HSPS and H&P TRIPOS
PART IIB 2019-2020
Pol 16 The Politics of Conflict and Peacebuilding

Course Organiser
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Drop in office hours: Mondays 12-1pm

Lecturers and Supervisors
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Outline of the Course

This paper explores issues of conflict and peacebuilding in contemporary international politics, with a particular focus on conflict and peace in the global south. It considers competing theories and claims about the causes of conflict and the relationship between the state, conflict, development and other international processes. It analyses the range of responses to conflict and how they are justified, and focuses on contests over the meanings and practices of peacebuilding. The possibilities and limitations of international institutions, including the United Nations, in ending conflict and maintaining peace are highlighted throughout the paper.

The paper pays particular attention to the connection between local, national, regional and international politics, economy and society. It looks at the ways in which regional and international dynamics may have a bearing on conflict and peace. What is the relationship between seemingly ‘local’ conflicts and the wider political structures in which they are embedded? Do institutions and programmes responding to conflict reproduce and reflect a state-centric system? What are the benefits and limits to existing approaches to peace and conflict? Is the state the primary actor in conflict and in its resolution? How can we best understand the multiple layers of conflict and how they interact? How is political agency exercised?

In Michaelmas, the lectures explore the origins and nature of contemporary conflict, and the relationship between conflict, the state, and the global system. We begin by discussing the contested meanings of concepts of security, war, and conflict, and how these are measured. We then turn to the relationship between the state and violence, including a discussion of rebel governance. Next, we will focus on a number of competing theories and claims about the causes and dynamics of conflict, looking at the state, economies, identities, gender, and refugees and population displacement. In Michaelmas we will also have lectures on three regional case studies to illustrate ideas, approaches, and practices of conflict and peace in diverse
settings around the world: the African Great Lakes region (Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda and Burundi); Kurdish movements in Syria and Iraq; and war by other means in Latin America. Students should attend all the lectures, but they are expected to become highly familiar with one of these case study regions.

In Lent, the lectures will focus on peace and peacebuilding. We will start by questioning the concept of peace, and we will critically assess the institutions, ideas and practices underlying peacebuilding efforts. The lectures focus on different international and regional actors and their strategies and normative agendas. Topics include the politics of humanitarian assistance, governance and democratisation, security reform, justice and reconciliation, and post-war economies. The final lecture discusses the possibilities and limits of peacebuilding and transnational advocacy.

Throughout Michaelmas and Lent we will have seminar classes to discuss some of the key overarching readings. In Michaelmas there will be one seminar on questions of concepts, measurement and indicators, and one seminar on local (ie Cambridge’s) connections to global conflict(s). In Lent there will be a seminar class on ‘alternative’ ideas and practices of peacebuilding and statebuilding.

In Easter term there will be one revision lecture, one revision seminar, and one revision supervision.

Aims and Objectives

- to explore a range of ways of understanding possible connections between conflict and peace
- to provide a framework for thinking about the causes of conflict and the connections between local, regional and international processes
- to gain detailed knowledge of conflict and peace in at least one region
- to encourage critical reflection of theoretical assumptions regarding conflict, and peacebuilding, and available models and policy packages
- to teach students how to read closely primary texts such as international treaties, resolutions and official reports

Teaching and Assessment

In Michaelmas, students will have 2 thematic supervisions and 2 seminars. Students will be allocated a supervisor at the beginning of Michaelmas term. For each supervision, students should prepare a 2000-2500 word essay. For the first seminar, students should submit two questions sparked by the readings. For the second seminar, students will be asked to prepare a short 1000-word brief. Details are in the relevant section of this paper guide.

There will also be one supervision on the case study material. Students can choose whether they will do this at the end of Michaelmas term, or beginning of Lent term (except the case study for Latin America, which will be in Lent).
In Lent, students will have 2 thematic supervisions and 1 seminar (as well as the case study supervision if they did not do this in Michaelmas). For each supervision, students should write a 2000-2500 word essay. For the seminar, students will be asked to prepare an essay as outlined in the relevant section of the paper guide.

In Easter term, we will have one revision lecture, one revision seminar, and one revisions supervision.

This paper is assessed by an undivided three-hour examination paper, from which students should answer three questions. There is a mock exam at the end of the paper guide, as well as a past examination paper and an examiners’ report. Students can also find other previous examination papers and examiners’ reports on moodle.
| Michaelmas |
|---|---|---|
| **Conflict: Causes, dynamics, consequences** – (D Curtis and J Pearce) | **Case studies** (D Curtis, B Ozcelik, G Denyer Willis) | **Seminars** (D Curtis and J Pearce) |
| Mondays (weeks 1-8) 11-12, SG1 Tuesdays (weeks 1-8), 11-12, Sidgwick lecture block room 8 | | |
| 1. Introduction: conflict and peacebuilding: **14 October** | **African Great Lakes** (D Curtis) | **Seminar 1 (week 2)** Concepts, measurement and indicators |
| 2. Defining and measuring conflict, war and security: **15 October** | **22 Oct**: Background and state formation **29 Oct**: Violence and conflict **5 Nov**: Intervention and Peacebuilding | Group 1 Monday 21 Oct, 3-5pm room S2 in POLIS |
| 3. Conflict and states in the contemporary world **21 Oct** | **Kurds: Syria and Iraq** (B Ozcelik) | Group 2 Tuesday 22 Oct, 3-5pm, room S2 in POLIS |
| 4. Security, development and constructing failed states: **28 October** | **12 Nov**: Transnational, state and local histories **19 Nov**: Prospects for autonomy, federalism and statehood in Iraq, Syria, Turkey **26 Nov**: The role of the US, Turkey and Russia over the settlement of Kurdish claims | **Seminar 2 (week 8)** Cambridge in conflict Group 1 and 2 Mon 2 Dec, 3-5:30pm, Emmanuel college Old JCR |
| 5. Economies of conflict: **4 Nov** | **Latin America: War by Other Means** (G Denyer Willis) | |
| 6. Identities: Ethnicity, religion, nation and conflict **11 November** | **L1 2 Dec** **L2 3 Dec** **L3 20 Jan** | |
| 7. Gender: Masculinities, patriarchy and conflict: **18 November** | | |
| 8. Refugees and population displacement as a cause and consequence of conflict: **25 November** | | |

