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Article

Maritime Claims and Conflict Management in Multilateral Alliances

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Abstract

Since the 1950s, the number of maritime claims has increased significantly, becoming a major source of militarized international disputes. This paper explores the design of alliances for the peaceful management of maritime claims. We argue that multilateral alliances enhance the likelihood of peaceful negotiations over maritime claims among member states. We test this hypothesis using logistic models, penalized maximum likelihood models, and linear probability models with fixed effect. Our findings support our argument, demonstrating the robust pacifying effects of multilateral alliances, especially in managing maritime claims.

Keywords

Maritime claims, Multilateral alliance, Intra-alliance conflict, Conflict management, Alliance design

Introduction

Allies can still experience militarized disputes among themselves, and some issues, particularly maritime claims, can significantly destabilize alliance relationships. For example, the UK and Spain have had tense conflicts around Gibraltar, especially after the UK installed an artificial reef in 2013 (Trinidad, 2016). Similarly, the US and Canada, both NATO members as well, have faced disputes in the Beaufort Sea (Baker & Byers, 2012). Ryou-Ellison and Gold (2020) provide empirical evidence that alliances with maritime claims are more susceptible to militarized interstate disputes (MIDs). This suggests that maritime issues can pose significant challenges to alliance cohesion. Given this context, we aim to address the question: How should alliances be

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structured to manage maritime claims peacefully?

Research on maritime claims in international relations has expanded, particularly following the initiation of the Issue Correlates of War (ICOW) Project (Hensel, 2001; Hensel & Mitchell, 2017; Hensel et al., 2008). With the project's extension to maritime claims, distinct features of these claims have been uncovered in multiple studies (Mitchell, 2020; Nemeth et al., 2014; Powell & Mitchell, 2022). Hensel and Mitchell (2005) highlight differences between territorial and maritime claims based on salience characteristics, while Owsiak and Mitchell (2019) focus on conflict management in maritime claims. Additionally, Ryou-Ellison and Gold (2020) examine the effects of alliances on MIDs in dyads with maritime claims, highlighting potential challenges for alliances. However, existing studies do not provide answers to our specific question.

In this research, we argue that the multilateral design of alliances counterbalances the risks posed by maritime claims. Economic interests at sea can destabilize relationships even among democratic allies (Daniels & Mitchell, 2017; Mitchell & Prins, 1999). However, through diffuse reciprocity and third-party mediation within multilateral alliances, the tangible salience and divisibility of maritime claims can promote peaceful negotiations. Our analysis primarily employs quantitative methods, using maritime-claim-dyad-year data from the ICOW and the Alliance Treaty Obligations and Provisions (ATOP) Project. Due to data limitations, our investigation is temporally confined to the 20th century and regionally to the Western Hemisphere and Europe. The empirical outcomes of our study strongly support our argument: multilateral alliances effectively enhance the chances of peaceful resolutions between parties with maritime claims. This insight advances theoretical knowledge in the fields of maritime issues and alliance studies and may offer policy guidance amid contemporary trends toward multilateralism in alliance politics.

The structure of this paper is organized as follows: After this introduction, we outline our theoretical approach and formulate hypotheses. Next, we detail the research design, including datasets, variables, and models. We then present and discuss the empirical results. In the final section, we conclude with the academic and policy implications of this study.

Maritimes Claims and Multilateral Alliances

Characteristics of Maritime Claims

Territorial issues have traditionally been seen as the primary sources of militarized disputes and wars (Senese & Vasquez, 2008, pp. 75-125; Vasquez, 2009, pp. 135-166). These issues are critical because they impact both international relations and domestic politics (Gibler & Sewell, 2006; Gibler & Tir, 2013). However, as Figure 1 illustrates, while the number of territorial claims has decreased, the number of maritime claims has increased based on the starting year of claims (Mitchell, 2020, p. 644). Such claims can pose major obstacles to cooperation among states and serve as sources of militarized disputes. Numerous studies have examined the impact of maritime claims on militarized disputes (Daniels & Mitchell, 2017; Mitchell, 2020; Ryou-Ellison & Gold, 2020). Additionally, other researchers have focused on pathways to peaceful settlement of maritime claims (Ásgeirsdóttir & Steinwand, 2015, 2018; Nemeth et al., 2014; Powell & Mitchell, 2022).

According to the ICOW project, territorial claims involve disputes over the sovereignty of land or island territories (Hensel & Mitchell, 2017, p. 127). Conversely, maritime claims concern official interstate contentions regarding maritime zones, excluding sovereignty over territories (Hensel & Mitchell, 2017, pp. 127-131). These claims often involve exclusive economic zones

