Chapter 2

THUCYDIDEAN THEMES:
DEMOCRACY IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

INTRODUCTION

The discipline of International Relations (IR) has often mirrored major real-world trends, and this has certainly been the case with democracy. There was a considerable growth in work on democracy after the end of the Cold War, as part of a more general resurgence of liberal ideas, policies and scholarship (Jahn 2013: 1–12). A further surge in interest followed the central role accorded to democracy and its promotion during America’s ‘Global War on Terror’. For Tony Smith, these trends have been closely linked: the development of liberal internationalism between 1989 and 2001 would defend the position ‘empirically, theoretically, and philosophically that the promotion of democracy was not only feasible, but that it would serve American security concerns’ (T. Smith 2007: 49). This expansion in scholarship on democracy appears to be a significant change from the longstanding practice of regarding it as the preserve of political scientists and comparativists. As Ian Clark observes, ‘in general, IR theory has not been much exercised by concerns with democracy’ (Clark 1999: 146). This situation has only been partially rectified: a majority of the studies undertaken have been by liberal scholars, with other traditions continuing to display limited interest.

Despite this notable increase in the volume of work on democracy in IR, it has not resulted in a comparable development in our understanding of the way democracy is influenced by, and interacts with, the international realm. The nature, shape and possibilities of democracy have long been regarded as determined exclusively within the confines of the state (Walker 1993: 141–58). Alexander Wendt expresses this point well:
The Westphalian approach to sovereignty allowed democratic and IR theorists to ignore each other. The former were concerned with making state power democratically accountable, which Westphalia constituted as strictly territorial and thus outside the domain of IR theory; the latter were concerned with interstate relations, which were anarchic and thus outside the domain of political theory. (Wendt 1996: 61)

The most influential example of this tendency is structural realism’s separation of systemic and unit level phenomena, whereby democracy is consigned to the unit level, and thus beyond the purview of IR (Waltz 1979). Against Waltz, democratic peace scholars have argued that the internal (democratic) nature of states does have a consequential impact on their international behaviour. This appears as an important corrective, but on closer inspection the shift is much less dramatic than it may first seem. Rather, both approaches commence from similar ontological and epistemological positions, with the crucial point of difference being that liberal scholars disagree in arguing that unit level characteristics are relevant. This reflects a pervasive way of thinking about democracy in IR, which is based on the strict separation between the domestic and the international spheres.

Given that liberal international theory has dominated discussions on democracy in IR, it is this literature that this study is primarily responding to. In particular, the focus is on democratic peace research, the most prominent body of IR scholarship that deals with democracy, and arguably the most influential version of liberal internationalism at present. In this regard, limitations and omissions present in this research are significant precisely because its findings have extended well beyond academia (Bueno de Mesquita 2002; C. Hobson et al. 2011; Ish-Shalom 2013; Parmar 2013; T. Smith 2007). Conclusions from this literature have underwritten claims about democracies being more legitimate than other states, and have also provided a strong rationale for the expansion of democracy promotion practices (McFaul 2010; Rawls 2001; T. Smith 2007). While the politicised version of the democratic peace finding differs from the more cautious, probabilistic claims of scholars, there is a link between the way it has been studied and how it has been adopted by policymakers. The proposition that democracies do not fight each other, and that they are generally more peaceful, has come to occupy a central place in the foreign policy and rhetoric of the
The Rise of Democracy

United States. Notably, the theory was adopted by neo-conservatives and occupied an important place in the Bush administration’s attempts to legitimate the 2003 Iraq war (Ish-Shalom 2007; T. Smith 2007). The influence of democratic peace research in theory and practice generates a need to reflect on it critically.

THE DEMOCRATIC PEACE RESEARCH PROGRAMME

In the last three decades a flourishing research programme has swiftly emerged around the core finding that modern democracies have rarely, if ever, fought one another (M. Brown et al. 1996; Chan 1997; Geis and Wagner 2011; Hayes 2012; Hegre 2014).¹ The inspiration for most of this work remains Immanuel Kant’s 1795 essay, Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch (Kant 1970). Building on pivotal early contributions by Dean Babst and R. J. Rummel in the 1970s that first highlighted an apparent correlation between democracies and peaceful behaviour, Michael Doyle’s promotion of the modern relevance of Kant’s ideas was crucial in igniting contemporary scholarship (Babst 1972; Doyle 1983a; Doyle 1983b; Rummel 1979; Rummel 1981). Discussion continued to increase through the 1980s, and in Bruce Russett’s influential 1993 book, Grasping the Democratic Peace, he was able to confidently talk of ‘the fact of democratic peace’, by which he meant that democracies have rarely, if ever, fought one another (Russett 1993: 4, 10). Notably, the empirical correlation of a dyadic democratic peace has been widely accepted, even by critics (Rosato 2003: 585). The success of this original, limited, claim laid the foundation for a wider range of studies on the ‘unique’ behaviour of democracies in international politics, giving rise to what Anna Geis and Wolfgang Wagner usefully label the ‘democratic distinctiveness’ research programme (Geis and Wagner 2011). This body of work suggests that democracy is a powerful variable in explaining different dimensions of state behaviour, such as making and keeping alliances and international agreements, joining international organisations, protecting human rights, resolving disputes amicably and following international law.

In highlighting the relevance of democracy for explaining international outcomes, quantitative large-N studies have become a trademark of democratic peace research (Chan 1997; Hayes 2012). Committed to a neo-positivist epistemology, researchers define the basic terms enabling analysis at the outset, allowing them to focus on constructing and
studying data. These studies continue to rely on a number of standard definitions and data sets, while rarely questioning the implications of these foundational decisions. Rather, the widespread agreement over how to understand democracy, peace and war is regarded as a sign of scientific progress (Chernoff 2004: 57–65; Van Belle 2006: 292–94). The definition of democracy generally used is the one dominant in American political science, taken from the influential contributions of Joseph Schumpeter and Robert Dahl (Schumpeter 1943; Dahl 1971). Employing standard definitions may allow for certain empirical relationships to be identified and greater commensurability between studies, but it comes at a price. Georg Cavallar makes this point in strong fashion: ‘We decide upon the outcome of our research and reasoning the moment we define democracy’ (Cavallar 2001: 238). Political concepts – such as democracy, war and peace – are deeply infused with historical and normative contestation, which problematise attempts at straightforward interpretations. Moreover, there is a widespread tendency to understand democracy in terms of American values, institutions and experiences, which then shape the way democratic peace is interpreted (Oren 1995; Tanji and Lawson 1997). This reflects the fact that definitional processes cannot be neutral, and the accounts to emerge from studies framed by these terms can never simply reflect empirical realities.

