



## Armed Groups' Governance in Civil War: A Synthesis

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*Non-state armed groups fighting in civil wars often engage in some form of governance—that is, the organization of civilian affairs within the territories where they are present. Both the existence of governance, and the form that it takes, vary widely across as well as within armed organizations. Such variation has important implications on war dynamics, as it shapes civilians' experiences of the war, as well as the evolution of armed groups in a given war zone. Whether armed groups engage in governance or not, and how, also affects post-war outcomes: the challenges and opportunities that local populations face in the aftermath of war vary depending on, among other factors, the particular ways in which they interacted with armed actors during the war. Despite its relevance for both scholars and policy makers, the phenomenon of non-state armed groups' governance tends to be overlooked by studies on civil war and post-war reconstruction. This synthesis provides a short review of different bodies of literature that offer insights onto this phenomenon. It is organized as follows. First, it assesses a small literature that focuses directly on armed groups' governance, mostly rebel organizations. Second, it briefly reviews a large literature on specific civil wars and armed organizations that provide valuable empirical evidence on how this type of governance emerges and operates. Finally, it concludes by suggesting how our understanding of these phenomena should illuminate several academic and policy-driven questions regarding both wartime and post-war dynamics.*

Non-state armed groups fighting in civil wars often engage in some form of governance—that is, the organization of civilian affairs for those living in territories where they are present. Both the existence of governance and the form that it takes vary widely across as well as within armed organizations. While in cases like the Lord's Resistance Army in Uganda civilian rule is seldom found, in others, like The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in Sri Lanka, the presence of elaborated systems of civilian administration was common in areas under its control. Furthermore, while some organizations set up sophisticated bureaucracies, others limit their intervention to a few informal regulations. What explains this variation? How are these systems of governance set up, and how do they operate? How do they shape civilians' experience of the war, as well as other wartime phenomena? What are the implications in the aftermath of conflict?

Cross-national studies of civil war have generally focused on macro-level outcomes such as onset, duration, and termination. A growing literature on the micro-level dynamics of these

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conflicts has mostly looked at armed groups' use of violence (e.g. Humphreys and Weinstein 2006; Kalyvas 2006; Balcells 2009), and to a lesser degree at recruitment of combatants (e.g. Humphreys and Weinstein 2008; Arjona and Kalyvas 2007). Yet, other aspects of the behavior of these organizations, and of their implications for civilians, have received little attention. The literatures on peacekeeping, transitional justice, and post-conflict reconstruction, on the other hand, have studied governance by former rebel groups once they have achieved power. Wartime governance, on the contrary, has been largely ignored in these fields. In consequence, armed groups' governance of civilians during the war has been largely overlooked, despite its far reaching consequences for non-combatant populations during the conflict, as well as for other wartime and post-war phenomena.

This synthesis reviews existing accounts of armed groups' governance during civil war. In the first part, it assesses an emerging literature that focuses directly on this phenomenon—especially on rebel governance. Second, it briefly reviews a very large, multi-disciplinary literature on specific civil wars and armed organizations; while by no means a comprehensive review, the goal of this section is to highlight sources that provide valuable empirical evidence on how this type of governance emerges and functions on the ground. Finally, it concludes by suggesting how our understanding of this phenomena should illuminate several academic and policy-driven questions regarding both wartime and post-war dynamics.

### **1. Understanding armed groups' governance in civil war**

Although several anthropologists and political scientists have written extensively about specific civil wars and non-state armed organizations, theorizing rebel governance—its sources, its variation, its implications—has seldom been the goal. Existing insights come from two types of sources. The first is the work of rebel theorists (and 'practitioners') who have written extensively on war making, such as Guevara (1997), Mao (1978), and Cabral (1970), and students of irregular warfare and counterinsurgency (e.g. Galula 1964; Thompson 1989, 1983; Trinquier 2006). All of them stress that rebel groups cannot develop and succeed without gaining popular support—the well known 'hearts and minds' approach. Regulating civilian life in controlled territories, guaranteeing public order, and providing public goods is often seen as a valuable means to gain such support, which points to the key instrumentality of governance for armed organizations<sup>3</sup>. Yet, these authors fail to account for the variation that we observe on the ground: if support is so important to wage irregular war, and governing civilians helps to achieve that end, why are not all armed groups systematically engaging in governance? And why do those who do govern civilians opt for radically different approaches?

