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Wartime governance and state-building trajectories in post-conflict societies

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Abstract: To date, there is limited understanding about the consequences of wartime dynamics for post-war state-building processes. This paper explores one such dynamics—the forms of governance exercised by armed groups during wartime—and proposes a theoretical framework outlining how forms of wartime governance affect trajectories of state-building in the aftermath of civil wars. Six possible trajectories are mapped out: stable democracy, weak democracy, stable autocracy, fragmented rule, contested autocracy, and durable disorder. Each trajectory is shaped by the interaction between two dimensions of wartime governance: how armed groups build institutional capacity in wartime and the characteristics of wartime civilian rule by armed groups. The core argument is that civil wars generate within themselves bureaucratic and institutional capacity—through how armed groups govern territories and civilians within them—that under certain circumstances may be harnessed in the post-war period to build states capable of governing. The characteristics and durability of those forms of wartime governance shape the type of state-building and political regime trajectories that emerge in the post-war period.

Key words: political violence, war, conflict, state-building, peace, development

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"I do know that there is no greater necessity for men who live in communities than that they be governed, self-governed if possible, well-governed if they are fortunate, but in any event, governed."

– Walter Lippmann, quoted in Huntington (1968: 2)

1 Introduction

Considerable resources are committed annually to state-building interventions in post-conflict countries. These interventions tend to have mixed results.[1] Countries emerging from civil wars remain at risk of violent conflict for long periods of time, while others transition to more stable political regimes.[2] This is not a new phenomenon. In 1968, Samuel Huntington wrote about the 'modernizing countries of Asia, Africa, and Latin America', characterized by 'increasing ethnic and class conflict, recurring rioting and mob violence, [and] frequent military coups d'état' (pp. 2–3). Some of the countries Huntington mentioned, such as Turkey, Thailand, Vietnam, Indonesia, and South Korea, went on to establish politically stable states. Some evolved into stable democracies. Many others—such as Syria, Sudan, Iraq, Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Pakistan, and most of Central America—continued to endure cycles of violence and conflict. Why? What explains this variation in the political trajectories of war-torn countries in the aftermath of civil war?

Several theories have been put forward to explain why post-conflict countries remain in or relapse into internal armed conflict. These include, among others, unequal and ineffectual patterns of economic and institutional development pursued in the post-conflict period (Hegre and Nygård 2015; Walter 2004, 2014), the deepening of ethnic antagonism in the aftermath of civil wars (Cederman et al. 2013; Fearon 2004; Kaufmann 1998), the type of peace agreement and post-war political settlement that is negotiated (Driscoll 2015; Toft 2010; Zartman 1995), whether civil wars end due to a military victory or a negotiated settlement (Fortna 2004; Licklider 1995; Toft 2010), and the effects of state and peacebuilding interventions by the international community (Autesserre 2010, 2021; Barron et al. 2011; Berdal and Zaum 2012; Call and Wyeth 2008; Doyle and Sambanis 2000, 2006; Fortna 2008; MacGinty 2011; Paris 2004; Richmond 2005; Walter 2002). Some studies have also analysed how and why some countries are able to maintain peace and establish the seeds of democracy in the aftermath of civil wars, whereas others become more or less table autocracies. For instance, Wantchekon and Neeman (2002) and Wantchekon (2004) argue that the end of civil wars may result in democracy when citizens prefer a system that protects them against expropriation and their productive actions under democracy generate benefits for the warring elites.

These theories have in common a focus on how civil wars end. The ways in which internal armed conflicts terminate and the interventions implemented at that point explain how post-conflict contexts evolve. All these factors undoubtedly shape how (some) states are (re)built after civil wars. However, the prevailing focus of existing theories of post-war state-building on how civil wars end has one important limitation: intentionally or not, these theories implicitly assume that state institutions in post-conflict countries are built in a blank slate. This could not be further from reality. Civil wars generate new institutions as armed actors, civilians, and myriad state and non-

[1] See reviews in King and Samii (2014) and Justino (2018a, 2019).

[2] According to a widely cited study, six out of ten post-conflict countries relapse into conflict during the ten years after the end of the initial conflict (Collier et al. 2008). For reviews of this literature, see Blattman and Miguel (2010), Justino et al. (2013a), Brück et al. (2017), and Verwimp et al. (2019).

state actors and organizations interact, fight, compete, and negotiate (Arjona 2014; Justino 2012, 2013). These institutions are likely to shape post-conflict outcomes. To date, we have however limited knowledge about how institutional change in wartime shapes post-war societies and states.[3] Even less is known about the consequences of these wartime dynamics for post-conflict state-building processes.

This paper explores one such institutional dynamics—the forms of governance exercised by armed groups in wartime—and proposes a theoretical framework outlining the pathways whereby forms of wartime governance affect processes of state-building in the aftermath of civil wars. In doing so, the paper aims to shift the focus of this area of research from how civil wars end to how civil wars develop and evolve and the implications of such processes of institutional change for post-conflict state-building trajectories. The core argument is that civil wars generate within themselves bureaucratic and institutional capacity—through how armed groups govern territories and civilians within them—that may be harnessed in the post-war period to build states (more or less) capable of governing. The characteristics and durability of those forms of wartime governance shape, in turn, the type of state-building and political regime trajectories that emerge in the post-war period.

Wartime governance is a widespread phenomenon. Although areas affected by internal armed conflicts tend to be portrayed in the media and public discourse as anarchic, disordered, and ungoverned, observations from the field show that this is not always (if ever) the case (Arjona 2016; Ibáñez et al. 2019; Justino et al. 2013b; Kalyvas et al. 2008; Mampilly 2011). These are areas where state authority is contested resulting in the fragmentation—but not necessarily the collapse—of social and political order. In such settings, different political (armed) actors adopt myriad governing strategies in their attempts to control territories and populations within—some resulting in stable forms of political order amidst the wider conflict. For instance, the *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia* (FARC) controlled and ruled over almost 40 per cent of the Colombian territory at the height of the civil war. The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in Sri Lanka established a fully functioning parallel state in northern and eastern parts Sri Lanka, sometimes operating in collaboration with the government. Other armed groups exercising 'state like' functions include Hezbollah in southern Lebanon, the Taliban across large swathes of Afghanistan during the Karzai and Ghani regimes, and the Islamic State (IS) in Syria, Iraq, and surrounding areas, among many others. These actors resort frequently to the use or threat of violence to maintain their authority, through raiding, victimizing, and plundering contested territories. But not all armed groups behave in solely destructive ways, nor do the more violent groups exercise violence at all times. In fact, insurgent groups often take on some (if not all) of the governance functions of the state, including local security provision, building infrastructure, setting up systems of administration, mediating access to, and in some cases providing, public goods, imposing revenue-extracting systems, and regulating markets. In these contexts, insurgent groups

[3] A large literature has analysed the long-term economic, social, and political consequences of individual, household, community exposure to wartime violence, including on education (Akbulut-Yuksel 2014; Justino et al. 2014, Justino 2016), health (Bundervoet et al. 2009, Tranchant et al. 2020), gender relations (Justino 2018c; Justino et al. 2018; La Mattina 2017), labour outcomes (Justino and Shemyakina 2013; Kondylis 2010), poverty (Justino and Verwimp 2013) (see reviews in Blattman and Miguel 2010; Justino 2012; Verwimp et al. 2009, 2019). Fewer studies have examined the long-term effects of wartime dynamics beyond violence, with some exceptions: Wood (2008) discusses how changes in social networks in the post-war period can be traced to six processes of social change in wartime (political mobilization, military socialization, polarization of social identities, militarization of local authority, transformation of gender roles, and fragmentation of the local political economy); Wood (2001) and Huang (2016) trace post-war democratization processes to wartime social mobilization of civilians; Bateson (2017) discusses how processes of civilian socialization during the civil war in Guatemala promoted tolerance (and often support) among civilians for civil patrols continuing to provide security in the post-war period as a preventive measure against crime in their communities.

become the de facto ruling authority in the territories they control (Arjona et al. 2015; Arjona 2016; Justino and Stojetz 2018; Mampilly 2011; Sanchez de la Sierra 2020; Weinstein 2006).

The main aim of this paper is to propose a theoretical framework outlining the pathways whereby forms of wartime governance may affect trajectories of state-building in the aftermath of civil wars and the mechanisms shaping those pathways. The paper maps out and defines the characteristics of six possible state-building trajectories: stable democracy, weak democracy, stable autocracy, fragmented authoritarian rule, contested autocracy, and durable disorder. These are determined by two dimensions of wartime governance: how armed groups gain the ability to govern (i.e. how they build their wartime institutional capacity) and how they govern (i.e. the characteristics of wartime civilian rule by armed groups). The level of wartime institutional capacity of armed groups shapes the probability of the group pursuing either a more democratic or more autocratic trajectory towards state-building in the post-war period. The type of wartime civilian rule by armed groups (whether inclusive, exclusive, or violent) determines the stability and cohesion of each state-building trajectory.

Wartime governance is defined as the way in which different armed political actors control, protect, and rule over a given territory during a civil war, regulate markets and communities, establish alliances or compete over power and resources, and manage civilian relations across different social groups. These actors include insurgent groups but also the state military and other groups associated to either the rebels or the state military, including militias, paramilitary groups, military juntas, warlords, and vigilante groups. Wartime governance is defined by two dimensions. The first is the level of institutional capacity of the group or, in other words, its 'infrastructural power' (Mann 1988), which is dependent on the strength and length of territorial control. The second is how armed groups interact with and govern civilians or, in other words, the shape of 'wartime social contracts'. Wartime refers to the period of fighting during civil wars,[4] whereas post-conflict or post-war refers to the period after a peace agreement or outright victory by one of the parties in the conflict—recognizing that the end of a conflict may not be necessarily associated with the end of violence. Wartime governance differs from peacetime governance in that policies and practices to rule obey military objectives and involve the use or threat of violence by those that rule. State-building in the post-conflict period refers to the development and implementation of institutions and arrangements to protect property rights, offer public goods and services, and manage social conflicts and external and internal threats, shocks, and volatility in ways that avoid violence, and emanate from and are consolidated by legitimate public authority (North et al. 2009). In what follows it is assumed that one faction of the conflict has won the war, either through a military or negotiated victory, and takes over the government in the post-conflict period.[5]

[4] The theoretical framework proposed in the paper applies largely to civil wars. External or internationalized wars are outside the scope of the paper as wartime institutional dynamics in these settings will be largely shaped by external actors and geopolitical considerations not included in the model. Throughout the paper, the terms 'civil war' and 'internal armed conflict' are used interchangeably.

