The Democratic Peace

POSC 3610 – International Conflict

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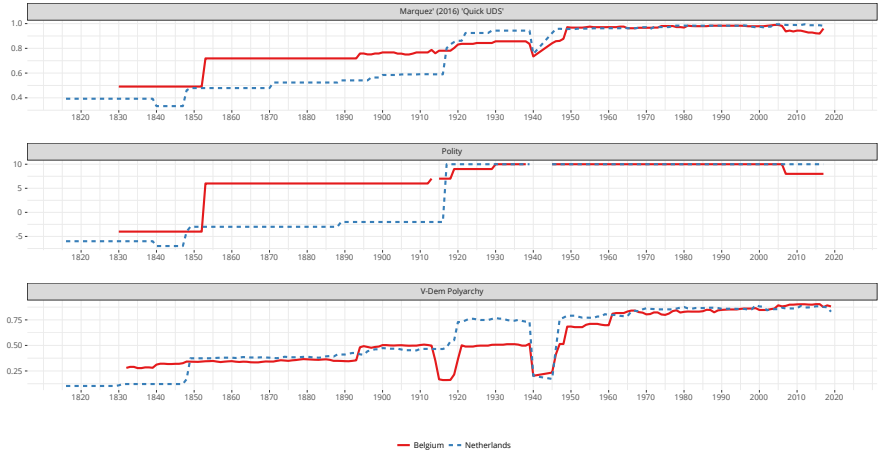
Goal for Today

Discuss the core findings and intuition behind "the democratic peace."

Confrontation of the Day: “The Ten Days’ Campaign” (MIC#0025)

Various Democracy Scores for Belgium and the Netherlands, 1816-2017

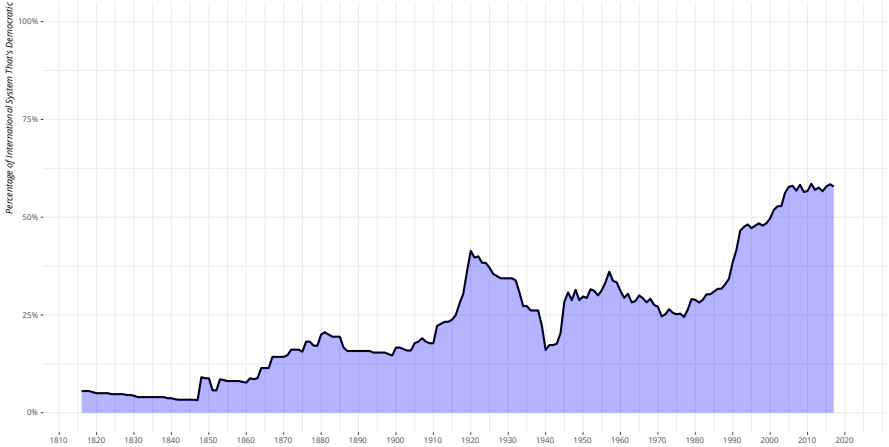
Peace emerged between Belgium and the Netherlands as both democratized, consistent with a story told by democratic peace theory.



Data: Coppedge et al. (2020), Marshall et al (2017), and Marquez (2016), by way of {peacesciencer}.
Note: Marquez' 'Quick UDS' extensions standardized to probability of democracy.

The Proliferation of Democracies in the International System (1816-2017)

States coded with `polity2` value at or above 6 are coded as democratic.



Data: The Polity Project (Center for Systemic Peace)

Democratic Peace Theory

Democratic peace theory (DPT) may constitute the most important advancement in IR scholarship.

- Originally a finding by Babst (1964), a skeptical Singer and Small (1976) confirmed it.
- Has important theoretical origins in Immanuel Kant (1795).
- Levy (1988) notes it's the closest thing to an empirical law in all political science.

Long story short: democracies don't fight each other, and never in war.

Democratic Peace Theory

Nonetheless, DPT is a bit of a misnomer.

- It's a democratic peace *fact.* It *needs* a theory.
- In many ways, this is still true.

So, why don't democracies fight each other?

Maoz and Russett (1993)

Maoz and Russett (1993) test two competing explanations.

- Normative model
- Structural (institutional) model

Normative Model

The authors identify two assumptions of the normative model.