Most versions of democratic peace theory are explicitly ahistorical, attempting to identify a correlative relationship and causal pattern between democracy and peace that holds across time and space. In so doing, democracy is interpreted in terms of contemporary values, institutions and experiences. Taking an ahistorical definition, however, prevents an appreciation of the way democracy’s meaning has altered over time (Barkawi and Laffey 1999; Duvall and Weldes 2001; C. Hobson 2009; C. Hobson 2011; Shaw 2001). The Correlates of War data beginning in 1816 is regularly employed, but the definition of democracy used is not adjusted to different periods. The problem is that what democracy meant in 1816 is noticeably different from what it meant in 1919 or 1989, as this book will explore. Related to this point, implicit in the theory is that for peace to hold between democracies, states must recognise each other as being democratic (Risse-Kappen 1995; Williams 2001). Yet the United States did not identify itself as a democracy until almost the middle of the nineteenth century, and it would take another half a century for other states to begin to follow suit. If
The Rise of Democracy

peace between democracies is underpinned by a mutual recognition of each party’s democratic identity, it is most unlikely this will happen if the states in question do not adopt the democratic label in the first place. Furthermore, whether democracy is understood as warlike (as in ancient Athens), anarchic and violent (as in the French Revolution) or stable and peaceful (as at present) will have important consequences for threat perception, the chances of democratic zones of peace to exist, and more fundamentally, what being a democracy means. This study will show how democracy’s past reveals a story far more varied and complex than most democratic peace scholarship allows for.

An impressive body of work has certainly developed out of the core dyadic finding. This has undoubtedly been aided by the vast majority of scholars sharing a commitment to neo-positivism, with many having a strong preference for quantitative analysis. Reflecting this, a majority of challenges to their claims revolve around issues of coding, correlation and causation. Proponents and sceptics may disagree over the nature and significance of the findings, but they largely agree on how these issues should be studied. David Lake highlights the importance of this common ground when identifying the democratic peace research programme as an exemplar of theoretical progress in IR, noting that such theories advance ‘only through sets of shared assumptions and common epistemologies and ontologies that allowed theory to be extended to new topics, additional hypotheses to be deduced, and propositions confronted with evidence according to agreed-upon standards’ (Lake 2013: 579–80). There are negative consequences that also come with these choices, however. Against the platitudes about this body of work being an exemplar of scholarly conduct, it is necessary to recognise the almost complete failure of the neo-positivist mainstream to engage with non-positivist democratic peace research. Questions over correlation, causation, modelling and coding are responded to in a detailed and thorough manner, whereas challenges to their underlying assumptions are comfortably ignored. In this regard, Ido Oren’s seminal 1995 International Security article is perhaps the only outside critique that mainstream democratic peace scholars have readily acknowledged, even if they are yet to provide a convincing rebuttal (Oren 1995). Meanwhile, the work that has built on Oren’s intervention has received scant attention. To take one example, Tarak Barkawi and Mark Laffey’s 1999 European Journal of International Relations article represents another important early contribution to
critical democratic peace scholarship, yet has been largely ignored by mainstream researchers (Barkawi and Laffey 1999; Barkawi and Laffey 2001).\(^4\)

Mainstream democratic peace scholars have also been remarkably quiet in relation to major recent real-world events and trends, especially the 2003 Iraq war, which was partly justified using democratic peace arguments (Ish-Shalom 2006; C. Hobson et al. 2011). In a literature review on democracy and armed conflict published in the *Journal of Peace Research* in 2014, Håvard Hegre devotes all of half a sentence to the 2003 Iraq war and notably does not cite any of the critical democratic peace literature on this topic (Hegre 2014). Likewise, in a forum in *International Studies Quarterly* in 2013, the discussion predictably revolves around causation, data and modelling, with little concern for real-world changes and how these may impact on the participants’ research (Dafoe et al. 2013; Gartzke and Weisiger 2013; Mousseau 2013; Ray 2013). In concluding their contribution, Allan Dafoe, John Oneal and Bruce Russett reflect on the way the democratic peace research programme has developed, reaffirming the value of the literature’s core contribution: ‘in a subject of study where reliable insights are rare, the robust finding that democracies are more peaceful toward each other remains an important empirical regularity for future scholarship to build upon’ (Dafoe et al. 2013: 213). Strictly speaking, Dafoe, Oneal and Russett may be justified in making this statement: despite the array of problems and challenges that democracies now face, none directly undermines the core dyadic claim. Yet if one looks at the course of international politics over the last twenty-five years, an increasingly prominent phenomenon – which became most apparent following the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks – is the belligerence of some of the world’s oldest democracies, notably the United States, the United Kingdom and Australia. While this seriously undermines the monadic argument, it does not directly contradict the probabilistic, dyadic claim that lies at the heart of the democratic peace research programme. Yet if this is indeed ‘the most important research program in the study of international politics’, as Michael Mousseau suggests (Mousseau 2013: 186), then its increasingly limited and detached account of international relations is much more problematic. The lack of focus on democratic belligerence is all the more troubling because it does fit with dyadic claims, which readily acknowledge that democracies are just as warlike as other regimes when dealing with non-democracies (Geis et
al. 2013). Furthermore, it represents a refusal to engage with scholarship that does examine the darker side of democratic peace. In this regard, Tony Smith’s forthright claims in *A Pact with the Devil* about the role of democratic peace research programme in helping to fashion the intellectual framework for the 2003 Iraq war have been met with deafening silence (T. Smith 2007). Brent Steele has powerfully argued that the failure by mainstream democratic peace scholars to acknowledge and respond to outside critique like Smith’s can have powerful disciplining effects (Steele 2010). In this sense, while one appreciates Lake’s understandable preference for ‘progress within paradigms rather than war between paradigms’ (Lake 2013: 580; original emphasis), this can quickly become an apologia for not engaging with – or worse, marginalising – other approaches, which has been the dominant tendency when it comes to the democratic peace literature.

