

PSC/IR 106: Week 4 Recitation

William Spaniel

williamspaniel@gmail.com

wjspaniel.wordpress.com/pscir106

Quick Administrative Notes

- March 6: Midterm
- March 11-15: Spring Break

Quick Administrative Notes

- March 6: Midterm
- March 11-15: Spring Break
- Therefore, no recitations March 6 (Wednesday) or 8 (Friday).
- I will do a review session on March 5 (or something) to make up for it.

Agenda

- Review: Crafting Theory
- Background: The Democratic Peace
- The Logic of Political Survival
- Preview: Unitary Actor Assumption

Agenda

- Review: Crafting Theory
- Background: The Democratic Peace
- The Logic of Political Survival
- Preview: Unitary Actor Assumption



PHASE 1

PHASE 2

PHASE 3

Make
Assumptions



Explain
Outcomes

Crafting Theory

1. Make assumptions.
2. Logic/game theory.
3. Explain outcomes.

Crafting Theory

- Everything rests on our assumptions.
- Pitfalls
 1. Failure to specify important assumptions invalidates the theory.
 2. Ridiculous assumptions will lead to (logically valid) but ridiculous conclusions.
 3. Too few assumptions leads to an intractable model and therefore no proven logical validity.

Agenda

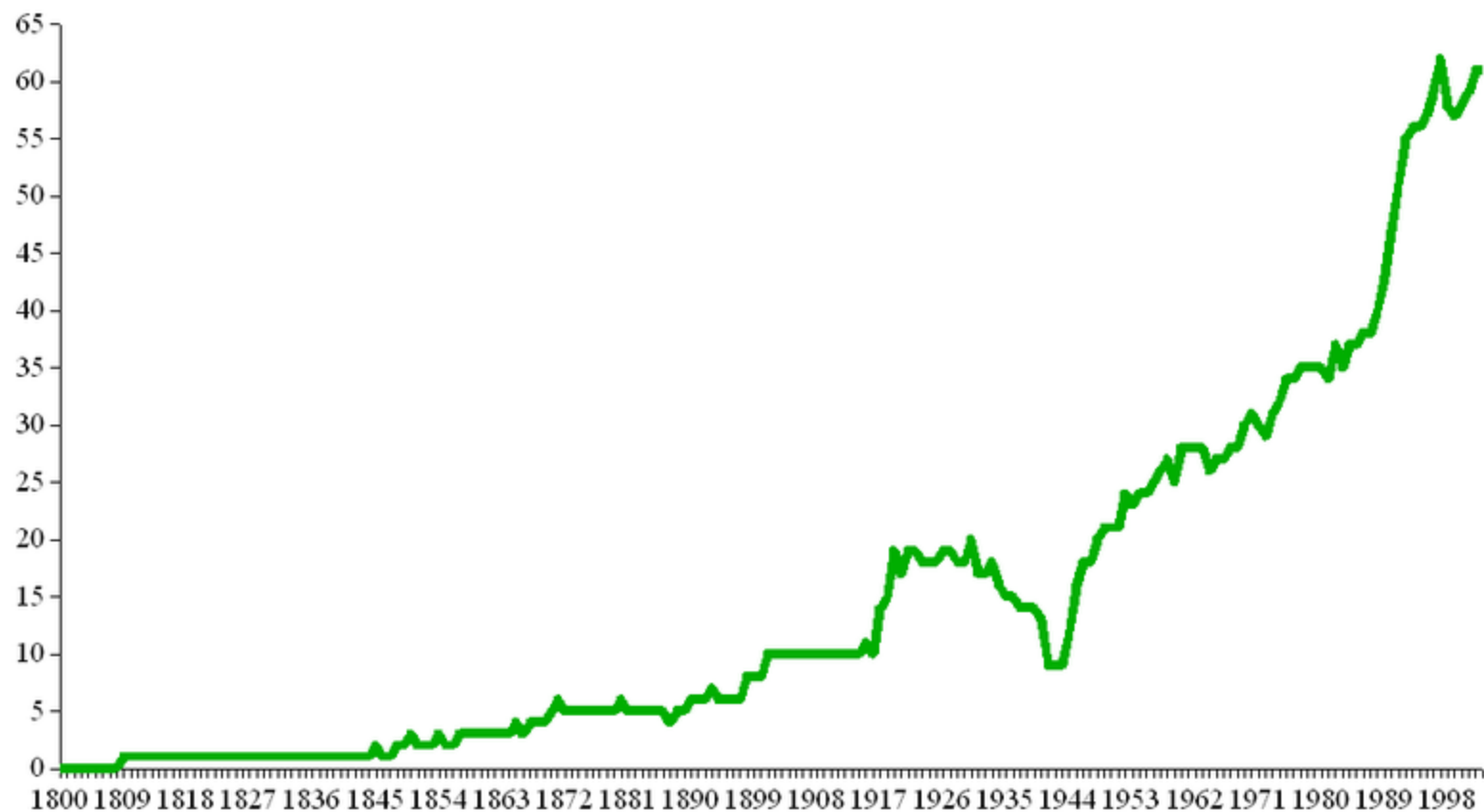
- Review: Crafting Theory
- Background: The Democratic Peace
- The Logic of Political Survival
- Preview: Unitary Actor Assumption

Immanuel Kant

- German philosopher
- Wrote *Perpetual Peace* in 1795
 - “The civil constitution of every state should be republican.”
 - Few democracies existed at the time.



Number of nations scoring 8 or higher on the Polity IV scale 1800-2003



The Dyadic Democratic Peace (1976)

- A *dyad* is a pair of countries.
- Democratic dyads almost never go to war with one another.

