

Abstract

In this study, I consider the relationship between urbanization and armed conflict. I find that as the rate at which cities grow is positively associated with incidence of intrastate warfare. As cities grow, people become more likely to fight over control of the government and less likely to fight for control of territory. These findings suggest a need for closer analysis of urbanization processes at sub-national levels to examine the how changes in the geographic concentration of a country's population affects the geographic patterns of political violence.

Motivation & Theory

- Urbanization is a major demographic phenomenon in many countries, particularly in the developing world.
- Empirical studies are divided on whether urbanization contributes to conflict; many do not differentiate between motivations for violence.
- Land and land use issues have greatest political salience in rural areas where poverty is high, and workforce is agricultural.
- Resolution of land tenure disputes may decrease political tensions in more rural societies but is likely to be less effective in highly urban countries where people are likely to care less about land, more about government services.
- Option to move to cities gives rural people to improve living standards, send remittances to those who remain in villages.
- As people move to cities, competition for jobs/housing, demand for government services increases; failure to provide services contributes to anti-government sentiments.
- The rapid of movement of people into cities should simultaneously reduce political salience of territory and increase demands on government.

Hypotheses

- H1:** Risk of intrastate conflicts over territory will decrease as a country urbanizes.
- H2:** Risk of intrastate conflicts over governmental issues will increase as a country urbanizes.

Research Design

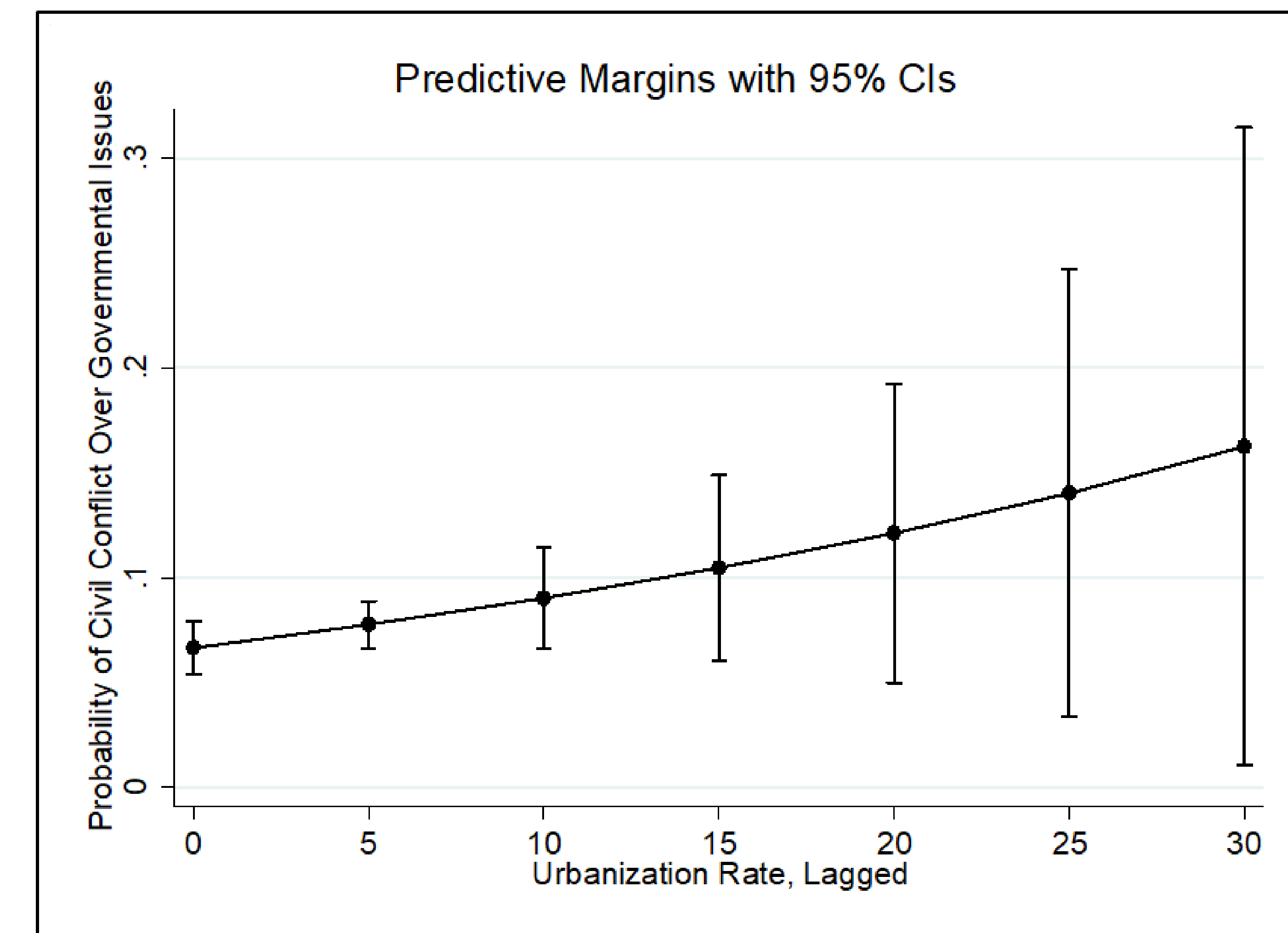
- Dependent Variables:** Dummies for civil war/conflict incidence, territorial or governmental based on UCDP incompatibility variable
- Independent Variables:** Urbanization rate (annual pct. growth of cities) and pct. of pop. living in cities, World Bank
- Controls**
 - Democracy Dummy (based on Polity IV scores of 6+)
 - GDP per capita (EPR3, drawing from World Bank, various sources)
 - Excluded population (EPR3)
 - Mountainous terrain (Fearon & Laitin)
 - Lagged DV
- Unit of Analysis:** Country-year
- Scope:** Worldwide, 1946-2016
- Statistical Methodology:** Logistic Regression, SE clustered by country

