Elections and Ethnic Civil Wars*

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1 Introduction

Following up studies on democratization and interstate wars, recent research has tried to examine how shifts to democracy may affect the likelihood of civil wars (e.g., Gleditsch 2002, Mansfield and Snyder 2007*a*, Cederman, Hug and Krebs 2010). There is a clear motivation for doing so as many of the causal mechanisms advanced for suggesting a link between democratization and interstate wars– for instance by Mansfield and Snyder (1995) Mansfield and Snyder (2005), Mann (2005) and others– seem to apply equally well to incentives for violence in the form of civil wars. Mansfield and Snyder's (1995) main argument relies on the diversionary incentives of elites facing pressures for political reform, while Mann's (2005) argument is largely based on incentives for ethnic cleansing and nepotism when democratization forces leaders to be more dependent on securing popular support. As such, it is not particularly surprising that the case studies presented by Snyder (2000) and Mann (2005) on closer inspection include many examples of conflict within countries rather than exclusively interstate wars.[1] More recently, Collier (2009) has pointed to how elections in "dangerous places" with a high likelihood of conflict often appears to precede the outbreak of violence.

Although at least three studies (e.g., Gleditsch 2002, Mansfield and Snyder 2007*a*, Cederman, Hug and Krebs 2010) explicitly model the possible effects of democratization on civil war in their empirical specification, there have been few explicit tests of the specific causal mechanisms postulated in this line of research.[2] In the present paper, which is still very much work in progress, we examine the effect of one causal factor related to various causal mechanisms, namely the holding of elections. While democratic governance is clearly about much more than elections, they play a central role in almost all definitions of democracy (for prominent examples, see Schumpeter 1942, Dahl 1989, 1998, Karl 1990, Alvarez, Cheibub, Limongi and Przeworski 1996, Manin 1997, Bunce 2003). Thus, in any case of a transition from an autocratic to a democratic regime, elections must be held at some point.[3]

In the next section, we offer a very brief discussion of the literature suggesting that

[1] Obviously, the break-up of the former Yugoslavia includes elements of both *intra* and *inter*state conflict. Mansfield Snyder also highlighted Rwanda as a supportive case, but it is more difficult to see how this can characterized as an interstate conflict.

[2] Hegre, Ellingsen, Gates and (2001) also discuss the implications of the effects of democratization on civil war, but their approach does not explicitly model democratization. In addition, Treier and Jackman (2008) and Vreeland (2008) suggest that the Polity IV indicators can be problematic for testing the effects of political regimes on conflict, and argues that the estimated effects of democracy on conflict are reduced when these issues are addressed (although see also Marshall and Cole 2008 and Gleditsch, Hegre and Strand 2009).

[3] Obviously, elections also play a role under authoritarian rule (see, e.g., Levitsky and Way 2002; Lust-Okar 2006).

democratization may increase the risk civil conflict. Based on this literature, and focusing specifically on the effect of elections, we first expose our arguments to a statistical test at the country level. Following up this first analysis, we conduct additional disaggregated tests looking at whether particular actors engage in violence, relying on the new dataset on ethnic power relations (EPR) introduced by Cederman, Wimmer and Min (2010).

2 Literature review

Although the link between democratization and domestic violence need not be limited to conflicts that involve ethnic differences between the antagonists (see for instance Huntington 1968, Przeworski 1991), much of the recent work on how democratization might lead to internal conflict focuses specifically on societies that are ethnically diverse and polarized. This literature builds directly on classical studies that highlight the destabilizing influence of ethnic politics on democratic institutions (Rabushka and Shepsle 1972; Horowitz 1985).

