

Interdisciplinary Programmes

Academic year 2020-2021

Conflict and Development

MINT174 - Spring - 6 ECTS

Thursday 14h15 - 16h00

Course Description

This course examines the messy relationship between violent conflict and the politics of development. We study these complex dynamics through a substantive focus on five key issues in the field, including rebel governance, humanitarian intervention, data, civil war, and conflict-related sexual violence. Pedagogically, the course relies on contemporary research conducted in and on the global South, including cases ranging from the Middle East, to Africa, to Latin America, as well as guest speakers who will share their cutting-edge research. In addition to the substantive aims of the course, we will also reflect on questions of knowledge production—that is, how do scholars go about identifying and understanding issues of conflict and development? Who sets research agendas on these topics, what methods do researchers employ to answer them, and how do these processes shape research findings? These questions are especially important for our understanding of conflict and development, issue areas that are deeply enmeshed in global power inequalities. At the end of the course, students will be able to critically discuss several key issues in conflict and development, and reflect on how different research methods, author positionality, and knowledge production shape academic research on conflict and development.

> PROFESSOR

[Rebecca Tapscott](#)

[Office hours](#)

> ASSISTANT

[Marie Kostrz](#)

[Office hours](#)

Syllabus

ASSIGNMENTS AND ASSESSEMENT:

- Participation 10%
- Commentaries 30%
- Final project proposal 10%
- Final project 50%

Course material (readings, et cetera): The class is structured in two-week intervals, with each interval dedicated to a different contemporary issue on the themes of conflict and development. In the first week of each interval, you will be asked to engage with several articles, book chapters, video clips, or blogs. I have selected these to offer you important background and context on each theme. I suggest you engage with them in the order presented on the syllabus. In the second week, we will be joined by a scholar who is currently researching this issue, and who will share their cutting-edge research with us for discussion. To prepare for this class, you will be assigned one in-progress or recently completed publication by the guest speaker. I ask that you prepare all the material before class, and come ready and willing to discuss it in the context of the session's topics, the discussion questions listed in the syllabus, and the course's overall themes.

Class participation will be oriented around discussion. To do this in an online / hybrid environment, I will design various in-class activities, such as "discussion bombs," break out rooms, and online polling. I have included questions in the syllabus for each class to help you prepare for the discussion.

Commentaries: The course is designed around five guest speakers, who have been selected because they are doing cutting-edge research on topics that shed light on conflict and development. Students are required to complete 1-page response papers for at least three of the guest speakers. Each response paper is worth 10% of your grade. If you complete more than three, I will include the highest scoring three response papers in your grade.

Final Project Proposal: The final project proposal will set out what you plan to do for the final project. I will provide feedback and approval. You can revise the project proposal based on my feedback.

Final Project: The final assignment can be completed in any medium (visual, audio, written, etc), and will respond to a prompt that I provide to you by mid-April. The prompt will relate to the key themes of the course. I will provide you with further information on the final assignment during the class.

EXPECTATIONS:

Academic integrity: The [Institute's academic honesty and integrity policy](#), and the applicable university disciplinary procedures, apply to all academic work including the taking of examinations and submission of written work. This includes poor citation, plagiarism, and resubmission of one's own work. It is your responsibility to read and understand the guidelines before submitting any assignment.

I will use a software program such as TurnItIn **on every piece submitted to me for assessment** to check for plagiarism. There is no minimum threshold that means your work is not plagiarized – rather, plagiarism reflects using words or ideas from another person or source without properly giving credit to that source (typically via citation). **If you plagiarize in your work, you will receive a 0 on the assignment and the case will be referred to IHEID administration.** Please look on Moodle for guidelines on what plagiarism is and how to avoid it. You must use a recognized citation style (Chicago, MLA, or other) in all written work and include a works cited section with **any and all** texts you used in the preparation of the assignment. Works cited do not count toward wordcounts.

Student hours: I hold regular student office hours each week, and am also happy to arrange other times to talk if the scheduled times are not convenient for you. Please attend! It is a great way for us to get to know each other and for me to help you engage with the course material in a way that is more directly tailored to your interests. For administrative questions or clarifications on assignments, please contact the TA.

Other: If you have a special condition that requires accommodation in this course, please let me know after class or in office hours as soon as possible. I will be happy to consider appropriate accommodations consistent with the Graduate Institute's policies.

