

Democratic Peace Theory

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Introduction

In this essay I will argue what is the importance of Democratic Peace Theory and its importance related to international relations. Liberal democracies do not go to war with each other and the reasons why these democratic states resolve conflicts peacefully through negotiations and different diplomatic techniques. Other thing which I will highlight in my essay is Democratic peace theory is proactive form of liberalism and it rely on human and civil rights. Also the neo-liberalism perspective that how strong institutes promote democracy in state which eventually make the state stable economically, politically, and socially. I use different examples of states around the world which were enemies in past but now after becoming liberal democracies how these states transformed their approach and achieve peace and stability. I will also shed some light on the drawbacks of Democratic Peace Theory and how this theory is not applicable on states who are non-democratic and authoritarian in their political structure but enjoy economic stability and peace within the state and also with their neighbouring states. How other theories like realism`s critique on Democratic Peace Theory and its relevancy with regard to international relations and explain the gaps in this theory. Another aspect which is of importance in this essay is why liberal states do not wage war and I explain how political structure and political participation of citizen is crucial. How different democratic institutes and different forms of accountability in liberal states stop leaders of democratic states to wage war? In the end I will conclude that DPT is not only western approach to promote peace and stability but it can be applicable to all states around the world to become peaceful and liberal states.

Democratic peace theory:

Democracies do not go to war among themselves, which could be explained by the Democratic Peace Theory, also known as Mutual Democratic Pacifism. Immanuel Kant in his essay in 1795 Perpetual Peace, the German philosopher among others, presented a fundamental concept. The world of Kant's theory is one in which all countries have the same political system of a constitutional republic, and where people would want to live in perpetual peace. The premise of Kant's theory is that people won't go to war unless they need to defend themselves, so there won't be any aggressor nations and wars won't

happen. According to Kant, democratic leaders are prevented from engaging in conflicts with other nations due to the people's reluctance to support war and the costs associated with it. Compared to non-democracies, democracies' foreign policies are more peaceful. A war between two democracies is less likely because both states will work toward long-term cooperation and rely on one another, making it difficult for them to fight each other. Theoretical side, there are numerous theories regarding the connection between democracy and peace. The majority of these theories concentrate on domestic political norms, constructed identities, and domestic political institutions. On the empirical side, some contend that democracies enjoy a "monadic" democratic peace in their relationships with all other states in the structure. Some argue that democracies are at their most peaceful when they interact with other democracies (referred to as "dyadic" democratic peace); Additional contend that a region's or international system's peace will increase with the number of democracies present ("systemic" democratic peace); and yet another group is sceptical that democracy and peace are in any way connected.

DPT is relevant in international relations as it suggests how states should act and behave with each other. The Democratic Peace Theory asserts that democratic states are reluctant to wage war with other democracies because they are dependent on liberalism's beliefs, such as political and civil liberties. Supporters point to a number of grounds for the tendency of democratic states to maintain peace, including: Democracies typically give their citizens a voice whether to declare war or not. In democracy, citizen which cast votes in general elections can hold their represented electable accountable for the financial and human costs of war. Government officials are held publically accountable that is why they are motivated to establish diplomatic arrangements to calm down international conflicts (Longley, 2022,). Democracies, which typically have more wealth than other states, avoid battle to protect their resources and are rather profound to find a peaceful solution.

Institutional restraints: Doyle (1986), drawing from Kant's teachings, argues that elected governments are opposed to going to war because they are answerable to the citizen of the state. Voters pay the price of war with their lives and their wealth; going into war put stress on the economy. Institutionalised and inner administrative rivalry, and decision-making responsibilities divided among numerous institutions or individuals should be more strictly controlled and therefore it will decrease the chance of war (Doyle, 1986).

Democratic norms and cultures: According to the description of democratic standards, culture, beliefs, and behaviours that encourage cooperation and the non-violent resolution of disputes. Perhaps the most powerful proof assisting the Democratic Peace Theory is the proof that there have been no wars among democracies at some point of the 20th century (Owen, 1994).

International relations can be looked in 3 ways:

1. **Realism approach:** In realism approach, different states that are unique in political structure and governed differently
2. **Institutional approach:** it is a kind of approach which based on values, principles and international agreements
3. **Liberal approach:** in this approach states look to achieve lasting co-operations, international law, institutional peace, democratic peace, and commercial peace theory.