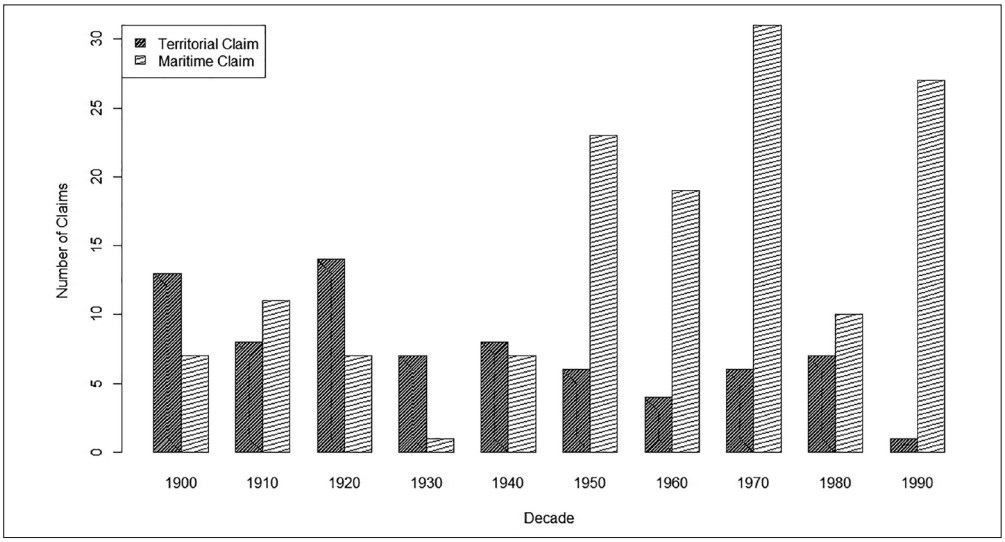

Figure 1. Increase of Maritime Claims in the 20th Century
Note: This figure is created by the authors with the ICOW data.

(EEZs) and issues related to the continental shelf, but exclude offshore territorial claims related to islands and coastal lands (Owsiak & Mitchell, 2019, p. 9). While offshore territorial claims share features with maritime claims, such as access to maritime resources like fisheries and hydrocarbons (Schultz, 2017, p. 1581), they primarily concern territorial sovereignty. This distinction between territorial and maritime claims is critical. Maritime claims have unique characteristics that set them apart from territorial disputes.

These characteristics can be summarized as economic interests and issue divisibility. The first characteristic, economic interests, relates to the tangible salience of maritime claims. Maritime claims primarily concern EEZs and continental shelves, which authorize sovereign rights to "explore and exploit, conserve and manage the natural resources...of the waters superjacent to the seabed and of the seabed and its subsoil," according to Article 56 of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS, 1982). Therefore, maritime claims are closely linked to fisheries and natural resources, including oil and gas (Ásgeirsdóttir & Steinwand, 2018). These economic interests make maritime claims a significant source of militarized disputes between democracies in the post-WWII era (Daniels & Mitchell, 2017; Mitchell & Prins, 1999). Conflicts such as the Turbot War and the Cod War exemplify how economic interests in maritime areas can trigger conflicts among democracies (Song, 1997; Steinsson, 2018).

The second characteristic of maritime claims is their divisibility, which leads to optimistic possibilities. Indivisibility of conflicting issues is a major source of costly wars, along with private information and commitment problems (Fearon, 1995). Issue indivisibility involves the inability to allocate disputed issues, often closely linked to domestic politics and territory (Fearon, 1995, p. 382; Powell, 2006, p. 170). Territories are more than just tracts of land; they embody the homeland of nationalism, rendering them indivisible, especially in modern international relations. The rise of nationalism has transformed territories into indivisible and inviolable homelands (Kadercan, 2017). Territories cannot be separated from the identity and history of the people living in them (Toft, 2002, p. 84). In some cases, religious factors must also be seriously

considered. There are several instances where divided territories have led to perpetual conflicts, such as those in Kashmir and Jerusalem (Goddard, 2006, pp. 36-38).

However, unlike territorial issues, maritime issues are relatively more divisible (Hensel & Mitchell, 2017, p. 133; Manicom, 2014, p. 6). What makes maritime claims more divisible than territorial ones is their tangible salience. According to Hensel and Mitchell (2005), territory is considered indivisible due to its intangible salience, such as ties to homeland, identity, and historical possession. In contrast, maritime claims primarily possess tangible salience, creating different dynamics (Hensel & Mitchell, 2017, p. 113). While intangible issues are indivisible because their division cannot be domestically accepted, tangible issues like fishery or hydrocarbon reserves are divisible and generally acceptable (Wiegand, 2014). This explains why the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands are viewed as indivisible, whereas fisheries and resources in the North Atlantic and the Caribbean Sea are considered divisible. This divisibility makes maritime claims more negotiable than territorial claims, offering the possibility of peaceful resolutions.

Conflict Management of Multilateral Alliances

Compared to others, allies are less likely to engage in conflict with each other (Bremer, 1992). They benefit from the institutional effect known as the tethering effect of alliances (Weitsman, 1997). The realist view on institutionalism examines how alliances foster intra-alliance peace and manage conflicts (Krebs, 1999; Weitsman, 2003, 2013). Intra-alliance peace represents alliance cohesion, which is critical for achieving the objectives of alliance formation or maintenance. According to the ATOP project, alliances are written agreements between representatives of two or more independent states concerning security cooperation, which may include defense, offense, neutrality, nonaggression, and/or consultation (Leeds et al., 2002, pp. 238-239). From these forms of cooperation, alliances can provide three security benefits for a state: deterring potential aggression from enemies, assuring victory in the event of war, and preventing neighbors from forming adversarial alliances (Snyder, 1990, pp. 110-111). These benefits from the formation or maintenance of an alliance can be attained when an alliance possesses a certain level of credibility. Alliance credibility primarily hinges on the belief in allies' support in the event of war, which requires commitments and alliance cohesion (Leeds, 2003, p. 427; Morrow, 1994, pp. 291-292; Smith, 1995, p. 418).

