The Microfoundations of Political Violence

Course Catalogue Number: 7324P244ZY

Credits: 30

Prerequisites
Students must have successfully completed your Master's Specialization Module plus at least one Master's level seminar.

Language of instruction
All seminars will be taught in English. Assignments can be submitted in English or Dutch.

Time period(s)
Academic year 2021-22, semester 2, block4&5
Tuesdays, 9-12:00 in REC C1.08 (with some exceptions, see schedule below)

Instructor
Dr. Ursula Daxecker
REC B8.08

Office hours by appointment. For an appointment, please send an email with the content you want to discuss on Canvas. For online meetings, please use the following link: https://uva-live.zoom.us/j/85261550285

Course Objectives

- Students will gain a firm understanding of the main theoretical and empirical approaches to the study of political violence, with a particular emphasis on micro-foundations.

- Students learn to critically assess existing approaches to political violence and apply discussed theoretical frameworks to their own questions and analyses.

- Students are able to turn their general research interests into a research design using methods that is appropriate for the Master level.

- Students acquire the knowledge and ability to design and execute a thesis research project in one of the themes outlined in the course.

- Students develop their skills of presenting their work in a structured, concise and inspiring way, predominantly in writing but also verbally.

Course Content

Conflict is a central aspect of politics. Conflict can be managed politically so that any disputes are resolved peacefully, but it can also break out into the open and turn violent. This course studies analytically how conflict is linked with politics and whether and how different institutional devices, in particular democracy and the holding of elections, help contain and resolve conflict and violence or fail to do so. In understanding the dynamics leading to political violence, we emphasis on arguments and findings at the individual and subnational level rather than macro-level dynamics at the country-level. We also explore the consequences of political violence for a range of political outcomes, including group cohesion, political attitudes, and political behavior. Empirically, course readings focus on countries and regions in the Global South, but we will also read some work on

political violence in the Global North. Methodologically, the course relies primarily on quantitative work ranging from observational data, to surveys and experiments. Since there is little prospect for doing fieldwork or interviews in conflict-affected countries in light of the pandemic, quantitative methods are an excellent choice for students writing theses as part of this research project. Students can also choose a qualitative approach, but should be comfortable with a positivist epistemology. The course will guide students in developing research questions, as well as theoretical and empirical analysis of cases in order to shed light on the questions. We will cover the strengths and weaknesses of various methods to evaluate empirical evidence, and how to leverage available methods to test hypotheses. Finally, the course will emphasize writing skills.

Teaching methods/learning formats

In-class discussion
This is a seminar course, so its quality will depend on everyone coming to class meetings prepared. Participation is required. Formulating comments and questions is difficult, but it is an essential skill. Listening is equally important, and should be done actively. In each session, we will use substantive texts on political violence to reflect on important aspects of the research process.

Electronic devices
Laptop and tablet are permitted but use must be strictly limited to course purposes, such as the reading materials or note taking. This requires a lot of self-control, so if you are doubting yourself, print the articles and bring them to class, along with a notebook. Any other use is distracting in seminars, to the student with the laptop, the instructor, and other students. If laptops or tablets appear to be used for non-class purposes, or their use become a distraction, the instructor may at any time decide to ban them entirely. Cell phone and other personal electronics are not allowed – please silence them before entering, and refrain from checking them. If it is an emergency, please leave class to attend to it.

Methodology and research process
The department has developed resources to assist students working on research projects. They are:
1. Twelve method packages are available via Canvas (https://canvas.uva.nl/courses/28871) as Method Packages containing film clips and literature.
2. Method Seminars on-campus in March (you will receive this list).

I strongly advise that students review **all** methods packages in line with their intended methodology and attend **at least two** methodology seminars related to the method they are interested in using. Note that teachers for the methods seminars will offer follow-up office hours, but you must attend the initial session to make use of this. Please understand that help with methodological issues later on in the thesis project builds on - rather than repeating - the material covered in methods packages and seminars; the course instructor's role is to cover additional questions rather than cover material students could have familiarized themselves with already. To choose appropriate methods packages and sessions, we will dedicate some time for discussing methodologies most appropriate for your project in class.

