

## Ethnic Politics and State Power in Africa

Why are some African countries trapped in vicious cycles of ethnic exclusion and civil war, while others experience relative peace? In this groundbreaking book, Philip Roessler addresses this question. Roessler models Africa's weak, ethnically divided states as confronting rulers with a coup–civil war trap—sharing power with ethnic rivals is necessary to underwrite societal peace and prevent civil war, but increases rivals' capabilities to seize sovereign power in a coup d'état. How rulers respond to this strategic trade-off is shown to be a function of their country's ethnic geography and the distribution of threat capabilities it produces. Moving between in-depth case studies of Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo based on years of field work and statistical analyses of powersharing, coups and civil war across sub-Saharan Africa, the book serves as an exemplar of the benefits of mixed methods research for theory-building and testing in comparative politics.

Philip Roessler is an Assistant Professor of Government and Director of the Center for African Development at the College of William and Mary, Virginia. He is an expert on conflict, state building, and development in sub-Saharan Africa with extensive field experience across the region. His book builds on his 2011 *World Politics* article “The Enemy Within”, which won the Gregory Luebbert Award from the American Political Science Association for the best article in comparative politics. He is also author of *Why Comrades Go to War: Liberation Politics and the Outbreak of Africa's Deadliest Conflict* (with Harry Verhoeven, 2016).

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-17607-2 — Ethnic Politics and State Power in Africa

Philip Roessler

Frontmatter

[More Information](#)

---

# Ethnic Politics and State Power in Africa

*The Logic of the Coup–Civil War Trap*

PHILIP ROESSLER

*College of William & Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia*



CAMBRIDGE  
UNIVERSITY PRESS

CAMBRIDGE  
UNIVERSITY PRESS

University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of education, learning, and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

[www.cambridge.org](http://www.cambridge.org)

Information on this title: [www.cambridge.org/9781107176072](http://www.cambridge.org/9781107176072)

DOI: 10.1017/9781316809877

© Philip Roessler 2016

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2016

Printed in the United States of America by Sheridan Books, Inc.

*A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library.*

ISBN 978-1-107-17607-2 Hardback

ISBN 978-1-316-62821-8 Paperback

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party Internet websites referred to in this publication and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

Cambridge University Press  
978-1-107-17607-2 — Ethnic Politics and State Power in Africa  
Philip Roessler  
Frontmatter  
[More Information](#)

---

*For Kate and my parents, Anne and Jim*

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-17607-2 — Ethnic Politics and State Power in Africa

Philip Roessler

Frontmatter

[More Information](#)

---

## Contents

<i>List of Figures</i>	<i>page xi</i>
<i>List of Tables</i>	xii
<i>List of Maps</i>	xiv
<i>Preface and Acknowledgments</i>	xv
<i>List of Abbreviations</i>	xxvi
<b>1 Introduction</b>	<b>I</b>
1.1 The Purge: Juba, December 2013	I
1.2 Civil War in Weak States: Existing Approaches, Unanswered Questions	7
1.3 The Institutional Basis of Peace in Weak States	11
1.4 Central Argument: Ethnic Powersharing, Strategic Uncertainty, and the Coup–Civil War Trap in Africa	16
1.5 Theoretical Expectations	20
1.6 Research Design and Key Findings	21
1.7 A Look Ahead	28
<b>PART I PUZZLE AND THEORY</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>2 A Meso-level Approach to the Study of Civil War</b>	<b>33</b>
2.1 Introduction	33
2.2 The Weak State Paradigm of Civil War	36
2.3 The Microcomparative Turn in the Study of Civil War and Its Limitations	41
2.4 The Institutional Basis of Peace in Weak States: The Political Networks Hypothesis	44

