

Political Science 12: IR -- Third Lecture



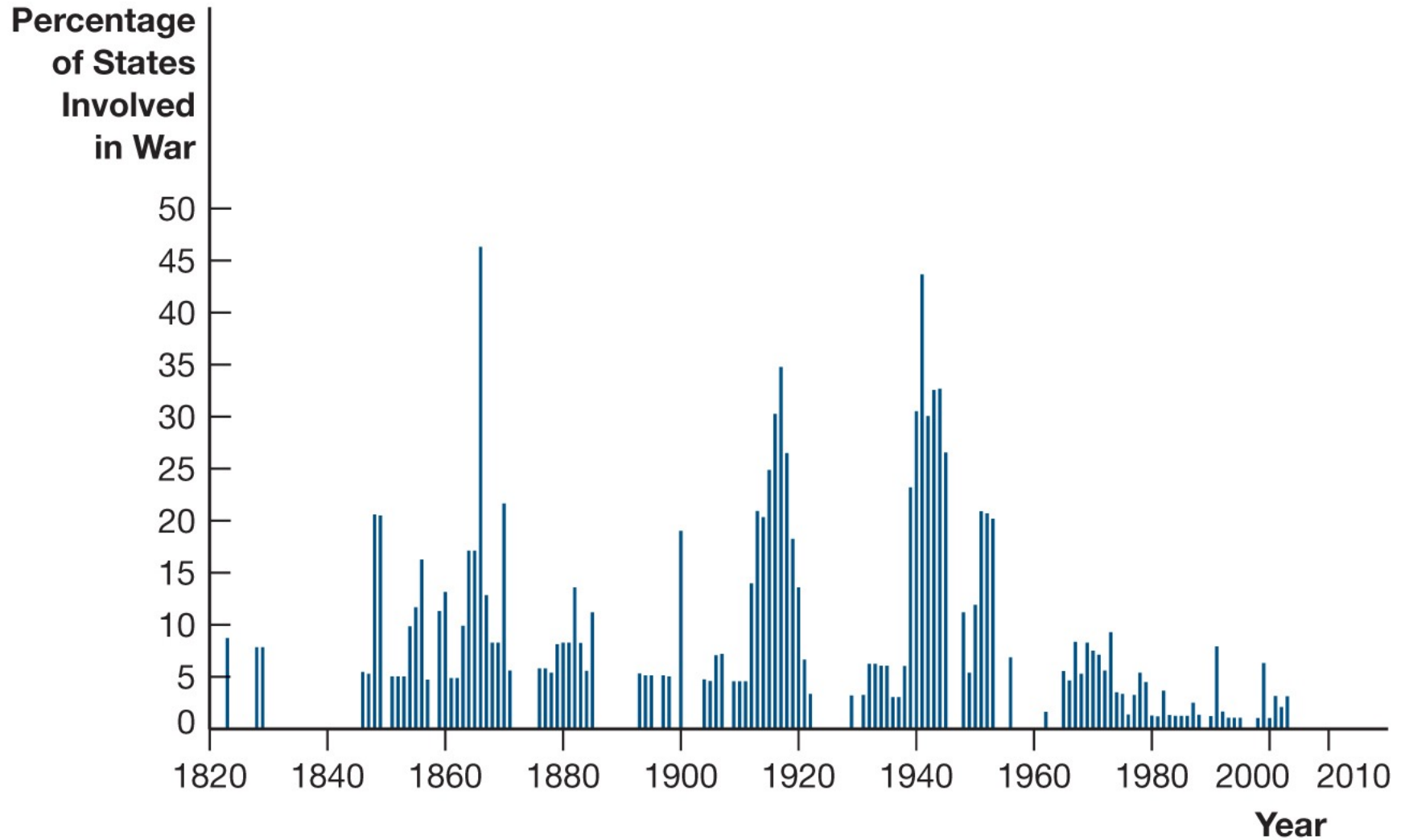
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**Why Are There
Wars?**

Why Is There So Much Peace in the World?

- Most nations are at peace most of the time
- American deaths from
 - 9/11: 2,986
 - Terrorism: A few dozen per year
 - Iraq War: 4,491 US KIA (174,000 Iraqi IBCp)
 - Murder, average year: 15,000
 - Car accidents, average year: 42,000
 - Lightning, average year: 90

The Percentage of States Involved in War per Year, 1820–2010



War Is Puzzling

- War is costly
- Blood and treasure
- States would rather get what they want without going to war
- “In war, the aggressor is always peace-loving; he would prefer to take over our country unopposed.”

—Karl von Clausewitz

Why Are There Wars?

1. What states fight over
2. War as outcome of a failed bargain
3. War from incomplete information
4. War from commitment problems
5. War from indivisibility
6. How to make war less likely

