

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT

EXPLAINING THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE ISLAMIC STATE
IN IRAQ AND SYRIA:
A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF REBEL GOVERNANCE

by
RASHA ADEL EL HALLAK

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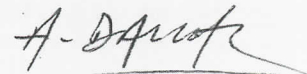
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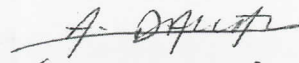
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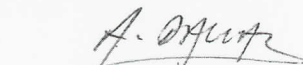
Advisor

Dr. Samer Frangieh, Associate Professor,
Political Studies and Public Administration


(on behalf of Dr. Frangieh)

Member of Committee

Dr. Waleed Hazbun, Associate Professor,
Political Studies and Public Administration


(on behalf of Dr. Hazbun)

Member of Committee

Date of thesis/dissertation defense: [April, 13, 2017]

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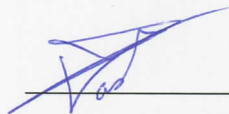
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AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

Rasha El Hallak for Masters of Arts
Major: Political Studies

Title: Explaining the achievements of the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria: A comparative study on rebel governance

This study focuses on ISIS' system of governance in territories under its effective control in Syria and Iraq. The main research question and purpose of this paper is to study whether there is anything unique or exceptional about ISIS' system of rebel governance. The study employs a comparative analysis with several other rebel groups: the FARC in Colombia, the LTTE in Sri Lanka, the Mai Mai in Congo and the UNITA and FNLA in Angola. The results show that ISIS is clearly unique in some respects, including the fact that the group does not function within normal territorial lines; ISIS is influenced by previous regimes in Iraq but only on the technocratic level; ISIS is not willing to sacrifice its mode of governance to gain civilian support; and ISIS' ideology is central to its governance structure. This means that ideology plays a central role in the group's governance structure and is both a motivating factor and an end goal.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

10 June 2014 marked a pivotal moment in Iraq's history. After five days of heavy fighting, the extremist Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) seized control of Mosul, the capital of Ninewah province and the second most populous Iraqi city. That day, the group raised its *jihadi* black flag over the city, a move symbolizing its territorial conquest. Simultaneously, loudspeakers blared across Mosul and the group announced that it had "come to liberate Mosul and would fight only those who attack them."¹

At the time of writing, ISIS has achieved an organizational and persistent presence in Syria, Iraq, Libya, Afghanistan, and Egypt. At the height of its territorial control in Iraq and Syria in 2014, ISIS' "state" spanned 90,800 km², and—while estimates of its numbers vary—the United States estimated in June 2016 that the number of ISIS combatants ranged from 19,000-25,000.³ This study focuses on ISIS' system of governance in territories under its effective control in Syria and Iraq. The aim of this thesis is to examine the means of state building used by ISIS by comparing it with various rebel movements across a wide ideological and geographical spectrum. The study will explain ISIS' ability to effectively hold and control territory from the perspective of rebel governance, a relatively new field of study within the social sciences. This study will examine the governance structure of ISIS using as a framework of analysis four key elements elaborated in the pioneering work of Mampilly, Kasfir and Arjona's *Rebel Governance in Civil War*: causes and factors arising

¹Roggio, B. "ISIS takes control of Mosul, Iraq's second largest city" The Long War Journal. June 10, 2014 http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2014/06/isis_take_control_of.php

²IHS Markit. "Islamic State's Caliphate Shrinks by 14 Percent in 2015." 21 December 2015. <http://press.ihs.com/press-release/aerospace-defense-security/islamic-states-caliphate-shrinks-14-percent-2015>

³White House Press Briefing, 10 June 2016. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2016/06/10/press-briefing-press-secretary-josh-earnest-and-special-presidential>

before the rebellion, factors emerging during the rebellion, factors relating to the behavior of the rebel group, and the response of civilians under rebel control.⁴ Rebel groups whose governance has been previously studied will be used to illustrate this framework.

The paper questions the distinctiveness of ISIS' system of governance in Iraq and Syria by developing a deeper understanding of historical rebel governance. Extremist groups generally seek to destroy—or at least to disrupt—the status quo. Counter-extremist discourse often emphasizes the ideological motivations behind this threat, but the understanding of—and hence the ability to more effectively confront—extremist groups is enhanced by mapping out their organizational structures.

Since the capture of Mosul in 2014, ISIS has been able to establish itself as a group that is able to govern and engage in state behavior. The group has not only managed to produce an impact on Syria and Iraq, but it has also disrupted the international arena. Arguably, the group and its behavior has contributed to the rise of populism in Europe and the United States and is used to justify a political shift towards closed borders. Not coincidentally, the group has also been a central topic in many political and academic studies focusing on its ideology and violence. Yet, there is a clear shortage in the literature on how ISIS engages in rebel governance. This paper uses the previously mentioned framework to shed light on their governance strategy and attempt to fill the gap in the literature on this particular topic. The paper also investigates whether this particular rebel governance field of study accurately captures ISIS' system of governance or if ISIS can provide us with insight into re-evaluating and making adjustments to this relatively new field of study. The paper explains the governance of ISIS using information provided on rebel groups present in four different locations (the UNITA and FNLA in Angola, General Padiri's Mai Mai in Congo, the FARC in Colombia, and the LTTE in Sri Lanka). These groups were chosen primarily

⁴ Arjona, A., K. Nelson, and Z. Mampilly, (2015). *Rebel Governance in Civil War*. Cambridge University Press

because they have been studied from a governance perspective. Additionally, these groups illustrate and provide real examples of the rebel governance model proposed by Arjona et. al.

Beyond the scope of the study, Arjona et al say that understanding rebel governance “promises to enlighten debates around several social processes related to civil war. Patterns of violence, recruitment strategies, and sources of insurgent funding – prominent subjects in recent studies of civil war – are all affected by rebel governance in ways that are only now gaining attention.”⁵

A. Literature Review

When gaining territory, rebels face an important decision regarding the methods through which they interact with the residents. Rebels choose between a variety of options, which could range from ignoring the civilian population altogether, to robbing civilians, or to attempting to impose a system of governance. A large number of rebel groups engage in some form of governance “ranging from creating minimal regulation and informal taxation to forming popular assemblies, elaborate bureaucracies, schools, courts, and health clinics” (Arjona et. al, page 1, 2015). The study of rebel governance seeks to move beyond general correlations to understand the behavior of those engaging in protracted political violence (Arjona et. al, page 2, 2015). According to Mampily (2007),⁶ rebel leaders decide to engage in governance in response to pressures from three different sides: “from below” they must take into consideration the needs of the civilian population, which can potentially challenge rebel rule; “from within” they must ensure internal cohesiveness; and “from above” they must respond to transnational bodies operating in conflict zones.

⁵*ibid*, p.3.

⁶Mampilly, Z. C. (2007). *Stationary Bandits: Understanding Rebel Governance*. University of California.

Governing also serves as an income generating enterprise: “mining, manufacture, taxation, seizure, kidnapping ... [and] extortion” generate income that is sometimes necessary for the survival of rebel groups (Arjona et. al, page 23, 2015).

Rebel governance must meet a number of different criteria for its emergence. Kasfir⁷ (page 4, 2008) postulates that rebel governments can only come into being after a number of conditions are met: the territory under control contains civilians; there must be initial or protracted violence; the rebels must control territory within the state(s) against which they rebel; the group must be sovereign. Few rebel movements meet the specific conditions for rebel government delineated by Kasfir.

According to Mampilly,⁸ academic literature pays little attention to how rebels govern mainly due to the difficulty in conducting research in areas of rebel control and due to the complexity of the subject itself.

Weinstein was a pioneer in examining rebel organization. In his seminal work, *Inside Rebellion*, Weinstein discusses the lack of focus on rebel organizational structure in the literature (2007, p34-35). He argues that two main models have been deployed in explaining where rebellion occurs. One approach treats rebel groups as social movements that employ violence and the other looks at the groups as if they were states. He says that both models fail, highlighting the need to take a closer look at organization of rebel movements. Both approaches focus on the structural conditions that pave the way for a rebellion to ensue, but he argues that these fail to take into account the micro-level perspective, which is necessary if a study intends to develop an understanding of the strategies these groups choose to pursue. He discusses how the logic of the security dilemma does not explain or predict “how groups will organize to protect their security; it simply suggests that they will organize.” (Weinstein,

⁷Kasfir, Nelson. (2008). “Guerrilla Governance: Patterns and Explanations,” paper presented to the Seminar on *Order, Conflict & Violence*, Yale University.

⁸Mampilly, Z.C. (2011). *Rebel Rulers: Insurgent Governance and Civilian Life during War*. Cornell University. Page 17

2007, p.36). Rebel organizations, as in traditional studies of interstate war, are regarded as a black box⁹ (Weinstein, 2007, p.37).

Accounts that view rebel organizations as social movements generally see organized violence perpetrated by those groups as an outcome of social or economic grievances (Weinstein, 2007, p. 32). Accounts that see rebels as groups acting as states provide more insight on the issue of governance, according to Weinstein (2007, p. 37). This model treats rebel groups as competitors for sovereign control of territory and explains that they begin to perform governmental functions mainly through the provision of collective goods. In order to be able to carry out these provisions, rebel groups must be of sufficient size and strength to be able to challenge the existing government in territorial control.¹⁰

Tilly (1978) argues that this fight for power gives rise to a state of multiple sovereignty in which at least two adversaries compete to be the central political authority whose command is followed by at least a part of the population. The most important collective good rebel groups provide is security—in particular, they offer protection from the forces of the previously established government.

Weinstein (2007, p. 38) reiterates that counterinsurgent national armies are notoriously brutal and use tactics that employ the indiscriminate targeting of civilians. These tactics are a double-edged sword—although they are used in order to dry up the support base for rebel groups, they can further alienate civilians from the government, leading them to seek the protection of rebels. Weinstein (2007, p. 60) uses an economic framework in explaining rebel organization. He conducts a comparative analysis of cases of wars in Uganda, Mozambique and Peru. He argues that “resource-rich” insurgents, who can rapidly finance themselves, are likely to have short-term horizons, undisciplined recruits as well as more abusive relationships with civilians. On the other hand, “resource poor” insurgencies that do

⁹Weinstein J.M. (2007). *Inside Rebellion: The Politics of Insurgent Violence*. Cambridge University Press.

¹⁰Tilly, C. (1978). *From Mobilization to Revolution*. McGraw-Hill.

not have immediate access to capital are led to develop what he calls “social endowments” and ideological identities. These groups tend to enjoy long-term horizons (Weinstein, 2007, p. 336). One problem with Weinstein’s conclusion is that the definition of “resource rich” can be misleading, particularly in the case of ISIS. ISIS, for example, is a “resource rich” rebel group but can also be seen as a “resource poor” state, given the fact that it has access to only marginal oil and gas output. Additionally, ISIS can be seen as a “resource rich” group with “long term horizons”. Kasfir argues¹¹ that “social endowments are available in resource-rich states and institutions could use them to meet their objectives even when they have easy access to wealth” (2008, p. 19).

Mampilly (2011, p. 17) attempts to define effective rebel governance. He posits that the group must demonstrate three capacities: first, it must possess a force capable of policing and providing stability to make other functions of governance possible; second, the group should be able to develop a method of resolving disputes “either through a formal judicial structure or through an ad hoc system”; third, the organization must be able to develop a capacity to provide other public services beyond security, such as education, distribution of food and health care.

In *Rebel Governance in Civil War*, Arjona et. al (2015) provide a framework for studying rebel governance. They postulate that four main clusters must be examined in order to enable the study and comparison of various rebel movements. First, pre-conflict factors should be examined. The authors argue that it is important to know the history and pre-existing culture because insurgent groups are likely influenced by that culture—including its education, its values as well as its understanding of what governance entails. All of these experiences shape the rebels’ understanding of the world. When they are given the opportunity to govern, the extent to which they choose to incorporate methods varies between

¹¹Kasfir, N. (2008). “Guerrilla Governance: Patterns and Explanations,” Seminar on *Order, Conflict & Violence*, Yale University.

different groups. In a paper published by the Brookings Institution, Mampilly and Kasfir (2016) argue that in the case of ISIS the group takes a very radical stance, which might differ entirely from the previous form of governance in its territories. They do, however, note that on close examination, there are elements of similarity, notably in food production (José Ciro Martínez and Brent Eng, in a still-unpublished manuscript, as cited by Brookings, 2015). In Baathist Syria, the government exerted direct control of the bread market, which was a key element of its social welfare pact with the population. Similarly, ISIS sought to control the production of bread within areas of its territorial control. In a pamphlet published by the group in 2013, the group promised to ensure the centralized production of bread, the same service that the Baathist regime had provided for decades¹². Of course, it is important to note that any group controlling territory attempts to control the distribution of rudimentary needs—including bread and other basic services. ISIS and the Syrian regime both distribute bread, but that fact does not necessarily indicate any direct regime influence on ISIS’ decision-making or strategy.

The second issue discussed in Arjona et. al is “wartime contextual factors,”—how rebel governance is impacted by the surrounding context. In a study of the Greek civil war, Kalyvas (2015, in *Rebel Governance in Civil War*) shows that when communist rebels lost territory, they became more coercive. The same comparison can also be drawn with ISIS, as evidence suggests that external military pressure against ISIS makes the group more aggressive and less likely to follow its own self-proclaimed rules.¹³

Arjona et. al also mention the various ways in which rebels imitate the state, including through the introduction of symbols (flags and a national currency, for example), taxation,

¹²Kasfir, N and Mampilly, Z. “Is ISIS good at governing?” Brookings Institution. 22 March 2016
<https://www.brookings.edu/blog/markaz/2016/03/22/experts-weigh-in-part-6-is-isis-good-at-governing/>

¹³*ibid*

doctrines and cultural values and predation. Weinstein¹⁴ argues that violence emerges as a strategy in varying degrees as a consequence of the interface between rebels and governments battling for control. The way groups govern is also affected by material returns. Mampilly and Kasfir (2016) posit that ISIS' income from exploitation of oil, kidnappings, extortion, and bank robberies has permitted the group to pay relatively high salaries to civilians and keep utility services working¹⁵.

Third, Mampilly and Kasfir (2016) discuss “rebel attributes and behavior” stemming from the organizational structure and ideology and how these factors affect how rebel groups govern. ISIS' Islamist ideology influences its legal system to a deep extent. When it comes to “land, trade, taxation and treatment of war prisoners,” its laws are based on the group's interpretation of Islamic texts.¹⁶ An important point to make here is that the group embodies what is described as a *jihadi* ideology (the details of which are explored in more depth later in this paper) and the group attempts to lean on the texts to rationalize this ideology and the indoctrination required for governance. To argue that Islamic texts yield ISIS' ideology would be a reductionist argument and would assume that the group follows Islam in its pure form, which is highly controversial and inaccurate. ISIS uses Islamic texts to enforce its existing ideology; in other words, the relationship between ISIS and Islam is circular rather than linear.

Finally, Mampilly and Kasfir look at “civilian responses” and argue that these influence how rebels govern. They argue that this particular issue is challenging to study in the case of ISIS, mostly due to the difficulty in conducting field research in ISIS-controlled territory. On the surface, it seems as though groups following Islam as the doctrinal basis do

¹⁴Weinstein J.M. (2006). *Inside Rebellion: The Politics of Insurgent Violence*. Cambridge University Press. P. 27

¹⁵Kasfir, N and Mampilly, Z. “Is ISIS good at governing?” Brookings Institution. 22 March 2016 <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/markaz/2016/03/22/experts-weigh-in-part-6-is-isis-good-at-governing/>

¹⁶March, A., Revkin, M. (2015) Caliphate of Law. Foreign affairs. <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/syria/2015-04-15/caliphate-law>

not take into account what civilians want and, instead, enforce the Islamist ideology. Nevertheless, they suggest that evidence suggests that the group relies on civilians on many issues such as providing services, and as such there may be more civilian involvement than meets the eye. This paper also discusses ISIS' relationship with civilians in ISIS held territories.

