Do Politically Irrelevant Events Cause Conflict?

The Cross-continental Effects of European Professional Football on Protests in Africa

Kikuta & Uesegi (2021)

Replication project by Jack Merriman

Conflict Models

Existing Theory

- Grievance theses, contentious politics frameworks, collective action theories, bargaining models
- Actors protest based on new information received based on political events
- Rational update treated as null in this study

Football in Africa

Rise of European pro football

- Weak domestic leagues in Africa but football the dominant sport on the continent
- European football a ‘second religion’
- Great environment to examine apolitical events

Two Natural Experiments - Outcomes

Event Data

- Identify relationship between football results and conflict
- Incidence of protests in African countries
- ACLED and SCAD data

$$\Delta Y_{ij}$$

Survey Data

- Identify the mechanisms underlying the event data
- Routine survey of Africans, 18 indicators of mood and political trust
- Afrobarometer data

$$W_k$$

Treatment Variable

The result of the game

- Results of 61,527 football matches involving African players from 2005-2019
- Top 5 European leagues
- 40 African countries

- Subsetted into close games based on aggregated betting odds
- Co-nationality used as an indicator of support. (tested in appendix)

$$D_{ij}$$

Controls

- For survey data, treat individual respondents to the Afrobarometer as subjects.
- Those who answered in the days after a game are treatment, those who did not answer around a game were the control.
- As-if randomisation exploited

player	season	match_id	match_date	result	team	league	birth_country	birth_subregion
Larbi Ben Barek	1948	1	1948-09-12	even	Atlético Madrid	La Liga	Morocco	Northern Africa
Jay-Jay Okocha	1994	11348	1995-05-13	lose	E. Frankfurt	Bundesliga	Nigeria	Western Africa
Rafik Saïfi	2001	21715	2002-05-04	lose	Troyes	Ligue 1	Algeria	Northern Africa
Yaya Touré	2008	34220	2009-04-28	even	FC Barcelona	Champions League	Cote d'Ivoire	Western Africa
Pape Cheikh	2016	47730	2016-08-27	lose	Celta de Vigo	La Liga	Senegal	Western Africa
Domingos Quina	2019	55156	2020-07-17	lose	Watford	Premier League	Guinea-Bissau	Western Africa

league	match_date	match_time	team	enemy	team_score	enemy_score	result	team_shot	enemy_shot	team_shot_target	enemy_shot_target	win_odds	even_odds	lose_odds
La Liga	2020-09-12	15:00	SD Eibar	Celta de Vigo	0	0	even	8	6	1	3	0.3770050	0.3018426	0.3211524
La Liga	2015-05-02	*NA*	Dep. La Coruña	Villarreal	1	1	even	9	7	3	2	0.2713808	0.2826883	0.4459309
Serie A	2009-10-25	*NA*	Bari	Lazio	2	0	win	18	7	5	3	0.3615659	0.3054814	0.3329527
Serie A	2015-02-22	*NA*	Chievo Verona	FC Empoli	0	3	lose	10	15	3	5	0.2277641	0.2949615	0.4772744
Ligue 1	2008-08-30	*NA*	Le Mans UC 72	FC Nantes	4	1	win	12	14	4	6	0.2641135	0.3096196	0.4262669
Bundesliga	2007-04-07	*NA*	Bor. Dortmund	Alem. Aachen	4	1	win	21	18	13	9	0.3467904	0.2869989	0.3662107

Data Process

- Calculate propensity scores to determine close games
- Subset any close games (<2)
- Use the MatchIt library to create treatment and control groups