There is certainly a need for mainstream scholars to be more open to dialogue with alternative approaches, but the onus is not just on them: critical democratic peace scholarship must also further develop its research programme. Initially this body of work arguably suffered from being overly conceptual and from not being fully substantiated. Ido Oren’s article was significant, yet his book-length study had a wider focus on American political science (Oren 2002), and he has yet to publish further on democratic peace. Likewise, Barkawi and Laffey made important interventions (Barkawi and Laffey 1999; Barkawi and Laffey 2001), but have not published again on the topic. There were a number of other valuable forays, often in the context of related issues such as US foreign policy and liberal internationalism, which were also not further substantiated (Desch 2007; Steele 2007). One scholar that did expand his research, however, was Michael Mann, who completed a book-length study on democracy’s dark past with genocide and ethnic cleansing (Mann 2005). Despite being authored by a leading sociologist, and providing an important rejoinder to the work of monadic theorists, Mann’s contribution was something of an outlier and has not received much attention from democratic peace scholars, mainstream or critical. The collective result was that early critical scholarship on democratic peace raised important questions and outlined some significant critiques, but it had trouble crystallising into a more sustained research programme.

The major exception to this trend was the ‘Antinomies of Democratic Peace’ project, an initiative undertaken by the Peace Research Institute
Frankfurt (PRIF) and led by Harald Müller. This represents the most sustained contribution to the development of a critical research programme through exploring the tensions, contradictions and ‘dark sides’ of the democratic peace. The PRIF project has resulted in a series of publications, including two important edited books: *Democratic Wars: Looking at the Dark Side of Democratic Peace* (Geis et al. 2006) and *The Militant Face of Democracy: Liberal Forces for Good* (Geis et al. 2013), which explore the relationship between democracy and war ‘as the flipside of democratic peace’. Piki Ish-Shalom has explored a related set of issues, focusing on the ways the academic findings of democratic peace theory have been translated and used in the political sphere through a series of articles (Ish-Shalom 2006; Ish-Shalom 2007; Ish-Shalom 2008a; Ish-Shalom 2008b; Ish-Shalom 2009), ultimately culminating in a book-length study, *Democratic Peace: A Political Biography* (Ish-Shalom 2013). Collectively these contributions represent a maturation of critical democratic peace scholarship, demonstrating theoretically and empirically that mainstream research has missed important dimensions of this phenomenon.

*The Rise of Democracy* is a conscious attempt to further advance this body of critical scholarship, and does so in a way that seeks to join some dots between previous works. It lies at the intersection between the historical sociology of Mann, the more discourse-orientated approach of Ish-Shalom, and the theoretical explorations of Müller, Geis and other members of the PRIF project. In this regard, Christian Reus-Smit has argued that an important aspect in the rise and acceptance of constructivism in IR is that it demonstrated its value by moving beyond theoretical debate and engaging in sustained empirical research (Reus-Smit 2005a). Elsewhere I have argued that critical democratic peace scholarship could benefit from this example, utilising critique as a starting point for further developing a non-positivist research programme focused on the complex and ambiguous relationships between democracy, peace and war (C. Hobson et al. 2011). This is a core goal of this book, an aim which is fulfilled by demonstrating how insights can be generated through examining the conceptual and historical dimensions of democracy. One of the most significant and telling lines of critique developed by Oren, and Barkawi and Laffey, has centred on the contested nature of key concepts, such as democracy, and the problems this creates for neo-positivist scholarship. The full consequences of this argument have yet to be worked through, however. It is here that
this study intervenes by examining the historically contested nature of democracy in detail and identifying its relevance for international relations.

Rather than taking democracy’s meaning as constant, as neo-positivist democratic peace work does, this book demonstrates how important insights can be derived through examining the shifting nature of such concepts. It seeks to explore what most scholarship takes for granted, namely, how the current relationship between democracy and peace was first able to come into being. This entails engaging in the broader historical trajectory of democracy, which is deeply intertwined with the development of the modern international system. The study shows how contemporary conceptions of the relationship between democracy and peace are not natural or inevitable, but historical artefacts. Through appreciating how the concept of democracy has had varied meanings and usages at different moments in time, insight is also gained into how the realities it operated within changed, as concepts play a key role in shaping social practices and structures. There is certainly a strong material dimension to this story: the outcomes of wars, from civil to worldwide, helped to create the conditions within which a more limited democratic peace could subsequently exist. Yet these processes have had an equally important ideational component: the way ‘democracy’ has changed over time, and how it has been related to ideas such as ‘war’ and ‘peace’, has in turn shaped what ‘democratic peace’ means. This reflects that a ‘democratic peace’ does not exist ‘out there’ in the world; it becomes real and tangible only through being labelled and described as such. It could never be a ‘brute fact’ in John Searle’s terminology; it is partly constituted through being identified and explained by the researchers that ‘observe’ it (Patrick Jackson 2008).

Reflecting on Kant’s role as the figurehead of the democratic peace research programme is a useful way of contrasting the approach adopted here with that which presently dominates. Considering the centrality of Perpetual Peace to this scholarship, it might be surprising to recall that in this text Kant explicitly dismissed democracy. He was certain that his desired end point could not come about between democracies, but only through republics. Kant clearly differentiated between these two types of rule: ‘the Republican Constitution is not to be confounded with the Democratic Constitution’, as the latter is ‘necessarily a despotism’ (Kant 1970: 99–102; original emphasis). Most
contemporary theorists using Kant equate his republican regimes with modern democracy, in so far as they are both based on constitutional, representative systems. While this move can be justified as analytically convenient given the similarities between the two, it betrays a distinct lack of curiosity with democracy’s complex history. Democracy’s past is lost both in the desire to claim Kant’s legacy and by employing a stable definition of the concept. This study takes inspiration from Kant in a different way, in as much as he is an important reference point for critical theorists (C. Hobson 2011). It instead illustrates how a non-positivist approach can generate a different set of insights about democracy, peace and war in international relations through focusing on conceptual contestation and change.

SOVEREIGNTY AND LEGITIMACY IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Most work in IR that considers democracy, including the vast majority of democratic peace research, commences from the assumption that the domestic and international are two wholly distinct realms, with democracy exclusively being a property of the former. In contrast, this study argues against such a stark rendering. Rather, as Ian Clark explains, ‘the fate of the democratic state is attached to the international order, not in the sense that the latter can now rectify the problems of the former, but because the former is already and indistinguishably a part of the latter’ (Clark 1999: 161). He makes this point in the context of discussing globalisation, echoing the observation made by proponents of cosmopolitan democracy (Archibugi and Held 2011; Archibugi et al. 2011). Certainly globalisation has altered – and arguably further blurred – the distinction between the domestic and the international, but democracy’s fate has long been intertwined with the international; this is not a new phenomenon. In this regard, democracy’s relationship with the international realm has been primarily determined by two fundamental and closely related principles: sovereignty and legitimacy. These need to be outlined in more detail, as does the larger structure of an international society that links these elements together.

