

Determinants of violence and escalation

A quantitative study on the relation between civil-military relations, democracy, and war behavior

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Abstract

Democratic peace theory, or DPT, has in recent academic studies had its explanatory power and validity questioned and examined. One of the contenders against DPT is civil-military relations. This paper aimed to examine whether democratic peace and civil-military relations could explain conflict behavior and conflict escalation in militarized interstate disputes, as opposed to the common method of analyzing conflict onset. This paper uses the quantitative and statistical method of multiple linear regression to find variables that significantly affect the dependent variable. The results show that level of democracy, civil-military relations, relative state power, and trade interdependence have significant effects on conflict behavior and escalation. Democracy has a strong deterring effect on conflict behavior and escalation, whereas military influence had an exacerbating effect. This study finds that both DPT and civil-military relations are important aspects to account when analyzing how conflict stakeholders behave.

Key words: Militarized interstate disputes, civil-military relations, praetorianism, conflict behavior, conflict decision-making

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1 Introduction

1.1 Introduction

One of the integral ideas in International Relations is that democracies refrain from using violent means against one another. War is generally observed between dictatorships, or dictatorships against democracies. This is what is generally referred to as the Democratic Peace Theory, or DPT. The logic of DPT is that democracies have inherent characteristics, qualities, and values that deter the risk of war (Karlsson, 2018: 169-171). Part of the logic could be explained by that democratic governments are accountable to and led by popular rule. In turn, the general population is negative towards war; hence decreasing the risk of it. Another reason formulated is that democracies generally, due to their similarity in governance and foreign policy, view each other in a cordial way. Recently, the validity and explanatory power of the democratic peace has been questioned and challenged. (Rosato, 2003; Mansfield and Snyder, 2002; Seung-Wan Choi & Patrick James, 2006; Layne, 1994)

Since quantitative studies of conflict behavior and conflict escalation are relatively sparse in comparison with the field studying the onset and prevalence of war, there is reason to look further on how democracy might relate general behavior in times of crisis or conflict. One of the fields that contest the validity of DPT is the study of transition, stability, and transformation, that asserts that DPT exclusively works for stable democracies (Mansfield and Snyder, 2002). Another field that has been generally maligned, but recently gained momentum in international relations and conflict studies is the question of civil-military relations. (Seung-Wan Choi & Patrick James, 2006; Piper, 2011; Stewart, 2009)

1.2 Militarized Interstate Disputes

In order to understand low-level conflict, one must be familiar with Militarized Interstate Disputes, or MID:s. These are not to be confused with interstate wars. MID:s are conflicts between states on low intensity, with no or few battle related causalities. MID:s are hence a diverse set of hostile interactions between states. Their characteristics, methods, and outcomes vary significantly more than full-scale wars (Jones et al, 1996). However, MID:s very often risk escalating or become preludes to full-scale war. Understanding MID:s is hence equally important to understanding wars. Since MID:s offer a variegated amount of behaviors, decisions, and degrees of escalation, opportunity is given to examine the phenomenon linearly rather than the prevalent method of looking at wars and conflicts as a binary occurrence in the world system. Yet, our understanding of what factors drive conflict behavior and escalation in MID:s is significantly low; why do states act violently or refrain from it?

1.3 Aims and Research questions

The questions of why countries go to war and why some countries are more aggressive than others have puzzled academics for hundreds of years. Many studies within international relations focus upon the occurrence or the initiation of war or conflict as binary factors. Few deal with the actual decision-making and specific behaviors related to certain actors and therefore this study will delve deeper into the factors that relate to states' conflict behavior. Since DPT has been exposed to large amounts of criticism, the purpose of this research is to firstly test whether democracy has an effect upon conflict behavior and acts. Since there are conflicting observations regarding the efficacy of democracy on peace, it is interesting to investigate further what effects it has on conflict behavior. Hence, this study aims to test the thesis in relation to conflict behavior and add to the debate through that. This study also aims to see whether the new contender civil-military relations,

which is a relatively understudied subject (Seung-Wan Choi & Patrick James, 2008), affect mentioned behaviors. Another subject that also will be tested is stability and transition, which has been attributed to cause conflicts.

The research questions are hence:

- Do civil-military relations and level of democracy have a significant effect on the level of exerted conflict behavior and escalation in a militarized interstate dispute?
- What sort of relation effects do civil-military relations and level of democracy have with conflict behavior and escalation in a militarized interstate dispute?
- What other variables play a role in conflict behavior and escalation and what type of relation do they concur?

1.4 Scope, limitation, and significance

The scope of this study is to be able to explain conflict behavior in militarized interstate disputes. The study has limited itself to look at MID's occurring between 2005 and 2010. The reason for this is to look closer on modern and generally unexplored conflicts. Many of the conflicts included during this timeline are relatively new to the Correlates of War data set 4.0, which I use in this essay (Maoz, et al, 2018). By looking closer on modern conflicts, there opens a possibility to know more about what drives the behavior of modern 21st century states. The study does not look at multistate conflicts, but conflicts that have two primary actors, this is primarily to maintain simplicity and avoid the complex task of deconstructing multifaceted and multistate conflicts. The significance and scientific relevance of this study is central. This study, given its result, will be able ascertain a greater understanding of the decision-making nexus in conflict situations. Hence, the study will be able to construct further understanding and knowledge in the study of peace, conflict, and decision-making.

1.5 Disposition

The paper unfolds as follows: In chapter 2 I introduce the theoretical underpinnings of the study. Alongside, I review the former research that exists on DPT and praetorianism as it relates to war and conflict. In chapter 3, I present the used methodology and the theoretical foundations of the method. I also operationalize the variables used in the statistical models. In chapter 4 I present the results produced by the models. In chapter 5 I analyze the results and relate them to the initial questions and hypotheses, here I also answer the initial research question. In chapter 6, I conclude the main findings and lessons from this study.

2 Former research and theory

2.1 Theoretical concepts

The field of research concerned with democratic peace and civil-military relations is vast. Theoretical and operative research can intertwine with one another. In this chapter, I discuss the theoretical assumptions and foundations of the study's used concepts. In chapter 2.2 I discuss the previous and relevant findings on this topic.

