

Bordering on Peace:
Democracy, Territorial Issues, and Conflict*

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ABSTRACT

Bordering on Peace: Democracy, Territorial Issues, and Conflict*

I argue that democracy and peace are both symptoms—not causes—of the removal of territorial issues between neighbors, and in this sense the “empirical law” of democratic peace may in fact be spurious. Since democracies tend to stabilize their border relations prior to becoming democratic, democracy as an independent variable in conflict studies captures the effects of an absence of territorial issues. States without these issues are less prone to disputes prior to regime type, and I show that, after controlling for the presence of stable borders, joint democracy exercises no pacifying effect on conflict behavior from 1946 to 1999.

Most democratic peace scholarship takes regime type as given and then estimates its effect on the likelihood of conflict. This paper deviates from that formula by endogenizing regime type in order to test whether joint democracy actually is an instrumental variable that represents an absence of territorial issues in particular dyads, especially neighbors. If states are most likely to have issues with their neighbors, but some neighbors remove these issues from contention, peaceful relationships should exist among these states outside of regime type. I argue that democracy and peace might both be symptoms—not causes—of the removal of territorial issues between neighbors, and in this sense the “empirical law” of democratic peace might be spurious (Levy 1988).

In the sections that follow, I examine literature on the steps to war explanation of conflict and the democratic peace, noting potentially useful points of accommodation between their findings. Next, I outline a theory that understands both peace and regime type—in particular, democracy—to be the product of specific patterns of border relationships. I then test this theory against a model of conflict that controls for the effects of border relationships and find that joint democracy does not exercise a pacifying effect on dispute initiation.

TERRITORIAL ISSUES AND THE STEPS TO WAR

Contiguity enjoys wide empirical support as one of the key factors influencing the likelihood of war in dyads (Bennett and Stam 2003; Diehl 1985; Garnham 1976; Gochman and Leng 1983; Hensel 1996; Holsti 1991; Huth 1996; Kocs 1995; Richardson 1960; Senese 1996; Senese 1997; Vasquez 1987; 1993; 1995; 1996; 2001; Vasquez and Henehan 2001; Wallenstein 1981). Bremer (1992) provides some of the most compelling evidence, demonstrating that contiguity is the single most important independent variable in predicting the war-proneness of a

dyad. In his analysis of “dangerous dyads” between 1815 and 1965, contiguous states are 35 times more likely to experience war than non-contiguous states. In short, states are far more likely *ceteris paribus* to fight their neighbors than any other states. But contiguity, as a constant for neighboring states, does not cause war on its own; rather, it serves as the primary locus of territorial issues, which are a fundamental underlying cause of war (Goertz and Diehl 1992; Holsti 1991; Vasquez 1995; 1996).

The steps-to-war explanation of conflict begins with the assumption that issues are the underlying causes of war and notes that territorial issues are the most war-prone of all issue types (Vasquez 1987; 1993; 1995; 1996; 1997; 2001; Senese and Vasquez, 2003; Senese, 2005; Vasquez and Gibler 2001; Vasquez and Henehan 2001; Colaresi and Thompson, 2005). Issues represent underlying causes to the extent that they give rise to disputes about which states make decisions that lead, ultimately, either to peaceful resolution or to war. The steps-to-war theory distinguishes those issue types most likely to be handled peacefully, through compromise and negotiation, from those most likely to be handled aggressively, through traditional, power politics behaviors like military buildups, alliance making, and demonstrations of resolve in crisis bargaining. These power politics behaviors represent proximate causes of—or steps along the path to—war, aggravating the conflict process once issues are defined.

Vasquez (1993) argues that leaders have learned through a kind of realist folklore to address territorial issues with power politics behaviors, as territory is a critical factor in identity, security, and prosperity for the modern state. Of all issue types, those involving territory prove to be the most war-prone (Vasquez 2001; Huth, 1996; Huth and Allee, 2002), and pairs of states lacking territorial issues should be highly unlikely to experience conflict—especially when they are neighbors, because the issues over which they fight are simply less contentious.

THE DEMOCRATIC PEACE AND THE STEPS TO WAR

The democratic peace centers on the finding that no two democracies have gone to war with one another in the modern era (Small and Singer 1976), and a sizeable body of literature has emerged that verifies the pacifying effects of democracy, especially in dyads (Bremer 1992; 1993; Chan 1984; Levy 1988; Oneal and Russett 1997; 1999; Ray 1993; 1995; Rummel 1983; Russett 1993; Weede 1984; 1992). For all its empirical strength, however, consensus on the causes of the democratic peace remains elusive. While monadic arguments about the general peacefulness of democracies have performed poorly in tests (Ray 1995), the dyadic nature of the peace has enjoyed far greater support and has been the subject of a great deal of inductive theory-building. In this section I examine the democratic peace in terms of its three dominant theoretical models and several important findings that have emerged from both proponents and critics. I then offer a way to reconceptualize these findings and lay the groundwork for an alternative theory of democratic peace.

Theoretical models. Three models dominate the democratic peace literature: normative, structural, and institutional. Each model looks to domestic regime type as the independent variable responsible for peace, though they disagree over the theory necessary to explain it and the specific expectations about state behavior that should constitute the peace.

Norms. Following Immanuel Kant's ([1795] 1991) assertion that states with republican constitutions should transcend the anarchy and relative gains considerations of the international system and achieve a kind of cooperative peace, the normative model assumes that states externalize the methods of conflict resolution that define their regime types. These democratic norms are externalized when doing so is not a threat to basic security, such as when dealing with

fellow democracies or substantially weaker states (Dixon 1994; Doyle 1986; Maoz and Russett 1993; Oneal and Russett 1997; 1999).

Domestic structures. The structural model focuses on the difficulties democracies face in mobilizing for war (Buono de Mesquita and Lalman 1992; Fearon 1994; Lake 1992; Rummel 1983; Small and Singer 1976). The need in democratic systems to generate broad public support and to win legitimacy from a variety of decentralized sources of authority represent structural constraints that make the process of mobilizing for war more difficult than in autocratic regimes. Only in rare cases, such as clear security emergencies, can democracies win the support of enough competing domestic interests to go to war. The process is slow and transparent, and in cases of joint-democratic disputes, diplomatic solutions can usually be found before either state wins enough domestic support for a war. Less-constrained autocratic regimes should be able to mobilize for war much faster, presenting the kind of immediate threat against which democratic polities are more likely to win support for violent action. Democracies are thus unlikely to fight one another, although they are more likely to aggressively engage less democratic states.

Institutions. The institutional model derives democratic peace from two factors: the hesitancy of leaders in democratic states to risk unwinnable wars and the fact that democracies, once committed to war, “try harder” than autocracies and tend to win most of their wars, thus becoming unattractive targets for aggression (Buono de Mesquita et al. 1999; 2003; Reiter and Stam 1998a; 1998b; 2000). Democratic leaders must distribute public goods such as prosperity and security in order to stay in power, while autocratic leaders are loyal to a smaller winning coalition who can be more easily placated with private goods, such as the spoils of conquest. Autocrats, able to divert the costs of war to a populace to whom they are not accountable, are thus more likely to resort to war but, because defeat is less a threat to regime survival, do not try

hard to win. Democracies, in contrast, fight only those wars they can win, and when committed they fight hard.

