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Liberal democracy and interstate peace

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Abstract

War has been a constant curse on humanity; however, the world currently finds itself in the unique position that interstate peace is prevalent on four continents. While there are many valid theories in International Relations they all except for the democratic peace theory fall short when used to explain the spread of interstate peace among liberal democracies. The democratic peace theory has, however, been contested in recent times with the attacks of 9/11 and subsequent US-led invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq as well as the rise of pseudo democracies that hold elections without being liberal. To determine whether the theory is as strong as its proponents insist, the theory is once again analyzed with a focus on liberalism. The findings are clear, liberal democracies do not go to war with each other.

Keywords: *democracy, liberalism & peace*

1. Introduction

Immanuel Kant wrote in 1795 *"According to the Republican Constitution, the consent of the citizens as members of the State is required to determine at any time the question, 'Whether there shall be war or not?' Hence, nothing is more natural than that they should be very loth to enter upon so undesirable an undertaking; for in decreeing it they would necessarily be resolving to bring upon themselves all the horrors of War"* (Kant, 1795 as quoted online by Gieseler, 2008).

A specter is haunting War - the specter, however, is not communism but liberal democracy. The continuing spread of liberal democracies across the globe has left areas of the map entrenched in regional peace and, if the spread continues, peace on a global scale is possible. War is no longer the constant human passion that Hobbes had us believed that peace as proclaimed by Kant is not only possible but can be perpetual (Hobbes, 2003; Kant, 1795).

Humanity currently finds itself in a unique situation: at the start of the second decade of the 21st century, interstate war is nonexistent across four continents, with no interstate-wars being waged in North and South America, Europe as well as Oceania. The founding blocks of this peace lie hundreds of years back, in events such as the Magna Carta, the US and French Revolutions as well as the defeat of Fascism and Communism in 1945 and 1989, respectively. These events were fundamental to the progression and survival of liberal democracies. And due to the slow but continuing progress and evolution of government towards liberal democracy, the end of interstate war is now possible.

However, the liberal victory that so many scholars and leaders proclaimed after the fall of the Berlin Wall has been subsequently challenged by the 9/11 attacks and the following US invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq. For many people, history, it appears, did not quite end with the fall of the Berlin Wall. Realism flourished and works such as Huntington's *Clash of Civilizations* gained in popularity. For many, the US unilaterally led invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan was proof that the liberal policies under the presidency of Bill Clinton were naïve to the true nature of the realist principles under which the international system operates. The false hope of peace after the end of the Cold War was no different from the dangers the world was warned about in 1939 (Carr, 2001). This resurgence of realist thought is not only misplaced but also very dangerous for the future. Since leaders make their policies and actions based on their understanding of IR, it is essential for emphasis once again to be placed on the spread of liberal democracies and how they lead to Kant's perpetual peace (Kant, 1795).

Democratic peace theory for all its good explanatory ability of the current zones of peace does leave questions unanswered. What exactly is a democracy? This question, while seemingly

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trivial, is vital in today's age where elections are held in very illiberal states which we do not associate with the liberal democracies of Europe. Examples that come to mind are Iran, Sudan and most recently Myanmar. A workable definition of a democracy is needed for the validity of the theory to be tested.

Democracy by itself, however, is not enough to create a lasting peace, liberal ideals are vital and without them the theory would not work. Liberal ideals according to scholar John Owen is the key to understanding the peace between liberal democracies (Owen, 1994). Liberalism in conjunction with democracy is indeed where the answer lies in understanding the peace between states in Europe and the Americas. For this reason the workable definition of a democracy must in fact be a liberal democratic one. As such, the theory on a whole should be called the liberal democratic peace, rather than purely focusing on democracy.

With a definition of democracy it is now possible to test it, and for this the very thorough work of scholars Oneal and Russett is useful. Their analysis of the impact democracy among various variables has on peace and war is excellent and disproves the realist argument that "it behooves us to see the world as it is, not as we would like it to be" (Mearsheimer, 2001). Having empirical evidence of an event is, however, nothing without an understanding of why this is so. As long as we cannot explain in theoretical terms why liberal democracies do not go to war the empirical evidence is inadequate. For this reason the paper will explain the reasons that liberal democracies do not go to war with each other.

2. The failure of realism

"The Passions that encline men to Peace, are Fear of Death" - Thomas Hobbes (Hobbes, 2003)

The roots of realism, which can be traced back to ancient Greece and Thucydides' understanding of the Peloponnesian War, are based on the fundamental understanding that interstate relations are directed by questions of power. This belief in power has manifested itself into various subfields within the realist camp; however, whether they are classical, neo or structural, they all hold power central to their beliefs.

Classical realist theory argues that the quests for power come from the understanding of 'man' in a state of nature as one full of desire, passion and conflict. Without control of this human nature, people will, as Hobbes (2003) wrote, revert to "that miserable condition of war, which is necessarily consequent (as had been shown) to the natural passions of men" (Hobbes, 2003). Machiavelli adds that "A man who wishes to make a profession of goodness in everything must necessarily come to grief among so many who are not good" (Machiavelli, 1952). Classical realism theory which Carr and Morgenthau helped develop from earlier philosophers is based on these understandings of human behavior: that state behavior is likewise guided by an innate desire for accumulation of power, and conflict is a natural conclusion of this desire (Morgenthau, 1950).

The problems with this discourse became clear as liberalism and democracy started spreading from its beginning in the US and French Revolutions. People lived in relatively peaceful societies not due control and fear of authority but rather because of a social contract. This understanding of a social contract is the foundation of liberalism and has its roots in the Age of Enlightenment, where the traditional order of religion and monarchy started being challenged by philosophers. Reason, which had been the domain of religion and power the domain of the monarchy, was no longer blindly accepted as such.

