CONFERENCE PAPER

Rebel Governance in Sri Lanka’s ‘Uncleared’ Territories during the 1990s and 2000s

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Introduction

Academic, journalistic and policy accounts of rebel groups are usually dominated by images of warlords, organized crime, human rights abuses, child soldiers, anarchy and natural resource plunder. However, scholarly research increasingly demonstrates that in many cases rebel actors perform substantial governance tasks, paradoxically often in tandem with these predatory practices (Mampilly 2007; Hagmann & Péclard 2010; Podder 2013; Reno 2009; Raeymakers et al. 2008). This paradox remains under-explored in both academic and policy debates, leaving us with a limited understanding of the practical dynamics of ‘rebel governance’ and the political legitimacy that rebel groups may derive from it. The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in Sri Lanka are an example of a rebel group that both accounts for severe predatory behavior towards civilian populations and the performance of substantial governance tasks at the same time. In this paper we investigate how the LTTE governed the territories under its military control. The paper describes and explains the phenomenon of rebel governance and the political legitimacy and legitimization that accompanied it. The objective of this paper is to expand our academic understanding of the phenomenon of rebel governance, and not to politically engage in the question whether the LTTE’s attempt to establish an independent state was in any kind justified or not. In this connection, we are aware of the severe human suffering that the nearly three decades of war in Sri Lanka caused and of the role of the LTTE therein. Our research focus on the governance domain in LTTE controlled territory is not to neglect these brutal sides of the LTTE, but is meant to open up an analytical angle from which life under rebel rule has not extensively been researched before. Our inspiration comes from research carried out by Mampilly (2007) and we are expanding on his findings with a new set of collected data.

Methodology

Our research is based on a dataset of primary empirical data collected in 2014 and 2015 as well as secondary research of academic literature and policy documents. At the beginning of the fieldwork in 2014 the Mahinda Rajapakse regime was still in office. The regime restricted access to the Northern Province of the country for foreign nationals and the intelligence agencies as well as the police were keeping a close eye on every foreigner that would openly be asking questions about the LTTE. This was due to the international investigations into the alleged war crimes by the

1 Our gratitude goes out to the Gerda Henkel Stiftung for supporting this research financially.
2 Accounts of this are given by (but are not confined to): Alison 2003; Brun 2008; De Mel 2007; Gaasbeek 2010; Hoole 2001; Sarvananthan 2007; Trawick 1997; Walker 2010.
3 Klem (2012) and Mampilly (2007) are the most important exceptions to this. They did previous scholarly work on governance-related phenomena in LTTE controlled territory through a similar analytical lens as we use, but they collected a different kind of data.
4 In December 2013 the Centre for Conflict Studies, Utrecht University hosted a conference on the phenomenon of ‘rebel governance’ in which Zacharia Mampilly was one of the key speakers. The input given during this conference by various scholars has inspired the authors of this study to continue working and expanding the research on rebel governance.
Government of Sri Lanka (GoSL) during the last phase of the war in 2009. The suspicion towards foreign journalists, academics and NGO workers made it difficult, if not impossible or outright dangerous, to carry out field research except by local Sri Lankan researchers.5

We decided to cooperate with a small local NGO having intimate contextual knowledge on the risks and the prevailing surveillance in the districts investigated for this study. Local interviewers could unobtrusively carry out the interviews with the civilian population (fishermen, farmers, etc.) in the villages that were previously under LTTE control (and therefore currently still under close watch by security forces), as their presence would not raise any significant suspicion. With every round of fieldwork an introductory workshop and a debriefing were held with the local researchers and the research instruments were developed and fine-tuned in accordance with this data collection strategy. A semi-structured interview guide was used to assess the governance structures and basic service provision in the territories previously under full LTTE control or under contested control between the LTTE and the government. In total, a number of 76 interviews of on average 2.5 hours were held with community members in nine different locations in Trincomalee district (33 interviews), ten locations in Batticaloa district (25 interviews) and four locations in the Northern Province (18 interviews). The NGO researchers interviewed the respondents in Tamil and filled in the interview guides accordingly. Subsequently, professional translators translated the transcripts into English, which were then analysed by us.

On 8 January 2015 the Sri Lankan presidential elections were scheduled. At the end of 2014 it was not clear whether that would lead to an upsurge in pre- or post-election violence. It remained relatively quiet and due to the regime change that followed it became possible for us as the authors to visit to Northern Province without major difficulties. From 17 January 2015 onwards the ban on foreign nationals visiting the North had been lifted, which enabled us to visit Mullaitivu district, Kilinochchi and Jaffna. Early 2015 we also carried out interviews inside the homes and/or offices of key informants such as civil society leaders, community leaders, Sri Lankan NGO workers, religious leaders, doctors, ex-LTTE cadres6 and supporters and local government officials. A total number of twenty key-informant interviews were held in the East and the North: Trincomalee district (7 interviews); Batticaloa district (9 interviews); and Jaffna city (4 interviews). The collected data has in every instance possible been triangulated with similar accounts in secondary literature and other publicly available primary sources in order to reduce the likelihood of reliability issues and to increase the validity of the findings presented.

The concept of rebel governance

Governance, and particularly a lack thereof by the formal nation-state, is a key concept in discussions on the sources of violent conflict. The weakness or absence of the state is argued to lead to Hobbesian anarchy (Krasner 2004; Mampilly 2007; Boege et al. 2009a; 2009b; Risse 2013), and therefore a main source of violent

5 On 14 and 15 December 2014 Georg Frerks and Niels Terpstra attended the annual Sri Lanka Roundtable held in Amsterdam. Most prominent scholars in the field of ‘Sri Lanka studies’ were present. We inquired among those who just returned from the field what were the opportunities and difficulties of conducting primary data collection. On arrival we discussed the risks with a Colombo-based think tank as well and we chose our methodological approach accordingly.

6 The word cadres refers to those LTTE-members that take part in armed fights.
conflict. While we indeed argue that internal warfare and the fragmentation of political authority are related (Kalyvas 2006; Fearon 2007), we see the fragmentation of political authority as quite distinct from the eradication of political authority altogether (Mampilly 2011: 50; Risse 2013). As Mampilly (2011) puts it: “In the absence of a centralized, empirical and juridical sovereign formation, new configurations of political order are likely to emerge, constructed in some cases by the state or its allies, but also by challengers to it” (Mampilly 2011: 50). Our phenomenon of study is precisely the political order created by the challengers of the state: rebel groups.

