

Rebel Legitimacy: A Theory on Battle Intensity

A Thesis Presented for the
Master of Arts
Degree
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Brooke Golden
December 2023

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my professor and chair of my committee, Dr. Gary Uzonyi, for his exceptional patience and feedback. This journey would not have been possible without his guidance and expertise. I am also extremely grateful to the rest of my committee, Dr. Krista Wiegand and Dr. Kyung Joon Han, for agreeing to join me on this journey and for continuing to be generously patient and kind.

I would also like to extend my sincere thanks to Ms. Cary Springer for being a guiding pillar in my time of need. Without her support and enthusiasm, some of the most important parts of this journey would have been impossible.

Lastly, I would like to recognize all the friends and family who have been there for me on this journey.

ABSTRACT

Why do some rebel groups experience more intense fighting during civil war than others?

This paper examines the relationship between rebel legitimacy and battle intensity.

Existing literature has much to say about the various variables that influence battle intensity; however, this paper will incorporate two causal mechanisms of rebel legitimacy that are often overlooked or understudied in the civil war literature that explores battle intensity. The two causal mechanisms are: the number of civilian deaths and the level of rebel governance. This study is unique in the way it challenges our current understanding of battle intensity through these mechanisms. This study utilizes a large-N quantitative analysis comprised of 2,751 observations to confirm or disconfirm my theory.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction.....	1
Chapter One: Literature Review	6
Rebel Governance	6
Civilian Victimization.....	10
Battle Intensity	13
Chapter Two: Conceptualizing Rebel Legitimacy and Battle Intensity	21
Alternative Explanations.....	26
Chapter Three: Illustrative Case	28
Chapter Four: Research Design and Data.....	31
Chapter Five: Analysis.....	37
Conclusion	41
List of References	43
Appendix.....	51
Vita.....	56

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Type of Governance.	32
Table 2: Levels of Governance	32
Table 3: External Support	51
Table 4: Rebel Capacity.....	51
Table 5: Type of Rebel Group	52
Table 6: Regime Type.....	52
Table 7: Descriptive Statistics.	36
Table 8: Main Analysis	38

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Rebel Type	53
Figure 2: Rebel Governance Level	53
Figure 3: Government Battle-Related Deaths	54
Figure 4: External Support.....	54
Figure 5: Rebel Capacity	55

INTRODUCTION

Why do some rebel groups experience more intense fighting during civil war than others?

Scholars expect conflict intensity to be a product of a rebel group's opportunity (e.g., Breslawski and Ives 2019, Kostyuk and Zhukov 2019, Mehrl and Thurner 2020, Rigterink 2020, and Sexton et al. 2019). In addition, the type of violence (i.e., strategic violence, civilian victimization, guerilla warfare, etc.) accounts for some variation in the conflict intensity (e.g., Jones 2017, Leventoglu and Metternich 2018, Griffiths and Wasser 2019, and Stanton 2020). However, consider the case of the government of Ethiopia against the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) in 1989. This case, in particular, took place in the Tigray Province and resulted in 9,000 government battle-related deaths. Despite such a large number of government battle-related deaths, there were no civilian deaths (Sundberg and Melander 2013).

This case is puzzling given what other scholars have said in regard to battle intensity. In particular, Reed Wood explores the positive correlation between battle-related deaths and civilian victimization (2014). In the aforementioned case, however, it is shown this is not the case. In contrast to what one would expect with the existing literature, the data shows there may be other mechanisms in place. Puzzling variation exists within the data when comparing the number of civilian deaths to the number of government battle-related deaths.

This observation urges a deeper understanding of rebel group legitimacy and how the components that comprise rebel group legitimacy hold significance in battle intensity. By

intense fighting, I refer to the number of battle-deaths in a conflict. My study will focus on government battle-related deaths. Rebel battle-related deaths will not be considered when exploring fighting intensity for this study because I am not interested in looking at inter-rebel conflict but rather how rebel factors allow them to fight the government or State more intensely. In addition, rebel group legitimacy will be comprised of two causal mechanisms: the number of civilian deaths and the level of rebel governance.

These two causal mechanisms of rebel group legitimacy help define the expectations of a rebel group. These expectations can be laid out as the following: (1) participants hold beliefs and expectations of authority, (2) authority imposes appropriate social order, and (3) authority has justification of the use of coercive power (Peter 2017). It is essential to form a distinction between the expectations of legitimacy and authority in this manner because while many times authority is linked to power, legitimacy is not solely linked to power. By participants, I refer to any rebel involved in their group's movement as well as any external support. Without expectations to either meet or fail to meet, a rebel group holds no authority or legitimacy. These expectations most likely come from the group's agenda or policy aims and make-up the populace of the rebel group as rebels join to make these demands. In addition, how a rebel group imposes social order says a lot about their resources, strength, and strategy. Social order can range from how a rebel group recruits new rebels to how they implement external relations. It can even refer to how rebel groups engage civilians and implement strategy, namely rebel governance. Lastly, if and how a rebel group uses their authority, it needs to be justified.

Under the conditions that a rebel group acts and appears more legitimate, then we would expect to see more intense fighting. In particular, the way in which they act and appear legitimate is a proponent of civilian victimization and rebel governance. Rebel governance refers to the way that rebels interact and engage civilians (Kasfir 2015). This relationship between rebels and civilians is better described through rebel governance rather than civilian victimization because there is more to understand regarding their relationship when we view it from a more positive lens. We would expect that a rebel group who engages in positive governance with civilians would be more likely to fight intense battles. In contrast, we would expect that rebel groups who engage in civilian victimization would not be as likely to fight intense battles. Civilian victimization can be described as a strategy insurgents use to target and kill civilians (Downes 2017).

Rather than reference to battle intensity, much of the literature around rebel governance focuses on the civilians themselves and the effects on civilians (e.g., Carnegie et al. 2022, Garcés-palacio et al. 2021, and Kubota 2023). While my theory depicts rebel governance as necessary for rebels fighting more intense battles, existing literature suggests that it is not all that beneficial to rebel groups. It causes rebels to allocate resources away from fighting, and it can even lead to more social problems depending on the cause of conflict (Stewart 2021). Existing literature also aims to explore how low to moderate levels of civilian victimization can aid in the bargaining process between non-State actors and State actors (Kathman and Wood 2013). In doing so though, it lacks an explanation regarding intensity and skips right to the outcome. On a different note, the likelihood that a rebel group will engage in civilian victimization regarding the likelihood that their

opponents will as well, has been explored. This is partly due to the perceived threat of controlling resources (e.g., Gibilisco et al. 2022, Wood and Kathman 2015).

Statistical analysis, mainly using data from the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP), comprised of 2,751 observations from 1989 to 2022 partially supports the claim that these variables are related in the manner which I expect. I am primarily interested in exploring post-WWII trends as it marked a pinnacle point for armed conflict and contains some of the deadliest wars. During the post-WWII era, there is variation in the number of civil and intrastate conflicts that suggests there is much to learn (Dupuy and Rustad 2018).

This argument and findings contribute to the civil war, political violence, rebel governance, and civilian victimization literature by exploring the process by which rebel governance and civilian victimization play a role during conflict rather than after. It is much more popular for scholars to focus on the conflict processes that lead to civil war onset or civil war termination than just the processes themselves (e.g., Fearon and Laitin 2003, Kirchner 2010, Ohmura 2011, Regan 2000, and Zeigler 2016). This study carries vital implications for the outcome of civil war. If these variables truly do impact battle intensity in this manner, then it could be directly related to the outcome of civil war and civil war reoccurrence. This study also holds political and social significance in understanding the war economy and how civilians and rebels alike traverse it.

Furthermore, this is an underexplored area in the rebel governance literature. While many studies look at the types of institutions and services set up by rebels and how those services impact civilians, there is a gap in the literature that utilizes all of these variables in terms of battle intensity.

This study proceeds as follows. Section one reviews existing literature that explains the current findings on rebel legitimacy and battle intensity. Section two explores my theory on the relationship between rebel legitimacy and battle intensity. Section three exhibits an illustrative case of my theory. Section four describes my methods and presents evidence collected that shows the relationship between rebel legitimacy and battle intensity.

Section five uses the data to show how my theory is confirmed or disconfirmed. Lastly, section six concludes this study by discussing future areas of research and inquiry as well as making concluding remarks.

CHAPTER ONE

LITERATURE REVIEW

There are a multitude of variables that seek to be explored when it comes to rebel legitimacy and battle intensity. This is such a vast area of study to explore that there is a lot of work yet to be done. There are also many mechanisms that have yet to be looked at together. In terms of battle intensity, rebel governance and civilian victimization are unstudied in the manner by which they will be looked at in this study.

Rebel Governance

One of the more popular indicators of rebel legitimacy rests in the concept of rebel governance. Rebel governance refers to the way in which rebels interact and organize civilians. It is also an extremely useful term for understanding rebel legitimacy. Existing literature pertaining to rebel governance usually falls into one of three categories: political institutions, elections, or the provision of goods and services (Kasfir 2015). Rebel political institutions exist at many levels, especially the local level. Political institution refers to any administrative body that holds a role in policymaking and management. These institutions are often used as a means of realizing their long-term political goals because it helps them set up a system to navigate challenges and establish authority. While the type and use of institutions can vary greatly, we often see institutions that help allocate resources and access to power (Mampilly and Stewart 2021). While these institutions can lead to negative relations with civilians, they can also do the opposite. These institutions often allow for cooperation and compliance on behalf of

civilians. This is partly because these institutions make use of a judicial process that brings about a sense of security during times of conflict (Loyle 2021).

Depending on what types of institutions and how they are set up, these institutions can also signify the level of understanding a rebel group has about the economy and how to operate themselves. Mampilly and Stewart, in particular, lay out the different mechanisms behind institution-building. Their theory splits institution-building into four factors: power sharing, integration, innovation, and inclusiveness (2021). These different factors combine to represent various preferences a rebel group might have for interacting with civilians.

