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Full Length Research Paper

Is there a monadic authoritarian peace: Authoritarian regimes, democratic transition types and the first use of violent force

John Ishiyama[1], Ryan Conway[2] and Katherine Haggans[3]

[1]University of North Texas, Department of Political Science, 1155 Union Circle #305340,Denton, TX 76203-5017.
[2]Truman State University, U.S.A.
[3]Columbia University, U.S.A.

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This paper examines conflict proneness of authoritarian states and tests whether the monadic democratic peace argument can be extended to explain the conflict behavior of authoritarian states. Previous works have examined the propensity of authoritarian states to engage in conflict in dyadic relations with other states, rather than directly examining the conflict propensity of these states using monadic analysis (or who uses violent force first). Further, little empirical work has examined how different *types* of transitions from authoritarian rule affect the conflict propensity of states. Using Caprioli's and Trumbore's (2004) *First use of Violent Force* (FuVF) dataset for 1980 - 2002, we find little support for the monadic argument that authoritarian regimes that have more institutional checks on executive authority are less likely to first use military force than are regimes that have fewer such checks; however, we find that the *type* of transition is a more important a variable than the type of authoritarian regime in explaining the conflict proneness of the state.

Key words: Monadic democratic peace, first use of force, democratic peace, democratization.

INTRODUCTION

There has been a considerable amount of scholarly attention paid to how democratic institutions affect the conflict proneness of states (Chan, 1997). In particular, much has been made of the so called 'democratic peace.' Research has consistently demonstrated that democracies are less likely to go to war with each other when compared to other states (Oneal and Russett, 1997; Ray, 1995; Reed, 2000; Rousseau et al., 1996; Russett, 1995; Russett and Oneal, 2001) . Several explanations have been offered to explain this trend. Many scholars have argued that the deliberative nature of democracy constrains the behavior of their leaders, and prevents rash military actions from being taken (Bueno de Mesquita and Lalman, 1992; Morgan and Campbell, 1991; Gaubatz, 1991; Kant, 1983). Others have argued that democracies share certain common values, including the norm of non-violence in the resolution of disputes (Dixon, 1994).

Recently, scholars have examined a corollary of the democratic peace thesis, the so called 'autocratic peace'. Essentially, this work has examined the proposition that internal institutional checks on 'rash behavior' serve to moderate the actions of states, and have applied this to authoritarian regimes. Indeed several scholars, as of late, have tested the hypothesis that internal institutional checks on executive authority will reduce the probability that authoritarian states go to war (Peceny et al., 2002; Geddes, 1999). However, this work has largely examined the propensity of authoritarian states to engage in conflict in dyadic relations with other states, rather than directly examine the conflict propensity of these states using monadic analysis (that is, whether states engage in conflict first). Further, little empirical work (to our knowledge) has examined how different types of transitions from authoritarian rule affect the conflict propensity of states (although there has been work on whether or not transitions actually affect conflict propensity). How does authoritarian regime type affect the conflict propensity of these states? And are certain 'types' of transitions from authoritarian rule more likely engage in conflict than others?

More specifically, this paper first derives hypotheses

*Corresponding author. E-mail: John.Ishiyama@unt.edu. Fax: (940) 565-4818.

from a review of the existing literature on how authoritarian regime types and how different types of transitions from authoritarian rule affect conflict propensity. In particular we examine whether a "monadic authoritarian peace" exists. We test this proposition by using a merged data set from two sources-- The First use of Violent Force (FuVF) developed by Caprioli and Trumbore (2003, 2004) and the data on authoritarian regime types. In addition, we add data on the type of transition that occurred, taken from Huntington's (1992) well known trichotomous measure, as well as other alternative explanations for conflict proneness, including the level of economic growth of a state, and social/cultural characteristics (such as the degree of the ethnic heterogeneity of a country). This paper examines these hypotheses in light of 101 states from 1980 - 2002 and assesses the effect of authoritarian institutions on the likelihood of a state being the first to use violent force in a militarized dispute.