The second line of research is comprised by the work of sociologists and political scientists who have explicitly sought to conceptualize armed groups' governance, and explain its variation. Wickham-Crowley (1987; 1991a; 1991b) was the first scholar who aimed to study the phenomenon of guerrilla governance directly. His work focused on insurgencies in Latin America, but provided theoretical insights about the phenomenon beyond this region. More than a decade later, Kasfir (2002) revisited the theoretical question of rebel governance, based on his study of the behavior of rebel groups in Uganda. In the following years, a few scholars—mostly writing their PhD dissertations—initiated research projects to explain variation in key dimensions of armed groups' governance. The remainder of this section summarizes how this emerging field has conceptualized and explained the phenomenon.

#### ***Definitions and variation***

Most authors have focused on governance provided by insurgent organizations. Hence, the terms rebel governance and guerrilla governance are more common than the more general term "armed groups' governance". In all cases the phenomenon has been defined on the basis of two characteristics: first, governance takes place in areas where the armed actor has some

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<sup>3</sup> See for example Beckett (2001) on Mao; Guevara (1997), especially chapter III; and McColl (1969).

territorial control (either partial or total<sup>4</sup>); and second, it entails the establishment of rules or institutions to regulate civilian populations, the relation between combatants and civilians, or both. While for some authors governance entails little or no use of violence against civilians, for others violence may coexist with governance.

While definitions of armed groups' governance are very similar, the existing literature has sought to explain its variation along different dimensions. A few authors conceptualize governance as a dichotomous variable. Wickham-Crowley (1987) focuses his analysis on whether or not a group becomes the legitimate authority for the ruled population. Following Olson's (1993) roving vs. stationary bandits distinction, Metelits (2009) differentiates between rebels' provision of public goods, which she characterizes as the behavior of "durable representative entities" (p. 2), and coercion, in which the group extracts resources without providing civilians anything in exchange.

Other authors focus on one or more dimensions, exploring variation along a continuum. Mampilly (2009) focuses on the effectiveness of the civil administration structures that rebels set up, which varies along a continuum that goes from low to moderate to high. Kasfir (2005:272, 2008:3) focuses on three dimensions: the extent to which rebels encourage civilian participation, set up forms of civilian administration, and organize civilians to generate high value goods or services.

Finally, other authors propose typologies of armed groups' governance based on variation along different dimensions. In her analysis of factors that shape armed groups' likelihood of harming civilians, Zahar (2001) proposes a typology of civil-militia relations that provides insights on governance as well.<sup>5</sup> The author focuses on variation along two dimensions: the degree of identification between civilians and the militia, and the type of economic relation between them, which can take four values: (i) independent militia sources of revenue, where militias do not depend on civilians at all; (ii) predatory civil-militia relations, where the militia extracts resources from civilians by force; (iii) parasitic civil-militia relations, where the militia benefits much more than civilians, but there is at least some minimal contribution by the militia; and (iv) symbiotic relations, in which the militia plays a large, positive role in the local economy.

Weinstein (2007:166) identifies four types on the basis of how democratic these governments are, by focusing on two dimensions: power sharing, which implies that groups can rule unilaterally, or have a joint military-civilian rule; and inclusiveness, which can take the form of non-participatory to participatory—i.e. whether civilians' preferences are somehow taken into account by the group, even if it rules unilaterally. This variation yields four types of rebel governments: (a) unilateral military and participatory; (b) unilateral military and non-participatory; (c) joint military-civilian and non-participatory; and (d) joint military-civilian and participatory (p. 166).

