

RECRUITMENT AND ALLEGIANCE:

The microfoundations of rebellion
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MAIN RESEARCH GOAL

- How does a rebel group **maintain organisational cohesion and deter defection?**
- Main concepts:
 - Examining geography, ideology and ethnicity
 - While featuring **economic model of microfoundations**
- Assumption that rebel group already formed itself and needs to manage recruitment and prevent defection or desertion
- ⇒ Therefore the model is underlining **conflict duration** rather than emergence of rebel groups or civil war
- Concepts and mechanisms from **economics** and from intra-state organised criminal groups (e. g. mafia or organised crime)
- Generating hypothesis

MECHANISMS

- Enforcement of contracts is the root of compliance and allegiance
- Peace-time contracts enforced from the outside => Rebel groups rely on enforcing contracts **from within**
 - *Modern rebel's similarity to criminal groups (e. g. Collier) => Rebel groups **need army to fight the state** = recruitment and allegiance are critical*
- Two key distinctions within rebel groups:
 1. Distance
 2. Economy

I. DISTANCE

- **Geographic**

- Critical with connection to ensuring compliance and preventing defection
- *Part of most conflicts – control over territory, secession etc.*

- **Ethnic**

- Less measurable
- Key in sense of identity – greatly affects recruitment and allegiance

- **Ideological**

- Partly measurable by examining attitudes towards key topics

⇒ Study examines how these aspects affect recruitment and allegiance

2. *ECONOMY*

- Difference between groups by **goals**:
 - **Loot seeking groups**
 - Concentrate on capturing valuable assets (e. g. Natural resources, drugs...)
 - Distribution of wages or benefits critical
 - **Justice seeking groups**
 - Ethnic separatism, political goals etc.
 - Some say that they are only sub-sums of loot-seeking groups
- ⇒ All groups need at least minimal financing (for weapons and food) + all the sub-types mingle

ENFORCEMENT WITHOUT COMPETITION

- Examining choices of **agents** of the rebellion with respect to the **leader**
 - **Defection** = non-compliance with the military objectives
 - Nature of rewards
 - **Pecuniary** – tangible (money, loot, drugs, alcohol etc.) – loot seeking groups
 - **Non-pecuniary** – functional (value of the task) & solidary (camaraderie)
 - Punishment for defection – from minimal to extreme (= death)
- ⇒ Assuming **opportunistic actors** – weighing every action for benefits and risks

HYPOTHESIS I.

- Every agent is weighing his/hers options at all times between:
 - The **probability** and **harshness** of punishment; and
 - **Gain from defection**
- The ability of leader to punish agents for defection **decreases with** (relative) **geographic distance**

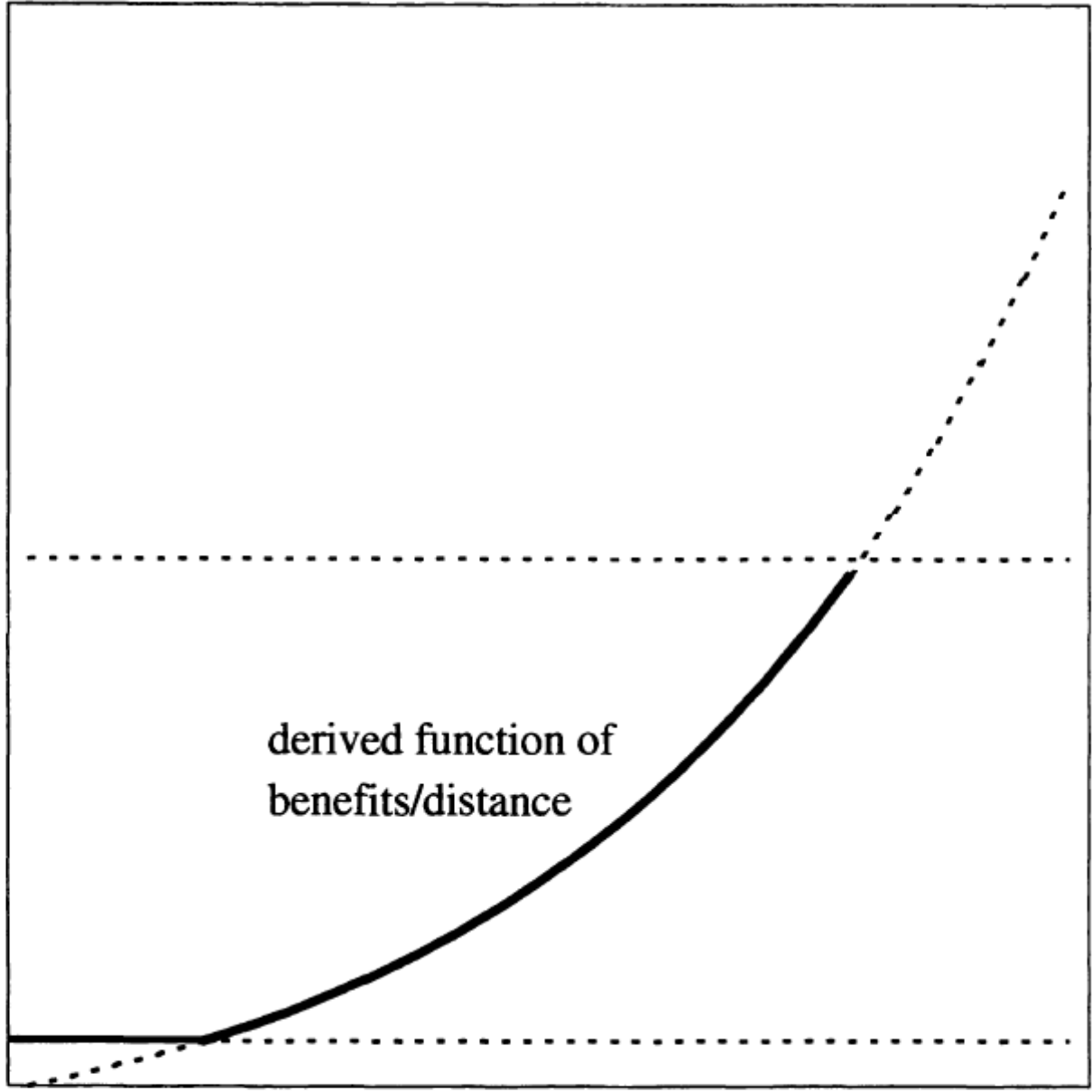
Hypothesis I.