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What States Fight Over

- Territory

Territorial Claims in the

Kashmir Region



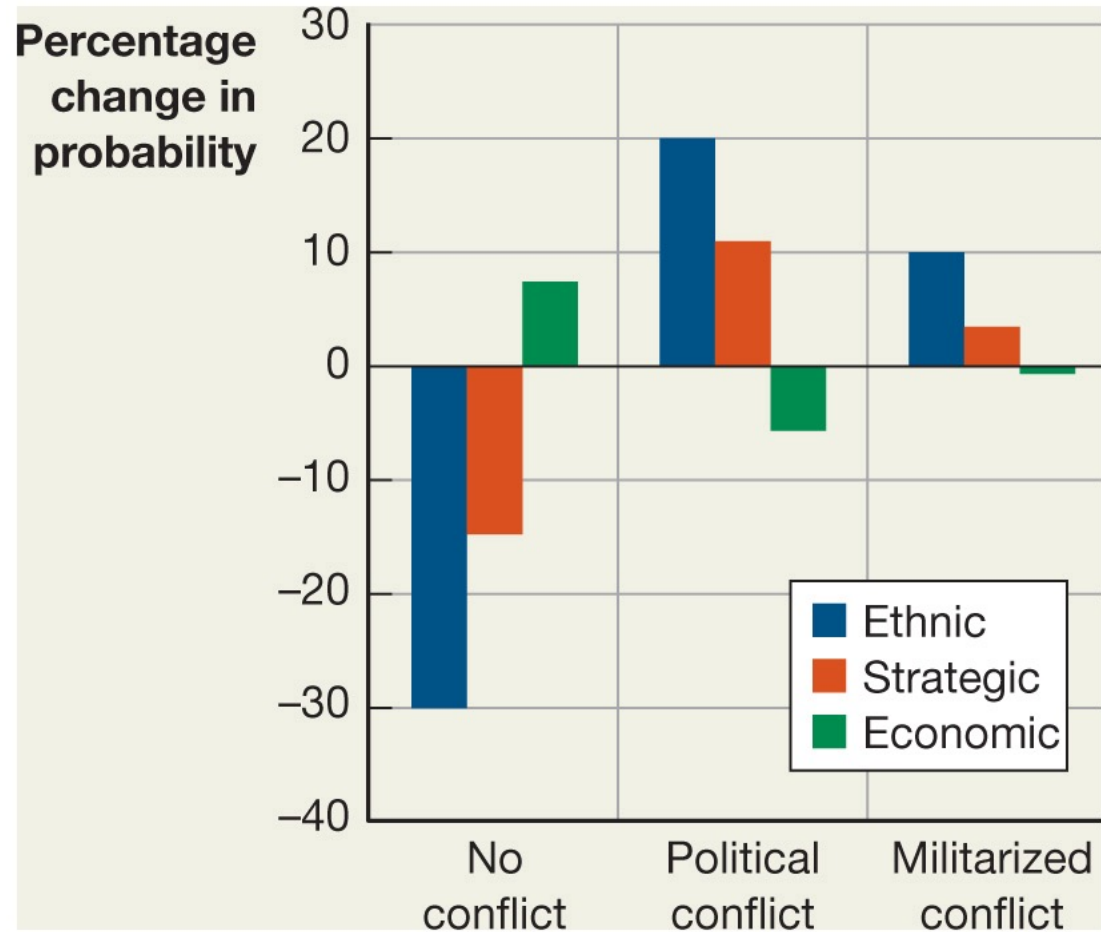
What States Fight Over

- National policy
- Regime type
- Ethnic or religious divisions



What States Fight Over

Territorial Disputes
and the Risk of
Interstate Conflict,
1950-1990



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War as Outcome of a Failed Bargain

Alternative explanations for war

1. Anarchy
2. Misperception
3. Domestic politics

Additional Features of War

War attributes

1. Intensity - casualties per time period
2. Duration - number of months/years
3. Scope - number of participants
4. “Decisiveness” - subjective

Additional Features of War

Intensity

1. Most wars are “nice little wars.”:
Low intensity conflicts, localized wars
2. Inverse relationship between
intensity and duration
3. Positive relationship between
intensity and scope (# of participants)
4. Intensity might be positively related

Additional Features of War

Duration

1. Most wars are relatively short
2. Low intensity contests -- tend to be long because they are not decisive
3. Wars of attrition -- tend to be long because goal is to exhaust opponent
4. High intensity contests -- can be short because they are informative

Features of War, cont.

