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To cite this article: David Siroky & Michael Hechter (2016) Ethnicity, class, and civil war: the role of hierarchy, segmentation, and cross-cutting cleavages, *Civil Wars*, 18:1, 91-107, DOI: [10.1080/13698249.2016.1145178](https://doi.org/10.1080/13698249.2016.1145178)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/13698249.2016.1145178>



Published online: 05 Apr 2016.



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## Ethnicity, class, and civil war: the role of hierarchy, segmentation, and cross-cutting cleavages

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### ABSTRACT

Why are some countries prone to ethno-nationalist conflict, whereas others are plagued by class conflict? This is a question that has seldom been raised and rarely been examined empirically. This paper presents a social-structural theory to account for the variable incidence of these two forms of political instability. These two types of conflict result from distinct principles of group solidarity – ethnicity and class – and since each individual is simultaneously a member of an ethnic group (or many such groups) and a particular class, these two principles vary in the degree to which they are mutually exclusive or cross-cutting. The degree of economic stratification between groups and economic segmentation within them shapes the relative salience of each principle of group solidarity in any society and is associated with a characteristic form of political mobilization. In places where between-group inequalities are high, and within-group inequalities low, ethnicity should be the dominant principle of group solidarity and serve as the primary basis of group conflict. By contrast, in countries where between-group inequalities are low, and within-group inequalities high, class is more likely to serve as the dominant principle of group solidarity, and conflicts along class lines are more likely. We test these conjectures with data in over 100 countries on cross-cutting cleavages, ethnic war, and class conflict. The results are supportive of the theory, and provide evidence that how groups are stratified and segmented in societies shapes the type of civil war.

Why are some countries prone to ethno-nationalist wars, whereas others are plagued by class conflicts? Surprisingly, this is a question that has seldom been raised at a theoretical level, and has not been examined empirically in a systematic manner. In this paper, we present a theory to account for the incidence of these two forms of civil war. The argument is that ethnic and class-based civil wars result from two distinct principles of group solidarity – ethnicity and class.<sup>1</sup> Since each individual is simultaneously a member of an

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 Supplemental data for this article can be accessed at <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13698249.2016.1145178>

ethnic group (or many such groups) and a particular social class, these two principles vary in the degree to which they are substitutes or complements. In the limit, the two principles overlap perfectly, forming an ethno-class (or *caste*).

The degree of between-group inequality – referred to as *hierarchy* – and within-group equality – or *segmentation* – determines the relative salience of each principle of group identity in any society at any given time. Most important for our understanding of group conflict, each principle is associated with a characteristic form of political mobilization: a society divided into hostile classes is ripe for revolution, but one divided into hostile ethnic groups is more likely to experience ethnic civil war.<sup>2</sup> When between-group inequalities are low, but within-group inequalities are high, the theory predicts that class will serve as the dominant principle of group identity, and class conflict will be more likely than ethnic conflict. Conversely, when between-group inequalities are high, but within-group inequalities low, ethnicity will be the dominant principle of group solidarity, and there will be no cross-cuttingness with class. Here, ethnicity will be the primary basis of conflict. When there are neither significant between-group nor within-group inequalities, the theory expects neither class nor ethnic conflict; and when there are both considerable between and within-group inequalities, the logic leads us to expect both class and ethnic conflict.

A growing body of literature regards inequality between groups as a crucial source of internal conflict.<sup>3</sup> We build on this research by relaxing the assumption that all ethnic groups are internally similar in terms of segmentation, which makes them about equally cohesive, and thus that they are equally primed for collective action. Although the simplifying unitary actor assumption is appropriate for the analysis of many problems, groups vary not only in their hierarchical status relative to other groups, but also in their degree of internal heterogeneity and economic segmentation in the labor market. A key advantage of opening up the black box of ethnic groups – specifically, examining within-group inequality – is that it permits us not only to explain the onset of group conflict, but also the *form* that conflict will assume – namely, whether it is primarily based on ethnicity or class.<sup>4</sup>

When economic segmentation is high, we conjecture that group members' material interests are more closely aligned and that the group therefore exhibits greater solidarity than when segmentation is low, all else equal. Segmentation makes group conflict more likely to assume an ethnic hue, particularly when between-group inequalities are pronounced. By the same token, when inequality within ethnic groups is greater than the inequality between these groups, we predict that ethnic solidarity will be diminished and class conflicts are more likely to prevail. We develop this theory and test its empirical implications using macro-level data covering almost 100 countries.

## What the literature provides

At least since the time of Aristotle, inequality between individuals and groups has been implicated in the onset of social conflict.<sup>5</sup> The mechanism that is most often thought to be responsible for this relationship is relative deprivation – the notion that individuals who feel deprived relative to a particular reference group become aggrieved.<sup>6</sup> These grievances, in turn, motivate people to engage in collective action to redress the causes of their deprivation.<sup>7</sup>

This account of social conflict came under attack in the 1960s. Mancur Olson asserted that individual grievances generally could not by themselves account for collective action.<sup>8</sup> His point was later reinforced by sociologists McCarthy and Zald.<sup>9</sup> Nearly three decades later, students of civil war in the developing world reiterated this criticism of grievance-based conflict.<sup>10</sup> They argued that grievances were universal, and hence essentially a constant, so variation in social conflict had to derive from other kinds of causes. Due to the influence of these articles, explanations of inter-group conflict in political science and sociology shifted away from social structural inequalities and toward other causes, such as opportunity costs and the control capacity of states. Collier and Hoeffler, for example, give short shrift to group grievances and focus instead on the opportunity and feasibility of extracting rents.<sup>11</sup> Fearon and Laitin have also downgraded the explanatory power of group level grievances, and cultural differences more generally.<sup>12</sup>