Contrary to more traditional conceptions of governance, political and social scientists increasingly recognize that the provision of security, welfare and political representation is not necessarily the prerogative of the state (Clements et al. 2007; Milliken and Krause 2002; Kalyvas et al. 2009; Krasner 2004). Despite the fact that the formal state may still be regarded the dominant actor in the provision of public goods, non-state actors – including those in direct contention with the state – prove to possess the means (i.e. armed forces, administrative system and taxation) and ambition to provide a constituency with security (through regulating the internal use of force and offering protection from external threats), welfare (by means of offering social and utility services) and political representation (through institutions for consultation and normative regulation) – usually in a fairly demarcated territory (Mampilly 2007; Hagmann and Péclard 2010; Lund 2006). Governance, therefore, should not be viewed purely through a state-centric lens, but more broadly, as the “whole set of practices and norms that govern daily life in a specific territory” (Mampilly 2007: 61; see also Raeymakers et al. 2008; Stoker 1998). Hence, there is a need to move away from a focus on state exclusivity to a more comprehensive and agnostic study of governance - with or without a formal government (Risse 2013).

The conception of ‘governance’ is central to this study and as a particularly multi-interpretable concept it requires definitional clarification. In line with authors as Mampilly (2011), Risse (2013) and Rosenau (1992), we define the phenomenon of governance - and hence “rebel governance”, as more encompassing than the “government” only. As Rosenau specifies:

It [governance] embraces governmental institutions but it also subsumes informal, non-governmental mechanisms, whereby those persons and organizations within its purview move ahead, satisfy their needs, and fulfill their wants. (...) Governance is thus a system of rule that is as dependent on inter-subjective meanings as on formally sanctioned constitutions and charters. (...) It is possible to conceive of governance without government—regulatory mechanisms in a sphere of activity which function effectively even though they are not endowed with formal authority (1992: 12).

In accordance with Risse (2013) who investigates governance in settings of ‘limited statehood’

7 Generally those states unable to uphold the Weberian monopoly on violence throughout their territory.

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coordination”). Through these structures and processes, governance provides “collectively binding rules” as well as “collective goods” (Risse 2013).

Following the understanding of Mampilly (2011) we shall define the “rebel group” as an “armed faction that uses violence to challenge the state”. Hereby we distinguish our definition from the more encompassing term “militias”, which would include all armed factions that use violence, including those that militarily work on the side of the government forces. Hence, our full definition of rebel governance is: the various institutionalized modes of social coordination to produce and implement collectively binding rules and / or to provide collective goods by armed factions that use violence to challenge the state.

Lastly, the legitimacy of a rebel ruler’s involvement in governance may be separated in a juridical and an empirical dimension (Péclard and Mechoulan 2015). Despite the absence of juridical legitimacy or international recognition, which is usually difficult to attain, rebel groups may carry varying levels of empirical legitimacy among a particular constituency (Péclard and Mechoulan 2015). The symbolic dimension of rebel governance may therefore be key to understand the de facto legitimacy of rebel groups, and the way in which political legitimacy feeds subjective and individual identities of the civilian population that lives in a rebel controlled territory. As Hoehne (2009) points out with regard to non-state actors (including rebel groups), the pursuit of authority through legitimation centres intangible processes of identity building, through symbols such as flags, songs, references to tradition and ethnicity. This process of building legitimacy through symbolism may involve ‘mimicry’ of the state and state institutions (Hoehne 2009). Hence, to conclude this paper we will finally investigate how the LTTE attempted to legitimize its rule through various symbols of, and claims to, political legitimacy.

The LTTE’s rebel governance

During the first four years of the violent conflict in Sri Lanka (1983–1987) the LTTE controlled little territory, working alongside existing state institutions (Mampilly 2009). The first establishment of a civil administration was in 1987, during the peace negotiations that led to the deployment of the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) in the Northeast (Swamy 2002). During the IPKF years, the LTTE still had little involvement in governance functions. It was only in the early 1990s, after the departure of the IPKF that the rebel leadership restructured and empowered its political wing, and started to experiment with larger scale institution-building efforts such as the establishment of a police force and the Tamil Eelam penal and civil codes (Mampilly 2009; Sanchez Meertens 2012; 2013). During the early 1990s the Jaffna peninsula came under full control of the LTTE, being the first locality to come under full LTTE administration (Gerhartz 2015: 192-193). Although the LTTE lost military control of the Jaffna peninsula in 1995, the institution-building efforts were progressively extended until 2003 along with the LTTE’s territorial expansion south of the Jaffna peninsula (Sanchez Meertens 2012), but this happened not in a linear fashion. The effectiveness as well as the comprehensiveness of these structures varied substantially during the different phases of the conflict (see for example Klem 2012; Korf et al. 2010).

Collective goods are understood here as “goods that benefit every individual belonging to some group, and where it is hard to exclude any individual from that benefit. For example, the benefit of having a defence force, or law and order. Since an individual cannot be excluded from these benefits, there is a motive for agents to free ride on the supply of these goods by others”. Blackburn (1996) Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy. University Press.
Equally important, the rebel governance structures varied over the different geographical regions with LTTE influence. The influence of the LTTE in the Northern part of the country was very different from their influence in the Eastern parts. In the North, the LTTE was for a long time in control of a large territory known as the Vanni. Their military strength was concentrated here, and their grip on the population was also the strongest in this area (Klem 2012). In the East, the territorial control was more fragmented and different spheres of influence clashed and intermingled (Korf et al. 2010). As Korf and colleagues explain, in the end of the 1990s multiple coexisting orders and systems of rule had emerged, mixing spaces of: authority by the state apparatus; LTTE rule; rule of Sri Lankan security forces; customary norms of religion, caste and class (2010: 393). Moreover, governance structures were in some localities constantly shifting as front lines shifted back and forth over short time frames (Goodhand et al. 2000). There were also significant differences between the center and periphery of the Northeast, as the GoSL usually had more influence in provincial centers such as the city of Trincomalee and Batticaloa, while the LTTE exerted more influence in the remote areas (Klem 2001; 2012). More than the North, the East has been ethnically very diverse and was therefore also a site of “multicultural contestation” (McGilvray 2008; Sanchez Meertens 2013: 23).

