

Incumbents, successors, and crisis bargaining: Leadership turnover as a commitment problem

Journal of Peace Research

49(4) 517–530

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DOI: 10.1177/0022343312440807

jpr.sagepub.com



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Abstract

Leadership turnover may produce significant foreign policy changes when leaders differ from their predecessors in their preferences over the resort to war and when they cannot commit to implement inherited policies. How, then, does the expected behavior of an incumbent leader's successor affect crisis bargaining in the present? I analyze a leader-centric model of crisis bargaining in which (a) the distributive outcomes of crises affect political survival, (b) leadership turnover implies the accession of a new leader with potentially different preferences, and (c) successors can renegotiate inherited settlements. In equilibrium, the sensitivity of an incumbent's political survival to making concessions interacts with the resolve of the successor to affect both the terms of settlement and the occurrence of war. First, political survival incentives can lead an incumbent to demand more than her adversary is willing to concede, provoking war when the successor is of similar resolve. Second, when a politically sensitive incumbent will be followed by a resolute successor, her adversary may grant otherwise unnecessary concessions to bolster the relatively irresolute incumbent in office. Finally, when a politically sensitive incumbent will be followed by an irresolute successor, her adversary may attack in order to depose the incumbent, hastening her replacement to secure better bargains in the future. Predictions about the present balance of resolve and leaders' survival incentives may thus be fundamentally altered in light of the future balance of resolve.

Keywords

bargaining, commitment, leaders, war

When national leaders differ in their preferences over war and peace, leadership turnover may herald significant changes in a country's foreign policy, especially when incumbents cannot pre-commit their successors to inherited policies. The average head of government lasts only 3.5 years in office (Goemans, Gleditsch & Chiozza, 2009), which means that the foreign policy preferences of a state's leadership may change more rapidly than other factors associated with conflict, such as military power or domestic institutions (see Bennett & Stam, 2004). How, then, might the anticipation of such policy changes affect crisis bargaining, and how does the leader-specific nature of this commitment problem affect strategies used to solve it?

Questions of succession and policy change commonly occupy relations between rivals. During the Cold War, the Central Intelligence Agency attempted to judge not only the political fortunes of incumbent leaders in both the Soviet Union and communist China but also the preferences of their likely successors.¹ During the power struggle following Stalin's death, the CIA produced a document on the preferences of potential successors,

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¹ The CIA in 2007 released thousands of pages of such documents from the 1950s to 1970s, known as the CAESAR-POLO-ESAU archive. It is available online at <http://www.foia.cia.gov/cpe.asp>.

including eventual premier Nikita Khrushchev, gauging the extent to which they would prove 'cautious or venturesome' in foreign policy (CIA, 1957; 2).² In 1970, another document assessed both the likelihood that Lin Pao, Mao's successor-designate, would soon take power in China and the extent of likely changes in foreign policy (CIA, 1970). Finally, in 1971, the CIA identified Andrey Kirilenko as the likely successor to Leonid Brezhnev, and it used the 'militancy' of his foreign policy positions to judge him more resolute than his predecessor (CIA, 1971).³

Commitment problems stem from leaders' ability to revise inherited policies, but the link between leaders and foreign policy change cuts against the grain of a long state-centric tradition in international relations (e.g. Waltz, 1979), where agreements are assumed to be robust to changes in national leadership. Even the seminal discussion of 'two-level' games, which argues that 'any leader who fails [in international negotiations] to satisfy his fellow players at the domestic table risks being evicted from his seat' (Putnam, 1988: 434), does not explore the consequences of that eviction. Yet if foreign policy outcomes affect an incumbent's prospects for political survival (Bueno de Mesquita et al., 2003; Chiozza & Goemans, 2004b; Debs & Goemans, 2010), then the threat posed by her successor to renegotiate inherited agreements due to changes in relative bargaining power (Fearon, 1995; Powell, 2004, 2006) may render promises made in the present incredible.

I explore these turnover-driven commitment problems in a two-period model of crisis bargaining with the following assumptions. First, the distributive character of crisis outcomes – the size of peaceful concessions or the outcome of a war – affects an incumbent leader's probability of political survival. Second, if an incumbent loses office, she is replaced by a successor with potentially different preferences over the resort to war. Specifically, I assume that leaders of the same state may differ in their subjective assessments of the costs of war, or *resolve* (cf. Wolford, 2007). Third, successors can renegotiate inherited settlements, which may lead to revisions of the

distribution of benefits due to changes in relative bargaining power.

Differences in resolve imply that individual leaders can differ in the range of settlements they will accept in lieu of war, and as such leadership turnover may be an example of the shifts in bargaining power that create commitment problems in the literature on bargaining and war (Fearon, 1995; Powell, 2004, 2006). However, since the occurrence of these shifts in power is endogenous to the bargaining process, there are unique implications for how leader-driven commitment problems may be addressed. First, incumbents may be driven by survival incentives to demand more than their adversaries are willing to concede (Debs & Goemans, 2010; Tarar, 2006), but this need not lead to war when concessions today might be made up for by an irresolute successor taking office in the future. Second, when an incumbent will be followed by a resolute successor, she can gain further leverage over her adversary, who moderates his demands in order to bolster the incumbent in office, forestalling the rise of the more resolute successor. Thus, the shadow of a resolute successor can create a range of acceptable settlements that otherwise would be absent for similarly vulnerable incumbents. Finally, an incumbent whose political survival is quite insensitive to concessions may be attacked in a war of deposition if an irresolute leader is expected to succeed her, regardless of any willingness to strike peaceful bargains in the present.

Leadership turnover and the balance of resolve

Commitment problems arise when changes in relative bargaining power undermine incentives to honor standing agreements. Scholars usually locate the sources of commitment problems in differential rates of economic or demographic growth (Powell, 1999), first-strike or offensive advantages (Fearon, 1995; Leventoglu & Slantchev, 2007), stakes that influence military power (Fearon, 1996), and 'temporary shock[s] to government capabilities and legitimacy' (Fearon, 2004: 290). Typically, a rising side will exploit a favorable position in the future and demand larger concessions from a declining side. Anticipating adverse changes in the distribution of benefits, the declining side will act to prevent them by fighting a war in the present when the expected shift in power is sufficiently 'large' and 'rapid' (Powell, 2004: 237) and when the rising side is unwilling or unable to limit its future power (Chadefaux, 2011). Thus, the declining side attempts to take for itself what it can through the costly mechanism of war, because the future

² Khrushchev had been First Secretary since 1954 but would not secure complete control until he captured the premiership in 1958 (Taubman, 2003), hence the lingering uncertainty in 1957 as to who would emerge victorious in the succession struggle.

³ Brezhnev would not lose office until 1982, and his successor would be not Kirilenko but Yuri Andropov, but the existence of this assessment over a decade before the incumbent's eventual fall illustrates the extent of US concerns with who would guide Soviet foreign policy in the future.

shift in power will be so large that losses from future concessions will be greater than the costs of fighting in the present.

