Christopher Gelpi, "Alliances as Instruments of Intra-Allied Control," Chapter 4 in Haftendorn, Keohane, and Wallander, eds., *Imperfect Unions: Security Institutions across Time and Space*.

Realist models examine alliances as tools of "capability aggregation"; that is, they view alliances as reactions to, and restraints upon, the behaviour of states outside the alliance. But an emerging literature, drawn on strategic and institutionalist traditions, suggests that allies can also affect each other's actions: alliances not only provide a (costly and thus credible) signal of mutual support in case of conflict, but also reveal wider alignments of interests. Gelpi proposes to test the implications of this claim.

Such an analysis must avoid certain methodological quagmires. An alliance (or any institution) may appear to influence its membership strongly, for example, because its members act similarly; however, the correlation is spurious unless the members would have acted differently without the alliance. This is a real concern, since the members evidently felt sufficient alignment of interests to ally themselves with one another; meaningful inquiry should concentrate on cases where allies' interests differ.

A recurrent pattern that meets this very criterion is found in mediation when the mediator is allied with one of the disputant parties. There are a variety of conventional theories of mediation – it is a legal process, it facilitates communication – which imply that the ideal mediator is a non-threatening neutral state that actively but non-coercively promotes agreement among disputants. However, an institutionalist approach suggests that allied and thus apparently biased states can more effectively mediate. Such mediators can credibly (given their divergence of interests in the issue under dispute) threaten their allies with a breakup of the alliance, and thus cajole the recalcitrant disputant into compromise. Further, the allied disputant presumably trusts such a mediator, and would therefore be more willing to make concessions under its good offices. But the non-allied disputant cannot exploit the situation; as the alliance proves substantial convergence of interests, the mediator will likely reject extravagant claims against, and may indeed militarily intervene in favour of, its ally. Meanwhile, realist theories suggest that institutionalization is irrelevant, and that the most important quality for a mediator is the power to cajole.

Gelpi suggests that the institutionalist and realist hypotheses should be combined, because powerful and allied mediators can exert even more pressure on their allies (and restrain allies' foes) than other allied mediators. This combination of theories also suggests that in contrast to conventional wisdom, coercive tactics ought to be the most successful: they are, after all, what makes strength and alliance valuable tools for mediators. However, if the coercive tactics are applied to browbeat the non-allied state, the capability-aggregation model would be preferred to the realist-institutionalist fusion.

To test these competing propositions statistically, Gelpi takes data from the Correlates of War project, restricting his attention to those cases where an allied party was brought in as a mediator to a dispute. He controls for a number of factors: ostensible alliance between the disputants (think Greece vs. Turkey. . .this should make mediation more successful by allowing credible commitments), relative strength of disputants (a large imbalance of power will lead the stronger state to prefer aggressive action to mediation, and thus reduce the probability of mediation success), and level of violence already observed in the conflict (violence makes compromise and mediation harder). To ensure that the hypothesis distinguishes between restraint of the ally and domineering of the non-ally, Gelpi also controls for which disputant – ally or non – is the revisionist (if revisionist allies are usually successful in mediation, capability aggregation is probably occurring).

A series of logit and ordered probit regressions affirms Gelpi's beliefs: the conventional model of mediation is not supported, but the realist-institutionalist amalgamation is (i.e., Great Powers allied with disputants are the most successful mediators). Thus alliances can act not only as means of defence against an outside power, but also as an institutional means of coercion among the allying parties.