2.1.1 Democratic peace theory, stability and transition

Immanuel Kant is believed to be the person that laid the groundwork for democratic peace theory. In his book, *A Perpetual Peace*, Kant explains his view upon what crucial factors that are necessary for a meaningful peace, among them is the necessity of states to have republican constitutions. According to Kant, only constitutional republics can live up to the virtue of peace. This is due to the fact that republican constitutions, unlike absolute monarchies, need to be founded on the consent of its citizens. The common citizens in each state are the ones who have to pay the price for war and bear its consequences. Hence, citizens will loath to partake in such an enterprise and the probability of war in a republic would remain low. Kant explicitly states that republican constitutions are not to be confounded with democratic constitutions. What was important to Kant was not whether a state was democratic, but whether it had a republican constitution or not. The focal dividing line between war and the system of peace was between absolute monarchies and republics (Kant, 1795). In essence Kant does not argue for a democratic peace, but rather a republican peace system. Another enlightenment thinker, Thomas Paine,

argued that the kingdoms of Europe were responsible for laying the world “in blood and ashes”, something that republican governments wouldn’t do. (Paine, 1776:10)

There are, however, other theorists that have built upon the ideas that Kant and Paine presented. Most notably the French politician Alexis de Toqueville wrote a renowned paper regarding American democracy and the political institutions of the United States. Toqueville highlights that the establishment of reciprocal democracy between nations, especially between France and the United States, could be a seed for a sustainable peace (Toqueville, 2002: 721-726). A contemporary thinker, and behemoth, in the study of democratic peace is the American political scientist R.J. Rummel. Rummel was a fervent adherent to the ideas of freedom and democracy; particularly loathing authoritarianism and dictatorship. Rummel coined the term ‘democide’ which referred to state organized killing of political opposition. For Rummel, the most sustainable form of governance is a libertarian form of democracy. This is due to an observable inverse relationship between democracy and violence. (Rummel, 1997)

In summary, democratic peace ascertains that the risk of war between fully democratic states is significantly low if existent at all. It can be primarily attributed to the inherent qualities of the democratic systems, including free and legal political mass mobilization, liberal ideology and affinity towards other similar regimes, press freedom and political openness, inclination towards establishing institutions based on means of non-violence, and greater amounts of public wealth. These factors tend to make democratic nations avoid confrontational and hostile methods towards other nations of the same kind.

2.1.2 How democracy, stability, and transition matter

Democracy is important, in regard to peace and conflict studies, due to that it permeates the modes of state bureaucracy and organization. This assumption is based upon the organizational process model, as defined by Allison and Zelikow (1999). This perspective takes a more holistic approach to analyzing decision-making and looks primarily on the organic connections and attributes of

government. Governments and its decision-making cannot be traced to a singular room or entity of actors. Rather, it operates from a jungle of interests, actors, and bureaucrats. In governments there is always a necessity for delegation of responsibility, no person can do everything. Hence, different organizations are tasked with primary responsibility over a certain topic or area. Each of these bodies attend the specific problems delegated to their agency and acts semi-independently on these issues.

In this sense, we should understand behavior through the output of an entire organization, acting in accordance to a pattern of conduct. The final decision is hence the output of many organizations working in a singular entity from the outset of a certain organizational custom and mode, receiving only partial guidance or directives from governmental leaders (Allison & Zelikow, 1999:143-153). As Allison & Zelikow writes: “It is a vast conglomerate of loosely allied organizations” (Ibid:143). To direct such large swaths of actors and organs as governments and countries, coordination is key. This in turn requires standardization of procedures and methods. This guarantees efficiency and predictability. Governments are very often disposed to acting in accordance with predetermined plans, leaving little room for actor-specific decision-making. This aspect is important in the sense that it gives opportunity to analyze the characteristics and attributes of governments and their subsequent effect on decision-making and rationale. This aspect is crucial due to that this study looks closer on the structural effects of regime stability and democracy on governmental decision-making and war behavior.

2.1.3 Praetorianism and civil-military relations

Praetorianism is, put simply, the denotation of excessive or abusive military involvement and influence in civilian politics. In civil-military relations studies, praetorianism is the phenomenon of dysfunctional civilian control. It highlights the propensity of military figures to intervene and manipulate civilian matters, primarily in favor of their own social group (Karlsson, 2018:93-95; Perlmutter, 1969). The etymological background, and historical perspective, of the concept is

derived from the Praetorian¹ guard: a special force of highly trained soldiers of the Roman empire. The cohort's main responsibilities were to act as bodyguards or escort sentinels to high ranking officers, curators, senators, and alike. Despite their formal, and trivial, obligations, the Praetorian guard wielded a crucial role in the imperial system. With their proximity to the Roman senate and vested role in its power struggles, they managed to interfere and steer politics in a direction that was favorable to them. The guard's form and character transformed over time as the Roman empire grew and contracted, but the general practice that the Praetorian cohort exerted was the use of sanguine violence; either for hire or for self-fulfilling purposes. In times of change, crisis, or conflict, they were political arbitrators that blackmailed governments. (Bingham, 1997)

It's a common belief that the mindset or behavior of the Praetorian cohort belongs to the forgotten past or the classical antiquity. However, that is not so. There are numerous examples in modern military history where armies have politically intervened, either through military coups or through a permanent normative presence in government. The coup d'état in Chile in 1973 and the military junta in Myanmar would be indicative examples of this phenomena (Simões, 2012; Egreteau, 2016). The typical Praetorian army signifies the inability of the military to maintain its distinct role as a protector of the state from external threats, and instead indulges itself in political governance by using its military power to manipulate state affairs. (Huntington, 1962; El-Shimy, 2016)

A valid question often asked is if not praetorianism is antithetic to democracy? According Rapoport, this is not the case. Praetorianism can be present in both democracies and dictatorships, but praetorian states are often so unstable that they alternate between the two regime types. There are even examples of “wafts” of praetorianism in respected democracies. One would be the 1961 putsch by French army officers who intended to press the sitting president Charles de Gaulle to not give up colonial Algiers (Karima Aït Yahia, 2013). Another would be American general Douglas MacArthur trying to persuade the US congress to militarily

¹ The word 'Praetor' ['prajto:r], in turn, denotes a rank of either a military commander or an elected magistratus. Hence attributing to the people that the praetorian guard was designated to protect.

retaliate against China for their involvement in the Korean war. Hence, democracies are not immune to Praetorian soldiers and armies. (Warfare History Network, 2017)

As stated above, the concept of praetorianism is derived from the contingent guard of the senate in the imperial Roman capital. However, this historical narration does little to establish a functional typology for the modern age. Certain characteristics of the modern praetorian army, and the professional one, needs to be clarified. According to Amos Perlmutter, (1969) the modern praetorian state is defined by the army's propensity to intervene and potentially dominate the political system. Internal political processes tend to favor the military as the core interest group and a ruling political class. Political leadership is either composed of people from the military, persons who are heavily positive towards the army, or people at least not antagonistic towards it.

David C. Rapoport describes the modern praetorian state as an overdeveloped land rather than an underdeveloped. It has large technological resources, but this source of power cannot be used for public purposes. Despite attempts to appropriate the country's wealth, it always flows back to private purses. Rapoport also describes the political and social state in praetorian nations as frail. Politics is not sustained by strong ideological sentiments or well-disciplined social groups, but rather by individual talents. The praetorian state is also plagued by immense social and economic inequalities, capricious and arbitrary law enforcement, absent economic protections, etcetera. (Huntington, 1962)

2.1.4 How praetorianism matter

The theoretical assumption of this study is that praetorianism creates a political leadership bent towards foreign adventurism. This is based upon the Court Politics-model, as defined by Allison & Zelikow (1999: 255-263). The Implicit theory is that a nation's actions can best be understood by the politicking and negotiations that occurs at the highest stratum of political leadership. Hence, the political arena in the central clique of a political leadership in said countries, explain their actions better than their political systems as a phenomenon. What you think depends on

where stands and that is highly relevant when talking about military involvement in government. The militaries that participate in governmental cabinets, bureaucratic institutions, ministries, etcetera, bring a certain form of competency and mode of behavior. Since the basis of their competency and professional career is based upon the usage of state sanctioned violence, they in turn will have certain methodology to solve conflicts and crisis. This, theoretically, makes them more adventurist and prone to war as a solution than civil politicians and public officials.

