**Why do Democracies do not wage wars against each other?**

The assumption that democracies do not wage war against each other is an assumption that is seen proven inter alia by James Lee Ray (1998), Jack S. Levy (1989) and William Dixon (1998). Before analyzing the assumption why democracies do not wage war against each other one has to define democracy first.

The definition of democracy was primarily adjusted to the today's world status by Small and Singer (1976) who argue that a nation that is democratic has to have periodical elections where all parties have the same ability to run the government. Hence, Small and Singer added another classification to their definition by saying that at least 10% of the adult population has to be able to vote. Doyle (1983) adds more requirement to the definition. He argues that a democratic state has to have a free or private property market, internal sovereignty and equal juridical rights.

After defining the term of democracy I will come to the most important theory for the purpose of this review, the democratic peace theory and the normative/structural model(s) associated with it. The democratic peace theory was firstly touched by Emanuel Kant and Thomas Paine (1795) in his work "Perpetual Peace". However, Kant does not talk about democratic states in his analysis but about republics. Even though Kant talks about republics the assumption that equal state systems are less likely to wage war continues to be a valid point. Democratic peace theory was further developed by Dean Babst (1972) who added statistical research to the theory. Hence, the statistical...
research has proven the assumption that democracies are less likely to wage war against each other. Furthermore, Melvin Small and J. David Singer (1976) added further aspects to the theory but made their reservations on Babst’s assumption that democratic peace can be proven in terms of statistics. Maoz and Russett (1993) introduced a further developed attempt to develop a theory for the assumption that Democracies do not wage war against each other. In their view “When defined as continuous variables, both institutional constraints and democratic norms reduce national conflict involvement and conflict escalation” (The American Political Science Review p.633, Vol.87, No.3). Hence, Maoz and Russett also introduced the Normative and structural model, which will be discussed later on in this literature review. Moreover, the component of realism has to be included in order to be able to address several aspects of the assumption in this review.

The Normative model is built on Kant’s assumption that the cost of wars will eventually exceed the willingness of people to vouch for it. However, the question of costs and benefits of war were then further touched by Fearon (1994) in his work “Rationalist explanation of war”. Furthermore, the Normative argument includes the assumption that democracies are all rational actors meaning that they are foreseeable, predictable, have no intentions to attack other democracies, and are reliable in terms of their official intentions and their maintaining of treaties in laws in terms of International law.

The similarity between the fundamental values and laws such as human rights, public press, freedom of speech is another cause of freedom according to Maoz and Bruce M. Russett in their work, the “Normative and structural Causes of Democratic Peace” (American Science Review, Sep 1993, p. 624-639). Hence, these
values result in the ability of democratic countries to solve problems and conflicts through democratic measures and therefore leads to Democratic peace. Also, the democratic system is built upon a free market where trade plays a significant role. Hence, trade always includes interdependence towards other nations and therefore decreases the likelihood of war, as Hiscox (DATE) explains in his article "domestic-Domestic" sources of foreign economic policies" where he argues that trade significantly changes foreign policies of nations and therefore increases the importance of communication between the nations in order to maintain this peaceful trading.

As opposed to the normative model of explanation of why democracies do not wage war against each other, the structural model identifies, as already mentioned in the name, the structural problems of the democratic society as the main reason for peace. What is meant with the structural problem is that it is not as easy for a democratically elected government to wage an unnecessary war because firstly, the population has to approve and secondly, the legislation has to pass through several instances in order to be brought forward which gives diplomacy more time to be efficient. These structural constraints were identified by Mansfield and Snyder (1995, 2002) and Rummel (1983). Bueno de Mesquita (1992) adds that the main goal of the government is to be reelected and this seems to be difficult when it started an unsuccessful or avoidable war, as Bueno de Mesquita (1992) argued.

The realist view is of course different to the assumption made earlier. Their "inherent belief is that the internal processes and political structures within states play no discernable role in shaping international behavior on matters of
war and peace” (Maoz, Zeev. "The Controversy Over the Democratic Peace: Rearguard Action or Cracks in the Wall?" International Security. Vol. 22, No. 1. Summer 1997. pp. 162-198.9). Realists, specifically Mearsheimer believe that states strive for power and that their goal is to maximize that power, or as Waltz argues, states may alternatively seek to maximize their security. According to Mearsheimer (DATE) there are three patterns that are most important for states to act aggressively and these are fear, self-help and power maximization. For this reasons, the offensive realist, relationships among democracies do not necessarily imply peace. Furthermore, Rosato (2003) questions the empirical observations made in the normative models that liberal norms were not violated and points at the European wars. Concluding, the realists in general do not disagree with democratic peace but point out that this democratic peace is unstable and should rather be called/can be called a negative peace.

Concluding, there is evidence collected in the past found in the literature indicates that democracies are indeed, less likely to fight wars against each other. However, there are exceptions to it in form of the European wars. It is also important to mention that the hegemonic stability theory is to some extend relevant to this topic. In short, the hegemonic stability theory says that the world system is stable until the hegemon is challenged. Even though, up to now, there was no global hegemon we can assume that for the purpose of challenging for example America the US, democracies might go

1 Negative peace is defined as the absence of war where war is considered to be the natural state of the world community.
to war against each other. In other words, the theory that democracies do not wage war against each other is unstable and can change constantly and at any point of time. Hence, this is also suggested by the realist school of thought.

Comment [SS18]: Nonsense. A theory is not unstable, it is either right or wrong, correct or flawed, strong or weak. Do you mean world politics or the relations between states?
Cited References


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Fearon – “Rationalist Explanations for War” (1994)

Waltz – “The Anarchic Structure of World Politics” (1979)

Mearsheimer – “Anarchy and the Struggle for Power” (1990)

Hiscox - The Domestic Sources of Foreign Economic Policies (2004)