GLOBAL CONSTRAINT: EXTENDING POWER TRANSITION THEORY TO INCLUDE GREAT POWER INTERFERENCE

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ABSTRACT : This paper investigates the influence of the great power hierarchy on minor power dyad conflict relations. The paper`s importance lies in providing a theoretical framework for studying great power interference in dyadic relations among minor powers within the power transition theory. Power transition theory assumes great power non-interference in war and peace dynamics among small power dyads. Building on the previous power transition based models of multiple hierarchy and regional hierarchy constraint, the global constraint model introduces the impact of the international system on the absence and existence of war among small powers within regions. Global constraint, the proposed explanatory variable, refers to the impact of the five most powerful states in the international system, and is operationalized as the ratio of arms transfers to the weaker dyad nation to that of the stronger one by the great powers.

Key Words: Power transition theory, war onset, great power interference, arms transfers

ÖZET: Bu makale büyük güçler hiyerarşisinin diğer devletler arasındaki çatışma ilişkilerine etkisini incelemektedir. Güç geçişi teorisi içinde büyük devletlerin görece daha az güçlü devletler arasındaki ilişkilere olan etkisini incelemek için teorik bir yapı oluşturduğu için önemlidir. Güç geçişi teorisi büyük devletlerin diğer devletler arasındaki savaş-barış ilişkilerinde müdahalede bulunmadığını varsaymaktadır. Küresel kısıtlama modeli güç geçişi teorisi temelli çoklu hiyerarşiler ve bölgesel kısıtlama modellerine dayanmaktadır. Modelin farklılığı uluslararası sistemin bölgesel aktörler arasında savaş olup olmayacağına etkisinin incelenmesidir. Açıklayıcı değişken olarak küresel sınırlama uluslararası sistemdeki en güçlü beş devletin etkisine işaret etmektedir. Bu etki büyük güçlerin güçsüz taraf ve güçlü tarafa yaptıkları silah transferi oranı ile ölçülecektir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Güç geçişimi teorisi, savaş başlangıcı, büyük güçlerin müdahaleleri, silah transferi

INTRODUCTION

What is the effect of the international hierarchy on the war and peace dynamics within regions? This paper extends the power transition theory to include the global system's effect on minor power dyadic dynamics. The variable I propose is the "global constraint." I argue that the inclusion of the global constraint to the power transition theory is a needed extension.

The major hypothesis of this paper is that an extension of power transition theory is needed to account for the effect of the great powers on small power dyad interactions. I present the logical and theoretical justifications for this extension, and outline the global constraint model in this paper. The focus of the examples is the Middle East region due to two reasons. First, the region is vitally important. Second, it is widely believed in the Middle East that the great powers do interfere in regional affairs.
To investigate great power interference in regional dyadic dynamics, I bring together power transition and arms transfers literatures. Global constraint will be measured as the ratio of arms transfers to the challengers and the defenders in local dyads from the great powers. The global constraint model proposes that parity, dissatisfaction with the dyadic status quo, the un-orderliness of the region, and increased values of arms transfers from great powers to the challengers in dyads increase the probability of interstate war.

The global constraint model brings together the systemic and sub-systemic factors that lead to war and peace. More specifically, I extend power transition theory's latest formulation based on the works of Lemke (2000), and Efird (2001). Power transition theory looks at the power distribution and status quo evaluations among members of dyads. The theory proposes that power parity and dissatisfaction with the status quo lead to conflict. This basic logic was extended theoretically to include all dyads by Lemke (1996; 2000). Lemke's multiple hierarchy model brings all

1

dyads into the scope of power transition theory. Efird, through the "hierarchy constraint", adds to this the effect of regional power distributions on dyadic relations.

What is missing in the power transition theory so far is the impact of the overriding international hierarchy on the relations between pairs of states. In its extended form (especially through Lemke's multiple hierarchies) power transition theory empirically shows that local hierarchies function identically to the international hierarchy in the absence of great power interference. That is, power parity and dissatisfaction with the status quo increase the probability of conflict in dyadic relations—for both major and minor power dyads. However, it is important to note that Lemke, after discussing the possible forms great power interference in regional affairs might take, assumes that such interference is absent (2000: 61). Moreover, the theory's logic asserts that the regional hierarchies are subordinate to the overall international hierarchy (Tammen et.al., 2000: 9). This is due to the enormous power imbalance between states which belong to the great power club and the rest.

