The Rhetorical Capital of Theories: The Democratic Peace and the Road to the Roadmap

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Abstract. The article introduces the concept of rhetorical capital, which is defined as the aggregate persuasive resources inherent in entities. It then proceeds to apply the concept to the study of theories and identifies the structural duality of accessibility and incomprehensibility overlaid with the prestige of objectivity as the theories' resources of rhetorical capital that render them vulnerable to political and rhetorical abuses. The article focuses on the democratic peace thesis and its mobilization by the Israeli right, mainly by Benjamin Netanyahu and Natan Sharansky, in helping to bring about the Roadmap.

Keywords: • Rhetorical capital • Theory • Democratic peace

Introduction

On June 24, 2002, President Bush aired a new plan for peace between Israel and the Palestinians. The plan, known as the "Roadmap,"[1] is based on a two-state solution and presents two novelties: (1) this was the first time the USA publicly committed itself to an independent Palestinian sovereignty and (2) it was also the first time that the USA conditioned Israeli concessions on Palestinian democratization. This article explores the role of the democratic peace thesis in bringing about these novelties: it examines how this thesis was mobilized politically by Israeli politicians in order to advance their ideological aims by influencing American policies and how and why the thesis has been useful to the politicians. The article is therefore a study of the rhetorical capital of social science theories, and of the political mobilization of that capital.[2] Rhetorical capital is defined as the aggregate persuasive resources inherent in entities. This concept is applicable to a variety of entities, be they material ones such as commemorative monuments, or abstract and ideal ones such as theories. In the article, I will concentrate on the rhetorical capital inherent in social science theories.

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Introducing the concept of rhetorical capital will contribute to the theoretical literature of rhetoric by enabling researchers to study not only the rhetor's skills, but also the assets available to her. It allows us to ask what it is, say in a theory, that enables the rhetor to use it to her rhetorical advantage. The concept therefore opens a space to study theories in terms of their rhetoric without falling into the postmodernist relativism so common among adherents of the rhetoric of science. I will ask what in theories comprises their rhetorical capital. In other words, which features of theories render them vulnerable to political and rhetorical abuses. These features comprise the general features that most theories share, namely the structural duality of accessibility and incomprehensibility overlaid with the prestige of objectivity, and features which are specific to particular theories. The specific features that add to the democratic peace theory's rhetorical capital will be explored below.

The second section of the article empirically examines the rhetorical mobilization of the rhetorical capital of the democratic peace thesis by two influential Israeli politicians: Benjamin Netanyahu and Natan Sharansky. Each of these politicians has expediently and rhetorically subordinated the thesis to his own ideological purposes. Whereas Netanyahu mobilizes the thesis in what might be termed a "politics of postponement," Sharansky mobilizes it as a "politics of avoidance." Netanyahu wishes to delay the resumption of negotiations with the Palestinians; Sharansky wishes to avoid it completely. Their mobilization of the democratic peace thesis has helped lay the groundwork for President Bush's Roadmap.

Rhetorical Capital and the Democratic Peace Thesis

It was Aristotle (1909: 5) who defined rhetoric as "the faculty of discovering in every case the available means of persuasion." Since ancient Greece, rhetoric has evolved further into the art of persuasion as we know it today. As the practice of rhetoric has developed so has the theory of rhetoric, evolving into a vast and sophisticated body of scholarship specifying the terms and means of persuasion. Rhetorical capital as defined above (the aggregate persuasive resources inherent in entities) conforms nicely to the theory of rhetoric and might also contribute to the literature by enabling researchers to shift their focus from the rhetors' skills to the rhetorical assets available to them.[3] Hence, novel questions might arise, such as why politicians and ideologues prefer to use certain entities rather than others rhetorically (or, to put it differently, which entities attract rhetors more and why this is so) and how those entities help them in their rhetorical campaign of persuasion (to put it differently again, what persuasive means are available to the rhetors in each entity). Thus, for example, the concept of rhetorical capital can augment William Riker's discussion of rhetoric and heresthetics (the art of setting up situations to compel political adversaries to support one's purpose) (1996; see also 1986). Rich as his discussion of political ingenuity in heresthetics may be, it leaves us with scant understanding of the persuasive tools employed. This lack can be rectified using the concept of rhetorical capital.

Rhetorical capital not only relates to the literature of rhetoric, it is also indebted to and informed by a vast literature on the subject of social capital and its conceptual kin such as economic capital, cultural capital, symbolic capital, human capital, and political capital (Bourdieu, 1986). A brief discussion of social capital will allow us to develop the concept of rhetorical capital and understand

more fully its analytical merits, shortcomings, and limitations. Social capital has become a catch-all concept with multiple definitions serving assorted scholarly and political agendas. Alejandro Portes (1998: 2) grasped this multidimensional nature and function of the concept by aptly dubbing it "a cure-all" concept. In other words, it is a somewhat loose concept – a characteristic that can be evaluated both positively (as enabling contributions to many fields of research) and negatively (as it might leave too much unspecified). To produce conclusive theories, social capital must be supplemented with other theoretical apparatuses.[4] Without supplementary theoretical apparatuses, the looseness of the concept of social capital precludes researchers from the possibility of producing conclusive theories: it can only supply them with functionalist analysis pointing to some feasible explanatory model.