2.2 Previous research

In this chapter I highlight and characterize the main findings that previous researchers have made in this field. The idea is to give context of where this study takes its starting point and what general conclusions that serves as foundation for this study.

2.2.1 Democratic peace

Dean Babst was probably the first scientist to make quantitative research testing the assumptions of the democratic peace. He found that the existence of independent and elective governments greatly increased the chance of the maintenance of peace (Babst, 1972). Maoz and Russet (1993) draw the conclusion that observable peace between democracies is not a spurious correlation. What they can see is that regime type, political norms and institutional constraints have a dampening effect upon international conflict. Maoz and Russet (2008) further tested the supposition that peacefulness between democratic nations is a spurious factor, coinciding with distance, wealth, and economic growth. What they found was that these variables did have an effect, though, political regime and state of democracy still had an independent effect. They theorize that this effect may be enhanced by political stability, entailing that democracies are in fact less likely to fight one another. Not on the basis of chance, but by virtue (Ibid).

There has, however, arisen a category of studies that question the validity and explanatory power of the democratic peace; questioning whether it is not just a spurious phenomenon emanating from the amicable affinity between western nations. Christopher Layne (1994) have found, through looking at cases of crises, that democracies have in each observed case been prepared to go war. What has hindered the war transgression have primarily been realist factors, not a spirit of peaceful “live and let live”-attitude exerted by democratic forbearance. Rosato (2003) argues that peacefulness between democracies should not be understood as a general democratic peace. He means that democracies do not externalize domestic norms of conflict and are not exceptionally sluggish in mobilizing military capacity for high-scale confrontations. Seung-Whan Choi and Patrick James(2008) has found that when accounting for civil-military relations as well as availability of free media, the degree of democracy becomes insignificant when looking at onset of war or militarized interstate dispute.

According to data analyzed by the news journal The Economist, the countries that are most prone to war are neither autocracies nor democracies, but the ones in between. Conversely, the countries with middle income are also more prone to war than those with high or low income (The Economist, 2018). Correspondingly, research points towards that ineffective or unstable governments are more prone to descending into civil wars. Benson and Kugler (1998) has found that politically efficient governments are significantly more likely to avert internal challenges. Hence, flawed democracies or ineffective regimes are less likely than super democracies or stable authoritarian states to avert political violence and civil war. Their argument is that during a regime transition from autocracy to either anocracy or democracy, there occur certain factors that contribute to the risk of war. The threat towards elites generates incentives for belligerent, nationalist political mobilization. Institutional weakness and low public legitimacy in these settings further highlight the problem.

Mansfield and Snyder (2002) has been able to prove that incomplete democratic transitions increased the possibility of war. Tenuous indication was found for that transitions resulting in either complete democracy or complete autocracy impacted the risk of war. Maoz and Russett (1993) have also found that newly born democratic

nations may experience significant international conflict, but that the longer process of this global democratization may have long term effects on international peace.

2.2.2 Civil-military relations and war

Civil-military relations, or CMR, entails the relationship between the purview of military structures and civil society. The general notion of CMR studies is that civil control over the military is preferable to vice versa. Yet, a paradox rests in that assumption. The military is, by design and purpose, strong enough to threaten the polity it serves. Hence, civil supremacy over the military rests upon a reciprocal agreement of trust; a professional military must be able to acknowledge that a civilian polity “have the right to be wrong”.

After the second world war, and the subsequent collapse of the last remnants of European imperialism, there was an explosion of newly founded states around the “third world”². This phenomenon in the “third world” regions conjoined the development of western modelled, modern armies together with political misgrowth through fragile and young, European-vogue yet idiosyncratic, representative governments. This in turn put no restraints on aspirations of military elites, which in turn gave way to renaissance-like military politics, inseminated with a modern apparatus of personal gain in government (Tilly, 1992: 203-205). Hence, the second world war marks the beginning of the introduction of modern praetorianism in civil-military relations and the onset military rule of modern states.

Part of the reason that Europe, in spite of its disastrous effects, collapsed into multistate war with global effects in 1914 is attributed to war-causing policies. These policies in turn emanated from civil-military relations that encouraged militaries to dominate in government and use wartime operations during peacetime. Offensive strategies were hence used to preserve military autonomy and prestige,

² The author is well aware that the terminology of third world can be interpreted as derogatory towards less affluent nations in the Asian, African, and American continent. For simplicity, and wider understanding of the denotation, the author reserves the right to use this term as finger gesturing referral.

as well as for resolving internal disputes and streamlining institutional practices (Snyder, 1984:1-2; Barnett, 1970:369). As Snyder writes:

[...] offense tends to suit the needs of military organizations better than defense does, and militaries normally exhibit at least a moderate preference for offensive strategies and doctrines for that reason. (Ibid)

Correspondingly, S.E. Finer means that the prevalence of war and conflict increases the influence of the military. Civilian authority succumbs, voluntarily or not, the jurisdiction of planning and strategy to central military leadership. Hence it is fully possible that military influence is symptomatic of its own prerequisite causes; military influence feeds the possibility of war which in turn would feed the supremacy of the military. (Finer, 1962:71-73)

In the book *Changing Patterns of military politics* (Huntington, 1962), Rapoport argues that praetorian states are unlikely to wage interstate wars. This is primarily due to the turbulent nature of the internal politics of the praetorian state. To be able to infer internal control over the state, the praetorian leaders often deviate from engaging in conflicts with neighboring states. A prime example that Rapoport highlight is the absence of war in the generally praetorian Latin American system (Ibid:72-75). By running a logistical regression model, Seung-Whan Choi & Patrick James (2008), have been able to show that civil-military relations (or degree of military influence) have a positive effect on the propensity of MID and war onset. Additionally, they were able to prove that democracy, when separating it from the effect of free media, only had a marginal effect on the propensity of MID onset. In summary the literature points towards that military involvement or domination over decision-making has been observed as conducive to war and conflict.

3 Method and terminology

In this section I describe the method that will be used and what theoretical underpinnings it has. I also operationalize the variables that are included in the study.

