

# **Does Issue Linkage Work?**

## Evidence from European Alliance Negotiations, 1815 to 1945

Excerpts on Failed Alliance Negotiations

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## 0.1 Limitation of the ATOP Dataset

The ATOP (Alliance Treaty Obligation and Provision) dataset is an outstanding source of information on completed alliance negotiations, but there exists no comparable data on failed negotiations. As a result, when previous studies have used ATOP data to study alliance formation, the dependent variable has been coded in the following fashion: those groups of states (typically state-to-state dyads) that formed alliances and those groups of states that did not.<sup>1</sup> This is problematic, as the latter group conflates those dyads that actually began alliance negotiations but failed to reach an agreement and those dyads that never even attempted negotiations. In order to measure the effect that offering to include economic linkages has on the probability of a group of states forming an alliance, I must know which instances witnessed a failed attempt to form an alliance agreement and, in particular, which of these failed negotiations witnessed the offer of an economic linkage provision.

## 0.2 Creating the Failed Alliance Negotiation Dataset

### 0.2.1 The Sources

I must identify a source of information from which I can identify failed negotiations. A logical starting point is foreign ministry archives or collections of foreign diplomatic documents such as the *British Foreign and State Papers*. However, this amounts to looking for a needle in a haystack and is costly both in terms of money (for travel) and time. For instance, if one were to focus only on British foreign documents, failed attempts could be identified (assuming the ministry wished to keep documents of the failure), but after extensive time spent reading these documents, one would only have coded the failed negotiations of a single country.

Therefore, an alternative approach is to draw upon the decades of archival research already con-

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<sup>1</sup>Leeds et al. 2002, Gibler and Wolford 2006, and Maoz et al 2007

ducted by historians. This can be done by using published diplomatic histories. Other, highly prominent and widely used international relations datasets were created through similar sources. In particular, diplomatic histories were used to identify cases of alliance formation by Leeds and her co-authors when constructing the ATOP dataset and by Singer and Small<sup>2</sup> when constructing the original Correlates of War listing of military alliances. Another example includes the *strategic rivals* dataset of Thompson and Colaresi, Rasler, and Thompson (2007)<sup>3</sup> They draw upon diplomatic and political histories of individual state's foreign policy activities to determine when and with whom decision-makers thought they were in rivalry relationships.

I use a number of diplomatic historical sources, such as the following prominent histories: *European Alliances and Alignments* by William Langer, *A Diplomatic History of Europe Since the Congress of Vienna* by Rene Albrecht-Carrie; *The Transformation of European Politics , 1763 to 1848* by Paul Schroeder; *The Struggle for Mastery in Europe, 1848 to 1918* by John Taylor; and *The Lights That Failed: European International History, 1919 to 1933* by Zara Steiner. My selection of secondary sources is European centered, but this is reasonable given the composition of the ATOP dataset. Specifically, nearly seventy six percent of the alliances formed between 1815 and 1945 have *only* European powers. Thus, perhaps unsurprisingly, European countries were the most involved in negotiating military alliances during this time period. Additionally, I follow Leeds by focusing on the pre-1945 time period when creating the first version of this dataset.<sup>4</sup> Another advantage of concentrating only on the earlier pre-1945 time period is that, perhaps obviously, the diplomatic historic record is more complete for this time period compared to the post-1945 time period.

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<sup>2</sup>1966

<sup>3</sup>Thompson 2001 and Colaresi, Rasler, and Thompson 2007.

<sup>4</sup>see Leeds et al 2002 for more details on the pre-1945 observations of the ATOP dataset.

### 0.2.2 The Coding Rule

Creating a dataset of failed alliance negotiations requires first developing a coding rule. Since I am interested in identifying attempts to form an actual alliance treaty (as opposed to attempts to create an informal coalition) between states (so as to be comparable to the ATOP dataset of formed alliances) I develop the following coding rule: there must exist evidence of a meeting (correspondence of letters, physical meeting) at the diplomatic level (between ambassadors, heads of state, foreign ministers) where a proposal of a formal (i.e. written) alliance (mutual defense pact, offensive pact, neutrality pact, a military consultative agreement, or a non-aggression pact) is made and then evidence of a rejection/refusal (one side must decline forming an alliance).

When applying this coding rule, it is important to keep in mind that, for example, declining to form an alliance may not take the form of a simple “no” response. These are, after all, diplomats (and, hence, their response could be quite diplomatic)! Moreover, it is worth emphasizing that evidence of a meeting need not entail the two diplomats or heads of state being physically present in the same location. Instead, a “meeting” could entail an exchange of letters. Inevitably, using diplomatic histories as source material will involve some subjectivity. Interpreting diplomatic histories lacks the strict objectivity associated with, for example, counting treaty texts. However, as Colaresi, Rasler, and Thompson state, “No phenomenon is so clearcut that counting it does not require some level of interpretation...The point remains that measurement choices rarely boil down to interpreting the raw information versus allowing the facts to speak for themselves. Some interpretation of the raw information is inevitable.”<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>Colaresi, Rasler, and Thompson 2007, p. 29.

