Hawks and doves. Democratic peace theory revisited

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Chapter 5 Experiments in the US, Russia & China

5.1 Research question and hypotheses

What influences decision-makers to decide to attack another country when they are on the brink of war? The theoretical framework, as discussed in chapter 3, offers several factors that might be of influence. The core underlying assumption of that framework is: if the threat of a severe interstate conflict is perceived as very high, decision-makers will decide to attack the opposing country to resolve the conflict. The perception of that threat is expected not to be constituted only by the ongoing conflict itself, but also by factors contextual to the conflict, and factors intrinsic to the decision-makers.

This chapter aims to test the remaining hypotheses. To investigate hypothesis 3, the chapter studies whether the from democratic peace theory derived contextual factors (the regime-type of the opposing state, the regime-type in which decision-makers are socialized, and in particular the interaction between these two factors) are of influence on decision-makers that try to resolve a severe interstate conflict. Democratic peace theory expects that if decision-makers of liberal democracies know that the opposing country is also a liberal democracy, the perception of the threat of the conflict will decrease in such way that an attack is significantly less likely. This, in contrast, to having an autocratic opponent, which would increase the perceived threat and subsequently lead to a higher likeliness of an attack. Moreover, if the decision-maker is not socialized within a liberal democracy but another regime-type, the regime-type of the other state will not increase or decrease the threat in such a way that it will affect the willingness to attack.

Another hypothesized contextual factor derived from democratic peace theory is the expectation that liberal norms influence decision-makers to be less likely to attack another state that shares a similar political culture of liberal norms, as formulated in hypothesis 5. Democratic peace theory assumes that liberal norms are only present (and thus of effect) within liberal democracies, and not in other regime-types. In chapter 4, however, it is established that this assumption finds only limited empirical support. An analysis of nationally representative survey data of individuals of the US, Russia, and China shows that liberal norms are indeed present among individuals of a liberal democracy, but also among individuals of other regime-types. Moreover, although the US representative sample scored on average higher than the Chinese and the Russian representative samples respectively, the difference was marginal and more importantly, all average scores were on the positive side of the liberal norms spectrum. The three samples were also varying in a similar and a close to normally distributed pattern and ranging within each country between the lowest and highest level. In other words, liberal norms exist irrespective of the political regime and seem to be more individually based. Democratic peace theory has high expectations of the pacifying effect of liberal norms, in particular when a decision-maker feels that their liberal norms are shared. Therefore is also hypothesized that

liberal norms affect decision-makers to be less willing to attack a liberal democratic opponent, one with a liberal political culture.

Other hypotheses (hypothesis 1 and 2), unrelated to democratic peace theory, lead the investigation into other contextual factors. These factors relate to the behavior of the opponent regarding the conflict: an invasion and the use of power. The initial conflict deals with a disputed resource between both parties, and the expectation is that when the opponent invades the territory of the other, the perception of threat will increase in such manner that decision-makers will be more willing to attack the opponent than when the opponent does not invade. The same goes for the use of power. The expectation is that if the opponent uses hard power over soft power, decision-makers will be more willing to attack their opponent and vice versa.

Another contextual factor, hypothesized based on realist theories in hypothesis 6, is the balance of power between the opposing states. The expectation is that if there is a balance of power between both states, there will be a status quo. In other words, there will be no increase or decrease in the perception of threat and thus no more willingness to attack.

Separate from the contextual factors, the theoretical framework also offers expectations based on factors that are actor-centric. Based on the insights that belief systems can influence the decision-making process of individuals, in this research, a particular belief system is tested that relates to beliefs about conflict resolution, the hawk-dove continuum. The expectation, as formulated in hypothesis 7, is that the more hawkish decision-makers are, the more likely they will be to attack the opposing state, despite the influence of structural factors. Moreover, reversed, the more dovish decision-makers are, the less willing they will be to attack the opponent, also despite the influence of structures.

The results of chapter 4 have given rise to a new expectation. The results indicated that liberal norms are more individually based, and thus not created by a socialization process of a political system. Considering the argument of this study that individual-centric factors such as beliefs might influence decision-makers, it seems worthwhile to investigate whether these individually based liberal norms are of effect on the decision-making of individuals about war. Democratic peace theory has posited that liberal norms do pacify decision-makers in relation to shared liberal norms, and this research will thus also test whether liberal norms influence decision-makers, in general, to be less willing to attack the opponent, no matter the regime. From this follows hypothesis 9: *Decision-makers with higher levels of liberal norms will be less willing to take military action against an opposing state during a severe interstate conflict than decision-makers with lower levels of liberal norms*. Lastly, gender is considered as an actor-centric factor, based on the expectation that female decision-makers will be less likely to attack the opponent than male decision-makers, as is formulated in hypothesis 8.

5.2 The instrument

A decision-making experiment is used as the research instrument to test the hypotheses and thereby study the possible influence of these factors on decision-makers. The experiment consists of a written scenario about a conflict in which the factors regime-type, the balance of power, invasion, and use of power are operationalized as randomized experimental treatments (see below). These factors are operationalized as described information within the experiment. A questionnaire follows the experiment that measures the dependent variable (the willingness to attack the opponent), and the factors liberal norms, hawkishness, and gender.

The scenario narrates a fictitious story about a continuous and severe conflict between two hypothetical states: *My Country* and *Other Country*, a conflict that is now on the brink of war. The choice for hypothetical countries on both sides is deliberate. With this choice this research distinguishes itself from earlier experimental studies that used the real-world countries from the participants as a reference (Geva et al., 1993; Johns & Davies, 2012; Rousseau, 2005; Tomz & Weeks, 2013), but follows the studies of Geva and Hanson (1999) and myself (Bakker, 2017). The use of hypothetical countries within a non-existent conflict aims deliberately to avoid any similarity with real-world countries and real-world conflicts. To measure as clearly as possible the effect factors have on decision-makers, the description of a real-world conflict of real countries might hinder that while participants might think of outcomes of those conflicts rather than purely deciding based on the information provided. However, to create experimental reality, the hypothetical conflict must 'feel as real as possible' to get participants to take their tasks seriously. In other words, participants must go along with the possible existence of this conflict and the threat that it poses to measure their responses rightfully.

The experiment starts by asking participants to imagine to be living their whole life *My Country*, one of the hypothetical countries. Furthermore, they have to imagine that they are the advisor of their government and have to advice how to deal with this particular conflict. They get to see a map about the geographic situation (see figure 5.1). The use of this map is twofold. The use of a graphic illustration can support the textual information, and moreover, a map can make the experiment look more authentic and help the participants to feel as if the hypothetical countries actually exist.

The scenario continues with a description of both countries, which provides information about the countries and how they relate to each other and the world. After that, it describes the interstate conflict and its history. Below follows a description about the operationalization of all relevant factors within the experiment. The description discusses the factors according to the proceeding line of the story.

Balance of power

Both countries are defined as neighboring states that together form a large island. Both countries rely on large and sufficient quantities of natural resources (such as sweet water, oil, and uranium). To establish a balance of power between both states, the countries are described as similar as possible when it comes to power factors on

system-level: size of population, territory, and industrial, economic and military strengths: both are prosperous, well-doing countries that are about equal in those respects. Also, the economic relationship between the countries is not specifically defined, there is no mentioning of economic interdependence and thereby kept constant. Both countries have an obligatory military service of 2 years, everybody in both countries needs to serve time in the army and is therefore meant to fight in case of military action. In other words, the scenario describes the two countries in a way that all possible system-level power factors are equal and therefore create the notion of a balance of power. This part of the scenario is the same for all participants.