Thus, multiple studies have researched alliance design to find ways to prevent abandonment and strengthen alliance cohesion (Benson & Clinton, 2016; Leeds & Anac, 2005; Mattes, 2012). The cornerstone of alliance cohesion is intra-alliance peace. Several empirical studies have examined alliance designs that effectively prevent and manage intra-alliance conflict. Bearce et al. (2006) suggested alliance designs that facilitate information provision to prevent conflict among members. Long et al. (2007) argued that a high level of institutionalization, including the presence of formal organizations, is key to preventing conflicts among members and ensuring the longevity of alliances. Additionally, the inclusion of nonaggression pacts has been reviewed as a direct tool for fostering intra-alliance peace (Lupu & Poast, 2016; Mattes & Vonnahme, 2010). While institutionalization and certain forms of obligations have been examined for their roles in intra-alliance peace and alliance performance, the multilateral aspect of alliance design has received scant attention in alliance studies. Although the peaceful effects of multilateralism have been overlooked in alliance studies, their mechanisms have primarily been explained by the school of liberal institutionalism.

Multilateral cooperation can be distinguished from bilateral cooperation by its nature of reciprocity. Reciprocity involves the exchange of concessions and cooperation, taking into account contingency and equivalence (Keohane, 1986, pp. 5-8). In bilateral cooperation, parties exchange

favors in a quid-pro-quo manner, known as specific reciprocity (Ruggie, 1992, pp. 571-572). In this context, Tit-for-Tat is the most effective strategy to guarantee bilateral cooperation (Axelrod, 1984). However, since one party's defection must be countered by the other's retaliation, Tit-for-Tat-based bilateral cooperation can be vulnerable to mistakes or misperceptions (Fundenberg & Maskin, 1990).

On the other hand, multilateral cooperation is based on diffuse reciprocity (Ruggie, 1992, p. 571). With multiple players involved, the calculation of expected utility becomes highly complex, and one's defection is rarely retaliated against in an equivalent manner (Axelrod & Keohane, 1985, pp. 234-235; Oye, 1985, pp. 19-20). Although this characteristic of multilateral mechanisms can sometimes be an obstacle to initiating cooperation, it enhances stability once cooperation begins. In the diffuse reciprocity of multilateral cooperation, parties do not retaliate immediately or equivalently, which increases stability, especially in response to mistakes or misperceptions (Martin, 1992, p. 771; Ruggie, 1992, pp. 571-572). Thus, although there are some conflicting issues between members of multilateral alliances (hereafter MAs), cooperation within MAs can be maintained, and members can seek ways to handle such issues peacefully.

Another mechanism of multilateral cooperation is third-party mediation. Intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) have demonstrated their role as conflict managers and mediators when member states experience conflicts (Bercovitch & Schneider, 2000; Hansen et al., 2008; Kinne, 2013). These institutions actively and passively press their members to peacefully settle conflicts and help guarantee compliance with agreements (Mitchell & Hensel, 2007). This mechanism also applies to MAs. Moreover, not only institutions themselves but also other members can mediate conflicts as third parties (Owsiak & Frazier, 2014). Because conflicts between members can undermine the entire cooperation of MAs due to their indivisibility (Caporaso, 1992), members other than the conflicting parties have substantial reasons to intervene (Kinne, 2013; Melin, 2011; Rixen, 2010). Issue linkage and side payments are primary ways that third parties facilitate peaceful settlements in conflicts between members (Axelrod & Keohane, 1985). Third parties can suggest other incentives or seek to coerce conflicting members with other relevant issues and interests for conflict management in MAs.

The characteristics of maritime claims can lead to a unique pattern of interaction when they intersect with the mechanisms of MAs. While the economic interests inherent in maritime claims can escalate tensions at sea, parties in MAs may continue dialogues and cooperation since their interactions are not based on a quid-pro-quo basis. Additionally, third-party mediation can alleviate tensions in the early phases, allowing conflicting parties to pursue peaceful resolutions. The economic interests of maritime claims, being divisible, can also facilitate peaceful negotiations between conflicting parties. This is more likely when parties share membership in MAs, as other members may encourage peaceful settlements. Sometimes, alliances themselves can mediate members' conflicts, as NATO did during the initial phases of the Cod War (Steinsson, 2018). Moreover, MAs can facilitate talks by providing side payments related to third parties. This approach was employed by NATO members, such as France and Germany, during the conflict between Greece and Turkey in the 1980s (Brenner, 2012, pp. 14-15). Accordingly, we propose the following two hypotheses:

H1. In maritime claims, members of multilateral alliances attempt more peaceful settlements with each other compared to others.
H2. In maritime claims, members of multilateral alliances attempt more third-party settlements with each other compared to others.

In this section, we have formulated two hypotheses to address our research question, focusing on examining the effect of MAs on peaceful settlement attempts in maritime claims. The following section describes our research design to test these hypotheses.