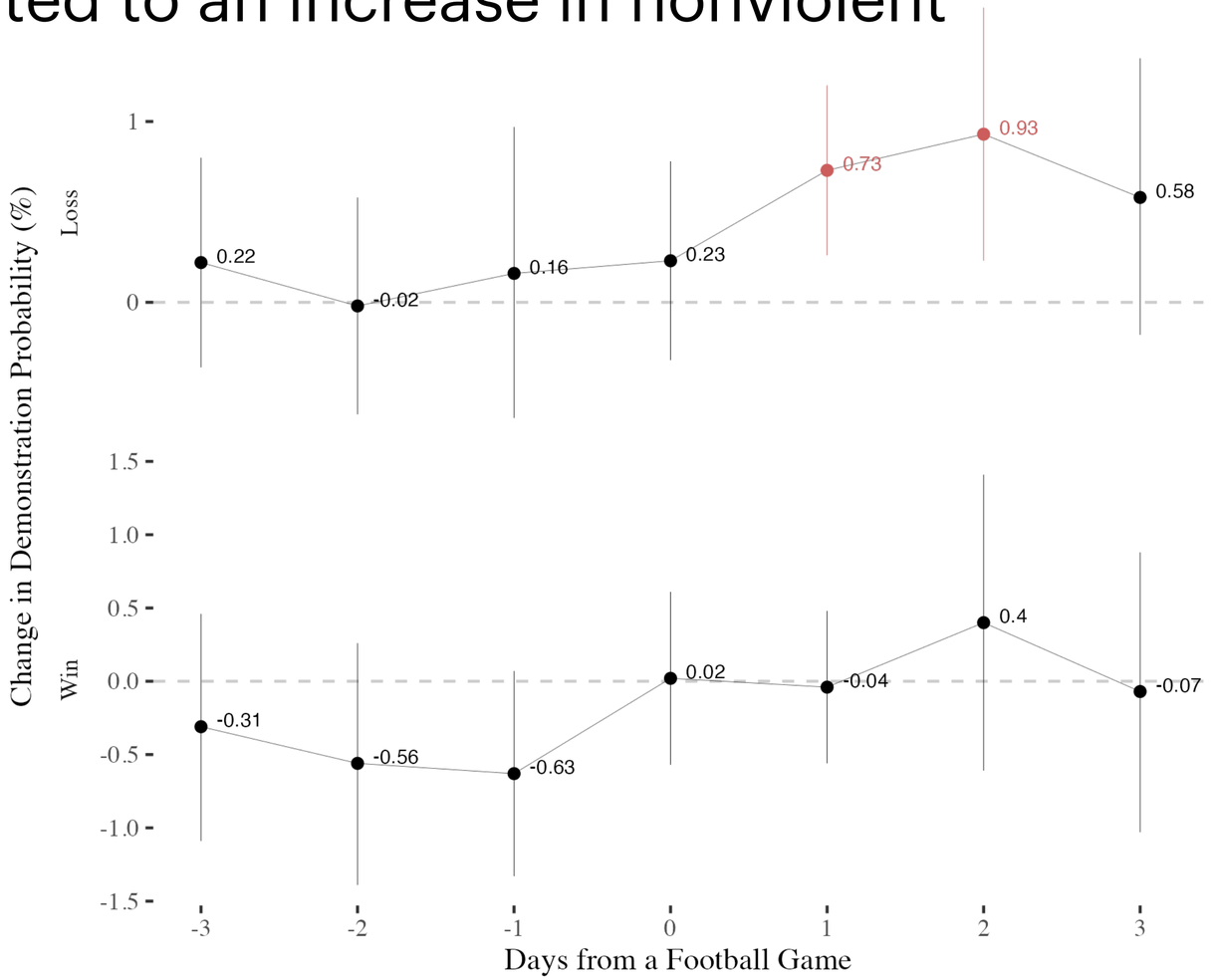
```
# close games
df.c1$m <- matching(group.id  = df.c1$match_team_id,
                    treat     = df.c1$lose,
                    p.score   = df.c1$p_score, caliper = 5)
df.c2$m <- matching(group.id  = df.c2$match_team_id,
                    treat     = df.c2$win,
                    p.score   = df.c2$p_score, caliper = 5)
```

```
m <- matchit(treat ~ p.score,
             data = df.agg, method = 'nearest', estimand = 'ATT',
             distance = df.agg$p.score, replace = F, caliper = caliper,
             std.caliper = F, m.order = 'random', discard = 'both')
```

