Rebel Rivalry and The Strategic Nature of Rebel Group Ideology and Demands

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Abstract

How does the presence of multiple combatants affect rebel groups' ideological positioning? Although violent forms of inter-group conflict have been widely studied in the civil war literature, rebel groups' strategic use of ideology has so far received scarce scholarly attention. We argue that the pressure of competition forces rebel groups to differentiate themselves ideologically from their rivals to maximize their chances of survival and success. Rebel groups strive to set themselves apart by offering unique ideological products to their supporters and recruits. Thus, we contend that rebel groups are more likely to modify their ideologies and demands from the government in the face of competition from rival groups. We test this theory using novel data collected from rebel group manifestos and public statements. Our findings suggest that groups are more likely to shift their ideology and modify their demands from the government as the number of rival groups increases.

Key Words: Rebel Group Ideology; Rebel Rivalry; Civil War; Item Response Theory.

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Introduction

How does the presence of multiple combatants affect rebel groups' ideological positioning? Multi-actor civil wars present unique challenges to rebel groups as they compete over limited economic, political, and military resources. Previous literature on multi-actor civil wars exclusively focused on inter-group violence as a strategy rebel groups have used to eliminate competition. Yet, findings also suggest that inter-group violence is often an ineffective and costly way of eliminating rivals (Cunningham, Bakke, and Seymour, 2012; Fjelde and Nilsson, 2012). An understudied topic in this strand of literature is the non-violent and tactical strategies rebel groups pursue to stand out among rival groups.

In this paper, we argue that rebel groups differentiate themselves ideologically from rival groups to attract the support of the minority group they seek to represent, to mobilize potential recruits, and to communicate a distinct message to current and potential external supporters. Rebel groups rely on their constituency and external supporters for military, political, and economic resources such as guns, funds, shelter, intelligence, and legitimacy. Groups that successfully survive in a multi-actor conflict are able to do so by guaranteeing access to the resources local population and external actors provide. Ideological differentiation, we argue, is a cost-effective strategy groups pursue to attract supporters. Groups purposefully carve out a distinguishable ideological niche for themselves in a competitive environment. Thus, unlike prior work, we do not see rebel group ideology as exogenous or fixed. We instead claim that group ideology and demands that accompany that ideology are strategically set and reset in the face of rivalry.

The Fatah-Hamas rivalry is a case in point. Hamas emerged as a rival to Fatah in the late 1980s with a distinctly different ideology. As the Cold War was coming to an end, Hamas slowly differentiated itself from various left-wing nationalist Palestinian groups, most notably Fatah, by offering an Islamist alternative. This way, it was able to attract the support of a significant group of Palestinians that prioritized their Islamic identity as well as various

external supporters such as private donors from the Gulf region and the government of Iran. The demands Hamas initially made also distinguished it from Fatah and other groups under Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) as it rejected the two-state solution. Fatah, on the other hand, as a countermove, took ideologically distinct steps to protect its legitimacy and dominance, choosing to moderate its stand. Fatah-led PLO denounced violence and embraced diplomacy with Israel seeking to present itself internationally as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.

Therefore, we contend that rebel groups are more likely to modify their ideologies and demands from the government in the face of competition from rival groups. We test this theory using novel data collected from rebel group manifestoes and public statements distributed between 1980 and 2008. Findings from 346 rebel groups suggest that groups are more likely to shift their ideology and modify their demands from the government as the number of rival groups increase.

We define rebel group ideology as "a set of ... ideas that identify a constituency, the objectives pursued on behalf of that group, and a program of action" (Sanin and Wood, 2014, p. 213). We perceive demands to be part of, and therefore, in line with, a group's ideological positioning. We emphasize the symbiotic relationship between a rebel group and its constituency. Competition with other groups in essence is a competition for constituency support and all the potential economic and military benefits that support will bring. Our study is one of the first in the literature to suggest that rebel groups' ideologies and demands are not set and that they are prone to strategic shifts in the face of rivalry. We also provide new data to quantitatively examine these shifts. The study will be of use to scholars and practitioners interested in the changing nature of rebel group ideology, demands, and multi-actor civil wars in general.

The paper will proceed as follows. First, we discuss the previous literature on rebel rivalry and ideology. Then we present our theoretical argument in regards to the effects of rivalry on rebel group ideology. Next, we introduce our new dataset and the variables we

use in the analyses. We discuss our empirical results and conclude with some theoretical and practical implications of our findings.

Consequences of Rebel Rivalry: Feeling the Strain

Competition between armed non-state actors is a line of research drawing significant attention from civil war and terrorism literatures. Many studies argue that rivalry intensifies the violence groups inflict not only on rival groups (Fjelde and Nilsson, 2012; Lilja and Hultman, 2011; Philips, 2015) but also on civilians (Bloom, 2005; Chenoweth, 2010; Nemeth, 2013; Wood and Kathman, 2015). Numerous works suggest that violence is a strategic choice for armed groups (Bloom, 2005; Boyle, 2009; Kaplan, 2014; Conrad and Greene, 2015; Metelits, 2009; Philips, 2015). Armed groups are reliant on a limited pool of military, political, and economic resources to survive and pursue their goals. Competing for the same resource base, groups may clash for access to territory and recruits (Fjelde and Nilsson, 2012; Philips, 2015). They may direct hostility on civilians to induce their forceful recruitment (Wood, 2014) or instill fear and ensure a wider audience for media coverage (Bloom, 2005; Conrad and Greene, 2015).

The literature on terrorism pays particular attention to the concept of outbidding, where, in the presence of "multiple groups, violence is a technique to gain credibility and win the public relation competition" (Bloom, 2005, p. 95). In fact, outbidding is one reason group survival is put at risk (Young and Dugan, 2014) and it forces groups to find ways to deal with this challenge. The obvious answer is more violence. The outbidding literature argues that as groups face greater competition, they increase the frequency (Bloom, 2005; Boyle, 2009; Nemeth, 2013) or intensity of terror attacks (Conrad and Greene, 2015) for media attention and access to resources. Some works see violent outbidding as a natural extension of ideological extremism (Conrad and Greene, 2015; Jaeger et al., 2015; Nemeth, 2013). Through violent extremism, or in other words terror, groups can publicly differentiate their

"brand" (Conrad and Greene, 2015, p. 546) and thereby have greater access to ideologically motivated recruits, local and third-party support (Conrad and Greene, 2015; Walter, 2014; Polo and Gleditsch, 2014). That is, terror serves as a credible signal of group's commitment to the cause.

Lichbach (1995) in his seminal "Rebel's Dilemma" suggests that new dissidents may seek to differentiate themselves ideologically from old dissidents to access local public goods and carve out a space for themselves in the conflict. Increasing the level of violence, however, is not the only means of differentiation. Yet, studies which rigorously test the relationship between inter-group competition and ideological differentiation are sparse. We argue that while some groups will choose to cater to those holding extreme views, others will appeal to a moderate constituency. In this paper, using novel data on armed group ideologies collected from group manifestos, programs, and statements, we demonstrate that increased competition drives groups to differentiate themselves visibly from one another through ideological polarization.

While outbidding of terror can be used as a tool for some groups to distinguish themselves (Bloom, 2005; Chenoweth, 2010; Conrad and Greene, 2015), other types of strategies groups pursue in the face of competition are understudied. Some groups are dependent on the support of the local population in maintaining access to a multitude of resources (Petersen, 2001; Weinstein, 2007). Under these conditions, some rival groups facing competition may choose to pursue non-violent strategies to draw the support of the population to their organization (Brathwaite, 2013; Clauset et al., 2010; Metelits, 2009, 2016; Wood, 2014). Representing a minority population in the legitimate political order can help groups harness the loyalty of this population. Studies that find a positive relationship between inter-group rivalry and the likelihood of negotiated settlements (Ogutcu, 2015) and the likelihood of group participation in the electoral process (Brathwaite, 2013) are supportive of this argument. Our work taps into this literature as shifts in ideology may be the means through which some groups strive for non-violence. Advocating a unique ideological point may bring supporters but if it is

accompanied by downgrading demands, then the group may have a seat at the negotiation table. Thus moderation of demands is a strategic choice that some armed groups make to be suitable candidates for negotiation. While separatist demands leave little room for bargaining, demanding sociopolitical rights for an ethnic minority is an issue two parties can negotiate on. Furthermore, ideological moderation is also a conscious choice as a group gets closer to the prospect of becoming a legitimate party.

