NATURAL EXPERIMENT ON TRAVEL RESTRICTION IN THE WEST BANK

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--work in progress--
1. How do checkpoints affect Palestinian political preferences towards institutions, religion, and violence? What role do they play in the Peace Process and broader regional security? More specifically, in this paper we ask: do checkpoints make Palestinians more likely to support diplomatic negotiation, or violence against the Israeli state?
Two theories of repression and dissent.

- Do repressive institutions prompt subject groups to obey or rebel?
- Two theories: Linear v. non-linear
Linear Theories of Rebellion

- **Repression → Dissent**
  - Repression actually encourages rebellion by creating conditions so unbearable that non-combatants come to believe that insurrection is the only option, thereby actually eliminating the collective action problem (i.e. Tullock, 1971; Gurr and Duvall 1973; Ziegenhagen 1986; Mason and Krane, 1989; Lichbach, 1995; Francisco 1996; Wood, 2003; Kalyvas, 2006).

- **Repression → Submission**
  - Repression diminishes dissent by weakening the opposition, producing fear within the population and convincing fence-sitters to stay loyal to the regime, thereby raising the cost to collective action (Olson, 1971; Ostrom, 1998; Diamond, 2002; Levitsky and Way, 2002; McFaul, 2002; Ottaway, 2003; Bueno de Mesquita and Downs, 2005; Wilson, 2005; Lyall, 2006).
Non-linear Theories

- **U-shaped Curve**
  - Low levels of state repression might enable rebellion, it is constrained under intermediate levels of state penetration, but after a certain threshold, higher levels of repression prompt increased recruitment, as the cost becomes too high not to organize (Gurr, 1970; Lichbach and Gurr, 1981)

- **Inverted U-Shaped Curve**
  - Dissent peaks in the middle, at intermediate levels of repression, as low government repression makes rebellion unnecessary, and high levels of repression make it impossible (Lichbach, 1987; Mason, 1989; Moore, 1998)
Checkpoints as Institutions of Repression: Definitions

- A **checkpoint** is defined by the UN as any staffed physical impediment to travel *within* the West Bank – i.e. travel restrictions within Palestinian territory, and between Palestinian communities.
- This *does not* include **crossings** which delimit the border between the Palestinian territories and Israel.
- Checkpoints are a subset of a broader infrastructure of **closures** within the West Bank, which includes a number of different categories of impediments – roadblocks, earth mounds, permanent checkpoints, temporary checkpoints, partial checkpoints, gates, etc.
- Thus, a “checkpoint” is a type of “closure” in which there are physical searches and interrogation by soldiers; nearly all Palestinian traffic is routed into these intersections for inspection.
Methodology I: Natural Experiment

Policy intervention prompted by the Tony Blair-led Quartet (US, UN, EU and Russia) in May/June 2009 to remove certain critical checkpoints as a means of opening up arteries for Palestinian business – based on the artificial division of the West Bank into business sectors in what became known as the ‘Jenin-first’ plan.

Policy intervention occurred from North to South along the Jenin-Hebron Corridor.

checkpoints were removed along corridor
Problems of Identification: how do you separate a “checkpoint” effect from, for example, a “settler” effect.

- Problem: The Palestinian Authority (PA) is an occupied territory, not a sovereign state, papered over not merely with obstacles to travel, but
  - approximately 700km of Israeli roads (World Bank 2008), with two parallel road networks (one for Palestinians, one for Israeli settlers)
  - 121 settlements with over 130,000 settlers accounting for 42.8% of West Bank land (OCHA 2011)
  - A mess of different civil and military administrations (both Israeli and PA) as well as a smattering of Israeli military bases, and security installations, amounting to an additional 26% requisitioned land (B’Tselem 2010).
  - Therefore, in the West Bank – a territory smaller than Delaware – it is almost impossible to distinguish one aspect of occupation from the others.