**Note:** In Michaelmas, students will have 2 thematic supervisions and 2 seminars. They may also have 1 case study supervision (but they may do this in Lent instead).
### Lent

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Peacebuilding (D Curtis)</th>
<th>Cases</th>
<th>Seminars (D Curtis and K Wittig)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thursdays (weeks 1-8) 11-12, SG1 Mondays (weeks 1-4) 11-12, SG1</td>
<td>Latin America: War by Other Means Jan 20, 11-1pm, ARB room S3</td>
<td>Guest seminar (Prof Richard Caplan, Oxford) Measuring Peace: Principles, Practices and Politics Fri 24 Jan, 3-4:30pm Room S3 in POLIS All welcome</td>
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1. Introduction: peace studies (16 Jan)
2. What is peacebuilding? (23 Jan)
3. Who keeps the peace and why? (27 Jan)
4. The politics of humanitarian assistance (30 Jan)
5. Negotiations, mediation and peace agreements (3 Feb)
6. Governance: Democratisation and the governance of divided societies (6 Feb)
7. Security: Ex-combatants, security and stabilisation (10 Feb)
8. Society: Justice and post-war reconciliation (13 Feb)
9. Economy: Post-conflict economic policies and development (20 Feb)
10. Opportunities and limits of peacebuilding and transnational advocacy (27 Feb)

**Note:** In Lent, examination students will have 2 supervisions (and a third supervision on a case study if they did not do this in Michaelmas) and 1 seminar. The Easter term revision lecture is Mon 27 April in room S2 from 11-12. Seminars will be held on Monday 4 May (11-1pm for Group 1, 2-4pm Group 2) in room S2.
Supervision Questions

Michaelmas Term (choose 2)

1. Do states still matter in understanding contemporary conflict?
2. What is the relationship between globalisation and state failure?
3. What is the relationship between economics and politics in understanding conflict?
4. Why are some interactions between identity groups peaceful and others violent? Answer with reference to one of the following: ethnicity, religion, nation or gender.
5. Is population displacement a cause or a consequence of conflict?

Case study supervision (either MT or LT) (choose 1)

1. Can conflict in the Great Lakes region of Africa be understood as the consequence of states that are too strong or too weak?
2. Who benefits from international peacebuilding interventions in the Great Lakes region of Africa?
3. To what extent has war served as an opportunity or a constraint for the dominant Kurdish national movements in Iraq and Syria?
4. Would the creation of an independent Kurdistan likely resolve intra-Kurdish rivalries and tensions with central ‘host’ states, or would it escalate them?
5. What are the key variations in the relationship between violence, law and politics in Latin America?

Lent supervisions (choose 2)

1. Is it possible for outside actors to do no harm to the populations they seek to help? Answer with reference to peace operations or humanitarian aid.
2. Do peace negotiations always privilege the powerful?
3. Is peace a matter of appropriate institutions?
4. Should policies targeting ex-combatants prioritise peace or justice?
5. How can war economies be transformed into peace economies?

Seminars (see sections in the paper guide for readings and seminar assignments):

Seminar 1: How do debates over definitions and measurement affect the study of comparative political violence and peace?

Seminar 2: How is Cambridge implicated in global conflict and peace?

Seminar 3: Are there alternatives to peacebuilding and statebuilding?
READINGS and COURSE MATERIALS

Both the University Library and the Seeley library hold most of the items listed here. Much of the literature also exists in college libraries. Most of the material is available on-line. Students should make sure that they know how to access journal material through the University Library ejournals portal. Items marked (M) are on the library moodle site.

Books and articles that are strongly recommended are indicated with an asterisk (*). Please note that although this paper guide is very long, students are not expected to do ALL the readings. The list of further readings (items without an asterisk) in each section is for students who wish to go into more depth on a particular topic. Several lecture topics also include a ‘case’ section to highlight the lecture theme in one or two cases. Also, many of the same readings are relevant for different sections of the paper, so they will turn up in multiple sections of the paper guide.

Powerpoint slides will be placed on the Moodle website.

General Readings

These are general readings that deal with the main themes in this paper.

David Keen, Complex Emergencies (London: Polity, 2007) [M: ch 1]


MICHAELMAS TERM

Conflict: Causes and Dynamics

Lecture 1: Introduction: Conflict and peacebuilding
What are the key themes of the course? How can we think about these different levels of analysis in thinking about conflict and peace, and what are the interactions between these levels? What is the role of the state? What is the role of ‘outside’ actors in war and peacebuilding?


David Keen, *Complex Emergencies* (London: Polity 2008), [Ch. 1 on War: M]


**Lecture 2: Defining and Measuring Conflict, War and Security**

What are the differences between ‘conflict’, ‘war’, ‘violence’, peace? Who uses them, and for what purposes? How, if at all, should these phenomena be measured and compared? Should scholars prioritise one of them for research? Why did the term ‘human security’ emerge and to what extent does it represent an alternative to state security or international security?