2.5	Personal Rule, Ethnopolitical Networks, and Societal Peace in Africa	46
2.6	Conclusion	58
3	Theories of Ethnopolitical Exclusion	60
3.1	Introduction	60
3.2	What Is Ethnopolitical Exclusion?	63
3.3	Instrumental Theories of Ethnopolitical Exclusion	66
3.4	Cultural Theories of Ethnopolitical Exclusion	72
3.5	Strategic Theories of Ethnopolitical Exclusion	75
3.6	Conclusion: The Primacy of Strategic Models of Ethnopolitical Exclusion	81
4	The Strategic Logic of War in Africa	82
4.1	Introduction	82
4.2	Building Blocks of a Strategic Theory of Civil War	83
4.3	Summary and Hypotheses	98
4.4	Empirical Strategy	99
	PART II THEORY-BUILDING CASE STUDY	101
5	Political Networks, Brokerage, and Cooperative Counterinsurgency: Civil War Averted in Darfur	103
5.1	Introduction	103
5.2	Historical Background	108
5.3	The Origin and Organization of Sudan's Islamic Movement	119
5.4	The <i>Tanzim</i> in Darfur	127
5.5	Al-Ingaz and the Pacification of Darfur	130
5.6	A Disaffected Islamist and the Coalescence of a Dissident Group	135
5.7	Insurgency versus Counterinsurgency in Darfur, 1991–1992	138
5.8	Analysis and Theoretical Implications: Exploring the Political Networks Hypothesis	142
5.9	Conclusion: Political Networks and the Feasibility of Armed Rebellion	146
6	The Strategic Logic of Ethnopolitical Exclusion: The Breakdown of Sudan's Islamic Movement	147
6.1	Introduction	147
6.2	The Sheikh versus the Field Marshal	151
6.3	The Ethnoregional Dimension to the Elite Conflict	161
6.4	Ethnic Exclusion and Ethnic Balancing	169
6.5	Analysis and Theoretical Implications: Exploring the Strategic Logic of Ethnopolitical Exclusion	174
6.6	Conclusion	176



*Contents*

ix

7	Political Exclusion and Civil War: The Outbreak of the Darfur Civil War	178
7.1	Introduction	178
7.2	The Origins of the Second Darfur Rebellion	181
7.3	A Critical Juncture in Darfur: Non-cooperative Counterinsurgency	186
7.4	The Outbreak of Full-Scale Civil War	190
7.5	Analysis of Link between Political Exclusion and the Second Darfur Rebellion	199
7.6	Conclusion	203
	PART III TESTING THE ARGUMENT	205
8	Empirical Analysis of the Coup–Civil War Trap	207
8.1	Introduction	207
8.2	Empirical Strategy: Using the Ethnic Power Relations Dataset to Capture Ethnopolitical Networks in Sub-Saharan Africa	208
8.3	Testing the Coup–Civil War Trap	211
8.4	Empirical Analysis: Access to Power and the Coup–Civil War Trade-Off	215
8.5	Testing the Strategic Logic of Ethnopolitical Exclusion, Part I: Regime Breakdown in Africa’s Ethnically Divided Regimes	221
8.6	Testing the Strategic Logic of Ethnopolitical Exclusion, Part II: Africa’s Co-conspirator Civil Wars	228
8.7	Co-conspirator at War	235
8.8	Conclusion	241
9	A Model-Testing Case: Explaining Africa’s Great War	243
9.1	Introduction	243
9.2	From Comrades-in-Arms to Belligerents at War: Explaining the Political Dynamics of Africa’s Great War	246
9.3	Instrumentalist Theories of Conflict and Africa’s Great War	252
9.4	Kabila, His Co-conspirators, and the Commitment Problem	256
9.5	Endgame	262
9.6	Conclusion	265
	PART IV EXTENSIONS	267
10	The Strategic Logic of Peace in Africa	269
10.1	Introduction	269
10.2	Threat Capabilities and Self-Enforcing Powersharing	271

10.3	Empirical Evidence: The Effect of Balance of Threat Capabilities on Ethnopolitical Bargaining	275
10.4	Discussion and Sensitivity Analysis	278
10.5	Implications	285
10.6	Conclusion	289
11	Conclusion	291
11.1	Summary of the Argument and Evidence	291
11.2	Contributions	295
11.3	Avenues for Future Research	299
11.4	Beyond Africa: Insights from the Coup–Civil War Trap for Understanding State Failure in Iraq and Syria	302
11.5	Policy Implications: Ending the Coup–Civil War Trap in Africa	308
	<i>Appendix 1 A Note on the Book’s Qualitative Methods</i>	317
	<i>Appendix 2 Data Variable Dictionary</i>	321
	<i>Appendix 3 Data on Ethnic Transfers of Power and Ethnicity of Coup Conspirators and Insurgents</i>	325
	<i>References</i>	360
	<i>Index</i>	379

## Figures

1.1	Nested Research Design	<i>page</i> 22
2.1	Schematic of Personal Rule in Weak States	36
2.2	Schematic of Ethnopolitical Exclusion in Weak States	56
2.3	Modal Regime Types in Postcolonial Africa, Independence to 2005	58
3.1	Ethnic Politics as a Two-Level Game	75
4.1	Sources of Ethnic Transfers of Power in Africa, Independence to 2005	87
4.2	Sudan's Al-Ingaz Regime and Civil War in Darfur: An Extended Theory-Building Case Study	100
5.1	Organizational Structure of Sudan's Islamic Movement	125
6.1	The Factionalization of Sudan's Islamic Movement, 1998–2000	148
8.1	The Coup–Rebellion Trade-Off in Postcolonial Africa	217
8.2	Access to Power and Likelihood of Executing a Successful Coup	218
8.3	Predicted Probability of Group Rebellion by Recently Excluded Co-Conspirators, Independence to 2005	235
10.1	Africa's Two Equilibriums, Independence to 2005	270
11.1	The Coup–Civil War Trade-Off in Sub-Saharan Africa, Independence to 2005	307