[5] Protracted conflicts are outside the scope of this paper. The implications of a military versus a negotiated victory for the effectiveness of post-war governance is also outside the scope of this paper. However, existing evidence suggests that military victories may facilitate the translation of effective wartime governance into more effective post-war governance and trajectories towards either democratic or autocratic stability (Doyle and Sambanis 2006; Fortna 2004; Licklider 1995; Toft 2010). These effects may, in turn, be shaped by the actions of external actors. The framework proposed in this paper does not model directly the role of external actors, although the influence of external actors is taken into account across the various mechanisms. Several other studies have analysed what specific factors may determine external support for armed groups (for instance, Huang and Sullivan 2020; Lidow 2016; Salehyan et al. 2011), external support in de facto states (Bakke et al. 2018), and external support for conflict-affected countries more generally (for instance, Hoeffer and Justino 2022).

This paper builds new theoretical arguments to better understand the institutional legacies of wartime governance for state-building. Specific case studies are used to illustrate the arguments, rather than provide causal empirical evidence, and hopefully to pave the way for future more systematic data collection and empirical analysis on the long-term legacies of wartime governance and other wartime institutional dynamics. In this way, the paper makes three distinct contributions. First, it advances the current literature on civil wars by analyzing the consequences of wartime governance for state-building trajectories. Several seminal studies published in the last decade have analysed why and how political order and governance structures emerge in conflict zones (Arjona et al. 2015; Kalyvas 2006; Kalyvas et al. 2008; Mampilly 2011; Staniland 2012). However, only recently have scholars started to pay attention to the long-term implications of these important institutional dynamics. Justino and Stojetz (2018) explore the long-term impact of individual exposure of ex-combatants to wartime governance by the armed group they belonged to during the Angola war and find that Angolan war veterans involved in wartime governance are more likely to engage in planning and delivering local public goods 12 years after the end of the civil war due to political preference formation induced by exposure to wartime governance and to in-group social learning mechanisms. Stewart (2018) shows that secessionist armed groups are more likely to succeed when they provided inclusive public goods to civilians in wartime. Justino et al. (2019) identify a positive relation between exposure to wartime rebel rule and the ability of households to cope with adverse weather shocks in the post-war period, explained by the provision of public goods in wartime by armed groups and their levels of interaction with local populations. Rickard and Bakke (2021) trace the persistence of punishment attacks in Northern Ireland to the informal 'justice' systems implemented by paramilitary groups in both sides of the Troubles (1968–98). They attribute the persistence of such punishments to the fact that social control still benefits the groups and to the socialization of both paramilitaries and civilians into relying on them as a way of providing justice. Arjona et al. (2022) show that individuals exposed to armed group presence in Colombia are not less likely to exhibit weaker preferences for the rule of law than those who never endured the presence of armed groups. Grasse et al. (2022) discuss how the Taliban's rule gained approval among citizens living in districts where their courts operated in wartime. Notwithstanding these emerging findings, we have only limited knowledge about the implications of institutional changes in wartime for how states build institutional capacity, rebuild social contracts, maintain stability in the post-war period, and establish political regimes. To address this question, the paper offers a new theoretical framing to explore six distinct state-building trajectories of post-conflict countries–stable democracy, weak democracy, stable autocracy, fragmented rule, contested autocracy, and durable disorder—each shaped by variation in forms of wartime governance. The paper thus defines the concept of wartime governance as a key determinant of state-building trajectories and distinguishes it from other forms of governance, such as governance exercised in peacetime and forms of governance provided by criminal organizations. The definitions of state-building trajectories draw on stylized facts from research on post-conflict societies, recognizing that the six categories may overlap across time and countries may fall in between, relapse into war, and move between trajectories at different points in time. Case studies are used to illustrate each one of these trajectories towards state-building.

Second, the paper provides a new theoretical account of how specific wartime mechanisms may shape these distinct state-building trajectories. Two mechanisms are identified. The first is how armed groups compete during wartime to gain authority and institutional capacity to rule over territories that may convey them power and military advantage. The second is how armed groups rule and interact with civilian populations in areas they control during wartime, and subsequent civilian responses in conveying legitimacy and support to (or resist and repel) the armed group, effectively shaping 'wartime social contracts'. Identifying these mechanisms offers entry points to future empirical analysis and data collection on key forms of institutional change that take place during conflicts and on how to trace the legacies of these factors to post-conflict political, social,

and economic dynamics. These mechanisms offer, in addition, important micro-foundations grounded on endogenous conflict dynamics to explain macro-level state-building processes. In doing so, the paper provides much needed links between two literatures that have largely remained disconnected: a growing literature at the micro level on the organization of violence, the emergence of political orders in conflict contexts, and the local dynamics of armed conflicts, and an older macro-level literature on state formation and nation-building.

Third, the paper explores important policy implications. Policy interventions in post-conflict settings in the last decade or so have taken a strong institutional approach intended to strengthen state capacity, support political stability, and promote democracy (World Bank 2011, 2017). This approach, which has come under heavy criticism since the withdrawal of the US military and NATO forces from Afghanistan, tends to portray countries emerging from internal armed conflicts as blank slates where new institutions can be built from scratch (Justino et al. 2013b, 2018a, 2019). There is also an underlying assumption in the academic and policy debates on state-building and peace-building that conflict-affected countries are not capable of autonomous recovery without external intervention (Weinstein 2005). The focus on wartime governance as a key mechanism shaping state-building trajectories in post-war countries reveals how institutional change is in fact endogenous to conflict dynamics and how the mechanisms that shaped such institutional change will also determine—both in negative and in positive ways—state-building trajectories in the aftermath of civil wars. Tackling these endogenous processes also provides insights into civilian agency and its role in shaping wartime governance and armed group behaviour. The forms of governance that result from these complex interactions between competing authorities and civilians in wartime provide, in turn, entry points to understand the potential for autonomous state-building and governance options in post-conflict countries, especially their implications for the institutional capacity of governments formed in the immediate post-conflict period and the strength of social contracts formed between ruling elites and ordinary citizens emerging from wars. Given the lacklustre record to date of external state- and democracy-building interventions, it is important that the international community understands more systematically how internal institutional dynamics may be harnessed to secure peace and stability in post-war countries.

2 Wartime governance: concepts and definitions

The idea that states are shaped by how institutions emerge and change at critical historical junctures has a long pedigree.[6] Several studies have discussed how modern developed societies have transitioned from violence and instability to inclusive political regimes through processes of institutional change at key historical transition points.[7] Wars are some of the most important transition points in the history of modern states. Charles Tilly (1975, 1992) famously argued that the formation of nation-states in Europe was motivated by the need to collect revenue that would sustain ongoing warfare. This need provided, in turn, the incentives for political leaders to develop institutions to control and govern local populations and levy taxes to sustain the war effort, in exchange for protection and the provision of public goods. The ability of political authorities to collect revenue and provide security and public goods demonstrated in turn their capacity to govern over a territory and its population (Bates 2008a, 2008b; Besley and Persson 2009; Tilly

[6] See Tilly (1975), Bates (1983, 2008b), Young (1994), Herbst (2000), Acemoglu et al. (2001, 2012), Boone (2003), Fukuyama (2004, 2012), North et al. (2009), Wimmer (2018).

[7] Pioneering studies include Boix (2003), Acemoglu and Robinson (2006, 2012), Wimmer and Min (2006), North et al. (2009) and Besley and Persson (2011), among others.

1992; Wimmer 2018), giving rise to the establishment of a social contract between rulers and citizens (Acemoglu and Robinson 2006; Azam and Mesnard 2003; Bates et al. 2002; Levi 1988), and helping to forge national identities (Tilly 1992). These bureaucracies evolved into today's modern European states (Levi 1988; Olson 1993; Tilly 1992).

More recently, an emerging body of literature has provided important insights into the formation of political order and structures of state-like governance in areas where the government is violently contested and different non-state armed political groups obtain the monopoly of violence in areas under their military control.[8] This literature focuses largely on insurgent groups in civil wars, but its theoretical predictions apply also to other non-state armed actors such as militias, paramilitary groups, vigilantes, and similar groups (Jentzsch et al. 2015). In parallel, scholars have studied the emergence of state apparatus in de facto states (Florea 2020; Risse 2011), as well as the emergence of social and political order in what is sometimes described as 'ungoverned spaces', such as those ruled by Mafia-type groups (Gambetta 1996; Rolla and Justino 2022), prison gangs (Skarbek 2011, 2014), pirate organizations (Leeson 2007, 2009), and urban slum gangs (Blattman et al. 2020; Lessing 2021; Venkatesh 2008, 2009). This literature deals with the emergence of forms of self-governing to ensure the enforcement of property rights and the protection of (illegal) business interests in areas under the control of criminal organizations, but where the state is ultimately the main authority and enforcer of such authority (Arias 2017; Lessing 2021; Skaperdas and Syropoulos 1997). This is in contrast with the rebel governance literature above where the authority of the state is fragmented and contested, and alternative Leviathans emerge in controlled areas.[9]

The exercise of state-like functions by different political actors during civil wars, or wartime governance, is well-documented. Hezbollah provide hospitals, health centres, schools, orphanages, supermarkets, gas stations, among other services that reach large numbers of communities in southern Lebanon (Flanigan 2008; Heger and Jung 2017). The FARC in Colombia financed the construction of roads, provided medical services, and offered a range of justice and conflict adjudication processes (Arjona 2016; Ibáñez et al. 2019). Justice and local conflict resolution provision was also at the heart of the expansion of Naxal rebels in India (Kennedy 2014). The LTTE in Sri Lanka provided education and health care, at times in collaboration with the Government of Sri Lanka (Flanigan 2008; Mampilly 2009, 2011; Stokke 2006).

Wartime governance can take on different forms ranging from the ad-hoc participation of armed groups in civilian affairs (Arjona 2016; Ibáñez et al. 2019; Kaplan 2017), the capture or co-option of local institutions for strategic purposes (Ch et al. 2018; Gáfaro et al. 2014, 2022; Gassier 2021; Raleigh and De Bruijne 2017), symbiotic relations between rebel and state groups (Staniland 2012, 2014, 2021), and being the de facto ruler (Arjona 2016; Mampilly 2011). Wartime governance can be exercised in specific territories by one group alone, under duopoly arrangements, or through a variety of contracts, bargains, and alliances between several groups. When territory control is absolute, it is likely that one group will oversee the most important decisions with respect to governing that territory. In many cases, the state may be almost completely absent and its

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[8] See, among others, Young (1994), Reno (1999, 2002), Pool (2001), Jackson (2003), Kasfir (2005), Kalyvas (2006), Stokke (2006), Cramer (2007), Menkhaus (2007), Bates (2008a), Kalyvas et al. (2008), Raeymaekers et al. (2008), Raeymaekers (2010), Mampilly (2011), Mampilly and Stewart (2021), Risse (2011), Ahmad (2015), Arjona et al. (2015), Arjona (2016), Sanchez de la Sierra (2020), Staniland (2012, 2021).