In addition to state-level factors, leadership turnover may also change relative bargaining power. Individual leaders make ultimate decisions over war and peace, and we might imagine that they differ individually in the range of bargains they find more or less attractive than war – that is, they differ in their *resolve*. Factors like beliefs, ideology, partisanship, and personal history may all play a role in determining subjective assessments of the costs of war (see also Wolford, 2007), such that relatively resolute leaders require large concessions in order to avert hostilities, while irresolute leaders accept less generous bargains in order to avoid the risks of conflict. This has a direct impact on the range of bargains reachable with their adversaries, who would clearly prefer to bargain with an irresolute as opposed to a resolute leader.

Commitment problems can cause war for sufficiently large shifts in power, but this also requires that war lock in shares of the benefits *and* that shifts in power alter players' minmax – i.e. war – payoffs (Powell, 2004: 232, 237). If both conditions are met, then it is plausible that impending leadership change might spark a preventive war. However, neither of these requirements may translate directly to a leader-specific context. First, most wars leave the former belligerents capable of continued hostilities (Wagner, 2007), and successors can take office with the express desire of overturning settlements produced by war as easily as those peacefully negotiated. Therefore, I allow bargaining to continue after both peaceful settlements and war. Second, rather than changing a state's military prospects, leadership turnover may simply alter the willingness to use force. This would render an opposing leader indifferent over war against both potential opponents, which is sufficient to rule out preventive war as a solution to the commitment problem. The model below thus treats leaders as differing only in their resolve.⁴

Despite potential effects on the balance of resolve, leadership turnover has received scant attention as a source of shifts in bargaining power. This is unsurprising

given the dominance of the state-centric view of international politics, though leader change has been linked to volatility in trade (McGillivray & Smith, 2004) and sovereign debt (McGillivray & Smith, 2008), as well as temporal patterns of conflict (Bak & Palmer, 2010; Chiozza & Goemans, 2003, 2004a; Gaubatz, 1991; Gelpi & Grieco, 2001). Yet despite some notable exceptions (McGillivray & Smith, 2004, 2008; Smith & Hayes, 1997), most leader-centric research assumes that international agreements are robust to changes in leadership. Political institutions can mediate these effects, for instance leading democratic states to exhibit less policy volatility as the result of leader change than non-democracies (McGillivray & Smith, 2008), and debate continues over whether autocrats or democrats are more politically sensitive to the outcomes of international crises and wars (Bueno de Mesquita et al., 2003; Bueno de Mesquita & Siverson, 1995; Chiozza & Goemans, 2004b; Debs & Goemans, 2010). Nonetheless, all states face some possibility of leaders taking office with different preferences over war and peace than their predecessors, and it is this general case with which the theory is concerned.

Finally, while the removal of an enemy's leadership is a potential solution to commitment problems in some contexts (Lo, Hashimoto & Reiter, 2008; Morrow et al., 2006), there exists as yet no treatment of the microfoundations of leader-specific commitment problems. Morrow et al. (2006), for example, argue that the type of issue in dispute creates commitment problems that may be solved by removing the current leadership and installing a puppet. But might leadership turnover *itself* create commitment problems? If so, it would illuminate a leader-specific example of the shifts in bargaining power necessary to create commitment problems and, intriguingly, leader-specific solutions to them. In the following section, I specify a two-period model of crisis bargaining and leadership turnover designed to explore the implications of these leader-specific shifts in bargaining power.

A model of turnover, policy change, and crisis bargaining

Consider a two-period game in which the leader of state *A* (he) bargains with state *B*'s incumbent and successor leaders (she), B_1 and B_2 , over the division of some benefits with a per-period value of 1. Information is complete – all players are informed over the value of all parameters – and a period consists of *A*'s choice to attack or to propose some division of the benefits and *B*'s

⁴ Some leader-centric theories allow leaders to differ in their competence to manage foreign affairs, where a competent leader 'chooses good military leaders, mobilizes resources well, and can influence ... allies' (Smith 1996: 136). However, I choose to restrict my focus to resolve, similar to the approach taken by Wolford (2007) – where leaders differ in their assessments of the costs of war – because it provides a direct, intuitive link between individual preferences and the willingness to resort to war.

acceptance or rejection, equivalent to mounting its own attack. After the first period, the distribution of benefits determines the probability with which B_1 survives or is replaced by B_2 . B_1 receives no further benefits if she is replaced, ensuring that she values holding office.⁵

To define notation, B_k is a generic leader of state B , where $k = \{1, 2\}$ denotes incumbent and successor, B_1 and B_2 , respectively. Let $x_{kt} \in [0, 1]$ represent a proposal made by A to leader B_k in period $t = \{1, 2\}$, such that A receives x_{kt} and B_k receives $1 - x_{kt}$ for that period. For example, x_{12} is a proposal that A makes to B_1 in the event that she survives into the second period, giving A x_{12} and B_1 $1 - x_{12}$. The leaders bargain according to a take-it-or-leave-it protocol in which, each period, A chooses between attacking and proposing some division of the benefits, $(x_{kt}, 1 - x_{kt})$, that B_k then accepts or rejects. Acceptance implements the division in the current period, while attack or rejection leads to a costly war that allows one side to capture all the benefits for that period. Whether war or peace occurred in the first period, the second leads to another round of bargaining in which A makes a new proposal to whichever leader of B holds office.

I make the following substantive assumptions to define utility functions. First, war is a costly lottery in which the winner takes all the benefits, the loser receives none, and both sides pay a cost $\{a, b_k\} > 0$. This ensures that war is inefficient and creates a shared incentive to avoid it. Let A win a war with probability p , such that A 's payoff for fighting a war in period $t = 2$ is $EU_A(\text{War}_2) = p - a$, while B_k 's is $EU_{Bk}(\text{War}_2) = 1 - p - b_k$. I assume further that $a < p$ and $b_k < 1 - p$, which ensures that threats of war are credible and rules out uninteresting cases in which peace obtains purely because one side cannot fight.

Second, leaders of state B can differ in their subjective assessments of the costs of war (cf. Wolford, 2007), such that $b_k = b_1$ for the incumbent and $b_k = b_2$ for the successor. This leads to a natural interpretation of relative resolve: when $b_2 \geq b_1$, the successor is no more resolute than the incumbent (or irresolute), and when $b_2 < b_1$, she is relatively resolute. Therefore, while I assume that leaders behave similarly in fighting wars, they can differ in the settlements they accept in lieu of war. A thus expects that B_1 's deposition leads to her replacement with a leader that accepts a potentially wider or narrower range of bargains than her predecessor.

