Strategies of Secession and International Legitimacy[*]

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Abstract

Secessionists often depend on foreigners for resources and political support, but scholars know little about how citizens form opinions towards international secessionists. We develop a theory to explain how international audiences evaluate the legitimacy of secessionists based on two of the most commonly used strategies of secession: violence against civilians and social service provision. While committing violence generally decreases legitimacy, we argue that secessionists can demonstrate sovereign capacity and reduce the negative effects of violence on legitimacy by providing social services. We test the theory with survey experiments in the United States and United Kingdom. Consistent with the theory, international audiences view violent groups as less legitimate than non-violent groups when no services are offered; however, these differences are reduced—and in some cases eliminated—when services are provided and as services become more inclusive. This finding suggests that social service provision allows secessionists to reduce the public costs of civilian killings.

Keywords: civil war, terrorism, social service provision, governance, survey experiments

In recent years, the rise of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) has brought worldwide attention to the threats posed by violent insurgencies. While violence is perhaps the most salient aspect of media coverage of these groups, significant attention has also been paid to insurgents' state-building activities. For instance, while ISIS propaganda initially focused on violent operations, more recently the organization has shifted its strategy to emphasize state-building and civilian life in the territory it controls (Osborne 2015). By highlighting governance while limiting information about violence, ISIS aims to cultivate a favorable public image among both domestic and international audiences. Indeed, recent events suggest that this strategy may have bolstered recruitment: since 2014, the number of foreign fighters in Syria has more than doubled, as tens of thousands of individuals have traveled across the world to fight on behalf of the insurgency (The Soufan Group 2015).[1]

A growing body of research considers how strategies of rebellion affect public evaluations and support of insurgent organizations (Huff and Kruszewska 2016; Berman and Laitin 2008; Coggins 2015; Chenoweth and Stephan 2011; Cunningham 2013, 2014; Chenoweth and Cunningham 2013). However, these studies focus overwhelmingly on the opinions of local civilians, overlooking how tactics affect the opinions of international audiences (but see Huff and Kruszewska 2016). Moreover, while scholars have raised the possibility that non-violent strategies may be used to offset the reputational costs of violence both domestically and internationally (Lyall, Blair, and Imai 2013; Berman and Laitin 2008; Bob 2005; Mampilly 2011; Huang 2016; Fazal 2013; Stanton 2013, 2016), no existing study tests the joint effects of violent and non-violent strategies on international public opinion. As a result, we know little about how international audiences evaluate insurgents who employ both violent and non-violent tactics—a common occurrence in secessionist conflict (Mampilly 2011; Arjona, Kasfir, and Mampilly 2014; Arjona 2016; Jo 2015; Huang 2016).

This article develops a theory to explain how international audiences form opinions towards

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[1]Of course, other insurgent groups have highlighted their governance efforts in the hopes of cultivating international support. For instance, since the 1970s, the Oromo Liberation Front in Ethiopia—the focus of one of the studies reported below—has engaged in a global public information campaign focused on its efforts to promote democracy in governance, build schools and hospitals, and include women and racial minorities in its institutions. This campaign included protests at the 2016 Rio Olympics and the opening of an office in Washington, D.C.

secessionist insurgencies depending on whether information about violent and/or non-violent tactics is made salient. We focus on secessionist insurgencies because these groups are especially reliant on the international system for material resources and political support (Coggins 2011; Mampilly 2011; Fazal 2013; Jo 2015; Huang 2016). Moreover, secessionist conflicts last longer than non-secessionist conflicts (Lujala 2010, 20) and pose a particular threat to regional stability (Buhaug and Gleditsch 2008). We examine how two of the most commonly used strategies of secession—the killing of civilians and social service provision—affect international evaluations of secessionist legitimacy. While we expect that groups that kill civilians will generally be viewed as less legitimate than non-violent groups, we argue that the magnitude of this negative violence effect will depend on groups' record of service provision—in particular, whether groups provide no services, services only to supporters (i.e., club goods), or services to both supporters and those outside the rebel group (i.e., public goods). The key rationale is that service provision demonstrates a capacity to govern state-like institutions. As a result, insurgents that do not provide social services fail to demonstrate sovereign capacity and thus pay a high price for civilian killings.

We test the theory with survey experiments in the United States and United Kingdom. The experiments, which resemble news media coverage of international insurgencies (e.g., Hammer 2016; Fuller 2012; Wax 2016; Gray 2007), randomize the information provided about real-life secessionists' record of violence and service provision before measuring multiple dimensions of legitimacy. We find that groups that avoid killing civilians and groups that provide social services are viewed as more legitimate than violent groups and groups that do not provide services, respectively. However, consistent with our theory, we find that violent and non-violent tactics interact to shape international evaluations of legitimacy. While international audiences view violent groups as less legitimate compared to non-violent groups, this negative violence effect is reduced—and in some cases eliminated—when services are provided and as these services become more inclusive. These results suggest that secessionist organizations can use non-violent tactics to reduce the public costs of civilian killings. This finding has important implications for

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scholarly research into civil war, rebel governance, and foreign policy opinion—and for efforts to combat ongoing insurgent conflicts across the globe.

Theory

Secession and the International Community

Insurgents rely on a portfolio of strategies—both violent and non-violent—to achieve their long-term goals (Kalyvas and Balcells 2010; Fazal 2013; Lasley and Thyne 2015; Fortna 2015; Jo 2015; Huang 2016). Although domestic political factors affect insurgents' choice of tactics, the international community significantly shapes—and in some cases determines—the violent and non-violent strategies that insurgents choose to deploy (Kalyvas and Balcells 2010; Fazal 2013; Lasley and Thyne 2015; Jo 2015; Chenoweth and Stephan 2011; Chenoweth and Cunningham 2013; Cunningham 2013, 2014; Stewart Forthcoming). The international community is especially important for secessionist insurgencies in particular. International political recognition is essential for accomplishing secessionists' ultimate goal of establishing a sovereign state. Moreover, secessionists often rely on foreigners for financial and military support (Bob 2005; Fazal 2013; Lasley and Thyne 2015; Cunningham 2014). As we discuss below, secessionists recognize these realities and engage in a variety of strategies to gain international support.

On the one hand, secessionists eschew certain strategies because they violate international norms and law. For instance, secessionists are less likely than non-secessionists to engage in terrorism (Fazal 2013; Stanton 2013, 2016), which breaches norms of war and reduces international support. Additionally, secessionist insurgents are less likely to rely on child soldiers (Lasley and Thyne 2015). Like terrorism, the use of child soldiers contradicts international norms of war. Compliance with international norms helps secessionists mimic the behavior of sovereign states and makes insurgents appear more legitimate.

On the other hand, secessionists engage in certain behaviors that involve demonstrations of state-like capacity to cultivate legitimacy internationally. For instance, secessionists often engage in international diplomacy by building embassies abroad (Coggins 2015; Huang 2016) or signing

international treaties and cooperating with international agreements (Jo 2015). One of the most commonly used strategies is the establishment of governing institutions (e.g., schools, hospitals). In fact, secessionist rebels often provide governance broadly and extensively, aiming to replicate the same social service institutions found in sovereign states (Stewart Forthcoming). For instance, the POLISARIO of the Western Sahara claim to manage, administrate, and govern their territory in order "to prove that they are ready for self-rule—a practice-run for statehood" (Organization for Statehood and Freedom 2010). These demonstrations of statehood—for both the public writ large but, most importantly, diaspora communities—are crucially important and among the most treasured pieces of information among diaspora activists living abroad. For instance, Eritrean activists in the United States during the Eritrean war for independence returned to the field of combat and the "liberated territories" of Eritrea. Delegates recorded daily activities and published this information back home in the United States. For activists abroad, such details about rebel governing institutions "were the most desired and coveted"; "by documenting every aspect of the [Eritrean People's Liberation Front]'s statelike structure, [Eritrean activists] not only felt a sense of belonging to the nation, but also solidified their commitment to ushering it into existence" (Hepner 2009, 85).

