

African Civil Wars in Comparative Perspective: A Research Seminar

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I. Course Summary

This research seminar course will engage graduate students in the rigorous, empirical analysis of multiple dimensions of contemporary civil conflict. From September 9-23, the course will be taught only at Columbia (for this part a separate syllabus will be provided). Beginning on September 30, it will be taught jointly between Columbia and Stanford universities via videoconferencing. The course will cover five topics: the causes of civil war, patterns of recruitment and participation, the organization of rebel groups, strategies used by warring factions, and bargaining in the context of peace processes and civil war termination. Every second week, we will introduce a new theme and debate the major theoretical issues surrounding that theme. In the other weeks, students will be required to take part in an inter-campus debate, documenting empirical support for the major theoretical arguments—with all argumentation based on original research, produced during the week in question, using data made available by the instructors and gathered by the participants. Prerequisites include experience in econometric modeling and graduate coursework in comparative politics, international relations, and statistics.

II. Requirements

- (a) *Readings.* The syllabus lists both required and additional readings. You are responsible for completing all of the assigned readings and coming to seminar prepared to discuss and debate the issues raised for the week.
- (b) *Empirical Presentations.* Working together with students from your campus, you will be responsible for presenting new empirical results that help us assess the relative explanatory power of major theories advanced in the field. Each group will be assigned a theory (or set of theories) identified in the previous week and you will be expected to use data to make the best case for your theory (and to undermine the claims made by competing theories). You should be prepared to present the results of your empirical analysis using Power Point. The structure of your presentation should mirror that of a well-thought out academic paper—you should first highlight the relevant theory, discuss its testable implications, describe the data gathered, and discuss the empirical results. You should present your strongest findings using data for at least one case, and then show how the theory you are defending works (or fails to work) in the other five (or six) cases either qualitatively or quantitatively. Your team should post its Power Point presentation, along with a Stata dataset and do files, to the class website by Thursday at noon, allowing those at the other campus an opportunity to examine and think about your arguments before seminar on Friday.

- (c) *Class structure.* Each week the class will take one of two structures.

On the “on” weeks, or the theory weeks, the first two hours of class will be dedicated to an open discussion of the readings, with approximately 20-30 minutes devoted to each reading. For such discussions, you should come prepared with at least one core critique or observation on the readings that you are willing to defend. The remaining half an hour will be used to identify hypotheses that can be tested using micro-level data. At the end of class, when hypotheses have been identified, these will be allocated to the groups for the following week’s discussion by lottery.

On the “off” weeks, or the debate weeks, the classes will take the form of an inter-campus debate. It will be structured as follows: each side will have 20 minutes to present their major findings (each member of the team should play a role in this presentation); following this, each side will deliver criticisms of the other side’s arguments and findings for 10 minutes each. We will then take a break (at 16:30 EST / 13:30 PST) and each side will be given 20 minutes to prepare a response. After we resume, each side will have 10 minutes to deliver their response, followed by a general discussion for about 20 minutes. We will aim to end this discussion at 17:30 EST / 14:30 PST and use the remaining half an hour to identify avenues for future research, including thoughts about appropriate data and empirical tests that one could use to test or refute the hypotheses in question.

- (d) *Final Paper.* You will be expected to write a final paper (20-30 pages in length) displaying original research on one of the key themes discussed in the seminar, or on another related aspect of civil war agreed to in advance with the instructors. The final paper should contain a theoretical argument, an empirical test of that argument, and a discussion of the policy prescriptions that follow from your analysis. It is expected, although not required, that your final paper will include quantitative analysis of existing or new micro-level data sources on civil war.