Research Design

Data, Dependent Variables, and an Independent Variable

To test the hypotheses of this study, we merged several datasets primarily concerning maritime claims and alliances. The unit of analysis is the maritime-claim-dyad-year, which was also used by Ryou-Ellison and Gold (2020). Our data includes dyads experiencing maritime claims during the period of the claim. Originally, the ICOW Dyad-Year Dataset version 1.1 includes all types of claim-dyad-years, with 10,041 observations (Hensel et al., 2008; Nemeth et al., 2014). Among the three types of claims—territorial, river, and maritime—provided by the ICOW data, we focus on the unique nature of maritime claims. Due to limitations in the ICOW maritime claim data, the temporal range is from 1900 to 2001, and the regional span is limited to the Western Hemisphere and Europe. As a result, this study's dataset contains 3,197 observations.

The analysis involves two dependent variables: Peaceful Settlement Attempts (PSAs) and Third-Party Settlement Attempts (TSAs). PSAs include all forms of peaceful attempts, whether bilateral or involving a third party, and whether binding or nonbinding. TSAs are a subset of PSAs. Distinguishing TSAs is important because they tend to be more costly and less flexible than other forms of peaceful settlement attempts, such as bilateral negotiations, making it more likely that claims will be settled through TSAs (Ásgeirsdóttir & Steinwand, 2015). The frequency of PSAs and TSAs is less meaningful than their mere existence. We count these events to examine whether dyads seek peaceful means to settle disputes. Within a year, a greater number of these events may not necessarily indicate a higher willingness for peaceful relations among dyads. Therefore, it is more appropriate to only count the existence of these events, treating all dependent variables as binary variables, following Nemeth et al. (2014). Among the 3,197 observations, PSAs occur in 337 cases (10.54%), and TSAs occur in 135 cases (4.22%). As both dependent variables are relatively rare events, the analysis should consider this aspect. Specific models for rare events will be discussed at the end of this section.

The sole independent variable in this study is MAs, which tests both H1 and H2. Alliances themselves may have a certain effect on the dependent variables, as summarized in Table 1. While only 7.9% of non-allied dyads experienced PSAs, 12.0% of alliance dyad-years experienced PSAs, with a statistically significant difference in proportions. However, for TSAs, the difference is not statistically significant, although alliance dyads do exhibit a slightly higher proportion. Based on theoretical inferences regarding multilateral alliances and maritime claims,

Table 1. Proportion tests on PSAs and TSAs by alliance dyads

		PSAs		TSAs	
		0	1	0	1
	N=3,197	2,860	337	3,062	135
Non-Allied dyad	1,136(100%)	1,046(92.1%)	90(7.9%)	1,097(96.6%)	39(3.4%)
Alliance dyad	2,061(100%)	1,814(88.0%)	247(12.0%)	1,965(95.3%)	96(4.7%)
Proportion Test		$\chi^2 = 12.386,\ p = 0.000$		$\chi^2 = 2.422,\ p = 0.120$	

this study posits that MAs have a more pronounced positive effect on the dependent variables. To incorporate MAs into our dataset, we extracted the variable from the ATOP Alliance Level and Dyad-Year Level Datasets, version 5.1 (Leeds et al., 2002). This independent variable is a dummy, set to 1 when a dyad shares at least one MA in a given year. Of the 3,197 observations, 2,020 (63.2%) are classified as MAs, while the remaining 1,177 (36.8%) are not.

Control Variables and Models

Peaceful settlements for maritime claims can be influenced by various other factors, which should be included as control variables. One part involves the nature of dyads, such as another critical component of alliance relationships, democratic regime pairing, and relative capabilities. The second part includes factors related to the nature of maritime claims, such as the importance of location and factors regarding natural resources. The last part concerns the structure of this study's data, which is time-series-cross-sectional.

The first part consists of three variables: defense pacts, joint democracy, and power preponderance. Formal defense pacts between allies represent a high level of peacetime commitment, which leads to alliance credibility and deterrence effects (Johnson & Leeds, 2011; Morrow, 2000; Wright & Rider, 2014). However, in intra-alliance politics, defense pacts can facilitate moral hazards exploited by alliance partners, especially regarding maritime claims (Ryou-Ellison & Gold, 2020). Thus, defense pacts between parties involved in maritime claims may experience more difficulties in attempting peaceful settlement. Therefore, this study controls for defense pacts with a binary variable assigned a value of 1 when a dyad shares membership in defense pacts.

Joint democracy has been identified as one of the strongest conditions for international peace (Benoit, 1996; Gleditsch & Hegre, 1997; Oneal & Russett, 2001). However, according to Daniels and Mitchell (2017), democratic states tend to be more conflictual in maritime claims due to economic opportunities and related interests. Given these existing studies, joint democracy should be included as a control variable. We use the Polity Project's Polity5 Annual Time-Series Dataset to measure joint democracy (Marshall et al., 2020). In this study, the variable is treated as a dummy, assigned a value of 1 when both states in a dyad score 6 or above on the polity scale, following the coding rules of existing studies (Daniels & Mitchell, 2017; Mitchell, 2002).