While some other works recognize the diversity of ideology (Jaeger et al., 2015; Nemeth, 2013) and demands (Cunningham, Bakke, and Seymour, 2012) among competing groups, they are generally assumed to be fixed. Using a dynamic and novel ideology and demands data, we demonstrate that competition forces some groups to outbid others by adopting different ideologies and demands. This way, we challenge the notion that ideology is set and static. Indeed, our aim in this paper is to show that ideology is endogenous to conflict dynamics.

Outbidding by Competing Rebels: Branding by Ideology and Demands

Civil wars are, in very basic terms, challenges posed by armed non-state actors to change the status quo. To do this, rebels appeal to their constituencies to generate the resources necessary to either defeat the government or force it to make concessions. Competition among rebel organizations who seek to gain political leverage implies, at best, shared resources. Where there are multiple rebel groups operating in the same context, the question becomes "who has the right to speak on behalf of the constituency?" It is a continuous fight to gain the upper hand vis a vis one's competitor to be the sole political voice of the community they seek to represent (Pearlman, 2009). The struggle between rebel groups is over the distribution of limited material and non-material resources that their community has to offer (Bloom, 2004). For rebel groups, a multi-party conflict becomes a battle to outdo one's rival

and gain the loyalty of supporters and potential recruits at the expense of the other.

When Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) emerged to fight for Eritrean independence, challenging the monopoly of Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF), this instigated a fierce competition between the two organizations to secure the loyalty of the Eritreans. What made this rivalry especially acute was the indistinguishability of their demands and ideology at the onset from one another. In this case, both wanted independence from Ethiopia within a Marxist-Leninist framework, an ideology that appealed to Eritreans, especially the working class in Eritrea. Eventually, the groups violently clashed to eliminate the competition. But, that was not the only strategy adopted by the groups to gain a competitive edge in the conflict. EPLF sought to differentiate itself from ELF the moment it emerged to win the Eritreans over. Indeed, muscle force is rarely the only means rebel groups use to pursue their competition over common resources. In fact, intergroup fighting often comes with risks. It may cause the weakening of groups or their elimination at the hands of their rival or the government (Young and Dugan, 2014). Thus, rebel groups may resort to product differentiation through an ideology with features such as goals, demands, and tactics distinct from its competitors as a substitute or, in some cases, as a complement to muscle force.

Differentiation in economics describes the situation where the firm provides a distinct product with features and attributes unmatched by others. This helps firms outrival other brands, gain customer loyalty and also reduces consumer sensitivity to price shocks in the market. Rebel groups that do not face rivals have already been successful in joining their constituency under their own organization and possess monopolized access to military and political resources that give them an advantage on the battlefield and the negotiation table. Rebel groups operating in multi-party civil conflicts, however, have to compete for those resources. Like business firms which seek to maximize profits by offering differentiated products in competitive environments, rebel groups operating in constrained environments can maximize non-material and material resources by appealing to prospective supporters and recruits. They can differentiate their ideology to secure the allegiance of their constituency

in pursuit of outbidding their rivals. By developing alternative strategies, new dissidents, for example, can divide older dissidents that possess monopolized access to a constituency and the resources they can provide (Lichbach, 1995). In a similar manner, existing dissidents can shift positions and demands to make themselves unique from others and cater to specific interests. Moreover, differentiation increases brand loyalty, as it matches the supporters with the group that offers their ideal. Thus, support becomes more resilient (inelastic), making it less likely the supporters will switch to alternatives during setbacks (Conrad and Greene, 2015; Pinson and Brosdahl, 2014). Thus, in multi-party civil conflicts, product differentiation is an optimal strategy which helps groups achieve their objectives.

As stated in the introduction, when referring to the ideology of a rebel group, we adopt the definition provided by Sanin and Wood (2014, p. 213): "a set of more or less systematic ideas that identify a constituency, the objectives pursued on behalf of that group, and a program of action." Prescribing to a distinct ideology encapsulates the group's constituency, strategies, tactics, and, most importantly, their objective in conflict, in other words, their demand from the state and/or the international system. It is a shortcut to communicating the group's raison d'être to all audiences they seek to reach including supporters, allies, and enemies.

The ownership of distinct ideologies helps rebel groups accomplish several objectives. First, moving to a unique point on an ideological scale guarantees a rebel group a set of supporters and recruits who identify solely with that ideological point. Just like political parties that become partisan and polarized in competitive settings (Coffey, 2011; Downs, 1957), rebel groups aim to carve a niche for themselves in a heavily crowded market. This helps the rebel group gain access to the financial, informational resources, and recruitment opportunities provided by that particular ideologically motivated constituency. For example, what helped EPLF gain more supporters was its adoption of an inclusive approach which challenged the pro-Muslim stand of ELF. Religious groups are not ideological substitutes of secular groups and vice versa. Given EPLF's stand, many non-Muslim, or moderate Muslim

Eritreans who felt alienated from ELF automatically defected to EPLF.

Adhering to a certain ideology also helps rebel groups signal their resolve. Rebels and their constituency are in a codependent relationship once a civil conflict starts. In return for their backing, potential supporters expect compensation: protection, a range of public goods, and eventually, a change in the status quo (Arjona, 2016; Mampilly, 2011; Wickham-Crowley, 1987). In addition to the inherent dangers of being associated with an armed uprising against the government, prospective rebel group supporters face asymmetric information problems. Civilians are fundamentally uncertain about the level of effort that insurgents will exert to accomplish their set goals (Kydd and Walter, 2002). They face the risk of allying with an opportunistic group, one that extracts resources from the population without producing any change in the state quo (Weinstein, 2007). Given this risk, civilians prefer to ally themselves with groups that are capable of providing both immediate benefits and a credible commitment to transform the status quo, shunning groups that are unable or unwilling to provide them. As the number of rebel groups operating in a region increases, exit options become increasingly available to each prospective supporter. Consequently, competing groups will be forced to signal their commitment, resolve and their ability to deliver to prospective supporters.

Ideologies are a shortcut to overcome these informational problems. Ideologies help rebel groups communicate to potential supporters and recruits that their proposed changes to the status quo are the best way to restructure a new order or that their tactics are the best way to achieve victory (Budge, 1994; Petrocik, 1996; Seymour, Bakke, and Cunningham, 2016; Walter, 2014). Different rebel groups will consider specific issues more or less salient than their counterparts, which, in turn, will signal the policy priorities their intended new order will pursue. In this sense, insurgent groups have incentives to emphasize their ideological differences by moving towards a distinct, extreme or moderate, ideological space. Rebel organizations thus often publicly demonstrate their ideology and criticize others to signal their resolve and righteousness in achieving certain objectives.

How do groups pick an ideological point? Some groups see extreme ideology as a potential tool to increase their public awareness, public support, prestige; in a crowded market, a so-called market share. It signals the group's dedication to a cause, allowing them to attract committed fighters to their movement. For groups that move towards an extreme ideological space in the face of rivalry, terror has been a frequently utilized tool. The literature extensively shows that rebel organizations increase their terrorist actions amidst acute competition. In particular, violence is a signal used by groups to demonstrate their capacity to accomplish a transformation in the status quo (Bloom, 2005; Conrad and Greene, 2015; Hoffman, 2001; Nemeth, 2013; Walter, 2014; Wood and Kathman, 2015). An extremist agenda may equip groups with the means to achieve better outcomes. Therefore, it is a strategic choice. For example, faith-based groups may advocate an extremist agenda to overcome organizational challenges that other groups may be exposed to such as the overcoming of collective action problem (afterlife rewards) or minimizing the adverse selection problem in recruitment with better screening (Weinstein, 2007; Walter, 2014). Groups with extremist ideologies are more likely to test their recruits with costly inductions such as heavy ideological training, attendance in religious seminaries, fighting without weapons, social alienation and entrapment that include renouncing family and friends who do not espouse the same ideology (Walter, 2014). The result is committed soldiers that can signal resolve to local populations. This indoctrination leads to more lethality (Berman and Laitin, 2009) which may force the government's hand in conceding to the group (Thomas, 2014).