Two main mechanisms are highlighted in the more recent research. First, democratization is often linked to an attempt to make the characterof the state so that the *demos* corresponds to *ethnos*. Hence, political actors, through ethnic cleansing and other forms of active discrimination and nepotism, will attempt to ensure that the state serves the interest of particular ethnic groups (Mann 2005). In a more competitive political environment, ethnicity may become much moresalient than a closed political system.[4] Linked to that are also considerations in relation to the provision of public goods and access to state resources, which in these phases of democratization might differ across groups (see e.g. Breton 1964). Collier (2009, 70f), for example, argues that the Kenyan opposition leader Raila Odinga in 2007 ran on a platform that in practice would amount to ethnic cleansing against the dominant ethnic group, the Kikuyus, which formed the main support base for the incumbent leader Mwai Kibaki.

Second, pressures to hold on to political power may lead incumbent leaders to play the ethnic card and drum up nationalist sentiment to hold on to power. Mansfield and Snyder (1995), for example, argue that "democratizing states are war-prone not because war is popular with the mass public, but because domestic pressures create incentives for elites to drum up nationalist sentiment. . . . Elites need to gain mass allies to defend their weakened positions … [and] often use appeals to nationalism to stay astride their unmanageable political actions." (Mansfield and Snyder 1995, 88). Similarly, "[d]emocratization createsa wider spectrum of politically significant groups with diverse and incompatible interests. . . . [W]here political parties and representative institutions are still in their infancy, the diversity of interests may make poltical

[4]Mann (2005) advances more subtle and detailed arguments, but the emphasis is still on ethnic nepotism.

coalitions difficult to maintain. Often the solution is a belligerent nationalist coalition." (Mansfield and Snyder 1995, 89).

The principal mechanisms behind these arguments are 1) that ethnic affiliation often dominates other cleavages in post-authoritarian political environments, and 2) the diversionary conflict argument, where elites can strengthen core support by attacking or highlighting tension with other groups. Given that elites need to mobilize supporters to survive elections, diversionary conflict – whether directed against other states, as in interstate wars, or other ethic groups –- arises as a consequence of mobilization efforts by elites emphasizing group differences. However, opposition groups may engage in similar behavior, and many observers point to the strong role of ethnic outbidding in political mobilization in the wake of autocratic rule where popular support plays a minor role.[5]

The arguments discussed above are either implicitly or explicitly linked to the role of elections. Mann's (2005) argument emphasizes the fact that some ethnicities should not be part of the demos. This implies that in the process of democratization attempts of exclusion or intimidation may undertaken and such efforts often take on violent forms. Actors running on exclusivist ethnic platforms may try to prevent ethnic groups from participating in elections either on formal grounds or through undermining the ability of other groups to perform well in elections. Mansfield and Snyder's (1995) argument about ethnic outbidding highlights how such political mobilization strategies may lead to the use of violence in election campaigns.

More fundamentally, violence may arise over the outcome of elections, either due to actual or perceived irregularities, or if actors reject their outcomes. Przeworski (1991) argues that democracy is not established as long as the losers of elections are not ready to accept defeat. Building on this insight, Strand (2005) relates elections to violence, and finds that elections in anocracies increase the likelihood of conflict onset.

Along similar lines, Anderson and Mendes (2005) explore the link between lost elections and protest behavior. Collier (2009) highlights how sore losers in elections often start violence after elections.[6] More generally, Collier (2009) argues that elections only work if the rule of law is guaranteed, if not, conflict may result. Mansfield and Snyder (2007b) make similar arguments in favor of "sequencing" democratization, so that elections are postponed until countries have reached a sufficient threshold of

[5] In some sense this idea of ethnic outbidding is predicated on what Deutsch (1953, 104) calls one source of national conflict, namely the mobilization of both assimilated and not assimilated populations. One has to note, however, that mobilization in Deutsch (1953) refers primarily to social rather than to political mobilization. Similarly, assimilation is not related to access to power, since it again refers to social communication in the context of the dominant culture.

[6] See also the examples discussed in Hoddie and Hartzell (2005).

internal stability and capacity for democracy.

