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Author: Bakker, F.E.
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Chapter 6 Beyond the Dichotomy of War & Peace

6.1 What lies between war and peace?

Democratic peace theory aims to explain why decision-makers do not go to war with other liberal democracies. The argument is that the empirical finding of the democratic peace is caused by a mechanism prior to that peace: decision-makers of liberal democracies will perceive other liberal democracies as a lesser threat than other regime-types, and thus will they be less willing to go to war with them. The concept of war is, as discussed above, an ex-post assessment. Tests of this mechanism use the willingness (or support for) to attack as a measure of the concept of war (Bakker, 2017; Geva et al., 1993; Geva & Hanson, 1999; Mintz & Geva, 1993; Rousseau, 2005; Tomz & Weeks, 2013). This measure seems a plausible proxy because the willingness to attack is understood as the most threatening option of all options to resolve an interstate conflict. An attack always involves the use of military force and a crossing of sovereign borders. These characteristics makes an attack quite offensive and therefore most likely to escalate into a full-blown war, relative to other policy options.

With the same logic, the willingness to negotiate is implicitly used as a proxy for peace. The option to negotiate does not involve the use of military force, and the means are most peaceful, compared to other policy options. At the least, to negotiate indicates a negative peace: the absence of military force between states means an absence of war, and thus: democratic peace. Therefore, the willingness to negotiate is a reliable measure for to test for the mechanism that might lead to the democratic peace.

Within most studies (including the previous chapter), however, only the willingness to attack is used as a measure for war, based on the (implicit) assumptions that if decision-makers are unwilling to attack, they must favor peace and thus negotiations. The question is if that is a valid assumption. Does being unwilling to attack indeed equate with being willing to negotiate? Chapter 5 concluded with the remark that this question is an empirical one. Before arguing that the foundations of democratic peace theory need to be rejected, it should be tested whether or not regime-type, socialization by a regime, and liberal norms have the same (lack of) influence on the willingness to negotiate. If the results are similar to the willingness to attack, but in the reversed direction, it would show to be an important robustness check in support of the results of chapter 5. If not, the results might lead to more theoretical clarification regarding democratic peace theory. It might be possible that liberal democratic decision-makers are more willing to negotiate with other liberal democracies, in comparison with autocracies. The willingness to negotiate might turn out to be the actual mechanism that explains the democratic peace rather than the unwillingness to attack.

Moreover, as discussed in chapter 3, when states aim to resolve an interstate conflict, it is seldom a matter of war and peace. There are many more policy options
possible, all with the aim to resolve the conflict into the best possible and sustainable outcome for their own state. Between to negotiate and to attack lies a much wider range of options that differ in threat and thus deterring power. Conflict resolution aims to bring opponents together into a solution to which both can agree. If negotiation fails, there are several possible actions decision-makers can take to try to deter or compel the other party towards the wanted behavior. It might be more practical and less expensive for decision-makers to want to try an option less threatening than an attack but at the same time more threatening than to negotiate, to come to a resolution. For this chapter, a continuum of increasing threat is used with to negotiate on the ‘peace pole’ and to attack on the ‘war pole’. It is assumed that several policy options lie between these two poles, which range in their level of threat in relation to these poles and each other. A range of four options is used, each of them of a lesser threat than an attack on the opponent. In order of decreasing threat; the next option short of attack is one that is still quite threatening and uses military power without attacking. This option is followed by a less threatening option that still poses a military threat, however less immediate and more into the future. The next in row could be a softer power option, which does pose a threat but not by military power, followed by the other pole of the spectrum in which there is no threat posed: negotiations. This rather abstract notion of policy options ranging on this spectrum will become more clear in the operationalization below.

The theoretical framework as used earlier is now applied for this empirical test. In the preceding chapter, it was studied what factors influence decision-makers when they have to decide how to resolve a severe interstate conflict on the brink of war. The results showed that the hawkishness of decision-makers was the strongest explanatory factor for their willingness to attack the opponent and that the use of hard power by the opposing state was also of modest but significant influence. Moreover, the results showed that the hypotheses generated from democratic peace theory did not find support. Following the logic of democratic peace theory, the option to negotiate seems to be the opposite option of an attack. Thus, if the results of chapter 5 are valid the same factors should be of influence on the willingness of decision-makers to top negotiate, but in the reversed direction. The use of soft power by the opponent would influence decision-makers to be more willing to negotiate, and more dovish decision-makers would also be more willing to negotiate. If the findings of this chapter can corroborate the findings of chapter 5, then the implication would be that indeed the foundations of democratic peace theory have to be revisited.

