

1 Introduction

Every Communist must grasp the truth, “Political power grows out of the barrel of a gun.” Our principle is that the Party commands the gun, and the gun must never be allowed to command the Party. Yet, having guns, we can create Party organizations, as witness the powerful Party organizations which the Eighth Route Army has created in northern China. We can also create cadres, create schools, create culture, create mass movements. Everything in Yen-an has been created by having guns. All things grow out of the barrel of a gun. Mao Tse-Tung (2011, loc. 135)

Why do some rebel groups knowingly undertake costly, burdensome governing projects that undermine their popularity and legitimacy, or even trigger civilian resistance that could imperil their own cadres, while other rebel groups do not? Since March 2012, Raqqa, a city perceived to be a peripheral backwater by the Assad regime (Khalaf 2015, 56), has succumbed to the control of three different rebel groups. The first rebel organization to take control of the city was the Free Syrian Army (FSA) – a heterogeneous and decentralized collection of fighters composed of a large number of defected soldiers (Lister 2016a, 4–6) – which enjoyed military, financial, and political support from several foreign backers, including the United States, Turkey, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia (Lister 2016a, 8). The Islamic State came next, a radical, revolutionary jihadist rebel organization that spread from Iraq into Syria, attracted legions of foreign fighters from a vast array of countries, amassed great financial wealth, and became infamous for its brutality (Laub and Masters 2016).² The third rebel group was the Syrian Democratic Front (SDF). Although the SDF is a heterogeneous assemblage of militias from various ethnic backgrounds (Mellon 2019), the key powerholders within the organization are the Yekîneyên Parastina Gel (YPG, Yacoubian 2017, 5), a revolutionary leftist (if not socialist) rebel group

¹ The Chinese Communist Party made Yen-an its wartime capital and introduced a number of intensive governance projects there. See, e.g., Selden (1995).

² See also Revkin (2020).

composed primarily of Syrian Kurds and also supported by the United States (Mellon 2019). All three organizations were strong and organized enough to control territory, all organizations controlled the same place (Raqqah) and population, and all organizations were well resourced. But the three organizations' approaches to governance in Raqqah varied or converged in surprising ways.

When Raqqah first slipped out of the control of the Syrian state, the FSA's approach to governance was minimal (Khalaf 2015, 57; Lister 2016a, 9) and the group had a "preoccupation" with "battles up the field" (Syria Untold 2018). Raqqah, however, was far from ungoverned and civilians spearheaded initiatives to shape the daily life of the city. Civil society boomed, and nearly thirty-five different organizations unconnected to the FSA formed within a few months to execute the administration of Raqqah (Khalaf 2015, 57). These groups focused on "[creating] awareness on [sic] and [promoting] elections, human rights, citizenship, democracy, women's political participation, etc.," and civil society members, through relatively more democratic processes, elected a local council to administer the daily activities in the city (Khalaf 2015, 57). The governance of Raqqah in the early months of its fall from the Syrian regime could not be characterized as rebel-dominated, but rather decidedly civilian-led, and as a result, "seemingly more progressive, peaceful and secular with much better focused strategies and plans, than many civil society groups elsewhere in Syria" (Khalaf 2015, 57).

The heyday of civil society's governance of Raqqah, however, was short-lived, and months later the revolutionary jihadist³ Islamic State rebel group wrested control of the city from the FSA. The Islamic State quickly began imposing a new order throughout Raqqah:

Within three months, water, electricity, and bread were readily available; schools and universities had been reopened; and the private sector began to function once again. A key component of ISIL's efforts in Raqqah to drive this rapid recovery was the establishment of civil institutions to manage public services for Raqqah. This included a consumer protection office and civil judiciary; an electricity office, responsible for monitoring consumption, setting prices, and repairing electricity infrastructure; a post office; an office charged with receiving complaints about services in the city, and institutions for managing health care provision, education, and job matching, among others. (Robinson et al. 2017, 107)

The Islamic State stripped the school curriculum of secular thought (Khalil 2014), convened Shariah courts, and created a police force to implement its oppressive rule (Khalaf 2015, 58–9). Elsewhere, the

³ See, e.g., Kalyvas (2018); Whiteside (2016) for a similar interpretation.

organization would even confiscate land from Christians, before renting it to Muslims (Callimachi and Rossback 2018). Although the Islamic State offered a far more comprehensive and wide-ranging portfolio of governance institutions than the FSA, and the group even made Raqqa the capital of its caliphate, many of its governance interventions were deeply unpopular, provoking local violent and nonviolent resistance (Khalaf 2015, 58) as well as widespread perceptions of illegitimacy (Khalaf 2015, 59).

In 2017, the SDF, dominated by the revolutionary leftist YPG, retook Raqqa. As opposed to adopting the FSA's popularly light-handed governance strategy, the SDF's approach in many ways more closely mirrored the Islamic State's. The SDF selected a Raqqa Civilian Council (RCC) and tasked the council with a governance mandate (Haid 2017) that included almost the same portfolio of institutions that the Islamic State did. According to articles published on the SDF's English-language website, the SDF's RCC has opened hospitals (Syrian Democratic Forces 2019a), created a new court system (Syrian Democratic Forces 2017a), controlled water (Syrian Democratic Forces 2019b) and electricity (Syrian Democratic Forces 2018a), introduced market regulations on food (Syrian Democratic Forces 2018b) and medical prices (Syrian Democratic Forces 2019c), created new political institutions (Syrian Democratic Forces 2017b), built and reopened schools (Syrian Democratic Forces 2020b), altered the role of women in political and social life (Syrian Democratic Forces 2018c), and regulated the use of agricultural land (Syrian Democratic Forces 2020a). While the nature and content of these institutions of course differed from the Islamic State – for instance, the Islamic State installed cabals of emirs from its ranks (Reuter 2015), while the SDF introduced communal councils (van Wilgenburg 2017) – both groups controlled, rebuilt, or created the same set of governance institutions.

Like the Islamic State's governance, not all of the SDF's changes were popular. The content of the education curriculum is just one example. In the same way that the Islamic State changed the curriculum of schools, so too did the SDF. Whereas the Islamic State purged Raqqa's curriculum of secular teaching (Khalil 2014), the SDF sought to create new, Kurdish-language classes in addition to the Arabic, English, and French courses already provided (Davison 2017). The idea of offering Kurdish-language instruction in schools, however, provoked local "resentment" and "[made] local officials bristle," and Raqqa officials noted that if such a policy were "imposed" then "there would be problems" (Davison 2017). In Raqqa and elsewhere, men balked at women's new-found leadership roles and relative equality (van Wilgenburg 2017).

The citizens of Raqqa even took to the streets in a mass demonstration against the SDF, including accusations of atrocities and forced recruitment of children (@3z0ooz [Abdalaziz Alhamza] 2018b). Activists from Raqqa have even directly compared the SDF to the Islamic State (@3z0ooz [Abdalaziz Alhamza] 2018a).