These claims have not gone unchallenged. A number of authors have brought new attention to the role of economic and political inequalities between groups as causes of armed conflict between groups.<sup>13</sup> We concur with this renewed emphasis on the social-structural determinants of grievances, and the focus on inter-ethnic inequalities. We add to this focus on between-group characteristics an emphasis on *intra*-ethnic inequalities, which influence both the occurrence and the *type* of collective action, but have often been overlooked.<sup>14</sup>

The literature on 'horizontal inequalities' is focused on means rather than variances, and thus implicitly assumes that ethnic groups possess roughly an equivalent degree of internal solidarity. Yet, we know that groups vary considerably in their solidarity, and a key source of this variation is the extent of within-group inequality – a low amount of it implies a segmented and cohesive group with many common interests. Groups with a high degree of segmentation (low within-group inequality) and a high level of hierarchy (between-group inequality) should have an even higher collective action capacity.<sup>15</sup> High segmentation (when combined with high hierarchy) implies few cross-cutting ties to other ethnic groups, whereas low segmentation permits for more cross-cutting ties between ethnic groups. There is thus a need to further theorize this important distinction and its consequences for the outbreak of conflict.

The present article makes two principal claims. In the first place, it offers a new theory about the relationship between within-group inequality and

social conflict – a topic that has been unduly ignored in much recent research, especially that branch of the literature focusing on civil war. Second, it argues that this literature can mislead, even when it focuses on structural inequalities, because it treats all types of civil war as similar. Since the causes of class and ethnic conflict are likely to be quite different, models of inter-group conflict that blur this distinction miss an important part of the dynamics of different forms of collective violence.

## The cultural division of labor

The cultural division of labor<sup>16</sup> represents an effort to conceptualize class and ethnicity as two principles along which social cleavages develop and groups coalesce. A cultural division of labor (hereafter, CDL) occurs whenever culturally marked groups are distributed in a hierarchical or segmental structure. Since the CDL varies according to its degree of segmentation and hierarchy, these two parameters determine the relative salience of class vs. ethnic identification.

Group identification has two separate roots. The first root is based on *hierarchy*. Individuals have a large number of attributes, physical as well as social, which potentially have implications for their likelihood of identifying with others who share the same attributes.<sup>17</sup> Consider two such attributes: hair color and skin color. There is no *logical* reason why one of these attributes is more likely to foster group identification than the other. Yet, when apprised of a group called the Red-headed League, Sherlock Holmes was quite confident that a hoax was afoot. Neither Holmes nor any of us would question the plausibility of a group confined to black-skinned individuals in our society (or his, for that matter), however. Although both attributes can unambiguously serve to distinguish individuals from one another, only one of them – skin color – has a potential for developing group identification. This is because in this day and age skin color – but not hair color – has implications for an individual's prospects in labor, residential and marriage markets in these two societies. To the degree that individuals perceive that their skin color limits their life chances quite independent of their abilities, this identity marker will loom large in their consciousness, and unless they can alter the color of their skin, they will tend to interact and identify with others in the same boat. This favors group identification on the basis of the specific discriminating attribute.

Yet, not all culturally marked groups that are hierarchically arranged display the same degree of internal cohesion, which is critical for producing and recognizing common interests, and ultimately collective action.<sup>18</sup> This is why incorporating the second root of group solidarity – *segmentation* – is crucial. Groups are more segmented when they are comprised of individuals sharing income levels, occupational niches, residential neighborhood, and socioeconomic status. The members of segmented groups interact more frequently (at work, home, and leisure sites) and share more common interests with one another than they do

with outsiders. As a consequence of greater interaction and common interests, segmented groups create stronger social networks and have a higher collective action capacity than groups that are internally more economically divided.<sup>19</sup>

There is a wealth of evidence that the greater the contact between individuals, the less likely they are to discriminate against one another.<sup>20</sup> This finding, based on inter-group contact theory, only holds among individuals *who share an equal status*, however.<sup>21</sup> This implies that people who share occupational niches, residential neighborhoods, and age cohorts, as well as similar levels of income, are on this basis likely to form a common social identity. Once a social identity evolves, this implies the existence of group boundaries that distinguish in-group members from all others.<sup>22</sup> All else equal, the members of such segmented (relatively homogeneous) groups are more likely to engage in collective action than individuals in socially heterogeneous contexts whose social identities, if they exist at all, are necessarily much weaker. Although this theory indicates that group solidarity has two separate roots – hierarchy and segmentation – the literature has focused almost exclusively on how hierarchy generates grievances and the perception of relative deprivation.<sup>23</sup>

Much less attention has focused on within-group stratification and inter-group conflict, but recently some writers<sup>24</sup> have contended that low segmentation (high within-group inequality) promotes *inter*-group conflict. They maintain that ethnic groups exhibiting high levels of intra-group inequality are more likely to engage in collective action (e.g. *inter*-group conflict) than their more egalitarian counterparts. The key to this fundamentally economic argument hinges on the free-rider problem. Since the demand for a collective good is insufficient to assure its production among self-regarding actors, the potential recruits to any collective action must be compensated for their participation. Highly unequal groups are composed of a resource-rich elite, and a much poorer mass of members. Such groups have an advantage over those with low within-group inequality because the elite has greater means to compensate its co-ethnics for engaging in collective action, and the much poorer masses in such groups have lower opportunity costs for so doing. Hence, given the demand for collective action (which arises from hierarchy, or between-group inequality), this mix of wealthy funders and poor potential fighters is most likely to foster mobilization. Although these writers have no direct evidence of the existence of side payments that compensate fighters, such payments have been documented in several African civil wars.

