



Domestic Constraints on War and the Democratic Peace

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POLI 150

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Today's Class

- Putnam and Two-Level Games
- Domestic Politics and War
- Democratic Peace



Reminders

- Prompt 4 due tonight; prompt 5 due Thursday.



Central Question

How can domestic factors influence interstate war?



Key Terms

- Two-Level Game
- Diversionary War
- Rally Effect
- Democratic Peace



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 - The bargaining model of war implicitly focuses on the international level.
- Putnam's main insight is that **even when states are negotiating with each other, each side's diplomats must also remember domestic factors.**
- Thus, he suggests that we should study **two-level games**: games where actors attempt to reach an agreement that is acceptable to an international bargaining partner **and** a domestic audience.



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- This model has two levels:
 - Level 1: International negotiations/bargaining.
 - Level 2: Domestic lobbying and constraints.
- We have been talking about Level 1 for the past few classes - the bargaining model of war is focused on this level.



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- Actors now must find a negotiated settlement that is acceptable to **both** the other state and their own domestic audience.
- National leaders are negotiators with two other parties: their foreign counterpart and their own domestic constituents.



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- Negotiators/leaders can agree to a deal between their states at L1.
- Each leader then takes that agreement to their domestic audiences to seek ratification.
- Sometimes, this process is iterative, with leaders coming back to L1 for multiple revisions of the deal based on input from L2.



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- Larger win-sets thus make agreements more likely.
- The size of domestic win-sets affects the distribution of outcomes possible in international bargaining.



Changing Win-Sets

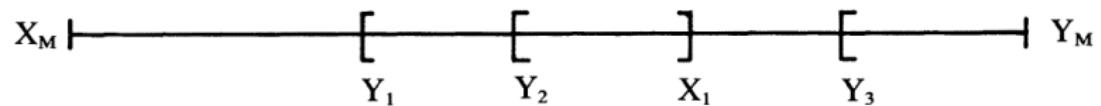


FIGURE 1. Effects of reducing win-set size



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- 3 Issue linkage: what are the dimensions of bargaining?
- 4 Institutions: how are agreements ratified by the domestic audience?



Two-Level Games

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- The other state’s leader can inflict costs on the opposing state.
- Domestic actors unhappy with a deal can remove the national leader from power.
- **When acting internationally, outcomes must please both international and domestic actors.**



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- This uncertainty increases risk of involuntary defection by the other side if their L2 supporters won't ratify a deal, so L1 negotiators want to be certain any deal is within the other side's L2 win-set.
- This means they may not press for especially harsh bargains that the other side's L2 won't accept.



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- The internal domestic institutions thus influence how international bargaining and cooperation plays out by impacting the bargaining range.
- Opaque domestic institutions make it harder for other states to determine resolve.
- The need to obey domestic coalitions may make it harder for states to commit to agreements.



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- We must consider both the international and domestic incentives that actors face to study their decision-making.
- **We have already discussed international incentives with the bargaining model of war, so what do these L2 domestic incentives look like?**