Decision-makers socialized regime-type

To operationalize the regime-type in which decision-makers are socialized, the experiment as a whole will be conducted within three different regime-types: a liberal democracy (the US), a hybrid regime (Russia), and an autocracy (China). To measure the possible effect of being socialized within a specific regime-type, participants are asked to imagine to have lived all their lives in *My Country* without getting any specific information about the regime-type of *My Country*. The aim is to have participants assume implicitly that *My Country* is more or less like their own (real) country and thus regime-type. This way they are more likely to act accordingly to the practices with which their political regimes have socialized them. Another reason for not providing the regime-type of *Own Country* is to avoid the possibility that the participants might understand that regime-type is a treatment, while that realization might obstruct the correct measurement of the instrument. This factor is called 'socialized' in the analyses below.

Regime-type opponent

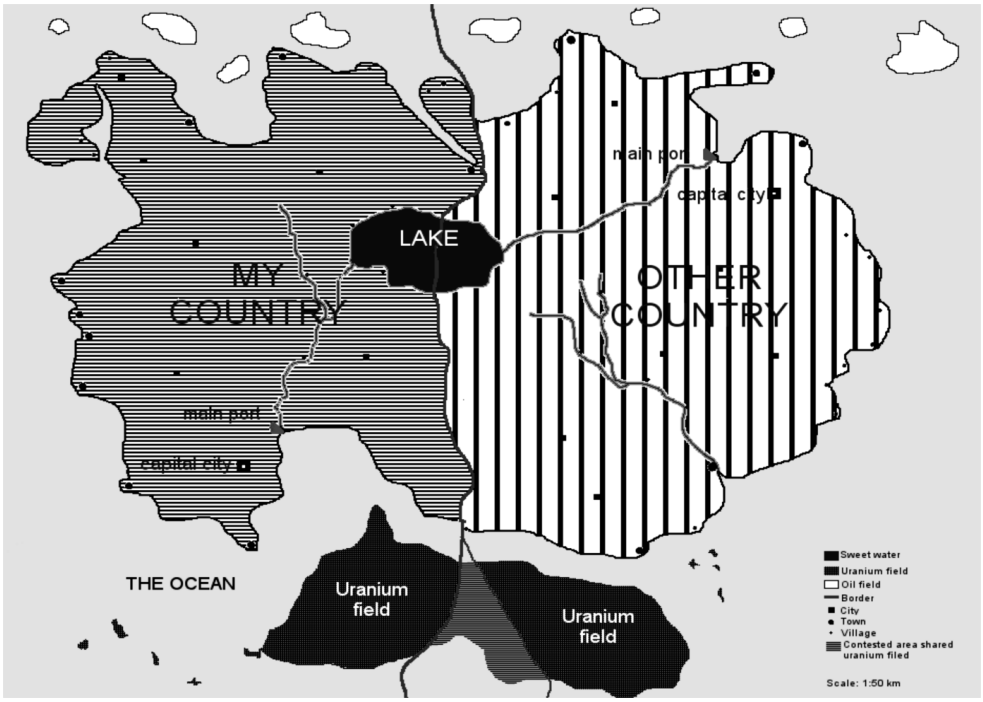
A randomized experimental treatment operationalizes the regime-type of the opponent. The treatment exists of a description of the regime-type of *Other Country*. The regime-type description is offered in two different treatments, each to about half of the participants. The treatments are, respectively, liberal democracy and autocracy. The first treatment is the description of a liberal democracy.

The actual word 'liberal democracy' is not mentioned because the word democracy often has a different meaning for different people and might trigger a varying definition among participants. Earlier experimental studies have been quite explicit in the measure for regime-type; they have either described the other state to be a democracy or described it to be an autocracy (Tomz & Weeks, 2013), or they have mentioned an elected president or government versus a (military) dictator (Johns & Davies, 2012; Mintz & Geva, 1993; Rousseau, 2005). Geva and Hanson (1999) have not described the regime-type, but let the participants decide upon that perception based on similarity of socio-cultural factors.

The perception of the words such as democracy, autocracy, and dictator can have a strong connotation for people. The word democracy can be seen as 'something good', but the concept is multi-interpretable. Political scientists already can rely on many different conceptualizations about democracy (Schedler & Sarsfield, 2007), let

alone what non-political scientist might perceive when they hear the word democracy. For example: a Chinese citizen might perceive the word democracy completely different than a US citizen (T. W. Smith, 2003). With that same logic, the words dictator, or autocracy, are heavily loaded words, and although there is little research to rely on, it is plausible to argue that these words have a negative connotation. Chinese citizens might not even perceive their own country to be an autocracy, while a political scientist would do so. If participants would perceive the word autocracy or dictator as a negative connotation, it might be that they would respond more to that notion than towards what such a concept actually entails. This is in particular important because we want to measure the assumed influence of liberal norms and democratic institutions, and with an unclear perception of these concepts, we might measure something else, something that is unrelated to the actual mechanism that is under scrutiny.

Figure 5.1 Map of the experimental setting



Thus, to avoid conceptual misperception, and to make sure that the core understanding - of what regime-type according to democratic peace theory entails-, is measured as accurately as possible, the practices of liberal democracy are described to measure the effect of democracy. The core concept of Dahl is used to describe these practices: the presence of fair, secret and regular elections, alternatives for information via media, citizens' rights to protest and trust that they will be treated

equally. Moreover, it is described that the citizens of Other Country feel free to say and be whomever they want to be without feeling any repercussions from the state or society. The second treatment of autocracy, based on the same logic, describes the practices of an autocracy, in which elections would be present, but irregular, with little options to choose for, and with a restriction of information and uncertainty about how free one is to say and be whoever one is. The autocratic practices are, however, described as neutral as possible, without any negative connotation or judgment. This treatment of regime-type is the factor 'regime' in the analyses below.

The interstate conflict

The scenario then proceeds with a description of the interstate conflict. As discussed in chapter 3, the issue of the conflict should be separated from the actions of the states and should be as neutral as possible, however threatening enough in itself. The concept of the issue was, therefore, an issue of resources that would suggest that both states would have the right to own these. Therefore, it is first described that both states possess uranium fields that are of great importance to the world, thereby aiming to create a condition that urges the participants to feel the pressure of this conflict. The choice for uranium fields bases itself on several pre-tests of several threatening scenarios on Dutch student populations. The pre-tests showed that a conflict over uranium is perceived as a more likely condition that might lead to war than conflicts over other natural resources (such as sweet water or oil).

With the choice for uranium, the issue in and of itself should have a realistic threat level. Secondly, the scenario describes a particular area with uranium fields that has been contested over by both states. Up to now, both states have been in conflict over this contested area, and no solution was reached. The aim is to indicate that both states could be the rightful owners of the resources, and no one is automatically perceived as the 'bad guy'. So, the issue is operationalized as an ongoing issue between both countries about a particular uranium field that has disputed borders. The status quo of the conflict, before any information about the actions of the opposing country is given, is that negotiations have been going on for a long time and have led to no results what so ever. This description indicates clearly that the conflict is serious. This part of the scenario is the same for all participants.

Invasion and Use of Power

The aim is to test the influence of two contextual factors, namely the behavior of the opposing state: an invasion and the use of power. Two randomized experimental treatments operationalize these behavioral factors by describing the behavior of *Other Country* in regard to an invasion and the use of power, respectively. Each factor is offered in two different treatments, fro which each is offered to about half of the participants.

