

Part IV: Advancing Theory through Narrative

Chapter 9: Random narratives: Methodological introductory chapter

In Part IV, we move from statistical analysis to narrative. In chapter 9, we defend and describe what we consider to be the most principled approach to the use of narrative as a complement to theory and statistics. In section 1, we defend the random approach to cases. In section 2, we describe how we employed this method in accounting for civil war onsets.

Section 1: The Random Method for Narrative

Statistical correlation – in a multivariate analysis with civil war onset as the dependent variable – helps to provide an answer to the question of what distinguishes countries that have experienced civil war onsets from those that have not. Formal analysis helps tie the significant variables together with a coherent causal model. Lacking in both is whether the variables in our models are actually “doing the work” in raising a country’s susceptibility to a civil war onset. This is the role of narrative; in Part IV we rely on the narration of country histories to add further understanding as to the sources of civil war onsets.

The first question we ask to develop our narrative approach is which narratives to tell? In statistical work, there are some methodological standards for case selection and analysis. In formal analysis, what constitutes an appropriate formal representation of a class of political phenomena remains somewhat contested – but the notion that the model should be simple, capturing the nub of the strategic situation, and offering at least some unexpected observable implications (as comparative statics predictions) is a developing standard.

There is no intellectual consensus, however, on the choice for narrative exposition of cases. There is a literature on Mill’s principles of similarity and difference with the hope of strategically isolating variables to examine their effect in particular cases. Two countries that share a history, a culture, and have similar levels of economic development, but differ only on political institutions serve as a Millian opportunity – differences in outcomes in these two countries cannot be explained by culture or any other shared characteristics, and thus we can attribute these differences to the impact of the political institutions. But in a project relying on statistical probabilities rather than deterministic processes, this method is epistemologically suspect (Goldthorpe, 2000). It could well be the case that cultural factors were more influential, but in one of the two cases, despite higher probabilities for an outcome based on culture, a lower probability event took place. Probabilistic expectations cannot be disconfirmed in a paired comparison that is chosen based on principles of similarity and/or difference. Using Millian case selection criteria when the statistical distribution of cases is already known may help to add real-life examples of the general processes that have been discovered, but they cannot help to add or reduce confidence in the general finding.

Another principle – and not really different from Mill’s methods – is to choose cases for narrative exposition that are off the regression line, say for example at the same point on the x axis but below and above the regression line as indicated by different positions on the y axis. The assumption here is that those cases on the regression line are confirming while those off of it are disconfirming the theory, and possibly offering (through careful process tracing of case material) new variables that would yield ultimately higher r-squares (or lower standard errors) if entered into the general model.

The idea of choosing only cases off the regression line is attractive but flawed. We cannot assume that cases on the regression line are in fact confirmatory – as we shall illustrate in our analyses, cases that are on the regression line may, after careful narrative exposition, prove to have been predicted correctly for the wrong reasons.

Complementary to the unwarranted assumption that cases on the regression line are confirmatory of theory are the cases that are off the regression line but not disconfirmatory. In these cases, careful narrative scrutiny might reveal that a rather arbitrary coding decision was decisive (or perhaps the predicted event was in the process of unfolding but some random, unmeasured other factor prevented it) and therefore the case is not really disconfirming. Such demonstrations are perhaps part of what we mean when we say that a particular case is an exception that proves the rule. In light of false positives and faulty negatives, any assumption that a scatterplot points to a methodologically sound selection of cases for narrative analysis is suspect.

The most attractive criterion for choosing cases for narrative exposition is that of investigator expertise. Narratives are far richer if the investigator has a reading knowledge of the country’s language, has done fieldwork in that country, and knows best how to navigate the secondary literature. This is the Benthamite criterion of propinquity – the closer you are to the material, the more utility that you will derive from it. The philosophy of science problem with this criterion is huge. Since it was likely that the theory being tested derived from an intimate knowledge of a particular case, putting the theory to further test by systematic examination of that case is a form of scientific double dipping. Methodological cookbooks are clear on this point – you need to test your theories from out of sample data! While expert narratives make for the most compelling and cogent reading, they fail the test of non-bias in selection of cases.

There is an alternative to the goal of seeking a non-biased sample of cases for narrative exposition. Based on Elster, it could be argued that knowing the values on significant independent variables (and interaction terms) is not the same thing as knowing the mechanisms that map values on significant independent variables to particular values on dependent variables. In fact, he argues, there can be several mechanisms that link values on independent variables to predicted outcomes.¹ With this perspective in mind, one can read narratives of all observations in a dataset with an eye toward mechanisms. One can then differentiate a variety of paths that can lead to civil wars with similar values on the key independent variables. These mechanisms are not likely to show up in

¹ . Jon Elster (1998) “A Plea for Mechanisms”. In P. Hedstrom and R. Swedberg (eds.), *Social Mechanisms: An Analytical Approach to Social Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press)

statistical analysis because each of them doesn't account for a sufficient number of cases. However, it would need to be shown that these mechanisms are unleashed under conditions where the theory predicts a civil war onset and not unleashed where the theory predicts no civil war.

We have in the course of our research on civil wars explored such mechanisms. One example is that of "sons of the soil". We found (through barefoot empiricism walking through the cases) that in countries with high population density (mostly in south Asia), leaders representing a dominant ethnic group will sometimes seek to relieve land pressure on that group by opening up new lands in less developed parts of the country through irrigation schemes. Internal migration to these new lands follows. In several remarkable cases (Sinhalese in the northeastern province of Sri Lanka; Bengalis in the Chittagong Hills; Javenese in Aceh) these efforts blew back on the dominant ethnic group, unleashing a civil war in the name of indigenous rights of the peoples who were indigenous to the area in which the migration was fostered. This mechanism of "sons of the soil" required a narrative that was consistent with the theory (and thus could not be told as a grievance story, as our statistical work showed that we could not predict civil war onset by knowing levels of grievance), yet true to the facts of the cases. The story had also to look at all cases in the world of "sons of the soil", even those that did not yield civil war. If successful, the narrative would show how under conditions that the statistical and formal models showed were propitious for civil war onset the mechanism of "sons of the soil" could provide the narrative link. Other mechanisms – commitment problems at the time of independence and the seeding of insurgents in country x by a leader in country y seeking to destabilize that country – were similarly identified. Each helped trace the route from high probability of civil war to actual onset.

The problem with this approach to mechanisms is that it provides no principles for choice of mechanism, other than what hits the researcher between the eyes in looking over cases. (Though the commitment mechanism was first proposed theoretically, and then found empirically). This empiricist approach may be useful in developing theory, but not in justifying which expositions are most relevant to provide. This approach while attractive is *ad hoc*.

In light of the failure of any positive principles to choose cases for narrative exposition, we advocate *random* selection. With random selection, the investigator is asked to write narratives for cases that were chosen *for* him or her by a random number generator. The investigator would need to go from the first case on a list generated by a random algorithm to some number down the list and to link through narrative the statistically significant independent variables to the coded value on the dependent variable. There could be no claim of bias in case selection. Cases on the regression line would be subject to the same narrative tests as those off of the regression line. If there were missing variables previously unexamined that would have improved the initial statistical analysis, they are more likely to be found in cases forced upon the investigator than in cases she or he chose. To be sure, the narratives will lack the expert's eye for nuance; but they will gain from a fresh reading of the standard literature about a country with an eye on how much mileage can be gotten in understanding outcomes through a

focus only on significant independent variables validated from time series cross sectional analysis.

How many narratives to tell? Our intuition is that once the investigator experiences severely diminishing returns to the researching of the next narrative, it is time to stop. There is no principled stopping point. At the time of diminished returns to new cases, it would be worth the effort to offer an updated version of the theory that was altered due to the findings in narrative analysis.²

Section 2: Application of the Method for Understanding Civil War Onsets

To construct the sample for the random narrative (RN) dataset, we took a stratified (by region and by whether there ever had been a civil war) random sample of countries. We chose “countries” (combining all years in which they were independent since 1945) rather than “country/years” as our units, because telling a narrative for a single year for a country is not feasible. For our choice of countries, we relied on a slightly modified form of random selection of cases. We have stratified our random sampling on two variables. We took our list of 161 countries, and organized it (1) by region, and (2) within region, by whether the country had at least one civil war. We then randomly ordered the countries within the twelve subsets that result (6 regions, war/no war for each one), and selected countries for our narrative case studies by starting at the top of each of the twelve lists. (In fact, we started by randomly selecting two from the “war” countries and two from the “no-war” countries at the top of the regional lists).

The rationale for stratifying by region is to ensure an even distribution across a factor that is correlated with common historical experience, culture, religion, and level of economic development. We were concerned that if we did not do this, a relatively small random sample (e.g., 24 countries) would have a fairly good chance of over- or under-representing at least one region pretty badly, making our inferences more open to the charge that (say) “they neglect the experience of Latin America, which is very different.”

We distinguished between “war” and “no war” countries for a different reason. We expect that there is more to be learned by studying a country that had an outbreak of war at some time than one that never did, because a “war” country has periods of both peace and war (variation), whereas a “no war” country has only peace. There is certainly information in the “no war” cases, and we thought it would be quite wrong to exclude them entirely. But we wanted to make possible the over sampling of countries that experienced a transition from peace to war, as this provides within country variation on

² . One problem here is if a new variable, or a new specification of an interaction term, compels the reworking of the statistical model, and the statistical model is thereby strengthened, then all the graphs that guided the narratives would be defunct, and would need to be redone. Since the narratives of one set of countries fed into a revised model, narratives would need to be written for a newly (and of course randomly) selected set of countries. This process should continue (at least logically) until the narratives added no more value. If the process is done to its logical conclusion, it will appear to the reader that the narratives have added no value!

the dependent variable in which, in effect, a great many country-specific factors are controlled for.

We oversampled Africa (7 countries) and undersampled the “West” and North Africa/ Middle East (each with 3 countries) to take into account the actual number of countries in each region. Table 1 gives the list of chosen countries.

Table 1: Randomly Selected Countries by Region and Civil War Experience (and ccode)

<u>Region</u>	<u>No War</u>	<u>War(s)</u>
West:	Japan USA	Portugal
E.Europe/FSU:	Armenia Lithuania	Georgia Azerbaijan
Asia:	N. Korea Thailand	S. Korea Burma
NA/ME:	Bahrain	Algeria Iraq
SSA:	Burkina Faso Botswana Cameroun	Chad Sudan Mozambique Nigeria
L. Am/Carib:	Panama Jamaica	Haiti Dominican Republic

A quick perusal of the countries selected for us by the random number generator shows some disadvantages of this selection method. Three of the four countries in the Eastern Europe/Former Soviet Union region are in the Trans Caucasus region, with no cases from Soviet Central Asia or the satellite countries of Eastern Europe. Worse, in the Latin America/Caribbean region, there are no Spanish or Portuguese-speaking states. Also troublesome is that the iconic cases of sons of the soil rebellion, discussed in chapter 6, were not chosen. But, as should be apparent from Table 2, on the key variables of interest, the random sample does not deviate much from the entire sample of cases. To be sure, the random cases are somewhat more authoritarian, more reliant on oil for export earnings, and less mountainous. However, on key operating variables such as anocracy, instability, GDP per capita, and population size, the two samples are quite similar.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics on the RN sample and the full sample

	Randomly Selected Cases*	All Cases
Anocratic (percentage of years when anocr==1)	21.9	22.57
Instability (percentage of years when instab==1)	17.23	14.65
Oil (percentage of years when Oil==1)	20.12	12.95
GDPen (mean (standard deviation))	3.17 (3.90)	3.69 (4.495)
Ethnic Fractionalization (mean (standard deviation))	.354 (.31)	.385 (.285)
New State (percentage of years when nwstate==1)	3.4	2.97
Mountainous (mean of estimated mountainous areas and (standard deviation))	11.35 (9.92)	18 (20.97)
Mountainous (same as above but only for year==1995)	12.43 (13.52)	17.76 (21.9)
Log population (1995) (standard deviation)	9.45 (1.45)	9.21 (1.43)

* this column has the same command as the "all cases" but with the following restriction: if ccode==2 | ccode==41 | ccode==42 | ccode==51 | ccode==95 | ccode==235 | ccode==368 | ccode==371 | ccode==372 | ccode==373 | ccode==471 | ccode== 475 | ccode==541 | ccode==615 | ccode== 625| ccode==645 | ccode==692 | ccode== 731 | ccode== 732 | ccode== 740 | ccode==775 | ccode== 800 | ccode== 571 | ccode==483 | ccode==439.

From this selection of cases, we created a graph for all chosen countries that reflected (on the x axis) every year that country was in the dataset from 1945 through 1999 and (on the y axis) the probability for each year that countries with the same RHS variables (but with the country being graphed taken out of the dataset) that our model would give for a civil war onset. The graphs give the all year mean value for all countries in the dataset and the mean value of all countries in the region, again for all years. We can thus see if the country was more susceptible to a civil war onset for any particular year than the regional or world average. Finally, we place a tic on the x axis if in fact there was an ongoing civil war in that country for the given year.

The graph below (Figure 1) illustrates the case of Algeria. Accompanying this graph (Table 3) are data on the key variables, and then in comparison to the mean values of the region and the world. Throughout its independent history, Algeria has had a higher susceptibility than the mean country of the world (.017) and the region as well (.016). We can see that there were two civil war onsets in years that our model predicted heightened susceptibility. Furthermore, we can see that the first civil war coincided with Algeria being a new state and the second civil war coincided with a period of anocracy and instability. All this looks good for our theory; but one purpose of telling the random

narratives is to see if the changes in these explanatory variables did the work of making Algeria vulnerable, and if so, how.

