

Rebel Governance and Political Engagement

Abbey Steele¹
Michael Weintraub²

¹University of Amsterdam
²Universidad de los Andes

WIDER Development Conference
May 2022

Armed group governance is common ...

Rebels, militias, and criminal groups govern civilians (Mampilly 2015; Arjona 2016) :

- Islamic State in Iraq and Syria: legal system to resolve disputes (Revkin and Ahram 2020).
- African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde (PAIGC): education, healthcare, and elections (Stewart 2020).
- Gangs in Rio de Janeiro: arbitrate disputes and punish criminals (Arias and Barnes 2017).

But these groups govern in different ways:

- Some replace local governing authorities, others work with existing decision makers to govern jointly (Vargas Castillo 2019).
- Some impose draconian, illiberal policies that run counter to local preferences, others adopt rules via participatory mechanisms (Kasfir 2005).

... and likely with long-term consequences.

Governance likely shapes how citizens participate politically, even once conflict ends. Why?

- Eliminates/ strengthens communal decision-making institutions while crowding out/crowding in state institutions.
- Alters expectations about what would-be governors can and should do.

Rethinking armed group governance and civilian participation

Two factors that we argue affect civilians' political engagement:

1. Armed group's position relative to the state:
 - Fight against state authority or reinforce it.
2. Armed group's governance ideology
 - "Shared" governance ideology (include civilians) or "centralized" (top-down rule).

Disaggregating participation: formal and informal

Interested in explaining variation in forms of political engagement:

- Formal: participate in politics through state-provided channels.
- Informal: join civil society organizations or engage in protest.

Why does this matter?

- Consequences for democratic health in post-conflict societies.

Theoretical Expectations

- Anti-state armed group with a shared governance ideology → more informal participation.
 - Socialization to reject legitimacy of formal state institutions.
 - Capacity for collective action remains in place.



Theoretical Expectations

- Anti-state armed group with a centralized governance ideology → less formal and informal engagement.
 - Socialization to reject legitimacy of formal state institutions.
 - Mechanisms for collective action destroyed or de-emphasized.



Theoretical Expectations

- State-aligned armed group with a shared governance ideology → increased formal and informal political participation.
 - Legitimacy of formal state institutions reinforced.
 - Capacity for collective action remains in place.



Theoretical Expectations

- State-aligned armed group with a centralized governance ideology
→ increased formal political participation.
 - Legitimacy of formal state institutions reinforced.
 - Mechanisms for collective action destroyed or de-emphasized.



Context: Peacebuilding in Colombia



- Historic peace agreement reached in 2016 with FARC.
- PDETs: community participation in peacebuilding

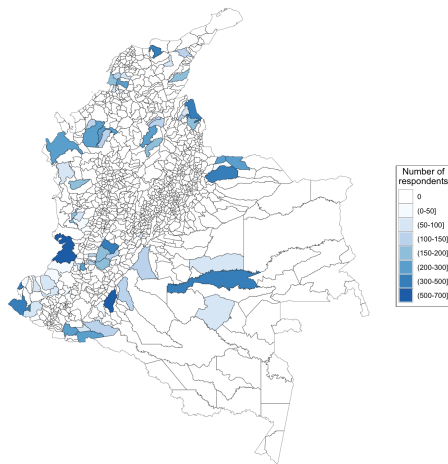
What did armed group governance look like?

- Insurgents collaborated with existing forms of political authority: **polycentric governance** (Vargas Castillo 2019).
 - Communal village boards (JACs) provide FARC local legitimacy.
 - Community meetings discuss rights the state *should* guarantee but did not.
 - Following the UP decimation, election boycotts.
- Paramilitaries sought to eradicate community-based forms of governance: **centralized governance**.
 - Aligned with regional elites, worked through state institutions to their benefit.
 - Destroyed/replaced communal village boards.

What effect does armed group governance have on participation?

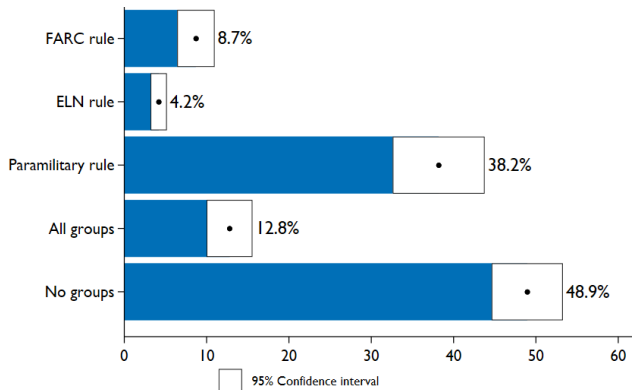
Novel survey in Colombia (late 2019):

- 12,052 respondents, representative of each of 16 regions prioritized for agreement implementation.
- Measure self-reported past exposure to armed group governance.
- Connect to recent self-reported political participation.