*Chris Cramer, *Civil War is not a Stupid Thing: Accounting for Violence in Developing Countries*, Hurst Publishers, 2006. [M: Ch. 2: Categories, Trends and Evidence of Violent Conflict]*

*Sally Engle Merry, *The Seductions of Quantification: Measuring Human Rights, Gender Violence and Sex Trafficking*, University of Chicago Press, 2016. [M: Ch 1: A World of Quantification]*


*Report on Global Peace 2019:*


Barry Buzan,” New Patterns of Global Security in the Twenty-first Century”


http://search.lib.cam.ac.uk/?itemid=|eresources|218247


**Human Security (and debates):**


**Seminar 1: Concepts, Definitions and Measurement**

**Seminar readings**

*1) Chris Cramer, *Civil War is not a Stupid Thing: Accounting for Violence in Developing Countries*, Hurst Publishers, 2006. [Read: Ch. 2: Categories, Trends and Evidence of Violent Conflict]*

*2) Sally Engle Merry, *The Seductions of Quantification: Measuring Human Rights, Gender Violence and Sex Trafficking*, University of Chicago Press, 2016. [Read: Ch 1: A World of Quantification]*


**Seminar assignment:**

After you have done the readings, please write two questions or observations that have been sparked by one or more of the readings. Please email these to your seminar leader at least 12 hours before your seminar.

**Lecture 3: Conflict and states in the contemporary world**

Do the wars of the last three decades represent change from or continuity with historical patterns? Is the state central or marginal to contemporary conflict? Is the idea of a nation state relevant in a situation of sub-national or cross-national conflict? How has ‘globalisation’ affected the nature and conduct of political violence, and in what dimensions?

Essay question: Do states still matter in understanding contemporary conflict?


David Keen, Complex Emergencies, Chapters 2 and 3 (London: Polity, 2007)


**Lecture 4. Security, development and constructing failed states**

How do ideas about development, aid and security play into post-conflict policy? What is the relationship between aid and globalisation? What does it mean to say a state is ‘failed’ or ‘collapsed’? What are the political implications of the term? What are the broader structures of production and profit in which violent conflicts are embedded? What are the implications of global war industries for our understanding of the dynamics of conflict?

Essay question: What is the relationship between globalisation and state failure?


* Christopher Cramer *Civil War is not a Stupid Thing*, chapter 6, ‘Passionate interests’.

Mary Anderson, Do No Harm: How Aid can Support Peace or War. (Lynne Rienner, 1999).


Campaign Against Arms Trade www.caat.org.uk : some useful research and arguments on their website.


Leo Scherer, ‘The OECD’s Fragility index is surprisingly fragile and difficult to reproduce, Monkey Cage blog, Washington Post, 17 May 2015.


Wayne Nafziger, Frances Stewart and Raimo Vayrynen (eds), War, Hunger and Displacement: The Origins of Humanitarian Emergencies (Oxford University Press, 2000),


*Fund for Peace, The Fragile States Index 2017, particularly section on ‘Indicators’
http://fundforpeace.org/fsi/2017/05/14/fragile-states-index-2017-annual-report/


United States Agency for International Development, *Fragile States Strategy* (2005),

Department for International Development (DFID), Why we need to work more effectively in fragile states, 2005


Tiitmamer, Nhial "The flaws in Kate Almquist Knopf’s call for trusteeship in South Sudan”. *The Sudd Institute Policy Brief, 18 October 2016*.
At: [https://www.suddinstitute.org/assets/Publications/5809bbc36cf6b_TheFlawsInKateAlmquistKnopfsCall_Full.pdf](https://www.suddinstitute.org/assets/Publications/5809bbc36cf6b_TheFlawsInKateAlmquistKnopfsCall_Full.pdf)

**Lecture 5: Economies: poverty, inequality, resources and conflict**

Do poverty and economic marginalisation lead to rebellion? How do development processes interact with conflict? How do economic issues become politicised? Do particular kinds of economic endowment or scarcity lead to particular patterns of violence?

Essay question: What is the relationship between economics and politics in understanding conflict?


The former is a readable, non-technical exposition of Collier’s thinking. See also the various articles by Collier and Hoeffler that give a more detailed account of their quantitative methodology, for example:


(Also browse other articles in this edition of The Journal of Conflict Resolution.)

Case studies: familiarise yourself with some of these:


Further theoretical reading


  http://search.lib.cam.ac.uk/?itemid=%7Ceresources%7C298103


- David Keen *Conflict and Collusion in Sierra Leone*. James Currey, 2005.


*Lecture 6: Identities: Religion, ethnicity, nation and conflict*
What is the role of identity in conflict? Which particular interactions produce ‘ethnic’ or ‘religious’ violence? Is ‘ethnic conflict’ a misleading term? What is the role of national identity in driving conflicts today? How do armed groups seek legitimacy for their struggles?

Essay question: Why are some interactions between identity groups peaceful and others violent? (Answer with reference to one of the following: ethnicity, religion, nation and gender.)


*Vigdis Broch-Due (ed) (2005), Violence and Belonging: The Quest for Identity in Postcolonial Africa. (Routledge, Abingdon) (Intro)


Stathis Kalyvas (2006), The Logic of Violence in Civil War, (Cambridge University Press) [Introduction].
Further case study readings:


Christopher Clapham (ed) African Guerrillas. See in particular the chapters by: Pool (Eritrea), Young (Ethiopia), Johnson (South Sudan), Compagnon (Somalia), Ngoga (Uganda), Behrend (Uganda).