Moderate ideologies, on the other hand, promise followers a more legitimate and reconciliatory new order or incorporation into the existing legitimate order (Jones and Libicki, 2008). Moderate groups are more likely to appeal to international audiences, find sympathy and support which can bring external patrons, diaspora help and donations to the group's cause. And unlike extremist groups, they face fewer challenges in the form of facing coordinated international efforts for their defeat. Indeed, extreme ideologies are considered to be a threat not only to the host country but also to the international world order when such ideologies

diffuse across borders by serving as an example to potential dissidents and attracting foreign fighters. Moderate groups are less likely to be interpreted as a global threat. While both ISIS and Al-Qaida sought a global caliphate, both groups diverged in visible ways in the strategies adopted after 2014. When ISIS gains began to challenge the Jabhat al-Nusra, an affiliate of Al-Qaida in Iraq, and as the jihadist groups pledged allegiance to ISIS, Al Qaida not only faced an existentialist threat but to its claims to be the representative of global jihad was seriously undermined (Lister, 2017). It was then that Al-Qaida began to criticize its competitor for its brutal sectarian practices in Iraq and Syria, and began a conscious effort to differentiate itself from ISIS by emphasizing slower steps, local insurgency and dawa (Lister, 2017). For example, AQIM leader Abu Musab Abdul Wadud's order to his forces in Mali was:

> *"...the current baby is in its first days, crawling on its knees, and it has not yet stood on its two legs. If we really want it to stand on its own two feet in the world full of enemies waiting to pounce, we must ease its burden, take it by the hand, help it, support it until it stands. ...One of the wrong policies that we think you carried out is the extreme speed with which you applied Shariah... Our previous experience that applying Shariah this way... will lead people rejecting the religion and engender hatred towards the mujahideen"* (Callimachi, 2013).

Though the ISIS' model of hard stand as opposed to Al-Qaida's theological debates over issues and its traditionalism at first attracted a pool of committed jihadists globally, Al-Qaida's growing sensitivity to the local dynamics soon provided it with a shield against external threats that ISIS lacked after it was targeted by third party states and suffered losses in Syria (Lister, 2017). But interestingly enough, competition not only wedged the two groups apart but also the mother organization Al-Qaida from its affiliate, Jabhat Al-Nusra in the recent years (Roberts, 2016). The latter explained its efforts to delink itself from Al-Qaida as a way clean its reputation from past brutality and gain sympathy from domestic and international audiences. As this example clearly demonstrates, political entrepreneurs

brand and rebrand continuously to secure the loyalty of audiences, and make gains at the expense of their competitors.

Ideological differentiation is important, but is not the only tool available to rebel groups in the strategy of branding. Perhaps the most distinct component of distinguishing a rebel group from others is their demand from the state. This is not only the ultimate goal of the rebel group, it also lies at the core of what attracts potential supporters to the group in the first place. While some ethnic-nationalist groups might demand increased democratization or federalism, others will advocate for territorial independence for their constituents. We argue that rivalry will force groups to adapt their demands as another means of product differentiation to maximize current and future resources. But why would rebel groups have the incentive to modify demands in multi-actor settings?

One explanation comes from looking at government incentives when it faces multiple rebel groups, that is, in competitive environments. Negotiating with a group that adopts violence is not preferable as it signals the government's reputation as weak and sets a precedent for future challengers to turn to violence (Walter, 2006). However, fighting with several rebel groups forces governments to make such strategic choices they otherwise would not prefer. Governments can use selective cooptation of rebel groups to sow fragmentation. Staniland (2012) shows that fratricidal flipping is a common survival strategy among competing identity groups. For instance, thousands of rehabilitated Chechen fighters were used in counterinsurgency operations in Russia (Lyall, 2010). This strategy was also successfully applied in the Tajik civil war where the head of the state made private bargains with individual warlords to fight against excluded insurgent commanders (Driscoll, 2012). Side-switching allows governments to weaken existing rebel groups by pitting them against their accommodated competitors who may be more experienced and informed about the way their foes operate. Second, selective accommodation leaves fewer groups for the government to fight. This means governments can allocate their resources to deal more effectively with the remaining threat. It also means regime concessions do not have to be shared by all. But

what are the implications of this for rebel groups?

In a competitive environment where the government faces incentives to make concessions strategically and only to a fewer groups, it becomes imperative for groups to signal their acceptability as a credible bargaining partner as opposed to others to be the receiver of any concessions. Moderating demands serve such a purpose. Not only moderate demands are more likely to fall within the range of what is acceptable to the government, but groups which shift towards moderation are able to reveal information about their type with the nature of their demands. Some groups that pursue independence may start seeking federalism whereas groups that pursue a federal state might advocate certain political or socioeconomic rights instead. The prospect of entering the political order through which one gains recognition and legitimacy domestically and internationally is an attractive offer. Thus rebel groups may gain political concessions just because they have an ideology and a set of demands that are more acceptable to the government compared to their competitors. In return, moderate followers are likely to channel their support to the group that promises them political representation not only during the conflict, but, should negotiations succeed, during peacetime as well. This can incentivize groups to take steps towards moderation. Indeed, Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), a rebel group seeking independence for Mindanao region along with two other groups, Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and Abu Sayyaf Group, managed to increase its bargaining chance with the government by softening its stance and changing its rhetoric away from that of its rivals. First it moved away from being ideologically identified as an Islamist group, and it modified its demands towards regional autonomy (Abuza, 2003). The strategy worked. Through this differentiation, MNLF outbid its rivals at the bargaining table.

But moderation is not the only available strategy in such competitive settings. Though certain tactics, discourses and demands automatically disqualify groups from negotiations, an increase in the quantity and extremity of demands can come with other benefits. Such a shift provides groups with the opportunity to do negative campaigning about their rivals with

lower or fewer demands to be marketed as sellouts to the relevant constituencies (Kydd and Walter, 2002). These groups often stress their ideological hardening and take violent actions to prevent peace, discredit moderates, and show the constituency that they can credibly deliver better dividends than cheap concessions. The refusal to budge on demands and the willingness to continue violence despite knowing that the group will not be selected for a seat at the bargaining table signals a deep level of commitment at a time when its rivals may be settling for little. This commitment to the cause will alleviate the informational problem in the constituency (Conrad and Greene, 2015), matching the hard-core believers with the appropriate group.

In summary, as the number of groups increase and each group seeks to carve out a space to maximize its support, we should see some changes in rebel groups ideologies and sets of demands. Moreover, the incentive to differentiate oneself from its rivals not only will push groups to seek modification in ideology and demands, but the urge to occupy a unique space, distinct and differentiable from others' chosen strategy, will lead to market polarization. After all, the more different one is from its rivals, the more identifiable its brand, and henceforth, the more resilient its brand loyalty will be. Where groups come closer to one another in ideology and demands, they become indistinguishable from one another, in that case, the strategy of shifting one's position does not help outbid one's rivals, which all happen to be look alikes. Thus we expect two trends in a competitive market: a continuous modification of both ideology and demands as well as their polarization.

H1: An increase in the number of rival groups in the conflict increases the likelihood of any modification in rebel group ideologies on the market.

H2: An increase in the number of rival groups in the conflict increases the likelihood of any modification in rebel group demands on the market.

H3: An increase in the number of rival groups in the conflict increases polarization of rebel group ideologies on the market.

H4: An increase in the number of rival groups in the conflict increases polarization of

rebel group demands on the market.