John Locke together with Thomas Hobbes was on the forefront of this challenge, but contrary to Hobbes' belief that human nature was one of conflict and war, Locke argued that humans were not born with innate principles but rather that all truths and knowledge comes from experience (Locke, 1690;1691). We were born with a clean slate without any inherent greed or desire for power. In fact, if given freedom and equality, there should be no destined desire for greed and conflict. Locke challenged the absolute monarchy as "inconsistent with civil society" and stated the need for representative government of the people which was allowed to rule through a contract with its citizens under the belief that all humans were created equal (Locke, 1652). In this contract between citizens and government, people gave up some of their freedom in exchange for peace and prosperity. This contract is what later became known by Rousseau as the *Social Contract* in which humans left their state of nature in order to make a civil society in which government was allowed to rule (Rousseau, 1969).

This social contract entails that government laws and rules shall be for the benefit of its citizens "as the sovereign is formed entirely of the individuals who compose it, it has not, nor could it have, any interests contrary to theirs" (Rousseau, 1969). The basic reasoning behind Locke and Rousseau's theory of people being able to live together in a society is the basis of not only liberalism, but also of the liberal democratic peace. If people can live together in a society, then states, which are a product of humans living together in a society, should be able to coexist peacefully in the international system. States that are liberal democracies have as their fundamental base this social contract.

As we see, classical realism was challenged from its beginning on its philosophical understanding of the nature of '*man*'. This understanding is vital as it is the root of difference between the understanding of International Relations by realist and liberalist.

Classical realism, while useful in its analysis of historical cases where princes, monarchs and despots waged war for personal greed and glory started having problems when attempting to explain the events of the 20th and 21st centuries. The declaration of human rights and empowerment of individuals over the state directly contradicts it. States willingly drafted, signed and declared that all humans have inherent dignity as well as equal and inalienable rights (UDHR, 1948). Before it was purely the right of the state and all individuals were merely parts of states, but by giving humans individual rights a state is in turn curtailing its own power. This intentional delimitation of state power pushed by the democracies at the time contradicts all realist thought. If states are destined to accumulate as much power as possible either due to human nature or the structure of the international system then intentionally reducing state power is a contradiction.

Contradictions to classical realism are bountiful in recent history, such as the relations between the Scandinavian states. The Scandinavian states had been in competition and conflict throughout their history up until the 20th century when wars between them ceased. The important difference between the 20th century and the ones preceding it, is the spread of liberal and democratic ideals, which started at the end of the 19th century. While realists might argue that the larger enemies of Imperial and Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union forced the states into peace, this argument fails after the fall of the Soviet Union. There was no return to Realpolitik that realist theory would have predicted after the fall of a common enemy. Regional peace is deeply entrenched in the mindset of Scandinavian leaders and citizens.

This example, though small and perhaps unique in the world, is vital because of the classical realist understanding that the desire for power is innate in humans. However, as Locke stated, it is impossible when talking of principles for something to be and not be at the same time (Locke, 1690; 1691).

Structural realism, whether it is offensive or defensive, suffers similar inconsistencies as classical realism in its explanatory ability of the peace between liberal democracies. The central and most important element of these theories is the anarchy of the international system. This anarchy manifests itself because states that have laws and governments internally have no comparable authoritative power in the international system to ensure peace and punishment of states that violate international law and norms.

The nature of this anarchy and lack of authority means that states are solely responsible for their own survival. Furthermore, since all states are in a similar situation of ensuring their own survival they all end up as "functionally undifferentiated" units (Waltz, 1979). The difference between the defensive realism promoted by Waltz and Mearsheimer's offensive realism is how far states go in ensuring their own survival (Mearsheimer, 2001).

Mearsheimer (2001), who is one of the leading proponents of offensive realism, argues that the anarchy in the international system means that states will always try to accumulate as much power as possible and strive for hegemony whether regionally, continentally or globally as the best way to ensure their own survival. Hegemony is, in fact, the only way to guarantee one's own survival. The world is not destined for peace but instead it "is condemned to perpetual great power competition" (Mearsheimer, 2001). Waltz (1979), while agreeing about the nature of the international system, differs in his belief that states will pursue power only to a certain extent because smaller powers will ally to balance the larger states' power. Any state that becomes too powerful will

be balanced by alliances of weaker states, similar to the alliances against Imperial and Nazi Germany. This is what is known as the balance-of-power theory (Waltz, 1979).

International peace for structural as with classical realist is only a temporary respite from the norm of conflict and war. Whether due to human nature or the anarchy in the international system, the prospects for a perpetual peace are unrealistic. To ignore the roles that power politics and alliances play in decisions of war and peace is not only wrong, but dangerous as Carr warned us (Carr, 2001).

While the realist theories mentioned above have at various times gained traction with policy makers and scholars, the thesis of a *Clash of Civilizations* by Huntington (1993) has gained greatly in notoriety and especially in the post 9/11 world. Central to his belief is that while the 18th and 19th centuries were dominated by interstate wars and the 20th century by ideological clashes, the 21st century will be dominated by clashes between the civilizations of the world. The future of world politics is likely to "be conflict between 'the West and the Rest' and the response of non-Western civilizations to Western power and values" (Huntington, 1993). Of the rest, Huntington believes that Islam is most likely to clash with the West.

Former member of the Dutch parliament Hirsh Ali agrees with the clash of civilization thesis and sees the rising controversy over Islam in Europe and America as a symptom of this. She also believes that the "West's universalist pretensions are increasingly bringing it into conflict with other civilizations, most seriously with Islam and China" (Ali, 2010). Nobel laureate Amartya Sen on the other hand, in his speech to UNESCAP in Bangkok spent a long time challenging the clash of civilization thesis, arguing that its focus on civilization was an oversimplification of the complexities of humans. (Sen, 2010) The problem facing scholars criticizing Huntington's thesis is that every terrorist attack by Islamic fundamentalists against a Western target or any Western led invasion or military strike against an Islamic nation only fuels the argument of people who believe that currently and in the immediate future, conflict and war will be caused by the clashes of civilizations.