Literature

Generally the literature has focused almost exclusively on the 'democratic peace' rather than the behavior of authoritarian states. Several explanations have been offered that explain why democracies rarely fight one another (Russett and Oneal, 2001). In general, one can identify two different sets of arguments regarding the reason why democracy is related to peace. First there are those who focus on 'system' level characteristics or the characteristics of dyadic relationships to explain peace. By and large, this is the more commonly held perspective on the democratic peace—that characteristics of relationships between states impact on the conflict propensity of individual states. One approach, the normative explanation, focuses on the notion that norms of cooperation prevent conflicts between democracies from escalating (Maoz and Russett, 1993), or that democracies share a common value system that makes the likelihood of international dispute escalation lower between democracies than between mixed or autocratic regime dyads (Dixon, 1994) However, this does not mean (as many have pointed out) democracies are inherently more peaceful than other forms of government (Russett, 1993; Oneal and Russett, 1997; Bueno de Mesquita et al., 1999). Rather, democracies do fight rather frequently, with non democracies (Maoz and Abdolali, 1989; Bueno de Mesquita et al., 1999; Russett and Oneal, 2001; Tures, 2002). For some, like Bruce Bueno de Mesquita this is because democracies 'are willing to set aside their abhorrence of violence…when they confront authoritarian states, because the latter do not share…common values' (1999).

Oneal and Russett (1997, 2001) also suggest that another important dimension is the degree of economic interdependence in accounting for the seemingly peaceful nature of democracies. Democracies tend to be better integrated into the international economic community and hence more likely to be economically interdependent. Any government whose economy is relatively open is subject to the negative results of military conflict and hence less likely to engage in war.

Although there is a considerable amount of empirical literature that supports the existence of a dyadic democratic peace, more recently there has been a growing literature that suggests that the democratic peace is not purely a dyadic phenomenon but that democracies may naturally be more peaceful than other regimes – that is, a monadic democratic peace (Bremer, 1992; Rousseau et al., 1996; Oneal and Ray, 1997; MacMillian, 1998, 2003; Ray, 2000; Russett and Starr, 2000; Huth and Allee, 2002). Rummel (1983, 1985, 1995), has long argued that democracies are more peaceful than other regimes in general, independent of the dyadic relationship. Empirically, some scholars have found support for this proposition. Bremer (1992), found that jointly non-democratic dyads are more dangerous than dyads containing at least one democracy, and other studies (Rousseau et al., 1996; Benoit, 1996; Rioux, 1998; Huth and Allee, 2002) suggest that democracies are less conflict prone than other regime types. Benoit (1996) found even stronger evidence than Bremer (1992) for a monadic peace, at least between 1960 and 1980.

Scholars who have made the argument in favor of a monadic democratic peace often point to the internal structural constraints facing states (Rousseau, 1996). These scholars emphasize the *internal* (or domestic) constraints that characterize democracies that serve to impede violent action. As Dixon (1994) points out, the internal structural explanation assumes that mobilization of resources and support is constrained by democratic institutions in a way that is not present in authoritarian regimes. Some have pointed to particular features of democracies that constrain conflictual behavior (Bueno de Mesquita et al., 1999). For instance, some argue that since in democracies it is necessary to maintain a popular mandate (as opposed to autocratic systems) and since the imperative facing any political leader is to stay in power, then public opinion plays a major role in constraining the actions of democratic leaders (Bueno de Mesquita et al., 1999; Gartzke, 2001). Bueno de Mesquita et al. (2003), investigated how institutional and electoral arrangements impacted conflict proneness; they find that democracies make unattractive targets, and are more selective when choosing targets, and that the issues over which a state will fight vary by regime type. On the other hand, authoritarian government leaders do not face such constraints because they do not have to rely on keeping public opinion in their favor in order to retain power (Russett and Oneal, 2001). Further, because of other institutional constraints (such as the series of checks and balances in a democracy) this compels the executives to act deliberatively and not

unilaterally. These institutional checks thus act as an additional internal break on pursuing war (Bueno de Mesquita et al., 1999; Rousseau, 1996).

On the other hand, Gartzke (2001) contends that democracies may in fact be more likely to go to war than other kinds of states (but not with other democracies) because most democracies are capital-abundant as opposed to labor-abundant states. As such democracies tend to invest their resources in high technology (and often unmanned) weapons, which comes with the added benefit of keeping their citizens out of military conflict. Conversely, labor-abundant states use those resources most readily available to them ---personnel. Given the lessened prospect of casualties, then democracies have fewer disincentives to go to war when compared to less technologically developed authoritarian states.

Although there has been a considerable amount of work that explains the relationship between democracy and conflict behavior, there is considerably less work that examines the conflict behavior of authoritarian states, let alone whether or not a monadic authoritarian peace exists. Some have argued that authoritarian states are generally less constrained internally than democracies and hence are more likely to engage in conflict (Russett and Oneal, 2001). However, others contend that authoritarian regimes are less likely to initiate conflict (particularly against democracies) because democracies generally succeed in military conflict, and this perception has acted as a 'brake' on the aggressiveness of authoritarian regimes vis-à-vis democracies (Bennett and Stam, 1998; Lake, 1992). Nonetheless, by and large most works treat authoritarian regimes as an undifferentiated mass, that is. that military regimes, one party states and personalist dictatorships are all basically the same.

