Rebel groups

Francisco Villamil

War, peace, and political violence

UC3M, Fall 2023

The universe of civil wars

Confederate Army in the US

The universe of civil wars

FLNC in Corsica, France

The universe of civil wars

Hamas in Gaza

The universe of civil wars

ELN in Colombia

The universe of civil wars

Russian ruble keeps rolling out in 'Donetsk People's Republic' ◯ COMMENTS

By **Euronews** • Updated: 26/05/2015

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The self-declared Donetsk People's Republic (DPR) has two currencies in circulation: Ukrainian Hryvnas and Russian Rubles.

Donetsk People's Republic

The universe of civil wars

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  2. Why are they different?
  3. What consequences do these differences have? (their behavior)

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- If you think about these, some refer to **actions** and some to **characteristics**

The universe of <mark>rebel organizations</mark>

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    - $\rightarrow$ Not talking about violence here (only, at least)

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- **Rebels** make a **decision** on how to rule local civilians, and **civilians** also have some **influence** on how they are ruled
- This 'wartime social order' can be purely coercive and violent, but most groups engage in some form of governance:
  - → taxation, popular assemblies, courts, schools, etc

Sri Lankan civil war (1983–2009)

LTTE (Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam)

LTTE & civilian governance

Understand governance

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- Rebel governance is developed to win over the support of the local population and disincentivize collaboration with the enemy
  - → Very dependent on territorial control (you can't obviously build banks or bureaucracies if you are a guerrilla group without firm territorial control)

Rebel governance

- But why do groups differ on how their relate to civilians?

Greed perspective: Resources and control
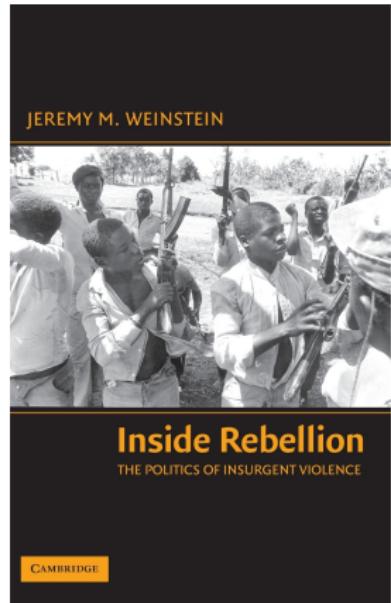
Charles Taylor's NPFL in Liberia

FNML in El Salvador

Greed perspective: Resources and control
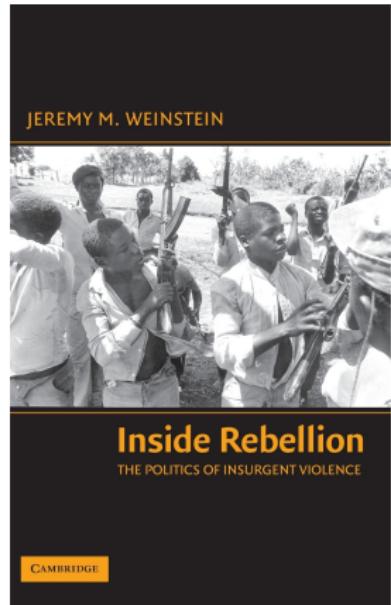
- Why do some groups use violence while other restrain themselves?

Jeremy Weinstein (2007)
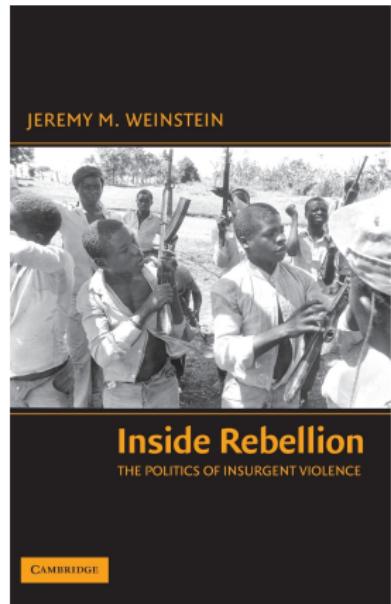
# Greed perspective: Resources and control

