REPUTATION AND WAR

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Question #3

• If the rebels win, the leader gets both the value of the good (1) and the private benefit (b)
In the News...
In the News...
In the News...
Agenda

1. Preview
2. Experiment #4
3. Evidence
4. Reputation As A Cause Of Peace?
5. Rational Appeasement
6. Syria And Chemical Weapons
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Intuition

• Bargaining reveals information about strength
  – Weak types accept smaller offers than strong types
  – How does this affect future interactions?
  – Do weak types have incentives to fight to project an image of strength?
What this is

- Vietnam War: “the domino theory”
What This Is

• Vietnam War: “the domino theory”
  – If the U.S. lets Vietnam fall, it will show weakness to our enemies
  – Thus, U.S. fights in a geopolitically irrelevant country so it isn’t challenged elsewhere
What This Isn’t

• Bargaining over objects that influence future bargaining power
  – If I make a concession today, the other side can use that concession to grow stronger and demand more concessions later
If you give a mouse a cookie, he’s going to ask for a glass of milk. When you give him the milk, he’ll probably ask you for a straw. When he’s finished, he’ll ask for a napkin…
What This Isn’t

• Doesn’t actually cause bargaining failure
  – I know concessions today will force me to give more concessions tomorrow, so I shrink the concessions I give today
What This Isn’t

• Doesn’t actually cause bargaining failure.
  – You are happy because you know those small concessions will lead to greater concessions later
  – I am happy because I am giving you less upfront
  – We are both happy because there is no war
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LET'S DRAW A PLAYER...
The Game

• Chosen player, you are a government
• Five row contestants, you are potential rebel groups
The Game

• One at a time, the potential rebel group will decide to **give up** or **challenge** the government
The Game

• One at a time, the potential rebel group will decide to give up or challenge the government
  – Giving up gives you a payoff of $1
The Game

• If you challenge, the government decides to resist or concede
  – If the government resists, you earn $0
  – If the government concedes, you earn $2
The Game

- Government’s payoffs are as follows:
  - $2 if the rebel group gives up
  - $1 if you concede to the rebels’ demands
  - $0 if you resist the rebels’ challenge
LET’S PLAY!
Questions

- How does the government’s decision to resist or concede change from the first challenger to the last challenger?
- How does the first rebel group’s decision differ from the last rebel group’s decision?
Government’s Incentives

• Wants to convince as many rebel groups not to fight as possible
• Does not want to resist
Rebels’ Incentives

• Wants to enter and induce the government to concede

• Does not want to enter and have the government resist
One-Shot Versus Repeated Interaction

• This logic works great if G faces a single challenger
• Incentives change completely when there are many challengers
One-Shot Versus Repeated Interaction

• G might view war as more costly (tough) or less costly (weak)
  – Weak types prefer conceding always better than resisting (what we saw in the payoffs before)
  – Tough types find resisting always better than conceding
One-Shot Versus Repeated Interaction

• Tough types will thus always resist
• Weak types have incentive to bluff that they are the tough type at the beginning
  – Costly upfront, but could ultimately pay off if future rebels don’t challenge
Implication

• If incomplete information is a cause of war, it is more likely to cause war when there are more potential challengers (rebel groups)
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Walter 2006

• Meet Barbara Walter.
She’s a political scientist at UC San Diego. (You stay classy!)
Walter 2006

- Meet Barbara Walters.
She's a journalist in New York.
Don’t confuse the two
Spelling is key
Concern for reputation is a major determinant of war.
Walter 2006

• Reputation is “dark matter” of international relations
  – It is clear it exists
  – But how to measure it?
Walter 2006

• Walter’s solution: compare concentration of ethnic groups to outbreak of war
  – More groups => more concern for reputation
  – More concern for reputation => fewer concessions
Walter 2006

• Step 1: Gather data on ethnic groups and concessions given
• Step 2: Control for other important factors (value of land, military strength, terrain)
• Step 3: See results
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Level of Government Accommodation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>All Groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>REPUTATION MODEL</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Potential Future Challengers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Ethnic Groups</td>
<td>-.102 (.046)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Concentrated Groups</td>
<td>-.265 (.090)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Disaffected Groups</td>
<td>-.268 (.075)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Value of All Land Occupied by Potential Challengers</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combined Economic Value</td>
<td>.046 (.031)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combined Strategic Value</td>
<td>-.313 (.136)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combined Psychological Value</td>
<td>.277 (.239)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion of Population (All Groups)</td>
<td>-2.03 (1.03)*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Further Evidence

• Governments that gave concessions to rebels faced more challenges afterward 59% of the time

• Governments that resisted only saw challenges afterward 27% of the time
Further Evidence

- More accommodation => more challenges
  - No concessions => .78 challenges
  - Territorial autonomy => 1.05 challenges
  - Full independence => 2.00 challenges
East Timor

- 1500s–1975: Portuguese Colony
- 1975: Independence
- 1976–1999: Indonesian Rule
- 1999–present: Independence
ETHNIC GROUPS IN INDONESIA
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Other Studies

• Studying reputation has become a popular thing

• Further evidence is mixed, however
  – Reputation => more war
  – Reputation => less war
Potential Issue

- Bargaining goes two ways
- Potential challengers may *not* challenge precisely because government has incentive to build reputation
Potential Issue

• More potential challengers => more incentive for government to build reputation => less incentive challengers to be aggressive at bargaining table
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Rational Appeasement

- Fighting wars is neither free nor easy
- Wastes capital (both physical and political) to fight effectively
- Consequences?
If a state faces multiple challenges and has limited resources, appeasing in one arena may then be vital to conserve sufficient resources to deter in others.
Rational Appeasement

• Imagine there are two rebel groups
• You don’t care much about R₁ but you do care a lot about R₂
Rational Appeasement

• $R_1$ demands concessions from you
  – Choice 1: Give in
  – Choice 2: Fight
Rational Appeasement

- Suppose you are either a strong type or a weak type
- Both types find fighting $R_1$ not worth the effort
- What do you signal by not fighting?
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Syria and Chemical Weapons

• The Syrian government has (probably) used chemical weapons
  – And (probably) more so than the rebels who have (maybe?) used chemical weapons as well
Syria and Chemical Weapons

- U.S. (maybe) has an interest in stopping chemical weapons proliferation
  - September 2013: Should the U.S. intervene in the conflict because of this?
Pro Argument

- Iran is watching
- Weakness here could signal timidity on its nuclear weapons program
- This appeals to the reputation theory
Con Argument

• Iran is watching
Con Argument

- Iran is watching...the U.S. weaken itself militarily, leaving it unable to stage a preventive strike
- Think about 2004 Iraq