Authority Contestation during and after Civil War

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Rebel Governance in Civil War. Edited by Ana Arjona, Nelson Kasfir, and Zachariah Mampilly. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015. 328p. $99.99 cloth, $31.99 paper.

Rebelocracy: Social Order in the Colombian Civil War. By Ana Arjona. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016. 430p. $120.00 cloth, $32.99 paper.

Organized Violence after Civil War: The Geography of Recruitment in Latin America. By Sarah Zukerman Daly. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016. 344p. $99.99 cloth, $31.99 paper.

Informal Order and the State in Afghanistan. By Jennifer Brick Murtazashvili. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016. 364p. $120.00 cloth.

Introduction

Civil wars evoke images of violence, destruction, collapse of governance, and disorder. Intrastate conflicts do indeed shatter existing sociopolitical orders; at the same time, they also create alternative orders where state and nonstate actors compete for power and legitimacy. Civil warfare produces multiple zones of contestation where authority is ambiguous, plural, and malleable, and where sovereignty, in practice rather than in principle, is divisible. In countries torn asunder by internal violence, myriad forms of authority contestation emerge at the local, regional, or national levels. Governments are challenged by a host of authority claimants: rebels, militias, warlords, criminal syndicates, or customary organizations. Civil warfare opens up multiple sites of contention where competing structures of authority intersect, overlap, and produce different kinds of political outcomes. The post-civil war environment is equally volatile, as various actors jockey for supremacy in a rugged authority landscape.

Each of the four books discussed in this essay recounts different, but related, "stories" of authority fragmentation during and after civil war. Taken together, they ensnare and enthrall through theoretical finesse, methodological complexity, and practical relevance. All four go beyond the folk image of rebels as ruthless violence entrepreneurs or roving bandits, and explore the conditions under which armed nonstate actors savvily adapt to rapid shifts in local power distributions, emerge as bulwarks against disorder in fluid conflict environments, establish and maintain parallel systems of governance, and institutionalize alternative forms of political order in the midst or aftermath of civil wars. Collectively, the four books reviewed herein explore three major themes that inform research on political ordering during or after civil war and on the behavior of armed nonstate actors.

First, the books enhance our understanding of *rebel governance*, a concept that encompasses the range of coercive, extractive, and redistributive institutions established by separatist or antigovernment insurgents who control territory. *Rebel Governance in Civil War* and *Rebelocracy*, in particular, map out the various contexts in which rebels decide to settle down, become rulers of their own domains, and establish complex architectures of local rule. In these two works, the authors explore why some rebels engage in governance activities (for example, setting up separate executive, legislative, and judicial bodies or providing public services to the local population), while others are more restrained in their governance initiatives. Both present us with a detailed account of the multifaceted nature of rebel governance, which can be instituted against the sovereign state (i.e., where rebels effectively supplant the sovereign state and exercise de facto authority), with the sovereign state (i.e., where insurgents sometimes compete but oftentimes collude

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with the government in the provision of public goods), or in the absence of the sovereign state (i.e., where the government is so weak that it cannot extend its authority beyond the capital and its immediate surroundings).

Second, the books illuminate the complex nature of the *competition among armed nonstate actors*, as well as the outcomes produced by this competition. *Rebelocracy* and *Organized Violence after Civil War* reflect on how armed nonstate actors cohabit or fiercely compete with one another over territory, resources, and influence, and how they engage with the government during and after civil conflict. The two works thoughtfully demonstrate that the interactions between armed nonstate actors and the state, as well as among armed nonstate actors themselves, can yield a range of political outcomes.

Third, the authors help us better grasp the *production and institutionalization of informal or hybrid orders* during and after civil conflict. *Rebel Governance* and *Informal Orders and the State in Afghanistan* explain how armed nonstate actors and community organizations navigate across tenuous political orders during and after conflict. From these two books, we learn a great deal about how fragile political order can be in (post) conflict environments and about how rebel or customary organizations can help spawn informal orders in what might otherwise be a bloody and chaotic environment.

In the remainder of this essay, I discuss each book in turn and identify the key contributions that the author(s) make to extant research. Finally, I conclude by focusing on three avenues for future research on the behavior of armed nonstate actors.