Domestic Politics and War: Gas



Doug Wilson/CORBIS/Corbis via Getty Images



Domestic Politics and War: Oil Price

FIGURE 4.1 *The Price of Oil, 1960–2018*

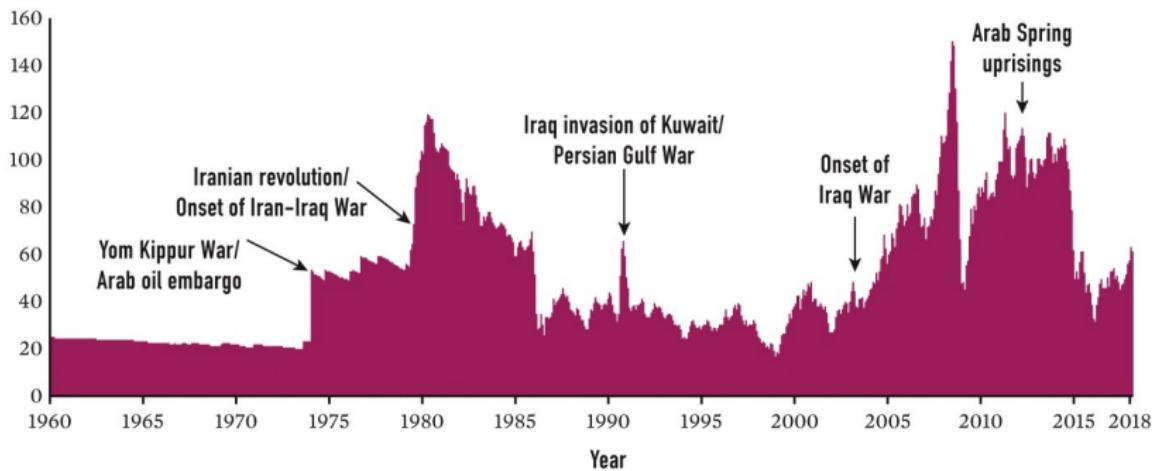


Figure source: Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis, Spot Crude Oil Price: West Texas Intermediate (WTI) [WTISPLC], retrieved from FRED, Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis; <https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/WTISPLC>, March 19, 2018. * In 2017 U.S. dollars.



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- This is a specific example of how internal (L2) domestic characteristics can influence military commitments (such as placement of US military bases in the ME) or political commitments (such as US-Saudi Arabia alliance).



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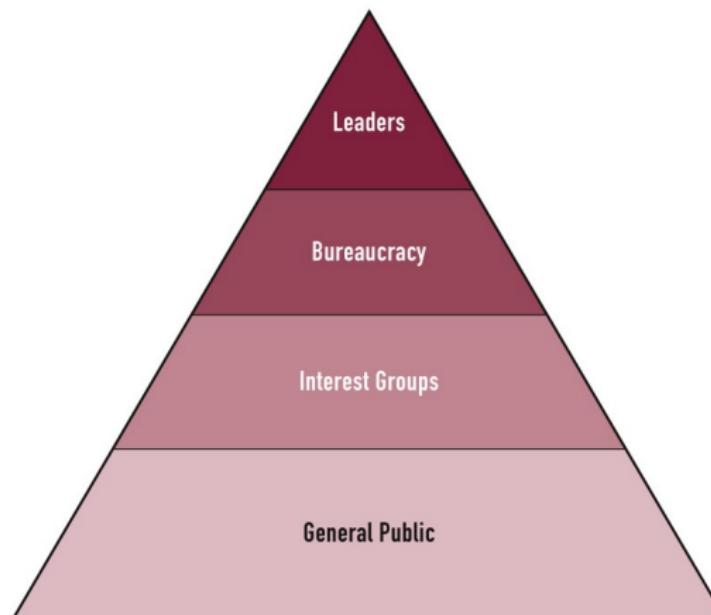


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- **National interests:** the motivations of states so far (power, security, wealth).
- **Particularistic interests:** the motivations of specific groups within states.
- Who are these groups?



Domestic Actors

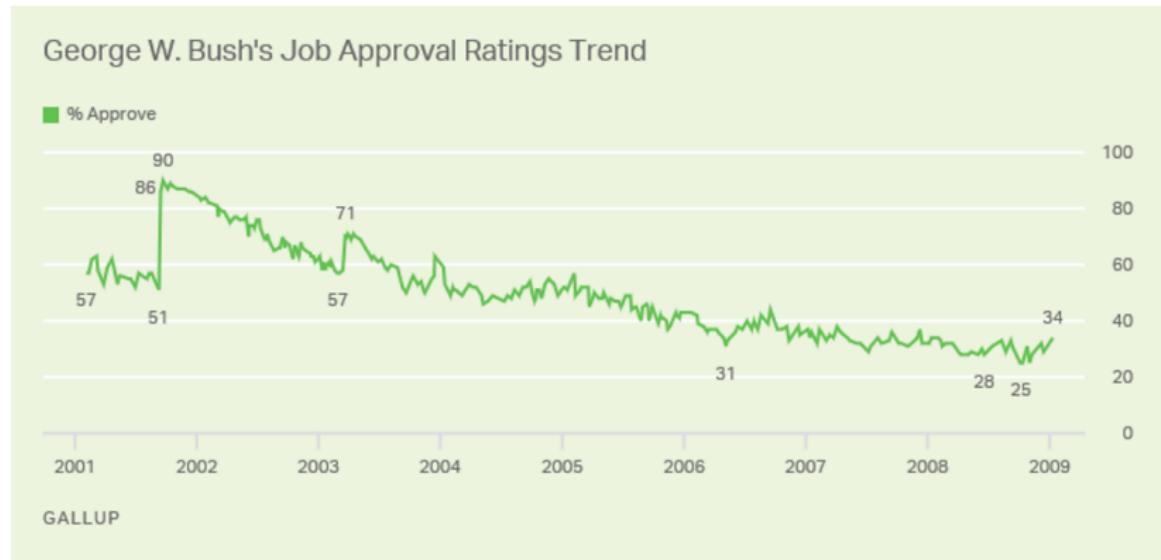
FIGURE 4.2 *Key Domestic Actors in Foreign Policy*





