

Who Is a Rebel? Typology and Rebel Groups in the Contemporary Middle East¹

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This article provides a typology of rebel groups in the Middle East from the perspective of political science and situates them in a broader context of rebellion around the world.

Keywords: Rebel groups; Civil conflicts; Middle East

Defining a Rebel

We define a rebel as a member of rebel groups that oppose existing national governments militarily and have political goals. This definition of armed political opposition will exclude members of some armed groups such as government militias or criminal groups with purely profit motives. In our discussion, a rebel will be an individual, embedded in a collective group, with political goals such as taking over the central government or achieving political autonomy or territorial independence. He or she is the person who decided to take up arms to achieve that goal, in opposition to the status quo provided by the government. This will also exclude some peace movements and unarmed rebellions.

In this article, we will focus on a rebel "group" as our key analytical unit. Why choose to study a group rather than an individual rebel as a key unit of analysis? Rebel groups are cohesive units with a certain political goal. We think studying those groups with definitive characteristics will be a profitable approach in understanding political, social and economic behaviors surrounding rebels. Our emphasis on "group" might sacrifice the individualities, but will simplify the characteristics of rebel elements in the world. The analytical leverage gained from looking at rebel groups

and organizations will be helpful in understanding rebellion, as rebel groups are producers of political strategies, social networks, and military tactics.

Our conceptual definition coincides with the ordinary definition of rebels, but with a focus on the group-dimension. The dictionary definitions of a rebel contain the ideas of progressivism and unorthodoxy. The word, rebel, is associated with a challenge to the traditions of an existing authority. Rebels usually desire independence and autonomy, seeking to establish their own social, political, and sometimes religious order. The associated adjectives included are dissident, subversive, and rebutting—highlighting the nature of a rebel to defy the status quo. In our conceptual, definitional boundary, rebel groups resist the political status quo collectively and with military means.

Beyond such conceptual boundaries, the empirical boundaries of a rebel have never been certain. The meaning, connotation, and classification of aliases—freedom fighters or terrorists, for instance—have varied over time and between regions. On one hand, freedom fighters (or liberation movements) was often used during the de-colonization periods in the 1960s and 1970s. On the other hand, terrorist groups have substantial overlap with rebel groups: some domestic indi-

vidual terrorists are not classified as organized rebels, and terrorist groups with global aims are not easily classified as rebels (Jo). But, many rebel groups use terrorist tactics and are thus identified as terrorists (Fortna).

With this empirical backdrop, we will use the following operational definition of rebel groups: armed organizations that engaged in actual battle against national government forces, generating at least 25 battle deaths in a civil conflict. This will include some terrorist groups as well as liberation movements, but exclude some armed groups such as government militias or criminal gangs. The empirical definition will also exclude some small rebel groups that may have had little military impact, such as initiators of peaceful, social movements.

With this conceptual and operational definition of rebels, the goal of this article is to provide a typology of rebel groups from a political science perspective, with application to the Middle Eastern (ME) rebel groups. Our focus is to uncover the commonalities and differences between the rebel groups in the Middle East vs. those of the rest of the world.

Specifically, we will argue that ME rebel groups are unique in two aspects: 1) religious divides run deep in many rebel movements, and 2) global aims of some

groups are not easily found in other parts of the world. We will also argue that ME rebel groups share many traits with rebel groups in other parts of the world, in particular, with respect to the relationship with their core constituencies/supporters or rebellion tactics.

In our analysis, we will take a fairly expansive definition of the Middle East region—spanning from Northern Africa (e.g. Algeria, Tunisia), the Persian Gulf countries (e.g. Iran, Iraq, Yemen), as well as neighboring countries in the east (e.g. Afghanistan). The temporal focus of this article is contemporary, mainly covering the post-Cold War period, from 1990 to the present day.

Classification of Rebels

Before we provide our typology of ME rebel groups, we review the literature in political science on the classification of rebels in the context of internal armed conflicts. Three subfields of political science—international relations, comparative politics, and political economy—all deal with the issues of civil conflicts. We identify five major classifications in those strands of literature.

