

Do the Onsets of Ethnic and Revolutionary Civil Conflicts Have the Same Causes?

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INTRODUCTION

Since 1945, 20 million people have died in civil conflicts and another 65 million have been displaced. Despite the huge human cost of civil conflicts, academia has only recently addressed the causes of intrastate conflict. The theoretical causes of internal war can be divided into two general categories: economic and socio-political. The economic incentives for civil conflict are particularly critical in the work of theorist teams Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler, and James Fearon and David Laitin who demonstrate the relative unimportance of socio-political causes of civil conflict. On the other side of the spectrum theorists such as Ted Gurr and Nicholas Sambanis argue that socio-political elements are at the root of civil conflict.

Further complicating this set of processes is that no two civil wars are alike: the social, political, and economic environments which lead to internal conflict between two or more groups within one nation are complex and are not always comparable. Only recently have effects been made to categorize internal conflicts to improve the accuracy of descriptive models of causation. Not surprisingly, models for ethnic civil wars draw a correlation with ethnic diversity and nonethnic wars with economic incentives (Sambanis, 2001; Doyle and Sambanis, 2000; Licklider, 1995). There are few conclusive models for revolutionary wars, those civil conflicts without an ethnic component, yet in the literature.

Most models for civil conflict, whether they be ethnic or nonethnic, draw on a dichotomy of causes as either *greed* or *grievance* (Collier and Hoeffler, 2004) depending on whether the impetus to rebel is economic or socio-political. These delineations prescribe specific solutions to the prevention or termination of civil strife that address either one or the other of these causes. The purpose of this study is to construct a model for analyzing the causes of civil war combining the predominant economic and socio-political models in the civil conflict literature and then testing the accuracy of these models when ethnic and revolutionary wars are separated to determine if all civil wars can be classified in the same manner. Current conclusions tend to find either socio-political or economic causes are the fundamental cause of the onset of civil strife. My model attempts to demonstrate systemic *human suffering* and the *failure of states to meet the basic needs of all citizens* as the fundamental cause, rather than *greed* or *grievance*, of both ethnic and nonethnic conflict. Even though the causes of the human suffering are different in the lead up to conflict in ethnic and revolutionary wars, it is this cause that is similar in both cases which is where solutions for wars need to begin.

CIVIL WAR: GREED AND GRIEVANCE MODELS

Civil conflicts are highly mutable, quickly evolving, and rarely analogous; it is therefore difficult to develop a model which will explain all civil conflicts accurately or provide a tool to predict the next outbreaks (Winlow and Woost 2004, 15; Collier and Sambanis 2005b, 303; Yanacopulos and Hanlon 2006, 177; Collier 2007, 19). Despite the

difficulties of comparing the intricate social, political, and economic situations which lead up to the outbreak of violence, political scientists and economists, amongst others, have generated broad comparisons of different wars to better inform future policies aimed at avoiding conflict, resolving current disputes, and encouraging lasting peace (see Morales 1973; Leatherman and Vayrynen 1999; Carment and Schnabel 2004; Collier and Sambinis 2005a). Traditionally, conflict studies within international relations studies focuses on inter-state conflicts. The actors are therefore individual states. Such state-centric approach emphasizes “the state as the primary referent to be protected” (Terriff, Croft, James and Morgan 1999, 176), which means that the actors are therefore individual states. While this is sufficient for the analysis of international disputes, it creates a fundamental issue in the analysis of intrastate conflict: what to use as the unit of analysis? Interestingly enough, this state-centric approach may provide “a unifying element that allows us to build bridges between analyses of the causes of inter-state war and studies of conflict resolution and peace implementation” within one single state (Saideman and Zahar 2008, 9). In fact, most studies compare states that experience civil conflict as the basic unit of analysis (see Snow 1993; Geller and Singer 1998; Hoffman and Weiss 2006), while others use minority groups as the basic unit to move away from the state comparison of a phenomenon that is driven by sub-state actors and structures (see Minority Rights Group 1997; Lake and Rothchild 1998; Diehl 1999; Sandole 1999; Hajjar 2005; Silver 2005).

Global models of conflict have identified a few causes that can be split into two general categories: material and socio-political. The material causes of conflict in the international arena align with neorealist beliefs that there is an anarchic world-system where states are in constant struggle to maintain their own survival to achieve their economic and political goals in a self-help manner (Mearsheimer, 1994). Internally, this is applied to groups within a state that are struggling to maintain group survival, and the dominant group uses security forces to maintain control. Neoliberals, on the other hand, argue that despite the anarchic world, different states can find common goals around which to cooperate and institutions are formed to meet these common goals and that conflict arises when institutions fail to maintain peace (Doyle, 1983; Ikenberry, 2001). Internally, this equates to a coherent network of shared beliefs and institutions that keeps different groups from attempting to impose their ideals over the ideals of the other groups.

Neorealists argue neoliberal institutionalism “is of little relevance in situations where states’ interests are fundamentally conflictual and neither side thinks it has much to gain from cooperation” (Mearsheimer, 1994: 52). It is here that the neoliberal theory of *Democratic Peace Theory* fits in to prescribe a solution to avoid diametrically opposed state interests. This theory argues “the existence of independent nations with elective governments greatly increases the chances for the maintenance of peace” (Babst, 1964: 14) because of transparent, open, and decentralized government (Doyle, 1983; Ikenberry, 2001). Through democratic peace theory, many, though not all, liberals are advocating not only for the use of institutions for the achievement of progress, but also the type of governments those participating in institutions. Neorealist arguments for international conflict are mirrored in the material-based, economic arguments of civil conflict while the neoliberal arguments for conflict are mirrored in the socio-political arguments of civil conflict.

