

Rebel Governance in the Middle East

Academic research has examined the transition of power from one actor to another, and it has proven to be a challenge to almost every military group that takes over an area they then attempt to administer (Romero 2013). However, previous research has ignored an important aspect which is the different forms of civilian and community resistance against the rule of armed groups or rebels, which means limiting the understanding of civilian agency, rebel behaviour and civilian combatant behaviour (Arjona, Kasfir, and Mampilly 2015). Moreover, there has been little, if any research on tribal-rebel relations. This is true both in the Middle East and elsewhere. In an effort to contribute to filling this gap, this workshop aims at bringing research from the different field that investigates when, and why there are different forms of interaction between the rebels and tribes, considering different factors and circumstances.

Rebel knowledge of local societies is not something acquired immediately after the insurgents take over an area. Rather, it is a long and historical knowledge that is commonly understood and a normative form of organization in any time of local conflicts or civil wars. These practices and norms, including the informal institutions of governance and public administration, have their own legitimacy as an assumed dynamic during the civil war. Besides this, the rebels usually rely on the already existing social networks and institutions. Therefore, each case study of rebellion has different sets of civilian-rebellion relations and how they affect each other. This approach is built upon a foundation of anthropology, political science, middle eastern studies, and public policy (mainly local governance and social relations) during conflicts (Humphreys and Weinstein 2008; Kriger 1992; Debois 2016; Arjona, Kasfir, and Mampilly 2015). Parallels can be drawn from recent reports and work in Syria where rebels have been mentioned in many cases as a decisive element in the governance of territories held by the rebels mainly in Al-Raqqa, Deir Ez- and Aleppo (KHALAF 2015; Oweis 2016).

In most countries with weak formal institutions, informal institutions become stronger and human interaction becomes a decisive factor in shaping the relationship between different actors and members in any society. The local norms that structure human interaction come from a plethora of sources including the state, religious leaders, tribes, clans, and sui generis organizations (Arjona, Kasfir, and Mampilly 2015).

The aim of this project is to explore varieties of topic related to rebel governance in the Middle East, mainly in Syria, Yemen, Libya, Lebanon and Palestine. The papers will be included in an edited volume to be published in an academic press.

Themes include (But not limited to):

- Legitimacy and Legitimization
- Service Provision
- Violence and Power
- Tribalism and Rebels
- States and Rebels
- Identity and Rebels
- Relationships between rebels
- Religion and its impact on rebels

Proposed timeline:

- Submission of abstracts to editors: 1 August 2020
- Confirmation of participation from editors: 15 August 2020
- Distribution of draft chapters/Authors' Workshop: 1 February 2021
- Submission of final chapters to editors: 10 March 2021

Abstracts: no longer than 300 words. In addition, please include a short bio (no more than 100 words) that notes your current affiliation.

Final chapters: no longer than 8000 words, not including references.

Contact: Abstracts and inquiries should be sent to Abdalhadi Alijla (a.ijla@daad-alumni.de)