

*Comments from Professor Curran: Excellent synthetic writing. You motivated well the debate in both practical and scholarly terms. I would only suggest that your introduction offer more specificity regarding your argument about the state of knowledge informed by this scholarly debate and that level of detail should also be apparent in the conclusion, as well as threaded through the middle of the essay. I think this is terribly close to perfection.*

JSIS 300  
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Assignment 3&4

### Literature Review: Systemic Peace

Each of the authors of these four articles seeks to understand what factors contribute to systemic peace, though they disagree on theoretical and empirical grounds about what variables are most important, the nature of the causal relationships between variables, and how to measure the relevant variables. This debate grapples with a huge issue that, though theoretical and large-scale in these articles, has practical implications for how humanity may seek to pursue peace and what elements of domestic and foreign policy countries might tend to prioritize under a goal of building a more cooperative world system in order to increase stability, reduce conflict, and improve the human condition. Academically, these articles are part of a long-standing debate trying to make sense of trends of conflict reduction, democratization, and other related factors observed at the systemic, dyadic, and monadic levels. While the democratic peace theory is widely accepted and some, such as Choi (2016), see continued critique of the theory a waste of time, others like Gartzke and Weisinger (2016) find cause for further consideration and nuancing of the theory. These articles also raise the need for greater transparency in academia so that scholars can understand and replicate data and analysis in order to critique each other's arguments and more successfully expand and refine the state of knowledge in their field.

The authors disagree over the theoretical underpinnings and completeness of the democratic peace theory, which supports the claim that the peaceful relationships between democracies are having an effect not just in dyadic relationships between democracies but also at the system level. Gartzke and Weisinger (2014; 2016) argue that this theory does not fully explain observations at the monadic and dyadic levels and that there is need to look beyond democracy as an explanation for systemic peace to understand how other recent trends, such as economic development, may have impacted systemic peace. On the other hand, Crescenzi and Kaldera (2016) and Choi (2016) hold to the theory that democracy has contributed to peace at the system level, though concede that there is need to look at the effects of other related factors.

One core element of the debate articulated in these articles is over the extent to which democracy contributes to systemic peace. The systemic democratic peace theory posits that, as the number of democracies in the international system increases, their norms of peaceful resolution will have a pacifying influence on the relations of non-democratic countries and thus lead to greater peace at the system level (Gartzke and Weisinger 2016). This argument is widely accepted in the scholarly community, and supported by the analysis of scholars such as

Crescenzi and Kaldera (2016) and Choi (2016). However, Gartzke and Weisinger (2014) point to inconsistencies between this theory and observations that suggest democracy does not have spillover effects on non-democratic regimes and that regime heterogeneity is a source of tension that increases conflict. Building on scholarship on systemic peace that has used the positive externalities of democratization as new independent variables (Gartzke and Weisinger 2014, 131), the authors argue that democracy is actually unrelated or of little significance to peace at the system level, a point which the other authors fervently disagree.

The authors' disagreement over whether or not democracy contributes to reducing conflict at the system level is founded on conflicting empirical findings that show differences in how the authors understand the relevant variables. Gartzke and Weisinger (2014) find empirical support for their hypothesis that democracy has an insignificant effect on systemic peace and that, rather, regime heterogeneity at the system level contributes to conflict. Scholars disagree, however, over the appropriate measures. Where Gartzke and Weisinger use average polity as a measure of systemic democracy, Crescenzi and Kaldera (2016) see this variable as an incomplete measure of the influence of democratic regimes on conflict reduction at the system level and introduce a new variable that combines average polity with CINC in order to capture regime quality and capability. Gartzke and Weisinger (2016) later test the models using both measures of democracy and find little difference in their impact on outbreaks of fatal militarized interstate disputes. This disagreement on how to measure democracy stems from the difference in the scholars' conceptualization of the role of democracy in contributing to peace; Crescenzi and Kaldera focus more on the ability of democracies, particularly powerful democratic countries, to exert a pacifying influence over other countries while Gartzke and Weisinger see no spillover effect of democratic behavior.

