



## Syllabus: Conflict and Development (Master Seminar)

M.WIWI-VWL.0184

Summer Semester 2021

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### 1. General Information

#### 1.1 Course content

The course provides an overview over the most recent literature on conflict and development. Students are introduced to state-of-the-art empirical methods used in this field. They will learn how to critically reflect on data quality and methods. The seminar is on the determinants and consequences of conflict, mostly from a micro-level perspective. This term's focus is on conflict and the role of media. Students will elaborate on a newly identified relationship by testing the same pre-defined hypotheses, though each student does so for a different country. In particular, each student will make use of subnational georeferenced data to test the relationship between conflict and the media. Students will also elaborate on the extent of media bias by applying methods as suggested in the recent literature in order to critically reflect upon data quality. Each student should additionally test another hypothesis of their own interest, which is related to the role of media within a conflict theater. Students will practice to work with data in Stata (and R) by running fairly simple regression models at a subnational level including fixed-effects and difference-in-difference approaches. The results of their regression analyses will be used to confirm or falsify the pre-defined hypotheses. The term paper consists of presenting these findings and discussing them with respect to the recent literature. Students will also learn how to critically assess the simple regression models they used and discuss which methods would be more appropriate to identify causal effects.

## 1.2 Course goals

The aims of this seminar are to

- deepen the knowledge of participants on conflict and development more broadly and conflict and the role of media more precisely
- train participants to review the relevant literature, to critically reflect on it, and to undertake their own complementary empirical research
- train participants to work with georeferenced data
- train participants to carry out regression analyses in Stata
- prepare a well-argued piece of research, well written and consistent in format
- present the outcome of this research in class and to engage in a discussion with other students and the teaching staff
- critically reflect on the research papers by other students.

## 1.3 Prerequisites

There are no formal requirements but prior knowledge in the following areas is highly recommended: econometrics, microeconomics, macroeconomics, and development economics.

***I strongly recommend that students participate in the voluntary preparatory course “[Introduction to Geospatial Analysis with R for Development Economics](#)”*** offered by Sebastian Schmidt. This is particularly important for students without significant previous experience with R or without experience in working with georeferenced data. Students who participate in this voluntary course will learn how to handle georeferenced data, how to combine spatial data, and how to make maps. Most importantly, students will already get familiar with the mobile coverage data that forms the basis of the analyses in this seminar.

***I also strongly advise against participation without some basic understanding of econometrics.*** We recommend that students take the following class in preparation or as complement to the seminar: “M.WIWI-QMW.0004 Econometrics I.”

It is further recommended that students have passed the following courses: “M.WIWI-VWL.0008 Development Economics I.”

#### *1.4 Credit points*

6 ECTS-LP

#### *1.5 Registration*

In order to assure a high-quality supervision, the number of participants is restricted to 10. The attendance at the introductory meeting is compulsory for registration. Please indicate your favorite three country settings in the “registration form,” which you can find under the rider “Files” on the course website on Stud.IP. Please send the digital registration form to [sarah.langlotz@uni-goettingen.de](mailto:sarah.langlotz@uni-goettingen.de) by **Friday, April 23, 2021, 23h59**. The allocation of seminar slots (including the assignment of the countries) will be done as quick as possible, based on the priority criteria of the examination board. Additionally, you need to register via FlexNow until Friday, April 30, 2021. If not all 10 places have been filled by the deadline, we will re-open registration based on a waiting list.

### **2. Course overview**

#### *2.1 Description of the teaching and learning methods*

The seminar meetings are supplemented by self-study based on the provided materials and literature. The lecture presents the state of the art of research on conflict and development. By writing an empirical term paper on the role of media for conflicts on one exemplary country, students demonstrate their ability to master empirical analyses in R and Stata and apply econometric methods to the study of conflict and development. By presenting the term paper, students demonstrate their ability to defend, but also to critically reflect upon empirical research. While knowledge of academic writing and econometric methods are prerequisites for this course, the recommended voluntary R course will provide students with the skills on how to prepare georeferenced data. Students will have the possibility to discuss problems and share experiences with their ongoing term project in a mid-term session. **The course language is English.**

## 2.2 Scheduling

**IMPORTANT:** Due to the current situation (coronavirus), parts of this course (or all of it) will be offered online. Please register for the course on Stud.IP so that you receive all pertinent information in due time (e.g., registration, virtual meetings).