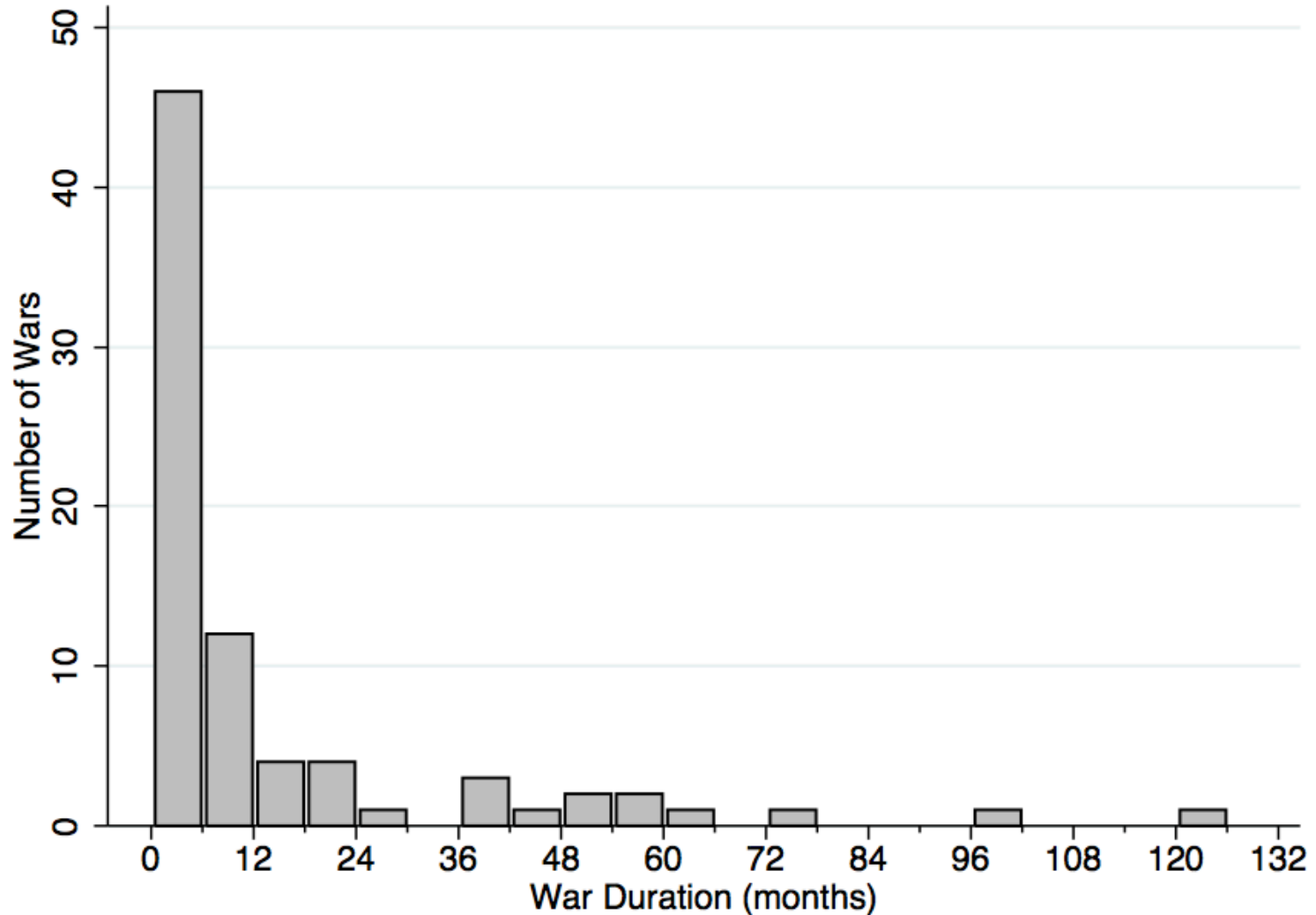
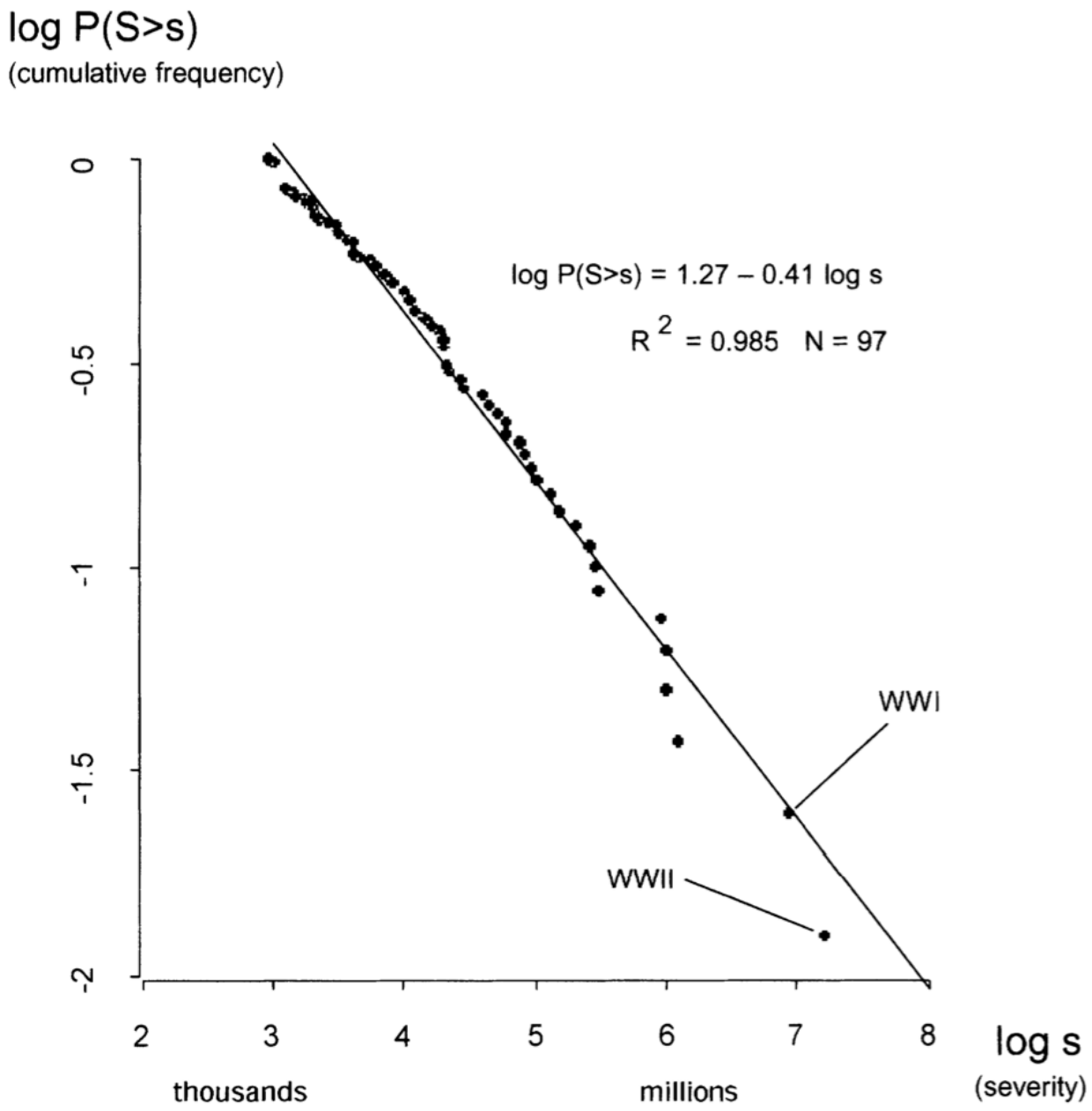
