In a country/issue context with multiple VEOs, negotiating with one VEO may lead to increased bad behavior by VEOs left out of negotiations.

98

General Description of the Literature:

When a state faces multiple challengers, there are important bargaining issues to consider. Beginning with Schelling (1960), economists have offered game theoretic arguments and hypotheses about successful strategies of bargaining during conflict. One canonical game, the Chain Store Paradox (Kreps and Wilson 1980) suggests that a state respond disproportionately to challengers when a game could be repeated with that challenger or other potential challengers. In these bargaining games, reputation is a critical factor that can dissuade future challengers (Walter 2003, 2006, 2009). States that build "tough" or "strong" reputations may encourage future VEOs to abandon their efforts. Economists and evolutionary biologists have done most of the theoretical work on the topic (e.g. Schelling 1960; Kreps and Wilson 1980; McElreath 2003), while political scientists have been interested in the application of these ideas to ethnic, civil, terrorist and low-level conflicts with multiple challengers (Bloom 2005, Cronin 2009, Cunningham 2006, Kydd and Walter 2002, Walter 2003, 2006, 2009). In general, it seems that governments definitely are concerned with reputation and future "bad behavior" from VEOs and thus are less likely to negotiate with VEOs when there are multiple challengers present. One finding that is fairly robust is that when a group makes peace with the state (peace processes/treaty negotiations), other parties are likely to use violence to "spoil the peace" (Stedman 1997; Kydd and Walter 2002).

Detailed Analyses

98: *In a country/issue context with multiple VEOs, negotiating with one VEO may lead to increased bad behavior by VEOs left out of negotiations.*

Summary of Relevant Empirical Evidence: Bloom (2005) examining several cases in-depth suggests that the presence of multiple VEO challengers will increase the likelihood of suicide terror. Stedman (1997) and Kydd and Walter (2002) show that "spoilers" will ramp up violence when more moderate groups negotiate with the state. Cunningham (2006) finds that civil wars will last longer when multiple groups are involved in negotiations using a time-series cross-sectional (tscs) quantitative analysis. However, Nilsson (2008), in another tscs study finds that parties that are negotiated with are likely to reduce their violence.

Empirical Support Score: 9

Applicability to Influencing VEOs: This hypothesis has received general support across a wide domain of cases including Sri Lanka, Northern Ireland, Iraq, and Palestine. Additionally, the cross-national quantitative results involve many countries in the post-WWII period. It is uncertain whether these results generalize to time periods prior but there is no direct reason to believe that there are stark differences.

Applicability Score: Direct: At least some of the empirical results directly concern the context of influencing VEOs

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