

Elections, political parties, and civil war*

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Abstract

Elections form a cornerstone of any democracy, and the former can hardly work without political parties. But how do elections and the way in which party competition is organized affect conflict occurrence? Combining detailed information on groups involved in ethnic civil war and election data I find that especially the second competitive election increases the likelihood of conflict onset. The (few) cases suggest that both the sore-loser argument and mobilization strategies by politicians are related to this breakup of civil peace.

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1 Introduction

Elections in democratization processes are of central importance but also often a watershed. As Przeworski (1991) aptly describes it, the electoral process is marred with uncertainty. The loser (or losing party) must consent defeat (Anderson, Blais, Bowler, Donovan and Listhaug, 2005) in the hope of winning the next election. When institutions are weak, however, the winner (or winning party) may cement the hold on power and thus decrease the likelihood of future transitions in power (for a related argument see Weingast, 1997). Thus,

“. . . successful democracies are those in which the institutions make it difficult to fortify temporary advantage. Unless the increasing returns to power are institutionally mitigated, losers must fight the first time they lose, for waiting makes it less likely that they will ever succeed” (Przeworski, 1991, 36).

At the same time when elites have to mobilize for the first time mass support, often programmatic stances linked to the ideological left and right play second fiddle to group-based and ethnic cleavages (e.g., Birnir, 2007). Mobilizing such cleavages is often, however, playing with fire (e.g., Mann, 2005).

While an increasing number of studies has started to assess under what conditions democratization (e.g. Gleditsch, 2002; Mansfield and Snyder, 2008; Cederman, Hug and Krebs, 2010) and elections (e.g. Strand, 2007*b*; Brancati and Snyder, 2010; Cheibub and Hays, 2010; Flores and Nooruddin, 2010; Gustafson, 2010; Brancati and Snyder, 2011 (forthcoming); Cederman, Gleditsch and Hug, 2012 (forthcoming)) may fuel violent domestic conflict, few of them consider, however, directly the main actors in elections, namely political parties. As Reilly (2006, 823) notes, however,

“[i]t is today widely recognized that parties play a crucial role not just in representing interests, aggregating preferences, and forming governments, but also in managing conflict.”

That political parties play an important role (see also Emminghaus, 2003) has most recently been acknowledged in studies on post-conflict elections (e.g., Kumar, 1998; Kumar and de Zeeuw, 2006; Reilly, 2002*a*; Reilly, 2002*b*; Reilly,

2004; Collier, Hoeffler and Soderbom, 2008; Söderberg Kovacs, 2008; Reilly, 2008; Collier, 2009; Höglund, Jarstad and Söderberg Kovacs, 2009; Jarstad, 2009*a*; Jarstad, 2009*b*; Brancati and Snyder, 2010; Flores and Nooruddin, 2010; Brancati and Snyder, 2011 (forthcoming)). What distinguishes post-conflict elections is that leaders and groups that have been in conflict need to organize in political parties to mobilize voters. As the empirical record demonstrates (e.g., Jarstad, 2008; Jarstad, 2009*a*; Brancati and Snyder, 2010; Brancati and Snyder, 2011 (forthcoming)) conflict recurrence in such elections is not a rare event.

Consequently, in the present paper I explore what elements of party competition in post-conflict periods,¹ and also more generally, may lead to conflict recurrence. As elections are mostly prone to lead to ethnic conflict (see Cederman, Gleditsch and Hug, 2012 (forthcoming)) the focus will also largely be on the latter type of conflict. Two issues will be at the forefront. First, is the sore loser argument relevant for post-conflict election induced ethnic violence?. Second, and relatedly, is such post-conflict election induced violence related to political parties that mobilize along ethnic lines?

The empirical exploration below suggests that among post-conflict elections and even more generally the second competitive election are likely to lead to conflict occurrence. Non-competitive elections in the aftermath of a civil war do not generate conflict risk and the first competitive election after a civil war neither. Most likely due to the scantiness of the empirical data, there is no evidence that voting along ethnic lines is especially conducive to conflict recurrence. A detailed look at the election results suggests, however, that losing twice in a row in the first two competitive elections is not orthogonal to conflict recurrence.

In the next section I discuss the literature that provides the foil of this study. In section three I present, based on the analyses in Cederman, Gleditsch and Hug (2012 (forthcoming)) a discussion of how post-conflict elections relate to the recurrence of ethnic civil wars. Using this analysis as a launch pad I then characterize in section four a set of post-conflict elections in terms of party competition and ethnic cleavages to highlight the role political parties play in the recurrence of ethnic civil war. Based on this discussion I offer a systematic analysis of the effect of competitive elections both in post-conflict and more general settings.

¹This focus on post-conflict elections is motivated by two issues. First of all, the role of post-conflict elections has attracted scholarly attention. Second, focusing on these elections reduces the coding work for elections.

Section five concludes and discusses further planned steps.