The first dominant theme in the civil war literature has been the dichotomy between greed-based rebels versus grievance-based rebels (Collier and Hoeffler). Rebels based on “greed” usually have

profit seeking motives, consequently dealing with lootable resources, such as diamonds or drugs. The Revolutionary United Front in Sierra Leone is usually classified in this greed category for their sales of diamonds in funding their rebellion. Rebels with “grievances” focus more on political solutions rather than economic profits. These usually include conflicts involving ethnic minorities or secessionism. The rebellion waged by the Karen National Union in Myanmar can be an example of grievance-based rebellion, as the group, based on Karen ethnicity, aims at their own Karen state.

The second classification involves what rebel groups aim at (Sobek and Payne). Some have aims to capture the central government (center aim) while others want to retain autonomy in their own region (peripheral aim). For example, Naxalites in India have a center aim while the rebels in Nagaland have a peripheral aim. The Naxalite-Maoist insurgency was not confined to a region but extended to subverting the ideology and operation of the central Indian Government. This national aim is in contrast to that of the National Socialist Council of Nagaland which focuses on the Naga territory in the north-east India. The distinction between secessionist and non-secessionist rebels also has its roots in rebel goals (Fazal).

The third classification hinges on how rebel groups evolve. In his study on African politics, Reno identified five sets of rebel groups: 1) “anti-colonial” rebels that fought against colonial rulers, 2) “majority-rule” rebels that were against minorities in South Africa, 3) “reform” rebels that worked to build a state, 4) “warlord” rebels that remained as destabilizing forces, and 5) “parochial” rebels with local concerns. This classification is based on a historical trajectory of rebel groups in Africa.

The fourth and most recent classification hinges on rebels’ institutional features. Weinstein studies rebel organizations and provides classification of opportunistic rebels vs. activist rebels. Opportunistic rebels are often resource-dependent and violence-prone. Activist rebels are usually committed to social ideals and are embedded within their society. More recently, Cunningham, Gleditsch and Salehyan suggest many institutional features of rebel groups, such as political wings, external funding bases, as well as command and control structures. The work by Cunningham, Gleditsch and Salehyan does not necessarily produce different categories for classification, but provides the basis for understanding diverse dimensions of rebel groups. These developments are additions to the studies of civil conflicts that contributed to the clas-

sification of rebel groups and our disaggregated understanding of their nature and operation.

Compared to twenty years ago, our understanding of rebel groups has improved over time. With the classifications mentioned above, the study on rebel groups has become more objective, beyond political connotations in normal parlance. Recent studies are beginning to recognize the deep links between terrorism studies and civil war studies (Findley and Young). This cross-fertilization will be an ongoing trend for the study of rebel groups.

The classification of a rebel is important because it brings with it profound social, legal, and political consequences.

Social consequences include “naming and shaming.” If rebels are branded as freedom fighters, social acceptance is implicitly present. But if rebels are branded as outlaw actors, they are often regarded as criminals.

Legal consequences include whether a rebel can sustain the effort for its movement. The Foreign Terrorist Organizations (FTO) list designated by the United States is one example. Once designated as a FTO, the group is unable to get material support from humanitarian organizations, diaspora populations, and other private entities.

The political consequences of being branded a rebel include the loss of political legitimacy in mainstream politics. Many national governments use this strategy of branding certain oppositions as rebels, in order to de-legitimize their activities—mainly to re-assert their own political authority and legitimacy. This delineation of the “ruler” and the “ruled” prompts political conflicts—from accusations to downright military confrontations.

Charting the Map of Middle East Rebel Groups

To provide a systematic and comprehensive study of ME rebel groups, we have collected the data on ME rebel groups following our conceptual and operational definition. The result is Table 1 (see supplement 1). The table lists the rebel groups operating in the Middle East between 1946 and 2015.

In creating the list of Middle Eastern rebel groups, the operational definition in the Non-State Actor (NSA) dataset (Cunningham, Gleditsch and Salehyan) was followed and expanded to include recent Middle Eastern groups. The NSA dataset follows the definition of armed conflicts from the UCDP (Uppsala Conflict Data Program) project and defines a conflict as “a contested incompatibility that concerns government and/or territory where the

use of armed force between two parties, of which at least one is the government of a state, results in at least 25 battle-related deaths.” This definition excludes some small or weak groups that failed to generate a count of 25 battle-deaths and groups that did not directly engage in military confrontations.

Rebels in the Middle East are not typical rebels but have political, religious, and social layers. There are several, important points in Table 1 that highlight the similarities and differences of Middle Eastern rebel groups compared to other rebel groups worldwide. Some features highlight the uniqueness of the rebel groups of the Middle East versus other regions.