Third, B_1 depends for her political survival after the first period on the outcome of crisis bargaining. B_1 's probability of political survival, S , is a twice-continuously differentiable, concave function that decreases in x_{11} . Substantively, this means that the more that B_1 allows A to keep, the more likely she is to lose office, and increasing concessions damage her prospects of survival at an increasing rate. Formally, this means that $S'(x_{11}) < 0$ and $S''(x_{11}) < 0$. To explore variation in the extent to which political survival is sensitive to the bargaining outcome, I also include $\phi > 0$ to capture the sensitivity of the incumbent's survival to concessions – or her *political sensitivity* – such that ϕ increases in the extent to which a given amount of concessions jeopardizes B_1 's survival. To ensure the existence of an analytical solution, I impose the following functional form,

$$S(x_{11}, \phi) \equiv \max\{1 - \phi x_{11}^2, 0\},$$

which allows both concessions and the incumbent's political sensitivity to decrease her chances of surviving in office. This also implies that B_1 survives in office after a military victory with probability 1, or $S(1, \phi) = 1$, and that she survives defeat, which strips her of all benefits, with probability 0, or $S(0, \phi) = 0$.⁶

This captures the intuition that underlies most research on political survival and war: the more resources an incumbent gains internationally, the stronger is her hold on political office, as she can convert her gains to the goods necessary to retain the support of her winning coalition (Bueno de Mesquita et al., 2003; Goemans & Fey, 2009) or increase the costs of ousting her (Debs & Goemans, 2010). Further, this replacement rule also reflects the fact that, in many cases, the opposition cannot credibly commit not to remove leaders weakened by their international performance (see Chiozza & Goemans, 2011). However, it is important to note that leaders vary in their political sensitivity to international outcomes, perhaps due to the issues at stake, the relative primacy of domestic and international issues in reselection decisions, or institutional structure (see e.g. Bueno de

⁵ In addition to ensuring that B_1 cannot be compensated for losing office, this assumption also excludes a policy-oriented desire to see certain settlements in place after leaving office.

⁶ We might also imagine that B_1 survives a military victory with some probability less than 1, as may happen in Wolford (2007), which would have the effect of *raising* A 's expected utility of attacking B_1 when the successor is resolute but *lowering* it when the successor is irresolute, thereby attenuating the effects of successor preferences on A 's incentives to use war to depose B_1 .

Mesquita et al., 2003; Chiozza & Goemans, 2004b; Colaresi, 2004a; Debs & Goemans, 2010).⁷

Finally, in order to capture variation in the extent to which leaders value present versus future interactions, I let A and B_1 value first-period outcomes at $(1 - \delta)$ and second-period outcomes at δ , where $0 < \delta < 1$ and indicates that leaders are increasingly patient or forward-looking as δ increases. To give a brief example, consider a possible equilibrium in which A expects to strike peaceful bargains at all opportunities with both leaders of state B . A 's present-discounted payoff stream for striking a deal in the first period is

$$EU_A(x_{11}) = (1 - \delta)x_{11} + \delta((1 - \phi x_{11}^2)x_{12} + \phi x_{11}^2 x_{22}),$$

while B_1 's is

$$EU_{B1}(x_{11}) = (1 - \delta)(1 - x_{11}) + \delta(1 - \phi x_{11}^2)(1 - x_{12}).$$

It is also worth noting that, since leadership turnover is endogenous to bargaining outcomes, which A and B_1 can manipulate, so is the emergence of the commitment problem, since shifts in bargaining power occur only if B_2 takes office. This is similar to a situation in which making a concession today renders one's opponent more powerful tomorrow (Fearon, 1996; Powell, 2006), but its leader-specific character has unique implications for exactly how leaders will choose to solve the commitment problem, since the possibility of altering B_1 's political fortunes renders the sources of future bargaining power partially transferable.

The model has some features in common with other work. First, while it shares an endogenous risk of leader removal with Bueno de Mesquita et al. (2003), Debs & Goemans (2010), and Goemans & Fey (2009), it follows other work by introducing the possibility of future interactions with a successor (Schultz, 2005; Smith & Hayes, 1997; Wolford, 2007). Next, where Schultz (2005) analyzes a discrete-choice trust game under incomplete information and Wolford (2007) treats resolve as a source of private information, no such uncertainty exists here. Finally, this model specifies an explicit function linking bargaining outcomes to the probability of political survival, like Goemans & Fey (2009), while Wolford (2007) assigns discrete probabilities of survival for

victory, defeat, and peace, regardless of the terms of settlement.

Analysis

How does the incumbent's inability to bind her successor affect crisis bargaining in the first period between A and B_1 ? While B_1 considers the effect of possible bargains on her chances of political survival, A weighs his first-period share of the benefits against B_1 's potential replacement by B_2 and the attendant shift in bargaining power. I show below that these expectations can influence both A 's willingness to fight a war and the bargains he strikes with B_1 in the first period. Before discussing the model's Subgame Perfect Equilibria, I characterize how these two factors – B_1 's political sensitivity and the shifting balance of resolve – interact in the first period to highlight the conditions under which bargains can and cannot be reached.

When considering a potential settlement, B_1 weighs acceptance against war, after which she survives into the second period only in the event of military victory. Should she survive, she will strike a peaceful bargain $x_{12}^* = p + b_1$ with A , so an acceptable proposal x_{11} in the first period must satisfy $EU_{B1}(\text{accept}_1) \geq EU_{B1}(\text{reject}_1)$, or

$$(1 - \delta)(1 - x_{11}) + \delta(1 - \phi x_{11}^2)(1 - x_{12}^*) \geq (1 - \delta)(1 - p - b_1) + \delta(1 - p)(1 - x_{12}^*). \quad (1)$$

This defines a range of proposals, $x_{11} \leq \bar{x}_{11}$, that B_1 accepts in lieu of war. Inequality 1 shows that she requires increasingly generous proposals as her political survival becomes more sensitive to concessions. Formally, the maximum that A can propose to keep for himself peacefully, \bar{x}_{11} , decreases in ϕ , which introduces the possibility that survival incentives can lead B_1 to require more than A is willing to concede, resulting in survival-driven wars similar to those that appear in other models of crisis bargaining with survival incentives (see also Debs & Goemans, 2010; Tarar, 2006).

It is worth noting at this point a restriction I place on valuations of the future in order to simplify the presentation of the results and to focus on the strategic dynamics of interest. As ϕ increases, it becomes increasingly easy for A to demand so much that B_1 's probability of political survival is zero if she accepts the proposal.⁸ The

⁷ Note that my definition of political sensitivity differs from that of Debs & Goemans (2010). In their specification, sensitivity is about the extent to which war outcomes affect political survival, but in the present model sensitivity refers to how sensitive the incumbent's survival is to the distributive outcome of a crisis, whether peaceful or violent.

⁸ Specifically, $1 - \phi x_{11}^2 = 0$ for $x_{11} \geq 1/\sqrt{\phi}$ when $\phi > 1$. Assuming $\delta > \delta^\dagger$, however, ensures that B_1 's survival incentives are strong enough to ensure that she will never accept such a bargain. It also implies that any proposal accepted in equilibrium satisfies $x_{11} < 1/\sqrt{\phi}$.

incumbent will accept such proposals if her valuation of the future is low enough, but since my substantive interests are on the effects of expectations over the future on the present, I focus on cases in which $\delta > \delta^\dagger$ (derived in the Appendix), which guarantees that the future is sufficiently valuable that B_1 fights, which affords some chance of survival, rather than accept bargains that lead to her certain ouster.

