

Introduction

Not so long ago, armed conflict was not studied by economists. This field was considered outside of the realm of mainstream economics, as the canonical model in economics pre-supposes the existence of a peaceful setting whereby two agents trade goods or services out of free will and for mutual benefit. Armed conflict, it was believed, does not fit into this canonical model and therefore does not need to be studied by economists. It was even believed that, as long as trade takes place, agents would not have a reason to go to war, because it would be too costly for them.

The latter point may summarize the German position versus Russia before the current conflict: “Let’s trade with Russia in order to keep the peace”.

However, what if an agent (individual, group or state) believes to have a comparative advantage vis-à-vis an opponent in the use of violence ? In that way the agent may want to appropriate the goods/services by force.

Today, economists study the causes as, the consequences as well as the processes of armed conflict and violence, all of which will be dealt with in the course.

Organisation of the classes

The first two classes (both on October 26), will consist of frontal teaching by the professor. I will introduce the main topics of the field and give an overview of the literature. I will explain a key behavioral model of rational participation in armed conflict. The lecture will also be used to divide the topics of the following weeks among the students. In each session of 2 hours, 2 students will present a piece of the literature, 1 h per student, of which 25 minutes are reserved for a presentation and 35 minutes for discussion with the class. The professor will guide the discussion.

In order to fulfill the requirements of the class, a student needs to perform three tasks:

- Present a piece of the literature in class (30 % of the final grade)
- Write two scientific essays of 5 to 8 pages each about a topic of choice (2*35% of the final grade). We will define in class what a ‘scientific essay’ is.
- Active participation in all classes counts at the margin. Participation in all seminar meetings is mandatory.

Both essays needs to be hand in at the latest on February 28, 2023.

Syllabus

26 October

10-12 am Organisation of the class and introduction to Economics of Armed Conflict

Presentation by prof.Ph.Verwimp

14-16 pm “The Behavioral Foundations of a rational participant” (a model)

Chapter 4 of “The Economics of Political Violence”, by Dipak K.Gupta, 1990, p83-115, Lecture by prof.Ph.Verwimp

9 November

“political economy of conflict”

10-12 am : a model

Economic Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy, D.Acemoglu and J.Robinson, 2006, chapter 5 “Nondemocratic Politics”, p.118-126 (student 1)

14-16 pm : a case study: genocide in Rwanda

(student 2) what do we learn from the model of Acemoglu and Robinson ?

(student 3) what do we learn from the model of the rational participant (D.Gupta)

Source: Peasants in Power, Philip Verwimp, 2013, Springer Verlag, chapters 1, 2 and 7 for student 2 and chapter 8 for student 3

7 December *“functioning/processes of conflict”*

10-12 am Perpetrators, Victims and the organisation of violence

- Justino, P. 2009, Poverty and violent conflict: A micro-level perspective on the causes and duration of warfare, Journal of Peace Research 46 (3), 315-333 (student 4)
- Weinstein, Jeremy, Inside Rebellion 2007, p27-126, Cambridge University Press (student 5), chapters 1 and 3

14-16 pm : War and inequality

-Walter Scheidel, The Great Leveler: Violence and the History of Inequality, 2018, Princeton University Press , part II (student 6)

-The case of Rwanda, presentation by prof.Verwimp

21 December “Long-term Consequences of Conflict”

10-12 am health and education in Burundi

-Bundervoet, T., Ph.Verwimp and R.Akresh, 2009, “Health and Civil War in Burundi”, Journal of Human Resources (student 7)

- Verwimp, Ph, 2022, “Civil war and Academic Test Scores”, unpublished man.(student 8)

14-16 pm gender, migration, war and forced displacement in Ukraine

- Bettina Haidinger, 2013, Hausfrau für zwei Ländern sein, Westfälisches Dampfboot Chapter 9 (only available in German) (student 9)
- Verwimp, Ph, 2022, Vox EU Essay on the consequences of war in Ukraine, July 5, (student 10)

<https://cepr.org/voxeu/columns/forced-displacement-gender-identity-norms-and-marital-stability-wake-war-ukraine>

18 January “economic policies for peace”

-10-12 am: in developing countries

-Miguel, E., 2007, Poverty and Violence: An Overview of Recent Research and Implications for Foreign Aid, chapter 3 (student 11)

- What Can MONUSCO Do to Better Address the Political Economy of Conflict in DRC?, Laura McCreedy, 2022, Relief Web (student 12)

<https://reliefweb.int/report/democratic-republic-congo/what-can-monusco-do-better-address-political-economy-conflict-drc>

-14-16 pm Ukraine, Russia and the EU

- “Increased urgency for the green transition in Europe”, Luis Garicano Dominic Rohner Beatrice Weder di Mauro / 23 Sep 2022, VOX EU, (student 13)

- “The simple economics of consumer subsidies for natural gas (and why it matters for Putin’s war)”, Daniel Gros / 22 Sep 2022 (student 14)

1 February “reflections on conflict, cooperation and human nature”

10-12 am : Lab-in-the-field

- Voors et al, 2014, Does Conflict increase cooperation ? American Economic Review (student 15)
- Bauer et al, 2014, “War’s Enduring Effects on the Development of Egalitarian Motivations and In-group Biases”. Psychological Science, Vol. 25(1) 47 –57, (student 16)

14-16 pm : Final group discussion about what we learned in this class