

The American cases are particularly apt for investigation, because the United States is one of the most frequent interveners in the international system. The reader comes away convinced that economic factors loom large in decisions to intervene. This is a valuable and original contribution.

Aydin's book is particularly notable for the rare unification of analysis of interstate conflicts and civil wars. That is, she analyzes her theory of intervention in both militarized interstate disputes and in civil wars. While a variety of scholars have pointed out that the standard bifurcation of IR conflict studies into discreet inter- versus intrastate areas of investigation is artificial, it is still extremely rare for investigators to include both interstate and intrastate conflicts in one study. Unifying analysis of both types of conflicts helps critique the unsubstantiated claim that they truly are different "types" of conflicts, and also increases confidence in Aydin's theoretical argument because she finds that strong economic ties between belligerents and third parties make interventions more likely in both inter- and intrastate conflicts. Her theory thus has a larger empirical domain than the competition which, again, tends to look only at interstate conflicts or only at civil wars. I very much hope her example will be emulated by scholars following in her footsteps.

One of the main findings of the book is particularly intriguing. In Chapter 4, Aydin finds and reports that economic ties make specifically military interventions more likely in interstate conflicts. But in Chapter 6 she finds and reports that economic ties make specifically economic or diplomatic interventions more likely in civil wars. In both instances economic ties increase the odds of intervention, so the unified framework is supported. But, the strategies of intervention vary across the two "types" of wars. Aydin suggests this difference may be caused by the fact that interstate conflicts tend to be quite short, limiting the down-side risks of military interventions. Civil wars, however, tend to drag on far longer than do interstate conflicts, and thus interveners have to be more cautious about involving themselves militarily because the costs will likely be far higher. While this is a plausible explanation, it does not exhaust interest in this finding. This is because in Chapter 1 (specifically Table 1.1 on page 3) Aydin reports that the most frequent type of intervention in inter-state conflicts is diplomatic (71 percent) and the most frequent type of intervention in civil wars is military (59 percent). Thus, not only do economically interested states vary their intervention strategy across inter- and intra-state conflicts, but they do so in directly opposite fashion to how the average or normal intervener intervenes. That is, the most frequent type of intervention in civil wars is a military intervention. But the economically motivated interveners are disproportionately likely to intervene non-militarily in civil wars. Similarly, economically motivated interveners run contrary to the norm because

they favor military interventions in interstate conflicts whereas most interveners (the vast majority, actually), favor diplomatic intervention. The question then is: Why do economically motivated interveners differ so much from interveners in general? This question is unanswered.

It may be that economically motivated interveners differ from interveners in general because their interests in the belligerent states are stronger than those of general interveners. In Chapter 2 Aydin writes about interventions in different phases of conflicts: pre-conflict, conflict, and post-conflict. Figure 2.1 (p. 25) indicates that pre-conflict interventions are intended to prevent conflict, and post-conflict interventions are intended to reconstruct the country, presumably to make recurrent conflict less likely. Although Aydin does not theorize about, nor does she analyze pre- or post-conflict interventions, it seems plausible that economically motivated third parties are perhaps the most likely to intervene in these pre- and post-conflict phases. A more developed theoretical argument that incorporated these other two phases would surely represent a step forward from the argument presented here, and might help us understand better why economically motivated third parties intervene differently than do other interveners.

This is an interesting book. Analysts of both interstate conflict and of civil war will find much to think about within it. The focus on economic motivations and domestic political constraints places it squarely within the liberal IR theory tradition, but is nonetheless original in intervention studies. That the theory does not discuss strategic interaction among belligerents and potential interveners, nor among potential interveners, will be disappointing to those favoring more current IR theorizing than the traditional debates between liberals and realists. It is likely that very different hypotheses would emerge if such considerations were taken into account. I look forward to seeing how Aydin and future scholars build on this work, in hopes that unified analyses of civil and interstate conflicts become the norm and in hopes of solving new theoretical puzzles such as that highlighted above.

**Alliance Formation in Civil Wars.** By Fotini Christia. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012. 356p. \$95.00 cloth, \$32.99 paper. doi:10.1017/S1537592714000632

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New and old studies tend to regard civil wars as organized around one of two separate dimensions: ethnicity or ideology. The social landscape of a civil war is therefore assumed to be shaped by blood ties or imported ideologies, where aggrieved ethnic groups or superpowers' ideological pawns face brutal governments in a war of all against all. Yet this approach is too simple to account for civil war environments that are characterized by cross-cutting ties and mostly instrumental adoption of identity by opposing actors.