For any given task and any number of agents, with all other things being equal, the **agents closer to the principal will be rewarded less than those further away** (limited by the max possible reward)

benefits to agents

b_{\max}

b_{\min}



derived function of
benefits/distance

Distance from leader

Figure 1: The Relationship Between Rebels' Distance from the Leader and Benefits to Rebellion.

IMPLICATIONS

- The maximal payoff is associated with group's resources => resources of the group **determine the maximal geographic stretch**
- Problem can be solved with groups more oriented on either **ideology** or **ethnicity** (with association to non-pecuniary rewards)
=> Key variable of the group's homogeneity
- Ethnic expansion is strictly limited to territory inhabited by the ethnic group

ENFORCEMENT WITH COMPETITION FROM THE GOV'T

- Not only military competition, but also competition for recruits
- **Desertion** now becomes an option (defection X desertion)
- Analysis only of the rebel groups

- The **probability of success** comes into play = probability of success of the particular agent as member of rebel group against the gov't
- Distance affects ability to project force and military capabilities

- Ideological focus groups advantage – can easily lure deserters from the gov't – 'Foxhole conversions'
- Ethnic focus groups advantage – have hard time luring deserters but is also more immune to desertion

HYPOTHESIS 2

All agents for which the **probability of success as part of the rebel group exceeds 50%** can be introduced to join the rebel group thought the offer of benefits is above agent's reservation level

⇒ Hypothesis 2.2

A rebel group will recruit only those agents, for which **probability of success is high enough to guarantee that the benefits allocated to agents are high enough to ensure no desertion**