1. States externalize their *internal* norms of behavior.
2. A conflict between democrats and autocrats will be characterized by the norms of the latter.

Normative Model

Autocrats have few if any normative bounds on their behavior.

- They may capture the state through use of lethal force and violence.
- They may also keep their hold on power through the same means.
- Autocratic foreign policy behavior reflects the autocrat's preferences.

Normative Model

Democracies, by contrast, rest on different norms.

- e.g. equal competition, minority rights, consent to be governed.
- Force and repression to govern would be deemed “illegitimate.”
- This imposes “normative” restraints on behavior.

International politics becomes an extension of domestic politics.

The Normative Model

The argument:

- In a jointly democratic dispute, both sides are secure in their knowledge of the other's normative restraints.
- In a mixed or autocratic dispute, nothing is in place to restrain escalation.

Democracies will not fight each other, but will fight other pairs of states.

Structural (Institutional) Model

The authors identify two assumptions of the structural model.

1. Dangerous foreign policy dilemmas require a lengthy mobilization of domestic support.
2. Only emergencies allow democracies to circumvent this mobilization process.

Structural (Institutional) Model

The argument:

- In a jointly democratic dispute, selling the conflict domestically takes too much time.
  - Cooler heads will prevail.
- There are no mutual structural constraints in a mixed or autocratic dispute.
  - This resembles an “emergency” that will allow democratic leaders to circumvent the lengthy mobilization process.

Democracies will not fight each other, but will fight other pairs of states.

What Does This Look Like Empirically?

Units of analysis:

- non-directed dyad-year
- state-year (e.g. USA-1816, USA-1817, USA-1818)

Dependent Variables

Dependent Variables:

- *confrontation onset*: binary, indicates a unique confrontation onset in dyad-year/state-year
- *sum of minimum fatalities*: total (minimum) estimated fatalities in dyad-year/state-year
- *sum of maximum fatalities*: total (maximum) estimated fatalities in dyad-year/state-year
- *dyadic war*: whether a confrontation escalated to over 1,000 [dyadic] (minimum) fatalities

Main Independent Variable(s)

Main Independent Variable(s): democracy (Polity project)

- *Joint democracy*: both members of dyad have `polity2 > 6` in dyad-year (dyad-year)
- *State is a democracy*: state has `polity2 > 6` in state-year (state-year)

Note:

- There's not a great reason to use Polity over alternatives these days.
- It is, however, the most common democracy measure you'll see.

Control Variables

Control Variables:

- *Dyad-year*: territorial rivalry, CINC proportion (W/S), land/water contiguity, major powers in the dyad, defense pact, advanced economies
- *State-year*: territorial rivalry, CINC score, num. land/sea borders, major power status, GDP per capita

Other notes: (i.e. things that academics care a lot about)

- Confrontation data: Gibler and Miller (Forthcoming)
- Sample: politically relevant dyads (i.e. neighbors and/or dyads with a major power)
- Onset estimated using logistic regression.
- Fatalities estimated with Heckman sample correction, selecting on ongoing confrontations.
  - Otherwise: basic OLS ("linear regression").
- War model is Bayesian probit with ad hoc Heckman sample correction.

Table 1: A Dangerous Dyad-ish Analysis of Inter-state Conflict

	Conf. Onset	Min. Fatalities	Max. Fatalities
Territorial Rivalry	0.921***	0.506***	0.583***
	(0.057)	(0.145)	(0.159)
Land Contiguity	1.012***	-0.052	-0.095
	(0.069)	(0.175)	(0.191)
Other Contiguity	0.540***	-0.304	-0.323
	(0.093)	(0.211)	(0.231)
CINC Proportion	0.612***	-0.033	-0.185
	(0.092)	(0.216)	(0.236)
Both Major Powers	0.756***	0.990***	0.909***
	(0.088)	(0.213)	(0.234)
Major-Minor	0.133*	0.477**	0.472**
	(0.066)	(0.148)	(0.162)
Defense Pact	0.007	-0.285*	-0.354*
	(0.060)	(0.138)	(0.151)
Joint Democracy	-0.815***	-0.367+	-0.436+
	(0.088)	(0.212)	(0.232)
Min. GDP per Capita in Dyad	0.112***	-0.214***	-0.263***
	(0.017)	(0.038)	(0.041)
Num.Obs.	107798	2338	2338

