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Rebel Rulers: Insurgent Governance and Civilian Life during War by Zachariah Cherian Mampilly (review)

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the book bolsters a conceptualization of African history and of Africa's historical connections with the rest of the world as a history of slavery, as we see in far too many African American studies and African history programs in North America. This tendency is a bit worrying, as is the over-emphasis on colonialism among European Africanists. The history of Africa's contact with other races should not always be defined by master–slave relations.

Nevertheless, the book is a provocative piece of writing about the history of Africa and China, and the author's thesis will be subject to a lot of discussion for a long time to come.

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POLITICS, INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS, AND GLOBALIZATION

Zachariah Cherian Mampilly. *Rebel Rulers: Insurgent Governance and Civilian Life during War*. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2011. xxi + 293 pp. Illustrations. Notes. Bibliography. Index. \$45.00. Cloth.

This book is a must-read for anybody wishing to understand why some rebels assemble comprehensive administrations to rule civilians while others fail to do so or reject this task. In his analysis, Mampilly challenges claims of other scholars that economic incentives drive rebel organization and goals, arguing instead for a process-based approach. In his well-researched surveys of rebel governance in Sri Lanka's Tamil Tigers, Sudan's SPLA (Sudan People's Liberation Army), and Congo's RCD-Goma (Rassemblement Congolais pour la Démocratie–Goma), Mampilly finds that preconflict political environments weigh heavily in shaping how rebels rule, but within this context rebels make consequential choices. He backs this conclusion with extensive interview and documentary evidence collected during field visits and from his interactions with rebel leaders and administrators.

Mampilly takes rebel agency seriously. Most rebels want to rule civilians, but rule requires considerable discipline among rebels and it claims resources that they could use for fighting. Yet ruling civilians brings rebels in contact with local material and political resources under civilian control. Effective rebel rule provides rebels with information from civilians about the activities of their enemies and rivals within rebel ranks. Equipped with such information, rebels can use violence selectively to address these challenges. Rule becomes more viable as rebels refrain from mistreating local people and avoid attracting international condemnation. In reality rebels have to make tough choices as they confront splits in their ranks, claim credit for services that NGOs provide, and contend with militias in addition to national armies. Mampilly calls this an interactional approach in which key actors

identify opportunities and adjust strategies accordingly. These rebel leaders are not slaves to resource curses or factional tensions or cross-border patrons. These variables weigh in the balance, but rebels use strengths to compensate for weaknesses, and clever leadership matters too.

Diving into the case studies, Mampilly explains that the dense institutions of the effective Sri Lankan state gave the Tamil Tigers an administration they could appropriate as they became rebel rulers. The bad news for rebels in Sudan and Congo is that civilians there had learned how to live without effective state institutions under preconflict regimes. Adept at evading the state, those civilians evaded rebels too, leaving these rebels to rule through a mix of coercion and patronage, much like the old Congolese state. In Sudan rebels shared the political environment that tested the rulers of that state. The evidence in these cases shows how rebel organization and behavior are endogenous to wider contexts, or at the very least, how context stacks the odds heavily in favor of path dependency with the strategies of rule of the states that rebels fight.

Where is rebel agency? Mampilly explains that Sudan's rebels were better rulers because they were separatists. Separatists have to show civilians that they can do better than the government as rulers of a new state. Sudan's SPLA and its various factions struggled over choices of political strategies, and these choices mattered. But were they determinative? This consideration occurs alongside a broader implication of evidence in this book that effective rebel rule depends on a sort of Goldilocks principle, of fighting in a state that is not too strong and not too weak. Failed states produce failed rebel rulers while strong ones defeat or suppress their rebels.

The interactional approach's challenge to rival explanations requires careful consideration of cases in which data contradict predictions of conventional explanations. A consideration of Angola's UNITA (União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola) appears in the Congo chapter. These rebels drew resources from alluvial diamond mining operations. Conventional approaches would predict that a source of income available to any fighter with a few tools would undermine the hierarchy of command and enhance the fighter's uses of violence for personal material gain. UNITA did pursue a Maoist strategy of rule organized around the charismatic Jonas Savimbi. The problem for the agency argument is that over time UNITA looked more like the fragmented, resource-driven rebels that conventional approaches predict. The story of Congo's Ernest Wamba dia Wamba, an early political leader of RCD-Goma, underscores this point. He was a leader with a political agenda that included rebel rule, but he could not survive in a political environment in which foreign governments picked rebel leaders who in turn had to navigate the highly fragmented social environment that was a legacy of Mobutu's violent and divisive rule.

But these are mere quibbles. This is a great book that provides rich detail. The analysis rests on the key observation that violence shapes the environment, which in turn shapes choices. The question, then, is where does opportunity emerge? That approach is very different from a search for

a single causal variable. This more difficult but more rewarding approach requires close process tracing and knowledge about the connections and skills of individual leaders. This important book is recommended for anyone who welcomes an innovative analysis of rebel organization and behavior.

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LANGUAGE, LITERATURE, AND THE ARTS

Gary van Wyk, ed. *Shangaa: Art of Tanzania*. Bayside, N.Y.: QCC Art Gallery, City University of New York and the Portland Museum of Art, 2013. 341 pp. Color and black-and-white photographs. Maps. List of institutional and private lenders. References. Indexes. \$75.00. Cloth.

Barbara Gianinazzi and Paolo Maiullari, eds. *Sogo: Maschere e Marionette Bamana*. Milano: Edizioni Gabriele Mazzotta, 2012. 147 pp. Color and black-and-white photographs. Maps. €25.50. Paper.

In recent years, exhibition catalogues of African art have often assumed the refreshing character of comprehensive scholarly monographs. Such publications include not only illustrations of the objects exhibited, but also essays based on meticulous research and field photographs that provide ethnographic context. A number of these catalogues can easily stand on their own, separate and apart from the exhibitions that they accompanied. While special exhibitions of African art can be powerful visual events, they are by their very nature ephemeral. However, scholarly catalogues, whether written by single or multiple authors, can continue to inform intellectual discourse on exhibition content for many years into the future.

Shangaa: Art of Tanzania, edited by Gary van Wyk, represents one of the finest of this genre of publications. It is comprehensive in its discussions of Tanzanian art forms, reflects the meticulous scholarship of the editor and other contributors, and provides readers with a sweeping portrait of the country through numerous field photographs.

Van Wyk, who was born in Zimbabwe and studied in South Africa, was eventually exiled from South Africa because of his activities in the anti-apartheid Resistance Art Movement. He later completed his doctorate in art history as a Fulbright Scholar at Columbia University. He is not only the editor and a contributor to this volume, but was also the curator of the exhibition of the same name that was held at the QCC Art Gallery of the City University of New York, February–May 2013. This exhibition, which later traveled to the Portland Art Museum, contained one hundred and sixty objects from both public and private collections in Europe and the United States.