Vacancy: PhD fellowship

Deadline: 1 June 2013

The Department of Government at the University of Essex invites applications for a three-year, full-time research position as a PhD fellow.

This PhD fellowship is financed as part of a Grant from the European Research Council for a project on “Conflict, Strategies, and Violence: An Actor-based Approach to Violent and Non-Violent Interactions” (313373) led by Professor Kristian Skrede Gleditsch. This project goes beyond analyzing conflict in terms of violent conflict, and examines conflict in terms of incompatibilities between actors, where the structure of the incompatibilities and the actors’ strategies and interactions determine whether we see escalation to violence, the use of non-violent direct action, and specific alternative outcomes, such as accommodation or regime change. An extended proposal summary is provided below.

Candidates with research interests directly related to the project as described are encouraged to apply. All applicants must submit a research proposal that is relevant to the project and the core motivation. We welcome applications from persons with broader interests in conflict research and choice of strategies in conflict, but we emphasize that we will not consider applications that primarily focus on individual case studies or primarily relate to normative aspects of non-violent direct action.

Applicants must have the following qualifications
* Hold an M.A. or equivalent
* Good skills in research methods and data analysis

In addition, as many as possible of the following qualifications are desirable
* Background in peace and conflict research
* Interest in interdisciplinary work
* Experience with Geographic Information Systems (GIS)
* General computing and programming skills
* Experience with collaborative projects

The candidate must be in residence at the University of Essex and enroll in a PhD at Essex under the supervision of Professor Kristian Skrede Gleditsch. Women and persons of ethnic minority background are encouraged to apply.

The starting date for the position is 1 October 2013 or as early as possible thereafter.

The application should include:
1) A completed PhD Application Form
2) A PhD project description of 6–10 pages, written in English, outlining
   a) main research questions
   b) expected innovation or ‘value-added’ of the project
   c) relationship of the proposed project to the study of violent and non-violent conflict
   d) a progress plan including an overview of milestones/outputs
3) A curriculum vitae
4) Certified copies of transcripts from higher education
5) Contact details for three references
The stipend for the fellowship is approximately £14,200 (with increments).


Questions and queries about the fellowship can be addressed to Kristian Skrede Gleditsch (ksg@essex.ac.uk).

For general information about the Department of Government at the University see http://www.essex.ac.uk/government/

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Conflict, Strategies, and Violence: An Actor-based Approach to Violent and Non-Violent Interactions (CSV)

Principal investigator: Kristian Skrede Gleditsch

Proposal summary:
Existing research has tended to equate conflict with violence, where ‘non-conflict’ situations are either ignored or lumped together in a binary category. This is unfortunate on theoretical and empirical grounds. Definitions of conflict normally highlight incompatibilities, which may motivate actors to resort to violence, but these do not automatically generate violence and can be settled or managed in non-violent ways. Lumping together as “not violence” both cases without conflict and agency (i.e., without clear incompatibilities or collective action) and cases where actors pursue different strategies ultimately undermines our ability to understand conflict processes and test core arguments about conflict, strategies, and the use of violence. There is a growing recognition of a decline in conventional warfare. Yet, without a broader perspective we cannot assess whether this may reflect increasing use of alternative strategies, more state accommodation, or fewer incompatibilities in the first place.

This project will examine conflict in terms of incompatibilities between actors, where the specific structure of the incompatibilities and the strategies and interactions determine whether we see escalation to violence as well as alternative outcomes such as accommodation or regime change. It will extend my prior research on civil war and focus more clearly on actor motivations, alternative outcomes to conventional civil war, and take seriously non-violent strategies in conflict and protest. Whereas previous research has tended to study violent and non-violent conflict as separate phenomena, this project will focus on violent and non-violent actions as possible substitutes and compliment and explain variation across a range of alternative outcomes, as illustrated in the so-called Arab spring, where we see both non-violent protest and violent insurgencies, as well as state responses ranging from violent repression to accommodation. The project will also consider how transnational factors can influence the choice of strategies that actors make in conflicts.

The work will be organized around 6 work packages:

* Theoretical framework;
* Data collection;
* Collective action and strategies in protest;
* Government responses and violence;
* Transnational dimensions;
* Out-of-sample evaluation and risk assessment.