- Existing Failures in Scholarship:
  - Existing studies by international organizations, including the World Bank, UNSCO, and the IMF, provide broad-brush economic statistics, but these are descriptive and non-systematic.
  - Academic studies have relied almost exclusively on ethnographic methods, covering any range of topics, from their role as collective punishment and the disciplining of a population (Brown, 2004; Bornstein, 2008), to feminist perspectives on the checkpoint experience (Naaman 2006; Kotef and Merav, 2007).
  - Even more econometrically-inclined reports explicitly admit that the effects of checkpoints cannot be isolated, claiming for example, that “the losses of the internal closure are difficult to measure” (Aranki 2004), or that “quantifying the economic impact of current restrictions is difficult given the paucity of data” (World Bank, 2008).
Checkpoints are removed in 2009 while settlements continue to steadily increase.
In this paper we address this challenge by exploiting a natural experiment, based around a policy intervention prompted by the Tony Blair-led Quartet (US, UN, EU and Russia) in May/June 2009 to remove certain critical checkpoints as a means of opening up arteries for Palestinian business — based on the artificial division of the West Bank into business sectors in what became known as the ‘Jenin-first’ plan.

This project is experimental in that we sample similar villages ex ante (N=599), some beside a checkpoint slated for removal, and others beside a checkpoint that will remain in place. We then pursue a difference-in-difference approach to ascertain the effect of this policy on Palestinian attitudes towards peace and violence.

Because the policy intervention occurred only in select areas, without corresponding changes to other aspects of occupation, this empirical strategy enables us to distinguish a ‘checkpoint effect’, discrete from other causal explanations, such as for example a ‘settlement effect’.
Za’atara (Exp)

Located on the road between Nablus and Ramallah.

Za’atara - circle-formation that permitted car travel

At the time of the study, the travel restrictions on these two checkpoints were significantly reduced.
Wadi Nar (Control)

Checkpoint located about 10 Km northeast of Bethlehem, on "Wadi El Nar road" (Fire Valley road)

Travel restrictions at the Wadi Nar checkpoint remained constant throughout the study, and remain to this day.
Two Important Conditions addressed prior to sampling:

- **Random Allocation/Implementation**: checkpoints were selected for an removed systematically from North to South, not because of security, political or demographic criteria integral to our study. The decision to remove checkpoints in the West Bank can be considered orthogonal to attitudes about violence. Thus, as far as the arguments made in this paper are concerned, the ‘Jenin-first’ initiative can be considered as-if exogeneous.

- **Double Blinding**: Those surveyed had no expectation of treatment, survey team not aware of treatment. While there was some diplomatic discussion about the removal of checkpoints, there was little or no knowledge amongst Palestinians about these talks, and certainly no belief that such a move would transpire
Survey Methods

T0 – surveyed villages close to Za’tara (n= 219)

T1 – survey villages
N = 254

Checkpoint Za’tara removed

Fall, 2009

T0 – surveyed villages close to Wadi Nar (n= 234)

T1 – survey villages
N = 250

Checkpoint Wadi Nar remains

Fall, 2008
Natural Experiment:

**Diff-in-Diff Model**

\[ Y = \alpha + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 (X_1 * X_2) + \epsilon \]
Post-experiment Satellite Images: Za’tara checkpoint was removed while Wadi Nar checkpoint remained in place

“Experimental” group
N = 254, Villages close to Za’tara checkpoint

“Control” group
N = 250 Villages close to Wadi Nar checkpoint.
## Outcome Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Definitions and significance</th>
<th>Scaling</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Militancy</td>
<td>Support for violence against Israel and support for the use of force more generally.</td>
<td>1 to 6 (from strongly oppose to strongly agree)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extremism</td>
<td>Recognition of acts of terrorism (or extremist violence against foreign targets) as such.</td>
<td>1 to 2 (all answers are yes or no)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two-State</td>
<td>Support for the two-state solution, including making compromises with Israel via diplomatic means.</td>
<td>1 to 6 (from strongly oppose to strongly support)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust of Israel</td>
<td>How much people trust Israel as a partner for peace.</td>
<td>1 to 6 (from strongly oppose to strongly agree)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Party Support</td>
<td>This variable looks at Palestinian political parties, divided into three groupings: secular, non-violent; secular, violent; Islamic, violent.</td>
<td>1 to 11 (based on 2006 parliamentary ballot, and 2005 presidential ballot.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fatah-Hamas</td>
<td>Support for one of the two principal parties: Fatah, a secular nationalist party, led by Mahmoud Abbas; and Hamas, an islamist party, led by Ismael Hanniyeh.</td>
<td>1 to 3, ranging from two votes for Fatah, one vote for each party (i.e. split ballots), and finally two votes for Hamas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exposure</td>
<td>This variable determines checkpoint exposure.</td>
<td>1 to 5 (from &quot;do not have to cross checkpoints&quot; to “almost every day”)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct Influence</td>
<td>Direct question regarding whether Palestinians believe that experiences at checkpoints affects their political preferences.</td>
<td>1 to 6 (from &quot;do not have to cross checkpoints&quot; to “almost every day”)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Balance Checks: Ex ante difference 2008

