When Organizations Rebel: The Foundations of Rebel Group Emergence (FORGE) Database

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We know an increasing amount about rebel groups around the world once they’re active in conflict against the government...
Motivation

We know an increasing amount about rebel groups around the world once they’re active in conflict against the government...

but we don’t know much - if anything - about their foundations.
Why should we care about the foundations of rebel groups?

- likely sources/conditions for rebellion
- group composition
- civilian victimization
- rebel institutions
- intervention & external support
- concessions during conflict
- COIN effectiveness/group survival
- conflict outcomes
- post-conflict governance
Point of departure for identifying a rebel group:

- violent organizations included in UCDP Actor List
- conflict against recognized government producing 25+ deaths
Introducing FORGE

Point of departure for identifying a rebel group:

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- Use rebel group name to identify information about founding process
  - “birth” date
  - founding location
  - what organization(s), if any, provided initial membership
Foundations of Rebel Group Emergence (FORGE) Database

Rebel groups active 1946-2011

Variables included in initial release:

- type(s) of “parent” organization
- whether rebel group was result of splintering or merger of multiple organizations
- rebel group organization’s initial activities (violent/nonviolent/political)
- initial stated goals of rebel group
- initial ideological/ethnic/religious affiliation of rebel group
Parent Organization Types

- other rebel group (EPLF from ELF, Ethiopia)
- armed group not causing 25+ deaths (SLM/A from DLM, Sudan)
- political party (CNDD from FRODEBU, Burundi)
- government faction (Parliamentary Forces, Russia)
- political movement (NDPVF from IYC, Nigeria)
- student/youth group (ABSDF from ABFSU, Myanmar)
- labor union (Tupamaros from UTA, Uruguay)
- religious organization (FIS from Rabitat Dawa, Algeria)
- current armed forces (Pinochet faction, Chile)
- armed forces of previous regime (FUNA from Amin’s army, Uganda)
- foreign fighters (Mba’s forces from French paratroopers, Gabon)
- refugees (Renamo from refugees in Rhodesia, Mozambique)
- ethnic group (KNF from Kuki ethnic group, India)
- none (Kamajors, Sierra Leone)
Parent Organization Types

Types of Parent Organizations (Global)

- rebel group
- other armed
- former military
- political party
- govt faction
- political mvt
- religious group
- trade union
- student group
- current military
- foreign org
- refugee group
- ethnic group
- none

0 20 40 60 80 100 120
Parent Organization Types

Types of Parent Organizations (Global)

- Rebel parent
- Party parent
- CSO parent
- No parent org
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Women's Participation, by parent type

- No evidence
- Low (< 5%)
- Mod (5-20%)
- High (> 20%)

- Rebel parent
- Military parent
- Party parent
- CSO parent
- Foreign parent
- No parent org

Wood & Thomas (2017): Women in Armed Rebellion Dataset
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FORGE & Civil War Outcomes

Conflict outcomes, by parent type

- Armed Group Parents
- Military Parents
- Party Parents
- CSO Parents
- Foreign Parents
- No Parent Org
Conflict outcomes, by parent type

Armed Group Parents

Military Parents

Party Parents

CSO Parents

Foreign Parents

No Parent Org
FORGE & Civil War Outcomes

Conflict outcomes, by parent type

Armed Group Parents

Military Parents

Party Parents

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Foreign Parents

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What makes organizations rebel?

- GDP per capita
- Population
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- Population
- Anocracy/regime type
- Natural resources
- Societal fractionalization
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- GDP growth
- Rough terrain
- Ongoing conflict
- Post-Cold War
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Conditions likely aggravate/mobilize different types of parent organizations
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- **Foreign orgs**: opportunities for increasing power/wealth (resources, co-ethnics)
What makes organizations rebel?

Country-years, 1946-2011

Dependent variables:

- onset: any rebels (1/0)
What makes organizations rebel?

Country-years, 1946-2011

Dependent variables:

- onset: any rebels (1/0)
- onset: rebels w/armed group parent
  - rebels, armed non-state groups, former military
- onset: rebels w/military parent
- onset: rebels w/political party parent
- onset: rebels w/CSO parent
  - student orgs, religious groups, political movements, trade unions
- onset: rebels w/foreign org parent
- onset: rebels w/no parent org
What makes organizations rebel: coefficient plot (logit)

All Conflict Onsets

- Anocracy
- Democracy
- GDP per capita
- GDP growth
- Resources
- Ethnic Fraction
- Population
- Mountains
- Ongoing War
- Cold War

Braithwaite & Cunningham
FORGE
9 Nov 2018
What makes organizations rebel: coefficient plot (logit)

Onset, by parent type

Armed Group Parents
- Anocracy
- Democracy
- GDP per capita
- GDP growth
- Resources
- Ethnic Frac
- Population
- Mountains
- Ongoing War
- Cold War

Military Parents
- Anocracy
- Democracy
- GDP per capita
- GDP growth
- Resources
- Ethnic Frac
- Population
- Mountains
- Ongoing War
- Cold War

Party Parents
- Anocracy
- Democracy
- GDP per capita
- GDP growth
- Resources
- Ethnic Frac
- Population
- Mountains
- Ongoing War
- Cold War

CSO Parents
- Anocracy
- Democracy
- GDP per capita
- GDP growth
- Resources
- Ethnic Frac
- Population
- Mountains
- Ongoing War
- Cold War

Foreign Parents
- Anocracy
- Democracy
- GDP per capita
- GDP growth
- Resources
- Ethnic Frac
- Population
- Mountains
- Ongoing War
- Cold War

No Parent Org
- Anocracy
- Democracy
- GDP per capita
- GDP growth
- Resources
- Ethnic Frac
- Population
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- Ongoing War
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Data on the organizational foundations of rebel groups suggests:

- determinants of onset vary across types of social organizations
  - *anocracy* matters for parties, military factions
  - *natural resources & growth* matter for military factions
  - *ethnic fractionalization* matters for parties, CSOs, foreign orgs
  - *GDP per capita* only matters for parentless rebels & those emerging from other armed groups
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- rebel groups w/o parent organizations are less likely to include women
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- Rebel groups w/o parent organizations are less likely to include women.

- Rebel origins can even influence conflict outcomes:
  - Military victory/defeat unlikely for rebel groups with armed origins.
  - Defeat/stalemate most likely for groups w/o parent organizations.
  - Groups with military origins most likely to win/lose decisively.
Any questions?
Want access to the FORGE data?

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Mobilization Capacity, by parent type

- Low (254 groups)
- Medium (168 groups)
- High (33 groups)

Color codes:
- Rebel parent
- Military parent
- Party parent
- CSO parent
- Foreign parent
- No parent org