became increasingly apparent that the main target of the Cultural Revolution was "power holders within the Party who take the capitalist road." They began to see "preparatory committees" as "government-sponsored organizations" (*guanban zuzhi*), and countered them by setting up "provisional committees" (*linshi weiyuanhui*). A major fault line developed over how to respond to "government-sponsored preparatory committees." The issue divided most schools and work organizations into two or more "rebel organizations," which in turn linked themselves with either of the two county-level factions—the "Preparatory Faction" (*chou pai*) and the "Provisional Faction" (*lin pai*) (Pucheng XZ 1993: Appendix 1-3).

The downfall of work teams also meant the disgrace of original Red Guards sponsored by them. In Luochuan County, a group splintered off from an original Red Guard organization in late November and formed a "combat corps." They distanced themselves from the "government-sponsored Red Guards of five red categories," and accused them of a "conservative faction." The debate spread to administrative organs and other work units, in which oppositions also formed (Luochuan XZ 1994: 199). In many other counties, original Red Guard

organizations were later censured by rebel organizations as “conservative factions” or “government-controlled organizations” (Ankang XZ 1989; Chang’an XZ 1999; and others). Thus, the sudden change in policy, rather than the conduct of work teams, made work teams and the sponsored Red Guards the targets of the oppositions.

In sum, work teams and preparatory committees divided students by three distinct but mutually related ways: the practice of dividing students by class backgrounds, the repression of recalcitrant students, and the sudden change in the policy concerning the work team. These processes suggest an emergence of distinct deprived groups—students of non-five-red-category origins, those repressed by work teams, and those riding on the current of the attack against the “bourgeois reactionary line.” As noted above, county annals do not provide enough evidence to determine the relative importance of these causes. Thus, we have to settle for an observation that those elements all existed in the opposition against work teams, the relative importance of which varied across counties or even across schools.⁷⁹ Despite these complexities, work teams caused major fault lines along which identities and factions formed.

Summer Reeducation Camp for Teachers

In some counties, victimized teachers, rather than students, took lead in organizing opposition. For a few months starting mid July 1966, county authorities concentrated all primary and middle school teachers into the “reeducation camp for teachers” (*jioshi jixun hui*) to investigate and then persecute them. Teachers were

⁷⁹ Future studies would use organization-level evidence to determine causes of rural student factionalism.

often classified into groups—"leftists," "middle of the roaders," "rightists," "extreme rightists" and so on—according to their past histories and class backgrounds. Teachers of "bad class backgrounds" and those with past problems were often singled out and subjected to cruel treatment by activists of peasants, students and teachers. About 15 to 30 percent of teachers were given such ignominious labels as "rightists," "spies," "monsters and demons," and others. As political currents changed from the summer to the fall, victimized teachers began to organize themselves into opposition to demand rehabilitation.⁸⁰

In early September 1966, some persecuted teachers of suburban Liquan County submitted the demand for rehabilitation (*pingfan*) several times to the county party committee and the people's committee. Later in the month, those teachers took the initiative in forming an oppositional organization. Later, students of the county's No. 1 Middle School and No. 2 Middle School set up their oppositional organizations. Some county-level organs and communes followed suit. On the basis of these, teachers' organization then played a core role (*gugan*) in forming a county-wide rebel organization, the "Red Allied Committee" (*hong lian hui*) (Liquan County Annals 1999: 994).

In Chang'an County, a southern neighbor of Xi'an, teachers punished in the camp rebelled against an original "five-red-category" Red Guard organization, and criticized those who obeyed the order (*tingming*) of the work team as "conservatives." In August-September, they called together rebels of educational institutions and set up an oppositional organization, the "Red Rebel Headquarters" (*hong zao si*). Later, schools, factories, administrative organs, communes all competed to establish rebel

⁸⁰ For the details of the "summer reeducation camp for teachers," see chapter 2.

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organizations (Chang'an XZ 1999: 601).

Thus, the teachers' reeducation camp gave rise to an oppositional group: persecuted teachers. The attempt at scapegoating "academic authorities" backfired on party officials as the political current turned against the local party organization. Moreover, the reeducation camp not only antagonized teachers but also drove a wedge among a larger segment of local population. We come back to this point in the next section.

Socialist Education Movement

In many rural counties, the Cultural Revolution began in the shadow of the "Socialist Education Movement." The SEM, also called the "Four-Cleanups" (*si-qing*), was started in 1962 as the campaign against economic, political, ideological, and organizational impurities of rural peasants and basic-level cadres (Baum 1969; Baum and Teiwes 1968). Aimed mainly at rural officials, the extensive purge campaign left a lasting cleavage that resurfaced during the Cultural Revolution. Due to the limitation of space, this chapter deals only with those cases in which the SEM caused a major fault line, around which the factional conflict of the Cultural Revolution evolved.⁸¹

The Cultural Revolution in many counties started at the heels of the Socialist Education. In some other counties, the initial phase of the Cultural Revolution was literally intermingled with the preceding movement. According to the county annals,

⁸¹ A full treatment of the Socialist Education Movement and its relationship with the Cultural Revolution requires another article, if not another dissertation. The purpose of this chapter is to point out that the SEM left one of the cleavages that were consequential to Cultural Revolution conflict. For an old but excellent treatment of the issues, see Baum (1969) and Baum and Teiwes (1968).

nearly 10 percent of Shaanxi counties⁸² were still in the middle of the SEM, and their political leaderships were being taken over by a Socialist Education work team sent by a higher authority—either the provincial party committee or the district party committee. In those counties, the Socialist Education work teams, rather than the county party committees, were responsible not only for conducting the purge of rural officials but also for sending work teams to schools and teachers' reeducation camps in the initial phase of the Cultural Revolution. Thus, the start of the Cultural Revolution in those counties did not indicate a change of policy, but meant that the purge was stepped up even more virulently with rebellious slogans and violent means of the Cultural Revolution. As a result, a massive purge conducted by Socialist Education work teams caused a major fault line along which opposition took shape.⁸³

In Lantian County, for example, an extensive purge of county-level, as well as commune and brigade, officials were conducted by the "Socialist Education General Team" (*shehui jiaoyu zong tuan*), which had taken over the county's political power before the Cultural Revolution was started.⁸⁴ In the county, "the Socialist Education [Movement] and the Cultural Revolution were combined with each other (*xiang*

⁸² There were 6 such counties in Shaanxi, which constitutes 8 percent of all the counties.

⁸³ An official document also suggests that officials punished in the Socialist Education put up opposition during the Cultural Revolution. The Party Center's "Letter to Poor and Lower-Middle Peasants and Cadres at All Levels in Rural People's Communes All Over the Country," issued on February 20, 1967, mentioned: "Former cadres removed from office in the 'four clean-ups' movement must take an active part in labor and remold themselves. They are not allowed to counter-attack in revenge" (CCRD 2002).

⁸⁴ In December 1965, the provincial Socialist Education team dispatched a 92-person advance team to Lantian, where the team stationed themselves in county-level organs to prepare for "the third stage of the Socialist Education Movement." The following account is based on Lantian County Annals (1994: 785-788).

jiehe) when the Party Center issued the "May 16 notice." On April 22, a ten-thousand "Socialist Education large force" (*she jiao da jun*) advanced to towns and villages, and started "the third round of the Socialist Education." On May 16, within 20-odd days after the SEM began, the Cultural Revolution was suddenly started all over the nation. The Socialist Education General Team led both the SEM and the Cultural Revolution. It carried out a top-down purge of officials and the masses, while applying "mistaken ideas and violent means of the Cultural Revolution."⁸⁵

The "leftist" line of the third round of the SEM was mixed with the rebellious climate of the Cultural Revolution to produce a great number of false charges, fabrications, and misjudgments (*yuan jia cuo an*). From May to December 1966, 981 party members were purged (*qingchu*) as "five-category elements," "class enemies," and "converters" who blended into the Party; 612 state officials (29.5 percent) were punished; 82 leading officials of county departments, bureaus, and communes (50.3 percent) were punished; and 80 percent of incumbent rural officials were forced to step down. 7 were also reported killed, 12 permanently injured, and 257 were forced to kill themselves. This thorough purge of party and state officials created a deep division among rural officials. The division created by the purge did not necessarily follow class background. As the county annals noted, "the Socialist

⁸⁵ The county annals also mentions that the persecution by the Socialist Education General Team intensified further when the "Sixteen Points" in early August added confusion to the county's "Cultural Revolution." "Leftist mistakes (*zuoqing cuowu*) [of the work team] intensified further, while mass organizations were formed one after another." "The targets of attack were expanded arbitrarily....., and the conflicts between those persecuting and persecuted, and between those affirming and denying the results of the Socialist Education became extremely acute" (786).

Education utilized activists (*jiji fenzi*) from poor and lower-middle peasant backgrounds to punish officials from the same backgrounds" (785). The SEM itself created a "great division" (*da fenlie*), which "developed into polarized factional conflict during the Cultural Revolution." In the county, rival factions formed mainly on different views on the SEM. One was a faction that upheld the results of the SEM and was staffed by Socialist Education activists—condemned by the opponent as a "conservative dog" (*baohuang gou*), while the other was a faction that denied the SEM and was built around those persecuted and implicated—a "reversing-the-judgment wolf" (*fan'an lang*).

Similarly in Jingyang County, a Socialist Education work team sent by the Xianyang District Party Committee took charge of directing the Cultural Revolution in its initial stage. In the county, rival factions also developed over the issues of the SEM. One of the factions regarded the SEM as having correctly carried out Mao's revolutionary line and prevented the restoration of capitalism, while the other saw it as having committed a "bourgeois reactionary line." The former consisted of officials, former members of Socialist Education work teams, activists of the SEM, and some students. The latter included rural officials persecuted or denounced as "four uncleans" (*si bu qing*) in the SEM, teachers, as well as some students (Jingyang XZ 2001: 743).

There were also some other counties—Hanzhong, Huangling, Yijun,⁸⁶ Yulin—in which the political power was being taken over by a Socialist Education

⁸⁶ The Socialist Education of Yijun County was combined with that of neighboring Huangling County. A work team sent by the provincial party committee conducted the movement in both counties. The work team was pulled out in November 1966 (Yijun XZ 1992: 26, 398).

work team sent by a higher authority at the time when the Cultural Revolution was started. In those counties, the SEM tended to become a predominant issue over which opposition formed. This was not only because Socialist Education work teams were responsible for the purges in the early phase of the Cultural Revolution, but also the persecutions conducted by them were generally more extensive and severer. The combination of the two major political movements increased the severity of political persecution, and as a result produced a major fault line for the factional conflict.⁸⁷

Opposition Instigated by Traveling Red Guards

In many inland counties, oppositions did not form internally—in response to work teams, the summer reeducation camp for teachers, or the Socialist Education Movement—but develop at the instigation of outside actors—traveling Red Guards.⁸⁸ In those counties, tensions may have existed locally. But not until those who suffered were provided with meanings and words to describe their predicaments, did they acquire an oppositional identity vis-à-vis authorities and rival groups. Those meanings and vocabularies—“frames”—were carried into rural counties by traveling Red Guards.

In the northernmost county of Fugu,⁸⁹ bordering both with Inner Mongolia and

⁸⁷ There were also some other counties in which the SEM became a dominant issue even after it had been settled and while the county party committees were in charge. This issue of a lingering effect of the SEM, rather than the direct effect examined here, is as I mentioned beyond the scope of this chapter.

⁸⁸ For the role of traveling Red Guards and the policy of the “exchange of experiences” in general, see Chapter 2.

⁸⁹ It is about 550 kilometers north of Xi’an.

Shanxi Province, the first oppositional organization was formed by local students returning from their "link-up" journeys. In Fugu Middle School, the "preparatory committee" created an original Red Guard organization by carefully selecting students of "five red categories" in mid August.⁹⁰ In November, when students returned from Beijing, Xi'an, Yan'an and so on, they started to organize themselves freely into Red Guard organizations. These groups gradually bifurcated into two large factions, according to their different views on major issues (Fugu XZ 1994: 576-578).⁹¹

In Jingbian,⁹² another northern county bordering with Inner Mongolia, the arrival of a "long march squad" (*changzheng dui*) from Shenyang, the provincial capital of the northeastern province of Liaoning, in early November immediately attracted the attention of local students. On November 5-6, instigated by them as well as three students from neighboring Dingbian County on their way to Beijing to make their own "long march," some 20 senior students of Jingbian Middle School secretly formed the school's first independent Red Guard organization, the "Lu Xun Combat Corps" (*Lu Xun zhandou dui*). A few days later, the Combat Corps declared that it no longer accepted the guidance of the preparatory committee, and would embark on a "long march" themselves. On November 28, when the Combat Corps arrived in Taiyuan, the provincial capital of neighboring Shanxi Province, they

⁹⁰ An eighteen-person work team was sent to the middle school on June 13, 1966. Following Mao's pronouncement, "Bombard the Headquarters," on August 5 and a meeting of the Northwestern Bureau in mid August, the county party secretary suddenly pulled out the work team and replaced it with the "preparatory committee for the Cultural Revolution."

⁹¹ These rivaling organizations, both of which originated from Fugu Middle School, became the prototypes of contending county-wide factions later on.

⁹² Jingbian is some 370 kilometers north of Xi'an.

demanded through correspondence that its members in school criticize the preparatory committee for conducting a “bourgeois reactionary line,” and be the first to introduce the slogan of “Bombard the Headquarters” (Jingbian XZ 1993: 335).

Even in suburban counties, oppositions came into being as formalized organizations often with the help of outside Red Guards. In a middle school in Sanyuan County, some 40 kilometers north of Xi’an, acute confrontation had developed in August among students over the attitude toward the work team. Within the same month, students of “five red categories” formed a county-wide Red Guard organization, the “Red Guard Headquarter” (*hongweibing silingbu*). In September, some students were prodded by a Red Guard organization from Xi’an into forming an oppositional organization, the “Red Guard Rebel Headquarters” (*hongweibing zaofan silingbu*). The oppositional Red Guard organization confronted fiercely with the original Red Guard organization (Sanyuan XZ 2000: 724-725).

PINGFAN: A UNIFYING OPPOSITIONAL IDENTITY

Toward the end of 1966, alliances among oppositional groups began to take place, as the movement against the “bourgeois reactionary line” swept all over the country.⁹³ Oppositions were united by one aim: rehabilitation (*pingfan*). What was implicit behind the campaign against the “bourgeois reactionary line” was that the policies of the early phase of the Cultural Revolution—the sending of work teams and the summer reeducation camp for teachers—were repudiated as the “bourgeois reactionary line” for “pitting the masses against the masses” and not aiming at “power

⁹³ See Chapter 2 on the details of the movement against the “bourgeois reactionary line.”

holders within the Party who take the capitalist road.” Thus, those who had been persecuted or snubbed in the early phase of the Cultural Revolution were now entitled to demand rehabilitation.

While the demand for rehabilitation by persecuted teachers began to appear in some suburban counties as early as in September (for example, Liquan XZ 1999: 994; Nanzheng XZ 1990: 484), it was made an official policy on October 5 when the Party Center approvingly communicated the Central Military Commission’s “Urgent Directive concerning the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution in Military Academies” (CCRD 2002). The directive, often referred as the “rehabilitation document” (*pingfan wenjian*), nullified the directing role of party committees in the Cultural Revolution, and declared invalid all the labels—“counterrevolutionary,” “anti-party elements,” “rightists,” “fake leftists”—given to people by work teams or party committees. The document created a storm of “Kicking Away Party Committees and Carrying Out Revolution!” It is reported that after the issuance of the document, school authorities completely lost control of students (Yang XZ 1996: 865). The demand for rehabilitation by those deprived groups continued until early 1967, when most of teachers and students punished in the early phase of the Cultural Revolution were rehabilitated.⁹⁴

The example of Jingbian County mentioned above provides a case in point. Local students started to press for rehabilitation in mid December, as they returned

⁹⁴ In early 1967, in the midst of the “January power seizure,” persecuted teachers and repressed students in most counties were rehabilitated. For example, in February 1967, based on the spirit of “an urgent instruction from the Party Center,” the Hua County Party Committee rehabilitated those teachers wrongly punished in the reeducation camp and those students unofficially decided “rightists” by work teams (Hua XZ, unpublished manuscript, 7).

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one after another from their link-up journeys. They demanded that all the masses who had been labeled “counter-revolutionaries,” “black gangs” (*heibang fenzi*), and others in the early phase of the Cultural Revolution be rehabilitated through such means as big character posters and “rehabilitation round-table talks,” and all documentary evidence be destroyed. From the county town to the villages, variously named mass organizations sprang up, which all turned their brunt against work teams and “Cultural Revolution committees” in their work units. As the county annals reports, “the only substance of those struggles was in fact about one thing: rehabilitation” (Jingbian XZ 1993: 335).

Identifying themselves as victims of the “bourgeois reactionary line,” persecuted teachers and repressed students worked hand in hand for rehabilitation. In some cases, rebel students not only broke up the teachers’ reeducation camp but also helped teachers with forming their own rebel organizations. In Pucheng County, students broke into and forcibly ended the teachers’ reeducation camp, declaring both the sending of work teams to schools and the reeducation camp the “bourgeois reactionary line.” Later, persecuted teachers organized themselves into a rebel group and demanded rehabilitation (Pucheng XZ 1993: 1 in the appendix).⁹⁵ In Luochuan County, located in a southern part of Yan’an District, 43 teachers who had been sent to the countryside after the reeducation camp were incited by “rebels” in the county town to start a “reactionary uprising” (*heibang baodong*) in mid December. Upon going back to the county town, they established their own “combat corps.” Those persecuted teachers denounced the “bourgeois reactionary line” committed by

⁹⁵ From August to October, work team heads made a series of self-criticisms at rallies in schools and communes, and “black materials” (*hei cailiao*) were burnt. Those punished teachers were rehabilitated in January.

the county party committee and demanded rehabilitation. In early February 1967, the county party committee rehabilitated those teachers who had been labeled "black gangs" during the teachers' reeducation camp," and burned "black materials" in the town's south square (Luochuan XZ 1994: 199-201).⁹⁶

The affiliation between persecuted teachers and rebel students is also a logical outcome of the relationship between original Red Guards and victimized teachers. Original Red Guards were often used by work teams to criticize and struggle against (*pidou*) "teachers with problems" (*you wenti de jiaoshi*). For example, in Taibai County, 66 "student representatives," along with activists of poor and lower-middle peasants, participated in the teachers' reeducation camp to criticize and struggle against teachers (Taibai XZ 1995: 422). The work team sent to the reeducation camp instigated those students to criticize teachers by such means as "big contending" (*da ming*), "big letting go" (*da fang*), "big character posters" (*da zi bao*) and "big debate" (*da bianlun*). It also publicized teachers' personal dossiers (*dang'an*) to disclose problems in their historical background, work, and private life.

⁹⁶ In the southwestern border county of Ningqiang, persecuted teachers were helped by Red Guards from outside the county. On December 27, 1966, they set free 58 teachers with "serious problems" who continued detained after the end of the reeducation camp in mid October. They urged those persecuted teachers to revolt and form a rebel organization (Ningqiang XZ 1995: 670). In Zhenba, when the "rehabilitation document" was issued, "some teachers had been wrongly persecuted in the disciplinary camp, but students were not yet struggled against or given any counterrevolutionary hat." Despite that, however, some local rebel students and the "Zhenba-bound rehabilitation delegation" of Hanzhong Agricultural College sponsored a "rehabilitation rally" of thousands of people on January 11 and 12. In the rally, a group of people "stirred up trouble without reason" (*wu shi sheng fei*), claiming that they had been "persecuted," and tried to coerce the county party committee and the people's committee into "rehabilitating" them. After the incident, rebel organizations at various levels competed to hold "rehabilitation rallies" (Zhenba XZ 1996: 38).

Officials of county-level organs, and teachers and students of other schools were invited to the reeducation camp to “learn about the experience” (Yichuan XZ 2000: 588-589). In another county, skirmish broke out between teachers and students who had been sent to criticize and struggle against teachers (Wugong XZ 2001: 850). Moreover, persecuted teachers were often attacked by original Red Guards as “monsters and demons”⁹⁷ (*niu gui she shen*), which included not only “five black categories” and those persecuted during the SEM but also teachers punished in the reeducation camp (for example, Yan’an City Annals 1994: 824). It is therefore far from surprising that victimized teachers and rebel students—the opponent of original Red Guards—found themselves in the same boat.

Unlike those of repressed students and persecuted teachers, the position of rural officials persecuted during the Socialist Education Movement was much less clear. For one thing, the official rehabilitation document pardoned only those criticized and punished *in the early phase of the Cultural Revolution*. Moreover, an official document⁹⁸ issued on late January 1967 categorically denies that the rehabilitation would extend to those punished in the SEM. Thus, as long as the official policy is

⁹⁷ “Monsters and demons” denoted “bourgeois academic authorities” and other “exploiting-class elements.” They did not usually include “capitalist roaders,” or party officials taking capitalist road. See, for example, the editorial of the *People’s Daily*, written by Chen Boda, on June 1, 1966, “Sweep Away All the Monsters and Demons.”

⁹⁸ The Party Center’s “Notice on Defending the Fruits of the Four Cleanups Movement,” issued on January 25, 1967, pointed out, “the Party Center recognizes that the Four Cleanups Movement (i.e., the SEM) achieved a great result. The provisions in ‘the former and latter 10 points’ and ‘23 points’ concerning the Socialist Education Movement in the rural area were all written under the auspices of Chairman Mao and great Marxist-Leninist documents.” It emphasized the sending of work teams *during the Socialist Education* was a “correct policy,” and warned against rehabilitating those persecuted in the movement and struggling against members of Socialist Education work teams (CCRD 2002).

concerned, officials persecuted in the SEM were not entitled for rehabilitation.

But the dividing line was less clear in actual settings. As I mentioned above, there are some rural counties where the Cultural Revolution was intermingled with the SEM in its early stage. In those counties, it was Socialist Education work teams that conducted the persecutions of the early Cultural Revolution. Thus, in Lantian County mentioned earlier, where the Socialist Education work team directed the early Cultural Revolution, the alliance between rebel students and rural officials punished in the SEM was formed. In early December 1966, members of the "Provisional Committee" (*lin wei hui*) of Red Guard No.1 Middle School (formerly Chenguan Middle School) went to rural villages to investigate circumstances of the SEM to produce a report disclosing the brutalities. They then showed in public the pictures of 22 kinds of punishments used in the SEM, and aroused public opinion against the movement. The opposing "Rebel Committee" (*zao wei hui*) of Red Guard No.1 Middle School also entered rural villages and made contact with poor and lower-middle peasant organizations. They then propagated, "Stand firmly with poor and lower-middle peasants, and defend the great fruits of the Socialist Education Movement to death!" "Allow only poor and lower-middle peasants to rebel, and do not allow five black categories to overthrow the universe!" At this point, the fault line of factional conflict became increasingly clear (Lantian XZ 1994: 787).

Even in those counties where the early stage of the Cultural Revolution was not conducted by Socialist Education work teams, some accounts suggest that the demand for rehabilitation extended to officials punished in the SEM. In Zhenba, a southern county bordering with Sichuan Province, for example, rebel students demanded the rehabilitation not only of those who had wrongly been criticized in the

initial phase of the Cultural Revolution but also of those who had been criticized and punished *before the Cultural Revolution* (Zhenba XZ 1996: 38). Therefore, the campaign against the "bourgeois reactionary line" in late 1966 united students not only with persecuted teachers but in some cases with persecuted officials. Those groups were united in one aim: rehabilitation.

CONSERVATIVE COUNTERMOBILIZATION

In response to the growing mobilization of oppositions in late 1966, party officials began to rally supporters using official networks. Among rural populations, the most staunch supporter of the Party was peasants of "poor and lower-middle backgrounds." Having been the driving force of the Communist Revolution, they were given a formal organization, the "Association of Poor and Lower-Middle Peasants," in the midst of the Socialist Education Movement in May 1964. Established at every level of rural society, from counties to production teams, the association was given a leading role in the SEM. In the early phase of the Cultural Revolution, they were also sent to schools and the "summer reeducation camp for teachers" to support the work teams. In short, the peasant association provided rural party officials the most reliable source of supporters/activists.

The process of peasant mobilization by officials is best described in the example of Langao County. In Langao, a southern county bordering with Sichuan Province, various factional groups that sprung up in late 1966 gradually bifurcated into county-wide factional coalitions by June 1967. One of the factions led by party officials gained numerical superiority by recruiting peasants through the network of the peasant association. In January 1967, a group of officials, led by those who just

returned from Shiquan County where they had participated in the Socialist Education Movement, went to urban streets and rural communes to recruit members (*zhao bing mai ma*) and help them organize their own "rebel headquarters" (*zaofan silingbu*). On February 20, those officials held a rally of 2,000 people, and declared the establishment of the "General Headquarters" (*zong bu*). In early June, to extend its influence further in the countryside, the "General Headquarters" used the network of the peasant association. Officials assisted peasants in setting up their own "rebel organization," the "Langao County Poor and Lower-Middle Peasants Revolutionary Rebel General Headquarters" (*Langao xian pinxiazhongnong geming zaofan zhihuibu*). Through the incorporation of poor and lower-middle peasants, the "General Headquarters" gained numerical superiority, controlling the "rebel organizations" of 7 urban districts and 42 communes (Langao XZ 1993: 587-589).

The alliance between party officials and poor and lower-middle peasants took place in many other counties (Mizhi XZ 1993; Fugu XZ 1994; Nanzheng XZ 1990; Shangnan XZ 1993; Chunhua XZ 2000; Dali XZ 1994: 728; and others).⁹⁹ In some counties, peasants came to rescue officials "voluntarily." In Pucheng County, when students surrounded leading officials, peasants, as well as some workers, "voluntarily mobilized themselves" into a street demonstration against those troublesome students. For a few days, major streets were packed with peasants carrying plows and pickaxes and shouting, "Defend the County Party Committee!" (Pucheng XZ 1993: Appendix 1-2) Elsewhere, peasants were mobilized for parades, "criticism and struggle

⁹⁹ Poor and lower-middle peasants were also mobilized by the Party for the teachers' reeducation camp, where they were used to "collect materials" and "criticize and struggle against" teachers. After the establishment of "revolutionary committees" in 1968, those peasants were once again mobilized for the purpose of political repression.

meetings" (*pidou hui*) and "denunciation meetings" (*shengtao hui*) in hundreds and thousands (Long XZ 1993); and to fortify the town and fight against oppositions (Huanglong XZ 1995; Yanchuan XZ 1991). Thus, the mobilization through the official network of poor and lower-middle peasants was a prominent pattern in the rural area. Those peasants proved the most reliable ally for embattled rural officials.

Another loyal supporter of party officials was students of the "preparatory committee," an official organization created by work teams in the early phase of the Cultural Revolution. As seen above, those students, often from revolutionary backgrounds, were groomed by work teams to lead the persecution of teachers and others as original Red Guards. Later in the year, as the wind of the attack against the "bourgeois reactionary line" swept over the country, however, they found themselves under attack by oppositional students as a "conservative faction" or a "government-sponsored organization." Thus, the political circumstances pushed students of preparatory committees to the side of party officials.

County annals often report the alliance between party officials and students of the preparatory committee. In Hua County, for example, the preparatory committee of Xianlin Middle School teamed up with a "rebel organization" of the county party committee, and together seized the powers of the county party committee and the people's committee in late January, 1967 (Hua XZ, unpublished manuscript, 12). The alliance between students of the preparatory committee and party officials was also found in other counties (Pucheng XZ 1993; Mizhi XZ 1993; and others).¹⁰⁰

Thus, even before the "January power seizure" of early 1967, the campaign

¹⁰⁰ Students of the preparatory committee were also found allied with poor and lower-middle peasants (Chunhua XZ 2000: 787).

against the "bourgeois reactionary line" and the demand for rehabilitation began to unite oppositions against the local political leadership and its supporters. When party officials mobilized loyal supporters to counter the increasingly unified opposition, a major fault line emerged. One side consisted of groups victimized by local party officials—persecuted teachers, repressed students, and punished officials, while the other was groups loyal to the Party—poor and lower-middle peasants, students of the preparatory committee, and party officials.¹⁰¹

(Process 1) Demand for rehabilitation by repressed groups → Conservative counter-mobilization → Polarization

As the year turned, the issue of rehabilitation gave way to that of power seizure. The processes of factional polarization were accelerated in the vast majority of Shaanxi counties as factional groups competed for power.

POLARIZATION OVER "POWER SEIZURES"

The storm of the "January power seizure" swept through the entire country in early 1967. It was not merely the culmination of the attack against the "bourgeois reactionary line" started in October but also an important turning point in the course of Cultural Revolution conflict. Power seizures plunged the local political

¹⁰¹ There were 5 counties in which factional polarization took place before January 1967. That consists of 8 percent (5 out of 59) of the counties for which the information on the timing of factional polarization was provided. In those counties, the demand for rehabilitation and the debate on the "bourgeois reactionary line" were the dominant issues over which factional polarization took place.

leadership into paralysis in most of the counties.¹⁰² Consequently, the main thrust of the conflict changed from the opposition to the political leadership to the struggle for power among factional groups. Before the power seizure, the conflict centered on the “bourgeois reactionary line” committed by the local political leadership. The opposition was directed against the political leadership, as well as those groups groomed by it. After the power seizure, however, rival factions competed with one another for power, as well as for the reputation as “revolutionary leftists,” without any presiding authority. Almost all local party leaders fell from power, or at least retreated backstage. Factional groups became increasingly bifurcated over such issues as the legitimacy of power seizures, who among “power holders” should be targeted, and the “expression of support” (*biaotai*) by local military units. The holders of major offices—county party secretary, vice-secretaries, and county magistrate—were almost never spared from being targeted, because factional groups competed to struggle against them to prove themselves “real revolutionary leftists.” The competition for the reputation of “revolutionary leftist,” and therefore for power, produced the largest wave of factional polarization (Figure 3.1).

Despite the connotation of the term, not all the “power seizures” in Shaanxi counties represented the wrestling of the political power by a group, or groups, challenging the authority of the government. In general, county annals report three forms of “power seizures.” “Insurgent power seizures” represent an ideal-typical

¹⁰² In this study, “power seizures” are operationally defined as “a reported seizing of power, or paralization, of the county party committee, the center of political power, by a group, or groups, of people.” Defined in this way, power seizures took place in 85 percent of Shaanxi counties. Among 75 county annals that include an independent Cultural Revolution section, 60 reported power seizures; 11 report either no power seizure or failed attempts, and 4 provide no information.

pattern, in which rebellious students, teachers, and others challenged the authority of the county party committee. This was a reminiscence of the "January power seizure" in Shanghai, the model for the nationwide movement. This pattern, however, consisted of less than 30 percent of all the "power seizures" in Shaanxi.¹⁰³ There were two varieties of so-called "fake power seizures" (*jia duoquan*). The first type, called "workplace power seizures" (*qiang ban duoquan*), accounted for more than 40 percent of the reported "power seizures." They were performed by a "rebel organization" of the county party committee, often with tacit consent of party leaders. "Combined power seizures" (*lianhe duoquan*) also represented nearly 30 percent in which the requisition of power was carried out by a military-sponsored "great alliance" of rebel factions. These different patterns of "power seizures" are associated with different processes and timing of polarization.

Insurgent Power Seizures

In some counties, a radical group, or groups, challenged the authority of the county party committee, the center of local political power. "Insurgent power

¹⁰³ Operationally, I divided these three types of power seizures according to the following criteria. "Insurgent power seizures" were characterized by the challenge to the local political leadership (i.e., the county party committee) by students, as well as teachers and other "non-elites." "Workplace power seizures" had to take place within the party county committee, and be carried out by lower-level officials against incumbent leading officials. "Workplace power seizures" were distinguished from the other forms by the military sponsorship of the great alliance among factional organizations.

