

Armed collaboration in Greece, 1941–1944

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In this paper a particular strand of collaboration in occupied Greece is explored: *military* or *armed collaboration*. The available evidence is reviewed and several puzzles raised by armed collaboration in Greece are discussed: its geographical distribution, size, timing, relation to prewar politics and cleavages, and the motivations of officers and rank-and-file who served in collaborationist militias. A statistical analysis is then presented using data from a regional study conducted in Greece by the author. The article concludes with some general points about the theoretical framework that best helps the analysis of the phenomenon and three key theoretical concepts are underlined: *indirect rule*, *civil war*, and *endogenous dynamics*.

Keywords: collaboration; occupation; resistance; Greek Civil War

Introduction

In this paper I explore a particular strand of collaboration in occupied Greece, *military* or *armed collaboration*. To be sure, this is not the only form of collaboration; the literature refers to several forms of collaborations that included administrative, political or economic collaboration. Yet military collaboration is perhaps the most extreme form of collaboration as it entails taking up arms, and fighting for and with the occupier and against one's own brethren. In other words, this is perhaps the most significant form of transgressing the boundaries of the nation. It is, therefore, the most puzzling one.

I begin by quoting an article filed by a British war reporter from Greece in September 1944 and published in the *Daily Express*. This piece signals the complexity of the issue, highlights potential pitfalls of the analysis, and motivates the paper. I review the available evidence and discuss several puzzles raised by armed collaboration in Greece: its geographical distribution, size, timing, relation with prewar politics and cleavages, and the motivations of officers and rank-and-file who served in it. I then present a statistical analysis using data from a regional study I conducted in Greece. I conclude with some general points about the theoretical framework that best helps the analysis of the phenomenon and underline three key theoretical concepts: *indirect rule*, *civil war* and *endogenous dynamics*.

Journalistic impressions

Walter Lucas was a war reporter working for the British newspaper the *Daily Express*. He arrived in Greece in late September 1944, just after the Germans' departure, landing with

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the British troops whose action he covered. As may be expected, he had no sympathy for the Germans and even less for their collaborators, whom he derisively called ‘Quislings’, following common practice. Yet, on 11 October, he published an intriguing article on the nature of collaboration in the Peloponnese, the peninsula of southern Greece. Its title was telling: ‘In Greece, “Quislings” are pro-British’.¹ His introductory paragraph sets the general tone: ‘I landed at Katakalon² imagining one thing and came out of Patras convinced of very different things. I believed that I imagined what most other readers of Greek affairs in the British Press imagine. I saw the problem as a simple contrast between black and white: the Partisans – or E.A.M. (Greek National Liberation Movement) – on one side, fighting a noble patriotic battle against the invaders; and on the other side, Greek quislings joining with the Germans against the partisans. But I discovered, as everyone else has discovered who has been in Greece for some time, that this simple generalisation is completely out of focus. The problem is unbelievably intricate; it is every shade of dirty gray as far as the warring parties go. There is no absolute good and no absolute bad on one side or the other. A dark stain of the original sin of self-seeking, and even of downright bestial banditry, exists on both sides.’ Having alluded to a glaring gap between prior knowledge and reality, he provides the conceptual key for understanding the messy reality: ‘Greece’, he points out, ‘in fact, is in the throes of a civil war which is so intense that the country’s natural enemy, Germany, is almost entirely ignored. For 18 months the Germans have sat on the sidelines and enjoyed the sport.’

In short, Lucas suggests that understanding the conflict as a civil war rather than simple collaboration offers a better understanding of the situation on the ground. He then summarises his observations about the components of this unexpected civil war:

Three generalisations can be made with some accuracy about the vast majority of Greeks: 1. They are deeply, and irrationally pro-British; 2. They hate the Germans; 3. They do not want any political interference in their country, either from friend or foe. That is the common denominator, but outside those simple facts the rest is a sizzling cauldron: Greek slaughtering Greek; so-called quislings as patriotic as Partisans; and between the two the mass of the poverty-stricken population silently and fearfully praying for a murrain on both. It is stark fact that for the past 18 months Greek has been engaged in cutting Greek throats. The E.A.M. which started as a patriotic political movement with a Communist tinge has developed in the Peloponnese into something like a terrorist organization. So-called ‘quisling troops’ – such as the Security Battalion which surrendered to us so readily at Patras last Sunday – were formed partly from a desire to maintain order and give protection in the countryside.

Lucas goes on to sketch the motivations animating the two sides: The ‘quisling troops’, he notes:

... are composed of many decent people who hate Germans but are frightened by the Communist bogey. Many of the members are conscripted and have no other choice; others are there because it is their only means of eating. There are, too, just ordinary thugs. Of the two warring parties, the so-called quislings are probably more pro-British than many Partisans. In fact on both sides there are patriots, unscrupulous leaders, and just ordinary people who have no other choice.