For his part, A seeks a peaceful settlement with B_1 when his own expected utility for making an acceptable proposal in the range $x_{11} \leq \bar{x}_{11}$ leaves him at least as well off as attacking, that is, when $EU_A(x_{11}) \geq EU_A(\text{war}_1)$, or

$$(1 - \delta)x_{11} + \delta((1 - \phi x_{11}^2)x_{12} + \phi x_{11}^2 x_{22}^*) \geq (1 - \delta)(p - a) + \delta(px_{22}^* + (1 - p)x_{12}^*). \quad (2)$$

Inequality 2 reveals a critical tradeoff for A . B_1 survives in office with probability $S(x_{11}, \phi)$, but with probability $1 - S(x_{11}, \phi) = \phi x_{11}^2$, B_2 takes office, yielding $x_{22}^* = p + b_2$ in the second period. Since A 's second-period payoffs are either $p + b_2$ or $p + b_1$, it is straightforward to see that he does best against the successor when she is irresolute, $b_2 > b_1$, and worst when she is resolute, $b_2 < b_1$. A 's demand thus has two effects on his payoffs. First, larger demands, if accepted, guarantee him a larger share of the benefits in the first period. Second, taking more from B_1 also decreases her probability of political survival, since $S'(x_{11}) < 0$. In other words, raising demands brings A distributive gains but hastens the rise of the successor, B_2 , who may negotiate a different second-period deal than the incumbent. Thus, two factors – the incumbent's political sensitivity and the successor's resolve – play a key role in whether A seeks war or peace with B_1 and, should he seek peace, exactly how much he demands.

When there exists a proposal x_{11} that satisfies Inequalities 1 and 2, then A and B_1 will strike a peaceful deal in the range $x_{11} \leq \bar{x}_{11}$, saving the costs of war. However, both B_1 's political sensitivity to concessions and the relative resolve of her successor determine whether these minimum demands are compatible. In equilibrium, war can occur for one of three reasons. First, when her political survival is sufficiently sensitive to concessions, B_1 may require so much in an agreement that A prefers war to such a settlement. Second, if her successor is very resolute, that same political sensitivity can facilitate peace, but only when the incumbent can be meaningfully bolstered through concessions. Finally, when the incumbent's survival is *not* very sensitive to concessions, A may attack in order to facilitate B_1 's deposition and replacement with an irresolute successor, foregoing

otherwise reachable settlements. The following sections explore each of these outcomes in turn.

Successors, survival, and pre-emptive appeasement

How do turnover-driven commitment problems and political sensitivity affect the dynamics of crisis bargaining? I show in this section that wars driven by an incumbent's survival incentives are most likely when the successor does not differ too much from the incumbent. Otherwise, A may have an incentive either to grant concessions that he can later recoup from an irresolute successor or to moderate his demands in order to bolster B_1 in office and forestall the rise of a resolute successor. Thus, the *future* balance of resolve conditions the effects of B_1 's political sensitivity on the probability of war, determining whether her survival incentives are a detriment to or a facilitator of peaceful settlements.

A expects to strike one of two bargains in the second period: $x_{12}^* = p + b_1$ if the incumbent retains office and $x_{22}^* = p + b_2$ should the successor come to power. When the successor is relatively irresolute, or $b_2 > b_1$, A does better in the second period against B_2 , and he actively prefers the incumbent's ouster; however, when the successor is relatively resolute, $b_2 < b_1$, he is better off when B_1 retains office.⁹ B_2 's resolve, in turn, has a direct effect on how much A wishes to demand of B_1 in the first period, since the terms of settlement affect B_1 's probability of political survival. Proposition 1 characterizes the conditions under which A is particularly unwilling to satisfy the incumbent's survival-driven demands where, in any peaceful bargain, A demands as much as he can without provoking rejection. Proposition 2, on the other hand, states the conditions under which A may not only seek peace but moderate his demands, extracting less from B_1 than he otherwise could in order to increase the incumbent's chances of retaining office.

Proposition 1 (Survival-driven war). When $\delta > \delta^\dagger$ and $b_2 \geq \underline{b}_2$, A attacks iff $\phi > \phi_w$ and $b_2 < b_2^w$. Otherwise, A proposes $x_{11}^* = \bar{x}_{11}$, which B_1 accepts.

Proposition 1 begins with the case in which the successor ranges from very irresolute to only somewhat more resolute than the incumbent, or $b_2 \geq \underline{b}_2$, where $\underline{b}_2 < b_1$. Recall from Inequality 1 that B_1 requires an ever larger

⁹ A is indifferent over his second-period opponent when $b_2 = b_1$, which is equivalent to a state-centric model in which leaders do not differ in their resolve.

share of the benefits in a settlement as she becomes more politically sensitive. This drives down the maximum that A can take for himself in a peaceful bargain, \bar{x}_{11} , and when two conditions are met, B_1 may require more for peace than A is willing to concede. First, the incumbent must be sufficiently sensitive to concessions, or $\phi > \phi_w$. Thus, consistent with extant literature (Debs & Goemans, 2010; Goemans & Fey, 2009), an incumbent's political sensitivity to concessions can be positively associated with the outbreak of war, because it makes B_1 's minimum requirements for peace increasingly intolerable for A .

However, the second condition shows that this claim depends critically on the resolve of the incumbent's successor. Specifically, B_2 must not be too irresolute, or $b_2 < b_2^w$. In other words, when the successor will not differ too much from the incumbent in terms of resolve, that is, $\underline{b}_2 \leq b_2 < b_2^w$, A is unwilling to grant excessive demands to a politically sensitive incumbent, because paying the premium will not hasten the rise of a significantly more dovish successor. On the other hand, when the successor *will* be significantly less resolute than the incumbent, or $b_2 \geq b_2^w$, then A meets a sensitive incumbent's demands, confident that today's losses will be recouped once a highly irresolute successor takes office. Therefore, political sensitivity can raise an incumbent's demands to an intolerable level, but whether those demands are intolerable also depends on the resolve of the successor waiting in the wings.

Where Proposition 1 shows that political sensitivity can increase the probability of war, Proposition 2 states that it can have the *opposite* effect when the successor will be significantly more resolute than the incumbent, or when $b_2 < \underline{b}_2$. Taken together, these two propositions show that political sensitivity can lead to war, but only when incumbent and successor will not differ too much in their resolve.

Proposition 2 (Pre-emptive appeasement). When $\delta > \delta^\dagger$, $\phi > \phi_{pa}$, and $b_2 < \underline{b}_2$, A attacks iff $\delta < \delta_{pw}$ and $\phi > \phi_{pw}$. Otherwise, A proposes $x_{11}^* = \hat{x}_{11}$, which B_1 accepts.

When the successor is *very* resolute, A may have an incentive to leave B_1 with more of the bargaining surplus than he must, making ostensibly unnecessary concessions. In what follows, I first characterize the conditions under which A 's optimal peaceful proposal is less than the maximum he can peacefully demand, and I then show when he prefers making such a proposal to simply attacking in the first period.