The multidimensional nature of the concept is also evident from the varied entities to which social capital is attributed. Pierre Bourdieu (1986: 248–9) employed the concept of social capital mostly as an attribute of membership in a group, applying it to the individuals who belong to the group. Robert Putnam (2000), however, attributed social capital to social networks. Putnam's analysis led to two relocations of social capital. It is no longer the attribute of individuals, but of groups or collectives, and, no less important, it is no longer the attribute of concrete subjects or entities. Social networks are abstract constructs, theoretical fictions with heuristic value. This analytical move or relocation by Putnam supports my claim that rhetorical capital as a concept is also applicable to inhuman abstract entities such as theories.[5]

Social networks as the locus of social capital can also help us analogously to go beyond the formal definition of rhetorical capital (the aggregate persuasive resources inherent in entities) and to understand more fully the internal constitution of rhetorical capital. Rhetorical capital is an attribute of entities generated by some features of those entities. Some features may act as persuasive resources all by themselves – in other words, they can stand rhetorically alone. Other features serve as persuasive resources when they form a set of relations (a network) with other features of the same entity. This involves internal networking in which internal features of the entity interrelate. Still other features of the entity are resources of persuasion only on the background of an external structure that frames the entity. This involves external networking in which the internal features of the entity relate it to external, broader, and more encompassing entities. Let us take a poem for example. A poem can have both internal-to-the-text and external-to-the-text resources of persuasion. Rhymes, for example, are internal-to-the-text features that can act as resources of persuasion, resources that an able rhetor can use to convey her message fluidly and gracefully. Yet the rhetor can do even better if she chooses a poem whose rhyme combines with the poem's rhythm to engender a calming or confrontational mood to augment her persuasive resources, rhyme and rhythm being internal-to-the-text features networked together to produce augmented persuasive resources. Of course, in the realm of politics our rhetor will fare best by choosing a well-known poem, which is constituted culturally as a national symbol with connotations of martyrdom, heroism, or piety as the cause requires. In that case, the poem as well-known and national symbol is an external-to-the-text cultural structure that acts as a background upon which the poem's internal features are further augmented as assets of persuasion, as resources of rhetorical capital. Thus, rhetorical capital is an attribute generated by features,

some internal to an entity, some external to it, and most (though not all) relational, constituting sets of relations that serve as persuasive assets – persuasive assets that come alive not by themselves, but in the hands of able rhetors.

To summarize, rhetorical capital is a loose analytical concept.[6] It cannot establish theoretical explanations alone, yet it has ample heuristic value to help us think functionally about the persuasive resources that are available to rhetors. It can be supplemented, for example, by such theoretical apparatuses as Riker's heresthetics, Alan Finlayson's (2007) Rhetorical Political Analysis, or the analytical triad of classical rhetoric: pathos, ethos, and logos. Using these complementary theoretical apparatuses researchers can develop fuller explanatory theories of the art of persuasion, something which entails a number of questions. What are the available persuasive resources? What are the techniques for mobilizing them and how do they work? What are the political conditions under which they function best and what are the political goals they serve to secure?

I use the concept of rhetorical capital here to open a space to study theories in terms of their rhetorical function without falling into the postmodernist relativism so common among adherents of the rhetoric of science and, more specifically, to demonstrate the rhetorical use of the democratic peace thesis by Netanyahu and Sharansky in their attempts to secure their political goals.

The Rhetoric of Science

The rhetoric of science or, as it is also known, the rhetoric of inquiry evolved following postmodernist and post-structuralist critique (for example, Beer and Hariman, 1996; Gross and Keith, 1997; Lyne, 1998; Megill, 1994; Nelson et al., 1987; Prelli, 1989; Simon, 1989, 1990), and together with them contests the foundationalist view of science.[7] The rhetoric of science disputes two different philosophies. First, it opposes positivism by challenging objectivism with relativism, and argues that scientific inquiry is governed by the logic of rhetoric cloaked by the semblance of objectivity and so-called rigorous methodology. Science, we are told by scholars of the rhetoric of science, is oriented toward persuasion, not toward discovering the truth. Scientists pursue prestige and financing, using rhetoric on their colleagues, on the public, and on decision-makers.

Second, being a particular branch of the more general study of rhetoric, the rhetoric of science questions the Habermasian philosophy of the public sphere. It refutes envisioning public deliberation as rational by highlighting the centrality of political manipulation in the public sphere along with the public sphere's nonrational, even irrational, qualities. It is not the rational and power-free ideal speech act that guides public discourse, but rhetorical devices, which overtake public discourse by triggering the nonrational faculties of the public. The rhetoric of science is specifically interested in the nature of how theories engage in the public sphere. Scientists would like to think that the objective and, more importantly, rational nature of theories makes them perfect facilitators of ideal speech situations in which arguments are clarified and interest and values elucidated en route to a public and rational understanding and agreement. However, scholars of the rhetoric of science would argue that objectivity and rationality are but a convenient myth, which both theoreticians and politicians use as a rhetorical device to realize their ideological and political aims. Accordingly, it is not in the service of truth and general interests that theories are used, but in the service of ideologies and narrow interests.

Although the rhetoric of science literature does provide some insightful lessons on the inner mechanisms of science, its conclusions are far too sweeping. The rhetoric of science's scholars immerse themselves in what is, after all, the marginal and the minor in scientific work, mistaking it for the core and essence of science. Of course, scientists engage in rhetoric, which they use to convey the soundness of their findings to colleagues and sometimes to the wider public, and, indeed, some are very skilled rhetors. However, the rhetoric comes into play, so to speak, once the scientists have finished with the science. Thus, being themselves convinced of the accuracy of their findings and the merit of their theories, they use rhetoric to try to persuade their colleagues. It is here where I diverge from the rhetoric of science and its relativism and anti-foundationalism. My argument, as will be explored in the next section, is not that science is inherently rhetorical or irrational, but rather that science's outputs (theories) are vulnerable to rhetorical abuse.

The Rhetorical Capital of the Democratic Peace Thesis

Four features of the democratic peace thesis comprise its rhetorical capital, that is, may serve as assets for persuasion: (1) the feature common to the rhetorical capital of theories in general, namely, the structural duality of accessibility and incomprehensibility, overlaid with the prestige of objectivity, (2) the status of the democratic peace thesis among policy elites as a law-like phenomenon governing the realm of world politics, (3) the existence of two distinct theories trying to explain the phenomenon, each of which helps to deliver a different political message, and (4) the implications of accepting the conclusion of the democratic peace thesis (that democratization creates a zone of peace) and the consequent urge to democratize nondemocratic states for the sake of national security.

