National Responses to Conflict

Africa's Contemporary Security Challenges
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1. Dynamics of violence and civilian protection

- There are different types of **violent conflicts**
  - Terrorism, riots, civil wars
    - Non-state challengers
    - Yet, state repression can lead to conflict escalation

- There are different types of **civil wars**
  - Conventional, Irregular, Symmetric non-conventional; Secessionist, Ideological

- There are different types of **armed actors**
  - Ideologically driven, non-ideological, genocidal

- All these things account for dynamics of violence against civilians
Types of violence

- **Targeted violence**
  - Against civilians or against combatants
  - Lethal or non-lethal
  - Selective or indiscriminate
  - Direct or indirect

- **Non-targeted violence**
  - Unintentional violence such as famine, displacement, collateral damage
Main Explanations for Targeted Violence in Civil Wars

- **Bargaining strategies**
  - Killing civilians as a form of coercion

- **Military competition**
  - Killing civilians as a form to obtain compliance and control of territory

- **Cleansing strategies**
  - Killing civilians as a form to eliminate threats

- **Organizational characteristics of groups**
  - Killing civilians as a result of principal-agent problems
Micro-Level Variables

- Violence against civilians seems to be the result of a combination of factors:
  - Relative strength in fighting
  - Military contestation/levels of control at the local level
  - Armed groups’ cohesion
  - Local-level distribution of supporters
Macro-level variables explaining violence against civilians

- **GDP per capita**: robust [- effect]
- **Oil**: robust [+ effect]
- **State military capacity**: + [effect on rebel victimization]
- **Cold War**: + [effect]
- **Regime type (Democracy)**: [− effect]
  - Although desperation is more likely to lead to civilian victimization in democracies (Downes)
Main Policy Implications

- GDP per capita (eco. development) is crucial to avoid conflict & mass atrocities
  - Promote economic growth
  - Decrease economic inequality
  - Promote public good provision

- Political inclusiveness
  - Diminish horizontal inequality between groups

- Special awareness to exploitable natural resources
  - And to resource dependence overall
Main Policy Implications (II)

- Postwar peacekeeping operations to avoid recurrence (important % of wars are recurring ones)
  - Demobilization efforts
  - Security Sector Reform

- Careful implementation of elections after conflict
  - Counterproductive effects of early elections

- Importance of international judicial institutions
  - ICC
2. Prevention of violence against civilians

- Look at the type of conflict to predict where violence is more likely
  - If irregular, violence is more likely in areas of contested military control (Kalyvas 2006)
  - If conventional, direct violence is more likely in areas where groups are at parity. Indirect violence will affect enclaves of the enemy (Balcells 2017)
  - Pay special attention to elites, their mobilization strategies, and their goals (Valentino 2004)
    - Look at the armed organizations and identify the most dangerous ones (i.e. non-hierarchical, genocidal)
3. Preventing state violence

- International Criminal Court
  - But, does it always work as a deterrent? Only *ex-ante*

- Carrots to good behavior by international organizations.
  - For ex, Seat in the UN for Serbia if agreement with Kosovo is achieved. EU, and perhaps NATO

- Peacekeeping operations. But, how we assure compliance?
  - Military coercion
  - Conditional incentives mechanisms
Preventing state violence (II)

- State military actors should be aware that indiscriminate violence or unconditional repression rarely works
  - It can make conflicts escalate from low-intensity to civil war (Lindemann and Wimmer 2018)
    - It can backlash and make individuals support rebel groups or extremist organizations
  - It can make crackdowns against criminal organizations escalate into major conflict (Lessing 2017)
  - Overall, heavy-handed responses to protest, unconventional forms of political participation, etc. do not tend to work