PROBLEM OF PEACE: HOW DO REBEL ALLIANCES IN A CIVIL WAR IMPACT AUTHORITY AND POWER SHARING?

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Abstract

What is the impact of rebel alliances on authority and power-sharing institutions? Civil wars introduce a highly fluid and fragmented political environment, shaped by internal actors, local grievances, and competing power struggles. These conflicts are rarely fought by monolithic entities; instead, they involve complex factional dynamics, where alliances form and dissolve in response to shifting strategic interests. While some conflicts culminate in inclusive post-war settlements, others result in exclusive governance structures or renewed violence. For example, while South Africa's transition from apartheid saw a negotiated power-sharing agreement that included former militant groups, Libya's post-Gaddafi landscape descended into factionalism. This variation raises a crucial question: how do rebel relations shape post-conflict settlement? More specifically, are certain types of rebel networks more likely to produce certain types of power-sharing arrangements?

This research addresses this gap by theorizing four outcomes based on the interplay between identity composition and power structures within rebel alliances. For example, heterogeneous alliances with balanced power structures often experience no institutional power-sharing due to internal rivalries and fragmentation, leading to prolonged instability. Conversely, homogeneous alliances with balanced power structures have the potential for inclusive institutional power-sharing. Hegemonic

alliances with heterogeneous identities typically adopt exclusive power-sharing to consolidate rule and manage resistance. Homogeneous hegemonic alliances rarely require formal power-sharing, as the hegemon consolidates control without significant opposition.

In this project, I design to use data on rebel group relations (such as alliances and rivalries), power-sharing agreements and implementations and measure the impact of rebel group behavior on power-sharing by using multinomial logistic regression and network analysis.

Introduction

What is the impact of rebel alliances on authority and power-sharing institutions? Civil wars introduce a highly fluid and fragmented political environment, shaped by internal actors, local grievances, and competing power struggles. These conflicts are rarely fought by monolithic entities; instead, they involve complex factional dynamics, where alliances form and dissolve in response to shifting strategic interests. While some conflicts culminate in inclusive post-war settlements, others result in exclusive governance structures or renewed violence. For example, while South Africa's transition from apartheid saw a negotiated power-sharing agreement that included former militant groups, Libya's post-Gaddafi landscape descended into factionalism, preventing a stable governing coalition from emerging. This variation raises a crucial question: how do rebel relations during a civil war shape post-conflict settlement? More specifically, are certain types of rebel networks more likely to produce certain types of power-sharing arrangements than others?

Civil war environments often resemble the anarchy of international politics, where the absence of a higher authority leads to a decentralized competition for power. In these conflicts, control over

violence and territory shifts away from the central government and into the hands of various armed groups. These groups form alliances not only to gain military advantages but also to negotiate political futures beyond the battlefield. However, the way these alliances evolve -whether they are hierarchical or decentralized, fragmented or cohesive- can determine the extent to which former rebels are willing to share power in a post-war government.

This project investigates the relationship between wartime rebel alliances and post-conflict authority and power-sharing institutions. By analyzing how different forms of rebel cooperation and coalition-building influence the likelihood of inclusive governance, this study seeks to explain why some post-war societies successfully integrate larger portions of society into governing institutions, while others experience consolidation of power or renewed conflict. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for designing policies that promote political stability and prevent conflict recurrence in war-torn societies.

Table 1 Post-Victory Rebel Governance: Pathways to Power Consolidation and Power-Sharing

		Identity composition	
		Heterogeneous	**Homogeneous**
Power Composition	**Balanced**	**Fragmented Anarchy**	**Conditional Inclusivity**
	Band-wagoned (Hegemonic)	**Hegemonic Exclusivity**	**Dominant Stability**

This study proposes four distinct pathways for post-victory rebel governance, determined by the intersection of identity composition (heterogeneous vs. homogeneous) and power composition (balanced vs. band-wagoned/hegemonic). When rebel groups are heterogeneous and balanced, governance descends into fragmented anarchy, marked by a lack of institutional power-sharing due to internal rivalries and factional fragmentation, causing intra-group competition and

instability. Alternatively, heterogeneous but hegemonic (band-wagoned) groups exhibit hegemonic exclusivity, where exclusive institutional power-sharing becomes essential for the hegemon to consolidate rule, establish legitimacy, and manage potential resistance. In homogeneous and balanced scenarios, governance tends towards conditional inclusivity, wherein inclusive institutional power-sharing is feasible if factions maintain unity, though unresolved internal conflicts pose continuous risks. Finally, homogeneous and hegemonic groups achieve dominant stability, characterized by no requirement for institutional power-sharing, as the hegemon effectively consolidates control without encountering significant opposition.

Rebel Alliance Behavior in Civil Wars

In a civil war, rebel groups exhibit diverse strategic behaviors that shape the conflict's trajectory and post-war outcomes. They may form formal alliances, where factions merge or coordinate military and political efforts to strengthen their bargaining position against the state or rival groups in a formal framework such as a coalition or an alliance agreement [1]. The Syrian Democratic Forces, for instance, was formed as a coalition between the Kurdish-led Democratic Union Party and Jaysh al-Sanadeed in 2015. Their alliance was formally announced in a press conference after a meeting in Riyadh, and established shared command mechanisms, including a leadership council and joint war room [2].

Some groups engage in tacit coalitions, cooperating informally without explicit agreements, often to achieve short-term military or strategic objectives while maintaining autonomy[3]. The informal cooperation, similarly, can be joint operations, sharing tactical or strategic information without

[1] Bapat and Bond, "Alliances between Militant Groups"; Corradi, "Beyond Armed Competition"; Gade et al., "Networks of Cooperation."
[2] Topal, "Pathways to Cooperation."
[3] Steinwand and Metternich, "Who Joins and Who Fights?"

committing into a formal framework [4]. In 2015, the Free Syrian Army collaborated with the Islamic State and Al-Nusra to expel Hezbollah from Damascus. Although these groups coordinated multiple military offensives along the Syria-Lebanon border, they maintained separate command structures and never integrated their troops or weaponry under a unified command [5].