The first factor, invasion, is operationalized by a description of how invasive the behavior of *Other Country* is. One treatment remains close to the initial 'neutral sense' of the conflict (as in both states seem right nor wrong), the other treatment depicts *Other Country* as invasive, or 'the bad guy'. The first treatment describes how

Other Country secretly exploits the contested area without consent, but without claiming the territory. It, moreover, describes that *Other Country* builds a nuclear program but claims it is for peaceful purposes only. The second treatment describes how *Other Country* officially confiscates the whole uranium field, positions warships around it and declares the field theirs. On top of that, the treatment describes that *Other Country* has secretly initiated a nuclear weapons program. Moreover, it mentions that *Other Country* counters a request from *My Country* to stop the program with the threat to use military force. In other words: *Other Country* is behaving more obviously as the 'bad guy' in this treatment. This factor is called 'invasion' in the analyses below.

The second factor, use of power, is operationalized by a description the way *Other Country* uses power to deter *My Country* from using military force to resolve their conflict. One treatment describes a soft use of power by *Other Country*, the other treatment describes a hard use of power. In the first treatment, *Other Country* uses rhetoric, expels the ambassador and diplomatic staff, and threatens to (but does not) freeze all payments. The threat is explicitly described as relatively low. In the second treatment, *Other Country* closes all borders, freezes payments, blocks the ports of *My Country*, holds military exercises along the border and gets all troops ready for combat. The threat is explicitly described as very high. This factor is called 'use of power' in the analyses below.

Decision-making: Willingness to Attack

The scenario ends by stating that after weeks of ongoing negotiations none of the countries have altered their position and that *My Country* needs to decide whether to attack *Other Country* or not. A questionnaire follows the experiment to measure, amongst other variables, the dependent variable: approval for an attack on the opponent. The first question is a binary option: attack or negotiate. After that, the participants are asked to indicate their approval for the foreign policy option to attack *Other Country* with a preventive strike on a 7 point rating scale that ranges from very strongly disapprove (1) to very strongly approve (7). The approval for other policy options is also measured on a 7-point scale, which will be discussed in the following chapter 6.

Liberal Norms

The questionnaire measures to which degree participants agree with several statements on a 7-point rating scale. The variable 'liberal norms' is measured as discussed in chapter 4. To recap briefly, the operationalization of these five dimensions roots in statements of existing measures of these concepts (*Measures of Political Attitudes*, 1999; *World Value Survey* 2010-2014), table 5.1 provides an overview of the single items used to measure freedom, autonomy, tolerance, interpersonal trust, and reciprocity. The sixth dimension, bounded rationality, is (just like in chapter 4) assumed. Participants indicate on a 7 point rating scale the degree to which they agree with the statements. The average of the sum of these five items constitutes the variable 'liberal norms' that is used in the analyses below.

Table 5.1 Liberal norms

Dimension	Items
Freedom	People choose their leaders in free elections
Autonomy	I feel that I have completely free choice and control over my life
Tolerance	It is necessary that everyone, regardless of whether I like their views or not, can express themselves freely
Trust	In general, I trust other people when I first meet them
Reciprocity	My consciousness guides my decisions about how to behave towards others

Hawkishness

The position participants take on the continuum hawkishness-dovishness is measured through the use of several statements that relate to the beliefs about conflict resolution. These statements are not just about conflict resolution on interstate-level, but also probe positions on conflict resolution on the personal level. The statements rely on an existing measure of beliefs about the nature of conflict resolution that range from support for cooperative behavior to offensive behavior to solve interstate conflicts (Rousseau & Garcia-Retamero, 2007), and on measures that relate to a more personal belief about how conflict should be resolved that range from using physical force or not to protect oneself (*World Value Survey* 2010-2014). Below follows a discussion of the used statements. The questionnaire measures the degree with which participants agree or disagree with the statements on a 7-point scale.

5.3 Procedure and Data Collection

Samples and execution

The experiment was conducted on 250 undergraduate students from the Higher School of Economics in St Petersburg, Russia in November 2014, on 251 undergraduate students from Binghamton University, Binghamton (NY) in the US in February 2015, and on 280 undergraduate students of the Chinese University for Political Science and Law in Beijing, China in April 2015. The research protocol was approved of by Binghamton University's Human Subject Committee, after the required review.

The experiments were conducted in regular university classrooms, after lectures. The scenario and following questionnaire was presented as a paper-and-pencil experiment and introduced as a survey about conflict resolution. The experiments were executed by either myself or one of my native research assistants. In China, I was not present in the classroom during the experiment, to ensure not to

introduce any bias (by the presence of a foreign investigator). In all instances, the research assistants were instructed very carefully about the protocol and, in particular, about ensuring randomization. In order to ensure that the participants would feel safe to participate in the experiment, they were explicitly told that their participation was voluntary, that their responses were treated confidential, that no details regarding identity were registered (such as student number or name), and that students were free to leave whenever they wanted. The instructions about the experiment were read out loud to the participants prior to the execution of the experiment. After completing the survey-experiment, a debriefing followed about the real purpose of the experiment. I entered all data myself during the fieldwork, except a small part (about 50 questionnaires) of the Chinese data that were entered by one of the Chinese research assistants.

Preparing the Data: Checks

The questionnaire checks for several issues. First of all, it checks whether participants are born and raised within the country they are tested. All participants who are not born and raised in the designated country (or left the answer open) are excluded from the dataset (China: 3 participants, Russia: 7 participants, US: 24 participants). A few participants, however, show to be born and raised in a regime-type similar[16] to the designated regime-type and are therefore included in the samples. The remaining participants are then categorized in a new variable (*Socialized*) based on the regime-type of their country: autocracy, hybrid, liberal democracy.

Secondly, the questionnaire checks whether the experimental treatments are perceived as intended. An inspection of these checks shows that all three treatments are perceived as intended. The question to indicate how democratic *Other Country* is shows that participants in the autocratic regime-type treatment find the target country on a 7-point scale significantly ($t(770) = -24.49$, $p < .001$) less democratic ($M = 1.97$, $SD = 1.24$) than participants in the democratic treatment ($M = 4.48$, $SD = 1.59$)[17]. Therefore, the measure of the treatment regime-type is included as a binary variable in the analysis called *Regime*. The question to indicate how violating participants consider the behavior of *Other Country* of *My Country's* territory shows that participants in the non-invasion treatment find the actions of target state on a 7-point scale significantly ($t(768) = -7.861$, $p < .005$) less violating ($M = 4.54$, $SD = 1.63$) than the participants in the invasion treatment ($M = 5.43$, $SD = 1.48$)[18]. Thus, the measure of the treatment invasion is included in the analysis as a binary variable called *Invasion*. The question to indicate how likely participants consider *Other Country* to attack *My Country* shows that participants in the hard power treatment find the target country on a 7-point scale significantly ($t(771) = -7.73$, $p < .001$) more likely to attack ($M = 4.96$, $SD = 1.55$) than the participants in the soft power

[16] The similarity and long time duration of the regime-type is based on Polity IV and Freedom House measures.
[17] Treatment checks of regime-type also differed significantly per country.
[18] Treatment checks of invasiveness also differed significantly per country.

treatment (M = 4.16, SD = 1.35)[19]. Hence, the measure of the treatment Use of Power is considered in the analysis as a binary variable called *Use of power*.

Lastly, the questionnaire checks whether or not the scenario reminds participants of a real-world scenario. This question controls for the possibility that respondents might have been triggered to use a real-world scenario to lead their answers rather than the perception of threat induced by the experimental setting. A total of 781 participants answers this question, from which 51,3% say they are reminded of a real-world conflict. When asked in an open question what specific conflict they think of, the answers show a strong variation, as well within as between the student samples. About 20 different conflicts are mentioned, such as the Cold War, Cuban Missile Crisis, Iraq and Iran, Israel and Palestine, North and South Korea, China and Japan over the South Chinese Sea, the Crimea conflict, India and Pakistan, the Gulf war, Middle Eastern oil conflicts, and more general nuclear conflicts. Based on these results, it is concluded that the hypothetical scenario is perceived as a realistic conflict situation, without reminding participants to one specific conflict that might have biased the results in a particular direction.