3 Country-level analysis

Based on an explicit measure of regime-type change, Cederman, Hug and Krebs (2010) show that democratization periods are more conflict prone. Their aggregated analysis, however, does not allow for a precise assessment of the causal mechanisms. Focusing on causal mechanisms linked to elections renders the analysis more specific than is possible based on more sweeping measures of regime type.[7]

As has been argued above, most scholars who analyze the impact of democratization on conflict, including Mansfield and Snyder as well as Mann, propose explanations linked to ethnicity or nationalism. Applying this general reasoning to electoral politics yields the following hypotheses:

H1a: Ethnic civil wars are more likely after elections than otherwise

H1b: Elections have no impact on other, non-ethnic civil wars

A test of these hypotheses gives us the opportunity to check whether the families of mechanisms reviewed above point in the right direction. In this section, we propose a straight-forward model measuring country-level effects of elections. The information on elections comes from the work of Golder (2004) and Hyde and Marinov (2008).[8] Based on this information and using country-level coding of conflicts based on Uppsala-PRIO ACD-data (Gleditsch et al. 2002 with the extensions of Harbom and Wallensteen 2007)[9] and estimating a multinomial logit where we distinguish between ethnic and non-ethnic conflicts[10] we find the following results (see Table 3.1).[11]

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[7]Given that elections, as demonstrated by Strand (2005) and Collier (2009), have different effects on conflict according to the prior political regime and economic development, we assessed in a previous version of this paper the effect of elections as mediated by the presence of a leader who had come to power in an irregular fashion (Goemans, Gleditsch and Chiozza 2009) and economic development. While finding some effects, these were rather limited and for this reason we simplify our analysis in this version by omitting them.

[8]Given the different coverage (or emphasis) of these two datasets, we simply combine the information on election years from these two sources. Hence, as soon as one source indicated that an election (either presidential or parliamentary) took place we code this as an election year.

[9]We use this conflict coding while removing three instances where the United States is coded as being involved in an internationalized civil wars.

[10]We also estimated these models as multinomial probits. While some slight differences appear in the estimates, the substantive interpretations are not affected. For this reason we present the results of the multinomial logits. All standard errors are clustered by country: a quick and dirty solution to some estimation problems. Ongoing conflicts are coded as missing data and we correct for time dependency in the standard way based on Beck, Katz and Tucker (1998).

[11]For a more detailed discussion of the control variables, see Cederman, Hug and Krebs (2010) and Wimmer, Cederman and Min (2009).

Table 3.1: Effect of elections at the country level

	ethnic civil war	non-ethnic civil war
	b	b
	(s.e.)	(s.e.)
elections, lagged	0.752	-0.096
	(0.314)	(0.242)
log(GDP/capita), lagged	-0.523	-0.282
	(0.125)	(0.080)
log(population), lagged	0.294	0.184
	(0.123)	(0.063)
excluded population	1.172	0.636
	(0.418)	(0.309)
peace years	0.106	-0.065
	(0.165)	(0.085)
spline1	0.004	0.000
	(0.003)	(0.002)
spline2	-0.003	-0.000
	(0.002)	(0.001)
spline3	0.001	0.000
	(0.000	(0.000)
constant	-7.413	-4.845
	(1.274)	(0.641)
Log pseudolikelihood	-801.40727	
n	5788	

Overall we find that elections in the previous year increases significantly the likelihood of ethnic-civil war onsets. Interesting to note is, however, that the probabilty that a non-ethnic war will erupt after an election is slightly smaller than after non-election years, but this effect is not significant. The control variables behave as one would expect: both wealth and population size have a strong influence on ethnic and non-ethnic civil wars, as reflected by Hegre and Sambanis' (2006) sensitivity analysis. As would be expected, the share of the population that belongs to excluded ethnic groups has a particularly strong effect on the onset of ethnic conflict, but not on non-ethnic wars. This measure is based on the EPR dataset, see Wimmer, Cederman and Min (2009). To provide more details on the cases driving these findings, Tables A.2 and A.3 in the Appendix list the relevant cases, subdivided into ethnic and non-ethnic wars.

The findings so far seem to suggest that the causal mechanisms related to elections clearly play a role in the onset of civil wars. However, country-level analysis makes it difficult to disentangle further the processes driving these results (Cederman and Gleditsch 2009). Therefore, we proceed by disaggregating the analysis to the group level.

