Quiz #7

• The U.S. Patriot Act did all of the following except: a.) eases restrictions on wiretaps; b.) allows legal aliens to be held for seven days without being charged; c.) makes it easier to conduct searches without a warrant; d.) provides law enforcement with more information on financial transactions; e.) all of the above are part of the Patriot Act.

• Which of the following is not a tendency of democratic states (compared with autocracies)?: a.) they tend to fight fewer wars; b.) they win more of the wars they fight; c.) they are more likely to opt for peaceful means of dispute resolution; d.) they are more likely to initiate a war against an autocracy than an autocracy is against a democracy; e.) all of the above are tendencies of democratic states.

• Many communist regimes objected to what they saw as an overly narrow U.S. definition of human rights. Which is a reason for their disagreement?: a.) whether human rights should be broadened to include economic and social rights; b.) whether human rights fundamentally violate state sovereignty; c.) whether the Universal Declaration of Human Rights constitutes a legally binding document; d.) whether human rights should include gender rights; e.) all of the above
Democracy and Foreign Policy

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POLI 142A, Lec. 9a
August 31, 2009
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
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
• Trade
• Security/Geography
• Information
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
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
Trade vs. Democracy

- Who is democratic (constraints), who trades (preferences)?
- Russett & Oneal: Both trade and democracy reduce probability of conflict
Security/Geography

• Cold War alliances are important and durable
  • Divide world along regime lines
  • Do not explain the democratic peace

• Democracy clusters
  • Neighbors are more likely to fight
  • This implies observed effect underestimates impact of democracy in inhibiting violence
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
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
  • Few “laws” in the study of foreign policy
• A plethora of competing explanations
  • All cannot be (equally) correct
• We learn most where the world gives us tractable riddles that require new thinking