Research Design

In this section, we proceed by first outlining our coding rules and then describe how we operationalized and measured our dependent variables, rebel group ideology and rebel group demands. Existing work attempting to measure time-variant rebel ideology and demands is scant, though we acknowledge the initiative and progress made by San-Akca (2016). For our project, we have assembled our own dataset of group demands while undertaking a more comprehensive coding of ideologies, composed of 19 components. Our coding draws its main inspiration from a well-known Comparative Manifesto Project Database (Volkens et al., 2018), or just CMP, as it is usually referred to in Comparative Politics literature. For CMP, a team of coders analyzed party manifestos at each election event and coded percentage of the manifesto devoted to a specific issue (e.g., environmental issues – positive mentions, or military – negative mentions).[1] Unfortunately, such coding approach cannot be directly applied to rebel groups since there are no separating events such as elections that we could have used in tracking rebel group manifestos and changes in them. Unlike the democratic process that is regulated by formal rules, civil wars are typically quite messy and characterized by an atmosphere of "lawlessness". This implies that changes in rebel groups' ideologies follow a more random pattern than changes in parties' ideologies.

We approached this issue by using formal coding procedures: we searched all publicly available information including, but not limited to, official manifestos, constitutions, group congress reports, declarations, interviews with and statements of rebel groups and their leader cadres. If we could not find any, we relied on Lexis-Nexis and secondary sources (e.g., academic papers and books) in coding ideologies and demands of rebel groups.[2] We recognize that this coding approach is prone to omission of information (situation when the

[1] To be precise, CMP coders first classified quasi-sentences in each document in accordance with 56 predefined categories; percentages are just proportions of categories in a given manifesto.

[2] For further information for the coding sources and procedures, please refer to the on-line appendix.

group did change its demands or ideology, but we failed to find information that reflects it), but without separating events like elections in CMP project, our approach is likely the most appropriate one.

Our dataset has the total of 19 ideological components.[3] Simply, we used dichotomous coding for the ideologies of rebel groups: 1 if the issue was mentioned in the group program, which was declared in a manifesto, or an official statement, and 0 if the issue was not mentioned. The reason for choosing dichotomous instead of percentage coding as in the case of CMP was data availability: for many groups, we could not locate written manifestos and had to resort to secondary sources which made CMP coding scheme infeasible to implement. To code the demand variable, we sorted the rebel groups into 5 categories: a) groups that demand policy concessions from governments, such as better provision of human rights, political incorporation etc. or simply want return of the status-quo before the event that initiated the conflict, b) groups that demand territorial autonomy, but NOT sovereignty, c) groups that demand territorial independence (sovereignty), d) groups that demand regime change, e) groups that demand global regime modifications. We treat this variable as ordinal as the breadth of demands increases in each category in an ascending order.

Finally, we need to address the issue of inter-coder reliability. Thrice, we circulated the same coding to different coders. We obtained a high correlation in coding among them. We reckon that the reason for high inter-coder reliability is the coding procedure: there is very little ambiguity in dichotomous indicators of ideological components, as well as there is very little "space for maneuver" in coding demands.

We include all 346 insurgent groups listed in UCDP dataset (Gleditch, 2012) from 1980-2008. Our starting year is determined by the scarcity of information on group ideologies and demands before 1980. Since we are interested in the changes in the market based on competition, we structure the data in a country-year format.

[3]List of all ideological components: Nationalism, Ethnonationalism, Regional Nationalism, Communism, Socialism, Left-leaning, Anti-communism, Marxism, Maoism, Cuban Communism, Other-type Communism, Secular, Religious and if religious then Sharia, Shia Extremism, Christian Extremism, Other-type Religious. Also, we coded Revolutionary Democracy and Social Democracy.

Dependent Variables

Coding rebel group ideology is not straightforward. The reason is that political scientists typically use the term "ideology" to describe one or at most 2-3 major dimensions at which candidates' or parties' positions are located. Typically, one generic "left-right" ideological dimension is used. The problem here is that datasets like CMP include plenty of different ideological indicators, which presumably are all influenced by the aggregate "left-right" ideological position of a political actor. In this paper, we aggregate our 19 ideological measurements into two generic dimensions using restricted Bayesian measurement model similar to one used in Bakker (2009) and Bakker, Hill, and Moore (2016). Our 2 dimensions are "left-right" and "religious-secular". Here, we describe our approach in more general terms while a detailed model specification is relegated to the on-line appendix. We start with a dataset that consists of J ideological indicators (columns) and I observations (rows)[4], with small j and i letters standing for specific ideological indicator and specific observation. We assume that our 19 indicators of rebel ideology follow Bernoulli distribution with parameter p:

$$y_{ij} \sim \text{Bern}(p_{ij})$$

where p_{ij} is modeled using logistic link function as:

$$p_{ij} = [1 + exp(-(\beta_{j1}x_i + \beta_{j2}s_i - \beta_{j3}))]^{-1}$$

where x_i and s_i stand for left-right and religious ideology for observation i (rebel group in a specific year). The model was estimated in Bayes using Gibbs Sampler.[5] The prior distributions for βs are all uniform distributions, but with different support since the model is restricted and some βs are assumed to be only positive (or negative) for specific ideological indicators. We ran 50000 iterations of 3 chains with the first 40000 iterations discarded. To

[4]Substantively, the observation in this dataset is a rebel group-year.

[5]We provide JAGS (Plummer, 2017) code in supplementary materials.

evaluate the convergence of chains we employed Gelman-Rubin diagnostics (Gelman and Rubin, 1992), a fairly standard tool in Bayesian statistics. For each parameter, the upper confidence interval of diagnostics did not exceed the value of 1.1, indicating the convergence of chains. We provide other model-related information such as item characteristic surfaces and detailed distributions of left-right and religious-secular ideology for each rebel group in the on-line appendix and supplementary materials. Once we obtained the estimates of ideologies on the left-right and religious-secular dimensions, we calculated the two-dimensional vector representation for each group as

$$Ideology = \sqrt{(left - right)^2 + (religious - secular)^2}$$

akin to the way directional theory treats voters' preferences (e.g., Rabinowitz and Macdonald, 1989).

Our hypotheses employ four dependent variables; two of these variables are constructed using the same primary variable, rebel group ideology, while the other two are constructed using the variable rebel group demands. For Hypothesis 1, we calculated the change in the market with respect to rebel ideologies. If any of the rebel groups in a specific country-year changed its ideology compared to the previous year, we coded this as 1. We have 126 out of 717 observations where there is some ideological change by any group. For Hypothesis 3, we calculated ideological polarization in the market for that year. To measure polarization, we used the mean absolute deviation in rebel ideologies in each country-year since ideology is a continuous variable. For Hypothesis 2, we calculated the change in the market with respect to demands. If there was any change in any of the rebel groups' demands in that specific country-year, we coded this as 1. We have 48 out of 717 observations where we observed demand changes. Finally, for Hypothesis 4, we calculated the polarization of rebel group demands in the market for that country-year. To measure polarization of demands, we calculated the mean absolute deviation of demand variable in each country-year.

Independent Variable and Control Variables

Our main independent variable is the number of rival rebel groups. We follow the approach that perceives all rebel groups in a country fighting against a common government as competitors (Findley and Young, 2012; Metelits, 2009). To generate the independent variable we calculated the number of these groups in each country-year, as this is the unit of analysis.