I wish to start by analyzing the specific features of the democratic peace that comprise its rhetorical capital. There is an ever-burgeoning theoretical and empirical literature establishing the soundness of the observed phenomenon that democracies never (or, in a qualified version, rarely) go to war with each other (for example, Babst, 1964; Doyle, 1983a, 1983b, 1986; Maoz and Russett, 1993; Rummel, 1979, 1981, 1983; Wallenstein, 1973). The observation has been hypothesized into a thesis, which claims that democracies never (or hardly ever) go to war with each other for no other reason than the fact that they are democracies. Despite harsh criticism of both the observation and the thesis (for example, Cohen, 1994; Farber and Gowa, 1996; Gaubatz, 1999; Gowa, 1999; Lane, 1996; Oren, 1996; Rosato, 2003; Spiro, 1996), both have by now been generally accepted in academia, and, furthermore, have migrated to the public sphere, where they are accepted by politicians, ideologues, and pundits from a wide political spectrum as a valid, law-like regularity that governs relations among states. The assertion that democracies have not fought *and will not* fight each other, can be found in the thinking of conservatives and neo-conservatives such as Francis Fukuyama (1999), Charles Krauthammer (2001, 2004), and William Kristol (Kaplan and Kristol, 2003: 104), and liberals the like of Paul Berman (2003) and Michael Mandelbaum (2002). More significantly, this thinking can be found in both the words and deeds of Presidents Bill Clinton and George W. Bush, indicating the width and depth of penetration of the democratic peace thesis into the common sense of American elites.[8] The notion that democracies do not fight each other has become the bedrock of the American perspective on world politics (see also Ish-Shalom, 2007–08; Smith, 2007).[9] Policy elites' acceptance

of the thesis, even more than a broad theoretical agreement over the validity of the thesis, is a major source of its rhetorical capital. The general acceptance of the thesis works similarly to a poem's standing as a national symbol. It is an external-to-the-theory cultural and political structure that acts as a background upon which the theory's internal features are further augmented as assets of persuasion, as resources of rhetorical capital.

Notwithstanding the broad theoretical agreement over the validity of the thesis, disagreement over the causal mechanism connecting democracy and the absence of war has produced two competing explanatory theories. The first explains the democratic peace phenomenon by focusing on the structural dimensions of democracy, maintaining that the division of power, checks and balances, and the principle of leaders' accountability make the decision-making process intricate and protracted, affording decision-makers of democracies the time required to resolve conflicts peacefully. By postulating leaders' universal desire to remain in office, the more sophisticated versions of structural explanation demonstrate (by formal game modeling) that the democratic structure forces leaders to resolve disputes with other democracies before escalation to war (for example, Bueno de Mesquita et al., 1999; Fearon, 1994; Reiter and Stam, 2002, 2003). The second theory underscores the normative dimensions of democratic societies, maintaining that the norms of tolerance and openness within these states transcend into the level of the relations between them, thereby producing greater readiness to use conflict-resolution techniques and to reach compromise so that conflicts are resolved peacefully (for example, Dixon, 1994; Maoz and Russett, 1993). More recently, advocates of the normative explanation, such as Bruce Russett, James Lee Ray, and John Oneal (Oneal and Ray, 1997; Oneal and Russett, 1997, 1999; Russett et al., 1998), have pointed to the interaction of democratic norms, international institutions, and economic interdependence as the force behind democratic peace.

These two theories, especially when broadly acknowledged as they are, carry real-world implications. Once one accepts that democracies do not fight each other, the policy implication should be to support democratization abroad. Allegedly, each state that becomes a democracy ceases to pose a threat to other democracies. To increase the number of democracies is to enlarge the zone of peace. Thus, the stakes in the validity of the democratic peace thesis are not only theoretical, and the theories are far from the ordinary abstract material that is usually the exclusive province of theoreticians. The theories raise real-world interests that appeal to policymakers and this appeal is another source of the theories' rhetorical capital: the theoreticians are speaking the policymakers' language. It is one of those occasions when truth (science) speaks to power (politics). But common language and interests allow able rhetors to mobilize theories for their political needs; although truth may inform power, power can and does distort truth according to expediency.

However, the implications of democratizing are not as straightforward as may seem at first glance, when we consider questions regarding the nature, the agents, and the means of democratization. Adherents to the structural theories of democratic peace tend to emphasize the structural features of democracy, and thus regard democratization as a relatively easy process of building the structure of democracy, namely checks and balances, periodical elections, and so forth. Seen from this angle, democratization can be initiated and maintained by

external agents, and can even be achieved in a relatively short time. In contrast, adherents to the normative theories of democratic peace tend to emphasize the normative and cultural features of democracy, regarding democratization as a complicated process of constructing and consolidating democratic norms. This, it is believed, should be carried out by internal agents in order to be both efficient and legitimate, and involves extensive processes of socialization, education, and norm dissemination.

The differences in the definitions, conceptualization, operationalization, and expectations of democratization open up a political space that can also be mobilized by able rhetors in order to deliver different political messages. In other words, the general acceptance of the democratic peace thesis supplemented by the different theoretical meanings is yet another specific feature, another source of rhetorical capital that can be mobilized politically. We see here the relational nature of the theory's features that network together and constitute its rhetorical capital. Definitions and concepts are internal-to-the-theory features. Yet they (the internal-to-the-theory features of both the normative and structural theories of democratic peace) network (or, more accurately, are networked by rhetors) with the parallel definitions and concepts of the other theory (or, to put it differently, with the other theory's internal features) and by opening a political space amenable to delivering different political messages augment the thesis' rhetorical capital. Finally, the internal-to-the-theories features are networked yet again with the general acceptance of the thesis to constitute a powerful asset of persuasion: the resource of rhetorical capital. Below, we will see how politicians rhetorically interact and network the theories with other cultural and political beliefs (external structures) to serve their political agendas. Strongest of these cultural and political external-to-the-theory structures is the idea of "us" against "them." In the hands of politicians, the rhetorical capital of the democratic peace thesis can be used to support and justify this belief while exploiting it through reframing it in terms of a "democratic us" against an "autocratic them."

