

# Civil wars II

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War, peace, and political violence

UC3M, Fall 2023

# Greed & opportunity

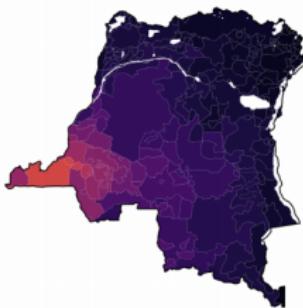
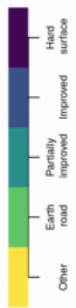


Gold mine in Ituri region, eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (2003)

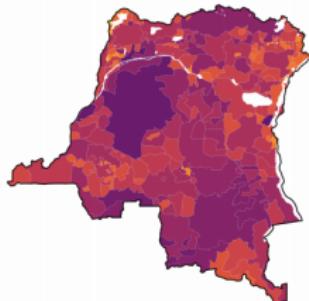
# Greed & opportunity



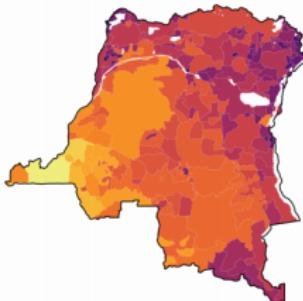
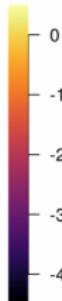
(a) Road network



(b) State access



(c) Internal connectedness



(d) Relational state capacity



(Müller-Crepon *et al.*, 2020)

## Greed & opportunity: what they have in common

- Ruling out *motivational* factors related to ideology, religion, ethnicity, inequality...
- Previous explanations based on grievances do not work
- Grievances are ubiquitous, so they can't explain anything
- Empirical results: no effect of ethnic fractionalization
  - Ethnic fractionalization: probability that two randomly drawn individuals belong to the same ethnic group (more ethnic groups, higher fractionalization)

# What are grievances?



- Outrage and historical rebellions

# What are grievances?



- Outrage and contemporary revolutions

# Grievances & ideology in the greed perspective

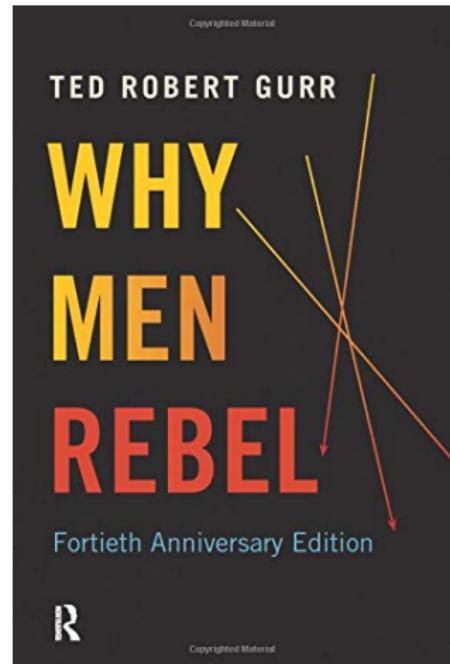
- Rebels 'wrap' themselves in ideology
- But no real effect: we won't be able to predict the outbreak of civil wars based on the existence of grievances
- Is this true?



Mural in Belfast

# The first wave of grievance studies

- Context in the 60s: violence and revolution in the 'Third World,' civil rights movement in the US
- What brings men and women to rise against 'unjust' regimes?
- Focus on psychological mechanisms
- 'Relative deprivation:' frustration over unmet expectations of material wellbeing triggers violent behavior
  - In other words: 'I'm not getting what I deserve'



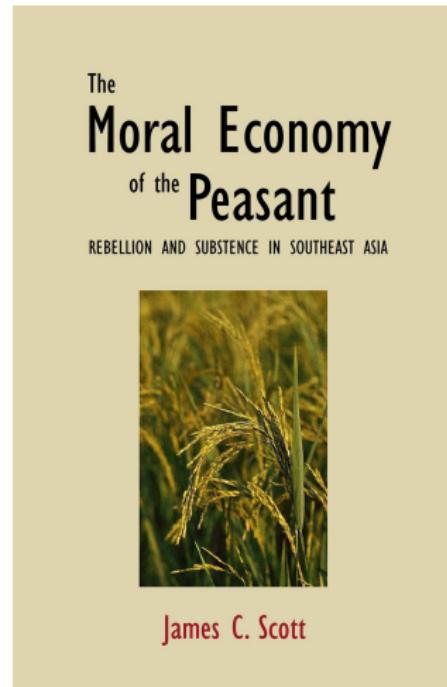
Ted Gurr (1970)

