

'Steps to War' Paper Instructions

POSC 3610 - International Conflict

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Basic Format

The paper you will write in this class will entail a summary of *The War Puzzle* (Vasquez, 2009) and an evaluation of how well Vasquez' core argument about how disputes become war fits a particular war of your choosing.

I will address the basic formatting concerns first. The research design paper should be *single-spaced* and between 6,000 to 8,000 words. This word count includes title, front-matter, and bibliography. Margins should be one-inch on all sides. This will correspond with a paper that is approximately eight to ten single-spaced pages. Citation and references should be done following APSA style (American Political Science Association, 2006).

Case Selection

It's also important to belabor upfront the case selection criteria for this paper. Table 1 (see end of the document) lists 53 wars in the Gibler, Miller and Little (2016) data from 1816 to 1919. These are "wars" the extent to which the hostility level (see: Jones, Bremer and Singer, 1996) is 5 in the data. You will pick one of these wars to summarize. Do note that World War I is *not* available to choose even though there are several "joiner" disputes corresponding with that war.

These cases are first-come-first-served. I will not allow more than one student to cover one particular war, no matter how popular the selection might be. The Canvas module for the site contains an excerpt from Sarkees and Wayman (2010) that briefly describes almost all these entries. Wikipedia is a fine place to start as well if you have never heard of one of these wars. It is not, however, a fine place to end your search.

I will add the caveat here that any paper you write without first clearing your topic with me gets an automatic zero. You must consult with me what case you will do before submission of your paper.

Introduction

The student should introduce the paper to follow in about three or four paragraphs. This is the part of any paper that is easy to neglect, but it is subtly one of the paper's most important parts. This will be an important life lesson for students who do not have a lot of practical writing experience; the introduction is where the reader makes first impressions of the paper and the author. If I, as a reader, do not have a firm idea of what is going to be addressed in the paper after the first few sentences, the fate of the paper is in serious peril.

That said, the nature of this assignment is going to make the introduction rather straightforward and unexciting. Here is a broad template for what the introduction should resemble. Think of each entry in the itemized list to follow as coinciding with the theme of the paragraph in this section.

1. Give me a paragraph synopsis of what the “steps to war” argument is. Sell me at least a little bit on its importance (i.e. why should I care what “steps to war” is?).
2. Transition to the war you will evaluate. Describe the war but also make sure to bridge the previous paragraph to this. In other words, start by asking if this prominent theory of how disputes become war matches the particular case. Do not forget you should also give me some indication why the war is important. In other words, what is important about, say, the Seven Weeks War and why should the reader evaluate this war in the “steps to war” framework?
3. Outline the paper to follow. This will be a cookie-cutter “The paper proceeds in the following fashion. First, I summarize the ‘steps to war’ argument. Then, I outline how the MID escalated to war.” Make it work for what you’re doing, and obviously expand on this simple passage I wrote, but make sure the final paragraph of the section outlines the rest of the paper.

I will add one caveat here. Make sure your introduction previews your argument. It’s tempting to write a paper like this that tries to “surprise” the reader with some dramatic reveal at the end of the paper that finally mentions the author’s argument. Don’t do that. Make sure you write this section of the paper *knowing what you intend to argue* (i.e. how well Vasquez’ steps to war argument fits the case you will describe).

Reviewing the Steps to War Argument

The student will need to review the “steps to war” argument in this section of the paper, a treatment that will span from roughly six to eight paragraphs.

To be clear, the “review” in this context means summarizing Vasquez’ core argument. He contends that certain issues, when state leaders handle them a certain way, create conflict spirals that lead states to major wars they should strive to avoid. This “realist” roadmap to war can have important implications for the size, scope, and severity of the war itself. The student’s task in this section of the paper is to condense Vasquez’ core argument and findings from across his book into this six-to-eight paragraph summary.