## Tables

3.1	Logics of Ethnopolitical Exclusion	<i>page</i> 61
5.1	Structural Determinants of War in Darfur, Sudan	107
7.1	Channels by which Ethnopolitical Exclusion Increases Civil War Risk: Evidence from Sudan	180
8.1	Ethnopolitical Inclusion, Coups and Civil War in Africa: Independence to 2005	220
8.2	Post-Independence Split Domination Regimes and the Coups–Civil War Trap	225
8.3	Co-Conspirators, Coup Attempts, and Ethnic Exclusion in Africa, Independence to 2005	231
8.4	Co-Conspirators and Rebellion in Africa, Independence to 2005	234
10.1	Balance of Threat Capabilities, Powersharing, and Relative Risk of Coups Versus Civil War	274
10.2	Summary Statistics (Threat Capabilities)	276
10.3	Distribution of Ruling Group–Rival Group Dyads by Balance of Threat Capabilities Across Sub-Saharan Africa, Independence to 2009	277
10.4	Balance of Threat Capabilities and Predicted Probabilities of Powersharing, Coups, and Armed Rebellion	279
10.5	Distribution of Dyads Using Fearon (2003) Data on Ethnic Geography, Independence to 2009	281
10.6	Balance of Threat Capabilities and the Likelihood of Ethnic Inclusion, Coups, and Civil War Using Ethnic Configurations from Fearon (2003)	282
10.7	Balance of Threat Capabilities and the Likelihood of Ethnic Inclusion, Coups, and Civil War with Independence Group Configurations	284

*List of Tables* xiii

10.8	State Size, Ethnopolitical Exclusion, Rebellion, and Coups in Africa	289
A3.1	Ruling Group Changes in Sub-Saharan Africa, Independence to 2005	325
A3.2	Ethnicity of Conspirators of Failed and Successful Coups and Successful Rebellions, Independence to 2005	334
A3.3	Ethnicity of Rebel Groups in Sub-Saharan Africa, Independence to 2005	355

## Maps

1.1	The Outbreak of Civil War in South Sudan, December 2013–January 2014	<i>page</i> 4
1.2	Civil Wars by Country in Sub-Saharan Africa, Independence to 2005	8
5.1	Political Topography of Sudan (2001)	104
5.2	First Darfur Rebellion, 1991–1992	140
7.1	The Outbreak of the Second Darfur Rebellion, July 2002–April 2003	179
9.1	Democratic Republic of the Congo	248

## Preface and Acknowledgments

What causes civil war? This question has been at the forefront of development and foreign policy agendas over the past quarter-century as intrastate conflict remains one of the principal sources of mass violence, displacement, economic destruction, and regional instability. From Syria to Iraq to South Sudan, the scourge of large-scale political violence between the state and its citizens continues.

What underlies this pernicious phenomenon? Poverty?<sup>1</sup> Inequality?<sup>2</sup> Conflict over land and territory?<sup>3</sup> Environmental change?<sup>4</sup> Weak, corrupt, and predatory states?<sup>5</sup> Ethnonationalism?<sup>6</sup>

This book places bargaining over power—the *sine qua non* of civil war—at the center of the analysis. While seemingly an obvious approach, it is surprising the degree to which competition for control of the central government has been marginal to the civil war literature.

<sup>1</sup> Paul Collier, *The Bottom Billion: Why the Poorest Countries Are Failing and What Can Be Done About It* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

<sup>2</sup> Frances Stewart, *Horizontal Inequalities and Conflict: Understanding Group Violence in Multiethnic Societies* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008). Lars-Erik Cederman, Kristian Skrede Gleditsch, and Halvard Buhaug, *Inequality, Grievances, and Civil War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

<sup>3</sup> Monica Duffy Toft, *The Geography of Ethnic Violence: Identity, Interests, and the Indivisibility of Territory* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003).

<sup>4</sup> Thomas F. Homer-Dixon, *Environment, Scarcity, and Violence* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999).

<sup>5</sup> James D. Fearon and David D. Laitin, “Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War,” *American Political Science Review*, 97 (1) (2003): 75–90.