For reasons discussed above, the CDL theory reaches the opposite conclusion about the relationship between segmentation and inter-group conflict. On our more sociological view, greater intra-group inequality reduces the prospects of group identification and solidarity, both of which are important precursors of collective action.<sup>25</sup> Needless to say, it is true that *some* amount of within-group inequality is necessary to spur collective action, even in relatively homogeneous groups, for the reasons that Esteban and Roy and other scholars have suggested.

We disagree, however, on the proportion of wealthy individuals that is required to invest in mobilization activities. The structural conditions that we expect to generate inter-group conflict – high segmentation (low within-group inequality) and hierarchy (high inter-group inequality) – serve to provide both a sufficient number of cheap fighters and high group solidarity. Contrary to Esteban and Roy's theory, such groups will also contain a small proportion of funders. Since only a few funders are needed to invest in mobilization activities, this would imply an overall low level of within-group inequality, particularly in larger social groups.<sup>26</sup> More within-group inequality than that is therefore not required to create a synergy between funders and fighters. Indeed, groups having many funders are likely to have a large cadre of individuals who share common interests with elites in other ethnic groups, as will the poor with the poor of other groups, which is precisely the condition most likely to generate class conflict, but not ethnic conflict.

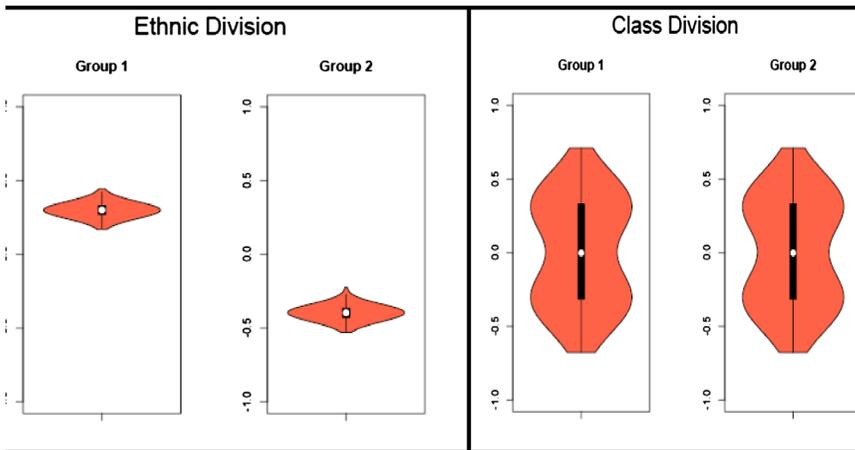
Not only does the CDL theory reach different conclusions about within-group inequality and conflict than its economic alternative, but it also provides an explanation of the *kind* of collective action that is most likely to occur. Most scholars have examined the political and social world through the prism of either class or ethnicity – mostly ethnicity in recent years.<sup>27</sup> By contrast, the CDL offers a more parsimonious concept that incorporates both concepts as foundations of social stratification and resultant identity formation.<sup>28</sup> Class and ethnicity may vary from fully disjoint (when each ethnic group is comprised of a variety of classes, and each class is comprised of sundry ethnic groups) to completely overlapping (when the two concepts are coterminous, e.g. an ethno-class). Complex societies often display some of both patterns: certain groups more plausibly constitute a class unto themselves (*Klasse an sich*), while other ethnic groups in the same society are more widely distributed across different classes.

Since the CDL varies according to the degrees of hierarchy and segmentation in a given society, it shapes the relative salience of class vs. ethnic identification. The core predictions in terms of types of conflict (ethnic vs. class) are depicted in Table 1.

Figure 1 depicts a society with a pronounced CDL in the left panel: it is divided into two ethnic groups exhibiting both hierarchy and segmentation. That is, all members of group A are economically very similar to one another, but very different from all members of group B, and vice versa. The right panel characterizes a society, also with two ethnic groups, but these ethnic groups are internally divided between rich and poor, and there are a lot of cross-cutting social and economic ties *between* ethnic groups. This society does not exhibit much hierarchy or segmentation. On the right, class and ethnicity are fully disjoint (when each ethnic group is comprised of a variety of classes, and each class is comprised of many distinct ethnic groups). On the left, the ethnic groups are completely overlapping: each group is internally quite similar – economically segmented – and economically distinct from other ethnic groups – hierarchically

**Table 1.** Theoretical expectations regarding the role of hierarchy and segmentation on group conflict.

	Lack of hierarchy (between groups)	Hierarchy (between groups)
Segmentation (within groups)	No conflict	<i>Ethnic conflict</i>
Lack of segmentation (within groups)	<i>Class conflict</i>	Both forms of conflict

**Figure 1.** An ethnically divided society (on the left) and a class-based society (on the right). The y-axis represents the group's income relative to the country mean (0). Groups with a mean below zero are poorer on average and above zero are richer groups; the x-axis is a factor for each group.

stratified).<sup>29</sup> The society on the left panel is primed for ethnic conflict; whereas the society on the right panel is at risk of class conflict.

We argue that the study of civil war could benefit by accounting for both of these dimensions. Whereas hierarchically organized ethnic groups possess grievances, not all such groups are equally capable of redressing those grievances through collective action. For an ethnic group to engage in collective action, its members must perceive themselves as having common interests and be able to mobilize. The more segmented a group is, the more likely it is to satisfy these requirements, yet segmentation in the absence of hierarchy does not provide the grievances that are *de rigueur* for ethnic conflict. Hierarchy and segmentation also have implications for the analysis of class conflict, since they determine whether ethnic conflict is more likely than class conflict, or vice versa.

