Quattro International Symposium

Testing the Nuclear Stability-Instability Paradox using Synthetic Control Method

Speaker:
Benjamin E. Goldsmith
Associate Professor, Department of Government and International Relations, University of Sydney

Tue. January 12, 2016
16:30 ~ 18:00

Venue:
Large Conference Room, 11F, New Humanities Building, Kawauchi South Campus, Tohoku University

For more details:
(Japanese) www.sed.tohoku.ac.jp/ura_kawauchi/seminar/
(English) www.tfc.tohoku.ac.jp/quattroseminar/

※The symposium will be given in English.

The purpose of these seminars is to enhance the research productivity in humanities and social sciences at Tohoku University. At the Quattro Seminar Series, researchers belonging to different faculties and research institutes at Tohoku University will meet to hold interdisciplinary discussions. The seminars will be held once/twice a month during Tohoku University term time. All researchers at Tohoku University are welcome to join the seminars.
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東北大学川内南キャンパス 文科系総合研究棟11階 大会議室

Title:
Testing the Nuclear Stability-Instability Paradox using Synthetic Control Method

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Abstract:
To overcome obstacles to causal inference in observational and qualitative studies, we use synthetic control method to assess whether acquisition of nuclear weapons by security rivals might increase their level of conventional militarized conflict. Recent theoretical (Powell 2015) and quantitative (Rauchhaus 2009) work has supported the "stability-instability paradox," the proposition that while nuclear weapons deter nuclear war, they may also provide the conditions for nuclear-armed rivals to increase conventional military conflict with each other (Snyder 1965; Jervis 1984; Zagare 1992). However, qualitative case studies for India and Pakistan have delivered more equivocal assessments (Kapur 2005; Kapur 2007 & 2008; Ganguly and Haggerty 2006; Ganguly 2008). For example, Kapur (2005) suggests that nuclear weapons discourage conventional war. Empirical tests of the stability-instability paradox are vulnerable to a number of problems that might greatly reduce their validity, including endogeneity. The decision by a state to acquire nuclear weapons is necessarily deliberate, and likely to be strongly correlated with its future security strategy and ambitions. A promising method for valid controlled comparison when the number of relevant potential control cases is small (or zero) is synthetic control (Abadie and Gardeazabal 2003; Abadie, Diamond, Heimullah 2010 & 2015). In this paper we apply it to international conflict among nuclear states before and after nuclearization.