



Seminar “Intrastate Conflict and Terrorism”

University of Zurich, Fall, 2021

Lecturer: Prof. Dr. Karsten Donnay (donnay@ipz.uzh.ch)

Contact: donnay@ipz.uzh.ch and [OLAT](#)

Office Hours: By appointment

Course number: 615e540a Seminar

Overview and Objectives

This seminar introduces students to the quantitative study of intrastate conflict and terrorism. It first covers foundational readings that introduce key theoretical explanations for these types of conflict. It then reviews the current state of our understanding of the causes and dynamics of these conflicts. The seminar places a particular emphasis on the measurement of conflict phenomena and their quantitative analysis. We will cover the current state-of-the-art for the collection of conflict event data through a variety of institutional data collection initiatives and the corresponding analytical approaches for these kinds of micro-level data. Throughout, we critically discuss the scope of our current conceptual understanding as well as the limitations of existing data collection efforts and quantitative methodologies.

Course Objectives and Key Skills

- Students will develop a good understanding on intrastate conflict and terrorism and the current (quantitative) research on this topic.
- They will familiarize themselves with leading data collection initiatives and the strengths and weaknesses of methodological approaches relying on micro-level conflict data.

Course Times

The course takes place every Monday 10:15 – 12:00 starting on Sep. 20, 2021; the last session of the class is on Dec. 20, 2021. Note that the course is currently planned for in-person teaching but future restrictions due to COVID-19 may make it necessary again that the course moves to an online-only teaching format.

Course Assessment

The seminar is reading-based, i.e., 3-4 papers will be assigned to be read per session. Students are required to prepare three response papers throughout the term that analyze the readings of a given week in more detail. A full list of readings is provided in the course outline below.

- Response papers should be short discussion papers (max. 2 pages) that summarize the main arguments of the week’s readings, critically evaluate them and put them into context. These papers are due Friday (end of day) before each of the respective session.
- Students are encouraged to discuss the readings and prepare the papers together – working remotely or meeting in person – with other students assigned to the same week/paper but each student is expected to hand in their own response paper.
- Students are then expected to be able to summarize the main arguments verbally and lead the in-class discussion for their session. A few slides may be used to support the in-class discussion but this is not required.



Students are further expected to write a seminar paper to be submitted at the end of the class. The paper deadline is on Thursday Dec. 23, 2021 (midnight). This paper should make an empirical contribution to a question in the domain of intrastate conflict and terrorism leveraging the questions, theoretical insights, quantitative methods and data discussed in class.

- There will be sessions dedicated to presenting and discussing research ideas and designs for these papers scheduled in weeks 10 and 11 of the term. This will leave enough time to complete the paper before the end of the class.
- The paper idea has to be formalized in a short research design note to be submitted prior to those sessions. This note will not be graded but serves as the basis for discussion of the idea for the paper; details on what is expected for the research design note will be given in class.
- Students are expected, in addition to presenting their own idea, to also discuss the idea of one of their fellow students.

The course grade is then based on the response papers (with in-class presentation) (20%) and the final seminar paper (80%).

Communication

Email addresses of the instructors and all participants in the course are to be treated confidentially. The (virtual) classroom is the best place to raise questions which are relevant for everybody in the class. The best time to ask short questions that might not be relevant for everybody is after class. The office hours should be dedicated to discuss more in- depth questions. I strongly discourage emails about class content that could be solved in class, after class or during office hours. I would like to encourage you to contact me via email or during office hours if there is something that makes you feel uncomfortable in class or about the course.

Course Outline and Readings

(* indicates additional, non-mandatory readings)

Week 1 (Sep. 20). Introduction – Disaggregating Civil Conflict

Kalyvas, Stathis. N. (2008). "Promises and Pitfalls of an Emerging Research Program: The Microdynamics of Civil War." In Kalyvas, Shapiro & Masoud (Eds.), *Order, Conflict, and Violence* (pp. 397–421). New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Cederman, Lars-Erik & Kristian Skrede Gleditsch. (2009). „Introduction to Special Issue on ‘Disaggregating Civil War’.” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 53(4): 487–495.

Donnay, Karsten, Elena Gadjanova & Ravi Bhavnani. (2014). "Disaggregating Conflict by Actors, Time, and Location." In Backer, Wilkenfeld & Huth (Eds.), *Peace and Conflict 2014* (pp. 44–56). New York, NY: Routledge.