B. Research Questions and Methodology

Analysts have described ISIS as “the most successful¹⁷” terrorist organization and “the most adept at recruiting.”¹⁸ The aim of this thesis is to profile the system of governance deployed by ISIS in its territories of control in Syria and Iraq to explain these perceived successes.

The purpose of this study is to understand the structure of the group's governance system, the role ideology plays in the governance system, and how unfolding events affect its relationship with civilians. In order to accomplish these tasks, the paper examines other rebel groups across the ideological, historical and geographical spectrums that have engaged in governance. It will also explore the extent to which ISIS is similar to- or different from these groups. This will aid in understanding whether there are any traits unique to ISIS.

The main research question and purpose of this paper is to study whether there is anything exceptional about ISIS' system of rebel governance. The paper examines how the specific organizational structure of ISIS, in comparison to other rebel movements, relates to

¹⁷ Hassan, H., Weiss, M. (2015) *ISIS: Inside the Army of Terror*, p.112

¹⁸ Grubbs, A. Islamic State Most Adept Terrorist Group at Online Recruiting, Says FBI (2016, July 7). *CNS News*
Retrieved from
<http://www.cnsnews.com/news/article/alex-grubbs/fbi-assistant-director-isis-most-adept-terrorist-group-online-recruitment>

ISIS' ideological claims. Do any purportedly unique characteristics of ISIS result from its identity as an Islamist organization?

In order to be able to answer this question, there are four main factors and questions to be addressed:

RQ1: Rebel governance structures are often influenced by systems developed by previous governments ruling over the same territory. To what extent is ISIS influenced by the Ba'athist regimes in its mode of governance?

RQ2: Rebel governance is often influenced by war-time contextual factors. Has ISIS' system of governance been affected by airstrikes? How have other war-time factors affected the group's choice of territory and ability to continue to secure territory?

RQ3: What role does ideology play in the group's governance model? Are there any peculiarities about the governance structure of ISIS' jihadist ideology?

RQ4: How does the group attempt to gain legitimacy among the civilian population in areas of its control? Is it willing to compromise its governance structure to gain civilian support?

1. Methodology

Corpus

This study looks at various primary and secondary sources.

2. Background information on rebel groups to be compared with ISIS

Not all rebel groups fit the rebel governance model developed by Kasfir and later used by Arjona et.al. To be able to study groups from a governance perspective, a number of

conditions must be met, and these include: the presence of civilians; a period of initial or protracted violence; territorial control; and the group must be at least the semi-sovereign leader of that territory. Therefore, while it will be interesting to compare ISIS with al-Qaeda's Syrian franchise (the al-Nusra front for most of the war to date), al-Qaeda in Syria does not engage in sovereign governance of territory, nor has it established an Islamic "state" as the group does not believe that the conditions have yet been met to implement their end goals, and it does not yet fully engage in governance of territory. ISIS' approach is quite different. Its main strategy is to control territory, steadily expanding its position. Part of this is perhaps an ideological difference between the two, as ISIS sees state-building as the first goal while al-Qaeda sees this as the end goal.¹⁹

As a result, the groups chosen for this comparative paper do fit the rebel governance mold postulated by Kasfir. These groups also have very different geographical, historical and ideological backgrounds: the FARC (Colombia), LTTE (Sri Lanka), MPLA/FNLA (Angola) and General Padiri's Mai-Mai (Congo). Below is some background information on the groups:

a. Colombia: The Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias Colombianas (FARC)

Established in 1964 as the military wing of the Colombian Communist Party (CCP), the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC or Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, People's Army) became the largest, most capable and best equipped insurgency in modern Colombia.²⁰

¹⁹ Byman, D. (2015). Comparing al Qaeda and ISIS: Different goals, different targets. *Brookings* <https://www.brookings.edu/testimonies/comparing-al-qaeda-and-isis-different-goals-different-targets/>

²⁰ Military world, FARC
John Pike - <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/para/farc.htm>

Since it was common knowledge that there was a link between the CCP and the FARC and that the Soviet Union provided financial support to the group, president Carlos Lleras Restrepo (1966-1970) addressed the problem by establishing diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union and shortly afterwards the activities of the FARC declined. The FARC was thus alienated on the international level. The government also successfully implemented agrarian reform, which contributed to the reduction in popular support for the group among the peasants.²¹ The loss of financial and political support led the FARC to seek an alternative source of income. The group therefore established an alliance with Pablo Escobar's Medellin cartel in the mid-1970s. In 1982, the FARC officially permitted involvement in coca production, which paved the way for a major reshaping of the organization.²²

The FARC grew exponentially on an organizational level in the 1990s. Although there is no consensus regarding the exact numbers of FARC fighters, estimates range between 20,000 to 40,000 combatants by the year 2000.²³ The government, in an effort to battle the massive growth in the FARC, implemented Plan Colombia with the help of the United States, aimed at weakening guerilla movements and eradicating drug-related endeavors. In 2001 and 2002, the FARC was officially designated a terrorist organization by the EU and the USA. In 2008, the death of many high-ranking officials within the FARC marked a serious weakening of FARC's capabilities. By 2010, the group had a presence in three out of five Colombian regions.²⁴

Formerly known as the Southern Guerilla Bloc, the group was formally supported by the CCP in 1964 across many departments. Many of the peasant leaders were CCP members including Manuel Marulanda Vélez, who was elected to the Central Committee of the CCP in 1960 and later emerged as one of the founding fathers of the FARC. In mid-1966, the Southern Guerilla Bloc officially transformed itself into the FARC with a declaration released in Moscow calling Colombian workers and peasants to support the struggle of the guerillas against what they called the imperialist United States and the setting up of US military bases in the country.

²¹ *Ibid* p105

²² *Ibid* p.108

²³ Brittain, J. (2007). Government, NGOs and the Paramilitary: A Colombian contradiction, v 50 pp 122-127

²⁴ In 2014, FARC negotiators committed to a unilateral ceasefire, and in 2015 both parties agreed to a plan to jointly begin removing landmines that are found heavily in the countryside. In September 2016, a

There are many reasons why a comparison between FARC and ISIS is of interest to this study. First, the group, like ISIS, controlled territories in rural areas where central government control was weak. Second, the FARC organization exploited and smuggled natural resources, namely coca, for its self-funding. ISIS similarly exploited and smuggled oil for its survival. FARC began as a Marxist movement and there is value in comparing its conception of justice to that of ISIS. Fourth, and a very important factor, is that FARC altered its system of governance in certain locations to meet the needs of the local population in order to gain legitimacy—an interesting point of comparison with ISIS to see how the latter attempts to bolster its legitimacy. Finally, the FARC is considered one of the richest and most persistent rebel groups in modern history and it will be interesting to examine whether any of the keys to its success apply to ISIS.

b. Sri Lanka: The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE)

The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), also known as the Tamil Tigers, was created in 1976 in northern and eastern areas of Sri Lanka following growing ethnic tensions between the minority Tamils and majority Sinhalese.²⁵ Between the 1980s and 2009, the group fought to establish a homeland for ethnic Tamils who felt marginalized by the majority Sinhalese dominated government. The LTTE are particularly notorious for deploying the

peace deal was signed between the FARC and the government but was rejected by the popular vote. Changes were subsequently made and in November 2016 a new peace deal was signed, whereby the group agreed to hand in all its weapons to the United Nations.

Military world, FARC

John Pike - <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/para/farc.htm>

Colombia's government formally ratifies revised FARC peace deal (2016, December 1). *The Guardian*.

Retrieved from

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/dec/01/colombias-government-formally-ratifies-revised-farc-peace-deal>

²⁵ Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). (2015, May). Project on Violent Conflict. *Rockerfeller College of Public Affairs and Policy*

Retrieved from

<http://www.start.umd.edu/baad/narratives/liberation-tigers-tamil-eelam-ltte>

suicide bomb jacket and the use of women in suicide attacks. LTTE fighters also wore cyanide capsules around their necks to allow them to commit suicide in case of capture²⁶.

LTTE cadres were known to be highly dedicated, organized, and disciplined. Men, women and children were members of its units. Nearly one third of the LTTE members were women assigned duties on the battlefield, in the kitchen and as nurses in medical camps. There were many allegations that the group kidnapped children from areas under its control to fill dwindling ranks, and estimates show that around 1600 children served with the group. At its peak in 2004, the group employed around 9000 combatants.²⁷

The civil war in Sri Lanka began on 23 January 1983 and ended in 2009 and resulted in 80,000-100,000 deaths during its course, according to UN estimates.²⁸ Since the late 1980s, the group conducted around 200 suicide attacks targeting transit hubs, security forces, Buddhist shrines and office buildings. In addition to suicide bombings, the group used conventional bombs to attack political and civilian figures. Many of the group's victims included government officials.²⁹

²⁶ Bhattacharji, P. (2009). Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (aka Tamil Tigers). *Council on Foreign Relations*
Retrieved from <http://www.cfr.org/separatist-terrorism/liberation-tigers-tamil-eelam-aka-tamil-tigers-sri-lanka-separatists/p9242>

²⁷ Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). *Incidents and Statements involving LTTE*
Retrieved from <http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/shrilanka/terroristoutfits/LTTE.HTM>

²⁸ Up to 100,000 killed in Sri Lanka's civil war: UN (2009, May 20). ABC news.
Retrieved from <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2009-05-20/up-to-100000-killed-in-sri-lankas-civil-war-un/1689524>

²⁹The group has been accused of assassinating many high level figures, including two heads of states. In July 2006, the fighting reached a crescendo and, as a result, the government stepped up its activities against the LTTE. In May 2009, the government claimed that it had defeated the LTTE after the government took the last remaining strip of land controlled by the LTTE in northeast Sri Lanka and killed the group's leader, Velupillai Pabhakaran.

Bhattacharji, P. (2009). Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (aka Tamil Tigers). *Council on Foreign Relations*
Retrieved from <http://www.cfr.org/separatist-terrorism/liberation-tigers-tamil-eelam-aka-tamil-tigers-sri-lanka-separatists/p9242>

Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). *Incidents and Statements involving LTTE*
Retrieved from <http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/shrilanka/terroristoutfits/LTTE.HTM>

The LTTE is a useful example to be compared with ISIS. The LTTE was first and foremost an ideologically driven group motivated by the perceived right of ethnic self-determination, whereas ISIS deliberately disregards ethnicity as a factor in its “nation.” Another interesting point is that the LTTE controlled and administered territory, but the Sri Lankan government continued to be involved in the same territory and often worked with the LTTE in territories under LTTE control. For example, the Sri Lankan government continued to pay state employees and continued to have state functions in LTTE areas. The LTTE also had ethnically defined territories and sought to establish a state within these territorial lines, unlike ISIS—which completely disregards nation states and established borders. The LTTE believed in justice for the marginalized Tamil on ethnic lines. ISIS’ conception of justice, examined in later chapters, is radically different.

c. Angolan rebels: National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) and the National Front for the Liberation of Angola (FNLA)

Following the Portuguese colonial withdrawal from Angola in 1974, the People’s Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA), the National Front for the Liberation of Angola (FNLA), and the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) were unable to create a united front and consequently fought one another in a bid to achieve power.³⁰

The MPLA, backed by the former Soviet Union and Cuba, secured control of the capital, Luanda, and declared itself the new government of independent Angola. In 1975, following the withdrawal of the Portuguese, Cuban and South African forces entered Luanda.

³⁰ The lack of unity and relative weakness of each group led them to seek the support of external actors, including the United States, the Soviet Union, Cuba and South Africa.

Ohaegbulam, F.U. (2003). Angola from Afro-Stalinism to Petro-Dollar Capitalism by Tony Hodges. Review, *Africa Today*, v. 50, 1 pp 126-129.

In 1976, the MPLA was formally recognized by the Organization for African Unity (OAU) as the legitimate government.³¹ This period also saw the failure of the FNLA due to lack of foreign support and the rise of the UNITA as the main challenger to the MPLA's rule.³² In this paper I will focus on the UNITA and the FNLA rebel groups.

The US and South Africa supported the UNITA for different reasons: the South Africans sought to weaken the Angolan regime and the United States, led by President Reagan, wanted to challenge the Soviet control in Angola. The FNLA and the UNITA established a rival government in Huambo and received the assistance of South African troops. The MPLA retaliated and benefited from a significant influx of Cuban troops (around 50,000), who ousted the South African troops and assisted the UNITA in gaining control of provincial capitals. After being forced out of provincial capitals, the UNITA established itself as an effective guerilla army³³.

The UNITA and FNLA are both interesting rebel groups to be compared with ISIS. Perhaps the most noteworthy element is their ability to survive as political parties after the end of the Angolan civil war and their ability to integrate into the political system. The groups also controlled resource-rich rural territories. The FNLA failed to become a major player in the civil war because, like ISIS, it did not secure the backing of a foreign state. The UNITA formed social contracts with the civilians and attempted to gain legitimacy by

³¹ The Angolan Civil War (1975-2002). (2017, March 1). *South Africa History online*. Retrieved from

<http://www.sahistory.org.za/article/angolan-civil-war-1975-2002-brief-history>

³² Ohaegbulam, F.U. (2003). Angola from Afro-Stalinism to Petro-Dollar Capitalism by Tony Hodges. Review, *Africa Today*, v. 50, 1 pp 126-129.

³³By 1992, UNITA had gained control of around two thirds of the country, including resource-rich locations used to fund the war, but the MPLA fully controlled oil-rich Luanda.

On 20 November 1994, both parties signed the Lusaka accord, with the UNITA agreeing to stop all hostilities in exchange for a role in the government. The war, however, did not end until 2002 following the assassination of Savimbi, the founder of the UNITA, after which point a peace agreement ended the 27-year civil war. Currently the FNLA, UNITA and the MPLA are all part of the current government, with the MPLA controlling the largest share. The Angolan Civil War (1975-2002). (2017, March 1). *South Africa History online*.

Retrieved from

<http://www.sahistory.org.za/article/angolan-civil-war-1975-2002-brief-history>

reviving national identity in areas it controlled, especially after expressions of national identity were banned under Portuguese colonial rule.

d. Democratic Republic of Congo: General Padiri's Mai-Mai

The Second Congo War—in which an estimated 5.4 million people died, mostly due to starvation and disease—was one of the most brutal wars since World War II. The war began in 1998 and officially ended in 2003. During the war, a number of local militias known as the Mai-Mai groups emerged across the country, the most influential of which was the Mai-Mai of Joseph David Karendo Bulenda, known as General Padiri.³⁴ At the peak of their power in 2002, the group reached approximately 16,000 combatants.³⁵

Padiri's Mai-Mai was based in the territory of Bunyakiri on the border of North Kivu. By 2002, Padiri's group was the strongest force in the territories of Bunyakiri, Kabare, Shabunda, Kahele, Mwenga and parts of Walungu in South Kivu, Masisi, Walikale and parts of Maniema, yet the group never gained full control of these territories and was forced to negotiate with rival Mai-Mai groups. According to Hoffman, the group's project of resistance had a political agenda not restricted solely to armed resistance; according to the group:

Resistance entails a broader countrywide strategy which is put to work in the pursuit of the cause to: *revolutionise the state and to re-educate the Congolese people*. The resistance of the Mai-Mai therefore operates on several levels. Firstly it operates on the level of resistance against foreign aggression; secondly it operates on the level of national governance

³⁴ Padiri rose to become a major figure among the heroes of Congolese resistance. In 2003, after the signing of the peace accords, Mai-Mai General Padiri was appointed Major General in the Congolese army and Commander of the 9th military region. Padiri then announced that the Mai-Mai was ready to be integrated into the new unified army, and he also declared that the movement was ready to demobilize its child soldiers that constituted a large part of the force.

