

Warlike Democracies

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Abstract

There is a gap between much of the theorizing about the democratic peace, with its focus on democracies' internalization of costs of war, and the empirical evidence, which finds that democracies are pacifistic only towards each other. Drawing on the insights of Machiavelli and the classical thinkers on whom he relied, we offer a theory of democratic deterrence that can explain this empirical pattern. Because democracies mobilize the resources of their populations more fully than do most nondemocracies, a democracy's net expected per capita gains from aggression may be sufficient to motivate warlike behavior even with public participation in decisions about whether or not to fight. By our account democracies are disinclined to fight other democracies at least in part because other well mobilized regimes make less attractive targets.

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1. Introduction

There are two democratic peace propositions: the first, that democracies are less war prone than other kinds of governments, receives only weak empirical support. The data more readily support the second, that democracies rarely fight each other. The first proposition ascribes pacific dispositions and perhaps intentions to democratic regimes and is therefore “monadic.” The second is “dyadic” because the claim is that wars should be infrequent between pairs of democracies. While the empirical patterns seem to support the second (dyadic) proposition, Immanuel Kant, the classical theorist of democratic peace, and as far as we can tell, all previous theorists who had anything to say about democracies or republics and fighting, produced monadic theories: theories that explained war propensities by way of regime attributes.

Dyadic theories of democratic peace rest on supplemental motivations -- such as economic integration to create common interests, shared democratic ideology, especially high levels of trust among democratic regimes -- or international organizations to facilitate a willingness to negotiate rather than fight.¹ But, tracing peace to “liberal” trade patterns or treaties is logically quite distinct from assessing the effects of regime type on foreign policy behavior. If democracies are less likely to fight each other on account of a virtuous cycle of liberal institutions and attitudes, we will have learned little about the foreign policy effects of democracy per se. Moreover, all of this focus on liberal beliefs and institutions raises the issue of whether it is democracy or some other

feature of regimes – liberalism either with respect to the organization of the economy or the legal/constitutional system – that is the key explanatory variable.

Understanding what if anything is distinctive about the foreign policies of democracies seems a worthwhile venture, but there are, in fact, two diametrically opposed theories about democracies' foreign policy inclinations. Kant thought that self-governing regimes might be more cautious about military conflict for two reasons: first, because the people, who had to bear the costs of war-fighting, had to agree to go to war. In effect, democracies, however they were organized constitutionally, had to consult in some way with the people to embark on a war. This consultation could of course be informal: the leaders might feel the need to ventilate the issue to see evidence of public support for the action however they might choose to measure that. Moreover, non-democracies might be able to take advantage of the resulting transparency and slow policy-making process of democracies by encroaching on their interests. In this view, democracies should be relatively uninclined to belligerency, and should maintain a primarily defensive posture.²

On the other hand, noted Machiavelli and classical thinkers before him, popularly ruled polities tend to mobilize more fully the resources of their societies and, with that capacity, and might be tempted to overpower their neighbors. The ancients thought that democracies were especially war prone. Empirical observation at the time would have

¹ As we discuss below, Kant himself supplemented his monadic theory with a dyadic one because he thought the internalization of the costs of war insufficient to guarantee a peaceful disposition.

² In more or less Kantian fashion, David Lake (1992) argues that democracies ought to be “powerful pacifists,” because of the smaller rent extraction possibilities from territorial aggrandizement for democratic leaders. Although this argument has a certain logical appeal, it is empirically unsupported because democracies are, in fact, not pacifistic except with other democracies.

provided support for this view. Athens in the age of Pericles, surely the best known of all democracies, became both radically democratic and quick to fight. Corcyra and Megara some of the time, and second and first century B.C. Republican Rome might be added to the list of warlike regimes with strongly populist or (direct) democratic elements in their constitutions.³ Moreover, even a little familiarity with Athenian and Roman political institutions would have revealed a strong military imprint on their political institutions. In Athens, by Pericles' time, the basis naval organization was the lower middle class who made up the bulk of the citizenry. And in Rome, the democratic assemblies that conducted elections and legislation reflected military values and hierarchy. The ancients thought that the reason for democratic bellicosity was to be found in the military advantages of democracy: democracies were better able than other regimes, they thought, to mobilize men and wealth to fight. Many have thought that that was the point of having a democracy in the first place. As the Old Oligarch wrote, "for it is the poor which mans the fleet and has brought the state her power, and the steersmen and the boatswains and the shipmasters and the lookout-men and the shipwrights---these have brought the state her power much rather than the hoplites and the best-born and the elite." And, of course, this special military prowess would sometimes tempt them to action where other regimes would see no opportunity at all.

In this paper, we offer a monadic explanation for democratic foreign policy that can explain both the conditions under which democracies are likely to be aggressive and

³ The Roman example suggests (as Aristotle said) that even if a state is not considered to be a full democracy, it may have democratic elements – a popular assembly that meets fairly often, elects leaders, and that has control of legislation and perhaps other important policy, or perhaps a practice of selecting leaders by lot, or democratic practices of holding leaders accountable.

when they are likely to be peaceful, and specifically why democracies are less likely to fight each other. While we agree with Kant that self-governing polities internalize the costs of fighting and will therefore choose their wars carefully, we also take Machiavelli's point that nondemocratic and therefore poorly mobilized neighbors might prove enticing targets to democracies with more fully realized fighting capacity. When surrounded by nondemocracies, democracies are likely to make use of their edge by encroaching and expanding. As more countries become democratic, any given democracy loses the mobilizational advantage that it may have possessed against less inclusive political regimes. Our argument is that democratic capacity, when sufficiently widespread, should alone be able to produce dyadic democratic peace since the costs of fighting similarly mobilized societies are likely to be high.⁴ If enough countries become democratic, democratic capacity should generate systemic peacefulness through democratic deterrence.

Our second undertaking in this paper is to parse the effects of institutional forms, specifically to grasp the various effects of democratic versus republican government on foreign policy. We take democracy to refer to self-rule, where there the public has what we will call a vertical check on government decisions. A republic is a regime type that overlaps with democracy, and can be defined as a system with multiple (horizontal) checks and therefore no possibility of despotic rule by a single person or (even majority) collectivity. Kant thought that all self-governing regimes would have some reason for

⁴ Here we agree with Bueno de Mesquita, Morrow, Siverson, and Smith (1999: 804) that "In general, democracies make unattractive targets, particularly for other democracies [that want to avoid high casualties and protracted conflict]." We also agree with their exception, that a much bigger democracy

caution on account of a popular check on possible elite war-proneness. But he further thought that republican regimes, with horizontal checks and balances, would be more cautious still because of the higher decision costs involved in surmounting one or more institutional vetoes that could discourage hasty action. For regimes that are simultaneously democratic and republican, there are therefore two separate reasons for caution.

These same institutions, however, also each generate mobilizational capacity that can be put to aggressive use. The Machiavellian insight is that democracies possess military advantages by potentially harnessing the loyalty of a large portion of the population. Republics, whether democratic or not, may have a separate mobilizational advantage because decision making checks make them good credit risks and safe places to in which to invest. Checked regimes will not be as quick to tax or to expropriate wealth, so citizens will be more willing to invest in wealth creating activities. Mixed regimes such as ancient Corinth or medieval Venice were known to have strong economies and powerful commercial fleets, though they were thought to be relatively passive militarily.

Democracies and republics therefore each generate a set of countervailing forces, for and against peace or aggression. Ideally, we could estimate their various effects by way of simultaneous equations, but we do not possess sufficient data of a meaningful kind to carry out such a task. Instead, we review the historical record in a few selected cases to see how regime transition among these implied categories affects foreign policy behavior.