He concludes by summarising his observations:

On top of this political volcano, with all its internecine rumblings, there is a complete collapse of Greek economy. The Germans have picked the country clean. In the Peloponnese, before they retreated north, they took everything of value they could find – clothes which the Red Cross had distributed to the people, the best horses, carts, steel rails, machinery, and even Greek youth wherever they could find it. They perpetrated unbelievable atrocities. For instance, in Kalabreita last December, in reprisal for the killing of 150 Germans by Partisans, they massacred the whole male population of the village Yet despite such horrors, when I asked Hermes, commanding the 18th Partisan Brigade at Patras, who was his No. 1 enemy,

he replied without hesitation, 'Greek quisling troops'. When I asked Colonel Courcoulakos, commanding the quisling troops, who surrendered at Patras, the same question, his answer was: 'The Partisans'.

His final sentence hammers home his key conceptual point: 'Actually there are almost no quislings in Greece. There is only a bitter ideological civil war which has been the despair of the handful of British officers who have been working inside Greece for almost two years.'

Despite the complexity and proximity of the events he was describing, Lucas did manage to raise several key questions about armed collaboration in Greece – and his points have more general implications. He correctly pointed to heterogeneous motivations underlying armed collaboration with the occupier, he castigated the kind of dichotomous simplifying view of the conflict that would later become dominant and, most importantly, he placed both resistance and collaboration within the conceptual framework of civil war.

Any satisfactory account of armed collaboration in Greece must explain two puzzles: its timing (armed collaboration exploded in the spring of 1944 when it was clear to all participants that the Germans were losing the war) and its size, particularly given the absence of a Fascist mass movement in prewar Greece. In this paper I argue that Lucas's insights provide useful hints for answering these questions and show exactly how.

The size of armed collaboration

It is difficult to estimate accurately the total size of armed collaboration. There were many types of formations and we lack detailed data on all of them. Although the Italians and the Bulgarians set up a few collaborationist units, especially based on ethnic minorities, recruitment really took off under the German watch, starting in April 1943.³ The main collaborationist militia, the Security Battalions (*Tagmata Asfaleias*), a formation that used traditional *evzone* units, was initially formed in Athens and included 453 officers, 684 petty officers and 1199 soldiers. Fanning out to the countryside, they then recruited 5724 regular army officers and men into nine Evzone Battalions located in Central Greece and the Peloponnese. Furthermore, 3370 soldiers and gendarmes were recruited into four Gendarmerie Battalions, primarily in the Peloponnese.⁴ In Greek Macedonia there were nine, mainly irregular, formations with over 6000 men. By the summer of 1944 there were 13 different types of units armed by the Germans, composed of 16,625 officers and men.⁵ Their legal status and position in the chain of command varied widely. The Security Battalions, for instance, were officially under the command of the Greek collaborationist government, though they had an auxiliary role in German military operations. The casualties of the Security Battalions were high. Between September 1943 and September 1944 a total of 637 dead, 910 wounded and 586 missing was recorded.⁶

These numbers exclude various semi-autonomous units with different pedigrees, including (a) criminal or semi-criminal gangs in the main Greek cities of Athens and Thessaloniki, (b) independent or semi-independent groups wearing German army uniforms and operating within the command structure of the German Army, such as the unit of Colonel Poulos in Macedonia which followed the Germans in their retreat, (c) local anticommunist organisations in places such as the islands of Cephalonia and Lefkada, or the central Greek towns of Larisa and Volos, (d) various ethnic minority militias (the Muslim Chams of Epirus, the Slavophone *komitadjis* in Macedonia), and (e) the 'armed villagers' of Macedonia, composed primarily of peasants of 'refugee' origin (i.e. those who came to Greece in 1922–1923 as part of the 'exchange of populations' agreement with Turkey). This last category was the most important in size, totalling close to 8000 men. Taken together, the number of these various armed collaborators may have

hovered between 25,000 and 30,000 men. The order of battle of the main Greek auxiliary units during the summer of 1944 is provided in Table 1.⁷

These are significant numbers, certainly not much smaller than the number of ELAS partisans (estimated to be between 30,000 and 35,000). Indeed, ‘by the spring and early summer of 1944, the Security Battalions presented themselves as the only well-armed, organized force inside Greece capable of blocking an EAM/ELAS bid for power’.⁸ The size of armed collaboration becomes more puzzling given the reluctance of Germans to arm all those clamouring for weapons, and if one takes into account its late timing, the absence of a mass fascist movement in Greece, and the generalised dislike of the Germans by the Greek population.

Table 1. Auxiliary forces: order of battle, 15 August 1944.

