

# **United States of America**

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This is one of a set of “random narratives” to complement our statistical findings in regard to civil war onsets. This is a draft; comments welcome.

The United States has had no civil war in the post WWII period. This absence of a civil war onset is consistent with our statistical model, which predicts that it would have been very unlikely for the United States to have suffered from a civil war. In fact, given the mean probability for a civil war in the U.S., a civil war would be a once in 425-year event. Despite its large population and above average percentage of mountainous terrain, the United States’ high GDP per capita, lack of oil exportation, and stable institutions kept the U.S.’s predicted probability of civil war below the world average for the entire post WWII period, and below the regional average for the period 1945 – 1999.

While there were no civil wars in the US since WWII, the US was not without domestic disturbances and violence. With a higher murder rate per capita than all western European nations (UN Survey), the United States is not an inherently peaceful society. Nor is it a country without intense grievances or ethnic heterogeneity. In consequence, from this case we should get insight on how a rich stable country that faces deep conflicts and considerable everyday violence is able to stifle any opportunity for insurgency.

## **Civil Rights Movement**

The grievances of African-Americans, especially in the South, are long-standing and profound. Ninety years after emancipation from slavery, they lacked fundamental rights enjoyed by fellow citizens and were far worse off economically than average Americans. These factors were the source of the civil rights movement. While violence was a part of the struggle for civil rights from its beginnings, tactics changed over time. In the early part of the movement, civil rights leaders made primary use of non-violent methods of protest, but as the scope of the conflict expanded and the goals of the movement changed, there was

increasing use of violence. Indeed, from roughly 1954-1965, the majority of the violence was initiated not by those in the movement, but rather by local and state police and white supremacists. To be sure, African-American leaders often planned their events with the intention of provoking violent responses, but the actions they took were non-violent in nature. Starting in the mid-1960s, however, there was an eruption of urban riots across the country provoked in part by black leaders who advocated the use of violence as a valid form of protest and a means by which gains for African-Americans might be achieved.

The federal government's response to the two tactics was different. Initially, the federal government played the role of mediator between black protesters and white local police in the South, stepping into a conflict when the conflict escalated or there was a danger of violence. The federal government was forced to take a more active role in response to the urban riots, providing troops to bring peace to cities and providing funding for riot training for local and state police.

### 1954-1965

While the struggle for civil rights by African-Americans dates back hundreds of years, what is commonly referred to as the civil rights movement began with the Supreme Court decision in the case of *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas*, which established segregation in public schools as unconstitutional. The ruling overturned the 1896 case of *Plessy v. Ferguson*, which had established the "separate but equal" criterion for racial segregation. The decision was not welcomed in Southern states, where few local officials complied with the ruling. In 1957, nine black students were barred from entering Central High School in Little Rock by Arkansas National Guard troops acting on the order of the governor. Following the beating of four black news reporters by a mob which had been attempting to stop the students from entering the school, President Eisenhower federalized the Arkansas National Guard and ordered it to enforce the federal desegregation order. Eisenhower's statement, focusing on the conflict between state and federal authorities, said that he would "use the full power of the United States, including whatever force may be necessary, to prevent any obstruction of the law and to carry out the orders of the federal court... The federal law and orders of a United States court, implementing the law," he emphasized, "cannot be flouted with impunity by any individual, or any mob of extremists" (Violence in the US p. 8). The nine children, accompanied by 1,000 federalized National Guard troops, were then able to enter the school.

But *Brown* had implications far beyond education. In the year after the ruling, Rosa Parks, an African-American woman, refused to give up her seat on a Montgomery, Alabama bus to a white passenger. Her arrest prompted a highly successful boycott of the bus system in the city. This protest was one of the first in a long series of nonviolent protests and acts of civil disobedience that would come to characterize the civil rights movement during this period. The boycott also brought Martin Luther King Jr., probably the best-known civil rights activist from the period, into a position of movement leadership.

During the 1950s and early 60s, four umbrella organizations – the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), and the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) were responsible for about 80% of civil rights movement events (McAdam 185). Throughout this period, these organizations remained committed to nonviolent means of protest and action, including sit-ins at segregated lunch counters, theaters, swimming pools, and other public places; marches, most notably in Washington, D.C. and Selma, Alabama; voter registration drives; and freedom rides through the South intended to force Southern authorities to comply with a federal law prohibiting segregation in interstate travel.

Southern resistance to these tactics aroused historical memories of several local insurgencies in the late 1860s, led by the Ku Klux Klan and other white supremacist groups, that overthrew northern supported “carpetbagger” governments that sought to implement new civil rights laws. Indeed, movement activists were often met with resistance and violence by Southern law-enforcement officials and white supremacist groups. But unlike the situation under President Ulysses Grant where federal troops were withdrawn from the South, in this case, federal troops were called in to regulate situations that escalated out of control. For example, in 1961, President Kennedy ordered 5,000 federal troops to the University of Mississippi where riots had broken out when a black student enrolled. In 1965 in Selma, Alabama, President Johnson ordered over 1,800 federalized National Guard troops, 1,000 Regular Army military police, 100 FBI agents, 100 U.S. Marshals, and 1,000 infantry troops to the area to stand-by as protection for marchers from Selma to Montgomery when Governor Wallace of Alabama refused to provide adequate protection (Violence in the US 96).