After the IPKF withdrew in 1990, there were three acknowledged regimes of military control in Sri Lanka’s war zone (Gaasbeek 2010: 132). As Gaasbeek (2010) explains, these emerged both in formal and in colloquial language, with the English terms ‘cleared’, ‘uncleared’ and ‘grey’ (132). The territory referred to as ‘cleared’ was controlled by the Sri Lankan military (and its paramilitary counterparts) during the day and - officially but not necessarily in practice - also at night. Territory referred to as ‘uncleared’ was controlled by the LTTE during day and night. Territory referred to as ‘grey’ was generally controlled by the Sri Lankan military during the day and by the LTTE at night, but could also be visited by government-allied Tamil paramilitary groups (see for example: Gaasbeek 2010: 132-133; Goodhand et al. 2000). In the East, the patchwork of fragmented sovereignty was the most complicated, but on the local level this turned into the ‘normal’ state of affairs (Spencer et al. 2015; Gaasbeek 2010). The East turned into a region “fragmented by frontlines, checkpoints, curfews and entrenched ethno-political boundaries” (Spencer et al. 2015: 54). Below we will discuss the most significant governance sectors that the LTTE was involved in: law enforcement (security and justice), health care and education, though we recognize this is not exhaustive.

**Law enforcement**

The LTTE began institutionalizing its own police stations in Jaffna and the Vanni in 1991 and continued to do so over the following decade (Gerhardt 2015). The LTTE

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9 “Vanni” is sometimes spelled as “Wanni” and is used as a generic term for the mainland districts of the Northern Province, namely Kilinochchi, Mannar, Mullaitivu and Vavuniya. The other district of the Northern Province, Jaffna, is a peninsula (Saravananthan 2007). The term is often used (in interviews and in literature) with reference to the LTTE-controlled areas in the Northern Province, excluding the Jaffna peninsula (see for example Brun 2008). Historically the term ‘Vanni’ however derives from a number of autonomous or independent chiefdoms, which were under the leadership of so-called ‘Vanniyars’ (Sitaramalal 2005: 213 – 218). During most of the thirteenth century these Vanniyars were ruling their areas while there were two main Kingdoms on the Island: the Tamil Kingdom of Jaffna in the North and the Sinhalese Kingdom consisting of the central highlands and the Southwest of the Island (Sitaramalal 2005: 213). As Sitaramalal (2005) explains a simpler replica of the system of administration of the Kingdom of Janna was to be found in these Vanni principalities.

10 See also: interview code KI 05 – Trinco; The Sunday Leader (2002).
police force functioned in the Vanni, and subsequently also in the LTTE-controlled areas of the East.\textsuperscript{11} Particularly throughout the second half of the 1990s up until the peace negotiations in 2002 the LTTE seemed to have invested more effort into policing the areas under its control. In the perception of the respondents living under the auspices of the LTTE police forces, they functioned like a real police force. As one of the respondents puts it:

\begin{quote}
(...) they [the LTTE police forces] were 100\% policemen. They would wear a police uniform, you know like a nice uniform. And there would be no bribes! No corruption! If you wanted to pay them, it would not work, you would get punished.\textsuperscript{12}
\end{quote}

Within the police force there was differentiation in different sections: crime prevention division; traffic division; technical division; transport division; communications division; camera/photography division; intelligence division; environmental police.\textsuperscript{13} Similar to the fragmented military control, the influence of the police forces was only partial in most areas of the Eastern Province.

The demarcation between LTTE civilian police and the LTTE ‘military’ was blurry. As the ‘Inspector General of Police of Tamil Eelam’ Balasingham Mahendran alias Nadesan points out in an interview with the Sunday Times in 2002: “If there is an offensive military operation, our men and women [the Tamil Eelam Police] take part in it.”\textsuperscript{14} One of the respondents of this study, similarly points out: “If needed, they [the police officers] would have to go to the Vanni to join the battle. So sometimes they went there”.\textsuperscript{15} The respondent further explains that usually “these policemen would be ex-cadres. (...) After some incident they would be referred to join the police force”.\textsuperscript{16} Hence, cadres would become policemen and sometimes policemen would again become cadres involved in combat in the North.

In the end of the 1980s the LTTE did not yet control large territories of land and it did not possess the capacity to set up a well-functioning parallel court system (Sanchez Meertens 2012; Sivakumaran 2009). Throughout the 1990s however, parallel to its expansion of the Tamil Eelam police force, the LTTE began establishing a system of courts in the territories under its control (Sanchez Meertens 2012; Sivakumaran 2009). As explanation for the LTTE’s establishment of the court system, the chief of the legal and administration division at the time, Illayathamby Pararajasingham, pointed to several reasons during a journalistic interview.\textsuperscript{17} Firstly, he mentions that the system should help protect ‘the poor’:

\begin{quote}
Our leader felt that the legal system in the country was not helping the poor. Therefore he decided that the 'Tamil Eelam' areas should have a separate courts and legal system which could serve the poor. From the early 1990s we have been developing the legal system. We introduced the 'law college' in 1992 with the courses first being opened only to the LTTE armed cadres who had passed the Advanced Level examination.\textsuperscript{18}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{11} Interview code KI 05 – Trinco
\textsuperscript{12} Interview code KI 05 – Trinco
\textsuperscript{13} Interview code KI 05 – Trinco; Sunday Times (2002).
\textsuperscript{14} See: Sunday Times (2002: 3).
\textsuperscript{15} Interview code KI 05 – Trinco
\textsuperscript{16} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{17} Sunday Times (2004).
\textsuperscript{18} Ibid.
Secondly, he stresses that a main goal is to run a smooth civil administration: “It is not to challenge the system in the South, but to run a smooth civil administration in the North. We should have a system suitable for the people”.19 Thirdly, he mentions: “The people in the North and East have lost faith in the legal system of the country. Therefore this system should continue”.20 At its most developed moment in time, the Tamil Eelam court system consisted of seventeen courts in a hierarchical structure, consisting of six District courts, two High courts, an Appeals Court and a Special Bench that was similar to a Supreme Court (Sivakumaran 2009: 494). As one of the respondents from Trincomalee town points out:

There were courts, these were 100% clean, not corrupt. They were 100% operational and enforced by the LTTE law enforcement. (...) They studied law and they had their own law. There was in the North also a Law University.21

The track record of the LTTE judiciary is however very mixed, particularly in the areas outside of the Vanni. Overall respondents of this study mention that the system of the LTTE justice was ‘suitable to the people’ or the ‘judicial unit of the people”22, but particularly a number of respondents from the East points out that the judgments were far from impartial and that the system was functioning poorly. As one of the respondents puts it: “impartiality and justice was not seen in these [LTTE] inquiries. Whatever they said was the verdict. They forced people to accept it”.23 In those areas where the LTTE only had a partial influence they would not be able to set up functioning police forces or courts. In these areas it was either the government’s justice system taking up those tasks or the military of either side of the conflict (the Sri Lankan military or the LTTE commanders/cadres) through more ad hoc forms of ‘justice’.24 As one of the respondents explains: “the government’s judiciary system was functioning, but the LTTE also called people to their territory to investigate. (...) Investigations and punishments were a speedy process and the hearing was limited, therefore there was no justice done to the people”.25

