

Reuschmeyer, eds. New York: Cambridge University Press.
Mahoney, James and Dietrich Reuschmeyer, eds. 2003. *Comparative Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
McAdam, Doug. 1982. *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, 1930-1970*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
McAdam, Doug, Sidney Tarrow, and Charles Tilly. 1997. "Toward

an Integrated Perspective on Social Movements and Revolution." in *Comparative Politics: Rationality, Culture, and Structure*. Mark I. Lichbach and Alan S. Zuckerman, eds. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Pierson, Paul. 2004. *Politics in Time*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
Rigby, Steve H. 1995. "Historical Causation: Is One Thing More Important Than Another?" *History* 80:259 (June), 227-42.

Symposium: Bridging the Gap? Connecting Qualitative and Quantitative Methods in the Study of Civil War

Introduction

Jeffrey T. Checkel

University of Oslo and Centre for the Study of Civil War, International Peace Research Institute, Oslo
j.t.checkel@stv.uio.no

Civil wars—and the violence, death, destruction and dislocation they cause—have become a central concern in the post-Cold War and post-9/11 worlds, even as we witness a more general decline in armed conflicts and related fatalities (Human Security Report Project 2006). Indeed, a new generation of scholarship has placed the study of such wars squarely in the academic mainstream, generating an array of findings on all phases of civil conflict (Tarrow 2007).

For readers of this newsletter, the particular way in which this knowledge has been generated will be of interest, as well. With a few important exceptions—Petersen (2002), Kalyvas (2006)—these findings flow from the rigorous application of quantitative methods, based on datasets of increasing power and sophistication (Gleditsch 2007; Humphreys and Weinstein 2007, among many others). Scholarship of this type is an outstanding example of the best that quantitative methodologies can offer—large, cross-national, as well as sub-national, disaggregated samples that yield “new insights into the causes of civil war, the forces impacting its duration, and the factors shaping its termination” (Weinstein 2007: 366).

This symposium does not dispute such claims, but instead asks how we can improve or build upon them. In particular, how can the application of mixed methods—quantitative and qualitative—consolidate and push forward the civil war research program? The contributions presented below suggest advances in three related areas: (1) a move from Humean or correlational accounts of cause to more robust mechanism-based understandings; (2) greater understanding of dynamics and processes; and (3) an argument to put quantitative and qualitative techniques on a more equal footing.

Nome’s contribution nicely illustrates how mixed methods can move work on civil war from correlation to causation. As he notes, causal mechanisms are not simply intervening variables or variables at lower levels of aggregation, but recurrent processes connecting specified initial conditions and outcomes. Nome then goes on to argue that Gerring and Sea-

wright’s (2007) notion of a pathway case study is especially well suited to uncover causal mechanisms. In his research, these mechanisms connect third-party military interventions in ethnic civil wars with transnational ethnic affinities. Selecting the best pathway case, however, still requires the careful, prior application of several quantitative techniques.

The essays by Arjona and Steele indicate that qualitative methods are an essential tool for grasping the complexity and dynamics of the relations between rebel groups and civilian populations. In both cases, they begin by applying quantitative methods to novel, sub-national datasets on the Colombian civil war; statistical analysis shows whether patterns of civilian displacement (Steele) or of local order (Arjona) match theoretical expectations. The comparative case method is then used to establish causality at the micro-level of individuals and groups. What causal processes best explain displacement or the creation of local order? However, theirs is not a simple story of quantitative first and qualitative second. Rather, both Arjona and Steele show that qualitative methods are essential not only for uncovering causal mechanisms, but also to explore the validity of the assumptions upon which their quantitative data collection is based.

Finally, all contributors argue for a more equal treatment of qualitative methods. As Jung notes in his essay, mixed methods applications in research on civil war have too often meant that qualitative techniques play an auxiliary function, where case studies are employed to detect limitations in statistical models or to improve the original models with new variables taken from the cases. If we are to accord the study of causal mechanisms a more central role, then qualitative techniques need to shed this auxiliary status (see also Lieberman 2005: 436).

In sum, contributors address *and* give operational content to Sambanis’ (2004) call for integrating statistical analyses and qualitative methods in work on civil war. They are indeed “bridging the gap” between qualitative (Kaufman 2001) and quantitative studies (Fearon and Laitin 2003). More importantly, they demonstrate that the bridging exercise has real value added, giving students of civil war more robust measures of causality and a better understanding of micro-dynamics, which are embedded in and indeed flow from large-N studies.

At the same time, the increasing application of mixed methods, both here and elsewhere (Symposium 2007), suggests new directions for methodological and theoretical research and

reflection. First—and echoing concerns raised by Gates in his contribution—methods are no substitute for theory. Put bluntly, what kind of theory results when we mix methods? Reading across the contributions—with their invocation of contingency, complex causal chains, scope conditions and mechanisms—one gets a sense that these dissertations will not produce broad, generalizable theories. Instead, we would appear to get middle-range theory (Johnston 2005), or what sociologists call grounded theory. If this is so, users of mixed methods might do well to connect their efforts to an earlier generation of middle-range theory building (Glaser and Strauss 1967) so as not to repeat past mistakes. More generally, is the civil war research program best served by a collection of complex theories, where the parts may not add up to a (unified) whole? Is there a trade-off to be considered: mixed methods → mechanisms and dynamics ≠ coherent, general theories of civil war?