This causal logic links the CDL to differential group solidarity and collective action capacity. Societies having a minimal hierarchy and segmentation are predicted to have more class than ethnic conflict due to extensive cross-cutting cleavages:<sup>30</sup> that is, due to bridge ties between different ethnic groups.<sup>31</sup>

Societies with hierarchically arranged groups that are internally segmented (homogeneous) have fewer cross-cutting cleavages between ethnic groups, and should therefore experience civil wars mainly along ethnic lines. To test this theory, we need to operationalize hierarchy and segmentation, and to explain how class and ethnic conflict are coded.

## Data and methods

An optimal measure of the CDL would be based on individual-level data on income/wealth, occupation, and political access (indicators of hierarchy), as well as occupational segregation, residential segregation, and endogamy (indicators of segmentation) aggregated for each ethnic group in the society. Since these data are not available for most of the countries in the world, this has been an enormous obstacle to empirical research on inter-group conflict. Hence, various proxies for these concepts – some of them extremely complex and indirect – have been used instead in the literature.

The original paper on the CDL<sup>32</sup> measured hierarchy using the variance of mean group occupational prestige (a proxy for group income) that was calculated from individual-level data from the US Census in 1970. It did not, however, include measures of political exclusion, which were incorporated in the subsequent literature on ‘horizontal inequalities’. Segmentation was measured by the mean occupational concentration (a proxy for work and workplace segregation) of each ethnic group that was calculated from data for 441 different occupations. That study also measured ethnic group endogamy, which could also be considered as a proxy for the degree of cross-cuttingness among groups—an *outcome* of hierarchy and segmentation.

Murshed and Gates (2005) measured hierarchy by mean regional scores on a human development index (an equal weighted sum of income per capita, educational attainment, and longevity), where the region is held to roughly correspond to particular ethnic groups.<sup>33</sup> There are no measures of segmentation. Østby (2008) measured hierarchy on the basis of Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) data to calculate a household asset index and years of education, proxies for mean group levels of economic status. Her study also has no measures of segmentation. Kuhn and Weidmann (2015) used geo-coded economic data on politically excluded ethnic settlements to measure hierarchy. Nightlight emissions data on different localities within the same ethnic group were used to measure segmentation. However, this indicator was only weakly correlated with Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) survey data on within-group inequality.

Rather than providing independent measures of hierarchy and segmentation, Selway (2011) introduced a new measure of cross-cuttingness between different social dimensions (e.g. region, religion, ethnicity, class, etc.). This seminal work was followed by Gubler and Selway (2012), which used a measure of cross-cuttingness that is the *outcome* of both hierarchy and segmentation.

A group with high cross-cuttingness has low segmentation (e.g. it is relatively heterogeneous) and low hierarchy (it is roughly equal in status to its paired group; if it were predominantly super- or subordinate, there would be fewer social ties between members of the groups). They find that ethnic-class cross-cuttingness reduces the likelihood of ethnic civil war by a factor of 12, but did not assess how it increased class conflict, which this article does. To assess the validity of our results, we utilize data on cross-cutting cleavages between class and ethnicity in about 100 countries. We expect countries exhibiting few cross-cutting cleavages<sup>34</sup> are more likely to be characterized by ethnic conflict, and countries with many cross-cutting cleavages to be beset by civil wars along class lines.

To measure our dependent variable – the occurrence of ethnic or class war – we rely on two primary sources: the Political Instability Task Force (PITF) data on revolutionary (that is, class) and ethnic conflict, and the Uppsala/Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO) Armed Conflict Data-set on ‘government vs. territorial incompatibility’.<sup>35</sup> We began with the PITF data for ethnic wars and for revolutionary wars,<sup>36</sup> and compared these with information in the UCDP/PRIO data on the ‘source of incompatibility’ (territory vs. government). We then explored any cases that were not clearly ethnic or class conflicts using secondary sources. In this way, we were able to safely identify and to cross-validate the occurrence of class-based conflicts and ethnic conflicts for each country in our data-set. In terms of frequency, approximately 28% of the countries in the data experience ethnic conflict, and 27% experience class conflict.

To capture the degree to which different dimensions of solidarity overlap (and therefore mutually reinforce one another) or rather cross-cut one another, we use Selway’s cross-cuttingness data,<sup>37</sup> and specifically his measure of ‘Language-Income Crosscuttingness (LIC).’<sup>38</sup> The concept and measurement of cross-cuttingness is akin to the concept of statistical independence.<sup>39</sup> There is perfect independence and complete cross-cuttingness when knowing the group to which an individual belongs on one dimension tells us nothing about what group they belong to on another dimension.<sup>40</sup> Following Selway (2011) and Gubler and Selway (2012), we use the term cross-cuttingness to reflect a scaled variable that varies from 0–1 and measures ‘the degree group  $l$  on cleavage  $x$  is identically distributed across groups on cleavage  $y$  with all other groups on cleavage  $x'$ . This tells us the degree to which knowing the group to which an individual belongs on  $x$  tells us anything about the group to which that person belongs on  $y$ . If it is not informative, there is perfect cross-cuttingness. But if ethnic groups in a given society each belong to their own unique religion or region, then there is no cross-cuttingness of social cleavages along ethno-religious or ethno-regional lines.

The higher the LIC marker, the less congruent ethnicity/language and income are in a given country. In other words, when there is no cross-cuttingness between language and income, all the people who speak language A fall into the bottom of the income scale, and all the people who speak language B fall into

the top of the income scale. This society is primed for ethnic conflict. Conversely, when there is a high degree of cross-cuttingness between language and income, civil wars are more likely to emerge along class rather than ethnic lines.