Hoffman, K. (2006). Governing Security and Development in the 'Maquis': A case study of General Padiri's Mai-Mai group. *International Development Studies workshop*.

³⁵ *Ibid* p. 7

where the objective is to: “install a united and democratic state founded on Congolese population: “to make the Congolese participate in the collective destiny through the equitable distribution of the national revenue...to revolutionise the Congolese on the level of morality, spirituality and culture”³⁶

The group’s ideological beliefs focus on the supernatural, blending Christianity with traditional belief and the group sought to “re-educate” the Congolese people and to “re-instill” religiosity in Congo³⁷.

The Mai Mai, like ISIS, was a radical religious group and therefore presents an interesting comparison. The group’s ideology is heavily based on the combination of Christianity and local beliefs in witchcraft. The paper examines the extent to which ideology shaped the group’s governance structure. Another important element is that the Mai Mai adopted a model of governance that mirrored pre-existing regimes while making some alterations to the already existing system. The paper compares the two to see if ISIS too used pre-existing systems in its governance structure or if it revolutionized the entire governance structure.

C. Framework

The study will employ a comparative analysis of the various rebel movements with ISIS as the central topic. The factors that will be examined are: “pre-conflict factors, wartime contextual factors, rebel attributes and behavior, and civilian responses.” The framework is informed by the general framework provided in Arjona et. al’s *Rebel Governance in Civil War* (2015), and by a more recent study by the same authors, conducted and published through the Brookings Institution.

³⁶ *Ibid* p. 11

³⁷ *Ibid*

Chapter II

PRE-CONFLICT FACTORS

It must be considered that there is nothing more difficult to carry out, nor more doubtful of success, nor more dangerous to handle, than to initiate a new order of things.

Machiavelli, *The Prince and the Discourses*

This chapter explores the extent to which Baathist Iraq and Baathist Syria influenced ISIS and examines the *pre-conflict factors* influencing the LTTE and Padiri's Mai Mai rebel groups. It is also important to touch upon the issue of foreign fighters, which is uniquely pervasive in the case of ISIS, particularly when the group is compared to other rebel movements. This comparison will attempt to answer the question of the distinctiveness of the system of governance of ISIS through building an understanding of whether the group created a system of governance from scratch, or like other typical rebel movements, whether it benefited from the pre-existing systems in place.

The first element Arjona et. al examine when exploring systems of governance implemented across a wide spectrum of rebel movements is *pre-conflict factors*.³⁸ They argue that there often are clear continuities between the period preceding war and the wartime rebel governance, and they postulate that one needs to understand how the pre-existing state and society shape subsequent rebel attributes and methods of governance. The society in which rebels are reared, which they later defy, must in some way inform their style of governance. The rebels' views and perspectives, as well as their expectations and processes of decision-making, are shaped by the society around them. Based on this reasoning, the authors argue

³⁸ Kasfir, N and Mapilly, Z. "Is ISIS good at governing?" Brookings Institution. 22 March 2016 <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/markaz/2016/03/22/experts-weigh-in-part-6-is-isis-good-at-governing/>

that the cultural beliefs and societal values of the pre-conflict society can affect rebel governance more profoundly than the rebels are themselves aware.³⁹ However, rebel views are not static—they change in response to the unfolding conflict and the needs of an insurgency to adapt and survive. In *Myths Set in Motion: The Moral Economy of Mai Mai Governance*⁴⁰ (2015), Hoffman argues that rebels seek to implement their worldviews in a strategic manner in order to ease their relationships with civilians. This is certainly the case with ISIS, as the group has only attempted to govern Sunni-majority areas, as they realize that they can more easily push their radical Sunni jihadi worldview in that context. In one example, in prewar Liberia, power was distributed through networks of patronage. During wartime, rebel leaders accepted these patterns of governance and took control of the existing patronage networks instead of replacing them.⁴¹ In many cases, rebels often imitate the very regime that they attempt to depose—despite the fact that, on the surface, their values differ greatly with those of the regime⁴². Rebels seeking to overturn the pre-existing socio-political order tend to incorporate the values, beliefs and practices of the order into their own governance. Deploying such schemes helps rebels to gain legitimacy amongst the local population⁴³.

The Islamic State claims to draw its inspiration from early Islam and attempts to impose a system of government stipulated, it believes, by Islam. But there are, in fact, direct links between the group's governance and that of pre-existing Baathist governments especially in Iraq.

³⁹ Arjona, A., K. Nelson, and Z. Mampilly, (2015). *Rebel Governance in Civil War*. Cambridge University Press

³⁹*ibid* , p.290.

⁴⁰ Hoffman, K. (2015) *Myths Set in Motion: The Moral Economy of Mai Mai*. *Rebel Governance in Civil War* page, p. 158

⁴¹ Arjona, A., K. Nelson, and Z. Mampilly, (2015). *Rebel Governance in Civil War*. Cambridge University Press

⁴¹*ibid* , p.291.

⁴² *Ibid* p. 290

⁴³ *Ibid*

The rise of the Ba'ath regime in Iraq involved a heavy reliance on the state in all facets of life as well as a heavy display of symbolism⁴⁴. Following the US invasion of Iraq in 2003, and the toppling of the Iraqi Ba'ath regime, the Bush administration appointed Paul Bremer to head the so-called Coalition Provisional Authority, which issued an order to disband the Iraqi military force and create a new army without any ties to the former regime.⁴⁵ The majority of Iraqis in the pre-war era were tied to the Ba'ath regime through various measures such as compulsory subscription. But the Sunni community in particular, which had benefited from the Ba'ath regime, were officially excluded and replaced by new and inexperienced soldiers during the American occupation—and many of the former Ba'athists viewed these fresh recruits as servants of the United States and Baghdad's new ally, Iran. Through this abrupt alienation of Iraq's powerful Sunni minority, the seeds of discord were planted. While the US attempted to fully excise the Ba'athists from Iraq, the precursors to the Islamic State emerged and succeeded in many ways through the exploitation of Ba'athist political infrastructure.

A. Influence of the Baathist regime on ISIS

A notable component of the Islamic State stems from Ba'athism, or more accurately a network of Iraqi ex-Ba'athists who joined ranks with ISIS, especially between 2008-2010. The Ba'athist ideology sought a “renaissance” of the Arab identity by freeing it from a legacy of the colonialism and corruption. The ultimate goal was a pan-Arab state under a single

⁴⁴ Schwarz, R. (2008). From Rentier State to Failed State: War and the Deformation of the State in Iraq, *A cotrano*, v. 5 p. 192

⁴⁵ Thompson, M. How Disbanding the Iraqi Army Fueled ISIS (2015, May 29). *Time*
Retrieved from
<http://time.com/3900753/isis-iraq-syria-army-united-states-military/>

Ba'athist leadership.⁴⁶ Inherently, the Ba'athist ideology adopted secular values and sought to separate religion from the state, so in matters of ideology, ISIS seems to be the polar opposite of the Ba'athist political vision. The only aspect the two groups have in common is the belief in totalitarianism, as both groups see that a select few should be appointed to rule over the subjects. While the jihadi worldview accepts non-Arab Muslims into the fold, the idea of a small “enlightened” group governing the subjects is certainly shared by both ideologies. The vast majority of Ba'athists who opposed the post-Ba'ath government in Iraq were indeed secular—they had joined the Ba'ath party in many instances as a means to move up the social ladder. In the post-Ba'ath era, many Sunni Iraqis joined groups espousing a jihadi ideology for their greater impact and ability to mobilize populations than Ba'athist ideology at the time and therefore took advantage of the new platform. Many Ba'athists were willing to sacrifice the secular values of the previous state in order to gain power, even opting instead to support the jihadi ideology and the system of governance it prescribed.⁴⁷

In “ISIS: Inside the Army of Terror” (2015), Michael Weiss and Hassan Hassan argue that the merging of constituents of the Al Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) and former Ba'athists was strengthened by, if not a direct result of, their captivity in American detention centers in Iraq,⁴⁸ namely Camp Bucca, which the analysts refer to as “ISIS’ boot camp.”⁴⁹ For instance, the imprisonment of Abu Bakr Al Baghdadi, the leader and self-declared Caliph of ISIS, at Camp Bucca in 2004 overlapped with some ex-Ba'athist officials who later became high-ranking leaders in the Islamic State.⁵⁰

⁴⁶ Devlin, J.F. (1991). The Baath Party: Rise and Metamorphosis. *The American Historical Review*, v. 96, No. 5 pp. 1396-1407

⁴⁷ Barrett, R. (2014). The Islamic State. *The Soufan Group*, p 18

⁴⁸ Weiss, M., Hassan, H. (2015). *ISIS: Inside the Army of Terror*

⁴⁹ Weiss, M., Hassan, H. ISIS Used a U.S. Prison as Boot Camp (2015, February 23). *The Daily Beast* Retrieved from

<http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2015/02/23/isis-used-a-u-s-prison-as-boot-camp.html>

⁵⁰ Barrett, R. (2014). The Islamic State. *The Soufan Group*, p 19

In the early days of the alliance between the two groups, the Ba’athists brought military, organizational skills and a network of seasoned bureaucrats that AQI, then the Islamic State in Iraq (ISI), lacked. The role of Hajj Bakr, a high ranking ex-army officer in the Ba’athist Iraq era and subsequently a senior leader in ISI, in getting Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi selected to head the organization following the death of former leader Abu Omar al-Baghdadi in 2010 demonstrates the heavy influence wielded at the time by the ex-Ba’athist contingent within the group⁵¹. Later, between 2011 and 2014—in the chaos of Syria’s war and later the official declaration of the Caliphate in June 2014—the jihadis began to monopolize and consolidate power, partially as a result of the large flock of international recruits who were attracted to the jihadist doctrine. This relegated the score-settling of the ex-Ba’athists to a lesser consideration for the movement. But ISIS murdered senior Ba’athist leaders following the fall of Mosul in an attempt to eliminate potential rivals.⁵² This move effectively served in ensuring the submission of former Ba’athists to the Islamist Jihadi-dominant core of the group. This move highlights the fact that the Ba’athists were not the leaders or the masterminds behind ISIS but mainly individuals who felt isolated by the new Iraqi government and were willing to give up on their previously held ideology to join the ranks of a much bigger movement. Nevertheless, despite the elimination of some ex-Iraqi Ba’athists, ISIS has certainly been influenced significantly by the former Iraqi Ba’ath regime, especially in gaining the technocratic and bureaucratic experiences it needed to develop its governance structure. And many ex-Ba’athists continue to hold leading positions in ISIS. So, although the two movements are diametrically opposite on the ideological level, it is undoubtedly the case that the radical Islamist group has adopted much of its governance model from the secular Ba’athist regime.

⁵¹ *Ibid*, p 20

⁵² Flick, M., Rasheed, A. ISIS rounds up ex-Baathists to eliminate rivals. *Al Arabiya*.

Retrieved from

<http://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/2014/07/08/Islamic-State-rounds-up-ex-Baathists-to-eliminate-potential-rivals-in-Iraq-s-Mosul.html>

One example of such influence is Hajji Bakr, who served as the head of ISIS's Military Council and was once a colonel in Saddam's elite air defense intelligence unit. Hajji Bakr used his skills as a former Baathist in his capacity as a jihadist, as ISIS documents obtained by Der Spiegel's Christoph Reuter make clear. Hassan and Weiss illustrate his influence below:

He built a Stasi-like apparatus for intelligence- and counterintelligence-gathering in Aleppo, with different cells tasked with spying not only on local populations but also one another, in classic Mukhabarat fashion. Powerful, bellwether families in villages and towns were surveilled and marked for bribery, extortion, or assassination. Soviet-style kompromat—embarrassing or incriminating details of targets' personal lives—were kept on members of these clans in order to ensure their loyalty to ISIS. Much of the same tradecraft was brought to bear on rival Syrian rebel groups, which were subsequently routed from Aleppo.⁵³

Both the Syrian and Iraqi Ba'athist regimes linked subsidized bread to the legitimacy of government.⁵⁴ Both regimes promised subsidized goods and services, including the distribution of bread, education and healthcare in return for political docility. As part of its attempt at building a nation-state, ISIS adopted this exact strategy to win the support of the local population.⁵⁵ Provision of subsidized goods is common in many relatively poor countries with ostensibly socialist governments, so it does not necessarily follow that the Islamic State emulated the Ba'athists in this social service. However, ISIS identified this governance structure as one that had helped build legitimacy for its predecessors in power and adopted it, a popular policy it carried over from the pre-existing regime. The group

⁵³ Hassan, H., Weiss, M. (2015) *ISIS: Inside the Army of Terror*, p.112

⁵⁴ Martinez, J., Eng, B. (2015). Islamic State works to win hearts, minds with bread. *Al Monitor*
Retrieved from
<http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2014/07/islamic-state-bread-subsidies-syria-iraq-terrorism.html>

⁵⁵ Wilayat Raqqa Twitter feed on the making of bread
Retrieved from
<https://justpaste.it/etow>

published a pamphlet⁵⁶ that highlighted the services it offers in the state of Aleppo, where the group controlled swathes of territory on an intermittent basis since 2013. In the pamphlet, the group discussed various services it provided including water and electricity distribution, but it made the issue of subsidized bread a core component of its service to the public. In the pamphlet, the group described its agricultural processes and the construction of bakeries to ensure all so-called citizens of the Islamic State would have access to bread.

The experience that ISIS gained in Iraq and Syria with the help of the former Iraqi Ba'athists does not apply to the Syrian Ba'athists for many reasons. First, the Ba'ath regime continues to exist in Syria and is actively fighting ISIS, so the Syrian Ba'athists have not been exposed to the power vacuum where weakened former Ba'athists found themselves alienated under a new government, as was the case in Iraq. Second, and more importantly, there is a very important sectarian element: while both the Iraqi and Syrian Ba'ath parties have a secular vision and seek to separate religion from the state, they are both deeply sectarian. The Ba'ath party in Iraq in many ways boosted the status of the minority Sunni population in Iraq; on the other hand, the Ba'ath party in Syria boosted the status of the Alawite minority in Syria. It would make more logical sense for an Iraqi Sunni ex-Ba'athist, suffering from perceived discrimination at the hands the majority Shi'a government in Baghdad to be motivated to join a radical Sunni group that blatantly targets Shi'ites and considers Shi'ism a form of apostasy. Meanwhile, a Syrian Ba'athist who continues to benefit from the Syrian government and has no sectarian affiliation with ISIS naturally has no interest in supporting the group. Of course, this is not to assume that low ranking, mandatorily recruited Ba'athists in Syria did not join ISIS, but it is unlikely these conscripts possess the technocratic expertise that the high-ranking Iraqi Ba'athist officials brought to the

⁵⁶ Al Tamimi, J. The Archivist: 26 Unseen Islamic State Administrative Documents: Overview, Translation & Analysis. (2015, August 24). *Jihadology*. Retrieved from <http://www.aymennjawad.org/17757/the-archivist-26-unseen-islamic-state>

table. Finally, while the Syrian and Iraqi Ba'ath parties and government structures are similar in many ways, the two governments have historically been at odds and did not have close ties or any kind of information sharing.

