Accountability and Responsiveness in Rebel Regimes

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January 5, 2015

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Introduction

As early as 2002, the U.S. national security strategy under former President George W. Bush stated that “America is now threatened less by conquering states than by failed ones.” Even a casual glance at some of the dominant foreign policy issues of the Obama administration reveals a shift in emphasis towards addressing the crises in weak or failed states: consider U.S. involvement in Iraq, Syria, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Mali, Somalia, and Ukraine. As threats to national and international security have increasingly originated from armed non-state actors occupying territory in the periphery outside state control, political scientists and economists have devoted greater attention to explaining the politics of weak states.

A primary threat to international, as well as U.S. national, security is the potential for violent non-state organizations to use the protection of remote, difficult to conquer, regions of weak states to train fighters and launch attacks. Recent events in peripheral regions of fragile states have made us painfully aware of the potential mortal consequences for civilians when insurgent organizations control territory: look no further than the brutal reign of the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria and Ansar Dine in Mali. However, it is also clear that insurgents can and do establish order in conflict zones. The EPLF in pre-independence Eritrea provided security and public goods and services to civilians in occupied territory. The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), infamous
for their brutality, also set up schools, health clinics, and justice systems in the areas of Sri Lanka under their control. These examples debunk the myth that territory outside state control is necessarily “ungoverned space.” In fact, non-state actors competing with the state often establish functioning governance structures in the territory under their control during conflict. Even the unlikeliest governors may step in to install institutions and perform administrative functions. For example ISIS has set up a sophisticated government structure in the territory it occupies in Andar Province in western Iraq.

It is precisely the establishment of order in rebel-controlled areas, or rebel governance, that escalates the threat to a state’s sovereignty within its borders and poses the greatest challenge to counterinsurgency, peacebuilding, and post-conflict development efforts. What determines an armed non-state actor’s motivation and capability to establish control in a particular territorial space as opposed to others? What motivates rebels to take costly actions to protect civilians in conflict areas and provide public goods and services? What instruments do civilians have at their disposal to shape rebel incentives and what factors contribute to their success or failure to encourage rebels to advance civilian interests?

Despite the welcomed increase in attention to rebel governance, there is a lack of theory and empirical work investigating the role civilians play as active participants in shaping conflict processes. The dissertation addresses this lacuna by placing civilian collective action at the center of a model of rebel behavior during intrastate conflict. Adopting the framework of accountability and responsiveness, the theory explains rebel governance at the local level. I conceptualize the relationship between civilians and rebels as a principal-agent relationship. Civilians (principals) seek to influence the rebels’ (agents) governance behavior. I argue that the civilian community’s coordination capacity, their ability to cooperate on collective action despite competing interests, is a crucial determinant of rebel governance.
1.1 The Puzzle

The Bicol region of the Philippines has been a center of the communist insurgency for decades. The New People’s Army (NPA) has maintained its foothold by establishing ties with the population through parallel governance functions, filling the gap left by an absent state. In many Bicol areas, “the military cannot provide the services that the NPA grants to the villagers, such as land to till or lower land rent, the elimination of cattle rustlers, protection of peasants’ rights, literacy lessons, health services...” (Small Arms Survey, 2010). Civilians turn to the nascent NPA parallel government for these basic services whereas the military has a history of violently clearing villages of insurgents but failing to establish the necessary civil government and development initiatives. In other Bicol areas, such as Masbate Province, the NPA retains control through extortion and mass killings against uncooperative communities.

Whether rebels invest in good governance can have drastic consequences for how civilians experience civil war. Where rebels respond to civilian needs and interests, communities may enjoy some moderate growth and security, even if the conflict might preclude full achievement of economic potential. Where rebels ignore civilian interests, communities may suffer mass killing and displacement, property damage, institutional breakdown, and cycles of communal violence that decimate populations and economies. As the NPA example illustrates, rebel organizations may vary their political interaction with civilians drastically even within a relatively small island region. Similar political, economic, and infrastructural conditions can nonetheless lead to significant differences in rebel behavior.

Policymakers and academics alike often assume civilians are essentially powerless compared to violent non-state actors and state-organized military forces. The extent to which civilians shape conflict processes is constrained by whether the rebels are motivated by political goals that coincide with civilian interests. Civilians attempting to protest armed group activities represent rare deviations from the norm of civilian pas-
sivity and such episodes are met with harsh punishment whether individually or through collective punishment.

Oliver Kaplan (2013) provides an in-depth account of the Peasant Worker’s Association (ATTC) in the conflict-affected region of Carare, Colombia. Following years of civilian victimization committed by rebel and counterinsurgent forces competing over territory, community leaders organized politically under the ATTC and “sought armed actors out... to declare they would neither leave nor take any part in the conflict. Surprisingly, after several rounds of discussions the various armed groups acceded to the civilians’ policies” (Kaplan 2013). The ATTC set up internal policing institutions to (credibly) ensure community members were not participating in the conflict, so rebels felt secure dialing back their repressive regime. Meanwhile, nearby communities continued to suffer from repressive violence as the belligerents in Colombia’s civil war continue to prey on communities in order to extract resources and security.

The ATTC example demonstrates that civilian political action may indeed have unexpected effects on changing rebel behavior. When should we expect civilians to mobilize and make demands on armed belligerents despite the risks? Under what conditions will they be successful? And how does civilian political action shape rebel incentives to provide protection and essential services to civilians during civil war?

Insurgent organizations need at least some minimal level of support from the civilian population in order to survive. This claim, often attributed to Mao Zedong, is so widely accepted that it approximates a law of insurgency and guerrilla warfare. That this claim is so widespread an assumption for scholars and military leadership alike is at odds with the dearth of attention in theory explaining rebel behavior. If civilians are so critical to insurgent survival and their ability to achieve political and military goals, then ignoring their role in the organization’s decision-making seems a significant gap. To the extent rebels depend on civilian support, civilians enjoy power to shape rebel decision making in line with their interests. The goal of this dissertation is to understand the process by
which civilians influence rebel behavior.