Generally, the LTTE police and the judicial units were known for their use of harsh punishments. Physically harsh, but also psychologically the upholding of law and order is reported to have been very intrusive, both in areas under their control and in areas under control of the government.26 Similar to the fear that civilians express towards the regular LTTE cadres, the LTTE police also ruled through fear. To illustrate, the following excerpts show the fear of the LTTE police force. A fisherman from Pudukuduirippu explains it as following: “the LTTE established regional police departments to maintain their law. The people adhered to the law of the LTTE out of

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20 Ibid.
21 Interview code KI 05 - Trinco
22 Interview code Trinco 3.6 (Sampur): “The security and justice division of the LTTE functioned separately. It functioned as the judicial unit of the people”.
23 Interview code 8.2 Batticaloa district
24 Interview code KI 11 – Batticaloa district; a number of respondents in the coastal area of Trincomalee mentioned that the LTTE would warn three times, after that you may just got shot on the spot (ad hoc) for disobeying their orders.
25 Interview code 7.3 – Batticaloa district
26 Brenner, 2013; Interview code Trinco 3.4 (Sampur): “LTTE security forces were responsible for our security. Offenders were brought to LTTE book. The punishments for offences were severe”. 
fear”.

A respondent who used to live in the Vanni explained how the law and order of the LTTE police was accepted and appreciated, but frustrating at the same time:

The people were okay with it. They kind of accepted it. Well I mean they adapted, you know. They had to follow the rules! I was not happy, not even me. We can’t move like machines. Some punishments were very high! They boys said we could not see that, could not do that, etc.  

There are also several accounts of an ‘imagined’ LTTE influence in the government controlled territories. This does not imply that the influence was not ‘real’, but exemplifies the power of imagination and the fear of potential LTTE punishments. Bremner, who conducted fieldwork in 2005 in a ‘cleared’ village in the Northeast, puts it as following:

The LTTE played a role in the day-to-day lives of the people even though this was a government controlled area. The LTTE state was imagined through its court system with its feared and swift system of violence and punishment. This imagination was created through rumour which circulated around, and about the impersonal moral justice, discipline and violence of the LTTE quasi state within the enclaves of its court system (Bremner 2013: 47).

According to Bremner (2013: 47) several stories circulated about the LTTE punishments. For example, stories about drunken men who had to empty tubs full of water with little soda bottle tops, stories about severe beatings, and stories about the rough physical work one had to do in order to be ‘rehabilitated’. Similarly, a respondent of this study explained:

A person accused of drinking illicit arrack was asked to pay 365 LKR as a fine. But he could pay only one rupee a day at a particular LTTE camp far away from his house. Due to such punishments some men totally gave up drinking arrack.

Another respondent mentions in relation to the LTTE environmental police:

Or they would tell you, if you did something against the environment, (...) that 60 KM away you have a coconut tree that you have to take care of. That is now your tree, so every day you would have to travel there and water the coconut tree.

The same respondent explains about the rules that had to be followed according to the LTTE:

For example no prostitution, no homosexuals, it was not allowed to cheat on your man or wife. Movies were not allowed. No sexy movies you know, from India, they were not allowed. (...) You know like sexy movies with women sexy dressed. (...) That also, but just regular movies, they were not allowed

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27 Interview code 2.4 Pudukuduirippu
28 Interview code KI 05 – Trinco
29 Interview code Trinco 3.1 - Kilivetty
30 Interview code KI 05 - Trinco
because women would not be appropriately covered, clothes too sexy, things like that. So people would be punished if you would watch that. (…) Also there were dress codes, you know we can’t wear sexy dresses. (…) Men also, but particularly for women, they could not wear like short skirts or things like that. It would have to be covered, long. If not, they would warn you, and you would get punished.31

A common perception among Tamils in Jaffna also seemed to have been that the LTTE-controlled Vanni was completely safe for women to go out on their own every time of the day, whereas in Jaffna town, which was under military control post-1995, women would not go out after 7 o’clock at night. Women, including visitors from Western countries were allegedly subject to sexual harassment and physical attacks (Gerhartz 2015: 195 – 196).

Health care
As Mampilly (2011) indicates, the LTTE ‘capital’ Kilinochchi for a long time had a large government-run hospital staffed by a crew of doctors and nurses paid for by the government, but under the rule of the LTTE. The data of this study also indicates that the medical personnel working in uncleared areas received a salary from the government, whereas at the same time the hospitals were administered and ruled by the LTTE leadership. As one of the respondents put it: “They [the LTTE] were controlling most of the basic public services. But the health care, so the medical staff, was paid by the government”.32 So despite the fact that the Sri Lankan Ministry of Health was officially providing health services through government hospitals, the LTTE made the final decisions of implementation.33 Hence, there was a complex interaction in which the GoSL and the LTTE were both attempting to influence the health care sector. As one Tamil respondent from Jaffna puts it: “You know, we were fighting against the government army, and if you would get wounded, you would go to a government hospital. Food and medicine for the population were also coming from the government”.34 In the next section on ‘hybrid governance’ we will address this complex phenomenon in more detail and across different sectors.

Apart from the government hospitals in the uncleared areas, the LTTE itself was also directly involved in health care through mobile medical units.35 With regard to these mobile units, a medical doctor from Jaffna explains:

In the name of LTTE commander Thileepan they [the LTTE] started a mobile medical unit. So with the mobile medical unit the LTTE was able to reach the people that were at the time all scattered around the Vanni. The LTTE also developed a medical college for the cadres and for the regular civilian people. These LTTE-trained doctors were able to do operations with very limited supplies. I heard from government-trained doctors that they were impressed by how these doctors did the operations with so little supplies. The LTTE-trained doctors were particularly good at that. They were able to do complicated

31 Interview code KI 05 - Trinco
32 Interview code KI 06 – Trinco
33 As explained by several respondents in this study from the Vanni area.
34 Interview code KI 17 – Jaffna town
35 Ibid.
operations with limited technology, that’s what they are known for. So the LTTE was providing the health care were they could.\footnote{Interview code KI 20 – Jaffna town; the respondents refers to Lt. Col. Thileepan, he was a LTTE political wing member. He passed away in a hunger strike in 1987 during the protests against the Indo-Lanka accords. It can however also be argued that the mobile medical units were primarily deemed a military need in order to follow the LTTE in their battles and treat injured cadres.}