Measuring rebel governance

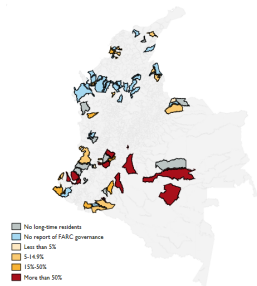
- Did the FARC / ELN / paramilitaries ever rule this community?
- Also asked questions about tax collection, dispute mediation, etc ...



Source: MAPS 2019 survey PNUD/PRIIO

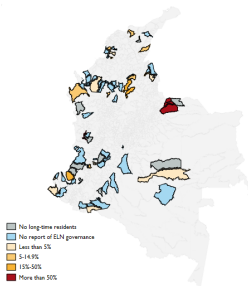
N = 12052

Geographic variation in armed group governance



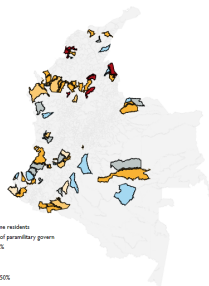
Source: MAPS 2019 survey PNUD/PRIO

(a) FARC



Source: MAPS 2019 survey PNUD/PRIO

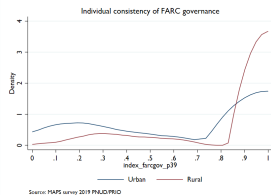
(b) ELN



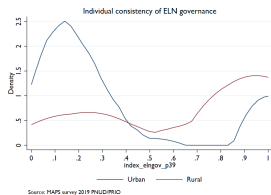
Source: MAPS 2019 survey PNUD/PRIO

(c) Paramilitaries

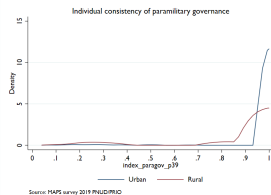
Consistency in responses within communities



(d) FARC

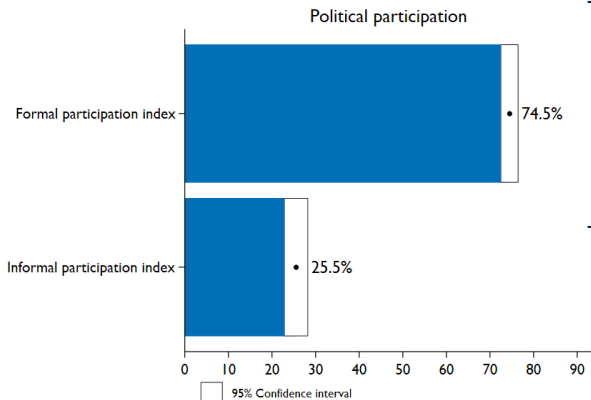


(e) ELN



(f) Paramilitaries

Measuring participation



Source: MAPS 2019 survey PNUD/PRIIO

N = 12052

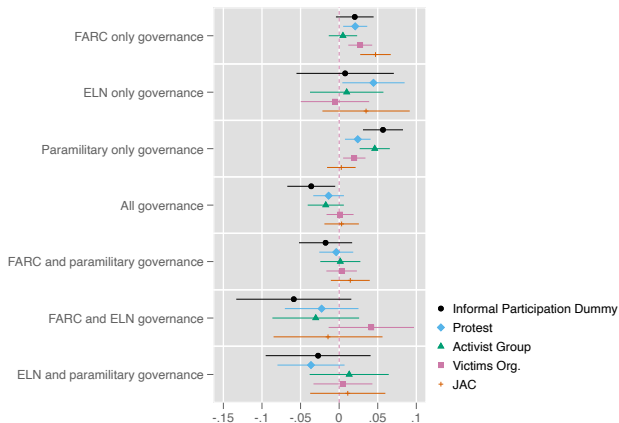
- **Formal:** contact local leaders, politicians, vote in peace referendum, vote in legislative elections.
- **Informal:** participate in protests, membership in NGOs, victims' organization, and/or village action board (JACs)

Individual-level analyses using OLS estimator

- DVs: index, dummy for formal and informal, individual components
- Controls: gender, education, occupation, age, rural/urban, victimization
- Municipality fixed effects
- Population weights: municipal population size per PDET and rural/urban divide.