Federal troops managed to control large-scale conflicts, but they could not manage all of the conflicts that existed between civil rights supporters and white supremacists during this time. At one end of the spectrum, white business leaders

opposed to civil rights organized White Citizens' Councils that sought to fight integration in legal ways, denouncing the activities of the Ku Klux Klan and avoiding violence which was bad for their businesses. In one instance, a Council took out a full-page advertisement in a local newspaper, printing the names and addresses of black residents who had signed an integration petition. Signers of the petition lost their jobs, were refused service in stores, and in some cases, were forced to leave town (Wade 299-300). The failure of the Citizens' Councils to prevent gains in civil rights fueled increased membership and activity at the other end of the spectrum of white supremacy, the Ku Klux Klan. From 1955 to 1959, there were over 500 cases of suspected KKK violence in the South, including bombings, lynchings, and torture (Wade 300). Many Klansmen believed that sufficient violence would bring an end to the civil rights movement, just as violence had ended Reconstruction efforts by the North after the civil war (Wade 328). The Klan lacked effective leaders, since most educated and affluent businessmen preferred the tactics of the Citizens' Councils to the violence of the KKK. Without strong leadership, the Klan failed to mount an organized campaign beyond the sporadic attacks and bombings.

The relationship between the civil rights movement, white supremacists, and the federal government during this period was one of provocation and response. As McAdam (174) explains, "Lacking sufficient power to defeat the supremacists in a local confrontation, [African-American] insurgents sought to broaden the conflict by inducing their opponents to disrupt public order to the point where supportive federal intervention was required." Civil rights leaders understood this dynamic and used it to their advantage. For example, the choice of Birmingham, Alabama, as a protest site in 1963 was motivated by the belief that officials there would respond violently. Civil rights leaders were correct in their assessment of the situation; the use of fire hoses and police dogs by local police on protesters prompted federal involvement in the situation. While white supremacists did not shy away from using violence against civil rights activists, they did not deem it wise to use violence against federal troops who had superior weapons and numbers, as well as the commitment of the President; histories of this period record no major incidents of violence against federal troops by whites or blacks.

Federal officials were primarily concerned with maintaining public order, not promoting the agenda of the civil rights movement. National political leaders had several ways of exerting control over the movement. Much of the funding for the major groups leading the civil rights movement came from sources external to the local chapters of the organizations. This often provided Northern political leaders with a means by which to influence movement speeches and actions, such

as when civil rights groups were asked to suspend activities during the fall of the 1964 presidential election or face a cut in voter registration funds (McAdam 168). Federal officials also exercised control over the civil rights movement by monitoring the activities of its leaders. The FBI monitored the private life of Martin Luther King Jr., with the intent that his improprieties could be leaked to the press if they needed to discredit him (McAdam 218). The FBI also maintained extensive files on Malcolm X, and later on members of black power groups such as the Black Panthers.

National officials in the 1960s took multiple steps in order to maintain order and control during this tumultuous period. But they also by and large supported the efforts of the movement to establish racial equality. As Attorney General, Robert Kennedy brought over fifty lawsuits to ensure that African-Americans had the right to vote. President Johnson worked hard to assure the passing of the Civil Rights Acts of 1964 and 1968 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965, as well as establishing the policy of affirmative action. It is thus a combination of full federal commitment to order (both by superceding white supremacist state governments and by monitoring the movements of African-American protesters) and a moderate federal commitment to remedy the injustices faced by African-Americans that contained potential large-scale violence in the 1950s and 1960s.

### Urban Riots

Grievances and their remedy were not the whole story, as more grievances and new organizations to articulate them came to the fore in the mid-1960s as old ones were addressed. While the four big organizations, the NAACP, SCLC, CORE, and SNCC, were responsible for about 80 percent of the movement's activities during the 1950s and early 1960s, by 1970, this number declined to one-third (McAdam 185). There was a proliferation of groups, especially ones that saw violence as an acceptable means by which their goals could be achieved. In addition, the activities of the movement spread out of the South where they had previously been centered. Through the early 1960s, over 70 percent of the movement's actions were located in the South. From 1966-1970, this number dropped to one-third (McAdam 190). The proliferation of groups and expansion of the movement meant that the previous leaders of the movement were no longer able to coordinate activities and exert their influence to ensure that protests remained nonviolent. CORE and SNCC became associated with the faction of the movement, referred to as black-power groups, which saw violence as an acceptable means of achieving change. Racial violence was endemic in the second half of the

1960s, when our model was predicting a monotonic decrease in the probability of a civil war from 1961-1974.

Major rioting began in northern cities in the summer of 1964, with riots in New York, New Jersey, Illinois, Pennsylvania, and several other places around the country. Thousands of people were involved in the riots, with both protesters and police being wounded, several protesters being killed, and businesses looted and destroyed. State police and National Guard troops were required to stop the rioting in several cases. The FBI report of the incidents failed to classify the riots as primarily racial in nature, calling them “senseless attack[s] on all constituted authority without purpose or object” (quoted in *Violence in the US* 85).

The riots continued in 1965, including one of the worst of the period in Watts, California, a section of south-central Los Angeles. It began on August 11<sup>th</sup> when a white state highway patrol officer pulled over a black driver, Marquette Frye, in the Watts area on suspicion of drunk driving. During the sobriety test, a crowd gathered, and Frye resisted arrest. The crowd grew violent and began throwing rocks at vehicles and looting stores. The crowd grew to about 1,000 that evening, but was eventually dispersed by police. The following day, a crowd of about 7,000 began looting and destroying stores in Watts, stealing weapons and ammunition from gun shops. Shoot-outs started with the police, and white drivers entering the area were dragged from their cars and beaten.

The following evening, rioters began attacking the hospital where many of the riot victims were being treated. Ambulances coming to the aid of victims were often attacked, as well as firefighters attempting to put out the fires started by the rioters. The governor committed the entire California National Guard to the scene, and by August 16<sup>th</sup>, there were over 12,000 National Guardsmen, 1,400 Los Angeles police, 1,000 county sheriff’s deputies, and 60 state highway patrolmen in the city (*Violence in the US* 108). A curfew was put into effect for the city. By the end of the riot, 34 people were dead, over 1,000 injured, 200 buildings were destroyed, and over \$40 million in damage was done. About one quarter of the injuries were of police, firefighters, National Guard troops, and government officials. One firefighter, one deputy sheriff, and one policeman were among the casualties.