1.2 Rebel Governance: a new perspective

Existing explanations for variation in rebel governance and treatment of civilians within conflict zones have privileged organizational and structural characteristics: most notably the organization’s control over territory (Kalyvas 2006), the structure of the local economy (Esteban, et. al. 2014, Weinstein 2006), history of state penetration (Mampilly 2011), and the level of organizational discipline (Weinstein 2006). Kalyvas (2003, 2006) argues that civil war belligerents use selective or indiscriminate violence against civilians based on their level of control in an area. Where they have greater control, there is no need to use indiscriminate violence because they are able to gather the necessary information to punish only those citizens that collaborate with the government. Where they have very little control they have no incentive to use indiscriminate violence because it only strengthens the population’s support for the enemy. In the intermediate range, where control is weak or contested, belligerents use indiscriminate violence because it can help them take and hold territory from the adversary. Belligerent decisions over the use of violence are shaped by information and capabilities constraints.

Weinstein (2006) emphasizes the role of insurgent organizations’ initial resource endowments, through the impact on organizational discipline, on governance and use of violence. Insurgent organizations that rely on economic endowments have an incentive to recruit soldiers using selective incentives, which attracts a pool of opportunistic pillagers rather than activists committed to the organization’s goals. Rebel governance is weak and predation is high where rebels enjoy lootable resources or external support to fund their campaigns. Here the decision to use violence is not a strategic one made by central leadership, but rather the local insurgent cadres pillaging for themselves.

Existing research leaves unexplained the role civilians play in conflict processes. Kalyvas and Arjona (2009) deflate the importance of civilian political action: they argue
that civilian support and participation in civil war is endogenous to the belligerent actors’ control over territory. In this model of the micro-dynamics of civil war, civilians are relatively passive; they respond to the threats and incentives of the most powerful organized armed actor in their community. In their empirical analysis of ex-combatants from Colombia’s civil war, civilians join and/or support the insurgent or paramilitary forces based on which has the greatest military and political authority in their community.

This “endogenous conflict” argument has two limitations. First, the hypothesis advanced begs the question: what explains belligerent control? Conflict actors are strategic, selecting communities and areas in which to operate based on their relative strengths, constraints, and the relationship with civilians. The factors that shape these choices may also drive civilian politics and the belligerents’ decisions regarding how to administer territory.

Second, recruitment into insurgent or counterinsurgent militias is particularly constrained by belligerent control in an area, in ways that other forms of collaboration are not. Individuals that would prefer to join the opposing side cannot do so because the militia in control would punish them. But, enlistment into an armed militia is not the only, and perhaps not even the most influential, way in which civilians participate in conflict. Civilians provide food, supplies, shelter, intelligence and political support to the political and insurgent movements with which they sympathize. These forms of support can be invaluable to budding insurgent movements and are driven by factors other than the division of military control in the conflict zone. I argue that an emphasis on the political and economic factors within civilian communities is essential to our understanding of these conflict processes.

Only recently have scholars begun to advance more tailored treatment of civilian politics during intrastate conflict. Mampilly (2011) argues that rebels provide resources in areas in which there is a pre-conflict history of state penetration. In these areas, civil-
ians are accustomed to public goods provision and have experience politically engaging politicians to retrieve state resources. State penetration serves as a proxy for civilian political preferences, and evidence suggests that where preferences for service delivery are high, rebels are more likely to provide governance.

This argument provides a crucial first step in bringing the literature towards an understanding of civilian politics during intrastate conflict. But, it is important to separate out the effects of civilian preferences from the effectiveness of civilian collective action. A history of state penetration may reflect both preferences and the population’s ability to mobilize to demand governance. Building from its foundation, it is crucial to investigate the internal politics of civilian communities’ demand for governance, the mechanisms by which they shape rebel incentives, and the conditions under which they are successful.

Arjona (2010, 2014) argues that the quality, measured by their legitimacy and efficacy, of local institutions and the type of rebel-imposed social order determines whether and to what extent civilians resist rebel rule. The expectation over the likelihood and strength of civilian resistance can shape rebel incentives to establish direct or indirect rule. Kaplan (2010, 2013) emphasizes the organizational capacity in civilian communities. Where civilians enjoy strong organizational and institutional structures they are able to reduce uncertainty about rebel actions and bargain effectively with rebel leaders over the administration in their communities. Staniland’s (2012, 2014) social-institutional theory argues that the social structure in which the rebel organization is embedded shapes rebel governance and military effectiveness. Strong horizontal links pull activist organizers together and centralize authority while strong vertical links tie the organizers to the local population. In these overlapping social structures, rebels can better manage resources and provide good governance while advancing their campaign. By contrast, where the underlying social structure lacks horizontal and/or vertical links, the resulting divided society is prone to disintegration in the face of the challenges common to insurgent campaigns. Sarbahi (2014) distinguishes between “anchored” and
“floating” rebel organizations, which also emphasizes the structure of the central leadership’s ties to the population.

But these theories reduce civilian influence to structural antecedents. In Mampilly (2011), civilian power is determined by pre-existing state presence and in Arjona (2010, 2014) it is determined by the local institutional endowments. The existing theories focus on civilian resistance to rebel rule where the goal behind mobilization is to replace or reduce the level of intervention of rebel cadres. Arjona’s dependent variable, the social order within rebel-controlled territory, is essentially defined as the level of control over politics in a civilian community. Rebelocracy is a social order in which the rebels run day-to-day administration in the polity while surveillance represents arms-length governance where much autonomy rests with the local civilian leaders. Arjona explains the conditions under which civilians prefer rebelocracy vs. surveillance social orders, and when they are successful in receiving their preferred order. Kaplan (2010, 2013) investigates the variation in civilians’ ability to keep rebels at arms length, in order to maintain autonomy over governance in their community. This dissertation is fundamentally concerned with civilian control over rebel rulers and the mechanisms by which civilians overcome distributional conflict. The dependent variable examined is the responsiveness of rebel leaders to the local civilian population. Therefore, I examine the political relationship within rebel regimes, rather than the variation in the level of political autonomy civilians are able to preserve.

The existing civilian politics explanations also emphasize the role of social and organizational capital (Mampilly 2011; Staniland 2012, 2014; and Kaplan 2010, 2013). The component of civilian agency I explore in this project is the process of civilian collective action. Civilians must overcome social, organizational and institutional gaps to respond to new threats associated with rebel rule during intrastate conflict. They must design coordinated responses to shape rebel incentives to adopt policy decisions. I examine the potential barriers to such coordination absent existing structure and offer an explanation for civilian communities’ ability to hold rebels accountable.
1.2. REBEL GOVERNANCE: A NEW PERSPECTIVE

This dissertation advances the existing literature in two ways. First, my focus is in particular on accountability and responsiveness in rebel-controlled territory. Second, I emphasize an explanation of rebel behavior that is based on the characteristics of local civilian communities, specifically the community’s ability to aggregate interests and mobilize collective action. I bring the “all politics is local” logic to the civil conflict literature, calling for greater attention to the centrality of local community-level politics to explain conflict processes.