The influx of tens of thousands of foreigners into the Islamic State may eventually affect the links to the previous regimes in ISIS' governance structures. Unlike other rebel groups in the 21st century, radical Islamist groups, chief among them ISIS, have seen an unprecedented number of foreign fighters flock from many countries to help the cause—and in ISIS' case to help establish the Caliphate. Foreign Jihadists who travel to fight in distant locations refer to this as the holiest of all causes. Because ISIS is a fundamentalist religious movement and demonstrates its supposed authenticity by highlighting its religious bona fides, the group has been successful in attracting many foreigners to Syria.⁵⁷ The group has also repeatedly called for foreigners to flock to Syria in many issues of its publication Dabiq, promising them status, material rewards and arguing that the jihad will fail without the help of foreigners. Below is an excerpt taken from Dabiq quoting Abu Mus'ab al Zarqawi:

The Imām, Abū Mus'ab az-Zarqāwī (may Allah accept him) said: “So I swear by the One to Whom I will return, that there is no real jihād in Iraq except with the presence of the muhājirīn, the sons of the generous ummah, those who have left their tribes, those who bring victory to Allah and His Messenger (sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam). So beware of losing them, for with their departure will be the departure of your strength, and the departure of the barakah and pleasure of jihād. You need them and they need you”⁵⁸

Naturally, the presence of foreign fighters stemming from various cultures, societies and states will dilute the influence of pre-existing political cultures in Syria and Iraq over the ISIS movement. As discussed, ISIS drew systemic and technocratic inspiration from pre-

⁵⁷ Stern, J., Berger, J.M. ISIS and the Foreign Fighter Phenomenon. *The Atlantic*. Retrieved from

<http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2015/03/isis-and-the-foreign-fighter-problem/387166/>

⁵⁸ Dabiq, Issue 3 (2014). *A Call to Hijrah*

existing regimes; however, the more foreign fighters it attracts, the less likely it will be impacted by the former Iraqi Ba'athist regime and its system of governance. For example, the influx of thousands of Tunisian foreign fighters has likely had an impact on ISIS' system of governance and has potentially diluted or affected the influence of the former Ba'athist regime.

B. The case of the Mai Mai

In *Myths Set in Motion: The Moral Economy of Mai Mai Governance* (2015), Hoffman examined how General Padiri, a Mai Mai leader in eastern Congo (DRC), and his allies combined pre-existing cultural beliefs, Christian symbols and nationalism to influence their group's relationship with civilians. Like ISIS, they imitated the pre-existing state's administrative structure. The Mai Mai group organized "ideological seminars," led by Christian priests. Local religious beliefs value the spiritual "interdependence of humans, nature and invisible beings,"⁵⁹ and individuals who attempt to disrupt the balance between humans and the spirits were seen to expose everyone to danger⁶⁰. Thus, Mai Mai discourse also meant protecting the "sacred nation" from the foreigners, both Rwandans and Europeans, who did not respect the Mai Mai's religious worldview. The Mai Mai therefore viewed its so-called liberation of Congo from foreigners as a religious duty to restore and maintain the perceived natural order. The group's practices directly related to the history of colonial nation-building in the DRC.⁶¹ The Batembo ethnic group, which filled the ranks of the

⁵⁹ Hoffman, K. (2015). *Myths Set in Motion: The Moral Economy of Mai Mai. Rebel Governance in Civil War* page, p. 160

⁶⁰ Wild, E. (1998), 'Is it Witchcraft? Is it Satan? 'IS IT WITCHCRAFT? IS IT SATAN? It is a miracle.' Mai-Mai soldiers and Christian Concepts of Evil in North-East Congo. *Journal of Religion in Africa*, v.28, p. 455

⁶¹ Hoffman, K. (2015) *Myths Set in Motion: The Moral Economy of Mai Mai. Rebel Governance in Civil War* page, p. 166

leadership of the Mai Mai, had experience with colonial administration since 1907⁶². In the early Mai Mai administration, the group mobilized civilians to continue with their daily activities in return for providing the Mai Mai rebels with taxes and food. Well-educated rebels helped set up an administration based on the model of the defunct Congolese administration and created a police and judicial structure. As governance grew, new strategies were taken from the Belgian's colonial state, with a mix of direct and indirect rule by creating territorial sub-divisions administered by state bureaucrats. With the help of defecting Congolese soldiers, the Mai Mai military organization assembled itself in the image of the regular Congolese army⁶³. The Mai Mai rebels added another department to handle religious affairs, dubbed "Bureau Six," to incorporate their religious beliefs into the pre-existing governance structure, which consisted of five bureaus.⁶⁴

The Mai Mai example is a case in which the administrative structure was taken from that of a previous government. ISIS benefited from the technocratic experience of the Iraqi Ba'athists, especially on issues relating to intelligence and military strategy; it also mimicked some of the basic service provision offered by the Syrian and Iraqi governments. However, ISIS' system of governance, inspired by its interpretation of Islam, follows Shari'a and, as discussed in later chapters, is modeled completely differently than the pre-existing regimes. The Mai Mai added elements to the system already present, while ISIS completely changed the pre-existing Ba'athist model. So, while it is fair to say that previous regimes influenced ISIS, their influence was far subtler than the ways in which the previous regime influenced the Mai Mai. This could be due to the fact that Islam provides plenty of material on ways of governance that ISIS drew from, whereas the Mai Mai did not have that platform already provided to them from their religious beliefs.

⁶² *Ibid*

⁶³ *Ibid* p. 168

⁶⁴ Kasfir, N and Mampilly, Z. "Is ISIS good at governing?" Brookings Institution. 22 March 2016 <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/markaz/2016/03/22/experts-weigh-in-part-6-is-isis-good-at-governing/>

C. The case of the LTTE

During its civil war, which lasted from 1983 until 2009, Sri Lanka was effectively divided into eight provinces, large parts of which were controlled by the LTTE. Each province was in turn divided into a number of districts⁶⁵. Yet even in what was ostensibly LTTE-controlled territory, the central government continued to provide various services, including health and education, throughout the war. The *porupalar* (the LTTE official in charge of a district) ensured that the government officials followed LTTE policy in the provision of public goods. The actual purpose of several ministries within the rebel administration was to regulate the provisions of the central government,⁶⁶ while other ministries and “state” activities remained under the control of the insurgents, including the local police forces. Due to the fact that the civilian population was accustomed to the continuous provision of public services, the LTTE rebels found themselves forced to work with the pre-existing institutions to ensure the welfare of the civilians.⁶⁷

The LTTE benefitted from this arrangement as it helped ensure that the regions under its control faced little social pressure. As the LTTE also imposed taxes on the population living in its territory, it gained both from the expenditure of central government money and the collection of local taxes. This meant, for example, that the central government in Colombo paid the salaries of professionals such as teachers, doctors and nurses,⁶⁸ while those same workers paid to the LTTE taxes on income earned through government salaries. The central government also benefitted from this arrangement as it continued to be involved in the

⁶⁵Mampilly, Z.C. (2011). *Rebel Rulers: Insurgent Governance and Civilian Life during War*. Cornell University, p. 115

⁶⁶ Hoffman, K. (2015) Myths Set in Motion: The Moral Economy of Mai Mai. *Rebel Governance in Civil War* page, p. 112

⁶⁷ *Ibid*

⁶⁸ Muarji, A. (2005). *Sri Lanka: A Dangerous Interlude*, p 48

governance of LTTE controlled governance thereby facilitating the ouster of the LTTE later in 2009 and making the transition into full control smoother.

The LTTE and ISIS differ in many respects. The Sri Lankan government continued to provide basic services in LTTE controlled territories, which meant that the LTTE did not have to allocate resources for the provisions of goods. This could help explain why ISIS chose to control territories where needs are rudimentary, thereby alleviating the burden of building a fully realized state. This is highlighted in an excerpt from, *Al-Jam' al-Qayyim li Silsilat Al-Mudhakkira al-Istratijiyya (The Valuable Collection for the Strategic Memorandum Series)* written by Abdullah Bin Muhammad, describing the plan to implement a jihadi agenda in the aftermath of the Arab Spring.

The state of tremendous chaos expected in the coming period will not require us as a state and government to provide the same kind of services that are expected in a contemporary [society], because the environment of war and the anarchy that accompany it... make people focus on the basic necessities and services, such as food, water, and security, followed by medical services, public sanitation, and fuel provisions... and these basic services do not require for their management the complexities of the modern systems that are found in rich states. This is why we find that the jihad experiments that succeeded in management were concentrated in poor countries like Afghanistan and Chechnya and Somalia, because the people of these states will not expect more than the basic needs... whereas this would not be the case in Dubai or Riyadh because the people of cities like these would not accept anything less than the luxury life they are used to.⁶⁹

Additionally, ISIS enjoyed relative flexibility in selecting a territorial target, unlike the LTTE. The LTTE naturally emerged from and controlled territory based on ethnic lines, i.e. the territory inhabited by the ethnic Tamil minority. But ISIS completely disregards territorial lines and opposes the Sykes-Picot borders, as demonstrated when the group captured the areas spanning from Mosul in Iraq to Raqqa in Syria with complete disregard to

⁶⁹ Bin Muhammad, A. (2011) *Al-Mudhakkira al-Istratijiyya: al-Manhaj al-Asas li 'Amal al-Qaeda*. (Syria: Dar al-Tamarrud, n.d.) [as cited in an unpublished paper by Dallal, A. *The Political Theology of ISIS: Prophets, Messiahs, and the Extinction of the Grayzone*].

the pre-existing states. The only overarching similarity across the territory is that the population is Sunni Muslim majority. And the group appears to strategically seek to acquire Sunni Muslim majority cities in areas in which state control is weak. What is interesting is that they completely disregard ethnic or territorially pre-existing structures and view territories in a new lens.

CHAPTER III

WARTIME CONTEXTUAL FACTORS

The rebels must build an administrative structure to collect taxes, to provide some education and social welfare, and to maintain a modicum of economic activity. A revolutionary guerrilla movement which does not have these administrative concerns and structures to fulfill its obligations to the populace would degenerate into banditry.

Eqbal Ahmad, “Revolutionary Warfare and Counterinsurgency”

This section examines the extent to which airstrikes and external military factors impact ISIS’ system of governance, and juxtaposes these changes with the ways in which the FARC in Colombia and the FNLA in Angola evolved during wartime.

A. The Impact of Airstrikes on ISIS’ System of Governance

In November 2014, reports indicated the US-led coalition and the Assad regime had stepped up their bombing campaign against the group’s stronghold in Raqqa⁷⁰. The US-led coalition’s strategy took two main approaches into consideration: it targeted ISIS leadership and barracks and it struck at the group’s sources of funding. The coalition therefore conducted strikes on oil fields and oil infrastructure and attempted to block routes used by the group for smuggling, mainly around the Syrian-Turkish borders.⁷¹ The coalition also

⁷⁰ Birke, S. How ISIS Rules (2014, December 9). *The New York Review Daily*
Retrieved from

<http://www.nybooks.com/daily/2014/12/09/how-isis-rules/>

⁷¹ Justice For Life Observatory in Deir Ezzor. The Impact of Air Strikes in Military Operations on ISIS’s Economy. (2015, January 13). *The Atlantic Council*

Retrieved from:

<http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/syriacouncil/impact-of-the-air-strikes-and-military-operations-on-isis-s-economy>

supported the Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG) to retake the cities of Kobani and Tal Abyad.

According to local residents who spoke with journalist Sarah Birke during her trip to southern Turkey in 2014, the group's success in governance suffered in the wake of the coalition's bombing campaign. According to one of the former residents of Raqqa:

"Electricity comes almost never so everyone uses a generator, water is scarce when there is no power for pumps, medical care is worsening, most schools are shut and rubbish lies on the street,"⁷² According to Birke, the airstrikes have had a pronounced impact in curtailing ISIS' ability to govern; however, the strikes have been less effective in eroding the group's military strength. By December 2014, the US led coalition targeted at least sixteen micro oil refineries in Syria, which heavily affected a key funding source for the group.

At the time, the group sold oil for around 25-30 US dollars per barrel, far below the market value for crude during the period studied, which generated about 50 million USD for the group, according to Justice for Life in Deir Ezzor's Studies. After capturing major oil fields from the Free Syrian Army (FSA), ISIS invested in operating refineries and invested in oil wells that have not been previously utilized by the FSA.⁷³

According to the study conducted by Justice for Life in Deir Ezzor, military operations against ISIS were successful in reducing production levels in the Conoco gas field but the group was unable to collate data on the Twainan and Hail fields.⁷⁴ However, airstrikes targeting teakettle oil refineries, production facilities and tanker trucks have clearly eroded ISIS' ability to earn money from Syria's oil resources.

⁷² Birke, S. How ISIS Rules (2014, December 9). *The New York Review Daily*
Retrieved from

<http://www.nybooks.com/daily/2014/12/09/how-isis-rules/>

⁷³ Justice For Life Observatory in Deir Ezzor. The Impact of Air Strikes in Military Operations on ISIS's Economy. (2015, January 13). *The Atlantic Council*

⁷⁴ *Ibid*

The group also attempted to blend back into the population to avoid further airstrikes. This also influenced their governance as they had to remove major elements of their security apparatus in Raqqa, such as checkpoints.⁷⁵ Further statements made by Raqqa residents indicated that before the beginning of airstrikes, residents managed to avoid strict punishment for “crimes” if they followed the rules that the group enforced. Coalition airstrikes made the group more paranoid and more coercive, however, resulting in more aggressive crackdowns on the local population, with arbitrary kidnapping becoming more common.⁷⁶

Another important revenue stream for ISIS stems from its tax system. The group controls local trade as well as transport routes between Iraq and Syria in areas it effectively controls. The legal system, based on Sharia law, also includes fines relating to violations of its Islamic laws. These violations include, but are not limited to, smoking, not wearing appropriate Islamic attire, and being late to prayer.⁷⁷ The group also created money transfer offices used by civilians living within its territory, with fees varying from one area to another because of the group’s decentralized economic structure. Another source of revenue stems from exploitations of archeological sites, such as Palmyra, where the group sells artifacts on the black market. While it is not known how much revenue the illicit sale of antiquities generates, the group formalized it by setting up antiquity offices aimed at excavating sites.⁷⁸

Unlike Birke, the Justice for Life Observatory in Deir Ezzor argues that ISIS has been successful at governing by adapting their governance strategy to meet the changing environment around them, adjusting sources of funding after airstrikes, for example. The Observatory states that ISIS raised taxes and fines following intensive airstrikes, while reducing the amount of money paid to its fighters by 25-50 percent. The group also used the

⁷⁵ Birke, S. How ISIS Rules (2014, December 9). *The New York Review Daily*
Retrieved from
<http://www.nybooks.com/daily/2014/12/09/how-isis-rules/>

⁷⁶ *Ibid*

⁷⁷ Justice For Life Observatory in Deir Ezzor. The Impact of Air Strikes in Military Operations on ISIS’s Economy. (2015, January 13). *The Atlantic Council*

⁷⁸ *Ibid*

aerial bombardment in its propaganda efforts to lure recruits, rallying the faithful against “the international coalition’s strikes against Muslims.”⁷⁹ Richard Barrett (2014, p. 6) expands on this point by saying that the coalition, led by nations opposing the practices and goals of ISIS, offers the group further so-called evidence for its sympathizers that the West wages a war on Islam and the independence of Muslims. While ISIS has clearly been limited financially and lost significant territory as a result of the airstrikes, the bombings have conversely helped ISIS attract followers and, in the view of its radical followers, legitimized ISIS’ goals.⁸⁰