It could also be possible, however, that the expectations of democratic peace theory –namely that the regime-type of the opponent, and/or the regime-type of the decision-maker (socialization), and/or liberal norms are of influence on conflict resolution during a severe interstate conflict- do find support when these democratic peace factors are tested for the willingness to negotiate. Democratic peace theory aims to explain why democracies do not end up fighting with one another, and possibly it might not be so much that democracies are unwilling to attack each other but rather willing to negotiate with each other. Geva and Hanson (1999) used their experiments to also measure the effect of a by democratic participants perceived
Beyond the Dichotomy of War and Peace

regime-type on the willingness to use a blockade or an isolationist approach and found the influence to be negligible. It is in that respect interesting to see whether or not liberal norms (either as an individual-centric factor or in interaction with regime-type) are of influence on the willingness to negotiate. Democratic peace theory relies heavily on the expectation that liberal norms socialize people into more benign individuals, if that influence is indeed anywhere to be expected it must be reflected in their willingness to negotiate.

The theoretical expectations for the other policy options are less clear-cut, but the leading logic is that the lesser a threat decision-makers experience, the lesser a threat they will want to use to deter the opponent. If hawkishness shows to be of influence as suggested by the results of chapter 5, the expectation is that hawkishness as an explanatory factor decreases in explanatory power for lesser threatening options. Being a hawk is probably of stronger influence on the option of a blockade or a nuclear missile program, and doves will be more likely to be willing to freeze relations and to negotiate. The same goes for the use of power. The hard use of power is expected to influence the decision for the more threatening options such as the blockade and the nuclear missile program, and the use of soft power is more likely to influence the decision for freezing the relations. Based on the results of chapter 5, it is expected that the other factors are not of influence.

6.2 Operationalization of policy options

The dependent variables, the different policy options in decreasing threat, are measured in a questionnaire that follows the scenario with the treatments. The continuum of decreasing threat, as described above, is underlying the operationalization of the different policy options. The first policy option just short of an attack is a blockade of the main port of the opposing country. It is a lesser threat than attack because there is no actual crossing of borders, but still, military force is used to create the blockade. The next option is to start a nuclear missile program in Own Country. The threat of possession of nuclear weapons is of enormous power, however, that power of threat is more diffused. It takes years to build such a program -if not decades- and many costs are involved. The threat of such a program is therefore imminent and lies more into the future than the present. At the same time, however, all parties involved can understand that once this option is chosen, it cannot be retracted quite easily without high costs, thereby posing a serious threat. The option of building nuclear missile programs belongs to policies of deterrence, in which decision-makers aim to balance nuclear power between states. The next option is the freezing of economic and diplomatic relations between the conflicting countries. This option is a lesser threat because such decisions can be reversed quite easily, after which the damage done will peter out soon enough to be able to reconcile relations. At the same time, it is considered to be more of a threat than to negotiate while such an option does affect the populations and economy of the opposing country. The last option is to negotiate, the least threatening option.
Table 6.1 Explanatory factors for different foreign policy options

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Treatments</th>
<th>Block Port</th>
<th>Start NMP</th>
<th>Freeze relations</th>
<th>Negotiate</th>
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*= p<.05, **= p<.01, ***= p<.001
Beyond the Dichotomy of War and Peace

To account for this logic of decreasing threat, the real world offers a good example through the Cuban Missile Crisis. The moment the US detected the nuclear missiles on Cuba, the US perceived an increased threat from the USSR. President Kennedy decided to block Cuba in an attempt to resolve the conflict. The blockade of Cuba was a more direct threat than building more nuclear missiles, and a less direct threat than attacking Cuba with the US army. The blockade did, however, send a clear message towards Cuba (and the USSR) which could also have escalated into war. Therefore, the blockade could be called an act just short of war, in particular in relation to the used threat of nuclear missiles.

Each policy option is measured as a separate dependent variable by asking the participants to indicate how much they would approve of their country taking such an option on a rating scale between 1 (disapprove strongly) and 7 (approve strongly). To empirically test the effect of these factors on the different policy options, the same experiment is used among the same student samples of the US, Russia, and China as used in chapter 4 and 5.

