

Democracies as Third Party Intermediaries in Militarized Interstate Disputes

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Abstract: Democratic peace literature has primarily focused on democracies and their role in militarized disputes as participants, against both democratic and non-democratic states. This paper examines the role of democracies as third party intermediaries in militarized interstate disputes. We begin by reviewing current theoretical perspectives that attempt to explain the democratic peace as it relates to interstate conflict. At the fore of the current theoretical debate is the question of whether normative or structural conditions better explain state behavior in cases of interstate conflict.

To answer this question, we expand the scope of the democratic peace by empirically testing the effects of democracy on third party mediation in militarized interstate disputes. This research utilizes Polity III, Polyarchy, National Materials Capability and Barbieri's monadic international trade data along with the MID data set for the years 1900-1994. Integral to this study is the incorporation of a new third party intervention data set that allows us to examine third party interventions with respect to the presence and level of democracy of the intermediary. Positive correlations between democracy and third party mediation in interstate disputes suggest that when controlling for relative capabilities and levels of international trade, the norm-based approach has greater explanatory power than other explanations for the democratic peace.

Introduction

The democratic peace theory has brought to the forefront of international relations literature differences in behavior of states based on regime type. It is clear that states with democratic systems of government are reluctant to enter into militarized conflict with other democratic states. However, while the basis for this reluctance is generally accepted as normative, it is unclear as to whether these norms carry over into other areas of international conflict in which they are not directly involved. This paper explores whether or not the same normative approaches to conflict resolution are utilized by democratic states when acting as third-party intermediaries in militarized interstate disputes.

Review of Literature

Democratic peace literature has most often focused on democracies and their role in conflict as participants, either against each other or against non-democratic states. This focus has led to strong empirical support for the hypothesis that democratic states do not fight interstate wars against each other. While such a finding has been important in both academic and policy circles, these studies have also been significant because they have demonstrated that while democratic states do not fight each other, democratic states are as likely to engage in conflict with non-democratic states as often as other states. Although not contradictory, these two findings possibly highlight different methods of conflict resolution utilized by democratic and non-democratic states.

To begin, we examine the normative approach behind the democratic peace. Simply stated, democracies are believed to have established norms that dictate the use of other conflict resolution mechanisms in lieu of war. Since all democracies inherently develop these norms, when conflicts arise between democracies both states will search for alternative dispute resolutions with the security of knowing that its opponent will also (Dixon 1998). Thus, democratic states rarely engage in military conflict.

As Ray (1998) suggests, studies of the democratic peace have been more successful using normative explanations than other types. While normative approaches have proven to be the

most compelling basis for the democratic peace, there remain other possible explanations. In particular, the neo-realist claim that the difference in relative strength is a significant causal variable of militarized conflict rather than domestic, regime type merits attention. A study of democratic states' roles in mediation will add to this debate by comparing both the presence and level of democracy against the tendency to intervene as a third party intermediary. Controlling for relative power will hopefully lead to empirical findings that lend greater validity to the role of democratic norms not only in preventing conflict among democracies but in reducing conflict among all actors at the system level.

Aside from relative power, another possible explanation for the democratic peace is the impact of trade on militarized conflict. Perhaps it is possible that the interdependence between two states due to trade constrains its choices of conflict resolution mechanisms, forcing alternatives to war. A Kantian elimination of conflict as described by Russett and Oneal (1999) includes the notion of trade in addition to a federation of republics as ingredients for a perpetual peace. Indeed, Russett and Oneal's study of economically important trade among dyads indicates that trade's benefits in reducing conflict are greater than those of democracy. Thus it seems plausible that economically important trade between two states can compliment democracy in its conflict reducing power or may be a sufficient condition for reducing conflict, regardless of the democratic nature of the states.

Contrasting the liberal idea of expanding trade as a cause of conflict reduction are other various explanations that remain focused on strategic issues and systemic constraints brought about by an anarchical international environment. Elman (1997) provides a compilation of cases that support neorealist claims and directly challenges normative theory explanations. Examples include Layne's (1997) study of Britain's readiness to go to war with France in order to protect national security interests and Elman's (1997) study of conflict between Finland and the Allies during World War II.

Even at the domestic level of analysis, democracies may be less conflict prone for reasons other than norms. For example, the idea that war has significant impacts on the life of a political regime, suggests another possible cause for the lack of conflict among democracies where rational actor calculations, not norms, are responsible for states' actions (Bueno de Mesquita and Siverson 1995). The necessity for mobilization of popular support for militarized conflict presents leaders of democratic states with more restrictions than those of non-democratic states (Rousseau et al 1996). Consequently, since popular support for war is often difficult and time consuming to attain, democratic leaders avoid wars against other democratic states because not doing so may threaten the leader's ability to remain in power (Ray 1998).

