offenders were given nutritional supplements and the other half a placebo, serious offences by members of the former group were reduced by 37 percent. More striking than this finding, however, is the blank refusal of the British Home Office and Prison Service to accept, let alone to act, on it (see *Prisongate: The Shocking State of Britain's Prisons and the Need for Visionary Change*, Free Press, 2003, 265 pp., £ 20, by Sir David Ramsbotham, the chief inspector of prisons for England, Wales, and Northern Ireland from 1996 to 2001). This kind of contempt for facts when it comes to matters of crime and punishment—even among highly educated people—is far from universal in advanced countries, but it recurs in both the United States and the United Kingdom. It, too, needs to be explained and those who are guilty of such contempt—many of our legislators and administrators—need to be punished and reeducated, just as much as our criminals do.

–Alasdair MacIntyre

## BUSYING GIDDY MINDS

Edward D. Mansfield and Jack Snyder: *Electing to Fight: Why Emerging Democracies Go to War* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2005. Pp. ix, 300. $32.95.)

DOI: 10.1017/S0034670507000691

*Electing to Fight* seeks to qualify the democratic peace thesis with its claim that democracies do not go to war with one another. Mansfield and Snyder accept the idea that "mature democracies" do not fight, but they make the counterintuitive argument that "democratizing states" are not only inclined to go to war, but are even more inclined than most other types of states. Thus, the book refutes the notion that promoting democracy of autocratic states will lead to a peaceful world.

The book is divided into three parts: a theory section, an analysis of statistical data, and a series of case studies that examine the casual mechanisms of their argument.

Mansfield and Snyder assert that democratizing states, or "mixed regimes," are very prone to war because they are domestically unstable. As the masses become mobilized and part of the political process, demands are placed on the system that cannot easily be met, for democratizing states lack the institutions needed to channel popular aspirations into peaceful and constructive endeavors, even though the masses are not necessarily bellicose at first. Mansfield and Snyder claim that elites, particularly more traditional ones, see that they can use nationalism to rally the masses behind them instead of working to build democratic institutions that truly serve the people. Since nationalism is best promoted through international conflict, democratizing states seek foreign enemies. Indeed, democratizing states not only have been involved in more wars than other states, they have initiated most of them.

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The second part statistically tests this theory. The authors attempt to measure shifts from autocracy to a mixed regime or anocracy, and from the latter to a fully democratic state using Ted Gurr's Polity III data over a five-year period. In particular, they use four indices to determine regime type: a composite one, the competition of political participation, the openness of executive recruitment, and the extent of the constraints placed on the chief executive. Since the authors wish to demonstrate that weak institutions explain the war proneness of democratizing states, they devise measures from Gurr's data to determine the degree to which domestic authority is concentrated in the state's government. In examining the wars, they use the COW Project, which provides data on international conflicts from 1816–1992. The authors find that democratizing states became involved in more wars, initiated them, and provoked them for reasons related to weak institutions. Even when conflicting dyads or realist/systemic variables are considered, domestic factors related to democratizing states best explain the conflicts.

The last part of this book consists of case studies of the democratizing states that initiated interstate wars before 1992 and wars since 1992 that involved such states. This section relies on Snyder's *From Voting to Violence*; it attempts to trace the casual mechanisms that lead democratizing states to war, and it shows that international factors, and not just domestic factors, partially explain many of these conflicts. Mansfield and Snyder conclude that the process or sequence of democratization is key to curtailing the propensity for violence in these states: the development of institutions must precede popular elections.

*Electing to Fight* is one of the most important books on international politics in the last several years. It builds upon Samuel Huntington's classic *Political Order in Changing Societies*, which argues that promoting democracy without institutions is likely to lead to domestic instability and political decay. In addition to their bold argument, Mansfield and Snyder offer a model for political science research that combines statistical analysis and case studies, each masterfully done.

Although the authors show with numbers that democratizing states are war prone, two states—Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia—caused a considerable amount of the international conflict during the twentieth century, yet they had regressed into autocracies. The book does not make a completely convincing argument that the lack of institutions, as opposed to other factors, explains the bellicosity of democratizing states. Too little attention is given to explaining the indicators of institutionalization. Moreover, other factors, such as ideas and norms, have played a bigger role than Mansfield and Snyder recognize.

A good example is Iraq. Although Iraq has been strengthening its institutions in forming a democratic government and increasing its security forces, the country has degenerated into chaos and civil war. The principal reason has been sectarian tensions and the inability to forge a new national identity that the Sunnis can accept. In short, ideas must precede the

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development of successful institutions. Mansfield and Snyder acknowledge this at the beginning, but lose sight of it later. Nevertheless, in focusing on the need to build institutions before elections, this book could not be more relevant to the current U.S.-initiated fiasco in Iraq.

–Robert S. Snyder

## THE STRONG DO WHAT THEY WILL; THE WEAK SUFFER WHAT THEY MUST (EXCEPT WHEN THEY DON'T)

Ivan Arreguin-Toft: *How the Weak Win Wars: A Theory of Asymmetric Conflict* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005. Pp. xv, 250. $29.95, paper.)

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The puzzle Ivan Arreguin-Toft addresses in this book is why the stronger side does not win every war it starts. In the 200-odd wars he identifies between 1800 and 2003, the stronger side emerged victorious just over 70 percent of the time. Conventional wisdom, and certainly realist theory, expects power to coincide with conflict outcomes. Yet, as Arreguin-Toft demonstrates, victory by the weak is far from rare. Probing his data a bit further, Arreguin-Toft reports that while the strong won nearly 90 percent of the wars waged between 1800 and 1849, they have lost over half of the wars waged since 1950.

Any satisfactory explanation of outcomes in asymmetric wars must account both for the fact that the strong do not always win and for the trend of increasingly probable victory by the weak over time. Arreguin-Toft's explanation is that the weaker side overcomes its power disadvantage by choosing the right strategy. Since all states have incentives to learn from each other, the successful use of the right strategies by weaker sides in wars has increasingly taught weaker actors how to wage asymmetric wars to their advantage. Specifically, if the stronger side mounts a conventional attack while the weaker side employs guerrilla tactics, the war drags on longer than the stronger side anticipated, and its power advantage erodes as its war costs rise. Denying the stronger side a quick victory enhances the odds of victory for the weaker side, and increasingly over time weak target-states have learned this lesson by watching the successful efforts of other weak targets.

In evaluating the usefulness of this argument about outcomes of asymmetric wars, Arreguin-Toft dissects the logic of competitor explanations, subjects his argument to statistical analysis, and, for the vast majority of the book, presents five absorbing case studies carefully chosen to demonstrate the causal logic of his argument at work, to provide temporal variation, and to permit him to assess alternate explanations. Arreguin-Toft concludes his

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