

POLS 318: Theories of IR
Lecture 18 (03.22.2021):
Audience Costs

Rotem Dvir

Texas A&M University

rdvir@tamu.edu

Department of Political Science
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Overview

- 1 Quick review
- 2 Audience Costs theory
- 3 Observing AC
- 4 Beyond Democracies
- 5 Extra Material

Review

WHAT WE COVERED LAST MEETING?

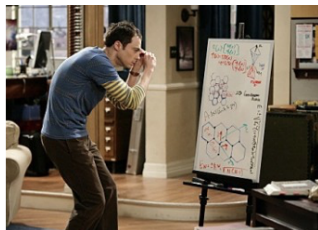
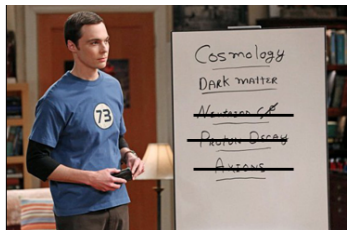
- Democratic peace theory - public angle.
- Experiments to measure individual views.
- Democracies - less threatening!
- Effort and resources vs. selection effect.
- Duration of wars.
- Strategies to minimize conflict costs.

Questions?? Email me!

Introduction

Audience Costs

- The "dark matter" of IR (Schultz 2012).
- Political accountability and leaders' behavior in IR.



Audience Costs

Fearon (1994)

- The electoral costs of not keeping promises.
- Inconsistency → political price.
- Failed foreign policy and removal from office.
- What matters most?
- Political institutions → regime type.
- Democratic leaders versus dictators and audience costs.

Audience Costs

Fearon (1994)

- The strategic element - International crisis/conflict.
- How audience costs affect rivals behavior?
- Democratic leaders → credible threat.
- Signal of actual intention to follow-through...
- International factors internalized when threat issued.
- Domestic concerns dominate the decision to escalate (threat).

Audience Costs

REPUTATION, HONOR AND BACKING-DOWN

- Backing down after a threat.
- Damage to reputation, honor, credibility.
- Critics - public, opposition, allies...
- Domestic criticism ≫ international incident.
- Threat → leaders are 'all-in'.
- But, credibility matters... [▶ JFK](#)

Audience Costs

What helps creating audience costs?

- (1) Means and incentives to coordinate and punish leader.
- (2) Backing down is worse than conceding.
- (3) Outsiders can observe this dynamic.

Why punish the leader?

- Bluff → damages to reputation and future bargaining.
- Bluff → display of leader's incompetence.

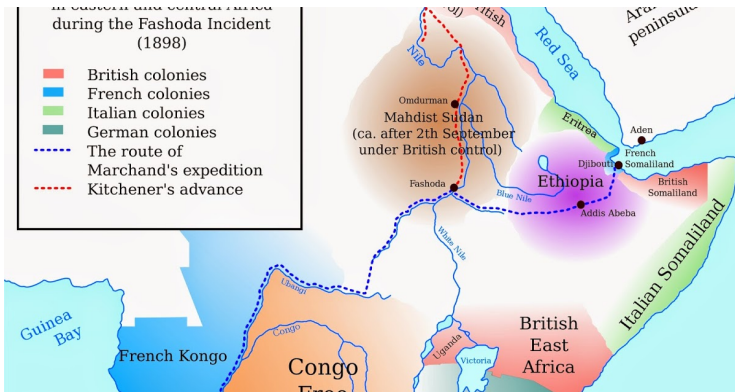
The issue of visibility

Schultz (2001)

- Conflict behavior → strategic calculations.
- Observed actions → low domestic costs.
- **Partial observability**
- International outcomes involve *Low audience costs*.
- Strategic selection into conflicts.

Invisible Audience Costs

FASHODA INCIDENT (1898)



Observing Audience Costs

Past work challenges and solution

- Indirect assessment of mechanism.
- Democracy and war outcomes correlate, yet...
- Is it really audience costs?
- Need to show direct effect → political costs of backing-down in crisis after threat.
- A formal model. [▶ CrisisBargain](#)

Finding audience costs

Potter and Baum (2014)

- Observe AC → public aware of government actions.
- Conflict information flow shapes public opinion.
- Unpack process leading to credible threat.
- Account for democratic regime heterogeneity:
 - ① Whistle-blowers: opposition parties and failed policy.
 - ② Access to information - free media.