Among 60 cases of reported "power seizures," there were 10 cases of "insurgent power seizures"; 15 cases of "workplace power seizures; and 10 cases of "combined power seizures." There is not enough information on the remaining 25 cases.

seizures” were often carried out by a group of students,¹⁰⁴ or a coalition of students, teachers, and others, who had opposed the “bourgeois reactionary line” of the county party committee—the sending of work teams and the summer reeducation camp for teachers. Oppositions in those counties usually had achieved a higher level of unity before the power seizures. “Insurgent power seizures” were thus often found in suburban counties where oppositions not only formed earlier but also became united against the “bourgeois reactionary line” earlier than in inland counties.¹⁰⁵ In other cases, insurgent power seizures were also performed by local students at the instigation of traveling Red Guards from urban centers. The following shows how insurgent power seizures are related to the processes of polarization:

(Process 2a) Polarization (a) → Insurgent power seizures → Conservative countermobilization → Polarization (b)

Because the oppositions tended to become united early, insurgent power seizures were sometimes preceded by factional polarization. For example, in the case of Pucheng County¹⁰⁶ seen above, faction organizations were divided between the “preparatory faction” (*chou pai*) and the “provisional faction” (*lin pai*) over the issue of “government-sponsored preparatory committees” by the end of 1966. In early February 1967, leaders of the “provisional faction” called together students and

¹⁰⁴ Those rebellious students organized themselves into variously named “combat corps,” “provisional committees” (*linshi weiyuanhui*), or others.

¹⁰⁵ 60 percent of the cases of “insurgent power seizures” are found in counties of the central plain region.

¹⁰⁶ Pucheng County is located in the central plain region, about 100 kilometers northeast of Xi’an.

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masses to break into the county party committee. The "February 3 robbery of the seal" was met with an opposition of many officials and masses. However, this incident sent all the levels of party and political organizations into paralysis (Pucheng XZ 1993: 3).

In other counties, oppositional groups achieved unity before launching an attack against the political leadership, while conservative countermobilization had yet to take place. In suburban Sanyuan County, some 40 kilometers north of Xi'an, students set up an oppositional (non-five-red-category) Red Guard organization, the "Red No.3 Headquarters" (*hong san si*) in September 1966 with the support of a Xi'an Red Guard organization. Upon its establishment on January 8, 1967, the "Workers-Peasants Headquarters" (*gong nong si*) declared its support for the oppositional Red Guard organization. On January 31, the "Red No.3 Headquarters" and the "Workers-Peasants Headquarters" joined forces in seizing the powers of the county party committee and the people's committee. They declared the county party secretary and the county magistrate suspended from the offices, and paraded them with nameplates reading "capitalist roader." After the power seizures, the county's party and political organs fell into paralysis (Sanyuan XZ 2000: 725-726).

"Insurgent power seizures" intensified factional confrontation by setting off a process of conservative countermobilization. In Fu County,¹⁰⁷ rebellious students and officials of the "Red Rebel Headquarters" (*hong zao si*) made a surprise attack on the county party committee in the evening of January 28. The "commanders" called out "combat corps," cut the telephone wire connecting the building to the outside, and

¹⁰⁷ Fu is located some 200 kilometers north of Xi'an and along the railroad line to Yan'an.

struggled against the county party secretary and the county magistrate in an exaggerated way. Within an hour, they gave up the seals of the county party committee and the people's committee. After the incident, the wind of power seizures swept through towns and villages. Meanwhile, a heated debate on whether the "January 28 power seizure" was a legitimate revolutionary act or an illegitimate usurpation of power continued endlessly, involving men and women of all ages. With the confrontation between the rival factions reaching the peak, the conservative foe, the "Unified Headquarters" (*tong zhi*), staged a "counter power seizure" (*fan duoquan*) on July 6 (Fu XZ 1994: 554-555).

Workplace Power Seizures

In another prominent pattern, officials of a county party committee unilaterally seized the power of their own workplace. A "rebel group" of the county party committee acted on their own, often with nodding of leading officials. This was presumably a collaborative attempt between "rebel officials" and their superiors behind the scenes to thwart opposition's attempt to seize power. Oppositional groups challenged this closed-door act of party officials as "workplace power seizures," "fake power seizures" (*jia duoquan*), "palace coups" (*gongting zhengbian*), or "conservative power seizures" (*baohuang duoquan*). In this pattern, the generalized mobilization of challenging groups took place only after the workplace power seizures. Officials seized the initiative only to find the authenticity of the power seizure challenged by opposition groups. Moreover, the issue of power seizures became a focal point around which factional polarization took place. This pattern was found more often in rural counties where oppositions did not fully

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develop before the “January power seizure.”

(Process 2b) Workplace power seizures → Insurgent mobilization → Polarization

In Huayin County, “rebel factions” of the county party committee and the people’s committee seized the power of their respective workplace in late January. On February 9, some 30 students accused them of “palace coups,” “fake power seizures,” and “conservative power seizures.” Responsible officials were dragged out to the street, and questioned about the nature of the “power seizures.” The county’s factional groups became bifurcated in the same month over issues of power seizures. Both factions—the student-led “Allied Headquarters” (*lian si*) and the “Workers and Peasants” (*gong nong*)—competed with each other in attacking leading officials. They alleged one another of “backstage manipulation of capitalist roaders.” There were not only the pattern of “you attack, then I attack,” but also those of “you attack, I protect” (“secret protection,” or *anbao*) and “you protect, I attack” (“fake attack,” or *jiadou*). Leading officials at all levels—from the county party secretary, vice-secretaries, the county magistrate and vice-magistrates to brigade party secretaries and brigade chiefs—were accused of “capitalist roaders,” “bogus party members,” “three-anti elements” (Huayin XZ 1995: 858-859).

A backstage role of leading officials is made plain in the case of Mizhi County in northern Yulin District. In late January, at the height of the nationwide frenzy of power seizures, some officials of the Yulin District Party Committee came to Mizhi to propagate, “it is better letting revolutionary workers seize power than letting monsters and demons seize power.” On January 25, “rebel organizations” of the county party

committee and the people's committee confiscated (*shoujiao*) the seals of those organs. The "preparatory committee" of Mizhi Middle School and some other organizations followed the example (*ru fa paro zhi*) by seizing the seals of their party committees. Opposition groups declared them "fake power seizures and protecting emperors in reality" (*jia duoqian, zhen baohuang*). Next day, radical students of Mizhi Middle School and some other organizations with similar views formed an alliance, the "101." Two days later, many party and youth league members, poor and lower middle peasants, and "good officials" (*hao ganbu*) rallied around the "preparatory committee" of Mizhi Middle School, and set up the "General Headquarters" (*zong bu*). The "General Headquarters" at first outnumbered the "101." The "101" accused the "General Headquarters" of "conservative running dogs" (*baohuang gou*), while the latter called the former "a big mixture of monsters and demons" (*niu gui she shen da zahui*) (Mizhi XZ 1993: 390-391).

In Fugu, another northern county bordering with Inner Mongolia, the authenticity of the "power seizure" by a faction of the county party committee was challenged as a "workplace power seizure." An oppositional faction protested that a faction was not allowed to seize power unilaterally. A major fault line developed as factional groups in the county town argued with one another about whether a faction could dismiss officials or not. Despite their differences, the rival factions both targeted the county party secretary as the county's biggest "capitalist roader." He was repeatedly interrogated and struggled against by both factions. Most middle and high ranking officials were also sidelined and struggled against, as both factions competed to attack them to show their revolutionary zeal (Fugu XZ 1994: 580).

Combined Power Seizures

The third variety of “power seizures” was called “combined power seizures” (*lianhe duoquan*). They were carried out by a “great alliance” (*da lianhe*) of various factional groups sponsored by the People’s Armed Department (*renmin wuzhuang bu*, hereafter PAD). When receiving a difficult order of “supporting the left” (*zhi zuo*) in late January 1967, in the midst of the nationwide fury of the “January power seizure,” some county PADs seized initiative by sponsoring a “great alliance” among contending factions and letting them seize power under its supervision.¹⁰⁸ But the fragile alliance began to crumble toward the summer of 1967. Some groups opted out over dissatisfaction with the allocation of seats in a new “three-in-one combination” (*san jiehe*) government.¹⁰⁹ More importantly, outside factions interfered in local efforts to maintain “great alliances” as polarizing conflict spread across county borders. Instigated by outside factions, local splinter groups began to criticize military-sponsored power seizures as “supervised power seizures” (*jianchang duoquan*), and distance themselves from “conservative medleys.” Except for a few cases, which I discuss later, military-sponsored “great alliances” almost never held out. Under intense pressure from both inside and outside the county, combined power seizures became a central issue around which factional

¹⁰⁸ Besides calling for the military to support “leftists,” the directive, “Concerning the Resolute Support of the People’s Liberation Army for the Revolutionary Masses of the Left” (CCRD 2002), demanded that “the military actively support *broad masses* of revolutionary leftists in their struggle for power seizures.” In view of the difficulties in deciding “leftists” among fiercely contending factional groups, sponsoring a “great alliance” was presumably one of the few viable options county PADs could take. See chapter 4 on details about the military “support the left” and PADs’ various reactions to it.

¹⁰⁹ A “three-in-one form of government” was staffed by representatives of the military, “revolutionary officials,” and “revolutionary masses.”

groups bifurcated.

(Process 2c) Combined power seizures → Split within the alliance → Polarization

The case of Yan'an County provides a typical example. In Yan'an, a 7-member "committee for requisition and control" (composed of 4 students and 3 officials) performed a "power seizure" under the sponsorship of the county PAD and the military branch district on January 27. On February 17, the committee reorganized itself into a "three-in-one" organization represented by the military, "revolutionary officials" and the masses, according to the format set forth in the editorial of the *Red Flag* (*hong qi*),¹¹⁰ and renamed itself "Yan'an County Revolutionary Committee." Three months later, in mid May, a split emerged within the alliance. Some officials broke away and formed a separate organization, the "May 15th Combat Corps" (*5.15 zhandou dui*). Some students also left the alliance, saying that the "three-in-one" is a "three medley" (*san couhe*) and thus should be dissolved. Two major factions—the "County Headquarters" (*xian zhi*) and the "County General" (*xian zong*)—took shape over the issue of the power seizure and the military-supported alliance. The former regarded the "January 27th power seizure" as a revolutionary "three-in-one" that should be defended, while the latter saw it as a "three medley of conservative factions" that should be dissolved. The post-power seizure "revolutionary committee" fell apart, as the county came increasingly under the influence of polarizing conflict in other places (Yan'an City

¹¹⁰ "On the Struggle for Power Seizure of Proletarian Revolutionary Faction," *Red Flag*, January 31, 1967 (Chen et al. 1996: 797). The editorial was drafted by Chen Boda, Wang Li and Guan Feng, and corrected by Mao himself.

Annals 1994: 826).

In another county, Liquan, a “supervised power seizure” took place on January 24, 1967. In February, some disgruntled students within the alliance put up a big character poster, “the Supervised Power Seizure is Not Complete Power Seizure but Revisionism.” Later in the month, those students broke away from the alliance, and established the “Allied Headquarters” (*lian zhi*). Remaining members of the alliance—some teachers, students and officials—set up a separate organization, the “Red Rebel” (*hong zao*). Those organizations became major rival factions in the later stage of the Cultural Revolution (Liquan XZ 1999: 994-996).

“Great alliances” were not necessarily participated by all contending groups within a county. In some cases, the military authority invited only those organizations it patronized to the alliance. This biased intervention at first made left-out groups flock into the alliance, but later invited the regrouping of opposition as those counties came under the intense pressure toward polarization from outside. In such a case, the involvement of the military in local factional conflict tended to magnify the level of factional violence.¹¹¹

The example of Huanglong County provides a case in point.¹¹² In the county, military intervention was said to have “had a certain stabilizing effect at first but caused an extremely ill effect later.”¹¹³ On January 27, 1967, a vice-political commissar of the county PAD expressed its support to the “Proletarian General” (*wu zong*) (composed of 5 large organizations and 65 combat corps), making it the

¹¹¹ See the next chapter on the relationship between military interventions and factional violence.

¹¹² The following account is based on Huanglong County Annals (1995: 675-677).

¹¹³ This is a phrase often found in county annals when they refer to the military role in the Cultural Revolution.

county's "one and the only (*xiangdangdang, yingbangbang*) rebel faction." Two days later, with the support of military representatives, as well as the public security and judiciary organs, the "Proletarian General" seized the powers of the county party committee, the people's committee, and others at one burst. With many other "rebel groups" scrambling to enter the rank of the "Proletarian General," a "great alliance" was formed.¹¹⁴ On February 4, a new provisional government of "three-in-one combination"—the "Huanglong County Proletarian Revolutionary Provisional Committee"—was established among "revolutionary leading officials," "stationed military representatives," and leaders of "rebel organizations." Even in the face of the military-sponsored "great alliance," however, opposition did not die out. As the district of Yan'an became entangled in a district-wide polarizing conflict toward the end of 1967, the opposing faction, the "Red General" (*hong zong*), was supported by the combat corps of 7 southern Yan'an counties. Thus, the military involvement in local factional conflict resulted in massive interference from other counties.

MILITARY DISINTEGRATION AND THE SPREAD OF POLARIZING CONFLICT ACROSS COUNTY BORDERS

Even in the midst of the nationwide fury of the "January power seizure," and the subsequent factional competition for power, some rural counties remained unaffected by the polarizing conflict. As of the end of July 1967, factional polarization had yet to take place in about a quarter of the counties (Figure 3.1). In

¹¹⁴ The county's 13 communes and towns established their "allied headquarters," attaching themselves to the "Proletarian General."

some of those counties, power seizures never took place,¹¹⁵ while in others, military-sponsored "great alliances" were still holding out. The summer of 1967, however, dealt a final blow to the moribund local political structure. The legitimacy of the military was badly tarnished by the campaign against "a handful in the military" started by Lin Biao and the Central Cultural Revolution Small Group (CRSG) in late July 1967. The new campaign not only ruined the last fortress of the local power structure, but also dragged local military units into the vortex of the polarizing conflict. Accordingly, the factional conflict grew increasingly violent and started to spread across county borders. Thus, the summer of 1967 marked yet another crucial turning point in the factional conflict of the Cultural Revolution: the unraveling of the military and the escalation of factional violence. While a full analysis of the involvement of the military in the escalation of factional armed battles is attempted in the next chapter, in the following we look at how factional polarization engulfed the remaining, mostly inland, counties.

Military "Support-the-Left" and the Breakdown of the Military's Legitimacy

The beginning of military involvement in the Cultural Revolution goes back to early 1967, when the Party Center abruptly reversed its policy of the non-involvement of the PLA (People's Liberation Army) in the Cultural Revolution in the midst of the turmoil caused by the "January power seizure." The central directive,¹¹⁶ issued on January 23, demanded that the military abandon previous non-involvement and

¹¹⁵ In 20 percent of the counties (15 out of 75), power seizures either ended in failure or never took place.

¹¹⁶ That is, "Decision to Provide the Revolutionary Masses of the Left with Firm Support from the People's Liberation Army" (CCRD 2002).

actively support "revolutionary leftists." The military was thus called in not to play an arbitral role but to support actively the "broad masses of revolutionary leftists" in their efforts to seize power. Furthermore, "[c]ounter-revolutionaries and counterrevolutionary organizations... must be resolutely suppressed."

The demise of the local political leadership—the county party committee as well as the people's committee—left the sole responsibility of presiding over factional conflict to the decentralized and quasi-political force of the County People's Armed Department (PAD).¹¹⁷ In winter-spring 1967, factional groups competed to win the support of the local military authorities, because their "expression of support" (*biaotai*) meant an official guarantee as "revolutionary leftists." Without clear direction from above about what "revolutionary leftists" meant, however, most PADs chose either of the following options: adopting a wait-and-see posture or sponsoring a "great alliance" among contending factions. Therefore, in winter-spring 1967, the military "support the left" (*zhi zuo*) became one of the fiercely contested issues among factional groups as they competed for power.

And then came the sensation of the campaign against "a handful in the military." The new campaign, started in late July in the wake of the "Wuhan incident,"¹¹⁸ shattered the legitimacy of the military from its footing. Emboldened, factional organizations further intensified their demand for military support. They began to struggle against local military commanders, and forcibly demanded their support. In Luochuan County, for example, a factional organization attempted to force the PAD to declare support to itself in September 1967. But the PAD was

¹¹⁷ See "Conclusion and Discussion" in Chapter 4 on the nature of the PAD.

¹¹⁸ On the "Wuhan incident," see chapter 4.

unable to take side because supporting one faction would have inevitably invited fierce opposition from the other (Luochuan XZ 1994: 201). In another county, the head of the county PAD was struggled against along with the county party secretary (Huangling XZ 1995: 759). In Chunhua County, a group of students staged a sit-in in the compound of the PAD on August 31, 1967, claiming that the attitude of the "support-the-left" mission was not clear. An opposing group mobilized its affiliates and militia members to surround the sit-inners. On September 6-7, the incident developed into the first armed battle in the county, leaving tens of people injured, more than 10 houses ruined, and some 40 county-level organs robbed (Chunhua XZ 2000: 787).

Besides galvanizing factional groups, the breakdown of the military's legitimacy literally added a new meaning to the military "support the left." As the factional competition for power degenerated into outright armed conflict, the backing of local military units became a decisive factor in their efforts to outdo the opponents. At the same time when Jiang Qing provoked armed conflict with her bellicose remark, "Attack with Reason, Defend with Force,"¹¹⁹ Lin Biao's agitation, "Attack a Handful in the Military," added fuel by involving the military in the factional conflict and, as a consequence, exposing local arsenals to factional groups.¹²⁰ While some of the "arms robberies" that increased dramatically after summer 1967 seem genuine, others

¹¹⁹ Jiang Qing's remark was made on July 22 when she met a delegate from Henan Province, and published next day on *Wenhuibao*, a Shanghai newspaper.

¹²⁰ The slogan was proposed by Lin Biao and the CRSG to attack leading officers of the PLA and wrestle its power. "A handful in the military" is the abbreviation of "a handful of capitalist roaders in the military." Lin Biao pronounced the slogan on July 25 in a one-million-person rally welcoming Xie Fuzhi and Wang Li returning from Wuhan. Wang Li and Guan Feng publicized the slogan extensively in the media from late July to early August (Chen et al. 1996: 366-367).

were carried out under the blind eyes of PAD officers. Moreover, more blatant cases of local PADs providing arms and other services—military training, information, and even personnel—to the faction they were backing were reported in county annals (Zichang XZ 1993: 831-833; Huanglong XZ 1995: 676-677; Xingping XZ 1994: 832-834; and others). Thus, after the summer of 1967, the military not only lost its footing as a presiding authority, but also became entangled in the vortex of polarizing conflict.

Uncoordinated Military Interventions and the Spread of Polarizing Conflict across County Borders

The disintegration of the local military system in rural Shaanxi not only increased the level of factional violence but also expanded the horizon of polarizing conflict. County PADs supported local factions at will without regard to their standing on the radical-conservative divide. Uncoordinated military interventions, thus, created a situation in which neighboring county factions on conflicting sides were supported by their PADs. The support-the-left missions failed to contain pressure toward factional polarization, because a county-level faction deprived of military backing could count on the support of outside allies that were supported by PADs of their counties. As a result, from the summer to the winter of 1967, counties where factional groups had remained unpolarized became increasingly drawn into the vortex of polarizing conflict raging across county borders (Figure 3.1). Thus, the disintegration of the military involved an ever-increasing number of counties into polarizing conflict by expanding the horizon of the conflict.

(Process 3a) The disintegration of the local military system → Conflicting military interventions → The spread of polarizing conflict to neighboring counties

In a northern county of Jingbian, for example, factional polarization did not take place until mid August when local factions were drawn into the polarizing conflict of the neighboring district center of Yulin. From May to August, various groups one after another expressed their supports for either of the rival Yulin factions, the "Hong-Gong-Ji" or the "Two Reds" (*er hong*). First, on June 1, the Jingbian "Red Flag Rebel Corps" (*hongqi zaofan bingtuan*) dispatched a 30-member investigative mission to Yulin, and upon returning expressed its support for the "Hong-Gong-Ji." They also sent food and money to support the hunger strike staged by "Hong-Gong-Ji" members, and propagated its view in Jingbian. Meanwhile, other groups such as the "Red Jingbian Middle School" (*hong jing zhong*) began to express their support for the opposing "Two Reds." On July 12, factional groups leaning toward the Yulin "Two Reds" first achieved a coalition, and called themselves the "Allied General Headquarter" (*lian zong bu*). It included factional organizations of the county people's committee, the county party committee, Jingbian Middle School, and workers. On August 18, other groups supporting the Yulin "Hong-Gong-Ji" formed a rival coalition, the "818." It consisted of groups of primary and middle schools, workers, government organs, peasants, and town residents (Jingbian XZ 1993: 336). Thus, in Jingbian, various factions coalesced into two major county-level factions as a result of their interactions with outside factions.

Similar developments were often found in remote, sparsely populated counties.

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In Liuba County of southwestern Hanzhong District, local “rebel factions” did not form county-level coalitions until early 1968 when they allied themselves with Hanzhong factions, the “Unified Faction” (*tong pai*) and the “Allied Faction” (*lian pai*) (Liuba XZ 2002: 845). In another southwestern county, Ningqiang, various county factions also attached themselves to the same Hanzhong factions, as they became bifurcated in mid October. The county annals cites “influence from outside” (*shou waidi yingxiang*) as a cause of factional polarization in other remote counties as well (for example, Xunyang XZ 1996 732; Zizhou XZ 1993: 560). Therefore, the disintegration of the local military system led to the spread of polarizing conflict across county borders.

Coordinated Military Intervention and the Collapse of the “Conservatives”

The breakdown of the local military system did not take place in all parts of the province. In two of the eight military branch districts (*jun fenqu*) of rural Shaanxi,¹²¹ contingent factors preserved the chains of command, which enabled constituent PADs to achieve coordinated interventions. Coordinated military interventions set in motion the process of “depolarization” either by stopping the process of factional polarization or, where they had already been entrenched, by breaking down the opposition (“conservative factions”). Unlike those in the areas where the local military forces made conflicting interventions, factions deprived of military support could not find neighboring allies that were supported by local PADs.

¹²¹ They are: Yulin, Yan’an, Weinan, Baoji, Xianyang, Shangluo, Hanzhong, and Ankang. “Military branch districts” were coterminous with administrative “districts” (*diqu*). Cities of Xi’an and Tongchuan are excluded from the analysis (see Table 2.1).

As a result, they began to collapse one after another.

(Process 3b) Concerted military interventions on behalf of "radical factions" →
Collapse of "conservative factions" in most neighboring counties →
"Depolarization" (radical domination)

Table 3.1 shows that the state of polarized conflict ended earlier in those counties where military interventions were coordinated than in the others where they were uncoordinated. On average, a polarized state ended within 10 months in the areas where military units supported only radical factions, while it lasted nearly 15 months in the areas where local units were divided between radical and conservative sides. Thus, the coordination among military units—PADs as well as regular PLA units—achieved an early ending of factional polarization in those counties.

Table 3.1 about here

The northern district of Yulin provided one such example. The close relationship between the PAD of Mizhi County, an eastern county of Yulin, and a local "radical faction," the "101," became a nationally publicized model as a standard-bearer of military "support the left." While the Mizhi "support the left" was repeatedly communicated through the national broadcasting system and newspapers in August 1967, the PADs of the other Yulin counties one after another

expressed their supports to local “radical factions.” As a result of these “coordinated” interventions, conservative factions in those counties collapsed one after another. In the case of Jingbian County seen above, the county’s “conservative faction,” the “Allied General Headquarters” (*lian zong bu*), “laid down the banner” (*daoqi*) and broke up on September 14 after losing the support of the PAD three days earlier (Jingbian XZ 1993: 18, 336). “Conservative factions” collapsed, or fled out of the counties, one after another in other counties of Yulin District—in Suide in October, in Qingjian and Yulin in November, and in Fugu in December. Thereafter, radical factions dominated Yulin counties except for one county, Jia, to which “conservative factions” of other counties fled.

A historical contingency also enabled the western district of Baoji to achieve coordinated military interventions. In Baoji, the presence of the 21st Group Army on its soil and the army’s decision to support the radicals had a decisive impact on the course of the district’s factional conflict. The presence of the regular PLA units gave the support-the-left missions of Baoji counties more legitimacy and coherence. Not only the units of the 21st Group Army but also the PADs of Baoji counties concentrated their supports to the radical side, which prompted the collapse of conservative factions in those counties. In Qianyang County, north of Baoji, for example, the PAD’s early expression of support to three “leftist” organizations and the subsequent decision by the 21st Group Army to support the “radicals” thwarted factional polarization in the county (Qianyang XZ 1991: 280). In Feng County, southwest of Baoji, the PAD’s expression of support to the “radical faction” on August 13 broke up the oppositional faction (Feng XZ 1994: 607).

In counties where PADs were unable to end the polarizing conflicts, the 21st

Group Army intervened and forced their way by suppressing oppositions. In Baoji County, a stationed platoon of the 21st Group Army (the 203rd Platoon of the 8166th Unit), along with the county PAD, expressed its support to the “radical faction,” the Red General” (*hong zong*). The “support-the-left” unit pushed aggressively for a “great alliance,” while on the other hand repressing the opposition. As a result, the county’s revolutionary committee was established on December 15, 1967, the second earliest among all the counties of Shaanxi (Baoji XZ 1996: 714). In at least two other counties, Long and Mei, platoons of a regular PLA unit (the 8145th unit in both cases) backed up the county PADs in supporting the “radical factions” (Long XZ 1993: 690; Mei XZ 2000: 585-589).

CONCLUSION

After discussing various causes of oppositions, this chapter identified 6 processes of factional polarization (or depolarization) during the Cultural Revolution. The first drive toward factional polarization came in late 1966, when the demand for rehabilitation united oppositional groups—disgruntled students, persecuted teachers, and punished officials—against the local political leadership. When party leaders countered the opposition by mobilizing their supporters—poor and lower-middle peasants, students of “preparatory committees,” workers, and others, some early cases of factional polarization took place.

But the vast majority of rural Shaanxi counties became divided only after the “January power seizure.” This chapter identified three varieties of “power seizures” in rural counties—“insurgent,” “workplace,” and “combined”—that were associated with different processes of polarization. These different paths, however, all

produced struggle for power among factions, which led to factional polarization.

In hindsight, the only actor that could stop the engulfing processes of factional polarization was the military. A crucial turning point came in summer 1967, when Lin Biao and others began to attack the local military system by initiating the campaign against "a handful in the military." While the campaign badly damaged the integrity of the local military system, historical contingencies enabled only two "military branch districts" to coordinate "support-the-left" missions of constituent county People's Armed Departments. In Yulin, the nationally publicized case of the Mizhi "support the left" made county PADs of Yulin District flock to the side of the "radicals." In Baoji, the presence of the 21st Group Army, also siding with the "radicals," on its soil gave coherence and control to county PADs. Other than these two areas, however, inconsistent military interventions aggravated polarizing conflict by spreading it across county borders. Where stationed military units backed local factions on the conflicting sides, county-level factions deprived of military support were nonetheless helped by neighboring allies supported by units in their counties. By this mechanism of conflicting military interventions, polarizing conflict spread to an ever-increasing number of rural counties.

Focusing on the processes of factional polarization at the county level, this chapter did not deal directly with the question of factional composition. Identifying patterns of factional composition in the rural area requires more information at the organizational level—rural middle schools, communes, production brigades, and others. But the processes of factional polarization identified in this chapter provide an implication for future studies: as the issues of contention changed in rapid succession from late 1966 to mid 1967, the factional compositions may have also

altered. The fortunes of factional groups were greatly affected by the rapid changes in political environment. They were, for example, swayed by the support of local military units, the balance of power in neighboring counties, and above all the initiatives of central leaders. As the major issues of contention shifted from rehabilitation to the power seizure, and then to the military "support the left," the factional conflict became increasingly centered on the struggle for domination, rather than on the protest against the local political leadership. It is implied, therefore, the more factions became focused on power struggle, the less they reflected social background and network. If this hypothesis is supported by findings at the organizational level, it will confirm the relevance of political processes over social structure in Cultural Revolution factionalism.

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Chapter 4 Military Interventions and the Escalation of Factional Violence

Previous studies of the Chinese Cultural Revolution centered around the issues of factionalism. While looking at different social settings/analytical units, researchers debated what theoretical underpinning best explained the origins of factionalism—that of interest/status groups (Lee 1978; Chan, Rosen, and Unger 1980; Rosen 1982; Unger 1982), political networks (Walder 1996, 2000), the mix of these plus “psychocultural orientation” (Perry and Li 1997), or political interactions (Walder 2002, 2006a, 2006b). While differing in their theoretical emphases, these studies shared an agenda: they focused on the issues of factionalism that took shape in the early phase of the Cultural Revolution (or the latter half of 1966).

Beginning in early 1967, however, factionalism gave way to polarization (see the previous chapter on the processes) and then, after the summer, to outright armed battles between polarized factions. Focusing on the armed battle phase (summer 1967 to summer 1968) of the Cultural Revolution, this study argues that the escalation of factional violence after summer 1967 involves processes, and the combinations of processes, different from those of factionalism. These processes turned structural and behavioral properties emphasized in previous studies into varying degrees of political violence. While related, the formation of factions and the escalation of violence involve different processes.¹²² Factionalism may or may

¹²² As Charles Tilly points out, we need to distinguish between the “determinants of collective action” and the “determinants of violent outcomes to collective action” (1978: 182-183). The distinction is analytical, however. Tilly in fact makes the distinction in the context of arguing for the continuity between non-violent and violent collective action—violence usually results from non-violent action such as demonstration, strike, parliamentary session and so on. In a real world, violence

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not involve violence. In some places, factional confrontation escalated into violent conflict, while in others the degenerating processes were stopped somewhere and somehow. To the extent that factionalism was found extensively across various settings (see the previous chapter), we have to look for additional inputs/processes for violence escalation.

I argue that three such processes were involved: polarization, military interventions, and outside interference. In many rural counties, factionalism gave way to polarization in early 1967. The polarization of various factions became a precondition on which the escalation of factional armed battles took place. The forms of military intervention, called for by the ill-conceived policy of the military's "support the left" (*zhi zuo*), had a crucial bearing on the course of local conflict—whether it escalated into violent armed battles or not. The extensiveness of interference by allies of other counties was yet another factor in determining whether factionalism escalated into violence. Various forms of outside support—arms, reinforcements, strategic coordination, and safe haven—often prolonged and expanded the horizon of factional violence.

This study is also different from past studies on the Cultural Revolution in its focus on processes, rather than structures. While recognizing the importance of structural preconditions and personal disposition¹²³ in shaping collective violence, this study places a greater emphasis on processes, whose varying sequences and combinations produce different outcomes. In this regard, this study is inspired by

almost always results from non-violent interactions. The distinction between the causes of collective action and those of violent outcomes is important, however, if we are to address the issues of violence.