Another element in the debate over democracy's contribution to systemic peace is the impact of regime heterogeneity as a source of conflict. Gartzke and Weisinger (2014) hypothesize and find evidence that regime-type difference in dyads creates disputes and thus increased regime-type heterogeneity at the systemic level increases systemic levels of conflict. They use this to nuance democratic peace theory, allowing that if democracy does have an impact on systemic peace, the negative outcomes of regime type heterogeneity, which would increase as the number of democracies increases, would outweigh the peaceful tendencies encouraged by democracies until a point when the number of democracies became large enough to tip the balance. The other scholars in these articles do not address this nuancing of democratic peace theory. In fact, Crescenzi and Kaldera (2016) do not empirically test the impact of regime-type heterogeneity at all in their attempted replication of the models by Gartzke and Weisinger (2014), an absence which the latter scholars point to in their 2016 article as the reason these versions of the models find greater significance of democracy on the reduction of conflict. Crescenzi and Kaldera assert that, at the dyadic level, mixed dyads are more peaceful than those that comprise of two autocracies, contrasting with the observations that Gartzke and Weisinger cite and thus allowing that observations that dyadic difference is destabilizing are compatible with their theory of democratic peace, though failing to fully address this element of the theory. Choi, on the other hand, focuses on the mathematical rather than empirical elements of this part of Gartzke and Weisinger's argument; this analysis points to a discrepancy in how the scholars measure difference. Choi proposes that a better measure of systemic regime-type difference is through skewness in yearly regime polity scores. This, however, Gartzke and Weisinger (2016)

find to be a poor capture of regime variation and maintain that a better measure is systemic standard deviation. This disagreement over the importance and measurement for difference speaks to a misunderstanding of Gartzke and Weisinger's arguments and unwillingness on the parts of Crescenzi and Kaldera and Choi to nuance their understandings of how dyadic democratic peace observation translates to the system level.

A final element in the debate articulated in these articles is the extent to which other variables that are closely linked to democratization, such as economic development, directly impact levels of systemic peace. Gartzke and Weisinger (2014) theorize that systemic economic development reduces levels of violent disputes by increasing the costs of such conflicts and thus incentivizing powerful actors in the international system to intervene in order to promote peace and stability (137). Gartzke and Weisinger assert that this tendency applies only to the systemic level, as developed countries are no less prone to dispute themselves. This theory, however, raises concern with Crescenzi and Kaldera (2016) who find it unclear how individual states' development translates to global peace and note that economic inequalities could be a source of conflict. Additionally, they see development as very interconnected with democracy and ask that Gartzke and Weisinger demonstrate that what appears to be developmental peace is not due instead to the increased capabilities that come with democratization. Gartzke and Weisinger, however, see this willingness to attribute to democracy all related variables as problematic and argue instead that there is a need to separate out recent trends in order to individually test their impacts on systemic levels of peace. Thus, while Gartzke and Weisinger argue that development is more responsible for systemic conflict reduction than democracy, the most important contribution of their articles is to pose to other scholars of systemic peace the need to investigate beyond democracy as the sole contributor to conflict reduction.

Based on these four articles, it seems that the state of knowledge in the field of systemic peace is still contested and in flux. Though democratic peace theory has a strong base of support, the critiques raised by Gartzke and Weisinger show that there is need for reevaluation of this theory, at the very least to make it more nuanced and clearer how democracy at the monadic level translates to peace at the system level. The greater nuancing of Gartzke and Weisinger's argument (2014; 2016) and their ability to defend their findings against the criticisms of Crescenzi and Kaldera (2016) and Choi (2016) makes their case more convincing, though a more thorough reevaluation by scholars who understand their argument is still necessary. All the scholars in this debate, regardless of their opinion of democratic peace theory, recognize that there is a need to further investigate other trends and externalities associated with democratization. Moving forward in research on systemic peace, scholars would be best served by moving beyond the back and forth about whether or not democracy reduces conflict at the system level to investigate the impact of other factors and to nuance and develop the causal mechanisms that allow dyadic democratic peace to translate to the system level.

## References:

Choi, S. (2016). A menace to the democratic peace? Dyadic and systemic difference. In *International Studies Quarterly*, 60, pp. 573-577.

Crescenzi, M. and K. Kaldera. (2016). Built to last: Understanding the link between democracy and conflict in the international system. In *International Studies Quarterly*, 60, pp. 565-572.