Arjona (2009) proposes a typology of the types of social order that armed groups establish in the areas they attempt to rule, based on two dimensions: whether there is an underlying contract between the group and the population, and, when such a contract exists, whether the scope of the group's intervention in civilian affairs is narrow or broad. This variation yields three types: (a) domination, when no social contract exists; (b) surveillance, when a contract exists and the scope of the group's intervention is narrow; and (c) rebelocracy, when a contract exists and the group's intervention is broad.

### ***Explaining variation***

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<sup>4</sup> See Kalyvas (2006) for a conceptualization of territorial control, and an assessment of its variation within civil wars.

<sup>5</sup> It is important to note that Zahar uses the term *militia* to denote "all nonstate actors who resort to violence in order to achieve their objectives." (Zahar 2001:44). Hence, both rebel and counter-rebel armed groups operating in internal conflicts fall in this category.

What explains variation in these different dimensions of rebel governance? The few studies that have sought to explain variation in armed groups' governance have focused on several explanatory factors, which can be lumped together into two broad categories: population attributes, and armed group characteristics and war dynamics. Although several authors identify more than one explanatory factor, organizing their theoretical claims in this way allows for a more coherent overview of how the phenomenon has been understood so far.

### **(i) Pre-existing governance and population characteristics**

Mampilly (2007) argues that pre-existing state structures shape the effectiveness of civilian administration. When the state has penetrated deeply into the population before the war, civilians are aware of their ability to influence political authority, and hence demand from the rebels a reciprocal relationship in which contribution is given in exchange for services. It follows that service provision will be less effective in states where penetration was limited. State penetration also determines whether the rebels will rely on existing institutions or innovate to provide services, as using those created by the state in deeply-penetrated populations will reduce costs and increase effectiveness.

Kasfir (2004) focuses on civilian organization by the rebels themselves prior to becoming a guerrilla group. The author argues that when these organizations devote efforts to mobilizing support before launching their armed struggle, creating a civil administration as a guerrilla group is easier, and rebels are likely to do so.

Pre-war governance at the sub-national level has also been identified as a key explanatory factor. Wickham-Crowley (1987) argues that rebel organizations are more likely to be welcomed by populations ruled by an illegitimate authority prior to the war, be it the state or local powerful actors. In such situations, civilians shift their loyalty to the guerrillas due to their dissatisfaction with existing authorities. The rebels are thus likely to engage in a reciprocal relation with the population, where a social contract defines the rights and duties of both. However, such loyalty may decay if the group fails to fulfill its obligations, which entail protecting civilians from the enemies, preserving public order, and improving the population's welfare. When such breaches of the social contract occur, peasants become dissatisfied with the group's rule and the rebels' government weakens.

Arjona (2009) argues that armed groups' strategies are shaped by their time horizons and their expectation of civilian resistance. When they do not face major principal-agent problems or armed competition, these organizations operate under long-time horizons, and prefer to bring about a social order of rebelocracy in which they maximize their influence over civilian affairs. However, because civilian resistance can ruin the groups' long-term benefits, these organizations tailor their strategies to each local community, opting for the type of social order that delivers the greatest influence over civilian affairs, without triggering resistance. Civilian resistance is in turn explained by the quality of pre-existing local institutions (i.e. their legitimacy and efficacy). Two mechanisms are at work: institutions affect the populations' preferences for new government, and shape their capacity for collective action, thus affecting their capacity to resist. Hence, in communities with high-quality institutions, armed groups opt for surveillance; in communities with low-quality institutions, they opt for rebelocracy. Domination is chosen when the group's time horizons are short, as mentioned below.

Finally, Berman (2005) and Berman and Laitin (2008) apply Iannaccone's (1992) club model to explain the behavior of religious sects to religious terrorist organizations (although the model is expected to explain the behavior of rebel groups more generally). Whereas their focus is on radical religious groups' use of suicide attacks, and effectiveness, Berman and Laitin's theory provides insights on armed groups' governance more generally. According to their model, terrorist groups will provide public goods when existing public good provision is weak, and non-militia market opportunities are poor.

