**DEMOCRATIC PEACE THEORY RELEVANCY TO INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

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# Introduction

The democratic peace theory suggests that the absence of war between democratic states is a significant aspect of international relations. It has been implied that the absence of warfare amongst modern democracies is one of the closest things in international relations to an empirical law. The dearth of warfare amongst liberal democracy involving a variety of historical, socioeconomic, and geopolitical conditions indicate that there is a significant tendency against armed forces aggression amongst democratic governments, notwithstanding the low likelihood of warfare involving any two countries (Simpson, 2018, p. 109). This theory casts doubt on the viability of other political ideologies such as fascism, communism, dictatorship, and tyranny in addition to the realist account of foreign relations that highlights balance-of-power analyses and shared geopolitical interests to account for the stability and tranquility that defines liberal democratic partnerships. This paper contends that the structural and normative underpinnings of the democratic peace theory offer a more coherent and convincing rationale for its relevancy to the study of international relations. Additionally, I will argue that, in conformity with Immanuel Kant's theory of permanent peace, better global peace will result from the democratic expansion if it occurs together with the expansion of economic interconnection and global organizations. Nonetheless, there are considerable risks of instability associated with the transition of democratization, and there is still ambiguity in the "incomplete Kantian world2" where the Hobbesian state of lawlessness still prevails in the global order (Mara, 2019, p. 87).

# The Democratic Peace Theory: Definition and Explanation

The Democratic Peace Theory is an international relations concept that contends liberal democracies are reluctant to participate in military wars with one another. Since its inception in the late 18th century, this concept has been extensively researched and contested by academics, lawmakers, and the general public (Mahdavi, 2016, p. 32).

Immanuel Kant was an early advocate of the democratic peace theory, arguing that liberal governments, defined by constitutional law, civil freedoms, and democratic structures, were more inclined to seek harmony and avoid conflict. Kant maintained that liberal governments are less prone to utilize armed power in international affairs because they are controlled by the democratic system and have a greater legitimacy rating (Reiter, 2012, p. 45).

Other researchers such as Mahdavi (2016, p. 32) drew on Kant's theories and advanced the democratic peace theory in the twentieth century. Michael Doyle and Bruce Russett wrote a series of seminal publications on the theory of democratic peace in the 1980s, suggesting that democratic countries have less disputes with one another and that this trend cannot be described by variables like financial interconnectedness or power dynamic.

Democracies, based on this view, have a high degree of stability, collaboration, and harmony. Non-democracies, on the other hand, are frequently more volatile, less collaborative, and more susceptible to violent disputes. As a result, according to the Democratic Peace Theory, the spread of democracy is essential to fostering worldwide stability and security (Reiter, 2012, p. 45).

Advocates of the Democratic Peace Theory say that liberal nations have more harmonious interactions with one another because they share numerous principles and features. Democracies, for instance, frequently place a premium on humanitarian law, individual liberties, and the constitutional framework. They also have more free and open political processes, allowing for increased constant surveillance and responsibility. As a result, democracies are more stable due to their higher apt to address conflicts peacefully instead of through bloodshed (Wiebrecht, 2013).

Critics of the Democratic Peace Theory claim that it is not always correct and has various drawbacks. They argue, for instance, that democratic governments could still participate in conflicts with non-democratic countries. Furthermore, they contend that the growth of democracy does not always result in better international peace and stability. Numerous academics also note out that democracies have been involved in disputes or violent confrontations with other civilizations, such as the Peloponnesian Warfare or the Warfare of 1812 (Vine, 2016).

# The Relevance of the Democratic Peace Theory to the Study of IR:

For numerous years, the Democratic Peace Theory has been a source of contention in the field of international relations. While some researchers claim that this idea is critical for achieving international peace and stability, others believe it has numerous shortcomings. Yet, the Democratic Peace Theory continues to be an important topic in the study of international relations since it has several key consequences for state behavior and the geopolitical structure (Sakib, 2017).

