

TO ALLY OR TO FIGHT: EFFECTS OF REBEL
GOVERNANCE AND TERRORISM ON INTER-
REBEL RELATIONS IN MULTIPARTY CIVIL WARS

A Master's Thesis

by
ALİ ARSLAN

Department of
International Relations
İhsan Doğramacı Bilkent University Ankara
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To Talya



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The Graduate School of Economics and Social Sciences of
İhsan Doğramacı Bilkent University

by

ALİ ARSLAN

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By Ali Arslan

I certify that I have read this thesis and have found that it is fully adequate, in scope and in quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts in International Relations.

Efe Tokdemir

Advisor

I certify that I have read this thesis and have found that it is fully adequate, in scope and in quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts in International Relations.

Seden Akçınaroğlu

Examining Committee Member

I certify that I have read this thesis and have found that it is fully adequate, in scope and in quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts in International Relations.

Ömer Zarplı

Examining Committee Member

Approval of the Graduate School of Economics and Social Sciences

Refet Soykan Gürkaynak

Director

ABSTRACT

TO ALLY OR TO FIGHT: EFFECTS OF REBEL GOVERNANCE AND TERRORISM ON INTER-REBEL RELATIONS IN MULTIPARTY CIVIL WARS

Arslan, Ali

M.A., Department of International Relations

Supervisor: Asst. Prof. Dr. Efe Tokdemir

June 2023

In multiparty civil wars, why do some rebels form alliances with one another but some do not; while still others divert resources to inter-rebel conflict? Although there are several answers to this question, most do not consider the role of rebel-public ties. Yet a group's interactions with the public matters, as research have shown that constructive ties with the public enhance a group's relations with the government, third-parties, along with its fighting effectiveness and endurance. This thesis expects rebels with more constructive ties to the public to be more selective partners and more rivalrous against other groups. However, groups with destructive ties would be less selective and rivalrous. Employing logistic regressions over cross-sectional time-series datasets, this thesis finds that former types of groups are more likely to engage in inter-rebel conflict to eliminate their rivals. Yet when the state becomes a non-credible actor to bargain with, where both gaining a concession and co-optation of other groups by the state are

unlikely, such rebels tend to avoid conflict in an attempt to form a united body of opposition peacefully. Contrarily, those having destructive ties with the public avoid conflict with others due to the numerous concomitant deficiencies they have. Finally, groups do not differ from others in their alliance behavior based on their ties to the public. The findings imply that public support is considered mainly when rebels decide whether to make limited resources scarcer through engaging in inter-rebel conflict where they may need a last resort.

Keywords: Multiparty civil wars, inter-rebel alliances, inter-rebel conflict, rebel governance, terrorism.

ÖZET

MÜTTEFİK OLMAK YA DA SAVAŞMAK: ÇOK TARAFLI İÇ SAVAŞLARDA İSYANCI GRUP YÖNETİMİ VE TERÖRÜNÜN İSYANCI GRUPLAR ARASINDAKİ İLİŞKİLERE ETKİLERİ

Arslan, Ali

Yüksek Lisans, Uluslararası İlişkiler Bölümü

Tez Danışmanı: Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Efe Tokdemir

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Çok taraflı iç savaşlarda neden bazı gruplar birbirleriyle müttefik olurken bazıları olmaz ve hatta bazıları kaynaklarını diğer gruplarla çatışmaya ayırır? Bu soruya birçok cevap verilmiş olsa da çoğu yanıt grupların halkla olan ilişkilerini incelememektedir. Fakat bu ilişkiler önem arz eder çünkü araştırmalar yapıcı ilişkilerin, bir grubun hükümetle ve üçüncü taraflarla daha iyi ilişkiler kurabilmesini, ayrıca grupların daha efektif savaşmalarını ve uzun yaşamalarını sağladığını göstermektedir. Bu tez, halkla yapıcı ilişkileri olan grupların daha seçici ortaklar ve rekabetçi aktörler olmasını beklemektedir. Yıkıcı ilişkileri olan grupların ise daha az seçici ve rekabetçi olması beklenmektedir. Tez, yer ve zamana bağlı olarak çeşitlilik gösteren veri setlerini lojistik regresyonlarla incelemiştir. Bulgular göstermektedir ki yapıcı ilişkilere sahip gruplar, rakiplerini yok etmek için diğer gruplarla çatışmaya girmeye yatkındır. Fakat devlet taviz verebilecek ya da diğer grupları kendine bağlayabilecek güvenilirlikte değilse bu

tür isyancıların, birleşmiş bir muhalefet bloğu yaratmak amacıyla diğer örgütlerle çatışmaktan kaçındıkları tespit edilmiştir. Halkla yıkıcı ilişkilere sahip grupların ise sahip oldukları birçok dezavantaj yüzünden diğer örgütlerle çatışmaktan kaçındığı bulunmuştur. Son olarak grupların, müttefiklik konusunda birbirlerinden halkla olan ilişkiler bazında farklılık göstermedikleri saptanmıştır. Bu bulgular halk desteğinin, esasen örgütlerin kısıtlı kaynaklarını başka gruplarla çatışarak daha da kısıtlı hale getirip getirmeyecekleri noktasında son bir dayanak noktası olarak dikkate alındığını işaret etmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Çok taraflı iç savaşlar, isyancı grup müttefikliği, isyancı grup çatışması, isyancı grup yönetimi, terörizm.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ROAD – Rebel Organization Alliance Dataset

TAC – Terrorism in Armed Conflict

MAROB – Minorities at Risk Organizational Behavior

MGAR – Militant Group Alliances and Rivalries

VNSA – Violent Non-State Actor

FARC – The Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia

ELN – El Ejército de Liberación Nacional

PUK – Patriotic Union of Kurdistan

KDPI – Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan

ZAPU – The Zimbabwe African People's Union

ZANU – The Zimbabwe African National Union

FAN – The Armed Forces of the North

FAP – The Popular Movement for the Liberation of Chad

TPLF – The Tigrayan People's Liberation Front

ELF – The Eritrean Liberation Front

Dyad-Level Central~d – Dyad Level Central Command

Co-Territorial Con~s – Co-Territorial Control Status

Co-Natural Resou~e – Co-Natural Resource Income Generation Status

Constructive R~s - Constructive Rebel-Public Ties

Negative R~s – Negative Rebel-Public Ties

Number of Stat~s – Number of State Sponsors

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Civil conflict is one of the most lethal problems that a state can face. It not only causes immense suffering for the combatants and the civilians, or deprives the economy of natural resources and growth (Collier, 1999); but also leads to high post-war mortality as a result of prolonged periods of underdevelopment after the ceasing of conflict (Ghobarah et al., 2003). In addition, for the neighboring states, it creates economic losses (Murdoch & Sandler, 2004), migration crises, and a burden on state capacity that can lead to a new civil war in the neighbors (Fisunoğlu, 2019). With the increase in civil war outbreaks after the second World War, and the end of the Cold War, scholarly attention has shifted to this important phenomenon and focused on a variety of questions regarding civil wars (Levy & Thompson, 2010).

Earlier works on the causes civil wars have focused on relative deprivation (Cederman et al., 2013; Gurr, 1970); whether the motive of rebellions were based on greed or grievance (Collier & Hoeffler, 2004; Keen, 2012; Ross, 2004) and what type of opportunities were available to revolt against the state: be them group-level factors that facilitate cohesion (Denny & Walter, 2014; Kalyvas & Kocher, 2007; Lake &

Rothchild, 1996; Sambanis, 2001), third party provision of supplies and shelters (Salehyan, 2011; Sawyer et al., 2017), underdevelopment and state weakness (Collier & Hoeffler, 2007; Fearon & Laitin, 2003; Miguel et al., 2004; Hendrix, 2010), regime type (Carey, 2007; Fearon & Laitin, 2003; Gleditsch & Ruggeri, 2010; Hegre & Sambanis, 2006), or other factors that generate bargaining failures (Fearon, 1998; Varshney, 2003). However, while providing compact models of conflict, a common problem with the major works of the earlier period is that they provide little guidance in analyzing multi-party civil war contexts due to ignoring “actor fragmentation” (K. G. Cunningham et al., 2012, p. 69).

Yet, as detailed below, civil wars generally involve multiple belligerents. Moreover, despite fighting the same adversary, i.e. the state which views contumacious groups as imminent threats to its sovereignty, rebel groups in multiparty civil wars do not frequently form alliances with one another.¹ For instance, though seeking secession, instead of mobilizing all their resources to fight against the government, Tamil VNSAs chose to fight against one another during the Sri Lankan civil war (Phillips, 2019). Similarly, though sharing a Marxist ideological common ground, the FARC and the ELN of Colombia’s civil war failed to unite against the government in the 1970s (Bapat & Bond, 2012). In addition, counter-intuitively, their failure to ally against the government came at a time when they were facing an adversary stronger than themselves (Bapat & Bond, 2012). Though one may view the alliance failure of rebel groups against a stronger incumbent as a success of the status-quo states in crushing emerging rebel ties (Mir, 2018), there have also been cases where government weakness also produced -intuitively- inter-rebel clashes. Fjelde and

¹ Following common practice, this thesis defines a rebel group as an armed non-state organization, seeking to change the status-quo (D. E. Cunningham et al., 2013).

Nilsson (2012) exemplify this point through pointing at the case of Afghanistan, where many rebel groups fought against one another when the government was weak during the post-Soviet invasion period.

It is the central aim of this thesis to explain inter-rebel relations in multiparty conflicts, where rebels face a “dual contest” (K. G. Cunningham et al., 2012): one involving the rebel group itself and the government, and another that may or may not involve the other rebel groups. In other words, this thesis mainly aims to shed new light on why some rebel groups form alliances with one another but others do not -and sometimes militate against one another instead. Studying this question is important as civil conflicts that involve multiple violent non-state actors (VNSAs) are prevalent, as there is high variation in how VNSAs interact with one another, as their ties to each other affects conflict processes/outcomes, and as there are empirical and theoretical incongruities in several of the existing work on inter-rebel relations.

According to Findley and Rudloff (2012), 44 percent of all the warring groups since 1989 fragmented into factions, increasing the number of armed actors of a given conflict. In addition to fragmentation, between 1946 and 2008, 71 percent of all civil wars witnessed more than one dyad in a given conflict, indicating that multiple rebel groups are operative generally (Akcinaroglu, 2012). Though this trend declined to encompass 30 percent of all civil wars in 2002 and 2003, which points to another interesting trend that calls for an additional study elsewhere, fighting multiple rebel groups is still an important reality that states fighting civil wars have to face (Harbom et al., 2008). In addition, such civil wars are complicated by the fact that inter-rebel relations show high variation across time/space. Akcinaroglu (2012) notes

that in all civil conflicts that occurred between 1946-2008, around half of the time rebel groups formed an alliance, while failing to do so in the other half. This is a considerable variation in inter-rebel relations, which potentially indicates that there are more than one factor that accounts for the observations. Thus, studies that attempt to shed new light on different determinants of inter-rebel relations seem to be warranted.

This justification is further strengthened by the significant costs that inter-rebel relations carry for governments and civilians in multiparty civil conflicts. For instance, it is found that as rebel groups form an alliance against the government, civil wars tend to last longer (Akcinaroglu, 2012) and more lethal (Asal & Shkolnik, 2021). In a similar vein, works on the longevity of terrorist organizations suggest that allied organizations tend to last longer, and also be more lethal (Asal & Rethemeyer, 2008; Phillips, 2014). Moreover, conflicts involving allied rebel groups are less likely to be concluded through negotiated settlements. Instead, they become more likely to end in rebel victory (Akcinaroglu, 2012). Yet, such victories tend to witness conflict recurrence, especially if the allies had previous disputes (Zeigler, 2016). In addition, even if a multiparty civil conflict terminates through peace settlements, conflict among former allies remains highly likely (Atlas & Licklider, 1999). These points justify the need for studying the causes of variation in inter-rebel relations and post-conflict stability.

Similarly, when VNSAs do not ally, but instead fight against one another, increased conflict intensity and prolongation can still become important problems that a government may need to address. Multiparty civil wars can be marked by violent

competition among groups in a bid of gaining legitimacy over one another (Bloom, 2005; Conrad & Greene, 2015).² Such violence among rebel groups, in turn, can lead to increased attacks on civilians and co-ethnics (Cunningham et al., 2012), especially when a new group enters the violence and disrupts the status-quo (Wood & Kathman, 2015).³ In addition, when not cooperating, the existence of rebel groups may spoil potential peace processes (D. E. Cunningham, 2006; Greenhill & Major, 2007; Stedman, 1997). This can, however, be avoided if an asymmetry in material power among groups takes place. Some findings suggest that fragmentation of actors, and thus the multiplicity of warring sides, do not preclude peace settlements when the fragmented side is considerably weaker (Findley & Rudloff, 2012). Yet, though divided movements may receive more concessions, the durability of such concessions and a concomitant peace is not found to be likely (Cunningham, 2012). In fact, Cunningham (2013) notes that internal divisions of opposition movements (where the research is not confounded to civil war contexts) can make armed conflict more likely due to commitment problems that may preclude peaceful settlement of disputes, pointing to a similar problem of spoilers. It is for these reasons that studying inter-rebel relations is important, so that one can better understand when and how conflict would become more intense and making peace would be more difficult.

In response to these needs, considerable ink has been spilled on inter-rebel relations.

While discussed more in detail in Chapter 2, the literature on inter-rebel ties can be

² Though note that the logic of outbidding through violence seems to be contested (Findley & Young, 2012a). The conditions under which rebel groups use violence in outbidding one another thus seems to deserve additional research elsewhere .

³ Related to the controversy noted in the previous footnote, some findings suggest that violence against civilians is not primarily driven by competition, but by the inability of groups to prevent defection without relying on violence (Humphreys & Weinstein, 2006). These findings also point at the need of studying conditions under which violence against civilians is more likely elsewhere.

crudely, and non-mutually-exclusively, categorized into five main branches⁴: works that focus on how shared ethnicity/ideology affects inter-rebel ties, works that study the effects of distributions of power on enmity and amity among VNSAs, works that examine the role of a third party that can regulate the behavior of armed actors it sponsors, works that study organization-level factors (such as whether the groups had centralized command structures), and works on how a government's relations with one group can shape the behavior of another group.

While they significantly improve our understanding of inter-rebel interactions, three key problems are apparent in the existing body of literature. First, some of the arguments are theoretically incomplete due to remaining overly-generalized, and consequently cannot explain important empirical incongruities discussed in the next chapter. For instance, though the branch on the role of ideology notes that shared denominators foster cooperation (Balcells et al., 2022), we do not have much knowledge on when shared ideology prompts rivalry over ideological leadership -which is a common problem in inter-state relations when the ideology is one of a unificatory type (Walt, 1990). Second, some of the findings address the issue of overgeneralization, but remain incapable of explaining much of the variation in rebel behavior. For instance, existing findings note that shared third-party sponsors can help rebel groups to cooperate in wars involving a strong government against whom the risks of defection may prevent insurgent cooperation by acting as sources of credibility (Bapat & Bond, 2012). While useful and does not attempt to theorize on the overall effects of third-party sponsors, however, recent research notes that, while

⁴ The crude categorization presented in this chapter omits the works on other variables as they are not as numerous to constitute a branch. Yet, they are also discussed and evaluated in the next chapter. In addition, within each branch, there are various disagreements on the effects of the variables of study. These, too, are discussed and evaluated in the next chapter.

not being to confined only to rebels, “groups share a sponsor in just 4.2 percent of the 5,918 alliance-years” (Blair et al., 2022) -motivating one to discover additional factors that fosters enmity and amity among rebels.

Third, and related to the need for shedding light on the role of additional factors, the existing body of research does not focus enough on how a rebel group’s ties with the public can shape the ties it has with other rebel groups. Yet, this is an important gap to be filled. The constructiveness of ties that a VNSA establishes with the public has important implications for its life-span, strength, credibility, and concomitantly for its relations with the government -i.e. the actor against which rebels can choose to ally against, side with, or remain hostile while waging clashes against other groups. For instance, on the effects of terrorism (i.e. a destructive tie that a rebel group may form with the citizenry), it is shown that rebel groups which use terrorism as a tactic succeed in obtaining concessions, in being invited to negotiations (Thomas, 2014), and in surviving longer (Fortna, 2015); but fail in obtaining their larger goals through negotiated agreements (Fortna, 2015).^{5,6} On the other hand, it is shown that the longevity of religious terrorist groups (Blomberg et al., 2011) can be attributed to their better relations with their constituencies, which increases the commitment of their members to the organization (Berman & Laitin, 2008; Akcinaroglu & Tokdemir, 2020). Relatedly, it is noted that terrorist groups that have better relations with their constituencies are more likely to achieve their goals (Akcinaroglu & Tokdemir, 2020). On the other hand, groups that do not have such ties are found to

⁵ Terrorism tactics are widely displayed in civil conflict settings (M. G. Findley & Young, 2012b; Fortna, 2015). For this reason, note that this thesis assumes that findings in terrorism studies are applicable to the theory-craft of this thesis.

⁶ Whether terrorism works in coercing governments is a contested issue, and is reviewed in the ‘Theory’ sub-section of the following chapter. However, see: Thomas, 2014; Fortna, 2015; Pape, 2003; Abrahms, 2006; Kydd & Walter, 2006; Wood & Kathman, 2014.

live shorter (Eck, 2014). Since the ties a rebel group has with the public affects the course of events for it, this thesis theorizes on how rebel governance and engaging in terrorism affects inter-rebel relations in multiparty civil wars.

There have been only a few studies studying the effects of how the citizenry affects inter-group relations (e.g. Fearon & Laitin, 1996; Derpanopoulos, 2018; Mosinger, 2018). However, they either do not extend the analysis into civil wars, do not study the effects of rebel governance and terrorism together; fail to take into account possible moderating variables in which rebel-public ties take place; and due to the data limitations back then, fail to conduct a more nuanced study of how rebel-public relations shapes group-to-group interactions. Building on them and some of the most recent work of on this subject that is analytically similar to this thesis (e.g. Asal et al., 2022), this study contributes to the literature on inter-rebel relations.

Developed further in the next chapter, this thesis argues that rebel groups that provide services to the public would be less likely to form alliances with others as they do not need to pool their resources with others considerably. This is theorized to be so as groups that establish constructive ties with the locals have a number of advantages in presenting themselves as credible to the government so that obtaining a concession is more likely without increasing the number of partners who may come to hold a veto power. They have advantages both in terms of recruiting committed supporters (Weinstein, 2007), demonstrating competence (Heger & Jung, 2017), establishing internal discipline, and thus receiving concessions (Akcinaroglu & Tokdemir, 2020). Forming an alliance with others can hurt the credibility of a VN SA that engages in rebel governance without adding considerable marginal utilities.

Moreover, the costs would exceed the utilities of forming an alliance significantly more if the potential partner of a service-providing rebel group is one that holds destructive ties with its constituency, as they are even less likely to survive (Eck, 2014). Groups that provide services to others would ally mainly groups that are equally, if not considerably less, credible as compared to themselves.

Yet, a group's ties with the public can also be violent -which may have different effects on inter-rebel relations.. This thesis argues that groups engaging in terrorism would be less likely to be allied with other VNSAs. Though it is shown that under specific conditions terrorism helps a group gain concessions (Pape, 2003; Wood & Kathman, 2013), it does not help an organization to achieve more than its goals which does not alter the status-quo significantly (Pape, 2003). This finding holds when a terrorist rebel organization is compared to a non-terrorist one (Fortna, 2015). In addition to the disadvantages that terrorist groups carry, they can also be viewed as more likely to fragment (Asal et al., 2012), especially if they are not formed around a consensus (Perkoski, 2022) or have not survived long enough to signal their endurance. This may also deter others from forming alliances with such groups -especially with non-terrorist rebels. Lastly, another and related cost of forming an alliance with a terrorist rebel group can be that a terrorist group may derail the peace process due to signaling extremism-related non-credibility (Kydd & Walter, 2002; Findley & Young, 2015). A non-terrorist group that does not have such disadvantages and that can receive concessions from the government would not be likely to forgo its position by forming an alliance with a terrorist rebel organization that can impair its credibility and the resultant bargaining advantage. Left alone, if

they can form an alliance with others, terrorist rebel groups would be more likely to ally with one another as doing so would still contribute to their capabilities.

As for rebel conflict, however, a different dynamic would operate. Groups engaging in rebel governance would be more likely to eliminate other groups as they have the resources to fight such wars thanks to their larger support base, and as they have the motive for doing so to outbid others.⁷ On the other hand, groups that lack such ties to the public would avoid fighting such wars, as they are highly deficient in terms of the concomitant benefits derived from rebel governance, such as an increased likelihood of surviving longer (Eck, 2014).

However, the theorized processes would hold mainly if the government is a credible actor that can negotiate with a rebel group or drive a wedge between rebels through co-optation strategies. In cases of low government credibility where it lacks political institutions that can ensure the enforcement of concessions (Fearon & Laitin, 2003) or is highly likely to be defeated by the rebels, an insurgent organization would prefer forming alliances mainly to control other groups that may also survive without recognizing the strength of one another.⁸ Under such circumstances, a group that provides services to the public would be more likely to ally with others and fight less to prove its legitimacy in a less costly and peaceful manner. Especially groups without constructive ties to the citizens would lack the legitimacy the former has, and would concede to forming an alliance instead of fighting with it -on which the former also has an advantage as noted above. On the other hand, a group that engages in

⁷ The logic of outbidding is discussed in Chapter 2.

⁸ The two key aims of alliance formation, i.e. affecting the behavior of third-parties (Morrow, 1991) and controlling one's partner (Schroeder, 1976) have long been noted in the literature on alliance politics in inter-state relations. Here, a consideration of these two aims is made in the context of multiparty civil wars.

rebel governance would find it difficult to form an alliance to control its partner if the other side also has constructive ties with its constituency. Since both sides can maintain themselves, and do not need to pool their resources to fight a common enemy, they would not prefer forgoing the political dividends they would have due to their service provisions. A similar logic would also be seen in the case of terrorism. They would be more likely to ally with others to overcome their numerous deficiencies. Their credibility-wise problems, moreover, would not be weighted as heavily as it would be if the government is a credible actor to bargain with whose offers of concessions in the absence of such alliances would be more valuable to other rebels. On the other hand, as for conflictual relations terrorist rebels may have, state credibility would not act as an interacting variable as they would have the problems of remaining as a unified body regardless. It is attached to the tactics of choice, not state credibility.

Devising such a theory, this paper makes five key contributions to the literature on inter-rebel relations in multiparty civil wars. First, it examines the understudied role of rebel governance and terrorism on inter-rebel relations, though the literature agrees that each has significant outcomes for the prospects of a given rebel group as noted above. In addition, by crafting a moderated theory, the argument of the thesis addresses the problem of overgeneralizing the roles of shared properties mentioned above. Second, it provides a basis for comparing the effects of constructive and destructive ties to the public a group has on its relations with other VNSAs. Third, by highlighting when one should expect the formation of a rebel alliance and inter-rebel conflicts, the thesis opens room for future research where the likelihood of successful government attempts in preventing the formation of a rebel coalition can be studied.

Fourth, the second part of the theory, which expects inter-rebel conflict between groups that are asymmetric in service provision and engaging in terrorism, can help explain why post-war conflict among former allies is prevalent (Atlas & Licklider, 1999; Zeigler, 2016). If the argument holds, then one can explain conflict among former allies through changing (a)symmetries in rebel service provision and involvement in terrorist activities.⁹ This is a point that future works can test. Fifth, by theorizing on the conditions where violence between rebels is more likely, this thesis contributes to the literature on when outbidding turns violent.

In making such contributions, Chapter 2 of this thesis presents the existing literature on inter-rebel relations along with an evaluation of it. Next, building on the works in rebel governance and terrorism, it devises the theory and hypotheses of the thesis. Chapter 3 presents the research design, where the variables/operationalizations are presented along with the data sources and the models for analysis. This thesis conducts logistic regression analysis on merged time-series cross-sectional data-sets.

Chapter 4 discusses the results along with their implications. The results suggest that rebel-public ties affect inter-rebel relations mainly in decisions regarding inter-group conflict, in the hypothesized directions. Groups with more constructive ties to the public are more likely to fight others, whereas those with destructive ties are less likely to do so. In addition, the interacting role of state credibility operates as expected. When the state is not a credible actor to bargain with, both groups act less

⁹ In fact, if a rebel group forms an alliance with another organization at time t , and a change in the (a)symmetry in rebel governance and/or engagement in terrorism occurs at time $t+1$, this change can itself be caused by the formation of the alliance. If such is the case, it would be an instance of moral hazard; and understanding variation in it would be highly contributive. Such a task, however, is beyond the scope of this thesis and can be conducted elsewhere.

rivalrous. However, the latter findings on the moderating role of state credibility appear to have some problems discussed in the fourth and fifth chapters. Moreover, when it comes to alliances, groups do not differ from one another based on their ties to the public. This suggests that when rebels decide in between waging conflict with others and not doing so, they consider whether they have enough devoted supporters to carry out such risky policies. However, when it comes to pooling resources with others, they do not consider their base-level of supporters. They seem to consider other factors such as material strength. Chapter 4 discusses the implications of such findings, along with additional results. Chapter 5 concludes by summarizing the findings, discussing the limitations of the study along with some solutions, and by making calls for future research.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE AND A CITIZEN-BASED, MODERATED THEORY OF INTER-REBEL RELATIONS

This chapter first summarizes the literature on inter-rebel relations, discussing the strengths and weaknesses of different lines of research. While useful in highlighting the gaps within each body of research, such a review proves useful also in underlining understudied factors that can affect inter-rebel behavior and in finding which variables one may control for when devising/testing a new theory (which are noted in Chapter 3). Next, it briefly discusses the existing works on the bargaining theory of conflict to justify a focus on credibility in explaining inter-rebel ties.

Making explicit its central assumptions, the chapter then builds on studies of rebel governance and terrorism to craft its theory and hypotheses. The central argument of this thesis is that credible rebels (i.e. rebels providing services to the public) would be more selective partners and more rivalrous agents, as they do not need the support of other groups to coerce the government. Groups that are less credible (i.e. rebels with destructive ties to the public) would be less selective and less rivalrous. In turn, the former would be less likely to ally with others and more likely to engage in inter-rebel conflict than the latter type of groups. Yet, the credibility of the state

would have a moderating effect. Deficiencies in credibility by the part of the state would alter the priorities and payoff structures of the groups, making several of the hypothesized relations reversed. These points are detailed below, and summarized in the tables at the end of this chapter. Yet, before moving to these points in detail, a look at the literature is warranted to discuss the existing findings along with their limitations.

2.1. Literature on Inter-Rebel Relations

Many have argued that when there are multiple rebel groups in a civil war, to increase their share of supporters and resources, they would fight against one another or target civilians to conduct attacks of broader publicity in an attempt to outbid each other (Bloom, 2005; Conrad & Greene, 2015; A. H. Kydd & Walter, 2006; van Um, 2012).¹ Further studies have shown that such outbidding is more likely under some conditions, such as during the emergence of a new group (Wood & Kathman, 2015), when groups share the same ethnicity (Conrad et al., 2021), when violent competition is socially acceptable for a group (Nemeth, 2014), or when conducted to outbid a group that is ideologically close as drawing supporters from other ideologies is more difficult (Jaeger et al., 2015). Groups can also engage in outbidding attempts when others are likely to reach a deal with the state, i.e. engage in spoiling, to prevent the peaceful negotiation of a conflict (Stedman, 1997), especially when they cannot be deterred by the state (Greenhill & Major, 2007).

As for the effectiveness of outbidding, some have noted that attempts during times with the state, not during peace negotiations in the form of spoiling activities, would

¹ Conditions under which type of attacks are more likely is an interesting question of its own, and can be studied elsewhere.

be more likely to work in attracting more supporters (Jaeger et al., 2015). Yet, whether violent outbidding may work in the first place is a debated issue. It may not be acceptable for the supporters of a given ideology but may be so for others (Nemeth, 2014). Moreover, groups may not choose to engage in rivalry through a resort to arms. Instead, they may attempt to differentiate themselves from others ideologically and through making different demands from the government to reach a different set of potential supports on which competition may be lower (Tokdemir et al., 2021). Research, for instance, suggests that the number of rebels in a civil war do not appear to be a robust predictor of the likelihood of outbidding attempts (M. G. Findley & Young, 2012a). Though conditions under which outbidding turns violent constitute an interesting question on its own, it appears that the number of groups present in a civil war may not lead to hostile relations directly. For instance, it is unclear as to why such factors cannot facilitate cooperation as well. Many of them, for example shared ideology, can create a common ground to cooperate for achieving shared goals. Thus, scholars have started producing more nuanced analyses, though not always overcoming theoretical problems discussed below.