Figure 1: Probability Graph for Civil War Onsets in Algeria

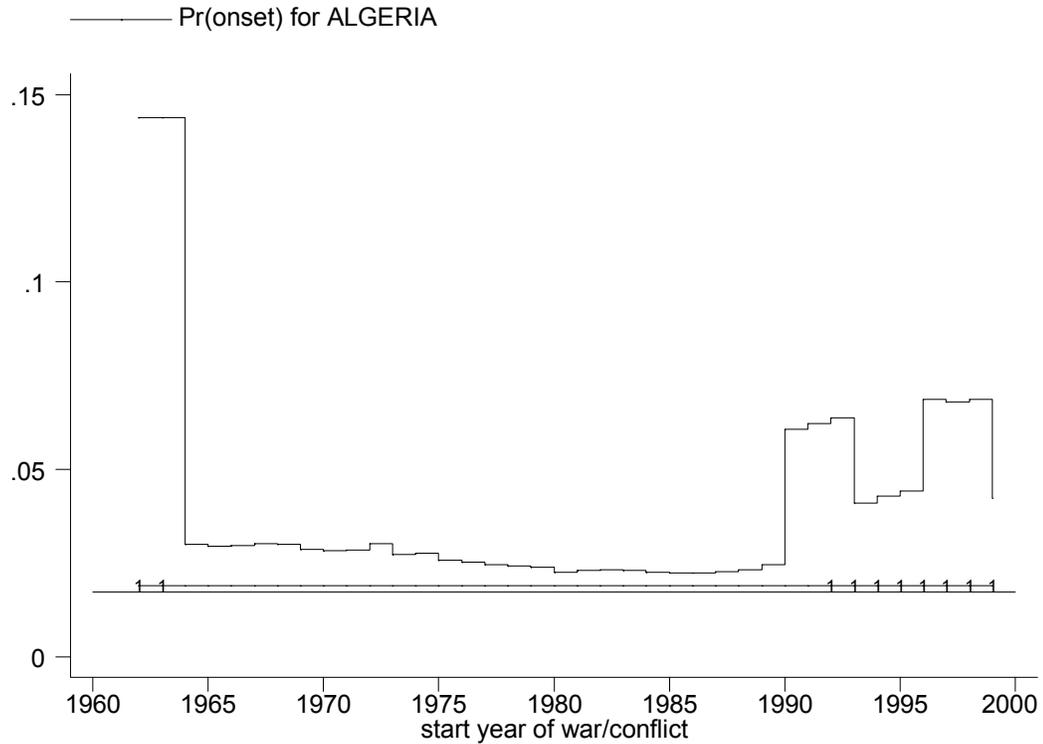


Table 3: Key Variables for Algeria, and in Comparison to Regional and World Means

cname	year	pr	gdp~1	pop	mtn~t	Oil	ins~b	anocl
ALGERIA	1962	.1438914	1.275	11236	15.7	1	0	0
ALGERIA	1963	.1438914	1.275	11460	15.7	1	0	0
ALGERIA	1964	.0299269	1.517	11690	15.7	1	0	0
ALGERIA	1965	.0294119	1.589	11923	15.7	1	0	0
ALGERIA	1966	.0296131	1.584	12267	15.7	1	0	0
ALGERIA	1967	.0301775	1.548	12622	15.7	1	0	0
ALGERIA	1968	.0299141	1.6	12986	15.7	1	0	0
ALGERIA	1969	.0286795	1.758	13360	15.7	1	0	0
ALGERIA	1970	.0282048	1.835	13746	15.7	1	0	0
ALGERIA	1971	.0285001	1.826	14169	15.7	1	0	0
ALGERIA	1972	.0301191	1.676	14609	15.7	1	0	0
ALGERIA	1973	.027326	2.011	15064	15.7	1	0	0
ALGERIA	1974	.0275415	2.012	15534	15.7	1	0	0
ALGERIA	1975	.0257108	2.256	16018	15.7	1	0	0
ALGERIA	1976	.0252196	2.343	16516	15.7	1	0	0
ALGERIA	1977	.0245347	2.456	17030	15.7	1	0	0
ALGERIA	1978	.0242563	2.518	17559	15.7	1	0	0
ALGERIA	1979	.0238973	2.591	18105	15.7	1	0	0
ALGERIA	1980	.0225013	2.807	18669	15.7	1	0	0
ALGERIA	1981	.0230417	2.758	19254	15.7	1	0	0
ALGERIA	1982	.0232107	2.761	19862	15.7	1	0	0
ALGERIA	1983	.0229497	2.823	20495	15.7	1	0	0
ALGERIA	1984	.0225642	2.903	21173	15.7	1	0	0
ALGERIA	1985	.0223402	2.962	21848	15.7	1	0	0
ALGERIA	1986	.0223439	2.988	22497	15.7	1	0	0

ALGERIA	1987	.0226486	2.97	23124	15.7	1	0	0
ALGERIA	1988	.0232314	2.913	23758	15.7	1	0	0
ALGERIA	1989	.0244908	2.769	24374	15.7	1	0	0
ALGERIA	1990	.0606509	2.843	25003	15.7	1	1	1
ALGERIA	1991	.0622876	2.777	25680	15.7	1	1	1
ALGERIA	1992	.0638113	2.72	26254	15.7	1	1	1
ALGERIA	1993	.0410341	2.719	26852.84	15.7	1	1	0
ALGERIA	1994	.0428582	2.598	27454.32	15.7	1	1	0
ALGERIA	1995	.044286	2.511	28058	15.7	1	1	0
ALGERIA	1996	.0686159	2.555	28678.96	15.7	1	1	1
ALGERIA	1997	.0679664	2.605	29317.75	15.7	1	1	1
ALGERIA	1998	.0686392	2.591	29974.95	15.7	1	1	1
ALGERIA	1999	.042282	2.68	.	15.7	1	0	1

Summary Values for Algeria:

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
pr	38	.0400676	.0289218	.0223402	.1438914
gdpenl	38	2.340079	.541402	1.275	2.988
pop	37	19411.4	5901.332	11236	29974.95
mtnest	38	15.7	0	15.7	15.7
Oil	38	1	0	1	1
instab	38	.2368421	.4308515	0	1
anocl	38	.1842105	.3928595	0	1

Summary Values for North Africa / Middle East

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
pr	845	.0160012	.0215488	3.10e-10	.2527809
gdpenl	857	5.430375	7.802111	.048	66.735
pop	889	11482.33	14302.43	222	63451
mtnest	910	18.61816	21.26137	0	71.3
Oil	910	.4901099	.5001771	0	1
instab	906	.1335541	.3403605	0	1
anocl	890	.2348315	.4241318	0	1

Summary Values for Entire World

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
pr	6327	.0166781	.0223868	3.10e-10	.4785439
gdpenl	6373	3.651117	4.536645	.048	66.735
pop	6433	31786.92	102560.8	222	1238599
mtnest	6610	18.08833	20.96648	0	94.3
Oil	6610	.1295008	.3357787	0	1
instab	6596	.1464524	.353586	0	1
anocl	6541	.2256536	.418044	0	1

Given the graph and tables, the task given the narrator is to provide value added for our general understanding of civil war by accounting for both good and bad model predictions for all country years for the randomly generated countries. The narrator is writing history under statistical constraint. It would be out of line, for example, to appeal to high levels of grievance over a certain policy as an explanation for a particular civil war onset unless it were shown why this particular grievance had properties different from other types of grievance *and* that if all grievances were coded by type, this type of grievance would have a significant and positive coefficient in a new statistical model. Thus the narrative would need not only to be consistent with the historical record of the

country under analysis but it would also need to be consistent with the statistical model that sets limits to what can be appealed to in the narrative.

The value added of the narrative would come from the stark realization that however strong our statistical model, it is far away from being a complete explanation for civil war onsets. In our dataset is Cyprus in 1974 (at the outbreak of the Turkish/Cypriot civil war) when our model estimated the probability of an onset at less than .2 percent. The model's most successful postdiction (nearly two times the second most successful) was in giving a civil war onset in Indonesia in 1950 a probability of 45 percent (and the South Moluccan insurgency began that year). Even in this case, the odds were against there being a civil war onset in that particular year.

Thus there is much still to be learned by using other methods than large-n analysis, and narratives of particular countries are a useful complement to the statistical method. Through narrative, it should be possible to point to interactions among individual variables already discredited that in tandem yield civil war susceptibility. It should be possible to specify more sharply the conditions when a variable will have the effect we have theorized. It should be possible to point to micro-factors for future coding such as tactical decisions by states and by insurgents that are usually ignored in large-n data collection exercises.

Finally, civil war narratives provide a benchmark to see, under more careful scrutiny than is generally given to codings in large-n research, how accurate those codings are on key variables, to get a sense of the magnitude of coder bias. We can get a better sense of the probable magnitude of measurement error relying on standard cross-national datasets, at least for several variables. We now examine errors in the coding of the dependent variable, where measurement error has especially troubling implications. Table 4 reckons our errors.³

Table 4: Errors in Coding of Civil War Onsets

	Wars Reported	Wars Discovered in RN but not reported	Wars reported but RN shows they do not meet criteria
Random Narrative Cases	16	6	2

Iraq accounts for five of the eight errors.⁴ Our dataset records two civil war onsets in Iraq: the Shammar rebellion (lasting one year) in 1959; and the Kurdish rebellion (lasting fourteen years) in 1961. As is common for many countries, historical accounts of

³ . Our research for these narratives revealed two anti-colonial wars in Cameroon that were not in our dataset. These insurgencies were against France, which is not one of our chosen countries, and therefore those wars are not counted as errors on Table 4. But it suggests that closer scrutiny of colonial powers would have yielded more uncounted civil wars.

⁴ It would therefore be dangerous to make a claim as to the expected number of errors for the entire dataset, as it seems intuitively obvious that among our random draw, we drew an outlier!

Iraq do not identify civil wars as distinct phenomena as we have done in our statistical analysis. An attention to Iraq historiography raises five issues for our coding on the dependent variable. First, what we call the Shammar rebellion is not highlighted at all in Iraqi historiography as an especially distinct event. Moreover, while early accounts of it had casualty claims that easily met our criteria for a civil war onset, later and more sober accounts discredit such numbers, and it is therefore an error to code this rebellion as a civil war. Second, what we call the Kurdish rebellion from 1961 through 1974 appears in the standard historiography as a series of civil wars with separate onsets. Third, the Ba'ath overthrow of the Qasim government in 1963 involved sufficient deaths on both sides to qualify as a civil war onset. Fourth, the Shi'ite uprising in the wake of the 1991 Gulf War should have qualified as a civil war onset, but our dataset does not include it. Fifth, standard historiographies point to a plethora of rebellions over Iraq's contemporary history making the two we originally identified appear arbitrary.

Consider the following time line since 1920, the date of the creation of a state of Iraq as a League mandate. To be sure 1920 is earlier than Iraq's entry into the international system of states (1932) and earlier as well than the start year of our dataset (1945). But the pre dataset events help put the post-1945 conflicts into a clearer perspective.⁵

* 1920 – As Britain sought to take control over Iraq, local forces were unsure of its resolve to define the postwar order. Popular demonstrations against the British and the Mandate reverberated through the country. The British sided with the Sunnis, explaining to them how popular rule would destroy Sunni domination, and through that argument they won Sunni tribal chiefs to their side. The Shi'as, however, were outraged, and were able to initiate an armed revolt, based on an alliance of Shi'ite spiritual centers and tribal armies (Tripp 2002, 42-3). (Early success of the Shi'as encouraged the Kurds into their own anti-British mobilization.) The British put the rebellion down by October, after 6,000 Iraqis and 500 British (including Indian) troops were killed.

* 1923-31 – The Kurds rebelled against British security forces that recruited Christian Assyrians (who had sided with the British in World War I) to retaliate.⁶ The war lasted until Britain sent units of the RAF to suppress it, and then captured the movement's leader, Shaikh Mahmud Barzani. As a gesture to the Kurds, the British-controlled government passed a Local Languages Law, giving recognition to the Kurdish language (Tripp 2002, 54).

* 1932-37 –The League of Nations authorized independence, yet there was no civil war onset in its wake. But over the next five years, there were a set of small rebellions testing the mettle of the new state. In 1935, Shi'ite tribal shaikhs rebelled in the mid-Euphrates, but their rebellion was quickly put down when militias loyal to the state assaulted retinues of these shaikhs who had entered Baghdad with a petition. This was the last of the tribal rebellions, as it became clear that any tribal coalition that wanted to mobilize

⁵ . Al-Khalil (1989, xi-xvii) presents a “Chronology” that helped structure the one presented below.

⁶ . In 1933, a Kurdish General in the Iraqi army was given license to avenge the retaliation, and after several clashes, his units killed about 300 Assyrian refugees including women and children (Metz 1988).

against the state would lose out to a coalition of their enemies supported by the central state. Also in 1935, an anti-conscription rebellion broke out in the Kurdish region. In 1936, there were a series of rebellions in the Gharraf region having to do with land titles and the state appointment of shaikhs.

* 1936-37 – When still a “new state” (had our dataset gone back that far), and thus still vulnerable, in 1936 there was an army coup (known as the Baqir Sidqi coup) led by an elite military faction. These officers deposed the King. The British army returned to Iraq in 1937, and restored ‘Abd al-Ilah to his throne. Subsequently, they brought back an Ottoman courtier, Nuri al-Sa’id who served a variety of roles in the government over the past decade, to help establish a repressive peace under British surveillance (Tripp 2002, 82-94). Small rebellions in the mid-Euphrates then broke out, led by shaikhs fearing government control. By 1941, the British reimposed imperial rule.

* 1945 – A rebellion began in Kurdistan in 1944 and became a full-scale revolt in mid-1945. Prime Minister Nuri al-Sa’id – through the efforts of Majid Mustafa, a Kurdish minister in Baghdad -- came to terms with the Kurds in 1944, but when he was followed by Prime Minister Hamdi al-Pachachi, the terms were disregarded. Mullah Mustafa Barzani’s forces had initial success, relying on a rare moment of unity among Kurdish tribes, and the turncoat tactics of two senior (Kurdish) advisors on Majid’s side who secretly joined in with the rebellion. By August 1944 the Iraqi army was taking many casualties, and was forced to rely on renegade Kurdish units to defeat the rebellion in 1946 (McDowall 1996, 290-95). After his defeat, Barzani was forced into exile, first to Iran and then to the Soviet Union.

* 1948 – In the so-called “Wathbah” uprising, students protested the Portsmouth Treaty of January and its provision that a board of Iraqis and British be established to decide on defense matters of mutual interest, especially on control over air bases. The treaty enraged Iraqi nationalists, who were still bitter over British interference in Iraqi affairs and possible complicity in the coup of 1941 that deposed Rashid Ali and what became the second British occupation of Iraq (Metz 1988; Marr 2004, 53-6).⁷ Students demonstrated and clashed with police who killed at least seventy-seven protesters. This incident led the regent to renounce the treaty with Britain he had earlier agreed to signing (Marr 2004, 65-66).