Testing the Steps to War Argument With Your Case

This section will be the meat of your paper. Here, you’ll relate Vasquez’ general argument to the war you will examine and explain how well Vasquez’ “steps to war” model explains the war you chose. Your treatment here will need to be broad in scope but narrowed in detail. In other words, your treatment here will need to focus on the following attributes of the war.

- Was the motivating issue consistent with what Vasquez argues generally leads states to war? Why or why not? Be mindful that Vasquez’ primary interest might be what he terms ‘territo-

riality' but his treatment is nebulous enough to include concerns of proximity, contiguity, and rivalry.

- How did the *MID* start? You'll notice the start date in Table 1 corresponds with the first threat, display, or use of force in what *became* a war (c.f. [Jones, Bremer and Singer, 1996](#)). Your treatment here *must sequence the events by which the MID culminated in war* and I will read it carefully to see how thorough you are. This will require you digging through newspaper archives for *Times of London* and/or the *New York Times* in addition to [other newspaper data sources](#) that [Clemson's library](#) has available. Start doing searches on [Google Books](#) and [Google Scholar](#) as well.
- What were the initial positions of the multiple state leaders and elites with a stake in the issue that ultimately led to war? Who was trying to influence the resolution of the dispute and toward what end? Identify the "hard-liners" and "soft-liners"/"accommodationists" that would interest Vasquez for his "steps to war" model. Your treatment here should identify the major players (e.g. foreign ministers, ministers of war, heads of state, other decision-making elites, even, when appropriate, the general public). It's worth saying you cannot adequately do this part of your analysis without hitting the books. [Google Books](#) and [Google Scholar](#) will be your friend.
- How did the "hard-liners" push for war and ultimately get it? Do notice there's a selection effect in this assignment. You're covering wars, so invariably a set of decision-making elites that wanted war were able to secure policies that escalated the MID to war. You'll need to tell me how the "hard-liners" in the decision-making circle were able to get what they wanted and how they were able to quell the policies proposed by those who wanted some kind of accommodation or peaceful conflict resolution. How did the "soft-liners" acquiesce? Were they simply outnumbered or did they come around and support the policies that ultimately led to war?
- How did the war unfold and was it consistent with Vasquez' chapter on what accounts for the size, scope, and severity of war? Do note there is a wide variation in war and Vasquez' treatment here is almost certainly thinking of "world wars" that may not describe your case. For example, the Battle of Navarino Bay was a multilateral war that was effectively one major battle and other cases, like the Boxer Rebellion and Crimean War, were major conflicts that dragged in multiple actors from around the globe. Some of these cases were simple bilateral fights (e.g. Spanish-Moroccan War). Vasquez' chapter on "world wars" need not describe your case, but it's likely there will be certain features he describes of these wars that partially fit the case you describe. Take care to discuss that here.
- What was the epilogue of the war? Clearly the war ended, but how? What was the nature of the "peace" that followed and how might it conform to Vasquez' chapter on the nature of peace and its relationship to war?

Conclusion

Take two or three paragraphs at the end of the paper to offer your conclusions. This will be somewhat banal, all things considered. You should have already said your argument and provided the reader the argument and the findings. Still, conclude with what do we know now about this war, Vasquez' "steps to war" argument, and how well the argument fits the war.

Extra Credit

I will give you upwards of 10 points on top of your paper grade for saving every relevant historical newspaper source (as a PDF) and providing me detailed bibliographic information of every one of these sources that you discovered while writing your paper. Toward that end, you will need to provide me detailed book sources as well. Basically, I will carefully read the section of the paper where you describe the incidents that escalated the MID to war and how the war unfolded before it ultimately ended. However, I will understand, for space constraints, that you can't detail every single incident. That's why there's this extra credit opportunity for this assignment.

Do note the points I allocate to you are my discretion and is not subject to appeal. You will need to email me these sources and bibliographic information before 12 p.m. (my Gmail time) on the day the paper itself is due. Make sure you remember the file attachments.

A Select List of Wars

Below are the wars you can select for your case study. Start days correspond with the onset of the MID and not the war itself. Start days and end days of “-9” mean “unknown day.”