They have examined the effects of a variety of factors, which is justified as rebel groups demonstrate a high degree of variation in their interactions with one another. Recall that while in almost half of the civil wars since 1946, rebels form an alliance; but half of the time they do not (Akcinaroglu, 2012) -indicating the possibility of multiple factors having a role in inter-rebel relations. The literature review begins with a discussion of studies on the role of ethnicity as, since 1945, 64% of all civil conflicts have been ethnic conflicts (Denny & Walter, 2014). It then moves to discussing works on how distribution of capabilities shape inter-rebel ties, as it is one

of the essential predictors of alliance formation.² Discussing incongruities, the section then moves to other branches of research, showing what important findings the literature has and what the gaps are.

2.1.1. Ethnicity

It is not surprising that ethnicity received attention in explaining inter-rebel relations, not only due to the prevalence of ethnic civil wars. The reasons why ethnic civil wars are prevalent in the first place can also explain why much attention was paid to ethnicity in explaining rebel alliances and infightings. For instance, it is noted that when trust on the state decreases, individuals tend to support co-ethnic groups (Denny & Walter, 2014). Coupled with the difficulty of hiding one's ethnic identity (Denny & Walter, 2014), ethnic identity facilitates collective action (Fearon & Laitin, 1996). In fact, recent research suggests that the number of ethnic groups in a conflict setting would be a strong predictor of how many groups would emerge in a given context (Walter, 2019). Relatedly, some have noted that cultural and racial cleavages are more difficult to resolve than other cleavages (Caselli & Coleman, 2013; D. L. Horowitz, 2000), contributing to mobilization along ethnic lines. This may make one suppose cooperation would ensue among groups that claim to represent the same ethnic group, while conflict to be more likely among others. However, this supposition is not supported by existing work.

To the contrary, it is found that shared ethnicity is a source for conflict among rebel groups as they would compete for being the main beneficiary/representative of the ethnic group that constitutes their constituency (Phillips, 2019). Such a rivalry can

² The focus on how distribution of capabilities shapes inter-state alliance politics has long been the basis of many theoretical models (Waltz, 1979), which then improved through a consideration of multiple other factors to explain more of the variation in alliance formation.

feed conflict between, for instance, among moderates and extremists (A. Kydd & Walter, 2002). Similarly, when the ethnic group that the rebel organizations claim to represent are located homogeneously in a region, not mixed with other ethnicities, control of the region becomes so valuable that rebel groups may fight one another for leadership. The fight between Tamil groups in Sri Lankan civil war, for Lilja and Hultman (2011), was an instance of such infighting. Similarly, working on Jihadist groups (i.e. a type of VNSAs widely observed), Ahmad (2016) notes that it is when Islamist groups have shared ethnic/tribal ties that the risk of inter-Islamist clashes in multiparty civil wars becomes more likely. Cited below as well, recent studies support claims that shared ethnicity among groups can contribute to violent rivalries (Conrad et al., 2021). Moreover, it is found that when a group of rival co-ethnic rebels defect to the government's side and cooperate in counterinsurgency efforts, their ethnic ties allow more effective counterinsurgency (Lyall, 2010). In other words, contrary to being effective at cooperation, co-ethnicity can contribute to effective fighting against other rebels. On the other hand, combined with other factors, having different ethnic backgrounds is found to be a conducive factor for inter-rebel cooperation (Steinwand & Metternich, 2022). The role of ethnicity seems, thus, to be mixed in predicting how inter-rebel relations may unfold.

However, these are not to indicate that co-ethnics always militate against one another. For instance, in the 1980s, the PUK and KDPI, two once-rival Kurdish groups in Iraq, eventually came to cooperate against the Iraqi government (Akcinaroglu, 2012). While it is true that no model can avoid having outliers, such cases that the author uses throughout the thesis suggest that there may be theoretical shortcomings in the existing works, so that there can be room for improvement in our

explanations of rebel relations. Relatedly, Balcells et al. (2022) find that co-ethnicity has weak but positive effects on rebel alliances. This raises the need for identifying the conditions under which co-ethnic cooperation is still likely.

Working on when ethnic groups fight against one another, Christia (2008) notes that economic incentives coupled with strong leadership in a group can help in-group allegiance prevail over inter-ethnic cooperation. This is similar to Lilja & Hultman's (2011) finding that ethnic groups' homogenous existences in a region lead to violence between co-ethnic rebel groups for leadership; as each work indicates that it is not a shared ethnicity, but the context in which ethnicity is shared shapes inter-rebel relations. This is emphasized also in work on inter-ethnic relations. For instance, Posner (2004) notes that it was not the ethnic cleavages, but the difference in population sizes that made Chewas and Tumbukas allied in Zambia where each were unable to form their own considerably major groups; and adversaries in Malawi where each were able to form such groups and fight over the cleavages. However, what is problematic about these works is the contextual variables they analyze. For instance, it is not clear why strong leadership and economic incentives lead to conflict instead of cooperation. While economic incentives can lead to cooperation for mutual gains, strong leadership committed to an agreement would prevent defections and make alliance more likely (V. Asal et al., 2012). Indeed, research notes that expectations of escalation of conflict and/or internal punishment of defecting from cooperation makes inter-ethnic groups cooperate, both of which are mainly the outcomes of mutual ethnic institutionalization (Fearon & Laitin, 1996). Therefore, it seems more focus on the contextual factors that shapes rebel credibility is needed. It seems unlikely that groups would not cooperate with credible actors in

cases of expected government strikes; or would fight prolonged wars when the government is strong.

2.1.2. Distribution of Capabilities

In response, many have focused on other variables that can shape inter-rebel relations. One such variable that many have analyzed is regarding the distribution of capabilities. According to Fjelde and Nilsson (2012), an imbalance of capabilities leads to inter-rebel fighting, especially when the weaker side attempts to reach a deal with the government. This is in line with the findings of Gade, Hafez, and others (2019). However, it is not clear why the weaker side would not ally with the stronger side by engaging in a security-autonomy trade-off, which is viewed as one of the strategies that weak rebel groups may follow to gain leverage against a government (Nilsson, 2010). Even if such leverage is not to be fruitful, weak groups can attempt to form such alliances mainly to survive. For instance, during the civil war in the Philippines, the much weaker Abu Sayyaf Group was able to form an alliance with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, the largest Islamic faction in Philippine's civil war, and survive (Abuza, 2005; Akcinaroglu, 2012). While empirics highlight the deficiencies in the theory, works of others also contrast with the findings linking power imbalances to infighting. For instance, Krause (2014, 2017) asserts that movements characterized by factions that lack a hegemonic power (i.e. where rival groups have balanced powers) are likely to suffer from infighting, compared to movements that have a hegemon (i.e. imbalance powers). A similar point is also theorized by Bakke et al. (2012). Finding contradicting theories on the role of distribution of power is not surprising, however, as it has been long shown in International Relations (IR) literature that what actors view as threats are different

than what actors view as powerful (Walt, 1990). Relatedly, some have focused on how the strength of government interacts (a potential source of threat) with rebel distribution of power to shape inter-rebel relations.

Some have argued that government weakness is an important factor that contributes to rebel alliance, as weak governments would fail in deterring the formation of such ties (V. H. Asal et al., 2016; Blair et al., 2022). However, it is not clear why government weakness would not facilitate competition. When the government is weak, rebels may allocate resources to infighting (Fjelde & Nilsson, 2012). In addition, when the government is strong, rebels still form alliances and thus answer their need for forming such ties. For instance, in the Afghan conflict, Quetta Shura and the Haqqani group were able to cooperate against the US forces (Bapat & Bond, 2012).³ This latter example contradicts with arguments that government strength can deter alliance formation among rebel groups (Mir, 2018)⁴ and that emphasize the role of government strength in making defeated/dismissed rebel groups to seek dominance among other rebels to become a more credible actor (Frisch, 2009). Since rebels can form alliances and develop their own capabilities after being defeated/dismissed by the government, there is still a cooperative manner of becoming a more credible actor.

In response to the contradictory claims, some have argued that both victory and defeat against the government can cause fragmentation. It is the condition of a stalemate, however, that predicts rebel cohesion (Woldemariam, 2016). However,

³ Though this form is an example for extrastate wars, the logic of strong government's inability to drive wedges applies. Government's policies for preventing rebel alliances are discussed in the following paragraphs.

⁴ Mir's focus is coupled with domestic political cohesion and establishment of efficacious ties with local partners in extrastate counterinsurgency.

stalemate can mean loss to some groups, especially to those who cannot sustain themselves for prolonged periods of time, such as those relying on forced recruitment (Eck, 2014; Tokdemir, 2021). These findings then point at two possibilities: either rebels choose their alliance partners based on some additional criteria (as argued in this thesis below) or a more comprehensive power analysis should be made. On this latter approach, Costantino Pischedda, for instance, analyzes the Ethiopian civil war and finds that situations where imbalance of power is coupled with ephemeral government weakness are the main ones marked by inter-rebel fighting among rival coethnic groups (Pischedda, 2018). However, whether this finding holds for inter-ethnic and non-rival groups is not tested over a broader sample of cases.

Another example of works that focus on the convoluted effects of power distributions argue that rebels are more likely to form alliances when they are able to withstand government repression; or else, when they can find external patrons that can ensure each side's commitment to an alliance (Bapat & Bond, 2012). While shedding light on a complicated issue, this argument opens room to two other discussions where disagreements exist in each. First, and related to power analysis, some have found that government repression has conditional effects, meaning that it fosters rebel cooperation if the dissidents were satisfied with the preexisting settings; and leads to inter-rebel conflict if the actors were not satisfied before repression as well (McLauchlin & Pearlman, 2012).⁵ This, then, implies that withstanding repression would not have unified effects in different cases. What makes a rebel group satisfied

⁵ The authors focus on ethnic/nationalist movements and the actors inside them, instead of two different rebel groups. However, since a case of movement fractionalization upon within-movement conflict would yield different groups who would also have rivalry with one another, this thesis assumes that what holds for within-movements would hold for inter-rebel relations as well.

with the status-quo, on the other hand, cannot be determined by capability distributions.⁶

2.1.3. Third Party Sponsors

Regarding the role of third party patrons, one again finds theoretical and empirical incongruities. Bapat and Bond (2012) argue that groups that cannot resist government repression would need a third party to form an alliance as the third party would serve to check commitment of each group and ensure non-defection. This is consistent with the finding that shared sponsors increase the likelihood of alliance formation among rebel groups (Popovic, 2018), and with some empirical cases. For instance, consider the role of Iran in fostering cooperation between Hamas and Hezbollah against Israel (Byman & Kreps, 2010); or the role of Frontline states in facilitating the merger of ZAPU and ZANU in the Rhodesian Bush War (Akcinaroglu, 2012).⁷ The need for gaining needed requirements for survival can make rebel groups cease emphasizing their differences to attract sponsorship. For instance, Popovic (2018) cites the example where Afghan mujahideen exhibited such behavior to receive support from third party actors (Yousaf & Adkin, 1992). However, there are theoretical and empirical incongruities. First, sharing a sponsor may lead to rebel infighting as the rebel groups may attempt to outbid one another after obtaining the requirements for survival. Popovic (2018) himself agrees on this point and notes that Libyan sponsorship of FAN and FAP in Chad against the government of Chad led to “serious disagreements and ultimately spelled the end of the Second Liberation Front in Chad” (pp.757). In addition, it is not clear why groups

⁶ As it is not the case in world politics as well. For instance, there are small but revisionist powers. On this, see: (Schweller, 1994).

⁷ However, it is useful to note that this war is seen as a war of independence, which are not categorized as a civil wars by some.

would leave their differences to abeyance for attracting foreign support, as “brand differentiation” is a tool that rebels use for portraying themselves as a different alternative to other groups and increase their support base by influencing different potential supporters (Tokdemir et al., 2021). Relatedly, as another empirical incongruity, it is noted that no significant effect of shared sponsorship in preventing rebel infighting was found (Gade, Gabbay, et al., 2019; Gade, Hafez, et al., 2019). This is not surprising, as having a sponsor may make some rebel groups commit more indiscriminate violence (Weinstein, 2007) and some engage in more selected violence due to the declined costs; thus making rebel groups fail to unite due to disagreements on the used tactics.⁸ In addition, shared sponsors are observed not as frequent as alliances among VNSAs in general are (Blair et al., 2022). This does not mean that shared sponsors cannot have a strong effect on inter-rebel relations; however, the rarity of shared sponsorship and the incongruities noted above point to the potential fruitfulness of studying the effects of other variables that can shape inter-rebel relations.

Remaining within the role of sponsorship, some have noted that having non-shared or asymmetric sponsorship can lead to inter-rebel conflict as sponsors can make rebels fight against those supported by rival states, or as the asymmetry may allow for one group to attempt defeating the other (Fjelde & Nilsson, 2012). However, the argument on the role of asymmetry of sponsorship suffers from the theoretical

⁸ Though not referencing sponsors, some argue that the high costs of engaging in selective violence makes groups use indiscriminate violence (Kalyvas, 2006; Wood, 2010). This is inconsistent with the finding that some rebel groups that operate under lowered costs of selective violence due to having sponsors still use indiscriminate violence (Weinstein, 2007). Which rebel groups use indiscriminate violence despite operating under low costs of engaging selective violence is an interesting question of its own, but the potential of witnessing disagreement among rebels that have sponsors is a logical conclusion as some are found to follow indiscriminate and some are implied to follow selective violence when they have resources to back their operations.

shortcomings that are noted for expectations of infighting under conditions of imbalance in rebel capabilities. The argument on the effects of having rival sponsors, on the other hand, provides important insight but does not account for other important factors that can shape inter-rebel relations, such as the government's policies or the distribution of capabilities on which much has been noted above. These can operate through, for instance, shaping the demands of the sponsors from the rebel groups.

2.1.4. Government

Apart from the work that focuses on how third party sponsors can affect inter-rebel relations, there are also those who focus on how government policies can alter rebel infighting and alliance formation. Governments can infiltrate an alliance partner and collect information regarding the other members of the alliance, weakening the ties between groups (Bacon, 2017; Blair et al., 2022). This, and the prediction of such interaction between a rebel group and the government, can prevent the formation of rebel alliances. For instance, some note that the reason why Peru's Sendero Luminoso did not form alliances with other groups is the expectation of infiltration of potential partners (McCormick, 1987). This infiltration can occur through use of force by the government, which predicts government strength to deter alliances as noted above; or through co-optation by giving positive inducements to a rebel group as discussed below.

The government can initiate a peace process which can lead to splintering in groups if in-group divisions are not addressed in the final agreements a group reaches with the state (Plank, 2017). In turn, inter-rebel conflict in the form of outbidding and

spoiling may emerge as discussed in the introduction of this section. Alternatively, the government can co-opt rebel groups by offering positive inducements in exchange for their collaboration with the government forces against the remaining rebel forces (Johnston, 2007). This is especially advantageous for governments who can co-opt rebel groups sharing the same ethnicity with those who are still fighting against the government, as such groups can use their ethnic ties for more efficacious counterinsurgency operations (Lyal, 2010). Governments can also install the rebels into the state and then play one against the other (Driscoll, 2012). Relatedly, Kalyvas (2008) notes that government strength can facilitate ethnic defection among the warring parties as such strength generates an ability to recruit ethnic defectors. In addition, governments can offer negotiated settlements to weak groups who would accept them to avoid situations where the stronger groups obtain yields in the future that may cause further weakness for such groups (K. G. Cunningham, 2011; Nilsson, 2010). In all such cases, governments can prevent the formation of a rebel alliance.

However, viewed as such, these arguments have important gaps. First, governments not only focus on the military strength of a group, but also what tactics it uses. For instance, usage of terrorism holds important implications for government-rebel relations.⁹ Thus, arguments that focus on co-optation remain incomplete as long as they fail to take into account who gets what based on the tactics they use. Second, weakness of the rebel groups may allow them to obtain concessions in multiparty settings; however, the mechanism may not be one of government's "winning away of pieces" (Nilsson, 2010), but one of alliances with strong rebel groups as the former

⁹ Whether this influence is positive or negative is a debated topic, discussed in the Theory subsection of this Chapter. See: (Fortna, 2015; Thomas, 2014)

attempts can be prevented by strong “veto players” (D. E. Cunningham, 2006).¹⁰

While research indicates that negotiations which leave out some actors are not necessarily marked by spoiled peace between the signatories as the potential spoilers are already accounted for by the sides (Nilsson, 2008), reaching such negotiations in the first place where spoilers are accounted by the signatories can become more difficult when a strong party is left out (D. E. Cunningham, 2006). In addition, it is not clear why the victory of the strong rebel group poses a risk to the weaker sides by itself. Weak rebel groups can avoid engaging in such negotiations by forming alliances with a strong rebel group that is held outside of the negotiations (Johnson, 2021). That would happen, however, if the strong rebel groups agree to do so, whose likelihood cannot be predicted by the accounts cited above. Though the explanatory variables she and this thesis use differ, Pearlman (2009) notes that whether a group utilizes negotiations or spoiling for addressing intra-movement conflict depends much on the internal dynamics of the groups, which this thesis focuses on in the next sub-section.

Third, government strength can facilitate ethnic defection by making the state more likely to recruit them (Kalyvas, 2008), but domestic politics can prevent the utilization of resources in such a manner, especially depending on the tactics the ethnic groups have used -as noted above. In summary of the three objections raised, it should be noted that the strength of governments and rebel groups cannot explain much by themselves and parsimonious additions to existing models should be made. Even the work that engages in power analysis notes that while government’s wedge

¹⁰ Nilsson (2010) does not deny that the second path is a sound explanation as well, but does not distinguish between the two.

strategies¹¹ are not linked to rebel infighting, they can shape whether rebels are alarmed of one another's relations with the government (Pischedda, 2018). Findings of Driscoll (2012), which indicate that post-cooptation rebel-state relations are not a function of rebel size but of political ties and ethnic origin, shed further doubt on power-related analysis and justify the need for focusing on other factors. Finally, research notes that inter-rebel relations that are based on ideology and ethnicity are not shaped by rebel-government relations (Balcells et al., 2022).

2.1.5. Goals and Ideology

Thus, many have also worked on how rebel-group level factors shape inter-rebel relations. One such studied factor is rebel ideology and goals. According to some, shared motivation (Islamic motivation, especially) fosters alliance formation among rebel groups (V. H. Asal et al., 2016; Phillips, 2019)¹². Some, increasing the scope, note that linked ideologies facilitate alliance formation (Bacon, 2018). Ideology may play such a role as shared ideology can mean shared goals and threat perceptions for the rebel groups (Karmon, 2005). In addition, shared ideology means an increase in the number of monitoring agents (i.e. followers of the ideology) that can punish defectors from an alliance, contributing to trust among partners (Blair et al., 2022). Ideological differences, on the other hand, may make some groups become more moderate than others and more likely to defect to the government (Stedman, 1997). Exploring dynamics of rebel relations in Syria, Gade, Gabbay and others (2019) confirm that shared ideology is an important predictor of rebel alliance; and ideological distance is more related to inter-rebel conflict compared to ideological

¹¹ Wedge strategy is an actor's attempt to prevent the formation of an enemy coalition against itself (Crawford, 2008, 2011).

¹² Asal et al. (2016) also find that common ethnic motivation also leads to rebel alliances, which are criticized above.

similarity (Gade, Hafez, et al., 2019). However, regarding ideology and goals of rebel groups, theoretical and empirical incongruities are again salient. To begin with the latter, consider for instance the alliance that TPLF and ELF formed against the Derg in the civil war of Ethiopia. These groups had different goals in mind, not being religious goals, but were able to cooperate: the TPLF was aiming at overthrowing the Derg whereas the ELF was aiming at secession (Akcinaroglu, 2012). However, FARC and ELN's shared ideologies did not prove efficacious in alliance formation and the two groups competed against one another during Colombia's civil war (Bapat & Bond, 2012). As for the role of religion, it should be noted that there are many instances where Muslim groups fight one another, be it in the Balkans (Christia, 2008) or in the Middle East. These are not surprising examples to find, as they are not examples of cases the arguments cited above simply not written for. To the contrary, they point at theoretical incongruities one should focus on.

Arguments that focus on the role of shared ideology and motivation remain incomplete as long as they fail to address the following problems, which makes this thesis claim that factors outside of ideology should be analyzed. For instance, it is not clear why shared ideology is not expected to lead to inter-rebel conflict for the aim of becoming the leader of an ideology. Such conflicts are not rare. Consider, for instance, the fights between ISIS and al-Qaeda or between the Salafist jihadist rebel groups of Jabhat al-Nusra and Ahrar al-Sham. Which group represents the ideology as its leader can become a source of contention. Indeed, Walt (1990) long noted that ideologies that allow room for contestation on sovereignty hinder formation of stable alliances in world politics due to this reason. Asal et al. (2016) acknowledge that and theorize on the role of religious motivation, but religious ideologies are not immune

to such contestations as noted above. Bacon (2018), on the other hand, limits her argument to non-rival organizations and thus gains a theoretical leverage by focusing on groups that are less likely to engage in conflicts of the type Walt (1990) noted.¹³ Nevertheless, it is also found that when groups share ideologies, this makes a group alter its ideology to differentiate itself from other groups and attract supporters from a wider pool of audiences (Tokdemir et al., 2021). This again sheds doubt on the role of shared ideologies in shaping inter-rebel relations.

On the effects of having different ideologies for rebel relations, it should be noted that scholars of world politics found ideological differences to foster competition mainly when states are not able to credibly signal tolerance towards other ideologies or when the actors are not able to protect their ideologies from challengers (Owen, 2005). These results can apply to intra-state conflict settings as well. In addition, it is also found that even ideological enemies can ally depending on their ability to prevent major ideological changes and the nature of the ideological enmity (Haas, 2021).¹⁴ Thus, though ideologically distant rebels are more likely to fight one another when compared to ideologically similar groups, this may not be a natural outcome of this ideological distance but of other factors. Finally, research indicates that defections to government are not related to ideological differences between moderates and extremists but to insurgent infighting (Staniland, 2012) -whose relation to ideological differences is questionable as argued there. It may be true, then, that shared ideology is a better predictor of rebel conflict than shared ethnicity (Balcells et al., 2022), but that would not indicate that shared ideology is a strong predictor of rebel alliance. On the other hand, one may point at the empirical findings

¹³ In addition, Bacon's (2018) work is on transnational alliances between terrorist organizations.

¹⁴ On this claim's justification, see the work of Lake (Lake, 2003).

of the works cited above and use empirics to counter the theoretical incongruities. It should be noted, however, that theoretical gaps should be addressed by theoretical arguments for diagnosing the ‘causality’ instead of ‘relations’ -however robust they may be. Such relations, afterall, can be related to omitted factors that play crucial roles but remain omitted.

2.1.6. Organizational Properties

There is also research focused on organizational characteristics of the groups. Some have argued that violent groups tend to form alliances with groups that are at the core of an alliance network (Bacon, 2018).¹⁵ In addition, to gain the most from an alliance, it is noted that violent groups would ally with the strongest terrorist group they can access (M. C. Horowitz & Potter, 2014).¹⁶ When having complementary needs (Bacon, 2018), the problems of monitoring and moral hazard may become of secondary importance for a core rebel group. However, these problems exist and can eventually become a net loss for the core group (Byman, 2014).¹⁷ It is not clear under which circumstances would core groups accept forming such ties, and to what extent complementary needs hold unifying effects. It may be the case that such alliance formation holds a decreasing marginal utility and that groups may be attempting to form the smallest winning coalitions possible (Christia, 2012). However, determinants of who is accepted in the smallest winning coalition remains debatable. Power-based analysis (Christia, 2012) is problematic due to both the reasons

¹⁵ Bacon's (2018) argument is on transnational terrorist group alliances. However, assuming the argument to apply to inter-rebel relations in a given civil war setting is sound, as allying with a central organization gives access to more resources as compared to another peripheral organization (Horowitz & Potter, 2014).

¹⁶ Work of Horowitz & Potter (2014) focus on relations between terrorist groups, but recall that this thesis assumes in its theory-craft that such findings apply to rebel groups in multiparty civil wars as well, as terrorism tactics are widely displayed in civil conflict settings (M. G. Findley & Young, 2012b; Fortna, 2015).

¹⁷ However, note that Byman's (2014) argument, similar to Bacon's (2018), is on transnational terrorist alliances.

discussed above and due to its inability to account for other factors that can facilitate defections and mistrust such as having rival third party sponsors, as cited and discussed above. On the other hand, several mechanisms that can facilitate trust, such as shared ideology, are discussed above as ineffective means of facilitating cooperation. This thesis argues that internal dynamics and tactics of rebel groups should be analyzed to provide a satisfactory answer. Moreover, since decline of a core group means a net loss for the peripheral allies as well (Byman, 2014), it is unclear why such allies would engage in shirking and moral hazard, which make alliances a net loss for the core group. Attention to myopic interests can be an answer. However, why some groups have such interests cannot be easily answered without understanding their internal politics.

Works that focus on whether movement-level characteristics play a role on inter-rebel relations found that movement fragmentation upon leadership collapse is marked by use of violence by the rebel groups both against the state and one another (Lawrence, 2010). Later research shows such fragmentation can also be due to use of violence by the groups (causing disagreements among moderates and extremists) or due to rivalry on leadership (Asal et al., 2012). When fragmented, groups can engage in infighting to curb the other group's potential of reaching a deal with the government (A. Kydd & Walter, 2002). Though the number of warring parties is not associated with prevalent usage of terrorism (M. G. Findley & Young, 2012a), post-splinter violence can be a unique type of observation, which deserves its own study. However, overall, these studies highlight the importance of whether groups fragmented from the same parent organization hold important implications for inter-rebel relations. In addition, taking the analyzed units as movements (not rebels

in general) is warranted as it is also found that divisions within a movement (i.e. not across movements that hold different goals) are associated with more non-negotiated government concessions to the movement (K. G. Cunningham, 2011)- a type of counterinsurgency that can also bypass spoiler problems. These points highlight the importance of understanding how political similarities and differences shape inter-rebel relations. While important, on the other hand, such studies still cannot provide a fuller analysis of inter-rebel relations as they still do not account for variation in credibility that rebel groups offer to one another for cooperation, which may change over time even if the groups were once-rival fragments of a divided movement. Such credibility, this thesis argues, can be best understood when each rebel group's internal politics are considered in detail.

The same limitation exists for works on other factors shaping a group's credibility at the organization-level. For instance, a line of research links territorial control to a group's credibility and relations with others. Some argue that whether a group suffers ethnic defection is shaped by whether the group exercises territorial control, as doing so can deter defection upon fears of punishment (Kalyvas, 2008), implying that the group is a credible one. In line with these findings, Asal et al. (2016) have found that controlling territory increases the likelihood for a group to be allied with others. However, how a group utilizes the benefits stemming from territorial control is a decision that a group would make, most likely with attention to its internal political constraints. In other words, the link between territorial control and inter-rebel relations may not be as direct as it seems. For instance, some suggest that territorial control may make a group have decreased motivation to continue fighting (D. E. Cunningham et al., 2009), which may also decrease the motivation for forming

alliances. Territorial expansion may make overseeing member behavior more difficult, hindering the unity of a group (Johnston, 2008) and consequently its credibility. For instance, in his analysis of rebel relations in Sudan, Seymour (2014) does not find support for the claim that territorial control increases the chances that controlling territory where other rebels also operate do not predict collaboration among factions of a group. Alternatively, a group may use the benefits it derives from territorial control to wage wars against other groups (Fjelde & Nilsson, 2012). Therefore, it seems territorial control may have mixed effects on rebel behavior. Instead, a better explanation may come from studying the internal politics of VNSAs. For instance, recent research shows that whether a group becomes a dominant organization in a conflict (Petricich & Asal, 2022), and after-conflict (Ishiyama & Widmeier, 2013) is related to their ties with the public -along with other internal political aspects.