2 Elections, political parties and conflict

Elections and, in our days of representative democracy, also political parties are the cornerstones of any democratic regime. It can hardly surprise, then, that elections have come to the forefront of academic research on democratization and conflicts.² On the one hand a series of scholars have pondered over the timing of elections in democratization processes (see for instance Snyder, 2000; Mansfield and Snyder, 2005; Carothers, 2007; Mansfield and Snyder, 2007) in general, other researchers have focused more heavily on the role of elections in post-conflict periods (e.g., Reilly, 2001; Reilly, 2002*b*; Höglund, Jarstad and Söderberg Kovacs, 2009; Brancati and Snyder, 2010; Brancati and Snyder, 2011 (forthcoming)). Implicit in most of these studies is the premise that elections are often a first step in a democratization process, and that they contribute to further steps in the process. This is most eloquently addressed by Lindberg (2006, 2009) when arguing that holding even imperfect elections makes it difficult to revert in a democratization process.³

Elections, however, have also been linked to conflict onset. Collier, Hoeffler and Soderbom (2008) and Collier (2009) find, for instance, that in pre-election periods conflict is less likely to occur, while elections increase the likelihood of conflict onset in post-conflict settings. Jarstad (2009*a*) (see also Jarstad, 2008) finds also that post-peace accord elections may lead to conflict recurrence but notes that elections held under peace accords containing power-sharing elements are less likely to lead to conflict. Cederman, Gleditsch and Hug (2012 (forthcoming)) find that more generally elections lead to higher risks of ethnic conflicts, especially the first few competitive elections. They also find that elections of dif-

²Not only academic research, but also journalists (see the series of articles “Pretty squalid. East Africa’s weakest new component” *The Economist* July 22, 2010, “The power of the angry voter. Even bad elections are better than none” *The Economist* July 22, 2010, “The democracy bug is fitfully catching on. Africa is in the throes of election fever. But more voting does not necessarily mean more democracy” *The Economist* July 22, 2010), and policy circles (e.g., López-Pintor, 2005).

³Lindberg’s (2006, 2009) argument is mostly informed by his work on elections in Africa. A related study by Bunce and Wolchik (2007) offers a more nuanced view on the role of elections in the postcommunist area, while Weiss (2009) finds for a larger set of countries from that same region hardly evidence for Lindberg’s (2006, 2009) claim.

ferent types affect ethnic groups differently, especially as a function of the latter's size.

The few studies that exist on the nexus between elections and conflict onset in post-conflict periods still allow scholars to argue that

“. . . there has been little systematic evaluation of the impact of postconflict elections.” (Flores and Nooruddin, 2010, 4)

More recently a series of studies has attempted to address some methodological challenges in assessing the effect of elections. The latter, and especially their timing, are hardly random events. Cheibub and Hays (2010) argue, for instance, that the theoretical explanation for conflict-inducing elections is mostly related to the absence of a well institutionalized political system. In such systems, however, leaders may have the choice between holding elections and starting a conflict. Their preliminary evidence, taking elections as exogenous and focusing exclusively on African countries (assuming a lower level of institutionalization), suggests that elections do not raise the likelihood of conflict onset. Brancati and Snyder (2010, 2011 (forthcoming)) focus more specifically on the timing of post-conflict elections. In their first study they find that civil wars ending in victory (thus no peace-settlement) lead to longer periods till the first election is held. At the same time, however, international intervention in that case reduces the time it takes to the first popular consultation. Similarly, in the post-cold war period earlier elections have become more frequent. In a subsequent study, and taking into account this non-random timing of elections through matching, Brancati and Snyder (2010) find that early elections are much more likely to lead to renewed conflict.

Relatedly, Flores and Nooruddin (2010) find in a study focusing exclusively on the post cold-war period that election timing does not matter for countries with a democratic tradition, while for the remaining countries earlier elections lead to more likely conflict recurrence. While being worried as much as Brancati and Snyder (2010) about possible endogeneity biases, they argue that in the post-cold-war period election timing has become much more difficult to tune, due to the presence of international actors.

While these recent studies offer clearly more systematic and detailed insights into the way in which elections pan out in post-conflict periods, they also suffer

from the fact that the actors involved in the elections (i.e., political parties) and conflicts (most often ethnic groups and their representatives) are largely absent. While Reilly (2006) emphasizes the role of political parties, he does not address this issue in a systematic way. Similarly, Cederman, Gleditsch and Hug (2012 (forthcoming)) while studying also how specific groups are reacting to particular types of elections, do not link these groups to the actors competing in elections, namely political parties.⁴

Given that in the literature on elections and their conflict-inducing potential the sore-loser argument figures prominently, I will use as a rather poorly motivated first hypothesis the following:

H1: If a party loses elections (especially in a repeated fashion) and represents an ethnic group excluded from power a conflict onset after elections is more likely.

