

POLS 318: Theories of IR
Lecture 15 (03.10.2021):
Alliances and international institutions

Rotem Dvir

Texas A&M University

rdvir@tamu.edu

Department of Political Science
Spring 2021

Overview

- 1 Quick review
- 2 Alliances and War
- 3 Other aspects of military treaties
- 4 Political Economy treaties
- 5 Extra Material

Review

WHAT WE COVERED LAST MEETING?

- International treaties.
- Types and ratification process.
- Compliance - reciprocity, reputation, and credible commitment.
- Types: Environmental regulations .
- Types: Human rights.
- Types: Laws of war.

Questions?? Email me!

Security and Treaties

Background

- Important role in interactions (war, peace).
- Alliances and defense pacts.
- Peace agreements, territorial boundaries.
- Laws of war (self-enforcing).

Compliance

- Rational view → credible commitment issues.
- Treaty signals intent to comply.
- Alliances → signal of military assistance.

Military Alliances

Definition

- Written agreement between two/more independent states, promises aid in case of conflict.

Types

- ① Defensive cooperation.
- ② Offensive cooperation.
- ③ Neutrality.
- ④ Non-aggression.
- ⑤ Consultation.

Military Alliances

Do alliances reduce the risks of war?

The content of alliance agreements

- Important aspect in understanding the commitment.
- Agreement type → a signal to both members and rivals.
- Shapes calculation of initiating attacks.

Military Alliances

Information and Intentions (Leeds 2003)

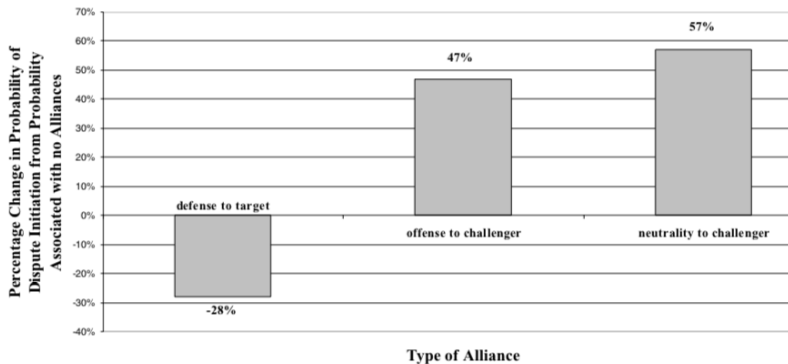
- Main challenge → credible commitment in alliance.
- Information about future intentions.
- Incentives for behavior.
- Sunk costs (forming an alliance) or anticipated reputation costs (failure to fulfill obligation).
- Costs → information is reliable.

Military Alliances

Types & Obligations (Leeds 2003)

- 1 Mutual defense pact - a deterrent effect.
 - Both parties promise active military support.
- 2 Neutrality pact [▶ SevenWeeksWar](#)
 - Nonintervention under certain conditions.
 - Encourage aggressive intentions (no opposing coalition).
- 3 Offensive pact - enhance aggressive intentions.

Military Alliances and War



- Data: alliances and conflicts among dyads (1816-1944).

Military Alliances (Johnson 2015)

Seeking a bargain

- Concessions required when seeking an ally.
- Weaker states.
- Treaty content → characteristics of signing actors and their rivals.

Military Alliances

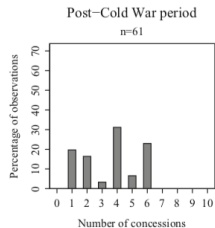
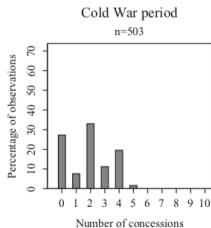
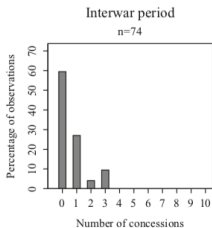
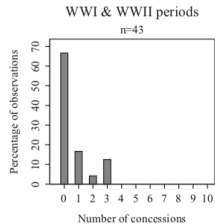
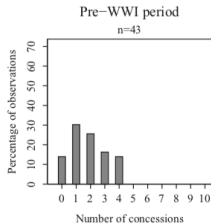
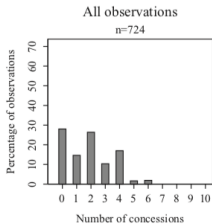
Alliance tradeoffs (Johnson 2015)

- Strong state seeks concessions for a treaty.
- How alliance changes the relative power relations?
- Bargaining game: target state and its (potential) ally.

The Shadow of external threat → extent of concessions

Military Alliances

Alliance concessions ▶ WhatAffects



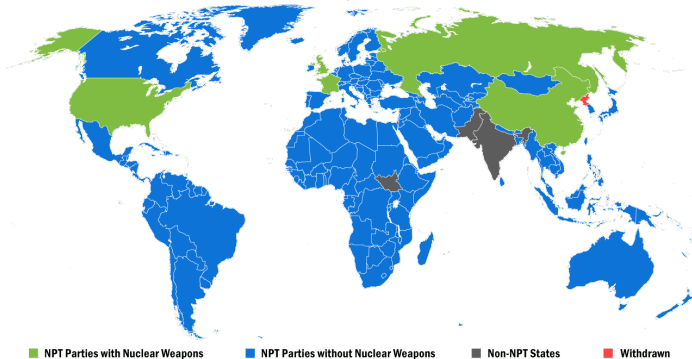
Arms control treaties

- Main objective → ban the use of certain weapons.
- Reduce the chances of dangerous arms races.
- Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (1970)



The NPT

Parties to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty



NPT PARTIES WITH NUCLEAR WEAPONS

- China
- France
- Russia
- United States
- United Kingdom

NON-NPT STATES

- India
- Israel
- North Korea
- Pakistan
- South Sudan

WITHDRAWN

- North Korea

Source: <http://disarmament.un.org/treaties/t/npt>

Arms control and arms race

NPT

- Limits the spread of nuclear weapons?
- Ratification → less proliferation.