III. Data Sources

A primary goal of the research seminar is to develop your capacity to evaluate existing theories using empirical evidence. In contrast to much of the current research on civil war, the seminar will focus mainly on micro-level processes including individual participation, group formation, and group strategies. These processes can best be analyzed using data gathered at the individual or group-level, rather than more macro-data traditionally used to study conflict. For this reason, we have endeavored to gather the most up-to-date and innovative micro-level datasets on violence. Where possible, the datasets are available on the course website. Where we have not yet succeeded in obtaining the data, we provide links to the relevant publications (encouraging you to contact the authors directly with requests to replicate their work). Moreover, there are likely countless data sources of which we are not even aware including those produced by local human rights organizations tracking conflict and information included in household surveys which probe on issues of security. Be on the lookout.

Causes

- [MACRO DATA] Fearon, James and David Laitin. “Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War,” *American Political Science Review* 97(1): 75-90.
(<http://www.stanford.edu/group/ethnic/publicdata/publicdata.html>)

- [MACRO DATA] Collier, Paul and Anke Hoeffler. “Greed and Grievance in Civil War,” *Oxford Economic Papers* 56: 663-695. (<http://users.ox.ac.uk/~ball0144/research.htm>)

Recruitment

- **Rwanda** [NOT YET AVAILABLE] Verwimp, Philip. “An Economic Profile of Peasant Perpetrators of Genocide: Micro-Level Evidence from Rwanda.” (p.verwimp@hicn.org)
- **Israel / Palestine** Kruger, Alan and Jitka Maleckova. “Education, Poverty, and Terrorism: Is There a Causal Connection?” *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 17(4): 119-144. <http://www.krueger.princeton.edu/terrorism2.pdf> (akrueger@princeton.edu)
- **Mexico** [NOT YET AVAILABLE] Trejo, Guillermo. “Insurgency, Democracy and Repression: The Logic of Preventive Rebellion in Chiapas, Mexico.” And “Redefining the Territorial Bases of Power: Peasants, Indians and Guerrilla Warfare in Chiapas, Mexico.” <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0013/001387/138777E.pdf> (trejo@duke.edu)

Organization

- [MACRO DATA] Sambanis, Nicholas. “Do Ethnic and Non-Ethnic Wars Have the Same Causes? A Theoretical and Empirical Inquiry (Part I),” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 45(3): 259-82. (Nicholas.Sambanis@yale.edu)
- **Multiple Regions** PRIO/Uppsala Conflict Armed Conflict Dataset (<http://www.prio.no/cwp/ArmedConflict/>)
- **Multiple Regions** Minorities at Risk Data (<http://www.cidcm.umd.edu/inscr/mar/>)
- **Multiple Regions** MIPT Terrorism Knowledge Database. (<http://www.tkb.org/Home.jsp>)
- **Multiple Regions** State Failure Task Force (<http://www.cidcm.umd.edu/inscr/stfail/index.htm>)

Violence

- **Global** Lacina Dataset on Battle Deaths (http://www.prio.no/page/CSCW_research_detail/Programme_detail_CSCW/9649/45656.html)
- **Multiple Regions** Ball, Patrick. Human Rights Data Analysis Group. (<http://shr.aaas.org/hrdag/>) and (<http://www.hrdag.org/about/projects.shtml>)
- **Rwanda** Davenport, Christian. *GenoDynamics: Understanding Genocide Through Time and Space*. (<http://www.bsos.umd.edu/gvpt/davenport/genodynamics/data.htm>)
- **Greece** Kalyvas, Stathis. *The Logic of Violence in Civil War* (New York: Cambridge University Press, forthcoming).

