Winning Hearts and Minds: The Role of Rebel Service Provision in Civil Conflicts

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Abstract

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As an important part of the strategy of winning "hearts and minds" of the people, many rebel groups provide substantive benefits and services to civilians in their captured territories. While some rebels provide services that are open to everyone including members of the incumbent government, while other groups provide benefits only to their members or supporters. Why do rebel groups invest vast amount of resources in providing social services to the general public? Does increasing the inclusivity of service provision help rebel groups secure more favorable outcomes? This thesis proposes that exclusive services only to rebel members provide incentives for joining the group, while inclusive services can reach a more general population and help rebels gain public support as well as recognition both domestically and internationally. Using a group-conflict analysis of 253 civil wars around the world from 1946 to 2003, this thesis tests the effects of different levels of education and healthcare provision. The results suggest that more inclusive levels of healthcare or education provision is associated with more established domestic support and international recognition. However, providing more extensive levels of social services does not have a statistically significant impact on increasing the possibility of rebel groups winning the conflicts. This thesis provides a systematic understanding of the effect of variations of rebel service provision and provides implications for both insurgencies and counterinsurgency strategies.

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The Revolution was in the minds and hearts of the people.

—John Adams, *From John Adams to Hezekiah Niles, 13 February 1818*

As violent and deadly as it can be, civil conflicts are not only about the use of superior military forces, but also about competing for the "hearts and minds" of the civilians. Both the governments and the insurgencies strive to generate public support basis and obtain international assistance. One of the most direct tools to gain "hearts and minds" is to provide social services. Historically, Mao's insurgency strategy emphasizes that providing social services to civilians is central for rebels to build support and ensure their survival (Mao 1966). Nowadays in civil conflicts, rebel groups provide a wide range of services such as healthcare, education, policing, and more (Mampilly 2011). Some rebels provide services that are open to everyone including members of the incumbent government, while other groups provide benefits only to their members or supporters (Stewart 2018).

For example, despite fighting a brutal civil war, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in Sri Lanka established the Tamil Eelam Education Council (TEEC) to coordinate the provision of education to the general public (Ethiveerasingam 1999). During the war, LTTE operated 1,994 primary and secondary schools within its controlled territories and enrolled about 648,000 students in total (Ministry of Education 2002, cited in United Nations 2003). The student dropout rate in northeast Sri Lanka under the LTTE rule was remarkably low for an area that had been in continuous conflict for more than two decades (Mamplilly 2011, 123). On the other hand, the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) in Sierra Leone provided healthcare services during the civil conflict, but only to its members and supporters (Peters 2011, 119-122). About 70% of the rebel groups adopt the same strategy as what the RUF did, limiting the access to its

social services to members and potential supporters (Stewart 2018, 1-2). However, some insurgencies indeed choose to devote considerable amount of resources to establish and maintain social service provision that are accessible to the general public.

While current scholars have examined the reasons and effects of rebel governance in general (Kasfir 2015; Mampilly 2011; Huang 2016), there is limited research on the effects of the variation in the exclusivity of rebel service provision. In other words, it remains puzzling that whether it is worth it for rebel groups to invest vast amount of resources in providing social services that can reach to the general public. Does the increasing the inclusivity of service provision help rebel groups secure more favorable outcomes? Otherwise, would more inclusive levels of social services bring other distinct benefits to the rebel groups?

This thesis examines the effects of different levels of service provision in terms of inclusivity, ranging from services provided only to combatants to inclusive services that could reach to members of the incumbent government, on conflict dynamics and outcomes. This thesis proposes that exclusive services only to rebel members provide incentives for joining the group, while more inclusive levels of services can reach a wider population and help rebels gain public support as well as recognition both domestically and internationally. Using a group-conflict analysis of 253 civil wars around the world from 1946 to 2003, this thesis tests the effects of different levels of education and healthcare provision. The results suggest that more inclusive levels of healthcare or education provision is associated with more established domestic support and international recognition. However, providing more extensive levels of social services does not have a statistically significant impact on increasing the possibility of rebel groups winning the conflicts.

By systematically examining the effect of variations in rebel service provision, this thesis contributes to more thorough understanding of rebel behaviors and provides implications for both insurgencies and counterinsurgency strategies. Through the analysis in this thesis, people can better understand the incentives for rebel groups to divert crucial time and resources to providing extensive social services, while improving social welfare not being rebels' major objective. At the same time, understanding the variation in rebel service provision is a critical part in comprehending how governance works, especially during wartime. While the daily lives of civilians are disrupted by constant fighting, rebel governance situations could show how basic welfare is sustained for people who live in poor conditions. With regard to policy implications, both insurgencies and counterinsurgencies could potentially extend some of their social services to cover a more general population so that the service provision may help solicit domestic support and global assistance. However, since extending the scope of service provision is not a key factor that affect conflict dynamics, both sides may choose to shift more resources to other strategies when operating under resource constraints.

Here is how the rest of the thesis will proceed: starting with an in-depth review of current scholarship on this topic and the contribution this thesis will make to the field, this thesis then presents the theory and hypotheses that will later be tested. After that, the Data and Methods section explains how the data set has been constructed, how the variables have been measured, and the statistical tests that have been used to test the hypotheses. The Results section shows and interprets the statistical test results, following which a robustness check is included to verify the quality of the testing process. Afterwards, the Discussion section explicates the reasons and logics behind the test results and some limitations of the current research design. Last but not

least, the Conclusion section summarizes the findings and provides policy implications as well as suggestions for future studies.

Literature Review

Civil wars are usually associated with violence, chaos, and collapse of governance, and rebel groups have mostly been portrayed as predatory actors who strive to shatter the existing sociopolitical order. This stereotypical image is valid to some extent, given that, by definition, rebel groups[1] are "armed factions that use violence to challenge the state" (Mampilly 2011, 3). However, a surprisingly large number of rebels in fact provide substantial benefits to civilians and establish sophisticated governance systems in their captured territories. The Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF), which began its war for independence from Ethiopia since the 1970s and finally achieved victory in 1993, provided extensive social services to its constituents (Stewart 2018). By 1978, the EPLF had provided various medical services to about 1.6 million citizens (Eritrean People's Liberation Front 1982). More recently, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in Sri Lanka, during the twenty-six-year civil war from 1983 to 2009 for a separate Tamil state, developed a comprehensive governance system for the local population in their controlled territory, including administrative offices, police force, as well as education and healthcare networks (Mampilly 2011, 108-23).

In general, some typical types of rebel governance include but are not limited to social service provision, including healthcare, education, and police force; regulatory functions

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[1] In this thesis, "rebels," "rebel group," "rebel organization," "insurgents," "insurgent group," "insurgent organization," and "insurgency" are used interchangeably. These terms are distinguished from "terrorist group," which implies its political objective is not to establish domestic and international legitimacy (Nadarajah and Sriskandarajah, 2005) (Bhatia, 2005). There is no clear distinction between terrorist groups and rebel groups, and the term "terrorist group" is avoided due to its political implications.

provision, which includes enforcing social norms, rules, and taxation; symbolic actions, which include creating flags, anthems, and uniforms; and the maintenance of political order such as resolving civil disputes and establishing diplomatic relations with other sovereign states (Mampilly 2011, 4). The notion "governance" implies a broader meaning than "government," as Rosenau (1992, 12) notes, "It is possible to conceive of governance without government – regulatory mechanisms in a sphere of activity which function effectively even though they are not endowed with formal authority." This thesis focuses specifically on one type of rebel governance – social service provision, and education and healthcare in particular. Nevertheless, it is important to understand rebel groups' governance behavior before examining service provision in particular.

Given the choice of taking on governance functions, different rebel groups adopt significantly different approaches of interacting with local residents. Some roving rebels, such as the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) in Uganda, prefer not to hold territory and instead view mobility as their greatest strength (Branch 2007). Some other rebel groups, after taking over territory, adopt extremely predatory and violent approaches. For example, the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) in Sierra Leone attack, rape, and kill thousands of civilians (Keen 2005). But many other insurgencies establish at least some extent of governance, ranging from creating minimal regulations to forming bureaucracies, legal systems, and extensive social welfare networks (Arjona, Kasfir and Mampilly 2015). Among those service-providing groups, some provide benefits to the general public living in their territories, including non-supporters, while others limit their services only to their members and supporters (Stewart 2018).