6.3 Results

Option: to negotiate

The least threatening policy option of the used continuum is to negotiate. The participants indicate on a rating scale between 1 (strongly disagree) and 7 (strongly agree) how much they approve of continuing negotiations. The distribution is rather skewed (skew=-1.60) but there is still sufficient variation (M=5.88, Var = 1.70, SD=1.3) to use this variable as the dependent variable in the following analyses. The skewed nature of the willingness to negotiate mirrors more or less the skew of the willingness to attack.

The reversed skew might be a first indication that the willingness to negotiate is indeed the other end of the spectrum opposite willingness to attack. If this is so, then a similar influence of the factors that explained the willingness to attack could be expected to influence the willingness to negotiate. Table 6.1, however, shows that this expectation does not find support. The use of power does not influence the willingness to negotiate. Neither are any of the other factors that surround the conflict.

Regime-type (neither of the opponent, nor of the decision-makers) does not influence the willingness to negotiate. If democratic peace theory would have been right that regime-type influences liberal democracies in their willingness to negotiate with each other then it should have been shown here. However, that is not the case.

There is one aspect of democratic peace theory that does find support. Liberal norms, considered on an individual level, shows to be influence on the willingness to negotiate (F = 5.37, p < .05, η² = .01). This influence is significant, however, the effect size is rather small. Still, this is an important finding. Liberal norms seem to matter indeed when it comes to the willingness to negotiate. Figure 6.1 shows that the
more decision-makers endorse liberal norms, the more willing they are to negotiate. That effect is similar for all decision-makers, and not only for decision-makers of a liberal-democracy (as democratic peace theory expect). That makes this finding intriguing, and it seems to support the conclusion of chapter 4: liberal norms seem to be a more individually based factor that affects individuals, irrespective of the regime from which they come.

**Figure 6.1 Relationship between liberal norms and negotiate**

![Figure 6.1](image)

*Shades indicate 95% confidence interval
Rug indicates density*

The strongest explanatory factor for the willingness to negotiate, however, is hawkishness. Doves are significantly more willing to negotiate than hawks ($F = 43.85, p < .001, \eta^2 = .06$), as figure 6.2 shows. This finding is in line with the expectations described above. The results for the willingness to negotiate support the conclusions of chapter 5 in which was argued that the foundations of democratic peace theory do not find support. Those findings are confirmed here. If the democratic peace could be explained by decision-makers of liberal democracies behaving more peacefully towards other liberal democracies, it would have been visible here.
Another notable finding is that none of the contextual factors have influenced the decision-makers; only actor-centric factors have been of influence. Whether or not decision-makers decide to negotiate is less connected to the actual conflict and seems to have more to do with their personal beliefs (being a dove, in this case) and to a lesser extent personal liberal norms. The willingness to negotiate shows to be more intrinsically tied to individual decision-makers’ selves and not the actual conflict. A test of the interaction between hawkishness and socialization showed the reversed effect of the willingness to attack. American doves are significantly more willing to negotiate than American hawks ($f = 7.95$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .2$), which means that the influence of hawkishness on decision-makers to negotiate is even stronger present for the American decision-makers.\footnote{There was no significant interaction effect of hawkishness with socialization for all other measured policy options.}

**Option: freeze economic and diplomatic relations**
A policy option that is a bit more threatening than to negotiate, but still relatively peaceful because it does not require military force, is the freezing of diplomatic and
economic relations between opponents. The factors that influence the willingness to negotiate show, in the analysis above, to be quite straightforward. An investigation what factors influence the willingness to freeze all relations shows to be more ambiguous. Table 6.1 shows that many factors have a small but significant influence and, moreover, it shows in particular that these factors interact with other factors. A closer inspection learns that the strongest explanatory factors for the willingness to freeze relations are the same factors that explained the willingness to attack: are the use of power \((F = 15.88, p < .001, \eta^2 = .02)\) and the hawkishness of decision-makers \((F = 10.34, p < .001, \eta^2 = .02)\). Both factors, however, have a rather small effect size in particular in comparison with their explanatory power for the willingness to attack.