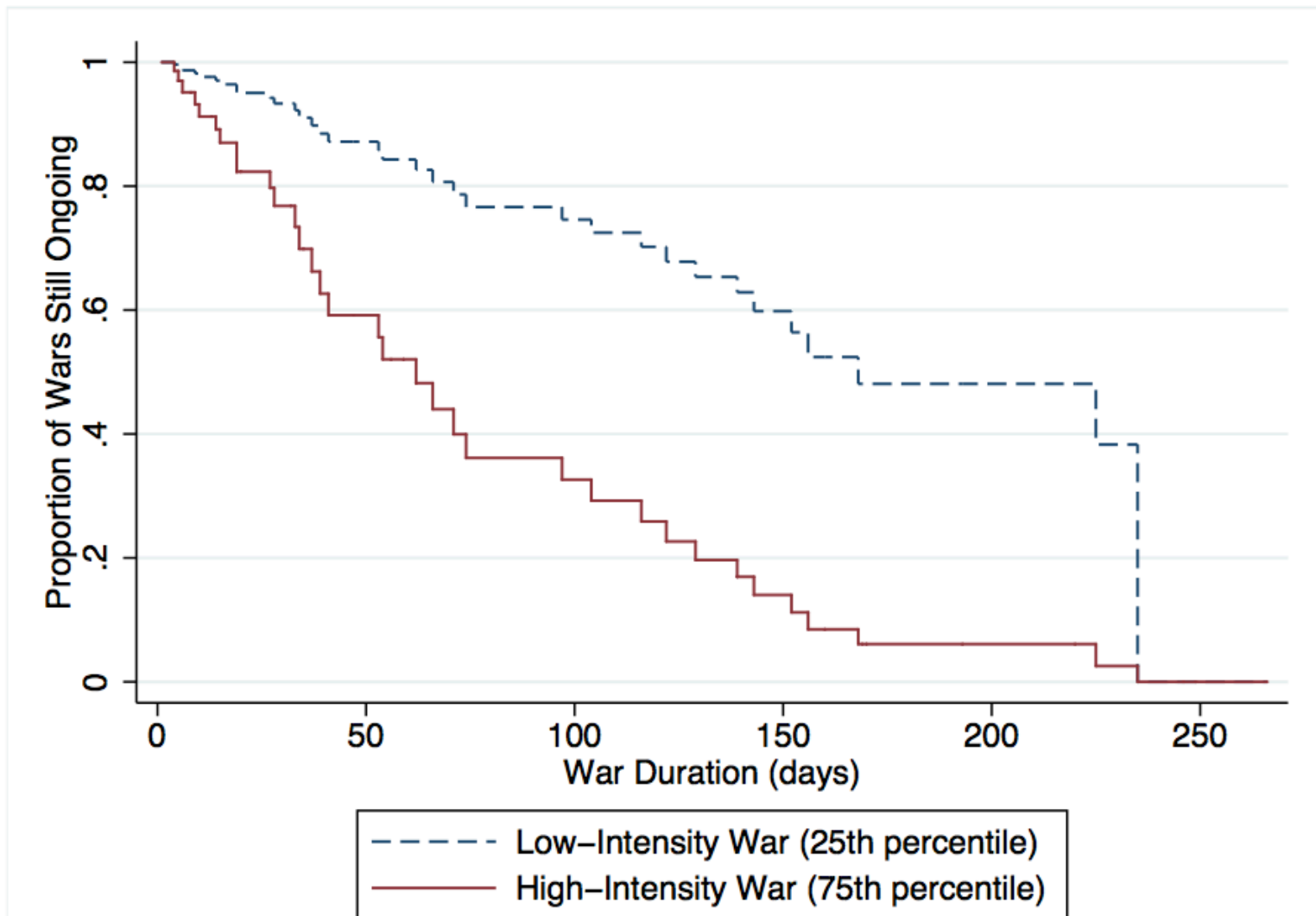


