Approved research grants 2019
In alphabetical order
Research Projects

Laia Baicells Ventura
Georgetown University

Project title
Memories in Conflict

Project description

How can governments promote reconciliation after conflict? Though transitional justice policies are prevalent after periods of political violence, we lack a thorough understand of their impacts. While their implementation rests on the notion that they address the past in a way that promotes tolerance and peace, critics argue that their subjectivity can antagonize actors on either side of the conflict's master cleavage and be emotionally tolling for participants. Our project focuses on one transitional justice policy - museums - and asks: Do transitional justice museums promote reconciliation? Does the visit experience differ according to pre-treatment ideological views or experiences during violence? Do effects last? Answering these questions will allow us to advance our understanding of a policy adopted consistently in delicate post-violence contexts. While this project seeks to evaluate visiting the Sierra Leone Peace Museum, our broader research agenda carries out interventions in a range of post-violence settings to understand both generalizable and specific consequences of museums.

Vincenzo Bove
University of Warwick

Project title
Peacebuilding, Refugees and Return Migrants

Project description

Do peacekeeping operations (PKOs) mitigate the outflow of refugees and internally displaced people (IDPs) and encourage their return? The "European migrant crisis" has highlighted the necessity of effective and coordinated policies to manage refugee flows. Yet, there is only a limited number of tools available to the international community to address large population movements from war-torn regions. We posit that PKOs is among the key intervention tools that can help mitigate some of the negative externalities associated to conflict. The deployment of UN peacekeepers, by delivering a secure environment and restoring the basic conditions for local economic recovery, can reduce forced migration, and encourage the return of vulnerable refugees and IDPs. The project envisages the collection of new data on the locality and timing of military and non-military PKOs, on populations movements across and within countries, and the use of individual/household data on Sub-Saharan countries. Findings have the potential to inform practices, produce detailed policy prescriptions and contribute to the ongoing reappraisal of UN PKOs.

Susanna P. Campbell

School of International Service, American University

Project title
Rule-breakers or Innovators? How Global Bureaucrats aid Local Peace and Development.

Project description

This project aims to identify the conditions under which staff working for international peacebuilding and development organizations exhibit innovative behavior that contributes to more effective peacebuilding. Existing scholarship on international peacebuilding, peacekeeping, and development has established the importance of making international peace and development agencies responsive to the local contexts in which they intervene (Campbell 2018; Honig 2018; Howard 2008). This local accountability, however, is hindered by the fact that International Organizations (IOs), bilateral donors, and international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) are primarily accountable to their donors and headquarters outside of the country, not to local stakeholders (Cooley and Ron 2002; Martens et al. 2012). For these organizations to be accountable to local stakeholders, individual staff in their country offices often have to break or bend rules set up to make the organization accountable only to its headquarters. What leads to constructive rule-breaking or rule-bending in IOs, INGOs, and bilateral donors? Which bureaucrats are able to engage in this type of behavior and which ones are not? How might IOs, INGOs, and bilateral donors increase the space for bureaucratic innovation and reduce the need for rule-breaking or rule-bending? To answer these questions, this project will conduct a survey-embedded experiment with staff of IOs, INGOs, and bilateral donors engaged in international peacebuilding and conflict prevention.

Sarah Daly

Columbia University

Project title
Voting for Victors: Why Violent Actors Win Postwar Elections

Project description

This project asks why do citizens elect political actors that perpetrated violence against the civilian population? Despite their use of atrocities, political parties with deep roots in the belligerent organizations of the past win democratic elections in postwar countries around the globe. Original cross-national and sub-national data on countries across the world reveal that indiscriminately violent rebels and incumbents gained a share of the vote equal to those that executed only restrained violence. Belligerents' wartime atrocities cannot explain the varied success of belligerent parties after wars. Instead, the distribution of military power at the end of war can. I argue that military strength translates into a reputation for competence on security issues, which enables relatively strong belligerents to own the security valence issue, which tends to cross-cut cleavages and appeal to swing voters. Stronger belligerents also are able to claim credit for bringing peace, which gains them retrospective security votes and serves to offset and justify their use of atrocities. The project proposes to test the individual-level implications of this argument with experimental survey data in Colombia. Its results can be utilized to design policies that help construct peace, and promote societal reconciliation, which serve to improve the well-being of vulnerable individuals living in environments torn apart by civil war.