3.1 Method and research design

This study works from the outset of a hypothetical-deductive model. It tests the hypothesis that civil-military relations and democracy have an impact on MID behavior. Since I want to be able to trace and flesh out casual effects, a quantitative (or extensive), statistical method is suitable for this intention. This study uses an Ordinary Least Square (OLS) regression analysis to test the effects of the independent variables (x_1), military influence, and (x_2), level of democracy, on the dependent variable (y_i), Highest act in MID. Since the dependent variable is interpreted in linear data, linear regression will be more suitable to interpret effects than a logistic regression (Teorell & Svensson, 2007: 164-173; Edling & Hedström, 2016: 88-101). Of course, the study has to account for other variables that might affect the dependent variable, or rather, counterfactually be able to say that the independent variables have an isolated effect on the dependent variable (Teorell & Svensson, 2007: 226-232). Hence, this paper applies a Multiple Linear Regression Analysis (MLRA), drawing on the lessons from models used by authors included but not limited to: Seung-Whan Choi & Patrick James (2008), Mansfield & Snyder (2002), Maoz & Russet (2008). Through applying a regression analysis, the study will be able to tangent what correlations and effects the variables have on aggressive or warring behavior. Below is the equation used in the study:

$$y_i = a + \beta_1 \cdot x_1 + \beta_2 \cdot x_2 + [...] \beta_{12} \cdot x_{12} + \epsilon_i$$

To reiterate, y_i is defined as the highest political act in a dyadic MID, which is defined on an ordinal scale of 1-17 (Jones et al, 1996). Please see table I for a detailing of the codification of the independent variable. The tripartite partition signifies the differentiation between threat, demonstration, and confrontation. a is the equation's intercept and β is the standardized coefficient. x_1 Refers to the first independent variable of military influence. Each variable is defined later in the operationalization section below. ε_i Refers to the standard error of the equation. By applying this statistical method, the study will be able to control what independent variables that has the strongest correlation with war and international violence (Teorell & Svensson, 2007: 164-173; Edling & Hedström, 2016: 88-101). To verify temporal precedence, or priority in time, in the link between cause and effect, I lag the data of the independent variables with one year. This is to secure the intended causality and remove the possibility that the dependent variables cause the independent ones. (Teorell & Svensson, 2007: 60-65)

The study analyzes the determination coefficient (R^2), which is a percentage measure that tells what degree the variance in the dependent variable can be explained by the independent variables (Ibid: 173-178). I reserve for the risk of relatively low determination coefficient value. This primarily due to the nature of the study subject, social science, is not as deterministic as other subjects. However, low r-square is not necessarily a problem, given that variables have a relevant effect on the independent variable (Ibid). This study also controls for the possibility of collinearity. Multicollinearity risks the precision of the data results. The problem of multicollinearity arises when the tested independent variables are too similar to one another (Edling och Hedström, 2016: 145-149). Collinearity diagnostics is done by calculating the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF). To calculate the VIF, the number 1 has to be divided by the Tolerance value. In case the VIF is too high on a variable, then it has to be discarded or analyzed further. There is no fixed number of an acceptable VIF number, however, this study has decided to set its acceptable rating at 5. The study's used acceptable rating is a widely used volume to test VIF.

Table I. Codification of independent variable.

1 = Threat to use force	2= Threat to blockade
3= Threat to occupy territory	4=Threat to declare war
5= Threat to use CBR ³ weapons	6=Threat to join war
7= Show of force	8= Alert
9= Nuclear alert	10= Mobilization
11= Fortify border	12= Border violation
13= Blockade	14= Occupation of territory
15 = Seizure	16= Attack
17=Clash	

Another source of error in the linear regression model is Heteroscedasticity. What it entails is that the variability of a variable is unequal across the range of values that predicts it. This study works from the assumption of homoscedasticity, which states that the errors of the model are constant and don't depend on the x-values. To verify whether there is presence of heteroscedasticity, I conduct a Breusch-Pagan test:

$$\varepsilon^2 = a + \sum x_i \cdot \beta_i$$

3.2 Variable operationalization

Operationalization is another important aspect of carrying through with a quantitative study. I've also accounted for other mediating variables which might explain the variance in the dependent variable. Here I detail the primary independent variables and their codification rationale.

3.2.1 Praetorianism and military influence

³ Weapons of mass destruction. CBR= Chemical, biological, and radiological.

To operationalize praetorianism and military influence in government, I will proceed with using data measured by Aurel et al. (2016). They have an aggregated score index accounting to which extent the military rules in a country or to which degree that the military enjoy power, concessions, and privileges in relation to political leadership. Their index of military influence is built upon six variables, which capture the essence of praetorianism well. The first considers whether the current regime has a military origin. The second considers whether the political leader is an active or former military/rebel leader. The third deliberates whether the minister of defense is an active military officer. The fourth studies whether the military has a veto power in politics. The fifth considers whether the military is actively deployed against political opposition and dissent. The final variable considers whether military personnel enjoys impunity from illicit and illegal activities. All these 6 variables reciprocally compute the degree of military influence in a country. The codification of military influence ranges from 1-4: no military influence (1), military ruler (2), military supporter (3), military ruler and supporter (4).

I will, however, make some changes to the data to improve the validity and reliability of the measurement. I codify failed states as military supporters. The reason for this is that failed states almost exclusively exert militaristic and repressive behaviors (Rotberg, 2011: 6-8). The states that this includes are Somalia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. I have also decided to overturn two years observations of Ethiopia, from ‘no military influence’ to ‘military supporter’. The reason for this is that, during the observed years, there exists no reason to believe that Ethiopia actually was free from military influence. Both before and after these observed years, Ethiopia was codified as ‘military supporter regime’ and nothing during that time indicates a substantial change from that.

H1: The higher the score of military influence, the higher the score of highest act.

3.2.2 Democracy

As thoroughly explained above, democracy supposedly have a soothing effect on the evolvement of conflict and dispute. I operationalize democracy on an ordinal-scale, accounting for each country's level of democracy, including both totalitarian and authoritarian regimes. I use the Polity IV Project's country specific observations as a foundation for my data. In dyadic peace research, the dyad's level of democracy will be represented by the lowest number in the dyad (Marshall & Gurr, 2013). This is, supposedly, due to that the worst regime have a permeating effect the dyad's relation, effectively making it the indicative actor. The operationalization is based upon a scale ranging from -10, the most authoritarian, to + 10, the most democratic. Of course, Polity is not a perfect measure instrument and it does have its flaws when it comes to validity; it doesn't capture all elements of democracy and authoritarianism. Though, Polity provides a clean-cut interval measurement that at least indicates the level of democracy. Since this study doesn't delve into the nuances of democracy, the measurement serves its purpose.

H2: The higher the democratic score in a dyad, the lower the score of highest act.

3.3 Control variables

3.3.1 Stability and transition

Stability and transition is one of the main critiques against DPT and so it must be accounted for in the model. Mansfield and Snyder have found that failed democratic transition, in comparison to other forms of regime transition, holds high effect on conflict onset. I have created a dummy variable, accounting for whether the dyad has experienced unsuccessful democratic transition or not. Like Mansfield and Snyder I use the Polity IV scores for in the dyad and codify the scores 7 – 10 as democratic, 6 – -6 as anocratic, and -7 – -10 as autocratic. If a country in a dyad has moved from autocratic to anocratic within ten years of the lagged observed year score, then it is codified as failed democratic transition. Hence, we observe the Polity scores of $t - 1$ and $t - 11$, where t signifies observed year.