## **(ii) Armed groups' characteristics and war dynamics**

Weinstein (2007) contends that governance is shaped by the type of endowments of the organization. Rebel groups are more likely to share power when they need financial support from civilians; when their members have a long-time horizon, and are thus committed to making short-term sacrifices in order to achieve long-term gains; and when they can make credible commitments, which is, again, a function of the time-horizon of their members. They are more likely to set up inclusive governments either because such inclusiveness increases the credibility of its long-time commitment, or because the type of resource being extracted from the population requires civilian labor. The type of endowments of the organization determines both its need of civilian support, and the horizons of its recruits. Hence, groups with ideological endowments are more likely to both share power and allow for civilian participation. Groups with material endowments are not likely to share power, but they may allow for participation if civilian labor is needed to produce or extract the resources that they rely on (ibid:167-174).

Consistent with Weinstein (2007) and Olson (1993), Arjona (2009) argues that because the benefits of governing civilians arise in the long run, units with short-time horizons are less likely to rule. Hence, when principal-agent problems are rampant, or competition with other armed groups is high, armed groups are more likely to bring about a social order of domination, where no social contract exists between them and the local population. When the group's time horizon is long, however, its choice for governance depends on the characteristics of the community, as mentioned before.

Metelits' (2009) argues that armed groups opt for coercion when other armed actors threaten their monopoly over resources. Coercion provides the most efficient way to amass resources quickly, which is essential for surviving. If no such competition exists, the group provides services and goods in exchange for resources, behaving as "durable representative entities" (ibid:2). Kasfir (2005) assigns a similar role to territorial disputes. In his account of the National Resistance Army in Uganda, however, the rebels avoided governance not to appropriate resources, but to direct all their efforts to fighting the enemy, while trying to protect the civilian population by moving it to safer territories.

Mampilly (2007, 2009) argues that given the fixed nature of natural resources, endowments cannot explain variation in governance through time. Other organizational characteristics, together with state penetration prior to the war as mentioned before, have to be taken into account. First, the group's goals—either center-seeking or secessionist—play a key role. When rebels seek to secede, they have higher incentives to show to their target populations that they have the capacity to improve their material welfare. In addition, Mampilly argues that civil administration is likely to be more effective if groups have the following characteristics: a left-wing agenda; a Maoist organizational structure; a unified group; ties with civil society actors like NGOs, who are incorporated into their governance project; and do not rely on funding from neighboring states or multinational corporations.

Finally, several authors have highlighted the effect of the duration of the war on governance: the longer the war, the more likely it is that armed groups set up systems of governance (e.g. Wickham-Crowley 1987; Mampilly 2007). Because governance takes place in areas that fall under control of irregular armed groups, as the war evolves such groups are more likely to control territories and, hence, rule over the populations that inhabit them. Mampilly (2007) also highlights the effects of truces and ceasefires: when rebels experience a period of relative peace, they are more likely to control territory and, hence, provide services for civilians.

## **2. Empirics: armed groups' governance on the ground**

Although armed groups' governance has seldom been the core question driving empirical research, details on how these organizations operate on the ground, and insights about why they do so, can be found in a large body of literature. Case studies of armed groups and civil wars, and comparative research, written by anthropologists, sociologists, historians, and political

scientists provide very valuable information. This section presents a limited overview of this broad literature on a few cases, divided by region.

Before doing so, it is worth mentioning a few works that can provide some guidance to anyone embarking on a study of rebel governance. Wickham-Crowley (1987, 1991b) provides a comprehensive list of sources on governance by Latin American insurgencies from the 1950s to the 1970s. McColl (1969) overviews multiple sources on rebel governance in the insurrections in China, Vietnam, the Philippines, Malaya, Thailand, Cuba, and Greece. In their analysis of violent non-state actors, Thomas et al (2005) do not focus on governance but touch upon the roles that several organizations play in the areas where they operate. Mampilly's (2007) dissertation is perhaps the only existing scholarly work that identifies sources on multiple contemporary wars on the topic of rebel governance specifically, mostly in Africa. Finally, Kasfir (2008) is putting together a dataset of all rebel armed organizations that controlled territories at some point within an internal armed conflict. Although this dataset is still in progress, it promises to become a valuable source on the topic.