Gartzke, E. and A. Weisiger. (2014). Under construction: Development, democracy, and difference as determinants of systemic liberal peace. In *International Studies Quarterly*, 58, pp. 130-145.

Gartzke, A. and E. Weisinger. (2016). Debating the democratic peace in the international system. In *International Studies Quarterly*, 60, pp. 578-585.

#### Appendix 1: Article Summaries

Gartzke, E. and A. Weisiger. (2014). Under construction: Development, democracy, and difference as determinants of systemic liberal peace. In *International Studies Quarterly*, 58, pp. 130-145. Abstract: The widely documented dyadic democratic peace observation has led to optimism that the spread of democracy might prove pacifying even outside of democratic dyads. Yet, tensions between the logic of liberal peace in dyads and systems suggest that economic development may be better suited than democracy as a determinant of systemic liberal peace. In particular, regime type heterogeneity (difference) stands to increase conflict at the system level. We argue that there exists a systemic developmental peace, in which increased wealth encourages powerful developed nations to discourage other countries from fighting, even as these same developed states continue to use force in service of their own private objectives. We also separate out the effects of aggregate democracy from regime type difference in our analysis. Systemic and cross-level statistical tests support the following propositions: greater systemic development encourages peace, difference propagates war, and increased systemic democracy has no consistent impact on interstate conflict.

Gartzke and Weisinger's article addresses the factors that lead to systemic liberal peace, namely the spread of democracy and economic development. Their implicit research question is whether proponents of the dyadic democratic peace observation are correct and the spread of democracy has contributed to increased systemic peace, or if economic development is more responsible. The practical motivation for this study is to understand how systemic peace can most effectively be pursued and how the countries of the world can form a more cooperative system in order to improve the human condition. The scholarly motivation is to challenge the widely accepted opinion that the growth of democracy will lead to world peace by addressing its theoretical underpinnings. Additionally, they explore new empirical territory by considering the impact of other concurrent factors on global levels of conflict.

Gartzke and Weisinger first address the logic theory of democratic peace observation, positing that democratic peace can fail to translate to peace at the system level. They note that there is little evidence that the peace found in democratic countries will have spillover effects to create peace in and between non-democratic countries, and instead cite findings that regime difference can be a source of dyadic and systemic tension. This leads the authors to hypothesize that democracy is unrelated to systemic peace and regime type heterogeneity increases disputes. Rather, they hypothesize that economic development at the system level decreases global conflict. To test these hypotheses, they use the number of new fatal militarized interstate disputes (MID) as the dependent variable to measure levels of peace. They first test the effect of democracy, using average polity and the global proportion of democratic countries as

independent variables to measure systemic democracy. Controlling for the number of countries and the year, they find that democracy is statistically insignificant, suggesting that the systemic democracy has no clear effect on systemic peace and contradicting other scholars' arguments for systemic democratic peace. They next test the effect of regime type heterogeneity, using difference as the independent variable and find it to positively impact the number of MIDs, supporting their hypothesis that as the number of democracies increases and creates more heterogeneous dyads there will be more disputes at the dyadic and systemic levels up to a point when the number of democracies overwhelms the negative impact of regime type difference and leads to greater systemic peace. To test their argument that development contributes to systemic peace, they test the impact of GDP and energy consumption (as proxies for development) on conflict and find that it is negatively correlated, supporting their argument. Finally, they look the impact of democracy and development on dyadic relationships, finding that dyadic difference is significant and positively related to onset of conflict and that, at the dyadic level, democracy is not statistically significant. In summary, they find support for their hypotheses that systemic democracy has not clear effect on systemic peace, while increased systemic difference is associated with greater conflict and development with less.

In their conclusion, Gartzke and Weisinger note the implications their study raises: one, the need to pay attention to system-level influences on the behavior of dyads; and two, the impact of identity on the study of politics. Thus, they argue for the development of dyadic theory that recognizes systemic influences and draws on social identity theories. They close emphasizing the role of difference on conflict, and here provide an area for further research that would explore beyond the regime type difference they use in their study to look also at the impact on conflict of other types of difference. Gartzke and Weisinger's study seems sound in that they clearly test each of their hypotheses using decently large sample sizes and accounting for many interrelated variables. However, critics of their study raise concern over a lack of clarity and development in their theory and problems in the variables they use.