Second, are there epistemological limits to multi-method work? Multi-method designs typically utilize some combination of formal models, quantitative techniques, and qualitative methods such as process tracing or case studies—all of which have an epistemological basis in positivism (Symposium 2007: 9-11). While qualitative methods could in principle include post-positivist techniques such as ethnography, discourse analysis or genealogy, these are rarely employed by practitioners of multi-method research (Symposium 2006). Are they irrelevant for understanding the complexity of civil war? Recent work would seem to suggest otherwise (Wood 2003; Hansen 2006). Perhaps, though, the problem is more fundamental: Many would caution that we simply cannot combine methods from differing epistemological traditions. Yet, in practice, several scholars have engaged in precisely such epistemological boundary crossing, and with significant empirical and methodological payoffs (Hopf 2002; Klotz 2008). Moreover, newer work in the philosophy of social science indicates that these epistemological dilemmas are not nearly as great as some once feared (Katzenstein and Sil 2008).

Third, mixing methods is but a means to an end, and that end is more complete theoretical accounts of civil war. However, multi-method work in this area seems to build theory whose roots are overwhelmingly anchored in rationalist social theory. Indeed, the rational choice language of constraints and incentives looms large in the contributions by Arjona, Jung, and Steele in this symposium; this is much in keeping with the political economy origins of much contemporary work on civil war. Yet students of mixed methods might also explore how their methodological toolkits can help bridge another gap—that between rational choice and its constructivist/sociological competitors.

Theoretical bridge building of this sort has become a cottage industry in recent years (Fearon and Wendt 2002). What role do social norms, feelings of community, and emotion, say, play in civil war? While we have hints of how to address such questions (Kaufman 2006; Kalyvas n.d.), much work remains. Multi-method research, with its problem-driven, pragmatic focus, seems well placed to bridge this other—theoretical—gap. This double bridging exercise of methods and social theory would not only generate richer theoretical accounts of civil

war. By incorporating instrumental and non-instrumental causal mechanisms, it would also contribute to central disciplinary debates.

References

- Fearon, James and David Laitin. 2003. "Ethnicity, Insurgency and Civil War." *American Political Science Review* 97:1, 75-90.
- Fearon, James and Alexander Wendt. 2002. "Rationalism v. Constructivism: A Skeptical View." in *Handbook of International Relations*. Walter Carlsnaes, Thomas Risse, Beth Simmons, eds. London: Sage Publications.
- Gerring, John and Jason Seawright. 2007. "Techniques for Choosing Cases." in *Case Study Research: Principles and Practices*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Glaser, Barney G. and Anselm L. Strauss. 1967. *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research*. New York: Aldine de Gruyter.
- Gleditsch, Kristian Skrede. 2007. "Transnational Dimensions of Civil War." *Journal of Peace Research* 44:3, 293-309.
- Hansen, Lene. 2006. *Security as Practice: Discourse Analysis and the Bosnian War*. London: Routledge.
- Hopf, Ted. 2002. *Social Construction of International Politics: Identities and Foreign Policies, Moscow, 1955 and 1999*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Human Security Report Project. 2006. *Human Security Brief 2006*. Vancouver, BC: Human Security Centre, University of British Columbia.
- Humphreys, Macartan and Jeremy Weinstein. 2007. "Demobilization and Reintegration." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 51:4, 531-67.
- Johnston, Alastair Iain. 2005. "Conclusions and Extensions: Toward Mid-Range Theorizing and Beyond Europe." *International Organization* 59:4, 1013-44.
- Kalyvas, Stathis. 2006. *The Logic of Violence in Civil War*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kalyvas, Stathis. n.d. "Ethnic Defection in Civil War." *Comparative Political Studies* (forthcoming).
- Katzenstein, Peter and Rudra Sil. 2008. "Eclectic Theorizing in the Study and Practice of International Relations." in *The Oxford Handbook of International Relations*. Christian Reus-Smit and Duncan Snidal, eds. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Kaufman, Stuart. 2001. *Modern Hatreds: The Symbolic Politics of Ethnic War*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Kaufman, Stuart. 2006. "Symbolic Politics or Rational Choice? Testing Theories of Extreme Ethnic Violence." *International Security* 30:4, 45-86.
- Klotz, Audie and Deepa Prakash, eds. 2008. *Qualitative Methods in International Relations: A Pluralist Guide*. New York: Palgrave.
- Lieberman, Evan. 2005. "Nested Analysis as a Mixed-Method Strategy for Comparative Research." *American Political Science Review* 99:3, 435-52.
- Petersen, Roger. 2002. *Understanding Ethnic Violence: Fear, Hatred and Resentment in Twentieth-Century Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Sambanis, Nicholas. 2004. "Using Case Studies to Expand Economic Models of Civil War." *Perspectives on Politics* 2:2, 257-79.
- Symposium. 2006. "Ethnography Meets Rational Choice: David Laitin, For Example." *Qualitative Methods: Newsletter of the American Political Science Association Organized Section on Qualitative Methods* 4:1, 2-33.
- Symposium. 2007. "Multi-Method Work, Dispatches from the Front Lines." *Qualitative Methods: Newsletter of the American Political*