Part 1 – Conceptual Foundations

Week 2 (Sep. 27). Civil War

- Blattman, Christopher & Edward Miguel. (2010). "Civil War." *Journal of Economic Literature* 48(1): 3–57.
- Kalyvas, Stathis N. (2003). "The Ontology of 'Political Violence': Action and Identity in Civil Wars." *Perspectives on Politics* 1(3): 475–494.
- Sambanis, Nicolas. (2004). "What is Civil War? Conceptual and Empirical Complexities of an Operational Definition." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 48(6): 814–858.

Week 3 (Oct. 4). Terrorism

- Schmid, Alex P. (2004). "Frameworks for Conceptualizing Terrorism." *Terrorism and Political Violence* 16(2): 197–221.
- LaFree, Gary & Laura Dugan. (2009). "Research on Terrorism and Countering Terrorism." *Crime and Justice* 38(1): 413–477.
- Hoffmann, Bruce. (2002). "Rethinking Terrorism and Counterterrorism Since 9/11." *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 25(5): 303–316.
- *Chenoweth, Erica. (2013). "Terrorism and Democracy." *Annual Review of Political Science* 16(1): 355–378.

Part 2 – Mechanisms

Week 4 (Oct. 11). Political Economy

- Collier, Paul, Anke Hoeffler & Dominic Rohner. (2009). "Beyond Greed and Grievances: Feasibility and Civil War." *Oxford Economic Papers* 61: 1–27.
- Ross, Michael. (2006). "A Closer Look at Oil, Diamonds, and Civil War." *Annual Review of Political Science* 9(1): 265–300.
- Weinstein, Jeremy M. (2005). "Resources and the Information Problem in Rebel Recruitment." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 49(4): 598–624.
- * Collier, Paul & Anke Hoeffler. (2004). "Greed and Grievance in Civil War." *Oxford Economic Papers* 56: 563–595.

Week 5 (Oct. 18). Grievances

- Gurr, Ted R. (1968). "Psychological Factors in Civil Violence." *World Politics* 20(2): 245–278.
- Tilly, Charles. (1978). *From Mobilization to Revolution*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley Publishing. Chapter 3 (pp. 52–97).
- Cederman, Lars-Erik, Nils B. Weidmann & Kristian Skrede Gleditsch. (2011). "Horizontal Inequalities and Ethnonationalist Civil War: A Global Comparison." *American Political Science Review* 105(3): 478–495.
- *Cederman, Lars-Erik, Andreas Wimmer & Brian Min. (2010). "Why Do Ethnic Groups Rebel? New Data and Analysis." *World Politics* 62(01): 87–119.



Week 6 (Oct. 25). Selective vs. Indiscriminate Violence

Kalyvas, Stathis N. (2012). "Micro-Level Studies of Violence in Civil War: Refining and Extending the Control-Collaboration Model." *Terrorism and Political Violence* 24(4): 658–668.

Bhavnani, Ravi, Dan Miodownik & Hyun Jin Choi. (2011). "Violence and Control in Civil Conflict: Israel, the West Bank, and Gaza." *Comparative Politics* 44(1): 61–80.

Lyll, Jason. (2009). "Does Indiscriminate Violence Incite Insurgent Attacks?: Evidence from Chechnya." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 53(3): 331–362.

*Ellsberg, Daniel. (1970). "Revolutionary Judo." *Working Notes on Vietnam N. 10*. Santa Monica, CA: The RAND Corporation.

Part 3 – Data on Intrastate Conflict and Terrorism

Week 7 (Nov. 1). Leading Event Datasets

Raleigh, Clionadh, Andrew Linke, Håvard Hegre & Joakim Karlsen. (2010). "Introducing ACLED—Armed Conflict Location and Event Data." *Journal of Peace Research* 47 (5): 651–60.

Sundberg, Ralph & Erik Melander. (2013). "Introducing the UCDP Georeferenced Event Dataset." *Journal of Peace Research* 50(4): 523–532.

LaFree, Gary. (2010). "The Global Terrorism Database (GTD): Accomplishments and Challenges." *Perspectives on Terrorism* 4(1): 24–46.

Week 8 (Nov. 8). Geo-Coded Covariate Data

Weidmann, Nils B. & Sebastian Schutte. (2017). "Using Night Light Emissions for the Prediction of Local Wealth." *Journal of Peace Research* 54(2): 125–140.

Donnay, Karsten & Ravi Bhavnani. (2016). "The Cutting Edge of Research on Peace and Conflict." In Backer, Bhavnani & Huth (eds.) *Peace and Conflict 2016* (pp. 4–18). New York, NY: Routledge.

