

The David and Goliath phenomenon of anticolonial insurgency: The role and impact of intelligence on informational and power asymmetries during the EOKA struggle

This paper examines an understudied aspect of the EOKA struggle by focusing on the role and impact of intelligence in three phases of the conflict: 1) the use of information by EOKA at its nascent stages and the facilitation of its growth and social support, 2) the use of information by the British colonial forces in the formulation of its counterinsurgency strategy, and 3) the use of British punitive tactics that led to the opposite of their intended effect, namely the failure to suppress the EOKA struggle and the further legitimization and enhancement of the organization's operational capacity.

While British strategies and tactics have received significant attention within the relevant academic literature, there has been little attention paid to the way in which they influenced the strategic dynamics of the struggle in the ways described above. This paper situates its analysis within a theoretical framework that models armed struggle as a process of sociopolitical recruitment that operationalizes prevailing social norms and social network structure. It illustrates that recruitment for the purposes of an armed struggle may be accomplished through the resolution of information asymmetry on participants' fitness and the use of intelligence, especially in clandestine operations. More specific to the case study is the additional element of power asymmetry between the local population and the colonial forces. The paper illustrates that information and its efficient use, as well as the embeddedness the social conditions – both in terms of norms and networks – compensate for and may even overcome an asymmetrical power distribution.