As discussed above another conflict-inducing mechanism is related to the mobilization of ethnic cleavages. Birnir (2007) argues in this context that it is not ethnically based parties that are necessarily the problem, but that their exclusion from power is more likely to cause tension and conflict.⁵ Hence, based on this we would expect that if ethnic voting reflects the inclusion to/exclusion from power conflict onsets after elections are more likely

H2: If a party system is based on ethnic cleavages which relate to the inclusion and exclusion of groups from power, conflict onset after elections is more likely.

3 Post-conflict elections and ethnic civil war onset

In the empirical analysis I focus on competitive elections as defined by Hyde and Marinov (2010).⁶ According to these authors competitive elections are those for

⁴This process of how former combatants become political actors is at the heart of Söderberg Kovacs's (2007, 2008) and de Zeeuw's (2008) sets of case studies.

⁵This is also underlying Breton's (1964) argument on how ethnic groups gaining power may favor their kin in the distribution of public goods.

⁶In post-conflict periods we also find 23 non-competitive elections, namely in Cambodia (1976), Cameroon (1984, 1988), Democratic Republic of the Congo (1982), Egypt (1999), Gabon (1964, 1967), Guinea (1974), Iran (1993, 1996, 1997), Iraq (2000), Kenya (1983), Laos (1992), Madagascar (1972), Portugal (1949), Republic of Vietnam (1967), Sudan (1972, 1975, 1977, 1978), Syria (1985, 1986), Togo (1986, 1990), Uzbekistan (2000, 2004), and Yemen Arab Republic (1971). In two of these cases, namely in Sudan (1975) and Togo (1990) a conflict ensued in the following year.

which the following three questions can all be answered in the affirmative: “(1) Was opposition allowed? (2) Was more than one party legal? (3) Was there a choice of candidates on the ballot?” (Hyde and Marinov, 2010, 8). I also employ their data on election dates for both parliamentary and presidential elections as well as elections to constitutional assemblies but complemented it with Golder’s (2004) data for countries not covered by Hyde and Marinov (2010). As these countries are all western democracies, their elections were all coded as competitive with the exception of the elections in Portugal before 1974.⁷

To determine post-conflict periods I use the information on ethnic groups involved in conflict (Cederman, Wimmer and Min, 2010) as used by Cederman, Gleditsch and Hug (2012 (forthcoming)). For each conflict coded at the group level the five subsequent years after the end of the conflict were coded as post-conflict period, as long as no other group was in conflict with the government or a new conflict started.⁸

Overall this coding identifies 73 post-conflict elections which were competitive in the period 1960-2000. Table 1 lists these elections and also reports on whether in the year after the election a new ethnic conflict started.⁹ Finally it also provides information on the degree of ethnic voting using the *World Values Surveys* (European Values Study Group and Association, 2006) to calculate Huber’s (2010) index of ethnic voting.¹⁰

Among all these post-conflict elections I find 23 first competitive elections.¹¹ Only one of these first competitive elections led to a conflict onset in the following year, namely the election in Uganda of 1980. Ten of the competitive elections

⁷More information on this coding appears in Cederman, Gleditsch and Hug (2012 (forthcoming)).

⁸It is important to note that post-conflict elections are not identical to post-accord elections as determined, for instance, by Jarstad (2009a). As Jarstad (2009a) highlights, the signing of a peace accord does not lead to an immediate end of all fighting in a country. I also determined group-specific post-conflict periods, but given that elections during ongoing government involvement in conflicts can hardly be considered as post-conflict elections, I refrain from reporting results based on this coding.

⁹This biases the results against the hypotheses in two ways. First of all, elections that are followed by conflict onset in the same year are excluded. Second, in some instances the conflict onset after elections takes place more than one year after the election (see, for instance Collier, Hoeffler and Soderbom, 2008). Both exclusions reduce the set of cases where elections are followed by conflict.

¹⁰I discuss this index more in detail below.

¹¹Following Cederman, Gleditsch and Hug (2012 (forthcoming)) elections are considered the first competitive ones if the previous one was noncompetitive or the last competitive election occurred more than five years before. Second competitive elections are coded accordingly.

