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Hawks and doves. Democratic peace theory revisited

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Curriculum Vitae

Femke Elisabeth Bakker (30 January 1972, Bergen op Zoom) graduated from Fontys Hogescholen in 1995 as a professional actor and worked as such in theater and for Dutch television during the 1990s and early 2000s. During these years she also started to write for television and, later on, for weekly and monthly magazines. She started to study Political Science at the Institute of Political Science of Leiden University and graduated cum laude in 2010, after which she enrolled in the Research master of the same institute. She graduated in 2012 (cum laude) and her master thesis was awarded with several thesis awards, including the prestigious Daniel Heinsius Thesis Award from the Dutch Political Science Association (NKWP) and the Flemish Political Science Association (VVP) for Best Political Science Master Thesis of the Netherlands and Flanders. Between September 2013 and September 2017, she was employed as a PhD-researcher at the same institute that trained her. Currently, she works as an assistant professor in Political Science at her alma mater. Femke's research has been published in *Acta Politica*, *Perspectives on Political Science*, *Review of Middle East Economics and Finance*, and *Res Publica*. She is also an associate researcher of the Laboratory for Comparative Social Research (LCSR), a member of the Early Career Committee (ECC) of the International Society for Political Psychologists (ISPP), and book reviews editor of the international peer reviewed political science journal *Acta Politica*.

Stellingen

Stellingen

Behorende bij het proefschrift *Hawks and Doves. Democratic peace theory revisited* van Femke Elisabeth Bakker.

1. Democratic peace theory needs to be revised and take the individual level perspective into account. [this dissertation]
2. The micro-level assumptions on which democratic peace theory rests need to be tested empirically and cannot be used without such a test. [this dissertation]
3. It does not suffice to refer to Kant as a theoretical argument for democratic peace research without explaining the specific interpretation of Kant's work. [this dissertation]
4. Liberal norms are individually held values rather than norms instilled by the structure of a political regime. [this dissertation]
5. Hawkishness of decision-makers explains their decisions during conflict resolution best. [this dissertation]
6. Structure-centric theories of political science and international relations need political psychology to inform them about the validity of their assumptions. [subject area]
7. Whether the agent-structure relationship is one-directional, two-directional or dialectical, it is prudent to include the actor's perspective within theories of political science and international relations. [subject area]
8. Experiments are an excellent research instrument to test the microfoundations of International Relations theories. [subject area]
9. Research in the field of international relations could benefit from leaving the normative perspectives of its grand theories behind. [subject area]
10. Writing a dissertation, or any writing that takes up a lot of your time, should follow a path of inspiration rather than a path of motivation. [own choice]
11. Conducting research can benefit immensely from a daily meditation practice. [own choice]
12. Individuals are naturally born with an actor-centric perspective, after which life tends to convince them to submit to the surrounding structures. Those that manage to maintain (or regain) an actor-centric perspective are able to experience a genuine feeling of freedom. [own choice]
13. You create your own reality: what you believe is what you see. [own choice]

What influences decision-makers to decide to attack another country when they are on the brink of war? The main aim of this study is to detect if there is a causal mechanism underlying the decision to attack another country when on the brink of war, and whether or not this mechanism differs between regime-types. It investigates whether or not regime-type, the nature of the conflict, the power used, and hawkish beliefs of decision-makers matter in this decision.

By addressing this question from a political psychological and comparative perspective, this dissertation tests the microfoundations of democratic peace theory simultaneously with alternative theories of decision-making during conflict resolution. The core analytical instrument is a decision-making experiment, executed in the US, Russia, and China. The experimental results are triangulated with a large N study, and a case study.

The overall results show that although the democratic peace as an empirical regularity might still be valid, the theoretical arguments to explain why democracies do not fight with each other turn out to have been built on empirically unsupported foundations. This study argues that an actor-based approach towards decision-making processes within international relations offers important insights to the more structured-based theories of international relations. It thereby convincingly shows that the individual matters, also in international relations.