Domestic Actors: Leaders

Do leaders ever spark war to generate domestic benefits?





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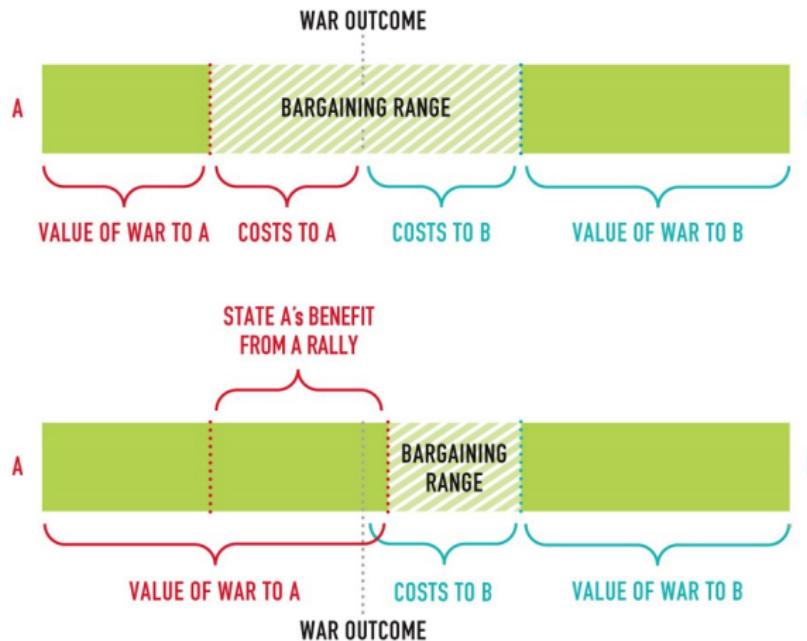
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 - Benefits for both democratic and autocratic leaders: reelection or increased legitimacy.
- Existence of rally effects creates a **diversionary incentive** for leaders.
- How does this impact the bargaining range?



Rally Effects and Bargaining Range

FIGURE 4.3 *Rally Effects and the Bargaining Range*





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- Seizing the Falkland Islands, a British possession, shifted the Argentine public's attention away from that domestic discontent (temporarily).
- Britain experiencing economic recession, and PM Thatcher facing very low approval ratings.
- Thatcher received a substantial boost in her approval ratings following the start of the war, which lasted Apr. 2 - Jun. 14, 1982 and ended in British victory.



