

# POLS303033 Environment, Human Security, and Conflict

## Week 3, 2022

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### Overture videos (choose your genre)

Manu Chao. 2007. Politik Kills. *La Radiolina*. <https://youtu.be/n3RfOPtiggs>

Public Enemy. 1990. Fight the Power. *Fear of a Black Planet*.  
<https://youtu.be/mmo3HFa2vjg>

Taylor Swift. 2020. Only the Young. <https://youtu.be/GJU-S1t2r1M>

Sergei Prokofiev. 1967 [1946]. *War and Peace*: Overture. Orchestre National de France.  
Mstislav Rostropovich, conductor. <https://youtu.be/wjpdvBNSMdg>.

### Video 1: Introduction

In Russia this week, thousands were arrested in anti-war protests as governmental repression escalated as the war entered its second week.

In Uttar Pradesh, India's most populous state, voters were waiting for state election results. One party's supporters "created a ruckus" when they claimed they found a truck of electronic voting machines.

In Turkmenistan, the country prepares for a crucial election that is likely to see the current president's son selected as the third post-independence president.

What do these events have in common?

They highlight the crucial roles political institutions and political leaders play in the lives of their citizens and shaping their countries' democratic norms and behavior.

They also lead me to today's **puzzle**, which is at the heart of the study of political institutions and political violence:

Political institutions and leaders need great power to enforce the rule of law and protect their citizens. However, they also need to not abuse this power, follow the law, and not unfairly hurt, detain, or harass their citizens.

### Today

Today, we are going to discuss some political institutions that make policy, enforce laws, and declare war.

We will then focus on how some of these institutions, specifically democratic institutions, shape the likelihood and nature of the violent conflicts they get involved in.

### **Why should we care?**

None of us want to be illegally detained, spied upon, or deprived of property.

Domestic political institutions have unparalleled power to monitor and shape our actions as well as get involved in wars at home and abroad that can lead to the deaths of people we will never meet.

Understanding how political institutions can shape conflict is at the heart of international relations scholarship from Thucydides and Kant to Waltz and Fearon.

Let's get started!

### ***Relevant news articles:***

Rouquette, Pauline. 2022. Russian anti-war movement takes shape on the streets – and on screens.” *France 24*.

<https://www.france24.com/en/europe/20220302-russian-anti-war-movement-takes-shape-on-the-streets-%E2%80%93-and-on-screens>.

Dikshit, Rajeev. 2022. UP polls: Samajwadi Party workers create ruckus after spotting truck carrying EVMs. *Times of India*.

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/lucknow/up-polls-samajwadi-party-workers-create-ruckus-after-spotting-truck-carrying-evms/articleshow/90084575.cms>.

Putz, Catherine. 2022. Turkmenistan Will Get a New President on March 12.

Will It Matter? *The Diplomat*. <https://thediplomat.com/2022/03/turkmenistan-will-get-a-new-president-on-march-12-will-it-matter/>

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## **Video #2: Political institutions—what are they and why do they matter?**

### **Part 1: Political Institutions**

Today's focus is on the effects of political institutions on conflict.

It is the end of the first section of this class where we explain some of the main explanations for conflict

### **Class path diagram**

This class explores the interactions between the environment, human security, and conflict.

We have spent the first two weeks defining the nature and scope of these three issue areas.

Last week we examined the different facets of human security and their links to conflict.

This week we focus on political institutions and their links to conflict.

Conflict is often lurking in the background of a lot of topics we focus on.

## **Homeland**

Like Carrie Mathison in *Homeland*, conflict scholars see connections to conflict and violence everywhere.

## **Homer-Dixon (1999) path diagram of environment, scarcity, and violence**

However, to wrap our arms around any topic we need to abstract away from the messiness of reality.

A clear path with reciprocal effects.

Today we focus on social segmentations and weakened institutions.

Last week, Burundi was a clear example of this.

## **What is a political institution?**

“a set of formal rules (including constitutions), informal norms, or shared understandings that constrain and prescribe political actors’ interactions with one another.

