

THE JUSTIFICATION OF DEMOCRATIC PEACE THEORY IN THE 21ST CENTURY

Sharmin Bhuiya¹
Miskat Jahan²

Abstract

Dependent on liberal ideologies, the democratic peace theory assumes that democracies rarely wage war on one another than non-democracies. But critics argue that merely being democratic in nature may not be the main reason for peace between democracies. Throughout the 21st century, we have witnessed the “War on Terrorism” after 9/11, the rise of multipolarity, several buffer zones underpinning major powers’ divisive politics, and reflection of national leaders’ decisions on regional cooperatives and international institutions, etc., which have had varying effects on international politics. Therefore, it begs a question that whether the implications of democratic peace theory are justified in the 21st century or not. Answering this question required a thorough review of the arguments put forward by democratic peace theorists and detractors. This study examines the justification of democratic peace theory by focusing on the remarkable political phenomena in the 21st century. The method of this study is based on the thematic literature review and in-depth study of documents and summaries comprised of articles and journals. It is found that authoritarianism, democratic backsliding, contentious politics, border and regional conflicts, violent annexation, etc. have become critical issues in democracies where neither the values of democracy are protected, nor the liberal ideology is followed in the state mechanisms.

Keywords: Democracy, Democratic Peace Theory, 21st Century Political Phenomena, Conflict, War.

Introduction

‘To Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch’ by Immanuel Kant explains the fundamental precepts required for democratic peace which are the basis of the

¹ **Sharmin Bhuiya**, Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, University of Dhaka, Dhaka-1000, Bangladesh. Email: bhuiya.sharmin@du.ac.bd

² **Miskat Jahan**, Lecturer, Department of Public Administration, Comilla University, Cumilla-3506, Bangladesh. Email: mishkat97jahan@gmail.com

philosophy of democratic peace theory. Kant envisaged a domain of peaceful republican states where mutual trust and respect can resist the initiation of conflict (Kant, 1795 trans. by Humphreys, 2003: 9). He claims that a republican constitution emphasizing the representational feature of republican governance, is the perfect framework for durable peace. Later, other academics, including Doyle, used Kant's writings to establish the concept of eternal peace. Modern academics claim that Kant's concept of republicanism fits with how we currently perceive democracy, even though he explicitly equated it with despotism. As a result, the phrases Kantian peace and democratic peace (or liberal peace) are frequently employed in the modern context.

As a core theory of democracy, the importance of democratic peace theory is immense as the theory influenced the academicians and practitioners to institutionalize democratic principles across the world specifically after the Cold war period. In the twentieth century, democratic peace theory became an influential theoretical proposition beyond academia to real-life politics while the foreign policy of powerful countries was reshaped by the arguments of democratic peace theory.

The democratic peace hypothesis holds that dictatorships, not democracies, are the ones that start wars. On the surface, the claim that democracy is intrinsically "serene" while autocracy or tyranny is "militaristic" appears persuasive. A genuinely democratic world would be devoid of conflict since democratic processes call for the discussion of differences. The belief that the most powerful nations in the world would democratize along with the demise of communism, as memorably articulated in Francis Fukuyama's 1989 article "The End of History," gave rise to this optimism during the 1990s. The other perspective asserts that the lack of legitimacy and security of the elites and rulers of dictatorships motivates them to instil anti-foreign sentiment to win over the populace. World peace would inevitably result if dictatorships were replaced everywhere with democracies (Skidelsky, 2022). Less consensus exists, nevertheless, about the reasons for democratic peace. In a democracy, governmental institutions are believed to take precedence over popular beliefs, but democratic institutions do not necessarily bring about and uphold peace (Widmaier, 2005). There seems to be a growing need for it to explain the role of people and state actors or agents since it discredits the influence of lone actors or agents. Besides, the ability of elected leaders to incite war is constrained by the division of powers and the checks and balances inherent in democratic political systems. Contrary violence remains potential, according to realists, as long as the global order is anarchic. According to this hypothesis, a

state's external behaviour is determined by its internal structure, which ignores the international system's impact on a nation's domestic politics. Kenneth N. Waltz argued in his 1979 book 'The Theory of International Politics that 'international anarchy' influences state behaviour more than state action influences 'international anarchy' (Skidelsky, 2022).

In theoretical discussions of international relations, democratic peace is equated with liberal perspectives, and therefore it is also strongly related to two other liberal global political agendas such as economic interdependence among nations and international institutions that facilitate international peace. But This theory is limited in that it fails to address the role of trade interdependence as a more compelling reason for peace than democratic processes. Besides, the manipulated nature of international institutions also failed to mitigate the increasing tensions among states.

In the twenty-first century, democracy has evolved beyond its initial meaning of domestic governance to play a significant role in influencing foreign affairs. In international relations, status, hierarchy, and alliances have grown to depend on the nature of the state, whether it be democratic or not. Democratic states often use certain moral superiority which has taken on its most militant expression and sparked conflicts in the name of democracy in the last 20 years. Furthermore, democracies tend to use the idea that democracy is "transplantable" to justify military engagement with authoritarian states, spreading and establishing democracies in turbulent regions of the world. An extreme miscalculation of the military, economic, and humanitarian costs has resulted from attempts (Skidelsky, 2022). Due to this wrong-intended democratization process, the situation in international politics is deteriorating. In interstate relations, using force and violence to achieve desired results has been the norm. Here, the focus is not on the action but on its intent. Moreover, Populism and authoritarianism have emerged as zeitgeists challenging democratic principles in many countries this century.