TIMELINE:

1. 25 February – The Politics of “Development”
2. 4 March – Out of the Ashes: Does Conflict Lead to Development or More Conflict?
3. 11 March – Armed Politics: Contestation, Collaboration and Governance Outcomes
4. **18 March – Guest lecture: Languages of Stateness in Lebanon**
5. 25 March – International Intervention and Global Governance
6. **1 April – Guest lecture: Emotions and international humanitarian law**
7. 15 April – Conceptualizing and Measuring Conflict and Development
8. **22 April – Guest lecture: Sustainable Development Goals and their Indicators**
9. 29 April – Understanding Civil War Onset
10. **6 May – Guest lecture: Understanding Civil War Non-Occurrence**
13 May – Ascension Day – no class
11. 20 May – Gendering Conflict and Development
12. **27 May – Guest lecture: Masculinity and Armed Conflict**
13. 3 June – Discussing Final Projects + Wrap Up

Week 1 | The Politics of “Development”

In this first session, we will start to unpack key course concepts of conflict and development. The class uses one short but very rich text by James Ferguson to critically consider the concept of “development”. This text serves as a helpful foundation for the course by showing how economic development deeply imbricated in—and often a product of—local, national, and international politics. We take this notion forward throughout the class, understanding both conflict and development as concepts that are fundamentally political constructions with very material and real-world implications.

REQUIRED

- **FERGUSON, James**, with **Larry LOHMANN**. “The Anti-Politics Machine: ‘Development’ and Bureaucratic Power in Lesotho.” *The Ecologist* 24, no. 5 (1994): 176-181.

OPTIONAL

- **LISTEN:** Decolonizing the Academy | Robbie Shillam, Meera Sabaratnam, Dalia Gebrial | The Dissonance of Things (2016) 55m04s <https://soundcloud.com/dissonanceofthings/decolonising-the-academy>

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What do Ferguson and Lohmann mean when they describe development as an “anti-politics machine”?
- Does this resonate with your view of “development”? Why or why not?
- Do you think any of the same lessons of the anti-politics machine could be applied to other concepts (like conflict)? Why or why not?

Week 2 | Out of the Ashes: Does Conflict Lead to Development or More Conflict?

An influential argument in political science asserts that modern states are the product of war-making. This argument is elaborated in Tilly's seminal book, *Coercion, capital, and European states*. Tilly's seemingly counter-intuitive argument has been extremely influential (indeed, perhaps helped by its seeming perverseness). But does it apply today? Others, such as Cheeseman et al, have argued that war is better understood as a threat to the integrity and stability of contemporary states. In this class, we juxtapose these two ideas and use them as a basis to unpick key assumptions that continue to guide many current studies of conflict and development.

REQUIRED

- **TILLY, Charles**. *Coercion, capital, and European states*. Basil Blackwell, 1990 (ch 3, pp. 67-95).
- **WATCH:** From warlord to governor—an Afghan paradox | Dipali Mukhopadhyay | TEDxColumbiaSIPA (2013) 14m35s https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dnCpaZy_ggc

- **CHEESEMAN, Nic, Michaela COLLARD, and Filip REYNTJENS.** “War and democracy: the legacy of conflict in East Africa.” *Journal of Modern African Studies* 56, no. 1 (2018).

OPTIONAL READINGS

- **LOWNDES, Vivien.** 2010. “The institutional approach.” In Davis Marsh and Gerry Stoker, eds. *Theory and Methods in Political Science*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 60-79.
- **NORTH, Douglass, John Joseph WALLIS, and Barry WEINGAST.** “Violence and the rise of open-access orders.” *Journal of Democracy* 20.1 (2009): 55-68.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What are the implications of Tilly’s argument?
- Do you find Tilly or Cheeseman et al more persuasive? Why?
- Can both Tilly and Cheeseman et al be right? Please explain your thoughts.

Week 3 | Armed Politics: Contestation, Collaboration and Governance Outcomes

As highlighted in Week 2, many popular political science scholarship assumes that rulers seek to maximize their control over resources, territory, and violence. This week, we nuance this picture in two ways. First, we examine how these efforts to govern are not limited to states; instead we see that rebels and other violent actors adopt many of the same strategies as states. In this role they must contend with other pre-existing social and political institutions. Second, in practice, rulers do not always seek to eliminate competitors—instead, sometimes they work with them, whether through collaboration or outsourcing unpleasant tasks to them. While a diverse array of violent actors sometimes creates volatility and fragmentation, other times it can actually reinforce political order.