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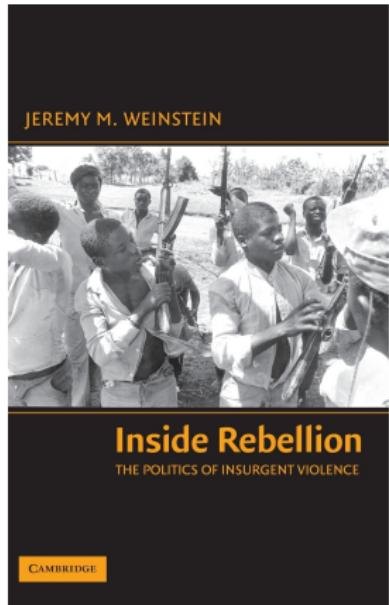
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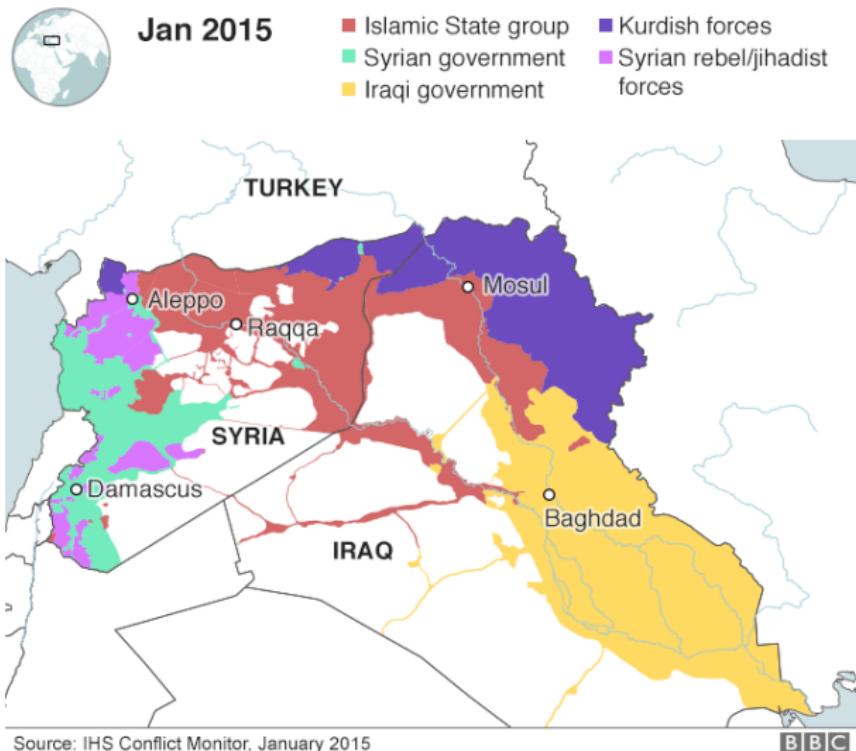
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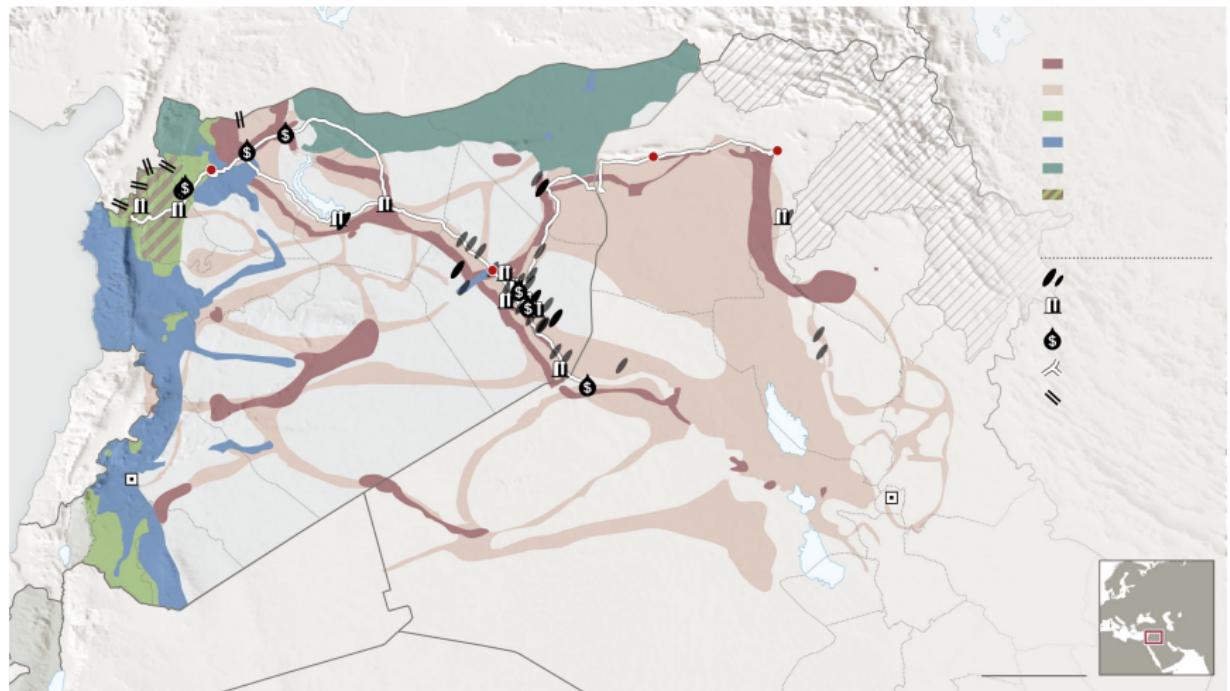
What about ISIS?