To test general regime transition, I create a second variable that accounts for all types of transition. I operationalize in accordance to the age of the regime. The count begins from the end of the second world war (1945). The reason for this is that this year indicates the beginning of the end of European imperialism and the beginning of an independence era, primarily noted in Africa and South-east Asia (Tilly, 1992: 197-200). I codify the age according to the number of years between 1945 and MID-occurrence, or the number of years between state formation/coup/revolution/democratic transition/state collapse and MID occurrence; whichever is the smallest number. Hence, $(t^4 - 1) - 1945$. The age signifies the time that a regime has had to stabilize its institutions and politics. The younger it is, the more reason there is to believe that politics can lead to a violent outcome. To account for concrete political instability, I also include the world bank political stability index. This index puts countries on a scale of +2.5 (the highest) and -2.5 (the lowest) in terms of political stability. In this case they define it on the grounds of absence of violence and terrorism, social unrest, armed conflict, security risk, government stability, etcetera. (World Bank, 2019a)

H3: The younger a regime dyad is, the higher the value of highest act will be.

H4: If a dyad has a regime experiencing failed democratization, conflict escalation will increase.

H5: The more politically stable a dyad is, the lower the value of highest act will be.

3.3.2 Realist arguments

One of the main rebuttals against the efficacy of DPT is realist arguments relating to power and capability. According to the standard realist argument, powerful nations engage in warfare with minor nations and minor nations engage in war with each other. As this has been defined as important aspects in previous chapters (Layne, 1994; Rosato, 2003), I will include a relative measure of state power. I operationalize a dyad's power by looking at the lower value of the two countries'

⁴ t = observed year

Composite Index of National Capability (CINC) score. This index observes the annual values of countries' total population, urban population, iron and steel production, energy consumption, military personnel, and military expenditures (Singer et al, 1972). This score gives a more complex and nuanced perspective of a state's relative power than other prevalently used methods. By using CINC, which accounts for general military investment in a dyad, I can verify if military influence as a variable becomes obsolete in relation to military fervor. I will also create a dummy variable categorizing the presence of solely minor powers (countries that are not France, Russia, USA, China, and United Kingdom).

H6: The higher the CINC score in a dyad, the lower the score of highest act.

H7: If there are only minor powers in a conflict, the score of the highest act will be higher

3.3.3 Geographical distance and contiguity

The hypothesis relating to geographical distance is that countries that are further away from each other will be less likely to fight one another in wars. This is primarily due to practical reasons, wars in countries far away from one's own are costly, often difficult to follow through, and also not as urgent to the public as close threats. Hence, the hypothesis is that distance will have a negative effect on MID-behavior (Vazquez, 1995 & 1996). The study operationalizes this as the distance in kilometers between the capitals in the dyad. The distance is written in a logarithmic value. If a country has several capitals, like South Africa, the assortment will be based on the location of the executive power. I also account for contiguity between nations. Contiguity is the direct connection between states, either in proximity of land or water This has been created as a dummy variable: If there is any direct contiguity between states it's coded as 1 and 0 if not (Stinnett et al, 2002).

H8: The longer the distance between two countries, the lower the score highest act.

H9: If a dyad has direct contiguity, it will lead to a higher score in highest act.

3.3.4 Auxiliary liberal arguments

Logically, press freedom should have a negative effect on MID violence/behavior. If a government don't or can't control press coverage of a conflict, the reporting would likely be negative or characterize the conflict in such a way that it would be problematic to ante up the violence. Hence, the freer the press is, the more likely that governments are deterred to use violence (Vultee, 2009; Van Belle, 1997). I operationalize press freedom according to the Press Freedom Index as defined by Reporters Without Borders. This score is based upon a questionnaire, which "reflects the degree of freedom that journalists, news organizations and netizens enjoy in each country, and the efforts made by the authorities to respect and ensure respect for this freedom." (Reporters Without Borders, 2013). The higher the score, the higher the repression of the free press (Ibid). Another important liberal argument is that trade has a deterring effect on war and conflict. Trade creates reciprocal wealth between states and this can be threatened by prolonged conflict. Hence, if a country is dependent on trade, it's dissuaded from escalating a conflict or behave violently due to fear of losing its income. I operationalize a dyad's dependency on wealth according to the lower value of trade as a percentage of gross domestic product in two states. My source for the data is the World Bank's compiled data on the subject. (World Bank, 2019b)

Diplomatic importance, or connectivity, is another important factor. The hypothesis is that the more diplomats there are in a dyad, the more likely it is that the dispute will be resolved in a peaceful way. Diplomats, as a professional class, work towards finding peaceful solutions to conflicts through negotiation. Hence, the more diplomatic important a dyad is, the less severe a conflict will be. I operationalize diplomatic importance according to the least diplomatically important country in the dyad. Using Diplometric's data on diplomatic representation (Moyer et al, 2015), I codify this by taking the amount of missions in this regime. To account for power asymmetry between states, I divide this number by the GDP per capita that this country has.

H10: The higher the score of press freedom, ergo less free the press is, the higher the score of the highest act.

H11: The higher the score of diplomatic importance, the higher the score of the highest act.

H12: The higher dependence on trade, the lower the score of highest act.

4 Results

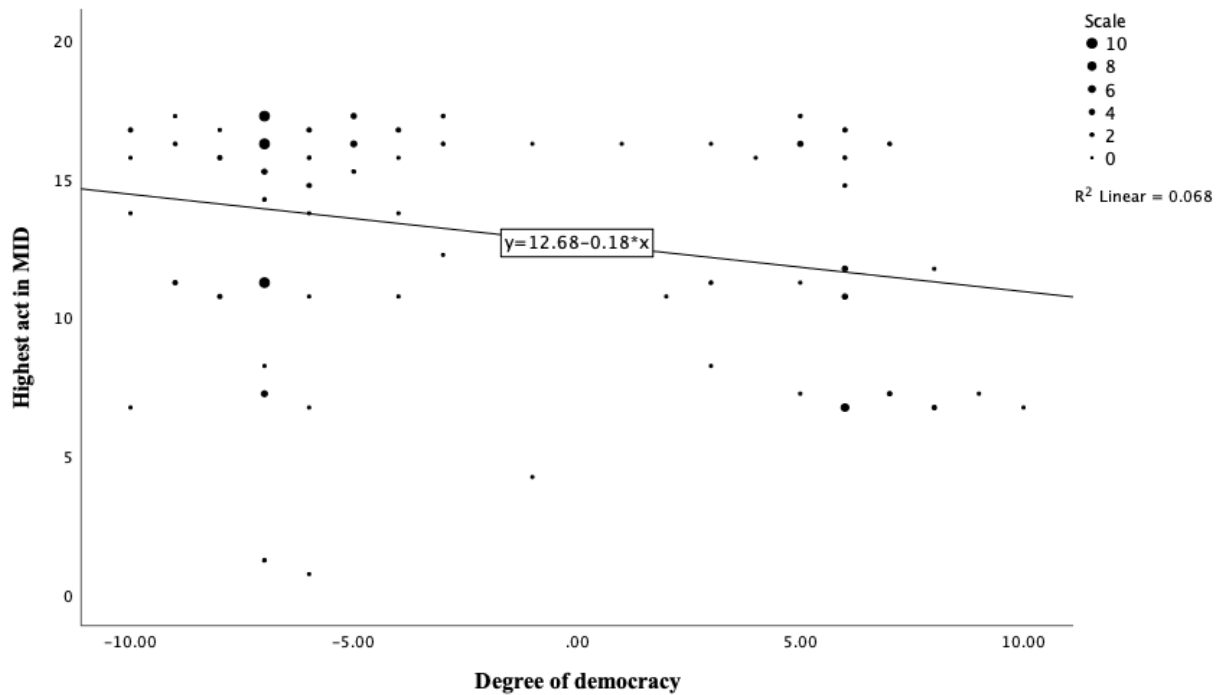
4.1 Descriptive statistics and simple plots

In the following chapter I will visualize the descriptive nature of the data used and plot some simple relations between the main variables. Initially, I want to highlight the descriptive statistics of the variables that are to be analyzed. It highlights the variances and nuances of the variables' internal cohesiveness. As can be seen in the table, there are no apparent red flags to note. Since the variables are very different, too much weight should not be given to the discrepancy in the standard deviation and variance.