Not only did the FSA initiate and control the *least* governing projects, but the FSA's light-handed approach to governing was undoubtedly the *most* popular. Furthermore, the two most ideologically distinct groups, the Islamic State (jihadist) and the SDF (leftist), engaged in the most comprehensive restructuring of almost the same set of governing institutions.⁴ Yet, rather than win over the civilian population by increased governing schemes, some of the initiatives the SDF and Islamic State introduced were deeply unpopular, provoked civilians' ire, and even ignited resistance (sometimes violent) against the rebel groups that introduced them. Despite civilian resistance to their governing projects, certainly undesired by rebel groups in the midst of a military conflict, both the SDF and the Islamic State nevertheless continued to pursue their governance interventions.

The Puzzle of Raqqa: Existing Research on Rebel Governance

What explains the FSA's divergence from the SDF and Islamic State, despite all three groups being relatively well resourced, operating in the same place, and doing so within less than a decade of each other? Why did the SDF's and the Islamic State's governance converge despite ideological differences? Why did the SDF and the Islamic State introduce and enforce governance programs that provoked resistance and sometimes even violence? The existing literature on rebel governance has difficulty answering these questions.

Arjona et al. (2015, 3) define rebel governance as "the set of actions insurgents engage in to regulate the social, political, and economic life of non-combatants during war." Most research on rebel governance locates its importance in the debate about how rebel groups win domestic conflicts. Governance requires initial upfront costs in the construction of institutions, but once rebels construct these institutions they are generally assumed to be quite popular and desirable. Because governance is popular and desirable, rebels generate legitimacy, and create or maintain support among civilians who benefit from rebels' governance

⁴ This accounting of the processes of governance and the formation of social orders is consistent with Baczko et al. (2018, 38).

activities (Migdal 1975/2015; Wickham-Crowley 1987; Grynkewich 2008; Mampilly 2011; Arjona 2016; Huang 2016b). The consequence of civilian perceptions of rebel legitimacy and support is civilian collaboration, with non-combatants providing information, resources, and recruits to rebels.⁵ Indeed, rebels are assumed to endeavor to maximize their governance interventions because the more they govern, the more legitimacy and support they generate for the organization, in turn expanding resources available to rebel groups and deepening civilian–rebel collaboration (Arjona 2016, 9).⁶

Civilian *collaboration*,⁷ the ultimate by-product of rebel governance efforts, is so greatly desired because civilian collaboration is argued to be the lynchpin for victory in civil war (Wickham-Crowley 1992, 8; Galula 2006, loc. 805–13; US Army 2006, 1 §1, 1 §8; Trinquier 2006/1964, 6). A version of the US *Counterinsurgency Field Manual* even clarifies that “[a]chieving victory still depends upon a group’s ability to

⁵ For instance, Migdal (1975/2015, 241) argues that rebels use both selective and collective governance as recruitment tools. Mampilly (2011, 54) argues that “the ability to provide a modicum of stability can be a powerful lure to civilians seeking refuge. And the provision of other benefits, including but not limited to the establishment of schools and hospitals, can provide a powerful incentive for civilians to support insurgent rule, even if only passively. From the perspective of the insurgent organization, reaching out to the larger noncombatant population makes tactical sense.” Wickham-Crowley (1987, 482) notes that rebels’ social services generated a “perceived ‘good-ness’ combined with their perceived ‘strength’ generated legitimate authority” in the territories they control. Grynkewich (2008, 353) explains that “non-state social welfare organizations offer the population an alternative entity in which to place their loyalty. Third, a group that gains the loyalty of the populace commands a steady stream of resources with which it can wage battle against the regime.” Weinstein (2006, 163) writes that “[c]ivilians are thought to be central players in insurgency: access to food, shelter, labor, and information depends on their compliance. For this reason, rebel groups often build governing structures that mobilize political support from noncombatants and enable the extraction of key resources.” Huang (2016b, 74) explains that “rebel statebuilding is a form of control, and enables rebel groups to elicit voluntary or coerced collaboration from the people under their authority.” See note 6 for how Arjona (2016, 9) conceives of the benefits of governance.

⁶ Arjona (2016, 9) writes: “I assume that rebels aim to control territories as a means of pressuring the incumbent and increasing their strength. I also assume that a secondary goal is to maximize the byproducts of that control – such as obtaining material resources, attracting recruits, and expanding their networks – which help rebels build their organizational capacity. Given these two goals, I argue that rebels prefer order to disorder and, among the possible types of order, they prefer rebelocracy [more comprehensive governance] to alicocracy [less comprehensive governance].”

⁷ Although many might assume governance creates positive sentiments among civilians such that collaborative behavior is a reflection of support for the organization, Kalyvas (2006, 91–104) presents an extensive review of how some researchers approach *collaboration* as attitudinal and dispositional and strongly cautions against the notion of assuming that observed collaborative behaviors are necessarily expressions of popular support for rebel organizations. Thus, collaboration achieved through rebel governance could also be reflective of rebel coercion.

mobilize support for its political interests” (US Army 2006, 1 §1). In other words, rebel governance is thought to be popular and generate civilian legitimacy and support, which in turn facilitates civilian collaboration with rebels, which is ultimately necessary for rebel victory.

Given a framework that typically assumes that rebel governance confers benefits despite initial upfront costs, existing works typically frame answers to puzzles related to variation in rebel governance as a product of group-level characteristics that hinder governance, or features of the operational environment that accelerate or impede governance efforts. Because governance is generally assumed to be beneficial, variation in rebel governance is therefore not a *choice* but a response to these sets of features.⁸ For instance, in terms of group-level explanations for variation in governance, Weinstein (2006, 163) argues that rebels “often build governing structures that mobilize political support from noncombatants and enable the extraction of key resources,” unless they have access to economic endowments such as lootable natural resources or narcotics that obviate the need for governance (Weinstein 2006, 103). Likewise, Huang (2016b; see Table 3.3) assesses the extent to which rebels are economically reliant on the civilian population: when rebels tax and rely on civilians, they are more likely to provide governance to facilitate consistent revenue streams. Similarly, Baczko et al. (2018, 38) note that key differences in rebel governance in Syria emerged because of organizational and experiential differences across rebel groups.

Rebels also encounter local-structural conditions that could inhibit governance. Limitations to or enhancers of governance arise in the form of operational realities such as prewar state penetration (Mampilly 2011, 210–1–1), competition (Mampilly 2011, 227), the presence of humanitarian organizations (Mampilly 2011, 225), and conflict intensity (Mampilly 2011, 223). By contrast, Arjona (2016, 9–11) argues that in the absence of armed competition and internal indiscipline, rebel groups will pursue governance to the greatest extent possible, unless they encounter local resistance caused by preexisting political institutions, which makes civilians better able to rebuff rebel incursions. Finally, Ahmad (2017, 4–9) argues that the success of Islamist rebels’ protostates relies on the identity and support of preexisting business communities working at the local level.

Ultimately, because governance is beneficial to rebels, limitations to governing initiatives are a reaction to local, organizational, or wartime conditions that hinder or obviate the need for governance (Weinstein

⁸ See, e.g., Revkin (2020) for an exception.