## Structural explanation

The structural explanation, one of the two fundamental interpretations of the democratic peace concept, argues that representative state arrangements, which put elected officials to scrutinizing by a sizable electoral populace, make warfare a typically unappealing prospect for both the sovereign and its inhabitants (Rasler & Thompson, 2016). There is a concise institutional motivation for democratic politicians to take into account such a voter rebuttal before declaring war because the expenses and hazards of military conflict significantly affect a significant number of people. If a losing or utterly pointless battle is started, it is anticipated that the voting public will remove the elected leader or governing coalition from office. This interpretation generally stipulate that democratic frameworks that offer civilians influence over states actions will lessen the probability that a democratically elected figurehead will be capable of initiating a military conflict with another democratic society. It does not indicate that all taxpayers and elected officials share this viewpoint. So, even under an authoritarian administration, it will be difficult for these authorities to convince the citizens to start conflict owing to institutions that include personal liberty, citizen participation, and rigorous elections (Kant, 2022).

## Normative Explanation

Conversely, advocates of the normative/cultural2 underpinning stipulate that the peace that prevails amongst liberal nations is greatly explained by mutual liberal and democratic2 principles2 (Rasler & Thompson, 2016). According to this perspective, democratic philosophical belief systems encourage peaceful dispute resolution procedures that extend beyond domestic governmental systems to other contemporary democracies because governments in both jurisdictions have an objective expectation that their counterparts will be eager to settle their discrepancies peacefully (Adiputera, 2017, p. 21). And thus, political philosophy defines how democratic countries categorize their alliances and enemies: democratic governments that portray and operate in the aspirations of their inhabitants are accorded dignity and consideration, whilst non-democracies that utilize oppressive practices against their own folks are viewed with skepticism and distrust. Since reputation is so crucial, even if a government has "educated citizenry and liberal structures," the democratic peace offer would fall short except if other democratic nations see it as a true liberal democratic republic. This approach can thus describe a variety of disputed instances: Americans did not deem Britain a democracy in 1812 since it was a monarchy (Battle of 1812), and Union liberals did not regard the Confederate a liberal democracy2 because it used enslavement (American Civil War) (Narayanan, 2021, p. 383).

While some researchers view structural and normative considerations as intrinsically mutually incongruent, bringing together these two ideas results in a far stronger and more convincing case for democratic peace theory. Thereby, the specific democratic procedures that create military conflict with other liberal democracies improbable - free and fair election process, the legal framework, a free media, and a competitive party framework - are powered by both 'interconnected anticipations about what customary conduct is probable to be' (institutions) and’ standards for what behavior should be'  (norms). The two aforementioned hypotheses are complementing and generally reinforcing: social practices influence the creation and growth of power institutions, whilst institutions aid in the gradual emergence of a more virtuous and peaceful society through period (Ghimire, 2018, p. 60).

# Criticism of the Theory

The democratic peace theory has received a lot of scrutiny for its philosophy. It is said that it is difficult to reliably validate the theory because the variability of the precise criteria utilized in such empirical studies is likely to have a significant influence on the findings. Nonetheless, a considerable amount of research indicate that democracies are extremely unlikely to invade one other, irrespective of the form of democratization, the sorts of occurrences examined, or the dispute/war2 threshold. Nevertheless, With the absent of any significant war, the proportion of 2democratic 2dyads has already expanded dramatically from less than 22% of all sociopolitical ties in the 19th century to 213% from 1900 to 1945 and 11% from 1946 to 1989 (Carlson, 2009, p. 181).

Researchers who, while not rejecting the factual findings, put forward competing hypotheses to describe the causal connection amongst democracy and peace. Realists claim that the low occurrence of conflicts amongst democracies is primarily explained by mutual values rather than shared polities (Baum & Potter, 2015, p. 87). Since the Cold War, they argue that democratic governments have been significantly more inclined than in the previous century to openly join with other republics, implying that shared strategic objectives are a more crucial issue than domestic political mechanisms. As a result, the specific form of the global political system is the most important element deciding how countries will operate. However, research has shown that democracy, not partnership, hinders confrontation and military conflict; non-aligned2 democratic governments are less inclined to battle one another compared to affiliated non-democracies22; and two nondemocratic states that express prevalent preferences are more prone to wage war against each other than two democratic countries which do not share ideological preferences (Cooper, 2015, p. 349).

