Midway Evaluation Prospectus (updated)

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1 Introduction

Based on the first article of the thesis, research interests, plans for articles 2-4 and the ARC and Geo-ISD projects, I pose the following overarching research question for my thesis: How do historical and pre-colonial states affect current contentious politics?

States have been some of the largest and most powerful organizations in the world ever since they fist appeared (Tilly 1990). Nevertheless, surprisingly little research has gone into what happens to states after they disappear from the international system of states, and what happens to states incorporating the such historical states. In the first article of this thesis we show multiple examples of states surviving on a sub-state (no longer sovereign) level, even decades after disappearing from the international system of sovereign states. Other states are dismantled by conquering states, yet live on in identities and histories of the inhabitants of the bygone state. This thesis will add to a growing literature exploring long histories, how differences in the past experiences affects recent or current outcomes, by examining the long history of statehood and its effect on contentious politics (both violent and non-violent).

2 Beyond Ethnicity: Dead States and Modern Conflict

This paper started from the overarching research question: How do historical state entities (states that are more or less 'dead') affect post World War 2 levels of conflict?

The emerging/existing literature on the subject of pre-colonial and historical (no longer sovereign states has reached differing conclusions. Some scholars find that ethnic groups with more centralized pre-colonial institutions experience less conflict with the central government (Wig 2016) and that regions with longer histories of statehood are more peaceful (Depetris-Chauvin 2016). However, others have found that the conflicts of prior states can leave legacies of ethnic tension (Besley & Reynal-Querol 2014). In a recent article Paine (2019) found that ethnic

groups who lack a history of statehood/centralized ethnic institutions, and find themselves within a country that has a group with such history, are more conflict prone than ethnic groups living in countries where no groups has such histories. Paine (2019) argues that this is because ethnic groups with a history of statehood or centralized ethnic institutions were more likely to inherit the state apparatus after decolonization. These groups would then more effectively (*ceteris paribus*) exclude other groups from political power, leaving the excluded groups few channels to political power other than violence. He also finds that in those instances where the group prior state history did not inherit 'the keys to the kingdom' they would also be more likely to engage in violence to achieve political power.

Our paper makes three main contributions to the literature. First, we do not assume that prior statehood necessarily affects conflict through ethnic groups. Not all pre-colonial states were ethnic states in any meaningful sense, while other were multi-ethnic in nature. Some were even the foundations of current ethnic identities (the paper gives multiple examples). Second, we employ new data that improves upon previous sources on pre-colonial statehood by identifying far more states than without compromising the pre- requisites for statehood and by having global coverage. Most of the literature has relied on either the Murdock (1967) map of ethnic groups in Africa, the state antiquity data (which is global but covers relatively few states) or other incomplete data. Third, we propose/construct a new measure of 'artificial statehood' that is more in line with theory than existing measures such as the straightness of boundaries (Alesina et al. 2011) or the variance in pre-colonial ethnic centralization (Englebert et al. 2002). We measure 'artificial statehood' – the degree to which a state overlaps with the pre-existing topology of statehood – as the number of historical state entities within its current boundaries. We propose 4 mechanisms through which more historical state entities (HSEs) increase the chance of civil conflict: HSEs (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 and specific values it brought with it.

Our hypothesis is:

H_1: *More historical states in the territory of a state increases the number of*

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internal armed conflicts.

We find a robust positive association between more HSEs inside a modern state and the number of civil conflict onsets 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. Using mediation analysis we find some moderate support for the colonialism mechanism, although a strong independent effect of more historical state entities on civil conflict onsets remains across all models.

Status: Awaiting response from JPR.

3   Geo-ISD Project

Together with Charles Butcher and research assistant Eirin Haugseth the project aimed to create geocoded information for the African historical state entities in the original ISD data set. Specifically, on the locations and borders of these historical state entities. The resulting data provides a far clearer view of not just how many pre-colonial states there were in Africa, but also where these were and – so we argue – over what areas they had more or less control.

The data has been collected, compiled and cleaned (mostly), and has been integrated not just with the original ISD, but with the PRIO-GRID system of geo-data as well.

The resulting papers using this data (covered in the subsections below) will form the bulk of my thesis.

3.1   The data

To get the locations of different historical state entities we used a combination of maps from the time period covered by the ISD and maps found in historical atlases compiled by historians in our own time. The historically contemporary maps were collected from the David Rumsey project at davidrumsey.com. We

then georeferenced the maps and traced polygons for the states included in both the map and the ISD. Similarly the historical atlases were scanned, georeferenced and relevant state entities were traced.

In the end we were left with over 3400 polygons covering the period 1800 to 1914 for continental Africa and Madagascar. For some HSE's in the ISD we have no maps for any years, some are covered only for some of the years they are in the ISD, but a substantial number of them are covered by multiple maps for many years. When maps disagreed on where the various borders were in a given year, we take it as an indication of the ambiguity of where a given state had *de facto* or *de jure* control in that year. In some areas all the maps would overlap (at the very least in the immediate surroundings of the capital), while in other areas they would not. In the areas where all the maps agree we could be quite sure that the given state entity had real presence. While in areas where only one map indicated that the state was presence, this could either be wrong, an indication of *de jure* as opposed to *de facto* presence or some other form of limited presence. The coding process of looking at hundred of maps strengthened this initial intuition, and the resulting figures of state presence drawn from the complete data lends it further credence.

The data from this project can be aggregated and used in many ways and to produce many variables. Initially, I have opted on 14 slightly different measures of state presence, 3 of which are considered the main measures of three unique aspects of state presence, the rest are more or less conservative versions of these three. All of these indicators are aggregated over all years for individual PRIO-GRID cells in Africa.

3.2   Historical states and civil conflict

3.3   Historical states and communal violence

3.4   Historical states and non-violent resistance

4   ARC data release paper

Finally, I will also co-author the data release paper from the Anatomy of Resistance Campaigns (ARC) project. The paper introduces the ARC data set on groups participating in violent an non- violent maximalist dissent in Africa over the period 1990-2015.

5   Progress

In terms of the articles that will form part of the thesis, the first one is currently under review at International Organization. The next step for the remaining articles is to finish the Geo-ISD data collection project, which is funded and underway. This should be done by the end of July. The resulting data should provide basis for at least two articles, hopefully three.

Overall I am content with the rate of progress so far, despite only having submitted one article for review. This is because I believe I now have a clearer idea of what the rest of the thesis will look like, and how I will go about writing it. Additionally, most of the duties to the department are done. After this semester there will only be approximately 30 hours remaining. I have also finished the requisite methods and philosophy of science courses that are part of the PhD Program. 10 ETC points worth of substantive course(s) remain. I have signed up for the PRIO course "Civil Resistance: Causes and Consequences", which will be 5 ETC points if I complete that as planned.

References

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