There are however, a few notable exceptions. For instance, Peceny et al. (2002) examined the conflict behaviour of three different types of autocratic regimes--personalist, military, and single-party dictatorships--in the post-World War II era. In general, however, their focus is less on the overall conflict behavior of each state but rather on who these states chose with which to engage in conflict. They find some evidence that specific types of authoritarian regimes are peaceful toward one another (e.g. no two personalist dictators or two military regimes have gone to war with each other since 1945) . They did find, however that single-party states behaved differently from either personal dictatorships or military dictatorships which suggested that a much more sophisticated treatment of 'authoritarianism' (or one that takes into account regime variation) is necessary. Reiter and Stam (2003) also found that dyads including personalist dictatorships were more likely than other types of dyads to experience militarized disputes. Finally, Lai and Slater (2003) found that there was also a difference between military and civilian authoritarian regimes. In particular, their findings are consistent with those of Peceny et al. (2002) and Reiter and Stam (2003). They found that relatively more institutionalized authoritarian governments that rely on party organizations as their underlying power are much less likely to be involved in disputes with each other and democratic states compared to authoritarian states that rely on military organizations. Interestingly, however, studies of the conflict behavior of different types of authoritarian states largely rely on the analysis of dyadic relationships rather than monadic behavior, thus they do not directly test the existence of a monadic authoritarian peace.

Although the literature has suggested that democratic transition leads to less conflict propensity of a formerly authoritarian state, these works have largely focused on whether or not a transition took place, and have examined democratization's impact on conflict dyads (Peceny, 2002; Lai and Taylor, 2002). One exception to this general tendency is the work of Gleditsch and Ward. (2000) who examined the argument that the type of democratic transition also impacted upon the conflict propensity of states. Indeed, they found that generally democratization reduces the risk of war, but uneven transitions toward democracy can increase the probability of war. They focus on the *direction, speed,* and *variability* of democratic transitions and found that democratization is accompanied by declining probabilities of war involvement, except where the process is characterized by unstable movement back and forth between democratic and non democratic regime types (setbacks and interruptions), though smooth transitions toward democracy reduce the risk of war. As with previous studies, the Gleditsch and Ward study relied on dyadic analysis using militarized interstate dispute (MID) data, which does not directly test the proposition regarding the existence of a "monadic" authoritarian peace.

Nonetheless, the above suggests that the type of transition plays as important a role in affecting the conflict propensity of states as the regime type. In this regard the work of Huntington (1991) is particularly relevant. He argued that different types of transitions can lead to different kinds of political results, even if they are 'smooth'. The three types of transitions include transformation, replacement and transplacement and are characterized by the illustrations in Table 1.

For Huntington the preferable types of democratic transitions were either transformation or transplacement and NOT replacement. This is because replacements were often characterized by rapid turnover leading to considerable political instability and the propensity of the new 'democratic' regime to engage in the use of force to maintain its new authority. Indeed, even transformation was preferable to transplacement in this regard because transplacements often involve confrontation and violence.

Given the unsteady legitimacy in regimes undergoing transplacement or replacement processes, this could theoretically lead to the greater propensity to use external force. First, external force may assist a besieged authori-

Table 1. Transition types and their principal phases.

Transformation: occurs when the elites in power take the lead in bringing about democracy. The process itself often involves five phases including:	**Replacement:** occurs when opposition groups take the lead in bringing about democracy; former regime collapses or is overthrown. This process involves three phases:	**Transplacement:** occurs when democratization resulted largely from joint action by government elites and reform opposition groups and often involves four phases:
1: Emergence of Reformers within the regime.	1: Struggle to produce the fall (wears down the old regime)	1: The existing regime engages in some liberalization, loses some power/authority.
2: Reformers acquire power	2: The fall (wait for trigger event, utilize military)	2: Opposition exploits the weakness, expands its support
3: Failure of Liberalization (transition leaders stays in power for only a short time)	3. Struggle after the fall (mass action/competition)	3: The authoritarian regime reacts forcefully to contain/suppress mobilization of political power
4: Backwards Legitimacy, old guard reemerges but is transformed and institutes change		4: The regime and opposition perceive a standoff and explore negotiation.
5: 'New' old regime co-opts the opposition		

Source: Huntington (1991).

tarian regime capture some legitimacy by engaging in a 'glorious little war.' Second, the besieged regime might seek to pursue opposition forces (or the new regime might seek to pursue the remnants of the old regime) across the border (as was the case of Rwandan security forces pursuing Interahamwe insurgents into Congo). In either case, different types of transitions should lead to greater conflict propensity for states undergoing trans-placement of replacement processes than states undergoing transformation processes.