Findings. Several important findings emerge from the democratic peace literature beyond the simple dyadic peace, but as yet they have not been subsumed under a single theory. As noted above, the absence of war between democratic states forms the core of the democratic peace. However, democracies are no less war-prone in general than other states; they simply do not fight each other (Russett 1993). Second, democracies are more likely than other states to submit their disputes to negotiation and arbitration instead of resorting to force (Brecher and Wilkenfeld 1997; Dixon 1994; Huth and Allee 2002; Mousseau 1998; Raymond 1994). Both findings suggest that, given the opportunity, democracies will act peacefully and will not resort to unprovoked attack. Studies also suggest that democracies are uniquely able to refrain from escalating territorial disputes to war (Bueno de Mesquita et al. 1999; Huth and Allee 2002; Mitchell and Prins 1999). Gleditsch (2002), who recasts the democratic peace as a regional phenomenon, notes two other critical regularities: democracies rarely if ever fight wars on or near their home territory, and democracies tend to cluster together in space and time, creating regional zones of peace.

Alternatives. Each of the above findings is consistent with the assertion that democracies have avoided war with one another because of a lack of territorial issues. First, if neighboring states do not have territorial issues they should be highly unlikely to fight *a priori*. To the extent that states with stable borders fight wars at all, they are unlikely to do so on or near their home territory. Should these states enter into disputes with distant states, they are less likely to involve threats to their territorial integrity; as such, they should be less likely to follow the power politics path to war identified in the steps-to-war model and more likely to seek peaceful negotiation and

arbitration. To the extent that democracies experience territorial disputes, they are likely to be distant.¹

Second, if states are more likely to become democratic in the absence of territorial issues, then democracies should cluster around stable interstate borders. As a result of settling their borders, neighbors should experience greater chances of both having a peaceful relationship and becoming democratic. In short, if democracies do not fight each other, it is because the borders between them had to be settled before democracy could take root. Precisely because democracies *share* stable borders, peace between them is highly likely.

This argument also makes sense in light of several important challenges to the democratic peace, notably in Reed's (2000) finding that joint democracy exerts a pacifying effect only on dispute onset and not on escalation to war. Joint democracies are simply less likely to experience disputes than other dyads; if these joint democracies tend to interact across shared stable borders, then this result is clearly expected.

Especially among newly independent or transitioning states, both of whom are likely to experience territorial disputes (Vasquez 1993; 1995), new democratic institutions might actually increase the likelihood of disputes escalating to war (Mansfield and Snyder 1995; Snyder 2000; Thompson and Tucker 1997). Territorial issues might then represent clear obstacles to democratic consolidation in transitioning states. While democratic peace scholars generally account for this by holding that the pacific benefits of democracy work chiefly in "mature" democracies (Maoz and Russett 1993), it is probably more plausible that the incidence of

¹ This holds true even for disputes over distant territory. For example, Huth and Allee's (2002) compilations of disputes by region include great powers—often democracies like the United States, Great Britain, and France—from outside the region, whose interests in dispute resolution should be far different from disputes with contiguous neighbors. The 1919 British and French dispute over territory along the border between French Equatorial Africa and Sudan is an important case in point, as the dispute was settled peacefully by negotiation (*ibid.* 379), yet the defense of far-flung lands likely raised few alarms about the territorial integrity of the British and French homelands. The same kind of noncontiguous disputes that do not threaten home territory can be found in Mitchell and Prins' data as well (see 1999: Table 2).

territorial issues, which are most likely during and after transition periods, might be the cause. That the difference between young and old democracies is explained away in this fashion is unsatisfactory, as the distinction underlying it—the propensity for territorial issues—is a key omitted variable.

Fearon and Laitin (2003) note that democracies, especially young ones, are no less likely than nondemocracies to experience insurgencies and civil wars, despite expectations that the protection of civil rights and broad participation should pacify rival ethnic groups. Many of the conditions that favor civil war—and, by extension, democratic breakdown—tend to be those that also destabilize borders: recent independence, favorable terrain, foreign support for guerillas, and past colonial legacies. The eruption of civil war poses a threat to the territorial status quo in much the same way that transitions do; neighbors are uncertain whether, first, violence will spread or, second, whether the victors will respect the established division of territory in the region. The result should be a clearly heightened sense of territorial threat. From this perspective, the conditions that favor insurgencies and civil wars also indicate the presence of an unstable or ill-defined border; thus many of the indicators of border instability in the next section are drawn from the insurgency literature.

The confluence of these findings suggests that, if stable borders have something to do not only with peace but also with prospects for democracy, there is reason to believe that the relationship between democracy and peace is spurious. The next step in this argument, then, is to establish the connection between stable borders and the development of democracy.

BORDERS, CONFLICT, AND DEMOCRACY

In this section I outline a theory that links regime type to the international environment through the process of participating in and responding to threats of territorial conflict. I draw on the links between domestic and international politics implicit in Boix's (2003) model of regime choice, as well as an updated variant of Hintze's (1975 [1906]) analysis of "insular" states, to construct a simple argument about the role of interstate borders, conflict, the costs of repression, and the consequences for domestic organization. I argue that democracy is most likely to take root when the threat of fighting wars on or near a state's home territory is low—that is, when the territorial status quo of a state's borders is settled.

The Politics of Democratic Transitions in a Militarized State.

Boix (2003) develops a formal model that captures the relationships between wealthy and poor in a society and bases the wealthy's decision over whether to maintain an autocratic regime or establish a democracy on the distribution and mobility of economic assets. When inequality is low, the poor make few redistributive demands on the wealthy and the costs of transitioning to a power-sharing agreement — a democratic constitution — are low. Additionally, when capital is highly mobile, the high taxation and extraction of an autocratic elite are more tenuous, as assets can flee to less repressive regimes. The costs of repression also figure prominently in the analysis, and when the elite can easily suppress redistributive pressures from below, autocratic outcomes are most likely. Democracy becomes a stable equilibrium when no single actor — whether the wealthy in power or the potentially victorious poor — has an incentive to play an exclusionary strategy; that is, relative to the costs of accepting a democratic outcome, the cost of imposing the preferred distributive regime are prohibitively high.

Repression by the elite is often easier in militarized societies, suggesting a simple path from potential conflict to regime type. States that experience consistent external threats to their home territory are more likely to construct large militaries and to experience slower economic development, resulting in a relatively low cost of repression for the elite, as well as more intense redistributive pressures from the poor. The elites then have an incentive to pursue an exclusionary strategy in the maintenance of the autocratic order, and autocracies should be quite skilled at maintaining this level of domination. When borders are stable and peaceful, however, economic growth becomes possible, reducing the differences between rich and poor, raising the costs of repression, and increasing the mobility of capital, rendering strategies of high taxation increasingly difficult. The relative size and power of the military diminishes, and democracy emerges as a possible equilibrium. Finally, because borders are interstate institutions, stability on one side frequently translates into stability on the other, and democracy spreads across peaceful interstate borders, emerging in zones of stable peace where the regional territorial status quo is accepted.

That the level of external threat should play a role in shaping forms of military and domestic organization is hardly a new idea, emerging at least a century ago in the work of German historian Otto Hintze (1975 [1906]). Hintze argued that continental states facing persistent threats to their security build highly centralized state apparatuses in order to support the large standing armies needed for security, whereas states protected by geography, like islands, tend to build more decentralized militias and democratic regimes. The problem for Hintze's original theory, though, is that many of the Central European autocracies followed the path of Britain and Switzerland and have since democratized, even clustering together in regional zones of democracy (Gleditsch, 2002). Further, most large-n examinations of democratization find little or no

association between external threat and state centralization; only direct participation in war seems to matter (see Reiter, 2001, for example).

The Effects of Territorial Threat on Militarization, Taxation, Centralization, and Growth.