Fotini Christia, ‘Following the Money: Muslim versus Muslim in Bosnia’s Civil War’. *Comparative Politics*, Volume 40, Number 4, July 2008, pp. 461-480(20)

Further theoretical reading


Kamala Visweswaran (ed), *Everyday Occupations : Experiencing Militarism in South Asia and the Middle East*, De Gruyter Online (eBook). (on politics of identity under military occupation in different conflict areas)


Lecture 7: Gender: Masculinities, Patriarchy and Conflict

How is the production of conflict and violence gendered? Does war subvert or reinforce peacetime gender dynamics? Should sexual violence in war be treated differently to other forms of violence? To what extent is ‘patriarchy’ relevant to understanding political violence and conflict?

Essay question: Why are some interactions between identity groups peaceful and others violent? (Answer with reference to one of the following: ethnicity, religion, nation or gender.)


*Carlo Koos, ‘What do we know about sexual violence in armed conflicts? Recent empirical progress and remaining gaps in peace and conflict research’ GIGA working paper No. 275, June 2015.


Further readings:


*Further case study readings:*


**Lecture 8: Refugees and Population Displacement as a Cause and Consequence of Conflict**

Do refugees and displaced populations cause inter-state conflict? What are the political, security, economic and social determinants of refugee and migration flows? Are international regimes and donor agencies adequately equipped to deal with migrants and refugees? Is it possible to reconcile state sovereignty with the ‘rights of others’?

Essay question: Is population displacement a cause or a consequence of conflict?


*Alex Betts and Gil Loescher (eds), Refugees in International Relations, Oxford University Press, 2011.
http://search.lib.cam.ac.uk/?itemid=%7Ceresources%7C408849


Further case study readings:


Seminar 2: Cambridge in Conflict: The Global-local Dimensions of Conflict and Peace

Seminar readings
Look at the following two articles for different views about the ways in which the local and global connect:

Seminar assignment:
Write a brief essay of one way in which Cambridge connects to global conflict or peacebuilding. Examples include: conflict resources in your mobiles such as coltan, the arms trade, the illegal drugs trade, local branches of an NGO such as Amnesty, war memorial sites in Cambridge. In your paper, explain the mechanisms linking
Cambridge to the ‘global’ and be prepared to discuss in the seminar. Please send your paper to your seminar leader 24 hours before the seminar.

CASES:

Case study: The Great Lakes Region of Africa (D Curtis)

The Great Lakes region of Africa is often represented as a site of brutal violence, and it is known for its experiences of genocide, high levels of sexual violence, ‘resource wars’ and other forms of atrocities. All three countries, Rwanda, Burundi and the Democratic Republic of the Congo have suffered from repeated cycles of violence, and, at times, have been labelled ‘failed states’. This option will allow students to better understand the violence in the region, and the ways in which local, regional and international drivers of conflict interact. It will question whether the media and policy depictions of conflict in the Great Lakes adequately capture the complexity of politics in the region and the reasons for violence and peace. The module will explore the historical underpinnings of violence in the region, and will discuss the particular patterns of violence in different parts of the region, and how these are connected to wider international processes. The last lecture focuses on responses to conflict in the Great Lakes. It will explore the impact of different peacebuilding initiatives along with the assumptions guiding these peacebuilding activities and transnational activist campaigns.

Lecture 1: A brief history of the region

It will be useful for you to read at least one of the books outlining the history of the region and the background to the conflicts. I would suggest reading either Prunier, Lemarchand, or Reyntjens as a starting point to get a sense of the broad history of the region. These are fairly detailed books - you are not expected to know all these details, but it will be useful to you to have a broad understanding of background history.

Most of the literature focuses on one country. After reading one of the regional histories, take a look at one or two readings in the country-specific literature.

On Congolese history, Young and Turner’s book is a classic, which deals with the colonial underpinnings of conflict in the Congo. Hochschild’s book is an excellent introduction to international involvement in the Congo, and provides a gripping account of the colonial period. Dunn specifically addresses the representation of Congo’s past and present. Nzongola-Ntalaja’s book is good on the end of the Mobutu period and attempts at democratisation. Deibert is a journalist and his book offers an introduction to Congo. Williams addresses the period of the immediate post-independence period in Congo, and the UN peacekeeping mission from 1960-64. The Stearns book is very good on the more recent Congo wars and Berwouts examines conflict in Congo since the 2000s.
There is a vast literature explaining the history of Rwanda, much of it written after the genocide. Mamdani’s book is an interesting and provocative account of the history of ethnicity in Rwanda. Newbury’s work is important in terms of its focus on rural populations. On Burundi, Lemarchand’s book is an excellent introduction.

**Regional Histories (skim through one of these in order to understand background)**

[http://search.lib.cam.ac.uk/?itemid=%7Ceresources%7C298067](http://search.lib.cam.ac.uk/?itemid=%7Ceresources%7C298067)


**DR Congo**

*Kevin Dunn, *Imagining the Congo: The International Relations of Identity*, (Palgrave 2003).  [http://search.lib.cam.ac.uk/?itemid=%7Ceresources%7C70190](http://search.lib.cam.ac.uk/?itemid=%7Ceresources%7C70190)*


**Rwanda and Burundi**


Lecture 2: Conflict and international relations
There are contrasting arguments accounting for violence in the region. Clark’s edited volume provides a good overview of the regional political dynamics in the 1990s. Explanations for conflict in the DRC tend to focus on economic factors (Nest et al., Kabamba, Samset), local political issues (Vlassenroot, Jackson, Autesserre), politics and regional connections (Stearns, Reyntjens). Some authors also focus on the interaction of these factors (Raeymaekers). There is an excellent blog that students will find interesting for an analysis of current events: http://congoresearchgroup.org/ There are plenty of books and articles to choose from in order to understand the Rwandan genocide. Straus and Uvin’s books are particularly recommended.