[9] A large body of literature has also documented the role of non-state institutions as service providers in contexts of weak or fragile states (see Helmke and Levitsky 2006). These institutions include NGOs, civil society organizations, citizen collective action, traditional leaders, and other similar civic organizations. In contrast to armed groups, these informal institutions are not driven by governing intentions and operate largely within state structures or alongside them.

institutions (when they exist in the first place) are replaced, captured, or co-opted by the ruling armed group (Arjona 2016; Gáfaro et al. 2022; Gassier 2021; Mampilly and Stewart 2021). The incumbent government and its military may at times become a competing authority in some of these contexts (Kalyvas 2006) or rule indirectly via paramilitary groups, militia, and other armed political actors under its support (Marchais et al. 2018; Muchlinski 2021). Often, insurgent groups, state actors, paramilitaries, militia, and other groups interact, forge alliances, negotiate, and bargain—in addition to fighting to control territories and populations (Staniland 2021).

Wartime governance can involve a range of activities, including the regulation and operation of markets, the support of livelihoods, the provision of health and education services, the regulation of disputes and criminal activity, and the dispensation of justice. The activities exercised under wartime governance vary substantially across conflicts, groups, and even across time in the same conflict and within the same group. Typically, groups who exercise political authority in defined territories provide some public goods and services, ranging from security to health care, education, and local dispute resolution. Some limit the provision of goods and services to individuals and households in areas under their control to facilitate recruitment and information (Berman and Laitin 2008; Lewis 2020), whereas others provide public goods more widely to support state-building objectives (Heger and Jung 2017), particularly related to secessionism (Stewart 2018). Adjudication of disputes and conflict resolution are usually prominent components of wartime governance (Arjona 2016; Heger and Jung 2017; Ibáñez et al. 2019; Loyle and Binningsbø 2018; Loyle 2020). Some studies have also documented the participation of armed groups in elections in wartime, both in direct ways by standing as a political party or putting forward their own candidates, or indirectly through backing, bribing, co-opting, and intimidating local and national politicians (Dunning 2011; Matanock 2017; Matanock and Staniland 2018).

Armed groups exercise forms of governance with different (often simultaneous) purposes, including the need to raise revenue to finance wartime strategies (Reno 1997), as a form of increasing their institutional reach (Weinstein 2006), as a way of exercising political authority, control territory, and exclude rivals (Metelits 2009), as a symbol of legitimacy, power, ideology, and identity between the armed group and civilians (Mampilly 2011, 2015), and in order to facilitate internal organization dynamics (Weinstein 2006) and gather information and intelligence (Berman et al. 2011; Kalyvas 2006; Lewis 2020). All these purposes serve, in broad terms, to provide military advantage to a group over other competing groups. Like other incipient forms of nation states across history (Wimmer 2018), the ability to provide security and public goods broadly signals the capacity of the armed group to rule and manage state functions in the post-conflict period (Kalyvas 2006; Mampilly 2011).

The forms, strength, and duration of wartime governance are, in turn, shaped by several factors including the strength and nature of pre-existing institutions in the communities where armed groups arrive (Arjona 2016), the levels of competition between different political actors (Kalyvas 2006), the time horizons of different factions and how long the group expects to stay in a certain area (Arjona 2016; Sanchez de la Sierra 2020), and the sources of external financing available to the group (Huang and Sullivan 2021; Snyder and Bhavani 2005; Weinstein 2006). The decisions of armed groups to establish order and exercise governance are shaped not only by competition between key political actors and external relations but also by the choices, perceptions, behaviour, and motivations of civilians living in conflict areas (Balcells and Justino 2014; Barter 2012; Justino et al. 2013b; Nordstrom 1997; Revkin 2021; Verwimp et al. 2019) and their ability to coordinate and exercise collective action (Arjona 2016; Breslawski 2021; Kaplan 2017; Rubin 2019). Forms of interaction by civilians include establishing strategic social, economic, and political alliances with armed actors, adapting livelihoods to existing economic opportunities (which sometimes may be illegal), and negotiating with a variety of local powerful actors that often change as the conflict evolves (Verwimp et al. 2019; Wood 2008). Through these interactions, some communities

support armed groups by voluntarily providing food, shelter, labour, recruits, and information. Other communities live under forced control by armed groups. Others resist armed groups openly, and sometimes successfully (Arjona 2016; Autesserre 2021; Kaplan 2017; Krause 2018).

These interactions between civilians, non-state armed actors, and the state result in profound forms of institutional transformation, which I argue are central to understanding processes of state-building in post-conflict countries. First, they determine how different population groups may perceive the legitimacy of different forms of authority and different political actors and, eventually, how these relationships may shape the nature of the state in the post-conflict period (Addison 2003; Azam and Mesnard 2003; Bates et al. 2002; Justino et al. 2013a; Snyder and Bhavani 2005). Second, they are central to understanding the potential for an armed group to transition from a military organization involved in armed fighting to an organization with the capacity to provide public goods and services, collect revenue in legitimate and accountable ways, represent and manage competing interests across different social groups, maintain peace, and uphold the rule of law in the aftermath of the conflict (Mampilly 2011). Third, political orders and their governance structures built during conflicts tend to persist well after the end of fighting (Kalyvas et al. 2008; Mann 1986; Tilly 1992), shaping the strength and level of authority exercised by new governments and opposition groups in the post-conflict period and the level of support they can expect from local populations and different social groups they may or may not represent (Justino 2009; Mampilly 2011).

Four key characteristics distinguish wartime governance from governance in peaceful times and from other forms of governance, such as those exercised by organized crime groups. First, wartime governance, independently of which group exercises it, operates under the threat of violence. Violence can be overt with armed groups engaging in combat with each other and against civilians, or covert whereby there is a clear understanding that armed groups will resort to violence when opposed. Violence can also be targeted towards specific individuals, groups, and physical targets, or be indiscriminate (Kalyvas 2006). In either case, violence is a key element to how wartime forms of governance are exercised and political orders are maintained in war zones. Second, wartime governance is often provided by actors and bureaucracies without recognized sovereignty (Kasfir 2015), alongside or in contestation of the incumbent government, itself a party of the conflict. But incumbent governments also adapt their forms of governance during wartime to respond to military aims, including outsourcing their governance functions to other armed actors, such as paramilitary groups and pro-government militias and vigilante groups. These state and proto-state forms of rule are part of the definition of wartime governance.[10] Third, wartime governance is provided by groups with political goals of 'competitive state-building' (Kalyvas 2006) and who hold territory (Kasfir 2015) during the war and where, for at least some time, the group exercises the monopoly of violence. This distinguishes the concept of wartime governance from governance exercised by criminal groups who typically operate under 'duopolies of violence' where the final authority lies with the state (Lessing 2021; Skaperdas and Syropoulos 1997). Fourth, wartime governance emerges to create political order. Political order facilitates revenue mobilization and, like criminal groups, armed groups involved in governance do so to extract resources. Many regulate illegal markets and extort financial contributions. But armed groups also tax populations in kind or financially in exchange for exercising state-like functions,[11] and to facilitate local

[10] This extends the definition of wartime governance beyond rebel governance, although a few studies of rebel governance have also taken into consideration the ruling roles of groups and organizations associated to the state such as paramilitary groups and militias (Arjona 2016).

[11] Criminal organizations may also tax directly those in the areas under their control (like small business), but this is usually not their main source of financing as amounts tend to be small and generally limited to businesses and not households (Lessing 2021).

recruitment (Daly 2016), improve the ability of armed groups to gather valuable information and loyalty (Berman et al. 2011; Kalyvas 2006; Lewis 2020), exclude rivals (Metelits 2009), and to strengthen authority, secure territory, and ensure civilian loyalty (Hoffmann at al. 2016; Mampilly and Thakur 2021; Revkin 2020). In other words, armed groups govern as a way of exercising and/or ensuring political authority and signaling to the population their ability to function as a state and gain legitimacy in their eyes. To do so, groups co-opt or build new institutions, including legislative bodies (such as parliaments), judicial and legal systems, health and education systems, civilian councils, and sometimes diplomatic wings (Arjona 2016; Loyle 2020; Mampilly 2011; Mampilly and Stewart 2021; Staniland 2012, 2021). These wartime governance institutions have several important functions: they establish boundaries to the power exercised by local political (armed) authorities vis-à-vis local communities, shape shifting economic, social, and political alliances, and frame the norms, behaviour, and beliefs of local populations. One important characteristic is their temporary nature, as wartime governance institutions are constantly renegotiated depending on shifts in power between different competing actors in given localities. These institutions determine how different armed factions govern over territories and populations in the absence of a unitary national government. The ability and willingness to govern, in turn, distinguishes 'state-like' armed groups from criminal bands or other extractive organizations. The next sections analyse how these forms of governance and the institutions that emerge from them shape post-war state-building trajectories.

3 From wartime governance to post-war state building: a typology of trajectories

Given the discussion above, it is tempting to view armed groups in modern civil wars as Olson's roving or stationary bandits of today—and those that do establish systems of wartime governance based on effective institutions could potentially evolve into states.[12] In this sense, the provision of rule and governance during wartime can be viewed as indicators of an incipient 'social contract' (Bates 1983; Olson 1993). This logic may not, however, apply to modern civil wars. First, many armed groups today face institutional, structural, and global constraints that were not present in the long-gone eras analysed by Mancur Olson, Charles Tilly, and others. Some of these groups are part of geo-strategic alliances that operate at the international level and form elite bargains with different global interest groups for different strategic purposes that may or may not be conducive to state-building purposes. Second, many armed groups in modern civil wars operate under conditions of competitive authority. Some groups use forms of wartime governance to extract revenue and resources from local populations without necessarily building social contracts (Mampilly 2011; Staniland 2012). Those that offer alternative state-building processes based on legitimate social contracts exercise revenue extraction in exchange for the provision of services, goods, security, and infrastructure (Ahmad 2015; Arjona et al. 2015; Mampilly 2011). Generally, this is done in contexts where different actors (usually the state and an opposing armed group, but sometimes several armed groups) build competing institutions and organizations. This in contrast with Tilly and Olson's early models, where one authority emerges to protect a territory (the future nation state) against external threats. Internal wars instead seem to give rise to multiple authorities acting in competition with each other. Whether processes of order and institutional change that emerge in contemporary civil wars will generate modern states—and what type of state—remains to be seen.

[12] Evidence indicates that state formation is more likely to take place in areas where incipient forms of centralized political power and authority existed before the wave of nation-building that swept the world in the 19th century (Wimmer 2018).