Of course, secessionists can only be viewed as legitimate if the international community knows about their state-like behaviors. As a result, secessionists take a variety of actions in order to highlight their state-building achievements to international audiences. Many of these actions are aimed at citizens in foreign countries, who can lobby their home governments and, in some cases, send material resources to support the insurgency (Bob 2005; Coggins 2015). Diaspora communities, such as the Tamils living in Canada or some Irish in the United States, have lobbied their countries to support independence projects in their home countries. Likewise, national liberation movements, such as the Palestinian Liberation Organization and the Biafran independence movement, rely on global networks of advocates and academics in the United States, Europe, and Australia to lobby foreign governments and raise public awareness. Sudanese secessionists went so far as to hire public relations firms to help the organization craft a positive public image (Bob

2005). As technology has changed over time, secessionists' diplomatic efforts now include appeals on social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube (Bodine-Baron, Helmus, Magnuson, and Wikelman 2016).

Insurgents also make appeals to elites in foreign states. For instance, secessionists sometimes invite observers from powerful Western governments to view their extensive administrative and governance structures. Secessionists as diverse as the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF), the African Party of Guinea and Cape Verde (PAIGC), and the Front for an Independent East Timor (FRETILIN) have invited observers from the United Kingdom, Sweden, and Australia to visit hospitals, listen to class lectures, or even travel on roads built by insurgencies.

Still other secessionists organize publicity campaigns consisting of press releases, interviews with sympathetic media outlets, or speeches in front of international bodies such as the United Nations (UN) or the United States Congress. For example, FRETILIN engaged in almost all of these behaviors over a brief two year period (FRETILIN 1976; Shackleton 1975; FRETILIN 1977). In its speeches to the UN, FRETILIN noted its state-building achievements in the territories the group controlled. In some cases, these efforts to demonstrate sovereign capacity result in international recognition. When Australia finally recognized the PAIGC in 1975, it did so because of "the people's alleged/demonstrated support of the PAIGC, and the administrative structure which PAIGC had built" (Government of Australia 1975, 240). In support of ongoing secessionist conflicts and to drum up worldwide support for certain national liberation movements, newspapers in socialist countries frequently publish editorials, missives from the field and interviews with rebel leaders engaged in conflict abroad in their local papers, despite the fact that their readership had little connection to the conflicts at hand (Bimbi 1982, 205). Though not a secessionist movement, Fidel Castro's first interview after surviving the failed landing of *The Granma* was not with a Cuban or Spanish-language newspaper, but rather with the *New York Times*. The front page Sunday morning coverage of Castro's movement was meant to win over the prized support of the American public (New York Times 2017).

To summarize, secessionists choose tactics strategically in order to generate legitimacy in the

eyes of international audiences. To build legitimacy, secessionists generally engage in certain behaviors, such as governance and international diplomacy, while eschewing others, such as terrorism and the use of child soldiers. Secessionists also highlight these strategic choices to international citizens in order to generate legitimacy in pursuit of their goals of sovereignty and international recognition.

Strategies of Secession and International Legitimacy

Although insurgents often target their appeals to international audiences, scholars know little about how citizens form opinions towards international insurgencies. In this section, we develop a theory to explain how people evaluate the legitimacy of international insurgencies. Our theory contributes to a growing body of research into the determinants of citizens' foreign policy opinions. This literature suggests that, while citizens often lack knowledge of specific facts in international politics, they are capable of using predispositions and available information to form reasonably coherent opinions about foreign affairs (Reifler, Scotto, and Clarke 2011; Page and Xie 2010; Jenkins-Smith, Mitchell, and Herron 2004; Richman, Malone, and Nolle 1997; Chittick, Billingsley, and Travis 1995; Page and Shapiro 1992; Hurwitz and Peffley 1987). For instance, citizens in the U.S. and U.K.—the settings for our experiments—hold relatively stable foreign policy outlooks that inform their views on particular issues (Goren, Schoen, Reifler, Scotto, and Chittick 2016; Rathbun, Kertzer, Reifler, Goren, and Scotto 2016; Kertzer, Powers, Rathbun, and Iyer 2014; Reifler, Scotto, and Clarke 2011). Based on this literature, we do not assume that citizens are highly informed about civil wars abroad or international insurgents. Rather, we merely assume that citizens are capable of using their more general views on foreign policy in combination with situational cues or information (e.g., media coverage) to form general evaluations about the legitimacy of insurgent groups (Herrmann, Fetlock, and Visser 1999).

Our theory focuses on how perceived legitimacy changes when citizens are provided with information about two of the most commonly employed strategies of secession: the killing of civilians and social service provision (Levi 1989; Wood 2010; Stewart and Liou 2017). We argue

that, consistent with the expectations of secessionist organizations, avoiding killing civilians and providing social services allows insurgents to demonstrate sovereign capacity by mimicking the behavior of the existing state. In particular, when secessionists limit violence against civilians, they comply with international expectations regarding norms of warfare and demonstrate discipline and order within their ranks. Similarly, the provision of social services represents a clear imitation of state behavior, especially when services are provided inclusively. These demonstrations of state capacity increase the likelihood that international audiences recognize insurgents as a legitimate alternative to the existing state. Although the international community will never benefit from the services secessionist rebels provide, these services nonetheless improve secessionist groups' standing in the eyes of the international community. With this general argument in mind, we now turn to a more detailed discussion of why and how violence and service provision influence legitimacy evaluations.

We focus first on violence. A large literature investigates how various forms of violence—including terrorism (Fazal 2013; Fortna 2015; Stanton 2013; Lapan and Sandler 1993; Hoffman and McCormick 2004; Stanton 2016), strategic violence against civilians (Weinstein 2006; Wood 2010; Salehyan, Siroky, and Wood 2014), guerrilla versus conventional warfare (Kalyvas and Balcells 2010), and sexual violence (Cohen 2013)—impact local and international conflict dynamics. Secessionist groups make strategic choices to deploy violence based on the organizational nature of the group itself (Weinstein 2006; Wood 2010; Stanton 2013; Fazal 2013; Stanton 2016) and structural factors, such as foreign support, that interact with the internal composition of the rebel group (Kalyvas 2008; Kalyvas and Balcells 2010; Salehyan, Siroky, and Wood 2014; Stewart and Liou 2017). Although it may seem counter-intuitive, the strategic use of violence offers many advantages: insurgents may be able to quickly extract resources or recruits and promote order and compliance in the territories they control (Kalyvas 2008; Wood 2010; Levi 1989). Sexual violence has also been shown to improve in-group cohesion (Cohen 2013). Terrorism can serve as a signal of resolve, commitment, and determination (Lapan and Sandler 1993; Hoffman and McCormick 2004), and can prolong civil wars (Fortna 2015).

However, violence against civilians entails substantial public costs. When civilians are victimized, public support for the perpetrators declines, even among people who may be likely to support the movement (Lyall, Blair, and Imai 2013). Because of these public costs, secessionists—who are especially reliant on international public support—often avoid using terrorism and strategic violence against civilians (Fazal 2013; Stanton 2013, 2016). Importantly, violence affects opinions among both domestic *and* international audiences. Historical public opinion data from the United States show that international publics generally "abhor" terrorism abroad (Downes-Le Guin and Hoffman 1993, 16), and are skeptical of foreign military interventions that could involve high levels of civilian casualties (Eichenberg 2005, 172; Burk 1999, 56; Gelpi, Feaver, and Reifler 2009, 256).