Essay: Can conflict in the Great Lakes region of Africa be understood as the consequence of states that are too strong or too weak?

*John F. Clark (ed), The African Stakes of the Congo War (Palgrave, 2004). http://search.lib.cam.ac.uk/?itemid=%7Ceresources%7C83632

Howard Adelman and Astri Suhrke (eds). The Path of a Genocide: The Rwanda Crisis from Uganda to Zaire (Somerset NJ: Transaction, 1999). (see chapters by Kakwenzire and Kamukama, and Otunnu)


DR Congo:


*All the President’s Wealth: The Kabila Family Business, Congo Research Group, July 2017, https://allthewealth.congoresearchgroup.org/dist/assets/all-the-presidents-wealth-ENG.pdf


UN Panel of Experts on the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources and Other Forms of Wealth of DR Congo, Final Report (16 October 2002), at: http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/AllDocsByUNID/706b89b947e5993dc1256c590052b353


Rwanda and Burundi

*Straus, Scott. The Order of Genocide: Race, Power and the War in Rwanda (Cornell University Press, 2006).

US National Security Archive (Sixteen declassified documents related to US and the Rwandan genocide)  
http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB53/index.html


**Lecture 3: Peacebuilding and transnational advocacy**

The region has been the focus of a number of peacebuilding initiatives and advocacy campaigns. In the DRC, international campaigns have especially targeted conflict minerals, sexual violence, and environmental conservation. Seay and Baaz/Stern discuss the limitations of these campaigns. A number of authors provide more general critiques of peacebuilding strategies in the DRC. For instance, Autesserre has written extensively on this topic.

There are big debates about how international and regional actors have responded to conflict in Rwanda and Burundi, and the different trajectories that these two countries have taken. The chapters in the edited volume by Straus and Waldorf highlight different aspects of the debate about international involvement in post-genocide Rwanda. There are fewer articles on Burundi, but Vandeginste provides a very interesting comparison of the two countries.
Essay: Who benefits from international peacebuilding interventions in the Great Lakes region of Africa?


**DR Congo**


Jeffrey Herbst and Greg Mills, “There is No Congo” *Foreign Policy*, 18 March 2009; See reply by Timothy Raeymaekers, “Who Calls the Congo”


Rwanda and Burundi


Pottier, Johan. Re-Imagining Rwanda. Conflict, Survival and Disinformation in the Late Twentieth Century (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001). http://search.lib.cam.ac.uk/?itemid=%7Ceresources%7C17849


**Case study: The Kurds in Syria and Iraq (B Ozcelik)**

The Kurds are the largest ethnic group without a state, a product of the post-World War I peace settlement that followed the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. Entangled in one of the most protracted conflicts in the Middle East, the future of the Kurdish peoples is deeply intertwined with questions of recognition, political representation and self-determination. Precipitated by the 2003 invasion of Iraq and the ongoing conflict in Syria, the rights struggle of the Kurds reverberates across a transnational geography through evolving, fluid political relations. More recently empowered by their role in the fight against Islamic State (IS), the Kurds have entered the stage as the Middle East’s new democratisers. Kurdish claims for autonomy and independence pose a challenge to state resilience in Turkey, Iraq and Syria (as well as wider regional stability), meriting analyses at the state, transnational, and sub-state levels.

While this case study option provides a general background on contemporary Kurdish trans-border politics, the specific focus is on how sub-state movements can redefine dominant conceptions of nationalism and state sovereignty, while introducing new debates to the task of democracy. The three lectures offer a glimpse at the many voices that speak out at competing and overlapping sites of power and resistance in the Kurdish nationalist-liberation movements in Syria and Iraq (and to an extent, Turkey). In a region in flux, the Kurds have become a key determinant in equations over the future of the state system in the region and possibly its borders. Rather than look at each country on an individual basis, this option explores tensions, key themes and
debates within and among Kurdish territories, armed groups, political parties and ideologies.

It would be useful to browse a number of the general readings below on the genesis and evolution of Kurdish nationalism. Given the fast pace of political and military developments in the region against the backdrop of the war in Syria, it is advisable to keep up to date on current events.


The role of political Islam among the Kurds is generally understudied, however, religion (mainly Sunni Islam) plays a significant role in Kurdish politics and society. For a useful historical overview see Michiel Leezenberg, ‘Political Islam among the Kurds’, in Faleh Jabbar and Hosham Dawod (eds), *The Kurds: Nationalism and Politics* (London: Saqi Books, 2006): 203-30. [A version of this chapter appears here http://home.hum.uva.nl/oz/leezenberg/PoliIslamKurds.pdf]

Lecture 1: Transnational, state and local histories

This lecture explores the crystallization of the Kurdish national question at the end of World War I and traces key moments in the evolution of regional Kurdish politics in conjunction with state-building exercises in Turkey, Iraq and Syria. Over the past decade, and hastened by the war against so-called Islamic State, the Kurds in Iraq and Syria, especially, have been described as sitting at the cusp of their golden moment and ‘surprise winners’. The focus here is on macro-level processes taking place across borders to reimagine the ‘State’ as the desired (and contested) form of political organization, forms of governance and identity in the Middle East as experienced by Kurdish groups. Attention will also be given to the heterogeneity in the state-building projects defended by rival Kurdish liberation-nationalist movements, including tensions between secular and Islamist ideologies among the Kurds. By looking at trans-border solidarity that challenges norms of situatedness, from Diyarbakir to Erbil to Kobane, the broad aim is explore how millions of Kurds live simultaneously ‘there’ and ‘here’, both within and beyond borders, and across multiple identities at once.
Lecture 2: State-determination or Self-determination? Prospects for autonomy, federalism and statehood in Iraq, Syria, Turkey