Evzone units:
1 st Evzone Regiment (Athens, LXVIII Army Corps area)
I, II, and III Battalions
2 nd Evzone Regiment (Tripolis, Peloponnese, LXVIII Army Corps area)
I, II, and III Battalions
3 rd Evzone Regiment (Yannina, Epirus, XXII Mountain Corps area)
I, II, and III Battalions
Gendarmerie units:
I Gendarmerie Battalion (Athens, LXVIII Army Corps area)
II Gendarmerie Battalion (Athens, LXVIII Army Corps area)
III Gendarmerie Battalion (Athens, LXVIII Army Corps area)
IV Gendarmerie Battalion (Argos, LXVIII Army Corps area)
V Gendarmerie Battalion (forming) (Athens, LXVIII Army Corps area)
Volunteer battalions:
I Volunteer Battalion (Katerini, Macedonia, LXXXXI Army Corps area)
II Volunteer Battalion (Verria, Macedonia, LXXXXI Army Corps area)
III Volunteer Battalion (Kozani, Macedonia, LXXXXI Army Corps area)
IV Volunteer Battalion (Yannitsa, Macedonia, LXXXXI Army Corps area)
V Volunteer Battalion (Kozani, Macedonia, LXXXXI Army Corps area)
VI Volunteer Battalion (Kozani, Macedonia, LXXXXI Army Corps area)
VII Volunteer Battalion (Kilkis, Macedonia, LXXXXI Army Corps area)
VIII Volunteer Battalion (Lachanas, Macedonia, LXXXXI Army Corps area)
IX Volunteer Battalion (Krya Vrissi, Macedonia, LXXXXI Army Corps area)
I (Macedonian) Volunteer Battalions [IMRO] (Kastoria, Macedonia, LXXXXI Army Corps area)
II (Macedonian) Volunteer Battalions [IMRO] (Florina, Macedonia, LXXXXI Army Corps area)
III (Macedonian) Volunteer Battalions [IMRO] (Edessa, Macedonia, LXXXXI Army Corps area)
Poulos-Verband (Verria, Macedonia, LXXXXI Army Corps area)
Police Volunteer Battalion ‘Karditsa’ (Karditsa, Thessaly, XXII Mountain Corps area)
Volunteer (Half) Battalion ‘Larissa’ (Larissa, Thessaly, XXII Mountain Corps area)
Police Volunteer Battalion ‘Lamia’ (forming) (Lamia, Central Greece, LXVIII Army Corps area)
Police Volunteer Battalion ‘Amfissa’ (forming) (Amfissa, Central Greece, LXVIII Army Corps area)
Police Volunteer Battalion ‘Salonika’ (Thessaloniki, Macedonia, LXXXXI Army Corps area)
I Police Volunteer Battalion (Athens, LXVIII Army Corps area)
II Police Volunteer Battalion (Volos, LXXXXI Army Corps area)
III Police Volunteer Battalion (Verria, LXXXXI Army Corps area)
Police Volunteer Battalion ‘Euboea I’ (Chalkis, Evia, LXVIII Army Corps area)
Police Volunteer Battalion ‘Euboea II’ (Chalkis, Evia, LXVIII Army Corps area)
Volunteer Battalion ‘Leonidas’ (Sparta, Peloponnese, LXVIII Army Corps area)
Volunteer Battalion ‘Agrinio’ (Agrinio, Central Greece, XXII Mountain Corps area)
Volunteer Battalion ‘Megalopolis’ (Megalopolis, Peloponnese, LXVIII Army Corps area)

Source: NARS Microfilm T-78, Roll 410, Frames 6378310-72; Befehlsgliederung OB Sudost (Heeresgruppe F), Stand: 15.8.44.

Following the end of the occupation, the bulk of the collaborationists (about 12,000) were incorporated in the National Guard units that were formed in 1945.⁹ Very few were prosecuted while, in contrast, the ELAS partisans found themselves persecuted by the postwar Greek governments.

The sociology of armed collaboration

I begin with the geographical distribution of armed collaboration. The auxiliary units were spread across Greece, but areas of particular strength included the Peloponnese (Greece's southern peninsula), west-central Greece, the island of Evia, and western-central Macedonia. In other words, armed collaboration was prevalent in the southern and northern extremities of the country with a few spots in between. At the same time, these units were much stronger in cities and towns than they were in the rural countryside.

One common argument in the relevant literature points to the dominant prewar cleavage of Greek politics, the Conservative/Royalist versus Liberal/Republican division, as the main factor in accounting for the form and distribution of armed collaboration. For example, the traditional explanation regarding the prevalence of collaboration in the Peloponnese has stressed the prewar political attitudes of the peasants in that region. A conservative and monarchist peasantry, this argument goes, could only have joined the Germans.

The problem for this type of explanation is twofold. First, conservatism has a nationalist dimension, and thus is not automatically associated with Nazism or collaboration with occupation forces. Second, this argument is unable to explain the absence of armed collaboration in other traditionally Conservative and Royalist areas, such as central Greece, or, conversely, its prevalence in the Liberal and Republican Macedonia. This geographic distribution suggests the problems of an interpretation that relies too heavily on the explanatory power of prewar cleavages. A British clandestine operative provides a more nuanced argument, combining prewar political attitudes with the behaviour of the Partisans:

The growth of these [Security] Battalions was disproportionately rapid in Peloponnese for two reasons, (a) the populations of Peloponnese as a whole is markedly Right Wing and/or Royalist in politics, and (b) the ELAS troops in Peloponnese had shown a corresponding determination to exterminate this attitude, and had consequently carried out a higher proportion of murders, arrests and so on, than in Mainland Greece. Thus, the recruiting for Security Bns. in the area of PATRAS, and AKHAIÁ generally, met with a greater response than it did elsewhere. Originally the Security Bns. in PATRAS were troops brought from Athens, under the command of Gen. Dertilis, but subsequently the majority of the original troops crossed over to the AGRINION–MESSOLONGHI area, and their vacancies were filled by local recruitment.¹⁰

Weakening the 'prewar cleavage' argument even more, armed collaboration was spearheaded by Republican rather than Royalist officers.¹¹

An alternative hypothesis accounting for the geographical distribution of armed collaboration emphasizes the (organizational) demand for collaboration rather than its (popular) supply: where the Germans invested in building collaborationist units, they found people willing to join – through a variety of collective or individual motivations ranging from coercion to ideology. In other words, the supply was constant whereas the demand varied. This variation was primarily military/strategic in nature as the Germans focused on areas of military importance, such as Macedonia, the region surrounding their main exit routes, or the Peloponnese where they feared a major Allied landing operation.

Turning to individual motivations we must ask why so many people joined the Germans and fought on their side – and why so late into the war? Obviously, motivations were heterogeneous. Nevertheless, it is possible to distinguish some broad patterns.

A first distinction is between two rough categories of armed collaboration. While some units were formed on the basis of 'ideology', specifically anticommunism, some other units were formed on the basis of ethnicity, targeting ethnic minorities, such as the Slavophones of Macedonia, the Muslim Chams of Epirus, the Vlachs of Thessaly, and the Turkish-speaking Pontian refugees of Macedonia – though, surprisingly, not the Muslims of Thrace. Although ethnic collaboration can be seen as having been motivated by past state repression and ethnic grievances (and the subsequent possibility of a *revanche*), what can be said about the sources of 'ideological' collaboration?

Again, a distinction must be made between the elite and the grassroots levels. At the elite level, it is possible to argue that the officers who staffed the collaborationist units had, for the most part, an ideological agenda – though the content of this agenda was negative rather than positive, anticommunist rather than Fascist. The main, and by far the largest, resistance organisation, EAM (National Liberation Front), was controlled by the Communist Party. In 1943, EAM and its armed wing ELAS (National Popular Liberation Army) attacked and eliminated most non-communist partisan groups. In fact, in a number of instances the remains of these defeated groups later joined the Security Battalions. Faced with the prospect of a communist takeover, many officers opted for what they saw as the 'least worst' solution and sided with the Germans, whose occupation of the country was viewed as temporary – as opposed to the more permanent prospect of Communist postwar domination. In other words, what motivated them was postwar expectations rather than past preferences only, the future rather than just the past. As a 1944 British report points out, 'The present phase of the war in GREECE is almost a transition from war to peace; or at least, from occupation to liberation. The GREEKS know that whatever the rebels do the departure of the Germans is a foregone conclusion. ELAS, therefore, seems to many GREEKS to be more trouble than it is worth . . . The national Risorgimento has degenerated into a political brawl.'¹² It makes sense, therefore, to speak of political rather than just ideological intentions.

This argument is consistent with the 'real-time' thinking of prominent collaborators as indicated by a memorandum sent to the British by Colonel Dionysios Papadhongonas, in early 1944. Papadhongonas, the head of the officer corps in Kalamata, in southern Peloponnese, claimed that in 1943, '[i]n order not to leave the Communists without a rival [he] encouraged numerous junior officers and NCOs to take to the mountains and form National Bands in co-operation with the British'. After the destruction of these officer bands in the summer and autumn of 1943, Papadhongonas pleaded with the BLOs operating in the area for assistance, but his demands went unheeded. At the same time, EAM stepped up the pressure on uncommitted or hostile officers. 'The Communist persecution of any law-abiding citizen who had the courage to resist them now became more open and unchecked', noted Papadhongonas. The gendarmerie had practically ceased to function and Papadhongonas escaped an assassination attack. He concludes that 'he is not in a position to suggest solutions, but . . . as a Hellene who has served his country for 35 years he can only report the truth and do what little he can'.¹³ Shortly after sending this memorandum, Papadhongonas joined the Security Battalions, led a large contingent in central Peloponnese, and went on to fight alongside the British during the Communist uprising of December 1944 in Athens, where he was killed.

