

Ideology

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Camelia and Margaux to present on Lake (1992), “Powerful Pacifists: Democratic States and War”

Lake (1992): “Powerful Pacifists: Democratic States and War”

Two Empirical Regularities

- Relative pacifism: democracies are much less likely to fight each other than to fight autocracies
- Powerful pacifists: democracies are more likely to win the wars that they do fight

Lake (1992): “Powerful Pacifists: Democratic States and War”

Research Question

- How can we explain these empirical regularities?
- Lake offers an explanation drawn from the “microeconomic theory of the state”

Lake (1992): “Powerful Pacifists: Democratic States and War”

Theory: Set-Up of the Model

- State: profit-maximizing firm that trades services for revenues
- Profit: includes both normal profit and rents
- Normal profit: revenue minus opportunity cost of the factor of production
- Rents: revenue minus what is necessary for the factor of production to remain in its current use

Lake (1992): “Powerful Pacifists: Democratic States and War”

Theory: Set-Up of the Model

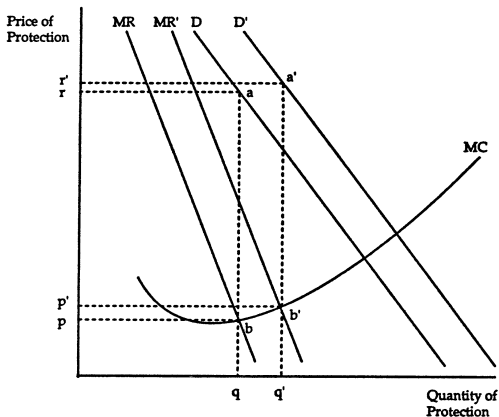
- State provides the following service: defense from external threats
- State has local monopoly: only one state exists in any area at any given time
- Protection from foreign threats is a local public good; state will supply this service only if it is granted some coercive ability over society

Lake (1992): "Powerful Pacifists: Democratic States and War"

Theory: Demand and Supply of Protection

Figure 1

The Supply and Demand for Protection under Monopoly Provision



Lake (1992): "Powerful Pacifists: Democratic States and War"

Theory: Demand and Supply of Protection

- Society has positive demand for protection; and as price declines, demand increases \rightarrow downward sloping demand curve for protection (D)
- Level of protection demanded by society is a function of the level of external threat; all else equal, the greater the external threat, the higher society's demand for protection ($D' > D$)
- As monopolist, state can control the quantity of protection supplied (within the limits set by demand)
- Profit-maximizing state sets supply of protection at level that equates marginal cost (MC) with marginal revenue (MR)

Lake (1992): “Powerful Pacifists: Democratic States and War”

Theory: Demand and Supply of Protection

- p is normal profit level, but price charged may be as high as r
- Price charged (e.g., r) minus p defines rent (rectangle $p-r-a-b$)
- State can artificially increase society's demand for protection by exaggerating foreign threats or by actively creating foreign threats; by doing so, state shifts demand curve outward ($D' > D$) and earns greater rents ($p'-r'-a'-b' > p-r-a-b$)
- Monopolist state supplies less protection than society demands; therefore, insecurity is an “inherent feature of life”

Lake (1992): “Powerful Pacifists: Democratic States and War”

Theory: Societal Constraints on State Rent Seeking

- Society prefers lowest possible price for protection (p); on the other hand, state has incentive to seek rents at the expense of society (by charging monopoly price r and artificially inflating demand for protection)
- Actual price for protection—and thus the level of rents the state can extract from society—is determined by how well society can control rent-seeking behavior of the state

Lake (1992): “Powerful Pacifists: Democratic States and War”

Theory: Societal Constraints on State Rent Seeking

- Society’s ability to control the state depends on the costs of three activities: monitoring state behavior, voice, and exit
 - Monitoring: the higher the society’s cost of acquiring information about the state’s costs of producing protection and the level of foreign threat, the greater the ability of the state to earn rents
 - Voice: the higher the costs of political participation, the greater the state’s ability to earn rents
 - Exit: the higher the cost of exit (leaving the current state for a low-rent state), the greater the state’s ability to earn rents

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Theory: Expansion and the Rent-Seeking State