Rebel Governance, Armed Nonstate Actor Competition, and Informal Orders

Rebel Governance stands out among those few edited volumes that offer a coherent structure. The book is organized around six conceptual and theoretical questions: 1) What exactly is rebel governance (and, how does it differ from cognate phenomena)? 2) Which factors facilitate or inhibit rebel governance? 3) How do rebel governments project authority and legitimacy through symbolism and political discourse? 4) How do group characteristics affect the type of rebel government that emerges? 5) How do civilians shape rebel governance? 6) How does the use of violence impact rebel governance?

The first question is thoroughly addressed in Chapter 2 by Nelson Kasfir, who provides one of the most comprehensive accounts of what rebel governance is and is not. Kasfir proposes that "rebel governance, at a minimum, means the organization of civilians within rebel-held territory for a public purpose. These purposes include rebel encouragement of civilian participation, provision of civilian administration, or organization of civilians for significant material gain. The presence of any aspect of one of these types of activities is sufficient to indicate governance" (p. 24). Kasfir delineates three scope conditions for rebel governance to occur: insurgents must hold territory (though territorial control can be variable, temporally and spatially); the area must be inhabited by a permanent population; and rebels must maintain a credible threat of force that would guarantee rule enforcement. Although Kasfir's main goal is conceptual, he also identifies a series of factors that affect the variation in rebel governance: rebels' ideologies, cultural beliefs, and social values; the goal of the insurgency (antigovernment vs. secessionist); conflict duration; material endowments; and intrafactional competition (pp. 39–42).

The conditions that favor insurgent rule are more extensively discussed in Chapter 3, by Timothy Wickham-Crowley. He argues that the underlying, or structural condition that favors the emergence of what he calls "counter-state formation" (p. 49) is the absence or erosion of sovereign state authority. According to Wickham-Crowley, predatory governments that suffer from an acute legitimacy crisis provide a fertile ground for the creation of alternative structures of authority. His overview of Latin American Cold War insurgencies reveals that rebel governance can be quite extensive. In addition to establishing basic institutions of taxation and public goods provision, various Latin American insurgents maintained separate schools, courts, and facilities and even protected the interests of coca growers or offered literacy services to indigenous populations. In this chapter, not only does Wickham-Crowley offer short descriptive accounts of the variation in the degree of governance across Cold War Latin American insurgencies (pp. 65–69), but he also addresses a number of reasons that precipitate rebel governance collapse: military conquest by government forces; expansion of electoral competitiveness in insurgent-held areas; and rebels' inability to protect the local population from regime violence (pp. 63–64).

In Chapter 4, Zachariah Mampilly eloquently argues that symbolic aspects of insurgent governance are as important as institutional ones for the consolidation of nonstate political authority. Mampilly suggests that symbolic practices serve both instrumental and normative objectives for rebel rulers: "[S]ymbolic processes reduce the need for a rebellion to use force to ensure compliance; in addition, they may increase civilian identification with the rebel government" (p. 74). Besides establishing formal coercive, extractive, and redistributive structures, insurgents perform a range of symbolic acts, like discourses, parades, and rallies, which help foster collective identities, generate local support, promote organizational cohesion, attract external support, and consolidate the institutionalization of insurgent rule.

In Chapter 5, Bridget Coggins provides an illuminating account of rebel diplomacy. Although formal diplomatic practices are rarely available to armed nonstate

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actors and violence remains a common insurgent tactic, some rebels embrace diplomacy in order to pursue their strategic objectives. Coggins holds that rebels' diplomatic practices typically target multiple audiences: individuals inside and outside the insurgent-held territory, international organizations, and third-party states. Using examples from various rebellions, she persuasively argues that diplomacy is integral to insurgents' governance efforts: Diplomacy helps rebels accrue the resources necessary to maintain military mobilization and provide public goods to the local population. Additionally, diplomacy serves as a conduit for cultivating relations with international actors and bolstering the legitimacy of the rebel movement.