## The first wave of grievance studies

- Different from previous sociological theories of mob behavior, irrational mass behavior, etc
- Influenced by the ideological conflict of the Cold War
- Civil wars interpreted as 'peasant revolutions' or 'social revolutions'

# The first wave of grievance studies

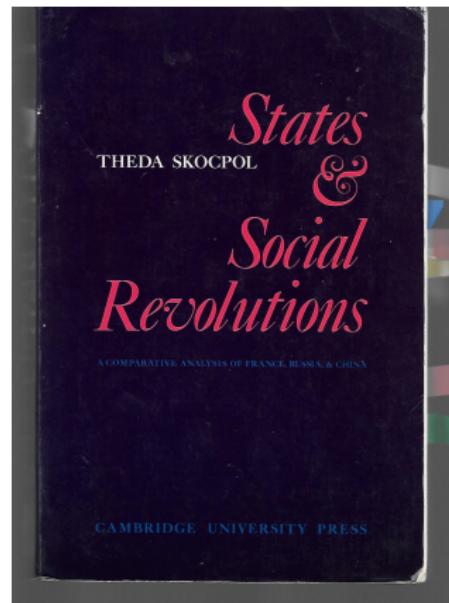
- Rebellions in Burma, Cochinchina
- Subsistence economy, social reciprocity
- Traditional (feudal) moral economy that preserved subsistence, social preference for stability
- Market-based transformations destroy this moral equilibrium and breed rebellion



James C Scott (1976)

# The first wave of grievance studies

- French, Russian, and Chinese Revolutions
- Social revolutions as a radical transformation of social and political structures (not a rebellion, not a political revolution)
- State-centric explanation of revolutions as a product of class struggle



Theda Skocpol (1979)

## The first wave of grievance studies

*No social group is more conservative than a landowning peasantry and none is more revolutionary than a peasantry that owns too little land or pays too high a rental.*

Samuel P Huntington (1968) *Political Order in Changing Societies*, p. 375.

## Early criticism or contributions

- Collective action theory and the focus on opportunity structures (Tilly, *From Mobilization to Revolution*): individual grievances or frustrations are not enough, resources and organization are needed for any form of collective action
- Rational action theory (Lichbach, *The Rebel's Dilemma*): free riding problem, why would I individually contribute to the struggle?
- The role of culture and social groups (Michael Hechter, Donald Horowitz): not about frustrated individuals, but about group comparisons

## The new focus on ethnic groups in the 1990s

- Lot of attention of a new set of conflicts where ethnic rivalries seems to play a huge role: Yugoslavia, Rwanda, former USSR, ongoing conflicts in Sri Lanka, Angola, ...
- Cold War perspective no longer present
- Posen's (1993) state collapse and ethnic security dilemma
- Primordialist accounts and ancient hatreds (Kaplan 1994)
- All this set the stage for the micro-economist approach and the greed/opportunity perspectives

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# The new grievance perspective

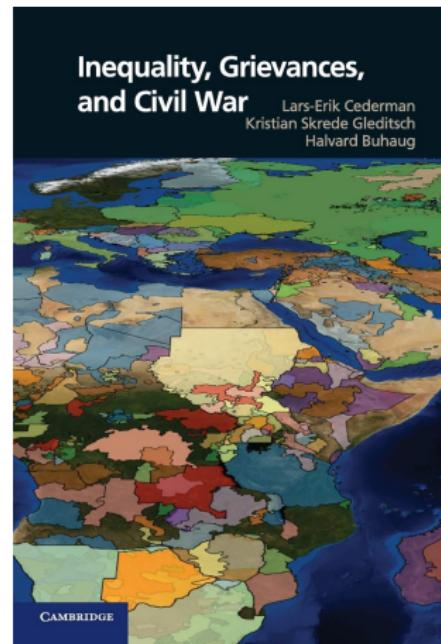
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- Structuralist approach and motivation
  - Collective action theory and resource mobilization
  - Why motivation based on material incentives but not on non-material ones?