### **Introductory Meeting (Friday, April 16, 2021, 09:00-11:00, online)**

**Zoom link:** <https://uni-goettingen.zoom.us/j/95211923243?pwd=c2dzY1o2Si9Hb0d3L0NidVhVeHVyZz09>

- Explanation of the class and the registration process
- Explanation of how to get access to the georeferenced data
- Organizational questions

### **Lecture (Friday, June 18 TBC, 2021, 09:00-18:00, on campus if situation permits - Room ZHG 101)**

- Introduction into the general literature on conflict and development
- Introduction into the literature on the role of media and conflict
- Introduction into conflict data

### **Deadline for draft outline and introduction (Friday, August 6, 2021, 23:55)**

Please upload an electronic version of your draft outline and introduction (about 1.5 pages of introduction plus outline plus first maps of mobile coverage) in a pdf format on Stud.IP. The draft outline and introduction of all participants will be available on Stud.IP, so that each participant can prepare discussions of other draft outlines and introductions. Please prepare short critical reviews of the two draft outlines and introductions that are assigned to you for the mid-term meeting (no written version required).

### **Mid-term meeting (Friday, August 13, 2021, 09:00-13:00, on campus if situation permits - Room TBA)**

Each seminar participant presents slides (not more than five) including first maps of the mobile network coverage and conflict events for his/her country setting. Each seminar participant comments on two draft outlines and introductions from his/her colleagues. No slides are required for the discussion of other drafts. Discussions of other draft outlines and introductions should not exceed 2 minutes. A maximum of 10 minutes is allotted for the following open Q&A session and feedback per outline. After the meeting, there are optional bilateral Q&As.

**Student presentations (Wednesday, September 1, 2021, 09:00-18:00, and Thursday, September 2, 2021, 09:00-13:00, on campus if situation permits - Room KWZ 0.602)**

Each seminar participant presents his or her research paper. Please prepare slides for your paper presentation. Presentations should take 15 minutes. 15 minutes are allotted for the following Q&A session and feedback on presentations.

**Deadline for final paper (Monday, September 20, 2021, 23:55)**

Please upload on Stud.IP an electronic version of your final paper (see guidelines below in Section 3; use pdf format; add word count), your R code, and your Stata files (do, dta, log). The research papers will be available on Stud.IP.

*2.3 Examination and grading of the module*

The grading consists of two components:

- Term paper [70%]
- Presentation of the term paper [20%]
- Peer discussions of two papers at the mid-term meeting [10%]

Furthermore, in order to pass the course, participants must

- be present and actively participate during all seminar dates
- submit all written course requirements (draft outline and introduction, research paper) on time
- achieve a grade exceeding or equal to 4.0 on the term paper
- achieve a weighted average grade exceeding or equal to 4.0 on all components

*2.4 Countries for analysis*

Students will test the same pre-defined hypotheses, though each student does so for a different country. As described in 1.5, please indicate your favorite three country settings from the list below in the “registration form.” Every student will be assigned one of his/her preferred countries according to a preference ranking:

Brazil	Mexico	Thailand
DR Congo	Mozambique	Turkey
India	Niger	Uganda
Indonesia	Nigeria	
Kenya	Philippines	

## 2.4 Course materials

### Key readings—required:

- Armand, Alex, Paul Atwell, and Joseph F. Gomes (2020). The reach of radio: Ending civil conflict through rebel demobilization. *American Economic Review* 110 (5), 1395–1429.
- Bailard, Catie S. (2015). Ethnic conflict goes mobile: Mobile technology's effect on the opportunities and motivations for violent collective action. *Journal of Peace Research* 52 (3), 323–337.
- Dietrich, Nick and Kristine Eck (2020). Known unknowns: Media bias in the reporting of political violence. *International Interactions* 46 (6), 1043–1060.
- Manacorda, Marco, and Andrea Tesei (2020). Liberation technology: Mobile phones and political mobilization in Africa. *Econometrica* 88.2: 533-567.
- Weidmann, Nils B. (2015). Communication, technology, and political conflict: Introduction to the special issue. *Journal of Peace Research* 52 (3), 263–268.
- Weidmann, Nils B. (2015). On the accuracy of media-based conflict event data. *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 59 (6), 1129–1149.