4 Group-level analysis

Building directly on the EPR dataset, we use a group-level dataset that contains politically relevant ethnic groups around the world from 1946 through 2005 (see Cederman, Wimmer and Min 2010). This dataset has the advantage of covering all ethnic groups regardless of their access to national executive power, together with explicit coding of this variable.

Our first task is to replicate the findings reported in Table 3.1. Is it possible to find support for H1a at the group-level? Model 4.1 regresses a number of group-level and country-level determinants on ethnic groups' involvement in ethnic conflict (see Table 4.1).[12]

As can be seen, H1a is confirmed at this level, though the effect is not very strong. The other determinants exhibit effects according to our theoretical expectations. In line with previous scholarship, excluded groups are much more likely to experience conflict (see Cederman, Wimmer and Min 2010). While economic wealth continues to be highly relevant for conflict onset, population figures at the national level are not connected to conflict behavior at the group level.

To better capture the political environment of elite decision-making, the current model also includes an indicator that records whether a leader was removed from office violently, causing the death of this person. Here we rely on the ARCHIGOS dataset for this information (see Goemans, Gleditsch and Chiozza 2009). As reflected by the positive and highly significant coefficient, this variable has a very strong impact on the onset of ethnic civil wars.

However, to proceed beyond this relatively general analysis, we need to disentangle the conflict type in question. As argued by Buhaug (2006), there is a major difference in conflict logic depending on whether the civil war in question is territorial or governmental. While the former class hinges on territorial incompatibilities, such as the autonomy or independence of regions, the latter type involves direct challenges to governmental power at the center of the state. Fortunately enough, the Uppsala/PRIO ACD conflict coding separates these two types explicitly. In the following, we consider mechanisms driving each type of civil war separately, starting with mechanisms driving governmental civil wars.

Table 4.1. Explaining group-level onset of ethnic conflict

[12] As in the country-level regressions, we rely on logit models with clustered standard errors and a "peace year" correction. Ongoing conflict is coded as missing values.

	Model 4.1
election, lagged	0.5855*
	(0.2713)
excluded group	1.3209**
	(0.2759)
log(group size)	0.2595**
	(0.0812)
log(GDP/capita), lagged	-0.4636**
	(0.1098)
log(population), lagged	-0.0033
	(0.0891)
history of killed leaders	1.0227**
	(0.2724)
peaceyears	-0.2241**
	(0.0842)
gspline1	-0.0010
	(0.0007)
gspline2	0.0002
	(0.0004)
gspline3	0.0002
	(0.0002)
Constant	-1.3357
	(1.1881)
Log pseudolikelihood	-693.36784
Observations	23097

Robust standard errors in parentheses
** p<0.01, * p<0.05

Mechanisms affecting governmental conflicts

From Model 4.1 and previous research (see e.g. Cederman, Wimmer and Min 2010) we know that larger groups are generally more likely get involved in civil wars. Here we assume that the size effect is especially important for governmental conflicts because only the largest groups are capable or willing to claim central power (see Table A.3 for a list of the post-electoral, governmental conflict cases).

In addition, we postulate that direct challenges to governmental power are more likely following elections because electoral events increase the level of political competition and lead to large-scale mobilization, especially where large groups are dissatisfied with the outcome of the election. Horowitz (1985, 331) describes how such “polarizing elections” are likely to provoke ethnic coups. Thus, the “sore loser” effect, whether driven by honest or dishonest behavior of the incumbent, can be expected to be larger

wherever a larger proportion of the population feels excluded.

Unfortunately, our election coding does not extend to electoraloutcomes linked to groups, but we can use the demographic size of the group in question as a proxy for the sore-loser effect.

> H2. After elections, larger rather than smaller groups are more likely to fight the government.

We evaluate H2 with models that break up the effect of group size into two parts with the help of an interactive term that combines the effect of elections with that of size (see Model 4.2 in Table 4.2).