I argue that this absence of strong findings is probably due to a focus on all types of international conflict rather than isolating specific, more salient threats such as territorial issues.² Matters involving territory are some of the most war-prone issues in international relations (Holsti 1991; Kocs 1995; Senese and Vasquez, 2003; Vasquez 1993, 1995, 1996, 2001; Colaresi and Thompson, 2005; Senese, 2005), and more so than questions of policy or ideological difference, the defense or pursuit of territory prompts states to engage in provocative and violent behavior, especially when that territory is within the formal borders of the state. Threats to the homeland by revisionist neighbors are thus more likely than other threats to result in the construction of large standing armies that sit at home and provide a readily available tool for repression.

Standing armies require high levels of taxation as well as a broad centralization of authority – to acquire, arm, equip, feed, and otherwise maintain the troops, which is consistent with the findings that autocracies have more highly centralized state structures than democracies (Boix, 2003; Alesina and Spolaore, 2003). High taxation and centralization both contribute to a widening of the gap between the elite's fortunes in a democracy as compared to the *status quo*. Because high levels of military spending and frequent conflict also depress domestic consumption and economic growth, the costs of adopting democracy and conceding to the poor's redistributive demands then become far higher than the costs of using the army to pursue a strategy of exclusion and suppress competing social groups.

² Indeed, the few times that tests have matched processes well, the external threat literature has generated strong findings. For example, Thies (2005) is able to demonstrate that correct specification of Tilly's (1992) models confirms that grave external conflict – prolonged rivalry in this case – leads to economic centralization of the state.

Settled Borders and Democratic Transitions.

When threat is lower and less consistent economic growth becomes possible. Boix (2003: 228) notes that sustained economic growth on the European continent, which produced the redistributive environment necessary for democracy, came only after the settling of “key territorial claims” in the 17th and 18th centuries and the attendant reduction in the frequency and threat of war. In times of lowered threat, the difference between rich and poor decreases, rendering the autocratic elite less fearful of the redistributive consequences of democracy, and assets become increasingly mobile with the emergence of diversified industries and human capital, lowering the sustainable tax rate. The military also becomes a less effective and thus more costly instrument of repression as demands upon it grow, and this, combined with the narrowing gap between wealthy and poor, reduces dramatically the incentives for any group, including the autocratic elite, to pursue an exclusionary strategy. At this point, even the elite’s ship is better raised by accepting democracy than continuing a policy of repression.³

The emergence of England as a democracy provides a nice example of how the absence of direct territorial threats reduces the likelihood of continued autocracy. As Barrington Moore (1966: 32) describes, “the repressive apparatus of the English state was relatively weak, a

³ External threats and the cheapness of defense also play an important role in Alesina and Spolaore’s (2003) formal model of the size of states, as a reduced threat of war favors the survival of smaller jurisdictions that spend relatively less on defense and can more easily sustain a democratic voting rule in the determination of public policy. Their study does not provide a story for the choice of voting rule—that is, it has no theory of transitions—but it does link democracy to groups of small, more or less homogeneous states with decentralized state apparatuses. (Conversely, recent work by Acemoglu and Robinson (2006) provide a dynamic model of democratic transition but still leave exogenous the factors influencing the costs of repression.)

One of the prime linkages in the story of small states is the cheapness of defense, which emerges as a direct consequence of expectations over current and future threats to the territory of the state. Democracy flourishes best in the absence of a threat of conflict—which, in their model, favors larger, more heterogeneous, extractive, and repressive states. Without some stable expectations of peace, then, democracy becomes difficult to manage. When democracy does emerge, it is likely to be in the context of states smaller *ceteris paribus* than the average autocracy, and it should happen in clusters of states whose fear of each other has ebbed. Alesina and Spolaore link democratization explicitly to the breakup of larger, more autocratic states like the Soviet Union, whose security behavior led them to choose size in the interest of defense despite greater costs, democratically speaking, of homogeneity.

consequence of the Civil War, the previous evolution of the monarchy, and of reliance on a navy rather than on the army. In turn the absence of a strong monarchy resting on an army and a bureaucracy, as in Prussia, made easier the development of parliamentary democracy.” Conflicts for England were often, but also foreign, requiring navies and militia abroad, not the standing militaries required to suppress direct threats to the homeland. Thus, as the prerequisites for institutional change – increasing per capita income, strong middle class interests, weakened central authority, etc – initiated a bargaining process between Parliament and Crown, the absence of a standing militia assured that no group could use the army to dominate other actors and control the state. If conflicts had been local, necessitating a standing army, the Crown could have used that force to dominate Parliament (North and Weingast, 1989).⁴

The Democratic Equilibrium and Democratic State Behavior.

Once a democratic equilibrium emerges, breaking it becomes difficult, barring any serious external shocks (Boix 2003). Even in the face of growing or significant external threats, democracies can build large militaries without worrying that they might provide incentives for any social groups to pursue exclusionary policies. Rent seeking and exclusion will likely be punished at the polls before any would-be autocrats can alter institutions through vertical conflict. This might explain why, despite a large arms buildup in the Cold War, the United States avoided developing into an autocratic “garrison state” (Friedberg 2000) or why Israel maintains democracy despite consistent and intense threats to its homeland. The democratic equilibrium also explains why one of the most prominent examinations of the peace-democracy link finds that only direct participation in wars—not lower-level disputes—significantly affects regime survival (Reiter 2001).

⁴ “Had a standing army existed in England, it would have been under the control of the Crown, and the political and economic future of England would likely have been different.” (North and Weingast, 1989: 828)

The clear conclusion of the theory outlined above is that mature democracies are unlikely to have direct threats to their homeland or serious conflicts with other democracies; nevertheless, democracies may engage in conflicts with other states in the system. Stated in terms of the developmental path of the state, peace, properly specified as a reduction in territorial threat, can lead to democracy because the international environment can affect directly (1) the incentives for and costs of repression and (2) the prospects for economic development and diversification. When elites in unequal or fixed-asset states can, they will pursue exclusionary strategies, and they often use conflict—because in controlling the military they control the biggest gun in the state—to maintain the current order. However, when stable expectations about peace contribute to economic growth and the decentralization of economic power, the strategies of exclusion become both less feasible and less attractive, and democracy emerges as a stable political equilibrium. Finally, because borders generally are stable or unstable for states on either side, democracy spreads across peaceful borders in regions where the territorial status quo is more or less settled, while autocracy prevails in regions where the territorial status quo remains unsettled.

Hypotheses.

The theory outlined above suggests that the stabilization of borders in a region should contribute to democratization in that region, establishing what Thompson (1996) and Gleditsch (2002) label as zones or clusters of peaceful democratic states. As neighbors experience fewer and fewer territorial issues, they are more likely to, first, have a peaceful relationship and, second, become more democratic. The democratic peace, as we know it, is simply the outgrowth of a peace between neighbors. In a purely international context, then, democracy is what can happen when neighbors no longer fear for the safety of their territory.

If democracies cluster spatially because their emergence requires the settling of territorial issues, democratic neighbors should be significantly less likely to enter into disputes than any other dyads. By extension, stable borders between autocracies, to the extent they exist, should also be peaceful. Additionally, given theoretical expectations that young states should be more prone to territorial issues and that, once in disputes, democracies may be less likely to back down, newly independent states with democratic institutions may actually be uniquely conflict-prone. These states should also be likely to experience democratic breakdown, as democracy should be less likely to survive in the presence of territorial threat.