The first prominent feature we can observe is the religious dimension of many rebel movements. The groups described are mostly Islamic, with 29 out of 35 groups (83%). The affiliation of Islam is largely determined by the group’s professed identity and the creed of the majority of its members, and we identified the religion based on the previous studies of each group relying on the key sources such as the narratives from the START dataset, the Non-State Actor dataset, and other secondary sources. A substantial majority of groups adhere to the Sunni sect of Islam in this list: i.e. 23 groups (66%). Groups adhering to the Shia sect

of Islam are the second largest religious group, totaling 4 groups (11%). The rest of the groups are categorized as mixed Islamic sects, like the Northern Alliance and KDPI (6%); Maronite Christian groups (6%); or secular groups that avoid religious affiliation (11%).

The second unique feature of ME rebel groups is the stark contrast in the scope of the groups’ aims. Some ME rebel groups have strictly domestic goals while others wage a globally-oriented struggle. This division defines the scope of the group’s reach, levels of exposure to international audiences, and the perceived salience of their struggle. The global aim of some rebel groups is simply not present in the rebel organizations of other parts of the world.

The domestic struggle of ME rebel groups usually involves minorities in a conflict against authorities over their political rights. One such example is Jundallah in Iran, an ethnically Baluch group, which has been engaged in a long standing conflict with the government. Another example of domestic struggle is the uprising of rebel groups related to the Kurdish ethnic minority. The Kurds are a very large ethnic group spread over several Middle Eastern countries, including Turkey, Iran, Iraq, and Syria. Within those countries, the Kurds are a minority fighting to achieve a certain

degree of political freedom or independence. In Turkey, the Revolutionary People's Liberation Army (DHKP/C) and the Maoist Communist Party of Turkey and North Kurdistan (MKP) are the main Kurdish rebel groups. In Iran, the Kurdistan Democratic Party of Iran (KDPI) and the Party for Free Life in Kurdistan (PJAK) have waged wars against the Iranian regime. In Iraq, the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) has been active (Van Bruinessen). For its part, the conflict in Yemen presents a slightly different version of domestic struggle, where the Huthis exert strong opposition to the central government which attempted to extend its authority to the semi-autonomous region of Sa'ada in the north (Salmoni et al.).

The opposite end of the spectrum involves groups with a more global orientation of their goals. In the case of ME rebel groups, the aims are mostly spreading their religious beliefs with the plan of establishing an Islamic Caliphate. Al-Qa'ida and its affiliations, such as Al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) which is active in Yemen and Saudi Arabia, have led this quest for over 20 years. These groups fight to expel all external, specifically Western and American, presences from the Middle East and to establish Islamic governments. Over the last two years, ISIS, an Islamic, extremist rebel group was established by

former Al-Qa'ida members, with the global aim of establishing an Islamic caliphate in the Middle East. This Islamic empire could stretch over to other regions, such as Europe or Africa.

The third feature of ME rebel groups concerns the groups' interaction with foreign interventionists. Examples of rebel groups fighting domestic forces, such as Jundallah or Huthis, were discussed earlier in the domestic struggle context. Those conflicts sometimes suffer from a limited number of paths to resolution and may last for many years, such as the Kurdish struggle for autonomy. On the other hand, rebel groups fighting external intervention generally face two types of adversaries: 1) external actors controlling their territory on a permanent basis or 2) external actors controlling a territory on a temporary basis.

The former type can be described as rebel groups fighting to expel foreign authorities which, they believe, control their territory and negate political rights, preventing independence. The Palestinian rebel groups belong to this category. Israel has partial control over disputed territories. Palestinian groups, such as Fatah or AMB, promote a struggle for Israel's withdrawal and Palestine's independence. A more extreme version of this struggle is conducted by Hamas and the Palestinian

Islamic Jihad (PIJ). Those groups believe all of present-day Israel is occupied Palestinian territories. Their goal is to liberate all Israeli and Israeli-occupied lands to create the nation of Palestine. PIJ and Hamas add a religious dimension to their struggle, specifically an Islamic affiliation.