At times, internal divisions lead to splinter factions, where ideological, strategic, or leadership disputes cause breakaway groups to emerge, sometimes aligning with opposing forces [6]. The split between the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) and the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) in the 1960s is an example of how ideological and ethnic divisions can fracture rebel movements. Originally united under the National Democratic Party, the two factions diverged in 1963 due to strategic and ethnic tensions [7].

The existing literature explains that rebel groups decide to cooperate with each other for a number of reasons such as shared identity, common enemy, or power dynamics [8]. Actors in civil wars, such as rebel groups or factions, function within a power vacuum and pursue their objectives using strategies akin to those observed in the international arena. They engage in power calculations, form alliances, seek external support, and employ coercive or negotiation tactics to achieve their goals. Groups decide based on all three criteria and their current and future opportunities. Alliances do not emerge naturally; it takes deliberate negotiations between groups to decide on why and with whom they will ally with.

[4] Akcinaroglu, "Rebel Interdependencies and Civil War Outcomes."
[5] Topal, "Pathways to Cooperation."
[6] Joo and Mukherjee, "Rebel Command and Control, Time, and Rebel Group Splits"; Gade, Hafez, and Gabbay, "Fratricide in Rebel Movements"; Driscoll, Pearlman, and Cunningham, "Commitment Problems or Bidding Wars?"; Otto, "The Grass Is Always Greener?"
[7] Liu, *Governing After War*.
[8] Corradi, "Beyond Armed Competition."

The groups that share the same religion, ethnicity or ideology may choose to ally because they have compatible political aspirations [9]. Sharing an ethnic identity can foster cooperation because of shared political goals. A shared ideology or ethnicity can create common trust and shared institutions, easing potential dissension about permissible allies [10].

Shared ideology can unite organizations with compatible political aspirations, reduce negotiation costs, and garner internal support for alliances [11]. Ideological homophily promotes connection, making inter-rebel cooperation more likely among ideologically similar groups [12]. More specifically, ideological commonality offers strategic advantages by lengthening the shadow of the future, facilitating monitoring and enforcement, providing access to common authority structures, and enhancing trust [13].

However, it is worth noting that while shared ideology fosters alliance formation, groups may still engage in competition to preserve their "market share" within the common constituency [14]. If groups with similar ideologies or ethnicities fight separately or against each other, they risk losing potential support and weakening their cause [15]. While shared ethnicity can promote cooperation, it can also be a source of tension and competition, potentially leading to inter-rebel conflict over resources and the control of a shared constituency. Co-ethnic rebel organizations are likely to be deeply suspicious of one another as it is fairly easy for each to absorb the social base of one another [16].

[9] Balcells, Chen, and Pischedda, "Do Birds of a Feather Flock Together?"
[10] Blair et al., "Honor Among Thieves: Understanding Rhetorical and Material Cooperation Among Violent Nonstate Actors"; Corradi, "Beyond Armed Competition"; Gade et al., "Networks of Cooperation."
[11] Balcells, Chen, and Pischedda, "Do Birds of a Feather Flock Together?"
[12] Gade et al., "Networks of Cooperation."
[13] Blair et al., "Honor Among Thieves: Understanding Rhetorical and Material Cooperation Among Violent Nonstate Actors."
[14] Tokdemir et al., "Rebel Rivalry and the Strategic Nature of Rebel Group Ideology and Demands."
[15] Pischedda, *Conflict Among Rebels*.
[16] Sambanis, Schulhofer-Wohl, and Shayo, "Parochialism as a Central Challenge in Counterinsurgency."

Secondly, groups might fight against their common enemy [17]. That could be a central government or foreign occupier. Their interest in fighting with that enemy might ally them. Alliances enable groups to pool their resources, coordinate battlefield operations, and exploit tactical advantages, strengthening their overall capabilities against the government [18]. By coordinating, allying groups can mount larger operations.

Lastly, groups might calculate the power dynamics they are currently in. Warring parties aim to form the smallest possible alliance with sufficient strength to win the civil war. When the "minimum winning coalition" threshold is passed, groups are expected to abandon the dominant coalition for an optimally sized one [19]. Weaker groups may seek alliances with stronger groups to improve their security and access resources [20]. When forming an alliance based on power distribution, groups have two options: they can either adopt a balancing strategy by aligning themselves against the most powerful groups, or they can choose a bandwagoning approach by joining forces with the group that presents the most significant power capabilities [21]. If there is one major group or movement that carries the insurgency, other groups might try to dissolve into it to be a part of the movement.

Those three mechanisms (ideology, common enemy, and power dynamics) are not mutually exclusive. I will approach these studies as compatible and present a framework for that. By emphasizing the role of identity and power distribution, I propose a new framework of rebel alliances.

Table 2 Rebel Alliances Typology

Identity composition

[17] Balcells, Chen, and Pischedda, "Do Birds of a Feather Flock Together?"
[18] Balcells, Chen, and Pischedda.
[19] Christia, *Alliance Formation in Civil Wars*.
[20] Bapat and Bond, "Alliances between Militant Groups"; Gade et al., "Networks of Cooperation."
[21] Snyder, "The Security Dilemma in Alliance Politics."

		Heterogeneous	Homogeneous
Power Composition	Balanced	Diverse Balance Alliance	Stable Balance Alliance
	Band-wagoned (Hegemonic)	Diverse Hegemonic Alliance	Absolute Hegemonic Alliance

As seen in Table 1, the *Diverse Balance Alliance* represents a political or military coalition where power is evenly distributed among multiple rebel actors, and the alliance consists of groups with distinct identities, making coordination and stability more challenging. With the balance of power, and the diversity within the coalition can lead to internal tensions and competition. On the other hand, the *Stable Balance Alliance* also features a balanced distribution of power, and its homogeneity in identity fosters greater cohesion and stability. Since all actors share a common background, ideology, they are more likely to cooperate and maintain institutional structures.
In contrast, the *Diverse Hegemonic Alliance* emerges when a dominant actor consolidates control but must incorporate diverse factions to maintain authority. Lastly, the *Absolute Hegemonic Alliance* represents a group where a single dominant force rules over a homogeneous identity group, facing little resistance.

