

BOSTON UNIVERSITY
PARDEE SCHOOL OF GLOBAL STUDIES
DEPARTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE
LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES PROGRAM
IR 411/PO 566: CONFLICT & CONFLICT RESOLUTION IN LATIN AMERICA
SYLLABUS
FALL 2016
THURSDAYS, 2-5
Room: 152 Bay State Road, 220

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This seminar focuses on past and present cases of conflict and conflict resolution in Spanish and Portuguese America, as well as on theories or frameworks that have been advanced to explain them. The region lends itself to such an exploration given its long history as independent republics and the many internal and foreign challenges every one of them has faced over the course of the past two centuries. Our concerns will center on three key questions over the course of the semester: 1) Why conflict arises in the first place, 2) What forces cause it to expand, and 3) How some are able to be resolved while others continue to bedevil.

Our first objective in the course, then, is to explore some of the theories that scholars and practitioners have developed which provide us with frameworks or elements that focus on conflict and conflict resolution. Can they help us to put together a list of the necessary and sufficient factors to explain why conflict arises and how it is resolved? Once we have done this, to what degree can we make them concrete or measurable (known as operationalizing) to be able to apply them to real world cases?

Indeed, this is our second main goal; to take these operationalized indicators to examine the cases of conflict we are considering in order to explore which combination works best in enabling our fuller understanding of their origins, dynamics, and dénouements. Throughout the history of the Latin American republics, basic differences between contending forces have all too often produced violent confrontations as they struggle to maintain or advance their causes. Some of these conflicts have involved ethnic groups chafing under colonial control or social groups seeking access to resources to meet basic needs. Others have been provoked by the efforts of dominant elites to retain or expand their influence, or by socialist ideologies whose supporters wage violent revolutions to overthrow the political status quo and establish new models of

governance. Still others have resulted from wars between neighbors over disputed boundaries or competition for control of natural resources, among other reasons.

A third, equally significant objective is to apply operationalized elements of the theories advanced in the literature to explore the ways that conflicts have been resolved. In the cases we are considering, what are the mechanisms employed that move conflicts toward peace or at least the absence of war? How does negotiation take place and what are the drivers that generate it? What are the key forces that contribute to such resolutions –Leadership? External actors? Favorable local, regional, or international developments? Specific institutional dynamics? Something else? For each conflict we will try to identify the most important elements involved in producing an outcome the contending parties can or must live with.

Conflict theories give us frameworks for our why, what, and how analyses, but case studies provide the specific contexts to answer these questions. Among the many we could select, we will focus on ten specific Latin American examples which illustrate different types of violent conflict over the years – 1) wars between countries, 2) insurgencies within countries which have been resolved; and 3) countries which continue to suffer from ongoing and seemingly unending violence.

The contemporary and ongoing cases continue to cope with the internal effects of violence that involve combinations of guerrilla, drug trafficking, and common criminal activity, and which are also affected by developments beyond national boundaries over which their governments have little or no control. This combination is called “intermestic” to highlight the degree to which external factors may affect levels of domestic conflict.

The specific cases selected for deeper study are the following:

1. Historical conflicts which have been resolved
 - a. Foreign wars, or external conflicts
 - 1) War of the Triple Alliance, or Paraguayan War, 1864-70 (Paraguay vs. Brazil, Argentina, & Uruguay)
 - 2) War of the Pacific, 1879-83 (Bolivia & Peru vs. Chile)
 - 3) Chaco War, 1932-35 (Paraguay vs. Bolivia)
 - 4) Peru-Ecuador wars & disputes, 1807-1998 (the longest lasting unresolved conflict in the Western Hemisphere)
 - b. Guerrilla wars, or internal conflicts
 - 1) Guatemala, 1960-96
 - 2) El Salvador, 1972-92
 - 3) Nicaragua, 1972-90
 - 4) Peru, 1980-95

2. Contemporary internal and “intermestic” conflicts
 - a. Colombia (primarily political violence) and its ongoing internal war since 1960 which includes guerrilla, drug trafficking, and criminal elements plus outside actor involvement, currently marked by intermittent conflict and peace negotiations
 - b. Mexico (primarily criminal violence) and the “war” on the drug cartels, a long-standing issue prioritized by both the Felipe Calderón and Enrique Peña Nieto governments (2006-12; 2012-18) and supported by the U.S., currently marked by high and ongoing levels of violence

The course is divided into three major parts and a concluding discussion. The first section examines key theories and frameworks which focus on why conflict occurs and on why and how conflict gets resolved.