Huntington's thesis on a superficial level seems reasonable and useful in explaining the events we are seeing around us. However, with further analysis it comes out as shallow and lacking in depth. The clearest problem with the clash of civilization discourse is that many of the conflicts today are not between civilizations, but rather intra-civilizational clashes. Even in Iraq most of the fighting is between Shia and Shiite Muslims of the same civilization. Taking the year 2008 as an example and looking at the states in conflicts, we see that Columbia, Congo, Georgia, Pakistan and Somalia all involve people of the same civilization. This is merely one year but we see similar patterns when looking at others. States and people of the same civilization are just as likely to fight and wage war with each other as they are with people and states of other civilizations. Furthermore, liberal democracies of different civilizations are found to be in strong alliances, such as the US-Japan alliance. Oddly enough, Huntington does agree that many conflicts are not inter-civilizational when he writes that "Slightly less than half of the forty-eight ethnic conflicts in the world in early 1993 for example was between groups of different civilizations" (Huntington, 1996). Yet he writes this as support of his argument. But a theory that is only right less than half the time is not a very useful one. And when compared with the liberal democratic peace theory where there are at most a few contradictions in history, Huntington's thesis loses much of its sway.

Structural realist as with Huntington's thesis fails in its explanatory ability of the interaction between liberal democracies. After the Cold War and reunification of Germany many statesmen, analysts and offensive realists worried about the rise of a unified Germany and the return of competition between France and Germany for hegemony in Continental Europe. British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher was the most forceful in her concern about the potential return of power politics to Europe. However, the opposite of this has happened. The two liberal democracies have forged close ties not only economically, but also politically with not only each other, but also with all of their neighboring liberal democracies. Open and direct competition for hegemony has been limited and war appears unthinkable. The reason for this as compared to notable competition in Asia between the rising powers of India and China is the liberal democracy that is widespread in Europe. Offensive realism does not provide a satisfactory

explanation as to why the European states are not involved in a competitive struggle for power and hegemony.

Even with the end of direct competition and conflict in Europe after the fall of the Berlin Wall, Waltz has refused to acknowledge the importance of liberal democracies in understanding the current regional peace. The spread of liberal democracies has not, according to Waltz, brought about such a profound change to the international political system that realism principles no longer govern state foreign affairs. In fact, the only thing that can make Realpolitik irrelevant is "Changes *of* the system; …changes *in* the system would not" (Waltz, 2000). This refusal to acknowledge the importance of liberal democracy on not only the unit but also the system as a whole is why realism falls short in explaining the peace in Europe and America.

The anarchic but not chaotic international system as in any system is a reflection of the units that make up that system. If enough units change their behavior within that system, the system would also be expected to change. Understanding the unit is essential to the understanding of the system as a whole. The evolution of that unit's government type should accordingly lead to an evolution of theory to explain the interaction of those units. As states have changed from autocracies to liberal democracies, aspects of their foreign policy behavior has changed and with these changes new ways of understanding that foreign policy behavior is needed.

One final argument that has yet to be assessed is the supposed peace between illiberal and autocratic states. This argument is based on the belief that most conflicts arise from ideological conflicts. This theory though appearing reasonable when looking at the many conflicts in the 20th century between communist, democratic and fascist regimes is clearly flawed upon further analysis. Communist Vietnam fought a brief war with Communist China in 1979 while also invading and occupying Communist Cambodia. Other examples are the Chaco war between autocratic Bolivia and Paraguay from 1932-1935 and the more recent Eritrea and Ethiopia border war from 1998 to 2000. These are but a few of the many wars between autocratic states which thoroughly contradicts the notion of a separate peace for illiberal and autocratic states. The reason that peace exists between some autocratic states lies likely in realist theories but these theories do not have any sway over how liberal democracies deal with each other.

As we see from the numerous examples above, realism fails in consistently explaining the peace that exists among liberal democracies in the 20th and 21st centuries. While it is true that realist theories might dictate the relations between liberal democracies and illiberal and undemocratic states, there is also a clear and distinct peace between liberal democracies that realist theory can't explain. And to understand that peace we must look at the liberal democracy.

3. The liberal democracy

"Democracies don't attack each other. They make better trading partners and partners in diplomacy." - Bill Clinton (Clinton, 1994).

Democracy and liberalism are very contentious words, for many people they hold many different meanings. However, to successfully argue the liberal democratic peace theory, a relatively clear definition of the liberal democracy is essential. Without a definition, the theory can be criticized as unclear and unrealistic. It could be argued that it is impossible to argue the truth of a theory if there is no way to define and measure the validity of the theory. Because of this we must look at what a liberal democracy is.

The idea of democracy goes back to Ancient Greece, where limited kinds of rule 'by the people' were practiced. The 'people' of Greece was not universal, but included only select citizens. The word democracy in fact comes from the translation of the Greek word 'demokratia'. When broken down 'demos' means people while 'kratia' means rule or power; in other words, 'rule by the people'. Such a basic definition leaves much to be desired. Who are the people? What are the limits to the rule of the people? How do we decide who gets to rule? These are but a few questions that arise from such a simple definition.