Lately, democratic backsliding has become an area of research for many scholars to identify the reasons behind the deterioration of democracy worldwide. Simultaneously, the rationality of the implications of democratic peace theory in the 21st century has become questionable.

Methodology

The method of the study is qualitative in nature. It is based on the thematic technique of literature review and in-depth study of the documents related to the origins,

implications, core features, limitations, and rationality of democratic peace theory. These comprise a wide array of written documents such as articles and journals. This review shall enable researchers to have a better understanding and insights into the subject.

Peace and Democracy

Peace and stability among countries are one of the major study areas in the discipline of International Relations (IR). Different theorists have defined peace differently based on various theoretical propositions. Realist theorists emphasized the “balance of power” for international peace where one hegemonic power would dominate. Idealists conceived peace as prosperity, freedom, and security from the threat of others. On the other hand, liberal theorists and institutionalists proposed institutionalizing the liberal economic, political and social norms to build a peaceful society. Constructivists focus on considering the ideas and identities in the society to motivate state actors to sustain peace inside the countries. Good governance, mechanism of good cooperation, regulation, and well-developed networking can ensure peace in society (Richmond, 2008). Peace is not only the opposition to war but also stability, independence, universal equality, and getting empathy from other states. Many scholars identified the negative and positive aspects of peace. Free from conflict, violence, and war is the negative peace while cohesion, cooperation, harmony, and amalgamation of human society have been pointed out as positive peace (Martín, 2005).

The classic theorists of democracy emphasized the theories of democracy which focused on “republicanism,” “popular sovereignty,” “political equality,” “polyarchy” and better representation of people. They conceived election as the instrumental tool of democracy which let the mass people be involved in the decision-making cycle, elect representatives based on their political background and ensure ruling by the majority that leads to maintaining democratic values. The Pluralist theory of democracy was developed with the essence of polyarchy which institutionalized the provision of a free fair credible election, universal suffrage of the voters, and freedom of expression (Dahl, 1956). The institutionalization of electoral democracy ascertains “horizontal accountability” by establishing checks and balances in the state which reduces the corruption rate although the values of electoral democracy are not properly institutionalized by populist leaders all over the world (O’Donnell, 1996). Counterarguments against the classical theories of democracy have been developed by the neo-classical and minimalist thinkers Schumpeter, Shapiro, and Przeworski who theorized election as the “competition

among the politicians” where only the representation of people cannot maximize welfare if the elected representatives are not responsible. They argued the standalone election cannot be adequate for resolute the conflict of interest (Shapiro & Hacker-Cordon, 1999). Although democracy is considered instrumental to keep peace ins and outs of the states, the deeply rooted administrative culture of inequality, discrimination, injustice, and lack of embeddedness of the state’s autonomy cannot sustain peace even in a democratic country.

Key Arguments of Democratic Peace Theory

Democracy is still one of the most popular forms of Government across the world. For having characteristics instrumental to good governance, scholars advocate sustaining democratic values in the state mechanism (Jahan, 2021). Many theories have emerged to figure out the process and system of democracy to promote overall development worldwide. Among other theories of democracy, democratic peace theory is one of the most studied topics in the field of International Relations (IR and Political Science broadly). Although the origin of this classic theory is rooted in the eighteenth century, still there is academic debate on the implications of democratic peace theory. A review of the literature shows that in 1795 in his essay German Philosopher and Thinker Immanuel Kant supported a constitutional republic to have the condition of peace and argued that people under a constitutional republic do not vote for war (Imai & Lo, 2021). English Political Theorist Thomas Paine (1776) wrote in favour of republicanism rather than the kingdom where he argued that republics would not be violent while kings would be involved in the war. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, French Political Scientist Alexis de Tocqueville also agreed that democratic states were less prone to war during the nineteenth century. Several Social Scientists such as Babst, Small, real-life, Doyle, and Rummel statistically proved and contributed to theorizing democratic peace theory in the ensuing years in the middle of the nineteenth century (Altman et al., 2021).

Democratic peace theory emerged as the opposition to realism which argues that civil norms and values of democracy are instrumental to shape foreign policy liberally rather than prioritizing the contentious interest of the state actors. On the other hand, liberalism creates the foundation of democratic peace theory that urges the liberal behaviour of the decision-makers under the democratic regime (Elman, 2001). To reduce conflict and contentious relationships between states, the peace theory advocated following a democratic government.

