

Civil wars II

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War, peace, and political violence

UC3M, Fall 2023

Greed & opportunity

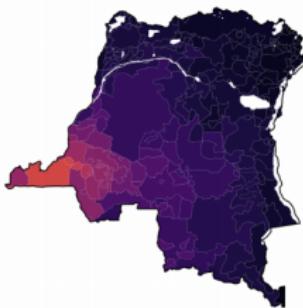
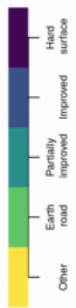


Gold mine in Ituri region, eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (2003)

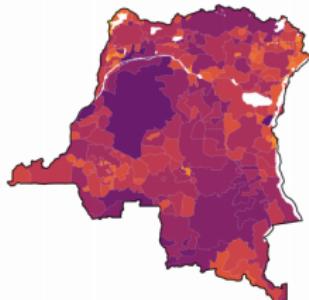
Greed & opportunity



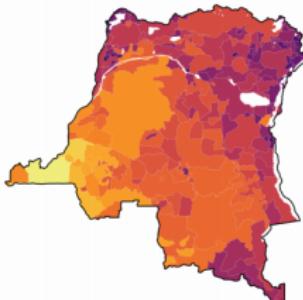
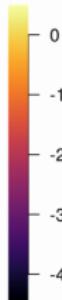
(a) Road network



(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

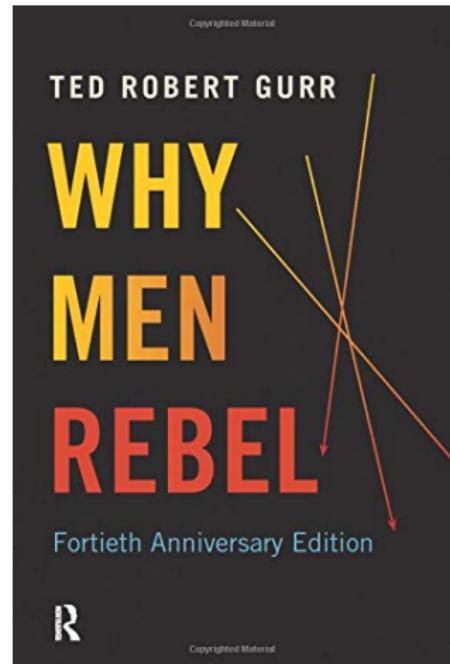
- Rebels 'wrap' themselves in ideology
- But no real effect: we won't be able to predict the outbreak of civil wars based on the existence of grievances
- Is this true?



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'



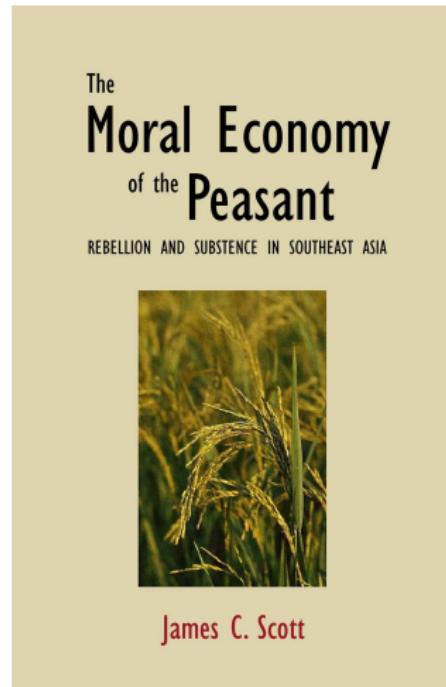
Ted Gurr (1970)

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

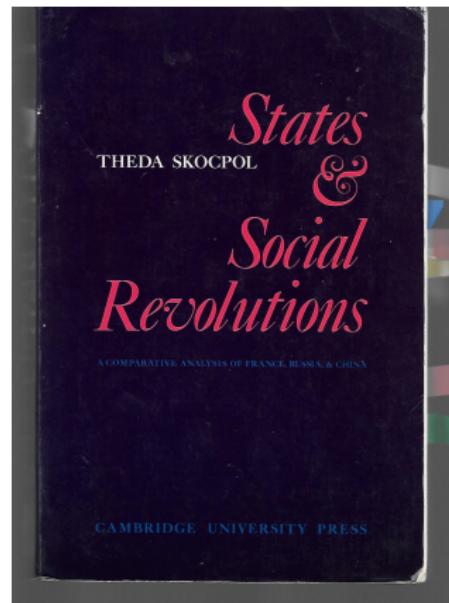
- Rebellions in Burma, Cochinchina
- Subsistence economy, social reciprocity
- Traditional (feudal) moral economy that preserved subsistence, social preference for stability
- Market-based transformations destroy this moral equilibrium and breed rebellion