This paper proposes that great powers interfere in the war and peace decisions of small power dyads. Indeed, a cursory glance at the literature suggests this effect has been dwelled upon. The findings to the question of why states give foreign aid indicate the primary motivation behind it to be the political and economic interests of the donor states (Arase 1995; Conteh-Morgan 1990; Hook 1995; Lebovic 1988; Meernik, Krueger & Poe 1998; Poe & Meernik 1995). Schraeder, Hook & Taylor (1998) show that shared alliances, ideological alignments, and military presence have a positive impact on the identity of foreign aid recipients and the amount of aid received. Palmer et al. (2002) suggest in their two-good theory of foreign policy that strong states use foreign aid as a means to seek changes in the foreign policy behaviors of the recipient countries.

2

More directly related to my main argument, Miller and Kagan (1997) assert that the effect of the overall international hierarchy (the great powers hierarchy) on regional dynamics is a function of the relative capabilities of the great powers and their interests in the region. Furthermore, Miller (2001: 206) argues that great powers' willingness to intervene in a region is dependent on "the intrinsic value of a region and a shared threat." Writing in 1989, Desch asserts that Western Europe, the Middle East, Northeast Asia and the Far East have intrinsic value for the US, while the Caribbean, the Indian Ocean littoral and a base in the Western Pacific are extrinsically valuable (108-113).

I take these findings to be encouraging for the model presented in this study. Great powers have the capability as well as the willingness to project power to other regions. The great powers of the international system have the ability to change the course of events in other parts of the globe, provided the issues at stake are important. Thus, in addition to the "hierarchy constraint" I argue that the interference of the great powers, "the global constraint," in the regions alter the probability of conflict or integration within those regions.

A note on terminology before proceeding: The unit of analysis for the model is a dyad of nations. In each dyad, the more powerful nation at the beginning of the time interval is the "defender". The "challenger" is the less powerful of the two nations. Parity exists between the dyad members when their power ratio is between (0.8) and (1.2). "Great powers" are those states that comprise the international hierarchy, and are the most powerful nations in the world at a given time interval. The great power hierarchy is used interchangeably with global or international hierarchy. I refer to those countries that are disproportionately powerless as small or minor powers.

A look at what follows: First, I provide a review of the power transition and arms transfers literatures. Then, I elaborate on the theoretical justifications of the global constraint model. I conclude with a summary and discussion.

LITERATURE REVIEW

I offer a view of the evolution of the power transition theory first. Over the years since its original formulation, the theory was expanded to account for a larger domain—both spatially and temporally. Next, I look at the arms transfer research.

Power Transition Theory

Power Transition Theory—Original

In its original formulation, power transition theory limits its domain to that of the major powers (the most powerful states) and the system changing wars (Organski, 1958; Organski & Kugler, 1980). The theory assumes a hierarchical international system, with a dominant nation (the strongest of the states) at the apex of the system. The major proposition of power transition, in contrast to the balance of power theory (Morgenthau, 1948; Waltz, 1979), is that power preponderance leads to peace, whereas power parity leads to war. Over time, a challenger emerges from the ranks of great powers as a result of internal growth, and the challenger has an opportunity to make a bid for replacing the dominant power once it catches up in power. The power transition leads to conflict if the challenger is dissatisfied with the existing world order, a peaceful takeover follows in the case the challenger is satisfied. Thus, relative power distribution and status quo evaluations are the critical variables in determining war and peace.

Power Transition Theory—Domain Extensions

Power transition theory was applied to other pairs of nations (dyads) despite the explicit limited scope of the original version. First came the extension in the units, and then came the extension in time.

The domain was extended to include all great power dyads (Houwelling & Siccama, 1988; Kim, 1989; Gochman, 1990)*,* and later extended in time from the original 1816-1975 period to 1648-1992 (Kim, 1992). It is important to note that Kim's extension rests on relaxing the restriction on internal growth through industrialization as the only method to augment power and letting power augmentation through the use of alliances as well.