“Institutions are generated and enforced by both state and nonstate actors, such as professional and accreditation bodies.

“Within institutional frameworks, political actors may have more or less freedom to pursue and develop their individual preferences and tastes.”

-Sharon Gilad. Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Encyclopaedia Britannica.  
<https://www.britannica.com/topic/institution>.

## **How many forms of political institutions can you think of?**

Are they more likely to be formal institutions with fancy buildings and clear leadership?

What about unofficial norms as political institutions?

The USA has learned a lot recently about how much informal norms shape political behavior instead of formal rules and procedures.

Two general types you have likely heard about

Democracy

Autocracy

What about states that have some combination of democratic and autocratic institutions

### **Lecture question #1: What makes a country a democracy?**

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### **Video #3: What makes a democracy?**

#### **Several characteristics of a democratic system**

If you ask people what makes a democracy a democracy you will get a bunch of different answers.

Most focus on elections.

Here are a few more:

- Constitutional government
- Representative government
- Separation of powers
- Judicial and legal rights
- Individual participation

#### **Institutionalised democracy**

Elements that go into Polity's democracy coding

#### **Gender differences in preferring democracy**

A figure from a recent publication of mine using Latinobarometer data.

Source: Frank, Richard W. 2021. Three Outcomes of Contentious Elections." *International Studies Review* 23(3) 1,144–1,163.

#### **Growth in research on contentious politics**

A graph from the same paper using the Scopus database.

#### **Autocratic regime types**

Military

Party

Personalist

Monarchy

Typology by Geddes, Wright, & Frantz (2014)

### **Institutionalised autocracy**

Elements of Polity's coding

Like democracy it is focused on constraints and competitiveness

### **Polity = democratic characteristics - autocratic characteristics**

This is one way to conceptualise democracy (-10 to 10)

There are many others.

### **Global trends in governance, 1800-2016 (Update)**

This graph from the Center for Systemic Peace plots three types of political institutions over time.

### **Freedom in the World map 2021**

Categorize states as free, partly free, or not free

Based on two sub-indices of political rights and civil liberties

### **Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) Project**

An election core surrounded by six democratic properties

Electoral	Rulers are responsible to citizens through competition for the approval of a broad electoral during periodic elections
Liberal	Intrinsic value of protecting individual and minority rights against potential tyranny of the majority
Participatory	Direct rule and active participation by citizens in all political processes
Deliberative	Political decisions for public good should be informed by respectful and reason-based dialogue at all levels
Egalitarian	Material and immaterial inequalities inhibit the actual use of formal political rights and liberties

### **V-Dem visualization website**

It can be fun to play with this interface like Gapminder as a way to visualize how different aspects of democracy correlate.

## **Video #4: Democracy and conflict**

### **Photo of “democracy” on rusted ship hull**

### **V-Dem democracy scores for Ethiopia and Eritrea**

1961-1991—Eritrean war of independence.

1998-2000—Eritrea-Ethiopian War.

Peace agreement only in 2018

### **The “democratic peace”**

Empirical finding: No two democracies have ever fought an interstate war against each other.

The democratic peace is “the closest thing we have to an empirical law in the study of international relations.” -Jack S. Levy (1989)

Source: “Domestic Politics in War,” in Robert I. Rotberg and Theodore K. Rabb, eds., *The Origin and Prevention of Major Wars* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 88.

### **Hegre (2001) outlines explanations for this empirical regularity**

Normative

Legislative constraints

Signaling resolve

Mobilization

Joint interests

### **Kantian triangle**

Democracy, economic interdependence, international law and organization have reciprocal effects.

They also have an interrelationship with peace

These are examples of what I asked about last week, what kinds of endogenous relationships you can think of.

Here are 12.

The main point that Immanuel Kant and others have embellished is that the more tied together countries are the less likely they are to have violent conflict.

## **The Golden Arches theory**

New York Times opinion columnist Tom Friedman has developed a similar argument back in 1996.

