2.1: War Commencement and Termination

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War Commencement and Termination

• Social Science in a Nutshell
• War Commencement
• War Termination
• Discussion
Social Science in a Nutshell

• Select Primitives for Analysis
  – Agents, Structures, Relations
• Postulate Inter/Intra-actions
  – Assumptions about causes of actions
• Generate Theories, Models, Hypotheses
  – Deduce behavior from primitives & actions
• Conduct Studies
  – Test models: statistics, case studies
Primitives

- **Actors**
  - States
  - Governments
  - Organizations
  - Individuals

- **Structures**
  - Anarchy
  - Hierarchy

- **Relations**
  - Cooperative
  - Conflictual
Actions

• Actor-based (Internal Characteristics)
  – Rational: Maximize Expected Utility
  – Boundedly Rational: Satisficing, Biases
• Structure-based (Position in structure)
  – Hierarchy: Act on rules of central authority
  – Anarchy: Depends on culture of anarchy
• Relation-based (Position vis-a-vis others)
  – Cooperative: Act together towards benefit
  – Conflictual: Act to maximize relative benefit
Models of Rational Action

• Utility Maximization
  – Maximize Expected Utility
    • (Expected Probability of success*reward –
      Expected Probability of failure*punishment) - Costs
  – Bayesian:
    • Update probability of success based on new information
  – Risk Propensity
    • May be averse, acceptant, or neutral
Boundedly Rational Models

• Utility Satisficing
  – Find first solution, not optimal

• Pathologies (cf Betts)
  – Organizational (Goal Displacement)
  – Psychological (Prospect Theory)
  – Political (Regime Inefficiency)

• A pathology at one level may be optimal behavior at another level
Testing

• Quantitative tests
  – Pick statistical model that closely fits your theoretical models
  – Generate (or borrow) data
  – Use to test general hypotheses

• Qualitative tests
  – Pick a set of interesting/important/relevant/crucial cases
  – Use to evaluate mechanisms
Three Models

• War Commencement
  – Offense/Defense Balance

• War Termination
  – States end wars
  – Governments end wars
War Commencement

• **Model: Offense/Defense Balance**
  – Primitives: States as Actors
  – Actions: Rational Actors Maximize (Perceived) Expected Utility
  – Assumptions: States as Security-Seekers
  – Conclusion: War is more likely when conquest is easy.

• **Testing:**
  – Case Studies
Hypotheses

• A shift in the Offense/Defense balance towards the offense makes war more likely.
  – Expansion due to opportunism or defense
  – Resistance to Expansion
  – First-mover rewards
  – Windows for war larger
  – Faits accomplis more frequent
  – Negotiation decreases
  – Secrecy increases
  – Arms races more intense
  – Offense grows even stronger

• Caveat: Unless Status Quo powers dominate.
Determinants of Dominance

• Military factors
  – Technology (but…)
  – Posture, force deployments, and operations

• Geography
  – Imports/Exports
  – Barriers (Mountains, Water, etc.)

• Social/Political Order
  – Popular regimes aid defense >1800

• Diplomatic
  – Collective Security, Defensive Alliances, Balancing by Neutrals
Testing

• Three prime predictions
  1. War more common when believed easy
  2. States w/intrinsic offensive opportunities or defensive liabilities will initiate more often in general
  3. States w/periodic offensive opportunities or defensive liabilities will initiate more often in those periods

• Three grouped case studies
  – Europe >1789 (1,2)
  – China Spring & Autumn, Warring States (1)
  – United States >1789 (2,3)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Era</th>
<th>PercMil</th>
<th>PercDip</th>
<th>Aggreg</th>
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Problems

• Why do perceptions vary from reality?
• Too many factors in the mix: Offense-Defense dominance is everything
• Unclear how to measure either the balance or the perceptions of it
• Too vaguely defined to test
• Dominance depends on strategic interaction
War Termination: Model I

• Model I
  – Primitives: States as Actors
  – Actions: Rational Actors Maximize Expected Utility
  – Assumptions: Utility = Blood and Treasure
  – Conclusion: Overlap in war aims = end of war (due to costs)
Regime Types

• Polity IV Dataset:
  – Democracy/Autocracy scores 0 to 10
  – Combine score by subtracting D from A + 11

• Grouping
  – Democracies (non-repressive/non-exclusionary) 17-21
  – Anocracies (semi-repressive/moderately exclusionary) 7-16
  – Autocracies (repressive/exclusionary) 1-6
War Termination: Model II

• Model II
  – Primitives: Governments as Actors
  – Actions: Rational Actors Maximize Expected Utility
  – Assumptions: Utility = Ability to stay in office
  – Conclusion: Overlap + extreme form of government = end of war
Hypotheses

1. Increased relative strength increases war aims
2. Decreased resolve of their opponent increases war aims
3. Decreased cost of the war increases war aims
4. Increased cost of the war increases war aims in anocracies
5. Anocracies are likely to suffer if they lose moderately or disastrously; Autocracies are likely to suffer only if they lose disastrously.
6. Wars with Anocratic losers will last longer.
## Outcome of War & Leaders

<table>
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<th>Type</th>
<th>Win</th>
<th>Lose Moderately</th>
<th>Lose Disastrously</th>
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<tr>
<td>Autocracy</td>
<td>Stay in power</td>
<td>Stay in power</td>
<td>Out and punished</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Testing

• Model I fails
  – States not acting rationally
  – This is due to Political Pathologies

• Model II succeeds
  – Governments acting rationally

• What about case studies?
Anocracies

• Germany
  – Increased war aims in 1916 despite worse position
  – High-risk strategies
    • 1915 Russian revolution
    • 1917 Unrestricted Sub Warfare
    • 1918 Stormtrooper offensives

• Russia
  – Never lowered war aims despite worse position
  – Evidence not strong
Democracies

- Britain
  - Increased franchise instead of increased war aims in 1918

- US
  - Lowered war aims after 1917 setbacks

- France
  - Lowered war aims consistently
War Termination

• 1917
  – After Russian revolutions, new Russian gov’t lowered war aims, produced settlement

• 1918
  – Late September, gov’t learned war would be lost and people would know
  – Allies increased war aims w/decline of Germany
  – Counterfactual holds: Reichstag would have ended war earlier
Problems

• Coding of regimes suspect
  – US receives perfect 10 since 1871
  – Coding neither in alignment with historical perceptions nor universal standards

• Germany only strong case for anocracy

• No autocracies examined
Commentary