**Figure 6.3 Freeze all relations by use of power and socialized**

![Error bars indicate 95% confidence interval](image)

Moreover, the use of power has also two higher order interactions which could explain why the use of power is of such influence. The first interaction is the use of power and socialization \((F = 5.68, p < .01, \eta^2 = .02)\), an interaction that has the same (small but substantial) effect size as the use of power on its own. Figure 6.3\(^{26}\) shows why that is: the use of hard power indeed influences the willingness to freeze all

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\(^{26}\) This effect explains also why the factor socialization shows to be of significant influence in table 6.1.
relations, however, this effect is only influencing the US and Chinese decision-makers. For the Russian decision-makers, the use of power turns out to be of no significant influence. The other interaction is the use of power with regime-type and invasiveness ($F = 5.74, p < .05, \eta^2 = .01$), as shown in figure 6.4.

At first sight, there seems to be no clear pattern. A closer inspection of the graph shows that there is actually one difference that explains this interaction: only when the opponent is a non-invasive autocracy that uses soft power, decision-makers are less likely to freeze all relations. In all other combinations, there is no significant difference in their willingness to freeze relations that relates to the significant influence that the factor use of power holds. Based on these interaction effects, the use of power has some influence on the willingness to freeze relations. However, this is not a straightforward pattern that can be generalized for all three samples of decision-makers. Furthermore, the influence of the use of power is contingent on a combination of factors, in other words: it depends on the context if it has an effect.

**Figure 6.4 Freeze all relations by use of power, invasion, and regime**

![Figure 6.4](image)

*Error bars indicate 95% confidence interval*

Thus, hawkishness remains as the clearest and most straightforward explanatory factor. Although the influence of this factor shows a weaker effect size than its influence for the option to attack, the fact that hawkishness is also for this option the
strongest explanatory factor indicates that hawkishness is quite robust in its influence.

**Figure 6.5 Relationship between hawkishness and freeze all relations**

An intriguing aspect of this influence is the direction of the influence. Above was assumed that the freezing of relations is a rather benign policy option since it does not involve the use of military force. It was, therefore, expected that if there would be an influence it would be doves that would favor this option over hawks. Figure 6.5, however, contradicts this expectation and shows that hawks tend to be more willing to freeze relations than doves. If these results hold out for the more threatening options, it would be an indication that doves only favor negotiations and that hawks favor other policy options as long as there is a threat involved, even if that threat is not of a military nature but an economic or diplomatic nature. The relative strength of the explanatory power of hawkishness in relation to the threat of the policy option makes a lot of sense then. Also the fact that contextual, however more diffused due to the interacting nature, factors can have some influence, next to a modest but significant effect of hawkishness.
Table 6.1 also shows a small but significant effect of the combined factors liberal norms, regime-type, and socialization. This interaction effect intrigues since democratic peace theory would expect such an interaction to have an effect on the willingness to attack, or on the willingness to negotiate. The logic of democratic peace theory would expect that the US decision-makers would be more willing to use peaceful means (such as freezing of relations because no military force is involved) than the Russian and Chinese decision-makers. Moreover, the expectation would also be that US decision-makers with high levels of liberal norms are more willing to freeze relations towards democracies and less willing towards autocracies than US decision-makers with lower levels of liberal norms. An examination of figure 6.6, however, shows that these expectations do not find support. Overall, figure 6.6 shows that the lower the level of liberal norms, the more willing decision-makers are to freeze relations. There is one exception: when Russian decision-makers with low levels of liberal norms encounter autocracies, they are less willing to freeze relations. For all three samples of decision-makers, it goes that there is a difference based on the regime-type. These differences, however, do not show a clear and therefore
Beyond the Dichotomy of War and Peace

generalizable pattern. The conclusion is that the influence of the liberal norms, regime-type and socialization is not working as democratic peace studies expect.

To recap briefly; what influences the willingness to freeze economic and diplomatic relations is, in the first place, the hawkishness of decision-makers. Furthermore, the contextual factors that offer information about the conflict do have influence, however, not in a clear generalizable way, but more contingent (or possibly even strategically) on the behavior of the opponent.

Option: Start own nuclear missile program
More threatening than freezing relations is to opt for the building of a nuclear missiles program. This option involves nuclear missiles, which are very dangerous and threatening weapons, which makes the option a threatening one. However, the threat of these missiles lies in the future, because the building of such a programme will take quite some time.