Allard Duursma
ETH Zürich

Project title
Keeping many Peaces: The Resolution of Local, Non-state Based
Armed Conflicts

Project description

Much of the conflict resolution literature focuses on peace-making between states or on efforts to end a civil war through a comprehensive peace agreement that brings peace to the entire country. The proposed project instead, focuses on peace-making efforts in conflicts that are 'non-state based' and 'local' and take place below the surface of the highly publicized peace processes that have the potential to end in a Nobel peace prize ceremony in Oslo.

The proposed project addresses one central question: what explains the resolution of local, non-state based conflicts? This type of conflict rarely take place in a vacuum. Instead, seemingly 'local' conflicts are often connected to higher-level political contests on the national or regional level. Hence, one cannot meaningfully study the resolution of local, non-state based conflict without also looking at the roles of national or regional sponsors of non-state based conflict parties.

The central theory used in this project to examine how national and transnational linkages influence the resolution of local, non-state based conflicts is the logic of the political marketplace developed by Alex de Waal. The political marketplace refers to the transactional politics whereby political allegiance and political services are exchanged for material reward.

In order to test two main hypotheses derived from the logic of the political marketplace, I am in the process of collecting data on peacemaking efforts in local, non-state based conflicts in Africa between 1989 and 2018. I would like to use the FBA research grant to hire two research assistants to collect these data over the course of a year. I already have one CSS research assistant that helps me with collecting data for this project. This means I can hit the ground running if this grant application is successful.

Lisa Hultman
Uppsala University

Project title
Expanding the Geocoded Peacekeeping (GEO-PKO) Dataset

Project description

There is a large research field devoted to peacekeeping practices and the effectiveness of peacekeeping operations in curbing violence and promoting sustainable peace. UN missions often deploy to large countries where the demand for peacekeepers is greater than the capacity to deploy troops and observers. Missions thus make crucial strategic decisions about where to deploy – and these decisions are in turn

important for understanding how the UN can influence the conflict. In this project, we collect data on the location of UN peacekeeping deployments, which will result in a global dataset on the strength of local UN peacekeeping presence, 1994-2019. We expand an existing dataset that only covers missions in Sub-Saharan Africa. We make use of UN mission deployment maps to code the strength and type of all peacekeeping deployments. These data can be used for visualizing peacekeeping trends and patterns. They can also be combined with other data of different spatial resolutions, thus providing the user with great flexibility. The end product, Geocoded Peacekeeping Operations (Geo-PKO) dataset 2.0, will allow scholars to explore the global variations in the very local dynamics of peacekeeping practices and effects.

Elisabeth King
New York University

Project title
Symbolic Politics for Peace

Project description

What do Zari (the first Afghan Muppet), Mandela's Springboks rugby jersey, and the lunch menu served at the 2018 inter-Korea summit have in common? In this project, I bring together varied symbols -- from food to fashion, from diplomatic gifts to schoolbooks, and from sports to museums -- focusing on contexts of peacebuilding. I ask: What symbols have been deployed for peace? What are the considerations, deliberations and choices of actors engaged in peace-oriented symbolic politics? And finally, what are the effects of peace-centered symbols on target audiences? To answer these questions, I use document analysis and visual methodologies, as well as interviews and original field studies. I make two contributions to scholarship and to practice. First, I advance our knowledge about if and how cultural issues we often consider 'soft' have important implications for 'hard' peacebuilding politics. Second, I show that by putting these varied issues— ones we do not typically consider "cases of" the same phenomenon—in conversation, we can advance theory as well as "effective conflict resolution, sustainable peacebuilding and statebuilding" (Government Offices of Sweden 2017).

