The Rebel Party: Political Implications of Rebel Funding

The transition that a rebel group makes into a political party once a peace agreement is reached in a conflict has been studied to determine what qualities help or hurt this transition. What have not been researched are the implications that a rebel group’s funding may have on this transition. This project looks at 65 cases between the years 1990 and 2012 where opposing governments and rebel groups signed a peace agreement and allowed the rebel group the opportunity to engage in the political process post-conflict. This dataset was a combination of Marshall (2015) and the Rebel Contraband Dataset (Walsh, et. al. 2016). The dependent variables were the first election and any subsequent election that occurred post-conflict. The independent variable was the funding stream of the rebel group and was operationalized into two variables: drug funding and natural resource funding. I ran a series of logit regressions, which found that external support improves the likelihood that a rebel group will transition into a political party and compete in the first and subsequent elections. I also find that drug funding and natural resource funding improve the likelihood of the rebel group’s emergence in the first election post-conflict, but not in subsequent elections.