- Uses lfe library to create linear models on the various outcome indicators. (Don’t specify any fixed effects)

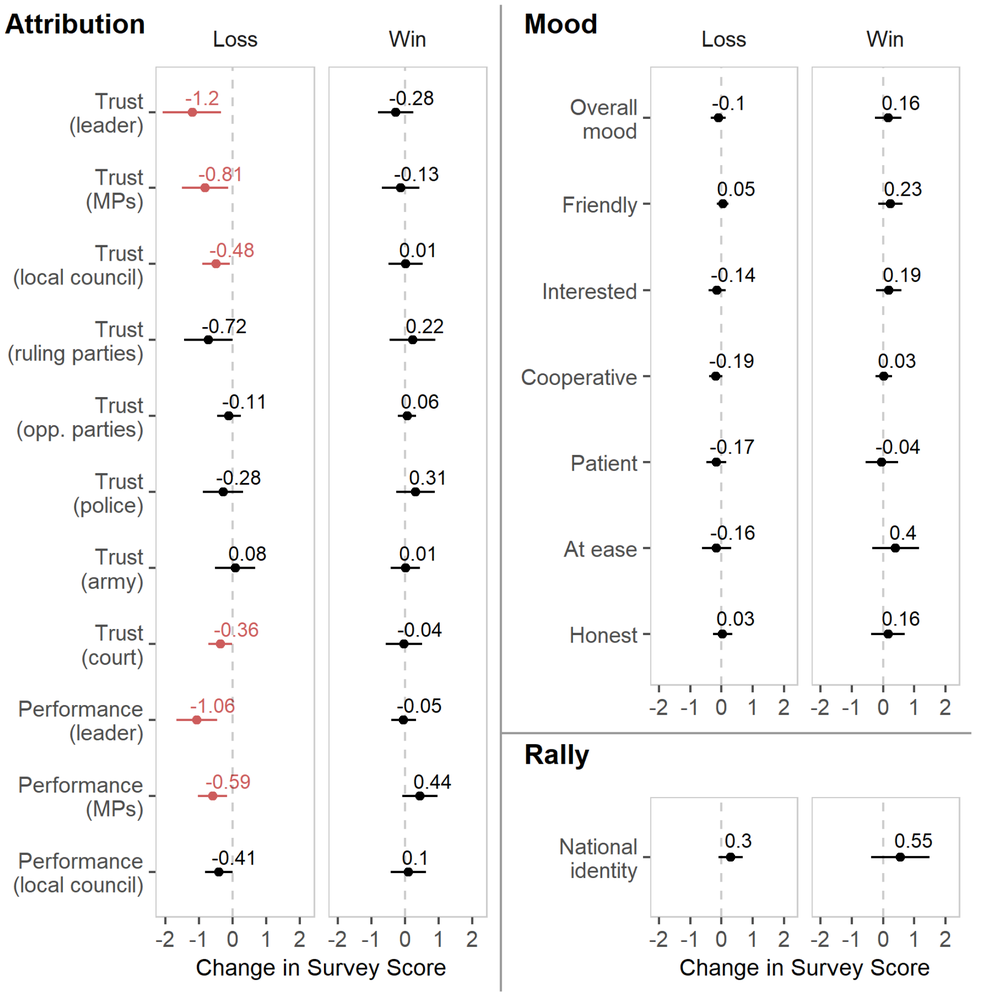
Results: Event Data

- Asymmetric effects: Losing is related to an increase in nonviolent demonstration
- No significant effect of winning
- Riots and battles not impacted
- Cast doubt on rational update theory, as political leaders have no influence on the results of these games.