<sup>6</sup> Andreas Wimmer, *Waves of War: Nationalism, State Formation, and Ethnic Exclusion in the Modern World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

In focusing on state power, the theoretical approach is fundamentally Hobbesian; civil war is seen as a consequence of the problem of forging order and peace out of anarchy. Hierarchies and anarchies, order and disorder ebb and flow throughout the course of human history. How and why they do so are among the most important puzzles with which social scientists grapple.

In this book, I focus on the anarchic conditions that arose with the dissolution of colonialism in Africa. With the withdrawal of the colonial Leviathan, a fierce competition for control of the extractive institutions left behind by the European imperial powers ensued. In the absence of strong cross-cutting institutions, this high-stakes game for political power often played out along ethnic lines—that is, between different descent-based social groups with shared culture and customs, a common homeland and geographic proximity, and strong norms of reciprocity. The Hobbesian problem confronting African states after independence was how, in the absence of an absolute authority, these strong social groups could forge a political covenant to govern their new countries.

In Africa's newly independent states, rulers recognized that sharing power with ethnic rivals was integral to building peace. Without such alliances, rulers lacked the capabilities to broadcast power beyond their own group, leaving their regimes vulnerable to societally based armed rebellions that they had little capacity to effectively defeat. But sharing power risked opening the door for their rivals to seize sovereign power for themselves in a coup d'état. Overall, then, this book's central argument is that the withdrawal of the colonial Leviathans, and the weak ethnically divided states they left behind, confronted Africa's postcolonial rulers with a coup–civil war trap.<sup>7</sup> The post-World War II international system worsened the strategic uncertainty dominating politics in these regimes by granting sovereign recognition to any group that controlled the capital city, no matter how they came to power and how much control they had outside the capital.

One of the devastating implications that follows from this theoretical framework is that civil war represents the consequence of a strategic choice by rulers, backed by their coethnics, to coup-proof their regimes from their ethnic rivals. With their rivals unable to credibly commit not to exploit their access to the central government to seize sovereign power for themselves, rulers are tempted to choose exclusion as a strategy to

<sup>7</sup> That the coup–civil war trap has also plagued Ethiopia and Liberia after the breakdown of ethnocratic rule illustrates that this political phenomenon is not only a legacy of European colonialism.



*Preface and Acknowledgments*

xvii

consolidate their hold on power and trade the clear and present danger of the coup d'état today for the uncertain risk of a distant, future civil war. This helps to account for the intractability of civil wars in many African states: they result not from miscalculation or greed but rather follow a clear strategic logic and are deemed the least threatening option for the political interests of the ruling group.

The upshot of this, however, is that as the *strategic* costs of civil war increase, choosing ethnopolitical exclusion becomes less appealing. And it suggests, counterintuitively, that strong civil war, or threat, capabilities, in which rival groups can mobilize a rebellion that can credibly threaten the capital *even* when they are excluded from state power, may help to induce powersharing. The empirical evidence demonstrates exactly this. Powersharing is significantly more likely to be self-enforcing when the ruling group *and* a given rival are endowed with strong threat capabilities due to their size and proximity to the capital. Under such conditions, rulers and the opposition are more likely to choose powersharing and reluctantly trade executive authority via coups—which do not significantly alter the relative distribution of power—than accept a mutually costly total war for control of the state.

This finding, however, points to another pernicious legacy of colonial rule—it tended to create unusually large and unusually divided states. Thus, for rulers of Sudan, Chad or the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), three of Africa's most notorious conflict-affected, failed states, their countries' ethnic geography reduces incentives for powersharing with peripheral groups, whose remoteness renders them strategically impotent and gives them little leverage to hold their rulers accountable.

What is the way out of this vicious trap? Deeply rooted in the sociopolitical foundations of the African state, overcoming the coup–civil war trap will not occur overnight. Instead, it will require significant changes over time along three key dimensions: (1) the rules of the game; (2) the structure of the state; and (3) the basis of societal mobilization. Yet, over the past two decades, there has been significant change across all three dimensions. For example, on the changing rules of the game, the African Union no longer recognizes groups that come to power via coups and elections are now the modal source of political change. On the changing structure of the state, a number of African regimes, backed by renewed external investment, especially from China, in big infrastructural projects, have sought to strengthen the state's capacity to broadcast its power into the periphery. Finally, on the changing basis of social mobilization, urbanization, technological diffusion, and generational change are strengthening interethnic social ties and

bases of trust, while leading an increasing number of individuals to reject political appeals along ethnic lines. This broadening of social identification and social movements increases society's capabilities to hold incumbents to account if they violate the letter or spirit of constitutionalism.

