

Ana Arjona, *Rebelocracy: Social Order in the Colombian Civil War*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016. Maps, abbreviations, glossary, tables, figures, bibliography, index, 430 pp.; hardcover \$120, paperback \$32.99, ebook \$96.

Compared with other countries in Latin America, Colombia has a strong tradition of democracy, electoral contestation, and constitutional government. Yet Colombia's state has always lacked what Michael Mann (1984) calls infrastructural power, or the ability to implement laws and policies throughout national territory. As a result, democracy in Colombia has coexisted with political violence and armed conflict. For years, nonstate armed groups, such as the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), the National Liberation Army (ELN), and various right-wing paramilitary groups have occupied large portions of territory outside of state control. The weakness of the state and the presence of armed groups have certainly undermined the effectiveness of democracy, as Colombia's formal democratic rules would have little bearing on the real lives of Colombian citizens living outside of state control, especially if they have more interaction with nonstate armed rebel groups than with official organs of government. Against this backdrop, Ana Arjona's excellent study provides a rigorous and valuable account of the civilian experience of living with rebel groups in Colombia.

The central premise of *Rebelocracy* is that life in territory controlled by armed groups may not necessarily be disorderly and anarchic. Contrary to popular portrayals, civil wars may have some social and political order, especially when armed groups govern the civilian population in a systematic manner. The study describes political order in civil wars as both widespread and variable. At one extreme, armed groups may create full-blown governments, or rebelocracies. Like actual governments, rebelocracies collect taxes, provide mechanisms for settling disputes, enforce laws, deliver some public services, and even perform sophisticated regulatory activities (such as overseeing local fisheries).

Rebelocracies are created for strategic reasons, such as to obtain population support, improve recruitment, and extract resources. Arjona emphasizes that the weakly governed may also benefit from having some government, even if it is a rebel government. Civilians face costs to living under a rebelocracy, of course. For one thing, armed groups are not democracies. They do not hold elections or uphold democratic liberties. As Arjona describes them, they may even try to undermine local governments or engage in illiberal practices, such as social cleansing.

Rebelocracy is one of three possible social orders that Arjona describes. At the opposite end of the governance spectrum, Colombia's armed groups sometimes adopt a posture of "disorder," in which there is no unpredictable interaction between rebels and civilians and indiscriminate violence is more common. A third possible outcome is "aliocracy," a form of indirect rule in which local populations govern themselves in exchange for paying tribute to the armed group or complying with a minimalist rule set. According to Arjona, aliocracy arises when armed groups confront strong community resistance, making the establishment of a more intrusive government more difficult.

The book is primarily a study of why different armed group governance patterns emerge in civil wars. Arjona theorizes that rebel governance patterns are shaped by two factors. The first is the time horizon of the armed group. Armed groups may see a long-term payoff to the establishment of rebelocracy, due to greater civilian cooperation. But this requires an interest by the armed group in actually pursuing long-term objectives. Some groups will have shorter time horizons, particularly if they face intense military competition for control of a region. Some groups may also lack the internal cohesion and discipline needed to carry out long-term planning. Either way, Arjona hypothesizes that armed group time horizons may lead to disorderly relations with civilians.

The second factor that explains variation in rebel government is the capability of civilians to act collectively and generate resistance. The book finds that when local populations have strong community-level institutions, which may serve as a focal point for collective action, rebelocracy may be too costly to implement, and armed groups may moderate their strategy by establishing an aliocracy. It is only when civilians lack the ability to act collectively, or when rebels are willing to bear the heavy costs of establishing a rebel government in the face of strong civilian resistance, that rebelocracy emerges.

With this theory established, Arjona devotes the remaining portion of the book to an empirical investigation of how rebel groups in Colombia actually interacted with the civilian population during the civil war. This is possible only because Arjona and her research team conducted an impressive survey of Colombian municipalities, gathering data from surveys, interviews, and memory workshops with local notables. Testimony from local experts and municipal-level administrative data also helped to create a picture of the on-the-ground situations in communities affected by war.

Using this data, the study employs several empirical strategies to test the theory. Chapter 5 uses linear regression models to confirm that disorder tends to emerge when rebel groups face high levels of armed competition or lack internal cohesion and discipline. Chapter 6 provides valuable information on the various strategies that Colombia's armed groups used when creating rebelocracies. Arjona finds that armed groups may utilize a mix of private and public goods provision, violence against community leaders, social cleansing tactics, and ideological indoctrination. Chapter 7 explores Colombia's Viota region, where different institutional patterns emerged in the post-*Violencia* period, thereby providing the opportunity for a natural experiment on why aliocracy sometimes develops instead of rebelocracy. Chapter 8 describes how armed groups using different governance strategies co-opt and recruit civilians.