Crescenzi, M. and K. Kaldera. (2016). Built to last: Understanding the link between democracy and conflict in the international system. In *International Studies Quarterly*, 60, pp. 565-572. Abstract: We revisit Gartzke and Weisiger's (2014) claim that development and dyadic difference, rather than democracy or a strong democratic community, drive peace and conflict in the international system. In so doing, we identify important inconsistencies in their theoretical argument. We also find extensive instability and errors in their empirical tests. Corrected analyses support the conclusion that a materially strong global democratic community dampens the onset of militarized violence. In addition, we show that an accurate interpretation of models including Gartzke and Weisiger's "dyadic difference" variable actually supports the conclusion that dyadic democracy reduces conflict. We recommend moving toward a more productive analysis of the interdependence between regime dynamics, political economy, and violence. This involves better theorizing about the emergence of market structures and their pacifying effects, treating global economic and democratic effects as complementary, research designs that carefully adhere to logic, and a continued practice of sharing replication files.

Crescenzi and Kadera revist Gartzke and Weisinger's article dealing with the impact of development and democracy on systemic peace, asking the question "do causal forces beyond individual states or dyads play a role in producing global peace?" (565). Their practical

motivation for the reanalysis of Gartzke and Weisinger's argument is to further understandings of what leads to peace, but they seem primarily motivated by scholarly arguments. On this front, they are motivated to clarify the literature about systemic peace by addressing what they see as inconsistencies in Gartzke and Weisinger's theoretical argument and errors in their empirical tests. They note that, while they encourage debate in the scholarly community, Gartzke and Weisinger's argument is unconvincing and goes against existing research that suggests a causal connection between democracy and war.

Crescenzi and Kadera approach Gartzke and Weisinger's article first by outlining their theory and its inconsistencies, then repeating their empirical study by preserving the structure while resolving issues. Crescenzi and Kadera find Gartzke and Weisinger's argument that systemic development should reduce violence to be unclear about how individual states' development translates to global peace, that they do not demonstrate clearly that increased democratic capabilities are not responsible for what appears to be developmental peace, and that individual states' development does not imply systematic peace. They next turn to the empirical research design used by Gartzke and Weisinger and reexamine the independent variables used, arguing that those used by Gartzke and Weisinger are too correlated. Crescenzi and Kadera repeat the models but adapt the variables, theorizing rather than controlling for year and replacing the average polity variable with democratic community. They find that dyadic democracy and systemic democracy as well as alliances between states in a dyad have negative and significant impacts on the probability of fatal dispute onset. These findings undermine the argument of Gartzke and Weisinger and support the idea commonly accepted by the scholarly community that democracy leads to peace.

Crezcinzi and Kadera's article raises issues for further research, such as the need to understand when systemic conditions lead to economic interdependence between states and how that interdependence affects different regimes. Additionally, they identify the need for better theories of how states and markets shape the economic environment and how this in turn drives regime change and foreign policy decisions. Their logic of their critique is clear enough and their replication of the original empirical analysis is consistent, but it seems that the discrepancy between arguments is more about a miscommunication than one being wrong or inconsistent.

Choi, S. (2016). A menace to the democratic peace? Dyadic and systemic difference. In *International Studies Quarterly*, 60, pp. 573-577. Abstract: Do democracies become less peaceful with one another as the overall number of democratic states in the international system increases? Gartzke and Weisiger (2013, 2014) claim that they do. However, I argue that their evidence stems from a mathematical error in their statistical model. Once I correct that error, their findings no longer hold. In other words, when Gartzke and Weisiger's model receives proper specification, no dyadic and systemic difference persists, while democracy emerges as a pacifying factor that reduces the likelihood of interstate dispute.

Choi revisits Gartzke and Weisinger's empirical analysis in their two articles, finding mathematical errors. Choi replicates Gartzke and Weisinger's studies, asking the question "Do democracies become less peaceful with one another as the overall number of democratic states in the international system increases?" (573). His practical motivation is to further understandings of what leads to peace, but he seems more motivated to defend systemic democratic peace

theory. His scholarly motivation is to clarify the literature around this topic and to address the mathematical errors he sees in Gartzke and Weisinger's statistical model through the replication of their project.

