

Cambridge University Press
978-1-107-10065-7 - The Politics of Military Coalitions
Scott Woldford
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

The Politics of Military Coalitions

Military coalitions are ubiquitous. The United States builds them regularly, yet they are associated with the largest, most destructive, and consequential wars in history. When do states build them, and how do they choose partners? Are coalitions a recipe for war, or can they facilitate peace? Finally, when do coalitions affect the expansion of conflict beyond its original participants? *The Politics of Military Coalitions* introduces newly collected data designed to answer these very questions, showing that coalitions – expensive to build but attractive from a military standpoint – are very often more (if sometimes less) than the sum of their parts, at times encouraging war while discouraging it at others, at times touching off wider wars while at others keeping their targets isolated. The combination of new data, new formal theories, and new quantitative analysis will be of interest to scholars, students, and policymakers alike.

Scott Woldford is an associate professor of government at the University of Texas. He has published articles in *The American Journal of Political Science*, *Journal of Politics*, *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, and *International Studies Quarterly*, among others. He is a Fellow of the Frank C. Irwin Chair in Government (2011–2016) and a recipient of the Best Paper in International Relations Award from the Midwest Political Science Association (2009).

Cambridge University Press
978-1-107-10065-7 - The Politics of Military Coalitions
Scott Welford
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

Cambridge University Press
978-1-107-10065-7 - The Politics of Military Coalitions
Scott Wolford
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

The Politics of Military Coalitions

SCOTT WOLFORD
University of Texas at Austin



Cambridge University Press
978-1-107-10065-7 - The Politics of Military Coalitions
Scott Walford
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

32 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10013-2473, USA

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of education, learning, and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781107100657

© Scott Walford 2015

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2015

A catalog record for this publication is available from the British Library.

ISBN 978-1-107-10065-7 Hardback

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party Internet Web sites referred to in this publication and does not guarantee that any content on such Web sites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

Contents

<i>List of Figures</i>	<i>page</i> ix
<i>List of Tables</i>	xi
<i>Preface</i>	xiii
1 Introduction	1
1.1 Rethinking Multilateralism	4
1.2 The Argument	7
1.3 Conclusion	10
2 Why Coalitions?	12
2.1 Defining Coalitions	14
2.1.1 Coalitions versus Treaties of Alliance	19
2.1.2 Military versus Diplomatic Multilateralism	22
2.2 The Process of Military Multilateralism	24
2.2.1 Coalition Formation	25
2.2.2 Crisis Bargaining	28
2.2.3 Conflict Expansion	31
2.2.4 Summary	34
2.3 Introducing the Coalitions Data	34
2.3.1 Identifying Coalitions	35
2.3.2 The Characteristics of Coalitions	38
2.3.3 Crisis Escalation and Conflict Expansion	41
2.4 Summary and Discussion	45
2.5 Appendix	46
3 Power, Preferences, and Cooperation	52
3.1 The Price of Cooperation	54
3.2 A Theory of Coalition Formation	56

3.2.1	The Model	57
3.2.2	Analysis	61
3.3	Empirical Models of Coalition Formation	71
3.3.1	Hypotheses	72
3.3.2	Research Design	73
3.3.3	Results: Coalition Formation	78
3.3.4	Results: Coalition Diversity	83
3.4	Application: Turkey and the Iraq Wars	85
3.5	Summary and Discussion	91
3.6	Appendix	92
3.6.1	Proofs	92
3.6.2	Assessing Potential Selection Bias	94
4	Cooperation, Signaling, and War	97
4.1	The Challenge of Credibility	99
4.2	A Theory of Coalitional Crisis Bargaining	102
4.2.1	The Model	103
4.2.2	Analysis	108
4.3	An Empirical Model of Crisis Escalation	119
4.3.1	Hypotheses	120
4.3.2	Research Design	122
4.3.3	Results: Crisis Escalation	124
4.4	Application: The Berlin and Kosovo Crises	129
4.5	Summary and Discussion	135
4.6	Appendix	137
5	Durability, Balancing, and Conflict Expansion	152
5.1	The Threat of Expansion	154
5.2	A Theory of Formation, Balancing, and Durability	156
5.2.1	The Model	158
5.2.2	Analysis	163
5.3	Empirical Models of Expansion and Durability	174
5.3.1	Hypotheses	174
5.3.2	Research Design: Conflict Expansion	176
5.3.3	Results: Conflict Expansion	180
5.3.4	Research Design: Coalitional Durability	185
5.3.5	Results: Coalitional Durability	188
5.4	Application: Pakistan, Iran, and the Superpowers	193
5.5	Summary and Discussion	196
5.6	Appendix	199
5.6.1	Proofs	199
5.6.2	Victorious Coalitions and their Members	202
6	Conclusion	206
6.1	Public and Private Stakes in International Cooperation	208
6.2	Allied and Nonallied Coalitions	210