Chapters 6, 7, and 8 examine how organizational characteristics, such as ideologies and doctrines, affect patterns of insurgent rule. In Chapter 6, Stathis Kalyvas employs the case of the Greek civil war to illustrate that the political identity of rebel groups can substantially impact governance outcomes. Kalyvas convincingly shows that communist Greek rebels were more successful at creating centralized quasi-governmental structures than were conservative insurgents. In a similar vein, in Chapter 7, Bert Suykens compares two rebel groups in the same state (India) but with different objectives, the secessionist Nationalist Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN) and the antigovernment Naxalite Communist Party of India (CPI). Suykens shows that the two groups embraced different approaches to governance, which can be traced to their ideology: the former aimed to create a separate Naga state, while the latter envisaged a nationwide revolution as the pathway toward an egalitarian socialist society. In Chapter 8, Kasper Hoffmann proposes a moral economy of rebel governance, an approach that places the emphasis on ideas rather than political institutions. Looking at the Mai Mai rebellion in Eastern Congo, Hoffmann discusses the processes through which local customs, ideas, and beliefs legitimized Mai Mai authority and molded the nature of rebel rule.

The subsequent three chapters investigate the complex relationship between civilians and insurgents. In Chapter 9, Ana Arjona argues that civilians in rebel-held territories are not passive actors, devoid of power and agency. Using Colombia as a case study, Arjona offers a gripping account of civilian behavior toward insurgent rule. Two key arguments are advanced: first, partial civilian resistance to rebel governance is common; and, second, extensive civilian resistance to rebel rule depends on the local population's capacity for collective action. In turn, civilians' capacity to mobilize is a function of the quality of preexisting local institutions and the scope of rebel intervention in local affairs. The contributor of Chapter 10, Till Förster, analyzes the relationship between rebels and civilians in the city of Korhogo in Côte d'Ivoire. Förster focuses on insurgents' redistributive and extractive activities (security provision and tax collection), and finds that local citizens' agency fundamentally shaped how security was provided and tax collected. In Chapter 11, Shane Barter looks at the case of the Free Aceh Movement (GAM) in Indonesia, and demonstrates that GAM's inclusion of religious education, as well as its promotion of human rights and democracy, expanded the range of GAM's governance activities.

The last section of the volume examines the predatory side of rebel governance. In Chapter 12, Francisco Gutiérrez-Sanín examines rebel militias in Medellin, Colombia. He offers a lucid analytical narrative of how power vacuums allowed militias to exercise de facto control and engage in indiscriminate violence, often without impunity. Finally, in Chapter 13, William Reno traces the evolution of Charles Taylor's rebel government in Liberia in the early 1990s, and shows how patronage politics and natural resource endowments created incentives for predatory, rather than stationary rebel behavior.

Altogether, *Rebel Governance* is remarkably coherent and sets out a clear agenda for theoretically grounded and empirically rigorous research on insurgent rule. The volume is foundational for the establishment of a distinct research program on rebel governance. While the volume addresses various facets of the phenomenon, several areas of inquiry await further exploration.

First, scholarship on governance by armed nonstate actors would benefit from greater terminological clarity. The contributors to *Rebel Governance* employ various terms (rebel governance, rebel government, rebelocracy, counter-state formation, para-governmental organization, multiple sovereignty) interchangeably, but it is not clear whether they capture the same phenomenon. Relatedly, conceptual boundaries remain imperfectly outlined. The minimalist definition adopted in this volume ("the organization of civilians within rebel-held territory for a public purpose," p. 24) is appropriate for capturing descriptively the range of behavioral repertoires across insurgencies spanning various regions and time periods. Empirically oriented scholars, however, may find this conceptualization less suitable for large-N or even qualitative inquiries. What kind of rebel activities fall under the broader governance umbrella? Is there a specific bundle of institutions (or rebel practices) that is necessary and sufficient for rebel governance to be empirically observed? Are coercive, extractive, and redistributive institutions equally important for assessing the presence and degree of rebel governance? Does one type or category of institutions established by rebels matter more than others? Are rational-bureaucratic institutions and symbolic practices equally consequential when trying to empirically gauge insurgent governance?

Second, an underlying assumption in this volume posits that rebel governance occurs when insurgents control territory. Prima facie, this assumption looks intuitive: how can one govern in a permanently contested space? Yet the empirical record suggests that some rebel organizations, such as Hezbollah or Hamas before 2007, for example, engaged in extensive governance activities

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without securing exclusive territorial control. Territorial control seems to be a critical variable that affects the *degree* of rebel governance, rather than its presence.