For the purposes of this paper, Collier and Hoeffler's (2000) terms *greed* and *grievance* will be used to denote the different theoretical causes of civil conflict. The Collier-Hoeffler greed-grievance model is not universally accepted and has been criticized in the literature (Arnson and Zartman 2005; Jacoby 2008, 139). According to Ross "there appears to be little agreement on the validity of the resources-civil war correlation" developed by Collier and Hoeffler (Ross 2004, 337-8). The model enjoys, however, wide application in the work of several prominent scholars (see Sandler 2004, 199-200; Collier and Sambanis 2005a; Ramsbotham and Woodhouse 2005, 94-7; Ylonen 2007, 126-9) and serves as a convenient model to bring the two sides –neorealist, material arguments and neoliberal, socio-political arguments– together.

Greed refers to the incentives, typically economic, that drive insurgencies to rise up to violently take power. *Grievance* refers to the injustices felt by a population that motivates groups to mobilize and fight for better living conditions and more rights from the ruling group. While theorists from both sides of the argument acknowledge that civil wars are caused by both greed and grievance, the models tend towards one more than the other and therefore the policy solutions recommended to prevent, lessen the duration and impact, or end civil conflicts.

The greed-driven, material models for the onset of civil conflict argue poverty and economic opportunities are driving insurgencies to action (Collier and Hoeffler, 1998, 2002, 2009; Fearon and Laitin, 2003). Rebels rise up when they determine the economic incentive is large enough to outweigh the relative costs of waging a war (Grossman, 1995; Azam, 1995). An economy highly dependent upon primary commodity exports (PCEs), such as diamonds, oil, or coffee, are believed to be at higher risk because these types of commodities are more easily looted by insurgencies and can therefore provide the economic incentive for potential insurgencies (Collier and Hoeffler, 2004). Though, as Humphreys (2005) notes, most nations with a high ratio of PCEs tend to have a high percentage of agricultural export. This is also correlated with a high level of agricultural dependence which could be an indication of an internal "sparse network". Sparse network theory demonstrates that nations do not tend to go to war with other nations they trade regularly with (Humphreys, 2005). Solomon Polachek finds that a doubling of trade between two international bodies leads to a decrease of belligerence by twenty percent (1980). While this is a valid critique, it is an untested model at the intranational level whether or not groups within a nation tend to not go to war with other groups they trade regularly with. Others find that PCEs have little impact on the onset of civil conflict, whether disaggregated into the different types or not (De Soysa, 2007) further adding to the critique of material-based models.

Ethnic diversity and a lack of a democratic government are shown in these models to be of minor importance. As Boix and Stokes put it:

"[a] more general and theoretical criticism of the effect of ethnicity is that the concept of ethnic conflict is in itself flawed and that ethnicity is constructed and quite mutable (the 'constructivist' claim). This is not to deny that ethnicity plays a part in conflict but that it is insufficient to look at the presence of groups (ethnic, religious, sectarian, etc.) to explain the onset of conflict, because the salience of ethnic identities can be itself the result of the conflict. In other words, the salience of ethnicity and the animosity between ethnic groups may be an outcome of the conflict rather than its cause" (2007: 420).

As it is not possible to determine the source of “ethnicity” it is not possible to separate it from the onset of war. Given that ethnicity is a construct (the primordialists’ arguments will be explored in the next section) the argument is that “objective rational factors are manipulated by a self-interested class or elite to attain the end of territorial autonomy” (Silva 1990: 38). The focus for some material theorists is how aspiring elites mimic Western models of economic dominance to satisfy personal goals of wealth accumulation. Aspiring elites convince a territorially specific population oppressed by the ethnic majority ruling the state as a means of creating a movement for a new state (which may prove to be equally oppressive and unjust). Peripheral elites mirror Western institutions creating a “militant, inter-class communally rendered strongly (if mythically) aware of its own separate identity vis-à-vis the outside forces of domination” (Nairn 1977: 355). Ethnicity is downplayed as something understood through material gains or as manipulated by the elites or intelligentsia for personal or class gains.

Literature that posits the causes of civil conflict to be material in nature recommends material-focused policies for prevention (Collier and Hoeffler, 1998, 2004; Fearon and Laitin, 2003). Economically minded theorists recognize “intense grievances *are produced by* civil war” but ultimately there is “little evidence that civil war is predicted by large cultural divisions or broadly held grievances”. The goal of policies aimed at the prevention of civil war should be economic growth and a “well-financed and administratively competent government” (Fearon and Latin, 2003: 88). While these are sound suggestions for the maintenance of a warless state, this does not necessarily mean these will address some of the other systemic issues driving minority groups to rebel and may in fact continue to perpetuate the problems.

The grievance-driven, socio-political models of civil conflict argue that systemic injustices are pushing minority populations to the point of violent rebellion. Inherent to the onset of a civil conflict are the underlying disparities that give rise not only to populations in need, but also to those who will organize and lead a movement:

A revolution needs leaders and followers, and traditionally the leaders seem to come from somewhere high up in the tertiary sectors of a society whereas the followers come from somewhere low down in the primary and secondary sectors. Thus, what is needed first of all is a built in disequilibrium in these social positions. (Galtung, 1964: 108)

Fundamental to a violent revolution is a system against which to revolt. Political economists would argue that these aspiring elites are taking advantage of an economic opportunity to rise to power as a result of socialization through the global capitalist system. The process of existing identities in a social structure “results in the internalization of the myths, the rhetoric, and the theorizing¹ of the system” (Wallerstein 2004: 38). Insurgents are revolting against a specific system to assuage grievances because of an indoctrination to emulate elites by striving to accumulate wealth and power. Aspiring elites use this to motivate a group to rebel.

¹ Myths, the communal knowledge generated through common experiences, rhetoric, the public discourse of political elites, and theorizing, the scientific knowledge generated by academia are the tools of various groups for generating and perpetuating identities and norms of a social structure.