Recall that A can propose any $x_{11} \leq \bar{x}_{11}$ and win B_1 's acceptance, and in standard ultimatum models of crisis bargaining (e.g. Fearon, 1995), A has every incentive to strike a bargain that leaves B_1 with as little of the pie as possible. In such a context, A 's best possible division of the benefits is $x_{11} = 1$. However, when (a) the successor is sufficiently resolute, or $b_2 < \underline{b}_2$, and (b) the incumbent is sufficiently sensitive to concessions, or $\phi > \phi_{pa}$, A 's best division of the benefits no longer maximizes immediate returns from the settlement. Rather, A 's optimum balances short-term gains from the first-period bargain against increasing B_1 's chances of retaining office. Formally, this means that A 's optimal proposal,

$$x_{11}^* = \frac{1 - \delta}{2\delta\phi(b_1 - b_2)} \equiv \hat{x}_{11},$$

is less than the maximum it can extract from B_1 , or $\hat{x}_{11} < \bar{x}_{11}$. Notably, this proposal grows more generous as B_2 becomes more resolute – increasing in b_2 – because A is incentivized to leave B_1 with a greater share of the surplus to bolster her in office, trading present gains for a greater chance of the incumbent surviving into the second period. I call this ‘pre-emptive appeasement’, as it translates B_2 's bargaining leverage into distributive gains for the incumbent and an increased probability of political survival *before* the successor takes office.

The mere existence of a generous peaceful proposal, however, does not guarantee that A will find it more attractive than war. Even when A would like to bolster the incumbent in office through concessions, Proposition 2 states that it attacks when pre-emptive appeasement would be too costly relative to fighting a survival-driven war. This occurs if A doesn't value the future sufficiently, or $\delta < \delta_{pw}$, and the incumbent is especially sensitive, or $\phi > \phi_{pw}$, rendering concessions too expensive in the short term. However, if either condition fails, then pre-emptive appeasement becomes A 's equilibrium strategy, as he can moderate his demands to forestall the rise of a highly resolute successor at an acceptable price. Therefore, A proposes $x_{11}^* = \hat{x}_{11}$, which B_1 accepts. The future balance of resolve, then, allows an otherwise politically vulnerable incumbent to borrow strength from the resolute successor waiting in the wings, increasing both her distributive gains and her chances of retaining office.

Thus, where political sensitivity can encourage survival-driven war when incumbent and successor are relatively similar, as it does in Proposition 1, similar levels of sensitivity can encourage peace when the successor is sufficiently resolute, making settlements possible

where they would otherwise fail. Notably, pre-emptive appeasement is a uniquely leader-centric solution to the commitment problem, endogenously affecting the chances that shifts in the balance of resolve occur. It also speaks to the effect of leaders' survival incentives on the occurrence of war (Chiozza & Goemans, 2011; Debs & Goemans, 2010; Goemans & Fey, 2009), as survival-driven wars require that incumbent and successor are relatively similar in their resolve, or that a leader's adversaries are not sympathetic to her desire to stay in office. In fact, when pre-emptive appeasement is possible, B_1 's ability to enhance her prospects through bargaining success *creates* a bargaining range, encouraging A to meet her demands, where the same incentive may not exist if A is indifferent to or actively seeks B_1 's removal.

What domestic conditions favor pre-emptive appeasement? In other words, in the shadow of a resolute successor, when might political survival be sufficiently sensitive to bargaining outcomes? Institutionally, the answer hinges on the relationship between international outcomes and political survival; one view has it that leaders of democracies should be most sensitive to international outcomes (Bueno de Mesquita et al., 2003; Bueno de Mesquita & Siverson, 1995), while recent empirical tests suggest that democracies are largely insensitive to war and crisis outcomes (Chiozza & Goemans, 2004b; Debs & Goemans, 2010). Regardless of the aggregate differences between these two regime types, we can imagine that there exist particular issues – say, core security interests and/or territory – and particular times – as elections or party congresses approach – over which both democrats and autocrats can see their political fortunes altered by the outcomes of international crises. In the following two examples, salient issues and the threat of elections led to attempts at pre-emptive appeasement, as resolute successors waited in the wings behind relatively irresolute incumbents.

First, consider British and French bargaining over the post-World War I settlement in the Middle East. At war's end, Great Britain sat in effective control of the majority of the Middle East and would have preferred a distribution of protectorates that ignored prior French claims to Syria and Lebanon, in order to honor commitments made to local princes in return for assistance against the Ottoman Empire. In fact, French premier Georges Clemenceau had made known his willingness to vacate French claims in the region, and the British ostensibly had the opportunity to achieve peacefully a settlement they had desired for decades.

However, during the Paris Peace Conference, Colonial Secretary Lord Milner warned that forcing

unsatisfactory terms on France might lead to Clemenceau's replacement with a member of the Colonialist faction, who would undoubtedly seek to revise an unsatisfactory settlement. Rather than deny the French claim and take short-term advantage of Clemenceau's offer, the British chose to grant the concession in the hopes of avoiding a future colonial crisis in the Middle East with their erstwhile ally and of bolstering Clemenceau's probability of political survival (Fromkin, 1989: 378). Though Colonialist Alexandre Millerand would replace Clemenceau after the election of 1920, the British clearly hoped to protect Clemenceau with their concessions and retain him in office. Their gamble failed, but the logic behind it is consistent with the notion of pre-emptive appeasement.

Next, the US approach to the issue of NATO enlargement through the mid-1990s was driven by fear that demanding too much of an electorally vulnerable Boris Yeltsin 'could tip the balance of forces in Russian politics in exactly the direction that [the United States] most feared' (Talbot, 2002: 94). President Clinton decided to delay formal enlargement until after the Russian elections of 1996, fearing that nationalists and communists opposed to NATO expansion might use the issue to oust Yeltsin and pursue a more anti-Western foreign policy. Rather than incorporate former Soviet republics immediately, then, Clinton decided first to pursue the Partnership for Peace, which allowed for a formal NATO–Russia relationship (Talbot, 2002: 156).

Also telling is Yeltsin's awareness of the possibility of pre-emptive appeasement and clear use of domestic vulnerability as the rationale for demanding a delay or 'pause' in the enlargement process. 'I've got to tell you,' he told Clinton at the Kremlin in 1995, 'my position heading into 1996 is not exactly brilliant. I have to look for positive developments and do anything I can to head off negative ones' (Talbot, 2002: 161–162). He later added in a meeting with US official Strobe Talbot that 'if [the communists] win [the presidential election], it will be bad for us and for the whole world. Russia will turn back completely' (Talbot, 2002: 198). Even as the elections of 2000 approached, Foreign Minister Victor Chernomyrdin declared that, should NATO enlarge, 'You'll strengthen [communist Gennady] Zyuganov and [nationalist Vladimir] Zhirinovsky! You'll elect [former general Alexander] Lebed!' (Talbot, 2002: 233).