Reading material
Course materials are available online through the university library, or will be provided in digital format. In addition, students will have their own specific readings for their thesis to deal with. The required readings can be found in the weekly schedule below. Further below, students can find additional reading suggestions for various types of political violence.

Manner and form of assessment

The final grade consists of the research project grade (20%) and the thesis grade (80%). The research project grade will reflect student's on-time completion of required readings and assignments, the quality of peer-feedback, and your attendance of and active involvement in seminar meetings. The thesis grade will be the based on input from your instructor and the second reader. Please review the "Grading Form" on Canvas for more information.

- Class attendance and participation is mandatory. Missing more than 1 meeting will result in failing the course. If you cannot attend class because you are ill or any other reason, you must email me before class to excuse your absence (maximum of 1 absence).[1] If you must attend class online because you are in mandatory quarantine (or a similarly pertinent reason), you must let me know by email before class to be allowed to attend online. For online attendance, please use the following link: https://uva-live.zoom.us/j/85261550285
- Feedback will only be provided on assignments submitted on time. If you do not submit an assignment, this will be taken into account in your final grade.
- No possibility of re-writing the thesis will be offered unless one is submitted by the deadline (**Final thesis deadline on Friday 10 June 2022 23:59**).
- A re-sit is possible only if a thesis representing a reasonable effort (minimum grade 4.5) is submitted by the deadline on 10 June 2022. Note also that the maximum grade for a re-sit will be 6.5.

Grades will be available 15 working days after the date of thesis submission.

Inspection of assignments and feedback

The course is designed to lead students step-by-step through the research process. There are several moments of structured feedback:

1. Literature review and research question (assignment 1, due Thursday February 17 at 23:59)
2. Theory and hypothesis (assignment 2, due Monday March 7 at 23:59)
3. Research proposal (assignment 3, due Friday April 1 at 23:59)
4. First thesis draft (assignment 4, due Tuesday May 17 at 23:59)

In addition to feedback from the instructor on each of these four assignments, you will write and receive two peer-review reports as feedback from other students in the class:

1. Peer review of research proposal, deadline Monday April 4 at 23:59
2. Peer review of first thesis draft, deadline Monday May 23 at 23:59

In order to make the most of feedback from the instructor and the group, make sure to always submit or present something decent. Assignments must be well structured and consist of full sentences, not telegram style or bullet points. It is essential that you keep up with the schedule of the course! Finally, several individual supervision sessions are planned throughout the semester, as indicated in the schedule below. For an appointment or (other questions) outside of these planned feedback sessions, please send an message with the content you want to discuss or specific questions you have to the instructor on Canvas. You can expect a response to your message within two working days (thus not on weekends, public holidays, UvA's collective closing days, or periods of travel).

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[1] For extenuating circumstances requiring accommodation, please email the study advisor studieadviseur-pol@uva.nl.

Rules regarding Fraud and Plagiarism

All work in this course must be your own original work. The provisions of the Regulations Governing Fraud and Plagiarism for UvA Students apply in full. Access this regulation at https://student.uva.nl/en/content/az/plagiarism-and-fraud/plagiarism-and-fraud.html

Course Schedule

Please not that this outline may change to adapt to the dynamics and needs of the group. The length of those sessions in which presentations are planned is dependent on the number of students and may be shorter or longer than 3 hours.

You will find detailed instructions for the assignments below and on Canvas, respectively. As stated above, **assignments** are obligatory, but designed to incentivize progress on your thesis. **Submission deadlines are indicated above and also included below. Assignments need to be uploaded to Canvas.**

Weekly Schedule

Week 1, February 8, Introduction, overview, approach to social science

In this first session, we want to get to know each other, discuss what the research project and MA thesis will entail, and get a a sense of your research interests. We will discuss what makes a good research question. We will conclude with a brief first introduction to the field(s) of research.

Required readings:
- Course Syllabus
- Thesis Manual 2021-2022 and grading form MA theses
- Read the interviews with Barbara Walter and Paul Staniland about the risk of political violence in the United States below:
- Walter: https://politicalviolenceataglance.org/2022/01/06/is-the-us-headed-toward-civil-war/
- Staniland: https://noahpinion.substack.com/p/will-the-us-have-another-civil-war

Class preparation: Exploring initial ideas
- What are your research interests? Within that area of interest, what could be a suitable research question to work on? What are topics that you have worked on earlier to which you possibly could connect, and what questions could you formulate?
- Most important is that you start reading on the topic of your interest!