Civilians are oftentimes displaced and left with nowhere to go during conflict or war. Those who seek refuge from violence might find themselves looking to the rebels for assistance. Rebel groups can be good providers for wartime social services that civilians would otherwise have no access to. This not only includes healthcare, but it can also include things such as education and legal systems. By rebel groups offering these types of services, they demonstrate their capability and entice civilians to pursue goals under the rebel's safety (Kubota 2023). This applies to displaced civilians who have nowhere to go. It is not as simple as having the ability to pack your bags and leave. Some civilians cannot afford to leave, fear the danger of leaving, cannot safely leave, or simply do not wish to leave their homes. And not only services but because rebel groups often govern territory, they can also distribute goods (Brenner and Tazzioli 2022). Not to mention, many people profit from war and sometimes war is how individuals get a paycheck. Some individuals may be incentivized by labor to stay near rebels (Estancona 2022).

Many rebels also engage in natural resource extraction that allows them to better able provide goods and services. In doing so, they can ensure a dependable civilian workforce (Conrad et al. 2022). While a civilian workforce might sound uncommon or unfamiliar in times of conflict, a wartime economy is still an economy and operates like one. So even though things might be displaced and different, there is still work to be done.

In addition to this, rebels hosting elections can be a good thing for citizens and themselves. It can demonstrate rebel capability and that instills a sense of legitimacy in the rebel group as perceived by the civilians. The reason it instills legitimacy is because it establishes public accountability. However, it does have the potential to bring about a disconnect between both groups. An election gives the rebel non-elite the opportunity to rise and could result in manipulation and backlash (Cunningham et al. 2021). These elections can serve to introduce new policies and standards. Policies and standards that the rebels are fighting for. This can refer to a multitude of things. For instance, an election that allows ordinary citizens to participate through democratically elected officials rather than individuals being appointed. Another example is elections appealing to civilians by imposing local order and social services that might have otherwise been impossible to experience under a ban (Huang 2022).

However, for how rarely rebel elections occur, it is just as important to know how rebels who do not hold elections can still gain legitimacy. Those who claim to represent others in political matters without electoral authorization and accountability can be referred to as self-appointed (Montanaro 2012). Rebel groups consist of self-appointed political leaders and their constituencies. The reason rebel groups can recruit members and strategize is

because they have individuals who take on the role of a political actor (the leaders) and the individuals who comprise of their manpower (basically everyone else) and give those political leaders power to make decisions on their behalf.

Self-appointed leaders have two types of constituencies: the authorizing and the affected. Authorizing refers to those who bring authority and accountability to the self-appointed leader, whereas the affected refers to those who are impacted by their actions – be it their own members or those who are uninvolved. These self-appointed leaders are considered legitimate so long as they provide a political presence for their constituency and are held accountable by them. This political presence exists outside of institutions and/or offices under state-authority (Montanaro 2012). Now, this is essential for understanding rebel group recruitment under the assumption that rebel group leaders act as political actors in the sense that self-appointed representatives do. Even though it might not seem like rebel groups offer a platform for individuals to have their interests voiced, they do in the sense that those who are recruited often have the same ideological preferences as their group and seek to act in relation to those ideological preferences. This means they are giving authority to an individual within the rebel group to lead members within their group and voice those preferences as one cohesive entity. Often those ideological preferences are aligned with some sort of factor, such as ethnicity or religion, that leaves the group feeling politically excluded. And like other political actors, a rebel group's actions impact those outside of their constituency. To some extent, those individuals outside of the rebel group leader's constituency hold that leader accountable as a political actor. This occurs

when a rebel group's action harms outsiders and they look to hold an individual accountable for their grievances.

How these individuals are entitled to self-appoint themselves on behalf of their constituencies is significant in understanding underrepresented groups and how they gain legitimacy as a result. Self-appointed representatives hold significance for groups whose interests might not be situated within electoral constituencies and who are still affected by policies. Self-appointment acts as a mechanism for constituent formation and brings groups who feel underrepresented in electoral constituencies together (Montanaro 2012). To add to this, self-appointed representatives automatically have a level of legitimacy as a result. Without this representation, there would be political exclusion. We can also see this in the sense of grassroots movements – individuals initiating a movement on behalf of others. You typically would not see a rebel group's formation as a movement, but it really is on a much deeper level. Rebel groups have self-appointed representation, gather and recruit individuals under their cause, and push for change – albeit in more violent manners than a social movement. And like how a lot of political actors' actions are top-down, so are the actions of rebel group leaders. Their actions are driven by upper-division elites who receive that authority from the constituents who act on their behalf.

Civilian Victimization

There is also literature that explores the relationship between rebel legitimacy and civilian victimization. Rebel groups often engage in civilian victimization. It is a tactic they resort to when they are desperate or at a loss (i.e., resource-wise, fighting-wise, etc.) (e.g., Costalli et al. 2020, Gibilisco et al. 2022). Variation in rebel groups has an impact

on the violence used by rebel groups. This variation can account for numerous calculations impacting the utilization of civilian victimization: strategy, motivation, costs, etc. These calculations can be at the group or individual level. The fractionalization that occurs because of these calculations determines how rebels engage in civilian victimization and lay out the incentives and restraints in doing so (Ottmann 2017). Wood and Kathman argue that civilian victimization increases at the same time rival rebel groups engage in conflict with one another. This is partly due to the perceived threat of controlling resources. The more rebel groups there are, the less resources there are to split. As a result, conflict arises as a means of monopolizing those resources (2015).

This indiscriminate violence is often viewed as a reason for extended or new conflicts. Rebels might choose to victimize civilians as a means of establishing control over a territory. As such, there is likely to be an increase in civilian victimization after a rebel group claims or takes over territory (Oswald et al. 2020). There are studies that try to prove and disprove the impact of humanitarian aid and/or peacekeeping on violence against civilians. One argument suggests that rebels are likely to attack civilians receiving aid as a means of pillaging their resources. However, the timing of the humanitarian aid is crucial in terms of its violence-reducing or violence-increasing properties (Lyll 2019). For the same reason, other scholars explore how rebel groups are less motivated to foster ties with civilians when they do not need them due to external support. However, this may depend on the actions of both sides (Salehyan et al. 2014).

While this applies to civilian victimization done by rebels, many scholars pay attention to civilian victimization done by the State/government. While this paper mainly focuses on

rebels, this literature is still a fantastic representation on how State actions and consequences can be translated to rebel groups. In fact, participating in civilian victimization can make it more likely that an outside presence will not view the actors as favorably. This can impact battle intensity by means of creating more conflict between outside and inside actors (Mattiacci and Jones 2020). The primary take away from this is that civilian victimization can stunt support from outsiders. However, sometimes rebels will use this as a tactic to consolidate power and take out rivals. This violence can also reach others and help form coalitions with groups who thrive on violence (Matt 2020).

It is also worth noting that location and type of rebel may play a part in how civilians are victimized. Secessionist movements are less likely to target civilians because they want to create stronger ties with them to legitimize their independence. In addition, rebels that hold territory domestically are also less likely to target and victimize civilians than rebels who hold foreign territory or are closer to the border (Stewart and Liou 2017). And the opposite applies to revolutionist rebel groups who are only focused on an extreme take over. In addition, understanding where civilian resistance comes from could also be a pivotal point in understanding civilian victimization. For example, exploring how likely civilians are to resist different types of rebel governance (Arjona 2015). Uncooperative civilians might increase the motivation of a rebel group to not provide any governance or to victimize the civilians. Furthermore, civilian agency and collective actions outline the path to resistance or the path to cooperation (Arjona 2016, 2017).

Wood explores this exact idea in a different manner and from the perspective of the rebels. Rebels are more likely to victimize when there is a collective action problem due

to their lack of ability to provide proper governance and benefits to the civilians. He uses the terms “selective incentives” and “selective repression” to explain his theory on rebel groups and why they victimize (2010). In addition, Wood looks at the relationship between civilian victimization and strategy. As more strategies become openly available to a rebel group who is improving their military capacity, they lose incentive to perform anti-civilian tactics (2014).

Battle Intensity

By battle intensity, I refer to the number of battle-deaths in a conflict. My study will focus on government battle-related deaths. Rebel battle-related deaths will not be considered when exploring fighting intensity for this study because I am not interested in looking at inter-rebel conflict but rather how rebel factors allow them to fight the government or State more intensely. An important aspect of this is understanding where battle-related deaths come from. The simple explanation is that battle deaths come from battles in a civil war. Since the focus of my study is on government battle-related deaths, however, it is essential to understand who engages in conflict first. This begs the question: who is entering whose territory?

This can be better understood by exploring the main two types of rebels: revolutionists and secessionists. Revolutionists are not concerned about proper channels of establishing themselves because they want total victory over the government. This means that they may not engage in rebel governance, or they might participate in victimization if it is profitable or not risky. However, secessionists really only seek independence. As a result, they might be more willing to use proper channels to establish themselves to avoid

fighting. This would mean that they engage with civilians in a positive manner through rebel governance and seek to appear more legitimate (Flynn and Stewart 2018). A more legitimate secessionist group would indicate that their claim to independence is not far-fetched and practical.

Battle intensity contributes to rebel legitimacy because the more intense battles that a rebel group can fight, the more capable the rebel group appears. Thinking solely of the mechanisms explored in this paper, there are a few ways rebel legitimacy is portrayed by battle intensity. Firstly, when you combine lower levels of civilian victimization with higher levels of rebel governance, this establishes a sense of capability. This capability or greater capacity to function can be associated with rebel legitimacy because it shows they have the means to popularize their cause or agenda. In doing so, they gain more support from new recruits and potentially citizens and external supporters. So, establishing this connection between these mechanisms and battle intensity can provide support for the idea that rebel legitimacy can be linked to battle intensity.

This concept of rebel legitimacy can get a bit warped when thinking about the type of rebels though. If we associate lower levels of battle intensity with secessionist rebels who are less interested in violence, this may not display their level of legitimacy in the same manner. In this case, we do assume that the government battle-related deaths that do occur are a result of the government acting first. This does not necessarily mean we would expect to see less or more government battle-related deaths because that would depend on the State and their actions. Which is why I would expect in my theory that it may not matter whether the rebel group is secessionist or revolutionist. Regardless of

whether the rebels or the State is acting first, there will be government battle-related deaths.