Moreover, limiting civilian victimization adheres to international expectations and norms of warfare, thereby increasing the perceived legitimacy of the organization and its goals (Fazal 2013; Lasley and Thyne 2015; Jo 2015; Stanton 2013, 2016). Likewise, secessionists who restrict violence against civilians demonstrate a capacity to instill discipline and control among subordinates, contributing to an overall sense of order and rule of law. We therefore expect that:

> **H1:** Secessionists that avoid killing civilians will be viewed as more legitimate than secessionists that kill civilians, all else constant.

Yet, these generally negative attitudes towards violence are not insurmountable for insurgents. For instance, despite nearly universal public distaste for terrorism, almost half of the American public reports that terrorists could have legitimate grievances (Downes-Le Guin and Hoffman 1993). Moreover, violence against civilians does not occur in a vacuum: secessionists simultaneously deploy both violent and non-violent strategies to attract support and achieve their long-term goals (e.g., Arjona, Kasfir, and Mampilly 2014).

One of the most common non-violent strategies of secession is social service provision. By social service provision, we mean secessionist-provided governance or goods, such as education, health care, utilities, or law and order. Unlike violence in civil wars, which can have both negative and positive consequences for secessionist movements, nearly all existing studies assert or

assume that service provision increases legitimacy and public support (Arjona 2016).

The positive effects of service provision on perceived legitimacy have typically been assumed to extend only to secessionists' domestic constituency (Weinstein 2006; Berman and Laitin 2008; Grynkewich 2008; Mampilly 2011). For instance, Weinstein (2006) and Berman and Laitin (2008) argue that service provision allows secessionists to target specific types of recruits. Grynkewich (2008) and Mampilly (2011) argue that service provision increases the perceived legitimacy of rebel organizations, while simultaneously undermining the legitimacy of the existing governing regime. Similarly, Beath, Christia, and Enikolopov (2013) show that even during wartime insecurity, Afghan civilians' attitudes towards the Afghan government improved when the government implemented local development projects. These positive effects persisted even as the Afghan government failed to decrease violence around the village. These studies suggest that social service provision should increase the perceived legitimacy of insurgents, at least in the domestic context. In fact, some scholars argue that service provision is so powerful among domestic audiences that it may inspire civilians to commit lethal violence (Berman and Laitin 2008).

Although social service provision affects domestic public opinion, the provision of goods may serve a critical international function for secessionist organizations as well, despite the fact that international audiences will never be beneficiaries of rebel governance. Before members of the international community recognize secessionist insurgencies as states, they consider not only the strategic consequences (Coggins 2011) but also whether secessionist movements have the capacity to survive and govern (United States 1975). Secessionist organizations are keenly aware of these international norms and therefore consider service provision an important tool in shaping the attitudes of international communities. As noted above, independence movements as varied as Hamas, POLISARIO, FRETILIN, the EPLF, and the PAIGC have invited international observers and politicians to visit the territories they control and observe their governing achievements. Just as terrorism and strategic violence serve domestic and international roles, so too do social service provision and non-violent strategies (Mampilly 2011; Cunningham 2013; Huang 2016; Jo 2015; Grynkewich 2008).

While service provision is common among secessionist insurgencies, there is considerable heterogeneity in the types of services secessionists provide (Mampilly 2011; Arjona 2016; Stewart Forthcoming). Perhaps the most important source of variation is the inclusivity of social service provision. Some secessionists offer services *inclusively*—that is, they provide services to all people, including non-co-ethnic rivals or even prisoners of war (Wilson 1991, 94). Other secessionist groups, such as the brutal Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU), provide services *restrictively*–that is, only to people who actively support the movement.

Inclusive service provision allows insurgents to demonstrate economic viability and more clearly perform the role of the state (Mampilly 2011, 2015; Stewart Forthcoming). As a result, inclusive services generate legitimacy both in absolute terms and relative to the incumbent state (Grynkewich 2008; Mampilly 2011). By providing goods inclusively, secessionists demonstrate a capacity to perform the role of the state by providing public goods, which in turn should enhance a secessionist group's legitimacy relative to the incumbent state, as well as international support for the secessionist group's long-term goals (Mampilly 2011; Stewart Forthcoming).

Taken together, this research suggests that social service provision should increase the perceived legitimacy of secessionist movements. However, the magnitude of this positive effect should depend on the inclusivity of services. Specifically, international audiences should respond more favorably to services that are provided inclusively compared to restrictively. This line of thinking leads to the following hypothesis:

> **H2:** The perceived legitimacy of insurgencies will increase as social service provision becomes more inclusive, all else constant.

The hypotheses above focus on the independent effects of violence and service provision; however, in practice, violent and non-violent strategies are often employed simultaneously. For instance, Berman and Laitin (2008) argue that service provision enables secessionists to commit greater violence and attract more recruits. Similarly, Lyall, Blair, and Imai (2013) show that when combatants victimize civilians, support for the combatants' rival increases, but when combatants who victimized civilians offer post-harm aid, support for the combatants' rival declines. There-

fore, we expect violence and service provision to have an interactive effect on opinions towards secessionist movements.

This interactive effect can be understood as reducing the public costs of violence. As services and governance become more inclusive, international support for a secessionists' goals increases, decreasing the negative consequences associated with violence. Secessionists that provide governance openly and broadly should therefore face fewer penalties in the eyes of the international community than secessionists that engage in strategic violence against civilians without simultaneously providing services inclusively. In other words, while the strategic use of violence against civilians generally decreases the perceived legitimacy of a secessionist group, this violence effect will be moderated by whether or not a secessionist movement provides inclusive services. Thus, our primary hypothesis is that:

> **H3:** Among groups that do not provide social services, killing civilians will decrease perceived legitimacy. By contrast, among groups that do provide social services, killing civilians will not decrease perceived legitimacy.

To summarize, we argue that secessionists rely on both non-violent and violent strategies to generate legitimacy among international audiences. In general, violence against civilians should decrease perceptions of legitimacy, while social service provision should increase the legitimacy of secessionist movements. However, violent and non-violent tactics should have an interactive effect on public opinion; specifically, the difference in perceived legitimacy between violent and non-violent groups should diminish as service provision becomes more inclusive.

Data and Methods

Experimental Design

We tested our hypotheses with survey experiments in the United States and United Kingdom. The experiments randomize the information provided about insurgents' record of violence and service provision before measuring multiple indicators of perceived legitimacy (see Huff and

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Kruszewska 2016 for a similar approach).[2] This experimental approach allows us to isolate the effects of violence and service provision—both independently and jointly—on the perceived legitimacy of international insurgents.

Study 1 asked a sample of participants in the United States (N=605) to evaluate the Karen National Union (KNU) in Myanmar, and Study 2 asked a sample of participants in the United Kingdom (N=617) to evaluate the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) in Ethiopia.[3] Although international insurgencies are often covered in U.S. and U.K. media, we focus on low salience groups to minimize the risk that participants associate our treatments with particular groups (Huff and Kruszewska 2016, 1777). Both the KNU and OLF are currently engaged in conflict, both are organized around an ethnic cleavage, and both are secessionists.

Both experiments used a 3 × 2 between-subjects design. All participants were provided with some background information about the insurgency, which covered its history, geographic location, and strategic objectives. Because all participants received this information, the analyses below consider how public opinion responds to variation in insurgent tactics holding information constant. The vignettes used in both studies are highly similar in length and style (see Appendix A). Participants were randomly assigned into one of six experimental conditions displayed in Table 1.[4] Following our theory, we manipulate two factors hypothesized to affect perceptions of insurgent legitimacy: violence against civilians and social service provision. We discuss each experimental factor in turn.