Results: Logistic Regressions

	Territorial Issues		Governmental Issues	
	Civil Conflict	Civil War	Civil Conflict	Civil War
Urbanization Rate Lagged	0.0330 (0.0586)	-0.0208*** (0.00965)	0.0505* (0.0304)	0.0595** (0.0259)
Urban Population Lagged	0.000713 (0.0120)	-0.0323 (0.0223)	0.00940 (0.00895)	0.00849 (0.0259)
Democracy Dummy Lagged	0.275 (0.278)	-0.338 (0.399)	-0.242 (0.279)	-0.382 (0.286)
GDP Per Capita Lagged, Logged	0.00821 (0.166)	0.520 (0.363)	-0.384** (0.169)	-0.506*** (0.179)
Population Lagged, Logged	0.385*** (0.0953)	0.389*** (0.121)	0.200*** (0.0758)	0.222** (0.0876)
Excluded Population Lagged	0.385*** (0.410)	0.389*** (0.549)	0.200*** (0.313)	0.222** (0.468)
Mountainous Terrain Lagged	-0.102 (0.0901)	0.0912 (0.131)	0.214*** (0.0721)	0.300*** (0.0904)
Lagged DV	4.982*** (0.399)	4.982*** (0.418)	3.557*** (0.211)	4.577*** (0.289)
Constant	-10.92*** (1.493)	-11.45*** (2.205)	-7.368*** (1.323)	-8.809*** (1.509)
N	6289	6289	6289	6289
BIC	1258.7	532.5	2258.9	1218.5

Standard Errors in parentheses
* p<0.10, ** p<0.05, *** p<0.01

Predicted Civil Conflict Risk



Findings & Future Directions

- Faster urbanization rate correlates with higher risk of governmental civil war and civil conflict, lower risk of territorial civil war.
- Conflict risk is not significantly influenced by the percent of the population living in cities, just the rate at which cities grow.
- Subnational analysis is needed to determine the conflict propensities of specific localities as migrants flow in or out.
- As countries urbanize, state capacity and government services become more important, land reform less important.
- Urbanization varies greatly across sub-national administrative units, so future studies of conflict trends in urbanizing countries requires sub-national data analysis.

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