* 1952 – Large-scale anti-regime protests took place in Baghdad and elsewhere, triggered by bad harvests and the government’s refusal to hold direct elections. The government declared martial law, banned political parties, suspended several newspapers, and imposed a curfew. There was violence, but no deaths were reported.

* 1958 – The Hashimite monarchy was overthrown by the Nineteenth Brigade led by Brigadier Abd al Karim Qasim and Col Abd as Salaam Arif. This republican revolution, led by Free Officers (Nasserites and pan-Arabists) of July 14 was without violence. But a power struggle between Arif and Qasim led to the arrest of Arif and the capture of the

⁷ . References to Metz (1987) do not include pages since an electronic version is available, and it is therefore possible to track references not by page but by keyword.

July 14th movement by Qasim, who took the country away from the Free Officer pan-Arabism and towards an alliance with the communists (Marr 2003, 88-90).

* 1959 – Free Officers mostly from Mosul, Arbil-Kirkuk, Diwaniya and Baghdad provinces, whose social base was in conservative Sunni families, who had originally supported the July 14th revolution, opposed Qasim’s flirtations with the Communists. Matters came to a head when the Iraqi Communist Party organized their associated Peace Partisans in a march of some 250,000 onto Mosul. The peace demonstration was quiet, but the day after, violence escalated as nationalist officers decided to challenge them. The challenge to the state was led by Abd al-Wahhab al-Shawwaf, commander of the Mosul garrison, who was disaffected for being overlooked for a ministerial job in Baghdad. Shawwaf declared the army in revolt. Only two units from outside Mosul joined in. At first, two leading Peace Partisans were brutally killed by the revolutionaries. The Shammar tribes in the area between Mosul and the Syrian border came in to support Shawwaf. Qasim, in rapid response, mobilized loyal troops to bomb Shawwaf’s key positions, and in the initial attack Shawwaf was injured, brought to a hospital, and then assassinated by a Kurd loyalist. In the ensuing days, leftists massacred the nationalists and attacked some of the rich Mosul families. Hundreds were killed. But the killing was chaotic. Christians killed Muslims; Kurds attacked Arabs; and poor looted from the rich. After peace was restored, around fourteen leaders of the revolt were taken into custody and were executed (Marr 2004, 91-92; Khadduri 1969, 104-12; Tripp 2002, 157). In our dataset, this is the first Iraqi onset.

* 1961 – After Kurds supported the 1958 revolution, in which the new constitution stipulated that the Kurds would have equal status as the Arabs, exiled Kurd leader Mullah Mustafa Barzani was allowed to return. But things soured, and Kurdish deserters from the army started attacking regular units. This was the beginning of a long series of armed confrontations between Kurdish forces and the Iraqi state. In our dataset, it represents the second Iraqi onset. In 1963, with the victory of the Ba’th party, Barzani halted military action and entered into negotiations with the new regime.

* 1963 – The Ba’th overthrow of the Qasim regime, in a series of pitched battles over a two-day period took “hundreds of lives” (Marr 2004, 116-17). Qasim took refuge in the heavily fortified Ministry of Defense. The army remained neutral, but the Communists confronted army tanks, killed some soldiers and then were mowed down. According to al-Khalil (1989, 29), between 1,500 and 5,000 people died in three days of street fighting. The Haras al-Qawmi (the Ba’th paramilitaries that became the National Guard) fought civilian supporters of Qasim and the Iraqi Communist Party (ICP). (One hundred soldiers were killed defending Qasim in the Ministry of Defense). Afterwards Qasim and three close associates were executed. Subsequent to the Ba’th assumption of rule (which lasted for nine months), some three thousand more communist members were executed (Metz 1987; Tripp 2002, 162-3). This is not listed as a civil war in our dataset.

* 1963 – When the Ba’th government agreed in principle to join an Arab Federation, the Kurds raised their demands on the Sunni controlled state and demanded full autonomy. Barzani got his forces to attack the Iraq army (Tripp 2002, 172-81). The government

resumed the war, rounding up and arresting the Kurdish negotiating team in Baghdad, and troops were deployed to the north. Iraqi forces began bombarding villages, bulldozing them, and then attempting to repopulate them with Arabs (Marr 2004, 119-20). This battle ended in 1964, when Barzani signed a cease-fire agreement with Abd as Alaam Arif, who had overthrown the Ba'th government in 1963, in a bloodless coup.

* 1965-70 – The Shah of Iran instigated Iraqi Kurds to resume their rebellion, allowing the Kurds to win victories over the Iraqi army. Prime Minister Bazzaz in response sought to negotiate a settlement with the Kurds, but the army denounced him and President Arif demanded his resignation. In 1968, with the Ba'th back in power, the leading Kurdish commanders feared its intentions, and intensified their attacks on government positions. The war then continued through 1970 when the Ba'th party agreed with Barzani to a 15-point peace plan that allowed Barzani to retain his 15,000 Kurdish troops, the *pesh merga*, and these troops were designated to protect the Iraqi borders. Barzani also received recognition as the leader of the Kurdish Democratic Party and as ex officio legitimate representative of the Kurdish people in Iraq.

* 1974 – The Ba'th leadership (co-opting the Soviets who had previously supported the Kurds) ordered the assassination of Barzani (whom the Ba'th earlier tried to assassinate in 1971) and his son Idris, thereby reigniting the Kurdish war. Two years earlier, the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) got covert US subsidies in response to the Soviet-Iraqi Treaties of Friendship and Cooperation (Tripp 2002, 211-14). Using further military material provided by Iran and Syria, the KDP was able to inflict heavy losses on Iraqi regular forces. In 1974, Saddam offered the Kurds their own elected legislature and autonomous government (ruling all areas of Kurdistan save for oil-rich Kirkuk) and legalized three (pro-government) Kurdish political parties. He then negotiated a deal with Iran, in which Iraq gave up territorial claims to Iranian Khuszestan and several Gulf Islands if the Shah would stop supporting the Kurdish rebellion in Iraq proper. After the signing of this Algiers Agreement, Iraqi forces destroyed the *pesh merga*, and seventy percent of them surrendered. Nearly all the rest escaped to Iran. A few remained in the mountains to fight. Finally, Saddam relocated many Kurds from the northern heartland, razed their villages, and repopulated them with Arabs. Kurdish resistance thereby ended in 1975.

* 1976 – A resurgence of Kurdish guerrilla attacks, in part the result of a war between Jalal Talabani's Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) and Idris Barzani's (inherited, after his father's death in 1975) KDP, but the rebellion was eventually crushed by the Iraqi military.

* 1977 – In the face of Shi'a demonstrations, and the government suspecting a bomb attack, it closed Karbala to a pilgrimage, leading to violent clashes between police and Shi'a pilgrims, which spread to An Najaf, but was eventually snuffed out by army troops. Some 200,000 Iraqis, stripped of their property and citizenship, were deported to Iran.

* 1988 – The Kurdish rebellion restarted as anti-government Kurds took control over several hundred square kilometers of Irbil and al-Sualymaniya governorates bordering on Iran.

* 1991 – After the 1991 Gulf War, uprisings erupted across southern Iraq and in Kurdistan as well. In Kurdistan, the Gulf War brought an alliance between Barzani and Talabani, but within ten days the government fought back, stalled the rebellion, and in the course of so doing, displaced some two million Kurds. In the south, there were spontaneous revolts – collectively called the *intifada* – with little coordination. Technical expertise came from army deserters, who got support from senior mujtahid, but the revolt had a different complexion in different cities. In Basra, retreating soldiers in a tank fired on a mural of Saddam, inspiring other soldiers in armored vehicles to attack government targets, killing Iraqi security forces. In Nasiriyya, rebels joined with marsh Arabs and directly attacked regular army units. In Diwaniyya, young civilians took control of a weapons cache and attacked government officials and their security personnel near the governor’s headquarters. In Najaf and Karbala Shi’ite religious bands (with help from Iranians) attacked soldiers. The Republican Guard ruthlessly recaptured lost towns killing civilians by the thousands in their wake. A U.S. Senate report estimated that thousands of government soldiers were killed as well as 30,000 Shi’ites in the South.⁸

What to make of this chronology? Our coding of Iraq lists two civil wars as distinct events in Iraqi history. There is no history of Iraq that would portray Iraqi history in this manner. As the above listing suggests, standard historiographies report on an unending and rather seamless set of violent conflicts between groups in society and between groups and the state. But the real question is whether, in light of a careful reading of secondary sources, we should revise our coding on the dependent variable?

Our answer is yes. First, let us consider the Kurdish rebellion(s). The vignettes listed above suggest that we should code the Kurds as having initiated three civil wars. In 1945-46, there was the first rebellion (casualties not known with precision) in the period covered by our dataset (though it might have started in 1944). Second, there was clearly a re-ignition of this war beginning in 1961, with a short respite in 1963 that did not last long enough to be considered a termination of hostilities that ended in 1970 with a formal agreement. A third war began in 1974, and ended with the Algiers Agreement between Iran and Iraq in 1975. The Kurdish campaigns of 1976 and 1991 did not kill enough people to qualify as a civil war.⁹

⁸ . Peter Galbraith (1991) “Civil War in Iraq”, Staff Report to the Committee on Foreign Relations, United States Senate (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office), p. vi.

⁹ . It was not outrageous to have coded the Kurdish rebellions as a connected set of campaigns over a long period, in which rebels can hide in neighboring countries and in the mountains, and every few years mount a campaign, but signing an armistice when things get rough. (Even if we were to agree to this notion of a continuous rebellion, we should change the start date for the Kurdish rebellion to 1945). However, the historical record shows that there was sufficient peace in the interstices of these wars to justify a coding of three separate Kurdish onsets.

Second, as for what we have called the Shammar rebellion (but perhaps better the Mosul mutiny),¹⁰ this event doesn't quite qualify as a civil war by our criteria, though the data on deaths remain ambiguous. Original estimates pointed to as many as 5,000 deaths. However, "it is now generally agreed that they were in the hundreds rather than in the thousands. The Communists count about 110 killed... The nationalists have been able to count up to at least 48 killed" (Batatu 1978, 888-89).

Third, the 1991 *intifada* in the south clearly killed enough people to count as a civil war, though it was not included in our dataset.

The Ba'th overthrow of the Qasim regime also qualifies as a civil war onset? It killed in one estimate "hundreds" of Iraqis, including soldiers and communist rebels. But a more authoritative account by al-Khalil enumerates the deaths of one hundred of Qasim's soldiers and up to 5,000 dead insurgents. Moreover, the purges of ICP members that followed from February through November 1963 killed well over 1000. These killings, arrests, and acts of torture were decidedly one-sided and were more of a massacre than a civil war, but enough soldiers defending the state died in the original days to make this qualify as a civil war.

Overall, our reading of the historiography suggests that there should be a re-coding that (a) lists three separate Kurdish wars; (b) eliminates the Shammar rebellion as a civil war; and (c) adds the Ba'th overthrow of Qasim in 1963; and (d) adds the Shi'ite rebellion of 1991 as an onset. With this coding, Iraq has had five civil wars.¹¹ This reckoning is substantially different from the one that formed the basis of our original statistical model.

Our random narratives revealed two other "missed" civil war onsets. The first one is Thailand. In our original coding of cases, Thailand was the only country in Indo-China (including India and China) that experienced no civil war onsets in the period under study. With our model predicting 1.5 civil wars for this period, we had some explaining to do. However, the secondary literature supported our model's expectations. Expert sources document that in the north and northeast, in August 1965, government troops and the Communist Party of Thailand (CPT) clashed near the Mekong River and the border with Laos. There were only a few casualties, but the CPT called this the "beginning of people's war in Thailand". By 1967 (on our criteria), Thailand's civil war had begun. In that year, the communist insurgency had over 100 deaths (93 to insurgents and 33 to government forces). By 1972, the accumulated deaths of government forces and insurgents (killed at a ratio of 1:2.8) was 1,590. By 1973 the ratio had reversed to 1:0.7, such that the government was losing more personnel than the insurgents. In the mid 1970s, when the estimated 6,500 insurgents (2,400 in the Northeast; 2,100 in the North; 1,600 in the mid-South; and 400 in the predominantly Thai central area) were able to

¹⁰ . The anti-Qasim forces also included significant numbers of Nasserists, nationalists, Baathists, and Muslim Brothers. The Shammar family was only one of many large landowning families/tribes involved (others include Farhan, Kashmula, Khudayr, and Shallal).

¹¹ . Since our model predicts .6 expected civil wars for Iraq since 1945, this re-coding makes Iraq even more anomalous than with the original coding of two civil war onsets.

procure modern weapons, casualties increased substantially. However, by 1982, the fighting was virtually over, and in December, more than 3,000 CPT members surrendered to the government forces en masse.¹²

Indeed, this case (and others like it), where you have government armies hunting down “insurgents” in places where there is no media coverage and where the locals are not linked to NGOs, or any other outside sources, one should expect that deaths are ignored or undercounted. This is in part due to unreported village massacres by government troops. Or the coding problem might have been a result of the fact that Thailand looked peaceful in a regional context. Next to Vietnam and Cambodia, the level of insurgency in Thailand was low. To those looking through the lens of the Vietnamese National Liberation Front, the Thai communist insurgency was a failure. But compared to Northern Ireland, there were many deaths, and the Thai communist insurgency easily meets our criteria for a civil war.

The final civil war onset that we missed was in Sudan. Our dataset does not include the Ansar rebellion against the government of the Free Officers in 1970, when conservative forces, led by the Ansar, threatened President Nimeiri’s Revolutionary Command Council (RCC). Imam Al Hadi al Mahdi demanded a return to democratic government, the exclusion of communists from power, and an end to RCC rule. Fearing government repression, Al Hadi withdrew to his Aba Island stronghold (in the Nile, near Khartoum). In March of that year, hostile Ansar crowds prevented Nimeiri from visiting the island for talks with the imam. Fighting subsequently erupted between government forces and as many as 30,000 Ansar militias. When the Ansar ignored an ultimatum to surrender, army units with air support assaulted Aba Island. About 3,000 people died during the battle. The imam escaped only to be killed while attempting to cross the border into Ethiopia. The government exiled al Hadi’s nephew Sadiq al Mahdi to Egypt, where Nasser promised to keep him under guard to prevent him from taking over the movement. Sources are not absolutely clear that at least 100 government forces were killed, but the nature of the battle suggests there were casualties of that magnitude on the government side. It therefore meets our criteria for a civil war onset.