Week 2, February 15, Concepts

Required readings:
- King, Keohane & Verba. 1994. *Designing Social Inquiry*. Princeton University Press. Chapter 1.
- Brubaker, Rogers, and David D. Laitin. 1998. "Ethnic and Nationalist Violence." *Annual Review of Sociology* 24, no. 1 (1998): 423-452. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.soc.24.1.423
- Przeworski, Adam. 2011. "Divided We Stand? Democracy as a Method of Processing Conflicts1." *Scandinavian Political Studies* 34 (2): 168–82. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9477.2011.00265.x
- University of Toronto Writing Center, "The Literature Review: A Few Tips on Conducting It." https://advice.writing.utoronto.ca/types-of-writing/literature-review/

Class preparation: Literature review
- Review the literature that connects to a topic or question you find interesting.
- How do others approach a particular type of political violence and what are the (theoretical) explanations they propose?
- Choose at least four articles or books that discuss your topic and read them, paying attention to the most important points and why these are relevant for your research question or topic.
- Sign up for the session on identifying relevant literature with Thea Rika, the Political Science subject librarian! The session is on **Thursday February 17, 10-12** and you may sign up by emailing her at r.rika@uva.nl

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Week 3, <mark>Friday February 18 (9-12:00 in REC B9.22),</mark> Research questions

[Please note: We are exceptionally meeting on Friday, same time, different room, my apologies for the inconvenience.]

Required readings:
- King, Keohane & Verba. 1994. *Designing Social Inquiry*. Princeton University Press. Chapter 2. [Skip the formulas]
- Birch, Sarah, Ursula Daxecker, and Kristine Höglund. 2020. "Electoral Violence: An Introduction." *Journal of Peace Research*. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343319889657
- Kalyvas, Stathis. 2019. "The Landscape of Political Violence." In *The Oxford Handbook of Terrorism*, 11–33. [Available on Canvas.]

Assignment 1: Literature review and research question
- Using the literature you've identified (so at least four articles on a topic or question you find interesting), discuss what it helps us understand about your topic and question, and what it might be missing, for about two pages.
- Drawing on this literature, what are some research question(s) you could formulate?
- Formulate at least one research question. Explain why your question is relevant and what it contributes to the literature you have discussed, for a maximum of one page.
- Review material on research questions and theory building on Andrea Ruggeri's website if necessary: https://www.aruggeri.eu/graduate-material
- Combining the literature review (max. 2 pages) and research question (max. 1 page), your assignment should be a max. of 3 pages. Submit **assignment 1** as a single file on Canvas (**deadline Thursday February 17)**

Week 4, March 1, Theories of political violence

Required readings:
- King, Keohane & Verba. 1994. *Designing Social Inquiry*. Princeton University Press. Chapter 4 and selected pages chapter 5. [Skip the formulas]
- LeBas, A. 2006. "Polarization as craft: Party formation and state violence in Zimbabwe." *Comparative Politics*, 419-438. https://doi.org/20434010
- Rauschenbach, Mascha, and Katrin Paula. 2019. "Intimidating Voters with Violence and Mobilizing Them with Clientelism." *Journal of Peace Research* 56 (5): 682–96. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343318822709

Class preparation: Theory-building
- How do the articles develop their theoretical arguments? What are the main concepts they theorize about (IV and DV)? Who are the relevant actors and levels of analysis at which they operate? Why? What are the mechanism(s) linking the two concepts? Why and how does variation in the IV explain variation in the DV?
- Ask yourself the same questions for your own research question. Review material on theory building on Andrea Ruggeri's website if necessary: https://www.aruggeri.eu/graduate-material
- We will also discuss methodology seminars in this session to decide which ones to sign up for.