Sovereignty has been historically central to democracy’s development in so far as it has both defined the international realm as anarchic and provided the possibility for separate polities to be self-governing. Sovereignty is a defining feature of modernity, a principle
that demarcates the present epoch from the Middle Ages and Latin Christendom (R. Jackson 2007). There are clear conceptions of sovereignty in the work of Bodin and Hobbes, but these theorists and their rulers were more concerned with its domestic consequences (Osiander 2001: 281–2; Shinoda 2000: 35). Only in the post-Christendom era did a conception of sovereignty emerge that incorporated both internal supremacy and external independence, thereby spatially and temporally demarcating states from each other (Walker 1993). It was Rousseau and Vattel that first highlighted this duality: the concomitant principle of self-determination within the state was independence and anarchy between them. Here one finds the foundation for both modern democracy and the modern states system.

Sovereignty is not determined by material forces, it is ‘inherently social’ (Biersteker and Weber 1996: 1–2). This observation reflects that the constitution and boundaries of any state cannot be fully resolved internally, as they are constructed through recognition between states. As such, sovereignty is not strictly an attribute of the state, but ‘is produced and reproduced by the collectivity of state rulers; it is the outcome of ongoing interactions between states in which the practically derived norms of sovereignty emerge’ (Thomson 1994: 5). In this structurationist reading, the state becomes fully constituted and sovereign only through its relations with other like entities. Thus, the international realm provides the possibility of existence for individual states. Anthony Giddens explains that ‘“international relations” are not connections set up between pre-established states, which could maintain their sovereign power without them: they are the basis upon which the nation-state exists at all’ (Giddens 1985: 263–4). The international and the state are co-constitutive, neither existing independently. ‘Sovereignty simultaneously provides an ordering principle for what is “internal” to states and what is “external” to them’ (Giddens 1985: 281), and thus becomes the condition of possibility for both spheres.

The corollary of sovereignty being a social construct is that the international realm as a whole has a social dimension to it. As C. A. W. Manning explains, ‘what it means to be a sovereign state is understandable only incidentally to an understanding of the nature of international society’ (Manning 1962: 103). Processes of recognition that enact and regulate sovereign statehood operate in relation to shared values and identities that exist between states. These practices help to construct an international society, which is ‘a reflexively monitored set
of relations between states’ (Giddens 1985: 263–4). Following the work of the English school, international society is understood here as the normative and ideational structure within which states are embedded and operate. The society of states is a composite of norms, rules and institutions that helps to shape the identities of its members and define the kind of behaviour that is acceptable. Tim Dunne explains:

International society exists as a social fact. Like all social structures it is unobservable but its effects are real. The structure embodies rules for identifying who gets to count as a member, what conduct is appropriate, and what (if any) consequences follow from acts of deviancy. (Dunne 2001: 89)

As English school scholars have demonstrated, societal relations may not exist in such a thick and developed sense as that found within the state, but there is a sufficiently shared purpose and set of understandings between states to talk of a society existing at the international level without the term being stretched too far (Alderson and Hurrell 2000: ch. I).

Underpinning this society of states is a constitution: a complex of rules, norms and principles that define legitimate membership and practice (Philpott 2001; Reus-Smit 1999). As Martin Wight notes, ‘international society exists and survives by virtue of some core of common standards and common custom’ (Wight 1966: 103). The way this constitution is historically constructed, understood and reproduced is necessarily mediated through language, in which concepts play a pivotal role. It is in this sense that international society has been the interpretative community within which democracy’s conceptual development has occurred. What exactly these shared norms are, as well as their breadth and depth, will be determined by the kind of international society that exists. English school theorists normally distinguish between ‘pluralist’ and ‘solidarist’ forms of international society. The former corresponds approximately to a ‘practical association’ and the latter a ‘purposive association’ in Terry Nardin’s influential analysis. Yet this separation is overly stark. Following Barry Buzan, it is more helpful to think of pluralism and solidarism as existing at different ends of a spectrum marking how ‘thick’ or developed the international society is. In conceiving of pluralism and solidarism in this way, it is worth emphasising that international society has never been a purely ‘practical association’; it has

Even within a more pluralist international society, shared values still exist, which are most clearly evidenced in the way sovereignty is collectively understood. For a state to be fully sovereign, its claims must be acknowledged and reciprocated by other states. As a social process, this act of recognition is based on shared conceptions about what a state should be. For a state to be acknowledged and accepted as sovereign by others, it needs to conform to certain shared expectations. These may be more or less extensive, but there will nonetheless be a basic set of criteria or beliefs for recognising states as sovereign members of international society. This reinforces Reus-Smit’s argument that ‘sovereignty has never been an independent, self-referential value. It has always been encased within larger complexes of metavalues, encoded within broader constitutive frameworks’ (Reus-Smit 1999: 6). Sovereignty’s substance is effectively filled out by some shared standard of legitimacy within and between states. As Mlada Bukovansky observes, ‘legitimacy is the meaningful, cultural substance of sovereignty, just as territory or population is its material substance. Sovereignty is conditioned by the terms of legitimacy’ (Bukovansky 2002: 23). What this means is that democracy has been relevant not only in more solidarist international societies, but also in more pluralist ones.

Principles of legitimacy, through shaping practices of state recognition and sovereignty, structure international society by determining its composition. And as Thomas Franck observes, ‘it is because states constitute a community that legitimacy has the power to influence their conduct’ (Franck 1990). It is in this sense that Manning likens the society of states to a club: ‘as membership of a club depends on acceptance as a member by the other members, so does membership in international society, the club, the “international”, that is, of sovereign states’ (Manning 1962: 103). This analogy is helpful, as it points to the primary role played by international legitimacy, which is to determine membership and codes of behaviour in the ‘club’ of states. This is reflected in the classic definition of international legitimacy provided by Wight, who describes it as ‘the collective judgment of international society about rightful membership of the family of nations’ (Wight 1977: 153). As such, principles of legitimacy are a constant element not only of domestic politics, but also of international relations, as Ian Hurd has convincingly argued (Hurd 1999). This is where the domestic makeup
of states, of which democracy represents one configuration, becomes of concern to international society at large. International legitimacy has been the primary framework through which democracy’s relationship with international society has been mediated, as it has been closely tied to questions about legitimate forms of statehood and domestic governance. It is in this sense that Wight observes that ‘principles of legitimacy mark the region of approximation between international and domestic politics’ (Wight 1977: 153).