Finally, this volume mainly focuses on insurgent governance *during* civil war. In certain situations, however, rebel governance predates the onset of violence (and can trigger the onset of war), and many rebels continue to provide governance after the guns fall silent. The effect of wartime violence and (negative) peace on rebels' governance practices remains an empirical question, one that awaits further inquiry.

Insurgents' governance practices are extensively explored by Ana Arjona in *Rebelocracy*. In this book, the author undertakes a monumental task as she provides a thorough conceptual, theoretical, and empirical examination of social order during civil war. Conceptually, she argues that the interaction between insurgents and civilians typically produces three types of outcomes: disorder (internal anarchy), "rebelocracy" (extensive rebel intervention in local affairs), or "aliocracy" (minimalist insurgent interference in local affairs). Theoretically, she posits that the type of order emerging in conflict zones is a function of two main factors: rebels' time horizon or discount rate (which affects the extent of rebel intervention in local affairs) and the quality of preexisting institutions (especially the quality of dispute adjudication structures).

The theory produces a range of testable expectations (Chapter 3). First, disorder is most common when armed groups' time horizons are short (when rebels discount the future at a higher rate). Short time horizons are most likely when insurgent groups are indisciplined or face armed competition with the government or other rebels. Second, long time horizons (which are most likely in an environment of high organizational discipline and low intergroup competition) can yield two outcomes, depending on the quality of preexisting institutions. Where high-quality institutions are present, civilians have considerable bargaining leverage and aliocracy is the most probable outcome. By contrast, low-quality local institutions reduce civilians' capacity for collective mobilization and resistance against rebel rule; in this case, rebelocracy is the most likely form of social order. Empirically, Arjona employs an impressive methodological arsenal—statistical analysis of original data (collected through surveys, interviews, in-depth case studies, and memory workshops), process tracing, and natural experiments—to test, in the context of the Colombian conflict, not only the main implications of the theory but also its microfoundations.

The book flows seamlessly. After having laid out the theoretical framework in Chapter 3 and discussed the staggering array of methods used to collect the empirical evidence in Chapter 4, in the subsequent chapters Arjona tests the key implications of the theory. Building on original data at the local level, Chapter 5 investigates the type of social orders that emerged across Colombian communities in war zones between 1970 and 2012. The empirical evidence (she employs multilevel models on a panel data set of community-armed group dyads) is broadly consonant with the theoretical expectations: insurgent indiscipline and armed competition are most likely to produce disorder; rebelocracy, or insurgent rule, is less likely to materialize where communities display legitimate and effective local institutions (especially dispute-adjudication institutions).

Chapter 6 unpacks the mechanisms through which insurgent indiscipline, armed competition, local institutions, and the value of disputed territories affect the types of social orders that emerge in civil war environments. Chapter 7 offers a thorough examination of the processes through which the quality of local institutions shapes civilians' capacity for collective mobilization and creates propitious conditions for aliocracy (rule by others or shared civilian-rebel rule). Here, Arjona relies on a natural experiment to ascertain the effect of institutional quality on social order. Specifically, she analyzes three similar communities in the same municipality (Viola in central Colombia). These three villages experienced different institutional transformations in the 1960s, which eventually shaped the type of social order that emerged in the 1990s when the municipality fell under rebel control. Finally, Chapter 8 probes the microfoundations of the theory by investigating the effect of rebelocracy on recruitment. Using novel quantitative and qualitative data, Arjona finds that high-quality local institutions are negatively correlated with recruitment (local civilians were less likely to join rebel groups under aliocracy than under rebelocracy).

Overall, *Rebelocracy* is a veritable tour de force, conceptually, theoretically, and empirically. The range of questions examined in a book-length manuscript is daunting, the multimethod approach is impressive, and the descriptive material is illuminating. The author's capacity for analytical breadth and depth is truly remarkable. Detecting major shortcomings in this study is tantamount to looking for the needle in the haystack. Arjona offers a compelling account of the architecture of rebel rule in Colombia and is meticulous about anticipating and addressing potential challenges to the theory and methodology. That said, a few avenues for future exploration stand out.

