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The Greek–Ottoman Boundary as Institution, Locality, and Process, 1832-1882

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Borders are often described as lines of conflict between states. The Greek–Ottoman boundary of the 19th century is no exception; history condemned it as a dangerous front of Greek state expansionism at the expense of a declining Ottoman Empire. This article uses Ottoman and Greek archival documents and British consular records to show that the Greek–Ottoman boundary was, in many ways, a well-managed institution. The central states that governed it and the two sides' border guards often cooperated and colluded to provide security and forestall conflict. Although the border eventually collapsed and moved northward at the expense of the Ottomans, this article demonstrates that the early decades of the boundary contain tremendous insight for historians and social scientists interested in contentious politics and institutions.

Keywords: *boundaries; Ottoman Empire; Greece; institutions; conflict; security*

The Greek–Ottoman land boundary was the product of protracted ethnic and civil conflict that devastated the Ottoman Empire's southern Balkan provinces during the 1820s. The Great Powers saw the conflict as an unlimited war of extermination between Muslim and Christian populations, and they decided to create an independent Greek state with a boundary that would ensure tranquility through a complete partition of the area's ethnic and religious groups.[1] Although the delimitation commission set out to create a perfect barrier between the two states, the demarcation commission that walked the boundary in 1832 reported that the border had done little to seal off the two sovereign territories from one another.

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The boundary cut across the migratory paths of nomads, and residents of certain villages suddenly found their crops and water sources along opposite sides of the boundary.[2] Moreover, as the delimitation commission began to survey the boundary and lay down stone pyramids, thousands of refugees, Christian and Muslim alike, abandoned the new Greek state for Ottoman territories.[3] Unhappy minorities were given 18 months to request indemnity and immigrate (Georges, 1996, p. 70). Some villages, rather than emigrate to the proximate state, took measures that ensured the neighboring state migrated to them. Villagers in the rugged central district of Agrafa, whose unity was to be split in half by the boundary, conspired to provide the delimitation commission and guardhouse engineers with false place-name information to ensure that they would end up in Greek territory.[4]

Foreign observers warned that the boundary was ill conceived and left both states less secure. Instead of sending well-armed military regulars to defend the border, the Ottoman and Greek states commissioned and deployed a group of former bandits, mercenaries, and domestic police units to take up positions along the boundary (Strong, 1842, p. 263). Despite predictions that the boundary was primed for more unrest, within several years it became a site of cooperation between Ottoman and Greek border guards who innovated procedure to administer the boundary jointly and with minimal escalation of incidents.

From the 1840s to the 1860s, the two states were quick to devolve administration to local authorities and expected their border guards to jointly manage the boundary. Both Greece and the Ottoman Empire demonstrated an unwillingness to escalate border incidents, even those that involved disputes about the location of the boundary. In this context, border guards along both sides of the boundary cooperated to police the border to suppress banditry, smuggling, and irredentist movement. Border authorities learned how to solve crises and patrol the boundary locally without escalating incidents needlessly. This cooperation included substantial innovative policing tactics. Border authorities coordinated patrols and met regularly to discuss common concerns and implementation of joint procedures. Eventually Ottoman and Greek border guards extended to one another the right to cross the border in pursuit of fleeing suspects and border jumpers. The stabilization of the border and the unwillingness of the two states to directly oversee and intervene in matters of border control are puzzling given the otherwise conflict-prone quality of Greek–Ottoman relations.

By the 1870s, the situation was very different. Despite a growing alliance between Greece and the Ottoman Empire, the two states began to militarize their boundary, intervene in the day-to-day administrative tasks of border authorities, and restrict the activities of their own border guards in ways that made it increasingly difficult to effectively police and protect the line against bandits and smugglers. Why did the Ottoman and Greek states replace successful joint management practices with a unilateral and inefficient border administration that lent to escalation and crisis?

This article shifts focus to the pinnacles of state administration. It traces the institutional history of the Ottoman–Greek land boundary from its inception in the 1830s

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to the 1880s. It examines administrative practices along the boundary, territoriality, and dispute escalation from the perspective of the Ottoman and Greek states. To emphasize the administrative hierarchy and separate the central states from local actors that played an altogether different role in the institutionalization of the boundary, I refer to the Ottoman Empire and Greece as “high states.”

This article will make the following claims: The Greek and Ottoman states managed their borders as broad zonal institutions. They devolved authority to the local level, overstaffed their borders to create employment, and triggered locally embedded forms of cooperation hoping to prevent escalation of incidents. In the process, they gave up the chance to extract customs duties aggressively, and they incurred substantial costs to keep the locally embedded boundary regime going. Furthermore, the Ottoman–Greek border regime did not vary according to the ups and downs of diplomatic relations or the presence of an international threat.

The case poses a challenge for much of the literature on security studies, which expects borders to be sites of competitive defense and unilateral management, especially following periods of conflict. In this literature, modern interstate boundaries serve as a means to maximize territorial control, and states are said to display a set of clear preferences on how to use borders to guarantee their sovereignty. In international relations scholarship, boundaries are points of separation where one state ends and another begins; as such, they function as natural places for states to defend and fortify their territory vigilantly and competitively against outside military and economic threats (see Mearsheimer, 2001; Mearsheimer & Pape, 1993; Mearsheimer & Van Evera, 1999; Starr & Thomas, 2002; Vasquez, 1993).[5]

The argument in this article does not imply that the Greek and Ottoman states never viewed their borders as military lines of offense or defense. By the 1880s, the shared contiguous land border, in fact, was a site of militarization, hostility, and constant escalation. Both states perceived it as the limits of their threatened sovereignty, and they vigilantly policed it. However, this policy of stabilizing borders required two things: First, the states had to pick apart the existing boundary regime—autonomous, efficient, and locally embedded; second, both the Ottoman and Greek states had to learn a mutually exclusive understanding of the boundary as a line of control.