However, the proponents of democratic peace theory have advocated logic

behind the argument of the theory. One of the logics is cultural or normative logic which argues that democracy has several inherent norms to inhibit the state actors to involve in conflict with other democratic countries. Under a democratic regime, citizens do not support the leaders to make insurgency in their country and also in other countries (Chan, 2001). Norms of democracy affirm peaceful conflict resolution and negotiation with other democracies. Democratic leaders are supposed to externalize the domestic democratic norms and values in case of international relations. Mutual respect and trust for each other make the democratic system more viable to sustain development and peace (Levy, 2002). Norm externalization and mutual respect are the two main arguments of the normative logic of democratic peace theory. Another institutional or structural logic confirms that institutional mechanisms of a democratic state such as checks and balances by the constitution, rule of law, transparency, etc. make the government reluctant at war. Democratic leaders are accountable to the citizens as they are elected by their vote and citizens do not support the war. Government cannot go against public sentiment as there is the possibility of opposition's uprising. In addition, an open system, freedom of speech, exchange of innovation, etc. institutional mandates do not let the government take contentious foreign policy. On the other hand, authoritarianism, anarchy, and the use of power seem to be common features of undemocratic countries (Zimelis, 2012).

Logics behind the democratic peace theory have been studied and justified by academicians to establish the theoretical propositions widely.

Theoretical Relevance of Democratic Peace Theory

Although democratic peace theory is rooted in the eighteenth century, it is still a debatable arena in the studies of political science and IRs in the twenty-first century. Proponents of the peace theory rationalized the implication of the theory by theoretical explanation, statistical analysis, and observation. After the Second World War democracy became the most popular regime type in world history while Francis Fukuyama advocated the universality of liberal democracy in his book titled "The End of History" (Etten, 2014). However, democratic peace theory became exceedingly popular for the widespread acceptability of democracy. The peace theory not only has proponents but also opponents of other approaches who critically argued against the main logic of the theory.

Realists offered counterarguments against the democratic peace theory based on historical and empirical evidence. Kenneth N. Waltz theorized that power is the core

concept in realist theory in international politics where states act to maximize their interest and to survive in the anarchical world (Baldwin, 2016). It was theorized by the realists that in the competitive world cooperation from the other states is not desirable where every state struggle to gain the maximum benefit. Alignment of the democratic states was necessary to establish the balance of power after the Second World War which would be more likely to be interpreted by the theory of balance of power rather than the democratic peace theory (Ripsman, 2007).

On the other hand, liberalism is considered as the opponent theory of realism, constructivism, and institutionalism but is related to democratic peace theory. Scholars in political science and IRs proposed that a democratic Government with a liberal ideology maintains a harmonious relationship with other democratic countries. Liberalism seems to be aligned with democratic values while illiberal state leaders in democratic countries can be contentious with other democracies as well as non-democracies (Owen, 1994). Liberalism and democratic peace theory have been studied as similar theoretical propositions both of which are supposed to resist contentious politics and war. In the twenty-first century, a democratic country with liberal leaders is not quite common to negotiate with other countries liberally.

However, the democratic peace theory is not supported by the constructivist approach which asserts that individual identity and interest are constructed based on socially and culturally gained knowledge. This approach to Constructivism encounters both a realist focus on rational actors and liberalism's emphasis on the institution's role (Dormer, 2017). According to the constructivists, all of the democratic norms are not practiced accurately, and democratic distinctions can create conflict between democratic countries and also with undemocratic states (Etten, 2014). Constructivism advocates for socially constructed agents which are not aligned with the norm of democratic peace theory (Fearon & Wendt, 2002). Constructivism emphasizes the emotion of the groups and individuals which is commonly addressed by psychological studies in IRs while democratic peace theory does not indicate the social orientation and emotions of the state actors (Kertzer & Tingley, 2018).

Rosato (2003) examined the causal logic of democratic peace theory to identify the accuracy of the theory where he considered democracy as the independent variable and peace as the dependent variable. After analysing the data of "imperial wars involving liberal democracy" from 1838 to 1920, the historical records, and theorists' interpretation, Rosato (2003) dismissed the argument of "norm

externalization” under normative logic and proved that democratic countries do not externalize their internal democratic norms of conflict resolution and many times liberal democrats decided for war by defying the democratic values. In his study, it also has been revealed by analysing “American Cold War Interventions against Democracies” from 1953 to 1984 that in case of conflict-of-interest democracies do not follow the rules of “trust and respect each other” while in many cases states take the hard decision of invasion and war. Although the proponents of normative logic tried to justify their argument by including the perception of the state actors as the independent variable, the author rejected the assumption of perception as the perception of the states cannot be unified and states can change their perception independently (Rosato, 2003).

On the other hand, all the causal mechanisms of the institutional logic such as accountability, public constraint, group constraint, autocratic constraint, slow mobilization, surprise attack, information, etc. have been analysed by the authors to vindicate the arguments of institutional logic. It has been clarified that democratic state actors are not accountable to “peace-loving publics or specific interest groups” while they can take abrupt decisions in the name of protecting the national interest. Instances of surprise attack, competitiveness, and revealing of private secret information do not help to support the institutional logic behind the democratic peace theory. The author concluded that the causal logic cannot justify the claims of democratic peace theory and the arguments of democratic peace theory can be accepted during the period post-1945 when there was less democratic war before this period and several democratic countries were also fewer before 1945 (Rosato, 2003). From this empirical study, it has been identified that democratic peace theory lacks explanatory power to reinforce the theoretical foundation.