The significance of these changes should not be underestimated; at the same time, they have a long way to go before the coup–civil war trap is rendered obsolete. For now, coups still remain a viable instrument of political change, if not a path to sovereign power, despite the anti-coup rules of the African Union; electoral rigging and other malfeasance undermine the institutional constraints posed by elections; despite significant investments in infrastructure, the political topography of the African state does not look vastly different than at independence; and, finally, political mobilization along ethnic lines remains the dominant mode of politics in many countries. Until institutional, structural, and social change is consolidated, the pernicious consequences of the coup–civil war trap will remain a key source of state failure and large-scale political violence, as was tragically demonstrated in South Sudan at the end of 2013—the case that opens the book.

\* \* \*

The seeds for this book project were planted long ago when I was an undergraduate student at Indiana University and ended up spending three summers working in western Kenya. My time in Kenya had two profound influences on me: it inspired an interest in both the politics of the African state and civil war. With Sudan's civil war between the government and the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) still raging at the time and spilling over into Kenya, I developed a fascination with Kenya's troubled northern neighbor. Each summer I was in Kenya I would make my way up to the United Nations Operation Lifeline Sudan base camp in Lokichogio, northwest Kenya. There I hoped to hitch a ride on an aid flight into South Sudan with the goal of learning firsthand from South Sudanese about the long-running conflict. It would take me three years of trying, but I finally made it into South Sudan—only to end up in western Mayom County in Unity State on the day before Khartoum launched one of its final counteroffensives to clear the oil fields ahead of the peace talks getting under way in Kenya. To this day I remain grateful to the people of the village of Kerieli who hosted me and kept me safe as we fled for four days together to Bahr el Ghazal; the sight of their bodies getting smaller and smaller as I was safely lifted out of the area by a food aid flight remains seared into my memory. And it is my hope that, in whatever small way, this book contributes to ending and preventing war and the suffering it causes.

*Preface and Acknowledgments*

xix

Witnessing the devastating consequences of civil war in South Sudan reaffirmed my interest in the subject and profoundly shaped the course of my Ph.D. at the University of Maryland. At Maryland I was extremely fortunate to study under the guidance of Mark Lichbach, whose formidable theoretical understanding of conflict provided the perfect balance to what I was learning firsthand in the field. At Maryland I also benefited from the guidance of a number of faculty members, including Virginia Haufler, Christian Davenport, Jillian Schwedler, Ernest Wilson, Fred Alford, and, especially, Marc Morjé Howard. As mentor, coauthor, and friend, Marc opened many doors for me while instilling in me the value of mixed-methods research and the importance of family–academic balance.

At Maryland, I also had the opportunity to work for the International Crisis Group as part of the original “dream team” of interns John Prendergast assembled to work on Sudan and other African countries. I would work as a consultant for the Crisis Group at various points throughout my graduate student career and would benefit immensely from the friendship and intellectual support of JP, John Norris, Colin Thomas-Jensen, and, especially, Suliman Baldo and Dave Mozersky. (I remain indebted to Dave for a number of things, but especially for helping from Nairobi to extricate me from the aforementioned trouble I ran into in Mayom County.)

As I was formulating my thesis on the link between political authority in weak states and civil war, Darfur erupted into large-scale political violence. Despite also facing high levels of political and economic marginalization from the central government and intermittent cycles of communal conflict, Darfur had never produced the kind of sustained antigovernment rebellions seen in South Sudan. The puzzle for me was why not and why now. Supported by a David L. Boren Fellowship from the National Security Education Program and subsequent support from a Dissertation Improvement Grant from the National Science Foundation, I set back out to Sudan. I sought to accomplish two things: (1) to better understand the political causes of the civil war in Darfur and (2) to situate it in comparative perspective. In doing so, I became fascinated as to why, a decade before the outbreak of the Darfur civil war, the Sudanese government, also led by Omar al-Bashir, faced and effectively defeated a rebellion in Darfur but failed spectacularly to do so in 2002 and 2003. Same underlying structural conditions, two rebellions, two radically different outcomes. The existing civil war literature could not account for this variation.

In addressing this puzzle I conducted semi-structured interviews with hundreds of Sudanese (many interviewees multiple times) from the top

echelon of the Islamic Movement, Islamist cadres, military officers, tribal elders in Darfur, leaders of Darfur's rebel movements, rank-and-file members of the rebellions, opposition politicians, journalists, civil society activists, academics, and international observers. (Among the internationals, I am particularly grateful to Janice Elmore, Opheera McDoom, and the African Union Mission in Sudan for the assistance they provided me.) With Khartoum as a base, I made several trips to all three of Darfur's states as well as to Eritrea (where most of the rebel leadership was based at the time), Chad, and Abuja, Nigeria, where the Darfur peace talks were being held.