Scholars have made considerable progress in theorizing the emergence of social and political order during wartime. Kalyvas' (2006) pioneering study of the logic of violence in civil war argues that political order will emerge in areas where one group exercises full territory control, as groups favour order over disorder when the need to punish rivals and obtain information is reduced. Three other recent studies are particularly relevant. Staniland (2012) defines a new typology of wartime political orders shaped by the interaction between types of territorial control by armed groups in wartime (segmented, where groups control territory, or fragmented, where territorial contestation dominates) and level of cooperation between the state and an insurgent group (active, passive, or non-existent). Different combinations of these two variables—territorial control and armed group cooperation—generate six possible wartime political orders: shared sovereignty, spheres of influence, clashing monopolies, collusion, tacit coexistence, and guerrilla disorder.[13] The second study by Arjona (2016) focuses on the relations and negotiations between non-state armed groups and civilians and discusses the advent of two forms of social order during wartime. In the first type of social order, rebelocracy (or the rule of rebels), rebel groups govern civilians and impose norms of behaviour and conduct. The second type, aliocracy (or the rule of others), is characterized by minimal interference of armed groups in civilian affairs. These types of order, or alternative situations of disorder, are shaped by the time horizons of armed groups and the quality of pre-existing local institutions before the arrival of the group to the community. Finally, Mampilly and Stewart (2021) develop a typology of six rebel political institutional arrangements, including martial law, partial subjugation, status quo (more or less inclusive), and transformative (more or less inclusive). Each of these institutional arrangements are defined by variation across the ways in which power is shared between rebel groups and locals, the integration of civilians in rebel group institutional arrangements, the degree to which groups transform pre-existing institutions, and levels of civilian influence over decision-making. Each institutional arrangement is, in turn, shaped by the interaction between the ideological position of rebel groups, their strategic objectives, and local conditions. In broad terms, the core insight of these different frameworks is the fact that wartime political orders are shaped by how armed groups make decisions about governing based on their strategic objectives and interactions they engage in with civilians.

These typologies are valuable in understanding the emergence of different constellations of wartime politics beyond the traditional conflation of wartime with violence—which is only one part of the dynamics of an internal armed conflict. However, while much progress has been made to understand the emergence of wartime social and political orders, much less is known about their consequences and long-term implications. Throughout history, several armed groups have transitioned into political parties, with varied degrees of success, including FRELIMO and RENAMO in Mozambique, the MPLA in Angola, the FMNL in El Salvador, the Maoists in Nepal, Hezbollah in Lebanon, Hamas in Palestine, the SPLM/A in South Sudan, and FRETILIN in East Timor (Branch and Mampilly 2005; Deonandan et al. 2007; de Zeeuw 2008; Ishiyama and Batta 2011; Manning 1998; McDonough 2008; Panzer 2013; Pearce 2012). In some cases, like South Sudan, armed fighting and instability hindered processes of state building in the aftermath of the civil war and trajectories towards more inclusive governance. Other winning rebel groups have been able to form stronger state institutions and stable post-war governance systems under authoritarian regimes (Levitsky and Way 2012). In other cases, more democratic processes have prevailed (Huang 2016). It is, however, unclear what explains this variation in how former military groups become the state and follow particular forms of political organization. This paper focuses on understanding the extent to which governance structures set in place during civil wars and their

[13] In a follow-up book, Staniland (2021) condenses these into four armed orders established between armed groups and the state: alliance, limited cooperation, containment, and total war.

resulting institutions may establish the foundations for different trajectories of state building and political regimes in the aftermath of civil wars.

Political scientists have long been preoccupied with understanding how the end of civil wars and their resolution may result either in the emergence of democratic systems or in forms of authoritarianism (Fortna and Huang 2012; Huang 2016; Levitsky and Way 2012; Toft 2010), and their durability given the weak institutional capacity of states that emerge from wars (Fukuyama 2004). While the liberal democracies of Western Europe and Northern America may have been built from the ashes of external conflict, only seldom have internal conflicts that ended after the Cold War period followed consistent trajectories towards stable democracies, though some may have improved their democratic standings (Huang 2016). Many of the countries that have successfully moved from overt civil warfare, such as Angola, Mozambique, Rwanda, Uganda, Zimbabwe, among several others, have largely followed trajectories towards autocracy. Several scholars have observed that rebel victories—as was the case with almost all the examples above—lead to the establishment of long-lasting authoritarian regimes, especially among those groups that built strong cohesion during armed struggle (Levitsky and Way 2012; McDonough 2008).[14] Other countries, such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Somalia, Yemen, Afghanistan, Iraq, find themselves under situations of fragmented political authority and vicious cycles of violence and repeated internal armed conflict. These examples illustrate the wide variation in state-building processes experienced in countries moving from civil wars in modern times and their implications for the political regimes adopted by post-conflict countries. Despite this variation, several stylized facts allow the definition of six broad types of state-building and political regime trajectories in countries emerging from civil wars: from conflict to stable or weak democracy, from conflict to stable or contested autocracy, and from conflict to fragmented rule or durable disorder. Although most post-conflict countries are likely to fit within one of the stylized trajectories outlined above and their subcategories, it is important to note that these are not linear nor mutually exclusive.

3.1 From conflict to (stable or weak) democracy

The first trajectory is towards inclusive democratic states. Power-sharing arrangements, managed elite bargains, democratic elections, and decentralization processes are all mechanisms used by states and the international community to support the establishment of democratic trajectories in post-conflict countries. The overarching motivation of these interventions is to replicate the liberal democracy trajectories followed by the USA in the aftermath of the American Civil War, or the war-rooted historical emergence of nation-states in Western European, and consolidated after WWII (Tilly 1992), towards strong, accountable, inclusive, and legitimate democracies, where programmatic politics dominate over patronage or identity politics. States following this trajectory are ruled by governments that 'choose to employ force to protect rather than prey upon their citizens and when citizens choose to disarm, leaving it to the government to protect their lives and property' (Bates 2008a: 22).

As shown in a large literature, democratic trajectories are largely dependent on how the new post-war governments credibly commit to non-predatory behaviour, the upholding of the social contract and govern over the whole country (Acemoglu 2005; Olken 2007). Overall, trajectories towards democracy may be more likely when winning elites at the end of war choose to adopt institutional reforms based on inclusive political competition (Acemoglu and Robinson 2006; Bardhan 2005; North et al. 2009; Slater 2010). This requires the establishment of institutions that

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[14] According to Toft (2010), between one fifth and one third of civil wars have resulted in rebel victories.

enable governments to accommodate multiple redistributive demands and, at the same time, constrain the power of ruling elites. There are few examples of countries in the post-Cold War period that moved from armed conflict to stable and consolidated democracies. There is, however, evidence that some post-war countries followed political trajectories that resulted in improved democratic outcomes. Wantchekon and Neeman (2002), Wantchekon (2004), and Huang (2016) discuss how between one third and half of states that emerged from civil wars after 1950 improved their democratic scores in the Polity scale. These include Northern Ireland, Peru, Uganda, Nepal, Mozambique, and Guatemala, among others. All these states include elements of democratic governance and democratic institution-building processes, albeit with large variation in the strength of such institutions.[15]

One defining characteristic of a democracy is the enactment of regular free and fair elections. There is some evidence that the establishment of early elections and processes of democratization in the immediate aftermath of civil wars may improve citizens' trust in the new government and support legitimacy and accountability of new state institutions (Carothers 2007; Hegre et al. 2001). Many of these efforts at early elections are, however, fraught with renewed violence fomented by ethnic, economic, and political competition, persistent mistrust between opposing groups, and poorly organized institutional transitions, such as demobilization, disarmament, and reintegration programmes and power sharing agreements (Brancati and Snyder 2012; Collier and Vicente 2012; Dowd et al. 2020; Durant and Weintraub 2014). Elections may also take place in wartime, as discussed in the previous section. In these cases, there is not much evidence that elections may lead onto peace agreements and better democratic outcomes in the post-war period. Instead, 'rather than being a solution to conflict, electoral strategies are often another means of waging war' (Matanock and Staniland 2018: 712) (see also Matanock 2017). The overall evidence for the emergence of *stable democratic trajectories* in modern post-conflict countries that follow the European and Northern American models is not encouraging. There is nonetheless evidence that some post-conflict states have made progress in establishing *weaker forms of inclusive democracy* by expanding political concessions, providing public goods to the overall population (instead of limiting those to patronage systems), and allowing competitive, multiparty democratic elections.

3.2 From conflict to (stable or contested) autocracy

The second type of trajectory results in states often characterized by strong but extractive, predatory, and authoritarian forms of governance. These countries tend to be effective in avoiding the re-ignition of open internal armed conflict and (sometimes) promoting economic development, at times over long periods of time, if the power hold of elites and their alliances remain strong (Slater 2010). Historically, this has been the most common case of transition from war to state building in modern civil wars. Liu (2020) identifies 11 countries in Africa which moved from war to peace since 1945 with some degree of success: Angola, Burundi, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Namibia, Rwanda, Uganda, and Zimbabwe. In most of these countries, the same ruling party has been in power since the end of the war and opposition parties, when allowed to exist, have limited pathways towards winning elections and presiding over a peaceful transfer of power. In Mozambique, the opposition party and former rebel group RENAMO has built at times convincing electoral opposition to the ruling FRELIMO (Manning 1998), whereas in Ethiopia the power of the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) was reduced

[15] One paradoxical example is Colombia, where internal armed conflict between the state, guerrilla groups, and paramilitary groups has co-existed, since the aftermath of *La Violencia* in the 1950s, with fairly robust democratic institutions.

in recent years, giving rise to a new civil war outbreak.[16] In Uganda, the Museveni government built a decentralized structure of local councils, elected in every village, which made decisions about village-level issues and managed local conflict-resolution mechanisms. These were modeled on the 'resistance councils' built by Museveni's National Resistance Movement during Uganda's 1981–86 civil war to facilitate recruitment and ensure the supply of food and information to the NRM (Kasfir 1998). Similar forms of local organization were also established by the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF), which formed the basis for Eritrea's post-war government (Pool 2011), and the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) movement in Zimbabwe (Levitsky and Way 2012; Liu 2020). However, democratic institutions in these countries are at most incipient and volatile and, in many cases, some of the seemingly participatory structures set in place have largely served to strengthen the power of authoritarian rulers (Kasfir 1998; Liu 2020). Nonetheless, strong and far-reaching governance institutions and local forms of decentralized politics have supported economic development and stability in many of these countries (Weinstein 2005).