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

The new grievance perspective

- Critiques to grievances skepticism:

The new grievance perspective

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- Individualist approach and macro-level empirics
 - Theories based on unitary individuals who seek material benefit
 - But testing this with country-level measures that miss the point (e.g. ethnic fractionalization)

The new grievance perspective

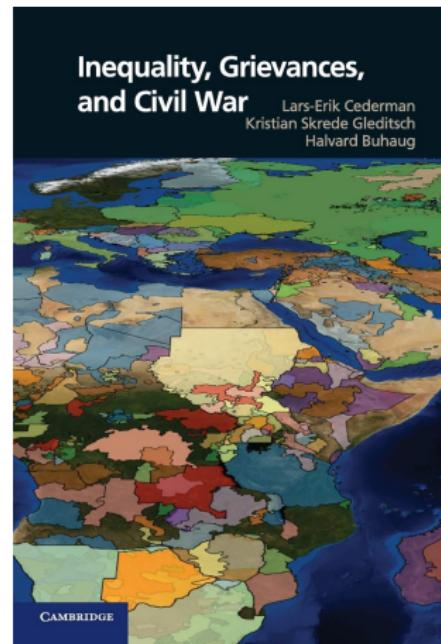
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- Structuralist approach and motivation
 - Collective action theory and resource mobilization
 - Why motivation based on material incentives but not on non-material ones?

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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

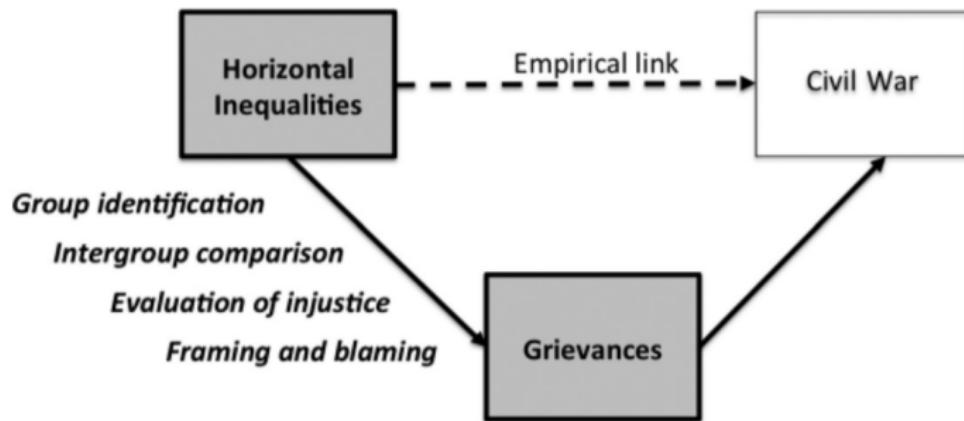


FIGURE 3.2. The causal path from horizontal inequalities to grievances.

Source: Cederman, Gleditsch, and Buhaug (2013)