A final argument against the normative theory behind the democratic peace suggests that the normative approach is only useful in explaining the foreign policies of great powers that lack any severe security threats (Elman 1997). The rationale behind this argument is that great powers are the only states that have the luxury of making foreign policy decisions based on norms and ideology. Thus, the democratic peace theory among dyads may be more a theory of US and great power foreign policy than any theory of global politics (Elman 1997).

What is one to make of such claims against normative theory in explaining the democratic peace? Trade as an explanation in reducing conflict does not necessarily contradict normative descriptions. Russett and Oneal's evidence that trade may be more important in reducing conflict does, however, challenge the priority of norms over trade and will be controlled for in this study. Elman's descriptions of neo-realist cases that dispute normative explanations are interesting but not particularly devastating to normative accounts. In particular, the cases are

limited in number and dated with reference to their historical occurrence. Greater support could come through descriptions of more recent conflicts. Other variables related to power do offer strong empirical alternatives to normative theory, and are addressed in this study through the use of capabilities data.

Turning our focus to mediation, how does an analysis of mediator type add to an understanding of whether normative or relative power differences better explain the democratic peace? First, mediation can be generally described as an intervention by an outside actor that assists the disputing parties in either managing or resolving a conflict without the use of force (Raymond and Kegley 1985; Skjelsbaek 1986; Bercovitch et al 1991). Assuming that democratic norms are responsible for non-violent conflict resolution, democracies would tend to have better dispute resolution mechanisms than non-democratic states. These better dispute resolution mechanisms may be more likely to have a positive effect in conflict intervention and influence a democratic state's willingness to become involved in interstate disputes. If relative power is more important then we might expect that characteristics such as state capability would be more influential in determining who mediates, regardless of the state's regime type.

While there are clearly other factors that require analysis in explaining variations on the democratic peace, relative power as an alternative cause for conflict occurrence is the most compelling challenger to normative theory. The research presented below focuses on strengthening the validity of the normative approach by controlling for power. In order to perform such a task, we assume that the measurement of institutional change, in this case a change in the presence or level of democracy, results from a strengthening of norms within a state. Thus, as our hypotheses suggest, the presence or level of democracy should be highly correlated to intermediary interventions after controlling for the relative power of the intervening state compared to other states in the international system.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical basis for the study of democratic states' behavior as third-party intervenors then, is an extension of the normative explanation for the democratic peace. Democratic states do not fight interstate wars against each other because ingrained within democratic systems are norms of conflict resolution that use alternative means to military action. Maoz and Russett (1993) present two normative assumptions for the democratic peace: (1) states tend to externalize norms that are core to their domestic systems, and (2) this externalization is only possible at the dyadic level, as expectations of reciprocating behavior only exist between two democratic states. While the first of these assumptions is central to our current study, the dyadic focus is not pertinent. Acting as an intermediary involves less risk than being an actual participant in a conflict.

The challenge of this study then is to externalize the democratic norms of conflict resolution to mediation tendencies similar to the way that scholars have done for conflict participant behavior. Goertz and Diehl (1992) list the behavioral regularity corresponding with a particular norm as the first element for conceptualizing norms. This regularity suggests a logical extension for the normative basis of the democratic peace to similar third-party behavioral patterns. Thus, democratic states will utilize the same peaceful tactics at resolving interstate disputes of which they are not participants more often than will non-democratic states.

Conceptually, there are different types of interventions that third-party states may utilize. A third-party intervention may be any involvement by a state in a dispute between two other states for the purpose of resolving the dispute, using techniques ranging from verbal appeals to

military deployment. We categorize these many potential forms of intervention under two broad headings: intermediary and participatory. As mentioned above, an intermediary intervention is defined as an intervention by an outside actor that assists the disputing parties in either managing or resolving a conflict without the use of force. While this type of intervention can range from a cease-fire appeal or demand to peacekeeping, participatory interventions mark a qualitative shift in behavior. A participatory intervention is defined as a third-party intervention in which the intervening state acts on behalf of one of the conflicting parties to end the dispute. Tactics used in participatory interventions can range from expression of support for one side to actual use of military personnel.