The latter type involves groups fighting for the removal of outside intervention forces which control a territory on a temporary basis, such as the US presence in Afghanistan and Iraq. Another effect in this category is that when the local government is influenced by a foreign entity, often the US, those rebel groups refuse to accept its legitimacy. This pattern is exemplified by the insurgency in Afghanistan and Iraq over the last 12-15 years and the activities of rebel groups like Al-Qa'ida, the Taliban, Jam'iyat-i-Islami, ISIS, Ansar al-Islam, and the Al-Mahdi Army. Those groups have fought for the removal of outside intervention forces and local governments influenced by foreign entities. Most of these groups fight with the aim of installing a government based on Islamic law.

Finally, governance functions of the ME rebel groups are worth mentioning. Some groups are strictly of a military nature and have no political representation or governance functions. Examples of this are extreme ideological groups, like PIJ in Palestine or Al-Qa'ida. Other rebel groups

exhibit some governance functions, maintaining military and political wings. As a subset of these governing rebels, the political wing is responsible for local representation or representation in the national or regional councils. Some of the Afghani groups fit this description. Jam'iyat-i-Islami has political representation in the government and the parliament in Afghanistan. Hizb-i Islami has both general representations in the Afghan cabinet and local positions of governance (Katzman). The Iraqi group, Jammāt al Sadr al Tahni is the political wing of the Al Mahdi Army and is a member of the Iraqi Parliament (National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism Dataset). Groups like Hamas, Fatah, and PNA have governance functions in their respective areas (see Table 1 (see supplement 1)). The PNA is the recognized Palestinian authority, while Fatah is the main party in this body. Hamas became the governing body in the Gaza strip following the 2006 elections. Hizbullah, a Lebanese based Shia rebel group, has a large military wing, but from the governance angle it participates in the general elections and is a large member in parliament (Lob). A significant part of this representation is a function of its social operations within the Shia population. Hizbullah works in government to

provide basic social services, but to also contribute to larger projects, like the reconstruction of Shia neighborhoods in Beirut and elsewhere following the civil war and confrontations with Israel (Cammatt).

The last group in this discussion may be a type in and of itself. ISIS aims to occupy all Islamic territories and establish a caliphate. In order to accomplish this, ISIS employs a different model of organization from that which is common for rebel and terrorist groups.

First, ISIS uses extensive military power to conquer territory and erase any possible opposition using extreme measures. The famous beheadings and other violent attacks on its adversaries exemplify this tactic by the ISIS.

The second aspect is a governance model of multiple offices and bureaus handling different issues such as finance, civilian life, and more. This governance feature is easily observed in some rebel groups with deep connections to domestic populations, but is not easily observed among groups branded as terrorists, making the case of ISIS a bit unique. This governance function of ISIS features two prime categories. The first category is an administrative one which handles religious outreach and enforcement, the judicial system, the educational system, and public relations. The

other is a service-oriented office which manages humanitarian aid and key infrastructures, like electricity and the water supply. This office has taken on even larger scale projects which provide services, such as dams and a thermal power plant in the Aleppo province of Syria (Cronin; Caris and Reynolds).

Many ME rebel groups are branded as terrorists. The most common offences are child soldiering; suicide bombings; killings; and violent acts committed against civilians. Most groups show negligent or intentional disregard for civilian safety and life, as most commit varying forms of attacks that endanger civilians. This negligent or intentional disregard for civilian safety is exemplified through practices of indiscriminate fire, indiscriminate attacks, the use of IEDs and anti-personnel mines, forced displacement, civilian killings, suicide bombings, and ethnic cleansing.

Suicide bombings are a common practice used by ME groups, but are not limited to Islamic groups. For example, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) and Devrimci Sol have a history of using suicide bombings, despite being secular groups desiring political autonomy. These examples demonstrate that rebel groups add suicide bombing to the repertoire of their tactics of rebellion when they need it, not necessarily due to religious reasons. In

the past few decades suicide bombings have become widespread in the region. They have been committed most often in Iraq, Afghanistan, Israel, Palestine, Lebanon, Yemen, and Syria. From 1982-2015, suicide bombings in Iraq and Afghanistan totaled more than all worldwide suicide attacks combined (The Chicago Project on Security and Terrorism).

Typology of Rebels in the Middle East

In this section, we propose a typology of rebel groups in the Middle East. The types are based on previous literature on rebel groups and civil wars, as well as our research on ME rebel groups in Table 1 (see supplement 1). Our primary goal is to illuminate the distinct features of the Middle Eastern groups as well as the commonalities they share with other groups in other parts of the world. The comparisons are mostly drawn from the main author's works (Jo). The typology is based on rebel groups' relationships with their political audiences as well as rebel tactics and strategies. Therefore, in future studies it can be used as an analytical framework to investigate rebel group behaviors and to understand their political and social environments.

