UNDERSTANDING POLITICS · CHAPTER 16

Democracy, War and Peace

Testing the democratic peace

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OPENING PUZZLE

A pattern that looks like a law

The pattern

Established democracies have rarely, if ever, fought wars against each other.

The question

Is it democracy, or something that travels with it?

Ask: what would count as a counter-example?

THE CLAIM

Dyadic and monadic

Dyadic

Democracies rarely fight each other.

Monadic

Democracies are less war-prone in general (weaker evidence).

War

Correlates of War: 1,000+ battle deaths between states.

Levy (1988): ‘as close as anything we have to an empirical law’.

KANT · THE FIRST DEFINITIVE ARTICLE

> *“The civil constitution in every state shall be republican.”*

Kant, *Toward Perpetual Peace*, 8:349

Citizens who bear war’s costs will hesitate to begin ‘such a bad game’ (8:351).

KANT'S REPUBLIC

Not the same as democracy

Representation

Citizens rule through representatives.

Separation

Executive separated from legislative power.

Democracy (Kant)

Direct rule, which he thought tended to despotism.

Doyle (1983) uses all three articles to explain why the peace is dyadic.

Three mechanisms

Institutional

Leaders need broad coalitions and choose wars carefully (Bueno de Mesquita et al., 1999).

Normative

Shared norms of compromise (Maoz and Russett, 1993).

Informational

Audience costs make threats credible (Fearon, 1994).

RIVAL EXPLANATIONS

Is the peace really democratic?

Capitalist peace

Markets and shared interests (Gartzke, 2007).

Cold War alliance

Common alignment after 1945 (Gowa, 1999).

Territorial peace

Settled borders (Gibler, 2007).

Russett and Oneal (2001): democracy, trade and IOs each matter independently.

HARD CASES

What do the codings show?

	Coding issue	Reading
Spanish–American War	Was Spain democratic?	Definition of democracy
Finland–Britain 1941	War declared, few deaths	Definition of war
Kargil 1999	Pakistan’s status before the coup	Strongest candidate exception
Fashoda, Cod Wars	Crises without war	Near-misses

COVERT ACTION

Peace in public, intervention in secret?

The record

Democracies have used covert action against elected governments (Downes and Lilley, 2010).

The implication

Restraint may rest on public accountability more than mutual respect.

Rosato (2003): the mechanisms do not survive historical scrutiny.

Are democratising states dangerous?

The finding

Early, incomplete transitions are more war-prone (Mansfield and Snyder, 1995).

The mechanism

Elites mobilise nationalism while institutions are weak.

Ask: what follows for democracy promotion?

SEMINAR TASK · 25 MINUTES

Is the peace democratic, capitalist or territorial?

1. Group A defends the democratic explanation.
2. Group B defends the capitalist peace.
3. Group C defends the territorial peace.

FINAL ESSAY

Is the peace democratic, capitalist or territorial?

Plan

State the dyadic finding and its definitions.

Test

Mechanisms against rivals and hard cases.

Judge

Real but conditional democratic effect?

1,500 words maximum · Student Pack: essay questions