B. The case of the FARC

Like ISIS, FARC developed in the “forgotten” corners of its country, essentially out of reach of government services and government-engineered socio-economic progress— FARC’s inextricable ties to Colombia’s hinterland, its lawless border regions, are a clear parallel with other significant rebel groups, including ISIS. While Mosul was a significant city during the Ba’ath regime, government services declined steadily following the US invasion of Iraq. A number of radical Islamist groups were active in Mosul including the Islamic State of Iraq before ISIS took over the city in 2014. According to Idler and Forest, these regions are “particularly prone” to the development of violent non-state actors (VNSAs):

This is because at least three characteristics make them attractive to VNSAs: first, their tendency for weak state governance systems; second, their low-risk/high-opportunity environment arising out of their trans-nationality making illegal cross-border activities extremely profitable; and third, a proneness to impunity because they operate in spaces where two different jurisdictions and security systems meet (Idler 2014). These three characteristic

⁷⁹ *Ibid*

⁸⁰ Barrett, R. (2014). The Islamic State. *The Soufan Group*, p 6

features are particularly pronounced in Colombia's borderlands. First, the weak state governance systems in these regions are rooted in the Andean states' historical neglect of their borderlands. Due to Colombia's centralist political system, policies have largely ignored sparsely populated peripheries. In the neighboring countries political, economic, and social life has been concentrated in the centers as well (Restrepo 2009). Second, due to their geostrategic location, the borderlands are major sites of coca cultivation and processing and constitute crucial corridors of international drug trafficking routes (Bonilla & Moreano 2007). Hence, illegal cross-border activities bring huge economic benefits. Finally, their rough terrain and vastness make efficient control difficult, increasing the propensity for impunity in the area.⁸¹

And like ISIS, FARC faced competition from like-minded groups before it was able to secure its position. When FARC emerged in Colombia in the 1960s, it was one of many leftist groups engaged in an intra-Colombian conflict. While FARC quickly solidified a support base among leftists and the rural populations of Colombia under its effective control, the group waged nearly constant warfare against several enemies, including the United States government, the Colombian government and the right-wing paramilitary forces that developed in Colombia in response to FARC. Yet, its position in the border regions allowed it to continue to tap revenue streams during wartime, benefiting from the harvest of coca and the production of export of cocaine. ISIS, similarly, was able to produce, sell locally and export illicit crude oil and refined oil products, in large part because this activity occurred in the sparsely populated deserts of western Iraq and eastern Syria. It is worth noting, however, that it is traditionally more challenging to smuggle goods through desert borders due to the clearer visibility from airplanes than it is to smuggle across jungle borders. This could

⁸¹ Idler, A. I., & Forest, J. J. F. (2015). Behavioral Patterns among (Violent) Non-State Actors: A Study of Complementary Governance. *Stability: International Journal of Security and Development*, 4(1),

explain why the airstrikes later seriously affected ISIS' oil revenue. The group also managed its air exposure by digging tunnels in Mosul and east of Mosul.⁸²

The level and intensity of warfare between FARC and its enemies never approached that seen between ISIS and its enemies; however, the decades-long armed conflict in Colombia yielded a system of rebel governance similar to that seen in Syria and Iraq: “Certainly, VSNA in Colombia’s borderlands have been jointly providing public goods and controlling the means of violence in transactional relationships, strategic alliances and pacific coexistence...In rural areas, for example, the FARC have contributed to building roads and health centers, which helps people tolerate negative aspects, such as extremely brutal punishment for non-compliance of the imposed rules.”⁸³

A clear distinction between ISIS and FARC, and perhaps between ISIS and the vast majority of the rebel groups, is that while the FARC was motivated by its own understanding of social justice, ISIS does not seem to care about social justice and instead is grounded by perceived divine justice. Competing concepts of justice underscored much of the fighting and social tensions in Colombia over the past several decades. It was, in part, FARC’s leftist thought and its ostensible support for the rural and urban poor of Colombia that bought the group legitimacy amongst that constituency. However, near-constant warfare meant that FARC’s imposition of ideology was often conducted by force or pacification of enemies. It built social institutions that matched its ideology while instituting mafia-like protection: “In urban areas, many citizens have appreciated the ‘security system’ which reduced assaults and robberies, even though the economic opportunities provided involved high risks.”⁸⁴

Clearly, legitimacy is often secured down the barrel of a gun—often more so in rebel-controlled areas. FARC provided a level of security in its areas that the central government

⁸² Barbani, S. ISIS digs underground trenches to hide from airstrikes. (2015, November 26). *The Times* Retrieved from <http://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/isis-digs-tunnels-to-hide-from-strikes-nr0q9gqmn07>

⁸³ *Ibid*

⁸⁴ *Ibid*.

was frequently unable to match: "...some citizens declared that their community has been safer under the rule of the FARC than when the state forces were present because the FARC established order."⁸⁵ Rebel governance is most effective when it mimics the responsibilities of the state, and perhaps one of the keys to FARC's staying-power was its ability to replace the state in a way that imposed relative order on the populations under its control.

ISIS, like FARC, gained power and territorial control by force. Nevertheless, the group attempts to gain its legitimacy from divine justice or from what it perceives as the will of God. It does not see a necessity in instituting social justice or "worldly" rights. ISIS does, however, invoke the concept of justice in many instances, especially when arguing that Muslims worldwide have been alienated and discriminated against by the West, or when complaining of the West's meddling in the affairs of Muslim countries and the US invasion of Iraq. Below is an excerpt taken from its magazine, *Dabiq* (issue 3):

The US had killed women, children, and the elderly, during its direct occupation of Iraq prior to its withdrawal. There are countless accounts of American soldiers executing families and raping women under the sanctity of the US military and Blackwater. Muslim families were killed under the broad definition of "collateral damage," which the US grants itself alone the right to apply. Therefore, if a mujāhid kills a single man with a knife, it is the barbaric killing of the "innocent." However, if Americans kill thousands of Muslim families all over the world by pressing missile fire buttons, it is merely "collateral damage"...⁸⁶

Nevertheless, social justice was not a concern to ISIS in the process of building their state. ISIS believes that a state built according to its interpretation of Islam will guarantee justice in the afterlife. Therefore, during the airstrikes on ISIS, the group did not attempt to draw legitimacy from offering social justice to civilians under its rule, like the FARC did.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ *Dabiq*, Issue 3 (2014). *A Call to Hijrah*

Instead, ISIS capitalized on the war against Islam to attract more recruits and guarantee the continued support of their fighters.

C. The case of the FNLA

The Popular Front for the Liberation of Angola (FNLA) is another example of a rebel movement that attempted to replace state institutions during wartime. The case of the FNLA provides a case-study in the successful destruction of a rebel force through divide-and-conquer and fostering dependence on outside powers. Foreign powers can affect the relative success of rebel movements by ensuring that certain players in a civil war outweigh others. Upon the collapse of Portuguese colonial dominion over Angola in 1974, war between competing movements erupted. Outside powers helped keep rebel groups in Angola divided: “[rebel movements] were unable to mount a united front. They frequently spied and fought against each other. They thereby rendered themselves easy prey to external forces—the United States, the Soviet Union, the Republic of South Africa—which exacerbated the conflict as they sought to promote their own geopolitical interests.”⁸⁷ While the FNLA’s competitors courted external powers, the FNLA eventually collapsed as a result of its failure to secure significant outside support.⁸⁸

As Clapham notes, liberation wars frequently become a “contest for ‘movement hegemony,’ in the course of which often vicious fighting takes place between rival movements.”⁸⁹ The collapse of the colonial state presented an opportunity for liberation movements in Angola to compete for succession; however, the FNLA failed to gain a

⁸⁷ Ohaegbulam, F. (2003). Southern Africa’s Evolving Security Challenges. *Africa Today*, 50(1), 126-129.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Clapham, C. (2012). “From Liberation Movement to Government: Past Legacies and the Challenge of Transition in Africa.” *The Brenthurst Foundation*.

Retrieved from:

<http://www.african.cam.ac.uk/images/files/Brenthurstpaper201208FromLiberationMovementtoGovernment2.pdf>

significant foothold, while its competitors successfully courted the United States on one side and Cuba and the Soviet Union on the other. Where the FNLA failed, other Angolan groups succeeded—or at least persisted—as a result of foreign interference. Before the mid-2014 expansion of ISIS into Mosul, the group reportedly received significant private donor support from individuals in Arab Gulf states. While this did not constitute state support, it helped the group outmaneuver competitors. Nevertheless, many governments including Turkey, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia provided financial support to other rebel groups in Syria, leaving ISIS as the only self-funded group in the country. This underlines the importance of governance because of the revenue it generates through taxation and other forms of state control. The Russian and Iranian governments’ support to the Assad regime, however, helped tip the war in favor of Bashar al-Assad, and combined with Turkish and international efforts, seriously undermined ISIS’ chances of expanding and resulted in significant territorial losses for the group.

CHAPTER IV

REBEL ATTRIBUTES AND BEHAVIOR

This chapter examines the role ISIS' ideological indoctrination plays in its governance and juxtaposes it with the role of ideology in influencing the governance structures of the LTTE and the Mai Mai.

A. The Ideology of ISIS and its Influence on Governance Structure

There are many schools of thought and many differences in the beliefs across the spectrum of Islamist movements, including varying ways in which these groups hope to incorporate Islam into politics and vice versa. This paper focuses on ISIS' ideology and, to avoid simplistic explanations, refers to the group's own publications and lessons learned from al-Qaeda's experience to explain ISIS' ideology.

ISIS' ideology, broadly speaking, is not unique to the group and is adopted by other groups such as Al-Qaeda and the Taliban and other jihadist groups that deem violence⁹⁰ a key tool in establishing the "ideal" Islamic State. The key difference between ISIS and these groups is the fact that ISIS has not only shown a desire to achieve a contemporary Islamic State but has done so by force. Al-Qaeda, for instance, believes in eventually establishing a caliphate, but it does not believe that the conditions have been met in the present geopolitical context.⁹¹

In the second issue of the group's publication *Dabiq*, entitled "The Flood," the cover page warns: "it is either the Islamic State or the Flood." In this issue, the group voices its clear rejection of democracy and its blatant opposition to the notion of free choice. It bases its

⁹⁰ Wiktrowicz, Q. (2005). A Genealogy of Radical Islam. *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, v28, p.75-97

⁹¹ *Ibid*

arguments on the prophet *Nuh* (Noah) who allegedly saved humanity from the great flood.

Based on the story of *Nuh*, ISIS argues that humanity was not given free choice and, therefore, humanity should not be given a free choice now with regards to whether or not it wants to support the Islamic State. The below statement highlights ISIS' reasoning:

The gist of the issue is that the methodology of letting the people choose between truth and falsehood was not from the prophet Nūh's manner of dealing with his people. He didn't say to them, for example: "I have come to you with the truth, and your leaders are calling you to falsehood, so you are free to choose whether to follow me or to follow your leaders." In fact, he didn't even say anything to the effect of: "If you follow me then you would be correct, and if you follow your leaders then you would be mistaken." nor did he say anything to the effect of: "If you follow me you will be saved, and if you oppose me and follow your leaders then your reckoning is with Allah, and I have done what is required of me and you are free to choose." Rather, he told them with full clarity: "It's either me or the flood."⁹²

Another distinguishing factor of the jihadist ideology is that they believe that Islam is an inherently violent religion rather than a pacifist one. In the seventh issue of *Dabiq* entitled "From Hypocrisy to Apostasy Extinction of the Grayzone," the author of the article "Islam the Religion of the Sword not Pacifism" argues that in their attempt to build ties with the West, the "du'at" have alleged that Islam calls to peace with infidels. The author rejects that notion by saying that Allah has revealed that Islam is the religion of the sword. They draw upon speeches from Ali Ibn Abi Talib who said that the Prophet was sent with four swords: one for the infidels, one for the Ahul-kitab (or those who believe in monotheism but are not Muslims and refuse to pay Jizya), one for the hypocrites and one for the rebellious aggressors.

⁹² The Flood. (2014). *Dabiq* p. 13

The author also quotes the Prophet in a hadith in which he describes the sword as the salvation from evil and fitnah (mutiny).⁹³

Abu Mus'ab al-Zarqawi, the founder of what became ISIS, initially led a number of autonomous jihadist groups under the banner of al-Qaeda. Eventually, due to a falling out with Osama Bin Laden and Ayman al Zawahiri, the leaders of al-Qaeda, al-Zarqawi created the Islamic State of Iraq, which later became ISIS.⁹⁴ Al Zarqawi's plan to instigate societal breakdown in Iraq is informed by the book *The Management of Savagery*, written in 2004 by Abu Bakr Naji, a pseudonym, who gained influence in the jihadist circles. The book is essentially a manual on how to establish the Caliphate by systematically creating pockets of instability, or "regions of savagery," which will lead civilians in that area to seek alternative sources of stability.⁹⁵ The author formulated a battle plan for weakening enemy states through what he referred to as the "power of vexation and exhaustion." The plan was to draw the United States into open warfare in the Middle East because he believed that the "media halo" suggesting US invincibility would dissipate as a result of protracted war.⁹⁶ He wrote that more would join the cause of jihad if Muslims were impressed by the harm they could inflict on what he believed to be a weak and morally bankrupt superpower. Then he called for the targeting of infrastructure of the "apostate" regimes allied with the West, leading to savagery and chaos. According to the author, there are four main objectives of the "power of vexation and exhaustion": the first is to tire the enemy, the second is to attract young jihadists, the third is to dislodge regions from the control of "apostate" regimes, and finally to prepare the jihadis for the management of savagery.⁹⁷

Then Naji proceeds to highlight twelve basic "needs" that must be satisfied for the

⁹³ From Hypocrisy to Apostasy, Extinction of the Grayzone (2015), *Dabiq* p. 20-22

⁹⁴ Hassan, H., Weiss, M. (2015), *ISIS: Inside the Army of Terror*, p. 44

⁹⁵ Siddiqui, S. (2015), *Beyond Authenticity: ISIS and the Islamic Legal Tradition. Jadaliyya*
Retrieved from

<http://www.jadaliyya.com/pages/index/20944/beyond-authenticity-isis-and->

⁹⁶ Hassan, H., Weiss, M. (2015), *ISIS: Inside the Army of Terror*, p. 44

⁹⁷ *Ibid*

management of savagery:

1. The establishment of internal security such that the local population would be protected from violence other than that meted by the Islamic authority;
2. The provision of food and medicine;
3. The securing of the borders from foreign invaders;
4. The installing of a system of Sharia jurisprudence to govern those ruled;
5. The creation of a pious and “combat-efficient” youth movement;
6. The spread of Islamic jurisprudence as well as “worldly science”;
7. The “dissemination of spies” and the creation of an intelligence service;
8. Buying the fealty of the local population through bribery and financial inducements;
9. “Deterring hypocrites,” by which Naji meant dissuading any internal resistance to challenges to the ruling Islamic authority;
10. Laying the groundwork for the expansion of this fief and a greater offensive against the enemy, whose money should be plundered and who should be put in a “constant state of apprehension and desire for reconciliation”;
11. Building “coalitions” with other groups, including those who have not pledged full allegiance to the Islamic authority (elsewhere in the text, Naji gives a separate disquisition on the role of “affiliates”);
12. The advancement of “managerial groups”— bureaucracies, in effect— who would work toward the future establishment of a bona fide Islamic state. This was the end goal of jihad, after all, and the stage of the management of savagery was to be the “bridge” to such a state, “which has been awaited since the fall of the caliphate.” This stage was also the most “critical” through which the global Islamic community would now have to pass, as Naji states in the subtitle to his tract.⁹⁸

B. An Apocalyptic Cult: Dabiq

Dabiq is a small village north of Aleppo, which, according to Islamic prophecy, will be the ground for the final battles of the Islamic apocalypse⁹⁹. Although Dabiq is not important militarily in the current Syrian conflict, the Islamic State fought aggressively to capture the village in the summer of 2014, as ISIS members believed that the penultimate battle between Muslims and infidels would take place there ahead of the Day of Judgment¹⁰⁰.