OPERATIONALIZING BORDER STABILITY

I consider a state's border relations as either stable or unstable based on two factors. First is the extent to which some part of its territory is at risk of capture or occupation by one or more of its neighbors. Second is the degree to which it possesses the ability to defend against territorial challenges and to pose similar threats of capture or occupation to its neighbors. Land borders and standing armies are thus crucial elements for my concept of border relations: land borders are the prime sources of threats to territoriality, and standing armies are the instrument by which states both defend their territory and threaten the territory of others. Standing armies also require highly centralized forms of state organization that may inhibit the development of democracy, and a state's border relations largely determine the need for this type of military organization.

Border relations are stable, then, when states perceive little or no threat to their sense of territoriality and when they have no designs on altering the territorial status quo. Defining stable borders without being tautological is difficult, but several characteristics of stable borders should be evident *prima facie*. Insular states, such as Great Britain, are clear examples of states with

stable borders. They need not develop large standing armies to defend against threats on the frontier, because the frontier does not exist. As in Britain's case, these states may develop considerable military power in the form of navies and expeditionary armies, but these forces are distinct from standing land armies in continental states since their principal deployment is abroad. They thus pose a less serious threat to democracy than do standing armies on the home territory. States whose terrain provides some protection against outside invaders, such as mountainous Switzerland, would likely have similar border relations.

If stable borders are difficult to define without doing so in terms of the phenomena I expect them to explain—particularly democracy and peace—unstable borders are an even greater challenge. Much of the argument about border relations depends necessarily on the perception of threat, which is often difficult to capture empirically. There is, however, some reliable empirical ground on which I can build a definition. First, only land borders can be considered unstable, as only they can provide the necessary type of threat to territoriality. Second, I avoid defining border instability in terms of war or dispute participation in order to prevent problems of circularity; rather, I focus on the geographic conditions that should promote unstable borders. Third, I control for the overall capability distribution in the dyad since this often will determine the likelihood of border renegotiation, and I identify political events in neighboring countries that might affect border legitimacy.

Geography and Borders.

Vasquez (1995: 288) argues that, “natural frontiers that have clear salients – like rivers, mountains, deserts, lakes and oceans – are more likely to lead to a mutually acceptable demarcation of boundaries, especially if people are not living in these areas.” The logic is straightforward: geographic salients permit easier coordination. Geographic landmarks are

observable to all parties, are stationary, and are thus less prone to misperception and error.

Geographic landmarks therefore provide some of the easiest tools for making agreements that require coordination among two or more actors. Schelling (1960: 54-58) describes the logic of this phenomenon with several examples:

First is the somewhat daunting hypothetical of meeting someone in another city without agreeing ahead of time on either the time or place for this meeting or even being able to coordinate with them through any type of communication. Where is the best place to meet? Were you to arrive in New York City, you might go to the Empire State building, at sunset or midnight, expecting the other person to be more likely to coordinate on this particular landmark at this particular time. Or for Schelling's (1960: 56) colleagues at Yale University, coordination was probably easiest at Grand Central Station at noon, since most would be familiar with the train line coming into town from nearby New Haven. Of course, in either case, few would expect their coordinating counterparts to meet them on some nondescript street at some unremarkable time – there would be no focal points upon which both parties could coordinate.

Territorial maps are often replete with focal points for coordination. Imagine parachuting from a plane and needing to coordinate with another jumper already on the ground. Bridges, buildings, rivers and intersections – any prominent landmarks – would provide the best possibilities for coordination, as only a dogged search finds the person who sits waiting in an empty field. Further, even if one jumper had a strong personal preference to meet in the middle of the open field, the lay of the map would have prevented such an unrealistic outcome, just as the person in New York City would likely eat alone at their favorite local restaurant. Though strong interests might be attached to the restaurant or the open field, both places would “lose” as

potential meeting places because both lack inherent clarity as focal points for coordination (Schelling, 1960: 67-74).

The logic of focal points for coordination on international borders follows. Open plains, featureless desert, and even consistently rugged, mountain terrain all lack the geographically defining features upon which the leaders of two bordering states could easily coordinate. Conversely, if a river divides two states across a border, absent other defining characteristics, that geographic feature would so completely define negotiations over boundaries that any border agreement not based on the river would be inferior, even if the river substantially decreased the land available to one of the states.

Consider a hypothetical division of territory between two countries, one to the north and one to the south. In this hypothetical, a river divides the two countries and competes with a border line proposed by the southern country. The proposed border demarcation is a more equitable division of territory than the river boundary as both countries would control roughly 50% of the total land occupied by both countries while the river divides the land so that the northern country controls 70% of the territory. Nevertheless, if Schelling's analysis of coordination is correct, the river, though inequitable, would dominate debate on the international border because it provides a clear focal point upon which both countries can agree. The demarcation line proposed by the southern country is equivalent to the parachutist waiting in the open field because the river provides the more tangible focal point for coordination.

Of course, there are no guarantees that geography will always determine the focal points for international border coordination. Relative dyadic capabilities also tend to be critically important. Returning again to the hypothetical outlined above, imagine the same divisions of territory, but this time the southern country is clearly more powerful than the northern country.

If this were the case, the southern country could press its claim and dictate the boundary line. Absent clear preponderance, though, the southern country would have to militarize the region north of the river, and possibly its homeland, in order to defend the claimed territory.

Military strategy often reinforces coordination on focal points as many types of geography carry strategic advantage as an international border. Rivers themselves, for example, are more easily defensible than the flat lands found in river basins. To defend an entire basin, the supply lines of a defender would have to stretch across a river, and the personnel defending the basin would be open to unimpeded attack. Alternately, a defender that uses a river as a border can dramatically increase the costs of attack by requiring an amphibious crossing; the supply lines that cross the river then become a disadvantage for the attacker.

France provides one of the best examples of the effects of geographic salients, as contemporary France traces its borders to the Atlantic, the Pyrenees, the Alps, and the Rhine – an overall border that Cardinal Richelieu claimed to be “marked out by nature.” Indeed, according to Sahlin (1990: 1424), “the idea of natural frontiers sometimes provided the justification, sometimes the organizing principle, of French foreign policy,” as a “bounded, delimited territory” competed with a common language and history as constitutive elements defining the French people (see also Goemans, 2006). France’s border also exemplifies how relative dyadic capabilities can often trump geographic focal points like the Rhine River, as the sovereignty of Alsace and Lorraine shifted with the military capabilities of Germany.

Of course, natural landmarks and power differentials are not the only determinants of coordination on boundaries; border history, ethnicity and possibly other factors all may play a part in border definition. For example, and again returning to the hypothetical discussed above, if previous border lines had included the region north of the river – an earlier, colonial border for

example – or if an ethnic group close in kinship to the southern country had settled in the region, the claims of the southern country, evinced by the proposed border line, would be more easily made. Both the colonial border and the ethnic border provide alternate foci for coordination, and the negotiation strategy of the southern country would thus center on making those alternate focal points, rather than geography, the determinants of demarcation.

Predictors of Focal Points.

To determine when focal points are likely to define an international border, I first concentrate on border topography and expect more geographic salients when international borders follow sharp differences in natural terrain. Absent a clear distinction between land types across a border, borders become ad hoc and often arbitrary. Contiguous mountainous terrain (or contiguous plains) provides few geographic salients for states to coordinate on border definition, as can be seen in the mountainous border regions between Saudi Arabia and Yemen, India and Pakistan, and the Nagorno-Karabakh between Azerbaijan and Armenia, all of which hold various insurgent groups, crossing heavily contested borders. Conversely, sharp geographic differences across the dyad add legitimacy to border demarcations, becoming the mechanism for compromise and territorial identity, but of course, geographic differences are not always stark, and therefore, employing a continuous measure of mountainous territory allows flexibility in capturing overall terrain differences between the two states of the dyad.