Multiple Hierarchies—the theoretical framework for extending the scope

3

Lemke (1996; 2000) provides the theoretical framework to apply power transition to all dyads of states. His "multiple hierarchies" suggest that the international system is composed of several nested hierarchies with the international hierarchy at the top. The regional hierarchies are identical with the international hierarchy in that they, too, have dominant, great and lesser powers. Moreover, Lemke finds that pairs of states in the regional hierarchies operate under the same structural factors power transition theory asserts: power parity and dissatisfaction with the status quo lead to increased probability of conflict (Lemke, 2000).

Lemke's theoretical model is distinguished from the earlier power transition extensions in three important ways. First, he provides a theoretical rationale for extending the scope from the international hierarchy to all hierarchies. Second, Lemke maps the local hierarchies in accordance with the states' ability to reach each other militarily with at least 50 % of their power intact. The importance of this measure cannot be overstated: empirical analysis based on possible dyadic interactions lead to an inflation of cases, some of which involve dyads that do not have the capabilities necessary to reach each others' territories (e.g. Chile v. Egypt). Last, Lemke (2000) argues to have brought back the original domain specification to the power transitions research by not including all dyads in his analysis, and instead only looking at those dyads that involve the regional defenders.

Extending the Domain Further—Accounting for Cooperation and Regional Power Distributions

Efird (2001) contributes to the theory in two significant ways. First, he extends the power transitions theory to explain cooperation, as well as, conflict through the creation of a dependent variable that combines the measures for dispute hostility levels from the Correlates of War (COW) project and integration levels among states. Conflict-integration, the dependent variable, combines the two extreme poles of war and integration.

Second, Efird shows that the orderliness of the regions does have an inverse relation with conflict (Efird, 2001: 3); that is the hierarchy constraint, as measured by the ratio of power capabilities between the regional dominant power and the summation of the power capabilities of the four contenders, reduces the probability of conflict, and increases the explanatory power of the theory for especially the minor powers.

In sum, in its extended version, power transition theory explains the structural factors that lead to war and peace: power parity, dissatisfaction with the status quo, and the absence of a preponderant regional defender increase the probability of conflict, whereas the opposite conditions lead to peace and ultimately, integration.

Arms Transfers Research

There is a vast literature on arms transfers and their effects. The historical and anecdotal works on the subject have been accompanied by empirical analysis, after arms transfers data became available following the Second World War. For the purposes of this study, attention is given to the works that study the relationship between arms transfers and war onset. Since I am interested in war initiation, and not war outcomes, I do not elaborate on those studies that search the effects of arms transfers on war termination, duration, or severity. Catrina (1994) provides an excellent overview of the arms trade literature for interested readers.

Two directions can be seen in assessing the effects of arms transfers on war initiation. One of these directions is to look at the systemic, or global, impact arms transfers have on war onset, using different logics with regards to the direction of the arms transfers and war initiation relationship. First, is the assertion that arms transfers precede wars (Baugh & Squires, 1983; SIPRI, 1971). Alternatively, arms transfers, through deterrence, lead to fewer wars (Bobrow et.al., 1973; Schrodt, 1983). Last, some studies contend that arms transfers follow wars (Sherwin, 1983). Craft (1999: 28-29) tests these alternative logics using SIPRI data, and finds support for arms transfers preceding war initiation, whereas the results refute the argument of deterrence and that wars precede arms transfers.

The other direction is to look at the relationships among suppliers and recipients of arms transfers. The most important aspect of the literature on supplier-recipient relationships is that of the effects of arms transfers on foreign policy behaviors of the recipients. Nevertheless, the research on the effect of arms transfers on recipients' conflict behavior has not produced cumulative and consistent findings (Kinsella, 1994). Other scholars look into the effect of superpower arms sales (Kinsella, 1994; Kinsella & Tillema, 1995; Sanjian, 1991). Miller (2001) suggests that the types of great power interactions and the types of regions do affect whether the regions are peaceful or not. Great power cooperation or hegemony leads to more peaceful outcomes in both stable and war-prone regions, whereas competition among the great powers prevents stability. In some cases, competing great powers increase the duration of conflict by increasing the arsenal of rival states (Miller, 2001: 200).