¹²³ These social structural and behavioral factors are what Goldstone (1998) calls "initial conditions."

two distinct, though related, recent theoretical developments. The first is the latest development of Cultural Revolution studies themselves. In his recent study on the early student activism in Beijing's universities, Walder (2002, 2006a, 2006b) presented a view of Red Guard factionalism very different from the past "social interpretations." Contrary to the previous perspective that emphasized social structural factors, he found that factions formed as university students responded to rapidly changing environments. Most importantly, students' responses to work teams imposed by higher authorities divided them into pro-work team and anti-work team factions, mostly regardless of their social backgrounds. Walder's latest finding suggests that preexisting social structures did not automatically produce forms of factionalism. Those initial conditions were intervened, if not transformed drastically, by conjunctural and relational factors. The causal emphasis is thus shifted from initial conditions—preexisting structures—to transforming processes.

The other source of theoretical inspiration is a recent breakaway of leading scholars of "contentious politics" from the well-established theoretical tradition they themselves created (McAdam 1999, Introduction to the Second Edition; McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly 2001; Tilly 2003; Tarrow 2005; Tilly and Tarrow 2007). They set aside, while by no means discarding, the conceptual building blocks of the tradition—political opportunities, mobilizing structures, and cognitive frames, calling them static, unitary and western-biased, in favor of a more dynamic model built around contingent and relational properties—*processes, mechanisms, and interactions*. This shift in the field of contentious politics dovetails perfectly with the latest

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development in Cultural Revolution studies.¹²⁴ Thus, the latest developments in these two different research traditions—the fields of contentious politics (social movements/collective action) and China’s Cultural Revolution—point to the same direction: from the analysis focused on the relationships between structural conditions and outcomes, to that more attuned to processes and mechanisms transforming these relationships. This study pushes this theoretical development further by exploring processes of violence escalation in the Cultural Revolution.

Finally, this study focuses on a different setting/analytical unit from previous studies: rural counties. Past studies looked at urban middle schools (Chan, Rosen and Unger 1980; Rosen 1982; Unger 1982), universities (Walder 2002), factories (Walder 1996), and cities (Perry and Li 1997; Wang 1995), but until very recently little attention has been paid to rural counties (Walder and Su 2003; Su 2003). Counties were the location where factions fought for the power of local government in early 1967; where local military units—the county People’s Armed Department (*renmin wuzhuang bu*)—made crucial decision to take side in factional conflict in early-mid 1967; and where “revolutionary committees” (*geming weiyuanhui*) were established after the forced endings of factional armed battles in 1968. It is, in short, a key locale if we are to understand not only the question of violence escalation but also the local processes of the Cultural Revolution in general.

PHASES OF VIOLENCE ESCALATION

(Phase 1) *PLA Called into the Fray: Winter 1967*

¹²⁴ In fact, McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly (2001) cites Walder’s study on the Cultural Revolution (2002) as evidence supportive of their process-oriented dynamic model.

The previous chapter chronicled the processes in which various factions were polarized into two diametrically opposed camps. This chapter tries to explicate the processes of violence escalation after summer 1967 by focusing on three mutually related processes: polarization, PLA intervention, and outside interference.

The “January Power Seizure” of 1967 brought an abrupt change of the policy concerning the non-involvement of the People’s Liberation Army (PLA).¹²⁵ When the wave of power seizures in January 1967 paralyzed local party committees and governments throughout China, the PLA was called into the fray as the last resort to maintain order. The directive, “Concerning the Resolute Support of the People’s Liberation Army for the Revolutionary Masses of the Left” (CCRD 2002), issued on January 23 demanded that the PLA abandon the previous non-involvement and actively support “revolutionary leftists” (*geming zuopai*). The PLA was thus called in not to play a role of a neutral arbiter, but to support actively the “broad masses of revolutionary leftists” in their efforts to seize power. Furthermore, “[c]ounterrevolutionaries and counterrevolutionary organizations...must be resolutely suppressed.”

The difficulty faced by military units stationed in counties—in many cases the county People’s Armed Department (hereafter PAD) or in some others stationed

¹²⁵ In a southern county of Pingli, when the Party Center issued the “Decisions on the Proletarian Cultural Revolution” (“Sixteen Points”) on August 8, 1966, the county People’s Armed Department (PAD) communicated by phone that: “Educate the militia and heighten their alert, and defend the Cultural Revolution movement. But the militia cannot use weapons to defend the Cultural Revolution. Nor can they participate in the great debate of the Cultural Revolution in the name of the militia.” As late as early December 1966, the Party Center and the Central Military Commission sternly requested that “the county PADs never intervene or participate in the local Cultural Revolution” (Pingli XZ, *Military Annals* 1988: 118).

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regular PLA units—was the problem of identifying “leftists” among all kinds of self-styled “rebel” groups. With all contending groups and factions claiming themselves “rebel factions” (*zaofan pai*), and accusing their opponents of “conservative factions” (*baohuang pai*), the task of choosing among “rebel” groups was formidable one. Moreover, by training, military officers were not entirely enthusiastic about making such political choices. The difficulties county PAD units faced in dealing with local factional groups are well summarized in a county annals (Fu XZ 1994: 555-556).

The military intervention, without saying a word when they were cursed, and without raising their hand when they were beaten, had a positive effect on the restoration of order in industrial and agricultural production. But the “support the left” (*zhi zuo*) of the “three supports and two militaries” (*san zhi liang jun*) made more complicated problems that were already complex, and added confusion to already chaotic situation. The reason was that major contending factions both regarded themselves as a genuine “revolutionary leftist,” and the opponent as a “conservative faction” or even a “counterrevolutionary” organization manipulated by bad people. They both also professed themselves to be a so-called “revolutionary rebel faction” by capturing “traitors” and struggling against “power holders.”..... On the surface, both factions were incompatible with each other, but as far as “beating, smashing, stealing, searching and capturing” and struggling against “power holders” were concerned, they were virtually identical. At the same time, circumstances such as “you attack, I protect” (tacit protect) and “you protect, I attack” (fake attack) also

existed.

In early 1967, most PAD commanders therefore did not “expressed its support” (*biaotai*) in the midst of raging factional conflict, but took either of the following positions. One was to take wait and see posture, waiting to support whatever faction or groups happened to emerge victorious or appeared to have the brightest prospects for emerging victorious. The other was to sponsor a “great alliance” (*da lianhe*) of rebel groups and support its “power seizures” at levels of administration. In the latter case, however, many “great alliances” collapsed shortly after the “power seizures” over such issues as who among leading officials should be targeted, which factional groups have the right to seizure power, and so on. Moreover, toward the summer of 1967, as polarization of factions developed, pressures mounted for county PADs to take their side in local conflict.

At least a few county PAD units took side decisively in this early stage, in response to the Center’s call for “supporting the left.” In some of these counties, military certification of the “revolutionary leftists” led to the collapse of oppositional factions. In Qianyang County, for example, the PAD’s early expression of support to three local rebel organizations¹²⁶ in early February 1967 thwarted factional polarization by disintegrating the others and then rallying members of the dissolved factions to join rank¹²⁷ (Qianyang XZ 1991). This pattern of early and decisive

¹²⁶ They are the “Revolutionary Rebel Headquarters,” the “Red Guard Rebel General Headquarters,” and the “Revolutionary Teachers’ and Students’ Rebel Headquarters.”

¹²⁷ No armed battles were reported in Qianyang County. The county’s only death in this period took place when a soldier accidentally shot a member of a rebel organization of another county which attempted to rob the arsenal of the Qianyang County PAD.

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PAD intervention preventing factional polarization was, however, an exception, rather than a norm. There were only a few other county annals that reported similar patterns (Lintong XZ 1991; Mizhi XZ 1993).

Other examples suggest that early PAD interventions were not a guarantee for the preventions of polarization and violence escalation. In Huanglong County, the PAD's early expression of support to a local faction in late January 1967 did not stop the process of factional polarization. Far from that, both factions were drawn into armed battles involving factions of neighboring counties. In Huanglong, the faction that had lost military support was propped up by factional organizations of other counties that were supported by military units of their own counties (Huanglong XZ 1995). Thus, whether an early intervention proved effective depended on the unfolding of subsequent processes. In those counties where military interventions were coordinated among neighboring units by a higher military authority—the military branch district (*jun fen qu*), they often proved effective in checking the growth of factional violence. But in others, uncoordinated or worse conflicting interventions by neighboring units fueled the processes of violence escalation. Early and decisive interventions were therefore not enough to stop the processes of violence escalation. They had to be accompanied by another condition: coordination among neighboring military units.

(Phase 2) *Crossroads—Campaign to “Drag out a Handful in the Military”*: Summer 1967

In the summer of 1967, renewed pressure to take side in local factional conflict came from the top. The radical central leadership started a new campaign to “drag

out a handful in the military” (*jiu junnei yixiaocuo*) that spread rapidly throughout the country. It originated in the “July 20th incident” in Wuhan, in which two radical leaders of the Central Cultural Revolution Small Group (CRSG)—Wang Li and Xie Fuzhi—were attacked by local Red Guards—the “Million Heroes” (*baiwan xiongshi*)—supported by the Wuhan Military District.¹²⁸ The central leadership ruled by the CRSG condemned the incident as a “military coup,” and dismissed the commander of the military district, Chen Zaidao. The “July 20th incident” invited further insurgency of “rebel” factions against the PLA. The attack against “a handful in the military” spread all over the nation. On July 22, Jiang Qing stepped up the militancy of “rebel” groups by putting forth a slogan of “Attack with Reason, Defend with Force” (*wengong wuwei*).

The loss of the military’s legitimacy caused by the “Wuhan incident” and the subsequent campaign against “a handful in the military” had profound implications for the course of the Cultural Revolution.¹²⁹ By signaling to rebels that even military officers could be targeted as “capitalist roaders,” it shattered the legitimacy of the military. It also meant that the military was not spared of the polarizing

¹²⁸ On July 13, 1967, Wang Li and Xie Fuzhi visited Wuhan, the provincial capital of Hubei, along with major central leaders including Mao and Zhou. Wang and Xie gave support to the “Workers Headquarters” (*gongren zongbu*), a faction opposing to the “Million Heroes” supported by the Wuhan Military District. Infuriated by the conduct, on July 20, members of the “Million Heroes,” as well as some hundreds of soldiers supporting the faction, subjected those radical leaders to violent struggle. See Wang (1995: 149-160) for details.

¹²⁹ Michael Schoenhals’ recent study (2005) argued that Mao himself was culpable for the escalation of factional armed battles by initiating the “arming of the left.” This new finding sheds an important light on the elite-level causes of the violence escalation after the summer of 1967. The extensiveness of arms seizures in Shaanxi counties is also more comprehensible in light of this finding. Thus, not only the policy of the military’s “supporting of the left” but also that of the “arming of the left” may well have caused the escalation.

conflict. With the military drawn into the vortex of polarizing conflict, and its arsenals dangerously exposed to local rebels, factional conflict was elevated to a new, and more violent, level.

The loss of its legitimacy virtually eliminated the option of remaining a third party for the military. Dragged into local factional conflicts, county PADs and other stationed units had to take side or left at the mercy of fighting rebels. Forms of PLA responses are generally grouped into three patterns: coordinated, divided, and indecisive or confused. These different forms of military interventions had important ramifications. When interventions by county-level units were coordinated at a higher level, they often succeeded in stopping the processes of polarization and cross-county interference, and thus the escalation of factional violence. On the other hand, divided interventions among units stationed in neighboring counties not only did not end the processes of polarization, but fueled cross-county interference among factions and thus the escalation of factional violence. And finally, the confused dealings of local military units with factions similarly intensified the processes of polarization and outside interference, and often resulted in the escalation of factional violence.

(Phase 3) *Expanding the Horizon of Factional Conflict: Fall 1967 to Winter 1968*

After the summer of 1967, when the radical central leadership put forth the slogans, "Attack with Reason, Defend with Force," and "Drag out a Handful within the Military," the parameters of factional conflicts began to exceed across county borders. Factions of neighboring counties started to "link up" with one another, exchange arms and other resources, and even put together "allied defense" (*lian fang*)

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to fight against common enemies. They were attracted to one another with similar "viewpoints" (*guandian*), and, more importantly, needed allies that could provide support in their fight against local rivals. This alliance of mutual interests therefore formed very rapidly hand in hand with the intensification of local rivalry and factional violence.

The growth of outside interference seems contingent on the forms of military interventions that took place over summer 1967. Coordinated interventions among neighboring military units checked the development of cross-county interference, because county factions without military support could not find outside allies. Isolated, those factions gave up the hope of continuing the fight. By concentrating their supports to the same side of factional alignments, therefore, stationed units successfully ended the process of cross-county interference among factions. On the other hand, divided PLA interventions did not stop the development of cross-county interference, because county factions without military support could count on the support of outside allies that were backed up by military units of their own counties. They were provided not only with arms and reinforcements but also with safe havens in which they regrouped. Divided military interventions, thus, spread factional violence across county borders, by fueling the development of cross-county interference among factions. Indecisive and confused dealings of county PADs and other units with local factions had a similar consequence to divided interventions. The loss of the military's legitimacy caused by the "Wuhan incident" had already deprived local military authorities of a third-party option. In those counties where military authorities remained uncommitted, they were overwhelmed by local factions, and their weapons were often forcibly seized. Indecisive and confused interventions

also added fuel to the development of cross-county interference, as county factions aligned with one another in pursuit of weapons and a larger sphere of influence. Thus, while the process was different from that of divided interventions, the consequence was identical: the escalation of factional violence.

During this phase, revolutionary committees began to be formed in those counties where PLA interventions ended factional confrontation. The first county-level revolutionary committee was established on December 4, 1967, in Lintong, where units of the 21st Group Army and the Lanzhou Air Force were based.¹³⁰ The large concentration of regular PLA units effectively checked the development of factional polarization (Lintong XZ 1991: 670-676). On December 15, the second county revolutionary committee in the province was set up in Baoji County, where the "support the left" was also backed up by a regular PLA unit.¹³¹ By March 1968, 16 additional revolutionary committees were formed in those counties where military interventions were coordinated by stationed regular PLA units and the military branch district. But in many other counties, factional armed battles dragged on well into the late summer.

(Phase 4) "*War of Alliance*": *Spring to Summer 1968*

While the demobilization process was under way in those counties where "revolutionary great alliances" (*geming de da lianhe*) were achieved, factional violence in other areas was escalated into a new and even more violent phase. From

¹³⁰ In Lintong County, the military "support the left" was carried out by the 8160th unit (an artillery unit of the 21st Army), the 203rd unit of the Lanzhou Air Force, and other regular PLA units.

¹³¹ That was, the 203rd squad of the 8166th unit of the 21st Army. Neighboring Baoji City was the headquarters of the 21st Army.

spring to summer 1968, the boundary of factional conflict transcended county borders. Armed battles increasingly involved "allied forces" of neighboring factions. The number of casualties per an armed battle increased sharply, as armed battles were fought between specialized "armed battle personnel" (*wudou renyuan*) equipped with heavier and more sophisticated weapons.

In those areas where county PADs and regular PLA units intervened in unison, the final phase of armed battles took the form of coordinated military campaigns against diehard factions that entrenched themselves in "battlefield counties."¹³² Despite heavy casualties in "battlefield counties," the vast majority of counties in those areas were spared of large-scale armed battles. In those areas where military interventions were either divided or indecisive, cross-county interference among county factions gave way to a "war of alliance." Military authorities in those areas were either made irrelevant or manipulating backstage. With the absence of presiding authorities, only the balance of power dictated. Armed battles in this phase often took the form of street fighting or "battles of position" fought for strategic points and the expansion of a sphere of influence.

A total of 4,565 people (or an average of 49 per county) were reported killed in the rural counties of Shaanxi Province during the armed battle period. The severity of armed battles in Shaanxi is also testified by the fact that one of the two "announcements" (*bugao*) made by the Center to demand immediate suspensions of

¹³² "Battlefield counties" were those counties where retreating county factions took refuge and as a result became a target of military campaigns by a coalition of superior factions backed by the military. Jia County of Yulin District and Long County of Baoji District represent such cases of "battlefield counties."

armed battles was directed specifically to Shaanxi.¹³³ The Center's announcements alone did not convince warring factions in some areas to give up arms¹³⁴ (Ankang XZ 1989: 906; Yan'an City Annals 1994: 829). Regular PLA units were ordered to advance to major conflict areas in summer 1968 to stop armed battles and arbitrate between warring factions. As figure 1 shows, the bulk of county revolutionary committees were established in August and September 1968.

Figure 4.1 about here

DIVERGING PATHS

Amid widespread confusion caused by the ill-conceived policy of the military's "support the left," coordinated interventions by county PADs and stationed regular PLA units brought stability to some areas of the province. In those areas, coordinated military interventions stopped the processes of polarization in many of the counties, by preventing the development of cross-county alliances of factions, and thus the escalation of armed battle violence. The "successful" interventions took place where county PADs and stationed regular PLA units managed to coordinate their supports to county factions at the "military branch district"¹³⁵ (*jun fen qu*) level.

¹³³ The "announcements" were made twice on July 3 and 24, 1968. The former was directed to Guangxi, and the latter to Shaanxi (CCRD 2002).

¹³⁴ Premier Zhou Enlai also personally attempted to mediate the disputes in Yan'an and Ankang several times in spring 1968 by inviting factional leaders to Beijing. His efforts took no effect, however.

¹³⁵ The "military branch districts" existed between the "provincial military district"

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With the breakdown in the chain of command after summer 1967, however, the coordination among half-militia county PADs was made possible only by particular circumstances. In the northern district of Yulin, county PADs yielded to local "radical factions"¹³⁶ one after another, after a county PAD acquired a national fame as a standard-bearer of military "support the left." In the western district of Baoji, the presence of regular PLA units—those of the 21st Group Army—on its soil gave all the local units not only coherence and legitimacy but also coercive force in coping with local factions.

Other than Yulin and Baoji districts, however, military units did not achieve sweeping interventions in any other part of the province. On the contrary, in at least three districts—Yan'an, Xianyang and Weinan, county PADs and stationed PLA units were divided between "radical" and "conservative" sides. In those districts, military interventions on behalf of one county faction did not dissolve the other, because the latter could count on the support of neighboring allies that may have also backed by units of their own counties. Divided interventions, thus, not only fails to end the processes of factional polarization, but also increased the level of factional interference across county borders. And still worse, weapons—pistols, rifles, automatic rifles, hand grenades, trench mortars, and so on—were passed from local

and the county People's Armed Departments, and were coterminous with "districts" (*diqu*). Shaanxi Provincial Military District was part of the Lanzhou Military Region. So were the regular PLA units stationed in the province—the 21st Group Army and the Lanzhou Air Force. The provincial military district and the regular PLA units separately belonged to the Lanzhou Military District.

¹³⁶ In this study, I use the adjectives "radical" and "conservative" in quotation marks only to make the storyline intelligible to readers, and not to suggest the characteristics or background of groups or individuals. In explaining the escalation of factional violence, this study is more concerned with processes and interactions than the characteristics and background of factional organizations.

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units into the hands of rebels. Thus, divided military interventions set off a cycle of violence escalation.

In the southern districts of Hanzhong and Ankang, there were few signs of decisive military interventions, either coordinated or divided. The “neutrality” or inaction of the military branch districts left county PADs without clear directions on what to do with raging factional conflicts. As a result, county PADs in the areas were uncommitted at best and confused at worst. They were in many cases overwhelmed by militant factions and made irrelevant, or in some others engulfed in the vortex and split within themselves. In either cases, they were helpless not only in checking the development of cross-county alliances of factions but also in defending their arsenals from rebel attacks. Thus, the indecisiveness of the military produced a similar, if not worse, outcome to divided interventions: an escalation of factional violence.

“Hoisting the Red Flag of ‘Support the Left’ in Northern Shaanxi Plateau”: Yulin District

On August 19, 1967, the Central People’s Broadcasting Station aired a part of the document transmitted by the Party Center, “the People’s Armed Department of Mizhi County in Shaanxi Praised by Revolutionary Masses for Hoisting the Red Flag of Support the Left in Northern Shaanxi Plateau.”¹³⁷ This was apparently a setup by the radical central leadership to expand its influence not only in the area but also in the nation’s countryside in general. Back to January 30, the PAD in Mizhi County

¹³⁷ The document was transferred by the Party Center on August 14, 1967, as “Document No. 245” (*zhongfa (67) 245 hao wenjian*) (CCRD 2002). The following account is based on Mizhi County Annals (1993: 391-192), unless noted otherwise.

expressed its support to a local faction, the "101." On June 19, reporters of the *Red Flag*, the *Liberation Daily* and others, all under the influence of radicals at the Center, visited Mizhi for 3 days, and returned to Xi'an. On July 10, the provincial "support-the-left" committee asked the Mizhi PAD to send personnel to Xi'an to report on its activities, and communicated its intention to support the "101."

Thereafter, the *People's Daily*, the *Liberation Daily*, and the Central People's Broadcasting Station covered related stories repeatedly, communicating their support for the "101," as well as the denunciation of the county magistrate and a vice-magistrate as "capitalist roaders." After the central document was issued, the provincial military district declared its support for the Mizhi "101," as well as for its ally in Yulin County, the "Hong-Gong-Ji" (i.e., "red guards, workers, and administrative organs"). In September, receiving an order from the Yulin Military Branch District, county PADs in other Yulin counties one after another expressed their support for local factions affiliated with the Mizhi "101" and the Yulin "Hong-Gong-Ji"—the Fugu "Headquarters" (*zhihuibu*), the Jingbian "818," the Qingjian "General Headquarters" (*zong bu*), the Suide "Ten Great Headquarters" (*shi da zhihuibu*), the Zizhou "Red Rebel Headquarters" (*hong zao si*), and so on. By mid September, the PADs of 9 counties took side with the "radicals" (Table 4.1).

Table 4.1 about here

Mizhi PAD suddenly became a nationally known standard-bearer of PLA's

“support-the-left” mission, and the “101” was turned into a real “leftist.” Mizhi PAD then ordered the opposing faction, the “General Headquarters” (*zong bu*) to disband and join individually in the “101,” irrespective of its objection. On October 4-6, with the support of the PAD, the “101” gathered many combatants with clubs and iron pikes, and attacked Mizhi Middle School, the base of the “General Headquarters.” They beat some 70 hostages badly, leaving 23 injured, including 3 permanently injured.

By November 1967, factions allied with the Yulin “Two Reds” (*er hong*), the opponent of the “Hong-Gong-Ji,” retreated to Jia County, an eastern county bordering with Shansi Province. In January 1968, under the pretext of sending Jia County’s “East is Red” (*dongfang hong*) faction back home, the coalition of 11 county-level factions centering around the Yulin “Hong-Gong-Ji” organized 300-strong specialized armed corps and surrounded Jia County. A machine factory in Mizhi County produced grenades, land mines, and artilleries, and distributed to the armed squads of Hengshan, Jingbian, Yanchuan, and others. From June to September, the “allied forces” carried out the second campaign against the besieged “Two Reds” and its allies in Jia County. Despite the siege campaigns, which resulted in the total of 90 deaths, the number of deaths per population caused by armed battles for Yulin District is much lower, 15 in 100,000, than some other districts such as Yan’an, Hanzhong, and Ankang, where the comparative numbers are 46, 32, and 73 respectively (Table 4.2). Military interventions coordinated at the district level prevented the escalation of violence in most of the counties in Yulin.

Table 4.2 about here

Stationed Regular PLA Units Stepped in to Support the "Radical" Factions: Baoji District

The other district where coordinated military interventions prevented the escalation of factional violence in most of the counties was Baoji District. Baoji was the headquarters of the 21st Group Army of the Lanzhou Military Region.¹³⁸ This contingent factor made important differences in the district's "support the left." First, the interventions by county PADs were backed up by units of the 21st Group Army. The presence of regular PLA units added strength and credibility to the "support-the-left" mission in the district. Perhaps more importantly, the presence of the 21st Group Army secured better control and cohesiveness among county PADs, which were lacking in other districts. In Baoji District, military units supported "radical factions" in 6 of 8 counties, on which the information is available (Table 4.2) (in the remaining two counties, the PADs does not seem to have taken side).

On June 17, 1967, the Baoji Military Branch District and stationed PLA units jointly expressed their supports to the Baoji District "Workers-Miners General Headquarters" (*gong kuang zong bu*) on June 17, 1967 (Baoji XZ 1996). At the same time, the 203rd squad of the 8166th unit stationed in Baoji County and the county PAD declared their supports to the "Red General" (*hong zong*), a county-level ally of

¹³⁸ Lanzhou Military Region included 3 provinces and 3 autonomous regions—Gansu, Qinghai, Shaanxi, Ningxia, Xinjiang, and Ali District of Tibet—of China's northwest.

the “Workers-Miners General Headquarters.” To appeal to the public and at the same time to put pressure on the opposing “Headquarters Faction” (*si pai*), they held a celebration rally and paraded in the streets. On August 16 and 17, the county’s “support-the-left” troops marched on vehicles with loud speakers, with the escort of members of the “Red General,” spreading the slogan, “Oppose ‘Dragging out a Handful within the Military’!”

The stationed unit and the county PAD pressed aggressively for a “great alliance” of the contending factions and the establishment of a “revolutionary committee.” In early September, they sponsored a “study group” of “masses of both factions, revolutionary leading officials, and leaders of the rebel faction.” While both factions contended fiercely over positions in the new government, the county revolutionary committee was established on December 1967, a more than half year earlier than most of the other counties in Shaanxi. There were only 3 “relatively large” armed battles in Baoji County, which killed a total of 12 people.

In two other counties of Baoji District, Feng and Qianyang, PADs’ expressions of support to one of the factions thwarted the polarization of factional groups. In both of these counties, the declarations of support by the PADs to one side set in motion the disintegration of the other (Feng XZ 1994; Qianyang XZ 1991).

In other counties, where contending factions had already entrenched themselves, military authorities could use stronger measures to force its way. In Mei County, “at the request of a local rebel faction and under the direction of a higher authority,” a regular PLA unit (the 8145th unit) was called in to intervene in the local factional conflict in the late summer of 1967. The unit supported the “Unified Headquarters” (*tong zhi*), while suppressing the “General Headquarters” (*zong si*).

The "General Headquarters" survived the loss of military support, and the subsequent establishment of the county revolutionary committee dominated by leaders of the "Unified Headquarters" on February 18, 1968. It continued its resistance until late May. There were 8 armed battles and 19 deaths in the county (Mei XZ 2000).

As in the case of Jia County in Yulin District, coordinated PLA interventions in Baoji District produced a "battlefield county." In Long County, in the northwestern corner of Baoji District bordering with Gansu Province, the combination of a decisive intervention by a regular PLA unit and an extensive interference by outside factional groups caused a deadly "war of intervention" that resulted in the total of 103 deaths.¹³⁹ In July 1967, the Baoji Military District and the 8145th Unit of the 21st Group Army came to Long County to express their supports to the "General Headquarters" (*zong bu*). On August 25, a skirmish developed between peasant groups of the "Red Alliance" (*hong lian*), the other major faction, and the "General Headquarters" at a water facility in Nanjieyuan. More than 200 members fought against one another with stones and bricks, resulting in 42 injuries on both sides. On the next day, leaders of the "General Headquarters" convened a meeting, and decided that they would mobilize 2,000 peasants of Tiancheng and Lengdixia communes to demonstrate with swords and spears in the county town, and prepare for armed battles. Leaders of the "Red Alliance" also met in Dongnan Commune to discuss the situation.

In the morning of August 27, the "Red Alliance" mobilized more than 1,000 peasants to attack the "General Headquarters" in four locations—Long Middle School, the county hospital, the theater, and the bank. Using bricks, clubs, plows

¹³⁹ The following account is based on Long County Annals (1993: 690-692).

and rifles, they beat to death one person and injured many. A leader of the "General Headquarters" telephoned the Baoji District "Workers and Miners General Headquarters" and other organizations many times, inventing, "Counterrevolutionary riots broke out in Long County. The rebel faction is much inferior in number. Send support immediately!" Dan Yingjie, leader of the Baoji District "Workers and Miners General Headquarters," instantly called together more than 8,000 members, who wore helmets and armed themselves with guns and clubs, and set out to Long County in 180 motor vehicles. Around 1:00 a.m., August 28, they arrived in Long County, and were met by combatants of "Geology 182nd Corps" (*dizhi 182 dui*) stationed in Long. On 10 a.m., they swarmed into the county town, and randomly shot 12 peasants. They also searched houses and captured leading officials, as well as some workers and residents. They took them to the premises of the former county party committee and the Geology 182nd, and subjected them to severe interrogation and torture. A former vice-chief of the county planning committee, Tong Yuezhong, was beaten to death, and many other were seriously injured.

The "August 28th armed battle" was not just an armed battle between rebel organizations but a campaign coordinated by the military. According to the county annals of neighboring Qianyang County (1991: 280), a political commissar of the PAD gathered leaders of the rebel organization (the Qianyang "General Headquarters," or *zongzhi*), and arranged with them to support the Long "General Headquarters." They organized a 160-person backup unit, a 20-person relief unit, a 7-person correspondence unit, and a 150-person emergency unit. They also prepared clubs, dynamite, percussion caps, fuses, nails, and others. Some 600 rebels set out to Long in vehicles. During the armed battle, the Qianyang "General

Headquarters" also provided services to 2,328 "comrades" in Long.

The cases of Long County in Baoji District and Jia County in Yulin District suggest that those "battlefield counties" may have been a by-product of sweeping military interventions, which forcibly supported one side—the "radicals"—at the expense of the other—the "conservatives." In both districts, the military was involved in coordinating the attacks. Attaining predominance at home, military-supported factions made alliances with one another, and concentrated excessive forces on diehard opponents. Despite the existence of a "battlefield county," the average number of armed battle deaths per population is 10 in 100,000, the lowest in all the districts of Shaanxi (Table 4.2). The human cost of factional armed battles could have been much higher without coordinated interventions by the units of the 21st Group Army and county PADs.

Divided Military Interventions Led to a District-Wide War of Interference: Yan'an

District In Huanglong, a county located in southern Yan'an District, the county People's Armed Department supported a "conservative" faction from the very early stage.¹⁴⁰ On January 27, a vice-political commissar of the PAD expressed his support to the "Proletarian General" (*wu zong*) certifying it as the county's "one and the only (*xiangdangdang, yingbangbang*) rebel faction." Many other rebel groups scrambled to enter the rank of the "Proletarian General." On January 29, with the supports of the PAD, as well as the Public Security and Judiciary, the "Proletarian General" seized the powers of the Party, the government, the finance, and the education at one burst. On February 4, a new "three-in-one" (*san jiehe*) provisional

¹⁴⁰ The following account is based on Huanglong County Annals (1995: 675-677).

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government—the “Huanglong County Proletarian Revolutionary Provisional Committee” (*Huanglong xian wuchan jieji geming linshi weiyuanhui*)—was established and staffed by “revolutionary leading officials, stationed military representatives, and leaders of rebel organizations.” Huanglong’s 13 communes and towns established their “allied headquarters” (*lianhe zhihuibu*), attaching themselves to the “Proletarian General.”

The provisional government solidified its position by mobilizing peasants to terrorize opponents. From January 11 to 31, the “Provisional Committee” levied more than 100 peasants with military experiences from communes and towns, in the name of protecting the “red government” (*hongse zhengquan*) from the attack of the opponent. These personnel set up a checkpoint at each work unit and major road, and inspected people and vehicles belonging to those “with different views” (*bu tong guandian*). They captured people at will, interrogated, and beat them. More than 30 people were detained, one killed, another permanently injured, and a few others injured. These armed peasant militia also dangled dynamites up on the streets, and laid landmines in the ends of the streets. At least two peasants were wrongly killed by the landmines. The county town was fortified, with command posts set up in the county town and machineguns on rooftops looking down to the major streets. The county was ruled by terror. Officials were afraid of going to the offices, no one worked at factories, and peasants did not dare to enter town to buy and sell goods.