Table II. Descriptive statistics of included variables

Variables	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
Democratization	147	0	1	0.3333	0.47302	0.224
Free media	147	-10	10	-2.5102	6.05044	36.608
Trade Openness	145	15	87	61.2690	25.88455	670.010
Highest act	147	1	17	13.12	4.056	16.451
Military Influence	147	1	4	2.8776	0.97150	0.944
Political Stability	147	-3.28	0.61	-1.4721	0.88994	0.792
Regime age	147	1	62	21.9524	19.60931	384.525
CINC Score	147	0.00005	0.1788	0.01133	0.02573884	0.001
Geographical Distance	147	2.21	4.09	3.0851	0.45425	0.206
Only Minor Powers	147	0	1	0.7347	0.44301	0.196
Contiguity	147	0	1	0.9048	0.29455	0.87
Diplomatic Importance	146	0.03	19.53	2.7509	3.76886	14.204

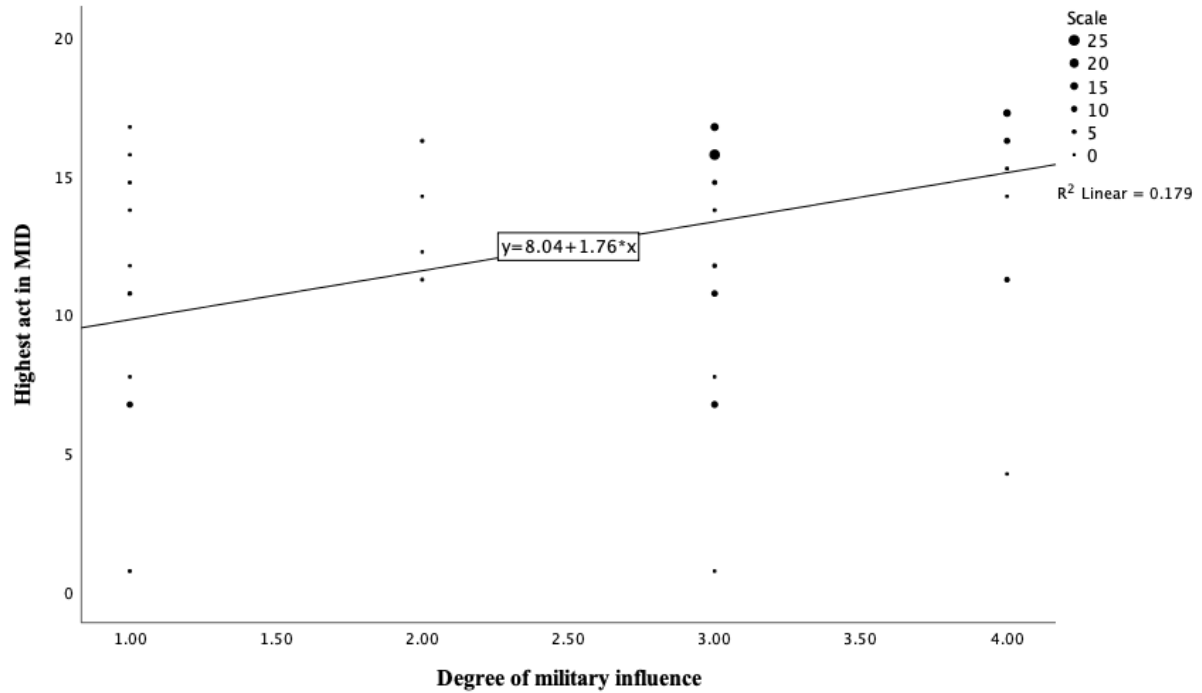
Table III. Plotting of democracy's effect on conflict behavior



As can be observed from the scatter plot in table III. Democracy seems to slightly decrease the propensity to escalate a conflict or act violently, as theorized. What is interesting is that authoritarian dyads account for the MID:s with the lowest violence. Though, most authoritarian regimes are plotted in the higher end on the dependent variable axis. High escalation, or violence, does however not seem to be exclusive for authoritarian regimes, several open anocratic dyads (0 – 6) are on the higher end of the dependent variable. Though, for democratic dyads (7 – 10) only one analysis unit seem to go above the score of 10. This somewhat validates the idea that the democratic peace is exclusive between democratic nations and further highlights the democratic state system of peace.

In table IV. I have plotted military influence and MID behavior. Evidently, both military and non-military regimes can be non-violent and violent. Hence, military type polity is not deterministic in how regimes act. Though, as the slope of the fitting line shows, military influence in states is more related with violent behavior than not. One observable feature is that regimes with low military influence could exert both high and low violence, whereas those with very high military influence almost exclusively showed high amounts of violence.

Table IV.



4.2 Linear model results

Table V. shows the results of the linear model. Since civil-military relations is a new contribution to the field, I create one model (1) where it is excluded and one model where every variable is included (2). By doing that, it can be observed what effects military influence instills on the significance of other variables. Seung-Whan Choi and Patrick James (2008) found in their study that democracy had an intrinsic relation with free media. The availability of free press made the effects of democracy irrelevant. I hence create models to account for this deviation: One where only democracy is accounted (3), and one where only free media is accounted (4).

Table V. Predicting behavior and escalation, 2005-2010

Variable	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Constant	12.259** (4.287)	9.749** (4.281)	9.766** (4.298)	12.875** (4.286)
Democratization	.052 (.715)	.060 (.698)	.047 (.696)	.076 (.718)
Democracy	-.270** (.72)	-.326** (.072)	-.229** (.056)	
Free media	-.059 (.016)	-.154 (.17)		.054 (.014)
Trade Interdependence	-.142* (.023)	-.128* (0.023)	-.140* (.023)	-0.180** (.023)
Military Influence		.245** (.377)	.205** (0.359)	0.194** (.382)
Political Stability	-.174* (.411)	-1.08 (.416)	-.120 (0.416)	-.161* (.421)
Regime age	.090 (.019)	.143 (.019)	.113 (.019)	.087 (.019)
CINC score	-.411*** (13.663)	-.357*** (13.753)	-.376*** (13.649)	-.339*** (14.146)
Geographic Distance	.099 (.966)	.095 (0.942)	.080 (0.941)	-.007 (0.935)
Only Minor Powers	0.98 (1.010)	.033 (1.009)	.079 (0.970)	.040 (1.040)
Direct Contiguity	-0.053 (1.294)	-.005 (1.285)	-.029 (1.269)	-.069 (1.291)
Diplomatic Importance	.002 (.090)	.024 (0.088)	-.003 (.086)	.037 (.091)
R-Square	.336	.373	.363	0.328
Adjusted R-square of the model	.281	.315	0.310	0.272
Std. error of the estimate	3.438	3.355	3.368	3.459
N	143	143	143	143

*p<.1; **p<.05; ***p<.01. Coefficient's standard error is listed in parenthesis.