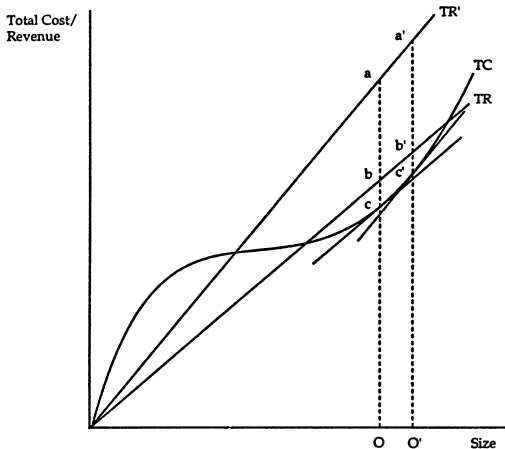
- The higher the costs of controlling the state, the greater the rent-seeking ability of the state, and the more expansionist the state becomes
- There are three reasons for this “imperialist bias”:
 - If through expansion a state can eliminate a low-rent competitor, expansion may increase the state’s rent-seeking ability (by reducing benefits of exit)
 - A state’s expansion may provoke other states into threatening its own society, thus increasing demand for protection and rents that can be earned
 - The larger a state’s rent-seeking ability, the higher the total revenue of the state. The more revenue, the larger the optimal size of the state (see Figure 2)

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Theory: Expansion and the Rent-Seeking State

Figure 2

The Optimal Size of Political Units



Lake (1992): "Powerful Pacifists: Democratic States and War"

Theory: Expansion and the Rent-Seeking State

- The optimal size of the state, O , is where marginal revenue equals the marginal costs of protection production and revenue collection (this is where a line tangent to the cost curve is equal to the slope of the revenue line)
- At O , the normal profit to the state is given by the line segment bc
- Rents earned by the state increase total revenue ($TR' > TR$)
- The increase in total revenue expands the optimal size of the state from O to O'
- At O' , $b'c'$ is the state's normal profit and $a'b'$ is the rent that is redistributed away from society to the state (without expansion the rent would be ab)

Lake (1992): “Powerful Pacifists: Democratic States and War”

The Propensity for War

Based on the above theory, Lake derives the following propositions about the propensity for war:

Lake (1992): "Powerful Pacifists: Democratic States and War"

The Propensity for War

Proposition (1)

The larger the rent-earning ability of a state, the greater its optimal size, and the greater its incentives to try to reach this optimal size. As democracies have lower rent-earning abilities than autocracies, the former are less expansionist than the latter. It follows that democracies are less war-prone than autocracies.

Lake (1992): "Powerful Pacifists: Democratic States and War"

The Propensity for War

Proposition (2)

Democracies extract lower rents from their societies, which gives citizens of autocracies an incentive to migrate to democratic states. In addition, by observing democracies, citizens in autocracies may become aware of the rent-seeking behavior of their states. Autocracies therefore have an incentive to eliminate democracies. It follows that democracies may become targets of the expansionary activity of autocracies, which increases their war involvement despite their own pacific nature.

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The Propensity for War

Proposition (3)

Democracies engage in expansion when the initial costs of conquest and the future costs of rule are less than the discounted present value of future economic profits (note that under these conditions, expansion is optimal regardless of regime type).

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The Propensity for War

Proposition (4)

Democracies may also preemptively intervene in the domestic affairs of an autocracy to construct democratic political structures as long as the costs of the intervention are less than the expected costs of a war stimulated by the autocracy's rent seeking.

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The Propensity for War

Together, the above propositions imply that democracies are, on average, no more or less war prone than autocracies. However, democracies are less likely to fight each other.

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The Propensity for Victory

Based on his theory, Lake derives the following propositions about the propensity for victory:

Lake (1992): "Powerful Pacifists: Democratic States and War"

The Propensity for Victory

Proposition (5)

Democracies earn fewer rents, which creates fewer economic distortions. Therefore, they possess greater national wealth, allowing them to devote more absolute resources to producing protection.

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The Propensity for Victory

Proposition (6)

Autocracies capture more state rents than democracies. Therefore, citizens of democracies have an incentive to demand—and to pay for—protection against the threats autocracies pose to their current and future wealth. On the other hand, citizens in autocracies may benefit from defeats against democracies (if victorious democratic states democratize defeated autocracies). Therefore, citizens in autocracies have less incentive for protection.

Lake (1992): “Powerful Pacifists: Democratic States and War”

The Propensity for Victory

Proposition (7)

Autocracies are more likely to target democracies. In addition, autocratic expansion poses a greater threat to democracies because of the larger rents autocracies tend to extract. The greater the threat, the greater the incentive to build countercoalitions. Therefore, democracies should form overwhelming countercoalitions against autocratic states.