“Conservative” factions were gaining ground in other southern counties as well. In Luochuan County, a “conservative faction,” the “Workers-Peasants General Headquarters” (*gong nong zong si*) seized the county’s political power in late January, and solidified its grip with tacit support of the PAD (Luochuan XZ 1994: 200-204).

The "conservatives" were also gaining upper hand in Yijun County. These southern counties became strongholds of "conservative factions" in Yan'an District.

To the north, however, the "radicals" were gaining ground, with the support of county PADs. The balance of power in the northern counties of Yan'an was swayed by the political situation in Yulin District, where the "radicals" were sweeping the counties. In Zichang County, the PAD expressed its support to the "Allied General" (*lian zong*) in July 1967, a faction related to the Yulin "Hong-Gong-Ji," the Mizhi "101," and the Suide "Ten Great Headquarters" then commanding neighboring Yulin District (Zichang XZ 1993). The opposing "Red Alliance" (*hong lian*) staged a sit-in in the PAD, protesting against its expression of support to its opponent. It also sent its members to Xi'an to file a complaint that the PAD "supported a faction and suppressed the other" (*zhi yipai, ya yipai*). The county's balance of power was upset in late 1967, when the Suide "Ten Great Headquarters" attacked and occupied the county town of Wayaobao. The "Red Alliance" was driven away from the county town, and its leaders fled to neighboring Yan'an and Ansai counties.

In fall-winter 1967, the factional conflicts began to transcend county borders, as factions searched for outside allies that could buttress their positions in their home counties. Inferior county factions sought outside helps, while prevailing factions aided to expand their spheres of influence in neighboring counties. Even if a faction attained predominance with support of the county PAD, outside support to the opponent would prolong the factional conflict. Other counties were also drawn into district-wide factional conflicts, because of their proximity to or "strategic importance" for neighboring factions.

Smaller, less tumultuous counties were drawn into the district-wide factional

conflict by larger and restless neighbors. In late 1967, contending factions in Ansai County began to arm themselves and develop specialized teams for armed battles.¹⁴¹ In early December, members of the “radical faction,” the Ansai “Allied General” (*lian zong*), brought back 4 rifles and some 100 bullets from Yan’an and Yulin. Seeing themselves disadvantaged, the “conservative” Ansai “Red Alliance” (*hong lian*) asked a neighboring ally, the Yan’an “Allied Headquarters” (*lian zhi*), to come to Ansai to “pull out the thorn” (*ba dingzi*). On December 30, leaders of the Yan’an “Allied Headquarters,” along with some 20 combatants, arrived in the county town, Zhenwudong, just a few kilometers across the border with Yan’an. After two hours of fighting, which resulted in one death and two injuries for the Ansai “Allied General” and one injury for the Ansai “Red Alliance,” the “conservative” coalition took over the county town and expelled the Ansai “Allied General” to neighboring Yan’an County.

The “war of intervention” did not end here. In March 20, 1968, some 300 combatants of the Yan’an “Allied General” (including 4 members of the Ansai “Allied General”) crossed the county border into Ansai in 22 vehicles, and headed to Zhenwudong. Outnumbered, the Ansai “Red Alliance” put up resistance first, and then retreated from Zhenwudong. One member of the “Red Alliance” was killed, and 7 taken prisoners. The reinforcements returned to Yan’an in the same afternoon.

¹⁴¹ In 1965, Ansai was a county of 88,900 people, of which 95 percent were registered as agricultural population. The neighboring district center of Yan’an County had a population of 155,500, and 74 percent of them were agricultural population. The estimates are based on *Shaanxi sheng di shi xian lishi tongji ziliao huibian* (*Compilation of Historical Statistical Materials on the Districts, Cities, and Counties of Shaanxi Province*) (1991). The following account is based on Ansai County Annals (1993: 749-750).

After the defeat on March 20, the Ansai "Red Alliance" retreated to communes south of the county town. On April 17, seeing the opponent inferior in number, the "Red Alliance" strike back again. The "Allied General" run away, leaving captives behind, and the "Red Alliance" recaptured Zhenwudong without any casualties. After this incident, the factional conflict deadlocked, with both factions fearful of each other's intention. The final showdown came in late July, when a regular PLA unit (the 8118th unit) advanced into Yan'an County to end the factional fighting. Lost its footing in Yan'an, the Ansai "Allied General" decided to "return to Ansai and recapture Zhenwudong." Some 120 combatants of the "Allied General" crashed with 200 combatants of the "Red Alliance" in the county town in mid August. The fighting continued for 6 days, resulting in 2 deaths and 2 injuries on the side of the "Red Alliance" and 1 deaths and 1 injury on the "Allied General." On August 23, the 8118th unit advanced into Ansai to enforce ceasefire.¹⁴²

In Ansai, the faction dominated by officials, the "Red Alliance," was superior both in number and in fire power. In addition, the "Red Alliance" appears supported by the county PAD. The opposing "Allied General" was, however, supported by the Yan'an "Allied General," which was predominant in the neighboring district center. The balance of power, as well as the proximity to the district center, prolonged the *armed battles in Ansai*.

The process of expanding horizon of conflict went hand in hand with the

¹⁴² Combatants of both factions were also engaged in armed battles outside the county. The "Red Alliance" took part in the coordinated attacks against the opponents in Yan'an and Zhidan in March 15 and mid-June 1968. In the period between December 16, 1967, and July 18, 1968, the "Allied General" participated in armed battles in many parts of Yan'an County (against the Yan'an "Allied Headquarters") and in Fu County.

increase of arms leakage and the militarization of factional organizations. The "leakage" took the forms of (both overt and covert) issuance by the county PADs, arms robberies by rebels, or somewhere in between. In those counties where PADs sided with local factions, they provided arms to rebels they were supporting. In those counties where PADs remained uncommitted, the arsenals were attacked by rebels who made light of the PADs' inability to cope with the situation.

In Zichang, where, as mentioned earlier, the PAD took side of the "radical" "Allied General," the PAD not only turned blind eyes to the "arms robberies" by its "comrades in arms" but also mobilized peasant militia for its sake. In the evening of December 2, the "conservative" "Red Alliance" took 10 rifles from the Education Bureau (those rifles were no use because the triggers were removed beforehand). On the next day, the "conservatives" encircled the county PAD, shutting down the telephone line and the lighting. Two days later, some 100 members of the "Allied General" "robbed" the county company¹⁴³ (*xian zhongdui*) of all the guns. After the "arms robbery," the PAD ordered commune officials to arm peasant militia and mobilize them for a military drill. The "Allied General" took charge of training some 80 peasant militia gathered in the water and electricity bureau. In the evening of December 5, complaining that the PAD issued guns to the "Allied General," the "Red Alliance" surrounded the county armed company, and took away some

¹⁴³ Originally known as "the county company of the People's Armed Police" (*Renmin wuzhuang jingcha xian zhongdui*), the county company had belonged to the Public Security Bureau. But it was shifted to the jurisdiction of the PLA and renamed "the county company of the Chinese People's Liberation Army" (*Zhongguo renmin jiefang jun xian zhongdui*) in 1966. Their primary duties were pursuit and arrest, the transferring and guarding of criminals, the maintenance of public safety, and the enforcement and administration of law (Yanchang XZ 1991: 413).

ammunitions, military outfits, a telephone, a camera, and so on (Zichang XZ 1993: 831-833).

In other counties, "conservative factions" also acquired weapons from patron PADs. In Huanglong, the county PAD turned blind eyes to "arms robberies" by the "conservative faction" it was supporting. On December 17, 1967, the "Proletarian General" took the Yan'an "Allied Headquarters" to the arsenal of the Huanglong PAD, and together took way all the weapons and ammunitions (Huanglong XZ 1995: 676-677). In neighboring Luochuan County, leaders of the "conservative" "Workers-Peasants General Headquarters" began to estimate the number of weapons stored in the county in late October. They then spread a rumor that "weapons of the Huangling (another neighboring county dominated by a "radical faction") PAD were taken by the mass organization." In late November, they also said that the Yan'an "Allied Headquarters" asked them twice by telephone to rob the Luochuan PAD. Those rebel leaders then "proposed" to an officer that the county PAD provide weapons to them. In the morning of December 11, the rebels and PAD officers negotiated that a rebel organization of the county people's committee, a subordinate organization of the "Workers-Peasants General Headquarters," would lead its members to carry weapons out. In the afternoon, some 30 members of rebel organizations of the people's committee" and the county party committee arrived in the compound of the county armed company. A responsible officer read aloud the "September 5 Order,"¹⁴⁴ and shouted, "You are not allowed to rob guns and

¹⁴⁴ The CCP Central Committee, the State Council, the Central Military Commission and the Central Cultural Revolution Small Group, "The Order Concerning the Prohibition of the Seizure of Arms, Equipment, and other Military Supplies from the PLA," September 5, 1967 (CCRD 2002).

ammunitions.” Paying no heed, the rebels took away 21 rifles, 11,100 rounds of bullets, 4 heavy machineguns, 4 light machineguns, 7 semiautomatic rifles, 40 flares and 1 flare gun. They also stole 50 handguns from public security, prosecutors and the court, and 37 handguns from the “507th arsenal” (Luochuan XZ 1994: 202-203).

In other counties, military authorities were made slight of their ability to deal with rebels. In Fu County, leaders of the “conservative faction” (the “Unified Headquarters,” or *tong zhi*) concluded that the “PLA (i.e., the county PAD) would not dare to fire at workers, peasants, and students.” On December 2, 1967, they mobilized the masses of the faction to break into the arsenal of the county PAD, and took 4 cannons and 6 shells, 11 machineguns, 50 rifles, and more than 700 rounds of bullets, and others. They then organized 110 members into a specialized team for armed battles. Later, the United Headquarters also took weapons from the armed departments of communes and the militia of production brigades (Fu XZ 1994: 556). These arms robberies escalated the factional confrontation to outright armed battles using live ammunitions.

In spring-summer 1968, cross-county interferences of factions coalesced into military alliances. “Allied forces” engaged themselves in the “wars of intervention” in many parts of the district. In “conservative”-dominated Huanglong, the inferior “radical faction”—the “Red General” (*hong zong*)—was sheltered in Pucheng County, in northern Weinan District, where the county PAD sided with the local “radicals” (the “Provisional Faction,” or *lin pai*) (Pucheng XZ 1993: 5). The Huanglong “Red General” not only survived the loss of military support and the lopsidedness in the balance of power within the county, but also hit back home with reinforcements of 7 southern Yan’an counties—the “205 Combat Corps” or the “Combat Corps of 7

Southern Yan'an Counties"—in May 1968 (Huanglong XZ 1995: 676-677).

In neighboring Yichuan, the "14-county Allied Headquarters," the "conservative" alliance led by the Yan'an "Allied Headquarters," attacked the county, as it was about to celebrate the establishment of the county revolutionary committee in June 1968 (Yichuan XZ 2000). In Yichuan, the "radical" "Yi District General" (*yi di zong*) was, from the start, predominant over the "conservative" "Yi General Headquarters" (*yi zong zhi*) in both number and fire power.¹⁴⁵ On June 14, when the county's revolutionary committee was about to be inaugurated, some 800 members (including 580 combatants) of the "conservative factions" of Yan'an, Luochuan, Huanglong, Huangling, Yijun, Ganquan, Fu, Zichang, and Yanchang,¹⁴⁶ entered Yichuan from two directions—Fu and Huanglong—and, using artilleries and other weapons, made a general attack on the county town and other strongholds of the "Yi District General." The "Yi District General" was also aided by reinforcements from the Huanglong "Red General" and the Yulin "Hong-Gong-Ji," with which it bombed the opposing general commander to death. Four days of heavy fighting resulted in 14 deaths and 21 injuries.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁵ Following two armed battles in November 1967 and in January 1968, which resulted in more than 10 deaths and a similar number of injuries, a "great alliance committee" was formed on March 9, 1968. The committee consisted of 43 members, including 30 representatives of the "Yi District General" and 10 of the "Yi General Headquarters," as well as 3 others. By mid March, the "great alliance" was achieved between the contending factions in 69 work units and 14 communes. Ominously, however, the "Yi District General" robbed the county Armed Company of ammunitions twice in the same month.

¹⁴⁶ The allied factions of Ansai, Wuqi, Zhidan, and Yanchuan appears not to have participated despite the name "14-county Allied Headquarters."

¹⁴⁷ The same armed battle was also reported in the county annals of neighboring Huanglong County (Huanglong XZ 1995). On June 14, 1968, when the Yichuan County Revolutionary Committee was established, the Huanglong "Proletarian General" was ordered by the Yan'an "Allied Headquarters" to attack neighboring

In the north, where the “radicals” held sway, the alliance of “radical factions” also attacked a “conservative”-dominated county. In Yanchuan County, the “conservatives” (the “Unified Headquarters,” or *tong zhi*) drove the “radicals” (the “Red Alliance,” or *hong lian*) away from the county town in late November 1967. After several deadly armed battles, on June 11-13, 1968, 2,000-strong allied forces of the Yan’an “Allied General,” the Yulin “Hong-Gong-Ji,” the Suide “Ten Great Headquarters,” and the Yanchang “Red Alliance” attacked back the county town. After sustaining 2 deaths and 2 injuries, the “Unified Headquarters” retreated from the county town. While the outside forces left on June 13, armed battles continued for the next 3 months until a regiment of the PLA entered Yanchang on August 27.

In Yan’an District, therefore, divided military interventions gave impetus to the development of cross-county interferences, as well as the arms race, among factional organizations. Cross-county interferences among factions not only prolonged the confrontations within counties, but also developed into district-wide military alliances. In the final stage of armed battles, both sides of the alliances engaged themselves in “wars of intervention.” The escalation of factional armed battles caused by divided military interventions took the toll of 46 lives per population in 100,000, the second highest among all the Shaanxi districts (Table 4.2).

*County People's Armed Departments and Regular PLA Units Confronting Each Other
Backstage: Xianyang and Weinan Districts*

The districts of Xianyang and Weinan—the surrounding region of

Yichuan County. The campaign involved elaborate planning and organization. The armed battle lasted four days, resulting in one death and two injuries for the Huanglong faction.

Xi'an—represents another area where military interventions were conflicted with one another, and thus led to the escalation of factional armed battles. Located in the surrounding of Xi'an, the area was the most densely populated and industrialized of all the Shaanxi regions, and had much larger populations of students and factory workers. The area was therefore not only closer to the provincial center, but also had larger populations of groups susceptible to developments in the urban center.

More importantly for the purpose of this study, the area had a large concentration of stationed regular PLA units—those of the 21nd Group Army, the Lanzhou Air Force, and the provincial military district. In a stark contrast to the Baoji District, where the 21st Group Army backed up coordinated interventions among stationed PLA units and county PADs, military units stationed on the outskirts of Xi'an did not achieve coordination among themselves, but were divided in their supports to the contending factions. As was the case with Yan'an District, divided military interventions led to the development of cross-county interferences among factions and the escalation of armed battle violence. One important difference was that while military units in Yan'an were divided between county PADs, those in Weinan and Xianyang were split between regular PLA units and county PADs.

In Xingping County, a regular PLA unit (the 8157th Unit), as well as the PAD,¹⁴⁸ not only backed the “radical faction” (the “Unified Headquarters,” or *tong zhi*), but fought side by side against the “conservative faction” (the “Allied General,” or *lian zong*) (Xingping XZ 1994: 832-834). On September 2, the chief of the PAD let members of the Unified Headquarters “move securely” (*anquan zhuanyi*) a large

¹⁴⁸ In those counties where regular PLA units were stationed, they usually took charge of the counties' “support-the-left” missions, and county PADs assumed a supporting role.

number of weapons (1,200 rifles, 42 heavy machine guns, 64 light machine guns, more than 30,000 bullets, 4 trench mortars and more than 50 shells) from the county arsenal to a factory basement. Two days later, when an armed battle broke out, the "Unified Headquarters" readily opened the door of the basement and carried away all the guns and ammunitions. Overpowered, the "Allied General" fled from the county town. Five people on both sides were shot to death.

On January 5, 1968, the "Allied General," together with the "conservative faction" of Xi'an (the "Workers' General Headquarters," or *gong zong si*) and others, attacked the "502nd state arsenal" in Jingyang County. They then tried to bring home 8 machineguns and 10 rifles through Zhouzhi County across the Wei River. On January 12, a staff officer of the 8157th unit told the "Unified Headquarters" that: "the Xi'an Workers' General Headquarters robbed the 502nd arsenal of weapons. Some of them were carried out of Xi'an to the west, and may be bought in Xingping from Zhouzhi to be issued to the armed squad [of the Allied General]." A leader of the "Unified Headquarters" immediately gathered some 200 people to lie in ambush near the river front. At the next dawn, they came across the armed squad of the "Allied General," on which they staged an attack. 4 people were killed on the spot. 2 other peasants were killed after captured by the rebels.

The 8157th unit continued to be deeply involved in the factional conflict in Xingping, on the side of the "radical" "Unified Headquarters." In late June 1968, the same staff officer worked out a plan to "capture" (*bodiao*) a check point of the "Allied General," where they stopped traffic to intercept weapons carried in by the "Unified Headquarters." On June 24, a truck carrying 20 PLA soldiers hiding behind sacks of flour approached the check point from the east. When the truck was

stopped for inspection, an argument broke out between soldiers and members of the "Allied General." Then, several military vehicles approached from both the east and the west, and surrounded the check point. After killing two persons, soldiers succeeded in capturing the check point.¹⁴⁹

Gaining upper hand at home, the Xingping "Unified Headquarters" began to interfere with the factional conflict in neighboring Liquan County. In Liquan, the county PAD had expressed its support to the other side—the "conservative" "Red Rebel" (*hong zao*)—in June 1967. Far from backing down, the opposing "Allied Headquarters" (*lian zhi*) counterattacked the PAD with the help of the Xingping "Unified Headquarters." On October 12, the "radical factions" of Liquan and Xingping counties got together to prepare a draft of the notice concerning "soldiers' controlling the PAD" (*bing guan wuzhuangbu*). In the evening of October 13, more than 50 students intruded and robbed the county arsenal of more than 300 rifles (the triggers had been removed) and several packs of trench mortar shells. At the same time, some 20 students carrying pistols and automatic rifles entered the county PAD and enforced "soldiers' control." They then issued a "notice of soldiers' controlling PAD" to the public.¹⁵⁰

In December, the factional confrontation grew into a full-fledged armed

¹⁴⁹ It is also reported that members of the "Unified Headquarters" were sheltered in the barracks of the 8157th unit.

¹⁵⁰ They also carried out so-called "soldiers' controlling the jail" (*bing guan jiansuo*). On December 18, 100 armed rebels broke into a county jail twice. They took away 18,000 bullets, 20 rifles and pistols from the guarding county company (*xian zhongdui*), leaving them unable to carry out the duty. While the soldiers all together went to the Xianyang Military District to complain about their plight, the rebel organization placed the prison under its control—"soldiers' controlling the jail"—for 15 days.

conflict. On December 9, the "conservative faction" of neighboring Jingyang County, also supported by the county's PAD, visited Liquan. Three days later, an armed battle broke out during a reception held by the Liquan "Red Rebel" for the neighboring ally in Zhao Town, leaving one of the combat personnel and a driver of the Jingyang faction killed. After this incident, the armed conflict escalated. On December 15, some 300 armed combatants of the "Allied Headquarters" surrounded Zhao Town in "semicircular formation." They bombarded the headquarters of the Red Rebel for two days, using a total of 21 shells and leaving 8 killed and 7 injured (3 paralyzed).

On December 23, Xianyang Military Branch District dispatched a mediator to Liquan. On their way to meet the mediator, however, a representative of the "Red Rebel," Zhang Chunsheng, was kidnapped by combatants of the "Allied Headquarters" in an eastern commune of Beitun. After taken from place to place, Zhang was beaten to death. On the same day, a shootout in Beitun killed 2 people and injured 7 (including 2 paralyzed). The next day, the Liquan "Allied Headquarters" paraded with the two corpses.

Military units were not only divided between counties but also within a county. In Sanyuan County, the military was divided between the county PAD and the military academy attached to "Air Force 030" (a unit of the Lanzhou Air Force), with the former supporting the "conservative faction" and the latter the "radical faction."¹⁵¹ From the start, the county PAD was deeply involved in the establishment of a "conservative" coalition—the "General Headquarters" (*zong*

¹⁵¹ The following account is based on Sanyuan County Annals (2000: 726-729), unless noted otherwise.

zhi)—in March 1967. In May, a rebel organization of the military academy, the “Red Column” (*hong zong*), expressed its support to opposing factional organizations (which later coalesced into the “Allied Headquarters,” or *lian zhi*). Thousands of cadets in uniform demonstrated in the county town along with members of the supported factions. It also set up a separate “support-the-left” office, and dispatched its personnel to schools, administrative organs, and other work units. As the county annals observes, “with each armed unit supporting a different faction, there emerged a serious situation in which both opposing factions were associated with different armed units” (727). The “conservatives” berated, “the military academy does not have the duty of supporting the left, and [the cadets] are just college students wearing military uniform.” The “radicals” responded by saying, “the county PAD is local officials wearing military uniforms.”

In summer, after Jiang Qing’s bellicose slogan of “Attack with Reason, Defend with Force” was introduced, the factional confrontation escalated into armed conflict. The county’s armed battles turned particularly violent, because the rebel organization of the military academy participated in the factional conflict with military equipments. After a few skirmishes between the factions in late July-mid August 1967, the first bullet was fired by a cadet of the military academy. On August 19, the “Red Column” of Air Force 030 drove up in an armored motorcar to a flour mill, where a quarrel broke out between cadets and mill workers. After much fussing, a cadet shot and injured a worker. On August 27, hundreds of students and others of the “Allied Headquarters,” who had been hiding in the barracks of Air Force 030 after an earlier armed battle, requested a leader of the “Red Column” to issue weapons to them. 400 cadets of the “Red Column” went out of the barracks in 11 armed vehicles

carrying guns and live cartridges under the pretext of escorting the members of the "Allied Headquarters" to the county town, and surrounded the buildings of the county party committee, the people's committee, the residence of county officials, and the county broadcasting station. As forcing their way into the gate of the people's committee, they first fired at officials standing on their way, and then mowed down people at random. 11 people were killed, many others injured, and those alive were taken to the barracks of Air Force 030.

To the east, military units in Weinan District were also divided in their supports to the polarized factions. With divided military units supporting them backstage, the contending factions fought "wars of allied intervention" in many parts of the district. As of spring 1968, the "radical" alliance (the "Wei District Alliance," or *wei zhuan lian*) and the "conservatives" alliance (the "Wei Red Allied Headquarters," or *wei hong lian zhi*) stood face to face across the Wei River, with the former ruling many of the northern counties and the latter the south. Hua County, located in the southern bank of the river, became a "strategic point" (*junshi zhuanluo de yaodi*) fiercely contested by the both factions.¹⁵² On April 30, with the help of its allies in Weinan and Lantian counties, the "conservatives" (the Hua "Allied Headquarters," or *hua lian zhi*) occupied the county town. Their intension was to dispel the "radicals" (the Hua "Allied General," or *hua lian zong*) from the county, and establish the domination of the "Wei Red Allied Headquarters" in the three counties south of the Wei River—Weinan, Hua, and Huayin.

Meanwhile, the opposing "Wei District Alliance" held a meeting in Dali County,

¹⁵² The following account is based on the unpublished manuscript of Hua County Annals: the "Cultural Revolution" Annals (18-29), unless noted otherwise.

a "radical" stronghold neighboring Hua across the Wei River, and decided that "capturing Weinan requires controlling Hua County first, and thus arming the rebel faction of Hua County (i.e., the Hua "Allied General)." They provided the Hua faction with 46 barrels of guns, and at the same time mobilized some 300 armed battle personnel from Dali, Heyang, Chengcheng, Tongchuan, and others to recapture Hua County. At the dawn of May 3, they entered Hua, and attempted to capture the county town twice to no avail. In the evening, the armed battle corps temporarily retreated to Dali County to be reinforced with a "heavy machine gun squad" equipped also with trench mortars, hand grenades, dynamites, and caterpillar tractors. Next morning, they reentered Hua, and staged a third attack against the county town. By 2:00 p.m., the Hua "Allied General" brought the county town under its control, and expelled the Hua "Allied Headquarters." The armed battle claimed 49 lives on both sides (among them 24 were shot to death after captured), and more than 30 were injured. The victorious Hua "Allied General" ruled the county with fear. The county also served for the "Wei District Alliance" as a stepping ground for attacking neighboring Weinan County.

After the "May 4th armed battle," remnants of the Hua "Allied Headquarters" fled to Lantian County, a stronghold of the "conservatives." On August 13, 1968, some leaders and combatants of the Hua "Allied Headquarters," as well as reinforcements from Heyang County, some 70 combatants in total, reentered Hua. Those combatants, armed with 50 rifles, 2 machineguns, and 200 hand grenades, advanced to Gaotang Town. Early next morning, an armed battle broke out between the invading squads and the "Gaotang branch of the Hua Allied General." 5 were killed in the battle, and 9 others were shot to death after captured. In Hua County,

the total of 19 armed battles (including 5 large-scale battles) claimed the lives of 111 people. Local arsenals were attacked 10 times, and robbed of 176 guns, and 20 packs and 5,000 rounds of ammunitions.

In Weinan District, as in other areas where cross-border interferences developed, there emerged some key counties that served as headquarters of allies' activities, providers of arms and reinforcements, and shelters for inferior outside factions. In short, those counties became "strongholds" for factional alliances. In those counties, one of the factions attained predominance often with the support of a local military unit. In the area, Dali and Lantian counties played such a role in the district-wide "war of alliance." In Lantian County, a "conservative" stronghold south of Hua, the county PAD expressed its support to the local "conservative faction" (the "August 8," or *ba ba*) in March 1967, and pronounced the dissolution of a "radical" Red Guard organization (later transformed into the "May 16," or *wu shiliu*).¹⁵³ As seen above, the "conservative faction" of Hua County took shelter in Lantian, after it was defeated by the "radical faction." Lantian, along with neighboring Weinan, became a "stronghold" for the "southern-line group" (*nanxian jituan*), another name for the "Wei Red Allied Headquarters," which held sway in the counties south of the Wei River.¹⁵⁴

On the other hand, Dali and Pucheng counties served as "radical" strongholds

¹⁵³ This is despite the firm support for the "radicals" by the 8169th unit (the artillery division) of the 21st Group Army in neighboring Lintong County.

¹⁵⁴ From October 1967 to May 1968, there were 8 large-scale armed battles in Lantian, involving 600-700 "armed battle personnel" (*wudou renyuan*). 105 were killed in the armed battles, and among them 41 were killed after having been captured. In addition, 1,809 guns, 7 artilleries, 95,000 rounds of ammunitions, and 16,000 kilograms of gunpowder were taken away.

for the “northern-line group” (*beixian jituan*), or the “Wei District Alliance,” which ruled many of the counties north of the river. The “radical faction” (the “Allied Headquarters,” or *lian zhi*) of Dali was “tied up with a related military unit” (*yu youguan jundui lianxi*) (Dali XZ 1994: 728).¹⁵⁵ In the spring of 1968, armed battle corps of 9 county factions¹⁵⁶ assembled in Dali to stage a series of attacks against the “conservative faction” of Weinan. The fierce battles over the district center killed nearly 90 people, and tens of others were seriously wounded.

In the area (Weinan and Xianyang districts), military units supported the “radical” side in 6 counties and the “conservative” side in 3 counties, while they were divided within the counties in 2 counties (Table 4.1). As a result, unlike their counterparts in Yulin and Baoji districts, military units in the area failed to end the processes of polarization, cross-county interferences, and the escalation of armed battles. Far from it, they were entangled in, and literally added fuel to the processes of violence escalation. While the average numbers of deaths from armed battles weighted by population are not very high in Weinan and Xianyang due to their large populations, the average “raw” numbers of deaths in those districts, 39 and 34 respectively, are higher than those of Yulin and Baoji, 28 and 18 (Table 4.2).

A closer look at the distribution of military supports in the area points to an important fault line. In the suburbs of Xi’an, at least 3 county PADs supported local

¹⁵⁵ In neighboring Pucheng County, where the PAD also sided with the local “radicals,” the dominant faction (the “provisional faction”) harbored the inferior faction (the “205”) of Huanglong County.

¹⁵⁶ They are: the Weinan “Seven Great Unified Headquarters,” the Dali “Allied Headquarters,” the Fuping “Bombarding Unified,” the Hancheng “1018 Combat Headquarters,” the Heyang “Allied Headquarters,” the Chengcheng “Allied Headquarters,” the Pucheng “Peasants Congress,” the Hua “Allied General,” and the Lantian “May 15” (Weinan District Annals 1996: 321).

“conservative factions,” while only 2 PADs backed the “radicals.” On the other hand, all of the 4 supports of regular PLA units were on the side of the “radicals.”¹⁵⁷ While regular PLA units—those of the 21st Group Army—were united on the “radical” side, county PADs were divided between the sides. They became backstage supporters of warring factions, with the 21st Group Army supporting the “radicals” and county PADs the “conservatives.” The division thus may have derived from the nature of the system of the People’s Armed Department. I will discuss implications of this point later in the chapter.

*Confused or Indecisive Military Led to an Escalation of Armed Battle Violence:
Hanzhong and Ankang Districts*

In the southern districts of Hanzhong and Ankang, few military units seem to have intervened decisively, either coordinated or divided. Rather, they were uncommitted at best or confused at worst in the face of raging factional conflict. The passivity and confusion of county PADs in the region seems attributable to the lack of clear direction from the higher authority—the military branch districts.

Hanzhong Military Branch District remained uncommitted despite fierce pressures from both sides. While perhaps a sound decision in ordinary circumstances, the “neutralism” in this juncture did not check the growth of all-engulfing factionalism and the escalation of violent conflict. With other military branch districts, as well as county PADs and stationed regular PLA units, taking side

¹⁵⁷ County PADs supported the “conservative” side in Jingyang, Liquan, and Lantian, while backing the “radical” side in Pucheng and Changwu. Regular PLA units, taking charge of the counties’ “support-the-Left” missions, supported the “radicals” in Lintong, Tongguan, Yao, and Xingping. Military units were divided within counties in Hua and Sanyuan.

one after another, the neutrality of the military branch district did not ensure the neutrality of constituent county PADs. On the contrary, without any clear direction from above, it left the PADs at the mercy of contending factions fiercely contesting for its recognition.

In July 1967, thousands of supporters of the Hanzhong "Unified Faction" (*tong pai*) paraded with a body of worker killed during an armed battle. They then flooded into the building of the military branch district, and forcibly placed the corpse and wreaths in a large conference room. By turning the conference room into a mortuary, leaders of the Hanzhong "Unified Faction" intended to pressure the military branch district into recognizing them as a "leftist" mass organization. The incident lasted a month, during which hundreds of wreaths were placed and hundreds of people staged sit-in hunger strikes.

Nearly a year later, a factional street fighting broke out at the heart of Hanzhong. In early June 1968, trying to rob soldiers of weapons, the opposing Hanzhong "Allied Faction" (*lian pai*) killed 9 soldiers and injured 4 others in neighboring Mian County. The incident precipitated an outbreak of the largest armed battle in Hanzhong. In mid June, the "Unified Faction" occupied major points in the eastern part of the county town including the military branch district building, in which it set up a headquarters. The opposing "Allied Faction" took possession of the western half of the town. They stood face to face for 50 days, during which shots and explosions were heard ceaselessly. More than 1,000 people were killed or wounded, and many others lost their homes.