### *Africa*

The Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) has been known for engaging in civilian governance widely. Several authors provide detailed information on how such governance has functioned, describing the group's provision of health care, education, and dispute resolution schemes, implementing land reform, and a formal system of taxation, and creating political councils (Pool 2001; Barnabas and Zwi 1997; Connell 2001; Cliffe 1984). The Tigray's People's Liberation Front (TPLF) in Ethiopia is also known for its provision of services (Young 1997a), and for attempting to elicit voluntary civilian participation (Kasfir 2005).

The National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) has also been described as a rebel group that was strongly involved with civilian rule in territories under its control. It created schools, hospitals, and even radio stations, which led several journalists to talk about UNITA's creation of a new government in the area of Jamba; yet, it was described as a more coercive and predatory organization in other areas of the country (Heywood, 1987; Radu 1990; Potgieter 1989; Malaquias 2001).

The National Resistance Army (NRA) and the Rwenzururu Kingdom Government in Uganda have also been identified as armed groups engaged with civilian rule. Kasfir (2002; 2004; 2005) and Weinstein (2007) portray the NRA as an organization that set up a system of civilian administration in the Luwero Triangle (especially at times when armed competition with the state forces was low). The authors stress the democratic character of the ruling system that the NRA tried to set up, as well as its provision of health services. The Rwenzururu Kingdom Government was, in contrast, not democratic (Kasfir 2004). It did not allow civilians to directly participate, and preserved a clearly hierarchical structure. Yet, it developed a broader system of service provision for civilians than the NRA did.

Governance by RENAMO in Mozambique has been described by different authors as indirect rule (Young 1997b; Vines 1996; Geffray 1990; Weinstein 2006). The organization relied on traditional chiefs, who in exchange organized civilian labor and provision of taxes and food to the guerrillas. RENAMO combatants did not attempt to rule on domestic life issues (Nordstrom 1997), although they made every effort to preserve traditional religious beliefs, and to portray their organization as the chosen one, gifted with supra-natural powers (Vines 1996). Although young civilian collaborators played a key role by working as informers, the direct interaction between regular civilians and combatants was kept to a minimum.

The Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) has also been portrayed as a rebel group that created governing structures in areas under its control (Johnson 1998; Mampilly 2007; Branch and Mampilly 2005). Governance seems to have varied greatly across the territory, as well as through time, both in its form and the extent to which civilians welcomed it.

Overall, although representation of the civilian population was supposed to exist, in reality the high command of the SPLM/A often intervened in civilian affairs (Mampilly 2007; Branch and Mampilly 2005).

In the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), rebel groups have exhibited varied behaviors in terms of ruling local populations. Vlassenroot (2008) discusses the strategies of these organizations and their effect on public life, stressing how while in some areas predation was pervasive, in others the rebels negotiated and cooperated with different types of local actors, including traditional chiefs, and entrepreneurs. In some cases, alliances were made on the basis of shared economic interests, while in others they were based on the need of security and protection.

Finally, a University of Ghent comparative project aiming at analyzing governance in protracted conditions of crisis in Sub-Saharan Africa provides insightful analysis of key cases. Although not specifically on rebel governance, some of the articles offer detailed evidence on the complex interaction between armed groups and different local actors in war zones.<sup>6</sup>

### *Latin America*

Wickham-Crowley (1987, 1991b) offers both original approaches and citations of a vast literature on multiple insurgencies across the globe, mostly in Latin America. His work provides an excellent overview of sources on Latin American armed groups, especially on Cuba and Nicaragua. In Cuba, the creation of administrative councils to deal with public health, the collection of taxes, and the enactment of new laws has been described by Guevara (1997) himself, as well as by others (e.g. McColl 1969).

