

Conflict: Root Causes, Consequences, and Solutions for the Future

(PPHA 38740)

Course Information

University of Chicago, Harris School
Winter 2018
Class time: Friday 9-11:50 am
Room: 140C

Instructor: Oeindrila Dube (odube@uchicago.edu)
Office Hours: Wednesday 4:30-6 pm
Office location: Harris School, 303A
Teaching Assistant: TBA

Course Objectives

The goals of this course are to introduce students to key concepts in the study of conflict, and to develop the policy analysis skills needed to understand and assess key arguments advanced in this arena. Effective policymakers today are consumers of data science, with an ability to discern what makes empirical evidence compelling. Thus a major emphasis of the course will be learning how to think critically about empirical evidence, and to develop a better understanding of common methodologies used in empirical analysis, such as the use of fixed effects, differences-in-differences research designs, and instrumental variables estimation. This methodological emphasis will occur through the examination of fundamental topics in conflict. Drawing on economics and political science, as well as psychology, we will examine the role of economic shocks and ethnic divisions on civil war. We will also discern whether similar factors explain the rise of terrorism. In addition, we will study the consequences of conflict on socio-economic development, and examine the role of foreign aid and post-conflict reconciliation in helping countries recover from conflict.

Course Requirements

All students must complete 2 memo-style written assignments. In these assignments, you will be required to critically analyze the content of either one or two academic papers, and argue whether the author has presented sufficient evidence to support the conclusion and policy implication advanced in the paper. You will be asked specifically to assess both the conceptual claim and the validity of the empirical methodology in forming this assessment. Memos should be typed, and should not exceed 3 pages in length (double-spaced, using 12 point font, 1-inch margins all around).

Your grades on the written assignments will be based on both the quality of your writing as well as the clarity and content of your points.

Note: These should be emailed to me and the TA by 5 pm on the date they are due. Each day an assignment is late, a full grade is deducted from the assignment. Starting from 30 minutes after the official deadline, your assignment is considered to be a day late, and two days late 24 hours after the official deadline, etc.

All students will also be required to do an in-class presentation, 20-30 minutes in length. You will be asked to select one of the papers designated under the student presentation section of each topic in the syllabus below, and present a brief overview, followed by an extensive assessment of the paper, in which you comment on the nature of the data, the empirical strategy and analysis, and offer suggestions for what other evidence would be needed to support the conclusion of the paper. The goal of the presentation is to develop the skills needed to translate the content of an academic paper into simple terms; critically analyze the content; and effectively communicate this analysis to an audience. (See presentation guidance for further details).

Note: The presentation slides are due in to me and the TA by **Wednesday, 5 pm**, the week in which you present.

Finally, you will be required to take an in-class final exam. The final exam will be held **Friday, March 16, 9-11:50 am**. There is no alternate exam time available.

Course Grading

30% - 2 Written Memo Assignments (15% each)
20% - Class Presentation
10% - Class Participation on non-presentation days
40% - In-class Final Exam

Texts

All articles will be uploaded on chalk. Links are also provided below for most readings. Links such as www.jstor.org may only work from an on-campus computer or IP address. Scholar.google.com is generally another good way of locating references.

It is expected that you do all the readings before class, including the papers listed under the student presentation sections. The presentations are meant to be interactive with all students in the class participating, and not just the presenter. Thus having all students read the papers is essential for having quality discussion during class.

Tentative Syllabus

1. January 5th – Introduction

We will go over the course requirements and assignments. We will also review how to read academic papers, and interpret regression tables in these papers. We will also cover the content of these two papers:

Collier, Paul and Anke Hoeffler. 2004. "[Greed and Grievance in Civil War](#)." *Oxford Economic Papers*. 56 (2004): 563-595.

Fearon, James D. and David D. Laitin. 2003. "[Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War](#)." *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 97, No. 1 (Feb., 2003), pp. 75-90

2. January 12th – Ethnic Divisions and Civil Conflict

Montalvo, Jose G., and Marta Reynal-Querol. 2005. "[Ethnic Polarization, Potential Conflict, and Civil Wars](#)." *American Economic Review* 95 (3): 796–816.

Michalopoulos, Stelios and Elias Papaioannou. 2015. "[The Long-Run Effects of the Scramble for Africa](#)." *American Economic Review*.

Jha, Saumitra. 2013. "[Trade, Institutions and Ethnic Tolerance: Evidence from S. Asia](#)." *American Political Science Review*

Meier, Gerald M., and James E. Rauch. (2005). "Appendix: How to Read a Regression Table", *Leading Issues in Economic Development*, Eight Edition, p. 561-566. (Posted on Chalk)

Papers for student presentations:

Yanagizawa-Drott, David. "[Propaganda and Conflict: Theory and Evidence from the Rwandan Genocide](#)." *Quarterly Journal of Economics*.