2006; Mampilly 2011; Arjona 2016; Huang 2016b; Ahmad 2017; Baczko et al. 2018). This existing research, however, and the assumptions upon which this research is based, have difficulty explaining rebels' governing behavior in Raqqa over the course of the Syrian Civil War.

Contrary to existing assumptions, the FSA's light-handed and minimalist approach to governance enjoyed the highest levels of local support, while the Islamic State and SDF sowed the rancor (and occasionally violent resistance) of civilian populations. Furthermore, all three rebel groups controlled the same city (Raqqa) and the same population at about the same time, so explanations that suggest local-level characteristics (Mampilly 2011; Arjona 2016; Ahmad 2017) determine rebel governance cannot alone explain rebel governance in the city of Raqqa. As described above, three groups either enjoyed external patronage or access to natural resources, so explanations of rebel governance that focus on the origins of rebels resources and support (Weinstein 2006; Huang 2016b) cannot alone explain rebel governance in Raqqa. All three groups were sufficiently consolidated and organized such that they were not able to pursue their longer-term aims, and all three groups had experienced soldiers of some kind, so explanations about time horizons (Arjona 2016, 9–11), better organization, or soldiering experience (Baczko et al. 2018, 38) cannot explain governance. Because of the similarities in the circumstances of all three groups, and because of the strategic benefits associated with governing, current scholarship predicts that all three rebel groups should have undertaken governing projects in similar ways. Yet, the FSA, Islamic State, and SDF did not.

In the next section I present a different conceptualization of governance that problematizes the assumption about the generally uniform benefits of rebel governance decisions. Instead, I conceive of governance as a politicized process beset by trade-offs and costs beyond initial investments. This new framework helps explain dynamics of governance in Raqqa and highlights the importance of rebel leader decision-making with respect to governance behaviors.

An Alternative Approach

Although I approach governance in a broadly similar way to the works above, I relax the assumptions about the consistent military benefits of governance to rebel groups. Instead, researchers have increasingly found that rebel governance programs vary in their costs and benefits: some forms of governance yield recruits and resources, while others not only require initial investments, but also entail enforcement and political costs, the bill for which is not always paid in full with material and

personnel gleaned from civilians (Stewart 2020). Specifically, I conceive of rebel governance as the process of creating or controlling a constellation of interlocking institutions and programs beyond the provision of security, intended to regulate the social, political, or economic landscape during war. Such governance varies across two dimensions – “intensiveness” and “extensiveness” – which is consistent with at least the ways some rebel leaders themselves conceive of their governance decisions (Yakhontoff 1934, 138–9; Eritrean People’s Liberation Front 1982).

Intensiveness of Governance

Intensiveness measures the potential political and coercive costs associated with the implementation of certain governance institutions (Yakhontoff 1934, 138–9). I take as given that rebel organizations will provide security, at a minimum. But beyond security, rebel governance institutions range from the provision of food or dispute resolution mechanisms, to full-scale land reform and elections. Many institutions are typically popular and well-received institutional forms that address basic human needs and provide some sense of order and normalcy to quotidian activities. Other institutions, however, unsettle preexisting ways of life and redistribute resources in ways that occasionally provoke anger and resentment, if not resistance, in turn imposing political if not also enforcement costs on rebel groups. By implementing these programs, rebels not only absorb initial investment burdens but they also face reputational and coercive costs associated with the execution of these programs. What’s more is that all of these governance initiatives could be postponed until *after* the war concludes, but some rebel groups still undertake governance of this kind during war.

For instance, in Sri Lanka (Terpstra and Frerks 2017), China (Seybolt 1971, 645–6), Eritrea (Connell 2001, 355; Pool 2001, 127), and Kurdish-controlled Syria today (Nordland 2018), rebel governance initiatives to liberate women were met with angry men, no organizational legitimation (or even a loss thereof), or the need for rebels to intensify their investments in institutions built for the liberation of women to actually achieve their desired results. Rebel governance efforts with collectivization and land reform faced skepticism from civilians, reduced foodstuffs, and even provoked a violent backlash that resulted in catastrophic levels of civilian and rebel loss of life (Opper 2018, 49–50; Pepper 1999, 307–8; Westad 2003, 129, 133–7; Houtart 1980, 103). In Syria (Davison 2017) and China (Seybolt 1971, 656–7), changes to educational curricula stoked civilian malcontent. Knowing that cadres would face skeptical, if not hostile, local elites who could thwart the rebel

Table 1.1 *Intensiveness of governance institutions*

Less intensive	Market/food regulations
	Judicial institutions
	Health care
	Public works
	Education
More intensive	Change gender roles
	Change political institutions
	Land reform and redistribution

organization, Amílcar Cabral, leader of the national liberation movement the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde (PAIGC), actually role-played with PAIGC political commissars' interactions with skeptical local elites, before sending them into the field (Chabal 1983, 64). In fact, some rebel leaders themselves have explicitly viewed rebels' governance of civilians as potentially challenging for, if not even rivaling, military efforts, as opposed to accelerating or bolstering them (Kasfir 2005, 274; Truth and Reconciliation of Timor-Leste (CAVR) 2006c, 2–3, 21–2).

Together, these anecdotes suggest that across time and space a certain set of institutions are consistently more likely to provoke civilian backlash: the redistribution of land and wealth; the education and inclusion of women in political, economic, and social life; altering religious, cultural, or political institutions; and certain context-specific school curricular changes. Beyond simply being unpopular to civilians, the creation of these institutions can impose political and reputational as well as coercive costs on rebel groups. As a result, when rebel groups provide one or more of these programs, they provide more intensive governance. By contrast, when rebels avoid these programs, they provide less intensive governance. Although some rebel groups provide less intensive governance exclusively, rebels almost never solely undertake more intensive programs. Thus, if rebels introduce more intensive programs, they almost always introduce less intensive programs alongside of them (Table 1.1).

Extensiveness of Governance

Beyond potential political costs, governance can entail resource and organizational costs that may not be recouped over the long term. One way in which governance can become consistently more or less costly is the *extensiveness* of governance.

Extensiveness refers to the idea of access and addresses who experiences rebels' governance (Yakhontoff 1934, 138–9), meaning not only the absolute numbers of civilians but also the ascriptive and dispositional categories of civilians. Not all civilians will be equally supportive of rebel organizations' ideology, goals, behaviors, and governance programs (Stewart 2018; Revkin 2019). Some civilians can actively support the insurgency by providing resources or information to rebels, but fall short of officially joining the movement themselves. Other civilians tacitly accept the rebel group, neither supporting the movement but doing little to aid the group beyond what they are compelled to do. A third category of civilians may be less likely to support the rebel group but fall short of actively mobilizing against an insurgency: a leftist group may be less likely to gain support from merchants, the upper and middle classes, or clergy, while rebel organizations that mobilize primarily along ethnic lines may be less likely to find support among non-co-ethnics (Larson and Lewis 2018; Stewart 2018).