Another indicator of border definition that I use rests with the division of ethnic groups across international borders. Cohesive ethnic groups often coordinated on geographically dividing salients well before the development of the state system. Thus, contemporary political boundaries that divide ethnic groups are also those borders least likely to be built upon coordinating focal points. As an example, consider the divisions of the Middle East that

followed the Peace at Versailles (1919). Cohesive ethnic groups were both divided and grouped not according to their pattern of settlement, but rather by the interests and capabilities of the major colonizing states (Fromkin, 2001). Of course, transnational ethnic groups might also be related to Fearon and Laitin's (2003) identification of transnational insurgency support since the divided group might sympathize with plans – legislative or revolutionary – to redraw territorial boundaries to better support their ethnic brethren.

Finally, I identify differences in types of colonial heritage. I assume that land-contiguous dyads that shared the same colonial masters are also likely to have poorly defined borders. Since imperial states had little need to differentiate among their colonial holdings, contiguous states gaining their independence from the same country often suffer from poor border definition. For example, French West Africa eventually became the independent states of Benin, Guinea, Mali, Côte d'Ivoire, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal, and Burkina Faso, but only after comprising administrative units within the French federation of West African states. Benin and Niger also shared a border with Nigeria, a former British colony, and the need to demarcate territories between France and Britain probably necessitated clearer border definition between these states than between the former French colonies. Unfortunately, this measure may be overwhelmed by the strong correlation between former colonial status and poverty – a strong predictor of non-democracy. I therefore control for the effects of wealth in the analyses by also adding the natural logarithm of the smaller per capita gross domestic product (GDP) in the dyad.

To operationalize the predictors of border salients, I identify internationally divided ethnic groups using the Minorities at Risk dataset, coding a dummy variable for dyads with minority groups that believe an imagined homeland includes both states in that particular dyad. Dyads of contiguous states that share the same colonial heritage are coded as 1 and 0 otherwise.

And finally, I compute the ratio of percent mountainous terrain for each dyad, using the lowest percentage mountainous state as the numerator, to measure differences in terrain across the border. These last two border variables and the control measure for GDP utilize the replication data available from Fearon and Laitin (2003).⁵

Predictors of Border Strength. I have thus far identified three geographic indicators of unstable borders – similar terrain, ethnic groups that straddle the border, and similar colonial heritages. Each of these indicators has little chance to vary substantially over time, absent a major reorganization of the dyadic boundary. However, borders are often flexible, and their perceived stability or legitimacy does change over time. I therefore include several indicators of conditions likely to affect the legitimacy of previously drawn borders.

First, I control for the capability ratio within the dyad. The power parity literature (Kugler and Lemke, 1996; and especially Geller, 2000) has demonstrated that conflict is likely when dyads are at or near parity, and I agree with Wayman (1996) and Vasquez (1996) that territorial renegotiations are a likely mechanism connecting power differentials and conflict. Large differences in power would suggest that a border is unlikely to undergo renegotiation regardless of how the border was previously defined. When a dyad approaches parity, latent territorial claims can be forwarded, upsetting the stability of the dyadic border; this makes transitions in power dangerous when they become linked to ill-defined borders. I therefore include in the analyses the capability ratio of the weaker state to the stronger state, using the latest version of the Composite Index of National Capabilities from the Correlates of War Project.

Second, I believe that the length of peace across the border and its overall age are both good indicators of border legitimacy. While I should include spells of peace to properly estimate

⁵ The Fearon and Laitin (2003) dataset defines the temporal domain for the tests that follow.

coefficients in binary, cross-sectional time-series studies like this one (Beck, Katz, and Tucker, 1998), I also believe that the length of peace constitutes a theoretically interesting variable.⁶ Stable borders are a function of age generally: old states whose borders have long been settled and whose neighbors accept the legitimacy of their borders should also perceive a lower territorial threat. Old states should also be less aggressive in desiring the capture of territory as well, as their border relations are an accepted norm. I define the age of the border using a count variable for the number of years since the last system entry date in the dyad, and I define the spell of peace as the time since last Militarized Interstate Dispute. Both of these datasets are from the Correlates of War Project.

Third, as I argue above, political events in neighboring states often put in question the legitimacy of international borders (Vasquez, 1995). The outbreak of civil war may lead regional leaders to fear that violence will spread or that victorious regimes might wish to redraw previous territorial divisions. I use Fearon and Laitin's dependent variable of civil war onset as an indicator of states likely to experience border instability, and I code this variable as present in the dyad if one of the states is experiencing a civil war.

Dependent variables. The dependent variable in the first set of analyses is joint democracy; I code dyads as jointly democratic if both states have combined Polity IV scores (autocracy – democracy) equal to or greater than 6. The dependent variable in the second set of analyses is the presence of a Militarized Interstate Dispute, using Correlates of War definitions. I include any dyadic dispute, but only for its first year, and I exclude dyads joining an ongoing MID.

*****FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE*****

⁶ Measuring time since last territorial dispute best captures this argument. However, I measure time since last dispute (of any kind) in order to correct for temporal dependence in estimating the dependent variable of any dispute onset.

My general expectations for these variables are summarized in Figure 1. Consistent with the argument outlined above, I believe that stable borders should increase the likelihood of joint democracy while also decreasing the likelihood of conflict. Moreover, failing to include controls for the likelihood of territorial issues will introduce bias into estimates of the effects of joint democracy on conflict, possibly resulting in the observation of a spurious relationship.

Sample Selection. My sample includes all dyads from 1946 to 1999. By including observations as recent as 1999, I can compare the effects of the Cold War to other periods; this is important since Farber and Gowa (1997), among others, have argued that the democratic peace may be a function of interest similarity during that period of intense bipolarity. More important for purposes of testing the argument I sketched above is the inclusion of the 8 post-Cold War years when the norms of self-determination biased states toward entering the international system as democracies. Indeed, as Gelditsch (2002) demonstrates, a higher percentage of states entered the system as democracies during this period than during any other decade. Also important, the 1990s witnessed the relaxation of norms against self-determination—Yugoslavia for example—and the breakup of territorial status quos guaranteed by superpowers (Germany and the former Soviet Republics), each of which I equate with border instability.

A Note on Borders and Territorial Issues— with a Validity Test.

I emulate the methodology of Starr and Thomas (2002; 2005) by concentrating on the geographic conditions likely to affect border conditions. While their dataset is drawn from the 1992 Geographic Information Systems (GIS) survey and is therefore limited to the geographical distribution of states during that year (and with modifications, the years since then), my dataset allows testing over a much larger temporal domain, drawing from indicators that vary with the composition of states in the system since 1946.

A focus on geography adds two important benefits for conclusions regarding tests of my overall argument. First, using geographic indicators will effectively insulate my argument from questions of reverse causality. This is important because many studies link joint democracy with peaceful dispute settlement generally (Dixon, 1994) and territorial dispute settlement in particular. Bueno de Mesquita et al. (2003), for example, argue that democratic leaders would find little political leverage in the private goods of territorial claims and will therefore quickly resolve these issues, especially with other democracies. By focusing on geographic conditions, then, I am able to empirically assess whether democracy leads to peaceful dispute settlement or territorial peace leads to democracy. After all, few would contend that democracies can literally move mountains or otherwise alter the physical shape of their geographic borders.