From horizontal inequalities to conflict

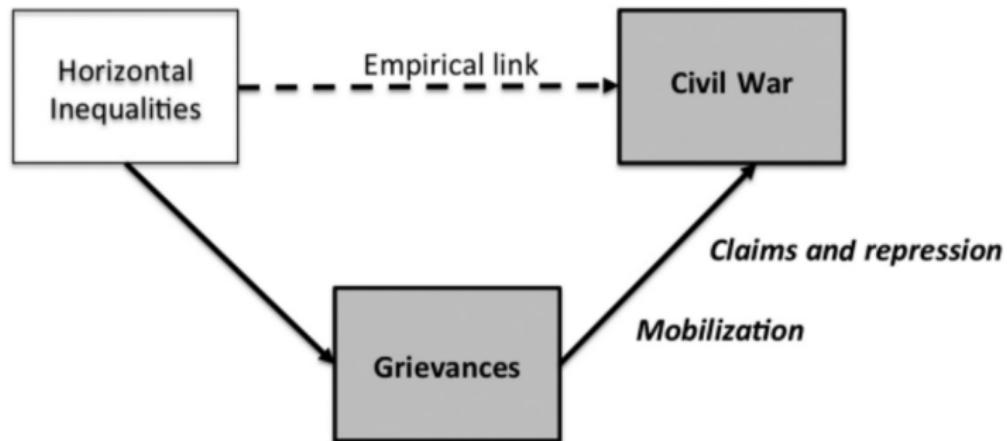
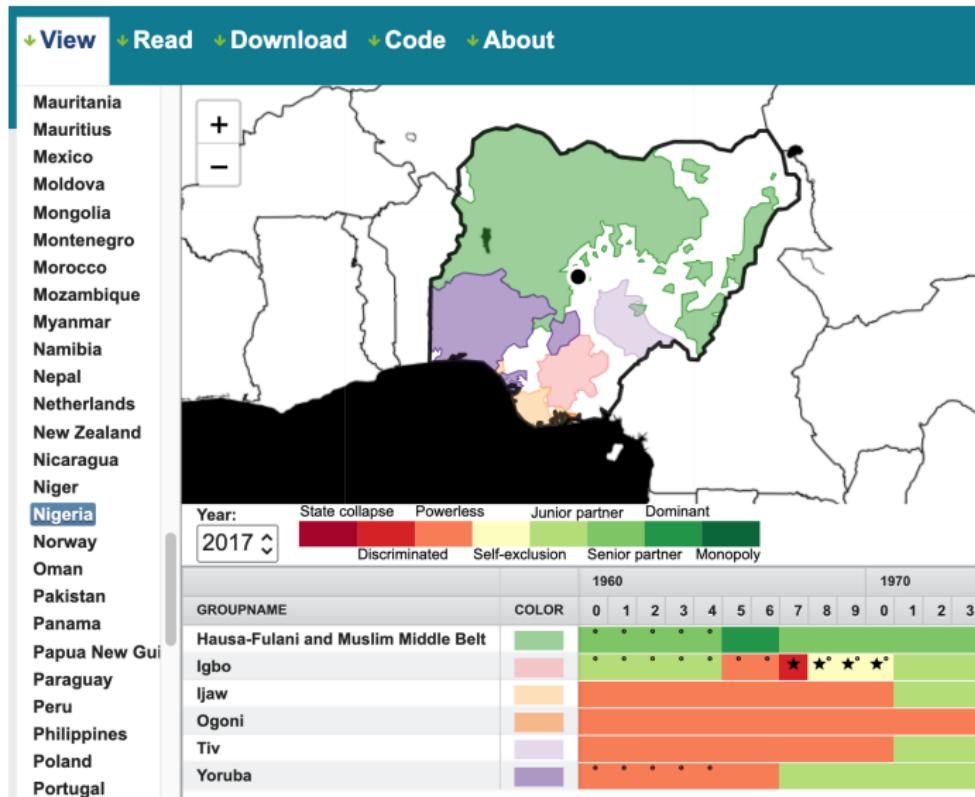


FIGURE 3.3. The causal path from grievances to civil war onset.

Source: Cederman, Gleditsch, and Buhaug (2013)

Measuring grievances



Testing the effect of grievances

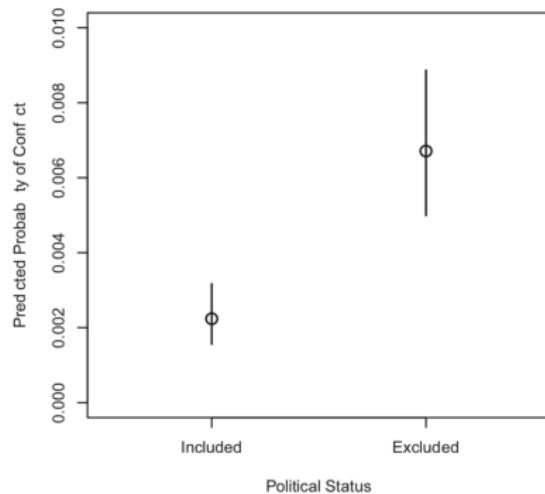


FIGURE 4.2. Comparing the effect of power access status on civil war onset.

Source: Cederman, Gleditsch, and Buhaug (2013)

- Being excluded from government linked to increased probability of conflict

Testing the effect of grievances

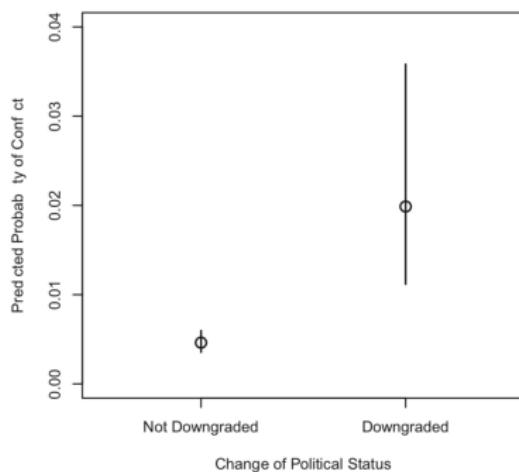


FIGURE 4.4. The effect of status reversals on the probability of civil war onset.