In the context of international relations, DPT encourage peace and peace can be obtained through political stability and political stability led to economic growth which promotes democracy. This is the relation on which all liberal democracies are based. Like in Monadic states (Sweden, Denmark, and Finland) where democratic state will maintain peace with other international communities irrespective of whether those foreign societies are of democratic view or not. Whereas, in Dyadic, states who are not democratic in nature will be perceive as threat to world and democratic states tend to decrease their engagement with them diplomatically, economically, and politically(U.S.A, and Canada).Democratic peace theory suggests that other states which are liberal democracies can term as transnational communities. These states promote tourism sector of their democratic like countries. In the context of international relations, peace is the ultimate goal for every nation state but it is more likely that nonaligned democracies will fight rather than aligned non-democracies. Realists argues that it is not common polities but rather than common interests (Hook, 2010). There are certain change in world which demands the rise of Democratic Peace Theory i.e. new thinking to policy makers` mind-sets and well-developed knowledge networks (Parmar, 2013, p. 236-251).

There are number of mechanisms of democratic accountability in democratic system. After reading and review different literature I choose 3 types of accountabilities in relevance to international relations:

- Electoral accountability
- Horizontal accountability
- Social accountability

Electoral accountability:

In democratic states, people who voted for prime minister or president can hold them accountable for going into war as I discussed this above it is difficult for liberal democracies to wage war if war costs them more than their resources. Kant argues that citizens of

republic will think broadly before going into war. This instrument is product of relation between leaders and people who elect them. The spirit of conducting elections in democracy is to make leaders responsive to their people. The formal explanation of democratic peace usually refer to this component. Leaders who promote uncertain and ineffective policies should be removed from office by the voters. Recent example of this is U.S president Donald Trump, he made numbers of unpopular international policies but one of them is, his retreating of United States from Paris Summit Agreement which shows that how much is he concerned about climate change and its effects on world (Herge, 2019).

Horizontal accountability:

The second instrument of accountability is horizontal accountability, which is less explore and studied. According to O'Donnell (1998) "This kind of accountability depends on the existence of state agencies that are legally empowered and factually willing and able to take actions ranging from routine oversight to criminal sanctions or impeachment in relation to possibly unlawful actions or omission by other agencies of the state." This form of accountability between states` different institutions and respects the constitutional responsibilities and limits their actions to those which are lawfully authorized. There are number of states especially in African region, who have weak institutes. Some states in Asia as well where role of institutes are weak or influence by political and ruling elites. Despite of their democratic structure some states failed to thrive politically, economically, and socially. I think the reason behind such states are called as hybrid democracies or transitional democracies is that they have weak institutes and because of lack of horizontal accountability they cannot promote democratic values and civil liberties in state (Herge, 2019).

Social accountability:

The last form of accountability is social accountability. It is less discussed in democratic peace theory. This ritual stresses citizen`s participation and non-electoral method of political contribution through civic organization. Social mobilization is directed against authoritarian regimes as civil society is re-emerged as a concept in social sciences in 1980`s to explain frustration of civilians against authoritarian regimes. Recent example of civil society movement is an ongoing series of protest and civil disturbance against the Iranian government began in Tehran on September 16th 2022 in a response to the loss of 22years old Mahsa Amini, who had been arrested by the Guidance Patrol Force for not covering her head properly. Another example is Black Lives Matters protest in U.S.A, after the killing of George Floyd by a white police officer. Social accountability serves as tool where people express their demands to the governmental organisation. These are different form of civil

society movements which can take part mostly in liberal democracies. In any state whose civil society is active, they are expected to have human rights and freedom (Doyle, 1986).

Democracy peace theory is not just about a state who conduct elections regularly but it emphasizing more on trade relations and economic interdependence. According to Kant's view of DPT, if two neighbouring states are democracies then there is less chance of war between them. Incentives to join a pacific union leads to elimination of warfare. It will help states to lock themselves into perpetual cooperation and interdependence. It will help in reduction of uncertainty and elimination of potential security dilemmas. Before the creation of European Economic Cooperation, currently known as European Union, European states tend to engage in wars with each other. After the end of WW-I and II, there was a trend of different institutions to control the world, which help states to interact with each other and resolve their conflicts through negotiations and cooperation. This led to create European Economic Commission. The integral part of this cooperation is economy. It promotes idea of single economy around whole Europe and free trade between European states. It promotes peace and since then all states are democratic except Bulgaria and Russia, there is no major war in Europe. We can take the example of Europe as promoting peace through economic cooperation and trade. It is not just strategic interest but also ideological commitment of Europe. During cold war period all of the west was aligned to defeat the ideology of socialism and it really helps them to stay at peace with each other. Although realist argues that it is about common interests rather than common polities. I think world should learn from the example of Europe. European states transformed themselves from monarchy to liberal democracies and gradually they attain peace and stability in the region, collaborating through different intergovernmental organisations. Institutes played a vital role in maintaining peace between European states. European states have common economic and trade interests. In context related to international relations, according to Adam Smith, individualism and freedom must be promoted and eventually it will bring out the common-good. In case of Europe, classical liberalism and neo-liberalism perspective developed individuals and societies. Neo-liberalism approach made Europe's institutional framework where they guide the individuals what is best for them and it helped European societies to transform from rigid and medieval era to era of enlightenment and progress.