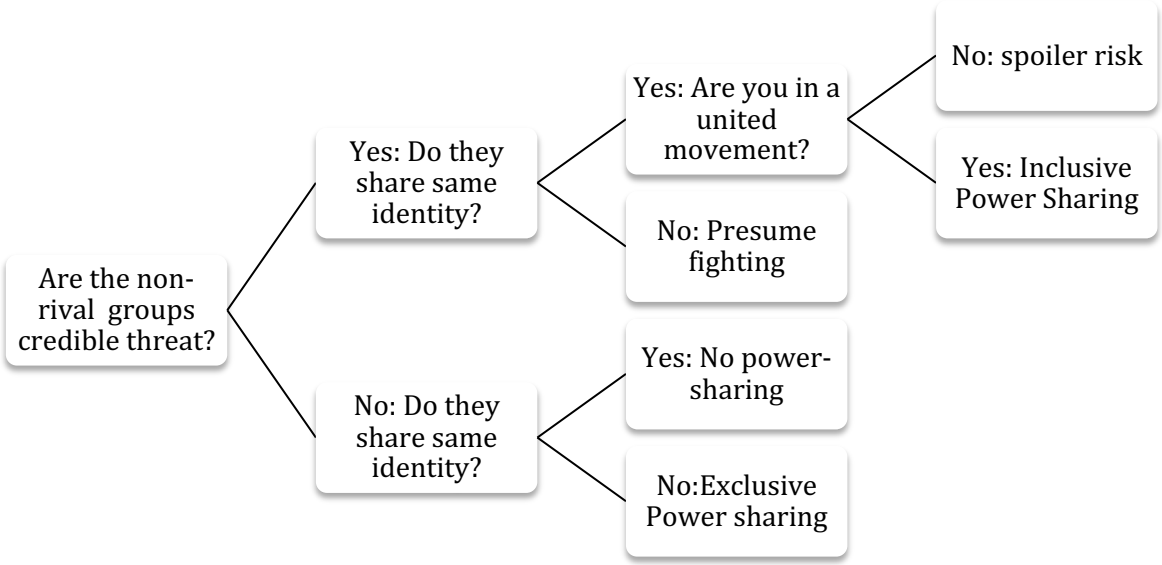
Rebel Alliances and Post-Conflict Settlement

What is the impact of rebel alliances on post-conflict power sharing institutions? I argue that the dynamics of actors (their identity composition and the perceived threat posed by other groups) in alliances impact the calculations of power maximization. When analyzing the governance outcomes of rebel alliances, several key factors determine whether inclusive or exclusive power-sharing, or internal conflict will emerge. The first crucial question is whether non-rival groups pose a credible threat while the second factor is the internal dynamics of the alliance.

If the non-rival groups pose a significant threat to each other and rebel factions share the same identity, the determining question is whether they form a united movement. If they are united, the outcome is likely to be inclusive power-sharing, as internal cohesion facilitates cooperative governance structures. However, if they are not part of a united movement, competition between factions leads to presumed fighting, as they struggle for control and the need for an external third party is at its highest to resolve the conflict.

If the rebel factions do not share the same identity and the credible threat is limited, governance outcomes shift toward more exclusive forms of rule. Here, the critical factor is whether a single faction has established dominance. If one group is hegemonic, it is likely to impose autocratic rule, consolidating power without the need to share governance with weaker factions, thus no need for an institutional framework. If no single group holds overwhelming control, exclusive power-sharing emerges, where governance is distributed only among select factions while others remain excluded.

Table 3 Rebel Decision Framework



The model operates on the assumption that the expectations and strategic calculations of rebel groups shift fundamentally once they overthrow the government. Before victory, their primary concern is winning the conflict, often leading to cooperation among factions. However, after taking power, their priorities change. Now, they must consolidate control, prevent internal fragmentation, and ensure that their newfound position remains secure.

Power composition

Not all groups have the same material capabilities in any given insurgent movement. Some groups have more recruits, some have more expertise. Some have more foreign support. Depending on their material capabilities, the groups are more or less likely to achieve what they ought to achieve. I will evaluate the power composition by the rank of the organization within the insurgency. Hegemon is "the strongest organization in the insurgency that has no other organization within ⅓ as strong as it in membership, funding, or popular support" [22]. Leader is "the strongest organization in the insurgency that has at least one other organization within 1/3 as strong as it in membership, funding, or popular support" [23]. Challenger is "an organization that is not the strongest but is at least 1/3 as strong as the strongest organization in membership, funding, or popular support" [24]. Subordinate is "a weak organization that is not at least 1/3 as strong as the strongest organization in membership, funding, or popular support" [25].

What does this say about the post-conflict power sharing? Hegemonic alliances are alliances where small or middle ranked groups band-wagoned to the hegemon. In these alliances, the decisions are mostly made by the hegemon because it is the authority, however the possibility of

[22] Krause, "The Structure of Success: How the Internal Distribution of Power Drives Armed Group Behavior and National Movement Effectiveness"; Krause, "Insurgent Spoils Dataset Codebook Version 1.20."
[23] Krause, "Insurgent Spoils Dataset Codebook Version 1.20."
[24] Krause.
[25] Krause.

flanks is always present. In this study, I am considering the alliances, so the flanks are out of the scope of this article.