The Dyadic Democratic Peace (1976)

- A *dyad* is a pair of countries.
- Democratic dyads almost never go to war with one another.
- But democratic/autocratic dyads are just as likely to fight one another as autocratic dyads.

Democracy + Democracy = Little War

Democracy + Non-Democracy = Some War

Non-Democracy + Non-Democracy = Some War

The Dyadic Democratic Peace (1976)

- A *dyad* is a pair of countries.
- Democratic dyads almost never go to war with one another.
- But democratic/autocratic dyads are just as likely to fight one another as autocratic dyads.
- Thus, the democratic peace effect is not about democracy but about pairs of democracy.

Statistics versus Theory

- This is a statistical result, not a theoretical explanation.
- Since 1976, a large branch of international research has attempted to explain why democracies do not fight other democracies.

Agenda

- Review: Crafting Theory
- Background: The Democratic Peace
- The Logic of Political Survival
- Preview: Unitary Actor Assumption

The book cover features a grayscale photograph of a chessboard. A king piece is prominently displayed in the center, with its shadow cast to the right. The board's squares are visible in the foreground, creating a sense of depth. A red horizontal band across the upper portion of the cover contains the title in white, bold, sans-serif capital letters.

THE LOGIC OF POLITICAL SURVIVAL

**BRUCE BUENO DE MESQUITA,
ALASTAIR SMITH,
RANDOLPH M. SIVERSON,
and JAMES D. MORROW**

We take as axiomatic that everyone in a position of authority wants to keep that authority and that it is the maneuvering to do so that is central to politics in any type of regime. When we say it is central, we mean that all actions taken by political leaders are intended by them to be compatible with their desire to retain power



Bruce Bueno de Mesquita
Author, *The Dictator's Handbook*



Bruce Bueno de Mesquita
Author, *The Dictator's Handbook*

[Obama] would like to be a dictator. Absolutely. I have no doubt about it.

Winning Coalition

- *A winning coalition is*

Winning Coalition

- *A winning coalition* is a group of individuals with enough combined power to control a government.

Winning Coalition

- A *winning coalition* is a group of individuals with enough combined power to control a government.
- United States/most democracies: Half the population.
- China: ?
- North Korea: ???

Selectorate

- The *selectorate* is

Selectorate

- The *selectorate* is the group of individuals who can be a part of a winning coalition.

Selectorate

- The *selectorate* is the group of individuals who can be a part of a winning coalition.
- United States: everyone.
- China: ?
- North Korea: ???
 - Definitely *not* everyone. A small enough group that we could name them all if we had to.

The Theory

- The sizes of winning coalitions and selectorates influences behavior.
- States with large winning coalitions and large selectorates have incentive to provide public goods to maintain power.
 - Public goods: safety, parks, wars that serve the national interest (heh).

The Theory

- The sizes of winning coalitions and selectorates influences behavior.
- States with tiny winning coalitions do not have that incentive.

Implications

- Autocratic regimes will fight more wars.
- Democratic regimes will only fight when there is broad support for a war.
- Hence a theoretical explanation for the democratic peace.

Implications

- Autocratic regimes will fight more wars.
- Democratic regimes will only fight when there is broad support for a war.
- Hence a theoretical explanation for the democratic peace.
- Right?

Problem

- Our theories explaining the democratic peace (including this one) explain why democracies are less likely to fight generally.
- But that is not what happens!
- Democracies fight *each other* less frequently. They are no more or less likely to go to war in general.

Democracy + Democracy → Little War

Democracy + Non-Democracy → A Little More War

Non-Democracy + Non-Democracy → Some War

Democracy + Democracy = Little War

Democracy + Non-Democracy = Some War

Non-Democracy + Non-Democracy = Some War

Agenda

- Review: Crafting Theory
- Background: The Democratic Peace Theory
- The Logic of Political Survival
- Preview: Unitary Actor Assumption

Self-Interest versus National Interest

- *The Logic of Political Survival* assumes that leaders are only in it for themselves.
- Alternative assumption: leaders act to maximize the overall welfare of their country, self-benefit be damned.

The Unitary Actor Assumption

- Do leaders always maximize the overall welfare of their countries all of the time?
 - No.
- Is this true some of the time?
 - Maybe.
- Leaders justify wars using the unitary actor assumption.

Things You Will Never Hear a Leader Say

- I really suck at running our domestic economy, so I'm going to fight a war to distract you from that.

Things You Will Never Hear a Leader Say

- I really suck at running our domestic economy, so I'm going to fight a war to distract you from that.
- The media is too interested in a sex scandal involving some intern I never slept with, so I'm going to bomb some countries in Africa you've never heard of.

Things You Will Hear a Leader Say

- This war is in the best interest of *our* national security.

Things You Will Hear a Leader Say

- This war is in the best interest of *our* national security.
- *We* have a moral obligation to intervene.

Things You Will Hear a Leader Say

- This war is in the best interest of *our* national security.
- *We* have a moral obligation to intervene.
- Stabilizing the region will secure *our* economic interests.

Things You Will Hear a Leader Say

- This war is in the best interest of *our* national security.
- *We* have a moral obligation to intervene.
- Stabilizing the region will secure *our* economic interests.
- In sum: It's about *we*, not me.

Justifying the Unitary Actor

- The unitary actor assumption allows us to analyze the validity of these explanations.

Justifying the Unitary Actor

- The unitary actor assumption allows us to analyze the validity of these explanations.
- Next week, we will discuss why unitary actor states start wars.
 - These explanations will still exist in a world where leaders are partially self-interested.
 - Making the unitary actor assumption will allow us to isolate these factors since we assume away domestic cleavages.