Table 1: Post-conflict competitive elections and ethnic conflict onset

country	year	first c.elect.	second c.elect.	onset	EV-index (WVS-survey, number of (r)eligious) or (e)thnic groups)
Algeria	1991	1	0	0	
Argentina	1963	0	0	0	0.01 (1995 5r)
Argentina	1965	0	0	0	0.01 (1995 5r)
Bangladesh	1996	0	0	0	0.07 (1996 4e)
Bosnia and Herzegovina	1996	1	0	0	
Bosnia and Herzegovina	1998	0	1	0	0.54 (1998 3e)
Burundi	1965	1	0	0	
Cambodia	1998	0	1	0	
Cameroon	1960	1	0	0	
Chile	1973	0	0	0	0.01 (1996 5e)
Croatia	1995	0	0	0	0.02 (1996 6r)
Croatia	1997	0	0	0	0.02 (1996 6r)
Democratic Republic of the Congo	1965	1	0	0	
Dominican Republic	1966	0	1	0	0.08 (1996 5e)
Ethiopia	1994	1	0	0	
Ethiopia	1995	0	1	1	
France	1962	0	0	0	
France	1965	0	0	0	
Gambia	1982	0	0	0	
Georgia	1995	1	0	0	0.04 (1996 2e)
Ghana	1969	1	0	0	
Guatemala	1995	0	0	0	
Guatemala	1996	0	0	0	
Guatemala	1999	0	0	0	
Guinea-Bissau	1999	0	1	0	
Haiti	1991	0	0	0	
Haiti	1995	0	0	0	
Indonesia	1992	0	0	0	0.13 (2001 6e)
Iraq	1996	1	0	0	0.17 (2004 6e)
Lebanon	1992	1	0	0	
Liberia	1997	1	0	0	
Malaysia	1969	0	1	0	
Malaysia	1978	0	0	0	
Malaysia	1982	0	0	0	
Mali	1992	1	0	0	
Mali	1997	0	1	0	
Mexico	1994	0	0	0	0.09 (1996 5e)
Mexico	1997	0	0	0	0.09 (1996 5e)
Moldova	1994	1	0	0	0.12 (2002 5e)
Moldova	1996	0	1	0	0.12 (2002 5e)
Morocco	1993	1	0	0	0.00 (2001 2r)
Mozambique	1994	1	0	0	
Nicaragua	1990	1	0	0	
Niger	1995	0	1	1	
Niger	1999	0	0	0	
Pakistan	1977	1	0	0	0.11 (2001 5e)
Pakistan	1997	0	0	0	0.11 (2001 5e)
Panama	1989	0	0	0	
Panama	1991	0	0	0	
Paraguay	1989	0	0	0	
Paraguay	1991	0	0	0	
Paraguay	1993	0	0	0	
Republic of Vietnam	1966	1	0	0	
Russia	1991	1	0	0	0.03 (1995 6r)
Russia	1996	0	0	0	0.03 (1995 6r)
South Africa	1994	0	0	0	0.38 (1996 4e)
Spain	1982	0	0	0	0.00 (1995 5e)
Spain	1989	0	0	0	0.01 (1995 5e)
Spain	1993	0	0	0	0.01 (1995 5e)
Spain	1996	0	0	0	0.01 (1995 5e)
Tajikistan	1999	0	0	0	
Thailand	1983	0	0	0	
Thailand	1986	0	0	0	
Togo	1993	1	0	0	
Togo	1994	0	1	0	
Trinidad and Tobago	1991	0	0	0	
Uganda	1980	1	0	1	0.93 (2001 3e)
United Kingdom	1997	0	0	1	0.09 (1998 9e)
Venezuela	1963	1	0	0	0.08 (1996 4e)
Venezuela	1993	0	0	0	0.08 (1996 4e)
Yugoslavia	1992	1	0	0	
Zimbabwe	1979	0	0	0	0.79 (2001 3e)
Zimbabwe	1980	0	0	0	0.79 (2001 3e)

listed in table 1 are the second competitive elections, namely those in Bosnia and Herzegovina (1998), Cambodia (1998), the Dominican Republic (1966), Ethiopia (1995), Guinea-Bissau (1999), Malaysia (1969), Mali (1997), Moldova (1996), Niger (1995), and Togo (1994). In two of these cases, namely Niger (1995) and Ethiopia (1995) a conflict ensued in the following year.¹² In Niger the Toubou and in Ethiopia both the Afar and the Somali (Ogaden) initiated their conflict against the government.¹³ Not surprising, all these groups were according to Cederman, Wimmer and Min's (2010) coding excluded from political power, however, not recently downgraded.

4 Post-conflict elections, party competition and civil war onset

So far the analysis has only focused on the effect of certain types of elections specifically without considering the possible mechanisms that might generate post-election conflict. As discussed above, a very prominent mechanism relates to the "sore-loser" argument, namely that electoral defeat is not accepted. This mechanism, as both Bratton (1998) and Strand (2007*a*), might be most prevalent in the second elections, as a repeated loss might inform the loser on his or her future chances. Consequently, I will briefly discuss the ten second competitive elections below, to assess commonalities in terms of party competition in the first two competitive elections and in conflict cases whether specific ethnic groups are linked to political parties. To do so I rely on the information on elections collected by Nohlen, Thibaut and Krennerich (1999), Nohlen, Grotz and Hartmann (2001), Nohlen (2005), and Nohlen and Stöver (2010).