Choi argues that Gartzke and Weisinger fail to test the effect of their variable, Dyadic Difference, as they claim due to a biased coefficient for Democracy (low). He finds that what Gartzke and Weisinger call Dyadic Difference is instead Dyadic Democracy (high), which dampens the significance of democracy in their models. He introduces a new measure to capture regime-type heterogeneity at the systemic level which, when substituted into Gartzke and Weisinger's models, shows the effect of systemic difference to be insignificant while dyadic democracy is significant. Choi asserts that this result contradicts Gartzke and Weisinger's argument and confirms the pacifying effect of democratic pairs. In sum, Choi argues and finds that dyadic and systemic difference is not important, that the pacifying effect of democracy, as expected by democratic peace theory, holds up, and that systemic development does not lead to greater systemic peace. However, his conclusions are based on a reanalysis of their models that does not seem to answer the original questions or fully test Gartzke and Weisinger's hypotheses.

Gartzke, A. and E. Weisinger. (2016). Debating the democratic peace in the international system.

In *International Studies Quarterly*, 60, pp. 578-585. Abstract: In recent publications, we inquire whether the pacifying effects that are often attributed to democracy are likely to continue to hold as the world democratizes. Critics raise questions about the theoretical logic and especially the empirical results that we present. After clarifying our theoretical arguments, we discuss the central empirical critiques. We demonstrate that Crescenzi and Kadera's (2016) finding of a pacifying effect of systemic democracy is driven not, as they claim, by the use of a better measure of systemic democracy, but by the unjustified decision to omit systemic regime difference from their analysis. Once we restore this variable, we find no evidence that democratization produces a system-level pacifying effect. We agree with our critics that the inclusion of dyadic regime difference produced misleading estimates for lowerthreshold democracy. Because our arguments presume the historical existence of a dyadic democratic peace, however, this observation, if anything, resolves an apparent anomaly for our claims. Finally, we explain that Choi (2016) misunderstands the argument that systemic regime-type difference seeks to capture; we show that his proposed alternative neither captures our concept of interest nor accomplishes what he claims.

In this follow-up article, Gartzke and Weisinger respond to the critiques raised by Crescenzi and Kadera (2016) and Choi (2016) to their previous two articles which deal with the implications of democratization on peace at the systemic level. Again, their practical motivation is to understand how systemic peace can most effectively be pursued and their scholarly motivation is to defend and clarify their original arguments and to encourage investigation into factors other than democracy that may contribute to systemic peace.

Gartzke and Weisinger reiterate the five main critics to their argument and address each to clarify their theoretical argument and discuss the empirical critiques. In response to Crescenzi and Kadera's (2016) criticism that their theoretical argument is underdeveloped, Gartzke and

Weisinger take the opportunity to expand on their logic which hinges on the three arguments that: (1) peace is not seen at the monadic level as is suggested by the democratic peace model; (2) economic development can be expected to produce peace; (3) and variation in regime types will be destabilizing. The next critique by Crescenzi and Kaldera is concern over the collinearity of their variables, to which they respond that this has caused earlier studies to attribute trends such as greater systemic peace to systemic democracy when they might be driven by other variables. Disentangling these factors is the motivation for their analysis and they strive to clarify and distinguish their variables. The third critique by Crescenzi and Kaldera is that Democratic Community is a better measure of systemic democracy than Average Polity, with which Gartzke and Weisinger disagree and find through replicating analysis that their critics find stronger support for systemic democratic peace because they drop the measure of systemic variability in regime types. Once this variable is restored, either measure of systemic democracy produces the findings that democracy is insignificant in systemic peace. Responding to the critique by Choi that their measure of Dyadic Difference leads to misleading insignificant results for Democracy (low), they acknowledge that Democracy (low) should be significant but this does not contradict their argument. Finally, in response to Choi's critique that their measure of Systemic Difference does not appropriately capture the concept of interest, they say that Choi misunderstands their argument and that the alternate variable he proposes, skewness, does not capture their concept of interest. In sum, Gartzke and Weisinger show that the criticisms raised by Crescenzi and Kaldera and by Choi have benign implications for their argument which still stands as a strong critique to systemic democratic peace theory. Finally, they assert that more work should be done to disentangle the relationship between economic development and democracy in order to more clearly understand the impacts of each on peace at all levels.