DEMOCRACY AND SOVEREIGNTY

When considering democracy’s relationship with sovereignty, it is necessary to recognise that historically it has been understood both as a form of state and as a form of government. Kant provides a useful description of these two dimensions of democracy, one which will be employed throughout this study:

The first classification goes by the form of sovereignty (forma imperii), while the second classification depends on the form of government (forma regiminis), and relates to the way in which the state, setting out from its constitution … makes use of its plenary power. (Kant 1970: 100–1)

Democracy as a state form (forma imperii) corresponds to the people acting as the constitutive power, otherwise known as popular sovereignty. Democracy as a form of government (forma regiminis) represents the constituted power of the people, which in contemporary terms manifests itself in the form of representative democratic government. Carl Schmitt explains this relationship:

Democracy is a state form … The people are the bearer of the constitution-making power and, as such, grant themselves their constitution. At the same time, the concept of democracy can provide a method for the exercise of certain state activities. It also designates a form of government or legislative form. (Schmitt 2008: 255)

Today democracy is understood largely in reference to the latter meaning, but historically both dimensions have been central to its reception.
In ancient Greece, the distinction between *forma imperii* and *forma regiminis* was not made; it was not necessary. *Dēmokratia* was a direct form of rule where the people both constituted the polity and exercised power. When democracy reappeared in modern politics these two dimensions were disaggregated. The form of sovereignty, *forma imperii*, was separated from the form of rule, *forma regiminis*. In this regard, a central claim that shapes this work is that it is necessary to investigate both the shift to popular sovereignty (*forma imperii*) and the revival of democracy as a form of domestic rule (*forma regiminis*). Looking at democracy only as a form of government ignores the extent to which it has historically been understood as a form of state. Meanwhile, the tendency to study popular sovereignty by itself can result in overemphasising its relationship with nationalism. As such, what this study does is chart the emergence of democracy as a form of government which was preceded by, and to a certain extent predicated on, the rise of popular sovereignty. These are separate, albeit heavily interrelated, phenomena and need to be considered together. It is only in the twentieth century, when popular sovereignty became widely accepted and the dominant state form, that this historically strong connection between *forma imperii* and *forma regiminis* faded into the background. Instead, contestation for most of the twentieth century would be centred on *forma regiminis*, between the rival systems of democracy, communism and fascism.

Popular sovereignty was able to receive far greater and quicker acceptance partly because it was more limited in its consequences, as it left much of the basic structure of international society intact. It entails a situation where the people, not a god or a monarch, are the basis of the polity. This understanding grows out of the tradition of *lex regia* as it was reinterpreted in the late Middle Ages, with a stronger notion of consent-based sovereignty emerging in the contract theories of Hobbes, Locke and Rousseau, which was later activated in the great revolutions of the late eighteenth century (Canovan 2005: 10–39). As the constitutive power, the collective body formed – the people – are the ultimate holders of sovereignty, and they, in turn, determine the nature of the polity. Istvan Hont usefully describes this as ‘indirect sovereignty’, in so far as the people are sovereign, but apart from exceptional circumstances they do not actually exercise sovereignty, as it is mediated through the power it has constituted (Hont 1994). Historically the transition from the sovereignty of kings to the sovereignty of peoples
did not fundamentally affect the nature of sovereignty: its locus altered, its character did not. This contributed to it being more easily accepted into international society, as what changed was the cast rather than the script. As James Mayall observes, ‘it is still a society of states but the states now belong to the people’ (Mayall 1990: 148).

Popular sovereignty does not necessarily demand a specific set of domestic institutions: it might logically point towards democratic government, but it is still compatible with other constitutional forms. This meant that the principle of popular sovereignty was capable of emerging and existing in more pluralist forms of international society. There is a long history of consent-based notions of sovereignty underpinning monarchies and other non-democratic constitutional forms. One only need look to Hobbes’s *Leviathan* for the classic theoretical exposition of this position, and to the fascist regimes of the last century for important real-world examples. The opposite arrangement, where democratic government exists but the prevailing philosophy of sovereignty is not popular, is much less plausible logically and historically. Even if popular sovereignty does not automatically entail democracy, historically it has created the most space for this possibility. As Ingeborg Maus notes, ‘the internal sovereignty of the democratic nation-state has from the beginning been … nothing other than popular sovereignty’ (Maus 2006: 465). It is unlikely to be a historical coincidence that reconsideration of democracy as a form of rule corresponded with and followed the emergence of contract theories. What this suggests is a fundamental, but complex and historically variable, relationship between democracy as *forma imperii* and as *forma regiminis*. The exact link between the two, and also where they diverge, will be extrapolated over the course of this book. In order to properly examine the historically shifting nature of democracy and its connections to sovereignty and legitimacy, this study will employ a conceptual history methodology.

**CONCEPTUAL HISTORY**

Only that which has no history is definable.

Friedrich Nietzsche (1989: 80)

Democracy is a concept famous for its contested nature and multiple meanings. For this reason, W. B. Gallie identified it as an ideal typical
example of what he termed ‘essentially contested concepts’ (Gallie 1964: ch. 8). These concepts are distinguished by the fact that contestation over their meaning is fundamental to their character. The approach taken by most democratic peace research, as noted, is the exact opposite, instead providing a fixed definition on which to base empirical investigation. Neither is satisfactory: one exaggerates the level of contestation by regarding it as an essential part of the concept’s character; the other effectively denies it completely. What is needed is a historically sensitive way of recognising the conflict and change that has undeniably shaped the concept of democracy, without falling into the trap of ignoring the continuities and shared understandings that have helped determine its trajectory. An approach which does this is conceptual history. When viewing democracy from the vantage point of conceptual history, its historically contingent and contested nature is not a problem to be overcome or avoided, but a source of insight into the concept and the social world it interacts with.