FIGURE 1. Cumulative Frequency Distribution of Severity of Interstate Wars, 1820–1997



Source: COW data.

Features of War, cont.

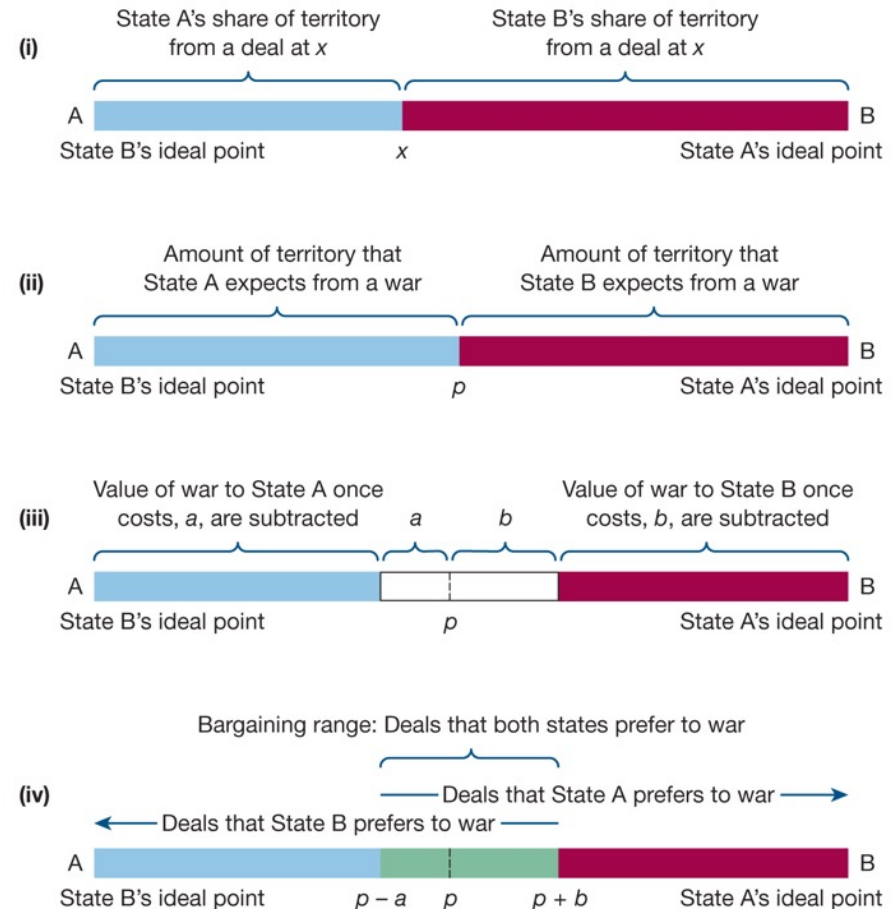


War as Outcome of a Failed Bargain

- Bargaining
- Coercive bargaining (aka “crisis bargaining” or “coercive diplomacy”)
- “Do what I ask or else!”