Much of the existing civil war literature that looks at battle intensity focuses on inter-rebel exchanges and violence, external support and mediation, regime type, and the economy (e.g., Stein and Cantin 2021, Chaudoin et al. 2017, and Lacina 2006). Rebel groups that use strategic violence (i.e., favorable towards civilians, etc.) have a better opportunity to garner support from third parties and international organizations and reach a more favorable outcome (e.g., Jones 2017, Leventoglu and Metternich 2018, Griffiths and Wasser 2019, and Stanton 2020).

Third-party involvement or intervention prolongs civil war conflict, primarily because of improving the performance and strategy of the State or the fighting capacity of the rebels (e.g., Mukherjee 2018, Prorok 2017, Prorok 2018, and Sawyer et al. 2017). Civil war duration is also often looked at with battle intensity for a couple of reasons. One, a longer battle could mean you have the resources to fight intense battles and to keep them going. Or two, a longer battle could signify that your resources are depleted, and that battle intensity is dwindling slowly.

On a more niche note, some scholars look at the use of technology as a resource on battle intensity. Access to technology gives rebels access to better and more information that they can use to strategize and make more informed decisions (Macías-Medellín and Atuesta 2021). Due to the challenges of studying natural resource extraction, there is not as much information as other topics on its relationship with battle intensity. Nevertheless,

it is still an important factor to take note of. Thinking about resources generally, one might assume that more resources is proportional to more fighting capacity. As a result, more resources could signify more intense battles. Some scholars argue that battle intensity decreases when opportunity costs rise in resource-rich areas (Rigterink 2020). It could depend on the type of resource, how it is used, and a cost-benefit analysis. As for resources, other scholars use finances to predict battle intensity because war is costly. Rebels use funding to acquire weapons, pay their fighters, create institutions, etc. (Daxecker and Prins 2017).

One of the more popular variables to study is rebel capacity or rebel strength. Rebel capacity refers to how capable a rebel group is to fight more intense battles based on their resources and weapons. We would expect that the more resources and weapons a rebel group has, the more likely they are to fight intense battles. Existing research suggests that rebel governance may improve rebel capacity or rebel military strength. However, Stewart finds that there is not actually much of a relationship between the two and, in fact, there is more likely to be a negative relationship between the two (2020). When it comes to rebel capacity, there are many factors to take into consideration. Even when referring to simply their military capability, there are many factors that impact the kind of authority that comes with that.

Existing literature on rebel capacity largely focuses on conflict termination, rebel strategy, and rebel resources. Scholars who explore conflict termination tend to place an emphasis on concessions and agreements. For example, it is expected that strong rebel groups can force concessions (Nilsson 2010). This is partly because a rebels group's

capacity to create durable peace has much to do with their resources and legitimacy. There is a lot of discourse over what outcome of civil war leads to more durable peace; however, many scholars suggest rebel military victories (e.g., Ohmura 2011; Akcinaroglu 2012). The way we study rebel military victories versus the way we study peace agreements is different due to the nature of the outcome. In terms of a peace agreement, the citizens need to trust the legitimacy of that document and both sides, especially that of the rebels, to follow through (Meernik et al. 2023). When it comes down to creating peace agreements, their durability essentially comes down to their provisions, standards of equality, and implementation (Mattes and Savun 2009; Albin and Druckman 2012; DeRouen et al. 2010; Joshi et al. 2017). Post-conflict peace is contingent on the settlements and provisions the peace agreement draws on (Mattes and Savun 2009), and one of the more important measures of this is the standard of equality between the negotiators (Albin and Druckman 2012). A sense of equality between the negotiators also indicates a level of legitimacy because it shows how close a rebel group is to the government in terms of their capacity.

Despite this, the capacity of the rebel group is a fundamental factor in the implementation of these peace agreements (DeRouen et al. 2010; Joshi et al. 2017). Better implementation is possible with a stronger capacity. It could be said that the strength of the negotiators signifies the strength of the agreement. A weak negotiator is not likely able to hold up their end of the agreement, which will deter the other negotiator from trying to hold up their end (DeRouen et al. 2010). The capacity to stabilize the post-conflict environment is also significant and often relies on the first steps taken (Joshi et

al. 2017). Despite all this, some scholars believe civil war peace agreements are more likely to result in a recurrence as it is easier to understand threats to their interests when everything is laid out (White 2020). A stronger rebel group is better able to establish their independence over a weaker state through information learned during a negotiation. As such, a stronger rebel group is better able to implement whatever settlements are established whether or not all parties involved agree upon it. While outcome is not a variable being studied within my hypothesis, it is still essential to understand the relationship between outcome and capacity because capacity does relate to fighting intensity in my study. And fighting intensity ultimately is connected to conflict termination or outcome.

Scholars who explore rebel tactics and rebel resources often turn to resources as a way to investigate tactics and strategy. Often scholars who focus on rebel resources will pay attention to natural resources and their impacts rather than earned or bought resources. As such, we see scholars who explore how a stable supply of resources can impact rebels fighting efficiently. In addition, how profitable those resource flows are can also be significant in fighting capability (Reeder et al. 2022). A stable supply of resources results in a stable profit. This profit allows the rebel group to offer better incentives and/or rewards for joining their cause. These incentives possibly target individuals who have been inflicted negatively by the conflict and need to earn money. This could be individuals who were displaced, unable to flee for various reasons, or simply did not want to leave (Weinstein 2005).

Simply put, having a flow of natural resources might allow the rebel group to have the profit necessary to increase recruitment. As such, this might allow for the rebel group to gain more fighting power. Rebel resources can also be linked to the duration of conflict. Profitable resources often give rebels the ability to persist longer (Conrad et al. 2018). While still an understudied area, some scholars seek to explore the relationship between resources and victimization. Rebel groups with more profitable resources typically can afford to risk their relationship with the civilians. This results in more victimization and violence as they do not need to depend on the civilians for certain resources (Whitaker et al. 2019). What we understand about rebel resources can be translated to rebel tactics.

Scholars who explore rebel tactics often turn to the manner in which rebels employ their resources. Rebels often use strategy, either in conventional or unconventional ways, depending on many factors. Such factors include elements of politics, economics, geography, demography, and military (Bueno de Mesquita 2013). Other tactics that rebels employ utilize technology and intelligence gathering. Using technology to gather intelligence allows rebels to improve their fighting ability without risking manpower (Sonin and Wright 2023). The primary reason for this is that when rebels gather intelligence, they do so by finding out information on their opponent. This information can vary greatly but can include numbers, resources, and even strategy. In addition, when they gather intelligence this way, they do not need to send actual manpower to gather this intelligence. Without technology, rebels could potentially have to send their fighters to dangerous scenarios in which they could lose manpower and resources. While my study will focus on resources in terms of fighting strength, it is still important to understand the

existing literature on all-things resources because, ultimately, all resources are going to have a relationship with fighting capacity. For example, the link between profitable resources and increased recruitment. Or even the link between technological intelligence gathering and strategy that saves on manpower.

CHAPTER TWO

CONCEPTUALIZING REBEL LEGITIMACY AND BATTLE INTENSITY

This research seeks to address the following question: Why do some rebel groups experience more intense fighting during civil war than others? This paper expects that a higher level of legitimacy attributed to a rebel group will result in more intense battles. This level of legitimacy is determined by two mechanisms: civilian victimization and rebel governance. For hypothesis testing, this section will also cover alternative explanations by other scholars. Before delving into the theory, it is vital to point out why I refer to the independent variable as rebel legitimacy rather than rebel governance. The reason that I use the term rebel legitimacy for my variable over the term rebel governance, even though they refer to quite similar concepts, is that rebel legitimacy refers to the build-up of events. While both rebel legitimacy and rebel governance occur over time, rebel governance can be viewed as a means to the end, whereas rebel legitimacy is hopefully the outcome. Rebel governance cannot be the outcome because rebel groups form as a means of reaching demands. If it ended with rebel governance, there would be no point in their agenda. The goal should be to legitimize their demands and seek change, which occurs together with their group identity and legitimacy.

The desire to legitimize their demands, however, is characterized by the type of rebel group. For example, a revolutionist rebel might not have a cause other than total victory. The demand to defeat the government is not a demand that can be negotiated for or against. As such, it is not possible to legitimize that kind of demand. However, a secessionist rebel is more likely to be open to channels that can legitimize their demand

for independence. Independence is a demand that can be negotiated. We would expect that revolutionist conflicts are more likely to result in government-related battle-deaths as a result of the rebels entering government territory. In addition, once rebels conquer territory, they are more likely to victimize civilians to establish dominance over an area. In contrast, we would expect that secessionist conflicts are more likely to result in government-related battle-deaths as a result of the government entering rebel territory. This could push civilians to support rebels more because the government is putting them at risk.

My theory suggests that rebel group legitimacy is improved through less civilian victimization (or lower numbers of civilian deaths) and high levels of rebel governance. Rebel governance refers to the way that rebels interact and engage civilians (Kasfir 2015). We would expect that a rebel group who engages in positive governance with civilians would be more likely to fight intense battles. The concept of rebel governance implies that a rebel group has the capability to manage resources and people. It also shows that the rebel group has enough resources or backing from elite individuals or external support to run like a business. It can also be argued that the capacity to use civilians as a resource denotes the ability of a rebel group to popularize their agenda and increase their following. As a result, it is likely that outsiders might view this as the rebel group having a legitimate backing for their cause which provides them with an outside legitimacy.

To put it broadly, the ability to formalize institutions that work effectively and efficiently provides the rebel group with structure that allows them to focus on the battle. Through

these institutions, they engage with civilians and provide goods and services. Outside of that, they also sometimes host elections. Elections can contribute to battle intensity because they allow the rebel group to consolidate their power and authority into one individual who can act as a cohesive voice for everyone. This, too, provides them with a structure and a hierarchy that allows them to focus and stay organized.