## Monadic Explanation of the Theory Criticism

Of course, skeptics of the theory of democratic peace are mostly correct in their assessment that liberal democracies are not considerably less prone to go to warfare with non-democratic governments (Maoz & Russett, 2006, p. 685). The available data strongly contradicts the monadic hypothesis that democratic states, regardless of political philosophy, are less inclined to use aggression. This is probably due to the assumption that democratic countries still function in a "incompletely3 Kantian society," with democracies only gradually passing from a minority to a very slim majority in the post-Cold3 War years.  Considering the high levels of conflict in mixed partnerships, balance of power continues to be an important aspect in most of liberal democracies. Democracies, on the other hand, have a multitude of substantial and evident advantages: They are more liable to indulge in low-intensity2 wrangling than full-scale2 armed wars; they are more inclined to withhold from intensifying disagreements into military confrontations; and they are less plausible to engage in utilizing coercion against other governments (Baum & Potter, 2015, p. 87).

Maybe more crucially, Democratic regimes are generally certain to prevail in confrontations than non-democratic regions because democratic politicians have a stronger incentive to pursue winnable battles that can be settled swiftly in order to avert a fall in public acceptability for warfare. While worldwide democratic incorporation may have other gains beyond lessening the chance of war between democratic countries, there are some noteworthy outliers, such as US-led operations in Iraq, Kabul, and Vietnam. Essentially, a growth in modern democracies may translate to lesser low-level disagreements, a lower likelihood of peaceful disagreements evolving into military confrontations, and a larger proportion of quickly mediated disagreements (Parmar, 2013, p. 231).

## Dyadic Explanation of the Theory Criticism

A considerably more fundamental rationale stems from the democratic peace theory's relationship assertion: democracies produce distinct and cooperative peace amongst other modern democracies. It is stated that in an autocratic-democratic relationship, replacing the tyrant with a democracy reduces the probability of violence by 33% (Jones & Lühe, 2021, p. 19). Furthermore, finding demonstrates that, aside from warfare and disputes, inter - state squabbles among democracy relationships are extremely uncommon, and that a government transition (from non-democracy to democratic republic) will not just decrease the likelihood for fighting or feud involving independent states, but will speed up this pattern more quickly as time passes (Molloy, 2019).

 As a consequence, alliances of democratic regimes will be better positioned to carry out their mutual responsibilities, since the institutional confines of liberal democracies pose a challenge to reverse any accords established through autonomous and open political organizations. As a result of the dearth of transparency and inclusivity in their political institutions, non-democracies2 not only lack this flexibility, but it also has a negative impact on their capability to succeed in armed engagements: the proportion of democratic allies raises the probability of prevailing in an armed battle by 622%, while the number of non-democratic222 accomplices decreases this potential by 442%. The implication is that liberal democracies must fortify their partnerships in order to increase efficiency and prevent difficulties that face joint intervention in mixed or non-democratic federal alliances (Daddow, 2013).

The fact that there haven't been any wars among democracies, notwithstanding the sudden spike in the percentage of democratic dyads within the global community (and a corresponding rise in the likelihood of controversy between democratic governments), suggests a substantial pattern: as more nations adopt democracy, the frequency of dispute should progressively decrease over time. This is crucial not only because liberal regimes still have to be equipped to use armed force to prevent or resist aggression in the current international structure, but also because governments are more vulnerable to problems and safety issues as long as this peace2 is still viewed as a "separate2" peace (Manwaring, 2014, p. 221).