The local community level of analysis is appropriate for the study of rebel-civilian political relationship. Where empirical sovereignty is hotly contested and constantly changing, penetration into local communities is especially challenging. Communities are unlikely to have regular direct contact with the central leadership of the rebel movement, or the government for that matter. Instead, rebel governance is delegated to local political and military units with varying levels of autonomy from the central leadership. The daily activities of governance are the product of interaction between local commanders and the community members. Local units are often themselves responsible for extracting resources and safe haven from the local population, as well as for dispensing the minimum public goods and services such as protection from counterinsurgent forces and the maintenance of public order.

To understand this set of interactions, it is essential to shine a light on the internal politics of the civilian community at the local level as opposed to the overall structure of the constituent population. The emphasis on civilian coordination capacity privileges the ability to mobilize a counterforce in order to constrain the local rebel unit’s use of power and material resources. In the absence of regular and institutionalized channels for leadership selection as a means of holding leaders accountable, civilian communities must construct their own non-institutional incentive structures. In order to do so, the disparate members of the community, with distinct interests, preferences, and resources at their disposal, must be capable of some level of interest aggregation and some thresh-
old for credible collective action in response to rebel behavior.

The existing literature cannot explain the phenomenon of civilian political control, nor the corollary of rebel accountability and responsiveness. This dissertation aims to address this lacuna. In the next chapter I define the key concepts and construct the theoretical argument.
An Accountability Theory of Rebel Regimes

The theory advanced injects a new emphasis on civilian political action into the literature on intrastate conflict processes, rebel governance, and the strategic use of violence. I adopt the framework of political accountability and argue that local communities’ coordination capacity is crucial to explaining belligerent behavior during intrastate conflict. Coordination capacity is defined by the community’s ability to achieve collective action to serve common interests, despite competing interests over the distributional outcomes of rebel governance. Distinct social groups with divergent preferences may nonetheless identify incentives, and possess mechanisms, to cooperate rather than compete with each other to achieve common goals. While existing theories have privileged structural features of the conflict setting or organizational features of particular rebel groups, the accountability theory of rebel regimes presented here privileges civilian collective action to explain variation in rebel group behavior during conflict.

In the remainder of this chapter, I offer a theory to explain variation in rebel responsiveness in the context of intrastate conflict. I first define the key concepts. I then develop the theory, describe the accountability mechanism in rebel regimes, and provide testable empirical implications. I address important endogeneity and confounding vari-
able issues. I will revisit these issues in the empirical research design, but it is worth noting their significance to the theory in advance in order to motivate the empirical strategy presented later.

2. Concepts and Definitions

2.1 Intrastate Conflict and Empirical Sovereignty

Before offering a theory of accountability and responsiveness in rebel regimes, I first define the actors, concepts, and variables central to the argument. I use the term intrastate conflict, rather than civil war, insurgency, rebellion, or any other common alternative because I wish to stress that the theory applies to cases that span these specific phenomena, and includes non-violent actors. By intrastate conflict, I mean any continuous hostile confrontation between a non-state organization which identifies a goal that challenges the state’s status quo political power, especially a revision of its present sovereignty. These revisionist goals may include efforts to replace existing state institutions with an alternative authority, in at least a portion of the state’s territory: secessionist, irredentist and autonomy movements. The organization may alternatively seek regime overthrow.

By hostile confrontation, I mean the non-state organization uses compellent strategies and tactics designed to enact costs on the state adversary until an acceptable change in political status quo is accomplished. Since the project is focused on explaining governance in conflict-affected areas, a key scope condition is the non-state challenger must identify some incentive to establish political control, or a monopoly on the use of violence, over at least some portion of territory and to forge political linkages with a local civilian population at some point during the conflict.

The definition is chosen as much for what it excludes as for what it includes. I exclude from the scope of this theory any systematic violence perpetrated by organized crime, which does not challenge the prevailing state institutions by seeking to replace it with an alternative political order. These organizations seek to exploit the state’s weak-
nesses for financial or political gain, but do not supplant their own institutions to govern citizens. It also excludes civil society and protest movements demanding policy change that stops short of challenging the state’s legitimacy and control over territory. These types of organizations may identify goals that challenge the prevailing political, economic, or social order, but they do not aim to establish authority over specific territory or populations. The scope does include, however, non-violent civil resistance movements that identify goals to replace the state as the legitimate political authority in a region or the state as a whole. For example, the scope would not include the Civil Rights Movement in the United States, since the goals identified focused on reforming the system rather than replacing the regime. The scope does include, for example, the Tibetan and Uigher self-determination movements in China. Neither has escalated to the level of conflict, but both regions have experienced mobilization of organized campaigns to reduce or remove central government authority.

Intrastate conflict coincides, almost by definition, with highly fragmented empirical sovereignty. Empirical sovereignty is contrasted with juridical sovereignty, the common definition of sovereignty used in academic and colloquial parlance. Juridical sovereignty is defined as the legal authority to govern and use violence within a defined territory. Here, legitimacy flows from the law and the institutions of the state, along with the recognition by other states in the international system. Empirical sovereignty is defined as de facto rather than de jure control. An actor enjoys empirical sovereignty if, regardless of the legal and institutional authority, it exercises a monopoly on the use of violence over a specific territory and local citizens recognize its authority to govern supersedes other sources of power, including the state. Civilian recognition of the actor’s authority may stem from legitimacy or from coercion. In the absence or recession of state power, political entrepreneurs emerge to assert their own authority and legitimacy in (geographically and/or socially) local spheres of influence. There is often a fluid ebb and flow in the concentration of power among these overlapping spheres and between local political entrepreneurs and the state in the context of intrastate conflict.
2. AN ACCOUNTABILITY THEORY OF REBEL REGIMES

2.1.2 Selectorates and Contracts

The selectorate is a general concept of which an electorate is a sub-type. Just as the electorate is the subset of the population that retains the right to vote in elections to select leaders in a democratic regime, the selectorate is the subset of the population enjoys the privilege of participating in the selection of the political leader, regardless of the political system. A contract is an agreement between participating signatories in which each commits to fulfill the specific set of rights and responsibilities assigned.

A selectorate contract is an often implicit agreement between the selectorate and the political leader over the set of minimum responsibilities expected of the political leader and the conditions under which the selectorate rewards the leader with political power or punishes him with efforts to remove that power.