The classical doctrine of democracy, which emerged in the eighteenth and nineteenth century, focused on the 'common good' and the 'will of the people'. Philosopher Joseph Schumpeter explained the classical doctrine of democracy as "that institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions which realizes the common good by making the people itself decide issues through the election of individuals who are to assemble in order to carry out its will"

(Schumpeter, 2010). Democracy thus is merely the method in which the 'common good' is achieved by allowing the people to carry out its will. This 'common good', Schumpeter explains, is "the obvious beacon light of policy, which is always simple to define and which every normal person can be made to see by means of rational argument". The only disagreements to the 'common good' and 'will of the people' thus come from stupidity, sinister interests or differences of opinion on the speed of which a goal is approached. This belief of defined 'good' and 'bad' were essential to early democratic philosophers. They believed life to have clear definitions of 'good' and 'bad' and society and its people would 'will' for the 'common good' if only they were allowed. In fact, "The people is never corrupted, but it is often misled; and only then does it seem to will what is bad" (Rousseau, 1969).

There are serious limitations to the common good and the clear definitions of 'good' and 'bad' upon which Schumpeter elaborates. Firstly, "many people may want things other than the common good" but more importantly "to different individuals and groups the common good is bound to mean different things". Secondly, even if it is possible to define 'common goods' such as health or maximum economic satisfaction that are acceptable to all, disagreement in how to achieve it are normal. Is economic maximization achieved through capitalism or socialism, and is health best achieved through vaccinations or not? Finally, if there is no 'common good' of the people, then all the wills of the individuals will not gravitate towards the common will, but rather towards their own perceived good. Przeworski, in his critique of the classical democracy theory, also attacks the notion of a unique and defined 'common good'. He puts it quite bluntly when he writes "Let us put the consensualist view of democracy where it belongs – in the museum of Eighteenth-century Thought – and observe that all societies are ridden with economic, cultural, or moral conflicts" (Przeworski, 2003).

In his critique of the classical democracy theory Schumpeter also advances his own idea of what a democracy is. He defines it as individuals acquiring power through a competitive struggle for the people's vote. To support this definition, he argues that the definition provides "a reasonably efficient criterion by which to distinguish democratic governments from others" while the theory also leaves room for a proper recognition of leadership. Another point he makes is that the theory seems to clarify the relation that subsists between democracy and individual freedom. This point comes about since a freedom to compete for political leadership in most cases means "considerable amounts of freedom of discussion for all" (Schumpeter, 2010).

To conclude Schumpeter's theory in his own words "In a democracy, as I have said, the primary function of the elector's vote is to produce government" (Schumpeter, 2010). This minimalist theory on democracy has its supporters as well as critics. On one hand, Przeworski, 2003, agrees with Schumpeter's theory and argues that by trying to define democracy in great detail and "Perusing innumerable definitions, one discovers that democracy has become an altar on which everyone hangs his or hers favorite *ex voto*" (Przeworski, 2003). On the other hand, Carole Pateman argues that the notion democracy is purely about the election of leadership misses vital points. For a real "democratic polity to exist, it is necessary for a participatory society to exist" (Pateman, 2003). Central to her argument is that the scope of the term political goes beyond the national government and entails many parts of the civil society. Thus a democracy is not purely about the election of national leaders; it requires "…maximum participation by all the people at that level socialization, or 'social training', for democracy must take place in other spheres in order that the necessary individual attitudes and psychological qualities can be developed" (Pateman, 2003).

While it is true that there are dangers in elaborate definitions, the minimalist theory can be criticized as lacking the essence of democracy. For many people democracy means more than just freedom to elect government: for some it is a democratic attitude, while for others it represents protection of the rights and freedom of the individual. This idea, though, is easily mixed with liberalism, which begs the question of whether they in fact can be separated? And does a state have to be liberal to be democratic? If we accept Schumpeter's minimalist definition of a democracy, then the answers appears to be yes and no, respectively. As long as the state holds competitive elections where leadership is chosen then it can be deemed democratic, but for many this is not enough to be considered liberal. Many

states across the world can be accepted as democratic in some sense of the word, but not liberal. States in North and South America, Europe and Oceania on the other hand go beyond this minimalist definition. They hold liberal ideals as part of the democratic process. It is this liberal notion combined with democracy that is essential to the possibility of a lasting peace. This point as mentioned earlier is strongly pushed by Owen, who argues that the key to understanding peace between democratic states is liberalism (Owen, 1994).

While liberalism, like democracy, can have various meanings and definitions it is generally associated with the protection of the rights and freedom of the individual. The question asked earlier of whether it is possible to separate liberalism and democracy is very important in the current era where the focus has been not only on democratic elections but also on the human rights of the individual. For electoral democracy, Schumpeter's minimalist definition is very useful, but for a more entailing definition of the many states we have in today's age we can look at Larry Diamond and his definition of the liberal democracy. Diamond defines the term "*liberal* to mean a political system in which individual and group liberties are well protected and in which there exist autonomous spheres of civil society and private life, insulated from state control…" (Diamond, 2003).

Diamond sees a clear difference between the minimalist democracy and the liberal democracy, he quotes Terry Karl when he writes that "This flawed conception of democracy privileges elections over other dimensions of democracy and ignores the degree to which multiparty elections (even if they are competitive and uncertain in outcome) may exclude significant portions of the population from contesting for power or advancing and defending their interests, or may leave significant arenas of decision making beyond the control of elected officials" (Diamond, 2003). This critique is a very valid one and it is exactly why this paper argues that the democratic peace theory should in fact be called the liberal democratic peace theory.