Violence. While there are countless possible ways to operationalize violence, we focus on perhaps the most widely employed and discussed violent tactic: the killing of civilians (Gelpi, Feaver, and Reifler 2009; Eichenberg 2005; Downes-Le Guin and Hoffman 1993). As shown in

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[2]We opt for multiple measures to increase external validity and because there is no agreed upon method for measuring the concept (e.g., Marquez 2016).

[3]Participants in both studies were recruited using the Internet. For Study 1, we used Qualtrics to recruit a sample that resembles the U.S. population in terms of age, race, region of residence, and party affiliation. For Study 2, we used Prolific Academic (Peer, Brandimarte, Samat, and Acquisti 2017) to recruit a non-student sample (N=617) of United Kingdom residents. Study 1 was fielded in February 2016 and Study 2 in November 2016. Demographic information on both samples is provided in Online Appendix A.

[4]In both studies, randomization checks confirm that conditions were balanced on relevant pre-treatment covariates. See Online Appendix A for more information on covariate balance and robustness.

Table 1: Experimental Design

	No violence against civilians	Violence against civilians
No mention of social services	Condition 1	Condition 2
Restrictive social service provision	Condition 3	Condition 4
Inclusive social service provision	Condition 5	Condition 6

Table 1, conditions 1, 3, and 5 read that the insurgency actively avoids harming civilians during its operations, while participants in groups 2, 4, and 6 read that the group targets civilians.[5] The non-violent and violent treatments indicated that:

> **No violence:** The [KNU's/OLF's] military strategy advocates avoiding the targeting of civilians at all costs. During the decades-long struggle for Karen independence, the [KNU/OLF] has meticulously avoided killing civilians.

> **Violence:** The [KNU's/OLF's] military strategy advocates pursuing independence at all costs. During the decades-long struggle for [Karen/Oromo] independence, many civilians have died at the hands of [KNU/OLF].

Social Service Provision. As discussed, the inclusivity of insurgent social service provision varies widely. For instance, from 1945-2003, about 25 percent of all insurgencies provided inclusive services, while the remaining 75 percent of rebels provided no services, or limited provision to active supporters only (Stewart Forthcoming). We therefore manipulate not only whether the group provides services, but also the inclusivity of the group's social service apparatus. As shown in Table 1, conditions 1 and 2 were not provided with any information about service provision, conditions 3 and 4 read that the group provides services *restrictively* (i.e., to supporters only),

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[5]All participants received information about the insurgency's record of violence or non-violence. We made this design choice for two reasons. First, because violence is an extremely common feature of media coverage of international insurgencies (e.g., Powell 2011), participants may assume the group is violent unless told otherwise. Pre-treatment effects like these could bias the between-condition comparisons needed to test our hypotheses (Druckman and Leeper 2012; Gaines, Kuklinski, and Quirk 2007). Second, adding an additional level of the violence treatment would expand the design by one-half, significantly reducing statistical power.

and conditions 5 and 6 read that the group provides services *inclusively* (i.e., to supporters and opponents). The restrictive and inclusive services treatments indicated that:

> **Restrictive Services:** The [KNU/OLF] provides a number of social services, including education and healthcare, in the areas where it operates. The [KNU/OLF] is the only service provider in these areas, and if residents cannot access the [KNU's/OLF's] services, they have no other way to obtain these services. For the past several decades, the [KNU/OLF] has provided these services only to civilians who are members of, or support the goals of, the [KNU/OLF].

> **Inclusive Services:** The [KNU/OLF] provides a number of social services, including education and healthcare, in the areas where it operates. The [KNU/OLF] is the only service provider in these areas, and if residents cannot access the [KNU's/OLF's] services, they have no other way to obtain these services. For the past several decades, the [KNU/OLF] has provided these services to anyone, including civilians who will likely never become members of, or even support the goals of, the [KNU/OLF].

After reading the experimental treatment, participants answered three outcome measures that captured perceived legitimacy: the extent to which the group is a legitimate alternative to the existing government (1-7), the extent to which the group is capable of governing an independent state (1-5), and support for an independent state (1-7).[6] We focus our in-text discussion primarily on the first outcome variable, though we present results on all three variables in the tables that follow. Question wordings for all dependent variables are provided in Appendix A.

Our experimental design reflects the range of insurgencies currently operating across the world. As shown in Table 2, there are real world analogues for all six possible combinations of violence and service provision treatments. For example, as shown in the top left cell of the table, the Front for the National Liberation of the Congo (FNLC) neither commits violence against civilians nor provides social services. By contrast, Hamas is found in the bottom right cell because it commits violence and provides inclusive social services. As a result, our experiments offer insight into how citizens evaluate a wide range of real life insurgencies.

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[6]These interval scales allow us to examine how information about violence and service provision affects the strength of participants' legitimacy evaluations. To evaluate whether the treatments affect the probability that participants view insurgents as legitimate, we conducted robustness checks using dichotomized versions of our outcome measures (e.g., 1 if strongly/somewhat/slightly agree that the group is legitimate, 0 otherwise). Our results are substantively the same when we use dichotomous outcome measures (see Online Appendix C).

While our experiments are well suited to isolate the causal effects of violence and service provision on legitimacy evaluations, one possible concern is external validity. As McDermott (2011, 37) explains, "conducting a series of experiments that include different populations, involve different situations, and use multiple measurements establishes the fundamental basis of external validity." Following this logic, we took several steps to maximize the external validity of our experiments. First, as mentioned, we recruited participants from two countries and asked them to evaluate two different international insurgencies. We can therefore evaluate the extent to which our results generalize across countries with distinct political cultures. Second, we consider how our treatments affect multiple indicators of perceived legitimacy. Finally, we crafted our treatments to resemble both news coverage of international insurgencies (e.g., Hammer 2016; Fuller 2012; Wax 2016; Gray 2007) and the public statements of insurgents themselves. For instance, consider how the OLF describes its stance on civilian violence: the group's website states that "OLF armed resistance targets the government's coercive machinery, not innocent civilians. The OLF has an unswerving anti-terrorism stand and opposes terrorism as means of struggle to achieve the right of the Oromo people" (Oromo Liberation Front 2017). The website also highlights the OLF's inclusive approach to non-Oromo people living in OLF controlled territory: "there are minorities who have distinct identity and culture of their own. Minorities in Oromia are economically, culturally, and politically closely linked with the Oromo people. The OLF recognizes and respects the right of national minorities in accordance with internationally accepted principles to develop their culture, administer their own affairs, enjoy equal rights in every field of activity" (Oromo Liberation Front 2017). Our experiments therefore capture how citizens respond to the types of information they may encounter in the real world.

Estimating Treatment Effects

In both studies, we test our hypotheses by estimating a series of OLS regression models. The models regress each dependent variable on binary indicators for violence, restrictive service provision, and inclusive service provision; we also include interaction terms between violence

Table 2: Real World Analogues for Each Experimental Cell

	No violence against civilians	Violence against civilians
No social services	Front for the National Liberation of the Congo (FNLC)	Kurdish Worker's Party (PKK)
Restrictive social services	Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU/ZANU)	National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL)
Inclusive social services	Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF), Karen National Union (KNU)	Liberation Tamil Tigers of Eelam (LTTE)

and the two levels of service provision. The result is a series of models that take the following form:

$$Y_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{Violent}_i + \beta_2 \text{Restrictive Services}_i + \beta_3 \text{Inclusive Services}_i +$$
$$\beta_4 \text{Violent} \times \text{Restrictive Services}_i + \beta_5 \text{Violent} \times \text{Inclusive Services}_i + \epsilon_i \tag{1}$$