One relates to the theory's portability outside of the Colombian context. Although the author is careful to provide vignettes from other civil conflicts that seem to support the posited mechanisms, external validity remains an empirical question. Another refers to transitions in social orders. Civil war orders often change more frequently than seemingly afforded by the framework developed in this book. The transition from one type of order to another, especially from rebelocracy to aliocracy, requires further theorizing and empirical testing. Arjona's theory elucidates how the quality of preexisting institutions shapes the cross-sectional creation of a given type of order (rebelocracy if local institutions are weak or aliocracy

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if local institutions are strong); however, the framework looks indeterminate vis-à-vis the cross-temporal change in social orders. The quality of local institutions—a slow-moving, or even time-invariant, variable—cannot fully capture rapid transitions in local orders that characterize so many civil wars.

Another aspect necessitating more attention is the role of the state. As the framework developed by Arjona privileges the local community-rebel actor interaction, one might think that the state is an agentless, passive actor in the production of local orders. The author, however, is careful to argue that state agency is captured by the theory in several ways (pp. 78–79): the state's presence affects the likelihood that rebels will secure territorial control; the state can create armed competition; the state shapes the quality of preexisting local institutions; the state is directly involved in the creation of social order. Since Arjona focuses primarily on how the community-rebel group interaction yields varying types of social orders, the last point requires further development. Particularly understudied are the conditions under which hybrid forms of governance emerge where the state colludes with rebel actors in the provision of public order and goods. Hence, more work is needed on the entire range of aliocratic social orders where the state is more present or more directly invested in the production of local orders.

While Arjona subtly dissects the anatomy of social orders during civil war, in *Organized Violence* Sarah Zukerman Daly maps out the contested nature of authority in the aftermath of internal conflict. Also focusing on the Colombia "laboratory" (which offers tremendous variation in rebels' postwar trajectories), the author examines why some armed groups lay down weapons while others remilitarize after peace agreements. According to Zukerman Daly, the key explanatory factor for the variation in rebel remilitarization is the geography of rebel recruitment: Groups that recruit locally tend to remain cohesive at the end of the war, while groups that recruit farther afield tend to disperse. The geography of rebel recruitment shapes the power distribution and informational asymmetry in the postwar environment, and affects the likelihood of remilitarization. Configurations that include only local groups display stable balances of power and informational symmetries, and are more likely to demilitarize over time; by contrast, configurations with nonlocal groups exhibit changes in power balance and informational asymmetries, and are more likely to remilitarize after a peace accord.

In essence, Zukerman Daly views postconflict bargaining failures and remilitarization as a by-product of informational problems that are triggered by rebels' recruitment patterns. The rationalist explanation for postconflict militia remilitarization is thoughtful and parsimonious, while the evidence amassed to test the main theoretical propositions is extensive. To evaluate the main argument, the author embarked on fieldwork in Colombia over a seven-year period (2006–2013), conducted more than three hundred interviews with "ex-combatants, victims, military personnel, civilians, politicians, and experts on the armed conflict" (p. 8), analyzed surveys of demobilized combatants, psychologists, and community members, and collected organizational-level data on all militia factions, as well as "geo-referenced data on 29,000 violent events between 1964 and 2013" (p. 8).

The book's sections are logically woven into a lucid narrative. Chapter 2 explains the causal chain that links the geography of recruitment to militia demobilization or remobilization in the postwar environment. Chapter 3 provides an overview of militia groups in the Colombian civil war. Chapter 4 offers a quantitative test of the main theoretical claim, with the evidence revealing a strong link between armed groups' recruitment patterns and their postconflict organizational capacity. Chapter 5 carries the large-N analysis further and uncovers a strong relationship between armed groups' recruitment patterns and their trajectory toward militarization or demilitarization in the aftermath of the peace agreement. Here, Zukerman Daly is careful to consider a host of alternative explanations that might account for the variation in observed patterns of demilitarization and remilitarization (pp. 126–36).

Chapters 6 and 7 provide qualitative evidence of the posited theoretical mechanisms: Chapter 6 examines the processes that led to the demilitarization of a militia group (Bloque Cacique Nutibara) in Colombia's most populated region, Antioquia. The case material captivates not only through descriptive finesse but also through analytical acumen as the author clarifies what type of case-level evidence would disprove the theory (pp. 139–40). Chapter 7 traces the remilitarization of local and nonlocal militias across various Colombian regions. Chapter 8 probes the theory's external validity by applying the theoretical framework to earlier internal conflict in Colombia during *La Violencia* (1948–1958) and to civil wars in other countries (Nicaragua, Guatemala, Peru, Angola, Mozambique, Sierra Leone, Uganda, and Indonesia).