Given this distribution of civilian dispositional categories, more extensive governance refers to rebels who regulate or build institutions for categories of persons who do not actively support the rebel movement, meaning that they either accept rebels' presence or may be unlikely to support the rebel movement. Less extensive governance therefore refers to rebels allowing only insurgents, active supporters of the rebel group, and/or the families thereof to access their governance. Rebels occasionally undertake a mix of both more and less extensive governance, offering some institutions broadly, while reserving other programs for rebels and supporters.

If rebels provide popular and well-received governance institutions, such governance could cast a wide net for potential recruits. Alternatively, the provision of more extensive, popular governance institutions could also create a free rider problem (Wood 2003, 193; Stewart 2018), meaning that civilians have no need to make costly commitments on behalf of the rebel group because they can receive the benefits of joining the movement (access to popular governance institutions) without any associated sacrifices. As a result, rebels allocate more resources to satisfy a broader population, but may not reap corresponding benefits of greater recruits and resources. In Yemen, for instance, Al-Qaeda operatives noted that the costs of governance in one town was millions of dollars (Callimachi 2015). Extensive governance could also become more costly as the war progresses: the Islamic State governed extensively, but as the war against the organization intensified it needed to raise taxes to continue governing in the way that it did (Revkin 2020).

By contrast, if governance institutions are not popular and they are also provided extensively, rebels effectively *impose* governance upon a broad civilian population. As an example, take the United Liberation Front of Assam's (ULFA) attempted to govern Mishing communities. ULFA's efforts led to Mishing resistance that ultimately culminated in violence and kidnapping between the Mishing and others (Mahanta 2013, 82–3). Arjona (2015, 195–8) also describes a similar resistance to the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia's (FARC) rule in particular villages.

For certain institutions, rebels can decide how extensive their governance will be: some organizations may offer education and health care to civilians, supporters, and combatants, or just to combatants.⁹ Other institutions, however, and the majority of more intensive institutions, are necessarily extensive in their implementation. For instance, public works are “public” because they are available to all. Similarly, a change in the political institutions in a given location necessarily affects all persons within that location. Likewise, although individual rebels may be compensated with confiscated land, land reform necessarily affects both the landed and landless. Because almost all intensive institutions must be extensive, governance that is both more intensive while less extensive is essentially nonexistent. Indeed, if more intensive governance programs entail political costs, rebel leaders might be hesitant to implement them internally, lest they lose existing members of their organization.

Governance Strategies

We can therefore understand governance strategies as rebel leaders' decisions about the intensiveness and extensiveness of their programs and institutions to regulate the social, political, or economic landscape. These can be configured in three ways: (1) less intensive and less extensive, (2) less intensive and more extensive, and (3) more intensive and more extensive.¹⁰ When rebels govern in ways that are less intensive and less extensive, they face fewer political and economic risks (strategy 1). When rebels provide more extensive governance but less intensive governance, they face fewer potential political risks but could exacerbate the free rider problem and raise maintenance costs (strategy 2). Finally,

⁹ According to Dhada (1993, 97), the PAIGC offered “literacy for all, quality education for some,” meaning PAIGC cadres.

¹⁰ As described above, more intensive and less extensive governance is essentially a null set.

when rebels provide more intensive and more extensive governance, they face a higher risk of incurring political or reputational costs because they introduce potentially unpopular programs, while also possibly inflaming the free rider problem and expanding maintenance costs (strategy 3).

Importantly, each strategic choice builds upon and is not exclusive to the numerically previous strategy. For instance, if a rebel group pursued a less intensive and more extensive governance strategy and provided basic services to members of the population broadly (strategy 2), the rebel group could also provide some high-quality institutions just for members of the rebel organization (strategy 1). Likewise, if rebel organizations introduce more intensive institutions to an extensive cut of the population (strategy 3), they almost always also introduce less intensive institutions to that same population as well (strategy 2), and sometimes reserve certain high-quality goods and services to members of the rebel group alone (strategy 1).

Figure 1.1 demonstrates how I conceptualize the burdens and levels of popularity associated with different types of rebel governance. This conceptualization of governance more closely reflects the dynamics associated with Raqqa. The FSA's governance was less intensive and less extensive and avoided political and economic costs (strategy 1). By contrast, both the SDF and the Islamic State undertook more intensive and more extensive governance and both organizations faced civilian resistance – if not violence – to their rule in rebel-held territories (strategy 3). In the next section, I present a theory that explains variation in why these three organizations adopted the governance strategies they did and identifies variation in the transformativity of rebels' long-term goals as the central causal factor for this variation.

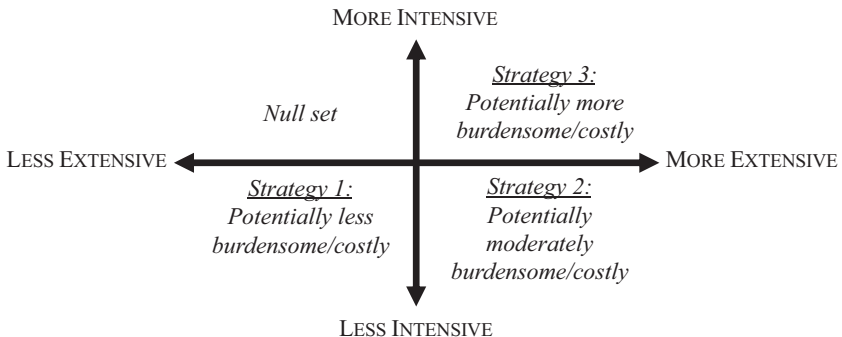


Figure 1.1 Governance strategies.

The Argument, in Brief

Rebel governance is not a new phenomenon. For rebel groups historically and today, as they capture and control territory they must make decisions about how to interact with preexisting civilian populations, over what issue areas, and the extent of this interaction. Given the potential costs discussed above, rebel forays into more intensive, extensive projects were not especially widespread before the 1930s. Indeed, many successful and ultimately victorious rebel leaders made the express decision to avoid more intensive governance projects until *after* the war had concluded, at which point they embarked upon their more intensive, extensive governance projects.¹¹

The articulation, concretization, and propagandization (but not necessarily origination) of a strategy of more intensive, extensive governance *during war* rose to prominence with the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) during the Chinese Civil War which began in the 1920s and lasted around two decades. The CCP's governance strategy was decidedly, and sometimes despite warnings from the Soviet Union, more intensive and more extensive (Yakhontoff 1934, 137–8). The CCP covered broad swaths of China and introduced a wide-ranging portfolio of governance institutions, from popular institutions like courts and health care, to more intensive, unpopular, and sometimes coercive institutions like the education and liberation of women, changing political institutions, and land reform. Some, if not most, of these programs could have been saved until after a military victory, but the CCP pursued them during war nevertheless. These institutions were even so perilous to both the CCP and civilians under their control that they caused the disastrous collapse of the CCP's southern base (Opper 2018, 49–50).