Rally Effects Wrap-Up

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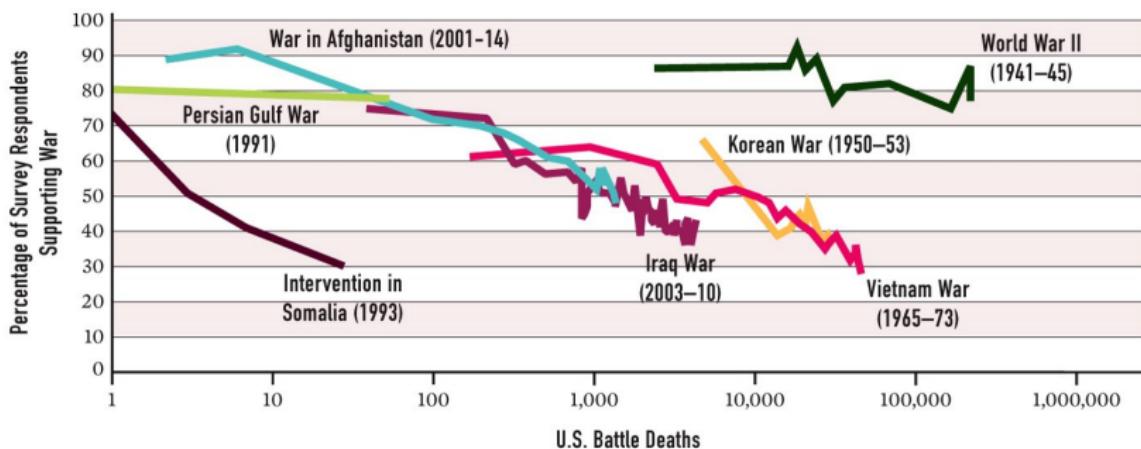
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- Benefits of war must certainly outweigh benefits of peace for a rational leader to launch a war in hopes of rally effect, which is rare.
- Rally effects are also temporary, as support decreases as casualties rise.



Rally Effects Wrap-Up

FIGURE 4.4 **U.S. Battle Deaths and Public Support for War**



Source: World War II, Korea, Vietnam, Gulf War, and Somalia from Eric V. Larson, *Casualties and Consensus* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 1996). Other poll numbers from Gallup, www.gallup.com/poll/1633/Iraq.aspx and www.gallup.com/poll/116233/Afghanistan.aspx (accessed 01/20/15). Casualty figures for Iraq and Afghanistan from www.icasualties.org (accessed 01/20/15).



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 - Military officers may view war as a chance for promotion and larger budget.
 - Military-industrial complex may view war as a chance for lucrative contracts.
- However, by definition, many of these groups will be much smaller than the general population who pay the costs of war (higher taxes and deaths). Why does their influence matter?



Collective Action Problems Reprise

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- Recall the elements of successful collective action: smaller group size enables easier coordination and monitoring to prevent free-riding to obtain a public good.
- In this case, the bureaucracy and special interest groups are sufficiently small that they can coordinate to effectively lobby government policy, gaining those benefits of war (“public goods” if we define “public” as these groups).
- By contrast, the general population will struggle to mobilize for similar collective action reasons.



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- Note that this does not always mean the military is automatically warmongering: it can have a more realistic understanding of its costs and abilities than civilians.



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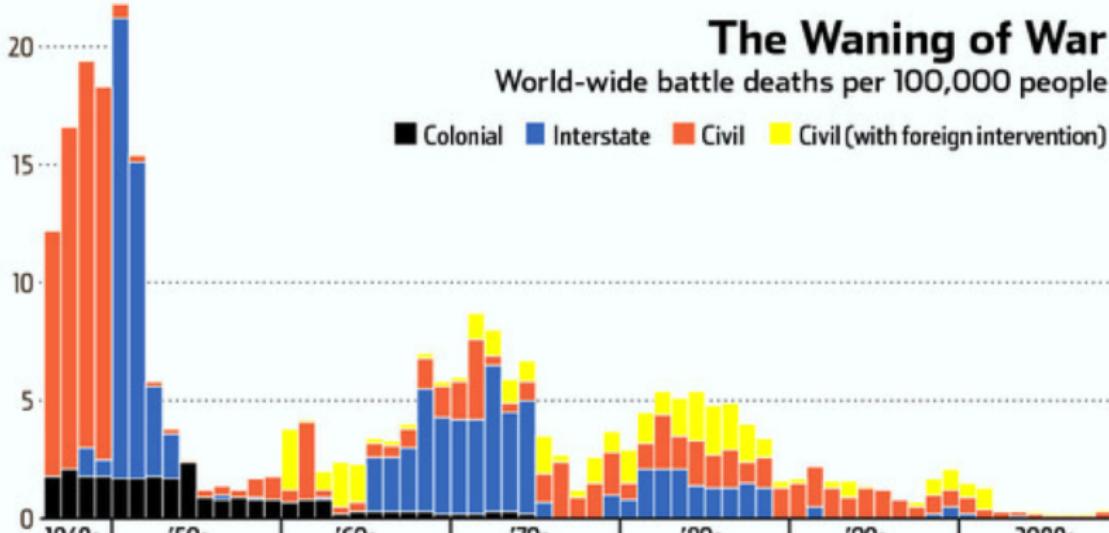
- The costs of war fall on the general public, while the benefits accrue to the bureaucracy and special interest groups.
- Note that this does not always mean the military is automatically warmongering: it can have a more realistic understanding of its costs and abilities than civilians.
- More generally, this points to the idea that different groups with different preferences over war influence the bargaining range between two states, even if none of those groups are directly negotiating with the opposing side.