Week 5, March 8, Hypotheses & Answers to Research Questions

Required readings:
- Epperly, B., Witko, C., Strickler, R., & White, P. 2020. "Rule by violence, rule by law: Lynching, Jim Crow, and the continuing evolution of voter suppression in the US." *Perspectives on Politics*, *18*(3), 756-769. https://doi.org/10.1017/S1537592718003584
- Turnbull, M. (2021). Elite Competition, Social Movements, and Election Violence in Nigeria. *International Security*, *45*(3), 40-78. https://doi.org/10.1162/isec_a_00401

Asssignment 2: Theory and hypothesis
- Elaborate on the theoretical framework(s) you plan to use for answering your research question and formulate one or more of your own hypotheses. Make sure to include several paragraphs outlining your argumentation. The assignment should be a maximum of 2 pages.
- You must incorporate the feedback you have received on your literature review and research question.
- If you have trouble with theorizing, review Andrea Ruggeri's notes on it https://www.aruggeri.eu/graduate-material
- Prepare a presentation (max. 2 minutes and 2 slides) to share your envisioned research question and hypothesis with the class.
- Submit **assignment 2** (max. 2 pages) as a single file to Canvas (**deadline Monday March 7**).

Week 6, March 15, Research design, methodology, and data collection

Required readings:
- Boone, Catherine. 2011. "Politically allocated land rights and the geography of electoral violence: The case of Kenya in the 1990s." *Comparative Political Studies*, *44*(10), 1311-1342. https://doi.org/10.1177%2F0010414011407465
- Daxecker, Ursula E, and Hanne Fjelde. 2022. "Electoral Violence, Partisanship and Perceptions of Electoral Integrity: A Survey Experiment in West Bengal." Forthcoming in *Comparative Politics* [Available on Canvas]

Class preparation:
- How do the authors explain their research question, their contribution to the literature, their main argument and hypotheses, the case they choose to test their argument, the data they have collected to do so, their findings, and how they deal with alternative explanations?
- Review the "Research Design worksheet" on Canvas to have an idea of what you will need to develop for the upcoming research proposal.

Week 7, March 22, Methodology, data collection & analysis

Required readings:
- Hadzic, Dino, David Carlson, and Margit Tavits. 2020. "How Exposure to Violence Affects Ethnic Voting." *British Journal of Political Science* 50 (1): 345–62. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0007123417000448

- Rosenzweig, S.C., 2021. "Dangerous disconnect: Voter backlash, elite misperception, and the costs of violence as an electoral tactic." *Political Behavior*, pp.1-24. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11109-021-09707-9

Class preparation:
- How do the authors explain their research question, their contribution to the literature, their main argument and hypotheses, the case they choose to test their argument, the data they have collected to do so, their findings, and how they deal with alternative explanations?
- Review the "Research Design worksheet" on Canvas to have an idea of what you will need to develop for the upcoming research proposal.

Week 8, March 29, Research proposals, NO CLASS

Assignment 3: Research proposal and presentation
- Prepare a research proposal (5-7 pages). Use the "Research Design worksheet" on Canvas to get started, and expand it to complete the assignment.
- The proposal must contain: 1) your research question; 2) literature identifying the contribution your thesis will bring to the literature, 3) brief summary of your theoretical approach, including your hypothesis (to which theories do you relate, or where do you deviate?); 4) a description of how you will go about answering the research question empirically (research design); 5) a description of the data you plan to use 6) description of how you will collect this data, i.e. data sources; 7.) a description of how you will analyze the data; 8) your individual timeline for completing the thesis (which needs to consider the set deadlines).
- Prepare a presentation of your research proposal of max. 10-12 minutes. Slides are required. Upload your proposal to Canvas.
- Submit **assignment 3** (5-7 page proposal) on Canvas **(deadline Friday April 1).**

Week 9, April 5, Presentation of research proposals, <mark>9:00-13:00</mark>

In this session, students will present their research proposals while peer reviewers, other students, and the instructor will share their feedback on proposals and presentations. Note that we will meet longer than usually (from 9-13:00) to ensure that each student can receive 25 minutes for their presentation and discussion. We will take breaks and feel free to bring snacks, lunch, and drinks.

Required reading:
- Assigned research proposal of your peer (see table on Canvas, I will enable access to the submitted documents)

Peer review assignment 1: Peer feedback
- Prepare written feedback (max. 1 page) on the research proposal of one other student in the class. The instructor will assign peer reviewers on Canvas.
- Use the "*Thesis Assessment Form*" on Canvas to critically reflect on the proposal. The best feedback is constructive; that is, it highlights strengths and weaknesses and rather than only presenting points of critique, also discusses how your peer could address them and improve upon their design.