Despite these setbacks, the CCP propagated its strategy and behaviors – including governance – to rebel groups, states, and activists globally, even during war. With the CCP's ultimate victory, China's informational campaigns intensified, and the CCP's experience stood as a successful template that could be introduced in other conflicts. By the 1960s, China even developed a training program to teach would-be rebels about its strategy, including its approach to governance.

The cumulative effect of these efforts was to make a significant amount of information about the CCP's experience, including intensive, extensive governance, cognitively available to active and future rebel leaders around the world. The CCP's experience and informational efforts thus

¹¹ See Chapter 2.

expanded the potential range of governance strategies upon which later rebel groups could draw, making wartime intensive and more extensive governance an option for rebel groups. Therefore, essentially all rebel leaders after the 1930s and 1940s operate in a global context characterized by a surfeit of information about the Chinese model of more intensive and more extensive governance.

Yet, not all rebel leaders adopt this strategy. Given the range of cognitively available strategies, what determines the choices rebels make with respect to governance is their long-term goals.

Rebel organizations' goals can be more or less transformative. Transformativity refers to the degree of change over the status quo affecting a greater or lesser number of persons. Rebels with less transformative aims seek personal gain and enrichment through wartime plunder, autonomy, reform, or a power transition without significant institutional restructuring. Rebel goals become moderately transformative when they seek to create a new state: a political revolution (Skocpol 1979, 4). Rebel goals become increasingly more transformative as rebels articulate objectives to fundamentally restructure an increasing number of nearly universal social hierarchies along racial, gender, religious, class, or ethnic lines (Tilly 1998, 6). Rebels with more transformative goals therefore aim to not only create fundamentally new political institutions but to bend societies in new directions (Skocpol 1979, 4–5).

Once rebel leaders determine the goals the organization will pursue, they are uncertain about how to achieve them. For guidance, rebel leaders look to examples of other, similar organizations that pursued and achieved (or are in the process of achieving) similar objectives. Given the global propagation of the CCP's wartime experiences, including more intensive and more extensive governance, aspiring or active rebel leaders encountered information about the CCP and its governance behaviors with relative ease. The compatibility in the transformativity of rebels' goals and the CCP's objectives determines the extent to which rebels learn from and decide to imitate the Chinese model.

Rebel leaders with more transformative goals recognize a high degree of similarity between the goals of the CCP and their own organizations' objectives, so they decide to imitate the CCP, replicating almost exactly the same governance institutions the CCP did during its conflict. Although rebel groups can postpone intensive, extensive governance schemes until after the conflict ends, they decide to imitate the Chinese model of governance during civil war. This imitation of the Chinese model's governance is not simply limited to leftist rebels with a shared ideology; all groups that share transformative goals make these mimetic decisions, including jihadist rebel groups.

Over time, the cascade of rebel organizations with more transformative goals imitating the CCP's model produced two additional system-wide consequences.¹² First, the Chinese model of governance eventually became delinked from the CCP specifically. Instead, more intensive, extensive governance became the prototypical behavior for rebels with more transformative goals. As a result, this strategy for governance need not be learned from the CCP specifically, but could be learned from any other rebel group or agglomeration of groups that imitated the Chinese model.

Second, the formation of this prototype also led to the expectations of select foreign audiences – typically certain ideologically aligned states, transnational activist or diaspora networks, and active, former, or aspiring rebel leaders – converging upon the Chinese model of more intensive and more extensive as the appropriate behavior for rebel groups with more transformative goals. This reinforced rebel leaders' decisions to imitate the Chinese model in two ways. By conforming to international behavioral expectations for rebels with more transformative goals, rebel leaders imitating the Chinese model sought to legitimate their organizations to specific and invested external audiences (Meyer and Rowan 1977, 348–52; Finnemore 1996, 329–30) in ways that occasionally resulted in material and political support. To gain such support, rebels in turn highlight and propagate their governance achievements to the international community, once again reinforcing the prototype of intensive and extensive governance behaviors for rebels with more transformative goals. But even in the absence of foreign aid, conformity to internationally expected behaviors for rebels with more transformative ends is sometimes a sufficient behavioral motivation in and of itself (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998, 904). As a result, even rebel leaders themselves came to justify their decision for adopting a strategy of more intensive, extensive governance as the correct and appropriate wartime behavior for rebels with more transformative goals.

Because the compatibility with the CCP's long-term goals (more transformative) determines the degree to which rebel leaders will decide to imitate the CCP's behaviors, rebels with moderate or less transformative goals introduce fewer elements of the CCP's model. Rebels with moderately transformative goals recognize a degree of complementarity between the CCP's goals and their own, but they also recognize considerable differences, lessening the extent to which rebel leaders learn from and decide to imitate the CCP. At the same time, rebels with moderate

¹² See, e.g., Beissinger (2002, 42) on “thickened history.”

goals are cognizant of the potential for strategic benefits to conforming to international expectations for governance by rebels with transformative goals, but are also cognizant of the potential costs associated with the implementation of certain governance institutions. As a result, rebels with moderately transformative goals partially imitate the Chinese model and provide less intensive but still extensive governance, and propagate this governance globally. In so doing, rebel groups with moderately transformative ambitions conform to expectations for rebel governance among select international observers to some degree, but also ultimately avoid some of the more challenging, intensive elements of the CCP's model during war. Of course, when rebels with more moderate goals avoid intensive governance during war, this does not mean that rebel leaders with moderately transformative goals would *never* undertake such programs. In fact, after achieving victory and as heads of state, the very same leaders of these rebel groups with moderately transformative goals occasionally undertook more intensive programs like changing political institutions and land reform.

Finally, rebel leaders with less transformative aims see no degree of compatibility between the CCP and their own organization. As a result, rebels cast aside the Chinese model as not particularly useful and do not imitate it. Instead, because rebels with less transformative goals need, at most, military victory to succeed, they prioritize their military campaign and provide less intensive and less extensive governance that avoids potentially politically and economically costly governance institutions, occasionally using these less extensive institutions as incentives to lure new recruits and collaborators. The lack of more extensive governance does not mean rebels rely on violence to secure civilian collaboration. Instead, indiscriminate state repression is frequently sufficient to swell the ranks of rebel groups (Kalyvas 2006, 151–2, 157–8), or rebels can already have strong vertical ties to their political communities (Staniland 2014, 22–3), such that promises of future pay-offs (as opposed to immediate, concrete, and tangible goods) are often sufficient to secure civilian collaboration (Barn 1968). Emotional appeals to civilians can also secure support (US State Department 1969a), and access to economic resources or foreign aid also obviates the need for any cooperative agreements: rebels may simply buy off supporters and fighters (Weinstein 2006, 103).

As a whole, this framework explains variation in rebel leaders' *decisions* with respect to governance. The actual on-the-ground manifestation of rebel governance is the interaction between rebel governing strategies, which I explain here, and the pressing, strategic, and operational factors that obviate or inhibit them already addressed in excellent earlier works

(Weinstein 2006; Mampilly 2011; Arjona 2016; Huang 2016b; Ahmad 2017; Baczko et al. 2018).