Despite the critique that material ends are at the base of rebellions, grievance driven models argue that it is fundamentally the differential treatment of one group by another that leads to civil conflict. Even if a group leader is an aspiring elite, the “larger differentials between groups, the easier it is for leaders to recruit members of disadvantaged or threatened groups” (Gurr 1993: 189). Because grievance models aim to demonstrate these differentials between groups, many theorists use minority groups as the basic unit of analysis to build their models (rather than the state-based models of the material-based theorists). Most of these analyses stem from Ted Gurr’s work cataloguing and quantifying minority groups through his Minorities At Risk Project. Through his work, Gurr concludes that economic disadvantages, such as poverty and economic discrimination, are “consistently correlated with economic and social grievances and with demands for greater political rights” (Gurr 1993: 188). Socio-political causes such as low levels of material well-being (SFTF Report 2003) and the previous mobilization of groups (Gurr, 1993) are the most important factors when predicting civil wars. It is therefore critical to examine the grievances of a group to understand why groups rise up to demand more political and/or economic power.

Because theorists on both side of the debate use different units of analysis and proxies for the independent variables leading up to the onset of civil conflict, it is hypothesized that:

(H1) A combination of both greed and grievance variables will be better predictors for civil conflict rather than models focused on one or the other.

One study of note that successfully combines both *greed* and *grievance* variables focuses on how globalization is both a force that discourages civil conflict as well as one that increases their frequency. Katherine Barbieri and Rafael Reuveny (2005) summarize the ways globalization reduces the risk of civil war as “promoting development”, “reducing income inequality”, “reducing state control over the economy”, “increasing communications and information flows”, “reducing export of primary products”, “increasing the size of security forces”, and “generating economic benefits” (1229-1231). The factors that increase the risk of civil conflict are listed as “promoting underdevelopment”, “raising income inequality”, “reducing state control over the economy”, “increasing communication and information flows”, “promoting export of primary products”, “stimulating alliances between rebels and organized crime”, and “generating unequal economic benefits” (1231-1234). Many of the factors that increase the risk of civil conflict, may also in fact reduce the risk, but while this combination of *greed* and *grievance* variables, may increase the predictability of a model, it does not explain when the same variables lead to opposing outcomes. The next section outlines an attempt to separate two distinct categories of civil conflict as a step towards better explaining when these variables lead to either conflict or peace.

ETHNIC AND REVOLUTIONARY CIVIL WARS

Not all civil wars are the same, yet attempt to create subcategories of civil conflict to better explain causation. There are some studies that attempt to separate ethnic and nonethnic civil wars to better explain the substantive differences between the two (Doyle and Sambanis 2000; Licklider 1995). The most commonly used delineation is ethnic and

nonethnic, or revolutionary, civil war (Sambanis 2001). Ethnic civil wars stem from one ethnic group of people demanding more political rights, or even the right to separate from one state to form a new state. . The idea that people should have the power to govern themselves logically follows liberal or universalistic ideals of governance; the issue arises of how a ‘people’ are defined. As Ivor Jennings notes that the idea of self-determination “seemed reasonable: let the people decide. It was in fact ridiculous because the people cannot decide until someone decides who are the people” (quoted in Moore 1998: 2). This is at the heart of ethnic civil conflict, the idea that one nation is fighting against the oppression of a state, typically for territory and political autonomy. It is because of this that I hypothesize:

(H2) The probability of ethnic civil war should be an increasing function of systemic ethnic oppression.

Before examining the different theories of ethnic civil war, it is first worthwhile to examine the different theories of what ethnicity is and where it comes from in justification for the divide of ethnic and revolutionary conflict. The work of academics (anthropologists, biologists, and archeologists) is used extensively in the justification and definition of ethnic movements both in defining groups and identifying injustices against those groups. But these movements draw on more than just the scientific theories about a people and a culture; local myths are instrumental in the creation and solidification of a group of people both civically and ethnically. This tension between *demos* (civic identity) and *ethos* (ethnic identity) forces theorists to address how both *mythos* (local lore and knowledge) and *logos* (scientific fact) are deployed by ethnic conflict groups to create, manipulate, and justify an ethno-identity to fit into a geo-political region which could then be justifiably separated from a larger political body.

This cultural identity built upon the position of academic authority (*logos*) may be used by political and social agents and professionals to “politicize nascent ethnic sentiment” (Williams 1982: 56) which can then be escalated to the level of ethnic conflict. The expansion of scientific knowledge about a specific group further encourages future study and perpetuation of the identity of a group as separate and unique. The *mythos* of a national identity is collectively constructed and is “grounded in common cultural experiences and socially shared beliefs” (Coppieters and Huysseune 2002: 42). As understanding and education of a group’s identity is better understood and becomes more widespread, it furthers local understanding of collective identity though much of the information is based on local traditions and customs that preceded the facts. While the construction of an ethnic group’s identity is a complex process based on primordial traits², collective social norms and customs³, and politicized “fact” about a group of

² Ethnic identity (*ethos*) is comprised of a variety of characteristics that have varying degrees of importance within the justification of the ethnic rationale for separatism. According to primordialists, those theorists who view certain characteristics as inherent rather than constructed, one’s ‘ethnic identity’ is rooted in ‘primordial characteristics’ including: “(i) language; (ii) religion; (iii) race; (iv) values or culture; (v) territory or homeland or region” (Premdas 1990; Samarasinghe 1990). These inherent traits are the

people, this identity is the crucial element that separates ethnic and revolutionary civil wars.

The idea of the 'nation-state' as a territory where the population identifies itself both as ethnically and civically cohesive stems in part from the Wilsonian, post-colonial concept of global political organization; but it is only partially accurate for labeling modern day, multinational, polyethnic, international, political bodies. The concept of nationalism is more commonly divided into the ethnic identity and civic identity (*ethos* and *demos*) of the populations within and across the geographical boundaries of political states. Today's states are categorized vis á vis these terms socially (as ethnically mixed or ethnically pure) and politically (ethnically blind or ethnically biased) to provide the backdrop for internal conflict analysis. When examining a civil conflict, this difference is crucial for the identification of causation of ethnic conflicts. Therefore, I hypothesize that:

(H3) the probability of ethnic war should be an increasing function of the ethnic diversity.

