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*The
Democratic Peace
and Territorial
Conflict in the
Twentieth Century*

*Paul K. Huth and
Todd L. Allee*

The democratic peace and territorial conflict in the twentieth century

Paul K. Huth and Todd L. Allee

University of Michigan, Ann Arbor



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The democratic peace and territorial conflict in the twentieth century

This book re-evaluates the foundations of the democratic peace literature and presents three distinct theoretical models of how domestic institutions can influence the foreign policy choices of state leaders – Political Accountability, Political Norms, and Political Affinity. Huth and Allee test their hypotheses against a new and original global data set of 348 territorial disputes from 1919 to 1995. Each territorial dispute is divided into three separate but related stages for empirical analysis: Challenge the Status Quo stage, Negotiation Stage, and Military Escalation Stage. The authors employ advanced statistical tests to compare the explanatory power of the three theoretical models across each stage of a territorial dispute. Their results provide strong support for the importance of democratic accountability and norms in shaping the diplomatic and military policies of incumbent leaders, and add new insights into understanding when and why democratic leaders engage in highly cooperative or confrontational foreign policies.

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The Democratic Peace and Territorial Conflict in the Twentieth Century

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Figures

1.1	Territorial dispute initiation and settlement in the international system, 1919–1995	<i>page</i> 28
2.1	The evolution of international disputes	35
2.2	The Challenge the Status Quo Stage in territorial disputes	46
2.3	The Negotiations Stage in territorial disputes	50
2.4	The Military Escalation Stage in territorial disputes	52
4.1	Summary of logic in Political Accountability Model	69
4.2	Political vulnerability of leaders in non-democratic systems	73
5.1	Summary of logic in Political Norms Model	102
6.1	Summary of logic in Political Affinity Model	125

Tables

1.1	Territorial disputes between states, 1919–1995	<i>page</i> 27
1.2	Negotiations over disputed territory, 1919–1995	29
1.3	Military confrontations over disputed territory, 1919–1995	30
2.1	Military confrontations initiated by challengers in territorial disputes, 1919–1995	37
2.2	Rounds of negotiations in territorial disputes, 1919–1995	38
2.3	Timing of military threats to the status quo by challengers in territorial disputes, 1919–1995	39
2.4	Shift from negotiations to military threats by challengers in territorial disputes, 1919–1995	39
2.5	Duration of territorial disputes and major concessions by challengers in negotiations, 1919–1995	40
2.6	Timing of major concessions by challengers in negotiations over disputed territory, 1919–1995	40
2.7	Military conflict and major concessions by challengers in negotiations over disputed territory, 1919–1995	41
2.8	Military escalation by challengers in territorial disputes, 1919–1995	43
2.9	Challenges to the status quo in territorial disputes, 1919–1995	45
2.10	Concessions by states in negotiations over disputed territory, 1919–1995	51
2.11	Escalation by states in military confrontations over disputed territory, 1919–1915	54
3.1	Summary of hypotheses to be tested from the International Politics Model	64
4.1	Summary of hypotheses to be tested from the Political Accountability Model	92
5.1	Summary of hypotheses to be tested from the Political Norms Model	118
6.1	Summary of hypotheses to be tested from the Political Affinity Model	133

7.1	Multinomial logit results for International Politics Model: Status Quo Stage	144
7.2	The impact of variables from the International Politics Model on decisions to challenge the status quo by threat of force	146
7.3	The impact of variables from the International Politics Model on decisions to challenge the status quo by initiating talks	150
7.4	Examples of challengers initiating threats of force in territorial disputes despite involvement in militarized conflicts with other states	151
7.5	Multinomial logit results for Political Accountability Model: hypotheses comparing regimes for Status Quo Stage	152
7.6	The impact of the democracy and ethnic ties variables from the Political Accountability Model on decisions to challenge the status quo by threat of force	154
7.7	The impact of the democracy and ethnic ties variables from the Political Accountability Model on decisions to challenge the status quo by initiating talks	156
7.8	Multinomial logit results for Political Accountability Model: hypotheses comparing differences within regimes for Status Quo Stage	158
7.9	The impact of the elections and secure non-democratic leadership variables from the Political Accountability Model on decisions to challenge the status quo by initiating talks	160
7.10	The impact of the election and secure non-democratic target variables from the Political Accountability Model on decisions to challenge the status quo by threatening force	162
7.11	Multinomial logit results for Political Accountability Model: hypotheses comparing dyads for Status Quo Stage	166
7.12	The impact of dyadic variables from the Political Accountability Model on decisions to challenge the status quo	167
7.13	The diplomatic and military behavior of democratic dyads in the challenge the Status Quo Stage	168
7.14	Multinomial logit results for Political Norms Model: hypotheses comparing regimes for Status Quo Stage	170
7.15	The impact of the nonviolent norms variable from the Political Norms Model on decisions to challenge the status quo	172
7.16	The impact of nonviolent norms on decisions to challenge the status quo when there has been a recent stalemate in talks	174