Figure 6.7 Relationship between hawkishness and start NMP

This aspect makes that this option is of a lesser threat than more direct policy options that involve immediate action by the army. What factors influence the willingness to
start a nuclear missile program is quite clear. The hawkishness of the decision-makers ($F = 97.87, p < .001, \eta^2 = .13$) is also for this policy option the strongest explanatory factor. Based on the effect size, the strength of hawkishness shows to have a similar explanatory strength as its influence for the willingness to attack, as also evidenced in figure 6.7. These results also indicate that actor-centric beliefs about conflict resolution are the most important explanation of why decision-makers opt for building a nuclear missile program. There is, however, one contextual factor: if the opponent invades, decision-makers at large are significantly more willing to start a nuclear missile program within their country ($F = 10.46, p < .01, \eta^2 = .02$) than when the opponent does not invade.

A closer look at the scenario used for the experiments explains this finding. The conflict was about a disputed area of uranium fields. Uranium provides the basis for nuclear weapons. In the invasion treatment, the opponent invaded these resources with the intent to exploit these resources in a nuclear missile program. It is not unlikely that the particularities of the conflict have triggered the decision-makers to wish to start a nuclear missiles program in their country as a response. This finding is an indication that the influence of a contextual factor, such as invasion in this case, is contingent on the context of the conflict. Moreover, it might be an indication that such a policy option comes close to being a strategy in response to the contextual behavior of the opposing state.

**Option: blockade of opponent’s main port**

The last policy option on the continuum used for this research is the willingness to block the main port of the opposing country. This option is the most threatening from the previous options because it directly involves military action and uses military threat. However, it does not involve the crossing of the borders or a physical encounter with the military forces of the opponent, which makes the threat of a lesser nature than an actual military attack. What factors influence the willingness to block the main port of the opponent? This policy option is a rather threatening one. Military troops are necessary to do so, and although the actual use of military force is not necessary, it is not unlikely that it will be used. In other words, decision-makers that opt for a blockade indicate that they are not shy to use force, if necessary.

The results in table 6.1 show that the willingness to use a blockade does not show clearcut and generalizable patterns, except for the influence of the factor hawkishness ($F = 31.15, p < .001, \eta^2 = .04$). The use of power is of influence ($F = 10.70, p < .01, \eta^2 = .02$), however, just like with the freezing of relations, the use of power is interacting with other factors. These interactions are not in all instances similar to the interactions that explained the willingness to freeze relations, however.

The first interaction is between the use of power, regime-type and invasion ($f = 12.48, p < .001, \eta^2 = .02$). This interaction shows the same pattern as these factors showed together for the willingness to freeze relations. Only if the opponent is a non-invasive soft power using autocracy, decision-makers are less willing to block the port than when any regime with any invasive behavior uses hard power. The relationship is visible in figure 6.8.
The use of power also interacts with invasion and socialization, which is, up to now, an unfamiliar pattern. Figure 6.9 shows that this pattern can also not easily be generalized. The Chinese decision-makers are more willing to block the port of an opponent who invaded their territory, but only if the opponent also uses hard power over soft power. The Russian decision-makers show a different pattern: they are more willing to use a blockade if a soft power opponent invades their territory. The US decision-makers do not differentiate between an invasion or the use of power in their willingness to use a blockade but show to be, overall, most willing to use a blockade. In other words, the interaction of use of power, invasion, and socialization in relation to the willingness to block the main port of the opponent shows at best that the behavior of the opponent has different consequences, depending on the different countries that perceive this behavior.
Another interaction remains, the one between liberal norms and socialization ($f = 3.81, p < .05, \eta^2 = .01$). Figure 6.10 shows this interaction to be mainly driven by the Russian sample. Russian decision-makers with low levels of liberal norms are less willing to block the port, whereas there is no relation between liberal norms and the willingness to block for the US and Chinese decision-makers. The effect size of this interaction is also very small ($\eta^2 = .01$). However, the finding is important to note because the liberal norms are in play, the norms that are leading democratic peace theory. These results show that liberal norms have a small impact but only on the Russian decision-makers, a group that according to democratic peace theory would not be affected by liberal norms.
Beyond the Dichotomy of War and Peace

Figure 6.10 Relationship between liberal norms, socialization and blockade

The main explanatory factor, as indicated above already, and the one that is quite straightforward, relative to the other factors, is the hawkishness of the decision-makers ($F = 31.15, p < .001, \eta^2 = .04$). Hawkishness is of significant and substantial influence. Figure 6.11 shows that the more hawkish decision-makers are, the more likely they are to block the main port. That goes for all decision-makers and is not related to one of the samples in particular.