- **Vietnam** [NOT YET AVAILABLE] Kalyvas, Stathis and Matthew Kocher. “Dynamics of Violence in Civil War: Evidence from Vietnam.”
(<http://www.people.umass.edu/woojin/ConferencePapers/Kalyvas&Kocher.pdf>)
- **Nepal** Murshed, S. Mansoob and Scott Gates. “Spatial-Horizontal Inequality and the Maoist Insurgency in Nepal,” *Review of Development Economics* 9(1): 121-134. (scott@prio.no)
- **Congo** Roberts, Les. Eastern DRC Mortality Survey. (<http://www.theirc.org/mortality/>).
- **Colombia** Rubio, Mauricio. “Kidnapping and Armed Conflict in Colombia.”
(<http://www.prio.no/cscw/pdf/micro/techniques/Kidnapping%20and%20armed%20conflict%20in%20Columbia.pdf>)
- **Colombia** Restrepo, Jorge, Michael Spagat, and Juan Vargas. “The Dynamics of the Colombian Civil Conflict: A New Dataset.”
(<http://personal.rhul.ac.uk/pkte/126/Documents/Docs/Database%20civil%20war.pdf>)
(J.Restrepo@rhul.ac.uk)
- **Northern Ireland** Sutton, Malcolm. Index of Deaths in Northern Ireland.
(<http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/sutton/>)
- **Iraq** Data from www.iraqbodycount.org is used in this intriguing paper by Johnson, Spigat, et al. “From Old Wars to New Wars and Global Terrorism.”
(<http://personal.rhul.ac.uk/uhte/014/PaperLANL6.pdf>)

Termination

- **Multiple Regions:** Data on Peace Agreements
(<http://www.incore.ulst.ac.uk/services/cds/agreements/>).
- [MACRO] Doyle, Michael and Nicholas Sambanis. “International Peacebuilding: A Theoretical and Quantitative Analysis,” *American Political Science Review* (December 2000): 779-802. (<http://www.worldbank.org/research/conflict/papers/peacebuilding/>)
- [MACRO] Hartzell, Caroline and Matthew Hoddie. “Institutionalizing Peace: Power Sharing and Post-Civil War Conflict Management,” *American Journal of Political Science* 47 (April 2003): 318-332. (<http://www-polisci.tamu.edu/faculty/hoddie/>)
- [MACRO] Regan, Patrick. Data on Third-Party Intervention.
(<http://bingweb.binghamton.edu/~pregan/>)
- [MACRO] Sambanis, Nicholas. “Partition as a Solution to Ethnic War: An Empirical Critique of the Theoretical Literature,” *World Politics* 52: 437-483.
(<http://www.worldbank.org/research/conflict/papers/partition.htm>)
- **Multiple Regions** Other Data on Truth and Reconciliation Commissions
(<http://www.incore.ulst.ac.uk/services/cds/themes/truth05.html>).

- **Sierra Leone** Statistical Appendix to the Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Sierra Leone (<http://www.hrdag.org/resources/publications/SL-TRC-statistics-chapter-final.pdf>).
- **Colombia** Deininger, Klaus et.al. “Towards Sustainable Return Policies for the Displaced Population: Why are Some Households More Willing to Return than Others?” (<http://www.hicn.org/papers/wp07.pdf>)

IV. Data on Sierra Leone

One major source you may utilize for your empirical presentations is the survey of ex-combatants (and non-combatants) we completed in Sierra Leone in 2002. This data, which was gathered from a random sample of former fighters from all factions that participated in the fighting, include questions on recruitment, organization, strategies, and demobilization. If you so choose, each week you are welcome to turn to the Sierra Leone data for your empirical presentations. A clean set of the survey responses from the both the combatant and non-combatant datasets, along with the relevant questionnaires, are available on the course website.

Importantly, we are making this data available to you for the purposes of your intellectual growth and development. At the same time, we are using this data in the preparation of a book manuscript on the micro-politics of violence. Teaching this course, and debating the theoretical and empirical aspects of civil war with graduate students, is a critical element of our book-drafting process. Discussions we have will undoubtedly shape the final manuscript. What this also means is that you have access to data which **will not** be made available to anyone else until after the book is published. We ask that you use the data for course purposes only, and not share it with your colleagues here or at other universities.

In the course of drafting our manuscript, there are some topics which we will not realistically be able to cover, mainly because they require the collection of new data (beyond what was included in the survey). Nonetheless, they represent interesting and useful extensions of the empirical work we are doing on Sierra Leone and have broader relevance for the study of conflict.