GLOBAL CONSTRAINT MODEL

What follows is the rationale for the global constraint model. The power transition literature, so far, has not considered the notion of great power intervention in minor power affairs. Yet, I propose it is only logical for the great powers to interfere with the affairs of especially those dyads that are vital for the continuation of the status quo. I provide a brief look at the scholarly research that supports the notion of global constraint below, and follow it with theoretical justifications for the model.

Scholars and policy makers have mentioned great power interference in dyadic affairs either as anecdotes, or as analytical interpretations. The Middle East is consistently mentioned among the key regions for the US national interests, with attention given to "forestalling the emergence of a hostile regional hegemon" (Lesser et.al, 1998; Desch, 1989; Khalilzad, 1995). Looking specifically at the Middle East, Russell (2006: 3) argues that "outside powers in the twentieth century" sought to "exert influence and protect their interests." Brown (2001: xiv) provides corroborating support for the argument by noting that "control of the Middle East, or denying control of this area to an enemy, has, in short, figure prominently in the strategic thinking of the great powers for some two centuries."

Within the power transition approach, when one looks at the moves by the global challenger, it can only be logical, and strategically necessary, for the challenger to stay away from a head-to-head conflict with the defender, and instead, look at opportunities to improve its relative standing through extending its influence over other regions. Rice (1991: 154) points out to the Soviet perception of the international system as being "fundamentally hostile," and refers to how "Khrushchev's third world strategy… allowed the Soviets to extend their power as cheaply as possible"

through the sale of arms to Egypt via Czechoslovakia (154-55). Rumer (2000: 43) suggests that the Soviet Union, in order to extend its sphere of influence, and to limit that of the global defender's, used economic subsidies and arms transfers in its relationship with Syria during the Cold War.

This move by the Soviets does not seem to have been a one-sided move. The U.S. has signaled its commitments in the region as well, through the "deployment of aircraft to Saudi Arabia in 1963, in response to the Saudi-Egyptian conflict in Yemen" (Russell, 2006: 205).

Lesser and colleagues (1998) argue that the persistence of the territorial status quo issues, combined with the inability of all but a few regional states to defend their borders against a determined aggressor (209), and the region being the major arms importer (197) demands a US commitment to the region.

One objection could be to point out that a majority of the instances that are provided as supporting viewpoints refer to a single observation in regards to challenger-defender relations: that of the Soviet Union and the United States. However, there are those accounts that bring China, among others, to the great power attempts at influence in the Middle East. Sutter (2000) argues that China is indeed following a policy to weaken the dominance of the current global defender.

> [T]he Chinese government came up with a two-pronged policy of its own with regard to US interests in the Middle East. Thus, China continued to employ strategic partnerships, such as those forged with France and Russia and historical affinity with the region's developing countries to weaken US dominancy; at the same time, it continued to promote cooperation and avoided direct confrontation in the ongoing dialogue with the United States on key regional issues (161).

Moving from the regional to the dyadic level, one finds arguments for the effect of outside powers. Looking at the Iranian relations with the Persian Gulf nations, Akshayji (2002) underlines the American presence in the Gulf; without which, he argues, Iran would be the preponderant player in the struggle for power (224).

The notion of great power interference is also commonly accepted by the ruling elites in the Middle East. Laipson and Hokayem (2006) report that the presumption in "the presidential palaces and the royal diwans is that national security depends on adapting to the preferences of powerful outside actors" (154).

The global constraint model posits that great powers interfere in the dyadic relationships among minor powers. Minor powers' actions are not only influenced by the power distributions and their satisfaction levels, but also by the strategies of great powers. As Russell (2005) puts it,

> Struggles for power in the greater Middle East are influenced by major nation-states that lie outside the regions. The United States, Russia, and China each have important strategic interests in the greater Middle East while nation-states inside the region look to outside powers to bolster their positions in regional competitions for power. Throughout the Cold War the United States was especially concerned with political-military moves by the Soviet Union in the greater Middle East (120).