On our recoding of civil wars that do not meet the criteria we set, besides the Shammar rebellion in Iraq, the only other case is in the Dominican Republic. Area experts do not fully agree on how to code the violent events that took place mostly in Santo Domingo in the spring of 1965. The leading American authority calls it a “crisis” (Lowenthal 1972, chap. 2). Theodore Draper (1968) calls it a “revolt”. Jerome Slater (1970) and Howard Wiarda and Michael Kryzaneck (1982) call it a “revolution”. However, given that the canonical number of deaths in the street battles is 2,000, and that the conflict pitted militias of insurgents (the constitutionalists) against an army that controlled the state (the loyalists), the events fit standard definitions for a civil war onset.

¹² . Data are from Prizzia (1985), 19-20, 24, relying on Com Ti Rak, published in 1974 by officers in the CSOC, the Communist Suppression Operations Command (and they were indicted for publishing secret-CSOC reports). Girling (1981, 257), Race (1973, 200), and Morell and Samudaviniya (1981, 90) provide supporting information. Morell and Samudavaija cite comparable data from the Thai Internal Security Operations Command, White Paper (Bangkok: ISOC, 1976)

However, the evidence that the loyalists took at least 100 casualties is non-existent, and this case therefore does not fully meet one criterion of a civil war. Moreno (1970, 29) writes that the navy and the police force reversed their decisions to side with the rebels and joined forces with the generals to crush the uprising. “Casualties,” he says without giving figures, “were heavy on both sides.” However, in a footnote (p. 198), he provides an eyewitness account claiming that the 2,000 reported dead were “mainly from the air force strafing of the Duarte Bridge.” This strongly implies that the government did not take 100 casualties.

There are no hard data in Wiarda and Kryzanek (1982) on casualties. This work does report (on p. 43) on the strafing of the rebel strongholds, especially on the Duarte Bridge “where weakly armed civilians repelled the efforts of the military tanks... The early fighting inflicted great loss on the constitutionalists who could not control the skies and were often cut down by the tanks... on April 28, the popular forces drove the military back and seemed on the verge of defeating it.” But no casualty figures are reported.

In cables from the Department of Defense and the Department of State, the estimated casualties from the strafing on the Duarte Bridge on April 26 was 100-200. There were reported twenty U.S. servicemen killed, and a handful of Dominican officers were killed by rebels. While obviously incomplete, the data still do not approach a 1,000-death figure.¹³ In sum, we should consider the Haiti coding for 1965 a “false positive.”

Close attention to the historical record compelled us to revise eight values on the dependent variable that has motivated our study. Already the value of random narratives should be clear – the likelihood of discovering error would be far less if we chose countries in which we had expertise; or if we chose countries that were broadly studied in the civil war literature.

In the chapters that follow, we will use the twenty-five random narratives as a qualitative dataset in which to examine whether the key variables in our model worked as our theory say they should, and to look for other variables that our initial statistical tests missed. From these chapters, we will be able to assess the plausibility of the causal mechanisms that we have postulated in our theory and in our statistical model; we will also be able to give guidance for future directions in the study of civil war onsets.

¹³ . See United States, National Security Council, Files and Histories (1964-69), Crisis in Panama and the Dominican Republic, microfilm, see especially frame 74 on reel V and frame 122 on reel VI.

Nigeria

(NigeriaRN1.1)

James D. Fearon
David D. Laitin

Stanford University

This is one of a set of “random narratives” to complement our statistical findings in regard to civil war onsets. This is a draft of June 17, 2005; comments welcome.

Nigeria has had an unusual susceptibility to civil war, given our model. By nearly a factor of two, Nigeria is the most populous country in Africa, with population size being a key determinant of civil war susceptibility. A substantial proportion of its export earnings is from crude oil. Of the twenty-four countries in the world that have more than one-third of their exports in fuels (giving them a positive value for “Oil” in our dataset), Nigeria is the second (next to Angola) poorest, in terms of GDP/cap. Poverty next to oil exporting is a double-whammy in making a country susceptible to civil war.¹⁴ Nigeria was a new state in 1960, and has suffered from eleven years of instability. This means that at five different times in Nigeria’s modern history there was a new constitutional framework. Having a new political regime (captured in our “instability” and “new state” variables) makes a country more susceptible to a civil war onset. On this dimension, Nigeria has certainly courted danger. Moreover, for six years, Nigeria’s political system lived in a kind of democratic/authoritarian limbo (though in the text we argue that our coding methods underestimate this figure in the Nigeria case) that we call anocracy, again making Nigeria susceptible to civil war. Of all the susceptibility variables, the only one that works in favor of civil peace (and against insurgent opportunities) in Nigeria is that of mountains, where only 2.4% of the country is mountainous, presenting tactical difficulties for potential insurgents.¹⁵

In light of these factors, it is no surprise that only sixteen countries in the world have scored for any year a higher probability than Nigeria’s highest probability year for civil war onset. Nor should it be a surprise that Nigeria suffered one of the most devastating civil wars in the post World War II era, a three-year civil war that occurred in the wake of a political transition – the Biafra war for secession -- that accounted for some two million deaths. In this narrative, we will examine whether the variables that made Nigeria susceptible to civil war were in fact important for explaining that war. We will also examine closely other transition periods, asking why these other transitions did not

¹⁴ . Of the ten poorest countries that are oil exporters, only one (Ecuador) has not had a civil war onset. The other nine (Angola, Nigeria, Yemen Arab Republic, Indonesia, Congo, Iran, and Colombia, Cameroon and Algeria) have had onsets.

¹⁵ . This will help explain why Nigeria’s only civil war was a conventional one; and why violence in other periods has been massive but without a concomitant insurgency.

unleash other civil wars. And more analytically, we will look closely at our variables that measure oil exports and population size to see if they “worked” as our interpretation of our statistical model claims. We will examine whether a direct measure of armed force strength would be helpful in adding explanatory power to our model. We will also look at factors that were not included in our model – federalism and urbanization – but play a role in area expert accounts, to see how general these factors might be.

Few can tell a narrative of Nigeria’s political history without an ethnic road map. This is true for a discussion of civil war violence even if in general these factors play no direct causal role. We therefore preface our narrative with an ethnic primer:

On the scale of ethnic fractionalization in our dataset, Nigeria scores a .87, which means that if two random Nigerians were to meet, there would only be a 13 percent chance that they were of the same ethnic group. Nigeria is the seventh most fractionated state ethnically in our dataset. Area experts distinguish among four ethnic divides:

- (a) That of the mostly Muslim north vs. the mostly Christian south;
- (b) That of the Hausa-Fulanis who are the dominant ethnic group in the North vs. the Yorubas in the Southwest vs. the Igbos of the Southeast – as these were the three distinct regions in the colonial and early post-colonial periods, each region having a dominant nationality group.
- (c) That of the majority group in each of the colonial regions vs. the plethora of minority groups in those regions. In the North, amongst other minorities, there were many highly Christianized groups such as the Idoma and Tiv in what was called the “Middle Belt”, as well as Muslim but ethnically distinct groups such as the Kanuri. In the East, amongst other minorities, there are Ibibios, Efiks, Ijaws, Ogonis, Urhobos, Itsekiris and others. In the West, there were Edos and other non-Yoruba groups in the zone centered on the ancient Benin Kingdom that later became the Midwest Region.
- (d) That of sub-ethnicities within each of the majority groups of the original three regions. Among the Hausa–Fulanis, there are those from Sokoto, from Kano, and from Kaduna, each associated with a different emirate. The Yorubas are doubly divided. Ethnic sub-groups are defined by attachment to different ancestral cities, such as the Ife, the Egba, the Ijebu, and the Oyo. And within each of these ancestral city groups, Yorubas are divided religiously among Muslims, Christians and followers of traditional religion. Among the Igbo, there are many branches as well, dividing inter alia the Onitshas, the Owerri, the Nsukkas, and the Umuahias.

A basic ethnic history of Nigeria would show that in pre-colonial times, while interethnic relations were sometimes violent (indeed there was a Fulani jihad that brought violence to the north and part of the southwest in the early 19th century), interregional trade required peaceful communications. The most widespread inter-regional trade system was between the pastoral north and the agricultural south, in which cattle was exchanged for kola and other farm products. (Because of the tsetse in the south, ranching could not be supported and cattle had therefore to be brought quickly to the markets for slaughter). The British protected the traders by providing designated neighborhoods for their agents to settle when outside their home region, and this is one of the ways their

colonial system of indirect rule provided clear boundaries and sharp differentiations among the ethnic groups.

And thus, despite trade and rapid urbanization in the past century, more than ninety percent of marriages have been within rather than between ethnic units. Marriages between subgroups of Igbo, Yoruba, Hausa, Fulani, or Kanuri occur without stigma. In the south, Yoruba-Igbo unions were uncommon, but north-south marriages were even rarer, especially between Hausa-Fulani or Kanuri and any person from southern Nigeria. Northern Muslim intermarriage was not uncommon, nor was intermarriage among peoples of the Middle Belt. But unions between Middle Belters and Muslims from emirates farther north remained rare. Migrants would often return to their home communities to obtain a mate. Social pressure for ethnic endogamy has long been intense and persists today even among elites in business, universities, and the military (Metz 1991).

Thus Nigeria has many dimensions of ethnic division that were reified during the colonial period and persist today. The resulting ethnic identities play a key role in local self-understandings, and perhaps an increasing role as well (Greif and Laitin 2004).

We can now address a set of questions raised by the Nigerian case after perusal of the accompanying table giving model predictions for Nigeria by year: (1) Why no civil war when Nigeria was a “new state”?; (2) What were the causes of the Biafra War?; (3) How was peace maintained during post civil war authoritarian rule (1970-78)?; (4) And how was peace maintained during three periods of regime transition, in which our model claims high susceptibility to civil war onsets?; and (5) What role do facts such as urbanization, high population, federal rule and army strength play in understanding Nigeria’s civil war history.¹⁶

Overall, two general findings come through from this narrative. First, oil is crucial for understanding Nigeria’s civil war, but not because it made for a weak administrative state. Rather oil was important because it was found in a region that would become immensely wealthy if its residents did not have to share that wealth with the rest of the population. Bargaining broke down between the region and the central government for a revenue sharing program that would have avoided a military confrontation. It is the failure of that bargain rather than a weak state that explains the civil war. Second, the nature of the federal institutional framework (along with an ecology that did not favor insurgency and an army strengthened by the civil war) favored two types of confrontation with the central state: on the elite level, entrepreneurs in the periphery sought the creation of new states (within the federal system) that would put them on the federal gravy train dispersing oil revenues; on the mass level, everyday criminals found in the weak state (in part due to oil) a fantastic opportunity for thievery and gangsterism that never needed to

¹⁶ . Laitin drafted this narrative based on his previous publication (Laitin 1986) that provides many of the references that went into the interpretations discussed herein. However, he relied on the Library of Congress Country Study (Metz 1991) for many of the basic facts that undergird the interpretations. These facts are only cited when the Metz study gave unusual structure to the narrative. No page numbers are provided for these cites, as they can be searched electronically through keywords.

get organized as an insurgency. Thus as conditions were still ripe by our model for insurgency after the Biafra war was over, the country created many new states (satisfying peripheral elites) and suffered from everyday criminality (satisfying potential recruits into an insurgency) but did not face an armed insurgency.

I. Why no civil war in 1960-62, in a period of “new state”

Nigeria became independent on October 1, 1960. Because it was a new state, our model gives Nigeria a rather high eleven percent probability for a civil war in its first two years. Yet there was no civil war in this period. Why not?

It was not for lack of tensions that might have generated an irresolvable commitment problem. In the general election of 1959 to determine which parties would rule in the immediate postcolonial period, the parties representing the majority group in each of the three regions won in their regions, but none emerged powerful enough to constitute a national government. A coalition government was formed by the northern dominant NPC and southeastern dominant NCNC, which reflected from the northerner's point of view a minimum winning coalition (the largest and smallest parties). Even if the two southern parties could have agreed to coalesce (doubtful given British interference), they could not have achieved a more efficient distributive coalition as the two leading southern parties did not have control over 50 percent of the seats. Nnamdi Azikiwe (NCNC) became the governor general (and president after the country became a republic in 1963), Abubakar Tafawa Balewa (NPC) was named prime minister. Obafemi Awolowo (Action Group [AG]), representing the southwest, settled for leader of the opposition, and the Yorubas were therefore the odd man out of the distributive politics of federal largesse (Post, 1963).

A new census was to be the key as to who would be the future ins and outs in subsequent governments. Population determined the allocation of parliamentary seats on which the power of every region was based. Because population figures were also used in allocating revenue to the regions and in determining the viability of any proposed new region, the 1962 census was approached by all regions as a key contest for control of the federation. Much was therefore at stake. Thus the census turned into a political contest spawning a variety of counting illegalities and irregularities. Although the chief census officer found evidence of more inflated figures in the southern regions, the northern region retained its numerical superiority. As could be expected, southern leaders rejected the results vehemently, leading to a cancellation of the census and the holding of a fresh census in 1963. This population count was finally accepted after a protracted legal battle by the NCNC and gave the Northern Region a population of 29,758,975 out of the total of 55,620,268. These figures eliminated whatever hope the southerners had of jointly ruling the federation (Metz 1991).

The NPC from the start sought to use the federal government's increasing power in favor of the Northern Region, especially inasmuch as the north had the numbers, to

counteract the power of the south with its great advantage in the public service.¹⁷ Under the First National Development Plan, many of the federal government's projects and military establishments were allocated to the north. There was an "affirmative action" program by the government to recruit and train northerners, resulting in the appointment of less qualified northerners to federal public service positions that would have gone to southerners in a strict merit system.

The West, the opposition, was the most recalcitrant. The NPC tried to split the leadership of the AG by cultivating an alliance with a leader of S.A. Akintola's faction, associated with Oyo, in order to isolate Awolowo, whose ancestral base was in rival Ijebu. Akintola, Awolowo's former deputy and premier of the Western Region, formed a new party--the Nigerian National Democratic Party (NNDP) – to ally with the NPC. This led to a crisis in the West, and a state of emergency was declared in the region allowing the federal government to administer the region directly. Awolowo was convicted of treasonable felony. The federal government also supported agitation by minority groups in the West for a separate state to be excised from the Western Region. In 1963, as a sort of punishment to the West, a Midwestern Region was excised from the Yoruba-dominated region. The AG elite thereby lost control over the West's tax revenues and over political appointments in the Midwest.