The same problems exist for works studying the effects of natural resources on inter-rebel relations. Some have found that operating in a region where natural resources such as drugs can facilitate competition among rebels over these resources (Fjelde & Nilsson, 2012; Phillips, 2018). Yet, such resources may also facilitate cooperation among rebels where each group can finance their operations through access to resource rents. The decision, then, can again be a function of the internal politics of rebels which shapes their credibility -and consequently their relations with one another. For instance, Christia (2008) notes that economic benefits one can receive from inter-group conflict would not motivate such clashes unless groups have

a commanding group of elites strongly established their authority over the group. Otherwise, conflict would be considered more risky than its offered benefits.¹⁸

2.1.7. Other Works

Finally, there are other works that focus on factors whose theoretical predictions remain incomplete. For instance, some note that proximity would allow rebel competition for leadership (Toft, 2010). On the other hand, geographical proximity can increase contact between groups and thus increase trust, especially among different ethnicities (Forbes, 1997). Even among coethnics, geographical proximity can provide an opportunity to avoid government repression and form bonds. Similarly, there are works emphasizing the role of the absence of a regulating mechanism that installs trust among rebel groups. They note that expectations of potential infiltrations, defections, and betrayals would inhibit rebel alliance formation (Bacon, 2017; Bapat & Bond 2012; Byman, 2014)¹⁹. However, such structural factors fail in explaining the high variation one observes in inter-rebel relations.²⁰ Some taking the individual-level perspective note that inter-rebel conflict, especially those sharing a common ideology, is mostly due to individuals' desire to make their organization hold the most members due to their personal attachments (Abrahms, 2008). However, such arguments again fail to explain the wide variance in inter-rebel relations and also the above-cited finding that shared ideology is related to rebel alliance -though in a causally questionable manner.

¹⁸ This is one of the reasons why the analyses presented in the following chapters include whether a group has central command structure as a control variable, which is discussed more in Chapter 3.

¹⁹ Note that Bacon (2017) refers mainly to international alliances among terrorist organizations when discussing potential hurdles to alliance formation. However, this issue seems to be applicable to civil war settings as well as no higher authority can ensure trust among two rebel groups within a country (for a discussion on the potential roles of the third party supporters and the thesis' critique, see above).

²⁰ Recall that almost half of the time, rebel groups form an alliance (Akcinaroglu, 2012).

2.1.8. Where to Move Forward?

Though shedding light to an important problem, the high variation in inter-rebel relations and the empirical and theoretical incongruities regarding some of the factors existing studies analyzed highlight the need for more work on inter-rebel ties.

Existing work does not analyze how a rebel group's relations with the public shape its relations with other rebel groups. This, in turn, sometimes leads to theoretical gaps. At other times, while the arguments offer significant insight into rebel-relations, they fail to consider how other factors shape enmity and amity among violent non-state actors in civil conflict settings -omitting a potential factor to control for.

This thesis argues that such a study is warranted as rebel-public ties shape a group's credibility; thus holding potential to shape rebel-government interactions (Akcinaroglu & Tokdemir, 2020; Fortna, 2015), and consequently inter-rebel relations which occur in the context of (armed) negotiations with the government. It would contribute to the existing findings by showing whether the existing findings are affected by rebel-public ties, and, for instance, answering post-conflict violence among rebels is more likely to expect. However, before developing the theory fully, a review of macro factors that affect government-rebel bargainings shall be provided to better show why such a framework is needed and how it can relate to inter-rebel alliances.

2.2. Macro Factors of Bargaining and Bargaining Failure

War is a costly action. However, even when negotiated agreements offer better outcomes to both parties to a dispute, war may occur. This is an instance of bargaining failure, and can be attributed to three main factors: information asymmetries and misrepresentation that causes optimal negotiations difficult to be reached; commitment problems where doubts on whether the parties will implement the negotiated settlements; and issue indivisibility where the parties cannot divide the disputed issue due to its nature (Fearon, 1995). Scholars have shown that such an approach is useful for explaining civil wars as, for instance, it is in such instances where the government cannot easily estimate the size of its adversary, exacerbated by rebels who are incentivized by their weakness to misrepresent such information (Walter, 2009).

As for the issue on credibility and commitment, which this thesis focuses on, rebel groups who lack power to punish the government for defecting from a potential deal can hold reservations about government credibility (Walter, 2009), which would loom large when the adversary of such groups is an ethnic majority (Fearon, 1998) or a state with weak institutions where credibility is concomitantly low (Fearon & Laitin, 2003)-in each case punishing the state from defection remains a difficulty. The possibility of the government, who does not disarm while rebels generally do so, exacerbate the rebel fears of future government strikes against the rebel groups (Walter, 2002). On the other side, governments can too hold such concerns as, for instance, negotiating with a group can cause spoiling attempts by splintering groups that hold more radical demands (Kydd & Walter, 2002), delaying the time where a group is found strong enough so that spoilers do not pose a commitment problem.

In addition to these problems, concerns about whether the relative powers of parties will change in the future also presents problems for successful bargaining (Daxecker, 2011; Powell, 2004). A negotiated settlement at the present time may not hold in the future due to changed balances of power. Then, if victory at the present time offers better outcomes compared to remaining at a stalemate in the future or offers outperforming the adversary in the future, parties can still engage in conflict (Garfinkel & Skaperdas, 2000). This holds even if an agreement at the present time overcomes several problems noted above. Moreover, even if such problems are not present for the parties to a dispute, governments may still refrain from engaging in negotiated settlements if it expects that such action can lead to the emergence of new groups who observed the success of rebellion (Walter, 2006).

Information problems regarding the capabilities may be solved when the conflict proceeds for a while, as the battlefield serves as a place where parties learn about the strength of their adversary (Collier et al., 2004; Powell, 2006). However, information problems regarding what a rebel group wants is difficult to be solved in the absence of increased credibility by the part of such groups. For instance, consider that groups may be motivated by the greed or grievances they hold (Collier & Hoeffler, 2004; Keen, 2012; Ross, 2004). Each motivation can yield different trajectories of how the conflict proceeds (Collier et al., 2004). However, since rebel groups can change their motivations as the conflict unfolds (Tokdemir et al., 2021), identifying the motivation of the group at a given time and finding what would satisfy the group can become a challenge for the state. In addition, since ethnic rebel groups act with value rationality (Varshney, 2003), meaning that costs and benefits may matter less than

receiving the valued goal, identifying rebel goals based on capabilities can become more challenging. In such instances, a more credible bargaining partner would not face the same problems as an uncredible one.

Without solving such problems, even if the harm that each side suffers can open the path to negotiations (Zartman, 2000), negotiations may fail. Alternatively, some parties can spoil the process (Stedman, 1997) or a civil war may be concluded with a negotiation but recur soon after.

This is why this thesis focuses broadly on how credibility of actors shapes their relations with one another. However, different from the famous work on bargaining failures in civil wars, this paper acknowledges the existence of multiple rebel groups and builds its theory accordingly.²¹ In addition, it does not assume credibility to be low or high for the rebel groups. Citing recent work in the next section, it builds on the finding that some rebel groups are more credible than others. In addition, it sides with the founding works and uses their insight that not all governments are also equally credible (for instance: Fearon & Laitin, 2003). It then theorizes how such asymmetries and symmetries of credibility can shape government-rebel relations and, relatedly, inter-rebel relations.

2.3. A Citizenry-Based, Mediated Theory of Inter-Rebel Relations

Determinants of rebel-government relations also influence inter-rebel relations, as it is the government who the rebel groups may or may not form an alliance against.

Then the question becomes “what shapes government-rebel relations?”. There are

²¹ As noted in the introduction, a common problem with the major works of the earlier period is that they provide little guidance in analyzing multi-party civil war contexts due to ignoring “actor fragmentation” (K. G. Cunningham et al., 2012, p. 69).

several factors, but most of them can be categorized as belonging to credibility and capability distributions. Building on some of them, and borrowing from the literature on alliance politics, this thesis develops a theory of inter-rebel relations that is shaped by rebel-public relations and tactics -mediated by government credibility. The first subsection lays out the foundations of crafting such a theory, along with its fundamental assumptions. The second and third subsections are devoted to crafting such the theory and testable hypotheses. The fourth subsection provides a justification for why other variables that shape government-rebel relations are not theorized for.

2.3.1. Foundations: Assumptions and the General Theory

This thesis builds on three key assumptions. First, it assumes that rebel groups would like to increase their credibility. This is not to argue that rebel groups would prefer doing so for reaching an agreement with the government instead of fighting costly wars. For instance, it is true that groups may prefer situations that do not involve a negotiated settlement for continued access to natural resources or land (D. E. Cunningham et al., 2009; DeRouen Jr & Sobek, 2004). Coupled with such a motivation, access to these endowments can prolong the conflict (Ross, 2004). Similarly, a group may engage in behavior that harms its credibility in the eyes of a government, but increases in-group cohesion (Cohen, 2017). However, it is not unreasonable to assume that even such groups would eventually seek to increase their credibility as a deficiency in trust to them can be a problem for finding international patrons and long-term support from the locals. A group can increase its credibility in a variety of manners, some being endogenous to the conflict process

itself (discussed in the next chapters). One path to increased credibility is alliance formation.

However, a potential ally would seek partners whose credibility exceeds at least a minimum threshold. Thus, the second assumption is that actors would prefer to ally with those whose partnership would not hinder its own credibility when they need to demonstrate that they are trustworthy agents if a negotiation is to take place. Such an alliance would not only harm the trust that others have vis-a-vis the group, but can also attenuate local support (Bacon, 2017). Yet, importantly, this is not to assume that actors would always prioritize credibility. As not above, at times, it can be forfeited for short-term boosts. In addition, an actor can forgo additional increases in credibility if it does not plan engaging in a bargaining process soon.

Third, this thesis assumes that actors would be forward-looking, meaning that they would take into consideration whether the partner would defect in the future. If this is the case, then fighting and gaining a consequently better position in the conflict would be expected (Garfinkel & Skaperdas, 2000).

Who defects, and who constitutes a credible partner are questions that are discussed below by considering the internal policies of the rebel groups. However, as a general theory, this thesis argues that when the government is a negotiable actor, then VNSAs would ally with other VNSAs who would not attenuate their credibilities and who would help in coercing the government into making concessions. It would also attempt to eliminate their viable alternatives that the government can co-opt, if it has the means of doing so. If the government is not a credible bargaining partner,

however, then a VNSA would prefer forming alliances intended to control other willing VNSAs instead of coercing the common adversary (i.e. the government).²²

2.3.2. Rebel Relations as an Outcome of Rebel-Public Relations

Given the assumptions and the focus on credibility, this subsection builds the theory of the thesis. Note that for a given rebel group, provision of services and resorting to arms constitute two of the major strategies open to rebels in advancing their interests -while also enhancing or attenuating their credibility.

A group that has constructive ties with the citizenry holds many properties to be considered as a credible organization. It is already noted that rebel groups that enjoy local support, have centralized organizational structures, and are civilian-dependent/leftist are less likely to suffer fragmentation (Fjelde & Nilsson, 2018; Mosinger, 2018). These factors are highly related to rebel governance (Florea, 2020; Mampilly, 2015; Weinstein, 2007). Groups that provide services to the public are found to be better able to establish internal discipline as they are also the groups that do not have access to short-term gains where “opportunistic members” can get into without engaging in costly sacrifices (Berman & Laitin, 2008; Weinstein, 2007). In turn, they reduce the chances of group fragmentation, which contributes to the longevity of the organization (Heger & Jung, 2017; Tokdemir, 2021; Wagstaff & Jung, 2020). In addition to their disciplined nature, such groups are found to enjoy higher levels of local support and enduring loyalty of the public as suggested by field research (Flanigan, 2008). Their provision of services enhances their legitimacy in the eyes of the public, some segments of which then join them (Levitt, 2004). On the other hand, even if local support is weak at a given time, rebel institutions of

²² On the two essential roles of alliances, i.e. coercion and control, see ft. 10 in Chapter 1.

governance can still help a group ensure compliance (Loyle, 2021) without violating human rights through forced participation and consequently damaging their legitimacies (Jo, 2015).

Coupled with the superior internal discipline these VNSAs have, these groups are found to fight their wars more effectively due to solving commitment and organization problems -consequently holding a better fighting efficacy (Berman, 2009; Weinstein, 2007). Consequently, such groups are found to be more likely to have a seat at the negotiation table with the government (Heger & Jung, 2017) and obtain indirect concessions from the government for their constituencies (Akcinaroglu & Tokdemir, 2020).

On the other hand, groups lacking such ties also lack such advantages. They are less likely to have enough monitoring and punishment capabilities for preventing defection (Weinstein, 2007). In addition, groups that engage in an opposite type of relation are found to have shorter life-spans, less commitment on the part of their recruits, and a concomitant decrease in the likelihood of victory against the government (Braithwaite & Ruiz, 2018; Eck, 2014; Mason & Krane, 1989). Therefore, it can be reasoned that these groups do not constitute credible bargaining partners for the government. They are also less likely to have international actors intervene in a civil war against the government, contrary to groups that do not have destructive ties with the citizenry (Stanton, 2020).

These inferences on credibility carry implications for inter-rebel relations. Note that one of the central aims of alliance formation is to act against an adversary (Morrow,

1991). In coercing the government into concessions/defeat, rebels would ally those who would contribute to their credibility. An already credible organization which provides services to the citizenry would not need the help of other rebels in most instances. As noted above, such groups are already close to obtaining concessions or victory. They would not need to form alliances frequently, and would be selective in forming them. Thus, such organizations would be less likely to form alliances, and form informal ones if they decide to cooperate with others in the first place. Yet, in rare instances when they can find a partner which has equally constructive ties to the citizens and thus is credible, they would prefer forming stronger bonds with them. This would not only pose the government a formidable risk, but also allow both groups to check one another in control -which is the other key role of alliance formations in general (Schroeder, 2004).

On the other hand, groups that lack such positive ties would be more willing to form alliances. Given the deficiencies they have in many aspects, they would have the need of overcoming those with alliances. Yet, since a group that provides services has a leverage over the government, it would not forgo it by allying with a group that the government is highly unlikely to negotiate with/give concessions to -i.e. a group that lacks such properties. In addition, allying with a group that has deficiencies in local support would not yield high benefits to a group engaging in rebel governance, as the former can eventually suffer from splintering problems associated with lack of discipline (Weinstein, 2007), and cannot fight as effectively as discussed above. They may be seen as potential targets that the government would attempt to co-opt (M. Findley & Rudloff, 2012) and thus as an instrument in opening the path to negotiations; yet still they may not be seen as credible bargaining parties who would

not withdraw from a partnership. One may oppose the idea of potential government co-optation of such groups as they are not as credible in the first place. Yet, governments may engage in co-optation activities for short-term purposes instead of a settlement (for instance, see: Cunningham, 2011), and this may cause problems for other rebels in terms of remaining as a competitive alternative in the political market.

As a further point, note that rebel-public ties can condition inter-rebel relations based on shaping the end-points groups aim to reach. One of the leading causes of rebel governance is civilian-dependence (Florea, 2020), which is associated with demands for benefits that accrue to the constituency (Cil & Prorok, 2020). Groups that do not depend on the civilians, on the other hand, are less likely to provide services (Weinstein, 2007), which is associated with rebel demands for benefits that accrue to the leadership (Cil & Prorok, 2020). Combined with other problems, this can impede rebel cooperation among groups that provide services to the public and those that do not.

While not allying with others frequently, moreover, groups providing services to the public would also engage in rivalry against others, reflecting the logic of outbidding and spoiling discussed in the literature review (Bloom, 2005).²³ Rivalry among groups does not happen violently all the time (M. G. Findley & Young, 2012a; Tokdemir et al., 2021). Yet, the thesis still expects some kind of a rivalry in the proposed context, operationalization of which is discussed in the next chapter, where groups that have positive ties to the public aim to utilize the many battle-field and political advantages they have to drive the competitors out of the political market.

²³ These logics also resonate with those noted in the literature on spoiling discussed by Kydd & Walter (2006); and on counter-insurgency involving other VNSAs (Johnston, 2007) respectively.

Moreover, this strategy would not be as open to groups that lack such positive ties to the public as it is those who have them. Coupled with their concomitant deficiencies in many aspects due to lacking constructive ties to the public, attempts of outbidding through violent means can backfire -resembling a finding by Jaeger et al. (Jaeger et al., 2015) in a study of the Second Intifada where it is shown that similar violent action done by different VNSAs can have different impacts on how the public reacts to the action.

Left alone, groups that do not engage in rebel governance would ally with one another, as they would still be incentivized to pool resources and coerce the government. Since they do not have much to lose from forming a stronger alliance with one another but have the potential of gaining much by addressing their deficiencies, such rebels would also be more likely to form formal alliances while keeping each other in check via mechanisms established through cooperation (recall the controlling purpose of alliances: Schroeder, 2004). Given these, the following hypotheses can be derived:²⁴

*H1a: As each group's rebel-public ties become more similar to one another in terms of constructiveness, being allied for a rebel-dyad becomes more likely.*²⁵

H1b: As a group's ties to the public becomes more constructive, it becomes less likely to be allies with others.

H1c: If a group with more constructive ties to the public is allied with others, the alliance would be more likely to be informal.

²⁴ Chapter 3 discusses alternative specifications of the terms used in the hypotheses, along with a justification of forming dyadic statements for some hypotheses while formulating monadic ones for others.

²⁵ For a detailed discussion of the focus on 'similarity', its operationalization, and limits related to it, see the following chapters.

H1d: As a group's ties to the public becomes more constructive, it is more likely to engage in inter-rebel conflict.

In addition to rebel governance, a rebel group can have violent relations with the citizenry as well. Some of them are already mentioned above, such as forced recruitment and how it shapes the credibility of an organization. For explaining how destructive ties affect a group's credibility, works on terrorism can be further drawn upon.²⁶

There are many factors that can make a group not seen as an ideal partner that may help in coercing the government into making concessions/defeat. First, groups that engage in suicide terrorism, which is one of the most lethal and visible forms of terrorist activities, are found to obtain mostly their moderate demands only (Pape, 2003). Some note that such behavior signals lack of a support base and military power for the group in the first place (Crenshaw, 1981; Laitin & Shapiro, 2008), decreasing their capability to demonstrate enduring commitment and attenuating their leverage in bargaining with the government. Relatedly, Abrahms (2006) finds that among terrorist groups, those targeting mainly the civilians are highly unlikely to achieve their goals.²⁷ Applied to civil war contexts, similar outcomes are observed. Such groups are less likely to reach an agreement with the government, or win against it (Fortna, 2015). To the contrary, it is found that usage of terrorism prolongs conflicts (M. G. Findley & Young, 2015; Fortna, 2015). It can be due to signals of extremism that follows a terrorist activity which can complicate making negotiations and weaken trust between the government and the VNSA (Kydd & Walter, 2006;

²⁶ For a justification, see the sixth footnote in Chapter 1.

²⁷ In other words, Abrahms (2006) does not consider terrorism only as an action against civilians.

Fortna, 2015), and also be due to consolidating the victimized public's support behind the government (Chowanietz, 2011).²⁸ Such groups may also find lower levels of international support and intervention available on their behalf (Stanton, 2020).

In addition, groups that have destructive ties to the public are found less likely to remain as a unified body. While use of violence itself can lead to defections (L. J. Seymour et al., 2016; Zirakzadeh, 2002), turning it to civilians in a given conflict can also negatively affect group survival by drawing moderates away from extremists in tactics (Cronin, 2009).²⁹ In a similar vein, recent research notes that disputes over tactics to use constitute one of the leading causes of group fragmentation (Perkoski, 2022), which is highly likely to occur when a group uses violence (V. Asal et al., 2012). Given the reasoning above for devising the first set of hypotheses, in coercing the government, a group that does not suffer such problems in credibility, gaining concessions, or surviving as a unified body would not prefer to ally with groups that have deficiencies in these points -i.e. with those engaging in terrorism.

However, before devising the hypotheses, note that there are disagreements in the literature on the effects of using terrorism on war outcomes and group fragmentation. A consideration of these disagreements is needed to better build the theory. First, mainly stemming from definitional differences, failure to have variance in the independent variable (as discussed by Fortna, 2015) or data-related differences, some findings indicate a positive link between usage of terrorism and success. For instance, some view terrorism as an act of committed agents that can signal

²⁸ The more specific effects of terrorism on public opinion is another topic that should be further studied on its own. See Chowanietz (2011) for a more granular analysis.

²⁹ The distinction between moderates and extremists does not have to be with respect to their goals. It can be related to the tactics they choose to use, which seems to explain war outcomes better (Abrahms, 2006).

credibility and that seems to be working in obtaining concessions (Kydd & Walter, 2006). Similarly, in a study noted by Fortna (2015) to correctly have variation in the independent variable, Thomas (2014) notes that usage of terrorism increases the likelihood of receiving offers of negotiations and concessions from the government. Yet, while useful in gaining legitimacy, to receive an offer is different than having successfully implemented concessions (Cunningham, 2011). Some groups may favor surviving and gaining legitimacy incrementally, but it may not be the main aim of other groups. Alternatively, some find that terrorism, though up to a level, contributes positively to the peaceful settlement of conflict (Wood & Kathman, 2013). Yet, terrorist organizations are found to be more likely in obtaining concessions that are not challenging the key political interests of their targets (Pape, 2003). While the finding may seem to suggest that terrorism nevertheless works, such limited success may not be satisfactory for other groups, hindering the likelihood of alliance formation among terrorist and non-terrorist rebels where the latter does not suffer from the disadvantages stemming from using terror tactics.

However, there are other points to consider as well. Recalling the outbidding literature and the conditions where violence is likely to pay, terrorism can help the group have access to a committed pool of supporters (Bloom, 2005). In addition, usage of terrorism can help the group force the government to retaliate, initiating a process where others may start viewing the organization legitimate (Lake, 2002). Moreover, violence against the civilians can foster in-group unity due to the commonly shared responsibility of the perpetrators (Cohen, 2013). Resonating with these arguments, some have found that usage of terrorism is linked to longer life-spans for the organizations (Fortna, 2015).

Yet, there are points to consider about these findings. First, contrary to Cohen's (2013) findings, Nagel and Doctor (2020) put forward that violence against civilians contributes to cohesion among the on-front perpetrators while increasing the chances of group-wise fragmentation six times. In addition, contrary to the argument on the backlash effect that government retaliations may result in, recent research suggests that this effect is highly likely to be observed mainly in democratic contexts where retaliation can only be limited (Daxecker & Hess, 2013). While suggesting that a consideration of state-level factors in theorizing VNSA-related phenomena, which is carried out by this thesis as well below, the argument induces a scope condition for the backlash-logic. Moreover, the value of terrorism in obtaining recruits seems to be one of a short-term benefit (Polo & Gleditsch, 2016; Stanton, 2013). Groups that depend on civilian support and thus tend to avoid terrorist tactics may be less likely to cooperate with those using such tactics. Finally, on the longevity argument, it is found that longevity is not associated with achievement of goals (Acosta, 2014), and can be attributable to other factors than the used tactic in the first place (Berman & Laitin, 2008; Daxecker & Hess, 2013; Young & Dugan, 2014).

Due to such problems, groups with destructive ties to the public can have difficulty in cooperating with those not having such ties despite their need for forming alliances to overcome their deficiencies. Yet, when they are able to do so when they find another group who is similarly at a disadvantaged position in the conflict, they can address their deficiencies through stronger forms of cooperation -reflecting the logic of benefit and control discussed for devising the first set of hypotheses. Moreover, when allied, they would not prefer forming informal ties which may not

be effective enough in keeping their allies in control. Finally, reflecting the above noted discussion on outbidding for generating the first hypotheses, they would avoid engaging in conflict against other rebels as they are already in a riskier position in terms of surviving and achieving their goals. Given these, the thesis hypothesizes:

H2a: As each group's rebel-public ties become more similar to one another in terms of destructiveness, being allied for a rebel-dyad becomes more likely.

H2b: Groups with more destructive ties to the public are less likely to be allied.

H2c: Provided that they are in an alliance, groups with more destructive ties to the public are less likely to be in an informal alliance.

H2d: Groups with more destructive ties to the public are less likely to engage in inter-rebel conflict.

These hypotheses may seem similar to the ones noted in the first set of hypotheses.

Yet, these should be devised separately as conflating them is theoretically and methodologically problematic. Theoretically, a group may decide to avoid engaging in rebel governance and in using violence against civilians at the same time; or, alternatively, may engage in both kinds of activities. In either case, having constructive or destructive ties to the public does not inhibit a VNSA to have the other tie as well. Hence, these are not mutually exclusive categories where one can state H1b and avoid devising H2a. Methodologically, too, it is problematic to conflate the two kinds of ties a group can have. It is, for instance, not sound to assign the same numeric values to taxation practices (e.g. 1 if happens, 0 otherwise) and to terrorism practices (e.g. 1 if happens, 0 otherwise), and then sum to have an overall “rebel-public tie score”. The two may, by intuition highly probably, have different

weights unknown to the researcher. Hence, keeping the two sets of hypotheses separate is more wise than conflating them.

Finally, there is an important consideration to make. This thesis acknowledges that rebels may not seek overthrowing the government or forcing it into making concessions, which were central to devising the above-sets of hypotheses. There can be multiple reasons for this (Rouen & Sobek, 2004; Cunningham et al., 2009). For instance, in a study of Taliban-al-Qaeda relations, Elias (2022) finds that rebels do not always seek to avoid cooperating with terrorist organizations to remain a credible agent. Yet, recalling the first assumption of the thesis, it is not expected that a rebel group would be allied with those that can weaken its credibility regardless of the goals of the group. An exception to this would be when the government is not a credible actor in the first place. Hence, this thesis expands the findings of scholars such as Elias (2022) in discussing when cooperating with terrorist groups in civil wars are likelier by considering the role of credibility of the key common enemy of rebels across time and space.

Recall that one of the causes of bargaining failures, and consequently of conflict, is related to credibility problems (Fearon, 1995). If the government is not a credible actor, then the above-noted disadvantages on gaining concessions for some rebel groups, and consequently the implications for alliance formation, would not be as relevant as they are for the above-sets of hypotheses. In such contexts, alliances would be formed not to coerce the government into concessions. Reflecting one of the assumptions noted above, rebels in such cases would be forward-looking, basing their decisions on what would happen in the future after the defeat of the state or a

stalemate. Thus, instead of coercing the adversary, alliances would be driven by the need for controlling other rebels so that they do not pose threats to one's interests.³⁰

Before detailing the theory further, note that linking state non-credibility to a decreased rebel attention to gaining concessions does not imply that state credibility will always make rebels seek negotiated settlements. A state may be credible but would not be likely to make concessions. However, there would be at least some room for gaining them. Similarly, state credibility does not preclude rebel prioritization of victory over concessions. Yet, if the state is credible, rebels would not interact with those who would make concessions unlikely as this would constitute an important opportunity cost. Finally, to account for the chances of rebel prioritization of victory even when the state is credible, the next chapter discusses military strength of the state as a control variable which would affect such considerations as well as the dependent variables as discussed in the literature review.

Advancing the theory further, given that rebel groups that provide services have more advantages in terms of legitimacy, fighting effectiveness, and internal discipline than those not engaging in rebel governance as discussed above, they would not need the help of one another after defeating the government/stalemate. Instead, they would have the tools for achieving their broader political goals, and would fail to credibly signal a willingness to share the spoils of war with others -which is a major driver for intra-group conflict (Best & Bapat, 2018) whose logic can extend to inter-rebel relations as well. The failure to signal would not stem from an organizational

³⁰ Recall that the two key aims of alliance formation are affecting the behavior of the adversary and keeping partners in check (Morrow, 1991; Schroeder, 1976).

inability, as these groups are discussed to have higher organizational capabilities than other rebels (Weinstein, 2007). It would stem rather from a lack of incentive. To assure other groups that it would be cooperative and thus avoid costly conflict, such groups would prefer forming alliances where they can control the behavior of other rebels. Moreover, since there is little risk of cooptation by the government of other groups, such rebels would not have the immediate need of eliminating their rivals in the costly manner of resorting to arms. It is expected, however, that such alliances would be easier to maintain for some partners, but would be difficult to form and maintain for dyads where each side has positive ties to the citizenry.