Lake (1992): "Powerful Pacifists: Democratic States and War"

The Propensity for Victory

Based on the above propositions, Lake derives the following hypothesis about the propensity for victory:

Hypothesis

Because democracies devote more absolute resources to producing protection and form overwhelming countercoalitions, the democratic coalition should be more likely to win against autocracies.

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Empirical Evidence

TABLE 1

**Regime Type and Victory in War
(Individual Participants)**

SUCCESS IN WAR	NATURE OF REGIME		TOTAL
	AUTOCRATIC	DEMOCRATIC	
Loser	42	9	51
Winner	32	38	70
Total	74	47	121

Note: All wars in the Appendix are included except the Spanish-American War of 1898 and wars in which no clear winner emerged. Gamma = .694; chi squared = 16.673; df = 1; $p = .000046$.

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Empirical Evidence

TABLE 2

Logit Analysis of Victory in War

VARIABLE	EQUATION 1	EQUATION 2
Constant	.4214 (.4461)	-.7527* (.3346)
Democracy (0–10)	.1933* (.0763)	.2524*** (.0597)
Military personnel (millions)	.3701 (.5325)	.4968 (.4188)
Iron and steel production (millions of tons)	.0024 (.0542)	-.0334 (.0201)
Initiator ^a	-1.3982** (.5126)	—
Log likelihood	-48.05	-71.63
n	87	121
Percent correctly predicted	72.41	67.77

Note: Standard errors are in parentheses. Dependent variable is war outcome (loser = 0; winner = 1).

^a0 = no; 1 = yes.

* $p < .02$.

** $p < .01$.

*** $p < .001$.

Claire to present on Rosato (2003), "The Flawed Logic of Democratic Peace Theory"

Rosato (2003): “The Flawed Logic of Democratic Peace Theory”

Research Questions

- Goal of the article is to assess democratic peace theory
- This requires answering two questions:
 - Do the data support the claim that democracies rarely fight each other?
 - Is there a compelling explanation for why this should be the case?

Rosato (2003): “The Flawed Logic of Democratic Peace Theory”

Do Democracies Fight Each Other?

- Democracies rarely go to war or engage in militarized disputes with one another
- Some scholars argue that while there is peace among democracies, it may be caused by factors other than the democratic nature of the states
- To resolve this debate, we need to evaluate the causal logic behind democratic peace theory

Rosato (2003): "The Flawed Logic of Democratic Peace Theory"

Causal Logics: Normative Logic

- Mechanism #1: Norm Externalization
 - Democracy socializes political elites to act on the basis of democratic norms, which mandate negotiation and nonviolent conflict resolution
 - Because democratic leaders are committed to these norms, they also adopt them in the international arena

Rosato (2003): “The Flawed Logic of Democratic Peace Theory”

Causal Logics: Normative Logic

- Evidence Against Mechanism #1
 - Democratic norms circumscribe the situations in which democracies can justify the use of force to self-defense and prevention of human rights violations
 - During Europe’s imperialist era (1815-1975), liberal democracies were involved in 66 of the 108 wars listed in the COW data set
 - Of the 66 wars, 33 were fought against previously independent people and 33 were fought against existing colonies
 - It is hard to justify those wars in terms of self-defense or prevention of human rights violations

Rosato (2003): “The Flawed Logic of Democratic Peace Theory”

Causal Logics: Normative Logic

- Mechanism #2: Mutual Trust and Respect
 - A democracy believes that other democracies adhere to the same norms and are therefore worthy of accommodation (mutual respect)
 - Moreover, a democracy believes that any other democracy will also respect and not use force against its fellow democracies (mutual trust)
 - Mutual trust and respect generally ensure that conflict between democracies is resolved peacefully

Rosato (2003): "The Flawed Logic of Democratic Peace Theory"

Causal Logics: Normative Logic

- Evidence Against Mechanism #2
 - Evidence suggests that democracies do not have an inclination to treat each other with trust and respect when their interests clash
 - Examples here are the US interventions in democracies in the developing world during the Cold War period
 - With the exception of Nicaragua, each of these interventions lead to a US-backed dictatorial regime
 - Furthermore, research shows that crises in which democracies almost went to war with one another, war was avoided not because of mutual trust and respect, but because of realist factors

Rosato (2003): “The Flawed Logic of Democratic Peace Theory”