Providing necessary health care to the civilian populations in the Vanni and the LTTE-controlled areas of the East was particularly difficult due to the checkpoints and the strict embargos that the medical supplies were under.\footnote{During ceasefires the ban was usually relaxed or even lifted, which generally improved the capacities and access to supplies. See also: Mampilly, 2011.} Particularly in the last years before the defeat of the LTTE (2006–2009) the embargos became stricter and the shortages higher. The doctor from Jaffna explains:

Up until the very final battle the government allowed very little medical supplies into the LTTE-controlled areas. So everything was too little in that final phase. I know that because one of my friends was there until the end as a doctor (…). They had to do everything with their own clothes as they did not even had simple supplies like bandages to use for the people. It was a terrible time, they had from everything too little. But even up until the day of the final defeat on 15 May 2009 they were able to help people to give birth, they were able to do medical operations and surgeries. My friend told me that one time he had to do an amputation of a leg without sedatives, simply because it was the only way to save this person’s life.\footnote{Interview code KI 20 – Jaffna town}

The uncleared areas were also provided medical support by NGOs and humanitarian organizations.\footnote{Interview code KI 04 – Trincomalee town} The ICRC, for example, was allowed by the GoSL to go inside the uncleared areas, but they would have to register what they were taking inside.\footnote{Ibid.}

In terms of personnel, there was an enduring shortage throughout the different phases of the war (Mampilly 2011: 120). Working in these areas obviously entailed security risks, which understandably created hesitation among the medically schooled Tamil doctors and nurses to go and work there.\footnote{Interview code KI 06 – Trincomalee town} Different respondents moreover pointed out that there were cases known in which the LTTE coerced medical personnel to help them. One respondent mentions: “The LTTE kidnapped many doctors and released them after fulfilling their medical needs (…)”, and “medicines were stolen by the LTTE”.\footnote{Interview code Trinco 4.1 - Thapalagamam} As a result the civilian people “suffered a lot” and “the doctors were scared to work here”.\footnote{Ibid.} Being reliant upon high-skilled personnel and the timely provision of supplies, the health sector in the uncleared areas was undermined to a much greater degree than other sectors like education (Mampilly 2007: 182).

In the East the situation was somewhat different from the North. In the areas investigated in Trincomalee district, nearly all respondents were getting their health care services from the government hospitals, which were also led and administered by the government. Only respondents from Sampur pointed out that they were receiving health care from LTTE medical teams and one of the respondents pointed out that
there was a LTTE hospital in eastern Mutur. In places like Kuchaveli and Kinniya respondents pointed out that the LTTE had some influence over the medical facilities. Apart from that, Trincomalee district was provided for by the government and (I)NGOs.

**Education**

Also the educational sector was affected by the raging war. A former member of the ICRC who worked in the Trincomalee district and the Vanni for several years pointed out to the authors:

(….) education was disrupted in these areas because many of the warring parties would occupy school buildings for their own purposes. Due to that there are now still a lot of ‘slow-learners’. A lot of these children would not be able to go to school because the building was occupied or it was too insecure to travel there.

Despite the difficult circumstances, the educational sector in the uncleared areas was functioning relatively well during the various phases of the war. As a local NGO-worker points out for example: “(…) education was OK in the uncleared areas. People tried to read and educate themselves that was one of the few things that went on very well. Also the LTTE would allow us to do education projects”. In similar terms Mampilly (2007: 184) points out that the education system in the uncleared was remarkable in terms of its ability to provide a continuity of schooling, particularly given the various disruptions the war imposed on daily life. At those times where the regular school system was interrupted by a lack of teachers or materials, members of the so-called Tamil Eelam Education Council were able to supplement the government’s education system in some areas of the North (Ethirveerasingam 1999 in Mampilly 2011: 121). This provided schools a sort of response mechanisms to deal with the disruptions caused by the war. As a respondent of this study points out, in the Vanni the LTTE “had education centers. They had their own university for medicine, for computer things, electronics, and the mechanical field”. Based on his life in the Vanni in the early 1990s he further explains:

People tried to get educated. They study, because they have a good drive. They for example tried to be a doctor. They studied well in this period, even though the war raged on. When I was there [in the Vanni], I studied and I passed all my exams, because there you study.

A respondent from Jaffna points out:

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44 Interview code KI 04 – Trincomalee town
45 Interview code 1.4 (Kuchaveli) and 4.4 (Kinniya)
46 Interview code KI 04 – Trincomalee town
47 Interview code KI 07 – Trincomalee town
48 During the war the LTTE established the Tamil Eelam Education Council (TEEC) to coordinate the provision of education with the provincial representatives. The council functioned as the Ministry of Education within the rebel civil administration under the leadership of a Secretary of Education. Its purpose was to encourage the establishment of civil society–based advisory committees in every district that would be composed of parents and educators to regulate and supplement the provision of education (Ethirveerasingam 1999 in Mampilly 2011: 121).
49 Interview code KI 05 – Trincomalee town
50 Interview code KI 05 – Trincomalee town
Sometimes people think that the LTTE didn’t allow people to get educated, but that is not true! I myself sat in my medical exams at the time in Jaffna. I could do the government or the parallel LTTE exam. That was all there in the early 1990s.\footnote{Interview code KI 20 – Jaffna town}

In the educational sector there was both an influence from the GoSL and the LTTE. As one respondent puts it: “In Kilinochchi and the uncleared areas in the East (…) school principals were appointed by the government, but controlled by the LTTE”.\footnote{Interview code KI 06 – Trincomalee town} In this complex interface school principals and teachers had to follow the rules of the LTTE, but were at the same time working for the government. As a respondent from Jaffna points out: “(…) my wife, she was working as a teacher, so a government job, so she got paid by the government, but we were living under the instructions from the LTTE. So that was the special situation”.\footnote{Interview code KI 17 – Jaffna town} Given the fact that the educational sector was less reliant on the immediate supply of goods (contrary to the health care sector), the respondents of this study point out that the educational sector was better equipped to deal with the disruptions of the war, and therefore the sector continued to function relatively well.

Having discussed various governance sectors in which the LTTE was active we may conclude that in some sectors the government could not continue to function in the uncleared areas: particularly the police and justice sector as these were executed by the LTTE itself. The government did, however, provide governance services in other sectors such as health care and education. Apart from the fact that the LTTE aimed to create law and order in the areas under its control, we may also assume that it provided governance services in order to control the civilian population and to engender collaboration. Through these governance provisions it was able to cement its sovereignty throughout the uncleared areas, particularly in the Vanni. Through these governance structures it was able to administer and normalize the situation in the uncleared areas and, as we shall argue in the last section, derive a level of legitimacy from it.