The Logic

My justification for studying the effect of great power interference in minor power dyads is based on the perspectives of both the defenders and challengers.

The original power transition formulation argues that the global defender would be restrained from preventing the rise of the challenger due to the fact that it would not want to upset the status quo, which also includes the institutional rules it created.

The assumption of great power non-interference seems to have stemmed from the original construction of power transition theory, and its emphasis on the absence of preventive war—the defender does not use its power advantage to stop a rising challenger. The major theoretical justifications for the absence of prevention would be that the

defender would not want to disturb the international order, and that given the internal growth assumption, the challenger's power increase could not easily be stopped, but only delayed, through a costly war.

However, this does not necessarily mean that the global defender does not take any action. Especially in those cases when the global challenger is trying to increase its influence, we see actions taken by the global defender. The most illuminating example of this is the U.S. grand strategy of containment against the Soviet Union during the Cold War. Containment strategy allowed the U.S. to abstain from direct contact with the Soviet Union, and prevented Soviet influence from expanding beyond the de facto borders generated after the Second World War.

However, once the domain of the theory is extended to include minor power dyads, the power asymmetry increases in magnitude. Thus, I diverge from Lemke in not assuming away great power interference in small power dyads.

I justify my divergence from Lemke's great power non-interference assumption in two aspects. First, I find it logical for great powers to use their advantage in capabilities to create/maintain conditions to their liking. The global defender and its satisfied allies would like to maintain the status quo, and one expects them to act in ways that would prolong the dyadic/regional orders, so long as these orders are in lieu with the international status quo. Conversely, small power dyads provide the global challengers with the opportunity to improve their positions of challenge. Moreover, Lemke's own argument that states direct their attention to their immediate vicinity gives credence to the above statement. A dyadic challenger is expected to be after a change in the dyadic status quo, a regional challenger searches to undo the regional order, and the global challenger is after systemic changes in the international order. Yet, major powers do not start out as major powers, but have to go through being minor, and then regional powers.

6

Second, the notion of great power interference in small power relations has practical importance. The popular belief in many developing nations is that the great powers are interfering with the dyadic dynamics. The most prominent example of this popular belief is that of the Muslims in the Middle East; that, great powers, especially the United States, are the sole reason for the existence of the Israeli state in the region (Russell, 2005, 19). Not only popular beliefs, but also scholarly analysis point to the same direction: outside interference by the great powers exacerbate regional conflicts (Ayoob 1991, 1994).

I also take issue with the construction of variables that measure regional and/or global hierarchy constraint as solely a derivative of power capabilities. Focusing only on capabilities misses the important issue of preferences. To use Starr's (1978) terminology, the great powers, and especially the global dominant power, have both the "opportunity" and the "willingness" to influence the interactions of small powers. Thus, I argue theoretically, that the effect of great powers has to be operationalized so as to allow for their preferences and salience to be taken into consideration.

Arms transfers from great powers provide such a measure. Arms transfers from the great powers signal to both the receiving country and its rivals the support these recipient countries get. Not only do these transfers improve the military power of the recipients, but more importantly, they suggest the backing of the great powers. Thus, the arms transfers reflect the political support these countries receive.
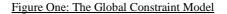
This great power intervention against minor powers in vital areas may take different forms; it might cover a range, from air strikes to waging a war against the winner of a minor power war. Haass (1994) reports twelve cases of intervention by the U.S. between 1979 and 1994.

Werner and Kugler's (1996) military build-up measure provides a tangential support for the global constraint model. The authors use military build-ups as a reflection of "the decision maker's choice to either challenge the system or to defend the status quo" (191). Similarly, the global constraint model proposes that the challenger uses arms transfers to countries in the region as an initial challenge to the global order in a region important to both itself and the global defender. The global defender reacts to this by exporting arms to key allies in those same regions.

To reiterate, I argue that the great powers do interfere in dyadic relationships. The possibility of this interference is understood and accepted by the minor powers. Thus, in addition to dissatisfaction with the dyadic status quo and the opportunity to rectify the dissatisfaction through the changing power distributions (parity), the dyadic challenger has to take into account the reactions of the great powers.

