

Measuring War and Peace

Quantitative Methods in Conflict Studies

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Course design · 2026

How the course is built

Every week is one **debate**.

Method

large-N

experiments

text-as-data

meta-analysis

network-analysis

● country-year ▲ group ● dyad ▤ grid-cell

Unit

👤 respondent * event ⌚ local-time

Region

AF LA AS ME EU GLOBAL

Participation

ShinyApp

Policy

AI Dialogue

replicate

reflections

workshop

Four commitments

1 Debates before methods

Fitness of the
method/data.

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2 Assume no coding back- ground

Shinyapps +
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3 Connect to policy debates

*e.g. When should
Syria hold elec-
tions?*

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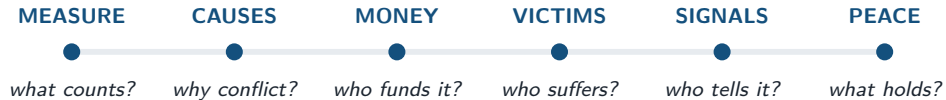
3 Connect to policy debates

e.g. When should Syria hold elections?

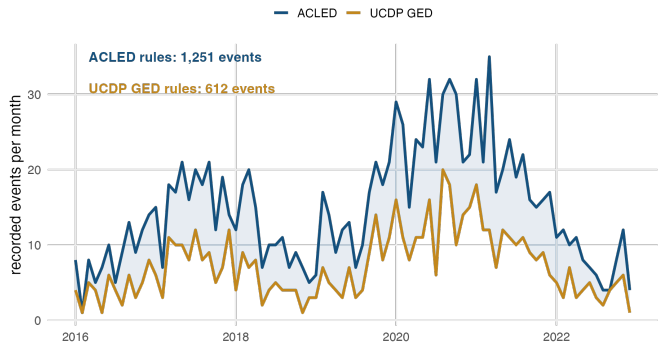
4 No one left behind

Different participation modes.

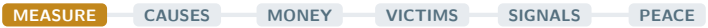
Six themes



Contested measurements



Raleigh, Clionadh, Roudabeh Kishi, and Andrew Linke. 2023. "Political Instability Patterns Are Obscured by Conflict Dataset Scope Conditions, Sources, and Coding Choices." *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications* 10(74).



Week 1-2

Contested measurements

In-class group exercise

Switch thresholds/inputs. Which conflicts disappear first? Would these data have an impact on how an agency distributes aid?

Be a dataset

[Code like ACLED](#) [Code like UCDP GED](#)

...or set your own rules

1 · Which event types count?

- ☒ Battle
- ☒ Explosion / remote violence
- ☒ Violence against civilians
- ☐ Protest
- ☐ Riot
- ☐ Strategic development

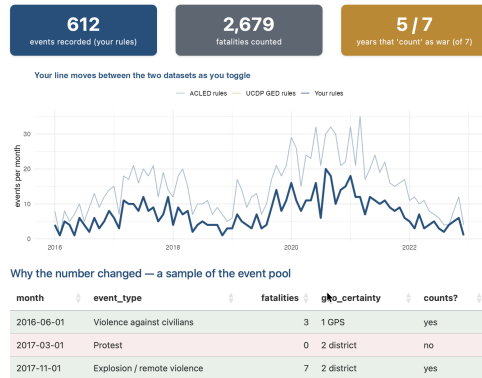
2 · Require at least one death per event

3 · Battle deaths per year to call it an 'armed conflict'

0 225 700

4 · Keep events located at least to... (1 = GPS, 3 = region)