Also importantly, by focusing on geographic conditions rather than directly measuring peaceful environments using territorial claims and disputes, the tests that follow are removed from possible strategic biases inherent in claims over territory. For example, the Issues Correlates of War (ICoW) Project identifies all international territorial claims, largely independent of the occurrence of armed conflict. But unfortunately for my purposes, juridical claims may be most likely between states that have resolved *not* to go to war with each other and that instead use international institutions or other supranational legal authority for the redress of these issues. This acceptance, then, selects the dyad out of the sample likely to experience territorial threat, and given the strategic nature of juridical claims, a dataset based on speeches, treaties, demonstrations, and the like, would all be inappropriate indicators of peaceful territorial environments, at least for my purposes here.

Of course, the decision to launch a claim or a dispute will still find more purchase when border specification is poor, so my indicators of border stability should also be correlated with

the data identifying territorial claims and disputes. To prove that this is the case, I conduct what is essentially a validity check of my measures of border salients and strength by estimating a series of logit models aimed at predicting the likelihood of territorial claims in a dyad. Again, though claims are behavioral and open to strategic bias, territorial claims should be, *ceteris paribus*, more prevalent across poorly defined borders. I code territorial claims using Huth and Allee's (2002) territorial dispute dataset (from 1946 to 1995),⁷ and these results are presented in Table 1.⁸

***** TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE *****

The first model provides a base for comparing the effects of the border salient variables on the likelihood of territorial disputes. Consistent with most theoretical expectations regarding territory and conflict, dyads at parity and contiguous dyads are likely to experience territorial disputes. The internal and external conflict variables are also consistent with expectations. A civil war in one state is correlated with the initiation of a territorial dispute, and an increase in the number of years since the last MID decreases the likelihood of territorial dispute initiation. The only variable generating unexpected results is the age of the border. Older borders are more likely to experience territorial dispute initiation, but the substantive effect of this variable is quite small (results available from author).

Models 2 through 4 add the border salient predictors to the estimation while also varying the temporal domain to assess possible Cold War effects. The predictors of border salients are generally consistent with the theoretical expectations outlined above. Territorial disputes are most likely when dyads share the same colonial master and when terrain differences are slight,

⁷Specifically, I code the *onset* of a territorial dispute and not the years following the initial dispute year. Note that Huth and Allee (2002) use the term "dispute", but their conceptualization is much closer to what Hensel (2001) and others label as territorial claims.

⁸Replication data for all the following analyses can be found at: <http://bama.ua.edu/~dmgibler/replication.htm>.

though the effects for this latter variable are concentrated in the Cold War years. Surprisingly, however, the presence of an ethnic border is *negatively* related to territorial disputes in each time period. Thus, if ethnic groups do have a large effect on conflict escalation, as Huth and Allee (2002) suspect, this finding suggests there may be a slight selection bias: dyads dividing ethnic groups are unlikely to have territorial disputes, but when territorial disputes do erupt across ethnic borders, the likelihood of conflict is much greater.

Comparing models 2 through 4 to the baseline model, only peace years and dyad duration remain unaltered (sign and statistical significance) across the additional three models; length of peace is negatively associated with territorial disputes while territorial disputes are more likely found in older borders (though again the results are substantively small for border age). The remaining two border strength variables present variegated results across models 2 through 4, but only parity seems affected by the addition of the border salient variables. The presence of a civil war is still positive and statistically significant ($p < 0.10$) for the full time period even with the addition of the border salient predictors, though the effects for civil wars are concentrated in the 6 post-Cold War years. Parity is different. While changes in temporal domain alter the direction of the relationship, with parity predicting fewer territorial disputes during the Cold War, a comparison of the baseline model to the fully specified model for the entire time period suggests that the addition of border salients renders parity statistically insignificant.

Overall, these results support the validity of the border variables outlined above. As a set, the border strength and border salient variables are strongly associated with the conditions likely to give rise to territorial disputes. Again, this is important because geography is, by nature, removed from both strategic bias and problems of endogeneity, and therefore, the border strength and border salient variables allow a test of the effects of peaceful territorial

environments with independent variables that are, for the most part, exogenous to both peace and democracy. With the validity of these measures established, I turn now to an analysis of the effects of border stability on the likelihood of joint democracy and peace.

INTERNATIONAL BORDERS AND JOINT DEMOCRACY

I begin by using the stable border proxies to predict the observance of joint democracy in a dyad. Since the dependent variable is dichotomous, jointly democratic or not, I again employ logistic regression. I also again split the sample into Cold War and post-Cold War time periods but also include tests of the entire temporal domain, and the results for these three periods are presented in Table 2.

*****TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE*****

My sole control variable for predicting joint democracy – the lowest level of GDP in the dyad – is positive and significant across all models. As expected, the likelihood of joint democracy increases with overall wealth. The capability ratio within the dyad is also consistently related to the observance of joint democracy. Dyads in which one state is preponderant have a greater chance of experiencing joint democracy, and I argue that this results from either (or both) a settled border that favors the claims of the stronger state and the inability of the weaker state to seek redress. Parity adds territorial threat to the dyad because revisionist states at parity with their rivals are more likely to press their latent territorial claims militarily (see Wayman, 1996).

The temporal controls are consistent and positive across each model. The age of the dyad and the length of time since the last conflict increase the probability that joint democracy will be observed. Again, I argue that the duration of the dyad functions as a proxy for border age and, as

such, gives an indication of the likelihood that border issues have been resolved. The length of peace also estimates the overall legitimacy of the border since, after controlling for capability differences, territorial disputes increase the likelihood of conflict.

The civil war onset variable predicts (negatively) the observation of joint democracy, but this effect is only for the post-Cold War model, with a relationship strong enough to drive a statistically significant result for the entire sample. Since the number of civil wars have not increased since 1991 (Fearon and Laitin, 2003), the strong post-Cold War relationship is most likely due to the dampening effects of bipolarity on the ability of civil wars to destabilize territorial boundaries in neighboring regimes. The divisions in the international system were such that civil wars in neighboring states found transnational support so long as the issues of contention paralleled the fault lines of the east-west split. In other words, the proxy wars that targeted regime stability did not also possess the same revolutionary dynamic capable of threatening the territories of neighboring states. With the added legitimacy of major state support, civil wars did not also threaten system-wide political divisions that supported international border stability.

The ethnic border variable is statistically significant and exhibits a negative relationship in each sample – having an ethnic group divided by an international border decreases the likelihood of observing joint democracy in that dyad. Having the same colonial master prior to independence inhibits joint democracy in the 1990s, and this effect is strong enough to generate statistically significant results for the entire time period. The positive association between democracy and same colonial master during the Cold War is the only result inconsistent with the theoretical expectations outlined above.

The final border variable captures terrain differences between the states of the dyad, and it is statistically significant and in the expected direction for both the smaller samples and the full sample. This finding provides an important clue supporting the contention that geography matters in the development of democracy. Borders are easily demarcated when differences in terrain persist, and these results suggest that this type of border is associated with the occurrence of joint democracy.

Also interesting are the results for contiguity. The results at first suggest that contiguity increases the likelihood of joint democracy only during the post-Cold War years, and this would contradict some well established findings that democracies cluster together (see Gleditsch, 2002, for example). But it must be remembered that the border variables serve essentially as interaction terms in these models. Thus, the contiguity coefficient estimates the baseline effects of borders absent controls for terrain, colonial differences, and ethnic groups. That contiguity exhibits a strong negative relationship during the Cold War – a time period when democracies were clustered together in Western Europe and North America – therefore lends even stronger support to the argument that border type matters. Democracies are clustering, but only across well defined borders with clear geographic salients. The next step is to determine whether border type also helps explain international conflict better than regime type.