Scholars have tried to explain the variation of rebel governance and have shed light on the causes and characteristics of these rebel behaviors. Two prominent historical figures on

insurgency and non-conventional warfare – Mao Zedong and Ernesto "Che" Guevara – first proposed in their guerrilla theories that the goal of public goods provision is to generate collaboration from the civilians and thus gain supply of essential items and reinforce the rebel's military strategy (Mao 1961; Guevara 1969). As Mao's insurgency theory mentions, "the guerrilla must move amongst the people as a fish swims in the sea" (Mao, 1961). Guevara also states that, "Guerrilla warfare is a people's war, a mass struggle. To try to carry out this type of war without the support of the population is to court inevitable disaster" (Guevara 1969, 2). Providing social services is a tool that helps rebel groups win over people's hearts and builds foundations for further warfare.

Recent scholars have found that resource-poor rebels are more likely to rely on civilians for their needs and survival, while resource-rich groups, such as groups with foreign funding, have less incentives to win over public support but are prone to use violence against civilians (Salehyan, Siroky, and Wood 2014). Moreover, a social welfare campaign is able to help the rebel group further its political agenda in ways violence alone cannot achieve. Gramsci (1992) provided such insights in his theory of modern state-building – rebels need to seek control not only over territories but also over the people in the territories. Governance strategies can allow insurgencies to achieve some form of legitimacy (Mampilly 2011, 8). By providing public goods, insurgencies compete with their rivals and demonstrate that they could be a better governor than the incumbent government (Bloom 2004; Grynkewich 2008). Besides gaining public support and legitimacy, selective service provision targeting only rebel group members is a tool to attract dedicated people and gain recruits (Weinstein 2007). Stewart (2018) further notes that the arguments above cannot depict the full picture of the variation in different levels of services provided by rebel groups, and she argues that it is the long-term strategic objectives that

determine rebels' service behaviors. For example, secessionist rebels are specifically more likely to provide large-scale services since their objectives are establishing independent states and governments (Stewart 2018). Besides long-term goals, Mampilly (2011) further adds that conflict-produced dynamics such as the changing organizational capacity and the influence from other political actors also partially account for the variation of how rebels develop governing apparatuses.

Having a relatively comprehensive picture of the factors that could influence rebel groups' governance strategies, another question comes to scholars' attention – what are the effects of such service provision? In other words, is it worth it to pour enormous resources into service provision? The predatory rebel Revolutionary United Front (RUF) in Sierra Leone had little civilian support and was utterly defeated and disintegrated in 2002 (Gberie 2005, 1-2). On the other hand, many welfare-oriented groups such as the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) achieved their long-term objectives of independence or other favorable outcomes (Eritrean People's Liberation Front 1982). It seems that service provision might have a positive effect on outcomes favored by rebels. However, there also are many other cases showing otherwise – the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) group provided well-established governance systems but was bitterly defeated (Mampilly 2011). Given the puzzling phenomenon, scholars have tried to empirically examine the consequences of service provision by rebel groups. By providing state-like institutions and creating symbols of governance in general, insurgencies are able to boost legitimacy, gather public support, and reduce the necessity to use coercive means (Mampilly 2015b). Humphreys and Weinstein (2008) show that benefits provided by rebels can be a powerful incentive for recruitment. With more highly dedicated members, service-providing groups in fact are more likely to be more lethal in conflicts (Heger,

Jung, and Wong 2012). On the international level, other state governments are more likely to enter negotiations such as peace talks with service-providing groups, since on average those groups have a wider base of support and a relatively stable internal structure (Heger and Jung 2017). By facilitating rebel legitimacy as domestic political actors, service provision also enables the rebels to enhance their international recognition.

Besides the effects of rebel governance on popular support and legitimacy, some scholars have examined its effects on war outcomes and postwar practices. Huang (2016) mostly focuses on the effects of rebel governance on postwar democratization, and before testing the effects on postwar regime types, she tests its effect on how the war ends as the first step. Huang operationalizes rebel governance using two independent variables – rebel sources of income and rebel state-building. Rebel sources of income indicates the extent to which the group needs to raise funds from the population, which clearly shapes rebel relations with local civilians. Rebel state-building measures the extent to which the group engages in activities that would enable the rebel group to look like a sovereign state such as holding elections, imposing taxes, and providing social services. Again, Huang uses rebel state-building as an operationalization of rebel governance since it captures rebels' relations with civilians as their relations will differ depending on whether and how rebels attempt to engage in state-building. For the effects on war outcomes, the research shows that rebel state-building makes rebel victory more likely compared with government victory, while heavy reliance on civilians as the source of income does not affect war outcomes (Huang 2016, 84-90). For postwar effects, it is shown that state-building structures developed at the local level during conflicts could be turned to more constructive purposes after the termination of war (Manor 2006, 14; de Zeeuw 2008). Huang (2016) shows that rebel state-building activities are not linked to postwar democratic institutions, contrary to

the belief that such state-building institutions may facilitate democratization from a top-down perspective. In fact, rebel state-building is associated with postwar autocratization in the immediate postwar years (Huang 2016, 99). On the other hand, wartime reliance on civilians has a positive effect on postwar democratization, since the dependence on civilians makes the group more concerned about the bottom-up demand from the population (Huang 2016, 90-106).

Huang utilizes an innovative method in operationalizing rebel governance, and provides robust empirical evidence on the effects of rebel governance using large-N analysis and incorporating relevant control variables such as foreign aid, natural resources, war duration, and ideology. However, the research has certain limitations. First, when operationalizing the concept of rebel governance, the research does not account for variations within state-building behaviors – it does not examine the scope and extent of services provided by rebel groups. Instead, it treats a rebel group as having minimum to maximum state-building by counting how many fundamental governance institutions are established, including executive offices, legal systems, education systems, and more (Huang 2016, 60). Second, the research chooses to compare government victory against all other kinds of possible war outcomes, which includes rebel victory, negotiated settlement, or ceasefire (Huang 2016, 84). As Day (2019) suggested in his book, such dichotomous comparison cannot capture the full picture of the range of fates an insurgency could face. For example, despite having chances of entering into a durable political settlement, the RUF in Sierra Leone forwent favorable outcomes in negotiations (Day 2019, 4).

More recently, Stewart (2018) constructs a new data set categorizing rebel service provision into different degrees of exclusivity. In the data set, the degree of exclusivity of rebel service provision is on a spectrum ranging from services provided to group members only to services that are available to the general population, including the current incumbent government

members. Stewart further operationalizes exclusive and inclusive services based on the degree of exclusivity. Exclusive service provision means "limited or targeted social service provision from which certain members of a population are explicitly prevented from accessing" (Stewart 2018, 3). For example, some rebel groups only provide services to combatants and supporters. Inclusive service provision refers to "goods from which almost anyone can benefit including unlikely supporters" (Stewart 2018, 3). Previous research shows that inclusive service provision may increase the free-rider problem, as civilians may take advantage of the benefits without having any incentive to make commitments to the rebel group (Wood 2003, 193). Stewart (2018), on the other hand, shows that, based on the long-term objective of the rebel group, secessionist groups are more likely to use inclusive service provision to legitimate their claim of sovereignty to both domestic and international audiences, which could help them achieve independence. This research explores the exclusivity of rebel service provision and contributes to a more comprehensive and in-depth understanding of rebels' governance strategies. Stewart (2018) speculates that services provided to a broader population could help rebel groups achieve victory. However, she does not empirically test how the variation in the degrees of exclusivity affects war outcomes as well as rebel legitimacy domestically and internationally. Current studies have provided valuable insights into the topic of rebel governance yet at the same time have left an open door for future studies to advance in the field.

Theory & Hypotheses

Identifying the gap in current literature on rebel governance, this thesis gathers data from several existing data sets and aims to investigate the effects of different levels of rebel service provision on conflict dynamics and various war outcomes. Building on the theories in previous

studies, this thesis argues that services that reach to the general population are more likely to boost domestic perceptions of the rebel groups since a larger number of people can potentially gain benefits from the services, compared to the services that are exclusively provided to certain groups of people. As the rebel group establishes more legitimacy domestically, the international community will be more likely to recognize the rebel group as a governing political actor, which could in turn bring the rebel group more assistance. With the potential of generating domestic support as well as international recognition, such service provision could possibly be an effective tool to alter war dynamics and bring the rebels favorable outcomes such as successfully overthrowing the government or achieving peace agreements. Achieving peace agreements in many cases can be a favorable outcome for rebel groups since compared to defeats or annihilations, obtaining peace agreements gives insurgencies chances to negotiate their demands with the other side and thus they may be able to accomplish their partial objectives.