Previewing the Data: Liberal Norms

In chapter 4, the levels of liberal norms were measured for all three student samples. To recap the results briefly: the US sample scores highest on average (M= 5.14, SD=.71), together with the Chinese sample that scores about the same level (M=5.00, SD=.83) of liberal norms. There is no significant difference between these two groups. The Russian samples (M = 4.78, SD=.73) scores on average significantly lower ($F(2, 734) = 13.2$, $p < .001$, $r = .18$) than the other two samples. All samples score on average well on the positive side of the midpoint (4) of the scale, and all three samples show a similar and about normally divided variation pattern. The individual scores of the participants are considered within the analysis as an independent variable.

Preparing the data: Hawkishness measure

To measure hawkishness, the questionnaire asks the participants to indicate on a 7-point scale to what degree they agree or disagree with statements about conflict resolution. The statements are about interstate conflict resolution, but also about interpersonal conflict resolution. The answers to six of these statements, the items, are used to build a construct. Table 5.2 gives an overview of these six items.

As table 5.2 also indicates, the items together do not form a strongly reliable scale[20]. However, although the reliability of the scale with a Cronbach alpha of .489 is low, the items correlate significantly together. Moreover, there is a level of coherence while deleting items would decrease the reliability of the scale. Having this said, there is a more important reason to use a construct rather than a single item to measure hawkishness. As indicated in chapter 3, hawkishness is not yet theoretically sharply

[19] Treatment checks of use of power also differed significantly per country.
[20] A principal component analysis suggests more dimensions, however, it is inconclusive because there are no clear differences between items that indicate clearly defined factors.

developed within the literature and is generally connected to positions towards specific interstate conflicts. This study aims to measure hawkishness as a more general concept that probes the willingness to use force during any conflict resolution, even when it is an interpersonal conflict. Therefore a measure should include different items that relate to different aspects of this more general concept. The used scale might not be the strongest; the items do correlate and, moreover, relate conceptually to each other in a meaningful way.

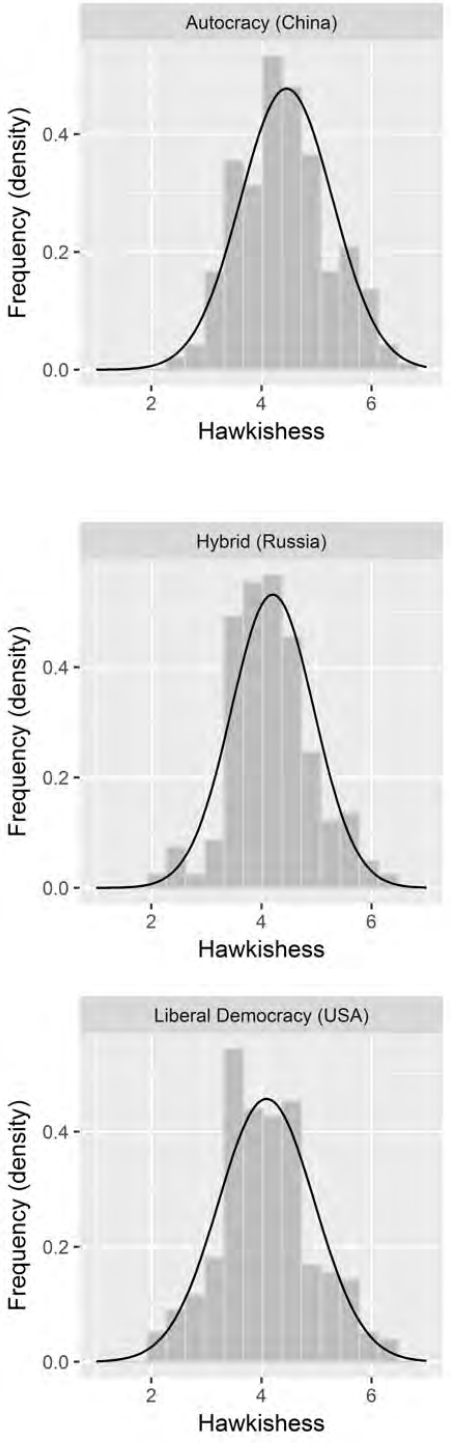
Table 5.2 Items used for the Hawkishness scale

Items	***α if item deleted***
States are generally not trustworthy: they will attempt to expand their territory if they have the chance.	.479
In general, international organizations are ineffective because they lack the power necessary to change the behavior of powerful states.	.447
The use or threat of nuclear weapons is a necessary instrument for states in order to survive as a state.	.366
It is important to teach children to defend themselves physically if necessary.	.450
Everybody thinks of themselves first, so I will have to protect myself and my family before I consider others.	.440
The worst way for us to keep peace is by trying to work out agreements at the bargaining table rather than by having a very strong military so other countries won't attack us. *(scale reversed)*	.469
	α = .489

Thus, the variable hawkishness exists of the average scores of the sum of these six items. The individual scores of participants are considered in the analysis as an independent variable. Is created by taking the average of the sum of these six items. Absolute doves score a 1, absolute hawks score a 7, and the midpoint of 4 differentiates between more hawkish and more dovish.

The level of hawkishness on the sample as a whole shows that on average the participants are a bit more leaning towards hawkishness than dovishness (M= 4.27, SD=.84) when the midpoint of 4 is considered as point where hawks become doves, and vice versa. The Chinese samples scores on average the highest on hawkishness (M=4.45, SD=.84), followed by the Russian sample (M=4.21, SD=.75) and then the US sample (M=4.12, SD=.88). Those seemingly slight differences are significant ($F(2,698.7) = 12.64$, $p \leq .001$, $r = .18$), but have a small effect. These results indicate that on average the Chinese participants are significantly more hawkish than the Russians, and the US students are significantly less hawkish than the Russian and the Chinese samples.

Figure 5.2 Levels of hawkishness in China, Russia, and the US



The patterns within the three samples show, again just like liberal norms, a variation that approximate a normal distribution, as evidenced in figure 5.2. The patterns indicate that being a hawk or a dove can be considered to be an actor-centric belief.

Gender
The variable of gender is binary and shows that 39% of the sample is male and 61% is female.

Willingness to attack
The binary question that follows immediately upon the scenario ask respondents whether they would like to continue to negotiate or to attack. From all respondents (N=745) 79.5% answers to prefer to negotiate, while only 18.4% answers to want to attack. The results show an extremely uneven distribution of this variable. Therefore, instead of this variable, a more nuanced measure is used. The question to indicate their level of agreement with an attack on *Other Country* on a 7-point rating scale shows to be skewed (skew=.739). This indicates that most participants lean towards disagreeing with an attack. However, there is sufficient variation (M=2.99, Var = 2.83, SD=1.68) to use this variable as the dependent variable in the following analyses.

5.4 Results

This study uses an analysis of variance (ANOVA) and an analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) to study the influence of the factors regime-type, invasive behavior and the use of power of the opponent, the influence of liberal norms in interaction with regime-type and socialization, liberal norms as an individual-based factor, the influence of hawkishness, and the influence of gender. Table 5.3 shows the results. Model 1 shows the results of the ANOVA that bring together the treatments regime, invasiveness, use of power, socialization, and all possible interaction effects of these treatments and analyses the influence of these factors on the willingness to attack. Model 2 shows the results of the ANCOVA in which the same treatments and interactions are combined with the continuous variables liberal norms, hawkishness, the hypothesized interaction effects of liberal norms with socialization and regime-type, and controls for gender. The results of Model 2 offer the evidence to find support for the hypotheses. Model 1 is merely included to provide clarity of how the treatments might affect the willingness to attack of decision-makers. Below follows a discussion of the results.