It is the intermediary intervention that allows for a clear extension of the normative basis for the democratic peace into third-party behavior. If democracies have more of a tendency than non-democracies to achieve success in attaining peacefully negotiated settlements to disputes (Dixon 1998), it is likely that they will utilize these capabilities when they are not actual participants. Given the propensity for democratic states to use these conflict resolution mechanisms both domestically and internationally more often than non-democratic states, it should be expected that democratic states will make attempts at this type of intervention more often than non-democratic states. Furthermore, differences in behavior are expected not only when categorized dichotomously as either a democracy or non-democracy, but also ordinarily based upon levels of democracy. Specifically, statistical analysis should demonstrate a correlation between higher levels of democracy and a greater tendency to intervene as intermediaries in interstate disputes.

If this extension of the normative rationale to mediation is accurate, it lends further credibility to the normative argument for the democratic peace. This pattern of behavior in different areas of international relations would support Maoz and Russett's (1993) assumption regarding the externalization of core domestic norms. A more accurate measure of these democratic norms requires the inclusion of state capability and levels of international trade. These inclusions also address the arguments that relative strength and trade are more important determinants in deciding whether or not to act as an intermediary.

Hypotheses

With the extension of the externalization of democratic conflict resolution norms into tendencies to act as intermediary third-party actors as the framework of our study, we will test the following hypotheses:

1. Democratic states will intervene as intermediaries more often than non-democratic states.
2. As states move along the continuum from autocratic to democratic regime types, they will intervene more often as intermediaries.

In both hypotheses, the democracy of the intervening party needs to be assessed in order to analyze the relationship between democracy and the tendency to intervene in conflicts. Thus, democracy, or the extent of democracy, is the independent variable in each of the hypotheses. The first hypothesis simply checks for the rate of intervention by democratic states relative to that of non-democratic states. Therefore, a dichotomous variable is used, with the categories of "democracy" and "non-democracy." The second hypothesis checks how the level of democracy affects the rate of intervention. For this, we use an ordinal independent "democracy" variable. Data on measurement of regime type is taken from both the Polity III and Polyarchy data sets.

The dependent variable for the two hypotheses will be the number of interventions per country-year. Table 1 shows the overall trends in this dependent variable over five year intervals. The average number of interventions per country year will express the tendency of

states at a particular level to intervene while allowing the use of the NMCD and levels of international trade as control variables. We would expect to observe an increase in the number of interventions per country-year as the level of democracy rises. The unit of analysis will be the *country-year*.

<figure 1 about here>

Research Design

The first two models in this study test the hypothesis: democratic states will intervene more often than non-democratic states. In Model 1, the independent variable measures the presence of democracy using the threshold value of 7 in the Polity ratings for each country year. Using the country year unit of analysis, we determine the number of interventions made by each state, every year between 1900 and 1994; these interventions serve as the dependent variable. This model allows us to determine whether or not democracies intervene more often than non-democracies while controlling for levels of international trade and state capabilities.

Model 2 employs the same methodology using the Polyarchy data set to insure that the results from Model 1 are robust. In the case of the Polyarchy data set, the threshold value is 30% for competitiveness, 10% for participation, and 5 index points for the Index of Democratization (ID). With the exception of the data used to measure democracy ratings, all other data and methodology remain the same as in Model 1.

The final two models in this study focus on the second hypothesis: as states move along the continuum from autocratic to democratic regime types, they will intervene more often than intermediaries. The Polity ratings are used again in the third model to determine whether or not the same trends in intermediary behavior exist as ratings of regime type move along this ordinal scale. The same unit of analysis and dependent variable are used again as in the first two models.

Finally, a continuous measure of the Polyarchy ratings is used in order to insure the robustness of our findings in Model 3, regarding the second hypothesis. With the exception of the data used for measuring the independent variable, all other data and methodology is consistent in Model 3 and Model 4. In addition to analyzing the competitiveness and participation ratings together, we separate them and use each individually as independent variables in order to verify that the distribution of regime power is measured equally over both of Polyarchy's democracy indicators.

Although count variables such as intermediary interventions can be treated as continuous and be estimated using a linear regression model, this can often times result in inefficient, inconsistent, and biased estimates (Long 1997). Using the generalized binomial model allows us to account for characteristics associated with count variables that linear regression cannot, specifically non-normal dispersions and non-constant variance. Our use of rare events data dealing with intermediary interventions presents us with such a case. Therefore, generalized binomial regression analysis is used in all four models.