As such, my theory argues that the resources rebel groups receive while conducting rebel governance and the incentives rebel governance provides outweigh the resources lost. There are many different types of resources. A rebel group that has a positive relationship with civilians likely does not have to allocate as many weapons and artillery to dealing with civilians as a rebel group that is against their civilians. So, while they may have to allocate other resources – such as time, personnel, funding, etc. – to manage these political institutions, hosting elections, and transporting goods and providing services, they are saving on the resources that allow them to fight more intense battles.

Existing literature emphasizes the effect of rebel governance on civilians and conflict (e.g., Cunningham and Loyle 2021). However, there is a gap in the literature that fails to look at how rebel legitimacy is gained from rebel governance. While most of the literature suggests that rebel groups holding the capability to establish institutions and provide goods and services is what garners legitimacy, my theory looks deeper. After all, these institutions are not useful without civilians to manage and organize and these goods and services are useless without civilians to provide them to. Furthermore, civilians will look more favorably on rebel groups that provide governance rather than those who victimize.

H1: Under the condition that a rebel group appears more legitimate through higher levels of rebel governance, then we would expect that rebel group to fight more intense battles.

Civilian victimization can be described as a strategy insurgents use to target and kill civilians (Downes 2012). Since rebel governance refers to how rebels engage with civilians through institutions and services, low civilian victimization levels would be expected when participating in rebel governance. As such, should levels of civilian victimization be high, we would expect battle intensity to decrease.

While existing literature exhibits some controversy regarding the necessity of rebel governance and interacting with civilians (e.g., Berti 2023, Conrad et al. 2022, and van Baalen 2021), it is vital to understand the role civilians have in conflict or war. Civilians, themselves, are a resource. That is why choosing how to handle civilians, be it violently or passively, is a strategy. Civilians as a resource can provide supplies, services, and knowledge. While it is possible to obtain these things through coercion, it is much more valuable to promote good relations for continued, extended use of the civilians as a resource (Hirschel-Burns 2021). In addition, civilians can provide labor to rebel groups. Civilians who still need to make money in wartime might decide to do so under the safety net of a rebel group. This is another resource they provide. While a rebel group may be losing some personnel by participating in governance, they could be gaining a workforce that makes up for it.

And whether or not rebel groups participate in civilian victimization; it is still likely they would create institutions and deal with goods and services. The reason being that these institutions help them allocate their own resources and manage their own people. These types of institutions just might not be formalized in the sense necessary to provide governance for civilians. In addition, especially with rebel groups dealing with natural resource extraction, they are already providing goods and services to their own.

Lastly, the ability of a rebel group to provide formalized, effective governance shows that they have the capability for intense battle. This solely has to do with the idea that the rebel group is doing well enough that they do not feel desperate enough to victimize the civilians. Or they have the resources and the personnel to produce and act out strategies that do not involve victimizing the civilians.

H2: Under the condition that a rebel group appears more legitimate by engaging in lower levels of civilian victimization, then we would expect that rebel group to be able to fight more intense battles.

To summarize, rebel legitimacy is comprised of low levels of civilian victimization and high levels of rebel governance. Rebel governance refers to the institutions created by rebels to engage with civilians. The more rebel governance a rebel group engages in, the more intensely they can fight. This is because the individuals they can gather to support their cause act as a resource. To put it broadly, rebel groups who can successfully formalize the types of governance they participate in can provide more effective and worthwhile governance. As a result, they hold incentives and motivation to victimize

less. Low levels of civilian victimization are expected to increase fighting intensity. This is because of the resources saved by not engaging in civilian victimization and the support gained by ordinary citizens as a result of not engaging in civilian victimization. These two mechanisms that make up rebel legitimacy factor in together to suggest a relationship with battle intensity.

Alternative Explanations

More generally, scholars who explore variation in conflict intensity, often look at severity. The literature expects that conflict severity can be linked to economic grievances, such as GDP and relative deprivation (e.g., Chaudoin et al. 2017; Couttenier and Soubeyran 2015; Lu and Thies 2011; Vestby et al. 2020). Several studies utilize the concept of “conflict traps” to explore how conflict exacerbates the conditions that keep conflict continuing (e.g., Hegre et al. 2017; Walter 2004). Existing literature also suggests that other variables play a more important role in battle intensity. Scholars expect that external support to non-state armed groups allows them to fight more intensely. It creates strategic incentives for rebels to target certain groups. Furthermore, providing rebels with either lethal or non-lethal resources can increase the intensity of inter-rebel conflicts (Stein and Cantin 2021).

Rebel capacity can be linked to rebel governance through the resources they save by engaging in positive governance with civilians. Despite allocating resources to offer goods and services to civilians, they no longer must allocate weapons and artillery to use against civilians. This allows them to save those resources for the actual battle. In addition, the civilians themselves possibly provide the rebel group with goods, services,

and knowledge that allow them to fight more intensely and for a longer duration. To put it briefly, the resources that rebel groups no longer need to allocate to use against civilians because of being on good terms, allows the rebel groups to put more effort into fighting intense battles. As such, rebel capacity is an important variable to test against.

CHAPTER THREE

ILLUSTRATIVE CASE

An excellent case that illustrates a high level of rebel governance and low levels of civilian victimization while still seemingly increasing the number of government battle-related deaths is the case of the Government of Azerbaijan versus the Republic of Artsakh. The Republic of Artsakh is a breakaway State from the recognized grounds of Azerbaijan. They are considered a de facto State because while technically they do not own claim to their independence, they do operate like their own country and are comprised of mainly ethnic Armenians. Due to that, they hold close ties to Armenia, share a currency with them, and even speak their language (Hughes 2002). I will further refer to the Republic of Artsakh as a rebel group for the sake of speaking clearly and due to the fact that they are not recognized by many as a nation.

In this particular case, we see extremely high levels of rebel governance. This rebel group operates on a much larger scale than the average rebel group. This means they have more resources to participate heavily in different forms of governance and have the capacity to establish themselves in a grander way. They also act as a presidential democracy in which they can establish new flows of governance. They also wrote their own constitution (Cornell 2011). As a result of these different processes, they have been able to fight more intense battles against the Government of Azerbaijan, who actively continue to attempt to retrieve their stolen territory. Battle intensity can be outlined by the States' difficulty in doing so.

Now, it is important to note that they do have a larger backing than many other rebel groups. Due to that fact, the legitimacy they hold by being recognized simply as a de facto State shows that their policy aims and agenda are more popularized around their borders than most other rebel groups might experience. As a result, they see more humanitarian assistance and onlookers than typically expected.

This particular rebel group also sees less civilian victimization as a result of the different types of governance they participate in. In fact, the army is under civilian command. This results in less civilian victimization because civilians have a stake in the conflict. Not only that, but it also shows their cause is legitimate enough to force civilians to take a stand. In addition, it promotes their legitimacy in a couple of ways. For instance, it shows that their demand for independence was not driven by the need for violence and that they are willing to compromise. It also shows that they are on the side of the citizens (Cornell 2011).

It is important to note the distinction between an army under civilian command versus combatants -- for the sake of outlining how this illustrative case pertains to my theory. It is similar to how civilians providing resources to rebel groups or finding safety under the net of a rebel group does not necessarily constitute them as rebels. These factors may improve rebel capacity and strategy and impact various variables; however, the civilians are still civilians. In this illustrative case, the civilians are taking on the role of combatants. The difference here may lie in the reason behind their actions; however, that is not information we are privy to. Various factors can influence this and motivate the

average citizen to take up arms. In this case, the civilians are providing labor – albeit a different type – as a resource in exchange for the benefits of acting under a rebel group.

As this is largely an ethnic example, there could be other mechanisms in place here that are impacting this paper's key variables. However, I wanted to highlight this particular rebel group's unique circumstances regarding this paper's key mechanisms behind rebel legitimacy. This particular rebel group has an interesting take on rebel governance and civilian engagement. This illustrative case was meant to show an example of one type of rebel group. Obviously, all rebel groups are different and have various starting points. The results of this particular rebel group may be better and grander than others because they had the backing of a nation from the beginning. However, this is also an important illustration of different mechanisms that may contribute to battle intensity. While it may be impossible to completely close in on the mechanisms of civilian victimization and rebel governance due to the various protruding sub-variables, this illustrative case hopefully goes hand-in-hand with analysis to further understand the results.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH DESIGN AND DATA

This study uses a large-N negative binomial regression comprising 2,751 observations. This test was chosen due to the nature of the data and to account for each rebel group being nested in multiple years. The unit of analysis for this study is rebel-dyad-year for all civil wars from 1989 to 2022, as coded by the UCDP (Davies et al. 2023). The dependent variable is battle intensity. This is measured by the number of government-related battle-deaths. This data comes from the UCDP Georeferenced Event Dataset (GED) Global version 23.1 (Sundberg and Melander 2013). This data provides an estimate for the number of battle-related deaths on all sides of a conflict.

My key independent variable is rebel legitimacy. I measure this through two different causal mechanisms: the number of civilian deaths and the level of rebel governance. Data on civilian deaths comes from the UCDP Georeferenced Event Dataset (GED) Global version 23.1 (Sundberg and Melander 2013). This is the better dataset for this particular variable because it accounts for conflicts that resulted in 0 civilian deaths as well. Data on the level of rebel governance comes from the Rebel Governance Network (Rebel Governance Network 2022). The Rebel Governance Network provides data on which rebel groups participated in which types of rebel governance, such as elections and education. I condensed these types of rebel governance into 13 broader categories (see Table 1). From there, I re-coded the type of governance into levels of governance, based on how many types of governance they participated in, to account for no governance, low governance, and high governance (see Table 2).