INTERNATIONAL BORDERS, JOINT DEMOCRACY AND CONFLICT

I estimate the effects of joint democracy and border stability on conflict using four separate logit models, covering the samples for years 1946 to 1989, 1990 to 1999, and 1946 to

1999. In all cases, the dependent variable is MID onset, and the independent variables include democracy, the minimum wealth in the dyad and the proxies for border stability.

I measure democracy using a “weak link” specification based on the lowest Polity IV score in the dyad (Dixon, 1994; Oneal and Russett, 1997; 1999). I do this because the results in the last section demonstrate well that the border variables accurately predict the observance of joint democracy in the dyad; therefore, the inclusion of the border variables in the same model with joint democracy as an independent variable would introduce multicollinearity into the models. While not a large problem given the sample sizes in the analyses, the multicollinearity is unnecessary since my theory predicts only that joint democracy is likely, not the level of democracy in each state of the dyad. In other words, strong borders constitute a near necessary condition for the observance of joint democracy in the dyad, but variations in border strength do not predict variations in regime type.⁹ Thus, while the border variables are highly correlated with joint democracy, the weak link specification has a more modest relationship with geography.

An even better reason for using the weak link specification is that recent research suggests it is superior to the dichotomous, joint democracy indicator for measuring the conflict effects of dyadic democracy. Developed by Dixon (1994), and used interchangeably with joint democracy by Oneal and Russett (1997; 1999), among others, Dixon and Goertz (2005) demonstrate through a series of empirical tests that, “dyadic relations depend primarily on the behavioral constraints of the less democratic state no matter how tightly constrained its more democratic partner.”

***** TABLE 3 ABOUT HERE *****

⁹ Joint democracy and the weak link specification are empirically distinct measures of democracy in my dataset. For example, joint democracy is correlated with the weak link specification at a relatively low 0.43 in the sample that includes all years, 1946-1999.

Table 3 presents the results for the models predicting international conflict. The first model again provides a baseline and demonstrates that democracy reduces the likelihood of conflict, even after controlling for wealth, parity and contiguity. Somewhat surprisingly, parity is not statistically significant in this model, though the sign is in the expected direction (positive).

Models 2 through 4 add the border control variables and vary the sample size again to assess the effects of the Cold War. Now, with the border controls added, the parity variable is statistically significant ($p < 0.05$) and in the expected direction in each model, while wealth and contiguity remain unchanged.

The border variables are again consistent with my theoretical expectations. Contiguity, peace years and civil war in at least one state of the dyad all increase the likelihood of MID initiation. Similarly, an international border that divides an ethnic group also has a higher chance of experiencing conflict. The dyadic duration and colonial master variables are not statistically significant in any of the three models, and while the terrain differences measure is significant in only one model (for the post Cold War years), the sign is in an unexpected direction (negative). But these results do not necessarily refute an empirical connection between these measures and conflict. Since terrain differences, same colonial master, and dyadic duration were strong predictors of joint democracy in Table 2, I conducted separate analyses (available from the author) to determine whether democracy was serving as an instrument for the effects of these border measures. As I expected, all three border variables were statistically significant and in the predicted direction for all models of international conflict that did not include the measure of democracy as an independent variable. Thus, the weak link specification of democracy – though statistically superior to the dichotomous, joint democracy variable – still captures a portion of the underlying relationship between borders and regime type, and the estimates for the

border variables measure the effects of each indicator not already accounted for by the processes predicting regime type.

Finally, the key variable for these analyses is the democracy indicator, which is, as expected, not statistically significant in any of the models of conflict that include the border controls. Of course, even if level of democracy were significant, the sign demonstrates a *positive* relationship between level of democracy and conflict in each fully specified model. This finding obviously supports the proposition that democracy has little or no effect on conflict once controls are included for stable borders, especially considering the inclusiveness of these models, each with over 100,000 dyadic cases.

RESTATING THE DEMOCRATIC PEACE FINDINGS

By endogenizing the emergence of jointly democratic dyads to a series of factors that affect democracy and conflict behavior, my results suggest that what scholars know as the democratic peace is, in fact, a stable border peace. This is the first step toward looking at international conflict a little bit differently. Of course, even though the relationship between joint democracy and peace remains the core of the democratic peace, there still remain a host of empirical regularities generally considered supportive of democratic peace theory (see for example a partial list in Bueno de Mesquita, et al. 2003: 218-219). So, while space does not permit a full discussion of all these secondary relationships, I use this brief conclusion to reinterpret, in the context of a stable border peace, several of the more important, second-order democratic peace findings.

A stable border peace implies that democratic states are more peaceful, but this is not due to any quality inherent in democratic government; rather, the development path necessary for

democratization selects democracies into a group of states that have settled borders, few territorial issues, and thus, little reason for war against neighbors. With only minor, non-territorial issues remaining for these states, mediation and arbitration become both easier and more likely for democracies, while the need for defensive alliances, military buildups, and aggressive crisis bargaining also decreases.

Because borders are international institutions, they affect the development paths of both states in the dyad, and stabilized borders that decrease the need for militarization and centralization in one state also tend to demilitarize and decentralize the neighboring state. “Zones of peace” can thus be understood as the contagion effect of stabilized borders, as democracies cluster in time and space following the removal of territorial issues. This clustering of peaceful states should also affect the economic development of the states involved. With less money needed for guns, spending for butter increases, and trade across settled borders is always preferred to the risk of crossing militarized frontiers.

A stable border peace does not necessarily imply that democracies will always be peaceful; the implication is only that democracies will have fewer conflicts relative to other types of governments. Should war occur, though, the war will likely be fought over far-flung territories since local borders have already been settled. This selection effect explains why the disagreements that democracies escalate are a matter of choice. The threat of conflict never directly affects the territorial homeland, so democratic leaders have the relative luxury of choosing their fights, or intervening when winning is easy. This renders democratic victories the product of peaceful local environments, not the result of domestic institutions that constrain leader choice or otherwise advantage democratic systems.

Many of the above reinterpretations are obviously speculative, but each is consistent with the concept of a stable border peace. When both peace and democracy are symptoms of the stabilization of the territorial status quo, the world should look differently than standard treatments of the democratic peace often see it, and this model holds promise for pointing inquiry in that direction.

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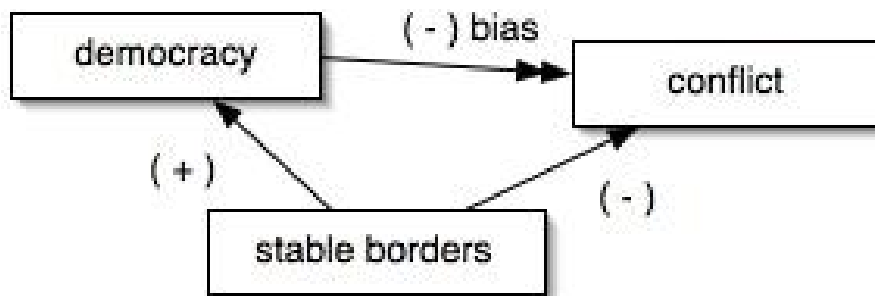


Figure 1: Omitted variable bias in the democratic peace

Table 1: Predicting Territorial Disputes with the Border Variables, 1946 to 1995.
 [Logit regression models with standard errors in parentheses.]