Non-hegemonic alliances are alliances where groups that came together are able to balance each other with future possibility of shifting positions. Since any of them is not able to force other groups into a policy or an action, the decision-making dynamics are different from the hegemonic alliances. They have to be more "democratic" and consult with each individual leader of groups in the alliances and include them in the decisions. Since groups have the option of leaving the alliance with less repercussions than a small group leaving a hegemonic alliance, committing to decisions and finding solutions that benefit everyone is harder in non-hegemonic alliances. With the possibility of shifting ranks existing, any challenger has the tendency to wait out the leader so that they can replace it as the leader. This reduces the possibility of accepting the proposed power sharing at time *t*, when the challenger could have a larger piece of pie at time *t+1*. Whereas, the small groups in a hegemonic movement do not have much of a chance to replace hegemon soon. Thus, they are more likely to accept the status quo decisions.

- ***Identity Composition***

While the argument for power distribution is appealing, and it is consistently shown that groups behave with the power calculations, the other side of the argument is that groups also consider identities such as ideology, ethnicity, and religion. In Syrian civil war, Gade et al (2019) find that ideological homophily is the driver of with whom the rebel groups ally [26]. However, alliances with other ideologies, identities, or religions also happen in conflicts.

I conceptualize the identity and power composition of an alliance together to understand its implications. An alliance might have a uniform identity, but if they lack the power to achieve their

[26] Gade et al., "Networks of Cooperation."

goals, identity will not be enough in itself. I divide the identity composition into two: heterogeneous and homogeneous. The homogenous alliances are the ones that were formed by two or more groups that share the same identity factors. Those factors could de shared ideology, shared ethnic kinship, or shared religion. The alliances between jihadists groups, such as the merger of Al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) and the Syrian jihadist group Jabhat al-Nusra in 2013 to form the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham, are homogenous alliances because they come together around the same ideology. The heterogeneous alliances are the opposite of that. At least one group in the alliance does not share the main identity of the other groups. The reason why these groups align is usually having a common enemy, thus, having a shared goal of winning over their enemy. An example of heterogeneous alliance is the Syrian Democratic Forces. PYD, a Kurdish group, allied with other minority groups such as Arabs, Assyrians against the rising threat of ISIS, While they did not share a religion, ethnicity, or ideology, they had a common enemy and a common goal [27].

When we add the identity composition to the alliance spectrum, a few things change. Firstly, the groups in homogenous balanced alliances will be more likely to accept the post conflict power sharing if they are united because the institutions will likely reflect their identities. The shared goals and identities will also ensure the groups have trust and motivation to work together. If they are fragmented, the chances of flanks and the likelihood of conflict going on will be higher. However, the heterogeneous balanced alliances are less likely to produce a stable post conflict power sharing institutions because the groups will turn against each other once their common enemy is defeated. Since they do not share a single identity, the likelihood of more conflict erupting is higher.

[27] van Wilgenburg and Fumerton, "From the PYD-YPG to the SDF."

When it comes to hegemonic alliances, the heterogeneous hegemonic alliance is more likely to create power sharing institutions. Institutions are ideal to preserve the status quo as it is. They are designed to keep the dynamics unchanged regardless of the change in the society they are in. The conflict environments are complex and ever-changing. The likelihood of a group being destroyed or thriving is much more than the stable societies. Any institution that was created after a conflict will likely reflect the power dynamics right after the conflict and will help the hegemon to preserve its status. In heterogeneous hegemonic alliances, the hegemon only has a current alliance that is fragile and likely to dissolve after the conflict. Thus, hegemon has an incentive to create institutions that will help their group to have the larger piece of pie when the fighting stops. The smaller groups might defect from the alliance but this does not prevent hegemon to put institutions in place because the smaller groups are not the veto powers. Since other groups are in no position to challenge the hegemon, they are forced to accept the proposal. Whereas, hegemon does not have this incentive in homogenous alliances because their identity, thus support base, is similar. Hegemon has the possibility of increasing its power without the alliance.

The Day After: Post-War Governing

Rebel governance does not simply end with military victory. Instead, it shapes the institutional foundations of the post-war order, influencing whether victorious insurgent groups consolidate power, establish inclusive institutions, or descend into renewed conflict. Scholarship on rebel governance can be divided into two primary forms: governance during wartime and governance after conflict. During the war, rebels create quasi-state institutions in the territories they control, often mimicking state structures to provide security, taxation, and public services [28]. These

[28] Albert, "What Is Rebel Governance?"

wartime institutions-serve strategic purposes, helping rebels extract resources, legitimize their rule, and sustain their war effort [29].

However, when the war ends, the incentives and mechanisms of governance shift. While wartime institutions are shaped by the ongoing struggle for territorial control, post-war governance revolves around coalition-building, legitimacy, and state consolidation. Victorious rebel groups must decide how to structure the new government, whether to include former adversaries, and how to manage competition within their own ranks [30]. The way they navigate these choices determines whether they establish inclusive power-sharing arrangements or exclusive power-sharing.

A growing literature in comparative politics examines these post-war transitions, highlighting that not all rebel victories lead to stable governance. Lyons (2016) argues that victorious insurgents often follow two distinct paths: some transform into strong, authoritarian parties, consolidating their rule through repression and institutional control, while others fragment and collapse into factional infighting. Factors such as war duration, external intervention, and preexisting organizational structures shape these trajectories. In Uganda and Ethiopia, prolonged wars fostered strong, disciplined rebel movements that later became dominant ruling parties. In contrast, in Libya and the Democratic Republic of Congo, external intervention facilitated quick rebel victories, leaving them organizationally weak and prone to fragmentation [31].

The role of wartime institutions in shaping post-war alliances is also critical. Corradi and Cama (2025) argue that rebel coalitions that implement power-sharing mechanisms during the war are more likely to remain cohesive after victory. In the Syrian Civil War, for instance, alliances that institutionalized horizontal decision-making and shared governance structures, such as the Syrian

[29] Kasfir, "Legacies of Victors' Rebel Governance."
[30] Lyons, "The Importance of Winning."
[31] Lyons.