Table 1*Type of Governance*

Type of Governance
Elections
Government
Media
Taxation
Education
Health
Infrastructure
Housing
Transportation
Law
Policing
Justice
Aid

Table 2*Levels of Governance*

Types of Governance	Indicator
0	0
1 to 6	1 (Low Governance)
7 to 13	2 (High Governance)

I include additional independent variables chosen to control for alternative explanations. I include a measure for external support (Stein and Cantin 2021). An indicator of 0 is used for conflicts with no external support, an indicator of 1 is used for conflicts with external support on behalf of the rebels, and an indicator of 2 is used for conflict with external support on behalf of the State (see Appendix A for Table 3). For data on external support, I use the UCDP External Support Dataset (ESD) (Meier et al. 2022). I include another measure for rebel capacity. An indicator of 0 is used for rebel groups are substantially weaker than the State, an indicator of 1 is used for rebel groups that are minimally weaker than the State, and an indicator of 2 is used for rebel groups that are equal or greater than in strength to the State (see Appendix B for Table 4). For data on Rebel Capacity, I use the Non-State Actor Data (Cunningham et al. 2009). This is a measure of rebel capacity relative to the government. Lastly, I include a measure to account for the type of rebel group. An indicator of 0 is used for secessionist rebel groups who are incompatible with the government in terms of territory, and an indicator of 1 is used for revolutionist rebel groups who are incompatible with the government in terms of how government is run (see Appendix C for Table 5). For data on the type of rebel group, I reference their incompatibility with the UCDP Battle-Related Deaths Dataset version 23.1 (Davies et al. 2023).

I also include several other control variables. I control for regime type. An indicator of 0 is used for closed autocracies, and indicator of 1 is used for electoral autocracies, an indicator of 2 is used for electoral democracies and for liberal democracies (see Appendix D for Table 6). I use the V-DEM (Varieties of Democracy) dataset to identify the regime

type (Coppedge et al. 2023). I control for terrain using data from the Terrain Ruggedness Index (Nunn and Puga 2012). This dataset provides a value that gives us a sense of the overall ruggedness of a nation. Lastly, I control for population and GDP per capita using data from the World Bank (The World Bank 2023).

There are several limitations and constraints to this study. Firstly, the data on civilian victimization solely relies on victimization that results in death. It does not consider less severe forms of civilian victimization that do often occur. Secondly, measuring rebel strength relative to the government is not actually the best measure of rebel military capability. However, there is not as much extensive data on rebel strength in other forms. Thirdly, knowing the number of governance types that a rebel group participates in may not be a great indicator of the level of governance because it does not tell us the level of effort they put into each type of governance. We do not know the level of formalization or the effectiveness of the rebel governance. Fourthly, some of the alternative explanations are unable to be tested against my hypothesis due to constraints with access to data. For example, testing an alternative explanation accounting for technology would be difficult given the nature of the data and my ability to find extensive data.

Lastly, there are some limitations to the current analysis. Since this analysis focuses on government battle-related deaths and not inter-rebel violence, it can be difficult to discern lower levels of battle intensity. Instances of low battle intensity can be explained by a few factors: there was no fighting, the fighting on both sides was directed at civilians, or the fighting was directed at the rebel's numbers. This could be reflected in the rebel battle-related deaths count if it had been a factor in this study.

Table 7 provides descriptive statistics for all variables in this study.

Table 7*Descriptive Statistics*

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Government Deaths*	179.247	1266.516	0.000	30072.000
Civilian Deaths	67.583	701.775	0.000	20182.000
Level of Governance	0.826	0.664	0.000	2.000
Rebel Type	1.491	0.500	1.000	2.000
External Support	0.697	0.872	0.000	2.000
Rebel Capacity	0.604	0.628	0.000	2.000
GDP per capita	3576.995	7318.371	22.850	54659.750
Terrain	132.294	89.808	11.500	620.200
Regime Type	1.807	0.862	0.00	3.000
Population	172995401.290	354262949.693	256000.000	1417173173.000

*Dependent Variable

CHAPTER FIVE

ANALYSIS

Table 8 represents my main analysis. Across these three models, I find partial support for my hypothesis. Model 1 is the base model and represents solely the variables in my hypothesis. Here, I find that an increase in the level of governance is actually not significant and not a good predictor of government battle-related deaths. In addition, I expected that given a particular level of rebel governance, an increase in the number of civilian deaths would result in a decrease in the number of government battle-related deaths. However, this base model shows that given rebel governance held constant, we actually see that an increase in the number of government battle-related deaths is positively correlated with an increase in the number of civilian deaths.

Model 2 includes the additional variables that account for alternative explanations. Here, I find that given these alternative variables, both of my key independent variables become significant. An increase in the level of governance from no governance or low governance to high governance makes it 4.260 times more likely to have an increased number of government battle-related deaths. This means that the higher the level of rebel governance, the higher the number of government battle-related deaths. This is interesting because it shows that the level of rebel governance only becomes significant when we remove other factors from it, such as rebel capacity. The results for the variable of civilian deaths are a bit more difficult to interpret due to the magnitude of some of the values. It can best be understood, however, as a single increase in the number of civilian

Table 8*Main Analysis*

Variable	Model 1: Base	Model 2: Alternative Explanations	Model 3: Controls
	Exp(B) (sig)	Exp(B) (sig)	Exp(B) (sig)
Civilian Deaths	1.003 (<.001)	1.002 (<.001)	1.002 (<.001)
Level of Governance	2.495 (0.154)	4.260 (<.001)	5.192 (<.001)
Rebel Type		1.252 (0.402)	1.157 (0.546)
External Support		6.328 (<.001)	5.441 (<.001)
Rebel Capacity		3.181 (<.001)	2.469 (<.001)
GDP per capita			1.000 (0.002)
Terrain			0.999 (0.608)
Regime Type			7.978 (<.001)
Population			1.000 (0.655)
Constant	63.953 (<.001)	8.235 (<.001)	2.525 (0.173)

deaths makes it minimally more likely to increase the number of government battle-related deaths.

It is interesting that the type of rebel is insignificant in this model given what expecting literatures suggests. However, this model shows it is not as significant a predictor as the rest of the variables. This is interesting because the number of rebel groups that were fighting over territory was 50.9% (see Appendix E for Figure 1). So, we might expect similar levels of high rebel governance or observations that resulted in less government battle-related deaths. However, only 14.8% of rebel groups participated in high levels of governance (see Appendix F for Figure 2). That means most rebel groups either did not participate in governance or had extremely low levels of governance. Whereas 50% of government battle-related deaths were under 10 – 21.5% of those being 0 government battle-related deaths (see Appendix G for Figure 3). External support is extremely significant in this model. External support on behalf of the rebels is 6.328 times more likely to increase the number of government battle-related deaths. Within this dataset, 14.8% of rebel groups had external support and 57.8% of the observations had no support on either side (see Appendix H for Figure 4).

Now, the interesting thing about rebel capacity is that the 0's differ greatly from the 1's but not the 2's. What this means is that the rebel groups that are substantially weaker than the State differ greatly from the rebel groups that are only minimally weaker than the State. Furthermore, there is not as much a difference from the rebel groups that are on par with the State or much stronger than the State. Now, this could be due to the fact that there is limited data on the number of rebel groups who are actually stronger than or

equal in strength to the State. Within this dataset, 92.3% of all rebel groups were substantially weaker or minimally weaker than the State. That means only 7.7% of the rebel groups in this dataset were of equal strength or much stronger than the State (see Appendix I for Figure 5). While those rebel groups who are equal in strength or stronger than the State do also show an increase in the number of government battle-related deaths, the sample size makes it difficult to differentiate the significance in this case.

Model 3 explores my first two models while including the rest of the control variables. Here, I find that both of my variables are still significant. An increase in the level of governance is now 5.192 times more likely to increase the number of government battle-related deaths given these control variables. And civilian deaths did not change. The type of rebel is actually less significant in this model but still likely to result in an increase. External support on behalf of the rebels is now only 5.441 times more likely to increase the number of government battle-related deaths. And rebel capacity is now only 2.469 times more likely to increase the number of government battle-related deaths.

Many of the controls are not significant to the model. GDP, terrain, and population are all insignificant in this model. However, regime type is very significant in this model. The regime type variable tells us that the closer a country's regime is to a closed autocracy, the more likely there is to be an increase in the number of government battle-related deaths. It is 7.978 times more likely a closed autocracy will result in an increase in the number of government battle-related deaths than a democracy of any type.

CONCLUSION

This research aimed to address the following question: Why do some rebel groups experience more intense fighting during civil war than others? This paper expected that a higher level of legitimacy attributed to a rebel group will result in more intense battles. This level of legitimacy is determined by civilian victimization and rebel governance. This legitimacy would be outlined by both of these variables acting together. However, the results were a bit mixed. While the results did show that an increased level of rebel governance was more likely to result in higher numbers of government battle-related deaths, the results did not show that lower levels of civilian victimization would be more likely to result in an increased number of government battle-related deaths. Albeit minimally, the results show that an increase in the levels of civilian victimization would actually do the opposite – which was expected by some already existing literature. The two variables did not interact together in the manner by which I was expecting.

This could be because there are various other variables that could be interacting with both levels of civilian victimization and rebel governance that were not accounted for in this study. Due to the several limitations on this study, it could also be the sample or methods were not sufficient enough. However, from the perspective that my theory was partially confirmed, this theory still provides vital implications and contributions to existing literature.

This study contributes to civil war literature by examining violence during war. By understanding rebel governance and the factors surrounding it, it allows us to explore the connection between civil war termination and civil war reoccurrence. In addition, it could also say something about duration. In addition to the theoretical contributions this study holds, there are also social implications and contributions. This study also somewhat holds prospects for understanding democratization. If we breakdown the process of rebel governance and the actions behind it, there are implications for how certain rebel types might begin the process of democratization on a smaller scale. This could also be tied to the rebels and the civilians' standards of living in which might provide rebels with the incentive to keep fighting or to stop fighting. All of this connects back to battle intensity and how rebels engage civilians.

Future areas of study could involve combining these mechanisms with others or choosing completely different mechanisms. Exploring rebel group splintering or fractionalization along with rebel strength, either on their own or with the mechanisms from this study, could provide interesting results. In addition, it would be worthwhile to look at these mechanisms hand-in-hand with other factors such as the number of rebel groups active in a nation per year.