Results: Survey Data

- Examination of attribution, mood and national identity.
- No significant results with latter two
- Significant loss in trust of government politicians in the immediate wake of losses
- No credit given to leaders reflects the asymmetry of the event data
- Strong evidence for hypotheses



Twist: Draws
Preparing the data

- The study separates the dataset into two and treats draws as the null.
- I re-order the data to examine the effects of draws, with a definitive result as the baseline.

$$D_{ij}$$

```r
# drop if there are players from the same country in opposing teams
df <- df %>% filter(both_teams_birth == 0)
jack.df <- df
# subset to win-even and lose-even data
df1 <- df %>% filter(result != 'win')
df2 <- df %>% filter(result != 'lose')

# calculate propensity score (%)
df1 <- df1 %>% mutate(p_score = 100 * lose_odds / (lose_odds + even_odds))
df2 <- df2 %>% mutate(p_score = 100 * win_odds  / (win_odds + even_odds))
jack.df <- jack.df %>% mutate(p_score = 100 * even_odds)
```

```r
# close games
df.c1$m <- matching(group.id  = df.c1$match_team_id,
                    treat     = df.c1$lose,
                    p.score   = df.c1$p_score, caliper = 5)
df.c2$m <- matching(group.id  = df.c2$match_team_id,
                    treat     = df.c2$win,
                    p.score   = df.c2$p_score, caliper = 5)
jack.df$m <- matching(group.id  = jack.df$match_team_id,
                      treat     = jack.df$even,
                      p.score   = jack.df$p_score, caliper = 5)
```