Single-nation states, definitionally, cannot have an ethnic civil war within their borders because there are not at least two ethnic groups to fight each other. There is a debate of a correlation between the number of ethnic nations within a state and the probability of an ethnic war breaking out. While many of the *greed* model, large-N studies find ethnic diversity to be insignificant in the emergence of civil war (Fearon and Latin 2003; Collier and Hoeffler 2001), this may be more a symptom of their measure of ethnic diversity. More likely, ethnic diversity is not a measure of systematic ethnic oppression. Studies that use ethnic fractionalization are measuring the presence of multiple ethnic groups rather than official governmental policies of discrimination or the relative socio-economic disparities between the ethnic majorities and minorities. Ethnic consciousness is seen in instrumentalist terms as a tool of aspiring elites to justify either the redistribution of material and territorial resources, or to maintain the status quo. Because it is possible to define populations by any number of primordial traits or to construct new ones, instrumentalists point out how these traits are used by aspiring elites. In the adoption of the Western idea of ethnicity and ethnohistory, elites create

defining factors theorists use to separate and categorize different populations within and across international political borders.

³ Constructivist theory views ethnic and national identities as evolving in tandem and becoming "sedimented over time" (Norval in Brown 2007: 16), rather than primordial, constricting the flexibility of identity. Constructivists are concerned with how various identities are created through various socio-cultural means. As Ronald Renard points out in examining the Burmese Karen rebel's eight self-described ethnic identity traits, "whether these are true is not so important as the realization that these Karens have internalized Western notions of ethnicity and have set out to make themselves in the image of their own definition" (Renard 1990: 106). By this implication, ethnicity is not a primordial set of traits, but rather a conception of "self" passed on through the local myths and doctrines of a rebellious group.

personality traits that then become used as justification for secession whether or not these qualities are inherent to a group or not. In the justification of an ethnic uprising, aspiring elites use the disparities of one group vis á vis the majority ruling group. “Grievances about differential treatment and the sense of group cultural identity provide the essential bases for mobilization and shape the kinds of claims made by the group’s leaders” (Gurr 1993: 167). Therefore, the grievances of a group may be used as a proxy to measure the group disadvantages and ethnic identity.

Aside from the grievances of a group, official government policies of discrimination need to be examined when analyzing causes of ethnic civil war. In Alan Anderson’s examination of various ethnolinguistic divisions within states, he argues against two specific types of negative policies that continue to perpetuate cultural chasms. He sees the two predominant negative policies as either “genocide” or “assimilation”(Anderson 1990: 172), and it is in reaction to these culturally suppressive policies that cultural minority groups rise up to gain more self-control over the governance of their homeland. These reactions are classified as either passive or active, with the most active being the violent demand for a new sovereign nation. Cultural chasm theorists adhere to the idea that there are primordial, not constructed, traits inherent to populations that are nevertheless manipulated by the ethnic majority as a means of maintaining power. Official ethnic discrimination is therefore a more useful variable than ethnic diversity for predicting the onset of an ethnic war. It is therefore hypothesized that:

(H4) Ethnic warfare should be an increasing function of state-sanctioned, ethnically-discriminatory practices.

One point of caution offered by constructivist theorists is that the act of theorizing in support of one form of causation will support further policies for or against this form of causation. We as academics generate theories about the world today which will be used to justify policies which will help construct the world we analyze tomorrow. The ethnic/revolutionary separation of civil war may not be the most appropriate one. In areas of ethnic conflict, the use of these ‘primordial’, ‘scientific’ facts or the ‘constructed’ myths overemphasizes, idealizes, or politicizes identity issues to the point which Sy calls ‘identism’ (Sy,158). The effort with which aspiring elites attempt to demonstrate the uniqueness of their group leads to the creation of “new symbols representing new groups, regardless of the original reason for the conflict” (Sy, 158). The act of using facts and myths to construct the argument for or against ethnic conflict, therefore, leads to the further creation of new facts and myths which may lead to the construction of new groups and identities. It is the human suffering underlying the rhetoric that enables movement leaders to effectively use ethnic differences to mobilize a group to action (Gurr 1993). Therefore, I hypothesize:

(H5) the probability of ethnic war should be an increasing function of human suffering.

Revolutionary civil conflicts are those conflicts where a political group mobilizes to take violently overthrow the “central government, to replace its, leaders, or to seize power in one region” (SFTF Report, 2000). Given this definition, revolutionary civil

conflicts are ones where one group is mobilized because of a discontent with the current political regime. Though “revolutionary civil conflict” is less well defined by one unifying force (the way ethnic civil conflict is defined by the presence of an ethnic group as one of the primary participants in the war), there are some economic and political interests that define these conflicts which can be used to make predictions. This economic and political interests are more in line with the material-driven models of insurgency (Collier and Hoeffler, 1998, 2002, 2009; Fearon and Laitin, 2003) which predict it is economic and political opportunities that encourage rebellion. Based on these models, it is hypothesized that:

(H6) the probability of revolutionary civil war should be an increasing function of a lack of political stability.

(H7) the probability of revolutionary civil war should be an decreasing function of standard of living, and

(H8) the probability of revolutionary civil war should be an increasing function of failed state responsibility.

DATA SET, ESTIMATION METHOD, AND PROXY VARIABLES

This model proposes to shift the dialogue from *civil conflict* towards *violent state failure*⁴; from *insurgencies* and *rebels* towards *mobilized neglected citizens*; from *greed* or *grievance* causes of war towards *human suffering* and *failed responsibilities of states*. By reframing the conversation about conflict from one of the aggressor and the defender towards one about economic and social rights, we will reshape how we conceptually secure ourselves and others in an increasingly complex and quickly changing world. This model aims to demonstrate the causes of civil conflicts are *both* greed and grievance driven depending on how the variables are framed. The difference that arises is which causes lead to either ethnic or revolutionary violent state failure.