This model specification permits straightforward tests of our hypotheses. Hypothesis 1, which suggests that violent groups will be viewed as less legitimate than non-violent groups, implies that the coefficient on violence will be negative ($\beta_1 < 0$). Hypothesis 2 posits that legitimacy will increase as social services become more inclusive. Our models allow two tests of Hypothesis 2. The first is whether groups that provide restrictive or inclusive services are viewed as more legitimate than groups that provide no services (i.e., $\beta_2 > 0$ and $\beta_3 > 0$, respectively). A second, more stringent, test is whether people view inclusive service providing groups as more legitimate than restrictive service providing groups (i.e., $\beta_3 > \beta_2$). (Based on the theory discussed above, we are confident that restrictive and inclusive service providing groups will be viewed as more legitimate than groups that do not provide services. However, we are agnostic about whether citizens will recognize the marginal increase in inclusivity from restrictive to inclusive and adjust their legitimacy evaluations accordingly.) Hypothesis 3 suggests that the negative effects of violence on legitimacy will diminish as service provision becomes more inclusive. Testing this hypothesis requires us to calculate the effect of violence conditional on various levels of service

provision. These conditional violence effects can be calculated by summing the relevant coefficient estimates (e.g., the effect of violence among groups that provide no services is simply β_1).[7] Because the significance of interactive effects like these is difficult to interpret, we follow Brambor, Clark, and Golder (2006) and plot the estimated effect of violence conditional on different levels of service provision and 95 percent confidence intervals.

Results

In discussing the results of both studies, we present three regression models (corresponding to our three outcome measures). We also present one plot for each study, which displays the interactive effects necessary to test our key hypothesis. Means and standard deviations for all variables in both studies are available in Online Appendix B.

Study 1 (United States)

Study 1 asked a sample of participants in the United States to evaluate the Karen National Union (KNU) in Myanmar. Table 3 displays the regression results for Study 1. We begin by examining Hypothesis 1, which posits that violence will decrease perceived legitimacy. Looking across the top row of Table 3, we see strong support for this hypothesis across all three outcome measures. Compared to the group that does not commit violence against civilians, the violent group is viewed as less of a legitimate alternative to the existing state ($\beta = -0.64$, $p < .01$) and less capable of governing an independent state ($\beta = -0.42$, $p < .01$); participants are also less supportive of an independent state when told that the group is violent ($\beta = -0.41$, $p < .05$).[8] These results suggest that committing violence against civilians has far-reaching negative consequences for perceived legitimacy.

We now turn to Hypothesis 2, which suggests that perceived legitimacy will increase as

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[7]Among groups that provide restrictive services, this same effect is $(\beta_1 + \beta_2 + \beta_4) - \beta_2 = (\beta_1 + \beta_4)$. Among groups that provide inclusive services, this effect is $(\beta_1 + \beta_3 + \beta_5) - \beta_3 = (\beta_1 + \beta_5)$.

[8]All reported p-values come from two-sided tests.

Table 3: OLS Regression Models Predicting Legitimacy Evaluations (Study 1)

	Dependent variable:		
	Legitimate Alternative (1-7)	Capable of Governing (1-5)	Support Independent State (1-7)
Violent	−0.64***	−0.42***	−0.41**
	(0.19)	(0.13)	(0.18)
Restrictive Services	0.31	0.06	0.31
	(0.20)	(0.14)	(0.20)
Inclusive Services	0.11	0.17	0.34*
	(0.19)	(0.13)	(0.19)
Violent x Restrictive Services	0.39	0.45**	0.14
	(0.28)	(0.19)	(0.27)
Violent x Inclusive Services	0.67**	0.19	0.10
	(0.27)	(0.18)	(0.26)
Constant	4.07***	3.19***	4.21***
	(0.13)	(0.09)	(0.13)
Observations	605	605	605

Note: All independent variables are binary. Significance codes: ***p<.01; **p<.05; *p<.10.

service provision becomes more inclusive. As discussed, the simplest test of this hypothesis is whether groups that provide restrictive or inclusive services are viewed as more legitimate than groups that do not provide services. As shown in the second row of Table 3, restrictive service provision increases all three forms of legitimacy, though the effects are insignificant ($p = 0.13$ for legitimate alternative; $p = 0.64$ for capable of governing; $p = 0.12$ for support independent state). Similarly, the effects of inclusive service provision our three outcomes measures are in the expected direction, but mostly insignificant. The effect of inclusive services is largest on support for an independent KNU state ($\beta = 0.34$, $p = 0.07$).

As mentioned, a more stringent test of Hypothesis 2 is whether inclusive services have a larger positive effect on perceived legitimacy than restrictive services (i.e., whether $\beta_3 > \beta_2$). Across all three models in Table 3, we cannot reject the null hypothesis of no difference between these coefficients.[9] Collectively, these results suggest that although citizens may view service providing groups as more legitimate than groups that do not provide services, citizens do not distinguish between groups that provide services restrictively and inclusively.

Finally, we consider our key hypothesis (H3), which posits that the negative effects of violence on legitimacy will decrease as service provision becomes more inclusive. As explained above, the effect of violence on perceived legitimacy can be calculated for each level of service provision by summing the relevant coefficient estimates. Consider the effect of violence on the first outcome variable: the extent to which participants view the KNU as a legitimate alternative to the existing state (first column in Table 3). The estimated effect of violence on legitimacy among groups that do not provide services is simply $\beta_1 = -0.64$. Among groups that provide restrictive services, this estimated effect is considerably smaller: -0.25. Finally, among groups that provide inclusive services, the estimated effect of violence on legitimacy is actually positive: 0.04.

These estimated effects of violence (along with 95 percent confidence intervals) are displayed graphically in Figure 1.[10] As shown in the left-most bar, the estimated effect of violence on per-

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[9]The p-values are $p = 0.33$ (legitimate alternative), $p = 0.41$ (capable of governing), and $p = 0.88$ (support independent state).

[10]In both studies, we test each conditional violence effect against a null of no effect. We opt for this straightforward test because it allows us to examine our key prediction that groups that do not provide services will pay a significant

Figure 1: Effect of Killing Civilians on Perceived Legitimacy, by Level of Social Service Provision (Study 1)
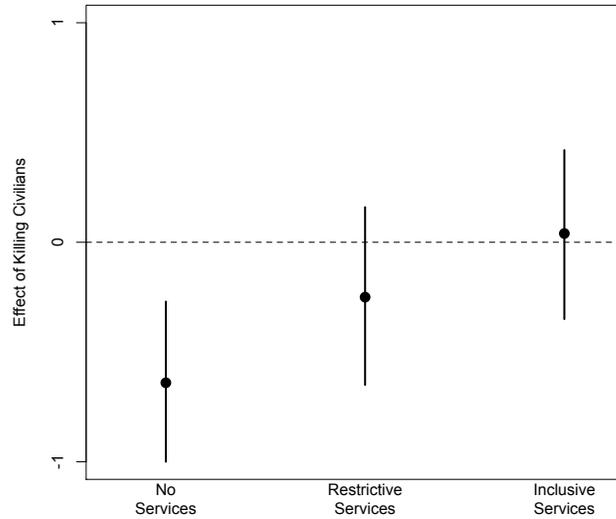
Note: Dots give the estimated effect of killing civilians on perceived legitimacy conditional on level of service provision. Lines contain 95% confidence intervals.

ceived legitimacy among groups that do not provide services is negative and statistically distinguishable from zero (95% CI: [-1.00, -0.27]). By contrast, the estimated effect of violence is indistinguishable from zero among groups that provide social services—either restrictively or inclusively. As shown in the middle bar in Figure 1, among groups that provide restrictive services, the 95 percent confidence interval around the estimated violence effect is [-0.14, 0.64]. Among groups that provide inclusive services, this interval is [-0.45, 0.37]. Consistent with Hypothesis 3, these patterns indicate that groups that do not provide social services pay a significant price for killing civilians, while groups that provide services pay no such price.

price for killing civilians while service providing groups will not. Of course, the difference between significant and insignificant effects is not necessarily itself significant (Gelman and Stern 2006). As shown in Figures 1 and 2, the conditional violence effect is more responsive to changes in service provision in study 1 compared to study 2.