## Democratization Explanation of the Theory Criticism

Until now, the difficulties of the democratization process and two key aspects that are related to them raise the possibility that the democratic transition could adversely affect the prospects for peaceful coexistence (Welzel, 2018, p. 31). First, numerous studies such as Welzel (2018, p. 31) have showcased that assertive nationalist standpoint is more probable to be ignited during democratic transitions when a country's power institutions are grossly insufficient (often at the beginning of the changeover from autocracy to representative government) or when the rich and powerful within that nation feel threatened by the democratization process itself (by having to respond to a wide range of newly formed demands). If political establishments are fragile in the early phases of a transition, the rising appeal of civic involvement may push the governing class to adopt nationalist2, ethno-religious2, or populist laws; nevertheless, it is vital to emphasize that this may happen before these politicians can be adequately held accountable to the general electorate (Daddow, 2013).

There are many cases that can be referenced, these historical instances span from the Napoleonic era in France, Wilhelm3 II's Germany, and Taisho's Japan to more recent occurrences like Slobodan3 Milosevic's military incursions into Serbia, the frontier conflict involving Ethiopia and Eritrea following the ousting of the Dergue autocratic dictatorship, and the 1999 India-Pakistan3 turmoil following modest democratic change in both nations and in Kashmir. (Chaudhuri, 2021, p. 7). This encompasses the claim that the large majority of civil combat operations over the past century have occurred under transitional or mixed authorities, compared to representative democracy or totalitarian dictatorships, which are better suitable to proficiently incorporate coercion via democratic or violent strategies, respectively. As a result, democracy should grow in conformity with a particular historical trend: the establishment of a nationwide identity, followed by the structuring of the federal government, and lastly, popular participation in elections and governance (James, 2022, p. 55).

The second problem is connected with the previous one in that it is improbable that the majority of countries undergoing democratic transformations would be prepared to follow this exact timeline, and even if they can, it is uncertain if liberal republican administrations will be prepared or willing to assist. So, it's imperative to comprehend the clear boundaries of external military involvement (Nugent, 2020, p. 210). Although liberal governments may carefully weigh the benefits and downsides of interfering in other jurisdictions and only provide assistance when there is broad domestic and worldwide support, their attempts to topple repressive regimes may stand in stark contrast to liberalism's core values, which strive to advance peace through democratic mechanism. This has been witnessed in other instances where foreign intervention has led to unpredicted circumstances, such as in Korea, Libya, and Kabul. Regardless of whether there is a compelling ethical rationale for helping dictatorial countries transition to democracy, geopolitical and socioeconomic considerations may still be more important given the enormous costs and difficulty of locally defending such missions (Economou et al., 2022).

 Similar to how emerging democracies usually start wars, they can also make appealing targets for invasions due to their armed weaknesses and governmental and social instability. This was the situation when Indonesian and Iraqi soldiers captured East Timor2 following its referendum vote in 1999, and Iran after its 1979 insurrection. Therefore, even though boosting the percentage of democracies within the global community has concise normative advantages, there is a possibility of destabilization and confrontation if the transition does not construct systemic groundwork for efficient and responsible scrutiny prior to participatory democracy and voting (Ahmed, 2022).

# Wider Implications

According to Caranti & Pinzani (2022), the international coordination of liberal nations' international policies, both independently and collectively, will be crucial to the success of the Kantian system's development. The democratic process of decision-making2, according to realists, deprives decision-makers of the "normality, long-range plan, mobility, and privacy" necessary to carry out an effective international set of policies (Caranti & Pinzani, 2022). According to this argument, elected officials' actions are vulnerable to autonomous public's opinion, which might cause democratic administrations to lose focus on the issues that are most important: security and power. However as was already said, liberal democratic states' basic political structures and social norms also enable these governments to best protect oneself and employ aggression in more strategic and successful ways, resulting in the "best, securest, and safest results for the majority of populations"(Sakib, 2017). The concept that international policy decisions ought to solely be steered by relative defense capabilities and the power dynamic between big powers is undermined because normative objectives make it impossible to evaluate international relations in a straightforward and accurate manner. This also goes against the core principles of realism. Conversely, the most effective method for democracies to protect their domestic security is to strengthen their populations and enhance structural power balance, since these same actions have been shown to assist preserve democratic stability and facilitate more accountable foreign diplomacy (Adiputera, 2017, p. 21).