On the other hand, other groups would have cooperative relations with VNSAs that engage in rebel governance. With state weakness easing the need of obtaining concessions, the disadvantages of cooperating with such groups in terms of losing legitimacy without gaining much material benefits would be weighted less heavily. In addition, since such groups lack the advantages in maintaining themselves highly effectively as a result of providing services to their constituency, such as increased longevity (Heger & Jung, 2017) or fighting efficacy (Berman, 2009), they would have less room to make major demands from an organization that enjoys such advantages. Instead, they would seek cooperation. In an attempt to avoid attacks from these organizations lacking constructive ties to the people, and control their behavior, groups that do rebel governance would also be willing to cooperate -resonating co-optation by the state (Driscoll, 2012).

In such contexts, the disadvantages of engaging with terrorism, a destructive form of ties, that relate to obtaining concessions from the government (Abrahms, 2006;

Fortna, 2015) would not be weighted as heavily as they would by other rebels in forming their relations with terrorist VNSAs. This is because of the known deficiencies a weak government would have in delivering concessions even if they are provided, as discussed above. Yet, the other disadvantages such groups have, such as difficulty in remaining as a unified body (Cronin, 2009), keeping supporters (Stanton, 2013), or in finding international support (Stanton, 2020). Such groups, then, would be in need of cooperative relations with others to address such problems. Since the disadvantages in gaining concessions do not hold much weight in such a context, and since groups would have a need of avoiding outbidding-related conflict, VNSAs not engaged in terrorism would be willing to ally with terrorist VNSAs in an attempt to control their behavior. The latter would also need allies to overcome their many deficiencies. Thus, the following set of hypotheses can be devised:

H3a: Conditional upon state non-credibility, as each group's constructive/destructive ties to citizens become less similar to one another, being allied for a rebel-dyad becomes more likely.

H3b: Conditional upon state non-credibility, as a group's ties to the public becomes more constructive, it becomes more likely to be allied with others.

H3c: Conditional upon state non-credibility, groups with more destructive ties to the public are more likely to be allied with others.

H3d: Conditional upon state non-credibility, the more constructive ties a group has with the public, the less likely it is to engage in inter-rebel conflict.

Recall that in the first two sets of hypotheses, whether an alliance would be formal or informal was also thought about. It was mainly because the existence of an alliance in the first place was hypothesized to be a function of each group having similar ties

to the citizens where it can be both of constructiveness or destructiveness -two types of ties where each can have implications for the formality of an alliance if it is formed. Yet, for the last set of hypotheses, being allied is hypothesized to be a function of dissimilarity in rebel-public ties, where there is only one condition it holds: a group being more constructive/destructive than the other. Contrary to the first two sets, there is no room for further specifications that require theorizing on what would happen if both groups have constructive ties to the public as compared to situations where two groups have destructive ones. Thus, on cooperation, the focus for the last set of hypotheses is on being allied. In addition, a conditional hypothesis on how destructive ties affect inter-rebel conflict is not devised as the mechanisms would not be changed for that outcome. More specifically, groups that have more destructive ties to the public would still be more cautious in their relations to other rebels as they would still have many deficiencies in terms of battlefield efficacy as well as political capability which may cause outbidding attempts fail as discussed above. Yet, the fourth chapter presents results on testing the conditional effects of destructive rebel-public ties.

There has been some research resembling the ideas presented in this thesis. For instance, Bencherif and Campana (2017) find in their analysis of the Malian civil war that having a fluid base of supporters can affect the durability of alliances rebels have negatively as changing loyalties within groups alter their aims -consequently altering their relations with other groups. It leads to continuous shifts in alliances and competition among groups. However, it is unclear whether this finding can be generalized to other cases as their explanation for having a fluid support base is a sociological/historical one. Moreover, they do not study the effects of the

independent variables presented here. Their dependent variable, too, is not cooperation or conflict but the durability of alliances. Yet, in terms of highlighting the role of the public in inter-rebel relations, they make an important contribution and are in similar lines with this thesis. As another instance, Bacon (2017) finds that whether terrorism is an acceptable tactic for the supporters of a group would shape whether a group would ally with a terrorist organization. Yet, her research is limited to the study of al-Qaeda, and does not include the effects of constructive rebel-public ties. It also does not study the effects of a group's public relations on inter-group conflict. Another example comes from Fearon and Laitin (1996). They have long noted that in-group policing would assure ethnic groups that transgressions by the members of each group in a hostile setting would be punished by the parent group of an individual, so that cooperation among groups would ensue. While important, however, they do not expand their study into a broader analysis of how rebel-public relations in general affect inter-rebel cooperation and conflict, and do not consider the several distinct aspects of the former (e.g. its constructiveness/destructiveness, along with the many forms of each). They focus mainly on relations between ethnic groups, not rebels or groups of other kinds; while limiting rebel-public ties to policing. They do not test their idea through a statistical analysis, and also do not study alliances in civil wars among groups. Yet, they provide one of the earlier works on how group-member ties affect inter-group behavior, on which some others have produced works as does this thesis.

Such an example comes from another work where the public has a central explanatory role, research finds that when the potential supporters of a group is rather stable, groups tend to form alliances aimed at mobilization; whereas having a

more fluid potential base of supporters makes groups more likely to form issue-based alliances in the opposition against governments (Sahgal, 2008). While similar to this thesis in terms of focusing on group-public ties, Sahgal (2008) studies opposition groups in general without having a criteria of focusing only on rebels during civil wars. Moreover, the work of Sahgal uses a comparative case study method; does not engage in dyadic analysis; and does not focus on whether group ties to the public are constructive or destructive as explanatory factors. While studying the same dependent variable, both the methods, units of analysis, and explanatory variables that Sahgal (2008) and this study uses are different as discussed below and in the following chapters. Thus, while important to acknowledge that there have been works paying attention to the role of the public, this thesis advances the knowledge on inter-rebel relations as a function of rebel-public ties.

As another similar work, in an analysis of rebel fragmentation (i.e. a risk factor for a potential rebel alliance) Mosinger (2018) hypothesizes that rebels with popular support are less likely to fragment. Yet, he operationalized popular support as mass-mobilization, not as rebel governance -i.e. the mark of positive rebel-public ties this thesis focuses on as discussed in the next chapter. While not all rebel governance acts yield popular support (Arjona, 2015), his independent variable is different from that of this thesis. In a different research closer to the topic of this thesis, it is found that having support from the ethno-religious community and engagement with terrorism predicts inter-rebel conflict in the civil war of Lebanon (Derpanopoulos, 2018). While the former claim is in line with the hypotheses of this study, the work of Derpanopoulos (2018) is a single-case study. In addition, contrary to this study, he uses the MAROB dataset (Asal et al., 2008) -which fails to capture the many aspects

of how a group has constructive ties to the public due to measuring rebel popularity on a limited number of indicators. Discussed in the next chapter, to overcome such limitations, this thesis uses cross-sectional time-series data with more recent datasets on rebel governance that captures its various forms. Moreover, he does not extend his analysis to testing how such variables affect the alliance behavior of rebels -limiting the research only to conflict patterns. Another limitation his work has is that while studying the effects of reaching a deal with the government, he does not control for government credibility and its effects, failing to test whether it has a moderating role on the variables of interest. As a result, the findings of his study and this thesis show differences regarding the role of state-level factors, discussed in the fourth chapter. Finally, while he predicts that engagement in terrorism increases the chances of inter-rebel conflict, this thesis argues that while hindering cooperation, it would also decrease the likelihood of inter-group clashes. This theoretical difference, too, seems to stem from this thesis' expanded analysis of rebel relations where conflict and cooperation are both analyzed as the dependent variables without focusing only on one of them. Thus, while sharing some ideas, this thesis has considerable differences from the work of Derpanopoulos (2018) as well.

In another study where the relations of al-Qaeda with other VNSAs in the Sahel are studied, Burchall-Henningsen (2021) found that having similar types of governance practices across different types of social groups fosters cooperation among groups. While similar to the idea that upon state non-credibility, rebel governance would foster rebel alliances; Burchall-Henningsen (2021) does not extend the research into where it can lead to conflict. The same limitations apply for the similar role of terrorism the researcher finds. Finally, the study is limited in terms of space and

time-wise variance. This thesis would, therefore, constitute an extension and augmentation of such findings.

As another example, which provides one of the most recent and comprehensive studies of inter-rebel relations and rebel tactics, Asal et al. (2022) find that both rebel governance and rebel terrorism are important predictors of inter-rebel alliances. Yet, as discussed above in the theoretical section, their effects would not be as such under all circumstances. For instance, a group engaging in rebel governance would be an attractive party to ally with (Asal et al., 2022), but only under some circumstances theorized above that it would prefer being allied with others. While the authors provide a scope condition in terms of the time-periods where systemic factors change and condition the effects of rebel governance/terrorism, they do not build a nuanced theoretical mechanism where the effects of each would operate differently when other variables act as moderators. This thesis, thus, builds on their findings but also comes to explain when rebel governance/terrorism do not foster alliances. Moreover, the authors do not study how these factors relate to inter-rebel violence on which they find ideology and goals to be the key predictors. In this aspect as well, this thesis expands the work of Asal et al. (2022).

As a final example, recent research has noted that non-state sponsors tend to use proxy groups that are more close to locals in terms of identity, and groups that have low battlefield utility as their main utility for the sponsors stems from establishing ties with the locals (Moghadam & Wyss, 2020). This research is close to the argument made here on rebel alliances, as both being close to locals and having low battlefield utility are functions of rebel-public ties as discussed above. Yet, the

authors focus mainly on cross-border proxy utilization of non-state actors instead of inter-rebel alliances in a given conflict setting; utilize a comparative case study method; and does not necessarily focus on rebel governance or terrorism -where the latter is the mark of destructive rebel-public ties in this thesis, as operationalized and discussed in the next chapter. In all these three aspects, this thesis shows considerable differences from that of Moghadam and Wyss (2020). Yet, in terms of building upon the idea they present, the thesis makes an important contribution, discussed in the concluding chapter. Before moving to the other chapters, the tables below summarize the main arguments of the thesis.

Table 1: Hypothesized Effects of Constructive and Destructive Ties on Inter-Rebel Relations - Summary

Hypothesized Scenario	Hypothesized Outcome (Sets 1 and 2)	Hypothesized Outcome (Interaction where state is non-credible; Set3)
Similarity in rebel-public ties decreases	Likelihood of being allied decreases	Likelihood of being allied increases
A group engages in more constructive relations	Likelihood of being allied decreases	Likelihood of being allied increases
A group engages in more constructive relations	Likelihood of being informally allied decreases	-
A group engages in more constructive relations	Likelihood of being in inter-rebel conflict increases	Likelihood of being in inter-rebel conflict decreases
A group engages in more destructive relations	Likelihood of being allied decreases	Likelihood of being allied increases
A group engages in more destructive relations	Likelihood informal alliance decreases	-
A group engages in more destructive relations	Likelihood of inter-rebel conflict increases	No interaction would take place.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN

The previous chapter has reviewed the literature on inter-rebel relations, highlighted the gaps, and developed a theory of inter-rebel conflict and cooperation as a function of rebel-public ties. This focus is discussed to be valid as rebel-public ties shape rebel-government relations (i.e. the adversary against whom rebel relations would be shaped) and also the credibility of a given rebel group (e.g. the life-span of a potential partner) (Weinstein, 2007; Fortna, 2015; Akcinaroglu & Tokdemir, 2020), both of which have implications for inter-rebel relations. After theoretical considerations, the previous chapter has devised three sets of hypotheses: one set on the effects of constructive rebel-public inter-rebel relations; one on the effects of destructive ties; and a final set on how government credibility moderates the hypothesized effects. This chapter details the data and operationalization of its variables for testing the three sets of hypotheses, along with the empirical strategy used. The next chapter provides the results.

3.1. Data and Operationalization

This thesis runs a cross-case time-series analysis to test its hypotheses with high external validity. For definitional purposes, it relies on the commonly used UCDP Dyadic Dataset 17.1, where civil war is defined as “a contested incompatibility that concerns government and/or territory where the use of armed force between two parties results in at least 25 battle-related deaths in a year” (Davies et al., 2022; Harbom et al., 2008). Building on this definition, this thesis uses three data-sets where it merges data from multiple existing works.

First, the thesis takes the Rebel Organization Alliance Dataset (ROAD) of Balcells et al. (2022) as its basis for testing its hypotheses on inter-rebel alliances. This data-set is more useful than others in several aspects. First, note that for some of the hypotheses on rebel cooperation, the unit of analysis is rebel dyad-year (e.g. H1a). The ROAD dataset has the same unit of analysis, encompassing all civil wars between 1946-2015 with 2.496 rebel dyad-years. In addition, it has more useful information on the dependent variables than those noted in other data-sets as discussed below. Moreover, it allows for a monadic transformation of the data to construct the second dataset of the thesis where it also can test monadic claims such as H1b.

Third, the thesis takes the data of Fjelde and Nilsson (2012) as its basis for testing its claims on inter-rebel conflict. Unlike the ROAD data, their dataset includes conflicts between VNSAs as long as it exceeds 25 battle-related deaths, even if one of the sides have not met the criteria of reaching the 25-battle related deaths in a conflict against the government. Due to this criteria of inclusion, there are some groups

where the ROAD dataset has no information, but the Fjelde and Nilsson data has (2012). While preventing a merger of the two data-sets, this criteria makes the analysis have distinct data-sets for studying inter-rebel conflict and cooperation. In addition, since the data sources for the independent variables discussed below have information only on the groups exceeding 25-battle related deaths against the government, the thesis cannot study its claims on inter-rebel conflict in a dyadic manner because in a majority of cases in the Fjelde and Nilsson (2012) data, only one of the VNSAs that constitute a rebel-dyad is as such. Yet, due to the theorizing made in Chapter 2, this does not pose a major analytical concern. Moreover, methodologically, since we do not know all the groups active below the 25-battle related death criteria, overcoming this issue seems not feasible for now. Yet, the monadic nature of such data helps in having a larger number of observations (Fjelde & Nilsson, 2012). Finally, their data also covers a brief period after a civil war terminates, which allows for testing the claims of this thesis on rebel conflict beyond the years of civil wars -allowing a brief discussion of a frequently seen phenomena (Atlas & Licklider, 1999). Yet, this is a limitation for the thesis, as its main focus is on inter-rebel relations ‘during’ a multiparty civil war. This point is discussed in the concluding chapter.

3.1.1 Dependent Variables

For all of the hypotheses presented in Chapter 2, recall that there are three dependent variables under study. First, the thesis examines being allies and, second, its formality as two of its key dependent variables. Data on these comes from the ROAD dataset. This data-set is more useful than others for testing the hypotheses of the thesis. Recall that the second hypotheses of each set of expectations are on the

strength of an alliance among rebels if they form one. Contrary to the UCDP Actor Dataset v. 22.1 (Davies et al., 2022), for example, the ROAD data-set does not code a rebel group to be allied with others if they choose to merge only. Instead, it codes both the informal alliances they form, as well as the formal ones. This is important to address not only because it helps in testing this study's hypotheses; but also given that formation of formal alliances is rare among rebels in the first place (Akcinaroglu, 2012), basing the analysis only on whether formal alliances takes place can fail to help seeing the expected mechanisms at place through lower levels of cooperation. In addition, it has a longer time span than other datasets employed (such as that of Popovic (2017, 2018)). Unlike other datasets (Akcinaroglu, 2012), moreover, the ROAD data shows which group a VNSA is allied to, instead of only showing whether it has an alliance partner. Hence, a dyadic analysis is possible. Relatedly, this thesis codes the existence of an *alliance* as a binary variable (i.e. 1 if a dyad is allied at a given year, 0 otherwise), and the *formal alliance* and *informal alliance* as the other two binary dependent variables it studies.

As for its third dependent variable, the thesis also studies *inter-rebel conflict*. Data on it comes from the Fjelde and Nilsson data-set (2012). The thesis treats the existence of an inter-rebel violent conflict as a binary variable for testing its hypotheses (i.e. 1 if such conflict exists, 0 otherwise).¹ Cases where the conflict is among a rebel group and a government militia are excluded, following Fjelde and Nilsson (2012).

The figures below provide yearly information on inter-rebel alliances and conflict.

Noted in the dyadic ROAD data, between 1946-2015, there were 2.496 rebel

¹ Tests are run where each is taken as separate and then as aggregated measures of conflict.

dyad-years out of 719 which observed a rebel alliance. On inter-rebel conflict, the Fjelde and Nilsson (2012) dataset notes that there were 1.935 rebel-years between 1989-2008, where 108 of them observed an inter-rebel conflict.

Figure 1: Yearly Frequency of Inter-Rebel Alliances in the ROAD dataset (Balcells et al., 2022)

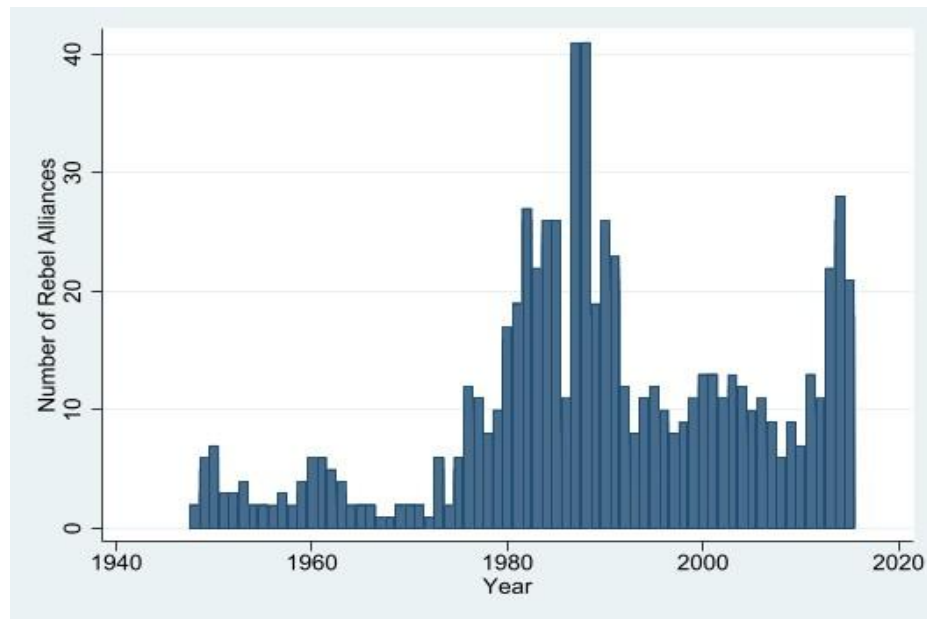
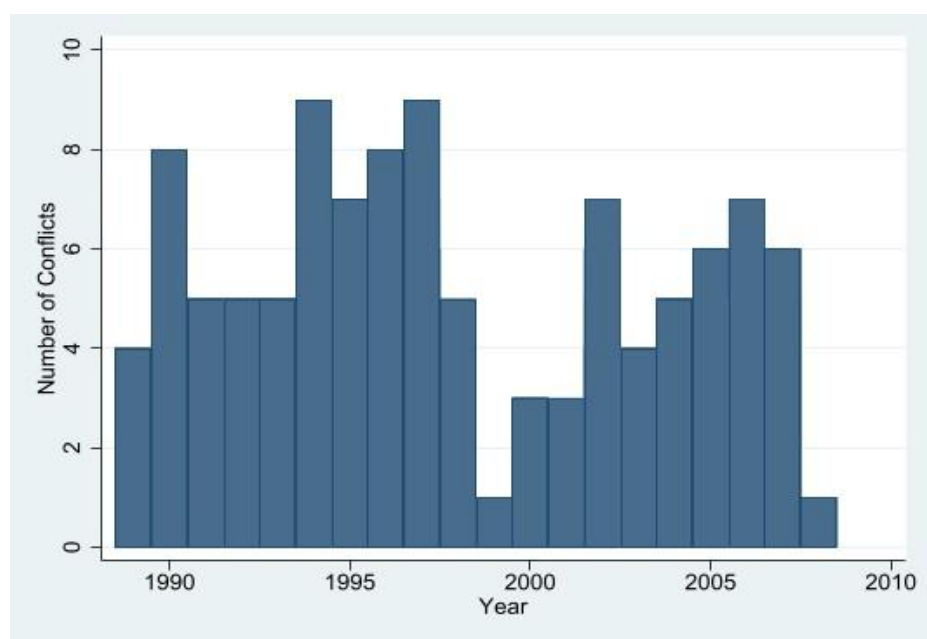


Figure 2: Yearly Frequency of Inter-Rebel Conflict in the Dataset of Fjelde and Nilsson (2012)



These figures demonstrate that rebel alliances and inter-rebel conflict have been important marks of multiparty conflict throughout time, while the latter has been more persistent than the former.

3.1.2. Independent Variables

This study has both dyadic and monadic hypotheses on how rebel-public ties shape a group's relations with others. Thus, a discussion of how to operationalize rebel-public relations for each type of hypothesis is needed. First, recall that the theory of this thesis focuses on constructive relations, lack of constructive relations, and destructive relations a rebel group can have with the people.² Data for the first two comes from the Rebel Quasi-State Institution data-set (Albert, 2022). Though the data-set has several indicators of rebel governance, this thesis follows other similar research in working on only the services directed at the public; which have been identified as “taxation, education, health, infrastructure, transportation, law, policing, justice, housing, and aid” (Yalaz, 2022, p. 53). The thesis assigns a score of 1 to a given rebel group's provision of each service, and sums the scores to have an overall score to create a variable called *positive rebel-public ties*. In doing this, the thesis assumes that the provision of each service is of equal utility to a rebel group, on the justification of which more research is needed.

As for destructive ties, data comes from the Terrorism in Armed Conflict (TAC) dataset (Fortna et al., 2018). For engaging in a destructive public relation, the thesis assigns a score of 1 to a rebel group, and thus obtains the binary variable called *negative rebel-public ties*. Since it is more likely that a group's reputation is affected

² Note that this thesis uses the terms ‘constructive ties’ and ‘positive ties’ interchangeably; as it does so for ‘destructive ties’ and ‘negative ties’.

more by whether it uses terrorism in the first place (Fortna et al., 2018), the amount of terrorism the group conducts is not taken as a separate variable. Following Fortna et al. (2018), note that in the calculation, terrorism scores are on fatal incidents attributed to a group coded in a strict manner with perfect actor-case match (i.e. *fm_a* in TAC, see the TAC codebook).

The thesis then creates a variable called *symmetry in constructive rebel-public relations* and *symmetry in destructive rebel-public relations* where, for each, it subtracts the two different overall scores of one rebel group from that of the other for each given rebel-dyad and takes the absolute value of the output. The closer the final output is to zero, the more symmetric is rebel-public relations. Hence, when interpreting the results, note that an increase in the symmetry scores actually denotes an increased disparity among groups in terms of their scores in rebel-public ties.

This variable allows several of the hypotheses above to be tested on the effects of similarity in rebel-public ties. The two are not summed to create a composite variable as it is not clear whether engaging in terrorism would have the same reputational effects as providing a healthcare service to the public. Moreover, while the scores for constructive rebel-public ties a group can have ranges from 1-9 (see the tables below), scores for destructive ties are binary. The scaling problem would also make the analysis complicated. This point is discussed further in the concluding chapter of the thesis. In addition, note that these variables treat two groups scoring low for a given rebel-public tie (e.g. two groups where each scoring 1 for rebel governance) and two groups scoring high (e.g. two groups scoring 9) as the same (i.e. as a dyad scoring zero). This is because of the focus on how ‘similarity’ in credibility shapes

inter-rebel relations for the related hypotheses. Two groups having high scores in credibility may find it difficult to form alliances as neither of them need one another, and two groups having low scores in credibility may find it difficult to form alliances due to shared inability to demonstrate that they are trustworthy agents (i.e. the scenarios with the interaction effect). Or, in the scenarios without the interaction effect of state non-credibility, one can suppose that groups with high credibility scores would ally with one another due to shared ability to demonstrate that they are trustworthy agents; whereas two groups scoring low on credibility would ally one another due to the need of pooling resources against the government even if they are also affected by the shared lack of trust. Yet, despite the theoretical justification, this approach also causes some limitations discussed in Chapter 5. As for conflict, recall that the *symmetry* variables are not used in the first place due to data limitations.

3.1.3. The Moderating Variable and Control Variables

The moderating variable of the study is *state non-credibility*. It is operationalized as a binary variable, data on which comes from Polity IV (Marshall & Jaggers, 2002), taking the value of 1 if the Polity score is between -5 and +5, 0 otherwise.³ As for its key control variables, the thesis includes controls on each line of research discussed in Chapter 2. Some of these controls are included in the analysis of hypotheses pertaining to rebel alliances, and some in both. This classification is mostly due to data limitations. The analysis controls for other state-level factors that can affect credibility, such as material power. The limitations stemming from it are discussed in the concluding chapter.

³ This operationalization follows the work of Fjelde and Nilsson (2012) and built upon Fearon and Laitin's (Fearon & Laitin, 2003) study noting that mixed political institutions signal state non-credibility.

First, as for the controls on rebel alliances, the thesis controls for whether the rebels are *co-ethnic*, information on which comes from the ROAD dataset. Second, it controls for the *rebel power imbalance* -where an imbalance is found to predict conflict in some research (Gade, Hafez et al., 2019), whereas some others find that it facilitates cooperation (Bakke et al., 2012; Krause, 2017). Information on this variable comes from the ROAD dataset. Third, as for the role of external sponsors where shared sponsors are found to facilitate cooperation (Popovic, 2018), the ROAD dataset has information on whether a rebel-dyad has *co-sponsorships*. Fourth, for one of the most debated variables of interest which can predict both conflict and cooperation as discussed in the previous chapter, the ROAD data allows this study to control whether rebels have a shared ideology, i.e. *co-ideology*. Fifth, this study controls for a variety of organizational factors. For instance, *territorial control* is found to facilitate cooperation among rebels in some research where rebels can cooperate free from state repression; as well as to be in correlation with terrorism (Anders, 2020; Phillips, 2019), or engage in inter-rebel violence in the absence of state forces (Fjelde & Nilsson, 2012). A similar dynamic can also operate for whether a group can signal its credibility through a *centralized command structure* that makes it less likely to fragment (Asal et al., 2012). These variables are also found to be associated with rebel governance, one of the key independent variables of this study -and thus are highly important to control for (Akcinaroglu & Tokdemir, 2018; Weinstein, 2007). The ROAD data has information on the latter in dyadic terms, and the data on the former comes from Fjelde and Nilsson (2012). Finally, since splinter groups are found to differ on the tactics they prefer to use as compared to their parent organizations (Robinson & Malone, 2023), they may avoid cooperating with one another. Alternatively, having past interactions can generate

expected patterns of behavior, where predictability generates cooperation. In either case, controlling for whether a group is a *splinter* is important, information on which comes from the ROAD dataset as well as the UCDP Actor Dataset (Davies et al., 2022).

In addition to these key control variables, some additional controls are included. As noted in the first chapter, there has been research on how the systemic factors affect civil wars (Kalyvas & Balcells, 2010). Thus, a dummy variable controlling for *cold war* is included. Second, similar to state strength, *rugged terrain* can have a role in facilitating cooperation by making state repression on inter-rebel contact difficult; or by hindering cooperation as partial freedom from state forces may allow for inter-rebel competition (Fjelde & Nilsson, 2012). Third, since the number of actors present in an environment can affect the chances of cooperation either by increasing the number of potential partners or attenuating fears of free-riding/buck-passing (Axelrod & Keohane, 1985; Oye, 1985), the thesis controls for the *number of rebels*, information on which comes from the ROAD data-set and is thus limited to rebels where the 25 battle-related death against the government is observed for each group. As an additional factor making this control important, recall that though a debated point, number of groups can also affect whether a group engages in violent outbidding attempts -affecting both whether it engages in terrorism and whether it competes with others (Bloom, 2005; Findley & Young, 2012a; Kydd & Walter, 2006; Wood & Kathman, 2015).