The liberal democracy that Diamond describes has ten components. While no state has all components, what matters is the extent to which they achieve them. The more components a state has, the more liberal democratic they are. The 10 components of a liberal democracy are as follows:

1. "Control of the state and its key decisions and allocations lies, in fact as well as in constitutional theory, with elected officials (and not democratic unaccountable actors or foreign powers); in particular, the military is subordinate to the authority of elected civilian officials".
2. "Executive power is constrained, constitutionally and in fact, by the autonomous power of government institutions (such as an independent judiciary, parliament, and other mechanisms of horizontal accountability)".
3. "Not only are electoral outcomes uncertain, with a significant opposition vote and the presumption of party alternation in government, but no group that adheres to constitutional principles is denied the right to form a party and contest elections (even if electoral thresholds and rules exclude small parties from winning representation in parliament)".
4. "Cultural, ethnic, religious, and other minority groups (as well as historically disadvantaged majorities) are not prohibited legally from expressing their interests in the political process or from speaking their language or practicing their culture".
5. "Beyond parties and elections, citizens have multiple, ongoing channels for expression and representation of their interests and values, including diverse, independent associations and movements, which they have the freedom to form and join".
6. "There are alternative sources of information (including independent media) to which citizens have (politically) unfettered access".
7. "Individuals also have substantial freedom of belief, opinion, discussion, speech, publication, assembly, demonstration, and petition".
8. "Citizens are politically equal under the law (even though they are invariably unequal in their political resources)".
9. "Individual and group liberties are effectively protected by an independent, nondiscriminatory judiciary, whose decisions

are enforces and respected by other centers of power".

10. "The rule of law protects citizens from unjustified detention, exile, terror, torture, and undue interference in their personal lives not only by the state but also by organized nonstate or antistate forces" (Diamond, 2003).

One final point he makes on these ten components is that they imply an eleventh: "if political authority is to be constrained and balanced, individual and minority rights protected, and a rule of law assured, democracy requires a constitution that is supreme". As mentioned above, these ten components are impossible to find in any state but it is the degree to which the state encompasses these components. Scandinavian states, for example, entail many of these components and thus can be considered liberal democracies, while states such as Myanmar and North Korea have almost none of these components and can be considered autocracies.

The Diamond's definition of a liberal democracy and the components that it entails leaves us with a well-refined definition on which the theory depends. There is, however, one component that Diamond does not mention, which also plays a part in the liberal democracy and the liberal democratic peace: a relatively open market economy. While all liberal democracies can be considered open market economies, there is, however, a wide range in the degree of openness. The US is among the most open economies while Scandinavians states have more controlled markets. Even with the high levels of taxation and government involvement in the market, Scandinavian states can still be considered open market economies when compared to the controlled economies of the former communist states.

Thus with the ten components of Diamond's definition of the liberal democracy together with an additional component of a relatively open market economy we now have the satisfactory definition that can be used to explain why it is that liberal democracies do not go to war with each other.

4. Data on conflict, war and democracy

"You can't separate peace from freedom because no one can be at peace unless he has his freedom." - Malcolm X (X, 1965).

Before we analyze why liberal democracy makes perpetual peace possible, the empirical evidence in support of the theory shall be assessed. This evidence has been declared as the closest we have to an empirical law in international relations (Owen, 1994). And for studies on this there is nothing more thorough than the studies mentioned earlier by Oneal and Russett. It must be noted that their study focuses on democracy as they do not separate it from liberalism; however, as it is the most thorough statistical analysis of correlations in war, it is still very useful. Their work involved taking a dyad of any two countries and seeing what the probability is that they are at war with each other during a calendar year. They then added in variables such as the states being democratic and calculated out the change to the probability of the countries being at war. They did this with various variables and found strong empirical evidence that supports the democratic peace theory.

To determine the states that are democratic and autocratic they used the Polity III series from George Mason University, while for conflict and war they used the Correlates of War Project (COW) data on militarized interstate disputes (MIDs). Militarized disputes were used rather than only wars to obtain more data since the COW definition of wars involves at least 1,000 deaths in battle. The Polity III series used to determine democratic states grades all governments in the world according to three characteristics: "1- the competitiveness of political participation, 2- the openness and competitiveness of executive recruitment, and 3- the level of institutionalized constraints on the chief executive". (Russett & Oneal, 2001) Countries fall into a range of -10 to +10 according to how they meet these characteristics. The range of -10 to -1 is given to autocratic states with -10 being extremely autocratic. Adversely, the plus numbers suggest levels of democracy with +10 being the highest possible score for the most democratic countries. Their data includes over 40,000 observations on militarized disputes from 1885 to 1992.

Initially a baseline was made of the probability a dyad of any two countries being involved in a militarized dispute with each other in any given year. The democracy grade of the countries is set at the midpoint of 0 to determine what an increase and decrease of democratic scores would mean to the likelihood of militarized disputes happening. Of note here is that the

democracy results are taken from the lowest grade of the country in the dyad. Since the more democratic state should be more constrained, to find the probability of democracies being at war it is best to take the lowest scoring country. The results are as follow:

DEMOC increased to + 7	- 42%
DEMOC decreased to – 7	+ 69%
DEMOC increased to +10	- 54%
DEMOC decreased to -10	+ 109%

(Russett & Oneal, 2001).

From this we find that if the democracy score of the least democratic country is increased to +7 (+7 is considered the minimum score for a coherent democracy) (Gurr & Jaggers, 1995) under the standard deviation the likelihood of the dyad being involved in a militarized conflict falls by 42%. Similarly if the least democratic country is reduced to an autocratic state of -7 the likelihood of a militarized dispute has increased by 69%. To further illustrate the point they calculated the change to probability if the least democratic country was a plus +10 or a -10. The chances of militarized disputes fell by 54% if the least democratic state scored +10, while the probability of a militarized dispute shot up by 109% if the least democratic country scored -10. The results are staggering and they concluded that this "provides further evidence for the pacific benefits of democracy." "Pairs of democracies are much more peaceful than other kinds of dyads" (Russett & Oneal 2001).

It should be noted that they also calculated what the realists focus of alliances and power ratio would mean to the probability of war. Here they did find the quite logical conclusion that if the countries in the dyad were linked in an alliance, mutual defense pact or neutrality pact then the probability was reduced by 46%. The same goes for the power ratio that finds an increase in the ratio of power of the stronger country to the weaker country means that the probability of a militarized dispute falls by 29%. This finding is logical since the large difference in power should mean that the weaker state would be inclined to avoid entering a militarized dispute it is bound to lose. An IR scholar would thus be mistaken to totally dismiss the realist's concepts of power and alliances.