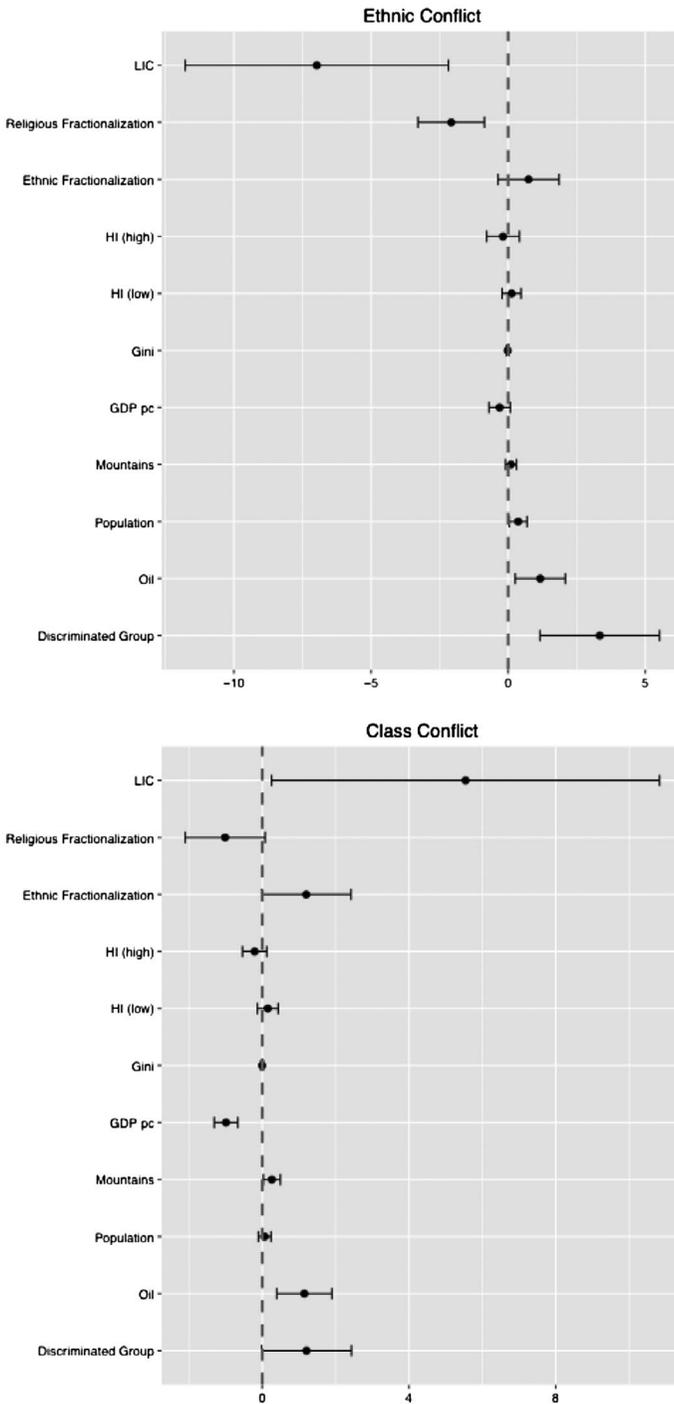
Building on past research on this subject, we include three variables traditionally used to capture state strength: the log of per capita income lagged one year (GDP pc); a dummy variable (Oil) indicating whether state revenues are derived primarily from oil exports; and the log of a country's population size (Population). We also include the log of the proportion of the country that is mountainous (Mountains) to capture the degree to which geographic conditions are favorable to insurgency, and control for ethnic and religious fractionalization, using data provided in Selway (2012), originally from Fearon and Laitin (2003).<sup>41</sup> To account for horizontal inequalities, we include two measures from Buhaug, Cederman, and Gleditsch (2014), which have been designed for country-level regression modeling. The first is negative horizontal inequality (HI low), which equals the country-level GDP per capita/mean per capita income for poorest group; and the second is positive horizontal inequality, which equals the mean per capita income for the richest group/country-level GDP per capita. To capture vertical inequality, we include the Gini index of income dispersion from the same source. Following the model specifications in Buhaug, Cederman, and Gleditsch (2014), we also include a measure, called Discriminated Group, which measures the demographic size of the largest discriminated ethnic group (LDG) relative to the joint size of the discriminated group and the group(s) in power.

To examine the differential causes of class-based and ethnic conflicts, we estimated two sets of Poisson regression models, one for each form of violent conflict, based on Cameron and Trivedi's (2013) proposed Poisson model with robust standard errors to account for mild violations of the distributional assumption that the mean and variance are equal.<sup>42</sup>

## Results and discussion

Figure 2 shows the key results. On average, countries with a high degree of cross-cuttingness between ethnicity and class are less likely to experience ethnic conflict, consistent with Gubler and Selway (2012). In the bottom panel, the results indicate that where there are many cross-cutting cleavages between ethnic groups, class conflict is more likely.

The empirical results indicate that the degree of cross-cuttingness between ethnicity and class determines their relative salience as alternative principles of group solidarity in any society, and that each principle is associated with a characteristic form of political conflict. Countries with segmented groups that are hierarchically arranged (few cross-cutting ties) are more likely to experience ethnic conflict and less likely to experience class conflict. Countries characterized by more cross-cutting cleavages between ethnicity and class are less prone to ethnic conflict, and more likely to have class conflicts.



**Figure 2.** Coefficient Plot of Poisson Regression Results from the analysis of cross-cutting data.

Note: LIC is the indicator of cross-cuttingness ties between ethnicity and economic income. Robust standard errors and 90% confidence intervals are displayed for  $n = 85$ .