We use several control variables that are typically encountered in civil conflict literature. First, we control for aggregate rebel group size; data on rebel size estimates are taken from Non-State Actor Dataset (NSA Dataset hereafter) (Cunningham, Gleditsch, and Salehyan, 2013). We can expect to see more changes in the market when higher rebel strength forces the government's hand in accommodation. This will induce some groups to make moderations in ideology and demands. Second, we control for ethnolinguistic fractionalization. With respect to polarization, *ethnolinguistic fractionalization index (ELF)* provides a baseline "space for maneuver". Countries with high ELF index are more likely to have polarized rebel groups since they need to appeal to different constituencies. We also expect a high ELF index to decrease the probability of changes in ideology and demands. This variable comes from Fearon (2003). Other control variables that we use are maximum *conflict intensity* in a country-year from UCDP Dyadic Dataset where we capture the number of battle-related deaths (Harbom, Melander, and Wallensteen, 2008) and conflict duration from NSA Dataset, as longer and more intense conflicts are more likely to force groups to create and recreate branding to stay afloat in the face of competition. We also use Polity score and Polity score squared from Polity IV project (Marshall, Gurr, and Jaggers, 2017) to capture regime type, as some studies argue that the prevalence of political competition in democracies leads to an increase in the number of groups with diverse ideologies (Chenoweth, 2010). We also use logged GDP per capita in constant 1963 dollars as a control variable (Gleditch, 2012). Both democracies and richer countries have various tools of accommodation which can in turn influence group strategies and ideology (Pape, 2005).

Analyses and Results

Since the nature of our dependent variables is different, we used different estimation methods for each. For Hypotheses 1 and 2 (Tables 1 and 2), where our dependent variable is dichotomous, we estimated logistic regressions with robust standard errors. For hypotheses 3 and 4 (Tables 3 and 4) we estimated OLS models with robust standard errors, as our polarization measures are continuous. We also employed different model specifications in order to check whether our results remain robust with the inclusion/exclusion of certain control variables.

We find strong robust support for Hypothesis 1 and 2: the number of rivals appears to increase the probability of change in the market with respect to rebel demands and ideology. Ideological and demand modification therefore are the means through which groups alleviate the pressure from rivalry and carve a niche market for themselves. Thus neither is static in the face of pressure from other groups who are seeking to maximize their share of support and resources. In the on-line appendix, we also provide results separately for each dimension and once again find robust support for our expectations.

In Tables 3 and 4 we present our results regarding the effect of competition on ideological and demand polarization. Here, results are even stronger than for the first two hypotheses and once again do not depend on the set of control variables used in estimation. This means that competition polarizes the left-right and religious-secular ideological spectrum. It also polarizes the market on demands. This is in conformity with our expectations, not only do groups change their ideology and demands to distinguish themselves from their look alikes but the changes are substantial enough to polarize the system.

In order to provide more substantive interpretation for our findings, we present 4 graphs in Figure 1; Model 1 specification was used to generate the graphs. We calculated predicted probabilities using CLARIFY simulation algorithm (King, Tomz, and Wittenberg, 2000). Graphs for polarization illustrate linear predictions. In all 4 graphs we set all variables except for the number of rival groups to their mean values. The dotted line in each graph

Table 1: Logistic Models – Effect of Rivalry on Political Ideology Change

	Model 1	*Model 2*	*Model 3*	*Model 4*	*Model 5*
# of Rival Groups	0.223**	0.236**	0.210*	0.223***	0.205**
	(0.086)	(0.084)	(0.082)	(0.067)	(0.074)
Ethnolinguistic	-0.217	-0.216		-0.191	
Fractionalization	(0.401)	(0.393)		(0.392)	
Log(GDP per Capita)	-0.042	-0.038	-0.025	-0.046	-0.037
	(0.124)	(0.106)	(0.121)	(0.119)	(0.101)
Polity	-0.015		-0.014	-0.018	
	(0.018)		(0.018)	(0.017)	
Polity^2	0.001		0.001	0.001	
	(0.004)		(0.004)	(0.004)	
Maximum Conflict	0.432	0.471*	0.428		
Intensity	(0.226)	(0.220)	(0.225)		
War Duration	0.008	0.001	0.007		
	(0.015)	(0.014)	(0.015)		
Total Rebel Size	-0.000	-0.000	-0.000		0.000
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)		(0.001)
Constant	-2.213*	-2.214*	-2.436*	-1.552	-1.672*
	(1.033)	(0.951)	(0.974)	(0.981)	(0.824)
Observations	717	736	717	717	738
Pseudo R^2	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02
Log likelihood	-325.383	-336.396	-325.524	-327.254	-339.101

Robust standard errors in parentheses

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table 2: Logistic Models – Effect of Rivalry on Demands Change

	Model 1	*Model 2*	*Model 3*	*Model 4*	*Model 5*
# of Rival Groups	0.273*	0.275**	0.219*	0.212*	0.181*
	(0.107)	(0.100)	(0.095)	(0.087)	(0.074)
Ethnolinguistic	-0.913	-0.959		-0.833	
Fractionalization	(0.556)	(0.542)		(0.549)	
Log(GDP per Capita)	0.142	0.041	0.202	0.175	0.090
	(0.182)	(0.152)	(0.184)	(0.177)	(0.146)
Polity	-0.033		-0.027	-0.029	
	(0.032)		(0.031)	(0.028)	
Polity^2	-0.006		-0.006	-0.007	
	(0.006)		(0.006)	(0.005)	
Maximum Conflict	0.418	0.580	0.400		
Intensity	(0.338)	(0.324)	(0.335)		
War Duration	0.008	-0.008	0.005		
	(0.024)	(0.023)	(0.023)		
Total Rebel Size	-0.002	-0.001	-0.001		-0.000
	(0.002)	(0.001)	(0.001)		(0.001)
Constant	-4.156**	-3.592**	-4.992**	-3.755*	-3.651**
	(1.532)	(1.337)	(1.557)	(1.489)	(1.201)
Observations	717	736	717	717	738
Pseudo R^2	0.02	0.03	0.02	0.02	0.01
Log likelihood	-172.136	-183.165	-173.260	-173.123	-186.315

Standard errors in parentheses

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table 3: OLS Models – Effect of Rivalry on Political Polarization

	Model 1	*Model 2*	*Model 3*	*Model 4*	*Model 5*
# of Rival Groups	0.026***	0.026***	0.026***	0.036***	0.032***
	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.003)	(0.004)
Ethnolinguistic Fractionalization	-0.007	-0.006		-0.007	
	(0.015)	(0.014)		(0.015)	
Log(GDP per Capita)	0.006	0.001	0.007	0.006	0.003
	(0.005)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)
Polity	-0.002*		-0.002*	-0.001	
	(0.001)		(0.001)	(0.001)	
Polity^2	-0.000		-0.000	-0.000	
	(0.000)		(0.000)	(0.000)	
Maximum Conflict Intensity	-0.004	0.001	-0.004		
	(0.009)	(0.009)	(0.009)		
War Duration	0.004***	0.003***	0.004***		
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)		
Total Rebel Size	0.000*	0.000*	0.000*		0.000*
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)		(0.000)
Constant	0.069	0.104**	0.060	0.079*	0.101***
	(0.041)	(0.038)	(0.035)	(0.038)	(0.030)
Observations	785	805	786	785	809
R^2	0.212	0.199	0.212	0.159	0.160

Robust standard errors in parentheses

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table 4: OLS Models – Effect of Rivalry on Demand Polarization