1 2 3



large-N

* event

GLOBAL

ShinyApp

Sources of intra-/inter-state conflict

Regime type	● country-year	large-N	Colgan, Jeff D., and Jessica L. P. Weeks. "Revolution, Personalist Dictatorships, and International Conflict." <i>International Organization</i> 69, no. 1 (2015): 163–94.
Climate	▣ grid-cell	meta-analysis	Burke, Marshall, Joel Ferguson, Solomon M. Hsiang, and Edward Miguel. "New Evidence on the Economics of Climate and Conflict." In <i>Handbook of the Economics of Conflict</i> , edited by Massimo Morelli, Debraj Ray, and Oeindrila Dube, 249–305. Amsterdam: North-Holland, 2024.
Ethnic identity/ exclusion	▲ group	large-N	Mazur, Kevin. "State Networks and Intra-Ethnic Group Variation in the 2011 Syrian Uprising." <i>Comparative Political Studies</i> 52, no. 7 (2019): 995–1027.

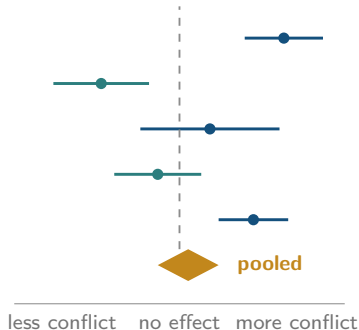


Reconciling contradictory findings

Climate stress & conflict: Same question, opposite signs.

In-person individual exercise

A conversation with an AI about meta-analysis, its pitfalls, and their translation into policy advice.



meta-analysis

Policy

AI Dialogue

Rebel income, organization, and governance

Resource rents

▲ group

large-N

Rebel
organization

● dyad

network-analysis

Governance

▲ group

large-N

Walsh, J. I., J. M. Conrad, B. E. Whitaker, and K. M. Hudak. "Funding Rebellion: The Rebel Contraband Dataset." *Journal of Peace Research* 55, no. 5 (2018): 699–707.

San-Akca, Belgin. *States in Disguise: Causes of State Support for Rebel Groups*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2016.

Braithwaite, Jessica Maves, and Kathleen Gallagher Cunningham. "When Organizations Rebel: Introducing the Foundations of Rebel Group Emergence (FORGE) Dataset." *International Studies Quarterly* 64, no. 1 (2020): 183–93.

Gade, E. K., M. Gabbay, M. M. Hafez, and Z. Kelly. "Networks of Cooperation: Rebel Alliances in Fragmented Civil Wars." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 63, no. 9 (2019): 2071–97.

Albert, K. E. "What Is Rebel Governance? Introducing a New Dataset on Rebel Institutions, 1945–2012." *Journal of Peace Research* 59, no. 4 (2022): 622–30.

Weeks 5–7 ■ GLOBAL ME

MEASURE

CAUSES

MONEY

VICTIMS

SIGNALS

PEACE

In-class group exercise

Fully replicable R / Python snippets on the **Rebel Governance** data: counts, coverage, and institution rates by region.

large-N

▲ group

GLOBAL

replicate

R

```
library(tidyverse)
rg <- read_csv("rebinst.csv")
rg |>
  group_by(region) |>
  summarise(n = n(), gov = mean(inst))
```

Python

```
import pandas as pd
rg = pd.read_csv("rebinst.csv")
(rg.groupby("region")
 .agg(n=("id", "size"), gov=("inst", "mean")))
```

Determinants of violence

Strategic considerations

🕒 local-time

large-N

Identity politics

▲ group

large-N

Gender

▲ group

large-N

Uribe, Andrés, and Noah Schouela. "Opportunistic Rebel Tactics in Civil War: Evidence from Colombia."

Belge, Ceren, and Semuhi Sinanoğlu. "Containing Ethnic Conflict: Repression, Cooptation, and Identity Politics." *Comparative Politics* 54, no. 4 (2022): 765–86.

Cohen, Dara Kay, and Ragnhild Nordås. "Sexual Violence in Armed Conflict: Introducing the SVAC Dataset, 1989–2009." *Journal of Peace Research* 51, no. 3 (2014): 418–28.