The conflict propensity of an authoritarian state undergoing transition could further be influenced by the existence of domestic level ethnic conflict. Peter Trumbore (2003) using data from militarized interstate disputes from 1980 - 1992, found that states suffering from ethnic rebellion were more likely to use force and use force first when involved in international disputes than states without similar insurgency problems. Thus we would expect that states that face higher probability of ethnic conflict (that is, states that are ethnically divided) will have a greater propensity to engage in the first use of violent force than states that are not ethnically divided.

DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The principal dependent variable in this study is the 'conflict proneness' of the state and is measured by examining whether or not an authoritarian state was in a conflict in a given year where it was the first to use violent force from 1980 - 2002. This measure is preferable to other measures used by most studies (Gleditsch and Ward, 2000) that employed the directional measure of the often used militarized interstate dispute (MID) data set, because the FuVF data includes only those events in which actual violent military force was used. This binary variable is coded as the first state to use military violence in an interstate dispute in which violence was employed and offers a more specific analysis of violence rather than the more general coding of the escalation of hostility variable. This dichotomous variable is coded 1 if the state was the first to use force and 0 otherwise. First use of force (Caprioli and Trumbore, 2003, 2004) is distinct from dispute initiation and presents a more rigorous test than dispute initiation alone of the connection between state characteristics and the initiation of actual interstate violence during interstate disputes as isolated from the violence reciprocation dynamic (Wilkenfeld, 1991). The first independent variable is the extent to which an authoritarian state has domestic political institutional constraints on leaders. Several scholars have identified differences between authoritarian regime types (Geddes, 1999; Kitschelt, 1995; Bratton and Van de Walle, 1994). Generally speaking, each of these scholars differentiates between 'patrimonial' or 'personalist' systems on the one hand, versus corporatist, institutionally based authoritarian regimes, on the other. Personalist or patrimonial systems rely heavily on hierarchical chains of personal dependence between leaders and followers, with low levels of inter-elite contestation, popular interest articulation and rational-bureaucratic professionalization. These systems are characterized by high degrees of autocracy, where the leader faces little (in the ways on checks on balances Recast sentence.) On the other hand, in relatively more corporatist systems, there are relatively higher levels of inter -elite contestation and interest articulation and there is a degree of bureaucratic professionalization, and hence greater accountability of state leaders. Further, in such systems elites allow for a measure of contestation and interest articulation in exchange for compliance with the basic features of the existing system, thus creating greater ties to society and hence less 'autocracy.'

Given the logic of the democratic peace argument, one would expect that regimes that were personalist dictatorship would have fewer institutional constraints on leaders than military oligarchies or personal dictatorships (Huntington, 1992; Bratton and Van de Walle, 1997, 1994). If the reason why democratic states do not go to war with each other and are generally less conflict-prone is because of the institutional constraints placed on leaders, then one would expect to see more conflict prone behavior by personalist

Table 2. Coefficient estimates, conflict proneness logistic regression.

	B (SE)	EXP(b)	VIF
CONFLICT INITIATION (LAG)	.823* (.419)	2.276	1.144
PERSONALIST AUTHORITARIAN REGIME DUMMY	-.019 (.384)	.981	1.083
SINGLE PARTY AUTHORITARIAN REGIME DUMMY	-.140 (.343)	.870	1.078
HUNTINGTON'S TRANSITION TYPES DUMMY	.453*** (.173)	1.573	1.138
ETHNOLINGUISTIC FRACTIONALIZATION INDEX	-.013* (.006)	.987	1.049
GDP AVG GROWTH RATE 1980-2002	.038 (.058)	1.039	1.030
Durbin-Watson	2.028		
Pseudo R-square	.16		

* = $p \leq .05$
** = $p \leq .01$
*** = $p \leq .001$

authoritarian regimes than other types. On the other hand, one would expect that single party states which have more civilian institutional constraints on the actions of individual leaders that these should exhibit less propensity for conflict than other types.

To measure the first independent variable different types of authoritarian regimes we use an adaptation of the measure developed by Barbara Geddes. Geddes coded regime type in terms of personal dictatorships, Military/personal hybrid regimes, military regimes, single party hybrids (combined with military or personal elements) and single party regimes. We essentially create two separate dummy variables, one which contrasts personalist dictatorships from all of the others, and the second coding single party and single party hybrid regimes as "1" and all other regimes as "0".