Although some of the countries above have built strong and stable governments, many with far-reaching and efficient bureaucracies and state institutions, the threat of violence remains high and credible, as illustrated by recent events in Burundi, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Uganda, and Zimbabwe. This threat remains because a myriad of actors outside central elite bargains may be able to make use of their networks to exercise violence to access or maintain power. In fact, the threat of violence is in itself an integral part of the way in which governance takes place in countries under this state-building trajectory (North et al. 2009). Levels of violence and instability, however, vary considerably across this set of countries, and across time, depending on the hold elites have over political power, what bargains and arrangements are set in place between the centre and the periphery, and how internal and external factors may affect the power balance between these different groups (Christia 2021; Justino 2016; Lidow 2016; Slater 2010). Given the permanent potential for contestation, countries in this second type of state-building trajectory invest largely on security and tend to have a strong military and police apparatus. There is also typically large variation in the reach of state institutions, reflecting the regime's military priorities, internal elite networks and interests, the involvement of outside interests, and how different factions are aligned with external interests and networks. The basic institutions of governance, such as rule of law, public goods provision, and security, are generally restricted to certain population groups and based on systems of monetized patronage (e.g. based on ethnic or kinship relations). This is particularly the case when building institutional capacity to govern in wartime and post-war goes hand in hand with instrumentalizing social identities as a way of mobilizing populations to support the war effort and the political ambitions of ruling elites in the post-war period (Horowitz 2003; Kaufman 2001).

Under these systems of patronage, local powerful actors establish symbiotic relationships with the parties that control the central state by delivering votes and economic advantages (Acemoglu et al. 2013). State–citizen relations are based on these strategic alliances with the central regime, and state capacity is often (but not always) limited to certain regions and enclaves. When this is the case, there is widespread use of hybrid political orders in periphery regions to maintain stability (such as forms of indirect rule) (Marchais et al. 2018). In some cases, such alliances will result in *stable autocracies* with low levels of violence and based on mutually beneficial elite bargains and shared values and ideology (Levitsky and Way 2012; Slater 2010). In other cases, unstable elite bargains whereby powerful political actors antagonize, resist, and contest existing political

[16] For earlier accounts of the TPLF, see Tadesse and Young (2003). For an analysis of recent events, see: https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/12/18/the-war-in-tigray-is-a-fight-over-ethiopias-past-and-future/.

settlements may result in *contested autocracies*, where the threat of violence remains high, elite alliances are shaped by the balance of military strength between factions, and governance outside the centre is maintained by repression (McDonough 2008; Slater 2010).

3.3 From conflict to fragmented rule or durable disorder

The third type of state-building trajectory results in states characterized by fragmented forms of political authority that remain in place after the formal end of violent conflicts, resulting in vicious cycles of state weakness and violent conflict. Examples include, among others, South Sudan after secession from Sudan, Somalia, Yemen, and DRC. In some of these cases, violent conflict may or may not be overt, but violence is prevalent and central authority is largely absent. It is, however, important to note that political fragmentation may not equate anarchy and disorder. In many of these countries, elements of relatively stable forms of governance may emerge at the subnational level, as reported, for instance, in Sanchez de la Sierra (2020) and Raeymaekers (2013) in parts of eastern DRC. This happens when local armed groups are able to establish local monopolies of violence or stable elite alliances for a certain period of time and in specific areas (see Kalyvas 2006; Mampilly 2011; Titeca 2011; Titeca and de Herdt 2001). Overall, despite occasional pockets of (short-lived) stability, these trajectories of state building are largely characterized by what Staniland (2017) defined as 'armed politics', where political processes are dominated by fragmented elite power and hostility between different players, and where relations with citizens are weak, volatile, and based on shifting alliances. I define these contexts as situations of *fragmented rule*, where ruling authorities have weak institutional capacity, high levels of informality dominate economic and political relations, and violence is used as a way for groups to establish power, albeit for limited periods of time (Boyle 2014; Richards 2005). Relations between ruling groups and civilians are generally one-way without the emergence of any discernible form of stable social contract. Relations with international order are also fragmented and fraught, tap into external illicit financial and arms flows, and are highly vulnerable to external shocks and interventions. Examples include warlord enclaves of governance (e.g. Somalia), which are fairly stable across time but do not amount to a centralized state—and may even work actively to discourage the emergence of such centralized state. However, some of these subnational polities have been able to provide the basic functions of the state, albeit at local levels, as described in Menkhaus (2007). Fragmented rule can easily slip into situations of *durable disorder*, where no discernible durable form of governance emerges, alliances quickly dissolve, and indiscriminate violence against civilians is not uncommon. These are Richards' (2005) 'no peace no war' situations, where political authority is left in the hands of bandits with no infrastructural power or durable authority over territories or populations.

4 How wartime governance affects state building and political regime trajectories

What explains the transition of conflict-affected countries into the different forms of state building outlined above? The literature so far has largely focused on explaining state formation in conflict-affected settings as a product of interventions implemented at the end of a conflict. The different constellations of power sharing, contestation, and alliance described above are not, however, solely the product of a peace agreement or a negotiated settlement at the end of the war. They have their roots in the conflict itself. This section theorizes the conditions under which wartime governance defines the emergence of each state-building trajectory. I focus on two key conditions. The first condition is how armed groups acquire the ability to govern, which is shaped by two key wartime variables: territorial control and institutional reach. This condition allows us to define two types of armed groups. The first are those with strong wartime institutional capacity. These are groups able to maintain dominance in competition with other groups by ensuring sovereignty and large institutional reach over substantial parts of the national territory and during significant time periods

in wartime. The second are groups that operate during wartime under fragmented territorial control, with limited institutional scope or reach. This first condition—institutional capacity—defines the ability of the winning armed group in the post-war period establishing a reasonably stable trajectory towards state building. The exact form of such (in)stability, is defined by how armed groups in delimited territories rule over civilians in wartime. Wartime rule can take three distinct forms: inclusive rule, exclusive rule, and violent rule. We discuss and expand on these conditions in more detail below.

Before proceeding, it is important to note that the theoretical framework discussed below does not explain how wartime governance may lead to regimes of democracy, autocracy, or fragmentation, but rather how variation in wartime governance may place a specific country on a *trajectory* towards each of these outcomes. This distinction has empirical implications: studying trajectories means estimating the probability of a given combination of wartime competition and rule to generate changes in scores of democracy or autocracy in the post-war period across time rather than focusing on estimating outcomes in terms of absolute values in a given year. Three other caveats are also in order. First, countries that start on one trajectory will not necessarily stay on it, and elements of each type can also co-exist at certain times. For instance, as discussed, countries under fragmented authority include many intractable conflicts but, in many cases, pockets of stability emerge in what appears to be a messy and violent context. How this happens will depend on how state and non-state actors (and sometimes civilians) interact, negotiate, and agree on power-sharing arrangements that are beneficial for each depending on own strategic objectives. Second, the democratic trajectories experienced in Western Europe and Northern America happened over centuries of breakouts of war, bargaining, and negotiation. Throughout most of their existence, these states followed trajectories of autocracy (North et al. 2009). It is thus unreasonable to expect that countries emerging from recent civil wars establish immediate trajectories towards democracy in the short term. Our task is to identify what wartime dynamics may make these trajectories *more or less likely* in the longer term. Third, the trajectories outlined above should not be judged on being better or worse than each other. For instance, it is not clear that countries characterized by fragmented authority may necessarily be worse off than those under autocratic regimes, since citizens may prefer the multitude of orders that characterize fragmented authority trajectories than living under a strong repressive state. The main takeaway point is that state building is a complex and chaotic process. No liner pathways are possible, and compromise and flexibility are needed. However, to better understand what these compromises might entail, it is useful to identify what factors or combination of factors may shape these ideal stylized pathways. These are summarized in Table 1 and discussed in more detail below.

Table 1: Typology of post-war state-building and regime trajectories

Wartime civilian rule	**Wartime institutional capacity**	
	Strong	*Limited*
Inclusive rule	Stable democracy	Weak democracy
Exclusive rule	Stable autocracy	Fragmented rule
Violent rule	Contested autocracy	Durable disorder

Source: author's elaboration.

4.1 Wartime institutional capacity

The rise of the modern nation-state has been largely shaped by shifts from patrimonialism to bureaucracies. State rule along this trajectory implies two conditions: scope and penetration (Hechter and Horne 2003). The scope of the state refers to the quantity and quality of the public goods and services it provides (social insurance, health care, education, economic regulation, and so forth). Penetration refers to the number of rules and to the control the central state exercises

in relation to regional or local decision-makers. Like in peaceful settings, wars can only make states if they result in at least some level of institutional capacity (Centeno 2002).

The strength of the wartime institutional capacity of a given armed group is determined in relation to other groups who may contend for access to de facto local power (including the incumbent government and armed groups associated to it) and may vary depending on various internal factors, such as the level of cohesion of the ruling group, and interests resulting from changes in local economic, social, and political environments. Civil wars have been portrayed as a form of competitive state building (Kalyvas 2006; Staniland 2012). These forms of competition vary in form, ranging from antagonism and fighting to alliances and degrees of cooperation (Christia 2012; Staniland 2012, 2017). Competition between groups is often about how much of the national territory can be controlled and ruled effectively by a given armed group and for how long. The duration of territorial control shapes, in turn, the institutional capacity of the group. Institutional capacity is not possible without some degree of territorial control, because territorial control defines a specific constituency, allows for some measure of stability and certainty, and facilitates access to resources. Kalyvas (2006) distinguishes between segmented control and fragmented control. Institutional capacity may be built under fragmented territorial control but is unlikely to last long or amount to sustainable forms of wartime governance. Armed groups are more likely to build institutional capacity under forms of segmented control, where armed groups hold sovereignty over portions of the national territory for meaningful lengths of time, thereby adjusting their time horizons accordingly (Arjona 2016). The expectation is that strong power holdings over territories where control is expected to continue over the long term may result in stronger wartime institutional capacity, which in turn may eventually ensure that the winning faction is able to transition into organizations with high capacity to provide public goods and maintain peace in the aftermath of the conflict—either as a democracy or an autocracy.

