

Political Rebels

William Reed¹ Katherine Sawyer²

¹University of Maryland
wlr@umd.edu

²Stonybrook University
katherine.sawyer@stonybrook.edu

November 10, 2018

Introduction

- What tools do rebels have at their disposal to coax a skeptical government into making them concessions?

Introduction

- What tools do rebels have at their disposal to coax a skeptical government into making them concessions?
- For governments that want a peace settlement, how can the rebels put themselves in a position the greatest concessions?

Introduction

- What tools do rebels have at their disposal to coax a skeptical government into making them concessions?
- For governments that want a peace settlement, how can the rebels put themselves in a position the greatest concessions?
- Conventional wisdom - more powerful rebels with larger military forces are better positioned to negotiate concessions.

Introduction

- What tools do rebels have at their disposal to coax a skeptical government into making them concessions?
- For governments that want a peace settlement, how can the rebels put themselves in a position the greatest concessions?
- Conventional wisdom - more powerful rebels with larger military forces are better positioned to negotiate concessions.
- At the same time, after the fighting between the government and rebels has persisted for a while, both sides are very much aware of their opponent's fighting capacity.

Argument

- Little room for a rebel group to strategically misrepresent their troop size or fighting capacity to the government in order to obtain more concessions.

Argument

- Little room for a rebel group to strategically misrepresent their troop size or fighting capacity to the government in order to obtain more concessions.
- This leaves weaker rebel groups very much disadvantaged when negotiating with the government.

Argument

- Little room for a rebel group to strategically misrepresent their troop size or fighting capacity to the government in order to obtain more concessions.
- This leaves weaker rebel groups very much disadvantaged when negotiating with the government.
- Weaker rebel groups can use constitutions to improve their negotiating position vis-à-vis the government. Constitutions place limits on how extreme rebel groups may become after prolonged fighting.

Argument

- Little room for a rebel group to strategically misrepresent their troop size or fighting capacity to the government in order to obtain more concessions.
- This leaves weaker rebel groups very much disadvantaged when negotiating with the government.
- Weaker rebel groups can use constitutions to improve their negotiating position vis-à-vis the government. Constitutions place limits on how extreme rebel groups may become after prolonged fighting.
- Constitutions open a space for the rebels to strategically misrepresent their ideal peacetime policy position with the end of obtaining a more concessions.

Argument

- We assume that as fighting persists rebels tend to become more extremist.

Argument

- We assume that as fighting persists rebels tend to become more extremist.
- Rebel constitutions tend to place limits on how extreme a rebel group can become.

Argument

- We assume that as fighting persists rebels tend to become more extremist.
- Rebel constitutions tend to place limits on how extreme a rebel group can become.
- This constitutional constraint on rebel extremity can lead to more government concessions.

Argument

- We assume that as fighting persists rebels tend to become more extremist.
- Rebel constitutions tend to place limits on how extreme a rebel group can become.
- This constitutional constraint on rebel extremity can lead to more government concessions.
- At the same time, constitutions create an incentive for rebels to misrepresent their most preferred policy position which can make civil wars last longer.

Payoffs

Table: Actions and Outcomes with Payoffs.

Actions	Payoffs to G	Payoffs to R
G resumes fighting	$(1 - p) + pr - w_g - c_g$	$pr + (1 - p) - w_r - c_r$
G offers peace, R accept	$(1 - k) - (1 - z)$	$k - (z - r)$
G offers peace, R rejects	$(1 - p) + pr' - w_g - c_g$	$pr' + (1 - p) - w_r - c_r$

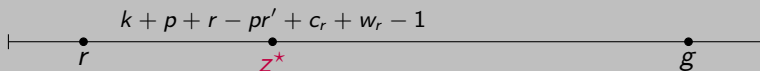


Figure: Optimal Peacetime Policy Offer

Extreme Rebels

Space for Extreme Rebels to Look Moderate



Figure: Optimal Peacetime Policy Offer

Moderate Rebels

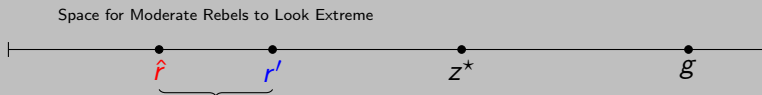


Figure: Optimal Peacetime Policy Offer

Research Design

- Monthly data on all active African conflicts in the Uppsala Conflict Database (UCDP) Dyadic Armed Conflict Dataset during the period 1989-2009.

Research Design

- Monthly data on all active African conflicts in the Uppsala Conflict Database (UCDP) Dyadic Armed Conflict Dataset during the period 1989-2009.
- Political concessions (Thomas 2014)
 - Monthly coded dichotomous variable of strong political concessions made by the government to the particular rebel group in a given dyad-month.

Research Design

- Monthly data on all active African conflicts in the Uppsala Conflict Database (UCDP) Dyadic Armed Conflict Dataset during the period 1989-2009.
- Political concessions (Thomas 2014)
 - Monthly coded dichotomous variable of strong political concessions made by the government to the particular rebel group in a given dyad-month.
- Rebel constitutions
 - Coded rebel constitutions from Geneva Call documents on Armed Non-State Actors (ANSAs).