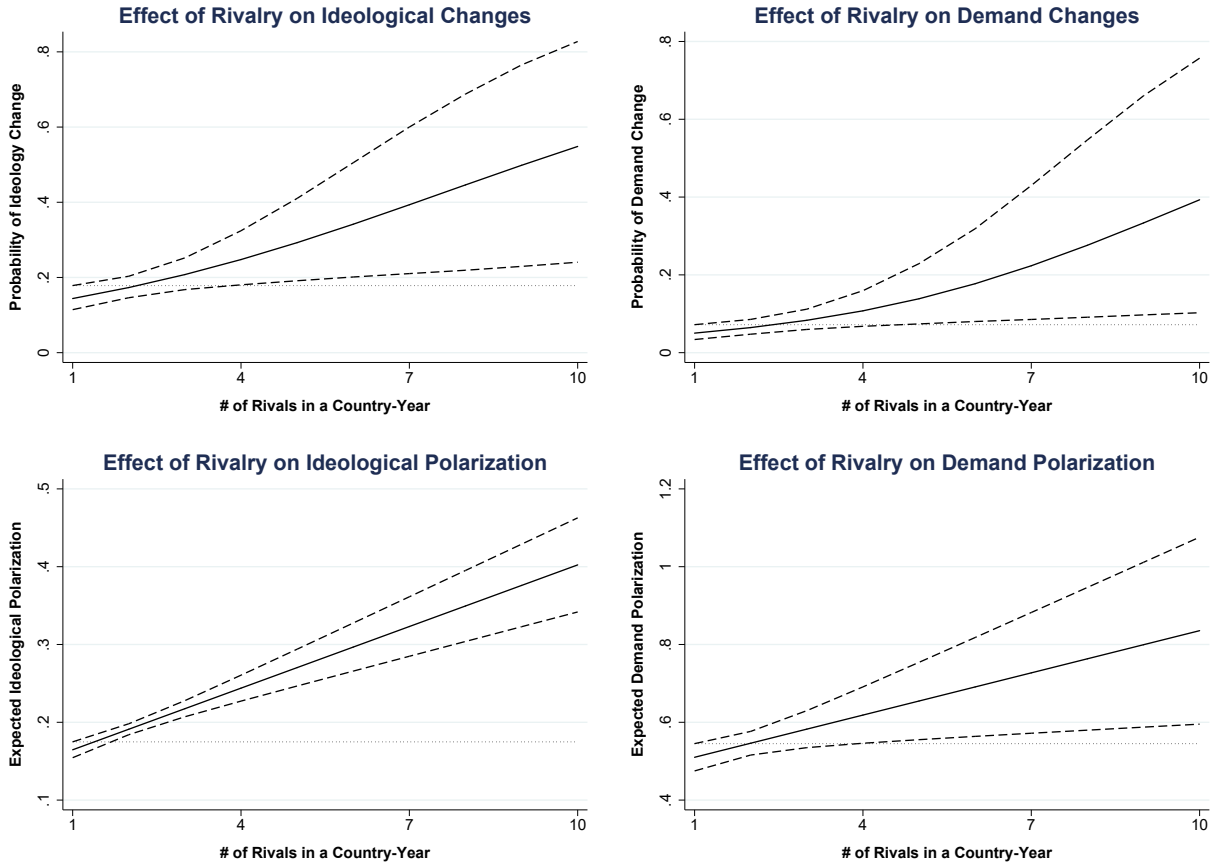
	Model 1	*Model 2*	*Model 3*	*Model 4*	*Model 5*
# of Rival Groups	0.036*	0.038*	0.024	0.033**	0.047**
	(0.015)	(0.016)	(0.015)	(0.012)	(0.016)
Ethnolinguistic Fractionalization	-0.232***	-0.253***		-0.197**	
	(0.067)	(0.066)		(0.068)	
Log(GDP per Capita)	-0.052**	-0.092***	-0.035	-0.032	-0.063***
	(0.019)	(0.017)	(0.018)	(0.019)	(0.016)
Polity	-0.002		-0.001	0.002	
	(0.003)		(0.003)	(0.003)	
Polity^2	-0.003***		-0.003***	-0.003***	
	(0.001)		(0.001)	(0.001)	
Maximum Conflict Intensity	0.118***	0.124***	0.114**		
	(0.036)	(0.036)	(0.036)		
War Duration	0.016***	0.015***	0.016***		
	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)		
Total Rebel Size	-0.001***	-0.001***	-0.001**		-0.001**
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)		(0.000)
Constant	0.854***	1.086***	0.611***	0.962***	0.984***
	(0.165)	(0.162)	(0.148)	(0.161)	(0.132)
Observations	785	805	786	785	809
R^2	0.138	0.104	0.122	0.058	0.028

Robust standard errors in parentheses

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

shows that the overall effect is significant (if this dotted line is inside dashed confidence intervals, the effect is not significant).

Figure 1: Interpreting Effects of Rebel Rivalry



Conclusion

The scope of civil wars are changing with presence of multiple groups battling one another and the state simultaneously. Recent research has answered important questions about war outcomes, duration, and group fragmentation, yet we still do not know much about how this context affects the strategies of insurgent groups to be the solo representer of a minority group. Outbidding literature from terrorism studies only focuses on the role of increased violence while other works from the civil war studies focus on inter-group fighting to end the competition. But violence is not the only means through which groups contest one another.

In this work, we covered how rebel rivalry affected group strategies, especially focusing on group ideology and demands. We showed that groups adapt to increasing pressure from other groups by moving in the ideological and demand space to make a brand for themselves. Substantial changes eventually end up polarizing the civil war context with some groups moderating themselves and others moving to extreme demands and ideologies. Just like business firms, product differentiation is the key to carving a niche market and securing the loyalty of the constituency that will donate resources and manpower for the sustenance and success of the insurgent group.

Using an original dataset on group ideologies and demands, we were able to find confirmation for most of our expectations. While the existence of multiple insurgent groups causes a strain on the resources of the state which has to fight on multiple grounds, it also offers certain opportunities. Existence of multiple groups pressures insurgents in ways that could offer unique moments to end conflict. While the pressure may push some insurgents to extreme ideologies and demands, it pushes others to moderation. Indeed, governments have often found it useful to accommodate groups after they have moved in ideological and demand space, a need that manifests itself because groups seek product differentiation. This is one of the first studies to examine the endogenous formation of group ideology and demands as a form of outbidding. Building upon our findings, future studies can delve into other related topics such as credibility of ideological changes as well as reputational costs of and distinct rewards from making such changes.

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On-line Appendix

A.1 Ideological Indicators and Their Coding Procedures

Variable	*Coding Procedures*
Nationalism	Coded as 1 if manifesto/secondary source mentions autonomy of any kind among group's main priorities, excluding autonomy based on ethnicity or the region of group's residence. Otherwise coded as 0.
Ethnonationalism	Coded as 1 if manifesto/secondary source mentions ethnicity-based autonomy of any kind among group's main priorities. Otherwise coded as 0.
Regional Nationalism	Coded as 1 if manifesto/secondary source mentions region-based autonomy of any kind among group's main priorities. Otherwise coded as 0.
Communism	Coded as 1 if manifesto/secondary source mentions transformation into communist regime among group's main priorities. Otherwise coded as 0.
Socialism	Coded as 1 if manifesto/secondary source mentions transformation into socialist regime among group's main priorities. Otherwise coded as 0.
Left-leaning	Coded as 1 if manifesto/secondary source is centered around generic leftist goals, but DOES NOT include goals of transformation into communist/socialist regime. Otherwise coded as 0.
Anti-communism	Coded as 1 if manifesto/secondary source mentions fight against communism/socialism among group's main goals. Otherwise coded as 0.
Marxism, Maoism, Cuban Communism, Other Communism*	Coded as 1 if manifesto/secondary source mentions specific form of communism as primary ideological orientation of the group. Otherwise coded as 0.

Variable	*Coding Procedures*
Religious	Coded as 1 if manifesto/secondary source mentions religion-related goals among group's main priorities. Otherwise coded as 0.
Secular	Coded as 1 if manifesto/secondary source mentions the goal of secularization among group's main priorities. Otherwise coded as 0.
Sharia, Shia extremism, Christian extremism, Religious other**	Coded as 1 if manifesto/secondary source mentions *specific form of religion-related demands* as primary ideological orientation of the group. Otherwise coded as 0.
Revolutionary Democracy	Coded as 1 if manifesto/secondary source mentions goals of reallocation of power from one group to another. Otherwise coded as 0. Typically this category goes hand-in-hand with communism/socialism.
Social Democracy	Coded as 1 if manifesto/secondary source mentions social democratic priorities of the group. Otherwise coded as 0. Category frequently goes hand-in-hand with communism/socialism.