Ju, Changwook. "Determinants of Conflict-Related Sexual Violence: A Meta-Reanalysis Distinguishing Two Classes of Zero Observations." *International Studies Quarterly* 67, no. 3 (2023).

MEASURE

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Week 8 ■

GLOBAL

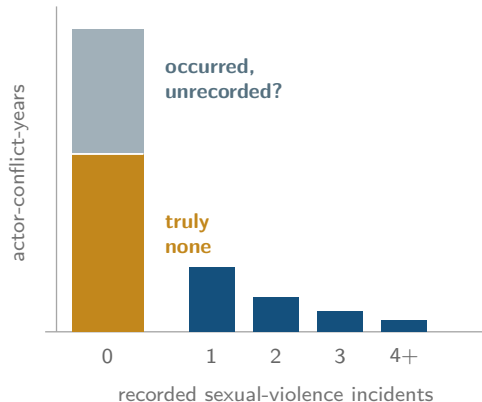
ME

LA

Is the sexual-violence dataset zero-inflated?

In-class individual reflection

What are the limits of **observable** datasets? when a recorded zero may mean “it never happened” or “no one recorded it”? And how does that reshape NGO advocacy on the ground?



large-N

▲ group

GLOBAL

reflections

Recruitment and social-media communication

Recruitment

▲ group

text-as-data

Bestvater, Samuel E., and Cyanne E. Loyle. "Messaging and Mobilization: Rebel Groups, Social Media Communication, and Audience Engagement." *Journal of Peace Research* 62, no. 2 (2025): 295–309.

Social-media communication

▲ group

text-as-data

Soules, M. J., and M. Berlin. "A Call to Arms: How Rebel Groups Choose Their Recruitment Appeals." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 70, no. 5 (2026): 807–35.

MEASURE

CAUSES

MONEY

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SIGNALS

PEACE

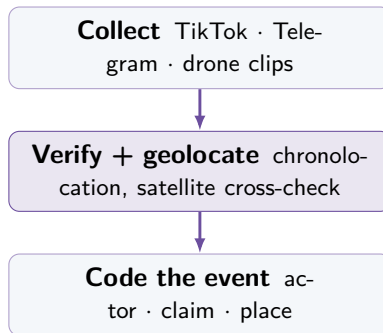
Week 9 ■ GLOBAL

Guest lecture/OSINT Workshop

In-class guest workshop

Geolocating a clip, verifying an account, turning scattered posts into one coded conflict event.

How do we use OSINT tools to track a civil war, and where do they mislead us?



text-as-data

* event

GLOBAL

workshop

Post-conflict: power-sharing and elections

Power-sharing

* event

large-N

Ottmann, Martin, and Johannes Vüllers. "The Power-Sharing Event Dataset (PSED): A New Dataset on the Promises and Practices of Power-Sharing in Post-Conflict Countries." *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 32, no. 3 (2015): 327–50.

Timing of elections

▲ group

large-N

Manning, C., I. O. Smith, and O. Tuncel. "Rebels with a Cause: Introducing the Post-Rebel Electoral Parties Dataset." *Journal of Peace Research* 61, no. 2 (2024): 294–303.

MEASURE

CAUSES

MONEY

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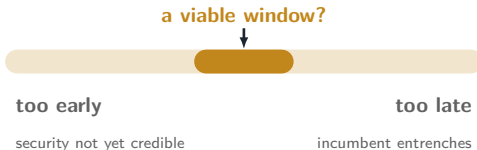
PEACE

Weeks 10–11 ■ GLOBAL

Timing of elections in Syria

In-class policy exercise

Read recent reporting on the **timing of elections in Syria**. Then advise the desk: **was the timing right?**



Early elections can lock in peace, or relight the war.

large-N

ME

Policy

The use of AI

Object of study

deepfakes, disinfo,
AI-assisted targeting

Instrument we use

LLM-assisted coding,
under a disclosure rule

Grading scheme

Midterm 25%

Final 30%

Participation & artifacts 45%

+ **bonus**