In this lecture the focus shifts to the state of intra-Kurdish rivalries within and between competing Kurdish liberationist-nationalist movements in Syria and Iraq. Specifically, this entails an analysis of the agendas for self-rule and federalisation advanced by dominant actors and the corresponding opportunities and challenges for democratisation and peace-making. The lecture looks at how each of these models can be considered effective power-sharing schemes that aim to both share and consolidate authority over contested territories and diverse societies that include Arabs, Turkoman and ethnic minorities. Core themes and questions that are addressed are: What are the dynamics between the Kurdistan Region in Iraq and the outlawed Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK)-dominated groups that are active in Turkey and Syria? What are the main features of the project of democratic autonomy/confederalism in Syria versus the standard state-building model in Iraqi Kurdistan? Is territorial autonomy a necessary pre-condition for peace? What were the goals of Kurdish armed violence and what has been achieved by political violence, if anything? How are citizenship rights, political pluralism and questions around ‘who are we, and what do we want to achieve together’ treated by the authors of these autonomy projects?

There is a rich literature on the emergence of a Kurdish de facto or quasi state in Iraq. Much of this scholarly work deals with local histories and KDP-PUK rivalry for rule over Iraqi Kurdistan. A portion of this body of work is situated within conceptual and empirical approaches to non-state recognition in international law and diplomacy. On this, see Nina Caspersen and Gareth Stansfield, eds. Unrecognized States in the International System (London: Routledge, 2011).


**On the democratic autonomy/confederalism ideological model attempted in northern Syria, see:**


**On the Kurds of Syria:**


On gender, nationalism and conflict:

Ahmet Serdar Aktürk (2016) Female Cousins and Wounded Masculinity: Kurdish Nationalist Discourse in the Post-Ottoman Middle East, Middle Eastern Studies, 52:1, 46-59, DOI: 10.1080/00263206.2015.1078793

Andrea Fischer-Tahir, ‘Gendered Memories and Masculinities: Kurdish Peshmerga on the Anfal Campaign in Iraq’ Journal of Middle East Women’s Studies, Vol. 8, No. 1, (Winter 2012), pp. 92-114

Lecture 3: The role of external actors: Kingmakers or spoilers?

This lecture takes up the role of external actors—new allies and former enemies—as drivers of Kurdish regional politics in Iraq and Syria, including the US and the more recent involvement of Russia. The foreign relation strategies of the Kurdistan Regional Government in Iraq and the Rojava federal administration in northern Syria is also scrutinized, particularly in light of the battle against IS as a source of external recognition and international legitimization for Kurdish actors. Additionally, Turkey’s foreign policy toward the KRG and Rojava is explored to highlight the complex and multifaceted relationship between domestic and foreign policy.


Case study: Latin America: War by other Means?

Readings:


LENT TERM

Peacebuilding

*Lecture 1. Introduction: peace studies*

How did peace studies evolve as a distinct area of study? What are the key methodological and theoretic commitments in the field of peace studies, and how have these changed over the past sixty years? How does peace studies relate to the study of international relations?

Lecture 2. What is peace? What is peacebuilding?

What is peace? Who are ‘peacebuilders’? Can you measure peace? What kinds of goals, interests and assumptions are held by different peacebuilding organisations, and what happens when their visions clash? Is peacebuilding intervention a form of domination? Is there an international peacebuilding ‘culture’?


*Institute for Economics and Peace, Global Peace Index 2019: 

*Michael Barnett, Hunjoon Kim, Madalene ODonnell, and Laura Sitea. 


*Michael Banks, ‘Four conceptions of peace’ in Dennis Sandole and Ingrid Sandole-Staroste (eds), Conflict Management and Problem-Solving (Pinter, 1987) [M]


Cases:


*Lecture 3: Who keeps the peace and why?: The United Nations, and regional organisations*

Is the use of force necessary to bring about peace/stability? How has UN peacekeeping evolved? On what basis do the United Nations and regional organisations involved in peace operations derive their legitimacy? What are the advantages and disadvantages of different regional organisations in conducting peace operations? Are multilateral organisations equipped to deal with the transnational nature of conflict?

Essay: Is it possible for outside actors to do no harm to the populations they seek to help? Answer with reference to peace operations or humanitarian aid.


**Regional organisations:**


Alexander Noyes and Janette Yarwood, ‘The AU Continental Early Warning System:


**Lecture 4: The politics of humanitarian assistance**

Is the work of humanitarian aid agencies based on altruism? Is it possible for humanitarian relief to be neutral? What are the politics of humanitarianism and how has this changed over the last fifty years? What are the consequences of framing populations as ‘victims’?

Essay: Is it possible for outside actors to do no harm to the populations they seek to help? Answer with reference to peace operations or humanitarian aid.


-Alex de Waal, Democratizing the Aid Encounter in Africa’ *International Affairs*, Vol 73, No. 4, October 1997.


Lecture 5: Negotiations, mediation and peace agreements

Are peace negotiations best understood as an exercise in bargaining between belligerents? On what basis are participants in peace negotiations chosen? Why do peace agreements so often break down? Is it possible for outsiders to ‘manage spoilers’ in peace processes?