Table 5.3 Explanatory factors for the willingness to attack

	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3		
	F		η^2	F		η^2	F		η^2
Treatments									
Regime	.39		.00	.27		.00	.25		.00
Invasion	2.80		.00	1.58		.00	1.39		.00
Use of power	8.38	**	.01	6.75	**	.01	6.67	**	.01
Socialization	29.56	****	.08	2.53	†	.01	.28		.00
Regime*Invasion	.57		.00	2.05		.00	1.93		.00
Regime*Use of power	.00		.00	.00		.00	.02		.00
Regime*Socialization	.30		.00	.20		.00	.19		.00
Invasion*Use of power	.05		.00	.36		.00	.51		.00
Invasion*Socialization	.80		.00	.23		.00	.43		.00
Use of power*Socialization	.82		.00	1.52		.01	1.33		.00
Regime*Invasion*Use of power	2.21		.00	1.67		.00	1.70		.00
Regime*Invasion*Socialization	.07		.00	.38		.00	.28		.00
Regime*Use of power* Socialization	.52		.00	.59		.00	.72		.00
Invasion*Use of power* Socialization	.33		.00	1.96		.01	1.83		.01
Regime*Invasion*Use of power* Socialization	.41		.00	.50		.00	.42		.00
Other factors									
Liberal norms				.03		.00	.01		.00
Hawkishness				104.12	****	.13	101.35	****	.13
Gender				.44		.00	.07		.00
Liberal Norms*Socialization				.54		.00	.33		.00
Liberal Norms*Regime				.37		.00	.35		.00
Liberal Norms*Socialization*Regime				.16		.00	.13		.00
Hawkishness*Socialization							5.26	***	.02
R^2	.10			.23			.24		
N	744			715			715		

†= p<.1, *= p<.05, **= p≤.01, ***= p<.005, ****=p<.001

Democratic peace theory

Democratic peace theory assumes a significant difference between decision-makers of liberal democracies and decision-makers of other regime-types in their willingness to attack liberal democracies. To find support for these theories, decision-makers of a liberal democracy would have to be significantly less willing to attack a liberal democracy over an autocracy, while their willingness to attack an autocracy would be similar to the willingness of decision-makers of non-democratic regimes to attack an opponent with any regime-type.

The analyses below investigate these expectations. To find support for hypothesis 3*: If at least one of the states in an interstate conflict does not have democratic institutions, its decision-makers will be more likely to use military action against the other state, but if both of the states have democratic institutions, decision-makers will be less likely to take military action against the other state*, there should be a significant influence from the interaction regime-type and socialization on the willingness to attack. Such interaction would be US decision-makers who respond differently towards a democracy than towards an autocracy, in contrast to the Russian and Chinese decision-makers who would not distinguish between a democratic or autocratic opponent.

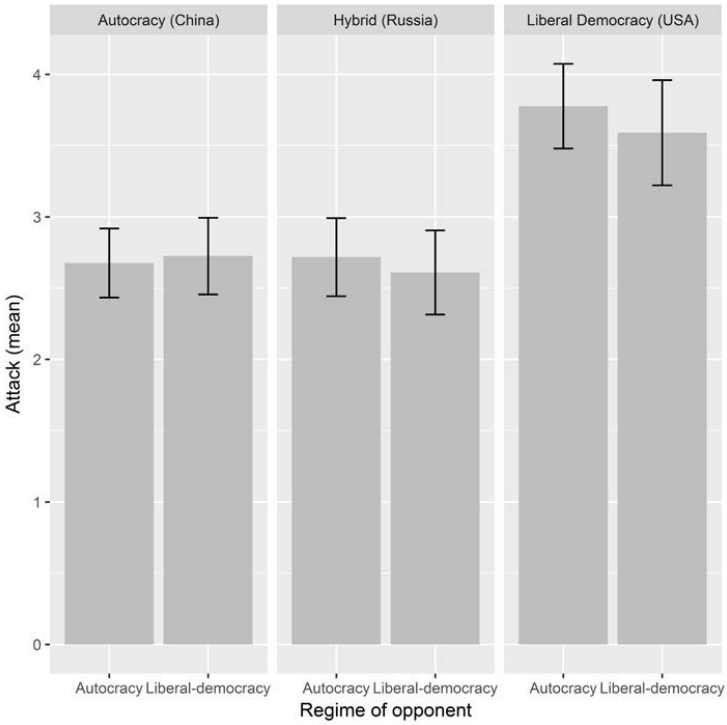
Table 5.3 shows that this interaction effect does not have any influence (F_{model2} = .20, η^2 = .00). Figure 5.3 portraits the willingness to attack of decision-makers on average per country and shows that regime-type[21] is not of influence on the decision to attack. This result is alike cross-regime[22]: nor the US decision-makers, neither the Russian and Chinese decision-makers differentiate between a democratic of an autocratic opponent. The expectation that decision-makers of liberal democracies respond differently to different regime-types than decision-makers of non-democratic regimes does not find empirical support.

Although the regime-type of the opponent does not significantly influence the decision-makers of all three countries, there is a different noteworthy result regarding the regime-type of the decision-makers (the factor socialization). Figure 5.3 also shows that the US decision-makers (M = 3.69, SD=1.78) are on average significantly more willing to attack any opponent ($F(2, 742) = 29.9$, $p<.001$, $r=.28$) than the Russian (M = 2.67, SD=1.50) or the Chinese decision-makers (M = 2.70, SD=1.53). Democratic peace theory would indeed expect such results for the Russian and Chinese decision-makers, however, not for the US decision-makers. The US decision-makers would be expected to be less war-prone, at least towards other democracies, but would not be expected to be more war-prone overall.

[21] From the analysis of the treatment check we know the treatment regime-type was perceived by participants as intended, which means that the participants were well aware of the difference in regime-type.

[22] Also when all decision-makers are considered as one sample, there is no significant influence of regime-type ($t(774) = .42$)

Figure 5.3 Attack by regime and socialized



Error bars indicate 95% confidence interval

Within a multivariate analysis, this difference between the US decision-makers, on the one hand, and Russian and Chinese decision-makers, on the other hand, remains to be of significant influence (F_{model1}=29.53, p<.001, η^2 = .08; F_{model2}= 2.53, p < .1, η^2 = .01). The significance of the factor socialization indicates that there is indeed a socialization effect visible. However, it is unclear what kind of socialization effect this is, at this point in the analysis. In model 1, only the influence of the experimental treatments are tested. Model 2, then, introduces liberal norms, hawkishness, gender, and interaction effects of these factors with the treatment factors. The explanatory power of the factor socialization decreases strongly in model 2, compared to its influence in model 1. This finding indicates that one of the newly introduced factors in model 2 might be responsible, something that will be explored below.

For now, the conclusion is that regime-type does not seem to be of influence on the socialization effect. These results, therefore, show that the assumptions of democratic peace theory that posit that there must be an interaction between the regime-type of the decision-makers and the regime-type of the opposing state when trying to resolve a severe interstate conflict do not find support. Hypothesis 3, thus, does not find support.