Despite its reputation to the outside world, Sudan is an incredibly hospitable place to work, as many know who have conducted research in the country. Beyond the famous hospitality, generosity, and sense of humor of the Sudanese, there exists a culture of support and encouragement for educational pursuits and endeavors (sadly a thing that too few Sudanese are able to embark upon). This spirit was evidenced in Sudanese from all walks of life from the *amjad* drivers in Khartoum, with whom I incessantly discussed the split in Al-Harakat Al-Islamiyya between Bashir and Turabi, to the Darfurians who opened their offices and doors to me to dissect the roots of the devastating civil war in their homeland, which I know could often invoke painful memories.

In Sudan, the following people were especially gracious and patient in helping me understand the complexities of Sudanese politics: Atta el-Battahani, Ali Shammam, Abul Ghasim Seif El Din, Abdallah Adam Khatir, Sayeed al-Khateeb, General Ibrahim Suleiman, Idriss Yusef, Jibril Abdullah, Qutbi al-Mahdi, Mohammed Hassan al-Amin, Mohamed Suliman Khatir, Sharif Mohamedein, Abdel-Rahim Hamdi, and especially Hamid Ali Nour, who generously served as what amounted to my personal tutor on Sudanese politics. I will always fondly remember our sessions over sweet Sudanese tea. For their friendship and for showing me Sudanese life beyond the political realm, including trips down the Nile River to Crocodile Island, I am grateful to Hassan Salah and Mubarak Mahgoub. I also would like to thank Anwar Idris and Mamoon Mohammed Abdallah for superb research assistance with translation and in the newspaper archives, respectively. Outside of Sudan, I am thankful to Ali al-Haj for taking the time to extensively meet me several times to discuss the rise and fall of Sudan's Islamic Movement as well as Professor Abdelwahab El-Affendi for sharing his unparalleled knowledge of the Movement. Last but not least I am exceptionally grateful to Abdulghani Idris from whom I gained a deeper understanding of the Islamic

*Preface and Acknowledgments*

xxi

Movement and broader Sudanese political history and whose sense of humor, compassion, and friendship uplift all who know him.

Having derived an original interpretation of the Darfur civil war and the building blocks of a generalizable theory of civil war in weak states, I then had the wonderful opportunity to further develop and expand the project on fellowships from Stanford University and Oxford University. Both institutions represent incredible intellectual environments and connected me to fellow scholars who would profoundly shape the development of the book. At Stanford, where I was a predoctoral fellow at the Center for International Security and Cooperation (CISAC), I am deeply appreciative to Lynn Eden, the Associate Director for Research, for overseeing the fellowship program and investing in each of us. At Stanford, I tried to absorb as much knowledge as I could from Jim Fearon, David Laitin, Jeremy Weinstein, Michael McFaul, and David Abernethy. Coming to Stanford with Darfur's sandy soil virtually still on my shoes, their incisive questioning and feedback helped crystallize what at that time were still raw ideas. I am pretty sure it was in one of our lunch conversations that Jim Fearon elegantly summed up my interpretation of the Darfur civil war as a ruler choosing to substitute civil war risk for coup risk. Beyond pushing me to take the project to the next level, I learned from these distinguished scholars the meaning of academic collegiality and mentorship.

After Stanford, I moved to Oxford, where I received an Andrew Mellon Postdoctoral Fellowship in the Department of Politics and International Relations. At Oxford I would be surrounded by a wonderful group of Africanists and political scientists—Nancy Bermeo, Dave Anderson, Adrienne LeBas, Nic Cheeseman, Phil Clark, Anke Hoeffler, and Ricardo Soares de Oliveira—from whose friendship and intellectual support I immensely benefited (with special thanks to Adrienne who is a kindred spirit for many of us in our Africanist cohort). My time at Oxford coincided with the publication of the Ethnic Power Relations (EPR) dataset by Andreas Wimmer, Lars-Erik Cederman, and Brian Min. I wish to thank Andreas for sharing the dataset and offering valuable feedback and encouragement at the early stages of this project. The dataset provided an invaluable opportunity to empirically test the existence of a coup–civil war trade-off in postcolonial Africa if I could generate data on the ethnicity of coup conspirators and rebels. So I set off to the enchanting Rhodes House Library to scour its Commonwealth and African Collections for detailed information on all of Africa's postcolonial conflicts. Indispensable to this endeavor was the Africa Contemporary Record and the Historical Dictionary series, especially the volumes by Samuel Decalo. I am grateful

to the staff at the Rhodes House Library for their assistance. This research would be published in *World Politics* in 2011 under the title, “The Enemy Within: Personal Rule, Coups and Civil War.” This forms the basis of parts of Chapters 4 and 8 in this book.