The research also looked at the effects interdependence and international organizations had on the probability of militarized disputes in the dyad. The two scholars argue not only for the democratic peace, but that peace comes from a combination of democracy, economic interdependence and international organizations. In the empirical research they also find "…strong, consistent evidence that economic interdependence, like democratic institutions and norms, significantly reduces the risk that two states will become involved in a military dispute" while on international organizations they found that "…the pacific benefit of international organizations apply largely to their members, though this measure is probably the least satisfactory of the three Kantian variables" (Russett & Oneal, 2001). The Kantian variables they talk of are the three *Definite Articles* of Kant's perpetual peace essay. As we shall see in the following part the liberal economic dependency and liberal institutionalism theories while not without merit do not hold up to historical cases in the same way as the liberal democratic peace theory.

5. The nexus between liberal democracy and foreign policy

"Between individuals, as between nations, respect for the rights of others is peace" - Benito Juarez, nd., (Wikiquote, 2010).

The father of the democratic peace theory and liberalism as whole is widely considered to be Immanuel Kant, who used his belief that people desired above all else peace and prosperity to lay out the conditions needed for a perpetual peace. These conditions consisted of three definite Articles, which are that every state should be a republic within a federation of free states and that there should be universal hospitality for all citizens of the world (Kant, 1795). These three Articles have been understood to mean that if all states were republics (democracies) with an international government (the UN) and freedom of travel and business (free trade) then peace in the world should be perpetual (Russett & Oneal, 2001).

Before we look at democracy, let us first look at the latter two articles as they form part of the economic interdependence and institutionalism theories. Economic interdependence theory is based on the notion that states which are economically interdependent will have no desire for war with each other as the economic costs of war far outweigh its benefits. The open market

and free trade that was promoted by David Ricardo and Adam Smith means that states' economies become intertwined and, since nothing destroys trade quicker than war, the economic incentive to wage war has disappeared. Ricardo's comparative advantage means that in a free market, states maximize their economic gain through specialization and trade (Ricardo, 2005). Thus, for states that desire economic success, free trade is more helpful than territorial conquest (Rosecrance, 1986). In the time before specialization and free trade this was not the case; acquiring territory and resources was needed for expanding state economic power. As a result, war was profitable.

Trade and the open market not only make war less unprofitable, for interdependency theorists it also creates understanding and a political relationship between states. For scholars a prime example of this is the Coal and Steel Community between France and Germany after World War II that eventually led to the forming of the European Community together with Benelux and Italy. As trade prospered and economic integration deepened, peace between the states became the norm. The traditional rivalry was replaced by a shared desire for economic prosperity.

While the reasoning behind the inter-dependence theory is sound, many examples from history show that trade and economic interdependence was not enough to prevent war. Before WWI, the European states' economies and more specifically trade were intertwined. In fact, the levels of international trade would not be reached again until the 1990's. These high levels of trade, however, did not prevent the European states from entering the destructive five-year war that left the economies of all states, as well as world trade, shattered. That the states of Europe would willingly enter a war that would destroy international trade for all parties involved is in direct contrast to the theory.

With economic interdependence we also find dilemmas. Does trade result in good relations, or is trade the result of political motivations for better relations? Furthermore, there is also the difficulty in explaining why states that have had prosperous trade will engage in foreign policy decisions which lead to sanctions that hurt their respective economies. If states were motivated purely by economic incentives then this contradiction should not exist. Though trade and economic incentives play a part in the peaceful relations between states, when compared to liberalism and democracy, they falter.

Liberal institutionalists, though accepting the benefits of democracy and interdependence to peace, believe that international institutions and their growing supranational power is the key to creating a peaceful international system. Kant's second article asserts the need for a federation of free states where the rights of states shall be secured by a constitution. His explanation of a federation of states rather than one all-encompassing super state is close to the UN that we have today. This belief in a federation of states was instrumental in the 14th point of Woodrow Wilson's speech to congress in 1918, in which he declared "A general association of nations must be formed under specific covenants for the purpose of affording mutual guarantees of political independence and territorial integrity to great and small states alike" (Wilson, 1918). The League of Nations was formed on this principal after World War I (WWI). Even though the League failed, world leaders did not lose faith in the idea and with it the United Nations was born after World War II (WWII).

The belief that international institutions will lead to a more peaceful world interestingly enough has its base in the structural realist argument that the anarchic nature of the international system causes competition and war. Joseph Nye might agree with structural realist that the international system is anarchic in nature, but in contrast he believes the importance of the UN and other international organizations to be greater with better prospects of cooperation between states (Nye, 1988). Cooperation within international organizations reduces uncertainty for states and at the same time, if states know that the UN guarantees their safety and survival, it means they can interact under the principals of absolute gain rather than relative gain.

This cooperation of states does not exclusively have to involve the UN, as there are many regional blocks such as the EU, OAS and ASEAN to name a few, that help solve disputes between states. Not only do the organizations provide a way to solve trade or territorial disputes without resorting to military solutions but they also create an environment in which states interact with each other peacefully, which in turn helps foster further cooperation.

This theory, as with the previously mentioned ones, falls short in explanatory ability

of the current spread of interstate peace. The League of Nations failed in preventing WWII and the UN has failed as well in its central role of securing peace during the Cold War and more recently in Iraq. This is not to say that the UN has not been successful in some conflicts and in other roles of promoting human rights and development; however, the large number of wars in the 20th century is a testament to failure of the liberal institutionalist theory.