Empirical Procedure

To test our hypothesis we analyze data on state democracy, capability, total trade, and intervention using a generalized negative binomial regression model. This model includes clustering around the country in addition to robust standard errors to insure that the measurements of each state over time are independent of each other. We also use one-tailed significance tests as each of our hypotheses are unidirectional. The skeleton of the data set was

created using the EUgene software (Bennett and Stam 2000) consisting of all country years for the period from 1900 to 1994.

The most common measure of democracy used in analyses of the democratic peace is the Polity series of datasets. For this study we use the Polity III dataset (Jagers and Gurr 1995). To ensure the robustness of our findings, we also use a second measure of democracy, the Polyarchy dataset compiled by Tatu Vanhanen (Vanhanen 2000). The use of two different measures for democracy serves to strengthen the robustness of our analysis. In addition, the different measures allow the potential for a deeper exploration of the mechanisms behind the democratic peace.

The Polity III dataset is a measure of the institutional democracy of a state. This dataset is the most commonly used measure of democracy in the literature and we follow conventional practice in our application. A state's democracy is calculated by subtracting its autocracy score from its democracy score, creating a value range from -10 to +10. This value is calculated for each country-year in the data set. This democracy variable provides a scaled measure of democracy that will be used to test hypothesis two. To create a dichotomous democracy measure for testing hypothesis 1, we generated a dichotomous score from the scaled democracy score. Following conventional practice (Jagers et al 1990; Maoz and Russett 1993; Dixon 1994) a score of 7 or higher on the scaled value for democracy is used as a threshold value. A value of 1 indicates that a state is a democracy in a given year and a value of 0 indicates that the state was not a democracy in a given year.

The Polyarchy data set measures the levels of participation and competitiveness within the polity. Participation is measured as the percentage of the total population (not just the electorate) to have voted in the previous election. Competition is the total percentage of votes received by the ruling party subtracted from 100. These measures are combined into an Index of Democracy (ID) calculated by multiplying the Competition and Participation variables together and dividing the result by 100. For testing hypothesis 1, the id score is used to provide a scaled score of democracy. Id ranges in value from 0 to 47.11. The threshold value scoring for the Polyarchy data set is more complex than that of the Polity data due to the lack of a standard form in the literature. For the purposes of this study, the threshold values defined by Vanhanen (Vanhanen 2000) are used. The threshold value is set as a combination of 30% or greater on Competition, 10% or greater on Participation, and a 5 or higher in the ID score. If all three of these values are reached, then a state is coded as a democracy. If any of these scores is below the threshold value, then it is coded as a non-democracy.

The capability of the state is measured using the COW National Material Capability Index (Singer and Small 1999). Our capability variable is calculated as the state's proportion of total material capability for a given year. This value is generated calculating the proportion of world material capability for each of the six categories indicated in the COW data followed by calculating the average of these scores. The resulting value has a theoretical range of 0 to 1 and represents the overall material power of the state in a given year.

Total external trade is included as a control. It can be argued that a greater volume of total trade provides a rough indicator of the degree to which a state is involved in the world community. While this is a rough measure, it does permit the testing of the principle that trade leads to the desire for peace and thus towards a tendency to intervene to promote non-violent resolution of disputes. The trade data included in the dataset is that compiled by Katherine Barbieri (Barbieri 1998). The value of trade is calculated as the total of all imports and exports by a country in a given year in trillions of 1998 US dollars.

The number of interventions per year is calculated for each country year in the dataset. The intervention variable indicates the number of intermediary interventions that a given country engaged in for a given year. The number of interventions is generated using a new data set of third party interventions in Militarized Interstate Disputes. The third party intervention data provide a discrete description of third party interventions in MID dyads for the twentieth century. All interventions by third parties in the disputes within these dyads are included in the intervention data set. While the intervention data distinguishes between participatory interventions (those in which the intervenor works directly on behalf of one party in the dyad) and intermediary interventions (those in which the intervenor remains impartial), the value of the intervention variable is calculated using only intermediary interventions. Dyads are ranked by the number of MIDs that occur in the dyad. The dyad with the most MIDs was ranked first, the dyad with the second largest number of MIDs second and so on. The data included in this analysis reflect the top 150 dyads as ranked by the number of MIDs per dyad.

There are a significant number of interventions that occur in the context of interventions by international organizations. For coding purposes these are coded in the following ways:

- Individual representatives are coded as representing the state from which they are drawn. If there is no information regarding the state from which the representative was drawn, this is coded as missing data and not included in the data set.
- Committees or other multi-state bodies are coded for each state represented. If a body has five members, each member is coded separately as an intermediary intervention by that state. If there is no information regarding the states involved in a committee, this intervention is excluded from the data set.