Overall, *Rebelocracy* is an impressive contribution to the political science scholarship on civil wars, in several respects. The book does more than any other study to date to show that political order can emerge in civil wars. Research into civil wars has only begun to examine the different ways that armed groups may actually function as governments and the possible variety of different types of rebel government. The book also shows that existing political science concepts used to classify and

study government may have some application to armed groups. For example, in describing how armed group time horizons can shape rebel governance, the book invokes Bates's 2008 analysis of how the discount rates of political leaders in Africa shaped politics and war during the 1990s. Lack of good microlevel data on armed groups and the conditions of civilian life in civil wars has always been a barrier to this type of research. The excellent data-gathering effort that supported *Rebelocracy* should serve as a guide for more work in this area.

The book shows that civilians are actually important agents in civil war and that choices by civilians interact with rebel strategies to produce social order. In this respect, *Rebelocracy* expands on the important work of Kalyvas (2006), which showed that violence in civil wars is jointly produced by civilians and armed groups. In Kalyvas's account, armed group behavior is determined mostly by the level of control exercised over a territory. *Rebelocracy* adds to this by showing how preexisting civilian institutions can make it more difficult for armed groups to establish control over territory and set up rebel institutions. The book also builds on Weinstein's important study of rebel organization (2007), which shows how indiscipline among armed groups can cause more violence against civilians. Arjona's findings seem to confirm this argument, as the lack of social order in the Colombian war is associated with rebel group indiscipline.

For scholars and students looking for a narrative account of the Colombian conflict or politics, it is important to note that the book uses the Colombian civil war as a laboratory to test a set of more general propositions and hypotheses on rebel governance and presents the data on war zones with this goal in mind. As such, the book presents little explicit analysis of how the theory and findings may affect our understanding of the Colombian war or Colombian politics. In my view, by treating rebel groups as quasi-government entities, the book supports a narrative of war as a sort of competitive quasi-state-building contest among armed actors in the context of a weak central government (Richani 1997; Kalyvas 2006; Soifer 2015).

Arjona's findings also call into question the role of class and ideology in the war, given the data showing that rebel groups do not have uniform policies for civilian governance and that there is significant heterogeneity in governance among groups over space and time. Furthermore, the political ideology of Colombia's rebel groups is shown to be less important than one might think for rebel institutions. For instance, despite a Marxist ideology, the FARC does not seem to have an intrinsic preference for rebelocracy; neither do the more conservative paramilitary groups. There is little discussion of why the social origins of these groups do not seem to factor into the types of political orders that they create. Still, there can be no question that this book presents important new information about the conflict that will be of interest to students and scholars of Colombian politics.

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Joy K. Langston, *Democratization and Authoritarian Party Survival: Mexico's PRI*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017. Figures, tables, appendixes, bibliography, index, 244 pp.; hardcover \$99.99, paperback \$29.99, ebook \$19.99.

Transitions to democracy have proved to be deadly for many authoritarian party organizations. The democratization of one-party states, such as the former communist regimes, often witnessed the swift demise of ruling parties. This is the case because a competitive environment represents a crucial challenge for party organizations born and raised in authoritarian regimes. Yet not all breakdowns of authoritarian regimes were created equal, and in some instances, hegemonic parties began their adaptation before they were ousted from power through free and fair elections. The story of those organizations that, against all odds, managed to thrive in these new conditions deserves further investigation.

Democratic transitions present former authoritarian parties with a clear threat, and they can either adapt or die in response. This threat materializes from two key sources: supporters and party elites. A successful adaptation must both brand itself as a viable option for voters and prevent elites from fleeing the organization. The latter threat is most pressing in institutionalized parties in which the ossification of their structures is expected to be more prone to rupture than to adaptation. If these expectations ring true, the successful survival of the Mexican Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI, *Partido de la Revolución Institucional*) represents an interesting puzzle.

In this book, Joy K. Langston proposes an institutional explanation to understand the PRI's successful adaptation to democratic competition after 70 years of hegemonic rule. Her argument points to the institutional features of Mexico's political system that permitted some PRI groups to thrive and cooperate during the gradual transition to democracy. Given that many of these institutions were created well before the opening period, these built-in incentives were, for the most part, both unintended and unanticipated. In addition to these institutional characteristics, Langston argues that the PRI benefited from its lack of programmatic identity, which helped it position itself between the leftist PRD (Partido de la Revolución Democrática) and the conservative PAN (Partido Acción Nacional).