### 0.2.3 Applying the Coding Rule

I read through these histories looking for instances that meet the criteria of my coding rule.<sup>6</sup> Consider the following account from Taylor of a failed attempt at forming an alliance:

“[Russian Chancellor] Gorchakov said to [French President] Thiers: ‘We shall occupy ourselves later with uniting France to Russia’, and [Russian Tsar] Alexander II added: ‘I should much like to gain an alliance like that of France, an alliance of peace, and not of war and conquest.’ These words, uttered on 29 September 1870, defined the Franco-Russian alliance as it was achieved twenty years later; they were of no use to Thiers in the circumstances of the moment. He returned to Paris empty-handed; and the French had to try to reverse the Prussian victories by their own efforts.”<sup>7</sup>

This excerpt from a larger passage shows that the Russian Chancellor and the French President met, that there was discussion of creating an alliance between the two nations (‘I should much like to gain an alliance like that of France, an alliance of peace, and not of war and conquest’), and that this attempt failed (He returned to Paris empty-handed). Another example comes from Schroeder:

“Russian policy was not hostile to Britain, nor was it opposed to all reform of the Ottoman Empire...In 1836 [Russian diplomat and foreign minister] Nesselrode began seeking an entente with Britain, for the sake of general peace and Russia’s economic development. His feelers were ignored at London. Instead, from 1834 to 1838 [British foreign secretary] Palmerston considered various ideas for shoring up the Ottoman Empire against Russia.”<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>To demonstrate the plausibility of my coding of negotiation failures, I conduct several inter-coder reliability checks. The details of these checks, as well as a guide for recreating the entire dataset, are available upon request.

<sup>7</sup>Taylor 1954, pp. 214-215.

<sup>8</sup>Schroeder 1994, p. 735.

Again, there is evidence that the Russian diplomat broached the idea of an alliance to the British diplomat (His *feelers*...), but that this idea was rejected (...were ignored at London.). In addition to identifying failed alliance negotiations, I also code which failed negotiations witnessed the offer of economic linkage. In order to match as closely as possible the coding of economic linkage offers found in the ATOP dataset, I code economic linkage offers as any identifiable offer of trade or foreign aid. An example of an aid offer can be found in the following account of a negotiation between the British and Austria-Hungary:

“While [former British prime minister] Derby had been trying half-heartedly for agreement with Russia, [current British prime minister] Beaconsfield had been pursuing more energetically an anti-Russian alliance with Austria-Hungary; he was equally unsuccessful. He supposed that Austria-Hungary was only waiting for an adequate subsidy, as in the old days, and asked on May 1 [1877]; ‘How much money do you want?’

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Several other examples demonstrate offers to expand the negotiations along a trade dimension. In 1816, Spain sought British assistance in suppressing rebellions within its colonies. However, the British made any assistance conditional on Spain opening its colonies to trade.<sup>10</sup> Spain rejected this demand. Another example involves the following account of Prussia and England in 1850,

“[Prussian Ambassador] Radowitz was sent to London, more to console him than with any serious purpose. He was empowered to offer the British government reductions in the Zollverein tariff in exchange for an alliance...Radowitz had no success.”<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>Taylor 1954, p. 244

<sup>10</sup>Schroeder, 1994, p. 630

<sup>11</sup>Taylor 1954, p. 41.

### 0.3 European Military Alliance Negotiations, 1815 to 1945

From 1815 to 1945 I identify 127 failed alliance negotiations involving at least one European state. For each negotiation, I code the following information: year of negotiation; states involved in the negotiation; type of alliance being negotiated (mutual defense pact, offensive pact, neutrality pact, a military consultative agreement, or a non-aggression pact); and whether or not the negotiation witnessed an offer of economic linkage. When combined with relevant ATOP alliances (alliances formed between 1815 and 1945 involving at least one European state), I have a dataset of 308 alliance negotiations involving at least 1 European power from 1815 to 1945. 181 of these negotiations were successful, 127 were unsuccessful, and 20 had an economic linkage offer.

Figure 2 shows the number of negotiations by year from 1815 to 1945. Note the spikes around the time of the Crimean War (1853 to 1856), Franco-Prussian War (1870 to 1871), the start of World War I (1914), and the start of World War II (1939). These spikes reveal the tendency of states to seek out alliance partners during the lead-up to major international crises and confrontations.