This model attempts to demonstrate that rather than greed and grievance causes of both ethnic and revolutionary civil wars, *human suffering* and *failed responsibility of states* are better explanatory variables for civil conflict. Building on similar studies on civil conflict (Doyle and Sambanis, 2000; Esty et al., 1998; Licklider, 1995; Fearon and Laitin, 2003; Gleditsch et al., 2002), a list of violent civil conflicts was collected that are believed to meet the following criteria:

- (1) They involve fighting between agents of (or claimants to) a state and organized, nonstate groups who sought either to take control of a government, to take power in a region, or to use violence to change government policies.
- (2) The conflict killed at least 1,000 over its course, with a yearly average of at least 100.

⁴ The State Failure Task Force includes two other categories of state failure, adverse regime change and genocides/politicides, but it is beyond the scope of this paper to include these into the model as well.

(3) At least 100 were killed on both sides (including civilians attacked by rebels)⁵.
(Fearon and Laitin, 2004)

The data cover the period from 1960 to 1999 on 171 countries producing 4215 country years⁶. One hundred and thirty-six instances of civil war were identified. Using data from the State Failure Task Force Report, the onsets of ethnic civil wars and the onsets of revolutionary civil wars were determined. The authors define ethnic war as “episodes of sustained violent conflict in which national, ethnic, religious, or other communal minorities challenge governments to seek major change in status” (Goldstone et al, 2000: v). Nonethnic, revolutionary wars are defined as “episodes of sustained violent conflict between governments and politically organized challengers that seek to overthrow the central government, to replace its leaders, or to seize power in one region” (Goldstone et al, 2000: v). The model therefore uses three dependent variables: 1) the onset of civil wars 2) the onset of ethnic civil wars and 3) the onset revolutionary wars. This study aim to demonstrate a difference between the causes of the three in relation to variables that proxy for *human suffering* and *failed responsibility of states*. Before that, the categories of *greed* and *grievance* are examined for validity. Based on the models presented by greed and grievance models of civil conflict, three pairs of proxy variables are used to explain the onset of civil war.

	GREED	GRIEVANCE
<i>ECONOMIC</i>	GDP/CAPITA	INFANT MORTALITY
<i>SOCIAL</i>	ETHNIC DIVERSITY	ETHNIC DISCRIMINATION
<i>POLITICAL</i>	INSTABILITY	PAST CONFLICTS
<i>CONTROLS</i>	URBANIZATION, POPULATION	

The first pair of proxies for the economic conditions that lead to the onset of civil warfare: *gross domestic product per capita* and *infant mortality rates*. *GDP per capita* is an indicator of the opportunities an insurgency because it is a proxy for several other factors such as a state’s financial, administrative, police, and military⁷ capabilities (Collier and Hoeffler, 1998, 2004; Fearon and Laitin, 2003). In addition, more developed countries will have better roads and rural areas better administered, making insurgency more difficult. While it is not the ideal, it is an indicator of the economic conditions of the poorest populations. *Infant mortality rates* is a proxy for the material well-being of a country’s citizens. This is based on the number of deaths of infants under one year of age per 1,000 births, logged and normalized. Infant mortality rates are a better proxy for human suffering than GNP per capita.

⁵ This last criterion is meant to rule out genocide or political massacres which are not internal wars because they are one-sided forms of state-endorsed violence against a group unable to sufficiently defend themselves.

⁶ The number of observations for each of the tests is different from 4215 because there are not complete datasets for each of the variables and because years during a civil conflict are coded as null. Multiple civil conflicts beginning simultaneously are coded as only one war outbreak.

⁷ Fearon and Laitin (2004) argue the higher the GDP per capita, the more resources that are available for a state to spend on security forces.

Variable	Observations	Mean	Standard Deviation	Min	Max
Log GDP per capita (LGDP CAP)	4672	6.83	1.53	0.00	10.68
Ethnic Diversity (ETHDIV)	5765	44.51	35.04	0.00	177.00
Political Instability (POLIN)	5302	0.15	0.36	0.00	1.00
Infant Mortality (INMOR)	5274	76.53	53.49	3.50	306.00
Ethnic Discrimination (ETHDIS)	5262	0.08	0.17	0.00	0.89
Past Conflict Magnitude (PASCON)	6280	5.37	11.39	0.00	60.00
Polity (POLITY)	5082	-0.45	7.67	-10.00	10.00
Urbanization (URBAN)	6553	43.57	24.30	1.76	100.00
Log of total population (LPOP)	4213	8.88	1.47	4.80	13.99

The second pair of proxies represent the social conditions that lead to the onset of civil warfare: *ethnic diversity* and *ethnic discrimination*. *Ethnic diversity*, based on a recent update of an ethnic diversity application of the Herfindahl-Hirschman Index (Montalvo and Reynal-Querol, 2005), is an indication of how many different groups of people are living within a state. It is a measure of the size of ethnic groups in relation to the total population and is an indicator of the amount of competition amongst them. It is defined as the sum of the squares of the population of the largest ethnic groups within a country, where the populations are expressed as percentages. The result is proportional to the average population of an ethnic group, weighted by population. As such, it can range from 0 to 177, moving from a huge number of very small groups to a single-nation state. Increases in the Herfindahl-Hirschman index generally indicate a decrease in competition and an increase of political power, whereas decreases indicate the opposite. The major benefit of the Herfindahl index in relationship to such measures as the concentration ratio is that it gives more weight to larger ethnic groups. An ethnic group provides the communal identity that may be used to mobilize a group into an insurgency. Increased diversity leads to more of “them” to consolidate an “us” intent upon greater economic opportunities and political power. *Ethnic discrimination*, based on the economic and political discrimination indicators of the Minorities At Risk database, is an indicator of at least one significant group that was the subject of political or economic discrimination from the majority group.