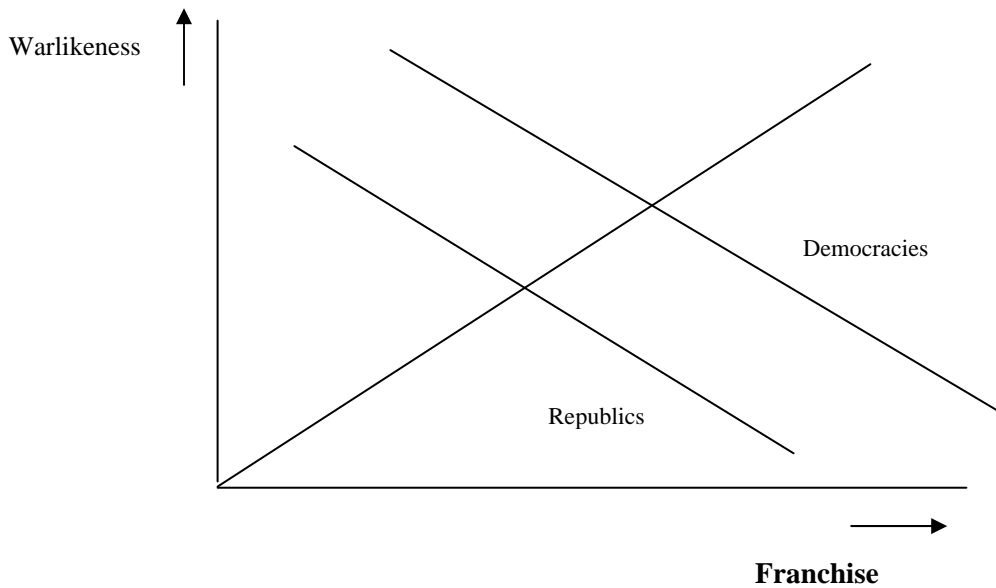
may be tempted to take advantage of a much smaller one, though we think the tenacity with which even a small democracy would be expected to fight could give pause.

Our conceptualization of the foreign policies of different types of politically inclusive regimes allows us to reconcile the seemingly opposed insights of Machiavelli and Kant. The probability of war, or more properly, of expansion, derives from a regime's mobilizational advantage over its targets. It is not inclusivity per se, as Machiavelli might have thought, but the gap between its franchise and those of its opponents that is one source of this advantage. When relative capacity is sufficiently large and the costs of expansion are low, both the expectation of victory and the net expected benefits of expansion per capita can rise simultaneously.

Figure 1 captures Machiavelli's and Kant's arguments pictorially: an increase in the franchise increases capacity, while it decreases the expected net gains from war for the elite who had previously been able to externalize the costs of war. Representative regimes, or democratic republics, have a lower curve on expected net gains, paralleling at a lower level the curve for direct democracies.

This conveys our sense that Machiavelli and Kant would have expected the effects of political inclusiveness to have monadic, or regime-specific, results—for Machiavelli, inclusive regimes should be more expansionary and for Kant, inclusive regimes should be more cautious.

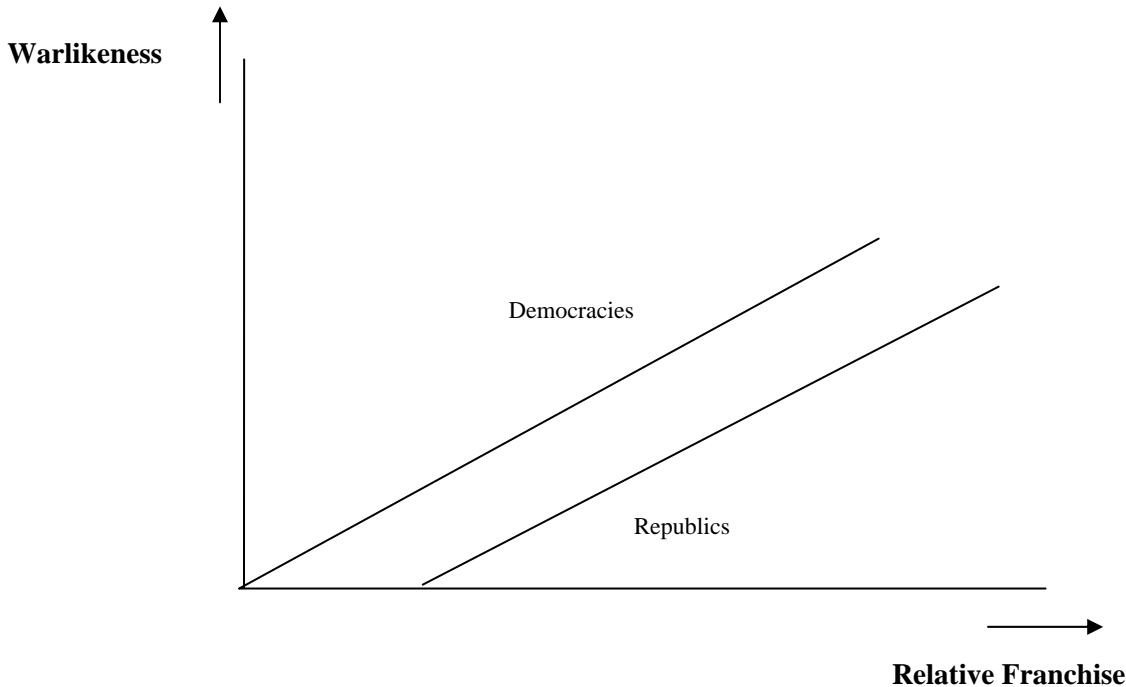
Figure 1
Machiavelli and Kant



If democratic republics have reasons for both caution and aggressiveness, evidence for either monadic theory is likely to be poor unless considering the environment within which opportunistic republics find themselves. Figure 2 shows that, when the x-axis is *relative* franchise, or the degree of political inclusivity compared to that of other countries, both the probability of winning *and* net expected benefits can rise simultaneously. Although Kant's intuition seems right that a bigger franchise means the political decision making process is more likely to consider fully the costs of war, a big enough capacity advantage may still make war worthwhile. The capacity gap between one regime and another is crucial to the concept of deterrence, and we take the difference in political inclusivity as one important source of this gap. To measure how republican

checks influence war proneness, we look separately for their expected effects on the economy and on military expansiveness.⁵

Figure 2
Warlike Democracies



In addition to our different causal basis for the democratic peace, we distinguish our approach from the mainstream neo-Kantian literature in two other ways.

⁵ Formally, suppose a state is composed of J groups, indexed $j = 1, \dots, J$. Let $v_j = 1$ if group j favors going to war, and $v_j = 0$ otherwise. Let $v = (v_1, \dots, v_J)$ be the "votes" in favor of war. Let $n_j = 1$ if group j has a veto over going to war, and $n_j = 0$ otherwise. Let $n = (n_1, \dots, n_J)$ characterize the veto structure. Let $q(v, n)$ be the probability that the state does go to war, given v and n . If there exists a j such that $n_j = 1$ and $v_j = 0$, then war is vetoed ($q = 0$). Otherwise, the state goes to war ($q = 1$). Let $p(v)$ be the probability that a state wins a war, given v . Let W_j be the gross benefit to winning war for j and L_j be the gross benefit to losing war for j . Let c_j be the cost of waging war to j . Then j favors war if and only if $p(v)W_j + (1 - p(v))L_j - c_j > 0$. The state goes to war if and only if $p(v)W_j + (1 - p(v))L_j - c_j > 0$ for all j such that $n_j = 1$. The mobilizational advantages due to democracy increase $p(v)$ against weak mobilizers. Against strong mobilizers, however, $|L_j|/W_j$ and c_j increase: the cost of losing a "total" war is high; the benefit of winning a "total" war is also higher, but does not increase as fast as the costs. The cost of waging total war also increases. From this perspective, the early democracies were aggressive because they knew they could out-mobilize their opponents; the later democracies avoid fighting each other because the L/W ratio typically does not justify it. We are grateful to Gary Cox for this formulation.