Causal Logics: Institutional Logic

- Mechanism #1: Domestic Accountability
 - In a democracy, citizens can monitor and sanction their office-seeking leaders
 - Therefore, democratic leaders will only engage in war if there is broad domestic support
 - Domestic groups may oppose war because it is costly, because they can gain politically from opposing it, or because they deem it morally unacceptable

Rosato (2003): “The Flawed Logic of Democratic Peace Theory”

Causal Logics: Institutional Logic

- Evidence Against Mechanism #1
 - Accountability is determined by the consequences as well as the probability of losing office for adopting an unpopular policy
 - Rosato argues that democratic leaders have not been removed much more often from office than their autocratic counterparts
 - However, losing autocrats have been more likely to suffer severe punishment than their democratic counterparts
 - Looking only at involvement in “costly wars,” autocrats have been more likely both to lose office and to be punished severely after they became involved in a costly war

Rosato (2003): “The Flawed Logic of Democratic Peace Theory”

Causal Logics: Institutional Logic

- Mechanism #2: Public Constraint
 - General public is averse to war
 - Because accountability leads democratic leaders to respond to the preferences of the public, they are unwilling to go to war

Rosato (2003): “The Flawed Logic of Democratic Peace Theory”

Causal Logics: Institutional Logic

- Evidence Against Mechanism #2
 - If pacific public opinion were to constrain democratic war proneness, then democracies would be more peaceful in their relations with all types of states
 - However, democracies are just as likely to go to war as nondemocracies
 - In many cases, the public is likely to be unaffected by war and therefore adopts a permissive attitude
 - If there is public aversion to war, it may be overwhelmed by the effects of nationalism

Rosato (2003): “The Flawed Logic of Democratic Peace Theory”

Causal Logics: Institutional Logic

- Mechanism #3: Group Constraint
 - Because democratic leaders respond to the wishes of antiwar groups, they are unwilling to go to war

Rosato (2003): "The Flawed Logic of Democratic Peace Theory"

Causal Logics: Institutional Logic

- Evidence Against Mechanism #3
 - Democratic representation is skewed towards groups that are better organized and have more at stake in an issue
 - Although antiwar groups may be well organized and have an incentive to avoid war, other groups such as the military industrial complex are likely to have just as much at stake and be equally proficient at furthering their interests
 - The historical record suggests that proponents of war often prevail democracies
 - On the other hand, autocratic leaders have an incentive to avoid war because raising money to finance war may trigger social and political changes
 - Finally, nonmilitary leaders of autocracies have an incentive to maintain weak militaries for fear of coups

Rosato (2003): "The Flawed Logic of Democratic Peace Theory"

Causal Logics: Institutional Logic

- Mechanism #4: Slow Mobilization
 - Persuading the public and antiwar groups to support military action is a long and complex process
 - Democracies therefore cannot mobilize quickly

Rosato (2003): “The Flawed Logic of Democratic Peace Theory”

Causal Logics: Institutional Logic

- Evidence Against Mechanism #4
 - American presidents often sped up the war decision making process by circumventing or ignoring the checks and balances
 - The US has taken military action more than 200 times during its history, but only five of these actions were wars declared by Congress

Rosato (2003): “The Flawed Logic of Democratic Peace Theory”

Causal Logics: Institutional Logic

- Mechanism #5: Surprise Attack
 - In democracies, mobilization takes place in the public domain
 - This makes it difficult for democracies to launch surprise attacks

- Evidence Against Mechanism #5
 - In general, attacks achieve surprise because defenders are poor at evaluating information, not because attackers are good at withholding information
 - Even if we accept that the achievement of surprise is a function of regime type, there is little historical support for the claim that democracies are less able to conceal their intentions

Rosato (2003): “The Flawed Logic of Democratic Peace Theory”

Causal Logics: Institutional Logic

- Mechanism #6: Information
 - Because democratic leaders are accountable to their citizens and domestic groups may oppose their policies, they will be cautious about leading their countries to war
 - They will only go to war if they place a high value on the issue of a conflict, if they expect war to be popular at home, if there is a good chance that they will win the war, and if they are prepared to fight hard
 - This sends a signal to the adversary: if a democracy is prepared to fight, then its resolve is high

- Evidence Against Mechanism #6
 - There is evidence showing that while open political systems provide a great deal of information about their intentions, the volume of information either has confused those who observe it or has served to reinforce their prior misperceptions
 - Even signals sent by the domestic opposition might be uninformative: since publics and oppositions generally rally to the government’s side during crisis, opposition support for war is not an informative signal