A curious thing is that the Hanzhong City Military Affairs Annals (2002) boasts of their enduring rebel attacks and sticking to "duty." When invaded by rebels,

“commanders and combatants of the military branch district promptly repaired 13 tunnels (every section of the branch district had a tunnel), stationed themselves underground, and held fast to the position and duty” (161). Holes from bombs and shells on the ground and loopholes on the walls were found everywhere in the compound. Especially on June 14, a shell attack by the “Allied Faction” injured 14 soldiers, among whom 2 were seriously wounded. “Under the life-threatening circumstances, not only that commanders, political commissars, and cadre soldiers did not desert the position, but also that their families shared joys and sorrows and lived in the tunnels for 50 days.” In the Annals, therefore, the district military authority was depicted not as a force responsible for maintaining the order of the area but as a third-party victim who held fast to “duty” despite the fierce rebel attack.

In neighboring Ankang District, the military branch district also failed to take initiative. It transmitted a vague guideline, “the support the left cannot be carried out solely on the basis of class origin, but rebel spirit should be the guiding principle,” suggesting its “preference” for the “radicals.” But it stopped short of providing specific directions to county PADs as to which factional organizations to support or much less, as in the case of Baoji District, sending regular PLA units to prop up the counties’ “support the left.” Similarly to their counterparts in Hanzhong District, the county PADs of Ankang were left alone to deal with local factions.

Passivity on the part of the military branch districts predictably resulted in confusion among county PADs. Without clear direction from above, some were overwhelmed by violent demands from local factions, while others were split within themselves. In Zhenba County, for example, a vice-political commissar of the PAD rebelled against his superiors by siding with a “radical faction” (Zhenba XZ 1996).

On September 6-8, the “radical” “Red Revolutionary Committee” (*hong ge hui*) held a three-day rally, in which some 300 to 400 members paraded and struggled against 184 leading officials at levels of party committees and governments. In the rally, a vice-political commissar of the PAD praised two “notoriously violent” organizations of the “Red Revolutionary Committee” as the “most beautiful flowers of all the rebel mass organizations.” He declared, “Their revolutionary course is always correct.” “Levels of party committees and governments in Zhenba were controlled by ‘capitalist roaders,’ and therefore must be destroyed completely. [The PAD] gives its firm support for their revolutionary actions.” With the PAD entangled in factional politics, this “expression of support” added to the tension, rather than reducing it. In the region, at least one more county PAD was split within itself between local factions (Baihe XZ 1996).

Other PADs were overwhelmed by violent demands of local factions. In Pingli County, a southern neighbor of Ankang County, for example, a local faction attempted to force the PAD to express its support to itself (Pingli XZ 1995: 698; Pingli XZ, Military Annals 1988: 118-123). On September 3, 1967, the “Six Allied General” (*liu lian zong*), along with 170 armed combatants from neighboring counties, encircled the Pingli PAD, and forcibly demanded that it recognize the “Six Allied General” as a “revolutionary leftist,” and provides weapons to them. Under pressure, an officer in charge of the “support the left” agreed to issue 40 rifles. Once the gate was opened, the combatants rushed into and robbed the arsenal randomly of 121 rifles, 2 pistols, 2 automatic rifles, 1 heavy machinegun, 17 light machineguns, 3,995 bullets of many kinds, and 7 hand grenades. Reproached by the military branch district, the Pingli PAD tried to recover the weapons. But the incident left an adverse effect in

the course of the county's factional conflict. Later, instigated by a neighboring ally, the Ankang "Red No.3 Headquarters" (*hong san si*), about 200 members of the opposing "Fifteen General" (*shiwu zong*) broke into the arsenal and took an even larger amount of weapons—4 cannons, 16 shells, 20 heavy and light machineguns, 160 rifles, and more than 16,000 bullets. The arsenal, as well as those of the county armed company and the prison, was robbed at least two more times.

County PADs were also helpless in the face of interferences by powerful outside factions. Xunyang PAD maintained its neutrality throughout the armed battle period, trying to arbitrate between contending factions (Xunyang XZ 1996: 700, 732-733). In spring 1968, the factions of Xunyang achieved an "alliance." But on April 4, when a major armed battle broke out in neighboring Ankang County, a split emerged within the alliance. The contending factions of Xunyang came under the influence of their allies in neighboring Ankang, the "Six General Headquarters" (*liu zong si*) and the "Red No.3 Headquarters" respectively. Interestingly, however, on April 10, when armed combatants of the Ankang "Red No.3 Headquarters" broke into the arsenal of Xunyang PAD, soldiers and the "masses" of the contending local factions together tried to recover weapons and ammunitions. But in spring-summer 1968, the local factions were gradually drawn into the district-wide factional war. In this county, most of the 204 deaths caused by armed battles took place outside the county, while engaging in the wars of alliance in other parts of the districts. Without coordination among local military units, therefore, a county PAD alone could not have succeeded in arbitrating between contending local factions. Cross-county interferences drew those factions into district-wide wars of alliance.

In Hanzhong District, factional alliances developed more centralized structure

than any other district in Shaanxi. Most of the county factions were subordinated to two district-wide factional organizations—the “Unified Faction” and the “Allied Faction”—by the summer of 1967. Factions of some counties—Nanzheng, Zhenba, and Mian—even named themselves “branch headquarters” of the district factions.¹⁵⁸ Besides the naming, activities of the alliances were coordinated among constituent factional organizations. For example, in January 1968, a “radical faction” of Yan County (the “Red Unified Center,” or *hong tong zhan*) was defeated by the opponent (the “General Headquarters,” or *zong bu*), and retreated to Hanzhong County (Yang XZ 1996). On May 31, the Hanzhong District “Unified Faction” called together more than 10,000 combatants from 9 counties and entered Yang from neighboring Chenggu County, carrying guns and ammunitions. After breaking through the defense line on the east bank of Xushui River, they entered the town of Machang, where a major armed battle broke out. 13 people were killed, and more than 90 wounded. One of the leaders of the Yang “General Headquarters” was also shot to death. The Yang “General Headquarters” abandoned the county town, and retreated to the mountains in haste. On the next day, while in the pursuit, 9 combatants of the “Unified Faction” were ambushed by the Yang “General Headquarters,” causing 9 deaths and 30 injuries on the side of the “Unified Faction.” A leader of the “Unified Faction” was also killed in action. In Yang County, there were 10 large-scale armed battles, in which about 2,000 people participated and more than 100 were killed.

In the spring of 1968, the factional armed battles in Ankang County were

¹⁵⁸ For example, in Nanzheng, two contending factions were named the “Nanzheng Branch Headquarters of the Hanzhong District Unified Provisional Miners’ General Headquarters” and the “Nanzheng Branch Headquarters of the Hanzhong District Allied New Revolutionary Rebel General Headquarters” respectively (Nanzheng XZ 1990).

increasingly getting out of control of central leaders.¹⁵⁹ From April 12 to May 9, Premier Zhou Enlai called for an immediate cease-fire in Ankang for 3 times. The Center had already thrown a regular PLA unit, the 282nd unit, into Ankang. But “from the Center to the Provincial Military District, and even to the stationed [regular PLA] unit, they all failed to restraint the armed battle” in Ankang.

In Ankang County, the “Six General Headquarters” controlled the county town, and the “Red No.3 Headquarters” retreated to the mountainous area and “surrounded the city from the rural area” (*nongcun baowei chengshi*). In order to break the siege, leaders of the “Six General Headquarters” met in Xi’an on May 2, 1968, and decided to attack the opponent on both flanks, from the inside and outside of the county town. On May 9, they held an “eastern advance” meeting in Hanyin County, west of Ankang, and organized the “West-Line Armed Battle Headquarters”¹⁶⁰ (*xi xian wudou zhihuibu*) composed of some 600 combatants from Ankang, Hanyin, Shiquan, and Xunyang.

The “West-Line Headquarters” first hit Jianchi in Hanyin County, killing 25 people, and then on May 15 headed southward to the town of Hanwang, Zhiyang County, and murdered 13 people. A week later, it entered Ankang County and attacked Xieping, killing 11 people. On May 26, the “West-Line Headquarters” hit the checkpoint at the Hengkou Pass, killing 45 people. On the next day, it continued to advance eastward and attacked the town of Hengkou, the rear command center of

¹⁵⁹ The following account is based on Ankang County Annals (1989: 902-906), unless noted otherwise.

¹⁶⁰ The Ankang “Six General Headquarters” named its members and allies besieged within the county town of Ankang as the “east line” (*dong xian*), and those in Shiquan and Hanyin as the “west line” (*xi xian*). The aim of the “west line” was to advance eastward and break the besiege (Zhiyang XZ 1989: 523).

the "Red No.3 Headquarters." Combatants of the "Red No.3 Headquarters" struck back desperately, and pushed back opponents to Hanyin County. In order to replenish munitions, the "Six General Headquarters" dispatched members to Hanzhong and Yulin, where they brought back more than a dozen cases of bullets.

The internecine armed fighting continued, involving armed combatants from many neighboring counties. The Ankang "Red No.3 Headquarters" had developed a military alliance, the "Eight-County Allied Defense Committee" (*ba xian wudou lianfang weiyuanhui*), earlier in November 1967. Besides defending the county town of Ankang, it made expeditions to Zhenping and Hanyin counties. It also searched through the houses of members of the "Six General Headquarters," and captured and tortured its members and relatives.

The district-wide warfare was reported in many other county annals of the district. On May 29, the Xunyang "Eight Headquarters" (*ba bu*, as part of the "Eight-County Allied Defense Committee" on the side of the Ankang "Red No.3 Headquarters") set up and sent a combat squad, the "May 29th Army Corps," to Ankang to support the ally. The combat squad was in Ankang until August 19. On June 9, the Xunyang "Eight Headquarters" sent another 40 combatants to Zhenping County (Xunyang XZ 1996: 700). From June 19 to July 13, leaders of the Pingli "Fifteen General" (an ally of the Ankang "Red No.3 Headquarters") led 270 armed combatants from 5 counties—Baihe, Langao, Pingli, Xunyang, and another—to Zhenping, and besieged the opponent for 25 days. On July 23, the Pingli "Fifteen General" attacked Zhenping again, causing heavy casualties on both sides (Pingli XZ 1995: 699).

In June, the Shiquan "Bombard Alliance" (*bao lian*, an ally of the Ankang "Six

General Headquarters") dispatched a combat squad—armed with machineguns, trench mortars, automatic rifles, hand grenades and others—to Hanyin County, where they killed 29 people (Shiquan XZ 1991: 19). On July 22, a combat squad of the Langao "General Headquarters" (*zong bu*, an ally of the Ankang "Red No.3 Headquarters") participated in an armed battle in Jianchi, Hanyin County, in which 14 were killed, 1 suffered a burn injury, and 37 captured. A "political commissar" and a "vice-commander" of the squad were captured and then killed (Langao XZ 1993: 16). On July 28, the Xunyang "Eight Headquarters" sent a combat squad to Jianchi, Hanyin County, where 18 were taken prisoner and killed. From July 26 to August 20, the opposing Xunyang "Seven General" (*qi zong*) was also fighting armed battles in Hanyin County (Xunyang XZ 1996: 700).

The indecision of military authorities in Hanzhong and Ankang produced a result similar to divided interventions: the escalation of factional violence. Thus, both forms of inconsistent military interventions escalated factional violence by fostering cross-county interferences among factions and the leakage of weapons to them. In spring-summer 1968, a state of anarchy ruled the southern Shaanxi region. Even the interventions by central leaders failed to stop the internecine warfare between allied factions. The average number of deaths from armed battles in the counties of Ankang reached 73 (in 100,000), by far the highest in all the districts of Shaanxi, while that in the counties of Hanzhong 32, the third highest (Table 4.2).

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

Three interrelated processes—polarization, military intervention, and outside interference—were involved in the escalation of factional armed battle during the

Cultural Revolution. However, not all the processes were equally important. As long as the escalation of factional armed battle was concerned, the forms of military intervention—coordinated, divided, and indecisive—had impacts that were more consequential than the others. In other words, the processes of polarization and outside intervention were contingent on the forms of military intervention. Coordinated military interventions brought an end to the process of polarization in some areas by preventing the development of cross-county interferences. On the other hand, divided military interventions failed to stop the processes of polarization, because a county faction without military support could count on the support of outside allies thriving with the support of their counties' military units. Divided interventions also expanded the horizon of factional armed battles from within the county to a larger area involving several neighboring counties, by encouraging cross-county interferences among county factions. Still worse, the leakage of weapons from divided military units to contending rebels magnified the level of violence. While the processes are different, the indecisiveness of military authorities produced an outcome similar to divided interventions. Those military units were overwhelmed by the fierce demands for recognition by contending factions. Unhampered by the military, contending factions built alliances across county borders, and jointly engaged in both arms robberies and armed battles. Thus, the processes of both polarization and outside interference were conditioned by the forms of military intervention. Military intervention was the predominant process in the escalation of factional violence.

While this study has focused on how processes intermingled to produce the escalation of factional violence, some discussion on causes of military split, or

indecision, is in order. Table 4.3 reports the distribution of military supports between the “radical factions” and the “conservative factions” by the types of military units—county PADs and regular PLA units. While all the supports of regular PLA units were concentrated on the “radical” side, those of county PADs were split between the “radicals” and the conservatives.” This suggests that military split originated in the system of county PADs, rather than that of regular PLA units which remained united in their support to the “radicals.” Thus, military divisions took two forms: between regular PLA units supporting the “radicals” and county PADs supporting the “conservatives,” and between county PADs supporting the conflicting sides.

Table 4.3 about here

Then, what were the causes of the division among county PADs? While a definite answer to this question has to wait for a future study on the system of the county People’s Armed Department during the Mao era, evidence at hand suggests the following scenario. Unlike those of regular PLA units, chief and the political commissar of county PAD were often part-time officers who concurrently held positions in the county party committee. In general, while the chief of county PAD often served on the county party committee, while the political commissar of PAD

was almost always the county party secretary.¹⁶¹ The overlaps in personnel between the PAD and the county party committee, at minimum, imply an existence of common interests between them. At maximum, it may mean, as cadets of a military academy in Sanyuan County aptly put, “the county PAD is local officials wearing military uniforms.” Provided that the “radicals” more often, and more severely, attacked the local political leadership, county PADs might well have gravitated toward the “conservative” side. Moreover, given the latent nature of factional struggle, the coalition of county PADs and “conservative factions” may have been more widespread. Thus, the inseparable nature of county PADs from counties’ political leadership may have been the source of military division that fueled the escalation of factional violence.

Personnel overlapping between county PADs and county party committees may also explain the inability of PADs in dealing with factional demands. County PADs were in no position to preside over factional struggle, if they were tied personally to county party committees—the target of rebel attacks. In those areas where the presence of regular PLA units was thin, like southern districts of Hanzhong and Ankang, county PADs were largely left alone to deal with local rebels. Without the

¹⁶¹ For example, the chief of Hancheng PAD, Peng Zhendong, was a standing committee member of the county party committee, while the political commissar of the PAD, An Jiwei, was the county party secretary (Hancheng City Party Organizational History Materials 1994: 85, 86, 235). In Yijun County, while the chief of the PAD did not hold a position in the county party committee, the political commissar was the county party secretary, and a vice-political commissar was a member of the county party committee (Yijun County Party Organizational History Materials 1993: 107, 108, 329). In Weinan County, the PAD chief did not hold a position in the county party committee, while the political commissar was the county party secretary (Weinan City Party Organizational History Materials, publication year unknown: 123, 305). In Zhenping County, the political commissar of PAD was the county party secretary (Zhenping XZ 2004: 404, 538).

prop of regular PLA units, PADs were made irrelevant, or became a target themselves, because of their inseparability from counties' political leadership. Therefore, not only divided interventions but also the indecisiveness of the military may have stemmed from the quasi-political nature of county PADs. The system of the county People's Armed Department holds a key to the understanding of factional violence during the Cultural Revolution.

Chapter 5 Demobilization, the Forms of Local Government, and the Escalation of Repressive Violence

In his study on the repressive violence during the Cultural Revolution, Yang Su proposed an insightful hypothesis about the cause of “mass killings” (Su 2006). Taking notice of the great variation in the magnitude of mass killings between Guangdong and Guangxi, on the one hand, and Hubei, on the other, he posited that a more “representative” form of government in the latter provided a deterrent to the escalation of repressive violence, while “conservative” dominations in the former provinces gave free hand, if not encouragement, to savage leaders at lower levels to commit atrocity. I believe that his hypothesis linking the forms of government to the levels of repressive violence is right on target. But unfortunately, basing his argument on the variation at the provincial level, rather than on that at lower levels (county, commune, production brigade) on which his evidence rests, he stops short of substantiating his point with evidence. This study seeks to find evidence on the relationship between the forms of local government and the levels of repressive violence, by focusing on the county level. I also try to establish a mechanism through which those two processes are linked. In the course of the analysis, some important modifications to Su’s hypothesis are also made.

There are two embedded questions in Su’s hypothesis: the first concerns the origins of the different forms of local government, and the other their outcomes. On the question of how the different forms of local government were created, Su attaches importance to the politics between national and provincial governments. Citing Xu Youyu’s study (1999), Su reasons that the Center’s tacit approval to the ascendance of

the radical faction to power in Hubei and many other provinces (including Shaanxi) resulted in a more inclusive form of government (type 1), while the Center's concern for national security led to the formation of conservative-dominated governments in border region provinces—Guangdong and Guangxi, as well as Inner Mongolia, Xinjiang and Tibet (type 2). On the second embedded question of why the different forms of government led to the different intensities of repressive violence, Su also focuses on the relationship between levels of the state. Mass killings tended to occur in remote areas and at the grassroots level where state control did not reach. Mass killings were a product of both state sponsorship and state failure at the same time, because while the state whipped up repression, it failed to control the repressive violence in those remote communes and production brigades.

His reasoning appears to hold good for Shaanxi as well. An average of 33 deaths per county due to political repression under the revolutionary committee is lower than the nationwide average of 35.¹⁶² This is however if we look only at the variation at the provincial level. My finding does not support his observation that compared to the variation across provinces, “there appears to have been a great degree of uniformity” within provinces (Su 2006: 120). In the case of Shaanxi counties, where a total of 3,046 people were killed during the period of political repression under the revolutionary committees,¹⁶³ about two thirds of the deaths took

¹⁶² See Table 5 in Walder and Su (2003: 88). Shaanxi's average number of deaths per county (106) *in the entire Cultural Revolution period* (1966-1971) was higher than the nationwide average (84). This is due to a high death toll (an average of 49 deaths per county) during the armed battle period. Shaanxi was probably one of the few provinces in which the death toll during the armed battle period exceeded that during the revolutionary committee period.

¹⁶³ That is, from the establishment of county revolutionary committees to the end of 1971. See Chapter 1 for the periodization.

place in one third of the counties. At the lowest end, one third of the counties had 10 or fewer deaths. A large number of deaths tended to concentrate in a few counties which I will show had similar characteristics.¹⁶⁴ Thus, the case of rural Shaanxi counties suggests that there was much variation at the county level, in addition to the provincial level.

By focusing at the county level, I argue that political processes leading from the demobilization of factions to the establishment of county revolutionary committees, rather than the political considerations of the Center, determined the factional configuration of new local government. Two different processes of demobilization led to different forms of local government. In the first path, the close relationship between a stationed military unit and a local faction led to the establishment of a county revolutionary committee monopolized by the dominant faction at an early stage—between December 1967 and July 1968. In the other, fierce and prolonged armed battles were only stopped by advancing regular PLA units in August and September 1968, which also arbitrated between warring factions and imposed equal representation in the new local government. Thus, the former process resulted in partial government, while the latter produced balanced government. These different forms of local government are in turn found related to varying intensities of repressive violence under their rules: severe repressive violence often took place under partial revolutionary committees, while the escalation of violence was checked by balanced revolutionary committees.

On the question of why partial representation in local government led to severe

¹⁶⁴ Only 8 percent of the counties (or 7 counties) reported more than 100 deaths during the period, and 17 percent (or 16 counties) more than 50 deaths.

repressive violence, I provide an account based on local political environment, organization, and leadership. Established in the middle of continuing factional armed battles in surrounding areas, partial (factional) revolutionary committees were still under threat, both real and perceived, from the opponents conspiring with neighboring allies. The “mass dictatorship command” (*qunzhong zhuanzheng zhihuibu*, or in abbreviation, *qunzhuan zhihuibu*), a specialized apparatus for repression, was created in this context by directly incorporating members of a dominant faction. Incorporated members of a dominant faction took this opportunity to take revenge on the opponents in an organized fashion. Moreover, the factional leadership fanned repressive violence by trumpeting conspiracies of “hidden class enemies.”¹⁶⁵ On the other hand, balanced revolutionary committees, a product of the arbitration by regular PLA units, not only felt less threatened by the opponents but also checked against each other in the government. Balanced governments also did not usually develop a “mass dictatorship command,” or any other repressive apparatus. Thus, the perception of threat, a repressive organization staffed by factional members, and factional leadership all combined to produce severe repressive violence under partial county revolutionary committees.

It is also found that almost all the balanced revolutionary committees were *creations of regular PLA units, while a majority of partial governments were products of the close relationship between a local faction and a quasi-political People’s Armed Department (renmin wuzhuang bu)*. All in all, these findings suggest that severe cases of repressive violence often took place where the close relationship between a

¹⁶⁵ See Walder (1991) for the centrality of the theme of conspiracy and betrayal in Cultural Revolution violence.

local faction and a People's Armed Department resulted in partial revolutionary committees.

I also derive from my analysis of county-level politics a different explanation of why most of Shaanxi counties were saved from large-scale killings that took place in Guangxi and Guangdong counties. This study supplements what Yang Su's pioneering study left to do. Readers will find that the analysis of political processes at the county level not only substantiates the hypothesis about the forms of government and the levels of repressive violence, but also produces a mechanism through which they were linked with each other.

EARLY ENDINGS OF FACTIONAL CONFLICT AND ONE-FACTION

DOMINATED REVOLUTIONARY COMMITTEES: DECEMBER 1967-JULY

1968

Before the Center issued the "July 24th decree"¹⁶⁶ to stop armed battles in Shaanxi, about a third of the counties had established revolutionary committees (Figure 4.1). In those counties, the establishment of new governments before the enforcement of cease-fire by regular PLA units meant either that one faction achieved dominance over the other or local factions attained a "revolutionary great alliance" (*geming da lianhe*) with the support of the local military. With fierce factional conflict swallowing the entire province, however, the latter pattern was rarely found except for a few counties where regular PLA units had been locally stationed and

¹⁶⁶ The Decree of the CCP Center, the State Department, the Central Military Commission, and the Central Cultural Revolution Small Group, July 24, 1968, *Zhongfa* [68] no. 113, in Song, Yongyi, et al., eds., *Chinese Cultural Revolution Database*, CD-ROM (hereafter CCRD), Universities Service Center for China Studies, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, 2002.

checked the development of factional conflict within the county boundary.¹⁶⁷ In other counties, "great alliances" were often only in name, but in reality were controlled by a dominant faction backed by the military. In other words, early endings of factional conflict almost always meant that one of the factions attained dominance in the county. As a result, positions in subsequent revolutionary committees reserved for "representatives of the masses" (*qunzhong daibiao*) were monopolized by the winning faction. This is borne out by Table 5.1. It shows that all the county revolutionary committees established before July 24, 1968, were dominated by one faction, while 80 percent of those set up after July 24 were evenly represented by both factions.¹⁶⁸

Table 5.1 about here

¹⁶⁷ One such example was Lintong County. Lintong was the bases of the 203rd unit of the Lanzhou Air Force and the 8160th unit (an artillery unit) of the 21st Group Army. The both units intervened in the county's Cultural Revolution immediately following the Center's call for the military "support-the-left" in January 1967. As a result, there was no polarization of factions in the county, and the revolutionary committee was established on December 4, 1967, the earliest of all the Shaanxi counties.

¹⁶⁸ "Representativeness of government" is operationally determined as follows. First, some county annals report the factional composition of the county revolutionary committees, and thus evident whether they were "partial" or "balanced." In other cases, county annals often use such sentences or words to describe the county revolutionary committees as "revolutionary committees were monopolized by a faction"; a "partial government" (*pai zhengquan*); or, conversely, the "positions were divided equally between both factions." I assigned "no information" to all the other county annals without such information.

The analysis is based only on those counties for which the information about factional representation in revolutionary committees is available. 37 county annals provided the information, accounting for 49 percent of the county annals in the statistical analyses of this study.

Fugu County of northern Yulin District provides a case in point.¹⁶⁹ Like most other counties in the district, where concerted military interventions stopped the escalation of armed battles (see Chapter 4), factional conflict in Fugu County virtually ended in fall 1967 when the county People's Armed Department (*xian renmin wuzhuang bu*, hereafter PAD) expressed its support to a local "radical faction" (the "Headquarters," or *zhihuibu*). After the "expression of support" (*biaotai*) in September, the opposing "East Is Red" (*dongfang hong*) fell apart, leaving the county in the hands of the "Headquarters." In order to "prevent class enemies (i.e., the "East Is Red") from disturbing social order" and "rising up again from the ashes" (*si hui fu ran*), the PAD secretly provided (*anzhong songgei*) weapons to the "Headquarters," and helped them organize a "security squad" (*zhi'an dui*) to patrol streets and public places.

On March 9, 1968, the Fugu County Revolutionary Committee was established, and took over all the powers of the county party committee and the people's committee. While the Center demanded that "red revolutionary committees" be established only on the basis of a "revolutionary great alliance" of both factions, the PAD reported falsely to the upper level that "both factions had already achieved an alliance." In fact, among prescribed 25 members of the revolutionary committee, 3 were left vacant (including 1 position on the standing committee). Moreover, within a few days after the establishment of the revolutionary committee, major leaders of the rival "East Is Red" were attacked as "wicked leaders" (*huai toutou*) and put into a

¹⁶⁹ The following account is based on Fugu County Annals (1994: 581-584), unless noted otherwise.

“dictatorship disciplinary camp” (*zhuanzheng jixun*), and other prominent members were subjected to “soul touching” (*chuji linghun*) interrogation for many times. Thus, the revolutionary committee was then called a “factional revolutionary committee” (*pai gewei*). Later, county-level work units set up their own revolutionary committees or “revolutionary leading small groups.” They were all alike (*ru chu yi zhe*) in that one faction seized the powers.

On May 20, the county revolutionary committee convened a “political work meeting,” in which the dominant faction presented a special report, “the history of the struggle between two lines in Fugu.” Drawing the line sharply, it proclaimed that all those standing by the “Headquarters” were a “revolutionary faction” standing on Chairman Mao’s proletarian revolutionary line, while those standing on the side of the “East Is Red” were a “conservative faction” standing on the bourgeois reactionary line. Some members of the county revolutionary committee regarded that the leaderships of some commune revolutionary committees were stolen by “old conservatives.” They staged attacks on those “conservative” commune revolutionary committees several times, and struggled against committee members. On May 26, the county revolutionary committee declared, “the lid of class struggle [in the county] was far from lifted open” (*jieji douzheng gaizi yuan wei jiekai*), and “there is a tendency of being left in form and right in reality (*xing zuo shi you*).” Influenced by the political work meeting, 9 (out of 23) commune revolutionary committees became unable to exercise their authorities, and 5 were broken up.

In Shanyang County, the PAD also sided with a local “radical faction” (“July 3 Faction,” or *qi san pai*) while repressing the other (“August 1 Faction,” or *ba yi*

pai).¹⁷⁰ In December 1967, the PAD let the "July 3 Faction" (*qi san pai*) "rob" its armory of almost all guns and ammunitions. The county PAD also pushed aggressively for a "revolutionary alliance" centered around the "July 3." Leaders of some combat corps (*zhandoudui*) of the "August 1 Faction" (*ba yi pai*), however, refused to be untied on the ground that the opponent had not surrendered stolen weapons, and that "the large faction was oppressing the small faction" (*dapai ya xiaopai*).

On February 24, 1968, despite the opposition, the Shanyang County Revolutionary Committee was declared established. Some "combat corps" of the "August 1" stated that it did not approve the revolutionary committee, accusing it of unlawfully controlled by the "July 3" and "one faction seizing power" (*yipai zhangquan*). Soon after a rally celebrating the establishment of the revolutionary committee, a slogan, "Defeat the Factional Committee!" appeared on the streets of the county town. On 27, several members of the "Raging Fire Combat Corps" (*hiehuo zhandoudui*) of the "August 1" seized an opportunity to take down the signboard of the county revolutionary committee and broke it at a nearby moat. On the next day, the revolutionary committee held a denunciation rally, in which a former vice-secretary of the county party committee and others were struggled against. It was also decided in the rally that the breaking of the signboard was a "counterrevolutionary incident," and searches and arrests were made in various places.

¹⁷⁰ The following account is based on Shanyang County Annals (1991: 216), unless noted otherwise. Shanyang is a county of southwestern Shangluo District. It had a population of 277,600 (in 1965), of which 97 percent was listed as agricultural population.

In a production brigade,¹⁷¹ tens of people were beaten and persecuted in connection with the incident. The general headquarters of the "August 1" was accused as a plotter of the signboard incident. Pursued by personnel dispatched by the revolutionary committee, dozens of active members of the "August 1" fled outside the county.

Besides these obvious examples, partial representation is also indicated by a number of "temporary vacancies" (*zanque*) in a revolutionary committee. In Luonan County, where the PAD sided with a faction and pushed for an early "revolutionary great alliance," 20 out of 63 positions were left vacant at the time when the revolutionary committee was established on March 1, 1968. Those left vacant included 9 of 18 "revolutionary officials," 8 of 36 "representatives of the masses," and all the 3 "flexible members" (*jidong renyuan*). Only 6 positions reserved for "military representatives" were fulfilled (Luonan XZ 1999: 426). In Wugong County, 23 out of 56 positions were left "temporary vacant" when the revolutionary committee was set up on March 3, 1968. Except for 7 military representatives, only 8 of 16 revolutionary officials and 15 of 33 representatives of the masses were chosen (Wugong XZ 2001: 854). Thus, an early ending of factional conflict in a county almost always meant that one of the factions attained dominance over the other, often with the help of the local military. This pattern then crystallized into a form of new government: revolutionary committees dominated by a winning faction.

¹⁷¹ That is, Jiucun Production Brigade (*dadui*) of Wuli Commune.

“MASS DICTATORSHIP COMMAND” AND EARLY REPRESSIVE VIOLENCE:

EARLY SUMMER 1968

Soon after their establishment, partial revolutionary committees set up a specialized apparatus for repression: the “mass dictatorship command.” It was usually formed by directly incorporating members of a dominant faction, and armed by county PADs.¹⁷² While acting under the pretext of defending “red government” (*hongse zhengquan*) from “class enemies,” “mass dictatorship commands” were in fact engaged in oppressive and revengeful attacks against members and sympathizers of opposing factions. They not only arrested and interrogated people at will but also tortured them to death. A substructure of a “mass dictatorship command” was also developed by setting up a “mass dictatorship small group” (*qunzhuan xiaozu*) in each commune. “Mass dictatorship commands” were found in most of the counties dominated by single factions, but rarely existed in those evenly represented by both factions.¹⁷³

¹⁷² For example, in Long County, the county party committee directly incorporated 3 “armed defense squads” (40 combatants in total) of a supporting faction, the “County General Headquarters” (*xian zong bu*), into the “mass dictatorship command” in late May 1968. Later, 19 communes and each county-level organization also set up “mass dictatorship departments” (*qunzhuanbu*) or “mass dictatorship teams” (*qunzhuanzu*). In total, there were 693 people in mass dictatorship organizations at county and commune levels. Many commune “dictatorship departments” set up “armed defense squads” (*wu wei banzi*), staffed by as many as 120 combatants and quipped with guns. The “mass dictatorship department” of Badu Commune, for example, unlawfully interrogated and brutally tortured 131 officials and masses, beat to death 2 people, and permanently injured 1. 18 people were killed during the county’s “cleansing class rank,” 82 others were taken into the custody of mass dictatorship organizations and interrogated (Long XZ 1993: 692-694).

