What Do We Know About Rivalry and International Conflict?

POSC 3610 – International Conflict

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Goal for Today

Discuss why inter-state conflict is not IID (independent and identically distributed).

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SOUTH AFRICA JETS BOMB MOZAMBIQUE

Pretoria Says Raids Retaliate for Black Guerrilla Attack

Special to The New York Times

Associated Press

Three workers were killed in a Mozambican jam factory during South African air raid.

MIC#3070

- *Who*: South Africa vs. Mozambique (13 April 1983 - 17 October 1983)
- *Why*: anti-apartheid/support for ANC, basically
- *What happened*:
  - 13 April: Mozambique detains a SAF fishing vessel
  - 20 May: car bomb in Pretoria, outside air force HQ
  - 23 May: Operation Skerwe
  - 17 Oct: another raid in Maputo, killing at least six

This rivalry had three total confrontations (MIC#1441 in 1975, MIC#2801 in 1987) before concluding with the end of apartheid.

Rivalry and Conflict

Rivalry captures/explains two problems in the study of inter-state conflict.

- Conflict is not IID.
- States that fight once are likely to fight again.

"Rivalry" defines these relationships, explaining conflict clustering and conflict recurrence.

Rivalry and Conflict

What explains conflict *within* the rivalry?

- i.e. we know to this point rivals are more likely to have (recurrent) conflict than non-rivals.

However, rivalry defines a relationship, and conflict varies inside it.

What Can We Do Here?

Let's put our own spin on this.

- *Unit of analysis*: non-directed *rivalry* dyad-years
    - e.g. USA-CUB 1959, USA-CUB 1960, etc.
    - Temporal domain: 1900-2010
    - *N*: 6,712
- *DVs*: confrontation onset, confrontation fatalities (min., max.), escalation to dyadic war.
    - You've seen these before by now.

International/Dyadic Factors

- CINC proportion (W/S)
- Alliance (defense)
- Major power status in dyad
- Land contiguity

Domestic Factors

- Joint democracy
- Leadership change
- Min. GDP per capita
- Min. leader willingness to use force (Carter and Smith, 2020)

Individual Factors

Individual Factors:

- Rivalry type (positional, ideological, interventionary)
  - Benchmarked to spatial rivalry (i.e. fixed effect)

"Shock" Factors

- Six-year period after Cold War ended [1990:1995]
- Six-year period after WW2 ended [1945:1950]
- Irregular leadership change
- Natural disaster category (a la Akcinaroglu and Radziszewski, 2021)

Other Notes

Briefly:

- Adjustments for temporal dependence/sample selection.
- "Perfect predictors" (separation) should be obvious from results.
  - i.e. look for unreasonably large coefficients with comically larger standard errors.

Table 1: The Effect of International/Dyadic Factors on Inter-state Conflict in Rivalries

	Conf. Onset	Min. Fatalities	Max. Fatalities	Dyadic War
Land Contiguity	0.427***	0.042	-0.151	0.113
	(0.118)	(0.320)	(0.346)	(0.201)
CINC Proportion	-0.110	0.294	0.313	-0.096
	(0.170)	(0.426)	(0.461)	(0.280)
Both Major Powers	0.607***	0.948*	0.596	0.990***
	(0.145)	(0.394)	(0.426)	(0.237)
Major-Minor	0.274*	0.906**	0.813*	0.802***
	(0.138)	(0.340)	(0.367)	(0.197)
Defense Pact	0.013	-0.845**	-1.042***	-0.732**
	(0.108)	(0.271)	(0.294)	(0.238)
Num.Obs.	4449	770	770	770

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

International/Dyadic Factors and Rivalry/Conflict

- Land-contiguous rivals are more likely to have confrontations, if not escalation/severe conflicts.
- Major power rivalries have a mostly robust effect across all models.
- Defense pacts among rivals don't deter onset, but do deter escalation.
- Wealthier rivals are less likely to see their confrontations escalate.

Table 2: The Effect of Domestic Factors on Inter-state Conflict in Rivalries

	Conf. Onset	Min. Fatalities	Max. Fatalities	Dyadic War
Leader Transition	-0.026	0.435	0.533+	0.199
	(0.116)	(0.293)	(0.317)	(0.177)
Joint Democracy	0.087	-0.253	-0.478	-5.001
	(0.216)	(0.543)	(0.587)	(217.057)
Min. Leader Willingness to Use Force	0.151*	0.284	0.367+	0.003
	(0.077)	(0.192)	(0.208)	(0.133)
Min. GDP per Capita in Dyad	-0.021	-0.249*	-0.273*	-0.102+
	(0.042)	(0.105)	(0.114)	(0.056)
Num.Obs.	4449	770	770	770

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

Domestic Factors and Rivalry/Conflict

- No real effect of leader transitions and conflict within rivalries.
- No real effect of joint democracy (beyond the perfect predictor)
- The more hawkish the leaders in rivalry, the more likely the conflict

Table 3: The Effect of Individual Factors on Inter-state Conflict in Rivalries

	Conf. Onset	Min. Fatalities	Max. Fatalities	Dyadic War
Positional Rivalry (vs. Spatial)	0.372***	-0.477+	-0.691*	-0.169
	(0.107)	(0.282)	(0.305)	(0.190)
Ideological Rivalry (vs. Spatial)	0.031	-0.343	-0.424	-0.268
	(0.131)	(0.336)	(0.364)	(0.243)
Interventionary Rivalry (vs. Spatial)	0.306	-1.068*	-1.321**	-4.585
	(0.193)	(0.471)	(0.510)	(212.238)
Num.Obs.	4449	770	770	770

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

Individual Factors and Rivalry/Conflict

Some evidence spatial rivalries are more severe than other rivalries.

- Positional rivalries are more likely to have confrontations, but:
- ...those conflicts are less severe.
- Kinda the same with interventionary rivalries as well.

Table 4: The Effect of 'Shock' Factors on Inter-state Conflict in Rivalries

	Conf. Onset	Min. Fatalities	Max. Fatalities	Dyadic War
'Irregular' Leader Transition	0.036	-0.141	-0.219	0.123
	(0.153)	(0.380)	(0.412)	(0.227)
Natural Disasters	0.065*	-0.175*	-0.198**	-0.173***
	(0.028)	(0.070)	(0.076)	(0.050)
Post-Cold War	-0.007	0.615	0.873+	0.263
	(0.171)	(0.423)	(0.458)	(0.331)
Post-WW2	0.212	0.704	0.841	0.143
	(0.206)	(0.493)	(0.533)	(0.274)
Num.Obs.	4449	770	770	770

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

Shock Factors and Rivalry/Conflict

- No real effect of 'irregular' leader transitions
- Natural disasters increase likelihood of confrontation onset, but decrease escalation.

Conclusion

We focus on distinction between rivals and non-rivals and neglect patterns within them.

- Escalatory: major powers, spatial rivalries, leader hawkishness
- De-escalatory: defense pacts, wealth, joint democracy
- Even "shocks" can cut both ways

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