Democratic Forces, maintained greater stability, whereas fragmented groups like the Free Syrian Army struggled with defections and internal rivalries[32]. These findings suggest that wartime coalition-building strategies can significantly influence post-war political stability.

However, even well-organized rebel victors face constraints in translating wartime governance into durable post-war institutions. Kasfir (2024) emphasizes that while some rebels attempt to institutionalize the governance structures they developed during the war, others abandon them entirely [33]. This discrepancy is shaped by factors such as elite interests, the urgency of power consolidation, and the legacy of military command structures. Even in cases where rebels initially implemented inclusive governance during the war, post-conflict realities often lead them to prioritize control over inclusiveness.

Thus, post-war governance is shaped by the interaction of rebel institutions, alliance cohesion, and political competition. While some victorious insurgents establish stable, albeit often authoritarian, rule, others struggle to maintain unity, increasing the likelihood of renewed violence. Understanding these dynamics is essential for assessing the long-term political trajectories of rebel-led states and the conditions under which power-sharing or autocracy emerges in the aftermath of war.

- ***Institutional Power-sharing***

In this section, I will first explain the logic of institutions in post-war contexts and propose theoretical framework that I will be using in this study. Due to the anarchical nature of civil wars, anything that makes a group more secure threatens the other groups. The groups might be fighting

[32] Corradi and Cama, "Institutions, Power-Sharing, and the Cohesiveness of Rebel Coalitions in the Syrian Civil War."
[33] Kasfir, "Legacies of Victors' Rebel Governance."

together against a common enemy, but this does not resolve their security dilemma. At any point, there is the possibility to turn against each other. The support any group acquires can be threatening for others. This creates a commitment problem. Noone can be sure of others' intentions. The institutions alleviate this problem in two ways: firstly, they make information sharing possible, secondly, they create an enforcement mechanism.

The study of political power sharing goes back to Arend Lijphart's consociational democracy with its four features: a grand coalition, a system of mutual veto power, proportionality, and segmental autonomy provisions [34].. He argued that these features help to stabilize divided societies. When conceptualizing power sharing institutions, scholars have opted to divide them either by content or by impact. Hartzell and Hoodie had divided institutions into four: military, territory, political, and economic [35]. They have looked at the content of the power the institution is sharing.

The political forms of power-sharing are proportional representation in elections, administration, and executive [36]. The territorial power-sharing is the federalism or regional autonomy arrangements. Coercive power distribution is on the military part of the typology. The distribution of economic resources is about economic power sharing. When we look at the examples of different power sharing institutions, those four spheres easily blend into each other. For instance, a certain group might get access to the ministry of finance or ministry of trade which controls the economic resources. How would we categorize such an arrangement? Would it be political or economic? The same dilemma also presents itself if a group gets , for instance, the ministry of defense. In addition to possibly having an economic aspect, the military is probably under the ministry of defense which makes it harder to differentiate these two spheres from political ones.

[34] Lijphart, *Democracy in Plural Societies*.
[35] Hartzell and Hoddie, "Institutionalizing Peace."
[36] Lijphart, *Democracy in Plural Societies*.

When it comes to territorial power sharing, it is very rare that the natural resources are equally distributed in a country. It is very likely that either the regional or central government will have more access to natural resources. In this case the territorial arrangement will also impact the access to economic resources. So, it is not ideal to evaluate the institutions based on the content for these reasons.

Strøm had divided the power sharing institutions into three, based on expected impact on the actor's behavior: inclusive, dispersive, and constraining [37] . Inclusive agreements are designed to include several groups in particular offices and decision-making processes. Dispersive agreements "divide the authority among many actors in a well-defined pattern" [38]. Constraining arrangements limit the power of any group to protect ordinary citizens and vulnerable groups.

The assumption of Strøm is that those institutions are there to protect the interests of citizens. Many share this assumption for post-conflict institutions that those are put in place to guide the society into a more inclusive political system that will prevent future conflicts. However, the data also suggests that if a country has experienced a violent conflict, it is more likely to have another one [39].

After a conflict, it is rare for a democratic and inclusive discussion on institution-building to take place. Instead, the key actors who fought in the war typically determine the structure of governance during peace negotiations, if such negotiations occur at all. If the conflict ends with a decisive victory for one side, negotiations are even less likely, as the dominant faction can impose its preferred order unilaterally.

[37] Strøm et al., "Inclusion, Dispersion, and Constraint."
[38] Strøm et al.
[39] von Einsiedel et al., "Civil War Trends and the Changing Nature of Armed Conflict."

After a conflict, the public often lacks the organizational structure and mechanisms necessary to influence post-war institution-building. Unlike political parties or armed groups that have established hierarchies, leadership, and bargaining power, the public is fragmented and unable to effectively advocate for its interests in negotiations. The only formal way for the public to express its preferences is typically through elections, yet democratic elections rarely take place immediately after a conflict. Instead, an interim government is often established, usually composed of those who held power before the war or the dominant factions from the conflict itself.

Because the public lacks direct mechanisms to shape post-war governance, the negotiations are dictated by the interests of the actors at the bargaining table. These actors, whether former ruling elites, rebel groups, or external mediators, prioritize their own strategic advantages over broader societal concerns. Armed rebel groups, in particular, behave like special interest groups, forming institutions that serve their own interests rather than those of society. As long as the benefits they gain outweigh the societal costs, they are likely to prioritize their own power and resources over public welfare. Consequently, the assumption that post-conflict institutions will be designed to protect and serve the public is often unfounded. As a result, post-war institutions are designed to serve the power brokers rather than reflect the needs of the general population.

This dynamic also extends to rebel groups that are excluded from the negotiation process. Just as the public lacks a voice, marginalized rebel factions are unable to secure their interests through formal agreements. This exclusion increases their incentives to reinitiate conflict, as they may see violence as the only viable path to influence governance and protect their standing. Ultimately, post-conflict settlements are shaped by those at the table, while both the general public and sidelined rebel factions remain largely powerless in determining the new political order.