+ $p < 0.1$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

How to Interpret a Regression Table Like This

1. Find the variable(s) of interest.
2. Look for direction (positive/negative)
3. Look for “stars” (to determine statistical significance)

Table 2: The Important Results of Our Analysis (Omitting the Control Variables)

	Conf. Onset	**Min. Fatalities**	**Max. Fatalities**
Joint Democracy	-0.815***	-0.367+	-0.436+
	(0.088)	(0.212)	(0.232)
Num.Obs.	107798	2338	2338

+ $p < 0.1$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table 3: The Important Results of Our Analysis (Omitting the Control Variables and Color Coded)

	Conf. Onset	**Min. Fatalities**	**Max. Fatalities**
Joint Democracy	-0.815***	-0.367+	-0.436+
	(0.088)	(0.212)	(0.232)
Num.Obs.	107798	2338	2338

+ $p < 0.1$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table 4: The Important Results of Our Analysis (Omitting the Control Variables, Color Coded, Identifying Significance)

	Conf. Onset	**Min. Fatalities**	**Max. Fatalities**
Joint Democracy	**-0.815*** **	**-0.367+**	**-0.436+**
	(0.088)	**(0.212)**	**(0.232)**
Num.Obs.	107798	2338	2338

+ $p < 0.1$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table 5: An Escalation Model of Dyadic War

	Dyadic War
Territorial Rivalry	**0.392**
	[0.177, 0.617]
Land Contiguity	-0.168
	[-0.402, 0.074]
Other Contiguity	**-0.357**
	[-0.685, -0.053]
CINC Proportion	-0.291
	[-0.624, 0.043]
Both Major Powers	**0.911**
	[0.634, 1.187]
Major-Minor	**0.482**
	[0.271, 0.705]
Defense Pact	**-0.376**
	[-0.649, -0.128]
Joint Democracy	**-10.801**
	[-32.955, -1.743]
Min. GDP per Capita in Dyad	**-0.071**
	[-0.124, -0.018]
Num.Obs.	2338

Note:
Model is Bayesian GLM with default {rstanarm} priors.

Table 6: A Monadic Analysis of Inter-state Conflict

	Conf. Onset	Min. Fatalities	Max. Fatalities	War
Has Territorial Rivalry	0.292***	0.199+	0.209+	0.233***
	(0.048)	(0.103)	(0.111)	(0.060)
CINC Score	5.519***	-1.428	-2.941*	1.528*
	(0.702)	(1.279)	(1.372)	(0.611)
Num. Land Borders	0.087***	-0.076***	-0.082***	-0.032**
	(0.009)	(0.019)	(0.021)	(0.011)
Num. Sea Borders	0.076***	-0.086***	-0.098***	-0.071***
	(0.010)	(0.023)	(0.025)	(0.016)
Major Power	0.145	1.193***	1.263***	0.710***
	(0.100)	(0.182)	(0.195)	(0.104)
Is Democracy (Polity)	-0.040	-0.296*	-0.370**	-0.237**
	(0.054)	(0.119)	(0.127)	(0.082)
GDP per Capita	0.048**	-0.294***	-0.353***	-0.106***
	(0.018)	(0.042)	(0.045)	(0.024)
Num.Obs.	14089	3245	3245	4115

+ $p < 0.1$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table 7: A Monadic Analysis of Inter-state Conflict

	Conf. Onset	Min. Fatalities	Max. Fatalities	War
Is Democracy (Polity)	-0.040	**-0.296***	**-0.370****	**-0.237****
	(0.054)	**(0.119)**	**(0.127)**	**(0.082)**
Num.Obs.	14089	3245	3245	4115