“No two countries that both have a McDonald's have ever fought a war against each other.”

Source: <https://www.nytimes.com/1996/12/08/opinion/foreign-affairs-big-mac-i.html>

## **Countries with McDonalds**

A world map of McDonalds

## **The Economist's Big Mac Index**

Evidence suggests the Australian \$ is 20% undervalued.

**Lecture question #2: Can you think of any other measures of culture or economics that could be useful correlates of peace? Why would they be better than either democracy or Big Macs?**

## **Polity and the onset of political instability, 1955-2006**

Graph of the inverted U-shaped relationship

## **Relative risk of civil war as a function of democracy and time since last regime change**

Figure from Hegre et al. (2001: 40).

You can plot the political instability inverted U-shape in three dimensions as well.

Several things to unpack here. First, time matters.

## **Democracy and conflict**

Democracy should decrease violence.

Collier (2009) argues this is because of increased levels of accountability and legitimacy in democracies.

He does find an interactive effect in democracy and incomes' relationship to violence. At low incomes democracy increases violence.

At high incomes it decreases.

The inflection point is USD\$2,700 GDP per capita.

## **Series of photos of political leaders**

Do leaders matter?

Source: <http://www.platonphoto.com/gallery/stories/power-world-leaders/>.

## **Ending with the presidents of Turkmenistan**

There have only been two Turkmenistan presidents since the USSR dissolved in 1991.

To what extent have they encouraged or prevented conflict?

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### **Video #5: Case study: Turkmenistan**

**Turkmenistan's democratic record (V-DEM)**

**Turkmenistan's economic record (World Bank)**

**Turkmenistan timeline**

**Live and Don't Let Dye**

**Serdar Berdymukhamedov**

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### **Turkmenistan videos**

Journeyman Pictures. 2005. President for Life. <https://youtu.be/KNJS2-Zv-Tc> (23 minutes)

Human Rights Watch. 2014. Turkmenistan: Prove They Are Alive.  
[https://youtu.be/\\_TYh9NEM9zc](https://youtu.be/_TYh9NEM9zc) (4 minutes)

Radio Free Europe. 2019. 'You're Fired': Turkmen President Dumps Interior Minister On TV.  
<https://youtu.be/pV5GEIYmTQ8> (3 minutes)

Ruptly. 2019. Turkmenistan: State TV footage shows Turkmen president's vacation activities. <https://youtu.be/I2y5H9IyOvo> (3 minutes)

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### **Video #6: Conclusions about political institutions and conflict**

What conclusions can we draw about the relationships between political institutions and conflict?

**Conclusion #1—Political change is dangerous.**

People are more likely to use violence during times of change—often political change.

Institutional change allows for a shift in the cost/benefit analysis of the use of conflict.



Regan and Bell (2010) suggest transition from democracy to anocracy is higher risk of conflict

The magnitude of the change matters as well.

**Conclusion #2—It's all about the U.**

**Conclusion #3—Spuriousness is a risk.**

Little evidence of a monotonic relationship between democracy and peace.

Hegre's (2014) main critique by of this literature is that both democracy and peace are due to pre-existing socio-economic conditions (spuriousness a risk).

Institutional consolidation

Elections increase risk of conflict

Democracies foster norms of negotiation and contracts

More developed states are less likely to depend on lootable resources.

**Conclusion #3—Endogeneity is a risk.**

Does democracy cause peace or peace cause democracy?

Economic development is seen as sufficient by Paul Collier (an economist) but insufficient to Hegre (a political scientist).

**Lecture question 3: Questions or issues about writing a literature review?**

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**Exeunt videos**

The Beatles. 1973. Revolution. *The Beatles 1967 – 1970*. <https://youtu.be/6MbqzDm1uCo>.

Black Sabbath. 1970. War Pigs. Paranoid. <https://youtu.be/K3b6SGoN6dA>.

U2. 1983. "Sunday Bloody Sunday." *War*. <https://youtu.be/EM4vblG6BVQ>