We identify five sets of rebel groups in the Middle East: 1) "ruler" rebels that have public good provision functions

(e.g. Hizbullah), 2) recognition-seeking "diplomat" rebels (e.g. PLO), 3) "terrorist" rebels (e.g. ISIS), 4) "warlord" rebels (e.g. Afghanistan rebels), and 5) "exile" rebels (e.g. Jundallah, MEK).

The first set is "ruler" rebels. Cammett's work on Hizbullah running public programs and social services, including health-care provisions or protection functions, is now well-known. Governance functions also include the activities of political parties to build local constituencies, as Table 1 (see supplement 1) indicates. These "governor" rebel groups are found in other parts of the world. For example, Maoists in Nepal exhibited extensive governing functions, such as running schools or political programs (Huang). M23 in the Democratic Republic of Congo attempted to "protect" civilians and taxed civilians in the territory they controlled (Gorur). Given that these features appear in other regions, this ruler-feature is not a distinct characteristic of the ME rebel groups. But the comparison tells us that ME groups are not that different in some aspects from those in other parts of the world. Rebels' core functions are in their attempts to fill the void by establishing their own rules and order where government control is lacking.

The second set is "diplomat" rebels. Some rebel groups actively conduct diplomacy

to seek recognition from other states. The PLO is a prime example for a diplomat rebel, with extensive diplomacy networks within the United Nations and obtaining observer status. MEK has an effective lobbying machine in the United States—it was taken off of the Foreign Terrorist Organization list by building political networks in the US Congress. Other groups engage transnational actors such as international non-governmental organizations to build their own social networks in the international system. For example, the Huthis in Yemen engaged in negotiations with the United Nations Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict to reduce the use of child soldiers in their ranks. There are ten other rebel groups that have signed the UN action plans to ban the child soldiering in other parts of the world, so this diplomatic effort is not unique to the ME rebels, but it is informative to note that this rebel diplomatic activity is also present in the Middle East.

The third set is "terrorist" rebels. Being branded as terrorists always carries political connotations depending on who designates a group as terrorists. But some rebel groups do engage in terrorist acts that generate physical and psychological terror against their enemies or innocent civilians. Human rights violations listed in Table 1 (see supplement 1) are an indica-

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tion that rebel groups engage in the acts that could violate the principles of human dignity in pursuit of their political goals. One prominent example is the Islamic State. ISIS is not commonly thought of as a rebel because of its prominence in global aims for spreading and imposing Islamic order and its regional aim of creating a caliphate. However, the group exhibits its rebel elements in fighting against the Assad government in Syria and fighting against the Iraqi government. ISIS is rather categorized as a terrorist organization than a rebel organization due to its so-called terror tactics, as exemplified in the group's treatment of Yazidis.

The fourth set is "warlord" rebels. Warlords are characterized by personal authority, commercial activity, and factional struggles, not aiming for the reconstruction of national politics (Reno). Afghanistan is a prime example of warlord politics. The Taliban still control many parts of Afghanistan, commandeering the drug fields in the Helmand region. Many warlords ceased fighting against Soviet rule and took positions in the government, holding local powers and commandeering commercial activities. For example, Ahmad Shah Mas'ud was dubbed the "Lion of the Panjshir" (local rule); Ismail Kahn, previously the Governor of Herat Province and a key member of the Jam'iyat-i-Islami,

became the minister of water and energy (government position) (Kaphle). Warlord politics are not confined to Afghanistan. We discover such dynamics in some African states and eastern Myanmar as well. In Africa, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Zaire, and Nigeria, in particular, have experienced warlord politics, with many rebel leaders behaving like warlords (Reno). In Myanmar, the opium warlord, Khun Sa, made or broke rebel groups such as the Shan United Army and the Mong Tai Army, engaged in factional politics and the drug trade, sometimes even co-opting the government (Staniland).

The fifth set is "exile" rebels. Jundallah is located in Iraq but fights for the Sunni Muslims in Iran, a predominantly Shia nation. Mujahidin-i Khalq (MEK) was based in Iraq but also fought against the Iranian regime. Although some rebel leadership circles reside in Europe as many African rebel group leaders do, the key purpose has been to connect to the western world for lobbying (in the case of MEK) or to garner support from diaspora populations (in the case of PKK). The exile rebels have exhibited some overlapping qualities with diplomat rebels, as they expand their activities beyond their motherlands.