¹⁷³ In our sample, two thirds (14 out of 21) of the counties monopolized by a faction are reported to have had “mass dictatorship commands,” or similar specialized apparatuses for repression, while only 13 percent (2 out of 16) of those evenly represented by both factions had them.

To continue the example of Fugu County, the revolutionary committee set up a “mass dictatorship command” in early May 1968, following the experience of Inner Mongolia, and invested with it all the powers of the public security, public prosecutors and court (*gong jian fa*).¹⁷⁴ In mid June, the mass dictatorship command established a “disciplinary squad” (*jixun dui*) composed of armed trainers and guards, and confined leaders of the “East Is Red,” as well as “capitalist roaders,” “traitors,” “spies,” and others. The mass dictatorship command also laid a “mass dictatorship network” (*qunzhuan wangluo*) by setting up a “mass dictatorship small group” in each commune. Assuming power, members of “mass dictatorship small groups” beat, broke, robbed, house-searched, and arrest at will (*da, za, qiang, chao, zhua*). Among those, the mass dictatorship small groups of Laogaochuan and Mugua communes used the most merciless means. The “mass dictatorship small group” of Laogaochuan Commune set up 8 makeshift interrogation rooms equipped with more than 20 kinds of torturing tools—hemp ropes, twigs of tamarisk, belts, fire tongs, bayonets, cudgels and others—on the premises of the commune government. Victims were beaten on their knees bound, hung, handcuffed, and stripped naked. 17 party members, 4 Communist Youth League members, and 99 masses, or 136 people in total, were badly beaten. Among those beaten, 67 people were illegally led away, 22 were fainted, 14 were either permanently disabled or mentally deranged, 5 killed themselves, and 1 was beaten to death. All those beatings and other forms of merciless persecutions were regard as “revolutionary actions” (*geming xingdong*). It was said, “beating people is making new contribution (*li xing gong*), while not

¹⁷⁴ The following account is based on Fugu County Annals (1994: 583), unless noted otherwise.

beating people is old conservatives (*lao bao*).” “Beat all class enemies to deaths, then there would be no class struggle.” Meanwhile, the “mass dictatorship small group” of Mugua Commune beat 1 person to death, compelled 4 others to kill themselves, paralyzed 2, and victimized 76 in total.

Continued hostility, or the perception of it, further escalated repressive violence. In Shanyang County mentioned above, the revolutionary committee entrusted the “July 3 Faction” with the task of rooting out opposition in the name of defending “new red government.” In May, it set up an “armed defense squad” (*wuweidui*) by incorporating members of the “July 3” and armed it with guns and live ammunition. Leaders of the “July 3” instigated the masses at several work places—the county party cadre school, the post and telegraph office, and others. They established “bases for beating people” (*da ren judian*), in which leading officials and the masses having different opinion from the “July 3” were hung up and beaten. Following the example, commune and district revolutionary committees organized their own “armed defense squads,” or “small squads of the militia” (*minbing xiao fendui*), one after another. Small scale armed battles were still reported continuing in some places, as those squads were engaged in capturing and torturing so-called “three-anti elements” (*san fan fenzi*)—anti-Cultural Revolution, anti-PLA (People’s Liberation Army), and anti-revolutionary committee.

It was in this context that one of the most brutal episodes took place. In early June, the county revolutionary committee convened a meeting of peasant representatives from the entire county, in which leaders of commune and district (*qu*) revolutionary committees also participated. On June 4, the “armed defense squads” of the county town (*chengguanzhen*) and several communes in the suburb

(*chengjiaoqu*)—Sanli, Wuli, Shili and Wuzhu—bound and paraded more than 200 “class enemies” in the streets of the county town. Tens of thousands spectators were mobilized by peasant representatives of the meeting to watch the parade. 4 people were beaten to death and more than 30 were injured on the spot. The “June 4 struggle parade (*youdou*)” acted as an “armed battle model” (*wudou shifan*). After the parade, the “armed defense squads” of other remote communes—Manchuan, Zhongcun, Zhaochuan, Banmiao, and others—started to torture people to extract confessions (*xingxun bigong*) and revenge themselves, and cooked up 5 false cases of uprising plots, involving more than 700 innocent people and leaving more 200 people dead or injured¹⁷⁵ (Shanyang XZ 1991: 216-217).

As suggested in the above examples, county People’s Armed Departments played a key role not only in an early, or “premature,” establishment of revolutionary committees but also in the violence committed by “dictatorship commands.” Under a situation in which armed battles still continued, the PAD helped a dominant faction root out opposition while conniving at their taking revenge (*xiexian baofu*). In Pucheng County, for example, the PAD entrusted its supporting faction with the task of suppressing opposition, despite continued hostilities.¹⁷⁶ Two days after its establishment on June 3, 1968, the standing committee of the revolutionary

¹⁷⁵ Among them, Huang Zichun, a party member in Banmiao Commune, was tortured to confess (*qu da cheng zhao*) to being a mastermind of “Taiping army” (*taiping jun*), one of the alleged uprising plots, and ruthlessly beaten to death. His whole family fell apart (*ren wang jia po*) after his death. His wife died of indignation, his little daughter was married young, and other orphaned children fell back on relatives and friends.

¹⁷⁶ The PAD expressed its support (*biaotai*) to the “Red No. 2 Headquarters” in early July 1967, and then pushed for a “great alliance.” Armed battles continued after the establishment of the county revolutionary committee and lasted until October 1968.

committee decided to form a “mass dictatorship command,” of which a military representative and a standing committee member took charge. Under the dictatorship command, a “dictatorship branch” (*zhuanzheng zhidui*) was set up to carry out specific duties. It was in fact staffed by members of the armed squad of the dominant faction, the “Red No.2 Headquarters” (*hong er si*). The “dictatorship branch” carried out a “red terror” throughout the county, captured and beat people at will, and collected “evidence” by torturing (*bigongxin*). On June 17, the first plenary meeting of the county revolutionary committee summarized “the two-year history of the struggle between the two lines in Pucheng County,” and demanded that “those who had stood on a wrong position change position” (*zhan cuo le dui de jiu yao zhan guolai*). “Study groups” were formed everywhere to “take a stand again” (*chongxin zhandui*), and those who did not come out clearly were subjected to “dictatorship.” 3,723 officials and masses were beaten, while 58 were killed, 69 permanently injured, 498 seriously wounded, and 808 houses were searched¹⁷⁷ (Pucheng XZ 1993: 5-8).

Thus, early repressive violence by “mass dictatorship commands” was a product of the close relationship between local military units and dominant factions. Under the circumstances of continuing factional conflict both inside and outside county boundaries, it took place when the PAD left the task of suppressing opposition to a dominant faction. Directed against inferior factions and their supposed sympathizers, the repressive violence escalated as the task of suppression was mixed of the emotion of revenge. Under the semblance of “new red government,”

¹⁷⁷ In Pucheng, 32 “targets of dictatorship” (*zhuanzheng duixiang*) were also reported to have killed themselves between March and May of 1970 (Pucheng XZ 1993: 7).

members of a dominant faction took the opportunity to revenge on enemies. This form of violence had characteristics of both what Tilly calls “opportunistic violence” and “coordinated destruction” (Tilly 2003: Chapters 5 and 6). Partial representation in the new local government therefore gave a dominant faction opportunity to take revenge on the inferior opponent in an organized way.

FORCIBLE ENDINGS OF FACTIONAL ARMED BATTLES AND BALANCED REVOLUTIONARY COMMITTEES: AUGUST-SEPTEMBER 1968

As figure 5.1 indicates, factional armed battles were fiercely fought and prolonged to the summer of 1968 in many parts of Shaanxi. The intensity of armed battles in Shaanxi was also testified by the fact that one of the two decrees sent by the Center in summer 1968 to stop persistent armed battles was specifically directed to the province.¹⁷⁸ The “July 24 decree” demanded that all fighting factions in Shaanxi “stop armed battles immediately and disband all specialized armed battle squads” (CCRD 2002). After the issuance of the decree, regular PLA units were sent in to put down the violence by force. Those units demobilized warring factions by collecting arms and demolishing strongpoints. They also arbitrated between rival factions and, despite grumbles, managed to impose equal representation in the new government.

In Yan’an District, where factional fighting involving county PADs had fallen into a quagmire,¹⁷⁹ a regular PLA unit—the 8118th unit¹⁸⁰—was sent to the district center of Yan’an County immediately following the “July 24 decree” to enforce a

¹⁷⁸ The other decree sent on July 3 was directed to Guangxi.

¹⁷⁹ See Chapter 4 for details.

¹⁸⁰ The 8118th unit belonged to the 21st Group Army (Zichang XZ 1993: 837).

cease-fire and demobilize warring factions (Ansai XZ 1993: 749; Yan'an City Annals 1994: 829).¹⁸¹ Within the month, the provincial revolutionary committee and the leading small group of the “support-the-left” unit in Yan'an sponsored a “study group” of leaders of two warring factions—the “County Headquarters” (*xian zhi*) and the “County General” (*xian zong*)—at Zhangbagou in Xi'an. But both factions were still unwilling to turn in weapons, guarding against each other. At first, both factions gave up only knives and broken guns, and not until the establishment of the county revolutionary committee on August 18 did they submit all weapons, disband armed combat squads, and actually stop fighting.

In early August, under the superintendence of the military, leaders of both factions and former leading officials participated in a conference to discuss specific issues related to the forming of a county revolutionary committee. In the end, it was decided that the county revolutionary committee was composed of 56 members, including 1 chief (*zhuren*), 5 deputy chiefs (*fu zhuren*), and 14 standing committee members (*changwu weiyuan*). A military representative, Chen Qinzhang, acted as chief, while 5 deputy chief positions were filled by 2 military representatives, 1 former leading official, and 1 each by each faction equally. On August 18, the county revolutionary committee was declared established, and at the same time, the entire county was put under military control (*junguan*).

After achieving a “great alliance” in Yan'an in mid August, the 8118th unit advanced into neighboring counties—Ansai, Ganquan, Yanchuan, Zichang, and probably Yanchang (Ansai XZ 1993: 749; Ganquan XZ 1993: 492; Yanchang XZ

¹⁸¹ The following account is based on Yan'an City Annals (1994: 828-829), unless noted otherwise.

1991: 28; Yanchuan XZ 1999: 38; Zichang XZ 1993: 835). Except for Zichang County, where the PAD had helped organize a revolutionary committee dominated by a faction in June *before* the 8118th unit entered the county, revolutionary committees in those counties were all formed in the first half of September,¹⁸² under the arbitration of the regular PLA unit.

The provincial support-the-left office dispatched other regular PLA units to southern counties of Yan'an District—the 8133rd unit to Luochuan and Yijun counties (Luochuan XZ 1994: 196; Yijun XZ 1992: 399), and the 8311th unit to Huangling County (Huangling XZ 1995: 761). In those counties, the regular PLA units similarly enforced the “July 24” decree by holding back armed battles, collecting weapons, and arbitrating between rival factions. Through much negotiation, the military managed equal representations of rival factions in the revolutionary committees. In Luochuan, for example, among 9 vice-chief positions, 3 were equally assigned to each rival faction, along with a PAD chief, a vice-secretary of the county party committee and a vice-county magistrate, while a section chief (*ke zhang*) of the 8133rd unit acted as chief (Luochuan XZ 1994: 196). In the county where the PAD secretly provided weapons (*ansong wuqi*) to a faction (the “Workers-Peasants Headquarters,” or *gong nong zong si*), the regular PLA unit enforced ceasefire, negotiated equal representations of factions in the new government, and installed itself as chief.

Next, we turn to the demobilizing process in Ankang, where armed battles were

¹⁸² A county revolutionary committee was formed in Ansai on September 10, in Ganquan on September 4, in Yanchang on September 14, and in Yanchuan on September 15.

most violently fought.¹⁸³ In Spring-Summer 1968, armed battles in Ankang District got out of the control of the Center.¹⁸⁴ Even Zhou Enlai's direct interventions were ignored by local factions. After several failed attempts to promote an alliance, the central authorities ordered a regular PLA unit—the 8163rd unit—to enter Ankang to stop armed battles and demobilize factions by force on June 2. There was no escape for warring factions this time, and gun shots gradually died down inside and outside the county town.

During the first 20 days of June, while large-scale armed battles ceased, both factions stood face to face with each other and remained prepared for action, with the 8163rd unit on strict guard. In late June, when a military vehicle (belonging to the 8163rd unit) escorting a few officials was stopped by combatants of the “Red No.3 Headquarters” (*hong san si*) at a ferry garrisoned by them. Without listening to the warning, a rebel combatant was shot to death by an escorting soldier. On account of this, rebels took all the weapons carried by escorting soldiers. In July, despite the issuance of the “July 3” and “July 24” decrees, both factions did not submit weapons but concealed them. In early August, the “west-line headquarters” (*xi xian zhihuibu*) of the “Six General Headquarters” (*liu zong si*) went on attacking the opponent's stronghold in neighboring Huayin County.

Meanwhile, in the first half of August, the military authorities stepped up mediation efforts to enforce the “July 3” and “July 24” decrees. After several study sessions, both factions finally expressed their willingness to stop armed battles and submit weapons. On August 17, both factions began to turn in weapons and remove

¹⁸³ The following account is based on Ankang County Annals (1989: 906-907), unless noted otherwise.

¹⁸⁴ See Chapter 4 for details.

makeshift checkpoints. They also held rallies and parades to show their obedience to the “proletarian headquarters.” Under the protection of the military, members of the “Red No.3 Headquarters” returned to the county town one after another, and a “great alliance” was eagerly promoted within work places.

In late August, the 8163rd unit and the county PAD sponsored a series of conference attended by county-level leading officials and leaders of both factions. Through much bargaining (*tao jia huan jia*) and repeated disputes (*fanfu zhengzhi*), a list of committee members was finally made and then approved by the provincial revolutionary committee on September 3. An inauguration rally was held three days later. Ankang County Revolutionary Committee was composed of 80 members, among whom 31 standing committee members were chosen. The position of chief was assumed by a military representative (*jundui daibiao*), while 13 vice-chief positions were filled by 3 military officers, 2 “united” leading officials (*bei jiehe de lingdao ganbu*), and 4 each by the two major factions equally. A scratch team of “revolutionary three-in-one combination” (*geming de san jiehe*) took over all the powers—party, political, financial, educational, and judicial—of the former county party committee and people’s committee. Later, each organ, factory, district, commune, production brigade, and others established its own “revolutionary committee” or “revolutionary leading small group” (*geming lingdao xiaozu*).

The 8163rd unit also advanced to neighboring counties of Ankang—Hanyin, Pingli, Xunyang, Zhenping, and probably others—from August to early September (Hanyin XZ 1991: 28; Pingli XZ 1995: 699; Xunyang XZ 1996: 733; Zhenping XZ 2004: 24). In those counties, the PLA unit similarly forcibly stopped armed battles, pulled down strongpoints and checkpoints, and collected weapons. It also carefully

worked out equal representation of local rival factions in the revolutionary committees. In Pingli, for example, the position of chief was served by a military representative, and 9 vice-chief positions were assigned to 2 military representatives, 1 leading official, and 3 “representatives of the masses” (*qunzhong daibiao*) for each faction equally (Pingli XZ 1995: 699).

“CLEANSING OF CLASS RANK”: FALL 1968-1969

So far, we have seen two different processes leading from demobilization to the rebuilding of local government. In the first process, one faction attained dominance before the enforcement of ceasefire by regular PLA units and then monopolized positions in county revolutionary committees. In the other, the forced endings of armed battles by regular PLA units in late summer 1968 gave rise to evenly represented revolutionary committees. We also looked at examples of early repressive violence committed by members of dominant factions against members and sympathizers of opposing factions.

Starting as early as October 1968, a nation-wide campaign of “cleansing of class rank” (*qingli jieji duiwu*) took over the counties of Shaanxi.¹⁸⁵ Part of a larger campaign, “struggle, criticism and transformation” (*dou, pi, gai*),¹⁸⁶ aimed at purging

¹⁸⁵ The campaign was first promulgated on May 25, 1968, when the Center issued “the experience of the military control commission of Beijing Xinhua Printing Factory in arousing the masses for the struggle against the enemy” (CCRD 2002), and spread to the entire country in the later half of the year.

¹⁸⁶ “Struggle” was to “struggle against and defeat power holders taking the capitalist road” (*doudao zou zibenzhuyi daolu de dangquan pai*); “criticism” was to “criticize bourgeois reactionary academic authorities” (*pipan zichan jieji fandong xueshu quanwei*); and “reform” was to “reform all unreasonable rules and institutions” (*gaige yiqie bu heli de guizhang zhidu*).

and rebuilding the Party and the society as a whole, the “cleansing of class rank” was expected to come after the establishment of revolutionary committees and before the rectification and rebuilding of the Party. As the name indicates, the aim of the campaign was to discern and purge “class enemies” (*jieji diren*) from the ranks of officials and the broad masses. In Shaanxi, “class enemies” were also called “nine categories of people” (*jiu zhong ren*). They included: “traitors” (*pantu*), “spies” (*tewu*), and “die-hard capitalist roaders” (*wangu buhua de zouzipai*) and “flagrant counterrevolutionaries” (*xianxing fangeming*), “historical counterrevolutionaries” (*lishi fangeming*), “bad elements” (*huai fenzi*), “rightists” (*youpai fenzi*), “class aliens” (*jieji yiji fenzi*), “remnants of the Guomindang (Nationalist Party) (*Guomindang canzhayunie*). As county annals frequently mention, they were, in fact, largely the same kinds of people who had been attacked earlier in the Cultural Revolution (see, for example, Ankang XZ 1989: 907; Ansai XZ 1993: 751; Pucheng XZ 1993: 7).

The methods and the environment in which the campaign was carried out led to an ever increasing number of campaign targets. In general, revolutionary committees organized “propaganda teams” (*xuanchuan dui*) of workers, peasants, and soldiers by recruiting activist elements among them. They were then sent to work units and communes, where they organized “Mao Zedong Thought study groups,” and divided and induced participants to inform against one another by using the carrot and the stick. This was done in the environment in which administrative and security authorities—the Party, as well as public security, the persecutors and the court—were in ruins. As a result, amateur “investigators” freely “disclosed” an ever increasing number of “class enemies” based on confession and without any evidence.

While these goals and methods were similarly applied everywhere, the "cleansing of class rank" resulted in varying intensities of repressive violence across counties. Table 5.2 shows that the average number of deaths (in 100,000) due to the "cleansing of class rank" in counties with partially represented revolutionary committees was more than three times as many as that in counties with evenly represented revolutionary committees. This is despite the very similar average numbers of those persecuted (in 100,000) between the two types of local government (Table 5.3). The latter finding suggests that local governments carried out the campaign according to a quota set by higher authorities. Seen together, these findings suggest that while the campaign was carried out in every county more or less uniformly, the intensities of repressive violence varied between the forms of local government. It is also shown that the high death tolls in counties with one-sided revolutionary committees were not only due to early repressions but also caused by much severer "cleansing of class rank." But how, and why, did different types of local government lead to varying intensities of repressive campaign violence, despite the similar methods and goals?

Tables 5.2 and 5.3 about here

Escalation of Repressive Violence under Partial Revolutionary Committees

Why were severe cases of repressive violence during the "cleansing of class rank" often found in counties where revolutionary committees were monopolized by

a faction? Accounts in county annals suggest three interrelated causes: the perception of threat, the repressive apparatus staffed by a dominant faction, and factional leadership.

First, one-faction dominated governments were still under threat, both real and perceived, from the oppositions. "Siege mentality" would have easily been intermingled with the search for "hidden class enemies" to produce a more violent repressive campaign. It is noteworthy in this context that the so-called "Tongguan experience," a model case of the "cleansing of class rank" in Shaanxi, was in fact created under a revolutionary committee monopolized by a faction.¹⁸⁷ The county's "cleansing of class rank" was started early on July 8, at the same time when a "mass dictatorship command" was set up. As the campaign just started, in late July, a stationed unit¹⁸⁸ and the dominant faction, the "Red Allied General" (*hong lian zong*), together led the militia to suppress the opposing "Peasants General Headquarters" (*nong zong si*). In the so-called "Daiziying case," the expedition to "propagate the 'July 3rd' and 'July 24th' decrees" developed into a bloody armed battle, which resulted in 21 deaths and 38 injuries (Chen et al. 1996: 579).¹⁸⁹ In September, the "mass dictatorship command" struggled against and paraded 388 officials and masses

¹⁸⁷ In Tongguan County, a revolutionary committee was established very early on March 6, 1968, and was dominated by a faction, the "Red Allied General," with the support of a stationed PLA unit. Tongguan County is about 120 kilometers east of Xi'an and on an eastern edge of the central plain. The following account is based on Tongguan County Annals (1992: 28-30, 515-516), unless noted otherwise.

¹⁸⁸ It was probably the 8734th unit, because a vice-chief of the county revolutionary committee belonged to the unit (Tongguan XZ 1992: 463).

¹⁸⁹ See also "'Daiziying case' overturned, denounce 'Tongguan's cleansing of class rank experience'" ("Wei 'Daiziying shijian' pingfan, fouding 'Tongguan qingdui jingyan'"), *Shaanxi Daily* (*shaanxi ribao*), December 30, 1978, p. 2, and Walder and Su (2003), n. 5, p. 75.

“with a different viewpoint” (*chi bu tong guandian*) on a charge of “opposing three reds” (*fan san hong*)—opposing the red government, the PLA, and the “revolutionary left.”

In November, the county revolutionary committee stepped up the campaign by greatly expanding the categories of “class enemies.” It demanded “five investigations” (*wu cha*)—investigations of those who had served the enemy’s army and government before the Liberation (*jiefang qian gan guo weijun, weishi*), the political profiles of those who had come from outside (*wailai hu zhengzhi mianmao*), the law-abidingness of four-category elements (*si lei fenzi shou fa qingkuang*), the words and deeds of flagrant counterrevolutionaries (*xianxing fangeming yuanxing*), and enemy dossiers (*di dang*). At the same time, standing committee members of the revolutionary committee toured around and directed the reexamination of “omitted landlords and rich peasants” (*louhua dizhu, funong*). In December, the provincial revolutionary committee held an “on-the-spot rally for Tongguan’s cleansing of class rank” (*Tongguan qingdui xianchang hui*). Propagated exaggeratedly through the provincial media, the “Tongguan experience” caused grave consequences throughout the province.¹⁹⁰ Thus, in the “Tongguan experience,” the perception of threat from the opposition was intertwined with the search for “class enemies” to escalate the repressive campaign.

Second, the “mass dictatorship command,” a repressive apparatus staffed by

¹⁹⁰ In total, the “cleansing of class rank” in Tongguan produced 3,311 victims of variously labeled “class enemies,” including 261 party and government leaders and rank and file officials (25.2 percent of all the officials), and 397 households (436 persons) of “omitted landlords and rich peasants.” There is also a report of *Shaanxi Daily* that among those arrested during the “cleansing of class rank,” many were tortured and killed. See *ibid.*

members of a dominant faction, often remained and took charge of carrying out the massive and violent purge. Having crushed the opponent, as well as public security, the prosecutors and the court, it had a free hand in purging “class enemies” from the society. Rebel-dominated “dictatorship commands” not only captured and interrogated people at will, but also punished and used force against those targets. Some even settled old scores (*siren enyuan*) by fabricating charges (*luozhi zuiming*) and then sending them to their deaths (Hua XZ, unpublished manuscript, 33). Commenting on various atrocities committed by factional members during the “cleansing of class rank,” a county annals observed that the “mass dictatorship” was in fact none other than the “dictatorship of leaders of a rebel faction” (Yichuan XZ 2000: 590).

The county annals of Baishui details the ways by which a “dictatorship command” persecuted people in the “cleansing of class rank.”¹⁹¹ In the county, where an early and aggressive intervention by the PAD achieved an early establishment of the revolutionary committee on May 1, 1968, the “mass dictatorship command” was held responsible for all the 155 deaths and 182 permanent injuries resulted from the “cleansing of class rank.” Following its foundation, the revolutionary committee issued two directives in succession. One was to set up a “mass dictatorship command,” and the other was to “smash up public security, the prosecutors and the court” (*za lan gong, jian, fa*). On May 6, in a mass rally organized by the revolutionary committee, the “Baishui County Mass Dictatorship Command” was declared established. During the rally, the county PAD issued

¹⁹¹ The following account is based on Baishui County Annals (1989: 448-453), unless noted otherwise.

bullets to leaders and their subordinates (*dashou*) of the “mass dictatorship command,” and also awarded “armed battle models” (*wudou mofa*) a copy of the “Quotations from Chairman Mao” and a badge. A “mass dictatorship network” (*qunzhuan wangluo*) was formed throughout the county, with the county and communes establishing “mass dictatorship commands” and work units and production brigades setting up “mass dictatorship small groups.” They had their own way, trampling laws and regulations. “With the spirit of beating, smashing, stealing, confiscating and arresting (*da, za, qiang, chao, zhua*) prevailing, [a mass dictatorship] turned into a fascist mob dictatorship (*faxisi baotu zhuanzheng*), throwing towns and villages of Baishui in bloody terror.”

In the county’s “cleansing of class rank,” five methods of persecution were used to torture and extract confessions from victims. In “struggle sessions” (*jiudou*), people were arbitrarily put on “big hats” (*da maozi*)—“spies,” “traitors,” “counterrevolutionaries,” “capitalist roaders,” “bad elements” and others—based on “problems” disclosed (*jiefa*) or even made up (*dian dao hei bai*), and struggled against in public (*jiudou shizhong*). There was also another way of struggling against targets that were smaller in scale but even more deadly in nature. In a so-called “small combat” (*xiao zhandou*), a small number of “combat personnel” settled a problem (*luoshi wenti*) on their own, by surrounding and assaulting a targeted person. This kind of lynching resulted in a number of deaths, permanent injuries and forced confessions (*qu da cheng zhao*). The imprisonment of “monsters and demons” (*niu gui she shen*) in a “cow shed” (*niupeng*) was another way. All county-level organs set up “cow sheds” of various sizes, with the county revolutionary committee itself having the largest one with the capacity of 30-40

people. Isolated from outside, captives were repeatedly asked to apologize for their guilt repeatedly day in, day out and tormented by various ways such forced labor and wearing a piece of white close on which the "name of a crime" was written. Deprived of freedom for many days and of any fragment of dignity, some committed suicide in despair.

"Parading in public" (*youjie shizhong*) in a dunce cap and with a heavy name plate hanging from neck no doubt had a similar effect of denying the dignity of targeted people. But a more violent variety, called "armed parade" (*wuzhuang youjie*), had an even more gruesome effect. Targeted victims were lined up with armed militia guarding on both sides. Two "rebels" stepped forward, and forced a victim on their knees and into the posture of a "jet plane" by twisting their arms up behind their back. They were then beaten, kicked and knocked by gunstock. Many were injured, while others fell down unconscious. "Torturing to extract confessions" (*xingxun bigong*) involved tens of gruesome torturing tools and methods. Many were tortured to death, while a still larger number of forced confessions were made. And finally, "implication" (*zhulian*) was used to involve an ever larger number of targets. Through the combination of these methods, 560 state officials, workers and teachers and 1,113 rural grassroots officials and commune members were made "class enemies," and 115 were killed or forced to kill themselves and 168 were permanently injured.

But even the specialized apparatus for repression could have not carried out large-scale killings without the orchestration of factional leaders. From the beginning, there would have been no partial revolutionary committee or "mass dictatorship command" without the backing of local military. Military officers, who

almost always served as chief or vice-chief of revolutionary committees, were a central figure in the new local government. Factional leadership, often military, continued to abet the escalation of repressive violence, while using the “mass dictatorship command” as a tool.

In Fugu County mentioned above, the county revolutionary committee studied “the experience of Beijing Xinhua Printing Factory,” prior to the beginning of the “cleansing of class rank” in October.¹⁹² A leading figure of the revolutionary committee then announced, “enemies’ movements in Fugu are serious, and a large number of class enemies have sneaked into our class rank. A number of revolutionary infirm elements are essentially class aliens, and once things turn bad they will sell out and defect. Based on what we know, during the revolutionary war period, there were more than 3,500 converts (*zishou bianjie fenzi*), 1,900 spies (*dite*), 1,000 members of the self-defense army of the puppet regime (*wei ziwaiduiyuan*), and 2,600 five-category elements (*wu rei fenzi*), which amount to more than 9,000 in all.” Following the announcement, “Mao Zedong Thought study groups” were held 411 times throughout the county, participated by a total of 82,000 people. On the basis of raised awareness, the county revolutionary committee organized 455 “Mao Zedong Thought propaganda teams” of poor and lower-middle peasants (5,820 people in total), which helped communes and production brigades throughout the county carry out the “cleansing of class rank.”

In March 1969, intent on stepping up the campaign, a leading figure of the revolutionary committee plausibly pointed out again, “there are three strands of black

¹⁹² The following account is based on Fugu County Annals (1994: 584-585), unless noted otherwise.

line, the first is spies infiltrated before the Liberation, the second is not a small number of defectors and traitors (during the war of liberation), and the third is a number of wicked people who were patronized by Liu Shaoqi and his proxies in Fugu and usurped the leadership.” After the declaration, “class 12 typhoon”¹⁹³ grew more and more violent as some of the communes came under intensive search for counterrevolutionary organizations such as “Inner Mongolian People’s Revolutionary Party” (*neimenggu renmng geming dang*) and “Red Flag Party” (*hongqi dang*). By May, 4,297 class enemies were purged and 719 households of “omitted landlords and rich peasants” (*louhua dizhu, funong*) were searched out. During the campaign, 92 people were killed or committed suicide, and many others were permanently injured.

There is another piece of evidence that points to a more aggressive posture of factional leadership. The so-called “supplementary class for the democratic revolution” (*minzhu geming buke*), subordinate to the “cleansing of class rank” and aimed at “supplementing (*buding*) omitted landlords and rich peasants,” was conducted in nearly half (47 percent) of the Shaanxi counties. The campaign was carried out on the presumption that the democratic revolution had not been thoroughgoing (*minzhu genming bu chedi*) and there were still landlords and rich peasants omitted during the land reform. Compared by the types of local government, 62 percent of partial revolutionary committees carried out the “supplementary class,” while only a quarter of balanced revolutionary committees conducted the campaign (Table 5.4). Considering that this kind of decision was made only by the authorities at the county revolutionary committee level or above,

¹⁹³ “Class 12 typhoon” was a metaphorical name for the “cleansing of class rank” campaign. “Class” (*ji*) indicates the force of the wind used to measure the scale of typhoon in China.

the effect of factional leadership is evident.