War as Outcome of a Failed Bargain

The Costs of War and the Bargaining Range



War as Outcome of a Failed Bargain: A Model of War



CASTLE A

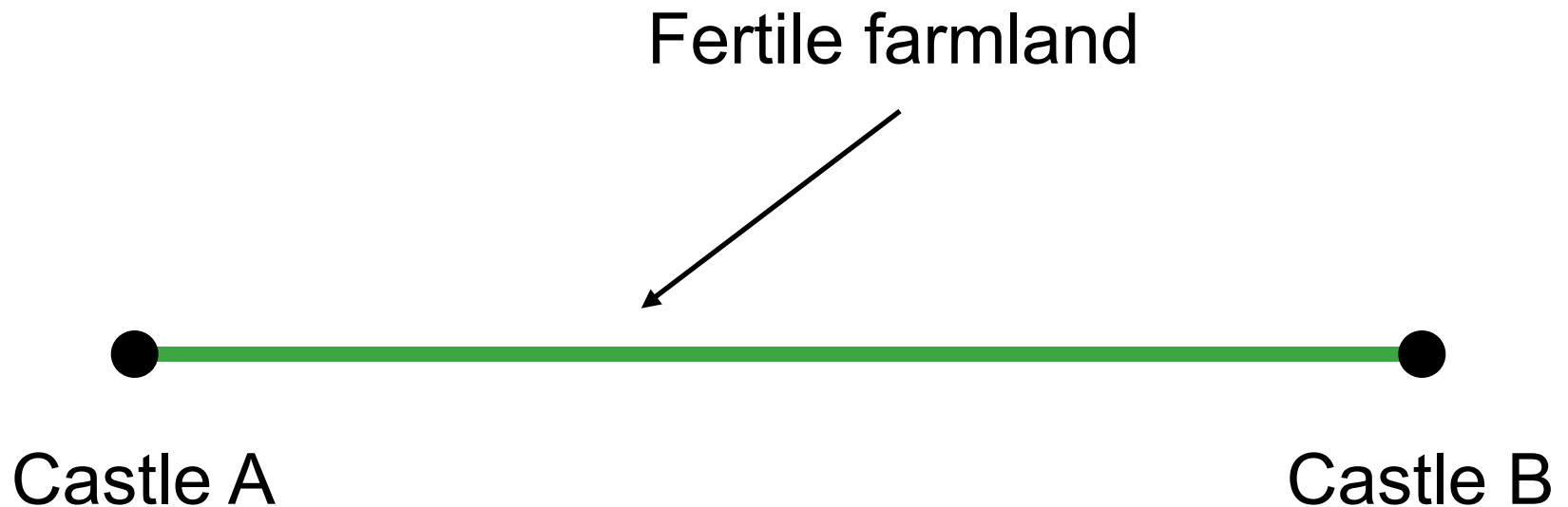


CASTLE B

A Model

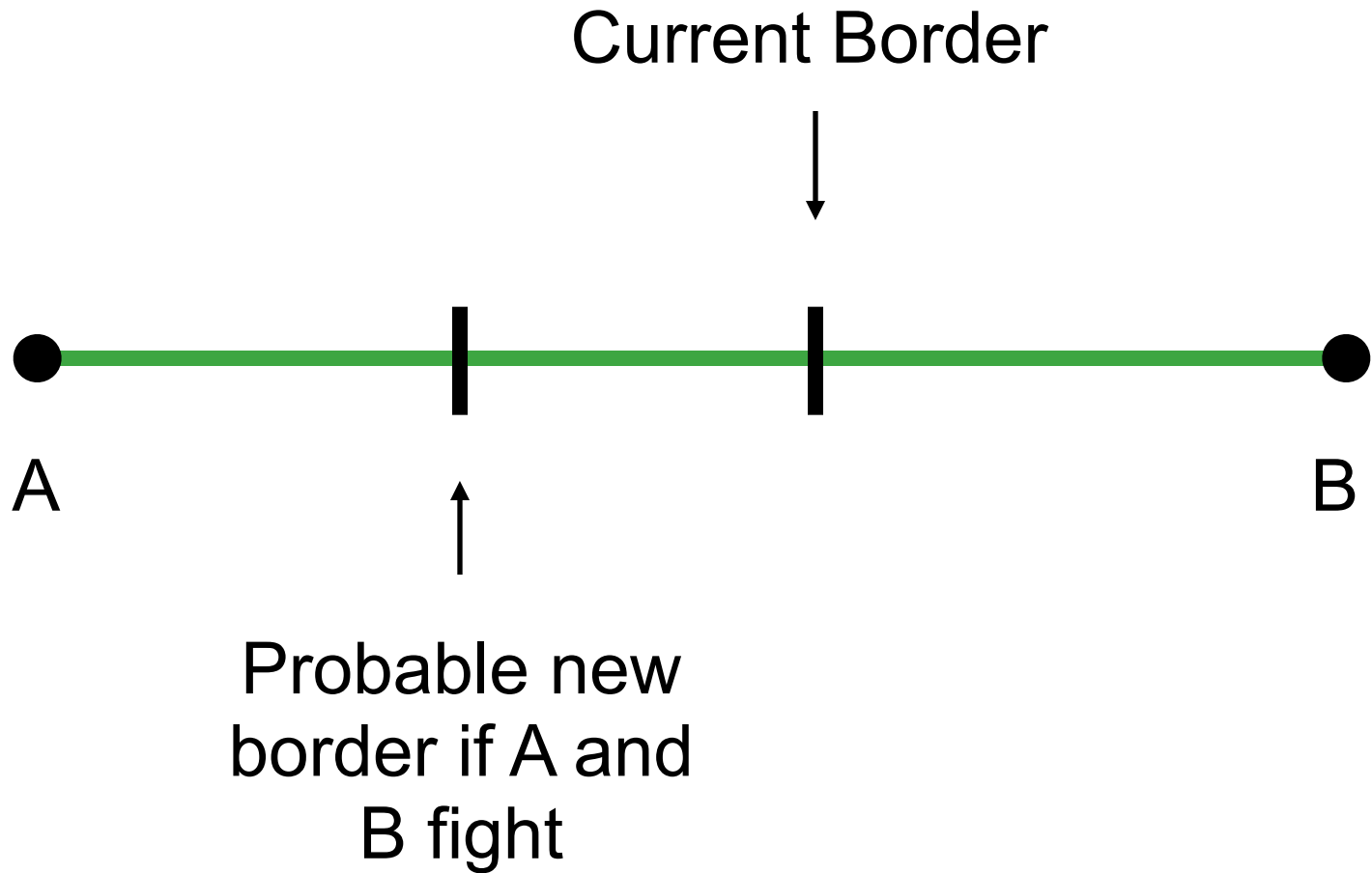


A Model of War

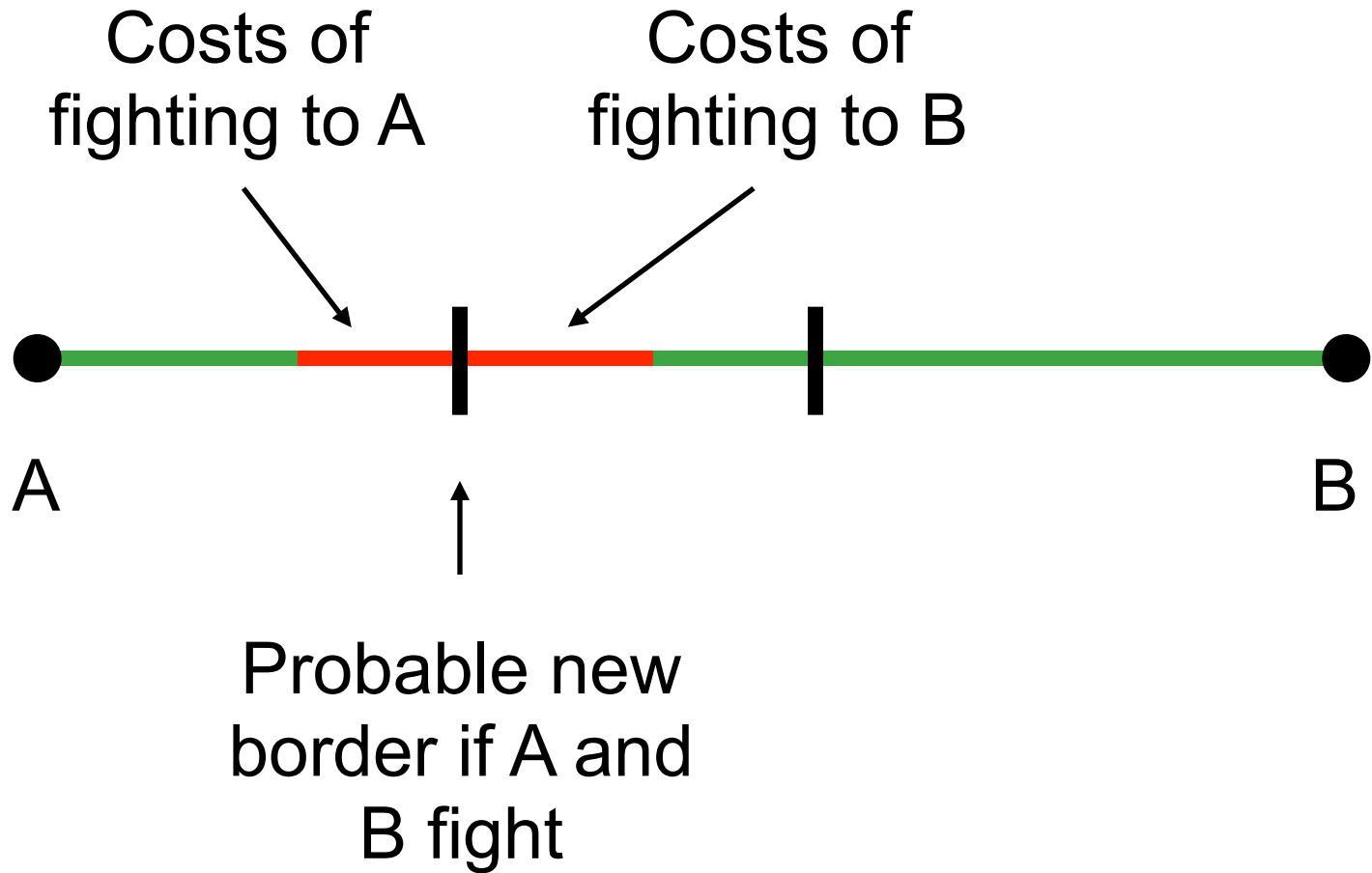


- The object of contention (the green line) can be anything that states are in conflict over.