The institutions built by armed groups to interact with and govern civilians in wartime take a variety of forms, including elective legislative bodies, local governing authorities, judicial and legal systems, structures for the provision of public goods and services, civilian councils, and diplomatic wings (Arjona 2016; Loyle 2020; Mampilly 2011). The form and operation of these institutions are shaped by both the ideological positions of the armed group and their wartime strategic objectives (Gassier 2021; Mampilly and Stewart 2020), with large variation across armed groups and across the duration of the conflict. For instance, the ZANU in Zimbabwe and FRELIMO in Mozambique had cells in almost every village at the end of their wars (Levitsky and Way 2012), whereas others like SPLM in South Sudan built impressive structures on paper which never took off in reality (Mampilly and Stewart 2020). Armed groups build their institutional and organizational capacity in a number of ways. Some groups replace the state in the control of prior government institutions and keep them for similar purposes, such as revenue extraction, social service provision, and security provision, among others. For instance, Gáfaro et al. (2014, 2022) report how the FARC and paramilitary groups in Colombia appropriated local decision-making institutions for their own purposes, including influence over local elections and local political processes. Other groups implement institutions and organizations that run in parallel with the state apparatus and sometimes in collusion with (or at least without being contested by) state organizations. Secession movements are likely to favour this strategy to signal their ability to govern in the post-war period. That was the case of the LTTE in Sri Lanka, which ran an almost parallel state in some areas under their control (Mampilly 2009, 2011), sometimes alongside the state in some areas (Stokke 2006). The madrassas education system set in place by the Taliban and associated groups in Afghanistan and Pakistan was run in parallel to the state education system (Hanif et al. 2019), whilst the Karzai government in Afghanistan incorporated several warlords and their fiefdoms within government structures with varied levels of success (Mukhopadhyay 2014). In some cases, the incumbent government may exercise governance functions via implicit

or explicit indirect rule implemented by quasi-government armed actors, such as paramilitary groups and militia, or in 'live-and-let-live' forms of engagement with insurgent groups. One example is the influential 'people's courts' rolled out by Maoist groups in Nepal (Loyle 2020). Similar justice-dispensing activities also take place in areas under Naxalite influence in India, where armed groups provide justice and public goods to rural populations where the state has rarely exercised (or showed much interest in exercising) their functions (Kennedy 2014). The Taliban also operated an equally widespread system of courts and dispute adjudication (Giustozzi 2014). In other cases, armed groups destroy previous institutions and bureaucracies and implement new ones that better serve their wartime objectives. Examples include the villagization programmes implemented in Zimbabwe (and Mozambique), whereby civilians were moved to new communities under the full control of rebel groups (Liu 2020), and how the Tigray People's Liberation Front in Ethiopia transformed local power structures in ways that allowed military gains and civilian support across the territory (Gassier 2021). These new institutional settings generally rely on social networks and groups that supported the formation of the armed group initially and carry on strengthening their position during wartime through systems of patronage and kinship or other social and ideological ties. These ties are important to access reliable information, ensure protection from competing factions or sub-factions that may emerge as the conflict develops, and strengthen loyalty within the organization.

Choices made by armed groups with respect to institution building in wartime have implications for state-building trajectories in the post-conflict period. Mann (1986) describes how state formation is shaped by the ability of certain rulers to effectively govern populations and regions through 'infrastructural powers'. These 'infrastructural powers' are different across the various institutional choices outlined above. Successful attempts at being the state in areas under territorial control during wartime—either by appropriating existing state institutions or building alternative ones—may well lead into state-building trajectories towards some form of democracy or more stable forms of autocracy. Stokke (2006: 1024) shows that, in the case of the LTTE, before their military destruction by government troops, 'the LTTE state institutions contain authoritarian and technocratic tendencies that provide a certain administrative efficiency but prevent democratic accountability. On the other hand, they are also rooted in and committed to the rights, welfare and development of the Tamil community on whose behalf the militant and political struggles have been waged. […] this combination of autonomy and embeddedness gives the emerging state a substantial degree of administrative capacity. This may provide an institutional basis for a more democratic relationship between the LTTE and citizens in northeast Sri Lanka'. These complex trajectories towards inclusive democracies and/or strong autocracies are likely to hinge on sound institutional capacity and wide reach across the territories ruled in wartime, whereby public goods and services are provided to the entire population under rule in an effort to win hearts and minds, gather information, facilitate recruitment, and increase the opportunity cost of defection to opposing factions. In addition, the accumulation of experience with state-like institutions in a certain locality may result in stronger incentives for improved state capacity and effective governance in the long term (Alesina and Fuchs-Schündeln 2007; Depetris-Chauvin 2015).

When wartime institutional capacity is limited, ruling (armed) elites may rely on closer kinship, social networks, and alliances via patronage links and parochial politics, without attempting to expand their institutional capacity beyond their centres of power. In these cases, institutional capacity and reach is limited to the centre and may continue to be so in the post-conflict period, with areas outside the direct control of the new government (remote, mountainous areas, areas inhabited by different ethnic groups, or porous borders, for instance) being characterized by fragmented rule or outright political disorder. If the periphery is contested by local actors or splitter factions, central authorities may choose to govern in two ways. The first is by providing club goods to certain ethnic or other groups that may support them and exclude everyone as a way of 'dividing

and ruling'. Governments may also govern those outside central alliances through forms of indirect rule whereby local strongmen represent the central state, thereby creating more stable autocracies. In this case, central authorities will transfer private goods to local elites to leverage their local political power (Marchais et al. 2018) or may devolve the provision of public goods to subnational actors (Muchlinski 2021). One potential weakness with these approaches is that these may become sources of rebellion against the ruling elites (see Cederman et al. 2013; Goodwin 2001; Wickham-Crowley 1992), which in turn may move incipient autocracies into fragmented rule.

A second alternative is to govern through repression in areas of limited institutional capacity. This approach is the most likely to result in trajectories to durable disorder, whereby different power holders attempt to control local population by force or through forced displacement—rather than building stronger institutional capacity to govern. Unsuccessful attempts at governance that backfire, such as was the case of the SPLM in South Sudan (Branch and Mampilly 2005; Podder 2014), may also place countries into durable disorder trajectories (Bueno de Mesquita et al. 2005). For instance, in the case of Somalia, the inability of the central government to govern across clan interests, especially in nomadic areas, and end clan-based conflicts led eventually to state collapse (Laitin and Samatar 1987; Wimmer 2018).

The strength of the wartime institutional capacity of an armed group allows us to draw hypotheses about state capacity and the scope of its institutions in the post-war period. However, this is not a sufficient condition to distinguish whether stable democracies or stable autocracies will emerge under strong wartime institutional capacity, whether limited wartime institutional capacity will lead to weak forms of democracy or to fragmented rule, or when fragmented rule may slide into durable disorder. To do so, we need to bring into play the third main actor in conflict settings: civilians. Once territorial control is established and the group achieves a certain level of institutional capacity, it may choose to exercise wartime governance by engaging in co-option, alliances, bargains, and negotiations with local communities to maximize stability and their longevity (Boone 2003; Cederman et al. 2010; Raleigh and De Bruijne 2017; Theis 2009; Tilly 1985). These actions produce a set of power relations between those that govern and the different communities that are governed at different times during the conflict that, under certain conditions, may amount to a social contract or at least a social compact that may shape state–citizen relations in the post-war period.

4.2 Wartime civilian rule

Understanding the social and institutional dynamics and legacies of civil wars implies understanding interactions not only between governments and armed groups—a type of inquiry that has dominated to date the study of civil wars—but also between these competing warring factions and the civilian population. Wartime civilian rule is defined by two key aspects: the provision of public goods and services and the management of violence against civilians. The interaction between the type of public goods provision and management of violence against civilians shapes, in turn, levels of legitimacy and compliance of civilians towards different armed groups and the mobilization of civilians either for or against armed groups in wartime—arguably key factors in how state-building trajectories will evolve in the post-conflict period.

I define three forms of wartime civilian rule. The first category is *inclusive rule*, whereby governance encompasses civilians both inside and outside the armed group's immediate networks. Inclusive rule is generally characterized by low levels of violence against civilians once territories are controlled. It is also often accompanied by efficient and inclusive provision of security and public goods and services, allowing the armed group to establish strong social contracts, which are perceived as legitimate by local communities, possibly beyond controlled areas. Armed groups who exercise inclusive rule are also often able to mobilize civilians to act in support of their cause in

wartime, with civilians being often incorporated into the running of local affairs and in decision-making processes within the territories controlled by the group. The second category is *exclusive rule*, whereby governance is limited to the provision of private and club goods and services. As a result, social contracts are limited to kinship, patronage links, and social networks of the armed group, leading to limited legitimacy and compliance outside the centre of power. Civilian mobilization is discouraged or violently repressed, but pockets of civilian rebellion are likely to remain active. Selective violence may be used against such groups or networks outside the elite settlement. The third category is *violent rule*, where governance is exercised under the threat or direct use of violence. These forms of civilian rule are characterized by large levels of indiscriminate violence against civilians outside periods or spaces of (sporadic) shared control by armed groups. Armed groups under this category are generally largely unable or uninterested in providing public goods and services beyond (sometimes) security and are unable to uphold legitimate social contracts with civilians. Table 2 illustrates these three categories of wartime civilian rule.

Table 2: Wartime civilian rule

	Inclusive rule	*Exclusive rule*	*Violent rule*
Public goods provision	Inclusive	Club goods	Limited
Violence against civilians	Limited	Selective	Indiscriminate
Legitimacy and compliance	Widespread	Based on patronage systems	Limited
Civilian mobilization	Strongly supportive of group	Repressed with persistent pockets of rebellion	Highly repressed using indiscriminate violence

Source: author's elaboration.

Provision of public goods and services[17]

One key aspect of wartime governance is the provision of public goods and services to civilians, including security, health, education, legal and judicial services, and infrastructure. Citizen support for political authority is known to be strongly shaped by the effective and inclusive provision of public goods (Weber 1976; Wimmer 2018). Recent studies have examined how armed groups provide public goods during wartime and the consequences of these activities for their survival during and after civil wars. Security is a particularly important public good in these contexts. Daly (2019) argues that groups that show better capacity to provide security to citizens may also be preferred in post-conflict elections. Groups that provide public goods may also be more likely to successfully negotiate peace deals and avoid the threat of spoilers (Heger and Jung 2017), and secessionist groups are more successful when they provided public goods in wartime (Stewart 2018). Grasse et al. (2022) show the Taliban courts reduced the frequency of disputes and increased citizen approval towards Taliban rule in districts where they were in operation, which may partially explain Taliban's swift takeover of Afghanistan after the US and NATO withdrawal of military forces in 2021. By contrast, the authority of ruling armed groups may be undermined when public goods provision is ineffective or limited. For instance, armed group policies that may damage or close down local markets, such as policies of agricultural self-sufficiency followed by the *Sendero Luminoso* at various stages of their rule in Peru, and attacks to infrastructure, as performed by the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN) in El Salvador in the 1980s, contributed to losses in authority by the groups (Moore 1978; Wickham-Crowley 2015; Wood 2003).

[17] Public goods (and services) are defined in economics as goods which are non-excludable and non-rivalrous. In other words, no one can be prevented from accessing or using them and their use by one person does not exclude access or availability to others.