7.17	Multinomial logit results for Political Norms Model: hypotheses comparing differences within regimes for Status Quo Stage	175
7.18	The impact of the strong violent norms and recently established democracy variables from the Political Norms Model on decisions to challenge the status quo	176
7.19	The diplomatic and military behavior of new and established democracies in the challenge the Status Quo Stage	178
7.20	Multinomial logit results for Political Norms Model: hypotheses comparing dyads for Status Quo Stage	179
7.21	The impact of dyadic variables from the Political Norms Model on decisions to challenge the status quo by threatening force	180
7.22	The impact of dyadic variables from the Political Norms Model on decisions to challenge the status quo by initiating talks	181
7.23	Multinomial logit results for Political Affinity Model: Status Quo Stage	182
7.24	The impact of variables from the Political Affinity Model on decisions to challenge the status quo	184
8.1	Bivariate probit results for International Politics Model: Negotiations Stage	194
8.2	The impact of variables from the International Politics Model on challenger decisions to offer concessions	196
8.3	The impact of variables from the International Politics Model on target decisions to offer concessions	197
8.4	Bivariate probit results for the Political Accountability Model: hypotheses comparing regimes for the Negotiations Stage	200
8.5	The impact of the democracy and ethnic ties interaction term and the democracy signaling variable from the Political Accountability Model on challenger decisions to offer concessions	202
8.6	The impact of variables from the Political Accountability Model comparing across regimes on target decisions to offer concessions	203
8.7	Bivariate probit results for the Political Accountability Model: hypotheses comparing differences within regimes for the Negotiations Stage	204
8.8	The impact of the elections and secure leadership variables from the Political Accountability Model on challenger decisions to offer concessions	206

8.9	The impact of the elections and secure leadership variables from the Political Accountability Model on target decisions to offer concessions	208
8.10	Bivariate probit results for Political Accountability Model: hypotheses comparing dyads for the Negotiations Stage	212
8.11	The impact of dyadic variables from the Political Accountability Model on challenger and target decisions to offer concessions	213
8.12	Bivariate probit results for the Political Norms Model: hypotheses comparing across regimes for the Negotiations Stage	216
8.13	The impact of nonviolent norms on target decisions to offer concessions	217
8.14	Bivariate probit results for the Political Norms Model: hypotheses comparing differences within regimes for the Negotiations Stage	218
8.15	Bivariate probit results for Political Norms Model: hypotheses comparing dyads for the Negotiations Stage	220
8.16	The impact of dyadic variables from the Political Norms Model on challenger and target decisions to offer concessions	222
8.17	Bivariate probit results for the Political Affinity Model: Negotiations Stage	224
8.18	The impact of the recent change to similarity and similarity in the presence of an external threat terms from the Political Affinity Model on challenger decisions to offer concessions	226
8.19	The impact of the recent change to similarity and similarity in the presence of an external threat to your adversary terms from the Political Affinity Model on target decisions to offer concessions	227
9.1	Bivariate probit results for International Politics Model: Escalation Stage	234
9.2	The impact of variables from the International Politics Model on challenger decisions to escalate with force	236
9.3	The impact of variables from the International Politics Model on target decisions to escalate with force	238
9.4	Bivariate probit results for Political Accountability Model: hypotheses comparing regimes for the Escalation Stage	240
9.5	The impact of the democracy and stalemate and democracy and signal of resolve interaction terms from the Political Accountability Model on challenger decisions to escalate with force	244