**Hybrid governance provision: the LTTE and the GoSL**

As several authors highlight, non-state governance provision often involves overlapping ‘networks’ with the state, other non-state actors and international actors (Gates 2002; Hagmann and Péclard 2010: 554). This was clearly also the case in the uncleared areas of Sri Lanka. It is challenging to precisely understand the complex overlapping networks that existed during the different phases of the war. As explained earlier, the police and judiciary were under complete control of the LTTE and fully carried out by the LTTE in the uncleared areas. The other public services were largely provided and/or paid for by the government, while simultaneously regulated and / or controlled by the LTTE. As Mampilly (2011) points out, the civilian population of Sri Lanka had got accustomed to the continuous provision of public services since independence\footnote{Sri Lanka acquired since the early 1960s some features of a ‘developed’ welfare state and has enjoyed throughout high levels of socio-economic indicators.} and it was in the interest of the LTTE to continue the provision of these services during their rule. In order to do so, it had to work with the pre-existing institutions of the Sri Lankan state, especially as it would have been difficult for them
to foot the bill associated with the provision of these services. Hence, the government hospitals and schools were incorporated in the LTTE’s rebel administration. As Mampilly (2011) points out, insurgent leaders approached government counterparts after the IPKF withdrawal in 1990 to ask them if they could continue their service provision in the Northeast. Hence, the distinction between contestation and cooperation of the LTTE and the GoSL is not always as clear-cut as it may seem. Whereas they were fighting militarily, there also was a kind of co-existence in the provision of public goods.

Despite the territorial control of the LTTE and the enduring warfare between the parties, the data of this study indicates that the government of Sri Lanka deliberately - and strategically - ensured some welfare provision to the civilian population in areas of the uncleared areas of the Northeast. As one of the respondents in this study puts it:

> From lower level to higher levels in the administration the executive officers in the uncleared areas were paid for by the government. It led to a very unique situation. The reasoning from the government was clear, they wanted to keep their connection to the civil populations in the Vanni. This was their connection, and their way of showing that the Sri Lankan state was still functioning in that area, for its citizens.\(^{55}\)

Several respondents explain the rationale of the GoSL in a similar fashion, pointing to the fact that it wanted to keep in contact with the civilian population of the Northeast. By continuing to be involved in the provision of public goods the GoSL was showing that despite the LTTE presence and influence it was still able to provide for public services and hence not losing its sovereignty completely over these uncleared territories. Hence, the GoSL saw this as a way to maintain its claim to sovereignty and the integrity of the country as a whole. Moreover, if the Sri Lankan government would have shut down all the government’s public services, it would have most likely been a disaster for them internationally.\(^{56}\) As one of the respondents explained, a lack of service provision by the government “would have strategically played into the hands of the LTTE with their claim on the establishment of a separate state. The people in the Vanni were depending on it”.\(^{57}\) The LTTE managed to build a sort of state within the state, but it was not internationally recognized, and that could have changed if the GoSL would have handed over all service provision into the hands of the insurgency.\(^{58}\) Or as Mampilly puts it: “the government preferred to negotiate directly with the rebel leaders about service provision because they feared that the insurgents might set up a comprehensive parallel administration as a testament to their secessionist credentials” (2011: 114).

For the LTTE on the other side, the complex interface of mutual dependency was also serving their interest as these arrangements enabled them to keep the Tamil populations under their control provided with basic public services, without having to spend too much of their own resources into it. In terms of public service provision to the population the LTTE was in fact partly depending on the GoSL.\(^{59}\) Apart from that, for the LTTE it seemed for the time being sufficient to monopolize the security and

\(^{55}\) Interview code KI 17 – Jaffna town
\(^{56}\) Interview code KI 17 – Jaffna town
\(^{57}\) Ibid. See also: (Mampilly 2011: 114).
\(^{58}\) Interview code KI 17 – Jaffna town
\(^{59}\) Interview code KI 06 – Trincomalee. See also: (Mampilly 2011: 115).
justice sector together with a significant influence on the other forms of service provision provided through the existing state structures. Anton Balasingham, the key theorist of the LTTE, similarly explained in an interview in 2002:

Don’t forget that government institutions are still functioning in areas controlled by the LTTE. We do not interfere with those. We have only taken over the enforcement of law since our armed cadres are confined to barracks. And there we are expanding civil administration. Some day you have to accept a Tamil regional police force and we have to discuss how it would harmonise with the national system.\(^\text{60}\)

Balasingam does – at least not openly – seem to express the urge to establish a complete parallel system of service provision that would circumnavigate the existing state structures. Rather his aim seems to further incorporate those structures into the LTTE rule.

A pertinent question here is how to conceptualize the LTTE’s governance efforts in relation to the state. Within approaches focusing on anti-state sovereignty, rebel groups are often perceived as ineffective and transplanted ‘state’ institutions, which cannot fulfill the basic requirements of a sovereign system (Mampilly 2007). However, this perspective may not suit the case of Sri Lanka in several ways. The LTTE did in fact not fully reject or replace the state institutions in areas under its control, but took over only the most strategic ones while assuring the continuation of other services by the state under its own regulations to its population and, hence, engendering a level of legitimacy among its constituencies. Scholars have discussed and documented various interactions, partnerships and alliances between rebel groups and state institutions, and conceptualized these phenomena in various models (see for example: Menkhaus 2007; Migdal 2001; Boege et al. 2009a; 2009b; Lund, 2006; Stel, 2015). In the case of Sri Lanka it makes sense to speak of ‘hybrid political orders’. As Boege and colleagues explain, this entails the following:

In hybrid political orders, diverse and competing authority structures, sets of rules, logics of order, and claims to power co-exist, overlap, interact, and intertwine (…). In this environment, the ‘‘state’’ has no privileged monopolistic position as the only agency providing security, welfare, and representation; it has to share authority, legitimacy, and capacity with other institutions (2009b: 17).

If we look at the situation in the uncleared areas of the Northeast post-1990, we could argue that the “diverse and competing authority structures, sets of rules, logics of order, and claims to power” in these areas indeed “co-existed, overlapped and intertwined”. As one of the respondents puts it:

The bureaucratic and organizational system was already there. I mean the government system. This however led to a very unique situation in which these offices were paid by the government, but they for example were not allowed to put up a Sri Lankan flag. The LTTE only allowed them to put up the LTTE flag!\(^\text{61}\)

\(^{60}\) See an interview given by Anton Balasingham during the peace negotiations on 3 December 2002 in The Sunday Leader (2002).