Where the literature in security studies falls short, Charles Tilly’s work proves indisposable. There are several reasons to make this claim: First of all, boundaries are institutions where states practice various forms of coercion and extraction. These practices include preventing exit and entry, suppressing contraband, and drawing revenues from goods and people in the form of customs taxes. Tilly’s (1990) classic work on coercive and extractive state-building practices is ideally suited to understanding borders as active sites of state building. At the same time, Tilly’s work on mechanism-based processes and the social dynamics of contentious politics go a long way in explaining how boundaries evolve as local institutions of security. Boundaries are, after all, staffed by human agents (i.e., border guards, captains, customs officers) who are embedded in networks of security and have to make vital and

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risky decisions regarding the border. These decisions included matters of policing, cooperating with their counterparts, enforcing border-crossing laws, colluding with smugglers, and sharing or hiding information from higher state authorities. A discussion of mechanism-based approaches follows the case study.

The Sources

Secondary sources on the Greek–Ottoman boundary are limited. Therefore, I used a number of archives that contain documents on the boundary and border matters. These archives contain documents that are representative of various perspectives: diplomatic, provincial, local, military, bandit, border guard, and so forth. The documents were also representative of the languages in which boundary events were recorded; I read documents in Ottoman Turkish, Greek, French, and English (see appendix). The records of the Ottoman Archives of the Prime Ministry in Istanbul and the Archives of the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Athens appear extensively in this article. These archives, however, should not be seen exclusively as a source of information on the state perspective. Reports between border posts that are local in nature were often deposited in these archives long after they were written.

In addition to the Greek and Ottoman archives, this article makes use of private newspapers published in Greek towns near the boundary and the records of British consulates that were in operation in the region. The combination of document type, scope of information, and time span allowed me to solve in part the problem of the "non-event"—that is, the inability to ascertain whether lack of information indicates a hidden event or an event that never took place. Comparing Greek and Ottoman archives with reports of boundary events in provincial newspapers allowed me to fill in missing information. The files of the British Foreign Office provide an additional means to uncover hidden events. British vice-consular staff in Ottoman and Greek border regions kept meticulous reports on provincial security, and, in light of their close ties to local authorities, they were often privy to information that even the capitals did not learn.

Local Border, High States

This section uses archival evidence to challenge the entrenched view that the Ottoman Empire and the Greek state had obvious orientations toward their boundary and that these orientations were stable in type but merely intensified over time. The following section begins with a state's eye view and assesses Greek and Ottoman state preferences and management policies governing the boundary at the time of its official creation.

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State Preferences in the Wake of Demarcation, 1830s

As Ottoman and Greek delegates sat down in London in 1832 to sign a peace treaty that would create an independent Greek Kingdom, British officials brokering the conference expressed great anxiety about how to carve out a boundary between the two states. They awarded the island of Evia to Greece to secure the spine of the Greek mainland and the peninsula of Punta to the Ottoman Empire to secure shipping in the Gulf of Arta. A British diplomatic memorandum circulated prior to the delimitation of the boundary argued that the overriding aim of the boundary ought to be the complete separation of the populations through a boundary that is highly strategic and capable of restricting contact between the two sides.[6]

In attempting to engineer an efficient and restrictive boundary, the British were hoping to pass on to the Greek and Ottoman states a view of the border as an instrument of sovereign power. The two states would enhance their sovereignty and lower the costs of territorial control by (a) monitoring and restricting contact along the boundary, (b) defending the boundary against a military threat from the other side, and (c) extracting a set of customs duties from goods and people passing through the boundary. In short, the two states were to take careful and deliberate measures to mark their territories as exclusive and seal them off from challenges coming from the other side.

Yet Greece and the Ottoman Empire did the opposite of what was expected. Instead of actively monitoring events at the boundary, they demanded that local boundary authorities solve administrative and positional disputes locally without requesting assistance from high-state ministries. Flooded by a large number of complaints, claims, and requests from local boundary authorities, the Greek Secretary of State made an exasperated (and apparently often repeated request) that the Minister of Interior prevent local boundary authorities from harassing Athens with information on border events and disputes.[7] The Ottomans simultaneously made similar demands down their administrative hierarchies and demanded that their border guards cooperate with their Greek counterparts instead of asking for high-state intervention.[8]

As border guards and engineers took positions along the boundary in 1836, a series of disputes occurred regarding the construction of blockhouses and their proximity to the boundary. These disputes are instructive insofar as they were treated as non-events by the states. Border guard reports that reached the capitals were forwarded to diplomatic agencies with little to no urgency, despite the fact that some blockhouses violated territory and were to house large numbers of armed guards.[9]

In 1842-1843, such a dispute took place between border authorities in the area of Molocha. Border authorities reported that the Ottomans began the construction of a new blockhouse one-fourth hour within Greek territory at a source of potable water called Armatolobryse. The Ottomans began construction after a water source on their side dried up.[10] Greek high-state officials, instead of accusing the Ottoman state of provocation and territorial violations, noted that the construction of the blockhouse could potentially harm relations among border guards and affect public health (as it

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would violate quarantine laws). The Ottoman foreign minister's response was to order an end to the construction, before confirming whether or not the territory in question actually belonged to Greece.[11]

It is telling to note that the language of exclusive territorialization in disputes such as this one originates with local authorities. Border guards, captains, and municipal authorities along the border initially displayed a proclivity in accusing the other side of territorial violations and spoke in the name of defending national territory.[12] High-state agencies, on the other hand, did not act according to such a territorial imperative and either ignored or downplayed local reports on violations of the boundary. If the Ottoman–Greek boundary was to mark the end of one sovereign territory and the beginning of the exclusive jurisdiction of another, Istanbul and Athens were seemingly acting with an alternative understanding.

Although the boundary separating the Ottoman Empire and Greece was new, both states implemented existing institutional practices to administer the boundary. The derbent institution of the Ottoman Empire traditionally served as the primary provincial police force. *Derbents* were armed guards that were chosen from local populations—both Muslim and Christian—and stationed in strategic points such as caravan roads, bridges, and important passes linking towns and provinces (Orhonlu, 1990, p. 61). The derbent were the best candidates for the new border guard positions because their former duties had included the protection of roads and strategic passes from criminals, restriction of access to bridges and caravan roads, and the collection of tolls. Their experience meant that they would require little training for the tasks required. Although Greek high-state officials discussed sending regular armed forces to guard the border, by the time the boundary was diplomatically recognized in 1837, local chieftains and their clients had already taken their posts. Even as an 1838 decree incorporated the border guard to the army with higher pay, the derbents were in actual control of boundary administration (Strong, 1842, p. 263).