2.1.3 Accountability and Responsiveness

I focus on the direct consequences of rebel actions on the livelihood and safety of civilian communities during intrastate conflict. Rebels have choices over how to prosecute their campaign and which risks to take to achieve their goals; these do not always coincide with civilian interests, especially short term interests for physical security. For example, the rebels may find it in their best interest to initiate a battle to seize territory even if it may result in civilian casualties. The outcome of interest represents the conformity of rebel decision making to civilian interests, what I call rebel responsiveness. Responsiveness defines the content of rebel actions in relation to the civilians’ preferences or interests: an action is responsive to the extent the rebel actor intends to generate an outcome that satisfies the civilians’ preferred outcome in the policy space. The policy space is not restricted to military decisions over where the rebels expand their influence, but also governance outcomes and the strategic use of violence in areas under rebel control.

Because it is extremely difficult to observe the distribution of civilian preferences on programmatic dimensions in a conflict zone, I examine rebel responsiveness to va-
2.1. CONCEPTS AND DEFINITIONS

Valence issues are dimensions on which all civilians have similar, monotonically trending preferences over the outcomes. All civilians want better public goods provision and lower levels of arbitrary violence in their communities. Public goods provision can be a programmatic issue in local politics under state administration. But in the context of intrastate conflict, where security and basic services are chronically under-provided, it is a safe assumption to treat public goods provision as a valence issue. Civilians will support belligerents that are willing and able to protect the community and establish basic public order. It may, of course, be the case that rebel accountability and responsiveness operate differently over programmatic policy dimensions compared to valence dimensions. But, these valence issues are central to the civilian experience of conflict and represent the first-order considerations for conflict-affected communities.

The responsiveness of rebel actions to civilian interests is challenging to measure, since there is an imperfect mapping of rebel decisions onto outcomes for civilians. Rebels face severe information constraints, as conditions change rapidly and the government cuts rebels off from intelligence about their capabilities and plans. As a result, decisions based on available information are likely to have unintended consequences in many cases. Instances of rebel predation may be observationally equivalent to instances in which rebels intend to select responsive actions and miscalculation leads to unintended...
negative consequences for civilians. For example, if rebels are unaware that the government intends to challenge their empirical sovereignty in a particular community, they may divert resources to important activities other than the provision of security from counterinsurgents. When a battle erupts that results in loss of life and destruction to the infrastructure, it may appear as if rebels were willing to tolerate civilian casualties to advance their campaign when in fact they were acting on the best available information regarding how to allocate resources in the community.

Moreover, instances of civilian resistance to rebel regimes does not provide an accurate measurement for rebel responsiveness. The quality and content of rebel governance is an equilibrium outcome, and so civilian punishment represents rare off-equilibrium path behavior. Where rebels are very accountable to civilians, and the threat of punishment looms large, rebels will take actions that avoid punishment. Where rebels are not held accountable, they may provide low governance and rely on repression, but civilians lack the ability to respond with punishments. Therefore, it is difficult to discern whether a rebel actor is accountable to civilians or provides governance and services to communities based on their preferences, goals, or other motivations.

I focus on two dimensions of rebel behavior along which civilians are primarily concerned. First, I will measure the provision of basic public goods and services. Responsive rebels invest resources to protect the local population from counterinsurgent forces, instill public order, provide basic education and health services, and promote economic development. Internal police functions mitigate communal conflicts and protect property rights to prevent the devolution of the conflict area into criminal lawlessness. Rebels may build health clinics to service community members and build and run schools in the territory under their control. These goods and services do not match the scale or breadth of public goods and services theorized in the established political economy literature, which examines functioning states, but rather represent the most basic of these governance outcomes. It is important to distinguish these protection forces and activities from those that simply advance the organization’s military objectives, for example re-
2.1. CONCEPTS AND DEFINITIONS

sources to strategically hold territory from counterinsurgent recapture. Both responsive goods provision and strategic military motivations are consistent with at least nascent infrastructure to enforce public order and safety. When categorizing communities for responsive governance, I take care to note the motivation for setting up these structures.

Conflict-affected areas, especially those at the fringes of state presence in which rebels may establish a foothold, often do not have access to even basic levels of public goods and services that allow the society to develop economically and politically. Therefore, the provision of these goods and services can be considered a valence issue because civilians have first order concerns for the physical safety and access to basic quality of life, and therefore prefer rebels to divert as much of their efforts as possible to securing these interests. High levels of public goods provision is associated with rebel responsiveness, while their absence or under-provision is a feature of non-responsiveness.

Second, I observe the level of arbitrary and indiscriminate violence in the community. Arbitrary violence is distinguished from selective violence, which refers to violence against individuals found, through processes deemed legitimate in the community, to have violated social or legal rules. Selective violence conforms to context-specific norms of proportionality. For example, if the community has entered an implicit contract to support the rebels, individuals who are found to defect to support the government may be punished by the rebels: this would not be arbitrary violence because all civilians are aware of the constraints on their behavior, and individuals are in control of whether they are at risk of being targeted with violence. Arbitrary violence, on the other hand, refers to violence against civilians in response to actions over which individuals do not control. Collective punishment is a classic example: where rebels target groups, villages, etc. with violence in response to specific individuals' actions, this is arbitrary violence.

The level of arbitrary violence is clearly a valence issue. Even if the civilians approve of the use of violence to secure order, they are threatened by arbitrary and indiscriminate forms of violence in which they may be targeted despite conforming to the rules
2. AN ACCOUNTABILITY THEORY OF REBEL REGIMES

and norms of the political order. Therefore, I assume civilians are united in their preference for lower levels of arbitrary violence. High levels of arbitrary or indiscriminate violence are associated with rebel non-responsiveness while limited or selective violence are characteristic of responsiveness.

The theory posits that civilian collective mobilization affects rebel responsiveness through an accountability mechanism. Accountability is defined by the structure of power between two actors: the civilian population’s power to influence or control rebel decision-making through their ability to shape rebel incentives. The rebel actor is accountable to a civilian population if the civilians possess means to effectively sanction rebels in punishment for non-responsive behavior and reward rebels for responsive actions. Crucially, the structure of these incentives must be sufficient to outweigh the rebels’ competing interests.