While Papadhongonas's memorandum could also be read as an attempt to justify his impeding collaboration, British officers operating inside occupied Greece were reaching similar conclusions. They doubted neither the anti-German and pro-British sentiments of the collaborationists, nor their self-defence argument. A British Political Intelligence Paper (Middle East) of 18 June 1944 begins as follows: 'In this Paper the word "quisling" is

applied to those who have collaborated with the Germans but it does not necessarily imply pro-German sentiments. The term “Quisling forces” is used by all those bodies who accepted arms from the Germans for use in the field against other Greeks.’¹⁴ ‘From the very start the sponsors of the Security Bns.’, wrote Colonel J.M. Stevens, ‘took great care to explain to me and other stations that they were not in any way anti-British but were merely driven to this step in self-defence, and I am of the opinion that if ELAS had not taken such an intransigent line against Right and Centre parties, the Security Bns. would never have been formed’.¹⁵ In April 1944, Colonel C.E. ‘Tom’ Barnes advised his superiors in Cairo, ‘I feel certain that they will be wholeheartedly on the side of any Allied Invasion Force. Hence, although they are admittedly doing the work of the Germans, I think we should avoid publicly denouncing them in such terms that the way to later reconciliation is irrevocably closed.’¹⁶ Eventually, the Security Battalions were publicly denounced by the Greek government in exile (in September 1944), but they nevertheless fought on the British side against the Communist insurrection in Athens in December 1944.

Besides ideological considerations, there were, of course, material ones ranging from sheer survival to professional advancement. The Greek collaborationist government enacted legislation in March 1944 that permitted the enlistment of officers who had been dismissed from the army since 1927. The bulk of these men had been Republican officers who had been dismissed following their participation in a number of (Republican) military coups, the most important of which took place in 1935. Yet, these motivations appear to have been subsumed under political ones.

Turning to the rank-and-file, one encounters a much larger variety of motivations and much less ideological content or political agenda. Material benefits and revenge would probably rank highest. Dissatisfaction with the practices of EAM was an important factor as well. A British Liaison Officer noted that EAM violence in the towns of the Peloponnese had become ‘so bad, that when the Security Bns. first appeared from Athens they were received with great enthusiasm. Even now, town populations consider Security Bns. the lesser of two evils.’¹⁷ A historian of Greece’s occupation notes that the occupation authorities found it much easier to find Greeks willing to fight ‘communist’ partisans than do routine police work; he adds that ‘one might conclude, however, that the fight against communism had more appeal than just working for the Germans.’¹⁸

A statistical test

To address the issue of motivations at the grass-roots level in a more rigorous way, I performed a statistical analysis of the likelihood that a village would contribute men to the Security Battalions. I used data from a regional study I conducted in 63 villages and towns of the region of the Argolid, in the north-eastern Peloponnese (Figure 1).¹⁹

After the Italian collapse in September 1944, the Argolid fell under the dominion of EAM. Even the region’s two towns were heavily infiltrated by clandestine resistance cells. The turning point was April 1944, when the German authorities decided to crack down on EAM in the towns of Argos and Nafplio. A wave of arrests and executions ensued and EAM’s clandestine organisations were destroyed. In late April, the Germans set up a local collaborationist militia led by an officer of the Greek Army who had been the target of a communist assassination attempt after having refused to join EAM. The Argolid unit began to recruit in May, eventually reaching a force of about 300 men. The initial recruits came from the two main towns, Nafplio and Argos; many were gendarmes who were transferred from the moribund gendarmerie to the newly minted militia. Once control of the towns was consolidated, the Germans and their local allies began to push into the

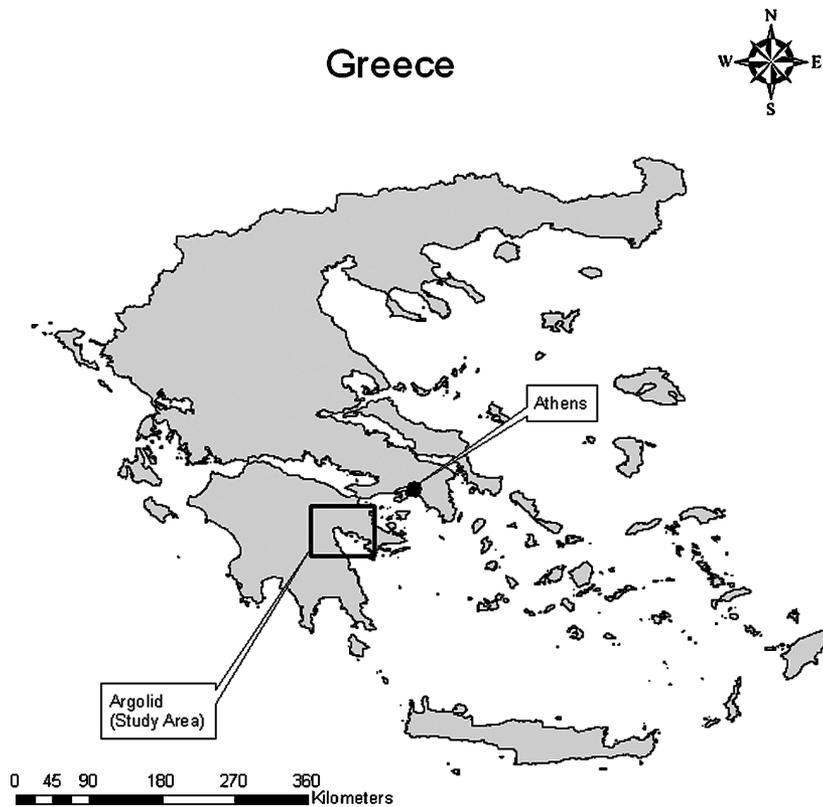


Figure 1. Greece and the Argolid.

surrounding villages around 10 May; they applied a counter-insurgent strategy that the French later dubbed ‘oil spot’. They set up several new outposts in and around these villages, increased their patrols, began registering the villagers and checking their identity papers frequently, and imposed a severe curfew. As the Germans extended their control outwardly, they began to recruit additional men during the summer of 1944. Recruitment at this stage was both individual and collective: a few men were recruited from most villages while two strategically important hill villages (Achladokambos and Arachnaio) were each asked to contribute a large contingent.