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  - Why motivation based on material incentives but not on non-material ones?
- Ethnic conflict and the state
  - Where's the state in the ancient hatreds view?
  - Ethnic conflict is usually *about* controlling the state

# The new grievance perspective

- Building on previous theories of grievances (Gurr) and social/ethnic groups (Horowitz, Hechter)
- Vertical and horizontal inequalities
  - Inequalities not between individuals but between culturally defined groups
- Nationalism and inequality
- Not captured by ethnic fractionalization, inequality measures (e.g. Gini), etc



Cederman, Gleditsch, and  
Buhaug (2013)

## From horizontal inequalities to conflict

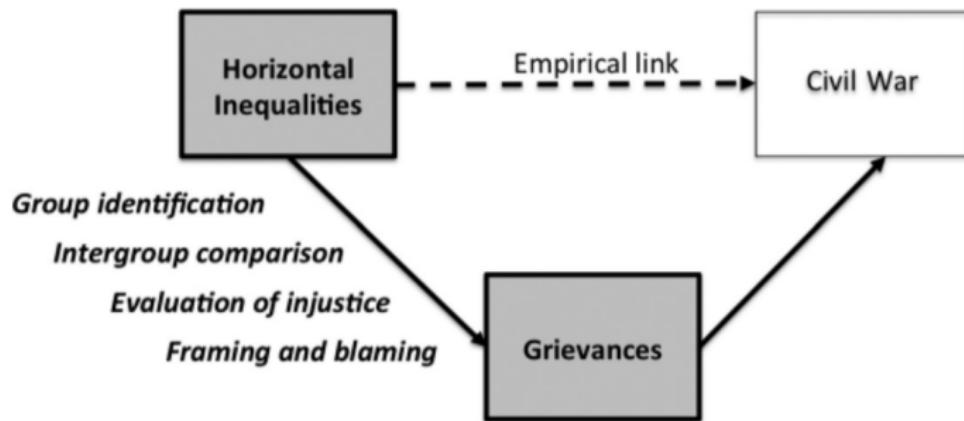


FIGURE 3.2. The causal path from horizontal inequalities to grievances.

Source: Cederman, Gleditsch, and Buhaug (2013)