I turn now to the general features that comprise the rhetorical capital of theories – the structural duality of accessibility and incomprehensibility overlaid with the prestige of objectivity. Theories offer explanations (usually causal explanations) for regularities. The basic requirement and expectation of a theory is its capacity to explain phenomena. This is the function at the center of the structure of theory: the relating of explanans to explanandum. Around this center arise other auxiliary, structural, and procedural features. First among these features is the principle of objectivity which, according to the positivistic and conventional wisdom, governs the conduct of theorizing. Supposedly, theories are developed in the pursuit of scientific knowledge, and, as such, are oblivious to political partisanship and moral and ideological persuasion. The function of explanation and the prestige of objectivity affect the attractiveness of theories in politics because policymakers seek causal mechanisms to help them devise effective policies. By offering causal mechanisms that are credited with objectivity rather than tainted by partisanship and ideology, theories represent the perfect apparatus for meeting this need (Shenhav, 2005: 81). The above-mentioned features and sources of the rhetorical capital of theories depend on their accessibility to the public. Without this accessibility, theories would remain obscure and secluded in their ivory towers, despite their real-world implications and attractiveness to policymakers. However, since theorizing is conducted in a public sphere and since

theories are circulated freely, they are indeed highly accessible to the public. The accessibility of theories facilitates their migration to the public sphere and is a major source of rhetorical capital.

There are certain technicalities and subtleties of theorizing, however, which are incomprehensible to the wide-public and do not travel well from academia to the public sphere. In particular, four requisites of theorizing do not fare well in the public sphere and become lost in the process of migration (for a similar account, see Ish-Shalom, 2006). First, in academia theories are forever subject to processes of evaluation and critical review, and are at risk of refutation (see Gilovich, 1991: 56–60). It is the outcome of the academic culture of skepticism. When this culture dissipates along with the cautiousness, self-reflectivity, and criticism that skepticism cultivates, theories can become accepted as absolute and unchallenged truth. Second, in theorizing and in evaluating theory we employ terms of conditionality that specify the restrictions of their applicability. Most theories are explicit about the conditions of their validity. For example, most of the democratic peace theoreticians insist that peaceful democratic relations are dyadic in nature, valid only within pairs of democracies.[10] Another important conditionality of the thesis is that it is valid only between stable democracies. As Edward Mansfield and Jack Snyder (2005) skillfully demonstrate, transition to democracy is dangerously disposed to destabilization.[11] Put differently, democratization might lead to both domestic and international violence. These conditionalities disappear in the political sphere when theoretical assertions turn into totalistic claims, for example, that democracies are peaceful overall and that democratization is the surest method to secure peace. Third, theory is probabilistic in essence, that is, indicative of strong tendencies. When this requisite is ignored, theory can be perceived as law-like assertion about absolute and universal patterns. Fourth, theoreticians are bounded by logic. The dictates of logic stipulate what is valid to infer from a theory and what is not. For example, we cannot infer from the theoretical assertion that democracies never (or rarely) fight each other, that an authoritarian regime is belligerent, or that other dyads (for example, democracy versus nondemocracy or nondemocracy versus nondemocracy) are necessarily war prone. These dictates of logic do not necessarily operate in the public sphere, and may be set aside by popular sentiments and political standards.

We should bear in mind that the incomprehensibility of theory, including democratic peace theory, is not in itself an asset of persuasion. It becomes such an asset only when combined with the accessibility of theory, or, to put it another way, as an outcome of theory's structural duality of incomprehensibility and accessibility. Because of its incomprehensibility to the wider public, politicians can mobilize theory's rhetorical capital (taking advantage of its being circulated and well known) and use it to their political advantage.[12] So, in effect, theory's accessibility is in and of itself a resource of rhetorical capital, while incomprehensibility becomes such a resource due to theory's accessibility, making theory vulnerable to rhetorical misuse and abuse.

Discarding these four requisites of theorizing results in a simplistic and totalistic "yes/no" reading of theories[13] (in public and political representation, rather than theory itself) that is highly amenable to manipulation by able rhetors and political mobilization. This aspect of rhetorical capital, the crude reading of theories, is evident in cases of political mobilization of the democratic peace thesis' rhetorical capital.

Political Mobilization of the Rhetorical Capital of Democratic Peace by the Israeli Right

This section analyzes the political mobilization of the democratic peace thesis' rhetorical capital by Netanyahu and Sharansky in the service of their respective political and ideological purposes: Netanyahu's conduct of a "politics of postponement" and Sharansky's conduct of a "politics of avoidance" (see also Ish-Shalom, 2005).

Benjamin Netanyahu and the Politics of Postponement

Benjamin Netanyahu (a former Israeli prime minister) is an able politician locked in a web of conflicting interests and political commitments. It is therefore quite difficult to assess accurately his real attitudes concerning a compromise with the Palestinians. It seems, however, that he has accepted unhappily that some sort of territorial compromise with the Palestinians is required. His aspiration, though, is that the terms of this compromise will be decided less by bilateral negotiations than by establishing facts on the ground (that is, more settlements), persuading the USA to agree to and legitimize the settlements, and thereby pressuring the international community and the Palestinians to accept a bargain that does not include an Israeli withdrawal to the 1967 borders. To achieve this, Netanyahu has adopted tactics of postponement along with a massive public relations campaign aimed at both the Israeli and American publics.

Netanyahu is one of Israel's most eloquent spokespersons, and as part of his explanatory efforts he uses the rhetorical capital of the democratic peace (see also Cohen, 1994: 223; Maoz, 1998: 8). One of his first articulations of the idea that Middle East peace must be based on democratization was in his 1993 book *A Place Among the Nations*. In the book, Netanyahu employs Kant's *Perpetual Peace* and distinguishes between two types of peace. The first type is between nondemocratic states, or between a democracy and a nondemocratic state, and is based on deterrence and a balance of power. It is a "peace through strength" (Netanyahu, 1993: 250), which is temporal, reflects interests, and is not to be relied on. Netanyahu follows Kant in envisaging a second type of peace that exists between democracies. Netanyahu argues that this is the peace that Israel must aspire to in the Middle East, and it requires promoting democratization among Israel's enemies. Until the establishment of a democratic and peaceful Middle East, Israel should rely on military might and settle for "peace through strength."