Democratic Peace Theory during the Post-Second World War

In the case of studying democratic theories and practice, the twentieth century is an important period as the dynamics of world politics changed during this century. The huge economic and political crisis became global as the tremendous backlash of the First World War ended with the crisis of the Second World War. However, after the Second World War, with the end of colonialism and imperialism, many states got independence from colonial rulers and built new nation-states. At the End of the cold war period international community introduced the Liberal International Order (LIO) in the twentieth century which offered liberal democracy, borderless free trade, and globalization to build an equal just society for all. As the ideal form

of Government, democracy was stipulated as one of the state principles in the constitution of the newly independent countries. Multilateral liberal institutions as such European Union (EU), United Nations (UN), and World Trade Organization (WTO) were constructed with the high endeavour of spreading liberal values of democracy worldwide. The mid-twentieth century was the heyday for the flourishing of democracy across the world. The democracy index became reliable to rank the status of countries. Democratic Peace Theory also got momentum in this period. Political Scientists, theorists, and scholars studied the peace theory to examine the applicability of the theory in the Twentieth century. Political Philosopher Francis Fukuyama published his widely accepted book “The End of the History and the Last Man” in 1992 where he declared the end of the other historical ideologies and affirmed the dominance of liberal democracy in world politics (Fukuyama, 1992).

However, after the Second World War, the world observed the continuation of the Cold war which lasted for about twenty years while there was indirect conflict among the world’s great powers. During the cold war period, two great powers emerged in international politics, the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). As a superpower, the United States of America advocated for democracy worldwide and fought against illiberal states (Pierce, 2009). The world saw the collapse of the USSR, the rival power of the cold war, in the late twentieth century because of domestic political instability (Shiman et al., 2022).

Although the number of democratic countries increased in the twentieth century, international violence spread across the world. Transformation in the world economy towards capitalism in the last century influenced international politics also (Keohane, 1984). In the case of the bipolar power of the USA and Russia, theoretically, the USA upholds democracy and desires to cooperate with democratic countries. On the other hand, Russian leaders supported communism after the end of the cold war. Although democratic peace theory asserts that democratic countries do not fight against other democratic states, by analysing previous wars of the USA for instance in Brazil, and Indonesia it is clear that the USA was involved in a war with several democratic countries (Owen, 2010). In addition, during the Twentieth century, Iraq-Iran War, the Gulf War, and the Middle East crisis created a hollow in international politics that was not unravelled by the logic of democratic peace theory. It is factual that from the security dilemma or to retain hegemonic power, democratic countries with great power do not externalize the internal values and norms of democracy. In these cases, the theoretical approach of realism explains the

context of international politics more accurately rather than the democratic peace theory. The influence of foreign powers in the domestic politics of any country risks the sovereignty of that country. In this regard, Kenneth Waltz, the classical realist, suggested a separate dimension of foreign policy and domestic politics, empirical evidence from history shows that often the foreign policy of powerful countries is shaped to influence domestic politics in other countries which can be a threat to the democratic countries and against the logic of Democratic Peace Theory (Williams, 2009). During the last half of the twentieth century, several phenomena such as the western intrusion into the Middle East domestic politics, the USA's support of the Israel-Palestine conflict, Iraq sanction by the West, etc. instigated the insurgency and caused the rise of fundamentalism. The Twentieth century ended with almost a unipolar hegemonic power of the USA while other powerful countries as such Great Britain, Russia, China, France, and Germany were restructuring their economic, social, and political orders to survive in the global competition.

It is evident from the twentieth century that democratic countries are involved in conflict with not only non-democratic countries but also democratic states which does not rationalize the main arguments of democratic peace theory.

The Twenty-First Century and Democratic Peace Theory

In the twentieth century, the world had two World Wars which created a huge backlash and caused an economic, social, and political crisis. The economic and political transformation took place across the globe after the Second World War.

The twenty-first century began with many unresolved issues in world politics. During the beginning of this century, the USA was under the deadliest attack on 11th September 2001 which caused more than 3000 death of US citizens. Islamic extremists who were dissatisfied and against the USA's support to Israel and employment of the US army in Middle East countries did this reprehensible attack on the USA which changed world dynamics hugely (Hartig & Doherty, 2021). America-led army occupation in Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, and Syria during this century challenges the contribution of LIO to solve the wars (Maynes, 1998). Throughout the twenty-first century, the world observed the declaration of the USA of the "War on Terrorism" after 9/11, the rise of multipolar power, the close link of China with Russia, the creation of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, regional conflicts, etc. which have shaped the international relations differently (Brown and Ainley 2005).

