Control & Collaboration: Simulating the Logic of Violence in Civil War for Political Science Students
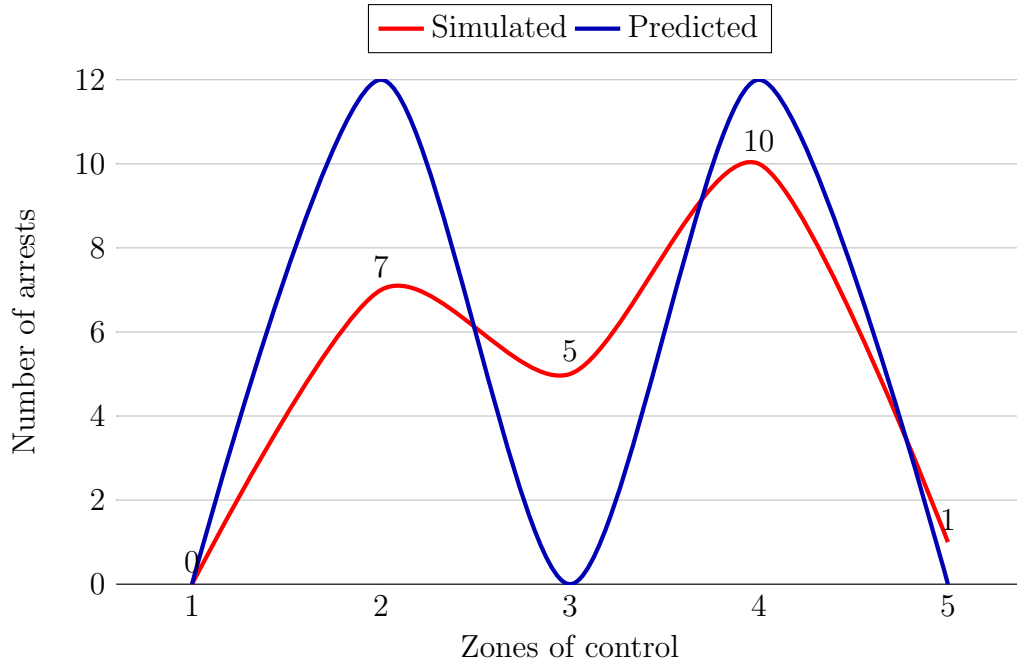
Supplemental Appendix

Eric Mosinger

Macalester College

February 9, 2019

Figure 1: Simulated Pattern of Arrests

1 Comparing student behavior to the model

In order to assess whether student behavior in the simulation matches the expectations of Kalyvas' theory, I recorded the results of three playthroughs. As Figure 1 shows, the students largely conformed to theoretical expectations during these three playthroughs. Soldiers made the vast majority of their arrests (17 out of 23) in Zones 2 and 4, while only six occurred in Zones 1, 3, and 5.[1] Moreover, soldiers were much more likely to abstain when offered opportunities to arrest villagers in Zone 3 (doing so 50% of the time, as compared to 10.5% in Zones 2 and 4). This coincides with my observation that—as Kalyvas predicts—students playing villagers were unwilling to collaborate with either side when both soldiers were in the room.

Nonetheless, several arrests did occur in Zone 3, which has consistently occurred in almost all playthroughs of this simulation over two years. First, students are in general much less

---

1. One caveat to the generalizability of the data collected: rock-paper-scissors battles produced full control—Zones 1 and 5 combined—a mere three times during these three playthroughs. This result is statistically unlikely, and full control has occurred frequently in past playthroughs. Anecdotally, soldiers rarely make arrests under full control, as predicted by Kalyvas.

risk-averse than actual civilians caught up in civil war violence. Students may therefore allow personal motivations to overcome strategic silence while in Zone 3. In past simulations, for example, students have sometimes sought revenge after having been denounced in previous rounds, even at the expense of their own (simulated) safety.

Another dynamic meets Kalyvas' expectations and impressed students with the difficulty of his "identification problem:" false arrests. A full seven of 23 arrests (or 30.4%) were cases in which a soldier mistakenly arrested her own supporter. While soldiers were able to distinguish between loyalists and opponents at a rate significantly better than chance, they also made frequent errors.