To further account for the effects given the variation of rebel service provision, this thesis argues that different levels of service provision have different rationales and thus different effects. It is widely agreed among scholars that service provision can attract highly dedicated members for rebel groups and extract other resources such as information and compliance (Berman and Laitin 2008; Berman, Shapiro, and Felter 2011; Kalyvas 2006; Weinstein 2007). Exclusive service provision – only to rebel group members especially – works as a tool for recruiting since it provides incentives for joining the rebel group. However, access to resources does not capture the full effects of inclusive services that are provided to the general public. Services that reach to more general population not only can gain recruits but also can alter people's perception on the rebel group and generate broader public support. In a randomized field experiment involving Afghanistan's largest development program – the National Solidarity

Program (NSP), researchers find that whether civilians support the government or the insurgents is affected by which party provides the most basic public goods and infrastructure (Beath, Christia and Enikolopov 2013). The researchers acknowledge that the strength of a rebel group depends primarily on its level of popular support, which could help it gain dedicated members and prevent civilians from sharing private intelligence with counter-insurgency forces (Beath, Christia and Enikolopov 2013). Berman, Shapiro, and Felter (2011) argue that service provision in general can attract resources for rebel groups including human capital. Stewart (2018) shows that more inclusive level of service provision could potentially prevent out-migration. As Grynkewich (2008) suggests, as people receive services from the rebel group over time, they will be more loyal to the group than to the state. Providing more inclusive level of services could meet more civilians' need and thus could potentially sway people's attitudes towards the insurgents. This leads to the first hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1: *During conflicts, rebel groups who provide social services that are more inclusive to the general public are more likely to generate substantial public support than groups who provide social services that are less inclusive to the public or groups who provide no social services.*

Moreover, since providing social services to all constituents is a normal behavior for sovereign states (Krasner and Risse 2014), inclusive service provision could make the rebel group look more like a sovereign state. Thus, the international community is more likely to recognize such a service-providing group as a legitimate political actor, which could potentially bring the rebel groups more external support. At the same time, more inclusive levels of service

provision demonstrate that the rebel group cares about the people (Wimmer 2012, 13-14), and thus it could help the rebel group create a benign image to its international audience. Previous researchers have presented the essential importance of favorable perceptions to rebel successes. Rebel groups "market" themselves to other outside actors to obtain support that assist them fighting the civil conflicts (Bob, 2005). Through a recent survey experiment in the U.S., Arves, Cunningham, and McCulloch (2019) show that compared to violent behaviors, nonviolent tactics improve positive perceptions of rebels among civilians, which could help rebels gain support from major powers. The alternative strategies besides violence such as providing social services can be effective in improving the rebel groups' international reputation and legitimacy. This provides the basis for the second hypothesis:

Hypothesis 2: During conflicts, rebel groups who provide social services that are more inclusive to the general public are more likely to receive higher levels of international recognition than groups who provide social services that are less inclusive to the public or groups who provide no social services.

Finally, along the logic of getting more domestic and international support through the provision of inclusive social services, more inclusive levels of services should be able to assist rebel groups achieve more desirable conflict outcomes. First, inclusive levels of social services can help rebel groups increase support from the population, which facilitates recruitment, increases material support to the rebels from the population, and reduces population cooperation with counterinsurgents. Arjona, Kasfir and Mampilly (2015) support the claim that service provision could significantly shape the civilian-insurgent relationship, and possibly bring the

rebels rewards. The benefits that greater ground-level support bring to the rebel groups can assist the rebel groups fighting the war and potentially winning the conflicts. Secondly, more inclusive levels of social services can help rebel groups build international recognition, which increases the likelihood of rebel groups gaining assistance that is essential for winning the war. As Coggins (2014, 28-29) suggests, international recognition is the foundation and ultimate requirement for state-forming groups, and even for non-secessionist groups, international legitimacy could bring them support for resources such as funding as well as more opportunities to negotiate favorable outcomes in peace talks. New political actors can significantly benefit from opportunities for development assistance, trade, and investment (Coggins 2014, 11). With the possible advantages that inclusive levels of service provision can bring to the rebels, it follows that more inclusive services should be able to contribute to more favorable outcomes for the rebel groups.

In terms of favorable outcomes, like Clausewitz said, "so long as I have not overthrown my opponent, I am bound to fear he may overthrow me" (Clausewitz 1976, 77). Especially in the case of rebellions, unless one side suffers total military defeat so that the victor can impose terms that prevent the adversary from reattacking in the future, there will be no guarantee of peace treaty compliance (Blainey 1988, 183). Thus, total victory against the government is undoubtedly the most desirable outcome for the rebels. However, in many cases, rebel groups have fewer advantages in terms of military strength and resources compared to the government side, and absolute rebel victories can be very difficult to realize. Besides a total win, there is another situation where rebel groups can possibly get certain desirable results – peace negotiations. Some of the demands from the rebel side may be met through peace agreements, which, to some extent, is a favorable outcome for rebel groups. This thesis aims to examine the

effects of more inclusive levels of service provision on the possibility of both rebel victory, and in general, more favorable outcomes for the rebels. This leads to the third set of hypotheses:

Hypothesis 3a: During conflicts, rebel groups who provide social services that are more inclusive to the general public are more likely to achieve victory than groups who provide social services that are less inclusive to the public or groups who provide no social services.

Hypothesis 3b: During conflicts, rebel groups who provide social services that are more inclusive to the general public are more likely to achieve favorable outcomes than groups who provide social services that are less inclusive to the public or groups who provide no social services.

Data and Methods

In order to reveal the relationships between rebel service provision and popular support, international recognition, as well as civil war outcomes, this thesis conducts quantitative tests using data from the Stewart data set (Stewart 2018), the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP) Conflict Termination data set (Kreutz 2010), and the Non-State Actor (NSA) data set (Cunningham, Gleditsch, and Salehyan 2013). These data sets provide comprehensive data on the characteristics of rebel groups as well as the outcomes of civil conflicts in the past decades. This thesis adopts the NSA data set's definition of insurgencies as "armed non-state participants in a conflict that causes at least 25-battle deaths per year from contestation over either central government control or territory" (Cunningham, Gleditsch, and Salehyan 2013, 6). Since the research interest is about civil conflicts, this thesis only focuses on the analysis of those conflicts

between the government of a state and one or more internal opposition group(s) as defined in the UCDP data set (Kreutz 2010).

The Stewart data set provides key information on the degree of inclusivity of services provided by 313 rebel groups from 1945-2003. The NSA data set includes other key variables of 327 insurgencies such as rebel strength, external support, and rebel group size. The UCDP data set contains information on conflict terminations for the time period 1946-2013, including outcomes of civil conflicts. With all the information obtained from the Stewart data sets that has corresponding information on the key variables in the UCDP data set and the NSA data set, this thesis generates a new data set that contains 253 civil conflicts from 1946 to 2003. This thesis analyzes data at a group-conflict level, which allows for one rebel group to have multiple entries with different conflicts.

Independent Variables

The main independent variable is the degree of inclusivity of rebel service provision. This thesis focuses on the provision of education and healthcare in particular. According to Stewart (2018), there are several reasons that education and healthcare provision is a good representation for rebel service provision. First, the two kinds of service provision are most common among various types of insurgencies, thus it is possible to compare these two kinds of services provided by different rebel groups in different times. Second, education and healthcare are generally desirable to all people and can be easily manipulated to be accessible to certain groups of people. Third, education and healthcare are codified as essential human rights in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and thus they are reasonably expected by all people (Stewart 2018). At the same time, this thesis examines healthcare and education provision since the data

on their levels of exclusivity is available in the Stewart data set, while the exclusivity of other

kinds of services such as policing is generally unknown in current data sets.

According to Stewart (2018), the exclusivity of the service provision is determined by

whether the group excluded certain classes of people from their services. In this way, the two

variables *education level* and *healthcare level* are coded into a scale of 0-5 based on the level of

provision, ranging from no provision to providing services that are open to everyone including

members of the incumbent government (as shown in Figure 1) (Stewart 2018). The categories

listed are cumulative, with no service provision as a "0," service provision to combatants only as

a "1," service provision to combatants and their family members and supports as a "2," and so on

till the most inclusive services coded as a "5" are accessible to everyone including the members

of the incumbent government.