= With increasing distance the probability of military success is decreasing

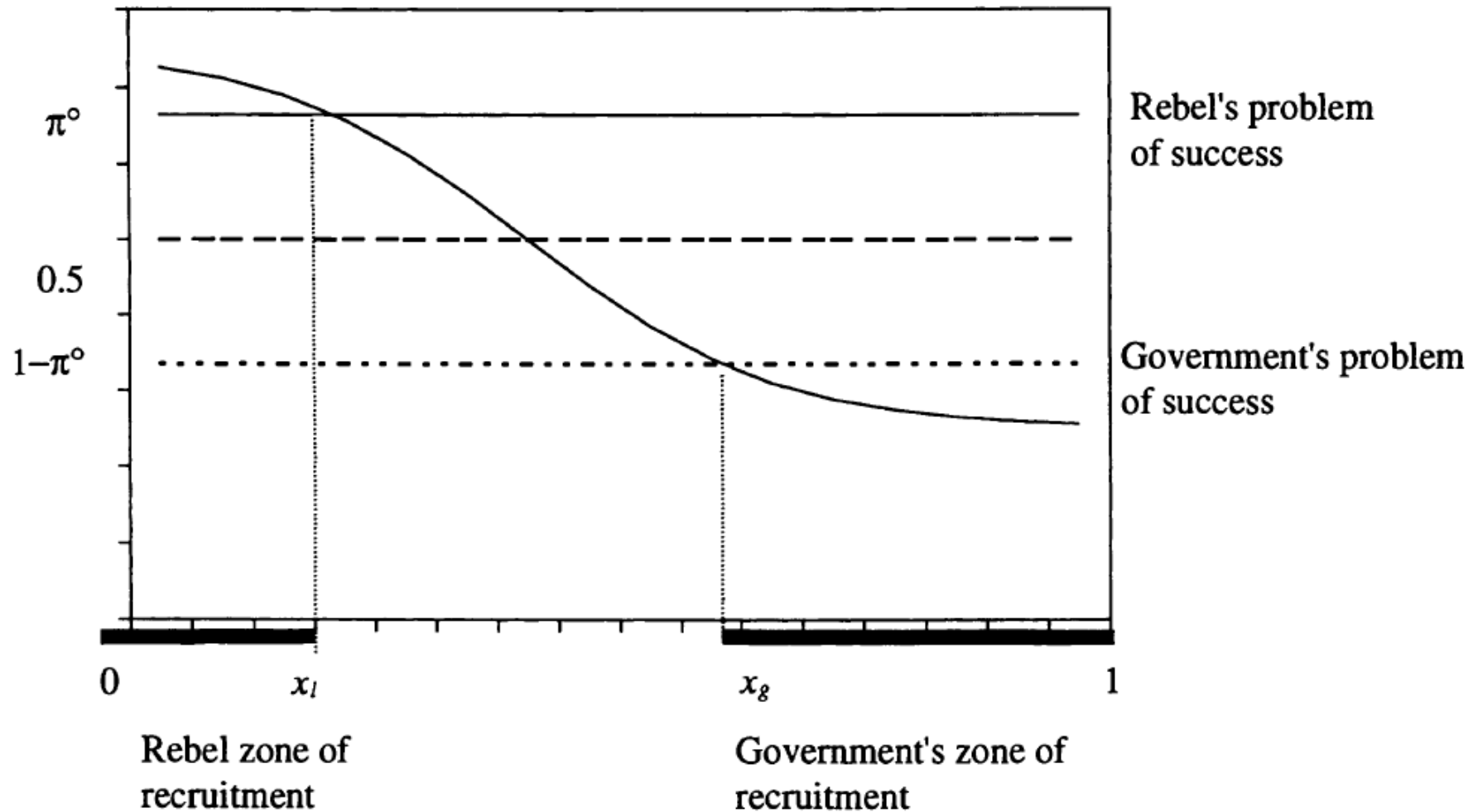


Figure 2: The Effect of Distance in Rebel Recruitment

SOURCE: Adapted from Polo (1995).

IMPLICATIONS

- Economic competition for wages can be seen
- If the rebel group is offering maximum possible benefits for distant agents and the gov't is not => the gov't can **increase wages to lure deserters** (and *vice versa*)
- Groups can react to this situation in various ways:
 - Ex. By **developing ideological goals** – in order to switch from pecuniary to non-pecuniary rewards (more difficult for the gov't to react)
- It would be irrational to recruit agents for which the rebel group does not have sufficient **probability of success** and **benefits** to prevent defection

HYPOTHESIS 3

There exists a **minimum distance** between the state and rebel group, under which no leader will be offering contracts to any agent

- Problem is not from the military conflict, but that the **potential for defection is too great to prevent the initial recruitment of members**

GEOGRAPHY

Critically important in order to ensure recruitment and allegiance, and offer rebel group a safe haven to develop

⇒ Empirical examples

- The effect of geography can be prevented by greater appeal to **ethnicity** or **ideology**
- ⇒ The more a leader can distinguish the group by ethnicity or ideology, the less important will the geographic factor in recruitment factor will be
- the **incentive compatibility** has to be high enough => must increase the level of non-pecuniary rewards

COMPETITION BETWEEN REBEL GROUPS

- When there is no (or failing) state
- The same model can be applied

Hypothesis 4:

There exists a **critical distance** between a rebel group and rival rebel group that precludes group's ability to recruit => only when rival rebel group **exist within sufficient distance it can arise**

- **Distance limits the number of rebel groups that can arise in a country**
- Given sufficient distance, rebel group can also **splinter and form a rival rebel movement**

Proposition 2. An agent, a , located at x_a such that $\pi_l(x_a; \varepsilon_l, \varepsilon_g, x_l, x_g) \geq \pi_l^0$ chooses the rebel organization, l , and does not deviate thereafter, given that the following conditions hold in equilibrium:

- (a) $\pi_l \gg 1/2$;
- (b) $\partial b^0(c1)_l(\pi_l)/\partial \pi_l \leq 0$;
- (c) $b(c2)_l = b_{\max}$.