How does regime type (democracy or autocracy) influence war?



The Decline in Conflict



Source: Human Security Report Project, the Uppsala Conflict Data Project, and the Peace Research Institute of Oslo



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- Zero: Number of colonial conquests since 1945
- Zero: Number of states that disappeared due to conquest since 1945



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- The dominant answer is the **democratic peace**: the observation that democracies do not fight one another.
- The democratic peace is held up as the closest thing in IR to a scientific law.



Spread of Democracy

FIGURE 4.6 *The Spread of Democracy, 1800–2016*

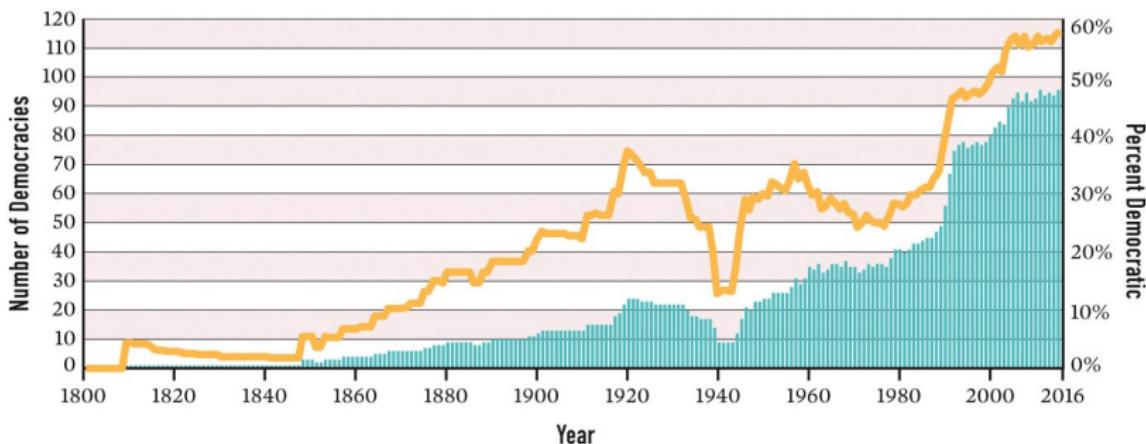


Figure source: Monty G. Marshall, Ted Robert Gurr, and Keith Jaggers, "Polity IV Project: Political Regime Characteristics and Transitions, 1800-2016," Center for Systemic Peace, <http://www.systemicpeace.org/inscrdata.html> (accessed 11/21/17).



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- However, democracies are *not* less belligerent overall.
- Modern democracies are not less likely to go to war with non-democracies.
- Policymakers clearly think it's important (e.g. Bush & Obama statements)