## From horizontal inequalities to conflict

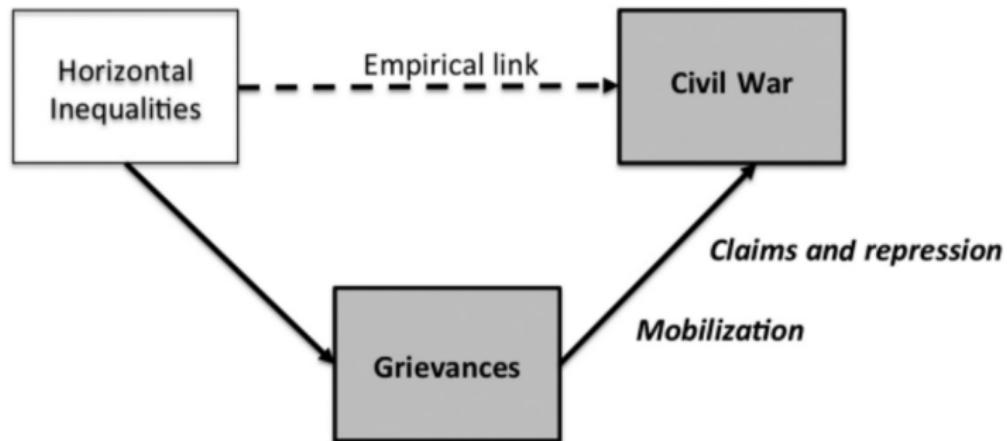
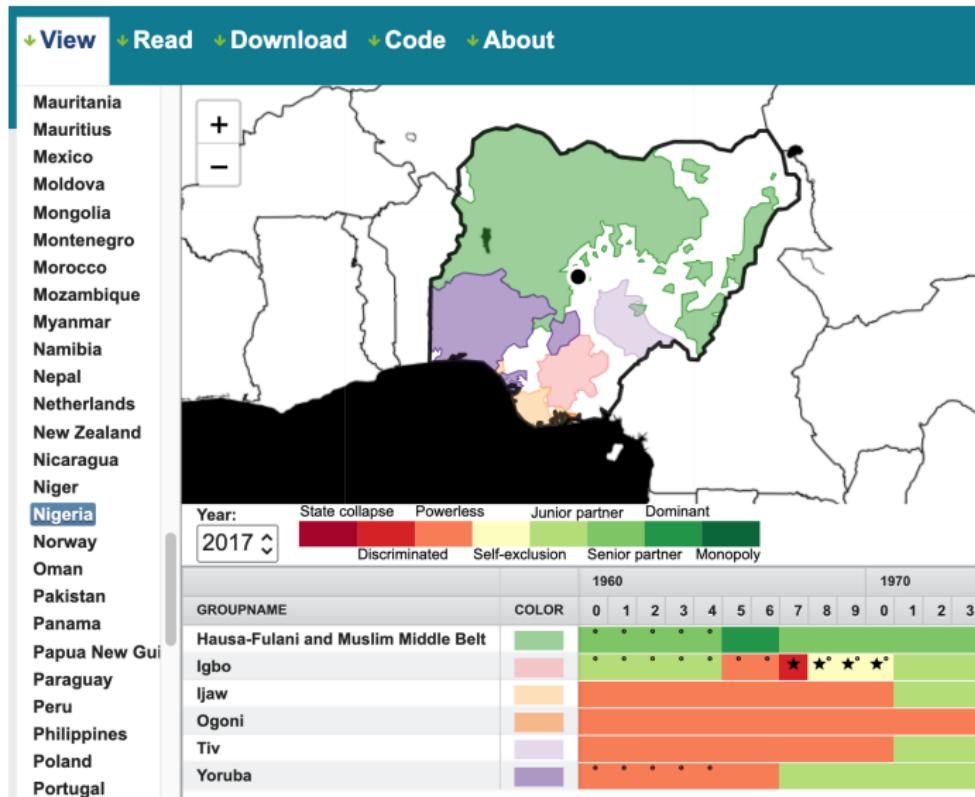


FIGURE 3.3. The causal path from grievances to civil war onset.

Source: Cederman, Gleditsch, and Buhaug (2013)

# Measuring grievances



# Testing the effect of grievances

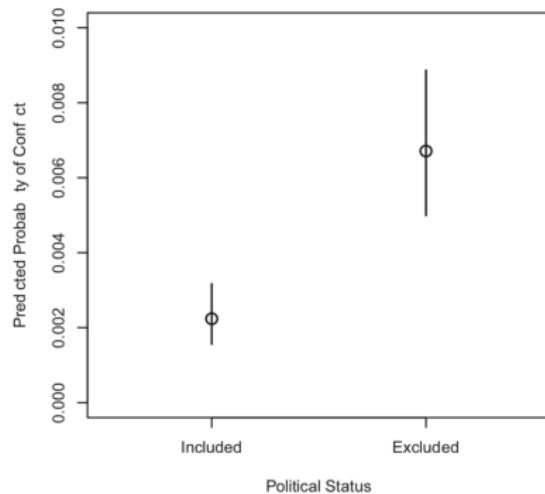


FIGURE 4.2. Comparing the effect of power access status on civil war onset.

*Source:* Cederman, Gleditsch, and Buhaug (2013)

- Being excluded from government linked to increased probability of conflict

# Testing the effect of grievances

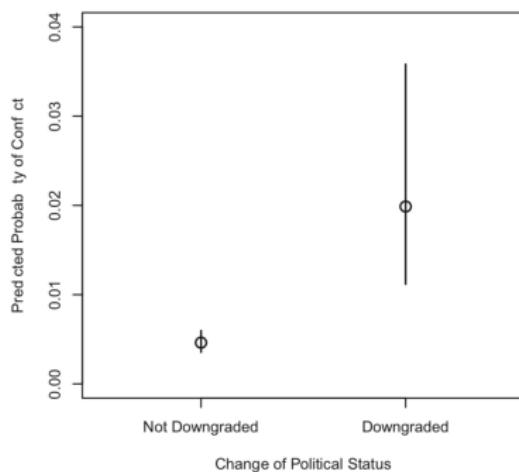


FIGURE 4.4. The effect of status reversals on the probability of civil war onset.