Table 6.1 also shows a significant influence of the interaction of invasion and socialization ($F = 4.33, p < .05, \eta^2 = .00$), however, its effect size is extremely low, in particular in relation to the other significant factors. Therefore this interaction is not discussed.
Concluding, also for the willingness to block the main port of the opponent during a severe interstate conflict, it shows that the actor-centric factor of hawkishness offers the strongest explanation. Based on the more threatening nature of the policy option, it was expected that hawkishness would explain this option best. This expectation indeed finds support. The contextual factors show, also for this option, to not follow generalizable patterns. Just like the other policy options; if contextual factors play a role, their influence seems to be more ad hoc and in relation to situation at hand by decision-makers.

6.4 Conclusion
This chapter investigated what influences decision-makers to decide for policy options –differing in the level of threat they pose- to resolve a severe interstate conflict. In chapter 5 it was established that the use of hard power by the opponent, and in particular the hawkishness of decision-makers themselves explain their willingness to attack best. The aim of chapter 5 was to test the assumptions of democratic peace theory that posit that decision-makers of liberal democracies would
not be willing to attack other liberal democracies, assumptions that did not find empirical support. The current chapter investigated if those results also hold true for the willingness to negotiate.

The policy option of negotiating is considered by many democratic peace studies as the opposite of the willingness to attack, and thereby understood a proxy for peace. The results of this chapter could, therefore, provide different insights. If the results turn out to be similar to the preceding chapter, but in the reversed direction, it would show the robustness of the empirical results of chapter 5. In that case, however, the robust results would also strengthen the argument of chapter 5 that democratic peace theory did not find support. Another possibility could be that democratic peace theory would find support. Even though regime-type did not affect liberal democratic decision-makers in their willingness to attack, it could be true that these decision-makers would be more willing to negotiate with other liberal democracies over autocracies. If this result would be visible, it might shed more light on democratic peace theory, and provide new evidence.

However, the results of the current chapter show, again, that democratic peace theory do not find empirical support. Neither the regime-type of the opponent nor the regime-type decision-makers are socialized in are of influence on the willingness to negotiate. Also, liberal norms, which are expected by democratic peace theory to have a significant influence on the willingness to negotiate of liberal democratic decision-makers with liberal democracies, did not show to have the expected effect. There was a small and significant effect of liberal norms on the willingness to negotiate, however, that effect showed to be individually based: decision-makers with higher levels of liberal norms showed to be more willing to negotiate than decision-makers that scored lower on liberal norms. This effect was, however, not for liberal-democratic decision-makers only, it was a general cross-regime effect. That result supports the earlier conclusions that if liberal norms are of any influence on decision-making processes, this influence is individually based rather than structure-based.

The strongest explanatory factor for decision-makers to be willing to negotiate was their hawkishness: doves showed to be significantly more willing to negotiate than hawks. This result is in line with the results of the preceding chapter, which showed that hawkishness is the most significant and strongest explanatory factor for the willingness to attack. The use of power, however, a factor that mattered for the willingness to attack, was not of significant influence on the willingness to negotiate. These results show that the willingness to negotiate is not exactly the opposite from the willingness to attack since the use of power turned out to be of no influence. Even more, none of the contextual factors influenced the decision-making, the only influential factors were actor-specific. This is an important insight that shows that the nuances of different policy options can be triggered by different factors.

This notion is supported when we take a look at the results for the other policy options. The actor-based factor hawkishness explains, in all cases, best the decision-making process, actor-based liberal norms have only in a few instances a small effect, and the contextual factors matter ad hoc. To start with the latter factors; there is no general pattern for the contextual factors regime-type, socialization, invasiveness,
Beyond the Dichotomy of War and Peace

and use of power. Whether or not a contextual factor is of influence seems to depend on the actual situation. Moreover, the actual situation turns out to be assessed differently by decision-makers of the different countries. It rather seems as if decision-makers are thinking more strategically when they opt for policy options that lie between the poles of attack and negotiate, and that this strategy can differ between countries. The use of power shows to be of influence on the willingness to freeze relations and to block the main port, however, this factor was often interacting with other contextual factors. The most common pattern was the autocracy that used soft power and did not invade; if decision-makers of all three countries encountered such an opponent, they were less willing to freeze relations or block the port over all other combinations of factors. Thus, these results indicate that a specific ‘package’ of information triggers the need to opt for a specific pressure by a policy option.