Methodologically, we question the sufficiency of empirical strategies that focus on cross sectional differences between regime types, obscuring intertemporal effects of democratization on foreign policy within a single country. Most of the variation is cross sectional, and many important variables are unmeasured. Moreover, by focusing on a truncated time period beginning after the Napoleonic Wars, the quantitative democratic peace literature misses many of the more interesting breaks in the data such as the rise of the mass army.

Second, assertiveness or expansion rather than war itself is the appropriate dependent variable for assessing the external effects of domestic institutions. Sometimes an aggressive policy that claims land and resources from others will be resisted violently but usually only if the resister thinks she stands some reasonable chance of success, however that may be defined.⁶ One need only consider the succession of treaties that the states concluded with the native populations in the United States, under which the Native Americans moved themselves ever westward.⁷ And whether this latter condition holds or is perceived by potential resisters to hold is wholly outside any theory about democratic peace. Econometric sophistication notwithstanding, many quantitative studies are not measuring what they purport to measure, and we seek to supply some needed theoretical clarity and concision.

⁶ This is a standard game theoretic point about conflict in complete information settings. James Fearon (1995) summarizes this nicely and explains why, nonetheless, rational actors might choose to fight.

⁷ We are indebted to Keith Darden for this example.

The rest of the paper is organized as follows. Section 2 lays out Kant’s thinking about how republican institutions may reduce the inclination of self-governing populations to wage war. Section 3 considers Machiavelli’s contrasting argument about democratic capacity and aggression. Section 4 lays out longitudinal evidence that can better capture the unit-level sources of foreign policy choices than can aggregate, cross-sectional data. The historical record suggests to us superior military capacity may override whatever reasons for caution that self rule generates. Section 5 concludes with the observation that the post World War II “democratic peace” may be more the result of democratic deterrence—rooted in the unwillingness of one well-mobilized population to risk fighting another—than from a fundamentally peaceful orientation that is thought to inhere in representative regimes.⁸

2. Kant and Neo-Kantianism

The father of the democratic peace idea was, of course, Immanuel Kant, who argued in this familiar and much quoted passage that “If (as must inevitably be the case, given this form of constitution) the consent of the citizenry is required in order to determine whether or not there will be war, it is natural that they consider all its calamities before committing themselves to so risky a game.... By contrast, under a nonrepublican constitution where subjects are not citizens, the easiest thing in the world is to declare war” (Perpetual Peace in Reiss 1971: 113). Citizens who could decide for themselves

⁸ Ray (1995) and Rummel (1983), for example, maintain that democracies are inherently more peaceful in general (monadic proposition) as well as more peaceful with other democracies (dyadic), but most neo-Kantians (Doyle 1983, 1997, Bueno de Mesquita, Morrow, Siverson, and Smith, Gaubatz; Kinsella forthcoming) stand only behind claims for dyadic peace. Michael Doyle calls the supplemental incentives a “web of mutual advantages and commitments” (Doyle 1983: 213). Gaubatz (1996) builds on this intuition to explain why alliances between democracies tend to last longer than either the relationships between nondemocracies or the alliances between democracies and nondemocracies.

whether or not to wage war would be more conservative than a head of state who could better insulate himself from the costs and miseries of war. An autocrat, by contrast “is not a fellow citizen but the owner of the state, and a war will not force him to make the slightest sacrifice so far as his banquets, hunts, pleasure palaces and court festivals are concerned. He can thus decide on war, without any significant reason, as a kind of amusement, and unconcernedly leave it to the diplomatic court...to justify the war for the sake of propriety” (Reiss 1970: 100). The sense of this is clear enough: a republic, because everyone (or perhaps every male) is a citizen, will internalize the costs of war and nonrepublican governments will not.⁹

Immediately after the passages stating the republican peace proposition, Kant went on to distinguish republican from democratic government: “Republicanism is that political principle whereby executive power is separated from legislative power. In a despotism the ruler independently executes the policy that it has itself made...here rulers have taken hold of the public will and treated it as their own private will. Among the ... forms of government, democracy, in the proper sense of the term, is necessarily a despotism...” (PP: 114). Kant accepted Montesquieu’s separation of despotic from republican (or moderate) government and the key distinction for both thinkers is that a republican government rules through law and not through arbitrary acts of will. Kant thought republicanism differed from democracy (and despotisms generally) in two ways. First,

⁹ In Kant’s own words, from his 1786 essay on the “Perpetual Peace,” “The reason is this: if the consent of the citizens is required in order to decide that war should be declared (and in this constitution it cannot but be the case), nothing is more natural than that they would be very cautious in commencing such a poor game, decreeing for themselves all the calamities of war. Among the latter includes: having to fight, having to pay the costs of war from their own resources, having painfully to repair the devastation war leaves behind, and, to fill up the measure of evils, load themselves with a heavy national debt that would embitter peace itself and that can never be liquidated on account of constant wars in the future.”

republics separate legislative and executive powers. The importance of what we will call horizontally separated powers stems from his notion of despotism, which occurs precisely when these powers are fused. The body authorizing action, whether or not it is comprised of representatives or the people, is different from the body taking the action (separation of the executive from the legislature). Second, Kant also says republics rule by way of representatives and not directly by the people.¹⁰ This creates a vertical division by which representatives rather than the people take authoritative actions. For Kant the people have no direct role in republican government as they had in both the Athenian *ekklesia* and the Roman *comitia*.

Quite clearly, then, Kant thought that his peace proposition applied to republics rather than to politically inclusive regimes more generally. Indeed, it seems very likely that his view was not really in conflict with traditional views at all; the Greeks would have thought exactly the same thing. While republics had representatives who would add another layer of checking to any proposal to fight, direct democracies might not exhibit the prudent behavior expected of republics. Kant thought democracies despotic (or will-driven) and for that reason might be moved to take action based on momentary passions.

Even for republics, however, Kant must have thought it unwise to rely solely on the first definitive article of perpetual peace to prevent war, for he added second (international

¹⁰ “Every form of government that is not representative is properly speaking without form, because one and the same person cannot be at the same time the legislator and executive of his will.” (PP: 114) Furthermore, “...if the form of government is to cohere with the concept of right, it must include the representative system, which is possible only in a republican form of government and without which ... government is despotic... None of the ancient so called republics were aware of this, and consequently they inevitably degenerated into despotism...” (PP 115).

organizations) and third (universal hospitality, or trade) definitive articles. Here, Kant departs from unit-level logic. While Kant may have thought it possible for humans' gravitation towards republican self-rule to take care of much of the world's ills, a better world might arise in this way only after "much inconvenience" (Reiss 1970: 113).

Kant's prescription for perpetual peace has found prolific modern day expression in scholarship advancing "the democratic peace proposition."¹¹ But contemporary theorists have dropped Kant's differentiation between democracies and republics, taking instead the broad and modern definition of a democracy as a self-governing polity of politically equal citizens. We think this is a potentially important distinction to revive, for decision-making checks and political inclusion are logically independent to at least a certain degree and should exert separate influences on foreign policy.

2.1 Direct and Representative Democracies

For classical theorists, on whom Kant relied extensively for his constitutional classifications, monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy could exist in their pure forms or could be combined in various ways to form "mixed government." For Aristotle, the preferred system of government was a hoplite democracy with a property qualification.