	Huth and Allee Dispute 1946 to 1995 All Dyads (non-directed)	Huth and Allee Dispute 1946 to 1989 All Dyads (non-directed)	Huth and Allee Dispute 1990 to 1995 All Dyads (non-directed)	Huth and Allee Dispute 1946 to 1995 All Dyads (non-directed)
Contiguous Dyad	4.178 ** (0.048)	4.300 *** (0.075)	3.894 *** (0.147)	4.178 *** (0.066)
Border Salient Variables				
Same colonial master before independence		0.410 ** (0.077)	0.722 *** (0.146)	0.535 ** (0.068)
Ethnic border (border separates ethnic group from its brethren across the border)		-0.394 * (0.069)	-0.429 *** (0.129)	-0.410 * (0.061)
Terrain differences (logged ratio of %mountainous [less mountainous/more mountainous])		0.126 ** (0.031)	-0.047 (0.059)	0.081 ** (0.027)
Border Strength Variables				
Capability ratio within dyad (weaker/stronger)	0.180 *** (0.069)	-0.185 ** (0.090)	0.415 ** (0.166)	-0.023 (0.078)
Years since last MID outbreak	-0.050 ** (0.002)	-0.058 *** (0.003)	-0.039 *** (0.003)	-0.052 *** (0.002)
Civil war onset in at least one state of dyad	0.240 *** (0.126)	0.182 (0.158)	0.530 ** (0.243)	0.245 * (0.132)
Duration of dyad (years since youngest state's entry into state system)	0.006 *** (0.001)	0.004 *** (0.001)	0.011 *** (0.001)	0.006 *** (0.001)
Constant	-5.463 *** (0.040)	-4.927 *** (0.048)	-5.752 *** (0.096)	-5.132 *** (0.043)
Number of Contiguous Dyads	537,653	255,275	116,124	371,399
LR chi-square	12,579.30 ***	8,440.45 ***	2400.38 ***	10,877.39 ***
Pseudo R-square	0.335	0.344	0.349	0.344

***p<0.01; **p<0.05; *p<0.10

Table 2: The Effect of Borders on the Likelihood of Joint Democracy

[Logit regression models with standard errors in parentheses.]

	Joint Democracy in Dyad 1946 to 1989		Joint Democracy in Dyad 1990 to 1999		Joint Democracy in Dyad 1946 to 1999	
	All Dyads (non-directed)	All Dyads (non-directed)	All Dyads (non-directed)	All Dyads (non-directed)	All Dyads (non-directed)	All Dyads (non-directed)
Smallest GDP of dyad (logged)	0.688 *** (0.005)	1.009 *** (0.010)	0.321 *** (0.009)	0.899 *** (0.007)		
Border Strength Variables						
Capability ratio within dyad (weaker/stronger)	0.265 *** (0.018)	0.305 *** (0.033)	0.502 *** (0.033)	0.346 *** (0.023)		
Years since last MID outbreak	0.016 *** (0.000)	0.011 *** (0.002)	0.026 *** (0.000)	0.017 *** (0.000)		
Civil war onset in at least one state of dyad	-1.287 *** (0.289)	-0.233 (0.327)	-3.640 *** (1.013)	-1.110 *** (0.305)		
Duration of dyad (years since youngest state's entry into state system)	0.007 *** (0.001)	0.010 *** (0.001)	0.009 *** (0.001)	0.008 *** (0.001)		
Contiguous Dyad	-0.099 ** (0.046)	-0.689 *** (0.118)	0.533 *** (0.109)	-0.133 * (0.077)		
Border Salient Variables						
Same colonial master before independence		0.367 ** (0.151)	-1.226 *** (0.199)	-0.222 * (0.117)		
Ethnic border (border separates ethnic group from its brethren across the border)		-0.263 * (0.109)	-0.504 *** (0.124)	-0.270 *** (0.078)		
Terrain differences (logged ratio of %mountainous less mountainous/more mountainous)		-0.384 *** (0.037)	-0.274 *** (0.054)	-0.293 *** (0.029)		
Constant	-3.132 *** (0.009)	-3.745 *** (0.017)	-2.936 *** (0.103)	-3.388 *** (0.012)		
Number of Contiguous Dyads	504,376	255,186	109,583	364,769		
LR chi-square	31,880.63 ***	14,309.30 ***	9568.79 ***	23342.09 ***		
Pseudo R-square	0.097	0.125	0.103	0.109		

*** $p < 0.01$; ** $p < 0.05$; * $p < 0.10$

Table 3: The Effect of Borders on Joint Democracy and Conflict

[Logit regression models with standard errors in parentheses.]

<i>Dependent Variable:</i> <i>Temporal Domain:</i> <i>Spatial Domain:</i>	MID Onset 1946 to 1999		MID Onset 1990 to 1999		MID Onset 1946 to 1999	
	All Dyads (non-directed)	All Dyads (non-directed)	All Dyads (non-directed)	All Dyads (non-directed)	All Dyads (non-directed)	All Dyads (non-directed)
Lowest Democracy Score in Dyad	-0.005 ** (0.002)	0.003 (0.004)	0.007 (0.006)	0.004 (0.003)	0.004 (0.003)	0.004 (0.003)
Smallest GDP of dyad (logged)	0.087 ** (0.028)	0.320 *** (0.039)	0.339 *** (0.071)	0.252 *** (0.033)	0.252 *** (0.033)	0.252 *** (0.033)
Border Strength Variables Capability ratio within dyad (weaker/stronger)	0.105 (0.101)	0.484 *** (0.121)	0.660 ** (0.240)	0.511 *** (0.108)	0.511 *** (0.108)	0.511 *** (0.108)
Years since last MID outbreak		-0.060 *** (0.004)	-0.033 *** (0.004)	-0.052 *** (0.003)	-0.052 *** (0.003)	-0.052 *** (0.003)
Civil war onset in at least one state of dyad		0.804 *** (0.193)	1.009 *** (0.298)	0.829 *** (0.161)	0.829 *** (0.161)	0.829 *** (0.161)
Duration of dyad (years since youngest state's entry into state system)		-0.001 (0.001)	0.002 (0.002)	0.001 (0.001)	0.001 (0.001)	0.001 (0.001)
Contiguous Dyad		3.988 *** (0.057)	3.398 *** (0.218)	3.360 *** (0.099)	3.360 *** (0.099)	3.360 *** (0.099)
Border Salient Variables Same colonial master before independence			0.128 (0.118)	-0.159 (0.267)	0.110 (0.107)	0.110 (0.107)
Ethnic border (border separates ethnic group from its brethren across the border)		0.278 ** (0.101)	0.638 *** (0.184)	0.326 *** (0.088)	0.326 *** (0.088)	0.326 *** (0.088)
Terrain differences (logged ratio of %mountainous less mountainous/more mountainous)		-0.019 (0.044)	-0.173 * (0.084)	-0.031 (0.039)	-0.031 (0.039)	-0.031 (0.039)
Constant	-6.785 *** (0.053)	-5.656 *** (0.075)	-6.698 *** (0.166)	-5.863 *** (0.067)	-5.863 *** (0.067)	-5.863 *** (0.067)
Number of Contiguous Dyads	504,376	255,196	109,583	364,779	364,779	364,779
LR chi-square	3,631.25 ***	2,793.52 ***	923.84 ***	3,696.08 ***	3,696.08 ***	3,696.08 ***
Pseudo R-square	0.199	0.227	0.272	0.234	0.234	0.234

***p<0.01; **p<0.05; *p<0.10