I would like to say that three elements make Democracy Peace Theory effective:

- Democratic political culture prevents belligerent attitudes towards other
- Common moral values points to creation of appealing unity (perpetual peace)

- Democracies are supported through economic ties of assistance and interdependence

All these three elements are applicable to every nation. If any nation have these three elements as a base to their policy making, then peace and stability can be achieve in any region of the world.

In relation with international politics, another aspect of democratic peace theory is if there is peace among democratic states and cooperation among them then one state would not spend billions of dollars, euros, or pounds on its military budget. So that amount of money which one state would spend on building its military strength like air craft carriers or advance level of weapons and what-not, will invest in other parts of the economy which help the GDP to grow and that would help to build the economy more stronger thus, bring more economic stability. It will eventually encourage political stability which led towards peace and democracy. Previously mentioned about economic pacifism, democratic peace theory ensures that primary mechanism for inter-relation between states in economy and it also promotes commercial pacifism and with these two together there is minimum chance of war between states. Democratic peace theory comes close to eliminate the threat of warfare but there is some lose ends. World has not come to perpetual peace across the world. Leaders like Kim Jun and Putin threats the peace of world with their hands on nuclear weapons. There are some parts of world which were stable few years back but now they are unstable. Democracy is not guaranteed for how long will it lasts. For example Ukraine was peaceful country few years back but now long going war is imposed and nobody knows when it will going to end (Owen, 1994). Although western states put sanctions on Russia, economically and politically but there is a backlash of war on Europe and on Britain in the form of cost of living. Inflation and recession is rising specially in United Kingdom and it put pressure on UK`s economy despite the fact the Britain is liberal democracy. The international system is still chaotic, but international law give states the right to make war when they are aggrieved and where legal actions cannot solve crisis. Like a democratic state can wage war on other state when it belief of being injured. Realists approach is that if one country wage war on other you should sit back and do nothing because what can you do if they are waging war on each other but if we look world with ideological lens that all people must be free and all lands must be sovereign then liberal state will tend to help the country which was invaded. This is the reason United States went on war against Iraq in 1990 and liberated the Kuwait from Iraq (Longley, 2022). If we look through the prism of liberalism, wars are defensive but certain wars are considered to be unjust. Other wars like war for liberation and democracy are consider differently.

Realists argue that keep ideology in closet, liberalism says embrace ideology because it is the ideology that will make world better place. Democratic peace theory is the proactive aspect of liberalism and the ideology is that more the states become democratic the less likely the wars will happen. Now there are two options to achieve this, firstly International police force, if anything happens in the world, states should go to United Nations and International Court of Justice and put leaders of state who cause war, held accountable. Secondly, make states to sign international agreements and treaties. In the past there were many treaties and summits were held to maintain peace but not all of them worked in the manner as they should be. Democratic peace theory is also about understandings of commitment and reputation. For example if United States wants to leave United Nations tomorrow who can stop it, no one. Except it will cost United States its reputation and undermine as many agreements as it depends upon it. Democratic peace theory is about commitment as well and it goes beyond only believing in democracy but it simply just make it very costly to think otherwise. In democratic peace theory, not a single peace treaty is sign for peace or there is no world government which forces other states to stay at peace with each other. For example U.S.A will not go to war against Canada or Britain. Same for United Kingdom and France or Sweden and Finland (Doyle, 1986). There is no contract or world police that force this behaviour, it is about common interest economically, politically and socially. Also there are ideological interest among these states as well. Democracies go to war to another democracy is zero and the chance of non-democracy would go to war with non-democracy is also minimum. Probability of war between democracies with non-democracy is very high.

Critique:

There are some points with democratic peace theory which I disagree. Firstly, it is relatively new in the context of international politics. During cold war, majority of democratic states emerged into existence due to same ideological perspective of capitalism and civil rights. Most of the European states are now mature liberal democracies and the chance of military conflict is less likely to be occurred. The European political system has fundamentally changed, we can say that instead of remaining Hobbesian, it has rather become Kantian (Paleck, 2012). Nonetheless, if world were full of democracies, it does not guaranteed a peaceful world. Democratic peace theory understands democracy as Western style liberal states or ``American like`` democracy.