REQUIRED

- **MAMPILLY, Zachariah, and Megan A. STEWART.** “A typology of rebel political institutional arrangements.” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 65, no. 1 (2021): 15-45.
- **CALLIMACHI, Rukmini** “The ISIS Files: When Terrorists Run City Hall”, *New York Times*, (4 April 2018) <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/04/04/world/middleeast/isis-documents-mosul-iraq.html>
- **STANILAND, Paul.** “Armed politics and the study of intrastate conflict.” *Journal of Peace Research* 54, no. 4 (2017): 459-467.

OPTIONAL READINGS

- **LUND, Christian.** “Twilight institutions: public authority and local politics in Africa.” *Development and change* 37.4 (2006): 685-705.
- **MITCHELL, Timothy.** “The limits of the state: Beyond statist approaches and their critics.” *American political science review* 85.1 (1991): 77-96.
- **PECLARD, Didier, Martina SANTOSCHI, Jon SCHUBERT, Gilson LAZARO, Leben MORO, and Ousmane ZINA.** “Civil wars and state formation: violence and the politics of legitimacy in Angola, Côte d’Ivoire and South Sudan.” (2019).

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Should we view rebel governance as different from state governance, whether empirically, normatively, or analytically?
- From a ruler’s perspective, what are the pros and cons to sharing violence with other actors that are not fully under your control? If you were governing a country, under what conditions would you tolerate non-state violent actors, and under what conditions would you seek to integrate or eliminate them? [If it helps to think of a concrete country, consider a case you know well—like your home country]

Week 4 | Guest Speaker “Languages of Stateness in South Lebanon’s Palestinian Gatherings”

Week 5 | International Intervention and Global Governance

A host of international organizations have a mandate to prevent conflict and to promote development. Rather than asking if these interventions achieve their aims (or the conditions under which they achieve greater success or failure) this class seeks to situate such interventions within the framework of the global political economy. This framing raises

questions about how some rich and “developed” nations narrate intervention in the affairs of other states as humanitarian in nature, and what this implies for the global distribution of conflict and development.

REQUIRED

- **DUFFIELD, Mark.** *Global governance and the new wars: The merging of development and security.* Zed Books Ltd., 2014. (Chapter 2: pp. 22-43).
- **ANDERSSON, Ruben, and Florian WEIGAND.** “Intervention at risk: the vicious cycle of distance and danger in Mali and Afghanistan.” *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding* 9, no. 4 (2015): 519-541.
- **WATCH:** “State Builders.” Directed by Anne Poiret and Florence Martin-Kessler (2013), 75m.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Who, in your view, is most responsible for conflict and underdevelopment?
- Can international intervention help alleviate the root causes of conflict and underdevelopment, or help mitigate their negative social, political, and/or economic effects?
- What challenges did the UN mission face in South Sudan? If you were Lise Grande, what if anything would you have done differently?

Week 6 | Guest speaker “How the Emotions and Perceptual Judgments of Frontline Actors Shape the Practice of International Humanitarian Law”

Week 7 | Conceptualizing and Measuring Conflict and Development

This week, we discuss the nature of concepts, data, and measurement. As we have discussed in previous classes, it can be difficult to find the boundaries of complex concepts like conflict and development. And even if we can theoretically determine what to count, doing so in practice can be particularly challenging. As noted succinctly Albert Einstein, “Not everything that can be counted counts and not everything that counts can be counted”. This week and next, we dive into these questions, revealing that even the seemingly technocratic activities of counting are highly political and contested—with real-world implications.