Two observations are crucial with respect to the derbent institution. First, it was contained to the provincial level. In other words, derbents were tied to local mayors and their clients and, as long as they received their pay, the system carried out its functions with little need for the high states to intervene. Second, derbent posts were geographically fluid; villages and derbents could switch duties among themselves as well as their positions (Orhonlu, 1990, pp. 61-64). The mobility required as well as the revolving nature of many positions gave the system a zonal quality. Although many derbent zones were well defined and guards did not interfere in each other's affairs, they were expected to cooperate when necessary. They were also held legally and financially responsible for crimes committed in their area, which meant that they monitored locals and other derbents alike to ensure that criminal and bandit activity did not spill over into their zones of jurisdiction.[13]

The Great Power third parties that sponsored the creation of the Greek state and brokered the delimitation talks of the Greek–Ottoman boundary attempted to instill in both states a view of the border as a line of defense and separation of sovereign

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territories. The aim for the Great Powers and the British in particular was to combine principles of partition with substantial military defense to make the costs of future conflict and territorial revisionism prohibitively high.

However, neither the Greek nor the Ottoman states shared this view of the border, especially in light of the lack of external military assistance and financing. Instead, the Greek and Ottoman states staffed their borders with the institution that was most suitable for the job. The Ottoman derbent institution and its replication on the Greek side as a regular border guard (in name only) provided an opportunity for both states to satisfy border security enough to pursue more pressing problems of domestic institutional reform. The Greek state, in particular, faced a problem inherent in its independence: how to construct state institutions from scratch. The Ottoman state faced an internal economic crisis, a revolution from within on the part of Mohammed Ali (the renegade leader of an autonomous Ottoman Egypt), and was on the verge of promulgating the Tanzimat—its most ambitious and extensive reform policies.[14]

It is not surprising, therefore, that both states resisted advice to militarize their borders and did not adopt a view of their boundary as a hard line of sovereign defense. The aforementioned exasperated initial responses to local-level petitions on the part of the high states reflect the possibility that the Ottoman and Greek high states were overwhelmed at the moment of the creation of the border and surprised that the otherwise autonomous institutions that they had charged to secure their boundaries were not acting autonomously.

State-Building Processes Under Way, 1840s

By the 1840s, the Greek state was attempting to extend its newly designed institutions into the Greek countryside and into matters of the economy, and the Ottoman Empire was investing huge efforts in the ambitious Tanzimat reforms. This section examines the impact of the simultaneous state-building efforts on the Ottoman–Greek boundary. It argues that although the high states were reluctant initially to intervene too much in boundary management, in times of crisis they displayed an understanding that the overall security of the boundary was a mutual task. And although governors and government ministers were likely to pass on to diplomatic agencies complaints from local border authorities regarding the indolence of one side, they were just as likely to hand down decrees and commands that demanded their border authorities take measures to suppress populations along their side of the boundary.

In the early years of the boundary, the Greek state attempted to implement draconian measures to settle nomads along the boundary, destroy the huts of mountaineers, and relocate villages that were suspected of causing unrest along the boundary (Koliopoulos, 1987, p. 107). These coercive policies represented basic attempts to expand state control in outlying regions. The policies are comparable with those described in much of the state-building literature on the projection of state power (see Migdal, 2001; Scott, 1998; Tilly, 1990; Weber, 1976). By settling populations and

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expanding the realm of state control, the Greek state was attempting to stabilize residence as grounds for obligation and service to the state. The state was well aware that such measures would meet fierce resistance but implemented them anyway.

Tight border controls can enhance the coercive capacities of states by removing the exit option for those who refuse to submit to the obligations and extractive policies demanded (Chandler, 1998; Hirschman, 1978). However, the Greek state did not have to directly or vigilantly monitor its border because it was aware that its Ottoman neighbor was taking similar measure to settle nomadic populations, eradicate banditry, and expand control over the countryside via expansive structural and fiscal reorganization of its provincial administrative apparatus.

An example from archival documents is instructive: A relatively large number of Greek mercenary captains found themselves in the Ottoman city of Tırhala (Trikkala), proximate to the boundary. The number of captains and their entourage totaled 168, and most had committed crimes of banditry throughout Greek and Ottoman territories. Local authorities had housed and fed the captains and wrote to the Porte requesting if salaried posts could be given to the captains along the boundary. The Porte responded with an interesting decision: The captains were to be transported and settled in the Anatolian city of Izmir (on the other side of the Aegean). They were not to be settled anywhere near the land boundary as this would upset the security of the area and give the Greek side license to make similar appointments in the future. The captains and their followers, despite having committed crimes in Greece, were to be returned to Greece only in the event that settlement in the Izmir area failed.[15]

This decision represents an emerging obligation between the two states to cooperate diffusely to secure the boundary zone. In the same year that this event took place, Hacı Hüseyin Paşa, head of the Ottoman derbents in Tırhala, reported to İstanbul that domestic security in Greece was in shambles and unlikely to recover any time soon: “Bandits are everywhere and there is no security to speak of. The Greek people don’t know what to do and are too scared to even stick their heads out of their houses.”[16] The Ottoman state monitored the insecurity in Greece. In settling the captains in its own internal territory, it was assisting the overall security of the border zone at the expense of its other provinces.

Borders are potentially important sites of extraction for states. Governments have traditionally found it convenient to set up customs posts at borders to collect duties, excise, and value added taxes. These modes of extraction can assist the fiscal solvency of governments, especially those that have weak internal surveillance capacities and are not in ideal positions to monitor income and prevent tax evasion. Yet high extraction rates at borders can trigger interstate disputes on customs policy. High extraction rates on the part of one state can strangle outbound trade and hurt the importing economy. They can also create incentives for large-scale evasion attempts, smuggling, and rising crime rates.