Twist: Draws
Running the model

- Run the fixed effects model for pure effect and 3 day window

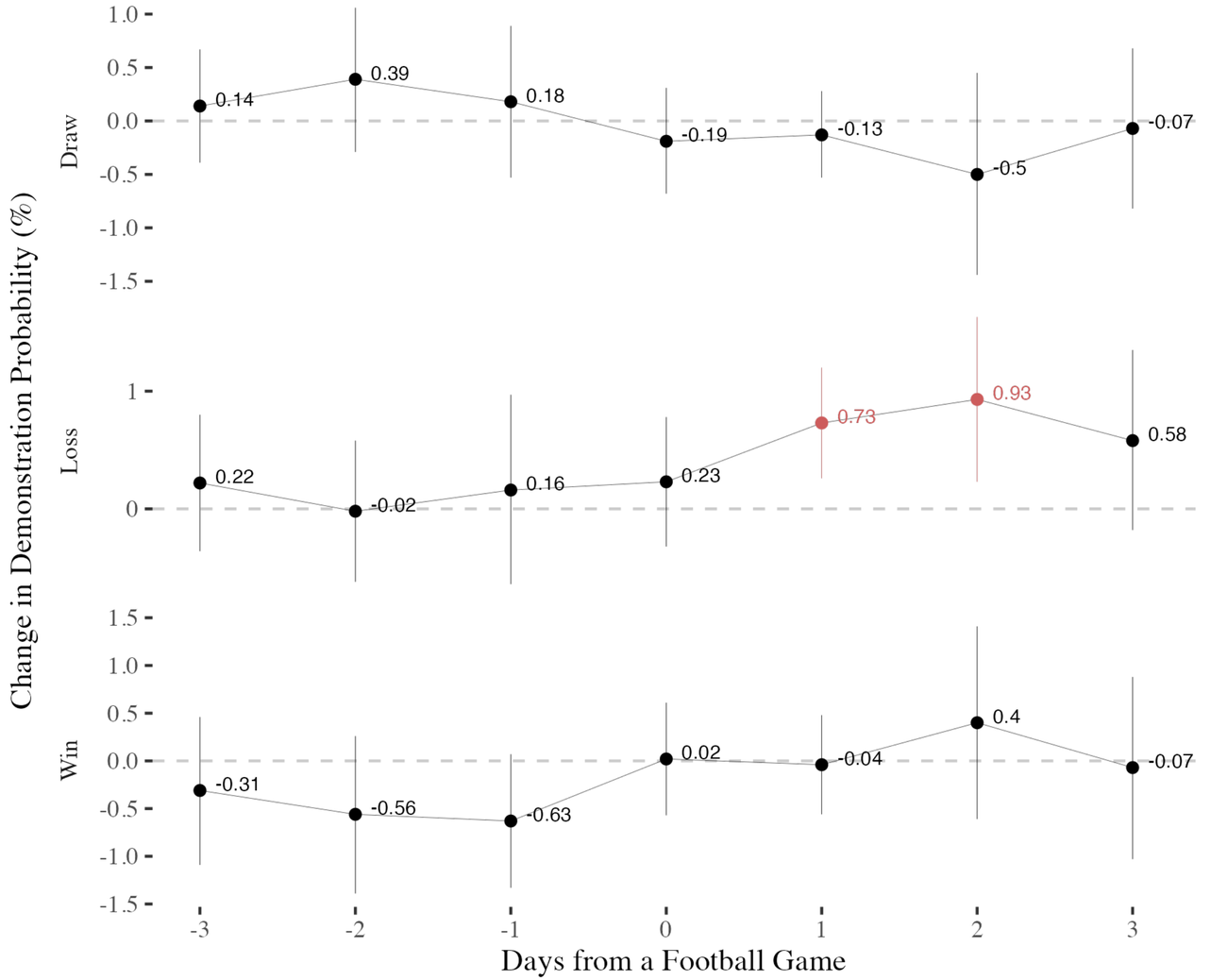
```
# analysis
ext.tmp1 <- batch.did(' ~ lose | 0 | 0 | birth_country + match_id', df.m1, out.vars, 'lose')
ext.tmp2 <- batch.did(' ~ win  | 0 | 0 | birth_country + match_id', df.m2, out.vars, 'win')
jack.tmp <- batch.did(' ~ even  | 0 | 0 | birth_country + match_id', jack.m, out.vars, 'even')
```

```
# outcome variables
d.seq           <- c(paste('l', 3:1, sep = ''), 0:3)
out.vars        <- paste0('acled_event_type1_', d.seq)
names(out.vars) <- d.seq

# analysis
ext.tmp1 <- batch.did(' ~ lose | 0 | 0 | birth_country + match_id', df.m1, out.vars, 'lose', labels = c(model = 1))
ext.tmp2 <- batch.did(' ~ win  | 0 | 0 | birth_country + match_id', df.m2, out.vars, 'win', labels = c(model = 2))
jack.tmp <- batch.did(' ~ even  | 0 | 0 | birth_country + match_id', jack.m, out.vars, 'even', labels = c(model = 3))
```

First differencing shows significant result of drawing

ov	var	x	coef	se	lwr	upr	n	df	p
Demonstration	lose	lose	**0.63***	0.25	**0.13**	**1.12**	35465	35463	**0.01**
Riot	lose	lose	**-0.3**	0.19	-0.67	0.06	35465	35463	0.1
Battle	lose	lose	**-0.17**	0.24	-0.63	0.3	35465	35463	0.48
Demonstration	win	win	**0.6***	0.28	**0.05**	**1.15**	34042	34040	**0.03**
Riot	win	win	**-0.35**	0.22	-0.78	0.08	34042	34040	0.11
Battle	win	win	**0.01**	0.35	-0.69	0.7	34042	34040	0.98
Demonstration	draw	draw	**-0.47***	0.18	**-0.82**	**-0.11**	50836	50834	**0.01**
Riot	draw	draw	**0.29**	0.21	-0.13	0.71	50836	50834	0.18
Battle	draw	draw	**0.36**	0.23	-0.09	0.81	50836	50834	0.12



Interpretation

- Authors used robustness checks and conservative models (LDV) to show no effect from wins. Could be similar with draws
- Theoretical reason for the effect? Drawing = boredom
- Doesn’t call into question the authors’ finding on losing (controls with no games for survey data)
- Paper is very thorough with easily replicable code. Functions are table focused and hard to interpret at times.


Questions?