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Homework #4

<u>Summary of Chosen Article</u>

The article that I chose for this assignment is Branislav L. Slantchev's *Military Coercion in Interstate Crises* in the academic journal *American Political Science Review*.[1] This article is a theory centered piece that is non-experimental. This is an article countering James Fearon's academic works *Escalation of International Disputes* (1994) and *Signaling Foreign Policy Interests: Tying Hands versus Sinking Costs* (1997).[2] Slantchev's theory declares that states have to deal with a duality of military mobilization as both sink costs and tie the hands of the opponent state while increasing the probability of winning a war if conflict breaks out.[3] Slantchev states that Fearon's (94) article states that 'unitary rational actor question, proves to require an answer with a nonunitary conception of the state'.[4] In laymen terms unitary rational actor theory explains that states credibly signal their foreign policy intentions without misrepresenting them.[5]

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[1] SLANTCHEV, BRANISLAV L. "Military Coercion in Interstate Crises." *American Political Science Review* 99, no. 4 (2005): 533-47. doi:10.1017/S0003055405051865.

[2] These articles primarily look at military mobilization as a form of 'hand tying' an opponent country and states that military mobilization is purely a signaling effect.

[3] Ibid. Abstract.

[4] Ibid, Pg. 545

[5] Ibid.

Slantchev proceeds to expound his own theoretical argument against Fearon by initiating a theoretical model that displays functions relating to military mobilization simultaneously sinking a country's costs and tying the hands (a theory that states mobilization increases the probability of winning war if it occurs).[6] The model uses a cumulative distribution function (CDF) to display how two states would either proceed or restrain from going to war with one an another over a desired valued piece of land. With the use of two figures Slantchev declares that

> 'Militarized bargaining threats are implicit in the crisis
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> behavior where actual costs are incurred in activities that
>
> could contribute to the success of the military campaign
>
> should one come… Relaxing unitary actors do recover their
>
> signaling abilities…Empirically, then, it may not be clear
>
> whether mobilization is a warning or a preparatory step to
>
> war…'

Slantchev's theoretical outline details that mobilization, though a duality in itself, is not a signaling gesture as stated by Fearon; rather, it is a designation that when a nation intends to fight it will willingly take on costs of potential warfare to not only show an opposing nation that a specific line must be met to counter policy goals, but it must also be willing to incur the same costs.[7]

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[6] Slantchev, Pg. 533

[7] His model includes other variables besides the pure duality being stated, however I expand on these in the next section when developing an experiment.

<u>What Would an Experiment of This Theory Look Like?</u>

Slantchev states in his model there are two actors designated S_1 and S_2 that are possibly going to have a potential dispute over territory. The specified territory value is designated by S_1 that controls the current disputed territory.[8] In my experimental desgin I would use a times-series set up for the data using datasets from Stuart Bremer's academic article piece *Dangerous Dyads* (1992). Why? Because it is a time-series set that specifically looks at interstate war from 1816-1965, except I would use the updated data set that is 1816-2007.[9] With this data I would use the theoretical presumptions of Slantachev's work to see if this theory can explain former historical wars of military disputed areas. The control group: S_2 country's that make the first move in mobilization and push for war. S_2 is the control since the theory claims that S_1 would mobilize first. The treatment group: S_1 country's make the first move in mobilization and push for war, this will test the theoretical model to see if the S_1 actor first move theory in mobilization holds true. Other variables that would be held constant would be a mixture of Bremer's seven variables and Slantachev's variables of 'risk', 'commitment credibility', 'price of peace', 'assured deterrence', 'risk of war', and 'assured compellence'. I would use a difference of means test over each observation to see if there is an average that S_1 mobilization reflects the assumption that it is an implicit threat. I would then follow the theory in finding the cumulative density functions of each observation distribution to see if they follow in suite of Slantachev's predictions.[10]

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[8] Ibid.

[9] Bremer, Stuart A. "Dangerous Dyads: Conditions Affecting the Likelihood of Interstate War, 1816-1965." The Journal of Conflict Resolution 36, no. 2 (1992): 309–41. Pg. 309. http://www.jstor.org/stable/174478.These seven variables are: GEOGRAPHICALLY PROXIMATE, ROUGHLY EQUAL IN POWER, MAJOR POWERS, ALLIED, UNDEMOCRATIC, ECONOMICALLY ADVANCED, OR/AND MILITARIZED. I would use these variables within the experiment.

[10] I will admit I'm still trying to fully understand these types of distributions and my full understanding is limited. I am however looking at Slantachev's model and would replicate it to find each S1 and S2 limits for peace and war in each observation.

<u>What are the Potential Outcomes Under Treatment & Control</u>

Potential outcomes could show proof of the theory; however, it would be difficult within the analysis since the time frame would be limited bias in sampling choice. This is expressed in Bremer's work as a structural limitation. But this experiment using Slantachev's theory can give light on why some interstate wars occur and why others don't. Primary examples to highlight over with the experiment would be the Cuban Missile Crisis, Bay of Pigs, Iran-Iraq War (1980-1988), Chechnya (1994-1996), Bosnia/Kosovo (1999), 2008 Georgian War, and the Russo-Ukraine War (2014-Present). However, there could be other confounding factors not mentioned as well as many assets of dark data that could both help or dismiss Slantchev's theory.[11]

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[11] Dark data is a reference to data we may not know is affecting the findings we would get from either CDF tests or OLS Regression testing. Therefore, this experiment would need to be fined tuned in order to proceed.