   Container = 0  Huwara/Zaatara = 1

   Variable | Index | Mean (ZA 2008) | Mean (Con 2008) | p-value
   ---------|-------|----------------|-----------------|------
   militancy| 1 to 6| 3.863          | 3.567           | 0.003
   extremism| 1 to 5| 2.982          | 3.207           | 0.082
   distrust_of_israel| 1 to 6| 5.275          | 4.698           | 0
   two_state| 1 to 6| 1.990          | 2.057           | 0.387
   secular_nonviolent_index| 1 to 8| 5.425          | 4.697           | 0.037
   harrass| 1 to 2| 0.248          | 0.293           | 0.404
   exposure| 1 to 25| 7.192          | 7.242           | 0.912

II. Balance of Demographics (2008)
   Container = 0  Huwara/Zaatara = 1

   Variable | Index | Mean (ZA 2008) | Mean (Con 2008) | p-value
   ---------|-------|----------------|-----------------|------
   religion_one| 1 to 6| 4.326          | 3.879           | 0
   religion_two| 1 to 6| 4.638          | 3.978           | 0
   psq91 (age)| 1 to 5| 2.404          | 1.894           | 0
   wealth| 1 to 5| 2.397          | 2.776           | 0
   gender| 1 to 2| 1.616          | 1.694           | 0.045
   soldier violence| 1 to 2| 1.527          | 1.474           | 0.217
   settler violence| 1 to 6| 2.523          | 2.742           | 0.155
   harrass| 1 to 2| 1.439          | 1.406           | 0.456
Four-Wave Sample taken 2007 – 2009:

Sampling was conducted by Jerusalem Media and Communications (JMCC) via a stratified 3-stage cluster random sample of 1197 individuals, selecting on household Kish tables. All interviews were conducted face to face.
Baseline Comparison: Experiment Group vs. Panel Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>exp_data Obs</th>
<th>exp_data Mean</th>
<th>panel data Obs</th>
<th>panel data Mean</th>
<th>Exp - Panel</th>
<th>diff in means</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>outcome variables</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>militancy</td>
<td>598</td>
<td>3.716</td>
<td>1185</td>
<td>3.406</td>
<td>(+)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>two_state</td>
<td>597</td>
<td>2.023</td>
<td>1185</td>
<td>1.714</td>
<td>(+)</td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>trust_israel</td>
<td>598</td>
<td>4.989</td>
<td>1193</td>
<td>5.340</td>
<td>(-)</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>democratic~s</td>
<td>598</td>
<td>5.076</td>
<td>1193</td>
<td>5.154</td>
<td>(-)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Checkpoint~affect</td>
<td>591</td>
<td>3.821</td>
<td>288</td>
<td>4.372</td>
<td>(-)</td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Checkpoint~expos</td>
<td>594</td>
<td>3.481</td>
<td>878</td>
<td>1.892</td>
<td>(+)</td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>secular_nonviolent</td>
<td>364</td>
<td>2.824</td>
<td>766</td>
<td>2.791</td>
<td>(+)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fatah_hamas</td>
<td>298</td>
<td>0.369</td>
<td>613</td>
<td>0.602</td>
<td>(-)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fatah_hama~party</td>
<td>285</td>
<td>0.274</td>
<td>663</td>
<td>0.308</td>
<td>(-)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>demographic</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>age</td>
<td>580</td>
<td>31.351</td>
<td>1191</td>
<td>35.006</td>
<td>(-)</td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wealth</td>
<td>578</td>
<td>2.581</td>
<td>1162</td>
<td>2.429</td>
<td>(+)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gender</td>
<td>596</td>
<td>0.346</td>
<td>1196</td>
<td>0.480</td>
<td>(+)</td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>religion_one</td>
<td>570</td>
<td>4.108</td>
<td>885</td>
<td>4.228</td>
<td>(-)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>religion_two</td>
<td>577</td>
<td>4.314</td>
<td>888</td>
<td>4.328</td>
<td>(-)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Living Near Checkpoints