A Model of War

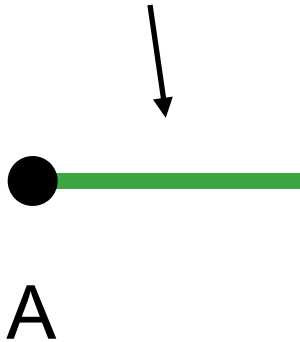


A Model of War

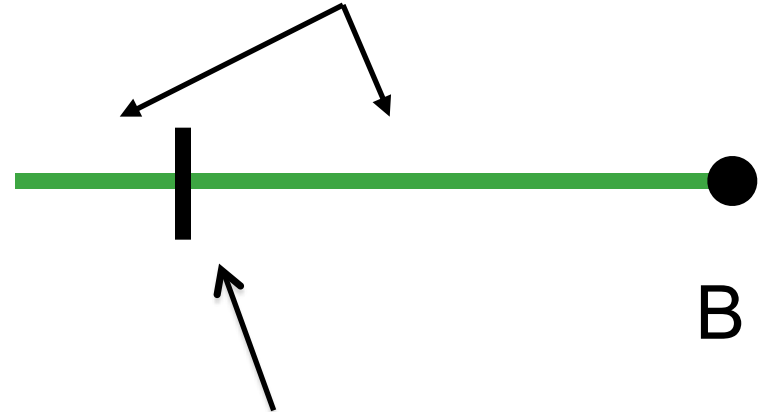


A Model of War

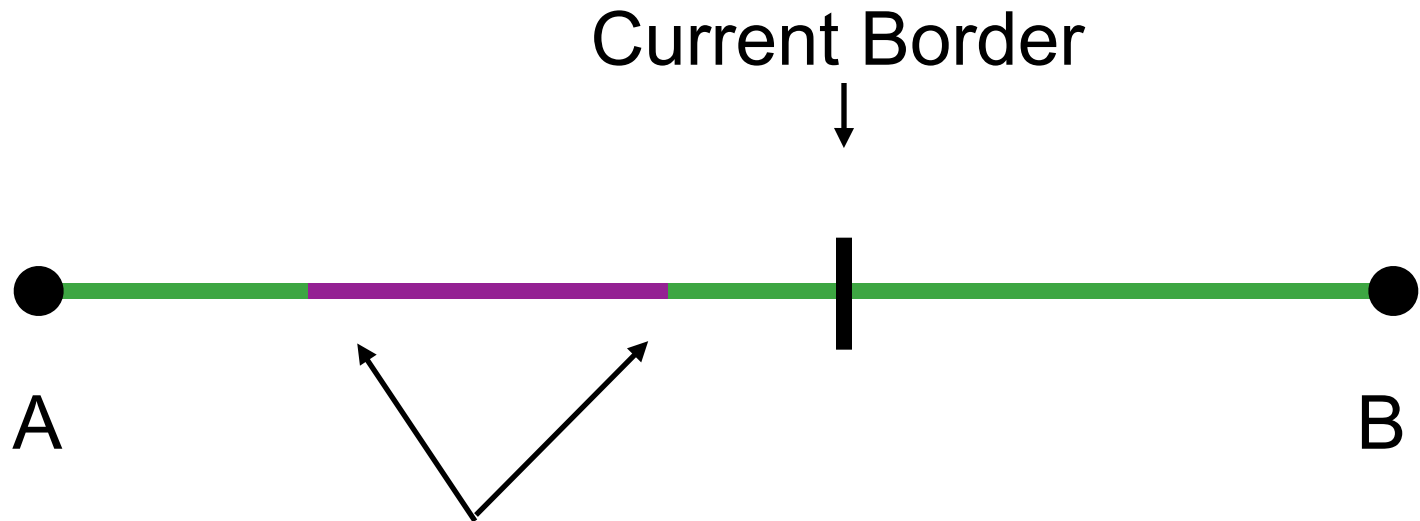
Net value of
fighting to A



Net value of
fighting to B



A Model of War

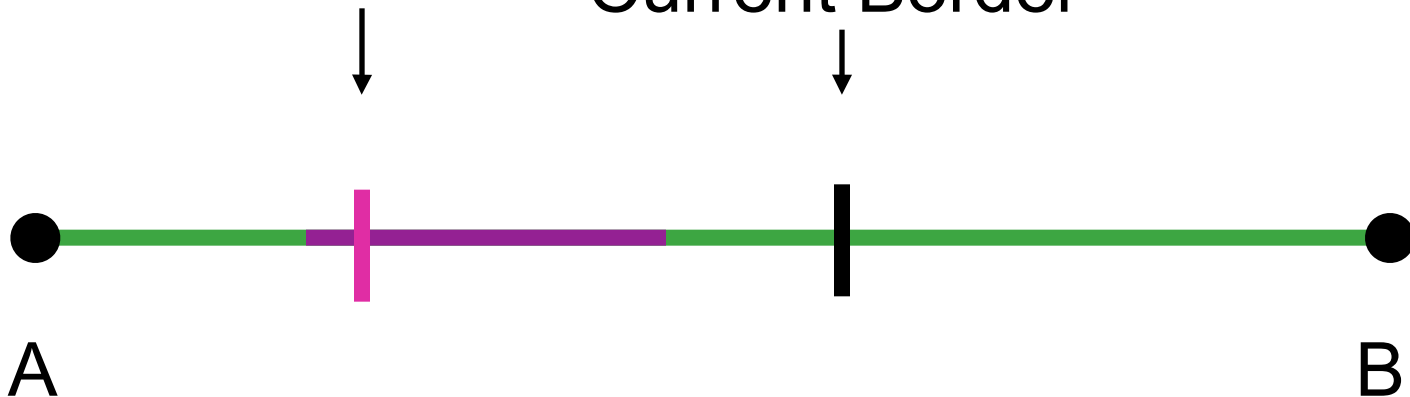


Range of possible border settlements that both A and B prefer to fighting

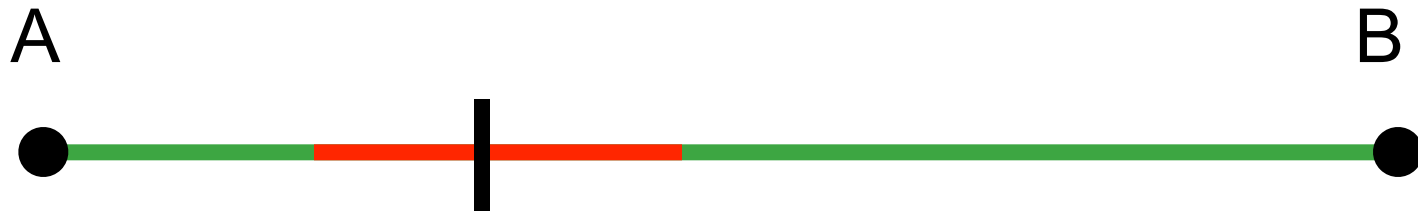
A Model of War

B's proposal for
a new border

Current Border



A Model of War

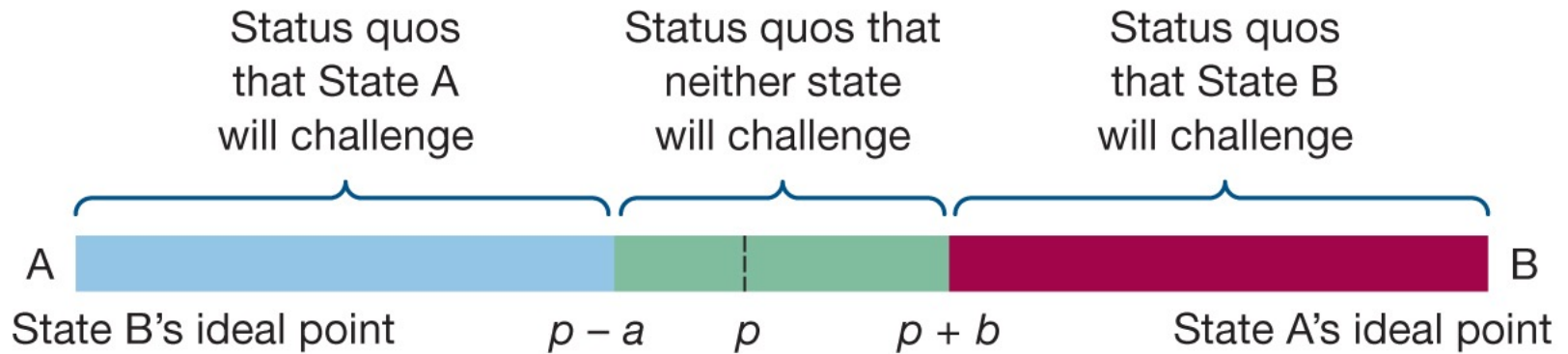


For any A and B, if

- War is costly
- The object of contention is divisible

Then there is always at least one negotiated settlement that A and B will both prefer to war.

Bargaining and the Status Quo



Deterrence



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War from Incomplete Information

- Leads to two bargaining mistakes:
 - Yielding too little
 - Demanding too much

War from Incomplete Information

- Incentives to misrepresent
- May seek to appear weaker or stronger
- May want to keep adversary guessing