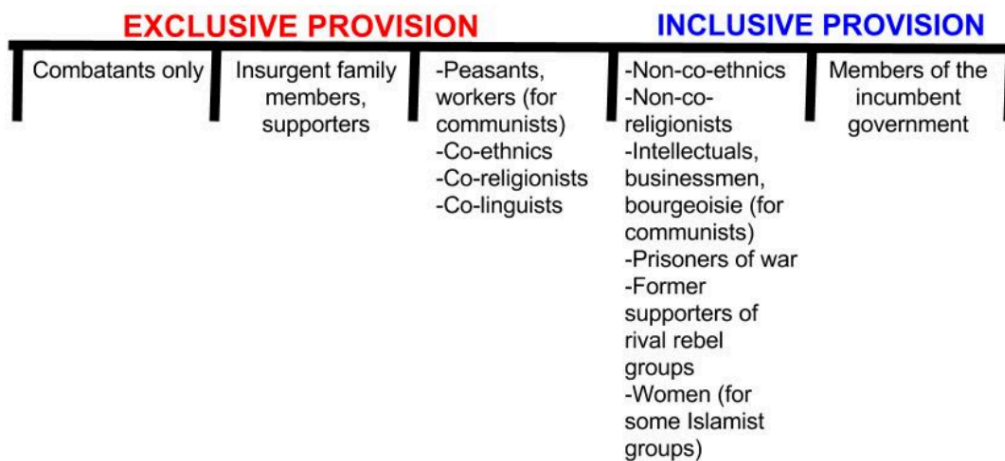| EXCLUSIVE PROVISION			INCLUSIVE PROVISION	
Combatants only	Insurgent family members, supporters	-Peasants, workers (for communists) -Co-ethnics -Co-religionists -Co-linguists	-Non-co-ethnics -Non-co-religionists -Intellectuals, businessmen, bourgeoisie (for communists) -Prisoners of war -Former supporters of rival rebel groups -Women (for some Islamist groups)	Members of the incumbent government

Figure 1. Levels of Exclusivity of Rebel Service Provision (Stewart 2018, 54)

In this coding method, Stewart (2018) coded inclusive and exclusive service provision as

not mutually exclusive. In some cases, rebel groups can provide certain groups with higher

quality of services while providing the general public with basic services. As Stewart mentions,

one example is the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde (PAIGC), which provides education as "literacy for all, quality education for some" (Dhada 1993, 97). Thus, this thesis measures the most inclusive level of such services a certain rebel group provides. For example, even though PAIGC provides both inclusive and exclusive education services, the highest level of exclusivity is its literacy education program to most of the general public, and thus the variable *education level* for PAIGC is coded as a "4."

Dependent Variable

The first major dependent variable is rebel groups' popular support, for which this thesis adopts the *rebel group size* as a proxy. Despite the fact that rebel groups may use coercion to recruit members and there is no available data on rebel memberships per capita, the size of the group can still show in a certain level of the popular support among constituents. For instance, during the Chinese Civil War, the Communist Party of China gathered massive base of support from the general population, and at the same time, its army (People's Liberation Army) enjoyed great increase in its membership (Party History Research Office of the CPC Central Committee, n.d.). With Mao's strategy of encircling cities from rural areas and gathering support from the bottom of the society, the membership for People's Liberation Army (PLA) increased from 1.27 million to 2.8 million from 1945 to 1948, 2.2 million of which were militias formed by the civil population (Party History Research Office of the CPC Central Committee, n.d.). PLA's membership was largely constituted of the grass roots, which indicates its soaring levels of popular support among civilians. When more civilians support rebel group, more of those people are likely to join the group voluntarily. Due to the lack of direct data on rebel groups' support level, this thesis uses rebel group size to estimate popular support. This thesis draws data of rebel

group size from the Stewart data set (Stewart 2018), which uses the data from the NSA data set (Cunningham, Gleditsch, and Salehyan 2013). *Rebel group size* is operationalized as the log of the best estimate of rebel size to reduce the influence of outliers in the data set.

The second dependent variable is international recognition. This thesis uses the amount of external support to estimate the level of international recognition. Since when the rebel group is more recognized by the international community, it is more likely to receive substantial support from a third party. At the same time, Coggins (2014) mentions that international recognition also depends largely on support from major powers. Thus, external support and international recognition are usually mutually influenced and determined. The variable *rebel support* measures whether the rebel group is supported by government of a foreign state (Cunningham, Gleditsch, and Salehyan 2013). The variable includes both military and non-military support from a foreign state, which is coded as a "0" if there is no outside support, and a "1" if there is support to the rebel group explicitly made by the government of a foreign state, or if the rebel group allege to have received external support.

The third major dependent variable in this thesis is civil war outcome. The conflict outcome variable in the UCDP data set is coded into six different potential outcomes based on the final year of conflict activity and first year of non-activity (Kreutz 2010). The possible outcomes are peace agreement, ceasefire, victory for the government side, victory for the rebel side, low activity, and actor ceases to exist (Kreutz 2010). As mentioned in the hypotheses section, rebel victory captures the most favorable outcome for the rebels, but achieving peace agreements can also be fairly favorable to the insurgencies. In order to test the effects of rebel service provision in a more comprehensive way, this thesis includes two variables *rebel victory* and *preferable outcome*. The variable *rebel victory* is coded into a "1" if the outcome is coded as

"victory for the rebel side" in the NSA data set, and the rest of the outcomes are coded into a "0."
The variable *preferable outcome* is coded into a "1" if the outcome is "victory for the rebel side"
or "peace agreement," and the other possible outcomes are coded into a "0."

Controls

Besides the key independent variables, this thesis includes controls that may confound
the relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variables. The control
variables are the variables that are suspected to influence the dependent variables. Due to limited
data and timeframe, as well as the difficulty in measuring public support and international
recognition for rebel groups, this thesis does not provide a perfectly rigorous causal inference
estimation strategy. However, this thesis takes the measures that contribute to the robustness of
the testing process and strives to add knowledge to the current research field. By including the
control variables, this thesis considers real-world interference and estimates the impact of the
levels of inclusivity of rebel service provision on the dependent variables more accurately.
Mindful of limited statistical power with the data set of 253 observations, this thesis contains
three control variables in total.

The first control variable is *rebel military strength*. Stronger rebel groups are likely to
generate more domestic support as well as international recognition since they are likely to have
good prospects on winning the conflicts. Stronger rebel groups tend to have more resources to
provide more extensive levels of services, and military strength directly affects the outcomes of
individual battles, and usually the winning side of the battle would be able to capture territories
and achieve the ultimate victory of a conflict (Smith 1998). This thesis evaluates the relative
military strength between the rebel group and the government instead of the absolute strength of

a belligerent. The relative strength of a rebel group in relation to its opponent is a more accurate representation of the military capacity when considering its influence on war outcomes. For example, the Taliban currently are militarily weaker than the US-backed Afghan state. However, when the coalition forces withdraw from Afghanistan, the Taliban, having remained constant absolute strength, will immediately face a more favorable military situation (Clayton 2013). This thesis relies on the NSA data set for relative rebel strength (Cunningham, Gleditsch, and Salehyan 2013). The data is coded into a 0-4 range of increasing relative strength, with 0 as much weaker and 4 as much stronger. Among the 313 observations in my data set, the lowest is 0 and the highest is 3.

In addition, in Daley's research (2018), another key factor that may predict the conflict outcome is whether the insurgency is able to securely capture territory. At the same time, Stewart (2018) notes that territorial control is nearly a pre-condition for large-scale inclusive service provision. Thus, this thesis includes a control variable of *territorial control* (Cunningham, Gleditsch, and Salehyan 2013), which is a dichotomous measure of whether the insurgency controls any territory at all. It is coded as "1" if the rebel group has actively controlled any territory during the conflict, and "0" if the insurgent does not have territory control.

Moreover, Mampilly (2011) shows that whether the rebel group is an ethnic group also influences its decision of service provision as well as the conflict dynamics. Gates (2002) proposes a model which demonstrates that ethnicity is one of the three factors that most crucially shapes recruitment and influences rebel groups' military successes. Ethnic wars are likely to be secessionist wars since ethnic rebel groups usually aim for establishing independent co-ethnic states. Stewart (2018) has shown that secessionist groups are more likely to provide inclusive services due to their long-term objectives of independence and the need for providing

governance. Thus, this thesis also includes the variable *ethnic* (Cunningham, Gleditsch, and Salehyan 2013) to take these considerations into control. The variable *ethnic* is coded as a "1" if the war is an ethnic war, and a "0" if otherwise.

In order to understand the relationships among all the variables, a correlation matrix (Table 1) is included. The correlations between control variables and the dependent variables also show support for including these control variables. The correlation matrix shows unconditional associations between variables, and despite some collinearity among the variables, regression tests are needed to show conditional and clearer causal relationships among the variables of research interest.