Students in the seminar are welcome to write their final papers using the Sierra Leone survey data along with additional outside data to address any of these questions (or others which you might propose). We may approach authors of particularly strong theoretical and empirical papers using the data about co-authoring article-length treatments of the issues they investigate or a book chapter for the final manuscript. Students will be under no obligation to co-author with the instructors, but any presentation or publication of results using the survey data will be otherwise prohibited until the book is released.

- What factors explain regional variation in recruitment patterns? Can household survey data or anthropological studies help us to understand geographic patterns of participation and non-participation in the violence?
- What explains the movements of factions across territory over time? Can GIS or other micro-level data help us to understand the logic of troop movements?
- How do quasi-units evolve over time? What factors account for change in the membership and structure of quasi-units?
- Why do some regions form civil defense units and others do not?
- Can we operationalize the notion of ripeness for negotiations?
- What determines the placement of UN troops within Sierra Leone?

- Who chooses to testify at the Truth and Reconciliation Commission?
- What is the impact of conflict on local-level economic performance? Do the hardest hit regions grow faster (or more slowly) after conflict ends?
- Do the hardest hit regions suffer from higher levels of post-conflict criminality or unrest?

V. Background Materials on Major Cases

The course draws on empirical materials from six major cases of civil war. Four are from Africa: Angola, Sierra Leone, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Sudan. These are four of the largest and longest running wars on the continent in recent years. For comparative purposes, we examine two cases in other regions: El Salvador and Vietnam. Where possible, the syllabus includes primary and secondary sources describing the micro-politics of rebellion in these diverse contexts. The readings listed below are useful background materials on each of the cases.

General:

- Paul Collier and Nicholas Sambanis. *Understanding Civil War: Evidence and Analysis (Africa)* (Washington: The World Bank, 2005).
- Christopher Clapham (ed.), *African Guerrillas* (Oxford: James Currey, 1998).

Sierra Leone:

- David Keen. *Conflict and Collusion in Sierra Leone* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, forthcoming).
- Paul Richards. *Fighting for the rain forest: war, youth and resources in Sierra Leone* (Portsmouth: Heinemann, 1996).

Sudan:

- Douglas Hamilton Johnson. *The Root Causes of Sudan's Civil Wars* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003).
- Jok Madut Jok. *War and Slavery in Sudan* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001).

Angola:

- Tony Hodges. *Angola from Afro-Stalinism to Petro-Diamond Capitalism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001).
- William Minter. *Apartheid's Contras: An Inquiry into the Roots of the War in Angola and Mozambique* (London: Zed Books, 1994).

Congo:

- Karen Ballentine and Michael Nest. *The Democratic Republic of Congo: Economic Dimensions of War and Peace* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2005).
- John F. Clark (ed.). *The African Stakes of the Congo War* (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2004).
- Georges Nzongola-Ntalaja. *The Congo From Leopold to Kabila: A People's History* (London: Zed Books, 2002).

El Salvador:

- Cynthia McClintock. *Revolutionary Movements in Latin America: El Salvador's FMLN and Peru's Shining Path* (Washington: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1998).
- Elisabeth Wood. *Insurgent collective action and civil war in El Salvador* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

Vietnam:

- David W. P. Elliott. *The Vietnamese War: Revolution and Social Change in the Mekong Delta 1930 – 1975* (Armonk, NY and London: M. E. Sharpe, 2003).
- Jeffrey Race. *War Comes to Long An: Revolutionary Conflict in a Vietnamese Province* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971).

VI. Course Outline and Schedule

Week 1: Civil War and its Causes (September 30)

- Rogers Brubaker and David Laitin, “Ethnic and Nationalist Violence,” *Annual Review of Sociology* 24 (1998): 423-452.
- James Fearon and David Laitin, “Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War,” *American Political Science Review* 97 (2003): 75-90.
- Stathis Kalyvas, “The Ontology of Political Violence: Action and Identity in Civil Wars,” *Perspectives on Politics* 1 (2003):475-494.
- Mark Lichbach, “Contending Theories Of Contentious Politics And The Structure-Action Problem Of Social Order,” *Annual Review of Political Science* (1998).
- Briefing by Columbia students on the six civil wars under study.