Democracy is significant in all the models it is included. Despite accounting for free media, diplomatic importance, trade openness, and recent democratization, democracy as an independent variable still showed significant effects on the

dependent variable. The relation with the dependent variable proved to, as expected in hypothesis 4, to have a negative effect. Free media had no significant effect in either model it is included. When democracy is excluded from the model, the R-square decreases from 0.315 to 0.272, whereas the exclusion of free media went from 0.315 to 0.310. The results also show that dyads involving states with more military influence and praetorianism act or behave more violently. Military influence has a positive relation with “highest act” and is significant at the 0.5 level. The adjusted R-square increased from .281 to .315 when military influence was accounted for in the model. Thus, there is a strong relation between military influence and behavior or violence escalation.

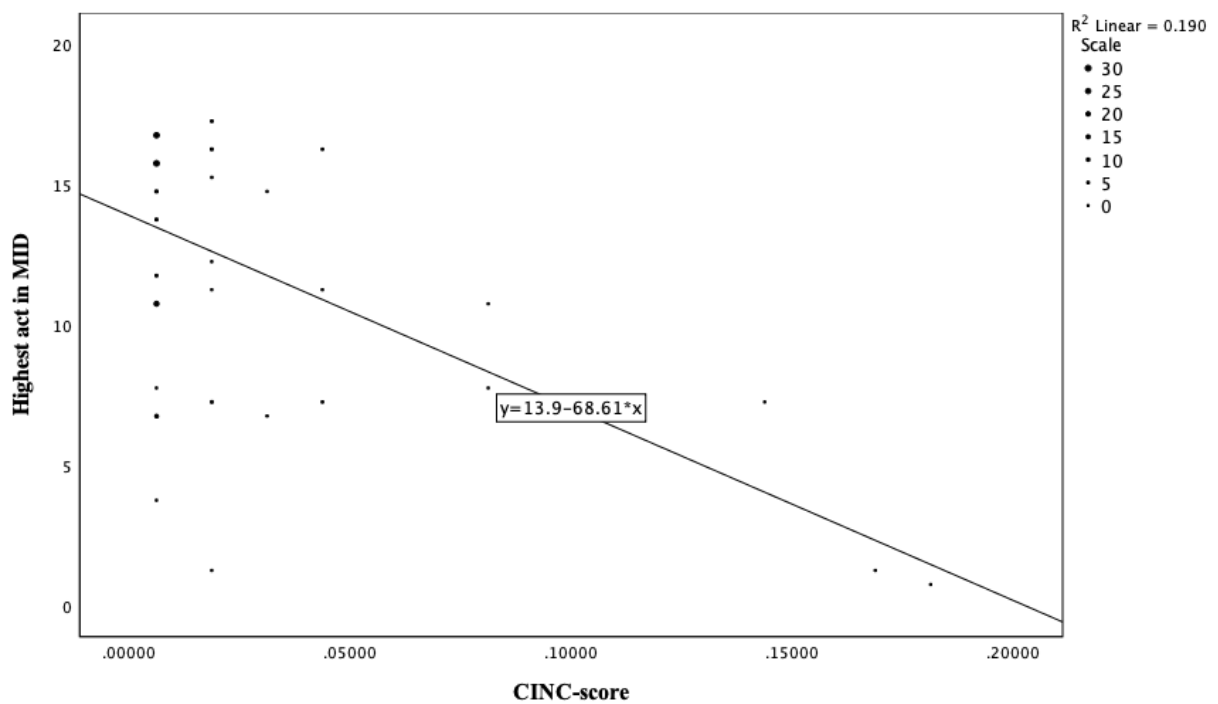
The CINC-score shows a high degree of significance in all tested models, being significant at the 0.01 level in all four models. For each unit increase in CINC-score, highest act decreases with 0.411, 0.357, 0.376, and 0.339 respectively. Hypothesis H6 can hence be confirmed as validated. This gives weight to the realist argument of relative power and terror balance. What can be discerned from the result is that mutually high CINC-score deters violent behavior and escalation. Diplomatic importance showed having no significance in any model. It had a negative effect in one model, while being positive in others. Since the relation goes in either direction, I reject the hypothesis as wrong.

Trade interdependence was significant in all models and had a consistently negative effect on the dependent variable: the more dependent a dyad is on trade, the less violent it becomes in a conflict. The effect was significant in all models, but it became more significant once democracy was removed as a variable. Direct contiguity was insignificant in all models. Direct contiguity had a consistently negative effect, which entails that adjacent dyads are less prone to escalate conflicts or act violently.

Political stability had a consistently negative relation with the dependent variable. It was significant at the .1 level in two models and insignificant in the other two. Political stability only became significant when either military influence or democracy was removed as variables. Regime age showed to, all though insignificant, positive relation with the dependent variable; the older the regime, the

more violent a MID becomes. Not all variables had consistent effects. Free media had a negative relation with the dependent variable in the model accounting democracy positive relation when not accounting for democracy. Geographic distance had a positive relation with the independent variable, except in the third model. Scores like these indicate that the effects are so small that the value is heavily susceptible to effects from other variables, and the direction of the effect can hence go either way. Credence should, hence, not be given to the efficacy of these variables.

Table VI. Plotting of CINC-score's effect on MID behavior



In all models, the adjusted R-square oscillated around 0.30. Hence, the models only explain about 30 percent of the variance in the independent variable. However, as I stated initially in the methods section, there's no need to have high R-square to prove effects. In relative terms, 0.30 represents a substantial explanatory power, given the subject matter. However, since 70 percent of the variance is still left to be explained, there is reason to further study the intricate nature of conflict behavior and specifically the highest act in MID:s.

4.3 Robustness of the model

None of the models indicated unacceptable VIF score, hence multicollinearity is not a problem and none of the variables explain one another. At the most, the VIF-score reached about 2.5, which is less than half of the critical threshold. The results from the Bresuch-Pagan test showed an absence of heteroscedasticity. The ANOVA analysis of the test showed that there was no significant effect of heteroscedasticity and hence the null-hypothesis of homoscedasticity stands.

5 Analysis

With the above results as foundation, I can answer the first research question as a yes: democracy and civil-military relations do have a significant effect on conflict behavior and escalation. I would also add that there were other relevant variables that affected conflict escalation and behavior. I can confirm hypothesis 1, 2, 6, and 12 as validated and the rest as either wrong or unsubstantiated. Below in this analysis I will discuss the relations that have been observed and hypothetical explanations for them, hence answering question 2 and part of question three.