A large literature has discussed the importance of inclusive versus exclusive provision of public goods, services, and policies to the establishment of effective social contracts (see Acemoglu and Robinson 2006). In wartime, some armed groups provide inclusive public goods effectively to the entire population under their control (and even beyond) (Heger and Jung 2017; Stewart 2018).[18] This strategy may support post-war state-building strategies towards (stable or weak) democracy because it allows ruling (armed) elites in wartime to extend their networks and alliances beyond their immediate circle and across larger areas of potential support (Wimmer 2018). Other groups only provide private or club goods (Berman and Laitin 2018). Reno (2011) describes these groups as 'parochial rebels', more likely to see the state as a prize to be won and a source of revenue and political influence—a view that is unlikely to change should the group win the war and take over the state. These groups may become successful at establishing stable autocracies with lasting, centralized power when elite bargains are mutually beneficial and last (Driscoll 2015; Slater 2010). Political fragmentation will dominate when elite bargains fail or are too volatile and groups are unable to build institutional capacity. In either case, limiting the provision of goods and services to private or club goods is unlikely to establish the seeds of democracy, although it may support stable autocracies when groups created strong institutional capacity in wartime.[19]

Violence against civilians

Another key aspect of wartime governance—and an important feature that distinguishes it from governance in peaceful contexts—is the management of violence against civilians during the period of rule (Justino 2018a). Exercising governance in these contexts implies making decisions about the use of violence and repression for different purposes.[20] Armed groups facing information asymmetries tend to resort to indiscriminate forms of violence to control valuable resources, take over areas of strategic interest to the war effort, displace or kill the opposition, and control the behaviour of civilians (Kalyvas 2006). As access to information improves, armed groups may use more selective forms of violence or reduce the use of violence and repression of civilians.[21] Repression by violent means may also be deemed unnecessary as armed groups gain local support or, at least, engage in mutually beneficial arrangements with local communities (Arjona 2016). Repression comes at a cost because policing and targeting civilians requires manpower and intelligence, and may trigger organized rebellion against the group, forcing it to fight on several fronts (Arjona 2016; Kaplan 2017; Kasfir 2015). Insurgent groups may nonetheless engage in predatory behaviour and exercise violence and repression against civilians when they are defeated in combat and lose territory (Wood 2014), or when they have access to external

[18] A parallel literature has analysed the effect of government social spending, aid, and economic policy on the incidence and outbreak of violent conflicts (Crost et al. 2014; Fearon et al. 2009; Justino 2015; Justino and Martonaro 2018), civic unrest (Gupte et al. 2014; Iacoella et al. 2021; Justino and Martorano 2019; McCulloch et al. 2022), and attitudes towards the state in post-conflict settings (Ghorpade and Justino 2019).

[19] To note that the provision of public goods and services is useful to improve institutional capacity and social contracts in both democracies and autocracies. Better infrastructure, lower levels of violence, and stronger social contracts improve market exchange, diffusion of ideas and information, and accumulation of human capital—all necessary conditions for the consolidation of democracy. But they also improve the ability of rulers to send security forces to marginalized areas where contention risks may be highest, strengthen the ability of armed groups to use forms of selective violence more efficiently thanks to better monitoring of populations outside the immediate patronage networks, and facilitate better access to resource-rich areas (Müller-Crepon et al. 2021).

[20] For reviews of the literature on violence against civilians in civil wars and its consequences, see Justino (2009, 2012) and Balcells and Stanton (2021). Stanton (2016) and Lidow (2016) discuss the strategic use of violence against civilians by armed groups as a signal to obtaining concessions and accessing external patronage.

[21] Kalyvas (2006) has shown how the use of indiscriminate or selective violence is endogenous to territorial control and levels of contestation with opposing factions.

endowments in the form of natural resources or international financial and military support, which reduce their need to win hearts and minds (Weinstein 2006). Armed groups with stronger internal organization and a strong central authority are also more able to manage the use of violence against civilians (Kalyvas 2006; Staniland 2014). The restrained use of violence may win civilian support. For instance, Wood (2000) describes how the restrained use of violence by the FMLN during the El Salvador civil war resulted in strong support from civilian networks which, in turn, weighted in the peace settlement negotiations. In contrast, the increasingly strong use of force against civilians by the *Sendero Luminoso* in Peru resulted is weakened support by civilians and eventually their dismissal as an alternative political force (Starr and Wood 2017). In Iraq, civilian casualties caused by insurgents increased information flows from civilians to the state military about insurgent activities, whereas government-induced casualties reduced such sharing of information (Shaver and Shapiro (2021). The restrained—or more selective—use of violence and repression may be more likely to support more stable (democratic or autocratic) political orders when armed groups progressively reduce the use of indiscriminate violence as they gain stronger control over territories, strengthen their rule over civilian populations, and/or muster local support. As argued in Kalyvas (2015: 119), '[t]he more extensive the geographical scope of control exercised by a rebel group, the fuller the expression of its political identity on the institutions of rebel rule. Conversely, limited and tenuous territorial control correlates with more openly coercive practices' (see also Kalyvas and Kocher 2009). The wide spread of violence against civilians results in 'violent rule'. This can manifest itself in trajectories towards contested autocracies where violence and repression are intrinsic components of how autocrats with strong institutional capacity at the centre rule over marginal parts of the territory where alliances with local authorities are weak and fraught with mistrust. Violent rule is also a component of trajectories towards durable disorder, where indiscriminate attacks of civilians and violent clashes between competing armed groups with weak institutional capacity dominate the political landscape.

Legitimacy and compliance

To sow some seeds of democracy, public goods provision also needs to be associated with voluntary compliance of civilians, legitimate and accountable social contracts, and the participation of civilians in wartime governance (Midgal 2001). This is because any form of political order is grounded on the relationship between a political authority and its constituency (Bates 1983; Midgal 2001; Moore 1978; Timmons 2005). As argued in Wimmer (2018: 9), the 'more a government is capable of providing public goods across all regions of a country, the more attractive it will be as an exchange partner and the more citizens will attempt to establish an alliance with the political center'. Knowing this, armed groups intended on ruling a certain territory and its population during the conflict but also in the post-war period will generally extract a surplus from them in exchange for protection, the provision of stability and relative peace within the territory, and the assurance of livelihoods and adequate levels of material well-being—rather than forcibly extracting such surplus—in hope of gaining legitimacy.

Many actors engage in battles over legitimacy in conflict-affected contexts: state and non-state armed groups in conflict settings are typically concerned not only with military struggle, but also work to delegitimize competing groups and mobilizing mass support by establishing alternate legitimate political order (Ahmad 1982; Chalmers 1962; Kasfir 2005; Mampilly 2011; Wickham-Crowley 1987). Perceptions about the legitimacy of forms of wartime governance, and ensuing political orders, are in turn shaped by how revenue extraction is used in exchange for protection, public goods, and other state-like functions, with highly coercive forms of wartime governance unlikely to be associated with positive perceptions of legitimacy (Bates 1983; Goodwin 2001; Podder 2014). Legitimacy is likely to be higher towards armed groups that exercise more inclusive forms of governance and public goods provision in wartime and restrain the use of coercion and repression. For instance, Wickham-Crowley (1992, 2015) and Goodwin (2001) discuss how rebel

revolutionary movements were more likely to muster civilian support and gain legitimacy in Latin America in areas where governments exercised terror and repression towards their citizens. Kubota (2017) shows that civilian identity (Tamil versus Sri Lankan) in northern and eastern areas of Sri Lanka is considerably shaped by how local populations perceive the legitimacy of state-like functions performed by the LTTE during the war. Improved legitimacy and capacity by armed groups may also ensure that civilians do not leave recently controlled territories, as Revkin (2021) shows for the case of the Islamic State in Mosul, and may also strengthen ties between armed group commanders and local communities in the post-war period (Martin 2021). Perceptions of legitimacy about the state-like roles of armed groups during wartime are important also because they define state–military–citizen relations in the post-war period. For instance, Levitsky and Way (2012) show how ex-ZANU combatants remained loyal to Robert Mugabe throughout the post-war years in Zimbabwe despite serious cycles of economic downturns, given the ZANU party's organization 'around non-material sources of cohesion, such as ideology, ethnicity, or bonds of solidarity rooted in a shared experience of violent struggle' (p. 870).

The nature of the relationship between civilians and ruling political actors can also be examined through the lens of compliance, and whether it is consensual or coercive (Revkin and Ahram 2020). While legitimacy reflects the perceptions of citizens about the right of competing authorities to rule, compliance refers to the degree of freedom civilians have to obey such rules. In some cases, civilians comply freely with the norms and regulations imposed by armed groups in wartime; in other cases, they resent and resist them. In many cases, they are coerced into complying with rules and norms. A variety of factors explains this variation in compliance, including the strength of territorial control (Kalyvas 2006), how the ideologies and interests of armed groups and civilians are aligned (Gutiérrez Sànin and Wood 2014; Weinstein 2006), the extent to which armed groups have the bureaucratic capacity to enforce norms and regulations, extract revenues, and provide public good and security in return (Azam and Mesnard 2003; Centeno 2002, 1997), and perceptions of fairness about how competing political actors charge taxes and decide on the different amounts levied across different populations and businesses (Ahmad 2015; Hoffmann et al. 2016; Mampilly and Thakur 2021; Revkin 2020).[22] In general, the more legitimacy civilians confer to one group, the more likely they are to comply with rules imposed by the group and the more likely it will be for a country to initiate state-building trajectories towards inclusive democracy (Huang 2016) or stable autocracies (Levitsky and Way 2012). Groups that sustain legitimacy in the eyes of those they govern are also more likely to be viewed as legitimate by other states, should they become the governing authority in the post-conflict period (for instance, via elections held as part of peace agreements) (Heger and Jung 2017). Strong power holdings combined with restricted levels of legitimacy and coercive compliance will likely result in 'contested autocracy' state-building trajectories, which may fold into more fragmented rule when facing external economic or political shocks (Levitsky and Way 2012; Slater 2010).

Civilian mobilization

Civilian collaboration and the mobilization of civilians to support own agendas has been often a major concern for warring factions intending on winning an internal armed conflict and controlling territories (Chalmers 1962; Guevara 1968; Kalyvas 2006; Laqueur 1976). As such, civilian mobilization is likely to shape state-building trajectories. Acemoglu and Robinson (2017) theorize how the emergence of weak, despotic, or inclusive states arises from the type of relationship established between governing elites and ordinary citizens. Asymmetries of power that favour

[22] Compliance can also be sought via the use of symbols like flags and anthems, which facilitate the identification of civilians with the warring faction that rules them (Mampilly 2015), or through mythical narratives used to consolidate values and beliefs and ensure civilian engagement (Hoffman 2015; Nordstrom 1997).

ruling elites over civil society will result in despotic states. Strong civil societies in the presence of weak authority result in weak and fragmented states. Inclusive states originate from endogenous processes whereby strong state capacity and strong civil society reinforce each other. This is particularly the case when civil society is formed of civic organizations able to bridge across ethnic, linguistic, and cultural divides (Aghajanian et al. 2020; Putnam 1993; Wimmer 2018).