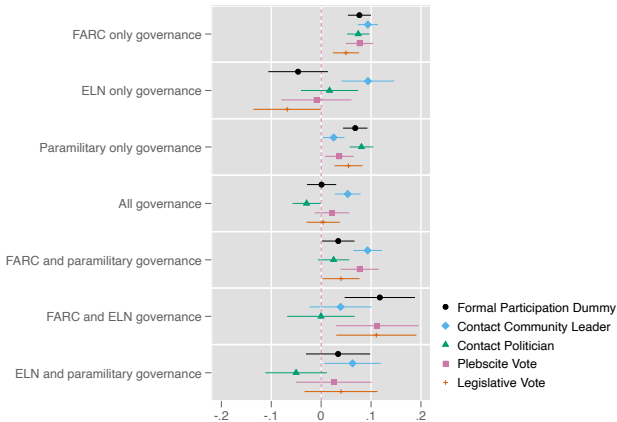
Insurgent and paramilitary gov increase informal participation...

+ 9% for FARC
+ 30% for paramilitary (surprise!)
- 14% for all groups together



... and both also increase formal participation

+ 10% for FARC
(surprise!)
+ 9% for
paramilitary



Accounting for the results: specific puzzles

- All types of armed group governance associated with increased formal *and* informal political engagement.
- What explains these results?
 - Have we mis-characterized how armed groups governed? *Not sure, more below.*
 - Driven by underlying preferences of communities where armed groups choose to govern (i.e. selection)? *Don't think so.*
 - Driven by internal displacement dynamics or migration? *No.*
 - Is armed group governance simply measuring victimization? *No.*

Accounting for the results: specific puzzles

- Why does FARC governance increase formal participation?
 - FARC mobilized local state institutions: served “as representatives who secured benefits from the state for their social bases”
Peñaranda Currie et al (2021: 7).
 - FARC educated residents about constitutional rights.
- Why does paramilitary governance increase informal participation?
 - Paramilitaries more decentralized: variation in governance across commanders, more shared governance than expected?

Implications and next steps

- Armed group governance produces lasting changes in behavior.
 - Where state authority was most challenged, more formal participation *and* informal engagement.
- What's next:
 - How do legacies interact with variation in peace agreement implementation across space?
 - What is the relationship between these legacies and local post-conflict stability?

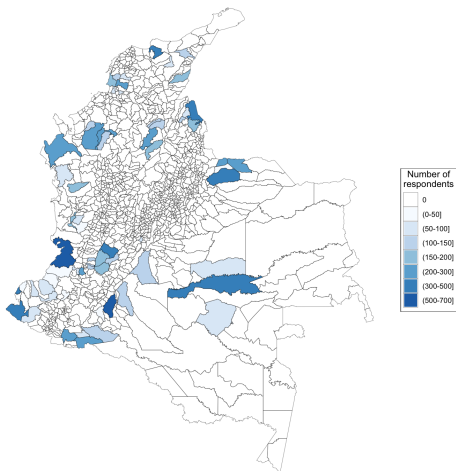
Thank you!

mlw@uniandes.edu.co

Additional slides

Distribution of respondents

Representative sample of each PDET
12,052 in total



Informal Participation and Armed Group Governance

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
	Informal Participation		Activist	Victims	JAC
	Dummy	Protest	Group	Org.	Member
FARC only governance	0.03 (0.02)	0.03* (0.01)	0.02 (0.02)	0.03** (0.01)	0.03 (0.02)
ELN only governance	0.02 (0.04)	0.05 (0.04)	-0.00 (0.02)	-0.01 (0.02)	0.06+ (0.03)
Paramilitary only governance	0.06** (0.02)	0.04** (0.01)	0.04* (0.02)	0.02 (0.01)	-0.00 (0.01)
All governance	-0.05* (0.02)	-0.05* (0.02)	-0.02 (0.02)	-0.00 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)
FARC and paramilitary governance	-0.00 (0.02)	-0.01 (0.02)	-0.01 (0.02)	0.00 (0.02)	0.02+ (0.01)
FARC and ELN governance	-0.06 (0.05)	-0.00 (0.05)	-0.04+ (0.03)	0.04 (0.03)	-0.03 (0.04)
ELN and paramilitary governance	-0.08 (0.06)	-0.07+ (0.04)	-0.01 (0.04)	-0.01 (0.03)	-0.01 (0.02)
Constant	0.05 (0.04)	-0.02 (0.03)	-0.00 (0.02)	-0.07*** (0.01)	0.06* (0.02)
Individual-level controls	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Municipal FEs	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
N	12052	12052	12052	10335	10335

Notes: Effects of armed group governance on an informal participation dummy (column 1) and the components of informal participation (columns 2-5). All specifications include municipal fixed effects, as well as individual respondent controls (gender, age, educational attainment, and dummies for employment). *** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$.