The riots continued after Watts. From 1963-1968, 22 percent of cities over 25,000 people had at least one flare-up (McAdam 222). In 1967, 160 cities in 34 states and Washington, D.C. experience riots, requiring the use of 4,800 military troops and over 27,000 National Guard troops, including nearly 13,000 National

Guard troops called in for the riot in Detroit, Michigan. There was \$69 million in property damage and 82 people were killed. The Senate Permanent Investigations Subcommittee estimated the cost of the 1967 riots as \$664 million dollars (Violence in the US 180). In April 1968 these figures increased, with 34,900 National Guard troops and 23,700 military troops being used to control riots in 138 cities in 36 states and Washington, D.C., in just one month. There were 43 deaths, and \$58 million in property damage was reported (McAdam 227).

The 1964 riots initially prompted President Johnson to make riot training available to all police departments and to increase the riot training of the National Guard. This, however, was only the beginning of a response by the federal government that provided over \$4 million<sup>1</sup> in riot training assistance grants to states through the Omnibus Crime Act of 1968, created 125 new National Guard units primarily devoted to riot control, and promoted a two-thirds increase in the number of Army troops assigned to riot control (McAdam 223). New laws were also passed at the state and national level that increased the penalties for those engaging in riot activities.

On top of the increased police training and forces, the government increased its surveillance of and pressure on black leaders. Government agencies planted articles in newspapers attempting to discredit the movement, attempted to infiltrate the groups, harassed and arrested individuals for minor violations, and had 24 groups under tax surveillance (McAdam 218-219). The surveillance and arrests placed the groups under significant financial strain from fighting charges in court and bailing members out of jail. Fear of informants and undercover agents also created great distrust and division within the groups (McAdam 220).

In addition to the suppressive techniques of riot control and FBI monitoring, the federal government also responded with increased social spending in many of the cities affected by riots. While President Johnson condemned the violence of the riots and declared that “rights will not be won through violence” (quoted in Violence in the US 108), he was aware of the underlying issues that contributed to the riots. “Aimless violence finds fertile ground among men imprisoned by the shadowed walls of hatred, coming of age in the poverty of slums, facing their future without education or skills and with little hope of rewarding work” (quoted in Violence in the US 109). Despite the President’s assertions that violence was not the way to motivate change, rioting often did lead to more resources for African-Americans. Betz (1974) and Piven and Cloward (1971) both find that

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<sup>1</sup> Equivalent to about \$20 million in 2004 dollars.

cities that experienced a major riot had a significant increase in welfare spending and the number of individuals receiving welfare in the year after the riot. In Los Angeles, following a second riot in Watts, the economic depression of the area was addressed by establishing a bus service to enable residents of the area to get to areas of the city with job and job training centers expanded (Violence in the US 127). In San Francisco, city officials responded to a riot by establishing an employment program to recruit black workers to fill vacancies at local companies and at city hall (Violence in the US 152).

Throughout both the nonviolent era of the civil rights movement and the later urban riots, local and federal forces prevented escalation of violence. While there were deaths and a large number of injuries caused by movement activists, white supremacists, and police, the conflicts never grew into full-scale war. When local police forces failed to maintain order or caused the unrest themselves, National Guard and federal forces were always ready to restore the peace. The government used resources at its disposal necessary to keep the peace, including troops, surveillance, the court system, and social spending. They outnumbered and outspent those seeking to create civil unrest. Federal forces provided a necessary check on state and local authorities in the South who often failed to comply with court orders and federal law.

It is also worthwhile to note that during all of this violence and turmoil, the police, National Guard, and federal troops did not join in with rioters or others looting and shooting during civil disturbances. In some cases, the same National Guard troops who were ordered by governors to prevent integration were later used to ensure integration under federal command. Black National Guardsmen and police officers were called upon to control riots being conducted by men and women who may have been their neighbors. A high degree of professionalism, training, and pay of police and military forces were also factors that aided the government in preventing escalation of violence. National Guard and federal military troops were aware that failure to follow orders could result in imprisonment and dishonorable discharge from the military. With little chance of defecting from their duties undetected, military and law enforcement officials did the jobs they were called upon to do.

### Rodney King Riots

The end of the racial riots in the 1960s did not bring the end of racial tensions and violence in the United States. Conflict persisted especially between white police officers and African-Americans. In Los Angeles, the conflict was

particularly acute, due to several cases of perceived police brutality and abuse. The cases included a 1979 lethal shooting of a black woman armed with only a knife and a 1988 destruction of two apartment buildings in South Central Los Angeles during a drug raid, for which victims were awarded \$3.8 million in damages. Frustration over police abuse came to a climax in 1992 when riots again broke out in South Central Los Angeles in response to the acquittal of police officers who had been videotaped beating a black suspect.

It began on March 3, 1991 when Rodney King led California Highway Patrol officers on a high-speed chase in Los Angeles. Once officers managed to stop his car, there was conflict during the arrest, and King, a twenty-seven year-old African-American, was beaten by several white LAPD officers. He was struck over fifty times with a police baton, and suffered serious injuries. The arrest and beating were videotaped by a bystander, who sold the videotape to a local television news station. The tape of the beating aired on March 4 and was replayed on TV stations around the world. On March 5, four officers, Sgt. Stacy Koon, Officer Laurence M. Powell, Officer Theodore Briseno and Officer Timothy Wind, were criminally charged with assault with a deadly weapon and excessive use of force. The trial was moved from the city of Los Angeles to a primarily white suburb north of the city. On April 29, 1992, the four officers were acquitted by a jury composed of one Filipino juror and 11 white jurors.