The next section reviews those eight major Latin American cases of external and internal conflict listed above, all of which have been resolved. Our goal in these cases is to learn what happened but also to draw from the first section of the course to explain why they began and how and why they were settled. Key questions for us to answer in this section include: What are the common patterns across these cases? In what ways do they differ? How do we explain the similarities and differences?

The third segment explores the two ongoing cases of conflict we are considering, Colombia (largely political) and Mexico (largely criminal), where we will want to determine why they began, why they have been so difficult to resolve, why key actors in Colombia signed a peace agreement after so many years, and what are its prospects for successful implementation. Are there special or unique aspects in the ways their internal conflicts developed or are playing out which distinguish them from others? Can we use some combination of the conflict resolution framework components we have studied that sheds light on what will be required to achieve their final and definitive resolution?

In the conclusion, we will revisit the elements of conflict and conflict settlement theory to come up with the best overall explanations for the cases we have studied during the semester.

The typical class will begin with 10-15 minutes of your comments about the Latin American news for the week, followed by my introduction to the topic of the day and your key points on the readings, to continue with a more extended discussion of the topic and/or a breakdown into student discussion and preparation groups.

Grading

1. **Map Quiz (5%):** Locate Latin American and Caribbean countries and their capitals on a blank map. A retake available if needed **(Sep 15)**
2. **Group Discussion and Preparation of Short Working Papers on Theories/Frameworks of Conflict and Conflict Resolution (15%):** About 3-4 pages. One group will focus on explanations for why conflict begins; the other on how and why it ends. Each paper should identify key elements, note the author of each, and provide a brief assessment of why they should be considered necessary conditions for conflict to break out or for it to be resolved. **(Due Sep 29)**
3. **Readings (20%):** We will have a discussion of the assigned readings in class each week, and you will be evaluated on the quality of your contributions over the course of the semester. You will want to offer a key point or a particular insight on each reading rather than a description, and prepare short written notes (bullet points or a short paragraph) for my selective review.
4. **Individual Research Papers (40%):**** About 15 pages in length (see specifications in Research Paper Guidelines). You will select one of the 8 historical cases we are discussing in the course and apply conflict theory to assess how and why it arose as well as how and why it was resolved. Your paper should include a critical analysis of the strengths and limitations of the conflict/ conflict resolution frameworks you chose to analyze the case. **(Due Oct 20)**

****A revise and resubmit option is available for these individual papers if they are complete and submitted on time. If you choose this option, the grade you receive on the resubmission will be your final grade for the paper.**

5. **Individual or Small Group (2 students) Research Papers (20%):** About 10 pages on one key aspect of the current unresolved internal and “intermestic” conflicts in Colombia (primarily political) or Mexico (primarily criminal) **(Due Dec 1; No revise and resubmit option for these papers)**

Topics for Colombia (If this case is your choice, you will select one from the following list to study in depth):

- a. Exploring the underlying causes of the multiple internal wars since independence
- b. Explaining the paradox of formal democracy along with frequent civil or internal war

- c. Analyzing the most important guerrilla actors since 1958, their major grievances, and why they have not achieved their goals
- d. Analyzing the major peace initiatives in the early 1980s and between 1998-2001 and why both failed
- e. Assessing the degree to which the Constitution of 1991 provides the bases for permanent settlement of the current internal conflict
- f. Exploring the prospects for success of the current peace agreement between the guerrillas and the government

Topics for Mexico (If this case is your choice, you will select one from the following list to study in depth):