### Research papers on conflict and development—examples:

- Angrist, Joshua D., and Adriana D. Kugler (2008). Rural windfall or a new resource curse? Coca, income, and civil conflict in Colombia. *Review of Economics and Statistics* 90 (2), 191–215.
- Bazzi, Samuel, Robert A. Blair, Christopher Blattman, Oeindrilla Dube, Matthew Gudgeon, and Richard M. Peck (forthcoming). The promise and pitfalls of conflict prediction: Evidence from Colombia and Indonesia. *Review of Economics and Statistics*.
- Berman, Nicolas and Mathieu Couttenier (2015). External shocks, internal shots: The geography of civil conflicts. *Review of Economics and Statistics* 97 (4), 758–776.
- Berman, Nicolas, Mathieu Couttenier, Dominic Rohner, and Mathias Thoenig (2017). This mine is mine! How minerals fuel conflicts in Africa. *American Economic Review* 107 (6), 1564–1610.
- Blair, Graeme, Darin Christensen, and Aaron Rudkin (2021). Do commodity price shocks cause armed conflict? A meta-analysis of natural experiments. *American Political Science Review* 115 (1), 1-8.
- Blattman, Christopher and Edward Miguel (2010). Civil War. *Journal of Economic Literature* 48 (1), 3–57.
- Bluhm, Richard, Martin Gassebner, Sarah Langlotz and Paul Schaudt (2020). Fueling conflict? (De)escalation and bilateral aid. *Journal of Applied Econometrics*.
- Collier, Paul and Anke Hoeffler (1998). On economic causes of civil war. *Oxford Economic Papers* 50 (4), 563–573.

- Collier, Paul and Anke Hoeffler (2004): Greed and grievance in civil war. *Oxford Economic Papers* 56 (4), 563–595.
- Crost, Benjamin, Joseph Felter, and Patrick Johnston (2014). Aid under fire: Development projects and civil conflict. *American Economic Review* 104 (6), 1833–1856.
- Dube, Oeindrilla and Juan F. Vargas (2013). Commodity price shocks and civil conflict: Evidence from Colombia. *The Review of Economic Studies* 80 (4), 1384–1421.
- Esteban, Joan and Debraj Ray (2008). Polarization, fractionalization and conflict. *Journal of Peace Research* 45 (2), 163–182.
- Fearon, James D., David D. Laitin (2003). Ethnicity, insurgency, and civil war. *American Political Science Review* 97 (1), 75–90.
- Gehring, Kai, Sarah Langlotz, and Stefan Kienberger (2018). Stimulant or depressant? Resource-related income shocks and conflict. *CESifo Working Papers* 7887.
- Grossman, Herschel I. (1999). Kleptocracy and revolutions. *Oxford Economic Papers* 51 (2), 267–283.
- Hegre, Håvard and Nicholas Sambanis (2006). Sensitivity analysis of empirical results on civil war onset. *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 50 (4): 508–535.
- Miguel, Edward, Shanker Satyanath, and Ernest Sergenti (2004). Economic shocks and civil conflict: An instrumental variables approach. *Journal of political Economy* 112 (4), 725–753.
- Nunn, Nathan and Nancy Qian (2014). US food aid and civil conflict. *American Economic Review* 104 (6), 1630–1666.
- Ree, Joppe de and Eleonora Nillesen (2008). Aiding violence or peace? The impact of foreign aid on the risk of civil conflict in sub-Saharan Africa. *Journal of Development Economics* 88 (2), 301-313.

#### **Research papers on conflict and media—examples:**

- Adena, Maja, Ruben Enikolopov, Maria Petrova, Veronica Santarosa, and Ekaterina Zhuravskaya (2015). Radio and the rise of the Nazis in prewar Germany. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 130 (4), 1885–1939.
- Barber IV, Benjamin and Charles Miller (2019). Propaganda and combat motivation: Radio broadcasts and German soldiers' performance in World War II. *World Politics* 71 (3), 457–502.
- Croicu, Mihai and Joakim Kreutz (2017). Communication technology and reports on political violence: Cross-national evidence using African events data. *Political Research Quarterly* 70 (1), 19–31.
- DellaVigna, Stefano, Ruben Enikolopov, Vera Mironova, Maria Petrova, and Ekaterina Zhuravskaya (2014). Crossborder media and nationalism: Evidence from Serbian radio in Croatia. *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics* 6 (3), 103–32.