As of 2016, the number of states shifting toward authoritarianism has been roughly three times that of those moving toward democracy, with the exception of Zambia, which is expected to (re)transition to democracy. A third (30%) of backsliding democracies, including Turkey, Nicaragua, and Venezuela, have become authoritarian or hybrid. Until 2020, free expression, media, and election integrity were the biggest democratic setbacks. Backsliding democracies endure democratic breakdown when electoral support dwindles, and incumbent administrations undermine the election system to maintain power (International IDEA, 2021). Inversely, several democratic states have recently transitioned from autocracies or oligarchies. Transitioning regimes generate turmoil and unrest within the political system and society, which can lead to the initiation of conflicts. During the democratic transition of a state with weak regimes, the government may employ deceptive strategies to maintain power. These approaches involve weaponizing ethnic or national ideals and sentiments which can lead to civil unrest and wars. The relative democratization in former Yugoslavia, which paved the way for the rise of nationalistic leaders and the political and military domination of one side over the other, caused ethnic cleansing (Annan, 2014) and can be considered as an example. In addition, civil conflicts in African nations with poor institutions and overall impoverished economies are also such examples. Between 2010 and 2011, Côte d'Ivoire nearly relapsed into civil war after its disputed November 2010 election led to violent confrontations between loyalists of then-president Laurent Gbagbo and opposition Alassane Ouattara, resulting in the deaths of more than 3,000 Ivoirians and the displacement of many (BBC News Africa, 2011).

It is also a matter of fact that leaders in countries with great power, for instance, Russia and China support communism more than democracy, and they influence other neighbouring countries' politics to establish their regional dominance. International relations among the states have become more contentious and anarchic. International and regional cooperative, economic and political institutions such as World Bank (WB), United Nations Development Program (UNDP), Organization for Islamic Cooperation (OIC), BRICS, etc. have become the reflection of the decisions of the state leaders with the great powers (Adler-Nissen & Zarakol, 2021).

However, an outbreak of the pandemic COVID 19 in 2019 has made the world more socially, economically, and politically vulnerable as the excessive infectious characteristic of the coronavirus made the affected countries impose lockdowns and maintain social distance. Voting as one of the core measurement scales of democracy was impacted negatively by the contagious epidemic (Fernandez-Navia

et al., 2021). States did not maintain democratic principles during the pandemic period which increased political inequality in many countries. Authoritarian Governments misused the pandemic and did not hold elections in many states to be in power for a longer period (Kurlantzick, 2021). Besides, lower voter turnout during the outbreak weakened the flow of democratization and signalled the restoration of democratic norms to keep democracy alive (Lijphart, 1997; López-Calva, 2021).

The pandemic COVID 19 has not dissolved into the world still. While the entire world is fighting against the deadly Coronavirus, by confirming the falsification of the democratic peace theory, Russia, a federal democratic state, invaded Ukraine, another democratic country, in February 2022 which worsened the international relations among the countries with great powers, created worst refugee crisis and generated global economic recession after the Second World War. From a security dilemma and to sustain regional dominance, Russia attacked Ukraine to annex the land of Russia, which is the largest forceful, illegal, illegitimate annexation in Europe by Russia after the Second World War. Historical backlash and Ukraine's joining NATO made Russia more aggressive in attack. The USA, Britain, and NATO allies have imposed many economic sanctions on Russia to stop the war. On the other hand, China and other neighbouring authoritarian states backed Russia up as allies. Thousands of people have been killed on both sides in this war and millions of people fled from Ukraine and Russia which has created a huge refugee crisis (Pita & Costa, 2022). The Russia-Ukraine war in the twenty-first will have the worst backlash on the economy and energy resources of the world. Many countries are facing higher inflation which has made the poor countries poorer and has deteriorated the living standard in those countries (Russia-Ukraine War, 2022). However, the war in the twenty-first century shows the ultimate failure of negotiation among the state leaders of democratic countries. This war is taking place between two constitutionally declared democratic countries which does not support the main argument of democratic peace theory. Additionally, another democratic superpower the USA is supporting Ukraine with arms while they did not take any attempt to dialogue with the president of Russia to stop the war.

Moreover, it is remarkable that existing conflicts between democratic states have become more intensified in the 21st century. Border skirmishes between India and Pakistan have intensified the existing tension between them which result in the death of many civilians. Harsh sanctions on Iran by the USA have limited Iran's access to products used in the oil and energy sectors, causing many oil companies to withdraw from Iran, and causing a drop in oil production due to a lack of access

to technologies needed to improve efficiency. Due to this sanction, Iran can lose foreign investment and the global market. Lately, Shelling from Myanmar into Bangladesh has heightened tensions along the border. It may have an impact on the repatriation of Rohingya refugees who fled the Myanmar military's genocide against them. According to Professor Imtiaz Ahmed, a Dhaka-based international relations expert, 'It's possible that Myanmar wants to make things messy along the Bangladesh-Myanmar border to make repatriation take longer and be forgotten' (Mostofa, 2022).

It is time to review the peace theory and make the justification for the democratic peace theory in the new era. Overall, the two key aspects of democratic peace theory are democratic countries with liberal order do not fight against other democratic countries while democratic states are more contentious to the undemocratic countries. Although the first aspect of the theory has been largely studied by scholars, the second aspect of democratic peace theory is more likely not explored by scholars in IRs and Political Science. In the contemporary world, the second argument of the theory is more applicable which would not be appropriate for many countries. Intervening in other countries' domestic politics in the name of protecting democracy cannot be aligned with the values of LIO.

