Quiz #7

• The dramatic increase in world trade has been aided by:  a.) a decline in world shipping costs, b.) infrastructure at major ports, c.) the development of the internet and computing generally, d.) air travel, e.) the World Trade Organization

• While the U.S. defense budget equals that of all other countries combined, China’s defense budget has grown on the order of what percentage over the last decade?:  a.) 1-2%, b.) 4-5%, c.) 7-9%, d.) 10-12%, e.) 15-20%

• All of the following had active or nascent nuclear programs as signatories to the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty except:  a.) Israel, b.) North Korea, c.) Iraq, d.) Libya, e.) Iran
Democratic Peace

Erik Gartzke

POLI 12, Lec. 7a
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Empirical generalization

• Immanuel Kant 1795; Small and Singer 1976; Doyle 1983

• Strong form: No two “democracies” have ever fought a “war”

• Weak form: Wars between two democracies are very rare

• Democracies are not more peaceful when facing non-democracies
Significance

• Domestic politics vs. systemic constraints

• International constraints depend upon domestic institutions
Alternative explanations

• Geography
• Alliances
• Bipolarity
Statistical tests

• Democratic peace is among the most robust generalizations in political science

• Controls for
  – Contiguity
  – Power distribution
  – Alliances (and expected utility)
  – Wealth, trade, economic growth
Competing Explanations

• Norms and preferences
• Institutional constraints
• Information
Trade vs. Democracy

• Who is democratic (constraints), who trades (preferences)?

• Russett & Oneal: Both trade and democracy reduce probability of conflict
Norms and preferences

• Democratic legal culture creates habits and expectations of peaceful resolution of conflicts
• Democratic publics disapprove of war as an instrument of policy
• Democratic publics have common interests, so serious conflicts are unlikely to arise
Institutional constraints

• Democratic leaders are bound by rule of law
• Role of Congress, Parliament (Veto Points)
• Preferences of the median voter
• Voter control through retrospective voting
Median voter

Elected officials have preferences close to the median voter
Voter control

• Median voter pays cost of war, but does not benefit
• Politicians want to be reelected
• Voters can control politicians by voting retrospectively
Effects of Constraints

• Democratic leaders have less freedom of action

• Are democracies bullied around by other states?

• But, veto points increase bargaining leverage! (two-level games)
Gambling for resurrection

- There is uncertainty about whether the incumbent is competent or not
- Voters punish leaders for bad policy outcome, but outcome depends on chance

Downs & Rocke 1994
Gambling for resurrection

- Competent leaders who face bad luck get unjustly punished
- Incompetent leaders are reluctant to end an unsuccessful war, to preserve office
- Democratic leaders are more likely to gamble for resurrection

Downs & Rocke 1994
How effective are constraints?

• Opponents of the Mexican-American War in Congress were six times more likely to retire

• Opponents of WWI were twice as likely

• Gulf War of 1991

• Second Gulf War

• Since 1789 the U.S. has used force over 200 times; it has declared war five times

Schultz 2001
Information

- Audience costs
- Transparency
- Impossibility of strategic surprise
- Cheap talk signaling
Audience costs

• War arises b/c of incomplete information
• Democratic leaders can signal resolve (if they have it) by making public commitments
• Voters punish them if they back down
• Democracies are less likely to be challenged when they are resolved

Fearon 1994
Audience costs

• So why are democracies unable to avoid conflicts with non-democracies?

• Why is it rational for voters to punish leaders who bluff, if the leaders are trying to protect the voters’ interests?

Fearon 1994
Transparency

• War arises b/c of incomplete information
• The preferences of democracies are transparent
  – Democratic leaders find it hard to bluff
  – Foreign leaders rarely misinterpret signs of resolve
• So why are democracies unable to avoid
Impossibility of Surprise

• Free press & separation of powers make surprise attack very difficult

• Democratic leaders are less tempted to start surprise wars

• Potential opponents are less insecure

• The security dilemma is less binding
Cheap talk signaling

• War arises b/c of incomplete information
• Opposition parties can credibly signal that the incumbent is resolved
• Opposition has cross-cutting incentives to support and undermine the incumbent, so its claims are credible
• Resolved democracies signal, and voters rationally reward the opposition when it reveals the incumbent’s weakness

Ramsay 2004
Suez Crisis

Every speech … made by members of the Labour Party during [the Suez Crisis] could only have the effect, as I have already said—and they must have known it—of weakening Britain in the eyes of Nasser and of the world. And that, no doubt, is why all of the speeches of Mr. Gaitskell, … were consistently relayed by Cairo Radio, an honour which was not accorded to speeches of Sir Anthony Eden. That being the case, to suggest that the Government are the main villains of this particular piece is, I think, manifestly absurd.


Ramsay 2004
Dewey vs. Truman, 1948

“Only a political miracle or extraordinary stupidity on the part of the Republicans can save the Democratic party, … from a debacle in November”

*Time Magazine*

“We shall not allow domestic partisan irritations to divert us from indispensable unity [w/ respect to Berlin status]”

*Thomas Dewey, July 24, 1948*

Ramsay 2004
Capitalist Peace

- Long tradition of inquiry about the role of commerce in promoting peace (Montesquieu, Payne, Cobden, Angell, Rosecrance)

- Traditional argument: Opportunity Costs
  - Nations are loath to fight when fighting interferes with valuable commerce
  - Peace prevails when merchants gain influence over politics/foreign policy
Capitalist Peace II

- Norman Angell (mostly right)
  - Traditional inputs to production could be stolen through force
  - Financial capital is not easily coerced
  - Intellectual capital is also hard to capture
  - Rationale also provides a common origin for both rise of democracy and interstate peace.
Capitalist Peace III

- Trade probably not that important
- Financial markets serve similar function to domestic audiences
- Development discourages territorial aggression
- Policy affinity affects interest in competition

Gartzke 2007
Tentative conclusions

• Important empirical generalization
• A plethora of competing explanations