The verdict sparked several days of rioting by African-Americans in Los Angeles and some minor riots in other cities across the country. During the riot, 54 people were killed, over 2,000 people were injured – over 200 of them critically, and there was almost \$1 billion in property damage. The riot was centered in South Central Los Angeles, the same area as the 1965 Watts riot. The 1992 riot mirrored the 1965 one in many ways. Store windows were smashed, and looting was extensive. There were thousands of cases of arson, many of which firefighters could not respond to because of shooting by snipers. Several white and Hispanic motorists were pulled from their cars and beaten during the first hours of the riots, including one televised case of a white truck-driver, Reginald Denny, who was pulled from his truck and severely beaten after stopping in the middle of the riots to prevent running over rioters. He was saved by four black men who intervened and took him to the hospital.

While the beating of Reginald Denny received much attention, most of the victims of the riots were not white. The majority of the 54 people who died in the riots were African-Americans; one-quarter of the deaths were Hispanics (Tierney p.149), and the looting and burning of businesses was concentrated on Korean-

owned establishments. One-third of the businesses reporting losses from the riots were Korean-owned and another 9 percent were owned by Chinese or other Asians (Tierney p.153). Over one-half of the businesses that were completely destroyed were owned by individuals of Asian descent, with the vast majority of those being Korean-owned. The looting and destruction of Korean businesses spread from the initial location in a primarily black neighborhood into Koreatown, where the majority of residents were Hispanic. At this point, many Hispanics joined in the rioting as well. Rioters destroyed their own neighborhoods, and many were left without grocery stores and other needed services in the days following the riots (Braun and Stolberg).

While the Los Angeles police were unprepared for the riots and had difficulty regaining control of the city during the first two days, the infusion of federal and National Guard troops into the situation brought an end to the riots. Over the course of the riots, over 2,000 Army troops, 1,500 Marines, 1,000 federal law enforcement officers, and 10,000 National Guard troops were deployed to aid the LAPD (Mendel). President Bush pledged as many troops as necessary to bring an end to the riots. By the end of the second day, most of the rioting had stopped, but the curfew that had been imposed on the city was not lifted until May 4<sup>th</sup>. The riots resulted in over 10,000 arrests (Murphy and Newton). The federal government also helped to bring an end to the riots when the U.S. Justice Department announced that it would investigate the violation of Rodney King's civil rights by the police officers.

Rioting spread to other cities as well, but the riots outside of Los Angeles were not as extensive or violent. Las Vegas, Seattle, New York City, Atlanta, and San Francisco all experienced fairly substantial riots, with the National Guard being called up in Las Vegas and Atlanta, and over 1,400 arrests being made in San Francisco (<http://www.emergency.com/la-riots.htm>). There were minor disturbances in other cities as well. Riots in other cities began after those in Los Angeles and were brought under control sooner than those in LA.

The federal civil rights trial against the police officers involved in the beating ended on April 17, 1993 with the conviction of two of the officers involved and the acquittal of the other two officers who were charged with civil rights violations. There were 6,500 LAPD officers on duty the day the verdict was handed down, but there was no rioting. In a civil case, Rodney King was awarded \$3.8 million in damages in a suit against the City of Los Angeles. Several rioters were convicted on serious charges, including Donald Coleman who was sentenced to nearly twenty years in prison setting a convenience store on fire and Damian

Williams who was sentenced to ten years in prison for the beating of truck-driver Reginald Denny.

As during earlier riots, the violence was brought to an end by the deployment of thousands of troops and police officers. Unlike with the earlier riots that often led to increased social spending, President Bush cited the social programs of the 1960s and 1970s as one of the causes of the riots. Despite rebuilding efforts, the area remains one of poorest in Los Angeles. Unemployment was above 20 percent in 2002, and half of 1,500 Los Angeles residents surveyed in 2002 believed another riot was likely in the next five years (Gutierrez, Booth and Adler). While there has not been another riot in Los Angeles, Cincinnati, Ohio, experienced a riot in 2001 following the lethal shooting of an unarmed black teenager. Still, President Bush's notion that social spending on grievances does not lower the probability of civil war, consistent with our findings, cannot be rejected from this narrative on race relations in Los Angeles.

## **Ruby Ridge, Waco, and the Militia Movement**

Civil unrest and proto-insurgencies in the United States have not been limited to racial conflict. One such case is the militia movement, which developed in the 1990s in response to events at Ruby Ridge and Waco, two federal FBI cases that ended in the deaths of civilians. The militia movement in the United States refers to a wide range of anti-government groups that believe in the right to bear arms and the illegitimacy of the federal government. Some of these groups are also associated with the white supremacist movement, forms of fundamentalist Christianity, and the tax-protest movement whose members profess the belief that the income tax is unconstitutional. What unites the varied militia groups is a belief in the unconstitutionality of gun control laws, a distrust of the federal government, and the possession of significant numbers of firearms. Some militia groups engage in military training to prepare themselves for possible conflict with the federal government. Militias can be found across the country, with particularly strong concentrations in Montana, Texas, Michigan, and the rest of the Midwest. The groups have no formal structure or leadership, with the expressed strategy being to form autonomous cells each capable of action (Stern 76).

The movement is relatively new, with most militias forming in the early 1990s (when the probability of a successful insurgency, by our reckoning, was three in ten thousand!), but similar groups such as the Posse Comitatus and the Order, an offshoot of the Aryan Nations, had been operating since the 1970s (Stern). Groups calling themselves militias began to emerge in 1994 following the

well-publicized conflicts at Ruby Ridge and Waco. “The stand-off between law enforcement and Randy Weaver near his Ruby Ridge, Idaho, compound in August 1992 and the end, on April 19, 1993, to the stand-off between Branch Davidians and the FBI near Waco, Texas, acted as catalysts to [militia] movements.” (FBI Counterterrorism Report 1999 p. 30) The passing of the Brady Bill in 1993, which put into effect a waiting period and background check before a gun can be bought, was also an event which helped spur the creation of militias and attract members to the movement.