Gleditsch, Kristian Skrede & Nils B. Weidmann. (2012). "Richardson in the Information Age: Geographic Information Systems and Spatial Data in International Studies." *Annual Review of Political Science* 15: 461–481.

*Zhukov, Yuri M. (2012). "Roads and the Diffusion of Insurgent Violence: The Logistics of Conflict in Russia's North Caucasus." *Political Geography* 31(3): 144–156.

Week 9 (Nov. 15). Issues in Using Event Data

Weidmann, Nils B. (2016). "A Closer Look at Reporting Bias in Conflict Event Data." *American Journal of Political Science* 60(1): 206–218.

Cook, Scott J. & Nils B. Weidmann. (2018). "Lost in Aggregation: Improving Event Analysis with Report-Level Data." *American Journal of Political Science* 55(2): 285–15.

Donnay, Karsten, Eric T. Dunford, Erin C. McGrath, David Backer & David C. Cunningham. (2019). "Integrating Conflict Event Data." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 63(5): 1337-1364.

*Weidmann, Nils B. (2015). "On the Accuracy of Media-based Conflict Event Data." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 59(6): 1129–1149.



Student Presentations

Week 10 (Nov. 22). Presentation of Research Designs

Week 11 (Nov. 29). Presentation of Research Designs

Part 4: Modern Insurgencies

Week 12 (Dec. 6). (Counter-)Insurgency Strategies

Kocher, Matthew A., Thomas B. Pepinsky & Stathis N. Kalyvas. (2011). "Aerial Bombing and Counterinsurgency in the Vietnam War." *American Journal of Political Science* 55(2): 201–218.

Berman, Eli, Jacob N. Shapiro & Joseph H. Felter. (2011). "Can Hearts and Minds Be Bought? The Economics of Counterinsurgency in Iraq." *Journal of Political Economy* 119(4): 766–819.

Lyll, Jason. (2010). "Are Coethnics More Effective Counterinsurgents? Evidence from the Second Chechen War." *American Political Science Review* 104(1): 1–20.

*Toft, Monica Duffy & Yuri M. Zhukov. (2012). "Denial and Punishment in the North Caucasus." *Journal of Peace Research* 49(6): 785–800.

*Johnson, Philip L. (2019). "The Crime and State Terrorism Nexus: How Organized Crime Appropriates Counterinsurgency Violence." *Perspectives on Terrorism* 13(6): 16–26.

Week 13 (Dec. 13). Israel

Clauset, Aaron, Lindsay Heger, Maxwell Young & Kristian Skrede Gleditsch. (2010). "The Strategic Calculus of Terrorism: Substitution and Competition in the Israel–Palestine Conflict." *Cooperation and Conflict* 45(1): 6–33.

Haushofer, Johannes, Anat Biletzki & Nancy Kanwisher. (2010). "Both Sides Retaliate in the Israeli–Palestinian Conflict." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS)* 107(42): 17927–17932.

Benmelech, Efraim, Claude Berrebi & Esteban F. Klor. (2015). "Counter-Suicide-Terrorism: Evidence from House Demolitions." *The Journal of Politics* 77(1): 27–43.

Bhavnani, Ravi, Karsten Donnay, Dan Miodownik, Maayan Mor & Dirk Helbing. (2014). "Group Segregation and Urban Violence." *American Journal of Political Science* 58(1): 226–245.

*Dugan, Laura & Erica Chenoweth. (2012). "Moving Beyond Deterrence: The Effectiveness of Raising the Expected Utility of Abstaining from Terrorism in Israel." *American Sociological Review* 77(4): 597–624.



Week 14 (Dec. 20). Afghanistan and Iraq

Schutte, Sebastian. (2017). "Violence and Civilian Loyalties: Evidence from Afghanistan." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 61(8): 1595–1625.

Shapiro, Jacob N. & Nils B. Weidmann. (2015). "Is the Phone Mightier Than the Sword? Cellphones and Insurgent Violence in Iraq." *International Organization* 69(2): 247–274.

Braithwaite, Alex & Shane D. Johnson. (2014). "The Battle for Baghdad: Testing Hypotheses About Insurgency From Risk Heterogeneity, Repeat Victimization, and Denial Policing Approaches." *Terrorism and Political Violence* 27(1): 112–132.

Condra, Luke N. & Jacob N. Shapiro. (2012). "Who Takes the Blame? The Strategic Effects of Collateral Damage." *American Journal of Political Science* 56(1): 167–187.

*Schutte, Sebastian & Karsten Donnay. (2014). "Matched Wake Analysis: Finding Causal Relationships in Spatiotemporal Event Data." *Political Geography* 41, 1–10.