- a. Exploring the degree to which long-term one-party government may have contributed to a permissive climate for criminal activity
- b. Analyzing the role of the economic crisis of the early 1980s and the resulting turn to economic liberalization as a possible key factor in the rise of drug trafficking
- c. Assessing the role of the U.S. in contributing to Mexico's criminal activity in recent years
- d. Explaining the rise of multiple drug cartels in recent years
- e. Analyzing the costs and benefits of the government's military campaign since 2006 against the drug cartels and their leaders
- f. Assessing the degree to which recent judicial reforms have contributed to increased prosecution of corruption
- g. Exploring the degree to which the Mérida Initiative is strengthening the institutional capacity of government

Readings

The assigned readings which are starred (*) may be found on the <https://learn.bu.edu> website at IR411/PO566 Conflict and Conflict Resolution in Latin America, which you may access with your BU e-mail and password. This course website will also contain additional course-related comments from the professor which will be posted in Announcements; other material, such as the syllabus and paper writing guidelines, will be found in Course Information.

The following required text is available at the BU Barnes & Noble Bookstore under IR411 or PO566:

Cynthia J. Arnson, ed. *In the Wake of War: Democratization and Internal Armed Conflict in Latin America* (Woodrow Wilson Center Press with Stanford University Press, 2012) ISBN: 9780804776684 (paper)

In addition to this required book, the following titles are recommended for any of you with a particular interest in the Peru-Ecuador border disputes or Peru's Shining Path guerrilla war, and are also available at the BU bookstore, under IR 411 and/or PO 566.

David Mares & David Scott Palmer, *Power, Institutions, and Leadership in War and Peace: Lessons from Peru and Ecuador, 1995-1998* (University of Texas Press, 2013), paper.

David Scott Palmer, ed. *Shining Path of Peru*, 2nd edition (St. Martin's Press, 1994) paper

Finally, you should plan to purchase a semester subscription to the *Latin American Weekly Report* (LAWR), which I find to offer the best and most balanced coverage of current developments in the region. It is available to you on-line for 10 weeks at a special reduced student rate of \$25. You sign up in class during our first or second meeting. We will have weekly discussions of current events, with a particular focus on ongoing and emerging conflicts.

Classes, Topics, and Reading Assignments

Sept 8 Introduction: A Latin American Conflict and Conflict Resolution Narrative

In addition to introducing ourselves to each other, going over the syllabus, answering questions and the like, we will also discuss the broad sweep of conflict in Latin America from pre-Conquest to the present. We'll also have a map quiz to see how much you know about the location of countries and capitals.

Please note: I would like to meet with each of you early in the semester to get a sense of your interests and topics you might like to pursue more deeply. I'll pass around a sheet with times available for you to select.

Sept 15 Conflict Theories & Frameworks: Why Does Conflict Occur?

Map Quiz

- a. Historical and Analytical Overview (Selected Pages):

*Pope Atkins, Chapter 12: "Warfare and Its Approximations," *Latin America and the Caribbean in the International System*, 4th Ed. Boulder: Westview, 1999, External 317-18, 320-23, 325-27, 334-35; Internal 333-34, 338-40.

- b. External:

*William Zartman, "Analyzing Intractability," in Chester A. Crocker et al., eds. *Grasping the Nettle: Analyzing Cases of Intractable Conflict* Washington DC: United States Institute for Peace, 2005, 47-58 (Not the entire chapter).

c. Internal:

*James C. Davies, "Toward a Theory of Revolution," *American Sociological Review* 27:1 (Feb 1962), 5-19

*Samuel P. Huntington, Chapter 5 "Revolution & Political Order," in *Political Order in Changing Societies* New Haven: Yale, 1968), 264-75

*Robert Dix, "Why Revolutions Succeed & Fail," *Polity* 16:3 (Spring 1984), 423-46

Sept 22 Conflict Resolution Theories & Frameworks: How Does Conflict Get Resolved?