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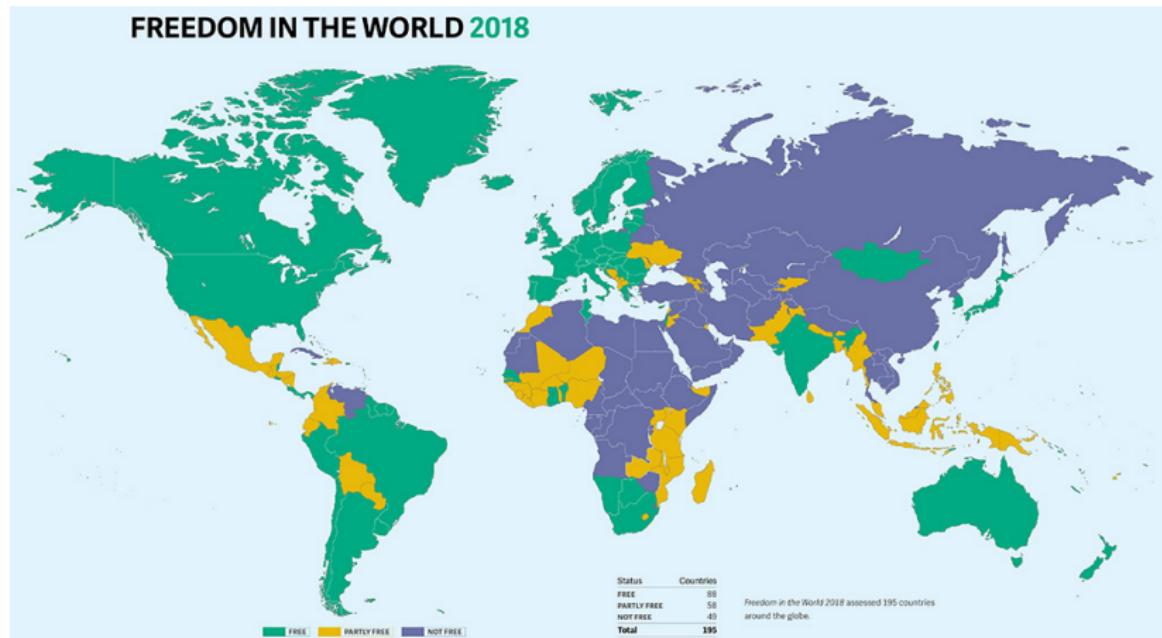


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- **Democracy:** a political system in which candidates compete in frequent free and fair elections in which many can vote.
- **Autocracy:** a system in which power is concentrated in an individual or small group of people with no competition and few constraints on power.
- These are not perfectly measured concepts!



Regime Type Around the World





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- 1 Norms of mutual respect and nonviolence.
- 2 Democratic institutional impacts on the bargaining process.
- 3 The relationship is spurious (something else explains it).



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- The idea here is that democracies are, by their nature, just less aggressive and prone to resorting to violence.
- This explanation is not convincing, as data shows democracies are not less likely to go to war with non-democracies.



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- **Accountability:** the ability to punish or reward leaders for their decisions.



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- These things make war between democracies especially unlikely.
- Does not affect autocracies challenging democracies (e.g. Persian Gulf War and Pearl Harbor)



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- Democratic leaders have high costs for backing down (like electoral defeat), so their threats are more credible when tying hands.
- Transparency, such as a free press, means less private information.
- Survey research shows low public support in democracies for war with other democracies.
- All of this makes finding a bargaining range easier for two democracies.



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- Some critics argue this finding could be spurious or the subject of reverse causality.
- Essentially, they argue that democracy and peace just happen to occur together, but one is not causing the other - there is some third factor we are missing.
- Another way of saying this is to say that the relationship is **endogenous**.



Endogeneity

Endogeneity comes in three forms:

- 1 Common (alternative) cause



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- 3 Spurious association
 - What if what really matters is that democracies happened to be allies after WWII against non-democratic Soviet Union?



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- While endogeneity remains theoretically possible, it is unlikely to explain away this relationship.
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- **Explanation 2 (institutions) seems the most likely cause of the democratic peace.**



Summary

- Before today, we have treated states as unitary actors, but now we discard that assumption to examine domestic impacts on war.
- Putnam's two-level game shows us that crisis bargaining involves finding a deal acceptable not only to the other state but also to one's own domestic constituents.
- At the domestic level, leaders may sometimes launch wars to benefit from a rally effect, while bureaucratic elements and interest groups may lobby for war.



Summary

- In all these cases, war's costs may be diffused across the population, while its benefits may accrue to specific small groups that can overcome their collective action problems to lobby the government.
- Democracies are less likely to go to war with each other, because democratic institutions decrease private information and make credible communication easier.