Bosnia and Herzegovina:¹⁴ held its first competitive election in 1996 and the largest vote share was obtained by the SDA, while the HDZ came second. In the 1998 second competitive election the newly formed KCD BiH came first in vote shares, which is a coalition comprising SDA, while HDZ remains second largest party. Consequently there was no change in popularity among parties and

¹²Another country experienced a conflict onset after a post-conflict election namely the United Kingdom in 1997. This election was, however, neither the first nor the second competitive election in this country.

¹³All group-specific information discussed here stems from Cederman, Wimmer and Min's (2010) data.

¹⁴The discussion of these elections is based on Kasapovic (2010).

no conflict started after either of the two elections. This despite the fact that ethnic voting (see table 1) is quite considerable. Perhaps the close supervision by international actors suppressed any potential for conflict outbreak.¹⁵

*Cambodia*¹⁶ The first competitive election took place in 1993, which was not part of a post-conflict period. The front runner of this election was FUNCINPEC followed closely by the Cambodian People's Party. In the second competitive election of 1998 which fell in a post-conflict period, the latter party scored the best results followed by FUNCINPEC. Hence, there was a change in the front runner, and the second competitive election was not followed by a conflict.

*Dominican Republic*¹⁷ The first competitive election occurred in 1992, thus in a non-post-conflict year, while second competitive election took place in 1966. In the former the "Partido Revolucionario Dominicano" came first before the "Union Civica Nacional." In 1966 the "Partido Reformista" came first, while the previous front-runner, the "Partido Revolucionario Dominicano" came second. Hence these first competitive elections saw a change in front runner and no conflict onset. In addition, table 1 reports a quite low level of ethnic voting.

Ethiopia.¹⁸ In Ethiopia the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Organization (EPRDF) and its allies won the first competitive election to the constitutional assembly in 1994 gaining roughly 85% of all seats. In the second competitive election to the parliament in 1996 the same party with its allies gained 82.9% of the votes and more than 85% of all seats. The independent president Negaso Gidada selected not surprisingly a member of the allies of EPRDF, namely Meles Zenawi as prime-minister.¹⁹ Subsequently the Afars and Somali of Ogaden enter into conflict with the government, from which they were excluded.

Interesting to note is that one of the Afar political parties, namely the Afar People's Democratic Organization was allied with the EPRDF in both elections winning 2 (0.4%) respectively 3 (0.6%) seats, while the Afar Liberation Front ran against these allies winning 6 (1.1%) respectively 3 (0.6%) of the seats. Among the parties representing Somalis, two also competed in both elections in opposition to the EPRDF and its allies, namely the Ethiopia Somali Democratic League

¹⁵See http://www.ipu.org/parline-e/reports/arc/2039_98.htm (accessed April 20, 2011).

¹⁶The discussion of these elections is based on Nohlen, Grotz and Hartmann (2001).

¹⁷The discussion of these elections is based on Nohlen (2005).

¹⁸The discussion of these elections is based on Meier (1999).

¹⁹Lindberg (2006a) notes that this election result was not accepted by the losers.

(ESDL) and the Western Somali Democratic Party (WSDP) winning 13 (2.4%) and 2 (0.4%) of the seats in the first election respectively 17 (3.1%) and 1 (0.2%) of the seats in the second one. The third party competing only in the second election, namely the Ogaden National Liberation Front (Ogaden NLF) obtained 3 (0.6%) seats. Given these results, for both ethnic groups and their political representatives the argument of a sore-loser induced conflict is not without credence.

*Guinea-Bissau:*²⁰ In its first competitive election in 1994 (non-post-conflict period) the “Partido Africano da Independência da Guiné e Cabo Verde” (PAIGC) came first followed by the RGB-MB, the UM and PRS. In the next competitive election of 1999 the PAIGC came third after the PRS and RGB-MB.²¹ Hence again a change in the front-runner occurred and as table 1 suggests, ethnic voting seems to be at a quite low level.

*Malaysia:*²² A first competitive election took place in 1964 and saw the Alliance come first place while the second largest party (in terms of votes) was the Socialist Front. In the second competitive election in 1969 the front runner remained the same, followed, however, this time by People’s Action Party that came third (in terms of votes, and second in terms of seats) in the previous election. Consequently, in this case the same party won the two first competitive elections and no conflict onset ensued.

*Mali:*²³ A first competitive election occurred in 1992 and second one in 1997. ADEMA came first with 48.4 percent in the first and 75.3 in second, because most other parties boycotted the second election with others gaining 24.7 percent. In the first competitive election US-RDA gained 17.6 percent and came second. Hence, here no change in front-runner occurred, but also no conflict occurred in the aftermath of the second election.

*Moldova:*²⁴ A first competitive election took place in 1995 (parliamentary) and a second one in 1996 (presidential). In 1994 PDAM largest party with 43.2 percent, PSMUE second one with 22 percent. In the 1996 presidential election a candidate of PRCM (Mircea Snegur) came first in the first round but lost to

²⁰The discussion of these elections is based on Clemente-Kersten (1999).