Sara Lindberg Bromley
Uppsala University

Project title
Who targets the Peacekeepers? New Data and Procedures to Track Perpetrators of Violence Against Peacekeepers – A Pilot Study

Project description

Who targets the peace-keepers? UN peacekeepers are in policy-circles viewed as being at growing risk of direct and deliberate violence. Concerns about the safety and security of peacekeepers have risen, with the UN recently issuing an action plan detailing efforts to make its personnel safe. Notwithstanding

these developments, little is known about who attacks peacekeepers and why. Owing to data limitations, research to date has largely focused on factors related to the mission to explain attacks. Despite ample research on how different types of armed actors affect conflict dynamics, research on violence against peacekeepers has not afforded attention to its perpetrators or their underlying motivations. Building on the applicant's earlier data collection efforts on the topic, the purpose of this pilot project is to create procedures for and collect data on different types of armed actors that attack peacekeepers, focusing at this stage on two UN peacekeeping contexts: Sudan and Mali. Systematically tracking perpetrators will facilitate for scholars to better probe the causal logic of this specific form of conflict-related violence. To tackle challenges related to information-availability, we develop and test novel methodological procedures. This project thus both develops procedures and produces new data, each with potential to contribute to current peacekeeping debates.

Elizabeth Menninga
University of Iowa

Project title

Negotiation Dynamics: Evaluating the Cumulative Effects of Negotiations in Civil War Resolution

Project description

Civil war is a dynamic process of repeated violent and cooperative interactions between combatants. Existing research, however, focuses almost exclusively on violence, paying little attention to cooperation (e.g. ceasefires, negotiations) during conflict. To understand how cooperation affects conflict dynamics and settlement, this project addresses two key research questions: First, does the outcome of past cooperation influence future cooperation and conflict between combatants? Second, how does the history of cooperative attempts between combatants shape the eventual terms of settlement and prospects for sustainable peace? We propose to collect novel data on the content and outcome of negotiations during civil wars as a first step to assess the question of how cooperation affects the conduct and settlement of civil conflicts. By focusing on negotiations as an iterative learning process, this project (1) challenges the dominant approach in civil conflict research, which often ignores cooperation that occurs during conflict, and (2) uniquely accounts for how past negotiations influence future interactions as combatants learn, rather than treating negotiations as isolated events.

William Nomikos
Washington University in St. Louis

Project title

Capacity-Building as a Means for Sustainable Peace: An Investigation of the Relationship between Electricity Blackouts and Violent Protest in Liberia

Project description

This project will investigate the relationship between public service provision and political violence in post-conflict states. Public service shortfalls exacerbate instability and undercut peacebuilding in states emerging from civil conflict. In Basra, Iraq, protestors razed government buildings in response to persistent electricity blackouts (Arraf 2018). Similarly, protestors in Caldwell, Liberia, cited the lack of access to electricity as the motivation for recent clashes with Liberian National Police forces (Yates 2018).

However, existing scholarship lacks a systematic understanding of the link between public goods capacity and the micro-level behaviour of individual citizens of post-conflict states. Our project will fill in this gap in two ways. First, we will directly document the micro-level attitudes of individuals in a post-conflict state. Specifically, we will launch a data collection project on electricity blackouts and protests in Liberia. Using a mobile reporting platform, we will collaborate with a local research group to construct a dataset containing household-level information of the incidence of electricity blackouts and protests in the Greater Monrovia area. Second, our research design allows us to identify the direct effect of electricity outtages on protest behaviour. In addition, this data structure will allow the research team to suggest specific causal mechanisms through which public service shortfalls undercut peacebuilding processes in post-conflict states.