Two major strands of conceptual history are the ‘Cambridge school’ and the German approach, Begriffsgeschichte. The framework utilised here builds on scholarship that regards these as compatible (Palonen 2001; Palonen 2003; Richter 2003), and draws primarily on the leading exponents of these two respective schools of thought: Quentin Skinner and Reinhart Koselleck. Begriffsgeschichte provides a useful overarching structure for analysis, identifying a two-stage process in charting the history of a concept (Koselleck 1985: ch. 5; Koselleck 1996: 63). First, a diachronic account explores how a concept is structured by previous historical usages and interpretations. This shapes the kind of conceptual change possible. As Koselleck explains,

> every concept ... has a diachronic thrust against which anyone seeking to add a new meaning must work. Yet what is new can be understood for the first time only because of some recurring feature, some reference to a previously unquestioned, accepted meaning. (Koselleck 1996: 63–6)

Concepts thus have a kind of weak path dependency that influences, but does not determine, their trajectory. Second, a synchronic analysis considers the way concepts are understood, challenged and sometimes revised or overturned at pivotal moments. Emphasis here is placed not on continuity, but rupture. As concepts are ultimately human
constructs, there is still considerable room for agency in determining their meaning. It is in this sense that Skinner suggests ‘we are all Marxists’ (Skinner 1969: 53), recalling one of Marx’s less deterministic moments, where he observed how historical structures may shape but not forestall the possibility for agent-driven change: ‘Men make their own history, but they do not make it as they please’ (Marx 1995). Through combining these two modes of analysis a strong framework is constructed: the synchronic analysis explores the way the concept is understood and utilised in a specific historical context, while the diachronic analysis orders meanings and usages from different moments into a larger history.

Of primary interest are ‘basic concepts’ (Grundbegriffe), which are ‘an inescapable, irreplaceable part of the political and social vocabulary’ (Koselleck 1996: 64–5). These act as ‘pivots’ around which argumentation occurs and political contestation takes place, a characteristic that separates them from other ideas and parts of the vocabulary. The pivotal role of basic concepts ensures that they play a fundamental part in the constitution and reconstitution of the social world. In so far as these concepts shape the perceptions and actions of agents, conceptual shifts do not merely reflect material changes, they actively inform such transformations by constituting actors, shaping behaviour and helping to remake material structures. Recognising the causal role concepts play highlights the close dynamic that exists between conceptual and political change. According to Kari Palonen, ‘there cannot be any politically crucial action that would not have a linguistic dimension’ (Palonen 2003: 58). To put it in strong terms, fundamental changes in the political world are unlikely, if not impossible, without corresponding conceptual shifts.

The highly political nature of basic concepts means that they do not develop in some predetermined manner or through a gradual unfolding of reason, but in a somewhat haphazard fashion in response to the outcomes of previous political battles. This is emphasised by Skinner, who, in a Weberian vein, sees the political sphere as a realm of conflict and contestation for power, and it is through this lens that he views the role of language (Palonen 2003: 48). Drawing on the insights of Wittgenstein, Austin and Searle, Skinner focuses on linguistic acts: ‘We need . . . to grasp not merely what people are saying but also what they are doing in saying it’ (Skinner 2002: 82; original emphasis). He is particularly concerned with the illocutionary force of key concepts in terms
of how they are used and the impact they have. From this perspective, concepts can play a limiting or enabling role in shaping the range of actions possible in a situation. Actors need to legitimate their behaviour, which places certain constraints on what they are able to do and say. Skinner puts this proposition forcefully: ‘Any course of action will be inhibited to the degree that it cannot be legitimised’ (Skinner 2002: 156). And it is precisely this need to legitimate behaviour that can drive conceptual change.

Skinner identifies ‘innovating ideologists’ as actors that attempt to alter a concept in a manner which enables them to legitimise behaviour that has not previously been accepted (Skinner 2002: ch. 8). Susceptible to this kind of manipulation are ‘evaluative-descriptive terms’, which are distinguished by the dual speech acts they perform: ‘Whenever they are used to describe actions ... they have the effect of evaluating them at the same time’ (Skinner 1973: 298–301; Skinner 2002: 148). When the term is employed to describe something it also passes judgement on it, and vice-versa. This leaves two options available to innovating ideologists. On the one hand, they can attempt to alter the descriptive component by extending its range in such a manner that their behaviour is now included within the concept. On the other hand, they can try to shift the evaluative dimension by revising its normative content. This can be done through neutralising a term previously considered negatively, turning a neutral term into a positive one, or the more radical move of reframing a negative term in a positive light. Clearly these revisions do not take place in a vacuum, as they need to be accepted by the target audience. In order for this to happen, innovators must carefully adjust both their project and their language so that they can be related to existing understandings. For their attempts at conceptual revision to be successful, innovators’ actions must remain compatible both with the previous diachronic structure of the concept and with the fashion in which they have redrawn it.

Conceptual revision is made more difficult by the fact that at moments of crisis and upheaval, when attempts at innovation will be most likely, competing actors are acutely aware of how language can be used as a power resource, and of the potentially major repercussions of conceptual redefinition or reaffirmation. In this regard, Skinner identifies an actor that operates in a parallel but opposed manner to that of the innovating ideologist: the ‘apologist’ for the existing order (Skinner 1973: 301–3; Palonen 2003: 55–6). Apologists aim to limit or
Thucydidean Themes

cause conceptual change in such a manner that the status quo is preserved. To do so, ‘any apologist will need to be able to show that these unfavourable characterizations [of the status quo] can in some way be defeated or at least overridden’ (Skinner 1973: 302; original emphasis). As such, when conceptual change occurs it is likely to proceed in a dialectical fashion, driven in part by contestation between ideologists and apologists. The outcome of these conceptual battles subsequently shapes the diachronic trajectory of the concept. It is with this sense in mind that Terence Ball observes, ‘The language we now speak is the result of the most long-lived and successful of those earlier attempts at conceptual revision’ (Ball 1988). Throughout this study emphasis will be placed on identifying innovators and apologists and how they sought to alter or reaffirm the way democracy was understood.

Just as concepts seldom appear de novo, they also rarely appear in isolation. Rather, concepts operate within a larger discourse, ideology or semantic field. Reflecting this, an important component of conceptual change is the way concepts are related to each other, which means that ‘charting the boundaries separating related concepts is an indispensable part of conceptual history’ (Richter 1995: 42). It is therefore necessary to consider subtle relationships where similar or related concepts may converge or diverge at certain moments. Basic concepts are shaped not only by closely related concepts, but also by those that are diametrically opposed. ‘Counter-concepts’ operate in a co-constitutive fashion: in reflecting each other, they help to define themselves. Key examples are the civilised–barbarian pairing, and with respect to this study, the monarchy–democracy and democracy–autocracy pairings. The relationship between the elements of a counter-concept pairing is generally not equal but asymmetric, in which one is identified as inferior (Koselleck 1985: ch. 10). In this regard, João Feres explains that asymmetrical counter-concepts are ‘used by a given human group to confer a universal character to its own identity while denying others a claim to self-assertion’ (Feres 2003: 14). Thus, opposed concepts can play a central role in defining others, as well as influencing the possibilities of political agency. These larger semantic fields have to be considered as part of doing conceptual history.

