

Better Together Or Alone?

Sharing Battlefield Space and Regime Type

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Summary

- Question(s):
 - On the battlefield, is better to fight alone or with others?
 - Are there advantages to sharing “battle space”?
- Argument:
 - Answer depends on regime type
 - Yes for non-democracies; not so much for democracies.
- Why it Matters:
 - Counters recent literature on why coalitions win and “democratic advantage”
 - Original data!! Detailed battle-level data

Outline

- Motivation
- Argument
- Evidence
- Conclusion

Motivation

“There is only one thing worse than fighting with allies, and that is fighting without them!”



Is That True?

Argument

- Our Answer: It depends...
 - ...on regime type
- Individual democracies effective on battlefield (Reiter and Stam 2002)
- Democracies coming together
 - Ceiling effect: No performance improvements associated with coming together
 - Size inefficiencies for democracies:
 - Make larger coalitions (Graham, Farris, and Gartzke 2017)
 - But “size principle” suggests bigger has its limits (Fordham and Poast 2016)
 - Only non-democracies will experience battlefield improvements from fighting as coalition

Empirical Implications

Main Hypotheses:

H1: Observe improvement in battlefield performance for non-democracies in coalitions compared to non-democracies alone.

H2: Observe no improvement in battlefield performance for democracies in coalitions compared to democracies alone.

Mechanism Hypotheses:

M1: Larger coalitions are less efficient

M2: Democracies have larger coalitions.

Data: Allied in Combat Dataset

- *World Wars: Major Battles and the Presence of Battlefield Coalitions*
 - All land battles
 - Presence of a coalition, coalition size, troop strength, casualties, and outcome.
- *World Wars: Battlefield Coalition Contribution and Casualties*
 - Coalitional member contributions and casualties.
- 130 World War battles
- 1950-2003 dataset forthcoming!

A Taste of the Empirical Results

Outcome = Probability(Victory)

- Dem Alone = 65 percent (N=52)
- Dem Coalition = 64 percent (N=28)
- **Diff** **-1 (-21, 23)** ← **Supports H1**

- Non-Dem Alone = 30 percent (N =154)
- Non-Dem Coalition = 50 percent (N =18)
- **Diff** **+20 (-44, 1)** ← **Supports H2**

Teasing Out the Mechanism

Size Lead to Inefficiency?

- Average Loss-Exchange-Ratio:

- Coalition of 2: 2.62
- Coalition of 3 or more: 1.99
- **Diff** -0.63 ← **Supports M1**

Influence Democracies?

- % Coalitions with 3 or more members:

- Dem Coalition: 29 percent
- NonDem Coalition: 11 percent
- **Diff** -0.18 ← **Supports M2**

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THANK YOU!