Table 4.2. Analyzing onset of ethnic governmental conflicts by comparing conflict types

	Model 4.2		Model 4.3	
	Terr.	Gov.	Terr.	Gov.
election, lagged	0.7418	0.8588	1.3042**	-0.4315
	(0.5405)	(0.5236)	(0.3345)	(0.4901)
group downgraded			2.0082**	1.3796
			(0.5040)	(0.9001)
election x downgraded			-35.6328**	1.7587
			(0.7306)	(1.0011)
group excluded	1.7045**	1.0949**	1.6913**	1.0197**
	(0.4307)	(0.3846)	(0.4298)	(0.3712)
log(group size)	0.2355*	0.4267**	0.1825	0.4789**
	(0.0980)	(0.1364)	(0.0937)	(0.1098)
election x group size	-0.1251	0.5025**		
	(0.1297)	(0.1756)		
log(GDP/capita), lagged	-0.5358**	-0.3765*	-0.5160**	-0.3122*
	(0.1913)	(0.1464)	(0.1973)	(0.1415)
log(population), lagged	0.2074	-0.3512*	0.2188	-0.3320*
	(0.1270)	(0.1398)	(0.1290)	(0.1444)
history of killed leaders	0.3337	1.9063**	0.2886	1.9148**
	(0.3871)	(0.3253)	(0.4007)	(0.3106)
peaceyears	-0.2986**	-0.1449	-0.2913**	-0.1603
	(0.1085)	(0.1490)	(0.1077)	(0.1560)
gspline1	-0.0017	-0.0003	-0.0016	-0.0004
	(0.0009)	(0.0012)	(0.0009)	(0.0013)
gspline2	0.0007	-0.0002	0.0006	-0.0002
	(0.0005)	(0.0008)	(0.0005)	(0.0008)
gspline3	0.0000	0.0003	0.0001	0.0003
	(0.0002)	(0.0003)	(0.0002)	(0.0003)
Constant	-3.8531*	0.5639	-4.4019*	0.0439
	(1.8968)	(1.4803)	(1.8591)	(1.5610)

Log pseudolikelihood	-739.775		-722.656	
Observations	23097	23097	23097	23097

Robust standard errors in parentheses
** p<0.01, * p<0.05

The model shows that, apart from an insignificant direct effect of elections, this factor triggers an additional size-dependent effect that is as strong as the basic size increment. Thus a substantial part of the dependence on demographic size materializes in the aftermath of elections.[13] For territorial conflicts, things look very different. In fact, here the net effect of elections on conflict is negative but far from significant, thus reflecting the absence of any systematic link.

To further investigate the sore-loser effect, we measure if the groups were recently downgraded in terms of their access to national executive power (see Cederman, Wimmer and Min 2010). The idea is that downgrading is to some extent going to identify those groups that suffer a power loss as a consequence of elections.

> H3. After elections, downgraded groups are more likely to fight the government than those groups that do not experience a status loss

Model 4.3 measures the effect of post-electoral downgrading through an interaction term. The regression model lends some limited support to this operationalization of the sore-loser effect. While the coefficient of the eldown variable is quite sizeable, it is only weakly significant (p=0.079). A peek at the cases reveals that there are some instances that seem to confirm the postulated logic, including the Igbo insurrection in 1966 in Nigeria and the violent challenge of the Congolese government by Lari and Mbochi groups in 1993. Other cases are less obviously linked to elections, especially those that are genuinely authoritarian such as the Kabré in Togo 1991 and the Fulani in Cameroon 1984.

In the absence of a more precise coding of the sequence of elections and conflict, it is conceivable that we have counted cases where no link exists or that we have missed a number of cases that might strengthen the results, especially those elections that took place the same year as the conflict. Because the current research design relies on a lagged election indicator, those instances would not be counted as confirming the sore-loser mechanism.

[13] Interestingly, Birnir (2007) finds that the group's size in the legislature has a negative impact on conflict, which is fully compatible with the present result.

In sum, we have found that governmental conflicts are especially likely to be launched by larger groups that have suffered recent losses of power, although these findings have to be treated as quite preliminary.