To summarise: at the heart of this discussion is a straightforward observation: basic concepts, such as democracy, are deeply political. They are sources and/or sites of contestation between political actors attempting to realise their own ends through the strategic use
of language. It is through the rhetorical actions of agents operating in specific historical contexts, responding to different questions and dilemmas, that basic concepts are altered or reaffirmed over time, as the strategies of actors are reconciled with the diachronic structures of the concepts they are employing. Clearly these processes take place in a reality that is not simply linguistic, as material forces influence the context within which conceptual contestation and change occurs. Nonetheless, ideational factors give meaning to the material world. On this point, Tzvetan Todorov explains that ‘ideas do not make history on their own: social and economic forces also intervene; but ideas are not purely a passive effect, either. They make acts possible, in the first instance; and then they make it possible for these acts to be accepted’ (Todorov 1993: xiii). To the extent that concepts help constitute the reality inhabited by these actors, such conceptual shifts can fundamentally alter the nature of the political realm within which they operate. The consequence, as James Farr notes, is that ‘the study of political concepts now becomes an essential not an incidental task of the study of politics’ (Farr 1989: 29).

THUCYDIDEAN THEMES

As a way of concluding the chapter and linking it to the history that follows, it is valuable to consider Thucydides' *History of the Peloponnesian War*, as it illuminates many themes and arguments central to this book. In so doing, this study builds on recent scholarship that has challenged the longstanding habit of reading Thucydides out of context (Bagby 1994; Bedford and Workman 2001; Lebow 2003; Welch 2003). Realists are not the only ones guilty of this: one of the most prominent democratic peace theorists, Bruce Russett, has tried to enlist Thucydides in a rather tortured attempt to extend contemporary democratic peace arguments back to ancient Greece (Russett and Antholis 1992). This can be taken as a prototypical example of the kind of understanding of democracy being argued against here. Despite numerous examples in Thucydides of war between different *dēmokratiai*, most notably between Athens and Syracuse, Russett and William Antholis still manage to force the conclusion that ‘to some degree the norms that “democracies should not fight each other” were just being born’ (Russett and Antholis 1992: 430). This claim is emblematic of the pervasive tendency to adopt a Whig interpretation
of democracy’s history, whereby the observer reads back into the past what is valued in the present (Butterfield 1950).

One of the most notable features in the diachronic structure of democracy is the central role played by the classical Greek experience in shaping how the concept came to be understood. This will be considered further in the next chapter, but for now it suffices to note that the History of the Peloponnesian War significantly contributed to a longstanding negative interpretation of democracy that lasted into the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Following the disappearance of democracy in ancient Greece, there was little direct experience with it until modern times, which meant classics such as Thucydides were central to how it was received across the centuries. In this regard, democracy’s bad reputation was one of venerable origins, with the major texts to reflect on it also representing the beginnings of written history (Herodotus and Thucydides) and political thought (Plato and Aristotle). The first written examples of the Greek word δημοκρατία can be found in the Athenian Constitution by the ‘Old Oligarch’ and in the Histories of Herodotus, neither of which employed it in a positive sense (Rhodes 2003: 19). When combined with the writings of Thucydides, Plato and Aristotle, Western political thought commenced with a ‘profoundly anti-democratic bias’ (McClelland 1989: 2). This situation was reinforced by the oral culture of Athenian democracy, whereby those who supported it did so through actively participating in democratic practice and rhetoric (Ober 1998: 32). As a result, when the democratic experiment of Athens came to an end, left were not the practices or values that may have vindicated it, but texts written by its enemies that told of its follies and flaws. Even if Thucydides’ reflections on democracy were more ambiguous than received wisdom suggests (J. Roberts 1994), his work was widely interpreted as a thorough indictment that illustrated how the fickle and wilful rule of the Athenian δῆμος ultimately brought about the ruin of the once great city. And there was plenty in the text to support such a reading. In History of the Peloponnesian War it was the voice of Alcibiades that spoke loudest, describing Athenian democracy as an ‘acknowledged folly’, with Hobbes stating in the introduction to his translation that ‘for his [Thucydides’] opinion touching the government of the state … it is manifest that he least of all liked the democracy’ (Hobbes 1975: VI.89, 13–14). When explaining his appreciation of Thucydides, Hobbes would later write: ‘He teaches me how foolish democracy is, and how
much more than an assembly one man knows’ (quoted in Evrigenis 2006: 303). Not only did Thucydides directly influence the way democracy was historically received, his work also exemplifies the strong diachronic structure of the concept. As explored in the ensuing chapters, for democracy to emerge as a legitimate form of rule it had to negotiate and overcome this damaging Athenian legacy.

Despite being read as a strong critique of democracy, Thucydides’ actual account is more complex. Indeed, it is possible to find two opposing images of democracy present in his work. One is emblematic of how democracy was negatively conceived of throughout much of history; the other is the positive and laudatory image that now prevails. These two faces of democracy are represented in the contrast between two central protagonists in the Athenian polity: Pericles and Cleon. Pericles is best known for his Funeral Oration, often taken as one of the definitive statements on democracy. Emblematic of this judgement is Karl Popper, who suggested that this speech presented ‘the democratic creed … in a manner which has never been surpassed’ (Popper 1966: 42). Pericles proudly announced:

Let me say that our system of government does not copy the institutions of our neighbours. It is more the case of our being a model to others, than of our imitating anyone else. Our constitution is called democracy because power is in the hands not of a minority but the whole people. (Thucydides 1954: II.37, 145)

Throughout the speech Pericles extolled the virtues of the Athenians – such as their courage, public-spiritedness, love of knowledge and tolerance – and identified these as characteristics stemming from its democracy. In this oration, the rule of the people is presented as the best and most legitimate form of polity.