In the existing literature, accountability has both a material and an informational component. The material component comprises the instrument through which civilians impose tangible consequences for rebel utility. In electoral politics, the accountability instrument are elections in which eligible citizens vote for preferred candidates or parties, along with the electoral institutions that translate voter expression into the assignment of candidates to political office. Voters influence politicians’ material incentives through the power to control who gets rewarded with the benefits of political office. Variation in the strength of accountability instruments in general reflect the differences in the power vested in civilians through institutional or other means to control politicians’ payoffs. Accountability instruments may be materially weak, for example, in a regime like Russia’s, where elections are rigged in favor of those in power or Iran’s, where candidates are pre-selected by the authoritarian leader of the central government.

In rebel regimes, civilian communities have very rough and rather weakly institutionalized accountability instruments. Nevertheless, scholars and policymakers commonly assume insurgents require at least some degree of support from a constituent population
in order to survive and maintain the military capacity to challenge the state. Generally, rebel organizations require the active support and participation from a relatively small inner subset of the constituent population and the passive support or minimal loyalty of the majority. Support may refer to rhetorical actions, such as civilians projecting the legitimacy of the group to external audiences, or material actions, such as providing supplies or sanctuary. Civilians reward (increase benefits and/or reduce costs) rebels to encourage responsive conduct. They contribute resources including food, supplies, and manpower; hide combatants from the enemy; pass on crucial intelligence; provide open political support to boost rebel legitimacy. Civilians punish (increase costs and/or reduce benefits) to discourage victimization. They may peacefully protest, withdraw or withhold the veneer of political legitimacy, provide intelligence to the adversary, sabotage rebel resources, or organize (violent) resistance to rebel units.

Civilians use support as a reward when they condition its provision on rebel conduct. Reward is distinct from support that is not conditional on rebel actions but rather on ideological or identity affiliation and grievance against the state. Here, civilians support rebels as an instrument for advancing the goals of the campaign against the government. Rewards, on the other hand, are conditional on rebel behavior. It may be the case that civilian rewards and punishments are more credible or effective depending on the extent to which the population sympathizes with the rebel organization’s cause. There may be less variance in the scale of rewards and punishments in a community in which coethnic rebels are fighting an ethno-nationalist struggle on their behalf compared to a community in which there is a more ambiguous link between civilians and insurgents. However, I argue that no matter where on this continuum of underlying support a community lies, civilians have some ability and willingness to exert accountability instruments to bend rebel behavior to serve their interests. The distinction between rewards and other forms of support for rebels is an important one. Civilian support can be instrumental towards either goal, disciplining rebels or bolstering the insurgency itself, and only the former motivation follows the accountability theory logic.
The informational component refers to the civilian population’s ability to discern whether the rebels acted responsively or non-responsively, so that they can credibly commit to wield their accountability instruments appropriately. If civilians have a difficult time observing rebel actions on relevant dimensions, they suffer a monitoring problem: rebels will have little incentive to behave responsively when it contradicts their own interests. This can be an especially severe issue in the context of intrastate conflict, where the link between conflict process outcomes and rebel decisions is diminished by many intervening factors largely outside rebel or civilian control.

Responsiveness and accountability are difficult concepts to measure directly. Accountability instruments in a rebel regime are not ritualized, as they are in states. Unlike regular elections, civilians do not enjoy the opportunity to express their approval or disapproval for those in power on official days marked on a calendar. Rather, civilians are locked in a perpetual lobbying effort to keep the rebels in check. Whereas in the state context one measures accountability according to the institutions for selecting politicians, in the rebel regime context accountability is measured by the effect civilians have on rebel strength and probability of survival.

### 2.1.4 Coordination Capacity

Existing political economy research has produced well-developed literature regarding the instrument and information components of accountability. The accountability theory of rebel regimes advanced here emphasizes a third component of accountability as the primary explanatory variable: *coordination capacity*. I start with the premise that within any conflict-affected polity, there exists some socially relevant cleavages that generate political competition in the community. These divisions into distinct social groups introduce both unifying and dividing pressures within the civilian population.

The civilian population shares a common interest in constraining rebel predation and levels of indiscriminate violence that are destructive to the social order and costly to all members of the community regardless of where they are situated in the cleavage
structure. Civilians may also share interest in the provision of certain public goods like basic education, health and protection of property rights so that individuals may engage in income generating activities without fear of losing their wealth. But, distinct social groups may have competing interests on particular conflict-related dimensions. In particular, they may be locked in distributional conflict over access to scarce excludable economic resources. These interest groups may be defined by ethnic, tribal, language, religious or other relevant social cleavage characteristics that drive political preferences at the local level.

Distributional conflict implies that civilians are not necessarily unified in the goals they wish the rebel governors to pursue. If social groups lobby rebels to use their scarce resources to provide goods and services that favor their own group over others, the efficiency of civilian accountability instruments diminishes. Civilians must divert effort and material resources to compete with each other to get their preferred outcome, which reduces the scale and efficacy of resources they can use to bargain directly with rebels. Rebels disinclined towards governance may exploit divisions within the civilian population to their own advantage through a divide and conquer occupation strategy. By contrast, where civilian social cleavage groups lobby together for common interests and de-emphasize the dimensions on which they identify competing preferences, resources are pooled together. Rebels are limited in how they may bargain with coordinated civilian populations. Instead of a multilateral bargaining framework in which the rebels may exploit divisions within the civilian population, they face a bilateral bargaining framework with coordinated demands.

Therefore, in addition to possessing accountability instruments and sufficient information and monitoring capacity, divided civilian populations must be willing and able to coordinate political demands and costly collective action. Local politics vary in the intensity of internal rivalries on distributional conflict issues, levels of inter-communal trust, and in the organizational, institutional, and cultural mechanisms through which they may build political consensus and coordinate action. If civilians across cleavage di-
vides have strong mechanisms for consensus-building and coordinating action, they will be more effective at wielding accountability instruments in a consistent way to structure rebel incentives.

Coordination is far from guaranteed in a high stakes, information-poor environment such as conflict zones of contested empirical sovereignty. Civilians must trust those in other social groups to act cooperatively and maintain the internal discipline to ensure their members will compromise on important political or economic issues at the center of the conflict. Communities that have developed mechanisms and norms for cooperation and consensus-based political processes to resolve distributional conflict in the polity are considered to enjoy greater coordination capacity. These communities are governed by inclusive political institutions, enjoy functioning conflict-resolution mechanisms that impartially resolve disputes between parties across cleavage divides. A history of amicable and productive relationships across cleavages provides incentives to cooperate rather than compete.