It is interesting to note the reasons given for this vision of democratic peace. Netanyahu considers both the structural and the normative explanations. In a structural argumentation, he asserts that "democracies require the consent of the governed to go to war, and that is not easy to secure" (Netanyahu, 1993: 240). But he also claims, in a more normative argumentation, that "the whole idea of politics in democratic states is the *nonviolent* resolution of conflict" (Netanyahu, 1993: 240).

Using his oratorical talents, Netanyahu tried in a series of public addresses to convince the American public and decision-makers that no advance in the peace process is feasible until the Palestinian Authority (PA) is democratized. One of his best-known speeches was given just after his inauguration, when on July 10, 1996 he addressed a joint session of the US Congress (Netanyahu, 1996). Netanyahu made references to the normative understanding of democracy, claiming that it

is the total commitment to democracy of both the USA and Israel that binds the two countries together. Without referring explicitly to the democratic peace thesis, Netanyahu treated democratic peace as a well-known and established fact. "I am not revealing a secret to the Members of this Chamber when I say that modern democracies do not initiate aggression. This has been the central lesson of the 20th century. States that respect the human rights of their citizens are not likely to provoke hostile action against their neighbors." Here Netanyahu does not refer to a philosopher who wrote two centuries ago, but to a modern, documented fact, proven by social science. Netanyahu also refers to it as conventional knowledge among Americans: "I am not revealing a secret...." Once Netanyahu reaffirms this conventional knowledge, he uses a political maneuver to "decontest" the political concepts involved in democratic peace in an altered form. He reinforces the observed fact about democracies, claiming democracies to be overall less aggressive: "modern democracies do not initiate aggression."

Another tenet of Netanyahu's address had already been put forth in his book: the collective identity of democracies and the need to strengthen Israel on the basis of this common identity (1993: 249–50). He emphasized this theme even more in speeches after September 11, 2001, when global terrorism became the main topic on the US international agenda. In this new global context, Netanyahu advances even further the idea of democratic peace. Democracy is no longer just less aggressive, it is also immune from exercising terrorism, and hence democratization is the ultimate solution to terror. This is the main theme of his address to the US Senate on October 4, 2002: "The open debate and plurality of ideas that buttress all genuine democracies and the respect for human rights and the sanctity of life that are the shared values of all free societies are a permanent antidote to the poison that the sponsors of terror seek to inject into the minds of their recruits" (Netanyahu, 2002a).

These same themes were the hallmark of another speech Netanyahu (2002b) gave on May 5, 2002 (about six weeks before Bush's declaration of the Roadmap) at the Ashbrook Center for Public Affairs. While repeating most of the above-mentioned themes, this time he returned to Kant as his source of inspiration. But Netanyahu argued that Kant was wrong in regard to the 21st century with its new threat – terror. Peace with nondemocratic states would leave those states' totalitarianism intact, and terror would continue to flourish. Here again we witness the political altering of theory. Democratic peace has been transformed into an antidote not only against war among states, but also against terrorism, and en route is used to demarcate a democratic "us" from a nondemocratic "them."

Although the alternations in Netanyahu's addresses and writings between structural explanations and normative explanations of democratic peace could be viewed as internal incoherencies, they are better viewed as well-crafted public relations campaigning. We should not evaluate Netanyahu as a theoretician committed to coherence and bounded by the dictates of logic, but as a politician committed to political goals. It is as a politician that Netanyahu makes maximal use of the different aspects of the democratic peace thesis, using each one to different political advantage, and forfeiting theoretical coherency in the process. Accordingly, it is better to understand these incoherencies as different subtexts that Netanyahu tacitly tries to transmit to his readers and listeners. While employing normative theories of democracy and democratic peace, Netanyahu stresses a common identity – the democratic "us" against the autocratic (terrorist) "them."

The political reward of this subtext is the strengthening of US–Israeli ties and the further weakening of poor US–Palestinian relations.

When Netanyahu shifts, however, to a structural reading of democracy and democratic peace, he conveys a different message. By stressing the structural theories, he tacitly suggests that it is not so difficult to democratize oneself. If democracy means certain political structures rather than others, democratization requires no more than a structural reform of political institutions, rather than an extensive and complex process of socialization and norm dissemination. Indeed, the Israeli reservations to the Roadmap, as presented in a document of 14 points on May 25, 2003, insist more on structural reforms of the Palestinian Authority than on democratization of Palestinian society (Israel Government, 2003). This subtext of the structural definition and explanation harbors two interlinked messages. The first is that striving for democratization is the best strategy for obtaining peace. On the one hand, it secures a stable peace; on the other, it is easy, quick, and demands few resources. Hence, the best peace strategy would be to demand that the PA democratizes. Here, of course, there is a postponement of the peace process until the Palestinians democratize, and more time is gained by Israel to transform reality, that is, to build more settlements. But there is a second message as well. If all that is needed to democratize and secure peace is a few rather easy structural reforms, and the Palestinians do not accomplish this, it is an indication that they do not really want peace or democracy. If they do not really want democracy, it further enhances the identity claim of "us" against "them." Netanyahu ignores, of course, several issues. The first is the implications of the normative definition of democracy, a definition Netanyahu himself uses when it is advantageous for his purposes. Actually, democratization is not easy and involves not only political institutions, but also society and individuals. It is a process that could lose its legitimacy if it is perceived as imposed by foreign powers.

Furthermore, the tacit subtext suggesting that democratization is the best strategy to achieve peace also veils other strategies of promoting peace, namely, dealing with the problems of mutual hatred, poverty, refugees, and above all the occupation and the spreading of more and more settlements. This veiling of other peace strategies is also connected to the implicit blaming of the Palestinians for failing to achieve democracy. Democratization is not only a protracted and intricate process, it is also burdened by the Israeli military presence in the Palestinian territories. As Anatol Lieven (2002) rightly asks, how can we expect the Palestinians to democratize under military occupation, continuous curfews, and unresolved borders?