Fotini Christia brings a rare insight to the politics of civil wars in *Alliance Formation in Civil Wars*. She shows that the cleavages that seem to be the most salient dividing lines of a society may be the building blocks of warring organizations, but they are less than satisfactory explanations for the ways in which these groups relate to one another in multiparty civil wars.

Christia satisfactorily applies what has long been regarded as the core of neorealism, the balance-of-power theory, to explain inter- and intragroup dynamics in political violence. She shows that even in civil wars where we would expect alignments on ethnic and ideological lines, organizations seem to be making highly strategic alliance decisions. Nicely predicted by balance-of-power theory, warring groups build minimum winning coalitions. In such diverse settings as Afghanistan and Bosnia, there is a strong tendency to balance the power of the stronger coalition by joining with the weaker side independent of the identity of the group. This is a coalition that is usefully sized to win the war but also guarantees that its members will maximize their share of the war spoils without being exploited by a stronger party. Identities complement this picture in interesting ways. The leadership invokes perceptual frames solely to justify their alliance decisions to the common folk. Identities therefore emerge as strategic choices made by the leadership cadre from a range of options to serve their interests.

Christia combines historical and quantitative analysis in a multimethod framework. She adopts a research design that allows sufficient variation in the key independent variables, power and identity, for a comparative case study approach. The book tracks four civil wars in two countries, Afghanistan and Bosnia Herzegovina. The jihad (1978–89) in Afghanistan and the Bosnian civil war (1941–45) are ideological wars, whereas the intra-Mujahedeen war (1992–98) and the second Bosnian civil war (1992–95) are fought along identity lines. Despite such differences, similar outcomes are observed in all four wars. Not surprisingly, the book's strongest chapters are those on the two Afghan civil wars (Chapters 3–5). The author's extensive fieldwork in Afghanistan resulted in fine-grained data that are suited to testing alliance formation and group fractionalization on multiple levels of analysis. At the warring group level, alliances follow the relative distribution of power, whereas commander-level rivalries closely mirror the alliances at the center rather than the characteristics of commanders. While alliance formation is endogenous to the conflict, group fractionalization is not. When they face dramatic battlefield losses, groups fractionalize along identity lines that are easily identifiable before the war. Quantitative tests (Chapter 5) analyze the same framework with a cross-national data set of multiparty conflicts and show that the most significant separation in alliance formation is observed between hegemonic and

balanced conflicts when controlling for politically salient cleavages.

*Alliance Formation in Civil Wars* goes beyond reviving balance of power and refurbishing it to fit intrastate contexts. In a book on balancing, the reader finds many helpful insights on identity and identity politics. Although coalition building between groups closely follows the relative distribution of power, a warring group splits along identity lines when its survival becomes at risk. Christia considers fractionalization as a response to the changes in the group's environment. However, given that identity allows us to predict how the group will split, it still presents an underlying current that coordinates actions in subtle ways. Recruitment of individuals into insurgent organizations tends to closely follow sociological and biological ties. Intermediaries and local power brokers build coalitions around cousinage and blood ties. They rely on closed societies for recruitment and try to spread the word through these networks. The fact that entrepreneurs in civil wars take into account local realities and civil war dynamics simultaneously opens up a research avenue that may have remained underexploited in Christia's framework. Identity may still be a relevant factor, but the mechanisms through which it plays a role in civil-war environments require more attention paid to the role of agency in mobilizing and reproducing them.

Midrange theories can be built from case studies through a meticulous process that requires back-and-forth between theory and evidence. When the analyst strives to test the theory in different contexts, there are challenges as well as rewards. While Christia's results on the warring-group level are comparable across cases, one might wonder whether the commander/subgroup-level analysis provides a similar basis. In the Afghanistan case, data on commander characteristics collected from primary sources allow for a test of the theory on the "meso level." In Bosnia, municipality, instead of commander, is the unit of analysis, and municipal data coded from prewar Yugoslavian maps only give an idea about the population sizes of ethnic groups before the war. Christia shows that conflict breaks out between ethnic groups in municipalities in accordance with the alliances at the center. Data-scarce environments certainly legitimize the use of proxies when necessary. Yet ethnic groups present a rather raw alternative to military commanders and may suggest few possible alliance combinations. Besides, in a theoretical setup where alliances are endogenous to the conflict, prewar measures may fail to account for groups' responses to the changing dynamics of the war. At the onset of the conflict, when little is known about how warring groups will perform on the battlefield, alliances may be driven less by power considerations and more by existing ties.