Mixed constitutions may achieve a similar effect if they can get the right balance: "the

¹¹ The Democratic Peace Theory literature is vast, though it divides roughly into approaches that link peacefulness of democracies to electoral accountability mechanisms that internalize the costs of war (Bueno de Mesquita et al.), and those that stress the importance of shared values and interests borne of democratic culture, trade, and diplomacy (Russett, Doyle, Gartzke, Oneal, Weart). Both strands, however, draw their primary empirical support from the dyadic and war-based finding that democracies are less likely to fight each other than are democracies to fight non democracies or non democracies are to fight

farther away one moves from middle-polity, the worse;” and “When the unpropertied class without the support of a middle class gets on top by weight of numbers, things go badly and they soon come to grief” (*The Politics* IV.11). Aristotle’s choice of mixed constitution rested on his view that majoritarian institutions would likely fail to give sufficient weight to the middle class of property owners, which “is also the steadiest element, the least eager for change. They neither covet, like the poor, the possessions of others, nor do others covet theirs, as the poor covet those of the rich. So they live less risky lives, not scheming and not being schemed against” (VI.11). For Aristotle, a system of government that privileged elements of society with a propertied stake, by way of magistracies or leadership councils of one kind or other, would likely make superior decisions about the use of community resources in war and peace.

While Kant adopted the classical three-fold typology of constitutional types and shared Aristotle’s disdain for direct democracy, his preoccupation was with rule of law rather than with the “golden mean.” For Kant, direct democracy would be as arbitrary and fickle as despotism because it had no way to commit itself to a rule of law that would govern impartially all members of society, including the existing majority. Kant’s solution was representative government. This would have the dual merits of allowing people to be self-governing and, by adding a layer of decision making in the legislative process, to stabilize laws by making them harder to change. Kant was not much clearer than this, but it seems important to consider alternative mechanisms by which indirect democracy is more conducive to rule of law.

each other. Rousseau, Gelpi, Reiter, Huth (1996), Chan (1997), Gelpi and Griesdorf (2001), Reiter and Stam (2002) provide insightful reviews of the democratic peace literature and its findings.

Lateral Checks

In one passage, Kant equates direct democracy with despotism for fusing the legislative and executive functions of government. By contrast, “republicanism is that political principle whereby the executive power (the government) is separated from the legislative power” (PP: 101). Here he is making a case for lateral checks by one branch on another to restrain an impetuous majority. Kant is in good company in making this claim, for it draws on a rich tradition from Aristotle, Polybius, and Machiavelli. We have already recounted Aristotle’s low opinion of majoritarian politics. Polybius thought of Rome that “the proper equilibrium is maintained by the impulsiveness of the one part being checked by its fear of the other,” referring to the Senatorial and popular elements of government balancing each other (Polybius VI). Machiavelli echoed this position, stating “all legislation favorable to liberty is brought about the clash between them [referring to the popular and aristocratic elements of government]” (Discourses 1.4).

In modern terminology, checks and balances can increase the commitment to rule of law by increasing the transactions costs of changing laws. Whether or not veto points are lodged in particular sociological groups with antithetical interests, as ancient writers conceived, any check is likely to slow down the process of policy change because no two aggregations of citizens’ interests are likely to be exactly the same. As we know from spatial theory, changing policy becomes harder the farther apart the ideal points of the veto holders, and this in turn depends on the rules by which the veto players in possession of the checks are chosen.

While lateral checks may slow down the process or increase the costs of policy change, we can see from modern examples that their absence does not necessarily eliminate the possibility of rule of law as a strict reading of Kant's text implies. Westminster systems, which deliberately fuse the legislative and executive functions of government, may indeed enable legislative majorities to change laws with greater ease than their counterparts in checked systems. For Kant, a second, vertical, set of checks built into representative systems qualify Westminster systems as republics and spares them from the "despotism" of direct democracies.

Vertical Checks

Representative governments, by definition, separate decision making from the people. In most matters, the public delegates to their representatives decision making authority to act on their behalf and thereby reduce the costs of decision making. Kant suggests that complete delegation is not possible in serious matters such as a declaration of war, where the people must somehow consent to these decisions directly by agreeing to fight. A vertical check thereby arises in these instances when the indirect aspect of representation is somehow incomplete: a residual undelegated power remains with the citizenry.

Vertical checks of this sort would work in much the same way as lateral checks and balances, by raising the threshold for making and changing laws. But in one way they are fundamentally different: vertical checks work to limit democracy directly or, if you prefer, to limit direct democracy. Of course, in the event that the distribution of the

legislative assembly's preferences over going to war turned out to be identical to that of the voting public, this check would lack force. But as Kant emphasized, when it comes to decisions to go to war, the preferences of representatives are likely to differ systematically from those they represent, so convergence is unlikely.

Kant is not likely to have thought, nor do we think, that checks slow down policy making in all circumstances, but institutional checks are more likely to constrain as the utility of aggression becomes more ambiguous or contested. In clear cases of self-defense, even a regime with multiple veto players would likely reach swift consensus on the appropriate policy response, such as the U.S. after Pearl Harbor, for example. Checks potentially induce prudence and weed out passionate or rash action by requiring more institutional actors to agree to the net expected costs.

3. Machiavelli and Democratic Capacity

Machiavelli approached the problem of warlike democracies with radically different motives than Kant's.¹² Wishing for his native Florence some of Republican Rome's vigor and power (to resist Spanish, French, Austrian and papal influence), Machiavelli concluded that politically inclusive regimes were more likely to be expansionist because their more thorough mobilization of the populace would give them a military advantage

¹² Machiavelli played the major role in creating a non-citizen militia in Florence in the context of the war against Pisa early in the 16th century. His reasons for this are well known: he opposed Florence's use of mercenary troops and thought that the best alternative was to rely on a conscripted militia. But we doubt that his leadership in this cause should be seen as an endorsement of the use of subjects rather than citizens in defense of the city. It seems much more likely that he thought that he could not hope to get Florentines to agree to citizen conscription and settled for a compromise.

over poorly mobilized neighbors (Discourses 1.6). For Machiavelli, it was precisely because Republican Rome gave its plebeian soldiers political voice, and because it enfranchised the populations of the lands it conquered, that it was militarily powerful, and therefore successfully republican for a long period of time. A broader political franchise gave Rome more citizen-soldiers, and they were all fighting for a system in which they had a stake. Machiavelli in fact thought that a well-organized republic *must* be militarily expansive.¹³

A Machiavellian explanation for why early democracies were militarily expansive rests on their superior capacity to mobilize their populations for war compared with their less politically inclusive neighbors. Machiavelli seems to have had in mind both the disinclination of governments to arm subjects who might use arms to wrest political concessions, and the stronger motivation of soldiers to fight for a polity in which they possessed a political stake.¹⁴ History bears him out on both counts. Oligarchical governments are famous for building their militaries around the mounted nobility, fearful of arming the peasantry. Sparta was forced to rely on its slaves and subject allies when its own population became insufficient to fend off military threats, but in 371 B.C. the Theban general Epaminondas defeated the Spartan army at Leuctra by concentrating the

¹³ Machiavelli admitted that it might be possible to establish a non-expansive republic on the model of Venice or Sparta. Such a republic would need to be located in a strong defensive position and be strong enough to resist invasion but not so strong as to threaten its neighbors. But Machiavelli doubted that this combination of factors would be likely. “I am convinced that the Roman type of constitution should be adopted, not that of any other republic, for to find a middle way between the two extremes I do not think possible.” Discourses 1.6; see also Doyle 1997 and McCormick 1993.

¹⁴ “One finds that cities in which the populace is the prince, in a very short time extend vastly their dominions much more than do those which have always been under a prince; as Rome did after the expulsion of the kings, and Athens after it was free of Pisistratus. This can only be due to one thing: government by the populace is better than government by princes...[O]f all the glories won by populaces

force of his assault against the Spartan hoplites. As he expected, the slave and allied flanks gave way as soon as the Spartan ranks fell. Heavy French losses to England at Agincourt in 1415 are often attributed to the unwillingness of the French nobility to arm peasants with crossbows (Landers 2003), and the dismemberment of Poland by Prussia and Russia in 1797 is arguably attributable to a similar fear of placing lethal weapons in the hands of serfs.