Why didn't the Yorubas, we should ask, apparently in permanent opposition, organize an insurgency before the state would have been strong enough to repel them? In one sense they were not doing too badly. Since the revenue formula for tax collection gave most returns from marketing boards that collected taxes through their monopsony on export goods, the West, Nigeria's cocoa heartland, was able to prosper in the late 1950s and early 1960s, supporting the only Universal Primary Education program in the republic. But in opposition (facing Emergency rule), they could hardly be sure of controlling those revenues for their own interests.

To answer this question, we need to go back to the nature of the colonial transition. In the 1950s, Nigeria's three regions were in constant jockeying for power. The British made clear to the political leaders in all three regions that there would be no transfer unless there was a gentleman's agreement to live under the arrangements agreed to in a series of constitutions written in the 1950s. Yoruba leaders knew that the British were committed to the regime to which they had transferred power, and that it would be a re-invitation for foreign intervention should the Yorubas seek militarily to undermine that order. Here there was no closing window of a state getting stronger; rather there was a new weak state being propped up by the ancient colonial bureaucracy that could, over time, only get weaker, once the British really left. Therefore, unlike the dynamic in the commitment game that plagues new states, the new African states in the 1960s could easily commit to their minorities because they could not over the short term strengthen themselves vis-à-vis their minorities.

¹⁷ . Because missionaries, who provided the necessary language skills for service in the administrative service, were more welcome in the south than in the north, southerners had a tremendous advantage in taking senior bureaucratic positions from the departing British over the northerners.

II. On the causes of the Biafra war – oil and anocracy – is our story right?

By 1965, no longer a new state, Nigeria was democratic and stable. The probability for a civil war went down by a factor of four to just over two percent, a little above the world average. To be sure, politics were hardly peaceful. The emergency in the West was slow to abate. And political violence in general did not abate. During the five years immediately preceding the civil war, 124 riots were reported. By the time of the 1964 general elections, the first to be conducted solely by Nigerians, there were riots among the Tiv in the Middle Belt. Regional elections late in 1965 (that were rescheduled due to the earlier violence) were also violent.

Nigeria's democracy collapsed in January 1966 with a coup d'état which put Major General Johnson Aguiyi Ironsi (an Igbo) in power. In the coup, the Prime Minister of the country, Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, a northerner, was killed, along with the Prime Minister of the West (Akintola, the Yoruba ally of the NPC), giving many Nigerians a sense that this was a southern, or even a Igbo coup. Ironsi's gravest error was in promulgating Decree Number 34 of 1966, which abrogated the federal system of government and substituted a unitary system, giving the majorities in the other two regions fears that they would lose control of regional budgets.

Six months later a counter coup was led by Col. (later General) Yakubu Gowon, a Christian from the Middle Belt (but then still part of the North). Most top-ranking Igbo officers, including Ironsi, lost their lives; the status quo ante of northern dominance was restored. The resulting military regime (with a Polity 2 score of -7) brought three years of instability starting in 1967. In that very year, oil became a significant part of the Nigerian economy. Our predicted probability for a civil war jumped from 2.4 percent in 1966 to 8.1 percent in 1967. And in that year a three-year civil war – the Biafran War for Independence – broke out, causing an estimated two million deaths. The question is why and whether our model captures the causal dynamic. Let us return to narrative.

Gowon, once in power, reinstated the federal system, along with the four regions and their allotted functions. But relations between the federal government and the Eastern Region, led by military governor Colonel Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu, were very strained. In addition to the elimination of many Igbo officers during the July coup, a massive pogrom against Igbos occurred in the Northern Region. In September 1966 Gowon summoned an ad hoc constitutional conference to deliberate on the country's political future. Most regional delegates to the conference, with the exception of those from the midwest, recommended a confederal system to replace the federation. The delegates from the Eastern Region insisted that any region wishing to secede from the federation should be allowed to do so. The conference was ended abruptly by increased killings of Igbos in the north and the heightening of tensions between the federal government and the Eastern Region. A summit of military leaders at Aburi, Ghana, in January 1967 attempted to resolve the disagreements and recommended the establishment of a confederation of regions.

Despite offers made by the Federal Military Government that met many of Ojukwu's demands, the Eastern Region Consultative Assembly voted May 26 to secede from Nigeria. In Lagos Gowon proclaimed a state of emergency and unveiled plans for abolition of the regions and for re-division of the country into twelve states. This provision broke up the Northern Region, reducing the possibility of unending northern domination and offering a major concession to the Eastern Region. It was also a strategic move, which won over the non-Igbo eastern minorities and deprived the rebellious Igbo heartland of its formal control over the oil fields and access to the sea. (Many of the federal troops who fought the civil war were members of minority groups, including the President himself. Many thought of the war as a war between the minorities who had the greatest interest in a federation vs. the majorities that would have been happy to have three separate countries.) Gowon also appointed prominent civilians, including Awolowo, as commissioners in the federal and new state governments, thus broadening his political support. (Awolowo had promised Ojukwu that if the East seceded, the West would follow shortly, creating an independent Oduduwa Republic. To his shock, Ojukwu watched Awolowo hold the Yorubas in the Federation and get the post of its Minister of Finance. He used that position to change the national currency and thereby bankrupt Biafra.) Thus the war pitted the North, the West, and the non-Igbo areas of the East, against the Eastern heartland.

Did Oil Play a Role in the Biafra Onset?

Major caches of petroleum were found in the Niger Delta (the non-Igbo section of the Eastern Region) in the early 1960s, and this was to change the economic and political future of the country. Nigeria's first oil refinery, at Alesa Eleme near Port Harcourt, began operations in late 1965 with a capacity of 38,000 barrels per day (Metz 1991). This find had immense impact on inter-regional distributive politics. From the late 1950s, the West was able to parlay its revenues from the cocoa boom into a well-subsidized educational system, one that was beating out the East in the production of educated personnel qualifying for university scholarships and bureaucratic positions (Abernethy 1969). Igbos saw the coming oil boom as the perfect answer to the East's relative backwardness. But, unfortunately for the Igbos, the constitution differentiated agricultural revenues (that went back principally to the states in which the crops were grown) from mineral revenues (that went back mostly to the Federal government). By the mid-1960s, Igbo leaders knew that as an independent state, they would be rich. This fact, along with the thousands of refugees returning from the pogroms in the North, made secession attractive. Oil is a factor in the Nigerian civil war not because it created a weak state unable to tax its own population – after all, revenues hadn't really been coming in by 1967 when the war began – but because it provided a motivation for the region of the country that had this oil to secede.

We can see here a commitment problem that prevented the Federal Military Government from offering the East a deal that would have prevented the civil war onset. Even if Gowon promised the East a share of the oil that was comparable to the share of cocoa revenues the West received, how could the East have believed that this promise would have been maintained (e.g. by a greedier set of generals that would overthrow

Gowon) once the period of instability were over? Moreover, since the government already showed itself incapable of protecting Igbos living outside of the Igbo heartland, how could Gowon have credibly promised Igbo security? Ojukwu understood this well, and demanded that the Federal Government give him full control over Eastern armories, and thus the ability to control an independent army. But Ojukwu could not credibly promise to abjure from future secessionist threats. At Aburi, the military governors showed themselves to be close buddies, going back to training days at Sandhurst. They called each other by their pet names. But they were unable to make credible commitments to each other. With the oil resources in the East, Ojukwu's incentives were to rebel; and to maintain control over those reserves Gowon committed the country to a war for unity.

The Biafra War for Independence was a conventional war, fought by the army of the federal republic against a rump element of that army fighting as the Biafran armed forces. The Biafran army had a structure of command similar to the federal army, and similar procedures for recruitment and promotion. Consistent with our model which would discount the possibility for an insurgency, even given the high population, instability, and oil due to lack of mountainous terrain, Nigeria did not experience a classic insurgency. The Biafrans, in order to sustain themselves as a threat to the federal government, needed to organize as a conventional army.

III. The Era of Authoritarian Stability (1970-78)

After the Biafra war, with oil prices booming, Gowon had a honeymoon. He was generous to the Biafran secessionists and put federal money into the East's reconstruction. He initiated several nation-building policies, the most notable of which was the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC), a community service institution that required one year of service by each Nigerian immediately after graduation from university or other institution of higher learning. Each member of the corps had to serve in a state other than his or her home state. More than a million graduates had served in this program by 1990.

But Gowon was unable to reward sufficiently his own senior military officers, and he was overthrown in a palace coup in July 1975 and succeeded by General Murtala Muhammad, a Hausa from the Kano State in the North. Within his short seven month period of rule, he endeared himself to most Nigerians because of his strong leadership and the radical reforms he introduced in domestic and foreign policies. In February 1976, Murtala was killed in an unsuccessful (yet peaceful) coup led by Colonel Bukar Dimka and officers from the Middle Belt; the coup appeared to be an attempt by Middle Belt officers to bring back Gowon from his self-imposed exile and reinstate him as head of state. He was replaced by a Yoruba, General Olusegun Obasanjo, formerly Murtala's second in command.

This was an era of civil peace; but not all was peaceful. Another census in 1973 failed, even though it was conducted by a military government that was less politicized than its civilian predecessor. What made the 1973 census particularly volatile was the fact

that it was part of a transition plan by the military to hand over power to civilians. The provisional figures showed an increase for the states that were carved out of the former Northern Region with a combined 51.4 million out of a total 79.8 million people. Old fears of northern domination were resurrected, and the stability of the federation was again seriously threatened. The provisional results were finally canceled in 1975, stemming planned mobilizations. The society was at peace, but the population was volatile.

Yet Nigeria had skilled leadership in this period. Gowon became a war hero, and even though in his later years in power he allowed his own people to engage in unimaginable corruption, he had a residue of popular support. Murtala was a national hero who took the role of insurgent in his own government. And his successor Obasanjo became an adept political ruler, using his organization ties to the north and his cultural ties to the west in a way that did not to exacerbate North-South and Muslim-Christian schisms in the country. The probability for a civil war onset in this period was low, and no civil war began; here our theory focusing on stability through authoritarianism had it right.

IV. The Seesaw of Democratization and Authoritarian Rule

The return to democracy (1979), its collapse (1984), and its resurgence (1999) brought Nigeria to three phases of high susceptibility to civil war. Moreover, beyond these three bouts of instability, in the context of a collapsing economy, with GDP/cap falling from \$1513 in 1979 to \$943 in 1999, the country was from our model's viewpoint especially vulnerable. In all three eras, however, there was no civil war onset. However, the levels of violence (religious in the North; tribal in the Southeast; the Ogoni rebellion also in the southeast; a proto-rebellion in the West; criminal gangs throughout the country) in the country are depressingly high. Therefore, the question of "why no civil war" in post-1979 Nigeria should be complemented by a meta-question about our dependent variable: are we explaining the use of a particular tactic (insurgency) in our model rather than a general phenomenon of a society at war with itself?

Democracy: 1979-83

In 1979, there was a return to civilian rule with a free and competitive election. The era of anocracy was over, but due to the rapid transition to democracy, Nigeria faced three years of instability (having moved from a -7 in 1977 to a 0 in 1978 to a +7 in 1979 in the Polity 2 index). In 1979, with both anocracy and instability, Nigeria's predicted probability for a civil war onset was 9.6 percent, considerably higher than the probability reached in 1967, at the outbreak of the Biafra war.

To avoid the pitfalls of the First Republic, President Murtala urged that the new constitution be designed to eliminate political competition based on a system of winner-takes-all. The Supreme Military Council suggested that these objectives could be met by recognition of national rather than sectional parties, controls on the proliferation of parties and on the creation of more states, and an executive presidential system similar to

that in the United States. In addition, the federal character of the country was to be reflected in the cabinet and all political as well as judicial institutions. These were all adopted after extensive research in the Constitutional Drafting Committee and a lively and open debate on these issues in the Constituent Assembly. A key component of the new constitution was the federal-character principle requiring that the composition of the cabinet, boards, and other executive bodies, as well as appointments to top government positions, reflect the diversity of the country at the particular level of government. This principle also applied to the composition of the armed forces. The principle was extended to the distribution of national resources, such as the placement of schools and industries. The Second Republic was carefully designed.

The instability that we record for the early Second Republic, however, is not only a statistical artifact of our coding procedures. The new regime was very weak, and there was common knowledge in Nigeria that this was the case. First, the coalition of the so-called Kaduna mafia in the North with the non-Igbo minorities in the east that dominated federal politics (in the NPN party) was itself unstable. In effect the NPN governed as a minority because the opposition (in which there was a party mostly representing the Yorubas, another party representing the anti-Kaduna northerners, a third party representing the Igbos, and a fourth party representing Muslims from the Northeast of the country) could not coordinate. Second, there was lack of cooperation between the NPN-dominated federal government and the twelve states controlled by opposition parties. Third, the oil boom ended in mid-1981, significantly lowering the GDP/cap and the patronage the new president, Shehu Shagari, could dispense.

Political entrepreneurs were quick to take advantage of state weakness. In Sokoto, thousands of farmers began protesting their loss of land due to a land development scheme (the Bakalori Project) that opened up land for outsiders to develop. Police retaliated by burning villages and killing or wounding hundreds of people. A populist religious figure, called the Maitatsine, who led a quasi-Muslim fringe group in the North, mobilized his supporters into religious riots in Kano in 1980 after police tried to control this activities. The disturbance in Kano alone resulted in the deaths of 4,177 people between December 18 and 29, 1980. Renewed rioting in Kano in July 1981 that destroyed or damaged several state government buildings was attributed to Muslim extremists opposed to the proposed removal of the emir of Kano. More riots by Maitatsine followers broke out in Maiduguri in late October 1982 and spread to Kaduna, where thirty-nine sect members were killed by vigilantes. The official death toll was 188 civilians and 18 police (mostly in Maiduguri), and 635 arrested, but the commission of inquiry afterward concluded that deaths probably exceeded 500. The sect was banned in November 1982, and its adherents became subject to surveillance and arrest. Nevertheless, in February 1984 members of the proscribed Maitatsine sect struck again, this time in northeast Nigeria and in Yola, the capital of Gongola state. The army was again obliged to intervene, using artillery to quell the disturbances, but between 1980 and 1985 it was ill equipped for riot control. As a result, more than 700 persons died, 30,000 were left homeless, and about 2,000 homes were destroyed and 1,500 damaged. In this period, teachers as well were mobilized against the regime because they had not been paid.