+ $p < 0.1$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

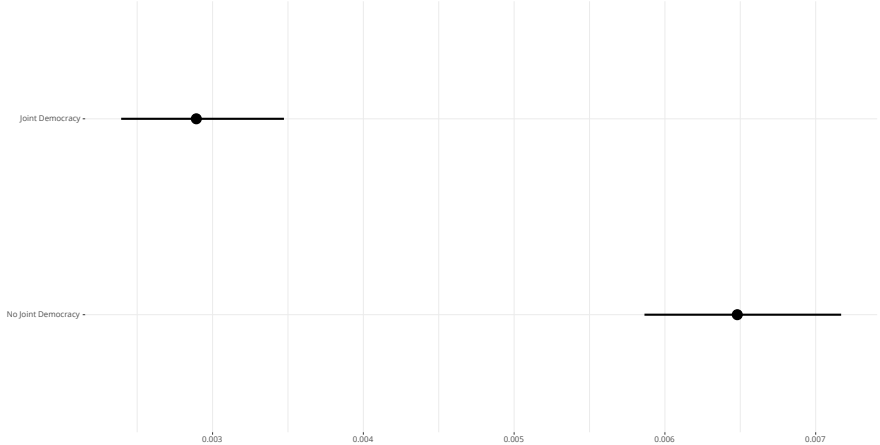
Takeaways

The core of the democratic peace: democracies do not fight each other, but aren't necessarily more peaceful in general.

- Joint democracy is more peaceful than other dyadic regime pairings.
- The probability of escalation to war is fantastically rare.
- Democracies are still as conflict-prone at the unit (monadic) level.
- Their confrontations, though, seem to be of lesser severity.

The Simulated Probability of Confrontation Onset, by Dyadic Regime Type

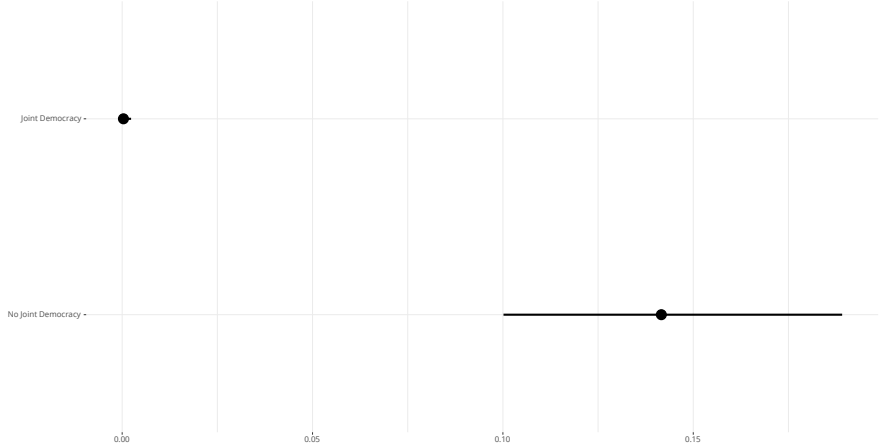
Joint democracy leads to percentage change in the probability of confrontation onset of about 55%. That's a big effect!



Simulation by way of multivariate normal distribution, given Model 1 in this presentation.

The Probability of Dyadic War Between Joint Democracies is Fantastically Small, Almost Zero

The baseline probability of escalation, all things equal, is .141. With joint democracy: about .00037.



Mean Probability of Confrontation Escalation to Dyadic War (with 95% Intervals)

Summaries of estimated predictive draws from the Bayesian probit model from earlier in this presentation.

What Are The Jointly Democratic Wars We Observe?

Flukes, coding artifacts, odd cases, and almost exceptions that prove the rule.

- Coding artifact of ephemeral declaration of war from WWII allies to Finland
  - There were some low-level skirmishes between the UK and Finland in 1941, with no more than 25 fatalities through the year.
- Franco-Siamese War (MIC#0196)
  - Britain never actually fought France.
- India-Pakistan "Kargil War" (MIC#4007)
  - Pakistan would soon have a military takeover of the state.
- Cyprus-Turkey 1974 conflict (MIC#1293)
  - Turkey had a coup (by memorandum) in 1971, and another in 1980.
- Lithuania's campaign for independence against (in part) Germany (MIC#2604) in 1919/1920.
  - A weird case at a weird moment in time.

Conclusion

The democratic peace is one of the most important empirical discoveries in IR.

- Joint democracies rarely fight each other, and almost never in war.
- The core is “dyadic” and not necessarily “monadic.”
- Theoretical arguments focus on norms or democratic institutions.

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