\(^{61}\) Interview code KI 17 – Jaffna town
What this excerpt indicates is on the one hand that the LTTE was able to exert its power to such an extent that it could force these ‘government-offices’ to fly the LTTE flag, whereas at the same time the government attempted to show its authority by paying and formally appointing officials that would work in these areas on the paycheck of the government. The data of this study indicates that all local government offices in the Vanni, such as the Divisional Secretariat, the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Education functioned according to the instructions of the LTTE. Although the people received the services of the government, the LTTE were the ones that took the real decisions related to appointments and functioning of these officials. And although the government servants ran the government offices, the LTTE directed and monitored these officials.

But also outside the LTTE-controlled territories in the Northeast, the concept of hybrid political orders may apply. According to our respondents, the LTTE was also able to exert its influence in the local governance of the grey and even the cleared areas throughout the Northeast, signifying the overlapping and competing authority structures and claims to power throughout those regions as well. As one of the respondents in a former grey area in Trincomalee puts it: “The government offices functioned during the war, but LTTE had an indirect influence”. Gerhartz (2015) similarly explains post-1995 Jaffna was a town under military control of the government, with the law enforcement of the Sri Lankan security forces. At the same time however, a common perception among the people was that the LTTE was in fact a more forceful and effective institution than the GoSL to enforce law and order (Gerhartz 2015: 195-199). Some people also thought to receive a better redress of their injustices through the LTTE than the armed forces. Jaffna town was indeed a typical example of two parallel systems of governance that overlapped and intertwined (Gerhartz 2015; Klem 2012). As Klem explains, in towns like Jaffna, Trincomalee and Batticaloa, which were formally and militarily under control of the government, the LTTE was able to exert its power through an invisible presence over the people’s everyday life, and through its influence on state bureaucracies (Klem 2012: 73).

Symbols of political legitimacy

Governance also assumes a certain level of legitimacy among a constituency. Legitimacy, according to Rodney Barker, forms ‘the master question of politics’ (1990: 4). Legitimation can be defined as “an action or series of actions –speech, writing, ritual, display - whereby people justify to themselves or others the actions they are taking and the identities they are expressing or claiming” (Barker 2001). The power exercised by a particular ruler needs a certain form of legitimation. Ground-based studies increasingly indicate that political legitimacy should be seen as a process, which is highly subjective, changing and context dependent (Beetham 1991; Barker 2001; Thornhill 2008; Stel and Ndayiragije 2014). It forms a
strategic process geared towards the right to rule within a particular normative context and is confined in time and space (Johnson et al. 2014). In politics, symbols are means of influence and control, whereby the interpretation of a symbol is not intrinsic to it, but it is collectively created, maintained and changed throughout time and place (Stone 2012). As Deborah Stone explains, a symbol could be seen as “anything that stands for something else” (2012: 157). Symbols can for example be words, songs, pictures, logos or events. These can symbolize a set of ideas, such as a political party or political movement (Stone 2012). Prabhakaran for example created a logo, a Central Committee and a Constitution for the LTTE in 1976. Symbols of the LTTE as a rebel movement and symbols of the struggle for an independent state with a distinct national identity, continued to evolve over the next decades.

From a rebel governance perspective, ‘mimicry’ of the state and the state institutions can serve to portray authority and to cement claims of legitimacy (Hoehne 2009; Stokke 2006; Péclard and Mechoulan 2015). Several examples of this kind of symbolism can be given. The public space in Jaffna (before 1995) and in the Vanni was dominated by the LTTE through symbols such as posters, flags and monuments (Gerhartz 2015: 193-194). After the LTTE’s move from Jaffna in 1995, the newly established LTTE capital Kilinochchi became an illustrious place of state-like symbolism. Buildings with flags and signposts of the various Tamil Eelam institutions covered the outline of the city, for example to indicate the police offices and the LTTE courts. The Tamil Eelam police force used own salutes, and there was a national anthem. There was a national bird, other national animals, a national tree and a national flower to symbolize the separate nation. The LTTE further used symbolic measures such as national days and hymns to support its cause (Klem 2012).

65 Based on the responses in this study, the perception of the Tamil communities regarding the LTTE was indeed that it was similar to a state. Both in the North and in the East a majority of the respondents in the uncleared areas point out that the LTTE had “everything a government should have”.

**Commemorations of heroes and martyrs**

An important element of the LTTE’s symbolic portrayal of its struggle was also apparent in the sacrifices made by its cadres. As Bavinck (2014) points out a kind of ‘mourning industry’ emerged in the North during the 1990s. There were countless commemorations of fallen cadres where these heroes or martyrs were accorded a status of ‘sainthood’ (2014: 11). An example that Bavinck noted in his diary in Jaffna in 1994 is:

> For the Tigers, the practice of declaring special days of mourning or celebration forms a means to involve the general population more closely in their cause. Because of their complete control they succeed in this. Today I saw the plaleted pal leaves and the black flags, which are the usual sign of such days, at several places in town(Bavink 2014: 15).

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65 Interview code KI 05 – Trincomalee
67 See also: https://www.tamilnet.com/art.html?catid=13&artid=16192
Another excerpt in Bavinck’s diary concerns the appraisal of Prabhakaran towards the Black Tigers:

Today is the day of the Black Tigers, the suicide commandos. Everywhere one sees flags, posters and little commemoration chapels with photographs of the fallen heroes. Loudspeakers are blaring martial music all day long. The great leader wrote an article in the papers in which he very idealistically calls these Black Tigers spiritual heroes, who give their lives for others (Bavinck 2014: 19-20).

The LTTE invested much of its resources into maintaining cemeteries of the fallen cadres during the war. As one of the respondents points out: “The fallen cadres were commemorated every year, and we would also go there every year to commemorate them”. The respondents of this study from the Vanni and in the uncleared areas of the East all point out that most of the population was attending these kinds of ceremonies. As one respondent points out: “People went and participated in these ceremonies and they willingly did it. They wanted to pay their respects”. Another respondent mentions with regard to these commemorations: “They [the civilian Tamil population] considered it as their tradition and as a part of their duties towards their motherland”.