The third pair of proxies for the political conditions that lead to the onset of civil warfare: *political instability* and *past conflicts*. *Political instability* indicates disorganization and weakness on the part of the state and it represents an opportunity for insurgents to wage a war at a lower cost due to limited capacity of the central government (Fearon and Laitin, 2003: 81, 85). This indicator is a dichotomous variable indicating whether or not there has been a three point change in the polity of a government in the preceding three years. This is also a proxy for a state’s ability to fulfill its responsibility to its citizens. *Past conflicts* is an indicator of the past failure on the part of the state over the course of 15 years. It is a cumulative score of the magnitude of state failures calculated by the state failure task force and is an indicator of how much suffering a country’s citizens have endured over time. This is also a proxy for human suffering as it is an indicator of the level of conflict and warfare a people have had to endure.

Finally, as a set of controls, *urbanization* and *total population*, are included. *Urbanization* In the age of modernization, ethnic conflicts increase as a result of a rapid reshuffling of populations into urban areas competing for fewer social and economic positions in ever expanding cities (Akzin 1966). Increased urbanization and modernity

leads to an increase in interaction between different ethnic groups; “strain and conflict are more likely to ensue than greater mutual understanding” (Lijphart 1977: 58) in these situations. Modernization of economies and societies encourages rural farm communities to migrate into urban spaces as agricultural workers are replaced by more efficient farming techniques and can no longer subsist on income earned in the more competitive produce markets. Cultural and economic differences between populations are no longer separated geographically leading to increased tensions within cities and/or demand for more control over rural areas by ethnic minorities. *Total population* is shown to have a significant and positive association with the onset of civil conflict (Fearon and Laitin 2001; Collier and Hoeffler 1998, 2001; Sambanis, 2000) because the higher the population, the more potential there is for angered groups and aspiring elites ready to lead them to rebellion. Population data comes from the State Failure Task Force Project (Goldstone et. al. 2000).

TABLE 2
Correlation Matrix: Core Variables (N=3290)

	LGDPCCAP	ETHDIV	POLIN	INMOR	ETHDIS	PCON	POLITY	URBAN	LPOP
LGDPCCAP	1.000								
ETHDIV	-0.277	1.000							
POLIN	-0.109	0.032	1.000						
INMOR	-0.765	0.389	0.066	1.000					
ETHDIS	-0.067	0.312	-0.004	0.071	1.000				
PCON	-0.193	0.203	0.152	0.181	0.127	1.000			
POLITY	0.454	-0.202	-0.022	-0.583	-0.144	-0.122	1.000		
URBAN	0.346	-0.270	-0.045	-0.338	-0.043	-0.072	0.201	1.000	
LPOP	0.023	-0.090	0.105	-0.128	-0.081	0.204	0.079	0.102	1.000

TESTING MODELS OF THE ONSET OF CIVIL WAR

To test the first hypothesis— *(H1) a model combining both greed and grievance variables will be better predictors for civil conflict rather than models focused on one or the other*— a robust logit regression was run to test the validity of *greed* and *grievance* models of civil conflict. The significance of GDP per capita in the greed model (regression 3.1) is consistent with the findings of Collier and Hoeffler (2000). The log of the population is highly significant and positive, which is consistent with many other civil conflict studies (Collier and Hoeffler 1998, 2000; Sambanis, 2001; Gurr, 1993). In all of these regressions, the material variables, are quite significant to onsets of civil war as predicted (decreased GDP per capita and increased infant mortality increase the probability of civil conflict).

The grievance model (regression 3.2) supports Gurr’s claim that it is socio-political disparities and the oppression of groups which leads to conflict. While ethnic diversity is not significant except for in regression 3.1, ethnic discrimination is highly predictive and positively associated with the onset of civil conflict. The polity is not significant in the prediction of civil conflict, contrary to neoliberal arguments that democracy is correlated with more peaceful forms of political protest (Gurr, 1993). Though when the square of the polity is used in regression 3.3 it does become significant. In all the regressions the social variables used are significant (and in regression 3.3 the political variable polity is significant).

In general, the greed model confirms the findings of the political economists who argue material incentives lead to the onset of civil conflict and the grievance model confirms the findings of the socio-political scholars. When the models are combined the predictive strength of the model increases (indicated by the increased pseudo R-squared of regressions 3.3 and 3.4). Therefore, the first hypothesis positing (*H1*) a combination of both greed and grievance variables will be better predictors for civil conflict rather than models focused on one or the other finds support through these tests.

Dependent Variable: Civil War Onset	Greed Regression 3.1		Grievance Regression 3.2		Regression 3.3		Regression 3.4	
Ln GDP/cap	-0.256**	(0.093)			-0.310***	(0.088)		
Ethnic diversity	0.008*	(0.003)			0.003	(0.003)	0.002	(0.003)
Political instability	0.165	(0.342)			0.225	(0.357)	0.387	(0.314)
Infant mortality			0.007***	(0.002)			0.007**	(0.002)
Ethnic discrimination			2.461***	(0.426)	2.327***	(0.463)	2.370***	(0.479)
Past conflicts			0.011	(0.007)	0.010	(0.009)	0.010	(0.007)
Polity (squared for 3.3)	-0.021	(0.018)	0.011	(0.018)	-0.011*	(0.019)	0.006	(0.019)
Urbanization	0.005	(0.006)	0.003	(0.005)	0.007	(0.006)	0.003	(0.005)
Ln population	0.294***	(0.070)	0.386***	(0.080)	0.367***	(0.075)	0.375***	(0.081)
Constant	-5.64***	(1.004)	-8.65***	(0.802)	-6.203***	(1.019)	-8.66***	(0.816)
Observations	3309		3897		3290		3855	
Pseudo R2	.0574		.0764		.0953		.0773	
<i>Note:</i> Standard errors are in parentheses. Estimators performed using Stata 10.0SE. Significance level *p<.05 **p<.01 ***p<.001								

The increased predictability of the models combining the greed and the grievance models indicates that a new model ought to be constructed. Instead of using the terms *greed* and *grievance*, the terms *failed responsibility* and *human suffering* are used in a tradition of human rights and responsibilities. Through this lens, it is neither *greed* nor *grievance* which leads to violent internal conflicts, but the suffering of a population and the state's failure to protect and serve its citizens' satisfactorily. The strongest predictors of civil war are economic disparities and systematic socio-political discrimination against a specific population.