Note that these categories are not mutually exclusive categories. Many rebel groups take on multiple titles. ISIS for

example exhibited "ruler" functions in the al-Raqqa region but is also branded as "terrorist" due to its acts toward the Yazidis. The remaining puzzle which current scholarship has not quite solved is the overlapping qualities of rebel groups. Why do some ME rebel groups exhibit the qualities of "governors" while they are branded as terrorists? Are these in-group vs. out-group behaviors where rebel groups play governors vis-à-vis their supporters while terrorizing "others"? Are the seemingly contrasting behaviors the result of strategic calculations of rebels at different time periods? Is it plausible to think that rebel groups violate the rules of the game when they get desperate, following the logic laid out in the work of Downes? Alternatively, do the rebels fill the void in the provision of public goods where state service is not simply available?

There are some additional notable features of ME groups vis-à-vis other parts of the world. Religion runs deep in the case of Middle Eastern rebel groups. The division between Sunnis and Shias is unparalleled. The resource war is less pronounced in the case of ME groups. Even though control of oil fields by ISIS highlights that resources, particularly oil, can play a role in rebel activity, it is less pronounced than that of gems in Africa or drugs in Latin America, which have been

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used to advance the economic interests of rebel groups.

Typologies usually involve multiple underlying dimensions (Skaaning and Møller). The key dimensions of this typology are the relationships with other political actors—the relationships with domestic populations, the relationships with the outside world, and the relationship with the opposing state. “Ruler” rebels and “warlord” rebels are concerned with their relationship with the domestic population. “Diplomat” rebels and “terrorist” rebels are characterized by relationships with the outside world. While “diplomat” rebels reach out to powerful international actors seeking recognition, “terrorist” rebels are often branded as criminals by the outside world. For their part, “ruler” rebels and “exile” rebels form special relationships with the opposing states: “ruler” rebels are in competition for governance functions and “exile” rebels try to exert influence from outside the state.

The second dimension is the rebels' tactics and strategies. In achieving their political goals, rebel groups pick and choose which strategies best suit them. “Ruler” rebel groups decide to provide governance functions in civilian areas they hope to rule one day. “Diplomat” rebel groups, usually secessionist groups (Huang), make international political strategies a priority,

in order to advance their goals of building an independent state. International political strategies are important for “exile” groups as well, because they have to survive outside of their key domain. MEK's fight to acquire a base in Iraq illustrates this point. As an Iranian dissent group, MEK has struggled to find a base of operations (Masters). Lastly, the tactics employed by “terrorist” and “warlord” rebel groups are well known. Terrorism involves violence against civilians with the political intention of creating physical and psychological damage (Gaibulloev and Sandler), whereas warlord rebel groups are often grounded economically and politically with local networks and shifting alliances (Christia). The two dimensions of rebel typology are summarized in Table 2 (see supplement 1).

The suggested typology is useful for several purposes. First, the types can be used for descriptive purposes. The typology is not unique to ME groups, so the types can be used for describing and classifying rebel groups in other parts of the world. Second, the types can also be used for analytical purposes. Since the typology's key dimension is about how rebel groups forge relations within and outside their society, we can study how each type is different in terms of behaviors in political violence. For example, future studies can test

the hypothesis that “diplomat” rebels reduce violence over time. Or, using the typology, future studies can focus on different propensities of rebel types to negotiate or co-opt. For instance, we could test whether warlord rebels are easier to co-opt compared to terrorist groups.

Conclusion

This article demonstrated that the classification of a rebel carries a complex issue that is laden with political, social, and legal consequences. The question of who a rebel is will have to be answered before we act on certain policies, and before we forge responses to a potential rebellion. Our analysis that examines ME rebels and compares them to rebel groups in other parts of the world shows that ME rebels are not anomalies. They share governance qualities and conduct diplomacy vis-à-vis the outside world. The differences, however, stand out with deep religious divides and occasional global aims. We are left with a tangled web of religion, ideology, military strategies, and political motivations. The typology provided here is an attempt at clarifying the situation, but other classifications and different levels of understanding should be forthcoming in order to see how rebellion is waged and in what ways it evolves in the context of both local and global arenas.

Notes

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