The prophet predicts the Day of Judgment will come after the Muslims defeat Rome at al-A’maq or Dabiq, two places close to the Syria border with Turkey:

⁹⁸ *Ibid*, p.45

⁹⁹ Mc Cants, W. (2015) *The ISIS apocalypse*, p. 102

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid*

The Last Hour would not come until the Romans would land at al-A'maq or in Dabiq. An army consisting of the best (soldiers) of the people of the earth at that time will come from Medina (to counteract them). When they will arrange themselves in ranks, the Romans would say: Do not stand between us and those (Muslims) who took prisoners from amongst us. Let us fight with them; and the Muslims would say: Nay, by Allah, we would never get aside from you and from our brethren that you may fight them. They will then fight and a third (part) of the army would run away, whom Allah will never forgive. A third (part of the army), which would be constituted of excellent martyrs in Allah's eye, would be killed and the third who would never be put to trial would win and they would be conquerors of Constantinople.¹⁰¹

In April 2014, an Islamic State spokesperson mentioned the village as one of a number of places prophesized to fall to the jihadists. “You were promised Baghdad, Damascus, Jerusalem, Mecca, and Medina. You were promised Dabiq, Ghouta, and Rome.”¹⁰² In July 2014, the Islamic State released an English language magazine named Dabiq. A few weeks later, ISIS fighters took the village from Sunni rebels and ISIS supporters shared pictures of their flags from hilltops quoting the prophecy on Twitter.¹⁰³ The importance of Dabiq appears to be purely symbolic, drawing on ideology as opposed to military significance, illustrating the extent to which ideology shapes the group’s decisions and its importance in attracting followers to the group.

The first chapter illuminated the influence of the secularist Ba’athist ideology on the Islamic State. This chapter delves deeper to discuss the importance of ideology for ISIS. While many elements are taken from the Ba’athist regime when it comes to the technicalities

¹⁰¹ The Book of Tribulations and Portents of the Last Hour
Retrieved from

<https://sunnah.com/muslim/54/44>

¹⁰² Mc Cants, W. (2015) *The ISIS apocalypse*, p. 103

¹⁰³ *Ibid* p. 104

of governance, religion ostensibly extends legitimacy to its actions and provides a very central element of the group's governance structure. The jihadist interpretation of Islam lends authority to ISIS courts to enforce sharia, with the help of religious police (al-Hisbah for men and al-Khansa for women).

In order to govern the territory under its control, ISIS introduced a Wilayat (states) system to divide its territory in Syria and Iraq (and elsewhere, but there are wilayat in those two countries under its direct control). In Mosul and Raqqa, wilaya refers to areas controlled by ISIS but the group also assigns wilaya status to areas like Damascus, where it operates but does not control significant territory.¹⁰⁴ Although the term Wilayat is not necessarily an Islamic term as it simply translates to "states," the group presents the term Wilayat as though it is an authentically Islamic administrative structure.

Exploiting religion as a tool for indoctrination and control is a core element of ISIS' administrative model.¹⁰⁵ One of the group's first objectives when capturing new territory is to establish centers where it can spread its creed (Dawa, which translates to "the call"). The Dawa events often involve setting up tents for Quranic recitations and religious sermons designed to inform the local population about the group's beliefs. Other times, such outreach is limited to the distribution of pamphlets. Dawa events do not require heavy investment in resources, and serve as a logical first choice for ISIS when it seeks to establish a foothold in a particular area.¹⁰⁶ The group also has Dawa offices in each of the wilayat. The number of offices in a particular wilaya depends on the size of the population. In Wilayat Aleppo, which is heavily populated, ISIS had two offices whereas in Raqqa it had one Dawa office.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁴ Caris, C.C., Reynolds, S. (2014). ISIS governance in Syria, *Institute for the Study of War*, p 13

¹⁰⁵ Barrett, R. (2014). The Islamic State. *The Soufan Group*, p. 44

¹⁰⁶ Caris, C.C., Reynolds, S. (2014). ISIS governance in Syria, *Institute for the Study of War*, p15

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid* p 13

The Sharia departments at both the state and provincial levels are essential to the group's ability to maintain control.¹⁰⁸ The focus on religion can also be seen in its education system. Schools teach about main Islamic subjects including aqida (belief), sira (the life of the prophet) and fiqh (jurisprudence). There is evidence suggesting that the Islamic State offers vocational training to manage sectors such as water distribution, electricity, and bakeries;¹⁰⁹ meanwhile, artistic expression is unimportant and music is banned.¹¹⁰

Another element of governance, mentioned earlier, is the religious police (al-Hisba or al-Khansa). Unlike the local police force, al-Hisba is tasked to “promote virtue and prevent vice to dry up sources of evil, prevent the manifestation of disobedience, and urge Muslims towards well-being.”¹¹¹ In a video released by the group in 2014 entitled “The Best Ummah”¹¹² members of al-Hisbah are filmed reminding residents to attend Friday prayer and overseeing the demolition of “polytheistic” monuments. Connected to the religious police and Sharia enforcement is the treatment of minority groups, namely Christians, although the vast majority of Christians fled ISIS controlled territory. The small number of religious minorities left is subject to the dhimmi pact, an Islamic concept used in the past to protect religious minorities. In the case of areas under ISIS control, such as Raqqa, it has been used to marginalize and disenfranchise minorities¹¹³ by imposing a number of restrictions—the most important of which is paying a jizya, which is a form of taxation non-Muslims pay

¹⁰⁸ Barrett, R. (2014). The Islamic State. *The Soufan Group*, p. 44

¹⁰⁹ Unpublished paper by Dallal, A. The Political Theology of ISIS: Prophets, Messiahs, and the Extinction of the Grayzone

¹¹⁰ *Ibid*

¹¹¹ Al Tamimi, A. (2013), The Islamic State of Iraq and ash-Sham Expands Into Rural Northern Syria Retrieved from

<http://www.aymennjawad.org/13562/rural-northern-syria>; Aaron Zelin,

¹¹² al-Furqan Media presents a new video message from the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham: “The Best Ummah’,” (2014, May 28), *Jihadology*

Retrieved from

<http://jihadology.net/2014/05/28/al-furqan-media-presents-a-new-video-message-from-the-islamic-state-of-iraq-and-al-sham-for-the-good-of-the-ummah/>

¹¹³ Caris, C.C., Reynolds, S. (2014). ISIS governance in Syria, *Institute for the Study of War*, p.15

twice a year in exchange for living in ISIS controlled areas.¹¹⁴ Taxation and governance are inextricably linked; the imposition of a special tax class on minority groups is itself a relegation of that group to a lower class.

ISIS also established a court system in its territory, with Islamic law instituted as the sole source of authority. By the spring of 2014, ISIS' court system included physical courthouses with dedicated employees.¹¹⁵ In April 2014, the group released a video interviewing a judge dealing with divorce and inheritance issues and another dealing with personal dispute resolution.¹¹⁶ Serious forms of punishment emerged along with the institutionalization of the group's court system, among the most serious of which are the hudud, which are dedicated to the most severe offenses under Islamic law. In Raqqa, for example, hudud are carried out on a weekly basis, sometimes taking the form of public executions in the city's main square.¹¹⁷ The group also established a complaints office where members of the population can present claims against the group's fighters or local emirs.¹¹⁸

The local police, not to be confused with the religious police, ensure that the court orders are carried out and are tasked with internal security matters through the deployment of regular patrols inside various towns. According to an Amnesty International report in December 2013, ISIS maintains many detention facilities within its areas where the group holds criminals sentenced by the judicial branch, political opponents, activists and children.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁴ *Ibid* p 16

¹¹⁵ *Ibid* p 18

¹¹⁶ al-Furqan Media presents a new video message from the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham: "The Best Ummah'," (2014, May 28), *Jihadology*

Retrieved from

<http://jihadology.net/2014/05/28/al-furqan-media-presents-a-new-video-message-from-the-islamic-state-of-iraq-and-al-sham-for-the-good-of-the-ummah/>

¹¹⁷ Caris, C.C., Reynolds, S. (2014). ISIS governance in Syria, *Institute for the Study of War*, p.19

¹¹⁸ *Ibid*

¹¹⁹ Rule of Fear: Isis Abuses in Detention in Northern Syria (2013, December 19) *Amnesty International*

Retrieved from

<http://www.countercurrents.org/amnesty201213.pdf>, p. 4-5, 8, 10-11

By 2014, the Islamic State employed 20,000 to 32,000 fighters, according to estimates from US intelligence, and an army of administrators to govern its state. The group's fighters consist of volunteers, including many from abroad, and conscripts forced to join by local commanders or from tribes in the conquered areas. ISIS swiftly built the institutions of a nation-state in the territory under its control. Its form of rebel governance mirrors the governance employed by many poor states—it controls the institutions of the state and imposes its rule by force and indoctrination.

ISIS appears strong in its propaganda outlets; it does not mirror the role of the victim or the downtrodden but instead speaks from a voice of authority. This propaganda method is arguably one of the group's most important strengths because it projects an image of power and resilience. Also, the brutal videos it publishes online, showcasing for example the burning alive of a Jordanian pilot, the execution of Turkish soldiers and the publicized executions of many foreigners has shocked the world and made ISIS a central topic of debate worldwide. Few rebel groups in history have matched ISIS in its ability to master propaganda while spreading its ideology so effectively.

C. The case of the LTTE

The ideological underpinnings of rebel movements often evolve to suit the needs—survival and success—of the respective group. The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), which fought the Sri Lankan government between 1972 and 2009, was the product of a number of social, political and sectarian dynamics in Sri Lanka. But it consolidated its position in the northern and eastern sections of the island in large part due to its galvanizing ideology. The LTTE began as a Marxist rebel movement, but it faced competition from its left among the Tamil people, with far-left groups in LTTE territory pushing “radical income and land redistribution and a commitment to the use of violence in order to achieve their

goals.”¹²⁰ In response to this threat to its hegemony in Tamil regions of Sri Lanka, the LTTE evolved quickly into a movement that could capture greater popularity—focusing on secession and Tamil nationalism: “This commitment essentially transformed the LTTE from a Marxist liberation movement into a nationalist movement that supported Marxist policies when it did not interfere with its commitment to an independent Tamil state.”¹²¹ Bizouras says that LTTE leadership pushed an ideology that “rejected all other options as inherently traitorous which deserved to be dealt with in the most violent way possible.”¹²² The LTTE also contributed to sectarian tensions on the island through terrorist attacks. After violence and ethnic riots hit the island’s capital, Colombo, in 1983 and anti-Tamil sentiment surged, many Tamils left Colombo and other ethnic-Sinhalese majority areas for Tamil-majority regions, further strengthening the LTTE’s base of support.¹²³

The strict and unwavering nationalism of the LTTE was itself the core ideology of the group and a core component of its governance structure. The LTTE imposed strict rules on its military units, banning alcohol, cigarettes, and relationships with the opposite sex. An elite unit was committed to carrying out suicide attacks on the enemy and LTTE soldiers were required to wear a vial containing cyanide which would be consumed to avoid capture.¹²⁴ There is no ideological link between ISIS, which deploys suicide bombers as a core tactic, and the LTTE.¹²⁵

National liberation at all costs. That was the LTTE’s core ideology for most of its existence, and it was unwaveringly committed to that end.

¹²⁰ Bizouras, N. (2012). The Formation, Institutionalization and Consolidation of the LTTE: Religious Practices, Intra-Tamil Divisions and a Violent Nationalist Ideology. *Politics, Religion & Ideology, Forthcoming*, p. 547-549

¹²¹ *Ibid*

¹²² *Ibid*

¹²³ *Ibid*

¹²⁴ Richards, J. (2014) An Institutional History of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). *The Centre on Conflict, Development and Peacebuilding*

¹²⁵ *Ibid*

The state building project of the LTTE is also closely linked to their political project of representing the Tamil nation and delivering self-determination for the Tamil nation. On the one hand, it is contingent on the discursive framing of LTTE as the sole representative and guardian of Tamil nationalism. On the other hand, LTTE's hegemony in Tamil politics is closely related to their military capacity to confront the GOSL and thereby provide a degree of external security, but also their repressive capacity in regard to internal anti-LTTE political and militant forces. Thus, the possible state power of LTTE is contingent on their ability to inscribe themselves in a Tamil national-popular will and their ability to apply force to maintain external and internal security¹²⁶

While the precursors to ISIS were in many ways nationalist—Sunni Arab, Iraqi Baathists, specifically—the group succeeded by tapping a radical Islamist vein that attracted greater support both locally and internationally. Tamil nationalism was starkly different, of course, but the LTTE's longevity was at least partially the result of its understanding of its constituency's goals and the molding of those goals to fit the group's own intentions. Nevertheless, ISIS' ideology is different from many rebel groups because it completely disregards the national element; for instance, while it controls Arab Sunni Muslim locations, the group has not attempted to appeal to Arabism, and perhaps this has helped it attract jihadis from around the world. The group dismisses the notion of the nation-state and seeks to create an alternative state for Muslims. So, while it attempts to be inclusive of all nationalities, the group only appeals directly to Sunni Muslims and therefore attempts to reign over Sunni Muslims. Indeed, group identity remains important in ISIS' understanding of the state. Likewise, the FARC did not have a traditional understanding of the nation-state. But, informed by its communist background, the group attempted to appeal to peasants and attempted to control territories in which peasants lived—which was essentially an easy path

¹²⁶ Stokke, K. (2006). Building the Tamil Eelam State: Emerging State Institutions and Forms of Governance in LTTE-controlled Areas in Sri Lanka. *Tamil Net*. Retrieved from http://www.tamilnet.com/img/publish/2006/02/Building_the_state_1.pdf

to implementing a communist model of the state. While these two groups followed the path of least resistance towards implementing their respective governance structures, ISIS is one of the very few groups not to borrow from what is usually seen as the European model of state-building be it a communist state or a nation state. ISIS instead makes Islam as the core model of state building

D. The case of the Mai Mai

ISIS is not the first rebel group to build its system of governance around a profound religious zealotry. The Mai-Mai rebel groups in the Democratic Republic of Congo, though disparate and not under central command and control, blended Christianity with traditional rituals. As one militiaman tells Kelly: “We use the traditional medicine for protection and [to] help us win the war—sort of.”¹²⁷ Another tells Kelly: “[Magical beliefs] are the rule, and it is our foundation. Our biggest support is that witchcraft.”¹²⁸ One Mai-Mai group in particular—that commanded by General Padiri in eastern Congo’s South Kivu—implemented a system of governance based on an ideology combining Christianity with traditional ritual. Padiri’s governance structure was based on the values and traditions of the communities under his command. “When these mythico-religious values and beliefs were reprocessed into political values, they had powerful politico-epistemological effects on how rebels organized themselves and related to civilians through rebel governance.”¹²⁹ Hoffman says that the traditional/magical ideology—and the centrality of good versus bad fortune—created an “autochthon/foreigner dichotomy” in areas under its control, whereby the Mai-Mai would use

¹²⁷ Kelly, J. (2014). Rape in War: Motives of Militia in DRC. *United States Institute of Peace. Special Report*, p. 243

¹²⁸ Ibid

¹²⁹ Hoffman, K. (2015). Myths Set in Motion: The Moral Economy of Mai Mai Governance. *Rebel Governance in Civil War*, p. 160

violence against its civilian population: “In any dispute, a soldier could justify himself by accusing the civilian of treason that had brought misfortune upon him.”¹³⁰

This bears striking resemblance to the case of ISIS because of the Mai Mai’s use of religion as a tool of subjugation and the use of violence against those who refuse to follow orders. The key difference between the two is that ISIS is not restricted to a pre-established territory within a state, attempting to move beyond classical borders. This is perhaps due to the fact that Sunni Muslims are the majority population in the Middle East and the same reasoning for the creation of an Islamic State in Iraq could be theoretically applied to other major Sunni-majority countries like Syria, Libya, and Egypt.