²¹(Source: http://africanelections.tripod.com/gw.html#1999_National_Peoples_Assembly_Election (accessed April 20, 2011)).

²²The discussion of these elections is based on Nohlen, Grotz and Hartmann (2001).

²³The discussion of these elections is based on Mozaffar (1999).

²⁴The discussion of these elections is based on Neukirch (2010).

the second placed independent candidate (Petru Lucinschi) in the second round. Consequently, a change in front runner occurred, and as table 1 suggests, ethnic voting seems to be at a quite low level in this country.

*Niger:*²⁵ The second competitive election in Niger that fell into the post-conflict period was the election to the national assembly in 1995. As already in the first competitive elections to the national assembly in 1993 the National Movement for a Developing Society-Nassara (MNSD-Nassara) was the strongest party, followed closely by Democratic and Social Convention-Rahama (CDS). As the latter formed with a series of other parties the Alliance of the Forces for Change (AFC). In the presidential election of 1993, held after the parliamentary elections the candidate of the MNSD-Nassara (Mamadou Tandja) was ahead in the first round, but lost in the second round to Mahamane Ousmane of the CDS-Rahama. The latter appointed Mahamadou Issoufou from the AFC as prime-minister. Given that the AFC dissolved due to dissent the president appointed a fellow party-member, namely Souley Abdoulayé as new prime-minister, followed by Amadou Cissé from the World Bank. Given the CDS' weak showing in the 1995 elections the newly elected president nominated Hama Amadou of the MNSD as prime-minister.²⁶

The conflict involved, however, the Toubou ethnic group which resides mostly in the Diffa region. According to the election results reported in Basedau (1999) no political party explicitly represented Toubou's from this region and competed in the 1995 election. Consequently, an electoral link is hard to establish for this case.

*Togo:*²⁷ A first competitive election occurred in 1993 (presidential) and second one in 1994 (parliamentary). In the first RPT (Gnassingb Eyadma) won 96.5 percent. In the parliament elected in the second election the RPT gained 43.2 percent of the seats, while CAR (with no candidate at the presidential election) gained also 43.2 percent of the seats. Hence, the same party stayed ahead in the first two competitive elections.

If we consider these cases of second competition elections in post-conflict situations it is striking that the former are followed by conflict onsets in two cases

²⁵This discussion of these elections is based on Basedau (1999).

²⁶Interesting to note is that Lindberg (2006a) does not list the 1995 parliamentary election, but finds that the 1996 election result was not accepted by the losers.

²⁷The discussion of these elections is based on Stroux (1999).

(out of ten) while in the remaining eight cases election losers apparently accepted their defeat. Among the two cases of second competitive elections followed by conflict, the clearest case is Ethiopia where the elections to the constitutional assembly and the parliamentary election were dominated by one party and its allies, and excluded groups represented by marginalized political parties started conflicts in the aftermath of the second election. In Niger, on the other hand, the electoral link cannot be established by the sore-loser argument. In that case apparently no party competed in the elections representing the Toubou, the group that was involved in the conflict onset. Among the non-conflict cases, interestingly more second competitive elections saw the front runner from the previous election be returned (five cases) than a change in the front runner (3 cases).

To get a more systematic assessment I resort to a model presented in Cederman, Gleditsch and Hug (2012 (forthcoming)), which relates different types of elections to the probability of conflict onset, either of an ethnic or non-ethnic type. As main independent variables appear the lagged indicator variables whether a competitive or non-competitive election has taken place. For the former two additional indicators reflect whether the election in question was a first or second competitive election. Control variables are GDP per capita (logged and lagged), population size (logged and lagged) and the share of the population excluded from access to executive power. In addition I control for time dependency by including the time since the last conflict and three cubic splines (Beck, Katz and Tucker, 1998).

The first model in table 2 is almost a replication of a model estimated in Cederman, Gleditsch and Hug (2012 (forthcoming)), but focuses only on post-conflict periods as defined above. The main results are largely similar to those reported in Cederman, Gleditsch and Hug (2012 (forthcoming)) indicating that the second competitive elections increase (though statistically non significantly) the likelihood of an ethnic conflict onset. On the other hand, competitive elections are very unlikely to lead to non-ethnic conflict.²⁸

The second model in table 2 is identical to the first one except that we only consider those cases of second elections where we could determine whether the front-runner was the same party. Despite losing only one case (Ethiopia 1995),

²⁸I refrain from discussing the remaining results as these are rather standard and duly discussed in Cederman, Gleditsch and Hug (2012 (forthcoming)).