Mechanisms affecting territorial conflicts

We now turn to mechanisms driving the other main conflict type, namely that of territorial civil wars. In these situations, the ethnic groups tend to be smaller relative to the country's total population and therefore pursue territorial aims, such as secession or various degrees of autonomy, rather than attempting to seize central state power.

For territorial civil wars, it can be expected that the election effect derived from difficulties of defining the demos. By inviting citizens to participate in national politics, elections imply a certain level of commitment to the polity as a whole. By highlighting alternative demos definitions, leaders of competing ethnic groups can use electoral campaigns to drum up support for secessionist or autonomist platforms that challenge the sovereignty of the state. In such cases, political violence may become an attractive alternative to democratic participation.

We proceed by retaining both sets of variables from the analysis of governmental conflicts while setting the interactive effect between elections and size to zero through a constraint since we have no theoretical reason to postulate an effect for territorial conflicts. Based on this specification, Model 4.4 in Table 4.3 reveals that the straight election effect in conformance with H1 is very much present for territorial conflicts. Following elections, the risk of territorial civil wars increases considerably (see Table A.4 for a list of the post-electoral conflict cases).

However, this finding says little about the particular conditions under which territorial conflicts are triggered by electoral politics. We therefore need to consider more closely the aims of group leaders. Because of its close connection to territory, nationalism is the main ideology underpinning territorial claims by leaders of ethnic groups. As argued by Mansfield and Snyder (2005), nationalist mobilization has the most destabilizing consequences in incomplete democracies, i.e. in anocracies. The destabilizing influence of nationalism can attributed to weak institutions that allow leaders to manipulate the electorate by abusing power, biasing the media and targeting scapegoats. We would therefore expect a partial opening of the political arena to be associated with territorial claims that could generate violence. In stable and complete democracies, however, elections can still destabilize the polity, but it is difficult for group elites to "play the ethno-naionalist card" since political institutions are more robust and less prone to abuse.

This characterization resonates with Levitsky and Way's (2002) notion of competitive

authoritarian systems, characterizing the situation in competitive authoritarian systems, where “the coexistence of democratic rules and autocratic methods aimed at keeping incumbents in power creates an inherent source of instability. The presence of elections, legislatures, courts, and an independent media creates periodic opportunities for challenges by opposition forces” (p. 59).

In brief, this reasoning yields the following hypothesis:

> H4. After elections, groups in anocracies are especially likely to fight over territory.

The following presents preliminary analysis that will have to be improved in later versions of the paper (see Model 4.5 in Table 4.3). Although there are problems associated with Gurr’s Polity indicator, especially as regards possible endogeneity (Vreeland 2008), for the time being, we use a single lagged classification of regime types into autocracy, anocratic and democratic based on this measure.

Table 4.3. Analyzing onset of ethnic territorial conflicts by comparing conflict types