Table 1. Correlation Matrix for All the Variables

	education level	healthcare level	rebel group size	rebel support	rebel victory	preferable outcome	rebel military strength	territorial control	ethnic
education level	1	0.824	0.322	0.164	0.087	0.078	0.092	0.348	0.188
healthcare level	0.824	1	0.270	0.157	0.068	0.082	0.059	0.378	0.095
rebel group size	0.322	0.270	1	0.156	0.198	0.236	0.482	0.374	-0.028
rebel support	0.164	0.157	0.156	1	0.070	0.091	0.117	0.118	0.047
rebel victory	0.087	0.068	0.198	0.070	1	0.481	0.154	0.077	-0.036
preferable outcome	0.078	0.082	0.236	0.091	0.481	1	0.224	0.152	-0.109
rebel military strength	0.092	0.059	0.482	0.117	0.154	0.224	1	0.335	-0.219
territorial control	0.348	0.378	0.374	0.118	0.077	0.152	0.335	1	0.097
ethnic	0.188	0.095	-0.028	0.047	-0.036	-0.109	-0.219	0.097	1

With the dependent variables (*rebel group size*, *rebel support*, *rebel victory*, *preferable outcome*), independent variables (*education level* and *healthcare level*), and three control variables (*rebel strength*, *territorial control*, and *ethni*c), this thesis conducts linear regressions to test the relationships among these variables. This thesis adopts a Linear Probability Model (LPM).

Results

Table 2 presents the results of the regression analysis on the effect of the inclusivity of rebel service provision on its popular support. Model 1 and Model 2 are two bivariate models using the maximum level of rebel groups' education and healthcare provision respectively to predict the group sizes, and Model 3 includes both healthcare and education. Model 4 and Model 5 are two models that include education and healthcare separately with the control variables. Model 6 includes both education and healthcare as well as the controls.

Taken together, Models 1, 2, 4, 5, show that when taking education and healthcare separately into consideration, either education or healthcare has positive and statistically significant ($p < 0.01$ or $p < 0.05$) effects on rebel size. Providing more inclusive levels of either education or healthcare, but not both, are highly correlated with larger rebel size, which indicates broader popular support. When rebel groups choose to provide education or healthcare to more general public, they are more likely to enjoy more domestic support, which in turn brings them more recruits and greater membership. In Model 1 and 2, the coefficients are around 0.3, which means that with a one unit increase of the levels of inclusivity of service provision, there is a 0.3 unit increase in the log of rebel size. The log of rebel size in this data set ranges from 4.09 to

13.82. The effect of the levels of inclusivity of rebel service provision on the log of rebel size is substantial. For example, a 0.3 increase from 4.09 to 4.39 is about an increase of about 7 percentage points. After unpacking the effects on the real rebel group size, an increase from 4.09 to 4.39 on the log of rebel size means that the approximate rebel membership almost doubles from 12,303 to 24,547. It shows that the increase of the levels of inclusivity of service provision has a considerably large effect on the rebel group's membership size.

With control variables in Model 4 and 5, the coefficients of the effect drop to around 0.2 compared to Model 1 and 2 when the independent variables are tested alone, which shows that the effect of the independent variables are smaller when possible confounding variables that are controlled for are taken into account. Nonetheless, even taking the effect of rebel groups' military strength, ethnic wars, and territory control into consideration, more inclusive provision of education or healthcare is significantly more likely to contribute to greater rebel size. For example, a 0.2 increase from 4.09 to 4.29 on the log of rebel size means approximately an increment of the actual rebel membership from 12,303 to 19,498, which is an about 58% increase. The more inclusive healthcare or education rebel groups provide, the more likely the group will have a mass base of popular support.

However, when the two independent variables are put together in the model, only education level shows a statistically significant result ($p<0.05$) in Model 3. With the control variables together in Model 6, there is no statistically significant effect. This is a rather interesting result – the models indicate that when rebel groups provide both education and healthcare in more inclusive levels, the individual positive effect on popular support is washed away. Simultaneously providing extensive levels of healthcare and education provision does not contribute to greater domestic support for the rebel group. The reason why the significant test

results disappear when both *education level* and *healthcare level* are included in the model will

be examined in the discussion section.

Table 2. Inclusivity of Service Provision and Rebel Group Popular Support

			rebel group size			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
education level	0.319***		0.262**	0.221***		0.186
	(0.068)		(0.129)	(0.066)		(0.115)
healthcare level		0.310***	0.088		0.202***	0.053
		(0.071)	(0.130)		(0.067)	(0.115)
rebel military strength				0.962***	1.037***	1.028***
				(0.146)	(0.149)	(0.152)
ethnic				0.025	0.211	0.139
				(0.225)	(0.226)	(0.232)
territorial control				0.394*	0.422*	0.385
				(0.229)	(0.236)	(0.239)
Constant	8.075***	8.041***	8.009***	7.172***	7.055***	7.065***
	(0.150)	(0.161)	(0.163)	(0.190)	(0.198)	(0.200)
Observations	188	182	180	188	182	180
R^2	0.105	0.096	0.116	0.328	0.339	0.350
Adjusted R^2	0.100	0.091	0.106	0.313	0.324	0.331
Residual Std. Error	1.563 (df = 186)	1.591 (df = 180)	1.585 (df = 177)	1.365 (df = 183)	1.373 (df = 177)	1.371 (df = 174)
F Statistic	21.825*** (df = 1; 186)	19.184*** (df = 1; 180)	11.573*** (df = 2; 177)	22.347*** (df = 4; 183)	22.690*** (df = 4; 177)	18.733*** (df = 5; 174)

Note: Estimates are reported from a linear Probability Model. Standard errors in parenthesis.

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table 3 presents the results of the regression analysis on the effect of the inclusivity of rebel service provision on its level of international recognition. Similarly, the independent variables are tested separately and jointly, with and without the control variables in Models 1 to 6. Models 1, 2, 4, 5, show that more inclusive levels of education or healthcare provision separately have positive and statistically significant ($p < 0.01$ or $p < 0.1$) effects on the external support rebel groups get. With control variables in Models 4 and 5, the coefficient of the effect is smaller than that when the independent variables are tested alone in Models 1 and 2, but it still shows statistically significant positive results. The significance levels in Models 4 and 5 drop from both $p < 0.01$ to $p < 0.05$ and $p < 0.1$ respectively. However, the p-levels in Models 4 and 5 still meet the threshold for statistical significance, which means that the correlations are reliable and are not attributed to chance.

The results show that more inclusive provision of education or healthcare positively influence the external support rebel groups get. When rebel groups provide either more inclusive levels of education or healthcare, they are more likely to receive support from an external party. This correlation holds true even when the effects of the control variables are taken into consideration. The coefficients for the effects are around 0.05, which is a relatively small, but significant and substantively important change of about 5 percentage points in the binary variable "rebel support" that is coded into "0" or "1." The more inclusive healthcare or education rebel groups provide, the more likely the group will receive external support from other states, which indicates higher levels of international recognition. It is worth noting that despite the fact that the effects are statistically significant, the models have fairly small adjusted R square, which means that the inclusivity of service provision explains only a limited amount of the variance in the rebel groups' international recognition level. In Model 4 and 5, the adjusted R square suggest

that the levels of inclusivity of education and healthcare, with the control variables, can respectively account for about 5% and 6% of the variance of the likelihood of rebel groups getting extremal support. When the two independent variables are put together in the model in Model 3 and Model 6, the statistically significant effects disappear. More inclusive levels of both education and healthcare provision do not contribute to greater possibilities of getting external support for the rebel groups. The reason for this result will be analyzed in the discussion section.

Table 3. Inclusivity of Service Provision and International Recognition

			rebel support			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
education level	0.057***		0.010	0.039*		-0.005
	(0.021)		(0.038)	(0.023)		(0.038)
healthcare level		0.068***	0.059		0.056**	0.058
		(0.021)	(0.038)		(0.023)	(0.038)
rebel military strength				0.059	0.059	0.060
				(0.047)	(0.048)	(0.048)
ethnic				0.074	0.091	0.090
				(0.075)	(0.076)	(0.077)
territorial control				0.118	0.088	0.086
				(0.080)	(0.083)	(0.083)
Constant	0.500***	0.470***	0.473***	0.408***	0.379***	0.383***
	(0.043)	(0.044)	(0.045)	(0.058)	(0.061)	(0.061)
Observations	210	202	201	208	200	199
R^2	0.034	0.048	0.047	0.066	0.076	0.074
Adjusted R^2	0.029	0.044	0.038	0.048	0.057	0.050
Residual Std. Error	0.489 (df = 208)	0.487 (df = 200)	0.488 (df = 198)	0.484 (df = 203)	0.483 (df = 195)	0.485 (df = 193)
F Statistic	7.313*** (df = 1; 208)	10.186*** (df = 1; 200)	4.907*** (df = 2; 198)	3.603*** (df = 4; 203)	4.002*** (df = 4; 195)	3.082** (df = 5; 193)

Note: Estimates are reported from a linear Probability Model. Standard errors in parenthesis.