What defines the arena of political competition between groups? Survival as the foremost goal coordinates warring groups' alliance decisions and makes them especially sensitive

to the changes in their environment. Group dynamics may take a back seat and become a salient factor only when external forces, such as battlefield outcomes, threaten survival. Christia's book claims its spot in an emerging cottage industry of micro-level civil war studies initiated by the groundbreaking studies of Stathis Kalyvas (*The Logic of Violence in Civil War*, 2006) and Jeremy Weinstein (*Inside Rebellion*, 2007). (For further discussion, see Sidney Tarrow's "Inside Insurgency: Politics and Violence in an Age of Civil War," *Perspectives on Politics* [September 2007]: 587–600). With attention to the causal mechanisms at work, recent studies (e.g., Jason Lyall, "Are Co-Ethnics More Effective Counter-Insurgents?" *American Political Science Review* 104 [February 2010]: 1–20) brought context back into the study of civil wars in the international relations field by drawing from historical and sociological accounts. *Alliance Formation in Civil Wars* further shows that international relations theory is alive and can work along with other social science traditions to explain civil war processes.

**Hunger in the Balance: The New Politics of**

**International Food Aid.** By Jennifer Clapp. Ithaca, NY:

Cornell University Press, 2012. 216p. \$29.95 cloth.

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— William A. Munro, *Illinois Wesleyan University*

In this sweeping assessment of the global food aid regime, Jennifer Clapp sets out to do three things. The first is to map shifts in the regime from one driven by donor states' interests and designed as a surplus disposal mechanism to one oriented towards recipients' needs and defined in terms of emergency assistance. The second is to show that these shifts have been occasioned not by the growing influence of humanitarian norms emanating from international institutions – as some constructivists and institutionalists have argued – but by domestic economic interests and political coalitions within donor states, working through locally specific institutional arrangements. The third is to capture the political conflicts between powerful donors that have marked these shifts; even as food aid has become a multilaterally organized humanitarian enterprise, it remains dependent on individual donors to supply food aid resources and cannot transcend conflicts of interest between them. Consequently, food aid has not been *depoliticized* but *repoliticized* in ways that may actually imperil its ability to effectively address the needs of the hungry poor.

Clapp's assessment is persuasive, timely, and sobering. The central tension in conflicts over food aid is the move towards "untied" aid (i.e. aid that is not necessarily sourced in donor-produced commodities but may be provided in cash to buy locally or regionally produced (LRP) food). As Clapp notes, the argument for untying food aid is compelling; it is more cost-effective and efficient than providing donor-grown commodity crops, and it allows

better food choices for the poor. But its uptake among donors has been uneven with the largest and most influential donor – the United States – remaining staunchly resistant. This is because powerful economic interests that support tied aid (agribusiness, the shipping industry, and food-aid-delivery NGOs that benefit from monetization) have been able to trump the state's interest in cost-saving through effective Congressional lobbying. While most other major donors have untied their food aid in the last decade (Japan is a noteworthy exception), they have done so, Clapp argues in brief but pithy country analyses, because their policy-making institutions are development-oriented (rather than assistance-oriented) and relatively insulated from societal pressures, domestic economic interests that support tied aid have become sufficiently weakened, and state interests have shifted towards untying aid for cost-saving or humanitarian reasons. The United States and the European Union (EU) have become the chief antagonists in debates about untying food aid.

This new politics of food aid cannot be disentangled from broader developments in the global agrifood system, notably the development of new agricultural biotechnologies, the negotiation of agricultural trade rules within the WTO, and the effects of systemic price volatility in global agricultural markets which drove the 2007-2008 food price spikes. Clapp analyzes each of these issues in detail. As she notes, the controversy over whether genetically modified food (GMOs) should be disbursed to needy African countries with scant regulatory capacity catalyzed the politics of untying aid nicely. On the one hand, it strengthened the argument for LRP or monetary aid. The EU, African governments, and environmental NGOs argued strongly that tied aid, including GMOs sourced mainly from the United States, lay at the heart of the problem. On the other hand, it increased pressure from U.S. lobbies to keep international markets open for U.S. products. Thus, it inexorably politicized food aid.

Food aid also became a bargaining chip in negotiations over agricultural trade rules. The EU sought to impose strict rules on food aid on the argument that U.S. practices of tied aid, monetization, and concessional sales had the same effect as trade-distorting export subsidies. The United States, on the other hand, wanted to maintain the flexibility of its food aid system, established in the 1950s as an export-promotion program and largely unchanged since. The ensuing impasse helped to stall trade negotiations in the World Trade Organization's Doha round.

The 2007-2008 global food price spikes brought these tensions into relief, and created an impetus to reform global governance mechanisms for promoting food security in the world's poorest countries. But food aid remains captive to political jockeying over tied aid, and the new conditions impose contradictory imperatives: On one hand, new trade rules create pressure for tighter constraints and discipline in food disbursement (a congenial position