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Africa

By Nicolas van de Walle

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Inside Rebellion: The Politics of Insurgent Violence. Jeremy M. Weinstein. Cambridge University Press, 2007, 428 \$70.00

Most of the increasingly voluminous literature on civil wars in Africa has ignored the organization of insurgencies, focusing instead on the broad reasons for the outbreak of violent conflict or on the difficulties of ending it. Weinstein begins to restore the balance by arguing that how rebels are organized -- in particular their sources of funding -- largely determines the degree to which they countenance civilian casualties. Through his fieldwork and careful analysis of recent civil wars, Weinstein gives new meaning to the old military adage that an army's organization shapes its tactics. Primarily based on case studies of wars in Uganda, Mozambique, and Peru, although Weinstein offers data from many other conflicts as well, his book demonstrates that insurgencies that can count on either foreign support or mining revenues -- and thus do not need the support of local populations to survive -- are much more likely to commit violence against civilians. He shows convincingly that civilian violence is rarely random: it follows a logic related to the internal needs of guerrilla armies.

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