Republican regimes have an additional mobilizational advantage in being able to borrow funds cheaply and in enforcing property rights necessary to foster economic growth. As North and Weingast (1989) argued in the case of the Glorious Revolution in England in 1688, making the king subject to a parliamentary check and strengthening judicial oversight assured investors that the monarchy would no longer be able to renege on loans or to confiscate other property. By their telling, England's military might grew substantially in comparison to that of France where the monarch could not credibly commit to honoring contracts to which he was party. The higher cost of French debt and France's weaker economic performance were, in part, constitutionally determined.

Nondemocracies, to be sure, have also extracted heroic sacrifices from their subject populations, and repressive regimes of all stripes have employed some combination of fear, nationalism, religion, and ideology with considerable success.¹⁵ We do not mean to suggest that democracy is the "magic bullet," so to speak. The Russian empire, for

and all those won by princes, it will be found that alike in goodness and in glory, the populace is far superior." Discourses I.58.

¹⁵ Rieter and Stam (2002) point out the extreme levels of sacrifice autocratic regimes imposed on civilian populations in service of war efforts in the 20th century.

example, was not particularly inclusive, but it expanded at a rate averaging 30 square kilometers a year from the 1500s for several centuries.¹⁶ At first much of this expansion was into the steppe lands and tundra that went relatively uncontested. Once Russia gained a certain scale, it became difficult even for smaller entities, however well mobilized, to challenge effectively. The more inclusive yet substantially smaller Swedish state shrank back rather than to take on the enormous Russian army. And as Napoleon's Grand Armee found when it marched towards Moscow in July 1812, taking only summer uniforms in utter confidence of swift victory, the Russian territory was so vast that the Russian armies were able to draw the French ever deeper without directly engaging Napoleon. It was the Russian winter that subsequently defeated Napoleon's army, leaving alive only 10,000 of the original half million to return, humiliated, to Paris.

History gives us a fair number of examples of repressive empires, and of political leaders who managed to mix selective compensation with fear and other elements of the human psyche to generate strong apparent support for their tyranny. We do not claim that only democracies have the sort of capacity advantage that allows them to expand. Our point is more modest, that politically inclusive regimes are on balance likely to enjoy higher levels of soldier morale and initiative, popular support, voluntary tax compliance, and economic vibrancy, all of which increase the odds of success to one degree or another.

If democracies are better at mobilizing manpower and other resources than are non-democracies, this mobilizational advantage would be expected, *ceteris paribus*, to shift the distribution of costs and benefits in their favor. If this is so it may be the case that

¹⁶ We are indebted to Keith Darden for this point.

democracies are more war-prone (as Machiavelli thought) simply because they are militarily stronger than otherwise identical nations, and not because of any property of democracy itself (as Kant may have thought).¹⁷ This effect might be especially strong in situations in which there are few democracies: in that context, a democracy is likely to face an especially tempting set of targets for aggression.

By Machiavelli's logic, any particular popular regime's mobilizational advantage would disappear when faced with other similarly mobilized regimes (other things being equal of course), and it would adjust its military posture accordingly. Democracies should be more peaceful than nondemocracies only if their expected costs from fighting outweigh their expected benefits. As with any effective deterrence, widespread democratic mobilization should generate peaceful inter-state relations by reducing the expected benefits from war.

In summary, it is possible to accept both Machiavelli's view that democracies can harness more efficiently the capacities of the population, and the Kantian view that representative democracies might be more cautious than either direct democracies or autocracies with comparable levels of fighting capacity. Direct democracies may be more prone to error if they are susceptible to demagoguery or to sudden fits of passion that do not take longer run issues sufficiently into account. By injecting the decision making process with more

¹⁷ Schultz (1999) found empirically that "targets of militarized action are less likely to respond militarily when the initiator of that action is a democracy." In a clever test of the informational and constraint hypotheses associated with democracies, Schultz concluded that democracies' ability to send clear signals of their intention to fight seems more important than a purportedly lower will to fight. Note that this result is also consistent with our argument about democratic capacity, assuming that it is known and expected.

deliberative venues, representative democracy may raise the bar for establishing the net expected benefits of a war worth fighting.

4. Evidence

The neo-Kantian literature tends to overlook prominent cases of aggressive democracies because it lacks a longitudinal orientation, and because of its preoccupation with wars rather than expansion, however achieved. The assertiveness of politically inclusive political regimes becomes more apparent when we can see the effects of domestic institutional changes on a country's foreign policy over time. Moreover, by including in our analysis territorial expansion and foreign policy assertiveness rather than focusing on wars per se, we steer clear of the trap of considering only cases where informed calculation broke down. In this section, we illustrate with four historical examples our proposition that an increase in political inclusiveness seems to produce more aggressive external behavior, at least relative to powers that are not comparably mobilized. We also find that nondemocratic republics, with all of their decision making hurdles, nevertheless may use their economic dynamism to expand their economic empires when they have a sufficient capacity advantage to justify the costs.

Greece: Neither Machiavelli nor Kant would have expected Athens of the 5th century to be militarily timid, Machiavelli because Athens was surrounded by regimes less inclusive than itself, and Kant because Athens was a radical democracy without checks in its decision making system. And of course Athenian aggressiveness is well documented. At the peak of its 5th century empire, Athens built a massive fleet paid in large part by the

tribute it extracted from the members of its alliance structure, with which it dominated commerce and protected its colonies and allies in the Aegean. The Aristotelian author of the *Constitution of the Athenians* pointed out that at least some of the tribute money was spent domestically on payment for public service in juries and the boule as well as the building program and for poor relief (*Constitution of the Athenians*, 24/2, in Samons 1998: 44). Plutarch has Pericles saying, in about 450, that the Athenians were not obliged to give the allies any account of how their money was spent provided that they carried on the war for them and kept the Persians away (*Rise and Fall of Athens*, 12). Although a powerful protector, Athens was not necessarily the object of the fondness and affection of its tribute states (Thucydides 75; though Ste. Croix 1955 argued that Thucydides exaggerated the ill will Athens brought on itself).

Some notorious examples of Athenian rashness may seem to bear out the Kantian interpretation that imprudence was behind Athenian aggrandizement: in 428 the Athenian assembly voted to slaughter all Mytilenean males for revolting against the Athenian alliance—though a subsequent assembly vote reversed the decision, requiring the dispatch of fast rowers to intercept the grim orders of the first boat; they authorized the Sicilian expedition in 421 on Alcibiades' urging without considering what they were up against¹⁸; and they voted to execute their (victorious!) generals for failing to pick up dead or possibly drowning sailors in stormy weather following the battle of Arginousai in 406. Note, however, that the rashness on these occasions may have contributed to war but not

¹⁸ Russett and Antholis (1995) in an extremely careful and well documented article about the Peloponnesian War argued that if Athens had known Syracuse was a democracy, they may not have wanted to fight it. We agree, if not on account of cultural affinity among democracies, at least because they would have expected a democracy to fight hard and well.

to successful expansion. The Sicilian expedition was a disastrous failure, and executing their best generals paved the way for the crushing defeat, with inexperienced generals at the helm, at Aegospotamai in 404.

How Athens would have behaved had it been constrained by Kantian institutional checks takes us into the realm of speculation. There was already in the 5th century a lottery-chosen boule that set the agenda for the assembly, annually elected generals, and checks on (lottery-chosen and elected) leaders in the form of post-term review backed by possible sanctions and even ostracism.¹⁹ When democracy was restored in 403 B.C. after the oligarchic interval, the Athenians instituted the nomothetai, a legislative/judicial board chosen by the various demes in their deme assemblies, with the solemn responsibility of passing or rejected any law proposed by the assembly (Hansen 1990: 163). Nevertheless, decisions about war were considered to be decrees rather than laws, and remained solely in the jurisdiction of the assembly. It would therefore be difficult to argue that Athens' shift towards a less expansionist foreign policy in the 4th century was on account of institutional innovation.