Source: Cederman, Gleditsch, and Buhaug (2013)

- Losing status linked to increased probability of conflict

# The international system and the Cold War effect

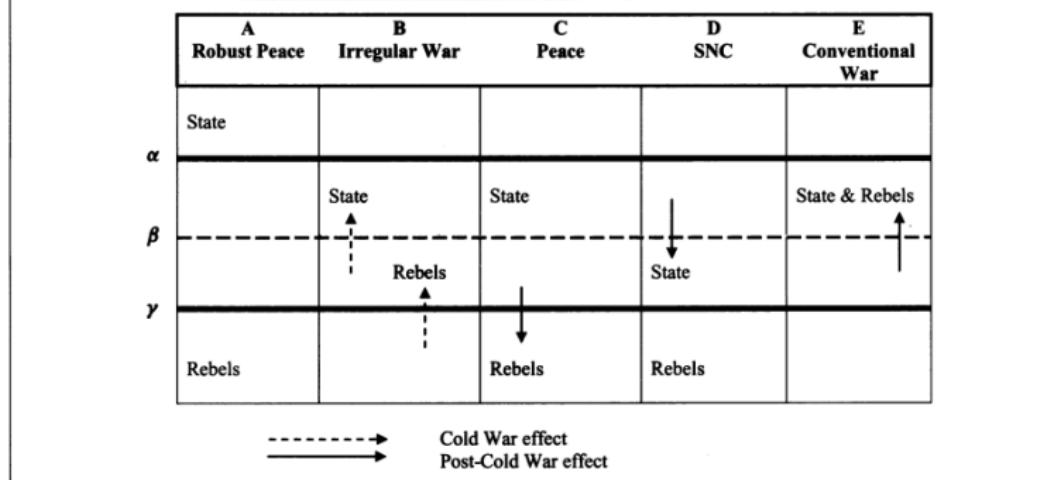
- Another take: Balcells & Kalyvas (*American Political Science Review*, 2010) and the international system
- How did global factors affected the *technology of rebellion*?
- Remember the types:
  - Irregular conflicts (guerrilla groups against conventional armies)
  - Conventional civil wars (all conventional armies, clear frontlines)
  - Symmetric non-conventional
- Q: Did the change in the international system (end of Cold War) affect the way civil wars are fought?

## The Cold War effect (during & after)

- Main idea: superpower support in 'proxy wars' increased insurgents' capacity, that's why we see so many irregular wars
- How? Material support, ideological support, training...
- Support to both sides
  - E.g. the USSR supported the government of Mozambique and US supported RENAMO
- After the Cold War, USSR support disappears and US no longer has incentives, and previously existing states collapse and armies fragment
- Increase in conventional and SNC wars