Another critique on DPT is that it suggests that two democracies would not wage war against each other, but in past democracies like Pakistan and India, Germany and France fought several wars. Another aspect of DPT is, only liberal democracies can developed and stable themselves economically than what about Qatar, U.A.E, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, China

and Russia? All these states are not liberal democracies but they enjoyed a significant economic growth. These states do not hold regular elections and violation of freedom of speech and basic human and civil rights and political participation of local people is minimum. Especially China has really good relations with democratic state like Pakistan and also with some African states. China has good trade and economic relations with U.S.A. Similarly on the other hand, U.S.A's diplomatic relations with Iran is on the edge. It is not that Iran pose a direct threat to U.S.A or the type of regime which is ruling Iran is problematic, the reason of US-Iran weak relations is Israel because Israel is an ally of U.S.A and Iran threatens Israel directly so that is why U.S.A and other western powers does not support Iran's nuclear program but on the other hand U.S.A and Saudi Arabia have good relations. If we look through the lens of theory of constructivism, everything we perceive is based on our personal experience and results. Britain's 500 nuclear weapons are not threat to U.S.A but North Korea's 5 nuclear weapons are direct threat, similar is the case with Iran. It is not the nuclear weapons which are problematic but the approach and meaning behind them is what makes them a threat. On some occasions, DPT used as to justify external military invasions on non-democratic states. For example in 2003, U.S.A float the idea of invasion of Iraq due to lack of civil rights in the country and Iraq's weapon of mass destruction. After invasion United States with its allies were able to remove Saddam Hussein from government and put democracy in place (Longley, 2022). But still after number of years, Iraq is not stable economically and politically. Thus, bringing democracy in Iraq does not bring peace and also the political institutions in Iraq are quite weak.

Africa is unstable because it is non-democratic or is it non-democratic because it is unstable? If we look at sub-Saharan Africa, democratic rule is placed in many parts. But this democratic system is what I called is "Hybrid Democracy" like Pakistan, Libya, or Lebanon due to lack of civil liberties and human rights. African democratization was largely driven by the pressure from Western states in 1990s after the cold war (Hook, 2010). Many African states designed elections not for the benefit of their own people but to satisfy Western powers to gain economic and military aids. Moreover, democratic political structure was seen as solution for Africa's poverty and conflicts but unfortunately democratic structure neither lower the poverty rate nor the frequency of conflicts in the region. Lack of peace in Africa is not the result of lack of democracy. There are other factors which must be taken into account like culture, ethnic rights, corruption, and unjust distribution of resources. Democratic peace theory must be mindful of these factors rather than blindly accepting democracy as cause of and cure for Africa's woes (Hook, 2010).

Conclusion:

Finally in terms of different explanations of democratic peace theory few arguments have been specifically influential. First, system wide allocation of material power remains the major factor that cause war and peace rather than local political institutions, according to realists. For them there is no assurance that states which are democratic now, will not go back to authoritarianism at some point. Secondly, liberalists argued that, capitalism rather than democracy will held peace between states. Such as economic development, mutual interests and similar ideological factors. I would like to conclude that Democratic Peace Theory is reliable theory in terms of achieving peace throughout the world as it speaks about human rights, civil rights, political participation of locals, common economic and ideological goals, and pacific union. All these factors can prevent two states to wage war and if all these factors are found in one state it will increase economic integration between other states specially neighbouring states (Owen, 1994). If Pakistan and India increase their economic interdependence on each other it would bring peace and stability not only among them but also in the region. As we know, both states are nuclear power and spend millions on military budget. It will also led these states to reduce their military budgets and spend it on welfare of citizens which increase economic stability and help to reduce poverty. Democratic Peace Theory is the extent of liberalism, more incline towards neo-liberalism I would say, because if institutions of one state are democratic then they will help the state to achieve democracy and peace. I will favour Democratic Peace Theory despite of some drawbacks I think those gaps will eventually be filled and world can become a better place for everyone and also for the generations to come. Democratic peace theory propose a peaceful solution to wars and conflicts. Any state who build its policies around democracy and peace, will eventually gain peace as we have seen in the past especially with European states. If states can achieve more by working together than why should they go to war? More economic interdependence will lead to more cooperation among states and lower the opportunities to wage war and disturbance. In the end we all want to live in a peaceful world where we can trust and help each other.

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