Finding audience costs

Potter and Baum (2014)

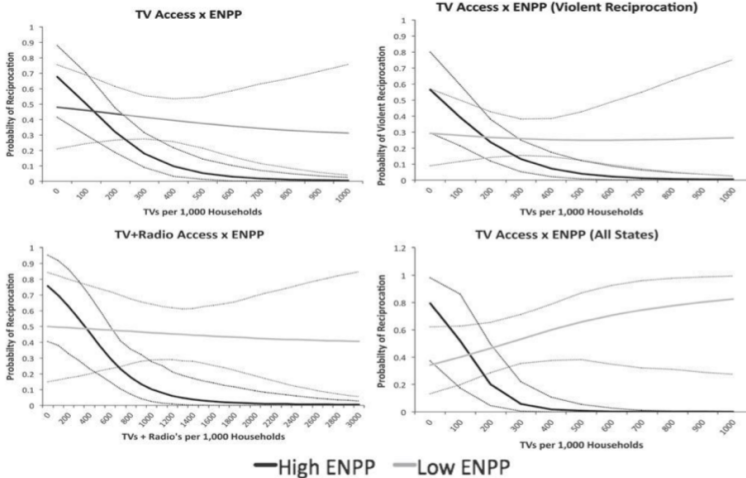
- Create AC → independent opposition parties and access to information through the free media.
- Close the 'knowledge gap': civilian and policymakers.
- Public pays little attention to foreign affairs.
- Require unpacking democratic regimes - variation on main factors to uncover hidden audience costs.

Method and data:

- What do we measure? Reciprocation in crisis.
- Factors: media (TVs distribution); political opposition.

Finding audience costs

Second order indication for audience costs



Unique democratic mechanism?

- Dictators are not as safe as we think.
- Most at risk and must cater to supporting elites.
- Audience costs → *possible* in autocracies.
- How?
- Elites coordination to sanction leader for failure.
- Is this process observable to outsiders?
- Coordination and visibility - requires less rigid approach.
- Unpack autocracies...

Autocracies and Audience costs

Weeks (2008)

- Dictators' challenge to create AC - stronger control over tenure.
- Democracy → coordination does not face risk of punishment.
- Autocracy → leader and elite collude to prevent participation and limit coordination.
- Still, dictators do not have full control.
- How can they limit opposition?
 - ① Control over intelligence services for inside information on resistance (Stalin/Saddam).
 - ② Punish opposition with secret police.
 - ③ Co-opt elites and recruit them as informants (private goods).

Unpacking Dictatorships

Weeks (2008)

- An exception - new and unstable democracies (invisible for outsiders).

Coordination & visibility - 3 types of regimes:

- (1) *Single party*
- Limited influence over policy, control political power.
- Elections are somewhat competitive.
- Elites rise through party → no personal connection to leader.

Unpacking Dictatorships

Coordination & visibility - 3 types of regimes:

- (2) *Military regimes*
 - Governed by high ranking officer.
 - Mechanism for officers to influence policy.
 - No personal connection to leader.

- (3) *Personalist regimes*
 - Extensive control over political and security institutions.
 - Prevents coordination and opposition.
 - Strong ties of elites to leader.
 - Keep incompetent leader → 'lesser of two evils'.

Audience costs across regimes

TABLE 1. *Target reciprocation rate by regime type of challenger*

<i>Challenger</i>	<i>1816–99</i>	<i>1946–99</i>
DEMOCRACY	.38 (574)	.41 (358)
NONDEMOCRACY	.49 (1,967)	.51 (1,224)
<i>Total</i>	.46 (2,541)	.49 (1,582)
<i>Chi-square p-value</i>	0.001	0.001

Note: The number of observations is in parentheses.