Power preponderance is another critical issue in conflict studies. Empirically, dyads with symmetry in power are more prone to conflict or war (Bennett & Stam, 2004; Bremer, 1992; Geller, 1993; Vasquez, 1993). To measure preponderance in dyads, we use the Composite Indicator of National Capability (CINC) scores from the COW National Material Capabilities Dataset version 5.0 (Singer, 1988; Singer et al., 1972). We calculate the CINC ratio as $\frac{Stronger's\ CINC}{Weaker's\ CINC}$, rounded to two decimal places, following the methods used by Mitchell (2002) and Boehmer et al. (2004). This study expects that this variable may enhance the chances of peaceful settlement attempts.

For the second part of the control variables, factors regarding maritime claims consist of strategic location, fishing, and oil factors. The salience of claims affects the possibility of peaceful settlement as well as militarized disputes (Owsiak & Frazier, 2014). Maritime claims are influenced by tangible salience issues, such as locational implications and natural resources, while in territorial claims, intangible saliences are more significant (Hensel & Mitchell, 2005; Mitchell, 2020). All three variables come from the ICOW Dyad-Year Dataset version 1.1 (Hensel et al., 2008; Nemeth et al., 2014). Strategic location is measured as a binary variable, assigned a value of 1 when the maritime zone includes a strategic location. Similarly, fishing is measured as

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of Variables

N = 3,197	0(%)	1(%)	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Multilateral alliance	1,177 (36.8%)	2,020 (63.2%)				
Defense pact	1,503 (47.0%)	1,694 (53.0%)				
Democracy	1,773 (55.5%)	1,424 (44.5%)				
Preponderance			110.525	423.778	1	4675.47
Strategic location	2,542 (79.5%)	655 (20.5%)				
Fishing resources	254 (7.9%)	2,943 (92.1%)				
Oil	1,897 (59.3%)	1,300 (40.7%)				
Time			69.575	24.199	0	101

a binary variable, with a value of 1 when the zone is used for fishing. Regarding oil, the variable is binary as well, with a value of 1 when oil is extracted from the zone or is believed to be located in the zone.

The last part of the control variables pertains to the structure of the data in this study. We use panel data that is both time-series and cross-sectional. For the temporal aspect, we employ a cubic polynomial approximation, including terms for t, t^2, and t^3, as suggested by Carter and Signorino (2010). Table 2 presents the descriptive statistics for the independent and control variables.

The characteristics of the data and dependent variables suggest two issues that affect the models in this analysis. The first issue is the rare event nature of the dependent variables. Maximum Likelihood Estimation (MLE) estimates parameters that are most probable given the observed data. However, when a binary dependent variable rarely exhibits events (with a value of 1) and has many non-events (with a value of 0), the log-likelihood function optimizes itself toward non-events, leading to an overestimation of non-events. As a result, the variables' effects may be underestimated, parameter estimates become unstable, and the overall model becomes inefficient (King & Zeng, 2001). To address this issue, we employ Firth's Penalized Maximum Likelihood (PML) estimation (Firth, 1993). Firth's PML approach adds a penalty term to the score function, preventing the likelihood function from being biased toward extreme values. This reduces bias in estimation and results in more stable estimates (Firth, 1993, pp. 30-37).

The second issue affecting the model design is the need for panel control. In our data, there may be unobserved heterogeneity between dyads—uncontrolled factors that influence peaceful settlement attempts between parties and may also affect the likelihood of their shared membership in MAs. This could lead to endogeneity in the models, making the estimation unreliable. We therefore assume that our explanatory variables might be correlated with the residuals to some extent, which necessitates panel control analysis with fixed effects. Among the fixed effects methods, the Least Squares Dummy Variable (LSDV) approach is not a feasible option due to 107 dyads in our data, which is too many to be treated as separate variables. As a result, the Within-Group (WG) estimation method appears to be the most appropriate approach for applying fixed effects.

However, WG estimation also presents a challenge when applied to logistic regression. When the dependent variable is binary, there can be a loss of information if groups consistently display the same values. This loss may lead to biased estimates of the marginal effects of explanatory variables. The problem is exacerbated when the dependent variable represents a rare event. In such cases, the Linear Probability Model with Fixed Effects (LPM-FE) is more appropriate because it avoids information loss, which can occur in logistic regression models (Beck, 2020;

Timoneda, 2021). An issue to consider with LPM-FE is heteroskedasticity. Residuals in linear probability models are typically heteroskedastic, leading to inefficiency in the models and inaccuracies in statistical tests. To address this, we employ a robust standard error approach, specifically Heteroskedasticity-Consistent Standard Error (HCSE). Among the various methods for HCSE, we use the basic format suggested by White (1980), which estimates the variance in the error term using residuals from ordinary least square (Hayes & Cai, 2007; Long & Ervin, 2000).

In summary, to address the potential issues, we employ three methods: logistic regression, PML models, and LPM-FE with HCSE. Each method includes four models. The first two models use PSAs as the dependent variable: one without MA and the other including MA to examine its distinct effect. The other two models use TSAs as the dependent variable in the same manner.