Then, some conflict-level factors are also controlled for. Appending the ROAD dataset by using the UCDP Dyadic Dataset version 22.1 (Davies et al., 2022;

Harbom et al., 2008), this study controls whether *shared goals* (i.e. whether the dispute was over territory or policy) have an effect on alliance formation. Using the UCDP Dyadic Data, it appends ROAD also by controlling for whether groups in a dyad has more than 1000 battle-related deaths against the government, as rebel alliances are found to be related to higher intensity battles and also can have an implication for inter-rebel relations in general (Asal & Shkolnik, 2021). The thesis also uses data from Fortna et al. (2018) to capture whether rebels have *natural resource income* generation, which can hinder or facilitate cooperation through mechanisms of decreasing the need to cooperate or increasing the ability to co opt others, respectively. In addition, to control for whether a *sponsor* existed for a group, which is found to affect whether a group engages in terrorism (Fortna et al., 2018), that can also decrease the need for forming alliances, the thesis borrows from San-Akca (2016).⁴ Finally, since the age of a rebel group can signal the credibility of an organization (Cronin, 2009, Asal et al., 2015), two variables capturing the *age* and *closeness in age* variables are controlled for.

Finally, at the state level, while the credibility of the state is taken as a moderating variable by itself, some controls are also included. First, state strength measures as the amount of military personnel and GDP per capita (logged) are controlled for -as two different variables. In addition, regime type is controlled through the usage of *XPolity* scores (for a discussion of why XPolity scores are more useful than Polity scores in the studies of civil wars, see Vreeland (2008)).

Note that most of these controls are taken at the dyadic level (e.g. territorial control is taken to be 1 if both groups have such control or both lack it, denoted as co-territorial

⁴ Their dataset also has information on ideology and goals of VNSAs.

control status), and at the group level in the monadic version of the ROAD. Some of the controls noted above are present also in the tests on inter-rebel conflict, though each being only in monadic terms as the hypotheses on inter-rebel conflict are formulated monadically. These are *rebel power*⁵, *sponsorship*, *territorial control*, *centralized command structure*⁶, *natural resources*, *splinter* (data on which comes from the UCDP Actor Dataset v22.1 (Davies et al., 2022)), *cold war*, *terrain* (for conflict, data on which is from Fjelde and Nilsson's dataset), *goal*⁷, *natural resource income*, *1000 battle-related deaths*, *age*, and whether the organization is an *ethnic/rightist* one as a means of creating a group-level identity-based variable.

As discussed above, these variables can have an effect on conflict directly, or can have an indirect effect such as making inter-rebel cooperation more likely (i.e. indirectly making inter-rebel conflict less likely). Also note that these constitute the same list of control variables except for the inherently dyadic ones, as the hypotheses devised in Chapter 2 for inter-rebel rivalry are monadic; and also for the ones where coding inherently excludes groups that do not exceed the 25 battle-related deaths in fights against the government (e.g. the *number of rebels* variable).

The tables below provide information on the descriptive statistics of the independent, moderator, and control variables as noted in the dyadic and monadic versions of the ROAD dataset as well as in the Fjelde and Nilsson (2012) dataset, respectively. Note that it is the number of observations in each variable that shapes how many units are

⁵ In the ROAD data, group strength is coded as strength vis-a-vis the government; in the Fjelde and Nilsson (2012) dataset, it is coded as whether a group has a considerably higher or lesser proportion of the total rebel troops. The variable named *Rebel Strength* captures the former, and *weak rebel/strong rebel* captures the latter.

⁶ Same procedure is followed as noted in footnote 6.

⁷ Denoted as 'incompatibility' where zero noted political goals and one territorial ones.'

analyzed in the models presented in Chapter 4. These differences are mainly attributable to the data coding processes of different researchers.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics Based on ROAD-Dyadic Version

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Alliance	2496	.288	.453	0	1
Symmetry in Constructive Relations	1233	2.035	2.086	0	8
Symmetry in Destructive Relations	1848	.227	.419	0	1
State Non-Credibility	1773	.142	.349	0	1
Co-ethnic	2496	.122	.327	0	1
Co-ideology	2496	.291	.454	0	1
Both Groups Splinter	2486	.057	.231	0	1
Dyad-Level Central Command	1738	3.065	.857	1	5
Co-Incompatibility	2148	.705	.456	0	1
Closeness in Age	2307	10.076	10.079	0	63
Co-Sponsor	1645	.249	.432	0	1
Rebel Power Imbalance	1608	.32	.467	0	1
Co-Intensity	2148	.714	.452	0	1
Co-Territorial Control Status	592	.674	.469	0	1
Co-Natural Resource Income	1465	.889	.315	0	1
Post-Cold War	2496	.437	.496	0	1
Rugged Terrain	2496	.025	.012	.002	.091
Number of Groups	2496	5.424	2.531	2	12
Xpolity	1949	1.503	4.807	-5	7
Military Personnel (in thousands)	2467	.371	.515	0	4.015
GDP per capita (logged)	2496	7.637	.899	5.813	10.222

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics Based on ROAD - Monadic Version

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Alliance	1841	.483	.5	0	1
Informal Alliance	1841	.2	.4	0	1
Formal Alliance	1841	.283	.451	0	1
Constructive Rebel-Public Ties	1208	1.599	2.231	0	8
Negative Rebel-Public Ties	1444	.277	.448	0	1
State Non-Credibility	1232	.263	.44	0	1
Ethnic Group	1462	.477	.5	0	1
Rightist Group	1464	.256	.437	0	1
Splinter	742	.398	.49	0	1
Central Command	1348	2.456	.785	1	3
Number of State Sponsors	1472	.976	1.273	0	8
Intensity Level	1615	1.186	.389	1	2
Incompatibility	1615	1.491	.5	1	2
Age	1730	14.657	13.17	-5	76
Territorial Control	555	.407	.492	0	1
Rebel Strength	1415	1.522	.591	1	5
Income from Natural Resources	1195	.382	.486	0	1
Post-Cold War	1841	.49	.5	0	1
Number of Rebels	1841	3.901	2.195	2	12
Rugged Terrain	1841	.022	.013	.002	.091
XPolity	1376	1.285	4.726	-5	7
Military Personnel (in thousands)	1814	.305	.479	0	4.015
GDP per capita (logged)	1841	7.852	.969	5.813	10.222

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics Based on Fjelde & Nilsson (2012)

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Inter-Rebel Conflict	1935	.056	.23	0	1
Constructive Rebel-Public Ties	1207	1.71	2.414	0	9
Negative Rebel-Public Ties	1712	.246	.431	0	1
State Non-Credibility	1796	.428	.495	0	1
Ethnic Group	1370	.492	.5	0	1
Rightist Group	1377	.164	.371	0	1
Central Command	1813	1.042	1.094	0	3
State Sponsors	1657	.335	.472	0	1
Intensity Level	1935	.097	.296	0	1
Incompatibility	1931	.559	.497	0	1
Age	1869	14.754	12.399	-3	61
Rebel Strength	1792	-1.302	.722	-2	2
Territorial Control	1657	.361	.481	0	1
Income from Natural Resources	1625	.279	.449	0	1
Post-Cold War	1935	.932	.251	0	1
Number of Rebels	1935	2.161	1.409	1	7
XPolity	1575	1.755	4.476	-6	7
Military Personnel (in thousands)	1847	286.664	415.711	0	3400
GDP per capita (logged)	1897	6.43	1.313	4.151	11.934
Mountainous Region	1765	33.792	29.379	0	100
Weak Rebel Group (by troop size)	1685	.258	.438	0	1
Strong Rebel Group (by troop size)	1685	.585	.493	0	1

3.2. Empirical Strategy

The thesis uses logistic regressions to test its hypotheses. Before detailing the empirical strategy, note that this thesis merged the above noted data-sources based on the common items of rebel id numbers, year, and country codes -meaning that, for instance, if a group is noted to have a sponsor in the data of this thesis, it means that the group operating ‘at a given country’ at a given year has a sponsor. Thus, if a group operates in multiple locations, it may appear to have a sponsor in one country but not in another in the same year. This is theoretically valid, as it would signal that the sponsor values the conflict at a given country more than the other and as the credibility-effect of having a sponsor would be different for the organization in different conflict countries.

3.2.1. Regressions

The thesis runs logistic regressions for testing its hypotheses on being allied and the strength of a formed alliance. Recall that several of the hypotheses to be tested are on the effects of rebel-public ties on the likelihood of alliance formation and the likelihood of formation of strong alliances among rebels. Since the focus is on the ‘likelihood’ of observing the dependent variables, and since the dependent variables are coded as binary variables, usage of logistic regressions in testing the hypotheses related to them are appropriate. More specifically, since the thesis codes alliance formation as a binary variable, running a logistic regression to test hypotheses on it is appropriate. The models are re-run with the moderating role of government credibility for testing the last set of hypotheses.

On these models, some considerations are worth noting. First, there can be reverse causality in the theory presented in Chapter 2. It can be the case that rebel alliances and/or inter-rebel conflict that shapes rebel governance, usage of terrorism, or rebel-public ties in the first place (for a recent case study on how rebel governance is shaped by rebel alliances and rivalry processes, see: Berti, (2020). For how inter-rebel rivalry and alliances affect the usage of terrorism, see: Asal et al. (2022)). This possibility is not without a theoretical basis. First, recall that many have noted that inter-rebel competition can provoke violence against both a group’s constituency and its non-constituency (Bloom, 2005; Lilja & Hultman, 2011). It can also facilitate a non-violent outbidding among groups where competition prompts rebel governance (Akcinaroglu & Tokdemir, 2018); or may drive away resources for such activities for some groups (Young & Dugan, 2014), resulting in less rebel governance. It can also make some rebel groups engage in less conflictual relations with the public for the

aim of cutting a deal with the government. Alternatively, they can increase their attacks against civilians due to being backed up by their ally, which can decrease their civilian-dependence and/or need for obtaining government concessions. This resonates with the logic of moral hazard in interstate alliances (Yuen, 2009) and the conditions under which rebel rivalry/alliances lead to different outcomes warrants separate research. In addition, rebel rivalry can also make a group more likely to use violence against civilians to keep being able to extract resources it needs to operate (Metelits, 2009). However, as it seems, there can be an issue of reverse causality for the key arguments of the thesis where its arrow of causal inference runs from rebel-public ties to inter-rebel relations. To account for this, both independent variables are lagged by a year. Alternative models are discussed in the concluding chapter

In addition, the thesis acknowledges that the costs and benefits of engaging in constructive and destructive relations with the public for a rebel group can also be sticky. In other words, for instance, if a rebel group engages in terrorism at a given year, its effects can continue to present themselves even if it does not engage in such activities the next year. Moreover, as time passes, each group would signal their commitment to their manner of having ties with the constituency -addressing information asymmetry problems discussed above (Fearon, 1995). This idea is reflected in the study of the Syrian civil war by Martinez and Eng (2018), where their findings that rebel governance provokes a violent regime response clashes with the findings above that rebel governance instead contributes to negotiations. The contradictory findings may be an artifact of the effect of time on strengthening the positive effects of rebel governance on gaining concessions. Using lagged

independent variables also partially addresses that problem as well. Similarly, some of the control variables may have their effects taking place after a time; and it is more difficult for some variables to establish that reverse causality may not be interfering with the analysis. Thus, for some of the control variables, the thesis uses lagged variables in some of the models it presents. It does not use them for more sticky variables, such as whether a group is an ethnicity-based one.

Third, it can be difficult for a group to become enemies/allies quickly even if one of the groups (or both of them) alter their relations with the citizenry. In other words, years spent as allies and adversaries can have an independent influence over group interactions, violating the assumption of independent and identically distributed (IID) observations for running the regression. To account for this, *the number of years* since a given rebel-dyad last engaged in a rivalry or formed an alliance is controlled (as t), with t -squared and t -cubed (Carter & Signorino, 2010).⁸ Models where the dependent variable is lagged and controlled for are also included (Kellstedt & Whitten, 2008).

Finally, note that the monadic versions of the ROAD data and the Fjelde and Nilsson (2012) datasets are symmetric. It means that if a group is allied to another group or engages in an inter-rebel conflict, at times, the other party of the alliance/conflict also appears in the dataset. To account for this, regressions using the former dataset relies on clustered standard errors around the country-year, and those using the latter relies on clustered standard errors around the unique id numbers of each conflict against the government. In other words, while the former cluster takes each year as a

⁸ For a recent application of this tool in a different research within the conflict literature, see: Cunningham (Cunningham, 2023).

different conflict episode, the latter clusters around each different conflict episode.

The first approach is not as useful, but used due to data limitations. Such limitations, and others, are discussed in detail in the concluding chapter of the thesis. Now, it provides a summary of the points discussed in this chapter and moves to Chapter 4.

Table 5: Key Variables, Operationalizations, Data Sources, and Expected Relations - Summary (Excluding Controls and Lags)

Unit of Analysis	Indep. Variable	Data Sources	Likelihood of Alliance and Conflict, Respectively (as IV increases)	Expected Relation on Being Informally Allied
Dyad-Year	Symmetry (Positive Ties)		Decrease; Not Theorized	-
Dyad-Year	Symmetry (Negative Ties)		Decrease; Not Theorized	-
Group-Year	Rebel Governance (i.e. Positive Ties)	Albert (2022)	Decrease; Increase	Increase
Group-Year	Terrorism (i.e. Negative Ties)	TAC (Fortna et al., 2018)	Decrease; Decrease	Decrease
Group-Year	State Credibility x Rebel Governance	State Credibility from Polity IV and Fjelde & Nilsson	Increase; Decrease	-
Group-Year	State Credibility x Terrorism		Decrease; Not Theorized but expected to decrease	-
Group-Year	State Credibility x Symmetry in Ties		Increase; Not Theorized	-

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

The previous chapter has detailed the operationalizations of the key variables of this study, along with the data sources and its empirical strategy. This chapter presents the results in three headings devoted to each set of hypotheses: one on the effects of constructive rebel-public ties on inter-rebel relations, one on the effects of destructive ties, and one on how state credibility moderates the results. In each part, 4 models are presented: the first ones are on the direct relation between the independent and dependent variables, the second ones control for group-level (or dyad-level if notes as such) characteristics, the third ones control for all such variables, and the last models include lagged independent/control variables. Recall that in Chapter 3, not all variables were planned to be lagged with a justification; and the lagged ones below are denoted with an ‘L’ preceding the variable name. In all models, the lagged dependent variable is controlled for (or t, t-squared, and t-cubed are included)¹. In the full models, variables that cause major drops in the number of observations are

¹ Lagged dependent variables are used only when using the monadic version of the ROAD dataset. Hence, when the independent variable in a test is on the “symmetry” of ties, time since the event and t-squared and cubed are used. When the dependent variable is inter-rebel conflict, time since last conflict and three spines are used, following the original datasets.

omitted. Appendix A provides the full models without dropping them. A final section presents an overview of the main findings.

4.1. Test Results of the First Set of Hypotheses

Recall that the first set of hypotheses is constituted by four different claims. The results for H1a are presented in Table 6. Note that symmetry in constructive ties to the public does not predict inter-rebel alliances.² This findings can be due to two reasons. First, inter-rebel dynamics may be affected more by the group-level dynamics than whether both groups engage in similar types of activities. In other words, group-level factors may weigh more heavily than dyad-level factors. This is why H1b, H1c, and H1d are equally important to examine, which is done after a look at the control variables below. Second, the design of the thesis has many limitations that are discussed in the next chapter that may be affecting the results. For instance, as it stands, the thesis does not capture how a group's alliances with others affects its relations with the remaining groups.

² Recall that when interpreting the results, an increase in the symmetry scores actually denotes an increased disparity among groups in terms of their scores in rebel-public ties

Table 6: Logit Models - Effects on Inter-Rebel Alliances (Dyadic Analysis)

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Positive Symmetry	-0.0513 (0.0354)	0.162 (0.135)	-0.0741 (0.0686)	
Negative Symmetry	-0.407* (0.186)	-0.456 (0.449)	0.0288 (0.348)	
Co-ethnic		0.541 (1.045)	0.625 (0.542)	0.273 (0.723)
Co-ideology		-1.144+ (0.598)	0.530 (0.339)	0.144 (0.417)
Both Groups Splinter		-0.952 (1.296)	-0.587 (0.687)	-0.284 (0.971)
Dyad-Level Central Command		0.275 (0.281)	-0.0628 (0.216)	
Co-Incompatibility		17.19 (1408.2)	0.112 (0.340)	0.249 (0.409)
Closeness in Age		-0.00813 (0.0226)	0.0130 (0.0144)	0.0292 (0.0196)
Co-Sponsor		2.202** (0.657)	1.745** (0.379)	
Rebel Power Imbalance		-0.156 (0.514)	-0.164 (0.360)	0.277 (0.457)
Co-Intensity		0.304 (0.590)	-0.445 (0.374)	-0.430 (0.457)
Co-Territorial Control Status		-0.918+ (0.493)		
Co-Natural Res. Income Stat.		-16.10 (1408.2)		
Post-Cold War			-0.545 (0.414)	-0.191 (0.542)
Number of Groups			-0.0865 (0.0984)	0.0293 (0.130)
Rugged Terrain			14.60 (17.72)	0.760 (23.46)
Xpolity			-0.0203 (0.0578)	0.0967 (0.0765)
Military Pers.			0.752 (0.545)	-0.0586 (0.705)
GDP per capita			-0.0924 (0.224)	-0.147 (0.308)
L.Positive Sym.				-0.0541 (0.0879)
L.Negative Sym.				-0.959* (0.468)
L.Dyad-Level Cent. Com.				0.0224 (0.275)
L.Co-Sponsor				0.811 (0.506)
Constant	2.190** (0.237)	1.339 (1.325)	2.567 (2.190)	4.264 (2.962)
Observations	1082	206	453	340
Pseudo R-squa-d	0.196	0.427	0.335	0.439

Standard errors in parentheses

+ p<0.10, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01

Also note that some of the control variables in Table 6 show interesting results. For instance, except for the results in Model 2, co-ideology does not seem to be a significant factor predicting alliances (contrary to the findings of Balcells et al., 2022) when other variables are controlled for. Yet, the design limitations should warn the reader that alternative tests are required until a claim against the values of controls are made. In the same model, whether the two groups hold territory (or whether neither of them holds it) seems to be a factor shaping inter-rebel alliances. This is understandable as shared conditions would create equal strengths (or deficiencies in cases where neither group holds a territory) in terms of credibility. Also note that in both Model 2 and Model 3, having a co-sponsor seems to be a statistically significant predictor of inter-rebel alliances, which contributes to the findings of scholars such as Popovic (2018). On the other hand, closeness of group ages to one another does not appear to be a significant predictor of the likelihood of rebel alliances. This may be due to the conflation where this variable treats two old groups as the same as two younger groups where they each score close to zero. Yet, the two dyads would have different credibilities and expectations from one another. The next models allow for such elaboration. Finally, note that rebel imbalance of power does not appear to be a statistically significant determinant of the likelihood of rebel alliances, casting doubt on power-oriented analyses.

Table 7 presents the results for H1b. Results of logistic regression analyses fail to reject the null hypothesis that groups do not differ in being allied with respect to having more constructive ties to the public. Only in the second model where group-level factors are controlled that a rebel group's positive ties with the public

predicts whether such a group is allied with other VNSAs at a given conflict-year. This may be due to the design limitations. However, as it stands, Table 7 suggests that when the effects of other factors that are found to co-vary with positive rebel-public relations are controlled for (e.g. central command structure, see: Weinstein, 2007), the latter does not predict inter-rebel alliances. On the other hand, both Model 2 and Model 4 show that groups with stronger centralized command structures are more likely to be allied. It can be due to the higher credibility such groups have. Recall, for instance, that such groups are less likely to fragment (Mosinger, 2018; Fjelde & Nilsson, 2018) -a mark of credible organizations.

Table 7: Logit Models - Effects on Inter-Rebel Alliances (Monadic Analysis)

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Constructive Ties	0.0636 (0.0496)	0.178+ (0.102)	0.0552 (0.0789)	
Destructive Ties	-0.507* (0.255)	-0.384 (0.542)	0.139 (0.406)	
Ethnic Group		1.277 (0.949)	0.350 (0.579)	0.226 (0.740)
Rightist Group		0.0828 (0.858)	-0.295 (0.676)	-0.273 (0.970)
Splinter		-0.104 (0.761)		
Central Command		0.933** (0.358)	0.260 (0.200)	
Incompatibility		0.275 (1.022)	-0.715 (0.596)	-0.869 (0.818)
Age		0.00462 (0.0255)	0.0139 (0.0132)	0.0428 (0.0304)
Number of State Sponsors		-0.244 (0.324)	0.0170 (0.147)	
Rebel Strength		0.929+ (0.535)	0.372 (0.290)	
Intensity Level		1.343* (0.597)	0.455 (0.412)	-0.250 (0.736)
Territorial Control		-0.804 (0.564)		
Income from Nat. Res.		-0.737 (0.601)	-0.714 (0.456)	0.565 (0.815)
Post-Cold War			-0.162 (0.360)	-1.028+ (0.593)
Number of Rebels			0.277* (0.113)	0.286 (0.201)
Rugged Terrain			-22.73 (22.29)	-67.53* (30.52)
XPolity			0.0457 (0.0459)	0.0667 (0.0621)
Military Pers.			-0.810 (0.745)	-0.252 (1.018)
GDP per capita			-0.153 (0.235)	-1.124* (0.454)
L.Constructiv-s				-0.0337 (0.119)
L.Negative Re-s				0.0637 (0.656)
L.Central Com-d				1.556** (0.397)
L.Number of S-s				0.606* (0.273)
L.Rebel Stren-h				1.103+ (0.569)
L.Territorial-l				0.620 (0.455)
Constant	-1.470** (0.236)	-7.664** (2.777)	-1.874 (2.627)	2.613 (3.848)
Observations	858	139	477	186
Pseudo R-squa-d	0.373	0.366	0.480	0.468

Standard errors in parentheses
+ p<0.10, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01

Territorial control does not appear to be a significant predictor of the likelihood for inter-rebel alliances in Table 7, and only a weak predictor in Table 6 where it is

coded on the basis of whether each group in a dyad has the same score in territorial control. This contradicts with the findings of Asal et al. (2016) that territorial control contributes to alliance formations among VNSAs. While their results may hold for terrorist groups (i.e. the groups they analyze), such findings seem not to extend to civil war contexts and relations among rebels and with additional variables. Also, note that the number of rebel groups present in a civil war is found to positively affect the likelihood of a group being allied with others at a given conflict year (Model 3). It implies that the larger number of actors may contribute to cooperation. Yet, the durability of such cooperation should also be examined elsewhere.

Next, note that Model 4 shows that the lagged measure of a group's central command structure's strength has an important effect on the likelihood of rebel alliances. It may be due to signaling of credibility stemming from having such structures. Recall, for instance, that they make splintering less likely (Mosinger, 2018; Fjelde & Nilsson, 2018). On the other hand, age, which is another factor affecting credibility (Cronin, 2009; Asal et al., 2016), does not appear statistically significant when other variables are controlled for. This, and finding that rebel strength vis-a-vis the government³ appears only as a weak predictor, strengthens the value of moving beyond non-agent specific analyses. The same can also be deduced from the finding that neither the number of sponsors a group has nor whether it generates income from natural resources can predict its alliance behavior. Hence, more agent-oriented analyses seem to be more promising avenues of research in explaining cooperative rebel behavior, building upon those based on power-analysis.

³ Note that this variable is named as *rebel strength*. See footnote 4 in chapter 3.

Given the results, while the constructive ties of a group to the citizens may not be predicting alliances, they may be affecting the format of the alliance (i.e. whether they are formal or informal). Hence, examining H1c is an important next step.

Table 8 presents the results for H1c. Though statistically significant in the base model, it seems that constructive rebel-public ties fail to predict whether groups engaging in providing services to their constituencies are likely to form informal alliances. Design-wise problems can be driving the results. For instance, the regression is not run with a condition that the rebel group should have formed an alliance in testing the likelihood of being informally allied to other VNSAs. This is justifiable as constructive rebel-public ties do not appear to predict the likelihood of being allied in the first place. The limitations of this approach, on the other hand, are discussed in the next chapter.

However, as it stands, the models also fail to reject the null hypothesis that groups providing services to the public show differences in being informally allied to others than those not providing such services. When the co-varying factors are controlled for, this independent variable seems not to have a statistically significant effect on the outcome. As for the control variables, moreover, the strength of a group's central command structure again appears to be an important predictor of whether a group can find informal allies. This can be related to the idea that such groups are, as hypothesized for those providing services to the public, are able to demonstrate their credibilities without having a need for forming formal alliances; thus are more likely to informally ally with other VNSAs.

Rebel strength appears to be influential in both Table 7 (Models 2 and 4) and in Table 8 (Models 3 and 4), yielding credit to Cristia (2012) that non-material factors may not be the primary driver of inter-rebel relations in multiparty civil wars. In addition, it seems that whether a group generates income from natural resources seems to affect being informally allied negatively. Yet, from the tests, it remains unclear whether such groups prefer forming formal alliances instead, or use the resource wealth to remain self-reliant. Future studies can focus on such questions more in detail. Nevertheless, when considered together with the findings above, these results suggest that when determining the specifics of an alliance dynamic, power-oriented analysis weighs heavily even if they do not determine whether an inter-rebel alliance takes place in a statistically significant manner. Therefore, it would be reasonable to argue that neither agent-specific nor power-oriented analyses can fully uncover the causes of inter-rebel alliances by themselves.

Finally, note that both whether a group has territorial control (Model 2) and the strength of its central command structure (Models 2 and 4) appear to be significant predictors of whether a group is informally allied with other VNSAs. While both are conducive to the credibility of an organization, also note that their effects on the likelihood of being informally allied for a group are in different directions. This intuitively implies that they may have different weights in affecting the credibility of an organization, which can be studied elsewhere in detail.

Table 8: Logit Models - Effects on Informal Alliances

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Constructive Ties	0.0859* (0.0433)	-0.172 (0.153)	0.0991 (0.0873)	
Destructive Ties	0.0897 (0.290)	-0.100 (0.575)	0.0870 (0.493)	
Ethnic Group		0.872 (0.750)	1.092+ (0.658)	0.373 (0.942)
Rightist Group		1.786 (1.268)	1.253 (0.790)	1.206 (1.408)
Splinter		0.942 (0.918)		
Central Command		1.174* (0.470)	-0.0953 (0.226)	
Incompatibility		1.022 (1.111)	0.816 (0.774)	0.573 (1.140)
Age		0.0252 (0.0299)	-0.0169 (0.0157)	-0.0231 (0.0312)
Number of State Sponsors		-0.659 (0.461)	0.0278 (0.180)	
Rebel Strength		0.398 (0.757)	0.875+ (0.483)	
Intensity Level		1.593* (0.708)	0.233 (0.390)	-0.641 (0.677)
Territorial Control		-1.650+ (0.851)		
Income from Nat. Res.		-1.829* (0.907)	-1.874** (0.616)	0.244 (0.778)
Post-Cold War			0.509 (0.345)	-0.655 (0.749)
Number of Rebels			0.000273 (0.0932)	-0.157 (0.235)
Rugged Terrain			6.228 (18.70)	-28.31 (22.85)
XPolity			0.0409 (0.0532)	0.264** (0.0897)
Military Pers.			0.272 (0.954)	1.317 (1.176)
GDP per capita			0.0959 (0.230)	-1.070+ (0.562)
L.Positive				-0.127 (0.131)
L.Negative				0.607 (0.571)
L.Central Com~d				0.809+ (0.434)
L.Number of S~s				0.650* (0.268)
L.Rebel Stren~h				1.962** (0.582)
L.Territorial~l				0.670 (0.469)
Constant	-2.868** (0.250)	-8.886** (2.830)	-6.735* (2.778)	0.623 (5.213)
Observations	858	139	477	186
Pseudo R-squa~d	0.399	0.383	0.486	0.344

Standard errors in parentheses
+ p<0.10, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01

While Tables 6, 7, and 8 are on how the constructiveness of rebel-public relations affects inter-rebel alliances, the thesis now presents the results of tests regarding how such ties shape inter-rebel conflict. Table 9 thus presents results on H1d. Table 9, to

account for temporal dependence, uses time since previous conflict and three splines (Fjelde & Nilsson, 2012). Note that whether a group has constructive ties to the public increases the likelihood for that group to be involved in inter-rebel conflict at a given conflict-year in a statistically significant manner in all the models. For better interpretation, odds-ratios are also calculated. The results indicate that the expected relation is also substantively important, as the odds-ratios are getting away from 1.00 (1.168, 1.474, 1.881, and 2.936 for the four models, respectively). The findings are also reported in Figure 3, where each point is found to be statistically significant, with an average marginal effect of 0.02 ($p < 0.01$).