Table 1: Select Wars in the GML MID Data (v 2.02) Before 1920

MID No.	Start Day	Start Month	Start Year	End Day	End Month	End Year	Name
89	21	9	1822	21	11	1823	Franco-Spanish War
146	16	8	1827	16	4	1828	Battle of Navarino Bay
189	-9	11	1827	-9	9	1829	Russo-Ottoman War (1828-9)
1552	23	8	1843	23	2	1848	Mexican-American War
19	15	1	1848	15	8	1849	First Italian War of Independence
375	31	3	1848	31	7	1849	First Schleswig-Holstein War
175	18	2	1849	18	7	1849	War of the Roman Republic (1849)
1528	-9	4	1851	-9	2	1852	La Plata War (1851-2)
57	31	5	1853	31	3	1856	Crimean War
8	11	7	1856	11	3	1857	Anglo-Persian War (1856-7)
115	29	1	1859	29	7	1859	Second Italian War of Independence
1580	25	10	1859	25	4	1860	Spanish-Moroccan War (1859-60)
112	7	9	1860	7	9	1860	Italian-Roman War (1860)
113	18	9	1860	18	2	1861	Neapolitan War (1860-1)
135	31	10	1861	31	2	1867	Franco-Mexican War (1862-7)
194	17	4	1863	17	7	1864	Second Schleswig-Holstein War
1519	-9	8	1863	-9	12	1863	Ecuador-Colombia War (1863)
1590	30	8	1863	30	3	1870	War of the Triple Alliance
1482	5	2	1865	5	5	1866	Chincha Islands War
261	3	4	1865	3	7	1866	Seven Weeks War
88	6	7	1870	6	2	1871	Franco-Prussian War (1870-1)
1533	22	2	1876	22	4	1876	Guatemala-Salvador War (1876)
187	31	10	1876	31	3	1878	Russo-Ottoman War (1877-8)
1518	8	11	1878	8	10	1883	The War of the Pacific
3725	2	6	1882	2	9	1882	Anglo-Egyptian War
202	14	4	1883	14	6	1885	Sino-French War
1535	28	2	1885	28	4	1885	Second Central American War (1885)
196	4	2	1893	4	10	1893	Franco-Siamese War
1490	5	6	1894	5	4	1895	First Sino-Japanese War
1569	-9	12	1896	-9	5	1897	Greco-Ottoman War (1897)
1557	3	1	1898	3	8	1898	Spanish-American War
31	30	5	1900	30	1	1901	Boxer Rebellion
3250	15	8	1900	-9	11	1900	Russian Invasion of Manchuria (1900)
180	29	6	1903	29	9	1905	Russo-Japanese War
1205	-9	3	1906	-9	7	1906	Third Central American War
1202	5	1	1907	5	12	1907	Fourth Central American War
1086	9	5	1909	9	3	1910	Spanish-Moroccan War (1909-10)
114	12	9	1911	12	10	1912	Italian-Turkish War (1911-2)
1250	3	9	1912	3	4	1913	First Balkan War (1912-3)
1251	18	4	1913	18	8	1913	Second Balkan War (1913)
320	25	8	1914	25	5	1915	Italy Joins World War I
397	8	10	1914	8	10	1915	Bulgaria Joins World War I
324	26	5	1915	26	6	1917	Greece Joins World War I
395	23	2	1916	23	3	1916	Portugal Joins World War I
396	14	8	1916	14	8	1916	Romania Joins World War I
399	7	10	1916	7	4	1917	U.S. Joins World War I
2649	9	2	1917	9	8	1917	China Joins World War I
400	5	4	1917	5	10	1917	Brazil Joins World War I
1219	1	1	1919	1	9	1920	Polish-Soviet War
1265	20	3	1919	20	8	1919	Hungarian Adversaries War
1272	4	4	1919	4	11	1920	Polish-Lithuanian War
1270	4	5	1919	4	10	1922	Greco-Turkish War (1919-22)
3134	1	11	1919	1	10	1921	Cilician War

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