- Eck, Kristine (2012). In data we trust? A comparison of UCDP GED and ACLED conflict events datasets. *Cooperation and Conflict* 47 (1), 124–141.
- Enikolopov, Ruben, Alexey Makarin, and Maria Petrova (2020). Social media and protest participation: Evidence from Russia. *Econometrica* 88.4: 1479-1514.
- Gohdes, Anita R. (2015). Pulling the plug: Network disruptions and violence in civil conflict. *Journal of Peace Research* 52 (3), 352–367.
- Gohdes, Anita R. (2020). Repression technology: Internet accessibility and state violence. *American Journal of Political Science* 64 (3), 488–503.
- Hollenbach, Florian M. and Jan H. Pierskalla (2017). A re-assessment of reporting bias in event-based violence data with respect to cell phone coverage. *Research and Politics* 4 (3), 1–5.
- Pierskalla, Jan H. and Florian M. Hollenbach (2013). Technology and collective action: The effect of cell phone coverage on political violence in Africa. *American Political Science Review* 107 (2), 207–224.
- Shapiro, Jacob N. and Nils B. Weidmann (2015). Is the phone mightier than the sword? Cellphones and insurgent violence in Iraq. *International Organization* 69 (2), 247–274.
- Van der Windt, Peter and Macartan Humphreys (2016). Crowdsourcing in Eastern Congo: Using cell phones to collect conflict events data in real time. *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 60 (4), 748-781.
- Warren, T. Camber (2015). Explosive connections? Mass media, social media, and the geography of collective violence in African states. *Journal of Peace Research* 52 (3), 297–311.
- Weidmann, Nils B. (2016). A closer look at reporting bias in conflict event data. *American Journal of Political Science* 60 (1), 206–218.

**Recommended textbooks for those who need to build up Stata skills are:**

- Cameron, Colin A. and Pravin K. Trivedi (2010). *Microeconometrics Using Stata* (revised edition). Stata Press.
- Kohler, Ulrich and Frauke Kreuter (2016). *Datenanalyse mit Stata: allgemeine Konzepte der Datenanalyse und ihre praktische Anwendung* (5th edition). Walter de Gruyter.

**3. Research paper requirements**

The length of the term paper must not exceed 15 pages. Main tables and main figures factor into the page count. The cover sheet, table of contents, list of figures, list of tables, bibliography and the appendix are excluded from the page count. Please use the following formatting: Font size: 12 pt, line spacing: 1.5 times, alignment: justification, margin (right, left, top and bottom margin): 2.5 cm each. Appendices may provide the details of the empirical approach, data sources, or some background tables and figures. Tables and figures that are essential for the research paper need to



be included in the main text. Please make sure that you are consistent in your referencing and bibliography.

Every idea, statement or fact taken from the literature or any other sources must be appropriately cited. Quotes need to be indicated as such. Plagiarism is sanctioned with the grade 5 (failed). The general rules of the Faculty of Business and Economics apply. A signed declaration must be attached to each scientific work: "I hereby declare that I wrote this thesis paper independently, without assistance from external parties, and without use of other resources than those indicated. All information taken from other publications or sources in text or in meaning are duly acknowledged in the text. I give my consent to have this thesis checked by plagiarism software."

Use a referencing style that is in line with basic conventions in the economics literature. Always quote within a work using the same method. The Chair recommends the in-text author-year citation style (see, for example, information sheet ["Citation according to the Harvard system"](#)). All sources that you have cited in the text must appear in the reference list. Everything that you have only read but not cited in the text must NOT appear in the reference list.

A good research paper implies a clear initial presentation of the research question. Relevant concepts and theoretical approaches need to be adequately discussed. If applicable, the methodological choices need to be justified. The analysis needs to focus on the research question. The paper should end with a well-argued synthesis that supports the conclusions. A good research paper is also fluently written and is consistent in its form. Term papers need to be written in English. The work must be done independently by the student; the supervisor only provides advice on the outline and specific issues of the paper.

A complete set of Stata files consists of .dta, .do, and .log files. The Stata files you hand in should include a folder containing any original datasets you have downloaded and the final merged dataset as .dta files. There should also be a single .do file that describes how your data sources were merged and how your output (tables, regression results, graphs, descriptive statistics etc.) was derived from the original data. Please make sure that your .do file can be executed outside your own computer without further adjustments to the code (e.g., by using relative file paths). Add comments to specify which part of the code corresponds to which part of your paper. Finally, include the corresponding log-file in plain text format.