Given that institutions are typically shaped by a small number of self-interested groups, they are unlikely to be inclusive or designed for the collective good. Recognizing these challenges, I adopt a revised typology of power-sharing institutions, distinguishing between inclusive and exclusive power-sharing arrangements to better capture these dynamics.

Factor	*Inclusive Power-Sharing*	*Exclusive Power-Sharing*
Outcome	Stability, though sometimes inefficient	Conflict recurrence or autocracy
Actors Included	Former rivals with shared governance roles	Only select groups, often excluding key factions
Implementation	Carefully negotiated, often internationally monitored	Imposed by one group, leading to backlash
Success Factors	Guarantees for all major groups, enforcement mechanisms	Clear dominance of a few factions, leading to marginalization

Inclusive power sharing

The inclusive power sharing institutions aim to include diverse groups who would be inadequately represented without such institutions. Inclusive power sharing solves the security dilemma[40] and commitment problems by providing mechanisms for different groups or communities to share political power and participate in decision-making.

An example of inclusive power sharing can be found in the Good Friday Agreement (Belfast Agreement) of 1998, which helped bring an end to decades of conflict in Northern Ireland, known as the Troubles[41]. The agreement established a power-sharing government, known as the Northern Ireland Executive, in which political parties representing both the Catholic nationalist community (which seeks reunification with Ireland) and the Protestant unionist community (which wishes to remain part of the United Kingdom) were included. The executive included ministers from both

[40] Strøm et al., "Inclusion, Dispersion, and Constraint."

[41] "Good Friday Agreement: What Is It?," accessed December 24, 2023, https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-northern-ireland-61968177.

unionist and nationalist parties, and its leadership required cooperation between the First Minister (usually a unionist) and the Deputy First Minister (usually a nationalist). This inclusive power-sharing arrangement aimed to accommodate the diverse identities in Northern Ireland and ensure that both communities had a stake in the governance of the region.

Exclusive power sharing

The institutions are usually understood as a means to limit the impact of the powerful groups into the politics[42]. However, they can be put in place to limit any group to gain more power through institutional arrangements. In the case of post-conflict environments, the institutions could help the hegemon to limit possible future challengers to emerge. I will call the institutions that limit the access to power to certain groups exclusive power sharing institutions. For instance, Turkey had adopted an entry barrier to the National Parliament of 10% of the total votes in an election in 1982. This limit particularly discriminated against pro-Kurdish parties whose vote was between 8-13%. Those institutions still share power but not equally. Exclusive power sharing helps the hegemon to preserve the status quo.

Data Collection

Scope Conditions

This study includes only insurgencies that ended with the victory of a rebel alliance, a stalemate or a negotiated settlement with the government, excluding cases where:

- The rebellion was defeated or co-opted into the ruling system.
- The conflict was dominated by a single rebel organization without alliances

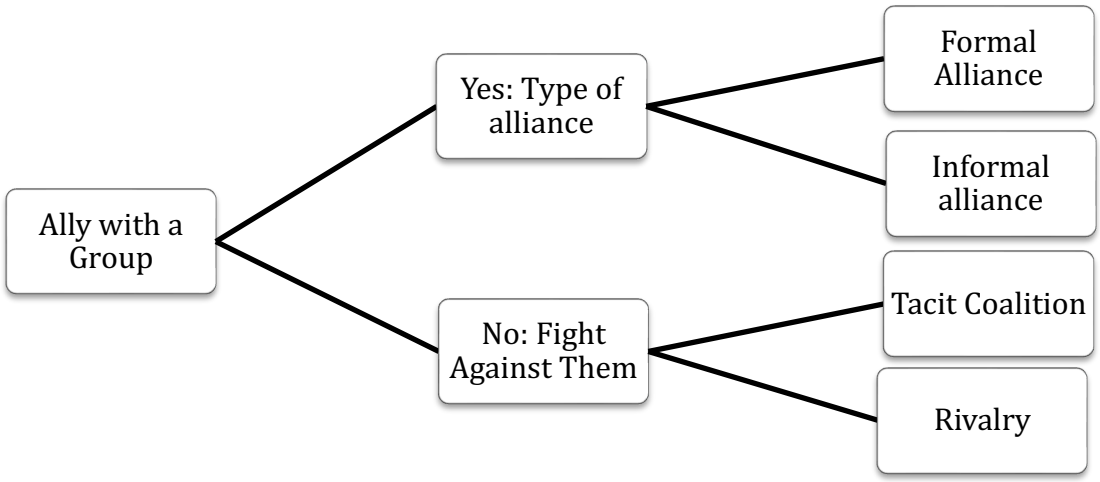
[42] Strøm et al., "Inclusion, Dispersion, and Constraint."

In this study, alliances between armed groups are categorized based on their degree of institutionalization and coordination, distinguishing between formal alliances, informal alliances, and tacit coalitions.

A formal alliance is a structured and publicly recognized coalition between two or more armed groups. These alliances typically involve official agreements, coordinated leadership structures, and long-term strategic commitments. Formal alliances are often announced through public declarations, press conferences, or signed agreements, signaling intentions of sustained cooperation beyond battlefield coordination.

An informal alliance refers to temporary or ad hoc cooperation between armed groups without a formal agreement or structured leadership coordination. These alliances may involve joint military operations, intelligence-sharing, or tactical coordination but lack long-term institutionalized commitments. Informal alliances are often fluid and situational, forming in response to specific battlefield conditions rather than broader strategic objectives.

A tacit coalition is a patterned but undeclared alignment between armed groups that frequently engage in military operations against common enemies within the same time period. Unlike formal alliances, tacit coalitions do not require explicit agreements or joint command structures but



are observable through repeated battlefield collaborations. These coalitions reflect unspoken strategic alignment rather than formalized cooperation.