Two characteristics of the recruitment process are crucial. First, it was predicated on a geographic logic: it began from the two towns and spread gradually from the lowlands toward the highlands, following the expansion of German territorial control. Second, it displayed a ‘one-shot’ pattern in each locality: recruitment was solicited at a precise time, usually immediately following the German conquest, after which no more people could join in each village. The reason is threefold. First, the Germans were interested in spreading recruitment to as many localities as possible in order to maximise commitment across the region; second, they faced serious logistic constraints that precluded the militia’s mass expansion; third, they did not stay in most villages they conquered, so joining the militia was not practical after the Germans had left.

In late August 1944, the rapid advance of the Soviet Army on the Eastern Front was felt in Greece. Pressed by the Soviet offensive, the Germans decided to evacuate Greece. They eventually left Argos on 19 September; the Security Battalions surrendered their

weapons in Nafplio on 5 October and were evacuated to a nearby island under British supervision. The war was over.

Since the Germans wanted to recruit from every locality, the following question must be answered: what differentiates the localities where they recruited more men from those where they recruited fewer or none? The item to be explained is the number of members of the collaborationist Security Battalions recruited in each locality and it is operationalised in two ways: as an absolute number and normalised per 1000 inhabitants. I collected these data from a variety of archival sources and interviews with surviving members of the militia, including one of its local leaders.

The potential causes (or 'independent variables') attempt to capture four key determinants of collaboration: prewar political cleavages, geographical dynamics, the dynamics of war, and socioeconomic processes. First, the propensity of some localities to collaborate with the Germans might have reflected the salient prewar cleavage between the Royalist Conservatives of the People's Party and Republicans of the Liberal Party. Some historians have suggested that Republicans were more likely to join the guerrillas and Conservatives the militia because of the more pronounced anticommunism of the latter and the anti-royalist agenda of the resistance. According to this view, the war was a replay of prewar Greek politics, albeit under different labels. The proxy is a dummy variable indicating the political majority in a given village in the 1933 elections (1 = royalist majority; 0 = liberal majority).

Second, geographical location captures both opportunities and constraints of insurgency or cultures of collaboration and resistance. For example, it is often pointed out that isolated mountainous villages are more likely to resist central authority; since rough terrain is associated with insurgent strength, villages located in the lowlands in close proximity to towns should exhibit collaborationist strength. I therefore included two variables that measure the effect of geography: the elevation of each village and its distance from the closest town during the 1940s.

Third, collaboration with occupation forces may be endogenous to the war itself, via two mechanisms: incentives and constraints on the one hand, and revenge on the other. First, control of a particular locality may produce a mix of incentives and constraints (e.g. material benefits; reaping the rewards of siding with a particular armed actor who is perceived as winning; coercion), leading people to collaborate with the actor exercising control. Second, individuals who have been aggrieved or repressed by one side may turn to its rival if they are offered such an option – even if this means transgressing ethnic boundaries. Two variables capture these factors: the extent of territorial control enjoyed by the rival actors and the level of violence inflicted upon civilians by the partisans prior to the formation of the Security Battalions. Villages that experienced a higher level of German control prior to recruitment and substantial prior partisan violence should be expected to provide more recruits for the SB. Partisan violence is measured using a fatality count of individuals executed by the insurgents in each village up to May 1944. To measure territorial control I rely on a five-zone indicator which ranges from 1 (full incumbent control) to 5 (full insurgent control).²⁰ For the two towns and the lowland villages, where recruitment took place in early May 1944, I use the control score of late April 1944; for the hill and mountain villages where recruitment took place in late May and June, I used the control score of 15 May.

Finally, I use three variables to capture broad socioeconomic processes: education (measured as the number of students in a locality enrolled in a high school, per capita), wealth (a three-scale variable with 3 being the wealthiest localities), and a measure of prewar social conflict (measured as the number of civil suits tried in courts in the period

1935–1939, per capita).²¹ The estimation is a simple Ordinary Least Squares model. The variables along with basic descriptive statistics are reported in Table 2. The results are presented in Table 3.

The results can be summarised as follows. First, EAM violence in the period preceding the recruitment of militiamen is a significant predictor across all specifications: localities that experienced insurgent violence were more likely to subsequently supply men to the SB than localities that did not.²² Second, territorial control is also a significant predictor across all specifications. The higher the level of control exercised by the Germans and their allies in a locality (i.e. tending towards a score of 1 or total control), the more militiamen were recruited in that locality.²³ Of all the other variables, altitude is the most consistently significant with a surprising causal direction: there appears to be a positive correlation between recruitment and higher elevations – a likely effect of two hill villages that contributed large contingents of men. Significantly, economic, social and political variables have no predictive capacity.