Essay: Do peace negotiations always privilege the powerful?

*Stephen Stedman, Donald Rothchild and Elizabeth Cousens, Ending Civil Wars: The Implementation of Peace Agreements (Lynne Rienner 2002). [Intro. pp. 1-40 on M]


Lecture 6 The Politics of Governance:
Democratisation and the governance of divided societies

Is there an immediate trade-off between democracy and order in highly divided countries emerging from civil war? Is it possible for outsiders to ‘institutionally engineer’ states and societies in order to reach desired outcomes? When, if ever, is partition necessary? Are certain kinds of institutions more conducive to peace? Is it possible to build domestic accountability?
through international administration?

Essay: Is peace a matter of appropriate institutions?

*Anna Jarstad and Timothy Sisk (eds), From War to Democracy: Dilemmas of Peacebuilding (Cambridge University Press, 2008). (see chapter 4)


-Phil Roeder and Donald Rothchild, eds., Sustainable Peace: Power and Democracy After
Civil Wars (Cornell University Press 2005). [Chapter 1 on M]


-David Campbell, National Deconstruction: Violence, Identity and Justice in Bosnia (University of Minnesota Press, 1998) esp chaps 1 and 7. [M-ch. 1]

**Lecture 7: Security: Ex-Combatants, Security and Stabilisation**

*Is security and stability the first priority for peacebuilding? Are there tensions between stabilization operations and sovereignty and if so, can these be resolved? Do disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) programmes achieve their objectives? Do security reforms help or undermine peace? What are the obstacles to regional security?*

Essay: Should policies targeting ex-combatants prioritise peace or justice?
*Mats Berdal and David Ucko, ‘Introduction to the DDR Forum: Rethinking the Reintegration of Former Combatants’ International Peacekeeping, Vol 20, No. 3, 2013. See also case study articles in same issue


Lilli Banholzer, When do disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes succeed? German Development Institute, Bonn, 2014.


Cases:


-Christopher Blattman and Jeannie Annan, ‘Child Combatants in northern Uganda: Reintegration Myths and Realities’ in Robert Muggah (ed), Security and Post-Conflict Reconstruction, (London: Routledge, 2008). (also see other chapters for other cases).


Official documents and reports:

Note the IDDRS modules on the links to SSR and to transitional justice (downloadable here: http://unddr.org/iddrs/framework.php)


SSR resource centre (documents and articles):
http://www.ssrresourcecentre.org/resources/


OECD Development Assistance Committee (OECD DAC), Security System Reform: What Have We Learned? 2010.


Lecture 8: Society: Justice and post-war reconciliation
Can there be anything more than a victor’s justice after conflict? Who benefits from international courts? Is there a trade-off between reconciliation and justice? Do truth commissions succeed in uncovering the truth? How can the transnational dimensions of conflict be addressed in post-war justice and reconciliation initiatives?

Essay: Should policies targeting ex-combatants prioritise peace or justice?

*-Mahmood Mamdani, “From Justice to Reconciliation: Making Sense of the African


*Priscilla Hayner, Unspeakable Truths: Facing the Challenge of Truth Commissions (Routledge, 2002). [M: ch. 1]


Andrew Rigby, Justice and Reconciliation: After the Violence (Lynne Rienner, 2001). [M: ch. 1]


Lecture 9: Economy: Post-Conflict Economic Policies and Development

To what extent are the governments of countries emerging from conflict constrained in their economic choices? When is post-conflict reconstruction assistance helpful? Which development models are chosen and why?

Essay: How can war economies be transformed into peace economies?


*Oliver P. Richmond, Audra Mitchell (eds), Hybrid forms of peace: from everyday agency to post-liberalism, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012, esp ch. 1 and 2, [M: ch 1]


Mary Anderson, Do No Harm: How Aid can Support Peace or War. (Lynne Rienner, 1999).


**Official documents:**

OECD, Concepts and dilemmas of statebuilding in fragile situations: From fragility to resilience, 2008  


**Lecture 10: The Possibilities and Limits of Peacebuilding, Statebuilding and Transnational Advocacy**

What accounts for the success and failure of advocacy campaigns? Is there a trade-off between integrity and influence? Do international campaigns buttress or marginalize local political agency? Are there alternatives to peacebuilding and statebuilding?

*Alex de Waal (ed), *Advocacy in Conflict: Critical Perspectives on Transnational Activism*, Zed Books, 2015. [see especially ch. 2: M]*


*Roland Paris and Timothy D. Sisk, “Managing Contradictions: The Inherent
Dilemmas of Postwar Statebuilding” Nov 2007.
http://aix1.uottawa.ca/~rparis/IPA.pdf

Limits:


Tania Murray Li, The Will to Improve: Governmentality, Development and the Practice of Politics, Duke University Press, 2007. (online)


Alternatives?


Cases

http://www.slate.com/articles/news_and_politics/the_next_20/2016/09/kony_2012_quickly_became_a_punch_line_but_what_if_it_did_more_good_than.html


- "Was Kony 2012 a failure?" Washington Post, December 2014
https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2014/12/16/was-kony2012-a-failure/?utm_term=.872001865b66

Seminar 3: Are there alternatives to international peacebuilding and statebuilding?

Seminar readings:

Seminar assignment: Write a short summary (approx. 1000 words) of the limits to international peacebuilding, and whether you think that there are viable alternatives. You can draw on the seminar readings but you may also want to look at one or two of the readings on the lecture list. Please send your assignment to the seminar leader 24 hours before the seminar.