Maybe not helpful?

- ① Strategic selection: no intentions → ratify NPT.
- ② Institutional weakness: benefits of development \gg costs of violations (lax enforcement).

Arms control and arms race

NPT

- Focus on process → ratification of treaty.
- Compare ratification process in other areas (arms, immunity, human rights, communications).
- Also estimate the likelihood of keeping the NPT commitment.

- Findings: NPT → positive effect on curbing spread of nuclear weapons (1970-2000).

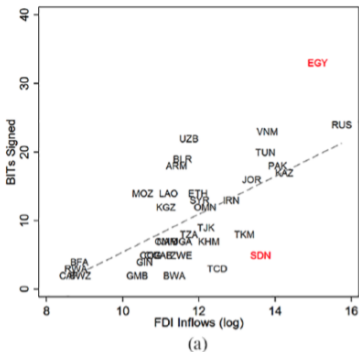
International Treaties

Economic policy - FDI

- How do international treaties affect economic policy actions?
- **BIT - Bilateral Investment Treaties.**
- Host state (developing country) and external investor (FDI).
- How does it work?
- Commitment to respect property rights and protect investors.
- Legal mechanism to settle disputes - potential costs for renegeing.

International Treaties

- BITs - allow autocrats to attract FDI.



BITs and FDI

Why? (Chen and Ye 2020)

- Leaders' view of their expected political survival.
- How long will my regime last?
- Future secure? → sign BITs.
- Enjoy benefits of FDI but accept the limitations (cannot intervene in projects or nationalise them).

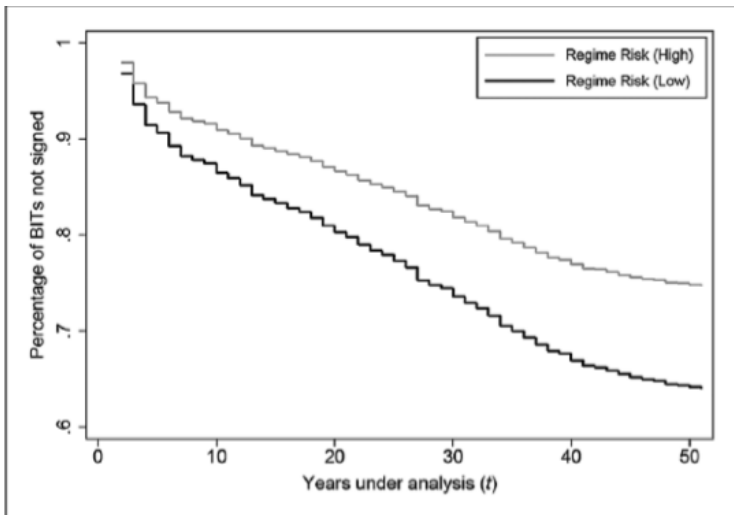
BITs and FDI

Time Horizons

- Perception of remaining time in office.
- Regimes - democracy vs. dictatorship.
- FDI → dictatorships, time horizons?
- Long term view: no threat → benefits \gg costs of BIT.
- Short term view:
 - Political survival uncertain - incentives to violate.
 - Why? use foreign revenue to co-opt rivals and secure coalition.

BITs and FDI

Dictator's perception of survival



International Institutions

Economic international organizations

- Why join an international organization?
- Endorse free trade: reduce global tariffs, incentives for economic integration.
- Benefits: MFN status, greater access to global markets.
- Data is mixed - membership is not certain to increase trade flows.

International Institutions

WTO - World Trade Organization

- The role of the institution - accession to the WTO.
- Multiple rounds of inquiry, require reduction in restrictions on free trade.
- More rigorous process → greater policy change and potential benefits.
- More scrutiny - more liberalization of the economy and more benefits.

WTO - World Trade Organization

Better trade flows? (Allee and Scalera 2012)

- Focus on process - requirement and duration.
- Findings:
 - ① Automatic process - no trade benefits.
 - ② Tough accession - greater trade benefits.
 - ③ More benefits in the ST.
- Implications:
 - Political 'cover' for cutting protection policies.
 - Evidence for effectiveness of WTO and global trade flows.

Recommended readings

More studies on international treaties and institutions:

- 1 Diguseppe, Matthew, and Paul Poast. (2018). "Arms versus democratic allies." *British Journal of Political Science* 48, 4, 981-1003.
- 2 Berkemeier, Molly, and Matthew Fuhrmann. (2018). "Reassessing the fulfillment of alliance commitments in war." *Research & Politics* 5, 2, 1-5.
- 3 Tucker, Todd. (April 2019) "The WTO just blew up Trump's argument for steel tariffs", *The Monkey Cage blog* ([Link](#))

What affects concessions?

How number of concessions change?

