Post-Conflict Elections and Recurrence of Violence

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A turning point: Former belligerents start the political process

Foundational event: institutionalization before liberalization

When do institution matter in generating cooperation?
Two chapters of my dissertation

First: What causes the conflict to recur after the first post conflict election?

Second: Building a model to analyze the mechanism and condition (Main focus of this presentation)

Brief discussion of the overall puzzle and the first chapter, since they are linked
First post-conflict elections (PCE)

- More than half of all civil wars are the relapse of the old cases (Walter 2004, Doyle and Sambanis 2000)
- Post-conflict elections increase the risk of conflict recurrence (Collier, Hoeffler, and Sderbom 2008; Paris 2004)

*Why/When are PCEs risky events?*
First post-conflict elections (PCE)

Why are PCEs risky?

- New area of study
- Case studies: Disarmament of combatants key before holding the elections (Lyons 2005)
- Timing matters: Recent empirical works show that PCEs held within one year are risky (Brancati & Snyder, 2012; Flores & Nooruddin, 2012)
The Puzzle

- But the effect of timing may be spurious

- Risk of conflict recurrence is highest during the early years after the conflict, irrespective of an election (Collier, Hoefler and Soderbom 2008; Snyder 2000; Fearon and Laitin 2003)

- Therefore, the main puzzle is controlling for time, what other factors make the elections risky?

- Rather than structural factors, I take the rational choice approach and examine the Strategic decision making of the groups/parties involved in choosing to fight after contending in the first PCE.
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Why fight?

Why do actors choose the suboptimal fight option rather than peaceful negotiations?

Literature:

- Pull: limited information on capabilities and coordination problem in allocating resources (Fearon 1995; Hirshleifer, 2000)
- Push: lack of credible commitment to peace and therefore better off defecting (Powell 2006)
The puzzle

Furthermore, the war equilibrium model by Garfinkel and Skaperdas (2007:680) suggests,

- Both sides have the best utility in choosing to fight, rather than any other alternative, **whether they are in fighting state, or in settlement state short of decisive outcome** (also Leventoglu & Slantchev, 2007)

Restating the puzzle: Can electoral institution build cooperation and change war equilibrium to peaceful equilibrium?
Theory building

- External third parties help by minimizing the credible commitment problem (Walter 1999)
- Elections should work in similar way
- Electoral functions are important predictors of stability in two ways.
  - First, elections provide incentives of political power against the high cost of war
  - Second, elections provide an integral mechanism of third party arbitration for the belligerents since the outcome of elections is dependent on the civilian mass rather than the opponent; Self-enforcing democracy (Fearon 2011)
- But an election loses its utility when it is rigged
Pre-election violence

Legend
- <20 civilian fatalities
- 20-40 civilian fatalities
- 40-60 civilian fatalities
Post-Conflict Elections and Recurrence of Violence

Theory

- Two main election irregularities: Pre-election violence and fraud
- Post-conflict elections are more vulnerable to such manipulations (Mason and Crane 1989; Weidmann and Callen 2013)
- Fraud by incumbents and pre-election violence by oppositions (Schdler 2002)
Electoral misconducts serve as the basis for the conflict recurrence on following three grounds.

First, fraudulent elections and pre-electoral violence serve as barrier to information regarding true popular support, and provides incentive for the losing party to seek violent path.

Second, as a result of electoral misconduct and the uncertainty, the self-enforcing mechanism of the election, where the people act as the neutral arbiter, loses its meaning.

Third, electoral misconducts lower the legitimacy of the incumbent, and the opposition can capitalize on it by challenging the weak incumbent on numerous problematic issues (Riker, 1982, pp. 206-209; Beaulieu 2014)
Theory

H1: As the incidence of pre-electoral violence in the first PCE increases, there should be higher likelihood for conflict recurrence.

H2: As the incidence of electoral fraud in the first PCE increases, there should be higher likelihood for conflict recurrence.
Moving Ahead

- But, extent of electoral malpractice and the opposition allegation can also be subjective

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**The New York Times**

Candidate Says Recordings Show Afghan Election Was Rigged

By AZAM AHMED | JUNE 22, 2014

KABUL, Afghanistan — One of the candidates in Afghanistan’s disputed presidential election released on Sunday what his campaign said were recordings of phone calls in which a top election official, other election officials and aides of a rival candidate speak about stuffing ballot boxes and rigging the vote.