- During the session, you will be asked to briefly share your feedback on the student's proposal, reflecting also on their presentation.
- Be prepared that you will need to complete this assignment between submitting your research proposal on Friday April 1 and Monday April 4.
- Submit your written feedback (max 1 page) on Canvas before class starts and bring it to class **(deadline Monday April 4).**

Week 10, April 12, Individual feedback and Resubmission of Research Proposal

The instructor will schedule individual feedback sessions with students to discuss their research proposals. Some students may be asked to resubmit their research proposal (you will be notified about this by the instructor).

Week 11, April 19, Work on thesis, NO CLASS

Writing tips:
- Re-read the Thesis manual, and particularly the section on Reporting.
- Read the EU Commission's little guide on clear writing in English: https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/bb87884e-4cb6-4985-b796-70784ee181ce/language-en (Links to an external site.)
- Re-read one of the articles covered in the first section of the course with an eye on how the text communicates with the reader:
    1. How is this text structured? What structuring elements can you identify (what is it that conveys the structure to the reader)? Highlight all those elements.
    2. How does the author describe the process of the research (methodological aspects)?
    3. What happens if you only read the headings? Would you be able to still grasp the argument by only reading the headings? If so, why? Take a close look at the first and the last paragraph of each section of the text. How do these paragraphs guide the reader? Try to emulate this in your thesis, good writing takes the reader by the hand, guiding them along the text.

Week 12, April 26, Individual Feedback on Empirical Analysis (group 1)

The instructor will schedule individual feedback sessions with students to discuss their empirical analysis. Each student will share their plans and progress on empirics. I recommend preparing a short presentation with a few slides (max. 2-3 slides, 5 minutes) to make the most of the session. The instructor will split students in two groups to ensure adequate time for feedback (approx. 30 minutes per student).

Week 13, May 3, Individual Feedback on Empirical Analysis (group 2)

The instructor will schedule individual feedback sessions with students to discuss their empirical analysis. Each student will share their plans and progress on empirics. I recommend preparing a short presentation with a few slides (max. 2-3 slides, 5 minutes) to make the most of the session. The instructor will split students in two groups to ensure adequate time for feedback (approx. 30 minutes per student).

Week 14, May 10, Work on Thesis, NO CLASS

Review the writing tips above.

Week 15, May 17, Thesis Draft, NO CLASS

Assignment 4: First draft of thesis
- Submit a draft of your thesis that at a minimum contains two thirds of your thesis, i.e. it should contain the parts you have handed in earlier while incorporating feedback you have received from the instructor and peers. That is, the draft should include research question, literature review, theoretical framework, research design, and empirical analysis. The first draft must include an abstract and draft introduction outlining the relevance and contribution of your research question.
- Review the thesis manual while preparing the draft. The thesis should be 8,000-10,000 words, meaning that your draft should be about 6,000-7,000 words long.
- Submit **assignment 4** (min. 2/3 of the thesis lengths) on Canvas **(deadline Tuesday May 17).**

Week 16, May 24, Peer feedback discussion

Peer review assignment 2: Peer feedback on thesis draft
- Prepare written feedback (max. 2 pages) on the thesis draft of one other student in the class (see table on Canvas, I will enable access to the submitted documents)
- Use the "*Thesis Assessment Form*" on Canvas to critically reflect on the proposal. The best feedback is constructive; that is, it highlights strengths and weaknesses and rather than only presenting points of critique, also discusses how your peer could address them and improve upon their design.
- During the session, you will be asked to briefly share your feedback on the student's proposal.
- Be prepared that you will need to complete this assignment between submitting your thesis draft on May 17 and this session.
- Submit your written feedback (max. 2 pages) on Canvas before class starts and bring it to class **(deadline Monday May 23).**

Week 17, May 31, Individual feedback sessions (as needed)

The instructor will schedule final individual feedback sessions on an as-needed basis.

Week 18, June 7, Final week, NO CLASS

Final Thesis submission
- For administration reasons, you are asked to submit a few details (title, whether or not the library may publish your thesis) on your thesis. Without answering these questions, you will not be able to receive your diploma. The link for the survey will be posted on Canvas.
- These are the second readers for the thesis. If you list the name of your second reader on the title page, make sure that you use the appropriate academic title (everyone who acts as second supervisor carries the title of Dr.).