*Atkins, "Warfare and Its Approximations," 340-42

*Zartman, "Analyzing Intractability," 58-62

*David Scott Palmer, "Nepal's Multiple Challenges in Comparative Perspective," Final Report for USAID, October 3, 2003, 13-20

*Álvaro de Soto, "International Missions & the Promotion of Peace & Democracy," in Tommie Sue Montgomery, ed. *Peacemaking and Democratization in the Western Hemisphere* Miami: North-South Center Press, 2000, 1-8

*Virginia Bouvier, "Toward an Integrated Framework for Building Peace," in Virginia M. Bouvier, ed. *Colombia: Building Peace in a Time of War* Washington DC: U.S. Institute of Peace, 2009, Conclusion Only, 431-36

*Paul Wehr & John Paul Lederach, "Mediating Conflict in Central America," *Journal of Peace Research*, 28:1 (1991), 85-98

Sept 29 Class Discussion of Explanations for Conflict and Conflict Resolution

Presentation and discussion of the short papers on explanations for conflict and conflict resolution

The goal is to determine as far as we can the necessary and sufficient causes of why conflict begins and why it ends by drawing on the material we have read.

Short Group Papers Due

Oct 6 External Conflict & Resolution: Four Major Latin American Wars

(Students preparing papers on these cases will comment on today's readings)

- a. The War of the Triple Alliance, 1864-70 (Paraguay vs. Brazil, Argentina, and Uruguay)

*Leslie Bethell, "The Paraguayan War (1864-1870)," Research Paper 46, Institute of Latin American Studies, University of London, 1996

- b. The War of the Pacific, 1879-83 (Chile vs. Bolivia and Peru)

*David Werlich, *Peru: A Short History* Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1978, 106-21

- c. The Chaco War, 1932-35 (Paraguay vs. Bolivia)

*Matthew Hughes, "Logistics and the Chaco War: Bolivia versus Paraguay, 1932-35," *The Journal of Military History*, 69:2 (April 2005), 411-37

- d. The Peru-Ecuador Border Dispute, 1807-1998

David Mares & David Scott Palmer, *Power, Institutions, and Leadership in War and Peace: Lessons from Peru and Ecuador, 1995-1998* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2013), selected chapters

*David Scott Palmer, "Overcoming the Weight of History: 'Getting to Yes' in the Peru-Ecuador Border Dispute," *Diplomacy & Statecraft*, 12:2 (June 2001), 29-46.

Oct 13 Internal Conflict and Resolution: Four Major Cases of Civil War

(Students preparing papers on these cases will comment on the readings)

- a. Guatemala, 1960-96

Edelberto Torres-Rivas, "The Limits of Peace and Democracy in Guatemala," Chapter 4 in Cynthia J. Arnson, ed. *In the Wake of War*, 107-137

Victoria Sanford, "Why Truth Still Matters: Historical Clarification, Impunity, and Justice in Contemporary Guatemala," Chapter 12 in Arnson, ed. *In the Wake of War*, 351-372

- b. El Salvador, 1972-92

Ricardo Córdova Macías and Carlos G. Ramos, "The Peace Process and the Construction of Democracy in El Salvador: Progress, Deficiencies, and Challenges," Chapter 3 in Arnson, ed. *In the Wake of War*, 79-106

*Christine J. Wade, "El Salvador," in Christine Wade & Thomas Walker, *Understanding Central America*, 5th Ed. Boulder: Westview, 2010, 111-34

c. Nicaragua, 1972-79

Shelley A. McConnell, "Nicaragua's Pacted Democracy," Chapter 5 in Arnson, ed. *In the Wake of War*, 139-173

*Thomas W. Walker and Christine J. Wade, *Nicaragua: Living in the Shadow of the Eagle*. 5th ed. Boulder: Westview, 2010, 25-61

d. Peru, 1980-2000

*David Scott Palmer, "Countering Terror in Latin America: The Case of Shining Path in Peru," in James Forest, *Countering Terrorism and Insurgency in the 21st Century: Lessons from the Fight Against Terrorism*. 2nd Ed. Westport CT: Praeger, 2015, 251-70

Carlos Basombrío Iglesias, "Peace in Peru, but Unresolved Tasks," Chapter 7 in Arnson, ed. *In the Wake of War*, 215-238