The Clinton administration supported pre-emptive appeasement because it believed not only that it would prefer a future with Yeltsin to one with a communist or nationalist, but also that Yeltsin could be meaningfully

bolstered in power by a moderation of the US position on NATO enlargement. Proposition 2 states that this is necessary for pre-emptive appeasement. This view of Yeltsin's ability to benefit electorally from concessions, however, was not a consensus in the alliance. German Chancellor Helmut Kohl, for example, believed that Yeltsin's electoral fortunes were insufficiently sensitive to NATO enlargement, so he argued that the process of enlargement should proceed unabated, forcing Yeltsin to accept its inevitability, before a more dangerous successor could replace him (Talbot, 2002: 227–228). Kohl's preference would appear to be the more aggressive proposal from Proposition 1, $x_{11}^* = \bar{x}_{11}$, but the US position ultimately won out and shaped NATO policy through the remainder of the decade.

Colaresi (2004b) discusses a similar empirical regularity where 'overcooperation' with, or unpopular concessions to, a rival increases the risk that an incumbent will be removed from office. The present model suggests that, to the extent that opposing leaders are aware of this, they may be particularly likely to engage in pre-emptive appeasement, strategically preventing overcooperation, in order to keep irresolute incumbents in office. This appears to be what the United States did with respect to Yeltsin. Schultz (2005) derives an incentive to bolster dovish leadership in a rival state in order to exploit weakness in the future, masking one's untrustworthiness in the present to influence electoral decisions in the other state, and the model here shows that a similar dynamic may still occur in the presence of both complete information and explicit bargaining over divisible goods.

Since it alters an incumbent's survival prospects, pre-emptive appeasement is also a case of bargaining over the future distribution of power, which can alleviate the commitment problem and ensure the existence of peaceful equilibria when the sources of power are transferrable (Chadefaux, 2011). However, since B_1 can influence only her own probability of survival, *not* her successor's preferences, there exists an upper limit to the effectiveness of pre-emptive appeasement to shift bargaining power away from state B . In this instance of turnover-driven commitment problems, bargaining can change only the probability that a resolute successor takes office, *not* the successor's resolve. When leadership selection processes are probabilistic, as in the case of elections, or when named successors can mask their true preferences from the incumbent, incumbents are unlikely to exercise sufficient control over future bargaining power to receive pre-emptive appeasement.

Successors, political security, and war

Finally, war may also occur not because the incumbent has outsized requirements for peace, but because A is unsatisfied with any deal it may strike with B_1 . While the shadow of a resolute successor, combined with an incumbent's political sensitivity, can facilitate peaceful settlements by encouraging pre-emptive appeasement, I show in this section that the opposite combination – an irresolute successor and political *insensitivity* – can also lead to war. Specifically, A would like to see B_1 replaced by the relatively irresolute B_2 . However, the incumbent can make large concessions without seriously jeopardizing her political survival, which may lead A to use war as the preferred way of bringing about B_1 's ouster.

Inequality 3 states that $EU_A(\text{war}_1) > EU_A(x_{11} = 1)$, or that A prefers war in the first period to even the best possible bargain, that is, $x_{11} = 1$, which both maximizes his immediate gains and diminishes B_1 's survival prospects as much as possible:

$$(1 - \delta)(p - a) + \delta(px_{22}^* + (1 - p)x_{12}^*) > (1 - \delta)1 + \delta((1 - \phi 1^2)x_{12}^* + \phi 1^2 x_{22}^*). \quad (3)$$

When Inequality 3 is satisfied, there are *no* settlements that can induce A to make peace in the first period, and Proposition 3 gives the conditions that support such wars of deposition.

Proposition 3 (Wars of deposition). When $\delta > \max\{\delta_d^\dagger, \delta_d\}$, $\phi < \phi_d$, and $b_2 > b_1$, there exists no $x_{11} \in [0, 1]$ that A prefers to war.

When B_1 's survival is sufficiently insensitive to concessions, the future is sufficiently valuable, and she will be followed by an irresolute successor, then *no* first-period proposal can satisfy A 's minimal demands for peace. Specifically, when

$$\phi < p - \frac{(1 - p + a)(1 - \delta)}{\delta(b_2 - b_1)} \equiv \phi_d,$$

B_1 's survival is so insensitive to concessions that war, despite its costs, affords A a better chance of toppling the incumbent and bargaining with her irresolute successor in the future.

Though the targeted incumbent would remain standing at war's end, the Iran–Iraq war of the 1980s is a prominent – and bloody – example of just such a war of deposition. After the revolutionary regime in Iran openly disavowed the Algiers Agreement that settled the border

between the two countries and called for Iraqi Shi'a to rise up against the Sunni-led government of Saddam Hussein, tensions rose markedly between the two countries. However, after Ayatollah Khomeini survived internal coup attempts – at least one of which was supported by Iraq (Gause, 2002: 68–69) – Hussein seems to have concluded that war, rather than any renegotiated settlement with Iran, would be the best route to seeking Khomeini's ouster. Indeed, after discussions with his own contacts across the border, he believed that, by attacking Iran in 1980, he might 'ignite a new revolution in Iran, one that would oust Khomeini and replace him with a government more amenable to Iraqi interests' (Pollack, 2004: 184). Iraq's perceived military advantage also seemed to push Hussein further towards war (Gause, 2002: 51), which is also consistent with Proposition 3, as both conditions supporting wars of deposition – $\delta > \delta_d$ and $\phi > \phi_d$ – become more permissive as A 's military prospects improve.¹⁰

Thus, while Propositions 1 and 2 identify how incumbents can be driven to require so much in a settlement as to eliminate the bargaining range, Proposition 3 identifies a different path by which the bargaining range is closed: an incumbent's opponent may refuse otherwise reachable settlements in order facilitate her ouster. As a result, even politically insensitive incumbents, who can strike international bargains at little cost to their prospects for political survival, can find it dangerous to have weak successors. This dynamic may shed some light on an endogenous relationship between the choice of succession institutions or, perhaps more directly, the designation of successors in autocratic regimes and the occurrence of wars aimed at deposing their leaders.

Conclusion

When leaders of the same state can differ in their resolve, the endogenous threat of leadership turnover creates an international commitment problem. A successor's resolve interacts with an incumbent's political sensitivity to produce three notable outcomes:

- *Survival-driven war*: when a politically sensitive incumbent will be followed by a successor of relatively similar resolve, she demands more in a peaceful settlement than her adversary is willing to concede, producing a war to preserve her political survival.
- *Pre-emptive appeasement*: when a politically sensitive incumbent will be followed by a resolute successor,

her adversary moderates his demands in order to bolster the incumbent in office, forestalling the need to make deep concessions.

- *Wars of deposition*: when a politically insensitive incumbent will be followed by an irresolute successor, her adversary attacks, using war as a tool to depose the incumbent, hastening her replacement in order to secure better bargains in the future.