Democratic peace theory also assumes that liberal norms are of influence on the willingness to attack. To recap briefly, there are two expectations about the effect of liberal norms. In chapter 4 was established that contrary to the expectations of democratic peace theory, liberal norms are not only present in liberal democracies but also present within different regime-types. Therefore, the assumptions of democratic peace theory that high levels of liberal norms exist only within liberal democracies do not find not support. These findings, however, do not show the possible influence these norms can have on decision-makers, in particular in relation to the regime-type of the opponent. In other words, although liberal norms are present among decision-makers of all regime-types, democratic peace theory could still be right that these norms only influence decision-makers within liberal-democracies, as hypothesis 5 posited*: A higher level of liberal norms will make it less likely for decision-makers to use military action against a state with a liberal political culture; however, a lower level of liberal norms will make it more likely for decision-makers to take military action against any opposing state, regardless of their political culture.*

These expectations do not find support. Table 5.3 shows that the interaction between liberal norms, socialization and regime-type has no significant influence on the willingness to go to war (F_{model2} = .37, η^2 = .00). Also interactions of liberal norms with regime-type only (F_{model2} = .37, η^2 = .00) or socialization only (F_{model2} = .54, η^2 = .00) are not of significant influence. With these results, also hypothesis 5 does not find support.

Chapter 4 showed that liberal norms vary similarly among decision-makers of different regimes. With democratic peace theory in mind, it led to the speculation that liberal norms could influence decision-makers, in general, to be more peaceful. This speculation resulted in hypothesis 9: *Decision-makers with higher levels of liberal norms will be less willing to take military action against an opposing state during a severe interstate conflict than decision-makers with lower levels of liberal norms.*

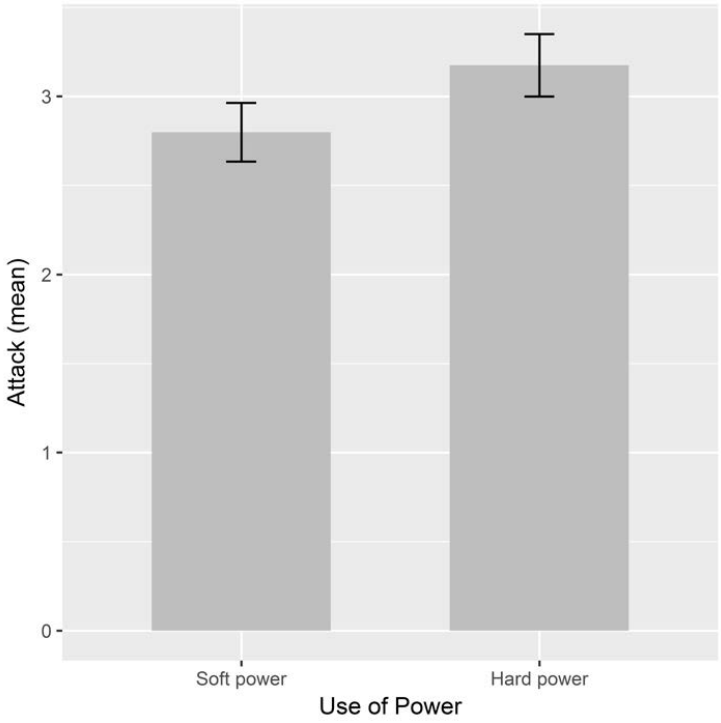
Also this expectation does not find support as table 5.3 shows (F_{model2} = .03, η^2 = .00). Individual liberal norms do not influence the willingness to take military action. Therefore, the conclusion based on these results is that the core assumptions of the democratic peace theory do not find support.

Behavior of opponent

An alternative explanation for the willingness to attack another state during a severe interstate conflict is the behavior of the opponent. This behavior is operationalized in two other treatments of the experiment: whether or not the opponent invades territory of the opponent, and the opponent's use of power. From the treatment check, we know that 'invasion' as a treatment is perceived as intended: the participants see the invasive treatment as significantly more violating the territory of their own country than the non-invasive treatment. However, that perceived difference in invasive behavior of *Other Country* does not show to have a significant relationship with their willingness to go to war. Whether or not the opponent invaded

the disputed area does not have a significant influence on the willingness to attack (F*model1* = 2.8, η^2 = .00; F*model2* = 1.58, η^2 = .00). These results are alike for all three samples; cross-regime, the invasion of the opponent did not show a significant relationship with the willingness to attack. Also when an invasion is considered to interact with other treatments such as regime–type, and use of power, there is no significant influence. Thereby hypothesis 1: *During a severe interstate conflict, decision-makers will be more likely to take military action towards the opposing state that invades their territory over the opposing state that does not invade their territory*, is unsupported.

Figure 5.4 Attack by use of power

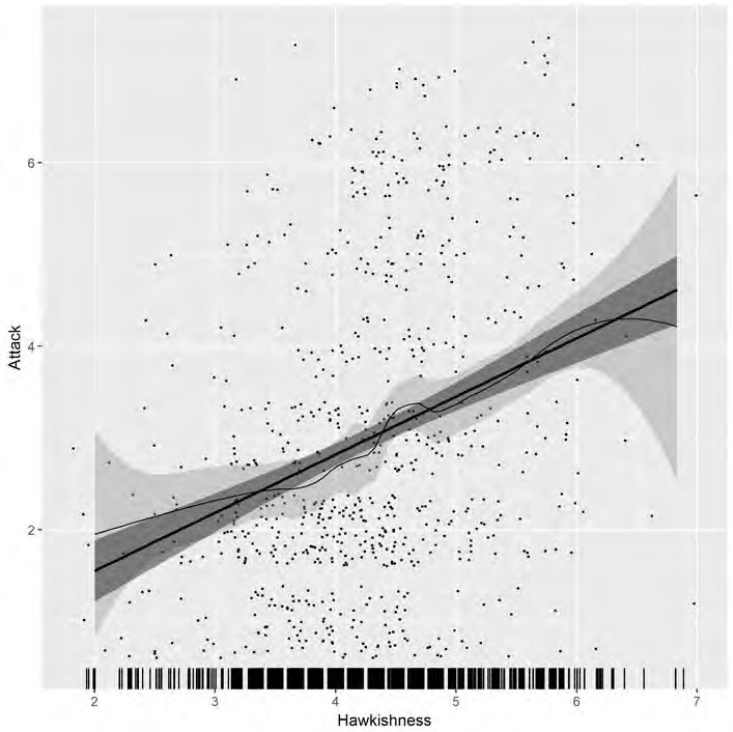


Error bars indicate 95% confidence interval

The treatment 'use of power' was perceived as intended, and this factor shows to have a significant relationship with the willingness to attack. Figure 5.4 shows a significant difference (t(741,14) = -3.07, p < .01) in the willingness to attack between the different treatments of the use of power: decision-makers that experience the use of hard power (M=3.20, SD=1.73) by the opponent show to be significantly more willing to attack than decision-makers that experience the use of soft power (M=2.82, SD=1.64). This influence remains within a multivariate analysis: that the use of hard power increases the willingness to go to war significantly (F*model1* = 8.38, p < .01,

η^2=.01; F*model2* = 6.75, p< .01, η^2=.01). Thereby hypothesis 2: *During a severe interstate conflict, decision-makers will be more likely to take military action towards the opposing state that uses hard power over the opposing state that uses soft power*, finds support.