Obviously, an analysis limited to one province in a single country can only be suggestive. Nevertheless, these results are consistent with my own qualitative evidence from Greece²⁴ as well as several local studies.²⁵ They are also striking in so far as they point to the considerable, and largely overlooked, endogenous effects of civil war dynamics. Once a conflict begins, military action has the potential of generating new political dynamics that override prewar political, social and economic factors. People are likely to commit to, and fight for, an organisation with which they share little common

Table 2. Variables.

Variable	Range
Number of militiamen recruited in the SB	Mean: 4.76 Min: 0 Max: 60
Insurgent violence per village (September 1943– April 1944)	Mean: 0.97 Min: 0 Max: 12
Control (scale 1 to 5) 1 = total incumbent control; 5 = total insurgent control)	Mean: 3.08 Min: 1 Max: 5
Altitude (metres)	Mean: 231 Min: 10 Max: 960
Distance from closest town (minutes)	Mean: 167 Min: 0 Max: 510
1933 Elections (dummy variable: 1 = royalist majority; 0 = liberal majority)	Mean: .92 Min: 0 Max: 1
Education level (secondary school students per capita)	Mean: .71 Min: 0 Max: 3.66
Prewar social conflict: per capita court cases (1935–1939)	Mean: .06 Min: .01 Max: .24
Income proxy (interval variable; wealthiest village = 3)	Mean: 2.21 Min: 1 Max: 3

Table 3. Determinants of collaboration with occupying forces: Argolid, 1943–1944: OLS regressions (standard errors in parentheses).

Model	1	2	3
Estimation method	OLS	OLS	OLS
Dependent variable	Militiamen/ village	Militiamen/ village	Militiamen/ village/ per 1000 inhabitants
Insurgent violence (September 1943–April 1944)	3.249*** [3.48]	3.268*** [3.33]	0.430** [2.42]
Territorial control (Spring 1944)	– 4.621** [–2.01]	–4.576* [–1.98]	–2.297* [–1.70]
Altitude (log)	2.012 [1.63]	2.413** [2.05]	2.405*** [2.82]
Distance from closest town	0.020 [1.06]	0.032 [1.26]	0.008 [1.65]
1933 Elections	–0.201 [–0.08]	–2.901 [–1.41]	–3.062 [–1.60]
Education level (high school students per capita)		–0.887 [–0.82]	–1.230 [–1.57]
Prewar social conflict (court suits per capita (1935–1939) (log)		–0.407 [–0.26]	0.571 [0.53]
Village income		3.236 [1.61]	3.518** [2.39]
Constant	3.501 [1.02]	–5.843 [–1.01]	–4.510 [–0.91]
Observations	63	63	63
R-squared	0.41	0.43	0.21
Prob > F	0.0025	0.0021	0.0032

Notes: Robust *t* and *z* statistics in brackets. *Significant at 10%; **Significant at 5%; ***Significant at 1%.

political ground. Although Greeks adhered to a strong standard of national self-identification, thousands of Greeks crossed the national boundary and fought on the German side against fellow Greeks – often against their very own neighbours. They did so despite the fact that the Germans were running an incredibly violent occupation that made the population loathe them; despite the fact that the Germans did not even pretend that they were interested in winning the ‘hearts and minds’ of the Greek population; and despite the fact that it was clear that Germany was losing the war in 1944. Given these incredibly adverse conditions, the Germans’ ability to recruit thousands of armed collaborators is a testament to the abilities of occupying powers and the elasticity of national loyalties.

Conclusion: toward a theoretical agenda

Moving from the issue of motivations to broader theoretical conditions, three general points are worth underlining. First, an appropriate theoretical framework for interpreting collaboration during occupation may well be found in the concept of indirect rule. Developed in the context of the study of empires and colonisation, this concept helps address a number of features of collaboration. For example, it may help explain the

remarkable success that occupiers have with the recruitment of ethnic minorities. It may also explain the oft-noted disjunction between discourse at the top and fighting on the ground.²⁶ Furthermore, it allows the conceptualisation of collaboration as a relation of exchange between two principals rather than as a unidirectional relation between a principal and an agent, as characterised by the popular term ‘puppet’. In occupation regimes, ‘puppets’ have their own agenda and volition and they try to manipulate their principals, often with success. Finally, such a framework encourages the comparison between collaboration in settings of occupation, colonisation and decolonisation.

Second, it is necessary to combine theoretically the phenomena of collaboration and civil war. Very often, civil war produces ‘endogenously’ the kinds of motivations and even identities that make collaboration possible. For example, civil wars during periods of occupation tend to reshape politics rather than simply being superimposed on them. Without a deep understanding of the dynamics of civil war, it is impossible to explain the variation in size, timing and location of armed collaboration – as well as its long-term effects on politics and memory. This applies, of course, to countries where occupation overlapped with civil war, as in Europe and in Asia under Japanese occupation.

