#### 5. ‘Audience costs’ is bunk. Empirics disprove AND autocrats are equally susceptible.

Dr. Femke E. Bakker 25, PhD, Senior Assistant Professor, Political Science, Leiden University, "Individuals under Threat," in Hawks & Doves: The Flawed Microfoundations of Democratic Peace Theory, Chapter 2, pg. 15-55, 02/06/2025, ECPR Press.

These studies focus on a range of different democratic institutions. However, the assumption they employ is that citizens do not want war because they have to bear the physical and material costs of war themselves, and their political leaders do not. When citizens have the power to decide these matters, as in a democracy, they will prefer peace, whether or not this is due to socialized liberal-democratic norms. This assumption is, however, not tested in these studies by studying whether and how democratic institutions carry out this constraining function: the mere existence of a particular institution, expected to function as a constraint, does not prove the existence of the proposed causal mechanism that leaders are constrained by institutions. Whether or not this is the case is an empirical question.

Empirical evidence does not support this assumption: several studies show that individuals, including those living in democracies, are prepared to go to war when they believe the cause is right (see, for example, DeRouen 2000; Gartner and Segura 1998; Morgan and Anderson 1999; Tir 2010). More recent empirical findings do not support the logic underlying theories of audience costs within democracies (Kertzer and Brutger 2016).

Moreover, the logic of this assumption is weak. Why would political leaders be so much more war-prone than their citizens? If that was the case, then the normative argument (in more detail below) that claims that most, if not all, individuals within a liberal democracy strongly endorse liberal norms would be invalid. After all, politicians must also have been socialized by these norms. Moreover, even if there was such a pattern of war-prone politicians *versus* peaceful citizens, empirical studies show that autocratic audiences are also influential on the foreign-policy decision-making of the autocratic elite (Weeks 2012). Another empirical finding, also relevant in this regard, is that autocratic regimes cannot be ‘black-boxed’ in their war-proneness; different types of autocratic regimes have different levels of conflict-initiation (Peceny, Beer, and Sanchez-Terry 2002; Weeks 2008 2012). A lot more research should be done to see if there are indeed differences in war-proneness between autocratic and democratic leaders.

#### 6. Collective bargaining doesn’t restrain Trump---decision making is unaffected

Nicholas Handler 2025, Associate Professor of Law at Texas A&M University School of Law, “Federal Labor Unions Strengthen the Administrative State”, May 5, https://lpeproject.org/blog/federal-labor-unions-strengthen-the-administrative-state/, accessed 8-23-25, HMc

As a matter of constitutional law, federal labor law does not undermine presidential authority in the way its opponents contend. First, labor protections are narrow in scope. Under the CSRA, only federal “employees” can organize and bargain collectively. “Employee,” as that term is defined, excludes the President’s political appointees, as well as members of the Senior Executive Service, who make up most of the federal government’s managerial core. In fact, anyone who exercises “supervisory” authority over other workers is excluded from bargaining protections. The protections thus don’t reach the categories of workers that participate regularly in the formulation of high-level agency policies. Instead, they cover primarily front-line workers—everyone from scientists, economists, and litigation attorneys to prison guards and park rangers. These positions are key to ensuring that the laws Congress has written are faithfully executed by competent staffs, but don’t formulate the types of policies that we usually think of as presidential prerogatives.

Second, to the extent that specific contractual provisions do impact policy, federal law has built in robust protections for presidential discretion. The CSRA contains provisions that prohibit collective bargaining agreements from infringing on the President’s “management rights,” including the right to determine the agency’s “mission, budget, organization, number of employees, and internal security practices.” When the workplace rights of civil servants conflict with the policy initiatives of the President, the CSRA provides a comprehensive adjudicatory structure for hashing out the dispute—ensuring that the rights of labor and the need to preserve state capacity are balanced against the political prerogatives of the Chief Executive. Moreover, the CSRA gives the President additional discretion to exempt otherwise protected workers from collective bargaining when doing so is necessary to protecting vital interests like “national security.”

#### 7. Fed unions not needed

Judge Glock 2025, director of research and a senior fellow at the Manhattan Institute and a contributing editor at City Journal, “Trump Goes After Federal Unions—It’s About Time”, April 4, https://www.city-journal.org/article/trump-collective-bargaining-unions-government-workers, accessed 8-5-25, HMc

Last week, President Donald Trump signed an executive order that marks his most decisive attack on the civil-service system so far. The order, “Exclusions from Federal Labor-Management Relations Programs,” ended collective bargaining for unions across most of the federal government.

These unions have been a millstone around the neck of the government and taxpayers for decades. Trump is right to end their influence.

Despite the enduring image of hard-hat-wearing factory workers, today’s unionized employees are more likely to be white-collar workers in government jobs. In the private sector, only 6 percent of the workforce is unionized. In the federal government, that figure rises to 25 percent—over a third if the military is excluded. President Joe Biden’s expansion of federal hiring, combined with his strong support for unionization, helped federal unions surpass 1 million members by the end of his term.

But federal employees aren’t in desperate need of union protection. The average annual pay in the federal workforce is $100,000, and it rises to $140,000 if one includes the generous benefits. That’s more than 50 percent higher than average private-sector compensation. The vast majority of federal employees are white-collar workers with bachelor’s degrees. They are hardly an oppressed group.

In his executive order, the president invoked a section of civil service law that allows him to stop collective bargaining if he determines that an agency “has as a primary function intelligence, counterintelligence, investigative, or national security work.” Most of the largest departments named in the order fit that description, including the Department of Defense, much of the Department of Homeland Security, and the Department of Energy, which focuses heavily on defense and nuclear issues. The legal basis for Trump’s action in these cases is solid.

But some agencies on Trump’s list are more of a legal stretch, among them the Environmental Protection Agency and the Food and Drug Administration. The White House claims that functions like fossil-fuel production, pandemic preparedness, or economic activity are related to national security, and thus can be removed from the unions’ grip. Courts will try to roll back his order for these agencies, unless Congress steps in to support his agenda.

The Trump administration’s guidance on the order targeted in particular the egregious practice of “official time,” or “union time”—federal employees working on union business while being paid by taxpayers and using government office space.

For example, union representatives spend hundreds of thousands of hours every year negotiating collective bargaining agreements, meaning the government pays to negotiate against itself. Unions use many more official-time hours fighting penalties or dismissals of workers, meaning the government funds opposition to its own managers. Altogether, the government estimates that official time costs taxpayers over $150 million annually.

Federal unions are making a ruckus about the executive order, but they often don’t speak for their members

. Everett Kelley, who leads the largest federal employee union, estimates that about 30 percent of his members voted for Trump. Yet somehow, 94 percent of the American Federation of Government Employees’ donations in the last election went to Democrats.

The AFGE also sued Trump to end his deferred resignation program, which offered cash for employees who wanted to leave the civil service. It’s hard to see the harm to the union’s members if they want to accept voluntary retirement. The clear reason AFGE opposed the offer is that it wanted to keep as many dues-payers as possible.

President Trump may be pushing boundaries, but his challenge to government unions rests on firm legal footing and plain common sense. There is no justification for handing control of the federal workforce to unions that obstruct its mission. Whatever portions of the president’s order survive will mark a lasting improvement in the civil service.