> - Feel free to also submit a short (optional) reflection on writing your thesis, using the link on Canvas! This is helpful for me for when I next teach the course.
> - For the **final submission** of the thesis, upload the **following two documents** by **Friday, June 10 at 23:59:**
>   - Submit your entire thesis containing all sections, including an abstract, on Canvas.
>   - Submit the grading form MA theses with your name and course identifying information filled in on Canvas.

Recommended readings on various forms of political violence (these are a starting rather than an end point)

Brass, Paul R. (2011). *The production of Hindu-Muslim violence in contemporary India.* University of Washington Press. Available at UvA library.

Brubaker, Rogers, and David D. Laitin. 1998. "Ethnic and Nationalist Violence." *Annual Review of Sociology* 24, no. 1 (1998): 423-452. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.soc.24.1.423

De la Calle, Luis de, and Ignacio Sánchez-Cuenca. 2011. "What We Talk About When We Talk About Terrorism." *Politics & Society* 39 (3): 451–72. https://doi.org/10.1177/0032329211415506

Earl, Jennifer. 2011. "Political Repression: Iron Fists, Velvet Gloves, and Diffuse Control." *Annual Review of Sociology* 37: 261–284. http://www.annualreviews.org/doi/abs/10.1146/annurev.soc.012809.102609

Gutiérrez-Sanín, Francisco, and Elisabeth Jean Wood. 2017. "What Should We Mean by 'Pattern of Political Violence'? Repertoire, Targeting, Frequency, and Technique." https://doi.org/10.1017/S1537592716004114

Kalyvas, Stathis N. 2003. "The Ontology of 'Political Violence': Action and Identity in Civil Wars." *Perspectives on Politics* 1 (3): 475–94. https://doi.org/10.1017/S1537592703000355

Kalyvas, Stathis N. 2006. "The Logic of Violence In Civil War." Cambridge University Press. Available at UvA library.

Krause, J. 2018. *Resilient Communities: Non-Violence and Civilian Agency in Communal War.* Available at UvA library.

Mares, I. and Zhu, B., 2015. "The production of electoral intimidation: Economic and political incentives." *Comparative Politics*, *48*(1), pp.23-43. https://doi.org/10.5129/001041515816075204

Przeworski, Adam. 2011. "Divided We Stand? Democracy as a Method of Processing Conflicts1." *Scandinavian Political Studies* 34 (2): 168–82. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9477.2011.00265.x

Steele, Abbey. 2017. *Democracy and Displacement in Colombia's Civil War.* Cornell University Press. Available at UvA library.

Tilly, Charles. 2012. *The Politics of Collective Violence.* In: Collective Violence, Contentious Politics, and Social Change: A Charles Tilly Reader, pp. 275-293. Available at UvA library.

Wilkinson, Steven I. 2004. *Votes and Violence: Electoral Competition and Ethnic Riots in India.* Cambridge University Press. Available at UvA library.

Wilkinson, Steven I. 2009. "Riots." *Annual Review of Political Science* 12 (1): 329–43. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.polisci.12.041307.075517

Additional resources on the research process

Please review the methodology and research process resources created specifically for MSc students in our program. If you need additional resources beyond that, you can consult with the instructor. Beyond that, a few other suggestions with emphasis on research design and methodology:

- Materials on research questions, theorizing, and more (such as abstracts) from Andrea Ruggeri's website: https://www.aruggeri.eu/graduate-material
- Scope conditions podcast, all episodes: https://www.scopeconditionspodcast.com/
- Stuk Rood Vlees podcast with Abbey Steele on conceptual issues in the study of violence https://stukroodvlees.nl/episode-91-coup-insurrection-or-what-with-abbey-steele/
- Professor Lindsay Malka's methods videos: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCfM0pXzkZCt5enG4fcV0oDw/videos

Micro-level data sources

- Regional barometer surveys such as Afrobarometer or LAPOP
- Conflict event data such as ACLED, UCDP, or SCAD
- Data on ethnicity such as the EPR family data: https://icr.ethz.ch/data/epr/