In addition, three other independent variables will be considered in this model as 'alternative' explanations for conflict proneness of authoritarian states. These include the degree of economic change measured in terms of annual change in GDP per capita, testing in part the hypothesis that economic growth or decline impacts upon the conflict proneness of states. In addition, we also examine the impact of socio-cultural heterogeneity using the commonly used measure, the percent population made up of the largest ethnolinguistic group. This relationship has been suggested by some scholars (Trumbore, 2003; Horowitz, 1985), that internal ethnic conflict often spills over into interstate conflicts. To measure the degree to which a state is ethnically heterogenous, we employ of the often used measure of the degree of Ethnolinguistic Fractionalization (or ELF) based upon the Hirschman-Herfindahl index of concentration. Finally, we also seek to test whether different transition processes impact on the conflict proneness of a state. To test this we include a dummy variable for 'democratization process' which is coded as 1 if the transition process was replacement, and 0 if it transformation or transplacement.

In total we examined the conflict proneness and regime characteristics of 101 authoritarian independent states from 1980 - 2002, that had a score of less than 0 on the Polity IV combined polity score (meaning only authoritarian regimes) for a period of more than five years during the 1980's. The unit of analysis was country year, meaning in any given year did that country engage in the use of force. This rendered an overall N of 2323 cases.

RESULTS

Table 2 reports the results of a binary logistic regression procedure with the dependent variable whether or not country x in year t was involved in a conflict in which it was the first to use violent force. In addition to the independent variables listed above, we also include a lagged endogenous variable to correct for serial correlation in the model (as indicated the Durbin Watson test value of 2.04 indicates the serial correlation problem was corrected by this procedure).

Does the type of authoritarian regime correlate with whether an authoritarian state "shoots first"? As indicated in Table 2, neither of our two dummy variables for the personalist dictatorship and single party rule were statistically significant in relationship to the dependent variable. This finding contradicts the notion of a monadic authoritarian peace but contradicts the suggestion that authoritarian regime characteristics affected conflict initiation as suggested by scholars such as Peceny et al. (2002) and Reiter and Stam (2003). Nonetheless these findings are consistent with those scholars who have argued against the existence of a monadic democratic peace. It would appear that there is little support for the supposition that an authoritarian monadic peace exists as well.

Regarding the second question we posed at the beginning of this piece, whether or not the type of transition from authoritarian rule makes a state less likely to engage in conflict, the above results indicate that states that became engaged in unstable replacement processes also became more conflict prone. In Table 2, countries that democratized via a replacement process were 70.4% more likely to first use violent force than countries that were characterized by transformation or transplacement processes. This suggests that not only is 'peace' promoted by the existence of democracies (and the fact that democracies do not fight one another), but that the type of democratization process has a direct impact on making states more or less conflict prone.

Interestingly, the degree to which a state is ethnically

heterogeneous also helps explain the conflict proneness of states. The significance and sign of the ELF coefficient is in the predicted direction which generally supports Trumbore's (2003) earlier contention regarding the spillover effects of ethnic conflict. However, the level of economic growth had no discernable impact on conflict proneness. Finally, the independent variables are not collinear (as indicated by the Variance Inflation Factor – VIF- scores all under 2). Thus, interestingly, regime type and transition process is relatively unrelated (or at least not related enough to create problems with multi-collinearity).

Conclusions

In sum, the above results indicated that generally different types of authoritarian regimes do indeed impact on the conflict propensity of authoritarian states, even when using monadic as opposed to dyadic conflict data. Thus, our findings support those of others who have argued that authoritarian regimes that have more institutional checks on executive authority are less likely to first use military force than are regimes that have fewer such institutional checks. Second, our results also indicated that the type of transition is as important an explanatory variable (if not more so) than the type of authoritarian regime, and that it exerts a significant and independent effect on conflict proneness of the state. States that transitioned in terms of replacement processes were far more likely to engage in the first use of force than were states that either followed transformation or transplacement processes. These findings also support the existing literature, even when using monadic as opposed to dyadic conflict data.

Although these findings are somewhat preliminary, the above results suggest further questions for future investigation. First, what are the precise institutions that dampen conflict proneness in authoritarian regimes? How do the ethnopolitical characteristics and institutional characteristics of authoritarian states interact to produce the use of violent force? Although the evidence thus far cannot yet answer these questions, these findings indicate that further investigation into the relationship between the internal dynamics of different authoritarian regimes and the conflict proneness of such regimes is warranted, and represents a promising avenue for future inquiry.

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