Evident in Netanyahu's rhetorical uses of the democratic peace thesis is what I term the "structural duality of the accessibility and incomprehensibility" of theories. Netanyahu relies on the accessibility of theories, on their being generally known and broadly acknowledged among policy elites as valid and objective – in other words, as beyond partisan disputes. At the same time, Netanyahu dispenses with the subtleties and technicalities of theorizing in ways that are politically and rhetorically advantageous to him. He ignores the probabilistic nature of the theoretical claim, treating it instead as a law-like regularity. More significantly, he ignores the laws of inference. Even if it is true that democratizing the Palestinian Authority would bring about a stable peace, one cannot logically infer that stable peace is a non-possibility with a nondemocratic PA. Stable peace exists, after all, with both Egypt and Jordan. Furthermore, Netanyahu overlooks the terms of

conditionality. In his formulations, democracies do not merely avoid war with other democratic states, they are overwhelmingly peaceful in nature, and, moreover, they also provide an antidote against terrorism. Netanyahu also overlooks the inherent risk of destabilization that might exist in the transition to democracy. In other words, the democratic peace thesis is no longer a probabilistic, debatable, and limited assertion; it becomes a magical, sure-fire remedy for political violence of any sort. Thus, Netanyahu's mobilization of the democratic peace thesis is logically flawed, but politically sound.

Netanyahu's political uses and abuses of the democratic peace thesis were probably effective in fostering a public atmosphere supportive of Israel and conducive to Bush's Roadmap of June 2002 (Bush, 2002), bringing yet another delay in resuming negotiations with the Palestinians following the second Intifada. This politics of postponement enables the building of more Israeli settlements in the occupied territories, seen as facts on the ground to be taken into account during the future, final status negotiations. The successful politics of postponement is also evident in President Bush's letter to Prime Minister Ariel Sharon of April 14, 2004, in which he affirms the Israeli claim that the final resolution of the conflict will have to take into consideration the map of Israeli settlements (see Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2004). Overwhelming majorities endorsed this letter both in the House of Representatives, as Resolution 460 on June 23, 2004, and in the Senate, as Resolution 393 a day latter.

Natan Sharansky and the Politics of Avoidance

A second Israeli politician who mobilizes the rhetorical capital of the democratic peace thesis is Natan Sharansky, the famous Soviet dissident, associate of Andre Sakharov, recipient of the Congressional Gold Medal and the Presidential Medal of Freedom, and former Israeli cabinet minister. Throughout Sharansky's political career, while propounding PA democratization as a precondition for peace, he has been a vocal opponent of every peace initiative. We can reasonably infer from Sharansky's consistent hawkish stands that he uses the democratic peace thesis to avoid utterly resuming negotiations with the Palestinians and the concomitant Israeli territorial concessions. Sharansky, in other words, practices a politics of avoidance.

Since embarking in Israeli politics as a right-wing leader of the Russian immigrants, Sharansky has argued against the Oslo accords. His criticism was aimed at what he saw as the flawed logic of the Oslo accords: "Take a dictator from Tunis, bring him to the West Bank and Gaza, give him control over 98 percent of all Palestinians, offer him territory, legitimacy, money, an army, and economical tools – and, as a result, he will be so interested in playing the role of a leader of his people that he will become our partner" (Sharansky, 2002b). Refuting this expectation, Sharansky (2000) offered the teachings of Sakharov:

> Long ago, Andrei Sakharov taught me that a society that does not respect the rights of its own citizens will never respect the rights of its neighbors. The reasons for this are simple. Democratic leaders are dependent for their rule on the will of a free people and as such have a vested interest in promoting the peace and prosperity that all free societies desire. In doing so, the nations they govern naturally assume a nonbelligerent posture toward their neighbors, particularly when those neighbors are also democratic states pursuing the same objectives.

This yields the axiom that "democracies do not go to war with one another" (Sharansky, 2000).

Sharansky (2002a) offers an alternative plan to the Oslo accords. The plan contains many issues, such as the implied need to dismantle the existing PA, the internationalization of the conflict, and the postponing of the final negotiations. But democratization as a precondition for negotiating the final settlement is at its core. According to Sharansky's plan, elections and accountability are the ultimate criteria for democratization. These notions of structural democratization on the one hand, and a minimal, structural definition of democracy on the other, mutually reinforce each other.

Sharansky presented this plan in many forums and many public addresses in the USA. Sharansky's (2002b) most successful talk was given at the American Enterprise Initiative (AEI) World Forum on June 20, 2002. The AEI World Forum was attended by close associates of neo-conservative circles and of President Bush, including Vice President Richard Cheney and Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz. Sharansky called his address "Democracy for Peace."

Sharansky emphasized four major points: democracy as the cure for terror; the shared identity of the democratic world; the collective identity of all types of terrorism; and the feasibility of the democratic idea in the Arab and Islamic world. At the beginning of the address, Sharansky declared, "We are in the midst of the first world war of the twenty-first century, waged between the world of terror and the world of democracy." Addressing mainly the veterans of the Reagan era among those present, Sharansky praised Reagan's tough attitude toward the Soviet Union and made the claim that terrorism had taken over from communism as a global menace. Sharansky then referred to Stalin as the prototype of the dictator who mobilizes his people against purported external and internal enemies. From Stalin he went to Arafat, claiming that Arafat had rejected Ehud Barak's offers because as a dictator he needed Israel as an enemy to mobilize his people. From Arafat he moved on to praise the war in Afghanistan in the name of democratization. Thus, in one oratorical sweep, he meshed together America's past and current threats, its self-perceived mission in the world, and Israel's current threats. He invoked, in other words, the eternal struggle between the democratic "us" and the despotic "them." We can detect here a brief alternation of the definition and conceptualization of democracy, a tactical move similar to the one we observed in Netanyahu. Sharansky tries to construct a sense of a shared democratic identity between Israel and the USA. To this end, he briefly offers a cultural-normative definition of democracy, and then returns to his usual structural notion of democracy. He asserts that just as "we" won the cold war, so "we" will win this new world war, because "we" are democratic. In his own words, "What a powerful weapon, democracy! What a drug for the people! Give it to them, and it will be the best guarantee of security." Peoples, so the argument goes, cannot resist the freedom embodied in democracy, the freedom to express their beliefs without the fear of being punished. This irresistibility of democracy is universal and pertains even to the Islamic and Arab worlds, as long as democracy is defined minimally by structural criteria. Thus, to defeat terrorism and promote peace in the Middle East, we need to promote democracy. Sharansky employs the same rhetorical tactics that Netanyahu uses. He relies on both the accessibility and incomprehensibility of the democratic peace thesis, expediently relating the thesis to the popular belief of "us" against "them," while strategically reframing