With revenues from oil down and a president who had little authority to control the rapacious bureaucracy, corruption once again was rampant under the Second Republic. It had been a serious problem since the civil war, when wartime contracts often were awarded under dubious circumstances. Corruption became more serious after the war, most notably in connection with a cement scandal of the early 1970s, the Festival of African Culture (FESTAC) in Lagos, and the development of Abuja as the new federal capital. Corruption under the Second Republic reached new heights, and demonstrated a state unable not only to control society but also to control itself. Major scandals involved the Federal Housing Scheme, the National Youth Service Corps, the Nigerian External Telecommunications, the Federal Mortgage Bank, the Federal Capital Territory Administration, the Central Bank of Nigeria, and the Nigerian National Supply Company. Smuggling was also rife. In a particularly revealing incident, the state sought to indict Umaru Dikko for a rice importing scandal, and its agents tried to kidnap him in London in order to stand trial. British authorities found him in a shipping crate on a runway moments before he was to be sent to Nigeria. The international financial community bet against Nigeria's stability. There was a massive flight of capital--estimated at US\$14 billion between 1979 and 1983. The second elections under the Second Republic were to be its last. When the results were tallied in 1983 that brought a clear victory for Shagari, talk of fraud was everywhere. Few believed the regime could survive. There is no doubt that from 1979 through 1983, instability went hand in glove with state weakness. Yet no civil war onset occurred.

Expert opinion suggests that there was no civil war in the Second Republic because of its constitutional design (Horowitz, 1985, 612-13). After the civil war the new constitution of 1979 provided that no political party could be legalized unless it obtained support in all parts of the country. This attempt to crosscut ethnicity with rules of political party competition meant that no organization with the institutional resources to rebel against the state was rooted in a single regional base. Given Nigeria's size and complexity (and lack of mountains to hide in), a coordinated rebellion against the center was constrained by awesome logistical and coordination problems; so rebellion required a separatist agenda and a regional base. But as we saw with the Maitatsine eruptions, local insurgencies faced a well-equipped (and brutal) armed force that could kill easily while themselves suffering from less than the required number of deaths to count as a civil war. Army strength contained Maitatsine, in a country in which ecology disfavored traditional insurgency.

Military Rule: 1983-1998

The Second Republic was overthrown in 1983 by the military, led by Major General Muhammadu Buhari, a Hausa/Fulani northerner from Katsina state, whose background and political loyalties tied him closely to the Muslim north and the deposed government. Buhari had been director of supply and services in the early 1970s, military governor of Northeast State at the time it was divided into three states, and federal commissioner for petroleum and mines (1976-78) during the height of the oil boom. At the time of the coup, he was commander of the Third Armored Division in Jos.

In the wake of the Buhari coup, Nigeria faced a new three year period of instability (having moved from a 7 in 1983 to a -7 in 1984 in the Polity 2 index). In this period, Nigerians suffered the worst oppression in their history of being an independent republic. There was a proto-rebellion among the Ogoni in which the intellectual leader of the movement was arrested and executed by the state without a fair trial. Everyday violence in the streets reached new heights. But despite the instability from 1985-87, there was no civil war onset. Nor was there an onset in the following twelve years of authoritarian rule.

There was an immediate drop in the democracy score not only because of the replacement of a democratically elected government by Buhari's military junta, but also because of government control over free society, something new in post-independence Nigerian politics. Constraints were placed on various groups, including the Nigerian Medical Association, which was outlawed, and the National Association of Nigerian Students, and it promulgated two decrees that restricted freedom of the press and suppressed criticism of the government. Buhari's infamous Decree Number 4 forbade any journalist from reporting information considered embarrassing to any government official. Two journalists, Tunde Thompson and Nduka Irabor, were convicted under the decree. Decree Number 2 gave the chief of staff at Supreme Headquarters the power to detain for up to six months without trial anyone considered a security risk. Special military tribunals increasingly replaced law courts while the state security agency, the National Security Organisation (created in 1976) was given greater powers. Fela Ransome-Kuti, perhaps the leading singing artist in Nigeria whose lyrics sharply mocked the government was arrested. In general during the Buhari period of rule, the NSO engaged in widespread abuses of due process, including detention without charge and trial, arrests without pretext, and wiretapping (Metz 1991).

Polity 2's appraisal gives Nigeria a -7 for the early years of Buhari is thus fully justified. Yet indiscipline in administration (or the inability of any mortal to discipline Nigerian society) gave Nigeria a sense of being ruled within the anocratic zone. To understand why, a word should be said about the vibrancy of Nigeria's society. Some say it is a free society; others that it is uncontrollable. Despite years of oppression in the 1980s, for example, and despite harassment and even contracted murders of journalists, Nigeria still had in its most authoritarian years more than thirty national and provincial newspapers, more than twenty general magazines and journals, and more than twenty television and radio stations. Although the radio and television stations were owned by the federal and state governments, most of the newspapers and magazines were privately owned and were, in general, seen as instruments of partisan political interests. These media outlets could afford to be critical of the government. Like journalists, students have felt free. Since 1962, when students through their protests prevented the government from signing the Anglo-Nigerian Defense Pact, they have played an active role in influencing government actions. From the 1970s on, they have engaged in violent protests and riots that have sometimes resulted in fatalities. They have continued challenging authoritarian and democratic governments alike. And many Nigerian women too have been fearless. In the 1980s, women from lower social strata in the towns, represented mainly by the market women's associations, became militant and organized

mass protests and demonstrations in several states. Their major grievances ranged from narrow concerns such as allocation of market stalls to broader issues such as increased school fees. The creativity and indiscipline of Nigerian society is famously depicted in Peter Enahoro's classic text, How to Be a Nigerian (1966), which through its immense popularity has made indiscipline into a valuable national identifier. It is for this aspect of political culture that gives Nigeria an anocratic flavor even under conditions of the highest rankings in authoritarian rule.

Nigeria's political culture undermined Buhari's authoritarian pretensions. His anti-corruption campaign was enforced haphazardly; some people were executed or given long jail terms while others were allowed off if they were well connected. And his environmental protection crusade was similarly haphazard. Its principal target was the petty bourgeoisie that eked a living out of selling services or retailing commodities on a small scale. Their "illegal structures"--market stalls and workshops along the streets--were destroyed, and widespread resentment resulted among the small traders, repairmen, and others in the self-employed service sector, though they were able to side-step state controls through their own will and wit.

The incompetence of the Buhari regime was evident to all, and mostly for self-protection of the military, on August 27, 1985 a group of officers under Major General Ibrahim Babangida overthrew Buhari and took charge. The Babangida regime too had a rocky start. A countercoup in December 1985 failed but made it clear that not everyone in the military sided with Babangida's Armed Forces Ruling Council (AFRC). The most serious opposition centered in the labor movement and on the university campuses. In May 1986, students at Ahmadu Bello University and Kaduna Polytechnic staged demonstrations that led to military occupation of those campuses and to the deaths of a number of students. The student movement had considerable support at other universities. On June 4, 1986, the Nigerian Labour Congress in alliance with students and university teachers organized a national day of sympathy, which led to the arrest of many union leaders. There was also considerable controversy over Nigeria's entry into the Organization of the Islamic Conference, an international body of Muslim states, in 1986. Buhari's regime had made the application, which Babangida allowed to stand. The strong reaction among many Christians, led by the Christian Association of Nigeria (formed in 1976) was yet another challenge to the authoritarian regime (Metz 1991).

Babangida's actions exacerbated North/South tensions. Under his rule, the AFRC consisted mainly of northern Muslims. The service chiefs of the army, navy, and police were Muslims; only the chief of the air staff was a southerner. The ministries of external affairs, petroleum resources, internal affairs, and defense, considered the most powerful cabinet posts, were held by northern Muslims (the minister of defense being the president himself). These changes generated heated controversy and antigovernment demonstrations by Christians in some northern cities. In 1986, the murder of *Newswatch* publisher and highly respected Lagosian journalist Dele Giwa, presumably by the NSO, unleashed widespread popular disgust, openly expressed, and was perceived by many southerners as yet another example of northern ambitions to root out the southern intellectual elite. In response to these tensions, religious conflict took on new and

ominous dimensions when unprecedented violence between Muslims and Christians erupted at secondary schools and universities. Clashes between Muslim and Christian students in March 1987 at the College of Education in Kafanchan, Kaduna State left at least twelve dead and several churches burned or damaged. The rioting spread to Zaria, Katsina, and Kano within a few days. Police reportedly arrested 360 in the city of Kaduna alone and about 400 in the university city of Zaria. Army troops again intervened, and the commander warned that the army would shoot anyone committing arson or murder. Bayero University in Kano was closed after about twenty students were injured in Muslim-Christian clashes. In Zaria Muslim students burned the chapel at the College of Advanced Studies and attacked Christian students; the riots spilled over into the town, where more than fifty churches were burned. A curfew was required in Kaduna State to slow the violence. Babangida denounced these outbreaks as "masterminded by evil men . . . to subvert the Federal Military Government." He also issued a Civil Disturbances (Special Tribunal) Decree establishing a special judicial tribunal to identify, arrest, and try those responsible and banned preaching by religious organizations at all institutions of higher learning. In June and July 1987, Kaduna State authorities twice closed the exclusive Queen Amina College girls' high school in Zaria after clashes between Muslim and Christian students. Muslim-Christian riots in Kaduna State were reported in March 1987. Another violent incident occurred in November 1988 over the disputed succession of a new sultan of Sokoto. Ten persons died and fifty were arrested (Metz 1991).

Babangida also courted a popular economic-based uprising. Nigeria's near economic collapse required dealing with the World Bank and adopting structural adjustment. Babangida followed this course, and the remedy for Nigerian economic woes was to accompany falling real wages, the redistribution of income from urban to rural areas, and reduced health, education, and social spending. The decrease in spending on social programs contributed to often vociferous domestic unrest. In April 1985, riots inspired by Maitatsine adherents in Gombe claimed more than 100 lives and resulted in 146 arrests of suspected sect members. Urban rioting in April 1988 broke out due to reduced gasoline subsidies. Student-led violence in opposition to government economic policies took place in May and June 1989.

Coup attempts in this period at the elite level threatened to spill over into an urban insurgency. There were two coup attempts aimed at Babangida. The second and more serious one was on April 22, 1990 when anti-Northern rebel officers launched a bloody abortive coup against Babangida's regime, resulting in the arrest of 14 officers and more than 200 soldiers. Led by Major Gideon Orkar, this one almost toppled the Babangida regime. The presidential residence in Dodan Barracks was extensively damaged by the rebellious soldiers, but the head of state escaped. A unique feature of this coup attempt was the level of involvement of Nigerian civilians, who allegedly helped finance the operation. During the hours when the rebels controlled the radio station in Lagos, they broadcast a critique of the regime that combined attacks on its dictatorial nature and pervasive corruption with threats to expel the far northern states from the federation (Metz 1991).

If there was instability (in terms of our coding), there was also a commitment by the Babangida regime to maintain that instability. It appointed a new body, the Political Bureau, in January 1986 to make recommendations on the return to democracy, which in the seesaw of Nigeria's politics would have continued the instability for yet another three years. The report, submitted in March 1987 by the Political Bureau, composed of academics and civil servants, was at odds with the Kaduna mafia that ruled the government. It favored creation of a two-party political system divided by economic ideology as a means of escaping from the ethnic-based political parties of the past. Although the Babangida regime did not like many of the Political Bureau's recommendations, a Constitution Review Committee was formed in September 1987 to implement them.

In May 1989, after introducing eleven amendments, the AFRC promulgated the new constitution by Decree Number 12. In this new constitution, there were to be two parties (without regional foundations) wholly run and financed by the state. The National Election Commission had to power to delimit the number of political associations with the goal of sustaining a left-right dimension rather than a regional dimension of political conflict. The state defined and supported a center left party (the Social Democratic Party) and one on the center right (the National Republican Convention). An election was held on June 12, 1993 that presumably gave victory to a Yoruba Muslim from the West, M.K. Abiola, representing the SDP. International observers certified the fairness of the process. But Babangida annulled the election, and to deflect protest, he arrested pro-democracy leaders, and shut down universities and media houses. Still millions of demonstrators marching under the slogan of the "June 12 mandate" responded with rallies, strikes, barricaded roads, and the burning of tires. In the face of these protests, Babangida stepped down from office, and entrusted the government to Ernest Shonekan to lead an Interim National Government. The regime was declared illegal by the Federal High Court, and this opened the way for General Sani Abacha, who had served in Buhari's SMC and Babangida's ARRC, and had been Minister of Defence, to seize power. Babangida's quasi-anocratic era in which a democratic transition was stillborn thus gave way to a coup led by the person who would become the most brutal dictator in Nigeria's history. He ruled ruthlessly until he died of a heart attack in 1998, and was succeeded by General Abdulsalam Abubakar, who became a transitional figure. In this period under Abacha, while autocracy reached its height, GDP/cap continued to decline. Yet civil war was (barely) averted.

In the Abacha era, a rebellion by the Ogoni people of the Niger Delta began confronting the state. The Ogonis number about 500,000, and live in the Rivers State, in the heart of the petroleum reserves. During the Babangida era, they prepared an "Ogoni Bill of Rights." They organized a movement (the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People, or Mosop) to plan rallies on their behalf, emphasizing the ecological disaster for traditional means of livelihood that resulted from the oil economy. They worked through the all-Nigeria civil group, the Campaign for Democracy, to publicize their plight. And they have brought their struggle to international media. The Abacha regime saw this as a threat, and after some violent confrontations between the Ogoni and their ethnic neighbours (the Ndoki, the Andoni, and the Okrika), the military intervened.

When four Ogoni elders were murdered by a mob in 1994, nine Mosop officers were tried and sentenced to death, including the president of Mosop, Ken Saro-Wiwa, an internationally known author and playwright (Ihonvbere 1996, 212-15).