Study 2 (United Kingdom)

We conducted a second experimental study to further test our hypotheses. This experiment asked a sample of non-student participants in the United Kingdom to evaluate the Oromo Liberation Front in Ethiopia. Table 4 displays the regression results for Study 2.

We again begin by testing Hypothesis 1, which asserts that violence will decrease legitimacy evaluations. Mirroring the results from Study 1, we find strong support for this hypothesis across all three outcome measures (see top row in Table 4). Compared to the the non-violent group, the violent group is viewed as less of a legitimate alternative to the existing state ($\beta = -0.42$, $p < .01$) and less capable of governing an independent state ($\beta = -0.40$, $p < .01$). Participants are also less supportive of independence for the violent group compared to the non-violent group ($\beta = -0.50$, $p < .01$). As in Study 1, these results suggest that killing civilians has strong negative effects on all three measured dimensions of legitimacy.

Turning our attention to Hypothesis 2, we again start with the simplest test: whether groups that provide restrictive or inclusive services are viewed as more legitimate than groups that do not provide services. Looking at the second row of Table 4, we see that groups that provide restrictive services are viewed as more legitimate alternatives to the existing state ($\beta = 0.41$, $p < .05$) and more capable of governing an independent state ($\beta = 0.20$, $p < .10$). (Participants are also more supportive of independence for the group that provides restrictive services, though this effect is insignificant.) The results are highly similar when we examine the effect of inclusive services. As shown in the third row of Table 4, groups that provide inclusive services are viewed as more legitimate alternatives ($\beta = 0.40$, $p < .05$) and as more capable of governing an independent state ($\beta = 0.46$, $p < .01$). (Participants are more supportive of independence for inclusive service providing groups, though this effect is again insignificant.)

We now conduct the more stringent test of Hypothesis 2 by examining whether participants view inclusive service providing groups as more legitimate than restrictive service providing groups (i.e., whether $\beta_3 > \beta_2$). Unlike the previous study, Study 2 suggests that citizens are capable of distinguishing between restrictive and inclusive service provision and adjusting their

Table 4: OLS Regression Models Predicting Legitimacy Evaluations (Study 2)

	Dependent variable:		
	Legitimate Alternative (1-7)	Capable of Governing (1-5)	Support Independent State (1-7)
Violent	−0.42**	−0.40***	−0.50***
	(0.18)	(0.11)	(0.16)
Restrictive Services	0.41**	0.20*	0.13
	(0.20)	(0.12)	(0.17)
Inclusive Services	0.40**	0.46***	0.25
	(0.19)	(0.12)	(0.17)
Violent x Restrictive Services	−0.04	0.30*	0.17
	(0.27)	(0.16)	(0.24)
Violent x Inclusive Services	0.20	0.23	0.22
	(0.26)	(0.16)	(0.23)
Constant	3.91***	3.00***	4.26***
	(0.13)	(0.08)	(0.12)
Observations	611	611	611

Note: All independent variables are binary. Significance codes: ***p<.01; **p<.05; *p<.10.

Figure 2: Effect of Killing Civilians on Perceived Legitimacy, by Level of Social Service Provision (Study 2)
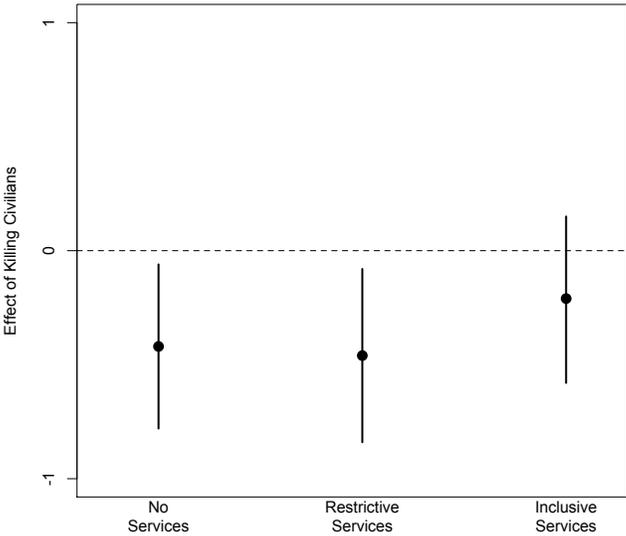
Note: Dots give the estimated effect of killing civilians on perceived legitimacy conditional on level of service provision. Lines contain 95% confidence intervals.

legitimacy evaluations accordingly. Consider the second model in Table 4, which predicts perceived governing capacity—the outcome most closely tied to the restrictive versus inclusive provision comparison. In this model, the coefficient on inclusive services is significantly larger than the coefficient on restrictive services ($p = .04$), suggesting that citizens view groups that provide wide-ranging social services as more capable at governing than groups that provide more restrictive services. This difference in coefficients is insignificant in the other two models (legitimate alternative: $p = .96$; support independent state: $p = .50$)—understandable since those two outcome variables are arguably more distant from the service provision treatments.

We conclude by considering Hypothesis 3. Following the procedure above, we calculate the conditional effect of violence on perceived legitimacy (left column in Table 4) by summing the relevant coefficient estimates. Among groups that do not provide services, the estimated effect of violence is simply $\beta_1 = -0.42$. Among groups that provide restrictive services, this estimated effect is similar: -0.46. Finally, among groups that provide inclusive services, this estimated effect is -0.21.

These estimated effects of violence (along with 95 percent confidence intervals) are displayed graphically in Figure 2. As shown in the figure, the estimated effects of violence on perceived legitimacy among groups that do not provide services (left most bar) or provide restrictive services (middle bar) are negative and statistically distinguishable from zero (95% CI for no services: [-0.78, -0.06]; 95% CI for restrictive services [-0.84, -0.08]). By contrast, the negative effect of violence among groups that provide inclusive services is statistically indistinguishable from zero (95% CI: [-0.58, 0.15]). Thus, consistent with Hypothesis 3, these patterns suggest that the negative effects of killing civilians diminish as service provision becomes more inclusive.

Discussion and Conclusion

A growing body of research suggests that violent and non-violent strategies of secession shape public opinion towards insurgencies. However, existing studies focus overwhelmingly on domes-

tic public opinion and fail to consider how violent and non-violent tactics might interact to shape opinion. This article develops a theory to explain how both sets of tactics affect a critical aspect of international public opinion: perceived legitimacy. In particular, we theorized that although committing violence against civilians generally decreases legitimacy, insurgents can demonstrate sovereign capacity and reduce these public costs by providing social services. We tested the theory with survey experiments that asked samples of U.S. and U.K. citizens to evaluate two contemporary international insurgencies. Consistent with the theory, we find that social service provision allow rebels to decrease—and in some cases eliminate—the public costs of violence. We showed that this effect persists across multiple groups and multiple important dimensions of legitimacy. For instance, in Study 1, we show that service provision leads people to view violent insurgents as equally legitimate alternatives to the existing state; and in Study 2, we show that inclusive service provision allows insurgents to reduce the negative effects of violence on support for an independent OLF state—the ultimate goal of the insurgency. These findings highlight the importance of rebel diplomacy for international public opinion (Coggins 2015; Huang 2016).