Lemma 2.1. All agents for which the probability of success as part of a rebel group exceeds 50%, $\pi_l > 1/2$, can be induced to join a rebel group through the offer of benefits above the agent's reservation level.

Proof. Start with an agent's initial decision to affiliate with a rebel group such that

$$\frac{\pi_l U_a(m_l, b(c1)_l, 0)}{1 - \delta \pi_l} = \frac{(1 - \pi_l) U_a(m_l, b(c1)_g, 0)}{1 - \delta(1 - \pi_l)}. \quad (11)$$

ideological focus, a group can shift its benefit stream from pecuniary to nonpecuniary benefits (in terms of functional preferences and solidary norms). As noted above, ethnically based groups are inherently less likely to experience problems with defection.

Consider π_l^0 such that $V(c_l)_a = V(c_g)_a$ and such that $b(c1)_l = b(c2)_g = b_{\max}$. For $\pi_l \geq \pi_l^0$, the incentive compatibility constraint is satisfied for lower levels of benefits, $b(c1)_l$, while $b(c2)_g = b_{\max}$, as stated above in proposition 2: (b): $\partial b^0(c1)_l(\pi_l)/\partial \pi_l \geq 0$ and (c): $b(c2)_l = b_{\max}$.

Finally, if $b(c1)_l = b(c2)_g = b_{\max}$, then for $\pi_l = 1/2$, the incentive compatibility condition $V(c_l)_a(\pi_l^0) \geq V(c_g)_a(\pi_l^0)$ becomes

$$U_a(m, b_{\max}, 0) \frac{1 - \delta}{2 - \delta} \geq U_a(s_a^0, b_{\max}, 0), \quad (13)$$

which is never satisfied. Thus, as in proposition 2: (a) $\pi_l \gg 1/2$. QED.

The implication of Proposition 2 is that although a slight military advantage can attract an agent initially, the incentive compatibility constraint requires a much stronger advantage if the principal is to deter desertion (as opposed to deterring defection).

$$V_a(d) = \pi_l U_a(s_a^0, b_l(c1), 0) + (1 - \pi_l) V_a(R_g) + \delta \frac{\pi_l [P_l V_a(p) + (1 - P) U_a(m, b_l(c2), 0)] + (1 - \pi) V_a(R_g)}{1 - (1 - \pi)(1 - P)\delta}.$$

Agents also face greater opportunities for defection. In addition to defecting by performing an assigned task, an individual can now desert and join the government army or join a renegade group. Modifying equation (3) above, the present value of defection and desertion $V_a(dd)$ (and presuming cooperation within the government army) becomes the following:

$$V_a(dd) = \pi_l U_a(s_a^0, b_l(c1), 0) + (1 - \pi_l) V_a(R_g) + \delta \frac{\pi_l V_a(R_l) + (1 - \pi) U_a(m, b_g(c2), 0)}{1 - (1 - \pi)\delta}.$$

$$F(\eta_g - \eta_l) = \frac{e^{(\eta_g - \eta_l)}}{1 + e^{(\eta_g - \eta_l)}}.$$

In terms of capabilities, the probability of success can be expressed in this fashion, such that the probability of success, π_l , depends on the proximity of x_a with respect to x_g (the location of the government's forces). More specifically,

$$\pi_l = \frac{\varepsilon_l / \varepsilon_g}{e^{(2x_a - x_l - x_g)(x_l - x_g)} + \varepsilon_l / \varepsilon_g}.$$

Such a functional form builds on a growing literature on conflict success functions that allows me to explicitly incorporate distance into my analysis. If a military commander is at the center of governmental territory, then $x_a = x_g$. The closer x_g and x_l are to each other, the flatter the function of the probability of success, and the more the ratio of

CRITICISM

- *Assuming opportunistic rational actors weighing every step (but applying results to child soldiers)*
- *The ideologically and ethnically related concepts are foggy and unclear*
- ⇒ *When in fact ethnic and ideological orientation is used to cancel out many of the prepositions of the study*
- *Economic assumptions of ideal but imaginary world*
- *Relative failure of microfoundations application in economy (microeconomic rational assumptions have no impact on macroeconomic implications)*

THANK YOU

YOUR CONFERENCE PRESENTATION

HOW YOU PLANNED IT:



HOW IT GOES:

