

Intermittent republics and democratic peace puzzles*

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The fact that democracies seldom fight other democracies has been explained monadically—there is something about democratic institutions that constrains decision-makers—and dyadically—there are normative sentiments shared by democracies that make their conflicts less probable in the first place and less likely to escalate when they do occur. The problem is that empirical analyses rarely support the contention that less authoritarian states are discernibly less likely to initiate wars. Moreover, the presence or absence of normative ties between democracies has proven difficult to measure directly. Even more problematic is the tendency to pursue regime type explanations as if regime type arguments, in either their monadic or dyadic manifestations, are likely to be necessary and sufficient. While no one explicitly argues that they are necessary and sufficient, the systematic assessment of competing explanations (regime type versus alternatives) is still very much in its infancy. Not only is it fair to say that we do not know for sure what it is about regime type that restrains conflict within some dyads; we also do not know how much relative explanatory credit to give to regime type.¹

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¹ Arguments and evidence on the democracy–war generalization may be found in Quincy Wright, *A Study of War* (Chicago 1942/65); Immanuel Kant, *Perpetual Peace* (Indianapolis, 1957); Dean Babst, ‘Elective Governments—A Force for Peace?’, *The Wisconsin Sociologist*, 3 (1964), pp. 9–14; Peter Wallensteen, *Structure and War: On International Relations, 1920–1968* (Stockholm, 1973); R. J. Rummel, ‘Libertarianism and International Violence’, *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 27 (1983), pp. 27–71; Steven Chan, ‘Mirror, Mirror on the Wall . . . Are the Freer Countries More Pacific?’, *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 28 (1984), pp. 617–48; Erich Weede, ‘Democracy and War Involvement’, *ibid.*, pp. 649–64; Michael W. Doyle, ‘Liberalism and World Politics’, *American Political Science Review*, 80 (1986), pp. 1151–69; Bruce Russett, *Grasping the Democratic Peace* (Princeton, 1993); Max Singer and Aaron Wildavsky, *The Real World Order: Zones of Peace/Zones of Turmoil* (Chatham, NJ, 1993); and James Lee Ray, *Democracy and International Conflict: An Evaluation of the Democratic Peace Proposition* (Columbia, MO, 1995). Alternative approaches to developing greater specification, examining rival hypotheses, and presenting still more arguments can be found in Melvin Small and J. David Singer, ‘The War-Proneness of Democratic Regimes, 1816–1965’, *Jerusalem Journal of International Relations*, 1 (1976), pp. 50–69; William K. Domke, *War and the Changing Global System* (New Haven, CT, 1988); Zeev Maoz and Nasrin Abdolali, ‘Regime Type and International Conflict’, *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 33 (1989), pp. 3–35; Richard L. Merritt and Dina A. Zinnes, ‘Democracies and War’, in Alex Inkeles (ed.), *On Measuring Democracy: Its Consequences and Concomitants* (New Brunswick, NJ, 1989); George Modelski and Gardener Perry III, ‘Democratization from a Longterm Perspective’, in N. Nakicenovic and A. Grubler (eds.), *Diffusion of Technologies and Social Behavior* (New York, 1991); Stuart A. Bremer, ‘Dangerous Dyads: Conditions Affecting the Likelihood of Interstate War, 1816–1965’, *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 36 (1992), pp. 309–41; Zeev Maoz and Bruce Russett, ‘Alliance Contiguity, Wealth, and Political Stability: Is the Lack of Conflict Among Democracies a Statistical Artifact?’, *International*

Let us assume for the sake of argument that dyadic regime type does restrain war-making propensities within democratic dyads. Yet, surely, few would contend that regime type is the only variable of interest or influence. If some states are relatively peaceful within certain types of dyadic arrangements but equally war-prone outside of those dyadic arrangements, something else other than, or in addition to, the constraints of regime type presumably is at work to encourage war-proneness. Only if all democratic states are equally likely to go to war with any non-democratic state at any time could one insist that explanations involving democratic dyads were sufficient to account for why states go to war. No analyst is likely to be comfortable with either claim.

The question, therefore, should not be solely one of why democratic states do not fight one another. We also need to ask how regime type considerations interact with other influences in order to account for differential war-proneness tendencies. The argument that will be pursued here is that interstate warfare is in some part attributable to a combination of external pressures and internal path-dependencies. The probability of one state fighting another hinges in part on considerations such as geographical location, rivalries and power distributions between the states in question and within the region or neighbourhood in which the states are located. Moreover, any state may possess certain internal characteristics, other than regime type, that make war with certain opponents at some time more probable. If these characteristics are genuinely idiosyncratic, they will not yield much explanatory power. If they tend to reoccur in different circumstances and different places, and some level of generalization becomes conceivable, the explanatory utility of these factors becomes more attractive. More specifically, it will be argued that path-dependencies, such as irredentism, the perceived need to break out of a containment system, or something resembling a collective inferiority complex, make some generalizable difference in accounting for the paucity of warfare between democratic states, as well as between other combinations of regime types. Furthermore, internal path-dependencies are often themselves causally related to antecedent war experiences. Advances in democratization, too, may be traceable to war participation. At the very least, the domestic political institution→war behaviour link should be

Interactions, 17 (1992), pp. 245–68; David Lake, 'Powerful Pacifists: Democratic States and War', *American Political Science Review*, 86 (1992), pp. 24–37; Randall Schweller, 'Domestic Structure and Preventative War: Are Democracies More Pacific?', *World Politics*, 44 (1992), pp. 235–69; Bruce Bueno de Mesquita and David Lalman, *War and Reason* (New Haven, CT, 1992); T. Clifton Morgan and Valerie Schwebach, 'Take Two Democracies and Call Me in the Morning: A Prescription for Peace?', *International Interactions*, 17 (1992), pp. 305–20; Alex Mintz and Nehemia Geva, 'Why Don't Democracies Fight Each Other? An Experimental Assessment of the "Political Incentive" Explanation', *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 37 (1993), pp. 484–503; William J. Dixon, 'Democracy and the Peaceful Settlement of International Conflict', *American Political Science Review*, 88 (1994), pp. 14–32; James D. Fearon, 'Domestic Political Audiences and the Escalation of International Disputes', *American Political Science Review*, 88 (1994), pp. 577–92; Christopher Layne, 'Kant or Cant: The Myth of the Democratic Peace', *International Security*, 19 (1994), pp. 5–49; David E. Spiro, 'The Insignificance of the Liberal Peace', *ibid.*, pp. 50–86; John M. Owen, 'How Liberalism Produces Democratic Peace', *ibid.*, pp. 87–125; and William R. Thompson, 'Democracy and Peace: Putting the Cart Before the Horse?' *International Organization*, 50 (1996), pp. 141–74. In particular, Bremer, 'Dangerous Dyads', and Maoz and Russett, 'Alliance Contiguity', have made some headway in examining the relative contribution of dyadic regime factors versus other sources of influence. However, Maoz and Russett's examination is limited to a restricted set of variables and the post-1945 era. Bremer's analysis has a longer time-span but his study is characterized by important operationalization problems and also fails to check the temporal stability of the outcome. More work along these lines is definitely warranted.

viewed as a more historically contingent and contextually sensitive war→institutions and internal path-dependencies→war linkage.

To pursue these issues further, we first need some preliminary sense of the extent to which regime type is useful in accounting for war decisions. Most empirical studies have relied upon highly aggregated correspondences between regime type and war participation. In this examination, an unusual purposive sample is proposed. Twenty-four states have moved in and out of the relatively democratic category since the 1790s and through the early 1980s. The question is whether these states have behaved differently when the democratic ‘switch’ has been on, as opposed to periods when it was off, and especially within the contexts of internal path-dependencies and fluctuations in relative power distributions. Have these states been more or less likely to initiate war (in contrast to simply participating in it) when their political systems are more or less democratic? If war initiations are associated exclusively with one type of regime, other possible influences may not matter all that much. If, on the other hand, war initiations are found on both sides of the regime ledger, we may assume that other attributes and processes besides regime type deserve attention. Since the level of analysis is clearly not dyadic, no direct challenge to the findings on, and arguments about, the pacific nature of democratic dyads is intended. A more general question is at stake. Assuming that the general predictive power of regime type is less than perfect, what other sorts of influences seem to influence states’ inclinations to go to war? Yet external pressures and internal path-dependencies are no more easily measured than are democratic norms, institutional constraints, or signalling. This awkwardness suggests the need to fall back on more traditional techniques to explore their possible causal significance. But there is simply too much material to do justice to all twenty-four cases at one time. Fortunately, of the twenty-four cases, only two states (France and Italy) initiated wars in and out of the relatively democratic regime category and, therefore, constitute the most interesting cases upon which to focus this examination. The other cases are interesting in other ways, but their analysis must be reserved for separate treatment at a future time.

Intermittent liberal republics and their war initiation behaviour

Do states that move back and forth from more to less authoritarian status demonstrate any noticeable proclivity for war initiation when they are in the more authoritarian category? In order to discuss this question, some preliminary caveats are inescapable. For instance, there is simply no way of circumventing the inherent awkwardness of the concept of war initiation. Who is responsible for actually starting a war is always a difficult and highly subjective question. Even when it is clear that one side attacks another first, there is always the question of whether or to what extent the attack was provoked by the behaviour of the attack’s target. Some room for perceptions of shared responsibility frequently exists. Nevertheless, it is usually possible to discern which side in a confrontation moves its military forces against the other side first. Small and Singer provide one useful schedule of who has attacked whom in interstate warfare since 1816.²

² Melvin Small and J. David Singer, *Resort to Arms* (Beverly Hills, CA, 1982), pp. 196–7.

Table 1. *Doyle's list of liberal republics rearranged*

Non-intermittent	Intermittent
Switzerland (18th century/1848)	France (1790–5, 1830–49, 1871–1940, 1945–)
United States (1776/1865)	Piedmont/Italy (1848–1922, 1946–)
Belgium (1830–1940, 1946–)	Denmark (1849–66, 1914–40, 1945–)
Britain (1832)	Greece (1864–1911, 1928–36, 1950–67, 1975–)
Netherlands (1848–1940, 1946–)	Argentina (1880–1943)
Sweden (1864)	Chile (1891–1924, 1932–73)
Canada (1867)	Colombia (1910–49, 1958–)
Australia (1901)	Poland (1917–35)
Norway (1905–40, 1945–)	Germany/W. Germany (1918–32, 1949–)
New Zealand (1907)	Austria (1918–34, 1945–)
Finland (1919)	Estonia (1919–34)
Costa Rica (1919)	Uruguay (1919–73)
Ireland (1920)	Czechoslovakia (1920–39)
Finland (1919)	Latvia (1922–34)
Mexico (1928)	Lebanon (1944–75)
Iceland (1944)	Brazil (1945–54, 1955–64)
Luxembourg (1946)	Philippines (1946–72)
Israel (1949)	India (1947–75, 1977–)
Japan (1951)	Sri Lanka (1948–61, 1963–71, 1978–)
Venezuela (1959)	Ecuador (1948–63, 1979–)
Jamaica (1962)	Peru (1950–62, 1963–8, 1980–)
Trinidad and Tobago (1962)	El Salvador (1950–61)
Senegal (1963)	Turkey (1950–60, 1966–71)
Malaysia (1963)	Bolivia (1956–69, 1982–)
Singapore (1965)	Nigeria (1961–4, 1979–84)
Botswana (1966)	
Portugal (1976)	
Spain (1978)	
Dominican Rep (1978)	
Honduras (1981)	
Papua New Guinea (1982)	

Source: Based on Michael W. Doyle, 'Liberalism and World Politics', *American Political Science Review*, 80 (1986), pp. 1164–5. Doyle notes that not all of these political systems were wholly liberal at the outset. Some, such as Switzerland and the United States, initially encompassed some liberal cantons or regions, with the entire system becoming liberal only at some later point. Consequently, there exists some degree of analytical choice as to whether the earlier or later dates are used.

This Correlates of War conception is a minimalist approach to the question of war initiation. Whether or not the 'initiator' deserves all of the blame for starting a war is a separate question. Whether states subsequently join wars already in progress must be put aside as a separate question as well. Yet the record of who moved their military forces first suffices for addressing the question of inhibitions associated with regime type. If less authoritarian states are more inhibited than more authoritarian states, less authoritarian states should demonstrate less of a tendency to initiate warfare.

Equally contentious is the question of differentiating less and more authoritarian states. Defining the essence of democracy, and justifying relevant indicators, is a very old exercise about which a strong consensus has yet to emerge. Rather than enter into that debate anew, it is both more pragmatic and convenient to fall back on one previous effort, outlined in table 1, to generate a specific chronology of the fluctuations in the number of liberal republics. Doyle's threshold for liberal republic status involves satisfying the following criteria: market and private property economies, external sovereignty, citizens with juridical rights, republican representative government that has genuine control over domestic policy including foreign and military affairs, an effective legislature which is formally and competitively elected, 30 per cent or more male suffrage, and female suffrage that is granted within a generation of the development of an extensive female suffrage movement.³

Liberal republics need not be all that democratic. Historically, the initial attainment of liberal republic status preceded variable processes of further democratization. Early liberal thought assumed that a restricted electorate was necessary to the avoidance of instability and domestic conflict. Gradually, the restrictions on the bases of wealth, education, gender, and race have been eased in various parts of the world. As a consequence, to meet Doyle's criteria will not necessarily satisfy all analytical thresholds for democracy. But, some minimal level of democratization is implicit in several of the criteria.

While some compromises are admittedly necessary to the measurement of such concepts as war initiation and regime type, they do permit us to proceed and construct table 2's illustrative summarization of the relationship between regime type, regime type intermittence, and war initiation behaviour. One problem is that table 2 conceals the fact that less authoritarian regime types have always been less common than their more authoritarian counterparts. Moreover, the actual ratio of more to less authoritarian states has fluctuated over time. Accordingly, we need to be careful in comparing the war initiation propensities of the different types of regime. It is one thing if we find different initiation propensities when both regime types are equally common; it is likely to be something different if the type that, historically, is more prone to initiation is also much more prevalent. Thus, table 2 does not represent a definitive test but it can suggest the existence of certain behavioural propensities.

Table 2 underscores at least two facts that have been established in earlier analyses. The generalization that democracies do not fight democracies goes unchallenged

Table 2. *Regime type and interstate war initiation, 1816–1980*

Target	Initiator	
	Less authoritarian	More authoritarian
Less authoritarian	—	7
More authoritarian	18	51

Source: The initiation and target data are found in Melvin Small and J. David Singer, *Resort to Arms* (Beverly Hills, CA, 1982), pp. 196–7. The regime type information is based on Doyle's coding of liberal republics as noted in table 1.

³ Doyle, 'Liberalism'.

here. But it is also clear that liberal republics have initiated wars. Whether they have initiated wars proportionally less often than more authoritarian states depends on when one asks the question. Between 1816 and 1980, the less authoritarian states initiated about one-fourth of the total number of interstate wars. At times, the proportion of less to more authoritarian states has been much less than one-fourth; at other times, it has been higher. In 1850, eight out of forty states (20 per cent) satisfied the liberal republic criteria. In 1900, thirteen of forty-two (31 per cent) met the threshold. By 1950, the ratio was thirty-three of seventy-five (44 per cent), but it had declined to thirty-nine of one hundred and fifty-five (25 per cent) by 1980. Roughly speaking, then, one-fourth of the warfare seems to approximate the long-term, average, proportional strength of the less authoritarian states.⁴ Thus, one would not categorize liberal republics as noticeably pacific, in that they have initiated about as many interstate wars as one might expect.

Hence, the monadic–dyadic distinction that most analysts have made about war participation holds quite clearly when examining the pattern of war initiations with liberal republic data. But does it continue to hold as clearly if we narrow the focus to those states that have actually moved in and out of the liberal republican camp? Since the upper left-hand corner cell in table 2 is empty, the dyadic generalization (democracies do not fight democracies) must persist. At the monadic level, though, should we expect war initiations of the intermittent republics to be concentrated in liberal republican phases or non-liberal republican phases, or equally distributed across both phases? Different schools of thought on why democratic dyads are relatively pacific would answer this question differently. Those analysts that stress normative or behavioural interaction within the dyad might say that no prediction is possible about monadic behaviour. Others that stress the constraining influences of democratic institutions might predict fewer war initiations in the less authoritarian column. But, if the highly aggregated outcome reported in table 2 is applicable, we might expect that war initiations should be equally distributed because liberal republican and non-liberal republican states were found to be about equally prone to initiate wars, controlling for the varying distribution of different regime types.

Table 3 tallies the twenty-five war initiations of the twenty-five intermittent republics listed in table 1.⁵ Ten of the twenty-five states (France, Piedmont/Italy,

⁴ The calculations make use of the number of liberal republics in existence, based on Doyle's 'Liberalism' p. 1164 schedule and the number of states in the international system as counted by Small and Singer, *Resort to Arms*, pp. 118–22. The reader should keep in mind that some other approach to conceptualizing and measuring regime type could produce different calculations. Other databases, such as Polity II/III, might have been utilized. The problem is that currently there are at least one half-dozen approaches to manipulating Polity data to create regime type thresholds. All have important implications for consequent analytical outcomes and none enjoy consensus support. In contrast, the Doyle data set is easy to use and not characterized by missing data, and its distinction between liberal and non-liberal regimes, while always debatable, is explicit.

⁵ To calculate which states have been intermittent liberal republics, some decision has to be made about which states have persisted across time. For the purposes of this analysis, Austria-Hungary and Austria, and the Ottoman Empire and Turkey, are regarded as different states. In these cases, large empires were reduced to smaller successor states. The implication is that Austrian and Turkish intermittence is strictly a twentieth-century phenomenon. In contrast, Piedmont and Prussia are viewed as constituting the cores of Italy and Germany, respectively, and therefore are counted as the same state through time. Thus, Italian and German intermittence spans both the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. States that fell out of the liberal republican column due solely to wartime occupation have not been counted as intermittent.

Table 3. *Intermittent liberal republics and war initiation*

War	More authoritarian	Less authoritarian
1. Franco-Spanish (1823)	FRN→SPN	
2. Austro-Sardinian (1848–9)		PIE→AUS
3. 1st Schleswig-Holstein (1848–9)	PRU→DEN	
4. Roman Republic (1849)		FRN→PAP
5. La Plata (1851–2)	BRA→ARG	
6. Italo-Roman (1860)		ITA→PAP
7. Italo-Sicilian (1860–1)		ITA→SIC
8. Franco-Mexican (1862–7)	FRN→MEX	
9. Ecuadorian–Colombian (1863)	COL→ECU	
10. 2nd Schleswig-Holstein (1864)	PRU→DEN	
11. Seven Weeks (1866)	PRU→AUS	
12. Franco-Prussian (1870–1)	FRN→GER	
13. Pacific (1879–83)	CHL→PER, BOL	
14. Sino-French (1884–5)		FRN→CHN
15. Greco-Turkish (1897)		GRC→OTT
16. Boxer Rebellion (1900)		FRN→CHN
17. Italo-Turkish (1911–12)		ITA→TUR
18. Hungarian–Allies (1919)	CZE→HUN	
19. Greco-Turkish (1919–22)		GRC→TUR
20. Italo-Ethiopian (1935–6)	ITA→ETH	
21. World War II (1939–45)	GER→POL	
22. Second Kashmir (1965)		IND→PAK
23. Football War (1969)	ELS→HON	
24. Bangladesh (1971)		IND→PAK
25. Turco-Cypriot (1974)	TUR→CYP	

Where ARG=Argentina, AUS=Austria-Hungary, BOL=Bolivia, BRA=Brazil, CHL=Chile, CHN=China, COL=Colombia, CYP=Cyprus, CZE=Czechoslovakia, DEN=Denmark, ECU=Ecuador, ELS=El Salvador, ETH=Ethiopia, FRN=France, GER=Prussia/Germany, GRC=Greece, HUN=Hungary, IND=India, ITA=Piedmont/Italy, MEX=Mexico, OTT=Ottoman Empire, PAP=Papal States, PIE=Piedmont/Italy, PER=Peru, POL=Poland, PRU=Prussia/Germany, SIC=Two Sicilies, SPN=Spain, TUR=Turkey.

Greece, Prussia/ Germany, Brazil, Colombia, Czechoslovakia, El Salvador, India, and Turkey) were responsible for all of the intermittent republic war initiations, accounting for more than a third of the sixty-seven interstate wars of the 1816–1980 period. This overachievement alone should make them an interesting group to examine. Not coincidentally, the list also includes three traditional great powers. The second and third columns in table 3 identify whether the war initiator satisfied the liberal republic criteria at the time of the war onset. The outcome is mixed. In the aggregate, almost as many wars were initiated (eleven versus fourteen) by intermittent republics when they were liberal republics as when they were not. Of the ten states that initiated wars, the four Prussian/German as well as the Brazilian, Colombian, Chilean, Salvadoran, and Turkish initiations all took place in non-republican circumstances. The Czech case missed the liberal republic threshold by

one year. In contrast, the two Greek cases and the two Indian cases are placed in the republican column. The six French cases were equally split between the two regime type categories. Four of the five Italian cases took place within the context of liberal republican regimes.

This mixed outcome with a selected sample would seem to suggest some caution in assuming that regime type is an important factor in the initiation of warfare. Are there other factors that might have more explanatory power? There are certainly alternative ways of explaining the initiations recorded in table 3. For instance, we might describe the story(ies) behind each case in a highly descriptive mode. Unfortunately, such an approach is likely to yield only a number of stories that might not appear to have much in common. What is needed are other generalizable factors that are capable of complementing and/or competing with the asserted regime type association.

Two factors with some promise are internal path-dependencies and external pressures. The concept of internal path-dependency refers to the inability of political systems to shake off the effects of past events.⁶ These past events, or their persisting influences, act as restraints on the range of probable choices open to decision-makers. A good example is irredentism. Decision-makers in states that emerge with some portion of their perceived 'natural' population or nation still under the control of other states will find it difficult to ignore opportunities to unify the nation. The domestic political costs are simply too great, for it is an easy issue, due to the popularity of nationalistic appeals, for rivals and opponents to co-opt. Path-dependencies do not determine which choices are made but they do make some choices more probable and others unlikely. It is certainly possible to break free of their influence, but to override path-dependencies has not proved to be either a very easy or frequently successful process.

One interesting characteristic of path-dependencies is that they are apt to persist regardless of changes in regime, even though those same regime changes may have been designed, at least in part, to break free of certain sensitivities to past events. In this respect, path-dependencies have some potential for explaining why a particular state may be equally likely to initiate certain kinds of warfare or go to war in certain circumstances, regardless of its regime type.

External pressures represent more familiar terrain for explaining war propensities. Perhaps the best known type of external pressure is the geopolitical variety. For example, states are situated within regional settings and power distributions. If one's neighbours to the west and north are too powerful to contemplate attacking, there is some increased probability that any expansionary activities that are undertaken will be oriented toward the east and/or the south. Not all states' decision-makers spend a great deal of time contemplating expansion and attacking neighbours, but those that do will find themselves encouraged by circumstances to move along paths of least geopolitical resistance. One facet of the present argument is that the paths of least geopolitical resistance for expansionist states have tended to coincide with areas populated by more authoritarian regimes. As a rule, less authoritarian targets have been less tempting targets, because they were either too powerful themselves, too

⁶ Paul A. David, 'Historical Economics in the Longrun: Some Implications of Path-Dependence', in G. D. Snooks (ed.), *Historical Analysis in Economics* (London, 1993).

difficult to attack readily, or protected by strong allies. However, none of these characteristics have been constants.

External pressures are not restricted to the proximity of powerful neighbours. Transnational economic depressions constitute another important source of pressure. Yet these external pressures do not exist in vacuums any more than do regime types. Path-dependencies, external pressures, and, no doubt, regime types interact. Some of the products of their interaction are found in table 3's partial list of war initiations. At this point, we need to shift analytical modes, moving from generalizations to specific cases, in order to illustrate how these factors may have interacted. There is no need (or space) to tell comprehensive and detailed stories about the twenty-five wars initiated by the intermittent democracies. Instead, the focus will be placed first on France and then on Italy, as the two states that have experienced significant variation in both regime type and war initiation dimensions, in order to assess the interaction of path-dependencies, external pressures, and regime types. These national 'stories' will not be any more comprehensive than stories about twenty-five wars might have been. Rather, they represent distillations of what seems to have transpired and what influences seem to have been most important. Obviously, other analysts might prefer different interpretations. That is why this form of analysis must be regarded as both tentative and exploratory. The question readers should ask is not whether the story is completely nuanced, but whether the interaction of the highlighted influences makes a plausible case for the significance of internal path-dependencies and external pressures in explaining foreign policy.

France

One of the keys to French foreign policy since the early eighteenth century has been the goal of resisting the implications of a declining trajectory in relative power.⁷ Gildea notes that the phrase 'The role of France is to retain its rank' might have been uttered by any number of prominent French decision-makers from Napoleon to de Gaulle but was actually proclaimed as recently as 1989 by President Mitterrand.⁸ Even since the defeat of Louis XIV, the European pre-eminence of France has been increasingly questioned as its absolute leads in regional wealth and population have eroded.⁹ The Napoleonic Empire may have represented a brief and temporary exception to this generalization, but its defeat in 1814 and 1815 accentuated the political problems associated with declining regional pre-eminence.

The Allied occupation of France in 1814 and 1815 created a two-headed policy problem for French decision-makers. Externally, the Vienna settlement designed to check further French expansion within Europe rankled as an unwarranted, alien imposition on French sovereignty and policy ambitions. Foreign troops remained in

⁷ See René Albrecht-Carrie, *Britain and France: Adaptations to a Changing Context of Power* (Garden City, NY, 1970); Roger Bullen, *Palmerston, Guizot and the Collapse of the Entente Cordiale* (London, 1974); and David H. Pinkney, *Decisive Years in France, 1840–1847* (Princeton, 1986).

⁸ Robert Gildea, *The Past in French History* (New Haven, CT, 1994), p. 112.

⁹ For an early International Relations effort to examine some of the implications of French decline, see Charles F. Doran, *The Politics of Assimilation: Hegemony and Its Aftermath* (Baltimore, MD, 1971).

France for several years. Reparations were paid. Territory was lost. Hostile armies and fortifications were found at all of France's land frontiers. The British navy was prepared to act on the maritime borders. Moreover, the principal great powers were united throughout the first half of the nineteenth century on the necessity of suppressing any renewal of French expansion within Europe. France continued to be the primary continental power, but most of its ambitions of improving its regional position were thwarted by effective or anticipated external opposition.¹⁰

All contending parties within France reacted negatively to the containment aspects of the 1815 settlement, but they disagreed on the appropriate counter-strategy. Conservatives preferred rebuilding French power while avoiding a great-power attack. Republicans preferred a more aggressive foreign policy and the export of liberal ideas and revolution. The contending parties also disagreed on the form of government most suitable for France. From at least 1789 on, domestic politics revolved around attempts to liberalize the French political system in the face of strong conservative opposition. The 1815 settlement reimposed the Bourbon monarchy and restored the traditional aristocracy but it could not completely turn back the societal clock to before 1789. Nor could it eliminate the societal changes that had been created by the French revolution, the Napoleonic Empire, twenty-four years of global warfare, and long-term economic changes. As a consequence, nineteenth- and twentieth-century France moved back and forth between more authoritarian and more liberal governmental formats, depending on external shocks and the relative strengths and strategies of the contending domestic political forces, in a search for a successful formula.

One aspect of this societal tug-of-war was the vulnerability of any government in power that appeared too weak in foreign policy. All political systems presumably face this threat in varying degrees, but the French problem was made more acute by the fact that the monarchy initially had to be reimposed by external force. In 1815, the French population had to accept the Bourbons. Yet enthusiastic support for, and loyalty to, the regime was an entirely different matter. One way to lose political popularity at home was to appear too complaisant in European politics. However, an overly aggressive foreign policy was sure to provoke a unified great-power retaliation. Successive regimes and governments, therefore, had to seek a course of policy that managed to avoid external and internal attack. The changes of regime in 1830, 1848, 1852, and 1871 suggest that developing such policies proved to be a difficult task.

A partial solution to this problem involved seeking French glory outside of Europe. The conquest of Algeria, beginning in 1830, was one of the by-products of what might be termed 'geopolitical deflection'.¹¹ The tendency to focus expansionist energies in areas that were least likely to incur the opposition of other great powers meant that deflected states such as France were less likely to be involved in European

¹⁰ French pursuits of more aggressive foreign policies in Spain (1823) and Italy (1832) were undertaken with little significant great power opposition. Spain was conceded as France's sole sphere of influence within Europe, and the Austrians were not in a position to oppose the 1832 Ancona expedition.

¹¹ In 1849 France sent an expeditionary force to Rome to restore Pius IX who had been overthrown by the new Roman Republic. This war may represent the closest two liberal republics have come to actually fighting one another. One of the reasons it is not counted as an inter-republican affair is that the Roman Republic did not last long. There is also an irony implicit in the usual explanation offered for the French intervention: Louis Napoleon was paying back an electoral debt to clerical supporters stemming from his December 1848 election.

warfare and more likely to be embroiled in colonial warfare. French energies were deflected to parts of the world where one was extremely unlikely to encounter native regimes of a democratic nature, and the probability of France, a sometime liberal republic, fighting another liberal republic was consequently diminished. The caveat to this generalization, of course, is that while colonial expansion may have decreased the probability of French warfare within Europe, it presumably increased the probability of conflict with other states that had ambitious colonial policies, some of which were also liberal republics.

In this context, the rise of Napoleon III definitely represented a more authoritarian turn for the French political system.¹² His reign also involved much greater French foreign policy activism and revisionism.¹³ The two facets were not independent. Imperial control, no doubt, gave Napoleon III greater leeway in foreign policy manoeuvring and his penchant for secret diplomacy. Foreign policy success, on the other hand, was an important way of creating support for the new dynasty. But therein lies an important clue. French foreign policy success would be popular because revision of the 1815 settlement and its implications for France's position in Europe and the world was not a goal on which domestic camps disagreed. Napoleon III's Empire also replaced the more liberal Orléans constitutional monarchy which had suffered domestically from the impression that its foreign policy efforts were too restrained. The Bonaparte heir was expected to try harder.

Napoleon III did work harder on the foreign policy front than the Orléans regime had done. But he also enjoyed a significant advantage, other than a more authoritarian regime, over his immediate predecessors. Namely, the European great powers of the 1850s and 1860s were much less likely to present a unified front against French foreign policy activism than they had been between 1815 and 1848. France actively pursued accommodation with Britain as evidenced in the Crimean War, the 1860s lowering of tariffs and the possibility of a joint intervention in the American Civil War. Britain, in any event, was even less interested in continental intervention than it had been before. Russia needed to rebuild after the Crimean War. The ascendancy of Prussia made Prussian–Austrian cooperation less of a sure thing. Austria was attempting to cope with the emergence of an Italian state. All of these developments provided France with external opportunities that it had not enjoyed for some time.

Nor did Napoleon III revert to the first Napoleon's tactics for revising the French position within Europe. The Second Empire engaged selectively in European warfare and even accomplished some modest territorial gains in the late 1850s, but French hegemony was not being sought primarily on the basis of military coercion. Interestingly, Napoleon III's own preferred strategy seems to have been negotiation and international conferences to resolve disputed issues. Even the Mexican adventure may have reflected as much the decreasing degree of foreign policy freedom within Europe as anything else. The search for ostensibly easier successes outside

¹² The initial instinct of the Orléans monarchy was to withdraw the Algerian operation that it had inherited from its predecessors. The combat in North Africa represented a drain on troops available for the defence of France in Europe and also increased British suspicions about French intentions. However, as noted in Pinkney, *Decisive Years*, p. 141, in 1830 it would have been politically imprudent to relinquish the first French conquest since the Napoleonic era. It also helped that it did not seem to raise the probability of a war in Europe.

¹³ James F. McMillan, *Napoleon III* (New York, 1991).

Europe was no more unique to the Second Empire than the general goal of revising the 1815 outcome was a novelty for French foreign policy in the 1850s and 1860s. Similarly, the demise of the Second Empire was very much a consequence of developments in Germany and the ascension of a new contender for the leading position in Europe.

Still another dimension of nineteenth-century French foreign policy, as hinted at above, was the search for a great-power ally to both weaken the containment of France and improve its ability to deal with the other great powers. Although rarely popular at home, Britain was the most likely candidate.¹⁴ The problem, especially in the first half of the nineteenth century, was that there were too many points of friction, potential and realized and both within and outside of Western Europe, for an Anglo-French entente to succeed for any length of time.¹⁵ Prior to the first decade of the twentieth century and certain ensuing changes in international relations, Anglo-French cooperation was only intermittent.

The possibility of an outbreak of war between the two liberal republics, arguably, was greatest in 1831 (although Britain is not coded as liberal until 1832), 1840, and 1898. Had war broken out on each of these occasions, the less authoritarian initiation of war against another less authoritarian state cell in table 2 would not be empty and the generalization that democracies do not fight other democracies would have lost some of its appeal. The question for our immediate purposes is whether the avoidance of war in these three cases should be attributed to chance, regime type, or something else. The answer is that, in each case, France backed down because its decision-makers expected to lose a military conflict with Britain. One may wish to argue that different outcomes might have occurred if different regime types had been involved, but, in actuality, the French monarchy proved to be a restraining factor in the 1840 crisis.

The first of the three crises took place in Europe and had important implications for the 1815 settlement. Belgium sought to break free from the Dutch monarchy in 1831. An independent Belgium constituted a challenge to the 1815 settlement in several respects. The Netherlands had obtained Belgium, formerly an Austrian province, at Vienna. A number of fortifications on the Belgian border with France were part of the French containment network. A breakaway and liberal Belgium also constituted a challenge to the legitimacy of conservative monarchical rule, and thereby a threat to Prussia, Austria, and Russia. It also provided an opportunity for French intervention on behalf of Belgian independence and its own interests.

In the end, Britain at sea and France on land intervened with military forces to compel a retreat by Dutch forces bent on reconquering Belgium. Once the Dutch threat had been eliminated, France insisted on a partition of Belgium favourable to France and appeared reluctant to withdraw its land forces. It required a British

¹⁴ French diplomatic feelers were extended to the conservative monarchies in 1836 and 1848 in search of an alternative to British support. In 1848, there was some possibility of a French–Austrian intervention in the Swiss civil war on behalf of the conservative, Catholic cantons, as discussed in Bullen, *Palmerston, Guizot, and Stuart Woolf, A History of Italy, 1700–1860: The Social Constraints of Political Change* (London, 1979), p. 295. If the French had initiated this intervention, it might have constituted another liberal-republic–liberal-republic clash. However, Britain successfully discouraged intervention.

¹⁵ British decision-makers preferred a situation in which French hegemonic ambitions could be contained while not leaving France so weak that Russian ambitions for European expansion might be encouraged. Nevertheless, British and French preferences collided in all sorts of places between Spain and Tahiti.

ultimatum threatening war, in conjunction with the desire of the conservative monarchies to restore royal control over the secessionists, and the transferral of five Belgian border forts (to France) to ensure French withdrawal.¹⁶

The next crisis focused on control of Syria. The French supported Muhammad 'Ali who in 1839–40 was threatening to bring down the Ottoman Empire from his base in Egypt. His occupation of Syria not only threatened the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire, it also threatened the British position in India. Successful expansion on the part of Muhammad 'Ali would have meant Egyptian control over the Suez and other overland routes between the Mediterranean and the Persian Gulf and Indian Ocean. 'Ali was closely aligned with France which had provided military training for the Egyptian forces. France's expanding position in Algeria, coupled with the overthrow of the *status quo* threatened not only the routes to India but also British control in North Africa and the Mediterranean. The fall of the Ottoman Empire would in addition have serious destabilizing implications for the Austrian and especially Russian positions in south-eastern Europe and the eastern Mediterranean.

Britain organized Russian, Austrian, and Prussian opposition to 'Ali's remaining in control of Syria. Adolphe Thiers as head of the French government resisted the pressure on 'Ali, underestimating the extent of great-power agreement and resolve to maintain the *status quo* by force if necessary. The Allies offered 'Ali several choices with increasing penalties including removal from power if a series of deadlines were not met in withdrawing from Syria. 'Ali ignored the deadlines. France threatened war if 'Ali was actually deposed. British–Austrian military intervention subsequently led to the forced eviction of Muhammad 'Ali's forces from Syria.

While 'Ali ultimately was allowed to remain in control of Egypt, the French threat to fight was accompanied by several steps to prepare for war with Britain. Reserves were mobilized. Extraordinary credits for the army and navy were approved. Parisian fortification efforts were accelerated. Popular support for war was clearly demonstrated. British decision-makers, although not entirely in agreement, thought the French were bluffing, but were prepared to go to war if it became necessary to teach the French a Palmerstonian lesson.¹⁷

Whether the French were bluffing or stalling, the prospect of facing all of the great powers simultaneously in a war which might have even greater costs than those imposed in 1815 persuaded some leading governmental elites in France to rethink their stance. There were also reasons for believing that war would increase the probability of revolution or insurrection and the overthrow of the Orleanist monarch.¹⁸ After a confrontation between the constitutional monarch, Louis-Philippe, and Thiers, Thiers resigned after it was made clear that the continuing risk of war was no longer considered tolerable. He was replaced by the more-willing-to-accommodate ambassador to Britain. The crisis was defused, although Collingham with Alexander have argued that the external defeat in 1840 contributed to the 1848

¹⁶ It is not clear how far the French were prepared to push the Belgian crisis, but Bullen, *Palmerston, Guizot*, p. 6, indicates that there was some expectation of war on the British side.

¹⁷ See André Jardin and André-Jean Tudesq, *Restoration and Reaction, 1815–1848*, tr. Elborg Forster (Cambridge, 1983), p. 155.

¹⁸ See Roger Magraw, *France, 1815–1914: The Bourgeois Century* (New York, 1986), p. 71, and Pinkney, *Decisive Years*, p. 131.

overthrow of the monarchy by increasing the number of Frenchmen who saw Louis-Philippe as too much of an internal restraint on French foreign policy.¹⁹

Almost sixty years later, the last serious Anglo-French crisis also had to do with control of Egypt. In the early 1890s, France had initiated several exploratory attempts in East Africa, seeking control of the upper Nile and a link with colonial possessions in West Africa, without much opposition. By the late 1890s, however, Britain was involved in suppressing the Mahdist revolt and moving into southern Sudan. Fashoda was the point at which a small French force and a much greater British military force met. Continued French occupation of Fashoda posed the threat of France having the capability to control the flow of water into the Nile tributary, with implications for Egyptian agriculture and British control of Egypt.

French decision-makers hoped to use the possession of the Fashoda bargaining chip to bring about an international conference on Egypt with the intended outcome of securing a British withdrawal or, alternatively, an improved French position within Egypt. They believed that at the very least the British would be willing to negotiate. The problem was that Britain enjoyed a clear military superiority at Fashoda, such that the meagre French force was unable even to communicate with its government. Not coincidentally, the British government also perceived no need to negotiate the question of who would control the Nile. The British were no more eager to go to war than the French but they were willing to contemplate the possibility. 'Unlike France, in the last analysis Britain could and would go to war for a few square miles of swamp.'²⁰

As long as a military clash could be avoided, the French government could withdraw if it chose to do so. One indication of the mood among French decision-makers is the Foreign Minister's prediction that should war break out, the French fleet would be at the bottom of the sea within two weeks.²¹ Lacking adequate military forces anywhere near Fashoda, possessing a navy that could not compete with Britain's and a Russian ally that was unwilling to provide assistance, beset at home by the Dreyfus Scandal, and confronted by an unyielding Britain, the French government had little rational choice in 1898 but to back down. Bates argues that there is no archival evidence that either France or Britain 'seriously considered going to war over Fashoda'.²² But an inadvertent military clash in the southern Sudan might have narrowed the options.²³ In any event, a year later and each having an eye on the German threat in Europe, Britain and France were able to resolve their territorial disputes in both West and East Africa. The foreign policy environment had suddenly become more conducive to Anglo-French cooperation.

¹⁹ H. A. C. Collingham with R. S. Alexander, *The July Monarchy: A Political History of France, 1830–1848* (New York, 1988), p. 237. Pinkney, *Decisive Years*, p. 132, suggests that the 1840 crisis had one by-product in arousing German fears of the possibility of French expansion in Europe, thereby renewing aspirations for German unification.

²⁰ Patricia Wright, *Conflict on the Nile: The Fashoda Incident of 1898* (London, 1972), p. 188.

²¹ Darrell Bates, *The Fashoda Incident of 1898: Encounter on the Nile* (London, 1984), p. 158.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 186.

²³ Ray gives greater credence to the potential for war in the Fashoda crisis than does the present analysis. However, he too views the crisis outcome as having more to do with capability calculations than democratic regimes. See James L. Ray, 'Comparing the Fashoda Crisis and the Spanish–American War: A Pseudo-Experiment Regarding the Impact of Joint Democracy', paper delivered at the annual meeting of the International Studies Association, Washington, DC, 1994. See as well Russett's treatment of the crisis in *Grasping the Democratic Peace*, pp. 7–9 in which he downplays the role of democratic norms in the crisis bargaining but emphasizes the post-crisis invocation of shared norms.

Italy

If French foreign policy can be interpreted in terms of a long-term decline trajectory and the need to preserve or reclaim France's rank, the history of Italian foreign policy exhibits the other side of the same coin. As 'the least of the great powers', Italy throughout the nineteenth century and beyond was too weak and economically underdeveloped to assume the role of a major power.²⁴ Italy had depended a great deal on external help to achieve unification.²⁵ It also had little luck in European warfare. Piedmont, the core state of the Italian unification movement, was defeated in 1848 by Austria and might have lost its autonomy if not for the threat of French intervention.²⁶ Piedmont participated in the Crimean War on the side of Britain and France in the unrealized hope that Austria would ally with Russia and that, in an expanded war, Piedmont's allies would help to weaken Austria's hold on Italian territory.²⁷ Control of Venice was accomplished only because the Prussians, allied with Italy, defeated the Austrians in 1866. Italy itself had been badly embarrassed by defeats in 1866 at Custoza and Lissa. Rome was regained only because the French, who were providing military protection for the Papacy, were forced to withdraw due to the Franco-Prussian War in 1870. At the same time, Italian decision-makers never contemplated, and probably could not contemplate, the option of reverting to minor power status. As a consequence, Italian foreign policy, in trying to live up to a role frequently beyond its capabilities, became unusually sensitive to the variable degrees of manoeuvre permitted it by external circumstances. Yet foreign policy remained important as an avenue of compensation for weakness and failure on other fronts in the past, even though the foreign policy record was equally less than successful.

Another part of Italy's problem was location. Its traditional enemy, Austria-Hungary, lay immediately to the north. As long as Austria-Hungary was perceived to control territory and populations rightly belonging to Italy, it could hardly be ignored. Yet Austria-Hungary was also perceived to be too strong to challenge with impunity. Allies were needed to help even the playing field and to provide protection from Austro-Hungarian attack. France sometimes played this role, while Germany did so at other times. Neither ally was particularly altruistic when it came time to advance Italian goals: both alliances had their price. For its assistance in the 1859 war to liberate Italian territory from Austrian rule, France received Nice and Savoy as its reward. Later German protection from the possibility of a French attack via the Triple Alliance was purchased at the cost of relinquishing the possibility of attacking Austria-Hungary, the other alliance member.

With a relatively powerful Austria-Hungary to the north and a too powerful France to the west, Italian expansionist ambitions were deflected to the east and the south. Expansion to the east, however, was complicated by the presence of the Austro-Hungarian Empire in the north-east. Expansion to the south-east would

²⁴ R. J. B. Bosworth, *Italy, the Least of the Great Powers: Italian Foreign Policy Before the First World War* (New York, 1979), and William I. Shorrock, *From Ally to Enemy: The Enigma of Fascist Italy in French Diplomacy, 1920–1940* (Kent, OH, 1988).

²⁵ Italy had the misfortune of joining the great-power ranks just as the entry costs, thanks to industrialization, were escalating the costs of participation in the system's elite ranks. The extraordinary dualism of the Italian economy hardly helped matters either.

²⁶ Woolf, *History of Italy*, p. 432.

²⁷ *ibid.*, p. 417.

incur the displeasure of Britain. The path of least resistance lay to the south.²⁸ But even here there were restrictions. The closest southern territory, Tunisia, had been taken by the French in 1881 despite the presence there of a sizeable Italian community. The consequent rift between Italy and France over the Tunisian issue led directly to the need for German protection in the Triple Alliance. As an Ottoman province, Libya was initially protected by the great-power disinclination to accelerate the dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire, one of the factors that precluded Italian movement into south-eastern Europe. The British were already in Egypt and the Sudan. The French were in Algeria and would not tolerate an attack on Morocco. The only conceivable opening in northern Africa in the late nineteenth century was Ethiopia. However, the 1896 defeat at Adowa only added another embarrassment to a string of foreign policy humiliations, thereby increasing the pressure to try harder at the imperial expansion game.

A major opportunity arose in 1911. Italian–French relations had improved significantly as early as 1897–8, immediately after the fall from office of Crispi. By 1902, the two states had reached formal agreement on their mutual interests in Libya and Morocco. In 1887 and 1902, the renewals of the Triple Alliance with Germany and Austria-Hungary indicated that Italy's allies would not interfere should Italy choose to act in North Africa. In 1909, an Italian–Russian agreement exchanged support for an Italian move into Libya for greater freedom for Russian shipping through the Dardanelles. When the Franco-German Agadir crisis broke out over French advances on Morocco, Italian decision-makers perceived a window of opportunity to make their own advance in Libya. With the major European powers polarized and distracted by the Moroccan crisis, what appeared to be approval by the British of Italian action in Libya removed all apparent restraints on Italian action. Despite a lack of military preparedness, Italian decision-makers felt that if they did not act in September 1911 another opportunity might never come.²⁹ In the near future, the other great powers would be more likely to restrain any Italian expansion against Turkey. Tripoli and Cyrenaica were attacked by Italian bombardment six days after the French moved their military forces into Morocco.

One of the generalizations in the democracy–war literature is that liberal republics tend to band together to fight authoritarian foes.³⁰ Italy's 1915 entry into World War I on the side of Britain and France, even though Italy was formally allied with Germany and Austria-Hungary, would seem to be a dramatic illustration of this tendency. However, the calculations of the Italian decision-makers paint a different picture.

Italy had allied with Germany and Austria-Hungary to gain protection against France over the possible escalation of disputes about the control of North African territory. An Austro-Hungarian attack on Serbia was a different matter. Italy had

²⁸ Both Piedmont and the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies are reported to have had early interests in Libyan and Ethiopian colonial efforts. See Bosworth, *Italy*, p. 135.

²⁹ Bosworth, *Italy*, pp. 127–64.

³⁰ Doyle argues that liberal republics will tend to align against authoritarian opponents in world wars. See Doyle, 'Liberalism', p. 1156. A more general analysis of the relationship between regime type and alliance formation is Randolph Siverson and Juliann Emmons, 'Birds of a Feather: Democratic Political Systems and Alliance Choices in the Twentieth Century', *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 35 (1991), pp. 285–306. However, a different interpretation is advanced in William R. Thompson and Richard Tucker, 'Different Strokes for Different Folks or Do Birds-of-a-Feather Flock Together?: The Regime Type–Alliance Affinities Conundrum' (Bloomington, mimeo).

absolutely no incentive to assist Austria-Hungary in extending its influence across the Adriatic Sea from Italy, a sphere coveted by Italian foreign-policy-makers. But Italy was also felt to be too weak to resist Austria-Hungary on its own. Austria-Hungary, for its part, had little that it could afford to offer in exchange for Italian cooperation. The Italian price included the transfer to Italy of Trentino, Alto Adige, Trieste, and parts of the Dalmatian coast. In marked contrast, Britain and France were quite prepared to see these territories go to Italy as a reward for joining the war effort on their side. After waiting to see whether the Germans would win quickly and with some hope that both Austria and France would somehow be beaten badly, Italian decision-makers sensed that the war would end soon with an Allied victory.³¹ While they might have been tempted by an opportunity to settle old scores with France, British naval power was regarded as too potent to withstand given Italy's long, largely undefended coastline. An Allied victory would also have implications for the disposition of territory in the Middle East and Africa.

