

# David E. Cunningham

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## Current Position

Postdoctoral Fellow, Olin Institute for Strategic Studies, Harvard University, September 2006-  
August 2007

## Education

Ph.D. Political Science, University of California, San Diego, 2006  
M.S. Conflict Analysis and Resolution, George Mason University, 2001  
B.A. Political Science, Wake Forest University, 1998

## Dissertation: Veto Players and Civil War Duration

Abstract: In this dissertation I explain why some civil wars are resolved quickly and others continue for a long time without resolution. I argue that civil wars with more parties that must agree to the terms of a settlement (veto players) will be harder to resolve and therefore of longer duration. More veto players lead to longer civil wars for four reasons. First, with more parties the range of settlements acceptable to all parties shrinks. Second, information asymmetries are more acute in multi-party conflicts, making parties more likely to overestimate their chance of winning and therefore more hesitant to negotiate. Third, more veto players increase the incentives for parties to hold out at the negotiating table in the hopes of getting a better deal. Fourth, civil war negotiations involving more parties can be hampered by situations of shifting alliances over potential agreements. I test the veto player approach both quantitatively and qualitatively. The quantitative tests use a new dataset to analyze the effect of number of veto players on the duration of all civil wars since 1945, controlling for competing theoretical approaches. These tests show a strong correlation between the number of veto players and the duration of conflict. Comparative case studies of a two veto-player conflict in Rwanda and a four veto-player conflict in Burundi show that negotiations were substantially more difficult in the Burundian civil war.

**Committee:** Barbara Walter (chair), David Lake, Kristian Gleditsch, Clark Gibson, and Robert Horowitz

## General Research Interests

- International Relations
- Civil War
- International Security
- Comparative Politics
- African Politics

## Honors and Awards

- National Science Foundation Doctoral Dissertation Research Improvement Grant, 2005-06
- American Political Science Association Travel Grant, 2005
- Dean's Social Science Fund Dissertation Travel Grant, 2005
- Rohr Chair in Pacific International Relations Dissertation Travel Grant, 2005
- International Studies Association Travel Grant 2005
- Mark Twain Fellowship, Department of Political Science, UCSD 2001-06

## Publications

2006. "Veto Players and Civil War Duration." *American Journal of Political Science*. Vol. 50, No. 4: pp. 875-92. In press.

2007. "Civil War in Chad." In Derouen, Karl and Uk Heo, Eds., *Civil Wars of the World: Profiles of the Most Intense Internal Conflicts Since World War II*. In press.

## Works in Progress

"Dyadic Interactions and Civil War Duration." With Kristian Gleditsch and Idean Salehyan. Under review, *American Political Science Review*.

"Security in Rwanda." In Bellamy, Paul and Karl DeRouen, Eds., *International Security and Society*. Forthcoming.

## Conference Presentations

2006. "Vetoing Resolution: How External States can Prolong Civil Wars." Prepared for presentation at the 102<sup>nd</sup> Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, August 31-September 3.

2006. "Transnational Linkages and Civil War Interactions." With Kristian Gleditsch and Idean Salehyan. Prepared for presentation at the 102<sup>nd</sup> Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, August 31-September 3.

2006. "Bargaining and Fighting: The Case of Rwanda." Presented at the 47<sup>th</sup> Annual International Studies Association Convention, San Diego, CA. March 22-25.

2006. "Dyadic Interactions and Civil War Duration." With Kristian Gleditsch and Idean Salehyan. Presented at the Polarization and Conflict conference, Nicosia, Cyprus, April 26-29. Also presented at the 47<sup>th</sup> Annual International Studies Association Convention, San Diego, CA. March 22-25.

2005. "Veto Players and Civil War Duration." Presented at the 101<sup>st</sup> Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, September 1-4. Also presented at the 38<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Peace Science Society, Houston, TX, November 12-14, 2004. Also presented at the Annual Meeting of the Western Political Science Association, Portland, OR, March 11-13, 2004.

2005. "The Effect of Intervention Type on the Duration and Outcome of Civil Wars." Presented at the 46<sup>th</sup> Annual International Studies Association Convention, Honolulu, Hawaii. March 1-5.

2004. "Contracting Out Security: State-Rebel Group Alliances in Central Africa." Presented at the Midwest Political Science Association Annual Meeting, Chicago, IL, April 15-18.

## Research and Employment

**Research Assistant:** International Dimensions of Civil War Project Winter-Summer 2004  
Professor: Kristian Gleditsch

**Research Assistant** Winter 2003  
Professor: Branislav L. Slantchev

**Research Assistant** Spring-Summer 2002  
Professor: William Chandler

**Intern:** Conflict Prevention and Recovery Program, Fund for Peace 2000-2001  
Director: Anne V. Russell

## Teaching Experience

### Teaching Assistant

- PS12: Introduction to International Relations (Spring 2006)
- PS30: Political Inquiry (Fall 2002, Spring 2003, Winter 2004)
- PS11: Introduction to Comparative Politics (Fall 2003)
- Dimensions of Culture Writing Program (Fall 2004, Winter 2005)

**Grader:** National Security Strategy, Introduction to International Relations; Government and Politics of Middle East; The German Political System; Political Economy of the Drug Trade; Politics of War Crime Tribunals; Politics in Israel; American Political Parties, Political Science Fiction

### Referree

*American Journal of Political Science*

*Journal of Conflict Resolution*

*Journal of Peace Research*

## Professional Associations

American Political Science Association, 2002-Present

International Studies Association, 2004-Present

Peace Science Society, 2004-Present

## Languages

- English (native)
- French (proficient)

## References

Barbara F. Walter  
Associate Professor of International Relations  
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