Tables 5.4 about here

In the “supplementary class for the democratic revolution,” hundreds, if not thousands, of laboring households were “supplemented ” to the infamous ranks of landlords and rich peasants without proper investigation, and then subjected to various ill-treatments. For example, in Baishui County mentioned above, the “supplementary class for the democratic revolution” was conducted in fall-winter 1968. Learning from and extending the “Tongguan experience,” the county revolutionary committee introduced a misguided slogan of “struggling to supplement 1,000 landlords and rich peasants.” Leading “officials” counted “exploited amount” without any ground (*pingkong suanzhan boxue liang*), and judged without investigation. Targets were interrogated and struggled against for three days and nights, and then kicked out of their houses with nothing but the clothes on their back (*sao di chu men*). And even more inhumanely, relatives of those made “landlords” or “rich peasants” and then killed were not allowed to bury them in coffin, cry for them, wear a white mourning band, or bury them in a cemetery (called “four not permitteds” or *si bu zhun*). Many self-cultivating households, those with a very small amount of exploitation, and other laboring households were elevated to landlords or rich peasants. By these means, 1,075 households were “supplemented” as landlords and rich peasants. The number was 3.5 times higher than that

determined during the land reform. In the process, 40 people were killed and 14 permanently injured (Baishui XZ 1989: 451).

Repressive Campaign under Balanced Revolutionary Committees

If severe repressive violence under partial government was due to the perception of threat, the “mass dictatorship command” and factional leadership, the opposite might be true for balanced government. Namely, the military leadership can be assumed more or less neutral because the military itself managed equal representation by arbitrating between factions. We have already seen that there was no “mass dictatorship command” in counties with balanced government, except a few cases (Table 5.4). And finally, it is logical to assume that under a balanced government, factional members on both sides perceived much less threat from each other. While accounts on *what did not happen* are inevitably thin, we could assume that these were primary reasons for subdued repressive violence (Table 5.2).

In the following, we provide brief accounts of how the “cleansing of class rank” was carried out in the counties of Yan’an and Ankang, where regular PLA units enforced the ceasefire and achieved equal factional representation in the revolutionary committees. In Yan’an County, the revolutionary committee started a “struggle, criticism and transformation” campaign on October 3. About a month later, 22 “flagrant counterrevolutionaries” (*xianxing fangeming fenzi*) were arrested. On December 14, “worker-peasant-soldier propaganda teams” (*gong nong bing xuanchuan dui*) were organized and stationed in the street and residents’ committees (*jiedao jumin weiyuanhui*) of the county town, while two companies (*lian*) of the 8118th unit were stationed in rural communes. According to an initial tally on

December 22, 182 spies and 168 traitors were disclosed in the county town and Songshulin Commune alone.¹⁹⁴ Three days after the tally was taken, an “on-the-spot exhibition” (*shikuang zhanlanhui*) of the “struggle, criticism, reform” was held. Thereafter, the emphasis of the political movement shifted to the “cleansing of class rank.” According to the statistics given by the county revolutionary committee, 3,101 people were exposed as “spies,” “traitors,” or “monsters and demons” (*niu gui she shen*), and brought under “legal proceedings” (*li'an chuli*) by May 1969. But there was no reported deaths due to the “cleansing of class rank” in Yan'an County, where 144 were killed during the armed battle period (Yan'an City Annals 1994: 31, 828-829).¹⁹⁵

In Ankang County, the “cleansing of class rank” campaign was started in late October. All kinds of people who had been persecuted in the early phase of the Cultural Revolution were “cleansed” (*qingli*) once again. The more “problems” they “cleansed,” the more numerous and the larger they became. “Hats” (*maozi*) of “capitalist roaders,” “traitors,” and “spies” flew all over the sky (*mantian fei*). Within one month, 2,565 “class enemies” were cleansed out, and by November 1969 the number reached 11,670.¹⁹⁶ While the number seems high, the number weighted

¹⁹⁴ These places must have been “models” (*mofan*) through which the campaign was propagated. Experimenting with a few work units and then holding “on-the-spot rallies” or “exhibitions” were a standard procedure by which a campaign was propagated.

¹⁹⁵ If we look at all the counties of Yan'an District where we know regular PLA units advanced to enforce ceasefire—Ansai, Ganquan, Huangling, Luochuan, Yan'an, Yanchang, Yanchuan, Yijun, and Zichang, the average number of deaths due to the “cleansing of class rank” was 10.7 (in 100,000), similar to the average of 8.3 among those counties with balanced revolutionary committees (Table 5.2).

¹⁹⁶ Among them, there were 6 county party secretaries and county magistrate, 57 department and bureau chiefs, 39 district party secretaries and district heads, 222 commune secretaries and commune heads, and 780 ordinary officials.

by population is in fact 2146.4 (in 100,000), very similar to the overall average of 2259.9. This may well show that the revolutionary committee carried out the campaign according to the quota set by higher authorities. Rough treatments such as “criticism and struggle” (*pidou*), “imprisonment” (*guanya*) and “penalizing” (*panxing*) led a small number of people (*gebie ren*) to commit suicide. But unlike those counties with partial revolutionary committees, mass suicides do not seem to have taken place in Ankang during the “cleansing of class rank.”¹⁹⁷ In the county where 478 people were killed during the armed battle period, repressive violence was checked under a balanced government.¹⁹⁸

“ONE STRIKE AND THREE ANTIS”: 1970-1971

In early 1970, the Party Center started another campaign, the “one strike and three antis” (*yi da san fan*). It was intended to “strike at counterrevolutionary subversive activities,” and “oppose graft and theft, speculation and profiteering, and

¹⁹⁷ Ankang County Annals summarily reports a total of 784 deaths in relation with the Cultural Revolution. Among those, 478 were killed “in armed battles” (*wudou zhong*), 286 were killed by “random beatings and killings” (*luan da lan sha*), and 20 committed suicide. The county annals does not specify when and how those “random beatings and killings” took place. But the spread of large-scale killings by factions in counties neighboring Ankang—Baihe, Langao, and Ziyang—during the armed battle period suggests that the indiscriminate killings in Ankang County also took place before the establishment of the revolutionary committee. Moreover, the origin of those mass killings, called *da jianzi*, was attributed to one of the major factions in Ankang County, the “Red No.3 Headquarters” (Baihe XZ 1996: 638).

¹⁹⁸ If we look at all the counties of Ankang District where we know the 8163rd unit advanced to enforce ceasefire—Ankang, Hanyin, Pingli, Xunyang and Zhenping, the average number of deaths due to the “cleansing of class rank” was .5 (in 100,000), even lower than the average of 8.3 among those counties with balanced revolutionary committees (Table 5.2).

extravaganza and waste.”¹⁹⁹ Compared to the previous “cleansing of class rank,” which was aimed at purging the society of “class enemies,” the new campaign supposedly had a more specific purpose of cracking down on political and economic “crimes.” Since the start of the Cultural Revolution, there had been many who filled their own pocket by “fishing in troubled waters” (*hun shui mo yu*). Accordingly, many were arrested and then sentenced to a term or to death. Many of those killed in this campaign were thus executed, rather than beaten to death, while suicides were still widely found. Under the condition in which public security, the prosecutors and the court were still controlled by the military and factions, however, a large number of false charges and misjudgments (*yuan jia cuo an*) were made.

The average numbers of both those killed and persecuted in the “one strike and three antis” were much less than those in the “cleansing of class rank” (Table 5.2 and 5.3). There were only two counties where the “one strike and three antis” caused more than 30 deaths, compared to the existence of 16 such counties during the “cleansing of class rank.” There is little evidence to suggest an involvement of “mass dictatorship commands,” or any other repressive apparatus that incorporated factional members, in the “one strike and three antis.” More importantly, the numbers of both those killed and persecuted during the campaign do not vary much between the types of local government. One of the counties that reported more than 30 deaths, Ankang, had a balanced revolutionary committee, while the other, Pucheng, a partial revolutionary committee. Among the 13 counties that reported more than 10 deaths from the campaign, 4 had balanced governments and 2 had partial

¹⁹⁹ The campaign was based on three central documents (called documents no. 3, 5, and 6, or *zhongfa* [70] 3, 5, and 6) issued on January 31 and February 5, 1970 (CCRD 2002).

governments, while we do not have the information on the remaining 7 counties. All in all, these suggest that the influence of factional leadership was fading in the early 1970s.²⁰⁰ But how did it come about?

The first way by which partial representation in revolutionary committees was amended was to fill “temporary vacancies” in revolutionary committees with members of excluded factions. Earlier in some counties dominated by a faction, the military and the dominant faction deliberately left open those seats reserved for the rival faction. In Fugu County, for example, the revolutionary committee belatedly added members of the “East is Red” (an inferior local faction) to three vacant positions (including one standing committee position) in summer 1969 (Fugu XZ 1994: 582). This was, however, only after early repressions and the “cleansing of class rank” claimed 106 lives. Interestingly, the county annals reports no death from the “one strike and three antis.” Similarly in Zichang County, the revolutionary committee newly appointed 3 vice-chiefs, 3 standing committee members and 17 committee members from the opposition faction, the “Red Alliance” (*hong lian*), to “supplement” (*butai*) itself on June 29, 1969 (Zichang XZ 1993: 837). These developments may suggest that factional leaders of those counties were under pressure from higher authorities to correct partial representation prior to the “one

²⁰⁰ This was despite continuing factional grumbling and the confusion in the police and judicial system, which resulted in a large number of false charges and misjudgments. This was, however, after all, not new in the Mao era. “Excesses” (*guohuo*) were always part of campaigns during the Mao era. To name only a few well-known examples, the “three antis and five antis” (*san fan wu fan*) (1951-1952), the “anti-rightist struggle” (*fan youpai douzheng*) (1957) and the Great Leap Forward (*da yuejin*) (1958-1961) all had similar characteristics. Thus, Shaanxi counties may well have begun to return to days of institutionalized campaigns, from those of anarchy and mass killings.

strike and three antis.”

More importantly, there were indications that the “one strike and three antis” itself was directed against factional leaders in revolutionary committees.²⁰¹ Factional leaders were charged with various crimes they had committed in armed battles. In Baihe County, for example, the emphasis of the campaign was placed on the backbones (*gugan*) of *both* factions. All those who took part in subversive activities such as plundering state property, stealing classified information, and beating, smashing and looting (*da za qiang*) were investigated. Many representatives of factions—vice-chiefs, standing committee members and committee members—were investigated and then dismissed. On the other hand, officials who had been ordered to “stand aside” (*kaobian zhan*) by rebels began to return to leading positions at various levels (Baihe XZ 1996: 641).

In Ankang County, where 47 people, the largest of all the counties, were killed in the “one strike and three antis,” the campaign was combined with the “struggle, criticism and transform,” the aim of which was to investigate serious incidents and “black hands of armed battles” (*wudou heishou*).²⁰² In early January, 1969, the “struggle, criticism, and transform leading small group” of the county revolutionary committee dispatched “propaganda teams” of peasants and workers to schools, organs and other work units. Throughout the county, 19,773 peasants were organized into 1,229 “poor and lower-middle peasant propaganda teams.” Stationed in 300 “work

²⁰¹ Thus, it seems that while the “cleansing of class rank” was targeted against those who had been persecuted earlier in the Cultural Revolution, the “one strike and three antis” was directed against rebel leaders who had been perpetrators of the persecution.

²⁰² The following account is based on Ankang County Annals (1989: 908-909), unless noted otherwise.

units with old, persistent problems" (*laodanan danwei*), the "propaganda teams" threw them into utter confusion (*tong mafengwo*). For example, in February, a few leaders of a district (*qu*) revolutionary committee decided to dig up and exhibit 13 corpses, killed by the "Red No.3 Headquarters" in May 1968, to officials and the masses. They also struggled against and paraded some officials and masses with no direct relation to this case, leaving some of them permanently injured.

In early February 1970, keeping pace with the Center's initiatives, the county's "one strike and three antis" was started. 15,530 "backbones" and 8,074 propaganda personnel were trained throughout the county, and organized into 829 propaganda teams. After mass rallies, the storm of "class struggle" once again took over the county. All people had to put up "big character posters" or write letters, struggled against, and exaggerated (*shanggang*) "crimes." By October, 1,721 "nine-category" cases (*jiu lei anjian*)—"plotting an uprising" (*yinmou baoluan*), "spying into military secrets" (*citan junqing*), "stealing classified information" (*daoqie jimi*), "murdering" (*sharen xingxiong*), "arson and poisoning" (*zonghuo fangdu*), "counterattack and reverse reckoning"²⁰³ (*fangong daosuan*), "nasty attack" (*edu gongji*), "plundering state property" (*qiangjie guojia caichan*), and "destroying social order" (*pohuai shehui zhi'an*)—were exposed and 2,030 people were implicated. 27 were executed,²⁰⁴ and 20 killed themselves. Among 119 ruled counterrevolutionary cases, 78 or 65 percent were found "false charges and misjudgments" (*yuan jia cuo an*) later.

²⁰³ That is, presumed attempts by landlords and rich peasants to recover lands confiscated during the land reform.

²⁰⁴ Among those executed were a vice county magistrate and a standing committee member of the county people's political consultative conference who were wrongly executed as "black hands of armed battles."

Similar processes took place in other counties as well. In at least 6 other counties, 10 or more people were executed (*chuxing*, *qiangjue*, or *shadiao*) or sentenced to death during the "one strike and three antis."²⁰⁵ Some, or even the majority, of them may have been based on false charges. Continued factional grumbling and the confusion in the police and judicial system contributed to those excesses. But the fact that there was little variation in the numbers of deaths between factional governments and balanced governments suggests that factional influence in the local governments generally subsided in the course of the campaign.

CONCLUSION

This study identified major patterns of the escalation of repressive violence in conjunction with the processes of demobilization and the rebuilding of local government. The processes of demobilization determined the forms of new local government, which in turn conditioned the degree of repressive violence under its rule. Two different processes of demobilization, one in which one of the factions attained dominance over the other, often with the support of a county People's Armed Department, and the other where factional armed battle was prolonged to the summer of 1968 and only stopped by regular PLA units, were related to the different forms of new local government. The former pattern resulted in a revolutionary committee controlled by a single faction, while the latter produced a government evenly represented by both factions. These different forms of local government were in

²⁰⁵ They are: 30 people were sentenced to death in Pucheng (1993: 8); 24 sentenced to death in Zhen'an (1995: 28); 12 sentenced to death in Shenmu (1990: 415); 11 executed in Hua (unpublished manuscript, 38); 10 executed in Fu (1994: 558); and 10 executed in Jingyang (2001: 747).

turn found related to varying degrees of repressive violence under their rules. That is, severe repressive violence often took place under governments monopolized by a faction, while the escalation of violence was checked by balanced governments.

This study also provided an account on why one-faction domination led to the escalation of repressive violence. Partial revolutionary committees were created in the midst of continuing factional armed battle not only outside but also sometimes inside the county boundaries. Real or perceived threat from the opposition drove factional leadership to extremity. The “mass dictatorship command” was created by factional governments to “defend the newborn red government” from die-hard opposition. The repressive apparatus staffed by members of a dominant faction remained to take charge of the violent, massive purge of the “cleansing of class rank.” The thin line between suppressing the opponent and purging “hidden class enemies” was easily crossed, as factional leaders eagerly fanned their followers into violence. On the other hand, balanced revolutionary committees were a product of the forcible ending and arbitration of factional conflict by regular PLA units. In the demobilization process, factional organizations were disarmed and equally represented in the new government. Accordingly, they were not only less threatened by the opponent, but also checked against each other in the government. Nor did they develop any specialized apparatus for repression. Thus, the perception of threat, the repressive organization, and factional leadership all combined to produce severe repressive violence under county revolutionary committees monopolized by a faction.

Another recurrent issue in the discussion thus far is the role of the military in the creation of the different forms of local government. Acute readers would have noticed that two different types of the military—regular PLA units and the People’s

Armed Department—were involved in the processes of the demobilization of factions and the reestablishment of local government. Table 5.5 shows that overall, regular PLA units were involved in the processes in 61 percent of the counties, while PADs were left alone to take the responsibility in a quarter of them. As expected, most of the PAD-sponsored governments were monopolized by a faction. On the other hand, almost all the balanced governments were creations of regular PLA units. This points to an important conclusion: most cases of severe repressive violence took place under partial revolutionary committees that was a product of the close relationship between a local faction and the county People's Armed Department. In those counties, the PAD forced the establishment of new government despite continuing factional conflict, and entrusted the tasks of attacking the opponent, and then class enemies, with the faction it supported. Thus, the county PAD played a key role once again at this critical juncture. The decentralized and quasi-political nature of the county PAD provided an important background against which one-faction domination and severe repressive violence took place.²⁰⁶

Tables 5.5 about here

Finally, what are the implications of this study for Yang Su's hypothesis on the provincial variation in the level of repressive violence? First of all, the relatively

²⁰⁶ See also the conclusion of Chapter 4 about the characteristics of the county People's Armed Department.

low degree of repressive violence in Shaanxi seems attributable to the late endings of armed battle and, through the arbitration of regular PLA units, the formation of balanced *county* revolutionary committees, rather than a “more representative” *provincial* government. It was irony that the fierce and prolonged armed battles in many parts of Shaanxi led to the formation of balanced county governments, through the forcible intervention of regular PLA units. On the other hand, in the counties where an early ending of factional conflict made an early establishment of revolutionary committee possible, a partially represented government was formed and severe repressive violence ensued. Thus, understanding rural repressive violence under the revolutionary committee requires the consideration of the forms of government, and the timing of its establishment, at the county, as well as preferably the lower, level.

The forms of county revolutionary committees and the timing of their establishment may also provide a clue to the appalling incidents of mass killings in Guangxi and Guangdong. Unlike Shaanxi, the vast majority of the county revolutionary committees in those provinces were established in early 1968, before the July 3rd and July 24th decrees (Su 2006: 105, Figure 4.1). If the case of Shaanxi counties is applicable, most counties of Guangxi and Guangdong may have been dominated by single factions, because in Shaanxi, the establishment of revolutionary committees before the July 3rd and July 24th decrees almost always indicated single faction domination (Table 5.1). This partial form of *county* governments, I suspect, may have been a cause of mass killings in those provinces. Su may be right in pointing out the limited reach of the state in those border provinces, but it tells only one side of the story. In any case, the power configuration in government at the

county and lower levels is the key to a better understanding of repressive violence at the grassroots.

Chapter 6 Conclusion

This study has identified four major sets of processes and mechanisms involved in the escalation of Cultural Revolution conflict in rural Shaanxi counties. They are: the diffusion of insurgencies through the brokerage of traveling Red Guards, the factional polarization through the competition for power and “security dilemma,” inconsistent military interventions and the escalation of factional violence, and “coordinated opportunistic violence” under the one-faction-dominated local government. Each of these sets of processes and mechanisms played a central role in each analytical stage of Cultural Revolution conflict in the countryside. They were, however, all part of the larger episode of the Cultural Revolution and, thus, interconnected to one another. As a conclusion, this final chapter considers how these processes and mechanisms were concatenated into larger processes of violence escalation, and ends with some theoretical and empirical reflections.

Before looking into how these processes and mechanisms were interacted to one another, let me briefly summarize how they worked independently. In Chapter 2, I found that the “brokerage” role of traveling Red Guards—the “exchange of experiences” (*chuanlian*)—provided a mechanism through which insurgencies spread from urban centers to rural counties. Contrary to the previous view that the Cultural Revolution was “primarily an urban phenomenon” (Baum 1971), this study found that the vast majority of rural counties of Shaanxi Province underwent insurgencies against the local governments by the end of 1966. Moreover, the patterns of the diffusion uncovered were neither urban-rural “spillover” nor a spontaneous outbreak of local tensions, but systematic “ignition of fire” (*dianhuo*) by purposeful

agents—urban college students. Manipulation of “frames” at the Center through the centralized communication system²⁰⁷ alone would have not spread insurgency to the remotest parts of the country. Those “frames” had to be communicated through human agents to convince locals to revolt against the political leadership—a high risk action that could ruin one’s life.

Chapter 3 found that oppositions to local authority took shape not on the basis of preexisting social structure but in the ongoing interactions between local state and social actors. Three kinds of campaigns and methods—the sending of work teams to schools, the “summer reeducation camps for teachers” (*jiashi xiaqi jixunhui*), and the Socialist Education Movement (*shehui zhuyi jiaoyu yundong*, hereafter SEM)—victimized some segments of students, teachers and rural officials in the early phase of the Cultural Revolution (or in the case of the SEM, immediately before it). “Rebel identities” were formed when the “attack against the bourgeois reactionary line” in fall 1966 repudiated those earlier policies. Thus, the interactions and political processes, not preexisting structures, led to the formation of oppositional groups. “Power seizures” of early 1967 led to very different processes. The demise of the local political structure caused by power seizures set in motion two mutually reinforcing processes. The political vacuum left by power seizures led to the competition for power among factional groups, while the “state of anarchy” caused a “security dilemma” among contending factions. Both the struggle for domination and mutual distrust prompted factional groups to ally themselves with one

²⁰⁷ Sidney Tarrow (2005: 103-106) calls this kind of diffusion through the mass media and other means of “direct communication” between top leaders and the masses “nonrelational diffusion,” and diffusion through brokerage “mediated diffusion.”

another. Thus, these processes accelerated the movement toward factional polarization.

Chapter 4 examined yet another mechanism—the mechanism of military interventions—in conjunction with the escalation of factional violence. We found that forms of military interventions were related to levels of armed battle violence. Coordinated interventions by stationed units on behalf of local “radical factions” led to de-escalation of factional conflict by stifling oppositional factions, and thus halting the processes of polarization. Two kinds of inconsistent interventions—divided and indecisive—both resulted in the escalation of factional violence by fueling processes of militarization and alliance-building. In some regions, such as Yan’an, Xianyang and Weinan, locally stationed units supported conflicting sides of the factional alignments. Divided interventions created a situation in which a county faction without military support could count on the support of neighboring allies that were supported by units stationed in their counties. Through this mechanism, local factional conflicts became increasingly militarized and expanded across county boundaries. In other regions, such as Hanzhong and Ankang, indecisiveness of local military commanders emboldened factional leaders to have their own way. In this “state of anarchy,” factional organizations armed themselves by attacking local arsenals and freely tied up with one another in their search for security. Thus, both forms of inconsistent military interventions led to the escalation of factional violence.

Chapter 5 examined the processes of escalating repressive violence in conjunction with the processes of demobilization and the formation of new local governments. Two divergent paths from factional demobilization to the birth of local governments were identified. In the first path, one-sided military interventions

led to an early ending of factional conflicts in the counties, but resulted in the formation of partial revolutionary committees monopolized by dominant factions. In the other, prolonged factional wars called for the forcible ending and arbitration of warring factions by regular PLA units, which gave rise to balanced revolutionary committees. It was found that severe cases of repressive violence often took place under partial county revolutionary committees. The perception of threat, a specialized organization for repression—the “mass dictatorship command” (*qunzhong zhuanzhi zhihuibu*)—that incorporated members of a dominant faction, and factional leadership all contributed to the escalation of “coordinated opportunistic violence” under partial local governments. Thus, the biased enforcement of demobilization by local military units led to the creation of one-faction dominated governments, and then to repressive violence by the dominant group against the minority.

CONCATENATIONS

Now let me outline how those processes and mechanisms were interconnected to produce high levels of political violence. Most of those concatenations were already discussed implicitly or explicitly in the previous chapters. This conclusion tries to tie the identified sets of processes and mechanisms together in a coherent picture and clarify theoretical implications to the larger field of contentious politics.

While Chapter 2 examined the brokerage role of traveling students in conjunction with the diffusion of insurgencies in August-December 1966, the “exchange of experiences” played an important role in other contexts as well. Most notably, it accelerated the processes of factional polarization in counties where two major coalitions of factions did not develop internally. As examined in Chapter 3,

various factions became bifurcated in the majority of Shaanxi counties over issues of power seizures by the summer of 1967. But at that point, factional polarization still had not taken place in about a quarter of the counties. In those mostly small, inland counties, factional groups were drawn into factional conflicts of larger neighbors through the mechanism of the “exchange of experiences.” Where military-sponsored “great alliances” among factions were still holding, members of factions from neighboring counties interfered with the county People’s Armed Department’s (PAD) efforts to maintain the fragile alliance. Once set free in the beginning of the Cultural Revolution, students and other actors continued to cross borders freely, interfered with one another, and set up networks of factional organizations. Thus, factional polarization did not develop solely through internal mechanisms—the competition for power and “security dilemma”²⁰⁸—but also were accelerated by the mechanism of brokerage.

Processes of factional polarization and inconsistent military interventions had mutually reinforcing, synergistic relationships that together escalated factional conflicts to civil-war-like armed battles. On the one hand, fierce competition among factional organizations over the “expression of support” (*biaotai*) by local military units—the PAD, as well as stationed regular PLA units, if any—intensified the processes of factional polarization. The policy of the People’s Liberation Army’s (PLA) “support the left” (*zhi zuo*) in early 1967 required that local units—in most

²⁰⁸ Theories of security dilemmas (Jervis 1976, 1978; Snyder and Diesing 1977) posit that in absence of powerful third parties—police, the courts, military forces—as characteristic in international relations, rational actions of each party to secure themselves in the situation of insecurity and distrust lead to an escalating cycle of conflict preparations and actual conflict. A similar process led to alliance building among factional organizations during the Cultural Revolution.

cases, the PAD—take side in the raging factional conflict. In the political vacuum left by “power seizures,” county PADs had to choose “leftists” among various factional groups. As a county annals plainly notes, “the Center’s ‘Notice Concerning PLA’s Supporting the Left’ made the county People’s Armed Department...the target of struggle between contending factions for its support” (Liquan XZ 1999: 997). With all factional groups fiercely contending for the official guarantee of the “revolutionary left,” any move toward a faction was met with severe protests by the others. As a result, a majority of county PAD units were unable to decide which side to take, trying to strike a difficult balance between factions by mediating a “great alliance.”

On the other hand, factional polarization also led to inconsistent interventions by local military forces. The embroiling of local units in factional conflicts was also an inevitable consequence of the policy of “support the left.” By ordering them to side with “leftists,” the ill-advised policy had an effect of involving local forces in factional conflicts. We have seen in Chapter 4 that local forces split among themselves—both among units stationed in neighboring counties and among units, or within a unit, in a county—in their support for polarized factions.

It was at this juncture that the campaign to “drag out a handful in the military” (*jiu junnei yixiacuo*) in summer 1967 severely damaged the military’s legitimacy. Its position as an arbiter between factional groups was badly tarnished. From then on, factional groups began to pressure local military commanders not only to support but also issue weapons to them. Once indecisive, or factionally-minded, commanders gave in and issued weapons, or turned blind eyes to the stealing, a deadly arms race set in. At this point, there was no stopping for the escalation, as

both factions fearful of each other's intention desperately searched for weapons in local and neighboring arsenals. After the summer, arms robberies took place in almost all the counties of Shaanxi. Thus, inconsistent military interventions fueled not only the processes of factional polarization but also the spreading of arms to factional organizations.

After the summer of 1967, the horizon of factional conflicts was expanded across county borders, as a result of the combined effects of the "exchange of experiences" (as a powerful mechanism of brokerage) and inconsistent military interventions. Factional organizations of neighboring counties started to "link up" (*chuanlian*) with one another to build alliance networks, through which they supplied one another with weapons, personnel and other resources, conspired to attack arsenals, and even put together "allied defenses" (*lian fang*) to fight against common enemies. They were attracted to one another by similar "viewpoints" (*guandian*), but more importantly, needed allies that could provide supports in their fight against local rivals.

Inconsistent military interventions fueled the processes of the cross-county brokerage among factional organizations. "Divided interventions" created a situation in which factions without military backing sought support of neighboring factions that were backed by military units of their own counties. In this situation, military support to a faction did not end the factional conflict because the other faction was provided by neighboring allies not only with weapons and reinforcements but also with safe havens in which the inferior faction could regroup. Troubled county-level factions were not only saved by their neighboring counterparts but also became deeply involved in alliance networks of factional organizations. Through

this way, divided military interventions intensified cross-county brokerage among factional organizations.

Indecisive and confused dealings of county PADs and other units with local factions had a similar consequence to divided intervention. The loss of the military's legitimacy caused by the "Wuhan incident" had already deprived local military authorities of a third-party option. In those counties where military authorities remained uncommitted, they were overwhelmed by local factions, and their weapons were forcibly seized. Indecisive and confused interventions also added fuel to the development of cross-county interference, as county factions aligned with one another in pursuit of weapons and a larger sphere of influence. Thus, while the process was different from that of divided interventions, the consequence was the same: the escalation of factional violence.

In those areas where PLA interventions were either divided or indecisive, cross-county interference among county factions gave way to a "war of alliance." Military authorities in those areas were either made irrelevant or manipulating backstage. Lack of presiding authority, only the balance of power dictated. Armed battles in this phase often took the form of street fighting or "battles of position" fought for strategic points and the expansion of a sphere of influence.

On the other hand, coordinated interventions among neighboring military units checked the development of cross-county interference, because county factions without military support could not find outside allies. Isolated, those factions gave up fighting. By concentrating their supports to the same side of factional alignments, therefore, stationed units successfully ended the process of cross-county interference among factions.

But the story did not end here. Chapter 5 unveiled an ironic consequence of “successful” coordinated military interventions. As seen in Chapter 4, coordinated interventions by locally stationed units checked the escalation of factional armed battles by throwing all their weight behind local “radical factions.” However, as the examination of different demobilization processes revealed, one outgrowth of the coordinated military interventions was the birth of local governments monopolized by a dominant faction. It was found that severe cases of repressive violence more often took place in counties under partial revolutionary committees. Thus, counties spared of severe armed battle violence by coordinated military interventions were ironically more likely to experience severe repressive violence under partial revolutionary committees.

EMPIRICAL AND THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS

Implications for Studies of the Cultural Revolution

For studies of the Cultural Revolution, first of all, the findings of this study point to the centrality of *emergent processes*, rather than *preexisting structures*. As Andrew Walder found in his study on the Beijing Red Guard Movement (2002; 2006a; 2006b), in the highly uncertain context of the Cultural Revolution, actors did not clearly perceive their interests in terms of their positions in the status quo ante. Instead, their decisions were made within ongoing interactions between state and social actors. This study also found that oppositions against local authority emerged as the results of elite-initiated campaigns and methods—the sending of work teams to schools, the “summer reeducation camps for teachers,” and the Socialist Education Movement—in the early phase of the Cultural Revolution (or in the case of the SEM,

immediately before it). Those victimized students, teachers, and rural officials all demanded *rehabilitation* (*pingfan*) of their lost statuses, rather than protested against the status quo.

Second, this study found not only the evidence of widespread Cultural Revolution conflicts in the countryside but also the patterns of the urban-rural diffusion. It was argued previously that the reach of Cultural Revolution conflict was limited to the suburbs (Baum 1971) or the non-agricultural population in county seats (Unger 1998). Contrary to Baum's early study, we (in Chapter 2) found that insurgencies spread to the vast majority of rural Shaanxi counties, including the remotest parts, in the latter half of 1966. Relying on county annals data, this study is not in the best position to determine the validity of Unger's more recent observation. It is beyond doubt that county seats, where the county's political leadership resides, was a focus of rural Cultural Revolution conflict. This was one of the reasons, after all, why we chose the county as the unit of analysis of this study. But reading through nearly a hundred county annals, I came to doubt the sharp distinction made between county seat towns and other areas. This observation is based on three kinds of interactions between residents of county seats and those of communes and production brigades (villages). First, commune militia were deeply involved in factional armed battles as combat personnel (*wudou renyuan*). This was especially true when a PAD unit supported a local faction, because the PAD supervised the commune militia. Second, polarized factions often had footholds in different communes, and divided spheres of influence in the rural areas. In some other counties, the factional armed battles took the form of "villages encircling cities." Moreover, armed battles often took place outside county seats. Third, some county

annals suggest that there was much conflict at commune and production brigade levels, when they tried to set up revolutionary committees. In a northern county, the county revolutionary committee attacked “conservative” commune revolutionary committees (Fugu XZ 1994: 583-584). In another county, 196 production brigades had yet to establish revolutionary committees in late 1969 due to intense factional conflict, and 94 of them were still without revolutionary committees in 1972 (Pucheng XZ 1993: Appendix, p. 7).