Militia members range in extremism from those who take offensive violent actions against the federal government to those who simply oppose gun-control legislation. The FBI reports that 83 of 457 terrorist incidents (actual, prevented, or suspected) in the US from 1980-1999 were committed by Right Wing groups such as militias (FBI 1999 Terrorism report p. 33). Not included in these figures is an activity labeled “paper terrorism” by the FBI (1999 report, p. 18). Militias and other anti-government groups have started to use the tactic employed by the IRS and other federal agencies against civil rights leaders, filing lawsuits against the government that consume the time and resources of government offices.

Ruby Ridge, Waco, and conflicts with the militia movement differ from the civil rights movement and the Rodney King riot in that the federal government was the initiator of the incident in these cases. While the FBI and other federal agencies did initiate some of the events that occurred during the civil rights movement, their primary role was to respond when events started to escalate out of control. Here, government agencies attempted to stop illegal activity before it could escalate. Their tactics, however, caused an escalation of conflict at Ruby Ridge and Waco, creating an incident where there had not been one before. Those with anti-government beliefs were able to use these incidents to recruit others to their cause, using the government actions in these cases as evidence of more general evils of the federal government.

Below are narratives of the two events that spurred the militia movement, followed by some of the conflicts between the government and militia members.

### Ruby Ridge

During the 1980s, Randy Weaver and his wife became involved with the Aryan Nations, a white supremacist group, near their home in mountainous Idaho. During one of the meetings in 1989, Weaver met a man who asked him to sell him

two sawed-off shotguns.<sup>2</sup> Weaver accepted the deal, but the man turned out to be a government informant. Weaver was told by the Federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (ATF) that if he became an informant for them on the activities of the Aryan Nations, he would not be charged. Weaver refused the deal, and was indicted on federal weapons charges in December 1990. Believing that it would be too risky to arrest Weaver at his home, federal agents waited until Weaver and his wife left their home, and then, pretending to be stranded motorists, arrested Weaver at gunpoint when he came to see if they needed help with their vehicle. Weaver pled not guilty to the charges in court and was released on bail. He was sent a letter with his court date; however, unknown to Weaver, the date on the letter Weaver received was incorrectly given as one month later than the actual court date. When Weaver failed to appear at the correct court date in February 1991, a warrant was issued for his arrest. Weaver was aware of the arrest warrant, and he decided to avoid leaving his cabin.

On August 21, 1992, a U.S. Marshals Special Operations Group began a raid on the cabin with the objective of arresting Weaver. As the Marshals were advancing up the mountain to Weaver's cabin, they were spotted by Weaver, Weaver's son Sam, the family dog, and a family friend, Kevin Harris. During the confrontation, a Marshal, Sam Weaver, and the dog were killed. Additional federal agents were brought in, including the FBI's Hostage Rescue Team (HRT). The following day, amended rules of engagement were put into effect, which allowed FBI agents to fire upon individuals carrying weapons. When Randy Weaver, his daughter Sara, and Harris stepped out of the front door of the cabin, they were fired upon by an FBI sniper. Randy was hit, and as Weaver's wife Vicki opened the door to let the three back inside the cabin, she was shot and killed while holding her baby. Harris was also shot.

On August 23, the HRT brought in armored cars and destroyed buildings outside of the cabin. The HRT also opened psychological warfare, shining bright lights at the cabin and yelling at those inside with bullhorns. During the stand-off, which was being covered on television, an angry crowd began to gather near the cabin. At one point, heavily armed members of an anti-government group were arrested as they approached the area. On August 28<sup>th</sup>, Bo Gritz, an anti-government leader, was brought in to negotiate with Weaver. He was given until the 31<sup>st</sup> to negotiate Weaver's surrender, or the cabin, with Weaver and his children inside, would be destroyed by the armored cars. Gritz was able to negotiate the removal of Vicki Weaver's body from the cabin and then the

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<sup>2</sup> Federal law requires that shotguns have a minimum barrel length.

surrender of Harris, who was badly injured. Once Gritz secured Weaver an attorney, Weaver agreed to surrender. Weaver and Harris were arrested and charged with murder and assault.

During the trial in 1993, the federal agents admitted to tampering with trial evidence and to failing to attempt to arrest Weaver peacefully. Harris was found innocent of all charges, and Weaver was only convicted of minor charges – a failure to appear in court and a bail violation. In a civil suit against the government, the Weaver family was awarded \$3.1 million in an out-of-court settlement for the deaths of Vicki and Sam Weaver. The U.S. government admitted no wrongdoing in the settlement. Federal agents involved in the incident received little punishment. Several were censured and two were suspended for 10-15 days. The surveillance and raid at Ruby Ridge cost \$1 million, and the trial of Weaver and Harris cost over \$1 million more (Stern 39).

## Waco

Since 1935 an apocalyptic religious group, known as the Branch Davidians, had been living near Waco, Texas. In 1990, a man named Vernon Howell, who called himself David Koresh, took over leadership of the group and the group's compound, Mount Carmel, where over about one hundred men, women, and children lived and worshipped. The Branch Davidians lived in relative isolation, had little contact with the surrounding community, and did not have ties to religious groups elsewhere.

In 1992 the Branch Davidians, and David Koresh in particular, came under investigation by the ATF for weapons violations. The Branch Davidians were believed to possess illegal weapons. They were also believed to be stockpiling weapons, a legal act. The ATF planned to use a raid on the compound to gain public recognition for their work. The media was tipped off about the raid beforehand (Reavis 39, Lewis 92, House report p. 181), and agents from the ATF videotaped both the training for the raid and the raid itself (Reavis 32-33). On the morning of February 28, 1993, a team ninety federal agents from the ATF approached the compound to serve arrest and search warrants on David Koresh (Reavis 138, House report p. 186). During the raid, gunfire broke out, and four ATF agents were killed, sixteen wounded, and an undetermined number of people inside the compound were killed and wounded. Who initiated the shooting is undetermined, although the official government version is that the Branch Davidians started the shooting (Senate report).