Whereas the literature has shown that horizontal inequalities make groups more likely to engage in ethnic conflict,<sup>43</sup> this analysis shows that the degree to which these groups have cross-cutting ties (are internally heterogeneous) is crucial to understand the differential solidarity of groups, which has clear behavioral implications for the *type* of collective action that is more likely to occur. This is important for *both* types of conflict. More cross-cuttingness increases the likelihood of class conflict and negatively influences the likelihood of ethnic conflict.<sup>44</sup>

## Conclusion

Why are some countries prone to ethno-nationalist conflict, while others are plagued by class conflict? Recent research has shown that horizontal inequalities encourage civil conflicts. Our analysis expands this line of research. In addition to the horizontal differences between groups, we show that differences within groups are crucial because they determine the extent to which there are cross-cutting ties. Where groups are hierarchically arranged and internally segmented (homogenous), there are few ties across groups; whereas when they are hierarchically ordered but internally heterogeneous, individuals from different ethnic groups possess cross-cutting ties that make ethnic conflict less likely. Further, we show that when groups are not hierarchically arranged, but are internally heterogeneous in terms of class, then ties cut across ethnic groups and class serves as a stronger basis for mobilization. The paper thus theorizes the conditions under which ethnicity or class will serve as the dominant principle of group solidarity and the basis for mobilization. Variation within groups shapes the form of political mobilization and collective action, just as variation between groups. A society divided into two hostile classes is ripe for class conflict, but a society divided into two hostile ethnic groups is more likely to be threatened by ethnic wars. The analysis provides strong support for the key predictions of the model. These findings speak to a growing body of literature concerned with the causes of political instability and civil wars.

We concur with studies that have focused on how between-group inequality (i.e. horizontal inequalities) influences the likelihood of conflict between ethnic groups. Our analysis findings also highlight the need for further theoretical refinement. Between-group inequality generates grievances, but group solidarity requires similar interests that are implied when there is also ethnic segmentation (low within-group inequality). In focusing on both hierarchy and segmentation, this article presents a framework for the analysis of both ethnic and class-based conflict as interrelated political phenomena. Empirically, the analysis shows that some of the causes of these two forms of group conflict are inversely related, and thus it makes sense to study them jointly. Whether these structural conditions generate behaviors and actions with potentially dire consequences at any given time will depend of course on the constraints

and opportunities that groups and their members face at a particular time and location.

When inter-group hierarchies are less well developed or are still in formation, contentious collective action is more difficult and inter-group cooperation more likely to ensue than is conflict. Structural parallels exist in dozens of developing countries, and the aim here has been to show that they are systematically associated with different types of political violence, but not to predict the timing of the conflict's onset.

Ethnicity is one group identity to which individuals can adhere, and not necessarily the most prominent one in any given society or in any specific context. Solidarity within groups is variable – treating it as a constant eliminates it by design as an explanation for the salience of cultural markers and its effect on collective action. These problems have left us with some gaps in our understanding of identity, mobilization, and civil war. This analysis aimed to redress some of these omissions and to highlight some ways forward.

## Notes

1. Religion and region (as well as urban/rural cleavages) can also be important bases of group solidarity, to the extent that they do not overlap with ethnicity, but we ignore them here, and focus exclusively on ethnicity and class as two important (though not only) status groups (Weber's *Stände*). See Max Weber, 'The Distribution of Power within the Community: Classes, *Stände*, Parties', Trans. by Dagmar Waters et al. *Journal of Classical Sociology* 10 (1921 [2010]) pp.153–72. Some scholars prefer to use the original term *Stand* to reflect its origins in medieval social order and distinctions based on guilds, professions and ethnic identities, see Tony Waters and Dagmar, 'The New Zeppelin Translation of Weber's Class, Status, and Party', *Journal of Classical Sociology* 10 (2010) pp.153–58.
2. Ethnic conflict could take a secessionist form when groups are spatially segregated or when a territorially concentrated group is confronting the state.
3. Michael Hechter, 'Group Formation and the Cultural Division of Labor', *American Journal of Sociology*, 84/2 (1978) pp.293–317; Michael Hechter, *Principles of Group Solidarity* (University of California Press 1987); Gudrun Østby, 'Polarization, Horizontal Inequalities and Violent Civil Conflict', *Journal of Peace Research* 45/2 (2008) pp.143–62; Frances Stewart, ed. *Horizontal Inequalities and Conflict: Understanding Group Violence in Multiethnic Societies* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan 2009); Lars-Erik Cederman, Kristian S. Gleditsch and Havard Buhaug, *Inequality, Grievances, and Civil War* (Cambridge University Press 2013); Havard Buhaug, Lars-Erik Cederman and Kristian S. Gleditsch, 'Square Pegs in Round Holes: Inequalities, Grievances, and Civil War', *International Studies Quarterly*, 58/2 (2014) pp.418–31. Another body of research sees the source of internal conflict as originating in the state's military and economic weakness, which provides opportunities for rebellion. Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan: Or the Matter, Forme, and Power of a Common-wealth Ecclesiasticall and Civill*, ed. by Ian Shapiro (Yale University Press (2010) [1651]); James Fearon and David Laitin, 'Ethnicity, Insurgency and Civil War', *American Political Science Review*, 1 (2003) pp.75–90; Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler, 'Greed and Grievance in Civil War', *Oxford Economic Papers* 56/4 (2004) pp.563–95.