Carlos Iván Degregori, "'Eppur si Muove' – Truth and Justice in Peru after the Truth and Reconciliation Commission," Commentary in Arnson, ed. *In the Wake of War*, 373-384

Oct 20 Presentations and Discussions of External and Internal Conflict and Conflict Resolution Papers

Individual Research Papers Due

Oct 27 Contemporary Internal Conflicts: Colombia I

(Students preparing papers on this case will comment on the readings)

Readings for all:

Marco Palacios, "A Historical Perspective on Counterinsurgency and the 'War on Drugs' in Colombia," Chapter 6 in Arnson, ed. *In the Wake of War*, 175-206

Ana María Bejarano, "Two Decades of Negotiations in Colombia – Contrasting Results and Missed Opportunities," Commentary in Arnson, ed. *In the Wake of War*, 207-214

Readings for students writing on the Colombian case:

*Peter Waldmann, "Colombia and the FARC: Failed Attempts to Stop Violence and Terrorism in a Weak State," in Robert Art & Louise Richardson, eds., *Democracy and*

Counterterrorism: Lessons from the Past. Washington DC: U.S. Institute of Peace, 2007, 221-60

*Cynthia J. Arnson & Theresa Whitfield, "Third Parties and Intractable Conflicts: The Case of Colombia," in Crocker et al., eds. *Grasping the Nettle*, 231-68

*Francisco E. Thoumi, "Illegal Drugs in Colombia: From Illegal Economic Boom to Social Crisis," in Menno Vellinga, ed. *The Political Economy of the Drug Industry: Latin America and the International System*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2004, 70-84

*María Clemencia Ramírez Lemus, et al., "Colombia. A Vicious Cycle of Drugs and War," in Coletta A. Youngers & Eileen Rosen, eds. *Drugs & Democracy in Latin America: The Impact of U.S. Policy*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006, 99-142

*Virginia Bouvier, "Toward an Integrated Framework for Building Peace," 413-31 (See full reference under Sept 17)

Nov 3 Contemporary Internal Conflicts: Colombia II

Presentations and discussion led by Dr. Jennie Lincoln, Director for Latin America, Carter Center, Atlanta GA and Julián Arévalo, Ph.D. Political Science, Boston University and Professor, Universidad de los Andes, member of the Colombian government peace negotiation mission

Nov 10 Contemporary Internal Conflicts: Colombia III

Discussion led by students preparing papers on the case, focusing on key issues, impediments to settlement, and necessary elements to achieve a definitive resolution of the conflict

Papers on Colombia Due

Nov 17 Contemporary Internal Conflicts: Mexico and Drugs I

Readings for all:

*José Luis Velasco, *Insurgency, Authoritarianism, and Drug Trafficking in Mexico's "Democratization"* New York: Routledge, 2005, 89-163

*Laurie Freeman & Jorge Luis Serra, "Mexico: The Militarization Trap," in Coletta A. Youngers & Eileen Rosen, eds. *Drugs & Democracy in Latin America*, 263-302

Readings for students writing on the Mexican case:

*Luis Astorga, "Mexico: Drugs and Politics," in Menno Vellinga, ed. *The Political Economy of the Drug Industry*. 85-102

*Hal Brands, *Mexico's Narco-Insurgency and US. Counterdrug Policy*. Carlisle PA: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, May, 2009

Nov 24 Thanksgiving Vacation: No Class

Dec 1 Contemporary Internal Conflicts: Mexico and Drugs II

Discussion led by students writing on this case, focusing on key issues, impediments to settlement, and necessary elements to achieve a definitive resolution of the conflict

Papers on Mexico Due

Dec 8 Conclusions: What Have We Learned?

An end-of-semester revisiting of the conflict and conflict resolution theories we considered early in the seminar now that we have applied them to Latin American cases and can see how both have actually worked out in practice. What is the best combination of elements of these theories which are most useful in explaining real world examples? In the final analysis, is there a set of theoretical/analytical elements which can be considered both necessary and sufficient? Or is that a hopelessly elusive objective? Finally, what operationalized elements are the most helpful in explaining conflict or conflict resolution?