By contrast, communities under contested empirical sovereignty may be beset by internal rivalries and patterns of competition across cleavage divides. The lines of communication through which individuals or leaders communicate across cleavages are fraught with mistrust. Community-level political institutions may be captured by one subgroup at the expense of others, in which governance functions as window dressing for repression of excluded subgroups. Low coordination capacity communities are those in which distinct groups identify incentives to compete with each other to control economic resources or political power rather than to cooperate on shared gains. Conflict across cleavage lines is meted out through violence. For example, low coordination capacity communities in the Philippines are those in which local clans continuously escalate blood feuds, sometimes called *rido*. Disputes over land, family honor, and access to resources from the state lead to revenge killings that are difficult to resolve once started. Blood-feuding precludes cooperation on conflict-management dimensions, often motivating clans to use conflict belligerents to gain advantages in their local disputes rather than attempt to
control belligerents’ behavior in the community.

Coordination capacity is composed of two observable dimensions central to cooperation across cleavage divides. First, coordination capacity rests on the *inclusiveness* of local institutions through which community-level policy decisions are made and intra-communal conflicts are managed. Inclusive institutions are those in which power is shared: village councils, or whatever are the institutions through which consequential political decisions are made, include members from all or most key social groups. Economic resources, whether from local productivity or allotments from higher levels of government, are shared equitably across groups so that all are vested in the status quo administration in the polity. Members from all or most social groups have confidence in, and support the legitimacy of, the community-level institutions of inter-group political and social administration. Social groups identify incentives to cooperate and to sustain existing institutions governing the interaction and the distribution of resources across cleavages, even if they have competing preferences.

By contrast, exclusive institutions are those in which one or a minority of powerful social groups controls the mechanisms of power. There may or may not be token participation for less powerful groups in the administration of the community, but in either case the decision making power is vested in one or a few privileged groups. The allocation of resources and political power are designed to advantage the particular groups in power. Social groups are rivals for political and economic resources. Community leaders channel available economic and political resources to the members of their social group in the form of patronage and exclusionary benefits to keep rivals at bay. Inter-group institutions for conflict resolution are either non-existent or biased in favor of powerful groups. In practice, disputes are resolved through violence. Members of excluded groups have very little trust in existing institutions and establish parallel institutions or actively seek to undermine existing structures.

Second, coordination capacity is defined by the *density* of interactions across social
group divides. Coordination capacity is greater where individuals regularly participate in organizations and activities with people they identify as belonging to other social groups. Markets and religious and social organizations in the community include members from across cleavage lines. Economic and social exchanges across cleavage divides are common or even essential to daily life. Routine interaction across cleavages facilitates knowledge about others’ preferences and likely reactions to conflict events. Groups enjoy technologies to communicate with and monitor the actions of other groups. These features make cooperation easier as non-cooperative behavior is easily detected and sanctioned. The density of interaction and trust across cleavages provides incentive for cooperation and increases the cost of competition across groups, as competition leads to the unraveling of mutually beneficial structures within the community.

By contrast, communities beset by low density of intergroup interactions look like segregated communities. Peace between the groups in the community is upheld, if at all, by in-group policing rather than by open institutions for resolving conflict and administering justice. Political and economic activities are confined within group boundaries, with little interaction across cleavage divides necessary or advantageous to accomplish daily needs. Lacking channels of communication and monitoring, social groups are reluctant to cooperate with others or to rely on other groups to follow through on commitments. There is greater risk involved in cooperation than unilateral decision-making.

This study is not the first to look inside the social dynamics of the civilian population for an explanation of conflict dynamics. Existing theories in the rebel governance literature have emphasized the network structure, cohesion, social capital, and other concepts that emphasize the structure of social relationships within the civilian population. I contribute to this literature by first identifying the components of social and political capital that are crucial to civilian collective action vis-a-vis rebels in areas of contested empirical sovereignty. Second, I propose a unique mechanism by which these social dynamics influence conflict processes: political accountability in rebel regimes. I emphasize convergence across social group cleavages within the local population. Con-
vergence does not require that individuals or social groups have the same preferences or beliefs, only that they acknowledge benefits to cooperating rather than competing (Marc, et. al. 2012, p. 41) and have the means of doing so. Convergence is defined by the incentives civilians have to cooperate, rather than the structure of social interactions emphasized by social capital and network based explanations.

The conceptual difference between coordination capacity and social capital is subtle but nonetheless important for the theory advanced here. Social capital and network explanations emphasize the structural characteristics within society, especially the network of social relationships. Convergence emphasizes incentives to cooperate with those in other social categories. Coordination capacity through the convergence mechanism captures the prevailing norms and practices of interaction across social cleavage divides. Though institutions can provide a structural means through which convergence operates more efficiently, for example institutions for inter-group conflict management, they are preceded by the collective recognition of incentives to cooperate across social divides.

2.2 Theory and Hypotheses

To fully account for the degree civilian political control over the rebel leadership’s political fate, we must consider both material and credibility components to accountability: 1) the material strength of the accountability instruments (reward and punishment), and 2) the civilian population’s capacity of the to wield these instruments in a way that maximizes control over rebel incentives. The existing literature has addressed the first, while neglecting the second. In what follows, I develop a theory of rebel accountability to civilian populations in order to explain rebel governance during intrastate conflict. I focus on the effect of civilian collective action on rebel organization incentives and behavior. In particular, a civilian population’s ability to overcome distributional conflict to cooperate on collective action is a crucial determinant of rebel actions during conflict.
2.2.1 Civilian Collective Action in Rebel Regimes

Social groups in a rebel-influenced community share a common interest in disciplining rebel leaders, to prevent predation and increase access to essential goods and services. The civilian population’s central collective interest is to maximize its influence over the rebel leadership’s governance strategy and use of violence within their community. Civilians expect rebels to provide some essential public goods and services, even if the best they can hope for is a modicum of general public safety. In some cases civilians demand the local rebel leadership fulfill additional responsibilities, such as the protection of property rights, dispute and conflict resolution, or the provision of health and education services in the community.

Despite competing interests on the distribution of goods, civilians would prefer to collude with others if the merger of their material accountability instruments allows them to demand rebels redistribute a sufficiently larger share of resources to civilians in equilibrium. Collusion requires groups commit to a retrospective selectoral contract that conditions their collaboration with, or resistance to, rebels on the benefits of rebel actions to all groups in the population, rather than just their own group. Collusion in this sense is similar to what Ferejohn (1986) refers to as “sociotropic” voting. Only by credibly committing to coordinate retrospective collaboration or resistance can the civilian population wield accountability instruments that structure rebel incentives towards exerting effort to provide public benefits to the community during wartime.