Week 2: Theories of Recruitment (October 7)

- Scott Gates. “Recruitment and Allegiance: The Microfoundations of Rebellion.” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 46 (2002): 111–130.
- Steven Levitt and Sudhir Venkatesh, “An Economic Analysis of a Drug-Selling Gang's Finances,” *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 115 (August 2000): 755-789.
- Mark Lichbach, “What Makes Rational Peasants Revolutionary: Dilemma, Paradox, and Irony in Peasant Rebellion,” *World Politics* 46 (1994): 383-418.
- Michael Taylor, “Rationality and revolutionary collective action,” in *Rationality and revolution*, Michael Taylor (ed.) (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

Other Readings to Consider for Empirical Testing

- Ted Robert Gurr, *Why Men Rebel* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971).
- Timur Kuran, “Sparks and prairie fires: A theory of unanticipated political revolution,” *Public Choice* 61 (1989):41-74.
- Roger Petersen, *Resistance and Rebellion: Lessons from Eastern Europe* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

Week 3: [Debate] An Empirical Analysis of Recruitment (October 14)

(NOTE: On “off” weeks/debate weeks, at least one person from each group needs to have read each of these papers/chapters. Be prepared for the fact that information from these readings will be used by students from the other campus in the discussion.)

- David W. P. Elliott. *The Vietnamese War: Revolution and Social Change in the Mekong Delta 1930 – 1975*, Chapter 8.
- International Labor Office, *Wounded Childhood: The Use of Children in Armed Conflict in Central Africa* (2003).
- William Minter, “Account from Angola. UNITA as described by ex-participants and foreign visitors,” A research report submitted to the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA), 1990.
- Krijn Peters, *Re-Examining Voluntarism: Youth Combatants in Sierra Leone* (Pretoria: Institute for Security Studies, 2004). <http://www.iss.co.za/pubs/Monographs/No100/Contents.html>
- Elisabeth Wood, “Campesino Accounts of Insurgent Participation,” in *Insurgent Collective Action and Civil War in El Salvador*.

Week 4: Theories of Organization (October 21)

- Mariagiovanna Baccara and Heski Bar-Isaac, “Crime, Punishment and Organizational Structure,” Unpublished Paper, New York University Stern School of Business, 2005.
- Eric Maskin, Y. Qian, C. Xu (2000) “Incentives, Information, and Organizational Form,” *The Review of Economic Studies* 67 (2000): 359-378.
- Gary Miller, *Managerial Dilemmas: The Political Economy of Hierarchy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 1-35.
- James Q. Wilson, *Bureaucracy: What Government Agencies Do and Why They Do It* (Basic Books Classics) by James Q. Wilson, p. 3-28.

NOTE: This week we will also devote one hour to presentations of ideas for final projects.

Week 5: [Debate] Empirical Materials on Organization (October 28)

- Muana, Patrick. 1997. "The Kamajoi Militia: Civil War, Internal Displacement and the Politics of Counter-Insurgency." *African Development* 22 (3/4):77-100.
- Osita Afoaku, “Congo’s Rebels: Their Origins, Motivations, and Strategies,” in John F. Clark (ed.). *The African Stakes of the Congo War*.
- Paul Berman, *Revolutionary Organization* (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1974), p. 79-118.
- Douglas Hamilton Johnson. *The Root Causes of Sudan's Civil Wars*, p. 91-126

- Cynthia McClintock, “Why Did the Revolutionary Movements Emerge and Expand,” in *Revolutionary Movements in Latin America: El Salvador's FMLN and Peru's Shining Path*, p. 249-298.
- Jakkie Potgieter, “Taking Aid from the Devil Himself: UNITA’s Support Structures,” in *Angola's War Economy: The Role of Oil and Diamonds*, Jakkie Cilliers and Christian Dietrich (eds.) (Pretoria: ISS, 2000). <http://www.iss.co.za/Pubs/BOOKS/Angola/13Potgieter.pdf>