Descriptions of governance by Sendero Luminoso in Peru depict different realities, which points to variation across time and space. Weinstein (2006:187) argues that in most areas of the country the group brought revolutionary change to local governance by broadening participation, and organizing civilians' contributions in "manageable and accepted ways". Likewise, Manrique (1998) described Sendero in Central Peru as a state that organized everything from policing, to private disputes, to recreation. But others, like DeGregori (1992), describe such government as fully authoritarian, and dismissive of any other form of civilian organization. In her case-study, Isbell (1992) also portrays Sendero as an oppressive ruler that did not allow peasants to participate unless such participation was directly orchestrated by the armed group. Weinstein (2006) finds that in the region of Alto Huallaga where Sendero was devoted to profit from the production of coca leaves, it ruled in an authoritarian way, but did allow some inclusion of civilians in the administration.

Instances of governance by the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC) have been described by several authors, mostly regarding the enactment of laws, the regulation of economic activities, and the influence over local governments (e.g. Molano 1994; Pécaut 2000; Peñate González et. al 2001; Ortiz 2002; Rangel 1996). A few sources focus explicitly on governance. Aguilera (2001) explores the FARC's provision of rules and a system of rule enforcement. Arjona (2008a) provides micro-level evidence on broad variation in different domains of governance, in areas where the FARC and the right-wing paramilitary groups are present, across Colombian regions. Gutierrez and Baron (2005) assess the creation of a new social order by the paramilitaries in a specific region of the country. Other authors also provide valuable information on the rule of these paramilitary organizations throughout the country, showing their great influence over local governments, as well as their complex links with local elites and narcotraffickers (e.g. Romero 2003;Álvaro 2007; Madariaga 2006).

The Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMNL) in El Salvador has been described as an organization committed to allowing democratic civilian participation (McClintock 1998), but

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<sup>6</sup> See *Afrika Focus* Vol. 21, 2 (2008).

incapable of providing continuous services to civilians in their territories. Wood (2003) provides detailed evidence on variation on the organization's role as authority in some areas, and as a purely coercive force in others. Likewise, the organization's stand towards peasant organization, especially cooperatives, varied across time and space.

### *Asia and the Middle East*

The Chinese People Liberation Army (PLA) seems to have combined different methods to interact with civilians in the areas it controlled. In some places, it created councils that performed administrative and juridical functions, which included health, education, taxes, and the maintenance of public order (McColl 1969). Yet, variation existed across space. In particular, the group's relation with landless and middle-class peasants differed across regions (Girling 1969; Hartford 1995; Hinton 1966).

The Liberation Tamil Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in Sri Lanka has also been described as a secessionist group highly committed to becoming the ruler in areas under its control. Mampilly (2007) and Stokke (2006) offer a detailed account of its effective civil administration. According to the authors, in the mid-1990s the group was devoted to reconstructing what the war had destroyed before, setting up education and health systems, a legal code with its corresponding judiciary, a police force, and even a bank. The organization also taxes the population in ways that may have affected economic development in the area. Participation to civilians is restricted, as the organization rules through a highly centralized decision-making system.

The Maoist Rebels of Nepal regulated different spheres of civilian affairs in areas under their control. According to Pettigrew (2004), their new government found peasant support in some villages, while not in others. Such government included ideological training, land and food distribution, and courts to solve disputes (Kattel 2003). The group also forced peasants to provide different forms of collaboration, from paying taxes to transporting supplies, participating in rallies and providing manual labor (Shah 2008).

