

In modern history governments have had an active role in responding and influencing the economic circumstances of the state. Whether by allocating resources or administering reforms, peacetime economic policies have traditionally impacted actor's public support as the choice of policy can impact the perception of actor's legitimacy. Despite the plethora of competing definitions, political scientists agree on considering legitimacy as a basic condition of governance -as it entails the acceptance and commitment of a people to a political authority. Rather than a unique characteristic of the state, governance becomes an attribute belonging to any social arrangement that exercises "*function of statehood*". By focusing on the comparison between the Syrian, the Libyan, and the Yemeni civil war this thesis aim is to enquire whether a positive relationship can be assessed between government economic choices and rebel's legitimacy. Given the neopatrimonial character of the three states this dissertation will focus on the actor's economic behavior to assess legitimacy. For the purpose of this analysis, I have chosen to adopt an Elitist framework as it focuses on bargain dynamics between political actors and elites (or constituencies). The methodological approach utilized is that of a comparative case study.