Table 2: Second competitive elections, sore-losers, and conflict onset (post-conflict periods)

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
	ethnic b (s.e.)	non-ethnic b (s.e.)	ethnic b (s.e.)	non-ethnic b (s.e.)	ethnic b (s.e.)	non-ethnic b (s.e.)
Competitive election _{t-1}	-0.012 (1.023)	-34.184 (0.640)	-0.019 (1.026)	-34.182 (0.640)	-0.045 (1.026)	-37.202 (0.634)
Non-competitive election _{t-1}	0.186 (1.145)	0.761 (0.822)	0.212 (1.143)	0.764 (0.822)	0.213 (1.141)	0.764 (0.822)
First competitive election _{t-1}	0.481 (1.316)	-0.892 (0.650)	0.460 (1.314)	-0.894 (0.651)	0.484 (1.314)	-0.874 (0.626)
Second competitive election _{t-1}	1.649 (1.272)	-2.160 (0.906)	1.014 (1.439)	-0.850 (0.895)		
Second competitive election with same front-runner _{t-1}					1.112 (1.457)	-1.240 (1.005)
log(GDP/capita) _{t-1}	-0.259 (0.288)	-0.451 (0.399)	-0.221 (0.284)	-0.448 (0.400)	-0.219 (0.284)	-0.448 (0.400)
log(country population) _{t-1}	0.251 (0.171)	0.107 (0.182)	0.211 (0.174)	0.105 (0.182)	0.212 (0.174)	0.105 (0.182)
Excluded population	0.326 (0.814)	0.703 (0.870)	0.318 (0.817)	0.704 (0.871)	0.311 (0.814)	0.703 (0.871)
Time since last onset	1.198 (0.361)	1.444 (0.426)	1.287 (0.370)	1.448 (0.427)	1.271 (0.369)	1.448 (0.427)
Spline 1	0.042 (0.020)	0.117 (0.028)	0.050 (0.021)	0.117 (0.028)	0.049 (0.021)	0.117 (0.028)
Constant	-7.469 (2.152)	-5.971 (1.909)	-7.160 (2.192)	-5.950 (1.905)	-7.136 (2.185)	-5.949 (1.905)
Log pseudolikelihood	-105.363		-104.138		-104.101	
n	441		440		440	

Note: Multinomial logit with clustered standard errors by country

the effect of the second competitive elections decreases considerably, while the remaining estimates are largely similar. When replacing this variable by indicator whether the same party was in the winning position in the first and second competitive election we find a marginally stronger effect. This seems to suggest that second competitive elections where the same party stays in first place are more conflict prone.²⁹

To get a more broader understanding table 3 reports the results of the same models estimated on the full set of country-years between 1960 and 2000 used by Cederman, Gleditsch and Hug (2012 (forthcoming)). In that case the results from the three models lend more support to the idea that second competitive elections increase the likelihood of an ethnic conflict onset, while not affecting non-ethnic conflicts. Model 3 underlines even more strongly that this effect is largely due to second competitive elections where the same party is the front-runner as in the first competitive election.

Hence, I find some limited evidence for the sore-loser argument and ideally I would explore also these cases regarding the way in which ethnicity is mobilized in the countries and elections during post-conflict periods. One way to do so is to rely on the ethnic voting index proposed by Huber (2010). This index is largely

²⁹Strictly speaking I should also control for second competitive elections, but due to a problem of complete separation I refrain from reporting the corresponding results here.

Table 3: Second competitive elections, sore-losers, and conflict onset (full sample)

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
	ethnic	non-ethnic	ethnic	non-ethnic	ethnic	non-ethnic
Competitive election $_{t-1}$	-0.260 (0.551)	-0.491 (0.638)	-0.256 (0.563)	-0.522 (0.637)	-0.316 (0.557)	-0.278 (0.537)
Non-competitive election $_{t-1}$	0.743 (0.478)	-0.487 (0.605)	0.741 (0.476)	-0.485 (0.606)	0.742 (0.476)	-0.488 (0.605)
First competitive election $_{t-1}$	0.663 (0.729)	0.647 (0.841)	0.653 (0.740)	0.681 (0.840)	0.713 (0.736)	0.434 (0.775)
Second competitive election $_{t-1}$	1.659 (0.645)	1.153 (0.829)	1.615 (0.833)	0.497 (1.230)		
Second competitive election with same front-runner $_{t-1}$					2.029 (0.824)	-39.599 (0.566)
log(GDP/capita) $_{t-1}$	-0.329 (0.189)	-0.306 (0.153)	-0.328 (0.185)	-0.278 (0.155)	-0.327 (0.184)	-0.290 (0.150)
log(country population) $_{t-1}$	0.411 (0.130)	0.105 (0.082)	0.398 (0.129)	0.088 (0.084)	0.399 (0.129)	0.085 (0.084)
Excluded population	1.233 (0.403)	0.969 (0.455)	1.190 (0.401)	0.964 (0.463)	1.167 (0.403)	0.979 (0.461)
Time since last onset	-0.054 (0.097)	-0.016 (0.111)	-0.052 (0.098)	-0.031 (0.113)	-0.055 (0.098)	-0.028 (0.115)
Spline 1	0.002 (0.002)	0.000 (0.002)	0.002 (0.002)	-0.001 (0.002)	0.002 (0.002)	-0.001 (0.002)
Spline 2	-0.002 (0.001)	0.000 (0.001)	-0.002 (0.001)	0.000 (0.001)	-0.002 (0.001)	0.000 (0.001)
Spline 3	0.001 (0.000)	0.000 (0.000)	0.001 (0.000)	0.000 (0.000)	0.001 (0.000)	0.000 (0.000)
Constant	-7.256 (1.243)	-4.943 (0.867)	-7.122 (1.228)	-4.758 (0.889)	-7.115 (1.226)	-4.734 (0.881)
Log pseudolikelihood	-595.233		-581.858		-580.558	
n	4383		4340		4340	