A Machiavellian view of Athenian success in the 5th century compared to other states, and compared to its own in the 4th, would stress relative capacity borne of political inclusivity. Plutarch thought that Solon abolished debt servitude in 594 B.C. to shore up Athenian military resistance against a menacing and more democratic Megara, and most scholars agree that Cleisthenes granted the franchise to the unpropertied in 508/7 to help

him expel Spartan-backed oligarchs (Scheidel 2004). Athens was one of the few poleis in the 5th century with unpropertied citizens, and the fleet with which it overpowered neighbors was manned primarily by Athens' urban poor. Barry Strauss notes that the light Athenian triremes that outmaneuvered many an opponent were designed with this manpower resource in mind, and Josiah Ober argues that Athenian democracy harnessed broadly based and local—even at the oars--knowledge of the kind that was unavailable to hierarchically organized societies (Strauss 2000; Ober, forthcoming).

Whatever the basis for Athens' democratic capacity, it was widely believed in the Greek world that Athenian democracy made for military vigor. Thucydides, though perhaps ambivalent about democracy per se, credits it—or at least Pericles' broad based popularity--for Athens' ability to both levy such a large portion of its population for military service, and to motivate them to fight bravely. Herodotus was more pointed: “The Athenians at this point [upon the expulsion of the Spartan-backed oligarchs in 506 B.C.] became much stronger. So it is clear what a noble thing is ‘equality of public speech.’ Since when they were ruled by tyrants, the Athenians did not stand out from their neighbors in military capability, but after deposing the tyrants, they became overwhelmingly superior” (Herodotus 5.78, quoted in Ober 2000: 2).

Athens was indeed less successful in the 4th century, but it was not, at least initially, for lack of trying. Athenian generals Thrasybulus, Conon, Iphikrates, and Timotheus worked hard to reestablish Athenian naval supremacy in the Aegean, but after Thebes defeated

¹⁹ In 415 the Athenians replaced ostracism with court procedures that allowed citizens to charge leaders of breaking decrees, laws, or going against the best interests of the Athenians. See Pasquale Pasquino and

Sparta at Leuktra in 371, Athens had difficulty securing tribute from other Greek poleis (McCoy 1991; Perlman 1968; Seager 1967; Cawkwell 1981: 41; Habicht 1996). Athens no longer had an undominated reputation with which to sell protection to surrounding city states. With Thebes as an alternative possible patron, some of Athens' erstwhile allies revolted from the Second Athenian League in 368 and resisted militarily Athens' attempts to repossess Amphipolis and the Chersonese, its former colonies near Thessaly. A decade later in the so-called "Social War," Athens again came to blows with some of its former allies that were moving towards a Theban alliance. Although the war lasted only two or three years, Athens not only used up its war chest but it also permanently lost the League's wealthiest members, Byzantium, Chios, and Rhodes. Gone was a portion of Athens' capacity advantage, partly because more poleis had inclusive regimes in the 4th century than in the 5th (including some of those renegades), and also because a number of poleis in Boeotia (led by Thebes), and later Aetolia, and Achaia formed their own defensive leagues among themselves as an alternative way of marshalling sizeable armies (Mackill 2004; Botsford 1910; Bakhuizen 1994; Larsen 1952).²⁰ Additional layers of judicial oversight may have strengthened property rights in fourth century Athens, contributing to a flourishing economy and commercial success (Fine 1951). But surrounded by more fully mobilized regimes, Athens was not to translate this economic vibrancy into empire. The days of getting neighbors to pay for the Athenian fleet were largely over.

Anna Krutonogaya 2004: 12-13.

²⁰ But as Morris (2004) points out, rich commercial oligarchies like Corinth or Aegina could always pay for their soldiers—rather like Venice of later times--and never needed to expand the franchise to levy troops.

Rome: While the adoption of elements of republican rule did not explain Athens' loss of empire, institutions are perhaps even more important in the Roman case, for explaining Rome's expansionist rush in the late Republic. Machiavelli admired the Republic's mixed or "Polybian" political system, in which democratic, oligarchic and monarchical elements are balanced, but he believed that the traditional system of checks began to break down in the late Republic under democratic pressures.²¹ These domestic political developments coincided with Rome's expansionist surge into far reaches of Europe and the Mediterranean, a surge fueled by immense new legions. We do not know if Rome was really more territorially ambitious in the late Republican period than earlier, but it was perhaps more successful militarily and its armies had, necessarily, to become more professional and removed from Roman life more than ever before. This record of success surely encouraged additional expansionist projects, which required finding more troops.

The Roman Senate, a bastion of the wealthy and conservative, had sought to limit the power of the poor by restricting their ability to serve in the army. In 101 B.C. Marius ignored the prohibition on recruiting from the lowest census order, the unpropertied, and raised armies on the largest scale Rome had mustered. The decision to enfranchise the Italians in 87, after losing to them in the Social War, further added to the recruitment base for the army. Expansion into Illyria and points east, and upward into Europe followed under the leadership of a succession of ambitious generals.

It would misrepresent history, however, to ignore that Rome had already taken control of most of the Mediterranean world while the Republican checks were still in place. In the

²¹ Millar (1998) endorses this view of the growing power of the "crowd."

mid Republic, annually elected consuls were at the top of the military chain of command and shared executive power with several other groups of magistrates; the Senate allocated military fields of operation to the consuls and controlled access to finances; and the popularly elected tribunes presided over the assemblies that passed legislation. Although decisions to go to war had to surmount institutional obstacles, of both the lateral and vertical sort that Kant identified, Rome was constantly at war and exceptionally good at it. The broad social base of Rome's military, and the generosity of Rome with its citizenship, gave it access to more fighting men, with a greater stake in the polity and outcome of the fight, than was true for many of the lands that Rome took.

It is true that Rome embarked on faster and more far flung expansion for a short time in the dying days of the Republic, but it was a short burst of energy until civil war consumed Rome's resources and the establishment of the imperial throne extinguished the flame. The collapse of the Republican institutions seem ultimately rooted in the stationing of troops overseas for years at a time, where they developed stronger attachments to their commanding generals who looked after them and distributed plunder than to Rome so far away. Once in this position of power over their troops, popular generals such as Sulla and Caesar defied Republican institutions with impunity and eventually seized power for themselves. Ironically, much of the Roman Empire had been built during the Republic, and expanded only incrementally once Roman generals began calling themselves Caesar.

Britain: Moving from an unchecked monarchy to, as Montesquieu noted, “a republic in monarchy’s garb” in 1688, to a virtual disappearance of horizontal checks by mid 19th century, English history displays a range of institutional forms. Because the timing of these regime changes does not coincide with changes in our structural variable--the British franchise relative to the political inclusivity of the rest of the world-- we are able to get some sense of their separate effects. Britain embarked on a major world expansion just as checks on monarchical power ensured a decision making role for the (narrowly based) popular element. It seems clear that this dynamism sprang from the newly attractive investment climate rather than from the upwelling of democratic vitality, but we also note that expansionism and the subsequent expansion of the British franchise proceeded hand in hand. We argue that the public did not use its growing political voice to stop British expansion because the relative ease with which Britain expanded against soft targets was appealing even to those paying taxes and sending family members to military service. As republic checks more or less melted into parliamentary sovereignty in the 19th century, England was slowing its imperial drive. This was not because the absence of checks hurt England’s investment climate, which was by this time ensured by majoritarian electoral competition. We point instead to England’s shrinking relative capacity advantage as the rest of Europe had closed the franchise gap.