* While all these ideological forms are typically understood as communist ideologies by definition, we followed more textual approach: group was coded as Communist AND Marxist only if manifesto/secondary source includes mentions of both generic Communism AND Marxism. If generic Communism was not mentioned, group was coded as Marxist only. In other words, being coded as the communist group of a specific type (e.g., Marxist or Maoist) was neither necessary nor sufficient condition for being coded as generically Communist group (category Communism). The rationale behind such an approach is our coding goals: we wanted to capture variation within communist groups, and differentiating between groups who are generically communist and groups that rely on specific type of communism was a vital part of a path towards achieving these goals.

** Here, procedure was similar to communism coding: we coded groups as Religious and, say, Sharia only if the group of interest posits both generic goals related to Islamic religion and Sharia-related demands as well. If all demands related to Islam come in the form of Sharia-related demands, then group is coded as Sharia but not generically Religious. It should be noted, however, that such occasions are quite rare, and in the vast majority of the cases group coded as Sharia was also coded as Religious.

A.2 Summary Statistics

Variable	*Mean*	*SD*	*Min*	*Max*
Ideology Change	.18	.38	0	1
Demand Change	.07	.26	0	1
Ideological Polarization	.19	.11	0	.36
Demand Polarization	.54	.46	0	1.5
# of Rival Groups	1.86	1.29	1	10
ELF	.53	.27	.005	.9
Log(GDP per Capita)	7.97	1.02	5.03	10.67
Polity	.15	6.19	-9	10
Polity^2	35.29	33.3	0	100
Maximum Conflict Intensity	1.28	.45	1	2
War Duration	8.93	7.42	1	29
Total Rebel Size	47.19	110	0	1110

The total number of observations is 813.

A.3 Bayesian Measurement Model's Detailed Description

We utilize a measurement approach akin to the standard 2-parameter logistic IRT model (see Hambleton, Swaminathan, and Rogers (1991) for more details about different types of IRT models), with one principal modification: we assume the observed values of ideological components are generated by two underlying latent dimensions instead of one. We start with a dataset that consists of group-year observations, each observation represents either a moment when a group first publicly announced demands and ideology (e.g., published a manifesto or was described in the secondary sources) or when a group changed current de-

mands and ideology to a new one. We assume that each 19 ideological components are jointly determined by 2 latent variables – left-right ideological dimension and religious ideological dimension. For the left-right ideological dimension, we assume the most leftist ideologies correspond to lower values while the most rightist ideologies correspond to higher values. For religious dimension, we assume that anti-religious ideology corresponds to lower values and pro-religious ideology corresponds to higher values. We denote left-right ideology corresponding to observation i (specific group at specific year) as x_i and religious ideology as s_i. Both ideologies follow standard normal priors:

$$x_i \sim \mathcal{N}(0, 1)$$
$$s_i \sim \mathcal{N}(0, 1)$$

For each ideological component j we assume Bernoulli distribution:

$$y_{ij} \sim \text{Bern}(p_{ij})$$

and model p_{ij} using logistic link function:

$$p_{ij} = [1 + exp(-(\beta_{j1}x_i + \beta_{j2}s_i - \beta_{j3}))]^{-1}$$

Constant β_{j3} follows uniform (-1,1) prior. Priors for all other betas are presented below:

$$\beta_{nationalism1} \sim \text{Unif}(0, 1)$$

$$\beta_{ethnonationalism1} \sim \text{Unif}(0, 1)$$

$$\beta_{regionalnationalism1} \sim \text{Unif}(0, 1)$$

$$\beta_{communism1} \sim \text{Unif}(-1, 0)$$

$$\beta_{socialism1} \sim \text{Unif}(-1, 0)$$

$$\beta_{left-leaning1} \sim \text{Unif}(-1, 0)$$

$$\beta_{anticommunism1} \sim \text{Unif}(0, 1)$$

$$\beta_{marxism1} \sim \text{Unif}(-1, 0)$$

$$\beta_{maoism1} \sim \text{Unif}(-1, 0)$$

$$\beta_{cubancommunism1} \sim \text{Unif}(-1, 0)$$

$$\beta_{othercommunism1} \sim \text{Unif}(-1, 0)$$

$$\beta_{revolutonarydemocracy1} \sim \text{Unif}(-1, 0)$$

$$\beta_{socialdemocracy1} \sim \text{Unif}(-1, 0)$$

$$\beta_{religious2} \sim \text{Unif}(0, 1)$$

$$\beta_{secular2} \sim \text{Unif}(-1, 0)$$

$$\beta_{sharia2} \sim \text{Unif}(0, 1)$$

$$\beta_{shiaextremism2} \sim \text{Unif}(0, 1)$$

$$\beta_{christianextremism2} \sim \text{Unif}(0, 1)$$

$$\beta_{religiousother2} \sim \text{Unif}(0, 1)$$

All other β not specified above follow uniform $(-1, 1)$ priors. For the detailed estimation code, see the file IRT_final.R in the supplementary materials.

A.4 Additional Information from the Measurement Model

In this section, we provide some additional information from our measurement model. Files A1.pdf and A2.pdf in the supplementary materials illustrate posterior distributions of left-right and religious ideological dimensions, respectively, for each group-year observation in our data. Each figure shows the dotplot that represents the median of the latent variable's distribution and its 95 % highest posterior density (HPD) region. While the differentiation between groups is not striking, we do observe certain degree of variation between groups on both dimensions.

Figure A.1 presents 3-dimensional item characteristic surfaces for each ideological indicator. These surfaces demonstrate how well our latent variables predict different ideological indicators. In all plots except for nationalism at least one dimension serves as good delineating parameter, and in 14 out of 19 both dimensions serve as good delineators of our ideological components. Overall, the item characteristic surfaces provide substantial support for our initial separation of rebel ideology into two dimensions.

A.5 Additional Robustness Checks

A.5.1 Exploratory Factor Analysis

Our main ideology scores come from the measurement model. Here we ran exploratory factor analysis as an additional robustness check. While the scores from exploratory factor analysis are not easily interpretable in substantive terms, it is not particularly consequential for us since we use two-dimensional vectors as measures for ideology. We present the findings in Table A.1 for changes in ideology and in Table A.2 for ideological polarization. Both variables were constructed in the same way as the ones used in the main manuscript.

As one can see, our findings with respect to ideology change disappear when the scores from exploratory factor analysis are used. This may seem as a cause for concern, but we encourage a reader to treat these findings with a grain of salt since conventional exploratory

Table A.1: Logistic Models – Effect of Rivalry on Political Ideology Change

	Model 1	*Model 2*	*Model 3*	*Model 4*	*Model 5*
# of Rival Groups	0.040	0.139	0.037	0.047	0.087
	(0.130)	(0.132)	(0.125)	(0.101)	(0.108)
Ethnolinguistic Fractionalization	-0.065	-0.179		-0.002	
	(0.726)	(0.675)		(0.642)	
Log(GDP per Capita)	-0.337	-0.142	-0.331	-0.334	-0.148
	(0.266)	(0.227)	(0.243)	(0.233)	(0.204)
Polity	0.023		0.024	0.008	
	(0.032)		(0.032)	(0.027)	
Polity^2	0.015		0.015	0.013	
	(0.009)		(0.009)	(0.008)	
Maximum Conflict Intensity	1.200**	1.057**	1.199**		
	(0.402)	(0.365)	(0.401)		
War Duration	0.021	0.013	0.021		
	(0.027)	(0.025)	(0.027)		
Total Rebel Size	-0.001	-0.001	-0.001		0.000
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)		(0.001)
Constant	-2.958	-3.671*	-3.032	-1.091	-2.092
	(2.013)	(1.791)	(1.706)	(1.808)	(1.585)
Observations	717	736	717	717	738
Pseudo R^2	0.05	0.03	0.05	0.02	0.01
Log likelihood	-121.080	-130.129	-121.083	-125.469	-133.922

Robust standard errors in parentheses

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

factor analysis is not well-suited for analyzing categorical data (and our observed indicators of ideology are all binary) while IRT models were designed specifically to perform these types of tasks. The effect of rivalry on ideological polarization, on the other hand, remains strong and significant, lending further support to our findings from the main models.