Concepts, Measures, and Testing the Argument

The causal logic presented above relies on a key independent variable: the transformativity of rebel goals. Because of the importance of this variable, it is worth describing how I conceive and measure it here. Rebel goals are challenging to define a priori and persons can be tempted to cast rebel goals in a certain light long after the conflict has ended, and in ways that differ from how rebels themselves understand the organization. Researchers might also attribute certain rebel behaviors as evidence of specific goals. In so doing, researchers use indicators of that which is to be explained as the explantor, and are unsurprised to find a relationship between both explanatory and response variables.

To avoid these problems, I take a similar approach to Lawrence (2013, 15) and define rebel goals as the written or stated objectives produced by rebel groups. Rebel leaders participate in a deliberative, consultative process, at the conclusion of which they articulate a set of objectives for the organization they represent. I base my categorization of rebel goals upon these articulated objectives. I determine whether rebels have more transformative goals based upon whether they describe a plan to change preexisting political institutions and fundamentally alter entrenched social hierarchies that could fall across racial, gender, ethnic, religious, or class lines (Tilly 1998, 6). The more sets of social hierarchies and political institutions rebels state that they aim to fundamentally restructure, the more transformative rebel goals are. They might also refer to themselves as revolutionaries or as pursuing a national liberation struggle. Rebels with moderately transformative goals will articulate a desire to alter preexisting political institutions but avoid mention of altering social hierarchies: these are political revolutionaries, not social revolutionaries. Finally, rebels with less transformative goals will articulate objectives for preserving culture or society, and thereby maintaining the status quo, or the pursuit of greater autonomy and reform.

The data that I use to assess these objectives are also important to establishing the validity of my claims. I almost exclusively rely on primary sources produced by rebel leaders at the start of a conflict, at the formation of the rebel group, or later reprintings of this primary material. I also rely on transcripts and reports published by scholars about conversations among rebel leaders who determined the goals of the organization, or conversations between governments or government informants and rebels about the rebel organization's goals found among archival records.

I therefore use the words of rebels themselves to assess rebel goals and I reinforce my interpretation with secondary case literature.

My overarching research design relies on a mixed methods approach that leverages qualitative and quantitative tools. First, I test causal mechanisms using process-tracing techniques within paired case comparisons. Data for the qualitative case studies include archival and primary source documents, field research and interviews, and secondary source material. Second, to evaluate the generalizability of my argument outside these cases and to test the strength of the correlations between my key independent (rebel goals) and dependent (rebel governance) variables, I rely on statistical analyses of an original dataset of rebel governance to identify general trends in the data, and test whether correlations between variables are robust to alternative explanations.

To evaluate my proposed causal mechanisms against alternative explanations, I select three cases that are highly similar to each other, operating at the same time and in neighboring countries, but demonstrating considerable variation in their long-term goals. Specifically, I use the Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF) and the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) as well as a within-case comparison of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A).

The first two cases, the ELF and the EPLF, are highly similar, differing almost exclusively in their long-term goals and the governing strategies they pursued. The ELF sought to create an autonomous or independent Eritrea that largely maintained the status quo and preserved local cultures, with some additional reforms at most. By contrast, the EPLF, the leadership of which was initially part of the ELF and which operated in the same place and same time as the ELF, sought to fundamentally transform state and social relations within Eritrea, replacing the existing ethno-sectarian and religious networks, gender hierarchies, cultural traditions, class structures, and political institutions with a fundamentally new social and political order. The variation in the transformative nature of these rebel group goals caused rebel leaders to adopt divergent governance strategies despite sharing the same knowledge of and information about the Chinese model: the ELF partially imitated the Chinese model, implementing a strategy of less intensive but more extensive governance. The EPLF, however, decided to imitate the Chinese model completely, introducing more intensive and more extensive governance learned by the EPLF's leaders in China as members of the ELF. The extremely tight comparison between the two groups allows me to investigate the causal determinants of variation in their governing strategies. Data from this chapter include primary documents and government archival sources, some of which were recently declassified, stored at the

US National Archives in Adelphi, Maryland, the Hoover Institution Library and Archives in Stanford, California, and the UK National Archives in Kew, United Kingdom.

The SPLM/A case offers a unique opportunity to assess within rebel group variation. During the 1980s and early 1990s, the SPLM/A had nontransformative objectives and implemented less intensive and less extensive governance (no Chinese model), despite some leaders within the organization knowing about the Chinese model and even advocating for its adoption. In 1994, however, the SPLM/A changed goals and adopted moderately transformative aims. At the same time, it also announced an intensified effort to construct a governing and administrative system. Because the SPLM/A's goals changed over time, I am able to evaluate the effects of long-term goals on rebel governance, and I find that this change in goals from less transformative to more transformative also corresponds to a change in governance strategies.

Beyond the ELF, EPLF, and SPLM/A, the next two cases demonstrate that the imitation of the Chinese model of governance is not simply a function of communist ideology, but a strategy for rebels with more transformative ambitions regardless of ideology. I select two cases that differed in almost all ways but their more transformative goals and their non-communist ideology. Furthermore, I selected cases outside of Africa and East Asia to highlight that the imitation of the Chinese model is not the result of contagion from a small slice of conflicts. I demonstrate this first by using the case of the Front for an Independent East Timor (FRETILIN). FRETILIN was a revolutionary leftist movement but was initially non-communist and was even recognized by Western governments, sensitive to leftist influences during the Cold War, as such. Despite its lack of communist ideology, when FRETILIN controlled territory from 1974 to 1979, the group explicitly imitated the Chinese model of governance, building almost the same portfolio of institutions created by the CCP during the Chinese Civil War, and explicitly drawing from the CCP's experience as well as earlier, successful rebel groups with shared goals that also introduced the Chinese model. This chapter includes data from primary documents and archival sources collected in East Timor, Australia, and the United Kingdom.

Likewise, Hezbollah¹³ was initially a jihadist organization with more transformative, revolutionary goals, and at its formation had the opportunity to pursue a strategy either more akin to Islamist political parties in Iraq, or a strategy more akin to leftist rebel groups with more

¹³ I study Hezbollah from its formation in the mid-1980s until 2000 when Israel withdrew from Lebanon.

transformative goals that imitated the Chinese model of governance. Hezbollah closely studied the Chinese model of governance and adopted thereof, and decided to imitate this model over others, but reinterpreted the strategy through an Islamist lens informed by Iran and the Iranian Revolution. The influence of historical revolutionaries' governance continues today, as Hezbollah explicitly references Mao's and Viet Minh's governing, organizational, and operational similarities, as well as publicly comparing its leader to Mao and Ho Chi Minh (Al Sayegh 2014; Qassim 2017). The Hezbollah case not only relies on data from qualitative sources, but it also includes research from interviews and fieldwork conducted in Beirut, Lebanon in May 2015.