Empirical Analysis

The results of the analysis are summarized in Tables 3, 4, and 5. Table 3 presents the results of logistic regression models, while Tables 4 and 5 show the results of PML models and LPM-FE

Table 3. Logistic Regression Models

	PSAs		TSAs	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Multilateral alliance		1.174*** (.184)		.523* (.306)
Defense pact	-.717*** (.133)	-1.492*** (.174)	-.290 (.204)	-.659** (.289)
Democracy	.499*** (.131)	.494*** (.133)	.363* (.196)	.356* (.197)
Preponderance	.001*** (.000)	.001*** (.000)	.001*** (.000)	.001*** (.000)
Strategic location	.418*** (.152)	.214 (.158)	.282 (.231)	.201 (.236)
Fishing resources	-.332 (.210)	-.452 (.211)	-.514* (.296)	-.560* (.297)
Oil	.383*** (.122)	.463*** (.124)	.470** (.186)	.501*** (.188)
Time	-.020 (.044)	-.009 (.047)	.030 (.065)	.032 (.066)
$Time^2$	.001 (.001)	.001* (.001)	.000 (.001)	-.000 (.001)
$Time^3$	-.000* (.000)	-.000** (.000)	-.000 (.000)	-.000 (.000)
Constant	-3.657*** (.773)	-3.414*** (.947)	-4.520*** (1.122)	-4.595*** (1.148)
N	3,197	3,197	3,197	3,197
AIC	2,044	2,006	1,098	1,097
Log likelihood	-1,011.952	-991.785	-539.072	-537.682

Notes: *** $p \leq 0.01$, ** $p \leq 0.05$, * $p \leq 0.1$

Table 4. Penalized Maximum Likelihood Models

	PSAs		TSAs	
	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8
Multilateral alliance		1.167*** (.183)		.527* (.299)
Defense pact	-.714*** (.132)	-1.485*** (.173)	-.289 (.201)	-.667** (.282)
Democracy	.496*** (.130)	.491*** (.132)	.358* (.193)	.352* (.193)
Preponderance	.001*** (.000)	.001*** (.000)	.001*** (.000)	.001*** (.000)
Strategic location	.419*** (.151)	.215 (.157)	.288 (.226)	.208 (.231)
Fishing resources	-.340 (.208)	-.459** (.209)	-.532* (.289)	-.578* (.289)
Oil	.382*** (.121)	.462*** (.123)	.468** (.183)	.498*** (.188)
Time	-.026 (.043)	-.016 (.047)	.017 (.060)	.019 (.061)
$Time^2$	.001 (.001)	.001 (.001)	.000 (.001)	.000 (.001)
$Time^3$	-.000* (.000)	-.000* (.000)	-.000 (.000)	-.000 (.000)
Constant	-3.493*** (.736)	- 3.719*** (.788)	-4.192*** (1.022)	-4.255*** (1.043)
N	3,197	3,197	3,197	3,197
Likelihood ratio test	129.889***	169.310***	40.936***	43.810***
Wald test	1242.948***	1225.799***	1196.281***	1191.683***

Notes: $^{***}p \leq 0.01$, $^{**}p \leq 0.05$, $^{*}p \leq 0.1$

models, respectively. These three tables help us robustly examine the hypotheses and illustrate how the results change when considering possible issues. The even-numbered models that include the MA variable robustly support the hypotheses: when dyads experiencing maritime claims share membership in multilateral alliances, they are more likely to attempt peaceful settlements and third-party settlements. Given the particularly rare event nature of TSAs, the results from both Model 8 and Model 12 are meaningful. The outcomes of both models firmly substantiate the second hypothesis. However, the statistical significance of the MA's effect is more pronounced in PSAs, indicating that MAs lead members to attempt peaceful settlements not only through third-party mediation but also through bilateral negotiations. Given the numerous variables included in the models, multicollinearity was checked using the variance inflation factor (VIF) in Table 6, and no issues were found.

Figure 2 visualizes the effect of MAs using predicted probabilities. We calculated the predicted probabilities to examine the marginal effects of MAs with Models 2 and 4. In the predictions, all other binary variables are set to 0, and numeric variables are fixed at their mean values. In Model 2, the probability increases from 0.11 to 0.28 due to MA, resulting in a marginal effect of 154.5%. Each value in Model 2 is distinctly separated within the 95% confidence intervals: for non-MA, the range is from 0.07 to 0.17, while for MA, it ranges from 0.18 to 0.41. The marginal effect in

Table 5. Linear Probability Model with Fixed Effects and HSCE

	PSAs		TSAs	
	Model 9	Model 10	Model 11	Model 12
Multilateral alliance		.103** (.042)		.033* (.017)
Defense pact	.059*** (.020)	-.024 (.039)	.030** (.015)	.004 (.020)
Democracy	.032 (.028)	.030 (.028)	.002 (.015)	.002 (.015)
Preponderance	-.000** (.000)	-.000*** (.000)	-.000 (.000)	-.000 (.000)
Strategic location	-.082 (.130)	-.071 (.120)	-.075 (.079)	-.071 (.079)
Fishing resources	.005 (.070)	.024 (.058)	-.028 (.038)	-.022 (.037)
Oil	-.014 (.039)	-.010 (.036)	.023 (.025)	.024 (.025)
N	3,197	3,197	3,197	3,197
F Statistic	3.715***	5.409***	2.137**	2.322***
Hausman test (χ^2)	44.849***	47.867***	28.295***	26.869***