Figure 5.5 Relationship between hawkishness and attack[23]



Shades indicate 95% confidence interval
Rug indicates density

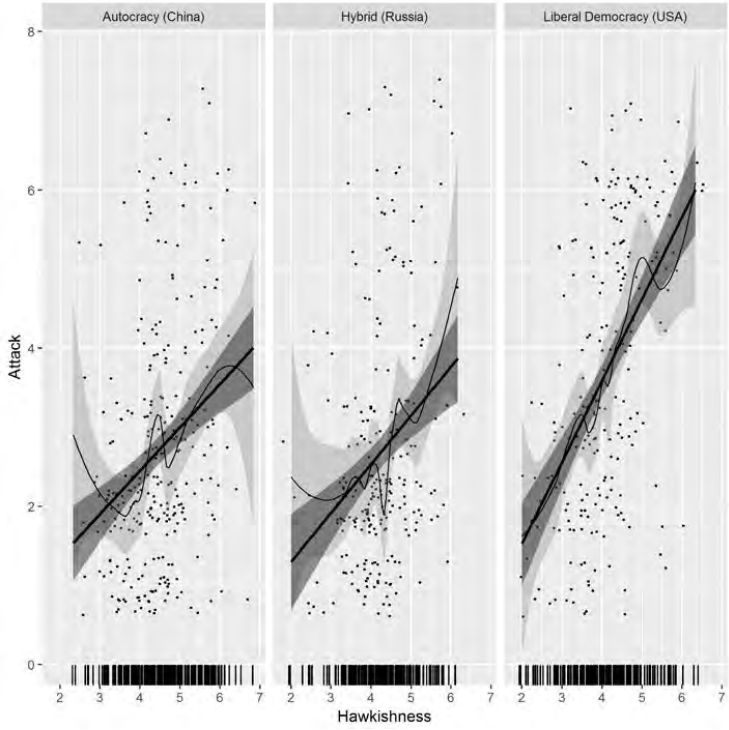
The relative explanatory power of hawkishness might shed light on the decreasing effect of socialization in model 2. Socialization, when tested in model 1 only along with the other treatments, shows to be of significant influence (F*model1*=29.56, p<.001, η^2 = .08). The conclusion of analyzing model 1 is that there is a significant difference in the willingness to attack from US decision-makers in comparison with Russian and Chinese decision-makers. With the introduction of the factors liberal norms and hawkishness in model 2 the effect and significance of the explanatory

[23] The scatterplot shows the relation between the level of hawkishness and the willingness to attack. The straight line is the regression line that represents the linear relationship. The curved line is the LOESS regression estimate that gives closer observations more weight and is therefore better able to detect non-linear patterns (if existing). The shades belonging to the lines represent the 95% confidence intervals. The rug, drawn on the horizontal axis, indicates the density.

power of socialization decreases strongly (F*model1* = 29.53, p < .001, η^2 = .08; F*model2* = 2.53, p < .1, η^2 = .01). The best explanation for that decrease is the introduction of the individually-based explanatory factors. The factor hawkishness is the only factor that has a significant and substantial influence on the willingness to attack, which finding results in the question if the socialization effect is created by the factor hawkishness. It might be that the hawks of one specific country are more willing to attack than hawks of other countries.

To test for this inductively discovered interaction, model 3 also includes the interaction effect between socialization and hawkishness. Table 5.3 shows that this interaction is indeed the explanation for the socialization effect. The results show that the interaction between hawkishness and socialization has a small but substantial effect (F*model3* = 5.26, p < .005, η^2 = .02). The factor socialization, which was a strong explanatory factor in model 1, a weak explanatory factor in model 2, looses all significant and substantial explanatory in model 3 (F*model1* = 29.56, p < .001, η^2 = .08; F*model2* = 2.53, p < .1, η^2 = .01; F*model3* = .28, p >.005, η^2 = .00).

Figure 5.6 Relationship between hawkishness, socialization, and attack



Shades indicate 95% confidence interval
Rug indicates density

Hawkishness, as an independent factor, remains its strong and substantial explanatory power, also in model 3 ($F_{model2} = 104.12$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .13$; $F_{model3} = 101.35$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .13$). Thus, hawkishness is indeed the main explanatory factor of the willingness of decision-makers to attack. These results are very clear: hawkishness explains for all decision-makers best the willingness to attack, and most strongly for US decision-makers[24]. A quick inspection of the other significant factors in the model shows that there are no substantial changes, the use of power remains constant and substantial in its effect on the willingness to attack ($F_{model1} = 8.38$, $p < .01$, $\eta^2=.01$; $F_{model2} = 6.75$, $p< .01$, $\eta^2=.01$; $F_{model3} = 6.67$, $p<.01$, $\eta^2=.01$).

Gender

Unlike some previous studies, whether decision-makers are male or female shows to be of no influence on their willingness to attack. Thereby hypothesis 8: *During a severe interstate conflict, male decision-makers will be more likely to take military action towards the opposing state over female decision-makers,* does not find support.

5.5 Conclusion

What influences decision-makers to decide to attack another country when on the brink of war? The theoretical framework in chapter 3 formulates several hypotheses. Each hypothesis offers a factor that can explain why decision-makers are willing to go to war. These hypotheses build on the premise that decision-makers who are trying to resolve an interstate conflict on the brink of war will need information what factors are involved in making up their mind. The explicit assumption used in this research is that if decision-makers perceive the threat of a conflict as very high, they prefer to attack the opposing country to end the conflict. The question is what factors influence the increase (or decrease) of this threat perception.

This research tested several factors and studied the influence these have on the willingness to attack. First of all, democratic peace theory posits that the factor regime-type functions as a moderating factor that will decrease the willingness to go to attack, in particular among decision-makers that are themselves socialized within a liberal democratic regime. If decision-makers of liberal democracies know that the opponent is also a liberal democracy, the expectation is that the threat of the conflict decreases significantly so that these decision-makers will be less likely to attack. If they know, however, that the opponent is an autocracy, the threat is expected to increase significantly which will make their willingness to attack more likely.

Secondly, democratic peace theory also claims that individuals (and therefore also decision-makers) in liberal democracies are socialized with liberal norms, in contrast to individuals in other regime-types, and furthermore that these norms are of influence on the willingness to go to war with other liberal democracies. In chapter 4, it was established that liberal norms are prevailing within all types of regimes, and

[24] A test showed that hawkishness did not have an interaction effect with any of the other treatments.

moreover varying similarly within different types of regime. This finding shows that the assumption of democratic peace about the presence and absence of liberal norms in liberal democracies and autocracies respectively does not find empirical support. In this chapter, it is, however, tested whether the level of liberal norms does influence decision-makers of liberal democracies when they encounter other democracies during interstate conflicts, as is expected by democratic peace theory. Additional, it also tested whether the level of liberal norms affects decision-makers in general, regardless their regime-type thereby understanding liberal norms as an actor-centric factor rather than a structurally-based factor as democratic peace theory does.

Thirdly, the behavior of the opposing state is considered as possibly influencing decision-makers to be willing to attack. This study tests whether an invasion by the opponent significantly increases the willingness to attack. Moreover, it tests if the use of hard power of the opponent increases the willingness to attack. Fourthly, besides the influence of actor-centric liberal norms as discussed above, other actor-centric factors are considered. This study tests if the level of hawkishness of decision-makers influences their willingness to go to war. Moreover, the study controls for gender as a possible influencer on the willingness to go to war. The analyses also included all relevant interactions. The study tested the hypotheses on decision-makers that were born and raised within three different regime-types: the US (liberal democracy), Russia (hybrid regime), and China (autocracy). Student samples were used as a proxy for decision-makers.