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- What would you expect from ISIS?

Resources and control: ISIS?

ISIS public execution in Raqqa (Syrian Civil War)

Resources and control: ISIS?

ISIS made millions from taxes that it then used to run garbage collections and even a DMV

Rosie Perper Apr 6, 2018, 7:41 AM

In this photo released on April 17, 2015 by a militant website, which has been verified and is consistent with other AP reporting, a member of the Islamic State group's vice police known as "Hisba," patrols a market in Raqqa City, Syria. Militant website / AP

Resources and control: ISIS?

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  - $\rightarrow$ Which also explains many other aspects of rebel governance
- War pressures
  - $\rightarrow$ Similar to Tilly's state formation idea

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- Some focus on economic production, health, education, some develop more participatory institutions, etc

Understanding rebel governance
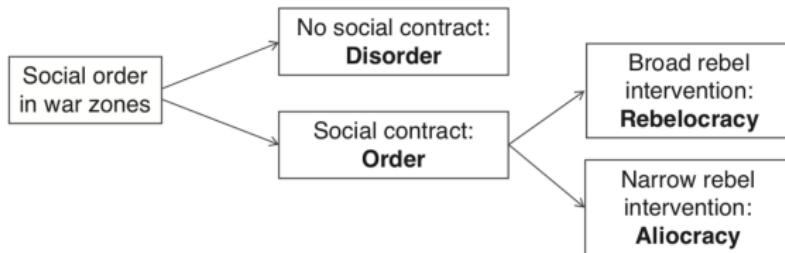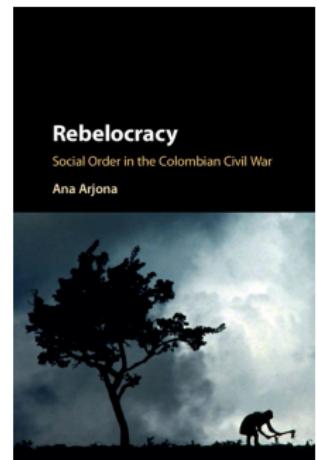
FIGURE 2.2 Typology of wartime social orders

(*Social contract* ≈ laws)

Ana Arjona (2017)

Understanding rebel governance
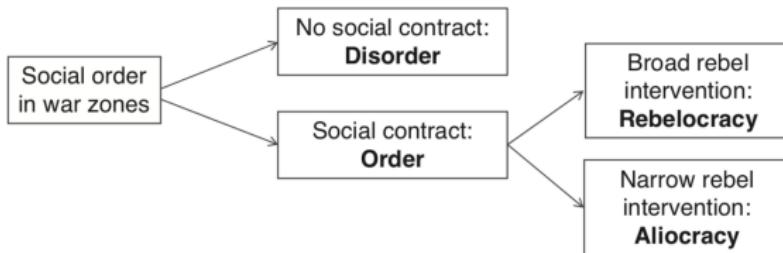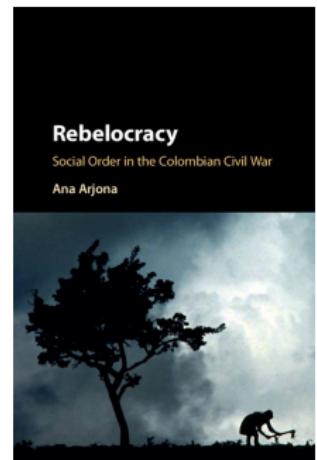