The vast literature on British imperialism, starting with Hobson (1902) and Lenin (1918), is dominated by the attempt to show how English producers and investors managed to get the English government to foster their interests abroad, whether or not these activities were profitable to the English people as a whole. Davis and Huttenback (1982, 1988)

provided evidence that the empire was a net loss to the English economy because the English taxpayer and not the dependent colonies paid the sizable colonial defense budgets. The upshot was that, over time, imperialism transferred income from English taxpayers to English investors in imperial enterprise.²²

Cobden and the Manchester School of the previous century, who argued strenuously that free trade made empire unnecessary and that colonies were wasteful of resources, presaged this twentieth century scholarly critique of British imperialism (Schuyler 1921).²³ Their inspiration, of course, was none other than Adam Smith, whose take was that "No nation ever voluntarily gave up the dominion of any province, how troublesome soever it might be to govern it....Such sacrifices...are always contrary to the private interest of the governing part of it, who would therefore be deprived of...many opportunities of acquiring wealth and distinction, which the possession of the most turbulent, and, to the great body of the people, the most unprofitable province, seldom fails to afford" (quoted in R. L. Schuyler, 1921: 537).

While public support for costly empire is fascinating, we leave aside the mechanics of how coalitions for conquest were built. We do not deny that English merchants and investors sought to put their country's military might in service of their material interests,

²³ Adam Smith's take (Wealth of Nations IV/vii) was that "No nation ever voluntarily gave up the dominion of any province, how troublesome soever it might be to govern it....Such sacrifices...are always contrary to the private interest of the governing part of it, who would therefore be deprived of...many opportunities of acquiring wealth and distinction, which the possession of the most turbulent, and, to the great body of the people, the most unprofitable province, seldom fails to afford" (quoted in R. L. Schuyler, 1921: 537). One way to interpret this is in terms of an interest group model where the public is brought into the coalition by side payments of some kind

but these accounts neither explain England's relative military strength, nor why the imperialist cause gained rather than faltered with the expansion of the English franchise during the 19th century. As Paul Kennedy has pointed out, the considerably higher British standard of living relative to its 19th century competitors—France, Russia, and Prussia--reduced the public burden of its defense expenditures (Kennedy 1989: 190). Palmerston's motto, "trade without rule where possible, trade with rule where necessary," may have overtaken the more cautious foreign policy inclinations of Walpole precisely because England's growing mobilizational capacity gave it resources to spend, and an advantage in competing against less inclusive countries and domains.

Early English territorial expansion began in an uncoordinated way, often made for the monarchy by government-sanctioned adventurers or pirates such as John Cabot, Sir Francis Drake, or William Hawkins and his son John. But until the late 17th century the English navy was poorly funded and these acquisitions were sporadic and poorly guarded until Parliament could be sure that it had a check on the monarchy and loosened the purse strings on taxation. John Cabot, a Genoese to whom Henry VII granted the first patent for western discovery in 1497, explored the Delaware for England but the English government did not choose to develop it. It is hard to disagree with Woodward's observation, if somewhat overstated, that "Nothing proves more conclusively the unfitness of England at that time for a policy of external growth than the neglect with which this most important discovery of the North American mainland was treated" (Woodward 1902: 12). In 1634 the English navy "was regarded by foreign nations with well-deserved contempt" because Parliament was reluctant give James I and Charles I

money for naval build up (Hassell 1912: 128). Indeed Charles I's attempt to improve the navy in the face of an overwhelmingly powerful Dutch fleet was one of the sparks that set off the Civil War between the monarchy and Parliament. As in the Dutch Provinces, the tinder was supplied by religion, for without popular antagonism to the monarchy's sympathies for Catholicism, the elite's contest with the king over taxes and budget may have been insufficient to bring the monarchy to its knees.

Cromwell's Protectorate raised significantly more money from Parliament for British naval expansion than the Stuarts had managed, but the relative powers of the Protector and Parliament remained contested. The Glorious Revolution of 1688, by definitively embedding the monarchy within parliamentary rule, laid to rest the possibility of autocracy. Although Britain was only very narrowly representative at this time, the check on the monarchy assured Commons of a voice in foreign policy making, and Commons in turn showed its willingness to raise the taxes necessary for a powerful military. Moreover, the parliamentary check on monarchical authority enabled the government to borrow money at lower interest rates, giving the English a decisive financial advantage in the "Second Hundred Years' War" with France that ensued (North and Weingast 1989; Schultz and Weingast 2003).²⁴

As William Woodward noted over a century ago, British territorial expansion occurred in parallel with the expansion of British liberty at home (Woodward 1902: 9). Domestic

²⁴ To be sure, there was still in 1779 political reluctance to arming unenfranchised males, who still made up the majority of subjects. In the words of the Earl of Sandwich, it could be "dangerous to the peace and quiet of the neighborhood" to do so (Conway 1997: 1195). This unease about mass arming was pushed

political backing for the British empire grew alongside the size of the British electorate over the course of the three Reform Acts in the 19th century. Kathleen Wilson has argued that the popularity of aggressive foreign policy was partly responsible for the fall of Walpole's relatively pacifist cabinet in 1842 (Wilson 1988). It is also well known that Disraeli's formulation of an electoral platform based on protection of the empire won for the Tories a legislative majority in 1874 and positioned the party to continue to flourish through the third Reform Act (Koebner 1949: 18; Dunbabin 1996: 91; Harcourt 1980), while the Liberals struggled to find an equally popular electoral appeal and were ultimately sidelined as a major party. One junior minister remarked in 1873 that, "Whatever may be the policy of this or any government, public opinion will not permit the withdrawal of British authority from the west coast of Africa" (cited in Darwin 1997: 623). The British government's assumption of rule in India in the wake of the indigenous revolt against the East India Company in 1857, and the government's tightening of its control of African territories following the European scramble for Africa in the 1880s, did not undermine domestic support for the imperial project. By the time of the Boer War in 1899, "there was not a beggar in London who did not speak of 'our' rebellious subjects" (Schumpeter 1951/1989: 15).

Schumpeter (1951/1989: 91) argued that capitalism and commerce eventually undermined empire by making it redundant. While more compatible with long run trends than Lenin's opposite claim that imperialism followed necessarily from the advanced stages of capitalism, Schumpeter's fails to account for the considerable lag between the

aside when England engaged in a struggle with revolutionary France some years later (Conway 1997: 1200).

rise of global trade and the collapse of European imperialism. Beliefs about the necessity of “trade with rule” doubtless varied across the population as well as over time, but the shift towards free trade in the mid 19th century does not seem to have disinclined the British populace to put away the “big stick” for quite some time. As we have noted, the appropriate dependent variable for assessing mobilizational capacity is successful expansion of territory and influence, rather than wars per se. A mobilizational advantage vis a vis other domains can generate gains without provoking a violent reaction if both sides share similar expectations about the outcome in the event that matters were to come to blows.

A Machiavellian explanation for England’s shrinking global presence might be more apt, which would have the English abandoning their empire when their expected net per capita gains were eroded by the growing capacity for mobilization among competitor states and in the states they occupied. The successive waves of democratization in Europe from 1848 and the nationalist movements throughout the colonized world led the English taxpayers and investors to reassess the value of foreign territorial control.

The United States: Washington’s Farewell Address is the classic statement of early American commitment to “freedom from entangling alliances,” but nowhere did this version of isolationism rule out expansion where convenient (Gilbert 1961, 1977: 15, 133). Hamilton, who is known to have put at least the finishing touches on Washington’s most famous speech, had Palmerstonian views on trade but also thought it imprudent to

challenge British maritime dominance.²⁵ American expansion instead went westward, where the political and military ineffectiveness of Native American resistance made for more tempting targets (Graebner 1985: 189). Jefferson's Louisiana Purchase in 1803 was a bargain at 15 million dollars, even if Napoleon pocketed the profits from land "he had no right to sell under the terms by which he had acquired it *gratis* from Spain" (Herold 1963: 311). The popular concept of Manifest Destiny, the Mexican War of 1846, the Spanish American War of 1898, and the Open Door Policy in China in 1900 were all of a piece in the very general sense that the American sphere of influence continued to expand, undeterred by American rhetorical commitment to—some would say a self-righteous moral obsession with-- the right of democratic self determination.²⁶

Colonial assemblies began with a wide array of franchise arrangements (Woodward 1902: 188-196), but as Alexander Keyssar has documented, American military exploits have often accompanied expansions in the franchise. Most colonies had expanded their franchises during the revolution, and Franklin was of the view that American soldiers had fought harder than British soldiers on account of being citizens with a political voice. At the Constitutional Convention Franklin opposed Morris's proposal for a national property qualification on suffrage rights on precisely these grounds, that the nation needed the full support of the populace (Keyssar 2000: 15). Hamilton was one of the few to favor giving slaves their freedom in exchange for joining the Continental Army, and gave an

²⁶ The redoubtable Hans Morgenthau spent his career as a diplomatic historian trying to disabuse the American public and their foreign policy leaders of the "intoxication with moral abstractions which as a mass phenomenon started with the Spanish American War" and inveighing against the American attachment to moralism that "has become the prevailing substitute for political thought" (Morgenthau 1951: 4, 7).

instrumentalist reason in addition to the moral one for doing this: “[I]t should be considered that if we do not make use of them in this way, the enemy probably will...” The South Carolina legislature rejected the slave enfranchisement plan, and the northern states permitted the southern states autonomy on the issue (Chernow 2004: 122).