Notes: $^{***}p \leq 0.01$, $^{**}p \leq 0.05$, $^{*}p \leq 0.1$

Table 6. VIFs of Models

	Model1	Model2	Model3	Model4
Multilateral Alliance	-	1.974	-	2.477
Defense	1.278	2.146	1.304	2.599
Democracy	1.243	1.258	1.221	1.232
Preponderance	1.143	1.143	1.184	1.183
Strategic Location	1.168	1.233	1.191	1.250
Fishing	1.165	1.177	1.200	1.211
Oil	1.068	1.091	1.102	1.117

Model 4 is less pronounced than in Model 2. The probability increases from 0.05 to 0.08 due to MA, resulting in a marginal effect of 60%, with some overlap in the confidence intervals. The results strongly support H1 but provide less support for H2.

The results generally align with the expected effects of the control variables. In most models except for Models 9 and 11, the defense pact variable decreases the chance of peaceful settlement attempts, consistent with Ryou-Ellison and Gold (2020). The moral hazard in defense pacts not only increases the possibility of low-level militarized disputes but also decreases the likelihood of peaceful resolutions. In the models with LPM-FE, the defense pact variable shows varied effects. In Models 9 and 11, which exclude MA, the coefficient is positive with a certain level of statistical significance. However, in Model 10, the variable's direction changes to negative, with no statistical significance. Therefore, in these models, the defense pact has no consistent impact and is definitely less meaningful than MA.

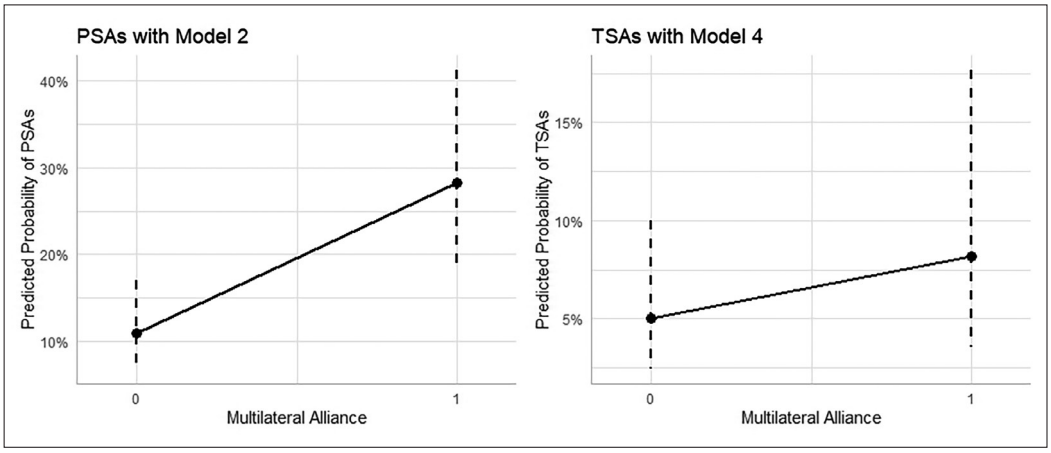

Figure 2. Marginal Effects of MAs on PSAs and TSAs
Note: Dash lines are 95% confidence intervals

The results regarding the joint democracy variable, however, do not align with findings of Daniels and Mitchell (2017). While Daniels and Mitchell (2017) found that democratic states are more conflictual in maritime claims, our analysis shows that democratic states simultaneously seek peaceful means for resolution. The power preponderance variable is significantly effective in logistic models and PML models in the expected direction, although no statistical significance is found in LPM-FE models. Thus, we can conclude that dyads with asymmetric material capabilities tend to seek more peaceful ways to resolve maritime claims, following existing studies (Bremer, 1992; Geller, 1993).

The second part of the control variables, regarding the tangible salience of maritime zones, shows inconsistent effects in their directions and significance across models. Limited to logistic models and PML models, the fishing resources variable and the oil variable are both significant in most models but with opposite directions: fishing-related maritime claims tend to accompany fewer peaceful settlement attempts, while oil-related maritime claims have a relatively robust effect in increasing peaceful settlement attempts. On the other hand, the strategic location variable has no robust effect. Thus, we can conclude that peaceful settlement attempts in maritime claims are more influenced by natural resources, especially oil, rather than strategic location. Lastly, time seems to have no systematic effect on this issue.

Discussion

In this section, we discuss the detailed mechanism of the MA effect in maritime conflict management. The economic interests in maritime zones can lead even allies to confront each other. As Ryou-Ellison and Gold (2020) argued, states seeking to expand their sovereign rights in critical maritime zones related to their allies may exploit the alliance relationship. Consequently, states occasionally experience militarized disputes between allies over maritime issues. However, unlike territorial claims, maritime claims have tangible salience with divisibility, making maritime issues negotiable. Conflicting parties that share membership in MAs do not immediately end their alliance relationship because of the conflicting issues due to the principle of diffuse

reciprocity in MAs. They anticipate more benefits from maintaining the relationship despite ongoing conflict with one member of the alliance. Additionally, other members of MAs demand peaceful resolutions to conflicts because they do not want the disputes between two members to disturb or collapse cooperation within the MA. Thus, conflicting dyads over maritime claims tend to seek peaceful settlement attempts when they belong to MAs.