This leaves us with the first of Kant's Articles that "The Civil Constitution in every State shall be Republican" (Kant, 1795). At first glance the article appears to contradict the democratic peace theory as it states that "a *Democracy*, in the proper sense of the word, is necessarily *a despotism"*. However, by looking further into the writing and taking into account the context of the time it was written, we see that Article I is quite close to the liberal democracy of today's age.

First, the essay was written in 1795 at a time when most states in Europe, except for France and the Swiss Cantons, were ruled by monarchs. The French revolution of 1789 that overthrew the absolute monarchy was a monumental change for Europe. For philosophers at the time, the French Republic for was a sign of progress from the traditional monarchies that waged wars during the 17th and 18th centuries. The French Republic ruled by Napoleon was in fact at war with all of the major monarchial powers of continental Europe during 1795. The Napoleonic wars were a conflict between the forward movement of progress and the traditional ways of the absolute monarchy. As Hegel would later proclaim, the victory of Napoleon over Prussia in the battle Jena in 1806 was "the end of history" (Fukuyama, 2006). After the defeat, for traditional Prussia and its allies, history could no longer be reversed and the onward evolution of human society towards the principles of liberty and equality could not be stopped, as Owen explains, the focus of people at the time and as late as the 19th century was on republics and monarchs as opposed to democracies and autocracies (Owen, 1994).

Furthermore, by looking closely at Kant's explanation of the republic we see a resemblance to the liberal democracy today. Kant talks of *Liberty, Dependence* and *Equality* as the foundation of the republican constitution. All liberal democracies of today's age hold these three beliefs as key foundations of their constitutions. In the traditional sense of the word the differences between a republic and a democracy are quite defined. In the republic the source of power is the charter or constitution while in a democracy power lies with the rule of the majority. This differing foundation was critical for philosophers in the early stages of democratic evolution; however, the distinctions have been blurred in modern times.

The democracy Kant rejects in his writing is close to the direct democracy, which is not fully practiced at state level anywhere; in fact, all liberal democracies have many aspects of the representative democracy that is closer to the republic. For example, according to Kant, in the "Republican Constitution, the consent of the citizens as members of the State is required to determine at any time the question, 'Whether there shall be war or not" (Kant, 1795)? In a liberal parliamentary democracy the people through representation are able to answer the question of whether there shall be war or not. In fact they have even more power since they can demonstrate and express their opposition freely.

Modern democratic peace theory has been pushed by scholars such as Doyle, Fukuyama, Owen and Russett. The underlying theme to all of their works is very similar to Kant's first *Definite Article*. People do not desire war and if government is a direct representation of the people, war should cease. Or put differently, "When citizens who bear the burdens of war elect their governments, wars become impossible" (Doyle, 1986). Fukuyama like Kant argues that "the instinct for self-preservation is in some sense the strongest and most widely shared of the natural passions" (Fukuyama, 2006).

The democratic peace theory gained in popularity after the end of the Cold War. Books such as *Grasping the Democratic Peace* by Russett and Fukuyama's highly debated *The End of History and the Last Man* both argued strongly that the victory of democracy over communism and its subsequent spread leads to a more peaceful world. According to Fukuyama, victory of the liberal democratic ideology over communism and fascism means that there are no further steps to be taken in the ideological evolution of government. Fukuyama, like Marx, believed history to be linear and that societies evolved from one step to the next; however, rather than communism, Fukuyama believed that the liberal open market democracy was the final step. With the defeat of communism

at the end of the Cold War there are no ideological challenges to liberal democracies left, thus the end of history.

The liberal democratic government, according to Fukuyama, is successful due to its legitimacy through election and because it is the only form of government that provides recognition of its citizens. The liberal democracy is more focused on the welfare of its citizens rather than costly foreign wars. Among the keys to the peaceful foreign policy of liberal democracies is that by definition, the state is weak since the preservation of individual rights meant a sharp delimitation of state power (Fukuyama, 2006).

From a philosophical standpoint, the liberal democracy according to Fukuyama satisfies the basic human desire for recognition. This *recognition* of one's self-worth is brought forth from the writings of Hegel and Plato. While Hegel called the desire of all humans to be *recognized* by another human-being essential in order to prove one's own self-worth, Plato understood it as *thymos*. According to them *recognition* and *thymos* has led to most if not all conflicts in human history; however, within the liberal democracy this desire is already recognized to a certain extent and because of that a more peaceful existence is possible. For Fukuyama the liberal democracy "shows us the way to the completely non-material end of recognition of our freedom" and until humans get that recognition they will always be in conflict. Carrying this logic on, if a state recognizes its own people, it will thus have fewer problems to recognize another state and *its* citizen's rights to equality and freedom. As Fukuyama explains "The civil peace brought about by liberalism should logically have its counterpart in relations between states" (Fukuyama, 2006).

There is of course much debate as to whether democracies are more peaceful in nature or only towards each other. It has been argued that democracies are at peace with each other because they share similar ideologies. This is the notion of the 'separate peace' brought forth by Doyle and Fukuyama. While they believe that democracies will be peaceful in their interactions they also believe that realist principles will continue to characterize the dealings with autocratic and illiberal regimes (Doyle, 1986). Some scholars, however, do believe liberal societies to be more peaceful and less likely to wage war with other illiberal states (Rawls, 1999). Russett and Oneal in their statistical analysis also found "*…that on average, democracies, as individual states, are more peaceful than autocracies*" (Russet & Oneal 2001).

While it is without a doubt that liberal democracies *do* go to war with illiberal states as witnessed by the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, this paper's focus is on the peace between liberal democracies and for that reason the analysis of why liberal democracies do go to war will be left for future research.