Source: Cederman, Gleditsch, and Buhaug (2013)

- Losing status linked to increased probability of conflict

The Cold War effect

- What about the effect of the *international system* on domestic conflict?

The Cold War effect

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- Another take: How global factors affected the *technology of rebellion*

Balcells & Kalyvas (*American Political Science Review*, 2010)

The Cold War effect

- What about the effect of the *international system* on domestic conflict?
- Another take: How global factors affected the *technology of rebellion*

Balcells & Kalyvas (*American Political Science Review*, 2010)
- 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)

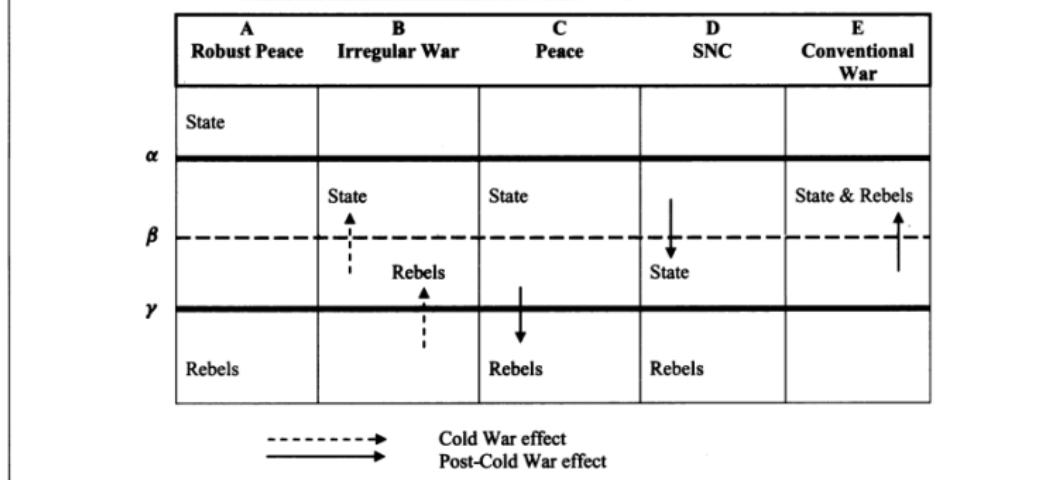
- Main idea: superpower support in ‘proxy wars’ increased insurgents’ capacity, that’s why we see so many irregular wars
- How? Material support, ideological support, training...
- Support to both sides
 - E.g. the USSR supported the government of Mozambique and US supported RENAMO

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- 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
- Consequence? Increase in conventional and SNC wars

The Cold War effect (during & after)

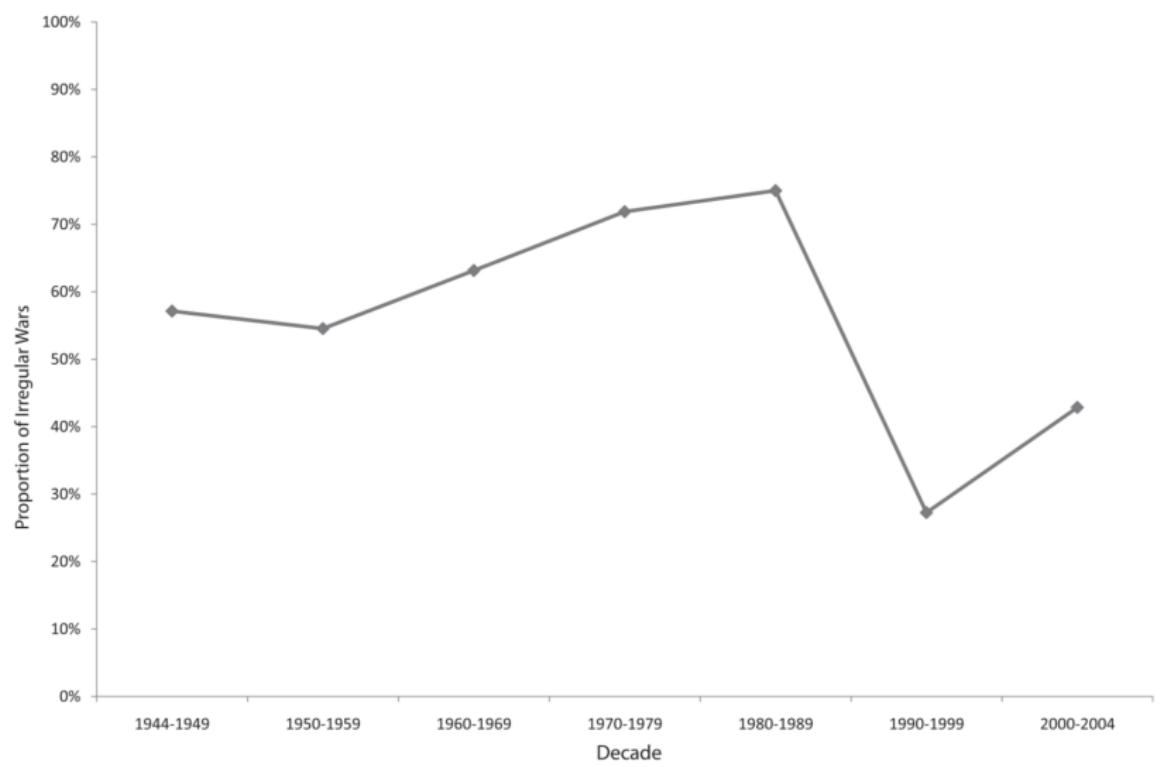
FIGURE 2. Impact of the Cold War on Civil Wars