The quantitative portion offers a final test of the generalizability of my proposed claims. In it, I conduct an initial analysis to ensure that some latent, underlying factor is not simply predicting both rebel goals and rebel governing efforts. The results indicate that the factors hypothesized to predict greater (lesser) rebel governance do not also predict more transformative (less transformative) goals. Next, I test whether more transformative goals are associated with more extensive governance. I find that rebel groups with more transformative goals provide more extensive governance compared to rebel groups with less transformative goals. Finally, I assess whether more extensive governance makes rebel groups systematically more likely to be victorious in civil war, and I find that rebels who govern extensively are victorious at the same rate as rebel groups that do not.

Contributions and Importance

This book's primary contributions are to three fields: civil wars, state building and governance, and revolutions. In the field of civil wars, *Governing for Revolution* presents a different conceptualization of rebel governance that challenges assumptions about the general and consistent benefits derived from all forms of rebel governance. Rather, I argue that governance is a political process, with some programs generating support while a certain, consistent set of other institutional forms generating potential political and sometimes military costs to the rebel group. Despite these costs, and despite rebels' ability to postpone these projects until after victory, some rebels nevertheless undertake such intensive governance schemes after war.

By underscoring the potential costs associated with governance, and rebel leaders' decisions to undertake governance despite these costs, this work highlights the importance of governance to some rebel groups beyond simply expanding recruitment or boosting military

strength. In the epigraph of this chapter, Mao Tse-Tung acknowledges the role of violence in achieving certain ends, but it is ultimately politicized actors that wield this violence and they wield this violence to achieve *governing* ends. Likewise, rebel leader and Syracuse University professor Eduardo Mondlane writes that “liberation does not consist of merely driving out the Portuguese authority, but also of constructing a new country; and that this construction must be undertaken even while the colonial state is in the process of being destroyed” (Mondlane 1983, 163). By ignoring the political and ideational motivations for governance – or viewing them through the lens of a broader military strategy – scholars fail to comprehend how rebel leaders conceive of and balance priorities on the military and political front.

Although the origins for the spread of intensive and extensive rebel governance date back to Mao Tse-Tung and the CCP, the implications of the CCP’s efforts still carry forward until today. For instance, both the Islamic State’s and the YPG’s governance closely mirror the portfolio of institutions contained within the Chinese model and both organizations hold more transformative ambitions.¹⁴ Both groups even propagated

¹⁴ For instance, Knapp et al. (2016, 51, 58) quote members of the Kurdish YPG as referring to their actions as part of a “leftist social revolution” while Western socialists similarly describe them as such (Hunt 2018). As described above, the group engages in intensive and extensive governance, and like the rebels with more transformative goals that preceded them decades earlier, the YPG also highlights its governance achievements globally. For instance, the YPG highlighted their implementation of elections to the United States (Derik 2018), just as the CCP had done seventy years earlier (Selden 1995, 103). Although the source of information for the YPG’s governance strategies is unclear, the YPG has tight links to and emerged from the Kurdish Workers Party in Turkey (PKK), another rebel group that had its origins as a revolutionary leftist organization (Knapp et al. 2016, 50–1). The PKK itself was intimately familiar with and planned to implement the Chinese model of governance within Turkey (Unal 2014, 420; Gunes 2013, 108), but failed to fully consolidate territory in ways that would have enabled the group to execute the governance it had planned (Marcus 2009, 108). Similarly, scholars conceive of the Islamic State as a revolutionary rebel group (Whiteside 2016; Kalyvas 2018). The Islamic State relies on a strategy developed by Abu Bakr Naji who advocates earlier, the establishment of an Islamic state during conflict (al Naji 2006, 11–12) and cites other rebel groups, including leftist rebel groups, doing so (al Naji 2006, 13–14). Not only does Naji explicitly cite the creation of rebel governance institutions by leftist rebels with more transformative goals, and even notes that some of these governance interventions were unpopular, but he builds from an earlier Al-Qaeda strategist, Abu Ubayad al-Qurashi, who explicitly adapted the Chinese model of both governance and warmaking as part of a jihadist strategy of revolutionary war (Ryan 2013, 83–9). Thus, Naji represents an adaptation of Mao learned through al-Qurashi, and so rebel groups that adopt the Naji strategy in turn adopted a jihadist interpretation of Mao. As described above, the Islamic State introduced many of the same institutional forms found as part of the Chinese model, and like Cold War leftist rebels, the Islamic State was keen to highlight their governance achievements globally (Winter 2015, 30–7; Islamic State 2014). Both groups are thus consistent with the expectations.

their governance globally: I was able to find almost all governance elements of the Chinese model on the SDF's English-language website complete with pictures (see also, e.g., Winter 2015, 30–7; Islamic State 2014 for the Islamic State). Without the work presented here, a complete understanding of rebels' governing choices in Syria or Iraq cannot be achieved. Furthermore, that rebel groups with more transformative goals continue to implement more intensive and more extensive governance learned from the Chinese model and continue to share their governance globally suggests that this strategy will continue to be adopted among rebel groups with more transformative goals moving forward, and any successes of either the YPG or the Islamic State would further accelerate and reinforce the centrality of the Chinese model of governance to later rebels with more transformative goals. This work is therefore not an esoteric exercise: it contextualizes the behaviors of rebel groups that have occasionally emerged and continue to operate in some of the most geostrategically important conflicts today.

Furthermore, if we question existing assumptions about the benefits of rebel governance to rebel groups, we must also question the *consequences* of the implementation of more intensive and extensive governance. Some rebel groups that imitated the Chinese model of more intensive and more extensive and were victorious either became one-party dictatorships for several decades or are currently one-party dictatorships: China, Mozambique, Vietnam, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Guinea-Bissau, Angola. Even if rebels are defeated, however, their more intensive and more extensive governance, by design, could have altered preexisting social hierarchies. In the absence of rebel groups to enforce these programs, the alteration and reduction in social hierarchies could unleash violent retribution against beneficiaries of such programs by people who perceive that they have been unfairly subordinated (Petersen 2001, 33–6; Petersen 2002, 40). Intensive and extensive governance by rebels have also led to striking divergences from prewar individual behavior that deviates from long-standing cultural norms (Callimachi 2017). Given that more intensive and more extensive governance is still a strategy rebels use today, understanding if and how governance affects social and political life after and during conflict is especially essential to policy makers and practitioners, as well as academic researchers.

The book also highlights that the political roots of rebel leaders' decisions with respect to their governance strategies result from the collision of structural and international-systematic forces¹⁵ with individual and

¹⁵ See also, e.g., Kalyvas and Balcells (2010); Beissinger (2002); Checkel (2013); Gleditsch (2007); Bakke (2013); Tarrow (2005); Goldstone (2001); Keck and Sikkink (1998);

small group psycho-social processes. As a result, the work reaffirms the importance of micro- and meso-level theorizing in civil wars, but contextualizes rebel leaders' cognitive processes within broader, global-historical dynamics. For instance, transnational actors and networks spread information about the Chinese model of governance strategy, while aspiring revolutionary rebel leaders leave their own countries and travel to foreign conflicts to observe and train with rebel organizations in the thick of fighting. States and transnational networks reinforce rebel leaders' decisions to imitate the Chinese model strategy of intensive and extensive governance, and when rebel leaders realize these institutions, they highlight their governance achievements to international audiences. The international system is thus an essential component in reproducing and reinforcing the governing behaviors of rebel groups with more transformative goals, but given this information from the international system it is individual leaders who ultimately make decisions with respect to governance.¹⁶

Beyond civil wars, *Governing for Revolution* also has implications for state building and governance. The conceptualization of governance strategies put forth in this book suggests that state builders, nation-states, and empires make similar decisions about the intensiveness and extensiveness of their governance, and correspondingly the costs they are willing to bear with respect to these choices.¹⁷ Some political actors willingly shoulder the burden of more intensive and extensive governance, while others do not.¹⁸ These observed similarities between rebel

Simmons (2009) for work on the transnational dimensions of civil war, revolution, and activism.