The failed raid initiated a fifty-one day standoff with the Branch Davidians that would utilize over 700 law enforcement officials (Reavis 263). The FBI took over control of the situation after the failed raid. The HRT was brought in, and state police were barred from involvement in the situation. Acting Attorney General Stuart Gerson was in charge at the start of the standoff, and a negotiation plan was given the go-ahead by President Clinton. On the first day of the standoff, Koresh expressed his religious views to the public through a local call-in radio show and in a telephone interview with CNN. Koresh interpreted the world in light of the Book of Revelations and believed himself to be a key part of series of events that was to lead to the end of the world.

On March 1, ten children were released from the compound, the first of thirty-six people who would leave the compound during the standoff (House report 145). On March 2, Koresh made a tape of his religious teachings, and promised to surrender upon the national broadcast of the tape. The tape was broadcast, but Koresh did not surrender. He reported that his father, God, had told him to wait. Negotiations continued with little success. On March 12, 1993, Janet Reno was sworn in as Attorney General and assumed ultimate control over the situation. The FBI's HRT increased pressure on the Branch Davidians throughout March, using psychological warfare such as periodically shutting off the electricity, playing loud music, and shining bright lights at the compound. Koresh was denied access to the media and the media were kept at a distance from the compound and denied access to Koresh and the others inside. The media reported on alleged polygamy, sexual abuse, and child abuse inside the compound. Towards the end of the month, the FBI began issuing ultimatums to Koresh. Koresh said that they would leave the compound after Passover at the beginning of April, but he did not leave it. Koresh then refused to commit to a specific date for surrender, saying that he would not surrender until he had written his religious teachings down. The FBI developed a plan that would use tear gas to force the Branch Davidians out of the compound. Reno eventually approved the plan, citing as one reason a belief that child abuse was being committed inside of the compound (House hearing p. 176). On April 19, the plan was carried out.

In the early morning, the FBI informed the Branch Davidians of the coming tear gas attack and relying on a loudspeaker, urged those inside the compound to come out. Gas canisters were then inserted into the building for over three hours. A hole, intended as an exit for those inside, was torn in the front of the compound by an armored vehicle. About six hours after the start of the attack, the FBI stopped delivering gas into the compound and another armored vehicle broke through walls in the back of the complex. A few minutes later, fires started in the

compound. Nine people from inside the compound fled and were arrested. The seventy-six Branch Davidians who remained in the compound died, bringing the total deaths of Branch Davidians to over 80. Eleven of the residents of Mount Carmel were brought to trial on criminal charges related to the deaths of four federal officers during the raid. Eight of those charged were found guilty and sentenced to a total of 240 years in jail (Reavis 299).

The response of the federal government to the incident was to identify changes that needed to be made in the ATF and FBI through congressional hearings and bureau reports in order to prevent another incident like this from occurring again. The Justice Department report of Office of the Special Counsel, conducted by former senator John Danforth, alone cost over \$12 million dollars. This report found that while the federal agents involved in the incident may have exercised poor judgment, “[t]he government of the United States and its agents [were] not responsible for the April 19, 1993, tragedy at Waco” (Danforth report, p. 4).

The conflicts at Ruby Ridge and Waco did not spread beyond the initial sites. Indeed, these events are examples of the power of the government to contain any threat, real or imagined, that it perceives, and to prevail in violent encounters, even if federal officials were in the wrong. Further, the incidents are an example of how the government is able to prevent violent incidents from sparking further conflict, even when the majority of the public believes the government to have acted wrongly.<sup>3</sup> While the AFT and FBI clearly made huge mistakes in these incidents, President Clinton, who was ultimately responsible for the actions of the federal government, was not the object of much of the public’s blame. There were no large protests against the government as a result of the events at Ruby Ridge or Waco.

Members of the militia movement were less forgiving of the federal government than the general public. Ruby Ridge and Waco are seen as part of a series of instances where the federal government has abused its power and infringed on the rights of its citizens. These incidents sparked a surge in the popularity of militia movements and encouraged new members to join anti-government organizations. Timothy McVeigh and Terry Nichols were two specific individuals at least sympathetic to the militia movement who believed that

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<sup>3</sup> According to a poll in *Time* magazine following the incident, 61 percent of respondents believed that the government started the fire at Waco (Danforth’s report).

the federal government had overstepped its authority and should not get away without punishment for its wrong-doing. On April 19, 1995, exactly two years after the fire that ended the raid at Waco, the two men destroyed the Oklahoma City Federal Building with a truck bomb, killing 168 people. This was the worst terrorist incident in the United States before the September 11<sup>th</sup> attack in 2001.

Neither man was a member of a militia group, but they were associated with individuals who were, including members of the Aryan Republican Army in Arkansas. McVeigh had been a soldier in the Gulf War, where his anti-government beliefs took form. Literature and videos about Waco were found in searches of McVeigh's and Nichols's property. Following the bombings, the federal government offered a \$2 million reward for the arrest of Nichols. McVeigh was executed for his role in the bombing, and Nichols was sentenced to life in prison. Nichols suggested that others may have been involved in the bombing.

### Militia Movement Post Waco

Post Waco, government forces became adept at not being lured into taking the first shot in confrontations with armed groups. And since militias have not been willing to fire a first shot in any confrontation, it has been the restraint of law enforcement officials that has prevented the escalation of conflict in several incidents.