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table 4 presents the results of the regression analysis on the effect of the inclusivity of rebel service provision on civil war outcome. Models 1 to 6 tests the effects on *rebel victory*, and Models 7 to 12 tests the effects on *preferable outcome* for rebel groups (victory or peace agreement). Across all models, the results show that the levels of exclusivity of healthcare and education provision do not have statistically significant effects on civil war outcome directly. Providing more inclusive levels of education or healthcare does not directly lead to more likelihood of achieving victory or peace agreement for rebel groups. Any superficial correlation between inclusive service provision and preferable war outcome for rebel groups is likely purely due to chance and does not have generalizability.

Table 4. Inclusivity of Service Provision and Civil War Outcome

	rebel victory						*preferable outcome*					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)
education level	0.010		0.015	0.010		0.016	0.024		0.036	0.015		0.035
	(0.011)		(0.020)	(0.011)		(0.020)	(0.018)		(0.033)	(0.019)		(0.032)
healthcare level		0.008	-0.005		0.006	-0.006		0.023	-0.008		0.010	-0.019
		(0.011)	(0.020)		(0.011)	(0.020)		(0.018)	(0.032)		(0.019)	(0.032)
Rebel military strength				0.055^{**}	0.060^{**}	0.059^{**}				0.095^{**}	0.102^{***}	0.097^{**}
				(0.023)	(0.024)	(0.024)				(0.038)	(0.039)	(0.039)
ethnic				-0.034	-0.030	-0.036				-0.079	-0.061	-0.077
				(0.038)	(0.038)	(0.039)				(0.062)	(0.062)	(0.063)
territorial control				0.012	0.017	0.017				0.097	0.104	0.106
				(0.040)	(0.041)	(0.042)				(0.066)	(0.067)	(0.068)
Constant	0.068^{***}	0.072^{***}	0.071^{***}	0.025	0.025	0.027	0.242^{***}	0.242^{***}	0.242^{***}	0.162^{***}	0.155^{***}	0.163^{***}
	(0.022)	(0.023)	(0.023)	(0.029)	(0.030)	(0.031)	(0.035)	(0.037)	(0.037)	(0.048)	(0.049)	(0.050)
Observations	250	243	240	248	241	238	250	243	240	248	241	238
R^2	0.004	0.002	0.004	0.039	0.042	0.045	0.008	0.007	0.011	0.066	0.069	0.073
Adjusted R^2	-0.0005	-0.002	-0.004	0.023	0.026	0.024	0.004	0.003	0.003	0.050	0.054	0.053
Residual Std. Error	0.272 (df = 248)	0.276 (df = 241)	0.278 (df = 237)	0.263 (df = 243)	0.266 (df = 236)	0.268 (df = 232)	0.445 (df = 248)	0.445 (df = 241)	0.447 (df = 237)	0.434 (df = 243)	0.433 (df = 236)	0.434 (df = 232)
F Statistic	0.877 (df = 1; 248)	0.552 (df = 1; 241)	0.506 (df = 2; 237)	2.478^{**} (df = 4; 243)	2.618^{**} (df = 4; 236)	2.162^{*} (df = 5; 232)	1.894 (df = 1; 248)	1.724 (df = 1; 241)	1.344 (df = 2; 237)	4.274^{***} (df = 4; 243)	4.397^{***} (df = 4; 236)	3.660^{***} (df = 5; 232)

Note: Estimates are reported from a linear Probability Model. Standard errors in parenthesis.

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Robustness Check: Pre-Conflict Provision

In the Stewart data set, the variable pre-conflict provision captures whether the rebel group provided any education or healthcare before the civil conflict started (Stewart 2018, 10). In order to check the robustness of the current analysis, this thesis excludes all the cases with any pre-conflict service provision. Focusing only on the rebel groups that started healthcare or education service provision from scratch, this thesis re-runs the statistical tests with 187 observations in the refined data set. The robustness of the statistical tests is checked by slightly modifying the previous regressions and examining the new regression coefficients. Results are shown in Tables 4, 5, and 6.

The robustness check results confirmed the previous test results with stronger statistical significance levels and more salient effect sizes. In the first test on service provision levels and rebel group popular support (Table 5), the results validate the previous results and shows that more inclusive levels of either education or healthcare, but not both, predict larger rebel size, which indicates broader popular support ($p<0.01$). Each of the coefficients increases compared to the previous test, which means that the impact of more inclusive levels of service provision on the log of rebel size are stronger among the groups that started service provision with no pre-conflict foundations. All the four models with only *education level* or *healthcare level* have p-levels under 0.01, which means that the correlation is almost certainly not due to a false positive. Models 3 and 6 with both education and healthcare levels as the independent variables still show no statistical significant results.

Table 5. Robustness Check: Rebel Group Popular Support

| | rebel group size | | | | | |
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
education level	0.377***		0.173	0.271***		0.158
	(0.086)		(0.176)	(0.082)		(0.161)
healthcare level		0.406***	0.255		0.276***	0.142
		(0.086)	(0.176)		(0.083)	(0.163)
rebel military strength				0.833***	0.870***	0.877***
				(0.174)	(0.175)	(0.179)
ethnic				0.005	0.175	0.132
				(0.270)	(0.268)	(0.278)
territorial control				0.414	0.404	0.380
				(0.267)	(0.272)	(0.279)
Constant	8.089***	7.999***	7.992***	7.246***	7.138***	7.141***
	(0.162)	(0.167)	(0.171)	(0.229)	(0.230)	(0.235)
Observations	133	130	128	133	130	128
R^2	0.129	0.147	0.152	0.322	0.335	0.341
Adjusted R^2	0.122	0.141	0.139	0.301	0.314	0.315
Residual Std. Error	1.526 (df = 131)	1.521 (df = 128)	1.531 (df = 125)	1.362 (df = 128)	1.359 (df = 125)	1.366 (df = 122)
F Statistic	19.317*** (df = 1; 131)	22.139*** (df = 1; 128)	11.244*** (df = 2; 125)	15.180*** (df = 4; 128)	15.752*** (df = 4; 125)	12.653*** (df = 5; 122)

Note: Estimates are reported from a linear Probability Model. Standard errors in parenthesis.

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

The second test on international recognition also confirms the robustness of the previous test (Table 6). The results are in the same direction as the previous test results with higher statistical significance levels. Providing more inclusive levels of education or healthcare services is associated with more likelihood of getting external support in statistical significant manners ($p<0.01$), which indicates higher levels of international recognition. Compared to the previous test with all rebel groups, the coefficients in Model 1, 2, 4, and 5 increase from around 0.05 to around 0.09, which is an 80% increase. Within rebel groups that started service provision from scratch, one unit increase in the level of inclusivity of service provision can bring on average an increase of about 10 percentage points of the likelihood of getting external support.

Table 6. Robustness Check: International Recognition

			rebel support			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
education level	0.102***		0.056	0.090***		0.043
	(0.027)		(0.052)	(0.028)		(0.053)
healthcare level		0.099***	0.050		0.092***	0.055
		(0.027)	(0.051)		(0.028)	(0.052)
Rebel military strength				0.044	0.055	0.052
				(0.052)	(0.053)	(0.053)
ethnic				0.048	0.085	0.068
				(0.086)	(0.087)	(0.089)
territorial control				0.044	0.019	0.013
				(0.092)	(0.094)	(0.095)
Constant	0.481***	0.462***	0.464***	0.425***	0.395***	0.405***
	(0.045)	(0.047)	(0.047)	(0.066)	(0.068)	(0.068)
Observations	156	152	151	155	151	150
R^2	0.086	0.083	0.089	0.094	0.095	0.097
Adjusted R^2	0.080	0.077	0.077	0.070	0.070	0.066
Residual Std. Error	0.476 (df = 154)	0.478 (df = 150)	0.478 (df = 148)	0.478 (df = 150)	0.480 (df = 146)	0.481 (df = 144)
F Statistic	14.432*** (df = 1; 154)	13.657*** (df = 1; 150)	7.216*** (df = 2; 148)	3.902*** (df = 4; 150)	3.844*** (df = 4; 146)	3.101** (df = 5; 144)

Note: Estimates are reported from a linear Probability Model. Standard errors in parenthesis.
*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

The final test on civil war outcomes also conforms with the previous test results and verifies the robustness of the research design (Table 7). While most models do not show statistical significant results, the new tests show some statistical significant impact of the more inclusive service provision on *preferable outcome* for rebel groups ($p<0.05$ and $p<0.1$). Models 7, 8, 10 and 11 in the previous test done with all rebel groups in the data set, with either education or healthcare level as the independent variable, show slight positive correlations between the independent variables and the dependent variable, *preferable outcome*, but the models do not yield statistical significance. In the new test focusing only on groups started service provision from scratch, the coefficients are all in the same directions compared to the previous test results. At the same time, the positive coefficients increase slightly, and show statistical significance ($p<0.05$ and $p<0.1$), which means that among this subset of rebel groups, more inclusive levels of either education or healthcare provision is indeed correlated with more likelihood for rebel groups getting victories or peace agreements.