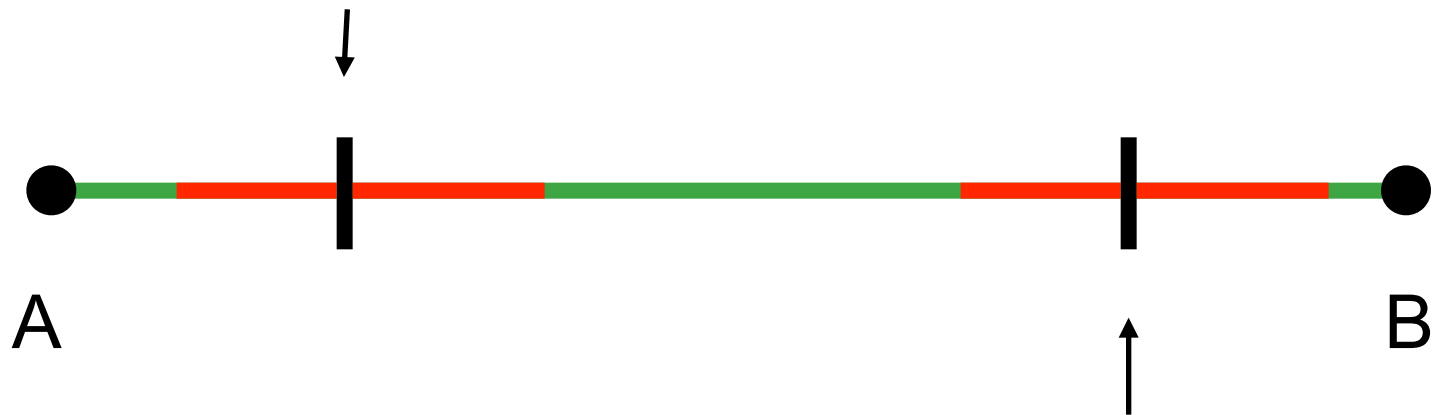
Bluffing



A thinks that the
probable new border
if A and B fight is here

Bluffing

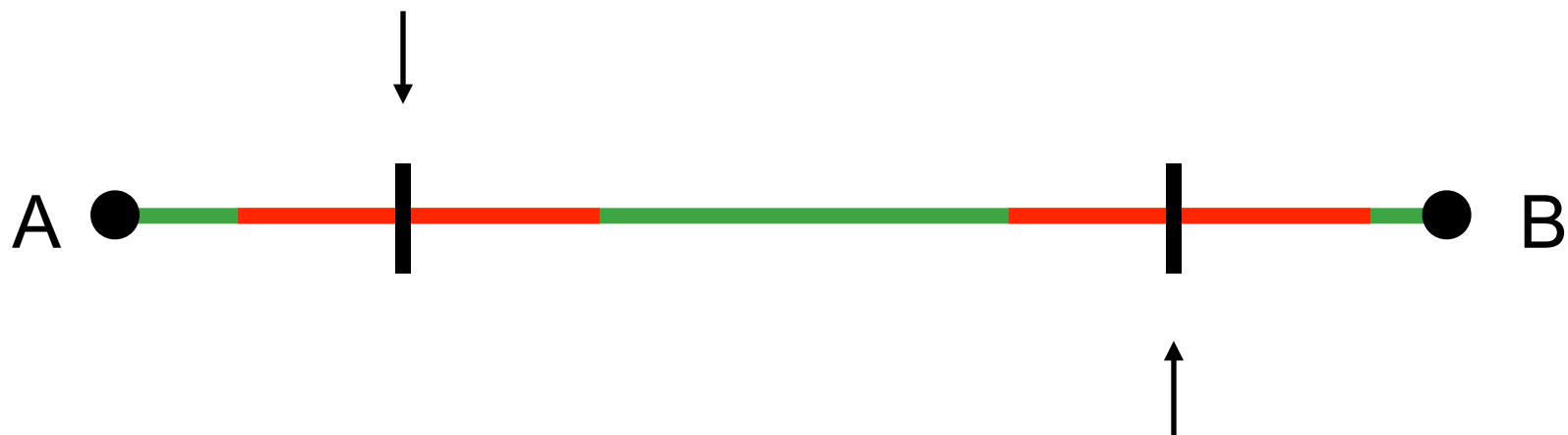
B says, "No--the probable new border if we fight is here."



A thinks that the probable new border if A and B fight is here

Bluffing

B has a secret weapon, putting the *actual* probable new border if they fight here



A thinks that the probable new border if A and B fight is here

War from Incomplete Information

- Communicating resolve
 - Brinkmanship
 - Tying hands
 - Paying for power

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Brinkmanship: The Cuban Missile Crisis



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War from Commitment Problems

- What if you find a settlement in the bargaining range?
- Can you trust your adversary to honor a deal?

War from Commitment Problems

- Bargaining over the future
- Preventive war
- Preemptive war (war in response to first-strike advantages)

War from Commitment Problems

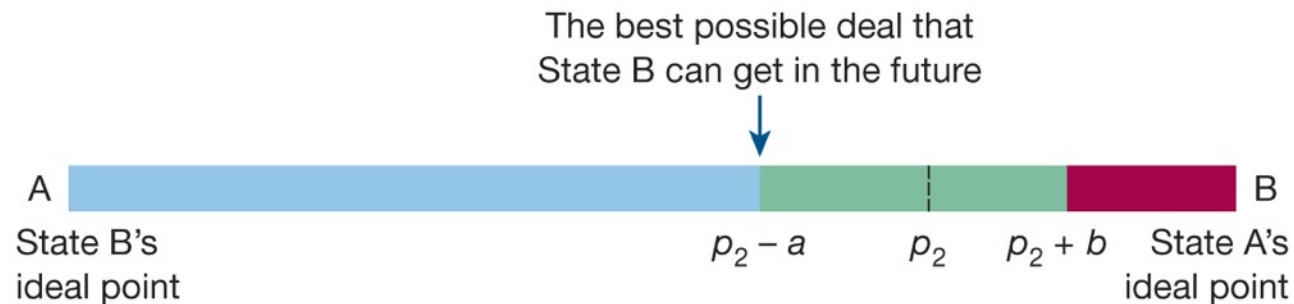
- Preventive war
 - Power shift: Even if states agree to a deal in the bargaining range now, the rising power may be tempted to use its power to revise the deal later.

Bargaining and Shifting Power

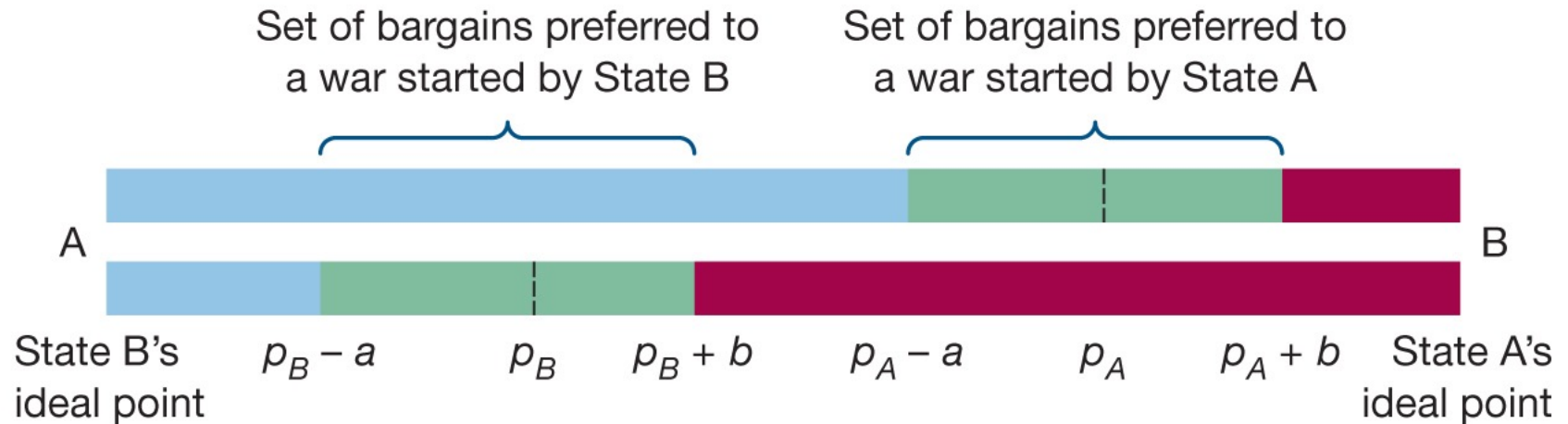
(i) Initial power distribution



(ii) Future power distribution following the rise of State A



Bargaining and First-Strike Advantages



Note: The upper line depicts the expected outcome of a war started by A. The lower line depicts the expected outcome of a war started by B.

War from Commitment Problems



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War from Indivisibility



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How to make war less likely

- Raise costs
- Increase transparency
- Outside enforcement
- Divide indivisible goods

Dividing Apparently Indivisible Goods



Political Science 12: International Relations