After negotiating with both sides, Italian decision-makers opted for what appeared to be the most profitable course of action. They miscalculated on the war being almost over. They also miscalculated that the promised territorial rewards would be delivered in full at war's end. Some of the promised Austrian territory was transferred. Other promised territory became part of an independent Yugoslavia. No territory was acquired in Turkey and, while Britain and France had taken over the former German colonies in Africa, no compensation in the Ethiopian area was offered to Italy. As a consequence, the impression of a 'mutilated victory' became popular in postwar Italy. After making extensive sacrifices and perceived contributions to the war effort, Italy had once again been humiliated by being denied its just rewards.

The 'mutilated victory' idea was to become a central motif of the nationalist movement after World War I.³² Italian territorial expansion, justified by domestic population growth and the need to find room for immigration, had been thwarted by 'more decadent' states, such as France, whose populations were no longer growing. One of the explanations for the foreign policy failure was the inherent incompetency of democratic regimes to defend Italy's share of the spoils of war. These images also fed into Fascist ideologies justifying the need to redistribute power and privileges among the newly ascending, have-not states in the system and the related need for late-comers to possess states with high degrees of power centralization.

One reason for allocating space to the Italian case is its claim to early liberal republic status (1848 for Piedmont and 1860 for Italy). Italy was also one of the earliest defectors from the liberal republic camp (1922). Both developments had much to do with war. Italy's (and Piedmont's) claim to liberal republic status had a decidedly fluky character. In 1848, Piedmont's monarch, Charles Albert, reluctantly surrendered some of his royal power to establish a parliamentary political system with a constitutional monarch. It was done hurriedly and the motives for taking this step are not entirely clear. But it is clear that Charles Albert was hardly an enthusiastic democrat. One very likely hypothesis is that the liberalization of Piedmont's political system was carried out initially in reaction to other liberalization moves that same year elsewhere in Italy, the idea being that if Charles Albert hoped to seize

³¹ Bosworth, *Italy*, pp. 397, 401.

³² Adrian Lyttleton, *The Seizure of Power: Fascism in Italy, 1919–1929*, 2nd edn (Princeton, 1987), p. 19.

the leadership of the drive toward Italian unification, he would have to appear as something other than the head of just another aristocratic, expansionist dynasty. There was the possibility that revolting republicans outside Piedmont would be successful and secure control of the drive for unification.³³ Also, 1848 was a dangerous year for monarchs, which may suggest an element of preventive action at home in Piedmont. Some measure of restricted democracy was better than the emergence of a more radical form of democracy.

Ironically, the Piedmontese parliament was able to expand its political role in the 1950s beyond what was initially intended, because Charles Albert's successor, Victor Emmanuel II, was regarded as dangerously ineffectual and because elites feared the threat of more radical republicanism. The military failures of the monarch, a tradition that contrasted markedly with the Prussian experience, and one that continued through the first few decades of the Italian state, also helped ensure that the crown did not retain or regain strong executive powers.³⁴ Another formative pressure may have come from France. Napoleon III is credited with discouraging Victor Emmanuel II's desire to bring down the republican structure of Piedmont by military coup.³⁵ It was feared that a more conservative government might align itself with Austria.

Lyttleton observes that after universal suffrage was enacted in 1912, quickly followed by the outbreak of World War I, the 'limited and artificial' type of democracy practised in Italy which had depended on limited participation could only be succeeded by one of three alternatives: more democratization, social revolution, or dictatorship.³⁶ That Italy was the first democratic political system to turn authoritarian in the interwar years is usually explained in terms of the traumatic consequences of the world war, the strong presence of frustrated expansionist drives, the domestic polarization of left and right, and the incapacity of relatively weak political institutions to manage political, economic, and social problems in a context of expanded enfranchisement.³⁷ This is not the place to explore the factors facilitating the rise of Mussolini.³⁸ But that rise did alter the nature of the political system. The obvious question for our purposes, then, is whether Mussolini's foreign policy was very different from the foreign policy of the liberal era and, if so, how far the change(s) should be attributed to the change in regime form.

Several commentators on Italian foreign policy have argued for strong elements of continuity between 1860 and 1943. Bosworth, for instance, contends that the

foreign policy of Liberal Italy was more covert, more hesitant, more verbally restrained than that of Fascist Italy, but it was not different in kind; instead from the Risorgimento to the fall of fascism, Italy pursued the foreign policy of the least of the great powers.³⁹

³³ Woolf, *A History of Italy*, p. 381.

³⁴ See Lyttleton, *Seizure of Power*, p. 5, and Denis M. Smith, *Italy and Its Monarchy* (New Haven, CT, 1989), p. 4. Although Lyttleton does not utilize path-dependency conceptualization, his discussion of the initial development of the Italian state matches the conceptualization closely: 'the early years of the new state created a pattern of institutions and practices which were hard to change, and which often acted as a brake on further development'. See Lyttleton, *Seizure of Power*, p. 6.

³⁵ Woolf, *History of Italy*, p. 439.

³⁶ Lyttleton, *Seizure of Power*, p. 7.

³⁷ Glen St. J. Barclay, *The Rise and Fall of the New Roman Empire: Italy's Bid for World Power, 1890–1943* (New York, 1973), pp. 130–1; Ian Kershaw, *The Nazi Dictatorship: Problems and Perspectives of Interpretation*, 2nd edn (London, 1989); and Roger Griffin, *The Nature of Fascism* (New York, 1993).

³⁸ A more detailed look at the Fascism issue is best left to a discussion of Weimar Germany and Central Europe in the interwar years, with Italy leading the way.

³⁹ Bosworth, *Italy*, p. 419.

The fundamental continuity was that Italy's relative capability meant that it could hope to satisfy its foreign policy ambitions only when external circumstances created opportunities that could be exploited. Some differences were inevitable and one was that the Fascists were probably more proactive in encouraging situations which enhanced Italy's degree of foreign policy freedom.⁴⁰ Yet the foreign policy ambitions themselves remained fairly constant: irredentism to the north and north-east and the revisionist expansion of Italian influence and control to the east and south. The creation of a new Roman empire in Africa and the Mediterranean was not an invention of the Fascist era. The general goal had been set decades before in a liberal era. Nor were the interwar Italian manoeuvres in the northern Adriatic, Albania, Greece, and Spain all that innovational. They were more reactions to new opportunities that had emerged in the aftermath of World War I and were rationalized by an Italian nationalism that had been shaped by a half-century of international failures.

Additionally, the decision-making behind Italy's participation in World War II resembled the situation preceding World War I. Italy was slow to join the war as it waited to see who was most likely to win. Once it seemed apparent that Germany would win, it was time to join the bandwagon before it was too late for Italian war participation to be rewarded in the subsequent peace settlement.⁴¹ One author goes so far as to suggest that if France had offered in 1938 to transfer territory considered as rightly belonging to Italy, at least by Italians (Nice, Tunisia, Savoy, and Corsica), Mussolini might have been seduced away from the German alliance.⁴² Such an offer seems an improbable counterfactual, but the point remains that prior to the mid- to late 1930s it would have been difficult to predict exactly what Fascist Italy might do once a major-power war had commenced. With the remarkable accuracy of hindsight, perhaps the safest prediction would have been that Fascist Italy would most likely behave along lines similar to liberal Italy, regardless of regime format, and bandwagon with the apparent winners after it was evident who that might be. One difference, of course, was that Italian decision-makers guessed correctly in 1915 and incorrectly in 1940. Nevertheless, it is difficult to link this difference in outcome to the inherent differences in regime.