Despite the fact that the Greek state and (less so) the Ottoman state had weak extractive capacities relative to their European counterparts, the border did not become

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a site of competitive customs extraction. Disputes about customs policy seem to have largely been localized and not escalated. A cursory examination of the border zone's remoteness and sparse population might explain the lack of emphasis on customs collection; simply put, too many costs would be required to collect too few duties.[17] Few passports were issued for travelers heading out of boundary zones in Greece in comparison to the number of passports issued for port arrivals.[18] Indeed, relative to duties and customs levied at port cities in various parts of the Empire and the Kingdom, both states seem to have paid little attention to the implementation of customs functions along the boundary. The heavy-volume ships carried in and out of port cities near the boundary region gave the states more concentrated and easier sites for levying duties and generating revenue.

The expenditures of the Ottoman and Greek states along the boundary far outstripped any customs duties that they collected from passage of goods and people. Specifically, both the Ottoman and Greek states commissioned a larger than necessary force of military captains and their clients to watch over the boundary and the border zones.[19] It was argued that those appointed to the boundary were part of the region's traditional security forces. However, the border guards and captains along both sides also included a large number of former bandits who had alternatively pillaged and taken part in the recent war as rebels.

In extending amnesty to many of the bandits and offering employment along the boundary, the high states were attempting to pacify the area. The policy was a rather smart one, tried and proven before in Ottoman state building (Barkey, 1994; Koliopoulos, 1987). It pacified bandit elements, amnestying and employing some, though suppressing and punishing the rest via coercive practices. It also maximized border security relative to state input. Hiring bandits effectively removed a substantial number of individuals from the pursuit of criminal acts (levying unofficial taxes, establishing protection rackets, and so forth) by giving them a stable and decent salary in an otherwise impoverished region. Second, these former bandits knew the tricks of the bandit trade and were adept at taking measures leading to the effective suppression and capture of those that remained on the margins of state authority.[20]

The above state-building measures demonstrate that the two states saw the security of their boundary zones and the administrative success of their border as mutual and reciprocal tasks. In their exchanges and interactions on the boundary, the Ottoman and Greek states demonstrate (a) an understanding of the boundary as an interdependent security zone, (b) an obligation to absorb certain costs domestically to assist the security of the other side, and (c) a forecast that such interaction would continue. As a result, the boundary was insulated from the frequent ups and downs that characterized Ottoman–Greek relations. Although the Ottoman Empire and Greece repeatedly came to the brink of war on issues such as commercial relations, the treatment of diplomats, and the sponsorship of irredentism in Ottoman territories, the boundary remained a well and locally managed institution. Border guards along both sides cooperated to solve positional disputes and to suppress border jumping and banditry along the boundary.

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The International System, State Capacity, and the 1854 Rebellion

By 1853, the Ottoman Empire was engaged in open conflict with Russia in the Crimea. Sentiment in Athens was highly pro-Russian, and the Greek government began to make public claims on Ottoman territories where Greek-speaking Christians constituted a large part of the population. In 1854, a large rebellion swept through the Ottoman provinces of Epirus and Thessaly (the sancaks of Yanya and Tırhala). Greek forces took part in this rebellion, besieging Ottoman border cities such as Narda (Arta) and Tırhala (Trikkala). The rebellion resulted in the severing of diplomatic relations between the Empire and Greece. Ottoman forces later swept through the area to suppress disorder. Meanwhile, the Great Powers, led by the British, launched a punitive expedition against Greece and occupied its main port city, Pireaus (Driault & Lheriter, 1925, p. 393).

On the surface, these events seem to be a turning point: The Greek state demonstrated an increased capacity to threaten the Ottoman Empire and a willingness to use the boundary as a front for irredentism. Although historiographers and observers at the time argued that Greece was using its boundary as an offensive line, much of the historical record suggests that the disturbances were both unintended and not under any form of high-state control. The revolt seems to have begun when captains in the Ottoman border guard feared unemployment; the Ottoman state had appointed yet another series of border captains who were coming to take positions with their clients at the expense of the existing guards (Koliopoulos, 1999). The salaries of the existing guards had been in arrears. The guards left their posts and began to engage in a violent spree hoping to force their reinstatement. Military circles, political parties, and the press in Greece wrongly perceived the growing violence just over the border as evidence of popular discontent and began to speak of seizing the moment to grab territories.

Greek army captains and regulars stationed in provincial cities defected en masse and headed for the boundary zone (Domna-Visvizi, 1972). A large and uncoordinated push began into Ottoman territory, with bandits, army deserters, and former border guards burning and pillaging indiscriminately. Although Greek irredentist circles celebrated when the Ottoman city of Narda was besieged, it became clear that much of the attack was less nationalist and patriotic than was previously thought: Insurgents robbed and burned Muslim and Christian villages alike and even created disturbances in Greek provincial cities. Lamia (Zeytin), the headquarters of Greece's eastern border guard, was attacked, its prisons opened, and its residents robbed.

Despite the massive disorder and violence, the Ottoman and Greek high states initially did not attempt to implement a more direct form of control over boundary matters. Under British diplomatic pressure, the two states restored diplomatic ties and signed into force the Convention on the Suppression of Brigandage in 1856. The convention essentially codified practices that already existed at the local level; these included cross-territorial pursuit, information exchange, and direct extradition of

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suspects. Following the signing of the convention, the two states fell back on their previous views of the boundary as a local zone of employment and mutual security. Border guards again cooperated with one another as if the events of 1854 had not occurred.

However, the convention of 1856 represented a turning point. It certified the existing border regime at the same time that the boundary came to the forefront of Greek political discussions. Moreover, the codification of the border regime contained one clause stipulating that only regulars could be stationed along the border. This clause would become a point of contention, despite the continued practice of amnestying bandits and captains and commissioning them as frontier guards.

Learning and Contradictions, 1856-1865

Following the signing of the convention, both the Ottoman and Greek states began to invest increasingly larger pieces of the budget to the boundary. The Ottoman state, in particular, announced its intent to renovate radically its border infrastructure. More and bigger blockhouses were to be built along the length of the boundary.[21] This would enable the guards to carry on their duties more properly, and it would also solve the issue of housing. Traditionally, much of the border force was either housed in crude wooden shacks, or they burdened local villagers for room and board. The new construction, however, required better maps and topographical surveys. Engineers were sent to the boundary to survey territory and select positions for the stone blockhouses. The new blockhouses were built just behind the boundary line, allowing border guards to continue interfacing. This promoted the ability of border guards to cooperate, communicate, and monitor one another.