Pol 16 Sample Examination 2019-20

Candidates must answer three questions.
1. To what extent are universal theories of conflict helpful? Answer with reference to EITHER identity OR economy OR both.
2. Are states particularly vulnerable under the pressures of contemporary wars?
3. Are global factors always implicated in local conflicts?
4. Does a gendered understanding of conflict have implications for peacebuilding?
5. Is population displacement only ever an indirect cause of conflict?
6. Is there always a trade-off between democracy and order in post-war political institutions?
7. To what extent does peacebuilding favour the powerful? Answer with reference to EITHER justice OR economic reconstruction OR disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR).
8. Can the limits of third party intervention be understood though accounts that focus on manipulation by local elites? Answer with reference to EITHER humanitarian aid OR peace operations.
9. Are spoilers the main obstacle to peace negotiations?
10. Is there a difference between war and peace?
11. If peacebuilding has failed, why does it continue?
12. To what extent is the Kurdish conflict one about territory, human rights and/or national identity? Answer with reference to the Kurds in either or both Iraq and Syria.

13. What, if anything, is lost if conflict and peacebuilding in the Great Lakes is studied at the regional level of analysis?

14. What role(s) does violence play in the reproduction of political order in Latin America?

Past examination (from 2017): But please note that the examination in 2019-20 will be undivided.

Answer three questions, including at least one question from each section.

Section A
1. Are there advantages to studying peace rather than studying conflict?
2. If the concept of state failure is problematic, why does it continue to be used?
3. Are ethnically homogeneous countries more peaceful?
4. When and how are gender identities mobilised for violence?
5. What would it mean to adopt a human security approach to the refugee crisis?
6. When, if ever, does peacekeeping increase the likelihood of conflict?
7. Does increased ‘local’ involvement lead to greater effectiveness of humanitarian relief efforts?
8. Are the most inclusive governance and military structures the most likely to bring about sustainable peace?
9. Are either post-conflict justice or reconciliation possible in the presence of structural violence?
10. Is economic development both a cause of conflict and a cause of peace?

Section B
11. Are there alternatives to statebuilding as a response to conflicts in the Great Lakes Region of Africa?
12. Can the Kurdish conflict be understood through a focus on the state?
13. Is it possible to end conflict in Colombia on a self-sustaining basis without taking into account regional and international factors?
14. To what extent do international policy responses resolve the underlying causes of conflict? Answer with reference to one of the following countries: Afghanistan, Burundi, Côte d’Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Iraq, Libya, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Somalia, Syria, Timor-Leste, Turkey.

Past examiners’ reports
Pol. 16 2017

POL 16 had a particularly large number of students in 2016-17, and there was greater variation in the marks compared with previous years. There were 62 candidates for this paper. Ten candidates received a first class mark and ten candidates received a 2.2 mark, with the other candidates receiving 2.1 marks. The average mark was 64.8.
The best answers showed intellectual agility, a strong ability to assess different claims and arguments intelligently, and provided convincing evidence. There were some exceptional answers that had elements of originality and careful thought. Strong answers were able to make connections across the course material, and were able to effectively challenge or question some of the assumptions in some of the literature and policy documents. Weaker answers were polemical or lacked a logical structure, veered from the question, or made unsubstantiated assertions.

No candidate chose to answer Q1, but every other exam question was attempted by at least four candidates. The most popular questions were Q2 and Q12, each attempted by 26 students. Q9 was attempted by 22 students, and Q10 by 21 students. There were some excellent answers to Q2, but weaker answers spent too much time on the debate about whether the concept of state failure was problematic, without addressing the question of why the term is used. Only 5 candidates answered Q3 and marks ranged for this question tended to be lower than average, with one mark of 72 but several marks in the 2.2 range. Weaker answers did not engage with the literature and offered pre-packaged answers on ethnicity and conflict. On the other hand, Q4 tended to be very well done, with several first class marks. Candidates intelligently discussed the multiple connections between gender identities and violence, drawing on a wide range of readings and examples. Several candidates had difficulty with Q5 because they failed to explain what was meant by a ‘human security approach’. Students are reminded to answer the specific question being asked, and to reflect on all aspects of the question, rather than producing an essay that resembles previous supervision essay work. Only 4 candidates attempted Q6 and again several of these answers suffered from a lack of precision. Many of the answers to Q7 were much better, with several candidates interrogating the meaning of ‘local’, and providing thoughtful critiques. Q8-Q9-Q10 were all popular questions. The best answers showed familiarity with a wide set of arguments and were able to refute or support different claims using appropriate evidence from the literature or from case study examples. There were some excellent answers to Q10, which drew upon general debates about causality. Weaker answers did not explain structural violence (in Q9) or were let down by insufficient attention to detail.

We were pleased to see that the case study answers were generally well done, and that students had proficiently deployed the case study material to make convincing arguments. The best scripts on Q11 discussed the relationship between the state and conflict in the Great Lakes, and persuasively argued what this meant for statebuilding and any possible alternatives. Stronger scripts on Q12 used an analytical approach to consider interaction and divergence across Syria and Iraq by considering a range of actors and histories. Weaker scripts retraced a basic descriptive account of the conflict(s). There were several excellent answers to Q13, which showed awareness of different kinds of factors influencing the Colombian conflict, and how these may be related. We were pleased to see that there were several strong answers to the different cases in Q14, but there was also one incomplete answer that received a 3rd class mark.
The paper was not taught in 2018-19. Other past examinations and examiners’ reports can be found on Moodle.