The three new tests prove the robustness of the statistical tests this thesis use. The results confirm that the relationships between the independent variables and the dependent variables can be validly concluded from the previous test results.

Table 7. Robustness Check: Civil War Outcome

	rebel victory						preferable outcome					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)
education level	0.007		0.018	0.007		0.018	0.053**		0.085*	0.045*		0.096**
	(0.014)		(0.027)	(0.014)		(0.026)	(0.023)		(0.045)	(0.024)		(0.044)
healthcare level		0.004	-0.011		0.003	-0.012		0.042*	-0.030		0.029	-0.051
		(0.014)	(0.026)		(0.014)	(0.025)		(0.023)	(0.044)		(0.024)	(0.043)
rebel military strength				0.073***	0.078***	0.076***				0.068	0.078*	0.066
				(0.025)	(0.026)	(0.026)				(0.044)	(0.045)	(0.045)
ethnic				-0.031	-0.029	-0.035				-0.139*	-0.117	-0.154**
				(0.042)	(0.042)	(0.043)				(0.073)	(0.073)	(0.074)
territorial control				-0.018	-0.011	-0.012				0.102	0.111	0.119
				(0.044)	(0.045)	(0.046)				(0.077)	(0.079)	(0.079)
Constant	0.069***	0.073***	0.074***	0.018	0.018	0.021	0.246***	0.253***	0.252***	0.198***	0.195***	0.213***
	(0.023)	(0.024)	(0.024)	(0.032)	(0.033)	(0.033)	(0.039)	(0.040)	(0.040)	(0.055)	(0.057)	(0.057)
Observations	185	181	179	184	180	178	185	181	179	184	180	178
R^2	0.002	0.001	0.003	0.059	0.064	0.066	0.027	0.018	0.037	0.089	0.081	0.106
Adjusted R^2	-0.004	-0.005	-0.008	0.038	0.042	0.039	0.022	0.013	0.026	0.069	0.060	0.080
Residual Std. Error	0.266 (df = 183)	0.269 (df = 179)	0.270 (df = 176)	0.252 (df = 179)	0.254 (df = 175)	0.256 (df = 172)	0.451 (df = 183)	0.453 (df = 179)	0.452 (df = 176)	0.438 (df = 179)	0.441 (df = 175)	0.437 (df = 172)
F Statistic	0.295 (df = 1; 183)	0.094 (df = 1; 179)	0.260 (df = 2; 176)	2.823** (df = 4; 179)	2.982** (df = 4; 175)	2.446** (df = 5; 172)	5.171** (df = 1; 183)	3.352* (df = 1; 179)	3.360** (df = 1; 179)	4.396*** (df = 2; 176)	3.870*** (df = 4; 175)	4.072*** (df = 5; 172)

Note: Estimates are reported from a linear Probability Model. Standard errors in parenthesis.

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Discussion

The regression results have shown that there are reliable correlations between more inclusive levels of healthcare or education provision and both higher levels of popular support and international recognition. The results indicate that rebel groups are more likely to have more popular support and international legitimacy if they provide more inclusive healthcare or education. However, providing the two kinds of services simultaneously does not necessarily have a positive effect. Among the 253 rebel groups considered in this thesis, 38 out of 40 groups that provide either education or healthcare inclusively (coded as "4" or "5") provide both of the two services inclusively at the same time. In some rare cases, rebel groups might want to focus only on education or healthcare. For example, ideology-driven groups such as communist groups may specifically expand their education provision, which can be used as a tool to spread their ideological beliefs. However, in most cases, when the rebel groups have the resources to provide social services inclusively, they are likely to apply the same standard across all kinds of their services. Thus, the results show no significant correlations when both education and healthcare are simultaneously tested as independent variables may be because the levels of inclusivity of education and healthcare provision influence each other. When the two independent variables co-vary with each other, the test results may be confounded. In order to test this possible explanation, this thesis conducts a regression test with the two independent variables. As shown below in Table 8, the two variables have statistically significantly ($p<0.01$) high correlations with each other. The two coefficients are larger than 0.8, which means the levels of inclusivity of education and healthcare provision are highly likely to co-vary with each other to a great extent.

Table 8. Inclusivity of Education and Healthcare Provision

	education level	*healthcare level*
	(1)	(2)
healthcare level	0.827***	
	(0.035)	
education level		0.844***
		(0.036)
Constant	0.131*	0.285***
	(0.073)	(0.072)
Observations	240	240
R^2	0.698	0.698
Adjusted R^2	0.697	0.697
Residual Std. Error (df = 238)	0.884	0.893
F Statistic (df = 1; 238)	550.659***	550.659***

Note: Estimates are reported from a linear Probability Model. Standard errors in parenthesis
*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

In addition to the statistical reason why there is no statistically significant effects when both education and healthcare are taken into consideration, there may be other explanations for the results. Inclusive services on both education and healthcare may occupy large amounts of public resources, which could trigger rebel groups to use targeted exploitation or violence towards civilians in order to get the resources. The means through which rebel groups gain the resources to sustain extensive service provision could have negative impact on rebel groups' support level. At the same time, providing both education and healthcare extensively may lead to

the decrease of the service quality due to resource constraints. Low quality of services can also negatively impact the effectiveness of gaining civilian support since people may be unsatisfied and suspect the governing abilities of the rebel group which provides the bad services. Thus, it is possible that inclusive education or healthcare alone would have a greater impact on rebel groups' domestic and international support.

Nonetheless, the results show that there are reliable relationships with more inclusive levels of social service provision and higher popular support as well as international recognition. Increasing the level of inclusivity in service provision for either healthcare or education is likely to bring rebel groups more massive support among civilians and external support from a third party. The daily lives for civilians are usually disrupted during wartime, and sending children to school as well as getting healthcare support can be two major concerns for the local population. These two basic needs from the civilians give rebel groups the opportunities to build connections with the general public. When rebel groups successfully provide the services to a more general population and meet people's needs, this "hearts and minds" tactic can effectively help them gather support from the mass public. No matter how disruptive wars can be, people's lives continue. The benefits civilians get from the services are real, and whichever side providing the welfare surely has an advantage in leaving positive impressions to the people.

At the same time, building the image as responsible governors is a reliable tactic for rebel groups to gain global recognition and support. As the international community places increasing more emphasis on human rights, the ability to safeguard social welfare for civilians is needed for a group or government to be recognized as a responsible political actor. Demonstrating its commitment to welfare through providing more inclusive levels of social services can be an efficacious method for rebel groups to build international recognition.

Though the effect of more inclusive levels of social service provision on domestic and international support is statistically significant, the impact is not major and may take time to be salient. With a one unit increase in the inclusivity of service provision, there is about a 7 percentage points increase in the log of rebel size and about a 5 percentage points increase in the likelihood of getting external support. Since there could be other elements that are more influential in determining whether the group can get support or assistance, the inclusivity of service provision is not a determinant but significant and non-negligible factor that contributes to rebel groups' domestic support and global recognition.

There is no reliable correlation between the inclusivity of social service provision and rebel victory or preferable outcomes in general. The test result does not attain statistical significance, which means that the correlation suggested in this test is likely due to chance. These results suggest that it is possible that extensive social service provision rebel groups offer to the population does not influence the chance of winning the wars for the rebels. This is a rather puzzling phenomenon since previous studies in general have suggested that public goods provision has a positive influence on winning civilian support, which is crucial for winning any conflicts (Mampilly 2015).