4. Sambanis found that the causes of ethnic and non-ethnic civil wars differ. Nicholas Sambanis, 'Do Ethnic and Nonethnic Civil Wars Have the Same Causes?', *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 45/3 (2001) pp.259–82.
5. For a reading of Rousseau's analysis of the problem of inequality in fostering social conflict, see David S. Siroky and Hans-Joerg Sigwart, 'Principle and Prudence: Rousseau on Private Property and Inequality', *Polity*, 46/3 (2014) pp.381–406.
6. 'The universal and chief cause of ... revolutionary feeling [is] the desire for equality; when men think that they are equal to others who have more than themselves, or, again the desire of inequality and superiority, when conceiving themselves to be superior they think that they have not more but the same or less than their interests, pretensions which may or may not be just. Inferiors revolt in order that they may be equal, and equals that they may be superior. Such is the state of mind which creates revolutions.' See Aristotle, *Poetics* (Penguin Classics 1996) pp.122. Similar reasoning may be found in much more recent works by the likes of Marx, Merton, Hyman, Pettigrew, Stouffer and Gurr. For a recent application of this theory, focusing on the role of lost autonomy, in fostering conflict, see David S. Siroky and John Cuffe, 'Lost Autonomy, Nationalism and Separatism', *Comparative Political Studies*, 48/1 (2015) pp.3–34.
7. Davies 1962; Gurr 1970; Horowitz 1985.
8. Mancur Olson, *The Logic of Collective Action* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press 1965).
9. John D. McCarthy and Mayer N. Zald, 'Resource Mobilization and Social Movements: A Partial Theory', *The American Journal of Sociology*, 82/6 (1977) pp.1212–41.
10. Collier and Hoeffler (2004); Fearon and Laitin (2003).
11. Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler, 'Testing the Neocon Agenda: Democracy in Resource-rich Societies', *European Economic Review* 53/3 (2009) pp.293–308.
12. Fearon and Laitin (2003).
13. Halvard Buhaug, Lars-Erik Cederman and Kristian Skrede Gleditsch, 'Square Pegs in Round Holes: Inequalities, Grievances, and Civil War', *International Studies Quarterly*, 58/2 (2014) pp.418–31; Lars-Erik Cederman, Andreas Wimmer and Brian Min, 'Why do Ethnic Groups Rebel? New Data and Analysis', *World Politics* 62/1 (2010) pp.87–119; Joan Esteban, Laura Mayoral and Debraj Ray, 'Ethnicity and Conflict: An Empirical Study', *American Economic Review* 102/4 (2012) pp.1310–42; Gudrun Østby, Ragnhild Nordås and Jan. Ketil Rød 'Regional Inequalities and Civil Conflict in Sub-Saharan Africa' *International Studies Quarterly* 53/2 (2009) pp.301–24; Frances Stewart, ed. *Horizontal Inequalities and Conflict: Understanding Group Violence in Multiethnic Societies* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan 2009); and Michael Hechter, Steven Pfaff and Patrick Underwood, 'Grievances and the Genesis of Rebellion: Mutiny in the Royal Navy, 1740 to 1820', *American Sociological Review* 81/1 (2016) pp.165–89. Others have focused on the effects of inter-group differences on the provision of public goods, most notably William Easterly and Ross Levine, 'Africa's Growth Tragedy: Policies and Ethnic Divisions', *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 112/4 (1997) pp.1203–50; Rafaela M. Dancygier, *Immigration and Conflict in Europe*, (Cambridge University Press 2010); and in a study by Kate Baldwin and John D. Huber, 'Economic vs. Cultural Differences: Forms of Ethnic Diversity and Public Goods Provision', *American Political Science Review* 104/4 (2010) pp.644–662.
14. Østby, Nordås and Rød (2009); Esteban, Mayoral and Ray (2012); and Patrick M. Kuhn and Nils B. Weidmann, 'Unequal We Fight: Between- and Within-group Inequality and Ethnic Civil War', *Political Science Research and Methods* 3/03 (2015) pp.543–68, are notable exceptions in this respect.

15. Horowitz (1985); Hechter (1987).
16. Hechter (1978).
17. Kanchan Chandra, *Constructivist Theories of Ethnic Politics* (Oxford University Press 2012).
18. For an analysis of separatism that focuses on internal economic heterogeneity, specifically how the middle class holds different economic interests than the poor and rich that lead to different preferences for separatism, see David S. Siroky, Valeriy Dzutsev, and Michael Hechter, 'The Differential Demand for Indirect Rule: Evidence from the North Caucasus', *Post-Soviet Affairs* 29/3 (2013) pp.268–86.
19. Hechter (1978) p. 296; Examples of the segmental CDL in the US were recently described in a NYT article (2011): '... the Chinese [run] the bus business, Filipinos and West Indians dominate nursing. South Koreans have a lock on fruit stands, delis and nail salons, while Afghans have established themselves as the city's fried-chicken and coffee-cart kings. In the past, ethnic niches have been so distinctive that speaking of a Jewish social worker or an Irish cop seemed a redundancy. In the late 1970s, a Greek luncheonette that seemed to serve mostly 'cheezborger, cheezborger' became a running skit on 'Saturday Night Live'. Joseph Berger, 'In a Deadly Bus Crash, an American Tale', *New York Times* 19 Mar. 2011.
20. Gordon Allport, *The Nature of Prejudice* (Cambridge, MA: Perseus Books 1954; Pettigrew and Tropp 2006).
21. George C. Homans, *The Human Group* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company 1950).
22. Henri Tajfel, *Social Identity and Intergroup Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1982).
23. We recognize that group-level political inequalities also affect solidarity through their influence on individual life chances Hechter (1978), (2000); Wimmer (2002); Stewart (2009); Cederman, Wimmer and Min (2010); Cederman, Weidmann and Gleditsch (2011); Weber (2010), but the focus of this study is on economic inequalities between and within groups.
24. Esteban and Ray (2008); Kuhn and Weidmann (2015).
25. By themselves, these factors are insufficient to determine collective action, however, due to the free-rider problem. Like Esteban and Roy and their followers, we do not have any direct and systematic evidence of the individual incentives that may be required to overcome free riding in such conflicts. Both of these theories therefore are social structural in nature, and do not directly address the collective action problem.
26. Here we are drawing on scholars, such as DuBois, Weber and Olson. DuBois (1903) wrote about the 'talented tenth'. W. E. B. DuBois, *The Negro Problem* (New York: James Pott and Company, 1903). Weber (1925) noted that 'Politics is always made by a small number of persons' (1968 translation, vol. 3, p.1421). Max Weber, *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology* (University of California Press, 1925 [1978]). Olson (1965, pp.48–50) contended that 'privileged groups' – those composed of a minority of individuals so interested in attaining a given collective good that they were willing to subsidize the vast majority of free riders – were the ones most likely to engage in collective action. Mancur Olson, *The Logic of Collective Action* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press 1965).
27. See Siroky and Aprasidze (2011) for an analysis of two forms of social conflict (ethnic and revolutionary) in post-Soviet Georgia. David S. Siroky and Davit Aprasidze, 'Guns, Roses and Democratization: Huntington's Secret Admirer in the Caucasus', *Democratization* 18/6 (2011) pp.1227–45.