Note: Multinomial logit with clustered standard errors by country

based on Gallagher’s (1991) least-squares index to measure the disproportionality of election systems. Higher values for this index, which varies between 0 and 1, suggest that the groups cover vote for very different parties, while lower values suggest that all groups divide their votes in a similar way across parties.

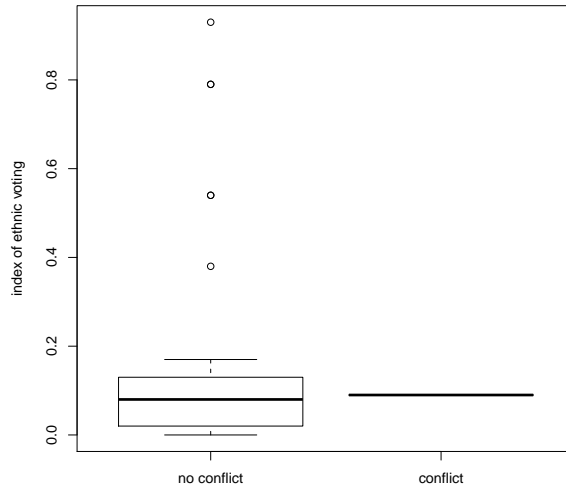
Table 1 reports values of this index for the countries for which World Values Survey data is available, even if the election occurred in a different year. The table also lists the number of groups listed in the World Values Survey, which is much smaller than for instance the group list of Cederman, Wimmer and Min (2010). In addition, in some surveys ethnic groups are not coded, in which case I used religious denomination.³⁰

Figure 1 presents for those countries with post-conflict competitive elections and information on ethnic voting the latter’s relationship with ethnic conflict onset. While the boxplots show that the median level of ethnic voting is largely similar across the two sets of cases, the spread around the median in non-conflict cases is very large. This obviously has to do with the fact that for only one

³⁰This obviously makes sense in some cases, while it does not in others. I have to note here, that compared to Huber (2010) the selection of surveys is less strict. More specifically I calculate the ethnic voting index for all surveys covering countries listed in table 1 as long as information on either ethnicity or religious denomination and party choice was available. Huber (2010), on the other hand, only uses surveys that cover well the groups listed by Fearon (2003).

conflict case (United Kingdom 1997) do I have information on ethnic voting.

Figure 1: Ethnic voting in post-conflict competitive elections and conflict onset



5 Conclusion

When assessing democratic transitions, in either post-conflict situations or authoritarian regimes, elections and how their results are accepted is of central importance. Elections, however, are largely unthinkable without political parties. In post-conflict situations these latter actors are, however, often linked to the groups that were in conflict against government.

These various links have, so far, not been addressed and studied systematically and jointly in the literature. Building up on earlier findings (see Cederman, Gleditsch and Hug, 2012 (forthcoming)) that first and second competitive elections are most likely to be followed by onsets of ethnic civil wars, I attempted to assess whether looking more closely at political parties and ethnic groups allows for a closer assessment of mechanisms linking elections with conflict.

As a first step I only considered post-conflict elections. For some of these elections, the failure to be represented appears not unrelated to political parties and the groups that they represent starting renewed conflicts. The small number

of cases, however, cautions against drawing more general conclusions. When looking, however, more generally at second competitive elections and changes in the front runner, I found that when such changes do not occur, second competitive elections are more likely to lead to conflict. This effect is weak in post-conflict elections and as the cases discussed more detail suggest, in only one case did a clear connection exist between political parties representing excluded groups and conflict onset. The effect is stronger in the full set of elections, but a closer look at the identity of the conflict partners and losers in the elections is required for a firmer conclusion.

Consequently, in further steps elections need to be assessed more in detail in terms of their party competition and degree of ethnic voting. Similarly, the elections need to be characterized in more detail, i.e., what rules and regulations were in place, whether electoral observations and assistance were in place, etc. Broadening and deepening the focus of the present study should allow to gain a better assessment on how political parties react to losing elections and whether they mobilize ethnic cleavages and to what effect.

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