In 1995, Calvin Greenup, a member of the Militia of Montana, did not appear in court to answer charges of failing to pay taxes. He retreated to his ranch and told the county sheriff he "wouldn't be hauled to jail alive...you've got the first shot. Don't wound me. Kill me" (quoted in Stern 87). The sheriff decided against any confrontation but kept a watch on Greenup. One day, Greenup saw a dark colored helicopter fly over his cabin. Believing it was a government helicopter that had come to get him, Greenup called up his fellow militia members, 20-30 of whom answered his call and came to his home to protect him. They tried to shoot it down. The helicopter turned out to be on a training mission from the National Guard. The Sheriff's strategy of waiting out Greenup worked, and Greenup surrendered a few months later (Pitcavage).

In 1996, federal officials issued an arrest warrant for Dr. Lynn Truman Crawford, a forty-two year old man who owed over \$70,000 in child support. By the Child Support Recovery Act of 1992, failing to pay child support to a child living in another state is a federal misdemeanor. When they went to arrest Crawford, he refused to surrender. Agents set up around the house, while inside

Crawford called fellow militia members to come to his aid. About 100 members from Alabama, Texas, Missouri, and Mississippi responded. The militia members videotaped the incident, but were wary to be associated with a deadbeat dad. The standoff lasted week, after which Crawford surrendered (Militia Watchdog).

On March 25, 1996, in one of the most publicized militia incidents, FBI agents arrested LeRoy Schweitzer and Daniel Peterson, two leaders of the Montana Freeman who had also led a widespread fraudulent check and money order scheme. While the Freeman were a separate group from the Militia of Montana, members of the Freeman had also threatened public officials and were heavily armed. The FBI chose a strategy of patience in dealing with the Freeman, going against the urgings of locals to take immediate action against the group. Undercover FBI agents built up trust with the men over time, and the arrests occurred without incident. Following the arrests, about twenty other militia members, many of whom had also been indicted on criminal charges, retreated to a ranch owned by one of the members and refused to surrender. Unlike at Ruby Ridge, the FBI team that set up outside the ranch did not ride in armored cars or place snipers around the building. The team included behavioral specialists, negotiators, and agents experienced in standoff incidents. Instead of surrounding the ranch, the FBI set up a roadblock to regulate movement into and out of the ranch and monitored the occupants with video cameras placed around the area. In early April, four people who had not been wanted on any charges left the ranch. The FBI had difficulty negotiating with the Freeman, since they refused to recognize the authority of the federal government. The FBI again allowed Bo Gritz, the anti-government leader who had successfully negotiated with Randy Weaver at Waco, to attempt to negotiate, but his attempts failed. The FBI slowly increased the pressure on those inside, cutting off power and limiting visitors to the ranch. On June 13, sixteen members of the group surrendered peacefully, ending the standoff.

In recent years, there has been a decline in militia activity and some of the initial organizations have dissolved. However, while the focus of FBI terrorism investigations has been diverted elsewhere following September 11<sup>th</sup>, militias still remain active throughout the country. The Militia of Montana and the Michigan Militia are two of the largest and most prominent groups, disseminating information to others and helping people set up their own militia groups. Many militias today are working to distance themselves from their association with white supremacist groups. For example, the Indiana Militia's website claims that "We do not discriminate based upon race, sex, or religious denomination" (Indiana

Militia Corps), and many militia members cite the African-American leader of the militia in Ohio as evidence that they are not a racist organization.

## **Conclusion**

While the statistical model does not find ethnic fractionalization to be a significant factor in predicting civil wars, much of the conflict that has existed in the United States has had a racial component to it. In addition to the civil rights movement and Rodney King riot, many of those involved in the militia movement are also involved in white supremacist or separatist groups. While there have been conflicts in US history that did not involve racial issues, such as the anti-war protests of the 1960s and 70s, the black-white division in the United States continues to be a factor in many incidents of civil unrest and violence.

With this deep social/ethnic/racial cleavage that is hardly crosscutting, and a long history of civil war violence connected to the issue – both the civil war itself and the insurgencies of white militias against local governments in the reconstruction period – those who focus on ethnic fractionalization, ancient hatreds, and repertoires of contention might well have seen a potential for the southern resistance to the end of Jim Crow, the race riots and the white supremacist movements in the 1950s through the 1990s to be likely candidates to escalate into civil war violence.

Our model, however, discounts such factors. It focuses on the fact that the United States has been in the top five in terms of GDP per capita every year since 1945, and it has frequently had the highest GDP per capita in the world. The question that narratives such as this one need to answer, however, is how country wealth translates into lower probability for a civil war onset.

The first point to make here is that unlike other cases of riots and incipient insurgencies, the American police forces did not turn coat. The National Guard (that was Federalized under Eisenhower) obeyed the legal order, however much it may have been a threat to their values in regard to the racial order. The Los Angeles police forces that had significant African-American representation protected White property against African-American rioters. The fact that these forces were well paid and its members had future mobility prospects if they remained loyal to their units surely played a role in deterring them from turning coat. In this sense, wealth and the ability to pay police forces a reasonable wage is one answer to the puzzle of why members who might have favored the interests of those whom they were containing still did their job to contain violence.

The second point to make here is that from Gov. Faubus to the race rioters and on to the militias, there was clearly an assessment that the forces of order were far more equipped militarily than the forces of challenge. This induced a near taboo against the direct and observable attacks on the police forces. The expected returns from shooting a policeman, given the equipment in intelligence that stood behind all policemen, have been in the US highly negative.

But wealth had indirect effects as well. The justice system in the United States has allowed those wronged by the federal government to be compensated monetarily, even when federal agents were not found guilty of any crimes. In cases heavily publicized by the media, compensation for those violently attacked by the government has been in the millions. In this way, those who were inadvertently hurt by the forces of order did not need to join in guerrilla bands in order to achieve a form of local justice. Personal injury lawyers offered them a more lucrative route.