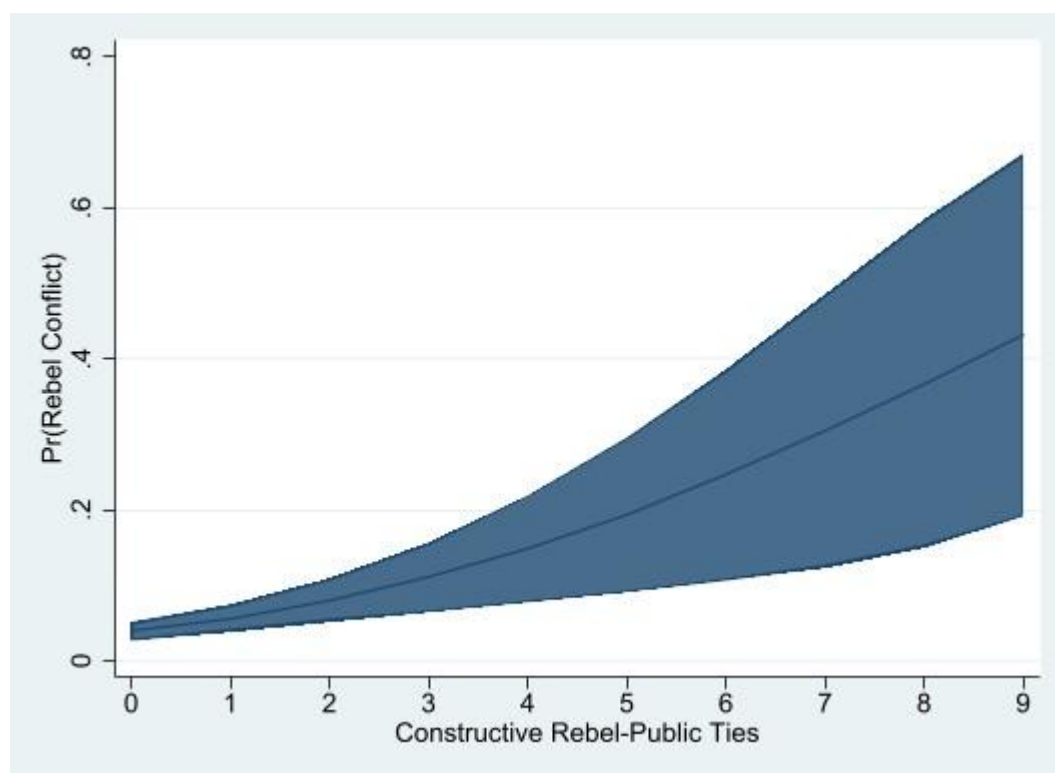
Table 9: Logit Models - Effects on Inter-Rebel Conflict

TABLE 7: LOGIT MODELS – EFFECTS ON INTER-REBEL CONFLICT

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Positive Ties	0.155* (0.0643)	0.388* (0.166)	0.632** (0.190)	
Negative Ties	-0.824+ (0.451)	-1.042 (0.716)	-3.399+ (2.064)	
Ethnic Group		0.185 (0.549)		
Rightist Group		0.533 (1.179)		
Splinter		1.272+ (0.699)	0.214 (0.925)	
Central Command		0.297 (0.226)	0.140 (0.264)	
Incompatibility		1.231 (0.904)	0.942 (1.323)	-1.282 (2.079)
Age		-0.0253+ (0.0147)	-0.0519 (0.0518)	-0.261** (0.0892)
State Sponsors		1.537** (0.489)	1.830* (0.837)	
Weak Rebel		0.878 (0.564)	0.819 (1.397)	
Strong Rebel		-0.824 (1.107)	-0.00904 (1.562)	
Intensity Level		0.504 (0.562)	0.846+ (0.474)	3.776** (0.812)
Territorial Control		-0.400 (0.540)	-3.692** (0.874)	
Income from Nat Res		-0.254 (0.573)	1.211 (0.985)	1.018 (1.761)
Rebel Strength		0.519* (0.235)	-0.762 (1.248)	
Post-Cold War			1.567* (0.734)	5.316** (1.200)
Number of Rebels			0.0540 (0.585)	-0.301 (0.693)
Mountainous Region			0.0575** (0.0167)	0.112* (0.0511)
XPolity			-0.569** (0.124)	-0.866** (0.242)
Military Personnel			0.00218* (0.00111)	0.00644** (0.00214)
GDP per capita			1.654** (0.470)	4.478** (0.923)
L. Positive				1.077** (0.212)
L.Negative				-4.033 (2.668)
L.splint				3.718* (1.683)
L.Central Comm				1.067** (0.380)
L.State Sponsor				4.342** (1.201)
L.Weak Rebel				-1.492 (1.657)
L.Strong Rebel				-0.691 (1.773)
L.Territorial Cont.				-5.180* (2.086)
L.Rebel Strength				2.677 (1.764)
Constant	-1.047** (0.365)	-3.847* (1.760)	-20.54** (4.602)	-40.94** (8.281)
Observations	599	391	354	321
Pseudo R-squa~d	0.173	0.343	0.503	0.592

Standard errors in parentheses
+ p<0.10, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01

Figure 3: Probability of Inter-Rebel Conflict based on Table 9 (Model 3), predictive margins with 95% CIs (IV: Positive Ties)



The control variables also demonstrate interesting results. First, Table 9 shows that having a state sponsor positively influences the likelihood that a group is engaged in inter-rebel conflict at a given year. Having a sponsor can help groups overcome resource scarcity to an extent where diverting sources to eliminating other rebels may become feasible. Yet, theoretically, a group can use its sponsored-resources to build working alliances as well -decisions on which by the rebels warrants a study of its own. Territorial control is found to decrease the likelihood for a group to engage in inter-rebel conflict in Models 3 and 4. This may be due to the decreased need of eliminating one's rivals in cases where a considerable gain is made. Yet, it partially contradicts with the findings of Fjelde and Nilsson (2012) where they note that operating in zones outside state control increases the likelihood of inter-rebel conflict. When additional variables are introduced, territorial control does not seem

to have the theorized effects. Variables on rebel strength, too, seem not to operate as theorized by Fjelde and Nilsson (2012) as they lose statistical significance in the third model. While significant in Model 2, rebel strength against government as a separate variable also loses statistical significance in Model 3 and 4. This supports the idea that power politics may not be the only or key driver of inter-group relations (Petrich & Asal, 2022) when it comes to armed rivalry. Similarly, Model 4 shows that state strength also increases the likelihood of inter-rebel conflict -contrary to the argument of Fjelde and Nilsson (2012). It may be due to co-optation strategies available to such states (recall, for instance, Johnston (2007) on cooptation). Conditions under which co-optation is likely to work over inter-rebel cooperation, thus, warrant to be studied in detail elsewhere. Finally, Models 2 and 4 show that whether a group is a splinter appears as a significant factor affecting the likelihood of inter-rebel conflict -increasing its log-odds. This is in contrast with recent research suggesting that splinters are not as violent as they are thought to be (Robinson & Malone, 2023), and can be studied further to contribute to the knowledge on splinter group behavior.

A further point worthy of highlighting is that while territorial control appeared to have a negative effect and having a strong central command structure appeared to have a positive effect only in the Model 4, whether a group has positive-ties to the public has positive and significant effects in all the models. The former two are found to be important covariates/predictors of the latter (Akcinaroglu & Tokdemir, 2018; Weinstein, 2007); but when their effects are controlled for, the latter appears to have an independent effect on inter-rebel relations. As a post-test procedure,

Appendix A provides further information on the area under the Receiver Operating Curve, which is 0.96.

As the research design stands as it is, when the concomitant benefits and predictors of rebel governance is controlled for, which would increase a group's credibility, a group's positive ties to the public appear not to affect its alliance behavior with other VNSAs; but to shape whether it engages in inter-rebel conflict.

4.2. Test Results of the Second Set of Hypotheses

The previous section has focused on how constructive relations a group has with the public shapes its relations with other rebels. This section focuses on the effects of destructive ties with the public. Again, four hypotheses are tested. Table 6 above presents the results of tests on H2a. Models 2 and 3 suggest that alliance behavior among rebel-dyads that are similar to each other in terms of having a destructive tie to the public do not differ from dyads that are not similar to one another in a statistically significant manner. This is in line with the findings of Asal et al. (2022), but further elaboration on the findings of this thesis in itself is needed. There may be two intuitive explanations for this finding. First, design-wise limitations may be driving the results. As noted above, the research design as it stands fails to control for some factors, and also has limitations discussed along with solutions in the next chapter. Second, the negative ties a group has with the public is coded as a binary variable. Alternative specifications where it is coded as a continuous one may alter the test results, allowing the analyst to see more nuanced patterns. While the justification for using a binary variable is provided in Chapter 3, this is also discussed in the next chapter more in detail.

Yet, note that Model 4 where the independent variable is taken as a lagged variable to address several problems on causal inference shows that similarity among groups in terms of how destructive their relations with the public is a significant predictor of the likelihood of inter-rebel conflict ($p < 0.05$). Model 4, moreover, suggests a negative relation. While contrary to H2a, this contradiction intuitively implies that there can be a condition where such similarity in having destructive ties shows different effects. Such possibilities are examined in the next section.

As for whether destructive ties to the public shapes a rebel group's decisions on whether it forms an, results are similar to the ones presented for H1b, and are presented in Table 7 above. Groups that have destructive ties to the public are no more/less likely than those that do not in terms of allying with other VNSAs. This finding can be due to design-wise limitations, such as treating the independent variable as a binary one. While it is justified in the previous chapter, it is well-acknowledged that using binary variables provides less nuanced information as compared to using continuous ones. The next chapter discusses such issues in detail, along with some solutions. Yet, suffice is to note that H2b is not supported by the research design and data the thesis follows.

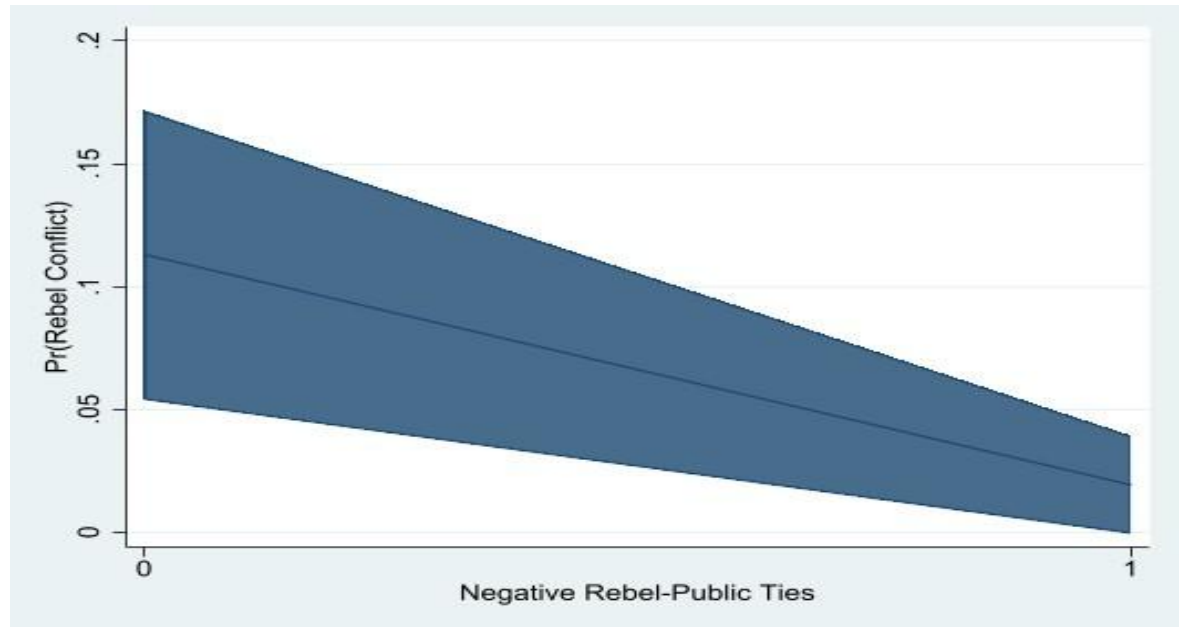
Moreover, whether a group has destructive ties to the public appears also not to be a statistically significant predictor of whether the alliances it has are formal or informal. The results presented in Table 8 suggest that H2c is, therefore, not supported. Yet, similar to the findings for H1c, note that this may be driven by the design that the logistic regressions for testing these hypotheses are not only on the

groups that are already allied. The logic for this approach is presented when discussing the findings for H1c. While the limitations it causes is discussed in the next chapter, here it should be noted that this approach causes the dependent binary variable of being informally allied to be 1 if such an observation is present, be 0 if a group is allied but not informally, and again be 0 if the group is not allied in the first place. Therefore, there are more zeros than it would be if the regression is only run where the group is allied in the first place. Details of the limitations this approach causes, along with possible solutions, are noted in the next chapter.⁴

Finally, as for the effects of destructive rebel-public relations on inter-rebel conflict, note that Model 3 in Table 9 suggests that there is a negative relationship as expected in H2d. The relationship is found to be statistically significant ($p < 0.1$). To better interpret the results, odds ratios are calculated. As the odds are away from zero, the relation seems to be strong but not as strong as was the case for the effects of positive rebel-public relations (0.439, 0.353, 0.0334, and 0.0177 for the four models, respectively). In Model 4, this statistical significance is not observed. This may indicate that the effects of destructive rebel-public relations are not sticky and show their implications at the same conflict-year. Yet, not being significant in Model 4 also means that reverse causality is not addressed in the tests on this particular independent variable, a discussion on which is carried out in the next chapter. Nevertheless, building on Model 3, the figure below illustrates the effects of negative rebel-public ties on the likelihood of inter-rebel conflict. Note that it is found to have an average marginal effect of -0.09 (significant at $p = 0.016$), with area under ROC 0.96.

⁴ Another regression was run for testing H2c where the dependent variable is taken as being formally allied for a VNSA. Results remain the same. The related table is provided in Appendix A.

Figure 4: Probability of Inter-Rebel Conflict based on Table 9 (Model 3), predictive margins with 95% CIs (IV: Negative Ties)



Overall, the test results suggest that whether a group has destructive ties with the public in the form of engaging in terrorism decreases the likelihood for such a group to engage in inter-rebel conflict. On the other hand, groups that engage in terrorism do not differ from those that do not in terms of being allied with other VNSAs, both formally and informally, in multiparty civil wars. The broader implications of these findings are discussed in the next chapter. Yet, this chapter finally turns to how state credibility moderates the outcomes to present its findings on the last set of hypotheses devised in Chapter 2.

4.3. Test Results of the Third Set of Hypotheses

As theorized in Chapter 2, there is enough justification for testing whether state credibility moderates the hypothesized relations between a VNSA's relations with the public and its relations with others. Table 10 and 11 Presents the results for H3a. In each, the interaction term is one where state credibility moderates similarity in constructive and destructive ties a group has with the public, respectively.

Table 10: Logit Models with Interaction – Effects On Rebel Alliances (State Non-Credibility x Positive Ties, Dyadic Analysis)

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Interaction Term	0.157 (0.160)	-0.0250 (0.465)	0.216 (0.580)	
Negative Symmetry	-0.415+ (0.239)	-0.144 (0.614)	0.112 (0.497)	
Co-ethnic		-4.275* (2.002)	0.0501 (1.128)	1.122 (1.634)
Co-ideology		-1.953* (0.874)	1.181* (0.479)	0.391 (0.576)
Both Groups Splinter		3.870+ (2.168)	0.786 (1.253)	-0.362 (1.849)
Dyad-Level Central Command		-0.0364 (0.388)	-0.0845 (0.301)	
Co-Incompatibility		18.01 (1304.8)	0.334 (0.470)	0.274 (0.576)
Closeness in Age		0.00363 (0.0303)	0.0275 (0.0207)	0.0512+ (0.0276)
Co-Sponsor		3.567** (1.032)	2.149** (0.462)	
Rebel Power Imbalance		0.0146 (0.650)	-0.0132 (0.431)	0.226 (0.583)
Co-Intensity		0.0570 (0.742)	-0.242 (0.436)	-0.695 (0.545)
Co-Territorial Control Status		-0.476 (0.603)		
Co-Natural Res. Income Stat.		-16.05 (1304.8)		
Post-Cold War			0.248 (0.594)	-0.113 (0.760)
Number of Groups			-0.182 (0.145)	0.0862 (0.172)
Rugged Terrain			-1.525 (23.00)	3.804 (33.69)
Xpolity			-0.0669 (0.0832)	0.190 (0.119)
Military Pers.			0.168 (0.763)	-0.675 (0.988)
GDP per capita			-0.531 (0.325)	-0.0519 (0.439)
L. Interaction				-1.112 (2.363)
L.Negative Symm.				-0.527 (0.657)
L.Dyad-Level Cent. Com.				0.570 (0.423)
L.Co-Sponsor				0.914 (0.594)
Constant	2.193** (0.266)	3.015 (2.737)	6.161+ (3.243)	2.133 (4.301)
Observations	849	137	326	255
Pseudo R-squared	0.195	0.478	0.408	0.526

Standard errors in parentheses
+ p<0.10, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01

Table 11: Logit Models with Interaction - Effects on Rebel Alliances (State Non-Credibility x Negative Ties, Dyadic Analysis)

	Model 1	Model 3	Model 4	Model 2
Positive Symmetry	-0.0550 (0.0407)	-0.0986 (0.0915)		
Interaction Term	0.638 (0.608)	0 (.)		
Co-ethnic		0.0332 (1.105)	1.038 (1.697)	
Co-ideology		1.169* (0.476)	0.465 (0.584)	
Both Groups Splinter		0.776 (1.228)	-0.221 (2.008)	
Dyad-Level Central Command		-0.0682 (0.298)		
Co-Incompatibility		0.324 (0.468)	0.209 (0.596)	
Closeness in Age		0.0281 (0.0206)	0.0427 (0.0271)	
Co-Sponsor		2.127** (0.458)		
Rebel Power Imbalance		-0.0102 (0.430)	0.209 (0.582)	
Co-Intensity		-0.254 (0.436)	-0.543 (0.532)	
Post-Cold War		0.220 (0.591)	-0.0458 (0.744)	
Number of Groups		-0.178 (0.144)	0.0426 (0.170)	
Rugged Terrain		-2.440 (22.92)	8.802 (32.92)	
Xpolity		-0.0633 (0.0822)	0.155 (0.109)	
Military Pers.		0.156 (0.761)	-0.410 (0.997)	
GDP per capita		-0.518 (0.325)	-0.137 (0.452)	
L.Positive Symm			-0.102 (0.128)	
L. Interaction			1.424 (2.461)	
L.Dyad-Level Cent. Com.			0.393 (0.405)	
L.Co-Sponsor			0.968 (0.605)	
Constant	2.204** (0.267)	6.035+ (3.238)	3.226 (4.408)	
Observations	849	322	257	
Pseudo R-squared	0.195	0.403	0.523	
Standard errors in parentheses + p<0.10, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01				

Note that neither interaction term appears statistically significant. Moreover, tests failed to provide results for Model 2 in Table 12, where converge issues prevented modeling of the data. The interaction term also failed to obtain an outcome in Model 3. These problems are indicative of the usefulness of the more simpler models discussed above.⁵ Thus, it can be concluded that H3a is not supported by the test results. This can be due to the design-wise limitations mentioned above and detailed later, but may also be due to the possibility that group-level factors as theorized above weigh more considerably in rebel decision-calculus that external factors do not alter their interactions with other VNSAs considerably.

Similar issues appear in the test results for H3b. It appears that state credibility does not moderate a group's alliance behavior with other VNSAs even when the analysis is conducted over how group-level constructive rebel-public ties interact with state credibility, instead of how such ties at the dyadic-level operate. Results are presented in Table 12.

⁵ Note that the constitutive terms are included in the calculations but not reported in the tables as they are not to be interpreted by themselves in an interaction model. On this approach, see: Brambor et al. (2006).

Table 12: Logit Models with Interaction - Effects on Rebel Alliances (State Non-Credibility x Positive Ties; Monadic Version)

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Interaction Term	-0.0635 (0.202)	-0.806 (0.614)	-0.598 (0.557)	
Negative Ties	-0.504 (0.359)	-0.105 (0.880)	0.332 (0.558)	
Ethnic Group		2.601* (1.173)	0.773 (0.736)	1.507 (0.989)
Rightist Group		-0.283 (1.252)	-1.448 (0.901)	-1.218 (1.616)
Splinter		0.0274 (1.236)		
Central Command		1.335* (0.653)	0.0964 (0.243)	
Incompatibility		0.572 (1.265)	-1.115 (0.754)	-1.812 (1.476)
Age		0.0292 (0.0407)	0.0299+ (0.0156)	-0.0145 (0.0403)
Number of State Sponsors		-0.269 (0.625)	-0.180 (0.183)	
Rebel Strength		1.342 (0.983)	0.436 (0.272)	
Intensity Level		1.458* (0.694)	0.699 (0.542)	-0.363 (1.112)
Territorial Control		-0.152 (0.625)		
Income from Nat. Res.		-0.939 (0.858)	-0.382 (0.689)	-1.164 (1.188)
Post-Cold War			-0.351 (0.529)	-1.731+ (1.006)
Number of Rebels			0.298* (0.139)	0.678+ (0.356)
Rugged Terrain			-25.47 (27.93)	-24.26 (36.23)
XPolity			0.0185 (0.0684)	0.160 (0.101)
Military Pers.			-1.171 (0.943)	-4.641* (2.030)
GDP per capita			-0.313 (0.356)	0.0334 (0.647)
L. Interaction				-0.528 (0.404)
L.Negative Ties				-1.774 (1.749)
L.Central Com~d				1.704** (0.557)
L.Number of State Sponsors				0.271 (0.732)
L.Rebel Stren~h				0.420 (0.766)
L.Territorial~l				1.275+ (0.725)
Constant	-1.553** (0.339)	-11.79** (4.025)	-0.213 (3.682)	-4.415 (6.298)
Observations	622	89	388	124
Pseudo R-squa~d	0.414	0.456	0.539	0.657

Standard errors in parentheses
+ p<0.10, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01

As for the test results on H3c, i.e. how state credibility moderates the effects of destructive rebel-public ties on the likelihood for a VNSA to be allied with others, Table 13 shows only in Model 2 that the interaction term appears statistically significant ($p < 0.1$). Yet, its effects are in the opposite direction of what is hypothesized in H3c. This finding indicates that as a group engages in destructive relations with the public, conditional upon state non-credibility, its likelihood of being allied with other VNSAs decreases. In Chapter 2, this relation was theorized to take place, without being conditional upon state non-credibility; and to be reversed upon it. The results imply that rebels fail to find allies in cases where the state is not a credible actor to bargain with, if they engage in destructive public relations. This may be due to a group's failure to signal credibility, while low potential to cooperate with the government that is not credible either. Yet, future studies are required to test this proposition's validity, as the statistical significance of the interaction term disappears in all three remaining models below.

Table 13: Logit Models with Interactions - Effects on Rebel Alliances (State Non-Credibility x Negative Ties, Monadic Version)

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Positive Ties	0.0599 (0.0699)	0.151 (0.124)	-0.0161 (0.0976)	
Interaction Term	-0.317 (0.803)	-2.941+ (1.687)	-1.492 (1.648)	
Ethnic Group		2.071* (1.006)	0.810 (0.755)	1.121 (1.122)
Rightist Group		-0.0907 (1.480)	-1.416 (0.908)	-1.204 (1.741)
Splinter		0.377 (1.132)		
Central Command		1.086* (0.522)	0.0987 (0.232)	
Incompatibility		0.491 (1.161)	-1.014 (0.777)	-1.842 (1.467)
Age		0.0280 (0.0421)	0.0302+ (0.0161)	0.0170 (0.0442)
Number of State Sponsors		-0.366 (0.614)	-0.205 (0.190)	
Rebel Strength		1.168 (1.005)	0.399 (0.300)	
Intensity Level		1.132 (0.799)	0.596 (0.537)	-1.038 (1.115)
Territorial Control		-0.326 (0.747)		
Income from Nat. Res.		-1.142 (0.903)	-0.376 (0.688)	-1.521 (1.171)
Post-Cold War			-0.254 (0.528)	-1.777+ (0.932)
Number of Rebels			0.310* (0.139)	0.437 (0.281)
Rugged Terrain			-25.80 (29.12)	-31.23 (36.54)
XPolity			-0.00823 (0.0680)	0.110 (0.0903)
Military Pers.			-1.095 (0.952)	-3.429* (1.702)
GDP per capita			-0.325 (0.342)	-0.385 (0.482)
L.Positive				0.168 (0.226)
L. Interaction Term				0 (.)
L.Central Comm.				1.279** (0.482)
L.Number of State Sponsors				0.373 (0.713)
L.Rebel Strength				1.106 (1.001)
L.Territorial Control				0.646 (0.594)
Constant	-1.562** (0.341)	-10.00** (3.669)	-0.229 (3.617)	0.281 (6.009)
Observations	622	89	388	119
Pseudo R-squa~d	0.414	0.461	0.538	0.640

Standard errors in parentheses
+ p<0.10, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01

As for how a group's constructive and destructive ties interact with state non-credibility to shape its conflictual relations with other VNSAs, the thesis finally turns to Tables 14 and 15, respectively. Note that a separate hypothesis for the latter

was not devised as discussed in Chapter 2, as an interaction effect was not theorized to take place. However, results are presented on it as well.

First, Table 14 shows that in Models 2 and 3, the interaction term (i.e. state non-credibility moderating the effects of constructive rebel-public ties) has a statistically significant effect on the likelihood of inter-rebel conflict for a given VNSA in a multiparty civil war. More specifically, conditional upon state non-credibility, rebels with more constructive ties to the public have a lesser likelihood of engaging in inter-rebel conflict -supporting H3d. For better interpretation, odds ratios are calculated. Though they are significant variables, their substantive importance seems to be limited as the odds ratios are not far away from one (0.614, 0.265 in Models 2 and 3, respectively). In addition, in Model 4, when the interaction term is lagged, calculating an output becomes problematic. While this may be due to design limitations, issues of reverse causality loom large in such instances. However, as it stands, H3d finds partial support. Based on Model 3, as a post-test procedure, the area under the ROC is calculated to be 0.97, which indicates a sound fit of the model with data.

Table 14: Logit Models with Interaction - Effects on Rebel Conflict (State Non-Credibility x Positive Ties, Monadic Version)

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Interaction Term	-0.184 (0.142)	-0.487** (0.150)	-1.327** (0.438)	
Negative Ties	-0.943+ (0.518)	-1.164+ (0.679)	-4.256 (2.898)	
Ethnic Group		0.227 (0.633)		
Rightist Group		0.237 (1.299)		
Splinter		1.310+ (0.768)	0.709 (1.153)	
Central Command		0.224 (0.220)	0.465+ (0.248)	
Incompatibility		0.981 (1.150)	0.257 (1.483)	-0.960 (2.061)
Age		-0.0258 (0.0209)	-0.0918 (0.0662)	-0.201** (0.0746)
State Sponsors		1.529* (0.606)	2.095+ (1.242)	
Weak Rebel		0.818 (0.647)	1.487 (1.656)	
Strong Rebel		-0.627 (1.148)	-0.0154 (1.896)	
Intensity Level		0.623 (0.647)	1.950** (0.436)	3.565** (1.266)
Territorial Control		-0.328 (0.541)	-3.430** (0.897)	
Income from Nat. Res.		0.00256 (0.605)	2.225 (1.365)	1.506 (2.227)
Rebel Strength		0.569* (0.268)	0.619 (1.268)	
Post-Cold War			1.523+ (0.852)	4.698** (1.304)
Number of Rebels			-0.328 (0.655)	-0.137 (0.752)
Mountainous Region			0.0731** (0.0186)	0.0809* (0.0383)
XPolity			-0.534** (0.134)	-0.782** (0.224)
Military Pers.			0.00338* (0.00134)	0.00548* (0.00233)
GDP per capita			2.247** (0.697)	3.427** (1.012)
L. Interaction Term				0 (.)
L.Negative Ties				-2.571 (2.118)
L.Splinter				2.833* (1.343)
L.Central Command				0.808* (0.323)
L.State Spons~s				3.083* (1.439)
L.Weak Rebel				-1.639 (1.386)
L.Strong Rebel				-0.0763 (2.259)
L.Territorial Control				-5.340** (1.412)
L.Rebel Strenght				1.514 (1.042)
Constant	-1.457* (0.669)	-3.981* (1.769)	-24.65** (6.092)	-33.04** (9.036)
Observations	554	390	354	299
Pseudo R-squa~d	0.202	0.358	0.556	0.570
Standard errors in parentheses + p<0.10, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01				

Finally, though not theorized to have an effect, the impact of the interaction between state non-credibility and a group's destructive relations with the public on inter-rebel conflict's likelihood is analyzed. Recall that it was theorized in Chapter 2 that the interaction would not have an effect. In Table 15, except for the base model, only in Model 4 that the interaction term appears significant and it is at the direction hypothesized for the non-interactive hypotheses labeled H2d. Yet, note that in Table 9, though was significant in Model 3, negative ties with the public appeared to be not significant in Model 4. Here, it appears significant, with an even lower negative coefficient. This finding further consolidates the idea that rebel groups that have destructive ties with the public tend to avoid inter-rebel conflicts that they are highly unlikely to win due to the many deficiencies they have as discussed in Chapter 2, especially when the state is not a credible actor trusting on whom and thus fighting other VNSAs is not feasible. Yet, note that the substantive importance of the interaction is considerably low as the odds ratio is close to zero (0.00558 for Model 4). Also note that the interaction terms require further examination as the findings noted in the Appendix show that they lose significance upon including additional variables to the model.