At Oxford I received two grants from the John Fell OUP Fund that proved instrumental to the project’s advancement. The grants allowed me to conduct additional field research in Sudan and critically also in Chad. (In N’djamenā I benefited immensely from the assistance of Dr. Siddick Adam Issa, who not only introduced me to a number of key players but whose own insights into the Darfur conflict and Chad–Sudan relations were quite valuable.) The research grants from the John Fell OUP Fund also enabled me to qualitatively test my coup-proofing theory of civil war on a second case. One of the most intriguing possibilities was the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the war that would break out there in August 1998—Africa’s Great War. The quantitative analysis pointed to the DRC case as a paradigmatic example of a co-conspirator civil war, but few seemed to study it in this way. The prospect of delving into the massively complex case of the DRC, a country in which I had never worked, was daunting to say the least. But then I met Harry Verhoeven.

As I was pondering adding the Congo case, I gave a lecture at the Sudan Programme, a forum for discussing Sudan at St. Antony’s College under the inimitable stewardship of Ahmed Al-Shahi, the prominent social anthropologist on northern Sudan, who would become a good friend and supporter during my time at Oxford. It was after that lecture that I met Harry, a D.Phil. student in politics at Oxford at the time. Aptly described by our mutual friend, Phil Clark, as a “one-man juggernaut,” given the depth and breadth of his intellect and scholarship and the dynamism of his personality, Harry had lived and worked in Kinshasa as an intern in the Belgian Embassy some two years earlier and expressed enthusiasm in the merits of adding the DRC to the project. At that moment our collaboration was born, and we set off to work together on applying the coup–civil war trap to the post-Mobutu order in the DRC. From the Holy See in Rome (where we were graciously received by Frank De Coninck, the former Belgian Ambassador to Congo, who was serving as Ambassador to the Vatican at the time) to Kinshasa to Kigali, we tracked down and interviewed as many of the protagonists and other stakeholders involved in the overthrow of Mobutu and the outbreak of Africa’s Great War. It proved an incredible physical and intellectual journey, punctuated by the nightly mad dash across the Boulevard du 30 Juin to O’Poeta, trips to the Congo river, and intense interviews on the

banks of Lake Kivu, in the back bar at the Sultani Hotel, and in nondescript offices in Kigali. Harry's theoretical insights, encyclopedic knowledge of Congo and the region, and unparalleled skills in winning and then executing elite-level interviews strengthened this book immensely. Chapter 9 is a product of our incredible collaboration. Unable to contain all of our research and theoretical insights on Africa's Great War in a single chapter or paper, we have since coauthored *Why Comrades Go to War: Liberation Politics and the Outbreak of Africa's Deadliest Conflict* (2016).

After Oxford, I joined the Department of Government at the College of William & Mary (W&M), another wonderful academic institution and intellectual environment and the perfect place to complete the book project. Being surrounded by both supportive and smart colleagues has helped me to see this book to the finish line. At W&M I would like to thank the former chair of the Government Department, John McGlennon, for his steadfast support of my research and my need to make field trips to Sudan, Congo, Angola, and elsewhere in sub-Saharan Africa. I am also grateful to the College's Faculty Summer Grant Program, which funded summer work on the book manuscript.

At the end of my second year at W&M, the Institute for the Theory and Practice of International Relations (ITPIR) sponsored and hosted a book workshop for me. The book workshop proved invaluable and easily the best day of my young academic career. Filled with positive energy and careful and constructive discussion of debates I had had in my own head for some time, the book workshop strengthened the manuscript immeasurably. I am deeply appreciative to ITPIR and its indomitable director, Mike Tierney, for organizing and holding the workshop. As our colleague Simon Stow describes him, Mike produces a Steve Jobsesque "reality distortion field" that inspires and brings out the best of all of us at W&M; for his inspiration and generous provision of public goods, we are grateful.

For their generous participation and insightful feedback and suggestions, I owe deep thanks to Will Reno, Alex de Waal, and David Cunningham as well as to my colleagues at W&M: Mike, Steve Hanson, Sue Peterson, Paul Manna, Paula Pickering, Maurits van der Veen, Cullen Hendrix, and Dave Ohls.

Beyond the incredible feedback on the existing draft, the book workshop also helped to solidify a collaboration with Dave Ohls. Dave has a razor-sharp mind. It was his intuition that as the costs of civil war and coup converge such that rulers gain no strategic advantage from exclusion



then powersharing becomes more likely that motivated the threat-capabilities theory of powersharing. Armed with this insight, we set out to identify the conditions that lead rivals to choose powersharing. Chapter 10 summarizes the results of that collaboration. We have fully developed and tested that argument in different form and with additional data in our stand-alone paper, “Self-Enforcing Powersharing in Weak States.”