One possible explanation is that providing large amounts of social services may divert rebel groups' resources for fighting battles. While insurgencies could care for the social welfare of the civilians, it is the military that fights the war and it is the battlefield performance that mostly determines conflict outcomes. Devoting too much time and resources on providing extensive levels of social services could possibly make the rebel groups weak in battlefields. Another probable explanation is that there are too many possible factors that contribute to a victory of a war, which makes the impact of the service provision level negligible. While

increasing the level of inclusivity in service provision could have some impact on rebel groups

gathering support, building domestic and international support does not cover the full picture in

winning a civil conflict. The outcome also depends on numerous other factors such as military

strength, alliances, leaderships and so on. Thus, a larger sample size is needed to see more

reliable effects of service provision levels on war outcomes directly.

One potential critique for the current research design is that the independent variables, the

levels of education and healthcare provided by rebel groups, are measured on a single scale,

which assumes that each unit increase has a similar impact as every other unit increase. The

major effect of the independent variables may in fact caused by the change from no services to

any service provision, instead of the inclusivity or exclusivity of services. In order to account for

this possibility, this thesis includes an additional simple linear regression in which the main

independent variable is truncated to dichotomous, no service provision versus any service

provision in education or healthcare. The results are shown below in Table 9. Consistent with the

previous test results, the new test indicates that rebel service provision, compared to no services

at all, does not have a statistically significant impact on war outcomes. The change from no

service provision to providing social services is significantly correlated with greater rebel size

and external support. However, it can only account for 8% of the variations in rebel size and 2%

of the variations in the likelihood of rebel groups getting external support, as shown by the

adjusted R square. This amount of impact does not differ significantly from the previous tests

with the level of service inclusivity being the independent variables, which means that the effect

of the change from no services to providing services does not account for more variations in the

dependent variables than the change from any other less inclusive level of to a more inclusive

level service provision. While this dichotomous change not being the main research interest, this

thesis reveals the overall effect of increasing the levels of inclusivity of service provision by the

rebel groups, including the effect of starting social service provision from no previous

foundations.

Table 9. The Effect of Rebel Service Provision Compared to No Service Provision

	rebel victory		preferable outcome		rebel size		rebel support	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
service provision	-0.012	-0.017	0.077	0.050	0.969***	0.671***	0.161**	0.122*
	(0.034)	(0.035)	(0.056)	(0.058)	(0.232)	(0.215)	(0.068)	(0.070)
rebel military strength		0.054**		0.096**		0.989***		0.062
		(0.023)		(0.038)		(0.147)		(0.047)
ethnic		-0.029		-0.072		0.134		0.092
		(0.037)		(0.061)		(0.222)		(0.075)
territorial control		0.030		0.097		0.416*		0.124
		(0.040)		(0.066)		(0.230)		(0.079)
Constant	0.086***	0.039	0.234***	0.153***	7.992***	7.045***	0.490***	0.384***
	(0.024)	(0.031)	(0.039)	(0.052)	(0.173)	(0.205)	(0.048)	(0.064)
Observations	250	248	250	248	188	188	210	208
R^2	0.001	0.037	0.008	0.066	0.086	0.323	0.026	0.067
Adjusted R^2	-0.004	0.021	0.003	0.051	0.081	0.308	0.022	0.048
Residual Std. Error	0.272 (df = 248)	0.264 (df = 243)	0.445 (df = 248)	0.434 (df = 243)	1.579 (df = 186)	1.370 (df = 183)	0.491 (df = 208)	0.484 (df = 203)
F Statistic	0.125 (df = 1; 248)	2.340* (df = 4; 243)	1.874 (df = 1; 248)	4.300*** (df = 4; 243)	17.445*** (df = 1; 186)	21.814*** (df = 4; 183)	5.621** (df = 1; 208)	3.632*** (df = 4; 203)

Note: Estimates are reported from a linear Probability Model. Standard errors in parenthesis.

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Limitations

It is important to notice that there is a possibility of reverse causality by using the size of a rebel group as a proxy for the level of its popular support and external support as a proxy for international recognition. As Stewart (2018) mentions, a larger rebel group may be more likely to provide services inclusively because the rebel group has enough people to fill both combat and non-combat positions. Thus, there is a possibility that whether the rebel group provides inclusive services is influenced by the group size. Similarly, since there is no time indicated in the data set when the rebel groups received the external support, there is the possibility that getting external support enables the rebel groups to provide more inclusive levels of services with the solicited resources.

To examine the possible reverse causality, one solution is to incorporate some case studies with specific dates that indicate the chronology of service provision and the change of its membership or amount of external support. Ideally, a close examination of a rebel group that has changed its service provision strategy can show the effects of different levels of service provision on its support level. If it is the inclusive service provision that influences the popular support or international recognition level, the change of service provision strategies should happen before a drastic change of its group size or external support situation. Moreover, conducting survey experiments in regions where insurgencies have control is a more direct to test the impact of different levels of service provision on local public opinion.

Another limitation is that there is no random assignments of experimental groups and control groups. It is not practical or ethical to manipulate the rebel groups' levels of service provision, nor is it possible to keep other variables constant among samples. As a result, there are no experimental comparisons, and the research can only be post-hoc analyses about past events.

Without experimental control, this thesis can only get some general trends of correlation, but cannot draw any rigorous causal conclusion. The test results observed might be largely caused by other elements instead of the independent variables. With this research design, it is not possible to know which factor is the central cause for the final outcomes. In order to have a more reliable conclusion, more within-case variations need to be examined to show the impact of the levels of service provision on the dependent variables more accurately. At the same time, ideally a larger data set is needed to increase the reliability of the general trend concluded from the regression analyses. Nonetheless, with the ethical and logistical constraints, the current thesis provides some preliminary understanding of the effects of rebel groups providing more inclusive levels of social services on civil war dynamics and outcomes.

Conclusion

This thesis proposes that more inclusive levels of social service provision by rebel groups help them win hearts and minds of the people and ultimately the civil conflicts. This thesis conducts simple linear regressions to examine the effects of different levels of healthcare and education provision on rebel groups' domestic support, international recognition, and civil war outcomes. The results offer substantial support for the first two hypotheses, while there is no statistically significant evidence for the third set of hypotheses. The thesis thereby concludes that the more inclusive levels of healthcare or education that rebel groups provide, the more likely that they will generate substantial popular support and international recognition. However, the effects of the levels of service provision are not statistically significant in terms of assisting rebel groups achieving victories or peace agreements.

Both insurgencies and counter-insurgency groups can potentially draw inferences from this research. In general, providing education or healthcare services that are accessible to the general population can be an effective tool to solicit civilian support and global recognition. To prevent the other side from gathering massive local support, both insurgencies and counter-insurgency groups should try to take the opportunity to provide social services to a more general population and build connections with the civilians. This strategy helps the group win the "hearts and minds" of the local people, which can be crucial for recruiting dedicated members and getting valuable information. At the same time, rebel groups' or counter-insurgencies' wartime performances are observed by the international community, and both side should try to maximize the provision of social welfare since it would help them solicit external support and gain higher levels of global recognition. Building lasting and friendly relationships with other members of the international community is not only important for the rebel group or counter-insurgency group to win the civil conflict, but also pivotal for their survival and prosperity in the future.

However, when fighting wars with limited resources, insurgencies and counterinsurgency groups may put more weight on improving other factors that can contribute to victories such as military strength. While civilians get real benefits from the social services provided during wartimes and the reasons for providing such services should be purely in consideration of people's welfare, the sadly realistic fact is that providing such services does not contribute to conflict victories significantly and there simply are not enough resources to sustain both large-scale social welfare programs and the prolonged fighting. Since increasing the inclusivity of social service provision does not have a significant impact on conflict outcomes directly, when the immediate and only objective for the group is to win the war and there is no extra resource, the group should focus more on other strategies that directly affect conflict dynamics. For

example, upgrading military equipment is likely to directly affect battlefield circumstances and outcomes, and thus may have a more direct impact on conflict outcomes than improving social service provision. In other words, improving social welfare is an important strategy for both rebel groups and counter-insurgencies to utilize in order to build support; however, it should not be the main focus nor should it take too much resources and time from the insurgencies or counter-insurgency groups.

For future studies, in depth case studies and a larger data set would be helpful in generating more reliable results and implications. Due to practical and ethical restrictions, it is difficult to conduct field experiments, which would allow random assignments of experimental conditions among sample groups. However, with a large sample size, researchers will be able to get more variations in the observations and better manipulate control variables to see more reliable relationships between the dependent variable and the major predictors. Moreover, case studies with more within-case variations can differentiate the effects of each independent variable more clearly. With more ideal research designs, future studies will be able to further contribute to people's understanding of rebel behaviors and the effects of wartime social service provision.

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