To a great degree, the Ogoni rebellion resembled the Biafra rebellion, in that the desire for control over oil (and its revenues) was a facilitator for demands for greater political autonomy. To be sure, the Ogoni did not have the size or the military capabilities to defy the federal state, but they have organized for lesser goals, with lower amounts of killing, but the structure of incentives was similar. Although they lost many of their sons in battle, they did not lose everything. Abacha conceded on a major issue: 13 percent of revenue from natural resources would be set aside as derivation, in order “to compensate communities which suffer severe ecological deprivation...” (Ihonvbere 1996, 222).

Rebellious activity also erupted in Yorubaland, home area of Abiola. There, opposition to Abacha regionalized and hardened. The Oodu’s Youth Movement, promulgated “The Yoruba People’s Charter for Self-Determination” (organized as the OPC) that declared a lack of faith in Nigeria as then constituted. Established in 1994, its announced aim was to overcome the political marginalization of the Yoruba. It has supported political agitation for Yoruba autonomy and promotion of Yoruba culture. It has been involved in violent confrontation with members of other ethnic groups. It has also taken on the task of vigilantism and crime-fighting, and its members have killed or injured hundreds of unarmed civilians. The military governors have responded by killing hundreds of OPC members, and incarcerating and torturing others. According to Human Rights Watch, there are links between government officials and the OPC leadership, and OPC members provide security for government officials making trips to the West, in part due to the weakness of the Nigerian police force, and its apparent inability to maintain law and order. Despite the cozy arrangement, in 1999 the federal government announced a ban on the OPC and gave the police orders to “shoot on sight” when they see OPC vigilantes in action. Despite this crackdown, the OPC has continued to function, sometimes underground, but more often boldly and openly challenging the federal government’s and the police’s attempts to crush it (Human Rights Watch, February 2003).

Area experts watched the aftermath of the aborted election, Abiola’s incarceration, and the massive protests against military dictatorship with awe. One analyst (Ihonvbere 1996, 224) speculated among possible near term futures. On the one hand, the author saw as a distinct possibility “a civil war that would see scores of well armed factions, ‘warlords’, and ‘technicals’ fighting up and down the country. Bombings [he noted in support of this scenario] have already been reported in Ilorin, Kano, and Kaduna...” An alternative possibility, however, is “a total dislocation of everyday life that would be characterised by sporadic violence, hijackings, bombings, kidnappings, assassinations, and harassment of the rich and expatriates. The existence of so many small and automatic weapons in the country, the porousness of the borders...these are the

conditions most likely to promote political decay.” While the latter was what occurred, experts such as Ihonvbere felt that an armed rebellion could not be ruled out of hand.¹⁸

The Third Republic 1999--

After a long period of post Second Republic military rule, Abacha’s successor, Abubakar, gave way to civilian demands for a democratic election in 1999. Two former military presidents contested for the first civilian presidency of the third republic, and a Yoruba, Olusegun Obasanjo defeated a Hausa, Mohammed Buhari. The Polity 2 index thus shifted from -6 in 1997 to -1 in 1998 and to +4 in 1999. This transition, unlike that to the Second Republic, yielded not only a positive score for instability but also for anocracy. As population continued to rise (reaching 121 million in 1998), the predicted probability for a civil war onset in 1999 reached 13.1 percent, with only thirteen countries in the world having for any year a higher level of civil war proneness.

In this period, going beyond that of our dataset, communal and religious violence were rife, but there is still no hint of a civil war onset. To give a hint at the nature of violence in Nigeria’s society, Human Rights Watch (April 2003) downloaded from electronic media sources these items from a two week period in 2003, and these cases mostly pitted partisans to the Obasanjo’s Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) against Buhari’s All Nigeria People’s Party (ANPP):

- Early March – Sokoto: PDP/ANPP clash between armed supporters.
- March 2 – Enugu: ANPP gubernatorial candidate petitions police regarding telephone calls threatening assassination if he does not give up his bid.
- March 3 – Ebonyi: State chairman for the ANPP reports shooting attack on him while in vehicle.
- March 4 – Rivers: Explosion damages medical clinic owned by secretary to the state government.
- March 4 – Edo: At least one person killed in PDP/ANPP clash after PDP state governor’s campaign convoy is attacked; bus and several houses burnt.
- March 4 – Ekiti: State ANPP leader dies of injuries from acid attack in late December.¹¹
- March 5 – Abuja: Marshall Harry, ANPP Vice Chairman for the South-South Zone, shot dead in his Abuja residence.
- March 6 – Cross Rivers: Several supporters injured and four cars vandalized in attack on ANPP senatorial candidate’s convoy.
- March 7 – Abuja: Protest against Plateau State governor comes under attack by state government thugs, leading to several injuries and destruction of vehicles.
- March 10, 11 – Kebbi: PDP/ANPP clash in which two reported seriously injured, eleven homes burned, fifty-three people arrested.
- March 11-12 – Lagos: Seven people feared dead in PDP/Alliance for Democracy (AD) clash.

¹⁸ . But Reno (1999, 121-2) summarizes expert opinion by pointing out that they see that “Nigeria boasts a great quantity, if not effectiveness, of societal organizations. It is too urbanized, its economy too commercialized, its bureaucracies still too organized, and its people too expectant,” for an outcome as disastrous as Sierra Leone, Liberia or the former Zaire.

- March 13 and subsequent two weeks – Delta: Scores of people reported killed in Okerenkoko and other villages around Warri following clashes between Ijaws and Itsekiris in dispute over additional electoral wards in Warri, and clashes between Ijaws and the military.
- March 13 – Imo: State officials announce armed attacks on residences of deputy governor and secretary to state government.
- March 14 – Ondo: Convoy of Gani Fawehinmi, presidential candidate for National Conscience Party (NCP), seriously injuring his driver.
- March 15 – Oyo: At least seven injured after attack on AD supporters at governor’s campaign rally.
- March 15, 16 – Kebbi: At least 200 homes burned during PDP/ANPP clash.

There were bigger issues for Obasanjo than constant riots and political attacks. A communal war is going on in Delta state. As reported in National Post (Canada) on June 19, 2004, the battle pits a 5,000-man "joint security force" led by Brigadier-General Elias Zamani against an array of well-armed gangs that haunt the region's rivers and mangrove swamps, robbing, raping, pillaging and siphoning off millions of dollars in oil from pipelines that snake through the area. According to Kelly McParland, the Post correspondent, "Zamani appears to be making some headway. In a shootout on Monday, his troops killed six men trying to steal crude oil near the town of Ogodobiri. Just a few days earlier, the task force ambushed a gang looting passengers on two ferries near Warri, the violence-ridden oil town at the centre of the conflict, killing 17. Earlier, witnesses claimed at least 50 people died when troops in gunboats and helicopters descended on a gang said to have kidnapped two policemen. Another 14 were killed when a mob of vigilantes, tired of their lives being turned into a misery, hunted down a group of thieves, soaked them in gasoline and set them alight." All this was taking place while the constant battles involving the Itsekiris, the Urhobos and the Efiks continued nearby. In the North, pogroms against Christians became an almost normal part of Nigerian political news. By one estimate, political, religious and ethnic unrest has killed more than 10,000 since President Olusegun Obasanjo was first elected in 1999.¹⁹

From 1979 to 2000, with Nigeria’s seesaw political history, moving back and forth from authoritarianism to democracy, our model predicts a high probability for a second civil war onset. Yet although violence was endemic, even catastrophic, none of it qualifies as civil war by our criteria. This leads to speculation as to what factors outside our model redirected violence from insurgency to communal and criminal violence. In the next section, we will suggest what these factors might be.

V. Factors Outside Our Model that Might Explain Nigeria’s Violence Without Civil War From 1979-2000

Urbanization

¹⁹ . Glenn McKenzie and Dulue Mbachu (June 4, 2004) “Villagers, militants claim dozens killed in Nigerian military offensive” Associated Press

Spurred by the oil boom prosperity of the 1970s and the massive improvements in roads and the availability of vehicles, Nigeria since independence has become an increasingly urbanized and urban-oriented society. During the 1970s Nigeria had possibly the fastest urbanization growth rate in the world. Because of the great influx of people into urban areas, the growth rate of urban population in Nigeria in 1986 was estimated to be close to 6 percent per year, more than twice that of the rural population. Between 1970 and 1980, the proportion of Nigerians living in urban areas was estimated to have grown from 16 to more than 20 percent, and by 2010 urban population was expected to be more than 40 percent of the nation's total. Although Nigeria did not have the highest proportion of urban population in sub-Saharan Africa (in several of the countries of francophone Central Africa, for example, close to 50 percent of the population was in the major city or cities), it had more large cities and the highest total urban population of any sub-Saharan African country.

Although cities varied, Nigeria's cities, like many in the Third World, are centers of enormous poverty and overcrowding for most residents, but exorbitantly wealthy suburbs and guarded enclaves for the upper classes. Indigenous populations control the centers, but migrants from other regions encroach in shantytowns and protected neighborhoods. Nigerian cities have teeming central market areas, filth that results from inadequate housing and public services, destitution as indicated by myriads of beggars and unemployed, and everywhere fear of crime and violence.

It is fair to say, in fact, that criminal violence is the urban substitute for insurgency. In the 1980s, serious crime grew to nearly epidemic proportions, particularly in Lagos and other urbanized areas characterized by rapid growth and change, by stark economic inequality and deprivation, by social disorganization, and by inadequate government service and law enforcement capabilities.

Annual crime rates fluctuated around 200 per 100,000 people until the early 1960s and then steadily increased to more than 300 per 100,000 by the mid-1970s. Available data from the 1980s indicated a continuing increase. Total reported crimes rose from almost 211,000 in 1981 to between 330,000 and 355,000 during 1984-85. Although serious crime usually constituted the larger category, minor crimes and offenses accounted for most of the increase. Crimes against property generally accounted for more than half the offenses, with thefts, burglary, and breaking and entering covering 80 to 90 percent in most years. Assaults constituted 70 to 75 percent of all offenses against persons. The British High Commission in Lagos cited more than 3,000 cases of forgeries annually.

Inconsistent policing yields urban chaos. In July 1987, butchers, traders, and unemployed persons in Minna vented their wrath over police harassment, intimidation, and extortion in a six-hour rampage against police and soldiers that was quelled by military units. In November 1989, when a police team raided suspect stores in Katsina market, the merchants feared it was a police robbery and sounded the alarm, attracting a mob that was then dispersed by riot police. As loss of confidence in law enforcement agencies and public insecurity increased, so also did public resort to vigilante action.

Onitsha vigilantes killed several suspected criminals in 1979. In July 1989, after a gang of about thirty armed men terrorized and looted a neighborhood in Onitsha without police intervention, residents vented their rage on known and suspected criminals and lynched four before riot police eventually restored order (Metz 1991). These urban uprisings and mob actions continued through the 1990s.

In a sense, from the viewpoint of a potential recruit into an insurgency, there is little need for an insurgent organization. Opportunities for crime and theft are Nigeria's low hanging fruit. (And from the point of view of regional elites, as we shall remark shortly, getting a new federal state is their low hanging fruit). High urbanization along with lack of mountains gives tactical advantage to those outside the legitimate economy to crime over insurgency. An observable implication of this interpretation of the case is that an interaction term combining poverty and level of urbanness should yield a higher crime rate and a lower incidence of insurgency than would have been predicted by GDP alone.

In discussing urbanness, the issue of population size ought to be addressed. Nigeria in our model is highly susceptible to civil war given its high population. In the period up to the Biafra secession, Nigeria's enormous size and complexity made it extremely difficult to govern and this might well explain the failure of the federal government to work out a deal satisfactory to the East. There were just too many other groups that would have demanded equal treatment. Moreover, given so many potential threats to secession, the Federal government recognized the great potential cost of making concessions to any one of them, as this could have easily triggered into a snowballing of secessionist demands. Finally, although Nigeria's army was large by African standards, as a percentage of the population in 1967 it was still relatively small, suggesting it was less competent than the average African army to patrol its peripheries. Population size therefore did play into the failure of Nigeria to resolve the secession crisis of 1967.

However, this narrative suggests that population size does not always work to enhance the probability of a civil war. As we noted in regard to protests during the Second Republic, large population size made coordination among opponents of the regime difficult to achieve. Organizations seeking control over the center will have greater difficulty, other things equal, the higher the population of the country. This leaves secession as the likely strategy for large countries. Yet secession for the non-oil regions of an oil-rich state is not likely. Therefore, there are constraints against insurgency in high population countries, but not high enough to affect the high-n findings.

What is the relationship of federalism to this story?

Gowon created a federal Nigeria with twelve states, but the structure of government under Gowon was basically unitarian. At the apex of government was the all-military Supreme Military Council (SMC), which was the lawmaking body for the entire federation. Its decrees could not be challenged in any law court. Most members of the SMC under Gowon were state governors. There was also a Federal Executive Council

composed of military and civilian commissioners. The states also had commissioners appointed by the governor. The states were practically reduced to administrative units of the federal government, which in several domains made uniform laws for the country.

Although he retained the framework of military federalism, Murtala Muhammad removed state governors from membership in the SMC and created a new body in which they were included at the center, the National Council of States. Because this body was chaired by the head of state and was subordinate to the SMC, its creation underscored the subordinate position of the state governments. This arrangement enabled the head of state to exert greater control over the state governors than had been the case under Gowon.

The number of states metastasized. In 27 May 1967 the three regions were dissolved and 12 states were created. Nigeria was subsequently further divided into 19 states and a federal capital territory (February 3, 1976), 21 states (September 23, 1987), 30 states (August 27, 1991), and 36 states (October 1, 1996). At each stage the average size of the states has been steadily decreasing, though there is a minimum transfer payment from the Federal government to each state. Therefore the average financial transfer, other things equal, to a state is in inverse proportion to population size. This gives benefits to small groups seeking to separate from the state to which they are a part, and helps explain the constant political pressures for new states by ethnic/regional political entrepreneurs.