In a rebel regime, the primary barrier to forming credible accountability enforcement is the civilian population’s ability to collectively implement a cooperative selectoral contract. Coordinating on a single contract is an essential component to effectively structuring rebel incentives. This barrier emerges when rebels can strategically target goods to particular civilian subgroups, and these social groups are unable to monitor or control each others’ retrospective collaboration rule decisions. When rebels can target goods to particular civilians, they will prefer to privilege a minimum winning coalition.
and exclude others, so that they spend less in total redistribution. Privileged clans may be tempted to accept the bribe since they fear other clans will act unilaterally to negotiate with the rebels.

The commitment problem can be severe in the context of intrastate conflict where rebel decisions are not directly observable and conflict processes are unpredictable. And yet, the commitment component of the accountability model has been overlooked in the rebel governance literature. Civilians take serious risks by issuing punishments, since rebels are not constrained by institutions from repressing civilians. Providing rewards can also be costly, since it requires civilians to surrender some of their wealth and resources to support the rebels. Moreover, there are often disagreements within communities about what rebels should do and divergent preferences across social groups over how scarce resources should be distributed. Since security and basic goods for survival are scarce in an intrastate conflict zone, distinct social groups are primarily concerned with securing these assets, even at the expense of others.

These circumstances generate incentives for civilians to compete over scarce goods and security. Communities in which civilian groups identify competing goals for the rebels’ distribution of resources and protection exhibit a common agency structure. Common agency is a modified form of the classic principal-agent relationship developed in the economics literature, in which there exist multiple principals and a single agent.

We know from the classic accountability models (Ferejohn 1986) that even in democratic elections, where the material strength of citizen instruments for reward and punishment have a high impact on politician incentives, accountability is not guaranteed. Elections are an instrument through which the citizens may hold politicians accountable, to reduce or remove the temptation to pursue selfish interests through the threat of removal from office. But this power to remove the politician from office is a double-edged sword. Unless the voters can commit to use the power of the vote only in response to
politician behavior, there is no guarantee politicians will not rationally renege on campaign promises to pursue their own interests that diverge from the electorate interests.

If the electorate cannot commit to re-elect the politician in the case his policies are responsive to public interest, then the politician will believe he is on his way out regardless of his behavior in office and may choose to serve his own interests while he still has power. This may be the case where citizens are particularly uninformed about economic trends and unfairly fault the politician for economic decline despite policies that actually alleviated the damage. Likewise, if the voters cannot credibly commit to vote out politicians even if they renege on the implicit electoral contract once in office, then they will have no incentive to implement responsive policy. Such a scenario may occur where incumbents control economic resources or patronage networks, such that voters are afraid of losing access to necessary benefits associated with incumbent rule.

This problem is exacerbated if the voters cannot act as a cohesive unit, and may even compete with each other to advance conflicting interests. In Ferejohn’s (1986) non-homogeneous electorate model, the implication of the common agency problem is the disappearance of any incentive for the politician to serve public interests. Instead, the politician will play competing interest groups off each other to keep the most rents for himself. The main challenge for civilians then, above and beyond the material strength of their rewards and punishments, is a commitment problem: the civilian population must be able to implement an ex post costly selectoral contract conditional on rebel behavior rather than on any intervening forces outside rebel control.

In order to overcome the common agency problem, individuals and interest groups in the civilian population must identify incentives to cooperate that outweigh incentives to compete, and have the means to coordinate action. Social group leaders must also remain confident that all other social groups will also be willing to implement the sociotropic selectoral contract. If civilians believe that their neighbors are likely to defect and succumb to a rebel divide-and-conquer strategy, they will fear being undercut by
other groups; civilian leaders under these conditions are more likely to choose to compete even if they know cooperation is more socially beneficial. This suggests a communication story as well. Collusion is more likely when there exist strong pre-existing consensus-building institutions designed to aggregate interests across social cleavages. Under these circumstances, civilians have tried and true mechanisms for communicating with other interest groups so that there can be greater confidence in broad-based implementation of the cooperative outcome.

In the preceding section, I identified two dimensions of civilian coordination capacity in a conflict-affected community: the inclusiveness of local institutions and the density of inter-group interactions. The theory implies that rebel-influenced communities endowed with greater institutional inclusiveness and higher density of inter-group interaction will be better equipped to generate accountability in rebel regimes, and therefore will experience higher rates of rebel responsiveness.

In the empirical test on conflict-affected communities in the Philippines, I will measure inclusiveness by observing the membership of local (barangay) political institutions both before and during the conflict. In particular, I will measure the proportion of social cleavage groups (clans) with meaningful representation in these institutions. By meaningful representation, I require the representatives from a particular social group are able to exert influence over political decisions. This condition distinguishes inclusive institutions from those in which there exists descriptive representation for many groups on the surface, but in practice some group leaders are excluded from actually having any impact on governance.

**Hypothesis 1.** Rebel-influenced communities in which a higher proportion of social groups are represented in local political institutions will have higher levels of rebel-provided public goods and lower levels of rebel-perpetrated arbitrary violence.

I will measure density of inter-group interaction by observing participation in barangay
community organizations. I will focus on the frequency and diversity of public community meetings, similar to town hall meetings in the United States. In these public fora, citizens may congregate to voice concerns and exercise influence over barangay council decisions. Communities in which public fora are frequently assembled to collect citizen input on political and administrative matters represent higher density of inter-group interaction.

**Hypothesis 2.** Rebel-influenced communities in which public fora for citizen participation are held more frequently in the pre-conflict era will have higher levels of rebel-provided public goods and lower levels of rebel-perpetrated arbitrary violence.

The strength of available accountability instruments also affects rebel accountability to civilians and predicts variation in responsiveness. Rebel-influenced communities that enjoy more valuable material resources convertible into rewards and punishments will be more successful in disciplining rebels. Existing research provides compelling theory and empirical evidence to suggest that rebel resources and financing are key determinants of rebel behavior. Rebel organizations with access to natural resources or external funding do not rely as heavily on civilian support, and therefore are not constrained by civilian demands. By contrast, when rebels are highly dependent on popular support for their survival, civilians wield significant control over the rebels’ fate and rebels have an incentive to choose their actions responsively. For example, if the local rebel unit’s center of gravity is its ability to hide personnel and weapons from the government, then civilians could punish the rebels at low cost by informing the government of these locations.