Third, from a methodological point of view, this paper stresses the need for more comparative work at the micro-level. Comparisons between villages and between regions help provide insights on ground-level dynamics and move the study of collaboration from the state level to that of the society. At the same time, this recalibration of the research agenda will help generate both better data and better insights through better comparisons.

Notes

1. Walter Lucas, “In Greece, ‘Quislings’ are pro-British,” *Daily Express*, 11 October 1944.
2. He means Katakolon, in the western Peloponnese (prefecture of Ilia).
3. The Italians raised small local units of Vlachs in central Greece (Thessaly), Slavomacedonians in northern Greece (Western Macedonia), and Chams in Western Greece (Epirus). The legislation decreeing the mobilisation of the first four battalions was passed by the collaborationist government headed by Ioannis Rallis on 7 April 1943.
4. More specifically, the Evzone units garrisoned and recruited in the towns of Halkida (December 1943), Patras (January 1944), Agrinio (February 1944), Corinth (April 1944), Pyrgos (May 1944), and Nafpaktos (June 1944). The gendarmerie units were set up in the towns of Tripolis, Sparta, Gytheion, Meligalas, and Gargalianoi, in the spring and summer of 1944.
5. Hondros, “Too Weighty a Weapon”, 34; *Occupation & Resistance*, 82.
6. Hondros, *Occupation & Resistance*, 83.
7. Note that the order of battle diverges from the information suggested by other archival sources, which confirms the general confusion about this matter, caused by the fluid and local nature of the collaboration.
8. Hondros, “Too Weighty a Weapon”, 34.
9. Gerolymatos, “The Role of the Greek Officer Corps in the Resistance”, 25.
10. PRO HS 5/698, “Details of Collaborators with Missions in the Field.” Appendix “B” to Final Report by 199417 Capt. Gibson.
11. Hondros, *Occupation & Resistance*, 81; Gerolymatos, “The Security Battalions and the Civil War”.
12. Woodhouse, C.M. “Situation in Greece, Jan to May 1944”, quoted in Baerentzen, *British Reports on Greece 1943–44 by J. M. Stevens, C. M. Woodhouse & D. J. Wallace*, 1982, 77.
13. PRO, FO 371/43689, “Summary of report on ‘Communism in the Peloponnese’.”
14. PRO, WO 208/713, “Political Intelligence Paper No. 55, Greek Security Battalions”, dated 18 June 1944.
15. PRO, HS 5/699, “Second Report of Colonel J.M. Stevens on Present Conditions in Peloponnese”, dated 24 June 1944.

16. PRO FO 371/43688 R9898/9/19, Col. C.E. Barnes, "Observations in Greece, July 1943 to April 1944".
17. PRO, HS 5/699, "Second Report of Colonel J.M. Stevens on Present Conditions in Peloponnese".
18. Hondros, *Occupation & Resistance*, 83.
19. The discussion of the Argolid draws from Kalyvas (2006).
20. The level of control was coded as follows. Zone 1: Incumbent combatants permanently garrisoned in the village or in a one-hour radius; incumbent combatants and administrators operate freely during all times of day and night; no insurgent activity reported; insurgent clandestine organisations never set up or completely destroyed. Zone 2: Incumbent combatants permanently garrisoned in the village or in a one-hour radius; incumbent combatants and administrators operate freely during all times of day and night; insurgent clandestine organisations operate inside the village; clandestine meetings take place; sporadic visits at night by insurgent combatants. Zone 3: Incumbent combatants permanently garrisoned in the village but do not move freely at night; incumbent administrators usually do not sleep in their homes; insurgent organisers are active; regular nightly visits by insurgent combatants at night. Zone 4: Insurgent combatants permanently garrisoned in the village or near it; insurgent combatants and administrators operate freely during all times of day and night; incumbent clandestine organisations inside the village; clandestine meetings take place; sporadic visits at night by incumbent combatants. Zone 5: Insurgent combatants permanently garrisoned in the village or near it; insurgent combatants and administrators operate freely during all times of day and night; no insurgent activity reported; incumbent clandestine organisations never set up or completely destroyed.
21. All data sources (with the exception of recruitment) are listed in Kalyvas (2006, 415).
22. It is possible that insurgents targeted villages with future collaborationist potential (which, in turn, would indicate that their violence had no effect). However, prior analysis of the determinants of insurgent violence shows that insurgent territorial control rather than political factors or expectations about political behaviour best predict this violence; in turn, territorial control was largely a function of geography (Kalyvas 2006).
23. Again, keep in mind that German control had nothing to do with political or other preferences.
24. Kalyvas, *The Logic of Violence in Civil War*.
25. Karakasidou, *Fields of Wheat, Hills of Blood*; Vermeulen, "To varos tou parelthontos"; Aschenbrenner, "The Civil War from the Perspective of a Messenian Village".
26. Kalyvas, "The Ontology of 'Political Violence'".

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