Although states retained control over the franchise under the Articles of Confederation, the Constitution gave the right to vote in national elections to those who could vote for the “most numerous Branch of the state legislature” (Keyssar 2000: 21). Virginia abandoned its property requirement during the War of 1812 (Pole 1958:18); in other states the franchise was broadened over the next few decades in the context of partisan competition for additional votes. Blacks finally won the right to vote during the Civil War, in part, not doubt, because their military contribution was valued, and the Nineteenth Amendment gave women the right to vote following World War I. There seems to be an inclination to draw in more voters to help with military conflict, but we also note that the expansion of the suffrage does not seem to bring in its wake a less aggressive foreign policy. The elimination of racial barriers to suffrage during the Civil Rights years took place in a cold war environment just as the U.S.’s containment policy led to military intervention in South East Asia.

One can make the Kantian case, however, that at least in some instances, expansion of territory or political influence may have been stymied by American political fragmentation. Depending on the distribution of costs and benefits associated with the use of power, heterogeneous interests might be inclined to exercise veto points built into

American political institutions. Scott Silverstone argues, for example, that although the Northwest supported Polk's aggressive policies towards Great Britain over Oregon, eastern states would have borne the brunt of any real fighting with Britain and forced Polk to temper his stance. It seems worth exploring in more detail when access to institutional checks may have mattered.

5. Conclusion

We have argued that self governing republics—even those that deliberate widely and that weigh the expected net costs of warfare for each citizen--may nevertheless be warprone if their political inclusivity provides the morale and other forms of mobilizational capacity to give them a sufficient military advantage over more poorly mobilized regimes. Unit level theories of the Kantian and Machiavellian sorts both fail to explain the empirical regularity of dyadic peace between democracies because the foreign policy effects of institutions are channeled through these calculations of costs and benefits. Politically inclusive regimes count carefully the costs of war since decisions are made by those who pay, but political inclusivity relative to that of other countries can cut in the opposite direction by increasing the expected gains from aggression. With many nondemocracies in the international system, especially as neighbors, democracies may fight or expand opportunistically with more frequency. Surrounded by more democracies, on the other hand, their mobilizational capacity would be met more evenly by those of other countries.

In the cases we examined, institutional forms shaped foreign policy in discernible ways. Athens of the 5th century B.C., where decisions required only a simple and single majority vote, may sometimes have chosen to fight in moments of passion. Whether the

problem with direct democracies is the ease with which a majority under simple majority rules can expect to distribute the costs and benefits of war in its favor, or the lack of incentives to invest in information, or the vulnerability of mass assemblies to group psychology, it seems obvious that there are ample opportunities for error to creep in.

There are also, however, enough cases of aggressive behavior by representative democracies to dispense with the idea that only direct democracies are expansionist. In the post World War II period, virtually all “democracies” are what Kant would have called republican systems, and we know that they are a peaceful bunch only vis a vis other democracies but not necessarily in more general terms. While direct democracies of old may have been more susceptible to simple mistakes of calculation, all politically inclusive regimes may also make some decisions to fight, coolly and with full deliberation, when the expected losses warrant the expected gains.

While our historical sketch poses a challenge to the idea that democratic regimes are inherently more peaceful than nondemocratic ones, we do not attempt to refute the democratic peace proposition. Rather, we suggest grounding it somewhat differently. If Machiavelli was right that politically inclusive regimes are expansionist because they excel at mobilizing societal resources, it may be that democracies are less likely to fight each other in part because of what they know they would be up against. And it may also follow that, the more numerous are democracies, the more this democratic deterrence phenomenon has a systemic effect. Not only can this logic explain the postwar patterns of dyadic democratic peace borne out by large statistical studies of the post World War II

period; it is also considerably more consistent with the older historical material we have introduced here that shows how often and readily democracies have behaved aggressively.

Our concern in this paper has been to show how democracy and expansionism have gone hand in hand in much of human history. Machiavelli's notion of democratic capacity also implies a hierarchy of mobilizational efficiency among a range of political systems, depending on how effectively they mobilize the resources of a given population. We leave for future work to explore these ideas more fully, and only suggest here that one way to interpret the rise of absolutism in early modern Europe is that monarchies represented broader social coalitions—including cities and peasants—than either the landed or merchant aristocracies that dominated much of medieval Europe over preceding centuries. This made them more efficient than aristocratic cavalry forces such as the Poles or the mercenary armies of Italian city states, but monarchies in turn were out-mobilized by political regimes that were more inclusive still, as in the cases we have examined here.

We recognize, of course, that rulers will give up political control only as a last resort and that they will try first other ways to mobilize societal resources that involve fewer political concessions. Religion, though a double edged sword for the temporal ruler, competes formidably with democracy for mobilizational power. The kingdoms of Aragon and Castile united in 1492 in religious opposition to the Moslems in southern Iberia, giving Spain a territorial and financial basis for the largest national army in

Europe for a time. Religious fires moved state boundaries in the rest of Europe as well, giving the greatest advantage to governments that could harness religion to the cause of nationalism, as in Holland and England. Even in France, where religious attachments and national interest often clashed in the Thirty Years' War, the devastation from the religious wars between the Huguenots and Catholic League made the provincial estates more ready to cooperate with the monarchy. Our argument about democracies is a *ceteris paribus* one, and large powers of every stripe are likely expansionist because they have found some way to mobilize the resources of their populations more effectively than their neighbors. In the longer run, however, non-democratic powers may be frail if they have mobilized their populations on promises they cannot deliver.²⁷

A more systematic measure of the mobilizational power of democracy compared to other forms of mobilization would entail assessing the expansion of politically inclusive regimes against that of despotic ones throughout history, a monumental undertaking. The democratic peace literature has shown that democracies are more likely than non-democracies to win wars they initiate, and we agree that this probably reflects the selection effect of democracies choosing to wage wars they think they can win. But as we have explained, expansion rather than victory in war is the better measure of our argument. From the few cases available from the historical record, it seems that direct democracies like Athens might have become embroiled in more “unproductive” wars

²⁷ One is tempted to think that the political history of Africa and Latin America would have been different if, instead of being overrun by the vastly superior forces of colonizing states that ruled through existing elites, those states had been able to mobilize their populations in self defense and in the process, bring larger swaths of the population into the governing circle (Centeno 2002; Herbst 2000). But that is another story.

than representative systems, and that these rash acts may have impeded rather than advanced their cause.

We return, in closing, to our conclusion that democracies may not be by nature more peaceful, and that we would do well not to excuse the aggressive behavior of democracies as necessary acts of preemptive self defense. While Kant was no doubt right to stress supplemental incentives for peacefulness, trade and treaties are not inherent to democracies. Without minimizing the importance of these other inducements, we have pointed to an explanation for how democracies can help to bring about a more peaceful world--by deterring each other.

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