Table 1 reports the countries that conducted at least 10 negotiations during the 1815 to 1945 time period, along with the “success rate” of these countries (i.e. the number of negotiations that resulted in an alliance, divided by the total number of negotiations in which that country participated). As can be expected, the major European powers during this time period (Russia, Germany, France, Austria, and Britain) are at the top of the list. However, with success rates between 41 and 54 percent, a fair number of these states’ alliance negotiations failed. In contrast, the success rates of several minor states (such as Serbia, Poland, Greece, and Bulgaria) are substantially higher. It is beyond the scope of this paper to more fully explore the negotiation spikes in Figure 2 and the variation in alliance negotiation success rates between small and large states in Table 1. However, both are trends worthy of future research.

Figure 1: Number of Military Alliance Negotiations, 1815 to 1945

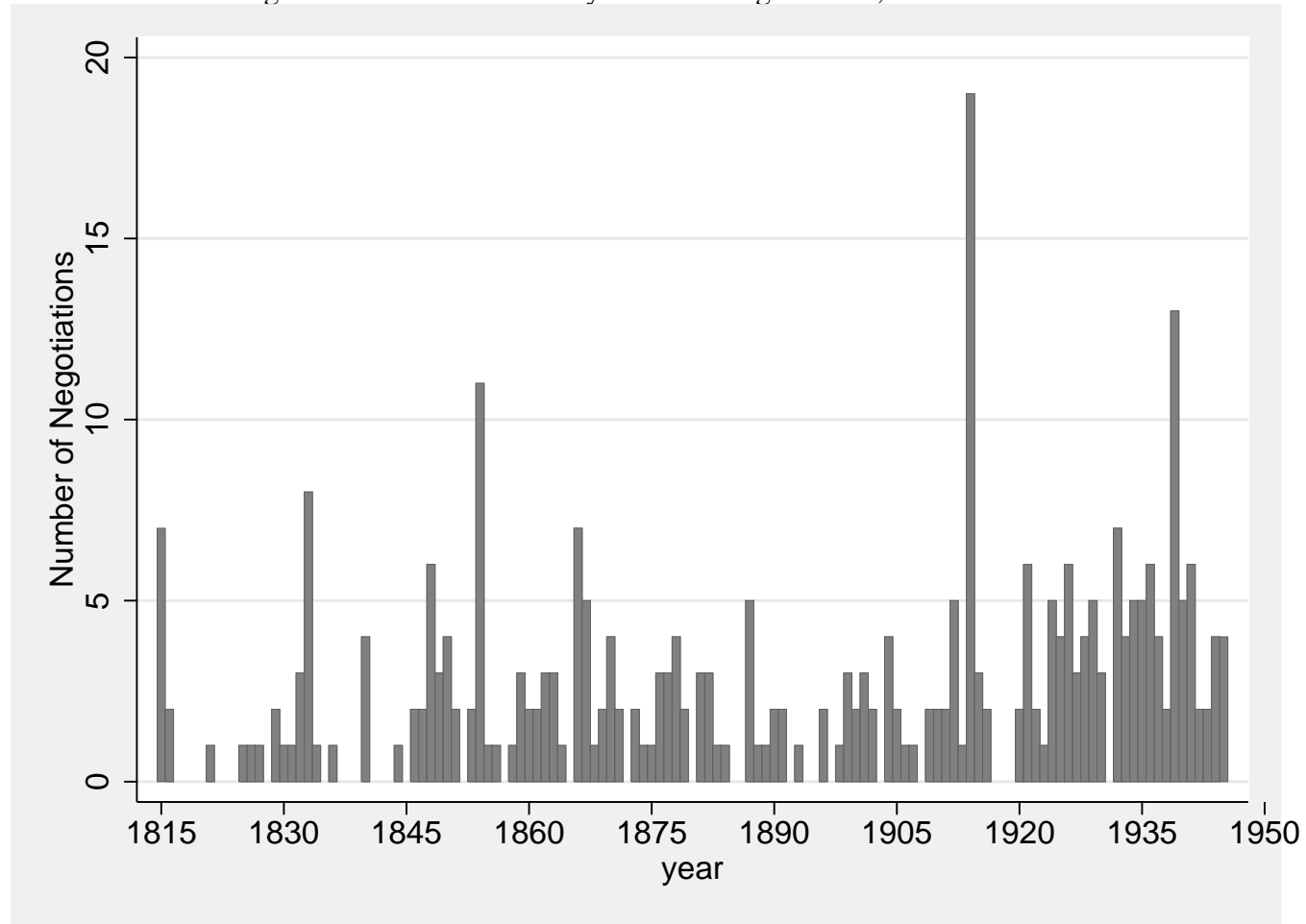




Table 1: Alliance Negotiations by Country (minimum 10), 1815 to 1945

Country Name	Number of Negotiations	Success Rate
Russia	112	0.54
Germany	102	0.41
Britain	88	0.45
France	87	0.51
Austria	69	0.52
Italy	45	0.75
Turkey	28	0.71
Serbia/Yugoslavia	20	0.85
Romania	19	0.74
Spain	13	0.77
Bulgaria	13	0.69
Poland	11	0.72
Greece	10	0.90
Japan	10	0.80