Table 15: Logit Models with Interaction - Effects on Rebel Conflict (State Non-Credibility x Negative Ties, Monadic Version)

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Constructive Ties	0.232** (0.0685)	0.414** (0.156)	0.649** (0.226)	
Interaction Term	1.127+ (0.674)	1.613 (1.339)	0.0991 (1.955)	
Ethnic Group		0.242 (0.616)		
Rightist Group		0.639 (1.230)		
Splinter		1.229+ (0.740)	0.231 (0.932)	
Central Command		0.274 (0.221)	0.158 (0.294)	
Incompatibility		1.149 (0.988)	0.845 (1.496)	-1.103 (1.789)
Age		-0.0187 (0.0186)	-0.0520 (0.0578)	-0.353** (0.129)
State Sponsors		1.417* (0.571)	1.901* (0.810)	
Weak Rebel		1.038 (0.631)	0.835 (1.482)	
Strong Rebel		-0.694 (1.247)	-0.111 (1.636)	
Intensity Level		0.512 (0.560)	0.874 (0.627)	6.600** (0.987)
Territorial Control		-0.359 (0.508)	-3.595** (0.838)	
Income from Nat. Res.		-0.228 (0.550)	1.386 (1.090)	4.327* (2.097)
Rebel Strength		0.526* (0.224)	-0.623 (1.396)	
Post-Cold War			1.492* (0.723)	7.718** (1.718)
Number of Rebels			0.0580 (0.555)	-0.843 (0.799)
Mountainous Region			0.0562** (0.0163)	0.203** (0.0381)
XPolity			-0.558** (0.101)	-1.319** (0.272)
Military Pers.			0.00236* (0.00118)	0.0110** (0.00268)
GDP per capita			1.670** (0.543)	8.033** (1.189)
L.Constructive Ties				1.946** (0.705)
L.Interaction Term				-5.189** (1.182)
L.Splinter				5.716** (1.823)
L.Central Com.				1.139+ (0.589)
L.State Sponsors				9.110** (1.736)
L.Weak Rebel				-3.085 (2.116)
L.Strong Rebel				-4.174** (1.583)
L.Territorial Control				-6.775** (1.811)
L.Rebel Strenght				4.611* (2.075)
Constant	-1.298* (0.566)	-3.958* (1.709)	-20.64** (4.292)	-74.90** (10.94)
Observations	554	390	354	325
Pseudo R-squa~d	0.202	0.350	0.504	0.659

Standard errors in parentheses
+ p<0.10, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01

4.4. Overall Findings

Overall, the tests suggest that rebel-public ties are important predictors of the likelihood of inter-rebel conflict in multiparty civil wars. Both positive and negative rebel-public ties appeared to operate as hypothesized, increasing and decreasing the likelihood of conflict respectively -confirming the findings on the former that Derpanopoulos (2018) reached after his study of the Lebanese Civil War. Yet, the effects of terrorism are contrary to what he has found. This may be due to the larger sample size this thesis has, the moderating variables it uses, and its treatment of cooperation and conflict as two separate outcomes where engagement in terrorism can decrease the likelihood of both. While a decrease in the likelihood of cooperation would partially support findings linking terrorism to hostile relations among rebels, one should be cautious on linking terrorism to conflict.

The substantive importance of these findings also appears considerable. Yet, destructive ties appear not significant when a lagged version of the related variable is used in Model 4 (Table 9). Further design improvements discussed in the next chapter can establish whether there can be reverse causality and/or effect-wise non-stickiness for that variable. Interaction models, too, show that the effects of such rebel-public relations in affecting the likelihood of inter-rebel conflict are important. Conditional upon state non-credibility, the relation between positive rebel-public ties and the likelihood of conflict becomes negative as hypothesized. Yet, again, its significance is lost when lagged explanatory/control variables are used. Similarly, conditional upon state non-credibility, destructive ties predict a decreased likelihood for inter-rebel conflict. Though substantively weakly and only conditionally, it supports the hypothesis that such groups would avoid inter-rebel conflict. What these

findings related to the interactions for the existing works linking state weakness to rebel relations are discussed in the next chapter.

A further look at the statistical and substantive significance of the findings suggest that constructive ties to the public would dominate the effects of destructive ties in shaping conflictual inter-rebel relations. This is reasonable, as groups with positive ties to the public would have the motive and tools to fight such wars due to their supportive public base, whereas the latter would have less room for avoiding such conflicts even if they are highly motivated to do so.

Intuitively, these results also intuitively imply that *ceteris paribus*, if a group with highly constructive ties to the public (i.e. likely to engage in rebel-conflict) interacts with a group with destructive ties to the citizens (i.e. with decreased likelihood of inter-rebel conflict), a conflict would be likely to emerge. However, recall that analysis using the *symmetry* variable suggested that groups focus mainly on their own ties to the citizens instead of taking into account the relations of other groups to the public. Yet, also recall that the *symmetry* variables did not sum the scores of groups on constructive and destructive ties. They were measuring the distance of scores for two groups in a dyad separately for each form of ties. Hence, it is not clear whether the intuitive interpretation of the findings in terms of which independent variable has the dominant effect. While a justification for this was provided in Chapter 3 where summing such scores was argued to be problematic due to the usage of different scales in measuring constructive and destructive ties, this still is a limitation that future works can solve and discussed in the next chapter.

Contrary to Derpanopoulos (2018), the interaction models that this thesis employs show that being able to reach a settlement with the government does not increase the likelihood of inter-rebel conflict for both of the independent variables. This is due to the different conceptualizations of these terms. While he focuses on whether a group reaches such goals and its aftermath, this thesis studies the moderating role of state non-credibility before such deals take place. These findings, therefore, contribute to the explanations of rebel behavior at different stages of a given conflict.

Moreover, groups that engage in rebel governance on the one hand, and terrorism on the other hand, appeared not to differ from rebels that do not engage in these separate activities in terms of having cooperative relations with other VNSAs. Such ties do not predict whether any cooperation that takes place is more likely to be an informal or formal one as well. These findings are in contrast with the outcomes of the work by Asal et al. (2022) where they claim such variables predict inter-rebel alliances. Moreover, the former is also in contrast with the claim of Fearon and Laitin (1996), where they argue that in-group policing would yield cooperation among ethnic groups as it would discipline members in each group not to transgress. Yet, note that there are differences between the context that this thesis studies (i.e. rebels in civil wars) and what Fearon and Laitin (1996) worked on (i.e. interethnic cooperation in general). However, the results may also be driven by the thesis' aggregated treatment of rebel governance without further analyzing how each type of rebel governance activities (including policing and other types of service provision) operates in shaping rebel credibility. This point is discussed in the next chapter as well.

Moving forward, whether groups in a rebel dyad are similar to one another in terms of the constructiveness and/or destructiveness of their relations with the public also do not predict the likelihood of rebel cooperation and its form. The lagged variable in Model 4 (Table 6) seemed to be a significant predictor but with an opposite effect to what is theorized about it; and the interaction models failed to give meaning to it as well. Interaction models also showed that constructive rebel-public ties cannot predict the likelihood of rebel cooperation when the government is not a credible actor, either. The reasoning behind these findings are discussed above. Recall that some relate to design-wise problems, which are discussed in the next chapter along with the broader implications of the findings can also be the drivers of such findings. Thus, the thesis now moves to such considerations.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

This thesis was motivated by some interesting findings in the literature that puzzles the analysts of multiparty civil wars. Despite the numerous advantages that rebel alliances provide VNSAs in their fights against the governments such as an increased likelihood of victory, only half of the civil wars between 1946-2008 witnessed such alliances (Akcinaroglu, 2012). Moreover, despite having limited resources, many multiparty civil wars have observed the utilization of scarce sources for inter-rebel conflict. This thesis attempted to examine why some rebels form alliances with one another while some do not; while still others go to the other end of the spectrum and fight against one another. Moreover, it aimed to examine why some rebels form formal alliances but some only form informal ones, if they ever decide to be allied in the first place.

There has been some research on this question, examining the effects of a variety of factors facilitating inter-rebel conflict and cooperation. These are discussed in detail in the second chapter of this thesis. Recall that they were mainly on how distribution of capabilities shape rebel relations, the role of third-party sponsors, the role of

shared ideologies and ethnic origins, the role of outbidding and government-rebel relations, as well as organization-level factors such as whether a group holds territory. Yet, while having theoretical problems as discussed, they also do not consider how a group's relations with the public shapes its relations with other rebels.

This is an important aspect to study, as recent research on rebel governance and terrorism studies have found that such rebel-public ties have important implications for a group's prospect in the conflict, which are also discussed in detail in the second half of Chapter 2. Though there has been some work on how the citizenry affects inter-rebel relations as discussed previously (e.g. recall Sahgal, 2008; Mosinger, 2018; Derpanopoulos, 2018), they have theorized rebel-public ties in the manner this thesis has done or followed an empirical strategy that this thesis followed. For instance, instead of following a small-n method, this thesis tests its claims over cross-sectional time-series data. Moreover, it conceptualizes its variables using the most recent datasets, including interaction terms to augment the theory's internal consistency. It also controls for both constructive and destructive ties a group has with the public when testing each one separately in the same model, providing a complete analysis. Building on them and some of the recent works on this subject holding a similar analytical perspective as to that of this thesis (e.g. Asal et al., 2022), the thesis contributed to the explanations of inter-rebel conflict. Some of the results, as discussed in the previous chapter and below, are in line with such works; while some are not.

It proposed that rebels providing services to the public would be less likely to need allies as they would have a number of advantages over others, such as high longevity rates (Heger & Jung, 2017; Wagstaff & Jung, 2020; Tokdemir, 2021), fighting more effectively (Weinstein, 2007), and an increased likelihood of obtaining concessions (Akcinaroglu & Tokdemir, 2020). Instead, the thesis expected such rebels to fight against their viable alternatives and become violent rivals with other VNSAs. On the other hand, groups with destructive ties to the public lack such advantages. Thus, the thesis proposed that they would need allies, but fail to form them due to credibility deficiencies. Yet, they would avoid inter-rebel conflict as well, as their chances of winning would also be lower. Groups in between this continuum were expected to engage in cooperative behavior with one another. In addition, government credibility was theorized to have a moderating effect as whether bargaining with the government is an option can alter its payoff structure and decision calculus.

After devising three sets of hypotheses, the thesis carried out logistic regressions to test them. The thesis tested its claims using both dyadic and monadic datasets, conducting a cross-conflict cross-time analysis. The next section presents the overall findings with their implications, followed by another section on the limitations of the research design along with some possible solutions. The consecutive chapter concludes this chapter with a discussion of the research avenues future research can study.

5.1. Findings and Implications

The results suggest that rebel-public ties are important predictors of the likelihood of inter-rebel conflict in multiparty civil wars. More specifically, the thesis finds

support for its hypothesis that as groups engage in rebel governance more, their likelihood of engaging in armed rivalry with other rebels decreases. Moreover, the hypothesis that state non-credibility moderates this relation is also partially supported. When the state is not a credible actor to bargain with, such rebels would find eliminating rivals as a less pressing issue. Under such circumstances, test results show that the more a group provides services to the public, they become less likely to engage in inter-rebel conflict. The reverse holds for groups with destructive ties. Yet, these findings on the interaction term are partial as the other models in the Appendix fail to find significant results for it.

Also, recall that the dataset used for inter-rebel conflict involves observations from a brief post-war period. Thus, the thesis is unable to predict when such conflicts are more likely. This is a limitation discussed in the next section. However, the findings seem to be in line with results of some case studies where such ties are found to predict inter-rebel conflict (e.g. Derpanopoulos, 2018). The thesis finds support for their generalizability, while improving them through using more recent and granular datasets and a better consideration of how government credibility can have a moderating effect. It also contributes by showing that predictions where engagement in terrorism is linked to rebel conflict are not supported by a large-n analysis. The discrepancy may be due to smaller sample sizes of such studies, operationalization of variables, or the many originalities this thesis brings to the analysis of inter-rebel relations such as treating cooperation and conflict as two independent events each deserving different theorizing. These points are discussed in the second and fourth chapters in detail.

These findings have several implications. First, it shows that public opinion is an important concern even for the rebel groups. It is important for groups to have a supportive and loyal group of citizens that can legitimize the group. When they have such a support base, their need for support from other groups decreases. In other words, they come to hold the means of forming an alliance (i.e. an enhanced credibility) but lack the motive. If the government is a credible actor, such groups use their means to fight (i.e. the enhanced fighting efficacy linked to positive rebel-public ties: Berman (2009)), and have the motive of eliminating their viable alternatives that can negotiate with the government. Groups with destructive ties lack such means to fight/cooperate, even if they have the motive to do the latter.

Consequently, moving to the second point, this thesis makes the promising implication that outbidding among groups where they target one another is also a function of rebel-public ties; and can thus explain why outbidding in this form is not present in several multiparty civil wars. There should be a group that engages in rebel governance for it to be more likely. Future studies can extend this finding to test why outbidding in the form of attacks against civilians is also rare (M.G. Findley & Young, 2012a), and also show which groups are more likely to do it. Finally, as discussed in the previous chapter, the coefficient of both the log-odds and odds-ratios of each independent variable on inter-rebel conflict intuitively suggest that constructive rebel-public ties dominate the effects of destructive ties in shaping inter-rebel conflict. This is understandable, as the increased likelihood of winning such wars for the former type of groups would motivate them to fight, whereas the latter type of groups may find it difficult to avoid being drawn into conflict even if they are highly motivated to do so. Yet, this intuitive interpretation should be tested

through a separate model which is discussed in the previous chapter and detailed below, as no tests as to what would happen when a rebel with high scores in constructive public ties interact with a group with high scores in destructive public ties are carried out in this thesis. The justification for this was provided in Chapter 3, and is recalled and discussed below.

On the other hand, tests show that groups engaging in rebel governance do not differ from those who do not in terms of cooperating with other rebels regardless of whether the interaction term is included. The same applies for groups engaging in destructive relations with the public. This implies that when the factors such as territorial control or having a strong central command structure that correlate with rebel-public ties are controlled for (see, for instance, Weinstein, 2007; Akcinaroglu & Tokdemir, 2020), then rebel-public ties by themselves do not have a considerable effect in shaping the alliance behavior of rebels. This is different from the findings of Moghadam and Wyss (2020), where they argue that non-state usage of proxies in conflict settings is a function of whether such proxies have close ties with the locals but low battlefield utility -which are themselves found to be functions of rebel-public ties elsewhere (both are discussed in Chapter 2). Their findings do not seem to extend to explaining inter-rebel conflict where each party operates in the same civil war. While the discrepancy in the findings may be due to different units and contexts of analysis each study focuses on, it may also indicate that rebels do not focus on each other's ties to the public when alternative factors are taken into account that seem to co-vary with constructive/destructive rebel-public ties. This is especially likely given that Moghadam and Wyss (2020) operationalize VNSA-local ties as

mobilization capacity, which is different than whether a group has positive or negative ties to the public -though each co-vary with one another.

Overall, while rebel-public ties shape whether a group diverts its scarce resources to rivalry with other VNSAs, such public-based factors do not shape their more peaceful behavior. It is not to indicate that more power-oriented factors shape alliance behaviors of rebels, however. While some of the models have yielded credit to power-oriented studies such as that of Christia's (2012), an analysis of the other control variables showed that both power-based and group-level factors are equally useful starting points of studies. Moreover, the finding that rebel-public ties fail to predict inter-rebel alliance behavior may be due to other public-based factors. For instance, it may not be whether a group engages in violence against civilians, but the acceptability of such moves that may shape inter-rebel relations while the key explanatory factor still remains in the realm of public-level factors/rebel-public ties (see, for the case of al-Qaeda, Bacon (2017)).

The broader implications of these findings when considered together is that rebels take into account their level of public support when they are deciding whether to fight against other VNSAs, because they would need a last resort in cases where the utilization of scarce resources for inter-group conflict can erode the limited sources. On the other hand, when forming alliances, groups do not need to think much on whether there is a public they can fall back on, as alliances are done mainly to increase the pool of resources available and honoring them are still up to the rebels -contrary to an inter-rebel conflict which would be harder to terminate. This is in contrast with the findings of Asal et al. (2022), where they find that rebel governance

and terrorism are important predictors of inter-group alliances. While design-wise problems may be driving the results as discussed, as well as the different controls, datasets, and time periods this thesis uses than those used in the work of Asal et al. (2022), further research is needed on explaining the contradictory findings this thesis reached in a theoretical manner.

Finally, when the analysis is conducted at the dyadic level, none of the findings appeared statistically significant. Recall, however, that dyadic analysis was possible only for testing claims on alliance behavior of rebels due to data limitations. This means that cooperative rebel interactions are affected more by other factors instead of considerations of how credible the other side is. However, limitations regarding the design of this research may also be affecting the results. Thus, a consideration of such limitations and possible solutions is carried out in the next section.

5.2. Limitations and Possible Solutions

The research design presented in Chapter 3 has some limitations to it, both in terms of variable and model specifications. If these are overcome, some of the findings may become more significant than they are. Here, a consideration of both types of limitations are discussed.

First, as for the limitations on variable specifications, note that the independent variables could have been coded in different manners. Rebel governance, for instance, sometimes happens smoothly but at times meets public resistance (Arjona, 2015). The variable used in the thesis fails to capture this aspect, which can have implications for rebel credibility and thus for inter-rebel relations. Similarly, the

variable here cannot capture whether rebel governance is inclusive or exclusive, which is found to affect the magnitude of benefits a rebel group can obtain from rebel governance (Stewart, 2017). Using other datasets here was not feasible due to issues on merging datasets. Yet, future research should overcome such problems to use alternative specifications. In addition, the thesis treated missing values for different kinds of rebel governance practices as zero when calculating the score (0-9) for a group. However, alternative specifications should treat missing values differently. For instance, if rebel governance is done in secret, it would have different implications for how it affects the credibility of a group -and thus its interactions with others. Moreover, the thesis does not study the effects of each type of rebel governance activity separately. Each may also have different effects, with some having more weight in shaping rebel credibility. While different in many other aspects on the unit and context of analysis, this may also explain why rebel-public ties appeared not to predict the likelihood of rebel alliances in this thesis while in-group policing seems to explain inter-ethnic cooperation elsewhere (Fearon & Laitin, 1996).

Similar limitations exist also for the operationalization of destructive rebel-public ties. This thesis focused only on whether a group engages in terrorism. Yet, much information is lost when a variable is measured in a binary format. Using the TAC dataset (Fortna et al., 2018), future research can focus on how the number of incidents and fatalities produce different results at different levels (on the differential effects of the amount of fatalities, see, for instance Wood and Kathman (2013)). This thesis focused on whether a group engages in terrorism as doing so has reputational costs whenever a group engages in it. Yet, alternative specifications would enrich our

explanations. In addition, datasets such as UCDP One-Sided Violence against civilians (Davies et al., 2022; Eck & Hultman, 2007) and the Sexual Violence Against Civilians in Armed Conflict (Cohen & Nordås, 2014) datasets can be used to augment the TAC dataset and create a composite index of destructive rebel-public ties.

Moreover, note that while the log-odds and odds-ratios provide an intuitive base for comparing the effects of positive and negative rebel-public ties as discussed above, the thesis does not carry out a dyadic analysis of whether conflict is especially likely among groups that have a high asymmetry in the scores they have for constructive and destructive rebel-public ties. Hence, it is unclear whether conflict is especially likely among them. The justification for not testing this claim was that it is unclear whether 1 unit of constructive rebel-public ties has the same impact on a group's behavior as 1 unit of destructive rebel-public ties. Moreover, the units are also in different scales and in different ranges -complicating the creation of a composite index. Though there are some works such as the Reputation of Terrorist Groups (Tokdemir & Akcinaroglu, 2016) dataset where a composite score for positive and negative rebel-public ties, they remain limited to terrorist groups or do not cover the list of rebels studied here. Future research can overcome such problems to test the intuitive claim made here. This would be an important contribution to the literature, as recent works suggest that rebel governance can predict usage of terrorism by rebels (Asal et al., 2022), which would have a complicated impact on inter-rebel relations on which a comparison of the effects is needed. In addition, in creating the composite index, dimensionality analysis can be helpful in terms of calculating the weighted effects of different scores a group has in terms of rebel-public ties.

The moderating variable, too, is limited in the sense that it focuses mainly on the Polity score of a state due to their demonstrated usefulness (Fearon & Laitin, 2003; Fjelde & Nilsson, 2012). Yet, military capabilities and other factors also shape a state's credibility and can moderate the expected relation between the variables. In this thesis, they are taken as control variables. Yet, future studies can test whether the findings hold when they are used as moderators in alternative specifications.

As for the dependent variables, while the thesis focused on being allied for a rebel group as its first dependent variable, future research should test whether the logic presented in this thesis extends to alliance formation/onset. As it stands, it would extend to them. Yet, while doing so, such future research should control for an important variable that this thesis could not, which is the number of allies (and rivals for testing claims on inter-rebel conflict, i.e. the second dependent variable of this thesis). As Fordham and Poast (2016) show in interstate alliance politics, and Christia (2012) in alliance politics in civil wars, the number of strong allies an actor at a given time can shape whether it would form another alliance with another actor. Similarly, the number of strong enemies one has can shape whether it would be more likely to cooperate with others. Thus, these factors should be controlled for. This is an important limitation for this thesis.

In addition, as discussed in the previous chapter, when testing the claims on whether the alliance is a formal one or an informal one, the regressions did not include a condition of being allied is already present. The justification for this approach was the inability of the independent variables to capture being allied in the first place.

Yet, this approach produces more zeros for the binary variables on being (in)formally allied than it would be if the condition of being allied was introduced to the regressions. This is a limitation, and future studies can find justifications to introduce the conditionality without turning a blind eye to the reason why this thesis does not introduce itself.

As for the second dependent variable, this study is limited as it focuses on only inter-rebel armed conflict. While focusing on its onset would also be a contribution, as suggested above for alliances, another limitation is that inter-rebel rivalry does not happen in a violent manner all the time. Other marks of inter-rebel rivalry may be taking place in a manner hypothesized by this thesis, but not captured due to its focus on inter-rebel armed conflict. For instance, recent research has shown that rebels sometimes compete with one another through differentiating their demands from the government and their ideologies from those of one another to attract a broader group of supporters (Tokdemir et al., 2021). Future studies can test the hypotheses of this thesis on inter-rebel conflict through a broader operationalization of it, where such non-violent forms of rivalry are also captured.

Moreover, from the current form of the findings of this thesis, while it is shown that rebel-public ties affect inter-rebel conflict, it remains unclear which type of groups initiate the conflict. The author could not find cross-sectional time-series data on this, and the release of new datasets would allow conducting such extended research. Similarly, while the thesis focuses on rebel-public ties, the public is divided into two in a civil war: the constituency the rebel group seeks to represent, and the non-constituency. Its relations with the two may differ, and may have different

implications for a rebel group's credibility. For instance, violence against the non-constituency (which may be expected in civil wars) may not have the same effects as violence against the constituency (which is not as expected as the former, since it can backfire as discussed in detail in Chapter 2). To the knowledge of the author, the existing datasets differentiate the public in this respect, but limit their units-of-analysis to terrorist groups (see, for instance, the Reputation of Terrorist Groups Dataset by Tokdemir and Akcinaroglu (2016)). With the release of new data, future research can overcome this limitation.

As for the dyadic analysis, the thesis does not focus on what would be the outcome for inter-rebel relations when the constructive/destructive rebel-public ties of each group in a dyad are both scoring high/low. Instead, it only focuses on whether they are similar to each other. This is a limitation, as two highly constructive groups are considered the same as two groups with almost no constructive ties to the public. It can be overcome by calculating the mean of constructive/destructive ties rebels have in a conflict, and add/subtract one standard deviation to create two variables where each scenario is captured -with the base group being dyads with medium levels of constructive/destructive ties to the public. It would help in better testing the dyadic hypotheses of this thesis, and find promising results.

On the variables, also note that alternative specifications of both rebel governance and terrorism should also take into account how much of each is done by a rebel group in a multiparty conflict as compared to all other groups. This is different from the *symmetry* variables. Here, for instance, if a conflict involves five parties where none but one engage in one type of rebel-governance activity, its weight in credibility

calculations would be different from cases where all groups provide all types of rebel governance activities. Such weighted variables would add nuance to the models. Finally, while the data is merged in this thesis based on the rebel id - year - country, it limits the research by treating groups operating in different countries as different actors. However, for instance, a group receiving funds from a state in a given conflict in one country may portray its other branches as equally credible/supported by the sponsor. The justification for the approach of the thesis was that it would not be able to do so, but future research can test these opposing claims.

Another problem with the *symmetry* variables is that it treats two groups scoring low for a given rebel-public relation form (e.g. two groups each scoring 1 for rebel governance) and two groups scoring high (e.g. two groups scoring 9 for rebel governance) the same as their symmetry score would be 0. The justification for this was that it was the ‘similarity’ in credibility that would predict inter-rebel relations as discussed in Chapter 2 for devising some of the hypotheses. Groups with high credibilities were theorized to be highly selective partners and rivalrous actors; whereas those with lesser amounts of credibility to be less selective but less likely to find allies. In turn, some hypotheses were devised to predict how the difference in symmetry would affect inter-rebel relations. As it stands, it would not make a difference in terms of alliance formation (i.e. the dependent variable that the *symmetry* variables aim to predict, as discussed in other chapters) whether each group has high credibility or low credibility scores. In the former case, neither of them would need one another; in the latter case, neither of them would trust one another. But the results in terms of alliance formation would be the same (i.e. the scenario where the state is not a credible agent). Or, if the state is a credible party,

groups with high credibility would ally one another thanks to their shared demonstrated trustworthiness; and groups with low credibility would still ally to pool their resources even if they are negatively affected by the lack of shared trust on each other. However, further research should test this claim by considering how symmetry among groups with high credibility and among those with low credibility affects inter-rebel alliances. This can be done through finding the mean score of credibility in each conflict setting, adding one standard deviation to it to create a threshold for determining ‘high credibility scores’, and then running the dyadic analyses according to that criteria.

Note that in solving the limitations above, the existence of multiple alternative variables may make the analysis complicated and thus unable to produce succinct answers to the research question at hand. In dealing with this problem, Principal Component Analysis where numerous variables for a long list of observations are condensed through a mathematical procedure to provide a weighted average of the related variables.

As for the limitations regarding model specifications, note that the present models could benefit from several improvements. For instance, the dependent variables of this study can also be coded as categorical variables, and can be tested using multinomial logistic models. This approach would allow the likelihood of each outcome as compared to that of one another, and add considerable nuance to the models. The assumption of independence of irrelevant alternatives may seem to be violated as the choice between cooperation and rivalry can be affected by the likelihood of winning a swift victory against another rebel group, as discussed in the

literature review. Yet, following the suggestions of Dow and Endersby (2004) and the application of Fortna (2015, p.540, footnote 101), since the set of choices is stable (i.e. to cooperate, remain neutral, or rival) and since the thesis lacks a ‘very’ large number of observations, the usage of multinomial regression would not be analytically problematic.