However, to build the blockhouses, engineers descended on the boundary with newer and more precise maps in hand. These maps presented the boundary line in more specific detail and revealed mistakes in the demarcation of the boundary as well as disputed spaces that border guards had managed quietly and cooperatively without reporting to their respective states.

Detailed maps and topographical surveys were the result of advances of cartography in European capitals (Biggs, 1999; Black, 1997). Greece, for instance, had contracted French military officials to carry out a huge geographical survey. The survey was published in 1850 in the form of a massive book itemizing villages and other man-made features. It also included a huge multifoil map that showed Greece and the boundary zone in unprecedented detail.[22] At the same time, the Porte was busy at work with the French in setting up courses on map making at the military academy. By 1860, as more blockhouses were being put up, the academy was turning out Map Officers (Harita Subayı) and sending state officials to France for advanced studies in cartography (Ülkekul, 1998).

The infrastructure projects along the boundary and the advances in map making meant that both states now had a more precise image of the boundary. The maps

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exclusively and precisely split up territory into Ottoman and Greek ownership. They revealed neutral zones and presented a more detailed inventory of resources along the boundary and made the nationality of border villages entirely clear. This precision did not create territorial claims or positional disputes. It also did not automatically generate a more precise awareness of national geography; newspapers in Athens regularly misplaced Ottoman towns in Greece when reporting events. However, these new maps, deposited in state agencies, gradually began to contradict the zonal image of the boundary.

A second factor that affected high-state views on the boundary was a series of political claims originating from the local level. Residents living near the land boundary began to demand a share of state investment, either in the form of salaried positions along the boundary or building contracts. Such claims began in 1856 and persisted throughout the 1860s. Boundary residents in the Ottoman Empire were particularly ingenious in manipulating petitions in an attempt to secure jobs, subsidies, and contracts pertaining to boundary administration. One village, for example, requested that it be declared regional headquarters for border security and that surrounding villages be tied to its jurisdiction.[23] It noted that the sizable budget required for this task would be well worth the increase in security given the threat across the boundary. Elsewhere, residents asked for tax relief in light of the frequent bandit disasters visited on their villages given their proximity to Greece.[24]

Such petitions from Muslim and Christian villages alike consistently share two themes: They underscore their strategic value given proximity to the Greek boundary, and they demand a slice of the budget to implement territorial defense against a perceived Greek threat. Villages along the boundary treated one another as competition for limited funds. They outdid each other in describing their strategic value and in casting the specter of invasion over the boundary. So tight was the competition for funds that one cluster of villages sent a plan to the Porte underbidding surrounding settlements. They described in detail their plan to protect a stretch of the boundary and informed the state that their per-man cost was the cheapest on offer regionally.[25]

Although a new provincial law had come into effect in 1864 forbidding towns from directly petitioning Istanbul, many local political claims had already made their way to the Ottoman state.[26] These claims presented a threatening view of the boundary. They alleged corruption and violent behavior by the other side's boundary authorities, and they contradicted the state view of the boundary as a zone to be locally managed.

Despite the 1864 provincial reforms, local strongmen and notables still found ways to make their claims. Provincial governors, whose powers and budgets were increased, now found themselves having to address such petitions. Although they did not forward all petitions to the Porte, they were clearly influenced by their content.[27]

A third factor that had the effect of making high states more actively regulate their boundary administration was the politics of citizenship. Since its inception, the Greek state had made a habit of extending passports to Greek-speaking Ottoman

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Christians on completion of a brief residency requirement yet denying passports and pushing out its Muslim minorities. Through this process, the Greek state was able to shape citizenship to include only Orthodox Christians while extending nationality and protection to Ottoman Christians outside its territory.

The Ottoman Empire had repeatedly tried to end extraterritorial claims to its citizens, alternatively declaring illegal the holding of dual passports and withdrawing diplomatic recognition of Greece (Georges, 1996). Yet such measures were temporary until 1856 when the Ottoman state declared the formal equality of all its subjects, irrespective of religion. Ottoman nationality became a juridical fact and non-Muslims were technically allowed to serve in the army. The formal equality of all subjects made the holding of foreign passports unnecessary and illegal.

The Greek state was confronted with two facts that were in direct contradiction with its citizenship policy. First, a substantial number of its border guards were (and had long been) holders of solely Ottoman passports. Certain members of the Ninth Regiment, which had been stationed along the more remote stretches of the border and had demonstrated excellent ability to cooperate with Ottoman guards, did not meet criteria for Greek citizenship in light of their Muslim background (Koliopoulos, 1987, p. 156). Second, in the 1856 Convention (and its renewed version in 1865), the Greek state had certified the practice of extraditing Ottoman army deserters. Although this had been a long-standing local practice, the Greek state found itself in the awkward position of extraditing Christian army deserters (not just bandits) who otherwise would have qualified for protection and a Greek passport.[28]

During the late 1860s, a major contradiction had come into existence concerning the Ottoman–Greek boundary. Although boundary authorities continued to cooperate with one another to administer the boundary as a common institutional zone, the Greek and Ottoman states had shifted to an understanding of their boundary as a line of territorial defense that deserved more monitoring and intervention than had previously been the case. Detailed maps and surveys made it easier for the central states to view their boundary as an exclusive line and to follow developments with specific reference to place and territory. Local political claims had likewise territorialized the boundary and contradicted local reports that enumerated cross-border cooperation. The citizenship debates, which coincided with high public attention to boundary events, revealed the divergence between theory and practice. For the first time, the Greek high state was confronted with the fact that its border guard looked little like the nation it purported to defend.

The Ottoman and the Greek high states began to monitor the boundary more vigilantly, and they increasingly restricted the administrative autonomy of the local level. Given this shift in preferences, it became increasingly difficult for border guards to cooperate. Boundary authorities found themselves trying to sustain cooperation against both local hostility and growing interference from their respective states.