In contexts of war, the net effect of strong civic organizations on state-building trajectories will depend on the effects of wartime governance on local civic life and how civilians are mobilized and integrated within the war effort of different factions. This relationship is formally theorized in Gáfaro et al. (2022), who show how the strength of civic society in the aftermath of violent conflict is shaped by political or economic alliances between armed groups and civilian populations during wartime. The strength of community collective action and social cohesion is also in turn a key determinant of the type and depth of governance systems implemented by armed groups locally (Breslawski 2021; Rubin 2019), and within-community social and economic structures (Justino 2006, 2022; Justino et al. 2019). Some armed groups engaged in the use of wartime governance often attempt to rule and govern over local populations through the capture of existing civic organizations or the establishment of new ones (Kaplan 2017; Wood 2008). For instance, Ch et al. (2018) show how both paramilitary and guerrilla groups in Colombia make use of their de facto power at the local level to capture local tax and property rights organizations. In some cases, civilian institutions may be co-opted and incorporated into wartime governance structures, with sometimes civilians running some aspects of their operations (Kaplan 2017; Mampilly 2011; Mampilly and Stewart 2020). This may be the case in particular when armed groups and civilians share pre-war social ties and mutual support (Staniland 2014), or when the aims of civilians and armed groups are (or become) ideologically aligned, as was the case of the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde (PAIGC), led by Amilcar Cabral, who 'introduce[d] a participatory, inclusive system of governance that represented a fundamental divergence from colonial subjugation' (Mampilly and Stewart 2020: 22). In other cases, armed groups capture existing civic organizations in order to facilitate social control. In other contexts, civilians resist the presence and control of armed groups by creating resistance movements or civil defence groups (Kalyvas 2006; Krause 2018; Petersen 2001; Wood 2003). As a response to resistance, armed groups may in turn inhibit the functioning of local civic organizations to prevent civil resistance movements or co-opt local organizations by replacing their leaders (Gáfaro et al. 2022).

Civilian agency shapes these complex processes of institutional capture and institution-building in ways that will also determine the behaviour of civil society in the aftermath of conflicts. Inclusive and strong civic organizations that may have risen from resistance movements or from strong movements that supported insurgent or incumbent coalitions in the post-conflict period may potentially support state-building trajectories towards inclusive democracy. Wood (2000, 2001) illustrates how pressures from civil society led to incumbent governments in El Salvador and South Africa agreeing to negotiate with insurgents. This eventually resulted in trajectories of both countries towards more inclusive democracies because 'sustained mobilization by poor and working-class people transformed key interests of economic elites, leading to pressure on the state to compromise with the insurgents, thereby strengthening regime moderates over hard-liners with the result that negotiated transitions to democracy followed' (Wood 2001: 863). As argued also by Huang (2016: 2), 'what may initially be a wartime choice on the part of rebel groups on how to engage with the people in their milieu has the force to catalyze regime change at the center once the war has come to an end' (see also Wantchekon 2004). Such 'pressure from below' can also reduce the opportunity costs of institutional reforms by elites because it increases the political costs of not conceding to demands (i.e. the potential loss of future political power) (Acemoglu and Robinson 2002, 2006; North et al. 2009). As noted by Slater (2010: 5), 'internal contention can "make the state" […] when it takes especially threatening and challenging forms'. Civilian

mobilization and collective action in the immediate aftermath of violent conflicts can be also key in shaping what society and state are to emerge from the war. For instance, Chenoweth and Stephan (2011) show that civilian resistance, particularly in the form of non-violent movements, can generate durable democracies and reduce the likelihood of post-conflict countries returning to civil war.

Trajectories towards autocracies are likely to emerge from the support of strategic alliances formed during wartime with specific population groups or specific local elites—at the cost of excluding non-supporters outside these patronage and kinship relations and repressing any form of dissent. For instance, Liu (2020) describes how the ZANU group in Zimbabwe courted civilian supporters to build local organizational capacity. This led to the creation of informal governing institutions that provided security, rule of law, and the provision of public goods. These institutions persisted once the ZANU party won the elections, ensuring the continuation of clientelistic electoral politics in the post-war period (see also Levinsky and Way 2012). Where civilians' views were suppressed, the same pattern continued in the post-war period in ways that entrenched autocratic trajectories. As described in Liu (2020: 3), 'political intimidation and state-sponsored violence against civilians is still disproportionately concentrated in districts that were historically pro-ZANU wartime strongholds […]. Citizens living in these districts have significantly less political choice, express greater doubts towards voting and election outcomes, and report greater fear towards political participation. In short, the institutional and social legacies of war have facilitated ZANUPF's post-war dominance.' The manipulation of ethnic identities and the mobilization of civilians along ethnic lines to support war efforts may further strengthen these processes of social and political exclusion in the post-war period, whereby political power is only extended to those within the alliances that form exclusive rule. However, civil wars may also reshape social and political identities in ways that overcome cultural cleavages and may lead to positive social change.

5 Policy implications and a new research agenda

This paper addressed some fundamental questions about the nature of state formation and the organization of society and politics in the aftermath of civil wars. Its core argument is that post-war state-building trajectories are shaped by the forms of institutional change that emerge and operate in wartime. The paper explored the specific role of wartime governance and outlined a new theoretical framework to explain *how* forms of wartime governance may affect state-building trajectories in the aftermath of civil wars. The framework maps out six possible trajectories: stable democracy, weak democracy, stable autocracy, fragmented rule, contested autocracy, and durable disorder. Each trajectory is shaped by the interaction between two dimensions of wartime governance: how armed groups build institutional capacity in wartime and the characteristics of wartime civilian rule by armed groups. This framework helps to illustrate how civil wars may generate within themselves bureaucratic and institutional capacity that may, under certain conditions, be harnessed in the post-war period to build autonomous states capable of governing. Notably, countries emerging from conflict are more likely to follow a trajectory of state building towards inclusive democracy when they managed to control territory for long time periods (which ensured the efficient provision of public goods and services), govern over and establish legitimate social contracts with local populations for a long period of time, and were able to build strong bureaucracies with wide institutional reach. Forms of wartime governance that faced large swings in territorial control, were dependent on specific alliances and the provision of club goods, and limited their operations to certain areas are more likely to turn into forms of contested autocracy. Large levels of competition between armed groups for territorial and political control, challenges in establishing social contracts with local (fragmented) civil society, and weak internal organization

and institutional capacity are likely to result in trajectories towards fragmented rule or durable disorder orders.

The framework and arguments developed in the paper open important directions for future research. The first is on the consequences of wartime political orders, especially over the longer term. Although a large body of research has mapped out the origins of wartime political orders in a variety of settings, much less is known about its long-term consequences. This paper focuses on one aspect of wartime political order (how armed groups governed), but other dynamics may matter too, including interactions between armed groups and external actors, cross-border spillovers, and the role of ideology. Second, the paper offers a theoretical framework to better understand how wartime governance may place countries under different post-war state-building trajectories but leaves open questions about the sustainability of such trajectories: what trajectories may better support economic recovery and the social reintegration of civilians and combatants in the post-war period? How do different state-building trajectories shape and are shaped by changes in social and political norms during and after civil wars? How do different state-building trajectories affect the duration of peace and possible reignition of conflict and violence? Third, the theoretical framework proposed in the paper raises additional questions about the determinants and evolution of political orders in wartime. While we are starting to get a good grasp on how different political orders emerge and their characteristics, we know much less about how they evolve and change over time. The typology proposed in this paper illustrates how variation in wartime governance pushes a country towards a certain type of state-building trajectory. But once a country enters a specific state-building trajectory, what explains whether it stays on course, changes from one trajectory to another, or even relapses into armed violence once more? Possible explanations may include the role of political and economic shocks in the post-conflict period, shifts in aid priorities, the level and type of external financing support, and the role of geopolitical alliances. Finally, assessing the validity of the theoretical framework proposed requires compiling new data on variation in different forms of wartime governance across countries and conflicts, at the subnational level and across time, as well as operationalizing 'state-building trajectories' as a dependent variable. This is a daunting task,[23] but it could potentially build on important empirical work reviewed in the paper on some of the mechanisms, especially on territorial control and use of violence against civilians.

One implication of the framework for state-building policy in post-conflict countries is the dual importance of strengthening the capacity of governments and of civil society in the aftermath of wars. However, it is important to note that this is not a panacea to sustaining peace. Trajectories towards state building may continue for a long time to use violence as part of governance systems, while military mindsets may persist for a long time. Policy-makers should not expect linear and straightforward pathways from civil wars to state building, particularly with respect to trajectories towards democracies. Reducing violence, improving the social contract, and strengthening institutional capacity and reach are necessary but not sufficient conditions to ensure the consolidation of democracy. The exercise of effective and wide-reaching wartime governance along these dimensions may facilitate the transition of armed groups to viable political parties (either as the government or the opposition) in the post-conflict period. In some cases, experience with effective wartime governance may sow the seeds of democracy. Often, however, we instead observe armed-groups-turned-elected-governments transitioning to autocracy, as the experience of many African countries in the aftermath of postcolonial wars has demonstrated. In many other cases, political fragmentation dominates and persists, as illustrated by the recent cases of Somalia,

[23] For earlier reviews of the literature on measurement of conflict dynamics, see Bruck et al. (2009, 2013, 2016) and Raleigh et al. (2010).

Afghanistan, and Iraq. This may not indicate that state-building trajectories are failing, but rather that building cohesive nation-states is a long-term process and there is no guarantee that liberal democratic regimes will work or are even the preferred governing system in modern post-conflict states. Supporting trajectories of state building in the aftermath of civil wars implies moving past entrenched ideas about what constitutes 'good governance' to understanding how a variety of (armed) actors negotiate, bargain, and establish alliances and attempt to shape the allocation of resources and power.

It is also important to remember that, in the short term, the formal end of a conflict (through a peace agreement, for instance) may be associated with a vacuum of power in many post-conflict regions. In these circumstances, armed actors may use social, economic, and political networks established during the conflict for their benefit, some with positive consequences for state formation, others with negative outcomes, particularly if corrupt, rent-seeking, and predatory behaviours persist and political competition (and fighting) between opposing factions continues into the post-conflict period. Strengthening state capacity and institutional reach in the post-conflict period may then be hindered by how the losing side continues to operate their own institutions, how those are absorbed into the new state, and whether processes of capture and co-option continue to operate at the local level. Although strengthening the reach of state institutions in the aftermath of violent conflicts is a necessary condition to support state-building trajectories towards inclusive democracies, these interventions require caution and an understanding that informal institutions may still have key roles to play until other conditions (such as legitimacy, social organization, and political inclusiveness) are met.

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