

Wartime Service Provision and State Legitimacy: Evidence from the Former FATA Region, Pakistan

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Abstract

Why and under what conditions is state legitimacy advanced by wartime service provision? In the crossfire between conflict belligerents, civilians are often provided public services by both the government and rebel groups, each intending to obtain popular support. Previous studies find that the successful delivery of wartime services is a signal to civilians that the provider is capable of and committed to governance in a conflict zone. However, exactly what types of and whose services facilitate (or impede) the development of state legitimacy in the post-conflict context has yet to be examined. Analyzing novel survey data collected from the former FATA region of Pakistan, we find that the state's provision of public services encourages civilians to have a positive attitude toward state legitimacy. In contrast, the provision of services by the rebels has a negative influence on that perspective. The type of services also matters, but in a different way from the causal mechanism previous studies rely on; while state's delivery of basic services and extra services beyond justice and security together have influence on the civilian perception of state legitimacy, the former enhances that perception more than the latter does.

Keywords

Conflict, civil war, public services, state legitimacy, local governance, Pakistan

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