- Above α : state is too strong (stable peace)
- Above β : able to use conventional armies
- Above γ : able to use irregular warfare
- Below γ : 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
Total	101	100	46	100	147	100

Wrapping up: explaining why civil wars break out

- Two key perspectives in academic research and policy-making

Wrapping up: explaining why civil wars break out

- Two key perspectives in academic research and policy-making
- Greed / opportunity
 - How **viable** is to launch an insurgency?
 - Economic and rational analysis of war onset
 - Dismissing motivational factors (ethnicity, discrimination, etc)

Wrapping up: explaining why civil wars break out

- Two key perspectives in academic research and policy-making
- Greed / opportunity
 - How **viable** is to launch an insurgency?
 - Economic and rational analysis of war onset
 - Dismissing motivational factors (ethnicity, discrimination, etc)
- Grievance / motivation
 - Effect of **horizontal inequalities** on conflict
 - Affects decision to fight, recruitment, internal cohesion...
 - Critique to greed studies: need to measure this properly

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?

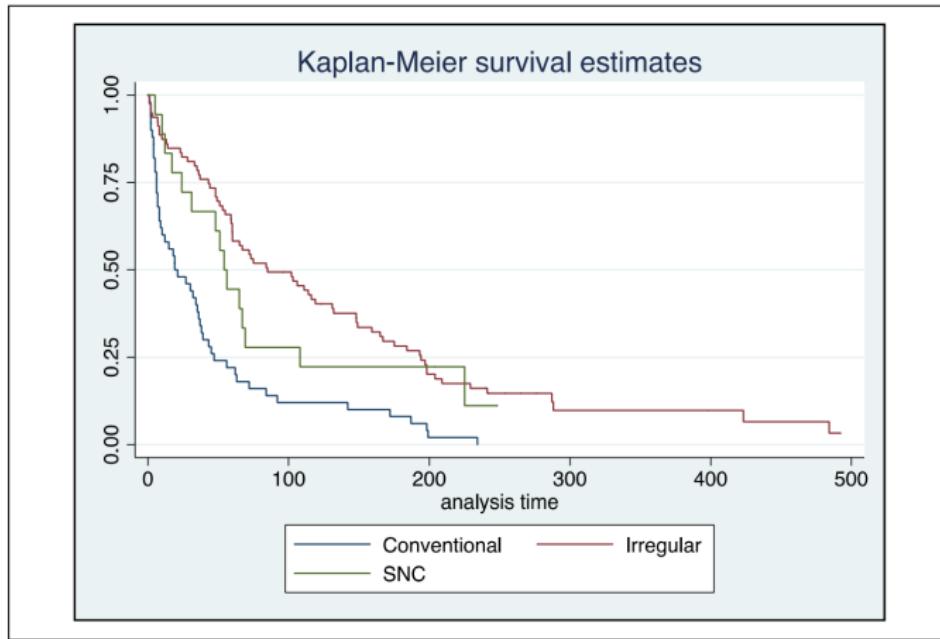


Figure 1. Duration of civil wars by technology of rebellion, in months (TR dataset).

- 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