Thus, the relationship between political sensitivity and war is conditioned by expectations over the consequences of leadership turnover. When successors are sufficiently resolute, then their political sensitivity can facilitate peace, where it otherwise might encourage war (Debs & Goemans, 2010; Goemans & Fey, 2009; Tarar, 2006). On the other hand, the ability to survive even large concessions can still be dangerous when incumbents will be followed by irresolute successors, because they cannot promise their adversaries enough in the present to avert a war of deposition aimed at their ouster.

Turnover-driven commitment problems may occur whenever leader change is a possibility, but whether differences in resolve lead to war or pre-emptive appeasement depends on the magnitude of those differences. The largest changes in resolve – and hence foreign policy – should occur in political systems that give leaders the widest latitude in changing inherited policies, but how might we measure expectations over the resolve of expected successors? Impending partisan change in democratic systems may serve as a rough indicator of the relative hawkishness of incumbent and successor, as 'right' governments tend to pay lower costs of conflict and, as a result, initiate them more often than 'left' governments in parliamentary systems (Palmer, London & Regan, 2004). As such, we might expect that left (or dovish) governments facing electoral challenges from right (or hawkish) parties will be more likely to receive pre-emptive appeasement than either more stable left governments or right governments in general. Thus, an incumbent's relative lack of resolve may turn out to be a source of bargaining leverage, but only when she faces a credible threat of replacement by a more resolute challenger.

These results also have implications for the study of domestic politics and war. First, political survival incentives may actually facilitate peace through pre-emptive appeasement when a resolute successor waits in the wings, where adversaries otherwise might be loath to make such concessions. In other words, rather than close the bargaining range, political sensitivity can in fact *open*

¹⁰ It is easily verifiable that δ_d decreases in p while ϕ_d increases in it.

it, encouraging concessions from adversaries rather than conflict. Second, where some work indicates that a 'significant divergence' between incumbent and successor can 'strengthen a nation's bargaining position' (Smith & Hayes, 1997: 100), such divergences can produce war, depending on the relationship between incumbents, successors, and political sensitivity. Third, the ability of incumbents to control who succeeds them in office offers a new way of viewing the relationship between selection institutions and war. While the relationship between crisis outcomes and political survival is central to survival-driven wars, pre-emptive appeasement, and wars of deposition, equally critical is the extent to which political institutions enable leaders to overturn their predecessors' policies.

For example, the anticipation of turnover-driven commitment problems might affect an autocrat's choice of succession institutions, as designating a slightly stronger successor can enable pre-emptive appeasement, while open succession rules may not if they give adversaries different expectations over likely successors. Next, domestic institutions also affect the extent to which foreign policies may change from one leader to the next; for example, states with numerous institutional constraints on the making of foreign policy or large, stable winning coalitions might prevent new leaders from changing inherited policies (McGillivray & Smith, 2008), which can mitigate the occurrence of wars of deposition relative to states in which new leaders are less constrained in setting new policies. The structure of a state's foreign policy-making institutions, then, may determine its leaders' vulnerability to survival-driven wars or wars of deposition, as well as their ability to position themselves strategically for pre-emptive appeasement, and we should perhaps expect that non-democratic countries will generally be more likely to see problems of internal succession affect their international relations than democracies.

Finally, by identifying leadership turnover as a source of commitment problems, the model may help shed light on what might otherwise be puzzling cases of bargaining success and failure. The inclusion of variables measured on leaders – their probability of political survival, incentives to retain office, and the shadow of their successors – in theoretical and empirical studies can contribute significantly to our understanding of bargaining in the shadow of war. Ostensibly reasonable predictions about the present balance of resolve, for example, can be fundamentally altered in light of the *future* balance of resolve; for example, where an irresolute incumbent might be expected to make large concessions to avoid war, she may achieve an unexpected bargaining success – pre-emptive appeasement

– because her adversary expects her successor to be more resolute. However, under a different set of assumptions, her adversary's desire to bargain with her likely successor may lead to an entirely different outcome – a war of deposition – despite her willingness to strike a bargain in the present. Failing to account for the shadow of the successor can therefore contribute to omitted variable bias that leads to incorrect inferences over the effects of the present balance of resolve on the outcome of crises. Rather than merely explaining more variance, then, a shift to leaders as units of analysis can reverse the predicted effects of the present distribution of resolve and an incumbent's political sensitivity on the occurrence of war.

Acknowledgements

Thanks to Phil Arena, Kyle Beardsley, Cliff Carrubba, Terry Chapman, Moonhawk Kim, Amy Liu, Pat McDonald, Eric Reinhardt, Dan Reiter, Toby Rider, Emily Ritter, Harrison Wagner, Amy Yuen, two anonymous reviewers, and the editors of *JPR* for helpful comments, critiques, and suggestions.

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Appendix: Proofs

Equilibria of second-period subgames

In any second period subgame, B_k accepts only those proposals that leave her at least as well off as she will be in expectation by fighting a war, such that she accepts some x_{k2} iff

$$1 - x_{k2} \geq 1 - p - b_k \Leftrightarrow x_{k2} \leq p + b_k.$$

Should A make a proposal acceptable to B_k , he will satisfy B_k 's acceptance constraint at equality, taking as much of the surplus as possible in the settlement since settling for any less would leave him strictly worse off, proposing $x_{k2}^* = p + b_k$. A proposes $x_{k2}^* = p + b_k$ iff

$$p + b_k \geq p - a,$$

which is strictly true since $b_k, a > 0$. Therefore, in any second-period subgame, A proposes $x_{k2}^* = p + b_k$, which B_k is sure to accept.

Valuations of the future

As discussed above, I restrict players' valuations of the future such that B_1 never accepts any proposal that is guaranteed to result in the loss of office, or $S(x_{11}, \phi) = 0$. I do this to restrict the number of equilibria but also to simplify the analysis of those equilibria I do present, because it places a straightforward restriction on any equilibrium proposal, namely that $x_{11}^* < 1/\sqrt{\phi}$.

This ensures that \bar{x}_{11} takes on a single value for a given set of parameter values, simplifying the analysis but not changing the core dynamics of survival-driven war or pre-emptive appeasement.

To derive the values of δ for which B_1 will reject any proposal that guarantees her ouster, let $x_{11} = 0$ and solve

$$(1 - \delta)(1 - p - b_1) + \delta(1 - p)(1 - x_{12}^*) > (1 - \delta)(1 - x_{11}),$$

which is true when

$$\delta > \frac{p + b_1}{1 - p + p(p + b_1)} \equiv \delta^\dagger.$$

Therefore, in any equilibrium in which B_1 accepts A 's equilibrium proposal, it must be the case that $x_{11}^* < 1/\sqrt{\phi}$, ensuring $S(x_{11}, \phi) > 0$, which prevents the incumbent from accepting her certain ouster. All equilibria characterized below maintain this assumption.