In addition, recall that some of the models did not present results that are immune to the possibility of reversed causality. To better solve this problem and augment the lagged variables approach, it would be useful to see if it takes a shorter time to form alliances/rivalries for rebel dyads with the proposed properties in Chapter 2 -which would be supportive of the theory. Using a hazard model for that purpose would be suitable. It would also help in addressing the issue of sticky inter-rebel relations that can complicate the analysis, as any change in the dependent variable makes the counter variable reset itself -resonating differenced dependent variables, which would also augment the regression models. Related to the issue of sticky inter-rebel relations, any result found through an analysis of time-series data can suffer from a spurious correlation problem stemming from trends-related issues. More specifically, it can be the case that the dependent variable happens to act as expected due to trends unrelated to the effects of the independent and control variables (Kellstedt & Whitten, 2008). To account for this, the models can run the analysis with differenced dependent variables, where $\Delta Y_t = Y_t - Y_{t-1}$ (Kellstedt & Whitten, 2008).

Another design-wise limitation is similar to the issue of reverse causality. It may not be the occurrence, but the expectation of rivalry/alliance that may affect rebel-public ties. A group may choose how it interacts with the citizenry for reasons beyond

considerations of inter-rebel relations (which would make the independent variable exogenous, such as the need for having in-group unity (Abrahms, 2008)), or with an expectation of cooperation/rivalry which would make the independent variable endogenous. To better account for the latter, alternative tests can run mediation analysis in addition to having the control variables above (for its value, see: (Imai et al., 2010)). They can treat factors that may lead to such expectations as mediating factors through which inter-rebel relations are shaped in its robustness checks. Such variables may be the significant control variables that are theoretically prior to the occurrence of a given rebel-public interaction. If the indirect effects of rebel-public ties remain statistically significant, it would be indicative of the value of studying them. In addition, alternative tests can utilize matching, a technique that resonates with a most similar case study, where observations which are similar on several factors are compared to one another to account for the possibility of an ‘expectation-based’ reverse causality (Iacus et al., 2009).¹

Also note that the Fjelde and Nilsson (2012) data has records from both war-time and post-war inter-rebel conflict. The analysis was unable to separate them and focus only on the former. This is an important limitation for the findings as the thesis is on inter-rebel relations ‘during’ multiparty civil wars, and as it cannot tell when such conflict is more likely. Yet, as it stands, the findings seem to have a promising explanatory power in explaining the commonly observed phenomenon of post-war inter-rebel conflict (Atlas & Licklider, 1999). Intuitively, it implies that changed rebel-public ties after the war ends may create a scenario in which conflict is hypothesized to occur in this thesis, so that rebels start fighting one another after the

¹ For a recent study using matching, see Cunningham, 2023.

war terminates. Future research should study war-time and post-war conflict among rebels as separate groups of instances, contributing to the literature on both.

There can also be factors unobservable to the analysts that may drive cooperative/rivaling behavior among groups, such as having hawkish preferences not expressed to preserve in-group unity at a given time.² In addressing this problem, a penalized maximum likelihood estimator can be used (Cook et al., 2020).³ As these limitations are resolved, the findings would be further strengthened, and the role of rebel-public ties in shaping inter-rebel relations would be better explained. Solving these can be done in future research, along with a consideration of some related research questions discussed in the next section.

5.3. Future Research

Some solutions to the limitations of this thesis are discussed above. While overcoming them with or without following some of these solutions can all be carried in future research on inter-rebel interactions, there are also some relevant research questions equally interesting to study. Building upon the findings presented there, future works can study how citizen resistance to rebel governance and the inclusivity of rebel service provision affects conflictual rebel relations -adding nuance to the findings of this thesis, as discussed above. In addition, it can study the comparative effects of constructive and destructive rebel-public ties on the intensity and duration of inter-rebel conflict. Building on the findings of this thesis and such

² On how hawkish preferences can attenuate in-group unity, and thus credibility, recall Asal et al. (2012).

³ For a discussion on how this technique differs from fixed and random effects, see Cook et al., 2020. For a recent application, see Cunningham, 2023.

future works, others can also study when a government's wedge strategies to divide rebels are more likely to work based on the effects of rebel-public ties.

As new datasets are released, future studies should also focus on how third-party interventions affect inter-rebel interactions, as they are found to be affected by the independent variables of this study (Stanton, 2020) and have the possibility of shaping inter-rebel relations as do external sponsors (Popovic, 2018). In addition, with the newly released datasets, future studies can conceptualize rebel alliances in different manners to test the claims raised in this thesis. For instance, the newly released MGAR dataset by Blair et al. (2021) offers granular information on VNSA cooperation. Coupled with the usage of Principal Component Analysis techniques, future works can better test the claims made here on rebel alliances. Moreover, using MGAR, they can also study the extent of alliances (e.g. how much help is given to one's allies as a function of rebel-public ties) as well as the generalizability of the findings to other VNSAs than rebels in multiparty civil wars. Such works can also move beyond interaction among rebels to include movements that are politically salient but have not resorted to arms. Works of Cunningham (for instance see: Cunningham, 2011) can be a useful starting point to carry out such research.

Relatedly, note that this thesis does not control for whether a given rebel group has a political party wing. It may be the case that parties related to rebels provide services to the public at some instances. Yet, since the data presented here cannot capture it, the lack of support for some of the hypotheses devised in the second chapter may be data-wise artifacts instead of a failure to reject the proposition that groups do not differ in forming alliances from one another based on their relations with the public.

Such additional controls, and others, may be included with the release of new cross-conflict time-series data.

Further, there are some cases where a group engages in inter-rebel conflict against, for instance, co-ethnics and not others; but doing it when also engaging in rebel-governance. Meanwhile, they form alliances with non-coethnics. Such cases, even when controlling for the effects of ethnicity, remain salient (on how co-ethnicity can lead to inter-rebel conflict, see: Lilja and Hultman (2011); for an example of the cases described here, see the behavior of Tamil Tigers). This may mean that rebel-governance may lead to inter-rebel conflict especially when there is a risk of such conflict -such as shared ethnicity among groups. Future research may test this claim using matching techniques discussed above; or through an interaction model where rebel governance moderates the effects of shared ethnicity. It may also help in testing the claims on inter-rebel alliances better.

Finally, there have been some other questions that warrants separate research noted throughout the thesis. Recapitulating them here is important to highlight once again what points are understudied in the literature that are still within the realm of inter-rebel relations but not directly linked to the independent variables of this study. First, why some civil wars include multiple rebels while others do not is an interesting question of its own. Explaining the number of rebels can be an important first-step for better theorizing inter-rebel relations, and thus warrants further work. In addition, how inter-rebel cooperation and conflict affects a group's ties with the public (i.e. where the dependent and independent variables of this study are reversed) is also an interesting study. While the latter is somehow captured by the literature on

outbidding discussed in Chapter 2, there are questions as to when rivalry becomes violent. At times, it happens through other means (recall, for instance, Tokdemir et al., 2021). In addition, rebel decisions to target the citizens or the rival rebels in attempts to outbid one another is an understudied topic that warrants future research (for a recent case study, see: Berti, 2020). As for how inter-rebel relations shape rebel governance, the effects of alliances also remain understudied. Finally, also note that rebel alliances/conflict and rebel-public ties may -after a period of demonstrating credibility- stop predicting one another and start occurring at the same time. In such cases, future research may test whether rebels differ from one another in terms of being allied/in conflict with other rebels based on their ties with the public in a statistically meaningful manner through an ANOVA-based study instead of attempting to see which one predicts the other. Then, other works can build on them to show after which time-period these variables cease to predict one another but instead covary only.

As it stands, however, this thesis made the contribution of studying the effects of rebel-public ties on inter-rebel relations, presenting promising results and recommendations for future works. The citizenry is an integral part of civil wars, and their role in shaping conflict processes in a variety of aspects should be examined more.

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APPENDIX

This appendix provides the visual where the area under the Receiver Operating Characteristic curve, the logistic regression models where the dependent variable is taken as being formally allied to other VNSAs, and the models where variables that cause major drops in the number of observations are not dropped. Note that the ROC curve shows where the model fails to fit with the data in a sound manner (i.e. the area above the ROC curve). This may be useful for future research where such areas are further theorized to create a better explanation of the variance in inter-rebel relations. Also note that these models should not be used in other research, as they are mainly for demonstration purposes where the main results of the thesis do not change, except for the findings on interaction terms predicting conflict -which become statistically insignificant. These models suffer from a variety of modeling problems and some of them have a very limited number of observations to make claims. Also, for the model names, note that Model 1 here denotes the full models, whereas Model 2 denotes the full models with lagged variables. All models are logistic regressions. Finally, to save space, some of the variables in the tables are abbreviated -whose full names are noted in the Abbreviations section in the first pages of this thesis.

Figure 5: Area Under the Receiver Operating Curve Based on Model 3 of Table 9

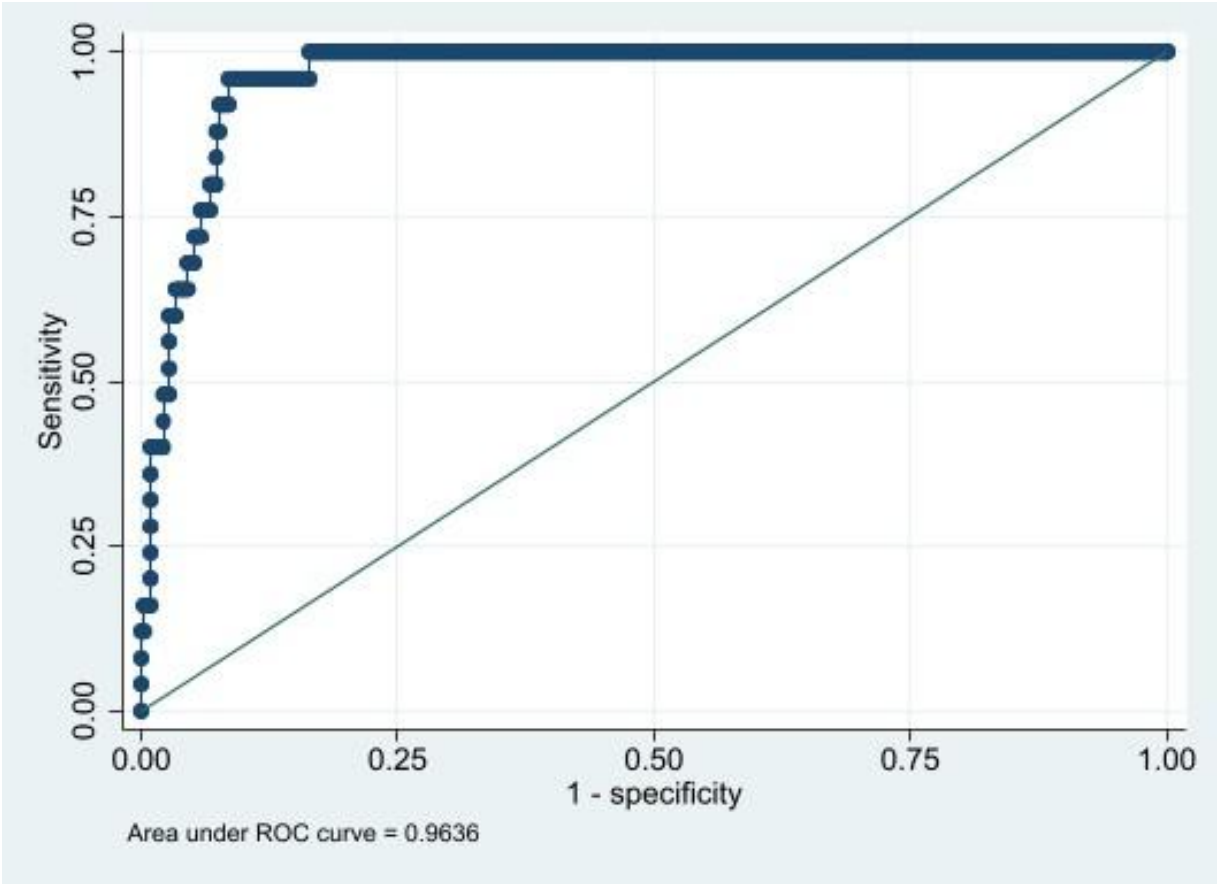


Table 16: Effects of Symmetry in Rebel Governance on Rebel Alliances

	Model 1	Model 2
Symmetry (Positive)	0.334 (0.206)	
Symmetry (Negative)	-0.294 (0.569)	
Co-ethnic	2.417 (1.514)	0 (.)
Co-ideology	-1.353 (1.729)	-3.246 (5.516)
Both Groups Splinter	-2.479 (2.037)	0 (.)
Dyad-Level Central~d	1.013 (0.827)	
Co-Incompatibility	18.94 (2298.3)	28.90 (2251.7)
Closeness in Age	-0.0311 (0.0359)	0.0272 (0.0600)
Co-Sponsor	2.459* (0.971)	
Rebel Power Imbalance	-1.444 (0.935)	0.737 (2.893)
Co-Intensity	0.366 (0.826)	0.134 (1.549)
Post-Cold War	-0.135 (0.913)	-2.774 (3.834)
Number of Groups	-0.0607 (0.247)	0.390 (0.432)
Rugged Terrain	-46.66 (44.14)	142.5 (190.7)
Xpolity	-0.121 (0.225)	1.781 (1.119)
Military Personnel~s	0.0431 (1.393)	-9.916 (6.587)
GDP per capita (lo~)	1.607+ (0.943)	-2.085 (2.721)
Co-Territorial Con~s	-1.964+ (1.040)	
Co-Natural Resourc~e	-16.89 (2298.3)	
L.Symmetry Positive		0.269 (0.467)
L.Symmetry Negative		-1.018 (1.013)
L.Dyad-Level Centr~d		3.186 (2.629)
L.Co-Sponsor		3.598 (2.867)
L.Co-Territorial C~s		-4.419 (4.083)
L.Co-Natural Resou~e		-15.14 (2251.7)
Constant	-11.57 (10.22)	-2.048 (32.48)
Observations	175	112
Pseudo R-squared	0.475	0.601

Standard errors in parentheses

+ p<0.10, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01

Table 17: Effects of Symmetry in Negative Relations with the Public On Rebel
Alliances

	Model 1	Model 2
Symmetry (Positive)	0.603+ (0.353)	
Interaction Term	0 (.)	
Co-ethnic	15.10 (4714.7)	0 (.)
Co-ideology	-1.801 (2.454)	116.0 (.)
Both Groups Splinter	-14.24 (4714.7)	0 (.)
Dyad-Level Central~d	0.403 (1.208)	
Co-Incompatibility	18.96 (1911.1)	5412.7 (.)
Closeness in Age	-0.0508 (0.0502)	4.034 (.)
Co-Sponsor	3.552** (1.345)	
Rebel Power Imbala~e	-1.462 (1.131)	94.01 (.)
Co-Intensity	0.965 (1.231)	-2002.9 (.)
Post-Cold War	0.176 (1.172)	1167.8 (.)
Number of Groups	-0.193 (0.382)	18.50 (.)
Rugged Terrain	-51.24 (63.14)	-28397.5 (.)
Xpolity	-0.233 (0.309)	-243.6 (.)
Military Personnel~s	0.493 (1.760)	2958.0 (.)
GDP per capita (lo~)	0.745 (1.495)	-894.3 (.)
Co-Territorial Con~s	-1.284 (1.316)	
Co-Natural Resourc~e	-17.61 (1911.1)	
L.Symmetry (Positive)		39.40 (.)
L.Interaction Term		0 (.)
L.Dyad-Level Centr~d		10.08 (.)
L.Co-Sponsor		5293.5 (.)
L.Co-Territorial C~s		-243.2 (.)
L.Co-Natural Resou~e		-9591.7 (.)
Constant	-0.558 (15.83)	10251.6 (.)
Observations	107	70
Pseudo R-squared	0.540	1.000

Standard errors in parentheses
+ p<0.10, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01

Table 18: Effects of Symmetry in Positive Relations with the Public On Rebel
Alliances (Model 1 Could Not Be Calculated)

	Model 2
L.Interaction Term	0 (.)
L.Symmetry (Negative)	-352.9 (.)
Co-ethnic	0 (.)
Co-ideology	-342.4 (.)
Both Groups Splinter	0 (.)
L.Dyad-Level Centr~d	531.6 (.)
Co-Incompatibility	1897.9 (.)
Closeness in Age	8.895 (.)
L.Co-Sponsor	2073.5 (.)
Rebel Power Imbalance	-484.2 (.)
Co-Intensity	-378.7 (.)
Post-Cold War	-419.3 (.)
Number of Groups	40.74 (.)
Rugged Terrain	18378.5 (.)
Xpolity	107.3 (.)
Military Personnel~s	-383.9 (.)
GDP per capita (lo~)	-215.1 (.)
L.Co-Territorial C~s	-535.1 (.)
L.Co-Natural Resou~e	-989.0 (.)
Constant	-10.96 (.)
Observations	68
Pseudo R-squared	1.000
Standard errors in parentheses	
+ p<0.10, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01	

Table 19: Effects of Constructive and Destructive Rebel-Public Ties on Rebel Alliances

	Model 1	Model 2
Constructive R~s	0.168 (0.180)	
Negative Rebel~s	0.157 (0.697)	
Incompatibility	-1.532 (1.463)	-1.507 (1.686)
Central Command	2.206** (0.631)	
Ethnic Group	0.245 (1.174)	0.0536 (1.385)
Rightist Group	3.754 (2.976)	5.306 (3.902)
Age	0.0813+ (0.0446)	0.103+ (0.0597)
Number of Stat~s	0.355 (0.560)	
Rebel Strength	1.347 (1.081)	
Intensity Level	1.872* (0.855)	1.697 (1.065)
Income from Na~s	-7.405+ (4.043)	-7.655 (5.251)
Post-Cold War	-0.849 (0.877)	-1.028 (1.350)
Number of Rebels	-0.142 (0.266)	-0.103 (0.264)
Rugged Terrain	81.99 (83.24)	66.09 (93.30)
XPolity	-0.275 (0.175)	-0.225 (0.246)
Military Perso~s	0.524 (1.277)	0.926 (1.744)
GDP per capita~)	-0.952 (0.931)	-1.705+ (1.010)
Splinter	-0.802 (1.192)	
Territorial Co~l	-3.339* (1.390)	
L.Constructive~s		0.0112 (0.217)
L.Negative Reb~s		0.469 (0.997)
L.Central Comm~d		2.859** (0.879)
L.Number of St~s		1.386* (0.600)
L.Rebel Strength		1.838 (1.486)
L.Territorial ~l		-3.008 (1.954)
oL.Territorial~l		0 (.)
L.Splinter		-1.299 (1.372)
Constant	-1.443 (9.184)	1.314 (8.493)
Observations	114	104
Pseudo R-squared	0.442	0.455

Standard errors in parentheses
+ p<0.10, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01

Table 20: Effects of Rebel-Public Ties on Rebel Alliances where State
Non-Credibility Moderates Positive-Rebel Public Ties

	Model 1	Model 2
Interaction Term	-1.628 (2.609)	
Negative Rebel~s	1.491 (1.396)	
Incompatibility	-1.288 (4.663)	-2.010 (2.248)
Central Command	0.133 (2.433)	
Ethnic Group	5.279 (5.790)	3.267 (3.929)
Rightist Group	3.813 (11.53)	8.200 (6.855)
Age	-0.115 (0.255)	-0.122 (0.170)
Number of Stat~s	-0.319 (2.040)	
Rebel Strength	1.651 (5.192)	
Intensity Level	1.409 (1.922)	0.501 (1.258)
Income from Na~s	-16.86 (15.39)	-19.83+ (11.26)
Post-Cold War	0.460 (1.230)	-1.049 (1.462)
Number of Rebels	0.0891 (0.566)	0.390 (0.882)
Rugged Terrain	391.1* (172.8)	388.4+ (210.0)
XPolity	-0.730 (0.467)	-0.634+ (0.374)
Military Perso~s	-4.231 (4.593)	-4.281 (4.175)
GDP per capita~)	4.241 (4.169)	2.937 (4.084)
Splinter	0.0718 (2.027)	
Territorial Co~l	-4.710 (4.449)	
L.Interaction Term		-0.958 (1.538)
L.Negative Reb~s		0.0930 (1.820)
L.Central Comm~d		0.784 (1.371)
L.Number of St~s		0.767 (0.860)
L.Rebel Strength		2.451 (2.669)
L.Territorial ~l		-3.929+ (2.367)
oL.Territorial~l		0 (.)
L.Splinter		-0.127 (1.538)
Constant	-41.26 (29.55)	-31.31 (36.27)
Observations	71	71
Pseudo R-squared	0.537	0.584
Standard errors in parentheses + p<0.10, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01		

Table 21: Dependent Variable Operationalized as Being Formally Allied (Model 1 could not be calculated)

	Model 2
L.Positive Ties	2.411+ (1.433)
L.Negative Ties	-8.916 (.)
L.Central Comm~d	157.6** (0.999)
Incompatibility	-42.57** (1.526)
Age	4.708** (0.188)
Ethnic Group	66.85** (2.031)
Rightist Group	134.0 (.)
L.Number of St~s	78.60 (.)
L.Rebel Strength	-26.91 (.)
Intensity Level	67.81 (.)
L.Territorial ~1	-29.75 (.)
Income from Na~s	-200.8 (.)
Post-Cold War	-12.51 (.)
Number of Rebels	26.72** (1.302)
Rugged Terrain	2057.1 (.)
XPolity	-6.340** (0.274)
Military Perso~s	-96.63 (.)
GDP per capita~)	-36.10** (0.763)
oL.Territorial~1	0 (.)
L.Splinter	-96.78 (.)
L.Formal Allia~e	106.8 (.)
Constant	-378.8 (.)
Observations	104
Pseudo R-squared	1.000
Standard errors in parentheses + p<0.10, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01	

Table 22: Effects of Rebel-Public Ties on Inter-Rebel Conflict

	Model 1	Model 2
Constructive Ties	0.903** (0.257)	
Negative Ties	-5.355 (3.654)	
Ethnic Group	3.885+ (2.201)	9.573* (4.441)
Rightist Group	4.388** (1.606)	3.025 (1.880)
Splinter	0.349 (1.322)	
Central Command	-0.480 (0.610)	
Incompatibility	7.774* (3.447)	10.03* (4.459)
Age	-0.0269 (0.0695)	-0.640 (0.397)
State Sponsors	3.422* (1.490)	
Weak Rebel Group (~)	1.449 (1.641)	
Strong Rebel Group~z	0.872 (2.182)	
Intensity Level	1.571* (0.776)	2.472** (0.787)
Territorial Control	-5.146** (1.337)	
Income from Natura~s	0.650 (1.178)	-1.035 (0.876)
Rebel Strength	-1.231 (1.611)	
Post-Cold War	1.903* (0.866)	3.991** (1.216)
Number of Rebels	-0.319 (0.624)	-1.249+ (0.721)
Mountainous Region	0.0921** (0.0317)	0.355+ (0.188)
XPolity	-0.929** (0.317)	-3.645+ (1.878)
Military Personnel~s	0.00528** (0.00201)	0.00286 (0.00176)
GDP per capita (lo~)	2.447* (0.968)	10.97* (5.383)
Time since last re~s	-1.294 (1.215)	0.670 (1.449)
L.Constructive Reb~s		4.650* (2.197)
L.Negative Rebel-P~s		-26.75* (12.10)
L.splint		1.209 (1.100)
L.Central Command		-0.345 (1.293)
L.State Sponsors		15.71* (6.716)
L.Weak Rebel Group~)		-2.466 (1.678)
L.Strong Rebel Gro~z		-3.276 (2.478)
L.Territorial Cont~l		-19.74* (8.345)
L.Rebel Strength		-6.395+ (3.372)
Constant	-36.14** (13.29)	-114.5* (53.17)
Observations	311	274
Pseudo R-squared	0.614	0.760

Standard errors in parentheses
+ p<0.10, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01

Table 23: Effects of Rebel-Public Ties on Inter-Rebel Conflict where State
Non-Credibility Moderates Positive-Rebel Public Ties

	Model 1	Model 2
Interaction Term	-1.287 (0.844)	
Negative Ties	-5.829 (4.720)	
Ethnic Group	4.834 (3.021)	2.680* (1.224)
Rightist Group	2.526 (3.183)	4.700** (1.656)
Splinter	0.867 (1.459)	
Central Command	-0.192 (0.665)	
Incompatibility	7.294+ (3.821)	3.389 (2.119)
Age	-0.113 (0.202)	-0.111* (0.0497)
State Sponsors	3.606* (1.734)	
Weak Rebel Group (~)	2.027 (2.381)	
Strong Rebel Group~z	1.181 (3.068)	
Intensity Level	2.251** (0.659)	2.542* (1.134)
Territorial Control	-4.492** (1.734)	
Income from Natura~s	2.019 (1.467)	-0.549 (1.722)
Rebel Strength	-0.254 (1.858)	
Post-Cold War	1.703 (1.291)	3.212* (1.395)
Number of Rebels	-0.624 (0.703)	-0.476 (0.884)
Mountainous Region	0.111+ (0.0621)	0.0642* (0.0325)
XPolity	-0.827+ (0.438)	-1.209** (0.333)
Military Personnel~s	0.00538* (0.00236)	0.00356 (0.00348)
GDP per capita (lo~)	3.057* (1.528)	2.523 (1.557)
L. Interaction Term		0 (.)
L.Negative Ties		-4.300 (4.407)
L.splint		1.199 (0.842)
L.Central Command		-0.000956 (0.608)
L.State Sponsors		4.688* (1.874)
L.Weak Rebel Group~)		-2.293 (1.483)
L.Strong Rebel Gro~z		0.384 (2.441)
L.Territorial Cont~l		-9.258** (1.660)
L.Rebel Strength		-1.673 (2.247)
Constant	-40.38* (19.27)	-30.14+ (16.39)
Observations	311	258
Pseudo R-squared	0.641	0.636

Standard errors in parentheses
+ p<0.10, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01

Table 24: Effects of Rebel-Public Ties on Inter-Rebel Conflict where State
Non-Credibility Moderates Negative-Rebel Public Ties

	Model 1	Model 2
Constructive Ties	0.932** (0.284)	
Interaction Term	-1.507 (2.286)	
Ethnic Group	3.813 (2.392)	3.291+ (1.827)
Rightist Group	4.771** (1.770)	11.15** (3.481)
Splinter	0.327 (1.485)	
Central Command	-0.440 (0.684)	
Incompatibility	8.054* (3.556)	8.067+ (4.408)
Age	-0.0247 (0.0718)	-0.483 (0.298)
State Sponsors	3.743** (1.200)	
Weak Rebel Gr~)	1.120 (1.999)	
Strong Rebel ~z	0.395 (2.833)	
Intensity Level	1.685* (0.748)	14.66* (6.173)
Territorial C~l	-5.327** (1.265)	
Income from N~s	0.983 (1.060)	6.781* (3.420)
Rebel Strength	-1.244 (1.501)	
Post-Cold War	1.956+ (1.161)	14.67* (5.854)
Number of Reb~s	-0.210 (0.653)	-3.588+ (2.139)
Mountainous R~n	0.0875* (0.0363)	0.537+ (0.278)
XPolity	-0.980** (0.310)	-4.525* (2.242)
Military Pers~s	0.00604** (0.00181)	0.0260* (0.0114)
GDP per capit~)	2.467** (0.920)	19.09* (9.238)
L.Constructiv~s		5.926* (2.852)
L. Interaction Term		-15.08+ (8.035)
L.splint		8.487** (3.205)
L.Central Com~d		-1.415 (1.354)
L.State Spons~s		22.78* (10.45)
L.Weak Rebel ~)		-4.570+ (2.647)
L.Strong Rebe~z		-14.30+ (8.140)
L.Territorial~l		-22.07* (9.257)
L.Rebel Stren~h		7.602* (3.797)
Constant	-37.31** (12.18)	-184.1* (86.30)
Observations	311	278
Pseudo R-squa~d	0.617	0.818

Standard errors in parentheses
+ p<0.10, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01