Joan Esteban, Laura Mayoral and Debraj Ray, "[Ethnicity and Conflict: An Empirical Investigation](#)" with, *American Economic Review* **102** (2012), 1310-1342.

3. January 19th – The Economic Causes of Civil Conflict

Edward Miguel, Shanker Satyanath and Ernest Sergenti, 2004. "[Economic Shocks and Civil Conflict: An Instrumental Variables Approach](#)," *Journal of Political Economy* 112 (4), 119-144.

Dube, Oeindrila and Juan Vargas. "[Commodity Price Shocks and Civil Conflict: Evidence from Colombia](#)." *Review of Economic Studies*. (2013) 80, 1384–1421.

"[This mine is mine! How minerals fuel conflicts in Africa](#)", (Nicolas Berman, Mathieu Couttenier, Dominic Rohner, and Mathias Thoenig), forthcoming in *American Economic Review*.

Papers for student presentations:

Angrist, Joshua and Adriana Kugler. 2008. "[Rural Windfall or a New Resource Curse? Coca, Income and Civil Conflict in Colombia](#)." *The Review of Economics and Statistics*. 90(2): 192-215.

Berman, Nick and M. Couttenier. [External shocks, internal shots: the geography of civil conflicts](#), 2015, *Review of Economics and Statistics* vol 97(4), pp 758-776.

DUE DATE FOR ASSIGNMENT 1: Wednesday Jan 25th

4. January 26th –Can Economic Factors Explain Terrorism?

Alan B. Krueger and Jitka Maleckova, 2003. "Education, Poverty and Terrorism: Is there a Causal Connection?" *Journal of Economic Perspectives* (17) 4, pp. 119-144.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/pdfplus/3216934.pdf>

Blair, Graeme C., Christine Fair, Neil Malhotra and Jacob Shapiro, "[Poverty and Support for Militant Politics: Evidence from Pakistan](#)," *American Journal of Political Science* **Volume 57, Issue 1, pages 30–48, January 2013**.

Eli Berman, Michael Callen, Joseph H. Felter and Jake Shapiro, "[Do Working Men Rebel? Employment and Insurgency in Afghanistan, Iraq and the Philippines](#)." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* (2011) 55 (4): 496-528

Benjamin W. Bahney, Radha K. Iyengar, Patrick B. Johnston, Danielle F. Jung, Jacob Shapiro Howard J. Shatz. "[Insurgent Compensation: Evidence from Iraq](#)," *American Economic Review: Papers and Proceedings*, 2013, 103(3): 518-522.

Papers for student presentations:

[“Relative Poverty, Perceived Violence, and Support for Militant Politics: Evidence from Pakistan.”](#) 2016 by C. CHRISTINE FAIR, REBECCA LITTMAN, NEIL MALHOTRA AND JACOB N. SHAPIRO. *Political Science Research Methods*

Piazza, James. A. "[A Supply-Side View of Suicide Terrorism: A Cross-National Study.](#)" 2008. *Journal of Politics*. 70(1): 28-39.

Benmelech, Efrain and Esteban Klor. "[What Explains the Flow of Foreign Fighters to ISIS?](#)" NBER Working Paper 22190

5. February 2nd – Social and Psychological Causes of Conflict

Littman, Rebecca and Betsy Levy Paluck. 2015. "[The Cycle of Violence: Understanding Individual Participation in Collective Violence](#)" *Advances in Political Psychology* 36(1): 79-99.

Victoroff, Jeff. "[The Mind of the Terrorist: A Review and Critique of Psychological Approaches.](#)" *The Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 49, No. 1 (Feb., 2005), pp. 3-42

Scott Atran, Hammad Sheikh, and Angel Gomez. "[Devoted actors sacrifice for close comrades and sacred cause.](#)" *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 111(50). 17702-17703

Papers for student presentations

Whitehouse, Harvey, Brain McQuinn, Michael Buhrmest, and William B. Swann, Jr. 2014. "[Brothers in arms: Libyan revolutionaries bond like family.](#)" *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 111(50).

Jeremy Ginges, Scott Atran. [What Motivates Participation in Violent Political Action: Selective Incentives or Parochial Altruism?](#). *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, Wiley, 2009, 1167, pp.115-123.

6. February 9th – The Role of Foreign Aid I

Besley, Tim and Torsten Persson. 2011. "[The Logic of Political Violence.](#)" *Quarterly Journal of Economics*

Berman, Eli, Jacob Shapiro and Joseph Felter. Forthcoming. "[Can Hearts and Minds be Bought: The Economics of Counterinsurgency in Iraq.](#)" *Journal of Political Economy*.