	Model 4.4		Model 4.5	
	Terr.	Gov.	Terr.	Gov.
election, lagged	1.3043**	0.3285	-0.9510	0.4166
	(0.3345)	(0.6462)	(1.1765)	(0.6028)
anocracy, lagged			0.2568	0.2390
			(0.6104)	(0.3862)
democracy, lagged			1.0452	-0.8424
			(0.7997)	(0.6579)
election x anocracy			3.1121**	-0.0685
			(1.1770)	(0.8192)
election x democracy			2.0702	-0.6549
			(1.3099)	(1.1211)
group downgraded	2.0081**	1.4094	2.0055**	1.3829
	(0.5040)	(0.8972)	(0.5093)	(0.8847)
election x downgraded	-45.6306	1.6531	-39.9334**	1.8880
	(0.0000)	(1.0293)	(0.7581)	(1.0235)
group excluded	1.6915**	1.0259**	1.9764**	1.0223**
	(0.4298)	(0.3752)	(0.3725)	(0.3845)
log(group size)	0.1826	0.4017**	0.1626	0.4041**
	(0.0937)	(0.1303)	(0.0876)	(0.1269)
election x group size	dropped	0.4607*	dropped	0.4848*
		(0.1957)		(0.1954)
log(GDP/capita), lagged	-0.5160**	-0.3186*	-0.6376**	-0.2505
	(0.1973)	(0.1403)	(0.2054)	(0.1422)
log(population), lagged	0.2188	-0.3339*	0.2255	-0.3098*
	(0.1290)	(0.1441)	(0.1158)	(0.1516)
history of killed leaders	0.2887	1.9401**	0.1857	1.8615**
	(0.4007)	(0.3124)	(0.3538)	(0.3151)
peaceyears	-0.2913**	-0.1561	-0.3023**	-0.1338
	(0.1077)	(0.1551)	(0.1087)	(0.1585)
gspline1	-0.0016	-0.0004	-0.0019*	-0.0002
	(0.0009)	(0.0013)	(0.0009)	(0.0013)
gspline2	0.0006	-0.0002	0.0008	-0.0002
	(0.0005)	(0.0008)	(0.0005)	(0.0008)
gspline3	0.0001	0.0003	0.0000	0.0003
	(0.0002)	(0.0003)	(0.0002)	(0.0003)
Constant	-4.4024*	-0.0789	-4.2428*	-0.8144
	(1.8590)	(1.5693)	(1.8693)	(1.6551)
Log pseudolikelihood	-721.585		-701.49254	
Observations	23097	23097	23033	23033

Robust standard errors in parentheses

** p<0.01, * p<0.05

Keeping the previous independent variables in the model (cf. Model 4.4), we add both

direct regime-type dummies based on the Polity dataset, as well as interactive terms multiplying the direct effects with the lagged election indicator.

The results offer some evidence in support of the hypothesis. The impact of elections on territorial conflict is by far the strongest in anocracies. A comparison test of the interaction terms for elections with anocracy and democracy respectively shows that the difference is significant at the p = 0.1 level.

Further strengthening the credibility of these findings, the list of cases include those where elections are known to have figured in the build-up of political violence, such the Tamils in Sri Lanka in 1983, as the first war in Chechnya in 1994 and the Georgian conflicts involving the Abkhazians and the South Ossetians in 1992 and 2004.

It should also be noted that modeling the election effect on territorial conflict hardly alters the previous results derived for governmental conflicts. The status of hypotheses H2 and H3 remains unchanged.

Finally, the EPR dataset allows us to test the impact of elections in the context of specific power access categories. This approach has the advantage of avoiding the problems associating with the Polity regime-type indicators. While excluded groups are much more likely to get involved in violence, there does not seem to be any systematic difference between excluded and included groups with respect to post-electoral conflict. Comparisons of the excluded categories indicate that powerless groups are the least conflict prone (even less likely than the included groups), with regional and separatist autonomy, as well as discrimination, being associated with an increased risk of territorial civil war.

To conclude the analysis of territorial conflict, we find a relatively strong link between elections and civil war, but it remains somewhat unclear what mechanisms are responsible for this effect. Incompletely democratized systems appear to be more at risk, but this effect is not clear-cut and relies on problematic measurements that will need to be improved in future research.

5 Conclusion

This paper has explored the effect of elections on internal conflict. We have find plenty of support for such a connection, both in comparisons of entire countries and ethnic groups across the globe. Our results connect elections with violence only in the case of ethnic conflicts. We have found no indication that post-electoral situations are associated with non-ethnic civil wars. Furthermore, group-level analysis suggests that the electoral influence makes itself known in different ways, depending on the type of

ethnic conflict. Whereas the conflict-inducing election effect is mediated through groups' demographic sizes, and possibly changes in their power status in governmental conflicts, territorial conflicts seem to occur mostly for intermediate ranges of the democracy scale.