¹⁶ For additional research on the importance of leadership and revolutions, see Skocpol (1979, 164–8) and Colgan (2013).

¹⁷ For instance, Mamdani (1999) and Herbst (2000/2014, 81) note that empires could approach colonization through forms of direct and indirect rule; Barma (2017, 3–8) and Lake (2016, 1–2) explain that post-conflict state-builders often introduce intensive governance projects or projects that require greater resources or time, though ostensibly more limited mandates might suffice, in ways that have long-term implications for the consolidation of such projects. Likewise, the account of state formation by Tilly (1992, 20–1) notes that conquest required some degree of administration which was an obligation for conquerors, as opposed to a “fortune” to “[create] the state through the struggle” for revolutionaries (Cabral 1974, 83–4); see also Huntington (1968/2006, 266); Skocpol (1979, 164); and Mondlane (1983, 163). Similarly, Spruyt (1996, 171–2) notes that mimetic processes and the adoption of certain institutional forms were partially the result of political-actor *choice*, suggesting that multiple approaches to governance exist and these approaches are beset by tradeoffs.

¹⁸ For instance, in the early years of the US Civil War, generals in the Union Army feared antagonizing enslaving but loyal border states by supporting emancipation or other initiatives to end slavery. They were instructed that “[i]t is possible that the conduct of our political affairs in Kentucky is more important than that of our military operations ... you will in all respects carefully regard the local institutions of the region in which you

leaders and the leaders of other political organizations ultimately suggest that governance choices, and potentially also the consequences of this governance, are similar across the various levels at which political actors are situated (subnational, national, and transnational). Thus, rather than isolating governance decision-making processes and outcomes as unique to each actor-type, a new approach to understanding governance ought to theorize about the micro and social foundations for how and why political actors make certain decisions about the creation of order, and how these processes scale and aggregate across levels of analysis.¹⁹

Beyond provoking questions about how scholars conceptualize the governance decisions generally, this work foregrounds the importance of governance to a particular type of actor: revolutionaries. Revolutionaries are some of the most consequential organizations historically and globally: their rise and success can trigger and shape domestic upheaval in other countries (Beissinger 2002; Wimmer 2012; Bakke 2013) or they can also provoke *interstate* war (Skocpol 1988; Walt 1992, 1996; Goldstone 2001; Colgan 2013; Colgan and Weeks 2015). To these most consequential of actors, however, governance (or “state building”) is important because it is only through governance that revolutionary actors achieve the consolidation of social, political, and economic transformation (Huntington 1968/2006, 266; Skocpol 1979, 164; Mondlane 1983, 163). As Mao notes, violence creates a space for revolutionaries to introduce the governance initiatives *needed* to foster such change, but violence alone cannot achieve such changes.

In particular, this book identifies the origins for and spread of information about a template for *how* (the Chinese model) and *when* (during war) a subset of revolutionaries (rebel groups) commence their governance activities that consolidate their political, economic, and social objectives. In doing so, I underscore the importance of revolutionaries learning from and imitating one another beyond just how to contest the state’s power, but also with respect to how change across multiple dimensions ought to be consolidated. For instance, Wimmer (2012, 19–22) argues that the French Revolution produced the “concept of

command” (McClellan 1864, 26). In this case, generals had the choice of preserving pre-existing institutions or supporting and undertaking more intensive governance, abolition, which entailed the transformation of social hierarchies from an enslaving society to one of (unequal) persons. The quote reinforces the idea that differing governance approaches exist; that there are tradeoffs tied to these differing approaches; and that actors beyond rebel groups (in this case, the military of a nation-state) also make decisions with respect to pursuing more or less intensive and extensive governance.

¹⁹ See, e.g., Butcher and Griffiths (2017, 332) who note that differences between states and empires are largely “quantitative” and that “there is no bright line separating states from empire.”

the nation as a community of equals” (Wimmer 2012, 19) around which a political-organizational form, the nation-state, could be built, and this organizational form then spread globally. In the same way, the CCP created a prototypical governance template, propagated it, and later rebel leaders imitated it thereby not only affecting local immediate civil war dynamics, but, by design, altering and reinforcing international interactions between states, transnational activist networks, and later rebel leaders, and these later rebel leaders’ decisions about their conduct (governance and in what way) during war.

Ultimately, the importance of this text is to identify the sometimes highly political decisions related to rebel governance strategies, while contextualizing these decisions in broader global-historical processes. Furthermore, for a certain set of some of the most important actors globally, governance is essential to the realization of their revolutionary projects, and the implementation of this governance has implications that not only shape individual and local institutions but ripple across the international system for decades.

Plan of the Book

The book proceeds as follows. In Chapter 2, I provide an overview of global-historical context in which the Chinese model of more intensive, extensive governance emerged, and the subsequent steps the CCP undertook to institutionalize this model globally. The reason for this is because to assess claims about rebel leaders learning from the Chinese model, we must first know the composition of the Chinese model. By delineating the CCP’s intensive and extensive institutions I am able to demonstrate that rebel leaders both knew about the Chinese model of governance and went about imitating it in their own conflicts. Furthermore, I can also illustrate how the Chinese model represents a break from previous rebel organizations’ governance choices. In Chapter 3, I then explain why some rebel groups introduce intensive and extensive governance, while other rebel groups do not. In Chapter 4, I describe my mixed methods research design, I summarize my concepts, data, and measures, and I explain how each empirical chapter tests my theoretical framework.

Chapters 5 through 9 test my theory and illustrate causal mechanisms. Chapter 5 examines variation across rebel groups in the same conflict, the Eritrean War for Independence, while Chapter 6 evaluates governance within the same rebel group over time, the SPLM/A, in a neighboring and similar conflict to the Eritrean War for Independence. Chapters 7 and 8 evaluate the adoption of the Chinese model of

governance among non-communist rebel groups that share more transformative, revolutionary goals nevertheless: FRETILIN (Chapter 7) and Hezbollah from the 1980s until 2000 (Chapter 8). In Chapter 9 I conclude with a quantitative assessment of the generalizability of my theory by testing an observable implication of my argument.

Finally, Chapter 10 concludes by discussing the theoretical and practical implications of the work, comparing rebel governance to governance by states or other political actors, and contextualizing revolutionary rebels in the broader canon of revolutionaries, while also highlighting points of departure for future research.