Of course, the experiments reported here are not without limitations. First, although our experiments focused on two commonly used tactics, rebel groups make many other tactical decisions that could potentially affect international public opinion. For example, it would be worthwhile to examine whether the violence effects reported here generalize to other types of violence (e.g., sexual violence, torture). Second, insurgents may adjust their tactics in response to unfavorable media coverage or public protest in foreign states. Our experiments cannot capture these over-time dynamics and future research should therefore consider how public opinion responds to changes in insurgent tactics. Third, future research should investigate sources of heterogeneity in how individuals evaluate insurgencies. Citizens who are more militaristic or interventionst might, for instance, be more inclined to oppose violent groups regardless of whether they provide services (e.g., Kertzer et al. 2014). Similarly, the effects we find here for the public writ large could be *weaker* than effects among interested and invested members of the international community, such as a diaspora. Members of diaspora communities may be more willing to accept violence

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against civilians than citizens with no personal connection to the contested territory, and the anecdotal evidence discussed in the theory suggests that social service provision generates favorable responses among diaspora members that may fully eliminate the negative consequences of violence.

These limitations notwithstanding, the results presented here demonstrate that opinions towards international insurgencies respond to both violent and non-violent strategies of rebellion. This finding has critical implications for foreign policy and media coverage of ongoing secessionist movements, including those in Palestine, Kurdistan, and elsewhere. For instance, the United States has recently allied with Kurdish groups in Iraq and Syria to push back against ISIS incursions. In covering this conflict, some American media coverage has emphasized Kurdish social service institutions, including explicitly inclusive institutions that partner with and provide services to non-Kurdish individuals (e.g., Enzinna 2015). The evidence presented here suggests that international publics take account of this sort of information as they form opinions about the legitimacy of international insurgencies.

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Appendix A: Experimental Treatments and Dependent Variables

Study 1

We are interested in your opinions towards some events recently in the news.

Please read the information on the next page before answering the questions that follow.

— Page Break —

The Karen National Union (KNU) is a rebel group seeking to establish an independent Karen country in present-day Myanmar, a country in southeast Asia. Operating since the late 1940s, the group claims that the Karens—an ethnic group within Myanmar—were never a part of Myanmar historically or culturally. The group argues that their region was incorporated into Myanmar by British colonists without the consent of the Karen people. Although the organization is nearly 70 years old, it continues to pursue its goal of independence to this day.

[Non-violent:]
The KNU's military strategy advocates avoiding the targeting of civilians at all costs. During the decades-long struggle for Karen independence, the KNU has meticulously avoided killing civilians.

[Violent:]
The KNU's military strategy advocates pursuing independence at all costs. During the decades-long struggle for Karen independence, many citizens have died at the hands of the KNU.

[Restrictive Services:]
The KNU provides a number of social services, including education and healthcare, in the areas where it operates. The KNU is the only service provider in these areas, and if residents cannot access the KNU's services, they have no other way to obtain these services. For the past several decades, the KNU has provided these services only to civilians who are members of, or support the goals of, the KNU.

[Inclusive Services:]
The KNU provides a number of social services, including education and healthcare, in the areas where it operates. The KNU is the only service provider in these areas, and if residents cannot access KNU's services, they have no other way to obtain these services. For the past several decades, the KNU has provided these services to anyone, including civilians who will likely never become members of, or even support the goals of, the KNU.

—Page Break—

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? … The KNU is a legitimate alternative to the existing government in Myanmar.
-Strongly Agree [7]
-Somewhat Agree [6]
-Slightly Agree [5]
-Neither Agree Nor Disagree [4]
-Slightly Disagree [3]
-Somewhat Disagree [2]
-Strongly Disagree [1]

— Page Break —

Do you think the KNU is capable or incapable of governing an independent country?
-Definitely capable [5]
-Probably capable [4]
-Not sure/no opinion [3]
-Probably incapable [2]
-Definitely capable [1]

— Page Break —

Do you support or oppose the establishment of an independent Karen country in Myanmar?
-Strongly Support [7]
-Somewhat Support [6]
-Slightly Support [5]
-Neither Support Nor Oppose [4]
-Slightly Oppose [3]
-Somewhat Oppose [2]
-Strongly Oppose [1]

Study 2

We are interested in your opinions towards some events recently in the news.

Please read the information on the next page before answering the questions that follow.

— Page Break —

The Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) is a rebel group seeking to establish an independent Oromo country in present-day Ethiopia, a country in sub-Saharan Africa. Operating since the mid-1970s, the OLF claims that the Oromos—an ethnic group within Ethiopia—were never part of Ethiopia culturally or economically. The group argues that the Ehiopian government has denied Oromos the right to self-govern and displaced them from their ancestral territory. Although the organization is over 40 years old, it continues to pursue its goal of independence to this day.

[Non-violent:]
The OLF's military strategy advocates avoiding the targeting of civilians at all costs. During the decades-long struggle for Oromo independence, the OLF has meticulously avoided killing civilians.

[Violent:]
The OLF's military strategy advocates pursuing independence at all costs. During the decades-long struggle for Oromo independence, many civilians have died at the hands of the OLF.

[Restrictive Services:]
The OLF provides a number of social services, including education and healthcare, in the areas where it operates. The OLF is the only service provider in these areas, and if residents cannot access the OLF's services, they have no other way to obtain these services. For the past several decades, the OLF has provided these services only to civilians who are members of, or support the goals of, the OLF.

[Inclusive Services:]
The OLF provides a number of social services, including education and healthcare, in the areas where it operates. The OLF is the only service provider in these areas, and if residents cannot access the OLF's services, they have no other way to obtain these services. For the past several decades, the OLF has provided these services to anyone, including civilians who will likely never become members of, or even support the goals of, the OLF.

— Page Break —

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? ... The OLF is a legitimate alternative to the existing government in Ethiopia.
-Strongly Agree [7]
-Somewhat Agree [6]
-Slightly Agree [5]
-Neither Agree Nor Disagree [4]
-Slightly Disagree [3]
-Somewhat Disagree [2]
-Strongly Disagree [1]

— Page Break —

Do you think the OLF is capable or incapable of governing an independent country?
-Definitely capable [5]
-Probably capable [4]
-Not sure/no opinion [3]
-Probably incapable [2]
-Definitely capable [1]

— Page Break —

Do you support or oppose the establishment of an independent Oromo country in Ethiopia?
-Strongly Support [7]
-Somewhat Support [6]
-Slightly Support [5]
-Neither Support Nor Oppose [4]
-Slightly Oppose [3]
-Somewhat Oppose [2]
-Strongly Oppose [1]

Online Appendix for "Strategies of Secession and International Legitimacy"

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August 10, 2017

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Online Appendix A: Sample Demographics and Randomization Checks

Online Appendix Table A1: Randomization Checks (Study 1)

	Experimental Condition					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Median Age (K-W χ^2=321.32, p=0.19)	43.0	46.0	37.5	45.0	39.0	47.5
Median Education (1-5) (K-W χ^2=21.02, p=0.40)	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0
% Male (χ^2=10.06, p=0.07)	41.1	48.2	42.9	60.6	53.3	49.0
% White (χ^2=3.65, p=0.60)	65.4	67.5	65.5	61.6	57.1	59.4
% Democrat (χ^2=4.48, p=0.48)	43.0	46.5	54.8	46.5	54.3	46.9
% Republican (χ^2=3.10, p=0.68)	42.1	40.4	33.3	42.4	34.3	38.5
Mean Ideology (1-7) (χ^2=30.47, p=0.44)	4.09	3.96	3.80	4.01	3.56	4.26

KW=Kruskal-Wallis rank sum test for difference-in-medians.

As shown in the table, randomization resulted in a slight imbalance on gender across conditions in Study 1. To ensure that our results are unaffected by this imbalance, we re-estimated the regression models presented in Table 3 in the main text. Specifically, we estimated one model which controlled for gender (male=1, 0 otherwise) and another model that controlled for all demographic variables presented in Online Appendix Table A1. The results are displayed in Online Appendix Table A2. Our results are the substantively the same.