¹³⁰ *Ibid*, p. 165

CHAPTER V

CIVILIAN RESPONSES

With regard to the people, if the army can win their affection, confidence, and admiration, it will surely win victory.

Ho Chi Minh, quoted in Vo Nguyen Giap, *Fighting under Siege*

The aim of this chapter is to delve deeper into civilians' responses to ISIS' rule. To better understand civilians under ISIS, the paper also examines civilian responses under FARC and the UNITA.

While civilian responses to rebel groups are often overlooked, it is crucial to understand when, how and why civilians engage in rebel governance initiatives. Civilians' acceptance and sometimes-outright support of rebel groups serve as important indicators of whether rebel groups can establish legitimately, and in many instances civilians affect the nature and scope of rebel governance.¹³¹ In war zones, rebels often change their behavior in order to bring on board allies whose backing is instrumental for achieving broad popular support¹³².

A. Civilians under ISIS rule

Given the obvious constraints of operating in ISIS controlled territory, it is very challenging for researchers to get a true sense of the local population's opinion and response to ISIS. Some information exists, but due to its scarcity it is not necessarily representative of

¹³¹ Arjona, A., K. Nelson, and Z. Mampilly, (2015). *Rebel Governance in Civil War*. Cambridge University Press, p. 309

¹³² *Ibid*

the entire civilian population living under ISIS rule. Also, on the surface, it seems that the group, with its extreme and brutal displays of violence, does not seek to win “the hearts and minds” of the people it governs. A few months after ISIS took control of Deir Ezzor, for example, protests against the group ended in massacre—when hundreds of the Shaitat tribe attempted to rebel against ISIS, they were slaughtered.¹³³ Also, shortly after the fall of Mosul to ISIS in mid-2014, their fighters stormed south in the direction of Baghdad and the group’s media department released videos boasting of the massacres they committed.¹³⁴ According to Human Rights Watch, at least 560 people were massacred in Tikrit over a period of three days.¹³⁵ The group also executed Shi’a soldiers and targeted minority groups including Christians of the Assyrian ethnicity, who were almost all forced from Mosul. The group spray-painted the homes of Christians with the Arabic letter “n,” the first letter of Nasrani, a term used by Islamist groups to refer to Christians.¹³⁶ In August 2014, ISIS massacred Yazidis, an ancient minority group from Northern Iraq. Yazidi women were taken as sex slaves and tens of thousands were forced from their homes, besieged by ISIS on Mount Sinjar with no access to food or water.¹³⁷

As more research is conducted on the topic, it seems that in parallel with its brutality, ISIS was also careful with Sunnis and interested in attracting civilian support. Their efforts

¹³³ Birke, S. How ISIS Rules (2014, December 9). *The New York Review Daily*

¹³⁴ Barrett, R. (2014). The Islamic State. *The Soufan Group*, p. 10

¹³⁵ Begum, R., Muscati, S. interview: These Yezidi Girls Escaped ISIS. Now what. (2015, April 15) *Human Rights Watch*,

Retrieved from

<https://www.hrw.org/news/2015/04/15/interview-these-yezidi-girls-escaped-isis-now-what>.

See also <https://www.hrw.org/news/2015/07/03/syria-deliberate-killing-civilians-isis>

¹³⁶ Rubin, A. (2014, July 18). ISIS forces Last Iraqi Christians to flee Mosul. *The New York Times*.

Retrieved from

https://www.nytimes.com/2014/07/19/world/middleeast/isis-forces-last-iraqi-christians-to-flee-mosul.html?_r=0

¹³⁷ Begum, R., Muscati, S. interview: These Yezidi Girls Escaped ISIS. Now what. (2015, April 15) *Human Rights Watch*,

Retrieved from

<https://www.hrw.org/news/2015/04/15/interview-these-yezidi-girls-escaped-isis-now-what>.

See also <https://www.hrw.org/news/2015/07/03/syria-deliberate-killing-civilians-isis>

towards that end started from the moment the group captured Mosul in 2014, as highlighted in Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi's speech:

I have been appointed to rule over you, though I am not the best among you...If you see that I do right, help me, and if you see that I do wrong, set me right. And obey me so long as I obey God touching you. If I disobey Him, no obedience is owed to me from you.¹³⁸

The group's control of territory, like that of the former Ba'ath regime in Iraq, depends heavily on alliances with local stakeholders. These include Sunni tribes and former members of the Iraqi army and intelligence services from the Saddam era. The long-term survival of the group hinges on its ability to maintain these alliances as it builds independent power.¹³⁹ ISIS' defeat may come at its own hands if it is unable to find a balance between governing by terror and governing by consent, especially as international airstrikes become more persistent.

The group also attempts to win support through its use of electronic media, notably social media. ISIS pays a great deal of attention to its public image and attempts to balance the pictures of horror directed towards its enemies with a softer image to encourage its supporters.¹⁴⁰ According to some, this strategy has seen short-term success; however, that success is a reflection of the weakness of opposition rather than ISIS' inherent strength. The future of the Islamic State depends on the ability of alternative groups in both Syria and Iraq to offer assurances of a better life to the largely uncommitted majority of civilians living under ISIS control.¹⁴¹ This dynamic exists in most states and is the essential function of politics—groups compete with each other to offer populations more attractive options for governance. True, ISIS filled a political and security vacuum, routing its weaker opposition. But it may continue to find fertile ground as long as armed conflict persists and it holds territory because it decimated political opposition in its territory; indeed, armed extrication of

¹³⁸ Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, Mosul, July 4, 2014, quoting the accession speech of Abu Bakr al-Siddiq (d. 634), first caliph of Sunni Islam

¹³⁹ Barrett, R. (2014). The Islamic State. *The Soufan Group*, p.8

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid*, p. 10

¹⁴¹ *Ibid*

the group may be the only path forward for its opponents. Despite the softer image ISIS projects to its followers, it capitalizes mostly on the violent, aggressive image it sends to the world. Civilians living under ISIS rule who witness these brutal killings of dissidents may be too afraid to rebel or to act against the group. But ISIS, likely believes that it will lose local support if it fails to instill fear and order. As discussed later in this chapter, other rebel groups capitalize on civilian support, which is a significant contributing factor to the longevity of each movement. ISIS relies to some extent on the support of local civilian populations, but there are numerous ways in which rebel movements see their support base erode. Loss of territorial control typically damages the ability of rebel groups to sustain local support.

As discussed in the “rebel attributes” section, ISIS’ primary objective is to control territory and establish its jihadi concept of governance. To accomplish its goals it intends to gain support for its project, and, to do so, the group claims to provide an alternative to the corruption and weak governance of the Assad regime in rural Syria.¹⁴² Nevertheless, the brutality of its enforcement of rules of conduct and appearance and its extreme reaction to minor transgressions have resulted in obedience through fear rather than an open embrace of its order.¹⁴³ Similarly, in Iraq, the group capitalized on the disillusionment of the Sunni population in Sunni-majority areas with the Shi’a-dominated government in Baghdad. The group set up tribal affairs departments within territories under its control to handle problems related to security and other disputes in conjunction with tribal leaders to show the civilians its willingness to engage with them in ways Baghdad does not.¹⁴⁴

Locals in Raqqa disagreed with the excessive use of violence by ISIS but were content that the group had put a halt to the pervasive corruption that plagued the rebel groups that had previous control the area. According to a statement from a businessman who moved to Turkey, ISIS did not make traders pay bribes at checkpoints, unlike other rebel groups

¹⁴² *Ibid*, p. 41

¹⁴³ *Ibid*, p. 41

¹⁴⁴ Birke, S. How ISIS Rules (2014, December 9). *The New York Review Daily*

operating in the area, and it was therefore easier for traders to traverse ISIS-held territory. While the group imposed order by reducing corruption, its order is one marked by severe conservatism and repression. A doctor who fled the country sheds light on the changes in the healthcare system in Raqqa: department heads at the hospital where she once worked were replaced by employees of the Islamic State with titles such as “the Emir of General Medicine” and female doctors were only allowed to treat female patients and were forced to operate in full niqab.¹⁴⁵ It quickly became evident to the residents of ISIS controlled areas that the group’s ability to exert power depended heavily on the use of severe repression. Abu Hamza, a Syrian defector from ISIS’ intelligence services, said that the Islamic State imposes control through its network of security apparatus similar to that used in Baathist Iraq and the current Baathist Syria.¹⁴⁶ Even though the group is unable to monitor the Syrian regime controlled-internet and phone lines, it gathers information on all residents, erects checkpoints, beheads anyone caught filming in Raqqa and monitors public places through its intelligence services.¹⁴⁷

As discussed in the war-time contextual factors section, coalition airstrikes have been a double-edged sword. While they certainly weakened the group financially and degraded its manpower, airstrikes have evoked a brutal reaction locally, thereby antagonizing civilians. Airstrikes also allowed the group to claim that it was under western “crusader” attack, increasing its appeal with disaffected Sunnis. It remains to be seen if airstrikes will be effective enough for the coalition to achieve its goals. A more total military defeat may be required to uproot ISIS from Syria and Iraq; already, Iraq has made much progress towards that goal—at the time of writing, the Iraqi forces have encircled western Mosul, and ISIS is on its back foot.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid*

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid*

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid*

B. The case of the FARC

The FARC in Colombia established its own constitution in the mid-1960s and FARC controlled areas were governed by the group's own set of laws.¹⁴⁸ The FARC set out by governing civilians according to its interpretations of Marxist ideology but evolved when it refocused its efforts on generating revenue from cocaine.¹⁴⁹ In the 1970s, in a rural community in San Vicente del Caguan, a region that would later become one of the strongholds of the FARC, the Colombian state was mostly absent and most civilians were displaced from other parts of the country. With no state institutions present, FARC became the de-facto ruler and governed socially, politically and economically. The group had total control and it was difficult for civilians to exercise agency independent of FARC. The group conducted executions often for petty reasons, which deterred the locals from publically disagreeing with or resisting the group.¹⁵⁰ While there were signs of disagreement with FARC's policies, it appeared that the locals generally embraced the group's ideology even if many disagreed with specifics of its rule.

The interaction in Hato Corozal area between the FARC and the local population was similar in that it was not met with resistance. The FARC arrived in that area in 1987 and the group's commander invited members of the indigenous community to meetings. The local authorities asked to preserve their own politics and organization and the FARC agreed; the symbiosis functioned without notable incidents.

Cauca, located in the southwestern region, is home to half of the Colombia's indigenous population. The communities had built their own system of governance. The movement was represented by the Regional Indian Council of Cauca (CRIC), which sought

¹⁴⁸ DiPaolo, A. (2005), Battle for State Control: Lessons from Violent Nonstate actors imitating the state: Colombia, Nicaragua, and lessons for Iraq. *World Affairs*, v167, pp.163-174

¹⁴⁹ Arjona, A. (2015). Civilian Resistance to Rebel Governance. *Rebel Governance in Civil War*, pp. 180-203

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid*

to defend indigenous land and strengthen the autonomous village councils while implementing indigenous laws and preserving their culture and language¹⁵¹.

The Cauca region witnessed the presence of many armed groups, including the FARC, and the indigenous people publically rejected the presence of all state and non-state actors within their territory. The CRIC managed to eventually dispel the FARC and Colombian soldiers from their territory in 2012. As Arjona argues:

The case of Cauca illustrates how pre-existing institutions allowed these communities to defy armed groups' rule and violence. According to our interviewees, the FARC arrived in Toribío in the early 1980s. In those early years, there was constant tension between the FARC and the community, but the cabildo remained the undisputed authority among most residents. The FARC attempted to rule local life extensively, establishing rules over many spheres of life. Yet, the population disobeyed many of the group's rules. As an interviewee explained, "They [the FARC] imposed norms . . . but civil society didn't really follow their rules. So, over time, the rules disappeared" (interview with local resident, 2006).¹⁵²

The willingness of the FARC to accept local pre-existing political and organizational structures differed greatly from ISIS. To ISIS, as mentioned in the "Rebel Attributes and Behavior" chapter, "it is either the Islamic State or the Flood." ISIS is not interested in compromise and will not alter its political or legal structures to accommodate civilians—the group is not interested in social justice and does not believe in civilian freedom or the self-determination; indeed, ISIS believes that only God chooses how civilians should live. The group also rejects compromise because it does not primarily acquire legitimacy from the population under its control. Rather, its perceived legitimacy is allegedly of divine origin, as it believes it is applying a pure form of Islam to worldly matters. But the group does make some attempts to garner legitimacy from civilian populations, for example in its efforts to

¹⁵¹ *Ibid*

¹⁵² *Ibid*

show civilians that its system is more functional and less corrupt than that of the Ba'ath regime. So, while we see many rebel groups willing to adjust governance structures to gain civilian acceptance, ISIS is unlikely to do so because it would be a reinterpretation of what it perceives as the word of God and equivalent with *bida'*, which is completely forbidden by ISIS.

C. The case of the UNITA

The UNITA in Angola, led by Jonas Savimbi, was an ethnically-oriented group of the Ovimbundu peoples who inhabit the country's central highlands. In order for the group to gain legitimacy in its fight for power with the ruling MPLA, Savimbi sought to create a multi-ethnic national movement transcending the concerns of the Ovimbundu. Supported by the USA and South Africa during the Angolan civil war, the group was often perceived as a puppet organization created solely to boost external interests and as such never had the support of a significant segment of the Angolan population.¹⁵³ Nevertheless, the group did have the support in its strongholds. The reasons for its constituents' attraction to the UNITA lie in the experience of Portuguese colonialism, whereby any sense of national pride was banned.¹⁵⁴

The legitimacy of the UNITA rule came from traditions relevant to the Ovimbundu communities. UNITA assisted locals in the administration of the villages in the highlands. In return, the villagers gave the combatants food. This form of labor division later informed the establishment of the UNITA military and civilian authority in the south starting from 1976, with a capital established in Jamba. This continued to be the case until 1992, as the group transferred their administration to the central Highlands, the core Ovimbundu area. In the

¹⁵³ Heywood, L. (1989), *Unita and Ethnic Nationalism in Angola*. *The Journal of African Studies*, v 27, pp/47-66

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid*

1970s approximately 250,000 people lived under UNITA authority; by 1991, that number had risen to 600,000 to 1 million.¹⁵⁵ The establishment of centralized territorial control saw the inauguration of a president and service institutions for the local population.

This could be interpreted as a similarity with ISIS because UNITA attempted to provide the local residents with administrative structures and, most importantly, security; in return UNITA expected residents to pay taxes. It is, however, almost certain that civilians paying taxes to ISIS do so out of fear of severe punishment including execution, and it does not appear to be an organic informal contract between fighters and civilians. ISIS is also certainly not interested in reviving social traditions in Mosul or Raqqa: in fact, ISIS has destroyed many non-Islamic cultural sites and shuns non-Islamic traditions.