The Global Constraint Model

The global constraint model proposes that great powers influence the dyadic relations among small powers. Specifically, the arms transfers from great powers to the members of minor power dyads affect whether war is waged or not. The main hypothesis of the global constraint model is that power parity, dissatisfaction with the dyadic status quo, the un-orderliness of the region, and the decreasing ratio of the arms transfers from great powers to dyadic defenders increase the probability of war within regions.
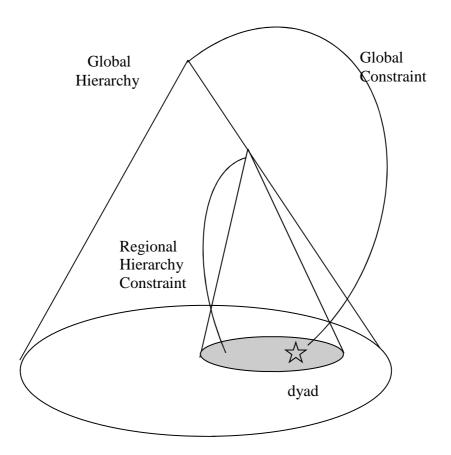
Figure One: The Global Constraint Model

Figure One graphically demonstrates the global constraint model. Minor power dyads are subject to three different levels of factors that guide their behavior: dyadic, regional and global. Dyadic interactions are guided by the power distribution and status quo evaluations. Parity and dissatisfaction with the status quo increases the probability of conflict between dyad members.

Dyad members also have to take into account the effects of the power distributions within their region. If the power distribution within the region is lopsided, that is, the defender is preponderant, dyadic challengers are discouraged to abrupt the status quo—provided that the regional defender is satisfied with the regional order. Last, dyad members need to keep an eye on the influences of the global or great power hierarchy. Members of the global hierarchy possess huge power advantages, and in the absence of credible political backing from at least some of the great powers, it would be unwise for the dyadic challengers to resort to arms to change the status quo.

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

The global constraint model presented in this paper aims to expand the power transition theory to include great power interference in small power dyadic relations. I propose to use arms transfers ratios by the great powers to the dyadic challengers as opposed to the dyadic defenders to gauge the political backing challengers expect. As the ratio increases, the global constraint is reduced, and probability of war increases.

Global constraint model improves our understanding of small power dyadic war and peace dynamics over multiple hierarchy and regional hierarchy models. Great powers do interfere in minor power dyadic relations. There is a positive relationship between increasing arms transfers to dyadic challengers relative to dyadic defenders, and war onset. When the global constraint is present, reflected by lower ratios of arms transfers to challengers *vis-à-vis* the defenders, the probability of war decreases.

Minor powers, in their struggle to alter dyadic dynamics, have to take into account the positions of the great powers. This means to be ready for a conflict with high severity for them, and a low-level severity for the great power. The great powers are not going to intervene all the time, and they cannot dictate the state of the events one hundred percent; that would mean the countries other than the great powers had no intrinsic value whatsoever. Yet, the great powers will in most cases be able to impose their terms when they become involved in regional affairs. Thus, it is important to study the effect of great power involvement in dyadic and regional affairs. The proposed method in this study is to look at arms transfers from the great powers to the dyads.

8

A very important issue at this point is whether the global constraint measure captures the political backing of a dyad member by the great powers, or is a measure that reflects the effects of decisions by countries to address their discontent with their rivals. In other words, are arm transfers signals of support for small states, or are they manifestations of intent of those small powers? Arms transfers data is from SIPRI, and proves inconclusive in answering these questions. It includes both sales and transfers that are openly declared by the suppliers and recipients. More research is needed in separating the two to reach more valid conclusions.

Nevertheless, I argue that the variable captures the political backing for minor powers by great powers. Logically, I do not expect a dissatisfied dyadic challenger to receive weapons from great powers unless either the dissatisfaction is only dyadic, or the supplier great power is regionally or globally dissatisfied. Thus, challengers whose dissatisfactions are not limited to the dyadic level would find it hard to ensure great power backing for long periods of time.

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9

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10

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11

12