- Science Association Organized Section on *Qualitative Methods* 5:1, 9-27.
- Tarrow, Sidney. 2007. "Inside Insurgencies: Politics and Violence in an Age of Civil War." *Perspectives on Politics* 5:3, 587-600.
- Weinstein, Jeremy. 2007. *Inside Rebellion: The Politics of Insurgent Violence*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Wood, Elisabeth Jean. 2003. *Insurgent Collective Action and Civil War in El Salvador*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Local Orders in Warring Times: Armed Groups' and Civilians' Strategies in Civil War

Ana Arjona
Yale University
ana.arjona@yale.edu

The type of relations between insurgent and counter-insurgent armed groups on the one hand, and the civilians with whom they interact on the other, is subject to wide variation. At times, armed groups try to approximate the behavior of states by extracting taxes, imposing new social norms, establishing predictable and routinized systems of rule enforcement, and supplying public goods. Yet, at other times, armed groups interact with civilians only through the use of violence. There is variation not only across wars and armed groups, but also within these organizations. Civilian populations, for their part, also vary in how they respond to the presence of such groups. Some stay and collaborate, some choose to leave their hometowns and become refugees or internally displaced persons, some fight back by forming self-defense groups, and some enlist as full-time combatants. What explains a group's decision to employ a specific strategy towards civilians? How can a civilian's response to the presence of armed groups in her hometown be explained?

My dissertation sheds light on these questions by examining the ways in which both sets of actors interact in a context of irregular warfare. I start from the premise that civilians' behaviors—collaboration, displacement, recruitment—cannot be understood in isolation from the very context in which their choices are made. I argue that this context varies not only across local territories, but also through time. The strategies of armed groups cannot be understood without taking into account three facts: (1) the essential nature of civilian collaboration for the warring sides in an irregular war; (2) the advantages that armed groups gain by bringing about local order in war zones; and (3) the possibility of institutional learning, which allows these organizations to fine-tune their strategies depending on the context in which they operate.¹

In this essay, I discuss the ways in which combining quantitative and qualitative methods allows me to test the different components of my theory. In particular, I stress the importance of relying on qualitative methods not only to test the causal mechanisms that I claim to be at work, but also to explore the validity of several of the assumptions on which the argument

is built (see also Steele, this symposium). By causal mechanism, I mean the underlying rationale of the causal link between the independent and dependent variables. As Jon Elster (1998: 45) has argued, "mechanisms are frequently occurring and easily recognizable causal patterns that are triggered under generally unknown conditions or with indeterminate consequences. They allow us to explain but not to predict." Put differently, a causal mechanism complements a general claim about causality of the form "if X then Y," by providing an answer to the question "why is Y occurring when X has taken place."²

The value of combining qualitative and quantitative methods is that the latter are usually better at showing general correlations, but rarely can offer a way to test our claims about the underlying rationale of such correlations. Qualitative methods, by contrast, allow us to illustrate the specific rationale we offer for the alleged causality—that is, the mechanism (or mechanisms) that we claim to be at work.

I start with a brief discussion of the research question and the approach I offer to theorize it. I then summarize the components of the research design, and the advantages of relying on both quantitative and qualitative methods. I conclude by arguing that further advances in the civil war research program require that we take micro-level variation more seriously. To do this, collecting more fine-grained data and giving importance to causal pathways—rather than only correlations—is a must.

Theoretical Discussion

Research Question: What explains the variation in armed groups' strategies towards civilians? Why do some local communities react differently to the strategies of armed groups? How does the interaction between civilians and combatants shape the behavior of both through time? To explore these questions, I define my dependent variables as follows. First, the behavior that the armed group adopts towards any given local community can vary along a continuum that goes from the exclusive use of violence to the creation of an encompassing system of governance. Second, local communities may provide different levels of support to the armed groups that are present in their territories. I differentiate between obedience and endorsement as well as between limited and full collaboration, and propose a typology that goes from resistance to full endorsement.

Theoretical Approach: Civil wars can be fought in very different ways. In some cases, victory relies on success in the battlefield—the so-called regular wars—as in most international conflicts. In others, the fight consists of controlling territories, with the armies rarely having direct encounters. This type of war is generally known as irregular, and is the most common type of civil war (Balcells and Kalyvas 2007). Even though the exact formula for gaining and maintaining territorial control in these wars remains disputed, most scholars and practitioners agree on the crucial role that civilian collaboration plays (Mao 1997; Guevara 1978; McColl 1969; Kalyvas 2006). I argue that in their quest for control and civilian collaboration, armed groups have strong incentives to create order in the territories where they are present, which shapes both their strategies and