Econometric Models

- First set of models
 - Probit model, reporting robust standard errors
 - DV: Political concessions (Thomas 2014).

Econometric Models

- First set of models
 - Probit model, reporting robust standard errors
 - DV: Political concessions (Thomas 2014).
- Second set of models
 - Negative Binomial
 - DV: Conflict-months.

Econometric Models

- First set of models
 - Probit model, reporting robust standard errors
 - DV: Political concessions (Thomas 2014).
- Second set of models
 - Negative Binomial
 - DV: Conflict-months.

Covariates

- IVs: Rebel constitution and rebel strength.

Covariates

- IVs: Rebel constitution and rebel strength.
- Rebel constitution
 - Dichotomous measure of whether or not rebels drafted a written constitution.

Covariates

- IVs: Rebel constitution and rebel strength.
- Rebel constitution
 - Dichotomous measure of whether or not rebels drafted a written constitution.
- Rebel strength
 - Number of rebel troops (log transformed)
 - Also account for government strength, number of state troops (log transformed)
 - Robust to different specifications, ratio of rebel to state troops.

Controls

- Other covariates
 - Rebel elections, natural resources and other funding (oil, drugs), territorial conflict, battle deaths (log transformed), sexual violence, ideology of rebels.

Controls

- Other covariates
 - Rebel elections, natural resources and other funding (oil, drugs), territorial conflict, battle deaths (log transformed), sexual violence, ideology of rebels.
- State characteristics
 - Democracy, ethnic fractionalization, population (log transformed), GDP per capita (log transformed).

Controls

- Other covariates
 - Rebel elections, natural resources and other funding (oil, drugs), territorial conflict, battle deaths (log transformed), sexual violence, ideology of rebels.
- State characteristics
 - Democracy, ethnic fractionalization, population (log transformed), GDP per capita (log transformed).
- International intervention
 - Third party intervention, external support.

Results

$$Pr(\text{Political Concession}) = \Phi(\beta_0 + \beta_1 * \text{Constitution} + \beta_2 * \text{Troops} + \beta_3 * \text{Constitution} * \text{Troops})$$

Table: Probit Model of Political Concessions

	<i>Dependent Variable:</i>
	Political Concessions
Constitution	5.354*** (1.456)
Log(Rebel Troop Size)	0.191*** (0.033)
Constitution*Log(Rebel Troop Size)	-0.592*** (0.201)
Constant	-3.110*** (0.287)
Observations	1,454
Log Likelihood	-346.546
Akaike Inf. Crit.	701.092

Note:

* p<0.1; ** p<0.05; *** p<0.01

Results

$$E(\text{Civil War Months}) = \beta_0 + \beta_1 * Pr(\text{Concession}) + \beta_2 * \text{Constitution} + \beta_3 * \text{Troops}$$

Table: Negative Binomial Model of Civil War Months

	<i>Dependent Variable:</i>
	Months of Civil War
Probability of Concession	-0.188*** (0.058)
Constitution	0.437*** (0.144)
Log(Rebel Troop Size)	0.039*** (0.015)
Constant	3.440*** (0.126)
Observations	1,454
Log Likelihood	-6,856.119
θ	1.093*** (0.038)
Akaike Inf. Crit.	13,720.240

Note:

* $p < 0.1$; ** $p < 0.05$; *** $p < 0.01$

Conclusion

- Weaker rebel groups very much disadvantaged when trying to reach a peace agreement with the government.

Conclusion

- Weaker rebel groups very much disadvantaged when trying to reach a peace agreement with the government.
- Constitutions open a space for the rebels to strategically misrepresent their ideal peacetime policy position with the end of obtaining a better deal from the government which can prolong conflict.

Conclusion

- Weaker rebel groups very much disadvantaged when trying to reach a peace agreement with the government.
- Constitutions open a space for the rebels to strategically misrepresent their ideal peacetime policy position with the end of obtaining a better deal from the government which can prolong conflict.
- Weaker rebels can use constitutions to limit extreme policy positions and coax a political concession from the government.

Conclusion

- Weaker rebel groups very much disadvantaged when trying to reach a peace agreement with the government.
- Constitutions open a space for the rebels to strategically misrepresent their ideal peacetime policy position with the end of obtaining a better deal from the government which can prolong conflict.
- Weaker rebels can use constitutions to limit extreme policy positions and coax a political concession from the government.
- Constitutions need not be a misrepresentation of the group's ideology; may reflect weak rebel's ideal position (although one they are not able to achieve with their current infrastructure and capacity).

Conclusion

- Weaker rebel groups very much disadvantaged when trying to reach a peace agreement with the government.
- Constitutions open a space for the rebels to strategically misrepresent their ideal peacetime policy position with the end of obtaining a better deal from the government which can prolong conflict.
- Weaker rebels can use constitutions to limit extreme policy positions and coax a political concession from the government.
- Constitutions need not be a misrepresentation of the group's ideology; may reflect weak rebel's ideal position (although one they are not able to achieve with their current infrastructure and capacity).