Globally, the recent increase in the proportion of democratic countries presents a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to rebuild the tenets and ideals that underpin the worldwide system to better reflect the harmonious coexistence of democratic countries. The two other facets of the Kantian system—international2 bodies and economic interdependence2—would ideally be strengthened as a result. Although "freely made peace without centralized power" is a probability under the democratic peace, it is also accurate that this liberal order2 has been best addressed when there has been2 a liberal nation (in this situation, the USA following World War II3) that is both capable and well-equipped to maintain the monetary and political underpinnings of the wider liberal social structure outside of its own territorial boundaries (Longley, 2019).

Various multilateral institutions, such as the 2WTO, the 2IMF, the World Bank, the 2UN, and The Hague, have the possibility of reinforcing contemporary democracies' obligation to enforce principles of democracy and to encourage stronger ties between members via enhanced discourse and cooperation (Rosato, 2020). This expands on studies that find that the constraining nature of IGOs is particularly prominent in politically relevant dyads, or bordering pairs of countries or partnerships with at least one dominant superpower, which also tend to account for the bulk of worldwide disagreements and tensions. The greatest useful way to solidify the democratic peace, in research viewpoint, would be to concentrate endeavors on more vigorously integrating the biggest non-democracies22 (China2, Vietnam, Russia22, and Iran) into this liberal global order and strengthening those aspects of constitutional2 liberal2 democracy (legal systems, governmental checks on power, personal rights) absent in illiberal representative democracy (Belarus2, Bangladesh, Rwanda2, Romania, Malaysia2, etc.) (Jegat, 2015).

This is additionally true for economic partnership and reliance. Liberal democracies will benefit immensely from adhering to a liberal worldwide economic foundation free of isolationism and mercantilist legislation, as demonstrated by the discovery that the odds of conflict among separate jurisdictions is 33% lower if those governments only have an average level of economic interconnectivity (Paquet-Sévigny, 2020, p. 24) 2. Encouraging accessible and authentic trade relationships is based on the notion that market mechanisms, rather than coercion or duress, will determine how prospective economic transactions are conducted. As a consequence, the associated impression of mutual dependency typically functions as a deterrent on the deployment of hostility. Democracies may consider it easier to grasp the intentions and objectives of non-democracies2, as well as their willingness to maintain contractual understandings and duties with any increase in the number or depth of intergovernmental discourse (Meyers, 2022, p. 235).

Realism and the Democratic Peace Theory (DPT) are traditionally viewed as having opposed views on international affairs. Some academics contend that the two can be merged to make a stronger case for peace across liberal democracies, nevertheless. DPT supporters recognize power geopolitics as one issue between many, whilst realists view it as a vital element of global affairs. Nations' domestic structures significantly influence how they choose to distribute power. There is a strong case that the growth of liberal philosophy will result in the expansion of peace if liberal governments see one another as being peaceful due to structural and normative causes. A robust, contract-intensive economy necessitates a healthy free market, which is a component of Liberal economic philosophy, according to the DPT and Realism synthesis. Economic interconnectedness is another important factor in promoting peace. When taking into account the many facets that contribute to peace, like as liberal doctrine, realist ideas of authority, and economic relations, a reconciliation of DPT and Realism is conceivable (Okuneva, 2015, p. 9).

# Conclusion

According to the democratic peace paradigm (structural and normative), expanding democracy contributes to global peace since democratic systems make it difficult for governments to launch warfare without electorate permission, and cultural traditions entail constructive disagreement resolution. This does not always lower the incidence of fighting, but it shifts liberal societies away from violent confrontation. Increasing the proportion of democratic societies can minimize the danger of warfare, promote constructive conflict resolution, and improve the odds of survival. This gives liberal regimes a normative and practical justification to pursue a more Wilsonian foreign policies. Prior to popular political engagement, initiatives should be undertaken to help transitional bureaucracies in order to build democratic institutions. Transnational organisations that represent liberal values, as well as increased economic engagement with non-democratic regimes, can serve to mitigate strategic uncertainty. Hence, boosting democracy can result to a considerable movement towards global peace, and strengthening democratic institutions and collaboration is vital, given the limitations of the democratic structures.

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