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Long-running civil wars blur the distinction between uniformed soldiers and civilians. Armed groups rely upon civilian cooperation for protection, recruitment, intelligence, as a tax base, and, if civilians stay loyal to the cause, as a post-war voting constituency. It is a short distance from these objective observations to a more cynical kind of realism. Perhaps there can be no neutrals or innocents in war. Perhaps it is invalid to treat civilians as victims or hostages, more analytically accurate to treat them as co-producers of violence (182). *Rivalry and Revenge: The Politics of Violence During Civil War* invites readers to view the Spanish Civil War as a social laboratory for what happens when these brutal and zero-sum variants of social theory are taken to their logical conclusion. Laia Balcells not only unblinkingly documents the horror, but rigorously tests theories about what motivated the killing of approximately 600,000 people. I have strong convictions that this book will stand the test of time as the primary text for the Spanish Civil War in the disciplines of political science, history, and sociology.

Mass murder was justified as a tactic to win the war and to suppress political competition from one's unconvertible ideological opponents. This drive to tip demographic balance by brutally eliminating ideological enemies, often far behind the lines of contestation, can be statistically measured due to the unusually well-documented records of killing. The analytic differentiation of direct vs. indirect killings and discriminate vs. indiscriminate killings is highly valuable. Direct killings were most likely to occur in areas where they would provide the most marginal benefit to the side producing the killing, where "base" civilian supporters of the two sides are evenly matched. The book really shines in its nuanced treatment of *reciprocal* direct killing as a result of the psycho-social experience of wartime violence on combatants. Atrocity begets more atrocity. It is possible to explain empirical patterns predicted by a sequence of shifting control patterns without reference to emotions, and their invocation is sure to alienate a stratum of political scientists and economists trying to make the counterinsurgency trains run on time. In my view, however, placing the book in an academic lineage that runs through deviants like Roger Petersen, with a more nuanced view of human behavior than rational choice approaches allow, will surely increase its readership and impact. Focus on the emotions that enable killing has an effect that is at once memorably humanizing, amenable to econometric testing, and utterly compelling.

The Spanish Civil War is presented by the author as an exemplar of *conventional civil war*, where an incumbent state with high capacity faces off against rebels in a situation of military parity in armaments and organizational capacity (e.g., when a country's military splits after a coup). Conventional civil wars are defined by maneuvers and confrontations between regular armies that face off across clear frontlines. If a high capacity state confronts insurgents unable to compete symmetrically, by contrast, an asymmetric *irregular civil war* is observed. Irregular wars are defined by guerrilla tactics, terrorism, and ambiguous territorial control. The hearts and minds of civilians living in contested zones are understood to be the resource being fought over, and anticipations of shifts in territorial control creates incentives to kill civilians. In conventional wars, where warfighting approximates interstate war, civilians have the option of decamping for one side or the other of the line of control. Civilians are allowed to escape.

As an avid consumer of Balcells's earlier scholarship, I came to *Rivalry* convinced that the analytic distinction between the two types of wars is vitally important. I am less convinced than I was before that the Spanish Civil War fits the theory. The vast scale of the killing, encompassing every kind of cruelty, runs counter to the simplification in the preceding paragraph. For a purer example of conventional civil war, consider contemporary Ukraine. The fighting takes place between *kontractniki*, fighting with artillery across predictable front-lines. Civilians can remove themselves as targets by exiting the conflict zones. About 10,000 people have died – 1/60th of the deaths in the Spanish civil war. Contra the litany of cruelty documented in *Rivalry*, there has not been a case of a pregnant woman having the baby cut out her stomach, no mass rape, no mutilation of dead soldiers' bodies, and not much torture. Celebration is premature, since the conflict could irregularize at any time, and Balcells's research program provides many reasons to expect civilian victimization would be much worse in a hybridized conventional-irregular war.

What explains the huge gap in conflict intensity between Ukraine in this decade and Spain in the 1930s? Balcells's text provides a few clues. One explanation is that the overall international environment in Europe today is more benign than in the 1930s. Russian speakers making pilgrimages to the frontlines in Ukraine are performing their politics in a way that previous international brigades might have recognized. They are not *actually* threatened, however, by either Putinism or NATO in a way analogous to the existential threats posed by either Stalinism or Franco's brand of fascism. Today's civil war actors may have better tools at their disposal to identity, and then selectively discipline or disappear, focal points in the enemy's ideological production network. Killing *all* the priests or *all* the activists is not necessary if one can selectively intervene to tag, track, and silence the most dangerous and prolific. In this vein, I hunger to know more about patterns of civilian victimization behind the lines in the Donbas, and more about the "shadow war" taking place behind the frontlines in places like Kyiv. Ubiquitous social media penetration allows for real-time fact-checking of false news stories of atrocity, cauterizing spirals of defensive arming and allowing for faster ideological sorting. The suppression of tit-for-tat atrocity had the secondary effect of arresting cycles of revenge. When Ukrainian and Russian researchers eventually gain access to state archives, and can reconstruct Ukraine's civil war with computer-assisted techniques, these speculations can be tested.

Rivalry and Revenge pairs primary sources with responsibly-curated historiography from the secondary case literature, then organizes the quantitative data in a manner suitable for transparent empirical tests. It should be widely assigned in graduate seminars as an example of what political science dissertations should aspire to if they have any desire to be taken seriously by historians. Moreover, students in the North American academy – as well as the Spanish, Basque, and Catalan academies – should demand the Balcells replication data files and convince themselves that the hundred-page empirical core of the book (49-148) can survive empirical quibbles. (Does post-coup territorial control correlate with pre-coup ideology (60) or is it more accurate to say control is distributed unpredictably and randomly (62-3)?) Calling for rigorous replication and data exploration of these rich data should not be meant as an indictment of Balcells's labor, but a celebration of it. Our guild would be strengthened if we could re-structure the incentives to get more students to engage further with serious books on serious topics like this one. Our guild would be a better place with more scholars like Balcells in it.

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