Another example is the use of power, which showed to be of influence on the willingness to freeze relations, however, not for the Russian decision-makers. All in all, for the options of freezing relations and the blockade, no clear pattern was visible. The results rather suggested that decision-makers might think more strategically in their efforts to deter or compel the opponent, based on the actions of the opponent. What is important to note is that the regime-type of the opponent hardly ever mattered.

There is another indication that might support the suggestion that decision-makers think more strategically when opting for policy options short of war, and that is the fact that all contextual factors that might influence decision-makers to opt for the start of a nuclear missile program, only an invasion by the opponent showed to be of influence. As discussed above, the scenario of the experiment dealt explicitly with uranium fields. In the treatment invasion, the opponent would confiscate the uranium field and start working more actively but secretly on a nuclear missile program. The results show that the more invasive behavior of the opponent led to a greater willingness to build a nuclear missile program seems not only plausible but also a very strategic decision. It could well have been that the invasion by the opponent triggered a tit for tat reaction, which can explain the willingness to build a nuclear missile program. It is a great example of how context is very relevant for decision-making, as is often posited by qualitative scholars that argue that the context of every case can differ and can determine outcomes. To conclude in brief, contextual factors matter, however, not in a generalizable pattern. The influence is rather ad hoc and specific to the context of the conflict and the environment of the decision-makers.

Liberal norms were, in a few instances, of very modest influence, and as an actor-based factor. In other words, there was no specific interaction effect between liberal norms and regime-type of the opponent, or between liberal norm and socialization with regime-type, as posited by democratic peace theory. There was one exception: Russian decision-makers with low levels of liberal norms showed to be less willing to freeze all relations with autocracies. This influence had only a small effect, and moreover, a very unclear pattern. The conclusion is that liberal norms seem to be of some influence, it is, however, unclear how they affect decision-makers exactly.
What is clear is that liberal norms do not function as democratic peace theory suggests. Moreover, liberal norms are actor-based, but hardly generalizable in their influence when it comes to policy options. The only clear influence of high levels of liberal norms was on the willingness to negotiate.

What stands out throughout the whole analysis is the actor-based factor hawkishness that is in all cases the most influential factor. The level of hawkishness can convincingly explain a decision for each and all of the policy options. As expected, hawkishness can explain the decision for the more threatening options, such as the blockade and the start-up of a nuclear missile program, but also – to a lesser but still significant and substantial extent - the decision to freeze all relations. Moreover, the other end of the hawkishness spectrum shows to be also of influence: doves tend to be significantly more willing to negotiate than hawks. That goes for all decision-makers of all three countries. When it comes to the option to attack or to negotiate, the two poles of the continuum of policy options or in other words: the two roads that most likely lead to war or peace respectively, there is an even stronger effect of hawkishness among the US decision-makers. American hawks tend to be even more willing to attack and less willing to negotiate. These results show therefore that the findings of chapter 5 regarding hawkishness are quite robust, while hawkishness also explains best other threatening policy options.

The results of this chapter show, just like in the preceding chapter, that the individual level matters in interstate conflict resolution. Not only as an assessor of all factors surrounding the conflict but in particular for what beliefs they bring to the decision-making table. The results show, moreover, that the emphasis on regime-type as posited by democratic peace theory up to now is at least a bit exaggerated. The micro-foundations of democratic peace theory do not find any support in this research. What the implications for democratic peace theory are and how these results relate to earlier studies into the micro-foundations of democratic peace theory will be discussed in chapter 8.

In the next chapter, the findings that hawkishness of the decision-makers and the use of power explain best why decision-makers opt for an attack, and, thus, war, will be studied within a case study. Using process tracing methodology, the decision-making process of British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher that led to the Falklands war is used to illustrate how the experimental results above would work out in a real world case.