Figure 1 Possible rebel behavior decisions a group can make after the war starts

Independent Variables

Identity Composition of Alliances (ICA) variable captures the extent to which rebel alliances share ideological and ethnic characteristics. An alliance is classified as fully homogeneous if all its member groups share both a common ideology and a common ethnic identity. It is classified as partially homogeneous if member groups share either ideology or ethnicity but not both. Finally, an alliance is classified as heterogeneous if its member groups share neither ideological nor ethnic ties.

The identity composition of an alliance will be calculated based on the following formula by using the ethnicity, religion, and ideology variables from FORGE dataset [43] :

Let an alliance A be composed of a set of groups $G = \{g1, g2, \dots, gn\}$, where each group g_i has an ideological identity I_i and an ethnic identity E_i

Define the ideological similarity function:

$$I\ (A) = \begin{cases} 1, & if\ \exists I\ such\ that\ I_i = I, \forall g_i = G \\ 0, & otherwise \end{cases}$$

Define the ethnic similarity function:

[43] Braithwaite and Cunningham, "When Organizations Rebel."

$$E\ (A) = \begin{cases} 1, & if\ \exists E\ such\ that\ E_i = E, \forall g_i = G \\ 0, & otherwise \end{cases}$$

The Identity Composition of Alliances (ICA) is then categorized as:

$$ICA(A) = \begin{cases} Fully\ Homogeneous, & if\ I(A) = 1\ and\ E(A) = 1 \\ Partially\ Homogeneous, & if\ I(A) = 1\ xor\ E(A) = 1 \\ Heterogeneous, & if\ I(A) = 0\ and\ E(A) = 0 \end{cases}$$

Power Composition of Alliances (PCA) variable captures the extent to which rebel alliances are balanced or band-wagoned. When a single organization holds a dominant position, exerting control over strategic decision-making and alliance dynamics, characterized by an asymmetric distribution of material capabilities, where no other group within the movement possesses sufficient strength to challenge the leading organization's authority, that alliance is a band-wagoned/ hegemonic alliance. A non-hegemonic alliance is an insurgent or political movement in which no single organization holds uncontested dominance. Instead, multiple organizations within the movement possess comparable levels of power, allowing for leadership competition, internal bargaining, and shifting power dynamics.

The power composition of an alliance will be calculated based on the following formula by using variables from FORGE dataset[44] and Insurgency Spoils Dataset[45].

Let an alliance A consist of a set of organizations $G = \{g1, g2, \ldots, gn\}$, where each organization g_i $h$as three key attributes:

[44] Braithwaite and Cunningham.
[45] Krause, "Insurgent Spoils Dataset Codebook Version 1.20."

- **Membership Size**: S_i
- **Funding**: F_i
- **Popular Support**: P_i

The **relative strength** of each organization is defined as:

$$R_i = \frac{\max(S_i, F_i, P_i)}{\max(S^*, F^*, P^*)}$$

where g^* is the strongest organization in the movement, and S^*, F^*, P^* denote its corresponding attributes.

Bandwagoned vs Balanced Alliances

$$PCA(A) = \begin{cases} Bandwagoned, if \quad \forall g_i \neq g^* < \frac{1}{3} \\ Balanced, otherwise \end{cases}$$

In a hegemonic alliance, no other group reaches at least one-third of the hegemon's strength in membership, funding, or popular support. In a non-hegemonic alliance, at least one challenger exists that holds at least one-third of the strength of the leading group in terms of membership, funding, or popular support.

Dependent Variables

To systematically analyze post-war governance outcomes, I will code several dependent variables that capture the institutional structures emerging after conflict. These variables include key political and institutional characteristics, drawing from existing datasets where available and supplementing gaps with additional coding.

First, I will analyze power-sharing arrangements in peace agreements[46]. Rebel institutions will also be coded, particularly regarding their role in governance after regime change. For elections, Cunningham's dataset on wartime elections provides a useful foundation, allowing me to assess whether and how elections are held post-conflict.

I will also consider broader democratization processes, coding whether the new regime exhibits democratic characteristics. I will examine the type of electoral system, classifying it as majority-plurality, semi-proportional, or proportional representation. Additionally, I will code the form of the executive as presidential, semi-presidential, or parliamentary, reflecting how post-war regimes distribute executive authority. Another crucial dimension is the degree of federalism in political authority, distinguishing between unitary, semi-federal, and fully federal systems to assess how governance structures decentralize power in the aftermath of war.

To capture long-term stability, I will measure the return of fighting, extracting conflict recurrence data from the UCDP-GED dataset. Finally, I will evaluate governance service provisions, using Albert's coding as a reference [47]. By integrating these variables, this study will provide a comprehensive assessment of how different institutional configurations emerge after rebel-led regime changes and how they shape governance stability.

Control Variables

To account for external factors that may influence post-war governance, I will include key control variables such as foreign intervention and external support [48], government strength, and economic capacity. Foreign intervention is crucial to consider because it can alter the balance of power, either

[46] Fontana et al., "The Dataset of Political Agreements in Internal Conflicts (PAIC)"; Högbladh, "UCDP Peace Agreement Dataset Codebook v 22.1."
[47] Albert, "What Is Rebel Governance?"
[48] Meier et al., "External Support in Armed Conflicts."

bolstering a regime's survival or empowering rebel forces to achieve victory. The presence of foreign actors can also shape post-war institutions through direct military or financial support. Additionally, I will control for government strength during the conflict, measured through the size of military personnel and GDP per capita. These variables capture whether rebels must overcome a strong, well-resourced state apparatus or whether they are essentially starting anew after state collapse. In cases where a government is highly institutionalized and has a strong military, rebel groups must engage in prolonged conflict to dismantle state structures. However, when a regime collapses entirely, as seen in Syria following the fall of Bashar al-Assad's government in December 2024, the dynamics of post-conflict governance shift significantly.