Audience costs across regimes

TABLE 3. *Target reciprocation rates by regime type of challenger, 1946–99*

<i>Challenger regime type</i>	<i>Reciprocation rate</i>
DEMOCRACY	.41 (358)
SINGLE-PARTY	.44 (272)
HYBRID MILITARY/SINGLE-PARTY	.44 (9)
MILITARY	.55 (44)
DYNASTIC MONARCHY	.53 (15)
MIXED NONDEMOCRACY	.33 (206)
NONDYNASTIC MONARCHY	.58 (38)
NONDEMOCRATIC INTERREGNA	.57 (259)
PERSONALIST	.61 (335)
NEW DEMOCRACY	.65 (46)
<i>Total</i>	0.49 (1,582)

Note: The number of observations is in parentheses.

Audience costs across regimes

TABLE 5. *Predicted probability of reciprocation by regime type of challenger*

<i>Initiator regime type</i>	<i>Predicted probability of target reciprocation</i>	<i>95 percent confidence interval</i>
DEMOCRACY	.27	(.21, .34)
SINGLE-PARTY	.26	(.18, .35)
MIXED NONDEMOCRACY	.27	(.20, .37)
MILITARY	.37	(.23, .53)
CYNASTIC MONARCHY	.28	(.11, .52)
NONDYNASTIC MONARCHY	.36	(.21, .54)
AUTOCRATIC INTERREGNA	.37	(.29, .46)
NEW DEMOCRACY	.44	(.29, .60)
PERSONALIST	.48	(.40, .55)

Recommended readings

More studies on audience costs theory:

- 1 Trachtenberg, Marc. (2012). "Audience costs: An historical analysis." *Security Studies* 21, 1, 3-42.
- 2 Crisman-Cox, Casey, and Michael Gibilisco. (2018). "Audience costs and the dynamics of war and peace." *American Journal of Political Science* 62, 3, 566-580.
- 3 Chiozza, Giacomo. (2017). "Presidents on the cycle: Elections, audience costs, and coercive diplomacy." *Conflict management and peace science* 34, 1, 3-26.

Regimes and credible threats



"All the News That's Fit to Print" **The New York Times.** LATE CITY EDITION

VOL. CXLV, NO. 148,111 *SATURDAY* NEW YORK, THURSDAY, OCTOBER 26, 1961. SUBSCRIPTIONS: \$12.00 PER ANNUM IN ADVANCE. SINGLE COPIES: 15c.

U.S. IMPOSES ARMS BLOCKADE ON CUBA ON FINDING OFFENSIVE-MISSILE SITES; KENNEDY READY FOR SOVIET SHOWDOWN

U.S. JUDGES GIVEN POWER TO REQUIRE VOTE FOR RESOURCES **Chinese Open New Front; Use Tanks Against Indians** **Other Action Planned if Big Rockets Are Not Demanded**

High Court Mandate Drives Back the Restrictions of 44 in Missouri County

Beijing Warns of Peril to Independence —Reds Attack New Business Order and Press Two Other Drives

SHIPS MUST STOP

Other Action Planned if Big Rockets Are Not Demanded

PRESIDENCY GRAVE

Reports Russians Lied and Pled Hemisphere in Great Danger

IN JAVAN REGION

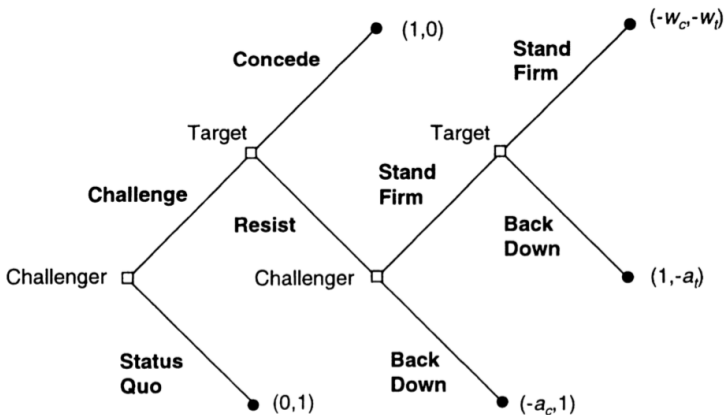
Chinese Open New Front; Use Tanks Against Indians

Other Action Planned if Big Rockets Are Not Demanded



Finding audience costs

CRISIS BARGAINING - A FORMAL MODEL



Finding audience costs

Abadan Crisis 1951