Discussion

After the second world war, democratic peace theory became prominent due to the increased worldwide popularity and acceptability of democracy. Since then, democratic peace theory is an arguable area of study though advocates of this theory rationalized its implications through observation, hypothetical elucidation, and statistical research. Realism and constructivism are the main adversaries of democratic peace theory which have challenged the implications and provided counter-argument against it.

Realist arguments claim that the international system is anarchic and unsecured, where states emphasize more on survival, self-help, and maximization of self-interest. Although in the constantly competitive world cooperation is a possibility, difficult to uphold or maintain. Realistically, states should aim to outperform their competitors in terms of power (Layne, 1994). Realist arguments demonstrate that democratic peace theory fell short of offering a convincing response to the question of why democracies opted out of war. The democratic peace theory, however, does not consider the role played by specific agents or actors.

Constructivism asserts that social and culturally acquired knowledge shapes a state's identity and interests. Constructivists contend that not all democratic principles are correctly upheld, and that differences among democratic nations as well as those that are not democratic can lead to conflict (Etten, 2014). This study found the authenticity of the aforementioned statement that deteriorating democratic practices have extended the probability of conflicts in the international arena.

In addition, authoritarianism, democratic regress, the growth of populism, contentious politics, etc. have emerged as critical issues in democratic nations when neither liberal philosophy nor democratic ideals are upheld by the governmental apparatus. Cantankerous international politics justifies that only democracy as the state principle does not prevent the state leaders to act aggressively against democracy or non-democracy; with democratic values, illiberal state leaders in democratic countries can be contentious to other democracies as well as non-democracies. As evidence that democracies do not always trust and respect each other, the democratic peace theory's detractors have pointed to military interventions, covert operations, and clandestine activities between democracies. Although the CIA and Special Operations Forces had coordinated previously, the border between militaristic covert operations and special operational activities grew blurred after 9/11. However, targeting non-combatants outside of active combat zones produced a political and diplomatic backlash against the U.S. and made host countries like Pakistan, Yemen, and Somalia look powerless and servile, though USA has been increasingly relying on CIA and Pentagon UAVs (Unmanned Aerial Vehicles) outside of active war zones to track and target terrorists (McDonald, 2017; Boyle, 2013). In addition, covert operations between India and Pakistan and the United States' military intervention in Iraq are also notable exemplars of mistrust and judgment error. Examining previous US wars in Indonesia and Brazil reveals that the US was at war with several democratic countries. Furthermore, the United States' involvement in conflicts with fellow democracies such as Iran and Russia indicate that democracies with significant power do not actually eschew democratic norms and values because of security dilemmas or merely maintaining hegemony.

Therefore, instances of surprise attacks, competitiveness, and the revealing of private secret information do not help to support the institutional logic behind the democratic peace theory. "Forcible regime promotion" is a common phenomenon in international politics which is mainly committed by the major powers to sustain their hegemonic power. In other words, the notion that democracy is "portable"

results in a massive miscalculation of the costs to the military, the economy, and society of attempting to bring democracy to unstable regions of the world. In this regard, Mark E. Pietrzyk argues that ‘Only states with a reasonable level of political, military, and economic stability can support pluralistic and free societies; in the absence of such stability, states are much more inclined to establish, uphold, or restore centralized enforced authority systems’ (Skidelsky, 2022).

By making shallow comparisons with Japan and post-war Germany, advocates of democracy underestimate the difficulty of introducing democracy into a society that lacks Western constitutional traditions. Therefore, Handicraft results are evident in Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Libya, and many African countries. Democratic peace theory simply explains “belligerent” behaviour ignoring the circumstances and histories of the countries involved (Skidelsky, 2022). This superficiality leads to overconfidence that swift sanctions and bombing will be enough to deal with the dictatorship. The detractors of the theory claim that people are not intrinsically pacific. Therefore, the democratic peace theory is unable to account for the general public’s propensity to favour the use of force and bloodshed against autocracies and Islamic regimes. The Clash of Civilizations debate makes clear that religion is also a significant factor in the decision to wage war or not.

Indeed, the existence of peace between democracies cannot be disputed, yet disagreements remain as to why peace exists. China, an autocratic state, has become more powerful in the twenty-first century and has fought to be equivalent to the United States (a democratic state) in terms of global influence. Despite their reported annual commerce of billions of dollars, there has never been an armed conflict between them. It indicates that democratic peace theory is limited in that it underemphasizes trade and other dimensions of economic interdependence as a more compelling reason for peace than democratic processes. Michael Mousseau, for example, contends that ‘market capitalism establishes the most important restraints on conflict or war (Mousseau, 2009).’ Instead, this theory emphasizes the importance of institutional restrictions and normative factors as determined by statistical models.