The MA's pacifying effect on maritime claims can be observed in several instances. The Cod War between the UK and Iceland, both signatories to NATO since 1949, serves as a prime example of maritime claims between allies. In this dispute, NATO members, including the US, facilitated peaceful talks between the two disputants. Before the parties agreed to settle the issue in the International Court of Justice (ICJ), their negotiations during the 1960s were primarily mediated by NATO and third-party allies within it (Steinsson, 2018). Additionally, the decades-long maritime claim in the Caribbean Sea between Nicaragua and Honduras provides another example of a maritime dispute between parties with security ties. Both countries are signatories to the Organization of American States (OAS) since 1948, which includes obligations of defense, nonaggression, and consultation (Leeds et al., 2002). The OAS played a critical role in mediating and managing the conflict between the two countries (Lathrop, 2007).

One issue to be discussed from the empirical analysis is the difference in the MA's effects on PSAs and TSAs. When comparing the coefficients and statistical significance between Models 2 and 4, Models 6 and 8, and Models 10 and 12, the MA appears to have a greater impact on PSAs than on TSAs. These differences are further illustrated in Figure 2, where the marginal effect of the MA on TSAs is much less pronounced than on PSAs. These results strongly support H1 while offering only marginal support for H2. These findings are particularly compelling because, based on our theoretical inference, we expected MAs to promote third-party involvement in talks, as illustrated by the examples we provided earlier. However, based on these results, we can conclude that while MAs encourage allied members to engage in peaceful talks regarding their maritime claims, these talks do not necessarily involve third parties, which would make agreements more binding.

Another issue to discuss concerns the fishing resources and oil variables. Although they are not the focus of our study, their opposite coefficient directions yield intriguing results. Maritime claims involving fishing resources tend to experience fewer peaceful talks, whereas those involving oil reserves see more peaceful attempts. Despite both being valuable maritime resources, fish and oil differ in several key ways. First, fishing boats can withdraw from disputed zones when the other side cracks down on unauthorized fishing (Chen et al., 2023, pp. 3-4). In contrast, maritime oil drilling cannot be easily halted or relocated. Second, drilling for hydrocarbons in the seabed requires significant investment, which demands minimal technological and legal risks (Blyschak, 2013, pp. 210-211). As a result, fishing can continue without clear maritime boundaries, whereas drilling cannot. We infer that these factors explain the oil variable's consistent positive effect on both dependent variables.

Conclusion

This study addresses one research question: "How should alliances be designed for the peaceful management of maritime claims?" To answer this question, we proposed two hypotheses, both of which are supported by the results of our analyses. Based on these results, we argue that the multilateral design of alliances is an effective means for managing conflicts arising from maritime claims. MAs prove to be robust and effective tools in facilitating peaceful talks. Multilateral cooperation among allies, based on diffuse reciprocity and active third-party mediation, uniquely

contributes to peace when combined with the divisibility of maritime claims.

Our study has some limitations. The dataset used for our analyses is restricted to the years 1900-2001 and geographically covers only the Western Hemisphere and Europe. This limitation is primarily due to the constraints of our main dataset, ICOW version 1.1. We hope to cover a more extensive scope in future studies. Additionally, a significant limitation of our work is the reliance on dyadic datasets. Maritime claims are not always dyadic; there can be k-adic claim issues, which can lead to bias in dyadic datasets (Poast, 2010). Addressing this k-adic event issue is essential for future studies.

Despite some limitations, we firmly believe that our results make a concrete contribution to conflict and alliance studies. Above all, we build on the work of Ryou-Ellison and Gold (2020), which examines the relationships between maritime issues and alliances, highlighting the potential dangers of defense pacts in maritime contexts. We expand this discussion by exploring how maritime-related cleavages can be managed within alliances. In terms of conflict studies related to maritime claims, our presentation of the MA with robust empirical evidence contributes to discussions on specific solutions for maritime conflict management, adding to the work of Nemeth et al. (2014), Ásgeirsdóttir and Steinwand (2015, 2018), and Mitchell (2020). Regarding alliance design and cohesion, this work supports the institutional view on alliances (Keohane, 1989; Weitsman, 2003, 2013) and extends the discussion on alliance design (Leeds & Anac, 2005; Bearce et al., 2006; Long et al., 2007; Mattes & Vonnahme, 2010; Johnson, 2022).

Lastly, our results have substantial policy implications in the context of recent developments in alliance politics. Today's international security cooperation has increasingly become multilateral: NATO now includes Finland and Sweden; the US' bilateral alliance network in Asia, known as the hub-and-spoke system, is becoming more interconnected in multilateral ways; and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) has expanded its membership across regions. In both Europe and Asia, new allies and partners frequently encounter maritime claims with other members. These existing maritime claims may challenge the cohesion of alliances, thereby weakening their effectiveness and performance. However, utilizing the multilateral mechanisms of alliances may contribute to the peaceful settlement of maritime claims, thus fostering intra-alliance peace.

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