The results of this chapter show that the hypotheses generated by democratic peace theory does not find support. Regime-type did not influence the willingness to attack, also not for liberal-democratic decision-makers. Also when tested in interaction with the behavior of the other state, such as the use of power or an invasion, the results showed that regime-type did not influence decision-makers to be more willing to attack. Regarding the influence of liberal norms in interaction with the regime-type of the decision-makers (socialized) and the regime-type of the opponent, there was no significant influence on the willingness to attack. Moreover, also on the individual level liberal norms showed to be of no significant influence. Although it is assumed throughout the democratic peace literature (Danilovic & Clare, 2007; Dixon, 1994; Dixon & Senese, 2002, p. 549; Geva et al., 1993; Geva & Hanson, 1999; Jakobsen et al., 2016; Johns & Davies, 2012; Kahl, 1998; Z. Maoz & Russett, 1993, p. 625; Mintz & Geva, 1993; Mousseau, 1997; Owen, 1994; Rawls, 1999; Ray, 1995; Risse-Kappen, 1995; Rousseau, 2005, pp. 27-28; Rummel, 1983; Tomz & Weeks, 2013; Van Belle, 1997; Weart, 1998, pp. 75-93) that liberal norms are of influence on the willingness to use force, in particular among decision-makers of liberal democracies, this research shows that there is no evidence to support that assumption. The assumptions that liberal democracy does something special with its citizens that makes them 'morally more advanced' (Doyle, 1983a, 1983b, 1986; Kant, 1795/2013a; Z. Maoz & Russett, 1993; Rawls, 1999) and that would make them subsequently more peace prone, is empirically simply not supported.

Thus, decision-makers of liberal democracy and other regime-types alike showed not to be influenced by the regime-type of the opponent, nor their own

regime-type, or by the level of liberal norms. The conclusion is thus that democratic peace theory that aim to explain why decision-makers of liberal democracies tend not to fight with other liberal democracies do not find support empirically. The core assumptions of democratic peace, the essential building blocks of democratic peace theory that are used untested as empirical facts, do not find any support when tested along with alternative hypotheses in a comparative framework. These are important findings for democratic peace theory.

As argued above, previous experimental studies into the mechanisms of democratic peace theory (Bakker, 2017; Geva et al., 1993; Geva & Hanson, 1999; Johns & Davies, 2012; Mintz & Geva, 1993; Rousseau, 2005; Tomz & Weeks, 2013) focused mainly on the influence regime-type could have on the decision-making process. These studies have (except Bakker (2017)) not controlled for the assumed difference between decision-makers of different regime-types, nor have they measured or tested for the influence of liberal norms. What this study shows is how important it is to consider that assumed variance of socialization processes within different regimes (since these processes turn out to have a different output than assumed), and moreover, how important it is to introduce other relevant factors that might influence decision-makers to decide to attack.

The introduction of behavioral factors of the opposing state into the current study shows to provide intriguing new insights. Whether or not the opposing state invaded territory, showed to be of no significant influence. This result surprises; an invasion would seem to increase the threat of a conflict significantly, but it did not. A look at the scenario might clarify. In the used scenario *Other Country* does not invade the actual country but a more distant and uninhabited territory of *My Country*. The invaded territory is indeed richly filled with important resources, but the fact that it is uninhabited might have caused a less threatening situation for decision-makers then when it would have been *My Country* itself. This lesser threat perception might not lead to a significantly greater willingness to attack.

The use of hard power, however, shows to have a significant effect. The use of hard power over soft power shows to be of significant influence, and separate from other possibly influential factors (no interaction effect was detected). Its power also remains consistent over the three different models. Concluding, the hard use of power by the opponent during a severe interstate conflict significantly influences the willingness of decision-makers to attack them.

The introduction of actor-centric factors shows to be of value for the study of the decision-making processes during severe interstate conflicts, and in particular in relation to the democratic peace, something that was already raised by myself and others (Bakker, 2017, pp. 538-539; Farnham, 2003; Hermann & Kegley, 1995). The results of the current study show that what decision-makers already believe personally about conflict resolution is the most dominant explanatory factor: the more hawkish decision-makers are, the more likely they are to attack the opponent. The factor 'hawkishness' is unrelated to the conflict at hand and relies solely on the personal beliefs of decision-makers. Beliefs that must have been formed prior in their lives and are therefore not closely connected to the actual information that the

decision-makers have about the conflict and the opponent. This finding indicates that decisions to go to war might be less influenced by the conflict itself and have more to do with the way decision-makers already believe they should act to solve severe and threatening conflicts. This is an important insight, not only for democratic peace theory in particular but just as well for theories of conflict resolution and decision-making in general. Generally, these studies focus strongly on system-level and state-level structures and the assumed impact these have on decision-makers. The results of this study, however, show that beliefs held by individual decision-makers are of importance. It might be rather life itself that has socialized decision-makers individually with specific beliefs than structural circumstances. How to perceive a situation might be less triggered by what you see, but more by what you believe to be true. A finding that falls in line with work of other scholars that have argued that decision-makers tend to assess a situation or opponent based on what they expect to see (see e.g. Jervis, 1976, pp. pp. 356-381).

Hawkishness explains best and strongest the willingness to attack of all decision-makers of all three countries. However, the results show there was also an interaction effect of hawkishness and socialization. Although the average level of hawkishness is significantly lower among US decision-makers than among Russian and Chinese decision-makers, hawkish US decision-makers showed to be significantly more willing to attack. Hawks are in general more likely to attack, that goes for all decision-makers. Moreover, although on average there are less US hawks, if US decision-makers are hawkish, they are more willing to attack, even more than their counterparts in Russia and China. These findings show that although there seemed to be a socialization effect, it has nothing to do with liberal norms or regime-type, as democratic peace theory claims. The outcome was solely based on the level of hawkishness of the US sample. This finding raises the question if these results can be generalized for other US raised individuals. This question cannot be answered in this study but is surely reason for further investigation. These implications will be addressed in the concluding chapter 8.

To sum up, from the possible factors that decision-makers could be influenced by to opt for war to resolve an interstate conflict, there are two clear ones: first of all, the hawkishness of decision-makers, and secondly the use of power of the opposing state. Considering the relative strength of these two factors, it is obvious that hawkishness seems to explain best why decision-makers attack. Hawkishness is, however, a factor that has no direct relationship with the actual interstate conflict. An inspection of a possible interaction between hawkishness and the use of power shows that there is none. Which means that even though one contextual factor, the use of power in relation to the conflict, influences decision-makers to be more willing to attack, the influence of the use of power is unrelated to the hawkishness of decision-makers. Whether or not the behavior of the opponent will influence decision-makers during an interstate conflict, their hawkishness will do so in any case.

A few questions in relation to the influence of these factors remain. Based on these results, it seems that the foundations of democratic peace theory are empirically unsupported. That is a rather strong statement that can only be

postulated carefully. Therefore, a robustness check might be prudent. Such check might be to test the influence of the same factors on different foreign policy options that might be decided for during a severe interstate conflict. As discussed in chapter 3, the black and white conceptualization of war and peace –as used by democratic peace theory- is problematic. This problem shows itself, in particular, when testing possible explanations for the democratic peace because these try to capture the decision-making before the actual outcome of war and peace. Following earlier micro-level studies, this study has operationalized the willingness to attack as a proxy of a decision-maker willing to go to war. Simply because, from all foreign policy options available, an attack seems to be most threatening and therefore most likely to escalate eventually into a full-blown war. There are, however, scholars that might argue that the democratic peace exists not so much because liberal democracies are less willing to fight with other liberal democracies, but because they are more willing to continue to negotiate with them (an argument that might resonate with the argument of Risse-Kappen (1995)). Until now, it has been assumed by the body of earlier work, and by myself, that when measuring the willingness to attack, the *un*willingness to attack would more or less equate a willingness to *negotiate*. Whether or not that is true, is an empirical question.

Therefore, the next chapter executes a robustness test in which the same experiment is used among the same samples to see whether these factors influence the willingness to negotiate, and moreover, whether the found influence is also valid when other policy options that range between to negotiate and to attack are decided for.