This qualitative shift becomes clear from events that took place in 1867 along the central region of the boundary. The Greek prime minister reported that he had

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received a report of a serious violation of Greek territory on the part of Ottoman troops. The report claimed that Ottoman guards had penetrated 1 hour into Greek territory, entered villages around Karitza, killed a woman, carried off 70 oxen, and threatened to come back and punish the district more severely.[29] A captain in the Greek border guard answered the inquiry stating that the reports had been greatly exaggerated and that facing a similar situation, he would have acted no differently than the Ottoman guards.[30] The exchange demonstrates that the content of interactions between the state and its border authorities had changed: The high state had become suspicious of local cooperation and uncomfortable with its territorially loose boundary administration, and the border guards had become uncomfortable at being called to justify long-standing administrative practices.[31]

In addition to the increased willingness of the high states to interfere in the administrative micro-management issues of the border, the conventions of 1856 and 1865 created a convenient template for Greek diplomats and political leaders to criticize the Ottoman state. This period witnessed a peak of diplomatic complaints that the Greek foreign ministry registered with the Ottoman state and with other major European powers. These complaints focused on Ottoman noncompliance with the articles of the treaty. Athens accused the Ottoman Empire of failing to staff the border posts with regular troops and with continued use of irregulars disguised in regular army uniforms. These complaints had some basis in fact, but the motives of the Greek state were to convince British diplomats that the Ottomans were uncivilized and barbaric and, hence, undeserving of their protection.

Although the Ottoman Empire was continuing to treat its boundary zone as an institution that would strike an optimal balance between job creation and the need for security, the Greek state was shifting to a view of the border as a line of control requiring unilateral management. In disputing Ottoman compliance with legal articles that were supposed to be a means to cross-border cooperation, the Greek state was making border policy itself the object of discord. On one hand, it seems counterintuitive for a nationalizing state with irredentist designs to prod its neighbor to replace a lightly armed ragtag group of irregulars with a professionally trained and well-armed military. On the other hand, this proved to be the only means by which the Greek high state could foreclose cooperation with its neighbor and begin to assume direct control of the actions of its border guard.

Many Greek provincial governors (nomarchs) applauded this projection of central authority. However, it is important to note that these governors were centrally appointed figures, agents of central state interests in the provinces, and often the very source of complaints regarding Ottoman irregulars. Newspapers of Greek border towns, like Lamia, found themselves on the losing side in a battle against their own high-level authorities. These provincial newspapers issued severe criticisms of high-state policies. They accused Athens of exaggerating the lack of professionalism on the part of Ottoman authorities and of fabricating crime statistics in the provinces to assert direct control over security matters.

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The Demise of the Boundary Regime and an Irredentist Epilogue

Historians describe the 1870s as a period of rapprochement in Greek–Ottoman relations. Diplomatic relations had been restored, public and joint efforts to stamp out brigandage in the border zones had been declared, and the two states were both campaigning (albeit for different reasons) against Russian interference in Ottoman affairs (see Dakin, 1972; Sergeant, 1897; Tatsios, 1984). Despite the rapprochement, I argue that both states exerted direct and unilateral management over their border. Both states increasingly restricted the form and content of local cross-border cooperation, and they enforced border control policies that were counterproductive in producing public security. Direct and unilateral management disrupted the border regime in a period of otherwise peaceful relations. This disruption was unable to recover following the peaceful and diplomatically negotiated transfer of the Ottoman territories of Thessaly (Tırhala) and Arta (Narda) to Greece in 1881.

In the early 1870s, both states announced their intent to cooperate and stamp out banditry once and for all following the highly publicized bandit kidnappings of British officials (Koliopoulos, 1987, pp. 179-190). The kidnapping, known as the Dilessi incident, had attracted unfavorable foreign attention to the domestic situation in Greece and the Ottoman Empire, and both the Porte and Athens were determined to suppress public disorder and bandit activity. Moreover, Russia's influence over the Ottoman Empire was in ascendance. Russia made public its sweeping plans for autonomy and independence of Ottoman territories with Slavic populations. Greek speakers and/or Christians tied to the Patriarchate populated many of these territories, and this created panic among Greek leaders and diplomats (Kofos, 1975). These events prompted a period of rapprochement and virtual alliance between the Ottoman and Greek high states.

Cooperative relations on the surface seemed to have extended to border administration. A series of high-level meetings took place along the border to discuss security and administration, and governors along both sides of the boundary offered joint rewards for the capture of border jumpers, deserters, and fugitives.[32] Finally, high-state officials discussed and implemented the use of mixed regiments of Ottoman and Greek border guards along the boundary.[33]

Despite the rapprochement and seemingly cooperative nature of boundary administration, the locally embedded boundary regime was gone. The high states had adopted an understanding of the frontier that was more territorial and linear than zonal. Spectacles of pomp and circumstance lacking in content replaced the substantive meetings along the boundary that had formerly taken place between local border officials. High-level officials were given 21 gun salutes as they crossed the border ("He Eleusis Tou Mechmet Ali Pasa Eis Lamia," 1874). The fanfare served as an indication that the act of leaving and entering the boundary had now become a formal act.

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More important, during these meetings the states demonstrated a willingness to restrict the access of the other side's border guards to cross the boundary even as they recertified the practice of cross-territorial pursuit. In May 1871, military and government officials discussed the implementation of mixed companies along the frontier. Ottoman and Greek border guards were to fight brigands using a coordinated strategy under a single captain.[34] Although the right of cross-territorial pursuit was affirmed, a set of restrictions was placed on the companies. The companies could only meet, communicate, and cross over at two selected points along the entire border.[35] High-state officials agreed that the companies should act in nightfall to surprise border jumpers and bandits, but they also demanded that the companies first request permission from governors in whose territorial jurisdiction the ambush was to take place.[36]

The results were disastrous for the boundary regime. The mixed regiments were a failure. The companies could not operate under the conditions the high states attached to the execution of their duties. Border jumpers and bandits seem to have been aware of the procedural limitations placed on the companies and eluded the regiments by cropping the frontier along points where passage was not certified.[37] The mixed companies found their activities frustrated in other ways. The quarantine houses and officials, which multiplied along the boundary,[38] routinely detained mixed regiments in hot pursuit as they entered Greece citing sanitary regulations.[39] The regiments looked on helplessly as the bandits escaped.