2   Simulation Variants

The classroom simulation presented in my paper recreates the minimal abstract logic of Kalyvas' control-collaboration model. With some extra effort, the instructor might elaborate a role-playing variant of the simulation, in which students, after receiving their playing card, review a paragraph-long description of their character and pre-war interrelationships with other characters ("Role-playing guide for 3 of Spades: Your son is married to 3 of Hearts' daughter. Previous business dealings with your fellow clan member 2 of Spades went sour, and you hold a grudge. Your clan has been locked in a feud with the Clubs clan for generations.") These roles and scenarios may be as simple or as intricate as the instructor desires. While labor-intensive to design, a role-playing variant could offer several advantages over the vanilla simulation: it would make civilian loyalties less systematic (better approximating real-life situations), it would give reticent students material for banter in the Denunciation Round, and it might provide students with a greater sense of immersion.

I offer two example role-playing guides below, suitable for playing with twelve villagers and two soldiers. They can be readily adapted to smaller or larger groups.

Local Cleavages Role-Playing Guide

1 of Hearts: 1 of Clubs owes you a lot of money. *A lot of money.* And if s/he gets arrested, you will never get it back.

2 of Hearts: You are a passionate supporter of the Red cause, willing to risk your own safety and that of your clan to help Red win.

3 of Hearts: Your daughter is married to 3 of Spades' son.

1 of Diamonds: Previous business dealings with your fellow clan member 2 of Diamonds went sour, and you hold a grudge.

2 of Diamonds: Previous business dealings with your fellow clan member 1 of Diamonds went sour, and you hold a grudge.

3 of Diamonds: 1 of Clubs owes you a lot of money. *A lot of money.* And if s/he gets arrested, you will never get it back.

1 of Clubs: You owe 1 of Hearts and 3 of Diamonds a lot of money. *A lot of money.* And if they get arrested, you never have to pay them back. Your clan has been locked in a feud with the Spades clan for generations.

2 of Clubs: Your clan has been locked in a feud with the Spades clan for generations.

3 of Clubs: Your clan has been locked in a feud with the Spades clan for generations, but you are secretly in love with 2 of Spades.

1 of Spades: 2 of Clubs has been following you around the village, and you are worried that s/he means to inform on you. Your clan has been locked in a feud with the Clubs clan for generations.

2 of Spades: Your clan has been locked in a feud with the Clubs clan for generations, but you are secretly in love with 3 of Clubs.

3 of Spades: Your son is married to 3 of Hearts' daughter. Your clan has been locked in a feud with the Clubs clan for generations.

Case Study Role-Playing Guide: The Peace Community in Apartadó, Colombia

While the control-collaboration simulation is primarily intended to help students learn Kalyvas' (2006) model, it can also be employed to help students develop an understanding of the microdynamics of specific cases of conflict. Here I provide a role-playing guide for a simulation set in Apartadó, Colombia. The instructor might pair this simulation with assigned readings from Abbey Steele's (2011, 2017) research on civilian displacement in this region. This case study simulation involves two playthroughs: the first in Policarpa, a heavily-contested urban *barrio*, and the second in San José de Apartadó, a rural town where villagers have founded a peace community. The armed actors in this setting seek to *displace* their opponents' supporters (making this simulation particularly useful for a course or unit on refugees and forced migration).

Beyond developing case knowledge, students will also learn how communities caught up in civil war violence can construct grassroots peacebuilding institutions designed to negotiate local conflicts and maintain solidarity in the face of threats from armed actors. Thus, this simulation is ideal not only for university students, but also for peacekeeping practitioners and members of peacebuilding NGOs. Potentially, the simulation could also be employed by communities threatened by civil war violence that seek to found or strengthen a local peacebuilding organization.

This role-playing guide could be readily adapted to accompany Oliver Kaplan's (2013; 2018) research on a local peacebuilding organization, the Peasant Worker Association of the Carare River (ATCC, also in Colombia), or Séverine Autessere's (2009, 2010) research exploring peacekeeping and local violence in the Congo.

Armed Actors

Red: Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC)

Black: Peasant Self-Defense Forces of Córdoba y Urabá (ACCU)

Policarpa

Hearts: Hearts are leaders of the Patriotic Union (UP), the legal political party affiliated with the FARC rebels. Your local enemy is Clubs, who are demobilized members of the Army of National Liberation (ELN), now loyal to the ACCU paramilitaries.