Local communities were integrated into the UNITA system under the leadership of traditional authorities. This was beneficial both to UNITA and to the local authorities. The local authorities had the chance to lead local administrative tasks, and guaranteed their positions of authority due to their relationship with the insurgents. UNITA also assisted in the establishment of health clinics and schools. The influence of Ovimbundu tradition was also manifested in the use of the traditional language, Umbundu, within the insurgent administrations. UNITA's respect for local tradition and language, the establishment of social services and provision of material goods, secured the loyalty of civilians.¹⁵⁶

There appears to be little information or interviews with civilians who have lived under UNITA control, but the survival of the group after the end of the civil war and its integration into the political system as a democratically elected party certainly indicates that the group's integration of the local populace into its governance helped in gaining legitimacy and ensuring the survival of the group.

¹⁵⁵ Bakonyi, J, Stuvoy, K. (2005), Violence and Social Order beyond the State: Somalia and Angola. *Review of African Political Economy*, v 32, pp. 359-382

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid*

It is highly unlikely that ISIS will be incorporated into the political process once the Syrian civil war ends. The group completely rejects the democratic process and will not be integrated into any political system, nor is it powerful enough to win the war outright to seize power. The group's ideology will likely survive territorial losses, relegating ISIS to the same level as al-Qaeda—the core difference between the two has been ISIS ability and willingness to control territory. As mentioned in earlier chapters, ISIS only operates in areas where needs are rudimentary: ISIS is only able to offer a weak state at this point. Also, the group's core strength is the success of its propaganda methods in showcasing its violence. Even a weak successor state will likely benefit from civilian support, especially in the aftermath of the military campaign against the group and its loss of territory, weakened governance structures and resources. ISIS simply is not concerned with social justice and implements extreme measures to silence opposition, meaning that it rules by fear alone. This opens an opportunity for a successor government to win civilian loyalty even without a sustained effort to win hearts and minds, and ISIS' brutality may prove to be a double-edged sword—on one hand, its brutality attracts worldwide fear and scorn; on the other, its barbarism alienates civilians under its control, which is a precarious position for any weak state.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

This section discusses the results of the study for each of the research questions and addresses the general question of whether ISIS is distinctive in its governance structure and how ideology impacts governance in comparison with other rebel movements.

As demonstrated, rebel governance structures are often influenced by systems developed by previous governments ruling over the same territory. To what extent is ISIS influenced by the Ba'athist regimes in its mode of governance?

ISIS benefited from the technocratic experience of the Iraqi Ba'athists, especially on issues relating to intelligence and military strategy; it also mimicked some of the basic service provision offered by the Syrian and Iraqi governments. However, ISIS' system of governance, inspired by its interpretation of Islam, follows its understanding of Shari'a and differs deeply with pre-existing models of governance in Iraq and Syria. While, for instance, the Mai Mai added elements to the system already present in previous governments, ISIS completely altered the pre-existing Ba'athist model. This is a common thread across rebel movements—many lift core structures from the previous regime and replicate them in their own systems of governance. While it is fair to say that previous regimes influenced ISIS, their influence was far subtler than the ways in which the previous regime influenced the Mai Mai, for instance. Another important element in studying ISIS is the impact of foreign fighters on its governance. Not all members of ISIS are Iraqi or Syrian, meaning that they share different past experiences and possess different understandings of government and its purpose. Therefore, foreign fighters are likely to bring their own experiences into the governance model as they rise up the ranks, thereby diluting the influence of pre-existing regimes in Iraq and Syria. ISIS differs with most rebel groups in that it does not operate in

one state. In fact, ISIS disregarded existing state borders in its attempt to gain territory.

Whereas the LTTE operated in Sri Lanka, the Mai Mai in Congo, the FARC in Colombia and the UNITA and FNLA in Angola, ISIS operates in both Syria and Iraq and has ambitions to expand elsewhere. Undoubtedly, most rebel groups operate in a single state—the term “rebel” in fact indicates that an entity rejects a regime’s leadership of the nation-state. But the influx of foreign fighters into ISIS’ hands means that foreigners inform ISIS’ system of government, even if pre-existing structures may have some minor influence over ISIS’ governance. This is definitely unique to ISIS because it does not follow the classical rebel governance model, which sees groups emerging in one state and then seek to control territory within these boundaries. The only factor at play in ISIS’ determination of whether to attempt to control territory is to target Sunni-majority, poor populations, thereby reducing the group’s burden and lowering expectations that it create a highly modern state.

It is also evident that rebel governance is often influenced by war-time contextual factors. Has ISIS’ system of governance been affected by airstrikes? How have other war-time factors affected the group’s choice of territory and ability to continue to secure territory?

Military operations against ISIS were successful in reducing revenue associated with oil production levels. The airstrikes and battles also resulted in the group’s attempt to blend into the population to avoid airstrikes on clear targets. Airstrikes also made the group more violent and arbitrary in meting out punishment for crimes committed in its territory, indicating that ISIS’ governance model was indeed affected by wartime contextual factors. In fact, ISIS followed its own rules less vigorously as airstrikes intensified. This shows that ideology is not the sole basis of its governance, as it appears that external pressures successfully altered its existing model of governance. Meanwhile, other wartime factors that have in the past impacted other rebel groups also seem to apply to ISIS. For instance, like the FARC, ISIS developed in areas essentially out of reach of government services and

government-engineered socio-economic progress. Raqqa, for instance, has always been a peripheral city in the eyes of the Syrian government and services in Raqqa were rudimentary and almost solely restricted to the provision of basic goods in pre-war Syria. The post-Ba'athist government also marginalized Mosul in Iraq. Following the fall of the former Iraqi Ba'ath regime, government services declined steadily in Mosul and a plethora of radical Sunni Islamist groups activated in Mosul, including the Islamic State before ISIS took over the city in 2014. Also, like the FARC and the LTTE, ISIS faced competition from like-minded groups before it was able to secure its position. Yet, like the FARC, ISIS' control of resources such as oil and its military superiority allowed it to secure control of these areas and defeat competitors. There are core differences between ISIS and rebel movements that have proven successful and enjoyed longevity. The FARC and the LTTE, for instance, were able to continue to control territory by securing the support of civilians living under their control by presenting themselves as a promoter of social justice. This is certainly not the case with ISIS, as the latter does not attempt to implement social justice and instead hopes to garner legitimacy from what it perceives as divine justice. ISIS does not believe in social justice or in issues relating to perceived worldly rights when governing.

Another element worth exploring when looking at wartime factors is external support from states. The FNLA in Angola, for instance, failed to survive and persist in controlling territory due to the lack of foreign funding. ISIS and the FARC both survived despite lack of foreign funding mainly due to their ability to self-generate revenue. Also in the case of ISIS many governments including Turkey, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia provided support to competing rebel groups in Syria. Nevertheless, the group was able to survive and emerged as the most powerful group in many areas. This highlights the importance of governance as a strategy for rebel movements as governance is itself a revenue generator through taxation, exploiting natural resources, and other forms of state control. Nevertheless, the joint international

campaigns against ISIS and the various players involved, including Russia, Turkey and the United States, are at the very least likely to seriously weaken the group, reduce its territorial control, and destroy its plans for expansion.

The question of ideology is very central to ISIS's governance model. What role does ideology play in the group's governance model? Are there any peculiarities about the governance structure of ISIS' jihadist ideology?

While ISIS takes some technocratic elements from the Iraqi Ba'athist regime in its system of governance, the group's Islamist ideology plays a very central role in its governance structure.

ISIS' ideology differs greatly from that of many rebel groups because it actively disdains national tendencies and existing borders. While ISIS effectively controls territories in which Arab Sunni Muslims are the majority, the group has not attempted to appeal to Arabism—helping it attract transnational support from jihadists of various backgrounds. The group disregards pre-existing borders, the concept of the nation-state and it only attempts to rule in areas with Sunni Muslim majority. Group identity is important to the group in the sense that it is solely a Sunni organization; indeed, its Sunni background is directly related to its underlying ideology.

While the FARC was also not primarily focused on pursuing the nation-state model, many rebel groups share its communist ideology. Ideological drive underpins many rebel movements and is far from unique to ISIS. The Islamic State, however, is one of a select few rebel movements to reject the "European" model of state building, whether through the concept of the modern nation-state or through European ideologies like communism. Of course other Islamist groups, including al-Qaeda, share this non-European vision with ISIS; however, few have been successful in managing an Islamist state and none have been able to effectively control territory across traditional state borders.

The Mai Mai, like ISIS, is a religious rebel group that deploys religion as a tool of subjugation and uses of violence against those who refuse to follow orders. The Mai Mai's system of governance, however, is not radically different than the pre-existing structure, and ideology does not play an overarching role in the way it governs. Another important distinction is that unlike ISIS, the Mai Mai did not have regional expansionist goals and was restricted to specific territory.

Civilian approval and support have proven very important for the survival of many of the rebel groups that enjoyed longevity. How does ISIS attempt to gain legitimacy among the civilian population in areas of its control? Is it willing to compromise its governance structure to gain civilian support?

This paper has demonstrated that groups often restructure their governance model to meet civilian needs and sometimes, like the FARC for example, are willing to accept pre-existing political and organizational structures in some territories. ISIS may be unique in that sense because the group rejects compromise, and the group's ideology is based on an absolute rejection of freedom of choice. ISIS has not shown any interest in compromise and, as discussed earlier, social justice does not concern it. The group appears to primarily seek legitimacy from what it believes is the true application of Islam to state building. Minor changes and evolution in behavior appear to be brought on by its exposure to war and losses in wartime.

However, it is wrong to suggest that ISIS does not attempt to gain the support of local populations; indeed, in some instances ISIS resorts to classic methods of appeal. For instance, the group has displayed efforts to show civilians that their system is more functional and less corrupt than that of the Ba'ath regime. So, although ISIS is not willing to compromise on the structure of governance itself, it cares about showing the local residents that its system is a

better alternative to existing structures or chaos; ISIS ensures that corruption is identified and punished, for example.

ISIS also resorts to standard forms of rebel governance and state-building structures when it comes to providing services and security in exchange for taxes, while other groups do so by force and by winning the support of the civilians. ISIS seemingly dedicates more resources to severe punishment and the distribution of materials related to its draconian punishments than it does to civilian acceptance and support.

The fact that ISIS does not devote the same resources to civilian support may undermine the long-term survival of the group, whereas many rebel groups have proven successful by attracting support from large swathes of the public under their control. ISIS' propaganda is arguably both a core strength and weakness. While its display of sheer violence and its boasting of mass murder has successfully attracted international attention, this style of brutality also alienates locals. Meanwhile, many Islamists who believe in a Caliphate as an ultimate political aim disagree with the methods with which ISIS has pursued this goal. The extreme brutality and its display through propaganda may prevent ISIS from winning the hearts and minds of the civilians in areas under its control— meaning that civilians are likely to support whatever successor group arrives to reestablish order.

Discussion

There are many factors that distinguish ISIS from other rebel groups; while there are other apparent similarities between ISIS and many groups that have come before it. First, the rejection of traditional borders is fairly unique to ISIS, as nearly all other rebel movements that have actually governed operate within established territory.

As discussed earlier, ISIS attempts to establish its foothold in poor areas, hardly a unique tactic among rebel groups—most operate in areas abandoned by the existing government. The fact that ISIS successfully took Raqqa and Mosul should therefore not be surprising to observers. These targets did not spring from ISIS' ideology; indeed, neither city has a particular significance in Islam, like Mecca, or Jerusalem for example. The group simply exploited the fact that these were Sunni-majority areas under weak government control. This is a similar pattern with rebel group around the world. However, what is unique is the fact that ISIS does not function within one state and rejects pre-established state boundaries.

Second, while it borrowed elements of the former Ba'ath regimes, ISIS created an entire system based on its ideology. While other rebel groups have created new systems, most have borrowed heavily from previous governments. ISIS' system of governance itself seems to be of equal importance to the group as its control of territory. To many rebel groups, the control of territory is the primary aim. Once accomplished, these groups are typically willing to bend their existing structures to accommodate change. To ISIS, the goal is the establishment of an Islamic state—its end goal is essentially the realization of its ideology, leaving no room for evolution. Unlike other rebel movements, ISIS is not only interested in controlling territory and administering a state; its primary goal is the establishment and proliferation of a caliphate that follows the jihadi ideology, meaning that any change to this structure is seriously unlikely.

Third, ISIS is not concerned with legitimacy through social justice because it leans instead on divine justice. This is not a particularly unique feature: many movements have purported to be implementing God's will. But ISIS' attempts to offer better public services and less corruption than the previous regime suggests that it is, like many rebel groups, capable of identifying the needs of the populations under its control.

Finally, ISIS deploys social media and propaganda more effectively than other rebel movements. Most of the rebel groups discussed in this paper operated in the pre-social media era, but it is undeniable that ISIS mastered the use of technology to help it achieve its objectives, to recruit from afar and to spread its propaganda. Al-Qaeda is a contemporary of ISIS that was not as proficient at mastering this skillset. But, as discussed earlier, ISIS' success online has been both a strength and weakness: it brought ISIS to the center of global attention and attracted foreign jihadists and helped it enforce its “clash of civilizations” narrative of crusaders versus true Muslims. But it also alienates civilians living under its control. This means that these civilians are likely to very easily abandon ISIS as soon as an alternative option surfaces.

The significance of this study lies in its ability to provide a better understanding of ISIS from a governance perspective. ISIS has learned from the experience of al-Qaeda and largely built its governance model based on the mistakes and successes of al-Qaeda. This means that rebel groups, especially likeminded ones, are likely to learn from one another and be inspired by one another to create states. There are a number of Islamist movements active in areas that meet all the preconditions for rebel governance—such as al-Shabab in Somalia—that exist in a weak and fragmented state; if such movements succeed in capturing and governing territories, they are likely to be inspired and learn from the ISIS state governance model. So, even if ISIS loses its territorial control in Syria and Iraq, future groups will likely find inspiration from the way ISIS managed to create a state and govern it. There is also some evidence suggesting that other ideologically incongruent groups, such as FARC in Colombia, are already observing the ISIS experiment and learning to emulate the way ISIS engages in mass communication and pushes ideology via social media. ISIS can be used as a benchmark for other rebel groups because of its success in creating methods and tools that such groups can easily deploy.

The rebel governance model appears to fall short in some instances when attempting to analyze ISIS. For instance, the framework assumes that rebel groups emerge within one state and are likely to be products of the same regime. ISIS clearly exists across traditional state boundaries and has been preceded not by one but by two regimes. Its foreign fighters also come from a variety of countries and the model does not take these factors into consideration. Another important issue is that this particular framework does not study groups controlling territory within a state and engaging in self governance, but that are not at war with this state, such as the Palestinian Liberation Organization when they controlled territory in Lebanon and Jordan or Hizbullah in Lebanon. Hizbullah works alongside the government, and while it would have been interesting to compare it with ISIS, such comparison does not apply within this particular rebel governance framework. Additionally, the factors considered in the rebel governance framework do not include propaganda. Today, with the wide availability of social media and the fast transfer of information, this can definitely have an impact on how rebels govern territory (for example, by the ease of publicizing new laws or information to their constituents) and how other groups are influenced by one another.

Beyond the scope of this study, future studies can examine pre-existing structures of authority and self-governance, such as tribes in Iraq, that have survived many centuries and regimes and, the ways in which regimes managed these structures and attempted to use them to buttress their authority. ISIS has used the help of tribes to weaken competing groups and it also created offices that deal with tribal affairs and disputes. However, unlike the former Baathists, who were willing to offer tribes significant autonomy in return for support of the regime, ISIS seems to have offered a much narrower margin of autonomy to these tribes. Once again, this underscores the distinctiveness of the governance model of ISIS and its potential impact on future rebel movements in the region and beyond.

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