In this period, the advances in boundary administration made during the 1850s and 1860s unraveled. Reports and exchanges between Ottoman border guards demonstrate a swift return to primitive methods of tit-for-tat cooperation that were reminiscent of the 1st years of the boundary. Basic issues of coordinating information exchange and patrolling dominated border guard communiqués. Each side began to exclusively and unilaterally manage the boundary with little coordination of activity or shared procedure.[40]

As a result, border guards found themselves working unilaterally and more furiously to combat banditry and crime along the boundary.[41] The decline in administrative capacity, in turn, meant that events that otherwise would have been solved jointly and without escalation were now rushed up administrative hierarchies. Boundary authorities also became more willing to blame disorder and crime occurring on their side as a consequence of the negligence of their foreign counterparts.

Before major crises of irredentism (1881, 1896, and 1912), the Russo–Turkish War (1877), and any obvious decline in their relations, the Greek and Ottoman states militarized their boundaries and declared marshal law in most of their frontier provinces. In 1881 the Ottoman–Greek boundary was moved to the north following the Congress of Berlin (on the events surround this, see Anderson, 1966; Blumi, 2003; Davison, 1999; Macfie, 1996; Paganele, 1882; Yasamee, 1996). With the blessing of the Great Powers, Greece annexed the Ottoman sancak of Tırhala (Thessaly) and the region of Arta. By this time, the local boundary regime had been wiped out

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of existence even as the two states pledged to restore cooperation and security along their new boundary (Halavart, 1973).

Conclusion

What conclusions can we draw from the above case study? Certainly, the history of the first Ottoman–Greek boundary indicates that boundaries are not automatic or necessary lines of military defense. The Ottoman–Greek boundary became a site of offensive and defensive countermeasures nearly 50 years after its creation.

Instead, borders are better conceptualized as process-based institutions with local, national, and international dimensions. Although a series of studies has explained how domestic political processes affect international boundaries (Andreas, 2000; Chandler, 1998; Gavrilis, 2004; Luhman, 1982; Lustick, 1993; Tronvoll, 1999), we can push the envelope further and claim that borders are formed and sustained by mechanisms and processes much like other social phenomena. Here Charles Tilly's work may very well prove indispensable to future studies of borders.

The benefit of adopting a mechanism-based framework in studying boundaries is that it allows us to connect the large array of actors and numerous levels of analysis that affect how borders function. Crudely put, mechanisms are small transfers of social energy between actors or social sites. When a mechanism occurs, it changes relations among actors or social sites in identical or consistently similar ways (Tilly, 2005). Take a mechanism such as brokerage. Brokerage joins two or more social sites that were previously less connected. In studies of contentious politics, brokerage may occur alongside other mechanisms to produce a host of collective phenomena such as protests, rebellions, and even changes in social identity (McAdam, Tarrow, & Tilly 2001; Tilly & Tarrow, 2007). But we see this mechanism operating along the Greek–Ottoman boundary as well. This occurred in the early years of the boundary when the Ottoman and Greek states sent directives down their administrative hierarchies demanding that their border guards cooperate with one another. The result was that Ottoman and Greek border guards began to interact and communicate with one another to pose solutions to joint security problems. Without such third-party brokerage from above, each side would have unilaterally and poorly managed the boundary.

A host of other mechanisms—conversation, diffusion, enforcement, and imposition—can be identified in the case study to show how the border evolved and collapsed as an institution of security. Following brokerage, conversation among Ottoman and Greek border guards about the dilemmas of the boundary had radical affects on policing tactics and also promoted trust among the two sides' security forces. Enforcement by border guards on recalcitrant or lazy colleagues kept the boundary regime honest and insulated it from intervention from high-state agencies.

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In subsequent years, a host of state impositions would disrupt the functioning of the boundary. As cooperative practices diffused along the boundary, the Ottoman and Greek states became intent to impose and enforce strict regulations on how the border would be policed and who would police it. The result was an upward scale shift[42] of sorts in which the states stripped border guards of their autonomy and vested actors in distant capital cities (such as ministers, members of parliament, and the media) with the task of micro-managing the administration of the border.

Readers of the above case study may certainly choose to explain the dynamics of the Ottoman–Greek boundary using other explanations or variables such as militarization, ethnic hatred, or international intervention. My aim here has not been to lead the witness to a particular approach. Rather, it has been to use a single, richly documented case study to provoke thought on interstate borders. At the very least, in treating the boundary as a process-based institution with multiple levels of analysis, we can make a forceful case that boundaries—contentious or otherwise—are social phenomena much like protests, revolutions, and collective identities.

Appendix
Archives Consulted

BBA: Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi.
The Archives of the Prime Ministry, Istanbul, Turkey

A.MKT.NZD: Sadaret Defterleri, Bab-ı Ali Evrak Odası
Cevdet Tasnifi: Hariciye, Askeriye, Zaptiye
Hatt-ı Hümayun Tasnifi
HR.SYS: Hariciye Nezareti, Siyasi Kısmı
İrade Dahiliye
İrade Yunanistan Defteri

AYE: Historiko Archeio tou Ypourgeiou Eksoterikon
The Historical Archives of the Foreign Ministry, Athens, Greece

3/1: Sunoriaka
4/1: Sunoriaka
4/2: Lestrika
4/3, 4: Orothetika
78/1: Peri Charton

FO: Foreign office files
Public Record Office, London, UK

FO 32: Political and other departments: General correspondence before 1906, Greece
FO 78: Political and other departments: General correspondence before 1906, Ottoman Empire
FO 195: Embassy and Consulates, Turkey (formerly Ottoman Empire): General correspondence

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Notes

1. Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi (The Archives of the Prime Ministry, Istanbul; henceforth, BBA), HR.SYS, 1677/2, 1827-7-6: February 19–March 2; "Memorandum on the new delimitation of Greece."