LIST OF REFERENCES

- Akcinaroglu, Seden. 2012. "Rebel Interdependencies and Civil War Outcomes." *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 56(5): 879-903.
- Albin, Cecilia, and Daniel Druckman. 2012. "Equality Matters: Negotiating an End to Civil Wars." *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 56(2): 155-182.
- Arjona, Ana. 2015. "Resistance Against Rebel Governance." In Ana Arjona, Nelson Kasfir, and Zachariah Mampilly (Eds.), *Rebel Governance in Civil War*. Cambridge University Press.
- Arjona, Ana. 2016. "Institutions, Civilian Resistance, and Wartime Social Order: A Process-driven Natural Experiment in the Colombian Civil War." *Latin American Politics and Society*, 58(3): 99-122.
- Arjona, Ana. 2017. "Civilian Cooperation and Non-Cooperation with Non-State Armed Groups: The Centrality of Obedience and Resistance." *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, 28(4-5): 755-778.
- Berti, Benedetta. 2023. "From Cooperation to Competition: Localization, Militarization and Rebel Co-Governance Arrangements in Syria." *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, 46(2): 209-227.
- Brenner, David, and Martina Tazzioli. 2022. "Defending Society, Building the Nation: Rebel Governance as Competing Biopolitics." *International Studies Quarterly*, 66(7).
- Breslawski, Jori and Brandon Ives. 2019. "Killing for God? Factional Violence on the Transnational Stage." *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 63(3): 617-643.
- Bueno de Mesquita, Ethan. 2013. "Rebel Tactics." *Journal of Political Economy*, 121(2): 323-357.
- Carnegie, Allison, Kimberly Howe, Adam G. Lichtenheld, and Dipali Mukhopadhyay. 2022. "Winning Hearts and Minds for Rebel Rulers: Foreign Aid and Military Contestation in Syria." *British Journal of Political Science*, 52: 1333-1354.
- Chaudoin, Stephen, Zachary Peskowitz, and Christopher Stanton. 2017. "Beyond Zeroes and Ones: The Intensity and Dynamics of Civil Conflict." *The Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 61(1): 56-83.
- Conrad, Justin M., Kevin T. Greene, James Igoe Walsh, and Beth Elise Whitaker. 2018. "Rebel Natural Resource Exploitation and Conflict Duration." 63(3): 591-616.

Conrad, Justin, Liana Eustacia Reyes, and Megan A. Stewart. 2022. "Revisiting Opportunism in Civil Conflict: Natural Resource Extraction and Health Care Provision." *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 66(1): 91–114.

Coppedge, Michael, John Gerring, Carl Henrik Knutsen, Staffan I. Lindberg, Jan Teorell, Lisa Gastaldi, Ana Good God, and Sandra Grahn. 2023. "V-Dem Country Coding Units v13" Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) Project.

Cornell, Svante. 2011. "Azerbaijan Since Independence." *New York: M.E.*, 135.

Costalli, Stefano, Francesco Niccolò Moro, and Andrea Ruggeri. 2020. "The Logic of Vulnerability and Civilian Victimization: Shifting Front Lines in Italy (1943–1945)." *World Politics*, 72(4): 679–718.

Couttenier, Mathieu, and Raphael Soubeyran. 2015. "A Survey of the Causes of Civil Conflicts: Natural Factors and Economic Conditions." *Revue d'économie politique*, 125(6): 787-810.

Cunningham, David E., Kristian Skrede Gleditsch, and Idean Salehyan. 2009. "Non-State Actor Data."

Cunningham, Kathleen Gallagher, Reyko Huang, and Katherine M. Sawyer. 2021. "Voting for Militants: Rebel Elections in Civil War." *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 65(1): 81-107.

Cunningham, Kathleen Gallagher, and Cyanne E. Loyle. 2021. "Introduction to the Special Feature on Dynamic Processes of Rebel Governance." *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 65(1): 3-14

Davies, Shawn, Therese Pettersson & Magnus Öberg. 2023. "Organized violence 1989-2022 and the return of conflicts between states?" *Journal of Peace Research* (Forthcoming).

Daxecker, Ursula, and Brandon C. Prins. 2017. "Financing rebellion: Using piracy to explain and predict conflict intensity in Africa and Southeast Asia." *Journal of Peace Research*, 54(2): 215–230.

DeRouen, Karl, Mark Ferguson, Samuel Norton, Young Park, Jenna Lea and Ashley Streat-Bartlett. 2010. "Civil War Peace Agreement Implementation and State Capacity." *Journal of Peace Research*, 47(3): 333-346.

Downes, Alexander B. 2012. "Targeting Civilians in War." Cornell University Press.

- Dupuy, Kendra, and Siri Aas Rustad. 2018. "Trends in Armed Conflict, 1946–2017." *Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO)*.
- Estancona, Chelsea L. 2022. "Banditry or business? Rebel labor markets and state economic intervention." *International Interactions*, 48(1): 139–151.
- Fearon, James D., and David D. Laitin. 2003. "Ethnicity, insurgency, and civil war." *American Political Science Review*, 97 (1): 75-90.
- Flynn, D.J., and Megan A. Stewart. 2018. "Secessionist social services reduce the public costs of civilian killings: Experimental evidence from the United States and the United Kingdom." *Research and Politics*, 1–10.
- Garcés-palacio, Isabel, Mary Salazar-Barrientos, Edison Bedoya Bedoya, and Ana Langer. 2021. "1421 Effects of the Colombian Armed Conflict on Reproductive, Maternal and Child Health." *International Journal of Epidemiology*, 50: 1.
- Gibilisco, Michael, Brenton Kenkel, and Miguel R. Rueda. 2022. "Competition and Civilian Victimization." *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 66(4-5): 809-835.
- Griffiths, Ryan, and Louis Wasser. 2019. "Does Violent Secessionism Work?" *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 63(5): 1310-1336.
- Hegre, Håvard, Håvard Møkleiv Nygård, and Ranveig Flaten Ræder. 2017. "Evaluating the scope and intensity of the conflict trap: A dynamic simulation approach." *Journal of Peace Research*, 54(2): 243-261.
- Hirschel-Burns, Danny. 2021. "Sowing the Seeds: Why do some armed groups socialise civilians more than others during civil war?" *Civil Wars*, 23(4): 545–569.
- Huang, Reyko. 2022. "Democracy on the Battlefield? Why Armed Groups Hold Elections. Mosbacher Institute for Trade, Economics & Public Policy." *The Bush School of Government and Public Service*. Available electronically from <https://hdl.handle.net/1969.1/196706>.
- Hughes, James. 2002. "Ethnicity and Territory in the Former Soviet Union: Regions in Conflict." *London: Cass*, 211.
- Jones, Benjamin. 2017. "Altering Capabilities or Imposing Costs? Intervention Strategy and Civil War Outcomes." *International Studies Quarterly*, 61: 52-63.
- Joshi, Madhav, Erik Melander, and Jason Quinn. 2017. "Sequencing the Peace: How the Order of Peace Agreement Implementation Can Reduce the Destabilizing Effects of Post-Accord Elections." *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 61(1): 4-28.

- Kasfir, Nelson. 2015. "2 - Rebel Governance – Constructing a Field of Inquiry: Definitions, Scope, Patterns, Order, Causes." *Cambridge*: Cambridge University Press.
- Kathman, Jacob D., and Reed M. Wood. 2013. "Too Much of a Bad Thing? Civilian Victimization and Bargaining in Civil War." *British Journal of Political Science*, 44(3): 685-706.
- Kirschner, Shanna A. 2010. "Knowing Your Enemy: Information and Commitment Problems in Civil Wars." *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 54(5) 745-770.
- Kostyuk, Nadiya, and Yuri Zhukvov. 2019. "Invisible digital Front: Can Cyber Attacks Shape Battlefield Events?" *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 63(2): 317-347.
- Kubota, Yuichi. 2023. "Remaining behind in the community: Rebel service provision and internal (non-)displacement of civilians in the former FATA, Pakistan." *Journal of Peace Research*, 60(3): 444–458.
- Lacina, Bethany Ann. 2006. "Explaining the Severity of Civil War." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 50(2): 276–289.
- Leventoglu, Bahar, and Nils Metternich. 2018. "Born Weak, Growing Strong: Anti-Government Protests as a Signal of Rebel Strength in the Context of Civil Wars." *American Journal of Political Science*, 62(3): 581-596.
- Loyle, Cyanne E. 2021. "Rebel Justice during Armed Conflict." *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 65(1): 108-134.
- Lu, Lingyu, and Cameron G. Thies. 2011. "War, Rivalry, and State Building in the Middle East." *Political Research Quarterly*, 66(2).
- Lyll, Jason. 2019. "Civilian Casualties, Humanitarian Aid, and Insurgent Violence in Civil Wars." *International Organization*, 73: 901–926
- Macías-Medellín, Martín, and Laura H Atuesta. 2021. "Constraints and Military Coordination: How ICTs Shape the Intensity of Rebel Violence." *International Interactions*, 47(4): 692–719.
- Mampilly, Zachariah, and Megan A. Stewart. 2021. "A Typology of Rebel Political Institutional Arrangements." *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 65(1): 15-45.
- Matt, Eelco van der. 2020. "Genocidal consolidation: final solutions to elite rivalry." *International Organization*, 74(4): 773-809.