As for the pattern of the diffusion, we found that the insurgencies were spread by purposeful agents—traveling Red Guards—more or less systematically from suburban to inland counties. This finding sheds light on an important but largely neglected question: How was it possible that the turmoil of the Cultural Revolution spread so rapidly to almost every corner of this vast continent?²⁰⁹

Probably the most important empirical implication of this study concerns the military involvement. After the announcement of PLA’s “support the left” (*zhi zuo*) in January 1967, local military units—the county People’s Armed Department, as well as stationed regular PLA units, if any—became a central player in Cultural Revolution conflict in the countryside. They became the target of the factional competition for the certification of “revolutionary leftists,” and as a result, intensified the processes of factional polarization. Some local forces also became entangled in local factional conflict. Inconsistent interventions by local forces escalated factional

²⁰⁹ It should be noted that the “state structure” served as a “pull factor” for the diffusion of the turmoil. Traveling Red Guards purposefully spread insurgency from cities to rural counties (a “push factor”). But, as we noted in Chapter 2, without local “grievances” caused by the work teams, the “teachers’ reeducation camps,” and the SEM, those urban students would have found it difficult to persuade locals to rise up against the political leadership.

violence not only by spreading arms to factional organizations, but also by expanding the scope of factional conflict across county borders. Furthermore, severe repressive violence under one-faction-dominated revolutionary committees was a product of the close relationship between a local military unit and a factional organization. Thus, after the much studied, early Red Guard phase of the Cultural Revolution (in spring-winter 1966), local military forces played a central role in Cultural Revolution conflict in the countryside.

Implications for the Field of Contentious Politics

What are the implications for the broader field of contentious politics? First, this study added to the knowledge of the field by providing interesting empirical cases of “brokerage” and “polarization.” The “exchange of experiences” provided such a powerful mechanism of diffusion that insurgencies spread to the vast majority of rural Shaanxi counties in a matter of a few months in the early phase of the Cultural Revolution. This is a unique form of “brokerage” (McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly 2001; Tilly 2003; Tilly and Tarrow 2007), or “mediated diffusion” (Tarrow 2005: 103-106), in that the agents were predominantly students—especially urban college students—who acted out of consideration for the supreme leader, Mao Zedong. They also took advantage of free travel sanctioned by Mao and his associates at the Center. Moreover, this was carried out against the backdrop of the tight travel control, especially the urban-rural movement, in the previous years. This sudden unleashing of freely traveling students proved devastating to the local power

structure.²¹⁰ But soon they got out of the hands of those central leaders, and greatly magnified the scale of rural conflicts. Without the “exchange of experiences,” the Cultural Revolution would have been much more contained, and in fact, may have been “primarily an urban phenomenon.” Another defining feature of the Cultural Revolution was the all-engulfing processes of factional polarization. They were set in motion by the “January power seizure” of 1967. The political dynamics introduced by the breakdown of the local political structure—a combination of the struggle for domination, “security dilemma,” as well as the competition for military support—led to the polarization of factions in the vast majority of Shaanxi counties. In the “state of anarchy,” factional groups allied themselves with one another in search for power and security. Thus, the general pattern repeated here is that the breakdown of power structure, polarization, and then collective violence.

Second, the escalating processes of factional violence analyzed in this study—through brokerage, polarization, and inconsistent military interventions—can be extended to other forms of collective violence—ethnic violence, tribal wars, and others. In general, sociologists have paid much more attention to structural causes of collective violence, but concerned themselves less with processes of violence escalation. This is by no means less important, considering recent cases of collective violence—the war in Iraq, the ethnic conflict in Darfur, the war in Lebanon,

²¹⁰ At the same time, in late August 1966, the Center forbade the public security and the military to suppress student movements. These two regulations gave student Red Guards free hand in challenging authorities. See the “Regulations for the General Staff Department and the General Political Department of the PLA Concerning Absolutely Forbidding Units to Suppress Revolutionary Student Movements by Force,” issued on August 21, 1966; and the “Regulations of the Ministry of Public Security Concerning Forbidding the Use of Police Force to Suppress Revolutionary Student Movements,” on August 22, 1966 (CCRD 2002).

and many others. On this kind of processes, we can use insights from other fields such as international relations and conflict resolution, which are generally more focused on processes in the absence of overarching political authorities. An escalation of collective violence usually takes place where such presiding authority is absent, or unwilling to intervene, after all. Under such a circumstance, concatenations of brokerage, polarization, and inconsistent interventions would lead to an escalation of collective violence.

The last point concerns the relationships between the representativeness of governments and repressive violence. This study (Chapter 5) found that severe cases of repressive violence took place more often in counties under partial governments, than in those under balanced governments. This finding calls for more attention to the representativeness of government, rather than its "capacity," as a possible cause of repressive violence. Here I am using the term "representativeness" distinctively from the "democratic/undemocratic" dichotomy used by Charles Tilly (2003: Chapter 2), who used the distinction along with another axis—"high-capacity/low-capacity"—to produce a two by two conceptual matrix. My point is that we need to look closer at the compositions of "undemocratic regimes." This study examined the compositions of local (county) governments, and found that one-faction-dominated governments more often produced severe cases of repressive violence than balanced governments. In addition, this study calls for attention to the staff compositions of coercive organizations—military forces, police organizations, and others, the background and inclination of leaders, and the perception of threat.

In the final analysis, any form of interventions by military forces in local

factional conflicts in the absence of overarching political authority was deemed to fail. Inconsistent interventions led to the escalation of factional armed battles. Coordinated interventions by local forces on behalf of local "radicals" checked the escalation of factional conflict but in the end provided a dominant faction an opportunity to engage in coordinated killings. In either way, the involvement of local forces in factional conflict proved a recipe for disaster.

Appendix 1 County Annals Data

This study uses county annals (*xianzhi*) as the main source of data. In 1966, there were 93 counties and 4 cities (3 county-level cities, Baoji, Tongchuan and Xianyang, and 1 district-level city, Xi'an) in Shaanxi (Table 1.1) (Shaanxi Provincial Annals, Administration Building Annals 1992: 560-576).²¹¹ Focusing on the rural Cultural Revolution, this study uses only the 93 county annals (as well as city annals, *shizhi*, for those former counties that were later elevated to cities). Relevant pages of all the 93 county and city annals were photocopied in the Universities Service Centre for China Studies (USC) in Hong Kong, read repeatedly, and coded into data.

The compilation of county annals was started in the early 1980s. Writing on the Cultural Revolution, local editorial staff used materials in local archives, most importantly official investigations completed in the late 1970s and early 1980s. They worked under national guidelines that stipulated the principle of "recording in broad strokes, not in detail" (*yi cu, bu yi xi*), when writing on politically sensitive subjects, including, above all, the Cultural Revolution (Thogersen and Clausen 1992: 1966). Other guidelines include: coverage on sensitive subjects should be scattered in separate sections, and should be brief. "Politically negative movements" and "political mistakes" were to be dealt with by party authorities, not by local historians (Vermeer 1992: 455).

A clear example of local censorship is found in the case of Hua County, a

²¹¹ To be precise, they are 92 counties under the jurisdiction of 8 district (*zhuanqu*), 5 urban districts (together composing of the urban area of Xi'an city), 1 county (Chang'an) and 1 county-level city (Xianyang) under the jurisdiction of the district-level city, Xi'an, and two county-level cities (Tongchuan and Baoji) directly under the jurisdiction of the province.

county along the major railroad 83 kilometers east of Xi'an, for which a 50-page mimeographed draft of the "Cultural Revolution Annals" (*wenhua da geming zhi*) fell into my hands. The published county annals contains only 1,520 characters on the Cultural Revolution, while the draft is 22,344-character long. The published annals reports no victims or deaths due to the Cultural Revolution, but the chart in the draft gives those numbers, 1,929 persecuted people and 217 deaths in total. This is not to mention the richness of the historical account given in the unpublished draft. While giving a glimpse of the severity of the censorship, this example seems an extreme case, insofar as Shaanxi county annals are concerned. In a contrasting example, the editors of Shangnan County Annals went through several meetings to decide whether, and in what way, they should include accounts on the Cultural Revolution. Contrary to their counterparts in Hua County, however, they decided to include a separate section on the Cultural Revolution as an appendix (Shangnan XZ 1993). A majority of Shaanxi counties seem to have taken a similar approach to Shangnan, rather than Hua. More than 80 percent of them have an independent section on the Cultural Revolution.

Thus, despite the national guidelines, the actual descriptions on the Cultural Revolution in county annals vary greatly from a province to another, and a county to another. This is because as is often the case in China, the interpretation and implementation of these general guidelines was left in the hands of local authorities. County annals published by Shaanxi counties generally provide much longer and detailed accounts on the Cultural Revolution than those of any other province (see Walder and Su 2003: 79-82), making the counties of Shaanxi suitable for the subject of the study. On average, Shaanxi county annals spend almost three times as many

characters on the Cultural Revolution as those of all the provinces (with the average for Shaanxi county annals being 11,087 and that for all the provinces 4,066). 41 of Shaanxi county annals make entry into the list of the first 100 county annals with the longest accounts on the Cultural Revolution.

Shaanxi county annals not only have much longer accounts on the Cultural Revolution, but also often devote an independent section to it. Despite the national guideline to “scatter coverage in different sections of the annals,” 81 percent (75 of 93) of Shaanxi county annals concentrated information about the Cultural Revolution in one separate section—variously called the summary (*jilue*) or the documentary (*shilu*) on the Cultural Revolution, the Cultural Revolution annals (*wenhua da geming zhi*), or others. Less than 20 percent do not have a separate section, and split the information across various sections—the “chronicle of major events” (*dashiji*), the “Communist Party,” “government,” “legal and criminal affairs,” and so on. In general, county annals with a separate Cultural Revolution section provide much longer and detailed description on the Cultural Revolution than those without the separate section.

Walder and Su (2003) found that the numbers of deaths, injuries and those persecuted reported in 1,520 county annals of China’s 28 provinces and provincial-level cities vary with the length of accounts devoted to the Cultural Revolution.²¹² The numbers of reported deaths in Shaanxi county annals are also positively related to the number of characters spent on the Cultural Revolution, while

²¹² The problem related to the accounts on the Cultural Revolution in county annals is generally that of underreporting, rather than exaggeration (Walder and Su 2003). Local authorities in charge may have reasons to downgrade local violent incidents, but have little reasons to overstate them.

the numbers of those persecuted are not related (Table A1). The finding cautions us about a possible “confounding” relationship between my dependent variables and the length of the accounts.

Table A1 about here

Accordingly, I set the following criteria to ensure the validity of data. Namely, I divide county annals into four groups—A, B, C, and D—according to the availability of a separate Cultural Revolution section and the kinds of available information, and use only county annals in Group A and B in the statistical analyses. The first criterion used to distinguish county annals is whether they have a separate section on the Cultural Revolution. The first two groups devote an independent section on the Cultural Revolution, while differing on the quality of information available in them. “Group A” annals have not only necessary numerical information—the numbers of deaths and those persecuted, as well as the timings of major events—but also an “excellent” historical account on political processes and social background. Specifically, an “excellent” historical account should include the organizational composition of factional coalitions, the timings and forms of military interventions, and others. There are 40 such county annals. “Group B” annals typically provide, in a separate section, a summary account on major events of the Cultural Revolution and necessary numerical information, but lack in-depth description on political processes and social background. 35 county annals are

assigned to this category. In total, 75 county annals of Group A and B—those with an independent section on the Cultural Revolution—are included in the statistical analyses.

The latter two groups do not have a separate Cultural Revolution section, but differs on the kinds of information found in the other sections, most importantly in the “chronology of major events.” Those in “Group C” provide the numerical information used in the statistical analyses, but lack detailed accounts on the background of major events. Of 18 county annals without the independent section, 8 are grouped in this category. The remaining 10, or “Group D,” annals lack both necessary numerical information²¹³ and detailed historical accounts of major events. I exclude 18 such county annals, in Group C and D, from the statistical analyses. As Table A2 shows, after excluding these 18 cases, the number of deaths, as well that of those persecuted, is no longer associated with the number of characters spend on the Cultural Revolution. Thus, we have more confidence in our data.

Table A2 about here

²¹³ The criterion is that if either of the numbers used for dependent variables, deaths or those persecuted, is missing, and there is no separate Cultural Revolution section, I assigned those to “Group D.”

Appendix 2 Shaanxi Province: Variation in Geography and Demography

Shaanxi province is located in the northwest of the People's Republic, in the middle reaches of the Yellow River (*Huang he*). It borders on Shanxi, Henan, Hubei, Sichuan, Gansu, Ningxia, and Inner Mongolia. In 1966, when the Cultural Revolution was started, Shaanxi had the population of 21.9 million, the 15th of 29 provinces and autonomous regions in population size. 86.5 percent of the population was listed as "agricultural population" (*nongye renkou*), while only 13.5 percent "non-agricultural population" (*fei nongye renkou*) (Shaanxi Provincial Annals, Population Annals 1986). The province's gross-output value of industry and agriculture (*gongnongye zongchanzhi*) was about 3.4 billion yuan, of which the industry accounted for 64 percent (Shaanxi Province Statistical Bureau 1999). As for education, 83 percent of school-age children attended elementary schools in 1965. There were 5,287,820 elementary school students, 1,070,002 lower-middle school students, 336,111 upper-middle school students, and 109,186 university and college students in 1964. However, 40 percent of the population was still illiterate or semi-illiterate in 1964 (Shaanxi Provincial Annals, Population Annals 1986).

Natural terrain divides Shaanxi into three demographically and historically diverse regions: the northern plateau (*Shaanbei gaoyuan*), the central plain (*Guanzhong pingyuan*), and the southern mountains (*Shaannan shandi*). The northern plateau is composed of sparsely populated loess hills. It is the least populous and poorest of all the Shaanxi regions.²¹⁴ But northern Shaanxi has one

²¹⁴ While 14 percent of the population lived in the region, it produced only 5 percent of the province's gross output (Shaanxi Province Statistical Bureau 1984).

thing to boast of to the entire country: it is the sacred ground of the Chinese Communist revolution.²¹⁵ It was where Mao Zedong, Zhou Enlai, Zhu De, and many other legendary revolutionaries lived and fought the revolutionary war against the Guomindang (Nationalist Party) and Japanese forces. Moreover, the "Yenan way" (Selden 1995) of revolutionary ideas and organizations became the foundation of the Communist state after the establishment of the People's Republic in 1949. Therefore, the northern plateau had a mixed profile: while proud of the region's revolutionary background, the region continued to face the reality of lower economic and educational standards.

The central plain of Shaanxi is a strip of fertile land produced by the Wei River, which runs through the middle of Shaanxi from the east to the west. It is by far the most populous and urbanized region of the province. In 1966, 12.5 million people (or 57 percent of the province's total population) lived in the Wei River valley. Central Shaanxi produced 79 percent of the gross economic output, with 86 percent of the industrial workers living in the region. As for educational enrollment, almost all of the college students (99 percent) and three-quarter of high school students were in the central plain (Shaanxi Province Statistical Bureau 1991).

Xi'an, the provincial capital, is located in the middle of the plain on the southern bank of the Wei River. It was the ancient capital (Chang'an) of a long time under such dynasties as Han (206 BC-24 AD) and Tang (618-907). In 1966, the urban area of Xi'an had 1.1 million people with the population density of 1,279

²¹⁵ Northern Shaanxi plateau is roughly coterminous with the Shaanxi part of the Shaan-Gan-Ning border region (1935-1947), which also spreads over parts of Gansu and Ningxia province. The headquarters of the border region was located in Yan'an (Yenan) in the heart of Northern Shaanxi.

people per square kilometer, while the city as a whole (including suburban districts and a county) had 4.1 million people with the population density of 409 people per square kilometer. Many of factories, universities and high schools, and government organs are concentrated in the urban area of Xi'an. In fact, 42 percent (2,336 million yuan) of the province's gross production (or 53 percent of the region's gross production) was produced in Xi'an, and 82 percent (28,887) of the province's college students were found in Xi'an. With the northern adjacent city of Xianyang just across the Wei River, the area constituted the urban center of the province. Baoji and Weinan—other major cities in the central plain—are also located on the bank of the Wei River.

Despite the proximity to the Communist revolutionary-base area, Xi'an was never fallen into the Communist hands until a few months before the establishment of the People's Republic in 1949. Partly due to the Communist strategy of not occupying urban centers, Xi'an was largely spared of war devastation often found those bordering areas between the Communist base area and the Guomintang occupied areas. Instead, Xi'an became a center of intelligence war between the Communist and the Guomintang, as well as the Japanese.²¹⁶ Xi'an had many large-scale plants, especially military-related, and research facilities.²¹⁷ It was the nation's largest production base of aircrafts, oil drilling instruments, automated meters, paper products, and electric transformers. Xi'an had a sizable number (32,747) of the Hui, a Muslim minority group in 1964.

²¹⁶ This may have given a justification for the massive search for "hidden spies" during the Cultural Revolution.

²¹⁷ In 1965, Xi'an had 320 state enterprises (Shaanxi Province Statistical Bureau 1991).

South Shaanxi is dominated by two large mountainous areas—the Qinling Mountains (1,000-3,000 meters in elevation) in the north and the Daba Mountains (1,500-2,000 meters) in the south. Between the two mountains, where the Hanjiang River runs from the east to the west, two centers of the region, Hanzhong and Ankang, are located. Hanzhong, a southeastern county, is more industrialized and densely populated than Ankang. It is in fact the only major urban area in southern Shaanxi. Hanzhong had a few dozen large- and medium-sized factories. Many of them were military-related manufacturers of such products as aircrafts, machine tools, precision machines, chemicals, and medicine. When the government moved large plants from the coastal to inland areas, including central and southern Shaanxi, as a way to protect them from possible American or Soviet attacks in the 1960s, some were built in the Hanzhong Basin. Ankang County, another center in the southeast, is mostly agricultural and surrounded by complicated mountainous terrain. It had the second largest number of Hui population (15,093 in 1964) after Xi'an. It is reported that in the subtropical, agricultural region, a total of 21,201 people died from hunger-related illness from October 1959 to May 1960 alone, due to "leftist mistakes" made by the leadership during the Great Leap Forward (Ankang XZ 1989: 24; Ankang District Disciplinary Inspection Annals, publication year unknown: 9). The mountainous, agricultural region of Ankang was also the most deadly region during the Cultural Revolution.

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Table 1.1. Counties and Districts of Shaanxi Province, 1966

District	County
Yulin	Yulin, Dingbian, Fugu, Hengshan, Jia, Jingbian, Mizhi, Qingjian, Shenmu, Suide, Wubao, Zizhou
Yan'an	Yan'an, Ansai, Fu, Ganquan, Huangling, Huanglong, Luochuan, Wuqi, Yanchang, Yanchuan, Yichuan, Yijun, Zhidan, Zichang
Weinan	Weinan, Baishui, Chengcheng, Dali, Fuping, Hancheng, Heyang, Hua, Huayin, Lantian, Lintong, Pucheng, Tongguan, Yao
Baoji	Baoji, Feng, Fengxiang, Fufeng, Lingyou, Long, Mei, Qianyang, Qishan, Taibai, Wugong
Xianyang	Bin, Changwu, Chunhua, Gaoling, Hu, Jingyang, Liquan, Qian, Sanyuan, Xingping, Xunyi, Yongshou, Zhouzhi
Xi'an (city)	(5 urban wards), Xianyang (city), Chang'an
Shangluo	Shang, Danfeng, Luonan, Shangnan, Shanyang, Zhashui, Zhen'an
Hanzhong	Hanzhong, Chenggu, Foping, Liuba, Lueyang, Mian, Nanzheng, Ningqiang, Xixiang, Yang, Zhenba
Ankang	Ankang, Baihe, Hanyin, Langao, Ningshan, Pingli, Shiquan, Xunyang, Zhenping, Ziyang
Controlled by the province	Tongchuan (city), Baoji (city)

Note: In 1966, there were 93 counties and 4 cities in Shaanxi. 8 districts (*zhuanqu*)—Yulin, Yan'an, Weinan, Baoji, Xianyang, Shangluo, Hanzhong, and Ankang—administered 92 counties; 1 district-level city (*shi*)—Xi'an—controlled 5 urban wards, 1 county-level city—Xianyang—and 1 county; while two other cities—Baoji and Tongchuan—were placed under the jurisdiction of the province. Because this study concerns only the Cultural Revolution in the rural area, the cities (shown in parentheses) are excluded from the analysis, except for those events relevant to the rural movement.

Table 2.1. Diffusion of Insurgencies, June-December 1966 (N=72)*

	Number of counties that underwent insurgency	Mean distance from Xi'an (km)	Proportions of counties located in the "central plain" [†]
June	2 (.03)	263	.50
July	0 (.03)	--	--
August	26 (.39)	156	.65
September	5 (.46)	151	.60
October	7 (.56)	156	.43
November	11 (.71)	189	.18
December	11 (.86)	281	.18
No insurgencies reported by the end of 1966	10 (1.00)	194	.30

Note: The numbers in parentheses in the first column are cumulative proportions, and in the second column are standard deviations.

* Among 93 county annals, 18 do not include an independent section on the Cultural Revolution, and thus are excluded from the analysis. Another 3 county annals mention the insurgencies but do not specify the timings. Excluding those cases leaves 72 cases.

[†] "Central plain" counties include 39 counties of Baoji, Weinan, Xi'an, and Xianyang districts.

Table 2.2. Primary Causes of First Insurgencies, August-December 1966

	External causes			Internal causes			Total
	Outside students instigated	Returning local students instigated	Local students responded to developments in Beijing	Lower-level officials revolted	Local students spontaneously revolted	Causes not clear	
August-September (First wave)	15 (.48)	1 (.03)	3 (.10)	4 (.13)	3 (.10)	5 (.16)	31 (1.00)
October-December (Second Wave)	16 (.55)	5 (.17)	1 (.03)	3 (.10)	1 (.03)	3 (.10)	29 (.98)

Note: Among 75 county annals in the analysis, there are 10 counties where no insurgencies are reported; 3 where insurgencies took place but the timings are not listed; and 2 where insurgencies occurred earlier than August 1966. Excluding those 15 cases leaves 60.

Table 2.3. Departing Points of Traveling Red Guards Who Instigated Insurgencies in Shaanxi Counties, June-December 1966

	Beijing	Xi'an	Hanzhong	Baoji	Outside the province other than Beijing
August-September (First Wave)	4	10	3	1	0
October-December (Second Wave)	1	12	2	0	2

Note: There are some overlaps in the numbers.

Table 3.1. Duration of Polarized Conflict by Forms of Military Intervention

Forms of military intervention	Average number of months factions remained polarized
Coordinated (17)	9.9
Uncoordinated (44)	14.7
Total (61)	13.4

Note: The numbers in parentheses are the numbers of cases. They are based on the numbers of counties the relevant information is available. The "duration of polarized conflict" was measured by counting the number of months between when factions became polarized and either when one of the factions collapsed or fled of out the county, or when the county revolutionary committee was established.

Table 4.1. Sides of Military "Support the Left" at the County Level by Districts, 1967-1968

	Supporting the "radicals"	Supporting the "conservatives"	Divided
Yulin (12)	9	0	0
Yan'an (14)	1	2	0
Weinan (14)	4	1	1
Baoji (11)	6	0	0
Xianyang (13)	2	2	1
Xi'an (1)	0	0	0
Shangluo (7)	2	0	1
Hanzhong (11)	0	0	1
Ankang (10)	0	0	1
Total (93)	24	5	5

Note: The numbers are based on those county annals that reported the information. The numbers in the parentheses after the names of districts are the numbers of counties under the jurisdiction.

Table 4.2. Death Rates from Armed Battles, by District (in 100,000) (N=75)*

Yulin	Yan'an	Weinan	Baoji	Xianyang	Shangluo	Hanzhong	Ankang
14.7	45.6	15.1	10.3	17.3	12.5	31.5	73.2
(28.4)	(41.7)	(38.5)	(17.7)	(33.6)	(24.7)	(61.8)	(186.1)

Note: The numbers in the parentheses are the average (raw) numbers of deaths from armed battles.

*Among the 93 county annals, 18 do not include an independent section on the Cultural Revolution, and thus are excluded from the statistical analysis. That leaves 75 cases.

Table 4.3. The Distribution of Military Supports between the "Radicals" and the "Conservatives" by the Types of Military Units

	Supporting the "radicals"	Supporting the "conservatives"
County PAD	16	5
Regular PLA units	8	0

Note: In five other counties, the military was divided.

Table 5.1. Forms of Representation in Revolutionary Committees by the Timings of their Establishment

	One faction dominated	Evenly represented	Total
Before July 24, 1968	17 (100.0)	0 (0.0)	17 (100.0)
After July 24, 1968	4 (20.0)	16 (80.0)	20 (100.0)
Total	21	16	37

Note: Numbers in parentheses are proportions.

Table 5.2. Average Numbers of Deaths due to the Three Successive Campaigns by Types of County Revolutionary Committees (in 100,000) (N=67)

	Early repression (before July 24, 1968)	Cleansing of Class Rank (Fall 1968-1969)	One-Strike, Three-Antis (1970-1971)	Total under revolutionary committee
One-faction dominated (19)	8.4 (15.6)	25.8 (39.4)	2.8 (5.3)	33.5 (54.2)
Evenly represented (13)	.0 (.0)	8.3 (17.3)	4.4 (8.2)	12.1 (24.1)
No information on composition (35)	.2 (.3)	12.1 (18.0)	4.6 (6.5)	14.7 (24.3)

Note: The numbers in parentheses in the left column are the numbers of cases. The other numbers in parentheses are raw average numbers. Among 75 cases in the analysis, there are 8 for which the information is not available. Numbers in rows do not add up because of missing values. Some county annals report only summary accounts, and no breakdowns or timing of occurrence.

Table 5.3. Average Numbers of Those Persecuted in the Three Successive Campaigns by Types of County Revolutionary Committees (in 100,000) (N=75)

	Early repression (before July 24, 1968)	Cleansing of Class Rank (Fall 1968-1969)	One-Strike, Three-Antis (1970-1971)	Total under revolutionary committee
One-faction dominated (21)	586.5 (1120.1)	2137.2 (4074.1)	982.9 (1781.4)	3470.1 (6206.1)
Evenly represented (16)	.0 (.0)	2341.4 (4068.3)	933.7 (1281.3)	3227.8 (5317.1)
No information on composition (38)	1.4 (2.3)	2293.2 (3428.9)	949.1 (1768.0)	3307.6 (5628.2)

Note: The numbers in parentheses in the left column are the numbers of cases. The other numbers in parentheses are raw average numbers. Numbers in rows do not add up because of missing values. Some county annals report only summary accounts, and no breakdowns or timing of occurrence.

Table 5.4. Proportions of the Counties that Underwent the “Supplementary Class for the Democratic Revolution,” by the Forms of Government (N=75)

One-faction dominated	.62
(21)	(13)
Equally represented	.25
(16)	(4)
No information on composition	.47
(38)	(18)
Total	.47
(75)	(35)

Note: The numbers in parentheses are the numbers of cases.

Table 5.5. Types of the Military that Helped Create County Revolutionary Committees, by the Forms of Government (N=75)

	PLA	PAD	No information	Total
Partial	8 (.38)	12 (.57)	1 (.05)	21 (1.00)
Balanced	12 (.75)	2 (.13)	2 (.13)	16 (1.01)
No information on composition	26 (.68)	5 (.13)	7 (.18)	38 (.99)
Total	46 (.61)	19 (.25)	10 (.13)	75 (.99)

Note: The numbers in parentheses are proportions.

Table A1.1. Coefficients from the Linear Regression of the Numbers of Deaths and Victims on the Number of Characters, Using All the County Annals (N=93)

Independent Variable	Reported Deaths	Reported Victims
Number of characters	.01***	.18
Constant	16.29	4965.71
Degrees of freedom	1	1

Note: * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$ (two-tailed tests)

Table A1.2. Coefficients from the Linear Regression of the Numbers of Deaths and Victims on the Number of Characters, Using Only County Annals with an Independent Cultural Revolution Section (N=75)

Independent Variable	Reported Deaths	Reported Victims
Number of characters	.01	.06
Constant	38.80	6946.62
Degrees of freedom	1	1

Note: * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$ (two-tailed tests)

Figure 2.1. Number of First Insurgencies in Shaanxi Counties, June-December 1966

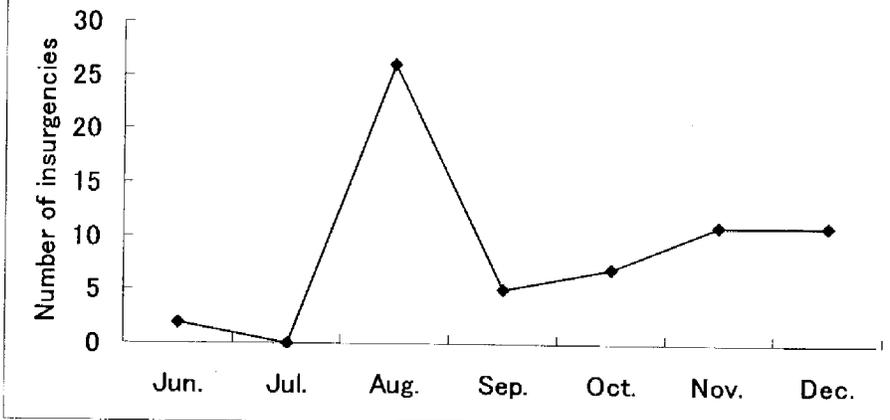


Figure 3.1. Timings of the Emergence of Oppositions and Polarization

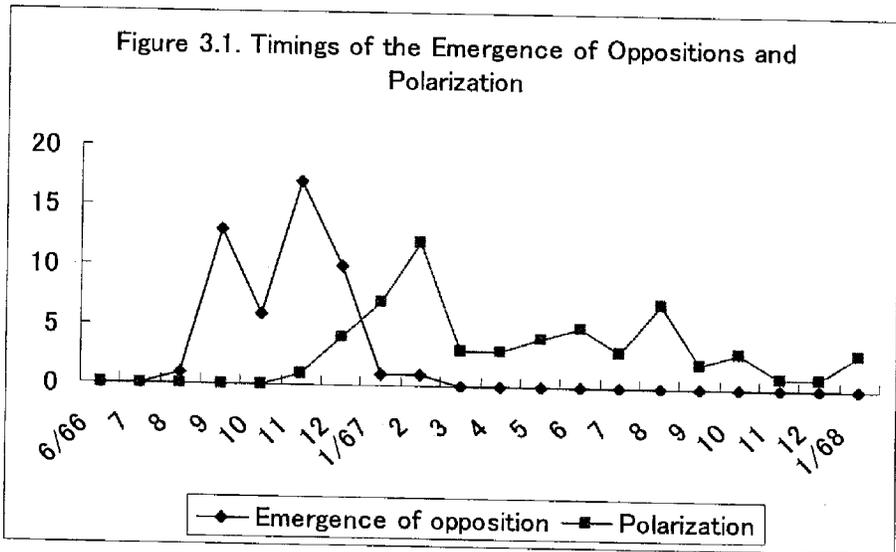


Figure 4.1. Number of Established Revolutionary Committees by Month