I use two observable proxies: labor productivity and socioeconomic status indicators. In the empirical test in conflict-affected communities in the Philippines, I will measure labor productivity by the soil fertility and land gradient in the locality. In the majority of conflict-affected communities, the majority labor force participation is in the production of agricultural commodities. Soil fertility and land gradient are key determinants of the quality and value of agricultural production, and by extension the
size of contribution rebels can expect to extract, in the barangay.

**Hypothesis 3.** Rebel-influenced communities with higher soil fertility and lower land gradient will have higher levels of rebel-provided public goods and lower levels of rebel-perpetrated arbitrary violence.

### 2.2.2 Rebel Entry: A Selection Problem

A rebel organization’s decision-making process is shaped by many different aspects of the intrastate conflict environment. There are two crucial challenges to the accountability theory of rebel regimes. First, a plausible critique argues that rebel behavior affects civilian coordination capacity rather than the other way around. Rebel actions can be destructive to the existing civilian social, political, and economic structures. Even if there is a correlation between the measures of coordination capacity and rebel responsiveness, it may be an artifact of rebel actions, driven by other factors, influencing social relationships in the civilian community. Alternatively, the challenges of managing rebel actions during conflict can bring civilians together by necessity. In either version, the causal arrow is opposite the one posited in the theory.

Second, rebels are strategic: they make deliberate decisions about where to seek empirical sovereignty. The costs to gaining and holding territory that shape these decisions may be at least partially determined by civilian coordination capacity and the material strength of accountability instruments. The rebel organization may observe the coordination capacity in a civilian population and, depending on their goals, adjust their estimate of the likely costs and benefits of seeking empirical sovereignty in the area.

In the remainder of this chapter I explore theoretically the relationship between crucial conflict process variables that affect rebel behavior and may relate to civilian coordination capacity. These are factors that may generate inferential bias in our empirical investigation of the theory. By developing the theory behind this process, I generate
empirical implications for the relationship between coordination capacity and rebel governance conditional on these confounding variables.

Rebel organizations seek influence or control over territory in order to extract the resources necessary to expand their campaign against the government. Rebels select areas to contest based on the present-future value of the territory and their own constraints. I argue that rebels face resource and personnel constraints that shape these decisions. In order to achieve both organizational survival as well as their ultimate political goals, rebels need the material and human resources necessary to carry out the campaign against the state. Therefore, collecting capital and labor inputs represent the rebel leadership’s primary concerns driving decisions over when and where to seek empirical sovereignty within the state.

Rebels may enter a territory for capital-seeking motivations where there exist lootable resources, from which they may extract profit. Where the motivation is purely for capital, the rebels have little incentive to set up governance structures or to broker a selectorate contract with the civilians. In territory with greater value of lootable resources, the temptation to seize empirical sovereignty increases. Because turning a profit from lootable resources is less reliant on civilian labor compared to resource-poor communities, rebels also have little incentive to share these resources with the population. At the same time, communities with higher coordination capacity are likely to demand higher levels of redistribution and pose a greater threat to the rebels’ control over capital, through their ability to mobilize coordinated action. Therefore, rebels will be willing to bring overwhelming force to bear to deter any efforts to resist rebel rule. This incentive implies a reversal of the correlation between coordination capacity and rebel responsiveness where lootable resources are central to rebel motivations to seize empirical sovereignty in a community.

I will measure the localities’ capital value by observing the presence and economic value of lootable resources. In the broader literature, this includes the presence of
diamond or precious gem deposits, cultivable illicit drugs, petroleum deposits, mining, timber, or other valuable commodities that are traded on a global market. In the Philippines, timber reserves and the mines for valuable mineral deposits represent the most important lootable resources. I will measure the percent of land covered by timber and mineral deposits to proxy the production value of lootable resources.

**Hypothesis 4.** *In the subset of rebel-influenced communities with high levels of land cover by timber or mineral deposits, there is a negative effect of coordination capacity on rebel responsiveness.*

By contrast, rebels enter territory for labor-seeking purposes when they require recruits, political legitimacy, or safe haven from government incursion. This is likely to occur in communities with high levels of underlying support for the rebel organization. All else equal, there is greater incentive to establish institutions for governance and selectorate contracts, since this will increase the return on investment of civilian effort. I will measure the underlying public support for the rebels in Moro insurgency areas by the percentage of coethncs in the barangay. I will measure underlying public support in communist insurgency areas by the socioeconomic status and rates of labor force participation in low-income occupational categories.

**Hypothesis 5.** *In the subset of rebel-influenced communities in which there is high identity/ideological affinity between the local population and the rebels the marginal effect of civilian coordination capacity on rebel responsiveness is greater than those with low affinity.*

### 2.3 Conclusion

This chapter advanced an accountability theory of rebel regimes, isolating the effect of civilian coordination on rebel behavior. I argued that civilian coordination capacity, measured by the inclusiveness of local institutions and the density of cross-cleavage interactions, is an important factor determining rebel behavior at the local level in intrastate conflicts. Coordination capacity determines the strength of mechanisms and norms for
cooperation across social cleavage divides.

The endogeneity and confoundedness concerns outlined above present challenges to the accountability theory of rebel regimes, but nonetheless I emphasize the link on the causal chain beginning with civilian politics for two main reasons. First, the civilian agency component to conflict processes, especially with regards to rebel behavior, has been largely overlooked in the existing literature. An emphasis on this under-explored relationship stands to make an important contribution to our understanding of the complex intrastate conflict system. Second, given the nascent state of the theoretical literature examining civilian agency, I can make the greatest contribution by providing a parsimonious theory.

In the chapters that follow, I bring the hypotheses generated by the theory to the empirical record. The empirical strategy is designed to triangulate evidence across three separate sources of data. First, I use community-level data from Mindanao, Philippines in a quantitative test based on an original survey and reported violence data. I also compare the quantitative evidence from Mindanao to similar data collected in Assam, a conflict-affected region in Northeast India. Second, I probe the causal process deeper using qualitative data from Mindanao and pre-independence Kosovo. I will conduct out-of-sample interviews in a selection of conflict-affected communities in Mindanao and selected communities within Kosovo under Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) and Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK) influence during the independence struggle with Serbia. Finally, I construct a cross-sectional dataset of rebellions to examine whether we find a similar empirical relationship between the actions of the rebel organization’s central leadership and civilian coordination capacity measured at the “movement” level of analysis.