Besides the empirical data to back up their argument, Oneal and Russett argue that the reason for the correlation between democracy and peace can be separated into *cultural* and *structural explanations*. The cultural "emphasize the role of shared democratic principles, perceptions, and expectations of behavior. Democratic peoples, who solve their domestic political disputes without resorting to organized violence against their opponents, should be inclined to resolve problems arising in their relations with other democratic peoples in the same way". While the structural explanation "stress the importance of the institutional constraints democracy characteristically imposes on the decision makers. A separation of power requires the executive to secure legislative approval and funding for war, and institutions that make democratic leaders accountable for bad decisions make democracies reluctant to go to war" (Maoz & Russett, 1993). This explanation from a previous work of Russett with Zeev Maoz provides a theoretical understanding of why there is a correlation between democracy and peace. The cultural and structural explanation gives an answer to the realist argument that states can never be certain of other states' intentions nor offensive capabilities. However, if both states are democratic they know that the other state is constrained by the same democratic structure that constrains itself, as well as knowing that the other state believes in the same liberal ideals. Thus, one of the leading elements of the security dilemma which plays a big role in realist thinking is negated. If a liberal democratic state knows that another liberal democratic state is not only structurally constrained, but also culturally, its people are disinclined to enter war with another liberal democracy, it needs to worry less about the intentions and offensive capabilities that could threaten its survival. This in turn means the state does not need to increase its own military capability and is thus less of a threat

to the other state. What happens then is the opposite of the realist security dilemma; instead of a military buildup, what we find is that "peace can promote and strengthen democratic institutions, which further improves the prospects for peace" (Russet & Oneal, 2001). This is what Russett and Oneal coins the virtuous circle as opposed to the realist security dilemma.

Essential to the democratic peace theory is that war has been waged throughout history by religious leaders, princes, monarchs and dictators, all people who did not have to bear the direct consequences of fighting the war, but instead would reap its spoils. If a ruler did not have to fight, but could gain not only glory but riches from a successful war, they should be more inclined to go to war. Thus, if leaders are chosen by the citizens who are the very people who fight, then those leaders must be responsive to their citizen's demands for peace. In a democracy leaders are a representation of the citizens and if they desire to stay in power they must follow the people and those people would loth to enter into war.

As we have seen, the reason that the liberal democratic peace theory is possible falls into *cultural* and *structural* reasons. These combine to ensure that the ability and reason for liberal democracies to go to war with each other is minimal. It also ensures that miscalculations or illiberal leaders of liberal democracies are unable to drag their state into a war with another liberal democracy.

The cultural explanations mainly entail liberal democracies having similar or common set of norms and values. Due to these shared liberal and democratic values, conflict at least of the serious kind that can lead to war is less likely. The peaceful effects of common liberal norms and values are manifested in various ways. Ideological conflicts similar to the ones pitting democracy, fascism and communism against each other disappear when all states are governed by similar principles. When the states of Eastern Europe opened up after the fall of the Berlin Wall, the West and the US assumed that conflict would cease as long as those states stayed relatively liberal and democratic. This is also why in most cases a return to democratic elections for autocratic states is celebrated in the West as a return to friendly relations. The military coup of 2006 in Thailand, for example was criticized in the US and military aid was cut; however, criticism subsided with the return of a certain amount of democracy after the elections of 2007. A similar scenario played out after the Honduran coup and subsequent election in 2009. When states open up and have elections they are assumed as natural allies of other liberal democracies. The key, however, is not only elections. If it were only elections, then Hamas and its electoral success in Palestine should have heralded an improvement in relations with the West. The same should have been true with the elections in Iran. This was, however, not the case as their thoroughly anti-liberal ideology made this impossible.

For citizens of liberal democracies there is a certain amount of shared understanding. Since they all share the enlightened ends of self-preservation, material well-being, and liberty, liberal democracies view each other as trustworthy and pacific (Owen, 1994). This point does bring in social constructivist arguments that liberal states build up their shared values as a way to encourage peace between them. This construction of common bonds between liberal states in turn promotes peace between them. It is certainly true that elements within any relationship are socially constructed, but it is not sufficient in explaining the whole theory.

The structural explanation can be categorized into six different constraints, they are representative government with universal suffrage, checks and balances of the executive, judicial and legislative arms of government, the rule of law and the human rights of citizens are respected, equality and freedom of its citizens, freedom of the media and finally a relative open market economy. The Diamond's definition of the liberal democracy described earlier fits in perfectly in the first five constraints (Diamond, 2003). While neither of these six constraints are enough to solely prevent war between two liberal democracies, when put together they will act as such a powerful constraint on the foreign policy that a perpetual peace is possible.

In its most simplistic logic, a representative government elected by a vote with universal suffrage has its raison d'être to serve the majority of voters. This, to a skeptic sounds like dictatorship of the majority; however, coupled with strong laws and checks and balances it leads to the best possible political method of securing the best results for the most people. For a rational leader or party that wishes to be elected or reelected they must present policies and take actions that best

represent the majority of the voting populous. Even if the leader is irrational or illiberal the six structural restraints mentioned above will mean that their foreign policy is contained. An economically empowered civil society that has rights to freely express their disagreement over their government's foreign policy and specifically the possibility of war is a powerful constraint on a leader. Without that support the leader would be unable to wage war. And as we have seen from earlier explanations, people desire peace, prosperity and self-preservation above all else; thus, the reasons for war with other liberal democracies are non-existent.

If democracy as illustrated above is the reason behind the interstate peace we currently find then it does bring to mind the question of whether or not the spread of democracy should be actively pursued across the globe as neoliberals desire, or allowed to develop on its own? This essay does, however, not venture into this loaded question, but with the spring uprisings of the Arab world in mind where the central demands are for freedom, liberty and elections I would like to end with a quote by Alexis de Tocqueville who prophesied in 1833 that democracy was an "irresistible revolution advancing century by century" (Tocqueville, 1969).

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