The respect of the LTTE and the civilian population for the ‘fallen heroes’ extended itself beyond commemorating them into the support for the remaining family members. As one of the respondents explains:

The LTTE gave much respect to the fallen heroes. They even had a separate department to take care of their family members. (...) It was called the ‘Heroes welfare society’. The families would get help from the LTTE, in terms of medical or financial support.

In other words this department was installed to support the families of the fallen heroes. Parents of fallen heroes would for example also be invited to the opening ceremonies of the Tamil police stations. A report of the Sunday Leader notes the following:

On June 10, the LTTE opened its 25th police station at Adamban in the Mannar District. LTTE Police Chief, P. Nadesan recounted to us how in similar vein to previous occasions the LTTE got the parent of a fallen martyr to declare open the police station. On this occasion it was Pedru, the father of the first woman martyr, Maladhi. The latter hailed from Mannar and so was thus honoured. Pedru was the chief guest at this ceremony.

In other words, not only the LTTE cadres themselves, but also their family members continued to play a symbolic role in the larger struggle of the LTTE.

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68 Interview code KI 20
69 Interview code 2.3. - Kilinochchi
70 Interview code 3.2. - Kilinochchi
71 Interview code KI 20
All of this symbolism was elevated through the LTTE’s propaganda channels, both internally and internationally. As one of the respondents in this study points out:

The LTTE had their radio channel in Jaffna, Mullaitivu and Kilinochchi. (…) They were doing documentaries, films, short films. They would release good films that would describe what was being achieved. That was the propaganda. These films were also taken on the battlefield. (…) They would show it very fiercely you know, they take all the Hindu songs/music, and they would get very vibrant.\(^{73}\)

When asked about the songs that were used one of the respondents pointed out:

Things about the fight, like ‘we want our land back’, or ‘we have to fight’. (…) There are plenty of songs. It is like, they wanted to boost, and they wanted to get that feeling in the community. They did it very deliberately.\(^{74}\)

There was only limited media available at the time in the Vanni, and the LTTE decided what people were allowed to watch and what was forbidden.\(^{75}\) As one respondent points out: “There was hardly any access to other media, we had to watch it. But like I said, most people also liked watching it”.\(^{76}\) As Brun (2008) explains many of these propaganda films produced by the LTTE were portraying the soldiers of the Sri Lankan Army as alcohol abusers who dance while the Tamil people are suffering. Most films included a portrayal of the battle sites and the history of the movement. It showed the atrocities against Tamils and the LTTE’s achievements in the violent struggle. In many films the Black July pogrom of 1983 was cited as the reason for the LTTE’s struggle against the Sri Lankan state (Brun 2008).

As the above has shown, rebel governance is not only about the merely instrumental delivery of certain public services. Ruling a population also involves a symbolic dimension in which a rebel group legitimizes both its struggle against the enemy and its rebel rule over a population. On the one hand, this symbolic endeavour entailed the mimicry of statehood, in which the LTTE presented its institutional capabilities. On the other hand, it also entailed the appraisal and the elevation of the struggle and the heroic status of LTTE cadres fighting against the GoSL. These symbols were physically presented in the public space, but also channelled through various forms of media. Through the symbolic legitimization of its struggle and the mimicry of statehood, the LTTE implicitly and explicitly imposed its rule over the population.

**Conclusion**

Whilst the weakness of the state may be a contributing factor in a rebel group’s involvement in governance, this case study research shows that instances of rebel governance cannot only be seen as a result of state weakness. The governance provision by the LTTE was built up in areas where the state structures were not necessarily weak or absent. Rather, the LTTE used the existing state structures and incorporated these into its rebel rule. So partly they adopted those kinds of service

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\(^{73}\) Interview code KJ 05 - Trinco

\(^{74}\) Ibid.

\(^{75}\) Ibid.

\(^{76}\) Ibid.
provisions - the health care and education sectors being the most illustrative examples. Next to that, the LTTE deliberately created numerous new governance institutions themselves, the police and justice sector being the most important examples of this. This study has shown how the involvement of the LTTE in governance varied per sector. Whereas the LTTE monopolized justice and policing sectors in the uncleared areas, in other sectors the governance services were fulfilled more pragmatically. The LTTE allowed other actors – both state and non-state – to work for the basic needs of the population as long as it would not interfere with their military strategies and helped boost their legitimacy. Despite the fact that the military and political struggle of the LTTE was distinctively anti-state, the provision of governance in the uncleared and grey areas showed various forms of political hybridity in which the governance structures of both the LTTE and Sri Lankan state overlapped and intertwined. Therefore, we conclude that rebel governance is characterized by autonomous dynamics – irrespective of state weakness necessarily – whereas at the same time it takes shape within a pre-existing political order and pre-existing provisions by the state.

In addition, this study has indicated that studying rebel governance is not confined to the instrumental delivery of governance services only. Governing as a rebel group also involves a symbolic dimension in which a rebel group legitimizes both its struggle against the enemy and its rebel rule over a population. Firstly, the concept of state mimicry has shown to be a useful heuristic device to understand such a governance project. The LTTE mimicked a judicial sector, a police apparatus, bureaucratic administrative functions, whereby presenting itself as a state in the making. The respondents of this study did also perceive it as such. A second important element in the symbolic dimension of the LTTE rule entailed the elevation of the struggle and the heroic status of LTTE cadres fighting - and dying in the fight - against the GoSL. Cemeteries and commemorations of the ‘heroes’ were common and widely respected within the Tamil community. The various forms of symbols were physically presented in the public space, but also channelled through various forms of media. Through the symbolic legitimization of its struggle, the LTTE implicitly and explicitly imposed and attempted to legitimize its rule over the Tamil population and the nascent statehood of its projected Tamil Eelam.
Bibliography


About the authors

Niels Terpstra holds a MA in Conflict Studies and Human Rights (Cum Laude) and is currently a PhD candidate at the Centre for Conflict Studies, Utrecht University in the Netherlands. In this capacity he focuses on issues of human security, state fragility, rebel governance, insurgencies and counter-insurgency in Central and South Asia. In 2013 Terpstra carried out fieldwork in Afghanistan and wrote his MA thesis on the Dutch Integrated Police-training Mission, focusing on the experiences of Afghan community members with formal and informal justice mechanisms. The Royal Holland Society of Sciences and Humanities awarded his thesis with the J.C. Baak Prize. The Faculty of Humanities at Utrecht University awarded his thesis the Faculty’s prize for the most social relevant MA thesis of the year. As one of the co-authors Niels recently published the book chapter “Rebel Governance Reconsidered” in: Lahai, J.I. and Lions, T. (Eds.) (2015) African Frontiers. Farnham: Ashgate.