Caitlin Ryan
University of Groningen

Project title
Politics of formalizing Customary Land Rights in Liberia and Sierra Leone

Project description

Liberia and Sierra Leone are embarking on large-scale land reform processes. Land reform in these countries offers a unique opportunity to generate new knowledge about land rights, poverty, gender and marginalization, and inclusive governance in post-war contexts. Inclusive land reform is important for economic development, but there is no clear consensus about how best to implement it at a community level. There is a need for local experimentation to identify implementation strategies that include all members of society. There are several models being piloted at a community level for legal recognition of traditional land use – a process known as 'formalizing customary land rights.' The project looks at the political opportunities, and constraints of different models of formalizing customary land rights. We need to analyse how communities and local and national authorities (such as Paramount Chiefs, national and local politicians, district-level bureaucrats) perceive these different models, particularly how they perceive the parts of the models that address land rights for women. Project outcomes will provide a chance to share knowledge with local, national, aid donors, and investors, creating opportunities to support policy uptake. In addition to practical policy relevance, the research will contribute to the growing academic literature on formalization of community land tenure.

Andrea Schneiker
University of Siegen

Project title
Keeping the Minutes or Leading the Talk? Women's Experiences in Peace Negotiations

Project description

In its resolution 1325, "Women, Peace, and Security", the Security Council of the United Nations for the first time acknowledged that gender matters in peace and security. The resolution, that was adopted in 2000, requires to include women at all stages of a peace process, including peace negotiations. Research suggests that peace agreements are more inclusive and that peace lasts longer when women play lead roles in the negotiations instead of only keeping the minutes. However, we still lack knowledge on the roles that women play when they sit at the negotiation table. The project therefore analyses whether and under what conditions women have voice and influence in peace negotiations. It seeks to identify those factors that allow women to make themselves heard in peace negotiations and those factors that hinder women to do so as well as the strategies that women apply to overcome such barriers. The project therefore draws on interviews with women and men who have actively participated in peace negotiations in the context of armed conflicts around the world. Relevant knowledge is needed in order to design future peace negotiations in ways that allow for an equal participation of women and men and, based thereon, for sustainable peace.

Research Workshops

Elin Bjarnegård
Uppsala University

Project title
Gender and Violence Against Political Actors

Project description

We propose to organize a two-day workshop on the topic of *Gender and Violence against Political Actors* in order to prepare the first edited book on the topic. Based on a book synopsis and a chapter template, scholars and practitioners will be invited to participate and present chapter drafts at the workshop, which will take place in Uppsala in November 2019. The publication of an edited volume on the topic is timely, because research on gender and political violence is an emerging, but burgeoning, field. While women's participation in politics – as voters, supporters, lobbyists, candidates and elected officials – has increased all over the world, so has different forms of attacks against women as political actors. Thus, while women's greater participation can be seen as a sign of political empowerment, we cannot jump to the conclusion that discriminatory structures have been considerably weakened, even if the dynamics may have changed. The purpose of this workshop - and of the resulting edited volume - is to bring together knowledge from various disciplines as well as from practice in order to jointly advance our conceptual, methodological, and empirical understanding of gender, politics and violence.

Zoe Marks
Harvard University

Project title
Workshop on Ethical Engagement in Conflict Research

Project description

Our workshop on Ethical Engagement in Conflict Research will gather together leading scholars from the Global South and North to discuss, document, and disseminate thoughtful perspectives from expert researchers on how to navigate ethical dilemmas and tradeoffs when conducting research on violence and oppression. The past two decades have seen a major expansion in the breadth and depth of research on armed conflict, oppression, and inequality. Our research methods and tools have also grown more advanced, including exponential increases in access to fieldwork, available data and datasets, and advances like machine learning and big data. However, as our information and connectedness have been growing, spaces for critical reflection and building intentional professional communities of care have been receding. Without a strong ethical community in academia, research on conflict and violence can quickly become high-risk for researchers and affected communities, undermining the broader objectives of evidence-based change for the common good. By examining power dynamics and ethical trade-offs in conflict research, this workshop will make our engagement linking research with policy and practice more rigorous, effective, and intentional.