Conclusion

Few analysts argue that foreign policy decision-makers enjoy complete free will in choosing their options. At times, however, the emphasis on the role(s) of democratic institutions in restraining foreign policy behaviour gives the impression that factors other than regime type, whether in the monadic or dyadic mode, have little consequence. The argument here is that external pressures and internal path-dependencies do not dictate foreign policy decisions, including those relating to war initiations, any more than political institutions and normative sentiments do.

⁴⁰ Lyttleton, *Seizure of Power*, p. 429. In the late 1920s, Italy made a conscious effort to work within the international economic *status quo* to encourage the inflow of foreign capital. The policy changed only after the external environment was changed radically by the advent of depression. *Ibid.*, p. 441.

⁴¹ Ronald S. Cunsolo, *Italian Nationalism: From Its Origins to World War II* (Malabar, 1990), p. 159.

⁴² Barclay, *Rise and Fall*, p. 161.

Nevertheless, a plausible case can be constructed that they probably have both long- and short-term impacts on the options that are pursued. The more general point is that decision-makers are apt to be confronted with a range of variable constraints, including external pressures, internal path-dependencies, institutions, and public opinion, on their ability to formulate preferences and to make choices. We need to be careful not to give too much of the credit or blame for outcomes to only one of several possible sources of influence until or unless we are in a position to sort out their relative effects.

Moreover, it needs to be kept in mind that a strong argument can be made for war influencing the likelihood of democracy.⁴³ Once again, we should not rule out elements of reciprocal influence. Moreover, the role of warfare in establishing path-dependencies was particularly salient in the two cases examined here. The defeats of Napoleon in 1814 and 1815 established the emphasis on containment of France to which French decision-makers were required to react between 1815 and 1848. The militant rise of Germany and its ascension to the status of leading continental power maintained the momentum established in 1815. The nationalistic embarrassments associated with the wars of Italian unification influenced foreign policy efforts in the years that followed. Subsequent war experiences did little to overcome the initial effect.

It should be noted as well that wars played extremely important roles in bringing about regime changes in France and Italy. Warfare contributed to the demise of the First and Second French Empires and the Third and Fourth Republics. It reimposed the Bourbons in 1814 and 1815. Later, the Paris Commune was suppressed in part because Bismarck released French prisoners of war to fight against it.⁴⁴ Warfare was essential to the creation of a unified Italian state and to the balance of political power between the monarchy and legislature. Warfare was equally essential to both the rise and the fall of Mussolini's Fascist regime.

Of course, a cursory and highly selective overview of two foreign policy experiences cannot be expected to determine the question of relative impacts once and for all. At best, it can merely suggest that external pressures and internal path-dependencies may have some general explanatory significance. Still, the reasons for selecting these two cases should be kept in mind. France and Italy were not selected randomly. They represent only two of the twenty-five intermittent republics (through 1980), yet they initiated eleven of the twenty-five wars begun by this group and about one-sixth of all interstate wars of the post-1815 era. Moreover, these two states were in existence for a respectable portion of that era, and as great powers for much of the time. Most important, France and Italy are the only states that have initiated wars under more and less authoritarian regime modes (according to the Doyle categorization). Together, they initiated seven wars as liberal republics and four in more authoritarian circumstances.

There are no grounds for insisting that regime type made no difference. Authoritarian regimes no doubt facilitated the foreign policy activism of Napoleon

⁴³ The subject is given more attention in Thompson, 'Democracy and Peace'.

⁴⁴ According to Magraw, *France*, p. 210, Bismarck preferred a moderate republic in France. A more radical regime would constitute a revolutionary threat. A Catholic monarchy might lead to an anti-German alliance with Austria. For a more systematic study of the relationship between wars and regime change, see Bruce Bueno de Mesquita, Randolph M. Siverson, and Gary Woller, 'War and the Fate of Regimes: A Comparative Analysis', *American Political Science Review*, 86 (1992), pp. 638–46.

III and Mussolini. However, regime type played a much less important role in developing the goals pursued, which tended to stem from situations developed in the past. For France, the goal was to maintain its once commanding regional position in the face of change and relative decline. For Italy, it was to try to act as a great power without the capabilities to do so. In neither case did the foreign policy pursued during the more authoritarian interludes constitute a marked discontinuity with what had taken place earlier. But geopolitical pressures and opportunities did change, providing Napoleon III and Mussolini with more or at least different degrees of freedom.

In both cases, expansionist foreign policies were highly dependent upon facilitative external environments. France had to back down when confronted with unified great-power opposition. It consistently backed down in crises with a more powerful Britain. Italy could not act alone in Europe. When the external environment was not facilitative, energies and attention tended to be deflected away from possible and nearby targets (Britain and Belgium for France, and France for Italy). France conquered Algeria, tried to control Mexico, and sought a colonial empire in Africa and South-east Asia, especially after its war defeat in 1871, to compensate to some degree for its relative decline and the too-powerful resistance encountered in Europe. Unable to fight Austria or France, Italy pursued empire in Ethiopia and Libya. One implication is that, at times, there was some inclination to go to war with other liberal republics. The inclination was suppressed not so much by legislative resistance, lack of public support, or normative constraints. Instead, rational, if reluctant, calculations of capability inferiority seem to have prevailed in crisis circumstances.

In the end analysis, domestic regimes have no doubt influenced foreign policy decision-making. So, too, have geopolitical and economic external pressures and internal path-dependencies, which have also influenced mightily domestic regimes.⁴⁵ Nor need we ignore the activity of contending political factions who argue over whether and when to go to war and how much democracy is appropriate. Ultimately, they are the leading targets of the conditioning influences of regime constraints, external pressures, and path-dependencies. But given these complex situations, what grounds do we have currently to emphasize one source of influence over others?

Such a conclusion does not imply that we are forced to fall back on traditional storytelling by default. What is needed are more balanced, more ambitious, and yet more historically sensitive theories that seek to integrate the multiple sources of influence on foreign policy decision-making. Much of the literature on the democratic peace takes the following form: political regime characteristics→foreign policy decision-making→external context. To put things in their proper perspective, what we need are theoretical arguments that approximate the following form: external context→intermediation of path-dependencies, regime characteristics, and other constraints→foreign policy decision-making→external context.

⁴⁵ There may be some analytical tension between long-term (external pressures and path-dependencies) and short-term (decision-making) perspectives. Yet institutional constraints and democratic norms presumably are also long-term factors except, perhaps, in the case of intermittent liberal republics in which certainly constraints and possibly norms could fluctuate with changes in regime type. The problem is that the constraints and the norms (along with external pressures and path-dependencies) remain hypothetical as systematic influences.

Regime type may give us strong clues about with whom democratic states are unlikely to go to war, but it does not appear to be able to tell us when these same states are likely to target non-democratic states. Nor does regime type tell us much about the war initiation propensities of more authoritarian states. To assess the probability of war initiation more generally, we need information on other variables that, unfortunately, are often more difficult to measure than regime type.⁴⁶ Once we overcome the hurdles, it should be possible to assess the relative effects of these factors in encouraging and discouraging war. Ultimately, we may even find that dyadic regime type explains less than many analysts currently believe.⁴⁷ Until then, we need to keep in perspective the limited scope of democratic peace explanations and the necessity of introducing other variables into the war and peace equation.

⁴⁶ A reviewer of this article has suggested that another candidate for consideration is the question of interstate rivalry patterns. See, for example, William R. Thompson, 'Principal Rivalries', *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 39 (1995), pp. 195–223.

⁴⁷ Russett suggests that 'Neither an unfavorable strategic cost–benefit evaluation nor shared democracy is a *necessary* condition for avoiding war. But, allowing for some possibility of irrationality or misconception, either may well constitute a virtually *sufficient* condition.' See his 'And Yet It Moves', *International Security*, 19 (1995), p. 167. My point is that while he may be right, we do not yet know enough about how these variables work together to speak of necessary and sufficient conditions. Unfortunately, we also currently lack the theoretical foundation that would encourage us to assess their combined effects on war avoidance or initiation.