Altogether, Zukerman Daly's carefully researched book offers a novel explanation for armed actors' postconflict behavior, and is a must-read for civil war scholars and Colombia specialists. The well-knit chapters provide a nuanced account of the circumstances under which rebels remilitarize after a peace deal is struck. As is the case with *Rebelocracy*, however, it remains to be seen whether the posited theoretical mechanisms operate in comparable contexts outside Colombia. The cross-region case illustrations provided in Chapter 9 demonstrate the theory's explanatory leverage beyond Colombia, but more systematic testing is needed (the empirical richness assembled in *Organized Violence* might be quite hard to replicate in other contexts).

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Finally, the author is right to claim that "the concept of information problems has not been rigorously applied to the intrastate arena" (p. 250), and that informational issues between and within armed groups "shed light on the puzzle of why demobilizing groups cannot resolve their territorial disputes without a return to violence" (p. 250). At the same time, it is not entirely clear whether the determining factor that produces bargaining failures—and, hence, remilitarization—with configurations that include nonlocal groups is informational asymmetry, rather than credible commitment. While at the beginning of a conflict information about actors' resolve and capabilities is relatively scarce (and belligerents have rational incentives to misrepresent this information), at the end of a protracted civil war—like the one in Colombia—informational asymmetries tend to be greatly reduced. It might be that the geography of recruitment produces a commitment problem, rather than an informational problem: groups may retain abundant information about each other's resolve and capabilities right after a peace deal is struck, but the loose network structure of nonlocal groups—their lack of internal cohesiveness—reduces their ability to credibly commit to agreements. Thus, the geography of rebel recruitment might operate to produce the outcomes anticipated by Zukerman Daly's theory through a credible commitment mechanism, rather than an informational mechanism. Future research should elucidate this conundrum.

The last book reviewed here immerses the reader into a different postwar society: Afghanistan. In *Informal Order,* Jennifer Brick Murtazashvili offers a captivating account of customary governance—governance provided by local actors—in Afghanistan between 2001 and 2014. Conventional wisdom holds that customary governance is at odds with the modern state; yet the author's analysis of postconflict Afghanistan indicates not only that governance provided by local self-governing communities is quite common but also that customary and formal state actors often cooperate toward the provision of local public goods. The book's theoretical contribution resides in a logical account of what James Scott calls "the art of being differently governed"—that is, in the clear exposition of the conditions under which local communities successfully embark on governance activities when the state is absent or when state presence is minimal. Its empirical richness is rendered by the disaggregated community-level data that were assembled through fieldwork conducted in Afghanistan during a period of high uncertainty and great peril (2006–2008). Relying on more than three hundred interviews and focus groups with government officials in Kabul and in 32 villages across six provinces, the book surveys a broad set of behavioral repertoires whereby civilians often organize local affairs in the absence of an effective state.

Brick Murtazashvili argues that customary governance is no panacea for the consolidation of peaceful social orders in the aftermath of conflict, but it can produce different types of positive political outcomes. Customary governance "can enhance public goods provision and may even improve political participation" (p. 5). Rather than completely undermining state authority, customary governance can also improve support for democracy and the central government (p. 4). Furthermore, "customary governance may actually improve long-term prospects for the rule of law because it serves as an obstacle for the state as it seeks to transgress citizens' rights" (p. 6). Finally, customary governance can serve "as a source of defense against insurgents" (p. 6). The processes through which customary governance shapes political outcomes are explored across several carefully calibrated chapters that trace actor interactions in Afghanistan at three levels: within villages; between villages; and between villages and the state.