Diamonds: Diamonds are leaders of SINTRABANANO, a labor union representing the interests of low-wage banana workers. Your local enemy is Spades, leaders of the AUGURA trade union representing wealthy *bananeros* in league with Chiquita Banana and the ACCU.

Clubs: Clubs are demobilized members of the Army of National Liberation (ELN), now loyal to the ACCU paramilitaries. Your local enemy is Hearts, who are leaders of the Patriotic Union (UP), the legal political party affiliated with the FARC rebels.

Spades: Spades are leaders of the AUGURA trade union representing wealthy *bananeros* in league with Chiquita Banana and the ACCU. Your local enemy is Diamonds, the leaders of SINTRABANANO, a labor union representing the interests of low-wage banana workers.

San José de Apartadó

Hearts, Diamonds, Clubs, and Spades continue to represent the same political identities described above, yet in this playthrough, all villagers begin the simulation as members of San José de Apartadó's **Peace Community**. Members of the Peace Community commit not to collaborate with either armed actor (the FARC or the ACCU) occupying the village. If any villager does collaborate, they are expelled from the Peace Community and are to be denounced by all remaining members.

Endogenous Identity Formation Variant

In the control-collaboration simulation presented in this paper, villagers' identities are pre-existing and static. That is, students' loyalties are determined by the card they receive at the beginning of the simulation, and cannot change at any point. However, in many civil wars, strong identities do not exist prior to conflict but instead form endogenously as a result of violence against oneself, one's family, or one's ethnic group. Students may therefore come away from the simulation having drawn erroneous conclusions about the immutability of identity in civil war.

This section presents a variant of the simulation in which villagers' loyalties are not fixed. Rather, they may change throughout the simulation as a consequence of violence by armed actors. This variant aims to help students understand how civil war violence reshapes identities and loyalties. The instructor may choose to play this later in a course, after having already run the main simulation, and may accompany the variant with John Mueller's (2000) article or the documentary film, We Are Neighbors (1993), about ethnic violence in a Bosnian village.

Rule Changes

Playing cards are dealt to the students as per normal, with Aces of each suit included. At the beginning of the game, only Aces are informants for their respective sides (Red and Black). However, if at any point a soldier makes an arrest, the next-lowest card of that suit (first 2, then 3, etc...) is "activated" as an informant. Additionally, if a soldier mistakenly arrests a member of a suit of their own color, that entire suit switches sides and supports the soldier's opponents (i.e., if the Red soldier arrests a Heart, all Hearts switch sides and support the Black soldier).

Scoring

Soldiers only gain a point for arresting an opponent's informant. They lose a point for arresting their own informants or for arresting any non-informant of any suit.

Alternate Battle Round Decision Rule: Six-Sided Dice

This decision rule is simpler than rock-paper-scissors and relies on chance to a greater extent. A soldier from each army rolls a six-sided dice. If each soldier rolls the same number, the village will come under "fragmented" control (Zone 3). If one army's roll is +1 or +2 larger than the others, then the village will come under "partial" control (Zone 2 or 4) of the winning side. If one army's roll is +3 or more larger, the village will come under "full" control (Zone 1 or 5) of the winning side.

Note that each battle decision rule presented in this paper should, in theory, distribute zones of control at a 2:3:2:3:2 ratio, thereby producing more rounds under theoretically interesting "partial" control. In practice, rock-paper-scissors is a game of skill and rolling dice a game of chance.

References

Autesserre, Séverine. 2009. "Hobbes and the Congo: Frames, Local Violence, and International Intervention." *International Organization* 63 (02): 249–280.

———. 2010. *The Trouble with the Congo: Local Violence and the Failure of International Peacebuilding.* Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press.

Kalyvas, Stathis N. 2006. *The Logic of Violence in Civil War.* Cambridge University Press.

Kaplan, Oliver. 2013. "Protecting Civilians in Civil War: The Institution of the ATCC in Colombia." *Journal of Peace Research* 50 (3): 351–367.

Kaplan, Oliver Ross. 2018. *Resisting War: How Communities Protect Themselves.*

Mueller, John. 2000. "The Banality of "Ethnic War"." *International Security* 25 (1): 42–70.

Steele, Abbey. 2017. *Democracy and Displacement in Colombia's Civil War.* Ithaca; London: Cornell University Press.

———. 2011. "Electing Displacement: Political Cleansing in Apartadó, Colombia." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 55 (3): 423–445.