One of the unexpected implications of this federal structure was that it directed minority politics away from directly confronting the Federal state, or even their current State, but in making demands for a newly created state. The best strategy for this (and one with a reasonable degree of success) was through bureaucratic infighting rather than through insurgency.²⁰ (Insurgency as the Igbos learned led to the emasculation of their state into separate components). The strategy is equally effective in the increasing demands for designation as a new local governing areas – for just a single example, in the city of Warri a communal war has pitted the Itsekiris who have controlled the local government against the Ijaws and Urhobos, both of whom want the city divided such that each of these groups can have control over a federally dispensed local budget.²¹

The Army and No Civil Wars since 1970

The Nigerian army traces its historical origins to three nineteenth-century military formations. The first dates from the establishment in 1862 by Captain John Glover of a small Hausa militia (dubbed Glover's Hausas) to defend the British colony of Lagos. Its mission was expanded to include imperial defense when dispatched to the Gold Coast during the Asante expedition of 1873-74. Enlarged and officially entitled the Hausa Constabulary in 1879, this unit performed both police and military duties until 1895,

²⁰ .For example, see a typical article for a local organization making demands for a new state: Charles Ozoemena (February 26, 2004) “Agitation For Anioma State Hots Up”, Vanguard (Nigeria); or Weekly Trust (September 20, 2003) “Nigeria: Split of Kaduna State: a Worthy Cause?”

²¹ . Vanguard (September 13, 2003) “Nigeria: Why Itsekiris Are Against Ibori's Peace Plan for Warri-Egbe” Africa News

when an independent Hausa Force was carved out of the constabulary and given exclusively military functions. This demographic recruitment base perpetuated the use of Hausa as the lingua franca of command in Ghana and Nigeria, where it persisted into the 1950s. It also marked the historical origin of the ethnic imbalance that has characterized the Nigerian armed forces to this day (Metz 1991).

Nigeria's armed forces, sharply reduced from about 300,000 after the 1967-68 civil war and undergoing continuing reductions into the 1990s, included the army, the navy (including coast guard), and the air force. Its size in 1995 was 77,100.²²

Military recruitment was highly selective and subject to a constitutional mandate that the composition of both the officer corps and other ranks should reflect Nigeria's "federal character." The minimum educational qualification was a West African School Certificate. Reports that more than 20,000 applicants sought 1,760 places in the army during one recruitment period underscored its selectivity. Nigerian law required the army to recruit equal quotas from among the states and to mix recruits in units. Northerners were overrepresented, however, especially in the infantry, in which soldiers from the states of Sokoto, Niger, Kaduna, Kano, and Borno predominated. In 1985 it was estimated that 70 percent of senior officers came from the northern or middle belt region, whereas the administrative, technical, and logistic formations were dominated by southerners (Metz 1991).

Nigeria boasted comprehensive and almost completely indigenized professional military training institutions, including the national triservice Nigerian Military University, the Command and Staff College, and the National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies. In addition, each service maintained extensive training programs for its own needs (Metz 1991).

The central pillar of the military training establishment was the Nigerian Military University. Founded in 1964 in Kaduna as the Nigerian Defense Academy, this unique academy for regular commissioned officer candidates in 1983 had a staff of about 1,100. The academy was upgraded and re-designated as the national Nigerian Military University in 1985. By 1989 it had trained about 5,300 officers, including 300 from other countries. For prospective army officers, the academy offered a two-and-a-half-year program leading to commissions as second lieutenants. Naval and air force cadets attended an eighteen-month joint training program, after which successful candidates advanced to specialized training with their chosen service before commissioning (Metz 1991).

According to one observer, no other country has promoted and retired its generals faster than Nigeria, where political imperatives led to pensioning off potential opponents or officers of questionable loyalty. More than forty senior officers were retired or dismissed after Babangida's coup, and thirty-eight army officers were retired in the wake of the foiled coup attempt in December 1985. By 1989 more than 200 generals, many of them "baby generals" only in their forties, had been retired with full pay and with

²² Atlapedia Online (<http://www.atlapedia.com/online/countries/nigeria.htm>), downloaded June 23, 2004.

allowances for life. Since the mid-1970s, the military produced more millionaires than any other profession. Many were chairmen or directors of parastatals or private companies and were eagerly sought by business because of their personal ties to the regime. Such conditions increased opportunities for corruption. The prospects for political stability were enhanced, however, to the extent that ambitious military officers who had tasted power were pensioned off and rewarded in the private sector.

Yet there is an impressive strength of the army vis-à-vis society. This is largely the result of the battle-tested period of the civil war from 1967-70. It is also the result of getting training as part of a regional peacekeeping force as part of ECOMOG. Finally, it is a result of the perquisites that have come to the army since the 1970s, enabling the army to recruit among the most ambitious young Nigerians. All of these factors have worked to give the military in Nigeria an immense advantage over potential challengers, and has directed opposition to the level of communal violence and crime (where the police forces are weak and underpaid) and away from insurgency.

VI. Conclusion

Our model reckoned that Nigeria was a country seriously at risk of experiencing a civil war onset, and indeed from 1967-70, the country suffered one of the most lethal civil wars on the continent and at a time that our model pointed to as especially likely for a civil war. In this sense our model was successful. But the narrative has shown weaknesses in our interpretation of the model and pointed to areas for greater explanatory power given our (failed) prediction of more than one civil war.

In regard to weaknesses in our interpretation, we pointed to the role of oil not as a resource that weakens a state, but rather as a prize that those sitting on the reserves want to keep all to themselves. Those sitting on oil reserves will want to exclude outsiders from its revenues; and outsiders will seek to prevent secession of oil rich regions that supports all members of the country. This conflict of interest worked itself out as a game of commitment in which neither the East nor the Federal Government could trust the other (over the long term) to uphold any distributive bargain.

We do underpredict civil wars in Nigeria, given the decreasing GDP and constant bouts of instability. The model predicts that in the course of Nigeria's forty year history in the dataset, there should have been 2.2 civil wars. To address the question of why there were fewer onsets, especially during the era of seesaw alternating between democracy and authoritarianism, we pointed to the ecological conditions (lack of mountains and urbanness) that favor crime and communal warfare over insurgency. We pointed to the structure of incentives to elites in the federal system, in which they could get oil revenues for their group by demanding through political lobbying a new state (or local government area) rather than demanding separation (which would lose them oil revenues) through insurgency. And we pointed out that battle tested in the Biafra War, the Nigerian army was vastly stronger than any regional competitor, and this directed energy away from insurgency and towards the jurisdictions of the less competent police.

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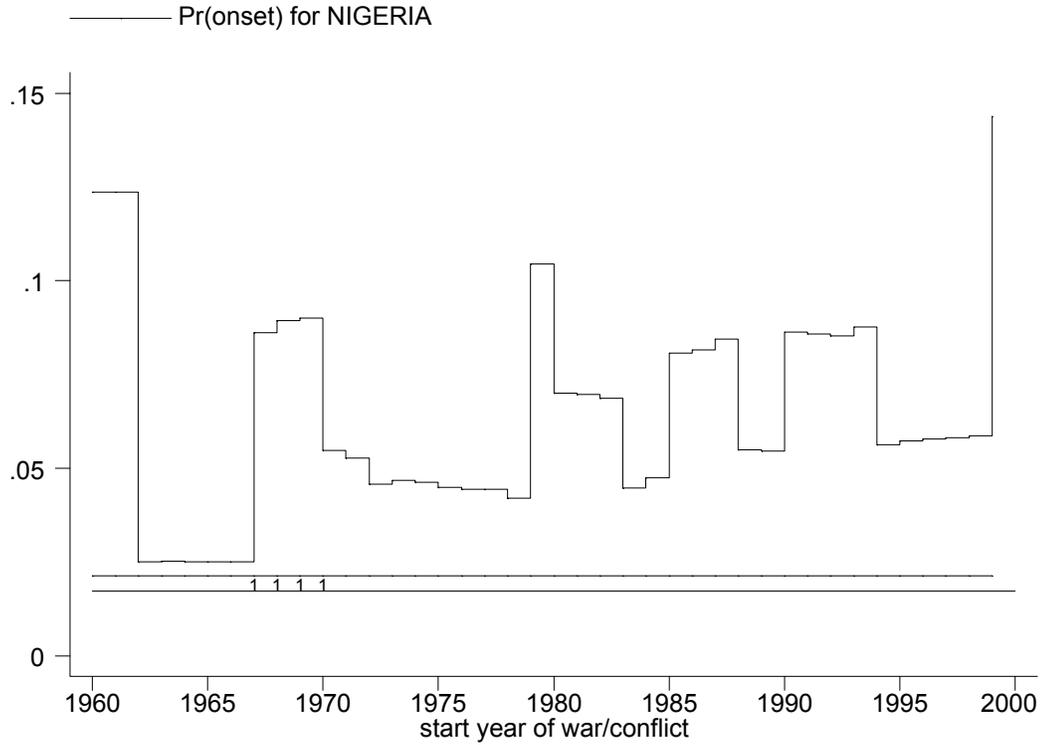
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cname	year	pr	gdp~1	pop	mtn~t	Oil	ins~b	anocl
NIGERIA	1960	.1109127	.567	51595	2.4	0	0	0
NIGERIA	1961	.1109127	.567	52919	2.4	0	0	0
NIGERIA	1962	.0237177	.551	54276	2.4	0	0	0
NIGERIA	1963	.0238657	.553	55672	2.4	0	0	0
NIGERIA	1964	.0238078	.582	57062	2.4	0	0	0
NIGERIA	1965	.0237834	.606	58492	2.4	0	0	0
NIGERIA	1966	.0238055	.624	59954	2.4	0	0	0
NIGERIA	1967	.0813704	.582	61450	2.4	1	1	0
NIGERIA	1968	.0366946	.485	62992	2.4	1	1	0
NIGERIA	1969	.0369737	.482	64567	2.4	1	1	0
NIGERIA	1970	.0209647	.625	66182	2.4	1	0	0
NIGERIA	1971	.020162	.767	54701	2.4	1	0	0
NIGERIA	1972	.0411461	1.055	56239	2.4	1	0	0
NIGERIA	1973	.0421492	1.002	57835	2.4	1	0	0
NIGERIA	1974	.0415899	1.068	59500	2.4	1	0	0
NIGERIA	1975	.0402975	1.192	61241	2.4	1	0	0
NIGERIA	1976	.0399344	1.245	63043	2.4	1	0	0
NIGERIA	1977	.0397893	1.281	64931	2.4	1	0	0
NIGERIA	1978	.0376577	1.48	66911	2.4	1	0	0
NIGERIA	1979	.0958998	1.513	68983	2.4	1	1	1
NIGERIA	1980	.0658821	1.393	71148	2.4	1	1	0
NIGERIA	1981	.0655001	1.438	73409	2.4	1	1	0
NIGERIA	1982	.0644885	1.515	75774	2.4	1	1	0
NIGERIA	1983	.0400065	1.419	78217	2.4	1	0	0
NIGERIA	1984	.0424343	1.259	80699	2.4	1	0	0
NIGERIA	1985	.07577	1.068	83196	2.4	1	1	0
NIGERIA	1986	.076504	1.062	85718	2.4	1	1	0
NIGERIA	1987	.0792011	.973	88273	2.4	1	1	0
NIGERIA	1988	.0490288	.901	90866	2.4	1	0	0
NIGERIA	1989	.0488059	.94	93505	2.4	1	0	0
NIGERIA	1990	.0751726	.952	96203	2.4	1	0	1
NIGERIA	1991	.0747393	.995	98983	2.4	1	0	1
NIGERIA	1992	.0742639	1.04	102000	2.4	1	0	1
NIGERIA	1993	.0762637	.978	104892.9	2.4	1	0	1
NIGERIA	1994	.0502013	.971	108014.3	2.4	1	0	0

NIGERIA	1995	.0510193	.944	111273	2.4	1	0	0
NIGERIA	1996	.0515007	.939	114568.1	2.4	1	0	0
NIGERIA	1997	.0516879	.952	117897.1	2.4	1	0	0
NIGERIA	1998	.0520953	.951	121257.3	2.4	1	0	0
NIGERIA	1999	.1311268	.943	.	2.4	1	1	1

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
pr	40	.0552782	.0266847	.020162	.1311268
gdpenl	40	.9615	.306574	.482	1.515
pop	39	76780.48	20835.06	51595	121257.3
mtnest	40	2.4	0	2.4	2.4
Oil	40	.825	.3848076	0	1
instab	40	.275	.4522026	0	1
anocl	40	.15	.3616203	0	1

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
pr	1550	.018723	.0191254	.0006228	.2093887
gdpenl	1561	1.095448	.9549041	.196	7.777
pop	1550	10008.91	14530.35	270	121257.3
mtnest	1593	12.75548	22.33017	0	82.20001
Oil	1593	.0803515	.271922	0	1
instab	1587	.1770636	.3818429	0	1
anocl	1582	.2237674	.4168998	0	1

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
pr	6327	.0167543	.0228494	2.45e-10	.488229
gdpenl	6373	3.651117	4.536645	.048	66.735
pop	6433	31786.92	102560.8	222	1238599
mtnest	6610	18.08833	20.96648	0	94.3
Oil	6610	.1295008	.3357787	0	1
instab	6596	.1464524	.353586	0	1
anocl	6541	.2256536	.418044	0	1

. Polity 2 Scores For Nigeria By Year

country	year	polity2
NIGERIA	1960	8
NIGERIA	1961	8
NIGERIA	1962	8
NIGERIA	1963	8
NIGERIA	1964	7
NIGERIA	1965	7
NIGERIA	1966	-7
NIGERIA	1967	-7
NIGERIA	1968	-7
NIGERIA	1969	-7
NIGERIA	1970	-7
NIGERIA	1971	-7
NIGERIA	1972	-7
NIGERIA	1973	-7
NIGERIA	1974	-7
NIGERIA	1975	-7
NIGERIA	1976	-7
NIGERIA	1977	-7
NIGERIA	1978	0
NIGERIA	1979	7
NIGERIA	1980	7
NIGERIA	1981	7

NIGERIA	1982	7	
NIGERIA	1983	7	
NIGERIA	1984	-7	

NIGERIA	1985	-7	
NIGERIA	1986	-7	
NIGERIA	1987	-7	
NIGERIA	1988	-7	
NIGERIA	1989	-5	

NIGERIA	1990	-5	
NIGERIA	1991	-5	
NIGERIA	1992	-5	
NIGERIA	1993	-7	
NIGERIA	1994	-7	

NIGERIA	1995	-6	
NIGERIA	1996	-6	
NIGERIA	1997	-6	
NIGERIA	1998	-1	
NIGERIA	1999	4	
-----+			