A.5.2 Analyzing Two Dimensions Separately

In this section, we provide the results of analyses for both left-right and religious dimension. The goal of this exercise is to demonstrate that our results do not depend on using two-dimensional, directional approach and hold even when we run the same models separately for religious and left-right dimension.

As you can see, we obtain substantively similar results with this one-dimensional approach. An attentive reader may notice that we obtain the same estimates in Tables A3, A4, and Table I. The reason for that is rooted in our measurement approach: since we estimate two dimensions simultaneously in the same measurement model, these dimensions change simultaneously as well. The magnitude of change is different for both dimensions, but, since we are not interested in the magnitude or direction of ideological changes in this study, we indeed obtain the same results. For polarization, we also obtain substantively very similar results, further reinforcing our inferences.

Table A.2: OLS Models – Effect of Rivalry on Political Polarization

	Model 1	*Model 2*	*Model 3*	*Model 4*	*Model 5*
# of Rival Groups	0.064***	0.067***	0.071***	0.052***	0.080***
	(0.007)	(0.006)	(0.007)	(0.006)	(0.006)
Ethnolinguistic	0.129***	0.113***		0.145***	
Fractionalization	(0.029)	(0.028)		(0.028)	
Log(GDP per Capita)	-0.013	-0.013	-0.022*	-0.002	-0.020**
	(0.010)	(0.008)	(0.009)	(0.009)	(0.007)
Polity	0.002		0.001	0.004***	
	(0.001)		(0.001)	(0.001)	
Polity^2	-0.000		-0.000	-0.000	
	(0.000)		(0.000)	(0.000)	
Maximum Conflict	-0.004	-0.006	-0.000		
Intensity	(0.016)	(0.015)	(0.016)		
War Duration	0.004***	0.004***	0.005***		
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)		
Total Rebel Size	-0.000***	-0.000***	-0.000***		-0.000***
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)		(0.000)
Constant	0.186*	0.193*	0.315***	0.133	0.317***
	(0.083)	(0.075)	(0.071)	(0.080)	(0.057)
Observations	785	805	786	785	809
R^2	0.215	0.208	0.192	0.168	0.170
Pseudo R^2					
F	29.445	36.464	30.344	37.646	55.657
Log lik.	202.770	210.643	191.420	179.990	190.996

Robust standard errors in parentheses

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table A.3: Logistic Models – Effect of Rivalry on Changes of the Left-Right Dimension

	Model 1	*Model 2*	*Model 3*	*Model 4*	*Model 5*
# of Rival Groups	0.223**	0.236**	0.210*	0.223***	0.205**
	(0.086)	(0.084)	(0.082)	(0.067)	(0.074)
Ethnolinguistic	-0.217	-0.216		-0.191	
Fractionalization	(0.401)	(0.393)		(0.392)	
Log(GDP per Capita)	-0.042	-0.038	-0.025	-0.046	-0.037
	(0.124)	(0.106)	(0.121)	(0.119)	(0.101)
Polity	-0.015		-0.014	-0.018	
	(0.018)		(0.018)	(0.017)	
Polity^2	0.001		0.001	0.001	
	(0.004)		(0.004)	(0.004)	
Maximum Conflict	0.432	0.471*	0.428		
Intensity	(0.226)	(0.220)	(0.225)		
War Duration	0.008	0.001	0.007		
	(0.015)	(0.014)	(0.015)		
Total Rebel Size	-0.000	-0.000	-0.000		0.000
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)		(0.001)
Constant	-2.213*	-2.214*	-2.436*	-1.552	-1.672*
	(1.033)	(0.951)	(0.974)	(0.981)	(0.824)
Observations	717	736	717	717	738
Pseudo R^2	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02
Log likelihood	-325.383	-336.396	-325.524	-327.254	-339.101

Robust standard errors in parentheses

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table A.4: Logistic Models – Effect of Rivalry on Changes of the Religious Dimension

	Model 1	*Model 2*	*Model 3*	*Model 4*	*Model 5*
# of Rival Groups	0.223**	0.236**	0.210*	0.223***	0.205**
	(0.086)	(0.084)	(0.082)	(0.067)	(0.074)
Ethnolinguistic	-0.217	-0.216		-0.191	
Fractionalization	(0.401)	(0.393)		(0.392)	
Log(GDP per Capita)	-0.042	-0.038	-0.025	-0.046	-0.037
	(0.124)	(0.106)	(0.121)	(0.119)	(0.101)
Polity	-0.015		-0.014	-0.018	
	(0.018)		(0.018)	(0.017)	
Polity^2	0.001		0.001	0.001	
	(0.004)		(0.004)	(0.004)	
Maximum Conflict	0.432	0.471*	0.428		
Intensity	(0.226)	(0.220)	(0.225)		
War Duration	0.008	0.001	0.007		
	(0.015)	(0.014)	(0.015)		
Total Rebel Size	-0.000	-0.000	-0.000		0.000
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)		(0.001)
Constant	-2.213*	-2.214*	-2.436*	-1.552	-1.672*
	(1.033)	(0.951)	(0.974)	(0.981)	(0.824)
Observations	717	736	717	717	738
Pseudo R^2	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02
Log likelihood	-325.383	-336.396	-325.524	-327.254	-339.101

Robust standard errors in parentheses

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table A.5: OLS Models – Effect of Rivalry on Political Polarization across the Left-Right Dimension

	Model 1	*Model 2*	*Model 3*	*Model 4*	*Model 5*
# of Rival Groups	0.022*	0.018	0.037***	0.049***	0.046***
	(0.009)	(0.010)	(0.008)	(0.008)	(0.009)
Ethnolinguistic	0.267***	0.285***		0.261***	
Fractionalization	(0.035)	(0.035)		(0.035)	
Log(GDP per Capita)	0.104***	0.087***	0.085***	0.104***	0.067***
	(0.012)	(0.011)	(0.013)	(0.012)	(0.011)
Polity	-0.010***		-0.011***	-0.008***	
	(0.002)		(0.002)	(0.002)	
Polity^2	0.000		-0.000	0.000	
	(0.000)		(0.000)	(0.000)	
Maximum Conflict	-0.085***	-0.058*	-0.079***		
Intensity	(0.022)	(0.023)	(0.023)		
War Duration	0.009***	0.007***	0.009***		
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)		
Total Rebel Size	0.000***	0.000***	0.000**		0.000**
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)		(0.000)
Constant	-0.598***	-0.479***	-0.327***	-0.661***	-0.230**
	(0.096)	(0.090)	(0.099)	(0.094)	(0.088)
Observations	785	805	786	785	809
R^2	0.226	0.183	0.183	0.169	0.096

Robust standard errors in parentheses

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table A.6: OLS Models – Effect of Rivalry on Political Polarization across the Religious Dimension

	Model 1	*Model 2*	*Model 3*	*Model 4*	*Model 5*
# of Rival Groups	0.025***	0.021***	0.030***	0.039***	0.031***
	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.005)
Ethnolinguistic	0.092***	0.103***		0.086***	
Fractionalization	(0.019)	(0.018)		(0.019)	
Log(GDP per Capita)	0.012*	0.000	0.006	0.009	-0.007
	(0.006)	(0.005)	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.005)
Polity	-0.002*		-0.003**	-0.002**	
	(0.001)		(0.001)	(0.001)	
Polity^2	-0.000*		-0.001*	-0.000	
	(0.000)		(0.000)	(0.000)	
Maximum Conflict	-0.030*	-0.019	-0.028*		
Intensity	(0.012)	(0.012)	(0.013)		
War Duration	0.002***	0.002***	0.003***		
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)		
Total Rebel Size	0.000***	0.000***	0.000***		0.000***
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)		(0.000)
Constant	0.082	0.152**	0.174***	0.075	0.247***
	(0.048)	(0.046)	(0.045)	(0.045)	(0.039)
Observations	785	805	786	785	809
R^2	0.183	0.159	0.162	0.152	0.121

Robust standard errors in parentheses

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Figure A.1: Item Characteristic Surfaces