
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)
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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 a 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