# The Cold War effect (during & after)

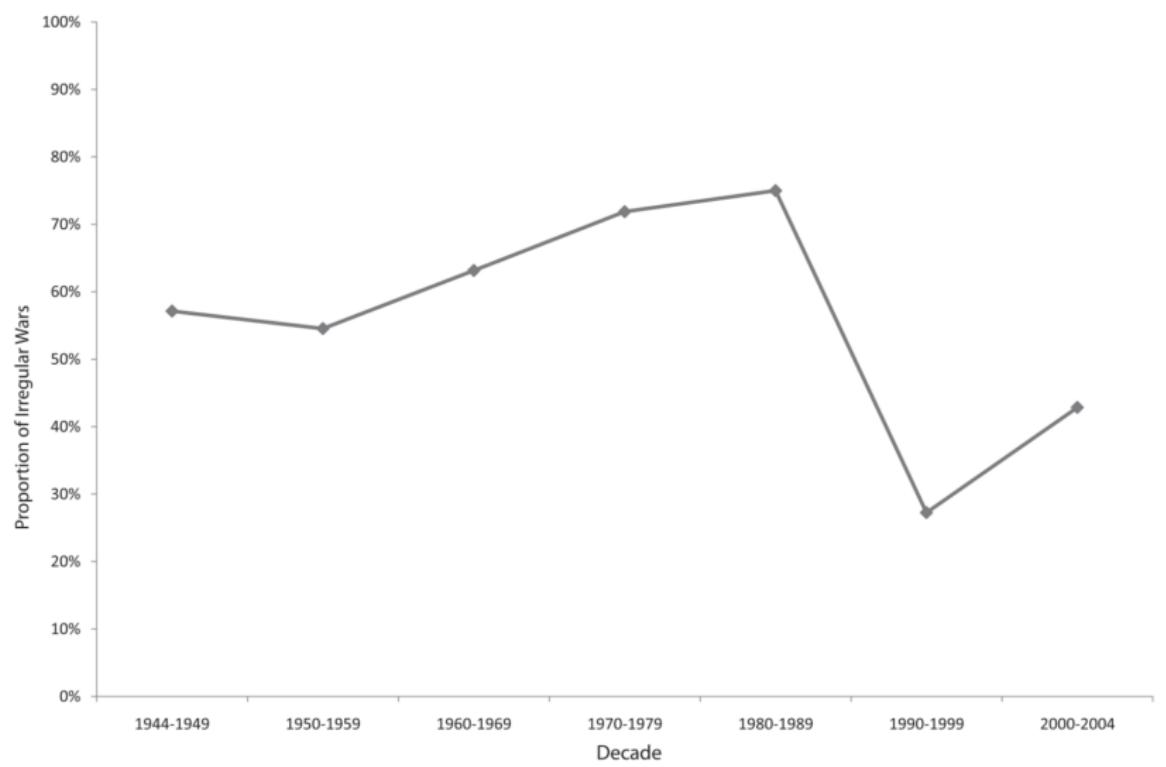
FIGURE 2. Impact of the Cold War on Civil Wars



- Above  $\alpha$ : state is too strong (stable peace)
- Above  $\beta$ : able to use conventional armies
- Above  $\gamma$ : able to use irregular warfare
- Below  $\gamma$ : not enough military capacity (bandits, terrorists, etc)

# The golden age of the guerrillas

**FIGURE 3. Irregular Civil Wars as a Proportion of All Civil Wars, by Decade**



# The golden age of the guerrillas

**TABLE 2. Civil War Onsets, by Technology of Rebellion (1944–2004)**

Technology of Rebellion	Cold War		Post–Cold War		Both Periods	
	N (1944–90)	% (1944–90)	N (1991–2004)	% (1991–2004)	N (1944–2004)	% (1944–2004)
Conventional	28	27.72	22	47.83	50	34.01
Irregular	67	66.34	12	26.09	79	53.74
Symmetric nonconventional	6	5.94	12	26.09	18	12.24
<b>Total</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>147</b>	<b>100</b>

## Wrapping up: explaining why civil wars break out

- Two key perspectives in academic research and policy-making

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- Two key perspectives in academic research and policy-making
- Greed (or opportunity)
  - Highlighting the opportunities of insurgencies to launch an insurgency
  - Economic and rational analysis of war onset
  - Dismissing motivational factors (ethnicity, discrimination, religion, etc)

# Wrapping up: explaining why civil wars break out

- Two key perspectives in academic research and policy-making
- Greed (or opportunity)
  - Highlighting the opportunities of insurgencies to launch an insurgency
  - Economic and rational analysis of war onset
  - Dismissing motivational factors (ethnicity, discrimination, religion, etc)
- Grievance (or motivation)
  - Role of horizontal inequalities
  - Critique to F&L: empirical measures do not reflect this (ethnic fractionalization)

## Beyond greed vs grievance

- No perspective (greed, grievances, opportunity) is sufficient to explain civil wars *on its own*
- Recent research (and policy) focuses on combining them, for instance:
  - Grievances can complement resource-based models of collective action
  - State capacity is probably the most important factor, but also includes a cultural aspect (nation-building)
  - Opportunistic or *greedy* leaders can co-exist with ideology-motivated participants
- Alternative points of view: e.g., the role of the international system