9.6	The impact of the democracy and military risk interaction term from the Political Accountability Model on target decisions to escalate with force	245
9.7	Bivariate probit results for Political Accountability Model: hypotheses comparing differences within regimes for the Escalation Stage	248
9.8	The impact of target government strength and election timing on challenger decisions to escalate with force	249
9.9	The impact of secure non-democratic governments on target decisions to escalate with force	252
9.10	Bivariate probit results for Political Accountability Model: hypotheses comparing dyads for the Escalation Stage	253
9.11	The impact of dyadic variables from the Political Accountability Model on challenger and target decisions to escalate with force	254
9.12	The Political Accountability Model and the escalation behavior of democratic dyads	255
9.13	Bivariate probit results for the Political Norms Model: hypotheses comparing across regimes for the Escalation Stage	256
9.14	Bivariate probit results for the Political Norms Model: hypotheses comparing differences within regimes for the Escalation Stage	260
9.15	The impact of the recent transition to democracy variable from the Political Norms Model on challenger and target decisions to escalate with force	262
9.16	Bivariate probit results for the Political Norms Model: hypotheses comparing dyads for the Escalation Stage	264
9.17	The impact of dyadic variables from the Political Norms Model on challenger decisions to escalate with force	265
9.18	The impact of dyadic variables from the Political Norms Model on target decisions to escalate with force	266
9.19	Bivariate probit results for the Political Affinity Model: hypotheses comparing differences between similar and dissimilar regimes for the Escalation Stage	268
9.20	Bivariate probit results for the Political Affinity Model: hypotheses comparing the impact of affinity in the presence of external threats for the Escalation Stage	270
9.21	The impact of the external threat to similar adversary interaction term from the Political Affinity Model on challenger decisions to escalate with force	272

9.22	The impact of variables concerning external threats to similar and dissimilar adversaries from the Political Affinity Model on target decisions to escalate with force	274
10.1	Empirical support for hypotheses tested from the International Politics Model	278
10.2	Empirical support for hypotheses tested from the Political Accountability Model	280
10.3	Empirical support for hypotheses tested from the Political Norms Model	282
10.4	Empirical support for hypotheses tested from the Political Affinity Model	283

Contents

<i>List of figures</i>	<i>page</i> x
<i>List of tables</i>	xi
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	xvii
1 Another study of democracy and international conflict?	1
2 Pathways to conflict escalation and resolution in international disputes	34
3 The international strategic context	56
4 Domestic institutions and the Political Accountability Model	68
5 Domestic institutions and the Political Norms Model	101
6 Domestic institutions and the Political Affinity Model	124
7 Empirical results for decisions to challenge the status quo	138
8 Empirical results for decisions to offer concessions in negotiations	189
9 Empirical results for decisions to escalate with military force	231
10 What have we learned about the democratic peace?	277
Appendices A–F	298
<i>Bibliography</i>	461
<i>Index</i>	485

1 Another study of democracy and international conflict?

Introduction

Over the past decade numerous books and countless articles have been published on the theoretical and empirical relationship between democracy and international conflict.¹ The central theoretical claim advanced by scholars is that decisions by state leaders to rely upon either peaceful diplomacy or military force as the means to resolve international disputes are influenced by the political institutions and norms of political competition and conflict resolution within states. As a result, analysts have argued that patterns of international conflict behavior should vary between democratic and non-democratic countries because of differences in the degree of state leaders' political accountability, or the strength of non-violent norms of resolving political conflict among political elites (e.g. Bueno de Mesquita and Lalman 1992; Bueno de Mesquita, Morrow, Siverson, and Smith 1999; Dixon 1993, 1994, 1998; Doyle 1986; Kahl 1998/99; Maoz and Russett 1992, 1993; Owen 1994, 1997; Raymond 1994; Rummel 1983, 1985; Russett 1993; Schweller 1992; Weart 1998).

In empirical research scholars have examined patterns of military conflict between democracies and non-democracies, as well as among the two types of states. Two different conclusions have emerged from empirical findings. The first, more widely accepted, claim is that while democratic states rarely if ever go to war against each other, they do adopt more confrontational diplomatic and military policies towards non-democratic states. Thus, patterns of military conflict between democracies and non-democracies are not very different from patterns of military conflict among non-democracies. Both are characterized by much higher rates of militarized disputes and war than are found between pairs of democratic states (e.g. Chan 1984; Dixon 1993, 1994; Owen 1994, 1997; Maoz 1997; Maoz and Abdolali 1989; Maoz and Russett 1992, 1993; Oneal and Ray 1997; Small and Singer 1976; Weart 1998; Weede 1984,

¹ Reviews of much of the literature can be found in Ray 1995: ch. 1, 1998; Maoz 1997, 1998; Chan 1997; and Rousseau, Gelpi, Reiter, and Huth 1996.