

# Electoral Cycles, Conflict, Crime, and Pro-environmental Behavior

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## ACADEMIC THESIS

Which has been duly authorized for defense in pursuit of the PhD degree at the School of Business, Economics and Law, University of Gothenburg, to be presented for public examination Friday the 9<sup>th</sup> of September, at 10:15, am, in lecture hall E44. Department of Economics, Vasagatan 1

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### **Chapter 1. Electoral Cycles, Foreign Policy and Conflict Mitigation: Evidence from Contributors to UN Peacekeeping Operations**

This paper documents electoral cycles in troop contributions to UN peacekeeping operations and examines their consequences for mission and conflict outcomes. Using monthly data on all countries' contributions to UN missions between 1990 and 2019 that operate in the midst of fighting, I find that a national election decreases the probability of having any troops deployed by 9 percentage points, and the expected number of troops deployed by around 20% from a mean of 230. For the top quartile troop contributors in the sample ( $\geq 915$  troops), national elections also decrease deployments from other contributors, decrease overall mission capacity, and seem to severely hamper conflict mitigation. Main estimates suggest that for each top contributor having an election, the probability of any battle deaths increases by up to 24 percentage points, and the monthly number of battle deaths increases by up to around 100% from a mean of 62. The results suggest that electoral concerns can severely hamper international collective action to mitigate conflict.

**Keywords:** Electoral Cycles, Conflict Mitigation, International Collective Action, UN Peacekeeping

**JEL codes:** F5, F35, D74, D72

### **Chapter 2. Echoes of Violent Conflict: The Effect of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict on Hate Crimes in the United States**

We examine whether social identity ties facilitate the spread of violent conflict. To do so, we assess whether the Israeli-Palestinian conflict causes hate crimes towards Jews and Muslims in the United States using daily data from 2000 to 2016. We measure the timing and intensity, and determine the instigators in the conflict using the number of conflict fatalities and US mass media coverage of the conflict. Analyses using both conflict measures find that conflict events trigger hate crimes in the coming days following a retaliatory pattern: anti-Jewish hate crimes increase after Israeli attacks and anti-Islamic hate crimes increase after Palestinian attacks. There is little evidence that the ethno-religious group not associated with the attacker is subjected to hate crimes during this period. Moreover, the lack of an effect of nonviolent conflict reporting suggests that hate crimes are not triggered by the salience of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in itself. Our findings show that victimization transcends the locality of the conflict, implying that violent conflict may be more costly than existing research suggests.

**Keywords:** Conflict, Hate crime, Violence, Israel, Palestine, Media

**JEL codes:** D74, K42, J15, L82

### **Chapter 3. Individual Carbon Footprint Reduction: Evidence from Pro-environmental Users of a Carbon Calculator**

We provide the first estimates of how pro-environmental consumers reduce their total carbon footprint using a carbon calculator that covers all financial transactions. We use data from users of a carbon calculator that includes weekly estimates of users' consumption-based carbon-equivalent emissions based on detailed financial statements, official registers, and self-reported life-style factors. The calculator is designed to induce behavioral change and gives users detailed information about their footprint, and includes social comparisons, and goal-setting options. By using a robust difference-in-differences analysis with staggered adoption of the calculator, we estimate that users decrease their carbon footprint by around 10 percent in the first few weeks, but over the next few weeks, the reduction fades. Further analysis suggests that the carbon footprint reduction is driven by a combination of a shift from high- to low-emitting consumption categories and a temporary decrease in overall spending, and not by changes in any specific consumption category.

**Keywords:** Pro-environmental Behavior, Carbon Footprint, Consumer Behavior

**JEL codes:** D12, D91, Q5

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