2. BBA, Hatt-ı Hümayun, 47760-B, 1249 (1833-1834); Hüseyin's description of the delimitation procedure and the boundary zone; and Historiko Archeio tou Ypourgeiou Eksoterikon (The Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Athens; henceforth, AYE), AYE, 1833, 4/4, 25 April 1833; petition of residents of Sourbe to Greek government.

3. BBA, Hatt-ı Hümayun, 21694-C, 1248 (1832-1833); in this document, the Muslims of Patracık send a terrified petition off to the Sultan begging to be transported out of Greece. Also, BBA, Hatt-ı Hümayun, 47762-H, 1250 (1834-1835).

4. BBA, Hatt-ı Hümayun, 47730-B, 1254 (1838-1839); and AYE, 1853, 4/1a, February 4, 1844; report of mayor of Ktemenion.

5. Herbst's (2000) exceptional study of state control in Africa departs from such accounts by outlining domestic and international determinants that have caused African state boundaries to be nonexistent on the ground but very durable and legitimate on maps. The case study in this article differs substantially from his approach largely because it shows that Greece and the Ottoman Empire initially benefited from an effective, well-functioning border despite state weakness.

6. BBA, HR.SYS, 1677/2, 1827-7-6.

7. AYE, 1836, 4/1b, July 30, 1836.

8. AYE, 1840, 4/1, 3/15 March 1840; and AYE, 1842, 4/1; n.d.; order of the Greek minister of war to the troops and gendarme in Lamia; and AYE, 1843, 4/1d; letter of Tayyar Mehmet Pasa, Kaymakam of the Sancak of Tırhala to the Greek consul in Salonika. Also, see BBA, Cevdet Hariciye, 8995, 22.R.1262 (April 19, 1846).

9. See, AYE, 1836, 4/1b, September 2, 1836; Greek Interior Minister to Minister of Foreign Affairs.

10. AYE, 1843, 4/1b, March 1 and 3, 1843.

11. AYE, 1843, 4/1b, November 23–December 5, 1843.

12. See Sahlins (1991) on a similar process along the 19th-century Spanish–French border.

13. See, BBA, Hatt-ı Hümayun, 1256.M.5 (March 9, 1840).

14. The Tanzimat lasted from 1839 to 1878. The reforms involved a massive reorganization of state bureaucracy involving both elements of centralization and devolution. Contrary to mistaken analyses, the Tanzimat did not aim to remove all forms of indirect rule nor was it borrowed wholesale from European administrative models. On the general scope of reorganization and reform, see work by Köksal (2002), Rogan (1999), Çadırcı (1989, 1997), Yıldız (1992), and İnalcık (1973).

15. BBA, İrade Yunanistan, 129, 1264.M.6 (December 14, 1847).

16. BBA, Cevdet Zaptiye 2372, 1264.S.29 (February 5, 1848); note that Hacı Hüseyin was also the Ottoman representative to the delimitation commission.

17. FO 32/124, 24 March 1843; on isolation and sparse population of border region; meant that travelers invariably performed quarantine; see accounts in Stamatake (1846) and Leake (1835).

18. AYE, 1841, 54/1, on sanitary and quarantine regulations involving major points of entry.

19. FO 169/19, March 7, 1842; in this dispatch, the British also express concern with the large number of security forces that Greece dispatched to the border.

20. This policy represents an interesting deployment of local knowledge as a means of gradually expanding state authority.

21. BBA, İrade Dahiliye, 26785, 1274.S.24 (October 14, 1857); and 28670, 1275.Za.3 (June 4, 1859); also, FO 195/494, October 22, 1855; description of new plan as reported to British consular agents.

22. This commissioned project is described in, AYE, 3/1, May 11, 1850; "Peri katartiseos geografikou chartou tou basileiou tes Hellados."

23. BBA, A.MKT.NZD, 1272.N.18 (May 23, 1856).

24. İrade Dahiliye, 30255, 1276.S.15 (September 13, 1859).

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25. FO 195/801, May 18, 1864; this was reported by the British vice consul stationed in the Ottoman provincial city of Yanya (Ioannina).

26. On the implementation of the provincial law, see Çadırcı (1989), Köksal (2002), and Rogan (1999).

27. FO 195/801, May 18, 1864; reports on revised plan.

28. AYE, 1866, 4/2a, December 14-26, 1865; on discussion of extradition and composition of army.

29. FO 195/868, From Greece 1866-1867; February 14, 1867.

30. FO 195/868, From Greece 1866-1867; February 23, 1867.

31. In a similar incident, an ad hoc commission of Greek high-state representatives "naturally" rejected an Ottoman offer to declare the zone neutral and open to mutual use. See, BBA, HR.SYS, 1530.1, August 29, 1866.

32. British consular officials reported that the Greek and Ottoman states offered a joint reward for the capture of the elusive bandit Takos. The Greek side offered 20,000 drachmas and the Ottoman government 1000 lira, a huge sum by the standards of the day. See, FO 195/952, July 6, 1870. In another instance, the governor of Tırhala telegraphed the nomarch of Lamia to announce that he was offering a reward of 300 Turkish lira for the capture of border bandits. The publication of such offers in local newspapers, such as *Faros tes Othryos*, in the 1870s created a stir and sent a huge wave of volunteers to the boundary in search of bandits.

33. AYE, 1840, 4/2b, May 19, 1870.

34. See discussion on boundary between government officials: AYE, 1871, 4/1e, April 19, 1871.

35. AYE, 1871, 4/1e, June 25, 1871; minister of foreign affairs reports to consulates in London, St. Petersburg, Paris, etc.

36. AYE, 1871, 4/1e, February 4-16 and February 17–March 1, 1871.

37. FO 195/980, December 16, 1871.

38. On lazarettos (quarantine houses) established on the border at Derven Fourka, Sourbe, Stamos, and New Myzele, see FO 195/980, December 10, 1871.

39. FO 195/980, December 26, 1871.

40. See FO 72/2294, 1873, on domestic measures and rewards to troops.

41. FO 195/952, January 5, 1871, regarding an event in which Ottoman hududiye (border guards) were ambushed, resulting in the death of 2 officers, 12 soldiers, and 4 assisting villagers.

42. On scale shift, see work by Tarrow (2005: chapter 7) and Tilly and Tarrow (2007).

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