Online Appendix Table A2: Robustness Checks (Study 1)

Violent	−0.64***	−0.64***
	(0.19)	(0.19)
Restrictive Services	0.30	0.32
	(0.20)	(0.20)
Inclusive Services	0.09	0.07
	(0.19)	(0.19)
Violent × Restrictive Services	0.38	0.36
	(0.28)	(0.28)
Violent × Inclusive Services	0.69**	0.70**
	(0.27)	(0.27)
Male	0.10	0.11
	(0.11)	(0.12)
Age		0.01
		(0.004)
Education		0.01
		(0.05)
White		−0.19
		(0.12)
Democrat		−0.34*
		(0.18)
Republican		−0.22
		(0.20)
Ideology		−0.07
		(0.04)
Constant	4.03***	4.39***
	(0.14)	(0.33)
Observations	605	603

Note: Dependent variable is the extent to which participants view the KNU as a legitimate alternative to the existing state (1-7). The omitted reference group for partisanship is independent. Significance codes: *p<.10; **p<.05; ***p<.01.

Online Appendix Table A3: Randomization Checks (Study 2)

	Experimental Condition					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Median Age (K-W χ^2=6.17, p=0.29)	39.0	36.0	36.0	37.0	37.0	37.0
% Graduated Higher Education (χ^2=2.17, p=0.40)	64.7	68.8	61.4	63.7	65.2	69.7
% Male (χ^2=5.45, p=0.36)	43.1	45.9	31.3	44.2	37.9	39.4
% White (χ^2=7.46, p=0.19)	90.2	82.6	86.7	91.2	90.5	92.7
% Labour (χ^2=3.11, p=0.68)	38.9	50.7	51.6	46.1	50.0	46.1
% Conservative (χ^2=1.28, p=0.94)	43.1	35.2	35.5	39.5	37.5	39.5
% Liberal Democrat (χ^2=1.08, p=0.96)	18.1	14.1	12.9	14.5	12.5	14.5
Mean Ideology (1-10) (χ^2=50.23, p=0.27)	4.70	4.56	4.90	4.94	4.59	4.56

Note: KW=Kruskal-Wallis rank sum test for difference-in-medians.

Online Appendix B: Condition Means and Standard Deviations

Online Appendix Table A4: Condition Means and Standard Deviations (Study 1)

	Experimental Condition					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Legitimate Alternative (1-7)	4.07	3.44	4.38	4.13	4.18	4.22
	(1.37)	(1.38)	(1.38)	(1.27)	(1.52)	(1.42)
Capable of Governing (1-5)	3.19	2.76	3.25	3.27	3.36	3.13
	(0.92)	(0.88)	(0.80)	(0.95)	(1.05)	(0.98)
Support Independent State (1-7)	4.21	3.80	4.51	4.24	4.54	4.24
	(1.42)	(1.39)	(1.16)	(1.25)	(1.51)	(1.34)

Online Appendix Table A5: Condition Means and Standard Deviations (Study 2)

	Experimental Condition					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Legitimate Alternative (1-7)	3.91	3.50	4.33	3.87	4.32	4.10
	(1.19)	(1.28)	(1.48)	(1.40)	(1.34)	(1.29)
Capable of Governing (1-5)	3.00	2.60	3.20	3.10	3.46	3.29
	(0.78)	(0.78)	(0.91)	(0.83)	(0.77)	(0.83)
Support Independent State (1-7)	4.26	3.76	4.40	4.06	4.52	4.23
	(1.20)	(1.12)	(1.37)	(1.28)	(1.06)	(1.03)

Online Appendix C: Robustness Check with Dichotomized Outcome Measures

Appendix Table A6: Regression Models Predicting Legitimacy Evaluations (Study 1)

	Original DV:			Dichotomized DV:		
	Legitimate Alternative	Capable of Governing	Support Ind. State	Legitimate Alternative	Capable of Governing	Support Ind. State
	(1-7)	(1-5)	(1-7)	(0-1)	(0-1)	(0-1)
Violent	−0.64***	−0.42***	−0.41**	−0.52*	−1.25***	−0.44
	(0.19)	(0.13)	(0.18)	(0.31)	(0.32)	(0.30)
Restrictive Services	0.31	0.06	0.31	0.37	0.07	0.39
	(0.20)	(0.14)	(0.20)	(0.31)	(0.30)	(0.30)
Inclusive Services	0.11	0.17	0.34*	0.28	0.23	0.43
	(0.19)	(0.13)	(0.19)	(0.29)	(0.28)	(0.28)
Violent x Restrictive Services	0.39	0.45**	0.14	0.41	1.32***	0.04
	(0.28)	(0.19)	(0.27)	(0.44)	(0.44)	(0.43)
Violent x Inclusive Services	0.67**	0.19	0.10	0.88**	1.05**	0.18
	(0.27)	(0.18)	(0.26)	(0.43)	(0.43)	(0.42)
Constant	4.07***	3.19***	4.21***	−0.85***	−0.36*	−0.68***
	(0.13)	(0.09)	(0.13)	(0.21)	(0.20)	(0.20)
Observations	605	605	605	605	605	605

Note: Models in columns 1–3 are the same as presented in the main text. Models in columns 4–6 are dichotomized indicators of perceived legitimacy (1 if 5-7 on the original scale, 0 otherwise); capability of governing an independent state (1 if 4-5 on the original scale, 0 otherwise); and support for an independent KNU state (1 if 5-7 on the original scale, 0 otherwise). Models in columns 1–3 were estimated with OLS regression. Models in columns 4–6 were estimated with logistic regression. Significance codes: *p<.10; **p<.05; ***p<.01.

Appendix Table A7: Regression Models Predicting Legitimacy Evaluations (Study 2)

	Original DV:			Dichotomized DV:		
	Legitimate Alternative	Capable of Governing	Support Ind. State	Legitimate Alternative	Capable of Governing	Support Ind. State
	(1-7)	(1-5)	(1-7)	(0-1)	(0-1)	(0-1)
Violent	−0.42**	−0.40***	−0.50***	−0.70**	−1.06***	−1.01***
	(0.18)	(0.11)	(0.16)	(0.34)	(0.41)	(0.33)
Restrictive Services	0.41**	0.20*	0.13	0.85***	0.92***	0.29
	(0.20)	(0.12)	(0.17)	(0.31)	(0.32)	(0.30)
Inclusive Services	0.40**	0.46***	0.25	0.52*	1.09***	0.20
	(0.19)	(0.12)	(0.17)	(0.30)	(0.31)	(0.29)
Violent x Restrictive Services	−0.04	0.30*	0.17	0.13	0.61	0.69
	(0.27)	(0.16)	(0.24)	(0.45)	(0.51)	(0.45)
Violent x Inclusive Services	0.20	0.23	0.22	0.35	0.93*	0.71
	(0.26)	(0.16)	(0.23)	(0.45)	(0.50)	(0.44)
Constant	3.91***	3.00***	4.26***	−0.92***	−1.23***	−0.61***
	(0.13)	(0.08)	(0.12)	(0.22)	(0.24)	(0.21)
Observations	611	611	611	611	611	611

Note: Models in columns 1–3 are the same as presented in the main text. Models in columns 4–6 are dichotomized indicators of perceived legitimacy (1 if 5-7 on the original scale, 0 otherwise; capability of governing an independent state (1 if 4-5 on the original scale, 0 otherwise); and support for an independent OLF state (1 if 5-7 on the original scale, 0 otherwise). Models in columns 1–3 were estimated with OLS regression. Models in columns 4–6 were estimated with logistic regression. Significance codes: *p<.10; **p<.05; ***p<.01.