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proximity</th>
<th>Low Mean</th>
<th>Medium Mean</th>
<th>High Mean</th>
<th>b</th>
<th>Std. Err.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Militancy</td>
<td>3.413</td>
<td>3.349</td>
<td>3.583</td>
<td>0.135**</td>
<td>(0.0560)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>secular_nonviolent</td>
<td>2.563</td>
<td>2.750</td>
<td>2.831</td>
<td>0.120</td>
<td>(0.0963)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fatah_hamas</td>
<td>0.736</td>
<td>0.667</td>
<td>0.412</td>
<td>-0.185***</td>
<td>(0.0520)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Empirical Strategy

- We use Difference-in-Difference estimation

\[ Y = \alpha + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 (X_1 \times X_2) + \varepsilon \]

- The dependent variable, Y, represents the survey questions on political responses. \( X_1 \) is the time variable indicating whether the year is 2008, before treatment or after treatment in 2009. \( X_2 \) variable denotes the location, Za’atara which was treated in 2009 or Wadi Nar which was never treated. \((X_1 \times X_2)\) is the interaction term, computed by multiplying \( X_1 \), time and \( X_2 \), place. The difference in difference model includes the individual effects of variables \( X_1 \) and \( X_2 \), in order to test for their individual significance and not to confound the interpretation of the \( \beta_3 \) coefficient. Thus the \( \beta_3 \) coefficient may be interpreted as the change in the treatment group, brought about by treatment.
Findings I: Checkpoints lead to militancy
Mechanism

Main factors about checkpoints that would drive Palestinians to support *violence*.

Self-reported perceptions of harm caused by checkpoints:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Length of delay</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humiliation</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violence</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uncertainty of opening times and locations</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial loss</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**“Harm” of Checkpoints as Mediator**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VARIABLES</th>
<th>militancy</th>
<th>militancy</th>
<th>militancy</th>
<th>militancy</th>
<th>militancy</th>
<th>militancy</th>
<th>militancy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ch_problem1</td>
<td>-0.165**</td>
<td>-0.077</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ch_problem2</td>
<td>0.135</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ch_problem3</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.0151</td>
<td>-0.122</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ch_problem4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ch_problem5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.0132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ch_problem6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-0.680***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>3.915***</td>
<td>3.841***</td>
<td>3.852***</td>
<td>3.780***</td>
<td>3.853***</td>
<td>3.876***</td>
<td>-0.209</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Observations: 1,043
R-squared: 0.004, 0.001, 0, 0.006, 0, 0.01

Standard errors in parentheses
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1
Conclusions

- **Policy concerns: Long-Term Harms**
  - We believe that Israel is engaged in a dangerous trade-off, exchanging short-term security for long-term risk.
    - Moreover, the short-term security is almost exclusively for the sake of settlements – already a controversial subject in Israel, and perhaps costlier than previously imagined.
  - Checkpoints are easy to place but hard to remove – thus rendering them sticky. We need to be more careful before we place them in the future.

- **Theoretical Concerns: New ways of studying repression**
  - Need to focus on “non-violent” forms of repression, and “non-events”.
  - Need to focus on collective punishment, rather than punishment against organized opposition

- **Final Thoughts: We Need a Theory of Occupation**
  - Increasingly critical form of political authority – see Iraq and Afghanistan
  - Situated at the cross-roads of conflict studies and studies of authoritarianism – sharing attributes of both but fully according with neither.
Thank You!