



Causes of War

**Tying Hands with
Domestic Audiences**

March 26, 2015

Today's Agenda

- 1. Domestic audience costs as a way to "tie hands" in a crisis.**
- 2. Presentation on "Domestic Opposition and Signaling in International Crises."**
- 3. Presentation on "Autocratic Audience Costs."**

Recap: Two-Level Games

- **Two-level bargaining**
 - **Agreement among leaders**
 - **Ratification by public**
- **Democracies face more public constraints**
- **Effects of greater constraints**
 - **More favorable settlement if reached**
 - **Less chance of reaching settlement**

Two-Level Games and War

Problems

- Why would the public's win set be narrower than the government's?**
- Shouldn't we see more wars between democracies?**

Two-Level Games and War

Resolving the Problems

Why would the public's win set be narrower than the governments?

- Crises take place over time**
- Longer it goes, the worse it is to back down
(= "audience costs")**
- ...especially for democracies**

Two-Level Games and War

Resolving the Problems

Shouldn't we see more wars between democracies?

- Audience costs → Democracies tie hands quickly**
- Credible signal of resolve**
- Consequences**
 - Democratic advantage in negotiations**
 - Democratic peace**

Fearon's Model

At each point in a crisis, states have three choices:

1. Fight

- Pay cost of war**
- More resolved → More willing**

2. Back down

- Pay audience cost**
- Less attractive over time**

3. Wait (escalate)

Locking In

- **Audience costs increase over time**
- **At some point, worse to back down than fight**
- **Comes more quickly for a democracy**

Escalation as a Signal of Resolve

- **Benefits of escalating**
 - **Unresolved opponent: will back down**
- **Costs of escalating**
 - **Resolved opponent: locked in**
- **More resolved → Willing to escalate longer**

Signaling and Democracy

- **Democracies get locked in quickly**
- **Unresolved democracies back down *very* quickly**

Crises between Democracies

If both states have high audience costs:

- Short time before war is inevitable**
- Escalation signals resolve clearly and quickly**
- War relatively unlikely**

Crises between Different Regime Types

One state with high audience costs, other with low audience costs.

- Democracy signals quickly, locked in quickly**
- Autocracy signals slowly, locked in slowly**
- Unresolved autocracy → Backs down**
- Resolved autocracy → Danger of war**

Conclusions

- **Democratic advantage in crises with autocracies**
- **Democratic peace in crises between democracies**

Critiques

- Does the public care about leaders being called on a bluff? (Should we?)**
- Are audience costs worse for democracies?**
- Do autocracies understand how democracies build audience costs?**

For Next Time

- Read chapters 1–3 of *The Sleepwalkers*

Image Sources

— John William Waterhouse, "Ulysses and the Sirens": [Philolog](#)