And an indirect effect of wealth is in the institutionalization of police forces with the capacity to learn. In the narratives of protest from the 1950s through the 1990s, the FBI has shown an ability to, at least slowly, learn from its mistakes. For example, in confrontations with militia members during the mid 1990s, the FBI showed a commitment to avoiding the disasters that occurred at Ruby Ridge and Waco.

To be sure, the mountainous terrain in the United States has been a factor in sustaining militias and other right-wing anti-government groups, but it has not severely hindered monitoring or law enforcement. While militias meet and train most often in rural and mountain regions, even these areas have well developed road systems, non-militia residents, and local law enforcement officials who patrol the areas. More important, however, is the heavy investment in policing, in surveillance, and in intelligence, which together consigns these mountain-based rebels into isolated and largely ineffective cults.

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## United States of America

### Predicted Probabilities of Civil War and Key Explanatory Variables

cname	year	pr	gdp~1	pop	mtn~t	Oil	ins~b	anocl
USA	1945	.0073459	7626	140969	23.9	0	0	0
USA	1946	.0073459	7626	141936	23.9	0	0	0
USA	1947	.0072948	7654	142713	23.9	0	0	0
USA	1948	.0064952	8025	145326	23.9	0	0	0
USA	1949	.0060399	8270	147987	23.9	0	0	0
USA	1950	.00653	8040	152273	23.9	0	0	0
USA	1951	.0052176	8772	155000	23.9	0	0	0
USA	1952	.0047112	9109	157727	23.9	0	0	0
USA	1953	.0047871	9074	160475	23.9	0	0	0
USA	1954	.0044769	9300	163202	23.9	0	0	0
USA	1955	.00481	9089	165929	23.9	0	0	0
USA	1956	.0039503	9723	168882	23.9	0	0	0
USA	1957	.0039837	9712	171835	23.9	0	0	0
USA	1958	.0040919	9643	174767	23.9	0	0	0
USA	1959	.004484	9370	177720	23.9	0	0	0
USA	1960	.003881	9839	180673	23.9	0	0	0
USA	1961	.00383	9895	183687	23.9	0	0	0
USA	1962	.0037859	9946	186537	23.9	0	0	0
USA	1963	.0033351	10358	189244	23.9	0	0	0
USA	1964	.0030592	10642	191889	23.9	0	0	0
USA	1965	.0026782	11072	194309	23.9	0	0	0
USA	1966	.0022365	11649	196564	23.9	0	0	0
USA	1967	.0019042	12164	198717	23.9	0	0	0
USA	1968	.0018185	12318	200706	23.9	0	0	0
USA	1969	.0016028	12723	202675	23.9	0	0	0
USA	1970	.0014831	12975	205052	23.9	0	0	0
USA	1971	.0014936	12963	207661	23.9	0	0	0
USA	1972	.0013753	13233	209896	23.9	0	0	0
USA	1973	.0011709	13747	211909	23.9	0	0	0
USA	1974	.0009597	14379	213854	23.9	0	0	0
USA	1975	.0010591	14078	215973	23.9	0	0	0
USA	1976	.001205	13682	218035	23.9	0	0	0
USA	1977	.0010013	14271	220239	23.9	0	0	0
USA	1978	.0008396	14832	222585	23.9	0	0	0
USA	1979	.0006937	15440	225055	23.9	0	0	0
USA	1980	.0006534	15637	227757	23.9	0	0	0
USA	1981	.0007312	15295	230138	23.9	0	0	0
USA	1982	.0006865	15502	232520	23.9	0	0	0
USA	1983	.000835	14897	234799	23.9	0	0	0
USA	1984	.0007386	15290	237001	23.9	0	0	0
USA	1985	.0005443	16255	239279	23.9	0	0	0
USA	1986	.0004936	16570	241625	23.9	0	0	0
USA	1987	.0004529	16848	243942	23.9	0	0	0
USA	1988	.0004077	17186	246307	23.9	0	0	0
USA	1989	.0003458	17710	248231	23.9	0	0	0
USA	1990	.0003065	18095	250372	23.9	0	0	0
USA	1991	.0003113	18054	252688	23.9	0	0	0
USA	1992	.0003615	17594	255000	23.9	0	0	0
USA	1993	.000324	17945	257753	23.9	0	0	0
USA	1994	.0002993	18203	260292	23.9	0	0	0
USA	1995	.0002558	18703	262761	23.9	0	0	0
USA	1996	.0002365	18957	265179	23.9	0	0	0

USA	1997	.0002068	19386	267636	23.9	0	0	0
USA	1998	.0001707	19995	270029	23.9	0	0	0
USA	1999	.0001405	20613	.	23.9	0	0	0

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
pr	55	.0023542	.0022174	.0001405	.0073459
gdpenl	55	13272.25	3814.538	7626	20613
pop	54	206765	38385	140969	270029
mtnest	55	23.9	0	23.9	23.9
Oil	55	0	0	0	0

instab	55	0	0	0	0
anocl	55	0	0	0	0

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
pr	1135	.0048406	.0081393	.0000866	.0736237
gdpenl	1139	8721.369	4182.463	704	20613
pop	1121	32326.97	48112.3	1688	270029
mtnest	1155	15.44143	18.13401	0	66.90001
Oil	1155	.0190476	.1367516	0	1

instab	1153	.0346921	.1830782	0	1
anocl	1142	.0367776	.1882977	0	1

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
pr	6327	.0167741	.0232441	3.99e-10	.5050805
gdpenl	6373	3651.117	4536.645	48	66735
pop	6433	31786.92	102560.8	222	1238599
mtnest	6610	18.08833	20.96648	0	94.3
Oil	6610	.1295008	.3357787	0	1

instab	6596	.1464524	.353586	0	1
anocl	6541	.2256536	.418044	0	1