Method

The end of the Cold War significantly altered the dynamics of civil conflicts, particularly in terms of rebel conventional capabilities and the balance of power in post-conflict governance. Rebel groups gained increased conventional military strength following the Cold War [49]. This transformation in warfare influenced not only the outcomes of conflicts but also the nature of post-war political settlements. With the weakening of superpower patronage and the decline of proxy wars, many conflicts evolved into more symmetric, conventionally fought civil wars, increasing the likelihood of rebels toppling regimes rather than being absorbed into negotiated settlements. My unit of analysis is the conflict level rather than the group level, as my research focuses on cases where the war ends with the overthrow of the regime and the subsequent need to establish a new political order. This perspective allows me to examine broader institutional outcomes and governance structures rather than the internal dynamics of individual rebel groups. By focusing

[49] Kalyvas, "'New' and 'Old' Civil Wars: A Valid Distinction?"; Kalyvas and Balcells, "International System and Technologies of Rebellion."

on conflict-level transitions, I aim to analyze the mechanisms through which victorious factions consolidate power, determine power-sharing arrangements, and establish new governing institutions in the aftermath of regime change.

As I have laid out in the theory section, I am theorizing 6 possible outcomes based on the rebel relations during the war:

1. If the rebel groups are rivals, I expect to see that conflict lasts long and produce no clear power-sharing institution.

If there is a tacit coalition, and formal or informal alliances:

2. If the alliance is formed between balanced powers (leaders and challengers) and is heterogeneous, I expect to see that conflict lasts long and produce no clear power-sharing institution.
3. If the alliance is formed between balanced powers (leaders and challengers) and is homogeneous, the outcome depends on if the alliance is united or fragmented.
    a. If the alliance is united, they will create inclusive power sharing institutions.
    b. If the alliance is fragmented, there will be flanks and spoilers and the conflict will last longer.
4. If the alliance is formed between non-balanced powers (hegemon and subordinates) and is heterogeneous, I expect to see exclusive power sharing institutions to be created.
5. If the alliance is formed between non-balanced powers (hegemon and subordinates) and is homogeneous, I expect to see no power sharing institutions to be created.

Quantitative analysis - Multinomial Logistic Regression

To analyze the factors influencing post-conflict governance outcomes, I employ Multinomial Logistic Regression (MLR), a statistical method suited for categorical dependent variables with

more than two discrete outcomes. In this study, the dependent variable consists of three possible post-conflict institutional arrangements: no power-sharing, inclusive power-sharing, and exclusive power-sharing. Since these categories are nominal rather than ordinal, MLR is the appropriate choice, as it allows for the estimation of the probability of each outcome relative to a baseline category.

Model:

For an outcome variable O with K categories $(k = 1,2, \dots, K)$ the probability of observing category k for observation i is given by:

$$P(O_i = k) = \frac{\exp(\beta_{0k}+\beta_{1k}I_i+\beta_{2k}P_i+\beta_{3k}(I_iP_i)+\beta_{4k}U_i)}{\sum_{j=1}^{K-1}\exp(\beta_{0j}+\beta_{1j}I_i+\beta_{2j}P_i+\beta_{3j}(I_iP_i)+\beta_{4j}U_i)}$$

Where:

- $P(Oi = k)$: The probability that outcome O for observation i is in category k.
- β_{0k}: Intercept for category k.
- I_i: Identity composition for observation i (categorical: heterogeneous , partially homogenous, homogeneous).
- P_i: Power composition for observation i (binary: balanced = 1, band-wagoned = 0).
- U_i: Unity within groups for observation i (binary: united = 1, fragmented = 0).
- $\beta_{1k}, \beta_{2k}, \beta_{3k}, \beta_{4k}$ Coefficients for the independent variables and interactions for category k.

For the baseline category (k = 0):

$$P(O_i = 0) = \frac{1}{\sum_{j=1}^{K-1} \exp\left(\beta_{0j} + \beta_{1j} I_i + \beta_{2j} P_i + \beta_{3j}(I_i P_i) + \beta_{4j} U_i\right)}$$

Conclusion

The study examines rebel behavior, distinguishing formal, informal, and tacit alliances, driven by identity (ethnicity, ideology, religion), common enemies, or power calculations. Ideological and ethnic homogeneity facilitates cohesive alliances, whereas heterogeneous alliances face instability risks post-conflict. Power dynamics significantly influence alliance stability and decision-making processes, affecting the likelihood of power-sharing institutions being established.

This research theorizes four primary outcomes based on identity composition and power dynamics within rebel alliances: fragmented anarchy, conditional inclusivity, hegemonic exclusivity, and dominant stability. Fragmented anarchy emerges in heterogeneous, balanced alliances characterized by internal fragmentation and competition. Conditional inclusivity appears in homogeneous, balanced alliances capable of inclusive governance if unity persists, though fragmentation remains a risk. Hegemonic exclusivity occurs within heterogeneous hegemonic alliances, where exclusive institutions consolidate the hegemon's power and manage resistance. Dominant stability characterizes homogeneous hegemonic alliances, where a single group consolidates power without needing formal institutions.

The research employs a detailed typology of rebel alliances based on identity and power composition, proposing a decision-making framework predicting post-conflict governance outcomes. It emphasizes that hegemonic alliances typically establish institutions to maintain status quo dynamics, while balanced, homogeneous alliances are more inclined toward inclusive power-sharing, provided unity persists.

The paper also scrutinizes institutional power-sharing, categorizing arrangements as inclusive, promoting stability by representing diverse groups, or exclusive, reinforcing hegemonic power

structures. Data collection methodologies include variables assessing identity and power composition from existing datasets, with multinomial logistic regression and network analysis methods to evaluate the probability of specific governance outcomes. Control variables such as foreign intervention, government strength, and economic capacity are included to refine analytical precision.

Ultimately, this research contributes significantly to understanding the relationship between wartime alliance dynamics and post-conflict political institutions, and aims to provide essential insights for policymaking for ensuring stability and mitigating conflict recurrence in post-war societies.

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