### Leader Turnover, Leader Attributes, and Conflict POSC 3610 – International Conflict

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# Goal for Today

Discuss what we know about leader turnover, leader attributes, and inter-state conflict.

# Confrontation of the Day: MIC#2331





### MIC#2331

- Who: United Kingdom vs. Iraq and UAR (14 July 1958 2 Nov. 1958)
- Why: overthrow of the Iraqi monarchy; threats to Jordan
- What happened (synopsis):
  - 14 July: overthrow of the Iraqi monarchy, UKG goes on alert
  - 17 July: show of force starts
  - 19 October: Britain starts withdrawal from Jordan
  - 2 November: Britain completes withdrawal from Jordan

## Leaders and Conflict

- 1. How do survival incentives shape decisions for/against war?
- 2. How are states' decisions for war shaped by which leader is in power?

If successive leaders evaluate war/peace differently, then leader turnover can produce variation in war and peace.

- Ex post
- Ex ante

## Ex Post Leader Turnover and War

- Unit of analysis: politically relevant directed dyad-years
- DV: Confrontation onset, escalation to war (A vs. B, GML MID v.2.2.1)
- *IVs*: irregular leader turnover in dyad-year, regular leader turnover in dyad-year
  - Benchmarks to comparison against no leader turnover in dyad-year
- *Controls*: land contiguity, relative power (W/S), major power in dyad, defense pact (CoW), minimum democracy, minimum GDP per capita, minimum level of militarization

| Table 1: The Effect of Leade | r Turnover on Confrontatio | n Onset/Escalation |
|------------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------|
|------------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------|

|                                   | Onset     | Escalation |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Irregular Leader Turnover in Dyad | 0.371***  | 0.145      |
|                                   | (0.067)   | (0.110)    |
| Regular Leader Turnover in Dyad   | 0.257+    | 0.313      |
|                                   | (0.151)   | (0.242)    |
| Land Contiguity                   | 1.038***  | 0.011      |
|                                   | (0.062)   | (0.121)    |
| Major Power in Dyad               | 0.222***  | 0.352**    |
|                                   | (0.063)   | (0.111)    |
| Defense Pact                      | -0.040    | -0.510***  |
|                                   | (0.062)   | (0.135)    |
| Democracy (Weak-Link)             | -0.601*** | -0.420**   |
|                                   | (0.056)   | (0.128)    |
| GDP per Capita (Minimum)          | 0.139**   | -0.245***  |
|                                   | (0.049)   | (0.071)    |
| Num.Obs.                          | 88877     | 2277       |

+ p < 0.1, \* p < 0.05, \*\* p < 0.01, \*\*\* p < 0.001

## Which Leaders Are More Likely to Use Force?

- Unit of analysis: leader-years
- DV: did leader initiate a conflict in leader-year?
- *IVs*: leader gender, military service, was leader previously a rebel, war outcome in previous military (rebel) service, years of experience in politics before becoming a leader, level of education
- Controls: CINC, level of democracy, leader age, leader year in office

|  | Model 1  |
|--|----------|
| Female Leader                            | 0.714*** |
|  | (0.212)  |
| Military Service (No Combat)             | 0.423*** |
|  | (0.087)  |
| Military Service (Combat)                | 0.276**  |
|  | (0.097)  |
| Previous Rebel                           | 0.269*** |
|  | (0.071)  |
| Won War in Military                      | 0.026    |
|  | (0.110)  |
| Lost War in Military                     | 0.026    |
|  | (0.110)  |
| Won War as Rebel                         | -0.063   |
|  | (0.103)  |
| Lost War as Rebel                        | 0.292*   |
|  | (0.147)  |
| Level of Education                       | 0.078*   |
|  | (0.034)  |
| Years in Politics Before Becoming Leader | 0.012*** |
|  | (0.003)  |
| Num.Obs.                                 | 13261    |

### Table 2: Leader Attributes and Conflict Initiation

Control variables/temporal adjustments omitted for presentation. + p < 0.1, \* p < 0.05, \*\* p < 0.01, \*\*\* p < 0.001

# Leader Attributes and Conflict Initiation

- Women are more likely to initiate conflicts than men.
- Leaders with military experience are more likely to initiate conflicts than leaders without military experience.
- Leaders who were previously rebels are more generally likely to initiate conflicts.
- More experienced leaders (in office, in politics) are more likely to initiate conflicts.

| Leader Gender | Rivalry    | No. of Leaders | Percentage |
|---------------|------------|----------------|------------|
| Female        | No Rivalry | 62             | 79.49%     |
| Female        | Rivalry    | 16             | 20.51%     |
| Male          | No Rivalry | 1864           | 56.03%     |
| Male          | Rivalry    | 1463           | 43.97%     |
|               |            |                |            |

### Table 3: Leader Gender and Rivalry

Note:

May double-count leaders who presided over changes in rivalry status.