First period bargaining

Before proving Propositions 1–3, I derive the conditions under which A 's equilibrium proposal in the first period is \bar{x}_{11} or \hat{x}_{11} . Solving Inequality 1 above for x_{11} yields B_1 's range of acceptable proposals, or

$$x_{11} \leq \frac{-1 + \delta + \sqrt{(-1 + \delta)^2 + 4\delta\phi(-1 + p + b_1)(p(-1 + p\delta) + (-1 + \delta + p\delta)b_1)}}{2\delta\phi(1 - p - b_1)} \equiv \bar{x}_{11}.$$

A 's expected utility for making some acceptable proposal is

$$EU_A(x_{11}) = (1 - \delta)x_{11} + \delta((1 - \phi x_{11}^2)x_{12}^* + \phi x_{11}^2 x_{22}^*),$$

and to determine A 's optimum I solve the first-order condition,

$$EU'_A(x_{11}) = 1 - \delta + 2x\delta\phi(-b_1 + b_2) = 0,$$

for x_{11} to yield the candidate optimum

$$x_{11} = \frac{1 - \delta}{2\delta\phi(b_1 - b_2)}.$$

To verify that this value maximizes $EU_A(x_{11})$, note that the second derivative with respect to x_{11} is negative, or $EU''_A(x_{11}) < 0$ as long as $b_2 < b_1$, or as long as B_2 is relatively resolute.

Therefore, when $b_1 \leq b_2$, $EU_A(x_{11})$ is maximized by setting x_{11} as large as possible, which implies that $x_{11}^* = \bar{x}_{11}$. When $b_2 < b_1$, A 's equilibrium proposal will be $x_{11}^* = \min\{\bar{x}_{11}, \hat{x}_{11}\}$. To determine when A makes each proposal in a peaceful equilibrium, I solve $\hat{x}_{11} < \bar{x}_{11}$, which yields the conditions under which A 's best proposal is less than the maximum it can take from B_1 and still win her acceptance (i.e. pre-emptive appeasement). Two conditions must be satisfied to ensure that $\hat{x}_{11} < \bar{x}_{11}$. First, B_2 must be sufficiently resolute, or $b_2 < \underline{b}_2$, where

$$\underline{b}_2 \equiv \frac{1}{4} \left(4b_1 + \frac{(1-\delta)^2}{\delta\phi(p(p\delta-1) - (1-\delta-p\delta)b_1)} \right) - \frac{1}{4} \left(\sqrt{\frac{(1-\delta)^2((1-\delta)^2 + 4(1-p)p\delta(1-p\delta)\phi + 4\delta\phi b_1(1-\delta-2p(1-p\delta) - (1-\delta-p\delta)b_1))}{\delta^2\phi^2(p(-1+p\delta) - (1-\delta-p\delta)b_1)^2}} \right).$$

Second, the incumbent must be sufficiently politically sensitive, or $\phi > \phi_{pa}$, where

$$\phi_{pa} \equiv \frac{(1-\delta)^2(1-p+b_1)}{4\delta b_1^2(p(1-p\delta) + (1-\delta-p\delta)b_1)},$$

otherwise $\underline{b}_2 < 0$, in which case the first constraint cannot bind. When both constraints are satisfied, $x_{11}^* = \hat{x}_{11}$ (pre-emptive appeasement), and when at least one is not satisfied, $x_{11}^* = \bar{x}_{11}$ (A takes as much as possible).

Proofs of Propositions 1–3

For each proposition, I prove the existence of the proposed equilibrium, where $\delta > \delta^\dagger$ and $x_{11} < 1/\sqrt{\phi}$, as derived above.

Proof of Proposition 1. Consider the case in which $x_{11}^* = \bar{x}_{11}$. Given sequentially rational behavior in the second-period subgames and B_1 's acceptance rule, both defined above, A 's decision at the initial node is to attack or to propose $x_{11}^* = \bar{x}_{11}$, which B_1 will accept. A attacks iff

$$(1-\delta)(p-a) + \delta(px_{22}^* + (1-p)x_{12}^*) > (1-\delta)\bar{x}_{11} + \delta((1-\phi\bar{x}_{11}^2)x_{12}^* + \phi\bar{x}_{11}^2x_{22}^*),$$

which is true when two conditions are satisfied. First, the incumbent must be politically sensitive enough, or $\phi > \phi_w$, where

$$\phi_w \equiv \frac{(1-p-b_2)(a(1-\delta) + (1-p)p\delta + (1-\delta)b_1 + p\delta b_2)}{\delta((p-a)(1-p) + b_1(a+b_1-b_2) - pb_2)^2}.$$

Second, the successor must not be too irresolute, or $b_w < b_2^w$, where

$$b_2^w \equiv a + b_1 + \frac{p-a}{p+b_1} - p.$$

Otherwise, if either condition fails, A proposes $x_{11}^* = \bar{x}_{11}$, which B_1 accepts. \square

Proof of Proposition 2. Let $\phi > \phi_{pa}$ and $b_2 < \underline{b}_2$, which ensures that $x_{11}^* = \hat{x}_{11}$. Given sequentially rational behavior in the second-period subgames and B_1 's acceptance rule, both defined above, A 's decision at the initial node is to attack or to propose $x_{11}^* = \hat{x}_{11}$, which B_1 will accept. A attacks iff

$$(1-\delta)(p-a) + \delta(px_{22}^* + (1-p)x_{12}^*) > (1-\delta)\hat{x}_{11} + \delta((1-\phi\hat{x}_{11}^2)x_{12}^* + \phi\hat{x}_{11}^2x_{22}^*),$$

which is true when two conditions are satisfied. First, when $\delta < \delta_{pw}$, where

$$\delta_{pw} \equiv \frac{p-a}{p-a+p(b_1-b_2)},$$

and $\phi > \phi_{pw}$, where

$$\phi_{pw} \equiv \frac{(1-\delta)^2}{4\delta((p-a)(1-\delta) - p\delta(b_1-b_2))(b_1-b_2)}.$$

Otherwise, if either condition fails, A proposes $x_{11}^* = \hat{x}_{11}$, which B_1 accepts. \square

Proof of Proposition 3. Let $b_2 \geq b_1$, such that A does weakly better against the successor than the incumbent. Given sequentially rational behavior in the second-period subgames and B_1 's acceptance rule, both defined above, A prefers attack to any settlement $x_{11} \in [0, 1]$ in the first period iff

$$(1-\delta)(p-a) + \delta(px_{22}^* + (1-p)x_{12}^*) > (1-\delta)x_{11} + \delta((1-\phi x_{11}^2)x_{12}^* + \phi x_{11}^2x_{22}^*),$$

where $x_{11} = 1$, or when $\phi < \phi_d$ and $\delta > \delta_d$, where

$$\phi_d \equiv p - \frac{(1-p+a)(1-\delta)}{\delta(b_2-b_1)} \quad \text{and}$$

$$\delta_d \equiv \frac{1-p+a}{1-p+a+p(b_2-b_1)}.$$

Otherwise, there exists some x'_{11} that A is willing to propose and see B_1 accept, provided that $x'_{11} \leq \bar{x}_{11}$ and the conditions for a first-period settlement in Proposition 1 are satisfied. \square