it as a "democratic us" against an "autocratic them" and generally dispensing with such subtleties and technicalities of theorizing as cautiousness, probability, and conditionality.

This address was given less than a week before Bush's Rose Garden speech in which he announced the launching of the Roadmap. It is argued that Sharansky's meetings with Cheney and Wolfowitz (taking place during the period of final revisions) considerably influenced the final version of the Roadmap speech (Ephron and Lipper, 2002; Milbank, 2002; Rosenblum, 2002). Sharansky's ideas are evident in key points of the Roadmap, such as the need for a new Palestinian leadership, a three-year transition period, an international coordinating body to supervise and support Palestinian institution building, and the need for a free and open Palestinian society as a guarantee of peace and security for Israel.

Sharansky's use of the rhetorical capital of the democratic peace thesis apparently succeeded. His public address and private meetings seem to have established the issue of democratization as the hallmark of the Roadmap. Later, this plan was also adopted by the Quartet (the mediating international body) and a more detailed and operative plan was drafted in April 2003. The impact of Sharansky's ideas on Bush's policy indeed appears dramatic. The impact was heightened still further following the publication of Sharansky's book, *The Case for Democracy*, in 2004 (Sharansky with Dermer, 2004). The book appeared at a politically intense juncture, when the war in Iraq was the focus of controversy amid the American election campaign. Sharansky's lucid and popular formulations, along with his personal prestige as a freedom fighter and dissident for democracy, helped Bush in his own rhetorical efforts. This influence is very evident in Bush's second inaugural address. Both Bush and Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice boasted of reading the book and praised it (see Milbank, 2004; Murphy, 2005), contributing further to the resonating of Sharansky's ideas in the USA.

Yet, there is reason to suspect Sharansky's sincerity in using the democratic peace thesis. He is not wholeheartedly committed to the cause of a two-state solution. He seems instead simply to exploit the rhetorical capital of the democratic peace. It is evident from his consistent hawkish resistance to any peace initiative as well as from his responsibility for massive money transfers to settlements, including unauthorized ones ("outposts") situated in the Palestinian heartland, in what appears to be a clear abuse of his ministerial powers (see Israel State Comptroller, 2004: 365–7). Essentially, he practices a politics of avoidance. Sharansky raised the idea of democratizing the PA to divert the Americans from other issues, which might have been found more urgent for resolving the Israeli–Palestinian conflict, such as settlements, refugees, and Jerusalem.

Conclusions

This study traces the rhetorical uses by Israeli rightist politicians of the democratic peace thesis. One contribution of the article is empirical: its examination of the role of the Israeli right's rhetoric in the road to the Roadmap and the hidden political agendas informing these rhetorical efforts. While Benjamin Netanyahu mobilizes democratic peace in a "politics of postponement," Natan Sharansky mobilizes it in a "politics of avoidance." The former tries to postpone negotiations with the Palestinians in order to establish more "facts on the ground" (that is, more settlements) so as to help Israel secure a bigger chunk of the occupied

territories following peace negotiations. The latter tries to avoid negotiations entirely for the sake of "Greater Israel." Their respective efforts, so it seems, were successful: President Bush's Roadmap and its insistence on PA democratization as a precondition to progress in the negotiations, the consequent exchange of letters with Prime Minister Sharon in which President Bush committed the USA to acknowledging "new realities on the ground" (as Israel continued building new settlements and enlarging existing ones), and American Congress resolutions affirming Bush's commitments testify to this rhetorical success. Still, one must be cautious in asserting these claims too strongly. Rhetoric hardly ever operates alone in shaping policies. Rhetoric helps to foster certain readings of reality that facilitate certain policies while hindering others. In other words, while not determining reality, rhetoric works within the terms of reality to help advance certain agendas.

However, the article's main aims have not been empirical, but theoretical. Its primary aim has been to offer a new theoretical concept, "rhetorical capital," which it defines as the "aggregate persuasive resources inherent in entities." The concept of rhetorical capital is valuable in that it not only allows researchers to study the rhetor's skills, but to evaluate the assets available to him or her: which features facilitate the rhetor's use of theories (or any other material or ideal entity) to his or her rhetorical advantage. The article's second aim has been to present the applicability of the concept of rhetorical capital to the study of theories and the relation between theory and reality. Although I have sided with some of the claims made by scholars of the rhetoric of science, I parted way with their more substantial assertions regarding relativism and the irrationalism of science. Theoreticians, I concur, carry out rhetorical activity, be it to raise research grants, to convince their colleagues of the soundness of their findings and the merits of their theories, or be it for the purpose of bolstering their personal prestige. A good example of a rhetorical act by theoreticians is their titling the absence of war "democratic peace." What was historically recorded negatively, as "no war," in theory has been positively dubbed "peace." As "no war" and "peace" are not identical, and as the former is less alluring than the latter, this titling is indeed a work of rhetoric performed by theoreticians. However, titling is marginal to the work of science (be this the natural sciences, the social sciences, or the humanities) and the claims of scholars of the rhetoric of science are too sweeping. Hence, while endorsing some of their claims, I prefer to focus the study of rhetoric away from the theoreticians and to study the rhetorical uses and abuses of theories by politicians instead. The concept "rhetorical capital" is most useful for this. The article identifies several features which are resources of the rhetorical capital of theories. The first are general and are shared by most theories. They relate to the structural duality of accessibility and incomprehensibility, overlaid with the prestige of objectivity. The other three are specific to the theories of democratic peace: the status of the democratic peace thesis among policy elites as a law-like phenomenon governing the realm of world politics; the existence of two distinct theories trying to explain the phenomenon, each helpful in delivering a different political message; and the immediate implications of subscribing to the conclusions of the democratic peace thesis, namely, the possible ensuing urge to democratize nondemocratic states for the sake of national security. All these resources have indeed been mobilized rhetorically by both Netanyahu and Sharansky to achieve their political agendas.