| Leader ID  | Name                    | Years | Conflicts | Conflict Years | Conflicts Started | Conflict Years (Started) |
|------------|-------------------------|-------|-----------|----------------|-------------------|--------------------------|
| NIC-1990   | Violeta Chamorro        | 8     | 4         | 4              | 4                 | 4                        |
| GUY-1997-2 | Janet Jagan             | 3     | 0         | 0              | 0                 | 0                        |
| ECU-1997-2 | Rosalia Arteaga Serrano | 1     | 0         | 0              | 0                 | 0                        |
| BOL-1979-3 | Lidia Gueiler Tejada    | 2     | 0         | 0              | 0                 | 0                        |
| CHL-2006   | Michelle Bachelet       | 5     | 0         | 0              | 0                 | 0                        |
| ARG-1974   | Peron, Isabel           | 3     | 1         | 1              | 1                 | 1                        |
| ARG-2007   | Fernandez de Kirchner   | 4     | 0         | 0              | 0                 | 0                        |
| UKG-1979   | Thatcher                | 12    | 8         | 8              | 4                 | 4                        |
| GAB-2009-1 | Rose Francine Rogombe   | 1     | 0         | 0              | 0                 | 0                        |
| TUR-1993-2 | Ciller                  | 4     | 3         | 4              | 3                 | 4                        |
| ISR-1969-2 | Meir                    | 6     | 4         | 6              | 4                 | 5                        |
| CHN-1911   | Empress Dowager Jonyu   | 2     | 0         | 0              | 0                 | 0                        |
| IND-1966-2 | Gandhi, I.              | 12    | 8         | 9              | 4                 | 5                        |
| IND-1980   | Gandhi, I.              | 5     | 5         | 5              | 5                 | 5                        |
| PAK-1988-2 | Benazir Bhutto          | 3     | 2         | 2              | 1                 | 1                        |
| PAK-1993-4 | Benazir Bhutto          | 4     | 0         | 4              | 0                 | 0                        |

### Table 4: The Conflict Behavior of Female Leaders in Rivalry

Note:

Data: GML MID v. 2.2.1 by way of {peacesciencer}

#### Leader Military Experience and Conflict Initiation

Horowitz and Stam (2014) suggest the most beligerent leaders with military backgrounds are the ones without combat experience.



Mean Simulated Probability of Being Targeted in a Dispute (with 90% Intervals)

Simulations from model provided earlier in this presentation.

Mark my words. It will not be six months before the world tests Barack Obama like they did John Kennedy. The world is looking. We're about to elect a brilliant 47-year-old senator president of the United States of America. Remember, I said it standing here, if you don't remember anything else I said. Watch, we're going to have an international crisis, a generated crisis, to test the mettle of this guy.

— Joe Biden (Oct. 19, 2008)

# Are Younger Leaders More Likely to Be Targeted?



# Testing the Biden Hypothesis

A test of the Biden hypothesis:

- Unit of analysis: politically relevant directed leader-dyad-years
- DV: Initiation of a dispute (A vs. B, GML MID v.2.2.1)
- *IVs*: Leader age (A,B), year in office (A,B)
- *Controls*: minimum democracy, female leader (B), relative power, land contiguity, (CoW) defense pact

|                                   | Model 1   |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|
| Leader Age (A)                    | 0.003     |
|                                   | (0.002)   |
| Leader Age (B)                    | 0.012***  |
|                                   | (0.003)   |
| Year in Office (A)                | 0.382***  |
|                                   | (0.023)   |
| Year in Office (B)                | 0.759***  |
|                                   | (0.095)   |
| Leader Age (B)*Year in Office (B) | -0.007*** |
|                                   | (0.002)   |
| Num.Obs.                          | 280376    |
| Note:                             |           |

Table 5: Testing the Biden Hypothesis, 1870-2010

Control variables omitted for presentation.

+ p < 0.1, \* p < 0.05, \*\* p < 0.01, \*\*\* p < 0.001

#### Testing the Biden Hypothesis, 1870-2010

Generally, older leaders like Biden are more likely to be 'tested' than younger leaders like Obama in their first year, but notice how age interacts with years in office.



Simulations from model provided earlier in this presentation. Ages chosen for simulation to approximate the ages of Obama and Biden around the time of Biden's remarks.

# Conclusion

- Leader turnover is associated with conflict onset (if not escalation), ex post.
- Identifying ex ante leader turnover's relationship with conflict is more difficult.
- Conflict initiation is (generally) the domain of the older, more experienced leaders.
- Female leaders are relatively rare, and their association with conflict is more about the select countries in which they emerged.
- There might be a distinction in the military effect, between those who fought and those who didn't.

# Table of Contents

### Introduction

### Leader Attributes and War

Ex Post, Ex Ante Which Leaders Are More Likely to Use Force? Leader Attributes and Conflict Initiation The Biden Hypothesis

### Conclusion