Paper for Student Presentations:

De Ree, Joppe and Eleonora Nillesen. "[Aiding violence or peace? The impact of foreign aid on the risk of civil conflict in sub-Saharan Africa](#)" *Journal of Development Economics* 88 (2009) 301–313.

Beath, Andrew, Fotini Christia and Ruben Enikopolov. "[Winning Hearts and Minds? Evidence from a Field Experiment in Afghanistan.](#)" Working paper, MIT.

7. February 16th – The Role of Foreign Aid II

Crost, Benjamin, Joseph Felter and Patrick Johnston. 2014. "[Aid under Fire: Development Projects and Civil Conflict.](#)" *American Economic Review*.

Dube, Oeindrila and Suresh Naidu. 2015. "[Bases, Bullets and Ballots: the Effect of U.S. Military Aid on Political Conflict in Colombia](#)" with a [Online Appendix](#). *Journal of Politics*.

Papers for student presentations

Nunn, Nathan and Nancy Qian, "[US food aid and civil conflict](#)," *The American Economic Review*, 2014, 104 (6), 1630–1666.

Crost B., J. Felter and P. Johnston. 2016. [Conditional Cash Transfers, Civil Conflict and Insurgent Influence: Experimental Evidence from the Philippines](#). *Journal of Development Economics* 118: 171-182

DUE DATE FOR ASSIGNMENT 2: Thursday February 23rd

8. February 23rd – The Effect of Conflict on Social Cohesion

Bauer, Blattman, Chytilová, Henrich, Miguel, and Mitts. "[Can War Foster Cooperation?](#)" *Journal of Economic Perspectives*—Volume 30, Number 3—Summer 2016—Pages 249–274.

Dell, Melissa and Pablo Querubin. 2016. [Nation Building Through Foreign Intervention: Evidence from Discontinuities in Military Strategies](#). NBER Working Paper No. 22395.

Papers for student presentations:

Voors, M.J., E.E.M. Nillesen, E.H. Bulte, B.W. Lensink, P. Verwimp, and D.P. van Soest. 2012. "[Violent Conflict and Behavior: a Field Experiment in Burundi](#). *American Economic Review*.

Bauer, Michal, Alessandra Cassar, Julie Chytilová, and Joseph Henrich. 2014. "[War's Enduring Effects on the Development of Egalitarian Motivations and In-Group Biases.](#)" *Psychological Science* 25(1): 47–57.

Rohner, Dominic, Mathias Thoenig and Fabrizio Zilibotti), "[Seeds of Distrust: Conflict in Uganda](#)" *Journal of Economic Growth*, 2013, 18 (3): 217-252.

9. March 2nd –Reconciling and Rebuilding after Conflict

Brouneus, Karen. "[The Trauma of Truth Telling: Effects of Witnessing in the Rwandan Gacaca Courts on Psychological Health](#)." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 54(3) 408 – 437

Cillers, Jacobus, Oeindrila Dube and Bilal Siddiqi. 2016. "[Reconciling after civil conflict increases social capital but decreases individual wellbeing](#)" *Science* (Paper and Appendix).

Casey, Katherine, Rachel Glennerster and Edward Miguel. 2017. "[Reshaping Institutions: Evidence on Aid Impacts using a Pre-Analysis Plan](#)." *Quarterly Journal of Economics*

Papers for student presentations

Paluck, E.L. (2009). [Reducing intergroup prejudice and conflict using the media: A field experiment in Rwanda](#). *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 96, 574-587.

Jha, Saumitra and Moses Shayo. 2016. **[Valuing Peace: The Effects of Stock Market Exposure on Votes and Political Attitudes](#)**, Stanford GSB Working Paper.

10. March 9th - The Economic Consequences of Conflict

Abadie, A. and J. Gardeazabal (2003). "[The Economic Costs of Conflict: A Case Study of the Basque Country](#)." *American Economic Review* 93(1): 113-132.

Miguel, Ted and Gerard Roland. 2011. [The Long Run Impact of Bombing Vietnam](#). *Journal of Development Economics*

Lind, Jo Thori, Karl Ove Moene, and Fredrik Willmusen. 2014. [Opium for the Masses? Conflict-induced narcotics production in Afghanistan](#). *Review of Economics and Statistics*.

Guidolin, Massimo and Eliana La Ferrara. 2007. [Diamonds Are Forever, Wars Are Not: Is Conflict Bad for Private Firms?](#) *American Economic Review* 97(5): 1978-1993.

For student presentations:

Dube, Arindrajit, Ethan Kaplan and Suresh Naidu. 2011. "[Coups, Corporations, and Classified Information](#)." *Quarterly Journal of Economics*.

Leon, Gianmarco, 2012. Civil Conflict and Human Capital Accumulation: Long Term Consequences of Political Violence in Perú *Journal of Human Resources*, Vol. 47(4): 991-1023.