Conclusion

Recently, major powers are exerting their world-transforming ambitions through hard and soft, formal and informal power such as legal processes, diplomacy, admonition, persuasion, coercion, economic sanction, and military power; extending to every corner of the globe. While some states such as the USA, and

Russia are struggling to maintain their status quo superior position, the other states, for instance, China, India, Pakistan, and Iran, are competing to attain regional supremacy. We have witnessed the most coercive, and illicit annexation of Ukraine by Russia out of a security concern and to maintain regional supremacy. As for Russia's aggression against Ukraine, it must be said that the root of such mismanagement lies in uncritical and disorderly submission to the overarching doctrine of democratic peace. Besides this, increasing tensions between Bangladesh and Myanmar, multiple skirmishes between India-Pakistan, and reinstated sanctions against Iran by the USA and international entities in the twenty-first century show the ultimate failure of negotiation among the state leaders of democratic countries. Thus, it indicates that the democratic peace theory has failed to provide a detailed explanation of the negotiation strategies to reduce conflict internationally. It is evident from the twentieth century that democratic countries are involved in conflict with not only non-democratic countries but also democratic states which does not rationalize the main arguments of democratic peace theory. Moreover, uncertainty and insecurity among the states lead to global chaos. In this regard, Waltz suggested that instead of unravelling democracy, it is better to try to reduce international insecurity as an antidote.

This theory can better explain the world before 1945 when the number of democratic countries was less. Currently, in the era of multi-polar power and contentious politics, peace theory fails to narrate the logic behind the theory. Using force and violence among other methods, to attain desired interests of states, is deteriorating the situation. Trade and economic interdependence, identity and interest of states, religious belief, culture, possession of the nuclear arsenal, border issues, regional and global supremacy, etc. The crucial factors that shape the behaviour of people, as well as the state, are not explained in the democratic peace theory, though all of these are creating new equations in international politics.

Substantially democracy has instrumental features which can make the world a more liveable, peaceful place. But following democratic norms, values and principles are urgent to get a fruitful impact on democracy. Without proper democratization, the situation of international politics would deteriorate which will affect the world tremendously. Normative aspects should be added to the democratic peace theory to suggest the state actors' principles to keep democracy viable. Therefore, it is time to review the peace theory and make the justification for the democratic peace theory in the new era.

References

- Adler-Nissen, R., & Zarakol, A. (2021). Struggles for Recognition: The Liberal International Order and the Merger of Its Discontents. *International Organization*, 75(2), 611–634. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020818320000454>
- Altman, D., Rojas-de-Galarreta, F., & Urdinez, F. (2021). An Interactive Model of Democratic Peace. *Journal of Peace Research*, 58(3), 384–398. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343319883672>
- Annan, N. (2014). Violent Conflicts and Civil Strife in West Africa: Causes, Challenges and Prospects. *Stability: International Journal of Security and Development*, 3(1), 3. <http://doi.org/10.5334/sta.da>
- Baldwin, D. A. (2016). *Power and International Relations: A Conceptual Approach*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- BBC News Africa. (2011, October 3). ICC to Investigate Ivory Coast Post-Election Violence. *BBC News Africa*. Retrieved from <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-15148801>
- Brown, C., & Ainley, K. (2005). *Understanding International Relations* (3rd ed). Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire; New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Chan, S. (2001). “Triangulating Peace: Democracy, Interdependence, and International Organizations. Bruce Russett and John R. Oneal.” *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific* 1(2), 305–309. DOI: 10.1093/irap/1.2.305
- Dahl, R. A. (1956). *A Preface to Democratic Theory*. The University of Chicago Press.
- Dormer, R. (2017). The Impact of Constructivism on International Relations Theory: A History. *Kwansei Gakuin University Social Sciences Review*, Nishinomiya, Japan 22, 14.
- Elman, C. (2001). Introduction: History, Theory, and the Democratic Peace. *The International History Review*, 23(4), 757–766. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07075332.2001.9640946>
- Etten, T. (2014). How Convincing is the Democratic Peace Thesis? *E-International Relations*, 6. Retrieved from <https://www.e-ir.info/2014/04/26/how-convincing-is-the-democratic-peace-thesis/>
- Fearon, J. D., & Wendt, A. (2002). Rationalism v. Constructivism: A Sceptical View in *Handbook of International Relations*. London; Thousand Oaks, Calif: SAGE Publication.
- Fernandez-Navia, T., Polo-Muro, E., & Tercero-Lucas, D. (2021). Too Afraid to Vote? The Effects of COVID-19 on Voting Behaviour. *European Journal of Political Economy*, 69(March), 102012. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ejpoleco.2021.102012>
- Fukuyama, F. (1992). *The end of history and the last man*. New York: Free Press.
- Hartig, H., & Doherty, C. (2021). Two Decades Later, the Enduring Legacy of 9/11, *Pew Research Center* 2. Retrieved from <https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/2021/09/02/two-decades-later-the-enduring-legacy-of-9-11/>
- International IDEA. (2021). Global State of Democracy Indices | International IDEA. Retrieved December 3, 2022, from <https://www.idea.int/data-tools/tools/global-state-democracy-indices>