In stark contrast, Cleon was the great danger of democracy personified: the archetypal demagogue. In Thucydides’ words, he was ‘remarkable among the Athenians for the violence of his character, and at this time he exercised far the greatest influence over the people’ (Thucydides 1954: III.36, 212). Cleon represents the image of democracy that prevailed for centuries after the demise of the Athenian experiment: a form of rule that was immoderate, rash, passionate, selfish, wilful and violent. Those weaknesses were most clearly witnessed in the Mytilenian debate, in which Cleon manipulated the
anger of the Athenians to such a degree that in the ‘fury of the moment’ it was determined that the whole adult male population would be put to death, and slaves would be made of the women and children (Thucydides 1954: III.36, 212). The next day the decision was reversed, as Diodotus’s words prevailed over those of Cleon. In addition to exemplifying the susceptibility of democracy to demagogues, this scene further highlighted the erratic and wilful nature of the de\(\text{m}\)os, liable to change their mood from one day to the next.

Drastically different images of democracy can thus be found in these two central characters in History of the Peloponnesian War. There is the dangerous, unstable and violent form of rule identified with the demagogue Cleon: an interpretation of democracy that would long shape its meaning and warn against it. The other image of democracy is the one that now prevails: a politically legitimate and normatively desirable form of rule in which popular power is identified as virtuous and valuable. This book traces the conceptual shift between these two visions of democracy: from that represented by Cleon to the one embodied in Pericles’ funeral oration.

In Thucydides one also finds insight about conceptual change, the core focus of this study. Concepts are especially susceptible to contestation and alteration during moments of political instability, most often manifest in times of revolution and war. Flux and change in the political and social order is reflected, and informed by, corresponding shifts in language. As Richard Ned Lebow notes, ‘Thucydides’ understanding of the story is not linear. Economic and political developments also had ideational roots ... ideas and language are the medium through which any kind of change takes place’ (Lebow 2003: 373) A particularly powerful example of this is a passage in History of the Peloponnesian War where Thucydides observed that ‘to fit in with the change of events, words, too, had to change their usual meanings’ (Thucydides 1954: III.82, 242). In identifying this state of affairs, Thucydides pointed to the constitutive role played by language in shaping the social realm, in which concepts form a crucial component. From this vantage, his history charts the breakdown of Athenian civilisation through the collapse of shared understandings and conventions (Lebow 2003: 117, 147, 161–2). In this regard, Thucydides’ awareness of the way conceptual change operates in relation to the political and social realm reflects one of the key assumptions informing this work.
CONCLUSION

The present shape of international politics, one where popular sovereignty is a doctrine accepted by all states (plus many more who seek entry), and where democracy is widely acclaimed as a form of government, only became possible as a result of transformations in the way the concept of democracy had been understood and used. The more one thinks about it, the more remarkable it is. For the greater part of two millennia there was a very high level of consensus over democracy, and this was wholly negative: it was considered a dangerous, unstable, violent and antiquated form of rule. It was only in the last two centuries that the descriptive and evaluative dimensions of democracy were contested, challenged and changed, so that democracy has emerged as the most legitimate form of polity in international society. In this sense, much of this book is about democracy becoming a basic concept in international relations. And through appreciating how the meaning and value attached to democracy has altered over time, insight is also gained into how the international order within which it has operated has changed. This study is thus engaging in a form of constitutive analysis: examining the question of how democracy’s meaning and value have been constructed over time in international politics and in so doing, ‘tracing the processes of how it mattered’ (Price and Reus-Smit 1998: 276, 282; original emphasis). The book charts how this occurred, with one eye towards the past, and the other towards the future. It is a story that begins in the second half of the eighteenth century in the United States, the subject of the next chapter.

Notes


2 In operationalising democracy, scholars largely rely on the Polity and Freedom House data sets, while the Correlates of War project (CoW) is the primary source for determining war and peace in the international system. A comprehensive list of different regime type data sets is provided by Paul Hensel at http://www.paulhensel.org/datapol.html (accessed 16 February
3 Representative is the definition provided by Russett: ‘For modern states, democracy (or polyarchy, following Dahl 1971) is usually identified with a voting franchise for a substantial fraction of citizens, a government brought to power in contested elections, and an executive either popularly elected or responsible to an elected legislature, often also with requirements for civil liberties such as free speech’ (Russett 1993: 14).

4 According to Google Scholar, Barkawi and Laffey’s 1999 article has been cited 147 times as at 14 January 2015. Of these, Nils Petter Gleditsch and Steve Chan are the only mainstream democratic peace scholars that have referenced it. It is also not listed in R. J. Rummel’s seemingly comprehensive bibliography on the democratic peace.


6 The history and theory of the concept of sovereignty have been considered in detail elsewhere (Bartelson 1995; Biersteker and Weber 1996; Hinsley 1966; R. Jackson 2007; N. G. Onuf 1991; Philpott 2001; Shinoda 2000; Thomson 1994).

7 The classic definition is provided by Hedley Bull: ‘A society of states (or international society) exists when a group of states, conscious of certain common interests and common values, form a society in the sense that they conceive of themselves to be bound by a common set of rules in their relations with one another, and share in the working of common institutions’ (Bull 2002: 13).

8 ‘Purposive association is a relationship among those who cooperate for the purpose of securing certain shared beliefs, values, and interests, who adopt certain practices as a means to that end, and who regard such practices as worthy of respect only to the extent that they are useful instruments of the common purpose. Practical association, in contrast, unites those engaged in the pursuit of different and sometimes incompatible ends through their recognition of the worth of those ways of life constituted by the authoritative practices that apply to them as moral agents or as members of a political community’ (Nardin 1983: 14).

9 There has been considerable debate among English school scholars about the relative merits of pluralism and solidarism. While providing certain insights, at times it has been confused by these categories being used in both empirical and normative senses. This study largely sidesteps that discussion, and here pluralism and solidarism are understood empirically (Buzan 2004: 159–60).

10 This suggests that while the meaning of concepts may remain in flux at
certain moments, the difficulties of actively bringing about conceptual revision lead to more continuity in concepts than the earlier emphasis on contingency would seem to imply (Ball 1988; Richter 2000).

In a critique of attempts at applying democratic peace theory to ancient Greece, Eric Robinson observes in relation to the quantitative data Russett and Antholis compile from Thucydides that ‘the results are striking: the government with the highest incidence of war against its own type is, by a hair, democracy!’ (Robinson 2001: 599).

What is regarded as the other great speech announcing democracy’s essence – Lincoln’s Gettysburg address – has been interpreted by scholars as being strongly influenced by and modelled on that of Pericles (Stow 2007).