Notes

1. The plan is known officially as "The Performance-Based Roadmap to a Permanent Two-State Solution to the Israeli–Palestinian Conflict."
2. The article develops, builds on, and refines an earlier article by the same author (Ish-Shalom, 2006). It develops the empirical analysis of the previous article by offering in-depth analysis of the political uses and abuses of the democratic peace by the Israeli right. It builds on the previous article by taking up the theoretical framework of hermeneutical mechanism – the process in which theory migrates outside academia, going through a process of simplification and politicization that results in a distorted representation that helps to frame commonsensical thinking about the world. It refines the theoretical framework of hermeneutical mechanism by focusing on the abuses of theory that the hermeneutical process enables; while the previous article focused on the process by which common sense is framed, the current article demonstrates how able rhetors manipulate the framed common sense and how they rhetorically employ theories for the sake of their agenda.
3. This theoretical move might help to resolve a recent theoretical debate in the constructivist school of international relations (IR). While former IR theories tend to ignore issues of rhetoric and communicative action, constructivism analyzes these issues as crucial to the understanding of world politics. However, while most constructivists tend to use a Habermasian framework for analyzing rhetoric and communicative actions, some have moved to analyzing them as manipulative apparatuses, as yet another device of coercion and power relations. By shifting their focus from the rhetors to the assets available to them, theoreticians may abandon the dichotomist reading of rhetoric in world politics. Persuasive resources are out there to be used in a Habermasian or a manipulative way; they could be used manipulatively to mask real interests or sincerely to elucidate real interests. A more valuable theoretical treatment (enabled by focusing on rhetorical capital) would involve clarifying the reasons and conditions that both facilitate and lead to each of the two options. On the Habermasian reading of rhetoric in IR constructivism, see Checkel (2001), Farrel (2003), Payne (1996), Price (1998), and Risse (2000). For a reading of rhetoric as manipulation, entrapment, and coercion in IR constructivism, see Jackson and Krebs (2007) and Schimmelfenning (2001). A more balanced and nuanced reading may be found in Payne (2001).
4. The loose nature of social capital is manifested in particular in Robert Putnam's seminal work *Making Democracy Work* (1993). Although Putnam attempts to establish a causal relation from social capital to functioning democracy, it remains unclear whether the causal direction is not the reverse: from functioning democracy to social capital. Thus, although Putnam tries to convince readers that effective social networks (the locus of social capital) instrumentally and causally contribute to functioning democracy, it is equally reasonable to infer that functioning democracy is a breeding ground for effective social networks abounding with social capital (Levi, 1996: 49–50; Lowndes and Wilson, 2001: 631; Newton, 1999: 17; Tarrow, 1996: 395).
5. This is by no means a reification of theories. Attributing theory with rhetorical capital is not the same as claiming theories are somehow conscious entities that rhetorically persuade other entities to achieve their goals. It is only to imply that theories, like other entities (abstract and concrete, conscious and non-conscious), can possess persuasive resources which rhetors can find useful in their persuasion campaigns: rhetorical capital that rhetors activate and set in political motion. It is, in other words, an analytical concept that is functionally oriented. It highlights the ways rhetors can functionally use diverse entities.
6. This is a problem above all for those interested in quantifying their subject of research.
7. In this section, I use the term "science" broadly as I engage with the literature of the rhetoric of science, which conflates the natural sciences, the social sciences, and the humanities and analyzes them similarly. My later focus and analysis are directed mainly at the social sciences.

8. The embeddedness of the democratic peace thesis is not limited to American policy elites, as can be seen from British Prime Minister Tony Blair (see Schafer and Walker, 2006) and UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan (2001).
9. Elsewhere (Ish-Shalom, 2006), I have offered a theoretical account of why and how the democratic peace thesis has been established as commonsensical truth among the American elite, of how the thesis has evolved into public convention and political conviction shaping American policies of forceful democratization. Among the main reasons for the thesis becoming commonsensical truth are its correspondence to the American self-identification as being the leader of the free world and a staunch supporter of democratization, as well as the thesis' association with the American tradition and belief in its own exceptionalism.
10. For dissenting views claiming that democracies are overall more peaceful, see Oneal and Russett (1997), Ray (1995, 1997), Reiter and Stam (2002, 2003), and Rummel (1983).
11. A similar and more encompassing conditionality was introduced by Fareed Zakaria (1997), who maintains that democratic peace is actually liberal peace between constitutional liberal states. He warns against the attempt to build illiberal democracies, namely, democracies that do not respect the rule of law and do not enjoy the pacifying force of liberalism.
12. This political mobilization of theory's structural duality is evident also in a different case, namely Al Gore's film *An Inconvenient Truth*. As ruled by Mr Justice Burton on October 10, 2007, "It [the film] is substantially founded upon scientific research and fact, albeit that the science is used, in the hands of a talented politician and communicator, to make a political statement and to support a political programme" (2007).
13. The simplistic and totalistic "yes/no" reading of theories is a good example of what Thomas Gilovich (1991: 3) calls "the bounded rationality of human information processing," that is, those cognitive biases that affect everyday human reasoning when dealing with the complexities that abound in the real world.

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