It is necessary to reiterate that the current paper is very much preliminary. Thus there is plenty of room for improvement. More direct tests of the main theoretical explanations would be highly desirable. In particular, an evaluation of the sore-loser logic would benefit a lot from data on electoral outcomes linked to the groups in our sample. Likewise we have started to look into the impact of "first elections" after election-free periods, but we are not ready to present results yet. Moreover, group-level analysis leaves out an important layer of political actors, such as political parties and rebel organizations, that are usually directly responsible for the outbreak of conflict. Information about such organizations would be very helpful in further evaluating competing explanations of the influence of ethnic politics on civil-war violence. The current research design, based as it is on yearly observations, is relatively crude as regards the precise sequence of elections and violence. It is conceivable that duration models, with more precise information about dates of elections and conflict onset could improve the precision of causal inference, although the relative timing may be difficult to tease out with better data, especially since low-level conflict makes it difficult to pin down the exact starting point of a civil war.

All the same, we believe that the current, preliminary study has shed some valuable light on the problem of post-electoral violence. Because democratization is a notoriously difficult concept to measure, a focus on elections, as well as other components of democracy, offers a useful complement to previous democratization research. By disaggregating such effects, both in terms of the level of analysis and the type of conflict, we are able to come closer to the causal mechanisms responsible for the outbreak of conflict.

Appendix

Table A.1: Conflict outbreaks in year after elections: ethnic wars

country	**year**
Bolivia	1952
United Kingdom	1971
Spain	1980
Yugoslavia	1998
Moldova	1992
Russia	1994
Georgia	2004
Azerbaijan	1992
Niger	1996
Togo	1986
Togo	1991
Cameroon	1984
Nigeria	1966
Congo	1993
Turkey	1984
Syria	1979
Lebanon	1958
India	1978
Pakistan	1971

Table A.2: Conflict outbreaks in year after elections: non-ethnic wars

country	**year**
Haiti	1989
Guatemala	1954
El Salvador	1979
Peru	1981
Bolivia	1967
Paraguay	1954
Paraguay	1989
Argentina	1955
Argentina	1963
Argentina	1974
Uruguay	1972
United Kingdom	1998
Spain	1987
Chad	1997
Madagascar	1971
Morocco	1971
Tunisia	1980
Iran	1997
Israel	2000
Tajikistan	1992
Uzbekistan	2000
Sri Lanka	1971
Nepal	1960
Cambodia	1967

Table A.3: Group-level outbreaks of governmental conflict in yearafter elections

country	group	year
Bolivia	Quechua	1952
Bolivia	Aymara	1952
Togo	Ewe (and related groups)	1986
Togo	KabrÈ (and related groups)	1991
Cameroon	Fulani (and other northern Muslim peoples)	1984
Nigeria	Igbo	1966
Chad	Sara	1991
Chad	Toubou	1991
Congo	Lari/Bakongo	1993
Congo	Mbochi (proper)	1993
Syria	Sunni Arabs	1979
Lebanon	Shi'a Muslims (Arab)	1958
Lebanon	Sunnis (Arab)	1958

Table A.4: Group-level outbreaks of territorial conflict in year after elections

country	group	year
United Kingdom	Catholics In N. Ireland	1971
Spain	Basques	1980
Yugoslavia	Croats	1991
Yugoslavia	Albanians	1998
Yugoslavia	Slovenes	1991
Moldova	Transnistrians	1992
Russia	Armenians	1990
Russia	Azerbaijanis	1990
Russia	Chechens	1994
Georgia	Ossetians (South)	1992
Georgia	Ossetians (South)	2004
Georgia	Abkhazians	1992
Azerbaijan	Armenians	1992
Niger	Toubou	1996
Nigeria	Ijaw	2004
Ethiopia	Afar	1996
Ethiopia	Somali (Ogaden)	1996
Turkey	Kurds	1984
India	Assamese (non-SC/ST/OBCs)	1990
India	Indigenous Tripuri	1978
India	Naga	1992
Pakistan	Bengali	1971
Bangladesh	Tribal-Buddhists	1974
Myanmar	Kachins	1961
Myanmar	Kayin (Karens)	1957
Sri Lanka	Sri Lankan Tamils	1983
Philippines	Moro	1970

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