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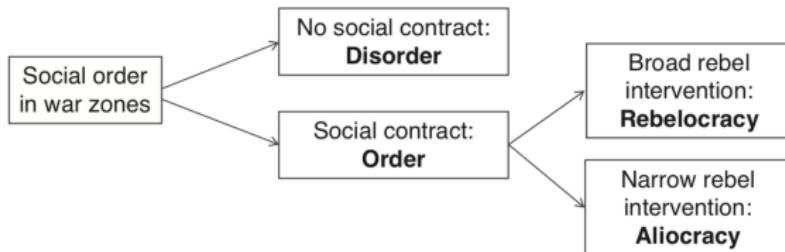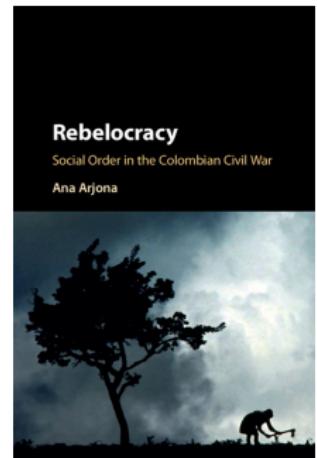
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- Therefore, they should prefer order to disorder, and more intervention (rebelocracy) than less (aliocracy)

Understanding rebel governance

- When does **order and rebelocracy** emerge? (i.e. when do rebel engage in extensive governance?)
- Depends on the rebels' time horizon and prewar local institutions

Understanding rebel governance

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4. Areas where civilians retain control, rebels establish *aliocracy*: a form of indirect rule, controlling only the basics of security and taxation

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- Alliance formation (rebels, social sectors/orgs)

Beyond governance

- Different experiences remembered by recruits for the Salvadorian army vs the FMLN
    - → Army: forced recruitment, beatings, humiliations...
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- 'Internal institutions':
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  - → military training
  - → political education
  - → disciplinary measures
- Does it matter?

Beyond governance: killing civilians

The New York Times

## MASSACRE OF HUNDREDS REPORTED IN SALVADOR VILLAGE

🎁 Share full article ↗ 🔖

By Raymond Bonner, Special To the New York Times
Jan. 27, 1982

From interviews with people who live in this small mountain village and surrounding hamlets, it is clear that a massacre of major proportions occurred here last month.

In some 20 mud brick huts here, this reporter saw the charred skulls and bones of dozens of bodies buried under burned-out roofs, beams and shattered tiles. There were more along the trail leading through the hills into the village, and at the edge of a nearby cornfield were the remains of 14 young men, women and children.

In separate interviews during a two-week period in the rebelcontrolled northern part of Morazan Province, 13 peasants said that all these, their relatives and friends, had been killed by Government soldiers of the Atlacatl Battalion in a sweep in December. 733 Victims Listed
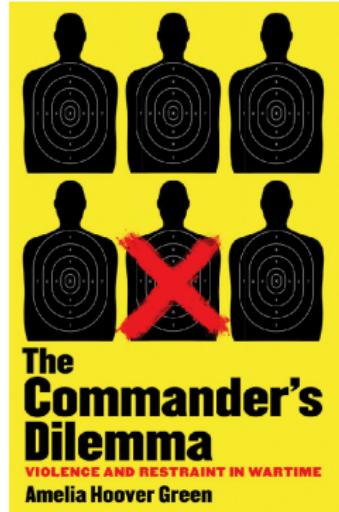
Dec 1981, almost 1,000 civilians killed, many children & women

Beyond governance: killing civilians
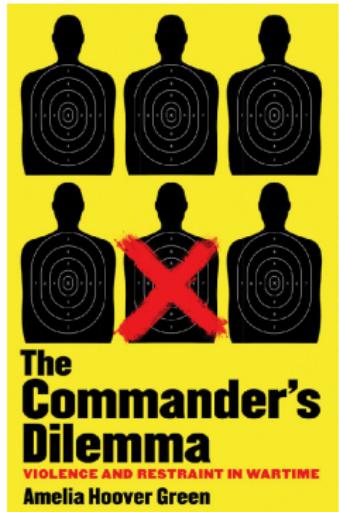
- Compare FMLN to Peru's Shinning Path

Hoover Green (2018)

Beyond governance: killing civilians

- Compare FMLN to Peru's Shinning Path
- The Commander's Dilemma: to win a war, you need to train and arm violent soldiers, but you also need to *control* how and when violence is employed
- When do we observe restraint ? When commanders create institutions to discipline soldiers and socialize them politically

Hoover Green (2018)

Beyond governance: sexual violence

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Beyond governance: sexual violence

Global Summit to End Sexual Violence in Conflict, 2014

Beyond governance: sexual violence

- What explains wartime sexual violence?

1. Rape as *collateral* violence, opportunistic & private reasons
2. Rape as *strategic* violence
   - $\rightarrow$ Sexual violence offers organizational advantages related to warfare
- Rape as **practice**
   - $\rightarrow$ Socialization, organizational aspects, absence of restraint, etc

Beyond governance: sexual violence

US troops in Vietnam, My Lai massacre (1968)

Beyond civil wars: gangs

'Combo' members in Colombia