- Imai, K., & Lo, J. (2021). Robustness of Empirical Evidence for the Democratic Peace: A Nonparametric Sensitivity Analysis. *International Organization*, 75(3), 901–919. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020818321000126>
- Jahan, M. (2021). Perplexing Coexistence of Democracy, Transparency, and Development in the Contemporary Era. In *New Horizons in Management, Leadership and Sustainability*. Springer, 357–374.
- Kant, I. (1795). *To Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch*. Translated by Humphrey, T. (2003). 9, Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc.
- Keohane, R. O. (1984). *After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Kertzer, J. D., & Tingley, D. (2018). Political Psychology in International Relations: Beyond the Paradigms. *Annual Review of Political Science* 21(1), 319–339. DOI: 10.1146/annurev-polisci-041916-020042.
- Kurlantzick, J. (2021). *COVID-19 and Its Effect on Inequality and Democracy: A Study of Five Large Democracies*. New York: Council on Foreign Relations.
- Layne, C. (1994). Kant or Cant: The Myth of The Democratic Peace. *International Security*, 19(2), 5-49. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2539195>
- Levy, J. S. (2002). *War and Peace*. SAGE Publications Ltd. <https://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781848608290>
- Lijphart, A. (1997). Unequal Participation: Democracy's Unresolved Dilemma. *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 91(1), 1-14. DOI:10.2307/2952255
- Lopez-Calve, L. F. (2021). The Virus and the Votes: How is COVID-19 changing voter turnout in LAC? | United Nations Development Programme. Retrieved December 3, 2022, from <https://www.undp.org/latin-america/blog/graph-for-thought/virus-and-votes-how-covid-19-changing-voter-turnout-lac>
- McDonald, J. (2017). *Enemies Known and Unknown: Targeted Killings and America's Transnational Wars* (NY); Boyle, M. J. (2013). "The Costs and Consequences of Drone Warfare," *International Affairs* 89(1), 3.
- Martín, F. E. (2005). Critical Analysis of the Concept of Peace in International Relations. *Peace Research*, 37 (2), 45–59.
- Maynes, C. W. (1998). The Middle East in the Twenty-First Century. *Middle East Journal*, 52(1), 9–16.
- Mostofa, Md. S. (2022, September 21). Tensions Escalate Along Bangladesh-Myanmar Border. *THE DIPLOMATE*. Retrieved November 12, 2022 from <https://thedi diplomat.com/authors/shafi-md-mostofa/>
- Mousseau, M. (2009). The Social Market Roots of Democratic Peace. *International Security*, 33(4), 52–86. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40207152>
- O'Donnell, G. A. (1996). "Illusions About Consolidation." *Journal of Democracy* 7 (2), 34–51.

- <https://doi.org/10.1353/jod.1996.0034>.
- Owen, J. M. (1994). How Liberalism Produces Democratic Peace. *International Security* 19(2), 87–125. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2539197>
- Owen, J. M. (2010). *The Clash of Ideas in World Politics: Transnational Networks, States, And Regime Change, 1510-2010*. Princeton University Press.
- Pierce, D. (2009). America in the Post-War Period. *Inquiries Journal*, 1(10). Retrieved from <http://www.inquiriesjournal.com/articles/2/america-in-the-post-war-period>
- Pita, A., & Costa, R. S. (2022, March 3). Ukrainian exodus could be Europe's biggest refugee crisis since World War II. Retrieved December 3, 2022, from EL PAÍS English Edition website: <https://english.elpais.com/international/2022-03-03/ukrainian-exodus-could-be-europes-biggest-refugee-crisis-since-world-war-ii.html>
- Richmond, O. P. (2008). *Peace in international relations*. London; New York: Routledge.
- Ripsman, N. M. (2007). Peacemaking and Democratic Peace Theory: Public Opinion as an Obstacle to Peace in Post-Conflict Situations. *Democracy and Security*, 3(1), 89–113. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17419160701199300>
- Rosato, S. (2003). The Flawed Logic of Democratic Peace Theory. *American Political Science Review*, 97(4), 585–602. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055403000893>
- Russia-Ukraine War (2022). *The New York Times*. Retrieved December 22, 2022 from <https://www.nytimes.com/news-event/ukraine-russia>
- Skidelsky, R. (2022, April 19). *The False Promise of Democratic Peace*, Project syndicate, Retrieved October 14, 2022 from <https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/democratic-peace-theory-is-wrong-by-robert-skidelsky-2022-04>
- Shiman, P., Converse, E., V., & Arena, J., A. (2022). *Reform and Experimentation after the Cold War, 1989-2001*. Washington, D.C: Historical Office, Office of the Secretary of Défense, 5.
- Shapiro, I., & Hacker-Cordon, C. (1999). *Democracy's Value*. Cambridge University Press.
- Widmaier, W. W. (2005). The Democratic Peace Is What States Make of It: A Constructivist Analysis of the US-Indian 'Near-Miss' in the 1971 South Asian Crisis. *European Journal of International Relations*, 11(3), 431-455. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1354066105055486>
- Williams, M. C. (2009). Waltz, Realism, and Democracy. *International Relations*, 23(3). <https://doi.org/10.1177/0047117809340490>
- Zimelis, A. (2012). Trust and Normative Democratic Peace Theory: Nexus Between Citizens and Foreign Policies? *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy*, 32(1), 17–28. <https://doi.org/10.1108/01443331211201734>