Chapter 2 provides a historical overview of the Afghan government's ambivalent position towards customary governance. In Chapter 3, Brick Murtazashvili delineates the analytical contours of customary governance by illustrating that in many Afghan villages, customary governance "exists as a shared responsibility between three distinct informal organizations: village councils (shuras/jirgas), religious judicial authority (mullahs), and community representatives (maliks)" (p. 65). The subsequent two chapters deal with the political economy of public goods provision at the village level: Chapter 4 assesses customary organizations' effectiveness in providing small-scale public goods within villages in the absence of an effective state, while Chapter 5 looks at the level of intervillage cooperation vis-à-vis the provision of larger-scale public goods, such as local order and public infrastructure. Using survey evidence, Chapter 6 shows that the presence of local customary organizations is positively correlated with support for the state and democratic norms. Chapter 7 looks at the relationship between customary organizations and government authorities, and analyzes the range of informal power-sharing arrangements that emerge out of that interaction.

Overall, the book makes an important contribution to the burgeoning literature on governance beyond the state. In *Informal Order*, Brick Murtazashvili convincingly argues that "there is often a substantial degree of order even in the absence of the state" (p. 24). The inquiry into customary governance in Afghanistan reveals that the relationship between the state and customary order is not zero sum but highly complex. In some situations, customary organizations were able to successfully perform functions typically associated with sovereign statehood; in other situations, however, they had to collaborate with formal state actors in the provision of local order and other large-scale public goods.

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While the book impresses through analytical breadth and depth, at least two aspects require greater attention. As with *Rebel Governance*, the conceptual boundaries of (customary) governance need to be more clearly specified. What exactly goes into the concept? When does customary governance actually begin and end? Without a priori conceptualization, customary governance will lie in the eye of the beholder—which is less of a problem for descriptive accounts but a real quandary for empirical projects. Relatedly, *Informal Order* nicely lays out the processes through which customary governance produces positive outcomes (public goods provision, consolidation of democratic norms). Yet further research is needed on the conditions under which customary governance encourages predatory behavior. Future studies should explain how customary institutions can be compromised by both state and nonstate actors and used instrumentally toward the accrual of private gains, rather than the provision of public goods.

Conclusion

Countries torn apart by internal conflict—as well as countries struggling to escape the anvils of civil violence—are not orderless or ungoverned, but differently governed. In conflict-ridden or postconflict societies, nonstate authority structures routinely fulfill functions commonly associated with sovereign statehood. Civil war and post-civil war environments are, above all, areas of contestation: about who rules, who governs, and what shape is taken by authority and governance. The four books reviewed here provide theoretically grounded, empirically based, and policy-relevant knowledge of the conditions under which armed nonstate actors mimic statelike functions during and in the aftermath of civil war. Collectively, they herald the emergence of a new phase in the study of authority, order, and governance in (post) conflict environments.

In addition to theoretical ingenuity and empirical richness, these studies open up exciting theoretical and empirical terrains for in-depth inquiries into the complex nature of nonstate political authority in the contemporary international system. Three particular avenues for future inquiry look promising.

First, the hybrid forms of governance that emerge during and after conflict require more systematic investigation. These four books show that sovereign governments reluctantly or voluntarily relinquish sovereign prerogatives to armed nonstate actors or local customary organizations. Why and how national governments cooperate with armed or nonviolent internal competitors has yet to be fully uncovered.

Second, the four studies included in this review provide nuanced accounts of the incentives that rebel organizations and local communities have to engage in governance activities against the state, with the state, or when the state is absent. After reading these books, one learns a great deal about the "supply side" of nonstate governance. However, the "demand side" of nonstate governance remains underexplored. Both the presence of nonstate governance and the form that it can take vary widely across and within civil wars. This variation could also be a function of civilian demand for rebel governance. The books included in this review seem to adopt a contractualist view of demand for nonstate governance, which holds that governance by nonstate actors is often a better alternative, vis-à-vis contract enforcement and property rights guarantees, than anarchy or predatory government. The contractualist perspective is intuitively appealing but necessitates more rigorous testing in multiple contexts.

Finally, more work is needed on the criminal aspects of civil warfare. Palimpsestic authority orderings—where the boundaries between the sovereign and the extralegal, between the licit and unlawful are effaced—are quite common during and after civil war. All four books enrich our understanding of the criminal activities undertaken by rebel actors exhibiting diverse organizational characteristics and embracing various strategies; yet little is known about the nexus between crime and the subnational, national, and cross-national variation in governance practices that emerge during and after civil war.

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