Formal Participation and Armed Group Governance

	(1) Formal Participation Dummy	(2) Contact Community Leader	(3) Contact Politician	(4) Plebiscite Vote	(5) Legislative Vote
FARC only governance	0.09*** (0.02)	0.08*** (0.02)	0.08*** (0.02)	0.08*** (0.02)	0.07** (0.02)
ELN only governance	0.02 (0.05)	0.10*** (0.03)	0.06+ (0.03)	0.02 (0.05)	0.01 (0.05)
Paramilitary only governance	0.07** (0.02)	0.03+ (0.02)	0.08*** (0.01)	0.07* (0.03)	0.07* (0.03)
All governance	0.02 (0.03)	0.03 (0.02)	-0.03 (0.02)	0.02 (0.03)	0.00 (0.03)
FARC and paramilitary governance	0.04+ (0.02)	0.05+ (0.03)	0.00 (0.02)	0.06* (0.03)	0.04+ (0.02)
FARC and ELN governance	0.03 (0.04)	-0.00 (0.03)	-0.01 (0.05)	0.10* (0.05)	0.02 (0.05)
ELN and paramilitary governance	-0.02 (0.03)	0.00 (0.03)	-0.07 (0.04)	-0.04 (0.04)	0.01 (0.03)
Constant	0.35*** (0.04)	-0.01 (0.03)	-0.01 (0.02)	-0.02 (0.05)	0.18*** (0.05)
N	12052	12052	12052	12052	12052
Individual-level controls	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Municipal FEs	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Notes: Effects of armed group governance on a formal participation dummy (column 1) and the components of formal participation (columns 2-5). All specifications include municipality fixed effects, as well as individual respondent controls (gender, age, educational attainment, and dummies for employment). *** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$.

Table: IDPs

	(1) Formal Participation Dummy	(2) Formal Participation Dummy, No IDPs	(3) Informal Participation Dummy	(4) Informal Participation Dummy, No IDPs
FARC only governance	0.09** (0.02)	0.07* (0.03)	0.03 (0.02)	0.01 (0.03)
ELN only governance	0.02 (0.05)	0.13+ (0.07)	0.02 (0.04)	-0.03 (0.07)
Paramilitary only governance	0.07** (0.02)	0.09** (0.03)	0.06** (0.02)	0.06*** (0.02)
All governance	0.02 (0.03)	-0.00 (0.05)	-0.05* (0.02)	-0.07* (0.03)
FARC and paramilitary governance	0.04+ (0.02)	0.02 (0.03)	-0.00 (0.02)	-0.02 (0.03)
FARC and ELN governance	0.03 (0.04)	-0.07 (0.08)	-0.06 (0.05)	0.04 (0.10)
ELN and paramilitary governance	-0.02 (0.03)	0.03 (0.06)	-0.08 (0.06)	-0.10 (0.07)
Education	0.06*** (0.00)	0.07*** (0.01)	0.05*** (0.00)	0.04*** (0.01)
Constant	0.35*** (0.04)	0.27*** (0.07)	0.05 (0.04)	0.02 (0.08)
Individual-level controls	✓	✓	✓	✓
Municipal FEs	✓	✓	✓	✓
12052	4830	12052	4830	

Notes: Effects of armed group governance on a formal participation dummy (columns 1 and 2) and an informal participation dummy (columns 3 and 4), with IDPs included (columns 1 and 3) and without (columns 2 and 4). All specifications include municipal fixed effects, as well as individual respondent controls (gender, age, educational attainment, and dummies for employment). *** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$.

Mobile respondents versus native municipal residents

Mobile Respondents versus native municipal residents

	Formal	Formal, native only	Informal	Informal, native only
FARC only governance	0.08*** (0.01)	0.06*** (0.02)	0.02 (0.01)	0.01 (0.02)
ELN only governance	-0.05 (0.03)	-0.10* (0.04)	0.01 (0.03)	0.06 (0.04)
Paramilitary only governance	0.07*** (0.01)	0.05*** (0.02)	0.06*** (0.01)	0.06*** (0.02)
All governance	0.00 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.02)	-0.04* (0.02)	-0.04+ (0.02)
FARC and paramilitary governance	0.03* (0.02)	0.00 (0.02)	-0.02 (0.02)	-0.04 (0.02)
FARC and ELN governance	0.12** (0.04)	0.19*** (0.05)	-0.06 (0.04)	-0.04 (0.05)
ELN and paramilitary governance	0.03 (0.03)	-0.00 (0.04)	-0.03 (0.03)	-0.06 (0.04)
Education	0.05*** (0.00)	0.06*** (0.00)	0.05*** (0.00)	0.05*** (0.00)
Individual-level controls	✓	✓	✓	✓
Municipal FEs	✓	✓	✓	✓
N	12,052	6,845	12,052	6,845

Notes: Effects of armed group governance on a formal participation dummy (columns 1 and 2) and an informal participation dummy (columns 3 and 4), with all respondents included (columns 1 and 3) and with only native-born municipal residents (columns 2 and 4). All specifications include municipal fixed effects, as well as individual respondent controls (gender, age, educational attainment, and dummies for employment). *** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$.