Table VII. hypothesis results

Variable hypothesis	Result
H1: The higher the score of military influence, the higher the score of highest act.	Validated
H2: The higher the democratic score in a dyad, the lower the score highest act.	Validated
H3: The younger a regime dyad is, the higher the value of highest act will be.	Rejected
H4: If a dyad has a regime experiencing failed democratization, conflict escalation will increase	Rejected
H5: The more politically stable a dyad is, the lower the value of highest act will be.	Partially validated
H6: The higher the CINC score in a dyad, the lower the score of highest act.	Validated

H7: If there are only minor powers in a conflict, the score of the highest act will be higher	Rejected
H8: If a dyad has direct contiguity, it will lead to a higher value in highest act.	Rejected
H9: If a dyad has direct contiguity, it will lead to a higher score in highest act.	Rejected
H10: The higher the score of press freedom, ergo less free the press is, the higher the score of the highest act in MID.	Rejected
H11: The higher the score of diplomatic importance, the higher the score of the highest act in MID.	Rejected
H12: The higher the dependence on trade, the lower the score of highest act	Validated

According to the results, as produced by this study, democratic peace theory holds significant value when looking at conflict behavior and escalation. The more democratic dyads are, the less likely to apply force or escalate conflicts. As was evident in the results, democracy has significant deterring effects on violent behavior. This proves an interesting addition to the findings of Seung-Whan Choi and Patrick James (2008), who found that democracy does not seem to be a relevant variable for MID onset. Hence, ‘democraticness’ does not affect the onset or inception of conflict, but it does affect the character of it and how states behave. There is hence ground for saying that the study of conflict onset must be understood separately from conflict behavior. Despite them being intertwined they constitute significant differences in terms of factors and causes. Failed democratization proved to have a no significant effect. Yet, as conjectured, the relations were slightly positive. What can be conclusively said is that democratization have less importance for how a conflict proceeds than what is has for its onset (Mansfield &

Snyder, 2002). Democratic peace seems hence to hold up when discussing conflict behavior and its assumption regarding the normative nature of democratic nations is true. The low scores of press freedom implies that states are not concerned with reporting once a conflict is initiated.

One of the focal points of this study was to study the relation of civil-military relations and conflict behavior. The findings show that dyads with high degrees of military influence and praetorianism increase violent behavior and conflict escalation in a dyad. These findings challenge Huntington's and Rapoport's ideas about the non-warring praetorian states. It is perhaps possible that praetorian states are less likely from participating in wars, but what their analysis miss is the behavior of the praetorian state once its challenged or derailed into crisis. Although, other studies (Seung-Whan Choi and Patrick James, 2008) shows that military influence is conducive for conflict onset. The results of this study seem to confirm the initial theorization of how military influence affects international decision-making: Military controlled states are more prone than civil controlled governments to deploy adventurist and violent behavior as a method to resolve or handle conflict. Military officials and officers in key decision-making positions in government, as well as militaristic modes of bureaucracy, increase the risk for violent behavior and escalation. Political stability was also made insignificant once military influence was accounted for. Thus, there is reason to believe that the violent nature of unstable dyads emanates from military political control gained through chaos

Political stability showed to be only significant in models where democracy and military influence was not accounted for. Yet, the relation had, as expected, a negative effect. Hence, the more politically stable a polity is, the less a conflict dispute escalates in terms of conflict behavior. However, what it tells us is that political stability is dependent on polity type and regime mode. We can perhaps conjecture that the level of democracy can explain the degree of political stability. Correspondingly, political instability can be symptomatic of the effects of military leadership, hence gaining strength once military influence is not considered. Regime age wasn't significant either, though it proved to have a positive effect in all models. Thus, it disproved the initial hypothesis. Discernibly, it seems like the older a regime is, the bolder it becomes in terms conflict behavior. Conceivably,

younger regimes are dissuaded from escalating conflicts due to them not enjoying the same amounts of political legitimacy and capacity.

A third interesting finding is CINC-score's effect on conflict behavior. What it shows (especially in table V.) is that powerful states behave violently towards weaker states, or weaker states behave violently towards each other. Mutually powerful states seem dissuaded to act violently towards one another. I see two possible explanations for this finding: Mutually powerful states fear that a war with an equally powerful state can lead to large amounts of losses and irreparable destruction. Afraid of losing their relative wealth, powerful states do not clash with one another. Weaker states, who doesn't have the same resources, capacities, wealth or infrastructure to lose, are hence not fazed by what consequences that intense conflict might bring. More affluent states may also opportunistically attack less affluent countries, knowing that weaker states pose a relatively small threat to them. This partially confirms a linchpin in DPT: that the general wealth of democratic nations dissuades conflict. Yet, as been evident in this study, wealth is not exclusive to democratic countries. A second possibility is that powerful states avoid violence intense conflicts with another out of fear of the other side using nuclear warheads; hence giving weight to the argument of Mutually Assured Destruction. Nuclear warheads are resources that less affluent states (or states with low CINC-score), usually don't have.

Diplomatic importance was not significant in any models and discernibly didn't have any relevant effects. Hence, diplomatic importance or presence of diplomatic representatives don't seem to affect whether conflict behavior becomes violent or escalate. Perhaps diplomacy carry larger effects in the onset of the conflict but carries smaller effect in the interaction between the parties in question. It does suggest that participating parties do not consider diplomatic imperatives in times of conflict, consequently strategize in independence from international norms. Another possibility is that foreign diplomatic entities don't interfere in conflict decision-making and actions.

Trade openness had a negative and significant effect on the dependent variable. Interestingly, it became more significant once democracy was excluded as a variable. It would suggest that trade is somewhat polity dependent. Since both trade and degree of democracy have a negative effect on the dependent variable, one could intuitively suspect that trade is higher in democratic polities due to that they are more open to and dependent on trade. This drives the spurious effect. Minor powers variable had only a positive relation but was insignificant in all models. The positive relation points towards that minor powers are more prone to escalate conflicts with one another. Yet, major powers do still seem to have a relevant effect that cannot be excluded. This does seem to confirm the analysis of the CINC-score variable, where I conjectured that weaker states against each other or weaker states against stronger states were conducive to violent behavior and escalation. Minor powers are a part of the explanation.

6 Conclusion

The main lessons from this study is that trade interdependence, regime type or level of democracy, relative power, and military influence are crucial factors in understanding why countries act violently and why conflicts can escalate. This study's finding strengthens the fundamental ideas of democratic peace theory. However, it also warrants further diligent study on the phenomenon. One of the main lessons is that there are nuances in conflict which democracy perhaps can explain. Where some previous studies have questioned the explanatory power of democratic peace in terms of conflict onset, this study sees that democracy has a heavily deterring factor upon violent behavior in conflict.

What is also evidently clear is that civil-military relation is an important aspect to research further in international relations and conflict; especially since low military influence can have a pacifying effect on authoritarian regimes. One of the lessons of this study is that authoritarian governments can be non-adventurist. Such a country that has been observed in this study is China: a highly authoritarian yet non-praetorian state. A majority of the conflicts involving China in this study has had low amounts of violent behavior and escalation. This study highlights the need for further research on civil-military relations in authoritarian states and what effects this has on international decision-making. Another important question is how sustainable and non-praetorian civil-military relations can be established in authoritarian polities and what results this can produce? More qualitative research on civil-military relations and its effects on international relations is highly warranted.

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