Cambridge University Press
978-1-107-10065-7 - The Politics of Military Coalitions
Scott Welford
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

<i>Contents</i>	vii
6.3 The United States and Military Multilateralism	212
6.4 A Coalitions Research Agenda	218
<i>Bibliography</i>	223
<i>Index</i>	237

Cambridge University Press
978-1-107-10065-7 - The Politics of Military Coalitions
Scott Woford
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

List of Figures

2.1	The stages of military multilateralism	<i>page</i> 25
2.2	Histogram of observed coalition sizes, 1946–2001	39
2.3	Number of coalitions by year, 1946–2001	40
3.1	Crisis initiation and coalition formation	58
3.2	Predicted probability of coalition formation by preference divergence and potential partner's military capabilities with 95% confidence intervals	80
3.3	Marginal effect of dyadic preference divergence by potential partner's military capabilities with 95% confidence intervals	82
3.4	Expected preference divergence between leader and partner by allied status and potential partner's military capabilities with 95% confidence intervals	85
4.1	Signaling, crisis bargaining, and military cooperation	104
4.2	Comparison of equilibria in the two- and three-player games	114
4.3	Equilibrium probability of war for singletons and coalitions by target military capabilities	121
4.4	Magnitudes and Z-statistics, with 95% confidence intervals, of interaction effect by predicted probability of war	126
4.5	Predicted probability of war by presence of coalition and target military capabilities with 95% confidence intervals	127
5.1	Coalition-building, conflict expansion, and coalitional durability	159
5.2	<i>P</i> 's willingness to stay in the coalition by the similarity of preferences	167
		ix

5.3 Predicted probability of balancing for coalitions and singletons by probability of military victory and diversity of preferences with 95% confidence intervals	183
5.4 Hazard of coalitional breakdown by diversity of preferences, 1859–2007	190
5.5 Hazard of coalitional breakdown by percent of states sharing ATOP Alliances, 1859–2007	192

List of Tables

2.1 A Typology of Multilateralism	<i>page</i> 24
2.2 Comparing Coalitions and Singletons, 1946–2001	41
2.3 Coalitions and Crisis Escalation, 1946–2001	42
2.4 Coalitions and Conflict Expansion, 1946–2001	42
2.5 Decomposition Analysis of Coalitions and Singletons in Crisis Escalation, 1946–2001	44
2.6 Decomposition Analysis of Coalitions and Singletons in Crisis Expansion, 1946–2001	44
2.7 ICB Crises Involving Coalitions, 1946–2001	47
3.1 The Structure of the Coalition Formation Dataset, Using only Neighbor and Great Power Partner Criteria	75
3.2 Probit Model of Coalition Formation, 1946–2001	79
3.3 OLS Model of Preference Diversity in Coalitions, 1946–2001	83
3.4 Probit and Heckman Probit Selection Models of Crisis Onset and Coalition Formation, 1946–2001	96
4.1 Probit Models of Crisis Escalation, 1946–2001	125
5.1 Probit Models of Conflict Expansion for Coalitions and Singletons, 1946–2001	181
5.2 Cox Proportional Hazard Model of Time Until War Between Victorious Coalition Partners, 1859–2007	189
5.3 Victorious Coalitions and Member States	203

Cambridge University Press
978-1-107-10065-7 - The Politics of Military Coalitions
Scott Welford
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