The coding of multiple state-specific interventions for multi-state commissions presents some concerns. The dispersal of costs among states lowers the cost of individual state intervention. The umbrella of an international organization may provide additional legitimacy and lower transaction costs further. These are valid points of criticism that must be addressed.

Our rationale for eliminating these from consideration is that the decision to intervene through either unilateral or multilateral action is a product of the domestic form of government. The decision to intervene will be unilateral regardless of the form it takes. While there is reason to believe that multilateral action lowers the cost of the intervention, the multilateral cost savings will be available to both democratic and non-democratic countries. Further, the transaction costs of intermediary intervention are lower than those for a participatory intervention, making the relative decrease in transaction costs significantly smaller. For the purposes of our analysis, the influence of any transaction cost savings should be minimal.

Our analysis consists of five separate statistical models. All models use the number of interventions in a given year as the dependent variable with capability and trade as controls. Model 1 uses dichotomous democracy as measured by the Polity dataset as the explanatory variable. Model 2 uses the dichotomous measure from the Polyarchy dataset as the explanatory variable. Model 3 uses the scaled Polity score as the explanatory variable. Model 4 uses the Polyarchy id score as the explanatory variable. Model 5 tests the Polyarchy Competition and Participation measures as separate indicators.

Results

The results provide strong support for our first hypothesis and mixed results for our second hypothesis. Table 1 summarizes the results of Model 1 and Model 2. In both Model 1 and Model 2, capability and trade are positively signed and statistically significant. In Model 1, the dichotomous democracy scores based on the Polity III and Polyarchy measures are significant in increasing the likelihood of states intervening as intermediaries.

<table 1 about here>

Table 2 summarizes Model 3 and Model 4. In both models, capability and trade are significant and positively signed, although trade is significant only at the .05 level in Model 4. Model 3 indicates that the scaled Polity democracy score is not significant as an indicator of the tendency to intervene. Model 4 indicates that the scaled Polyarchy score is significant as an indicator of the tendency to intervene. These results indicate mixed support for our second hypothesis.

<table 2 about here>

Table 3 summarizes the result of Model 5. Model 5 treats the two components of the Polyarchy scale as separate indicators. In Model 5 capability and trade are significant, which is consistent with our observations across all of the models. In Model 5, we find that competitiveness is a significant and positive indicator of the tendency to intervene. This would indicate that the more competitive the government of a state, the greater the likelihood of intervention. Participation is not a significant factor in the tendency to intervene in this model.

<table 3 about here>

Conclusions

It is clear from these results that democracy plays a significant role in the tendency of states to intervene as intermediaries in militarized interstate disputes. Our results indicate that further study of the role of democracy in the decision to intervene is necessary. The bulk of the literature on the democratic peace uses the dichotomous measure derived from the Polity scores to determine whether or not a state qualifies as a democracy. Using this standard, our hypothesis that democracy serves as a positive indicator of the propensity of states to intervene is supported by our analysis. The observation that the dichotomous Polyarchy measure yields a similar result to that of the Polity data lends further support to our hypothesis that dichotomous democracy is a positive indicator of the tendency to intervene. The results for our hypothesis that the scaled democracy scores would yield significant results also indicates that further research is needed before conclusions may be drawn.

The results of Model 5, that the competitiveness of a democracy is a positive indicator of the tendency to intervene potentially points to future research on the specific mechanisms by which democracy influences intervention behavior. Future research concentrating on the mechanisms by which democracy influences intervention behavior is called for to help resolve the inconsistent results found using different measures of democracy.

Our findings support the general acceptance in the literature of capability as a primary indicator of a state's propensity to intervene. Our models consistently show that the capability of a state is a positive indicator of the tendency to intervene.

Less expected is the significance of trade as an indicator of the tendency to intervene. Across all of the models, trade is a significant factor in increasing the likelihood of intervention. While the measure used here is a crude one, our findings clearly support the influence of external trade on states' decisions to intervene.

There are several potential concerns that need further investigation. The first arises from the preliminary nature of the dataset. The dataset of interventions is not yet complete. The data used in this study come from the 150 dyads with the largest number of militarized interstate disputes. While this dataset is preliminary, the dyads included cover a wide geographic and temporal range as well as including major powers, minor powers, and mixed dyads. We expect that the completed dataset will add to the robustness of our findings but will not alter the results.

