Rebelocracy

Conventional wisdom portrays war zones as chaotic and anarchic. In reality, however, they are often orderly. This work introduces a new phenomenon in the study of civil war: wartime social order. It investigates theoretically and empirically how new forms of order emerge and function in conflict zones. By theorizing the interaction between combatants and civilians and how they impact wartime institutions, the study delves into rebel behavior, civilian agency, and their impact on the conduct of war. Based on years of fieldwork in Colombia, the theory is tested with qualitative and quantitative evidence on communities, armed groups, and individuals in conflict zones. The study shows how armed groups strive to rule civilians, and how the latter influence the terms of that rule. The theory and empirical results illuminate our understanding of civil war, institutions, local governance, nonviolent resistance, and the emergence of political order.

Ana Arjona is Assistant Professor of political science at Northwestern University. She is the coeditor of Rebel Governance in Civil War (Cambridge University Press, 2015). Her work has been funded by the Harry Frank Guggenheim Foundation, Social Science Research Council (SSRC), the United States Institute of Peace, Columbia University, Northwestern University, and Yale University in the United States; the International Development Research Centre in Canada; the Folke Bernadotte Academy in Sweden; and the Department for International Development and the Economic and Social Research Council in the UK.
Rebelocracy

Social Order in the Colombian Civil War

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Northwestern University
To Eudald Lerga
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I decided to embark on the study of the dynamics of civil war in the early 2000s. Colombia was still enduring some of the worst years of the armed conflict between the state, insurgents, and paramilitary groups. I was initially determined to investigate how countries can recover from the wounds that war leaves behind. But I quickly realized that I would not be able to understand the challenges that societies endure in a postwar period without an understanding of what happens during war. Even though I was concerned about the intense violence that often characterizes civil wars, I realized that much more changes in war and we did not know much about it. In particular, war seemed to entail not only the destruction of a preexisting reality but also the emergence of multiple new local realities. There was a sense of normality during lulls in the fighting in conflict zones – but such normality was quite different from place to place, and it seemed to shape civilians’ lives in profound ways. I set out to understand which new forms of order emerge in conflict zones, what roles do civilians and combatants play in that process, and what are the consequences for the conduct of war.

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As Colombia gets close to a peace agreement between the insurgent group FARC and the government, my hope is that this book contributes to our understanding of how war transformed communities and individuals – and how such transformations should be taken into account as the country transitions into peace.
Abbreviations and Glossary of Terms

ACC Peasant Self-Defense Forces of Casanare (Colombia)
ACCU Peasant Self-Defense Forces of Córdoba and Urabá (Colombia)
AMV Self-Defense Forces of Meta and Vichada (Colombia)
AUC United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia
BACRIM Emerging Criminal Bands (Colombia)
C. Case number
CAJAR Colectivo de Abogados José Alvear Restrepo (Colombia)
CNAI Fundación Nuevo Arco Iris (Colombia)
CP Communist Party of Colombia
DDR Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reinsertion
DRC The Democratic Republic of Congo
ELN National Liberation Army (Colombia)
EPL Popular Liberation Army (Colombia)
FARC Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia
FATA Federally Administered Tribal Areas (Pakistan)
FMLN Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (El Salvador)
HRW Human Rights Watch
IDEs Individually demobilized combatants
IELN Individually demobilized former ELN members
IFARC Individually demobilized former FARC members
Int. Interview number
IPARAS Individually demobilized former paramilitary members
JAC Juntas de Acción Comunal (Communal Action Association)
M19 April 19 Movement (Colombia)
MOE Misión de Observación Electoral (Electoral Observation Mission)
NPLF National Patriotic Front of Liberia
Abbreviations and Glossary of Terms

NRA The National Resistance Army (Uganda)
NYT New York Times
PKP Communist Party of the Philippines
PLA The People’s Liberation Army (China)
RCD Congolese Rally for Democracy
RUF Revolutionary United Front (Sierra Leone)
SPLA Sudan’s People Liberation Army
SPLM Sudan’s People Liberation Movement
TPLF The Tigray’s People’s Liberation Front (Ethiopia)
UNITA The National Union for the Total Independence of Angola