- Mattes, Michaela and Burcu Savun. 2009. "Fostering Peace after Civil War: Commitment Problems and Agreement Design." *International Studies Quarterly*, 53: 737-759.
- Mattiacci, Eleonora, and Benjamin T. Jones. 2020. "Restoring Legitimacy: Public Diplomacy Campaigns during Civil Wars." *International Studies Quarterly*, 64(4): 867–878.
- Meernik, James, Diego Esparza, Gustavo Duncan, Clarita Toro, and Juan Camilo Gaviria. 2023. "Trust of Demobilized Combatants: Overcoming Fear or Becoming Familiar?" *Social Science Quarterly*, 104(3): 315–28.
- Mehrl, Marius, and Paul Thurner. 2020. "Military Technology and Human Loss in Intrastate Conflict: The Conditional Impact of Arms Imports." *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 64(6): 1172-1196.
- Meier, Vanessa, Niklas Karlén, Therése Pettersson and Mihai Croicu. 2022. "External Support in Armed Conflicts. Introducing the UCDP External Support Dataset (ESD), 1975-2017." *Journal of Peace Research*. Online First.
- Montanaro, Laura. 2012. "The Democratic Legitimacy of Self-Appointed Representatives." *Journal of Politics*, 74(4): 1094-1107.
- Mukherjee, Shivaji. 2018. "Colonial Origins of Maoist Insurgency in India: Historical Institutions and Civil War." *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 62(10): 2232-2274.
- Nilsson, Desiree. 2010. "Turning Weakness into Strength: Military Capabilities, Multiple Rebel Groups and Negotiated Settlement." *Conflict Management and Peace Science*, 27(3): 253-271.
- Nunn, Nathan, and Diego Puga. 2012. "Ruggedness: The Blessing of Bad Geography in Africa." *Review of Economics and Statistics*, 94(1): 20–36.
- Ohmura, Hirotaka. 2011. "Termination and Recurrence of Civil War: Which Outcomes Lead to Durable Peace after Civil War?" *Japanese Journal of Political Science*, 12(3): 375–398.
- Ottmann, Martin. 2017. "Rebel constituencies and rebel violence against civilians in civil conflicts." *Conflict Management and Peace Science*, 34(1): 27-51.
- Oswald, Christian, Melanie Sauter, Sigrid Weber, and Rob Williams. 2020. "Under the Roof of Rebels: Civilian Targeting After Territorial Takeover in Sierra Leone." *International Studies Quarterly*, 64(2): 295-305.

- Peter, Fabienne. 2017. "Political Legitimacy." *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Summer 2017 Edition). Available at <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2017/entries/legitimacy/>. [Accessed 12 March 2023].
- Prorok, Alyssa. 2017. "The (In)compatibility of Peace and Justice? The International Criminal Court and Civil Conflict Termination." *International Organization*, 71: 213-243.
- Prorok, Alyssa. 2018. "Lead Astray: Leaders and the Duration of Civil War." *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 62(6): 1179-1204.
- Rebel Governance Network. 2022. "Quantitative Resources: Rebel Quasi-state Institutions Dataset." Accessed from <https://rebelgovernance.weebly.com/data.html>.
- Reeder, Bryce W., Dongjin Kwak, John R. Smith, and Michael D. Wales. 2022. "Rebel Resource Efficiency and the Escalation of Civil Conflict." *Journal of Global Security Studies*, 8(1).
- Regan, Patrick M. 2000. "Civil wars and foreign powers: outside intervention in intrastate conflict." *Ann Arbor*: University of Michigan Press.
- Rigterink, Anouk. 2020. "Diamonds, Rebel's and Farmer's Best Friends: Impact of Variation in the Price of Lootable, Labor-intensive Natural Resources on the Intensity of Violent Conflict." *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 64(1): 90-126.
- Salehyan, Idean, David Siroky, and Reed M. Wood. 2014. "External Rebel Sponsorship and Civilian Abuse: A Principal-Agent Analysis of Wartime Atrocities." *International Organization*, 68: 633-66.
- Sawyer, Katherine, Kathleen Cunningham, and William Reed. 2017. "The Role of External Support in Civil War Termination." *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 61(6): 1174-1202.
- Sexton, Renard, Rachel Wellhausen, and Michael Findley. 2019. "How Government Reactions to Violence Worsen Social Welfare: Evidence from Peru." *American Journal of Political Science*, 63(2): 353-367.
- Sonin, Konstantin, and Austin L. Wright. 2023. "Rebel Capacity, Intelligence Gathering, and Combat Tactics." *American Journal of Political Science*.
- Stanton, Jessica. 2020. "Rebel Groups, International Humanitarian Law, and Civil War Outcomes in the Post-Cold War Era." *International Organization*, 74: 523-559.

Stein, Arthur, and Marc-Olivier Cantin. 2021. "Crowding out the Field: External Support to Insurgents and the Intensity of Inter-Rebel Fighting in Civil Wars." *International Interactions*, 47(4): 662–91.

Stewart, Megan A. 2020. "Rebel governance: military boon or military bust?" *Conflict Management and Peace Science*, 37(1): 16–38.

Stewart, Megan A. 2021. "Governing for Revolution: Social Transformation in Civil War." *Cambridge*: Cambridge University Press.

Stewart, Megan A., and Yu-Ming Liou. 2017. "Do Good Borders Make Good Rebels? Territorial Control and Civilian Casualties." *The Journal of Politics*, 79(1): 284–301.

Sundberg, Ralph, and Erik Melander. 2013. "Introducing the UCDP Georeferenced Event Dataset." *Journal of Peace Research*, 50(4): 523–532.

The World Bank. 2023. "GDP." Retrieved from <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/>.

van Baalen, Sebastian. 2021. "Local elites, civil resistance, and the responsiveness of rebel governance in Côte d'Ivoire." *Journal of Peace Research*, 58(5): 930–944.

Vestby, Jonas, Halvard Buhaug, and Nina von Uexkull. 2020. "Why do some poor countries see armed conflict while others do not? A dual sector approach." *World Development*, 138.

Walter, Barbara F. 2006. "Building Reputation: Why Governments Fight Some Separatists but Not Others." *American Journal of Political Science*, 50(2): 313–330.

Weinstein, Jeremy M. 2005. "Resources and the Information Problem in Rebel Recruitment." *The Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 49(4): 598–624.

Whitaker, Beth Elise, James Igoe Walsh, and Justin Conrad. 2019. "Natural Resource Exploitation and Sexual Violence by Rebel Groups." *The Journal of Politics*, 81(2).

White, Peter. 2020. "The Perils of Peace: Civil War Peace Agreements and Military Coups." *Journal of Politics*, 82(1): 104–118.

Wood, Reed M. 2010. "Rebel capability and strategic violence against civilians." *Journal of Peace Research*, 47(5): 601–614.

Wood, Reed M. 2014. "Opportunities to kill or incentives for restraint? Rebel capabilities, the origins of support, and civilian victimization in civil war." *Conflict Management Peace Science*, 31(5): 461–480.

Wood, Reed M, and Jacob D. Kathman. 2015. "Competing for the Crown: Inter-rebel Competition and Civilian Targeting in Civil War." *Political Research Quarterly*, 68(1): 167–179.

Zeigler, Sean M. 2016. "Competitive Alliances and Civil War Recurrence." *International Studies Quarterly*, 60: 24–37.

APPENDIX

Appendix A

Table 3

External Support

Indicator	
No External Support	0
External Support to Rebels	1
External Support to State	2

Appendix B

Table 4

Rebel Capacity

Indicator	
Substantially Weaker than State	0
Minimally Weaker than State	1
Parity or Stronger than State	2