## Beyond conflict onset

- Main focus is on civil war onset, which roughly tries to explain why at some point individuals decide to use organized violence against the state
- But if we care about civil wars because of the human suffering (or even economic consequences), we should look at least at two different things
  - How long do wars last?
  - Why do wars break out again? (we'll see this in the postwar week)

## How long do civil wars last?

- Fearon (2004) 'Why do some civil wars last so much longer than others?'
- Two types of particularly long conflicts:
  - Conflicts where rebel groups receive funding from contraband activities: diamonds, coca, opium...
  - 'Sons-of-the-soil' conflicts: ethnic minority in the periphery against a dominant ethnic group that supports migrants into the periphery
- Commitment problems
  - Why would I stop fighting and reach a negotiated settlement?
  - Wartime contraband is making me rich even if fighting is costly
  - I'm sending migrants of my group to your region, which will increase in local power in the future

How long do civil wars last?

## Colombia's Longest Insurgency and the Last Chance for Peace?

Within the ELN, differing ideologies and visions for the end of conflict may set a time limit on the potential for peace.

December 23, 2019

 Tweet

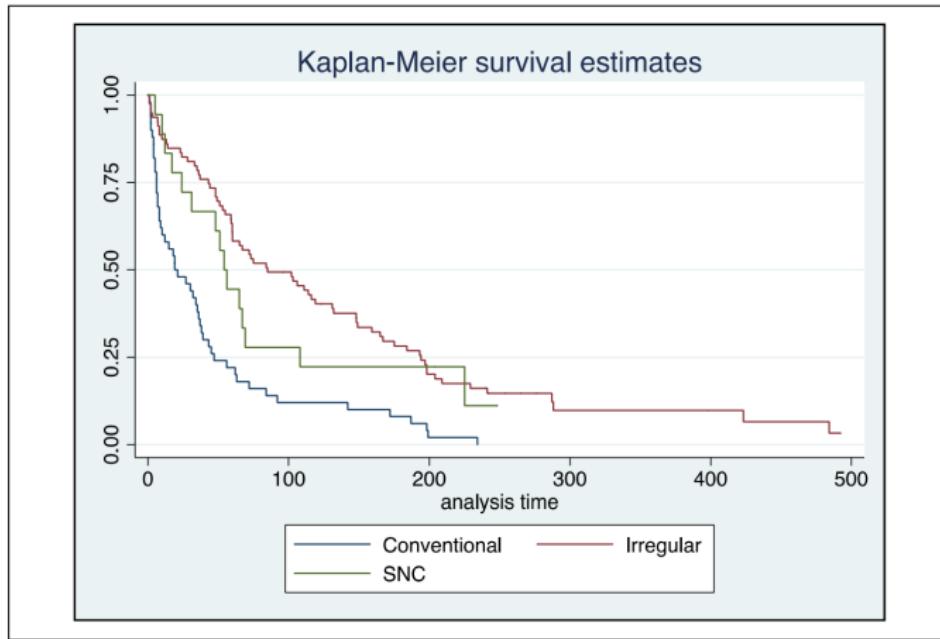
Mathew Charles



# How long do civil wars last?

- But another explanation is that the way a civil war is fought could also impact its duration
- Why did civil wars in Colombia, Guatemala, ... last for so long?
  - not the same, but why did the Troubles in NI or ETA in Spain last for so long?
- Ideas?

# How long do civil wars last?



**Figure 1.** Duration of civil wars by technology of rebellion, in months (TR dataset).

- Balcells & Kalyvas (*Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 2014)
- Looking at the duration depending on **technology of rebellion**

## How long do civil wars last?

- What about **grievances**?
- How can they impact the duration of wars?
- And can they explain why some conflicts are so durable?

# Next seminar

A REPORTER AT LARGE SEPTEMBER 13, 2021 ISSUE

## THE OTHER AFGHAN WOMEN

*Inside, the endless killing of civilians turned women against the o  
claimed to be helping them.*

By Anand Gopal

September 6, 2021

- Anand Gopal, 'The other Afghan women' (*New Yorker*, Sept 2021)
- Why women turned against the US and supported the Taliban