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- Modeling the condition:
  
  **Under what conditions do electoral malpractices risk the sustainability of electoral institutions?**
Mechanism and Condition

When do election irregularities lead to violence?
EITM Framework

Step 1: Strategic decisionmaking concept and nominal choice

Step 2: Bayesian information update model and duration model to test the prediction

Step 3: Unify the two
Model

Two player sequential game:
Incomplete information

Players 1 and 2 contend first elections after the end of an armed conflict
Model

- Player 1’s type is either
  - Committed to peace
  - Not committed to peace
- Player 1 knows its type and player 2 has prior belief, \( p \)
- Player 1 wins the election either by using electoral malpractice \( M \) or fairly \( \sim M \)
- Using the signal \( M \) or \( \sim M \), Player 2 updates its belief about 1’s type and chooses one of the following actions
  - Fight or challenge \( F \)
  - Accept \( A \)
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Model-Payoffs

- $s_1$ and $s_2$ are the shares of popular support for 1 & 2:
  \[ s_1 + s_2 = 1 \]

- When using M, Player 1 gains power/share m that 2 loses

- Both 1 & 2 incur cost from fighting
  - When 1 wins using M, then the expected cost for fighting for 1 is higher ($C_{H1}$), than if it wins fairly –not using M, ($C_{L1}$)
  - For 2, cost of challenging or fighting peaceful type player 1 is less since 2’s demands are likely to be addressed more easily ($C_{L2}$), compared to when player 1 is not committed to peace that is ready to fight harder ($C_{H2}$)

- $d_2$ is player 2’s demands for which it chooses to challenge or fight
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Model: The Game Tree

\[ N \]

\[ \text{Peace} \]

\[ 1 \]

\[ M \]

\[ F \]

\[ s_1 - c_{L1}, \quad s_1, \quad s_1 + m - c_{H1}, \quad s_1 + m, \quad s_1 - c_{L1}, \]

\[ s_2 + d_2 - c_{L2} \quad s_2 \quad s_2 + m + d_2 - c_{L2} \quad s_2 - m \quad s_2 + d_2 - c_{H2} \]

\[ \sim\text{Peace} \]

\[ 1 \]

\[ \sim M \]

\[ F \]

\[ s_1, \quad s_1 + m - c_{H1}, \quad s_1 + m, \]

\[ s_1 + m, \quad s_1 + m, \quad s_2 + d_2 - c_{H2} \quad s_2 - m \]

\[ \sim M \]

\[ F \]

\[ s_2, \quad s_2 + m + d_2 - c_{H2} \quad s_2 - m \]
Theory-Propositions

- **Separating Equilibria**
  Player 2 chooses F when 1 plays M and $c_{H2} > c_{L2}$

- **Pooling Equilibria**:
  Player 2 chooses F when 1 plays $\sim$M and

  $$c_{H2} < s_2 + \frac{d_2 - p_{CL}}{1 - p}$$

- **Semi-pooling Equilibria**:
  When the cost of fighting is higher, Player 2 chooses A even when 1 plays M

(Discuss Proofs)
Equilibria predictions

- **Pooling Eq**: High conflict prob
- **Separating Eq**: Conflict if M and no conflict if ~M
- **Semi-sep Eq**: Low Conflict prob

Cost:
- Low cost
- Med cost
- High cost

Conflict prob
Hypotheses

H3: Low cost of conflict after the first post-conflict elections should increase the risk of conflict recurrence

H4: High cost of conflict after the first post-conflict elections should lower the risk of conflict recurrence

H5: When the cost of conflict is between the low and high extreme, election irregularities should increase the risk of conflict recurrence
Data and Methods

- All post conflict elections 1950-2010
- Minimalist definition of armed conflict 25 or more battle related deaths per year
- Event history analysis (Box-Steppensmeier & Jones, 2004)
Data and Methods

- **Dependent Variable:**
  conflict recurrence after PCE

- **Main explanatory variables:**
  Electoral malpractice (pre-election violence and fraud),
  cost of past conflict (Battle deaths & duration),
  past conflict outcomes (negotiated settlement and victory)

- **Control variables:**
  number of years after end of conflict when the election held,
  population,
  lagged GDP,
  cold war period,
  presence of UN peacekeeping
Preliminary Findings

- Cost of the prior civil war significant factor in player 2’s decision not to challenge incumbent (H3)

- There is less likelihood of conflict recurrence after PR elections compared to Majoritarian elections (H6)

- Not significant: Cost of the prior civil war has similar pacifying effect for negotiated settlements (H4)

- Future work: Margins and conflict recurrence
Preliminary Findings

- Both pre-election violence and electoral fraud significant predictor of conflict recurrence (H1 & H2)
### Equilibria predictions

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<th>VARIABLES</th>
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<td>1.69***</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Years after conflict</td>
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<td>chi2</td>
<td>50.61***</td>
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Robust z-statistics in parentheses

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1
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Cost:
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- Med cost
- High cost

Overlap:
- 30-48th percentile
- 75-85th percentile

From empirics
Implications and future

- Shadow of the future and the role of institution
- Other ways to impose cost from outside? Will they work?
Challenges

- Building the model
- Probabilities of conflict recurrence associated with cost both from theoretical equilibria and empirics
- Robustness: Other model specifications? Cubic splines?
Preliminary Findings

CONCLUSION