

Overview of the PhD thesis

Introductory chapter

Introducing the Anatomy of Resistance Campaigns (ARC) Dataset

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Published in Journal of Peace Research.

Abstract: We introduce the Anatomy of Resistance Campaigns (ARC) dataset, which records information on 1,426 organizations that participated in events of maximalist violent and nonviolent contention in Africa from 1990-2015. The ARC data disaggregate episodes of contention into their organizational components and inter-organizational networks, containing 18 variables covering organization-level features such as type, age, leadership, goals, origins, social bases, and inter-organizational alliances. These data facilitate new measurements of key concepts in the study of contentious politics, such as the social and ideological diversity of resistance episodes, in addition to measures of network centralization and fragmentation. This paper outlines the core concepts underpinning the ARC data, the data collection method, and descriptive statistics that illustrate trends in organizational participation over time and how organization types vary in their main features. The paper also provides initial evidence that structural factors correlate with the participation of some organization types, but not others. Finally, we show how organization types cluster together or repel each other during periods of contention. The ARC dataset can resolve existing debates in the field and opens new avenues of inquiry in the study of contentious dissent. It should be useful to scholars of violent and nonviolent contention, repression and dissent, along with researchers aiming to understand the dynamics of revolution and democratization.

Beyond Ethnicity: Historical States and Modern Conflict

Marius Swane Wishman and Charles Butcher.

Published in European Journal of Peace Research.

Abstract: Historical states, be they sprawling empires or nominal vassal states, can make lasting impressions on the territories they once governed. We argue that more historical states located within the borders of modern states increase the chance of civil conflict because they: (1) created networks useful for insurgency, (2) were symbols of past sovereignty, (3) generated modern ethnic groups that activated dynamics of ethnic inclusion and exclusion, and (4) resisted western colonialism. Using new global data on historical statehood, we find a robust positive association between more historical states inside a modern state and the rate of civil conflict onset between 1946-2019. This relationship is not driven by common explanations of state-formation that also drive conflict such as the number of ethnic groups, population density, colonialism, levels of historical warfare, or other region-specific factors. We also find that historical states are more likely to be conflict inducing when they are located far from the capital and in poorer countries. Our study points to unexplored channels linking past statehood to modern day conflict that are independent of ethno-nationalist conflict and open possibilities for a new research agenda linking past statehood to modern-day conflict outcomes.

Communal Violence and the Legacy of Pre-Colonial States

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Unpublished manuscript.

Abstract: Within the communal violence literature recent authors have stressed the potential conflict inducing effects of precolonial states, while others have emphasized the potential conflict reducing effects of local institutions associated with prior statehood. We address this apparent puzzle by arguing that an initial reduction of commitment issues and inter-group security dilemma introduced by pre-colonial states set in motion a positive

feedback loop of increased trade, reduced information problems, increased relative gains from continued cooperation, and a legacy of mixed ethnic settlement patterns. In support of the proposed mechanism we find that more precolonial state presence is associated with higher levels of ethnic fractionalization, and while precolonial states could cause more state based violence we find a general conflict reducing effect on communal violence. This effect is particularly strong in East Africa.

After Forever: Pre-Colonial States and Civil Conflict

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Unpublished manuscript.

Abstract: This paper examines the relationship between the presence of pre-colonial states and post cold war civil conflict. I argue that pre-colonial state presence can be conflict inducing or reducing depending on the relationship between the pre-colonial and post-independence states. To test this argument the paper introduces the Geo-ISD data set, which maps the borders of 82 independent states in Africa in the 1800-1914 period. I use these data to create a topographic measure of state presence. Proxying the relationship between the pre-colonial and post-independence state using the distance from the post-independence capital, the article finds that higher levels of pre-colonial state presence are conflict reducing in areas surrounding modern capital cities, which is consistent with greater continuity of traditions and institutions associated with statehood that are inherently conflict reducing. In areas further away from the post-independence capital, higher levels of pre-colonial statehood are found to be conflict inducing, consistent with the view that state legacies can represent powerful symbols of past independence useful for mobilization, and leave behind regional elite networks with the potential to violently resist centralisation efforts of national governments.