REQUIRED

- **WATCH:** “Our Friends at the Bank.” A film by Peter Chappell. Icarus Films (1998), 85m.
- **FISHER, Jonathan.** “When it pays to be a ‘fragile state’: Uganda’s use and abuse of a dubious concept.” *Third World Quarterly* 35, no. 2 (2014): 316-332.
- **DAWKINS, Sophia.** “The problem of the missing dead.” *Journal of Peace Research* (2020).
- **ANGÉLICA, Prada Uribe María.** “The Quest for Measuring Development. The Role of the Indicator Bank.” In Merry, Sally Engle, Kevin E. Davis, and Benedict Kingsbury, eds. *The quiet power of indicators: measuring governance, corruption, and rule of law.* Cambridge University Press, (2015): 133-155.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What are the pros and cons to using indicators to measure conflict and development?
- The Angélica and Fisher articles offer different visions of how indicators of fragility can have unanticipated outcomes. Are these problematic in your view? Why or why not?
- Should global governance actors continue to use indicators in their research and work on conflict and development? Why or why not?

Week 8 | Guest speaker “Sustainable Development Goals and Their Indicators”

Week 9 | Understanding Civil War Onset

What causes civil war? With a renewed sense of data skepticism, we return to interrogating the relationship between conflict and development. This class starts with a review essay summarizing the wide array of plausible answers to this question. It then homes in on two case studies that help show the complicated interplay between structure and agency.

REQUIRED

- **KALYVAS, Stathis and Paul KENNY.** “Civil wars.” In *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of International Studies.* 2010.
- **WOOD, Elisabeth.** “The emotional benefits of insurgency in El Salvador.” In *The Social Movements Reader: Cases and Concept,* eds Goodwin, Jeff and James Jasper (2001): 143-152.

- **RENO, William.** "The politics of insurgency in collapsing states." *Development and Change* 33, no. 5 (2002): 837-858.

OPTIONAL READINGS

- **CRAMER, Chris.** "Homo Economicus Goes to War: Methodological Individualism, Rational Choice and the Political Economy of War." *World Development*. 30, no. 11 (2002): 1845-1864.
- **HUMPHREYS, Macartan and Jeremy M. WEINSTEIN.** "Who Fights? The Determinants of Participation in Civil War." *American Journal of Political Science*, 52, no. 2: (2008): 436-455.
- **SAMBANIS, Nicholas.** "What Is a Civil War? Conceptual and Empirical Complexities of an Operational Definition," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 48, no. 6 (2004): 814-58.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- According to the authors, what are the causes of civil conflict? If there are multiple causes, how are they related to each other?
- What assumptions do the authors make? What is their unit of analysis? If you were to change these assumptions and/or the unit of analysis, would their findings still hold?
- When you think of other cases that you know, which arguments are most persuasive (and least) and why?
- Why do you think scholars continue to disagree about what causes civil war?

Week 10 | Guest speaker "Civil War Non-Recurrence"

Week 11 | Gendering Conflict and Development

Gender is one important lens to help understand power relations. This class touches on some of the different ways that scholars have applied gender lenses to untangle issues around conflict and development. We move from eastern Uganda to Latin America to the social media presence of the Islamic State, each showing different ways that gendered identities impact and are impacted by processes of conflict and development.

REQUIRED

- **HOPWOOD, Julian, Holly PORTER, and Nangiro SAUM.** "Resilient patriarchy: public authority and women's (in) security in Karamoja, Uganda." *Disasters* 42 (2018): S140-S158.
- **HUME, Mo, and Polly WILDING.** "Beyond agency and passivity: Situating a gendered articulation of urban violence in Brazil and El Salvador." *Urban Studies* 57, no. 2 (2020): 249-266.
- **CRONE, Manni.** "It's a man's world: carnal spectatorship and dissonant masculinities in Islamic State videos." *International Affairs* 96, no. 3 (2020): 573-591.

OPTIONAL READINGS

- **BAAZ, Maria Eriksson, and Maria STERN.** "Why do soldiers rape? Masculinity, violence, and sexuality in the armed forces in the Congo (DRC)." *International studies quarterly* 53, no. 2 (2009): 495-518.
- **ENLOE, Cynthia.** "All the Men are in the Militias." *The women and war reader* (1998): 50-62.
- **UTAS, Mats.** "West-African warscapes: Victimcy, girlfriending, soldiering: Tactic agency in a young woman's social navigation of the Liberian war zone." *Anthropological Quarterly* (2005): 403-430.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- How do these different authors understand "gender"?
- What does using a gendered lens reveal in each of the pieces that otherwise might have been invisible or difficult to understand?

Week 12 | Guest Speaker "Masculinities and Armed Conflict"

Week 13 | Wrap up