In the future, we will expand this research to include an analysis of the levels of intervention, differentiating between statements and calls for action to actual mediation or peacekeeping roles. This will further expand our understanding of the process by which norms of non-violence are put into practice at the international level and will also increase the sophistication of our understanding of the role of capability.

Since our findings provide some linkage between the democratic peace and mediation it is a valuable addition to the abundant literature in both areas. Future research will need to continue to bridge the two fields of study in order to gain a better understanding of how both domestic and international conditions affect mediation in interstate conflicts. Although this research suggests many possibilities, it is only with continued investigations that these findings can be placed in a more complete context.

Figure 1: Count of Intermediary Interventions by five-year Period, 1900-1994

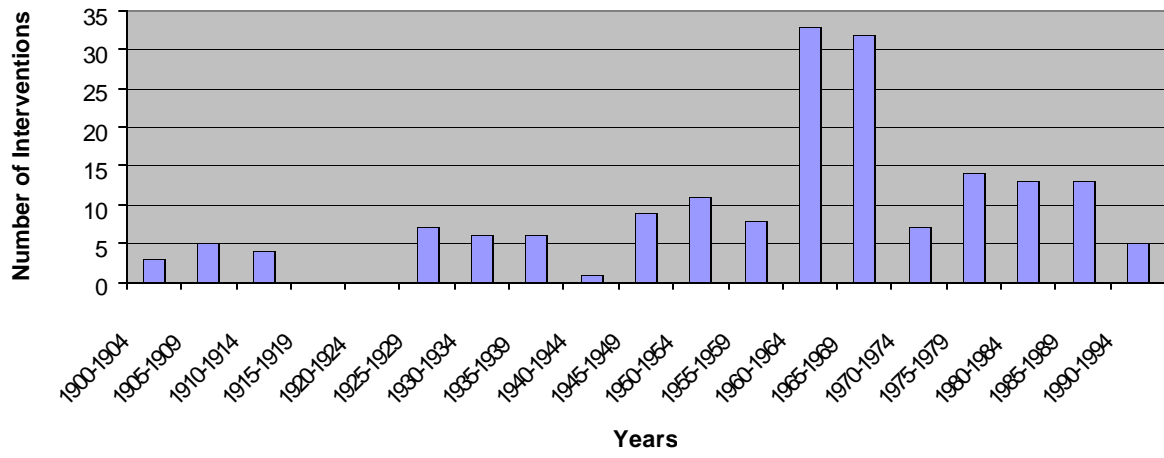


Table 1: Generalized Negative Binomial Regression Results: Impact on Number of Interventions Per Year, Dichotomous Democracy Measures

Independent Variables	Model 1 (Polity III)	Model 2 (Polyarchy)
Dichotomous Democracy Measure	.781** (.277)	.498* (.288)
CINC Capability Score	12.564** (1.121)	13.409** (1.015)
Trade Volume	1.321** (.450)	1.899** (.616)
Constant	-4.530 (.202)	-4.509 (.199)
Wald χ^2	233.63**	206.51**
$\ln \alpha$	1.143* (.573)	1.215* (.580)
Number of observations	7379	8041

Entries are one-tailed generalized negative binomial regression coefficients with standard errors in parenthesis.

* $p \leq .05$ ** $p \leq .01$

Table 2: Generalized Negative Binomial Regression Results: Impact on Number of Interventions Per Year, Scaled Democracy Scores

Independent Variables	Model 3 (Polity)	Model 4 (Polyarchy)
Democracy Scaled Score	.033 (.021)	.025* (.012)
CINC Capability Score	13.076** (1.027)	14.188** (1.067)
Trade Volume	1.622** (.517)	1.480* (.619)
Constant	-4.251 (.163)	-4.556 (.197)
Wald χ^2	226.87**	299.97**
ln α	1.20* (.586)	1.20* (.553)
Number of observations	7379	8041

Entries are one-tailed generalized negative binomial regression coefficients with standard errors in parenthesis.

* $p \leq .05$ ** $p \leq .01$

Table 3: Generalized Negative Binomial Regression Results: Impact on Number of Interventions Per Year, Polyarchy Component Scores

Variables In Model	
Polyarchy Competitiveness Score	.009* (.004)
Polyarchy Participation Score	.004 (.006)
CINC Capability Score	13.699** (.933)
Trade Volume	1.741** (.615)
Constant	-4.667 (.278)
Wald χ^2	268.12**
ln α	1.19* (.571)
Number of observations	8041

Entries are one-tailed generalized negative binomial regression coefficients with standard errors in parenthesis.

* $p \leq .05$ ** $p \leq .01$

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