Appendix C

Table 5

Type of Rebel Group

	Indicator
Secessionist Group	0
Revolutionist Group	1

Appendix D

Table 6

Regime Type

	Indicator
Closed Autocracy	0
Electoral Autocracy	1
Electoral/Liberal Democracy	2

Appendix E

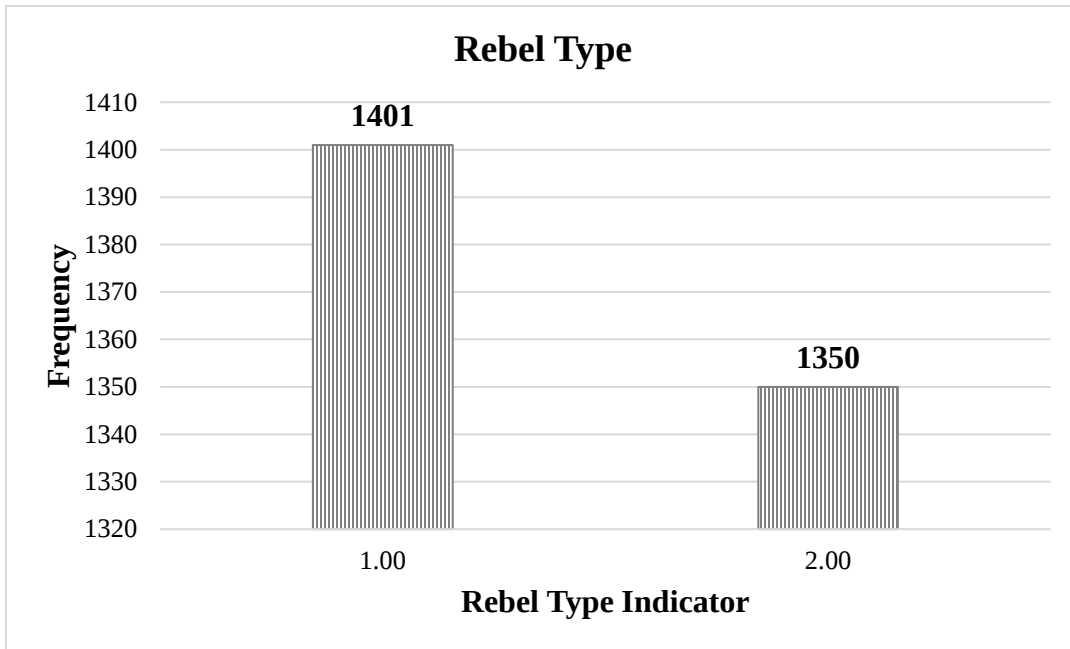


Figure 1

Appendix F

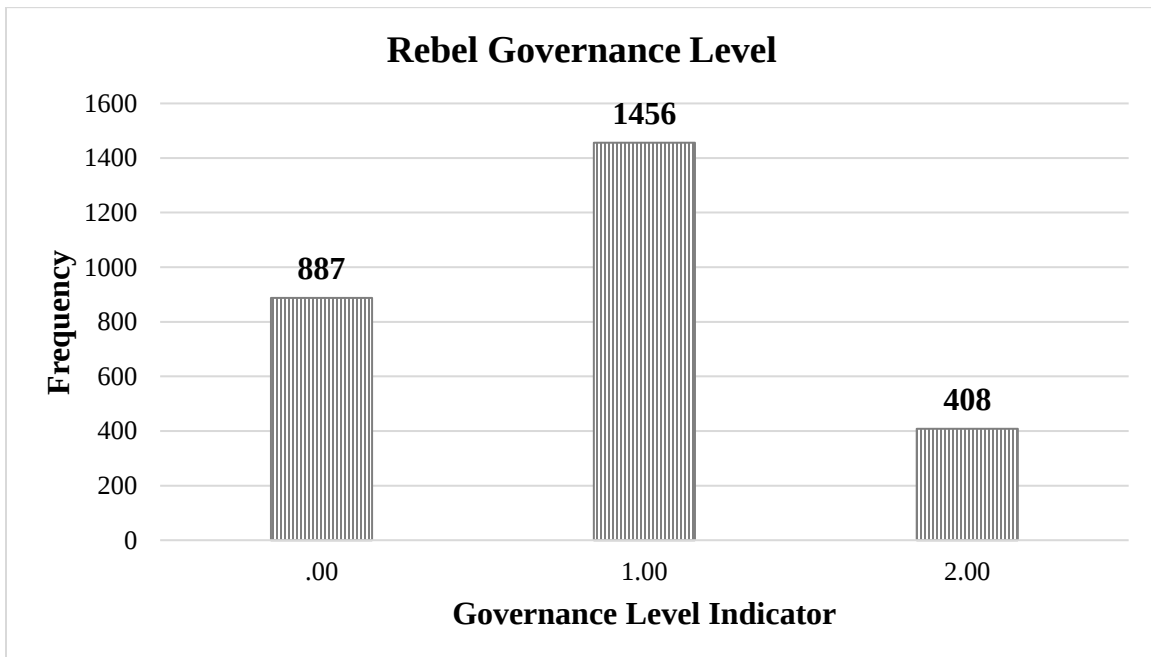


Figure 2

Appendix G

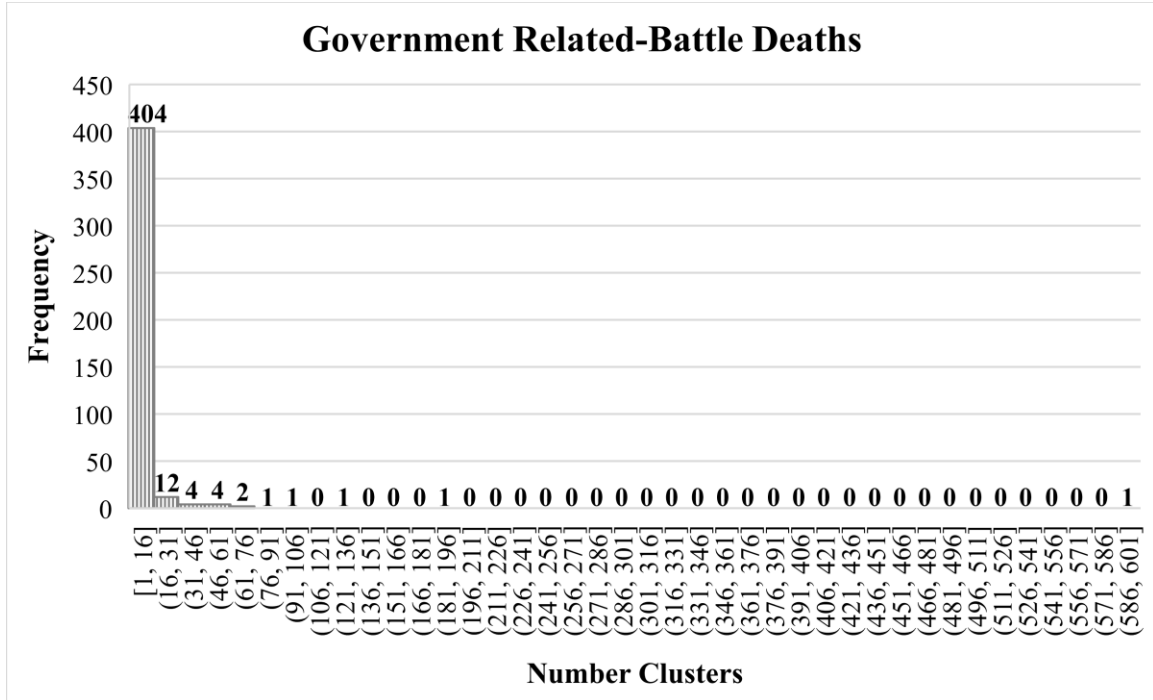


Figure 3

Appendix H

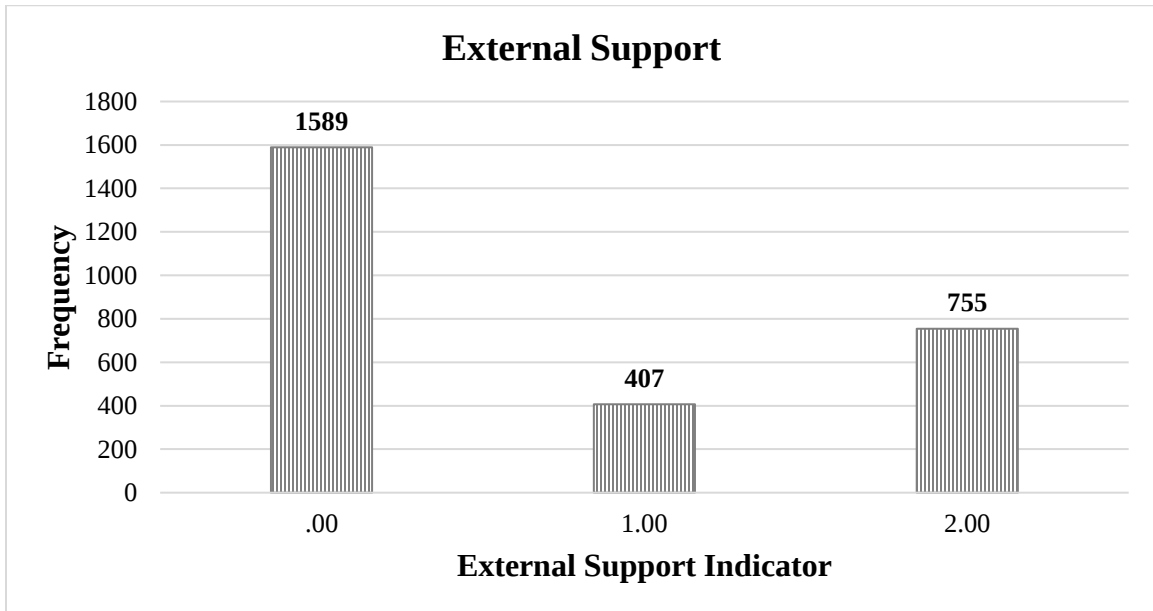


Figure 4

Appendix I

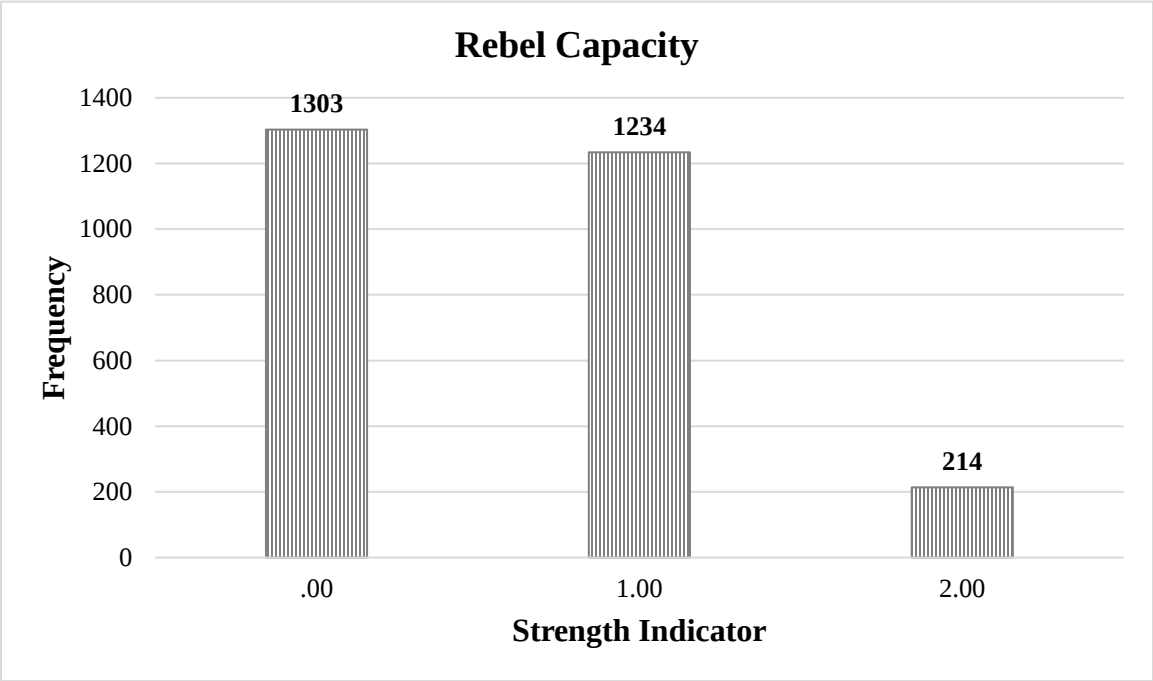


Figure 5

VITA

Brooke A. Golden was born in Brookfield, Wisconsin on August 5th, 1999. She attended elementary and middle school in Waukesha County and graduated from Arrowhead High School with honors in June 2017. The following August, she entered Kent State University and received the degree of Bachelor of Arts in International Relations and French Literature, Culture, and Translation in August 2020. She entered the University of Tennessee – Knoxville in August 2021 and received a Master of Arts Degree in Political Science in December 2023.