

Predicting the Evolution of Intrastate Conflict: Evidence from Nigeria [☆]

Cassy Dorff^a, Max Gallop^b, Shahryar Minhas^c

^a*Department of Political Science, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, NM 87106, USA*

^b*University of Strathclyde, Glasgow, 16 Richmond St., Glasgow, UK G1 1XQ*

^c*Department of Political Science, Duke University, Durham, NC 27701, USA*

Abstract

Civil conflicts are complex: multiple warring parties compete for control of territory both against each other and the government. These processes are often dynamic; changing over time and space. In this study, we embrace these complexities through a network based approach. By considering important relational patterns, such as reciprocity and transitivity, and tying them together with existing theoretical developments in the conflict processes literature, we answer the question of ‘who fights whom and when’ during civil conflict. Further, using the case of Nigeria, we offer novel theoretical insights about how the entrance of a new, aggressive actor can decisively alter the trajectory of conflict. In addition, we show that our approach is better at predicting ‘who fights whom and when’ in an out-of-sample context than extant approaches.

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[☆] Authors are listed in alphabetical order.

Email addresses: `cassy.dorff@unm.edu` (Cassy Dorff), `max.gallop@strath.ac.uk` (Max Gallop), `shahryar.minhas@duke.edu` (Shahryar Minhas)