	FAILED RESPONSIBILITY	HUMAN SUFFERING
<i>ECONOMIC</i>	INFANT MORTALITY	INFANT MORTALITY
<i>SOCIAL</i>	POLITICAL INSTABILITY	ETHNIC DISCRIMINATION
<i>POLITICAL</i>	POLITY	PAST CONFLICTS
<i>CONTROLS</i>	URBANIZATION, POPULATION, GDP PER CAPITA, ETHNIC DIVERSITY	

TESTING MODELS OF THE ONSET OF ETHNIC WAR

Next, by applying the category of ethnic war, as discussed previously, new logit models are estimated to determine if there are differences leading up to the onset of civil conflict using the models of *failed responsibility* and *human suffering*. The results of the estimates are presented in Table 4 which are used to test hypotheses (*H2*) *the probability of ethnic civil war should be an increasing function of systemic ethnic oppression*, (*H3*) *the probability of ethnic war should be an increasing function of the ethnic diversity*, and

(H4) *the probability of ethnic war should be an increasing function of human suffering*. It is apparent that the causal factors of ethnic civil war are not the same as all civil wars. Both ethnic diversity and ethnic oppression are significant and positively associated with the onset of ethnic civil conflict. This is in contradiction to the *greed* models of civil war, based on material causes and economic factors, that do not find ethnic diversity to have a strong effect on the onset of civil wars. While there is a strong correlation between ethnic discrimination and the onset of civil wars in general, ethnic diversity is less strongly correlated. This supports Sambanis' claim (2001) that there are in fact differences between different types of civil conflicts.

Even though both ethnic diversity and ethnic oppression are both highly associated and positively correlated with the onset of ethnic civil war, it is to different degrees. High levels of ethnic oppression are more significant than high levels of ethnic diversity⁸. The significance of this is that ethnic diversity is not necessarily the predecessor to ethnic civil conflict, but rather, the systematic oppression of ethnic minorities. Diversity is a measure of how many 'groups' live in the same state, but ethnic oppression is a measure of whether or not there is a denial of political and economic rights of a group which leads to suffering. These findings support the hypotheses that ethnic diversity (H3) and ethnic oppression (H2) are positively correlated with the onset of ethnic civil conflict. These findings also build support for the claim that *human suffering*, rather than *failed state responsibility*, is a stronger predictor of ethnic civil war.

TABLE 4
Logit Models of Civil War Onset

Dependent Variable: Ethnic Civil War Onset	Failed Responsibility Regression 4.1		Human Suffering Regression 4.2		Regression 4.3		Full Model Regression 4.4	
Ln GDP/cap			-0.401**	(0.145)	-0.420**	(0.130)	-0.408***	(0.156)
Ethnic diversity	0.021***	(0.005)	0.013**	(0.005)	0.011**	(0.004)	0.013**	(0.005)
Political instability	0.552	(0.404)					0.465	(0.474)
Infant mortality	0.000	(0.003)					0.000	(0.004)
Ethnic discrimination			3.252***	(0.479)	3.270***	(0.465)	3.319***	(0.528)
Past conflicts			0.053***	(0.011)	0.051***	(0.010)	0.054***	(0.012)
Polity	-0.060**	(0.029)	-0.045	(0.031)			-0.047	(0.033)
Urbanization	0.006	(0.007)	0.012*	(0.007)	0.008	(0.007)	0.013*	(0.007)
Ln population	0.491***	(0.086)	0.542***	(0.085)	0.511***	(0.081)	0.550***	(0.093)
Constant	-10.52***	(1.012)	-9.074***	(1.424)	-8.212***	(1.193)	-9.202***	(1.638)
N	3496		3040		3104		3003	
R2	0.127		0.226		0.214		0.226	

Note: Standard errors are in parentheses. Estimators performed using Stata 10.0SE.
Significance level *p<.05 **p<.01 ***p<.001

Aside from ethnic diversity and oppression, the other strongest predictor of ethnic civil conflict is the magnitude of past conflicts. This supports Gurr's claim that the best predictor of a minority groups mobilizing is whether or not they had mobilized in the past (1993). While the magnitude of past conflicts does not necessarily show past

⁸ Even though the correlation matrix reveals that while there is a positive correlation between ethnic diversity and ethnic oppression the (what's the score called in a correlation matrix?) score is not high enough to assume the two are correlated. These tests were all run using robust logistic models to correct for any correlation.

mobilization, it is an indicator of a history of internal strife within a state, possible examples of mobilization, as well as a longer history of group struggle. This is one area of the study that could be expanded upon much more to better quantify whether the previous struggles were instances of group oppression, political upheaval, or could be quantified in terms of human rights violations and human suffering. Because the past conflict is calculated on a scale of the magnitude of the human impact, this correlation tentatively supports the claim that *human suffering* explains ethnic civil conflict better than *failed responsibility of the state to protect citizens*.

