
IN MEMORIAM

In Memoriam: Bruce Russett

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Bruce Russett, John R. Oneal, and David R. Davis. 1998. The Third Leg of the Kantian Tripod for Peace: International Organizations and Militarized Disputes, 1950–85. *International Organization* 52 (3):441–67.

John R. Oneal and Bruce Russett. 2001. Clear and Clean: The Fixed Effects of the Liberal Peace. *International Organization* 55 (2):469–85.

Jon Pevehouse and Bruce Russett. 2006. Democratic International Governmental Organizations Promote Peace. *International Organization* 60 (4):969–1000.

Bruce Russett, Dean Acheson Professor Emeritus of Political Science at Yale University, passed away on September 22, 2023. He was one of the most impactful political scientists of his generation, having shaped the field of International Relations by infusing it with a quest for data-driven analysis and fact-based policy design. He was most widely known for his probing analysis of the “democratic peace” —the idea that democracies rarely if ever fight wars against each other. His career spanned many decades and covered several topics beyond the democratic peace, from deterrence theory, to reform of the United Nations Security Council, to determinants of military spending, and the social impacts of civil war. In *International Organization* alone, he published nine papers between 1971 and 2012. Bruce was also a major public goods provider, editing the *Journal of Conflict Resolution* between 1973 and 2009.

Bruce’s most important contributions centered on the democratic peace. The idea itself can be traced back to Immanuel Kant’s writings in the late eighteenth century and it began to attract renewed attention from a few scholars in the 1970s and 1980s. Though seemingly simple, the idea was difficult to prove. Bruce used quantitative methods to probe the democratic peace and to evaluate the causal process underlying it. This line of work produced two books, *Grasping the Democratic Peace* (1993) and *Triangulating Peace* (2001), with John R. Oneal, and three articles in *International Organization*. In “The Third Leg of the Kantian Tripod for Peace” (1998) and “Democratic International Governmental Organizations Promote Peace” (2006), Bruce and his co-authors find that joint membership in international organizations,

International Organization 77, Fall 2023, pp. 883–4

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doi:10.1017/S0020818323000231

specifically international organizations composed mainly of democracies, contributes to peace.

Bruce's work on the democratic peace was highly influential. *Triangulating Peace* was co-winner of the 2010 International Studies Association prize for best book of the decade, 2000-2009. The work also generated much debate, on the possibility of the confounding role of development and Cold War dynamics, and on its lessons for policymaking. With co-authors, Bruce tested the robustness of the finding against various alternative explanations. In "Clear and Clean" (2001), Bruce and John R. Oneal argue that the result is robust to different statistical estimation techniques. Bruce also objected to what he perceived as the misuses of the democratic peace as a post hoc justification for forcible regime change with the US invasion of Iraq ("Bushwhacking the Democratic Peace," *International Studies Perspectives*, 2005).

Bruce was a numbers person and the numbers speak for themselves: he wrote twenty-eight books and more than 250 articles, received eleven grants from the NSF, and additional grants from the MacArthur, Guggenheim, and Ford Foundations, among other organizations. According to all our metrics of impact, Bruce had an outsize impact in our discipline. Yet perhaps his most lasting impact will be measured in the norms and practices that he cultivated in the profession, and in the high standards that he set for others to follow. At Yale, where Bruce taught for a lifetime, students and colleagues will remember him as an intellectual leader and a soft-spoken mentor with an edge. He was purposeful in his efforts to advance the field of international relations and generous in his help of young colleagues for whom he served not only as a role model, but also as the source of professional guidance and opportunities for advancement.