Rebels in a Rotten State: Understanding Atrocity in the Sierra Leonean Civil War

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Friday 5th December
12pm
Arts 1.83

The talk considers a central question: How can we best explain the most extreme, cruel - even seemingly ‘senseless’ - forms of violence in civil war? Using the case study of the Sierra Leone civil war and drawing on fieldwork with perpetrators of atrocity, Kieran explores the role of emotions and social psychological processes in promoting violence divorced from terror tactics or strategic war aims, which are yet poorly described as the result of anarchy or the breakdown of military discipline. He argues that a better understanding of the internal social dynamics of Sierra Leone’s rebel group sheds light on the escalation of violence in conflict more broadly.

All welcome!