Polity is significant and negatively associated with the onset of ethnic civil war in regression 4.1, but not as strongly as ethnic diversity. This is in contradiction to the claims of Sambanis (2001) who argues that level of democracy is one of the most important factors in preventing civil conflict despite other findings claiming that the process of democratization may actually lead to ethnic conflict (Snyder 2000). Change in polity in this study uses Fearon and Laitin's (2006) measure of political instability which is a rapid change in the level of democracy. This study confirms Sambanis' claim that democratization does not necessarily correlate with the onset of ethnic war even if it does not support the claim that democracies are less likely to have internal ethnic wars.

THE ONSET OF REVOLUTIONARY WAR

Finally, using revolutionary war onset as the dependent variable, new logit models are estimated to determine if there are differences leading up to the onset of civil conflict in general, ethnic civil conflict, and revolutionary civil conflict using the models of *failed responsibility* and *human suffering*. The results of the estimates are presented in Table 5 which are used to test hypotheses (H5) *the probability of revolutionary civil war should be an increasing function of a lack of political stability*, (H6) *the probability of revolutionary civil war should be an decreasing function of standard of living*, and (H7) *the probability of revolutionary civil war should be an increasing function of failed state responsibility*. It is apparent that the causal factors of revolutionary war are not the same as all civil wars or ethnic civil wars, though the causes are more ambiguous than they are for the other two.

Dependent Variable: Revolutionary War Onset	Failed Responsibility Regression 5.1		Human Suffering Regression 5.2		Regression 5.3		Full Model Regression 5.4	
Ln GDP/cap			-0.246	(0.131)			-0.309	(0.175)
Ethnic diversity	0.004	(0.004)	0.002	(0.004)	0.002	(0.004)	0.005	(0.004)
Political instability	0.991**	(0.401)			0.977**	(0.340)	0.965*	(0.438)
Infant mortality	0.005	(0.003)			0.010***	(0.003)	-0.004	(0.005)
Ethnic discrimination			0.808	(0.853)			0.748	(0.914)
Past conflicts			-0.013	(0.014)			-0.020	(0.015)
Polity	-0.024	(0.028)	-0.037	(0.029)			-0.047	(0.031)
Urbanization	0.003	(0.008)	0.007	(0.009)	0.001	(0.007)	0.008	(0.009)
Ln population	0.262*	(0.114)	0.312**	(0.115)	0.255**	(0.096)	0.295***	(0.119)
Constant	-8.13***	(0.925)	-6.54***	(1.385)	-8.12***	(0.789)	-5.94***	(1.731)
N	3880		3326		4028		3289	
R2	0.043		0.042		0.061		0.055	
<i>Note:</i> Standard errors are in parentheses. Estimators performed using Stata 10.0SE. Significance level *p<.05 **p<.01 ***p<.001								

The most significant influences of revolutionary war (aside from population size) are political instability and infant mortality. Regression 5.3 shows both of these variables to be highly associated and positively associated with the onset of revolutionary war. GDP per capita and polity were substituted in this model (not presented) with substantially lower significances and were therefore left out of the model as poor proxies for *human suffering* and *failed state responsibility*. This evidence supports the claims of Collier and Hoeffler (1998, 2000) and Fearon and Laitin (1999, 2000) that economic opportunities explain the onset of rebellions, but the evidence is not strong. Infant mortality, a proxy for standard of living, access to health care, and economic hardship, is more significant than GDP per capita, a proxy for economic development, government capacity, and national wealth. This implies that it is not only poverty and the pursuit of more wealth that drives insurgency, but a level of desperation to institute change in a system that cannot—or will not—provide for its most vulnerable populations.

The lack of political stability, measured as a recent jump in the level of polity, is also highly significant. This supports Fearon and Laitin's claim that political instability provides insurgencies with the opportunity to act at a time when the cost of waging a war are decreased. This may explain why a group chooses a specific time to rebel, but the significance of political instability only explains revolutionary war onsets and not all civil conflict nor ethnic conflict onsets. The implication is that while this may explain the onset, it fails to address the root causes of revolutionary conflict. It may be that the instability is a proxy for a weak government, in general, that has failed to fulfill the basic needs of its citizens, but based solely on this study it is not possible to say conclusively. While the causes of revolutionary civil conflict are not entirely clear based on these models, it is clear that the causes are different from those of ethnic conflicts and of the aggregate of all civil wars.

CONCLUSIONS

Through the comparison of economic *greed* based models of civil conflict and socio-political *grievance* based models of civil conflict across 171 countries over 40 years, I find that neither model can exclusively explain the onset of civil war. While this work is a step towards integrating two competing theories of civil war onset, more should be done to continue investigating the root causes of the tension to complement the large-N analysis. This data ends at 1999, and while nations like Sudan and the Ivory Coast are examples of nations that were high risk for civil war and then have experienced civil war in the past ten years, nations like Russia and Thailand warrant further investigation to improve the predictability of these models.

The variables in these models describe the internal conditions of states for the most part. A follow-up study should work to incorporate more international elements into the model to see what the international community's effect is on creating these situations and what the responsibility is of international organizations to intervene when the state is unable. While many studies examine the international factors of the onset of civil war (Barbieri, 2005; Goldstone, 2000) there is a lack of studies examining what sort of impact international factors have on the different types of civil conflict.

Furthermore, this research identifies real difference between ethnic and revolutionary civil wars which ought to be furthered in future research. Part of the

improvements in the predictability of these models may deal with better criteria for distinguishing between different categories of civil conflict. Because of the obvious differences between the both material and socio-political factors leading up to different types of civil conflict neither the neorealist, economic development plans nor the neoliberal, democratization institutions should be recommended as methods for preventing civil conflict in general. Just as Barbieri is cautious about the recommendation of further incorporating lesser developed countries into the global market, so too must the economic and socio-political policies be. By embracing a different model of analysis which focuses on the needs of citizens and the responsibilities of states to fulfill those needs, the root causes of civil conflict at a more fundamental level may be reached and the proper caution paid in the application of the policies to encourage a more peaceful world for tomorrow.

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