Week 6: Theories of Violence (November 4)

- Jean-Paul Azam. “On Thugs and Heroes: Why Warlords Victimize Their Own Civilians,” *Economics and Governance* (forthcoming).
- Stathis Kalyvas, *The Logic of Violence in Civil War* (New York: Cambridge University Press, forthcoming), theoretical chapter.
- Stathis N. Kalyvas, “Warfare in Civil Wars,” in *Rethinking the Nature of War*, In Isabelle Duyvesteyn and Jan Angstrom (eds.), (Abingdon: Frank Cass, 2005).
- Jeremy Weinstein, “Resources and the Information Problem in Rebel Recruitment,” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 49 (2005): 598-624.
- Elisabeth Wood, “Sexual Violence During War,” Unpublished Paper, Yale University, 2005. <http://pantheon.yale.edu/~7Eejw33/wood%20SV%20feb%202005.pdf> [a new version of this piece should be coming out in the middle of the term, so check on Wood’s website before reading.]

Week 7: [Debate] The Empirics of Violence (November 11)

- *Angola Unravels: The Rise and Fall of the Lusaka Peace Process* (New York: Human Rights Watch, 1999), Chapters 6 and 7.
- “Cases and Patterns of Violence: Section IV,” in *From Madness to Hope: the 12 year war in El Salvador*, Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.
- Macartan Humphreys and Jeremy Weinstein, “Handling and Manhandling Civilians in Civil War: Determinants of the Strategies of Warring Factions,” Unpublished Paper, Columbia and Stanford Universities, 2005.
- Matthew Kocher and Stathis Kalyvas, “Dynamics of Violence: Evidence from Civil War in Vietnam,” Unpublished Paper, Yale University, 2005.
- Les Roberts, Eastern DRC Mortality Survey.

Week 8: Negotiations, Termination, and Post-Conflict Reconstruction (November 18)

- Chaim Kaufmann. 1996. "Possible and Impossible Solutions to Ethnic Civil Wars." *International Security* 20(4):136-175.
- Andrew Kydd, "Which Side Are You On? Bias, Credibility, and Mediation," *American Journal of Political Science* 47 (2003): 597-611.
- Andrew Kydd and Barbara Walter, "Sabotaging the Peace: The Politics of Extremist Violence," *International Organization* 56 (2002): 263-296.
- Virginia Page Fortna, "The Causal Mechanisms of Peacekeeping" [draft book chapter].
- Barbara Walter, "The Critical Barrier to Civil War Settlement," *International Organization* 51 (1997): 335-364.

Week 9: [Debate] Empirical Assessments of Conflict Resolution and Termination (Dec 2)

- Charles Call, "El Salvador's Transition from Civil War to Peace," in *Ending Civil Wars: The Implementation of Peace Agreements* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2002).
- Frances Grignon, "Economic Agendas in the Congolese Peace Process, in Karen Ballentine and Michael Nest. *The Democratic Republic of Congo: Economic Dimensions of War and Peace*.
- Paul Hare, *Angola's Last Best Chance for Peace: An Insider's Account of the Peace Process* (Washington: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1998), Chapters 2-4.
- Nicholas Sambanis. "Partition as a Solution to Ethnic War: An Empirical Critique of the Theoretical Literature," *World Politics* 52: 437-483.
- Michael Doyle and Nicholas Sambanis. "International Peacebuilding: A Theoretical and Quantitative Analysis," *American Political Science Review* (December 2000): 779-802.
- Aki Stavrou et. al. 2003. Tracer Study and Follow-Up Assessment of the Reintegration Component of Sierra Leone's Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration Program.

Week 10: Class Presentations on Final Papers (December 9)