Beyond my colleagues, special recognition is also due to a remarkable group of W&M students who helped in various stages on the book: Luke Elias, Michael Hibshman, Logan Ferrell, Kyle Titlow, and Nadia Ilunga. Luke and Logan took extensive notes at the book workshop; both think with incredible clarity and have offered insightful reflections on the book’s theoretical model. Moreover, debriefing with Luke after the workshop helped me to get my head around the hundreds of different comments and suggestions to come out of the workshop. Michael contributed valuable research assistance that helped to strengthen Chapter 10, especially on the dynamics of durable powersharing and the coup trap in Ghana. Meanwhile, Kyle significantly advanced the geospatial analysis in this book, not only in helping to calculate the threat-capabilities’ scores used in the analysis in Chapter 10 but also in producing a number of excellent maps, including the ones that formed the basis of the maps in this book. Finally, I am extremely grateful to Nadia Ilunga for excellent research assistance both at W&M and in Kinshasa and for the wonderful hospitality of her family.

Throughout this project’s duration, I also benefited from feedback at research presentations at Stanford, Oxford, Maryland, and W&M, and also at Yale University, University of Chicago, American University, St. Andrews University, and London School of Economics as well as at several of the annual meetings of the American Political Science Association. In addition, discussions with the following scholars proved useful at various stages throughout this project: Macartan Humphreys, Dan Slater, Stathis Kalyvas, Scott Straus, Lars-Erik Cederman, Julia Choucair Vizoso, Kristen Harkness, Jack Paine, and, especially, Rob Blair, who offered a set of very useful comments at my talk at Yale.

Such an endeavor and project is impossible, however, without a core base of support that can sustain one throughout its entirety, from the time in the field to the data collection and analysis to the writing and rewriting. I am blessed to have a wonderful group of friends and family without whom I would neither have initiated nor completed this project. I wish I could name and thank each individually.



*Preface and Acknowledgments*

xxv

In my first summer trip to Kenya I traveled with my dear friend Justin; from breaking my malaria-induced fever as we rushed to the hospital to our nightly conversations by kerosene lamp, he was and remains a great friend. For instilling in us a scientific outlook and Roessler family values, Grandma and Grandpa Ocre. For embodying those family values much better than I have, my unwavering and selfless sister and brother, Lisa and Steve. For the motivation to study the human condition, the inspiration to ask big questions about how the world works, and the fortitude to go out and tackle them, I wish to thank our parents, Anne and Jim. The love, support, and devotion they give to all of us—and now our children and their grandchildren—are beyond words.

Finally, to my dearest Kate. This project coincided with our young lives together. Your dad, Greg, was the first person from home I talked to when I finally made it out of Mayom County. Our engagement in the Maasai Mara occurred in the middle of my dissertation field research; our wedding was only a few weeks after I *finally* “finished” that field research. Fellowships at Stanford and Oxford led to our adventures in California and England and unforgettable trips with your sisters, Kim and Kristen. Our time at Oxford ended with the birth of Lucy, while Lena’s birth in Williamsburg came just on the heels of my book workshop and Libby’s a few months before I finally put the book to rest. That we have shared this experience together—and that you so generously allowed our experience to be shared with the labors of such a project—and that it has been punctuated by so many wonderful memories—not the least the births and first years of our wonderful daughters, Lucy, Lena, and Libby—mean so much to me. Without your patience, understanding, and intellectual support, this book would not be what it is.

## Abbreviations

AU	African Union
CAR	Central African Republic
DLF	Darfur Liberation Front
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EPR	Ethnic Power Relations
EPRDF	Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front
FAC	Forces Armées Congolaises
FAN	Forces Armées du Nord
ICC	International Criminal Court
ICF	Islamic Charter Front
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
ISIS	Islamic State of Iraq and Syria
KUSU	Khartoum University Student Union
NCP	National Congress Party
NIF	National Islamic Front
NISS	National Intelligence and Security Service
NPFL	National Patriotic Front of Liberia
NUP	National Unionist Party
OAU	Organization of African Unity
PAIC	Popular Arab and Islamic Conference
PRC	People's Redemption Council
PSC	Peace and Security Council
RCC	Revolutionary Command Council
RPA	Rwandan Patriotic Army
RPF	Rwandan Patriotic Front
RUF	Revolutionary United Front
SAF	Sudanese Armed Forces

*List of Abbreviations*

xxvii

SCP	Sudanese Communist Party
SFDA	Sudan Federal Democratic Alliance
SLA	Sudan Liberation Army
SPLA	Sudan People's Liberation Army
SPLM	Sudan People's Liberation Movement
UNLA	Uganda National Liberation Army