

EC3320

2012-2013

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## Lecture 1

Welcome!!

The running of the course is straightforward and explained in the course outline so we don't need to dwell on it very much.

We meet two hours a week except today when we meet just in this hour.

One hour is a lecture. Still, I hope that people will participate actively.

The other hour is a seminar. These will really and truly be discussions. **THIS MEANS THAT IT IS CRUCIAL FOR EVERYBODY TO DO THE READINGS ASSIGNED FOR SEMINARS BEFORE THE SEMINARS.** This is the only way we'll know what we're talking about when we discuss things in seminars.

Grades are based 100% on the final at the end of the course but there will be two data-based assignments and two in-class tests.

Every reading on the course outline is required except in a couple of cases for which I note otherwise.

I guess I should apologize for the fact that I assign quite a few articles for which I am one of the authors. But I think, in the end, people will like this because the work is readily understandable for students of your backgrounds, I know the material very well and, you will see, I will get very excited about it.

OK. Let's dive into the content.

## The Dirty War Index

Imagine a war involving several armed groups.

Almost inevitably there will be claims and counter claims about dirty behavior by each of the groups. This debate is about groups striving to mobilize public opinion in their favor and against their enemies.

For example:

“Afghan President Hamid Karzai on Wednesday denounced the use of child suicide bombers, saying that militants who recruit them to wage terror are ‘oppressors of Islam’ and ‘oppressors of children.’” AP Story, <http://news.yahoo.com/karzai-denounces-child-suicide-bombers-102442734.html>

“Although civilian deaths caused by foreign troops were reportedly down, most Afghans apparently don’t believe that. The Taliban challenged UN claims that they were mostly to blame.

"Where do they get these numbers from, what sources do they have? Foreign forces are responsible for civilian casualties in bombing and firing," Taliban spokesman Qari Yusuf Ahmadi told the BBC." Uruknet <http://www.uruknet.info/?p=75748>

The Dirty War Index is a tool to help sort through some of these claims by looking at certain types of simple ratios.

Here's the general definition:

$$DWI = \frac{\text{Number of "dirty," i.e., undesirable or prohibited cases}}{\text{Total number of cases}} \times 100$$

A few examples should make the whole idea pretty clear. See the next two tables.

The first table is on the Colombian conflict and the second is on the conflict in Northern Ireland. Interestingly, the two conflicts share a common three-sided structure. There are:

1. Government forces
2. Anti-government forces
3. Illegal paramilitary forces that are anti-anti-government forces. Combining the two "anti's" we could say that they are pro-government forces except that they are illegal. Their relationship with government forces are murky and controversial.

The tables make clear that these illegal paramilitaries are much dirtier than the other groups in both conflicts. Is this a case of governments, effectively, subcontracting out dirty work while appearing to keep their hands clean?

**Table 1.** Dirty War Index for Attacks by Actors in the Colombian Civil Conflict, 1988–2005: Civilian Versus Opponent Combatant Mortality

DWI	Illegal Paramilitaries	Guerrillas	Government Forces
No. civilians killed	6,944	2,498	539
No. combatant opponents killed	41	2,946	659
Civilian versus opponent combatant mortality	$6,944/6,985 = 0.99 \times 100 = 99$	$2,498/5,444 = 0.46 \times 100 = 46$	$539/1,198 = 0.45 \times 100 = 45$
DWI calculation: No. civilians killed/Total no. of civilians and opponent combatants killed, times 100			
DWI value (range 0 to 100)	99	46	45
DWI interpretation	Paramilitaries rank highest in killing the greatest absolute number of civilians. Their DWI value of 99 ranks "dirtiest," approaching the "dirtiest" theoretically possible (100). Civilians comprised 99% of victims killed and legitimate targets only 1%. The high number and high DWI suggest systematic civilian targeting.	Guerrillas rank 2nd in killing absolute numbers of civilians. Their DWI of 46 shows that civilians comprised 46% of victims killed in their attacks, a proportion that needs to be substantially lowered.	Government forces rank lowest in killing absolute numbers of civilians. However, as with the guerrillas, their DWI of 45 indicates that they need to lower substantially the proportion of civilians killed in their attacks.

This table includes deaths from one-sided, unopposed attacks by a combatant group, excluding deaths from two-sided clashes in which responsibility for death cannot be reliably assigned. Data source: CERAC's Colombia conflict database ([http://www.cerac.org/home\\_english.htm](http://www.cerac.org/home_english.htm)) [18].  
doi:10.1371/journal.pmed.0050243.t001

**Table 4.** The Northern Ireland Conflict, 1969–2001: Complementary DWI Analyses for Unacceptable Aggression and Endangerment by Actors

DWI	British Security Forces	Irish Republican Paramilitaries	Loyalist Paramilitaries
No. civilians + civilian political activists killed [51]	190	738	873
Total no. persons killed [51]	362	2,056	1,020
Civilian mortality DWI calculation	$190/362 = 0.52 \times 100 = 52$	$738/2,056 = 0.36 \times 100 = 36$	$873/1,020 = 0.86 \times 100 = 86$
Civilian mortality DWI value <sup>a</sup>	52	36	86
Combatants not wearing uniforms or distinguishing marks in attacks	Extremely low rate; British forces routinely wear uniforms in attacks.	Extremely high rate; Republican paramilitaries routinely dress as civilians in attacks.	Very high rate; Loyalist paramilitaries frequently dress as civilians during attacks.
Attacks without uniform DWI value	Approaches 0	Approaches 100	Approaches 100
Interpretation	British forces rank second dirtiest in terms of civilians constituting half their victims (DWI = 52), yet killed the lowest number of civilians ( $n = 190$ ). British forces have a low, i.e., "clean" DWI value for attacks without uniform.	Republican paramilitaries have a high "attacks without uniform DWI" approaching 100. They thereby probably increase British forces' civilian mortality DWI by decreasing distinction between civilians and Republican combatants. Republican paramilitaries killed a high number of civilians ( $n = 738$ ), but relative to their high number of total victims were least dirty in their civilian mortality ratio (DWI = 36). That their military opponents (British forces) wear uniforms increases their ability to distinguish civilians from combatants and to achieve a lower civilian mortality DWI.	Loyalist paramilitaries are dirtiest in terms of the civilian mortality DWI, with civilians constituting 86% of victims (DWI = 86). Loyalists also killed the highest absolute number of civilians ( $n = 873$ ).

<sup>a</sup>Chi-square = 675, df = 2,  $p < 0.001$ .  
doi:10.1371/journal.pmed.0050243.t004

A few last things to notice:

1. The tables just give two examples of the same type. The analysis is at the group level (i.e, government, anti-government and illegal paramilitaries) and the other key breakdown is into civilians and combatants. But there are other possibilities. Soon I'll show you examples where weapons are the unit of analysis. The DWI paper contains a wider range of examples.
2. The DWI approach sidesteps the issue of intention. In the particular applications above we don't ask whether or not the different sides intended to kill civilians. We focus on what they actually do rather than what they intended to do.
3. It is interesting to think through the logic of the three-sided with two of the groups, divided into a legal group and an illegal group, fighting against the third (illegal) group. It turns out that this sort of situation is common. In class we will discuss reasons why such situations might come about.