28. Henry Hale, *The Foundations of Ethnic Politics: Separatism of States and Nations in Eurasia and the World* (Cambridge University Press 2008); Dina Okamoto, 'Toward a Theory of Panethnicity: Explaining Asian American Collective Action', *American Sociological Review* 68 (2003) pp.811–42.
29. Complex societies often display some of both patterns: certain ethnic groups constitute a class unto themselves (*Klasse an sich*), while the members of others in the same society are distributed among different classes.
30. Peter Michael Blau and Joseph E. Schwartz, *Crosscutting Social Circle: Testing a Macrostructural Theory of Intergroup Relations* (Orlando: Academic Press 1984); Ashutosh Varshney, *Ethnic Conflict and Civic Life: Hindus and Muslims in India* (Yale University Press 2003).
31. Mark Granovetter. 'The Strength of Weak Ties', *American Journal of Sociology* 78/6(1973) pp.1360–80.
32. Hechter (1978).
33. S. Mansoob Murshed and Scott Gates, 'Spatial–Horizontal Inequality and the Maoist Insurgency in Nepal', *Review of Development Economics* 9/1 (2005) pp.121–34.
34. Joel Selway 'Cross-cuttingness, Cleavage Structures and Civil War Onset', *British Journal of Political Science* 41/1 (2011) pp.111–38; Joshua R. Gubler and Joel Selway, 'Horizontal Inequality, Crosscutting Cleavages, and Civil War', *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 56/2 (2012) pp.206–32.
35. Nils Petter Gleditsch, et al., 'Armed Conflict 1946–2001: A New Dataset', *Journal of Peace Research* 39/5 (2002) pp.615–37 (data available at <http://www.prio.no/cscw/armedconflict>).
36. According to the PITF codebook, ethnic wars are 'episodes of violent conflict between governments and national, ethnic, religious, or other communal minorities (ethnic challengers) in which the challengers seek major changes in their status. Most ethnic wars since 1955 have been guerrilla or civil wars in which the challengers have sought independence or regional autonomy. A few, like the events in South Africa's black townships in 1976–77, involve large-scale demonstrations and riots aimed at sweeping political reform that were violently suppressed by police and military. Rioting and warfare between rival communal groups is not coded as ethnic warfare unless it involves conflict over political power or government policy.' Revolutionary wars are 'episodes of violent conflict between governments and politically organized groups (political challengers) that seek to overthrow the central government, to replace its leaders, or to seize power in one region. Conflicts must include substantial use of violence by one or both parties to qualify as "wars." Politically organized groups may include revolutionary and reform movements, political parties, student and labor organizations, and elements of the armed forces and the regime itself. If the challenging group represents a national, ethnic, or other communal minority, the conflict is analyzed as an ethnic war.'
37. Selway (2011); Gubler and Selway (2012).
38. Language is used here as a marker for ethnicity and income is used as a proxy for class.
39. Defined in probability as:  $P(A|B) = P(A)$ .
40. The full data-set is publicly available from the Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR) data archives and the Institute for Quantitative Social Science (IQSS) Dataverse Network.
41. See Selway (2011), footnote 21.

42. Colin Cameron and Pravin K. Trivedi, *Regression Analysis of Count Data*, 2nd edition, Econometric Society Monograph No.53 (Cambridge University Press 1998, p.566.) We estimate count models because some countries have several independent conflicts measurement of cross-cutting cleavages (the main predictor) is cross-sectional and the distribution is approximately Poisson. In the appendix, we examine tests for this model.
43. Lars-Erik Cederman, Kristian Gleditsch and Nils Weidmann, 'Horizontal Inequalities and Ethno-Nationalist Civil War: A Global Comparison', *American Political Science Review* 105/3 (2011) pp.478–95.
44. We also find that ethnic group spatial concentration (as a proxy for collective action capacity, see Weidmann (2009) is weakly and positively associated with ethnic conflict, and weakly but negatively associated with class conflict.

## Acknowledgements

We are grateful for comments and feedback received from Laia Balcells, Nick Biziouras, John Cuffe, Todd Eisenstadt, Chip Gagnon, Christopher Haid, Henry Hale, Stefan Lindemann, John McCauley, Nikola Mirilovic, Kimberly Morgan, David Muchlinski, Harris Mylonas, Gudrun Østby, Grigore Pop-Eleches, Andrew Radin, Graeme Robertson, Nicholas Sambanis, Nadav Shelef, Nils Weidmann, Ethan Wilson, Yael Zeira, and audience members at the Peace Research Institute Oslo, George Washington University Ethnic Politics Workshop III, and Uppsala University Workshop on Ethnicity and Conflict, Department of Peace and Conflict Research, and the meetings of the Association for the Study of Nationalities and American Political Science Association. For excellent research assistance, we thank Valery Dzutsati.

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