Preface

I honestly never intended to write this book – or any book, for that matter. My plan had always been a career based on journal articles, which is pretty much the norm for someone like me who publishes applied formal theory and an occasional empirical paper. However, armed with a fellowship semester in the fall of 2012, some data I'd started collecting but didn't know what to do with, and a couple of related journal articles in the pipeline, the idea to tie it all together into a book started to take shape. What, after all, did we *really* know about military coalitions? Was the conventional wisdom, basically a horror story of free-riding, intramural rancor, and coercive ineffectiveness, correct? If it was, why did we see so many states using coalitions in so many conflicts? Did coalition partners increase the chances of war? Did they presage expanded conflicts? I soon realized that, to do this thing right – that is, to introduce my own definition of military coalitions, to build a series of theoretical models, and to test their predictions against the data – would be very much a book-sized endeavor.

After lamenting each of the (many, many) times I'd tuned out when people talked about book writing and publishing, I took a leap into the dark and got to work. The result, I hope, can start a scholarly dialogue about the dominant mode of military cooperation in international politics: the crisis-specific, purpose-built coalition. In the chapters that follow, I introduce the data, identify some puzzles to be explained, and then analyze the choice of partner, the escalation of crises to war, and the expansion of conflicts, all with an eye to the fundamental politics of buying and selling military cooperation. Hopefully, my claims that coalitions are worthy of study, that when it comes to shaping patterns of international war and peace they are more than the sum of their parts, are convincing. At the same time, I'm also hopeful that the exercise invites scrutiny and improvement; to the extent I can be productively wrong about something in this book, I'll consider the effort a success.

The effort, though, wasn't all my own; I racked up intellectual debts over the last several years like a compulsive gambler. First, I should acknowledge the people who set me most clearly on the path to academia: Jeff Freyman and Don Dugi at Transylvania University. Without their guidance, which involved a characterization of my writing as "like an 18th Century French philosopher" (not a compliment, mind you) and the (correct) observation that I needed to take some "pride in workmanship," I might've become . . . a lawyer. I spent my first year of graduate school at the University of Kentucky, where I studied under Doug Gibler and Matt Gabel, a brief time that still exercises a disproportionate influence on my work to this day. Finally, the seeds of this project were sown during my time at Emory University, where I learned from Dan Reiter, Cliff Carrubba, Eric Reinhardt, and Micheal Giles; all of them rightly picked up on the need to convince me to work a little bit harder, to put in that extra bit of spit and polish, and while I still struggle with that, I'm a better scholar for their efforts to push me in the right direction.

Countless people and organizations deserve mention for their encouragement, feedback, and support over the last two years of shepherding this book through the writing process: the University of Texas for my free semester in Fall 2012; the University of Colorado and the Colorado European Union Center of Excellence for the grant that allowed me to hire Amber Curtis to start data collection in 2009; audiences at SUNY Buffalo, the University of Rochester, the University of Virginia, and Texas A&M University who invited me to present parts of the project over the years; the students in my Fall 2013 International Security seminar, who read an early draft of the manuscript; people who offered helpful comments along the way, like Harrison Wagner, Amy Yuen, Kris Ramsay, Harvey Palmer, Ric Stoll, William Spaniel, Dan McCormack, Henry Pascoe, and Cliff Morgan; a brilliant set of dear friends who generously read full drafts of the book, in some cases multiple times: Emily Ritter, Toby Rider, Phil Arena, and my fantastic IR colleagues here at UT, Terry Chapman, Mike Findley, Pat McDonald, and Rachel Wellhausen; the editors and anonymous reviewers at the *American Journal of Political Science* and *International Studies Quarterly*, where I published parts of Chapter 4 and an early version of Chapter 5; the staffs at the Dog & Duck Pub and Draft Pick in Austin, Cerveteca Lisboa in Lisbon, and Club 93 in Budapest, for excellent writing environments; and, of course, three anonymous reviewers and my editor, Robert Dreesen, at Cambridge University Press, who made this process a smooth and, ultimately, a fun one. My family also deserves a lot of credit; my parents, Mike and Susanne, have been unwavering in the enthusiasm of their support, and my wife, Amy, has been loving, helpful, brilliant, supportive, and – as she's already been through the book-writing process herself – remarkably patient and understanding. I couldn't have done this without her.