In the different armed conflicts that Afghanistan has endured in the last decades, different armed groups and warlords' organizations have fought over control of territory, resources, and population. They often became the de facto guarantors of local order, provided public goods, and co-opted or eliminated other sources of authority in their areas of influence. For example, the resistance groups that fought against Soviet occupation developed a bureaucracy that, while not sophisticated, was in charge of several regulatory tasks in local territories (Sinno 2008:126-7; Rubin 2002:ch. 10). Later on other armed groups, like Massoud's organization and Wahdat—two of the many that were competing for power after the Najib regime collapsed in 1992—created and developed civilian institutions in some of the territories under their influence (Sinno 2008:193, 217). Likewise, the Taliban, which grew as an organization since 1994, engaged early on in state-like activities in areas where they were present. Upon their arrival to Kandahar in 1994, for example, the Taliban dismantled criminal bands, established codes of conducts, and burned poppy seeds (Sinno 2008: 227).

### **Relevance and implications**

Despite the neglect of armed groups' governance in most theoretical approaches to civil war, this phenomenon is likely to have broad implications on wartime as well as postwar dynamics. Hence, both academic and policy-driven audiences have good reasons to take this neglected aspect of civil war into account.

First, non-state governance directly affects the lives of civilians, and their experience of the war. This makes the phenomenon relevant in and of itself, as it entails a key dimension of how civil war affects non-combatants (Arjona 2008b). In addition, knowing more about the lives of populations living in war zones is essential for actors aiming to promote their well-being, which makes this topic highly relevant for NGOs, donors, and other international actors (Bruderlein 2001, Jones and Cater 2001, Zahar 2001, Mampilly 2007). Likewise, the phenomenon entails a key aspect of how armed organizations operate; understanding it should illuminate our study of their behavior more generally, especially given the general dismissal of the non-violent aspects of these organizations (Lubkemann 2007, 2008; Mampilly 2007; Arjona 2009). In particular,

understanding how governance interacts with other factors may be essential to understand armed groups' capacity to survive, and eventually win (Sinno 2008).

Second, the literature on the social conditions of war, developed mostly by anthropologists, points to close connections between the dynamics of war and societal changes at the local level (e.g. (Lubkemann 2008; Nordstrom 1997). Political mobilization, military socialization, the polarization of social identities, the militarization of local authority, the transformation of gender roles, and the fragmentation of the local political economy, are among the social processes that war transforms (Wood 2008). Such changes can be so profound, that new social orders often emerge in war zones (Arjona 2008a). Armed groups' governance is likely to have a great impact on all these transformations, and hence our understanding of its causes and implications should shed light on the complex processes that local societies experience during the war (Arjona 2008a).

Third, by transforming social processes, or bringing about new social orders in war zones, armed groups' governance affects the context in which civilians and combatants make choices. Our understanding of such contexts should illuminate our study of key phenomena such as recruitment, civilian collaboration, and displacement, as well as of violence against non-combatants (Arjona 2009). These phenomena, in turn, are important in and of themselves as they entail key experiences of civilians living in war zones; they are also consequential, in as far as they affect the overall evolution, duration, and costs of the war. Furthermore, rebel governance may affect the duration of the war and the possibilities of durable peace directly, especially given the rebels' role in channeling and distributing resources that come from multiple sources, including foreign NGOs (Branch and Mampilly 2005).

Finally, armed groups' governance is also likely to shape post-war dynamics. As far as it shapes social processes, it might transform gender roles, activism, political organization, and labor—for better or for worse (Wood 2008). Communities' inter-personal trust and capacity to initiate and sustain collective action may be affected by the particular social order that they experience during the war, as well as their perception of national and local institutions (Arjona 2008a, 2009). In addition, the challenges and opportunities that different communities face in the aftermath of war might vary greatly depending on how they experienced it. In this sense, the existence and form of armed groups' governance during the war can affect the efficacy and legitimacy of local-level interventions and programs that aim at fostering reconstruction, reconciliation, and reintegration, via multiple mechanisms (Arjona 2008a). Regarding the post-war trajectory of rebel movements themselves, governing civilians during the war may well affect their capacity, and willingness, to become non-violent political actors engaged with the populations that they claim to represent (Mampilly 2007; Zuckerman 2009).

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